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Parsiana

July-August 1999
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Cover: Bombay University Convocation Hall

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"In the eye of..."

In the article "In the eye of a storm" by K. N. Dastoor (*Parsiana*, February-March 1999) I was appalled at the theological case made out against the donation of eyes as something a lay reader like me inferred to be a hindrance to the transmigration of the soul.

In fact, from the time the ancient Zoroastrians practised our religion in ancient Iran, to the current times, we have attached no importance to the body which is returned to the elements. We do though attach all the importance to the requisite prayers being performed for the first four days, the 10th, 30th and 365th day. That is why we do not construct mausoleums over the corpses.

Now, there are millions who go blind each year and many are in need of corneal implants. How can K. N. Dastoor preach a regressive, almost an anti-Zoroastrian, message not to donate one's

eyes, after death? It is better that a blind person sees light again than a vulture or a crow or a kite relishes our eyes.

To my knowledge, there is nothing in our scriptures against organ donations. It is such archaic and unscientific beliefs which disillusion our youngsters who are revolted by such suggestions, more so from the clergy. Maybe K. N. Dastoor draws a liberal inspiration from the *Vendidad* which states that any part/organ of the body once detached (from the body) is labelled *naso* which gives rise to the free exercise of the demon *druj-i-nasu*. That progress is the watchword of Zoroastrianism is abundantly evident in Yasnas 30.9 and 34.15. K. N. Dastoor's proposal puts the clock back by 1,000, if not 5,000, years.

The days of spare-parts surgery have already arrived and maybe almost every part of the body could go to a bank for its clinical storage.

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BEHRAM T. DASTOOR

"The three Parsi myths"

Brig N. B. Grant of Poona has invited the readers of "The Three Parsi Myths," (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 1999) to provide scientific explanations for three rituals amongst the Parsis of Bombay, viz drinking bull's urine (*taro*), diagnosis of death by the Doongerwadi dog and not permitting a non-Parsi to see a Parsi corpse after the last funeral rites.

I will restrict my comments only to the first two practices mentioned above. As far as drinking the *taro* is concerned, I must mention that I have noted that some priests ask the parties undergoing the ceremony to only touch the vessel to their lips. Thank God, there are at least some sensible priests in our community. Only the gullible would drink the dark, foul-smelling liquid. The earlier this practice is dispensed with the better. And why wash the hands with only Dettol or Listerine when many bactericidal soaps are available in the market?

Viewing of the corpse by a dog is an entirely different matter. I don't think it has anything to do with the diagnostic capabilities of a dog. In any case how can a dog detect life or death from a distance of at least 10 feet when even a

medical practitioner has to sit by the side of the patient to feel the pulse or hear the heartbeats with a stethoscope? I am of the opinion that this ritual signifies a farewell from this earth from man's best friend.

Let me also take this opportunity to comment upon an erroneous belief amongst some Parsis that modern electric gadgets like tube lights, exhaust fans, ceiling fans and pedestal fans should not be used in fire-temples.

Ms Pervin J. Mistry of Toronto, Canada recently wrote a long article in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of April 18, 1999 contending that the electro-magnetic field of the electric gadgets clashes with and destroys the electro-magnetic field of the wood fire (she calls it the "aipee of the atash padshah") and this results in our ill health. If she knew that sitting in a dark, dingy, smoky and stuffy atmosphere in the fire-temples without the help of exhaust and other fans could lead to serious lung problems, Ms Mistry would not have written such an article.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

We Parsis seem to excel in the art of antagonizing others, by perpetrating certain uncalled-for, uncivilized and senseless acts/customs which may seem innocent or unintentional but are, nevertheless, enough to cause insult/humiliation/embarrassment to all concerned. One such act is forbidding non-Parsi friends to go near, cast their shadow and perform sezdo to their dear departed Parsi friends.

I have attended funerals of almost all communities, at different places in India; no one has ever prevented me from going near the dead reciting our brief prayers, if I wanted to.

With the passage of time and after realizing our folly, the *bahargamwalla* Parsis, residing outside Bombay, Bangalore and a few places in Gujarat, are permitting their non-Parsi friends and fellow-office-goers to attend funerals of their Parsi friends, to go near the dead and perform sezdo. This gesture of the *bahargamwallas* has proved their far-sightedness, liberalism, down-to-earth approach and common sense.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the community, in the past, acted magnanimously and are allowing the dead bodies of Parsi girls married outside the



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community to be consigned to the dokhmas! It is hoped that, once again, the same magnanimity will be shown and our non-Parsi friends will be allowed to attend the Parsi funerals and perform sezdo, provided the relatives of the deceased are agreeable. This will remove the irritation which exists now and foster better relationship and brotherhood amongst all communities.

DALJI GUNDEVIA

More "Parsi myths"

Apropos letters from Mr D. Gundevia of Bombay "Outlived the dokhmas?" and Brig N. B. Grant of Poona "The three Parsi myths" in your issue of April 1999, I am spurred to add my views on some more myths connected with our customs and rituals. I regret my inability to enlighten Brig Grant as there are no scientific or even plausible explanations for the myths stated by him.

The nirang is prepared from the urine of a white bull after subjecting the urine to some lengthy and expensive religious ceremony. I understand that while preparing nirang, urine from other ordinary bulls is mixed with the urine of the varasio to make up an adequate quantity. The dark port wine color imparted

to the nirang is due to conversion of a pigment urobilinogen present in the urine to urobilin. The nauseating ritual of drinking a small quantity of nirang as a part of the ablution process prior to the navjote and wedding ceremonies amount to consumption of an excretory product of another animal. It appears as repulsive as the practice amongst the Masais and other African tribes requiring for initiation into adulthood compulsory drinking of a decoction made up of a mixture of cattle blood and semen. The poor varasio leads a lonely life tied up in an enclosure without exercise, sex or company of other animals, although he is well fed in the true Parsi tradition with malido and daran. When a varasio dies, I am informed that his body is taken to Doongerwadi and buried next to a dokhma, after due recitation of geh sarna prayers. A Parsi Zoroastrian who opts for burial is denied geh sarna ceremony by the very same priests.

With the possible exception of the dokhmas in Bombay, almost all the other dokhmas in small towns in India (and earlier even abroad) are an anachronism. In Bombay, five dokhmas are situated in an area of 42 acres on top of Malabar Hill situated in the center of the

city, surrounded by posh high-rise apartments. Four other dokhmas are outside the Malabar Hill area and have been closed down for a long time. The dokhmas situated on the Malabar Hill are functional due to the fact that on an average three to four bodies of Zoroastrians are consigned daily and hence the carrion birds, vultures, find a regular and adequate quantity of food and due to heavy vegetation around the dokhmas are able to nest and breed in the vicinity away from noise and pollution. Such situations are not available in the vicinity of dokhmas situated in smaller towns, wherein the consigned dead bodies are left to rot and decompose. Periodically, the bones, non-biodegradable tissues, etc are collected and buried in a pit in a ritual called *astodan*. Why can't we from the beginning give a decent burial to a dead person? The present grave of Cyrus the Great is only an *astodan*, 2,000 years old, containing only the bones.

There are two myths connected with dokhmenashini. First, that the dead body is completely consumed within a few hours by the carrion birds. One has only to see "Wild Africa" on the TV channels of Discovery and National Geographic to realize how long it takes to consume

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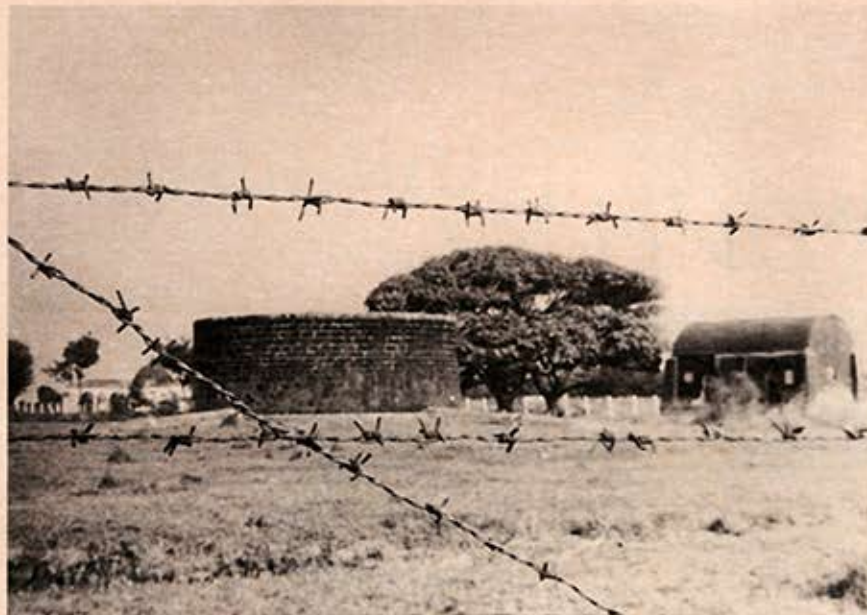
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A defunct dokhma in Gujarat

hours by the carrion birds. One has only to see "Wild Africa" on the TV channels of Discovery and National Geographic to realize how long it takes to consume a carcass even with plenty of predators and carrion birds. The second myth is that the bones are converted to a powder state by the hot sun rays. It is

relevant to know in this context that bones of dinosaurs which became extinct 65 million years ago are still found intact in the hot environment of the Wyoming desert in the USA (see "Looking forward," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, December 1995). Unfortunately, even educated Zoroastrians blindly believe in the wrong information passed on to them regarding the

ultimate state of the dead body in the dokhmas.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) incurs a yearly expenditure/loss of Rs 22 lakhs to maintain the dokhmas. Even the system of burials is not a practical proposition as the upkeep of an additional about 1,000 graves per year and the cemetery will be very expensive. The only logical solution is to accept the system of cremation in an electric crematorium which has no fire to defile as the dead bodies are rapidly burnt to ashes by the intense heat generated by the high wattage of electricity.

A booklet *Tower of Silence* published by the BPP in 1994 has a number of letters, mostly more than a century old from British and other foreign visitors extolling the system of dokhmenashini. All these invitees were shown only the verdant surroundings of the Doonger-wadi and none of them was given an opportunity to peep into the inside of a dokhma.

The other problem that the BPP will have to face shortly will be the replacement of the aging nassessalars who are the only people willing to undertake the grim job of daily taking the dead bodies inside the dokhmas. There are only 13

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nassessalars at present left as per the last count that I know of and due to our repulsive attitude of treating them as social outcasts, it will be extremely difficult to replace them as their children are looking out for greener pastures and marriages outside the community. No job in the world is so debasing as that of a nassessalar who day in and day out sees nothing except the grim and the ghastly interior of the dokhmas and the wailing of the relatives of the dead. In all religions, be it Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, etc, it is considered a privilege to carry the dead body of the dear and departed one to the ultimate resting place. We too can adopt this system if burial or cremation is taken up as our system of disposal of dead bodies.

What was accepted centuries ago as dokhmenashini is completely out of place in the way it is practiced currently in the cities, with the rapid urbanization and keen awareness for the preservation of a healthy environment with emphasis on pollution control. We have to be aware of the onslaught from the rapidly growing army of environmentalists and PILs (public interest litigators) and start thinking of either alternate ways of disposal of dead bodies, or if we intend to continue with our system of dokhmenashini, then we must be prepared to shift the dokhmas well outside the city limits at considerable expense to the community.

Any Zoroastrian who opts for burial or cremation is considered an infidel and is denied the usual prayers for the first four days. From the fifth day onwards, the deceased is accepted as a Zoroastrian and all the prayers and ceremonies connected with the first 10 days, monthly, six monthly, annually and thereafter are performed by the same priests who refused to do even a geh sarna ceremony. I have never understood this attitude of our priests and any explanation will only smack of hypocrisy and double standards.

On more than one occasion, I have been a witness to the most embarrassing situation, when a non-Zoroastrian who came from a long distance to pay homage and last respects to his departed Zoroastrian friend found that he was not permitted to see the face or even to place some flowers. No religion enforces such a cruel rule as all men are equal in the eyes of God. However, we permit a flea-ridden and mangy dog to see the dead body.

It is accepted that a marriage within the community has many advantages



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and should be encouraged as it brings together couples who are brought up in the same environment of a common religion, culture and way of life.

In certain cases inter-communal marriages occur due to personal reasons of the couple. In such cases it is imperative that such marriages are accepted if the girl retains her Zoroastrian religion of birth and the marriage is solemnized under the Special Marriage Act and not by any other religious marriage ceremony. Even in such cases, the girl (and not the boy) of such marriage is excommunicated and the children are debarred from accepting the Zoroastrian religion, although the non-Zoroastrian father has no objection to his children opting for the Zoroastrian religion. At some places, even the children of a Zoroastrian father and alien mother are debarred from entering the fire-temple till the navjote ceremony is performed, thus depriving the young children of knowing, learning and appreciating our own religion during their most formative period of life till the navjote is performed nearer the age of nine years.

The result of these senseless restrictions is that we are slowly but surely reducing our already depleted population. Prof Jamsheed K. Choksy has rightly stressed that "once a community declines in number, its revival is a pipe dream" ("How Iran became Islamic," Books, *Parsiana*, April 1999). Even one of our most respected trustees of the BPP has in an article cautioned us that within a few decades our number in India will be down to 30,000 to 40,000 and we might get a status of a tribe or protected ethnic group. Even at present we are only 0.0006 percent of the teeming Indian population. It is high time we set aside dwelling on our glorious past and work to ensure the survival of our small but still unique ethnic group. One of the most practical and sensible approaches, however minimal in impact, is to accept all children of mixed marriages into the fold of our community. This has become a vital issue as inter-community marriages are on the increase, even as much as 30 percent in some areas. Then there is our low fertility rate, compounded further due to late marriages.

I have no intention of suggesting radical changes in all aspects of our community life and rituals. Many of our rituals are practical and bring joy and happiness to us. These must be pre-

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served to keep the identity of our community and should form a template for our future generations to follow. At the same time let us remove our blinkers and be not afraid to discard unnecessary, impractical and out of time rituals and customs as we face the coming millennium.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

"Filling in the gaps"

In your issue of April 1999, a letter titled "Filling in the gaps," by Dr Ardeshtir B. Damania, California, USA refers to the Parsi owned shops at Khodadad Circle. Further to those that Dr Damania has mentioned, I would like to add three other names. There was one Aga Brothers where we would get evening snacks with lovely bhelpuri and Softy ice cream. Then there were two pharmacists namely Adie and Company, which still exists but the management has changed, and the other was Khushroo and Sons where today the noted shop of Babubhai Bhawanji stands.

In his letter Dr Damania also writes that Khodadad Circle is saved from being renamed. I would like to state here with pride that it is because of my father Mr Firoze K. Sholapurwala's efforts that this ghastly act of renaming the Circle has been prevented. He has been fighting for this cause for the last three decades with all his disabilities and with the family and other businessmen's support. It is because of his efforts that today the BEST buses display "Khodadad Circle" instead of "Dadar TT" as the destination. There was a plan to remove the Circle for easy flow of traffic but due to his zeal and enthusiasm, the authorities had to drop the idea of removing the Circle.

RUKHSHANA F. SHOLAPURWALA

"We have to learn from..."

In the February-March issue of *Parsiana* Mr Kobad Zarolia, president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, made some uninformed and petulant remarks about The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO). I feel it my duty to inform your readers and the community how wrong Mr Zarolia is in the views expressed by him ("We have to learn from the churches," Zoroastrians Abroad).

Despite the facts and the history of WZO's origin, working and finances, well-known and repeated for years, some Zarathushtis keep on raising them as questions again and again. They simply



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do not want to accept them, real as they are.

The UK Zarathushtis did not arrogate the title "world" for their organization. The community charged them with the task of creating a world body to fulfil repeated calls made by our World Zoroastrian Congresses, when the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) failed to respond. A committee of several respected Zarathushtis then representing Iran, India, UK, North America, etc worked on a charter to create the world body and incorporate it in the UK, in the aftermath of the Khomeini revolution. After consultations world-wide, WZO was established under UK company laws and later on charity laws, to serve the community world-wide.

Since then, many associations in India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, UK, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and even North America, have joined WZO, and through them, and even directly, the Zarathushtis living in their jurisdiction. I know many Zoroastrians who have joined WZO as members and many, many donors to WZO who consider themselves members of WZO. So the number of Zoroastrians supporting WZO could easily total and possibly

exceed Mr Zarolia's figure of 28,000 attributed rightly or wrongly to Mr A. Davar. Do such figures really matter?

A community is made up of individuals and legal entities like associations and federations. It is strong when both work together as one. WZO's operations are an object lesson to individuals and associations/anjumans to join forces and work together for the betterment of the community.

No, Mr Zarolia, WZO is not a welfare organization only. That is the label which those like you, who want to create a rival WCZF (World Council of Zoroastrian Federations), have given to WZO because they want to do a part of its work. In addition to its welfare work, WZO supports fire-temples, priests, trusts, their training, research on religion, education within the community, etc.

The work of representing and protecting the community with governments and international organizations, which Mr Zarolia conveniently prefers to ignore, has been done by WZO as successfully as its welfare work since its inception 20 years ago. Many Iranian Zarathushtis found refuge in the West due to its efforts. Since then, many Zarathushti lives

have been saved, or their properties protected by WZO's interventions with governments. To be effective, this work has to be done with diplomacy, tact and without publicity.

Mr Zarolia's view of WZO finances is also misinformed. Membership fees can hardly support WZO's many activities. It is the munificent donations of individual Zarathushtis, family trusts, etc that do so. In 1998, over \$ 1,000,000 was collected and channeled back for community activities. In addition, a Medical Benevolent Fund and a separate World Zarathushtian Trust Fund endorsed by a Zarathushti family for all activities of WZO, provide additional resources.

WZO's accounts are scrupulously audited every year by a well-known chartered accountancy firm and are published and sent to all WZO members along with an annual report. There is no "secret" or "hanky panky" as he suggests. This would simply not be possible under UK charity laws. As with all corporations, outsiders are free to ask for a copy, or scrutinize them at the corporate headquarters.

Despite all this work that our community's world body has done

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Mauritius

successfully for nearly two decades if Mr Zarolia does not want to accept it as such, then that is his privilege. But do you, Mr Zarolia, really want to cut off your Toronto community's nose to spite your face? Because that is exactly what you would be doing if you took out Toronto from the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America. Does your community back you? Or is it a threat to frighten other North American associations into not joining a restructured WZO, and despite a majority wish in our global community in its support, push them instead into joining a separate world body of federations and associations, WCZF?

The office bearers of WZO have shown clearly that individual membership along with association membership has worked very well for the past 19 years. Let us as Zoroastrians stick with this well-tried and tested format of The World Zoroastrian Organisation. Let the world community unite under a restructured WZO. Let us work together to make it strong. By doing so, we only strengthen ourselves and our future.

D. T. MARFATIA

"Resurrection of Parsis"

I came across an article "Resurrection of Parsis" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February-March 1999) by Roda D. Hakim of Baroda which has prompted me to write to you. This is an appeal to Ms Hakim and others like her not to misguide the other members of our community by writing something of which they are totally unaware.

Ms Hakim does not know what she is talking about when she refers to bringing the children of either parents married outside "into our fold."

The most important thing overlooked by those Parsis marrying outside is that bringing their non-Parsi children into our fold and thus increasing our numbers is not going to solve problems. What can be expected of their children when the parents themselves have drifted away from their own religion, being totally ignorant of its teachings? Intermarriages by Parsi men or women are not recognizable nor performable and, therefore, their children having any right to be inducted in the Zoroastrian religion does not arise. There should not even be a suggestion that children of intermarried Parsi women or men should have a right to be inducted, for there should be no discrimination be-

tween either sexes according to the Mazdayasni religion. No judicial decree was ever passed for allowing induction of children of intermarried Parsi men into the Zoroastrian faith. It is the biggest wrongdoing for, as the saying goes, "They know not what they're doing." (The Bombay High Court judgment of Justices Beaman and Daver states that children born of a Parsi father are considered Parsis — *Editor*)

Ours is not a dying religion. Even with the reduced number of members who still are staunch believers only of the Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion we will survive against all odds.

Our ancestors fled their ancient homeland for the sole purpose of preserving the religion of Zarathushtra and not for any materialistic or hedonistic motives — this is a covenanted trust and all of us are but trustee-custodians of this solemn legacy. We should, therefore, be able to respect these religious laws with the total faith and sincerity they deserve, instead of maligning them by disrespectful suggestions.

K. COLABEWALLA

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"Such are, indeed,
 The saviors of the earth,
 They follow duty's call,
 The call of love;
 Mazda, they listen
 Unto Vohu Mana;
 They do what Asha bids,
 And thy commands;
 Surely, they are
 The vanquishers of hate."
 "Such are, indeed,
 The saviors of the earth,
 They follow duty's call,
 The call of love;

*Translation by I. J. Taraporewala of Yasna 48.12 of
 Spentomard Gatha, Chapter IV*



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fine tradition of seamanship and it is well-known that in the days of wooden ships, there was a flourishing Parsi ship-building industry in this country. The Hindu colonization of lands across the seas — in Havana and Malaya, in Ceylon and Cambodia — bears testimony to the excellence of the Indian mercantile marine in the past and the qualities of navigational skill. What is perhaps not so well known is that even as recently as the last century, Indian-built ships played no little part in the merchant and fighting navies of Europe," wrote D. Radhakrishnan in December 1954.

In 1806, with the loss of the British warships, the *Fly* and the *Intrepid*, the Bombay Council ordered the building of a 74-gun ship in the Bombay Dockyard. It was completed by May 1810 and was launched on Tuesday, June 19. The *Bombay Chronicle* of June 23, 1810 describes her launching: "On Tuesday last His Majesty's ship, 74 guns, built in the new docks of this presidency by Jamsetjee Bomanjee was floated into the stream at high water, after the usual ceremony of breaking the bottle had been performed by the honorable governor Jonathan Duncan.

"In having produced this ship, Bombay Parsis are entitled to the distinguished praise of providing the first and only British ship of the line built out of the limits of the mother country, and in the opinion of very competent judges, the ship for beauty of construction and strength of frame, may stand in competition with any man-of-war that has come out of the most celebrated dockyards of Great Britain."

The master of the ship, Capt McArthur Low, wrote, "I have heard many of them declare, that no ship so highly finished, or composed throughout of material so good, had been launched from any of His Majesty's dockyards, or any yard in England, during the last 50 years, nor was the scarcity of good timber likely to admit such selection of that article for any one ship as was observable in this ship for many years to come. We have found her in all circumstances answer extremely well in my opinion better than any ship in which I have sailed hitherto."

During the American War of Independence in 1812, a young lawyer named Key sailed down Chesapeake Bay to obtain the release of an American prisoner held on board an English warship. Key reached the vessel just as the British



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began to bombard Fort McHenry. He too was detained as a prisoner.

All night from the deck he watched bursting bombs explode over the distant fort. In the flashes of light he could see the American flag still floating. Toward morning the firing ceased. In the darkness, Key had no way of knowing which side had been victorious. When the 'dawn's early light' revealed the stars and stripes still waving in the breeze, Francis Scott Key wrote the first stanzas of the song. Later in the day, after his release from the English warship, he sailed back to Baltimore. It was then that he wrote the other stanzas. For his song Key borrowed an old tune that Englishmen had brought to the colonies. Because it sings of the flag, Key's song was named *The Star Spangled Banner*. It is now the national anthem of the United States of America.

That English warship was the *Minden* which was none other than the one Jamsetjee Bomanjee built in the Bombay Dockyard — the only British gun ship built outside Britain — and which gave America its national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*.

Brig N. B. GRANT

Poona

The prominent Patels

"There is an adage in Marathi, 'Where there is a Parsi, there is success (*Parsi téthé sarasi*)'", wrote Govind Narayan Madkholkar, a Maharashtrian chroni-

cler in his book *Mumbaiche Varnan* (History of Bombay) published in 1863. He pays handsome compliments to the Parsi community in the following words: "Parsis were in the forefront in trade and commerce and government establishments. They earned honor and respect both from the government and the people... They converted adversities into opportunities by their sheer enterprise, ingenuity, adaptability and generosity. In the course of time, Parsis excelled in every field they entered. They owned nothing in the island when they arrived. But Parsis owned half of the Bombay island and city. In 1854 Parsis numbered 1,10,544."

During the Portuguese rule, one Dorabji, founder of the Patel family, was residing with his family. Dorabji was looking after the administration on behalf of the Portuguese.

During the East India Company's regime, Rustomji, son of Dorabji, helped the government by mobilizing the fisherfolk (Kolis) to repel the invasion by the Siddis of Janjira in 1692 when the plague epidemic broke out during which quite a good number of soldiers and people were killed. For his bravery the government conferred the title of Patelship upon Rustomji and made it hereditary. Rustomji Dorabji was liv-

Cawasji Patel (left) and Dorabji

Photos: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil



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the government by mobilizing the fisherfolk (Kolis) to repel the invasion by the Siddis of Janjira in 1692 when the plague epidemic broke out during which quite a good number of soldiers and people were killed. For his bravery the government conferred the title of Patelship upon Rustomji and made it hereditary. Rustomji Dorabji was living quietly in the island honored alike by the government and by the fisherfolk (Kolis) whose domestic disputes he was empowered to settle.

In later years, his son Cawasji became the Patel during the governorship of Hornby. He built the Tank near Bhuleshwar popularly known as Cawasji Patel Tank (C. P. Tank) and the road passing the Tank is still known as Cawasji Patel Tank Road. Besides, a street in the Fort area still bears the name of this great Parsi gentleman. Cawasji Rustomji owned large landed properties. He was respected by all alike. After the takeover of Thane from the Marathas by the English, Cawasji Patel was instrumental in its growth and development. He helped establish the Parsi settlements in the island. Besides, Cawasji Patel was himself one of

the big traders.

GOPINATH BHALEKER

Another sacred fire

An extract from a book I read here in Manipur, *Maid of the Mountains* by R. Constantine, may interest Zoroastrians: "The Loi scheduled caste is a privileged lot inasmuch as the caste Hindus, even royalty, confer a unique honor on them. Most of them live in a hamlet called Andro. They keep a fire going which is considered sacred all over Manipur. It is a very interesting phenomenon. This is perhaps the oldest manmade fire in India which has been burning without a break for centuries. Nobody knows when it was started.

"According to legend, a ruler by name Pana Ningthou (king) ignited the fire by rubbing flints. In days of yore, when people did not know how to make a fire they used to come here to take some for domestic use. It is now kept burning by firewood supplied by each household. The village Pardhan is in charge of the fire. A watchman is earmarked by every house in turn to keep vigil on it.

"Being the most sacred fire, it used to be taken by lighting a lamp for the coronation of the king. For other strictly Meitei public functions, the Andro fire is a necessary element. Its ashes are believed to have some medicinal qualities to cure certain skin diseases.

"The Andro fire deserves wide publicity. Such a phenomenal element as this is not known outside the state at all. It could be a tourist attraction of no mean interest."

Col M. D. COMMISSARIAT
Imphal, Manipur

Indians first and last

Ever since our forefathers landed on the hallowed shores of India nearly 1,400 years ago, we Zoroastrians have been unwavering in our allegiance and have contributed towards the growth, development and safety of mother India in no small measure.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, said about us Zoroastrians — "In numbers they are beneath contempt, but in contribution beyond compare." We Zoroastrians have always prided ourselves as being Indians first, Indians last, and everything else in-between.

For over a month now, the brave men of our armed forces have been fighting relentlessly, in the most difficult combat zones of the world, at heights of 15,000 feet and more, to safeguard our freedom, dignity and self-respect as

Indians. For our brave soldiers, death and sorrow are their companions, hardship their garment, determination and valor their only shield. As Indians, we must be united and undaunted in support of our gallant warriors who willingly lay down their lives so that freedom may flourish and we may live.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) appeals to Zoroastrians residing everywhere in India to extend a helping hand to our valiant soldiers, by contributing towards the welfare of the men of our armed forces and that of their families.

The BPP will receive and hand over all amounts collected to the concerned authorities. The BPP is proud to start the ball rolling with a contribution of Rs 5,00,000 from its own coffers. The management of *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* has very kindly agreed to publish every week a list given by the BPP in which the names of individuals contributing Rs 1,000 and more will be acknowledged.

Cheques and drafts may please be made out in the name of "National Defence Fund" and forwarded to The Controller of Finance, Bombay Parsi Punchayet, 209, Dr D. N. Road, Fort, Bombay 400001.

A temporary acknowledgement will be given by the BPP. Subsequently, receipts will be forwarded to the individual donors.

In conclusion, we urge every Indian to recall the words of Sir Winston Churchill in a speech made on October 29, 1941 — "Do not let us speak of darker days; let us rather speak of sterner days. These are not dark days; these are great days — the greatest days that our country has ever lived; and we must all thank God that we have been allowed, each one of us according to our stations, to play a part in making these days memorable in the history of our race."

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Dr. Prof. Meher Pavri for his great research on the Vendidad Texts -

ECOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS IN ZARATHUSHTRIAN AVESTAN TEXTS; DR. MRS. L. POONGOTHAI of Coimbatore — Thesis entitled CURE OF ILLNESS WITH REFERENCE TO UNIVERSAL DYNAMICS, **DR. PANDIT KHEMCHANDSHARMA**, for his extraordinary Thesis on THE SYSTEM



Upper: Chief Guest of Honour Field Marshal and Sam Maneckshaw being conferred the Kaikhushroo Ardeshir Master Q. C. International Memorial Award, with Ms. Khurshid Cooper, Justice Dinshaw Mehta (Retd.) and Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master-Moos, President Zoroastrian College, (seated in background L. to R. Dr. Hoshang Daruwala, Mr. Sorabji Godrej and Dr. Mrs. Shyamala Chandran). Lower: Lord Pandit Prof. Dr. Sir Anton Jayasuriya, Chairman Medicina Alternativa International conferring Award along with Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master Moos on Dr. Ms. Nataliya Singh of Russia.

OF THE NUCLEAR GROWTH AND LIFE GROWN UP FROM THE SAD-BRAHMA; THE COMPLETE ATOMIC STRUCTURE IN THE RIG VEDA; DR. B. LAKSHMI for her work on VEDIC FLOWERS BIO THERAPY; DR. S. C. SHUKLAJI for his work on ASTROLOGY; DR. THORNTON STREETER for his work on BIOPHYSICS; ELECTRO CRYSTAL THERAPY.

All Zoroastrian College Research Thesis and many other books are available from the College office address in Bombay.

Please write for the list of books and cassettes available***

***Every one of us has the duty to have the annual "Mukhtad" or Fravardegan Ceremonies performed for our dear late family members and friends - especially those who have no family members surviving who would have had these special prayer ceremonies performed for 10 days annually.

According to the birth death rate statistics published in Parsiana every year about 1200 - 1300 Zoroastrians die - many through old age between 70 and 100 years - and only about 300 are born. This puts a strain on the Agiary Panthakies who have to cope with the full first year after death ceremonies of all the persons who have passed away during the previous year. It is increasingly difficult to cope with separate tables and "Behra- (flower vases) for every individual "Asho Farohar", with separate "Baaj", "Afringan" "Furrokshi" and "Satum"(once, twice or thrice daily) for the persons who have passed away several years ago.

Agiary Panthakies are also facing the problem of finding enough "part time mobeds" - Athornan family men who have undergone the Navar ceremony and are working in jobs full time - to cope with the "Mukhtad rush".

Every one of us, as Zoroastrians have to face this problem. In the Fravardin Yasht Ahura Mazda reveals to Spitama Zarathushtra how the Holy Farohars come to the help of those who remember them and pray for them: Karda 1.1

"Mraot Ahura Mazdaao Spitamaai Zarathushtraai, aeva to zaavare aojascha khareno avascha rafnascha framrava, erezvo Spitama, yat ashaonaam fravashinaam ughranaam sivi-thuranaam yatha me jasan avanghe yatha me baren upastaanm ughtaao ashaonaam fravashayp"

Thus I declare to you O righteous Spitama, about the righteous powerful and triumphant Fravashis - with their strength and power, their glory and comfort, they came to my assistance, the powerful righteous Fravashis, helped me!

FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL ZOROASTRIANS WORLD-WIDE: FRAVARDEGAN CEREMONIES



Fravardegan ceremonies at the Zoroastrian College-March 99 being performed by Ervad Yazdi Karanjia.

(as they also help each one of us, who invoke their help by remembering them and praying for them.)

At Zoroastrian College we are endeavoring to cope with this Community crisis and solve the problem by tackling it in two ways:

1. To develop a good cadre of educated Zoroastrian Priests, we are providing the Athornan boys the possibility of being trained in the Zoroastrian College for the degrees of B. Phil; M.Phil; and Ph.D. In the long run a new generation of better educated Priests will provide a Spiritual backbone for the survival of the Zoroastrians world-wide.

2. At the Zoroastrian College building at (Sanjan) (the historical landing place in India of the Zoroastrians who left Iran after the end of the Sassanian Dynasty where the sacred Iran shah Atash Behram was consecrated by Mobedan Mobed Nereyosangh Dhaval) every year in March for 10 days before Navroze, the Fravardegan Ceremonies are being regularly performed. The Afringan, Farrokshi and Satum - morning, afternoon, and evening, are ceremonies which are jointly performed for all the Asho Farohars whose names are included in the long list of Yadgari Donations. The Baaj is individually performed for only certain names in the list.

ZOROASTRIAN COLLEGE can provide

this benefit for helping our community members world-wide. If you wish to have the names of any dear departed family member or friend included in the list of names of the Asho Farohars, for whom the prayer ceremonies are performed annually in March it is possible for you to do one of the following: (A) You may use the Yadgari Donation form available from College office address and send it together with cash or bank draft payable on any Bombay Bank in favour of SHAH BEHRAM BAUG SOCIETY to our Bombay College office address together with the names of the persons in whose Yadgari the donation is given. Please take care to state - Behdin/Osta/Osti/Ervad before the name of the person and father or husband of the departed person in whose Yadgari the donation is given: SEE FORM PAGE 211

e.g. Osti Perin, Ervad Nozer, or Behdin Xerxes Behdin Dara; or Osta Mormu-ji Ervad Kaikbushroo etc.

(B) If you prefer to give an annual donation amount instead of a lump sum Yadgari one time donation, you may give standing instructions to your bank to send a Bank Draft in favour of SHAH BEHRAM BAUG SOCIETY to our College Bombay office address and send a xerox copy of your bank standing instructions to us, together with the names of the departed family members or friends, as indicated above for inclusion in the list of Asho Farohars for whom the prayer ceremonies are to be performed. The bank draft should reach our office before January end each year.

The best way to remember our dear departed family members is to set a side a clean corner of our home for ourselves to pray and perform the ceremonies. But in this busy 21st Century many people do not find the time nor have the facility. Hence through Zoroastrian College this possibility is made available to all Zoroastrians world wide.

Please contact our College office at Bombay address for further details or by e-mail at mazcol@hotmail.com

We hope that this will be useful to you; and the work of the Zoroastrian College Avesta and Scriptural Studies Dept. will benefit our Zoroastrian Community members world-wide. Our College conducts courses in Avesta language and Scriptural studies headed by Prof. Sam Doctor.

Any interested persons can join these courses. Audio Video cassettes and reading materials are made available also (by e-mail and post) for those residing outside Bombay.

Turn to page 211

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self to the continuous expansion of the Schools to meet the ever increasing demand for better education. In this spirit the president of the Schools has embarked on an ambitious project of building a Co-Educational High School. A Fund Raising Committee has been formed to assist in the financial requirements of the project.

The Co-Ed School will be housed in a new 27,000 sq feet building comprising 18 classrooms, two laboratories, a cooking class, a library, a computer room and administration services. The project cost is estimated at two crore rupees.

The success of this project depends entirely on the generosity of well-wishers who share the ideals for which the Sardar Dastur Schools proudly and unselfishly stand. This is an appeal to generously contribute to the Building Fund. Donations are exempt under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

A Remembrance Scheme for larger donations of five lakh rupees and above will entitle the naming of classrooms and facilities according to the wishes of the donor. Cheques are to be made in the name of "The Sardar Dastur Schools' Trust" and sent to the Trust office at 2,

Lt Col Tarapore Road, Poona 411001, Tel: 842630, Fax: 842660.

We will be happy to give more details of the project on request and welcome personal visits to the premises. My fellow members on the Fund Raising Committee and myself thank you in advance for supporting an invaluable cause.

TEHMI GRANT

Chairperson

The New Co-Ed School Fund Raising Committee
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For inquiries please contact Dr Silloo Bhagwagar, Tel: 2832955, e-mail:

silloob@bom5.vsnl.net.in or Ms Mehroo J. Mistry, Tel: 4147646, e-mail: kaivu@hotmail.com or Dr Jairam Ramani, Tel: 8343182 (clinic), 6242518 (res) or Dr Sangeeta Vengsarkar Shah, Tel: (mobile) 9820010047, 4461748 (clinic).

MEHROO J. MISTRY

Trade union briefs

We are compiling an *All India Directory of Trade Unions*. The *Directory* will include the names and addresses of office bearers, their mailing addresses, details of their political or other affiliations, information about the founders, etc. Besides, the *Directory* will include write-ups on major achievements as well as the blunders made by various trade unions. It will also contain historical developments in the field of trade unionism like the land struggle in Kerala, the takeover of Kamani by its employees, projects of people's participation like the Amul story, etc. Some portion of the *Directory* will be dedicated to the Who's Who of Indian trade unionism. In short the *Directory* will act as a chronicle on trade unionism in India, very useful to students, researchers and journalists. Further, it will feature various trade union crusaders – past and present, advocates and activists.

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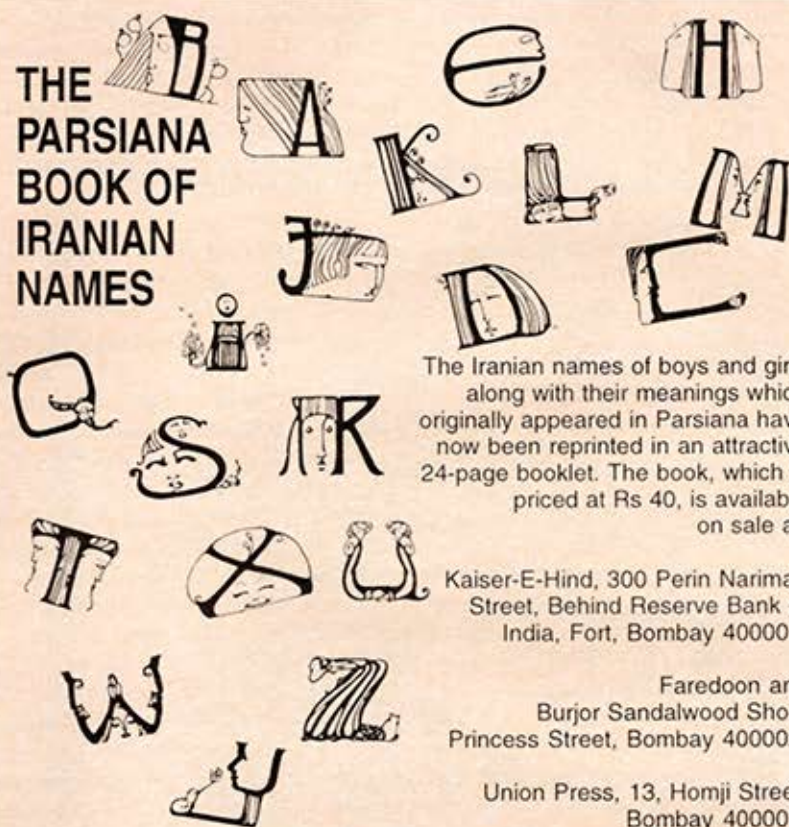
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Union Press, 13, Homji Street, Bombay 400001.

We welcome contributions from your readers in the form of material information towards the preparation of such a *Directory*. They may send us the names and addresses of trade unions, contact addresses of information sources, newspaper clippings, write-ups on trade union stories, etc. All trade unions are also requested to contact us at the Humanist Centre of Direct Communication, Room No 1, M. J. Jadhav Nivas, New Jimmibaugh, PO Katemanevli, Kalyan (East), 421306.

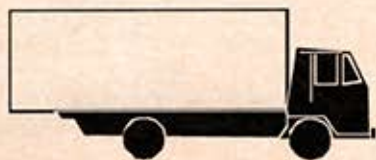
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Montessori training

We would like to inform your readers about the S. Z. M. Montessori Training Course conducted by Stri Zarthosti Mandal. The international training course in Early Childhood Education is run at the Sir Ratan Tata Institute at 30, N. S. Patkar Marg, Bombay 400007. On completion of this course, the person is eligible to take up a job in the USA. There is a great need for A. M. I. (Association Montessori Internationale) teachers and jobs are easily available. Please inquire at 3679161/62 or 3802781/82.

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Director, Sir J. J. College of Commerce

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ment projects. This positive prevention initiative teaches young people specific strategies and skills like self-discipline, self-confidence through better communication, improving peer relationships, developing critical thinking skills, taking responsibilities, setting goals for healthy environment at home and office, commitment to a vice-free life in pursuit of honesty and integrity. Quest helps kids develop skills. Quest is a comprehensive educational program that helps young people deal with the challenges of our changing world. Teachers are the key in creating rapport and confidence. The teacher's role calls for a delicate balance between giving students structure and guidance, and allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning. The program calls for a mandatory teacher's training policy. This means that Quest programs are not for sale to schools. The teachers are trained at a three-day workshop conducted by trained members of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and given reference materials and teaching aids. The program is now actively supported by the Education Department, Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation not only in schools having English medium but even in municipal schools having

continued on page 212



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Events and Personalities

Pledge to protect

"We hereby pledge to make our best endeavors, individually and severally, to ensure that care for mother earth and nature becomes the inspiration governing human thought and action in the future," noted the concluding sentence of *Prithvi Sankalp* or the pledge read out by Delhi based religious scholar Piloo Jungalwalla at the National Consultation on Religion and Conservation. The function on April 21, 1999, on the eve of Earth Day which is observed throughout the world to remind mankind of its indebtedness to mother earth, was held under the joint auspices of the World Wide Fund for Nature — India (WWF), the Temple of Understanding, the People's Commission on Environment and Development, and the World Conference of Religions for Peace at the Pirojsha Godrej National Conservation Centre, New Delhi which is the headquarters of WWF — India.

The meet which was supported by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests was considered an event of great significance as for the first time representatives of 10 of the world's major religions came together for the cause of saving the earth, noted a press release issued by Raghuvansh Saxena, manager, Network Services. Representing the Zoroastrian faith were Sohrab Godrej, president of WWF — India, Delhi Parsi Anjuman president Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Jungalwalla and her former pupil Dr Shernaz Cama who read a paper on "Conservation from the Zoroastrian point of view." "Linking religion to conservation is a relatively new concept in environmental education and

practice. It tends to attract the greatest community support as it strikes a deep-rooted chord in man's sacred beliefs."



Cama (at the mike) stressing on interdependence of all creation

according to their write-up.

"We pledge ourselves to protect and honor this bountiful earth which gives us sustenance, the sacred waters and plants and all animals, wild and domestic. We honor the sun with love and devotion as also the consecrated fire, emblem of truth, which destroys evil and illuminates our path through life. May the fravashis (guardian spirits) of the righteous come to help all humankind through fragrant breezes and sweet-scented flowers. As followers of Zarathushtra may we never forget this pledge," was the Zoroastrian commitment at the Consultation.

"At the heart of Zoroastrianism lies the doctrine of the interdependence and unity of man and the creation," stressed Cama in the course of her speech. "Zoroastrianism places great responsibility on man...The defeat of evil and the

renewal of the good world can only come about through the conscious choice and effort of each individual to preserve and protect this earth.

The call to action stresses the fact that mere meditation upon spiritual problems is insufficient; the spiritual battle is not to be fought in cloistered retirement but in the struggles and suffering of the everyday experiences of the world... Despite stress on duty, Zoroastrianism is a faith full of joy... The unity and wholeness which is preached shows that both spiritual and material worlds are intimately linked for both are part of a universal process of harmony that was marred by the corruption introduced by evil..."

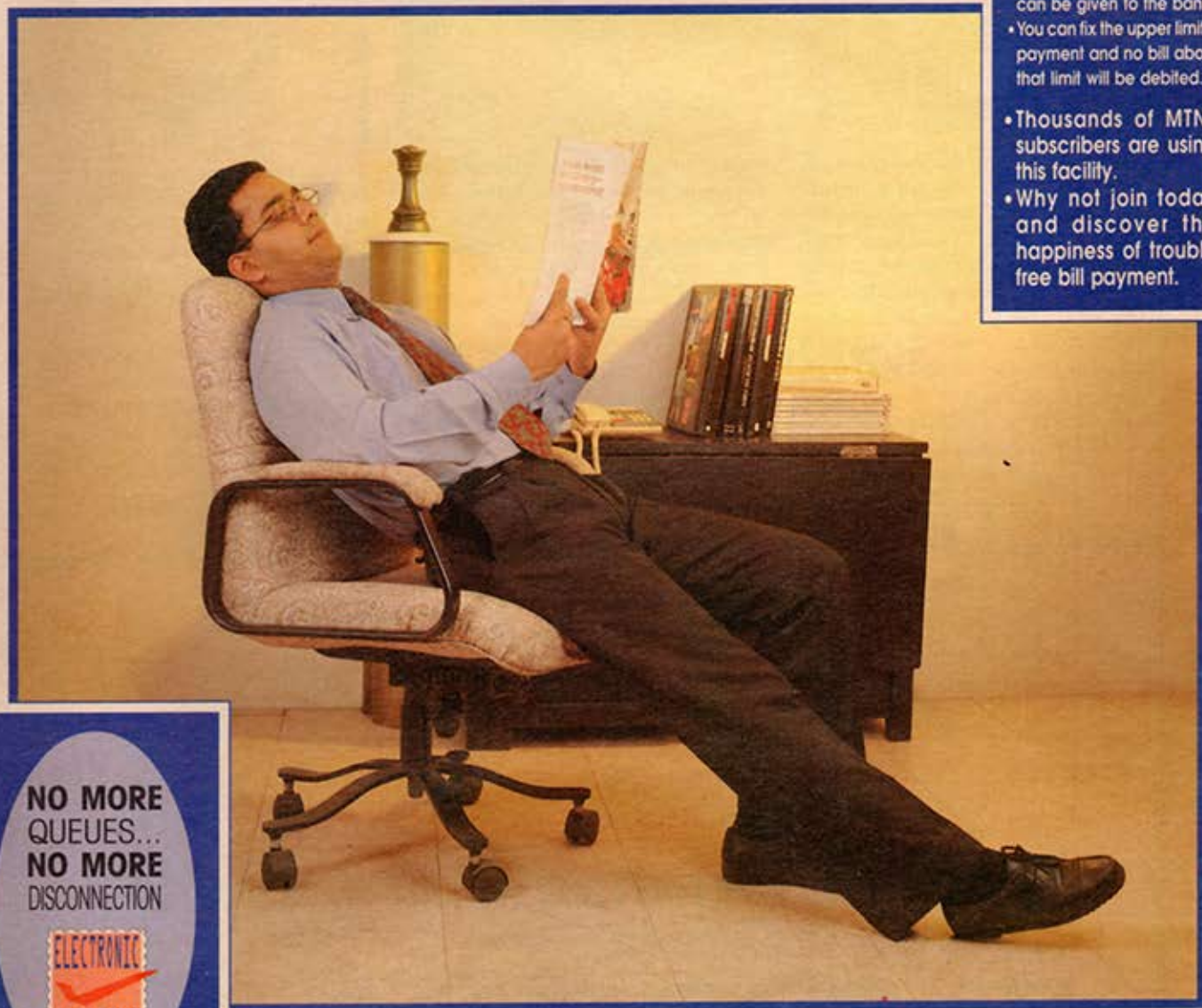
Educated priests

The training imparted at a madressa should be such that the students feel inclined to pursue a priest's vocation, impressed Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal when addressing the gathering at the annual day celebrations of Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa. In present times when there is greater emphasis on secular education, running a madressa is difficult, observed Kotwal who commended the dedication of the teachers, noted the press release issued by Ervad Parvez Bajan, joint honorary secretary of the Athornan Mandal, giving the highlights of the function.

Whilst congratulating the madressa for its eight decades of service to the community and for fulfilling its mission of providing educated priests to the community who are well versed in the scriptures, religious ceremonies, traditions and history, chief guest Khorshed

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Bharucha, principal of Dadar's J. B. Vatcha High School for Girls, distributed prizes on the evening of December 19, 1998. Excellence in *bhantar* (recitation of prayers), school studies, Avesta language, religious knowledge and sports were among the categories where good performance was rewarded. A special felicitation was reserved for 23-year-old Ervad Darayus Parvez Bajan, an ex-student of the Madressa, who besides qualifying as a cost accountant, chartered accountant and company secretary, has been involved in the perfor-

mance of religious ceremonies like nirangdin, boi in an atash behram, consecration of fire-temples, etc. He was presented a cheque of Rs 10,000, a shawl and a plaque at the hands of his ex-principal Ervad Rustomji Panthaki. A further reward of Rs 25,000 came to him from Dinshaw Tamboly of the World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust.

The present principal of the Madressa, Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia, conveyed his satisfaction with the progress of the students and reported that the Madressa is growing from

At the annual day celebrations of Dadar's Athornan Madressa (from left) Parvez Bajan, Kotwal, Neryosangh Turel and Karanjia Right: Darayus Bajan receiving plaque from Panthaki

strength to strength with the support of the trustees, managing committee members, parents, staff, donors and well-wishers, and the management of The Dadar Parsee Youths Assembly High School.

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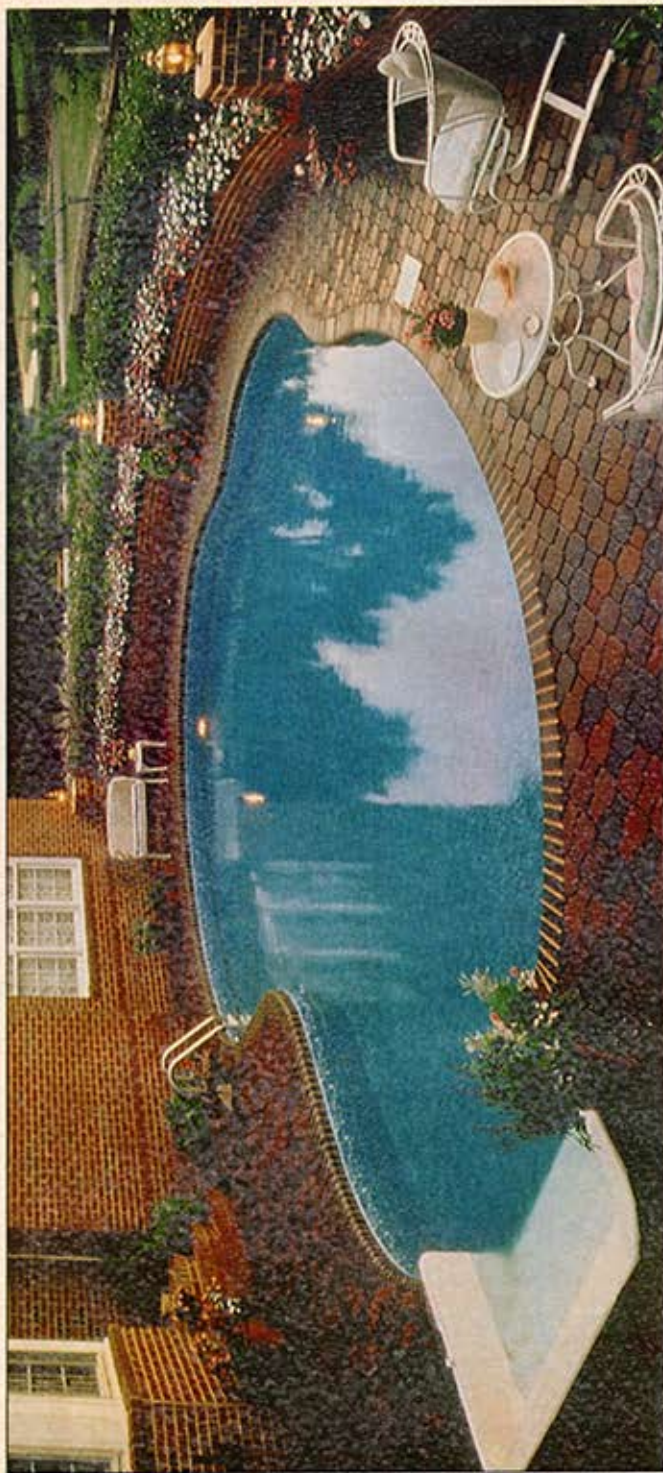
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students then performed a musical item choreographed by Roshni Dadachandji enacting the meaning of the *Kem na Mazda* prayer. The finale of the evening was the hilarious play *Agiary ni etiquette*, staged by the Madressa students under the direction of Silloo Mahava.

Religious zeal

The central hall of the Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy Adaran at Adajan was packed to capacity to honor its panthaky, Ervad Noshir Pirojsha Turel who is known to have performed 75 nirangdin ceremonies. Joining in the felicitation organized by trustee Noshir S. Dabhoiwala on the occasion of the agiary's 173rd anniversary on May 8, 1999 were representatives of nearly 30 Zoroastrian religious and social organizations like the Adajan Parsi Anjuman and the Surat Athornan Mandal, notes a write-up sent by Soli Gandhi of Surat.

Present on the occasion were Dastur Noshirwan Dastur of Surat who commended Turel's religious dedication, and president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat Dr Sam Bhacca who recalled the nirangdin ceremonies performed by many generations of the Turel family.

Master of ceremonies Rusi Besania



At the Adajan Adaran function (from left): Dabhoiwala, Bhacca, Dastur, Turel and Besania

highlighted Turel's record of service to the fire-temples in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Belgaum, Siganpore and Surat. While acknowledging the many floral tributes and gifts presented to him Turel pointed out that due to financial reasons priests are constantly on the move. Inadequate accommodation, salary, perks like medical and travel allowance or

education facilities for their children prompt mobeds to find better jobs, he noted. Turel gave credit to his mentor Ervad Rustomji Panthaki for giving him a good religious foundation and members of the Turel family who have always assisted him.

Technical model

Beginning June 1999, the Patuck Technical High School and Junior College was to admit students enrolled by the Yeshwantrao Chavan Memorial Open

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Celebrating the 65th anniversary of the Patuck Technical High School and Junior College (from left) Colah, Julio Ribeiro, Mody, Patuck, S. Parab and Goiporia

development and allied activities.

The institute had its humble beginning in the Model Industrial School started with a handful of poor and deserving students by the late Rustomji Hormusji Patuck, entrepreneur turned technical educationist. Today, after 67 years the Trust named after the settlor manages a full-fledged Technical High School, Junior College (vocational and science with technical) and Industrial Training Institute with built-in workshop and infrastructural facilities under one roof at its premises on Nehru Road, Santacruz (East).

"A charismatic figure cast in the true Gandhian mold, what he (Patuck) conceived and put into practice nearly seven decades back came to be adopted later as the standard accepted norm at the all-India level as the main plank of the Center's new education policy, making him a perennial source of inspiration and a role model to generations of teachers and (students)," writes Mody. Pres-

University for laboratory practice and workshop training, being well equipped with the requisite staff and hardware, notes a press release issued by Prof Rustam Mody, director and chief executive officer of the Patuck Polytechnic Trust. The collaboration with the American Concrete Institute was to result in high-grade training in concrete technology with placement facilities for students from Patuck who have qualified as vocational technicians in civil engineering. "More such facilities are

being planned for other vocations in the future," adds the release.

Entrepreneurship development programs are regularly attended by the 70 strong faculty which has developed an "excellent linkage with industry...for which it was accorded national level recognition through the 1998 NCERT award for industrial linkage." Lately, the institution which caters to a student strength of nearly 1,600 was recognized as an all-India center for teacher training as well as a center for curriculum

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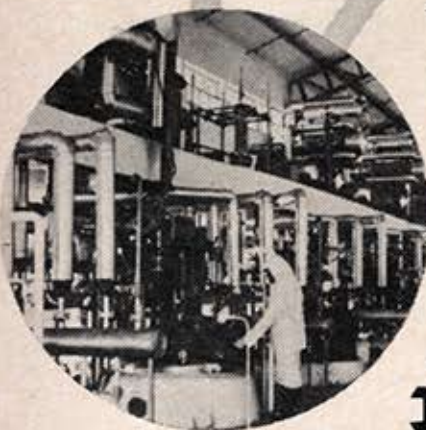
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ently on the organizing board are chairman Dr R. B. M. Colah, K. R. Alpawala, Adil J. Patuck, J. J. Goiporia and Mody with K. G. K. Kurup as principal.

Among the vocational courses they offer are accounting and auditing, auto engineering technician, building maintenance, electronics technology, maintenance and repair of electrical domestic appliances, mechanical technology, medical laboratory technician, tourism and travel techniques. During the '70s and '80s they had to switch over to Marathi and Hindi as the medium of instruction. Now it is back to English, with Hindi and Marathi at the secondary level. A relatively new development is the introduction of pre-primary and primary sections, with admissions being open to all on merit basis, irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

Substantial credit for the institute's diversification and expansion should go to S. K. Gala of Gold Coin Builders, acknowledges Mody, referring to the donor's munificent contribution of the Golden Jubilee Wing covering an area of 22,000 sq ft. The Old Boys' Association too which has been reactivated has been coming to the aid of its alma mater through the fund-raising programs it organizes, mentions Mody. For the successive stages of construction the organizing board has sanctioned an expenditure of Rs 31 lakhs, sponsors for which they hope will materialize in the form of Sir Dorab Tata Trust or Gala Foundation. Appeals are constantly being issued to finance the high-cost capital expenditure and modernization plans and projects which are on the anvil.

Beacon of light

"The P. M. Modi High School and Junior College has become a beacon of light in this short span of 20 years...where the children have a safe and happy atmosphere and enjoy coming..." notes the literature on the School which was forwarded to *Parsiana* by trustee Mariam P. Modi.

Established as the first English medium school in Mahabaleshwar on April 4, 1979 in the International Year of the Child, the institution "serves as a social advantage to the local residents who mainly come from low and middle income groups." The School was started at Stone House, Mahabaleshwar which was the residence of the late Peshotan Meherwanji Modi who requested his wife Mariam to open a school for the



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The new block at the P. M. Modi High School and Junior College

local children on the two-acre plot.

First they had only pre-primary classes and gradually they have been adding higher grades with now a junior college included, offering arts, science and commerce faculties. Students appearing for the Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary School Certificate examinations are governed by the Kolhapur Board. In the academic year 1998-99 they introduced the NOS

(National Open School) Delhi Board examination whereby students of Std X and XII can be exempted from Hindi and Marathi while opting for five subjects of their choice, states their press release. With the introduction of NOS, foreign and Indian students can save a year in Junior College. They have 400 students on their rolls with the teacher-student ratio being 1:15, according to their information booklet. Seventy stu-

dents from the low-income bracket are educated totally free of cost, writes Mariam Modi while boarders who can afford are required to pay Rs 45,000 per annum for the lower classes and Rs 75,000 for the higher classes. Parsis seeking admission can avail of "a special concession for them," she adds. Being a minority institution managed by the P. M. Modi and Amzel Educational Foundation, the trustees have allocated 50 percent of the seats in this co-educational English medium residential school-college to members of the minority community. Nargis M. Khambatta serves as the principal of this government-recognized unaided institution and Munira Patel as the administrator. In addition to Mariam Modi, the other trustees are: Saleem Fazelbhoj (chairman), Farida Kidwai, Dr Darius Modi, Rashid Omer, Tehemton Patel and Nazura Sattar.

"The aim of P. M. Modi School and Junior College is to impart not only education with the three 'R's' but to...make him rich in his cultural background, his religious instincts to be

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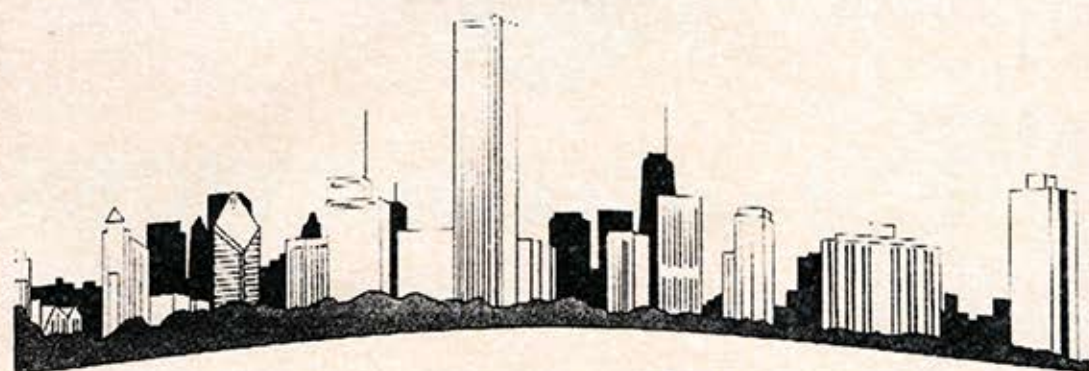
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roused in the right direction, (to teach him) to respect his elders and his progeny, have good morals and love for his place of residence and here in Mahabaleshwar nothing could be better than being close to nature and God...The ultimate aim...is to see that the highest type of education is imparted to the students to make them worthy citizens of India, irrespective of caste or creed," declares the literature of the School which has adopted for its motto: "Fiat lux (let there be light)." For further enquiries contact the School at Stone House, Mahabaleshwar 412806, Tel: 02168/60295, Fax: 2168/60626.

The literary spirit

"Our catalyst Behli as he is known to many in Karachi steadfastly served the community and his city right from the days of youth to his old age, in manifold ways on almost all communal institutions, however high or humble the role might have been. Now an octogenarian, yet of agile mind and of restless soul he breathes in (Bombay) but his heart is in Karachi, ever encouraging his friends here to serve and enliven the spirit of Karachi's Parsi community which he dearly loved and devotedly served and

gave away the best part of his life too," notes an introduction from the trustees of the Informal Religious Meetings Trust Fund (IRMTF), Karachi, referring to the dedication of Beheram S. H. J. Rustomjee, the author of the booklet *The Teachings of Zarathushtra* which the IRMTF republished in March 1999.

The booklet was initially published by the Fifth Parsi Youth Conference at Karachi in 1940 as part of a series of publications titled *Youth Tracts*. The author was then the vice-principal of the Bai Virbaiji Sopariwala Parsi High School for Boys, Karachi and subsequently its principal for 19 years. As a youth, he was "bursting with energy for social reforms and the well-being of the community (and) was also burning with zeal (to spread) the spirit of the most profound message of Asho Zarathushtra," continues the introduction.

The 30-page booklet was originally "dedicated to M.B.P. (Dr Maneck B. Pithawalla) my teacher and inspirer." Rustomjee also acknowledges his inspiration from other spiritual guardians in Karachi, Dastur (Dr) M. N. Dhalla and Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta. As



Rustomjee: an octogenarian with an agile mind and restless soul



noted Dhalla in his foreword, "*The Teachings of Zarathushtra* is the admirably written first tract of the series...May the *Tracts* that appear from time to time instil in the youth industrious habits and the spirit of enterprise, may they enthuse them to tread courageously the difficult path of their duty...may they lead them to attune their will to the will of Zarathushtra..."

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the three ringing notes of the *Gathas*, sounded on the clarion of simplicity and blown by the breath of sincerity, states Rustomjee in his chapter on the *Gathas*. "May we be the perfectors of the world," is one of the commonest prayers in Zoroastrianism, reminds the author in his chapter on "Zarathushtrian Philosophy." Zarathushtrian ethics, the God Head, the Amesha Spentas and the freedom of choice are some of the other concepts on which he enumerates.

Those who are well-versed in the *Shah Nameh* and those who have a nodding acquaintance with it would be interested to read *Shayaran-E-Shayar Persia's Immortal Poet Firdowsi Tousi*, states a foreword by Adi F. Doctor. The author, "Mr Aspiandiar Gotla deserves to be commended for penning a lucid and authoritative account of the life and times of Firdowsi with copious quotations in Persian ably translated and transliterated by him," mentions Doctor.

Lamenting that today's younger generation are quite unfamiliar with the *Shah Nameh* and the ancient history of Iran, Gotla writes in his preface, "The purpose of this little booklet will be fulfilled if it succeeds in reviving the interest of the young and old in our *Shah*

Nameh... Since there is no book on the life history of Firdowsi, I thought it fit to make an attempt by compiling a few words." By carrying couplets in Farsi, Gotla, a chartered accountant by profession, hoped to "introduce the general layman to the sweet Farsi language and its literature."

One never gets tired of reading or chanting verses from the *Shah Nameh*, Sohrab Dahmubed's opinion is quoted in the 21-page booklet. Dahmubed refers to Gotla's narration of Firdowsi's life and travails for 35 years in the hope of gains, only to be disappointed by Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi, and lauds the synopsis of the *Shah Nameh*.

"The man who dedicated the best years of his life to write the 60,000 beautiful and heart-lifting verses died heartbroken and penniless... What shines out are Firdowsi's virtues of persistence, dedication, generosity, ready wit and a higher purpose in life," mentions Noshir Dadrawala in his foreword. "Though born a Muslim, he glorified Zoroastrian Iran and immortalized its righteous kings," continues Dadrawala. "All Zoroastrians should salute this immortal bard for lighting that ever-brilliant flame of cultural

pride." The first edition of this booklet was published in November 1998 by Gotla (B-9, Anand Vihar, St Martins X Road, Bandra (W), Bombay 400050).

Combustion consultant

"My humble knowledge in research and industry helped me to invent a totally original technique, 'computerized fuel savings,'" writes Prof Tehmurasp Rustomji Sarkari of Poona, mentioning that his invention has resulted in substantial saving of petroleum fuels used in engines, boilers and furnaces. This technique has earned him recognition in the form of a national award in 1989 from the National



Sarkari: saving fuel

Research and Development Corporation, New Delhi. His invention has also found mention in the Marquis *Who's Who in the World* (16th and 17th editions, the latter edition will be published in 2000) and Marquis *Who's Who in Science and Engineering* (fifth

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edition), he states.

After serving the Surat Parsi Polytechnic for 12 years as lecturer and later as vice principal, and subsequently for eight years as assistant professor of Bombay's Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, and senior professor for 14 years at the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai, Sarkari opted to make a career with Thermax Limited, after 34 years in the teaching profession. At Thermax, he was head of their research and development department and later appointed technical director on the Thermax board until his retirement in 1983, notes his bio data. Thereafter he has been working as consultant on combustion and fuel efficiency for boilers, furnaces and power plants.

Fellow of the Institute of Plant Engineering and member of the Combustion Institute, Sarkari also enjoys writing plays and studying homeopathy. Following the demise of his father at a young age, Sarkari was dependent on different Parsi trusts to finance his education, all such aid being gratefully acknowledged by him.

More than medicine

At the three-day Universal Conference

on Integrated Medicine held in New Delhi last November, from the over 100 entries that were submitted, Dr Sohrab

J. Mehta's article was selected for the "Award of Excellence," notes a write-up by Capt Homi Dandiwalla, president-trustee of The Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman,

all praise for the selfless service rendered by this Allahabad resident. The International Institute of Integrated Medical Sciences also recognized Mehta as a fellow of the Foundation of Integrated Medicine while conferring on him the certificate of academic excellence.

In addition to managing his charitable homeopathic clinic (see "The honorable homeopath," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, May 1998) Mehta has to attend to his domestic work and outdoor commitments, leaving him little time for study and research, points out



Mehta: stickler for discipline

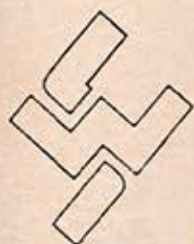
Dandiwalla. Yet Mehta sits late into the night to study. Known to be a stickler for discipline, principles matter more than fortune to Mehta. "Success cannot always be measured by the amount of amassed wealth," he believes, "The amount of love, helpfulness and sacrifices we have made for our fellowmen can also be our yardstick."

Even as a boy, Mehta reportedly did not read a single book on fiction, preferring instead to improve his knowledge of science, technology (with aircrafts and spacecrafts being his particular interest), arts and crafts, ingeniously enjoying his hobbies in fretwork, carpentry, metal and plastic work in his small workshop in a garage. He was also fond of inventing his own formulae in mathematics and performing chemical experiments in his home laboratory.

In March 1999 Mehta was honored with a letter from the Vatican saying that the Pope was praying for his noble intentions and invoking divine blessings on his work, according to Dandiwalla.

Vanishing vultures

Members of the Zoroastrian community view vultures with a certain element of awe having heard stories of



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how they speedily and neatly finish off the mortal remains of those consigned to the dokhmas. Just as the diminishing strength of the vultures is of concern to the community, the World Wide Fund for Nature — India too has expressed its dismay that vultures are vanishing from the Indian skies at an alarming pace. The January 1999 issue of WWF, the WWF India Network Newsletter in its cover story on "The Vanishing Skylords," has brought to the fore many little-known facts about this species.

Being "nature's disposal squads or 'incinerators' vultures have a definite role to play...especially in preventing outbreak and spread of infectious diseases by appropriating highly decomposed carcasses," notes the article by Dr S. M. Satheesan. And whilst they may be equated with predators, vultures are supposed to be shy birds who are afraid of men and would not attack man or livestock. As elaborates the article, vultures get their food from carnivore kills in forests and flayed carcasses and meat at primitive slaughter houses, carcass dumps, carcass processing centers and bone mills.

There are known to be eight varieties of vultures: Red-headed (Indian King or Pondicherry) Vulture; Cinereous or European Black Vulture; Asian White-rumped or White-backed Vulture; Indian Long-billed Griffon; India Fulvous or Eurasian Griffon; Himalayan Griffon; Indian Scavenger or Egyptian Vulture; Bearded Vulture. From the descriptions provided of these different vultures, it would appear that the variety sighted at Bombay's Doongerwadi is the Asian White-rumped or White-backed Vulture.

Loss of their natural habitats including roosting and nesting sites, felling of trees used by vultures to permit urban constructions, modernization of slaughter houses and improvement of civic amenities which bans dumping of carcasses has resulted in loss of food for the vultures. Aircraft bird hits, electrocu-



ILLUSTRATION: SURESH PATEL

tion, poisoning from pesticides and pollutants are the other reasons cited for their fast disappearance. Vultures are believed to fetch a good price in the international market with some of them being exhibited at zoos and museums and others employed in circuses, mentions the article.

Natural habitats of vultures have been and are being destroyed due to developmental projects, commercial activities, local community pressure, states the article recommending a strict ban on capturing and killing of vultures, identifying the remaining habitats of vultures, setting up feeding stations for their convenience, providing artificial perching, roosting and nesting sites, and furthering research.

Vulture enthusiasts who are known as gypsophils are therefore convinced that not only do vultures have a right to live on earth but mankind's future is intrinsically linked to their survival.

A recent article in *The Times of India* of June 23, 1999 declares that "vultures have unwittingly contributed to dramatize the English language...the much maligned vulture...ends up denoting a contemptible person who preys upon or exploits others... the term 'culture vulture' is used to describe a person who is interested in the arts to an obsessive degree." Vultures on the whole have been more sinned against than sinning, the article quotes experts.

SPOTLIGHT

Attorney-General of India and reputed human rights activist **Soli Sorabjee** has been appointed personal envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for East Timor, noted a write-up in *The Times of India* of May 8, 1999. As part of his assignment Sorabjee was to lead a short mission to East Timor to assess the situation and explore ways in which the Human Rights Commission and the international community can help.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Inviting future leaders

The latest from the executive board of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress is an academic challenge to the far-flung youths of the community. Those in the age bracket 17-21 on December 31, 2000 are invited to participate in an essay competition: "A blueprint for a viable Zarathushti Community of the future," informs an e-mail from project coordinator Dr Jehan Bagli.

While two prizes of educational scholarships worth US \$ 5,000 and \$ 3,000 for the best and second best essays await the participants, Bagli views the project as a means of stimulating original thought among Zoroastrian youth of all persuasions. He hopes the involvement will foster the study of culture, religion and history, steering these potential community leaders into an understanding of the need for "unity with the diversity" of Zoroastrian traditions in the new millennium.

Those interested in participating are required to register themselves with Bagli at 61 Sayre Drive, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, USA (e-mail: ajehan@aol.com) before February 29, 2000.

The essay, in English, is limited to 4,000 words, and will be judged for its innovative ideas, development of the concept, clarity of expression and linguistic skill apart from its spiritual, cultural, historical input, informs Bagli. The papers will be evaluated by a panel of impartial and objective Zoroastrian judges highly regarded by the community.

The winning authors will be officially invited to the Congress. If they can be present at the Congress at their own expense, their registration, boarding and lodging will be borne by the Congress committee, further notes Bagli.

For the latest Congress news on the web tune in to <http://www.tezana.org/wzc2000>

KZBM's Pak directory

The third edition of the *A & T Zarathushtrian Directory of Pakistan* has been published by the Karachi Zarthusti Banu Mandal (KZBM). "The *Directory* is kept as accurate as humanly possible as it can be used as a census of Zarathushtis living in Pakistan," writes KZBM president Toxy Cowasjee. She notes that as of March 1999 there are 2,379 residents in Karachi and a total of 2,565 in Pakistan.

There are 37 families listed from Lahore, four from Multan, two from Islamabad, 19 from Quetta, 10 from Rawalpindi and one each from Faisalabad, Peshawar and Sargoda. The *Directory* provides the names of the spouse and children in each family together with the residential address, phone number and in a few cases, the e-mail address. A dozen pages have been devoted to e-mail addresses of former Karachiites who have spread to various parts of the world. Prominent community centers in Karachi have also been listed.

Cowasjee acknowledges the assistance of all the people who worked to bring the *Directory* up-to-date — Zarin Byromshaw and Bakhtawar Rabadi, the late Hilla Kotwal, Feroza Kanga for the update on Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Dara Hormusji for Lahore and Gulbano Bamji for Quetta. Ronny (Gogo) Byramji and Nader Cowasjee provided their own extensive lists of e-mail contacts "but one e-mail sent to Afshad Mistri... had the network buzzing," notes Cowasjee. Arnavaz Sethna contributed from Houston, Niloufer Birdie from Canada, Rohinton Minwalla and friends from Toronto. Lyla Byramji sorted the vast incoming information country-wise and Fiona Sukhia rechecked the e-mails with the individuals concerned. Sheroy Irani and Frayan Mama also helped with the compilation and Tannaz Minwalla designed the sepia and black cover.

"With shrinking of the wealthy and the indigent classes and expansion of the

middle class, needs and expectations of the community have changed," notes the annual report for 1997-98 of the Karachi Zarthusti Banu Mandal. Having come a long way from its initial objective of helping the poor, KZBM activities with their amalgam of imagination, effort and resource, touch the lives of most Karachi Zarathushtis, claims the report.

The KZBM numbered 620 life members and 15 patrons among its total membership of 679 at the end of June '98.

The KZBM managing committee led by president Toxy Cowasjee then had five vice presidents — Gool Talati, Vera Dastur, Julie Anklesaria, Mehroo Khambatta and Zareen Wania. Nargis Dubash and Sunnu Golwalla were honorary secretaries with Roshan Mehri the honorary treasurer. Hilla Umrigar, Dinaz Polad, Hilla Kotwal, Roshan Kamdin, Aban Aga and Navaz Aga were chairpersons of their respective committees. Niloufer Noshirwani was the linen secretary. Since then, with the revamping of the KZBM constitution, the five vice presidents have been replaced by one, a youth representative has been co-opted and an upper age limit of 70 years has been stipulated for the office bearers. Among its many activities are the workshops, sales and melas in which it participates, the *Services* and *Blood Donors'* directories that it publishes and the counselling service it provides.

The long serving ladies man six subcommittees in addition to special projects concentrating on the promotion of youth, education and development. Indeed youth representatives from the subcommittees have been invited to attend the managing committee meetings "so that they get exposure to the actual working of the Mandal."

The balance of the 57 trust funds under the KZBM rose from an aggregate of Pak Rs 21,049,435 at the beginning of the year to Rs 23,487,534 at the end, after accounting for an expenditure of Rs 2,585,808 in the course of the year. The increase resulted from new donations/contributions amounting to Rs 1,407,970 plus Rs 3,615,937 in profits/dividends earned on the corpus.

The activities of the welfare subcommittee included the distribution of foodgrain, clothing, linen, cash and gifts to its beneficiaries totalling Rs



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1,037,231. The rehabilitation subcommittee helps ladies use their sewing and culinary talents and market their wares, providing loans amounting to Rs 300,000 in the course of the year apart from incurring an expense of Rs 76,838. A challenge to the medical subcommittee was met when a young Zarathushti contacted the rare Guillain Barr Syndrome and "lost all control except the flickering of his eyelids" in just 24 hours. His immediate need of five injections costing Rs 70,000 each followed by months of hospitalization and nursing care was borne by individual and Zarathushti trust donations aggregating Rs 567,581 collected by KZBM on behalf of the patient, notes the medical subcommittee's report. The education, child welfare and program subcommittees also performed their assigned tasks.

Among KZBM's many activities in the first half of 1999 was Jashn-e-Sadeh held on January 24. A family event of bonfire, music, songs and dancing, 59 children dressed in white participated, accompanied by Spitman Pettigara on his organ, with Arif on the guitar, informs the March edition of *What's On*.

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the KZBM's monthly newsletter. The children had been coached for the occasion by Virasp Mehta. A total of 250 persons dined alfresco.

The Jashn-e-Sadeh heralds spring and offers thanks to Ahura Mazda for his blessings. Fire, laughter and companionship are "an act of defiance by man against death and darkness," notes the January newsletter announcing the event.

Diana Dinshaw, a teacher who works with children with learning disabilities in the US gave a talk and held three workshops under KZBM auspices, January to March '99. The talk focussed on the Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) where children are known to have problems in school and problems with social behavior.

The *Avesta Bulletin* is a new monthly issued free in Karachi. Co-edited by two young Zarathushtrians — Kiumars Kiani and Kurosh Aryana, the photo-stated journal shares knowledge and asks for participation from the youth. The articles are concise, easily readable and attractively presented, notes *What's On*. They may be e-mailed on Avesta_btn@hotmail.com

The January issue of *What's On* quotes a piece by Daryoush Mehrshahi on the Z-net regarding a Japanese sect known as Haika Kyoo whose ceremonies and traditions appear to be similar to those of the Zoroastrians. They wear a white shirt and white belt, make a big fire particularly in mid summer and pray and sing before it. It is known that there was steady eastward migration from Iran. Is there any other information available on these people, asks Mehrshahi.

A demonstration of e-mail through the TV was organized under the KZBM auspices by Wavetech, the sole agent for this facility, notes *What's On*. The demonstrators came equipped with five to six sets of TVs, decoder, remote control and cordless keyboard to give the audience a hands-on experience of sending email through television. A unit of decoder, remote control and keyboard, normally priced at PRs 8,500 plus an annual charge of PRs 2,280 for unlimited e-mail was offered to the KZBM audience at PRs 7,900 and Rs 1,900 respectively.

The KZBM now has its own website: URL: http://www.aahung.com/banu_mandal

At the sixth show of the World Association of Flower Arrangers at Durban,

South Africa, Dilshad Aspi Irani won a special mention in the class, "Wizardry of the Waves." She was one of the 21 participants from Pakistan. A total of 450 individuals from 26 countries had participated in the competition.

The Governor of Sindh bestowed a gold medal on Kamal Dorab Anklesaria at the Institute of Business Administration campus on March 15, 1999. Anklesaria had secured an overall first in her Master of Business Administration, 1996 and had stood first among her peers in marketing.

ZSBC logo

"Can you come up with a logo which suits our organization?" challenges the March-May 1999 edition of *In Search of the Truth*, the quarterly newsletter of The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC). To be used in a one-inch square format, the logo design needs to be clear and well-defined. The newsletter stipulates that it may incorporate the ZSBC acronym and the fravahar (neither of which is mandatory) but may not include the likeness of Zarathushtra.

The directors of ZSBC, led by president Bella Tata, include Jamshed Gustavsp, who is in charge of the children's/youth education, Homi Italia who shoulders the treasurer and maintenance portfolios, Azadmehr Kaviani overseeing youth liaison, sports and culture, secretary Dinaz Mizan, social secretary Shirin Sethna and Rumi Shroff who looks after the seniors' liaison and special projects.

Tata, who recently witnessed a parliamentary session in Victoria, BC and lunched with the speaker and several other faith leaders, was taken on a tour of the 100-year-old Parliament Buildings. On ascending a staircase, Tata came face to face with a stained glass image of Zarathushtra at the first landing, she notes in the newsletter. Several feet away was the portrait of Pericles, the Greek statesman and military commander under whom Athens reached the summit of her power. "What went through the architect's mind when he decided to put both these powerful people on one wall? How enlightened was the architect that he chose someone like our prophet, who must have been relatively unknown to Europeans, Britishers and North Americans a century ago, to watch over parliamentarians — even figuratively," Tata notes in the newsletter.

Conference in Calgary

The Second International Avesta Conference will be held at Calgary's Ramada Hotel Downtown September 24-26, 1999 in cooperation with the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society, notes the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA). Pilsum Master and Firdosh Mehta are the co-chairs. Professors from Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Russia, USA and UK are scheduled to present papers apart from community members from India, Canada and USA, as notes a flyer on the conference.

Dr Dhun Noria of North York, Ontario has gifted a generous donation of Farohar pendants with necklace and tie pins, the sale proceeds of which will go towards ZAA efforts to host the Conference.

As part of his interfaith activities Mehta had provided an insight into Zoroastrian rituals to various classes in comparative religion study at the University of Alberta late in 1998. Mehta is vice chairman of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre and lectures frequently on the subject.

Cybersmart Appoo

Zubin Appoo who scored 97.9 percent in the HSC has been gifted a \$ 12,000 a year scholarship for a three-year course in information technology (IT) at the University of Technology, notes a press release forwarded to *Parsiana* by former Bombay Parsi Punchayet chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. At the end of the course, a guaranteed high-paying job awaits him, notes the article by Robert Sullivan.

Born in Oxford, England, Appoo moved to Australia as a child and has lived most of his life in Prospect where he attended the Giraween High School. He is one of 20 chosen for the scholarship from among 800 applicants.

In the course of the past year Appoo designed Internet websites for several companies, charging about \$ 35-40 an hour as against the prevailing professional fees of \$ 80 an hour. He has also worked in the computing field. While he likes maths, he doesn't want to do it all day long, he says, and hopes to make it into the field of IT management which would enable him "to work with customers," he told Sullivan. With an eye on travel, Appoo says "With IT you can go anywhere in the world and get a job because they need IT workers everywhere." Appoo planned to reside with

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his parents while attending University, notes the article.

Planning awardee Mistry

"Opportunity and challenge are my prime considerations," writes award winning architect Homi Mistry. He received the 1998 Current Topic Award for Planning and Conservation of Places from the American Planning Association, the only Indian Zoroastrian among a number of American peers, inform his parents Thrity and Dinshaw Mistry.

Mistry's career has encompassed architecture, master planning, and project and contract management, as per his bio data.

A Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the State University of New York, Albany, Mistry had graduated from Bombay's J. J. College of Architecture. Between the two degrees, garnered 17 years apart, Mistry harvested valuable working experience beginning as an intern with Z. N. Gobhai Architect, going on to the Architect's Cooperative in Tehran, Iran, where he worked on the development of the master plan for the city of Mashad, among other assignments. A year with Radicon Consulting Engineers in Saudi Arabia followed by independent work led to his appointment

as project architect for the 400-room Centaur Hotel under Pheroze Kudiana-vala Consultant Engineers in Bombay. More time with

Rumy Shroff and Associates and a few more years again with Pheroze Kudiana-vala Industrial Designers led Mistry to the City of Albany Planning Office in the US where he took Mistry: projects his masters degree and plans while assisting the director with reviewing and analyzing requests from the planning board and zoning board of appeals, addressing short and long term planning issues, etc.



Pake-E-Mehr is 12

The bilingual Farsi-English magazine, *Pake-E-Mehr*, edited by Dr Jamshid Shahrivini of Vancouver, completed 12 years of publication on Jamshedi Navroz. The chorus of good wishes is led by the Canadian Prime Minister: "May the blessings of the spring season touch your lives as you look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the

continued on page 98

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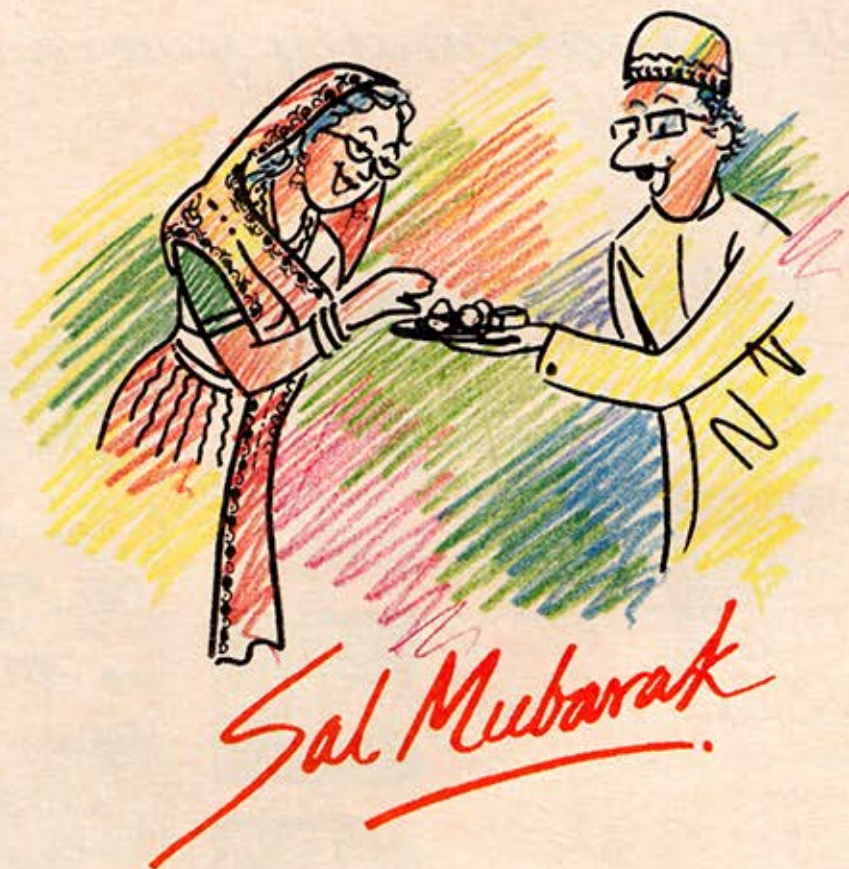
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The Federation salutes Sam

Justice Sam Variava's appointment as chief justice of the Delhi High Court is celebrated by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Houston expects at least 100 delegates from India plus 100 youths," Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman and president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Jamshed Guzder told the assembled delegates at the Federation's executive council meet at Bombay's Muncherji Khareghat Hall on June 12 and 13, 1999. Guzder was referring to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001. He urged the anjumans to mobilize funds to send at least 10 to 20 delegates if not 100.

FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) founder president Rohinton Rivetna made a presentation to the council on his negotiations with the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) on the restructuring of its constitution to make it more representative. But it appears that equality between its anjuman and individual members cannot be talked away. The Federation has decided to await the reaction of other bodies like FEZANA, the Iranian Anjuman of Tehran, Iran, etc.

The woes of the anjumans regarding the unavailability of mobeds in the mofussil were addressed to Athornan Mandal trustee and honorary secretary Ervad Parvez Bajan who noted that though schemes had been introduced to make mobedi more attractive as a profession for athornan youths, it would be some time before the current paucity of priests would be rectified.

The Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA) will now be officially represented on the executive council of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India by a member of the FOZYA managing committee co-opted by the executive council. The motion, which had been vehemently debated at earlier meets of the executive

council was adopted at the Federation's annual general meeting without too much discussion.

A suggestion by Hoshang Wania, president of the Nargol Zarathushti Anjuman for a group medical insurance of the entire Zoroastrian community in India found favor with the council. Wania has been given the go ahead to form a committee to investigate the possibilities.

The Madhya Pradesh anjumans have voted at their intercity meet to petition an increase in the size of the State Minorities Commission to include all the five minorities represented at the National Minorities Commission. Presently only the Muslims, Sikhs and Christians are represented, reported Indore Zoroastrian Anjuman president Bomi Heerjee. He also announced the establishment of a Parsi Matrimonial Court in Indore with jurisdiction over the whole of Madhya Pradesh.

Justice Sam Variava of the Bombay High Court who has been transferred as chief justice of the Delhi High Court was felicitated by the Federation and the BPP at a dinner at the Ripon Club.

The meet had begun with a minute's silent remembrance of Iranian Anjuman president and Federation treasurer Aspi Irani who has passed away since the last meeting in Sanjan. Also mourned was Rohinton Chinoy of the Union Press whose sudden death marked the end of many years of service to the community.

A UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation) sponsored project to preserve the culture and heritage of the Parsi community is being coordinated by Dr Shernaz Cama of Delhi University. Donations to the funding of the project was flagged off with a five lakh rupee grant from the BPP, and Guzder offering an equal amount from his trust.

The next meeting of the executive council will be hosted by the Mhow Parsi Anjuman on November 20 and 21, 1999.

Congress

Homai Modi, joint secretary of the fourth and fifth World Zoroastrian Congresses will be the Indian liaison for the Seventh Congress in Houston, December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001. Guzder will be the leader of the Indian delegation, announced Rivetna. "The visa section at the US consulate has agreed that if they have a list of delegates, visas will be easy," he added. Although the theme of the Congress is what we are going to do in the next millennium as a community, the program details are yet to be put together. With several concurrent sessions, "everybody should be free and welcome to present viewpoints as long as you can attract an audience," he noted.

Modi requested subsidized registration fees for Indian delegates to which Rivetna readily agreed. They "will be well taken care of: Houston Zoroastrians are very hospitable," he declared.

A global essay competition and a year of festivities and Zarathushti athletics and games are being planned with jashans around the world at the opening of the Congress, noted Modi and requested the BPP and the Federation for funds for the Congress.

Rivetna urged the assembled delegates to contribute/subscribe to the *FEZANA Journal*, the quarterly publication of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America available at an annual cost of US \$ 15. "FEZANA is an NGO (non-governmental organization) recognized by the United Nations. This status could be transferred to the world body when it is established," he added.

Rivetna is involved with the nascent body, United Religions of the World,

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which seeks to resolve religious and ethnic strife around the world, calling for peace. "We Zoroastrians (could) look upon ourselves as bridge builders because our image is in all the faiths... Zoroastrianism is recognized as one of 14 major religions of the world because of our efforts as individuals," he said.

Speaking about the third Parliament of World Religions due to be held in South Africa, December 1-8, 1999 Rivetna hoped Bajan, scholars Dr Rooyintan Peer, Dr Homi Dhalla, Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree and others would come from Bombay because if Zoroastrians are out of sight they will be out of mind. Eighty to 100 Zoroastrians were among the 8,000 people who attended the second Parliament in Chicago in 1993.

On that occasion religious leaders of the world, Dastur Kaikhusroo Jamasp-Asa among them, had endorsed the concept of a global ethic. This time there is expected to be a call to our guiding institutions like the governments, universities, etc. "Zoroastrians should be on that document," Rivetna said, mentioning that so far only 20 were attending, including BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana.

With the millennium celebrations

round the corner, the communities of the world are offering a gift to the world. From Zoroastrians it could be the commitment that every Zoroastrian youth would be instructed in global ethics plus civics and parenting which are not always taught at the school level, suggested Rivetna.

Dhalla who has recently established the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation suggested the presentation of devotional Parsi poetry as he is in the process of collecting an anthology. He informed the Federation of the Foundation's various projects, specifically the preservation of manuscripts on CD-ROM, the establishment of libraries in various parts of India starting with the first in Poona, reprinting of old books, etc.

World body

"How we come together is secondary. (We must) harness the potential that Zoroastrians represent globally, must allow all initiatives to flower, because if we don't, we create a situation where people don't come forward. Complete harmony means more than unity..."

His crusade for a world body is based on Rivetna's reading of the situation in North America where he says the "need for ties is extremely urgent. If these ties



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L to R: (1st row) Guzder, Rivetna, Keki Gandhi; (2nd row) Engineer, Tamboly, Eruch Irani, Rustomji; (left) Guzder felicitating the Variavas

are not there, North American Zoroastrians will develop in (their own) individual way and become unrecognizable."

The blueprint for a bonding of federations worldwide (the World Council of Zoroastrian Federations — WCZF) presented by Rivetna had been endorsed by India but FEZANA had held back from joining as a founder member on

the request of the WZO for a chance to restructure itself into a representative body. The Indian Federation had joined FEZANA in giving Rivetna the mandate to negotiate with the WZO for the purpose. Though much ground was covered by Rivetna with WZO representative Rummy Sethna, final agreement has been elusive. Rivetna now presented three alternatives to the Federation:

- To go ahead with the proposed World Council of Zoroastrian Federations with a memorandum of understanding with the WZO to demarcate their fields of operation. This means that there will be two world bodies in operation.
- To accept the restructured WZO with its 16-member Council of Federations and 16-member Council of Individuals which together constitute the 32-member International Board of Directors with overall responsibility. Here the original "flaw" of equal weightage to individuals and associations in the WZO constitution remains.
- To opt for a confederation of the Zarathushti members comprising a council of individuals and a council of federations which satisfies the concept of one world body without either section impinging on the other.

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Rivetna is to hold on to the ideal while accepting reality and make the necessary compromise.

While Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) trustee and Federation vice president Eruch Irani sniffed, "This is no solution: we've heard this before," BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz upbraided the delegates: "We, as a community, have stopped listening... Our community needs an apex body so that the apex body can thrust certain changes down the throats of the trustees of various institutions. We are all on an ego trip, each and every one of us... Corpses of small trusts are frittered away on the administration of the trusts... Silent charity is the need of the hour (because) the burden of obligation is a destructive burden... Whether you like it or not the BPP is the apex body of the community... change the indifference with which the community is faced. (We are) afraid of taking decisions. The BPP is the favorite whipping horse of the community."

"We had offered to give a clause by clause response to the WZO's new draft constitution which was done," declared Keki Gandhi, joint honorary secretary of the Federation adding, "The dialog

will be put forward to FEZANA and Iran and others. Let other regions of the world decide which alternative they want to opt for. When the right time comes we'll have a full-fledged debate."

Referring to the WZO as "a fact of life," BPP trustee and WZO India president Dadi Engineer termed the fusion of the proposed body with the existing one as an equal partnership. To deprive the WZO's individual members of a say in the running of the world body would amount to the withdrawal of a vested right, as in the case of the BPP's constitution, resulting in an unequal partnership. "If the partners are not on equal terms, there has to be a parting," he said, simultaneously hoping that "the dialog would continue and that the WZO and the Federation will be able to work hand in hand." As an example of WZO's work Engineer referred to its contribution of half the cost of the Rs 10 lakh outlay towards the repair and refurbishing of the Indore dharamshala while BPP trustee and WZO, UK vice president Dinshaw Tamboly informed the gathering that all the WZO trusts in India were zero corpus trusts. "We raise funds per project. (It is) a testimony of the faith of the donors," he added.

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L to R: (1st row) Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Tirandaz, Mehli Colah, Dastur; (2nd row) Masani, Heerjee, Karanjawalla, Dara Irani; (3rd row) Bajan, Modi; (4th row) Giara, Dhalla

Priests

With Bajan present, Federation members poured forth their woes regarding the non-availability of mobeds. On the one hand Guzder briefly related how interest on a 52 lakh rupee donation from Iranian philanthropists Faridoon and Mehraban Zartoshty was being used by the BPP to widen the academic background of mobeds, show them how they should conduct their duties and themselves. On the other hand Mhow Anjuman secretary Behram Masani reported how one of their two mobeds had left Mhow without notice: they received his letter of resignation after he had taken up his new job with a trust in Navsari. "The other one is also threat-



ening to leave." According to Masani, the Mhow anjuman offers a good salary because funds are substantial with free housing and many ceremonies performed in their adarian, the only consecrated fire in north India. "There should be an understanding between anjumans not to entice employees away," urged Masani.

Neither Agra, Jhansi nor Gwalior have a mobed and would be willing to share one, said Jhansi president Ronnie Dick. Delhi has been on the lookout for a second priest as well as an agiary assistant. They pay over a lakh of rupees to their priest annually plus free housing. Delhi Parsi Anjuman youth representative Adil Nargolwala informed the gathering.

With industrialization in Umbergaon some Parsis have come but they need a mobed at the Navabai Goiporia Agiary in Davier



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where they do not have the resources to pay well, announced Marzban Wadia of Davier. They share their 150-year-old dokhma with Saronda and Sanjan. Saronda pays its mobed Rs 85,000 per annum, according to its representative Homi Palsetia.

Calcutta's two senior priests have passed away after serving the community for over 60 years. Two young mobeds are currently holding the fort but the community doesn't know how long they will stay, reported Calcutta's Nauzer Batlivala. Jamshedpur has a "reluctant panthaky" and a few retired people who are priests. Five young members of the community have done their navar and maratab but are mostly away pursuing their education, remarked its representative Silloo Surti. Mukta time is particularly difficult, she added.

Borivli has seven to eight mobeds on its muster but no agiary; Allahabad has made do with paramobeds since 1983; even the wealthy Karachi anjuman can't find mobeds despite offering high salaries, as noted BPP chief executive Behram Dastur. Wania was the only one to declare they had "no problems in Nargol (because) the anjuman pays properly."

Pervez Irani of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman sought "some scheme to merge some agiaries together" but Dastur informed him that Dasturs (Drs) Jamasp-Asa and Firoze Kotwal as well as Mistree had opposed the idea when consulted by the BPP. Heerjee suggested the institution of a central employment exchange with the seminaries as a resource bank.

To put the current problems in historical perspective Bajan spoke of the humiliation and indignities suffered by the priests, the social inequality and poverty despite grinding labor. "The Athornan Mandal was formed in 1915 for the amelioration of mobeds, for better prospects and dignity for the priestly class," he said. Explaining how the best brains of the priestly class had dispersed to other professions, often at the behest of their fathers and grandfathers who did not wish their sons to suffer the ingratitude and ignominy they had suffered themselves, Bajan noted, "Today what you are seeing is the result of those social inequalities," adding, "Today there is a yen for more money with less effort."

Bajan agreed on the need for professional ethics among priests and said that

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L to R: (1st row) Pervaz Irani, Homi Dandiwalla, Cursetji, Marzban Wadia; (2nd row) Wania, Noshir Paghdiwalla, K. Pastakia, Boman Irani; (3rd row) Dinshaw Patel, Nariman Balsara, Silloo and Eruch Surti; Palsetia (alongside)



the Athornan Mandal has a declaration in its form that the member agrees to go out to other anjumans for at least one month. They were making a short list of mobeds willing to go out and had sent someone to Madras for two months. With the WZO scheme which bolsters the earnings of mobeds as well as ensures their training beyond the bounds of ritual practice, more enlightened clergy may be forthcoming in the future, because the scheme concentrates on mobeds in

the age group of 15 to 35 years, as per the terms of the donors, noted Tamboly. Philanthropist Naryman Dubash has distributed Rs 50,000 among older mobeds, acknowledged Bajan. Nonetheless, behdins need to change their attitude from the covert sneer of "Tu khali mobedi karèch (Is mobedi all that you do?)" to one of greater respect, be willing to accept him as a member of the family, Bajan emphasized.

"What does an anjuman do when it needs permanent mobeds?" asked Bharuch's Sarosh Ginwalla mindful of



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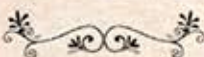
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their six to eight agiaries with no merger or movement of the fire permitted. Young mobeds are averse to go to Bharuch, he noted.

Since a Zoroastrian priest is a family man, schooling for his children is an important consideration as also the residence and returns available to him, responded Bajan. In many of these agiaries it would be virtually solitary confinement with no work and no devotees.

Marzban Giara who has been shouldering a lot of documentation work for the benefit of the community, saw the need to address the problems of agiaries — where the population has declined, as in Bombay's Fort area, and of agiary fires dying out in the mofussil — as an intelligent, educated community. There is also need for proper religious and moral education for children, he opined.

UNESCO

Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) secretary Farrokh Rustomji informed the delegates about the UNESCO supported project for the preservation of Parsi-Zoroastrian culture and heritage. Aware that valuable information and documents are being lost, "UNESCO has realized the need to document Parsi

culture and heritage for the world," he noted. Prof Cama is the consultant to the project and UNESCO has contributed a seed capital of US \$ 4,500. Other institutional support comes from the DPA and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. The initial cost of the project is estimated at over 40 lakh rupees a year. There is said to be substantial response from Gujarat with old manuscripts and material for micro-filming. The BPP has promised a grant of Rs 5 lakhs and Guzder has made a matching personal promise. It is expected that associations worldwide will contribute towards the project. Bharuch made an initial promise of Rs 10,000 with a further amount expected. Saronda promised Rs 1,001. Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman president Capt Homi Dandiwalla, in his personal capacity, offered Rs 201. All cheques are to be made to UNESCO who have opened a special account and are exploring the tax exemption angle, informed Rustomji.

Udvada-Sanjan

Earlier, Pervaz Irani had been asked to study the beautification of the Sanjan Stambh in conjunction with Rohinton

continued on page 114

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Treasured on the Island - 1

Faith and fortune

Parsis who accidentally or intentionally landed in Ceylon contributed to the wealth of their new homeland while prospering as businessmen

After being shipwrecked in the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean a handful of Parsis landed in Ceylon in the early 17th century. In the 18th century, some adventurous Parsis had sought to establish themselves on this beautiful island as planters and shopkeepers. By the 19th century the community was so well respected that on the formation of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in 1839, Hormusjee Espandiarjee and Shapoorjee Hirji were the only two non-English members invited thereon.

At the turn of the 20th century Zoroastrians in Ceylon numbered less than a hundred, reaching their peak of over 350 prior to World War II. Then followed the exodus and today around 60 Zoroastrians remain in Sri Lanka (see "The Zoroastrians of Serendip," *Parsiana*, January 1999).

Beginning this issue, *Parsiana* will be chronicling the achievements of prominent Sri Lankan Zoroastrians of the 19th and the 20th century. These are edited excerpts from Behram Kaikhushroo Billimoria's historical compilation, *The Parsees in Ceylon*, culled from the memoirs of Framroze Rustomjee and K. D. Choksy. Written about nine years ago, factually there may be a change of circumstances for some of the individuals mentioned herein although we have imposed on Sri Lanka's respected legal light Kairshasp Choksy's time to check the episodes for accuracy.

The first instalment details the success story of Dady Muncherji also known as Dady Parsi who was a merchant held in high esteem by the locals as also the Europeans who patronized his shops. Transport facilities too came within his purview in the early 19th century and there are references to his establishment running the palanquin facilities for the convenience of passengers.

The coffee estate and exports of

Cowasjee Eduljee Colombowalla earned him substantial wealth and he used a part of it to donate a burial ground for Parsis in Colombo, mentions the second instalment. (This old burial ground in Kottanchina that was in use prior to the present one on Jawatte Road was acquired for the community by Pestonjee Dinshawjee Khan.) To Framjee Bhikhajee and Company goes the credit for making possible the influx of many Parsis from India. The Khan Clock Tower and the Crippled Children's Ward bear testimony to their largesse. Framjee House was the venue for all Parsi festivities and it was also customary to have an "open house" for all Parsis every Sunday, it is recounted.

The rags to riches story of Rustomjee Muncherjee who had assiduously toiled to build up his business empire and invariably presided over every meeting of the community is related in the third instalment. Among the leading professionals of the 20th century were Homi Framroze Billimoria who enjoyed the distinction of serving as the first Ceylonese (the previous incumbents being English) chief architect of the public works department of the government and Dr Rustom Pestonjee who had served the King during World War I and returned with distinctions in war service. Some of the imposing structures erected by Billimoria are the Independence Hall, The Elphinstone and Majestic Theatres and Navroz Baug. As superintendent of the Leper Asylum in Hendala Pestonjee played host to the Parsi community every Christmas when they gathered there to celebrate the occasion with the patients.

Another revered medical practitioner was Dr Dadabhoy Pestonjee Banajee who had served the Maharaja of Morvi before being appointed member of the Colombo Municipality, states the fourth instalment. Even though the Maharaja

followed Banajee to Ceylon to persuade him to return, Banajee's wife would not allow it for one of his duties was to taste the food before it was served to the Maharaja which she felt could endanger his life. The legal fraternity's claim to fame was Nariman Kaikhushroo Choksy who was appointed King's Counsel and his son Kairshasp who officiates as President's Counsel. The Prayer Hall and priest's residence known as Navroz Baug were constructed by Meherbai who was keen to fulfil her husband Pallonjee Nowrojee Kapadia's dream project.

The Parasmani Hall which is in use by the Parsi Sports Club was the combined effort of Framroze Rustomjee who donated the land and Ruttonshah Rustomjee who bore the cost of construction, it is explained in the fifth instalment. As per Ruttonshah's last will, every year the community is invited to a dinner at the Navroz Baug on a date close to his death anniversary. The academician Kaikhushroo Billimoria, who as principal of the Dharmaraja College was responsible for building up the center of learning into a reputed institute, was always happy to host Parsi visitors to Kandy as theirs was the only Zoroastrian family resident there.

Many other outstanding Parsis have their roots in Ceylon. Professional, business and/or family commitments may have persuaded them to settle in other lands. But their accomplishments are fondly recalled in the final episode of this treatise on Sri Lankan Zoroastrians.

...

The Parsis in India were ambitious and inherently possessed of wanderlust. They preferred to travel to distant lands and to establish themselves in professions and skillful undertakings. The Parsis migrated to many countries like Africa, the Mediterranean cities and other parts of the world.

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In their peregrinations they reached the Maldivian coast and proved their worth as expert builders of vessels and sea craft. The Maldivians welcomed them openheartedly and not only engaged them and their services for build-

ing boats but also for manning many of their crafts across the turbulent waters of the Indian, Arabian and African coasts. The Parsis who were expert navigators associated themselves with their Maldivian comrades and proved themselves their trustworthy friends. During their many journeys to distant lands near the Arabian Coast they taught the Maldivians to do extensive barter for the goods they carried. The numerous barter transactions which the Parsis taught the Maldivians brought them into prominence with the Maldivian government which not only permitted them to extend their trade facilities but also employed them in their government offices as men of intense integrity. Thus the Parsis found ample scope both for

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carrying on and extending the scope of their business activity in many different places. One such field for the expansion of their business activity was the island of Ceylon, which in the days gone by brought to Ceylon in Maldivian buggalows vast quantities of commercial goods not only from the Maldivian islands, but also from other parts of India, Arabia and the African coast. The gravest danger lay in the manning and handling of

these frail craft. The Parsis who were experts in shipbuilding made tremendous advances in the strengthening of the buggalows. This helped the Maldivian government to acquire considerable wealth and increased their prosperity.

Among the persons who had been shipwrecked and whose tombstones are found in remote areas of our maritime provinces of Ceylon will be found the remains of able-bodied seamen, of the buggalows they had built and of which they were the most senior craftsmen.

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who had risked their precious lives to save their craft being broken up in stormy weather. This accounts for the gravestones which have been discovered in Ceylon's maritime eastern and western coasts dating as far back as 1603, bearing the names of the ancient shipbuilders. Hence the Parsis did visit this beautiful island known as the "Pearl of the Orient" over 368 years ago.

Traces of stray Parsi burials in the eastern province establish that Parsis ventured into this island also around the year 1750. Some of them had been planters and the others shopkeepers. Their earlier prosperity, of which we have little information, helped others of their kinsmen from India to launch forth into business activities in Ceylon.

Ceylon proved a most hospitable and homely country to the Parsis who had come to the island from remote times and made the country their permanent home. The different governments, from times prior to the British occupation, always afforded the Parsis freedom of worship and full freedom of trade. Parsis have at all times mingled with the indigenous population in every part of the island and have been always welcome in their homes. This is due to

the inborn traits of the Parsis who have never proved hostile or inimical to the interest of all others nor have they at any time been so politically minded as to aspire for office, rank or position in the affairs of government.

The interest of the Parsis has at all times been subservient to the interest of the country in which they have made their home and they have been always charitably disposed towards the people with whom they dwell. They have been noted to use their wealth for the benefit of the country in which they have made their home.

K. D. Choksy, one of the pioneer research workers of his day, living in Ceylon, had spent many years making ardent investigations at the Government Archives to discover particulars regarding the advent of Parsis in Ceylon for purposes of trade. A few of his available notes, placed at the disposal of the writer by his son, N. K. Choksy, advocate, Queen's Counsel, and one time judge of the Supreme Court of the island of Ceylon, have helped to give the data pertaining to the incidents referred to in this work.

According to the *Parsee Prakash* of Bombay, it would appear that Hormus-



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jee Espandiarjee Khambata came to Bombay from Khambat (Cambay) and went to Mysore during the Tipu Sultan wars to do business there. He then spread out to the Malabar coast and in 1803 established himself in Colombo as one of the leading merchants owning three ships.

Hormusjee Espandiarjee and a number of his Parsi relatives carried on a lucrative business in the Pettah and at 15, Baillie Street in the Fort of Colombo. Espandiarjee's business dealt with the import of goods on consignment basis from India and large stocks of goods of foreign manufacture from China and Europe.

The *History of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce* reveals that at the first meeting held on March 25, 1839 when the Chamber was inaugurated, Hormusjee Espandiarjee and Shapoorjee Hirji were the only two non-English members of that Chamber — thus indicating the high esteem in which these two Parsis had been held in Ceylon at that time. According to the *Parsie Prakash*, Hormusjee Espandiarjee died in Bombay at the age of 85 years in 1845.

It would appear that King's Street and Baillie Street in the Fort were well-

known for business purposes and a number of Parsis founded their businesses in the Fort of Colombo. Ceylon having become noted for its wonderfully productive terrain, the Parsis of India decided to come over to Ceylon for trade.

In the early 19th century, 1807-1813, there were a number of Parsis who had established themselves in Colombo and elsewhere for business and trade, namely Sorabjee Pestonjee who came from Bombay, Nusserwanjee Eduljee Hormusjee from Surat, Sorabjee Ruttonjee from Bombay, Dinyarji Burjorji from Bombay.

Dady Muncherji, known as "Parsi Dady" or "Dady Parsi" did business on a greater scale than any of the above named four persons. He dealt in cloth, liquor, imported food items, potatoes, onions and in addition conducted auctions of furniture of his clients. He also conducted lotteries for the sale of such items. He used to buy or sell for his customers horses and carriages. He held agencies for ships. If anyone lost any item he published a notice stating that if the item was taken to the shop of "Parsi Dady" he would receive a reward. In those days Europeans did not own shops or conduct business with the result that

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English civilians, Supreme Court judges, lawyers, barristers as well as military officers and padres were his clients. Owing to his humility people were attracted to him. After having conducted his business for about 25 years, he announced that he proposed to go for a short time to his hometown, Bombay. In recognition of his services to them for 25 years, his customers made a collection and decided to present him with a "piece of plate" which was meant to be "a small but just tribute of approbation due to the worth of an upright, obliging and benevolent man."

Thereafter a notice was published in the *Government Gazette* of March 27, 1824:

"The committee appointed by the subscribers for a piece of plate to Dady Muncherji commonly called 'Dady Parsi' now beg to inform that the amount of the subscription received has been appropriated to the purchase of a silver cup, made under the committee's directions at Colombo and which was lately presented to him in the names of the subscribers on his return to this island. The sentiments of Dady Muncherji on receiving this flattering token of public estimation are expressed in the follow-

ing address:

"Gentlemen, penetrated with the honor which you have done me, I cannot express the gratitude and self-satisfaction I feel on this occasion; but I beg to assure you it will be the study of my future days to continue to deserve the goodwill and esteem of a community that has long commanded my respect.

"If, gentlemen, I have in any degree deserved the praises you have been pleased to bestow upon me, the merit is rather yours than mine — the extensive patronage I have received from this community during my long residence here, the encouragement it has ever given me and the interest it seemed to take in my welfare could not fail to produce effects, which I am happy to find have obtained your approbation.

"I return my most sincere and grateful thanks for the flattering present with which you have honored me. I shall cherish it and consider it as a pledge of the continuance of your goodwill and support which, I trust in God, I shall never forfeit.

"I remain, gentlemen, with great respect Your most obedient, most obliged and faithful servant

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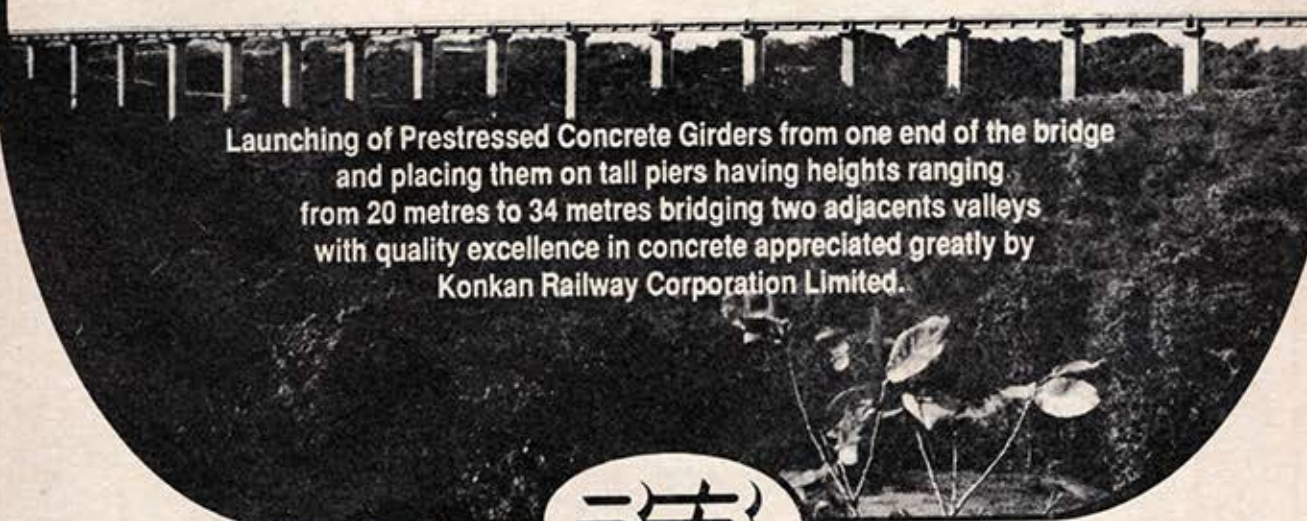
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(signed) Dady Muncherji
Colombo, March 11, 1824."

The *Government Gazette* of May 5, 1830 contains a notice that on May 2, 1830 "Parsi Dady Muncherji" aged 70 passed away.

There is a possibility that Parsi Dady Muncherji is the same as Dady Hirjee hereinafter referred to.

Dady Hirjee, a Parsi from Bombay, came over with his family to Colombo and opened a large departmental store in Baillie Street next door to the long-standing auction rooms of G. W. Gambo in the Corner House of Baillie Street in the Fort of Colombo. The strict honesty and integrity of Dady Hirjee's business methods and transactions appealed to the government which patronized this firm for every kind of project beneficial to the people and Dady Hirjee became singularly well-known to the people of Colombo. He later acquired the auction rooms of Gambo and established a large auctioning business where almost all goods and stocks of articles seized by the customs were sent to be auctioned.

In the year 1820, Parsi Dady Hirjee, a philanthropist, donated a set of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at a meeting at the King's House, Colombo, for the

formation of a Society called the Ceylon Literary Society. From the numerous records in the *Government Gazettes* of the early 19th century it is abundantly clear that in government circles, Parsi Dady Hirjee had been well known for his probity through the large volume of valuable articles he had handled for sale or otherwise for the government of Ceylon.

According to the *Government Gazette* of June 2, 1821, we learn that a large vessel named the *Hastings* with an emplacement of 24 guns, built by the notable Bombay shipbuilder, Parsi Jamshedjee Bomanjee was floated from the docks on May 12, 1821. It reached Colombo on June 2, 1821. The firm of Dady Hirjee acted as agents of this vessel.

It is known from the *Government Gazettes* of the early 19th century that transport facilities for the transport of goods from the capital city of the island were very poor and that as a result of this the Parsi traders, who helped to send goods to the interior provinces, had to meet with many reverses. These goods used to be sent through coolies who carried the parcels by hand for delivery. In the course of transit the

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merchants had to undergo severe losses due to pilferage. Some of the coolies had even absconded with the goods. Even palanquins were in constant use in those early days for the transport of passengers from one destination to another. Parsi Dady Hirjee's establishment was in charge of the palanquin facilities.

The first new brig known as *George the Fourth* was built at Batticaloe by Parsi craftsmen to carry a load of 135 tons. It was built to carry freight in safety. Other ships and crafts came to be built with the aid of the Parsi craftsmen for voyages from Trincomalee, Point de Galle and Colombo to the distant ports of Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Chittagong and many other South Indian ports. Parsi Dady Hirjee's establishment was in charge of all these transport facilities.

Dady Hirjee and his family lived long in Ceylon as prominent citizens, well recognized by the government for their probity of character, honesty and integrity.

There is no trace of Parsi Dady Hirjee's family having left Ceylon, which had been their home for many years.

To be continued



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Daring Dosebai

One of the few Indian women writers of the 19th century, Dosebai Jessawalla critically chronicles life in a tradition-bound society

Dr Mridula Ramanna

Recent research has focussed on autobiographies as source material to gauge responses to social change. This becomes all the more important with regard to the few works written by women writers in the 19th century. A woman wrote about herself as a conscious act, as it represented her desire to express her feelings and emotions. This article is based on an autobiography entitled *The Story of My Life* by Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla (née Shroff).

Jessawalla was an upper-class Parsi housewife. She claimed to be the first woman to have received an English education in Bombay and ascribed this pioneering step to her widowed mother, Meheribai Shroff, who braved the hostile criticism of both her family and the leaders of her community. Jessawalla repeatedly emphasizes the fact that this initiative had been overlooked by a male dominated society. Jessawalla's education was confined to a knowledge of the English language and an acquisition of western social graces. Her account covers half a century and hence her reactions to the changing social environment are significant, especially since there are such few voices like hers. She led no campaigns for reform and was an ardent anglophile, taking pride in being the first to adopt certain social practices of the west. She travelled extensively and recorded her experiences. While there is a tendency to ramble and highlight society events, her writing provides a valuable insight into the perceptions of a woman living in the late 19th century.

Jessawalla's parents were Hormusjee Cursetjee Shroff and Meheribai. Hormusjee was the son of Cursetjee Manekjee Shroff, head of the Parsi Panchayet, while Meheribai was the daughter of Jamsetjee Nanabhoy Guzder. Meheribai was fluent in Gujarati, but had her sons educated in English. She seems to have been an independent-minded woman, with an admiration for western manners.

The state of education in the mid 19th century is described by Jessawalla,

to show the reader the environment in which Meheribai took the bold step of educating her daughter. Only some men knew English and did not think of teaching the language to women. A slight smattering of the vernaculars was the extent of a girl's attainments, which was acquired from schools conducted by mehtajis. The school consisted only of a ground floor verandah, where the students squatted on a hard mattress. Jessawalla felt that the very appearance of the teachers was not such as to "com-

mand respect." The method of teaching was the recitation of multiplication tables in "a united roar," with girls picking up "a few crumbs of learning." For the rest, a girl passed her time in routine housework or in "idleness and gossip." The orthodox Parsis wanted to keep "the females stationary," and considered them "vastly inferior" and a career was "undreamt of."

Meheribai made the acquaintance of Ms Ward and her mother Ms Mackenzie through her family doctor Baptist (son-in-law of Sir Roger de Faria) and subsequently sent Dosebai to Ms Ward's Seminary (as the school was called) in 1842. This action created a scandal among the Parsis. Not only did her father-in-law oppose her, but the Gujarati papers, *Jam-e-Jamshed* and the *Chabuk*, which catered to a Parsi readership, made critical comments. The family was even threatened with excommunication.

On the other hand, the *Bombay Courier*, of August 23, 1842 hailed the step and declared, "We shall watch the progress of this girl with deep interest and will rejoice to find the noble example followed by others." Jessawalla points out that the paper, while highlighting the fact that she was the grand-



Jessawalla: devout Parsi

Photos: *The Story of My Life*

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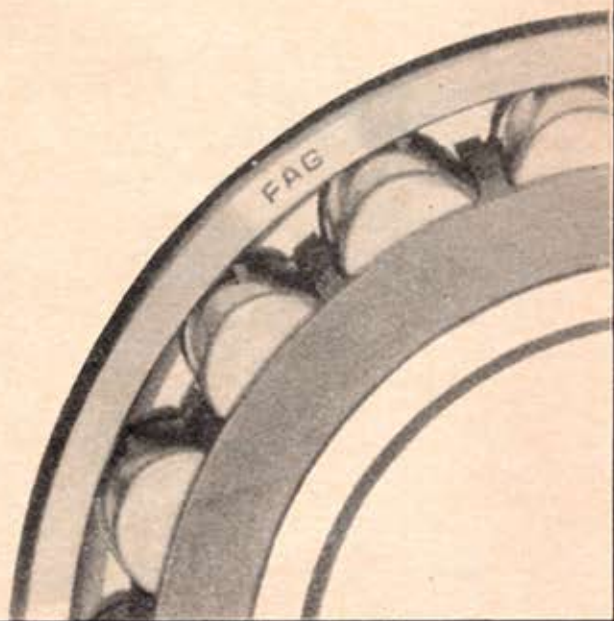
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Jessawalla's bungalow at Tardeo Holding the reins: Dosebai with Cowasjee in 1876



daughter of Cursetjee Manekjee Shroff and the daughter of Hormusjee Cursetjee, had remarked that her mother had cooperated with other members of that enlightened family in procuring every advantage of education. Jessawalla spiritedly dismisses this statement as being "far wide off the mark." Her grandfather also received a letter of praise from Mountstuart Elphinstone from England.

She regrets that in both the editions of his volumes on the manners, customs and ancestral lore of the Parsis, Dosabhai Framji Karaka, while mentioning the founder of female education, passes over "in silence" an event which had caused "so much consternation." Jessawalla concludes that the "male sex is ever tardy of acknowledging the merits of a female rival." Ms Ward's school closed in 1847 but Jessawalla's example was followed by her cousin,

Cooverbai, who was taught English by a governess. Subsequently, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy had his only daughter Pirojbai educated, while Framji Cowasji Banaji's 18-year-old married daughter was instructed in secrecy by a Portuguese master called Amadore Viegas. Jessawalla asserts that while these leaders of Parsi society were afraid of letting it be known that their daughters were being educated, her mother had openly espoused the cause. This example was emulated by Sir Albert Sassoon, after overcoming the objections of his father, as Jewish women never appeared unveiled in public. He sent his daughters to a school set up by Ms Hinton in 1849. Manockjee Cursetjee's daughters, Aima K. R. Cama and Serene Manockjee Cursetjee also attended this school. Manockjee founded the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution in 1863 and Serene

Cursetjee was associated with its maintenance. Jessawalla's contention was that while this initiative was highlighted, her mother's bold step two decades earlier was overlooked. Meheribai died in 1879. The *Indian Magazine and Review* of London, 1908 seems to have eulogized her. The *Bombay Gazette* of 1887 also acknowledged Meheribai's contribution, after Manockjee's death.

Karaka dates female education to 1849, when educated men saw the need to educate their womenfolk, particularly since they exercised such an influence on children. This was realized through the efforts of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. Jessawalla refers to the Society and commends Dadabhai Naoroji, Nowroji Furdoonji, Ardesir Framji Moos and Bomanji Pestonji Master for promoting vernacular education. She observes that only later were the "plutocrats roused to their sense of duty" and those who gave "the mere assistance of their purse" were held up for praise, even though their own women were not educated.

When Jessawalla left school at the age of 13, she continued her "education" under the tuition of a governess twice a week. She contrasts favorably her own "manner of sitting" and "modulated voice" with those of her acquaintances, who talked "loudly." Her "education" came to an end when she was 17. Her mother had begun scouting for grooms a year earlier. Jessawalla states that she was convinced that she had a right to assent or decline a proposal. She disapproved of the practice of consulting horoscopes as "idle superstition." She had apparently developed a fondness for a cousin of hers and with her mother's approval had broached the subject of marriage with her uncle, but he refused to permit the alliance since he disapproved of Meheribai's ways. Finally, Dosebai married her mother's friend's son, Cowasjee Jessawalla, a widower with six children.

Cowasjee had been educated in English and worked in his father's firm.

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Jehangir and Company. He was present in 1839 during the war in Kabul and was responsible for establishing the family business at Multan, Sukkur, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Kabul. Subsequently he worked as a guarantee broker with Volkart Brothers and took an active part in establishing the Bombay Native Insurance Company and Bombay Oil Press Company. He had his steamers plying between Bombay and Kathiawar. Cowasjee apparently suffered losses in 1879 and Dosebai, who had private property of her own, paid his debts to the tune of Rs10,000. She claims that doing this for him gave her "much satisfaction."

She also states that she successfully defended herself and her husband against "spurious claims" in a court of law. She appears to have been devoted to him, and on his death at the age of 80, declared, "To an Indian wife, there is no greater bereavement than losing her husband."

Initially, Dosebai and Cowasjee lived in a joint family of 50 to 60 members, but under her influence he took to "new ways" and set up a separate establishment. Now she had her daughter trained in dancing. Her husband encouraged her to travel outside Bombay. Her married daughter voyaged to England without an escort and, on her return, wore a western style riding dress to the bandstand. This flouting of conventions evoked critical comment, but with the spread of "education" she observes that Parsi girls moved about freely.

Jessawalla makes specific mention of a "close friend" called Kesarbai. Kesarbai is described as "a progressive Hindu." She was the wife of Kalyandas Manmohandas and seems to have followed Jessawalla in adopting the use of stockings and different types of ornaments and expressed her appreciation of the changes in Jessawalla's family through a small verse she composed.

Contemporary social practices among Parsis are seen as gender discriminatory by Jessawalla. Thus while widows spent their lives wearing black dresses and no

ornaments, she notes that a widower resumed the "gaiety and amusement of his bachelor days" after a month of mourning. A woman's role was perceived as being essentially domestic. She records that she took over the cooking from servants when her husband's business

eroded. This willingness to try western medicine, in the middle of the century when its availability and acceptance were limited, is significant.

Being an ardent admirer of British monarchy, Jessawalla attributes all that she sees as progress to the "human influence" of Queen Victoria.

She believed that "equal distribution of justice and prosperity" had resulted from British rule. In the same vein, she contends,

"India boasts of many noble chiefs. I doubt if one could be found who would bring order out of chaos as the English do." The year 1870 is termed "memorable" because of the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh, when the Government requested people to whitewash their houses and observe "clean-

liness" and princes and native chiefs came to Bombay to pay their "respects." The visit of the Prince of Wales in 1875 is hailed as "an auspicious omen" as it provided Parsi women "a freedom unknown before" with even widows coming out and attending functions. Streets and public gardens were repaired and put in order. In the following year, she attended the Delhi Darbar, where she was the only Parsi woman present, the others being Zenana ladies "who were screened from view." She is aware of the famine of 1876, but sees the Darbar as a means of providing employment to the poor. The splendor and display of wealth made her feel how "powerful was the scepter" of Queen Victoria.

Socializing with Europeans was important to Jessawalla and she records with pride the various receptions she attended. Her regret was that upper-class Indian women were devoid of interest and curiosity and reluctant to take what she regarded as their "legitimate place" at state ceremonies. At the same time, she observes that Europeans made "incorrect surmises" about India, their "supercilious superiority" being "taken down a peg" when they saw how Indians accepted western facilities. European visitors to her friend Kesarbai's home were amazed at the comforts she had.

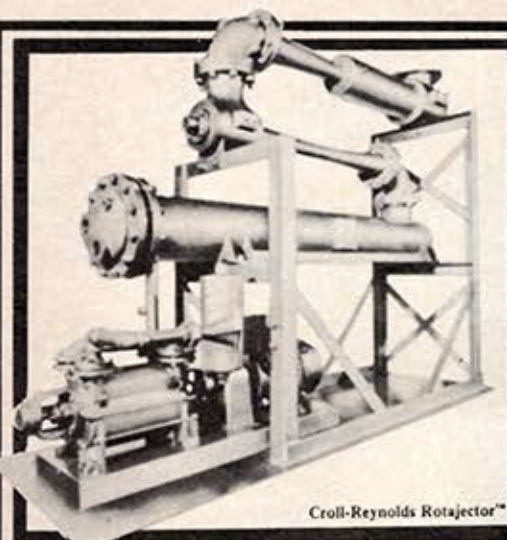
Descriptions of Jessawalla's exten-



Dosebai Jessawalla (right) and son Dadabhai (in pugree) with Ms R. Ahlers and her children in Bonn in 1878

suffered a downswing during the share crisis. On another occasion, when she cooked for her husband's guests, Nowroji Furdoonji, Dorabji Framji and others, Sir Jamsetjee remarked that it pleased him that so "refined" a person as Dosebai possessed the "sterling qualities" of a "capable housewife." The contemporary male perception of an "educated" woman was one who possessed western manners, and yet performed her homely tasks.

Critical of those who learnt English and on the strength of that knowledge ignored their household duties, disregarded religion, or the performance of rituals, Jessawalla was outraged that some even upheld Christianity as the "embodiment of truth." There is an inevitable acceptance of certain practices. Thus her daughter had to spend 40 days "lying-in" after her second baby, as was the custom, even though she had not done likewise for her first child in England. She also mentions the effects of 11 childbirths on her own health. However, when Dosebai and her brother had been afflicted by cholera as children, their mother had moved house to the Fort area, where with the timely treatment of a physician they recov-



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sive travels form a major part of her autobiography. She appears to have been an indefatigable traveler. The first trip she records was to Mahableshwar, which was a "heavenly retreat" and notes that such "healthful" resorts were not availed of, due to "ill founded, dreadful prejudice." She maintained that since "steam had obliterated" the difficulty of travel, "a woman should shake off the antiquarian dread of locomotion." Her trip to Delhi in 1876 was by train, via Allahabad. She was impressed by the large railway station at Allahabad and visited the Sangam and what she describes as the "subterranean cellar" where Hindu rites and ceremonies were performed. At Delhi she mentions visiting Jama Masjid and Chandni Chowk, the latter reminding her of Bhindi Bazaar or Parel Road in Bombay. She is amused by the speculation in Chandni Chowk among the locals as to whether she was a Chinese or an Egyptian.

Her visit to the Taj Mahal evokes the comment that while "the architecture of the British rule was large and showy," it was "nothing approaching the exquisite details and costly elegance of the Taj." Her ardent pro British sentiments lead her to regard Lucknow as "a landmark of British heroism" and she is moved by her visit to the Residency there. She took a ride on an elephant in the howdah, creating a stir, with passersby asking her to partake of *pan supari* (betelnut). Benares, the "sacred city of India," disappointed her with its "filth and squalor" everywhere, except in areas where European regiments were lodged. At Calcutta, "the city of palaces," she attended a reception at Government House, where Lady Strachey welcomed her as the first Parsi lady to ever do so. On her way back to Bombay, Jessawalla stopped at Jabalpur where she saw the Marble Rocks and even visited a jail where the prisoners, she noted, looked "far from discontented." Being a devout Parsi, she undertook a trip to Navsari to worship at the fire-temple there.

Jessawalla traveled to England in 1878 with her son. She points out that

while her husband was encouraging, her brother disapproved of her trip. On board the *S. S. Nizam* she socialized with her fellow passengers. She describes the slow progress of the steamer



Dosebai Jessawalla with granddaughter J. R. Patell (standing) and great-grandson

through the Suez Canal. They disembarked at Malta, where they saw Indian forces mustered in large numbers. She notes that the ship rounded the tip at Gibraltar and reached Southampton after a 27-day journey. Arriving in London was the realization of "the greatest aim of her life." She found that Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy was so well-known in London that she was identified as belonging to his community. She was impressed by the railway network in the city and the "majestic bridge" over the river Thames. She mentions her visit to Madame Tussaud's, the India Office Library, the Crystal Palace, with its collection of roses, Hyde Park, Kensington

Gardens, the Tower of London, St Paul's, Covent Garden Theatre, the aquarium and the Polytechnic, where she saw the telephone. At the House of Commons, she was inspired by Gladstone speaking against the "infamous" Press Act, and championing the cause of India's rights and liberties. She notes, with interest, that numerous saleswomen and seamstresses were employed in London. She met friends like Framji Bamonji Cama who had established his business there, Dr Rustamji Nusserwanji Khory, who was a doctor educated at the Grant Medical College, Bombay and Dr George Birdwood (credited with the creation of Victoria Gardens), who had been curator at the Government Central Museum, Bombay, and secretary to the Agri-Horticultural Society of Western India and was at the time with the India Office. Jessawalla also visited Brighton. Her trip to England so overwhelmed her that she declared "England affords her people an unceasing round of refinement and legitimate pleasure, even a 10th of which cannot be had in India."

Jessawalla and her son went to Paris next to see the exhibition there. They visited the English, Chinese and Indian stalls, exhibiting their products, arts and industries. Jessawalla even managed a balloon ride. Since she wore her Parsi costume everywhere, she found herself photographed in London, Paris and Bonn. They visited Switzerland, particularly Geneva, with its "romantic mountain scenery." Passing through Parma, Bologna, and Ravenna they arrived at Rome, where they saw the Pantheon, the Colosseum and St Peter's Basilica. She even had an audience with the Pope, Leo XIII. She was exempted from the customary kissing of the toe, as she regarded it "polluting" and was allowed to kiss his fingers instead.

On her return to India, Jessawalla traveled to Rawalpindi and Kashmir, which she terms the 'Venice of India.' She remarks that she found men to be educated there but not women. Her next trip was to South India in 1904. At Madras, she visited the General Hospital, which had the reputation of being

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the best hospital, with facilities for women and children. She describes Pondicherry as "the relic of an unbuilt empire" and is amazed by the noiseless traffic there, with no horse conveyance, but only the *pousse* (rickshaw). She went up the Nilgiris to Ooty and was impressed by the engineering skill that went into the construction of the railway. The Todas, with their tall and athletic looks, are compared to the Jews. Jessawalla's next halt was Bangalore, where she enjoyed the green meadows and drive to the Cubbon Park, and then on to "enlightened" Mysore. She managed a trip to the Kolar Gold Mines where she saw the "processes" by which gold was extracted.

After selling some of her property in Bombay, 76-year-old Jessawalla went on a second visit to England in 1906. She disembarked at Marseilles and travelled to London by train. She stayed in England for three months. She particularly mentions her meeting Dadabhai Naoroji, whom she had known since childhood, and remarks that she was amazed by "the energy and enthusiasm with which he worked for the good of India."

In 1907, Jessawalla went on a world

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tour with two of her sons. She waxes eloquent about Bombay, as it appeared from the ship, P & O's *Delta*, with its "magnificent harbor, busy wharves" and "amphitheater of distant hills," a "truly sublime spectacle." This time, she traveled east via Colombo which, she notes, was famed for its cinnamon and cloves; on to Penang, Singapore and Hong Kong. Here they met leading Parsi merchants, Sir Hormusji N. Mody and Sorabji Dhunjibhoy Sethna. They then visited Shanghai, "the Paris of the Far East" where they were surprised to find a Parsi cemetery in "good order." Their next halt was Japan, described as "a perfect study in color and configuration." They went via Kobe and Yokohama to Tokyo. Though "a city of temples," Jessawalla notes that Tokyo was modern with electric lighting and tram lines. They then sailed for nine days till they reached Honolulu where they saw collections of colored fishes. On the voyage from Honolulu to San Francisco, Jessawalla was photographed and interviewed by the Press.

At San Francisco, they found signs of the recent earthquake. Yet the view from the hills, Jessawalla declares, was beyond comparison with what they had seen in Rome, Malta or Hong Kong. They then proceeded to Chicago by train and went on to see the "awful majestic plunge" of the Niagara Falls. Their next stop was New York city, where they found a number of established Parsi firms viz. J. N. Tata, Bhungara and Company and Cowasji Brothers. Jessawalla was struck by the sympathy of the American people for "all things Indian." She makes discerning comments about New York. The city of four million "never knew the darkness of sleep," and concludes that because people were always rushing about and keeping late hours, they lived short lives. She did the sights on "a sightseeing tour" in the company of a Parsi who was an American citizen, Nasserwanji Panthaky. Jessawalla categorizes New York's restaurants into those for the poor, where women served, and those for the rich, where only men waited at tables.

Their last stop in America was Washington and the Jamestown exhibition in Virginia, where the tercentenary of a permanent English settlement was being celebrated. Bhungara and Company had displayed ivories, tapestries and bronzes, the crowning exhibit be-

ing the reproduction of the historic temple of Palitana, in teak.

Jessawalla and her party went on to England where she was gratified to have been able to attend a talk on education of Indian women by N. G.



*Devoted couple:
Cowasjee and
Dosebai
Jessawalla*

Welinkar, a retired professor from Wilson College, Bombay. She was also present at a meeting presided over by William Wedderburn and addressed by speakers who belonged to the "forward school," with "sympathy" for India. An interviewer of the *Daily Mail* tried to draw her into a political discussion, but she declined to speak of anything but her travels. She was also interviewed by Ms A. A. Smith, editor of the *Indian Magazine and Review*.

Being an ardent monarchist, the highlight of her trip was her presentation before King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, arranged through the good offices of Lord Ripon, "the most popular Viceroy India ever had." To Jessawalla, the presentation was "a hall-

mark of social status and respectability." She gifted the royal couple a cap and dress trimmings, embroidered by her in silver and gold lace and assured the King that Parsis were happy "under his benign rule." Jessawalla also attended the opening of the British Parliament, and claims to be the only Parsi lady to have done so by 1908. At the Tableau Vivant, organized in aid of the India Famine Fund, she met Indian men and women dressed in national dress, and heard talks on Indian subjects, in English. Jessawalla's almost childlike enthusiasm to try new things is apparent in the fact that she became a motorist in England and had a car transported to Bombay, through the offices of Thomas Cook. Jessawalla left England in 1908 gratified by what she terms the "entente cordiale" between different communities.

En route to India, Jessawalla and her sons made a brief halt at Marseilles where they were impressed by the panoramic view from

the Notre Dame de la Garde. They also went ashore at Aden, where they were entertained by the family of Cowasjee Dinshaw and Brothers who had a reputation for being "first and foremost" in welcoming royalty, viceroys and governors. Jessawalla records her joy at returning home. Subsequently she offered prayers at all the fire-temples in Bombay.

Jessawalla died in 1911 and her sons had the auto-

biography published. Her views had obviously made an impression on them for they note, in an epilogue, that when the history of India would be written, it would bear witness that progress in the 19th and 20th centuries owed as much to her sons as to her daughters.

Edited version of a paper by Dr Mridula Ramanna published in the *Journal* No 61, 1997 of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Dr Ramanna is the head of the department of history at the SIES College, Bombay.





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ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD
continued from page 54
New Year," he writes.

Bella Tata, president of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia notes, "Let us...get on with it, living life to the fullest, tackling obstacles and changes, and doing as much as we can in harmony with the message of Asho Zarathushtra."

Says Khorshed Jungalwala, chairperson of FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America)'s publications committee, "The Pake-E-Mehr and the FEZANA Journal are sister journals that



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Three Prayers

A request from her son Rich for "a couple of prayers with meanings," has propelled Dina McIntyre, Pennsylvania based attorney and *Gatha* scholar, into publishing a 26-page booklet titled *Three Prayers and the Name of God*. In it she has meditated on the *Ashem Vohu*, *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*, *Yenghe Haataam* and the name of Ahura Mazda.

An Introduction seeks to place these offerings, which she describes as "mantras, little nuggets of wisdom with many



McIntyre: good purpose and love

layers of meaning," into a historical context. Referring to the loss of precious knowledge, McIntyre lays the blame on the marauding Greeks and Arabs, but not only on them: "Part of the reason may have been that with the passing of time, the religion for many centuries was in the hands of souls who were not enlightened, who made political compromises, who turned it into a profit making institution, a control mechanism, and who were not able to grasp, and therefore maintain, the pure, spiritual truths that Zarat-

thushtira taught."

She recalls Zaratthushtira's belief that prayers are always answered if they have two ingredients — good purpose and love. He says to God: "...For I know that words deriving from good purpose and from love are not to be left wanting by you" (*The Gathas*, Y28.10).

In a covering letter McIntyre notes, "The conclusions I have come to are not in accord with Zoroastrian ideas of the last few centuries. But I have to go where the evidence leads me. I cannot compromise with the truth as I understand it (not knowingly, anyway)."

McIntyre provides two meanings for the *Ashem Vohu*. At the simplest level she says it "stands for the proposition that truth is the best, that it is available to all who desire it and that we should desire truth for truth's own best sake... because it is the right thing to do."

At a deeper level she discusses the concept of Asha — "of which ashem and ashai are grammatical variants." Noting that "there is no one English word which accurately encompasses the meaning of 'Asha,'" McIntyre uses "truth" in conjunction with its other "divine" aspects: "what's right, goodness, compassion, loving kindness, generosity as well as the laws that govern the spiritual and material worlds including that perfect justice which sets in motion the law of consequences."

Concluding with a deeper understanding of the *Ashem Vohu*, McIntyre defines Asha as the best good — "it is divine, the way to divinity and the heaven of becoming one with the divine" — which can be attained by all who desire it for its own sake, without ulterior motives.

The *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* (or *Ahuna Vairya*) has often been described as a talisman capable of producing extraordinary effects, including the impotence of the evil spirit, according

to the post-Sasanian *Bundahishn*, notes McIntyre, defining

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the *Yatha* as the prayer of choices: the first as that of the lord (ahu — in accord with the truth, Asha); the second as the judgment that accords with the truth, Asha; the third establishing the rule of actions (khshathra) stemming from an existence of good thinking for the sake of the wise lord.

The first choice leads McIntyre into an examination of the attributes of divinity as embodied in the amesha spentas in contrast to the pantheon of local gods in Zarathushtra's time. The second choice is made with an understanding of Asha — "good thinking is the key to accessing the divine. And Zarathushtra requires that we think for ourselves — not blindly accept what others may tell us." The importance of the third choice — of action prompted by good thinking — "is reflected in Zarathushtra's view of what it takes to be a saoshyant — a savior or redeemer... According to Zarathushtra each individual is a potential saoshyant... In other words, 'actions in harmony with good thinking and truth' bring the divine to life, not only in our spirits, but also in our world and so establish good rule (vohu khshathra)." McIntyre stresses the "inextricably linked" material and spiri-

tual worlds as Zarathushtra saw them, the purpose of life being to realize the divine in both worlds.

While one explanation of the *Yenghe Haataam* prayer is that it is addressed to the amesha spentas, another tradition refers to it as a statement that we revere all good men and women whose daily actions are known to God as prompted by Asha. Quoting Chicago high priest Kersey Antia, McIntyre accepts that the prayer is "deliberately ambiguous" and reconciles both aspects — revering the divine in concept (amesha spenta) and in being (those who have realized them) and serving both with love.

Dissecting Ahura Mazda, McIntyre says "...being ahura and mazda means to be enlightened oneself and also help others to become enlightened. This corroborates Zarathushtra's idea that man and God are part of the same whole." She acknowledges however that this is not the conventional interpretation of Ahura Mazda.

Before tailing off with two pages of quotations from the *Gathas*, McIntyre introduces a poem of hers — *In Search Of* — which may perhaps be reminiscent of Sufi verses:

Beloved,

I search for Your Face.

In the moving lights and darks of earth
and space,

I search for Your Face.

I stretch my mind to grasp at the thought
of Thee,

Grasp, as You move and breathe in all
around me,

And find in my grasp,
Wisps of eternity... elusive...

In the silent rhapsody of the universe,
In tree, and sky, and star, and sand,
I feel your Hand.

In a loving heart,
In a truthful mind,
In an act of grace,
I see Your Face,
Beloved.

Like the 12 essays on the *Gathas* by different scholars that Dina and her late husband Richard had published earlier, *Three Prayers and the Name of God* is offered free to anyone who would like a copy. Write to Dina McIntyre at PO Box 461, Glenshaw, Pennsylvania 15116, USA (e-mail: dinamci@aol.com)

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Hallowed be thy name

The terms Zarathushtra, Zarathushti Din and Zarathushti should be standardized when referring to the Prophet, his religion and its followers, avers the author

Jamshed R. Udvadia

A variety of spellings and forms of the name of the Prophet, his religion and its followers have been used on the e-mail and in articles submitted to *FEZANA Journal*, the newsletter of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America. When Zarathushtis talk at inter-faith seminars or to the local newspapers, the same diverse forms and pronunciation are noticed.

It would be desirable to have one standard nomenclature and one standard set of spellings for the name of the Prophet, his religion and the followers of the religion. This would:

- Eliminate any confusion in the minds of the readers and listeners, especially the younger Zarathushtis and the people of other religions, who are not conversant with the mental translation that Zarathushti elders go through, when they speak of Zoroastrianism as the religion of Zarathushtra, to reconcile two words with different roots.
- Give proper respect to the Prophet of our ancient religion, which has aroused considerable interest among the diverse communities of the world.

The Prophet's name has been spelt variously:

Zarathushtra has been used by various scholars, teachers and authors of religious books such as Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu, Dastur (Dr) Framroze A. Bode, Dr Pallan R. Ichaporia, Ervad Jal R. Vimalalal, Framroze Rustumjee and others.

Zarathustra, occasionally preceded by the honorary title 'Asho' was used by *FEZANA Journal* (prior to 1997). It is almost identical to the first form, but was adopted to simplify the spelling.

Zarthost or Jarthost (usually suffixed by Saheb) is mostly used by Parsis in India. This is obviously a shortened form of the first usage with a slight sloppiness of tongue in the variation where the J is used instead of the Z. This

particular substitution is noticed in other names like Jarine instead of Zarine, Jal instead of Zal, etc.

Zardusht, the form in use by some Iranian Zarathushtis, might be traced to the *Shah Nameh*. The author, Firdowsi, compiled his information from various poets and authors who had written about Persian history before his birth. It looks like a contraction of the first form with the simplification of the middle 'th' by the 'd' sound.

Zoroaster is used mainly by western authors and others with a western education. While the first four forms are related to each other, the last form, Zoroaster shows a considerable departure from them. Dastur Dabu explains that the three Avestan syllables Zarathushtra meant golden shining star and that the Greeks simplified the name by dropping the middle syllable and translating the rest, which through further translation by western authors became Zoroaster (golden or shining star).

Some Zarathushtis prefer the form Zoroaster, because of the claim of some non-Zarathushti scholars, that 'ushtira' is related to 'ushtor' which means 'camel' in Dari, a current language of Iran. Hence the meaning 'owner of old camels,' attached to the name Zarathushtra, seems pejorative to them. Dr Simmons adds that the Greeks had no knowledge of Avestan derivation and tried to make sense of the name by calling it 'shining star' or

Zoro-aster. However Dr Pallan Ichaporia says: "The above etymology from Dari is like putting the cart before the horse. Dari is a very late development — at least 3,000 years after the Gathic Avesta where we find the name of our Prophet as Zarathushtra."

What's in a name? Some would argue that "there is nothing inherently sacred in a name which exists primarily for the convenience of reference." This school of thought generally relies on the line made famous by Shakespeare: "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

While the rose would "smell as sweet" even if one called it by another name like dahlia or pansy, it would be impossible for the listener to understand that what the speaker really meant was a rose.

Each person's name is important to him. This is more true when we talk about an important historical person; even more true when we talk about a Prophet who has founded a religion that has been followed for over 3,000 years.

Chuck is a short form of Charles, but no one would address Prince Charles of England as Prince Chuck as it would show a lack of respect. This is meant to answer those who might try to use Zarathustra, Zarthost or Zardusht.

There are those who allow the westerners to change their original name to a westernized form, for example Jim instead of Jamshed, Phil in-



continued on page 112



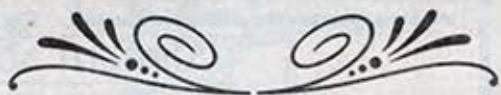
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Lonavla's legacy

The Bai Jerbai Cowasjee Dinshaw Daremeher in Lonavla has fortified the faith of residents and visitors over 100 years

Hilla P. Guzder

A bright blue kingfisher flitted among the foliage of the Rye Woods near the agiary as a breeze wafted the fragrance of sukhad and loban through the serene surroundings of the Bai Jerbai Cowasjee Dinshaw Daremeher (Adenwalla agiary) in Lonavla. Above the eight fluted columns of the fire-temple stood its emblem of a rising sun, as the brilliant sunshine of a May morning cast speckles of light and shadow through the green canopy in the compound.

The agiary was consecrated 100 years ago on June 3, 1899, when the hills of Lonavla were alive, not with burgeoning bungalows, but with bird song and tigers roaming in the gloaming!

Leading the seven mobeds in the jashan on May 10, 1999 to mark the

centenary was Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar Dastur, high priest of the Deccan who had come from Poona's Sardar Sorabji Ratanji Patel Dar-e-Meher. A congregation of devotees from Bombay, Poona as well as local residents wove their way in and out of the packed hall offering sandalwood to the two fires housed within its precincts — the original fire consecrated a century ago and an even older (116-year-old) fire brought in 1976 from the Adenwalla agiary in Aden, South Yemen.

Addressing a large gathering in the shade of a shamiana in the compound, Cowasjee Nusserwanji Dinshaw, the chairman of the agiary trust, narrated how his great-grandfather Cowasjee Dinshaw Adenwalla (the agiary's

founder) was in two minds as to how to commemorate his wife Jerbai's death — should a fire-temple be built in her memory or a dokhma? "People come crying to a dokhma," he said, whereas an agiary is used for weddings, navjotes, etc, when people come smiling. And so an agiary it was. Describing some of the trials and tribulations the trust has faced through the years, Dinshaw described how the government had sought to requisition some of the land to broaden the road which would then have touched the agiary steps. Thanking Dr Mehroo Bengalee, who was a member of the Minorities Commission at that time and

Dinshaw addressing the gathering

Photo: Hormyar Mistry, Hormz Prints





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The agiary was consecrated on June 3, 1899, when the hills of Lonavla were alive, not with burgeoning bungalows, but with bird song and tigers





Alongside: Portraits of the founder Cowasjee Dinshaw Adenwalla (far left) and his wife Bai Jerbai (Photo: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints) and the jashan in progress Photo: Hilla Guzder

Below: The founder's granddaughter the late Jerbai Savakshaw Dinshaw Adenwalla whose largesse benefitted the agiary Photo: Studio Suder



From left: Guzder (top); Dinshaw (below); the Daremeher (center) and Dinshaw garlanding Sardar Dastur Photos: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints

Below: Gotla
Alongside (l to r):
Lilaowala, Bengalee,
Khodaparast Dinshaw,
Guzder and Dinshaw,
with Shroff (in pugree)
at rear Photos: Homyar
Mistry, Homz Prints



who was present at the function. Dinshaw stated that it was due to her letters and personal representations that "this land has been saved." The dokhma lands (near the Don Bosco School on the way to Tungarli), originally consisting of 1,40,000 sq yards had also been encroached upon. "Encroachment is very common in Lonavla," asserted Dinshaw, "and it is very difficult to get anyone out." The trustees were advised to keep 40,000 sq yards for the dokhma and sell the rest of the property for building bungalows for Parsis. The charity commissioner refused permission for an all-Parsi colony, so the land was divided into 57 plots and auctioned, with the dokhma trust retaining a few plots and a number of Parsis buying the others, related Dinshaw, thanking Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Dinshaw Mehta for his guidance and assistance in this matter. The new national highway linking Bombay to Poona will touch the dokhma boundary, he informed the gathering.

Recalling the dedicated services of Ervad Savaksha Fatakia as the agiary's panthaky for 57 years, Dinshaw stated that so pious a man was Fatakia (and extremely strict towards any ladies seeking to enter the agiary in shorts or mini-skirts!) that he would offer four days'

Middle: Entrance hall of the agiary

Photo: Hilla Guzder

Alongside: Variava (second from right in foreground) inaugurating the fountain Photo: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints



kriya at his own cost for any Zoroastrians who had met an unfortunate end on Duke's Nose, the national highway, etc. The present mobed, Ervad Marzban Gonda who has been with the agiary for three years, 'sings' the prayers, declared Dinshaw, and he was happy to note that many visitors to Lonavla came to the agiary attracted by his style of praying.

Dinshaw also thanked Jamshed Guzder, BPP chairman, for driving down to Lonavla despite the fact that he had not been well earlier. The Guzder and Adenwalla families have a long association, he said, expressing appreciation also for the cheque of Rs 10 lakhs received from the Jerbai Savakshaw Dinshaw Adenwalla Trust, (formed from her estate) of which Guzder is a trustee. Congratulating Justice Sam Variava, who had come especially for the function from Bombay, on his elevation as chief justice of the Delhi

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Fatakia would offer four days' kriya at his own cost for any Zoroastrians who had met an unfortunate end on Duke's Nose, the national highway, etc.

High Court, Dinshaw opined that he "was proud and happy but sorry to see him leave Bombay."

"Paak parvardégar no huath apri kaum per ché (God's blessings are on our community)," declared Guzder as he informed the assembly that UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) had decided to extend support for the preservation of Zoroastrian culture and religion. "Parsismustrespond," asserted Guzder, "by donating to this cause too" and suggested that a fund be started with even small contributions of Rs 50-Rs 100 from the public.

Chiding the community for constantly saying that there is "maara-maari" (infighting) among the BPP trustees, Guzder emphasized that all the trustees worked in a spirit of cooperation and differing opinions could never be termed "maara-maari."

In a hard-hitting, prepared speech, Bengalee, ex vice chancellor of Bombay University and former BPP trustee, launched a broadside against those "who treat religion as a matter of convenience." The community possesses certain attributes and qualities like honesty, integrity, nobility, charity, enterprise and humor, she said, and "it is a sin to destroy these by mixing the seed. The children of a Parsi father and non-Parsi mother should never be accepted." A greater sin, she maintained, is committed by Parsi women married to non-Parsis. "We as a community have failed to excommunicate mobeds who perform such marriages," she specified. "Even UNESCO is trying to preserve the purity of our race and religion. We need to form a brigade of like-minded, spirited Zoroastrians to backtrack on the steps of the reformists, to preserve the purity," she said.

Lamenting that large Zoroastrian funds are often given to cosmopolitan charities, Bengalee stated that there are wealthy Zoroastrians who can contribute lakhs, if not crores, to the poor and needy. "But I'm afraid we have scared them away and lost their trust. Our fire-temples are starved of funds, yet 1,001 Parsi endowments and charity trusts have in the past become redundant." Bengalee appealed to Variava and other legal luminaries to "help get back" the trust funds for the benefit of the community.

The recent frequent murders of elderly Parsis living alone in Bombay do not seem to have shaken the community, believed Bengalee. "The Christians and Muslims are so well-knit as a community that they can bring the entire country upside down, but the Parsis have raised no hue and cry." Build strong family bonds, she advised, hold back married children to stay under one roof with their elders for "physical, social and emotional support." Channelize the career patterns of Parsi youth and involve them in definite schemes of apprenticeship and understudy in successful Zoroastrian enterprises for all 365 days of the year, she counselled, as the "best industries are still in the community. In every field we are second to none."

Elaborating on the significance of the consecrated fire, journalist Ruby Lilaowala termed the fire of Ahura Mazda "the greatest of all yazads." The sun is the symbol of heavenly light in a man's soul, she averred, and prayers like the ijashne and vendidad, through heat, light and sound vibrations, transform physical energy into cosmic energy, which is strengthened also during the boi ceremony five times a day. Praying the *Atash-Nyaish*, she believed, "cleans the inner soul." If suffering from mental torment or depression, "sit in tranquility in front of a consecrated fire, it will do far more good than many a visit to a psychiatrist."

As their gift to the fire-temple on its centenary, the 12 members of the committee of the Lonavla Anjuman contributed to renovating the fountain in front of the agiary steps. "We have brought *ava ardavisur banoo* in front of the fire," stated secretary Darius Gotla. Shawls and flowers were presented to numerous individuals, both local and from Bombay and Poona, who had helped the agiary in various ways. The proceedings were enlivened with BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz removing the shawl from across his shoulders and exhorting Dinshaw's eldest son Anoo-shihrahan to approach the dais: "I do not feel cold in Bombay, but I am not given to returning things which are given with affection. I want to put the shawl around the shoulders of the coming generation, so drop everything and come here before I change my mind! Your great-grandfather built the agiary and I charge you with the responsibility that as long as you are alive, you will continue to walk in the strong footsteps (of your forefathers)."

Hosting the invitees to a sumptuous lunch, Dinshaw, his wife Khodaparast (who is also a trustee of the agiary, along with solicitor Jimmy Shroff) and children Anoo-shihrahan, Freny and Saroosh mingled with the guests, ministering to their earthly comforts with bottles of mineral water thoughtfully provided, as well as stronger spirits donated by London Pilsner and Perzon Zend of Peekay Wines. The evening function saw a larger attendance with permanent Lonavla residents and bungalow owners fraternizing over dinner. "There are almost 100 Parsi bungalow/apartment owners in

front of the agiary steps. "We have brought *ava ardavisur banoo* in front of the fire," stated secretary Darius Gotla. Shawls and flowers were presented to numerous individuals, both local and from Bombay and Poona, who had helped the agiary in various ways. The proceedings were enlivened with BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz removing the shawl from across his shoulders and exhorting Dinshaw's eldest son Anoo-shihrahan to approach the dais: "I do not feel cold in Bombay, but I am not given to returning things which are given with affection. I want to put the shawl around the shoulders of the coming generation, so drop everything and come here before I change my mind! Your great-grandfather built the agiary and I charge you with the responsibility that as long as you are alive, you will continue to walk in the strong footsteps (of your forefathers)."

Enjoying the repast Photo: Hilla Guzder



Lonavla," estimates anjuman vice president Maneck Shroff as wife Rashida adds: "We are about 28 families living here permanently. Of the approximately 100 individuals, most are old, there are very few young people and even fewer children. We do get together every year to celebrate the agiary's salgrehi."

Over the past five to seven years, Rusi Cama, Shera Jussawalla, Percy Master, Sam Choksi and others have played a major part in maintaining the agiary, acknowledges Dinshaw. The old Adenwalla bungalow, Jer Lodge, now in a perilous state, and the agiary were originally part of the same complex which extended over 12-13 acres, he reminisces. The road bridge, which has separated the bungalow from the agiary, was built on land surrendered by the Adenwallas. "I remember that years ago our bungalow had no electric lights, only lamps, though the other bungalows in Lonavla did have electricity. But that is the way my grandfather Sir Hormusjee Cowasjee Dinshaw (whose statue stands next to Bombay's Bhikha Behram Well) wanted it. It was grandfather who had the old tank (on which stands the present Shivaji park near the agiary) filled up as it was a breeding ground for malarial mosquitoes." Out on an evening walk one evening, Dinshaw narrates, his grandfather asked the accompanying ladies of his family to quicken their steps to return to the safety of the bungalow as dusk approached. The ladies paid no heed, till a glimpse of a striped, furry form across the path ahead added wings to their feet!

The original firm of Cowasjee Dinshaw and Brothers, shipbuilders, was founded in Aden in 1850 when Aden was a prosperous port, strategically situated on the sea route between East and West. When the dar-e-meher built in memory of Merwanji Kharegat, possibly the first Parsi to stake his claim in the Arabian Sea port, needed repairs, Cowasjee decided to build a new fire-temple which was consecrated on September 20, 1854 (see "The Flight of the Fire," *Parsiana*, December '76-January '77). In 1883, the Adenwalla family consecrated an adarian grade fire in the township. Their "generosity and charity... even went to the extent of building a mosque in Aden for the use of the local Mohammedan population which was known as Cowasji Masjid," states an article penned by Rustom K. Anklesaria in a booklet which describes the Lonavla

agiary and the Aden fire's journey to India and enthronement therein.

After the departure of the British in 1967, South Yemen turned communist, rapidly losing its premier position as a trading center. The Parsis, at one time numbering over 1,000, exited the erst-



The Aden fire arriving in Bombay

Photo courtesy: Forward Studio

while British colony, moving to UK, Canada or India. The dokhma, agiary and their funds became "nationalized state properties." It was decided in the 1970s that the fire be brought back to India. "The buildings all around had been bombarded, but the adarian was untouched," explained Dinshaw. But the president of Yemen refused permission to shift the fire. An approach was made to Queen Elizabeth and the World Bank for assistance in the matter, but the efforts bore no fruit. It was Maharashtra's strongman Y. B. Chavan, then foreign minister of India, who finally prevailed upon the Yemen president at a Non-Aligned Conference to accede to the request, aided by pressure from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The condition, however, was that the fire could be shifted only at midnight. An unexpected problem arose when the Aden police commissioner, a Muslim, decided he would personally inspect the metallic box that was to hold the urn, lest it be used for smuggling! "This would have been sacrilege as the holy fire cannot be set eyes upon by any non-Zoroastrians," states the booklet. A midnight knock on the agiary door brought, however, not

the police commissioner but a messenger who informed the Parsis inside that there would be no inspection as the commissioner had died!

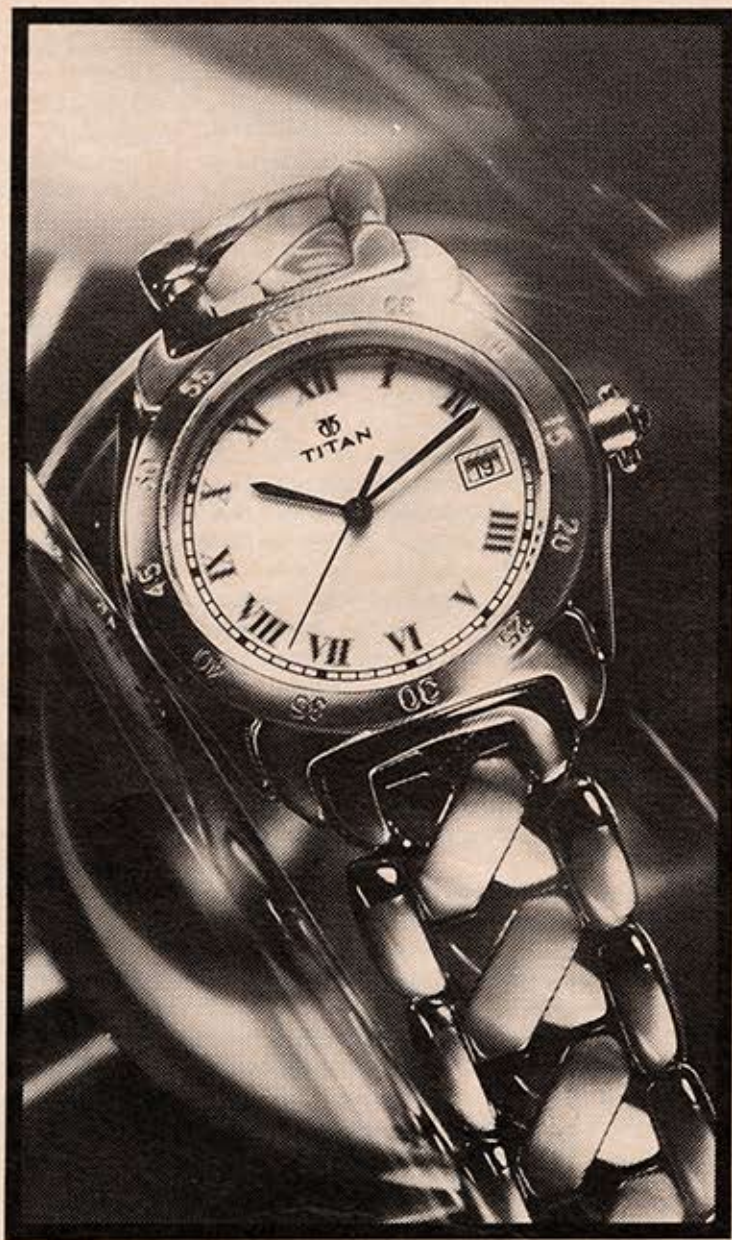
Under motorcycle escort, the fire was moved in the still of the night to Air India's special Boeing 707, *Lhotse*, manned by an all-Parsi crew. It landed at the VIP section of the tarmac in Bombay, according to Dinshaw, with the president and prime minister of India sending flowers and greetings! It traveled by special bus from Bombay to Lonavla under police escort, with the ghats closed to all traffic except the cavalcade of eight buses and 70 cars! The Aden fire was ceremoniously installed on *roz* Behram, *mah* Khordad, YZ 1346 (November 14, '76) in the specially constructed sanctum sanctorum by the side of the existing fire, details the booklet.

A plaque fixed in the entrance hall informs devotees that the agiary had been opened for use on *roz* Govad, *mah* Adar, YZ 1268 (AD 1899). Nearly 700 Zoroastrians are said to have attended the consecration performed by Dastur Kaikhushro Jamaspji JamaspAsana, Poona's deputy Dastur Kekobad Adarbad, Kadmi Dastur Khurshedji Bejonji and others. "The rest houses, hotels and sanatoria in this small village were packed with Zoroastrians," narrates the booklet. Two large mandaps were put up, one for the ladies, the other for the gents, with the ladies outnumbering the latter!

The contract for construction was awarded to Pirojshaw Dhunjibhoy Patel under the supervision of an architect from Bombay, Dinshaw Dorabji Mistry. Built of Porbandar stone, with marble on the steps and beautiful Minton tiles inside, the agiary has the priests' quarters alongside. The founder, it is said, spent nearly Rs 30,000 on its construction and Khan Bahadur M. C. Murzban presented an address in a silver casket to Dinshaw, stating that the permanent Zoroastrian population of Khandala and Lonavla was 100 persons, with the number enhanced 10-fold during the season and in building a fire-temple Cowasjee Dinshaw Adenwalla had fulfilled a much-felt need.

"This agiary is a unique privilege we have in our family and I hope it will continue forever," asserts Dinshaw, reinforcing fellow trustee Shroff's prophecy made at the start of the celebration: "We will be here on this *dharti* (earth) 1,300 years later."

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HALLOWED BE THY NAME

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stead of Phiroze. This results in a loss of identity and is possibly done to gain some temporary advantage with the westerners. Sometimes it may be due to a mental laziness which prefers to permit the change in their name, rather than make the effort to correct and educate. There are others who steadfastly refuse to do that because they are proud of their identity as Zarathushtis. They have no difficulty in getting the westerners to spell and pronounce their names as they should be.

Some Parsis who use Zarathushtra when speaking in Gujarati switch to Zoroaster in English in the mistaken belief that that is the English translation of Zarathushtra. As we all know a proper noun such as a name cannot be translated.

The rules of etymology and semantic derivation require that words related to the original word keep the same root and build upon it, to show the relationship. The words Zarathushti Din and Zarathushti designating the religion of Zarathushtra and its followers would satisfy the above rule.

While Zarathushtra is the authentic name of the Prophet, there are some who advocate that we should retain Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian. This was suggested in the interest of being understood by the western world which is more familiar with those forms. It does not take long for people to adapt to a different form or even a totally different name, for example, everyone has adapted to Sri Lanka which was known as Ceylon a few years ago; and Beijing (Peking), Malawi (Nyasaland) and several others.

Another consideration against the term Zoroastrianism is the meaning of the suffix '-ism.' The *American Heritage Dictionary* gives this meaning among others: "a distinctive doctrine, system or theory — generally used disparagingly." It should be noted that the disparaging use is only as applied to doctrines and not to practices or actions like patriotism, heroism, etc. It is of interest to note that all religions are referred to as '-isms' in the English language, except Christianity (and Islam-Ed) — which may be a point to ponder.

Some scholars pointed out that the

Some Parsis who use Zarathushtra when speaking in Gujarati switch to Zoroaster in English

authentic name of Jesus is Yeshua, but since all English language *Bibles* and other literature refer to him as Jesus, there would be tremendous resistance now to the idea of reverting to the original form of the name. Let us not fall into the same error and allow the westerners to change the authentic name of our Prophet, his religion or its followers. Let us exert a little effort to educate western society, instead of falling in step with them, using the argument:

"Zoroaster and its derivative forms are more recognizable in the West."

The time to do that is now, when the name is little known outside Zarathushti society. The adoption of these standards by *FEZANA Journal* now could be the first step to achieving this goal.

All change has always been started by a few far-sighted individuals and the rest of society has followed in time. That was how the US constitution was adopted by the representatives of 13 states at the start, who then convinced the people of their state to accept it and later the people of other states followed one by one.

It is suggested that for all the reasons given above, we should adopt Zarathushtra, Zarathushti Din and Zarathushti as the standard forms and spellings henceforth. The effort needed to standardize these names would certainly be much less than that needed for the adoption of the US constitution. Let us all make a decision now and stand by it.

(The proposals in this paper were accepted by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America at its 1997 annual general meeting.)

Jamshed R. Udvadia retired from the Michigan Civil Service as a computer programming supervisor. For three



years his commentaries on community matters were broadcast over WKAR (Michigan State University Radio). He started the Zarathushti Din classes for Michigan Zarathushtis in 1985 and continues to be a guest teacher there.

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THE FEDERATION SALUTES SAM

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Davierwalla, president of the BPP's Sanjan Stambh subcommittee, in order to make it a prestigious community memorial. He reported that the fence there is frequently breached by the local people and that another well or boring is required to augment its water supply for gardening purposes. While Guzder spontaneously offered financial support up to a lakh of rupees, Tamboly, knowledgeable about boring costs in Gujarat, noted that the project would probably cost Rs 70,000 to 75,000 at the rate of Rs 120 per foot. He also suggested that the best time to work on it is during April-May when the water table is at its lowest, otherwise a transient water level would be reached which would recede in the summer months. According to Palsetia, there is no municipal pipeline in the village. Gandhi would like to see the Stambh maintained in proper style with the necessary security arrangements.

The North American Zoroastrians would like to see Udvada develop on the lines of Jerusalem as an international center where we can establish a library and other facilities for the world community, said Rivetna. Guzder referred to a large plot and two enormous bungalows on the seaside bequeathed to the Kasturba Sev Ashram Trust by the late Mithuben Petit. "Can the BPP or the Federation do something to preserve them?" he asked.

Providing information on the work of the Save Udvada Committee (SUC), Modi informed the gathering that after the demise of Homi Taleyarkhan, Temas Pundol was the chairman of the Committee with Bejon Baldavala as co-chairman and treasurer. Meher Master-Moos continues as secretary. The offshore marine wall has been completed with the stones now embedded in sandbanks, noted Modi. "The sea is playing with

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us. We find a different topography each time," she added. The scheme to plant specific species of plants so that their roots may provide a bonding for the sand has not succeeded because people steal them, said Modi.

Dara Irani, vice president of the PPP had described the marine work as "shabby." "Stones have been laid but the water is crossing the stones and remaining there," he averred. Besides villagers are taking away sand to build their own homes and the beach is very dirty. Observer Mahrukh Noble endorsed Irani's statement. In her estimation about 35 bullock-carts' load of sand is removed daily. "When I tried to question the bullock-carts' (authority to lift the sand) they asked, 'Tahmara bawani chë kë (Is it your father's property)?" noted Irani.

Modi recalled that the SUC was formed to contain the sea erosion at Udvada and admitted that initially the quality of the material used had been found to be substandard. However the construction of the underwater marine

wall was the only viable solution reached after a lot of trial and error. The concept of transporting sand from other places along the coast was abandoned as too costly. She noted that the SUC had tried in vain to get the local people's support. Though the Gujarat Government had given a fair amount of funds, even Taleyarkhan was unable to secure its administrative help, she said in response to an inquiry by Eruch Irani.

Rustomji suggested that the SUC apply to the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Central Pollution Control Board to put an end to the sand piracy, asking for a copy of the letter to enable him to pursue the matter in Delhi. He also recommended that the SUC involve the local NGOs on their side. Pervez Irani suggested that the SUC officebearers, as citizens of India, make a formal complaint to the local authority. Gandhi advised Modi to invite Dara Irani, Pervez Irani and Noble to the next meeting of the SUC.

Alarmed at the possible subsoil degradation Dastur advocated the drawing up of a contingency plan to shift Iranshah. To ensure that the fire be safe from aerial attack he further noted that it not be brought to Bombay. Modi however noted that at this point in time

there is no threat to the Iranshah.

Chief Justice Variava

Bombay High Court judge Variava and his wife Dilnavaz were the honored guests at the dinner traditionally hosted at the Ripon Club by the BPP trustees at the end of the first day's conferencing. Variava has been appointed chief justice of the Delhi High Court. Also invited on the occasion was Air Vice Marshal Manek Madon with his wife Yasmin and son Kaizad. The Madons are currently posted in Allahabad but were briefly in Bombay.

In the course of his welcome address Guzder fondly hoped that Variava's career will take him to the apex of India's judiciary. Engineer who has known Variava as counsel and as judge remarked on his friendliness and informality. Variava, who constituted the commission investigating the economic misadventures of "Big Bull" Harshad Mehta, had earned the sobriquet "Scam Sam" among his friends on the bar.

Modestly disclaiming the accolades, Variava hoped more community youth would go into business or the professions than into service. "It's only by taking risks and succeeding that people shine," he commented acknowledging

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Dilnavaz's support in his own career.

Individual anjumans

The woes of the Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman seem almost quintessential to the community in the mofussil. Now reduced to about 28 in number, the majority over 60 years of age, the Allahabad Zarathushtis spend about Rs 10,000 annually on repairing and maintaining their aramgah boundary walls against encroachers as noted Dandiwalla. Their repeated representations to government bodies has evoked the usual response — the encroachment is outside the aramgah itself. "But encroachments require boundary walls to be repaired every year. We have a limited corpus — only three-and-a-half lakh rupees," said Dandiwalla, adding that the ashes of the former prime minister Indira Gandhi's husband Firoze Gandhi also lie there.

The Allahabad dar-e-mehr belongs to the private trust of the Gandhi family but its managing trustee Dossabhai Gandhi is currently battling cancer. An old paramoed from Calicut who was looking after the fire has been operated for hernia and the Gandhi brothers are looking after the fire as of now, informed Dandiwalla. A huge property donated by Keki Gandhi to the Surat Parsi Panchayat's (SPP) Nariman Home and Infirmary was sold last April and the SPP donated Rs 2,000 from the proceeds to the Allahabad mobed fund. The Universal Healing Centre operated by Shernaz and Rustom Gandhi, provides pranik and reiki healing. Currently the posting of Air Vice Marshal Madon and his wife Yasmin in Allahabad has infused some enthusiasm in the community.

Despite their advanced years and medical problems, Dandiwalla and his wife Shirin hold an almost "100 percent record of Federation attendance," as noted Keki Gandhi, saluting their dedication.

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*L to R: (1st row)
Nargolwala, Batlivala,
Dilnavaz Mehta,
Cooper; (2nd row)
Talati, Mistry, Aga,
Daruwalla; Percy
Paghdwalla
(alongside)*



The DPA will be 75 years old next January and planning a three-day celebration which will focus on an education program aimed to inculcate in the other communities an appreciation of the Parsi role in national life, informed Rustomji. At a recent seminar organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature the Zoroastrian community received equal attention with other communities "because we consume a large amount of sandalwood and bawal wood."

Two new members — one of them a youth — have been inducted among the officebearers of the Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association after their

Zarathushtis are working on their project to create a community hall and addressing the problems of finance.

The Thana Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman has been facing the uphill task of regaining its 3,000 sq ft property in Thana's central business district which has been allegedly encroached upon by Shiv Sena's Anand Dighe, a local shakha pramukh. The property, allotted for use to an indigent Zoroastrian on humanitarian grounds had been passed on to a non-Parsi. On paper the property reverted to the Thana Anjuman when it won the court case in the early 1980s but physically it never regained control as the defendant arranged for Dighe to infiltrate it. Thana president Rustom

last elections which are held every three years, as noted its secretary Khurshed Pastakia. Other activities included an overnight excursion to Udva and a moonlit cruise as well as the felicitation of two Parsi cricket umpires after the Dae mah jashan, he added. The Borivli

Cursetji who provided the 25-year background reported that legal and personal persuasion had failed. Now there was unauthorized construction on the property and they received no proper hearing in the Thana court. Cursetji sought the Federation's intervention either as co-petitioner or by way of filing a petition against the Thana Anjuman "for not looking after the property. The matter needs to get the immediate attention of the High Court."

While Keki Gandhi said the Federation was prepared to help and awaited the moves of the Thana Anjuman, Engineer suggested that along with the approach to the High Court — which may refuse to entertain the issue as being too delayed — the Thana Anjuman make a representation to Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray.

Their Stree Mandal has completed its round of celebrations to mark its golden jubilee, informed Jamshedpur's Surti. The high point was the "Changing fashions of the Parsi community" wherein the models ranged from under six to over 60. In the course of the year the Bag-e-Jamshed, the pre-primary cosmopolitan school run by the Stree

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Mandal completes 25 years of existence. Earlier the Jamshedpur Parsi Association organized a picnic at the picturesque Dimna Lake where boat rides and good food were the order of the day. Astad Deboo also gave a dance performance under the aegis of Loyola School and Jeelu Billimoria won two Emmies one of which focussed on child safety and two Gracie Awards for her documentaries on breast cancer, noted Surti.

At Calcutta two memorial gahambars on Olpadwala's death anniversary, a community natak and the Calcutta Parsi Club's prize distribution and dinner for new arrivals, carol singing at Xmas and a campfire in February were the activities of the past six months highlighted by Batlivala. During this same period the Calcutta community mourned the passing of Ervad Bapuji Desai who had served them for over 60 years.

The 144-year-old Davier agiary was recently painted with boys from Bombay's Nowroz Baug working on the kebala, informed the anjuman's representative Wadia. The anjuman had to pay off a female encroacher; there are no Parsis in the vicinity of the agiary any more. The anjuman needs funds to maintain its lone mobed.

The reconstructed dharamshala at Bardoli has enabled 12 families to be settled in the flats in the building put up through community funding, as well as donations from the WZO and the Maneckbai Jeejeebhoy Trust. Their first gahambar was held on June 3, 1999 and its representative Homi Pithawala acknowledged the Rs 50,000 received through the offices of Tamboly towards its Rs 70,000 gahambar fund.

The 26 members on the roll of the Agra Parsi Anjuman includes non-resident members. They continue to maintain their dharamshala and their 114-year-old aramgah, by renting a part of the dharamshala, as per the report of Dolat Debara.

Jhansi's 45 Zoroastrians will be holding their annual aramgah jashan on Fravardigan day, noted Dick. Principal of Bombay's Queen Mary School Rati Wadia and her husband who have a fine collection of slides on Iran had given a lecture demonstration at their Jamshedi Navroz celebration in March.

The Mhow Anjuman, the only one to have accepted the Federation as a trustee, will be hosting the next Federation meet in November as they hope to acquire the use of army guest houses to accommodate the delegates during a fallow period at the army school. A long-standing complaint of the Mhow Anjuman is that the road to the dokhma, constructed by a Parsi philanthropist, is not being maintained by the cantonment on the plea that it is not registered in their books. The army as well as civilians in the vicinity enjoy the facility.

The Anjuman has gone to court against its absentee tenants as their properties are deteriorating due to lack of maintenance. Maintenance is particularly necessary with the Mhow properties as the army is preventing the repair of roads and bungalows owned and occupied by Zoroastrians as the land belongs to the army. It even resorts to such tactics of harassment as stopping water supply and giving notices to bungalow owners to vacate under the Public Premises Act, informed Masani.

Judgment on the Hyderabad Secunderabad Anjuman's case against the Andhra Government Board is awaited, informed their representative Omim Debara. The Government Board had attempted to take over the properties of the Anjuman on alleged charges of mismanagement. Numbering 1,320 Zoroastrians, the Anjuman runs a school which has only 23 Parsis among its 1,500 students. The Zarthosti Stree Mandal works for the old and disabled while the youth wing is active collecting funds, he added.

Heerjee spoke of the "happy experience" of 40 persons from Indore, Mhow, Ratlam and Neemuch who made a group trip to Udvada. Heerjee acknowledged the cooperation of the Railways which stopped the train both ways for them to board and alight. He also announced the establishment of a Parsi Matrimonial Court in Indore with jurisdiction over entire Madhya Pradesh (MP). Hitherto Parsi marriages in the area used to be registered under the Special Marriage Act. A former IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer, Heerjee has also taken up the matter of Parsi representation on the District Minorities Cell.

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Guzder inaugurating the FOZYA website

sion provides for a chairman and two members, from the Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities. The MP anjumans resolved at their intercity meet to seek an amendment to increase the number of members on the lines of the central commission which recognizes five minority communities. "If the state and district committees (prove) indifferent, the Federation should take it up directly with the chief minister," opined Heerjee.

At the anjuman level Heerjee is busy revising its bylaws. The last amendment dates back to 1920 with the bylaws "out of date, not in keeping with modern concepts," said Heerjee. An anjuman directory is on the cards and the over 100-year-old decrepit dharam-shala is to be rebuilt at a total cost of over 15 lakh rupees, thanks to the financial support provided by Guzder, Tamboly and the WZO, he added.

Another project Heerjee is working on is the collation of the large number of facilities provided by the government to the minorities in the fields of education, banking, finance, etc. He wants to publish them so that the community may become aware of them.

The Bharuch Anjuman with its emphasis on "continuity, stability and maintenance" enclosed half its tower of silence property and another property where there was encroachment at a cost of one-and-a-half lakh rupees, informed Ginwalla. "What do we do if the government takes over the land for industrial or residential use of major corporates?" he asked, mentioning that the old dokhma lands lie close to their development plan area. According to Tirandaz no land reserved for schools, hospitals or crematoria "can suffer change of user" as they have a 999-year lease.

Nargol's Wania painted a picture of growth: Its agiary, which needs Rs 36,000 worth of kathi annually has collected Rs 3.36 lakhs in donations by offering to pray the tandurasti or patet on specific days. Wania said Nargol had received substantial community contributions. Its two-acre Doongerwadi has been planted with bawal trees which will mature for harvesting in 15 years' time when they will be able to fell one or two as required, planting others in their place. Wania recommended the practice to all the anjumans, especially Bharuch. "After 15 years not a single agiary (Bharuch has six) will be short of kathi." The only problem will be that of watering the trees for the first five to six years.

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like those in Bombay. Nor do they have any mobed problem, exchanging their mobeds with Saronda and Sanjan as required and maintaining harmony by participating in each others' functions. They have also constructed 36 flats which have been taken by people from Bombay who are now members of the Nargol anjuman.

The PPP has begun the construction of 224 flats of 620 sq ft each. The project has been totally funded by the Maneckbai Jeejeebhoy Trust, informed Dara Irani. The PPP trustees, whose current president is Firdaus Kayani, expect the first phase to be ready by December 2000. The total flats envisaged at Lullanagar approximate 440, noted Dara Irani.

The dharamshala plan has also been sanctioned. Comprising ground plus three floors with a total of 24 rooms, the dharamshala is expected to cost Rs 40 lakhs and will necessarily be taken up after the housing project is complete, unless additional specific funds are forthcoming earlier, said Dara Irani.

Apart from the usual help the PPP provides the community from its educational, medical relief and anaj funds, the

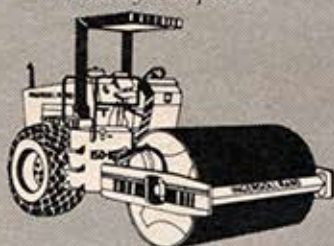
trustees have had the experience of shouldering the body of a 340 kg Zoroastrian lady as the nassessalars proved inadequate for the task.

While Bomi Talati of Baroda spoke of his anjuman's education, medical and miscellaneous charities it was the Davier representative who informed the gathering that the Baroda trustees themselves discharge khandhia responsibilities.

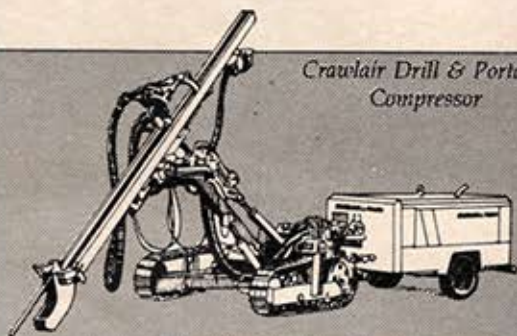
Youth

The Parsi Youth League of Ahmedabad secretary Perzid Daruwalla briefly referred to their programs involving religious discourses and honoring achievers, especially Merzban Lahewala whose 14 feet nine inches tall, six-inches thick agarbatti has vaulted him into the *Limca Book of World Records* as well as *The Guinness Book of Records*. The agarbatti emits three fragrances and burns for 66 hours. The BPP Youth Club's Zelda Mistry spoke of their hike to Sanjan, the crazy olympics and a barge party where ex HPY (Holiday Programme for Youth) members met the new batch. Merzeen Aga spoke of this year's HPY where Bombay based and upcountry students participated in the BPP's month-long

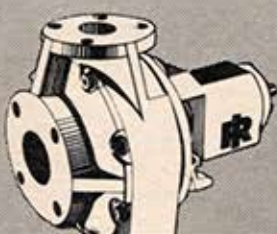
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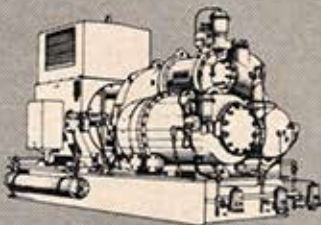
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star program which helps the youths bridge the end of their school lives and the start of their collegiate years. Delna Pastakia of Borivli noted how the HPY has enabled her to acquire several Parsi friends.

A picnic, religious lectures and a pilgrimage to Udvada ensure that for Borivli youths enjoyment and religious education go hand in hand, as noted Borivli's Percy Paghdwalla. Batlivala referred to art and music competitions in Calcutta. Poona's Sarosh Palkhiwala mentioned that a new managing committee of youths was elected at the annual general meeting in April and were busy with a jashan and enrolment for the summer sports camp. They had hosted the Baroda youths' trip to Poona for which they were thanked by Talati. The Poona youths are following up on the marriage bureaux they organized last year and learnt from Keki Gandhi that they need to add a column of personal attributes in their form for more efficient matchmaking. Talati spoke of the Baroda youths' commitment to help maintain their 75-year-old Sayajigunj Agiary and a lecture by Dadar Athornan Madressa principal Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia.

Though the Delhi youths are involved in organizing plays and musical programs, and receive scholarship facilities up to college level, they are not very interactive with the youths of other anjumans, admitted Nargolwala. There are five to six functions a year when the youths are involved with the DPA's activities. For the 75th anniversary of the DPA they expect to be involved in planning the brochure and in fund-raising.

The Thana anjuman encourages its youths in social service projects as a binding force for future growth as noted Cursetji. The anjuman is encouraging young couples with financial assistance for the second child up to the SSC level. The support is against requirements and not as a dole, emphasized Cursetji.

Speaking on behalf of Jamshedpur youths Surti declared that they traditionally organize the entertainment for the community at the Jamshedi Navroz functions. Noting that several of them live in Parsi hostels in Bombay, she requested the Bombay youths to invite them to their functions.

Bombay's Dilnavaz Mehta gave the audience an insight into the working of the Zartoshty Brothers' Fund established

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in 1996 under BPP aegis. Its aim is to increase religious and historical awareness. With a roster of 19 speakers, the Fund enables upcountry anjumans to organize programs of lectures and demonstrations by hosting the speaker and making the necessary publicity arrangements. The Fund also supports madressa students, as well as research and publication of books, amplified Tirandaz. A series of articles on Parsi saints by Noshir Dadrawala have been collated and the book is under print, announced Tamboly.

Poona's Eruch Irani noted that none of the youths had mentioned looking after agiaries and/or dharamshalas in their area. The Baroda dharamshala for example is not in the condition it should be in, he pointed out. Gandhi suggested that youth associations mention their socially relevant activities in their news reports.

The venue and dates of the next FOZYA youth seminar are uncertain as no positive reply has come from Madras, as per FOZYA president Porus Karanjawalla.

Counselling

The Federation's school counselling

scheme, conducted by Diana Marfatia and Anupama Sharma under the aegis of the BPP, covers three schools: the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution, the A. F. Petit and the Cowasjee Jehangir High schools. The three phases of the job start with personal counselling where parental problems, dysfunctional relationships, etc come to light, informed Sharma. Diagnosis of the problem constitutes the second phase and therapy, the third, she said. The counsellors maintain contact with parents, teachers and in case of the A. F. Petit residential students, with matrons. The BPP has arranged for psychological testing material and 78 cases are currently under treatment while 26 have been concluded, said Sharma. Eight cases are being handled by social workers of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Remedial group work, solving adjustment problems for students, behavioral therapy techniques all aim to facilitate confidence building. In addition, the counsellors give career guidance talks, do aptitude and interest testing and counsel students individually. They also teach basic counselling skills to chosen students like group leaders

and monitors so that they then help teachers in a peer group promotion program.

Mediclaim

Recommending medical insurance for all Parsis, Wania suggested that the BPP contribute 20 crore rupees and the other anjumans of India together contribute 30 crore rupees into a pool that would ensure medical insurance for every Parsi in India. To ensure that there were no exceptions, Wania recommended the division of India into 10 parts, each having a major hospital which would have on its rolls the names of each and every Zoroastrian in the area. Wania, a chartered accountant, said expenditure on the scheme would be permissible under trust law.

Keki Gandhi proposed that Wania "set up and head a committee and go ahead;" the BPP and the Federation would back him up. The question of insuring old people was addressed by Rustomji who claimed his mother was over 75 years old and still insured while Engineer noted that a new clause now seeks to enforce an upper age limit of 75 years. He however added that the WZO would also endorse such a scheme.

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Dr Jungalwalla was the founder director of the Government of India's National Institute of Health Education and former director of the World Health Organization's Health Unit. The expertise he had gained over the years was put to use by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Union Public Services Commission as also the Royal College of Physicians of which he was a Fellow.



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Annual General Meeting

The existing vice presidents were confirmed in their respective positions: Lt Gen Adi Sethna (retired) for the north zone, Homi Bodhanwalla for the east zone, Nariman Mogrelia for the south zone, Eruch Irani for west zone A and Dr Sam Bhacca for west zone B. The usual practice of the Federation's accounts being approved first by the executive council and then by the general body and receiving the auditor's approval thereafter, was challenged by Wania, Jain and Co, the existing auditors will continue to audit the accounts of the Federation for the accounting year ending March 31, 2000.

The absence of Surat's delegates was brought up by Karanjawalla. The SPP was last represented by Sorab Katpitia at the Federation's Bombay meet in December 1996. Though Keki Gandhi noted that Katpitia and SPP president Bhacca do valuable work for the Federation, Dastur held that members who do not attend are a problem. He suggested that a survey be made of those

who do and those who don't attend Federation meetings because "non-attendance is counter-productive." Heerjee suggested a provision in the constitution that those who don't attend three consecutive meetings automatically forfeit their right as executive council members. "Give others a larger role," he recommended. The provision would be subject to a leave of absence, argued Gandhi. It should be applied for in writing, countered Heerjee. Gandhi assured the delegates that the Surat representative has promised to attend the next Federation meeting.

A point of argument in recent meets has been the two west zones — A and B comprising Maharashtra and Gujarat respectively. Rustomji and Heerjee favor a central zone instead. But Gandhi explained that the largest community settlements being in Maharashtra and Gujarat, these states had individual representation. The anjumans of Madhya Pradesh are included in the north zone. "In what way will involvement increase if there is one more zone?" queried Gandhi.

The Borivli anjuman asked for an official place on the executive council on the grounds that they attended all

meets but Gandhi replied that they received the same consideration as any executive council member with their views being ascertained and accepted.

To provide a youth representative on the council, the council will co-opt one member of the FOZYA managing committee at a time such that no individual represents the youth for more than two years and that representation from a different zone of the country would be ensured.

Pervez Irani has been co-opted in place of the late Aspi Irani. The other co-opted members continue to be Rustomji, Eruch Surti, Mani Clubwala and Rustom Anklesaria. Tirandaz who mistakenly assumed that Anklesaria had been co-opted in his former capacity as chief executive of the BPP sought the seat for the current BPP incumbent Dastur. He was supported by Tamboly. They were informed that Anklesaria was the nominee of west zone B i.e. Gujarat and BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta opined that the Federation needs the services of a man of Anklesaria's great experience.

Rocky road ahead

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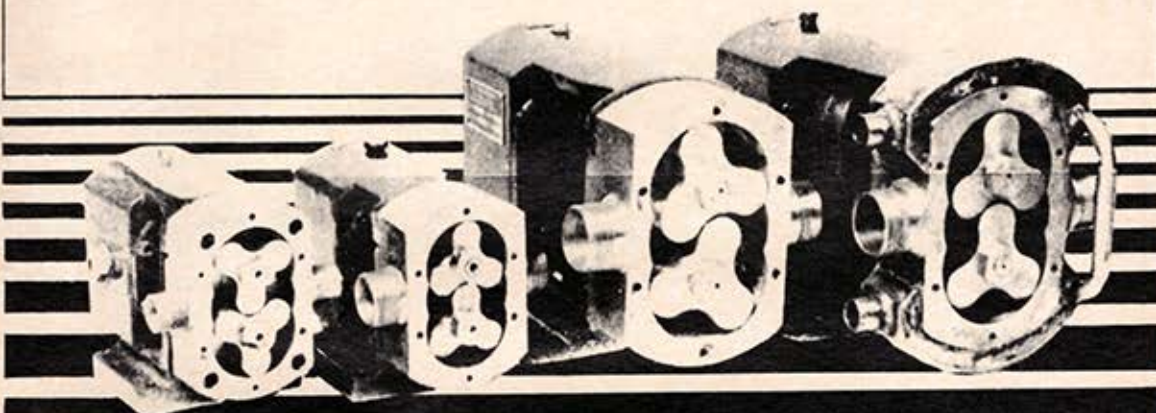
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ideas as circumstances are turning traditional thought on its head. Slowly, the priorities seem to be changing. It faces a persistent demand for adult franchise from a section of the community. Though housing remains an acute problem for historical reasons, as per Dastur, ("it is a fallacy that large houses will produce more children. Our strength lies in quality"), the emphasis is shifting to education — 70 lakh rupees from housing reserves have been placed at the use of the education committee to finance higher studies.

This is apart from a one crore rupee corpus earmarked for special coaching to students aiming at the medical and engineering colleges. While Rs 88,000 have been spent on coaching of students for the central administrative services, only one girl has made it so far, noted Dastur. He suggested that the Panchayet "fund only the cream of students. It will be an excellent investment," he added.

Guzder urged Federation members to donate towards the Bombay University's Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan for Civics and Politics so that the University can be persuaded to reserve a couple of seats in medicine and engineering for Parsi students. Though the question of reservation for Parsi students in Poona's Wadia Colleges as requested by Prof Hoshang Mugat had fallen through since these colleges are not administered by a community trust, Guzder said he had been informed by Nusli Wadia that he had taken over as chairman of the management committee. Wadia has suggested that the Federation wait for a few months.

With 62 on the roll of the third child scheme, the Panchayet is seeking to create a two crore rupee fund, interest on which will ensure that the project continues, said Guzder, who has personally contributed Rs 25 lakhs to the kitty.

With cancer, heart and liver diseases taking their toll of individual budgets, the BPP has earmarked 50 lakhs of rupees, the interest on which would support the medical treatment of indigent ailing Zoroastrians. "Sickness is arising out of poverty, congested living, poor education. Poverty is the focus," believes Dastur.

With a "crisis situation regarding birds of prey in India," as Tirandaz noted, the BPP is worried about the

continued efficacy of dokhmenashini. There are few vultures at Doonger-wadi and the BPP is examining a proposal for the breeding of vultures in conjunction with a UK agency, said Tamboly.

Then again there are pressures due to the paucity of mobeds, shortage of bawal wood, the question of the assimilation of children of interfaith marriages, the question of merger of agiaries, the assets of defunct anjumans where Surat's Katpitia has done much work. All these questions are related to economic compulsions and the responsibility for them rests with the entire community but Federation meetings are not achieving much because "we have not prioritized our objectives," lamented Dastur.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Dolat Debara from Agra; Porus Karanjawalla, Perzid Daruwala and Dinaz Gandhi from Ahmedabad; Capt Homi and Shirin Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Pervez Mehta, Homi Pithawala and Eruch Baldawala from Bardoli; Cyrus Cooper and Bomi Talati from Baroda; Sarosh and Pilloo Ginwalla from Bharuch; Jamshed Guzder, Dinshaw Tamboly, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Rustom Tirandaz, Behram Dastoor, Sheroo Master, Adil Crawford, Gool Kias, Mehli Colah, Zeldia Mistry, Merzeen Aga, Delzin Irani and Anupama Sharma from Bombay; Noshir Paghdwalla, Khurshed Pastakia, Marazban Mehta, Mehernosh Mehta, Percy Paghdwalla and Delna Pastakia from the Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association; Nauzer Batlivala from Calcutta; Marzban Wadia from Davier; Keki Gandhi, Farrokh Rustomji and Adil Nargolwala from Delhi; Bomi Heerjee from Indore; Mehrwan Irani, Pervez Irani and Perzon Zend from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Eruch and Silloo Surti from Jamshedpur; Ronnie and Zerin Dick from Jhansi; Dara Irani, Boman Irani, Eruch Irani, Sarosh Palkhiwala and Kashmira Udachia from Poona; Behram and Dolly Masani from Mhow; Hoshang Wania from Nargol; Homi Palsetia, Nariman Balsara and Dinshaw Patel from Saronda; Omim Debara from Secunderabad; Rustom Cursetji, Pervez Bhesania and Rusi Gandevia from Thane. Homai Modi, Rohinton Rivetna, Ervad Parvez Bajan and Dr Homi Dhalla were special invitees. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.



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To the marrow borne

The ordeal of helping Imroze recover from Fanconi's anemia has fortified the Ardeshir family to help similar victims

Marzban Ardeshir

Ours was a very happy family of four living a normal life. My daughters Farah and Imroze were doing well in school and so was my wife in the French Consulate, Bombay and I in the British Deputy High Commission, Bombay. Suddenly our lives fell apart. Our younger daughter Imroze was diagnosed with an incurable degeneration of her bone marrow, called Fanconi's anemia. Fanconi was a Swiss scientist who found this marrow defect. The bone marrow responsible for producing blood cells gradually degenerates and death occurs.

Imroze was born a healthy baby with no physical signs of a Fanconi child. A Fanconi child is short statured, has an additional finger or thumb, crooked limbs and is very weak in appearance. None of this was in Imroze although she was a difficult child and had a peculiar dislike for food, being never hungry, even at the age of 10 years. This is normally when the degeneration of the marrow starts. We used to feed her with force or with bribes of a better toy, very common in children. But we never expected anything serious.

In 1995, when she was 12 years old, on the insistence of my wife Daisy we found a doctor to examine her as we never had a family doctor for the children or the family. We asked him to give us some tonic to increase her appetite observing that she was losing weight and her appearance was turning dark. He advised a blood test and the results were alarming. This is when the first bell rang. The doctor advised a specialist to look into the medical history of Imroze as he felt her condition was serious. How could a child be serious

when she went to school, played like a normal child? Her white blood cells count was 3.2, platelet count was 29,000 and hemoglobin was 6.8.



The Ardeshir family (from left): Daisy, Farah, Imroze and Marzban

We consulted a pediatrician at the Hinduja Hospital who asked for various expensive tests including bone marrow aspirations which ruled out leukemia, but her illness was still not diagnosed. We were advised to see a hematologist and we were shattered. We kept all this from both our daughters lest they get scared. Imroze was always asked to leave the doctor's room and sit outside when we were given the results of her tests. Being a smart child she questioned us as to why she was made to sit out, why were mummy's eyes always moist when she came out of a doctor's room, etc. I would make up stories and my dear little one always believed me. I still never believed that Imroze could have cancer as it had not struck anyone in my wife's family or mine.

Dr M. B. Agarwal, the hematologist, did a bone marrow biopsy, a very painful test in which a small chip of the bone is removed from the hip bone and tests

done on it. Aplastic anemia was diagnosed and Imroze was asked to be admitted into Breach Candy Hospital where an expensive drug ALG was administered. A week later, the injection course complete, she was discharged. The medicine takes six months to show results and Imroze was back at school and play. She was advised not to run around much to avoid falling down for bleeding would not stop if she cut her skin, we were warned.

It was nearing the end of nine months when Imroze developed a gut infection and was profusely bleeding. We rushed her to Breach Candy Hospital where she was declared very serious. Many drugs were administered but Imroze did not respond. Surprisingly some of the life saving drugs were available from only one outlet and one could get them only if luck was on his side. I remember a drug costing Rs 10,000 and we needed three. Two were immediately needed so my wife took Rs 20,000 to a Sandoz outlet in Bandra. The salesman said the prescription was for three vials and my wife being so much in shock began to cry. That salesman, God bless him, gave my wife the three vials and asked her to be with Imroze and not to bother to pay for the third. We began to see the goodness of humanity.

The then British Deputy High Commissioner, Terrance Curran, spoke to the Breach Candy Hospital's accounts department to spare me the torture of regular payments and to permit me to pay at the discharge date, saying he would stand guarantee. All prayed for Imroze to be saved and the last possible drug worked on her and she recovered.

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Six months later, the worst was yet to come. Dr Agarwal pronounced the failure of the ALG drug and asked us to go for a genetic test which declared her a Fanconi anemia patient, where the only cure can be a bone marrow transplant with a 70 percent chance of success. To avoid further risk of infection and hospitalization we prepared to go to Vellore where transplants are done in India. Dr Agarwal arranged our appointments there. By now we were touching the bottom of our savings. My office travel agent, Sterling Travels, declared that our travel anywhere would be covered by them. They sent the tickets for us to go to Vellore.

We met the specialist Dr Mamman Chandy who confirmed that a transplant was the only hope for Imroze and the cost would be eight lakh rupees. He however cautioned that such a transplant had never been done in India and advised us to try abroad where the success rates for Fanconi transplants are increasing. Our enquiries revealed that the cost of such a transplant was USD 150,000 in the USA, £ 110,000 in Paris, £ 70,000 in the UK.

My wife's cousins explored all possibilities and then zeroed in on Hammersmith Hospital in London which agreed to do the transplant for £ 45,000 as Imroze was below the age of 14 years. Now began the race to collect £ 45,000, approximately Rs 28 lakhs. I was aghast. How many people do I contact to accumulate so much money? Penny Curran, my office colleagues, Ms Beraud-Chaulet (wife of the then French Consul General), the tenants of the Bandra Tata Colony, some of our relatives and many friends here and abroad began the fund-raising. The message spread and so did the network. People I had never met sent donations and even helped in collecting funds. Many trusts when contacted responded spontaneously and generously. The French Ministry of External Affairs donated French Francs 20,000. Donations from Hongkong, Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai, UK, USA, Canada poured in too. With tickets from Sterling Travels we went to the UK. Air India also helped with the tickets which we used later. The ANZ Grindlays Bank helped in a very big way to transfer funds to the Hammersmith Hospital.

Imroze was tested all over again at Hammersmith and the transplant was done on October 24, 1996 with my

other daughter Farah being the perfect donor. Unfortunately the transplant failed and another was planned on December 6, 1996. This meant our Farah undergoing another operation for donating her bone marrow which she willingly did. Farah was great and brave and took the burden of two marrow donations in 40 days very well. This should inspire other donors too.

The Hammersmith Hospital has very

All prayed for Imroze to be saved and the last possible drug worked on her

caring doctors and nurses, and good arrangements for children. During the transplant Imroze was kept in isolation for one-and-a-half-months which was repeated for the second transplant. She had her ups and downs there too. She nearly gave up her fight for life after the havoc the radiation along with chemotherapy created on her physically. Pain became unbearable and she pleaded that medicines be stopped and she be allowed to pass away. The Hospital provided the services of a psychologist who worked on her miraculously. The play teachers and entertainment kept her spirits up. Drawing, computers, reading, craft and painting were in her regular curriculum under the watchful eyes of a school teacher and play leaders.

The people of the UK were very helpful too. Many who were unknown to us came with food and toys for Farah and Imroze. Get-well cards were received in plenty. Mr and Ms Curran visited us in the Hospital and made sure we had everything. They proceeded to their next posting which was Toronto. Imroze was discharged on February 11, 1997 after 120 days of total hospitalization and I rushed back to India on February 15, 1997. I resumed work in the same position as when I left, but after two weeks I was demoted and my position was advertised as a vacancy. To find your position advertised when you have returned to your job leaving a sick child behind was too much to bear. I resigned and returned to London to be with my daughter and my wife returned to her job to keep the home fires burning.

As if that were not enough, Farah was asked to repeat the year (first year junior college, Arts) on grounds of poor

attendance by the Mithibai College principal. Although we had informed the principal, the deputy director of education when approached, rudely said "no exceptions." My wife contacted many people to save our daughter's year but ultimately help came in the form of Mr Sudhir Joshi, the education minister and the deputy secretary Mr Phansalkar who believed in Farah's sacrifice and promoted her.

Meanwhile, Imroze had to be admitted thrice again in the hospital (as is normal after a transplant) for fever and other complications. By God's grace we sailed through all those months and returned to India in October 1997. After all that we went through, I want to be of help to people in similar circumstances. Every year thousands of people with bone marrow diseases such as leukemia, aplastic anemia and inborn metabolic and immune deficiency conditions reach a state when only a bone marrow transplant can possibly save them. The chance of a match between siblings is in the ratio of 1:4. During our stay in the Hospital we saw many patients awaiting transplants whose siblings did not match their type of bone marrow and many others who had no siblings at all, hence awaiting the inevitable end. The F & I Bone Marrow Foundation, aptly named after my brave daughters, has been set up by me to help such cases find a match here in India and abroad. Twenty-nine people, of whom around 10 are Zoroastrians, are registered as donors for the four patients awaiting transplants. Unfortunately we have yet not succeeded in finding a match.

So far we have managed to raise Rs 1,80,000 with the largest donation of Rs 1,00,000 coming from the Tulsi Trust. People have come forward to be potential donors and many more are deciding. Many cases of cancer and anemia are asking for my help which is readily available whenever needed. Many job offers have come but I am concentrating more on the Foundation.

The chance of saving a life by donating your marrow and the satisfaction one gets no one can explain better than Farah who donated her marrow twice in 40 days and did save a life. Then why not you? Contact The F & I Bone Marrow Foundation at 24, Ratanbai Tata Building, 38th Road, Bandra, Bombay 400050 or call on 6404989. Help us build a lifeline.

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Crossing musical barriers

After his training in classical music
Rushad Eggleston has taken his cello to the jazz stage

Dina Mehta

I knew his mother in Bombay as a young girl. Nazneen played the flute and wanted more than anything else to create music. Her dream proved elusive, but years later she was jubilant when the intimations, urgencies, promises she had glimpsed in herself were effortlessly articulated by her gifted son Rushad. On the cello. On the guitar. On the bass, the mandolin...

Yes, Rushad plays them all. The cello from the time he was nine, the guitar at age 12 and the bass and mandolin in high school. (Here I recall that his grandfather Jal Khambatta — Nazneen's dad — played the harmonica and tinkered with the amplification of sounds on his electric guitar.) With so many instruments beckoning him, it is not surprising that Rushad's approach to his music is confident, his taste eclectic; or that his talent embraces diverse styles and genres. A braveheart who is not afraid to cross musical boundaries, his oeuvre ranges from the classical (in which he received his basic training) to the more spontaneous stuff generated by glad and venturesome spirits.

Born almost 20 years ago in Carmel in California (USA) to Nazneen and Bob Eggleston, the eldest of a brood of three sons, Rushad has been involved in music from his schooldays. He was a member of the Carmel High jazz band for three years, first on string bass, then guitar, then cello and guitar. He played chamber music; he played as the first cello and soloist in orchestras; and at top folk festivals he played with major jazz and bluegrass musicians. At a joint concert of the Youth Music Monterey orchestra and the Monterey County Symphony orchestra he performed the Beethoven *Triple Concerto* and Hayden's *Cello*

Concerto in D — and wowed his audience. In 1996 he was invited to attend the Aspen Music Festival.

Then last year the gods really smiled on Rushad: he won a full-tuition scholarship (\$60,000) to the Berklee College of Music in Boston, the world's largest



Eggleston: making real music

college of music with a jazz orientation and an enrolment of 2,900 multicultural students. A renewable award, satisfactory progress in each successive year allows the recipient to attend Berklee right through to graduation, tuition-free. Rushad competed for this plum with about a hundred Northern Californian candidates and it is exciting to learn something of the process that went into the selection.

As a starter, the aspiring musicians had to submit demo tapes of their work.

So in his friend's garage Rushad recorded a tape of him performing a classical piece by Giovanni Sammartini on the cello, some improvisations, a jazzy version of *Sweet Georgia Brown*, "a bluegrass thing and all kinds of stuff." It was fun, though unlikely that a cellist could bag a jazz scholarship — since traditionally the cello is not a swinging instrument. But Rushad was ready to tempt the devil... what the hell... just in case...

And he was in!

Then came the second round of screenings when three senior Berklee staff members flew in to audition 21 hopeful Californians winnowed from the large number of tapes received at Berklee.

Rushad came out of his audition feeling great. Apart from the required pieces, he had performed a Bach *Suite in C* that segued into a heady tune by jazz giant John Coltrane, *Mr P.C.*

What charmed Damien Bracken, director of Berklee scholarships about this swinging cellist was his free and open approach to music. Rushad, who had in the past turned down offers from classical conservatories, puts it this way: "I didn't go to a classical school because I was into more

than that." For him Berklee was just right because it gave him a direction "where I could follow my own path."

Rushad wants to make "real music, true music." Noting the dearth of jazz or bluegrass cellists, he hopes to open up the scene for cello players. What is more important to him is to reach out to audiences and share with them his extravagant delight in music.

The bets are on that *aapro* Rushad will rocket into a major professional orbit by the time he passes out of Berklee. May a chorus of ashirvads accompany him on his flights!

An "extended family"

On the completion of its first year, the author observes that the inmates of the Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre feel 'at home'

Noshir H. Dadrawala

Having been present at the inauguration of the Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre in January 1998, I took the opportunity of visiting it again during my scheduled visit to Navsari on May 5, 1999 to attend the anniversary celebrations of our atash behram.

The modern, spacious center is a fine example of how community resources, if pooled together with a sense of purpose and commitment, can make a positive change in the lives of those for whom the wealth has been left in trust. While the building funds for this center were

provided by the trustees of the Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund, the entire project was conceptualized and executed by the WZO Trust Funds.

Situated in the heart of a classical Parsi *mohalla* (Pinjar Mohalla), the Senior Citizens Centre provides a serene environment free of the hurry-scurry of life. The ground plus four storeyed structure covers an area of 20,000 sq ft. Each floor has seven ample rooms — four single, two double and one quadruple. All rooms are modern in terms of facilities, well ventilated and with attached bath and toilets.

Visiting the Centre after a year, we were impressed with the quality of life enjoyed by its 18 inmates. And I feel I must share my happy experience with other community members.

The moment we entered the foyer our hearts warmed to the sight of a couple of aged Parsis playing carrom, a few watching cricket on television, one or two reading newspapers and others engrossed in animated conversation. A

few had just returned from their daily visit to the atash behram in Motafalia.

Shermin Tamboly, the administrator of the Centre and manager Soli Vandre-

"I rest, I pray and I play carrom." Katy Patel, 71, was busy weaving a *kusti*. She manages to produce two to three *kustis* every month which fetch a good price in Bombay.

Probably the most energetic was Eruch Karkaria, 82, who zips around Navsari on his own moped, visiting friends and doing odd jobs as an electrician. He said, "Most people go to heaven after they die. We are lucky to find heaven during our lifetime here." Agreed Jimmy, "We must have done good deeds to have earned this heaven. We pray for the soul of Ma-



Engrossed in a game of chess

walla introduced us to the inmates who seemed to be in high spirits. Jimmy Dastur, and his wife who has had three heart attacks, "feel absolutely at home here living as one big family." A retired medical representative, Dastur formerly lived in Tadkeshwar, a remote village in Gujarat. "Our neighbors there were violent and abusive in nature. It is a welcome change living with our own people in a clean and cultured environment," he said with satisfaction.

Nargish J. Wankadia who moved into the Centre in September 1998 said, "I am so well looked after here, I never feel lonely." Eighty-three-year-old Minoo (Bob) Damri suffers from weak eyesight but is strong as ever. A professional musician and sports enthusiast, he said, "Here I am very happy and comfortable." How did he spend his time? "I go for walks, watch television and pray, what else would you expect a man of my age to do?" he smiled. Hilla R. Irani expressed the same sentiments:

neckbai and bless WZO Trust Funds."

At 12.30 p.m. we are invited to join the inmates for a 'simple' lunch which turned out to be chicken dhansak with kebabs and kachumber. Each one had a fixed place on the common table and all ate with zest and satisfaction. "The food is always very good and I've never had to complain even once," said Dastur. Inmates are encouraged to help in the kitchen. Many of them are experts at cooking. For a change some of them prepare idlis, dosas and generally have fun pampering their taste buds.

Shermin said, "We grab every opportunity to celebrate. We feast on birthdays, Christmas, New Year's day and every other holiday." Added Soli, "Every last Saturday of the month we organize Housie, take the inmates out for picnics and make them enjoy life fully." Morning tea is at 7 a.m. followed by breakfast at nine o'clock, lunch at 12.30 p.m., tea and snacks at four in the afternoon and dinner at eight. Discipline in terms of these timings is strictly enforced. In all other matters, procedures



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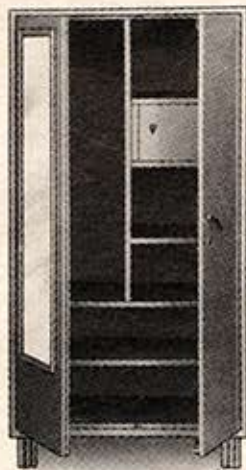
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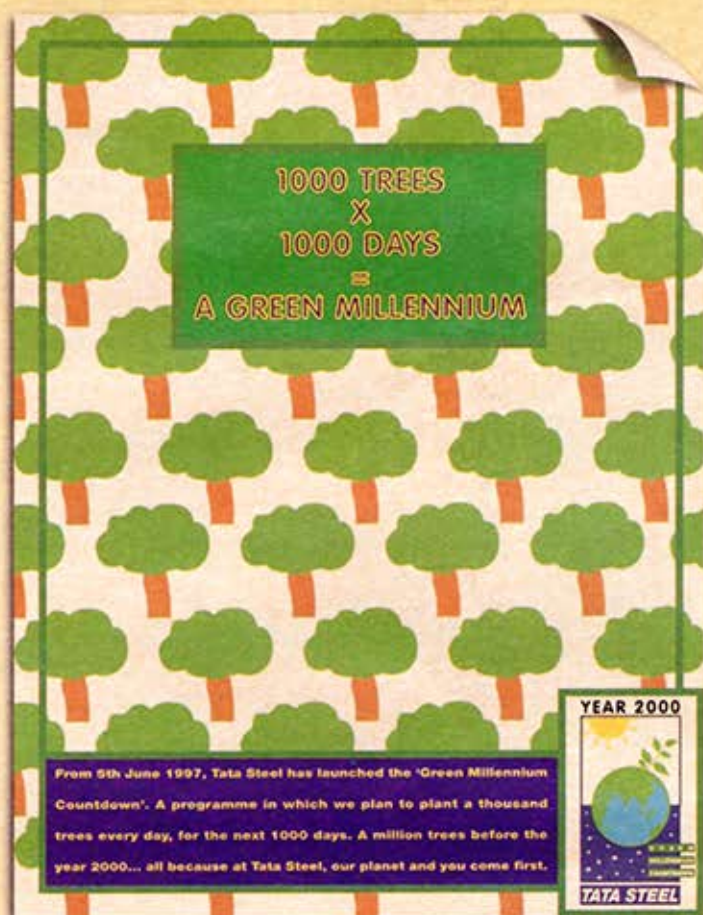
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*Clockwise from top:
Inmates of the
Navsari Centre
paying their respects
on Avan roz nu
parav; a single
occupancy room
(Photo: Homyar Mistry,
Homz Prints); facade of
the Centre; on their
way to Ubhrat beach
and residents
savoring their meal*



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From left: (seated) Dinshaw Tamboly, Sharmin Tamboly, Bachi Tamboly, Vandrewalla and Wadia. Tangri and Variava (standing) Photo: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints

are simple and flexible. The Centre receives important newspapers like *The Times of India*, *The Bombay Samachar*, *Gujarat Mitra*, *Jam-e-Jamshed* and has a modest library of books and magazines.

Soli finds a lot of satisfaction in his work. "It's like my home and the inmates are like my extended family," he said with joy. Sharmin concurred, adding, "When I took on this responsibility I was a bit nervous. Today I find a lot of satisfaction in bringing so much cheer in the lives of our elders."

Sharmin and Soli also took us to the D. N. Mehta Hospital where one of the inmates, 64-year-old Gool Gotlaseth was hospitalized for a fracture. Despite the pain Gool's face was radiant and cheerful. "My friends from the Centre come to visit me every day. They are all so loving. These people are doing more for me than my own family," she said with tears of gratitude.

We have seen a few other senior citizens' homes in India and in most places our experience has been unpleasant. Often there is a pall of gloom, an atmosphere charged with negative emotions and impulses. The Senior Citizens Centre in Navsari is strikingly different, full of life and positive attitudes — all very Zarathushtrian traits. We were impressed with the overall cleanliness, the smooth administration that runs the place, the bonhomie among the inmates;

and of course the dedication with which Sharmin, Soli and his assistant Pervin Kasad as also the kitchen staff Khorshed Variava, Bapsy Tangri and Zarine Wadia discharge their duties.

It was truly an uplifting experience. Perhaps some of the inmates had lived disturbed and turbulent lives, but they will be spending their autumnal years in peace, comfort and safety. Said Eruch, "We have been reading about the many aged Parsis murdered in Bombay. Thankfully we have no such fears out here."

So far the Centre has taken in only the poor and needy. Now in keeping with the requests and needs of those who are well placed, the management is admitting those who are in a position to pay the full fees. We know quite a few cases where there is no financial poverty but lots of emotional poverty — persons feeling insecure, lonely and deprived in the evening of their lives. These are also 'deserving' cases in a different context. It is a very welcome development that those who can afford to pay can now enjoy the hospitality of this excellent institution.

The trustees of the WZO Trust Funds and those of the Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund must feel satisfied. They probably must be going through the same emotions J.R.D. Tata experienced after reenacting his pioneering flight of 50 years ago from Karachi to Bombay. Surely JRD's words apply to our trustees: "Despite all the difficulties, all the frustrations, there is a joy in having done something as well as you could and better than others thought you could."

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Enshrined ever after

Mota Dadysett is known to have donated one-third of his wealth for religious and charitable causes

Marzban J. Giara

Two hundred years ago there were no newspapers, railways, telephones. No television, cinemas, educational institutions. People used bullock carts for commuting. At such a time, Dady Noshervanji Dadysett (1734-1799), popularly known as Mota Dadysett, built the first atash behram for the Parsis in Bombay who numbered less than 3,000.

Dady's grandfather Homji Behramji came to Bombay from Surat. Homji Street near Horniman Circle in Fort, Bombay is named after him. His father Noshervanji Homji and uncle Behramji Homji were freight brokers for ships.

Dadysett was a well-known merchant, owner of ships and a *jagirdar* (landlord). A freight broker for commercial vessels that came from the UK, he is mentioned in Britain's *Celebrities of the Age* as: "The great Dadysett, the first Parsi to establish the native trade of Bombay with England."

He owned five ships. They were: *Shah Ardeshir*, 839 tons; *King George*, 1,022 tons; *Friendship*, 872 tons; *Brig William*, 390 tons and *David Scott*, 350 tons. He carried on extensive trade with Europe and China. As a banker Dadysett was widely known and mentioned in several memoirs of the time (e.g. Admiral Carden's autobiography, pg 190, Hove's tours in Gujarat, etc). The Bombay directory and calendar for 1793 printed by Joseph Burnes mentions his name as one of the six Parsi shareholders in the Insurance Society which insured goods of English businessmen. Each share was worth Rs 20,000.

In 1776 Dadysett set up a "screw" for pressing cotton bales at Apollo Street. On September 29, 1783, he established the first atash behram in Bombay. In 1790, during the famine in Gujarat, along with other Parsi *sethias* he fed thousands of destitute migrants who came to Bombay for 10 months.

He built a dokhma at Walkeshwar on his own land and had it consecrated on April 22, 1798.

He was a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. A letter dated March 16, 1787, addressed to him by the then governor of Bombay, says: "I now send you the power for holding the committee of

astrian is to observe gahambars or seasonal feasts. On the day the Dadysett Atash Behram was consecrated, Dadysett organized a community feast. Since then every year he organized six gahambars which served as community get-togethers.

Dadysett had the Persian *Revayats* translated into Gujarati by Ervad Minocher Behram Minocher Homji, a resident of Navsari. This book was written in Samvat 1828, i.e. 1772 AC. In 1796 he established a school for teaching *Zend Avesta* in Pitha Moholla in Fort, Bombay.

Dossabhoy F. Karaka writes about Dadysett in his book *The History of the Parsees*: "He was a man of great simplicity of character, remarkable good nature and unbounded benevolence. He was one of the most opulent and influential Parsis of the time."

Two hundred years ago Parsis lived amicably with people of other communities, just as they live now. The Parsis and Hindus were fond of each other. Dadysett owned about 25,000 square yards of land on the seafront opposite Mahalaxmi Hill. He

gave this land free to the Hindus for building their seven temples and 19 dharamshalas. These temples are: Mahalaxmi Mandir, Dhackjee Dadajee's Dhakleshwar shrine, Kalika Devishrine, Udasi Bawashrine, Anandji Mistry shrine, Ramchand Bhashankar shrine and the Vithoba Kanji shrine.

According to Ratanji Faramji Vachha of *Mumbaino Bahar*, Dadysett's wealth amounted to Rs 30 lakhs, and his charities to a minimum of Rs 10 lakhs (at today's rate this figure would equal



Dadysett Atash Behram with founder Dady (Mota) Dadysett (inset)

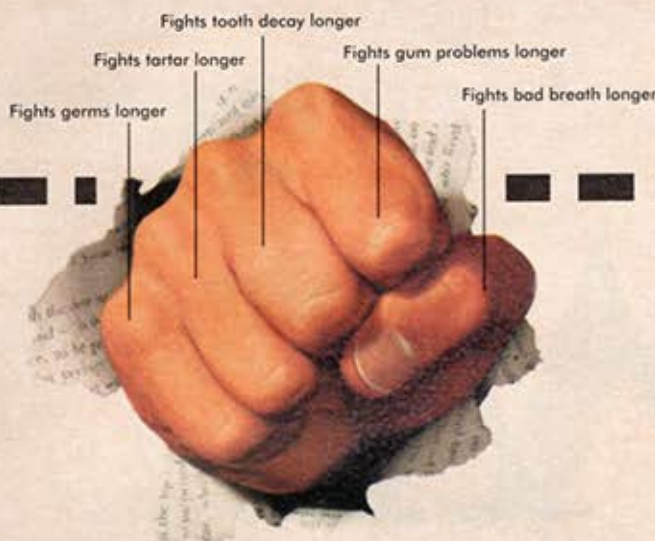
12 out of 24 persons as the Panchat or assembly of the Parsi caste. You will make the same known in the general assembly and act therein agreeably to the rules of your caste; doing strict justice to all parties without fear or affection to anyone.

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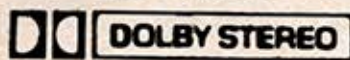
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*The Dadysett dokhma at Walkeshwar,
now in disuse*

several crores of rupees). This philanthropic Parsi Zoroastrian gave freely one-third of his wealth for religious and charitable activities. His greatness lies in his humility. There is no tablet or plaque in the atash behram built by him. This shows that he had no craze for name and fame unlike most people who donate money and want their names engraved in gold.

In his will dated August 21, 1794 he advised his son to live harmoniously with others: Be kind and loving to your fellowmen. Even if some were to do evil, you be good to them.

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Tata trends

The spiffy, new 20,000 sq ft shop strategically situated on Hughes Road in south Bombay seeks to provide a different, elegant shopping experience to India's burgeoning middle class, accustomed to battling its way in bustling, overcrowded market places. Designed on the lines of international stores like Marks & Spencers, Tata's new enterprise, Westside, has plush interiors designed by Talati and Panthaky Associated Private Limited and stands at the place TELCO (Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Limited) dealer United Motors had its showroom.

Westside, launched by TRENT (Tata Retail Enterprise) a little over a year ago, now has lifestyle stores in Bangalore, Madras and Hyderabad and aims to project its Bombay unit as its "flagship store," according to a publicity handout. TRENT, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Lakme Limited, bought over Littlewoods International which had one store in Bangalore, revamped and re-launched it as Westside.

The company promotes its in-house label, Westside. "We are not aiming to compete with any established market brands in India. Our objective is to create new choices for the customer who previously did not have access to international retailing," stated Simone Tata, chairman of Lakme Limited. "At Westside we are more product driven; there's a certain exclusiveness but not at a high price... Young people won't have

to ask friends and families to send clothes from abroad," Noel Tata, the company's managing director, is reported to have told a reporter of *Sunday Mid-Day*.

First into the entrance at the Bombay store is the 'Lady at Westside,' with its colorful racks displaying skirts, blouses, trousers, chinos, etc standing alongside salwar kameezes in mangalkari cottons, printed georgettes and sand crepe. Lingerie and versatile nightwear, jewellery, cosmetics and handbags cater to current fashion needs. The menswear range includes formal and casual wear, with the Stone River Classics seeking to entice the trendy teenager.

Pervading the mid-section of the store is the tempting aroma of freshly brewing coffee, with the self-service cafeteria replenishing the energies of enthusiastic shoppers! The bright children's section has garments, soft toys, etc for the newborn to the 12-year-old. The 'Home Beautiful' department showcases, on the lines of stores in the West, flowery table and bed linen, kitchenware, crockery and bathroom accessories, the 'Gift Shop' houses a range of affordable gifts. "We are trying to look at the middle to upper middle class... We will cater to the top end also... Therefore the pricing is under control," Ajay Mehra, the vice president of Trent Limited told the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of May 6, '99, adding that the company will open one or two more stores in Bombay by the end of the year, bringing their

total to six, with further expansion all over India.

Award-winning hotelier

Jehangir J. Ghadiali, general manager of the Welcomgroup Mughal Sheraton Hotel in Agra, has won the "General Manager of the Year-Luxury Hotel, 1998" award instituted by the Hotel and Food Service Review. "We the Zoroastrians of Agra comprise just 25 members and an achievement by any one of us is a matter of great pride for all of us," states the president of the Agra Parsi Anjuman Hosang Debara, forwarding a write-up of Ghadiali's achievements.

The award is a national one and this year's panel of jurists consisted of Homi



Aibara of Mahajan and Aibara, leading consultants from Bombay who were appointed to conduct the evaluation, Vijay Thacker, a Bombay-based management consultant, Rajiv Chopra, senior hotel consultant and Arnaud Kindt, India head of the Accor group of hotels.

Forty-two-year-old Ghadiali heads a staff of about 550 people at the five-star deluxe, 300-room Hotel sprawling over an estate of 30 acres which includes, among its other five-star facilities, kennels for thoroughbred dogs! With his razor sharp memory, Ghadiali can address all his staff members by name, writes Debara, besides knowing in most cases the names of members of their families and the class in which their children are studying. Ghadiali is also the secretary of the Tourism Guild of Agra.

With the Welcomgroup since 1979, Ghadiali's first assignment as general manager took him to Port Blair in the Andaman Islands, where the Welcomgroup Bay Island Hotel he headed won an international award from British Airways for promoting eco-friendly tourism. He has been on training stints with the Sheraton group in London and New

Westside: new choices for the customer



York and has also attended a course for general managers at Cornell University. Ghadiali, whose interests include wild life, photography and reading, resides in Agra with wife Vandana, daughter Vera and son Manek.

Ro-Ro's reach

"Nobody feels the need to reach out to me because I've reached out to them already!" declares marketing man Rusy S. Shroff, explaining his philosophy of life. The gregarious individual behind Ro-Ro's Market Reach, Shroff left the security of a job in J. K. Ansell Limited (part of the Raymond group) last year to start his own new marketing service, providing corporate houses, clubs, restaurants, institutions and households in Bombay with their product requirements, delivered to their doorstep at no extra charge subject to a minimum delivery order.

"My main focus is to offer rock bottom prices, along with quality and prompt service," he asserts. Currently counting among his customers large shipping companies such as P & O Nedlloyd (India) Limited and Maersk India Limited, banks like Crédit Agricole Indo-Suez and Bank of Tokyo/Mitsubishi,

etc, Shroff supplies mineral water, toiletries, detergents and other products they routinely require. Shroff also supplies the snacks, salads, desserts, etc corporate houses need for their board meetings, conferences, training programs, etc.

The food market in Bombay, states Shroff, is unbelievably big and his "sheer love for food" led him to tie up with talented individuals like Rishad Suntook who makes a select variety of fresh pastas with no coloring or preservatives, Zarine Kotwal with her choice of cakes, brownies, mousses, etc, Gulshan Marfatia's variety of

chocolates, Hema Aref's chicken liver paté, etc. "There are a number of Cordon Bleu cooks in Bombay but they lack the marketing thrust to promote their product, which I can provide," he elaborates. Piloo Vakil and her two daughters, Shireen Vakil and Tanaz Shroff, of Vtex Enterprises tied up with Shroff to market their range of detergents under the brand name Sudsy. Visualizers Daisy Sidhwa and Shireen Kapadia assisted Shroff in designing

attractive packaging and creating Ro-Ro's image.

"In my earlier job, I was experiencing what you might call the 'middle management squeeze.' I could not see what I expected to see (in the form of career advancement). There were phenomenal advantages — I was travelling all over India as assistant brand manager for the Kama Sutra brand of premium condoms. I had independence in brand creation and liaising with advertising agencies, etc," but there was, he felt, a need for change. Moneywise too, he believes he has benefitted in

his new business, though he took the plunge at a time when the economy was in a downswing! "Of course there are days of dullness and drops, but I am now beginning to reap the fruits of my labor. Corporates are my bread and butter, but it has been the individual, particularly Parsi householders, who encouraged me in the initial days and who by word of mouth helped me to make it to the corporate customer."

Shroff's varied interests include the-



Shroff: extending market reach

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Rusy J. Kapadia (center), managing director of White Cloud Filter Pads Private Limited, Poona, receives the ISO 9002:1994 certificate for conforming to the quality system standard in the manufacture and supply of paper filter pads, from Col R. M. Bedi (retd), lead auditor of Det Norske Veritas of The Netherlands. At far left is director Pervine Kapadia.

ater and music. He joined the Paranjoti Choir under Coomi Wadia way back in 1984. "In 1989, we made a world tour covering Japan, USA and Europe. I remember in Los Angeles (LA) we sang on Pateti day for a large audience of Parsis who had come not only from LA but from

San Diego and San Francisco to hear us!" he recalls. His music tours, he says, have won him many acquaintances all over the world, with one of his German friends especially flying down to Bombay last year to visit Shroff's dying mother who unfortunately passed away just before he arrived.

"I also love acting, and it was Noshirwan Jehangir who put me on the public stage for the first time when I was a schoolboy in Campion when he gave me one of the lead singing roles in the musical extravaganza *Pippin*," he recalls. He has acted in Janak Toprani's *Cause Célèbre* and Hima Devi's *Go Back for Murder*, he reminisces, adding that his experience in theater and art helps to bring out creative talent in marketing as well. A first class student through ICSE and HSC, Shroff won a state scholarship for his BCom studies. "I did three years of articleship with the well-known chartered accountants firm of P. C. Hansotia and Company, but I wasn't cut out for accountancy!" he opines. When Raymonds selected him during their all-India management training program, the interviewers were in no doubt that they found him to be not a finance but a marketing man! Having found his métier, Shroff says he now wants to innovate, to tie up with more and more individuals to distribute a wider range of products to households and corporates. Just dial 2024988 for Shroff to reach out to you.

Web way

Hyderabad-based computer engineers Dadi R. Bhote and Viraf Kalyaniwalla have designed and produced the country's first Internet access device for television, reports *Business India*, June 14-27, 1999. Named Eye-Net, the digital set-top box comes with a remote control keyboard which can be used even as far as 20 meters away. "We think the product has a mind-boggling market since it is available at a 10th of the price of a computer," Bhote told the magazine.

Launched by Hyderabad-based Kayz Distech Private Limited, Eye-Net is priced at Rs 14,500 and includes 25 hours of Internet access from Satyam Infoway. "Eye-Net's greatest advantage is its ease of use. One need not be conversant with a computer to use the product," a vice president of Satyam Infoway is reported to have stated. The product has been designed to suit the Indian environment. "Most of the foreign products work on dedicated ISPs (Internet Service Provider). Ours had to be independent of the ISP so that it could be used for a VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited), MTNL (Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited) or Satyam connection," asserted Kalyaniwalla. Eye-Net has a number of ports through which it can be connected to a telephone, video.

Presently assembled in Singapore, the company plans a large investment six months hence to go into an assembly line for 35,000 set-top boxes annually. "Once we get economies of scale we can begin manufacturing in our present facilities where we are already making circuit boards," stated Kalyaniwalla. According to Bhote, the response from smaller towns like Ludhiana, Bhopal, Coimbatore, etc has been encouraging: "They are not used to computers and do not need its sophistication. The price also seems to be a key factor prompting purchase."

Besides the household customer, the company has targeted schools, hotels, libraries, etc as prospective purchasers. "Every primary center in the taluk or mandal has a television and telephone line. This eliminates the cost of buying and maintaining a computer and is relatively maintenance free," Kalyaniwalla told *Business India*.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

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Jeroo Chavda Khambatta

Parinaz M. Gandhi

"Aap kaise hai? Tumhi kaise aahat? Tamé kêm chho? How are you?" We hear this refrain over and over again as though there is some multilingual class in progress. Seen in action are the primary students at Nritya Jyoti, the school of Indian dance founded by Khurshid Chavda 50 years ago at their terrace 'studio' at Master Chambers (behind Metro cinema) and now run jointly with her daughter Jeroo Chavda Khambatta.

The children are practising the three-beat *di-di-thai*, one of the basic steps of Bharat Natyam, but instead of repeating the monotonous *di-di-thai*, Khambatta has introduced the four-language variation of 'How are you?' The first time the query is posed in the national language, Hindi, as we are Indians. Staying in Bombay, Maharashtra, the next time the intonation is in Marathi. Since the majority of the children have Gujarati as their mother tongue, the third time around this language is used. And as the medium of instruction for all these youngsters is English, this language too is incorporated, Khambatta explains the rationale. "When made to say things, it brings about a sense of participation. They forget about their inhibitions when concentrating on both things (their hand-leg movements and speech)," Khambatta has noticed.

"I see a dance class as personality development," declares Khambatta. "There is an integration of disciplines because Indian dancing has a lot of acting and miming. (Plus), you must know music, when the beat ends and when the line starts. Unfortunately the parents today want everything instantaneously." They expect their children to become star performers overnight and unless they have studied some classical art form themselves they do not understand the depth and training required, points out Khambatta who has had art in her genes

as also her immediate environment, her mother having achieved fame as a dancer as one of the celebrated Vajifdar sisters and her late father Shiavax Chavda being a reputed artist on the Indian firmament.

Soon thereafter we see the pre-primary girls enacting their nursery rhymes while standing on one foot. No, this is not a punishment but practice in balancing. Khambatta herself has to do a lot of balancing too. In addition to conducting bi-weekly classes at Nritya Jyoti she also teaches at Nritya Manjari, the dance class started by her mother's sister Shirin Vajifdar at Cuffe Parade. Then, she lectures on Indian dance at the Nirmala Niketan College. All this in addition to pursuing her own career as a performing artiste.

At the *Femina*-Miss India 1999 show early this year in Poona, Khambatta led a six-member troupe of dancers to perform a 15-minute interlude which was envisaged as an Indo-West fusion. While her artistes performed dances mainly in the Odissi style they had to synchronize their movements with the male jazz dancers of Mahesh Mahboobani's troupe. Hemant Trivedi, the consultant-director of the show found this presentation "fantastic," says Khambatta. "This item (at the pageant) stood out because of its uniqueness although in the coverage by Doordarshan it was hacked to death." Apparently one of the cranes for the lights was not working which meant that half of the 150 ft wide, 100 ft deep stage was not covered.

Among her performances abroad, she has very happy memories of being the first artiste from this country selected to



promote the Indian Food Festival in Dubai. For two months she had to stage dances every night and as is her style, before each rendition, she explained the theme and the corresponding hand gestures, realizing that the audience would not otherwise understand the intricacies. In Bahrain she felt "the crowd was very hungry for classical Indian fare." Her explanation that Odissi was practised as an "avenue to give vent to the divine longing of an individual soul for sublimation" was quoted in the *Khaleej Times* which gave her a rave review. In Bulgaria too she had promoted the Indian Food Festival for two months.

When sailing up the Rhine from Cologne in Germany Khambatta had to perform Bharat Natyam and Odissi numbers for the guests as their ship passed through five countries in 1994. This was in addition to the modelling shows for Burlingtons choreographed by Jeannie Naoraji in which she featured regularly. In the India Book House published coffee table brochure *India Calling* depicting the life and culture of this country, it was once again Khambatta's face which was chosen to represent the quintessential Indian woman on the cover.

After her stay in Antwerp, Belgium where she conducted a two-month workshop in folk dance for those aged 15 and above, giving the participants three hours of rigorous training in the morning and three in the evening each day, the danseuse was offered a work permit to stay there which she declined. "I don't think I could ever live abroad," she says although she

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Through facial expressions, hand and leg coordination, Khambatta conveys the different moods of the Bharat Natyam and Odissi dance styles

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"You are never too old to dance. You have to be a beginner at some point"

has some knowledge of foreign languages having studied French at the Alliance Francaise and German at the Max Mueller Bhavan. "I've always felt the vibrancy, the spontaneity, the warmth is missing in their atmosphere; there is something lacking emotionally."

Her shows in India have been performed before appreciative local and foreign audiences. "Tall, beautifully formed, with a grasp of Bharat Natyam far above others of her generation," commended dance critic Hima Devi. "Surrounded from her childhood by dancers and the dance, she has naturally absorbed from this atmosphere around her the essence of the classical schools. The tragedy lies in the fact that Indians in urban Bombay are not alive to the treasure we have in our cultural heritage," continued the article.

"We have to break the mindset that everything classical is boring which cannot be enjoyed," points out Khambatta. Realizing that the South Indian languages in which most Bharat Natyam numbers are performed may not be comprehensible to the layman, she is endeavoring to present her dances in languages which are understood. Khambatta has experimented with shlokas in Sanskrit and bhajans in English. "My forte is choreography which is very creative," she had conveyed in an earlier interview. "I study the music and if I am moved by it, I set the dance to it. Why should one be limited by traditional songs?"

In fact she has even choreographed a dance in classical style for the *Koi ladki hai* song from the Yash Chopra musical hit *Dil to Pagal Hai*. For those who may have seen the rendition on the screen, Khambatta's composition would look quite alien. As Khambatta sees it, "In jazz dancing (which is in vogue on the Hindi movie scene and popular in Bombay because of its keep trim credo) the movements are more uninhibited," observes Khambatta. "They can do so much more, if only that pelvic thrust" would be eliminated. With classical dances, one has to be very conscious of the framework. A slight change in gait or posture or limb movement and one can



easily impinge on any one of the seven classical styles: Bharat Natyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Mohini Attam, Kathakali, Manipuri and Kathak.

Unless schools and the TV promote them, classical dances will slowly but surely die, believes Khambatta. Classical music enters the home much more easily than dance, she points out, critical of Doordarshan's policy of reserving the occasional 11.30 p.m. slot for such programs. Many schools may insist that they have no budget or no time for dance periods. Khambatta though maintains that this exposure can be worked in subtly, combining it with their music period perhaps to give the children a chance to decide for themselves whether they wish to pursue further training in this art.

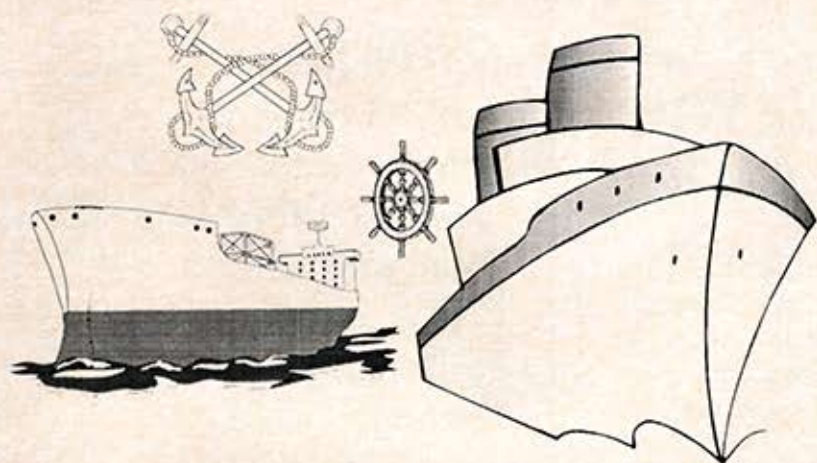
At her dance classes, Khambatta welcomes students aged three-and-a-half upwards. "You are never too old to dance. You have to be a beginner at some point," she tells many mothers who say '*Mané shikvano bau shauk hato* (I've always longed to learn Indian dancing).' "At least give yourself a chance; do it for your own satisfaction," she convinces them. Even if you don't have the necessary aptitude, if the interest is there and the student is willing to put in the effort, a new dancer may emerge on the horizon, she is convinced. The sense of timing or *taal* is something you have to be born with but even if that is missing she does not dissuade students so long as they are

enjoying their dance. She endeavors to create an element of fun while teaching classical dance so that the students feel free to express themselves. "I also have to enjoy myself whilst teaching," she gives her dimpled smile.

When asked how the Parsi community reacts to her doing traditional dance, she had earlier responded, "Our community is known for being Anglicized but they are proud of my achievements and pleasantly surprised." But sometimes she is not sure whether the Parsi label which she is born and stuck with deters members of other communities from taking her dancing seriously, from doubting her credentials. "I don't advertise myself," says Khambatta who after completing her schooling from The Alexandra Girls' English Institution had initially joined the J. J. School of Art to study textile designing and left the course within a few months when she learnt that the Bombay University was offering a degree course in Bharat Natyam. She is now a double graduate, Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Arts from the Bombay University. She was trained in Bharat Natyam by her mother and aunt before she qualified for admission to the University. Her grooming in Odissi was at the hands of rather the feet of Natbar Maharana and Kelucharan Mahapatra. Since she was three-and-a-half, she has been happily performing on stage, first with the group shows presented by Nitya Jyoti biennially, then giving solo shows and now presenting items with her students.

In March 1999 Khambatta was invited to perform with her troupe for the Navroze Dhamaka at Allbless Baug. Although last year they had rendered items at Cama Baug as part of the Navroze Dhamaka, this year she had to turn down the offer due to prior commitments. Among the other Parsis who are into classical Indian dancing are Hosi Mulla, Mani Mulla, Rohinton Cama and Khurshid Irani, the latter two having settled abroad.

"Every moment of your life should be a prayer," says Khambatta who does not feel the need to frequent fire-temples regularly or wear the sudreh-kusti which are "just material symbols. Love and consideration should be the main prayer and being mentally vigilant at every instant" is more important to her. Children of intercommunity marriages should be given the option to follow the religion of their choice, she believes, viewing the Judaic law which permits such children



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to follow their mother's religion as more practical. Staying in close proximity to Bombay's Doongerwadi with her husband Noshir, a stock broker who runs Khambatta Securities Limited, Khambatta views dokhmenashini as the most environment-friendly mode of disposing the dead. If any organ from the deceased can be of use to another, she would favor donating it rather than being sentimental.

The pragmatic danseuse is willing to adapt to a changing scenario. While originally dance programs were performed to the accompaniment of live music, today she has to settle for prerecorded music. "Half the time organizers of different shows want you to perform for free, and very often their opening line is that they have no budget or only a token amount to offer," she reveals. Artistes also have to earn a living, declares Khambatta, and since not everyone can become a star or a stage performer, the next best option for them is to teach dancing and in this their efforts to preserve India's heritage need to be commended. Is there then a future for Indian dancers? "Yes, definitely," says Khambatta, "if there is sufficient exposure, propagation and promotion."

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The tricks of the trade

As both Pearl and father Mhelly Bhumgara participate in the same magic conventions, they share the prizes in different events

Parinaz M. Gandhi

She wants the colorful scarf her father is wearing around his neck in exchange for her black one. She tries pleading and cajoling but to no avail. So what does she do when he doesn't oblige? She uses the resources at her command and pronto her scarf changes color while the one worn by her father turns black.

In real life, Pearl, the 10-year-old magician girl, may not have such control over her father Mhelly Bhumgara but while she is on stage she enjoys doing such acts to the bemusement of the audience. "First she used to assist daddy at his magic shows. Then daddy started assisting her during her performances. And now she prefers to be on stage alone," explains Pearl's mother Kaizad who takes pride in the dual accomplishments of her husband and daughter. In 1999 while Mhelly won the first prize and Bharucha Rolling Trophy [Parsianna had done an article on Rutton Bharucha when he won the Merlin Excaliber Award (see "What's up his sleeve?" February-March 1997)] at the competition organized by the Society of Indian Magicians in Bombay, Pearl won the first prize in the junior section.

At a competition in Trivandrum, Pearl was the only participant to compete in all the three categories — close-up (which requires performance at close quarters before a small audience), conjuring (where things are made to appear from nothing) and table hopping (showing tricks using the artefacts available with the audience and some other trivia that can be carried on person). While Pearl won prizes in the close-up and conjuring events, in the more difficult table hopping event it was Mhelly who walked away with the prize. At yet

another competition in Udupi where she was placed against her father, it was Pearl who was declared the winner. And what was Mhelly's reaction to that? "See what a good teacher I am!"



Pearl has learnt the tricks of the trade from Mhelly who has nurtured a major interest in magic as a hobby since his college days in Calcutta convinced that "if you take money you lose the love for magic." Besides magic, he is also known to be a talented musician and carpenter. "Actually my first trick was taught by my mummy. My daddy thought I was too young to learn," says Pearl. As she was perfecting the art of pulling out coins from a Thums Up bottle, the family decided that for her fifth birthday party, as a surprise item, Pearl would demonstrate some tricks to the guests.

When she was six-and-a-half, the parents decided to expose her to the competitive world of magic by making her participate at the Bombay convention of the Society of Indian Magicians where she won the first prize among the juniors and a consolation prize when competing with seniors. The last-minute decision to compete with adults required her to learn paper magic which was then alien to her, recalls her mother. Seeing her exhausted after her first day's involvement they did not try teaching her anything new that night. Early next morning she was initiated into this new craft by her father and they were perfecting that art even during their car ride en route to the destination. Pearl explains how, with paper, she showed that she was into a bad habit of drinking tea and tried to overcome it gradually. She removed the 'h' from 'habit' but 'a bit' still remained; she dismissed 'a' but a

'bit' persisted; she got rid of 'b' even then 'it' remained; she then rejected 'i' but the 't' was a fixture!

How long does it take Pearl to learn a new trick? "About half an hour," she says. She does not elaborate though on the hours of practice she has to put in with her father to perfect the art, when mummy's presence in the room is a must too to officiate as arbitrator. As Kaizad explains, "She makes it sound simple but actually it takes time to master the intricacies. Her daddy makes her stand in front of a mirror to explain the movements and the poise and the angle she should maintain" so that she does not divulge her secrets. As notes Pearl's paternal grandmother Dolly Bhumgara, fame and success followed "long hours of hard work, perseverance, a few tears and a lot of heartburn. Heartburn as she watched her friends playing merrily outside while she was confined to a room practicing trick after trick, act after act, word after word, over and over again till she reached the perfection that raised her on the pedestal she is presently on."

Was Pearl keen to learn magic or was she coaxed into it? Ever since she was two-and-a-half and had won the first prize as a magician in a fancy dress competition she had assumed that she would be able to don the magician's robes in real life too, reveals Kaizad. At one international convention of magicians, Kaizad remembers Pearl, then four years old, looking at the different acts with rapt attention late into the night while many other older children in that hall had already dozed off.

She is ever keen to learn new tricks and is constantly pestering her father for more. Since both of them cannot perform the same tricks at one meet, it means Mhelly has to perpetually increase his repertoire.

"She's very intelligent but not diligent," opines Kaizad of her daughter.



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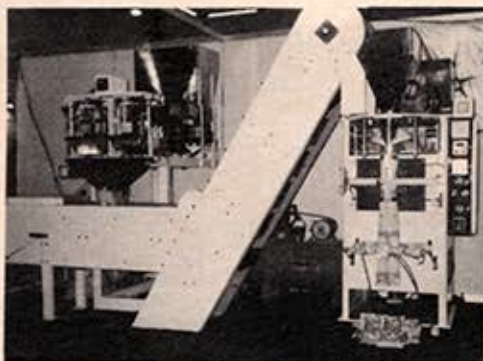
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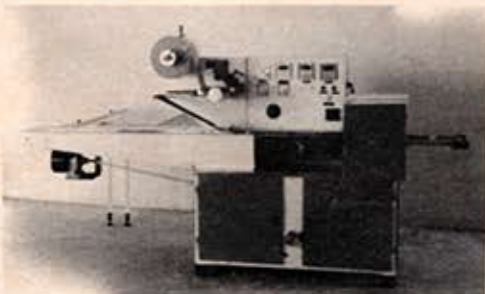


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Pearl Bhumgara (left) and above with her family Zeenia, Mhelly and Kaizad

After learning a trick, you need to practice it for an hour for around 10 days to perfect it, explains the mother who has often to nag Pearl to complete her chores. "Her friends at Godrej Baug (where she resides) are the most important thing in life for her...Her ace card though is that she's a born performer," states Kaizad, adding, "Even if she makes a mistake, she smiles so beautifully and covers it up that no one would notice it."

There is no knowing how many shows she will perform in a month. In December 1998, she was entertaining audiences almost every alternate day. And in the month of May 1999, she was performing her first show on May 27, the day following the interview with *Parsiana*. How many times did she practice for the 15-minute slot assigned to her for the next day's program? Three times, she candidly confesses. Whilst earlier the bag was invariably packed by daddy and the table too set up by him, now she is relatively confident of handling both these tasks by herself, although the

setting up of the table itself takes nearly half an hour, often longer than the performance. Of late, she has even made it to some functions on her own when mummy and daddy are not able to accompany her. Kaizad, being an air-hostess with Air India, has to adhere to her own flight schedule and Mhelly's new responsibilities as general manager of Samsara Shipping mean he has less time to devote to the family which includes two-year-old daughter Zeenia. Domestic matters then are left in the capable hands of Pearl's maternal grandmother Amy Gandevia.

Even when both the parents have accompanied her there have been minor mishaps along the way which have now become family lore. At Udupi when both Mhelly and Pearl were participating in one event, on reaching the venue, Mhelly realized that Pearl's stage costume had been left on the bed in the hotel room. Kaizad had to dash back and returned in time for Pearl to perform, although not as the opening participant.

Last December when Pearl was to perform at the Sophia College in Bombay, they forgot to carry the ropes necessary for one of her tricks. Mhelly was of the opinion that she should improvise but Pearl insisted on her familiar strings from home. So again mummy had to make a quick journey. "Once on stage she seemed in total command," unfazed by the earlier commotion, points out the mother.

A part of her performance is usually set to music, catchy tunes like *Barbie Girl*, *Macarena*, etc. The rest of the show requires her to keep her audience engaged in her patter as she relates "a long tale of tails" whilst the toy monkeys perched on her wand lengthen or shorten their tails depending on her narration. The lines for the pom-poms dangling on different ends of the rod have the audience in laughter too. She memorizes the script which is the combined effort of both her parents and sometimes surprises her parents with her own impromptu delivery, bringing to the fore



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her magical touch.

"If magic be entertainment, your daughter was the most entertaining." Kaizad remembers the words of one of the American judges at a competition in Bangalore when little Pearl won a prize against experienced adolescent participants. It is also at this competition that the parents learnt a lesson from their daughter. She had won a cash award of Rs 7,000 and this being her first earning, her parents felt she had the right to decide how to spend it, expecting her to squander it on her favorite chewing gum and other frivolities. "I want to give it to the poor,"

she decided. Her parents explained that she need not give the entire sum to the poor, but she was determined, the sight of poor children scraping food from a dustbin at Kemp's Corner having remained with her. Thereafter the family has maintained the tradition of donating all her earnings (she charges Rs 2,000 for magic shows that she performs at birthday parties) to charitable causes. "Thanks to her we have a wealth of friends and well-wishers," says Kaizad. Members of the Mobile Creche, handicapped children, Three Cheers are but some of the organizations which have gained from her support. Many from the Zoroastrian community may have seen her in action at the Tenth All India Youth Fest held in Bombay in November 1996.

Pearl's community involvement includes participating in various activities organized by the Godrej Baug Residents' Association: dance talent, sports, prayer classes. "She has the spirit to win," observes her mother relating how she borrowed spikes from her friend to compete at the All Parsis Athletic meet in 1999 even though she had never practiced in them earlier. And to her mother's surprise she won over those who had been taking athletic coaching. She likes to accompany her friends to the fire-temple, refuses to eat food until she has tied her kusti, and always steps out of the house with a prayer on her lips. Yet her mother is not sure whether she would qualify as being religious!

She has recently started to go for Shiamak Davar's dance classes, enjoys swimming, skating and juggling which she is trying to incorporate into her

shows. Now that she is promoted to the fifth standard at the Villa Theresa High School, the academic pressures will be even greater for young Pearl who last year had often to complete her homework on the bus journey to school or during the half hour before school commenced.

Magic is only a hobby for Pearl whose favorite subject at school is mathematics. She would like to be an air hostess

when she grows up, she declares whilst happily chewing gum and soothing her restless little sister. The free air tickets that the mother gets enables the family to make

**"If magic be
entertainment, your
daughter was the
most entertaining"**

quick trips to different destinations to participate in magic shows. Just four months back, during the three-and-a-half days they were at Dar es Salaam, Pearl performed four magic shows, including one for the local TV channel. Recently, the family received a letter from a Japanese writer Mami Yamada informing them that Pearl will feature in her new book on south Indian magic named *The Mayo Tree* which is to be translated into English.

"She now needs to improve. She is getting stagnant," says the mother who is "happy supporting and promoting them." While Pearl looks forward to learning new tricks, she has decided her shows would never involve doves for she perceives that as an act of cruelty. Her maxim in life is: "The more you give, the more you get." No wonder then, her favorite trick is the one where she makes a candle appear from a scarf. It would help her bring light into the lives of others...

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Twin talent

Every 'waugh' has his day. And cricket's controversial Waugh twins have had more than their share. Possibly, as a happy result of being twins, they have been more celebrated and criticized than others, and written about doubly, since every time one is mentioned, the



Meher-Homji — tracing the Waugh twins' successes and struggles

other too falls in the media glare.

Kersi Meher-Homji's new book, *The Waugh Twins* (Kangaroo Press, Australia, 1998, 142 pp, price not mentioned) is not the first book on the sports' best-known twins since the Bedser brothers, even if the blurb says so. There have been others (by way of tour diaries, especially), including a book *Waugh Declared* by Mark Gatley. But Gatley's work was published in 1992. And many a Waugh-willow has been wielded since then by the twins, Steve and Mark, and many a record laid to rest.

Yet, it's not just the records Meher-Homji's eighth book on cricket is concerned with. As in his seven earlier works, he draws on history and histrionics, laced with wit and whisper, and served with his inimitable style combining pun and pizzazz. Even the chapter headings here ("Gone with the Windies," "Oh Brother," "Wog Twins' World Cup") give an impression of the author's outwardly cavalier approach, but in actual fact, much like his subjects, are a result of a fine control of the

language and stylized strokes (to borrow a cricketing phrase) to account for a 'well-crafted' work.

Meher-Homji's large-formatted, almost coffee-tablebook-like volume containing over 60 photographs, some from the Waugh family album, traces the story of the twins (Steve is older than Mark by four minutes, being born at 8.14 and 8.18 on the night of June 2, 1965), not just from their infant days, but their 'bloodline' in sports. The twins' parents, Beverley and Rodger Waugh were outstanding tennis players, and their parents too played a neat game of tennis, rugby and even cricket. How the boys grew through backyard battles and early successes and struggles to rise to the top at international level, scoring between themselves together 28 centuries and over 11,000 runs in 181 Tests (up to August 1, 1998), forms the crust of the book.

Meher-Homji's work abounds with anecdotes, fascinating trivia, assessments by peers and colleagues, to most certainly rank not just as another cork-n-willow tale, but a fine piece of cricketing literature that should appeal to Waugh fans or cricket lovers all the world over. As writes Bob Simpson in his foreword: "As the book is by Kersi Meher-Homji, I know it will be accurate, honest and a very good read."

A good biography, to quote A. C. Grayling, "requires the psychologist's eye, the historian's eye, and the novelist's feel for narrative." Meher-Homji's work reflects all these qualities, with the added bounty of a research analyst's skill, as he weaves in masses of statistical facts and figures in the 107-page long narrative. (For those who like their figures straight, there are 32 pages of statistics appended to the text.)

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Homi J. Rogers

Conscientious captains

There could scarce be a better illustration of how hot a seat being India's cricket captain is than the fact that in the last 50 years of independence, the country has had 23 Test cricket captains.

Partab Ramchand, a professional sports journalist for nearly 30 years, puts together a compellingly written tale *Indian Cricket: The Captains, Nayudu to Tendulkar* [The Marine Sports Pub-

lishing Division, 63A Gokhale Road (North), Dadar, Bombay 400028, 1999, 206 pp, Rs 195] of the rise-and-fall (and occasional rise again) of the 23 men who have led India into the field, in the face of power politics and passions that have exerted themselves from the plebeians to the parliamentarians.

The Captains is an extremely readable book, enveloping within its 193-page-narrative crisp and comprehensive accounts of various aspects of Indian cricket, and the men who led what was often euphemistically called a "team," onto the pitches from Australia to Zimbabwe.

The book should be of interest, and even pride, to the Zoroastrian community because two of these 23 men were Parsis, and, as per the statistical records (supplied by Rajneesh Gupta) appended, are yet holders of the distinction of being amongst the most successful Indian skippers with a success ratio of 50 percent, surpassed only — possibly as a result of the plethora of Tests played after their departure from the cricketing scene — by Mohammed Azharuddin (52.70 percent) and Sunil Gavaskar (51.60 percent), if one discounts Ravi Shastri, who led India in only one Test and won it. Interestingly, both Polly Umrigar and Nari Contractor in chronological order, did not allow their batting to suffer when they led the country, and notched till their time the highest bat-

INDIAN CRICKET THE CAPTAINS Nayudu to Tendulkar

Partab
Ramchand



Foreword by
K. Srikanth

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ting averages as captains of 32.83 percent and 29.16 percent respectively, below only Vijay Hazare (41.18 percent) and Hemu Adhikari, who like Shastri, captained India only once, and made 103 runs in that match (hence an average of 51.50 percent).

But mere statistics apart, it is the quality of these two players, especially Pehlon (Polly) Ratanjee Umrigar, that places them in a class of their own. Ramchand displays a particular shine for Umrigar, who assumes through his writings an almost Hamlet-like tragic proportion, as he recounts how Umrigar time and again despite displaying his captaincy skill was denied, and even ousted, from the crown that should rightfully have been his for more than the mere eight Tests he led India into. "Umrigar was the nearest Indian cricket had to offer as an example of the perfect captain...a captain who seemed born to lead Indian cricket to great achievements, a leader who combined deep thinking and planning and analyzing with imaginative and deft changes on the spot, depending on the situation." Ramchand recalls how during that turbulent period in the early '50s when the selectors experimented with captains and teams, Umrigar led India in the first (unofficial) Test (against the Silver Jubilee Overseas Cricket team) and won it, drew the second, and found himself "suddenly replaced" for the rest of the series. He achieved personal milestones as well, such as scoring a record 223 at New Delhi in the first Test against New Zealand in 1955-56, and bettering it by ravaging 231 runs in the third at Madras.

The "climax of the tragedy" came, as Ramchand tells it, when Umrigar, denied the presence of another batsman in the team in place of Vijay Manjrekar, submitted his letter of resignation to the Board, and "did not withdraw it, because he did not consider himself in a fit state of mind to do justice to his duties as captain" the next morning, after it was discussed. Rightfully, Ramchand is all praise for such exemplary selflessness where Umrigar placed the country's interest ahead of self-glory; and in the process rung down the curtain on his nascent career as captain, which he could well have been till his retirement from the game in 1962.

Strangely, an equally tragic career, though for different reasons, lay in store for the other Zoroastrian cricketer and Umrigar's later-day contemporary,

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Nariman (Nari) Jehangir Contractor. Contractor's cricketing days almost ended when he was felled by a nasty delivery from Griffith, during a 'colony' game (not a Test, as somehow commonly believed) at Bridgetown against Barbados, sandwiched between the second and third Tests against the West Indies in 1962. The 28-year-old Contractor, who had by then already led India in 10 Tests, and by the end of the series would have equaled Amarnath's record of having led India in most Tests (15), found his career nipped, as he battled between life and death for several days. It is to Contractor's credit that despite a career so dramatically and sadly cut short (even as his best years as leader potentially lay ahead of him), he made a brave bid to stage a comeback, opening the innings for Gujarat in the Ranji Trophy '63-'64 season (and scoring a hundred), and maintaining a fine form even four years later, when by hitting a century for West Zone in the Duleep Trophy, he staked a claim to be included in the Indian team to Australia. "He (Contractor) remains one of the most tragic figures in the Indian captaincy hierarchy," writes Ramchand, a statement that almost seems an echo of Umrigar's chapter heading, "The tragic figure of Indian captaincy."

It is clear from Ramchand's writings that despite the sad overtones shading them, two of his favorite captains of the 23 to lead India have both been Parsis. If Umrigar is oft praised for his deft managing of the team, and his exemplary handling of bowling and field placement, Contractor is lauded for his humility and even while being a captain learning "like a dedicated pupil from the master" (Umrigar) or "consulting him on the field."

While summarizing the story of Indian cricket captains Ramchand states: "...if anything has come out of this narrative, it is that... the seemingly less successful captains — Nayudu, Amarnath, Umrigar, Pataudi — emerge somewhere at the top."

The Captains is certainly a work that itself emerges at the top and should find a place on any cricket lover's bookshelf, even if it is too crowded with the plethora of books on cricket released to coincide with the World Cup craze. Its insightful look and its racy journalistic style qualify it for this position.

H. J. R.

A fine sequel

The Marine Sports, Bombay which brought out Sensei Farokh Dinshaw's *The Code of Bushido*, introducing the original oriental martial arts to India, has now published in response to "an extraordinary demand for a sequel," as claimed by the author in the prologue, a follow-up title, *Bushi: The Warrior*.

The new book (1998, 122 pp, Rs 110) is the result of several lectures, seminars and demonstrations presented by Dinshaw, a qualified martial artist and fitness instructor, who runs a martial arts school, Combat Center, a fitness academy, Bodyline, and an adventure camping institute, Eco-venturers in Bombay. The work elaborates on several specialized training techniques, many of which are developed and improved upon by Dinshaw. The book also explains the philosophy behind the various martial arts and their applications in daily life.

Besides providing a well-rounded curriculum for those who are interested in learning the martial arts, the book also serves to dispel popular myths and be-

liefs associated with them. Amply illustrated with photographs and neat sketches portraying the techniques in sequential form, the book should find favor with anyone interested in the martial arts and learning them. A few chapters on Reiki, Zen, and FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) should make the work appealing to the lay reader as well.

The book was recently released in Bombay by Ramdeo Tyagi, former commissioner of police, Bombay.

H. J. R.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder



Dinshaw: popularizing martial arts



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A community contributes

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Parsis in Western India: 1818 to 1920 edited by Nawaz B. Mody. Published in 1998 by Allied Publishers Limited, 15, J. N. Heredia Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400038. Pp: xxxii+288. Price: Rs 290.

"Let no time be lost nor money be spared in making Bombay as strong and defensible as you can and to be fitted with all conveniences and materials for building and repairing of ships... land in that place will certainly be worth double what it is now when our whole trade and shipping is entirely fixed to that place..."

So wrote the directors of the East India Company to its agents in Bombay on August 3, 1687. Research scholar and director of the Prince of Wales Museum Dr Kalpana Desai, who quotes the letter in her paper titled "The Role of Parsis in the urbanization of Mumbai," notes, "It would be no exaggeration to say that the history of the development of this city, in the 18th and 19th centuries, is directly linked with the history of the Dockyard headed by the Wadia Master Builders... The genius of Lowji Wadia and seven generations of his descendants, contributed largely to the development of the Dockyard."

Desai's was one of the 13 research papers presented at the two-day seminar, "The contribution of the Parsi community to Western India between 1818 and 1920," jointly organized by the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations Committee (Sir PMBACC) and the Bombay University's department of civics and politics, under the auspices of the Gulestan and Rustom Billimoria Trust on February 15 and 16, 1997. Edited into this book by Dr Nawaz Mody, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta professor and head of the University's department of civics and politics as also secretary of the Sir PMBACC, they mark a serious attempt at compiling lesser known facets of

Parsi contribution and its impact on various aspects of the socio-politico-economic scene, specifically in the building of India's Urbs Prima — Bombay.

The seminar was organized in four parts: "The role of Parsis in the national movement and nation building" included papers by research scholar Dr Y. D. Phadke on Behramji Malabari as a social reformer; Mody's assessment of Madame Bhikhaji Cama as a sentinel of liberty; and first baronet, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's philanthropy and building of social institutions by the president of the Bombay Parsi Association and chairman of the Sir J. J. Dharamshala, Vispi Dastur.

The second part tracing Parsi involvement in urban development, trade and industry received the contributions of Dr Mani Kamerkar, former head of the department of history at the S. N. D. T. Women's University on the maritime trade; Dr Zenobia Shroff, reader in the department of history at Elphinstone College on Jeejeebhoy Dadabhai and the industrialization of Bombay; and Desai on the urbanization of Bombay in the 19th century.

The third part dealing with the community's contribution to Indian literatures and linguistics was addressed by Dr Nilufer Bharucha, professor of English at the University of Bombay, who assessed the involvement with literature and journalism; chartered accountant Dr Firdaus Gandevis who recalled the impact of India's first graduate Cornelia Sorabji and Dadar Athornan Madressa principal Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia who traced the transition in the study of Indo-Iranian languages from the traditional methods to scientific philology.

Part four was concerned with the film industry, theater and music with K. R. Cama Oriental Institute trustee-secretary Homai Modi speaking of

Jamshedji Madan's pioneering of the film industry in India; Dr Gopal Shastri who received his doctorate for his research on Parsi theater sharing his knowledge; renowned musicologist Dr Sharatchandra Vishnu Gokhale speaking on Indian music among the Parsis and Prof Vispy Balaporia, dean of the University's Faculty of Arts, providing a cameo on Homi Wadia of Wadia Movietone.

The presence of the octogenarian Wadia at the seminar was an added attraction. Also present at that session were Maneck Sidhwa of Regal Theatre, film distributor Roos Balaporia, eminent tabla player Dr Aban Mistry and renowned musician Kersi Mistry whose father Pherozeshah Mistry had composed the music for the first Indian talkie, *Alam Ara*, records Nawaz Mody.

The four sessions had been consecutively chaired by the late politician-diplomat Homi Taleyarkhan who was vice chairman of the Sir PMBACC until his death, Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Jamshed Guzder, *The Bombay Samachar* editor Jehan Daruvala and Vispy Balaporia, recalls Mody. She also records the other special features at the seminar: the playback of old Parsi *garbas* and *lagan na geet* thanks to Gokhale and Ganesh Shandvankar who made the recordings available. Also featured was the documentary *Happiness Unto Others* created by Homi Sethna.

The compilation of the work into the present volume — embellished with photographs by Hoshi Patel and Dr Viraf Dhalla as also other vintage pictures — has been enabled by the aid of Russi Lala and other trustees of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust.

Veteran Gandhian Dr Usha Mehta who gave the inaugural address, included in the book, notes that the Wadias' skill in shipbuilding and repair had been appreciated with the official presentation of a silver footrule and shawl. Tracing the contribution of other members of the Wadia family who did not join in the shipbuilding activity,



Mody: chronicling the community

Photo: Hoshi S. Patel

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Group photo of the Gayan Uttejak Mandal founded on 1.10.1870

Photo courtesy: Sharatchandra V. Gokhale

Mehta speaks of Lowji's grandson Pestonji who "carried on extensive trade with Europe, China and several cities of Asia." His brother Hormasji was high sheriff of Bombay in 1859.

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's son Kharshedji became a member of the Legislative Council of Bombay. His second son Rustomji was honored by the King of Portugal for his charities in Goa and third son Sorabji became a scholar of Persian.

Framji Kavasji who had been appointed government member of the Board of Education worked hard for the promotion of agriculture. "It was mainly because of his efforts that the forest of Powai was converted into a fertile estate growing indigo, sugarcane and mulberry," says Usha Mehta.

"Reforming Indian society and improving the condition of women had been pursued by Malabari as the sole mission of his life. In his *Niti Vinod*, a collection of lyrics in Gujarati, his poems on the woes of enforced widowhood and the horrors of infant marriage are considered the best... He found that child-widows had hardly cut their milk-teeth. The custom of infant marriages was not restricted only to the Hindus. It had worked havoc for a long time among the Parsis... Malabari could never forget the heart-rending shrieks of a 10-year-old Parsi girl when she was 'raped' by her husband," notes Phadke. The 'first marriage' contracted in infancy was consummated by the 'second marriage' at the age of 10. Malabari fought

along with a number of Hindu reformers to legally raise the age of consent to 12 years. Phadke's paper highlights Malabari's role as a social reformer with special reference to this campaign conducted between 1884 and 1891. An appended extract from the *Indian Spectator* edited by Malabari, one of the first English journals to be published from Bombay, deals with his aversion to the clause "restitution of conjugal rights" which had been "imported" from England: "Think of marrying a girl of five to a man of 25, and of the man claiming her person as soon as she is 12, whatever the disparity between the two. Think of a man invoking the aid of a foreign law in dragging that tender, innocent child to his house, or to the nearest prison..." Malabari believed there should be no cohabitation until the girl reached puberty and then too only if she was agreeable.

Nawaz Mody reveals that contrary to romanticized accounts of political and attitudinal differences between Madame Bhikhaiji Cama and her husband Rustom, it was his ongoing liaison with Shirin Warden that led to the breakup of their marriage. "She was the first of the modern feminists who could not tolerate this situation... (and) turned to politics in her hope of a new life..." Mody refers to Cama's contacts with Irish rebels, European socialists, Italian revolutionaries and American sympathisers, her defence of Veer Savarkar, and her help to his family when he was interred in the Andamans. Nonetheless when Cama died on August 12, 1936 only two papers reported her passing as a news item, two days after the event: *The Bombay Chronicle* and the *Kaiser-E-*

Hind, with the latter publishing a tribute by Harendranath Chattopadhyay on the 10th day after her death. Nawaz Mody's paper is followed by nine appendices which include articles from *The Indian Sociologist* and *L'Humanité*. Chattopadhyay's obituary write-up, Cama's will and death certificate and a piece by K. F. Nariman from *The Bombay Chronicle*, August 20, 1938.

Dastur enumerates Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's many philanthropies. He also notes that Jamsetjee was "the first Indian and Parsi to grant freedom to women. On March 9, 1840 for the first time, ladies of his family appeared in public amongst men of different communities" when he gave a banquet to celebrate Queen Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert. In 1843 he published his *Kholaseh-I-Punchayet* under a pseudonym and in 1855 the Freedom of the City of London was conferred on him, for the first time on an Indian.

An annual tax called "choola-vero," then levied on the Parsis of Navsari by the Gaekwad of Baroda, was a burden on poor Parsis. "Jamsetjee prevailed upon the Gaekwad to abolish this annual tax by paying Rs 12,000 to the Baroda treasury," notes Dastur. He also recounts Jamsetjee's funding of the publication of Gujarati translations of Zoroastrian scriptures and peripheral works on the religion. His last benefaction was a donation of Rs 5,000 to the newly launched pension fund for dock workers.

When Jamsetjee died not only were uthamna ceremonies performed in all the towns of Bombay Presidency and other parts of India as well as Hong Kong, his name has been incorporated among the names of great Zoroastrians recited in all Zoroastrian ceremonies and continues to be invoked.

Kamerkar recounts the changing trading patterns from entrepôt trade in the Straits of Malacca (which was an intermediary center of trade and transshipment) to the opening up of trading networks in the Atlantic and Pacific regions. The European demand changed from pepper and spices to cotton, textiles, opium and tea. Building suppliers, watchmakers and wine merchants began to thrive in Bombay. The Banaji Limji Company prospered by trading on the Malabar and Coromandal coasts. Spices, piecegoods and teak were the top commodities. The buying and selling of Arab horses from the Persian Gulf and even Australia interested Parsis

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Pateti banquet at Criterion Restaurant, London in 1906, with Naoroji in the chair Photo courtesy: Malcolm Deboo, ZTFE

in the early 19th century.

It was "the introduction of steam that brought Indian shipbuilding to an end by 1857," she notes. The arrival of new technologies in communications, banking, engineering took their toll. They made the Europeans less dependent on indigenous merchants and the fortunes of the latter began to decline," notes Kamerkar.

Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoi's enterprising spirit led him to help in the establishment and running of three banks, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, the Parsee Insurance Society and the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. However, his greatest achievement was the estab-

lishment of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company which commissioned a steamer from London to ply between Bombay and Surat and other parts of Gujarat, and eventually to Karachi and Colombo, notes Shroff. The company even obtained a government contract to conduct a mail service between Bombay and Karachi for three years beginning 1853. A steamer commissioned by Dadabhoi was constructed at Mazagon Docks. Called *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy*, it was launched on November 12, 1848, she recounts.

The first cotton mill using steam energy — the Bombay Spinning and Weaving Company — was projected in 1856 by Kavasji Nanabhai Davar. Two years later Manockjee Petit, Dadabhoi's son-in-law, established the Oriental Spinning and Weaving Company.

Manockjee died shortly thereafter but his son, Sir Dinshaw Petit shared grandfather Dadabhoi's vision and foresaw the development of the cotton industry in Bombay, establishing six flourishing cotton mills by 1884, earning Bombay the title "Manchester of the East."

Desai relates how Cowasji Patel had had a big tank constructed between Kumbhar Tukda and Khetwadi which came to be known as C. P. Tank — a name that the area still bears. It provided water to the townsfolk for a century until it was eventually filled up. When Bombay faced one of its acute water shortages in 1839 Framji Cawasji Banaji got the Dhobi Talao Tank cleaned and deepened, and arranged to eliminate the inflow of dirty water. It came to be called the Framji Cawasji Tank by an order of the government. Desai relates how the Wadias, Dadi Seth and Sorabji Mancherji Readymoney fed thousands of hungry migrants from famine devastated Gujarat in 1791 for 10 months, making no distinction of community or religion.

The urbanization of Bombay was reflected in the overall development of the city. Numerous wells were dug and Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney ordered and had installed 40 decorative drinking water fountains in various parts of the city, notes Desai.

The danger of westernized Parsi youth becoming attracted to Christianity under the influence of Rev John Wilson was countered by religious revivalism fostered by Parsi reformers like Dadabhai Naoroji. Naoroji Furdoonji, S. S. Bengalee, K. R. Cama and Ardesher Framjee Moos, declares Bharucha. The Gujarati newspaper *Rast Gofar*, established under the leadership of Dadabhai Naoroji, became the mouthpiece of Parsi reforms such as female education, free association of women with men at public functions, abolition of child marriages and acceptance of widow remarriage. "Under the influence of the reformists, the scientific, natural aspects of Zoroastrianism were stressed and its monotheistic nature showcased," notes Bharucha.

In 1777 Bombay's first English newspaper, the *Bombay Courier* was printed by Rustomji Keshaspathi. By 1854 six Parsi Gujarati newspapers were in circulation: *The Bombay Samachar*, *Mumbai Vartman*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *Mumbaina Chabuk*, *Samachar Darpan* and *Chitranjan Durpan*. In the field of



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poetry there were Jamshedji Petit and Jehangir Marazban, Behramji Malabari and A. F. Khabardar. "It is intriguing to note that none of the Parsi writers of this period centerstaged their ethno-religious Parsi Zoroastrian identities. Malabari called himself a Hindu Zoroastrian... Even the more westernized and at times anglophilic (Cornelia) Sorabji and (Fredoon) Kabraji, when they envisage an identity distinct from the colonizer, it is always the Indian identity that they showcase," writes Bharucha.

Cornelia Sorabji's father had converted to Christianity and had translated the Bible into Gujarati. Her mother was a Hindu converted to Christianity, "a woman who combined intellectual ability, strength of character and spiritual charisma," notes Gandevia. The children were never allowed to forget that they were Parsis and were told tales of Persian ancestors and famous Parsis. They grew up familiar with western as well as Indian culture. Sorabji, the first woman to graduate from Bombay University, was one of only four first class students from the Presidency. Thereafter she was the first and only woman law student at Oxford. Despite earning her degree she, being a woman, was not admitted to the legal profession — until nearly 30 years later. She returned to India and started her campaign on behalf of the widows, wives and orphans of India, especially purdanashin women, receiving the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal in 1909 for her work. Her life and times have been well documented in her autobiography.

K. R. Cama went to Paris and Erlanger in 1859 to study the system of application of the rules of grammar and philology to ancient Iranian languages under eminent orientalist Jules Oppert and Friedrich Spiegel. In the course of his studies he came into contact with Professors Eugene Barnoufe, Franz Bopp, Albrecht Weber, Dr Martin Haug, James Darmesteter and Dr A. V. Williams Jackson, all of whom had contributed to the study of Indo-Iranian languages, notes Karanjia. In 1861 Cama started a private class to teach Avesta and Pahlavi in a scientific manner. Among his students were Tehmuras Anklesaria, Sheriarji Bharucha, Kavasji Kanga and others, all of whom later

made sizable contribution to their subject. In 1888 Cama succeeded in getting Avesta and Pahlavi introduced as a second language for the MA degree in Bombay University. In 1896 the University allowed Avesta-Pahlavi as a second language at all the arts faculty examinations, notes Karanjia.



Sorabji: first woman law student at Oxford

Source: Rajabai Tower Library, University of Mumbai

Speaking of her great-grandfather Jamshedji Madan, Homai Modi depicted his progress from a leading contractor for the supply and transport of goods, and wine and general merchant to become the leading cinema owner and distributor. Starting out as a 'travelling cinema showman' Madan began by showing movies in a tent in Calcutta's Hati Market. On the first day only two customers showed up. "Instead of cancelling the show, he showed two movies in one ticket. The two happy viewers spread the news and the next day there were 200 viewers!" narrates Modi. Madan went on to develop "a film production, distribution, exhibition empire that for three decades dominated the scene in the whole of British India, which at that time also included Ceylon and Burma." But in Calcutta, no Parsi was ever asked to purchase tickets — they went free, adds Modi. A share certificate of Madan Theatres Limited and a copy of the CBE (Commander of the British Empire) awarded to Madan in 1923 have been reproduced in the book.

During the 19th century the Parsis were the first to write drama and were the founders of Gujarati theater, notes Shastri. A drama club, Parsi Natak Mandli was established with the blessings of Dadabhai

Naoroji which was tended for many years by Faramji Gustadji Dalal. The first Gujarati drama was *Rustom and Sohrab*. Among other contributors to the growth of Parsi theater were Kaikhushroo Kabraji, Cooverji Nazir, Edulji Khor and Dadabhai Patel. A club in Surat performed a Gujarati translation of *Taming of the Shrew*. In course of time there were 19 drama companies as enumerated by Shastri. They not only staged Gujarati plays but also Urdu dramas and operas and took their productions on tour.

"There does not appear to be any record of musicians among the Zoroastrians arriving in India... They imbibed Indian music here... and gave a progressive outlook in the field of music," writes Gokhale. The Parsi garbas were either invocative or a reportage of current events or even a social satire. Manekjee Minocher Homjee and Nanabhai Raneena wrote many articles on them in the *Mumbai Samachar*. Chief among the serious songs in the grand vein is the famous *Aatashnu geet*, a long poem taking hours to sing composed by Jeewanjee and Dosaabai Bharucha. Dhanjibhai Patel's kirtans were based on the *Shah Namah* and the *Kisseh-e-Sanjan*. The Gayan Uttej Mandali trained many Parsi ladies and gentlemen including Saraswati Devi — the assumed name of a Parsi lady, Khorshed Minocherhomji, working as a music director in films — and the Vajifdar sisters. In 1931 Pandit Pheroze Framjee of Poona published the *Hindustani Sangeet ki Encyclopaedia*.

Homi Wadia's career comprised 150 films spanning the silent era as well as the talkies, notes Balaporia. Wadia became an expert cameraman and excelled at shooting subtitles for the silent films, always displayed in English, Gujarati and Urdu. When a former schoolmate jokingly suggested he make his own picture, Wadia took up the challenge and on the advice of his brother J. B. H. Wadia, who already had a footing in the film industry, produced *Dile-Dakoo*, a remake of *The Mark of Zorro*. Balaporia traces the progress of Wadia Movietone from the silent era into the talkies probing the reasons behind their box office success.

In his valedictory address Dr Freddie Mehta quoted respected jurist Nani



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Palkivala that of the four great emblems of India, three have been given by Parsis: The magic word "swaraj" by Dadabhai Naoroji, Mme Bhikhaiji Cama's flag which was accepted by the nation with minor modifications; and the industrial renaissance of India spearheaded by Jamsetji Tata. He spoke of the great Jamshed Mehta, father of modern Karachi and eminent economist Jamshed Mehta of Allahabad on whose death "the whole of Allahabad stood still."

Addressing the problem of a diminishing community — no marriage/late marriage, emigration leading to a thinner spread of Zoroastrians across the globe and the increasingly secular outlook — Freddie Mehta concluded gloomily, "Future generations will not condemn us for perpetrating this holocaust because there (may) be no future generations in the first place. Even today it may not be too late for the Parsi community to give itself a 'wake-up call,' too much of what we are doing today resembles the discussion of a lunch menu on a sinking *Titanic*."

At the inaugural Bombay University vice chancellor and Sir PMBACC chairperson Dr Snehalata Deshmukh had pronounced herself a beneficiary of the Parsis and hence "(had) a right to speak at this gathering." She acknowledged the professional guidance of Dr Aspi Golwalla and Dr Rustom Irani in her surgical career. Lauding Nawaz Mody's service to the department of civics and politics and her marathon effort in organizing this seminar Deshmukh said, "She is another Parsi in my life who has helped in the success of my career," and praised the "uniquely distinctive community (which) never sought special favors, (remained) content with the harvest of its labors."

The volume includes 16 pages of bibliography prepared by research scholar B. Venkatesh Kumar of the University department of civics and politics, and an efficient index. While one wishes that the pictures were better reproduced, preferably in color, the substance of the presentation whets the appetite for more. Future seminars and/or research dissertations could perhaps concentrate on the theme of each session in greater depth. Literary, analytical biographies of some of our stalwarts of yore may provide a substantial answer to the questions how and why such a small community could make this awesome contribution in so many fields.



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Pahlavi Primer

Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan P. Peer

The Persic ("Pahlavi"), A Grammatical Précis by Raham Asha. Published in 1998 by Erman-Rudaki and distributed by Editions Khavaran, 49, rue De France, 94300 Vincennes, France. Pp: 130. Price: Not mentioned.

This book, about the grammar of the Pahlavi language which flourished in Iran for about a millennium between the first 10 centuries of the Christian era, is very significant from the Zoroastrian scriptural point of view. Pahlavi was the state language during the glorious Sasanian dynasty, the last of the five dynasties of Zoroastrian sovereignty in Iran.

It was during this time of the Sasanian era that the Avesta literature, destroyed by Alexander in 330 BC, and existing in scattered fragments, was regrouped, re-structured and translated into Pahlavi, the spoken language of the day, along with copious commentaries and glosses. Not only that, but even after the downfall of the Iranian Empire in 641 AC, Pahlavi continued to flourish, and the ninth century is in fact considered to be the golden era of Pahlavi language and literature. During this particular period of the ninth century, voluminous Pahlavi works of an independent nature were composed by the well-known high priests of the Zoroastrians in Iran at that time; and these works in fact constitute the link between the present times and the Sasanian era of the past.

The grammar of the Pahlavi language is rather simple in nature as compared to that of Avesta. But it has two major areas of difficulty. One is the ambiguity of the script which has only 14 letters — several among them having more than one form of reading. The practice of joining the letters further complicates the process of reading and deciphering, as one single word can be read in various combinations. The other difficulty is about the frequent use of ideograms through the language, thereby necessitating the study of two sets of vocabulary (Iranian equivalents for the non-Iranian forms) in

order to understand words in their proper context.

Pahlavi is also known by the term "Middle Persian," though it is only one among a group of Middle Persian languages. The author of the book under review, the French-based Raham Asha, calls it *Persic*, and explains the same in the very beginning of the first chapter titled "Introductory Remarks."



Asha: singularly simple

At present we have quite a few works on Pahlavi grammar, most of them published in the latter half of the last century or at the beginning of this century. But a fresh and comprehensive work on the subject in English has been overdue since C. Salemann's original German translated into English by L. Bogdanov in 1930 as *Middle Persian Grammar*. The present work, therefore, appears to have served this requirement to a considerable extent.

This book is intended for those who have a basic knowledge of Pahlavi, at least of its script, since no use of the actual script is made throughout the pages. To the credit of the author, the work has not been written in heavy or highly technical terms, but rather in a simple and lucid manner. He has practically covered all the parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, derivatives et al in a *précis* form, with all of them divided into sub-groups. Asha treats each form by explaining it in a sentence or two, then gives quite a number of examples to substantiate his statements. This style helps one in understanding that particular classification immediately. As the author himself says in the preface: "This book is intended to be a preliminary guide and framework for the more detailed study of *Persic*... In this work, I have tried to describe how the language functions by citing whole sentences in order to illustrate the context in which this or that nominal or verbal form can be used."

Finally, the bibliography given can be very useful for reference work, and for further study in the given field.

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Farrukh's fables

Dina Mehta

Janaky and the Giant and other stories by Farrukh Dhondy. Published in 1998 by HarperCollins Publishers, India Private Limited, 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002. Pp: 191. Price: Rs 95.

The illustrations are all in black-and-white, which is something Priya, the nine-year-old daughter of a friend of mine, rather disdains; but this time, instead of turning up her nose, Priya buried it in the pages of Farrukh Dhondy's collection of nine exuberant tales with obvious enjoyment. The absence of colored pictures was more than compensated for, it appeared, by the author's gift for endlessly detailing the things a child could accept without batting an eyelid.

In other words, Dhondy does not intimidate his young readers, nor does he talk down to them. He mixes the implausible so neatly with the plausible in his engaging narratives that you never dream of challenging his credibility (unless you are one of those tiresome adults who must inject logic into everything and spoil the fun). No, you believe in him right away. If you have any sense, that is.

You are not really shocked, for instance, that WW ('double-u double-u,' the wicked witch) has certain food preferences. At the party that King Asman gives for his newborn daughter Surya, WW insists on being served rat and lizard cake. When that is not available, she graciously offers to make do with frizzled pig-tail crisps. But when she learns that even these are not on the menu, nor her favorite drink (sick bull's blood with a dash of freshly shaved black cat's hair) she stamps her foot and calls the footman "a chewed-up dog biscuit." (Dhondy can be really rude when he wants to be and Priya never

fails to be charmed by this.) Then WW pronounces a curse on little Surya, gathers up her golden gown and sweeps out to the parking lot where her donkey is awaiting her.

Can anything be more whacky and delightful?

Born in Poona, 55-year-old Dhondy studied English at Cambridge, then taught for several years before he took to professional writing. His books for young readers include *East End at Your Feet*, and *Come to Mecca* (both winners of the Other Award), *Poona Company* and *Trip Trap*. His first adult novel, *Bombay Duck*, was shortlisted for the 1990 Whitbread Award. Dhondy has also written for television and the stage, and has done good work as Commissioning Editor for Multicultural Programmes at BBC's Channel Four.

In the book under review I find Dhondy at his best when he improvises on existing stories, fables, characters. *The Bright Princess* (from which I've quoted above) echoes the familiar tale of the wicked 13th fairy who curses a princess at the royal baby's birthday bash. It is the unpredictable and outrageous twists Dhondy gives such stories as he parts company with the original version that make them irresistible. His endings are particularly delicious. When WW calls off her spell on Surya, the grateful king offers her a choice of gold, silver, or a free ticket to Disneyland! Of course, WW will have none of that. At Surya's wedding feast she expects to be fed her favorite fare, and that's it. Except that she adds "wild dog samosas" to the menu.

Croc Saw-Bones and Delilah, Dhondy's version of the ancient fable about the wily crocodile who carries the monkey on her back, ends with the carnivorous Croc becoming a vegetarian — or more precisely a

fruitarian.

In *The Beastly Burden*, Tinbad the tailor is a take-off on Sinbad the sailor, and the tailor is as enamored of faraway lands as the sailor. This is the mouth-watering account of England that Tinbad has heard: "...in England there was a big man called Ben who sat in a tower and had to ring a bell every hour. There was a shop as big as a small town named after a man in the Bible who killed baby boys... places which were really pickled circuses... pools of black water where people went for holidays... a wax museum named after a woman with two swords..." Surely this para was aimed more at me than at Priya? Yes, Dhondy has lots of fun with his readers, young and old.

But to get back to the tailor. On his travels Tinbad, too, has trouble shaking off the obnoxious old man he has been kind enough to take piggy back across a river. In the end it is an invitation to tea (for one) from the Queen of England on his 100th birthday that makes the codger dismount and Tinbad, momentarily minus his burden, wisely takes to his heels.

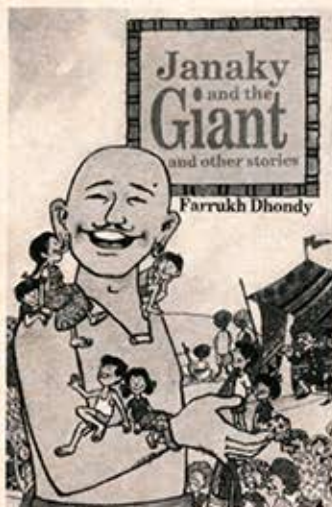
Come to think of it, the old man in *The Beastly Burden* is the only scoundrel in all the nine stories. The rest of the villains are rather nice. The giant Mr Boghulbumpfulboochyboochy (in the title story *Janaky and the Giant*, one of Dhondy's original tales) is supposed to breathe fire, crush bones, eat six goats a day and sleep "with his own beard as a blanket." But in truth he is in chains, bullied by his diminutive owner and has a surprisingly tender heart. Janaky helps to free him and to this day

he works as a school bus in her village, carrying children back and forth on his gentle person. Even WW "hates to be as unpopular as a jug of castor oil" and takes her spell off the lovely princess. And the *churail* (an Asian witch) in *Chew Chew*, descended from a clan of gory gut-chewers, turns out to be a lost little girl who becomes addicted to — chewing gum!

A few words about



Dhondy: engaging narratives



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the black-and-white illustrations by Tapas Guha that Priya had no quarrel with. The drawings are expressive, appealing. For example, who can resist the mute plea in the eyes of the thirsty, weebegone camels as their owner Pally Ali (spelt 'Pali' in the title and list of contents, 'Pally' in the text of *Pali Ali and his Camels* — and there are a few other proofing errors), impervious to the animals' plight, takes smug swigs from his bottle of orange juice? Not I. Not Priya.

The aim of the arrow

My youngest daughter is called Tir. The English can't pronounce it. They interpose a 'u' sound as though they were saying 'deer' or 'beer.' Then there's the soft 'Th' for 'Tir.' Europeans, at least those who haven't trained in acting school, can't manage it. Poor Tir comes out as 'Tear' and the die-hard hippies who hear it swoon — "Wow, 'tear' — that's a far-out name man!"

If the truth were told, the name came to me in my mother's bathroom, which happened to have a Parsi calendar hanging on the wall. Practising my faltering Gujarati, I was reading the names of the days of the month. As a good Zoroastrian child I had memorized them, half as well as seven-times tables: Hormazd, Bahman, Ardibehesht, Shahrevar... Some of them I recognized as names. I have a cousin called Bomon and a sister called Meher. Then I came to the name 'Tir.' I have never heard it used on a child before, but it passed through me like an arrow. A strong, unusual and undoubtedly Zoroastrian name.

It had the advantage of being a beautiful 'Indian' idea too: the Hindi word for an arrow. That was it.

I looked into the derivations. The Persian or Zoroastrian was ambiguous. One book said that 'Tir' was the name for Sirius the Dog Star. I know it. It's at the bottom of Orion's Belt. Another book said it was the name for Cupid.

Now that made sense: Cupid? Bow and arrow of love? Venus' boy? And the word in Hindi meant precisely that — an arrow, associated now with love, with a merging of Parsi and Hindu myths and with my daughter. So what if they call her 'tear' in Britain?

Reprinted from *Outlook*, June 7, 1999 where Farrukh Dhondy has contributed to "Native Tongue," their weekly column on Indian words in common use in Indian cities.

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Menus that are offered at Delhi's Basil and Thyme restaurant can now be sampled at home

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

Basil and Thyme is a charming little restaurant where I cook. It is owned by my son-in-law, Sunil Chandra. It is situated in the Santushti Complex in New Delhi which in happier days was started and run by the Air Force Wives Welfare Association. Some of you may have heard of it and lunched or snacked there, and some of you may not have had the opportunity to do so. The restaurant is open from 10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. where one can have a light or a heavy snack, or the "du jour" of the day, from 12.30 p.m. onwards.

The "du jour" has duck on Mondays, seafood on Tuesdays, tornadoe on Wednesdays, lamb on Thursdays, trout or fish on Fridays and chicken on Saturdays.

To the credit of the restaurant it must be said that since its opening seven years ago, the "du jour" has not been repeated, except when especially asked for! (No wonder the children and grandchildren cannot understand why I go to bed with a cookery book instead of a novel! I read recipes, gloat over them, get inspired by them, then work out the menu or make my own.)

Given below are two of the menus which were cooked recently.

MENU NO. 1

Chilli bean and beer soup
Duck with mangoes
Fresh peach flan

CHILLI BEAN AND BEER SOUP

(serves 6-8)
White haricot beans (60 g — 2 oz)
Red kidney beans (60 g — 2 oz)
Chickpeas (60 g — 2 oz)
Water (to cover the beans)
Oil (3-4 tbsp)
Onions (2 — chopped — in India take large onions, as in the USA, Canada or Europe the onions are much larger than

in India)
Garlic (1 medium pod — crushed — use 3-4 cloves, in India)
Cumin powder (2 tbsp)
Paprika powder (3-4 tsp)
Tomatoes ($\frac{1}{4}$ kg — 1½ lbs — blanched and seeded, finely chopped)
Oregano (dry — 1 tsp)
Chicken stock (strong — 2 cups)
Tomato purée (4 tbsp)
Bay leaf (1)
Beer (1 bottle — 750 ml)
Salt, pepper (to taste)
Put all the beans in a saucepan, cover with four cups water and bring to boil. Remove from fire, strain. Put back in pan, cover with water, simmer till just done. Keep aside. Heat oil in a saucepan, add onions and garlic, sauté till onions are soft. Add cumin, paprika, bay leaf and sauté one minute. Add stock and beer, mix well, simmer for five minutes, then add tomatoes and purée, mix well, simmer for two-three minutes, add beans and oregano, season to taste. Simmer till soup is thickish. Garnish with chopped spring onions and serve.

DUCK WITH MANGOES

(serves 6-8)
Oven temperature 180°C - 350°F
Duck (1 — weighing about 3-3½ kg — 6-7 lbs)
Butter (60 g — 2 oz)
Salt, pepper (to taste)
Sauce
Flour ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)
Stock (1 cup — made from the neck, wingtips and gizzard of duck, flavored with onion, carrot, bay leaf and black peppercorns)
White or red wine (2 cups)
Orange (juice — $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
Thyme (dried — 1 tsp)
Salt, pepper (to taste)
Mangoes (2 — peeled and sliced)

Wash and clean duck well. Remove giblets from its cavity. Wipe duck dry, place on a baking tin. Spread with butter, salt and pepper. Roast in preheated oven about 1½ hour, basting with fat from the duck, once or twice. The duck is cooked when white liquid comes out of the flesh when pierced with a skewer in its thigh. Cool and slice. Keep aside.

Sauce
Remove half of fat from the roasting tin in which the duck was roasted. Keep aside. Place tin on top of high heat, and scrape all the crust from tin. Add flour and mix till brown. Add stock, simmer for two-three minutes. Then add rest of ingredients and simmer for five-eight minutes. Strain. Pour sauce in a saucepan. Add duck to sauce. Reheat. Place on a warm platter.

Lightly fry mango slices in remaining duck fat and arrange with duck on the platter and serve, with sautéed potatoes, buttered carrots and sliced, buttered zucchini.

FRESH PEACH FLAN (serves 6-8)

Oven temperature 180°C-350°F.
Line a flan tin approximately 9" in diameter with short crust pastry and bake blind.
Filling
Creme patisserie
Egg (1 whole)
Egg (1 yolk)
Castor sugar (60 g — 2 oz)
Flour (30 g — 1oz)
Cornflour (15 g — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz)
Milk (10 oz)
Brandy (2 tbsp)
Peaches (2 — purée)
Cream (2 tbsp — whipped)
Topping
Peaches (6-8 — peeled, sliced)
Plum glaze
Plum jam ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)

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Water (¼ cup)
Lime (½ — juice)
Salt (pinch)

Crème patisserie

Beat egg, yolk and sugar together. Mix flour with cornflour. Add to egg mixture. Mix till smooth. Gradually pour in milk, stirring till smooth. Place pan on medium heat. Cook stirring gently, all the while, till mixture is thick. Cool, add brandy, cream and peach purée. Spoon into baked cold pastry shell. Arrange sliced peaches on top. Chill.

Plum glaze

Place jam, water and lime juice with a pinch of salt in a pan. Place pan on medium heat, bring to boil, stirring all the while. Strain, cool slightly. Spoon evenly over peaches. Chill and serve.

MENU NO. 2

Spinach Vichyssoise
Prawns with Avocado and Tomato Mousse
Figs in Red Wine

SPINACH VICHYSOISE

(serves 6-8)
Spinach (1 kg — mixed greens with spinach predominating in flavor)
Leeks (2 — large)

Potatoes (250 g — ½ lb)
Butter (100 g)
Chicken stock (3 cups)
Milk (2 cups)
Cream (1 cup)
Salt, pepper (to taste)
Nutmeg (1 tsp — grated)
Wash and chop greens, removing stems. Chop leeks, peel and slice potatoes. Melt butter with a tablespoon of oil (to prevent butter from burning). Add leeks, sauté till soft. Add potatoes and greens, sauté for three to five minutes. Pour in chicken stock. Simmer till potatoes are cooked. Add milk. Cook further for another five to eight minutes. Season to taste. Cool and purée. Chill. Add cream, chill and serve. Garnish with chopped chives.

PRAWNS WITH AVOCADO AND TOMATO MOUSSE

(serves 6-8)
Prawns (1½ kg — 3 lbs — medium sized — peeled and marinated with lime juice and salt)
Butter (90 g — 3 oz)
Oil (2 tbsp)
Avocado and Tomato Mousse
Avocados (2 — medium sized, peeled and sliced — sprinkled with lime juice)

Gelatin (1 tsp — dissolved in 4 tbsp water)
Lime (juice — 1 tsp)
Lettuce (1 bunch — green-brown)
Tomato Mousse
Tomato (¾ kg — 1½ lb approx — puréed and strained)
Garlic (4 cloves — finely chopped)
Spring onions (2 — chopped with a little of the green)
Celery (1 stick — chopped)
Tabasco
Salt, pepper (to taste)
Sugar and lime juice (to taste)
Gelatin (2 tbsp dissolved in 6 tbsp water)
Timbales (6-8 wetted)
Mix tomato purée, garlic, spring onion, celery and seasoning together. Add melted gelatin and semi set over ice. In the meanwhile, spoon a little dissolved gelatin in the timbales and arrange slices of avocados on top, dribble a little gelatin on top and set.
Carefully spoon semi set tomato mousse on top of avocados, without disturbing them. Chill till set.
Lightly fry prawns in butter and oil.
To serve
Place on plates the set avocado and tomato mousse, loosen them by dipping



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them in hot water for 1-2 seconds and then invert on plates. Place prawns on green and brown lettuce, serve with carrot sticks, french beans and baby corn, boiled and lightly sautéed in butter.

FIGS IN RED WINE

Sponge cake (1 — 9" in diameter)

Figs (250 g — 8 oz — dried)

Red wine (1 cup)

Lime (2 slices — seeds removed)

Cinnamon (1 stick)

Star anise (1)

Cream (as needed)

Place figs in wine with rest of ingredients except cream. Simmer gently for 30 minutes. Cool in syrup. Slice cake, place a slice of cake on plates, spoon some of the liquid from the figs on top. Place 3-4 figs on top of slice of cake. Decorate with a rosette of whipped cream.

Bon appetit!

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

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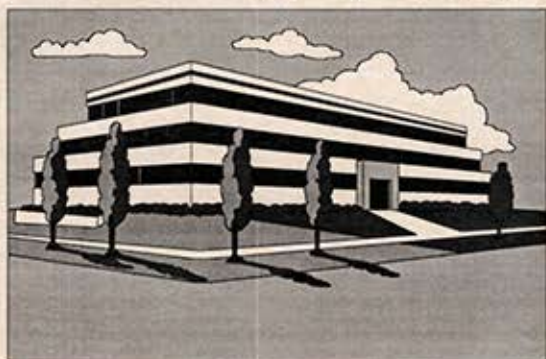
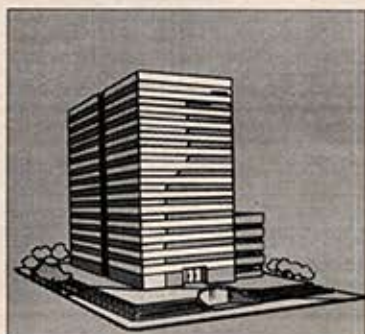
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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* presents Milestones data for the two-month period of May and June 1999.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 22 and 40 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 28 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 45 years, averaging at 33 years.

Twenty-eight babies were born in the two-month period of May and June 1999 as versus 183 Zoroastrians who breathed their last. The major killer as always, heart disease, took the lives of 77 patients of whom 50 were 80 years and above. Twenty deaths were attributed to pneumonia/lung disease, 16 to cancer and 10 to brain disease. Nine victims fell prey to septicemia, eight to old age/general debility and six each to liver disease and hypertension. The other killers were diabetes (four) and nervous disorder, kidney fail-

ure, asthma, head injury and dermatomyositis (an acute inflammation of the skin and muscles) (two each). There were 13 isolated cases registered for the two months. They were: dislocation of the spine, burns, anemia, tuberculosis, leukemia, malnutrition, Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, uremia, malaria, fracture, gastroenteritis, diverticulitis (inflammation of a sac protruding from the wall of a tube or hollow organ) and arteriosclerosis (a degenerative arterial change associated with advancing age). The coroner's report was still awaited in the cases of three deaths. A stillborn baby and two youths in their early thirties were also lost to the community. Three centenarians, aged 100, 105 and 112, also breathed their last. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for May and June, in Bombay, was 78 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anju-

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

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

Zarthost Ardeshir Tata (84), Khorshed Abad, 658, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 1

Sheroo Framji Elavia (72), E-1, 36, A-10, Sector no 8, Nerul, New Bombay, 400703; May 2

Manee Maneck Mehta (83), 101, Sagar Darshan, Worli Sea Face, 400025; May 2

Jal Erachsha Mistry (93), C/30, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 2

Cyrus Pesi Udwadia (46), D. Dinbai Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 2

Homi Nariman Cooper (86), 109, Roxana, M. Karve Rd, Churchgate, 400020; May 3

Hirjibhoy Muncherji Kavarana (98), Kavarana Mans, 176, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 3

Homee Phirozeshah Chinoy (77), 11, Nariawala Bldg, M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; May 4

Aloo Fardoonji Driver (86), Banaji Bldg, Forjett St, Gowalia Tank, 400007; May 4

Minocher Kaikhushroo Shroff (95), Patel Palace, 580, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; May 4

Roshan Dinshaw Avari (72), Minocher Block, Balarum St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 5

Dina Khurshedji Bilimoria (72), Pallonji Hse, 35, Rajaram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; May 5

Rati Behram Daruwala (74), C-1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 5

Homi Rustomji Lakdawala (74), A-6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 5

Parviz Homi Colabewala (76), 18, Nawab Manzil, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; May 6

Nariman Gustad Hathidaroo (84), Star Mans, 66, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; May 6

Minocher Jamshedji Master (90), 608, Jer Villa, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 6

Jal Sohrabji Wadia (87), Yusuf Bldg, J. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 6

Darabshah Bavaadam; May 9

Leena Jhangoo Jokhi and Cyrus Kersi Dupetawalla; May 9

Persis Kersi Raja and Shazad Nariman Mogrelia of Bangalore; May 12

Delbar Naval Bhaya and Zerkis Hoshang Mirza; May 16

Shermaz Pesi Mistry and Polly Minocher Shroff; May 21

Anahita Rustom Irani and Yezad Percy Sigamporia; May 22

Sairin Darabsha Patel of Surat and Mehernosh Jamshed Homavazir; May 25

Frangiz Cyrus Hakhamaneshy and Jehanbux Faredoon Chithiwalla; May 28

Dinaz Piloo Motiwalla and Zarir Homi Bharucha; June 5

Negar Mehraban Dehmoubed (Nasrabadi) of Tehran, Iran and Shahbahr Ardeshir Mehraein of California, USA; June 16

Wankadia; June 4

A girl to Roxanne and Nicholas Pilgrim; June 9

A boy to Roshni and Hormazd Sangar; June 13

A girl to Shaheen and Santosh Kumar; June 14

A girl to Phirozi and Anosh Irani; June 15

A girl to Razvin and Hemavand Namdarian; June 22

A girl to Sharmila and Rustom Pavri; June 24

A boy to Ruby and Yazdi Parekh; June 28

A boy to Sherin and Luigi Bisol; June 30

A boy to Pervin and Ratan Mistry; June 30

A boy to Viloo and Sharok Nikorawalla; June 30

A boy to Nazneen and Meheriar Patel; June 30

MARRIED

Shahnaz Dara Wadia and Kersi Firoz Elavia of Houston, Texas, USA; May 3

Nilufer Firoze Bam and Kerman Khurshed Billimoria; May 6

Dilnaz Jehangir Khambatta and Zubin Rusy Mory; May 8

Navaz Rumi Gyara of Bangalore and Freddy

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to Auzita and Naresh Asrani on May 7, 1999

A girl to Roshani and Navroze Gamir; May 13

A boy to Naazneen and Mehernosh Deboo; May 15

A girl to Parizad and Hushedar Divwala; May 15

A boy to Anahita and Phiroze Havaladar; May 15

A boy to Yasmin and Afsad Motashaw; May 16

A boy to Anaita and Meher Sethna; May 17

A boy to Avan and Eruch Patel; May 19

A girl to Kamal and Meherji Tantra; May 21

A girl to Binaifer and Mahendra Bhagat; May 24

A boy to Pinaze and Darayus Bharucha; May 24

A boy, Kavi, to Dinaz and Rajendra Shinde, brother to Freyana; May 24

A girl to Monaz and Ravomand Noble; May 28

A boy, Fardin, to Faranaz and Khushru Kavarana; May 31

A girl to Tanaz and Sarosh Patel; June 2

A boy to Shireen and Shiavax Vazifdar; June 2

A girl to Firoza and Phiroze

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Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; May 7
Rustomji Navroji Machliwalla (77), 1, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; May 7
Shirin Ratan Sepoy (88), 44/B, Karani Bldg, Rajaram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; May 7
Eruch Maneckji Dalal (87), N-1, Cuffe Castle, Cuffe Parade, 400005; May 8
Mani Homi Dastoor (90), 12A, Colaba Chmbs, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; May 8
Nargish Dinshaw Engineer (82), 618/C, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, J. S. Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; May 8
Pesi Ardeser Italia (78), C/o Dhan F. Mavji, Room no 6, Zaveri Bldg, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; May 8
Dina Faredoon Marker (94), Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; May 8
Dady Nusserwanji Shroff (80), A, Botawalla Bldg, 239, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 8
Pesi Darabsha Baliwala (83), 1/1, Neelkanth, Sanjana Lane, Off Carter Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; May 9
Mehroo Jamshed Bilimoria (77), Brightlands Glow, 195, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 9
Homi Sheriarji Gonda (94), 30, Kashinath Hse, Khetwadi 7th Lane, 400004; May 9
Amy Keki Lavangia (83), 26, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 9
Keki Hiraji Marawalla (53), Jalbhoy Sett Bldg, 279, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 9
Jamshed Nanabhoy Master (83), 5, Jehangir Mans, 1st Marine St, 400020; May 9
Aloo Jal Mehta (80), Noor-E-Rehmat, Byramjee Jeejibhoy Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 9
Phirozesha Rustomji Mobed (80), Lilycot, 1st Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; May 9
Jaiji Framroze Pastakia (97), Avambai Mans, 788, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 9
Mehra Dara Sukhadwalla (85), 6, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 9
Dhun Sorabji Talati (79), Talati Ter, Seven Bglws, Andheri (W), 400061; May 9
Maneckmai Manchershah Bhadha (87), Engineer Bldg, Ardeshir Dadi St, C. P. Tank, 400004; May 10
Jal Framroz Parbhu (78), Vevai Villa, 686, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 10
Freny Framroze Pastakia (85), 1/4, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 10
Tehmina Jehangir Tantra (87), D-28, New Vinay, Manipada, Vidyanagari, 400098; May 10
Hosi Behramji Dubash (71), 6, Dalamal Apts, 15, Cuffe Parade, 400005; May 11
Dhun Ardeshir Karai (87), 22/5, Heera Meher, 110, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; May 11
Aloo Maneck Madan (65), C/o Fali Aderbad Bamji, Bhandari Bldg, 14, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; May 11
Kersy Burjor Mehta (60), Bharucha Bldg, Khetwadi 12th Lane, 400004; May 11
Piroja Pirojshaw Patel (93), Room no 17, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Stn, 400007; May 11
Goolbai Shamarda Irani (105), Salma Manzil, Oliver St, Colaba Causeway, 400039; May 12
Hormuz Ratansha Balsara (85), Jehangir Mans, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 13
Goolbai Ardeshir Daruwala (87), Puspa Nivas, Uranwala St, Grant Rd (E), 400007; May 14
Nariman Dorabsha Panthaky (94), Ahunavar, 617, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 14
Dhunjishaw Dorabji Patell (93), 3/3, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 14
Mani Pirojshaw Sachinwalla (86), 275, Green Hse, Village Valiv, Taluka Vasai, Dist Thane, 401208; May 14
Shirin Eruch Hansotia (79), Rehana Manzil, L. T. Rd, Mahim, 400016; May 15
Jamshed Nariman B. (58), Ripon Guest Hse, Nagpada, 400008; May 15
Anahit Jehangir Wadia (48), Bakhtawar, 22, Narayan Dabholkar Rd, 400006; May 15
Jal Hormusji Anklesaria (87), C/o 50, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; May 16
Baby of Pervin Jimmy Mithaiwala (stillborn), D-3/13, M. S. Bldg, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 16
Nariman Eruchsha Amrolia (64), R/22, Nowroz Baug,

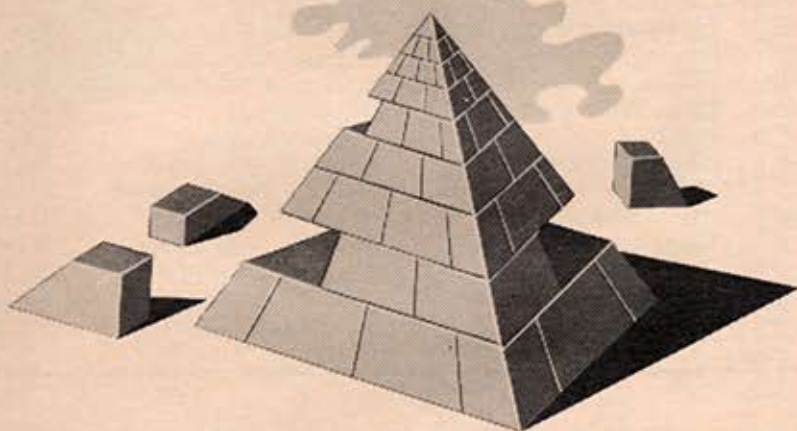
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Nadir Darasha Bharucha (73), 10/275, Princess Bldg, Princess St, 400002; May 17
Meher Shahrukh Contractor (69), 34, Capadia Bldg, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; May 17
Shirin Navroji Kelawala (91), E-14, Ginwala Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 17
Perin Arach Bajina (79), 4/2, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; May 18
Behram Dinshaji Bhagwagar (68), Mistry Bldg, 36, Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; May 18
Sheran Naoraji Fatakia (79), Room no 19, 16, Shree Ram Nivas, Khambatta Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; May 18
Hilla Dara Kapadia (95), 1/11, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; May 18
Tehmina Rustomji Pesikaka (92), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 18
Savaksha Nawroji Kavarana (84), 74, Vijay Chmbs, Tribhuvan Rd, 400004; May 19
Firoz Nusserwanji Mistry

(79), Room no 13, HongKongwalla Cooper Bldg, Khetwadi 9th back Rd, 400004; May 19
Dinshaw Edulji Shastri (69), M-32, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 19
Framroz Sorabji Tarapore (67), 583, J. S. Rd, Chira Bazar, 400002; May 19
Sarvar Jamshed Irani (85), E-5, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400006; May 20
Naval Darabshaw Mistry (75), Khurshed Hse, 604/D, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 20
Kelly Rusi Engineer (68), Sethna Bldg, 689, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 21
Eruch Ratansha Ichhaporia (75), Desai Bldg, 668, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; May 21
Maneck Cursetji Patel (95), 31, Gautam Niwas, Seven Bglws, Versova, 400053; May 21
Fali Rustomji Billimoria (81), 20, Soona Mhl, Marine Drive, 400020; May 22
Ratanbai Navalsha Cooper (99), Rubans, Setalvad Lane, 30, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; May 22

Rustomji Jamshedji Desai (83), Suleman Manzil, 176, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 22
Banoo Hormusji Tampal (74), H-21, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 22
Kaikhushroo Cooverji Wadia (84), E/34, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculia, 400027; May 22
Perinbano Khodabux Irani (68), 3/25, Sidhwa Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 23
Khorshed Peshotan Daver (85), B-14, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 24
Shirin Dhunjisha Lakdawalla (79), D/18, Godrej Baug, Napean Sea Rd, 400026; May 24
Roshan Rusi Poonewalla (65), 31, Anmol Apt, 6/10, Sorabji Santok Lane, Dhobitalao, 400002; May 24
Kekhashru Mervanji Buhariwalla (82), 190-A, Presswalla Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400007; May 25
Boman Jamshedji Kharas (80), B/103, Dhanbai P. Jeejibhai Bldg, Next to St. Peter's School, Vasai (W),

401201; May 25
Alamai Rustom Madon (92), 604-B, Madhu-Milan, Eksar Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; May 25
Rustom Kharshedji Pavri (86), 33, Jamaspji Apts, 32, Sleater Rd, 400007; May 25
Sheroo Manek Bilimoria (83), D, Imperial Mhl, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; May 26
Kaikhushroo Maneckji Malva (88), F-1, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 26
Piloo Peshotan Postwalla (84), C/o Amy R. Irani, Vijay Niwas No 5, Sleater Rd, 400007; May 26
Khushru Khodaram Roshni (66), 42, Olympus, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; May 26
Kumi Phirojshah Fitter (67), Faredoon Ter, 676, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; May 27
Zarine Ruttonji Dastoor (68), 501, Bhagwati, 68, Yari Rd, Versova, 400061; May 28
Aloo Dara Kanga (74), Tehmina Captain Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, 400007; May 28
Erach Navroji Patel (70), R. F. Cooper Bldg, Corner of

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Grant Rd, 400007; May 28
Aloo Khodabux Surveyor (89),
 Chapsey Ter, Altamont Rd,
 400026; May 28
Tehmina Gustadji Gandhi
 (97), 3/23, A. H. Wadia Bldg,
 Parel Tank Rd, 400033;
 May 29
Maneck Jamshedji Colaba-
walla (78), Old Chinoy Bldg,
 Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi,
 Grant Rd, 400007; May 30
Rati Jehangirji Damania (86),
 Wadia Bldg, 6, Babulnath Rd,
 400007; May 30
Dorabji Maneckji Patel (86),
 Shilpa Apts, Naigaum Cross
 Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 30
Sarosh Naval Goghavala (85),
 24, Sai Darshan, Cumballa
 Hill, 400036; May 31
Rusi Naoroji Marolia (80), 7,
 Bai Ratanbai Tata Bldg, S. V.
 Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 31
Eruch Ardeshir Mehta (80),
 Karim Bldg, Grant Rd,
 400007; May 31
Ruby Nariman Nallaseth (65),
 Mayfair Hse, Little Gibbs Rd,
 Malabar Hill, 400006; May 31
Piroj Darabshaw Bilimoria
 (75), Dhun Villa, Malcolim
 Bldg, Jogeshwari (W),
 400102; June 1

Shireen Dosoo Jeejeebhoy
 (79), South Ville, 106, N.
 Parekh Rd, Colaba, 400005;
 June 1
Bano Minoo Pavri (75), 63,
 Mumtaz Manzil, Wodehouse
 Rd, Colaba, 400005; June 1
Jal Framroz Barucha (83),
 B/8, Princess St, 400002;
 June 3
Mehru Behram Contractor
 (87), Hormuzd Mans, Opp
 Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo, 400007;
 June 3
Nargish Dhanjishaw Medhora
 (76), C/o Dhanjishaw
 Medhora, Parsi Students'
 Hostel, 8, Gamadia Clny,
 Tardeo, 400007; June 3
Phiroze Darabshaw Pundole
 (79), A/21, United Chmbs,
 347, Maulana Shaukat Ali Rd,
 400007; June 3
Yezdi Savaksha Chandana
 (74), 21, Dubash Bldg, Old
 Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
 400007; June 4
Shirin Keikobad Elavia (87),
 E/14, Shapur Bldg, V. P. Rd,
 400004; June 6
Shekufeh Farshid Yazdani
 (32), 1/31, Sangam Bldg, Opp
 Century Bazar, Worli,
 400025; June 6

Framroze Ardeshir Boomla
 (85), Holland Hse, S. B. Rd,
 400039; June 7
Homai Tehmul Bulsara (82),
 Palia Mans, 622, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; June 7
Narges Darabsha Kapadia
 (79), Chaman Chmbs 4, 1st
 Marine St, 400002; June 7
Dolat Keki Khambatta (82), 8,
 Sea-shell, Perry Rd, Bandra,
 400050; June 7
Pheroze Rustomjee Bharucha
 (100), The Homestead, 6,
 Kashibai Navarange Rd, New
 Gamdevi, 400007; June 8
Shirin Phiroze Bharucha (85),
 Homi Hall, Deolali, 422401;
 June 8
Fali Behramji Gordon (68),
 Plot no 5, Above Grant Rd P.
 O., Sleater Rd, 400007; June 8
Mani Erach Irani (73), Rustom
 Court, Worli, 400025; June 8
Bamansha Byramsha
Pardiwalla (80), 15,
 Safoorabai Manzil, Wadia St,
 Tardeo, 400034; June 8
Eruch Jal Writer (75), Dinu
 Villa, 631, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 8
Piloo Sorabji Captain (82),
 Central Bldg no 1, Bomanji
 Master Rd, 400002; June 9

Bapai Bomansha Khan (79),
 B-1, Triputi Apts, Warden Rd,
 400026; June 9
Allan Rustomji Chiniwala
 (76), C/5, Rustom Bldg,
 Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
 June 10
Jaiji Nusserwanji Patel (112),
 A/4, S. B. Bharucha Bldg, S.
 V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;
 June 10
Jerbai Jehangirji Talavia
 (95), B/9/204, Brahmand Face
 3, Azad Ngr, Thane (W),
 400601; June 10
Hilla Cawas Bharucha (86), 5,
 East and West Court, Colaba
 Causeway, 400039; June 11
Pesi Khurshedji Bulsara (74),
 Mishra Bhavan, Wadia St,
 Tardeo, 400034; June 12
Lim Ardeshir Dumasia (70),
 M-13, S. B. Bharucha Bldg,
 S. V. Rd, Andheri (W),
 400058; June 12
Zubin Savak Mogal (30), L-2,
 62, Cama Park, Cama Rd,
 Andheri (W), 400058; June 12
Sorab Ardeshir MullaPhiroze
 (84), A, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd,
 400087; June 12
Boman Kaikhushroo Shroff
 (85), 53, Mistry Park, B.
 Desai Rd, 400026; June 12



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Dinshaw Jehangir Antia (73), Ajay Niwas, 443, Girgaum Rd, 400002; June 14
Phiroze Sorabji Devitre (80), 6, Divecha Bldg, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 14
Dhunjai Navalshaw Driver (80), Room no 5, Cama Bldg, Murzban Clny, 22, Gilder Lane, 400008; June 14
Goolbanoo Boman Irani (69), Room no 35, Maneckji Petit Charity Trust Bldg, Mody St, Fort, 400001; June 14
Kaikhshru Dhunjishaw Mehta (89), 215, R. K. Mans (Amroliwalla Bldg), N. M. Joshi Marg, 400013; June 14
Roshan Keki Raghina (77), Lady Dorab Tata Bldg no 1, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; June 14
Adi Behram Sagar (68), 9, Colaba Chmbs, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; June 15
Nargish Behramshah Dhabhar (78), 406, Alankar Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 16
Jer Tirandaz Iranpur (68), A-20, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar

Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 16
Aloo Behramshaw Mistry (80), 53, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Stn (E), 400007; June 16
Noshir Cawasji Engineer (88), R3/3, Sunder Ngr, S. V. Rd, Malad (W), 400064; June 17
Eduji Pirosha Ghaswala (78), Jame Jamshed Bldg, 811, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 17
Jahangir Rustamji Kapadiya (88), C/o B. A. Daruwala, Dinshaw Bldg, Dhunbaiwadi Dhuswadi, Vile Parle (W), 400056; June 17
Khorshed Sarosh Zorabi (Tafti) (84), At Post Mankiwali, Tal Khalapur, 410202; June 17
Adi J. Bode (90), 86/K, Bhadwar Park, Railway Clny, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; June 18
Pervez Rustomji Commissariat (52), 310, Panchal Ngr Co-op Hsg Soc, Nilemore Rd, Nallasopara (W); June 19
Firoz Faramroz Elavia (69), 11/16, Tata Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; June 19
Homai Eruch Khargamwalla (81), Pehelvi Bldg, 315,

Lamington Rd, 400007; June 19
Rati Noshir Mistry (72), Ahunavar, 617, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 19
Mehroo Erachsha Panthaki (79), 598 A, Wadia Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; June 19
Homai Purvez Bhiwandiwala (81), Gemfrina, 630, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 21
Najoo Cali Daruwala (82), Doctor Engineer Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; June 21
Banoobai Framroz Wadia (92), 609, Singapori Bldg, J. Shankershetth Rd, 400002; June 21
Navazbai Pallonji Hilloona (87), Koka Sadan, Sopari Baug, Parel, 400012; June 22
Kaikhshru Hormesji Vajifdar (95), 2, Doctor Daji Bldg, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 22
Rustom Sheriarji Zarolia (66), 403, Rizvi Palace, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 22
Sheroo Kavashah Anklesaria (77), 20, Malbari Bldg, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 23

Dhunjishaw Fardoon Garda (90), B-9, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 23
Dosabhai Jamshedji Daver (92), New Khan Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; June 24
Dolly Minoo Kasad (57), Room no 12, Petit Widows' Chawl, Thakurdwar, 400002; June 24
Homai Nariman Katgara (81), Sai-Ashish, 31-32, Tertulian Rd, Off Peter Dias Rd, Bandra 400050; June 24
Shavak Jehangirji Kheshwala (70), B-305, Kailash Apts, 293, Bellasis Rd, 400008; June 24
Roshan Ardeshtir Kolah (61), 2, Noor-E-Rahmat, 59, B. J. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; June 24
Tehmurasp Bhikhaji Andhyarujina (75), The Reward, Next to Ganga Jamuna Theater, Tardeo, 400007; June 25
Freny Bejonji Panthaky (71), 19/2, New Wadia Bldg, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 25
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Rusi Darabshaw Mody (81), 14-B, Vijay Bhavan, St Sebastian Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 27
Thirity Percy Avari (70), B-20, Tardeo Chmbs, Avabai Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; June 28

Dhunjisha Pirojsha Ratnagar (85), C-20, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 29

Bomanshaw Darabshaw Patel (86), Meherbai Wadia Bldg, 764-D, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 30

Sarosh Bomanshaw Patel (49), 73, Piroja Villa, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 30

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 Dandiwalla, 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
Homai Dosabhai Jila, mother of Zarin Gimi, Homi, Behram and Khorshed Davar; May 22

POONA

DIED

Dolly Pallonje Mistry (74), Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; April 5

Homayun Gustad Yazdegardi (75), C-1/21-22, Brahma Baug, Mundhwa, 411036; April 12

Roshan Sam Khansaheb (76), 20, Banu Apts, D. M. Rd, 411001; April 15
Maneck Jeebhoy Ghayara

(84), 19/D, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; April 16

Goolbanu Sorabji Bharucha (82), E/2, Gita Soc, Synagogue St, 411001; April 28
Homi Merwan Irani (76), 21, Empress Gardens, Sopan Baug, 411001; April 29
Ardeshir Gustad Lawyer (74), Priyadarshini, Koregaon Park, 411001; May 4
Erucl Ardeshir Patel (86), 24, Pushpak Soc, Kalyaninagar, 411014; May 5
Shenaz Boman Irani (47), 63, St Patrick's Town, 411013; May 17

Homi Muluk Irani (71), 7, Napier Rd, 411040; May 19
Dara Phirojeshah Antia (84), A-7, Ashoka Apts, Naylor Rd, 411001; May 24
Nergish Behram Irani (73), 3, Mody Clny, Synagogue St, 411001; May 31

SECUNDERABAD

MARRIED

Nazneen Murzban Umrigar and *Homiyar Sam Debara*; February 26
Farahnaz A. Jami and *Kaizer D. Billimoria*; June 25

DIED

Parinbanoo Bomanshaw Patel (86); March 3
Shirin G. Wadia (79); April 17
Fareed J. Italia (57); April 24
Shirin R. Vakshur (71); May 10
Gool Phiroz Chenoy; May 18

SURAT

DIED

Rusibhai Jehangirji Anklesaria (75), Pinakin Apt, Nanpura, 395001; May 10
Jamshedji Hormasji Katpitia (84), Machhlipith, Shahpore, 395003; May 21
Najoo Jesi Patel (72), Parsiwad, Village Adajan, Dist Surat; May 21
Jhanbux Framroz Dastoor (72), 1, Sahkar Ngr, Magdalla Rd, Post Althan, Udhana, 394210; May 26
Noshir Pirojshaw Bhathena (65), Dangore St, Nanpura, 395001, June 6
Jalejar Ardeshir Daver (61), Kavina St, Vanki Bordi, 395003; June 15
Rusi Maneckji Wadia (82), Narimaq Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; June 16
Dadiba Eruchshaw Gandhi (86), Nagoriwad, Sayedpura,

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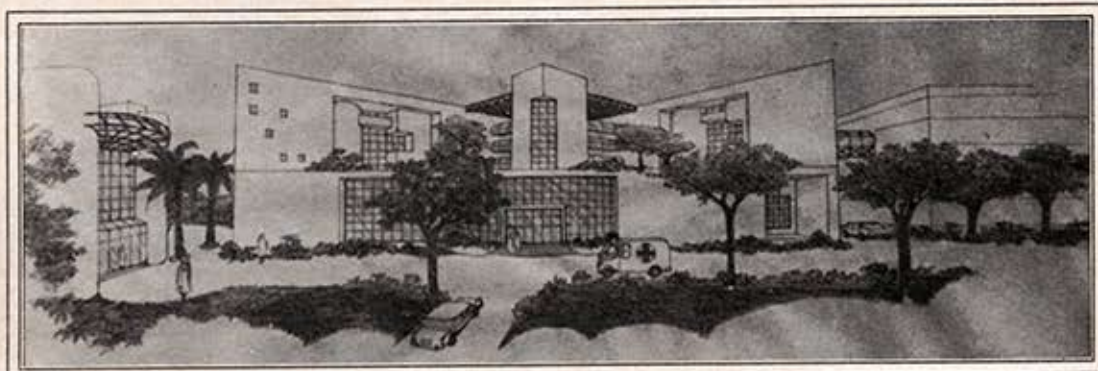
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CANADA
Ontario**BORN**

A boy, *Thomas William Firoze*, to *Yasmin* and *Randy Clark* in Toronto; April 27
A girl, *Alisha Farah*, to *Persis* and *Cyrus Banker* in Oakville; May 4

DIED

Minoo Eruchshaw Treasurywala (81), husband of *Coomi* and father of *Anaita* and *Adi* in Toronto; February 18

Quebec**MARRIED**

Shirin Palkhivala and *Fram Petit* in Montreal; June 26

PAKISTAN**Karachi****DIED**

Jimmy Mehta, father of *Delna Minwalla*; April 13

USA**California****BORN**

A girl, *Reanna*, to *Farah* and *Khushroo Unwalla* in Highland; January 29

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*								
	Bombay			India			World	
	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o	This issue	1998*
BIRTHS								
Boys	16	116	42	1	3	6	2	51
Girls	12	92	41	—	5	2	3	35
MARRIAGES								
Parsi	13	262	127	2	15	6	1	19
INTERCOMMUNAL								
Males married out	—	63	9	—	1	—	—	2
Females married out	—	56	4	—	1	—	—	9
DEATHS								
CONSIGNED								
Males	89	481	254	15	125	54	4	55
Females	94	513	264	16	115	41	—	47
CREMATED								
Males	—	11	2	—	—	—	—	—
Females	1	7	2	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1998 (January 1998-July-August 1999 issues)
^oRunning totals for 1999 (January 1999-July-August 1999 issues)
 Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have a breakup of those cremated.
 *These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

Georgia**BORN**

A boy, *Ruzan*, to *Bakhtavar* and *Hushe-dar Dariwalla*; April 1

Illinois**DIED**

Nariman Jokhy (82), husband of *Rati* and father of *Aban* and *Pervez* in Peoria; March 4

Texas**BORN**

A girl, *Madison Kate*, to *Maynaz* and *Matthew Olson* in Houston; June 25

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

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An anjuman asset

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Aspi Merwan Irani, 74, president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA) and vice president of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO)-India, on March 19, 1999 in Bombay following cardiac arrest.

Irani's "very valuable services as trustee, vice president and president of the Anjuman extending over 14 years," were recorded in the condolence resolution adopted at the working committee meeting of the IZA. "His guidance for such a long period had helped the Anjuman in various ways," continued the resolution commending his "ever willingness to attend to the work of the Anjuman whenever the same (was) placed before him."

"Very conscientious" and "an asset to the Anjuman" was how IZA vice president Zal K. Eranee viewed the president. "He saw to it that he attended all the meetings of the Anjuman even at the cost of his health and work, unless he was out of Bombay," added Eranee. At the executive council meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India too Irani was among the most regular members who had recently been elected treasurer. At its last meeting in Bombay on June 12, 1999 the Federation observed a two-minute silence in his memory.

When speaking at the condolence meeting convened by the WZO in joint honor of Rohinton Chinoy and Irani, Marazban Patrawala, member of the National Minorities Commission gave Irani credit for taking up matters at the senior level when Iranian Zoroastrian students were being deported from India. He even went up to Rajiv Gandhi and ultimately saw to it that the deportation was halted. Lands in Palghar and Marker Manzil in Lonavla being valuable properties owned by the IZA, Irani would make personal visits to the sites to keep himself abreast of the latest developments, stated Eranee.

At the last World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran, Irani had represented the Bombay-based IZA. "Full of life, optimistic, cheerful and gregarious, he lived life to the fullest," remarked Eranee. Another characteristic of Irani which had endeared him to his colleagues and juniors was his humility. He showed great consideration for his staff members and was always willing to take up their cause, believing that charity begins at home. The poor and needy who approached him knew he had a soft corner for the economically weaker section.

"He never used his office to grant any out-of-turn favors," recalls his elder daughter Phiroza Tafti who says that she knew very little about his community involvement, and that too often from outside sources, her father preferring to maintain a low profile. She recalled though that her father's firm, Aspi Irani, reputed as engineers and contractors, had made a humble beginning from their then residence at Ghoga Street, Fort. Over the years he had built up a reputation whilst building factories for Bombay Dyeing, Morarji Mills and others, and undertaking some residential constructions like the new building at Cusrow Baug and Daisylea on Mount Pleasant Road.

"It is indeed sad to lose a person who has been so closely associated with Bombay Dyeing over the last few decades," remarked the company's marketing manager Ness N. Wadia in his condolence letter to the family. "I spent many an evening just sitting and talking about work and life with him. I will miss his wisdom dearly," he added.

At Udvada, Irani was instrumental in building Spenta and Phiroz Ghar, affordable residential complexes for Zoroastrians. He was also known to be "a great devotee of the holy fire in Udvada," recalled WZO president Dadi Engineer at the condolence meeting. Every

Behram *roz* he would visit the Iranshah until two years ago when he suffered a paralytic stroke and subsequently suffered from an enlarged heart which necessitated a slowdown in his activities. "But he did not like living life that way," observed Tafti who convinced him to wind up his firm which he was in the process of doing in March 1999.

With his elder daughter based in Dahanu and his younger daughter Tanaaz Timblo settled in Goa, most of Irani's trips in later years were to these destinations although travelling was once a passion for him. There was a time however when every school holiday the family would be touring different parts of India, "nothing exotic," clarifies Tafti, but covering distances by road and staying in affordable boarding houses.

Known to be a conservative, at his *paidust*, his younger daughter who has married out of the community sat not in the main bungli at Doongerwadi but in the adjoining room, mentions Tafti. And while he had great faith in the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion, he also believed in Kamu Baba and realized the inevitability of changing with the times and accepting his daughter's decision to marry a non-Parsi.

"He was a very strict father," according to the elder daughter who learnt the reason only later when she was in college. He too was very naughty as a child and was in and out of several schools, she was told — Cathedral and John Connon, the boarding school in Deolali, finally completing his schooling from St Xavier's in Bombay. Subsequently he graduated in civil engineering from the Poona University and was employed with Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Private Limited for some years. He then set up a partnership firm, Antia and Irani, with Khurshed Antia and when his partner chose to move to Dubai, Irani branched out on his own in 1969, mentions Tafti.

"A silent person who got things done," was the tribute paid to him by Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Rustom Tirandaz which aptly sums up Irani's nature.

Irani is survived by his wife Katie and daughters Phiroza Tafti and Tanaaz Timblo.



Irani: ever obliging

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Press, prayers, projects

Died: Rohinton Pervaz Chinoy, 49, proprietor of Union Press and joint honorary secretary of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO)-India, on March 5, 1999 at Bombay following cardiac arrest.

"Every time you open a prayer book in an agiary, remember him," urged Dadi Engineer, president of WZO-India, at a condolence meeting convened under the joint auspices of the WZO and The Navsari Parsi Association on April 1, 1999. Known to be religious, Chinoy had continued with the Union Press' tradition of printing *Avesta* prayer books in English and Gujarati without looking at its financial viability. Their calendars too, synchronizing the Shahenshahi and Kadmi *roz* with the Gregorian dates were popular among community members.

As proprietor of India's oldest existing commercial printing establishment, on the occasion of the 140th anniversary of the Press in 1997, Chinoy had been felicitated by the Karnataka State Printers Association in Bangalore. To coincide with their 140th-year celebrations Chinoy had announced his plans to distribute free copies of the *Khordeh Avesta* to all the fire-temples in India.

"He was a dynamic, lively and very loving personality in the printing fraternity and we at Mumbai Mudrak Sangh have lost a jewel," noted president Ram Desai in the March issue of *Print Bulletin*, the journal of the Mumbai Mudrak Sangh. Chinoy had also served as honorary joint secretary of the All India Federation of Master Printers.

The fifth generation from the family to take over the reins of Union Press, "he entered the business as an inexperienced young man full of enthusiasm and soon picked up the intricacies of the trade and his hunger to acquire technical knowledge was fantastic...Soon he realized

that the only way to survive in the business was to adopt new technology...The changeover clearly showed that Rohinton had a vision and foresight much ahead of some of the stalwarts in the printing industry," remarked N. R. Patel, past president of the Mumbai Mudrak Sangh.



Chinoy: Pioneering and expanding
Photo: Chetan Mistry

"In business he was constantly innovating, pioneering and expanding. He would be so involved in his work that he would neglect food and rest. Alone, he used to work till late in the night," wrote Noshir Dadrawala who considered him an elder brother "always by my side...in times of distress." Dadrawala also referred to Chinoy's sense of humor and his zest for the good things in life, preferring to count his blessings than his calories!

Every Behram *roz* he was invariably at Udvada, dutifully paying his respects to the Iranshah. "God has helped me at all times. He has given me more than what I wanted," he had told *Parsiana* in an interview (see "Chinoy's pressing role," February-March 1997). It was at Udvada that he was keen to start a lodging house to provide affordable accommodation for 24 hours to poor Zoroastri-

ans interested in praying at the Atash Behram there as also introducing a cheap local conveyance facility. At Udvada too he was involved in one of his many social welfare projects — distributing foodgrain to the poor households in the vicinity. Not only the destitute in Udvada but the widows at Lalbaug, the hapless

for whom he printed invitations free of cost, the young entrepreneurs as also the sportsmen of the community, the many trusts and organizations which felt free to use his premises...will miss his presence.

"More than 90 percent of the Zoroastrians of the world have been touched by Rohinton Chinoy," declared Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Rustom Tirandaz at the condolence meeting recalling his warmhearted personality. "We at the WZO miss him very sadly," mentioned Engineer giving his reasons: His address was available for WZO correspondence; tickets for their functions would be sold at Union Press; all managing committee meetings were held at the Press premises when Chinoy played host. For the Navsari Parsi Association too, Union Press was their official address, stated president Burjor Antia who described Chinoy as a "great worker of our community...He was everywhere." He loaned his premises at Wadala for use by the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, said BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly. "He was interested in the working of the Parsi Punchayet and could one day have been a trustee of the BPP," noted BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder.

He was "deeply dedicated to the Lions movement and (was) committed to furthering various ongoing service projects for the betterment of society," noted an obituary write-up in honor of Chinoy who had worked as secretary of

Shah Behram Baug Society

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Chinoy who had worked as secretary of the Lions Club of Byculla for the year 1998-99. With the Freemasonic and Giants movement too Chinoy had maintained ties.

Being burdened with several responsibilities he was always in a tearing hurry to fulfil his duties and Chinoy had acknowledged the good managerial counsel of Tamboly who used to continuously goad him to adopt a slower pace. "He never joined any organization without a purpose," revealed his elder daughter Meher. "He died as he had lived: speedily, suddenly and without any fuss."

On the day of his unexpected death, *mah* Meher, *roz* Meher, the family were to move into their new house at Dadar's Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony. As noted a communiqué from wife Dinaz, daughters Meher and Kainaz, "While Rohinton's passing away so suddenly has left us all shocked and in grief, we his family members also recognize that the responsibility of continuing his work and fulfilling all his dreams now rests on us..."

After his initial study at the Antonio D'Silva High School, Chinoy had matriculated from the Dadar Parsee Youths Assembly High School. He then proceeded to the Government Institute of Printing Technology for higher studies. Viewing himself as "a product of Nowroz Baug," he continued to maintain his ties with the residents there who convened a condolence meeting on March 14 under the joint auspices of the Nowroz Baug Play Centre and the N. N. Wadia Welfare League. As was recalled at the meeting, he started his social activities by taking up various responsibilities as managing committee member and joint honorary secretary of the N. N. Wadia Welfare League including conducting educational tours and sports tournaments. Sports activities continued to be dear to him and there were many competitions and athletic meets within the community where Union Press had associated itself as a sponsor.

To Chinoy, a conservative at heart, events that contributed to the community's well-being were worthy of encouragement. As the good samaritan had told *Parsiana*, "Anything good I can do for the community, I'm available."

Chinoy is survived by his mother Perinbanoo, wife Dinaz, and daughters Meher and Kainaz.

P. M. G.

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 26

ing Marathi medium. The lessons in the Quest program fit under the topic "Value-Based Education Policy" of the government. The program has been implemented in many schools in south Bombay like The Alexandra Girls' English Institution and Panday Girls' High School.

For further information contact Roshan M. Master on 2046526/3082994.

ROSHAN MASTER

More on Marker

When East Timor, a part of Indonesia, was in the news over the issue of granting it autonomy, I had witnessed on television a CNN presenter in the Q&A - Asia series asking Mr Jamsheed Marker questions on East Timor. Mr Marker looked like a soft-spoken man in his sixties. He was introduced as the United Nations' Secretary General's personal envoy. It is an honor that Mr Marker, a Parsi, should hold such a highly trusted post.

Who is Marker? Where does he live?

Will any of your readers throw light on the above questions and also give a life-sketch of him?

BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA

The Editor replies

Jamsheed Marker has at various times been Pakistan's ambassador to the United States and the United Nations and has represented his country on the Security Council. He lives in the US.

Whither, Parsiana?

To improve the readability of your magazine please introduce interesting columns which our youngsters can enjoy.

Please also incorporate columns which bring in contributions from readers. This we feel can boost the circulation. The increase in the subscription rate also makes us think twice before subscribing.

R. M. DAVAR

The Editor replies

While we may not have a column exclusively devoted to the youth, we are always keen to feature their accomplishments in our columns.

Despite our subscription base being limited, *Parsiana* has never stinted in giving coverage to community events be it a Federation meeting in Indore or a Youth Congress in the UK or a World Congress in Tehran.

We have increased the number of editorial pages per issue both for color and black and white. In 1998 we intro-

duced a calendar giving the Shahen-shahi, Kadmi and Fasli rozs. This has also added to our costs. Readers will appreciate that to cover the costs of publishing a professional community journal we have no option but to raise our subscription and advertising rates. Only 37 percent (Rs 12.58 lakhs) of our income is derived from subscription. Hence the subscription rate is subsidized by advertising (60 percent of our income, Rs 20.4 lakhs) and donations (three percent, Rs 1.02 lakhs).

J. R. D. Tata's abode

J. R. D. Tata was among the top few influential decision makers of the world. He headed the powerful Tata organization with a turnover running into several crores of rupees. Apart from this, he was a pioneer in Indian aviation and supported any worthwhile national cause based on family planning or scientific research and education.

On a number of occasions, his group built prestigious flats and houses in India so that from the rent received they could support the fine arts.

He preferred to stay in a rented house called Cairns in the posh Altamount Road locality for 50 long years. This 100-year-old two-storeyed bungalow was built on a 4,700 sq m plot. Its 15 rooms provided a panoramic view of south Bombay. Unfortunately it is about to be destroyed very soon because it is in shambles.

Now that he is no more, our nation pays no heed to repairing his bungalow. This prestigious bungalow should be converted into a historical monument in memory of J. R. D. Tata.

DINSHAW D. NATERWALLA

CLARIFICATION

In response to our report "When Sam came to Sanjan" (*Parsiana*, January 1999) where it was mentioned that the call to sing *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarhoshti* was overruled, one of our readers Behram Rustomji sent us a letter (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, May 1999) stressing on the importance of singing this song. Rati Wadia who was the master of ceremonies on the occasion has clarified that the call to sing *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarhoshti* was not overruled. The gathering happily sung this all-time favorite, after which the function concluded with the national anthem.

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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