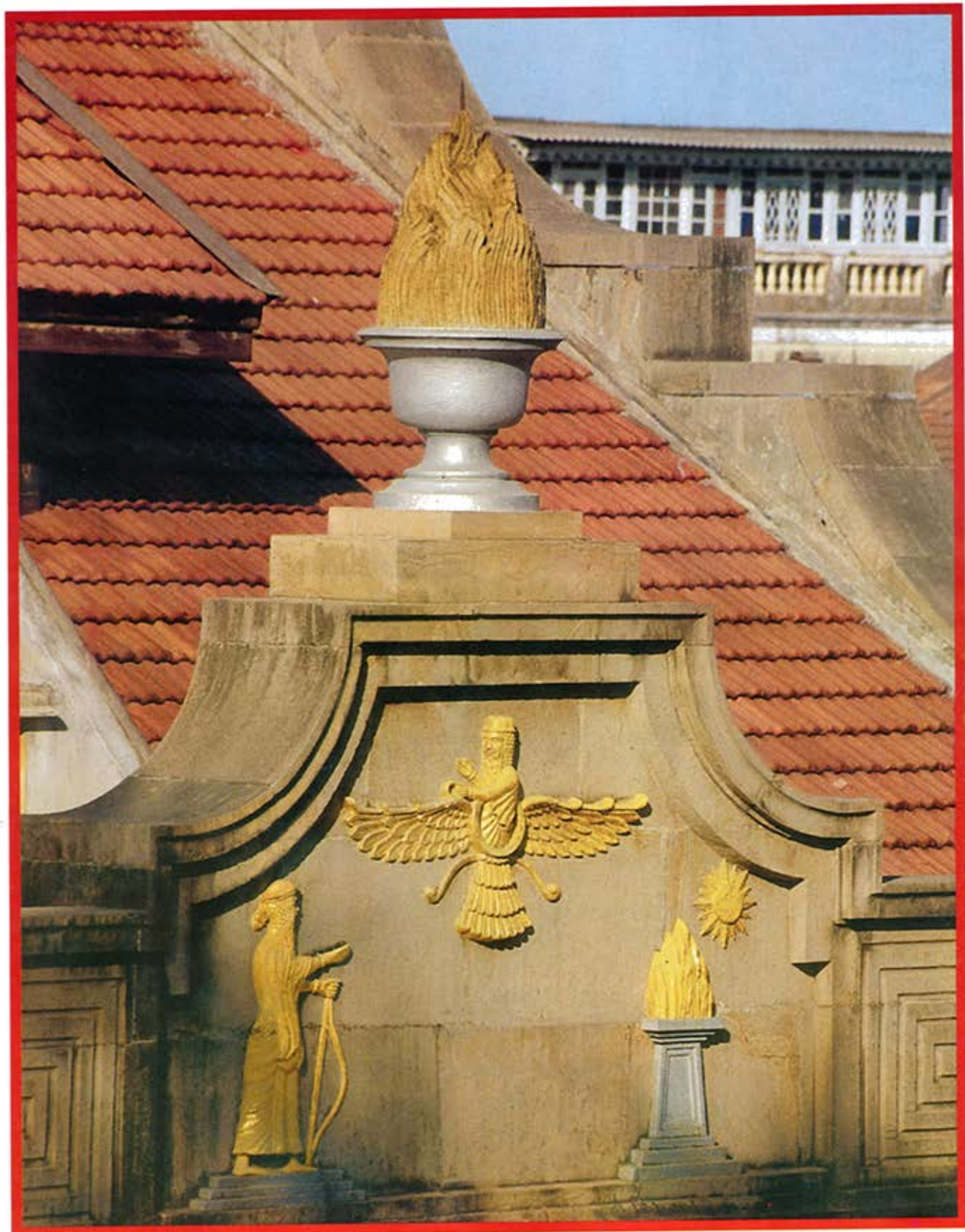


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Cover: Facade of the Navsari Anjuman Atash Behram

Photo: Gustasp Irani



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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Milestones"

I refer to the letter by Tina Balsara Vasvani ("Milestones," *Parsiana*, November 1998) in response to mine published in the June 1998 issue.

I was on a posting in Hong Kong for about a year but unfortunately couldn't meet most of the Parsis over there as I was constantly on business tour.

Unfortunately, she has not answered the basic issue which was initiated by Zenobia Sidhwa of Udvada to which you gave your editorial note and on which I have commented in my letter. The basic issue for discussion is: "To preserve the buniad of the Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Parsis by not marrying outside the community." It would be worthwhile to clear some of her misconceptions.

It is a misnomer that animals do not have the "freedom to choose." For instance, a gorilla will choose only a gorilla as a mate and not a chimpanzee

although both are monkeys. Animals too have "imagination," "sense of self awareness" and "conscience." Any biologist may confirm this aspect.

She mentions: "If we were to compare ourselves to nature we would be limited to stimulus and response." No being, whether human or animal, can be above nature. Nature never limits one to mere stimulus and response. "Stimulus" and "response" are only corollaries to "choice."

If she chose to marry a non-Parsi, well, that was her choice. No one can have a grudge against her choice as such and hence she need not be on the defensive to justify her choice. About human nature it has been said: "Human nature will remain human nature till the nature of human nature is changed by nature!"

She writes about having been taught "principles," "integrity," "honesty," "fairness," "sense of justice," "potential and developing talents"... etc. But these are the basics which exist in all decent human beings irrespective of the religion they follow and are absolutely irrelevant to the topic under discussion, viz. maintaining the buniad of the Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Parsi community.

RUSTOM D. PATEL

"The greening of..."

In the October '98 issue of *Parsiana* there is an article by Parinaz Gandhi, "The Greening of Doongerwadi," wherein reference is made to the short-



age of vultures at the Doongerwadi and the ways and means of enticing them there by planting more trees, etc. The question arises as to why we are trying to forcibly attract these birds by artificial means when they don't want to come there any more. The pertinent question to be answered is that under the circumstances do we need dokhmas at all to dispose of our dead, now that these structures have outlived their purpose?

Take Poona for example. We have two dokhmas here of which one had to be shut down as the bodies were just piling up undisposed due to lack of vultures. The situation in the second dokhma is very similar, but we are forced to use it, although the stench there permeates the whole area.

It is time we become more realistic on this issue, and substitute our dokhmas by electric crematoriums. It has nothing to do with defiling the sacred fire, etc. Except for burial, there is now no other alternative.

Brig N. B. GRANT

Poona

"Irrepressible Rhoda"

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "Irrepressible Rhoda" (*Parsiana*, October 1998).

Perhaps you could encourage more such articles, or even occasionally a short story by a Parsi. It would be a welcome distraction from the weighty but all too frequently discussed topics of intermarriage, housing and disposal of the dead. Who knows, among your readers exists a Booker Prize winner!

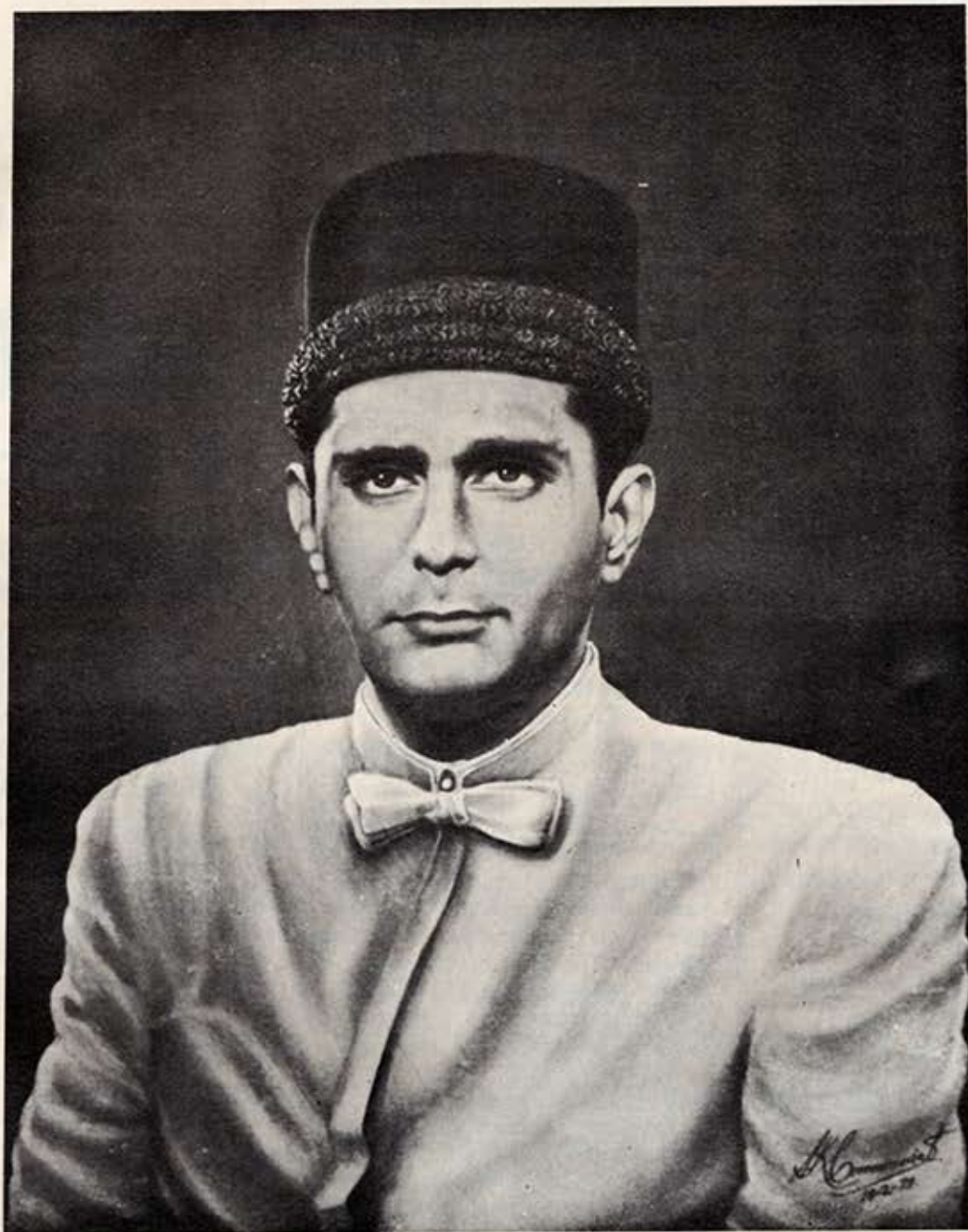
K. R. JAVERI

"Behind the screens"

We receive the *Parsiana* issues extremely late, nevertheless we read it with great interest and also encourage our children to do so. Being away from home, it's a wonderful link between Parsis around the globe.

The issue of July-August 1998 had an article on "Behind the screens" by B. K. Karanjia. Amongst all the notable Parsis behind the screens he has forgotten to mention, or may be he is not aware of, a very eminent and a great Parsi entrepreneur—the late Mr Phiroze Dorabji Mehta, the owner of Chitra Cinema in Dadar. He built an empire of

Bombay's Doongerwadi environs



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cinemas from 1955 to 1982 when he suddenly died of heart attack. His son Dara Mehta still runs his cinemas in Bulsar, Poona, Bombay and many other towns in Gujarat.



P. Mehta: empire of cinemas

Mr. Phiroze Mehta was also a leading distributor of Hindi films and his only son Dara is today a leading distributor of 20th Century Fox's famous *Titanic* — the Hollywood blockbuster which resulted in a box office triumph for Regal Cinema.

It is very surprising that Mr. Sidhwa in flagging his "*Titanic* triumph," (*Parsiana*, October 1998) did not even mention or throw some light on this young Parsi who was the distributor.

Mr. Mehta's family lives in Bombay and they receive your magazine as well. They must have felt very cut off by this omission of a great contribution.

COWAS AND PERVIN PAHLAN
London, UK

"Cross the sound barrier"

The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) Trust had highlighted the sad case of three-year-old Jennifer ("Cross the sound barrier," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1998) who was born with congenital hearing loss, which had left her without the ability to hear or speak.

The inherent defect with which little Jennifer was born was reversible, if a series of complex surgeries could be performed before she attained the age of four. Doctors were consulted in India, but were unable to perform the surgery due to unavailability of highly sophisticated equipment required. The only options available were to have the surgery performed either in USA or Australia where the success rates were very high.

Jennifer's parents coming from a family of very modest means just did not have the capacity to raise the amount of Rs 30,00,000 that was required. The funds required were indeed daunting,

but The WZO Trust issued its first public appeal during March 1998.

It is to the credit of the members of our community in India and overseas, as well as some donors from sister communities, and the Lions Club, that they responded with alacrity and very generously. The Daruwalla family too persevered in their fund-raising efforts. Nine months after the process of fund-raising began, the target was achieved, and the Daruwalla family left for Australia during end November 1998.

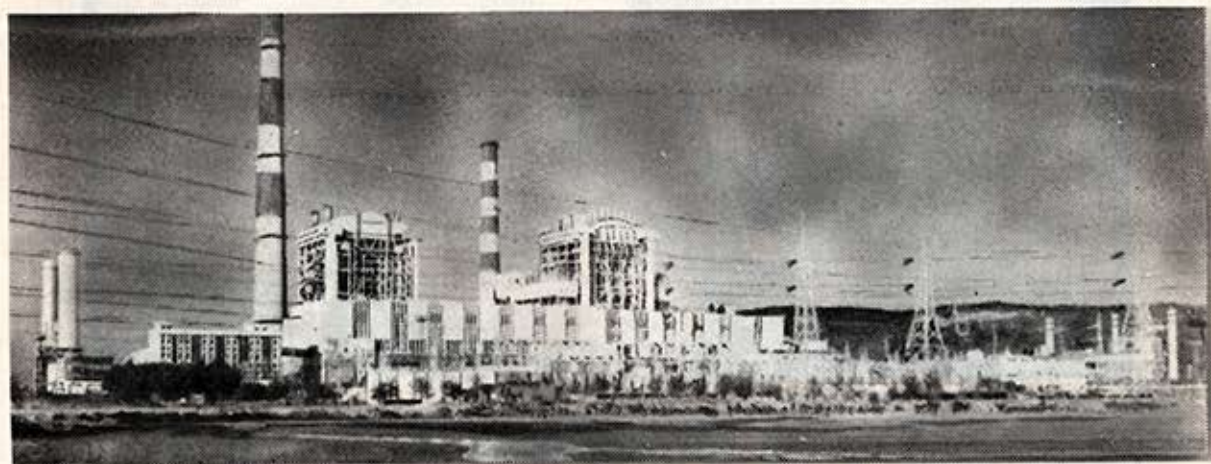
The WZO Trust has remained in contact with the family whilst they are 'Down Under.' Little Jennifer underwent numerous tests and was finally operated upon on December 30, 1998. We have now received the news that the defect with which Jennifer was born has been reversed, and she is now undergoing therapy to develop her faculties of hearing and speech.

By way of this public report, we wish to update all donors who have partici-



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pated in the noble exercise of giving to Jennifer the precious gifts of sound and speech, and reiterate our gratitude for the support and cooperation extended.

DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY

"At Mother's mass"

In "At Mother's mass," (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, October 1997) there was reference to the Parsis of Calcutta not attending Mother Teresa's funeral.

I had found the Parsis of Calcutta were very helpful when I was on the ship as fourth engineer during World War II. I fell very sick owing to stomach trouble and was removed to General Hospital where Capt White was in charge. After keeping me under observation for one week he suggested a research operation on my stomach.

I did not know any one in Calcutta except the priests of the Parsi agiary. So I wrote an urgent letter to the trustees of the agiary stating that my condition was very serious and in case I die during the operation they should take charge of my body, perform four days' prayers and get money from my family at Bombay.

On the day of the operation, after I opened my eyes in the evening I found

Nurture the Udvada township

three trustees standing near my bed. For three days they came every evening and then every alternate evening one trustee kept visiting.

I was discharged 15 days after the operation. The trustees then took me to the Parsi Dhamshala and kept me at their cost for three days.

Had it not been for the trustees, I would have been stranded in Calcutta for due to the war I had only kept Rs 100 with me, the rest I had sent to my bank account.

I was 34 years old at that time. Now I am 86, but I still remember the trustees although I have forgotten their names.

TEHMURAS P. SETHNA

Uplift Udvada

Udvada can best be described as a dying town. The streets full of shuttered and closed houses, the general air of poverty and decay arising out of it and the virtual absence of a young face, all point towards a place neglected, overlooked and for which no one appears to



be bothered.

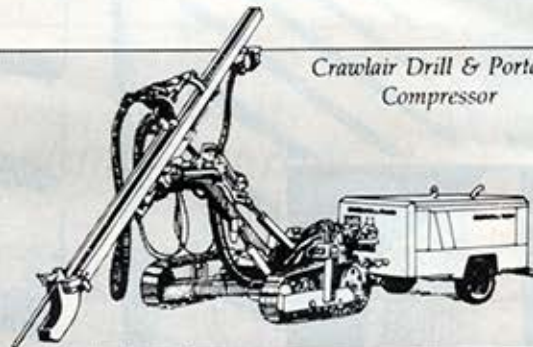
As perhaps one of the smallest religious communities in the world, it is our sacred duty to see that we not only protect, nurture and nourish the sacred fire housed at Udvada but also that the community and the township, which gave shelter to this fire, is also looked after, nurtured and nourished.

In the past, I have repeatedly approached the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the trustees thereof individually, to consider the setting up of a master plan for the upliftment of this town and the population of Udvada.

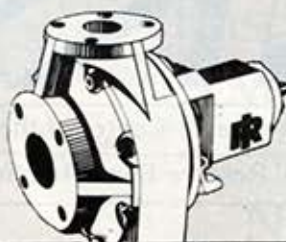
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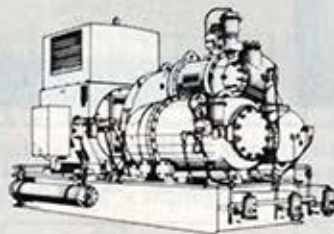
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Ideally there is need for a project which would serve to bring a lot of people to Udvada not only out of curiosity but perhaps as a matter of research and as a matter of tourist interest also.

The other solution towards the upliftment of Udvada would be to have this zone declared as special development area so that financial and infra-structural assistance would be available for entrepreneurs and industrial houses who would want to move there.

The third alternative of course would be to try and see if the old agricultural traditions can somehow be revived for there are lands still owned by Zoroastrians in that area.

If the scheme of things, as envisaged by me, is at least deserving of some thought, I would like to appeal to the members of the community to put their heads together and see if something can be achieved. Merely having the reputation of being the most farsighted and enterprising community in the country, which has done so much and achieved so much, is not going to be of any help if we continue to neglect and permit the extinction of the very root of our spiritual heritage.

JEHANGIR R. J. CAMA

Ahmedabad

Missing the *mah*

The name of your magazine *Parsiana* depicts descendants of Pars, a province in Iran from where under the leadership of Abed Saheb Nariosang Dhaval we landed at Sanjan in the present state of Gujarat where the former ruler Jadiv Rana was ruling.

My humble request to you is to print *roj, mah* and year of the Zoroastrian era side by side with the English date and year.

RUSTOM A. KOTWAL

The Editor replies

The publishing of the month and year in the magazine is a legal requirement. It also identifies the time period when the magazine is published. If we were to publish the Zoroastrian calendar months we would have to contend with the months of Shahenshahi, Kadmi and Fasli calendars which would not only be confusing but also cumbersome e.g. our February-March or July-August issues would end up listing four/five months on the masthead. *Parsiana* has demonstrated its commitment to the Zoroastrian calendar by publishing a calendar which can be used by all the three sects. The practice of putting a date other than

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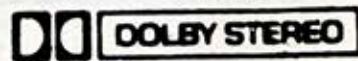
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the Gregorian calendar is not followed by other publications, community or otherwise, to the best of our knowledge. This does not mean *Parsiana* cannot be an exception. We just feel that it does not serve a practical purpose and we see no other reason why to publish it. But we welcome readers' views on Kotwal's suggestion.

Disclose addresses

I am a senior citizen of 72 years who cannot go out due to various surgical operations since December '94. My request to you is to give the addresses of your letter writers near their names. It is the usual practice of Bombay's morning and evening newspapers. This will enable me to correspond with them on various topics. I am sure your letter writers will not object.

HOSHANG P. D. SOONAWALLA

The Editor replies

We are sorry we are not able to oblige Hoshang Soonawalla. While some readers may not object to their addresses being published there would be others who value their privacy.

To confirm the authenticity of the correspondents, we do insist that an address be mentioned on all letters sent to us for publication. Thus if Soonawalla wishes to contact them he can write to us enclosing the letter in a spare, sealed and stamped envelope and we will forward it to the party on his behalf.

Parity with priests

It seems necessary that the priesthood is thrown open to all. The priests have conferred upon themselves superior status, have laid down all the commandments to their own advantage, and have made all believe that they alone, by reciting undecipherable prayers and performing ceremonies, are capable of giving eternal salvation. Our community, thanks to the priests, must be holding a record for spending the maximum amount of money over prayers/ceremonies for the dead.

Before becoming priests, the boys are supposed to undergo rigorous, very demanding, austere training and strict ordeals. However the entire procedure is an eyewash and a farce.

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The brighter boys opt for higher studies to join service, business or any profession. Once at a function, it was announced that a particular priest had become navar when he was seven years old. If this is not a farce, then it only can be a miracle.

Some time ago a high priest, in Bombay, had lamented that our priests are not reciting prayers with the proper and correct pronunciations, hence such prayers are meaningless. The original prayers are in Avesta — a dead language even to the country of its origin — Iran, and completely foreign to our motherland — India. Is it remotely possible for the priests, the children who are made navars and the members of the community who have not even seen the Avesta script to recite prayers with correct and proper pronunciations?

After I saw two priests exchanging flowers and shaking hands during a jashan ceremony, I asked the younger priest the significance of the ceremony. He admitted that he did not know and would tell me after consulting his father. I asked him if the continuous monotonous muttering could put him to slumber. There was no reply.

It is noticed that the priests who be-

come panthakies are very well off but the subordinate priests who work in the agiaries are exploited.

Once I had attended a lecture on religion, delivered by a known priest/scholar from Bombay. He went on harping on the necessity of reciting prayers for the dead. He mentioned the minimum number of prayers, absolutely necessary. Then he told the audience that all must get extra prayers recited so that whatever prayers are said in excess can be diverted to those souls whose relatives may not have done their duty to get the necessary number of prayers. Then he asked the audience if they had ever seen a Parsi ghost. All said "no." He explained that our Parsi prayers are so strong that no Parsi can ever become a ghost. After the meeting I asked the small group, if they had ever seen any ghost, leave aside a Parsi ghost. The answer was again "no."

During my life span of 75 years, I have had very little to do with priests. There were no agiaries where I was posted for the first 25 years. During my second spell of posting at Delhi, I came across a genuine priest, the late Ervad Daraius Bagli. He was always concerned about the welfare of the community. He

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used to recite prayers from the heart in a unique manner, with true emotion, sitting in a dignified posture. During funerals, he used to create a serene atmosphere which gave solace to the grief-stricken relatives and friends of the deceased. There was some magic in his prayers which I have yet to experience with the Bangalore and Bombay priests. In the agiaris and at the Doon-gerwadi, for the *motte-gharwallas* (affluent), slow, loud prayers with little bit of Anglicized accent are recited, while for the others, murmuring in shorthand takes place.

There are a number of charitable trusts and institutions for the welfare of the athornans. It would be interesting to find out the amount we are spending for the upkeep of the priesthood. We are fleeced in the name of ashodad which is a holy word for tips.

The least that we can expect from the priests is that their clothes are clean and appropriate. During muktads, shabby chasniwallas are allowed to touch the *karasias* and put flowers inside, while we are not allowed to do so.

The time has come for the priests to change their attitude. The priests and the behdins cannot exist without each other.

We are all human, neither priests nor behdins are saints. Both have to toil to earn a livelihood. We want priests to be adequately happy, fully satisfied and well-to-do. They should, at least, appear to be pious, divine, holy and above all, dignified, whom we can respect and who will make us proud of them.

DALI J. GUNDEVIA

In praise of prayers

Going to church once a week not only reduces blood pressure, it also raises spiritual awareness. According to a new study, regular churchgoers, who pray or study the *Bible* daily are 40 percent less likely to have a high reading of blood pressure than those who don't.

The findings by researchers at Duke University in North Carolina came from a survey of 2,391 people aged 65 or over for six years. It shows church attendance is better for your health; it improved the mental health of the elderly, said David Larson of the U.S. National Institute for Healthcare Research.

The art of healing appears in the *Avesta* as a profession of high order. It plays an important part in our *Avesta* texts. Manthra Spenta (master thought) is extolled in all *Avesta* and Pahlavi

writings. Our *Ardibehesht Yasht* shows this true aspect of prayer. Another mighty prayer of *Hormazd Yasht* prayed with immense faith with heart, body and mind together i.e. complete dedication, could bring the desired results.

FAROKH NAVARAJI DARUWALA
Middlesex, UK

Resurrection of Parsis

The 21st century is just round the corner and it is time we Parsis in particular take stock of the mistakes we have made and rectify them. *Mutthibhar* (a handful) we arrived and have made a mark in every walk of life. But now suddenly a sense of fright seems to engulf most of us. Will we be there to enjoy the next century?

Retrospection is the need of the day. In our anxiety to preserve our faith and so-called purity, our dogmatic stand has made us come to a point where we need to do some quick, decisive thinking which can be immediately implemented. Corrective steps to increase our race need to be taken now.

I have of late observed a very strange trend. The Parsi boys who marry outside our community, instead of bringing their children into our fold, opt for their wives' religion. When a Parsi girl marries a



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non-Parsi boy, even when her children are very keen to become Parsis, being more influenced by their mother and her religion, unfortunately we do not accept such kids. What a shame I say! Those who want to, can't and those who can, won't.

Is expecting an end to this type of bias and discrimination between sexes asking for too much? We surely don't wish to be listed among the "extinct species." Being an optimist I feel that once more the 21st century will see a gradual resurrection of this powerful community and for that to happen we must make it happen now!

RODA D. HAKIM
Baroda

Dedicated doctors

There was a time when Parsi doctors used to keep their dispensaries (now called clinics) open on Sundays/holidays, even though for half-a-day each. They also used to pay visits to their patients' homes on these days and for which their fees were moderate. It is said that a few amongst these doctors were helping poor patients by quietly placing money under the pillows of the patients to buy them medicines.

Alas! Among the last of such a magnificent and dedicated breed of doctors, which is getting extinct, was the late Dr Jehangir P. Vajifdar, an eminent cardiologist, who fully lived up to the Hippocratic Oath. Even at the age of 83 he would pay a visit to a patient's home at 11.30 p.m. After one such visit, on his return home he was brutally murdered, allegedly by the security guards who were employed to protect the residents and their properties from intruders.

Recently, there passed away at the ripe age of 80 years an unassuming Parsi doctor, a general practitioner, residing at Gilder Lane, Bombay Central. Patients used to come to Dr Rustom Framroze Workingboxwalla's residential clinic not only from Murzban Colony but also from far-off places.

Come rain or shine, day or night, he would, when called, trudge on foot with his medical kit in his hand to his patients' homes. His fees, both for the home visits and for examination and medicines at the clinic were affordable. Rarely would we find him on a long vacation.

BIKHAIJI M. ADENWALLA

The march of art

His paintings and murals decorate promi-

nent places in Pakistan. Nearly 2,000 of his paintings are in private collections in about 50 countries. Additionally he must have painted over 3,000 original paintings and 1,500 calligraphies.

Born on August 13, 1954 in Loralai, Pakistan, Jimmy Engineer completed



Engineer: art
for the poor

his high school, spent three years at the National College of Arts, Lahore, and then turned professional in 1978.

His paintings have been on view at several exhibitions. Engineer has participated in the Inter-

national Vi-sitors Program, sponsored by the United States Information Agency. He has received 20 awards in 21 years.

His patriotism took the form of serving the nation via his art. The blood and tears that were shed on the birth of Pakistan in 1947 have been portrayed by him in graphic detail.

He has decided to use his art and walks for fund-raising to help the poor,



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widows, orphans, students who cannot pay school fees and disabled members of society. He must have undertaken 4,700 km walks for ailing humanity during which he visited every nook and corner of Pakistan. The promotion of peace, population control and health care are some of the other causes dear to him.

Though his parents are settled in the USA he refuses to go and settle there, preferring to remain in Karachi with his wife and daughter, and serving the country when the need arises.

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Complex for seniors

Our community has many aged parents of children settled abroad, and in need of care in old age.

ASRA, a home for people aged above 55, now hosts seven members (including one Parsi lady) with eight on the verge of joining. ASRA which roughly stands for Aparnath Senior Citizens Home is situated 25 km from Poona on the Poona-Sholapur Highway in Shiva farms, three km short of Urli Kanchan. Running under the Pandit Aparnath Tara Devi Public Charitable Trust, a non-governmental organization, the home

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started functioning on April 6, 1998. As the brochure states, "The concept of ASRA originated from the realization that senior citizens lack a suitable place where they can enjoy their retired lives in a manner befitting their status." The home is against the usage of the term inmates and refers to all of them as members.

The brainchild of Jaswant Rai Sharma, ASRA has 20 well-equipped residential rooms with space for 40 members to reside. These are fully-furnished with telephones, attached bathroom and verandas. Other fittings and necessities like wardrobes, bathroom fittings are already done with 24 hours hot water enhancing the comfort. The home has a generator ensuring continuous power supply. Members are only required to bring their personal belongings.

The spacious mess complex seating 60 with a well-equipped kitchen works with a system which, according to the members, is unlike other homes with hygienic washing and storing facilities. The weekly menu, purely vegetarian, is prepared by the members themselves.

Three adjacent rooms have televisions, with cable connections and the



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indoor games take care of recreational activities. A jogging and walking track has been laid inside the Shiva farms campus to avoid members being exposed to pollution and traffic. Acres of gardens and landscapes adorned with flower beds with covered canopies in the premises provide just the right kind of environment. A library with hundreds of books subscribes to daily newspapers, national and international. An open space holds yoga classes and celebrations like birthdays and anniversaries.

A shopping complex offering groceries, barber shop, dhobi, STD and ISD booth caters to the members' daily needs. A qualified doctor visits the Trust-run polyclinic daily for the people in the vicinity as well as for ASRA members with free treatment and medication. With 24 hours' security by trained guards, regular postal service and staff taking care of daily chores, members could not ask for more.

The home is being run on a no-profit, no-loss basis as the monthly electricity, bills, messing, staff salary are equally divided and paid by the members.

They welcome casual visitors who wish to enjoy a few days' holidays. The

rates are only Rs 300 per head including vegetarian food and good service.

For learning more of their different schemes contact Sharma (020-816291).

M. S. BHATHENA

Poona

"The Top Ten"

To my mind a few Zoroastrians who have made the community proud in the 19th and 20th centuries by excelling in various fields deserve recognition. Notable amongst them who are no more with us are Mr Jamsetji Tata, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Mr J. R. D. Tata, Mr Naoroji Godrej, Mr Naval H. Tata, Dr Homi J. Bhabha to mention a few.

The eminent persons who are alive and need to be recognized are Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, Dr Homi N. Sethna, Mr Nani Palkhivala.

KERSH. DADINATHA

I would like to suggest the name of my friend, Homi Nusserwanji Sethna among the 10 most eminent Zoroastrians of this century.

He started his career in 1949 by setting up the Indian Rare Earths plant

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Cooper (left) and Sethna

which marked the beginning of the exploitation of nuclear material in India. He became director and later chairman of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. He was responsible for India's first nuclear experiment in 1974. He was the longest serving chairman with Atomic Energy and it was under him that the world recognized India's nuclear capabilities.

Upon his retirement from Atomic Energy, he is currently a prominent industrialist and has headed several large Indian corporations. He devotes a lot of time as trustee of several charitable trusts for the benefit of students and the underprivileged members of all communities.

Dr Sethna has been awarded several national, international and academic awards such as Padma Shri, Padma

Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan. Internationally, he has been awarded prestigious awards such as Sesquicentennial Award of the University of Michigan, Sir Walter Puckey Prize for outstanding contribution to production engineering, to name a few. He has over 15 honorary doctorates conferred on him by national and international universities.

I could keep enlisting his many achievements and accolades but I would like to emphasize that although he had an extremely busy career, he always made time for his family.

In my opinion Homi has made a major and significant contribution to our country's development and should be considered as one of the founders of modern India.

Dr FALIS MEHTA

Among the Parsis who have excelled in their chosen field, I wish to nominate Dr Rustam Nusserwanji Cooper.

Dr Cooper was a legend and a role model for doctors. He was awarded a rotating scholarship when he won the gold medal for the MBBS degree, Bombay.

He left for London where his brilliance was recognized and he was conferred two degrees — MS (London) and

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FRCS (London) — one of the first Indians and a Parsi to obtain these with honors.

On his return home, the British faculty of the J. J. Hospitals appointed him honorary surgeon. He also opened his own nursing home, "Charak Clinic." Being a staunch nationalist he supported the Seth G. S. Medical College and was invited to join the K.E.M. Hospital as an honorary surgeon. He was attached to the Jerbai Wadia Children's Hospital where he was later appointed honorary director by the late Mr Neville Wadia. Dr R. N. Cooper was also instrumental in setting up the Nursing Home at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital.

Dr Cooper was also a founder member of the College of Surgeons and Physicians, Parel.

Rustamji was a household name, both amongst poor and rich Parsi families. He was a philanthropist and for a needy patient, not only would he refuse his fees, but he would also provide for medical needs.

The House of Birlas recognized his merit and when he joined the renowned Bombay Hospital, another milestone in medical history was established.

"Daddy Cooper," as he was affectionately called by his loyal

students, passed on his dedication and surgical skills to many stalwarts and surgical luminaries of today.

Education was his forte. He was chairman of the J. B. Petit High School for Girls and The Jai Vakeel School for Children in Need of Special Care. It was his indefatigable efforts which pioneered this now prestigious institute at Sewri.

The Bombay Municipality honored him posthumously by naming the municipal hospital at Juhu as the R. N. Cooper Hospital to perpetuate his memory.

Dr M. K. PAVRI

Sacred or sordid?

Having had a vision of the Sodawaterwalla Agiary in its pristine glory in a dream, I opted to pay my respects to this atash padshah at Marine Lines.

Visiting this sacred abode after several decades, I was shocked and distressed by the pathetic condition and neglect that has befallen this once renowned Agiary where Ervad Aibara served. Are not the concerned trustees



Sodawaterwalla Agiary: need to spruce up

able to remedy the miserable state of affairs at the Agiary situated in a prime locality in Bombay?

There are so many established Parsis in business. Can not one noble among those in the construction/painting profession charitably offer to at least whitewash the interior of this holy place of worship? Surely some efforts can be made to alternatively raise funds to completely spruce up the fire-temple. It is a sad community predicament that while some agiaries flourish, others cannot



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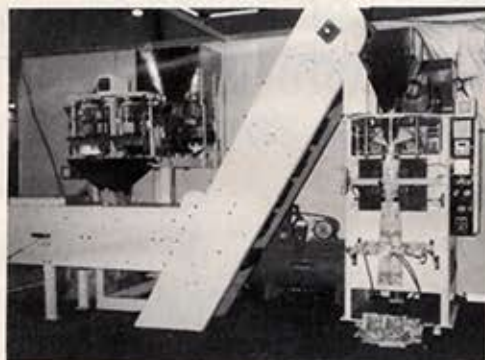
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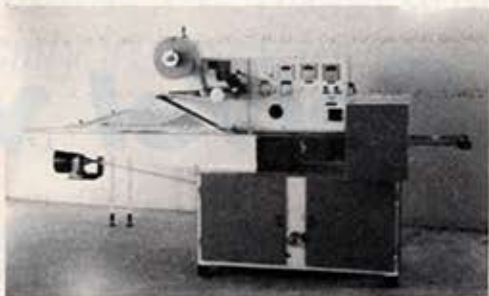
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even muster sufficient *boi*.

More appalling was the foul garbage pile exactly below the extreme left window of Sodawaterwalla Agiary; not to mention the man-on-the-street sleeping right on the steps leading into the place of worship that wore a deserted look. Inquiries revealed the same to be a regular occurrence. It is the duty of the Agiary's administrators to ensure that the immediate area/pavements surrounding the sacred precinct are not defiled by stench emitting from dumps and footpath sleepers.

Any conscientious Parsi residing in the vicinity, or someone patronizing this Agiary should have seen fit to draw the attention of the civic authorities for taking necessary action. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet should take up the matter with the municipal commissioner and/or the concerned ward officer to immediately set right this thoughtless disrespect to the community's religious place and have the obnoxious rubbish promptly removed.

MICKIE SORABJEE

Response from the trustees of the J. D. Amaria Sodawaterwalla Agiary Trust

In reply to Mickie Sorabjee's letter, we the trustees of Sodawaterwalla Agiary would like to clarify that the present trustees of J. D. Amaria Sodawaterwalla Agiary Trust tried our utmost to bring about an amicable settlement with panthaky Farokh Mobedji but to no avail.

Initially, the panthaky would agree but thereafter he would make impossible demands.

Finally, in sheer desperation, keeping the welfare of the Agiary in mind, the trustees have filed a suit in the Bombay High Court.

When the matter comes up for hearing, all the evidence

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Homi K. Sidhwa
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gathered shall be placed before the learned judge, and we shall certainly inform the Parsi community through *Parsiana* and other newspapers.

We would further like to inform you that two years ago, repairs and painting of the exterior walls and windows of the Agiary were carried out from donations received as a result of an appeal given by the trustees in the newspapers.

Regarding garbage, the trustees have written to the civic authorities and also have personally approached the concerned officers of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, but to no avail.

Cultural bind

What binds one generation to the next, what gives a people their sense of identity, is a knowledge and understanding of their history, and a vision for their future.

The western world has understood this. They have made a conscious effort to make sure that every generation learns about their cultural heroes. They have even portrayed people as heroes when in fact they may have been rapacious plunderers and murderers. Examples abound — Alexander the "great" versus Alexander the "destroyer," Christopher Columbus, the English rulers of India, etc. We

Parsis need our heroes too. There have been so many, yet we have not spread the word. It is time we did.

My suggestion is that we select a few of our most glorious heroes, and produce biographical docu-dramas for television and videotape that would instill a sense of pride in Parsis about the accomplishments of their community, and serve as an inspiration for future generations. If the production qualities are good enough, we could even generate revenue to fund additional such efforts by licensing the programs for broadcast on educational and cultural stations around the world. The first few names that come to my mind include:

Dadabhai Naoroji, Jamsetji Tata, Bomanji Petit, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Cawasji Jehangir, K. R. Cama, Shapur Saklatvala, J. R. D. Tata, Homi Bhabha, Sam Manekshaw.

I am sure there are many others equally, if not more, deserving of recognition.

We have the talent within our community to pull this off. Under the auspices of the 7th World Zoroastrian Congress (Houston, 2000 AD), I would like to set up a working committee of volunteers with an interest in this project. The immediate tasks at hand, as I see them are to:

continued on page 204



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Events and Personalities

Conscience keeper

While the community in general has been painfully silent on the attacks on other minorities, one Zoroastrian has strongly registered his protest at the injustice and persecution meted out to Christian missionaries, initially in Gujarat and subsequently in Orissa. To make his grievance known to the Gujarat Government for its alleged failure to protect minorities in the State, eminent Supreme Court advocate Fali S. Nariman returned the brief on New Year's eve, regretting his inability to function as counsel for Gujarat in the Narmada Dam case pending in the Supreme Court, as announced in the media in the second week of January.

In an interview with Pamela Philipose, Nariman stated, "Every democratic nation must be seen to treat its minorities well. That's what civilized governance is all about." He further added, "A majority is always able to overpower a minority, but they don't emerge strengthened in any way." Criticizing the Hindutva approach of attacking Christian missionaries who were reportedly converting Hindus to their faith after meeting their basic physical needs, Nariman argued, "Please, by all means go and make people good Hindus. But instead of convincing people about the superiority of Hinduism, these people attack Christians. This is madness." He would like others holding independent positions in government to lodge their protest too.

As per his statement, "After I withdrew from the case, they sent me a long letter explaining their position. But...my stand is simple: if minorities feel inse-

cure, it is the duty of the Government to make them secure."

Another instance when Nariman had publicly lodged his protest was the day after the promulgation of the Emergency



S. Godrej (left) being felicitated by Blanchemaison Photo: P. P. Hirani

by Indira Gandhi. Though his resignation as additional solicitor general only came to light through *The New York Times* on account of the prevailing censorship, there were some who believed that Nariman had resigned to fight the case on Indira Gandhi's behalf! Since India was able to emerge from the gloom cast by the Emergency thanks to the society's innate resilience, he is convinced that the present bleak scenario will improve for the better as "people have never lost their sense of values."

Honored by France

"And even now he's always on the go. One word he doesn't understand is slow... This kind of schedule would cause me to weep. When does he ever find the time

to sleep?"

It is no wonder that he sometimes sinks His head and calmly takes his 40 winks. But if he's asked to answer, he can rise And to the audience's great surprise,

He manages to say what's a propos, But how he does it, I will never know... And nowadays his worry is our nation And its ever rising population. He thinks that we should have no more than two I disagreed, just two seemed far too few. And so we planned to have our normal share, One more was named for him, that's only fair. Of course less people means more nature

This is what gives his argument some stature..."

This salutation in verse for the versatile industrialist Sohrab Godrej was penned by his nephew Nadir Godrej, managing director of Godrej Soaps, for the function on December 4, 1998 when Sohrab Godrej was to be decorated with the *Officier dans l'ordre des Palmes Academiques* by the Ambassador of France Claude Blanchemaison.

According to a report in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of December 8, this award instituted by Napoleon I in recognition of services rendered in the field of education is given once every seven years to eminent persons outside France.

Members of various consulates, ambassadors, industrialists and media representatives were present at the function at the roof garden of Godrej Bhavan to honor Sohrab Godrej known for his hu-

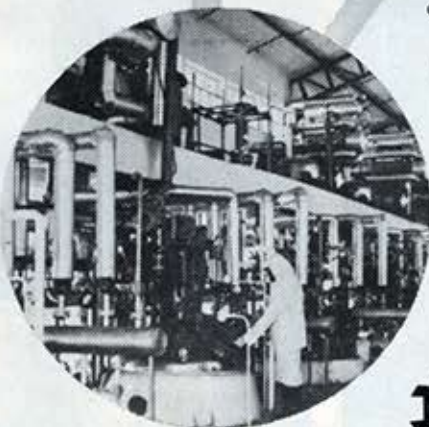
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mility and simplicity. Dressed in a beige suit and "his favorite black tie embroidered with the Eiffel Tower," the former president of the Alliance Francaise and chairman of the Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry recalled the enjoyable times he had spent in France and stressed the importance of foreign countries improving relations with India. In an interview which appeared on the eve of the awards function, he was particularly appreciative of the fact that in France they teach children to think of answers before they ask questions.

Well travelled and well read, Sohrab Godrej is perhaps best known for his financial and managerial support for the World Wide Fund for Nature — India. The former sheriff of Bombay was critical of the present state of affairs in the city and told *Mid-Day*, "I am guilty of living in (Bombay) today." He was further quoted in the *Mid-Day* interview of November 6, "People always look at the British rule with suspicion. But what is the state of affairs now? We fought against the British and won Independence, but what is the use now? Have we made any use of our Independence at all?" Following the honor from France came the news on India's Republic Day that the government had conferred the Padma Bhushan on Godrej.

Reproductive responsibility

As president of The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India which has 13,000 members spread over 126 societies, Dr Mehroo Hansotia declared 1999 as the Year of the Adolescent Girl, notes a report in *The Times of*

India of December 27, 1998. With the assistance of the field staff of UNICEF, the program will impart information about reproductive health and nutrition to the adolescent girl and also instil in her the necessary self confidence to pursue her education and plan her pregnancy when she is mentally and physically able to provide for herself and the newborn child.

According to Hansotia's statistics, the maternal mortality rate is 700 per 1,00,000 births in India as compared to seven per lakh in developed countries. "We can attribute this to many factors, primarily the low awareness levels, teenage pregnancies and lack of adequate primary health facilities," in a nation where the bias is predominantly pro male, she mentioned.

A reputed infertility specialist who likes to keep herself abreast of the latest in reproductive technology, Hansotia declared, "Today we have the technology to allow one in four patients to take home a baby. But we should also develop the ability to realize when one should stop trying...and go in for adoption. I have yet to meet a couple who is unhappy after adopting a child."

Power to sustain

Spirituality is "this worldly." "Life is a celebration." "Be happy and be in har-



Hansotia: assist the adolescent girl

mony with the environment." These were some of the punch lines by Khojeste Mistree delivered to the Zoroastrian crowds in Dubai and Muscat who were happy to partake of the intellectual feast, according to a press release.

Different sessions were geared for different audiences — children, adults and those philosophically inclined. His wife Firoza conducted a class for the pre-teens at Muscat while Khojeste interfaced with their parents. A novel experience for the group was the exercise in meditation conducted by Khojeste. At one session lasting over 11 hours, when Khojeste elaborated on the theology, rituals and some history of the faith, the "participants were surprised at their staying power (as also) Khojeste's eloquence of sustaining the interest of a diverse group of people." In his explicit and lucid style, Khojeste would distribute handouts at sessions so that the knowledge imbibed remained with the audience.

As acknowledged Neville Madan, an old stalwart of Dubai, "Khojeste missed no opportunity to further the Zoroastrian faith. At every step Khojeste emphasized the wisdom of the Zarathushti faith and its differences from the other faiths. Therefore the need to marry within the faith, the need to have and promote Zoroastrian centers and a community feeling in order to remain united..."

Prior to his tour of the Middle East in November, Khojeste was invited by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe to conduct an intensive seminar for its members in London. Over two weekends in October Khojeste elaborated on



Mistree (above) conducting a seminar in Dubai



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the message of the Prophet, the theology, the metaphysical aspects, the rituals and the esoteric implications of the sacred fires. Contemporary issues were also discussed at the meet, as detailed in the press release. "He came into his own when some 350 Zoroastrians packed into Zoroastrian House to listen to Khojeste deliver his talk on the 'Ahunavar Prayer' after which he got a standing ovation which has seldom been given at Zoroastrian House."

Propagating divinity

The efficacy of Zoroastrian prayers has been repeatedly emphasized. In the course of the last few months there have been several different publications highlighting the need to upgrade our religious knowledge. In the form of books are *Religious Discourses* by Ervad (Dr) Minocher Dadabhoy Karkhanavala and the second edition of *The Divine Science of Navjote and Sudreh-Kushti* by Ervad K. N. Dastoor. In the form of booklets are *The Jashan Ceremony* distributed by Marzban J. Giara and a Gujarati title *Ham Bandagi ane Afsoon Mantra* published in memory of Ervad Dinshaw Hormasji Kutar.

On the 19th death anniversary of

Karkhanavala, a scientist affiliated to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and known for his commitment to the Zoroastrian faith, his contributions were lauded at a function at the Mehla Patel Agiary on November 16 and the book *Religious Discourses* was released. Karkhanavala's views expressed in the 1960s and 1970s feature here under the heads "Zoroastrianism and the Modern Youth," "Date and Teachings of Prophet Zarathushtra," "The Significance of Sudreh-Kushti," "Dokhmenashini—the Zoroastrian method of disposal of the dead," "Importance of Science in the study of *Zend Avesta*." As notes an accompanying press release, "Dr Karkhanavala's talks ring with sincerity and courage of conviction. His direct, no-nonsense, logical arguments appeal to the reader... This book clearly brings out his ability to relate and interpret scriptural texts in simple English and the practical value of Zarathushtra's lofty teachings." Priced at Rs 50, this 92-page book is available with Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Bombay 400014.

While Karkhanavala's book had a 14-page chapter on "The Significance of Sudreh-Kushti," Dastoor devotes 32

pages to this topic in his 40-page compilation on *The Divine Science of Navjote and Sudreh-Kushti*. After providing the basics of the religion in the first chapter, Dastoor explains the ceremony, the structure and design of the sudreh-kusti, and the meaning of the kusti prayer in the subsequent chapters. Former general manager (legal) of the Bank of Baroda, Dastoor is presently editor of the bilingual *Parsi Pukar* published every month from Bombay. The remaining pages in this book priced at Rs 30 are devoted to introducing Ilm-e-Khshnood, Khurshedji Cama, Baheramshah Shroff and their works to the reader. Since the second edition is published by Edal Jal Cassad (1-B/14, TMC Housing Society, Elphinstone Road, Parel, Bombay 400012) the publisher distributed around 500 copies of the book "replete and oozing with Zoroastrian spirituality and mysticism" to commemorate the fifth death anniversary of his father in 1998. The book carries photographs of the publisher, his parents, his grandfather, his greatgrandfather, his present family, his father being greeted by Charan Singh Ji of Radhasoami Satsang Beas and a daily prayer under the head of Radha Soami.

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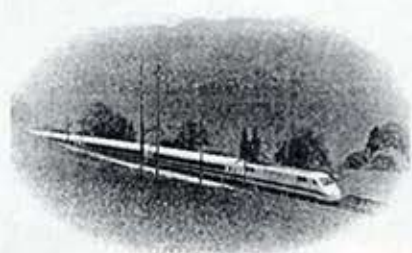
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Draped in their finery, well-known Parsi ladies displayed their garas at the DBS Gala Celebrations Nite, January 13, 1999 when nearly six lakh rupees were raised for the Women's India Trust. Expressing their solidarity for the cause are (from left) Shirin Kotwal, Shirin Mulla, Bakhtawar Chinoy, Meher Castellino, Neena Unwala and Parvin Enty. Also created was a navjote tableau (from left) Chinoy, Zenia Patel, Camille Patel and Dilnavaz Shroff.



Prayers to improve physical health, prayers for the well-being of the family, prayers to help overcome difficulties, prayers to be recited on Mondays in the Aiwisruthrem gah, all find a place in the 12-page booklet *Ham Bandagi ané Afsoon Mantra* published in memory of Kutar. To create an awareness about the

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religion as also increase faith in the Zoroastrian religion among the present generation, every Monday in the Aiwisruthrem *gah* there is a hambandagi conducted at the Banaji Atash Behram which is well attended by Zoroastrians of all age-groups who converge in the hope of seeking mental solace as also blessings of the atash padshah, notes an introduction to the booklet in Gujarati. Photographs of Zarathushtra, Afsoone Shah Faredun as also Dastur Jamshed Kookadar are carried on three different pages.

The eight-page booklet, *The Jashan Ceremony*, details the different types of jashans: religious, seasonal and historical, the symbolism of the jashan ceremony and the immortal souls whose blessings are invoked through these rituals. While Giara is involved in the distribution of this plus other literature on the community, his wife Bapsy's research on the social and religious reformers of Iran was reprinted in the *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* (KRCOI).

Bapsy Giara's essay, "But for them Zoroastrianism would have been extinct from Iran," won the first prize in the global essay competition in English and Persian sponsored by the KRCOI.

the World Zoroastrian Organisation, London and the Zartoshty Brothers Charitable Foundation in 1995. Hertre-tise constituting No 61 of the *Journal* was adjudged the best by an international panel of judges, according to the publisher's note. It is further stated, "The competitors were requested to cover outstanding contributions from social reformers like the late Mr Maneckji Hatara who did a tremendous lot for bringing about religious awakening among the Zoroastrians of Iran; Arbab Kaikhushru Shahrukh and Master Khudabaksh of Iran who did a lot for religious awakening by starting religious classes and writing small books; and Prof Aga Poure Davoud who devoted half a century of his life to the study of Avesta and translation of the holy *Gathas* and *Yashts* in Persian. Social reformers up to the Pahlavi regime were only to be covered." Bapsy Giara chose to focus on the contributions of Hatara, Shahrukh, Ardeshirji E. Reporter, Peshonji Dossabhai Marker, Poure Davoud and Arbab Jamshid Behman.

The choicest column

"Readers have been brought up on

Busybee's writing. People have bought copies of the various newspapers in which he has worked simply to read his column" Round and About, mentions Dom Moraes in his introduction to *Busybee: Best of 1996-97*. As he further states, "It must be very difficult to write 500 words of humorous prose a day every day of your life, but the humor never flags. It is, in a strange way, intrinsic to his style. His style is terse and laconic, like his conversation, but it has a rhythm in it which creates an impression of deadpan comedy."

This 255-page book which is basically a reprint of some of Behram Contractor's columns which appeared in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* in 1996-97 is divided into 12 sections with the maximum number of pages devoted to the first chapter, "Bombay." According to Moraes, "Anybody who writes a social history of the city in the second half of the 20th century will find that his most essential source material will be the columns of Busybee."

The illustrations by Mario de Miranda at the start and end of each section lend a special flavor to the book, quite apart from "Eating Out," and "Cocktail Chatter" which are Busybee's contributions.



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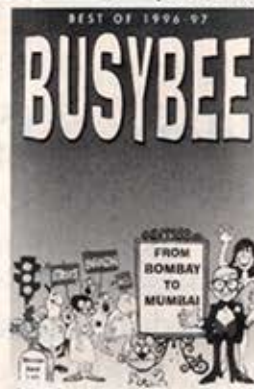
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Several Parsi characters like Meher Heroyce Moos, Bachi Karkaria, Marazban Patrawala, Mehr Jesia, Soli Godrej, Adi Godrej, Nusli Wadia, Darasshah Edibam find a mention in this book as Contractor links their names with almost real-life episodes to provide amusement to the readers. Among the Parsi institutions he cites more than once is the Parsi Dairy Farm reputed for its kulfi and curd.

As confirms Moraes, "Behram is a Parsi and he writes particularly well about that very idiosyncratic race, its customs, its conversation, and its food. To grow up a Parsi in (Bombay) is to grow up differently from others...it is something in the nature of Parsi people. They belong to (Bombay) in a way that no other Indian race belongs to any other Indian city. They are warm, stub-



born, and very talkative. I would not say Behram Contractor is talkative, indeed he tends to be the other way inclined, except for sudden staccato bursts of words...Usually he is noticeably silent, but his eyes behind the very powerful lenses of his spectacles are always very alert...Behram looks like a lamb, even when he is watching you with unnerving fixity, but when turned loose on the computer can be caustic." His views from cricket and politics to vegetarianism and education find an expression in this book.

The first edition of *Busybee* priced at Rs 150 was published in October 1998 by Oriana Communications Pvt Ltd, 16C, Lands End, Dongersey Road, Malabar Hill, Bombay 400006 and the second edition was already out by November 1998.

Stock of surnames

"In my opinion we Parsis in general have the most beautiful first names and the most ridiculous surnames," mentions the author Dr Goolcheher D. Coyaji in her

introduction to *Having Fun With Parsi Surnames*, a 36-page compilation published by her in 1998. "Here is the list of more than 1,000 surnames for a people on this earth who number less than 100,000," states the author, born in Surat and brought up in Karachi, who claims, "But for death columns and marriage lists of the *Jam-e-Jamshed*... I would never have learnt of surnames such as Kirolwala, Mengoosi, Notia, Shahuraja, Zaigar, Vanskooiwala..."

Actually only 16 pages of this compilation bear the list of surnames with an additional two pages offering "Final Words," a kind of quiz to test the reader's knowledge of the subject. While the correct response for all the teasers is not indicated, it is interesting to learn that SodaWaterBottleOpenerwala is believed to be the longest surname; that 'wala' surnames constitute approximately 25 percent of the total; that the maximum number of surnames, 111, start with the letter B... The illustration on almost every page is delightful bringing life and laughter to the Parsi surnames. Particularly amusing were the illustrations of Mrs Press and Mr Sagar. As clarifies the artist Niloufer R. Wadia, "It is hoped that all this cartooning will

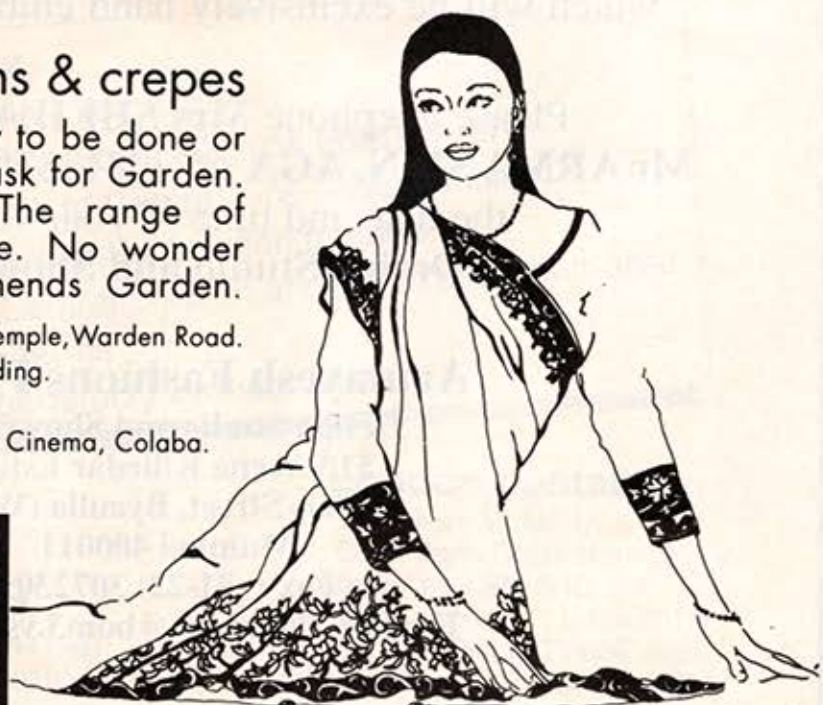
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be taken in the right spirit. I have had fun doing this work. It is now for you dear reader to have fun with the peculiar surnames of our community."

The Mid-Link on page 28 reads, "The book was originally intended to end here but after discussions among us it was felt that since one is born with one's surname, there was not much scope for propagating the book except for the 'fun' part of it. So we decided to include a list of first names as well — both boys and girls." A little over two pages for Parsi names for girls and just about two pages for the boys' names covers the entire section of first names with no explanations or meanings cited there.

In the Commentator's Notes, Dr Phiroz N. Dastoor of Canada specifies, "The income from the sale of this booklet will first and foremost be used to pay for the cost of printing and publishing and then the balance will be disbursed as per the wishes of the principal author..." A few grammatical and spelling errors are noticeable on the cover and headlines. Since the price is not quoted, for further enquiries contact Coyaji at 10-Phayre Road, Pune 411040. Among the other compilations authored by Coyaji,



a medical practitioner by profession, are: *Our Zarathushti Religion* and *A Garland of Poems*.

Life saving mission

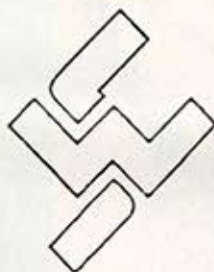
Happy to resume his medical profession

from his clinic at Chira Bazar, Dr Minoo Wadia went to the fire-temple on the morning of January 1, 1999. But before his regular patients could realize that the door to his clinic, which had been closed for the last three months due to the building being under repairs, was open once again, Wadia was knocked dead. As he was standing outside the clinic, a nine-year-old boy who lost his balance while flying a kite from the terrace of Singapori Building landed on Wadia, notes a report in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of January 12. While Wadia hit his head against an iron beam and succumbed to his injuries within a few hours at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, the little boy's life was saved, his fall being cushioned by Wadia.



Wadia: exemplary zeal

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his modest one-room clinic," mentions the article. District surgeon, Parsi Ambulance Division, of the St John Ambulance Brigade, the dedicated doctor was also trustee of the Wadia School in Phansa founded by his family. In 1994 he had been conferred the Civil Defence and Home Guards Medal by the President of India having served as honorary lecturer for nearly two decades at the Civil Defence Staff College and the Home Guards. Wadia was on the medical panel of companies like Air-India and the Life Insurance Corporation of India.

Happily crossing 100

With five children, 11 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren Banoo Dhunjishah Shroff must surely have had her share of joys and woes in life. But with her cheerful disposition and contented attitude she has crossed the 100-year milestone, becoming the third member from her family to do so. To celebrate her 100th birthday on December 15, the family had organized a function at Bombay's Saher Agiary when relatives and friends from near and afar came to wish the matriarch.

Her mobility now being restricted as she pushes herself on a walker, most of her movements are limited from her bungalow to the garden outside. She may miss out on some conversation but refuses to wear hearing

etc which in her opinion would appeal to a particular recipient.

To this day, games like solitaire and bridge can keep her happily entertained for many evenings. Even at midnight if someone offers to play cards with her she will have a gleam in her eye, recalls a family member. Knitting and stitching in which she excelled at one time are no longer possible though she was amused when about five years ago her youngest son Homi stitched her a dress, his lessons in tailoring having been received from her but well remembered even whilst he pursues his vocation in engineering. She also made sure that her children had a firm grasp of their mathematical tables and today, they give her credit for being able to recite their tables backwards.

Born and educated in Calcutta, her marriage to Dhunjishah brought her to Bombay in the mid '30s. Reminiscing fondly of her indulgent husband whom she married when she was but 18 years of age, her thoughtful sister-in-law Goolistan Jussawalla who made her married life so comfortable, Shroff spoke of her early days in Juhu in an interview with



Matriarch B. Shroff with her extended family celebrating her century milestone
Photo: Spectravision



aids. Her eyesight now only permits her to scan the headlines of newspapers. Reading poetry though was once her great passion and many of her family members treasure the little books she has presented them where she has painstakingly copied out verses from poets like Byron, Shelley,

the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, December 30, 1998. Following her husband's demise when she was in her 60s she chose to travel around the globe alone and has happy memories of her sojourns abroad.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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"We have to learn from the churches"

After years of office and years out of it, ZSO president Kobad Zarolia speaks with new perspectives

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Zoroastrianism is a religion, a philosophy. No one has a right on Zoroastrianism. How you want to practice it is personal," says North American mobed Kobad Zarolia who believes that conservatives, liberals and middle-of-the-roadsers can practice it the way they think best. The late Kersi Doodha of Ontario had got 50 families together to practice it in the footsteps of the legendary Dastur Jamshed Kookadaru and his votary, the late Ervad Nadirsha Aibara, notes Zarolia. Apart from the 12 gahambars — six Shahenshahi, six Iranian — the Ontario Zoroastrians celebrate Kookadaru's and Aibara's *baj* each year. "If 10



Zarolia: a time to "think for ourselves"

or 50 people attend, what's wrong? People have to do their own worshipping," says the committee member of the North American Mobed Council (NAMC) and its former president in the course of an interview with *Parsiana*.

Back at the helm of the 28-year-old Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) after a 10-year respite, Zarolia leads a team that includes executive vice president Kamal Driver, vice president Dara Panthakee, treasurer Kersi Bhesania, secretary Niloofer Irani and executive officers Pervez Mistry and Aflatoon Javid. Their agenda includes a rise in the ZSO's annual family fee of \$ 55 which he says "does not even cover the cost of printing and mailing its (bilingual — English and Farsi) newsletter," not to speak of voluntary service. "If people don't value what they have, they don't deserve to have it," he notes, adding, "Parsis have a tendency to undervalue themselves" citing the example of their \$ 10 drama tickets in comparison to the \$ 25 tickets charged by the Gujarati community because "we believe ours

is not as good!" he adds with asperity. Zarolia had slated an extraordinary general meeting of the ZSO in late February to increase annual family commitment to the ZSO to \$ 500 which would be tax exempt as the ZSO has charity status.

The Rustam Guiv Dar-e-Mehr "serves less than five percent of the community," avers Zarolia who estimates the total number of Zoroastrians in Ontario in the region of five-and-a-half to six thousand including the Iranians. Their present hall can't hold more than 200 people "jammed in." Because it gets so crowded a lot of Zoroastrians don't come. "The youth are totally turned off. There's no place for a nice meal... What legacy are we leaving our children after 30 long years?" he asks.

While almost all the Zoroastrians there "started out in small, rented apartments... financially we are all very well off... Now all of us own large homes," Zarolia notes with satisfaction. However, he adds, "collectively we are the poorest Indian community in Ontario," with a property that he describes as a white elephant in terms of heating costs but whose utility value is restricted to the hall and dadgah. He compares this to the 35 gurdwaras, 21 Hindu temples and 10-15 mosques established by other Indians. "We are the only people not to have our own agiary," he laments.

Zarolia is positive that collectively the community has the necessary resources, but he adds in his forthright manner, "We have a mental block on giving... While the Iranians are givers, Parsis have adopted the phrase 'Parsi thy name is charity,' but do not practice it." The Parsi community, according to Zarolia, still believes that rich sethians

and not individual community members should pay for religious facilities and contrasts this mentality with that of other communities in North America. "Hindus have learnt to do it together because Hindus from the West Indies didn't have rich patrons, so they learnt to contribute. The Muslims are always giving. Two years ago the Bosnian Muslims came with nothing. But they have already established themselves on a 15,000 square foot area. (They) bought over an old building and converted it into a mosque... The Mormons, Muslims, Jews give four to five percent of their annual income towards their church... A synagogue's membership is established. You can't go unless you contribute to it." According to Zarolia, Canadian synagogues helped establish a center for the newly immigrant Jews from Ethiopia and Senegal. The ZSO project to acquire a new place began two years ago but has only collected \$ 55,000 so far. "If every family donates \$ 500 a year, we can collect a quarter million dollars a year," he says.

The ZSO Dar-e-Mehr, that used to be lit with almost 200 divas at muktad time, now no longer permits votaries to light divas except for one that ritually burns there because the walls have been so badly blackened, it's going to cost \$ 3,000 in labor costs to clean them up, even though the paint is donated, says Zarolia.

The first two Fridays each month the Dar-e-Mehr facilities are now reserved for children, in two batches of up to 12 years and those between 13 and 25, the idea being "first to throw them together... To survive as a religious community in North America... We have to learn from the churches, go after the children, make it interesting for them to come there, bring their partners." Zarolia attributes the Parsis' demographic problem — no marriages, out marriages — to the parents abdicating their responsibility to find suitable mates for their children.



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Then, if nothing happens, they start looking when their children are in their late 30s and 40s. At that age when a prospective partner refuses, "the ego hurts are so big," they refuse to go ahead with the search, says Zarolia. Holding up the example of a Zoroastrian lady in Mississauga who considered it her duty to get both her children married, Zarolia says, "If (this attitude) becomes the norm, no one will question it. We won't have a population problem."

Zarolia believes Parsis are color conscious. That is why they are willing to "go along with the marriage of their children to white partners... During a 100 years in Africa we did not marry out because we felt superior," he reasons. The same applied to China and Hong-kong and hitherto to India, he maintains. He was unhappy at the weightage given to interfaith marriages at the 11th North American Zoroastrian Congress in New York in 1998.

As a priest Zarolia does not officiate at intercommunal marriages although he attends such functions as an invitee. He will do the navjote of any child of mixed marriage because the child is innocent but admits that when they grow up such children are often lost to the community because the parents don't

persevere and the community does not have the infrastructure to support them. He believes that "all mobeds have a choice" and is emphatic that "if we respect each other, the community will

"If people don't value what they have, they don't deserve to have it"

respect us, but not if we bad mouth each other."

Time was when the outspoken Zarolia had jolted the staid Bombay audience (at the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress) by publicly asking the high priests for advice to deal with issues like abortion and the children of Parsi women divorced by their non-Zoroastrian spouses. Now, more pragmatically, he notes, "We mobeds in North America have to start thinking for ourselves."

The NAMC is currently working on guidelines for mobeds on how to deal with homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia. He was happy to have performed an Iranian wedding ceremony with parts of it translated into English with the help of Iranian mobed Faribourz Shahzadi to make the ceremony intelligible to participants and guests.

The need for statistics is widely felt by the North American community, notes Zarolia and as the mobeds are often too busy to report the functions where they officiate, there is a move towards a system of forwarding all navjote and wedding invitations to their respective anjumans to help create statistical records of the community.

Zarolia shares a feeling of pride with other North American Zoroastrians on the success of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) "because it's been established by all of us" and notes that "more and more presidents of (member) associations are going to be involved with FEZANA" since the present president of the North American body, Framroze Patel, is "open to the idea." Enthusiastic about the Zarathusti Chamber of Commerce (ZCC), a business body that FEZANA has spawned, Zarolia feels that it will result in a resurgence of business confidence even in the Zoroastrian community in India. The ZCC will now be established as an independent organization with its own charter and bylaws, he says. He cites the example of an article on a web page which received a response from an Ahmedabad Parsi asking for information on certain issues.



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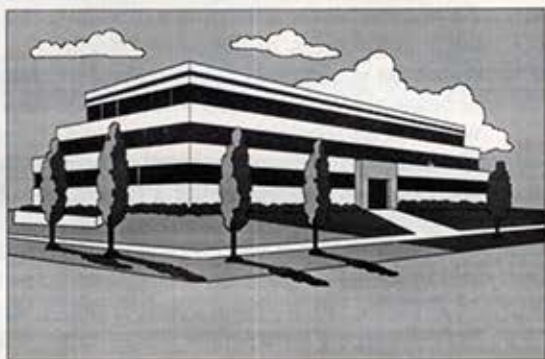
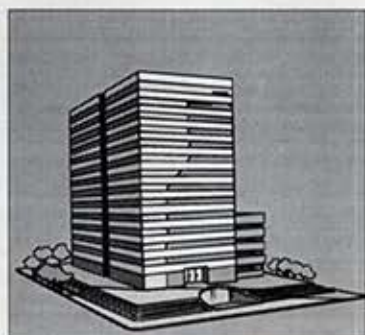
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He was put in touch with the right people as "we have got some good brains in information technology in North America. (Though) they are working in isolation, they can help others." Referring to the second North American entrepreneurship meet last November Zarolia was keen that the 55-60 Zoroastrian entrepreneurs attending the meet be profiled. "There's a Zoroastrian genius in mining in Mexico," he provides an example, adding that Mexicans prefer to work with Indians than with the white community.

Zarolia was not as happy with FEZANA's treatment of the world body issue under its former president Dolly Dastoor. "Dolly did a disservice by allowing the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) at our (annual general) meeting... We are not invited to WZO meetings. Why did the WZO come to FEZANA?" he asks. The WZO is "a good welfare body (but) the word 'world' (in its title) does not make it a world body," he notes. Claiming that he and others of the same persuasion are collecting letters to present to the next FEZANA AGM, Zarolia says that if the WZO is "in control (of the world body), we (ZSO) may even leave FEZANA"

because raising the WZO to the level of a world body is like "taking over an old house, taking in all their problems." He is rooting for a conglomeration of world Zoroastrian federations as proposed in 1993. "Nobody knows where the WZO funds come from. (There is) not one piece of paper sent to any member," alleges Zarolia adding that he has "challenged (WZO spokesman at the FEZANA AGM) Adi Davar to produce an audited list of the 28,000 members (WZO claims to have)" and promised "I'll give you one dollar per person... Why does the WZO require membership? No Parsi welfare body has membership," he adds.

Running his own business as an insurance broker since the past 30 years, Zarolia sits on the collection and allotment committees of the giant North American charity, United Way, where he began as a volunteer. His wife Nergish works as an administrative officer in a Canadian government hospital. Their son Zubin (24) is becoming a lawyer, daughter Sanobar (21) is studying business administration while Persis (18) is still in school.

"The worst part about Parsis is that they'll respect everyone's ideas and

opinions except that of other Parsis!" concludes Zarolia ruefully.

Pavri's prowess

Long time Vancouver resident and fellow architect of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) along with her late husband Jamshed, Roda Pavri, 77, passed away on January 19, 1999. Though ailing from a multitude of causes in the latter years, Pavri's commitment to social work continued to the end, as notes *In Search of the Truth (IST)*, the ZSBC newsletter. In a new series of articles, "Honoring our Elders," meant to cover the biographies of living members of the Vancouver community, Pavri's obituary is the maiden offering. "We are making this exception for an exceptional person," notes the *IST* article.

The eldest of three daughters of Shirinbai and Framroze Framroze — her sisters Sheroo and Diana Anklesaria continue to live in Poona — Pavri's scholastic career included Barnes School in Deolali and Wadia College in Poona whence she acquired a double graduation in arts and commerce. Sallying off to Hongkong to work with her uncle in his aerated waters business proved to be a fateful step. There she met Jamshed

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Pavri whose commitment to humanitarian causes spanned the gamut of social work. There was, however, still place for a very special commitment to Zoroastrianism which Roda too shared. After their marriage and return to Bombay where their son Yezdi was born, the family moved to Canada in 1958, the third to settle in Vancouver. There ZSBC was born in their own home in 1968.

But before that Roda went back to India, a six-year-old Yezdi in tow, to acquire a bachelor of education degree in Poona and returned to work as a teacher in various schools in the Greater Vancouver area, a life in harmony with students and colleagues.

Roda was founder member of the Indian Mahilla Association, volunteered with the Gujarati Society, the Immigration Society, Folk Fest Canada and the Brook House Society. She taught Zarathushti children their prayers, old songs, etc, hosted many an immigrant Zarathushti family. To *Parsiana* she remained a friend and donor up to the end. A philanthropist to the core, the notice of Roda's funeral requested that well wishers contribute to the Jamshed K. Pavri Memorial Fund, which provides health and educational benefits, in lieu of

wreaths and flowers for the deceased.

Roda is survived by her son Yezdi.

"A seamless whole"

"If you live like a good man you are religious. Otherwise no amount of prayers (can make you so)," believed businessman and jazz art historian Manek Daver.

Kobe born, Bombay educated, long-term Tokyo resident (since 1977) Daver succumbed to a heart attack in Bangkok on December 6, 1998.

His two coffee-table, bilingual (English and Japanese) books commemorating the cover artists of jazz long-playing (LP) records — *Jazz Graphics: David Stone Martin* and *Jazz Album Covers: the rare and the beautiful* — had won him recognition among the cognoscenti in the art and jazz worlds, leading to personal friendships with some memorable creators in both fields of art. Of him, impresario Norman Granz had stated, "Manek Daver is one of a dwindling group of people who throughout

history has kept art alive." Daver's compilations not only put these creations on record for generations unborn but painstakingly identified the concerned artists, researched their lives and bore the cost of such specialized publications. He was driven by the sad thought that a pictorial artist does not keep his own work and therefore has no record of his life's work.



Daver: kept art alive for future generations

Daver's interest in the field grew initially as a listener and then as a collector. The record covers used for illustration were the original first issues and, sometimes, far from pristine. Noting that few people today realize that the issue of jazz LPs in the 1950s and 1960s were not a commercial proposition, Daver had said, "It was typical of jazz that the jacket often had an 'inside story.'" The

designers of classic jazz recordings of the time were "walking archives of jazz history. ... The music, the musician, the liner notes and the jacket created a seamless whole."

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recommendation by the Governor of Tokyo for his contribution "towards establishing friendly relations between India and Japan for many years." Daver had once joked happily about how nice it is to be a Parsi: "Everyone believes in you as honest." He had for years been the convener of the Indian community of about 1,280 persons in Tokyo and Yokohama. Arranging Diwali get-togethers and formal receptions for visiting Indian dignitaries, photographs of Daver with prime ministers, foreign ministers and ambassadors abound. Unabashedly delighted with their spontaneous compliment, Daver had recounted to *Parsiana* how four consecutive Indian ambassadors to Japan had chosen to grace his daughter Roxana's wedding reception at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay.

The increasingly isolationist aspects of recent Zarathushti community behavior saddened him. Having observed the community since 1965 when *Parsiana* was founded by his friend Dr Pestonji Warden, Daver noted with concern that whereas thanksgiving jashans in factories, offices and other places had been a regular feature in the past, especially in the west, "Now priests are saying

'Baharna hoi to nahi karié (we will not perform if there are non-Zoroastrians present), but *vadil* (senior) priests have done it...' He also felt that the Parsis have professionalized themselves out of their traditional entrepreneurial tradition. But again, the technological changes of our times and their impact on lifestyles would have their own story to tell. The Zoroastrians from Persia had changed in time with local conditions. That ability to modify and adjust is part of the community's heritage, he had noted with satisfaction.

Daver is survived by his wife Dilnavaz, daughters Roxana and Tannaz.

Chicago chronicle

Twenty-five members of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) indicated their willingness to serve on the ZAC board at its last annual general meeting in June '98 and all of them were unanimously elected to the board by the general body, reported the ZAC newsletter. The enterprising team for 1998-2000 included Anahita Antia, Dilshad Antia, Diana Damkevala, Freya Dhunjisha, Arnavaz Elavia, Darayus Elavia, Rashna Ghadialy, Aban Grant, Hosi Mehta, Kayomars Mehta,

Roxana Mehta, Keikhosrow Mobed, Sohila Parsinejad, Roshan Patel, Minoo Press, Dara Rivetna, Dinsoo Rivetna, Jehan Rivetna, Farida Sharyari, Zenobia Tantra, Zubin Tantra, Aban Vazifdar, Pesi Vazifdar and Dinaz Weber.

ZAC high priest Ervad (Dr) Kersi Antia continues to remain on the board.

The subsequent board meetings elected H. Mehta to preside over the team. Other office bearers include vice president A. Elavia, secretary A. Vazifdar, treasurer Weber, assistant secretary Zenobia Tantra and assistant treasurer Parsinejad.

Wanting the ZAC to be "a model that everyone else would like to emulate," president Mehta noted, "We have such a talented community that we can stretch the meaning of the word 'impossible' to make it very insignificant."

ZAC was among the North American associations that shared the cost of Dastur (Dr) Firoze and Navaz Kotwal's trip in mid 1998, estimated at \$4,000 by the ZAC newsletter. Chicago was the Kotwals' base for much of their time in the USA between July 6 and August 9, 1998 and the ZAC was happy to present the scholar priest a purse in acknowledgement apart from organizing a num-

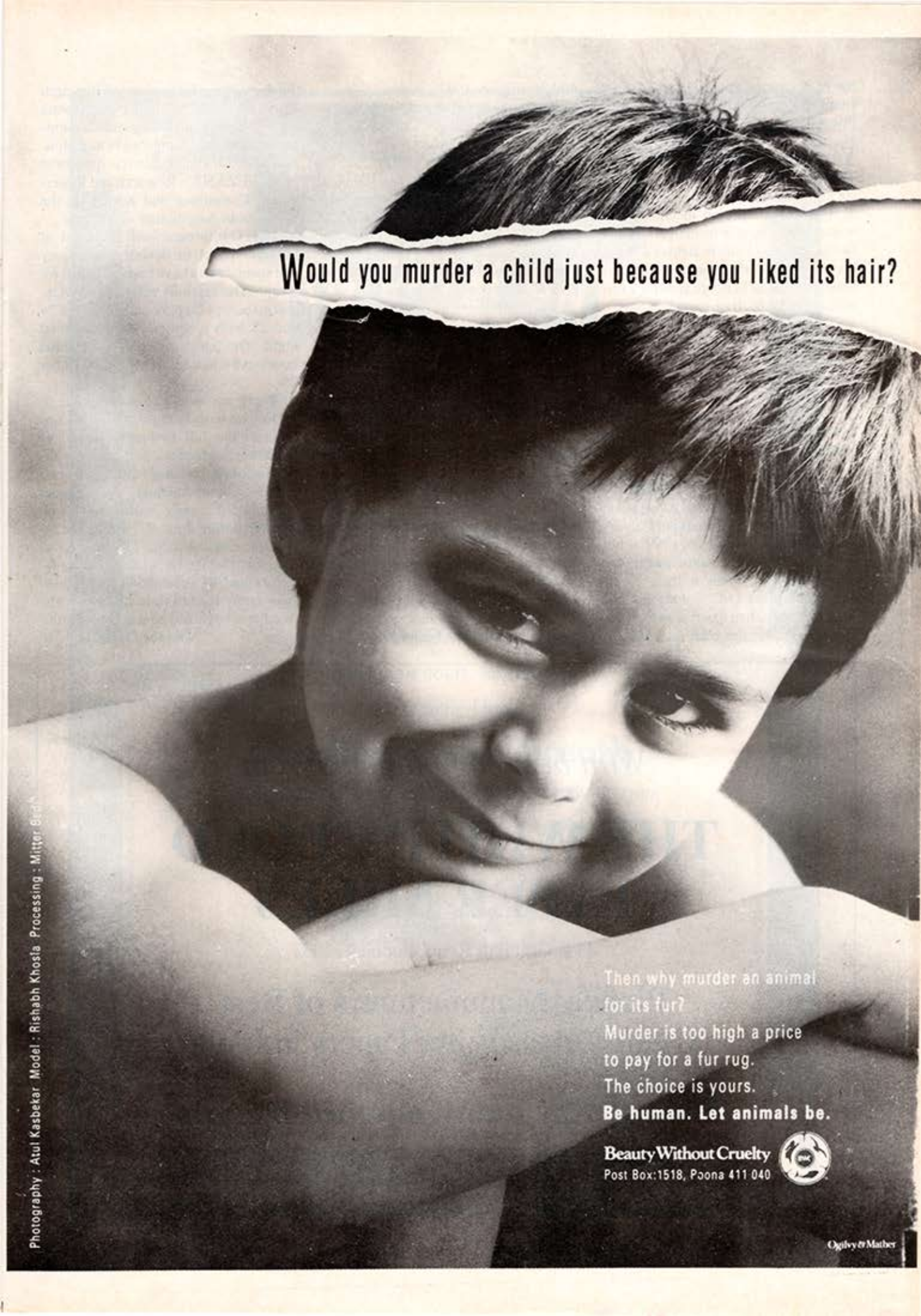


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ber of occasions at the Darbe Mehr to enable the community and the High Priest to interact.

Yazd in Canada

The fragrance of *agarbatti* (incense sticks) and sandalwood spread in the air as a youth group clad in white, with white caps, prayed in front of an afargan fire at Shannon Falls in British Columbia to celebrate the memory of Peer-i-Sabz, the annual heritage spot for Zoroastrians in Yazd, Iran.

The congregation of about 150 Zarathushtis joined in singing religious songs after the prayers and everyone enjoyed the picnic and the traditional sirog, notes the newsletter. With a substantial Iranian Zoroastrian population in and around Vancouver, Iranian festivities are being happily celebrated in the area.

Conference in Calgary

At the Second International Avesta Conference (IAC) due to be held in Calgary, Alberta, September 24-26, 1999, scholarly contributions are anticipated from eight countries, notes a flyer on the event. The First IAC in Framingham, Massachusetts had been a resounding success despite the chill and snow of

mid-November 1997.

The impressive team of professors — Carlo Cereti, Jamsheed Choksy, Dr Richard Frye, Helmut Humbach, William Malandra, Antonio Panaino, James Russell, Martin Schwartz, Shaul Shaked, Nicholas Sims-Williams, Werner Sundermann, Mario Vitalone and Gernot Windfuhr — will be joined by Dr Arthur Ambartsumian from Russia, Ervad Pervaz Bajan from India, Keki Bhot and Dr Pallan Ichaporia from the US.

The conference is aimed at promoting knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Zoroastrianism from the *Gathas*, the Younger *Avesta*, Pahlavi, Parsi/Zoroastrian literature, rituals and traditions that have evolved over three millennia. The scholars are expected to share their research and knowledge and panel discussion — with Ervad Jehan Bagli, Dr Dolly Dastoor, Dr Keikhosrow Harvesf, Rohinton Rivetna, Cyrus Mehta, Jamshed Verza, Pilsum Master and others — to include topics of general community interest dealing with health and healing, integration and assimilation, interfaith activities, consecrated establishments, spirituality, etc.

The Second Conference, like its earlier counterpart has been sponsored by

the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society (ZERS) chaired by Ichaporia with directors including the Boston-based Khorshed Jungalwala and Houston's Sarosh Manekshaw, co-sponsored by the FEZANA's Research and Preservation Committee and hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta.

The Conference will be held at Ramada Hotel in downtown Calgary and special rates have been arranged for rooms. The sessions will start at 8 a.m. and go on to 4.30 p.m. on September 24 and 25 with a banquet on the second night. The panel session is scheduled between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on September 26.

There are four options available to those who wish to register for the Conference: the full two-and-a-half days including two lunches, coffee with/without banquet; one day with lunch and coffee without banquet; and banquet only. For the early birds (those who register before June 23, 1999) the respective rates are US \$ 110, 90, 45 and 35. After that the rates rise to US \$ 140, 115, 60 and 40. Substantially discounted rates apply for full time students registered at recognized educational institu-

continued on page 174b

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Honoring Sanjan

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India congregated in Sanjan to discuss community issues

Arnavaz S. Mama

"We have spread all over like the Jews, in small pockets," noted Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, nostalgic about the "beautiful aramgah" in his native Amritsar. Thankful that it's "Jimmy Guzder's problem, not mine," he jocularly suggested that the president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India follow the line of former Israeli president Golda Meir and "order Parsis to all stay in one area!" Then, with sober realism he told the all-India delegates to the executive council meet, "We have to get used to the situation."

Manekshaw was responding to the reports on individual anjumans submitted by their representatives at the behest of Guzder "to acquaint the Field Marshal with what exactly we meet for." The agenda had been reversed for the benefit of the chief guest who joined the delegates as they met in Sanjan's Jamshed Jehangir Vimadlal Pavillion after lunch at the end of the Sanjan Day celebration on November 21, 1998.

The Federation's awards for excellence having been presented earlier that morning, the subject was taken up again as the Federation's joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi informed the gathering of two new awards instituted in the fields of law and medicine with a third offer made on the floor of the Federation.

After a two-minute silence in memory of the late political and community activist Homi Taleyarkhan, Federation members offered fulsome praise of his total involvement in any task he undertook. The Federation, on its part, agreed to pursue the interests of the Save Udvada Project (SUP) committee which had been so close to Taleyarkhan's heart.

Silloo Surti of Jamshedpur gave a synopsis of the 12th All-India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar hosted by the Steel City while the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations' (FOZYA) president Porus Karanjawalla informed the

delegates of the changes on the FOZYA managing committee instituted during its annual general meeting (AGM) concurrently held in Jamshedpur.

While discussion on the world body failed to reveal any substantial development, the Borivli Association's need for an agiary and hall has been registered, with the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), the Bharuch Parsi Punchayet and the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) offering to help.

"Though we have not joined the Federation, for the first time the (Sanjan Stambh) committee has been given the honor to host a Federation meeting," its president Rohinton Daviervala had declared at the start of the morning's proceedings, welcoming the Federation delegates. On behalf of them all Guzder registered his appreciation of the work of the committee which also includes Nariman Balsara, Gustad Jassawala and, especially, Dossabhai Oliaji in whose Duke's Hotel the delegates had been quartered and where the meeting continued the following morning.

Except for the first day's lunch which was held under the shamiana at the Stambh grounds, all meals were served at Oliaji's and even the awardees, stationed in Udvada and in private bungalows, gathered here for *chhaato-pani* (aperitifs) followed by a three-course meal prepared under the supervision of Manek Todywalla of Udvada and Fareedoon Joshi of Navsari. The only snag was that the provision of a tape recorder on the second day of the meet had been forgotten. And, as two-thirds of the delegates elected to leave after lunch on the second day, the council's deliberations turned out to be a one-day affair, in actual terms.

The Sanjan Stambh Committee had made a plea for donations in their letter of invitation. Accordingly, the Mhow anjuman donated Rs 10,000, informed its secretary Dr Behram Masani.

Guzder's suggestion of Rs 20,000 from the BPP/Federation remained in the air as Balsara proposed a vote of thanks with special reference to Homi Palsetia and Bahadurshah Dalal who had been in charge of the logistics and transport.

Awards

Two new awards have been instituted under the aegis of the Federation: In memory of his gynecologist wife Freny, Surat's litterateur and community stalwart Dr Ratan Marshall has donated an award to be presented for the year's outstanding performance in gynecology, or failing that in other medical branches.

The Kaiser-E-Hind Award in memory of doughty advocate Ardeshir Katrak is meant to honor the professional who devotes time to legal matters pertaining to the community. Also in the running would be lawyers doing outstanding work in the field of human rights or in assisting the needy in legal matters.

While Gandhi apprised the delegates of the two abovementioned donations for instituting awards, the BPP's new CEO (chief executive officer) Behram Dastur spoke of his grandfather's "record of 59 years of continuous service to education," offering Rs 15,000 to institute an award in his memory.

Gandhi registered his appreciation of the work of Federation treasurer Rustom Anklesaria, BPP joint secretary Sheroo Master and assistant secretary Adil Crawford who had worked assiduously behind the scene to enable the distribution of 12 awards that morning. Anklesaria's absence due to illness robbed the event of some of its normal éclat, he noted.

Remembering Taleyarkhan

The communal retrospection on the achievements of the late Homi Taleyarkhan began with a suggestion from Guzder that the community appeal to the Government to issue a stamp in his

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Clockwise from top left: Guzder, Master, Manekshaw, Sethna, Mogrelia, E. Irani, B. Dastur, Tamboly, Gandhi, Oliaji and Palsetia



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Left to right (top): Balsara, Kavarana, Karanjawalla, P. Irani; (Alongside) N. Palkhiwala, B. Irani, D. Irani

memory. Having known Taleyarkhan as a junior executive in the Tata Oil Mills in the 1930s, asserting himself, achieving "sometimes to the chagrin of his superiors," Guzder was sorry that the indefatigable worker disregarded his doctor's recommendation of ICU treatment and rest.

A committee to commemorate Taleyarkhan's first death anniversary had been constituted, informed Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president and Federation vice president Lt Gen Adi Sethna, adding that that might be a better time to approach the Government regarding the issue of a stamp.

Describing the late politician as a "touching, loving human being (though he) cloaked it," Sethna recalled their work together on the Asiad Games in 1982 and after the tragic demise of Taleyarkhan's son Firdaus. "It is very important to remember the most important aspect of his outlook for our own survival. He almost echoed Dadabhai Naoroji: 'I am an Indian first,'" emphasized Sethna. "(It was) for this reason (that he was) effective in doing so much for the community. To get things done one must look outward... We tend to get bogged down with our own problems," Sethna continued, referring to Taleyarkhan's wide interests, experience, contacts. "We must emulate some of his

widespread enthusiasm," he added.

Member of the National Minorities Commission Marazban Patrawala emphasized Taleyarkhan's contribution to the community even at the age of 80.

President of the Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman Capt Homi Dandiwalla recalled Taleyarkhan's visit in response to their invitation to view the encroachments on their cemetery grounds. Co-opted member of the south zone Mani Clubwala spoke of Taleyarkhan's visits to Madras for work of the National Minorities Commission, of which he was a senior member, when he would invite representatives of the Madras Anjuman to the meeting and ask them to bring the younger generation with them. "Every community came prepared with demands. We asked for a loan for the blind. We got Rs 10 lakhs. 'See that you help them,' his response was like a command!" reminisced Clubwala.

That one seat is reserved for Parsis in the Karnataka medical college is entirely due to Taleyarkhan's efforts, noted invitee Bezan Dittia who lives in Secunderabad. "He would follow up... He wanted to know the representation of the minorities on the local banking board."

When Baroda's Baman Cama recommended that the SUP — Taleyar-

khan's last and dearest baby — be adopted by the Federation, Gandhi informed the delegates that he had written to SUP committee member Homai Modi that the Federation will continue to aid the project.

Udvada

While the delegates endorsed the decision to support the Save Udvada Project, there was no concerted, organized attempt to go to Udvada and inspect the work done there. Underwater cement blocks, held together by nylon ropes, are said to be in position, as informed Gandhi. Dastur referred to an "informed discussion" he had had with Udvada residents in Bombay and reported that "their concern goes beyond the marine retention wall." Specifically, the road infrastructure is "terrible" including the road connecting the railhead to the town. Atrocious telecom facilities, police apathy and weak power supply with 100 percent powercut two days a week are the other complaints, he noted.

While the Federation debates on entrepreneurship, old traditional Parsi hotels in Udvada are falling apart, noted Sethna. "The Atash Behram is only a small part" of the work that needs to be done in Udvada. Citing the "revolting condition of the roads," Sethna remarked, "Every year Zoroastrians come from all over the world. With what impression do they go back?"

The original nomenclature of "pavitra yatradham" awarded to Udvada in a Government notification has now been revised to "yatradham" and its development will only be undertaken by the state after it has completed its other ventures, noted Gandhi. "This may take 20 years. We have to take it up with



Left to right (top): Chubwala, Banaji, M. Engineer, M. Irani; (Below): Dick, H. Dandiwalla, Dubash, Paghdiwalla, and Wadia

Patrawala." In the meantime the SUP committee could enlarge its ambit to develop a bypass to avert traffic congestion at the Atash Behram, it was suggested. BPP trustee and WZO Trust Funds managing trustee Dinshaw Tamboly however noted that the SUP was governed by the Public Trusts Act which placed the building of roads outside its purview. It's an "infructuous discussion," he opined.

When Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) president Dara Irani said that King's Hotel in Udvada had been sold to Muslims who are planning a madressa on the site, Todywalla informed the gathering that only the building has been sold, not the land and Palsetia of Saronda added that the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP), which is a beneficiary of the Hotel, has lodged a court case. "Till the case is disposed of, it can't be sold."

"If we are ourselves interested in selling to non-Parsis, there is nothing that the punchayets can do," stated Dastur. In contrast he cited the example of solicitor Soli Billimoria who sold his Warden Road bungalow to a Parsi builder "despite being offered substantially more by a non-Parsi (developer)."

Tamboly provided another instance where solicitor Burjor Antia steered a donation to the WZO "and we were able to prevent the sale to a non-Parsi."

Complimenting other communities on "maintaining their monuments so much better," Gandhi suggested that Zoroastrian commercial organizations be asked to maintain the Sanjan Stambh. Expressing his dismay at wealthy Zoroastrians turning away from Zoroastrian hotels and other institutions, he noted, "Some support should be provided."

Antia who said he had been serving the community for 37 years, attributed the community's ills to the decline in "Parsipanu." It had been with us since the arrival of our forebears in the 10th century up to the beginning of the 20th century, he noted, placing interfaith marriages as the main culprit. "When we came, we were united (with) only one purpose: to live and die as Zoroastrians, to be perfect in our customs, traditions and usages... (Landed) properties you are discussing now, didn't exist then." He urged the gathering to bring back that religious fervor. "If not, all problems will be discussed for life." Agreeing that the agiaries and dokhmas which our forefathers established need to be protected, he suggested compromise where litigation to establish rights is not possible. Also, "where we can't get back the property, give it to the local

authority to use for charitable purposes in memory of the original donors," he added.

When Gandhi cited the example of the Tarapur dokhma — administered by a local trust that is not interested in talking to the Federation though the property is reportedly untended — and recalled that a council of trusts had been mooted years ago, Antia noted, "Unfortunately, Parsis are over independent... There are over 40 agiaries in Bombay. If we convert them to 10, the problem of housing and priests can be solved in a minute... Agiary properties in some cases have been (encroached upon) by others but Parsi trustees won't budge." Citing the example of the Readymoney Agiary fire in Walkeshwar which was shifted to the Thoothi Agiary in 1965, Antia asked, "But where are such logical, reasonable trustees in our community now?"

Homi Pithawalla of Bardoli traced the changes in the community mindset: once people in high places filled their departments with Parsis but not anymore; a "lakhopatty" said his computer educated son was not earning enough to be married. Yet, following the lead of other communities who are willing to use muscle power, local Zoroastrian manpower helped to clear the land near the dokhma in Bardoli.

Bombay Dyeing chairman Nusli Wadia had written to Guzder explaining

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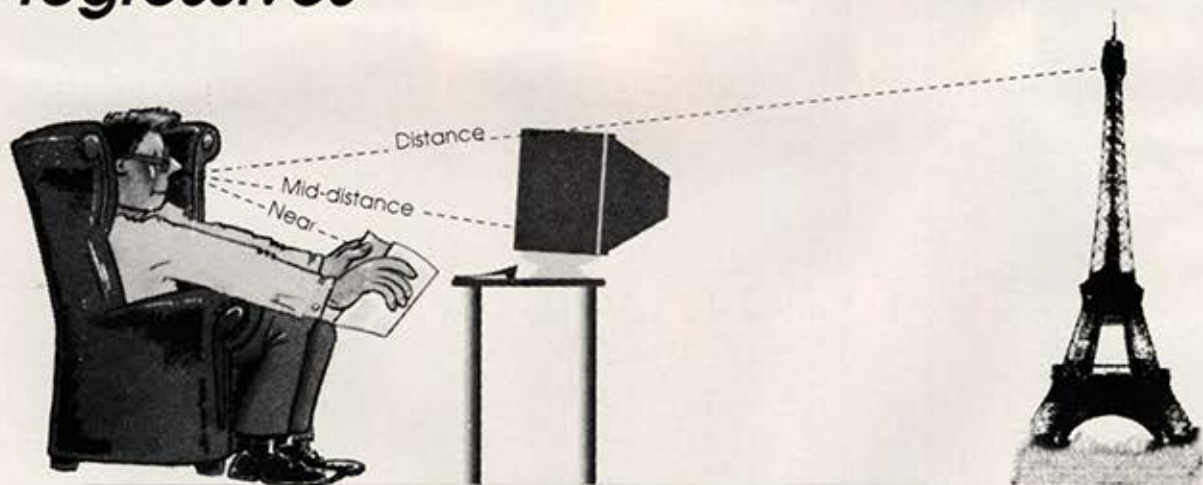
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that the management of the Wadia Colleges in Poona lay with the non-communal Modern Education Society. Hence, despite being wholly endowed by the Wadia family he regretted his inability to help Parsi students as he would have liked to do. Wadia had been approached by the Federation at the instance of Poona trustee and Federation vice president Eruch Irani on the basis that the Wadias continue to donate to the Colleges and as donors could exert their right to ensure that a certain number of Parsi children be granted admission. However, Gandhi asserted that the donor's right to reserve seats has been negated by the Supreme Court. Antia supported Gandhi and volunteered to send a copy of the judgement to Guzder.

World body

The joint effort of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) founder president Rohinton Rivetna and WZO chairman Romy Sethna in revamping a new, more representative constitution for the WZO is still under way, said Gandhi. FEZANA president Framroze Patel is said to be monitoring the situation. "We are awaiting a positive reaction from other re-

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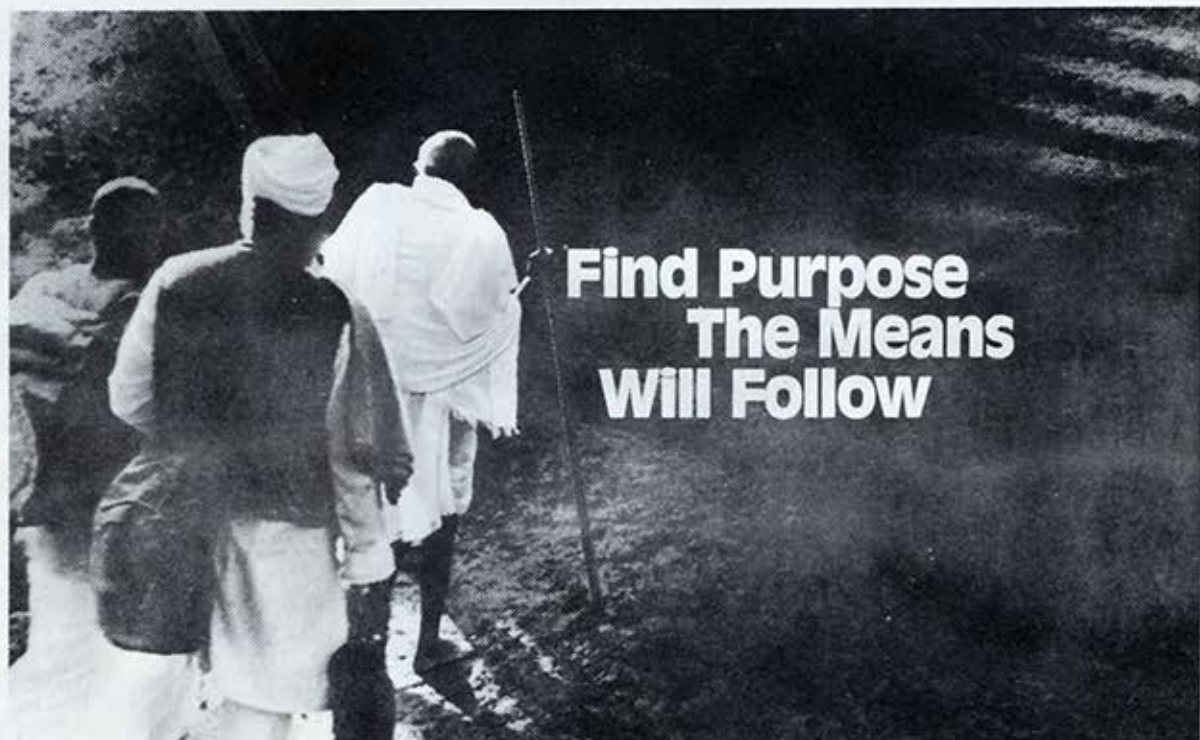
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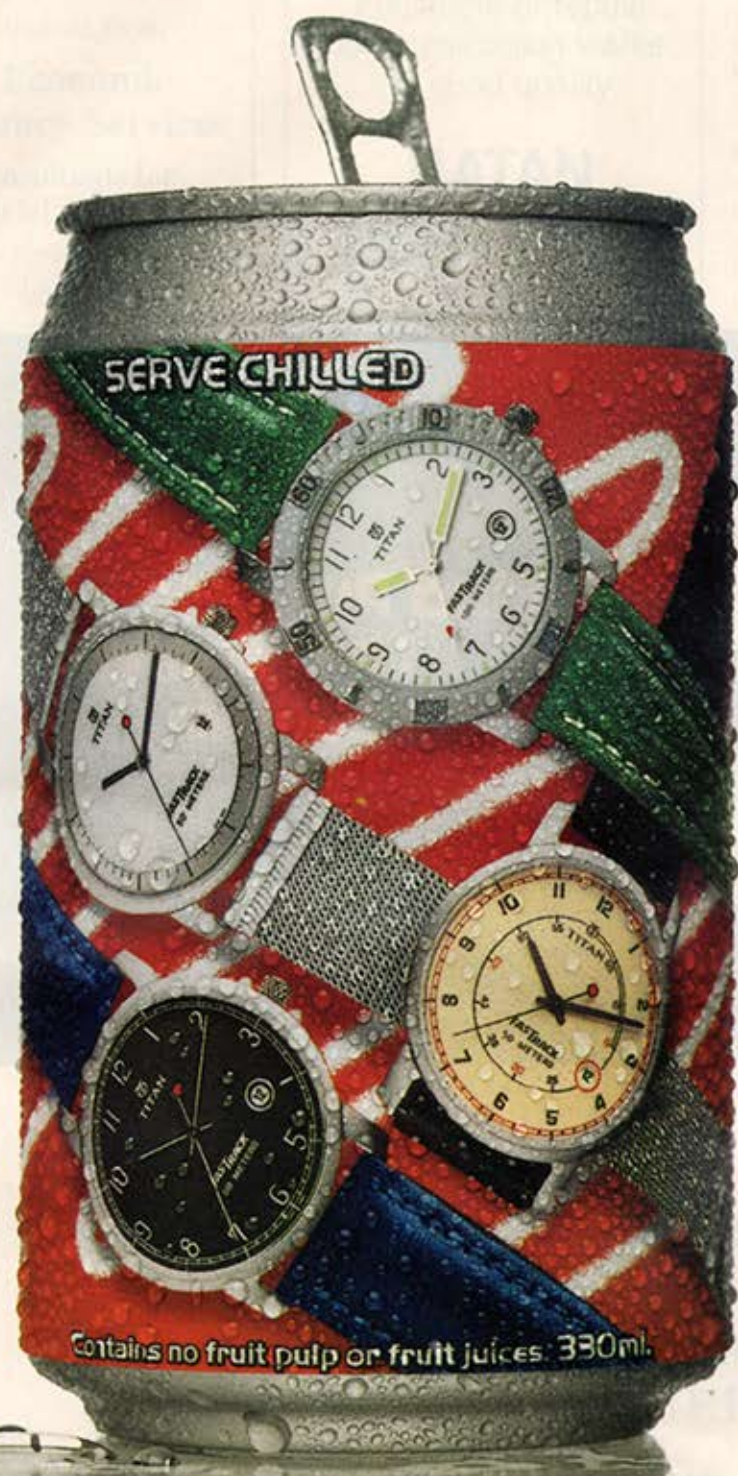
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Left to right (top): Jokhi, H. Debara, H. Dastur, Daruwalla, Charna; (Alongside) Masani and Mobarakai

gions of the world," said Gandhi.

Gandhi was criticized by Clubwala as much for not circulating a draft he had received from Romy Sethna in July as for adding his personal notes thereon in the annexures circulated to Federation members. "Every anjuman of India should get copies (of the draft constitution)," insisted Clubwala. "My circular goes to 200 people," stated Gandhi, arguing against the uneconomic circulation of 25 to 26-page drafts to people who had not asked for it. "I have told member anjumans that a copy of the constitution will be forwarded to those who ask for it." Accordingly he had despatched copies to the BPP, PPP, Borivli, to Nariman Mogrelia of Madras and Eruch Surti of Jamshedpur. "There is no question of suppression," he assured them.

Individual anjumans

In an effort to acquaint Manekshaw with Zoroastrian affairs in different parts of the country, the delegates sketched in their normal activities and problems. Thus Clubwala of Madras spoke of their long, hitherto fruitless search for a second priest, opining that the Dadar Madressa constitution be amended to insert a mandatory internship in the mofussil by young mobeds. Masani referred to a solitary Parsi family in Pathankot and suggested that isolated Parsi families in different parts of the country be integrated into the mainstream by inviting them to Federation meetings.

Dr Bahadur Jokhi spoke of the 500 individuals in and around Vyara-

Songadh who reconstructed their 100-year-old agiary 10 years earlier while Hosang Debara, president of the 125-year-old Agra Parsi Anjuman informed the Field Marshal that their once 3,500 strong Zoroastrian community was down to 23 souls today.

The long-disputed Indore dokhma land "will now fetch us approximately 50 lakhs," noted an upbeat Minoo Engineer of Indore while Masani informed that they were "fighting a losing battle" over the 12-acre aramgah land in Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh.

"Can the Field Marshal help us make the kutchra road to the aramgah (in the cantonment area) into a pukka road?" queried Ronny Dick of Jhansi and was asked to write a short note and forward it to Gandhi.

Only two Federation members faced the problems of growth. The PPP is having "a hectic time" constructing 220 flats, each with a carpet area of 650 feet so that no marriages are held up for want of houses, noted Dara Irani. Plans for a ground-plus-three-storey dharamshala with 24 rooms is awaiting finance, he added.

The 11-year-old Borivli Association with its regular meetings, newsletter and functions is in need of community infrastructure. "The nearest agiary is in Jogeshwari (with) one in Vasai coming up," said president Noshir Paghdwalla. For the 1,000-strong anjuman "muktad is a big problem," requiring them to start their day at 4 a.m. to attend prayers in agiaries in south Bombay. Gandhi suggested they create a project report, working out the size and cost estimates, etc.

"Surprised to hear that there are 1,000 Zoroastrians and no agiary in Borivli," Guzder noted that there were 250 Zoroastrians in Bharuch with six agiaries between them. "If we can assist Borivli to get that fire..." Setting the record straight Bharuch's Sarosh Ginwalla said there are only four fires there. "The rest have died out."

The DPA's "main thrust of activities," according to Sethna, is on education. Bhicoo Manekshaw's *Parsi Food and Customs* is going into a second edition plus translations while Piloo Nanavutty's *Gathas of Zarathushtra* is shortly due to be released. Aware of the need to shoulder some of the publishing costs for the latter book, Guzder offered "help in a limited way" to publish 200 to 300 books which could then be distributed free of cost to Zoroastrian educational institutions.

Youths

ZEST — the youth fest organized by Jamshedpur in October 1998 was lauded by delegates, old and young. "Five of the nine mobeds who conducted the jashan were youth delegates," informed Surti. The 120 participants had been distributed into five teams named after eminent Iranian kings. They discussed the community's stand vis-à-vis the children of mixed marriages, the Parsis' social consciousness, listened to talks, participated in football and cricket matches, trekking and water sports, singing and dancing. Tata historian Russi Lala "made Jamsetjee Tata and JRD come alive;" *The Statesman's* managing director Cusrow Irani spoke of his feelings for the community; ANZ Grindlay's then CEO Mehli Mehta talked about the economic future of India; Hindustan Lever chairman Keki Dadyseth was chief guest at the valedictory function. Post lunch sessions were poorly attended, said Surti. It had taken four

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months of sustained effort to present ZEST, informed Surti, gratified that it had received "the ultimate accolade: Jamshedpur's youth seminar will be the benchmark for future seminars." The next one is to be hosted by Madras.

For youth delegate Hormuzd Dastur of Ahmedabad, "Jamshedpur's has been the most eventful experience." "The youths didn't realize what the Tatas had done until they saw (Jamshedpur)," noted Bombay's Zelda Mistry. Gandhi was disappointed that despite TISCO managing director Jamshed Irani's proffered cooperation to youths willing to settle in Jamshedpur, not a single application was forthcoming.

Karanjawalla and Sarosh Palkhiwala continue as president and vice president, respectively, of FOZYA. Yasmin Charna joins the team as secretary and Porus Debara as treasurer. Nauzer Kasad, Nauzer Batlivala and Jamshed Panthaki are committee members. The new team, elected at the FOZYA AGM in Jamshedpur, was introduced by Karanjawalla.

Perzid Daruwala of the Parsi Youth League of Ahmedabad spoke of his association's activities which included volleyball at night, the felicitation of educational and sports achievers and a

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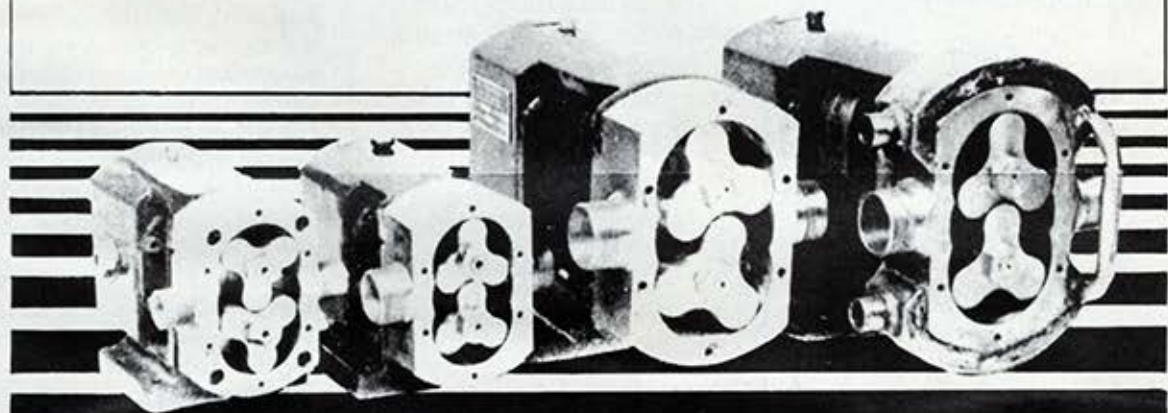
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talk on religion by Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa to the 2,500-strong Zoroastrian community under the auspices of the Zartoshty Brothers' Fund.

Baroda youths organize blood camps, produce their house magazine *Zend*, volunteer in the summer vacation camp organized by the panchayet — the first of its kind with water sports, games and *antakshari*, the participants stayed at the dharamshala for two days at Rs 200 per head, informed Kaizad Engineer.

The BPP's star project, the Holiday Programme for Youth opens various career opportunities and provides exposure to develop talents, noted Mistry attributing its success to Diana Marfatia's hard work and BPP support. Marfatia will soon be on her way to the US for a postgraduate diploma in leadership, informed Mistry.

Palkhiwala reported that their Poona football team won the all-India Zoroastrian monsoon games in Bombay. Batlivala spoke of their annual elocution contest and scavenger hunt in Calcutta and noted that 22 youths from that city had attended the 12th All-India Youth Seminar in Jamshedpur. Speaking on behalf of the Delhi youths who were unrepresented at Devka, Sethna

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referred to their Farohar activity where pre-teen children attend a weekly get-together at the Delhi Dharamshala to learn their navjote prayers, customs, traditions, etc. Two years ago their team had toured Gujarat where they had sung monajats. "The current crop wants the trip to be repeated," informed Sethna, adding that they had also been invited to go to Agra.

Students of the Dahanu Youth Association's cosmopolitan school will now be appearing for their SSC board exams, informed Pervez Irani. Special classes were being held for the Zoroastrian children at the agiary and "the mobed has motivated the youths to wear caps." Eruch Irani sought to know why Pervez Irani, who is now no longer in the youth category, remained the Dahanu youths' only representative at Federation meets.

Agra's depleted population has only five youths, none of whom attended the meet. The Borivli youths were unable to attend the Jamshedpur seminar as they failed to get railway reservations. Yasmin Bhote of Mhow reported that Tehmtan Anklesaria, president of the Ratlam anjuman, is sponsoring 10 youths for a trip to Udvada.

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Zarthost Mobarakai, president of the Dahanu anjuman informed the gathering that Dahanu farmers were unable to find suitable brides. He urged BPP trustees to arrange get-togethers in Bombay so that parents and children could meet each other. He explained that farmers were not in a position to go for youth programs in distant cities like Jamshedpur because their profession does not allow them long breaks. "Forget Bombay girls," advised Gandhi. "We've found that Bombay Parsis don't want to go out."

Mogrelia of Madras suggested that the BPP matrimonial bureau arrange more frequent meets with a wider program so that interested parties from different parts of the country could avail of the facility. Tamboly informed of the parallel facility offered in Dadar by social worker Mithoo Jesia and Palkhiwala spoke of their work in Poona, claiming to have arranged three matches in the course of the past year. Behram Dastur considered the arrangement of marriages within the faith as the moral, social and religious responsibility of the elders of the community.

Karanjawalla reported on a few intercity meets organized under the



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FOZYA banner which provides financial aid up to Rs 3,000. He also proposed that FOZYA underwrite religious lectures in the mofussil. Having successfully arranged a leisure trip to Nepal last year, he promised more in the future.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Hosang and Dolat Debara from Agra; Porus Karanjawalla, Perzid Daruwala and Hormuzd Dastur from Ahmedabad; Aspi Contractor from Ajmer; Capt Homi and Shirin Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Daulat Mohta, Pervez Mehta, Roomi Sanjana, Homi Pithawalla, Meki Kadodwala and Viraf Pithawalla from Bardoli; Baman Cama, Cyrus Cooper, Ruhshad Cama and Kaizad Engineer from Baroda; Sarosh and Pilloo Ginwalla, and Dara and Shirin Mahudawalla from Bharuch; Jamshed Guzder, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly, Behram Dastur, Sheroo Master, Gool Kias, Mehli Colah, Zelda Mistry, Mancher Karbhary, Yasmin Charna, Behram Irani and Percy Mehta from Bombay; Noshir Paghdwalla, Kersi Dubash, Marzban Wadia and Yezdi Motivala

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from Borivli; Nauzer Batlivala from Calcutta; Zarhost and Arnavaz Mobarakai and Pervez Irani from Dahanu; Dosabhai Oliaji from Daman; Rohinton Daviervala from Sanjan; Lt Gen Adi and Khorshed Sethna and Keki Gandhi from Delhi; Minoo Engineer from Indore; Aspi Irani and Mehrwan Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Silloo Surti from Jamshedpur; Ronny Dick from Jhansi; Nariman Mogrelia from Madras; Behram Masani, Phiroze Illava, Ketki Kothawala, Yasmin Bhote and Persis Bulsara from Mhow; Jamshed Cassad from Nagpur; Bahadurshah Dalal from Nargol; Dara Irani, Eruch Irani, Firdaus Kayani, Boman Irani, Sarosh and Navaz Palkhiwala, and Ashtad and Dilzeen Engineer from Poona; Homi and Roshan Palsetia, Nariman Balsara and Adi and Ruby Balsara from Saronda; Dr Bahadur Jokhi, Faramros Jokhi and Persi Buhariwala from Vyara-Songadh; Eruch Surti from east zone and Mani Clubwala from south zone. Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, Marazban Patrawala, Maj Firoze Patel, Bazun Dittia, Meher Banaji and Burjor Antia were special invitees. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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Surfing surnames - II

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Further to the list of 1,173 surnames carried under "Surfing surnames," (*Parsiana*, February-March 1997) Burjor M. Daboo of Ahmedabad sent *Parsiana* a second list of 407 surnames that came to his notice in the course of

his ongoing "labor of love."

Thus, while Gandhi appears in the original list, little known varieties like Bholagandhi and Kaalaagandhi find place in the annexure. The first list had not a single surname from the letter Y,

while the new list has six surnames listed here. Although many surnames may not be comprehensible, there can be no mistaking some like "Mydear."

Imagine starting a letter "My dear Mydear!"

A
Aabaadaan
Aagaazadeh
Aarianfar
Aasa
Aasavaid
Aavshayan
Aazadi
Aazarmanesh
Abesteh
Abester
Afayla
Afkhani
Aidun
Alghabi
Amaanat
Amalsad
Anjeerwala
Anoshirvani
Ardeshiri
Aresh
Arestani
Aryamehr
Ashraabaadi
Aslaji
Astor
Atashband
Atroliwala
Attaie
Ayem

B
Baafna
Baajwala
Baaraalaakhi
Baasta
Baastani
Baati
Baawan
Bachaana
Bahadur
Bahmani
Bakhtiyar
Balla
Bambaawala
Bamerdi
Bandrawala
Banglorewala

Barafwala
Barhamond
Barjobehram
Barniwala
Batha
Beckon
Behdinan
Behrampur
Behrozi
Bekhradina
Belikaka
Bellihomji
Bennet
Bhansali
Bhathania
Bhathawala
Bhathela
Bhoja
Bhojana
Bholagandhi
Bhomia
Bhurana
Bhuri
Bhutha
Bobbinmaker
Bonshai
Borkhadiwala
Bozorgi
Bozurgechami
Brandywala
Bunsha
Burmawala
Burze
Buzorg

C
Chaamdaawala
Chaarania
Chakkar
Chandiwala
Chena
Chhappania
Chhatiwala
Chili
Chinai
Chobdar
Collie
Cowascama

D
Dadamani
Dadamari
Damubed
Darbian
Darjeelingwala
Darvish



Davalien
Davies
Dehradoonwala
Delina
Delkhan
Devkawala
Dhaarwar
Dhanda
Dharampurwala
Dhasina
Dhumpal
Dinyari
Dinyarian
Divaan
Dohadwala
Doongriwala

E
Ebtadai

Eibari
Eindawala
Elchi
F
Falahati
Fallahzadeh

Faraamarzi
Faraasman
Faredooni
Faredoonian
Farhangis
Faridani
Faroodi
Farouhar
Farshid
Farsiwala
Farzaadi
Felfeli
Firozpurwala
Fisher

G
Gaajwala
Gaanjia
Gandiwala

Ganjipa
Gardin
Garsasbi
Ghaibi
Ghodhrwala
Godaawra
Golawala

Golimarwala
Gorakhpurwala
Goregamwala
Gourabian
Guineawala
Guiv
Gumasta
Gushtaspor
Gustav

H
Haladwala
Harvesf
Harwaar
Hazari
Hirawala
Hirjikhurshed
Hodiwala
Honarmand

Hormazdi
Hormazdian
Hosangi
Hubliwala
Humranwala

I
Icewala
Iranpour
Itakbewala
Izadian

J
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Jaamaspi
Jaamooji
Jagos
Jahaanian
Jahina
Jaiya
Jalgaonwala
Jambusarwala
Jamshidian
Jarrah
Jaykar
Jubaanian
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Jum
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Laalaajijina
Lodhanwala
Lohar
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Meherabani	N	Panchmahalwala	Rangwala	Shahparast	Taraa	Vyakhori
Meherabanipour	Naanwala	Panty	Rasaldar	Shahzadi	Tarachand	Vyara
Meherfar	Nadiri	Papa	Ratheshtari	Shariari	Tavana	Vyarawala
Meher Shahi	Najadkay	Pardese	Rivetna	Sharifabadi	Tehrani	
Miller	Naksatkhan	Parelwala	Rostami	Sharoukh	Tester	W
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The *Mainyo-i-Khard* consists of some 62 questions, with a series of sub-questions, asked by a wise man — a sage — to the "Spirit of Wisdom" and the answers given by that Spirit. In the rare book printed at Stuttgart, Germany in 1871, the eminent Orientalist Dr E. W. West gives in Roman characters, the Pazand and Sanskrit texts "as arranged by Neriosangh Dhaval in the 15th century." He also gives an English translation and a glossary of the Pazand text. West emphasizes that the work furnishes the Parsi "with a compendium of much of the morality, and some of the mythology and cosmology" taught by his religion in the Middle Ages. The book does not deal with religious rites or ceremonies.

West had spent 20 years of his active professional life as an engineer in Bombay. During this period, he studied Sanskrit, Zend and Pahlavi. West is modest enough to emphasize that he is not a philologist but acknowledges the assistance and advice of his learned friend Dr Martin Haug and states that but for his encouragement, the preparation of the book would never have been undertaken.

The term "Mino-Khirad," normally used by Parsis, is best understood by them as heavenly intelligence or divine wisdom. We often use the word *mino* and *gethi* — heaven and earth — in our prayers. But because of the use of the idiom 'i' in the Pazand text *Mainyo-i-Khard* as many as 113 times, West prefers to translate it as "the Spirit of Wis-

dom." He supports this conclusion by emphasizing that this meaning is well expressed by Neriosangh's Sanskrit phrase *paralokiya ya buddhih* — the other world's wisdom. West opines that the personification of divine wisdom

Whoever has acquired wealth from crime, and there is pleasure for him in it, then that pleasure is worse for him than unhappiness



That one who has made wealth from regular industry is to be considered as happy

implies the existence of "a spirit to represent it, that *Mainyo-i-Khard* does not appear in the *Avesta* but the term "asn-khard" is the "asno-kharatush" of Yasna 22.25 which must mean "natural, innate, instructive or original wisdom."

In the invocation of the book a sage refers to the "learning of learnings, the Mazdayasnian religion — the foundation of wisdom" bestowing every novelty for the appropriation of wisdom in firmly acquiring benefits, most wholesome to the body and soul of the two worlds.

In the discourse between the Creator

and Spitama Zarathushtra it is, in many places, asserted that the Creator created this creation through divine wisdom. Through a desire for wisdom, the sage wanders through the world and studies many religions. He concludes that the best religion is the Mazdayasnian and that wisdom is the best guide. He is convinced that "the Creator and the creatures that are in the world were created by Hormazd through original wisdom and the advancement of the world and the spirit is through wisdom."

The Spirit of Wisdom, pleased with the thoughts and wishes of the sage and by his eminent piety, displayed unto him a body and asked the sage to seek clarifications and instructions from him "so that he may be a guide to the satisfaction of God and the good, and to the preservation of the body in the world, and to the deliverance of the soul in the spirit." Then starts the series of questions by the sage (S) and the answers by the Spirit of Wisdom (SW). Only a selected few typical short questions and answers are carried here:

S: For the preservation of the body, and the deliverance of the soul, what one thing is good and more pre-eminent?

SW: Of the benefit which happens to men, wisdom is good since it is possible to impel the world by the power of wisdom and it is possible to acquire heaven also for one's self by the power of wisdom. Hormazd has created these creatures and creation which are in the world through original wisdom and also the advancement of the world and the spirit is through wisdom.

S: Is liberality good or truth? Is thank-



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fulness good or wisdom? Is devotedness good or contentment?

SW: In the soul, liberality; and in the world truth; and unto God, thankfulness; and in the body of man, wisdom and in all business, devotedness and in the comfort of the body and the subjugation of Ahriman and the demons, contentment is good.

S: Is wisdom good or skill?

SW: Wisdom that has no goodness with it is not to be considered as wisdom, and skill that has no wisdom with it is not to

**Living in fear and
falsehood is worse
than death**

be considered as skill.

S: What is that pleasure worse than unhappiness?

SW: Whoever has acquired wealth from crime, and there is pleasure for him in it, then that pleasure is worse for him than unhappiness.

S: Is living in fear and falsehood worse or death?

SW: Living in fear and falsehood is worse than death since everyone's life is

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necessary for the enjoyment and pleasure of the world and if the enjoyment and pleasure of the world are not his and fear and falsehood are with him, it is called worse than death.

S: Of kings, which is the one thing more advantageous, and which the more injurious?

SW: For kings, conversation which is with the wise and good is the one thing more advantageous, and speech and conversation which are with slanderers and double-dealers are the more injurious for them.

S: Of the rich, who is the poorer, and of the poor, who is the richer?

SW: Of the rich, he is the poorer who is not content with that which is his and suffers anxiety for the increase of anything. And of the poor, he is the richer who is content with that which has come and cares not for the increase of anything.

S: Which is that wealthy one who is to be considered as happy and which is that who is to be considered as unhappy?

SW: That one who has made wealth from regular industry is to be considered as happy and that one who has made it from irregularity as unhappy.

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Moved by their mission

A visit to Navsari and its surrounding villages reinforced the author's faith in the Zoroastrian commitment to magnanimity

Burjor H. Antia

I have some idea about the condition of poor Parsis living in Bombay and it was my desire to augment this knowledge by learning at firsthand the condition of poor Parsis residing in the surrounding areas.

During the Xmas vacation I visited Parsi institutions in Navsari such as the Parsi Infirmary, Boys' Orphanage and the D. M. Mehta Hospital.

The Mehta Hospital was established about 80 years ago as a maternity home for Parsis only, but thanks to the sagacity of the then trustees, it was decided to convert it into a full-fledged cosmopolitan hospital. It is now well established, having about 180 beds with medical facilities available to residents of all the communities of Navsari. Poor Parsi patients are taken in free of charge or at a concessional rate.

Even today, for the delivery of a child, Parsi mothers stay in the Hospital for 40 days and the charges are only Rs 800 for the duration. Hats off to the foresightedness and practical approach of the then trustees of the Hospital, which makes it not only survive today but to also thrive despite the falling numbers of our community.

I was most impressed by the World Zoroastrian Organisation's (WZO) Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre at Navsari. It is well planned, well managed and each inmate feels at home. The boarding and lodging arrangements are excellent. One of the conditions for admission to the Centre is that the applicant should be mobile, so that he is free to go out for a stroll or to the fire-temple.

I was touched by the remark of one of the inmates of the Centre: "Generally people go to heaven after their death, but I am enjoying my heaven during my lifetime by staying at this Centre." I

wish that all other Parsi institutions earn such compliments from their inmates. This beautiful Centre was made possible because of the munificent donation given by the trustees of Bai Maneck-



Hard lives, ramshackle homes

Photo: Homiyar Mistry, Homz Prints

bai Jeejeebhoy Fund.

On December 31, I visited Bardoli and met the trustees and members of the Bardoli Anjuman. I also visited the renovated Petit Dharamshala at Bardoli. What I observed among the members of the Bardoli Anjuman was that there is complete harmony and cooperation among them, a shining example for other anjumans to follow.

On the evening of December 31, 1998 there was a wedding reception at Jamshed Baug in Navsari where a Parsi Zoroastrian couple had come all the way from England with about 20 relatives and friends to solemnize their marriage. As the bridegroom was originally from Navsari and his navjote ceremony had been performed at the Navsari Atash

Behram, it was his solemn wish that his marriage ceremony should be performed at the same venue. So he brought his bride from the UK and got married in the Atash Behram in the morning. In the evening a reception was held at Jamshed Baug.

It is being said that "NRIs residing abroad are more patriotic than Indians residing in India." Similarly, I can say that our Zoroastrian brothers residing abroad are more concerned and caring about our religion and traditions than some of us residing in India.

On Friday, January 1, 1999 we visited the villages of Gangaria, Dhoti Kuva, Sadad Devi and Vaghai and interacted with the Bacha, Mehta, Tangri and Jivasa families who are doing poultry farming, cultivation of land, etc. But two Parsi ladies, a bedridden mother-in-law and her young daughter-in-law having six children (all working in Bombay or elsewhere), staying in the jungles of Vandsa took the cake. They

have been staying alone in the jungles of Dang, prohibited for human inhabitation. There is no electricity or water, but the two ladies Alice and Jinibai are staying alone in a jungle to protect and preserve their ancestral land. Even their dog was devoured by a leopard.

I marvelled at the ways of Almighty God: Parsi ladies of Bombay and other cities where all medical facilities are available, have one or two children or even no child; while in a lonely forest a Parsi lady gave birth to six children and her physical condition is splendid.

My visit to Navsari and its villages was made possible by the trustees of the WZO Trust, Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly, Phiroze Panthaky and Farokh Kassad.

I always believe that on auspicious occasions we should not forget our poor brethren. So on behalf of our Navsari

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Parsi Association we decided to give financial help to about 20 poor Parsis of Navsari and nearby villages. We personally went to their residence on the evening of January 1 to give them financial help.

In my opinion the WZO Trust is doing excellent work for our coreligionists in Navsari and other villages of Gujarat by providing self-employment or monetary aid for poultry farming and other cultivation, etc. WZO is at present providing such facilities in 96 villages and looking after 275 family members. To date it has provided financial assistance of about Rs 2.5 crores, thanks to munificent donations from the Hong-kong Zoroastrian Association, Bai Maneckbai Jeejeebhoy Fund, etc.

Thankfully, the missionary spirit is still alive to do good for the community. The Tambolys with their dedicated team of helpers have changed the lifestyle of poor Parsi villagers. Then there is Nariman Dubash. Though a behdin, the mission of his life appears to be to ameliorate the conditions of our poor priests. Since our arrival in India about 1,300 years ago, no anjuman or punchayet or any of our rich sethias have thought it fit to felicitate our priests who have dedi-

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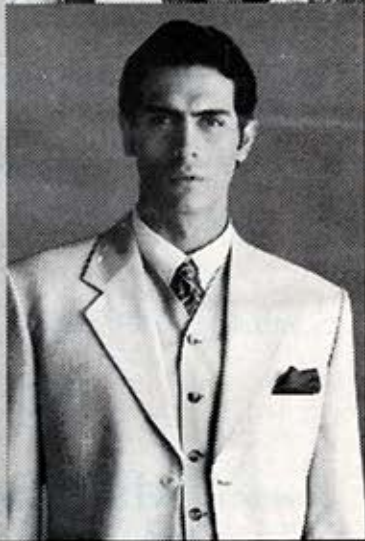
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cated their entire lives to our religion. It was Nariman Dubash who chose to felicitate 250 full-time practising priests of 50 years' standing, or their widows, by personally visiting places like Surat, Navsari and Udvada. He has donated about Rs 1.50 crores to date.

Khojeste Mistree is another behdin who is spreading the knowledge of our religion in our community; particularly amongst the youth, sometimes even at the cost of receiving brickbats. He is a qualified chartered accountant from the UK who, if he had so chosen, could have led a prosperous life in the UK rather than undertaken tedious and thankless tasks here.

Needless to add that there are several more such persons with missionary zeal in our community working in their respective fields of endeavor. Kudos to all of them for their spirit of service, in contrast to those who make it their business to find fault with the good work of others.

In the past I have celebrated many a New Year's eve by dining and dancing in five-star hotels and posh clubs. But spending my time with the poor of our community on New Year brought a deeper sense of satisfaction.

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Only priests, no pope

Like the Pope, the high priests in the community need to assume moral leadership, recommends the author

Aspi Moddie

I have often wondered if the great laymen sethias, wealthy merchants and high professional trustees of the last 200 years, who assumed community leadership, have ever paused to think of the consequences of relegating the Zoroastrian priest to a secondary, prayer-offering ritual-enacting place; with no significant role in the community's wider stakes and its intrinsic quality. Which has, as a consequence, been damaging to the community's spiritual and cultural identity and inner strength. These are questions which apply beyond India and Pakistan to the whole diasporic community, which took the consequences abroad with them, post-1960.

And what have been the consequences on community governance today of at least three significant examples of that sethia/high priest leadership looking to external authorities to resolve internal community problems?

First, the local Hindu ruler, Damaji Rao had to intervene and decide the controversy over priestly jurisdiction between Navsari and Sanjan priests. Second, the intervention of the Governor of Bombay in 1785 to appoint a commission to decide on the issue of the marriage of Zoroastrian priests and Zoroastrian women of non-priestly families. (A transferred problem of Brahmins and non-Brahmins in a Hindu society?) Third, in 1822 a British Court in Surat was asked to rule whether two atash behrams (Kadmi and Shahanshahi) could co-exist in one city. After centuries of religious wars, Catholic and Protestant churches have co-existed in the same towns and cities of the West (from "Psychological Profile of North American Zoroastrians" by Dr Dolly Dastoor).

Do all such examples show a basic lack of self-confidence and democratic tolerance in self-government within the community, as a historical legacy? Does it indicate a weak traditional leadership

of sethia and high priest in autonomous governance within the community? If so, what are its roots and causes in so educated and well-to-do a community?

We are not an illiterate tribe in some backwoods. Have we not found our own souls and our own identities in these two centuries of growing awareness and well-being? Do we not have Zoroastrian teachings and criteria for better self-governance? Let the community debate and find the answers. It is of fundamental importance in an institutional world.

There has been quite a bit of public debate about the governance of our lay sethias in the last 30 years; unfortunately, not very favorable. Both leaders and the led don't seem to take good governance very seriously in community life. Whatever the constitutional flaws and limitations, in the light of this historical background, some credit must be given to the World Zoroastrian Organisation for taking an initiative in self-governance in a foreign land, and sustaining it in recent decades. It was contrary to the external dependencies of the two previous centuries. This also applies to the federal units in India and North America. External dependency is giving way to internal debate and some responses.

And how does the community see its high priests? They see them on the dais on ceremonial occasions, offering prayers and rituals; and beyond that, no real role in public affairs on public occasions. They see them offering prayers and ritual openings at Zoroastrian congresses, and then virtually divorced from most of the proceedings of the congress; with isolated good and not-so-good exceptions.

But come a case like Roxan Shah, and a high priest's breast bursts with holy indignation, and the lay sethias are caught mindless on a hot issue which had been brewing for at least a decade.

The lethargic community is set on fire. Then the fire dies down in time. All revert to traditional apathy.

Let us look at another high priest, Pope John Paul II, in some ways, an exemplar of the age in public leadership, though many do not agree with his orthodox views on family planning and abortion. At the start, may I raise the question, is it fair to compare the Pope with Zoroastrian high priests on a much smaller stage? Admittedly, there are vast historical differences. But what one man can do on a global stage, another can do on a local one with similar qualitative effect.

One does not have to have a scepter, a Pope's hat, and a following of 50 million, before one becomes a moral and a social exemplar. Neither Nelson Mandela, nor Archbishop Tutu waited for that.

Pope John Paul II put himself amidst his fellow Poles against the then gigantic power of the USSR. He gave leadership expression to the hatred of the communist state's ungodly repression, not only among the Poles, but among the entire free world. With no military divisions (Napoleon once asked how many divisions the Pope then had), he was the inspiring leader in the battle for the souls and minds of Central Europe. It was the beginning of the end of that "evil empire." It was personal and spiritual impact which destroyed the communist myth.

On a far smaller stage, did any of our high priests or sethias play an approaching role, when the Parsis of Dadar were threatened by Shiv Sainiks of extermination "in half an hour," for giving shelter to fleeing Muslims in the Palamkote Hall in the Bombay riots of 1993? Where was indignation and leadership then? Do we have any real causes, beyond unscientific genetic ones?

When Zbigniew Brezezinski, a former

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American secretary of state, was asked about the Pope's historical legacy, he gave three answers. First, Pope John Paul II revitalized the Catholic Church, earlier torn by the issue of freedom in theology. He revitalized the inner core with inner discipline and with theological coherence; both needs in the Zoroastrian community, especially theological coherence after a century of sterile disputes between so-called orthodox ritualists and rational reformers.

Second, he played a role as a unifier between the three Christian Churches of Rome, Canterbury and Byzantium by resolving some theological issues, and by personal contacts never known in earlier centuries. He also moved the Church closer to the Jews with his explicit rejection of anti-Semitism. (At the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress, we heard a Bombay priest shockingly justify absurd Parsi racialism with a reference to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*!) Third, he has contributed to the awakening of the moral dimension in a hedonistic modern life. At the heart of tradition is not just ritualism, it is ethical morality, a respect for all life, kindness and love; once taught in the family, in the local community, not transferred to a therapeutic 'welfare' state, or abandoned in the name of freedom into a "permissive cornucopia." That is now at the heart of the Clinton affair. Pope John Paul II is advocating a balance between the state's social justice and public and private morality to define a good life.

We await such significant responses in modern life from Zoroastrian high priests too, not least in the diasporic community abroad; and especially in its most vital section, North America. Or is it emerging from the non-priest community there, scholars and concerned Zoroastrians? They seem to be the resurgent soul of Zoroastrianism, in the spirit of Zarathushtra's *frasho-kereti*, refreshing the world!

A management consultant, Aspi Moddie is a former IAS officer who early in his career opted for the private sector. His voice was



evident at the Fourth and Fifth World Zoroastrian Congresses in Bombay. His book, *Zarathushtra's "Frasho-Kereti": Renewal in Our Time* was published in 1996.

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"Did I do wrong?"

A promise to send the kusti to Paris was not honored

Nariman H. Wadia

My family has always looked upon a certain learned dasturji for guidance and sometimes, ceremonial assistance. This dasturji was extremely well regarded by all Zarathushtris, his erudition and scholarship were unassailable. Therefore, I always desired to know his personal views on conversion.

He never gave us his opinion.

Once, visiting him, we found him reciting prayers into a cassette recorder, interrupting himself often to record some commentary. We asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was expecting some Japanese students who had requested him to record some specific texts, with his comments. (The following conversations with him took place mostly in Gujarati; I will try to retain their sense and flavor in English. Phonetic transliterations would be exhausting!)

I asked him, "Dasturji Saheb, after studying our religion, do not these people wish to be initiated into our religion?"

"Yes, some of them really do!"

"Then, Dasturji Saheb, what is your own, personal view on accepting such people, who after deep study wish to be one of us?"

"Banda, my personal view is exactly that — personal. Being in the position I am, any public expression of that view, one way or the other, would generate controversy; and I feel it my function to promote harmony, not cause further divisions." And that was that — for the moment. My next chance for finding out his personal view came some years later. (Please understand, I was not trying to "put him on the spot" or anything like that. His opinion would have mattered deeply to me.)

Driving him to and from my home for a jashan ceremony, I related the following experience to him: "Dasturji Saheb, over 25 years ago, I was a student

in London from 1960 to '62. I was returning home, first overland to Italy, then by ship from Genoa to Bombay.

"A friend of a friend asked me to carry a small parcel to Paris, deliver it to a lady at a certain address. I agreed, and took the parcel not knowing its contents.

that a South American 'artiste' had even heard of our little community (this was early 1962). She became quite agitated, and began to ask me questions about our community, our religion, our ceremonies. I was ashamed to parade my total ignorance, but expressed my curiosity — why was she interested?

"Well, it turned out that she was a student at the Sorbonne University, and her subject was Comparative Religion. The 'dancer' occupation was only the means to allow her to continue her education. She declared herself to be a Zoroastrian.

"I laughed, and said she could not be! She became very serious and asked why not! I once again acknowledged my profound lack of knowledge of my own religion, but could only stammer that it was impossible for her to be a Zoroastrian without a navjote ceremony.

"But I am, I am. I am a Zoroastrian," she repeated over and over again. 'I affirm my belief in the teachings of Zarathushtra, therefore I am Zoroastrian. I say my prayers. Look! I even stitch

my own sudreh and wear a common string around my waist, instead of the kusti. I cannot weave myself a kusti!'

"I was shocked, but more so when, before she allowed me to go, she said, 'Please promise me. As soon as you reach Bombay, get me a real kusti, and send it to me. Please promise.'

"She convinced me, and I promised to send her a kusti soon."

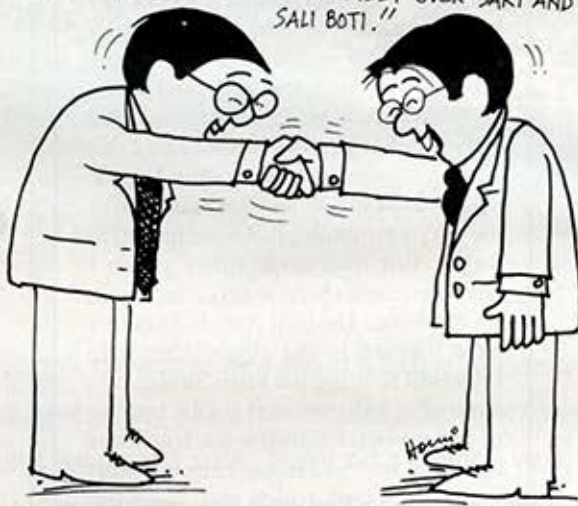
(In my car, sitting next to me, the dasturji was absolutely still. I did not even know if he had been listening to all this.) "Dasturji Saheb, are you with me?"

"Haa, Biradar, hoo badhoo samajhyo. (Yes, brother, I have understood everything.) You were shocked by the woman's profession, you were shocked at her faith in Ahura Mazda, you were

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IF CONVERSION WAS PERMITTED.

"HAI! I'M ADI
AJINOMOTO."

"HAI! I'M MANCHI MIKIMOTO.
LET'S MEET OVER SAKI AND
SALI BOTI."



(In those days there was no problem with security.)

"On reaching the address in Paris, I was aghast to find that the lady was in fact a nightclub dancer, a striptease artiste. What I had carried was a jar of body make-up. I was a *pucca bawaji* prude in those days (still am), and was greatly embarrassed in the presence of this girl, a tall and very attractive South American — Brazilian, Argentinian, I do not remember her nationality.

"Acutely uncomfortable, I wanted to give her the parcel, and get out of there as soon as possible! Although she sensed my unease, she could not just let me run away, and tried to make small talk. Suddenly she asked me if I was a Parsi.

"I said I was, and expressed surprise



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shocked that she asked you for a kusti. Yet you told her you would send her one. I have understood everything."

"Dasturji Saheb, that is not the end of the story. When I got back to Bombay, I asked one of the elders in the family to obtain a kusti, for such-a-waist size, as I did not know how that translated into the gaj size normally quoted. The extremely

The 'dancer'
occupation was only
the means to allow
her to continue her
education. She
declared herself to
be a Zoroastrian

small size surprised my aunt, and she asked me whom it was for. I told her the whole story. There was an uproar, Dasturji. I was lectured soundly on the holiness of our kusti, how it should not be given to anyone who was not of our religion, that it would be defiled by the very touch of such a woman, and so on.

"I did not believe, having seen the fervor of that girl, that I would be committing a grave sin by sending her the kusti which she so badly wanted. Over the next few months, I allowed myself to forget. But over these many years, I have sometimes been deeply concerned.

"Tell me, Dasturji Saheb, should I have listened to the elders? Did I do right, not sending the kusti, or did I do wrong?"

My revered Dasturji was silent. I was watching his eyes in my rearview mirror. I saw a look which said, "I understand your trick, my friend. You are still asking the same old question. I understand perfectly."

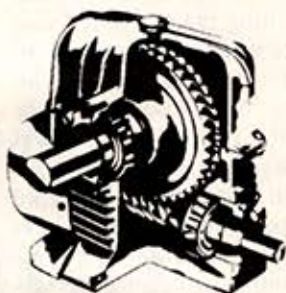
He was silent while my car slowly crept from Chandanwadi to beyond the first few sari shops on Queen's Road, Bombay. That was maybe two or three long minutes.

After which, he put his hand gently on my knee. Taking his time, he gently rocked my knee as he spoke, quite sadly and regretfully, "*Bhool kidhee, dost! Bhool kidhee.* (You made a mistake, my friend! You made a mistake.)"

I had my answer.

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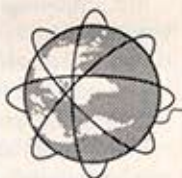
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COMMENT

"Because I care"

Instead of being enveloped in her own misery
the author chose to help those in distress

Daisy Presswalla

About 19 years ago, I was very sick with cancer. I had undergone surgery, and various painful treatments. I was very upset, angry, and asked myself: "Why me?"

One day I decided: "That's it. I am not going to my doctor, I will take charge of my own body and be my own doctor." I started to look inward, to communicate with Self. Things began to happen. The first thought was to stop feeling sorry for myself, let go of my anger, ego, listen to the inner voice, and take care of my body, mind and soul. As our religion says, with good thoughts, good words and good deeds, I put myself in the hands of Ahura Mazda, and was ready any time he called for me.

I love material things but am not particularly fascinated by anything. I told my husband Faruk not to worry, to be in good spirits, carry on with his life, and let someone enjoy my material things when I go to meet the Maker. One has to leave this physical existence empty-handed just as one enters this life. Once free of fear and anger, it is easy to live life, enjoying everything and desiring nothing.

I feel that my sickness made me into a changed person. I feel strong through the experience, watching carefully what I say or do, always thinking about the other person's feelings. I started following a course of exercise, a diet devoid of chicken and fish (red meat was never a part of my food), lifting weights and praying four to five times a day. I also began to enjoy nature with walks in the open, observing the sun, moon, stars and other creations around.

As I began to feel strong, I started taking care of cancer and AIDS patients and learned quite a lot from my sick friends. People in these circumstances develop a common bond and freely converse about their experiences in life. I was always able to pick something good from these friends and warmly incorporate it in my life. Soon I found out that

life is just one long educational process where one continues to learn till the last day on this earth. Now I regularly pray, meditate and fast. Particularly, I find fasting offers significant inner strength, power of will and self-discipline. At the same time, it also cleans and gives rest to one's inner organs.

I was taught that the *gireban* — the pocket in front of our *sudreh* — stores what good we have done in our life. Presently I work in a big soup kitchen in Trenton, where I help with cooking and serving food for 500-800 people. Often people stop and ask me why I come here every week to help them. To this I have a standard reply: "Because I care!" People respond differently: some offer their blessings while others are put out and do not comprehend. I serve these homeless persons with the words of Dadarji (the Almighty Giver) on my lips, a smile on my face, and wish each one of them an enjoyable lunch. I also work in the nursing home where I talk to old people, look after their frail bodies, play ball with them and feed those who cannot feed themselves. I go to church on Sundays to baby-sit so that parents can enjoy their prayers peacefully.

My narrow and erroneous view of the superiority of my religion over others was gradually laid to rest as I began to study other philosophies. This has broadened my horizon and changed my thinking. I have been requested to correspond with cancer patients in India, which I do on a regular basis. I have started doing something I never thought of before: to pray for their well-being.

I recall an incident when I was sick. My sister had come over from India to help me. She asked me if her Christian friends could pray for me? I retorted with vanity: "No thanks, I can pray myself." Now I realize how wrong I was. At that time I was quite angry, and used to argue with my sister, not recognizing her kindness in coming all the

continued on page 182



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The Renaissance man

The credit for India's progress in nuclear science goes to Homi Bhabha

Jamsheed Kanga

The destiny of India as the world's sixth nuclear power was decided by a quirk of fate. A brilliant young physicist working at Cambridge decided to come home on holiday to Bombay. Before he could return, the Second World War broke out and it was not possible for him to resume his teaching at Cambridge. The young man of 30 years was Dr Homi J. Bhabha.

A brilliant student throughout his career, he went to Cambridge in 1927 to study engineering which would have ensured him a career in industry. However, Bhabha's love for physics was overwhelming and he persuaded his father to let him switch over to physics after he secured a first class in the Mechanical Science Tripos; and two years later he passed the Mathematical Science Tripos again in the first class. After getting a number of prizes and distinctions and working in Zurich and later Rome with the great Dr Enrico Fermi and in Copenhagen at the Bohr Institute, he taught at Cambridge from 1935 to 1939, and along with Prof Hytler of the University of Heidelberg enunciated the Cascade Theory of Cosmic Ray Showers.

Finding himself unable to return to Cambridge, Bhabha became a reader and later a professor in the physics department of the Indian Institute of Science (IIS) at Bangalore under Prof C. V. Raman. Having worked in the rarefied atmosphere of Cambridge and mingled with the world's best scientific brains, Bhabha had the vision to realize that similar research institutions were needed in India. Though the IIS was one of the best science institutes at the time established by the visionary Jamsetji Tata, founder of the House of Tatas, in Bangalore in 1911, it could not concentrate on fundamental research in physics or mathematics as well as a small university department could, or even a general purpose research institute.

Bhabha's restless mind felt something had to be done. On August 19,

1943 he wrote a letter to J. R. D. Tata that "lack of proper conditions and intelligent financial support hamper the development of science in India at the pace



Bhabha: lured the best brains to serve the country

which the talent in the country would warrant. If proper facilities are available it would attract the best Indian brains as it is one's duty to stay in one's own country and build up schools comparable with those in other lands." JRD, a visionary member of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, responded enthusiastically. He suggested that "if you and/or some of your colleagues in the scientific world would put up concrete proposals backed by a sound case, I think there is a very good chance that Sir Dorabji Tata Trust would respond. After all, the advancement of science is one of the fundamental objectives with which most of the Tata Trusts were founded and they have already rendered useful service in this field."

On March 12, 1944 Bhabha wrote to the chairman of the Dorabji Tata Trust suggesting the setting up of an institute exclusively devoted to fundamental research in physics and mathematics. He

concluded: "The scheme I am now submitting to you is but an embryo from which I hope to build up in the course of time a school of physics comparable with the best anywhere." The trustees accepted the responsibility of funding such an institute but felt that this responsibility should be shared at the outset by the Bombay University and the Bombay Government. Subsequently, the Tata Trust along with the Government of Maharashtra and the Government of India undertook this responsibility and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) came into existence as an autonomous body. This event may well be considered the start of modern scientific research which ultimately enabled India to build up the talent that helped to project it into the nuclear age.

Bhabha in one of his speeches had foreseen that "when nuclear energy has been successfully applied for power production in say a couple of decades from now, India will not look abroad for its experts but will find them ready at hand." His vision was matched by that of the trustees of the Dorabji Tata Trust who undertook the financial responsibility for starting the TIFR in April 1944, more than a year before the explosion of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The TIFR enabled Bhabha to attract the best brains to work for the country. In those days it was not the lure of money but the lack of opportunities for scientists and mathematicians that persuaded them to go West. However, the spirit of patriotism was burning bright in their hearts and many were overjoyed to be working for the country. Even the great astrophysicist, S. Chandrasekhar was approached by Bhabha with an offer of a chair at the TIFR and Chandrasekhar responded by saying he had no hesitation in accepting "a professorship in the institute under the circumstances you have described..." Though ultimately Chandrasekhar did not accept the chair on a permanent basis, he con-

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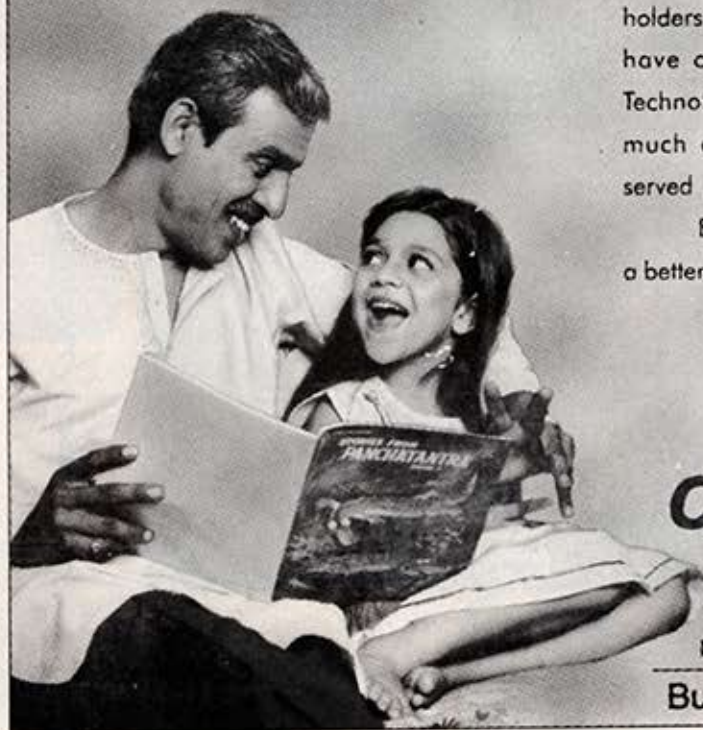
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continued to come to TIFR as a visiting professor.

Many other brilliant scientists working abroad were attracted back to the country now that they had research facilities comparable to what was offered elsewhere. Govind Swarup and four Indian radioastronomers offered to return, and formed the radioastronomy group which built one of the largest radio telescopes in the world. Prof Ob Siddiqui, a renowned microbiologist founded a flourishing department of microbiology. Famous Indian scientists such as M. G. K. Menon and Raja Ramanna owe their eminence to the opportunities available to them under Bhabha's influence at the TIFR which became the nursery for India's nuclear physics.

The history of the creation of TIFR is remembered by the pioneering scientists with nostalgia. The first home of TIFR was a part of Bhabha's aunt's bungalow at Peddar Road called Kenilworth. The other half was still occupied by his aunt, who used to supply tea and snacks to the scientists from her own kitchen. When the institute needed more space it was first shifted to the old Yacht Club at Gateway of India. Subsequently, with the help of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru TIFR was allotted a plot of land at Colaba in Navy Nagar much against the wishes of Krishna Menon, then defence minister of India. This is where the beautiful edifice stands today.

Bhabha's success was due to the presence of JRD and Nehru. JRD was a nationalist at heart and his vision of India made him assemble a group of experts to formulate the first development plan for India called the Bombay Plan. In Nehru both Bhabha and JRD found a kindred soul. With his support there soon came into existence an independent department of atomic energy and the Atomic Energy Commission by an Act of Parliament with Bhabha as its first chairman, directly under Nehru.

Bhabha soon realized that for India's development of atomic energy, TIFR would not be enough and that the time had come to start new laboratories entirely devoted to this research. The proposed laboratory was set up in Trombay where 1,200 acres of marshy land was

allotted for this purpose. Here the Atomic Energy Establishment (AEE) came into existence and started functioning in 1954. Till then the various departments of AEE were scattered over a number of places: in Kenilworth, in the old Yacht Club, in an old defunct textile mill on Cadell Road and in barracks at Colaba made by the Navy dur-



ing the War. Eminent scientists like Ramanna, Dr A. S. Rao and many others thus began working in makeshift laboratories until they were

Bhabha never intended his efforts in the nuclear field to be used for making a bomb

relocated in beautiful new buildings at Trombay.

Thereafter great leaps were made in the development of atomic energy in India. The Apsara Reactor was planned in 1954 and went into operation in 1956. It was a major milestone because it was designed and built in India by Indian scientists. Only the fuel elements came from England thanks to the close friendship of Bhabha and Sir John Cockroft who headed the atomic research estab-

lishment in the UK. Of course, at that time the entire object of research was for peaceful purposes, namely, power generation.

It was Bhabha's immense prestige in the world of science and his friendship with the leading scientists of his time that enabled him to get assistance and collaboration from establishments in the western world. In order to build reactors for experiments and to acquire atomic power generation technology, with the help of his friend from Cambridge, Prof W. E. Lewis, who was heading the Canadian atomic energy program, Bhabha finalized the Canada India Reactor Project for building a heavy water nuclear reactor. Constructed by Indian scientists along with Canadians, it was successfully completed in 1960. In his excellent book *Bhabha And His Magnificent Obsessions* Prof Venkataraman writes that Bhabha promoted atomic energy not merely because it promised a steady source of energy for centuries, but also because the best way in which India could take giant strides in technology was for her to swing into an area like atomic energy where the rest of the world was only about five to 10 years ahead, unlike in other areas where she was decades behind.

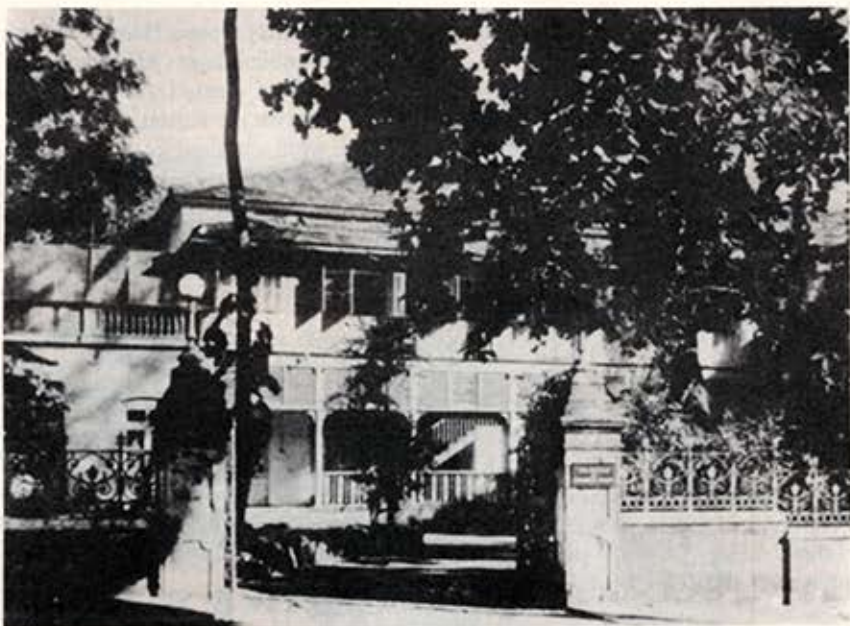
It was the early start that India got with the creation of TIFR and the AEE that enabled a host of young scientists and engineers to carry out research under conditions comparable to the best institutes in the western world. Thus India was able to develop the first peaceful nuclear device exploded in Pokhran in 1974 under the leadership of Dr Homi Sethna, another protégé of Dr Bhabha.

It must be remembered that Bhabha never intended his efforts in the nuclear field to be used for making a bomb one day. In fact he was one of the pioneers of the movement for peaceful uses of atomic energy. When at President Eisenhower's suggestion the United Nations decided to hold an international conference in Geneva on "The Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy," by popular acclaim Bhabha was elected its president, a great honor when one considers that compared to other countries India's atomic energy program was in its infancy. It was a measure of the respect the international



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The old Kenilworth where the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research was born

scientific community had for Bhabha who played a memorable role in this conference. His presidential address was a brilliant essay on "The history of mankind and its constant struggle to improve its control over the sources of energy in nature."

One wonders what Bhabha would have felt now that India's energies seem to be diverted from the production of power to that of nuclear warheads. Unfortunately, on both the occasions when India exploded nuclear devices, it was because the government of the day needed a big bang to bolster its prestige. Bhabha's untimely death in an air crash on January 23, 1966, when an Air India flight from Bombay to Geneva crashed in the Alps, deprived India of his leadership in the scientific field.

Today, however, when the country is passing through a jingoistic phase of self-praise and we are proudly proclaiming ourselves as a nuclear superpower, one has to remember what the country owes to the vision of Dr Homi J. Bhabha.

Besides being a brilliant scientist, Bhabha was a true Renaissance man. His interests included painting and appreciation of art and music. His outstanding administrative skills enabled him to single-handedly create institutions such as the TIFR and the AEE at Trombay, now called Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Out of these grew other departments of space and electronics, all headed by his protégés.

Today, India can hold its head up in the world of science because Bhabha dared to dream and had the courage to fulfill his dream.

I cannot think of a better tribute than the one given to him by one of his colleagues, C. F. Powell: "Homi was surely a man out of his own time. He had the wide breadth of interests, the penetrating intellect, the abounding personal confidence in the ability of the human understanding, by observation and experiment, to unravel the secrets of Nature, which are characteristic of the great figures of the Renaissance. But perhaps such figures have an essential role to play in all ages."

Unfortunately, none of our national leaders have bothered to mention the role he played in the country's scientific development. I hope this omission will soon be rectified.

Former municipal commissioner of Bombay, during his tenure with the Indian Administrative services, Jamshed Kanga had worked as joint secretary (projects and financial adviser) Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. Since his retirement from the IAS he has been with the Tata



Housing Development Company Limited where he was formerly vice president and managing director, and is currently senior corporate advisor. For over a decade he served as trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet.

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On a throne of stone

The establishment of the Navsari Atash Behram was due greatly to the efforts of Desai Khurshed Tehmulji

Hormazdiar J. M. Desai

I was privileged to read two excellent treatises in Persian verse: the *Qisseh-i-Zarthushtian-i-Hindustan Va Bayan-i-Atash Behram-i-Naosari* written by Dastur Shapurji Manockji Sanjana at the end of the 18th century, and *Ahwale Atash Behram-i-Naosari* written by Mahiyar and Framarz Navroji Kutar, published in February 1926.

The internationally reputed scholar, the late Dr Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, had contributed a learned paper on the *Qisseh* in Journal No 17 of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Giving a free version of the Persian text, he has stated that there were only two extant manuscripts of the treatise — both in the author's own handwriting. The first draft, corrected at several places, was with the reputed scholar Sorabjee Muncherjee Desai of Navsari; and the second, a fair copy, with the Dastur Meherji Rana Library of Navsari.

Modi states that the first part of the *Qisseh* treats of the early settlement of the Parsis in India, while the second part deals with the foundation and consecration of the atash behram at Navsari. Referring to the dates of events in the *Qisseh*, he states that in 651 AC, on the fall of the Persian Empire, the Zoroastrians of Iran fled to Kohistan. After a hundred years' stay in hiding there, in 751 AC the fugitives stayed for 15 years at port Hormuz. When the Abbassid Caliphs came to power in Iran, the Zoroastrians left the shores of Hormuz and arrived at Diu in Kathiawar, India, in 766 AC. After 19 years in Diu, they arrived at Sanjan in 785 AC and founded, in 790 AC, the first fire-temple in India — the Iranshah at Sanjan.

Not many Zoroastrians know that the

holy Iranshah was in Navsari from 1516 to 1741 AC, i.e. for 225 long years. On the conquest of Sanjan by the army of Mahmud Bigara, the Parsis first fled to

specifically for the purpose.

From 1090 AC, the Zoroastrians had begun to disperse and settled in parts of Gujarat such as Vankaner, Broach,

Variav, Anklesar, Khambayat and Navsari. With the dispersion, the economic condition of the priestly class deteriorated since the number of their clients decreased substantially. Hence the division of Gujarat into five panthaks was made for sacerdotal work. When disputes started between the mobeds from Sanjan and the Bhagaria mobeds from Navsari, Shah Changa bin Asa reminded them of the five divisions for sacerdotal work. The Sanjana mobeds were to do *khadmat* or serve the sacred fire and retain all the proceeds of the offerings. The Bhagaria mobeds of Navsari were to perform all religious ceremonies in connection with the living and the dead. The Sanjana mobeds were pleased with the arrangement and an agreement to this effect was signed by both the parties.

After some time, however, the Sanjana mobeds went back on the agreement and the dispute took a serious turn. It was in

1740 that Damaji Rao Gaikwar gave a ruling that the Bhagaria priests of Navsari had the right to officiate even in the houses of the Sanjana priests. Not satisfied with this decision, the Sanjana priests agitated, insisting that they ought not to be asked to abstain from performing obsequial and other religious ceremonies of members of their own families. Since Damaji Rao ruled in favor of the original agreement executed by the ancestors of the Sanjana priests, the Sanjanas sought permission to depart from Navsari with their sacred fire.

Damaji Rao consulted Desai Khurshed Tehmulji who firmly opined



An entrance to the Navsari Atash Behram complex. Photo: Ashvin Mehta

Bahrot from whence they arrived in 1502 AC to Bansda with the sacred fire. When the pious behdin Shah Changa bin Asa of Navsari went to Bansda to pray at the atash behram, he thought that the sacred fire should be brought and located at Navsari. He convened a meeting of the anjuman and all enthusiastically agreed to his suggestion. Then Shah Changa, with a devout band of Zoroastrians, went to Bansda and ceremoniously brought the sacred fire to Navsari and enthroned it in a good house vacated

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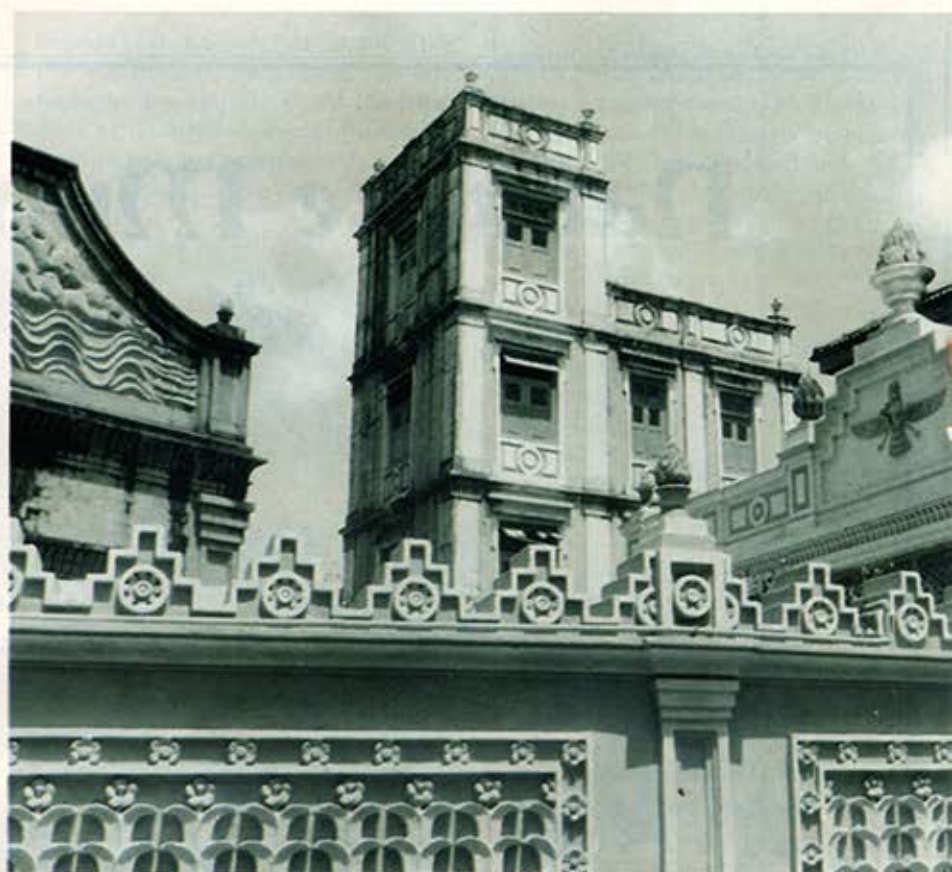


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They brought the sacred fire to Navsari
and enthroned it in a good house vacated
specifically for the purpose



*Different parts of the 233-year old
venerable Atash Behram at Navsari*
Black-and-white photos: Ashvin Mehta

that if the Sanjanas wanted to remain in Navsari, they had to abide by the agreement executed by their forefathers; if they did not agree to do so, they may be permitted to go back. The Sanjanas refused to remain in Navsari. At their own request, they were given a *parvaneh* to return. They left Navsari on *roz Zamyad mah* Spandarmad, Yazdegirdi 1109, with the sacred fire and went to Bulsar where they remained for two to three years. With the approval of Raja Durji Sang, they enthroned the holy fire at Udvada, where it is located even today.

Meanwhile at a Rapithvin jashan held at the Dar-e-Meher under the leadership of Desai Khurshed, priests and laymen requested Desai to found an atash behram in Navsari in his lifetime. The religious sardar replied, "I also pray for the same work day and night... I am ready." The assembly recited *tandarosti* and resolved to found the atash behram. Four leading dasturs offered their services and produced ancient books and manuscripts to settle the procedure for the ceremonies required to be performed to prepare and consecrate the sacred fire. At the instance of Desai Khurshed various Parsi centers were informed of their resolve to found an atash behram. The response from the centers was positive and encouraging.

Desai Khurshed requested Dastur Sohrab, son of Rustomji Meherji Rana — a descendant of Dastur Mahyar (Meherji Rana) who had gone to the court of Akbar, to hasten the work of preparing the sacred fire. On the authority of a manuscript belonging to Dastur Darab Pahlon, Desai was informed that 16 fires of different kinds, i.e. from places of work of different tradesmen, were required. Desai appointed Dastur Sohrab as leader of the work and permitted him to select his own team of mobeds. Out of some 200 mobeds who offered their services, 100 were selected. All the 100 mobeds took the selected 16 fires to the Dar-e-Meher, recited *yazashne* and *vendidad* over them; and they agreed on the *adusht* i.e. the stone slab upon which the vase (*afarganyu*) stands. This united consecrated fire became the atash behram.

All officiating priests were given double the usual wages by Desai which pleased the mobeds. A proper *gumbaj* (dome) was prepared for the kingly atash

behran, and on November 30, 1765, the fire was installed on a throne of stone under the dome built by Desai. Modi has clarified that the ceremony to consecrate the holy fire took place two months and 28 days after the date of the first



Navsari's Vadi Dar-e-Meher

Photo: Ashvin Mehta

proposal to found the atash behram. The enthronement took place 10 months and 17 days after the commencement of the ceremony.

I would not like to get involved in the controversy as to whether the atash behram should be known as 'Desai Khurshedji's Atash Behram' or 'Anjuman's Atash Behram.' Suffice it to say that the Bhagaria priests give the lion's share of credit to Desai Khurshed in the work of the foundation, construction and inauguration of the atash behram. But according to them the expenses were shared by others also, and hence it is really the Anjuman's Atash Behram.

My uncle, the late reputed scholar Sorabji Mancherji Desai, author of some 115 books in Gujarati, has written a book, *Atash Behram-I-Desai Khorshed*. In this book, he has quoted some 114 supportive evidences to authenticate that

the atash behram was founded, constructed and maintained by Desai Khurshed and his family. Modi states that on the whole, the Desais are justified in saying that Khurshed built the atash behram. But an impartial study of the data supplied by the *Qisseh* shows that "both the sides are partially right and partially wrong."

A scholar whom I hold in the highest esteem — the reputed author of *Oriental Treasures* — the late Jamshed Cawasji Katrak has this to say about Desai Khurshed: "This great and good leader of the Parsis... was desai (i.e. revenue authority or collector of Navsari) from 1728 to 1779 AD. We find from his own diary that he learnt religious knowledge and Persian from the learned Dastur Darab Pahlon. His father (Tehmulji) was desai of Navsari from 1700 to 1728 AD and suffered hardship, injustices and oppression at the hands of higher government officials at Surat. Tehmulji's father Rustomji and grandfather Homji Fardunji were also desais."

Katrak continues, "Desai Khurshedji was chiefly instrumental in the construction of the new atash behram at Navsari in 1765 AD... He exerted his power and influence with the government to have many heavy taxes removed. He was in truth the leader and guide of the Bhagaria priests... He introduced many beneficent customs amongst Navsari Parsis." His name was, and is even now, great in Navsari. The first Parsi desai known by name was Changa bin Asa, who brought about the transfer of the sacred fire, first founded in Sanjan, from Bansda to Navsari.

Modi further states that when the Maratha leader Gopibhai sent a band of plundering soldiers to Navsari, a sum of Rs 35,000 was settled as ransom. Desai Khurshed paid that amount on behalf of the people out of his own pocket. He truly saved Navsari from being plundered and destroyed. He also dedicated the Khurshed Wadi — named after him — for the use of the anjuman for all its festive and public purposes. But the greatest service given by Khurshed 'Bappa' — as he is still very lovingly called — was helping the Navsari anjuman to found an atash behram of their own. Indeed, I am very proud to be the ninth direct descendant of the great and noble Desai Khurshed Tehmulji.

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Lighting up a landmark

As part of its 150th year celebrations, the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution illuminates its heritage building and releases a new biography of its founder, the first baronet

Hilla P. Guzder

As the invitees congregated on Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Road looked skyward, Jamshed Guzder pressed the switch to illuminate for the first time in its 126-year-old history the stone facade of the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution (SJJPBI). Lighting the night sky in accompaniment were multi-hued fireworks, serving to enhance the elegance of the columns and balustrades ornamented in three different styles on each floor — Ionic, Doric and Corinthian.

Strategically situated within the protected heritage precinct of Fort, the SJJPBI joins a growing list of historical buildings whose illuminated facades add luster to the Bombay heritage scene at dusk. An automatic timer ensures that the lights go off at 10 o'clock.

The inauguration on January 8, 1999 sponsored by Guzder and the trustees of the CSD Adenwalla Trust marked a high point in the 150th anniversary celebrations of the SJJPBI (see "The edifice of education," *Parsiana*, February-March 1998). "Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (first baronet) will feel very proud that the senior-most trustee of this institution [Guzder, who is also the chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) whose offices are housed in the same building] is associated with this illumination," stated Rustom Jejeebhoy, son and heir of the present seventh baronet. "We have hitherto suffered from an 'identity crisis,'" quipped Rustom, with most people knowing where the office of the BPP is situated, but not the J. J. School! He hoped that "coming into the limelight" would solve that identity crisis!

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the seventh baronet, presented Guzder a silver salver in appreciation, with a picture of the building etched into it. Acknowledging

also the guidance and assistance of Guzder's son Cyrus and commending him for his interest in heritage structures, Sir Jamsetjee presented him a painting of the building, which was received in his absence by his wife Maneck.



SJJPBI's heritage structure

Photo: Karunakar Bolor (Darpan Photos)

"The first baronet did not live to see this building being constructed," noted Guzder, "but the offices of the BPP came to be housed here as Sir Jamsetjee was also the chairman of the Parsi Punchayet." It is in the fitness of things, he joked, that 150 years later another Jamshed, who is also a trustee of the School and the chairman of the BPP, should be involved with the restoration and illumination!

"We have however not been able to light up the arches because of the hawkers," lamented Rustom. They are so well entrenched, he stated, that they even have phone and light connections! The efforts of the municipality have not resulted in any success. Only the government, he believed, could achieve the desired result, provided it had the political will to do so. "There is not a single hawker outside the Bank of Maharashtra

building right next door," Rustom pointed out.

For the evening of the function, however, the hawkers had agreed to move out temporarily, resulting in neat rows of beautifully blooming bougainvilleas occupying the space where cardboard boxes and a variety of wares (including pornographic literature clandestinely sold outside the school) usually cluttered the pavement. Inside the freshly painted lobby at the foot of the wide staircase, the rustle of silken saris and the clink of crystal replaced the faintly musty Dickensian air that had hitherto permeated the old structure.

The internal and external renovation of the building was supervised by the noted firm of architects, Talati and Panthaky-Associated Private Limited without charging any fees. The execution at an estimated cost of Rs 40 lakhs was by Manek Dinshaw and Company. The SJJPBI's fund-raising drive over the past year has generated more than Rs 60 lakhs, noted Rustom.

A Bombay merchant

"Half of you have come to hear the Field Marshal (chief guest Sam Manekshaw) and the other half to see their children perform; I shall not be an obstruction to either," Sir Jamsetjee told the assembled students of the J. J. Schools, their parents and invitees at the Birla Matushri Sabhagar on January 9, 1999. Introduced by master of ceremonies Homai Modi as "a perfect gentleman and a gentle man, truly loved by all connected with this Institution," the chairman of the SJJPBI related how exactly two centuries ago his ancestor, the first baronet, had left Navsari a penniless orphan, arriving in Bombay to join his uncle's trade of selling old bottles (see "The

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Top: Illuminated facade (Photo: Spectravision Labs); (inset) decorative terrace corner (Photo: Chetan Mistry)

Middle row: Guzder switching on the lights flanked by Rustom (left) and Jejeebhoy; inside view of the gathering

Bottom: SJJPB trustees (back row) with the heads of the J. J. Schools (Photos: Spectravision Labs)





Top: Maneck Guzder (third from left) being felicitated; Karanjia addressing the audience; Middle: On the dais (l to r) Pal, Mody, Manekshaw, Jejeebhoy, Karanjia and Modi; Bottom: Manekshaw releasing Karanjia's book on the first baronet (Photo: Spectravision Labs)



benevolent baron," *Parsiana*, April 1998). "His is not just a story of a poor boy coming good," proclaimed Sir Jamsetjee. "He was unique in that he never forgot his poverty-stricken days." His character and compassion ensured that he gave back in full measure to the city which gave him prosperity. Repeating the first baronet's words, Sir Jamsetjee advised his young students: "One should never be proud of one's riches as riches pass away, only good name will endure." Judging by the response to their appeal for funds, Sir Jamsetjee stated that he was happy to note that "charity is still considered a virtue, not an income tax deduction!"

Presenting the School's annual report, administrator Hemavati N. Pal, who has been associated with the Institution for 34 years, declared that J. J. Schools followed a transparent admission policy of "first come, first served," steering away from "elitism and crass commercialization." The founder's aim had been to create a fund to take in the poorest of poor students, she asserted, and the Institution had achieved its successes by "sheer dint of classroom teaching and not by courtesy of coaching classes," mentioning also that the Sir J. J. Girls' School had been the first to start computer education in south Bombay.

Give me a Bombay Merchant - Anytime!, a biography of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, first baronet, by well-known



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Sesquicentennial concert: Boman Irani (center) as the first baronet with J. J. students (Photo: Spectravision Labs)

journalist, author and former chairman of the National Film Development Corporation B. K. Karanjia, was released by Manekshaw. The book, published under the auspices of the University of Bombay, aims to provide inspirational reading to school and college students. In his frank and forthright address delivered in measured tones, Karanjia contrasted the decaying condition of Bombay today to a century and a half ago when the first baronet was alive. Sir Jamsetjee, asserted Karanjia, would be outraged at the sight of our "poor, ruined, plundered city," with its proliferating slums, pathetic public hospitals with patients lying on the floor in corridors and verandahs and ward boys suturing wounds, the crass commercialization of education and the "indignities that man has inflicted on man." Sir Jamsetjee, Karanjia emphasized, built institutions by delving his hand into his own pocket. "In good times he was a godsend, in bad times he was a one-man relief center."

Voicing similar thoughts, but in his frothy, inimitable style, Manekshaw branded India the "most indiscipline country in the world!" Discipline, he pointed out, is a code of conduct for decent living which has come down from time immemorial. Like a true and disciplined soldier, Manekshaw declared that he honors the numerous invitations he receives by arriving at the function on the dot of the appointed hour, neither one minute early nor one minute late! Our politicians however arrive hours

late, accompanied by gun-toting security and the rest of their retinue, sit on the stage revealing "four-fifths of their hairy legs and scratching the unimaginable!" The Field Marshal asked the laughing audience to note, however, how well "suited and booted" their chief guest was, nor was he suffering from any kind of urticaria!

On a more serious note, Manekshaw exhorted the students and their parents to inculcate and enforce discipline in their own lives which would lead to development of character. Asked to distribute special sesquicentennial medals to staff members with long service and others being honored, Manekshaw enlivened the proceedings by planting kisses — to the blushes of the ladies and the merriment of the audience!

In his vote of thanks, ex-student and present trustee Minoo Mody termed his school an "oasis of discipline," reminiscing however that discipline could not preclude such childish pranks as sitting on the bannister and sliding, bag on back, all the way down the imposing stairway!

On the anvil as part of the sesquicentennial celebrations is The Art of Charity — an exhibition and sale of contemporary art featuring the works of 60 of India's most eminent artists including S. H. Raza, M. F. Husain, Ganesh Pyne, Laxman Shreshtha and others, many of whom are alumni of the Sir J. J. School of Art. "Fund-raising will continue with proper utilization spread over time to fulfill our objectives," states Rustom, reiterating the family's continuing commitment, five generations later, to the SJJPI and the dreams of its founder.



**With
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The lady's lamp of learning

Bai Ruttonbai F. D. Panday Girls' High School celebrates its centenary with a refurbishment of its premises and upgrading of its facilities

Hilla P. Guzder

The young drum majorette's crisp commands led her all-girl band in marching patterns across the stage, shrill pipes trilling in unison, drumbeats rhythmic, with clear clicking of sticks in the air. The Bai Ruttonbai F. D. Panday Girls' High School band, which has won laurels at ward, zonal and regional level competitions, flagged off the centenary concert on December 4, 1998 at the Patkar Hall. Built by Sir Dinshaw Petit, first baronet, and Lady Sakerbai Petit and named after their daughter Ruttonbai who died at the young age of 31 in giving birth to Meherbai (the mother of Dr Homi Bhabha, founder of India's atomic energy program), Panday School completed 100 years on June 5, 1998.

One of the highlights of the year-long centenary celebrations, the "dance and musical extravaganza" performed with gusto by a 300-strong student contingent reflected the words and spirit of the school song: "We are the girls of Panday School, so happy as you see; activity not sloth our rule, ever ready, ever free."

Panday School, with its 100-year-old freshly-painted white building with rambling verandahs and sloping roof and a new building constructed in the 1960s, is set in the serene surroundings of Murzban Colony at Gilder Lane. Dotted all around are old-style villas and two-storeyed residential buildings built for the community by an assortment of Parsi philanthropists. A stone's throw away is the cacophony of Bombay Central Station. "Most of the Parsi population is now gone from this area," laments principal Silloo Commissariat who has been associated with Panday School for 41 of its 100 years, first as a student, then as teacher, first assistant and principal! Parsi

students now number just 75 amidst 1,200 students of other communities, mostly Gujaratis from surrounding areas. "We still get a number of Parsi priests' children as well as the children of the khandias at Doongerwadi, to whom I give first preference," elaborates Commissariat. Also receiving pri-

mentions a donation of Rs 20 lakhs from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. Russi Lala and Jamshed Bhabha, who is the School's senior-most trustee, were largely instrumental in helping to get this donation, notes Commissariat. Another major donor, Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund with a contri-

bution of Rs 10 lakhs, has been helping the cause of Panday School for years, declares the principal, with the School report for the year '97-'98 also gratefully acknowledging a donation of Rs 62,000 to the fund for school fees from the Bai Maneckbai Fund, received through Scylla Vatcha. "She (Vatcha) is a wonderful, benevolent, unassuming lady whose left hand doesn't know what her right hand is doing," comments Commissariat. The drive has so far raised over Rs 65 lakhs, with



The 100-year-old School building

ority in admission are the polio-affected and mentally impaired of all communities whom many other schools refuse to take. "We have some deaf children as well, who quietly switch off their hearing aid and stare at you blankly when you give them a scolding! The only ones we can't handle are the blind." If Parsi students are in a minority, staff members are in the majority with 33 out of 45 staff being Zoroastrians! Many, including guide captain (honorary) Dinoo Sarkari, office staff member Homai Katgara and the principal herself, have been working at the School for decades.

The centenary celebrations and fund-raising drive were kicked off at a function on December 17, '97 at the Patkar Hall, with the release of a souvenir at a musical evening presented by Raju Verma and Silloo Shapoorji. A detailed list of donors published in the souvenir

ex-student Maneck C. Khabardar, granddaughter of Kavi Khabardar, bringing in the largest total collection from individuals.

The Centenary Celebrations Committee, especially constituted under chairperson Ketu Mehta and vice-chairperson Banoo Cama, has been working for over two years to celebrate the landmark event. Mehta also heads the School's managing committee with Mehroo Bengalee, Vatcha, Cama, Prof Khurshed Sheriar, Kershasp Dadinatha and Commissariat as the other members. "The chairperson gives much attention to our School and is always understanding and sympathetic," eulogizes Commissariat. It was she (Mehta) who persuaded the School to go in for a smart new uniform as part of its centenary celebrations and "though she has a number of new ideas, there is never any interference, we are given a free hand in implementation." Responds Mehta,

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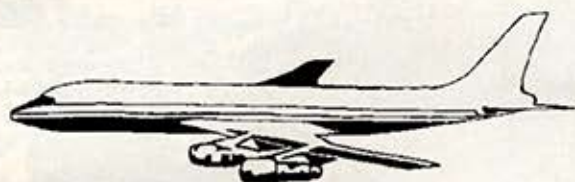
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Top row: Commissariat (right) being felicitated by first assistant Freny Jabulee; Mohile (second from left) releasing special postal cover flanked by Commissariat, Mehta and Vispi Dastur; Middle row: Mody addressing the gathering; Roshen Driver, Mehta, Cama and Guzder at the gahambar function (Photo: Hilla Guzder); Bottom: Mohile inspecting guard of honor

"The person who has worked very hard is the principal together with her staff. We merely give a helping hand."

From its inception in 1898, the School was placed by Sir Dinshaw Petit under the management of the Garib Zarthostiona Rehetan Fund, which had members of the Petit, Jejeebhoy, All-bless, Cama and other renowned Parsi families as trustees. The present board of trustees comprises Jamshed Guzder, president (who is also chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet), Bhabha, Adi Mulla, Mehta, Dadinatha and Cama,

with Bengalee, Bomi Mistry and Jamshed Irani as members.

To preserve for posterity the School's completion of a century, the chief postmaster general of Maharashtra, Aparna Mohile released a postal cover on September 11, 1998 in the high-ceilinged Hirabai Petit Hall of the School. "I do not say what I do not feel," she observed. "The Parsi community has contributed immensely to the welfare and knowledge of this country, be it in the field of philanthropy, industry, education etc." The late Homi Bhabha, re-

nowned as an atomic scientist, was associated with the School. "History is behind you and a glorious history will be accompanied by a glorious future," Mohile stated.

Guest of honor Dr Nawaz B. Mody, professor and head of the department of civics and politics of Bombay University, outlined the genesis of the School. According to the *Parsi Prakash*, she observed, Sir Dinshaw Petit, first baronet, announced a donation of Rs 20,154 on the day of his daughter's uthamna in 1885. With furniture costing Rs 3,600, the School was set up at a total cost of Rs 23,747, the value of the land, which was gifted by the baronet from his own property, being Rs 3,600! The first principal, Piroja Banaji Boyce, who died in the 1980s at the ripe old age of 106, was also



Portraits of Ruttonbai (top), Sir Dinshaw and Lady Sakerbai Petit on the special cover

the first woman postgraduate of Bombay University, with an MA in English and French. In 1933, ex-student Dr Banoo Jehangir Jilla became the first lady dentist, she related. Reeling off a list of Parsi-established schools, Mody named the Alexandra, Bengalee, J. J. (Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy), Gamadia, Girton, Young Ladies and Panday Schools as "educational institutions which have stood the community in good stead." She announced that soon a book on the history of Parsi schools written by Dr Zenobia Dumasia would be published. "We have however to match the prevailing competition and go beyond schools to colleges," she counselled, appealing to trustees like Mehta to encourage the establishment of good, senior colleges to benefit the community.

A gahambar with a difference organized on November 14, '98 had all the catering done in-house by the principal and staff! After the jashan led by ex-parent Aspi Katila (jashans are an annual feature, mentions Commissariat), Hormusji Wadia, managing trustee of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram, distributed the Nadia Mary Homi Wadia prizes instituted in memory of his late wife for extra-curricular activities mainly in the arts field. Cama ("a noble lady, still active despite her health," remarks Commissariat) distributed the prizes for Zoroastrian Studies (ZS), which conducts regular classes at the School. Thanks to Mehta's largeheartedness, all Parsi children are given breakfast when they come to attend the ZS classes. "Our children have benefitted to such an extent from these classes that they go home and impart religious knowledge

to their parents, who are now asking for classes for themselves!" laughs the principal. The School diary marks the five Gatha days prior to the Shahenshahi New Year in August as holidays, preserving an old custom rarely observed among cosmopolitan schools.

Originally for Zoroastrians only, the School opened its portals to all communities in 1975 due to a paucity of Parsi students. "Right up to the 1960s, we had 400-500 Parsis," asserts the principal. "At one point in the 1970s we had asked for government aid, but they did not give it. We have continued to function as an unaided school." Freeships are still available to needy Zoroastrian students, while free books and uniforms are given to deserving students from other communities too. Parsi students also have the benefit of free lunch cooked in the school kitchen, with salad and banana for added nourishment. The weak ones are given extra biscuits and are toned up with tonics.

To make optimum use of its limited premises the School functions in shifts. Pre-primary and primary classes, which include boys up to standard four, are housed in the new two-storeyed building constructed in 1966 at a cost of Rs 2,00,000, of which Rs 75,000 was donated by Maneckbai D. C. Panday in memory of her husband Seth Dady Cowasji Panday. A plaque also marks a donation of Rs 51,000 by Cursetji Readymoney in memory of his wife Peroja. "We had many Parsi sethias associated with our School," observes Commissariat. The new building however has been repaired seven times in its 22 years, she discloses.

The science and computer labs are also situated in the new structure. Cramped for space, a staff room had to be dispensed with to make way for a

small computer room with its array of 12 computers, including a spanking new pentium computer with multi-media facilities donated by the Rotary Club of Bombay Central and three computers received through the good offices of prominent Congress leader Murli Deora. Corridors are cluttered with old Parsi furniture gifted by magnanimous donors, old-style sofas, cupboards, even decades-old tables and chairs which have been lovingly preserved, retaining for the School a Parsi ambience. The terrace, with its vast sweep of surrounding rooftops, plays host to neat rows of pots, with the primary children's little green fingers tending budding plants of roses, tomatoes, lady fingers, chillies and even gooseberries!

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are given equal importance with academic subjects with the School report detailing participation in inter-school elocution, quiz, drawing and painting, science and sports competitions. Yoga, karate and Indian dance are part of the School's added interests. Four girl guide companies, a bulbul flock, Interact Club and Junior Red Cross encourage social awareness. At the SSC level, the School maintains a 100 percent record, with the highest aggregate fluctuating between 88-90 percent, according to School sources. Fees are a modest Rs 150 a month in the primary, Rs 210 in the secondary and Rs 250 in the pre-primary sections. "We have all along faced a big deficit in fees, with the pre-primary section compensating somewhat, but we would really like to stand on our own feet," asserts the head of the School. Generous donors continue to offer support not only towards fees, but also for school maintenance, free books and uniforms, prizes, scholarships and other activities.

Commissariat maintains that strong educational foundations were laid by its previous principals, Piroja Banaji Boyce (from 1898-1910) whose portrait was recently unveiled in the School hall, Piroja Banaji (1911-1951), Bacha Mowdawalla ('51-'59) and Goolcher Khergamwalla ('59-'75). Commissariat herself considers Panday School her first, not her second home! She narrates that when she joined Panday School in 1947 and did her matriculation in 1951, the School did not even have dividing walls, only partitions. There were no ceiling fans, no teaching aids, hardly

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*Top: Enacting the School's history at the centenary concert
Middle and bottom: Parsi students presenting songs and skits and enjoying the gahambar lunch
(Photos: Hilla Guzder)*





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any facilities. "I feel richly rewarded that God has given me the honor and privilege to work here on the occasion of the School's centenary. It's God's grace," she says with emotion. The monies collected from the fund-raising drive have resulted in the much-needed renovations and painting of both the School buildings, while furniture replacement, upgrading of the School hall facilities, library, etc are among the pending tasks. "My dream is to build a children's playground, employ an elocution teacher and athletics coach and to have a free, remedial class of our own for children with difficulties," visualizes Commissariat. "We function within many limitations," she adds wistfully. But she believes there are "spiritual blessings" for those who serve the School sincerely. "Many of my teachers too have often observed this," she remarks.

Ex-student Khushnuma Nagwaswala, who completed her schooling last year, believes the School has transformed her. "I was a nervous, timid 12-year-old when I joined, struggling through a dark tunnel. The School in keeping with its motto 'Lead kindly light' led me through to the other end, changing me in a short span of four years from crybaby to confident citizen!"

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"Guard the spiritual boundaries"

Being orthodox may not be considered hep but it's the only route for community survival, asserts the author

Pashmina M. Contractor

Drastic times, they say, call for drastic measures. Similarly, compelling issues call for urgent expression, especially when those trying to safeguard the legacy of holy Zarathushtra, i.e. Zarathushtrianism itself, have of late come under heavy fire from the so-called liberals.

A breeze of liberalism is blowing across the globe and being liberal seems to be the 'in' thing these days. Being orthodox on religious issues is viewed as being inflexible, antisocial and what not, and certain members of our community have raised a hue and cry over the claim that the number of world Zoroastrians is drastically falling and therefore they advocate the induction of children of parents wherein one spouse is of non-Zarathushtrian origin, into the Zarathushtrian fold.

Whereas the claim itself is of a dubious nature, the solution is infantile, for anyone with some background in demography should know that when a minuscule community starts intermarrying (outside their community) in an attempt to increase their numbers (via the induction of such offspring into the minority community), it is nature's immutable law that the minority community gets absorbed in time into the majority community (i.e. the Zoroastrian community will in time get absorbed into the various surrounding communities) and not vice-versa.

Look what happened to the Red Indians of North America. Intermarrying has brought them nothing but apathy and they are no longer even a shadow of what they used to be. Now even the Jews in America are beginning to frown at intermarriages for fear of annihilation. It is wishful thinking indeed that Zarathushtrianism will survive in the face of such a situation, wherein the mother is Zoroastrian, the father is Christian, the son (who is considered Parsi) marries a Hindu girl, whose children in turn may marry a Moslem... and on and on it will continue. Realistically, where in the midst of this miscellaneous brew

do we expect Zarathushtrianism to surface? And how many generations before the Zarathushtrian strains are wiped out, physically, mentally, genetically and most importantly, spiritually?

One very common argument put forth by the liberals is "where do our scriptures tell us that Zoroastrianism cannot be followed by non-Parsis?" Indeed it can and I have always pointed out that all of humanity is free to abide by the teachings of Zarathushtra if it so wishes. But a religion is the sum total of a prophet's teachings, of long-standing customs and traditions, of written and unwritten codes of law. Also it is downright pompous for scholars to scoff at anything other than the *Gathas*, as not being the word of the Seer of Iran, i.e. our Prophet Asho Zarathushtra.

Do they truly believe that the words of the *Gathas* were all that Zarathushtra had to say? Were they the limit, the beginning and end of his revelation? Surely not. There is a wealth of wisdom and truth contained in our later Avestan literature; and the *Vendidad*, which always comes in for harsh criticism, is nothing but pure, scientific laws explained in religious terms, to suit the needs of early times, and as we all know the laws of science are eternal and immutable.

Clearly our scriptures indicate at various places the reasons why one should not cohabit with a non-Zarathushtrian — which have time and again been quoted by writers, yet the same questions are raised again. A community's right to self-preservation is misconstrued by some individuals to be a profession of hate, discord, racism, etc. How wrong they are, for one need only turn the pages of history books to see there has never been a religion more tolerant and magnanimous than Zoroastrianism. However, like other people and races of the world, we have a right to self-preservation when it does no harm to anybody, and no doomsday prophets can take away this basic right from the

Zarathushtrian community.

It is very easy for writers based in and outside India to accuse Zarathushtrians of being out of touch with the times. They who marry outside have made their choice and we have nothing against it, but they must be prepared to face its consequences. It is very childish to want to have one's cake and eat it too! The consequences are the forgoing of certain rights and privileges that are accorded only to those of full Zarathushtrian descent. I for one do condemn the practice whereby the progeny of men married outside are allowed into the fold, while the same concession is denied to the progeny of women married outside. This just goes to show how manmade changes can distort the true nature of our faith which is at once fair and undiscriminating.

As far as the dwindling numbers of the world's Zarathushtrian population is concerned... as long as there is one true couple left on earth who abides by the laws of the Zarathushtrian creed, Zarathushtrianism will never die out! For it is better that a handful of people go about their business of being true Zarathushtrians, than a world full of people being untrue, running around without their *sudreh-kusti*, smoking (desecrating the fire) and indulging in un-Zoroastrian acts.

Breeding like rats, on the other hand, is no solution to the problem either. Look at the population of India... sizable, isn't it? Then let's look around for a single Olympian gold medallist in recent times. Not one! The reason for this? Lack of infrastructure to support this homogeneous population. Look at the Parsis on the other hand. They have featured throughout as top athletes of the country... take Nari Contractor, Polly Umrigar, Diana Eduljee, Pesi Shroff, Adille Sumariwalla, Hirji Nagarwala, Cawas Billimoria, Zenia Ayrton etc. And this excellence extends to all fields and not just sport.

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farsightedness of our worthy ancestors, the Zarathushtrians have an infrastructure available to them which not only makes life easier, but affords opportunity and resources for us to shine to the fullest. With the doors of the community opened to outsiders, the Zarathushtrian trusts and other auspices would be inundated, with a multitude of people vying for its various facilities. The existing infrastructure would definitely not be able to support this kind of growing demand and it

would break down in time. Then what of those needy and less fortunate Zarathushtrians for whom these community facilities are a lifeline?

And I believe that whereas Zarathushtrians top the list in everything positive, to the best of my knowledge, no Zarathushti tops any of the negative lists. Can we not associate this with our sublime faith, our genetic make-up as well as our way of life? And one change means a hundred to follow, for once a

Zarathushtrian written or unwritten law is changed, it will not be long before the next one is, for once the ball is on the roll we will never be able to stop it.

We who have for centuries guarded the sanctity of our beloved atash behrams and agiaries, thanks to the magnani-

**A community's right
to self-preservation is
misconstrued by
some individuals to
be a profession of
hate, discord, racism**

mous laws of the land which Ahura Mazda selected as our refuge after our flight from Iran, have largely been able to do so because when a Zarathushtrian enters a fire-tem-

ple, it's clear from one's physical characteristics whether he/she is a Zarathushtrian (the same way a Chinese looks Chinese, an Italian looks Italian and a Scandinavian looks Scandinavian... nothing wrong with that!). But with the doors of the faith thrown open to converts, how could we ever guard the sanctity of our fire-temples, for then any person donning a sudreh-kusti could walk into an agiary and he'd have to be admitted.

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In order to satisfy the contentions of a few Zarathushtrians married outside, do we do away with our ancient laws — which call for the maintenance of the ultimate sanctity of our holy fires?

Talking of the sudreh-kusti, which every parent married outside the community wants for her child, it's not for the mobed to decide whether he can perform such navjotes. The sudreh-kusti has been the raiment of Mazdayasnis since the time of King Jamshid, who lived at the time of the last Ice Age, i.e. 10,000 years ago. Needless to say that this raiment may be donned only by the progeny of a Mazdayasni Zarathushtrian couple. A tradition so ancient and sublime cannot be changed to suit the whims of any person who, knowing full well the implications of his action, still chooses to embark on a certain path. How can so glorious a tradition which binds us all in purity and distinction to our majestic past be changed just like that?

It is indeed a shame that some Zarathushtrian children and adults alike, who have had the fortune to be born Zarathushti and to wear the sudreh-kusti, choose to abandon them in the name of fashion. It's appalling!

Like someone said before me, this is

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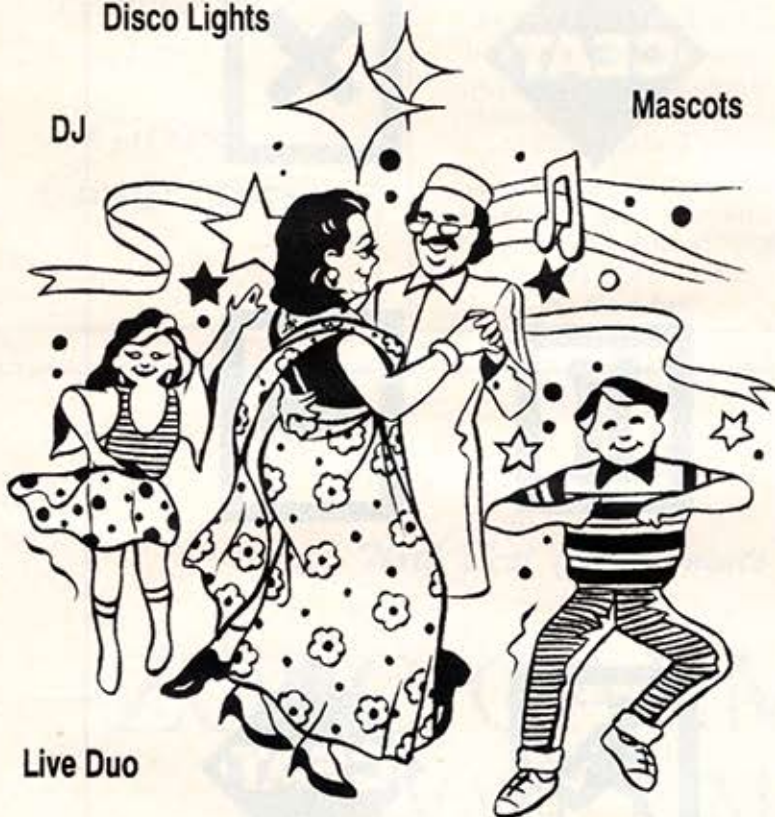
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Danny advtg.

definitely not the first generation to have felt the pangs of love and passion for members of the opposite sex from outside of the Zarathushtrian community. Our ancestors too must have felt such emotions, but they made great sacrifices for the sake of their religion. Who is to say what would have happened to the Zarathushtrian community had our forefathers given in to their passions? However, unlike them, our present-day generation feels it is their right not only to do as they will, but to bend the laws of the world's oldest and first revealed religion to suit their purpose. I am also aware that there are hundreds of young Zoroastrians the world over, who even in this day and age have sacrificed their worldly love in favor of their spiritual love, i.e. their religion. It is therefore unfair of anyone to accuse people opposed to intermarriages and conversions as being oblivious to the true meaning of love.

And to these martyrs of worldly love, I would say that you have gained a thousandfold more than that which you have lost! And so, time will tell. Marriage is anything but a bed of roses, and when all the initial passions and fireworks have subsided, it is one's reli-

continued on page 152

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Fire-temple etiquette

The author lists 20 do's and don'ts to observe when visiting fire-temples

Curset M. Patel

A certain decorum is necessary and in the fitness of things before visiting our places of worship:

1. One should bathe (preferably a head bath) before going to the atash behram or agiary and try his best, as far as possible, to then avoid touching too many extraneous things; this is more so before going to the atash behram. After traveling from one city to another it is imperative that a bath is taken. You can't appear in the presence of the Iranshah in Udvada without a bath.

2. Dress with discretion, no tight jeans or miniskirts or tight cholis. Dress in white rather than any other color, especially avoid dark ones (black, green, red, violet). White is a prime color which transmutes the sum total of evil, *asaeray tariki*, into *asaeray roshni*, the sum total of *ashoi*. Cotton is preferable to any other material. Clean and washed clothes should be worn. "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

3. The head should be covered before coming into the vicinity of the atash behram or agiary. To do so after entering the atash behram or agiary compound is undesirable. (Really a Zarathushti's head should be covered 24 hours.) What is allowed is a cotton *topi* with two layers or double layer, a *mathabana* or big scarves. A woollen knitted *topi* which has holes, handkerchiefs and scanty scarves are taboo. Hair should be completely covered.

4. Before entering the main building of the atash behram/agiary in order to go near the threshold of the holy fire, *padiyab-kusti* should be performed – meaning all the open parts of the body should be cleaned with water, dried and the *kusti* should be done. This is to purify and rearrange our own aura which has become impure in contact with the activities of the outside world and environment. When going to an atash behram it is worthwhile to do *kusti* twice, ie to

wash all the open parts of the body with downward strokes and do the *kusti*, then again wash and do the *kusti*. When going before the Iranshah this is a must. (*nahn*, a spiritual bath which cleans the pollution that accumulates from time to

be covered by socks. Whilst praying, feet (or at least one foot) should touch the ground and not be kept hanging or on the chair. Connection with the earth has to be there but through some kind of covering, like a carpet, socks, *setranji*.

Rubber shoes or gumboots should not be worn while praying as rubber/plastic are non-conductors of electricity. It hinders the bad magnetism from flowing out freely from our feet.

9. In the fire-temple (as well as at home) a special place or corner should be selected and fixed by us, and as far as possible we should pray there. Strange as it may seem, this builds up an atmosphere which is conducive to the type of work you are doing, and over a period of time a strong field is created.

10. All able persons should preferably pray standing. If this is not possible for some reason, sit in the *do-zanoo* position (ie folding the legs at the knees, keeping the feet back on the right side if male, left if female), which will not cause inconvenience to other devotees.

11. Prayers should be done softly but distinctly, not in whispers, or thought of in the mind. One should not rock or sway from side to side like a pendulum whilst praying, as the prayer vibrations get distorted. Do not show your back to the atash padshah, face him! Take care that no one passes between you and the altar, nor should you do the same. While praying, do not cross the legs or talk.

12. As our nails and fingertips send out impure vibrations, our hands should be covered by a piece of cloth or by a handkerchief, preferably white, when we say our prayers and while facing the holy fire. According to our tradition, the placing of a white handkerchief on the palm of our hand is a gesture of reverence and submission to Ahura Mazda and our fervent desire to establish a *paevand* with all spiritual beings.

13. *Rakhia* (ash) should not be misused.

...AND REMEMBER NOT TO TOUCH THE SUKHAD WITH WET HANDS... ALSO STAND AND PRAY... AND KEEP YOUR SOCKS ON... COVER YOUR NAILS WITH A HANDKERCHIEF, WIPE OFF THE RAKHIA WHEN WE LEAVE, AND...



time in our personal magnetic field, the *aipee*, should be taken.) The *sudreh* should not be inserted back into the trousers but kept out whilst praying.

5. Do not strike the *kusti* nor snap your fingers towards a fellow devotee standing nearby. The *kusti* should not be done in the room facing or near the atash padshah, or near a well. Snap your *kusti* in the northern direction.

6. Remember to loosen your shoelaces before doing your *padiyab-kusti*. Do not touch *sukhad* (sandalwood) with wet hands after *padiyab-kusti*.

7. One should not face north whilst doing the *kusti* or whilst praying, except while doing *char dishano namaskar*.

8. Care should be taken that bare feet do not touch the ground at any time (formerly agiaries/atash behrams used to have wall-to-wall carpets). Feet should

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It should be taken by the first finger near the thumb (*burjisi* finger) and applied between the eyebrows (the third eye) and nowhere else. Thus a point of contact is established with the holy fire on the altar. Please refrain from placing coins and currency notes in the receptacle of *rakhia*. It can do you no good, it only reduces its spiritual benefit. *Rakhia* should be wiped off when you leave the *agiar/atah behram*, because as it has the power to absorb good vibrations from the atmospheric field of the places of worship, it can also absorb the polluted vibrations of the outside world.

14. The sandalwood piece brought by you for the *atah padshah* should be kept in your hand in front of you, or in your shirt pocket, not in your pants or anywhere below the navel. When you do your prayers, especially the *Atah Niyaesh*, hold it in your hand as it has the ability to absorb the good vibrations. Also when the sandalwood is shown the glow of the *atah padshah*, whatever pollution it has gathered from the outside world gets wiped off to an extent. After prayers place the sandalwood in its appointed place. In an *atah behram*, it is undesirable to insist on

personally handing the sandalwood to the officiating priest who is in *baresh-noom* for attending to the holy fire.

15. Whilst bells are rung during the *boi kriya* or change of *gahs*, different people do different things. The correct and the simplest thing is to stop whatever you are doing, even praying, and stand or sit still silently and think that the attack of the black side of nature on the *padshah* gets repelled; that *dushmata*, *dusukhth*, *dusvarashta* get destroyed and *humata*, *hukhta*, *havarashta* expand and become more powerful.

16. Electric lights or fans in our *atah kadehs* are objectionable but we are faced with a fait accompli here. Electricity waves and vibrations are base and materialistic and are not at all compatible with the vibrations of manthra recitation, and tend to destroy them or nullify them. We cannot switch off the lights, as many people do not understand this point and they may get offended. Hence, for a believer the only alternative is to go and pray where there is sufficient natural light, or pray near the *divas*.

17. On *hamkaras* and festival days during rush hours, devotees should maintain patience and calm whilst offering obeisance on the *umber* (threshold) with-

out any hustle or undue hurry. While kneeling to pay obeisance, ladies should not put their handbags or purses (with their combs and cosmetics) on the threshold. In fact, they should not be carried into the inner room at all. Kissing the threshold or the inner room or the photo frame of *Paegamber Sahib* is taboo.

18. *Divas* should be prepared only of oil, water should not be mixed with them. Burning of *agarbattis* or incense sticks near the *atah kadeh* should be avoided.

19. *Khurshed*, *Meher*, *Mah Bokhtar* and *Ava Niyaeshs*, and *Ava Yasht* should not be recited in front of the *atah padshah*. At night recite the *Sarosh Baj*, *Avisruthrem Gah* and *Mah Bokhtar Niyaesh* the same way, ie not in front of the *padshah*.

20. Concentrate properly on the prayer that is being recited by you rather than prick your ears at what others are saying or focus your eyes on what others have worn. Decorum should be maintained. Remember the *atah behrams/agiaris* are not clubs or chit-chat places. If you have to talk, do it softly and in a dignified manner. Remember, you have come to pray and the spiritual king is sitting in front of you on his throne.

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In the eye of a storm

Lest the soul's equilibrium be disturbed, donating eyes after death should be discouraged, says the author

Kaikhushro N. Dastoor

Two points of view are offered here on eye donations: one from the medical angle, the other from the mystical. According to medical science, there is a high probability of the donee becoming miserable after the transplantation, because of the absence of image formation in his/her mind. As per the mystical view, the donor of the eye may have a karmic reaction, if the recipient violates the divine law as ordained by the prophets: that is, if he or she commits sins through the transplanted eye.

We now enter the third grey area, which is related to our Parsi religious traditions.

Unlike the 19th century, the 20th century has piled up enough data to suggest that not all religious and mystical traditions can be brushed aside as superstitions, or products of a primitive mind. The books of biologist Dr Lyll Watson, like *Supernature* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1974-1986), *The Romeo Error* (Coronet, 1976), and *Gifts of Unknown Things* (Coronet, 1977); of Charles Berlitz like *The Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds* (Laurel, 1975) and *Atlantis* (Fawcett-Crest, 1984); of biologist Rupert Sheldrake, like *Presence of the Past* (Times Books, Random House, 1988), and a host of others provide ample evidence that the days of laughing away religious traditions on the strength of modern science are gone. I do not elaborate on this here; it is a long subject by itself.

To return to our Parsi religious traditions, which we have for centuries adopted as a way of life, we learn that death is a very very important event for the *ruvan* (soul) passing through the earth in a physical body. There is a special place — the *dokhma* — for the disposal of the body. There are elabo-

rate ceremonies to help the departed *ruvan* in the next world. Detailed accounts are provided in our holy scriptures and Pahlavi writings about the *ruvan's* journey after death. That again,

dokhma and in its environs at the time of its construction and establishment, through certain ordained rituals. The dead body is treated almost as a temple. We kneel before it, pray before it, honor it. Why? Why such a fuss over a lifeless decaying thing?

It is revealed in our scriptures and through our traditions that the physical body, which carries the *ruvan* on earth, is not just a bag to be thrown away. It is composed of certain ultra-material elements called *anasars*. These are like subtle nuclei or centers around which the physical body is interwoven.

In modern science, the body is made up of billions of cells. Tremendous chemical activities go on within the cell every second. An average cell reproduces itself every 20 minutes. Just read how a biologist describes its working:

"A cell works like a big industry, which manufactures different products at different sites, ships them around to assembly plants, where they are

combined into half-finished or finished products, to be eventually, with or without storage in intermediate facilities, either used up in the household of that particular cell or else, extruded for export to other cells or waste disposal." This is Paul Weiss in *The Living System*, quoted in *The New Biology* by Agros and Stancu (Shambhala, 1988).

What is the force or energy behind the tremendous activities within a cell? A triangular debate has been going on in the field of modern science. It is just a machine, the 19th century said. It has some non-physical force in it, say the 'vitalists.' It has some organization arising out of a 'system' which operates in relation to the parts; no one part has the property of the whole.



is a vast subject and here we shall confine ourselves to a few facts relevant to our subject.

In our religion, the dead body is given special treatment. Sachkar is the first step when the body is bathed and clothed according to set procedures. *Avesta* prayers are continuously chanted before the body, near which a fire is kept constantly burning. Sarosh invocations are offered for the Saroshnu Patru and the *Ahunavad Gatha*, with certain preliminaries and closing ceremonies immediately before lifting up the body on its journey to the *dokhma*, is recited for the *geh sarna*. In the *dokhma*, the body is subject to three forces of nature: the sun's rays, vultures and the subtle ultra-magnetic fields established within the

The mystical science of our religion indicates that all activities of the human body, mind and consciousness arise from the subtle non-physical *anasars* that do not have a physical form. They are circuits of energy generated from certain energy centers. A cell is a physical manifestation of these *anasaric* circuits. Every living animal has these circuits or nuclei in its body. During our life on earth, cells die and grow again, but the *anasaric* essence remains interwoven in the body. When the animal dies, the physical cells die and decay, but the *anasaric* essence remains.

Our religion ordains that this essence is to be lifted from the dead body and taken with the *ruvan* to the next world. The dokhma with its three forces, sunlight, vultures and the spiritual fields, is meant to achieve this. Every organ of the dead body is connected with the *anasaric* essence, and therefore our tradition requires that the whole of the dead body with all its parts should be subjected to dokhmenashini i.e., taken to the dokhma after the due *kriyas*.

Our tradition, therefore, ordains that if a part of the body, say a foot or leg is cut out or amputated, the severed part should be subjected to the same procedure of dokhmenashini, although the amputee may remain alive and live long. Geh sarna mantras are chanted on the white cloth-covered leg, and it is taken to the dokhma.

Now, apply this to eye donations. Here, the donor is dead. He is taken to the dokhma. His *anasaric* essence is transmitted to the next world, to be delivered to the *ruvan* at the proper time. But the *anasars* attached to the eye will go with the recipient, who may live for many years. The eye *anasars* will thus be delayed, and the donor's *ruvan* will have its journey impeded.

I am aware that today our mental makeup may not be able to grasp such other-worldly narrations. Nor do we have proofs to satisfy our limited mental equipment. But the indications, if not proof, are there. *Vendidad* paragarad 8 and 19 afford some glimpses of life after death and the transmission of *anasaric*

essences of the body to the *ruvan* in the next world. The tradition regarding the disposal of an amputated part indicates strong support to the theory of *anasaric*

Mazda, Asho Zarathushtra, *Khordeh Avesta* prayers, atash padshah and, above all, *kriyakaam* (rituals for the dead), you have to take into consideration these mystical and traditional indications. There seems to be a risk, a real risk; and when risk is indicated, don't ask for rigid proof; just avoid the risk.

So, what are you doing? It is highly probable that by donating your eyes, you will create three major disturbances: disturbance in the life of the previously blind donee (recipient) of your eyes; disturbance in your own karmic cycles and reactions, if the donee commits sins through your eyes; and disturbance in the journey of your own *ruvan* in the next world.

There is one more aspect to the matter. In this most inhuman century, science has given much evil power to humans who have lost their humanity. Every invention of science has led to selfishness and violence. The scientific psyche has resulted in a warring, fiercely competitive psyche. Commercial exploitation of man by man is so rampant that even medical science has become a trading house. Doctors can transplant organs from one person to another to cure the latter. But this has developed into a big, horribly cruel trade.

Brian Freemantle in his book

Octopus has devoted a whole chapter on the terrifying activities of organ snatchers. The ex-UN Secretary-General, Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali, referred to trafficking in human organs in a conference on worldwide organized crime held at Naples in 1994. The medical boon of transplantation is in the hands of Mafia groups. In this scenario, who knows what selfish, violent and murderous games could be played on your donated eyes?

You want to be humane, to help a blind person see; that is a genuinely good feeling. But that feeling is most likely to be misused and misplaced. It is most likely to create more harm than good.

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transmissions. We may doubt, but we have no evidence that it may not be true. The question then once again is: in view of such mystical and traditional indica-

Our tradition ordains that if a part of the body is amputated, the severed part should be subjected to dokhmenashini

tions, should you take the risk?

If you don't believe in God and the next world and mysticism, if you believe that life is just a machine, it is a different matter. But with faith in Ahura

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"GUARD THE SPIRITUAL..."

continued from page 142

gion, culture, family ties, communal ties, etc that keep a couple together.

Look at the divorce rates in western countries where free love and inter-communal marriages are rampant. Love is not enough to keep people together in this day and age. Two people don't necessarily have to think alike, but the fire that burns inside each one of them should be alike so that it can last a lifetime. If not, it only results in tragedy for both the parties concerned, and more so for their children. I quote a couple of examples here... real-life ones (names are changed).

Scenario A: Parsi boy marries Sikh girl. A child is born called Noshir. Noshir looks like his father... happy family. Suddenly things go wrong, they divorce. Boy now marries a Parsi girl. Noshir stays with his mother who marries a Sikh. God only knows now what will be the fate of the poor child, whether some day he will sport a sudreh-kusti or a turban!

Scenario B: Behzad migrates to Australia, falls in love with Annalise and marries her. They have a child, Rushad, who has his navjote performed. Rushad is constantly surrounded by his mother's family and the atmosphere in the house

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is more Christian than Zarathushtrian. Rushad does not wear his sudreh-kusti and has forgotten his kusti prayers. He is anything but Zarathushtrian.

In the first case the child is lost to the faith as a result of the rift between his parents. In the second case, Behzad who tried to assimilate his non-Zarathushtrian spouse into his own faith in turn got assimilated into the wider influences surrounding him. More often than not, Zarathushtrianism is lost in inter-communal marriages in a couple of generations. We may meet people whose mother or father is Parsi, but do we ever meet a Parsi person whose grandfather (or great grandmother) was not a Parsi? We do not and this is because it is realistically never possible for Zarathushtrianism to survive in people born of un-Zarathushtrian descent. The other equally great religions of the world exert great forces on our youth and it is easier for them to succumb when one parent belongs to one of those religions.

As for the accusation leveled against orthodox Zarathushtrians by liberals who label them racist, fascist, etc, it must be remembered that we are not the ones who issue *fatwas*, or incite communal violence, or order inquisitions or mass conversions. Neither do we have

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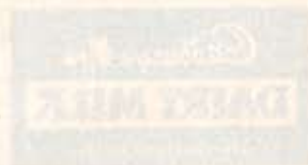
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anything against people who marry outside; it's their freedom of choice. Only we choose to guard our ancient and sublime faith in all purity as laid down by our holy prophet Zarathushtra, which is also our God-given right, which no one can deny us. So, instead of worrying about extinction like doomsday prophets, let's have faith in God's plan and do His will.

Zarathushtrians are probably the only ethnic community in the world who have no country of their own. Iran, the land of our forefathers was lost, and we have made our homes in a host of countries. To India, that has sheltered Zarathushtrians for centuries like its very own, our heartfelt gratitude.

However, the only thing that comes close to anything like a Zarathushtrian nation of our own are the boundaries of our sublime faith itself, that are open to only those of full Zarathushtrian descent. Just as people guard the physical boundaries of their countries with their lives, similarly, it is the duty of every Zarathushtrian to guard the spiritual boundaries of our ancient faith. So let us stand undaunted in our faith in Ahura Mazda, for it is He who brought us this far, and it is He who will see us make it through.

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Godiwalla at the Globe

The management of Udvada's reputed Globe Hotel passes from the Sidhwa family to Bombay caterer Neville Godiwalla

Aban Bana

In Udvada, where the most sacred Iranshah fire-temple is located, there are several good hotels and dharamshalas which cater to the needs of the visiting Zoroastrian pilgrims. Of these, the oldest and probably the best known is the Globe Hotel which is widely associated with family tradition, old-world charm, delicious food and pleasant company.

The late Mr Kaikobad H. Sidhwa was the founder of the Globe Hotel. He was a member of the exclusive Nav Kutumbi priestly family of Udvada. Although he was from a poor family he was very enterprising. In those days the fee was only one rupee per head per day in the Hotel for full boarding and lodging. There was a very big plot of land attached to the Hotel which he sold and from that amount he started building separate blocks.

At that time there was no hotel in Udvada and Mr Sidhwa was a pioneer in the concept of hospitality. For the very first time in Udvada electricity was introduced at the Hotel and later running water as well. People from far and near came to see the electric lights and were shocked by something so strange. There was also a car service for Hotel passengers to and from the railway station. The Hotel cars have now been replaced by autorickshaws which are driven by the local men.

In addition to running a first class hotel, Mr Sidhwa was very interested in the welfare of Udvada village. He was thrice elected *sarpanch* (head) of Udvada and he served for a total of 16 years. During the time of his *sarpanchship*, many ministers, governors and other dignitaries visited the village and his Hotel was occupied by the cream of Parsi society from Bombay.

Mr Sidhwa took the opportunity to make an asphalt road from the station to the village. Telephone exchange was

brought to Udvada with the help of the late Mr Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan and State Transport buses started plying through Udvada village. Even the first radio in Udvada was installed in Globe Hotel for the pleasure of the guests. Through the influence of his friends, nearly 20 wells have been dug in Udvada as well as in the surrounding villages, such was the influence and the enter-

and Zubina, added their diverse talents to the success of Globe Hotel which by now had grown to include several large and small country cottages, set in beautifully maintained gardens. The three youngest members of the Sidhwa clan, Kaikobad's great grandsons Jamshed, Rayomand and Tanishq, are still very young. They delight the hotel guests with their mischief and fun.

In the meantime great changes were taking place in the nearby towns of Vapi, Silvassa and Daman. New factories and offices were coming up and there was a need for workers. Soon the villagers of Udvada found employment in this new set-up which provided regular working hours, transport and reasonably good salaries. The Udvada hotels and dharamshalas

began to face an acute shortage of workers. This resulted in the closure of hotels Majestic and King. Globe Hotel too had to struggle in the face of mounting scarcity of servants, but the Sidhwa family forged on and continued to give quality service to all its guests.

Enter Neville Godiwalla, the very well-known star caterer from Bombay, who has had 15 years of friendly association with the Sidhwa family and Globe Hotel. Neville was able to perceive the great potential of development inherent in the Hotel and that a radical change was necessary in order to achieve maximum results. Moreover, it had always been the dream of Neville's father to run a family hotel. The time had come it seems, and by mutual agreement Neville Godiwalla took up the management of Globe Hotel.

Henceforth he will look after the entire running of the Hotel, served by his trusted workers whom he has brought with him from Bombay. The proprietorship of the Hotel will continue to remain in the hands of the Sidhwa family, but

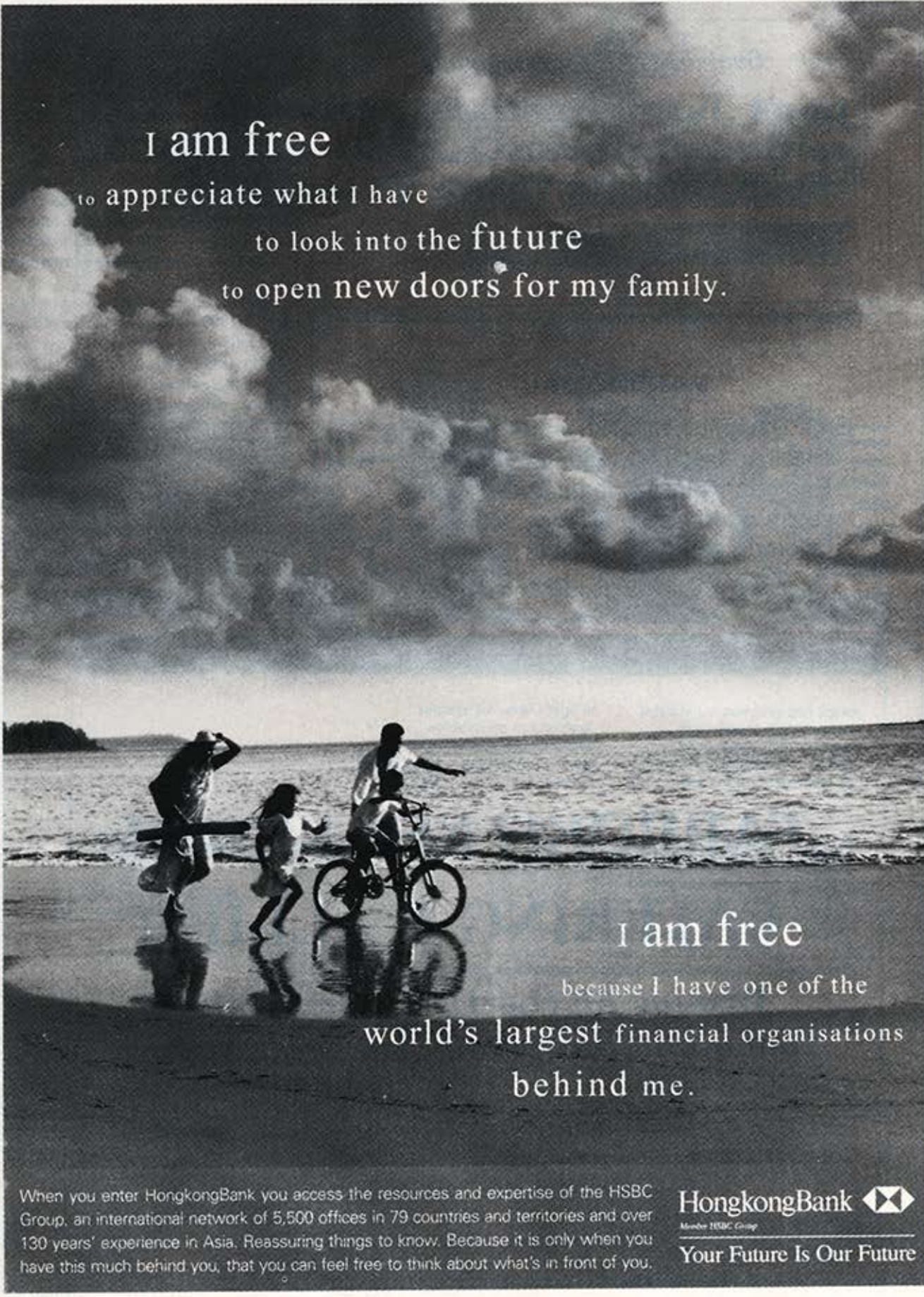


The Globe: a pioneer under transformation

prising spirit of Mr Kaikobad Sidhwa. No wonder that he was known as the uncrowned king of Udvada.

As there was no high school in Udvada, the people turned to Mr Sidhwa. With the help of Mr and Ms Taleyarkhan, Mr Sidhwa approached the late Shapoorji Pallonji who in his brother's memory donated Rs 25,000. Against this amount the Gujarat government paid the remaining sum and the high school was erected.

Kaikobad Sidhwa's son Homi, hard-working and upright in the best Zoroastrian tradition, was still studying in Bombay. In 1942 he came to Udvada to take over the running of the family Hotel. Now the rate had increased to five rupees per day and Globe Hotel continued to prosper. Homi's vibrant and highly efficient wife Bapsy joined the family business and increased their fortunes. Next came their two lively and sociable sons Peshotan and Percy who together with their lovely wives Zenobia



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Neville is free to make any number of changes in order to achieve his goal, which is to transform Globe Hotel into an elegant, professionally run, upper class hotel with an imaginative cuisine and superb rooms. It will offer good entertainment to its weekend guests, both young and old. This will coincide with the plans to proclaim Udvada as a *pavitra yatra dham* (sacred place of pilgrimage) by the government of Gujarat, and will also be an asset to the World Zoroastrian Organisation Youth Wing's program to develop Udvada.

Neville celebrated the big day on January 13, 1999 with a jashan in the office of the Hotel in the presence of many well-wishers and friends from Udvada, Bombay and elsewhere. This was followed by a most delicious festive lunch in the Hotel compound behind the new building which is still under construction.

In the living room of the Sidhwa residence, nine ladies from the priestly families of Udvada sang the beautiful *Atash nu Geet*, a traditional fire song about the atash padshah at the Iranshah. This went on for about five hours without a break.

It was indeed an important day in the history of Udvada.

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however small it may be, that
is governed by conscience,
and that nothing can be meaner
or more petty than a business,
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without honesty and
without brotherhood.*

— The First Viscount Leverhulme



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Catering to the exercise needs of children and adults, Behroze Mistry's aerobics studio combines fitness with fun

Hilla P. Guzder

All the lasses are not lissome. Tucking in that tummy, busting flab from hips and thighs, in step to "the funkier music in town" are fitness enthusiasts, clad in brightly-hued T-shirts, leotards, tights, shorts, feet shod in a variety of colorful sports shoes.

Behroze S. Mistry's Pure Energy Studio at Walkeshwar effervesces with energy. Mistry and her team of 10 qualified instructors, seven ladies and three men, take their students through aerobics, step classes, body sculpting, dance mania, flexi class and circuit training. "Aerobics is good not just for the body but for the mind as well. Exercise stimulates the 'happy hormone' endorphin which adds to health," observes Mistry. The range of scientifically designed exercises seek to improve cardio-vascular fitness, build stamina and work on individual muscle groups of the upper and lower body. Trouble spots are tackled with BATS (bottom-abdomen-thigh-stomach) combinations and PHAT (pretty hips and thighs) exercises, she explains.

A spirit of camaraderie pervades the studio and girlish giggles and chatter can be heard as one climbs the narrow but elegant spiral steps in red and cream granite that lead to the top floor of an old building. Niches in the wall display a variety of sports goods, as well as pictures of lovely homes and complexes built by Shapoorji Pallonji and Company (Private) Limited, the construction specialists into whose family Mistry is married. "My husband Shapoor has been very supportive," beams the slim and vivacious mother of six-year-old Pallon and five-year-old Tanya.

The studio itself, small but well-designed and utilized, has big, round port windows enlivened with stained glass through which the light comes streaming in. The aerobics studio is air-conditioned, with a sprung wooden floor and full front glass in which the students can see themselves. No outside footwear is allowed into the room; pupils change

into shoes kept exclusively for exercise.

"Training concepts have changed," comments Mistry. "No longer are 1,000 kicks, 100 leg lifts the 'in' thing. Chorus-verse choreography has been replaced by the 'add on' method. We start with a gentle approach, which can give as good a workout, and add on progressively. Like a pyramid, we begin on a broad base and work our way up." Students never go from here with a knee or back problem, she assures. If they join with a specific injury, "we tell them to take an X-ray, consult a doctor and then come back. We are also very careful about their footwear, as incorrect footwear can cause problems." Specific problems have tailor-made remedies. "I find that most women complain of pain in the shins, besides lower back and knee difficulties," Mistry points out. "For that we recommend high intensity but low impact classes where the foot strikes the sprung floor with low impact, the emphasis being on strong, wide movements of the arms." Of the almost 200 students of all age-groups attending the various classes, most are ladies but "we have three men in the seven a.m. class, and two have come after by-pass surgery," Mistry notes with pride. The doctor's only instruction — stop immediately you feel any strain. Students come in three times a week and progress from beginner to intermediate and advanced levels. Three-month courses cost Rs 2,600 and many opt to continue. There is no registration fee.

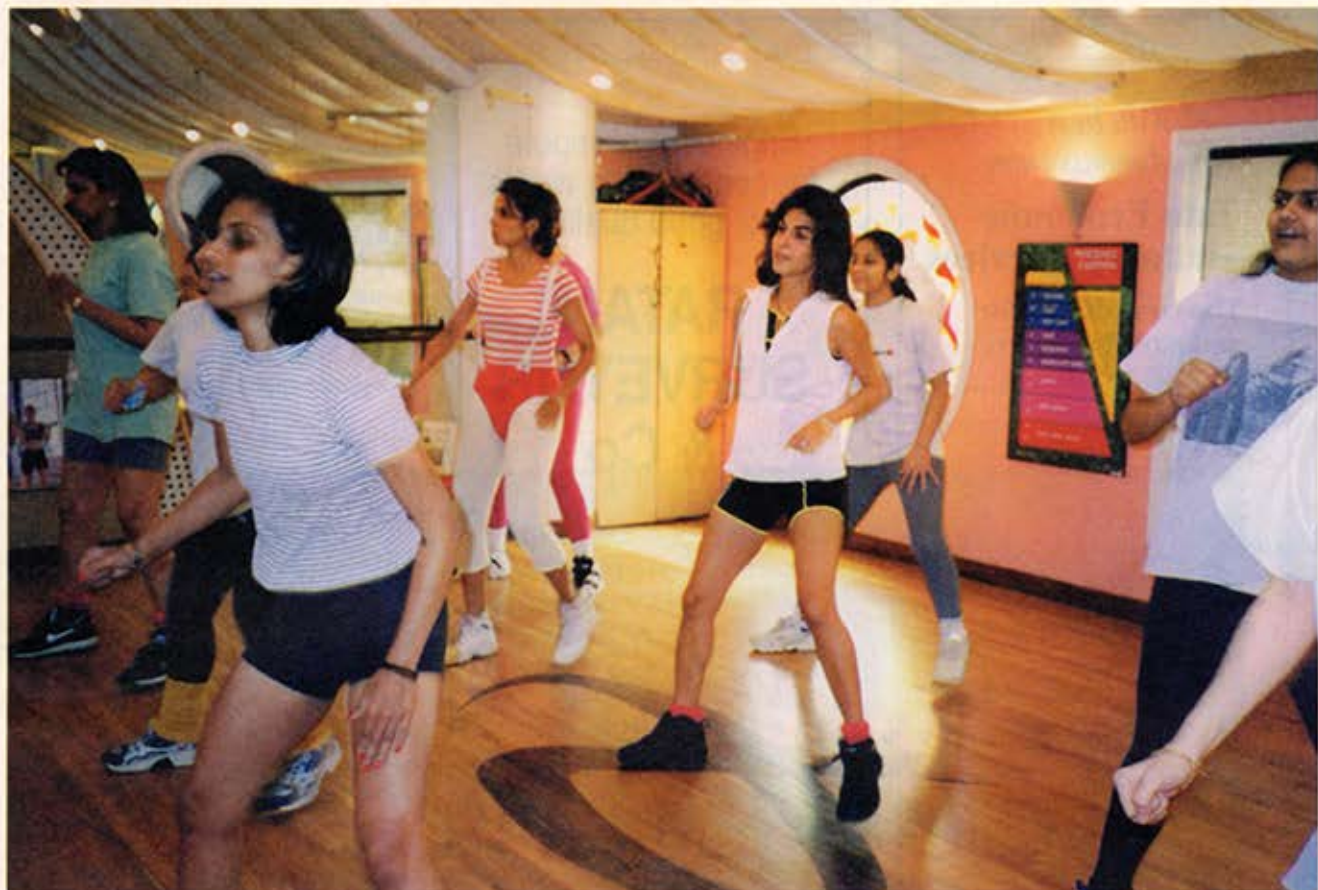
Of her Parsi instructors, Sammy Colabawala, with 16 years' experience in the field, takes body conditioning and cross training classes, guiding new students on how to do exercises correctly. Colabawala lays emphasis on form, posture and control in beginner and advanced courses and must be "one of the kindest instructors," smiles Mistry. Ava Verma takes body conditioning classes which involve muscle-toning with no cardio-activity (i.e. no aerobics, no step). Earlier, Verma used to take pre-natal

exercises for pregnant patients at gynecologist Dr Rusi Soonawalla's clinic, Mistry details. Teaching aerobics is instructor Najoo Sohoni's "total passion" which she has been doing for almost a decade, in addition to giving French tuitions to children! Tazeen Walia with "her most beautiful smile" takes beginners' classes. Nike New Body, yoga and tai chi are included in flexi classes, with each instructor being responsible for his/her own batch of students, including administration.

The studio also offers a Personal Training Program (PTP) with students working with a personal trainer. Treadmills placed in the passage take just two people at a time and a small gym adjacent offers a variety of barbells, dumbbells, a bench press and a lat pull-down machine. "We also had a 'spinning' program with an imported bike, but this has been temporarily suspended due to constraints of space," Mistry relates, promising that it will soon be reintroduced. All other gym equipment is fully locally made.

Afternoons at the studio mean fun time for kids, with Banoo Jasubhoy (Mistry's partner in FitKid) taking kids under 12 through fun activities with bean bags, hoola hoops, rope ladders, a small trampoline, etc. FitKid, an organization owned by the Rosemary Conley group as per their brochure, encourages children to enjoy non-competitive exercise at a very young age, reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, brittle bones and back trouble in adulthood. Jasubhoy, a FitKid coach who has trained abroad, promotes the philosophy of non-competitive fun, which means that "everyone is a winner at FitKid!"

In the evenings, Biokinetix, a fitness academy led by Sunil Kudva, conducts box-a-cise, kick-boxing, circuit training classes patronized mostly by males, informs Mistry. The Biokinetix total fitness program, declares their publicity leaflet, is for those "fit or fat... in shape or out..." who want a more balanced



Clockwise from top: Mistry (center and page center) amidst instructors and students; exterior and interior view of Studio (Photos: Hilla P. Guzder); a step class

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lifestyle, or are training for a sports event, or recovering from an illness or just seeking to lose a few pounds.

Mistry herself teaches three days a week — muscle toning (mainly for those above 30 years) and high energy cross training which involves step, aerobics as well as muscle toning. "I have been very fond of movement and dance right from my early years," she reveals. After schooling at Queen Mary's, Mistry did her BA from St Xavier's College. "I was no shining sports star in school or college," she quips. "I just liked running, that's all." Daughter of Arnavaaz and solicitor Rusi Sethna, Mistry did law for two years, then gave it up. "Law was not my cup of tea," she smiles. She joined Talwalkar's gymnasium, later teaching at the same gym for four years and then at Flex Appeal, another gym at Marine Drive, finally branching out on her own by setting up Pure Energy in August '97.

Confident about her business venture, Mistry says she believes in God, in herself and in hard work. "People come to you if you are a good teacher and can communicate effectively." Lending "100 percent, no, it's 125 percent" support are members of the family. Two years ago, she went to London to keep up with

continued on page 170

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Of Dossabhai, Duke's and Devka

Devka and Dossabhai Oliaji's Duke's Hotel
are synonymous for the community

Arnavaz S. Mama

Hearty. It's the word that best describes Dossabhai Oliaji and his Duke's Hotel -- the nine squat cottages hugging the strip of land between the road and the Devka beach. From the genial welcome to the comfortable large beds to the ample finger-licking food, an earthy, old-fashioned charm emanates to envelop the guest in a culture of substance rather than of style.

On Jamshedi Navroze 1999 Duke's will celebrate 63 years of existence, much of the time as the sole hostelry in the little village of Devka. A community bastion, it has served as a source of refreshments to the Zoroastrian households in the bungalows in the vicinity and as a watering hole to which devout Parsis converged for some spirits and toddy and Oliaji's delectable cuisine after offering obeisance to the Iranshah in alcohol-arid Gujarat.

The Devka Parsi Colony was developed as a cluster of independent cottages by Dr Jehangir Dhunbhoora who owned the land, recalls Oliaji. Beginning 1920, Dhunbhoora is said to have engaged Dossabhai's father Nariman as a contractor to oversee the job and in acknowledgment of Nariman's service Dhunbhoora "gave (him) this plot of land and told him to open a dharamshala and make it self-supporting," says Dossabhai. Accordingly Nariman built a four-room cottage -- Kuver Baug -- which became functional on March 21, 1936.

It took just Re 1.8 annas (today's one rupee 50 paise) per day for a person to live at Duke's up to 1939. The price included full board -- three meals a day plus morning and evening tea -- with sweet toddy to wash it down! There was a slight increase in price during the years of World War II. And then, when the Portuguese colonies were "liberated" (on December 16, 1961) the Duke's tariff jumped to three or four rupees,

says the burly hotelier.

Dossabhai Oliaji says he took charge in 1962 and thereafter gradually added several small cottages, raising the available space to 18 rooms, with a capacity to accommodate 72 individuals, all rooms having attached bath and toilet. Buckets of steaming hot bath water are provided from the coal-fired boilers in the compound. Oliaji's tariff rates today amount to Rs 350 per head per day which includes all meals with three dishes per meal "and more, if anyone wants." In contrast, the big hotels that have sprouted in the vicinity since 1986 charge Rs 800-900 for double rooms and Rs 550 to 600 for single rooms without meals or even bed tea, for all of which the guest needs to patronize its restaurants, says Oliaji. Of course, they offer A/c, TV and telephones in the rooms and do not enjoy the privilege of owning the land as does Oliaji. Their very presence nonetheless has created "a big problem with labor" and other sources of supply.

Though his original, strictly Parsi, clientele is now down to 60 percent, the other 40 being cosmopolitan -- and he is anticipating a switch in the ratio in the not-too-distant future -- long years of seeing the community relaxing under his aegis has given Oliaji vantage and a sense of realism touched with irony. His conversation with *Parsiana* after the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India on November 22, 1998 proceeded in the normal amalgam of English and Gujarati which constitutes the Parsi patois.

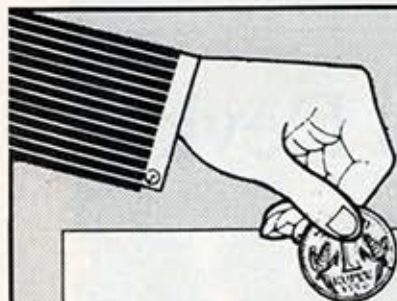
Oliaji feels that the community is caught in a welter of fripperies: fashions come and go: "*Kon bhané? Kon ghari ghari kusti karé* (What's the point in praying? In frequently untying and retying the kusti)?" he mimics sarcastically. "Our mother tongue is Gujarati but everyone has forgotten the language"

and even simple accounts, pulling out the calculator for the most basic maths, he notes with some asperity.

"We are very microscopic (in number). How can we challenge others?" Oliaji addresses the basic community insecurity, especially in rural Gujarat. Acknowledging the diminishing community numbers, Oliaji finds the constant complaints about lack of accommodation in Bombay despite "so many bays, colonies and private properties," somewhat ungrateful. "Thank God the community is getting less (or) in five years they'll be on the footpath," he notes with grim humor. He attributes this and several other problems to the downfall of the joint family. "Previously everyone remained together. We lost unity after the Second World War... The children are not getting training from their family elders. They have to live and grow up with outsiders because of atomic families... (Though) our income sources are very limited, girls (in Bombay) have become used to luxury," he says. Boys in the mofussil are unable to find Parsi wives because even if the girl is initially agreeable to settle out of Bombay, some trouble-making friend will say, "*Ta ka junglema jayech?*" Finish *thai gai vaat* (Why are you going into the jungle? And there ends the matter)."

Oliaji and his wife Daulat have overcome the atomic family syndrome by integrating their own family so that their son Shapur and daughter-in-law Freney (a Bombay lass) are very much a part of the "crew" running Duke's. To help with the large turnout for Sanjan Day and the Federation meet, even their grandsons Nariman and Hormuzd had been conscripted to help serve the guests.

It's not only the present youths who attract Oliaji's ire. Many anjumans/trusts with large funds "are not looking after their property properly... Disagree-



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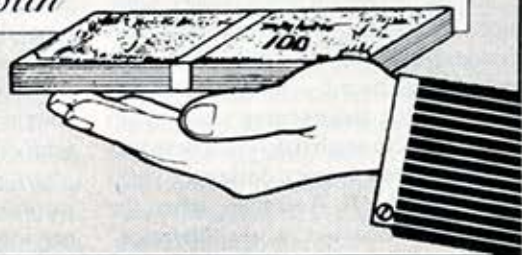
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From left: Hormuzd and Freny Oliaji, Maneck Toddywalla, Dossabhai and Shapur Oliaji

Photos: Amavaz S. Mama

ment between trustees leads to the property being neglected." Nor do all trustees have the kind of integrity that carries them beyond temptation, he avers. In various parts of Gujarat there are "no Parsis and no mobeds but (they) didn't let the Doongaji fire move (from Bharuch to the Godrej Baug agiary in Bombay)," he cites the example. It is his belief that the transfer of Doongaji funds may have had something to do with the resistance.

Acceding that the new generation of mobeds are being helped, Oliaji believes nonetheless that the quality of the professional priests is declining. "There are only 16 or 17 mobeds, mostly in Bombay, who are capable of performing ceremonies like the vendidad, nirangdin,

fareshta, etc. In Udvada, where there is need, there are no mobeds to carry out these ceremonies. Eighty percent of mobeds are in Bombay. (The rest are) in Navsari, Surat, Udvada. In the villages there may or may not be any." Striking a quaint analogy Oliaji says, "The mobed community is like an artificial bulb. It turns in the direction of money!" He is unhappy about their "limited power of appreciation" and that "the panthakies are not (sufficiently) encouraging young mobeds." According to Oliaji, of the Rs 40-45 per hour charged for prayers at Bombay's doongerwadi, the mobed gets about Rs 25 per hour.

Oliaji believes there is more denudation of the Devka beach than at Udvada, imputing the breaches to coastal weather.

"In cyclonic weather the ingress will be greater," he notes matter-of-factly. He is unperturbed by fears of the sea damaging the Iranshah. "Iranshah is there to save the community. How can you save Iranshah?" asks the devout Zoroastrian. Acknowledging the work of the late politician-diplomat Homi Taleyarkhan, Oliaji asserts, "Taleyarkhan did a lot for Udvada. He had strong influence with the Gujarat government." He recommends that making a good road there would help Parsis and non-Parsis alike and maintain the esteem of the Zoroastrian community among other communities. As for restoring Udvada to its former glory, "Aapré khotta sapna joi rahyach (we are chasing a mirage)..."

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STIMULATING HAPPY HORMONES *continued from page 164*

new trends, attending the London Central YMCA and Fit to Perform courses involving "a bit of a gym situation" with dance and exercise. "In Bombay, we have organized a hip hop workshop for instructors with Liam Salter, a French hip hop instructor, and a Lambada workshop with Sunil Kudva. Dietitian Aruna Joglekar used to come to talk to students," Mistry discloses. Every Wednesday is salad day, when low fat salad dressings, dahi dressings, etc are available. Kavita Mukhi's low calorie snacks and soya-based products are sold at the gym. "We are not however qualified nutritionists," she candidly admits.

Fond as they are of food, Parsis are now beginning to realize the value of exercise, she asserts, with one Parsi lady joining the class when she was almost 60! "Though of course I am proud to be a Parsi, I respect all religions," specifies the liberal who, like many members of her community, loves music and animals, particularly stray dogs!

"I have a passion to do something creative," she bubbles. "I love teaching. Getting into shape is what people want to do for themselves, because it makes them look good, feel good and stay healthy."



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Renu's rewarding roles

Versatile thespian Renu Setna who has performed at London's West End brought his stage production of *The Prophet* to India

Shernaaz Engineer

The London-based actor, Renu Setna, was in Bombay recently, and it was heartening to meet someone as accomplished and understated. These days, lesser talents pump the publicity machine and garner great hype for themselves. Setna, despite his enviable track record, is strangely self-effacing.

Our interview was fixed at the behest of his friend, the theater actress and director, Mahabano Mody-Kotwal, who was determinedly voluble in her admiration of him. The two were co-actors in the film adaptation of Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, and subsequently did a play in London together. It was she who spearheaded the India tour for his celebrated one-man production of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, late last year. It was a resounding success, and the shows sold out.

Setna was typically embarrassed when he learnt that tales of his triumph were being told. He felt happier brushing the brouhaha aside and reminiscing about his childhood in pre-Independence Pakistan instead.

"I was born in Karachi, and being pro-British, my father decided in 1950 to move to England. He asked me if I'd like to go along. I thought, why not? Having spent the last 49 years there, I have no regrets. There is a quality about England that is hard to define. You can live your sort of life there," he said.

In 1960, he decided he wanted to be a professional actor and went to drama school. Earlier, he had tried his luck on the amateur circuit and the response was warming. "Mind you, we're talking of the days when the British media used only British actors even for Asian parts. I entered that scenario. I joined an amateur theater company and found I was doing extremely well. There was no prejudice. I was offered lead roles in many plays, and the local Press gave me good articles. One day, I received a note

in the greenroom. On it was scrawled: 'Meet me at the pub.' I had no idea who'd written it, but went anyway! It turned out to be Denys Blakelock, the famous actor, teacher, director and coach. He was an important man in theater back then and told me, 'Why don't you become a professional actor?' Until then, I was only doing amateur



Setna: rigorous haul to fame

Photo: Trevor Page

theater. This meant I did a job during the day, and theater after that. Going professional meant taking the plunge by quitting my full-time employment. I didn't know if I had it in me. Blakelock said, 'Until you try it, how will you know.' That made sense."

So Setna applied to the Royal Academy of Drama and Arts (RADA), the premier drama school, and set himself a very high standard. "I told myself that only if I got a scholarship would I go, and what do you know, I got one! Those days RADA was attended by the progeny of the rich and famous. During this time, my father had passed away and my mother was skeptical (about my) leaving my job (I had very good prospects) in order to become an actor. But she was gracious and said, 'If this is what you want to do, stick with it.'"

The first few years were tough. Then, slowly, doors opened. "Today I'd call myself a nice, solid working actor. I get

job after job. Not all of them are great parts, many are bread-and-butter jobs," he smiled.

It has been a rewarding, if rigorous, haul to fame. He was doing a poetry reading once when a director came and offered him a lead part in his next play. The play envisaged the main actors standing completely naked on stage throughout. Setna was horrified. "With my sort of background and upbringing, the very thought was frightening. The play was Athol Fugard's *Statements*, a very strong indictment of apartheid. I turned it down initially. Then I rolled up my sleeves and read the script again. It was outstanding. It was the harshest condemnation of apartheid by a white man. I was opposed to apartheid myself, and thought: 'Am I going to shy away from a public protest against inhumanity for the sake of my vanity?' I decided to do the play, after all, and it was enormously successful."

Thereafter, Nigel Williams, a well-known playwright, was commissioned to write a play for Setna called *Trial Run*. As a mark of honor, the title character was called Renu. Renu Setna had arrived.

I was curious how he got his first name. Charming, he supplied the details: "The night I was born, it was extremely rainy. Also, a Lord Rainey was Admiral of the English fleet then, and my parents ended up naming me Rainey. I was uncomfortable with the name, so I changed it to Rainoo. But on my school certificate, it finally became Renu. I am told it's a name largely belonging to Hindu girls, but I like its uniqueness."

Hold on! There's another tale. He spells his surname distinctively too. It's 'Setna,' and he gets paranoid if it is misspelt! He is known not to appear on stage for a performance if the publicity flyers haven't spelt it correctly. "My family has always spelt it this way, and it's special for me," he reasoned.

There are other things that are special. His varied parts played in hugely popular plays at West End are among the highlights of his career. One such, G. B. Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, gave him the opportunity of working alongside the Hollywood icon Ingrid Bergman. It was a professional acquaintance that grew into a very affectionate personal alliance, and Setna turned misty-eyed at its recollection. "She was a wonderful human being and a great actress. She was in her mid-fifties then, and could still fill a theater with her charisma. When the play opened in Brighton, she had a very bad knee. So bad, she could hardly walk. But what a performance she gave despite it. She was the most unstarry actress I have ever met. Every Friday night, right through the duration of the play, she would invite the entire cast to her suite for a drink. We (were) doing eight performances a week, and this was a wonderful way to get together and relax."

"One day I hosted a lunch at my house, and out of courtesy invited her. I was touched that she accepted and arrived with a huge bunch of flowers for my mother. My mother was over the moon. After the play was over, we went our ways, but still stayed in touch. She

would drop me postcards from all over the world. And every time she was in London, she would ring me up and invite me for tea. She was so considerate and thoughtful. Without meaning to belittle myself, I have to concede that I was a nobody. Yet she showed me such kindness by reciprocating my fondness for her."

There were a few moments of silence as Setna felt his throat catch. The trip down memory lane had its emotional moments. But he was happy to exult over the good times. Apart from his extensive and much acclaimed work on stage — including his two one-man adaptations of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* (which he brought to India), and Mathew Arnold's *Rustom and Sohrab* — he does considerable work on British television. "I have been in scores of sitcoms that require caricature-type Indian parts, but I have never compromised on the dignity of the individual I am playing. I never make my character appear foolish. I hope I have never in any way demeaned Asians by my portrayals," he earnestly said.

Today, Setna feels there is a lot more scope for Indian actors. "People are much more open-minded, prejudices are dying out, and integrated casting is common."

Yet, having said that, he confessed that good film parts still rarely come to Asian actors. They prefer to use white players even for colored characters. He cites an instance: "I used to play Godbole in the theater version of *A Passage to India* and it was always well received. But when David Lean thought of doing the film, he cast Sir Alec Guinness as Godbole. He didn't take an Asian actor."

There are other challenges, for Asians in general and Parsis in particular, of living in a foreign land. Setna, who has stayed single, revealed that the factionalism within the Zoroastrian community in England is unnerving. "I don't go to Zoroastrian House very often because I find the fighting genuinely unpleasant, and I don't want to be part of it. But I have a lot of Parsi friends and whenever I feel like a good dhansak, I get myself invited over. More and more, though, the community is getting westernized, which I suppose is only natural. The ladies seldom wear saris even to Parsi functions nowadays. Which reminds me, I must get a new dagli done while I'm here. I'll take it back and wear it in London," he beamed.

No matter where a bawaji goes, irrespective of what he does, some things seldom change.

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ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 54b

tions. Under 12s will only be permitted to attend the banquet, notes the handout. More information will be available with the organizers.

Apart from advertisements in its program brochure, the organizers are seeking donations. Donation cheques in US dollars with a footnote "2nd IA CONF-DONATION" may be forwarded to Jungalwala, 53 Firecut Lane, Sudbury, MA 01776, USA. Amounts higher than US \$ 100 will be acknowledged in the brochure. Donation categories also include co-sponsors (\$ 5,000+), patrons (\$ 2,500+), benefactors (\$ 1,000+) and donors (up to \$ 1,000).

The First IAC had explored the gamut of religious viewpoints but according to a report in the *FEZANA Journal*, "there was a refreshing lack of anger and bitterness... heated discussion, but no in-temperate behavior."

Patel at DAWN

General manager, circulation, for the DAWN group of newspapers in Pakistan since 1992 Niloufer Patel has been on the cutting edge of the publications in a highly competitive field, informs an article in *What's On*, the newsletter of the

Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal. She not only successfully implemented the highest number of price hikes in DAWN's history, but supervised the establishment of a computerized delivery address base in Lahore to prepare for the launch of the publication's Lahore edition in 1996. To promote circulation she worked on the DAWN readership profile series, organized a 'DAWN management game' for the corporate sector and launched *Images*, a film and entertainment magazine that has proved to be a circulation booster for Sunday editions. She has been responsible for coordinating the editorial, design and production departments and for completely redesigning *Young World*, the children's magazine, with a consequent spurt in sales.

The 38-year-old who successfully juggles marriage, a son and a career that requires her to regularly liaise with institutional customers, industry leaders and government officials apart from direct national and international subscribers was educated at the Mama School, graduated in commerce with a gold medal and majored in management and finance with special emphasis on personnel management and managerial policy at the MBA level with a silver medal, informs

What's On.

Joining *Dawn* as a marketing and finance research officer, she had initiated and formulated a computerized system of delivery addresses in Karachi to counter a hawker strike in 1986. In 1991 she prepared *Dawn* to successfully face the competition of a new English daily, monitoring the circulation of the group and that of its competitors.

Tabak stands tall

Educationist Marukh Tabak was honored by the City of Toronto with its 1998 Award for Race Solutions and Harmony, informs the bilingual newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. Tabak's work with East Scarborough Boys Club, her volunteer work with the elderly in her area, her ideas and work with the curriculum at the Scarborough High School where she is vice president and her dedication to her students which prompts her own continuous course of self-improvement were cited by the newsletter as the factors leading to her inclusion among the select few across the Greater Toronto Area who received the award from its mayor Mel Lastman.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama



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"The great spirit of giving"

The Parsis in Western India 1818 to 1920
provides the cue for soul searching on democracy

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Those who have integrity and character to make a good contribution to political life but have chosen to remain out are guilty of inaction. If a political disaster happens it will be not enough to blame only those who are in politics but also those who should be in politics."

Governor of Maharashtra Dr P. C. Alexander was voicing his misgivings on the alienation of intellectuals from India's political life. The contrast between the past and the present was particularly glaring as Alexander released *The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920* edited by Dr Nawaz Mody, Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta professor and head of Bombay University's department of civics and politics at the University Convocation Hall on February 9, 1999.

The book is a compilation of research papers presented on the subject of the Parsis' contribution to the development of western India at a seminar organized by the Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations Committee (Sir PMBACC) and hosted by the University in February 1997.

The seminar had examined the role of the Parsis in four parts – in the national movement and in nation building; in urban development, trade and industry; the contribution to Indian literature and linguistics; their role in the film industry, theater and music. The 13 papers presented had been flagged off by the inaugural contribution of eminent Gandhian Dr Usha Mehta and ended with a valedictory address by reputed economist Dr Freddie Mehta.

The seed of the seminar had been planted by research scholar Dr Y. D. Phadke and Govind Talvarkar, former editor of the *Maharashtra Times*, when they asked Mody why a small commu-

nity like the Parsis was able to contribute so much in diverse fields. It germinated in the two-day seminar organized under the auspices of the Gulestan and Rustom Billimoria Charity Trust whose five lakh rupee donation, thanks to its



Mehta, Deshmukh, Alexander, Guzder and Mody: launching *The Parsis*

Photo: Hoshi Patel

trustee Ketu Mehta, has resulted in ongoing intellectual enquiry.

The function marking the release of the compilation, largely attended by eminent academicians and community stalwarts, had been specially held on the birth anniversary of the late politician-diplomat and vice-chairman of the Sir PMBACC, Homi Taleyarkhan, to whom the book is dedicated and whom University vice chancellor Dr Snehalata Deshmukh extolled as "a man with vision, a cultured, wise personality closely associated with the University who always made constructive suggestions. I miss his smiling, reassuring face," she noted. Her sentiment was buttressed by the Governor who referred to him as "one of my closest friends," remarking that Taleyarkhan joined as a freedom fighter when Mahatma Gandhi "sent out a message that he wanted good, honest men."

Recalling Taleyarkhan's "unblem-

ished record of service, an image of integrity," Alexander asked, "Why is it that politics has ceased to attract good and decent men now? Everywhere (that) democracy prevails you find the cream of society entering politics... offering to

be legislative members, ministers, at sacrifice to personal income, using the political arena as their main field of activity." Sadly, he noted, in our country in the last two decades, "the sophisticated, the educated, have preferred to remain on the sidelines. (We) have refused to soil our hands with the filth of political life." Criticizing the indifference of "intellectuals as armchair critics," Alexander quoted Sarah Perkins' rebuke

to society on its inertia in the face of environmental degradation, as equally applicable to the devaluation of public life: "Our numbness, our silence, our lack of outrage could mean that we could end up as the only species to monitor our own extinction (because we) hadn't the grit and courage to stop it happening." Complacency can lead to catastrophe – something most unexpected can happen," added Alexander.

He enumerated the faults in the current system: the enormous size of the electorate of around 1,000 million electing 550 parliamentary representatives where "anyone who wants to get elected needs the support of two million or more. But it is the duty of intellectuals to devise some method so that parliamentary elections are held differently. To spend several million rupees is common. Election time is collection time for some people. But it is for us, educated people, to devise a system so that those who have difficulty can enter."

The unruly scenes in most legislatures was off-putting, conceded the Governor. "People rush in to stage protest

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L to R 1st row: Dr Bakhtawar JamaspAsa, Jamsheed Kanga, Nani Palkhivala; 2nd row: Delara and Rustum Jejeebhoy, Dastur Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa and Silloo Kavarana; Mehta and Godrej

(Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama)

Below: Nawaz Mody and Homai Modi: chronicling the past (Photo: Hoshi Patel)

rather than state their view. But (it is) our responsibility to find a way out, create conventions, standards which are difficult to break." Noting that "accountability has been distorted, diluted, destroyed," Alexander recalled his years as a bureaucrat when he "used to be in jitters until the debates on my ministry were over... Not today, not any more, since they know there will not even be a debate on ministry grants." Vehemently he urged, "Devise a system so that it works in the required manner."

The third disastrous development Alexander enumerated was the defection of the elected representatives, "the *ayarams* and the *gayarams* with their monkey habit of jumping from one political party to another." With concern amounting to shame Alexander noted that his thorough research on floor crossings in the other democracies of the world revealed only two cases in an entire decade! Addressing his appeal to the audience – "almost all persons at a function like this belong to the intellectual class" – Alexander urged people not to wait until "things happen that we feel sorry that we allowed to happen."

The Governor complimented Mody on her research into the life of Mme Bhikhaji Cama whom he admired. He

was particularly pleased at Deshmukh's earlier announcement that a new university women's hostel at Kalina is to be named in memory of Cama. Happy to receive a cheque of Rs 10 lakhs from Bombay Parsi Punchayet president and incoming vice chairman of Sir PMBACC Jamshed Guzder, Alexander noted his desire to be present when the new Pheroze Shah Mehta Bhavan at Kalina is completed, registering his intent to inaugurate it.

Simultaneously he urged Mody to proceed with a supplementary volume to the present work, analyzing the great contribution of the Parsi community to India's social life from 1920 to 2000. "It

is absolutely necessary that Tata, Godrej and other great champions of democracy" be documented. He wanted to see included the contributions of the great Parsi lawyers – "top names in the world of law (who) will not be forgotten while the rule of law exists" – surgeons and physicians. Addressing Mody with mock stern-

ness he said, "Immediately start on this new project. By the time we inaugurate Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta Bhavan be ready with both. I will still be chancellor and have the right to ask you."

Noting that the present work refers to the great intellectual contributions of the Parsis, Alexander said, "But if the community had only contributed to intellectual life, others could have said, 'We too have names like that.' But the great spirit of giving, the great capacity for social service, what could have given them this unique motivation? Some communities have made more money than you have but they have not had the capacity to give away to great causes."

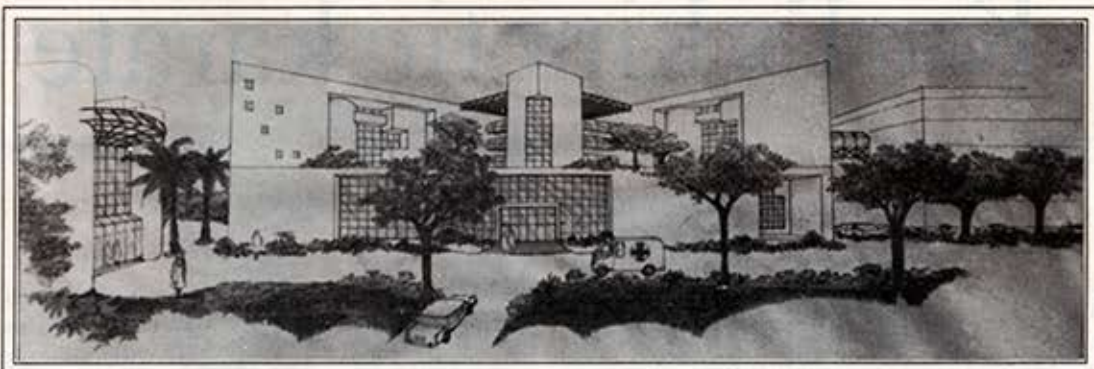
He found his answer in the teachings of Zarathushtra, quoting principles from the *Gathas* – "We grow by giving, not by acquisitive greed; we are trustees of what we possess; wealth is only a sense of well-being which is enhanced by the participation of the majority; if you wish to be happy, make others happy – these simple truths have become a fetish for the community. Keep up this tradition and the Parsis will never die... Your numbers may decline but your tradition will keep you together and hold your respect... intact."

The function which had been sponsored by the F. N. Davar Trust had begun with the congregation standing in a two-minute silent remembrance of Taleqarkhan, followed by an invocation by Dastur Dr Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa beseeching the fellowship of good men and women for the support and welfare of all living things. Environmentalist Sohrab Godrej, head of the House of Godrej, was felicitated with a floral tribute on his being awarded the Padma Bhushan. The day's compere, Homai Modi announced a donation of Rs 25 lakhs from noted jurist Nani Palkhivala, who was present in the audience, towards the construction of Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta Bhavan where noted architect I. M. Kadri has provided his service gratis. Former sheriff Jehangir Nicholson ended a well-worded vote of thanks with a promise – a "humble donation" of Rs 11 lakhs for the Bhavan, citing the advice of his father, an illustrious member of Bombay's cotton exchange: "Never forget to give and do not take what does not belong to you."

Ever appreciative of Parsi contributions to the welfare of the nation, Dr Usha Mehta reiterated what she had suggested at the start of the seminar: "If I am given a chance to rename Bombay, I'd say Parsi Puram or Parsi Nagri!"



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Karl's kinetic karate

Senior karateist Karl Naoroji has won Maharashtra's top sports honor

Hilla P. Guzder

"Karate is not a glamor sport. Call it a sport or a tradition, a martial art or a self-discipline, a lot of aspects go into the learning and teaching of karate," states Karl Naoroji, national champion and winner of the Shiv Chhatrapati Award for '95-'96 for outstanding achievements in the field of karate. The Maharashtra governor, Dr P. C. Alexander, presented Naoroji the state's highest sports honor in the form of a trophy, citation and Rs 25,000 at a function in Nagpur on September 14, 1998.

Specializing in the Shotokan style, the six-foot tall Naoroji is the current All India Karate Federation's heavy-weight national champion in the 70-75 kg category, retaining his title for the second consecutive national tournament. "About 20-25 states participate and getting into the finals is itself an achievement," comments Naoroji.

A fourth degree black belt from the All India Karate Federation and a third degree black belt from the Japan Karate Association of India (JKAI), 33-year-old Naoroji is himself a qualified international judge/examiner/instructor of the JKAI. Having represented India at international tournaments in Japan, the Philippines and Australia, Naoroji explains that not all national champions are selected to represent India. "Because we do not get the opportunity to train abroad, we do not do well internationally. If a karateka could train say in Japan for even a month or two, our standard would be closer to international levels." Finding funds to train abroad is a major constraint. Indian sponsors are willing to give Rs 1,000-Rs 2,000 which is "quite ridiculous." Participation in tournaments is self-sponsored, or at best partly spon-

sored. "All the efforts, physical and financial, are at our end," he points out.

Naoroji took up karate as a hobby in 1982. "Karate is very difficult to understand. It is a set of strikes with hands and legs, compared to locks and throws in judo. All martial arts have character development," he elaborates. Obtaining his black belt in three years, Naoroji has represented Maharashtra state since 1986

injuries during tournaments, I have kept myself relatively injury-free."

After his early education at Christ Church and St Xavier's High School in Bombay, Naoroji joined Bhavan's College in the science stream, obtaining a diploma in industrial electronics from Father Agnel Polytechnic at Vashi (New Bombay). He resides at A. H. Wadia Baug at Parel with father Sheri, wife

Tanaz and young daughters Jenny and Afreen. "No, my family do not come to watch tournaments," he laughs. "They feel I put too much time into karate! I have however never taken up karate as a profession, never earned money from it. Success has involved a lot of sacrifice." Naoroji currently



Naoroji: "martial arts have character development"

at national championships held in different parts of India, winning in the open weight, open kata ("a series of movements put together in something like a dance," he elucidates) and team events.

Naoroji has trained under Sensei Anand Ratna at the Dadar Dojo. Prior to national tournaments, intensive training in the various styles is supervised by Sensei Pervez Mistry, he states. "Instruction level begins when you obtain a black belt. We have instructed school and college students at classes held at the Antonio D'Silva Technical High School at Shivaji Park," he observes. "One has to mature as a karate person. If you train in a rash manner, you end up with knee and back problems. I do enough warm-ups, etc and so, apart from

works with Ocean Air Express Forwarders, a P. N. Writer group company. Playing football was an earlier love and he represented Wadia Sports Club at All-Parsis football tournaments for 10 years.

"Community support for sports, including karate, is not forthcoming as much as it should," he laments. "Earlier, a spate of martial art movies had generated enthusiasm, but now interest seems to be dwindling. There are hardly any new, up-coming Zoroastrians participating at a senior level." Stating that there are Parsis who have the capacity to encourage, Naoroji believes a lot more can be done by eminent Parsis to encourage sports. On the whole, however, "our community is doing good. People are more aware of the religion now. I myself wouldn't want to be anything but a Zoroastrian."



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"BECAUSE I CARE"

continued from page 104

way from India. Now I know that such behavior was only an outlet for my frustrations, caused by my being sorry for myself. I never realized I could work in a soup kitchen, clean up cancer patients and give the homeless a hug. It is a very humbling experience. When they exclaim: "God sent you to do this!" I cannot believe my ears, but am overcome with a feeling of spiritual satisfaction. I shall be happy to help out anybody who is in need. I can be reached at (609) 895-1268. May Ahura Mazda bless you all.

*Edited and reprinted from FEZANA Journal,
Summer 1998*

Daisy Presswalla has diverse experiences working with various organizations that help unfortunate people. She has worked with the handicapped, at Samaritan Home for battered ladies, Seton home for young girls (age 10-17), old people homes at Luther Manor, Marion Manor, Westminster Canterbury and Sevamp. She has also worked with cancer patients at Hospice Group and Virginia Beach General Hospital. At Bayside Presbyterian Church, she has helped with baby-sitting, soup kitchen, flower arrangements for church, and care for special handicapped. Furthermore, she disseminates her valuable experience by giving talks to social workers.

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Waxing eloquent

The cumbersome process that goes into creating batik works is explained by Smita Crishna who is promoting this art

Parinaz M. Gandhi

For a few moments before we commence our interview at her residence on Cumballa Hill, she leaves us in the company of her pet dog Champagne, (who had been named before she was gifted to the family) and a few batik samples which we gingerly study, hesitant to remove the plastic covers. We notice the floral and graphic designs; we observe the subtle hues. But when Smita Crishna explains the tedious and exacting process that constitutes batik work as she lays open each piece, we gaze at it with awe.

The materials in use may be mull or organdy or silk or georgette or crepe. The color effect will not be the same on different fabrics. "What appears blue on mull could be brown on silk," she cites an example. After tracing the design on the fabric and before it is dipped in the solution for the background color, those areas which require another color have to be coated with a combination of beeswax and paraffin. Once the first color is onto the fabric, the same procedure has to be repeated each time a new shade is introduced. These days the colors are so weak that they need to use a higher concentrate to match the original sample. Additionally a difference in the water's chlorine content from day to day can also make coloring a challenging exercise.

Thus, laboriously created are scarves, dupattas, saris, tablecloths, lampshades and screens in different hues on different fabrics, depending on the clients' interests and demands. Their periodic exhibitions over the years, initially held at their residence or sometimes informally at friends' homes and subsequently at the Cymroza Art Gallery, have aroused varied responses. The most enthusiastic reception though was earned at their last exhibition at Godrej Bhavan on December 17 and 18, 1998, observes Crishna who masterminds these shows in their

entirety, from deciding on the designs and color schemes for each exclusive piece to finding buyers who would appreciate the expertise and care that goes into each batik work.

In the late 1980s, seeing the leftovers of the batik ingredients, old bottles containing colors and salt lying around, Crishna, the third generation daughter of the industrial Godrej family, decided to reintroduce batik painting as an income generating avenue for the wives of employees who choose to spend time at the Pragati Kendra, the welfare center of Godrej. Initially the intention was to "finish the stock. The whole emphasis was on not to waste anything," she adds. This same message of conservation — "from nothing you create something" — is repeatedly reinforced on the children of employees who avail of the educational facilities offered by the House of Godrej at their Udayachal School in the Godrej township at Vikhroli, she states. During the last decade their band of 12 to 15 women must have exhausted and replenished their stock umpteen number of times.

Since it is almost impossible to rectify any errors in execution, supervising the ladies at work is a teacher Sushilla who maneuvers them through difficult patches, we are told. Each artist would be assigned one piece at a time and she would usually complete it from a time frame of within a week to 15 days, there being no deadlines or time schedules that these women have to adhere to. Their regularity at work is dependent on their family commitments: an illness in the family, vacation time for children, and their batik is given a break. "At exhibitions when they see their piece appreciated, they feel thrilled. They feel fulfilled and satisfied," points out Crishna. Each craftsman is paid per piece, depending on the hours of work and the difficulty of the task set before her.

"There is not much profit that we make. Whatever we earn is put back into the Kendra," maintains Crishna.

The Kendra which was established on August 15, 1955 "grew out of a corporate emotion that believes in the welfare of its employees and their families," she says. Among the activities undertaken at Pragati Kendra are family planning, counselling, adult literacy classes, women's vocational courses such as batik, tailoring, embroidery and typing, and promoting physical and personality development among children through trekking, dance, drama, gardening, scouting, martial arts and other courses.

The Kendra is actually a corollary to the Godrej family's initial frustrating efforts to introduce schooling for their workers' children. That was the time when Vikhroli was outside municipal limits, when children would be out playing on the streets, muses Crishna on January 8, 1999. Her mother Soonu Naoroji Godrej and Cooverbai Vakil (who formerly ran the Pupils' Own School in Vile Parle and laid the foundation of the Udayachal School) had to literally go from house to house begging them to send their children for education to the little room which was the precursor of the present Udayachal School, adds Crishna. Initially the boys were sent to school, but not the girls. In the meantime, the Kendra was running classes in literacy, tailoring and batik for the family of employees. "It required a lot of dedication to set up the school and center and make them self-sufficient." Crishna gives credit to Vakil, who lived at Vikhroli, and her mother who was there practically every day, and of course her father Naoroji who inspired them all by personal example. Consciously or unconsciously Crishna, then Godrej, imbibed her first lessons in batik which remained with her over the years and

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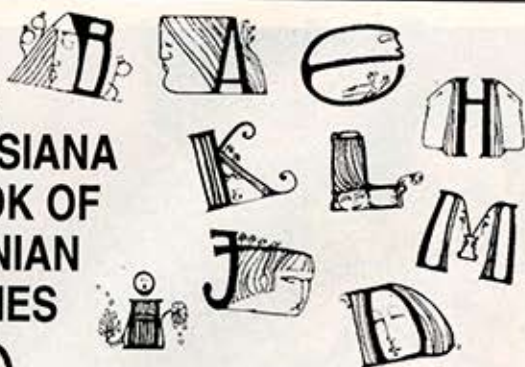


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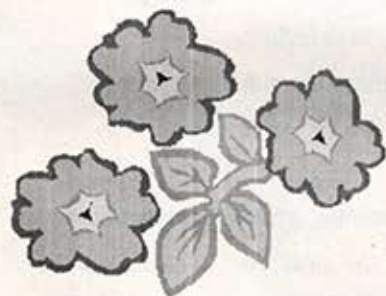
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which helped her reintroduce batik at the Kendra, the traditional designs now considerably evolved.

As explained to the layman, "The true origin of batik has never been determined, but it can safely be presumed to be at least 2,000 years old. Archeological findings prove that the people of Egypt and Persia used to wear batiked garments, and the same can be said of the people of India, China, Japan and most countries in the East...The wax-drop resist technique of the batik...has also become subject to some imitation, for example the machine printed cotton falsely called batik because it has scraggly lines printed over the material, copying the crackle effect which is so characteristic of batik work." The stained glass effect of light filtering through batiked fabrics is effectively handled by interior decorators who use lamp shades and screens where the delicacy of work and variety of texture can be accentuated.

While substantially involved in the running of the Kendra, Crishna does not contribute to the managerial decisions at Godrej where brother Jamshyd Godrej is the managing director of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited and husband Vijay Crishna is the managing director of Godrej-GE. "I was never brought up to take over (the Godrej reins)," she mentions. Smita was initially at the J. B. Petit High School for Girls in Bombay before she proceeded to the Presentation Convent at Kodaikanal. Following her graduation from Bombay's St Xavier's College where she obtained her BA in political science, she later studied communication arts in Montreal. After studying TV production in Canada she returned to India and joined Doordarshan in 1972. Disillusioned with the chaotic scenario when there "was no coordination



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Smita Crishna with the exclusive batik works reflecting a variety of shades and designs

Photos: Chetan Mistry

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**"The true origin of batik...
can safely be presumed to be
at least 2,000 years old"**

among the different technical departments," she opted to devote herself to motherhood and now considers herself "too far removed from the advanced technology of today" to return to it.

"My parents never foisted anything on me. I am happy with the present scenario." With her two daughters now out of school, she says, "You either pursue a career or bring up your children in the best possible manner." While elder daughter Freyan is studying political science in America, one of the subjects which Crishna herself specialized in at college, younger daughter Nyrika won a two-year international baccalaureate scholarship to the United World College of the Adriatic in Italy in mid '98 where she now studies.

Crishna is also interested and helps in useful causes like conservation, cleaning up Bombay and playing an active role on the music and arts committee of the Time and Talents' Club. As vice president of the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians since its inception in 1991, Crishna declares, "Our aim really is to safeguard our rights as Zoroastrians." Having studied French and some German, would Crishna be interested in learning Avestan? "I might be," she responds. "There should be more studying; it's a shame that we are not more interested." Her plate may be loaded right now as she experiments with different colors for the new batik creations but the tapestry of life may have its own designs...

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Food has no frontiers

Food can bring about an understanding and acceptance of different cultures and values

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

Imagine an excellently prepared meal, without any taboos, well served, to men and women of different cultures! With the tasting and savoring of good food and the sipping of wines in a congenial atmosphere, one experiences a deep sense of contentment.

Talleyrand, the celebrated statesman, diplomat and gourmand of France had as his cook, the illustrious Antonin Careme. It is said that when Talleyrand was about to leave for the Vienna Congress to gain advantages for his country, he told his king, Louis XVIII. "Sire, I have more need of casseroles than written instructions." He later said that he had often been more indebted to the skillful creations of Antonin at his table than to his sophisticated political helpers for his successes.

I have brought together here some delightful aphorisms and axioms quoted by some of the "Greats" of European cuisine that I have taken from *Larousse Gastronomique* to emphasize the importance of the cook.

Before that, I want to give you two instances of the many I've had that also point to the importance of the cook.

As a young girl studying at the Queen Mary High School in Bombay, I had opted for domestic science. Our final examinations were on and during the lunch break a few of the girls who were taking maths were discussing their paper in great agitation. When I asked them what their problem was, I was told that I would not understand, as I was only a cook. "Yes," I said, "but if you make a mistake in your paper you can rub it out. If I put in too much salt in my dish would I be able to rub it off?"

"Touché," they said, and continued to bite their nails.

I was in Lucknow with my friends Premola Ghosh and Urmilla Dongre who were on an assignment to photograph and write about the city. I had just tagged

along. We were invited by Jaimal Raja of Jehangirabad where we had the most delicious subdeg at his table, which was renowned as the best in Lucknow. He was as interested in food as I was and as we got talking, he invited us to taste the famous Lucknow biryani prepared by his cook.

We arrived at the appointed time, our mouths watering at the prospect of the biryani. But alas, it was not to be! In a matter-of-fact manner he informed us that he was sorry he would not be serving biryani that day as his cook was not in the mood to prepare it.

There was dead silence from all of us. We had done nothing but discuss the dinner, and I was left with my mouth half-open. I don't know if I was more disappointed at missing the biryani or full of admiration for a Raja who bowed to his cook! Not to mention a cook who had enough confidence in herself to say that she did not feel like cooking a dish the Raja asked for — dare I say 'ordered'?

She made it up to us by producing the most superb kakori kababs I have ever tasted or ever will. The service was carried out in detail. The entire barbecue was brought to within a few feet of where we were sitting. Kakori kababs do not travel well (I did not know that). The Raja told us that the second lot is always better and he was quite right.

Kudos for the Raja and his cook! How many of us would have shown such an understanding of our cooks? And how many of our cooks would have had the guts to refuse to make a dish if ordered?

Now for some delightful aphorisms and axioms from *Larousse Gastronomique*.

Careme came from such a poor family that his father abandoned him in a tavern after giving him a meal, saying that his son had talent and could make a

better life for himself. Careme had the fortune of knocking at the door of a cookshop owner who took him in and gave him his first lesson in cooking. Careme never looked back.

His advice to ministers and diplomats:

"The culinary art follows diplomacy and every prime minister is its tributary.

"To preside over a political chamber or hold a post in an embassy is to take a course in gastronomy.

"When there is no more cookery in the world there will be no more letters, no quick and lofty intelligence, no pleasant easy relationships: no more social unity."

Careme should know, as he had worked for not only Talleyrand but also the Prince Regent who later became King George IV, the Russian Czar Alexander, the British Embassy in Paris and finally with Baron de Rothschild whose table was considered the best in Europe.

Brillat-Savarin was a lawyer, politician and master of gastronomical sciences. He wrote the masterpiece *La Physiologie du Gout*. I quote from his preface: "The universe is nothing except for life and everything that lives has to feed itself.

"The destiny of nations depends on their manner of eating."

"Tell me what you eat and I shall tell you what you are.

"The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of mankind than the discovery of a star.

"The most indispensable quality of a cook is punctuality. It should also be that of a guest. (Oh you modern jet-set people! Please remember this and don't think that it is the 'in' thing to go late to a party.)

"To wait too long for a latecomer is to show a lack of consideration for all present."

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Desessaris was a man of wit and a gastronome: "Good cookery is the food of pure conscience."

Aemius Paulus Plutarch was an army commander: "The same intelligence is required to marshal an army in battle and to order a good dinner. The first must be as formidable as possible and the second as pleasant as possible to the participants." (Will my brother-in-law Sam, the victor of the Bangladesh war agree on this point?)

Lucien Tardieu was the great nephew of Brillat-Savarin. He wrote in his book *La Table au Pays de Brillat-Savarin* that: "Cuisine is both an art and a science; it is an art when it strives to bring about the realization of the true and the beautiful, called *le bon* (the good) in culinary ideas. As a science, it respects chemistry, physics and natural history. Its axioms are called aphorisms, its theorems, recipes and its philosophy, gastronomy."

"Cooking is one of the oldest arts and one which has rendered us the most important service in civic life."

"Gourmandism is an ardent, rational and habitual preference for things which flatter the taste."

"Gourmandism is one of the main links uniting society."

"Digestion, of all the bodily functions, is the one which exercises the greatest influence on the mental state of an individual."

"Theory and experience both prove that the quality and quantity of food

**He would not be
serving biryani that
day as his cook was
not in the mood
to prepare it**

have a powerful influence on work."

"A badly nourished man cannot adequately cope with the effort of continuous work for any length of time."

Here I must pause to clarify the meaning of the word gourmand. When I had acknowledged my esteemed friend Vijay Pillay in my book *Parsi Food and Customs* as a gourmand, I received many calls from friends asking me why I had called him a glutton. This is incorrect. Today a gourmand is wrongly described, even in dictionaries as a greedy person or glutton, just because the clergy said so. In the field of cookery and fine

eating, it is exactly the opposite. The word is a French word and in French, it has no derogatory overtones.

Brillat-Savarin was sternly critical of this interpretation. He said, "Authorities who thus interpret gourmandise have completely forgotten social gourmandise which combines the elegance of Athens, the luxury of Rome and the delicacies of France. Such gourmandise orders with discernment, supervises with wisdom, savors with enthusiasm, judges with profundity. It is a precious attribute, which may well be esteemed a virtue for it is the source of the purest delight. Gourmandise is the enemy of excess; every man who gives himself indigestion or gets drunk runs the risk of no longer being a true gourmand."

In the old world of gracious living, the gourmet was but a sworn official, charged with the duty of tasting wines and spirits. These taster-grooms were once a brotherhood; today they are organized into syndicates.

Augustus Escoffier is to my way of thinking the finest European chef of the century. He was called the king of chefs and the chef of kings. Emperor William II of Germany gave him the title, "Emperor of the world's kitchens." He helped

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in the opening of the Savoy in London and later took charge of the Carlton — both regarded as the best hotels in Europe at that time.

He started his career at the tender age of 12 and retired at the age of 74 (two years younger than I am, but then I did not start working at the age of 12, nor will I ever have his talent — but I am still working). His best known works are *Le Guide Culinaire* and *Ma Cuisine*. He modernized the old classical cookery of Carême. Although Nouvelle Cuisine was introduced and is still produced in some hotels it could not hold its ground against Escoffier's classical cooking, and as long as there are connoisseurs of French classical cooking, Escoffier will never die.

Let me end with an anonymous source who said, "The pleasantest of ties is the tie of a host and guest" and ask you if you agree with Lin Yutang when he says, "Food is of the first importance." Let me also ask all you highly educated artists, sports persons, doctors, economists (I could go on), where would you be without food to sustain you? I would often tell my husband, who was a doctor, that while he helped to save lives, I helped to sustain lives.

Let me also ask the government why a cook has never been decorated. Who has given the respect due to the superb cooks in our hotels, the kababwallas of Lucknow, the roomali rotiwallas, the wasa who produce the wonderful waswan of Kashmir, the little tumby in south India who cools your coffee by pouring it between two mugs held a yard away? Our government has decorated people of almost all professions but not the cook, sustainer of life.

You may wonder why I have decided to quote so much from *Larousse Gastronomique* in an article for *Parsiana*. It is because I know that there are so many of my community and people all over India who are gourmards and gastronomes and have a high standard of living and thinking and appreciate good food from all over the world which, according to Brillat-Savarin, is one of the greatest of virtues attributed to mankind.

In today's world of strife, distrust, envy, jealousy, etc we can bring about a sense of peace, trust and harmony; an

understanding, honoring and acceptance of different cultures and ways of life through food, as food has no frontiers.

Civilized man has dreamt of one world with malice towards none, where we could all live in peace and harmony. This can be drafted through the kitchen more so than by any other means.

Here are some recipes from the "Greats."

From Brillat-Savarin:

SAVARIN

Flour (150 g)
Fresh yeast (20 g)
Sugar (20 g)
Eggs (3)
Tepid milk (90 ml)
Butter (60 g)
Salt (a pinch)
Syrup
Loaf sugar (500 g)
Water (250 ml)
Rum (½ cup)
Vanilla essence (1 tsp)
Salt (a pinch)
Chantilly cream
Thick cream (450 ml)
Castor sugar (2-3 tbsp)
Vanilla (2-3 drops)

Grease a 7" savarin tin. Sift flour in a warm bowl. Cream yeast with 1 tsp sugar. Add beaten eggs and milk. Pour into flour with yeast. Mix well and beat thoroughly for five minutes. Cover with a damp cloth or cling wrap and keep in a warm place till dough rises to double its size — for about 40 minutes.

Cream butter and salt till soft. Beat into yeast mixture with remaining sugar and continue beating for a further five minutes. Pour into prepared tin and prove till mixture rises to the top of tin. It may take about 10-15 minutes. Bake in a preheated oven at 400°F (205°C) for about 20-30 minutes till well browned.

To make the syrup dissolve sugar in water and boil steadily for five minutes. Remove from fire. Add vanilla, rum and a pinch of salt.

Remove cake gently from tin and place on a plate. While still warm baste thoroughly with warm syrup until the cake is soaked through.

Whip cream with sugar until stiff.

Add essence and mix well. Just before serving, spoon a few tablespoons of rum if desired. Fold Chantilly cream into the center and serve.

Note: Change the plate after soaking the cake.

From Escoffier:

MATELOTE WITH RED WINE

In Europe, the fish used for Matelote are the eel, carp, tench, perch, etc. In India we can use ramras, bekti, grey mullet, rahu and eel. You can use only one type of fish, but it will not have the same flavor as when cooked with a variety. Mixed fish (1 kg — cut into 1" cubes)
Onion (1 large — minced or finely chopped)

Garlic (4 cloves — lightly crushed)
Fresh mixed herbs (1 small bunch or 1 tbsp dried mixed herbs — oregano, thyme, basil)
Red wine (20 ml)
Brandy (3 tbsp)
Beurre manie (butter — 45 g, flour — 2 tbsp, mixed to a paste)
Salt and pepper (to taste)
Chopped parsley for garnish

Put fish in a stainless steel or 'kallaied' pan. Add onion, herbs, garlic, wine, salt and pepper. Bring to boil. Add flambéed brandy and simmer till fish is cooked. Transfer fish into another pan. Strain liquid and reduce by one third. Thicken with Beurre manie. Simmer for 1-2 minutes. Pour over fish and heat through. Spoon into an earthenware dish if possible. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with hot crusty bread.

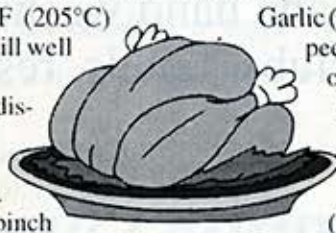
Giuliano Bugialli is one of the great chefs of Italy. He comes from Florence and is now settled in the USA. This recipe is from his book, *Foods of Italy*.

CHICKEN ROASTED WITH LEMON HALVES

Chicken (1½ — 2 kg)
Lemons (4 — not limes)

Garlic (4-6 medium sized cloves, peeled — this is for India as our garlic cloves are smaller, else use 2)

Italian parsley (15 sprigs — leaves only)
Hot red paprika flakes (½ tsp)



Salt and freshly ground pepper
Sprigs of Italian parsley for garnish
Clean chicken, removing any extra fat from the cavity. Open the chicken by cutting it lengthwise through the breast-bone, not the back. Place flattened bird

in a large crockery or glass bowl. Squeeze lemons and pour juice over the chicken. Add lemon halves to the bowl.

Chop garlic and parsley finely. Add to bowl with paprika, salt and pepper. Allow to marinate for one hour in a cool place or on the lower shelf of a refrigerator, turning it four times.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Transfer chicken to a baking dish, preferably of terracotta, pour marinade over it, arrange lemon halves on chicken and roast for 45 minutes, basting occasionally.

Remove chicken from oven and serve immediately with a few sprigs of parsley.

Once a great chef (I cannot remember the name, but I think it was Escoffier) was asked by a smug Frenchman, which three cuisines he considered the best in the world. The answer was, first Indian, second Chinese and third French.

Indian cuisine is, according to me, supassable. Its diversity, mindboggling. India has many great cooks, known and unknown. Given here are recipes from some of them for this article.

But I salute the housewife from all over the world who improvises and cooks

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"The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of mankind"

Awadh.

DAL QUERESHI

Pigeon peas (arhar/toor/toor dal — 500 g)

Mustard oil (20 ml)

Hung curds (200 ml)

Turmeric powder (1 tbsp, heaped)

Garlic (10 g — sliced)

Red chillies (3 whole, dried)

Cream (200 ml)

Ghee (50 ml)

Salt (to taste)

Sauté dal in mustard oil. Wash dal in water. Add three cups water, turmeric and salt and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer till dal is cooked. Add hung curds on high flame. Add cream and bring to boil again.

Heat ghee and add garlic and chillies. Add to dal and serve with paratha Dumpukht style.

PARATHA DUMPUKHT

Flour (500 g — sieved)

Salt (1 tsp)

Milk (2 tbsp)

Rose water (2 drops)

Sugar (1½ tbsp)

Ghee (200 g)

Water (130 ml, approx)

Add salt to flour in a thali (large flat tray). Add sugar to milk and dissolve in warm milk. Add rose water. Make a well in center of flour. Pour in milk and water. Stir in flour gradually. Knead well to make dough. Keep aside for 10 minutes, covered with a damp cloth. Add half the ghee to dough. Knead well to a soft dough consistency. Cover with damp cloth and leave aside for further 10 minutes.

Roll dough into a large square. Melt remaining ghee and apply all over. Fold into three. Cover with damp cloth and chill for 10 minutes.

Roll out again into a large square. Cut into rounds the size of a half plate, or if desired quarter plate.

Melt extra ghee on a griddle (tava).

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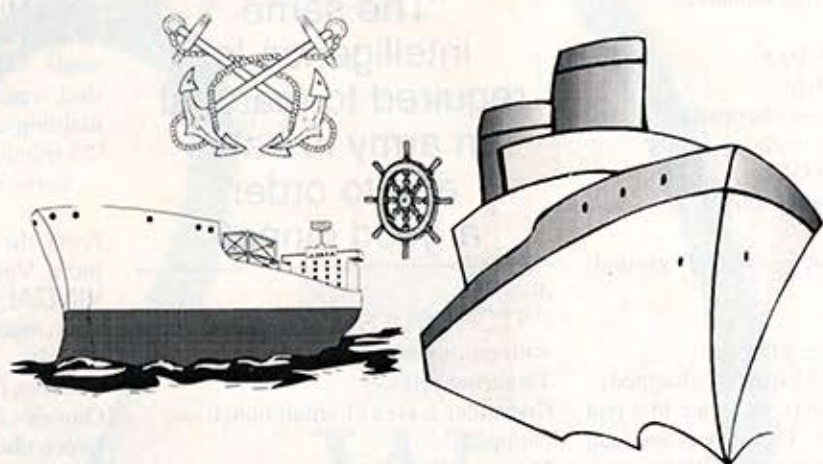
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The following recipe is from an exceptionally good book *Vegetable Delights* written by the famous Malini Bisen.

RIPE BANANA PEEL SABJI

This is a rather unusual dish. Try it.

Banana peel (12 ripe bananas)
Ghee (1 dsp)
Mustard seeds (¼ tsp)
Cumin seeds (¼ tsp)
Green chillies (4 — chopped)
Ginger (1" piece — chopped)
Turmeric powder (¼ tsp)
Dried mango powder (amchur — ½-1 tsp)
Groundnuts (¼ cup — coarsely ground)
Salt (to taste)
Garnish
Coconut (2 tbsp — grated)
Coriander leaves (4 tbsp — chopped)
Wash peel and chop. Put ghee in a pan and place on fire. Heat ghee and add mustard and cumin seeds. When mustard seeds start spluttering add green chillies and ginger. Fry 1-2 minutes. Add turmeric powder and peel. Add salt and dried mango powder. Mix well, lower heat, cover pan and cook on a slow fire till tender. Remove lid, add

groundnuts and sugar, mix well, garnish with coconut and coriander leaves and serve.

The next recipe is from a beautifully brought out book *Hyderabadi Cuisine* written by Pratibha Karan. It is a Telegu

**"The same
intelligence is
required to marshal
an army in battle
and to order
a good dinner"**

dish.
PATCHI PULSU (Tamarind water with onions and greens)
Tamarind (100 g)
Coriander leaves (1 small bunch — chopped)
Green chillies (6 — ground)
Onion (1 — medium sized, chopped)
Mint (1 small bunch — chopped)
Sesame seeds (2 tbsp — dry, roasted)
Curry leaves (20)
Turmeric powder (½ tsp)
Cumin seeds (1 tsp)

Oil (2 tbsp)

Salt

Soak tamarind in one cup water for 15 minutes. Mash and sieve to extract tamarind water. Discard residue. Add two cups water, salt, turmeric, sesame seeds, green chillies and half the chopped mint, coriander and onion to the tamarind water. Mix well.

Heat oil in a pan and add cumin seeds. When golden brown add tamarind water. Bring to boil and add remaining chopped ingredients. Simmer 2-3 minutes and remove from fire.

Serve with khichdi.

From the queen of cookery books in India, Vimla Patil, comes this recipe.

VINDALOO

Pork, mutton or jointed chicken (1 kg — cubed)
Potatoes (5 small — peeled)
Onions (2 large — finely chopped)
Green chillies (3 — slit lengthwise)
Sugar (1 tsp)
Vinegar (4 tbsp)
Cloves (2)
Peppercorns (4 black)
Green cardamoms (2)
Oil (4 tbsp)
Salt (to taste)

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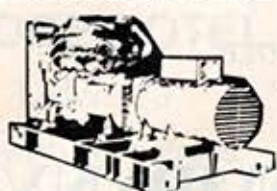
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 Coriander seeds (1 tsp)
 Turmeric powder (1 tsp)
 Garlic (3 cloves)
 Ginger (3-cm piece)
 Red chillies (6)

Heat oil in a pressure cooker. Fry potatoes till brown and remove. Fry onions in the same oil. Add pork, mutton or chicken, cloves, peppercorn, cardamoms, green chillies, sugar and salt. Pressure cook till almost done. Open cooker, add potatoes and ground masala. Cook till meat and potatoes are soft. Add vinegar and simmer for 10 minutes.

Serve with Goan bread or rice.

Note: Although Ms Patil has not mentioned water in the dish, you will need to add water according to your pressure cooker to just cook the meat till ¾ done. Do not overload the dish with water, as it should have rich, thick, reddish brown gravy.

Bon Appetit!

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



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OBSERVATION

Cross connections in Cyberspace

Zoroastrians may have left their home
towns but they have easy access to their roots

Pilloo Mullan

It's 1966 in Calcutta. The Anglo-Indians
have gone 'back home.' The Beatles are
all the rage. Radio Ceylon — poor cousin
of MTV — crackles out a Jim Reeves
favorite. Terylene is in. And your parents
are about to buy the first family car —
the ubiquitous Ambassador, available
in any color, so long as it's black.

At the Calcutta Parsee Club, a perfectly healthy, normal, (read boisterous,
high decibel) generation of baby boomer
Parsis is focusing its collective energies
on the complex business of growing up.
There goes Bhindi (Bhiwandiwalla)
sneaking off for a quick puff on the
tennis court, even as Billy and Bapsey
disappear — yet again — into the dark
shadows of the hedges. Nauzer's turn-
ing back the hands of all the clocks to
ensure that he can safely sneak home
after midnight — his idea of a win-win
solution, long before the Americans
immortalize the concept in management
theory. Khushrow and Hoshi prop each
other up, as hand in hand they sleepwalk
their way to the Anderson baths. And
Kamal and Kersi, still high on winning
the Calcutta Parsi Twist competition now
assiduously practice the cha-cha.

Come seventies and the great exodus
begins. One by one, these young Parsis
disappear into the blue beyond — some
chasing their economic dreams in Iran,
others their academic pursuits in the US
of A. The less adventurous migrate to
Bombay. Marriage, family, babies fol-
low — not always in that order. The ties
taper off. The bonds are broken. The
Parsee Club gang becomes a dim
memory. And with each passing year,
the faithful elders shake their heads and
cluck with growing disapproval —
"What will become of our Parsi com
(community)?" Dismal numbers of a
dwindling population are bandied about
— hard evidence that as a breed we are
fast nearing extinction. Accusations and
counter accusations fly at punchayet
meetings. Many blame it on the exces-

sively emancipated Parsi women who
choose to marry non-Parsis or not marry
at all! All conclude that the Parsis are an
endangered species with as much of a
future as the dinosaur.

And then the nineties dawn. Time
and technology collude to prove the
doomsayers wrong! The Internet arrives
bringing with it instant connectivity
across the globe. The gang awakens
from two decades of stupor and starts
networking with a vengeance, making
up for lost time, catching up on old
friends and foes. And bingo — the
Calcutta Parsee Club is reborn in
cyberspace. E-mail messages zig-zag
across the world. Collective memories
of a shared childhood climax in the
planning of a reunion. And, the gang is
back in business.

Bhindi has matured from cigarettes to
cigars and, now on his third marriage
(courtesy the Net) is wrestling with bring-
ing up a family comprising his, hers and
their offspring. Bapsey and Billy ensure
that their respective children go nowhere
near hedges. Nauzer reportedly has only
digital clocks at home. Khushrow and
Hoshi are celebrating their silver wedding
anniversaries jointly (some things just
never change!). Exasperated, Kamal has
long since dumped Kersi — he just
couldn't get the hang of how to cha-cha!

Thanks to the Internet, geography
has become history and a whole genera-
tion of Parsis can access their roots,
trace their lineage, uphold their tradi-
tions, seek partners, exchange jokes,
recipes and spouses, and just generally
reunite in their promised land in
Cyberspace. And for those doubting
Tehmuls out there who still need em-
pirical proof that Zoroastrianism is alive,
well and kicking — we suggest a quick
tour of the most popular Zoroastrian
sites on the Internet. For more informa-
tion contact Frenny (the Parsi's answer
to askjeeves.com) at Frenny@giadl01.
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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 28b

- achieve consensus on the top 10 candidates worthy of recognition;
- identify individuals within the community who could serve as screen-writers, directors, producers, actors, camera-men, etc;
- identify individuals who can raise the necessary funds (my guess is US \$ 100,000 per documentary film).

Please contact: Jimmy D. Kumana, 5042 Autumn Forest Drive, Houston, Texas 77091, USA, phone (713) 957-1125, fax 957-1128, e-mail: jkumana@aol.com

JIMMY D. KUMANA
Houston, USA

Help trace her roots

A lady by the name of Rose Koch from the state of Bremen, Germany, claims to be the granddaughter of a Parsi gentleman with following particulars:

- Name: Dhunjishaw Ardeshir Painter
- Parsi from Bombay and a British citizen
- Went to China in 1900 along with Talati brothers
- Married a Chinese, Lili Shih, renamed Mary Anne Painter
- Died in China at the age of 62, on September 2, 1941.

His son lives in Bremen, Germany,

with wife.

His granddaughter Rose Koch is now very keen on tracing some Parsi descendants of D. A. Painter, if any, and wishes to get in touch with them.

If any of your readers are connected with this family, I would appreciate if they could contact me at J-146 Sarita Vihar, New Delhi 110044, tel 6941935 or 6948151.

DILNAWAZ LAKDAWALA MAHANTI

Come to light

Here below is a poem composed by me in honor of our Lord Spitama Zarathushtra.

O! Spitama Zarathushtra
May Thy glories unfold.
O! Spirit of the Holy Manthras
Come to light and behold.
Thy disciples are ready and now
Await the revelation of Thy words.

With bated breath we gather together
And await Thy clarion call
Of "Peace on earth and death to the
devil

Light the fire of love in your heart —
Be ever pure and do not leave the path.
Through many centuries ye have
followed

This path shown to thy ancestors and

Surviving so many many disasters.
You have carried the message of the
Gathas Divine.
Remember always — I am yours and
you are Mine.

"Let not hearsay, nor fear, nor
misguided modernity
Ever lead you astray my children.
My spirit is there ever for you,
To seek and invoke it — it will lead the
way

To the highest land of bliss and joy;
Where awaits for thee the life eternal;
For where I am — you are — and
always will be
For now and for all eternity"

GOOLOO R. MEHTA

Donate to Salsette

This is a fervent appeal to all our Zarthoshti community members, Zoroastrian trusts and other charitable organizations, to donate their mite towards the construction of a dadgah and community hall at the Salsette Parsis Association Complex, Andheri (East).

This dadgah and community hall will be of immense spiritual and social value to our community. We, the trustees, take this opportunity to request one and all to contribute generously towards the main-

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We can live it and our India will be as beautiful as any flower arrangement.

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tenance of the dadgah and the kathi funds. Full-time priests will be appointed to hold various religious ceremonies.

We sincerely hope that you will help us in achieving our goal. Donations may be sent to Ms J. D. Moos (Hon secretary/trustee, 1, Gool Dhun Abad, S. V. Road, Jogeshwari, Bombay 400102), for which an official receipt will be issued. Cheques are to be drawn in favor of "Salsette Parsis Association Corpus Account."

J. D. MOOS

Tasks before Tapovan

Since the last two years we have been working in the tribal belt at the foot of Bahrot Hill. We are involved through the Tapovan Vihar Cultural Trust set up by me in developmental activities covering the surrounding tribal belt of Dahanu Taluka.

As members of The Indian Network of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) for Development, Environment and Population we are working for the eradication of poverty and welfare of people through programs of literacy, education, advancement of health, family planning, equality of women and well being of children, income generation, gainful employment, village bet-

terment, environmental concerns and such other national objectives which will take the country on a forward march into the next millennium.

In our Bordi premises we have set up a *chikitshalaya* (dispensary) with facilities for medical check-up and dispensing of medicines. A regular qualified doctor has been appointed to operate the *chikitshalaya* on a daily basis.

We are working closely with the tribal ashramshala at village Aswali and have identified the need for text/work books required by the students and also playground equipment for healthy development of the body and mind. We are also surveying specific needs of the various zilla parishad schools located in the area.

As a NGO we have a lot of field work to do. The existing cluster of villages which we cover are spread within a radius of 10-15 km around Bordi. Transportation is the biggest handicap we are facing.

Our Trust also runs the Tapovan Retreat at Bordi. We let out the place to families/groups who wish to spend time together, relax and have some brainstorming or even general camaraderie. The Retreat is well-equipped and offers boarding and lodging. The maximum

number of guests we can accommodate is 15. In case of groups the figure can be stretched to 18-20.

In fact just outside our Retreat we have already popularized information about Bahrot Caves. One of the projects our Trust has on its agenda is to resuscitate the ancient precincts of Bahrot Caves and to bring the monument back to life. Visitors to Bordi have shown a keen interest to visit the site. We are working on the 'modus operandi' of having some local Adivasi guides who can escort visitors in groups to the Caves. As of date, it is a good uphill trek in the midst of beautiful flora and fauna.

To date we have generated through donations and Retreat Camps a sum of Rs 93,150. Our total requirement of funds for capital expenditure would be Rs 98,700. Our monthly recurring expenditure on the Trust activities is to the tune of Rs 12,000. We still have a long way to go. All donations therefore would be welcome and can be sent to Tapovan Vihar Cultural Trust, Tapovan Retreat, Bordi, Tal Dahanu 401701.

HOMI D. MEHTA

Trustee, Tapovan Vihar Cultural Trust

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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Lovji Cama

The Death of Ahriman: Culture, Identity and Theological Change among The Parsis of India by Susan Stiles Maneck. A PhD dissertation published by the Graduate College, University of Arizona, USA. Pp: 272.

This book propounds the theory that the Parsis continually redefined themselves under the influence of their rulers in India: first the Hindus, then the Muslims and finally the Christians. Well researched, the collection of over 150 primary and secondary references in the book, dealing mostly with the history of the Parsis, is itself of value to anyone interested in Parsi history. Yet despite the considerable scholarship, the work does not quite ring true to this Parsi reader. The author seems to have plowed through the references, decided on a central thesis and then propounded it while disregarding many of the facts and ideas that did not agree with the thesis.

Of the eight chapters of the book, the first is an introduction which includes a review of similar works by other authors, a short essay on Zoroastrianism, followed by an outline of the chapters to follow. The remaining chapters deal with Parsi history from the time of their arrival in India to the 19th century, during which they rapidly became westernized.

Chapter two deals with the Parsi migration from Iran to India, their first settlements and early history up to the 14th century. Maneck accepts the traditional eighth century date for their first landing, while many scholars now accept a later date in the 10th century. She begins with an assertion that the Parsis came to India primarily because business conditions in Iran were not suitable under Arab rule, and not because of religious persecution. Choosing the early date for migration makes it easier for her to affirm this, since she contends that insufficient time had elapsed since the Arab conquest for the Iranian Zoroastrians to have suffered religious persecution (Zoroastrians were still a majority in Iran until about the early part of the 10th century). And because they embarked for India from the port of Hormuz,

she infers that they were primarily merchants, ignoring the fact that Hormuz was the regular point of departure for India for anyone who wanted to do so. But even if they were primarily merchants, why would that preclude them from fleeing religious persecution in Iran? Why could not their purpose have been to save the religion, as the *Kisseh-i Sanjan* says? After all, she does not deny that the leader of the band of immigrants was a dastur and not some merchant king.

In the latter part of this chapter the author argues that the immigrants explained their religion to the Hindu ruler in terms that made Zoroastrianism appear similar to Hinduism. I am certain this must have happened. It would have been foolhardy for this band looking for a home to point out the differences and risk being turned away. This really points to the desperate situation of the Parsis at their time of arrival.

In concluding this chapter the author states that "theology played no role in forming their corporate identity within the Indian milieu. Instead, Parsis defined themselves by what they did, not by what they believed." While this statement is possibly true in that the early Parsis may have been reticent about their beliefs and ethics in their new environment, it should not be understood that they had given them up. The very fact that they were able to consecrate the Iranshah fire within a short time of their arrival speaks well of their religious zeal.

Chapter four discusses the growing prosperity of the Parsi community from the 14th to the 17th century as they involved themselves in trade. This is also the period of the early *Rivayats*. The author asserts that the growing prosperous laity became dissatisfied with decisions made by Parsi priests, and asked the Iranian priests via the *Rivayats* for their opinion. Here she makes a rather puzzling statement (pg 42): "The opinion of the Iranian dasturs were seen as authoritative whether or not the Parsis abided by them. Requests for rulings were therefore generally motivated by

disputes within the Parsi community, which requested outside mediation." This would imply that the Parsis were involved in some very curious behavior. Would they spend considerable time, money and effort to get an authoritative ruling from Iran and then ignore it? The answer in this case lies with Dastur Firoze Kotwal's opinion (pg 35): "The Indian dasturs were asking questions of their Iranian counterparts in order to increase their knowledge and learn other points of view. This is not to imply that the Indian dasturs were ignorant and asking for advice. Rather it was an exchange of knowledge."

The positive answer of the Iranian priests with regard to acceptance of non-Zoroastrians into the religion (permissible after proper ritual purification) seemed to be based on their understanding of the religion rather than the current practice (of not permitting them because of the ruling of the Muslim authorities in Iran). The response of the Indian priests was to discourage acceptance (because of the social conditions in India). But certainly some acceptance of the servants of Parsis and of Parsi illegitimate children was carried out, quietly.

The remaining part of the chapter discusses the rise of the Bhagaria priests under their high priest Meherji Rana; the decrease in power of the family of Changa Asa, a rich and powerful trader; the relocation of the Iranshah fire to Udvada from Navsari; the creation of the Navsari Atash Behram; the rise of Surat as the major port city on the west coast; and the growing power of Rustam Maneck and Modi Kuverji Nanabhoy.

Chapter five deals with the presence of Parsi priests at Akbar's court. In order to establish his kingship over a diverse empire composed of various religious groups of which the Muslims were a minority, Akbar had to establish rapport with all his subjects. Traditional Islam which required power to be only in the hands of Muslims was not suited to his purpose. So Akbar adopted the ancient religious and political symbolism of Persia as a model for his kingship and it was this, according to the author, that al-

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lowed Zoroastrian priests to wield influence in court and not their knowledge or expertise in debate against other religious leaders.

This chapter also deals with the influence of Ishraqi philosophy in Akbar's court, especially through Abul-Fazl, one of his favorite ministers. Ishraqi philosophy allowed for the legitimacy of all religions and thus cut into the influence of traditional Islamic ideas. According to the author, Meherji Rana learned to converse in terms of Ishraqi philosophy so that he could be more influential.

Two Zoroastrian books of questionable religious content, the *Dabistan* and *Desatir*, are also introduced in this chapter. The author of *Dabistan* seems to have been influenced by Ishraqi philosophy, especially the version espoused by Azar Kavan (an Iranian, perhaps a Zoroastrian). Maneck then stretches the argument that "if the *Dabistan* correctly represented the teachings presented by the Parsis in Akbar's court, it would seem that the dasturs accepted the teachings associated with Zurvanism."

The overall conclusion of this chapter is that once again the Parsis, this time at Akbar's court, defined their religion in terms of the dominant one (Islam). In this instance the dualism of Zoroastrian-

ism was suppressed by reviving Zurvanistic ideas, in order to make the religion appear monotheistic.

Chapter five also describes the rising prosperity of Parsis in Surat and, in great detail, the life of Rustam Maneck and his dealings with British, Portuguese and Dutch East India companies. Reasons are given for successful trade with the Europeans, which include Parsi flexibility and their involvement both in the areas of manufacture and brokerage, which gave them very good control.

The Kadmi-Shahenshahi calendar dispute is discussed in chapter six. In this controversy Maneck again sees the Parsis seeking guidance from Iranian priests and Muslim scholars as an indication that they looked to others to solve their religious problems. But since the source of this particular problem was Iran, it does not seem unnatural to look to Iran for answers.

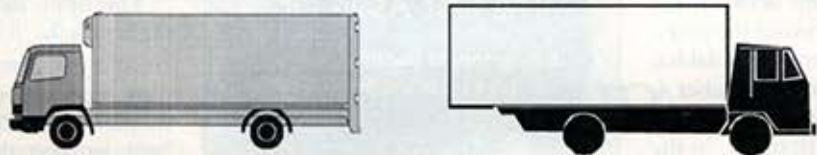
Another part of this chapter gives an account of Anquetil Du-Peron's visit and his dealings with the Kadmi priests Dastur Darab Kumana and Dastur Mulla Kaus, who taught Du-Peron the *Avesta* and provided him with Avestan manuscripts. There is also the account of a visit to a fire-temple, escorted by Dastur Kumana. The account is most likely a

fabrication, or a visit when the fire was removed from the temple during renovation, but the author actually harbors the possibility that Du-Peron was converted to Zoroastrianism by Dastur Kumana before his visit to the temple. She thinks it might be possible because Dastur Kumana was educated by Iranian priests who believed in conversion.

In chapter seven we read of the growth of Bombay as a Parsi center and the formation of the Parsi Punchayet. Its power to regulate the affairs of the lay and priestly communities, and the decline of that power caused by an increasing difference of opinion between its older conservative members and the younger western educated members is discussed.

Chapter eight deals with the controversy and battles over the conversion of three Parsi boys who attended the English school run by the Scottish Presbyterian missionary, Dr John Wilson. The Parsi community's response is well documented. However, in an analysis of the response by Dastur Edul Sanjana, high priest of the Shahenshahis, the author shows her unfamiliarity with the Zoroastrian religion. On page 214 Dastur Sanjana refers to God as the creator of

continued on page 218



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Naoroji The first Asian MP - A Biography of Dadabhai Naoroji: India's Patriot and Britain's MP by Omar Ralph. Published in 1997 by Hansib Caribbean, PO Box 2773, St John's, Antigua, Wisconsin, USA. Price: £ 11.95. Pp: 208.

So far the only authentic biography of Dadabhai Naoroji has been Rustom P. Masani's volume entitled *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*, which was first published in 1939. Omar Ralph's present volume attempts to "re-live the life story of Dadabhai, so that the work done by him in laying the foundation of modern India can be understood, appreciated and remembered both in India and in Britain."

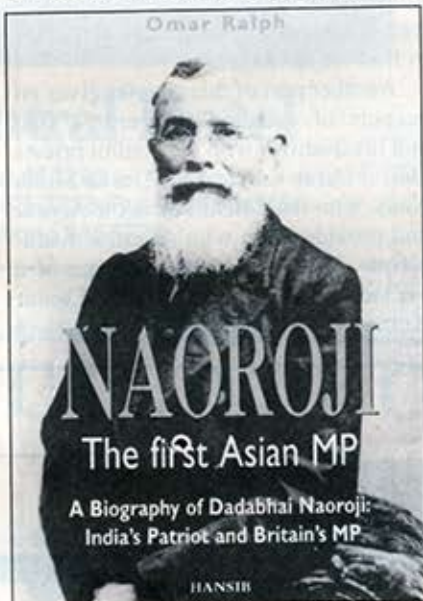
Ralph, who has a Parsi mother, has been conducting research on the Parsis and Zoroastrianism for some time now. He had earlier co-authored in 1995, with Dr John R. Hinnells, a brochure on another Parsi member of the British Parliament, Mancherjee M. Bhownaggee. Given his personal background Ralph aims at attempting through his research to look at the connection between the Zoroastrians and the Jews over the years.

While tracing the story of Dadabhai Naoroji from his birth on September 4, 1825 in Mandvi, one of the seven original islets of the city of Bombay, in the chapter on "His Roots," Ralph focuses on his early education, his elevation to professor of mathematics and natural philosophy in 1853, which was the first professorship ever held by any Indian. Till the end, Dadabhai felt proud of that distinction, stating, "Several honors came to me during my lifetime, but no other title created in me that sense of pride which I felt in being known as a professor." He also traces his involvement in promoting education for women through the Students Literary and Scientific Society and the Parsi Girls School Association which went on to establish a number of schools for women after 1849.

While drawing considerably from Masani's volume, Ralph also attempts to look at this period from the perspective of records available in England.

Particularly interesting in this context is the data he provides on the treatment meted out to Parsis like Dhanjibhoy Naoroji and George Edulji, who had converted to Christianity and settled in England.

The second chapter traces Dadabhai's role in the first political associations in India—including the Bombay Association in 1852. Dadabhai's faith in the British sense of fair play and justice remained with him throughout his life.



Under the sponsorship of Khurshedji Nassarwanji Cama, he began to bring out a fortnightly newspaper, *Rast Goftar* (Truth Teller), the first issue of which came out on November 15, 1851. The first few issues dealt with Parsi-Muslim riots which had erupted owing to an ill-conceived article in *Chitra Dnyan Darpan*. Dadabhai retained his interest and faith in the vernacular Press in India throughout his life.

Pre-eminent among the issues taken up by Dadabhai during this period were the problems faced by the Zoroastrians who had remained behind in Persia. These included the levy of poll tax, inability to trade and lack of educational facilities. The Parsis in India had deputed Manekji Limji Hatara to Iran as their delegate to study the situation.

Dadabhai keenly followed the situation. He led three deputations to the Shah of Iran when he visited England in 1885, 1901 and 1906. His pleading for fair treatment met with a positive response.

Indeed the two Zarthosty brothers (Mehraban and Faredoon), who have donated so generously to numerous Parsi causes in India of late, acknowledge their debt to the work of Hatara and Dadabhai for Zoroastrians in Iran which enabled them to survive and later to prosper.

Deeply conscious of his reason for coming to Britain, Dadabhai took up his task of educating the British about their fellow subjects in India—including the Parsis. A major issue which he was to focus on was that of facilitating the entry of Indians into the Indian Civil Service (ICS). Ralph informs us that Rustomji Hiribhai Wadia was the first Indian student to take the 'open' ICS examination with the assistance of Dadabhai. The other Indian whom Dadabhai assisted was Mancherji Colah who was later to hold the post of assistant surgeon.

One of his most significant activities then was to found, with Mancherjee Hormasjee Cama, the London Zoroastrian Association in 1861. He remained its president from 1862 to 1908. This later became the present Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Incorporated) (ZTFE).

Dadabhai's stay in England led to his neglect of his wife and family. He returned to India and brought back his wife, son Ardeshir, daughter Shirin and his mother who stayed at Parsi Lodge in North London in 1865. Serene Cursetjee, daughter of Manockjee Cursetjee (founder of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution), was a close companion of the family. The author quotes from Serene Cursetjee's diaries but unfortunately does not acknowledge that he has in fact used Masani's book, rather than the original diaries which are no longer available for reference.

Dadabhai's own business company prospered as did his reputation, honesty and integrity. He was also influenced by Englishmen like John Dickinson (1815-

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1876), Major Evans Bell and John Bright, MP (1811-1889) who molded his ideas on reform. These three gentlemen had similar arguments on the impoverishment of India, which along with issues like exams for the ICS and independence for native states became the major issues of Dadabhai's campaign.

Later, to bring Indian problems to the attention of the British public, Dadabhai established the London Indian Society in 1865 and the East India Association in 1866. He drew attention to India's problems in his paper on England's duties to India. Ancillary organizations were also established in India, including the Bombay Association and the Ratepayers Committee.

Soon Dadabhai's ideas on un-British policies in India began to crystallize while making a deep study of the economy and wants of the country, which for him were: sufficient food, clothing and shelter and sufficient savings. Dadabhai conceived of the 'Drain Theory' as an external drain built into the internal economy with a bias whereby the ruling power was able to extract resources out of a colonial economy. India, being a colonial economy, essen-

tially served the needs of the British Empire to the grave detriment of her own interests.

In 1901, Dadabhai published his *Poverty and un-British Rule in India* which remains a referred publication even today. The publication also brought him into contact with Henry Mayers Hyndman, founder of the Social Democratic Foundation, who was to remain his friend for life.

In 1881, Dadabhai returned to India after closing down business and began to take an active role in politics. He, along with Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dinshaw Vatcha and others played a leading role in the establishment of the Indian National Congress whose first meeting was held on December 28, 1885 in Bombay. Dadabhai spoke on the need for political reform in India, the impact of the drain on the Indian economy and the entry of Indians into the ICS. This was the first major national political association established by the "educated natives."

The discussion on Dadabhai standing for election to the House of Commons began soon after this and, as Ralph

points out, Dadabhai's diary entries in 1886 in England show his attempts to develop links with people from all walks of life. He approached various groups including the Liberal Party, the Irish Home Rule Movement and even the Conservatives in his choice of a seat. Ultimately, with the support of the Liberals, Dadabhai contested the election from Central Finsbury in 1892.

The campaign was a heated one with Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister calling Dadabhai "a black man," seeking to give a racial color to the campaign. This smear campaign did not work and Dadabhai's campaign gained support from various sections including the Gaekwad of Baroda, Behramji Malabari, Bhownagreg, Kier Hardie and Florence Nightingale among others. Dadabhai defeated his rival Captain F. T. Penton by only three votes (2,959 to 2,956) which gave Dadabhai the nickname "narrow majority."

His tenure in Parliament was very eventful and Ralph has documented this extensively in his chapter on "Parliament's Business" as well as in Appendices 2, 3 and 4. As will be seen, Dadabhai's contribution to various is-

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sues affecting Indian interests proved crucial in furthering Indian interests. His term in the House was short — it ended in July 1895. However he continued to work in the Royal Commission and for the interests of the members of his constituency.

Among Dadabhai's subsequent campaigns were issues focusing on the hardship of Indians in South Africa, voting rights for women, the race question and drawing attention to the suffering of Indians through recurring famines. Interestingly, Dadabhai was shrewd enough to realize that the moderate means used by older leaders of the Congress had increasingly distanced them from the younger generation of Indians. He was much admired by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the young Mahatma Gandhi.

Dadabhai's links with Socialist leaders like Hardie and Hyndman led to his attending the Second International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam in 1904. He created a stir when he announced his support to the working classes in India and was strongly critical of British policy there.

Significantly, Madame Bhikhaiji Cama too attended the Third International Socialist Congress in 1907 and launched India's first flag of independence. There she was much more critical of British rule than Dadabhai.

The 1905 session of the Congress led to major differences between the 'moderates' led by Mehta and the 'extremists' led by Tilak. The British decision to divide Bengal had serious ramifications which nurtured a new generation of armed revolutionaries who wanted to overthrow British rule by force. As a compromise Dadabhai was invited from England to be the president of the Congress in 1906.

Dadabhai had a clear grip of the situation and in his presidential address spoke of *swaraj* (self-government) for the first time. It was he and not Tilak who used the term first. His speech was

conciliatory and the unity of the Congress was retained. This stand however was totally rejected by Indian revolutionaries in London like Shyamji Krishna Verma and Veer Savarkar in various issues of *The Indian Sociologist*. Dadabhai deprecated violence, but unlike the other older leaders he did not denounce the younger leaders. His links

with Madame Cama are well-known. He was present at the opening of Verma's 'India House' and was close to other revolutionary leaders too.

In 1916, he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Law by the University of Bombay. Though it was also decided to award it to Mehta, he died in 1915 before it could be conferred on him.

Truly, as stated Narayanrao Chandavarkar, Dadabhai's life was all that the "prophet Zoroaster's religion personified — because he was the man more than any-

body else of pure thought, of pure speech and of pure deeds."

Ralph also traces the legacy of Dadabhai who became the first Asian Member of Parliament and its impact on future Asian representatives. He describes him aptly as: "The underdog beat the bully without tainting his own character...." Humanity in Dadabhai transcended the inhumanity of the system. He became the first Indian ambassador to England.

Ralph laments the fact that though Gandhiji is well-known in present day England, the Grand Old Man of the 19th century is unknown in Britain. Even Gandhiji drew great inspiration from him and described his life as "so noble and yet so simple".

Ralph's book, written in a racy style, is relevant and readable. In fact I was very fortunate to locate through the good offices of ZTFE's Rusi Dalal, Malcolm Deboo and Ralph the recording of an interview with Dadabhai's granddaughter Goshi Captain which proved invaluable for my ongoing research. However,

it would have been much more authentic had Ralph used proper footnotes and citations, particularly since he has relied so much on Masani's biography of Dadabhai. Ralph has also had the privilege of consulting so much material in England and it would greatly assist researchers to have the citations which will aid them in their research. As pointed out to me by Ralph he has not been able to come down to India and use the extensive material and letters available here on Dadabhai — perhaps he can prepare a second volume on this.

The book serves the purpose of generating interest in Dadabhai among the younger generation of readers in England and India. However, the high price of £ 11.95 for the paperback edition will deter Indian readers.

"A lot of people are not aware..."

Knowing a Jewish rabbi who wonders if there'll be Jewish grandchildren in the years to come, Omar Ralph smiles. "Every generation worries but (the communities) are still there," says the offspring of a Parsi Zarathushti mother and a Scottish father. They named him Omar "because they wanted an Asian name that was easy to pronounce."

Working in the area of race equality in the London bo-rough of Islington that had twice sponsored Dadabhai Naoroji to the British Parliament, Ralph refers to the "dramatic change" in the composition of London's population since Naoroji's time. According to him racial minorities now account for 25-30 percent with over 30 non-white members of the British Parliament, though so far no colored Britisher forms a part of UK's representation at the European Parliament in Bruxelles. With some Zoroastrian members of the local councils and a mayor to date, "there'll always be room" for them in British politics, feels Ralph.

Though the Commission for Racial Equality is not a campaigning body, its policy regarding black and Asian businessmen ensures them support in their work with local agencies. The aim, says Ralph, is to prevent racial violence, "give help when someone is suffering harassment, let the victims know they are not alone," provide moral support in action. "Racial violence has always been there — it's a manifestation of racism."

Schooled in London and with a BSc



A sketch of Naoroji made when he was 20

in psychology from the University of Southampton under his belt, Ralph began work on Dadabhai Naoroji's biography in 1990. Reverential toward the "grandfather of India and Pakistan," Ralph was transfixed by the charismatic Naoroji who corresponded with Mahatma Gandhi on a weekly basis, employed Mohammedali



Ralph: preserve heritage

Photo: Arnava S. Mama

Jinnah as his personal assistant and lived by the creed of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. It was hard for Ralph to stomach the fact that there is "a whole generation of Asians who don't know about him... A lot of people are not aware of their heritage, religion, philosophy," he notes sadly adding (in the context of the second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress during which this brief interview was conducted), "If you give up your good customs, you better have something to replace them..."

Arnava S. Mama

ADEPT AT ADAPTING

continued from page 211

both worlds (the spiritual and the material). The author understands this to mean the worlds of good and evil and goes on to show how Sanjana's description of divinity is a Muslim definition of God, thus harking back to her central argument that Parsis define themselves in terms of the dominant religion (in this case a hangover of Muslim domination over Gujarat). Later on she again interprets the word "qibleh" as used by Sanjana (the kebla of the fire-temple) as a Muslim derivative.

A considerable part of this chapter is a discussion of Wilson's book *The Parsi Religion: As Contained in the Zand Avesta and Propounded and Defended by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, Unfolded, Refuted and Contrasted with Christianity*. The title speaks for itself, a blatant attempt to denigrate Zoroastrianism and show the superiority of Christianity in the hope of converting Parsis. The effect of all these attacks forced the Parsis to understand their religion in western terms, and they looked to the ideas of the Enlightenment as terms of reference. Surprisingly, the author does not mention anywhere the new interest

in the study of the *Gathas* both by western and Parsi scholars. These studies showed that many of the ideas in the *Gathas* were not very different from Enlightenment ideas and that was the reason for their acceptance.

Finally, the author makes one more effort to show how the Parsis, by defining their religion in terms of the dominant religion, first Hinduism, then Islam and finally Christianity (or rather the Enlightenment) had compromised much of the content of their faith, that might have distinguished it from the religions surrounding it.

The author does not understand the Parsi psyche. She misunderstands their willingness to adapt to the dominant culture as a willingness to give up their religious beliefs. But the Parsis never gave up the teachings of their religion, which is a code of behavior, they never gave up on upholding the truth, fighting injustice, doing charity and using their Good Mind to work for the good of society both their own and that surrounding it. These are the teachings of the Prophet passed on from generation to generation by example, and they go to make up the Parsi psyche. In the end the author has missed the point of what it is all about.

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 19 and 34 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 24 and 35 years, averaging at 28 years.

Compared to 13 babies born in the first month of 1999, there were 81 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay. Thirty-two victims succumbed to heart disease of whom 18 were 80 years and above. Lung disease/pneumonia took a toll of nine lives and cancer of eight. Septicemia claimed four people and diabetes, general debility/old age, brain disease, bronchitis and hypertension felled three patients each. Two deaths each were accounted to asthma and uremia. There were 11 isolated cases registered for January. They were: death due to head injury, tuberculosis, liver disease, emphysema (gaseous distension of the tissues), intestinal obstruction, marasmus (wasting away of the body without apparent cause) due to motor neuron disease, Parkinson's disease, neurological disorder, malaria, hypertrophy (increase in the size of tissues or structures, independent of natural growth) and kidney failure. The young-

est to die was a 46-year-old as compared to the eldest, a 99-year-old. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for January, in Bombay, was 76 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman 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 anjuman 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

Bacchi Adi Patel of Jabalpur, mother of Freny P. Bharda and Behram on January 7, 1999

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, Taronish, to Sanobar and Cowas Bajan; August 6, 1998

A girl to Rashna and Homiyar Dhamodiwalla; January 3, 1999

A girl to Jinoo and Sarosh Daruwalla; January 6

A boy to Nilufer and Pervaz Boocha; January 7

A girl to Mithra and Mahyar Engineer; January 11

A girl to Simone and Farokh Pandole; January 14

A boy to Shanaaz and Farokh Commissariat; January 19

A girl to Benaifer and Dinyar Dastoor; January 19

A boy to Daisy and Adil Jesia; January 19

A boy to Kashmira and Shapoor Khodadadi; January 21

A boy to Soonnu and Farokh Balsara; January 27

A boy to Binaifer and Sanjay Kholi; January 27

A boy to Anna and Neville Choksi; January 28

A girl, Hufriah, to Shirin and Neville Lacca; January 30

MARRIED

Azmi Erach Singpurwalla and Mehernosh Manek Baliwalla; December 7, 1998

Dinaz Behram Bhathena and Yazad Gaev Saher; December 20

Meher Hosi Carnac and Cyrus Aspi Nariman; December 24

Farzana Yazdi Kohiar and Rushad Noshir Anklesaria; December 25

Zenobia Dara Panthakee of Ontario and Pervaz Jimmy Mistry of Ontario; December 25

Kaynaaz Farrokh Desai and Neville Khushroo Dholoo; December 28

Parizad Hosang Suntoke

and Farzad Darayus Mithaiwalla; December 28

Rukzane Pervaz Hiranmanek and Kurush Dhunjishaw Bhungara; December 31

Niloufer Pervaz Mullan and Farzad Phiroz Limki; December 31

Monaz Feroz Taraporewala and Farzad Minoo Antia; January 2, 1999

Khushnima Manek Engineer and Porus Dhunjishaw Suntoke; January 3

Susan Ruintan Dastiyar of Chatsworth, California and Farzad Rustom Hormuzdi of New York; January 4

Dilnavaz Cyrus Bharucha of Poona and Mehernosh Adi Pavri; January 4

Ruzvin Adil Elavia and Farookh Jamshed Elavia; January 7

Monaz Dinyar Gazdar and Jamshed Homi Maloo; January 7

Zarin Noshir Fatakia and Hoshedar Dara Pochara; January 7

Farzin Minoo Bharucha and Sarosh Dinyar Daruwalla; January 8

Nina Fali Todiwalla and Paitizad Kersy Driver; January 8

Anita Pervaz Dubash and Hector Fali Patel; January 9

Binyfer Kersi Engineer and Nozer Noshir Patel; January 9

Anahita Farokh Bhathena and Firdoush Phiroze Bhathena; January 10

Anahita Rashid Irani and Percy Jamshed Irani; January 10

Dilnavaz Russi Parelvala and Bahadur Cyrus Kaikobadi; January 10

Mahtab Darayus Mowdawala and Cawas Kobad Panthaki; January 10

Khurshed Hoshang Buchia and Barjor Mehernosh Dastur; January 11

Natasha Aspi Kavarana and Honoze Hoshang Nekoo; January 11

Ketayun Adi Daver and Danesh Noshir Irani; January 14

Shernaz Dadi Elavia and Kayomarz Noshir Palkhiwalla; January 14

Tina Farokh Messman and Homiyar Behram Wykes; January 19

Mahazareen Behram Dastur and Marzban Jamshed Hathiram; January 21

Monaz Behram Kelawala and Cyrus Dinshaw Darbari; January 22

Ruxana Jal Adajania and Fredy Soli Hansotia; January 22

Dilshad Farokh Kolah and Neville Noshirwan Korshaw; January 22

Kamal Homi Ichhaporia and Darius Jal Moos; January 22

Zenobia Kersi Bhadha and Birjis Dinshaw Chinoy of Secunderabad; January 23

Tanaaz Dinshaw Daruwalla and Phiroze Rusi Damania of Ahmednagar; January 23

Mehernaz Ratan Bharucha and Feroze Gev Merchant; January 23

Shanaz Jal Kanga and Jamshed Nanabhai Patel; January 24

Benifer Adi Amin and Khushroo Tehemtan Satarawala; January 24

Ooshin Fardoon Nicholson and Darayes Jal Shroff; January 24

Navaaz Dara Dastur and Adil Noshir Tantra; January 24

Natasha Keki Dadiseth and Faridun Sam Dotiwala; January 25

Ferzana Hoshang Bharucha and Soli Minoo Mawji; January 25

Farida Firoz Patel and Dick Sam Readymoney; January 26

Parizad Minoo Master and Naozad Kaikobad Sirwalla; January 26

Dilkhush Jehangir Irani of Las Vegas and Aspy Jamshed Taraporewalla of Alpharetta, USA; January 26

Keshmira Shapur Delkhah and Rohinton Sohrab Elavia; January 28

Shiraz Dara Vakharia and Dosu Rohinton Sarkari; January 28

Farida Dhanjishaw Cooper and Shahrugh Rohinton Bhathena of Vasai; January 30

Naazneen Adi Engineer and Mahiyar Naval Engineer; January 30

Yasmin Sam Deboo of Navsari and Sharugh Tehmurasp Dumasia; January 31

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Jal Naoroji Driver (85),

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December 31
Makki Shiavux Mistry (69),
84, Satnam Apts, Opp
World Trade Centre, 93,
Cuffe Parade, 400005;
January 1, 1999
Minoo Framroze Wadia (67),
Chaman Chmbs, 1st Marine St,
New Marine Lines, 400020;
January 1
Khodadad Khodabux Irani
(75), 586, Chira Bazar, J. S. S.
Rd, 400002; January 2
Aban Keki Pardiwalla (48),
Doshbai Jehangir Home for
Aged, Masina Hosp Compd,
Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
January 2
Banu Soli Anklesaria (62),
D/10, Malegamwalla Bldg,
M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016;
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(85), 25/H, Wellington
Catholic Clny, S. V. Rd,
Santacruz (W), 400054;
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(83), 6, Dhandadina Hse, 6,

Jehangir Daji Cross Lane, Off
Sleater Rd, 400007; January 5
Phiroze Sheriar Tavadia (63),
19, Maradia Bhavan, 6th
Khetwadi Lane, 400004;
January 5
Freny Phiroz Bamji (78),
20/D, Wimbridge Hse,
N. Bharucha Marg, 400007;
January 7
Mehroo Jehangir Driver (74),
65/A, Cote D'Azur, Bhulabhai
Desai Rd, 400026; January 7
Roshen Framroj Kurwa (83),
Pundole Bldg, Sleater Rd,
400007; January 7
Bomi Framroze Pithawala
(71), O/7, Dalal Est,
Lamington Rd, Bombay
Central, 400008; January 7
Minocher Ardeshir Daruwalla
(86), D/62, New Chandra
Co-op Hsg Soc, Veera Desai
Rd, Andheri (W), 400053;
January 8
Jerbai Dadabhoy Dumasia
(77), 15, Girija Sadan,
Khetwadi 7th Lane, 400004;
January 8
Jamshed Ratansha Hilloowalla
(71), Bhivandiwadi Bldg,
583/2, Girgaum Rd, 400002;
January 8
Maneck Jalejar Taraporewalla
(67), C/o N. P. Variava, H/29,

Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; January 8
Dhun Minoo Sahiar (85), 24,
Tara Manzil, 1st Dhobitalao
Lane, 400002; January 9
Naju Keki Contractor (82),
607/B, Sohrab Hse, Khareghat
Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
January 10
Hillamai Pestonji
Pochkhanawalla (92), F. S.
Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes
Rd, 400007; January 10
Aloo Merhwanji Sagar (86),
C/o A. S. Baria, 602, Garden
View, Somnath Lane, Bandra,
400050; January 10
Mani Phiroze Boomla (66),
3/62, Kailash, S. V. Rd,
Borivli (W), 400092;
January 11
Noshir Dhunjisha Chhayela
(57), 6, Mehta Bldg, M. Pasta
Rd, Dadar, 400014; January 11
Sheriar Behram Irani (65),
Irani Dharamshalla, Pandita
Ramabai Marg, Gamdevi,
400007; January 11
Maneckji Minocher Patel (52),
Raiyanigram Bldg 4,
Sadvihar, B/205, Simpoli,
Borivli (W), 400092;
January 11
Roshan Cawas Sethna (68),
M3/34, Cama Park, Cama Rd,

Andheri (W), 400058;
January 11
Shiavak Eruchsha Shroff (85),
201, Robert's Ark,
Chinchpokli Rd, Off Hill Rd,
Bandra, 400050; January 11
Phirozsha Behramji Bhagat
(72), 4, Panday Sanatorium,
Wodehouse Rd, Colaba,
400005; January 12
Tehmina Kaikhusroo
Daruwalla (72), Mehta Bldg,
Khan Est, Chotani Rd, Mahim,
400016; January 12
Jehangir Shavakshaw
Pithawala (77), Jelubai Wadia
Bldg, 84/85, Lady Jehangir
Rd, Matunga, 400019;
January 12
Sheroo Khurshed Anklesaria
(74), 153, Jaswanti Niwas,
Mody St, Fort, 400001;
January 13
Piloo Malcolm Malcolm (82),
B/12, Jaiphal Ter, K. V. N.
Naik Marg, 400036;
January 13
Jal Dadabhoy Mistry (82),
147/A, Adam Mhl, Wadia St,
Tardeo, 400034; January 13
Ruby Rasi Sachinwalla (46),
386/B, Jagmohandas Bldg,
J. Shankerseth Rd, 400002;
January 13
Coomi Jal Tarapore (79), 7,



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Lady Dorab Tata Bldg No 2,
Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra,
400050; January 13
Shirinbai Jamshedji Elavia
(86), 21, Old Khareghat Clny,
Hughes Rd, 400007;
January 14
Jal Jehangir Kaka (84), A/2,
Palm Springs, Cuffe Parade,
400005; January 14
Meheroo Pirojshaw Mistry
(75), C/o Adi Lovji Doctor,
Hongkongwalla Cooper
Chawl, 9th Lane, Khetwadi
Back Rd, 400004; January 14
Jeroo Adi Modi (88), 622,
Palia Mans, Lady Jehangir Rd,
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
January 14
Homi Ruttonji Kalyaniwalla
(88), 41, Subh Nivas,
Karelwadi, Thakurdwar,
400002; January 15
Xerxes Behram Kerawalla
(46), Sidhwa Bldg, Princess St,
400002; January 15
Noshir Kaikhushroo Lali (84),
A/5, Rustom Palace, Tardeo,
400007; January 16
Homai Hormusji Sagar (91),
Type III, D/16, Tata Clny,
Mahul Rd, Chembur, 400074;
January 16
Maneck Nadirshah Sarkari
(70), 2/18, Awabai Bldg,

Sleater Rd, 400007; January 16
Perin Homi Canteenwalla
(63), 14/3, Panthaky Baug,
S. V. Rd, Andheri (E), 400069;
January 17
Behram Savakshaw Talaty
(86), P-9, Cusrow Baug,
S. B. Rd, 400039; January 17
Minoo Sorabji Bagli (75),
Daswani Hse, Dhuswadi,
Dhobitalao, 400002;
January 18
Banubai Pirojsha Billimoria
(80), O/7, Ava Baug, Opp S.
T. Depot, Navsari, 396445;
January 18
Roshan Adi Elavia (60), A/19,
Dauri Ngr, Nehru Rd,
Santacruz (E), 400055;
January 18
Perviz Savak Gandevia (62),
Moti Mans, B.E.S.T. Marg,
Apollo Bunder, 400039;
January 18
Parviz Nanabhai Mehta (91),
A. Satya Bhama Nivas,
Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034;
January 18
Homi Shavaksha Mistry (84),
194, Talaty Bldg, Khetwadi
Back Rd, 400004; January 18
Dhun Doliha Pithawalla (76),
20-23, Patanwala Mhl, E. S.
Patanwala Marg, 400027;
January 18

Maneck Noshir Cooper (47),
Crown Mans, Forjett St,
Gowalia Tank, 400036;
January 19
Homi Merwanji Hakim (83),
16/17B, Rustom Baug,
Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
January 19
Homai Ardesher Lelinwalla
(65), Lam Bldg, Lower Parel,
400013; January 19
Najamai Rustom Malaowala
(95), 4/21, Tata Blocks, Sir C.
J. Clny, Tardeo, 400034;
January 20
Adi Dara Vakil (76), Vakil
Bglw, Opp Mission Church,
Dahanu Rd (E), 401602;
January 20
Jal Jehangir Khambata (88),
602-C, Indu Villa, Lady
Jehangir Rd, Matunga,
400019; January 21
Cooverji Shavaksha Mody
(81), B-4, Ness Baug, Nana
Chowk, 400007; January 21
Banoo Dorab Dahivala (72),
Kerawala Bldg, 789, Jame
Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny,
Dadar, 400014; January 22
Dinbai Burjorji Daruwalla
(99), 3/1, Wadia Baug, Parel
Tank Rd, 400033; January 22
Soonamai Aspiandiar
Ghadially (98), F-51, Cusrow

Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039;
January 22
Coomi Cawasji Italia (88),
Malegamwalla Bldg 2,
Chhotani Cross Rd, Mahim,
400016; January 22
Najamai Meherji Kotwal (87),
C-36, Samadhan Co-op Soc,
Chakala, 400099; January 22
Keki Jehangirji Limbiwala
(79), Jijibai Bldg, Khan Est,
Chhotani Rd, Mahim, 400016;
January 23
Freni Dinshaw Bhot (63),
F/24, M-2, M. Cama Park,
Cama Rd, Andheri (W),
400058; January 24
Jeanie Firoze Khambatta (83),
F-17, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; January 25
Goolcher Dadabhai Mehta
(96), Old Master Bldg,
275/L, Tardeo Rd, 400007;
January 25
Pilan Minocher Mullan (84),
303, Namdar Hse, 89, Hill Rd,
Bandra, 400050; January 25
Shapur Maneckshaw Sidhwa
(56), 102, Parsi Salsette
Association, Pump Hse,
Andheri (E), 400069;
January 26
Ratanbai Dadabhoy
Daruwalla (82), Dr Dadina
Bldg, Jehangir Daji St, Sleater

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Rd, 400007; January 27
Keki Behramsha Balsara (83),
B-16, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd,
400004; January 29

Darab Jehangir Jussawalla
(84), B21-22, Darshan Apts,
Mount Pleasant Rd, 400006;
January 29

Aloo Ardeshir Polishwalla
(82), D. Karai Est, Tardeo Rd,
400007; January 29

Homi Dinshaw Tata (63), F-5,
Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd,
400004; January 29

Soli Byramji Udwadia (74),
97B, Tri Sandhya, Dadasaheb
Phalke Rd, Dadar, 400014;
January 29

Shivak Rustomji Mistry (74),
629/B, N. J. Wadia Dispensary
Bldg, Homavazir Rd, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014;
January 30

Edalji Pallonji Dadachanji
(94), 39/B, Gool Mhl, Sleater
Rd, 400007; January 31

Peshotan (Pesi) Ardeshir
Mistry (76), 275/H, Motlibai
Wadia Bldg, Zoroastrian
Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400007;
January 31

Behram Ardeshir Nentin (93),
Peace Haven, 49/50, Malcolm
Baug, Jogeshwari (W),
400102; January 31

Jehanbux Hormasji Patel
(76), G-42, Cusrow Baug,
S. B. Rd, 400039;
January 31

CALCUTTA

BORN

A boy, *Danesh*, to *Shenaz*
and *Jubin Dabir*; January 4

DIED

Shirin Minu Jila, mother
of *Darius* and *Pervin*
Darius Nusserwanji;
December 10, 1998

Aspy Jal Dandiwala, husband
of *Roshan* and father of
Shahruk and *Kaizad*;
January 2, 1999

Banoo Shapurji Guzder;
January 18

Jeroo Sherosh Kaikobad,
mother of *Pervez* and *Gaver*
Chatterjee; January 25
Mani Hoshang Engineer,
mother of *Parvez* and
Meheryar; January 31

JABALPUR

DIED

Noshir Ardeshir Batliwalla
(68), husband of *Mani* and
father of *Kerman* and
Jasmine Jal Engineer;
December 17, 1998

JHANSI

DIED

Najamai Dossabai Maneckji
(87); December 31

KATNI

DIED

Beji Cowasji Bajan (66),
husband of *Aban* and father of
Jeroo Kersy Modi, *Firoza Zarir*
Dalal and *Navaz Jehangir*
Daruwalla; January 14, 1999

NAVSARI

MARRIED

Navaz Suratia of Birmingham,
UK, daughter of *Amy* and
Kali, and *Zubin Contractor*
of London; December 31, 1998

POONA

DIED

Manijeh Feroze Boomla (73),
C/9, Konark Ngr II, 411014;
December 5

Erachshaw Dinshaw Desai
(85), 605, Kumar Korner,
Convent St, 411001;
December 10

Dhuan Jehangir Dastur (86),
857, D. M. Rd, 411001;
December 22

Hilla Faredoon Dinshaw (98),
3/A, Castellino Rd, 411001;
December 23

Gulbai Meherwanji Kharadi
(87), 5/B, Survey No 247+14 B,
Deccan College Rd, Yerawada,
411006; December 24

Piloo Khodadad Yazdabadi
(77), K. P. Towers I, Fatima
Ngr, 411013; December 25
Nargesh Bhadr Gandhi (80),
613-A/3, Nana Peth, 411002;
December 30

Noshir Nariman Dastur (82),
850, D. M. Rd, 411001;
January 5, 1999

Behram Shapur Irani (79),
Talukdar Bldg, 177, M. G. Rd,
411001; January 5

Bomanshaw Munchershaw
Daruwalla (93), 13, Mody
Clny, Synagogue St, 411001;
January 7

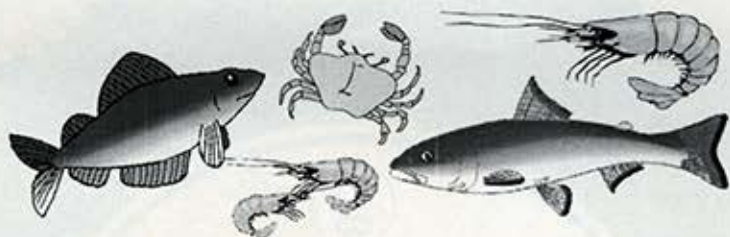
Meheru Noshir Adajania (76),
C-3/302, Natasha Enclave,
NIBM Rd, Kondhwa, 411048;
January 14

Burjor Aaderjee Nogama (73),
8, Bund Garden Rd, 411001;
January 14

Rati Edulji Unwalla (85), B/11,
Kumar Castle Soc, Convent St,
411001; January 14

Kaikhashru Kharshedji
Sunavala (102), 3/B, Hill
View, Salisbury Park, 411037;
January 15

Behram Jamshedji Katrak



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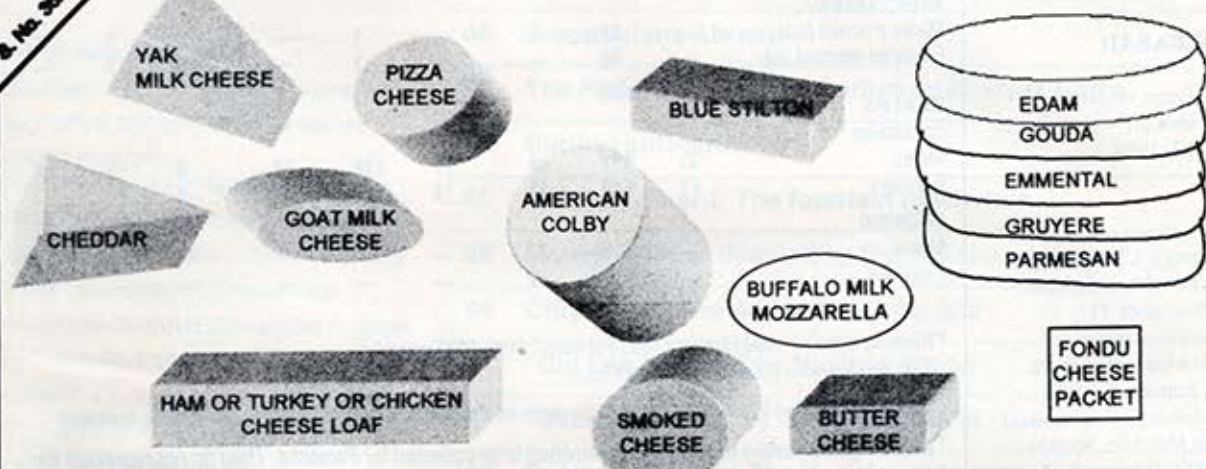
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(67), J/6, Sacred Heart Town, Wanowrie, 411040; January 20
Khorshed Jal Engineer (88), 17-B/24, Vishrant Soc, Vishrant-wadi, 411015; January 21
Jamshed Faramazian Irani (93), C/o National Stores, 2398, Sholapur Rd, 411001; January 23
Eruch Ijdiarji Sarandewala (80), G/11, Green Acres, Salunke Vihar Rd, 411048; January 25

SECUNDERABAD

BORN

A boy, *Yashaan*, to *Jerroo* and *Aspi Cawasji*; December 17, 1998

SURAT

DIED

Eruch Hosangji Chiniwala (84), Kela ni vakhar, Lalgate, 395003; December 31

Sorabji Rustomji Havaladar (77), Sorab Mans, Rastipura, Brhanpur; January 5, 1999

Savaksha Jahangirji Hillowala (81), Dehla Mohallo, Rustom-pura, 395002; January 5

Perinbanoo Naoroji Bajwala (85), Kooka Chawl, Rani Talao, 395003; January 6

Freni Rustomji Sarkari (80), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; January 7

Dhanmai Ardeshir Nariman (75), E. G. Meher Bglw, Somnath Soc, Ichhanath, 395003; January 9

Darabsha Kavasji Besania (80), Bartad, Tal Mahuva, Dist Surat, 394250; January 12

Pirojhai Rustomji Bhesania (97), Chandra Villa Apt, Vanki Bordi, 395003; January 16

Darabshaw Naoroji Tampal (75), Village Bartad, Tal Mahuva, Dist Surat, 394250; January 16

Parvez Darabsha Munshi (70), Gita Apt, Nanpura, 395001; January 18

Darayash Hosang Adibam (28), Navchetan Soc, J. P. Rd, 395003; January 21

Shavaksha Maneksha Mir (62), 6, Upasna Apt, Kharva Mohallo, Nanpura, 395001; January 26

Dali Faramji Patel (63), Village Vesu, Dist Surat; January 31

...

CANADA

British Columbia

DIED

Roda Jamshed Pavri (77), mother of Yezdi, in Vancouver; January 19

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o
BIRTHS									
Boys	7	115	7	2	2	1	3	47	1
Girls	7	92	6	—	5	—	3	34	1
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	51	262	42	1	15	—	—	18	—
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	37	—	—	1	—	1	2	1
Females married out	—	36	—	—	1	—	—	9	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	40	481	38	21	119	18	9	53	4
Females	43	513	43	19	110	11	4	47	1
CREMATED									
Males	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1998 (January 1998-February-March 1999 issues)

^oRunning totals for 1999 (January 1999 issue)

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.

Ontario

DIED

Kersi Dinshawji Doodha, husband of Coomi and father of Amie and Dolsie; December 29, 1998

IRAN

DIED

Esfandiar Khodadad Khosravi (85), father of Kiyan Pas-hootanizadeh; January 2, 1999

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED

Alloo Minoo Sidhwa (84), mother of Roshan Kapadia and Homai Anklesaria; December 17, 1998

UK

Essex

BORN

A boy, *Darius*, to *Erine* and *Jimmy Shroff* of Upminster, brother to Rhea; November 6

Herts

DIED

Rustom Byram Limbuvala (71), 11, Homefield, Potter End, Berkhamsted, HP4 2QX; November 7

Hounslow

DIED

Khorshed Keki Vania (82), 63,

Channel Close, Sutton Rd, Heston; September 29

London

DIED

Dinshaw Daruvala (74), 209, Ribblesdale Rd, SW16; December 1

Sorabji N. Sethna (95), 53, Musgrave Court, 110, Battersea Bridge Rd, SW11 3AN; January 9, 1999
Burjor Maneckji Magol, 31, Higham Hill Rd, E17 6EA; January 23

Middlesex

BORN

A girl, *Zara*, to *Kamal* and *Fershoster Patel* of Harrow; July 4, 1998

DIED

Homi Behramjee Austin (95), 47, Rose Court, Nursery Rd, Pinner, HA5 2AR; December 23

Peterborough

DIED

Roshan Homi Bulsara (67), 48, All Saints Rd, PE1 2QU; October 11

USA

California

BORN

A girl, *Jasmyn-Ava*, to *Shiraz* and *Jal Irani* at Yareka;

January 16, 1999

Colorado

BORN

A girl, *Yasmin*, to *Brandy* and *Phiroze Sethna* at Denver; August 30, 1998

Illinois

BORN

A boy, *Justin*, to *Gurpreet* and *Farokh Kianipour* at Chicago; January 10, 1999

DIED

Erachsha Fakirji Master, husband of Jer and father of Katy Mike Engineer at Chicago; December 29, 1998
Firoz Noshirwan Khory, father of Noshir; January 7, 1999

Kentucky

BORN

A boy, *Kaizad*, to *Neena* and *Cyrus Joshi* at Louisville, July 29, 1998

Missouri

MARRIED

Melanie Bacon, daughter of Jean and Richard, and *Shiraz Patel*, son of Roda and Khushroo at St Louis; January 2, 1999

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver



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