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Parsiana

July-August 1998
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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Reach the inner fire"

This has reference to Ms Perin Divecha's comment, "Reach the inner fire" (*Parsiana*, February-March 1998).

Divecha appears to have heard me on Radio 4 on July 6, 1997 stating, "I am not ashamed to say that I worship fire."

To begin with, I must clarify that representatives of a British radio station did interview me at the time of the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London in order to have my views on Parsi philanthropy, a subject I have been studying and involved with for the past 18 years. My views on religious issues were sought only in passing. While I have not heard the interview on radio and do not know whether the interview was carried in full or only excerpts, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify why I am not ashamed to say that I worship fire.

At the most simplistic level, I see fire as the physical symbol of "light and life."

It dispels darkness and ignorance and has the inherent quality to animate or bring to life the various creations of Ahura Mazda. To this physical symbol of light and life, I am as a Zoroastrian always respectful. At the ethical level, I am aware that Ardibehesht Ameshaspand (Ameshaspands are seen both as archangels and energies/ethical extensions of Ahura Mazda) doctrinally presides over fire. Ardibehesht is Asha Vahishta or the best righteousness/best truth/holiness.

In other words, at an ethical level, I perceive fire as the living embodiment of Ahura Mazda's truth and righteousness which I am not at all ashamed to worship.

Finally, at a mystical level, when I am in a state of ritual purity and spiritual ecstasy praying before a duly consecrated fire of an agiary or atash behram, I find that the fire helps me attune myself to divinity. You could say the spiritual energy of the consecrated fire attunes me to the divine energies operating in this universe. In my moment of prayer, the fire energies operating within myself, the spiritual energy of the consecrated fire and the divine energies operating within the universe, all become one.

An exercise of this nature helps one develop a wholeness of character — one that extends beyond the confines of the lesser self to a greater self which coexists in harmony with the living essence of the universe.

Yes, indeed, with this intellectual awareness, ethical understanding and spiritual consciousness, I repeat, "I am not ashamed to say that I worship fire."

NOSHIR H. DADRAWALA

"Together, to the..."

The WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) had nothing to do with the split in the community in the United Kingdom ("Together, to the..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 1998). Just because three members of the previous ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) committee were members of the WZO committee does not ipso facto imply that WZO was "antithetical." Arnavaz Mama has made an assumption which is totally wrong and misleading and one that she should not have made and stated. SHAHPUR CAPTAIN

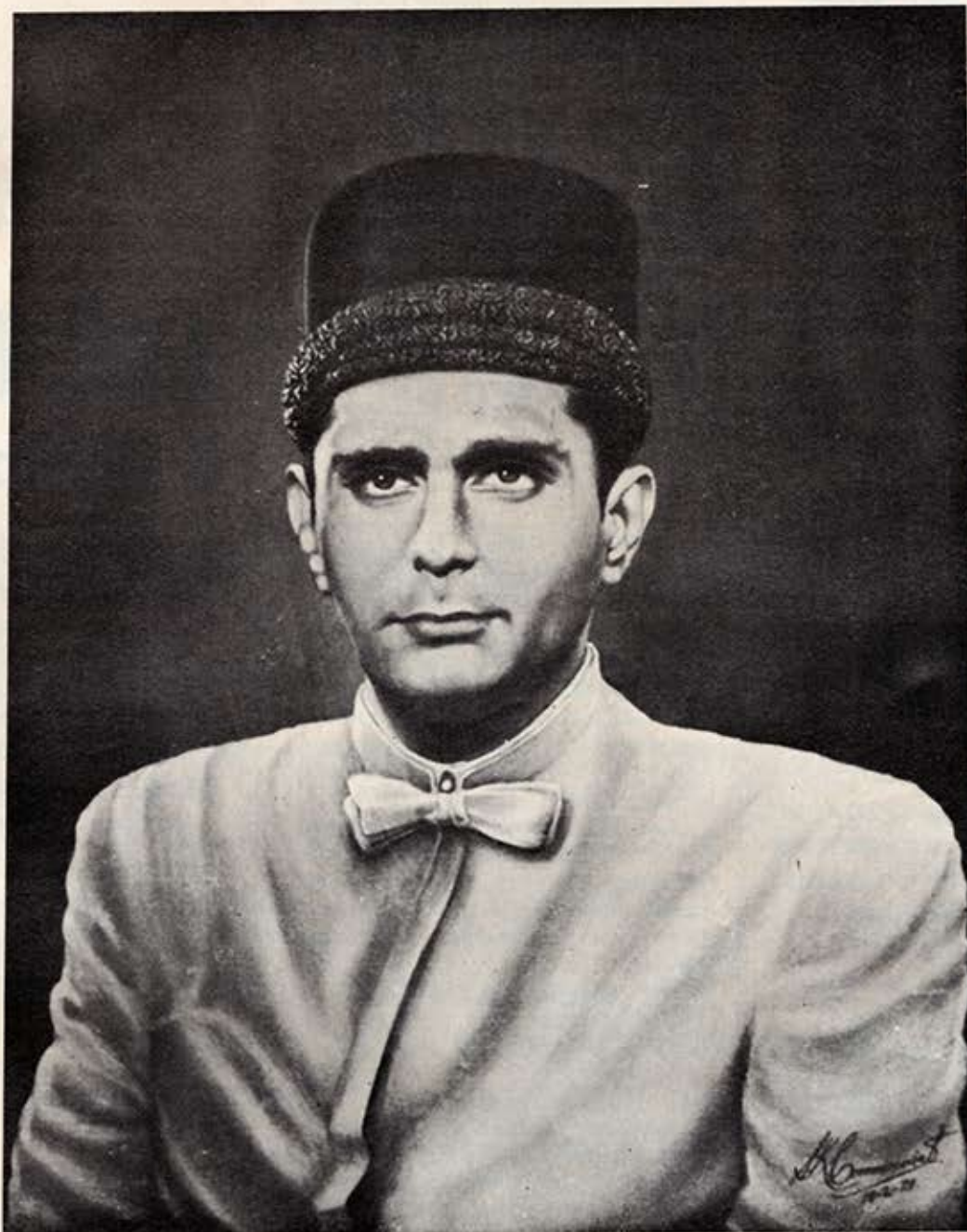
Chairman, The World Zoroastrian Organisation, London

It is always an unwelcome surprise when we see *Parsiana* unquestioningly print balderdash in the name of religiosity, whether to do with the calendar or conversion and whatever comes in between. Surely, it is not beyond the competence of your editorial board to distinguish between formulations based on facts and opinions based on deliberate fiction? You could thereby fulfil your appointed function of an informative and progressive journal and save us all the needless ping-pong of unnecessary correspondence engendered by disinformation fed through your reportage.

Dr P. D. Sunavala has a habit of being right, and his letter concerning the so-called Fasli calendar ("Together, to the..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 1998) is no exception. Mr Mistree and his acolytes may have succeeded in abolishing the seasons on the subcontinent, but they cannot dismiss the hard evidence of our texts on the question of the religious calendar. Not only are the months tied up in threes with the seasons, but they are irrevocably bound up with the zodiacal constellations and, would you believe, with shadows!

Thus Fravardin, Ardibehesht and Khordad are the spring months traditionally attached to the constellations Aries/Warrag, Taurus/Gaw and Gemini/Do-pahikar; Tir, Amardad and Shah-revar — the summer months — with Cancer/Karzang, Leo/Shagr and Virgo/Kanizag; Mihr, Aban and Adar — the three autumn months — with Libra/Tarazug, Scorpio/Gazdum and Sagittarius/Nem-asp; lastly, the three winter months of Din, Vohuman/Bahman and Spandarmad with Capricorn/Wahig, Aquarius/Dol and Pisces/Mahig.

One cannot dislodge the time and order of these central constellations to accommodate either the erroneous Kadmi or Shehenshahi calendars, though in due course allowance will have to be made for the precession of the equinoxes to commence the year with Pisces. At present the Kadmi system forces Fravardin onto Leo/Shagr, and the Shehenshahi does that to Virgo/Kanizag. It is clear that neither astral lore (astrology) nor astral law (astronomy) is being satisfied, nor does one need reminding that the Zoroastrian calendar is a solar one, and the seasons, in whichever hemisphere Zo-



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roastrians settle, are wholly dependent upon the position of the sun in the zodiac. It is therefore irrelevant whether there are two seasons or four in India, or even none as per the ingenious Mr Mistree.

It is indeed the angular position of the sun at the various times of the year which enabled the learned scribe Ervad-zade Mihraban-i Kaikhosrow under the eye of his instructor Ervad Peshotan-i Ram to compile the measurements of the noonday shadows cast in Yazd by a fixed gnomon, and place these in chapter 21 of our ritualistic text, the *Shayast ne-shayast*. The shortest shadow is thrown when the sun is in Cancer/Karzang (June 19 — July 18) — on midsummer day during the month of Tir; the longest is during Capricorn/Wahig (December 16 — January 14) in the month of Din. It is no accident that the two astronomically signposted gambhars, the midsummer *Maidhyo-shema* (the very word means midsummer!) and the *Maidhyairya* ("midwinter") originally divided the year seasonally, but for poor seasonless India, according to the position of the sun and the shadows cast by it.

Mr Mistree sought refuge in a wholly facile chronological argument that the Fasli calendar, as the Iranians have it, has its apparent chronological genesis in another religion. When the founding dynast of the Islamic Pahlavi dynasty in Iran reestablished the Zoroastrian months, the Faslis prudently allowed the anno Hegirae into their solar computations. It therefore has its true genesis in prudence and common sense, and not in Islam. The Indian Faslis saw no need for any compromise and quite rightly opted for the accession year of the last Zoroastrian monarch, His Imperial Majesty Yazdgird III Shahryar. It must be stressed that this is solely a matter of chronology and not of calendrical moment.

The incorrect observation of the Rapithwin *gah* has been noted before. It should be observed from the vernal equinox (as per our religious commentaries) on Hormazd or Ardibehesht *roj* of Fravardin month, and not on August 22 or 24 when it should be got ready for its disappearance after the autumn equinox, on Anaghran *roj* of Mihr *mah* (October 16). So much for Kadmi and Shehensahi logic! India is no stranger to the concept of Rapithwin: since Vedic times it has observed the Uttarayana

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and the Dakshinayana. Similar considerations affect the advent of the anxious Fravashis during the greatly delayed 10 muktad days. The year has been allowed to steadily drift backwards (not ahead, as per Dr Sunavala) through negligence and a casual attitude towards the perpetuation of an error of omission. There is certainly no religious sanction for carelessness! One should further note that the gambhars being seasonal feasts, are also being wrongly observed. The offering, for instance, of the rich mid-spring butter in the Maidhyoizaremaya festival would, it is respectfully suggested, become quite rancid if presented in early September or October instead of, as intended, in early May. Just think of the fate which would similarly await Alfonso mangoes! The entire system is thrown into a vast and unnecessary turmoil through sheer cussedness!

The fact that the Fasli system marches in step with the solar year through the intercalation of one day every four years has thrown up another irrational fear. What prayers should be said for this awkward additional day? Given the extensive repertory of our ever inventive priesthood, surely it is no great effort to devise appropriate offerings for the Awardadsal *gah*? What most readily springs to mind is the wonderfully all-embracing *Haptanhaiti Yasna*. Not for nothing is it called the "prose *Gatha*," and while Zarathushtra may not have composed it, he certainly would not have objected to its use in bringing much-needed conformity and order (that, after all, is what Asha is about!) to a quite chaotic system of time measurement which is neither solar nor stellar, and certainly should not be lunar. Will our stagnationists ever learn to stop their perennial obstructive tactics and get on with the renovative task of proudly carrying the Zoroastrian torch aloft into the 21st century? One always lives in hope! FARROKH VAJIFDAR

London

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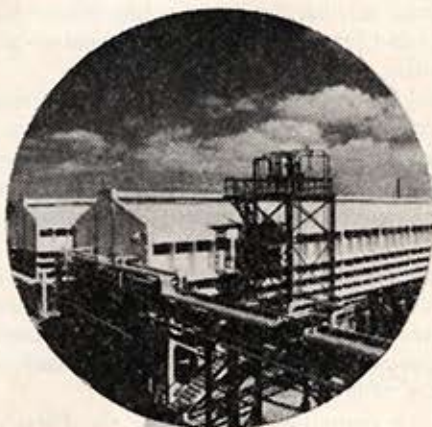
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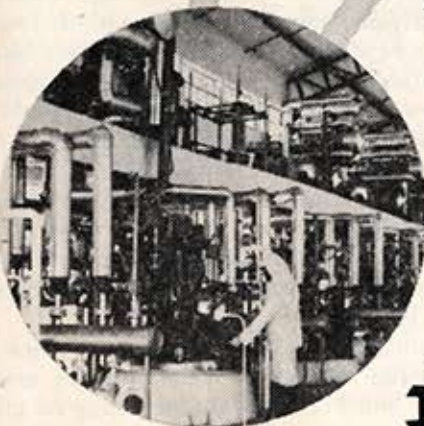
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had followed the British e.g. Aden, East Africa, Ceylon and China (where the British were not involved). Our numbers have also dwindled.

An agiary is a costly institution unlike some other religious institution which, once erected, can be left to itself — unattended. What worries me is the large number of agiaries in small towns: in Bharuch (with a population of about 300 Parsis) we have six agiaries; in Surat (with a population of about 2,500 Parsis), we have two atash behrams plus nine agiaries. In Bombay (with a population of 50,000 Parsis) there are believed to be 44 agiaries plus four atash behrams.

Even for the smallest agiary, we need firewood worth about Rs 100 a day. Fairly frequently, we all receive appeals from the trustees of the agiaries for extensive repairs to be done to the holy institutions which are in a state of disrepair. It is high time a serious study is undertaken by the local anjumans, whether for a place like Bharuch we need six agiaries and for Surat, nine agiaries, and even for Bombay, 44 agiaries.

No legal norms can be laid down about how many agiaries there can be and within what radial distance because the parameters applicable to Bombay will not apply anywhere else in the country. But through an intra-anjuman and inter-anjuman (and/or various trusts administering these agiaries) understanding, new decisions can be reached about which agiaries can be merged, in the largest interest of the community. Some of the agiaries can be merged, after due judicial processes are completed so that we conserve our community's resources and divert resultant savings towards education and medicare principally.

With a dwindling population, the Parsi community's priorities have got to shift and change. That is the key to an intelligent survival.

Tending fire needs a lot of money, which is getting scarcer in the community because we have lost our position as a prime trading community of the east. We have got to refashion our priorities, without passion, but with no loss of devotion.

B. T. DASTUR

Understand your prayers

Today many Zoroastrians are busy with their own affairs and think it is enough to put on a sudreh and tie a kusti. Their example is followed by their children. Is it not necessary to impress on their young minds the teaching of our Prophet? They should not be taught to fear God. They must feel that God is very kind and generous and wishes us to live an honest life with good words, good thoughts and good deeds. Our every Nyaish and Yasht begins with the para "Az humah ghuna... papatet hom." Children should know the meaning of these words and follow them. If not a law, a custom may be introduced that if a child does not understand the meaning of the kusti prayer, he or she cannot undergo the navjote ceremony. Some children do ask the meaning but the parents are themselves ignorant.

With all due honor to our learned dasturjis I think their precious books full of thoughts are beyond the reach of ordinary people. Small cheap books translating the prayers will perhaps help poor Parsis. Perhaps many do not know that there is a considerable number of our brothers, sisters, old and young, who have a cup of tea with very little milk and home-made chapattis before going to bed. In *Haptan Yasht* we are told to be charitable but today's well-to-do turn a blind



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Could one of your readers answer the following questions:

- Why can't we pray the *Avan Yasht* and *Nyaish* after sunset? Is it because in *Tir Yasht* we are told that a demon fights with Tir yazad under the sea water?
- Why should there be clapping in *Wanant Yasht* especially in the second part?
- Why in the *Gathas* is the 52nd ha omitted?
- Did Zarathushtis believe in *yatoos* in olden times? (black art)
- Did Zarathushtis eat meat? *Behram Yasht*, kardo 17, suggests it.

MANJEH D. BHABHA
Germany

Famous fringe Iranis

The term Irani refers to those who migrated from Iran to India after 1857 when the political climate in India had become stable. There are Iranis who came to India 1,300 years ago and landed at Sanjan and are termed Parsis. They are not being discussed here.

The Iranis, practically all, came from the province of Yazd in Iran. It is a drought affected area which encourages migration to greener pastures. The Iranis came to India some 150 years ago and became over the years bakers, restaurateurs, storekeepers, winemercants and more than half of them settled along the Dahanu, Golvad coastal strip and became chickoo farmers. This group, bakers to farmers, constitute 95 percent of the Iranis. They meet and mix together at weddings, jashans, and usually intermarry. Over the years many have lost their roots in Iran, especially the ones with Indian passports. But there are many who still hold Iranian passports (their surnames are Tafti, Nasrabadi, Zarhosti, etc) and they have ancestral homes in Iran which they visit every few years.

There are five percent of Iranis who constitute the fringe Iranis. They form a very important facet of the Irani community. These have no roots left in Iran. They usually have no family business or farm to fall back upon. They have come up in life by their own grit and determination and have reached the pinnacle of their professions. You hardly see them at general weddings or functions. They invariably or inadvertently marry Parsis or outside the community.

Some of them are:

Air Marshal Aspy Engineer (Irani), chief of Air Staff, Indian Air Force had a remarkable memory. When Abdul Nasser had come to India a second time and Nehru and Irani went to receive him at the airport, the band started playing the Egyptian national anthem. Nasser whispered into Nehru's ears. The band was immediately ordered to be disbanded. Nehru told Aspy that the band was playing the wrong national anthem, not of free democratic Egypt but of Farokh's Egypt. Aspy, being a shrewd Irani, told Nehru that the last time the band played the same national anthem Nasser did not object.

Cusrow Irani, Editor of *The Statesman*, Calcutta was one of the few editors to defy Indira Gandhi during the Emergency and was awarded the International Press Guild's Award for upholding democracy.

Dr Jehangir Irani, an 85-year-old general practitioner at the corner of Grant Road even now puts in 10 hours' stint of work at his dispensary serving the poor of the community.

Dr Jamshed Irani, managing director of Tata Steel who

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flower', with people like
you, we hope to repair the broken
petals of thousands of such
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was recently knighted was felicitated along with Nani Palkhivala. It was the prerogative of the Irani community. Perhaps they do not know how to go about it.

The main purpose of this letter is for Iranis and the Irani Anjuman to gear up and recognize their deserving members and bring them into the mainstream of the Irani community, and make them feel proud and happy that they are Iranis.

All this was inspired at the Union Press function where deserving Zoroastrian sportsmen were felicitated. We should have some more functions like this where all can mix and meet freely and come across new faces. Of course these meetings will be successful if food and hot drinks are donated by inspired donors. ZEND ZEND

Priests need partners

The World Zoroastrian Organisation and other organizations are trying their best to uplift mobeds and desire that more youths join this noble profession, look after our pious places like agiaries and atash behrams and serve our community.

But merely giving them a handsome salary will not solve the problem. How many girls are really willing to marry these mobeds? So first try to create such an atmosphere that mobeds do not remain bachelors and get married and settled in life. RUSTOM A. KOTWAL

Choksi commemorated

On April 27, 1998, the anniversary of the Panchgani dar-e-meher, a function was organized when Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar unveiled the portrait of the late Hormuzdiar D. Choksi, a leading social worker and trustee of Choksi dar-e-meher, in the presence of a large gathering.



Choksi: humble service

Mr Darab Bajina, a trustee of the dar-e-meher and N. B. Choksi Charities, paid glowing tributes to the late Hormuzdiar D. Choksi who had humbly served his community throughout his life without any self interest. A jeweller by profession, because of his various social and philanthropic activi-

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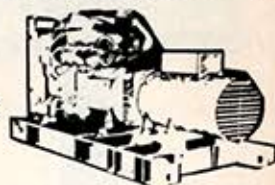
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ties as trustee of various organizations he can well be called "a jewel of our community." He also mentioned that Navsari owes a special debt to late Hormuzdiar D. Choksi and his enthusiastic wife Dinaz for creating the rural girls' home at Navsari at the instance of the late Lady Hirabai Cawasji Jehangir. This home has been providing education, boarding and lodging to poor underprivileged Parsi girls for the last 32 years.

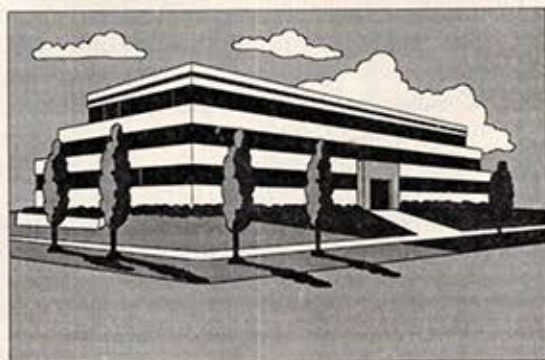
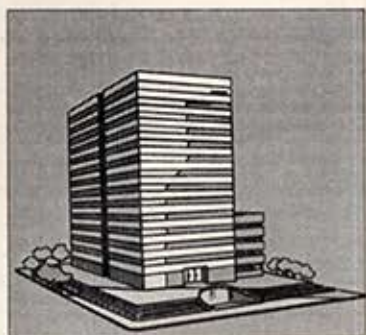
Dr Dinshaw Kelawala, also a trustee of the dar-e-meher, thanked Dasturji Hormazdiar for unveiling the portrait and also for his great services to the community for the last 50 years. The present panthaky Ervad Sorab Panthaky who had organized this commendable function was also presented with a shawl. The other trustees, Mr Pervez Khambatta and Mr Pesi Virjee, also graced the occasion. **DINAZ H. CHOKSI**

Whither, Parsi plays?

Are Parsi Gujarati plays (*nataks*) on the way out? Before the advent of talkies, Parsi Gujarati plays were the main source of entertainment. A typical Parsi Gujarati play would run for three to four hours, yet the audience would not get bored, as the play was clean, touched one's heartstrings and was a moral booster. It was a mix of both tragedy and comedy. These dramas were mostly staged at the famous Baliwala Theatre, Play House. The arrival, first of the silent films and second, of the talkies, struck a deadly blow to this type of *natak*.

Their place was slowly and gradually taken by slapstick comedies and the playing time would be between two to three hours. Playwrights like Dr Jehangir Wadia, Firoze Antia, Homi Tavadia and the doyen of them all, Adi Marzban, used to regale audiences with typical Parsi humor. At present, only one such dramatist lives, he is none other than Dorab Mehta who must be in his eighties.

What do we notice now? All Parsi Gujarati plays presented on festive occasions like Jamshedi Navroze, New Year, Khordad Sal etc are one-night performances, seen today, forgotten tomorrow. Unlike non-Parsi Gujarati plays which can be seen throughout the year, our Gujarati *natako* are seen for a very limited period. We have no professional group of actors which can offer Parsi Gujarati plays for longer periods



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of time during a year.

Slowly, presentation of even this type of play will fade away and, like Parsi bands, Parsi Gujarati plays will cease to be performed and will become a part of Parsi history.

BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA

Quality education

The community must seriously tackle the issue of education at the initial and higher level. Education must begin at a very young age when the child's mind is most impressionable. We may not be aware but a child even at the age of three or four is watching its elders very attentively and the behavior of the elders is the most effective teacher. Impressions made at the tender age last for life. It is therefore absolutely necessary that parents should see that wholesome influence prevails at home. If a child sees constant squabbles among its parents, relatives or neighbors, that creates a lasting bad impression.

Ex-Vice President of India, Zakir Hussain said, "The child is like the essence hidden in the bud which later grows into a flower." It is the duty of parents and school authorities to see that this essence within the child is

nurtured properly and helped to grow. The child passes through school in about 10 years. This is the important period when the child's character is formed. Habits of punctuality can be best formed at home.

It is a tragedy that at times parents adopt prejudicial treatment towards children, favoring the child whose progress is good and neglecting the other child whose progress is slow. Such unfair preferential treatment creates bitterness in the heart of the children with the result that their career is jeopardized. Moreover both children fight among themselves thereby damaging their mutual affection. Talents, natural aptitude and intellect vary from child to child.

We generally insist on college education for children. It is all right for a few bright ones but others must find their avocations suitable to their aptitude. There is no loss of dignity in manual labor. Such students should be helped to settle down in their trade.

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continued on page 182

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Events and Personalities

The summer of '98

A mixed dose of games, competitions, music, dance, general and religious knowledge was offered to the 35 children who enrolled for the first ever summer camp organized by the Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara from April 26 to 28, 1998.

Enjoying as they did their cricket match, swimming pool party, rounds of tambola, treasure hunt and antakshari, the youngsters, the majority of whom were in the seven to 14 age-group, succeeded in extracting from the Panchayat president Savak Patel a promise that such camps would be a regular feature, notes a press release sent by Roda D. Hakim. With so much entertainment packed within those three days, a sprinkling of seriousness in the form of a visit to the agiary on *Adar mah* and *Adar roj* as also a general knowledge quiz with two special rounds on Zoroastrian religion and culture was accepted in good spirit.

While the organizers were amazed "at the vast knowledge of Bollywood songs and films" the children exhibited, the quiz was a revelation in that "lots more information on our Zoroastrian matters needs to be instilled in our young ones," states the write-up.

A variety of gastronomic delights from South Indian and Chinese food to traditional Parsi *nasto* and *bhonu* were happily consumed by the youngsters along with the unlimited supply of Coca-Cola and Godrej's Jumpin "which helped us all to beat the Baroda heat," according to the organizers.

To the trustees Dara Hakim and Aspi Vazifdar with their all-ladies' team who

constituted the social and entertainment committee, and the ever enthusiastic young volunteers who took charge of the campers at the Godrej Hall go the



The organizers and participants of the summer camp at Vadodara

credit for organizing this successful meet, adds the write-up.

Visionary effort

The inauguration of a low vision center at the Muncherji Nawrojee Banaji Industrial Home for the Blind at Jogeshwari this year should help persons with residual low vision in their mobility, reading, seeing television and working on their jobs, explained leading ophthalmologist Dr Rumi Jehangir. Elaborating on this project launched in January 1998, he said that patients would be provided with magnification and optical aids and appliances, telescopic lenses and similar apparatus. Providing free facilities, the center should bring relief to those residing in the suburbs, notes a press release issued by The NAB (National Association for the Blind) Workshop for the Blind.

Fellow ophthalmologist Dr Keiki

Mehta who is chairman of the nearly 15-year-old Worli unit of the Kantaben and Varjivandas Saraiya Low Vision Centre elaborated how the provision

and training in the use of magnification aids assisted students and craftsmen such as tailors, cobblers, carpenters and others to pursue their normal vocations and earn a decent living, according to the write-up.

For every blind person in India, we have some eight to 10 persons suffering from minimal residual vision, pointed out Dr Badar Maskati in his presidential address, adding that

these were the worst sufferers as neither could they avail of rehabilitative services provided for the blind nor could they function as normal sighted persons. There is need for more such centers, observed Capt Hormazdiar Desai, a founder of the National Association for the Blind, in his keynote address, urging the union and state governments to sanction liberal grants for this purpose.

Yet another project that the institute is pursuing is the building of a hostel for the blind at a cost of Rs 55 lakhs, adds the release. It is meant to accommodate 54 blind persons from the rural areas who have found gainful employment in Bombay. Minocher Patel, trustee of the Nariman Sahukar Charity Trust who had earlier contributed one lakh rupees, donated a further sum of three lakh rupees for the proposed hostel, according to the press release.

Unveiled in court

A portrait of the 'Advocate of the ten-

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At the unveiling of A. Katrak's portrait (from left) Bobhate, Sorab Irani, Vimala Dalal, Adi Bhesania, Dosa Dhapla and M. Katrak

ants' Ardeshir M. Katrak was unveiled at the Bombay Small Causes Court by the Chief Judge R. R. Gandhi on June 25 in the presence of judges and advocates of the Court.

G. T. Karia, president of the Bombay Advocates' Association referred to the numerous cases Katrak had taken up on behalf of the tenants, especially the

poor ones. "He was a most respected member of our Bar... noble of heart... very pious and religious." Karia recalled that Katrak was active in the country's freedom struggle.

Sunil Samant, a member of the managing council of the Association, gratefully acknowledged a donation of Rs 15,000 made to the Association by Manekbai, the advocate's widow, who along with her family and Katrak's junior Shridhar Bobhate were present at the function.

Another noted lawyer of the Small Causes Court Adi Ripon Daruvala was felicitated by the Bombay Advocates' Association on completing 50 years at the Bar. Daruvala had requested the function be kept private with only members of the Bar present.

Mistry adding value

As area manager for South Asia and executive vice president at McCann-Erickson (M-E) Asia-Pacific, Sorab Mistry's area of influence will now extend to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, it was reported in the *Advertising Age International*, May 15, 1998. For the last three years he had been functioning as president and chief executive officer of the newly established McCann-Erickson India during which time the agency was able to report an increase in billing from Rs 27 crore to Rs 200 crore and an improvement in agency ranking from No 18 to No 8, as notes the press release.

"Sorab's accomplishments on behalf of our clients in India are truly remarkable (and) we are delighted to be able to expand his responsibilities," Marcio Moreira, vice-chairman of M-E Worldwide and Asia-Pacific regional director was quoted in the *Advertising Age*. "I am looking forward to contributing to the success of my colleagues across South Asia. This is all about bringing added value to the table, both to client relationships and to the agencies themselves," stated Mistry as per

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the press release. "I want McCann to lead on three fronts — consumer insight, creativity and understanding the fact that in India the medium is as important as the message," mentioned Mistry in an interview with *Sunday Mid-Day*, May 17, 1998.

Following an open management policy, Mistry has been stressing on moral leadership and integrity. He abolished titles for middle-level managers and below last year which could have led to an exodus but "people stuck around because they knew this was the place to grow," explained Mistry.

Forty-six-year-old Mistry had joined M-E in Tehran as management trainee in 1973 following his graduation from Bombay's St Xavier's College. He was later transferred to M-E London, was with JWT in Toronto, Canada for a decade, and returned to M-E as vice president in charge of the Coca-Cola account in Canada before coming to



Mistry: moral leadership

the Microsoft, Dabur and L'Oreal accounts which add up to another Rs 16 crore...It is today the fastest growing agency among the top 10, galloping along at 53.8 percent compared to the industry average of 22.5 percent." This year M-E won several creative awards including the coveted Gold Abby for the best television commercial, notes the press release.

Mistry's recent strategy was to cement a 50:50 joint venture with Enterprise-Nexus (part of the Lowe group)

India as executive vice president.

Last year Coke dropped M-E in favor of Chaitra Leo Burnett but, as reported in *Business India*, June 1-14, 1998, "The loss of Coke has been more or less made up with its new clients. Post-Coke it has picked up the Rs 40 crore Reckitt and Colman account, the Rs 15 crore Perfetti account, the Rs 12 crore Ponds' Vaseline account, the Rs 10 crore Motorola account, and

for media buying in India. "To be christened InterMedia, the unit's combined Rs 350 crore billings for this year will place it within the top five media players in the country," stated a write-up in *The Economic Times* of June 17, 1998. "This move obviously preempts the expected arrival of MindShare here: the world's largest media buying and planning company," adds the article quoting Mistry. "The media scene is changing significantly. We decided to take charge of the situation since the lead players aren't doing so and to preempt the market. This will make us a force to reckon with."

Launching a lager

Attractively displayed spirals of the golden brew in king cans and amber bottles welcomed the invitees to the cool confines of the Taj Ballroom. Brewing an international partnership with San Miguel Corporation was the Bombay-based Associated Breweries and Distilleries Private Limited (ABD) which is, according to their company profile, the only brewery in the world owned and managed by women. The three gracious ladies, Mehroo Irani, with daughters Zinia Lawyer and

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Brewing an international partnership (from left): Erich Wimmer, Chenoy, Eizmendi, Mehroo Irani and Lawyer

Photo: Nazneen K. Vajifdar, Spectravision Labs

Bakhtawar Chenoy, were flanked at the function on April 27, 1998 by Francisco Eizmendi, Jr, president and chief operating officer of San Miguel Corporation, and other high officials of the Philippine-based organization.

San Miguel beer, reputed to be among the world's top 20 largest selling beers and among the top three in Asia, is

being manufactured and distributed for the first time in India under a licensing agreement between San Miguel Corporation, a century-old food, beverage and packaging organization, and ABD. Stated ABD director Lawyer at the launch: "To briefly give you an indication of San Miguel's size of operation, their single brewery, namely San Fernando Brewery in the Philippines, brews six million hectoliters of beer a year, which is more than the entire production of all the breweries in India put together! After discussions with

nearly everyone, we decided on our partner... there is tremendous synergy between our two companies." Added Eizmendi, "We are honored and excited to introduce our beer to consumers in Bombay and eventually throughout India."

Elaborating on the international character of San Miguel Corporation, which has strategic alliances of half a century or longer with giant corporations like Coca-Cola, Nestle, the New Zealand Dairy Board, United Distillers of UK etc, Eizmendi informed the gathering that San Miguel beer is also produced in China, Hongkong, Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal and is exported to 24 countries in Asia, Australia and North America.

Associated Breweries and Distilleries was established in 1973 by noted architect and builder, the late Noshir Muluk Irani. After his death in 1985, the company has been under the stewardship of his wife Mehroo and daughters Lawyer and Chenoy, with Lawyer's daughter Farah being a third generation family member to evince an interest in the business. ABD's flagship brand, London Pilsner, has won awards at the world selection of beers for five con-

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secutive years, states the company's brochure, and its London Diet is India's first low calorie beer. ABD also pioneered draught beer in Bombay with the launch of its London Draft almost 20 years ago. Its main export brand Maharaja has found markets in Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the West Indies.

ABD's bottling and canning facilities at its New Bombay plant have been recently upgraded by the import of machines from Krones of Germany, considered to be "the Rolls Royce of machinery in the bottling and canning field," states the company profile. Expansion plans include penetration of regional markets in Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh through technical collaboration with local breweries like Venus Brewery and H. Dasappa and Sons Private Limited, Bangalore. The company will also be commissioning a new brewery, London Pilsner Breweries Private Limited, at a prominent site in Goa, according to company sources.

Hilla P. Guzder

Brilliant at her bow

At the National Archery Championship in April 1998, 13-year-old Yazneen



Sarosh Rana of Jamshedpur won a gold as also a bronze medal in the sub-junior category. A month prior, she had won two bronze medals at the Bihar State Archery Championship, notes a press release forwarded by Silloo Surti.

Having taken to this sport since 1995, Rana is being trained by Arjuna awardee Sanjeeva Singh at the J. R. D. Tata Sports Complex. She also benefitted from the intensive practice given by a

Rana: improving archery technique

coach from Korea, mentions the write-up.

In archery, the equipment alone costs Rs 35,000 to Rs 40,000 as the modern bow in use is not made in India. "As the archer improves his technique/physical fitness he/she is needed to use a higher poundage bow for better accuracy and to get more distance," explains a family

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source. Rana who has hitherto been using an amateur bow is now keen on winning the national championship and participating in international meets. Thus she would be required to progress to professional equipment for which some sponsorship or financial assistance would be appreciated. Her father Sarosh works for Tata Steel in the Information Technology Services Division.

A student of standard eight at the Sacred Heart Convent School, Jamshedpur, Rana has also won swimming contests and completed a parasailing program. In April 1998 she was declared the best all rounder of the middle school for, besides faring well in studies, she has also been winning prizes in both English and Hindi elocution and art contests. Having leadership qualities and being popular in her class, she has been elected class leader every year since she was in grade one, notes her resume. For three consecutive years she was awarded the Sportsperson of the Year trophy by the Jamshedpur Parsee Association.

To mind your lane

"The lieutenant governor is pleased to appoint you as a citizen (and) traffic



warden...to improve the traffic situation in the national territory of Delhi," wrote the secretary to the lieutenant governor in his letter to Carey Marfatia in January '98.

As detailed by the special secretary to the lieutenant governor, Dr Kiran Bedi, the citizen and traffic wardens would be "carefully selected citizens who have the required capability, leadership qualities and zeal to participate effectively in traffic management...The selected (candidates) shall undergo a special training in road safety education organized by the Institute of Road Traffic Education. A colorful traffic

warden jacket has been designed for...purposes of identification and high visibility. Their personal vehicles will be affixed with fluorescent colorful stripes for increasing deterrence."

Since they would be required to work in close liaison with the regular area traffic police officers to help improve road discipline and safety, they will be provided notice books issued by the Delhi Traffic Police to record traffic violations observed by them as also high level of visible pollution arising from vehicles. "The notice branch of the Delhi Traffic Police, on receipt of these notices shall issue legal prosecution challans to the violators." Other matters noticed by the wardens like defective traffic lights, violation of lane discipline, faulty road signs, absence of proper road marking, inadequate road engineering or bottlenecks are to be intimated for appropriate initiatives.

Does no one want kids?

The family is often sacrificed at the altar of individualism in a high-technology society, observes Prof (Dr) Josef Schmid, teacher of population studies, in his article in *Deutschland*, April 1998, entitled "Does no one want to have

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children? Germans' life expectancy is rising but the birth rate is falling."

His analyses of the German population figures bear a semblance to the Parsi community's and could hold a few lessons for all progressive communities.

"The metropolitan life-style has affected marriage and family relations... Weddings are frequently postponed until later in life; a third of all marriages eventually end in divorce. Common-law marriages, single-person households, and one-parent families are now normal in all social groups. The instability of partnerships reduces the motivation for parenthood, because by its nature it demands stable and long-term relationships... However, experience has also shown the importance of effective social institutions which make it possible to combine the role of mother and a career, and do not turn a decision in favor of having a second child into a great uncertainty in the lives of women and young couples," states the author.

While the strength of the Parsis in India has been gradually declining over

there was a doubling of population size, totalling 64 million in 1930. In the post-war period, Germans participated in the baby boom of the 1950s-1960s leading to a high birth rate (18 per thousand of the population). "What happened in the following years shall remain one of the mysteries of the fertility god," stated Schmid. From an average of 2.54 children per woman in 1964, the figure had fallen to 1.45 in 1975, significantly less than the so-called replacement minimum of 2.2 children per family. By 1980, the number of births per woman had almost returned to the replacement level thanks to the introduction of a baby year and a comprehensive child care system which reduced the burden on working women. Then again, a change in the perception of parenthood and a low infant mortality as also an increase in materialism contributed to the two-child family norm becoming a thing of the past.

Coinciding with a dwindling birth rate is an increase in the number of old people with life expectancy at birth being 73 for men and 79.5 for women in Germany, contributing to a rise in the

Living his mission

"There are a lot of techniques on stress management. But what we say is 'don't manage stress, eliminate it,'" declares Khurshed Batliwala who has for some years now taken it upon himself to advocate the message of The Art of Living Foundation through the basic course that he regularly conducts. In the course of the 30-hour program spread over five to six fun-filled sessions, the participants are taught breathing and stretching exercises



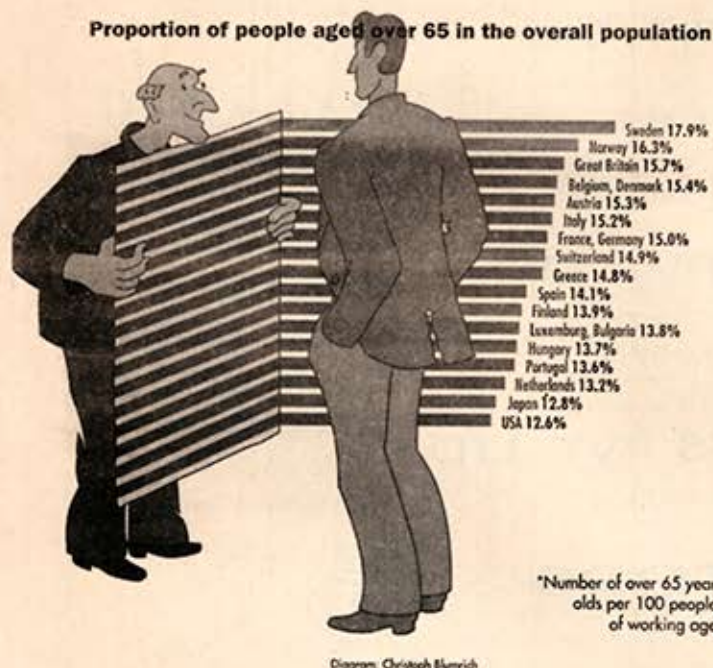
Batliwala: relieve stress

to relieve stress and rejuvenate the mind and body. Their most potent tool is the *sudarshan kriya*, a cycle of breathing exercises which is supposed to have cured patients suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer...as vouched for in the testimonials provided by a cross-section of participants in *Healing Breath, Breathing Health*, a publication of "amazing facts" from Vyakti Vikas Kendra/ The Art of Living Foundation.

As explains Batliwala, due to stress, the body's immune system weakens and hence it is incapable of warding off infection. When stress is rooted out, the body's immune system functions at its peak capacity preventing the onset of disease. In fact for 29-year-old Batliwala, who had been a sickly child suffering from G6PD deficiency and rheumatism, a chance introduction to one such course when he was a student at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has dramatically altered his health chart. The course does not require a change of life-styles, beliefs or religious practices and it is neither a sect nor a psychological exercise, clarifies the brochure.

"In the pursuit of better performance, the modern day life-style pursues pieces of mind rather than peace of mind," has been the observation of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar who has conceived the workshop and who is described as "an enlightened spiritual master and a leader in the human development movement. He has traveled throughout the world, teaching and setting up organizations to train people in the Art of Living." In 1996 their Foundation which is spread over 93 countries was given the recog-

Proportion of people aged over 65 in the overall population



Change in proportion of elderly* in Germany

1871	8.9
1880	9.3
1890	10.2
1900	9.6
1910	9.8
1925	10.0
1939	13.0
1950	16.3
1960	19.3
1970	24.6
1980	26.9
1990	23.6
1995	24.7
2000	25.7
2010	32.2
2020	35.1
2030	46.8
2040	56.2

Courtesy: Deutschland (Source: Federal Statistical Office)

the years, Germany has seen ups and downs in its birth figures. Following the social transformations of the 19th century and the period up to the Great Depression at the end of the 1920s,

average age of the population. Similar was the life expectancy at birth among Parsis in Bombay in 1997, averaging at 75 years. "When life expectancy within a population increases and there is a low birth rate, the population pyramid begins to distort, gradually becoming top-heavy," reminds the author.

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dition of "an NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations."

"He cannot be described, he is an experience," maintains Batliwala of his guru. Referring to his master's perceptions of others' needs, Batliwala cites a recent example when his father Yezdi was very ill at home. To the chagrin of his mother who was complaining that he was neglecting his family, Batliwala mentally beseeched his guru to take care of his father while he set out to conduct one of his courses. On his return, his father's health had yet not improved. Just when they were contemplating shifting him to a hospital there was an overseas call from Sri Sri Ravi Shankar enquiring after Yezdi's health and assuring the family that his condition would improve in the next 15 minutes. And it did so happen, relates a grateful son who is happy to have "felt guruji's hand; to know that there is someone to take care of you."

In the words of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, "There are only two choices: either we can be grumbling in the mind or we can be grateful...Prayer is being grateful for all that has been bestowed on you."

Whether it is Zarathushtra or Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, they're both the same, says Batliwala except that one is still alive and can be reached on the phone. "The satisfaction from talking to him is different," otherwise "my Zoroastrian values have enhanced and the spirituality inherent in the religion has become more meaningful." Similar has been the experience of his other Zoroastrian participants too. When they pray, when they go to the fire-temple, they are much more sensitive to the vibrations. Now that he has turned a vegetarian as has also his entire family, including his dog, by choice, he is surprised how a peace-loving religion like Zoroastrianism could have non-vegetarian votaries.

On this self undertaken mission Batliwala feels "a lot of satisfaction in teaching people something so precious." The honorarium that he receives from the ashram is sufficient to meet his needs which are not many. In his spare time he plays the piano and also teaches maths which was the subject of his specialization at the IIT. He is surprised therefore when his associates ask him, "What is your mission in life?" As far as he is concerned, "I am already living it."

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Zoroastrian democracy in Sydney

With a daremehr of their own Sydney Zoroastrians are ready to face the challenge of perpetuating their faith, believes Australian Zoroastrian Association president Nauzer Bana

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Not get too dogmatic about our own beliefs and be more pragmatic about what the community really wants," is Nauzer Bana's guiding principle. A chartered accountant now in the second year of his first two-year term as president of the Sydney based Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales (NSW), Bana says he favors the democratic approach and if need be, is ready to organize a referendum.

However there are currently "no raging issues of the liberal/conservative type," says Bana. A traditionalist at heart who is happy "to accept what the priests decree — consider it a law," Bana is content that people in Sydney haven't tried to "superimpose their views" and rock the boat.

Of an estimated 1,200 Zoroastrians in the Sydney area, AZA membership is in the region of 300-350 individuals, reckons Bana. About 400-500 people attend the ghambar and Navroze functions however by paying a slightly higher fee, he notes, depicting the atmosphere at these functions as "cohesive." Himself a Farsi speaker, Bana has been promoting Parsi-Irani integration and this March the AZA held a jashan on Fasli Khordadsal to "help everyone mingle." Though AZA is yet to begin the practice, muktads are being talked about and Bana says, "if priests are available and they want to do it, that's great." He is all praise for their mobeds who give selfless honorary service and donate even the ashodad they receive to the association.

The generosity of the Guiv, Zartoshty and Ostowari families together with the community's own unrelenting efforts had enabled the establishment of the first daremehr in Australia — "a dream come true in 1994." The AZA has overcome some of the reservations and virulent criticism of AZA House neighbors

(which had led to a long legal battle before the property could be developed and the daremehr established) by inviting them to some of the functions, informs Bana. When the daremehr was



Nauzer and Arnavaz Bana: "a healthy exchange of ideas"

opened several local dignitaries had accepted their invitation and so had the media.

Taking up the cudgels against a recent TV program "Bewitched" which listed Zoroastrianism amidst the cult of "witches, satanists, pagans, pantheists and druids," Bana addressed a strong letter to the producer of the "Today" show under whose banner the program was viewed. After a religious and historic overview Bana noted, "We invite you to meet the Australian Zoroastrian community among whom you will be delighted to meet reputable business personnel, teachers, accountants, architects, engineers, lawyers, general medical practitioners, specialist physicians, surgeons and dental surgeons and all

proud Australian citizens.

"We invite you to our place of worship at Annangrove, which was inaugurated on July 24, 1994 when representative media coverage was done by SBS and, later, by ABC in their program on religions 'Compass.' You will realize that your impressions were inaccurate as you interview some of our learned scholarly Zoroastrians and may even feel tempted to film a program about our most ancient religion, which has for millennia remained the fountainhead of subsequent 'revealed' religions to follow...

"(We invite) you to see for yourself and confirm our remarks in this letter by visiting the State Libraries of NSW and University Libraries in Sydney and the National Library in Canberra.

"We invite you to celebrate with us our New Year's Day on March 21, 1998, the geographically accurate 1st day of each New Year in the ancient 'old' world..."

Sadly, the AZA newsletter *Manashni* (May-July 1998) notes that there has been no reply to the letter.

"One of the prime objectives of the newly appointed committee will be to investigate the reason for falling membership numbers," Bana had stated in his first post-election 'President's Column,' in *Manashni*. "Distances shouldn't really stop them," he told *Parsiana* at an interview at Oberoi Towers in April 1998 and said that efforts were underway "to make the functions more enjoyable." A questionnaire was dispatched to AZA members seeking their opinion on the fee structure and the organization of Pateti and Navroze functions, to which Bana said there were 80 responses when "the survey closed in March (see box)."

Cremation is the more common method for disposal of the dead because it is more economic, says Bana who is

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"seriously looking at a memorial rose garden" as a project during his tenure and expects to invite donations. His second goal is to construct more classes for Sunday school where four or five teachers provide voluntary service to 60 children divided into three groups according to their age. Gujarati is one of the subjects being taught. Former AZA president and compiler of Zoroastrian religious literature on computer, Perviz Kolsawalla, addresses the adults while a priest teaches kusti prayers to navjote age children, says Bana. A project-wise fund-raising committee is on the cards, especially as the library doubles as a classroom currently which means that people are unable to use the library at that time.

Fund-raising has been an important community activity ever since the AZA first set out to establish a property of its own. Bana described the Bush Dance and the Navroze function as a "superhit." The Bush Dance generated Australian \$440. Bhelpuri and falooda treats at Sunday School collect about \$200. A recent innovative occasion was the ladies night out organized by Arnaz Bana which raised \$851 to celebrate Mothers' Day. Not to be out-done, a gentlemen's Persian night out is in the offing in September, courtesy Capt

Noshir Sachinwalla who retired as AZA president in 1997. Among the donations received by the Association is a 12 inch German silver afargani, a silver pigani (rose water dispenser) and a decorative silver vase with panels and pictures including a likeness of Zarathushtra, prompting Bana to suggest the planning of a museum of typically Zarathushti articles in the daremehr, as notes *Manashni*.

The majority of Zoroastrian settlers in the Sydney area are "comfortable" with a house and improved lifestyles, says Bana. Among them are quite a few doctors, computer and management specialists. He suggests that prospective migrants concentrate on information technology which is the growing area. "With two people working (you can) lead a very comfortable life... if you are prepared for the dignity of labor," he says, adding that medical benefits and education are provided free by the state. "The public hospital is as good as Breach Candy" according to Bana as he recalls his wife's view of the ocean and golf course from the obstetrics ward!

Among AZA achievers is Sherna Kotwal, one of Sydney's five emerging artists. At a joint exhibition recently patronized by the bigwigs of the art world Kotwal exhibited nine modernis-

"Are the Pateti, Navroze functions enjoyable?"

The May-July '98 *Manashni* presented the findings of the opinion poll to the community:

- 54 of the 67 respondents (80.6%) to the question "Are the annual fees too high? If yes, how low should they be?" endorsed the current fee structure.

- 29 of 72 respondents (40.3%) answered the query, "Are the Pateti, Navroze functions enjoyable? If no, what can the committee do to make them more enjoyable?" in the positive. Among the rest, 15 (20.8%) said the music played was too loud, had poor sound and suggested less Indian music. Among 19 other suggestions were the provision of more time to meet and talk; that the crowd be more disciplined with less rushing at meal queues; that the show be no more than 45 minutes; that Iranians be made to feel at home; have shorter speeches; get people to mix more.

- 29 respondents to the question "What do you feel is the most important part of

AZA functions?" considered it to be meeting people while 10 considered it the least important. Food, entertainment and music came next in importance, in that order. Cost was considered the least important issue.

- The last query asked was "In general, are there incidents, attitudes that you would like to bring to our attention, which has disturbed your rapport with members/AZA? No names please, only incidents," it was specified. The gripes as listed in *Manashni*:

- Keep entertainment short.
- Committee member should not be rude.
- There are a few snobs.
- Holier than thou attitude.
- Learn to avoid the stupid ones.
- Not paying fees.
- General bitching among friends.
- Prayer and Sunday School classes for children — if teacher is late we wait, but if children are late they are not admitted to classes — why?



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tic paintings and sold a majority during the week, writes Kersi Meher-Homji in *Manashni*.

Starting young, Yuhon Reporter, 10, has been selected to play with NSW State Symphonic Wind Ensemble as percussionist. Debating buff Jehangir Meher-Homji represented the University of Sydney at the 1997 Australasian Universities Debating Championship and won it — for the second consecutive year. He has represented Sydney University at the meet for three years in a row.

His father Kersi Meher-Homji edited *Manashni* for 12 years (with a gap of three years). An official cricket correspondent, Meher-Homji has seven books to his credit. He has now been promoted to emeritus editor-in-chief with *Manashni* being currently handled by the three member team of Dr Sam Kerr (who has recently transcribed the *Bahman Yasht* into Roman script), Jimmy Medhora and Danesh Kadwa.

The Batliwalla family has produced three actuaries — Minoo and his children Sarosh and Marina — a Zarathushti record in Sydney, notes *Manashni*.

Nor is it difficult to practice the religion "if you make the extra effort

and bring the children up that way, talk in Gujarati," says Bana whose eldest son Beghzad, 15, is a navar even though he is not.

An alumnus of Don Bosco, Boys' Town (Bana salutes his former principal Bejon Desai and vice principal Homi Dotiwalla), and Podar College whence he graduated with commerce and economics, Bana articulated for chartered accountancy with Bombay's prestigious S. Billimoria and Company. Sadly, Australia did not recognize his Indian degrees and he had to spend nearly seven initial years in Australia working part-time and studying for the Australian equivalents. He thanks his wife Arnaz for her "full support" during those trying early years. Arnaz continued as a legal secretary until their third child Homeher, 8, was born, thereafter opting to be a housewife and social worker (she has been AZA secretary and is currently its social secretary) with involvement in the parent-teachers' association (PTA) of the childrens' schools. Their daughter Freeya is 11.

Bana says it's a "pity that (his) father Homi is not there to see (him) well-placed in life. He instilled the moral and true Zarathushti faith." Bana singles



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out his "very patient and understanding mother Tehmi" and his aunt Dolly Madan who was his "mentor" during his teenage years, saying "I owe what I am in life to both these ladies and my father." His elder brother Pervez runs a fitness center in Andheri which is highly regarded in the field of sports and gymnastics, says Bana.

All in favor of congresses like the Second World Zoroastrian Youth Congress held in London in 1997, Bana would like the community and particularly the youth to participate in more such events ("if the costs were not so prohibitive") where they "get to meet religious scholars... have a very healthy exchange of ideas... (It is) healthy to know if we are going wrong, where we are going wrong."

Describing himself as a "very patient listener," Bana avidly dislikes people arguing counterproductively, reiterating his commitment that "any issue can be resolved if you are willing to sit down and listen, be willing to change views if necessary..."

30 years of the ZSBC

The 30th anniversary of The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) was a reason to celebrate. Two fund-raising dinners, an all-day seminar and the publication of a cookbook marked the happy occasion, informs ZSBC president Bella Tata.

"The Zarathushti celebration" was the theme of the seminar held on May 16, 1998 at Vancouver's Empire Landmark Hotel. Among the participants and speakers were Dina McIntyre of Pennsylvania, Prof Kaikhosrov Irani of New York and Prof Mehraban Khodavandi of Wisconsin. Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari presented a live rendition of their educational program *Paradise*. A youth panel on "Our terrific teens: their triumphs and their turmoils" saw Trity Pourbahrani and Rustom Appoo as moderators and Shirin Kiani, Farhad Mistry, Zeenia Mizan, Danny Nanavaty and Farzad Rahnamoon as panelists. Azita Oshidary Kanai was the day's effective mistress of ceremony, notes Tata.

At the gala dinner the following night British Columbia's attorney general and minister for multiculturalism, human rights and immigration Ujjal Dosanjh and his wife Raminder were honored guests. Zubin Amrolia and



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Shahpour Mehrabani emceed the evening in English and Farsi and two dance groups, the Atash Dance Group and the Golden Girls, performed Iranian and Indian dances choreographed by Mojdeh Shahriari and Piroj Amrolia respectively. Kourosh Kavousi was the disc jockey that evening. On behalf of the ZSBC Dosanjh presented bouquets to Roda Pavri (whose late husband Jamshed is revered as the founder of the ZSBC), Homi Gilan and Soonoo Engineer "for their role as members who helped form the society."

The original constitution and by-laws of the ZSBC date to February 22, 1968. With changing requirements these were reviewed and a new constitution and bylaws registered on March 5, 1997, informs Tata.

Two sets of awards were presented that night, writes Tata. The valuable contribution and service of mobed Jehangir Panthaky, Piroj Amrolia, Farrokh Namdaran, Zarine Dastur and Tata were appreciated with an award. Also presented were awards in recognition of the contribution of Mehraban Zartoshty, Mojdeh Shahriari, Shahriar Shahriari and Dr Mehraban Shahrivini "in enhancing the vis-

ibility of the Zarathushti community."

In all, Jehangir Sethna and Faribourz Rahnamoon and the social committee were credited with the smooth organization of the gala anniversary dinner.

The directors of ZSBC who helped Tata put these events together, and who served ZSBC until June 13, were Minoo Engineer, Homi Italia, Rostam Kavousi, Dinaz Mizan, Fariborz Rahnamoon and Jehangir Sethna.

The ZSBC Cookbook was the idea of Gonny Confectioner. Kamal Nanavaty and Kashmira Dastur helped with the compilation. Homi Italia, Shiraz Italia and Narius Dastur provided the artwork for the book, on sale for \$8 (Canadian or US).

In the ZSBC newsletter *In Search of the Truth* (June-August 1998) Tata notes, "During the past two years that I have been director/secretary, our team of directors and committee members has worked tirelessly to bring new life to the society and to the darbe mehr, which is open for meetings, classes, events, etc., at least 12 days in the month. Under the new constitution, we made it easier for those who are true believers and followers of the teachings of Asho Zarathushtra to become members but, unfortunately, there has been no surge in our membership. The fear that the floodgates open up with the introduction of associate membership for non-Zarathushtris has not occurred,

as we have had only one long time associate of the society become an associate member."



Clockwise from top (left to right standing): H. Italia, J. Sethna; Tata, Mizan, Engineer, Fariborz Rahnamoon (seated) Irani, Pourbahrani, McIntyre, Khodavandi; Atash Dance Group; Paradise; Nanavaty, Kiani, Farzad Rahnamoon, Mistry and Appoo; the Golden Girls Dance Group



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A voice of conscience

A series of crusading articles by Karachi-based Ardeshir Cowasjee, a senior columnist in *Dawn*, has led to several questionable episodes. An excerpt from Cowasjee's "Storming of the Supreme Court — 3" (*Dawn*, April 12, 1998):

Soon after receiving a notice from the Supreme Court summoning me to Islamabad to appear on March 25, where my statement in connection with the November 28 storming of the Court was to be recorded, one of our senior-most journalists rang to say that what he could not tell me on the telephone he wished to come, pronto, to tell me in person.

He came and whispered that an Intelligence Bureau (IB) man had enquired about my antecedents and those of my General Staff Officer-1 (G-1), my fellow-columnist by avocation. The IB had been ordered to compile files. Nothing new, I told my worried friend, they have been preparing files on me since 1948, and my telephone remains tapped. A new man has apparently fallen upon an old job.

This was filed away as a circumstance.

continued on page 70b

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The trustees and their electors

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees addressed the Anjuman Committee after a lapse of three years

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Do Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees work in unison or at cross purposes?... It is absurd and ridiculous that people ask this question," BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder told the Anjuman Committee (AC) members who responded to the BPP invitation for a meet at the Patkar Hall on June 5, 1998. "Animated discussions... are resolved and a consensus reached" at the board meetings every Tuesday between 6 and 9.45 p.m. and "80 percent of the agenda completed," maintained Guzder.

A paltry 131 from among the 1,604 AC members eligible to elect the trustees of the BPP cared to attend the accountability meeting called after a lapse of three years. Apologizing for the delay, Guzder set a target of one such meet every year. The poor attendance led AC member Tehemton Daver and *Parsidom* editor Dara Kadva to make a strong plea for such accountability meetings to be open to the community at large and not restricted to members of the AC. Guzder said he and his co-trustees would consider the request for future meets.

Delineating the expenses of the BPP under various social heads (see box) Guzder acquainted the voters with the large scale philanthropy of Vancouver based Iranian businessmen Mehraban and Faridoon Zartoshty who have given Rs 2.70 crores for the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital for renovation and maintenance apart from Rs 30 lakhs meant specifically for the maintenance of poor patients. The BPP has received Rs 38.15 lakhs from them for its third child scheme plus Rs 27 lakhs for religious education. Guzder noted that Dasturs (Drs) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, Hormazdyar Mirza and Firoze Kotwal had been commissioned to translate scholarly books into simple Gujarati in an effort to create more educational material. The Zartoshty brothers have

also contributed Rs 90 lakhs towards the construction of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan to house Bombay University's department of civics and politics on the University campus at Kalina. The Bhavan is designed to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of the stalwart of local self-govern-

The BPP incurred a loss of Rs 22 lakhs on the Doongerwadi account

ment. As the likely cost of the Bhavan was estimated at four crore rupees, Guzder, who has himself contributed Rs 10 lakhs urged the community to contribute to the project in whatever measure via the BPP so that a consolidated amount could be forwarded to the University. To this Shehnaz Lilaonwalla from Godrej Baug suggested that the Punchayet ask the University for reservation against the one crore rupee donation.

Another donation of Rs 50 lakhs from businessman Nariman Dubash is meant specifically for the beautification of Doongerwadi where 250 trees have been planted to attract vultures, apart from flowering trees and plants. The access to the sagdi is also being beautified with the further donation of a pair of Assyrian bulls for the purpose. In response to a challenge from Yasmin Mistry alleging that the khandhias' salaries had not been revised despite Dubash's donation stipulating so, trustee Dinshaw Tamboly intervened to state that khandhias' salaries were raised by nearly Rs 1,000 since January 1997.

Nonetheless the BPP incurred a loss of Rs 22 lakhs on the Doongerwadi account, noted Guzder. When Kadva

challenged this saying that Parsi families spend Rs 7,000-8,000 for four days at Doongerwadi, Tamboly noted, "You are talking of uthamna and paidast expenses" and differentiated these which do not accrue to the BPP from the modest charge for bungli and nassessalar services and emphasized the immense cost of maintaining the large Doongerwadi estate. Also speaking up from the floor of the house was Mithoo Jesia, the noted social worker from Dadar Parsi Colony. Inducted by BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana on the Doongerwadi advisory board, Jesia told the gathering, "You tip 10 percent in hotels. Why not to the khandhias who have nothing to look forward to?" Responding to an earlier query from Daver as to the Wadias' and Tatas' financial involvement to meet community needs, Jesia asked, "But (what of) our own responsibility as a community? Why are we always looking to fight the Punchayet?" She referred to recent renovations of the bunglis "through Punchayet money and people's money" and urged volunteers to "come forward and help a little."

The hottest issue was, as usual, housing. Admitting to "some reverses" Guzder spoke of the trustees' attempt to make block booking of 20 or more flats at a time in the extended suburbs. "None of the deals (with Lok Housing, Surya Construction, Thakur Complex and Dhiraj Complex) materialized, some owing to an absence of an absolute, legal and valid title to the property by the builders," he said. A deal that is "near conclusion" concerns a seven crore rupee donation from the Manekji Sett Charitable Trust for housing Bhagaria mobeds.

The bone of contention concerned ready but unallotted flats at Godrej Baug. Admitting to 63 unoccupied flats (of a total of 474), Guzder said they had been kept in reserve as a transit camp



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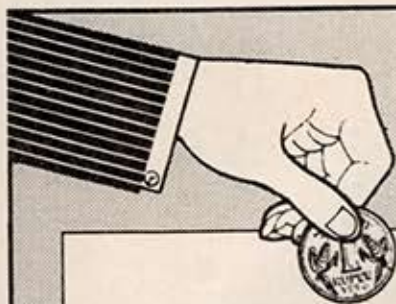
for the tenants of old properties where substantial FSI is available for development. The donors of one of the concerned buildings — the Aloo Dinshaw Trust — have been unhappy with this policy and the issue has been politicized. There were queries from Kadva and Union Press proprietor Rohinton Chinoy whether the BPP was seeking to convert them to ownership to raise more funds but were reassured that such was not the case. Lilaonwalla complained of there being no clubhouse or playground despite ample space and that the lack of a proper wall was a security concern with ample trespassing. In response to her question as to when the agiary was likely to be commissioned Guzder noted that its structure may need to be altered from a religious point of view but that they were already looking for a panthaky and chasniwala to man it.

It was former magistrate Jal Vakil's contention that Godrej Baug had been built for the poor and needy but that people who lived there enjoyed a 10-12 thousand rupee income level. Guzder explained the BPP's exchange policy permitting residents from older colonies to opt for the higher rents of Godrej

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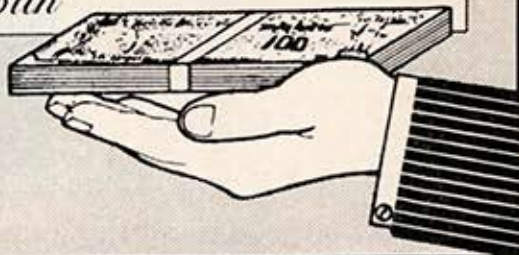
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Baug (municipal taxes, etc in the exclusive Nepean Sea Road area are higher than elsewhere) so that rents at Godrej Baug ranged between Rs 650 and Rs 1,500. The released low rent flats in the older colonies are thus available for the use of those with fewer resources. Also, according to Guzder, "the current donors give very meaningful donations for the allotment of even one flat on a leave and licence basis to their nominees. The BPP has accepted such donations because it is totally legal; also it will help augment the housing stock for the community."

At Khareghat Colony where Pluto Properties are constructing a plush new building, the BPP is said to have received Rs 8.5 crores of the 17 crore rupee contracted deal. In light of the current recession in the real estate market the BPP has deferred the recovery of an interest amount of Rs 1.5 crores, noted Guzder. Further payments from Pluto are expected in the last quarter of 1998, he added. A motorable road to some of the upper buildings is one of the benefits of the deal for Khareghat Colony residents.

According to Guzder, the BPP is involved in 100 pending cases regarding housing of which 81 have been filed by the Punchayet against illegal inductees. He made a strong plea against such "shameful" behavior.

A more distressing situation concerns the non-cooperation of the tenants of "old/unsafe buildings" where enough FSI is available to add many more flats. He cited the case of Dhunmai Building at Dadar Parsi Colony noting "we have a surplus FSI of 24,000 sq ft." Despite 18 months of dialog and a proposal to provide written assurances which would enable the old tenants to claim a flat of equal area in a new building with the same type of fittings and furnishings as they may have installed in their current flats, the tenants have not agreed to the scheme which also provides for a transit camp for the tenants in Dadar.

Over the past three years the BPP has spent Rs 1.66 crores on repairs and maintenance. The tenants in the various housing colonies were given the option to pay their 50 percent share of the cost of repair in installments but many have gone by default, Guzder said, with the result that the BPP has borne 60-65 percent of such cost. "Perhaps the BPP is a unique landlord in the city, bearing

50 percent of the cost of repairs and yet some tenants seem to be dissatisfied with the financial efforts put in by the BPP... Everyone must appreciate that... (the BPP) has to spend only out of the income of its various corporates, retaining the latter intact... An empty bag

"What of our own responsibility as a community? Why are we always looking to fight the Punchayet?"

cannot stand erect... I urge all occupants to play their part in not only maintaining but augmenting the financial viability of the world's oldest charitable institution. We cannot stand or work alone but only with your full support because the BPP is indistinguishable from the community and vice versa," declared Guzder.

In response to a query from Noshir Dadrawala, Guzder admitted to approximately 2,700 applicants for housing on the BPP's register. A complainant maintained that the BPP's third child scheme (the Punchayet pays Rs 1,000 per month towards the living expenses of a third child in the family from 1994) was meaningless as couples did not have the opportunity to marry and raise the first or second child for want of housing.

Other issues raised at the meeting concerned the provision of old age homes. Zal Contractor suggested that senior individuals or couples occupying large flats in colonies be rehoused in old peoples' homes provided in the same colony. While Guzder noted that the idea was "close to (his) heart," there was no FSI in the baugs, he said. Interjected trustee Rustom Tirandaz, "Which relative is going to allow the aged person to cede the flat to the Punchayet?"

Nariman Mehta sought "help for family life" in the face of "50-70 divorces a year... Give houses on probation," he suggested. The allottees need to be told "if you do not carry on with the marriage, forfeit the flat," he counseled. Jerry Kumana, a delegate to the Parsi Matrimonial Court (the only one in India where a jury works) explained that the non-Parsi judges seek the help of the Parsi jurors to try and get the warring couple together and divorce is

only granted when they fail.

Phiroze Davar enquired and Guzder acknowledged that Rs 325 lakhs had been received from Tata Housing Development Company Limited for the Blue Hills property in Pune donated to the Punchayet by E. R. H. Cama. According to Guzder there were 13 dogs on the property and the will of the donor had stipulated that "the property could not be transferred until the last dog died."

Chinoy asked whether the Godrej Press at Gamadia Colony could be revived with the present trend in the community for entrepreneurship to which senior trustee Minoo Shroff noted that it had taken seven years to get the Gamadia Trust (which owns the land) to agree to a polyclinic there.

Acknowledging the work of the BPP of which "the community is kept in darkness," Noshir Bhathena spoke glowingly of the upkeep and welfare at the Parukh Dharamshalla at Khareghat Colony where he frequently visits an inmate and urged the Punchayet to hold at least one Anjuman Committee meeting each year so that the community may be better informed.

The meeting was addressed by Jamshed Guzder and his six colleagues on the BPP board, namely Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Dadi Engineer, Rustom Tirandaz and Dinshaw Tamboly assisted by a team of BPP officials led by chief executive Behram Laskari and joint secretary Sheroo Master. The Press was represented by *The Bombay Samachar*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *Parsidom*, *Deen Parast*, *Hamazor* and *Parsiana*.

BPP disbursements in 1997-98

Subsidies on rents and service charges to deserving tenants: Rs 2.2 lakhs
Financial help to 654 persons: Rs 14.96 lakhs
Education: Rs 19.07 lakhs
Holiday Programme for Youth: Rs 1.26 lakhs
Vocational guidance to 810 students: Rs 1.34 lakhs
Help to 20 mobeds: Rs 33,000/-
Third child assistance to 40 families: Rs 5.18 lakhs
Contribution toward day-care centers: Rs 1.04 lakhs
Medical relief: Rs 23.60 lakhs
Education and medical relief from Seth Pestonji Davar Trust: Rs 44.40 lakhs

"Your brain is your super computer"

More than academic performance, human values are important, emphasized speakers at the BPP's 12th Holiday Programme for Youth

Hilla P. Guzder

"Set yourself SMART goals — specific, measurable, action-oriented, readjustable and time-bound... Develop the right, compassionate attitude. People should latch on to your name and say, 'he's a good man and he's a Parsi,'" chief guest and eminent orthodontist Dr Keki Mistry advised the 200 young boys and girls assembled on May 21, 1998 for the valedictory function of the 12th Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY).

Seeking to inspire the youth to achieve greater heights, Mistry narrated how success is often a matter of seeing things in a new light. "Newton perceived a falling object in a different manner and propounded the law of gravity... the most important thing in life is to be focussed." Mistry, who was the first Asian chairman of the Oral Health Committee of the World Dental Foundation, recalled that the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had once told him: "*Aapki fauj kuch choti hai* [your army (the community of Parsis) is rather small]." Though we are small in numbers, asserted Mistry, we must shine. He remembered how the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) had granted him loans to go abroad for further studies and again to set up practice and how he had repaid the loans as soon as possible.

"March to the beat of your own drummer, to thine own self be true. Listen to everybody's advice, but don't follow it against your instincts or mind. If you do, you will make mistakes," counselled guest of honor and legal luminary Prof Nadir Modi. "Enjoy whatever you do. You will never excel unless you love what you're doing," added Modi, cautioning the youngsters' parents to "love them and leave them alone!"

Senior BPP trustee Minoo Shroff, who chaired the meet held at the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution (BJPCI) which was also the venue for the program conducted under the auspices of the BPP, informed the gathering that over 2,000 students had participated in HPY

over the course of its 12 years and five matrimonial alliances had resulted so far. What is most satisfying, he opined, is the degree of self-confidence and gusto exhibited by the youngsters.

BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder exhorted the youth to become entrepreneurs. "We are soon going to start a Venture Capital organization which will guide prospective entrepreneurs, examine their project and support it," he stated. Citing his own example, he described how he had started Airfreight 50 years ago employing just 15 people — and his companies today employ over 4,000 people! "When in difficulty, say a short prayer," he advised, "the power of prayer is the foundation of a good life."

HPY this year registered its highest enrolment of 104 girls and 96 boys, coming from 60 schools, with 26 participants from places as far away as Burhanpur, Ooty, Mt Abu, Baroda, Panchgani, Bulsar, Surat, etc, according to Diana Marfatia, program coordinator, who is also the assistant principal cum counsellor of the BJPCI. Often called the BPP's stellar program, students enrol for a nominal fee of Rs 250 which includes lunch and a drink twice a day for the entire duration of the four-week course, a stationery folder, outdoor visits by chartered bus, etc. The BPP also arranges for free lodging and boarding for out-of-Bombay students who are unable to afford the expenses.

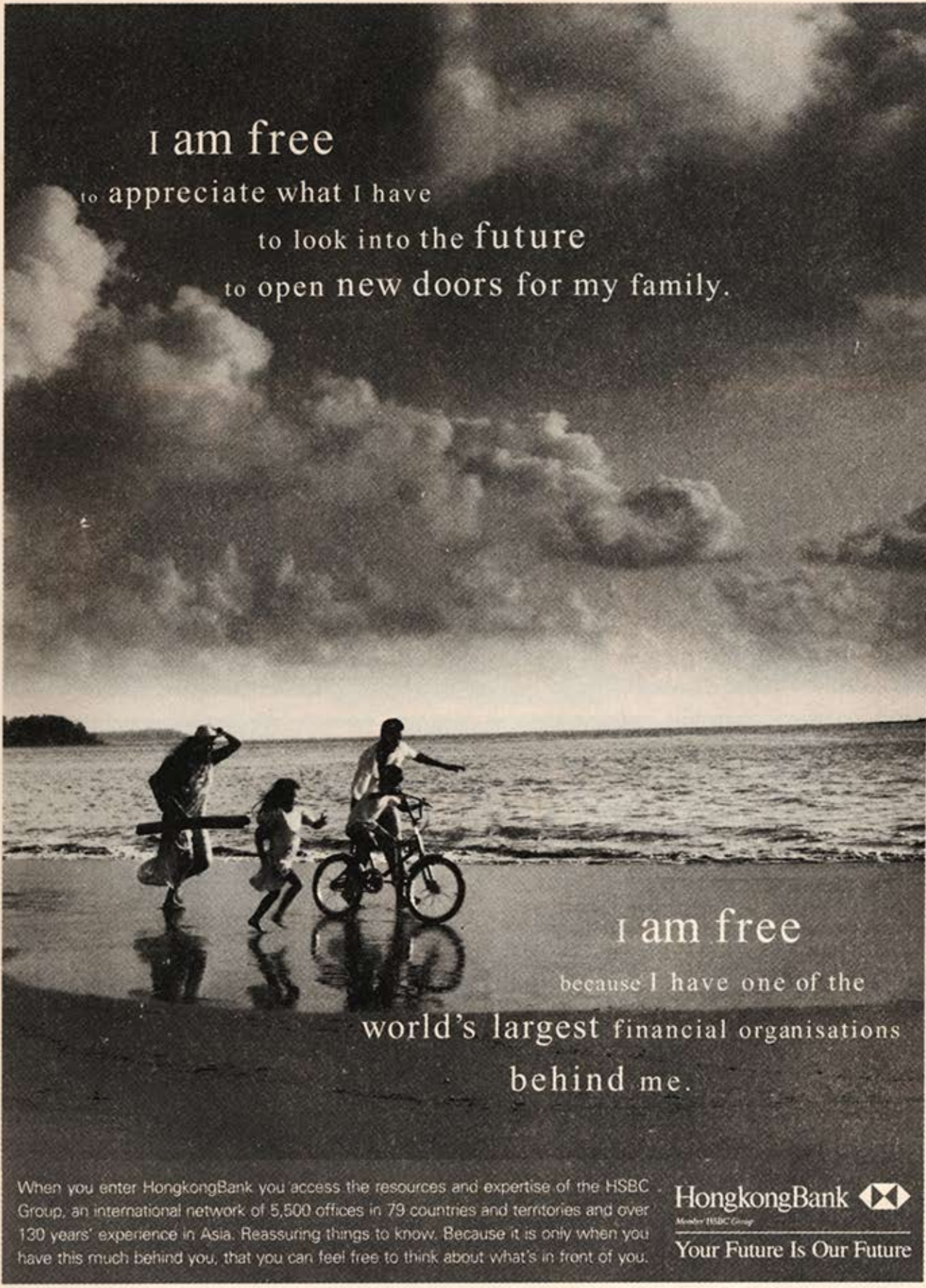
HPY seeks to harness the holiday energies of children who have just completed their standard ten examinations. Freshly unshackled from the rigors of school life, the adolescents participate in a gamut of enjoyable activities ranging from a fashion show, talent contest, dramatics, elocution and essay competitions to more serious talks on career options, lectures on Zoroastrianism, aptitude tests, etc. Games like football, cricket and throwball foster team spirit and healthy competition, while the children's social conscience is jogged

by visits to the Braille Press, the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), a blood donation drive, cleaning of an agiary, etc.

The program was kicked off on April 25, 1998 with ebullient BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz presiding over the inaugural function in the absence of Guzder who was out of town. Tirandaz laced his speech with generous doses of humor, often evoking exuberant applause from the youngsters. "I am a nobody who became a somebody," he quipped. Stating that he had received five to six pages of bio data ("I don't care a damn for bio datas") regarding the chief guest Dr Snehalata Deshmukh, vice chancellor of Bombay University, and guest of honor Dr Tehmtan Udwadia, Tirandaz proceeded to introduce them in his own inimitable style. "I have known her (Deshmukh) for 25 years... She is a pioneering pediatric surgeon, the dean of Sion Hospital who looks like a cherubic 21-year-old!" Referring to Udwadia as "the first name and last word in surgery," Tirandaz had no doubt that if he himself were to be operated upon, he would "choose Udwadia from any surgeon in the world!"

In her address, Deshmukh declared, "My presence here shows how much I love the Parsis and how much they love me as they have invited me." To the assembled students, she counselled, "Marks are not important to be a good human being. It is the way you behave with people that makes you a good human being. In this computer age, your brain is your super computer, so utilize it properly. Choose your profession carefully and practice it with devotion. May you be granted a ready hand and a watchful eye."

"As a schoolboy, I was more interested in athletics rather than arithmetic. When I passed my SSC, the results of student counselling showed that I could become a surgeon, pilot or author!" Udwadia recalled. Though he did become a surgeon, the strange part was, he



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said, that he took up flying and writing years later! Encouraging the teenagers not to be daunted by failure, Udwadia narrated stories of how even great men often failed at first. "Churchill failed in history in school, yet he made history... the great runner Jesse Owens as a child suffered from scurvy, rickets and bow legs." Udwadia advised parents not to hassle their children for higher marks and to spend more time with them on holidays. "I strongly believe in the strength, future and youth of our com-

munity. Our *Ashem Vohu* prayer tells us that righteousness is its own reward. Such a religion will always rise. You carry the genes of Darius and Cyrus the Great, Dadabhai Naoroji, Jamshetji Tata, Homi Bhabha and many others... The Parsi community will be more than fulfilled in your hands."

"Some of us see, but never look, hear but never listen... You have had a tough last two years in school. You will now become a number, a roll call, not a name in college. Accept your freedom with

At the inaugural: L to R (top row) Deshmukh, D. Marfatia, Chubb; (middle row) Tirandaz and Udwadia, Driver receiving a floral tribute with Tamboly and Kavarana alongside; (bottom row) a view of the audience, Deshmukh and Taleyarkhan with Marfatia at center Photos: C.C. Gandevia

responsibility, tolerance and understanding," prescribed Bapsy Chubb, principal of Cumballa Hill High School, speaking on behalf of the heads of par-



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At the valedictory function: L to R (top row) Mistry with proud winners Dadinath and Mistree and Irani and P. Marfatia; (middle row) Guzder congratulating Bharucha and Sachinvala, with Panthaky at left; (bottom row) Modi, Shroff and Sharma

Photos: C.C. Gandevia



ticipating schools.

Cheers greeted master of ceremonies Priya Bhujwala's announcement that the BJPCI, which already had a junior college in commerce and electronic science, would start a senior college in the commerce stream from June '98. The principal of BJPCI, Roshen Driver was also commended for her continued support to HPY, as the program was being conducted in the spacious heritage precincts of the Institution for the third year in succession.

The ever efficient and popular Marfatia, who received warm and re-

peated applause from the students and a golden memento of appreciation from Guzder, recorded her 12th year with HPY, the first two years as facilitator, the next 10 as coordinator. Anupama Sharma, assisting Marfatia for the first time as coordinator, commended Marfatia's "caliber, stamina and seniority." Dr Mehroo Bengalee and Rustom Anklesaria (former BPP trustee and chief executive respectively) were the architects of HPY, stated Sharma, and the BPP is its backbone, with present chief executive Behram Laskari and joint secretary Sherroo Master ("from

the beginning, the person in the background," lauded Tirandaz) being on the organizing committee with the coordinators and co-organizers. Lending support with their presence at the program were BPP trustees Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Tamboly, Dinshaw Mehta and Dadi Engineer.

Marfatia accorded special appreciation to the "head, heart and hands of HPY" — its co-organizers, ex-HPYites Bhujwala, Khorram Siodia, Fabian Panthaky and Vinifer Gandhi who were

continued on page 102

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"People are more religious after they migrate"

Researcher and historian Prof John Hinnells speaks of the varying perceptions of Zoroastrians around the world

Arnavaz S. Mama

Originally a New Testament specialist whose first love was football, John Hinnells set out to do his PhD thesis on the Zoroastrian influence on Biblical imagery at London University. "I enjoyed the Zoroastrians so much, I never got round to the Biblical bit," he laughs. Since then the peripatetic professor has become the Zoroastrian community's most diligent chronicler, historian, favorite speaker and friend. He could have assumed the role of a messiah but has determinedly stopped short: "Not for me as an outsider to say..." is an oft repeated phrase when he feels he is being drawn into community controversies.

In Bombay last January Hinnells gave three lectures at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. Based on his research for the Katrak Lectures which he gave at Oxford University a decade ago, Hinnells spoke from firsthand knowledge of the growth of the Parsi diaspora and its contemporary profile. He also gave a lecture under Zoroastrian Studies auspices on the Zoroastrian influence on Judaism and Christianity. In the course of his stay, he talked to *Parsiana* about the community's preoccupation with identity, the strengths and weaknesses, the educational lacunae and the emerging patterns.

He calls the survival of Zoroastrianism in Iran "one of the great miracles of religious history," ascribing it to the community's "incredible courage and determination... the strength of Iranian Zoroastrians (in the face of) physical and economic pressures." He sees some of those same qualities at play in the

readiness for change and innovation as reflected in the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) housing and counseling projects to meet the "fear of assimilation" in India.

A preoccupation with the question of identity is "inevitable" when a community is diminishing: "When there is a perception of being under threat, it is important to know what you stand for," notes the professor. More than at any other time in the world, it has become a global phenomenon due to migrations and "Parsis are not the only people to feel threatened by the American melting pot. The issue is a big one for Jews" and in England, for the Scots and the Irish. "Identity is becoming a bigger issue as people mix, mingle and migrate. It must be seen on a wider setting," he advises.

He refers to the dramatic speed of technological change in recent years which has made people everywhere feel insecure. For the Parsis, there is the additional change in milieu from British raj to republican India. Hinnells says, "Many Parsis feel they are no longer as influential, rich or dynamic. People feel vulnerable, insecure." Added to that is the "perceived threat to numbers." But Hinnells sees a strand of optimism. "A number of people feel secure in the Indian environment." An impression has been gaining ground over the past 15-20 years that the Bombay community is becoming more commercial than professional. The hypothesis is that "The business people are staying — the professionals are migrating."

Also, in the last 15 years there has

been a significant increase in community housing. "I am told more than 50 percent of Parsis live in charity housing colonies" in Bombay.

The last census showing an increase of about 6,000 among Parsis in India has also been a source of optimism. "People are feeling more confident about the numbers than they did in the 70s and 80s." However, the age structure being what it is, "it is inevitable that deaths will outstrip births... (As BPP social worker) Roda Pardivala's report implies, all these activities will not necessarily overcome the problem. Work pressures, economic considerations and social life (imply that) wherever they are, Parsis have small families. This is true in Pakistan, America, Britain, Australia." Hinnells believes this feature is a part of the process of urbanization and the increase in middle class families. "My hunch is that having Parsi baugs is more likely to preserve tradition." These provide a "support mechanism of living as a group." He contrasts the situation in Bombay with that of Zoroastrians in North America who are so spread out that there can be no support mechanism. "If you live in a big colony, it helps with marriage even though it may not lead to numbers."

Comparing contemporary Parsi perceptions with those of their earlier stay in India, Hinnells refers to the 19th century as the age of great Parsi confidence. Before that, in pre-British times Parsis felt secure in obscurity, living in relatively small worlds, by and large unthreatened by their Hindu hosts.

On the emerging societies of Central Asia, some of whom have claimed Zarathushtrian roots, Hinnells has "no firsthand opinion." Though he has heard reports of them he has met none of them



Hinnells: "found Parsis addictive"

personally and feels that "though their religion may go back to Zoroastrianism, it has changed so much that it may be questionable to think so."

Hinnells equates ritualism to devotion and feels the commonly used phrase "performing a ritual" is unfortunate. "If you use 'offering devotion,' it eliminates the unkind connotations," he suggests.

While in Bombay, Hinnells made a trip to the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar and "was genuinely impressed" with the boys. How many of them will go into full-time mobedi he is not sure, adding that the religious duties they learn to perform at the Madressa will probably be worth the effort even if none of them become professional priests. Nonetheless there are "more old priests than young priests (which) indicates substantial future problems." He says some people from North America had enquired if he would put up a course for young mobeds in London which could include a grounding in religious history with emphasis on Zoroastrianism, social and pastoral counseling and teacher training with psychology and economics as options. Hinnells found the suggestion interesting "because it shows the American

perception of what priesthood is all about." He would be willing to organize such a course once in three years provided there were enough students — six at a minimum. But he wonders who

"When there is a perception of being under threat, it is important to know what you stand for"

would pay for them as the British government would charge overseas student rates for the course.

Having studied the various Zoroastrian communities in the diaspora the first thing that Hinnells stresses is how different they are: The futuristic Boston community with its substantial student body has a young female president. This information produced "gasps in Hong Kong which is dominated by older men." In Vancouver there is need to balance Iranians and Parsis and there is more harmony now, he says, with its Persian section and *Shah Nameh* classes. He says he "didn't detect much tension

there." Houston has a large contingent of Parsis from Pakistan who are more traditional than Parsis from Bombay "perhaps because of Dastur Dhalla's religious education network. Religious education in childhood produces a different mindset. It seems to have equipped them for life in the diaspora," notes the professor. He also observes that when people have children they turn to the tradition. "People are typically more religious after they migrate than before. How they perceive the priorities of the religion may be different, but the commitment may be very very substantial."

Zoroastrians live in many more countries now than at any time in the religion's history, says Hinnells. In most places like the USA they are scattered since the towns are spread out and the groups are tiny. "There is a critical mass that any group needs to survive. By spreading the jam too thinly you could lose its flavor... Also, in the modern age with its process of globalization, the maintenance of tiny groups in isolation from each other is swimming against the tide of history," he says, suggesting a pooling of resources with the bigger groups like Bombay, London and

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Toronto supporting the smaller ones. For these reasons a world body is "a really good idea" and Hinnells hopes the community can "harmoniously resolve" what its nature should be.

Whereas a need for good educational material has been voiced at all the world conferences, there is still a dearth, opines the professor. Apart from Ava Mehta-Jamooji's book for children, *The story of the religion: Zoroastrianism*, and Khojeste Mistree's *A Zoroastrian Perspective* there are many other points of view that have not been expressed in readable form — a lacuna that must be filled "if you are going to equip your young people for the challenges of the modern world. A knowledge of history helps. I don't know how Zoroastrians are going to preserve their identity if they don't know who and what they are... This is especially true of Zoroastrians in the diaspora," says one who has "spent (his) career studying it" and is sad that "some Zoroastrians don't think their history and religion worth studying."

The curriculum of study would depend on age and educational levels, says the academician for whom "what matters even more is quality teaching"

for the teacher inspires more than the curriculum. Aware that what is appropriate for a university course may not be so for a community, Hinnells was all praise for the Sunday school teacher in Houston where he attended a class. "I was learning and enjoying. I don't think I've got anything to teach that teacher how to teach!"

That the youths are thirsty to learn became evident when president Noshir Irani of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales set up a session for Hinnells with the young people in Sydney. "There were no old people except me," recounts Hinnells. "The session began at 7. Dinner was brought in at 9. No one touched it till 12!" What Hinnells has learnt, and loses no opportunity to get across to the community, is that the young are enthusiastically religious though they are accused of ignoring their religion: "It is heartbreaking when their religiousness is broken by infighting."

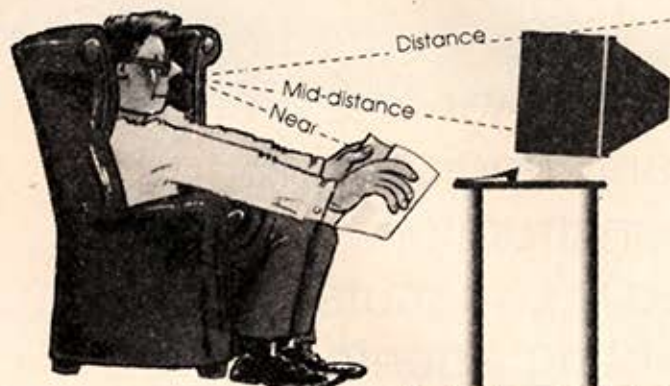
Though Hinnells is sceptical about the orthodox-liberal divide ever being bridged ("I think if it was bridged it would be the first religion to bridge it"), what's important is respecting somebody else's right to be different. "It's

terrible when the argument is so acrimonious and verbal fighting so intense that it alienates young people from the community... Putting a pen in the hand of a Parsi is a bigger threat than anything... You are not producing enough youngsters and you are frightening away the ones that are!"

The increasing frequency of congresses and conferences are a positive and welcome development according to this observer. "Meeting people is crucial to any society," he says and though "many conferences are talkshops, over the decades things do change... the housing policy in Bombay, the education policy in North America, networks for marriage, quite a bit of interaction about putting up new buildings and prayer-rooms. Even in 25 years much has changed — some of it due to these conferences."

Asked whether our diminishing community could ever bounce back to a positive growth rate Hinnells' reaction was a comparison with the Jews: "After the holocaust who would have thought of the state of Israel and that there would be more Jews active and powerful in the US? But there is the question of a critical mass. If you sink (in numbers) below a

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certain level, extinction becomes probable. If the scattered groups of Zoroastrians don't pull together... they may not be able to provide the critical mass."

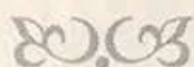
A student of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and King's College, Hinnells has a tremendous respect for Prof Mary Boyce: "She was the teacher who inspired me." He had started to specialize on ancient Zoroastrian material before he started meeting Parsis "and found them addictive." He says he is still in close touch with long time UK resident Cyrus Mehta, "the first Parsi I ever met. He and his family made a tremendous impression on me. They are really good people, very gentle, very loving, with family values that I could share... I admired his devotion to his religion."

Currently occupied with writing Volume II of the Katrak Lectures (Vol I was titled *Zoroastrians in Britain*) Hinnells is tracing the development of the Zoroastrian communities of Bombay, Karachi, Hong Kong, East Africa, Europe, Canada, USA and Australia through the period 1947-1990. Having been through their archives, this historical and social science survey he expects to complete by Christmas.

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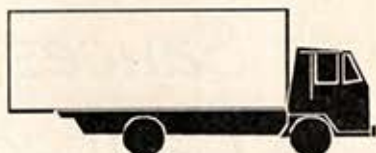
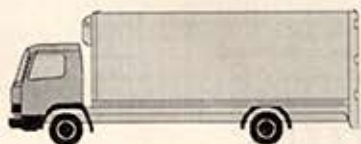
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Thereafter he hopes to concentrate on a joint project with Dastur (Dr) Kaikusroo JamaspAsa which began in 1970 — a history of the Parsis in British India.

The Hinnells — John and his late wife Marianne who succumbed to cancer two years ago — have two sons. Mark, 31, with a doctorate in environmental policy has a residential post at Oxford University where he heads a team to look at government policy following the Tokyo summit. Father and son share a love for football, cricket and photography. Duncan, 28, who has just finished his PhD has written his first book for the Oxford University Press on the musician Vaughan Williams and been commissioned to write another, says his father.

Having reached the top of the British academia as part of the SOAS faculty, Hinnells was considering a change. He had started his career by making his living as a painter and a teacher of art. Now he was thinking in terms of picking up drawing and painting again.

It wouldn't affect his relationship with the Zoroastrian community. "To me Zoroastrians have always been friendly, supportive," he says, adding, "I wish you'd treat your fellow Zoroastrians as you treat me."



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Carrying life to the soul

To enhance Udvada's popularity, efforts are on by the Youth Wing of the World Zoroastrian Organisation

Sarosh Bana

Far removed from the drudgery of city life, the 1,500-acre coastal village of Udvada stands as a forlorn reminder of the heyday of this minuscule community.

Situated 198 km north of Bombay on the southwestern coast of Gujarat, Udvada appears to have been caught in a time warp, its rustic houses and picturesque alleyways evoking nostalgia of a past when it was a thriving village inhabited by so many Parsi families that it boasted of three cricket teams comprising Parsi youths.

A village built around the most venerated shrine of the Parsis, the splendid Iranshah, Udvada is in imminent danger of becoming history if it is denied a chance to rejuvenate itself and attain some semblance of development that will motivate Parsis to resettle there.

The Youth Wing of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), India, has been concerned enough by this situation to have devised a comprehensive scheme to revitalize Udvada which can succeed only if the community's support and cooperation are forthcoming. We owe at least this much to Udvada, which is our most sacred pilgrim resort and the last real stronghold of Zoroastrianism in India.

The clergy (athornans) outstrip the laity (behdins) in number in Udvada which is a village based almost exclusively on ecclesiastical norms. According to Shapurji Kavasji Hodivala's *Pak Iranshah ni Tavarikh* (The History of Holy Iranshah), 1927, there were in 1927, 1,353 athornans inhabiting 230 houses in Udvada, while the behdins

numbered only 101 and lived in 40 houses. Of them, 481 were women, 446 men and the rest children.

Today, Udvada stands deserted. Hardly a hundred Parsis still live here on a permanent basis. The 1991 census

resist. Even the priesthood has been fragmented, there never being enough mobeds to perform the myriad ceremonies the Parsis are known for. Many have sold off their houses and joined their families elsewhere while others,

though not living in Udvada, still retain properties that have fallen into disuse and are in urgent need of repair.

In an attempt to turn the situation around, several Parsis have suggested that houses offered for sale in Udvada be purchased by Parsis so that they are retained within the community. Numerous such time-honored properties have been lost to the community because they have been purchased by non-Parsis as

not enough Parsis were informed about such sales. The WZO Youth Wing has listed such houses that are for sale in Udvada which can be purchased by those interested.

The newfound wealth of the non-Parsi locals, along with the prosperity generated in recent years by the setting up of the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) complex in Vapi, 10 km to the south of Udvada, has helped to better the lot of most of the non-Parsi inhabitants. And it is this very opportunity for work that can rehabilitate those Parsis who either live in desperate circumstances in unaffordable places like Bombay, or are keen on making a break with the past and starting afresh. The Youth Wing has surveyed the prospects of such job opportunities as well as nearby English medium convents and other reputed schools that can provide education for the children of those families intent on settling



Udvada's picturesque alleyway

Photo: Ashvin Mehta

registers Udvada's population at 5,284, exactly half of them men and half of them women. Scheduled Tribes (ST) make up 2,357 of the population and Scheduled Castes (SC), 358. The rest comprise Other Backward Castes (OBCs) such as tandels, manghelas and shaikhs.

Not one Parsi birth has been recorded here for the last two decades; the P. P. Mistry High School and the Zilla Prathamik Shikshak Samiti's primary school, with a total of approximately 1,700 pupils between them, do not have a single Parsi child on their rolls.

Mostly the aged and infirm Parsis remain in Udvada, a good many of them unmarried or widowed, their families and other relatives having ventured out to greener pastures where the lure of better pay-packets was too strong to

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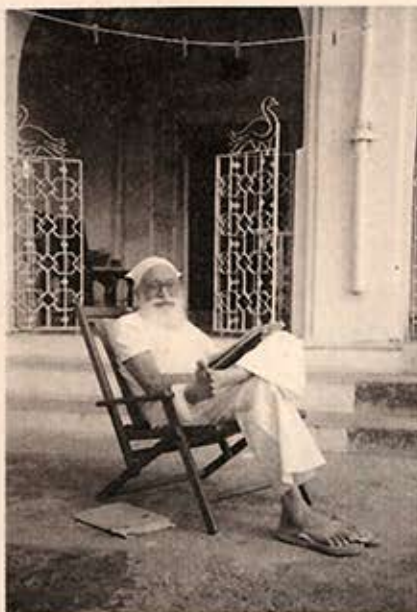
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Preserving the character and ethos of Udvada Photos: Sarosh Bana

there. Thus Udvada offers a ready haven to those Parsis keen on trying their hand at a new beginning in a wholesome environment free of urban encumbrances.

Though a picturesque village, Udvada is in the proximity of Bombay, Valsad, Navsari, Vapi and Dahanu and well connected by rail and road. Daman airport is just 15 km away, closer than Sahar airport is for most Bombayites.

A weekend visit of a 14-member fact-finding WZO Youth Wing team to the village on November 29-30, 1997, provided valuable insight into the present outlook of the residents as well as into the prevalent situation. Most of those spoken to were very enthused by the Youth Wing's plans and were of the view that something definitely needed to be done for the village before it was too late.

Udvada also has immense potential for developing into an affordable resort for retired or homeless Parsis. Indeed, some of the houses on sale may be converted into homes for the aged, though not necessarily for the infirm. The Damanvala dispensary, in good condition, is totally free for Parsis and there are no consultancy fees.

For the initial development of Udvada, it is necessary that small-time vocations such as agro-based activities, poultry-farming, gardening and tailoring be introduced. Also industrial units could be set up by Parsi entrepreneurs in the nearby union territory of Daman,



along the highway approaching Udvada, or even in Vapi for that matter, where members of the community can be gainfully employed and housed in the village. One instance of a highly successful enterprise has been that of young Sarosh Irani and his wife Kashmira who have set up a broiler farm close to the Udvada bazaar. Through dint of hard work and singular commitment, they have proved beyond doubt that this village holds out promise for even the younger folk.

The financial plight of the local Parsis is pathetic, many of them constrained to subsist on charity. There are also no trained people to look after the aged and the needy. There is scope to provide them with opportunities of livelihood by engaging them in cottage industries such as those encouraged at Bombay's Sir Ratan Tata Institute (RTI).

A commune may be fashioned out of available property — which can be purchased by a Parsi philanthropist for just such a venture — where the inmates can live together as in a home with boarding facilities and medical care on hand. There their individual skills or interests can find fulfillment in the making and selling of sudreh, kusti, topis, glass and plastic bead torans, chalk boxes, pugrees, daglis as also Parsi foodstuff and confectionery, and simple garments for religious functions and ceremonies. These could be sold to visiting Parsis in order to create employment for the locals.

One such plot where a commune of this nature can be established is that of King Hotel that once overlooked the



beach and now lies entirely dismantled. The owner is Pesi Patel who, living at Baug-e-Irانشah across the plot, is on the lookout for buyers.

Apart from King Hotel, Majestic and Regal Hotels too have closed down, all three once renowned for their cuisine, service, rustic charm and location. Their plots are up for sale.

An ambitious project called the Vahishtaad Residential Complex is being established on a plot of land behind Dastur Baug not far from the Irانشah. The complex will be the first of its kind in this village, boasting of a swimming pool and a club house, five bungalows, five row-houses, three penthouses, as well as 36 flats. This complex too offers an opportunity to those Parsis wishing to shift to Udvada permanently or for holidays.

The Youth Wing's desire to revive this moribund village is not the first expression of its kind. There have been, and indeed are, large numbers of Parsis both in India and abroad who cherish Udvada's return to its past stature so that it can provide a hospitable and liveable environment for those wishing to make this charming village their home. There are many who believe that for a community so intent on sustaining its traditions and character — referred to in our native Gujarati as Parsipanu — there needs to be at least one settlement identifiable with our religion.

The Youth Wing has also proposed occasional entertainment programs for the residents of Udvada as well as the visitors there. Those who can help in putting together such programs are ear-

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nestly requested to get in touch with us at the earliest.

The WZO Trust Funds have been assisting needy and disabled Parsis in the villages around Navsari and Surat in southern Gujarat for the past many years. There are a number of instances where the Trust has provided interest-free financial support towards self-employment in areas such as transport, poultry farming, cultivation, animal husbandry, flour mills, cycle repairs, forest nurseries, tea stalls, brick kilns, refrigeration, provision shops, kusti-weaving, electric stores, motor garages, and even sugarcane stalls and gobar gas plants. On January 6, 1998, it also inaugurated a home for the aged in Navsari. The Trust has covered 127 villages so far, assisting 283 families living there, and disbursed as much as Rs 1.82 crore up to the end of 1996.

If similar assistance were to be provided for Udvada, the village would have an excellent chance of survival. Under its mobed welfare program, the Funds at present give Rs 3,000 every quarter to 15 identified priestly families, and Rs 1,500 per head every quarter to 27 others in Udvada.

But all this requires finance and we earnestly urge all Parsis in India and abroad to please be generous in this cause. Do call on us for further information regarding the areas where your assistance can make a vast difference.

Though the Youth Wing intends to be the nodal agency to see its scheme through, the effort is stupendous and needs to be supplemented by all like-minded persons within the community.

The Youth Wing has a two-pronged approach: To create the required infrastructure, including work, educational, entertainment and residential opportunities, for the Parsis of Udvada as well as those desirous of settling down there; and to ensure the retention of Parsi-owned properties within the community and help in their maintenance and conservation.

With every death of an aged resident and with every rustic house that is pulled down to make way for an apartment block in Udvada, we witness part of a valuable heritage being wiped out before our very eyes. And with each such event, we imperil our own culture and edge it towards the brink.

Dasturji (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza of

Udvada has been extremely gracious in offering the WZO Youth Wing part of his family's Kayoji Mirza Hall in the heart of the village as a place for a permanent exhibition on Pak Iranshah and on Udvada. Indeed, Dasturji Mirza has also offered to put on display some of his family's own priceless heirlooms and other articles for the benefit of the viewers.

We are planning to set up this display with maximum help from those of you who may have old write-ups, articles, reports, anecdotes, photographs, memorabilia, artefacts, even memories, of Pak Iranshah or of Udvada village that you may have in your possession.

Those interested in knowing more about the Udvada Development Programme and in contributing their mite towards making this scheme successful may please contact Youth Wing members: president Sarosh Bana, 52, Bakhtawar, N. Dabholkar Road, Off Nepean Sea Road, Bombay 400006. (Tel: 3679717), Mancher Karbhary (8570601 or Pager 9622-312420), Mehernosh Dumasia (4013438), Poras Saklatwala (2654670) or Parvez Panthaky (Pager 9622-319221).

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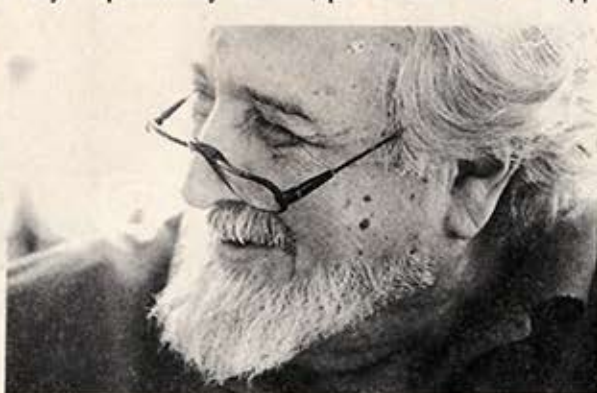
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A VOICE OF CONSCIENCE *continued from page 42*

In the early hours of March 22, a man broke into my house, came into my bedroom, and when I sleepily asked who he was and what was happening, with hand held over his mouth, he ordered me to go back to sleep. Switching on my bedside light, I asked why, having awoken me, he now wished me to sleep. He put off the light, hand still over mouth, hoarsely whispered "Paissa, paissa (money)." I had none, I said, but he could take whatever pleased him, and depart. Patting his midriff, he threatened, "Goli marega, goli marega (I'll shoot)." Go ahead, I told him. An inquisitive man, he wanted to know how I eat without money. My money is with my majordomo who feeds me. He could go downstairs, and rob him if he could. He then pulled out my telephone wire.

He rifled around the room, opening cupboards and drawers. Intrigued by my hat boxes in one cupboard, he wanted to know what they contained. My ceremonial Parsi puggies, I told him. Take them. In another cupboard were my

panama hats. How many hats do you wear, he asked? He fondled the CD player, the VCR, the receiver. He inspected my camera, put it back. Fid-



Cowasjee: three coincidences within three weeks

dling about on my dressing table, he picked up my gold signet ring and my watch, padded about a bit, and then left.

Not a usual occurrence, but not that unusual in this city devoid of law and order. The man was a junkie, I concluded, wanting money for a quick fix. On second thoughts, he was far too clean for the normal junkie, too well dressed, in a 'khadar' salwar-kameez.

The incident was filed away as a happenstance.

Whilst in Islamabad, I narrated this happening to my retired friend, Khan Roedad Khan, the longest-serving interior secretary of our country who glorified that office for nine years running. Secure in his knowledge and giving me a severe look, he told me not to take the matter lightly, it was an 'agency' intimidation ploy. How 'unlucky' do I take it, I asked? Shall I double my guard and oil my revolver?

Back in Karachi, after the March 25 hearing, due once again in the Supreme Court on

April 2, when a further lot of 'stormers' were to give their statements, I prepared a second affidavit attaching additional press cuttings in which names of the MNAs (Members of the National Assembly), the MPAs (Members of the Provincial Assembly) and the PML stalwarts were mentioned as having been present at the Court on November 28, and in which were printed photographs of certain prominent 'stormers.' We worked on this on the evening of March 31, prior to flying off to Islamabad on



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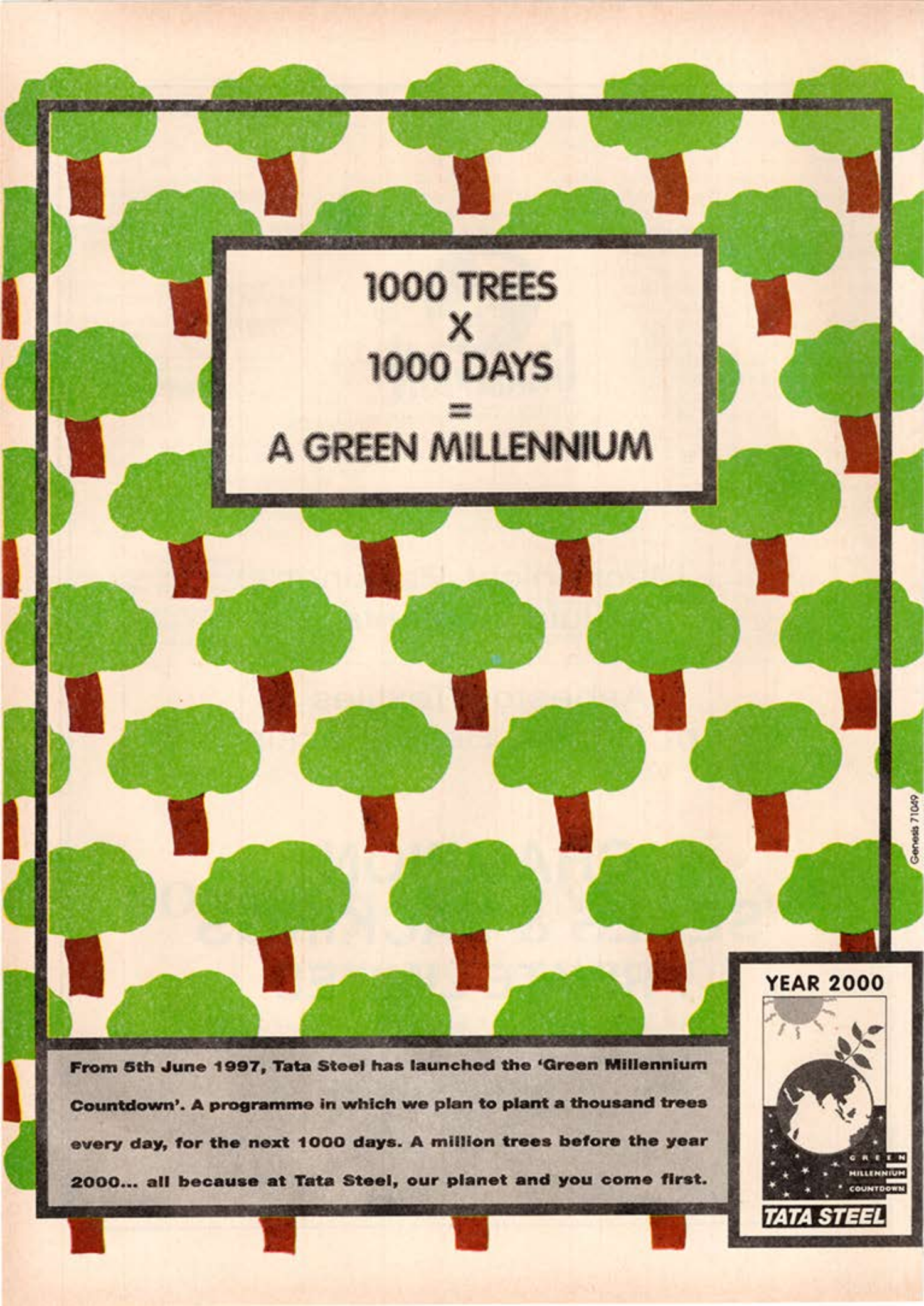
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“Who will teach the Zarathushtrian religion?”

To fund the university education of teachers of Zoroastrianism would be an investment in the community's welfare, notes the author

Malcolm M. Deboo

In the article “Mirror Images” (*Parsiana*, September 1997), Hilla P. Guzder quotes Ahmedabad-based artist Delna Khambatta:

“My parents from childhood instilled the proper values in their three children. I am proud to be a Parsi. The desire to wear a sudreh-kusti, to marry within the community, etc has to come from inside. Unfortunately, not all parents of the past generation have passed on their values to their children, hence the community is now faced with a problem of increasing intermarriage. Community property too has not been well looked after and a lot has been lost due to improper planning. On my visits to Bombay, whenever I see the beautiful baugs and so many other structures constructed by the Parsis of yesteryear as well as the statues of eminent Parsis, I feel renewed pride in our community.”

Having observed our community for a number of years, and also been active within my local community association in London, the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), I agree in principle with Khambatta's comment.

Our religion teaches us that our bad actions cannot be undone. But we certainly can learn from our individual and collective mistakes so as to ensure that we perform good actions in the future.

As a lay person I wonder, have we as a community forgotten what it is to be a Zarathushti? This process of erosion has not been sudden but has occurred gradually over a few generations. It can be argued that the identity crisis really started towards the end of the last century, when the British Raj was at its zenith, and what we are witnessing today is really the fallout of the changes that took place in our great grandpar-

ents' generation. This loss in Zarathushtrian belief has created a vacuum within all of us, which has led either to extremes in our Zarathushtrian practices or been filled by a belief in the value system that prevails in our surrounding environment, whether in India, Iran, Pakistan or the diaspora communities of the West such as the United Kingdom.

The question is, what can be done to ensure that we have a better tomorrow? The age old answer is education, on a basic simplistic level for children and adults, but using adult methods of education for the latter.

Using Delna Khambatta's “desire to wear the sudreh-kusti, to marry within the community” as two examples to extend the same education idea on the Zarathushtrian front, not only do the parents need to be textually aware, from the Zarathushtrian religious point of view, of the necessity to wear the sudreh-kusti, but it should be impressed upon them that they must wear the sudreh-kusti at all times and should be seen by their children to be performing their daily kusti prayers at a normal pace, not at 300 mph. Both the parents performing the ritual of the kusti prayers daily will automatically go part of the way of ensuring that the child too will wear the sudreh-kusti, because the child is already, prior to the navjote, being educated by observation. The other part of learning for the child as well as the parents is by formal religious education of a Zarathushtrian kind. The education pertaining to the sudreh-kusti example should cover subject matters on the origin and the correct make-up of the sudreh and kusti, the correct pronunciation and the meaning of the prayers, and which sections of our religious litera-

ture have been used to compile our kusti prayers. For instance, it was a mind-blowing experience when it was first impressed on me that the first two verses of the *Kemna Mazda* prayer are directly from the *Gathas*. Just imagine, everytime I untie my kusti I am reciting the very same words that were recited by Prophet Zarathushtra thousands of years ago! Later on when I was taught the meaning of the kusti prayers, once again it added a whole new dimension to my understanding of the sudreh-kusti ritual.

Here it is very important to impress especially on the parents, more than their children, to make time in their busy lives to acquire this formal religious education of a Zarathushtrian kind and at the same time it should be from qualified persons. Furthermore, that it takes years of learning to be familiar with any subject, therefore the parents should be willing to spend a good few years on once-a-week evening classes plus further reading, to get a fair grasp of our Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture. Then only they will see the need to send their children to such classes from a tender age, thereby giving them a head start, instead of erroneously prioritizing ballet and piano classes, etc.

Just as the desire to wear the sudreh-kusti has to come from within so must the desire to marry within the community. Formal religious education can create the initial desire to marry within the community. The growing phenomenon of mixed faith marriages in an urban environment like Britain concerns other religious minorities too, such as the Jews and even the Catholics who have over a million faithful in Britain alone. How do these communi-

ties tackle it? The mainstream Jews, of Britain, as part of their religious education are taught before they reach the age of 10, by qualified, religiously educated persons, not only how to read and recite the *Torah* in Hebrew, but also the impact of mixed faith marriages for the future well-being of the Jewish religion, heritage and culture. They are reminded of these facts by rituals during their numerous festivals, where the participation of the family unit is all important, bearing in mind that rituals were developed to complement the religious theology.

The reformists and liberal counterparts acknowledge mixed faith marriages, but their rabbis in Britain generally tend not to perform such a marriage nor religiously bless such a union, although they would be willing to bless the house of the newly married couple. It should be stressed that this message is conveyed in an educational manner by qualified personnel, unlike in our case where too often the emotionally super-charged subject of mixed faith marriage is conveyed with racial and bigoted overtones by unqualified persons and tend to make many of us cringe with disgust.

Sadly, Zarathushtrians tend to obtain their formal religious education

from unqualified quacks. The reason is simple. Our community, at the dawn of the third millennium of the Christian era, faces a dire shortage of teachers who are adequately, never mind prop-

There is no career outlet for teachers of Zarathushtrianism in our community

erly, qualified in Zarathushtrian religious education, a shortage which is even greater than the shortage of full-time properly qualified mobeds. Here I would urge the reader to pause for a few seconds and calculate how many Zarathushtrians under 40 do we have today, who have a degree education in a subject which is even remotely related to the Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture? One will be hard pressed to find even a handful! This is reflected in the quality of the leadership of our anjumans and associations not only in India but in the UK and globally. When is the last time during trusteeship and management position elections that we

heard or read in the bio data that the person who wants to become our leader is familiar with the Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture?

In my opinion, the reason for this shortage is primarily financial. To be precise, there is no career outlet for teachers of Zarathushtrianism in our community. The result is that the Zarathushtrian religious community is losing out.

How can this malaise be rectified? In my opinion, a career path needs to be created, so as to invest in candidates who show interest in this field of religious education, by sponsoring them from school leaving age, to university education and beyond. Why beyond? Because no employer in the secular world would employ a person who has got a degree in Avestan studies to fill a vacancy which requires to be filled by a doctor, lawyer, engineer or an accountant. When is the last time one read in the jobs section of *The Times of India*, or any other paper, "Wanted a professionally qualified person in Avestan-Pahlavi?" Thus the only avenue for holders of such degree, besides universities, will be within community organizations. By sending such persons on a



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CONCEPT

further course such as management of charities, social work, data analyzing, etc our community organizations such as the punchayets could have a dynamic ready-made professional work force. Naturally, they should be paid on par with other professionals with degree qualification such as doctors, lawyers, engineers and accountants. An employer who pays his workers peanuts gets monkeys. I would consider such sponsorship not as dole money, but as an investment.

Thus I would urge like-minded people in their respective anjumans, many of whom are in the wealth creating business, to sow the seeds now, by investing in endowment funds that will assist in producing qualified teachers of Zarathushtrian religious education for tomorrow. It took only one K. R. Cama at the turn of the last century, to encourage individuals such as the likes of J. J. Modi to study, thus becoming a 'Cama Scholar' par excellence of the Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture. And didn't J. J. Modi work as a secretary of the BPP (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) thus providing immense service not only to the trustees who, like today, more often than not were not familiar with Zarathushtrianism, but

also to humanity at large? His book *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* is still used as a basic text in undergraduate and doctorate degree courses of Zarathushtrianism even at British Universities.

Like Delna Khambatta, I am fortunate to have parents who sent me to have my basic education in Zarathushtrian schools, thus creating a desire to learn more. Furthermore, by the grace

The first two verses of the *Kem na Mazda* prayer are directly from the *Gathas*

of Ahura Mazda, I have managed to find teachers, who in my opinion have been qualified, and thus been able to guide me on the textual path for the study of the Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture. If people like Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Manekji Hataria and others like them were able to achieve their aims and objectives against all odds then so can we of the present

generation who will be the torchbearers of our Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture tomorrow.

Being an optimist, I believe the tide is turning! Here it would be appropriate to congratulate philanthropists like the Zartoshty Brothers who have raised the profile of Zarathushtrian religious education globally by donating handsomely for this specific cause. Another group that deserves our full praise are the front-line children's teachers of the Zarathushtrian religion such as Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia, the young principal of the Athornan Madressa, Shernaz Munshi, Firoza Punthakey-Mistree and others of Zoroastrian Studies, including Khojeste himself, who week after week voluntarily go to various schools in Bombay to teach their young pupils about our Zarathushtrian religion, heritage and culture. Not only should these people be supported, both in terms of finance and human resources, but more importantly the hurdles put in their way by individuals and groups with vested interests should be removed. We can ensure a better tomorrow if the next generation observes the encouragement given to teachers of Zarathushtrian religious education today.

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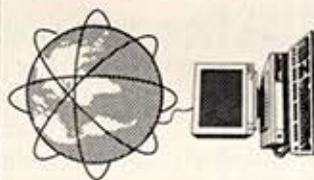
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Bringing light into darkness

The services of the renowned ophthalmologist Sir Jamshedji Duggan are recalled on his 40th death anniversary

Hormazdiar J. M. Desai

"Individual blindness must be looked upon as a national calamity." These words, spoken by Sir Jamshedji Duggan in his welcome address at the sixth conference of the All India Ophthalmological Society, reiterated the commitment of one of the world's most reputed eye surgeons to his profession.

His concern for the blind was unflagging. The prevention of blindness was for him not only a professional challenge but also a social responsibility which had to be fulfilled to his satisfaction. And to that end he spared himself nothing.

The Sir Jamshedji Duggan Eye Bank — the first of its kind in India — was inaugurated by Vijayalaxmi Pandit, the then governor of Maharashtra in 1963, five years after the demise of this awesome, ambidextrous surgeon. Generously funded by Lady Jena Duggan (whom Jamshedji had married in 1914) this eye bank has been emulated all over the country and blind patients today have access to many such establishments.

In his lifetime, honors and awards accrued to Duggan thick and fast. In recognition of his meritorious services, the then British government gave him an OBE (officer of the Order of the British Empire) in June 1929, CIE (Companion of the Indian Empire) in June 1933, and knighted him in January 1935. No other professional from India (certainly not an ophthalmologist) had received such recognition from his alien rulers in such a short spell of time.

In 1929, the Ophthalmological Society of Egypt elected Duggan as its honorary member, a rare distinction conferred barely on 13 or so of the world's best ophthalmologists. As his fame in the world spread, many distinguished persons from abroad came to him for consultation and eye surgery. For students, it was a treat to watch this wizard operating. His reputation also attracted rulers of the then native states, governors and other high-ranking dignitaries who entrusted their precious eyes to him for treatment.

Duggan, who kept in touch with all advances in his chosen field, was always the first in India to introduce new ideas and methods and appliances, and never lost his human touch.



Duggan: pioneering eye surgeon

Born in Bombay on April 8, 1884, Duggan had a distinguished academic career in the course of which he won several prizes and scholarships. He joined the Sir C. J. Ophthalmic Hospital in March 1906 as its clinical registrar. The post of tutor in ophthalmology was created in 1908 and Duggan was appointed as the first tutor. In June 1912 he received a diploma in ophthalmology from the Oxford University. Duggan officiated as the ophthalmic surgeon at the Sir C. J. Ophthalmic Hospital, and as professor of ophthalmology at the Grant Medical College in 1918, and again from 1920 onwards till he retired in April 1939. On his retirement he was appointed consulting ophthalmic surgeon to the hospital.

As the science of ophthalmology made tremendous progress and as Duggan was anxious to keep abreast of it, he ap-

proached Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Second Baronet, (whose father's generosity had brought the C. J. Ophthalmic Hospital into existence), and was successful in getting adequate funds for raising the present commodious three-storeyed building in the corner of the J. J. Hospital compound in Bombay. The Hospital is now fitted with the best and most modern equipment and affords facilities for post-graduate studies.

Associated with the University of Bombay as its fellow from 1918 onwards and as examiner in ophthalmology for the MBBS and the Doctor of Optometry (DO) examinations for a number of years, Duggan was elected the dean of the faculty of medicine of the Bombay University in 1929; as fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons (FCPS) in 1918; and member of the college council, vice president and finally president in 1934-35. He held these high offices with great distinction.

Duggan was instrumental in instituting the ophthalmology diploma in Bombay University on the same lines as the diploma given by the Oxford University. He also introduced the medicine and surgery diploma for the benefit of licentiates.

Throughout his distinguished career, Duggan played a significant role in promoting the rehabilitation of the blind. He was one of the founder members of the All India Blind Relief Association. He also assisted the late Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwala, Bar-at-law, himself blind, in founding the National Association for the Blind on January 19, 1952, of which he was the vice president till his death.

In his revered memory, this Association now runs the Sir Jamshedji Duggan Braille Press located in its beautiful building at Worli Seaface, Bombay. This Press caters to the educational needs of blind students not only from India, but also from several countries abroad where Indians have settled. The Braille Press prints school and college text books, maga-



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zines and other literature which keep the blind apprised of modern global advances and entertains them with light reading material.

Sir Duggan was particularly noted for his interest in the blind coming from remote rural and semi-urban areas. He devoted to the poor the same personal attention and time that he gave a millionaire. And though a strict disciplinarian, his transparent sincerity and human approach to all problems made him popular with all.

Here is a typical example: Acharya Vijay Vallabha Suriswarji, religious head of the Jain community lived as a blind person for over six years. He had his sight restored after an operation performed by Duggan. As a mark of their gratitude, the Jain community of Bombay presented an address to Duggan in October 1952.

Duggan was a member of the Medical Council of India; member of the Rotary International and its president in 1932-33; a major in the Indian Medical Service (IMS) and thereafter a colonel, which rank he was permitted to retain even after his retirement because of his magnificent work in the IMS. He was also a justice of peace as far back as 1916, and was made

honorary presidency magistrate in 1918. He was chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society.

Not many today know that Duggan was the first superintendent of the prestigious Tata Memorial Hospital for cancer patients. This is how it came about: The late J.R.D. Tata and the late Sir Ardeshir Dalal persuaded Duggan, on his retirement from the Sir C. J. Ophthalmic Hospital, to give the benefit of his professional expertise and vast and varied experience as organizer and administrator, to the planning and development of this first ever cancer hospital in Asia.

Duggan excelled at picking the right man for the right job. He selected such exceptionally capable and outstanding professionals as the late Dr J. C. Paymaster, Dr E. Borges, Dr Dady MeherHomji and Dr D. J. Jussawala. They were trained under specialists and gave a magnificent start to the Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital and developed it to its present international stature. Thus Duggan's pioneering work has immensely benefitted patients from all over Asia.

As long as suffering and blindness exists, this eminent ophthalmologist will be remembered with gratitude and esteem.



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The shape of the sudreh should not be dependent on one's whims and the weather

Curset M. Patel

Are you wearing the correct sudreh? What do you mean? Is there a wrong sudreh also, someone may ask. Yes, there is. Mini-sudreh, sleeveless sudreh, low-cut sudreh, *girda* (nape piece)-less sudreh, without *tiri* sudreh, etc. This question is for those who are orthodox, or think and call themselves orthodox or religious-minded individuals wearing the sudreh and not for those Parsis who do not believe in sudreh, or are not wearing the same. They will have much to pay for and a long way to go in the end.

Let's put them aside (as we say in Gujarati, *abrai per muki-devo*). Here we are concerned with those who believe in it, but consciously or unconsciously, knowingly or unknowingly, wear a sudreh which sometimes is too ridiculous for words.

First of all, 60 to 70 percent of persons who stitch the sudreh are to be blamed. They themselves do not know that the sudreh should be of nine seams, and as far as possible should be stitched by hand and not by machine. Its *gireban*, the tiny bag-like receptacle over the chest, should be at a certain place according to individual measurement. Sudreh *tiri* — small vertical seam, two right angled triangular seams — should be at the right or left side according to the gender of the person. *Girda* should be there on all sudrehs compulsorily etc, not to mention the length of the sleeves of the sudreh itself.

The mini-mini sudreh mainly worn by the ladies must be seen to be believed. Just a thin strip of mulmul running from the shoulder downwards, having a low *gireban*, and the cloth going over the bosom and ending just

underneath the breast in order to fit in the *choli* (blouse). Naturally this will not have any *girda* or sleeves at all. Can one call this a sudreh? Yet, the wearer of it proudly says: "Oh yes! I always wear the sudreh, I am orthodox."

One would think that the passion for fashion is associated with the ladies only, but that is not so. The last half of the 20th century has brought in with a bang their counterpart males. Sleeveless sudreh, small sleeve sudreh, just below the waist sudreh, sudreh which narrow down (so as not to make a bulge with the shirt tucked into the pant), etc.

In fact the sleeve of the sudreh should be broad with its end touching the elbow, which was cut in half to begin with. It then became sleeveless, but now they have not stopped there: they feel hot, hence we have the sudreh which runs down the shoulder with a big arc up to the front ribcage, whereby half its front and rear portions are not there at all. The true length of the sudreh, in its sublimity, should be touching the knees.

Let us be frank, one sees very few persons wearing such a sudreh as a rule. A few wear it on important days and occasions, or when they pray. The rest wear it at a reasonable length which goes half way to the thighs. But some fashionable ones are only up to the hips, and do not

even cover the groin. Can one call this a sudreh?

Over 60 to 65 percent of Parsis do not know about the *tiri*, the two side seams. Some do not have the *girda* at all, which is of importance in the sudreh, denoting that we have come with the weight of obligations from our past life, to be fulfilled in this life by the observance of Zoroastrian disciplines. This load we have to bear — the *girda* reminds us of that. The reason for this stupid omission is not understood.

Where, oh where is the real sudreh the prophet Zarathushtra gave us of nine seams, long down to the knees, with full blown sleeves up to the elbow, of *gireban* over that part of the body where the individual's own *ravan* is now sleeping (10th plexus of the *kehrp*), with *girda*, *tiri*, etc?

The sudreh should be made from one whole length of white cotton cloth and have nine seams: the nape piece or *girda*; tiny bag-like piece over the chest or the *gireban*; front and rear main parts; two sleeves up to the elbow; parallel seams; two triangular seams. The sudreh length should extend from the neck to the knees, and be completely circular at the bottom.

The sudreh should not be treated like other garments that may be altered according to the whims and fancies of a fashion designer.

Prophet Zarathushtra prescribed the sudreh of a specific material, design, color and shape, in doing which he has, as it were, reduced the very macrocosm of the universe into the microcosm of the sudreh.

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Dating Zarathushtra

There is a divergence of opinion regarding the century in which Zarathushtra spread his message

Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw

Why is so little known about the early history of the Zarathushti religion? Perhaps it is because of its antiquity, its lack of written tradition, the repeated destruction of its texts, or because of a combination of all these factors that there is such a dearth of information on the origins of the Zarathushti religion. This lack of definitive data has led to a great deal of speculation; none more so than that regarding the time and place of its Prophet Zarathushtra.

At the outset it may be stated that there is no information contained in the *Gathas*, the hymns composed by Zarathushtra himself, which specifically mentions either the time or the place of its composition. In fact, even the extant younger Avestan texts, which include the *Yasna*, the *Yashts*, the *Vendidad* and miscellaneous fragments, provide little help in placing or dating Zarathushtra. Needless to say, these texts have been analyzed in detail by numerous scholars who have tried to deduce from their contents a time and place for the Prophet. Of course, these deductions have led to dates for Zarathushtra varying not only over decades or even centuries, but over millennia, and give a place for Zarathushtra ranging from western Iran and Azerbaijan all the way eastwards to Afghanistan.

Knowledge of the early chronology of the Zarathushti religion is critical to developing an accurate understanding of the *Gathas*. Without it, one is left with conflicting opinions and confusion. Ilya Gershevitch (1995 "Approaches to Zoroaster's *Gathas*," *Iran*, Vol XXXIII, pg 1) in fact, states that this chaos is "due mainly to neglect of the compass fixing the four cardinal points of the Gathic horizon... The four cardinal points, all of course equally cardinal are: one, the authorship of the *Gathas*, two, the time of their composition, three, the space, geographical, where they were composed, and four, the gist of what they

are saying."

This article will not attempt to review all the four cardinal points outlined by Gershevitch, but rather it will be limited to reviewing only the materials related to the date and place of the Prophet. Since various dates and locations have been proposed for Zarathushtra, only a few of the more important are mentioned here. It is by no means a complete review; it is merely meant to give readers an idea of the vast divergence of opinions regarding Zarathushtra's time and place, and hopefully to inspire the more conscientious to research the details for themselves.

The dates for Zarathushtra, commonly found in the literature, range from approximately 6500 BC to about 600 BC. For the sake of convenience, we can categorize them into three groups:

- The earliest dates, mainly from Greek sources, placing Zarathushtra around 6000 BC.
- Dates that place Zarathushtra typically at a time between 1600 BC and 700 BC.
- The 'traditional date' of Zarathushtra, which places him 258 years before Alexander, or some time in the sixth century BC.

Around 6000 BC

In general, the very early Greek dates are no longer recognized as having any historical validity. For a more complete compilation of the Greek and Roman texts which include references to the date of Zarathushtra, see *Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran* by A.V.W. Jackson (1899, Appendix II and VI) and the English translation of these texts given in "Passages in Greek and Latin relating to Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism" by Fox, W. Sherwood and R. E. K. Pemberton (1928), *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, Vol 14.

Diogenes Laertius quoted Xanthus of Lydia (fifth century BC) as stating that Zarathushtra lived 6,000 years be-

fore Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont (an event which took place in 480 BC). In another copy of the manuscript the time between Zarathushtra and Xerxes is given as 600 years. This would put Zarathushtra at either 6480 BC or at 1080 BC. Shahpur Shahbazi ("The Traditional Date of Zarathushtra Explained," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol 40, No 1, 1977, pp 34-35) interprets the latter date as the more credible, since it agrees with his own hypothesis.

However, Gershevitch (1995, pp 10-12) believes that the correct number in the manuscript should neither be 6,000 years nor 600 years, but rather 60 years before the crossing of the Hellespont, which would put Zarathushtra at about 540 BC, a time more in agreement with the "traditional date" of Zarathushtra.

Note that this is but one example where different scholars have found solace in different numbers which they have used to help prove their own hypotheses.

Pliny the Elder quoted Eudoxus, a pupil of Plato (fourth century BC), as saying that Zarathushtra lived 6,000 years before the death of Plato (348 BC), which in turn would put Zarathushtra at about 6350 BC.

Laertius, in the third century AD, quoting Hermodorus (who lived in the third century BC) dated Zarathushtra as living 5,000 years before the fall of Troy (which took place about 1200 BC). This would place Zarathushtra at about 6200 BC. This same date was also given by Pliny the Elder (first century AC) when he quoted Hermippus (who lived about 250 BC).

Between 1400 BC and 700 BC

There are numerous scholars who have proposed dates for Zarathushtra, basing their deductions or inferences on various factors contained in the *Gathas* and the later Avestan literature. In general these dates range between 1400 BC and 700 BC.

Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza in his book *Outlines of Parsi History* (1987, pp 361-366) reviews the 'traditional date' and various Greek dating assigned to the time of Zarathushtra. Then, based on the Greek evidence, he "assigns very high antiquity to Zarathushtra and shows that Zarathushtra must have appeared not

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later than 6000 BC.

Mary Boyce in *A History of Zoroastrianism* (1989, pg 190) states that both the 'traditional date' of 258 years before Alexander, and the early Greek dates placing Zarathushtra at about 6000 BC, are based on erroneous calculations and that "no reliable tradition exists about this." She then goes on to state that: "In the absence of any sound external evidence, therefore, it seems natural to conclude that the prophet lived some time between 1400 and 1000 BC."

Thomas Burrow in his article (1973, "The Proto-Indoaryans," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp 136-139) uses a different approach to dating Zarathushtra. He develops a line of logic based on two factors:

- The time of the migration of the east Iranians (who first adopted the Mazdayasnan religion of Zarathushtra) into central and western Iran; which he sets at 900 BC.

- The fact that the *Farvardin Yasht* was written before this migration took place. In the *Farvardin Yasht*, the names of some of the early converts to the faith are stated, and include the family of a Saena, the first teacher of the Zarathushti religion, to have 100 pupils. Three sub-

sequent generations of Saena's descendants are also named. Now, placing Saena at 100 years after Zarathushtra, and assigning 30 years per generation to the three generations following Saena, Burrow arrives at an interval of 200 years from the time of Zarathushtra to the writing of the *Farvardin Yasht*.

Adding these 200 years to the date of the migration (900 BC) he arrives at the date of 1100 BC as the very latest, for the founding of the Zarathushti religion. He, in fact, states that it is very likely that this date could be even earlier, by as much as another century.

Thus, Burrow would place Zarathushtra in the period between 1200 and 1100 BC.

Shahbazi first explains the genesis of the 'traditional date of Zarathushtra' of 258 years before Alexander, and then goes on to show that it "must therefore be regarded as wholly unhistorical, the product of scholastic combinations which cannot be older than the Parthian period. It must be emphasized that neither its attestations in certain old works based on Sasanian sources, nor its acceptance for a time by some Zarathushti scholar-priests, proves the authenticity of this tradition." (1977, pg 34).

Shahbazi then goes on to present his own dating for Zarathushtra. Citing al Biruni, Shahbazi states that the Khwarezmians in establishing their 'national' era, adopted the coming of Siyavush as the event to mark that date. This event the Khwarezmians held to be 888 years before Alexander, or about 1200 BC (=888+331). Now, in the *Shah Nameh*, Siyavush is four generations removed from Zarathushtra. Again, assigning 30 years per generation, this gives a period of 120 (=4x30) years between Siyavush and Zarathushtra. Shahbazi hence places Zarathushtra in 1080 BC (=1200-120).

Gherardo Gnoli in his very exhaustive work: *Zarathushtra's Time and Homeland* (1980) devotes a chapter to Zarathushtra's time (pp 159-179). He spends the greater part of the chapter to disproving the 'traditional date' as being too late. This chapter, like Shahbazi's work gives an excellent review of the bases for the 'traditional date,' and he then goes on to state why he feels that it is invalid.

Gnoli does propose that the time and homeland for Zarathushtra "be placed between the end of the second and the beginning of the 1st millennium BC in

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eastern territories of the Iranian Plateau (pg 177)." He bases his arguments for this dating in large part to the radical social and cultural differences between the Gathic and Achaemenian societies. The Gathic society is based on a tribal and patriarchal society, dependent on stock-raising and elementary agriculture; while the Achaemenian society is a worldwide monarchy, with a developed economy based on trade and an advanced monetary system.

Note: Gnoli has recently retracted this date, and is now supporting the 'traditional date.'

Dastur M. N. Dhalla in the *History of Zoroastrianism* (1938, pg xxxi) states in two very curt sentences: "The time when Zarathushtra flourished is a moot question. The approximate date at which he lived is 1000 BC."

Between 754 BC to 558 BC

The 'traditional date' of Zarathushtra is taken to be 258 years before Alexander (330 BC) or 558 BC (=330+258). It is referred to as the 'traditional date' because it is mentioned in some of the Pahlavi texts, and also referred to by 10th and 11th century Islamic scholars, as the date ascribed to Zarathushtra by

the Zarathushtrian clergy (al Biruni, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, Edward Sachau translation, 1897, pg 17).

While at first glance this appears to be a very precise date, there is considerable uncertainty in it. For example, does this date refer to Zarathushtra's birth; the date of his receiving his revelation from Ahura Mazda (at the age of 30); the date of his converting Kavi Vishtasp to the 'Good Religion' (at the age of 42); or to his death (at the age of 77)? Also "before Alexander" begs the question, before Alexander's conquest of the Persians, or his death?

The number 258 years itself, appears to have been derived from the *Bundahishn* chronology (Behramgore Anklesaria, *Zand-Akasihi: Iranian or Greater Bundahishn* 1956, pg 307) which gives a 90-year rule for King Vishtasp (who was converted to the 'Good Religion' by Zarathushtra), 112 for Vohuman, his successor, who was followed by Humay for a 30-year rule, by Daray-i Chihrazatan for 12 years and by Daray-i Darayan for 14 years, or $(90+112+30+12+14=258)$, Daray-i Darayan being Darius III, the last Achaemenian king, who was defeated by Alexander.

Another reference to the 'traditional date' is in the *Arda Viraf Namak* (AVN) where there is variation on the date of "258 years before Alexander." The AVN, in Chapter 1, gives a date for Zarathushtra as 300 years before Alexander (Dastur Hoshang Jamaspji Asa and Martin Haug, *The Book of Arda Viraf*, 1971, pg 141). There are two apparent explanations for the date of 300 years before Alexander:

- That it is a rounding up of the number 258, and

- That if one subtracts from 300 the age of Zarathushtra when he converted Kavi Vishtasp (42), one gets 258 (=300-42), which is the 'traditional date.'

The 'traditional date' has also been referred to by two Islamic chronologists: al-Masudi (10th century AD) and al Biruni (late 10th early 11th century AD).

Numerous scholars have argued in favor of this traditional dating, specifically: Hildegard Lewy (1944), Sayyid Taqizadeh (1947), Walter Henning (1951) and most recently Ilya Gershevitch (1995).

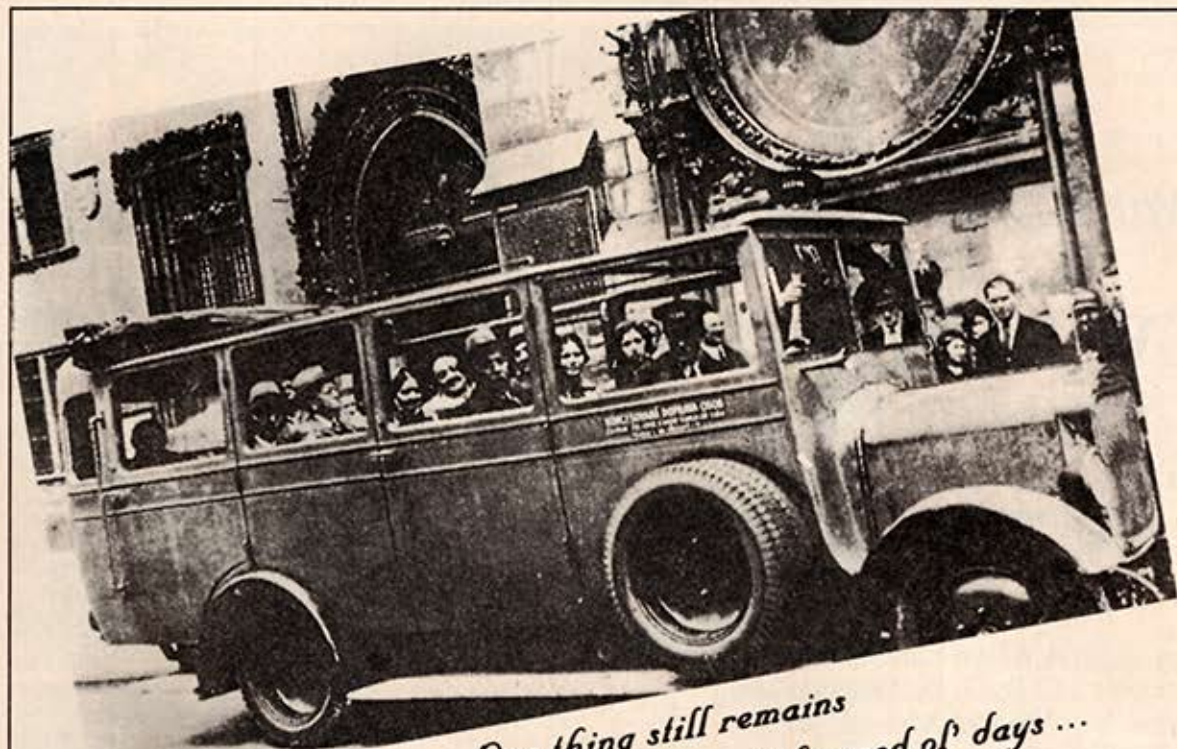
Arguing equally fervently against this 'traditional date' as being too late in time, are: Shahpur Shahbazi (1977),

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Gherardo Gnoli (1980), Helmut Humbach (1991) and Mary Boyce (1989).

Otakar Klima (1959, "The Date of Zoroaster," *Archiv Orientalni*, Vol 27, No 4, pp 557-558) uses a variation of the 'traditional date' to develop his dating. Taking the same *Bundahishn* chronology given above, and associating Daray-i Chihrazatan with Darius the Great, whose rule started in 522 BC, Klima adds 232 years ($=90+112+30$) to the starting date of Darius' rule to obtain the date of Zarathushtra as 754 BC ($=522+232$).



Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw is director of environmental safety and health at Pennzoil Company. He was a co-chairman of the Second North American Gatha Conference, in Houston, Texas, in August 1996, and served as editor of the Proceedings of that Conference. Manekshaw is also the Houston vice-chairman of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in the year 2000.

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A place for the Prophet

Whether it is eastern Iran or Azerbaijan, different regions have been postulated as the homeland of Zarathushtra

Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw

Just as there are numerous hypotheses for the date of Zarathushtra's birth, with these dates varying in time over a range of millennia, so too there are numerous hypotheses for the place of Zarathushtra's birth, with locations varying spatially over thousands of miles. These numerous and wide-spread claims have made it difficult to pin-point Zarathushtra's birthplace with any degree of certainty. This uncertainty has been further compounded in the past 150 years by various scholars, each strongly championing a different location, usually by concentration on discreet pieces of information from either the Avestan, Pahlavi or Greek literature.

In addition to the birthplace of Zarathushtra, there is also the question

regarding the land of Vishtaspa, the first king to accept Zarathushtra's new message. Zarathushtra was driven out of his original homeland, persecuted by his own people and frustrated by his failure to win over converts to his cause (*Yasna* 46:1: "To what land shall I go, whither to flee? From nobles and my peers they sever me, nor are the people pleased with me... nor the liar rulers of the land.") He then wandered through different lands until he found refuge with and a willing ear in Vishtaspa. Here the birth of the religion took place, and thus, to an extent, Vishtaspa's homeland, too, has had special significance to Zarathushtis, since it was from this area that Zarathushtra's mission started spreading throughout Iran.

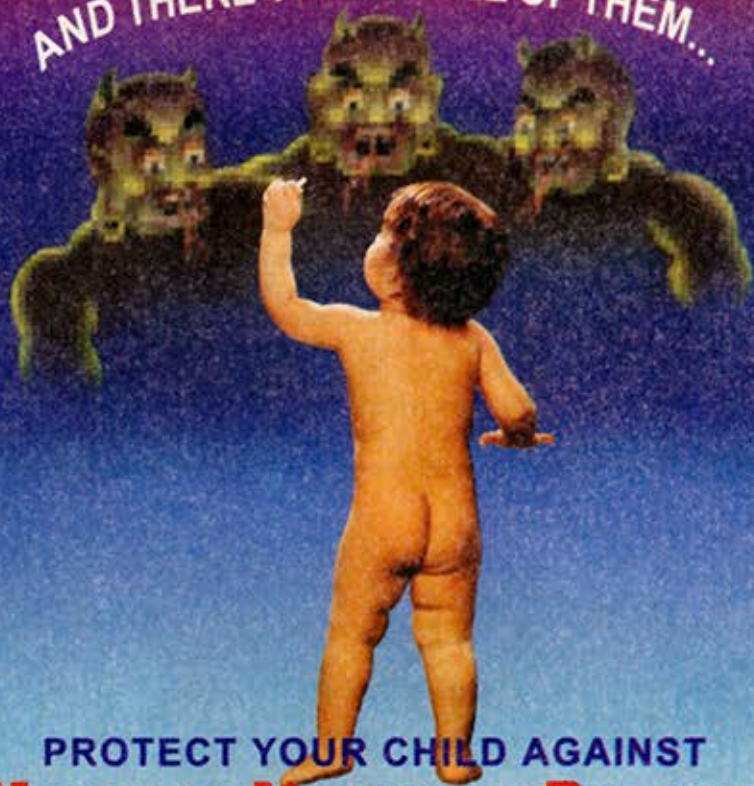
It is most probable that both the location of the birthplace of Zarathushtra and the land of Vishtaspa had been long forgotten by the time of Alexander's conquest of Persia, in 331 BC. As a result, starting soon after that period (in the Parthian era), the priests and kings of various different localities started making claims that it was their homeland that was either the original place of Zarathushtra or the land of Vishtaspa. Around these dubious claims, gradually legends were built and documented, and eventually these legends appeared to give an air of authenticity to their claims. Many of these legends were then recorded in the Pahlavi works, by the Greeks and even by later Islamic authors.

Most of the modern theories, then,



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are based on these earlier, possibly legendary records, with 20th century scholars also vying with each other to try to authenticate the validity of one land versus another. All this uncertainty leaves the practitioner of the religion confused and adrift in a sea of conflicting claims and counter-claims.

The Avestan literature is of little help to us in locating Zarathushtra's homeland, and the Pahlavi literature is so full of the contradictory claims mentioned above, that it too needs to be examined with a fair deal of scepticism.

As stated before, the *Gathas* contain absolutely no information about the place or date of Zarathushtra's birth. These devotional hymns are not a historical record of Zarathushtra's life, and hence, are of little help in trying to solve our dilemma.

Airyana Vaejah

In the opening chapter of the *Vendidad* (1:2), however, there is a list of 16 lands created by Ahura Mazda, and the first to be named is Airyana Vaejah, it being qualified as "the first and the best of the regions and districts." In a Younger Avestan text (*Yasht* 9:14) mention is made that Zarathushtra was "renowned

in Airyana Vaejah," while in another (*Yasht* 5:104) Zarathushtra is said to have sacrificed in "Airyana Vaejah of the good Daitya." It has, thus, generally come to be accepted by most that Airyana Vaejah was the original homeland of the Iranians and of Zarathushtra. But where Airyana Vaejah is located is left unclear.

Iranians were also supposed to have settled in the remaining 15 lands described in the *Vendidad*, many of which have been associated with locations in present eastern and north-eastern Iran (the Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) and Afghanistan. Thus, the general inference is that Airyana Vaejah must also lie somewhere in the area of north-eastern Iran.

Mary Boyce (*Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour* 1992, pg 5) feels that in Avestan times, while the Younger Avestan texts were still being composed, the people of eastern Iran had a general idea that Airyana Vaejah lay somewhere to the far north. However, by post-Avestan times, this knowledge had gradually faded away and it gave rise to the opportunity for priests and kings from various areas (including western Iran) to start making their own

fantastic claims to having that distinction.

Zarathushtrian Raga/Median Raga

In the *Vendidad*, amongst the 16 lands mentioned, the 12th is a land named Raga (*Vendidad* 1:16). Here again, there are no explanations given to help us to more precisely locate this land. Further in *Yasna* 19:18, reference is made to a 'Zarathushtrian Raga.' Now, in Media, just south of present-day Tehran, there is a city called Raga (Ray). The ancient Medians (despite the difference in the spelling of the two names) decided to associate the Avestan Raga with their city, thus claiming for themselves the distinction that theirs was the land of Zarathushtra's birth.

Herzfeld (1974, pp 60-66) strongly supported this theory that Zarathushtra was from Median Raga. However, Ilya Gershevitch, ("Zoroaster's Own Contribution," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 1964, pg 37) on the basis of the language difference between the two names, concluded that they are two different cities, with the Avestan Raga being the true land of Zarathushtra lying somewhere in eastern Iran, as opposed to the Median Raga in western Iran. However, while we know the location of

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the Median Raga, the location of the Avestan Ragha is still unknown.

Azerbaijan (Atropatene)

A.V.W. Jackson (*Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, 1899, Appendix IV) has argued that Zarathushtra was from Azerbaijan (Atropatene), specifically from the area around Lake Urumiah. Azerbaijan's claim is attested to in the *Bundahishn* (29:12-13), where it is stated that "Eranwez (Airyana Vaejah) is in Azerbaijan." However, it must be remembered that the *Bundahishn* is a post-Sasanian work, and that it is probably documenting a legend that must have been often repeated by the people of that place.

According to Shahrastani, an 11th century Islamic author (cited in Jackson, 1899, pg 199) Zarathushtra's father, Pourushaspa was from Azerbaijan, while his mother, Dugdhova was from Ray (Median Raga), and that Zarathushtra himself was born in Azerbaijan.

Parthia

The Parthians too, in eastern Iran, made a strong claim that theirs was the land of Vishtaspa and hence of Zarathushtra's ministry. In the *Bundahishn* (9:37) it is stated that immediately after Vishtaspa

accepted the religion of Zarathushtra, he was said to have built a fire-temple, Adur Burzin Mihr, on Mount Revant, which was on a hill near Nishapur in Parthia (see Boyce: 1992, pg 10).

Balkh, capital of Bactria

Balkh's claim to being the land of Vishtaspa is attested to in two different post-Sasanian works. In the *Zarathusht Nama*, a 13th century work, Zarathushtra is said to have traveled from his homeland in Iran to the court of Vishtaspa, in Balkh.

The *Shah Nameh* also describes in great detail how Zarathushtra traveled to Balkh and there converted Vishtaspa to the new faith. Here, too, the story is repeated that Vishtaspa established a temple, and founded the Adur Burzin Mihr fire. The *Shah Nameh* also goes on to describe how Zarathushtra planted a cypress tree that became famous as the 'Cypress of Kishmar' (see Boyce: 1992, pg 12).

Khwarezmia (Chorasmia)

Among modern scholars, it was Markwart who first put together the hypothesis that Airyana Vaejah was in Khwarezmia, a land south of the Aral Sea, on the lower water course of the

Oxus river (see Helmut Humbach: *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* 1991, pg 37). Later Walter B. Henning (*Zoroaster: Politician or Witchdoctor?* 1951, pp 42-43) interpreting some of Herodotus' works identified Khwarezmia as the land of Vishtaspa. According to Henning, Khwarezmia coexisted with Media as an independent state, until Vishtaspa was defeated by Cyrus, and the land annexed into the Achaemenian empire. Again, like most opinions on the place of Zarathushtra, this too has its detractors; most notably Frye (1993, pg 41), Gherardo Gnoli (*Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, 1980, pg 99) and Humbach (1991, pg 37), who all strongly disagree with the 'Khwarezmian hypothesis,' and present evidence to refute it.

Seistan (Sakastan)

Another location with ties to Zarathushtra is Seistan. In both the *Zamyad Yasht* (19.92) and in the *Vendidad* (19.5), there is mention of the Saoshyant — *Astvat-ereta* — rising out of the waters of lake Kansaoya, into which flows the river Haerumant (Helmand). The Saoshyant is the world savior who will bring about *frasho-kereti*, the final renovation, when evil will be

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forever destroyed.

There is also a legend that the seed of Zarathushtra is preserved in the waters of Lake Kansaoya. That at the right time a virgin swimming in this lake will give birth to the Saoshyant.

Gnoli (1980, pp 146-149) examined the geographical names mentioned in the *Zamyad Yasht*, and located them in Seistan. He thus concluded that the original homeland of Zarathushtra was in this area.

Other locations

Without going into details, the following locations have also made some claim to be Zarathushtra's homeland, and have some form of legend associating them with the Prophet: Margiana (Marv), Sogdia, Mabug in north Syria (Boyce: 1992, pg 17), and Babylon. It is interesting to note that the last two locations mentioned do not even lie within Iran, and yet claims have been made that they are Zarathushtra's homeland!

Conclusion

We have listed various dates for Zarathushtra and numerous locations which could have been his homeland. But the important question that we have not

asked ourselves is why is it important for us to accurately know these?

Henning (1951, pg 35) most succinctly answers this question by stating that: "It is obviously impossible to understand anything of anyone without knowing, at least approximately, the time in which he lived; without apprehending, by such knowledge, his environment, the conditions of life, the cultural situation in which he found himself. To say that the date is irrelevant, shows an abysmal lack of feeling for all history."

The message of Zarathushtra is timeless, however, it is imperative that we continue to strive to accurately pinpoint a date and location for Zarathushtra. Research must continue and, by necessity, we practitioners of the religion must be willing to face the fact that we will continue to be bombarded with divergent opinions. Perhaps, however, it is not too futile for us to hope that, some day soon, this quest will result in a scholar being able to come up with an irrefutable conclusion which will definitively give us the date and place of Zarathushtra.

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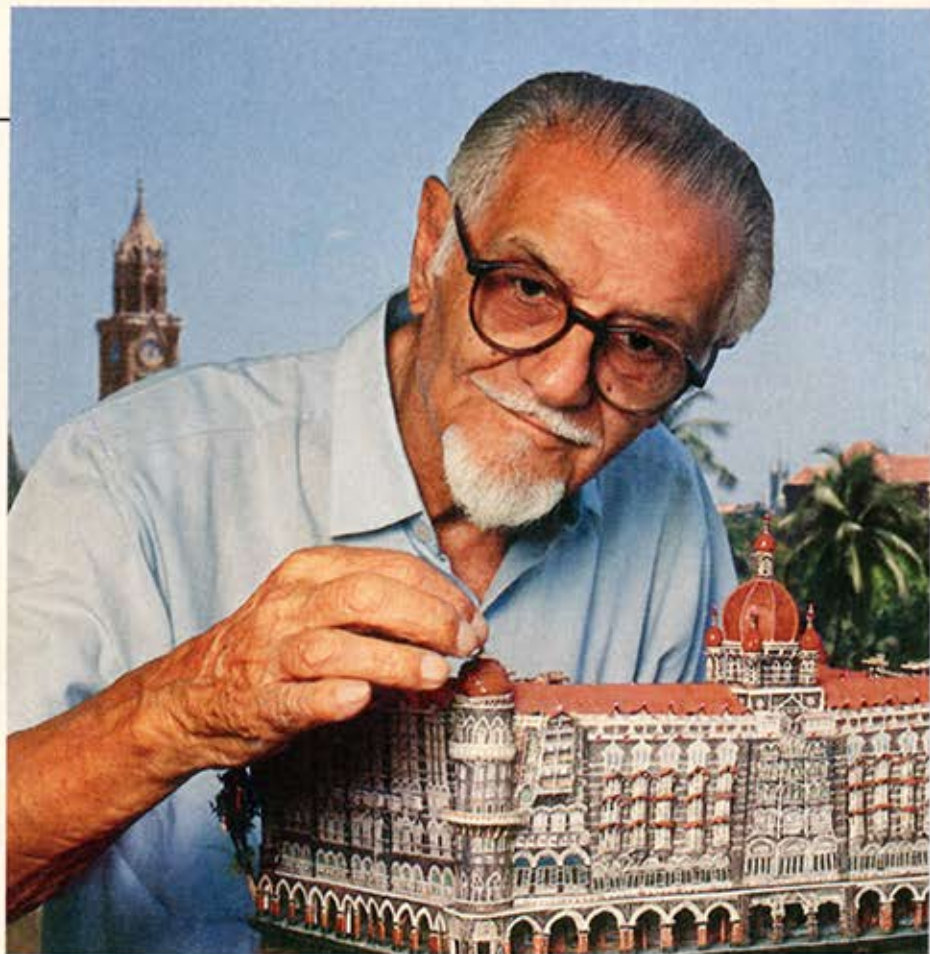
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Former cinema
art director Rusi Banker
creates miniatures
of heritage buildings
in paper

Hilla P. Guzder



His home is studded with towers and turrets, his living room showcases a collage of colors. The fawn sandstone of the Gateway of India stands cheek-by-jowl with the bright red roofs of the High Court and the Taj Mahal Hotel, the blue basalt of the Western Railway headquarters and the aristocratic white fluted columns of the Town Hall.

In his little studio on the verandah, 87-year-old Rusi Banker painstakingly fashions in cardpaper a miniature of the century-old Elphinstone College. Built to scale, it is the latest in his "Bombay Heritage" series of paper models. Within view, and lending inspiration to his

work from across the palm-fringed swath of the Oval maidan, stand an imposing array of Bombay's heritage structures — the High Court, the University with its Rajabai Clock Tower and the old Secretariat.

"My interest in recreating Bombay's heritage buildings in paper started in 1994. My first models were truly lilliputian — built on a scale of a quarter centimeter to a foot. First of all, I visit the building and walk around it, measuring it with my feet as I know that each of my paces is about three feet. I then photograph the building from various angles. I work on it section by

section, constructing it in paper and then painting on it every minute detail of design," he explains. The model of the Taj Mahal Hotel took him almost a year, he elaborates, and making each of the 36 fluted columns of the Town Hall required the most delicate workmanship. Banker also authentically duplicates the environment around the structure, making miniature palm trees and other foliage, while the model of Crawford Market is complete with its plethora of stalls with a variety of miniature merchandise on sale!

A second showcase in the living room houses a replica of Noah's Ark —



- 1 Banker with his model of the Taj Mahal Hotel. In the background can be seen the Rajabai Clock Tower, Old Secretariat and Stock Exchange;
- 2 Bottling Noah's Ark!
- 3 Rajabai Clock Tower, Bombay University;
- 4 Bombay Municipal Corporation;
- 5 V.T. Station (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus);
- 6 Crawford Market (Mahatma Phule Market);
- 7 Town Hall

Photos: Chetan Mistry

a plasticine and paper model with 56 pairs of animals comfortably ensconced in a glass bottle! "This also took me almost a year to complete," observes Banker matter-of-factly. Alongside models of ships and airplanes stand paper models of Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, Windsor Castle, Anne Hathaway's cottage, the White House, the Capitol and the Vatican.

"I was born in Nagpur and my entry into the art world was literally by accident," he quips. "I intended becoming a doctor but, during the third year of college I was knocked down by a lorry,

suffering a concussion which required a hospital stay of six months." He later opened a school of handicrafts and fine arts which proved to be short-lived. On a visit to Nagpur, well-known producer/director/actor Sohrab Modi's brother Rustomji spotted Banker's talent in art. After an apprenticeship of two years in other film studios, Banker joined Modi's Minerva Movietone.

"Sohrab and I were good

Oriental building and (below) Gateway of India and Western Railway headquarters



friends and we had a long career together. I joined Minerva Movietone from inception in 1934 and served as art director for over 60 films, including classics such as *Jhansi Ki Rani*, *Pukar*, *Sikander*, *Nawshirwan-E-Adil*, *Kundan* and of course *Mirza Ghalib*, for which I won a *Filmfare* award in 1954," he observes. It was the first time, he believes, an art director had been honored with a *Filmfare* award.

For historical movies, Banker would research each period thoroughly from libraries including the Asiatic Library and then do hundreds of sketches of that

particular period for the sets and costumes. He also had his own collection of books on art, architecture, costume-designing, etc.

Banker narrates that for *Jhansi Ki Rani*, the first technicolor film made in 1951, the research itself took almost 12 months. An entire fort was recreated in authentic detail on five acres of land at Chembur. It was a wooden fort, he reminisces, with 12-14 bastions and the stone effect of the facade was achieved with *gobar* (animal dung). "For the fighting scenes we moved to Jaipur and Bikaner, using over 2,000 cavalry and a

200-strong camel corps. A unit from Hyderabad provided the electrical impulses for the bombs," he relates. Unfortunately the studio incurred heavy losses as the film could not recover from the box-office the enormous costs incurred in its production.

When Minerva Movietone closed down, Banker left behind the glamor of film and moved to the salubrious climes of Simla with his wife Pilloo in 1961, running a boarding house called Berodel named after their three daughters, Beroze, Roda

and Delna. In 1973, a mild heart attack necessitated a return to Bombay. Calling himself an "old, staunch Parsiite" whose "*shraddha* (faith)" is strong, Banker sadly notes however that much of the earlier prosperity of the community is now decaying and "our high standards are falling."

Through the years art has continued to absorb Banker, oil painting on canvas being an enjoyable hobby for the dapper artist who has held three one-man exhibitions of paintings.

His current interest in miniature paper models "fascinates" him, he says. "I make slightly bigger models now, on a scale of one centimeter to a foot as my eyesight is failing but I hope to complete all the 20 public buildings mainly in south Bombay listed by the Bombay Heritage Society," he declares with an energy and enthusiasm that would put to shame many a man half his age! "I have never sold or cared to sell any of my models," he asserts, strongly believing that his daughters will preserve for posterity his model art.

YOUR BRAIN IS YOUR...

continued from page 54

in charge of the nitty-gritties of putting together the fashion show, the literary, sports and social service activities, project work, etc. Lending a helping hand were other HPY alumni whose numbers continue to augment the BPP Youth Club. Marfatia regretted however that the three-day social service trip to Udva to be undertaken in conjunction with the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Youth Wing by HPY participants had been shelved because of the heat and water shortage in Udva. The navjotes of two children

had however been performed in Bombay. Generous donations for the various activities from the Zartosht Brothers Fund, the Jamshed and Shirin Guzder Trust, Kavarana, Shroff and others, the continued support of the guest speakers, resource persons and judges for the competitions were acknowledged with gratitude by the coordinators.

Walking away with the awards for the best participants in each of the four groups, titled Performers, Enactors, Creators and Achievers, were Percy Sachinwalla and Kaynaz Dadinath, Cherag Dubash and Nazneen Bharucha, Percy Marfatia and Shahvir Irani (with

a special prize for Hormazd Daver), and Tashan Mistree.

"I always thought the *bawas* and *bawis* of bays and colonies were useless no-gooders — till I joined HPY!" opined Pashna Munshi, a previous participant. HPY, she said, stood for Hail Parsi Youth! "Yes, HPY is interactive and informative and I recommend it to everyone," prize winner Bharucha told *Parsiana* at the end of the program. "It widened my horizons and opened doors to careers," endorsed Meherzad Dastoor as the students wended their way to the farewell dinner, bringing to an end their enlightening summer of '98.



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A library legend

Computerization of its book indexing and restoration of the heritage structure are being planned for the 100-year-old J. N. Petit Institute

Parinaz M. Gandhi

All the regulars are used to their favorite chair, be it near the doorway, the windows, under the fan...for it is here in the reading room at The Jamsetjee Nasserwanjee Petit Institute that they spend a good many of their waking hours, away from the din and congestion that could otherwise impede their

literary and scholastic pursuits.

The popular reading room on the second floor of the Gothic structure at the junction of Bombay's Dadabhai Naoroji Road and Pherozeshah Mehta Road continues to be well patronized as can be seen from the scores of faces engrossed in the reading material be-

fore them. Filling the vast expanse of the reading room are the elderly males who like to recline on the easy chairs near the peripheral walls with a newspaper propped before them. Most of the youngsters are seated in clusters around a table poring over their study material.

The library is located on the first floor. To the left are the administrative assistants. At the further end facing the entrance is the circulation department for periodicals. To the right are the myriad cupboards which house the various books and also serve to compartmentalize the area into cubicles. While

Above: The Victorian Gothic Revival architectural structure with its embellishments

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a couple of individuals seemed to be scanning old newspapers for some information, one man was perched on a high stool trying to retrieve a book of his choice from a top shelf. Beyond these cubicles lie the reference room, and some more rooms set aside for administrative purposes.

Gazing up at one of the majestic columns while we are still on the first floor landing, our eyes travel upward to notice a gallery reminiscent of old theaters. Here too are seen rows of cupboards titled administration, politics, social welfare... On the same mezzanine floor are the precious books in the Institute's custody, kept under lock and key, and the committee room. The second stairway of this palatial building also leads to the reading room but its use is prohibited.

To commemorate the 100th year of the ornate building which was given the Urban Heritage Award for the year 1990 by the Bombay Heritage Society, a drama, *Fundebaj No 1*, was staged at the Tejpal Auditorium on March 21, 1998 when R. M. Lala was the chief guest. As director of Sir Dorab Tata Trust, Lala had earlier sanctioned a sum of Rs 10 lakhs for the repairs and reno-

vation of the building estimated at Rs 40 lakhs. There is need for plastering and painting, repairing the toilet blocks, substituting the old electrical wiring, touching up the stained glass windows in the reading room and the administrator's office, and replacing the old lift, it was specified in their appeal for funds.

"A conservation laboratory is also a must," says the administrator Jehangir R. Mody, "otherwise what will happen to the old books?" The Institute serves as a research center too drawing diverse candidates, among the recent, Mody recalls, being students of the National Institute of Fashion Designing who were doing a project on the Parsi wardrobe. Though it involves a higher cost, the use of gum to bind books should be substituted with formalin which can preserve paper, Mody has learnt in the course of his duties.

Through the show they were able to raise nearly Rs 2.5 lakhs, and another Rs 4.5 lakhs were received from The Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited earmarked for computerization of the book indexing at the library. But the software program itself costs Rs 3.5 lakhs, explains the administrator. A

donation of Rs 30,000 came from Godrej. Another gift of value is the Ricoh xerox machine from the RWITC (Royal Western India Turf Club) Charities Fund which will for the first time in the history of the Institute enable members to copy documents of value on the premises besides serving the convenience of the administration too. A microfilm reader printer is also on the cards which will permit easy accessibility to 129 of their rare and precious books which were microfilmed and stored on 19 reels by the Congress in the United States as part of their project on the history of India after which a set of positives was presented to the Institute, according to the administrator.

Among the precious tomes in the library, which boasts nearly 1,20,000 titles, is a 17th century edition of Firdausi's *Shah Nameh*—a 10 kg handwritten manuscript with luminous miniature paintings, as per a write-up in *The Times of India* of August 3, 1997. Another interesting work is the original copy of Sir Richard Burton's first translated edition of *A Thousand and One Nights*. *Mumbaiche Varnan*, written in Marathi in 1863, is reportedly in a very fragile form. As per a write-up by



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Gopinath Bhalekar, "The maximum number of books, including periodicals are read in English, followed by Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi."

At this cosmopolitan Institute, nearly one-third of the members are Zoroastrians, as per Mody's statement. The total membership fluctuates around 4,000, reaching its zenith during examination time when students need to avail of the reading room facilities. As per their rules, only individuals above 18 years of age can become members — paying life membership dues of Rs 3,500 or annual dues of Rs 340. Since fees can be paid quarterly, members who are in arrears of dues for more than two quarters are struck off the register. The class II and class III membership which was originally in force to encourage even those with low income is gradually being phased out.

Open from 7 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. every day of the year, contributing to the popularity of the reading room, which has a seating accommodation for nearly 300 members, are the 56 periodicals that are subscribed to daily, as also the cold drinking water, liquid soap and toilet facilities, notes the administrator.

Older members continue to value their association with the Institute. As recounted by Rustom P. Thanavala who has been a member of this library for over six decades and who now, after his retirement as a director of Parsiana Publications Private Limited, likes to spend about two hours a day in the comfort of the reading room, "The variety of books that we get here, we wouldn't get elsewhere. Even though I was out of Bombay for 10 years, I kept up my membership of this library which I had joined because it was close to my office (he was formerly with the Life Insurance Corporation of India) and (it was) Bombay's best at that time... Just as others go to a club, I like to go to this library."

Echoing his sentiments was Chandrakant N. Chintakunta, a retired central government officer and presently the chairman of Balkanji Bari, a social welfare institute at Santa Cruz. He frequents this place daily, viewing it as his "second home. If I don't come here, I feel uneasy." He has been impressed with "the big treasury of books at this library ever since I was introduced to it by Mr Dara Marshall, the

then librarian at the Bombay University." The atmosphere here has promoted his creative outpourings in prose and poetry, he mentions. The light arrangements, the flow of air in the reading room make him feel he is "on a hill station even during summer."

From Mondays to Fridays, a visit to the Institute is a must for Gustasp P. Marolia who retired as officer from the Western Railway. Although he has been a member here for the past 18 years, earlier too he was acquainted with this library on the strength of his brother's membership. A trip to the Institute gives him an opportunity to scan all periodicals and carry home for his wife the Gujarati magazines from the circulation department. Earlier he used to enjoy the religious literature at the library like the *Shah Nameh* and Kavi Ardeshir Khabardar's translations, but now with failing eyesight he has had to cut down on his reading time, he laments.

"Shortage of funds" is the most pervasive problem at the Institute, mentions the president of the Institute Jehangir Dalal. "Whatever income we get from membership dues and donations goes into salary and property expenses," he adds, relating how they were in the midst of their next union settlement. With the constant devaluation of the rupee, "we have had to cut down on the number of foreign periodicals," he regrets as the official exchange rate now works out to over Rs 70 = £ 1.

As per their audited statement of accounts for the year ended March 31, 1997, their maximum expenses during the year were under the salaries head, Rs 7,36,542; property expenses totalled Rs 2,00,055. On the income side, the highest receipts were from membership subscription accounting for Rs 8,49,431 with another Rs 98,800 arising from life membership subscription. At the end of the year, the deficit carried over to the balance sheet was Rs 2,29,183.

Last year when a massive tree from their compound came crashing down during the heavy downpour on the Shehenshahi New Year on August 22, the management was immediately intimated so that they could take necessary steps to ensure that traffic was not disrupted on the busy thoroughfare. Their compound wall which was broken has not yet been repaired due to financial

constraints and was instantly concealed by one of the street hawkers who line the pavement, reveals Mody. Altogether 33 individuals are employed at the Institute but the convenience of a watchman they are not able to afford.

Assisting Dalal in managing the affairs of the Institute are the trustees and managing committee members: advocate Dadabhai V. M. Patel, dentist Dr Dinshaw Boga and chartered accountant Kersasp Sirvala who serve as vice president, honorary treasurer and joint honorary secretary respectively. The other joint secretary is nominated member Kersy Driver. In addition to the office bearers, the other members on the managing committee are Soli Sorabjee, Sohrab Chiniwala, Homa Petit, Rusi Seervai, Roda Anklesaria, Zia Mody and Dr Perin Marolia. Elections are held annually, and usually the same members continue on the committee. With so many people of eminence guiding the destiny of the Institute, their respective contribution to the running of the Institute depends on their area of expertise, notes the president.

A new attraction at the library is the Robotron Rainbow which can scan typewritten matter and have it read aloud in a matter of seconds in a variety of accents depending on the user's choice. The first such machine for public use was installed on their premises last year by the J. J. Hospital Nursing Association, a non-governmental organization which supports a number of social causes. "This is a remarkable facility, not only for blind people but for the old as well who cannot read because of failing eyesight," Rasheed Taleyarkhan, treasurer of the donor Association was quoted in *The Times of India* of August 25, 1997.

It is not only new apparatus and gadgets which the Institute welcomes but also quality books received from various philanthropic donors and overseas periodicals which are regularly sent by Nani Palkhivala within a week of his receiving them by airmail, as acknowledged in their annual report. Books and periodicals in good condition are always accepted at the library; what they need, they keep, the balance passed on to others. Donors thus are expected to respect the Institute's discretion to make the best use of the gifted

continued on page 129

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DAME DR. PROF. MEHER MASTER-MOOS LECTURES IN EUROPE

REPORT OF LECTURES, CONFERENCES, & AWARDS FUNCTIONS EUROPE TOUR OF APRIL - MAY 1998 - ENGLAND, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, BELGIUM, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, POLAND

(1) THE MAIN HIGHLIGHT OF THE VISIT TO ENGLAND was the KNIGHTHOOD AWARDS CEREMONY in Brighton at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene on 3rd April 1998. The Ceremony was under the auspices of the Royal Order of Natural Medicine, founded by H.R.H. Crown. Prince of Lithuania, Dr. Leonard Carr, and His Grace and Excellency, Deric, Duke of Bircham, of Clermont Count Palatine, Baron of Dextar. Amongst the persons on whom the Title of Knighthood was conferred, were Presidents of four former French West African Republics and several distinguished Members of the Nobility of Europe. The only person from Asia to be conferred the Honour of the Title of 'DAME' was the Zoroastrian College President, Meher Master-Moos; the First Lady in the history of the Parsi Community to be conferred this Title.

(2) It was also a great privilege to be invited to speak at Zoroastrian House on the occasion of the Jashan & Gahambar Function arranged in pious Yadgari of Late Meherwanji Shapurji Sepai and Late Mr. S. Mody; and have a happy re-union with Parsi friends in England.

(3) It was a special joy to meet dear family members and old friends in England, amongst whom were Rusi Singaporewala and his family, Jehan & Rukhshana Master and family, Mrs. Sheroo D. Keeka and family, Mrs. Joyce Les Bastien, Mrs. Pervin Badshah, Dr. Joyce Penn, Dr. Carol Bruce, Thornton Streeter, and his family, Dr. Rev. Fred J. Fox, Janice Bray, Dr. Harry and Mrs. Eileen Oldfield, Mrs. Meenal Mehta, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Hore, Mr. & Mrs. Shahrokh Shahrokh, Mrs. Heidi Ram, Mrs. Ruth Deech, Principal of St. Anne's

College, Oxford, Dr. Michael Pinto Dushinsky, amongst others. Whilst visiting Rev. Dr. Fred J. Fox in Liverpool just after Easter, wintry weather set in with four inches of snow within 24 hours in the wettest April of the Century.

(4) Whilst visiting the Editor of the International Journal of Alternative Medicine in London, and Dr. G. Bodekar at Green's College, Oxford, it was heartening to find that there is a growing public demand for Alternative Methods of Health Care in England. Some of the Universities such as Exeter and Greens college at Oxford are including various Alternative Methods in their Medical Degrees Syllabus. There are also numerous Societies, Academies and Institutes offering a wide range of short Courses in a variety of Alternative Medicine Methods ranging from Acupuncture, Aroma Therapy, Colour Therapy, Chiropractic, Spiritual Healing, Herbal Medicine etc.

(5) With Dr. Carol Bruce, who is organising the Healing Summit in Glastonbury, in August 1998, it was a special experience to visit the King Arthur's Round Table Zodiac on the Earth in Summersetshire, formerly a Colony of the Ancient Sumerian Civilization and ascertain the exact location of the centre of the 6 Leih Lines which converge at the centre of the Zodiac. This is a very powerful Earth Chakhra Centre which was known to the Sumerian Athravans, the highly enlightened Astrologer Fire Priests, who built the Stonehenge Observatory/Sun temple.

(6) With Dr. Harry Oldfield, it was an eye opener to observe his clinical work with the Poly Information Photography live video Aura Photography observing the Chakhras and Energy flowing through the Acupuncture Meridians of the patients: diagnosis with the Chakhras Sound Levels Machine: and treatment with the help of Healers and Alternative Medicine Methods. It was a special joy to do this work taking photo-

graphs of the changes in the Aura produced by the sound of Avesta Prayers vibrations: working with the ladies practising as Healers and with Thornton Streeter, Mrs. Meenal Mehta and Mrs. Eileen Oldfield. Through Dr. Harry Oldfield & Thornton Streeter's collaboration with Zoroastrian College, there is the possibility of a good development to introduce Crystal Therapy into India.

(7) It was a special joy to discuss the development of the Avesta & Zoroastrian Religion Courses and books education with Mr. Shahrokh Shahrokh, the College Representative in England. The Educational Programs of the College can reach out to the Zoroastrians in England, especially for the continuing of our Religious Heritage and Culture for the younger generation.

(8) The highlights in FRANCE were first the visit to Nantes to meet Madame Gisele Melin, the Founder of the Melin Method of aura automatic Pen diagnosis and her great Research work in formulating special Therapeutic Creams for the Bio-Magnetic field to treat patients suffering from many disorders. There was a dynamic meeting of three, with Dr. Alexander Trofimov the Siberian Scientist who specially flew out from Siberia to France to meet Madame Melin and Dr. Meher Master-Moos; to discuss setting up Scientific Research Collaboration projects concerning the Earth's Geo-Magnetic Field, and the harm caused to human health and life on Earth due to the damaging of the Earth Field. The possibility of a 5 pointed star project taking in Siberia, England, France, Martinique and India is under consideration. The Siberian Scientists in an earlier experiment had set up mirrors pointed to star constellations at Stonehenge, the Carnac Megaliths in France and Stone circles at their Siberian Laboratory and pulled out of the Akashik records thousands of characters in Sumerian Ceneiform script of Sumerian



Astrology.

(9) In Paris thanks to the gracious hospitality of the French Scholar **Dr. Eric Phalippou** and his charming wife **Martine**, and **Prof. Kasa Vafadari**, President of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman in France, there was a very lively Lecture Meeting with Slide Show on Ancient Iran, Persepolis and Ancient History and Culture given by **Dr. Meher Master-Moos** at the residence of **Prof. Kasa Vafadari**, to a group of Iranians residing in France. It was a special joy to develop the Zoroastrian College Avesta and Zoroastrian Religious Scriptural Studies Dept. work through both these scholars in France

and Iran. Eric is putting the finishing touches to his Magnum Opus Film Thesis on the Iranian Zoroastrians in India and Iran. A visit to the new Wing of the Louvre Museum Oriental Antiquities Section revealed many new additions under the Pyramid of the Museum.

(10) The visit to **Basle SWITZERLAND** was for a very special purpose. Zoroastrian College late patron **Dr. Rudolf Passet**, had a complete Mora Therapy equipment set with the original Nosodes of **Dr. Morrell** and Colour Therapy Equipment in his Clinic, which his daughter **Madame Marina Passet**, had graciously donated to the Zoroastrian College through the kindness of the

College Representatives in Basle, **Madame Simone Buhler** and **Herr Ruedi Brauning**. The Blumen Brauning Hot Houses have grown 14 years successive generations of orange and saffron Marigolds from seeds taken from the College garden at Sanjan. It was a privilege to visit **Madame Marina Passet** to pay respectful condolences on the passing away of her late father; and to visit the bedroom where he passed away in his home in Basle; and also see the large set of equipment in his Clinic, whilst enjoying her gracious hospitality over dinner. It was a special joy to be with **Simone** and **Ruedi** in their colourful blossomful abode; and to be made aware of all the Natural Health Care Methods that are flourishing in Switzerland especially through **Maharishi Maheshyogi's European Research University**.

(11) With **Madame Elizabeth Sauter** it was a special pleasure to visit the Headquarters of the **Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum at Dornach** near Basle. The Ancient Cosmic Wisdom and Mazdayasnie Zarathushtrian Ilm-e-Khshnoom Wisdom has much in common with the teachings of **Dr. Rudolf Steiner**. It was very satisfying to develop a collaboration between the Zoroastrian College Library and Courses with the Goetheanum special Library collection of Anthroposophical books; for the benefit of the European Members of the Dornach centre.

BELGIUM

(12) **Prof. Dr. Francis Dessart** is a most distinguished and Internationally renowned Educationist connected with the International Association of Educators for World Peace and many other European Union Universities Education Organisations. He is also the Zoroastrian College Representative and International Advisory Board Member. He had very kindly arranged an Inter Faith Peace Dialogue discussion Meeting with **Rev. Marc Broomberg** and **Rev. Moos** at his residence in Namur. There was discussion concerning future development of the work of this Dept. of our College; especially the possibility of an Inter Faith Peace Conference being arranged in India in 1999. **Madame Wanda Dessart**, a renowned Artist in Moldavia provided gracious hospitality at home with her children **Christina** and **Richard**. A Lecture scheduled to have been held in Antwerp on 6th May could not take place.

One location, many voices

Whether scholarship or cookery, the
K. R. Cama Oriental Institute provided vintage fare

Arnavaz S. Mama

How do the five major diasporas of the current Zoroastrian world differ from each other? What is the philosophy of the Zarathushtrian faith and how does it differ from other views of the world? Who are we and why are we so concerned about our identity? These were some of the themes resounding through the KRCOI (K. R. Cama Oriental Institute) library hall in the first quarter of 1998. Leavening the intellectual fare was an exhibition-cum-recital of the highpoints in the life of the three Parsi baronets and the launch of a cookery book with the promise of high tea that virtually amounted to a hearty lunch!

A wealth of information regarding major Zoroastrian settlements around the world was conveyed by John Hinnells, professor of comparative religion at the London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). To deliver the prestigious Katrak Lectures in 1985 — held once a decade at Oxford University on Zoroastrian themes — Hinnells had traveled to virtually every Zoroastrian community, examining their archives and undertaking a worldwide postal survey that netted 1,800 responses which translated into 200,000 pages of computer print-out. A distillate of the strenuous scholastic task was conveyed to the KRCOI audience in three lectures.

"The more I study Parsi history the more it seems to me that to know what happens in Bombay one must know what happens abroad," declared Hinnells, adding, "Few Bombay Parsis have made fortunes or achieved power by remaining in Bombay." While the popular concept of the diaspora refers only to groups fleeing oppression, Hinnells distinguished such refugee diaspora from its educational and economic counterparts.

Dating most Parsi settlements back to 1756 because of scant earlier records, Hinnells noted that Parsis had reached

China before the British though they arrived in Hongkong in larger numbers after the establishment of the crown colony. Though no records survive of the associations in Peking and Penang, there are Parsi graves in Macao which was "used by South China Parsis as a holiday center." The dead were victims of disease or had drowned in typhoons, he noted.

A quarter of the funds for Britain's

**The higher the
level of education,
the less likely is
the Zoroastrian to
preserve tradition**

Indian administration came from taxation of the China trade financed by opium from Calcutta which was also the basis of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's fortune and the source that funded the foundation of two of Bombay's atash behrams, said Hinnells. But Zoroastrians in Hongkong were also active in banking and had a role in the establishment of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank; the Hongkong Land Company was set up by Sir Hormusji Modi and the Hongkong University was his brainchild, noted Hinnells. Other Parsi preoccupations there were the Star Ferry that connected the island to the mainland and the institution of horse racing. An affluent and charitable group, few Zoroastrians took their wives to Hongkong in those early years and the settlement continues to be male dominated.

The Zoroastrian diaspora to East Africa began with Aden, a watering hole for British troops in the Abyssinian Campaign, which became more Indian than Arabic. Describing Cowasjee Dinshaw as "the single most important

person to build Aden," Hinnells credited to him the construction of the first floating dock, desalinization plant, ice factory, bank, post office, school, dispensary and fire-temple. His son Hormusji branched into Zanzibar where the community had arrived prior to him and "the three Darukhanawalla brothers there employed more Parsis than everyone else." It was the post-1896 building of the East African railways from Mombasa to Kenya, to Lake Victoria, to Uganda, to Nairobi that led to vast professional recruitment in Bombay. The East African settlements with their professional character differed from the wholly commercial complexion of the Hongkong diaspora. Also, while East Africa was a source of individual wealth for Bombay families there was no comparison to the affluence generated in Hongkong with the lone exception of the Cowasjee Dinshaw family.

The third diaspora Hinnells examined concerned the migration of Parsis to Hyderabad in Sind and thence to Karachi. Here the Parsi businessmen came as suppliers to the British Army locked in the Afghan Campaign and the Edulji Dinshaw, Ghadiali and Minwalla families enjoyed considerable success. "Unlike Hongkong and East Africa, Karachi was seen as a place to settle," said Hinnells. In 40 years they had established two dar-e-mehers, two dokhmas and two schools. "By 1872 a third of the pupils were girls" (perhaps because being dynamic and flexible minded they were more open to the idea of female education) and in 1875 a varasiya was transported there. Dispensaries, a hospital and a college followed as their liquor trade zoomed 700 percent, noted Hinnells. Religious infrastructure was "coherently and rationally developed by Dastur Maneck Dhallia who "was loved even if people disagreed with him." Pakistan's early

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cabinet meetings were held in Dinshaw Avari's Beach Luxury Hotel and "Parsis believed they had contributed substantially to Moslem Pakistan," said Hinnells.

In contrast to these commercial diasporas, the settlement in Britain began as a largely educational diaspora. The British "records are greater and in some respects the impact was huge." Rustom Sett, winning his case against the East India Company, was the first visitor. In the mid 19th century came three members of the Wadia family to study engineering, followed by Jamsetji Tata. In the 1860 and 70s the rolls in the law, medical and engineering colleges were full of Parsi names, notes Hinnells. "Few went to make money. (It was the) acceptance of knowledge as power." Dadabhai Naoroji and Muncherjee Bhownaggee, in search of political influence, were elected to the British Parliament, the former "idolized in the community," the latter "denounced as antihero" for currying favor with the establishment. Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji settled in the UK as a supplier in the Boer War and First World War.

Wherever the Parsis went they set up their clubs where liquor, food and cards

were the order of the day. They were the direct result of the early food restrictions which required travelers to take their cooks with them. It was Bhownaggee who broke with the tradi-

**"More people...
described themselves
as Canadian
Zoroastrians than
as American
Zoroastrians"**

tion and used social life to show British society that Parsis were not like other Indians by inviting British dignitaries to Navroze and Pateti dinners which he as president of the Parsi Association organized at elite restaurants. While Parsi women were unable to move around in Chinese society, in Britain Parsis took their wives and daughters with them, emphasized Hinnells.

When, whence and why people migrate determines how they settle in the new country, said Hinnells. Cosmopolitan cities prepare people for life in

the west, yet people from Karachi are more traditional than people from Bombay because of their early access to a Zoroastrian education thanks to Dhalla. The most traditional ones are those who have gone west from East Africa whence they felt uprooted due to political strife. "If people see the new country as alien, they tend to preserve traditions; if the new culture is seen as welcoming, they are less likely to cling to old values. Indians in India see themselves in a homogenous culture and are therefore more open to Hindu influence. East Africans and Pakistanis come from cultures where the boundary is maintained," argued Hinnells.

Also, the higher the level of education, the less likely is the Zoroastrian to preserve tradition. Hinnells has noted a strange attribute among postgraduates, however: doctorates in arts show a proclivity towards the religion, doctorates in science are more likely to preserve ethnicity!

Young people follow the religion of their parents while at home but drift away at the university. However, they revert to the religion when their children come. More young people in the

continued on page 133

Saal Mubarak

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

— The First Viscount Leverhulme



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"Listen attentively. Then I can teach"

The wisdom of the Pahlavi text *Pand Namah* authored by Dastur Adarbad Marespand in the fourth century AD is still relevant today

Capt Hormazdiar Desai

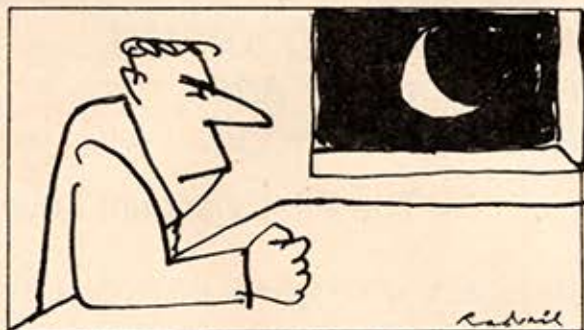
Referred to as Atunpad E Manuspandan or Atunpat in Pahlavi and Adhurbadh in English, Dastur Adarbad — a great lover and able exponent of the religion of Zarathushtra — lived during the reign of Shapur II (309-79 AD). A firm believer in ethical teaching, in righteousness, moral behavior, transparent character and purity, in good thoughts, good words and good deeds, Adarbad was an orthodox dastur to the core. He did not agree with the Zervanite sect which believed that man was powerless against fate or time and thus opposed Zarathushtra's teaching that human beings were free to choose between good and evil and that Asha — righteousness — was the best for them. To vindicate his stand, Adarbad Marespand underwent the ordeal of having molten brass poured on his bare chest. His emergence from the ordeal unscathed was hailed as a miracle. The King decreed that he would not tolerate false religions.

Several prayers in the *Khordeh Avesta* are the compositions of Dastur Adarbad Marespand. They speak volumes for his vision, foresight, righteous character and practical and balanced approach to all problems in life.

He named his son Zartusht. His counsels to his son, wherein he claims to teach him civilized behavior, is a superb code of ethics — and true even today — nay for all times.

A pious, righteous, truthful, wise and practical religious head, Dastur Adarbad has greatly emphasized the fundamentals of the good religion. For Adarbad, wisdom, intellect, experience, faith, knowledge, sound common sense, good behavior, character, integrity and honesty, moderation, balance, reasonableness, foresight, opposition to evil at all times and at all costs, abstaining from lies, vice and vengeance, justice

and order were most important, bearing in mind that the soul has to prepare for its journey to the world hereafter. We may find some of his counsels — dos and don'ts — rather elementary. But they were for a young son. Our youth would greatly benefit from them. He has consistently laid great stress on wisdom — using one's intellect, avoiding anger and vengeance, avoiding bad company. In his counsels, he has given to the youth of all generations the quin-



Do not have vengeance in your mind towards someone through whom you have suffered

essence of the religion of Zarathushtra. He even advises them to enjoy life, and to make merry, indulging moderately in the good things of life.

There are 149 such counsels. For the benefit of our youth, I will briefly translate them from the Gujarati version of Ervad Sheriarjee Dadabhai Bharucha who was a Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Fellow and Zend teacher in the Sir J. J. Zarthoshti Madressa. His was the only entry for the essay competition organized by the Zarthoshti Dinni Khol Karnari Mandali requiring candidates to translate the *Pand Namah* I Adarbad Marespand. A panel of judges consisting of the Poona Dastur Nowshirwanji Dastur Jamaspji, Dr Martin Haug (philologist) and Dastur Hoshangji Jamaspji Dastur was appointed. In January 1866 they declared that he had

made an excellent effort and the essay deserved, from every point of view, the Haug Prize of Rs 200.

The late K. R. Cama issued a circular urging Zoroastrian bodies and individuals to buy copies of the book in large numbers and promised to plough back the profits by offering prizes for translations of other Pahlavi works. In his excellent booklet, printed in 1869, Ervad Bharucha has in addition to an explanatory preface, explained how to read the Pahlavi text; indicated the pronunciation of the words in Gujarati and in Roman character; offered a Gujarati translation; and given notes, explaining various abbreviations and Pahlavi terms.

The only English translation of the Pahlavi *Pand Namah* that the author is aware of is the one printed in 1956 in the informative book entitled *The Teachings of the Magi, A Compendium of Zoroastrian Beliefs* by Professor R. C. Zaehner, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford and Fellow of All Souls College.

Adarbad starts the *Pand Namah* in the name of the Holy Creator — the giver of good health to us all. He told his son: "Listen attentively. Then I can teach (give) you the best knowledge." He states:

- Think of (doing) good deeds.
- Do not (ever) think of (committing) sins — for man does not live eternally. Good deeds only lead to the highest heaven.
- Do not forget what is honorable to do. By this, your status in both the worlds is higher.
- Do not grieve or indulge in sorrow for what you (feel) you have not received from the Creator.
- Be a lover of elders and chieftains.
- Never be disrespectful.
- What you consider not good for your-

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self, do not do unto others.

- Be one in mind with elders and friends.
- Do not be a slave to any man. Stay well away from those who behave with you in anger and vengeance.

- Always, and at all times, have hope (faith) in God and love only those who may be interested in you and benefit you most.

- Endeavor, and be ready, to sacrifice your life for things dear to God and the Ameshaspands.

- Do not reveal your secrets to women.

- Do not respect what you have heard as if you have yourself seen it.

- Do not let yourself, your wife, children and your countrymen remain uneducated so that you have not to suffer grievous hurt and unhappiness and have not to repent.

- Do not indulge in undue laughter at inappropriate times.

- In all matters, give balanced replies after duly considering everything —

the past and the future.

- Do not mock or jest at anyone.

- Do not tell your secrets to a fool.

- Do not keep company of persons who get angry.

- Do not enter into arguments with persons who do not believe in religion.

- Do not (make a habit) of dining with rich people.

- Do not even dine with drunkards.

- Do not borrow from an evil natured man or from one with a base lineage nor lend

to them, for you will have to repay heavy interest — not only that but that man will send at your doors persons to collect the amount from which you would suffer grievous loss (in reputation).

- Do not summon an evil person to your help.

- Do not show your wealth and property to a jealous or envious man.

- Do not make false declarations in the presence of kings or those in higher

positions.

- Do not listen to those who indulge in calumnies or lies.

- Do not have vengeance in your mind towards someone through whom you have suffered.

- Do not have enmity towards your soul i.e. do not anything by which your soul may have to go to hell.

- Do not beat or hurt any man.

- Do not strive or quarrel to take a higher seat in public meetings.

- Seek the advice of dignified and honorable persons, wise, intelligent and good natured people and make them your friends.

- Be wary and afraid of the world so that you do not have to face heavy disgrace.

- Keep well away from vengeful and powerful people.

- Do not have enmity with scribes (journalists).

- Do not tell your secrets to thoughtless people who speak at random.

- Always respect elders and wise people. Seek their advice and listen (act upon) what they say.

- Do not lie to any person.

- Do not take (buy) goods from a person who has no shame.

- Do not have the intention of taking and



Do not mock a poor man, for some day you too may become poor

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keeping anything from anyone nor pledge any of your things with them.

•Do not indulge in taking oaths, whether you are in the right or in the wrong.

•When you desire to construct a house, take the advice of a well experienced person in building construction.

•For your own sake, love your own wife. Do not cast an evil eye on other women.

•If you have wealth, first buy land and plan thereon irrigation facilities, wells, lakes and agriculture. Though you

may not get immediate results, still it will give moderate produce.

•Do not use bad words and make people unhappy. Do not be vengeful and do not attempt to cause harm to them.

•Do charity from your own resources.

•Do not cheat any person. Then you too will not be too unhappy.

•Hold the elders of your tribe in great esteem — rather consider them greater and accept whatever you hear from them.

•Do not take any debt from strangers, (those) who are not your relatives or friends.

•Love modest women and get them married to intelligent and wise persons, for the intelligent and wise persons are like good land (earth) which yield good

produce and excellent food and fruits, once the seed has been sown.

•Be frank and open in your speech.

•Do not indulge in conversation with people who do not think.

•Do not lend money to people lacking character.

•Be a friend of educated and modest women and wish to make one such your wife.

•Make only him your son-in-law if he is good natured, without blemish and experienced, even if he be poor, because some day the Creator would give him wealth.

•Do not mock a poor man, for some day you too may become poor.

•Do not imprison a sinner with status but make an elder and intelligent man a warden over him.

•Should you have a son, send him to school from childhood for the art of reading and writing is like another seeing eye.

•Sharp speaking should be done only after due deliberation — sometimes it is better to speak firmly and at other times it is better not to speak at all, even so, it is better not to speak than to speak.

•Make your messenger only one who speaks the truth.

•Do not consider a rank outsider as trustworthy i.e. do not place more confidence in a man looking only to his outward appearance and without knowing his inner inclination.

•Respect a famous person as per the prevailing custom.

•Be courteous in your speech.

•Keep your speech sweet.

•Always think good thoughts.

•Do not ever praise yourself — that you only do good deeds.

•Do not expose yourself as a guilty person in the presence of kings and chieftains.

•Seek advice and guidance from elders and from good people.



Do not indulge in undue laughter at inappropriate times

Neville & Tanaz Godiwalla

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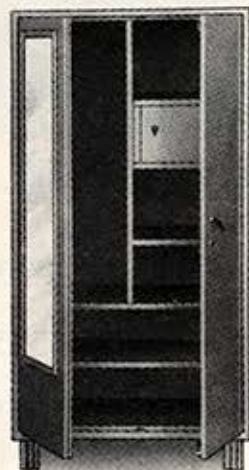
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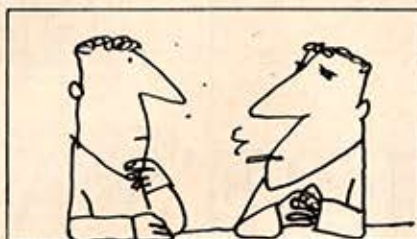
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- Do not take from or give anything to thieves. Make them powerless.
- Punish others after due consideration for fear of hell.
- Do not be proud of any unlawful person or possession with you.
- Be good in obedience for thus you will be good and profit.
- Be without sins — thus you will be without fear.
- Be always grateful — thus you will desire the best.
- Be friendly to all — thus you will be famous.
- Be truthful — thus you will be trustworthy.
- Be wise — thus you will have many friends.
- Have many good friends — thus you will have good reputation.
- Be of good repute — thus you will lead a good life.
- Be a champion of your religion — thus you will profit and be free from the fear



Do not consider a rank outsider as trustworthy i.e. do not place more confidence in a man looking only to his outward appearance and without knowing his inner inclination

- of hell.
- Search your soul i.e. often think good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds so that you may go to heaven.
- Be generous so that you may go to the highest heaven.
- Do not seduce or spoil other women, for if you do that, your soul would be the sinner.
- Do not consider mean persons deserving, for they shall not be grateful or thank you.
- Do not harm your own soul by anger and vengeance.
- While saying or doing something, be sweet and humble for no backs are broken by exercising humility and no mouth smells bad by asking sweetly.
- Do not talk during the very first conversation with anyone with an evil or angry face.
- When you sit in an assembly, do not sit next to a person with bad characteristics so that you too are not considered as a

- bad character.
- Whenever you sit at banquets or at public meetings, do not sit at a higher place so that you are not asked to make room for higher ups and asked to take a lower seat.
- Do not be proud of the wealth and treasure of this world because it is like a bird which flies and sits from one tree to another and is not stable on any tree.
- Be obedient, listen to and do as your parents order, as man is like a lion, who is not afraid of any one in the jungle, so long as his parents are alive. Those whose parents are not alive are like widowed women who are unwanted and whom men despise as low.
- Get your daughter married to a wise and intelligent man for such men are like good land, which when planted with good seeds, give ample produce.
- Do not abuse any one if you do not like to hear abuses from others.
- Do not speak aggressively or inconsiderately, because a person who speaks rudely and without due consideration is like a fire which sets ablaze a tree forest, killing all animals and insects.
- Do not work with a person with whom his parents are distressed and unhappy so that you do not deserve reprimands.



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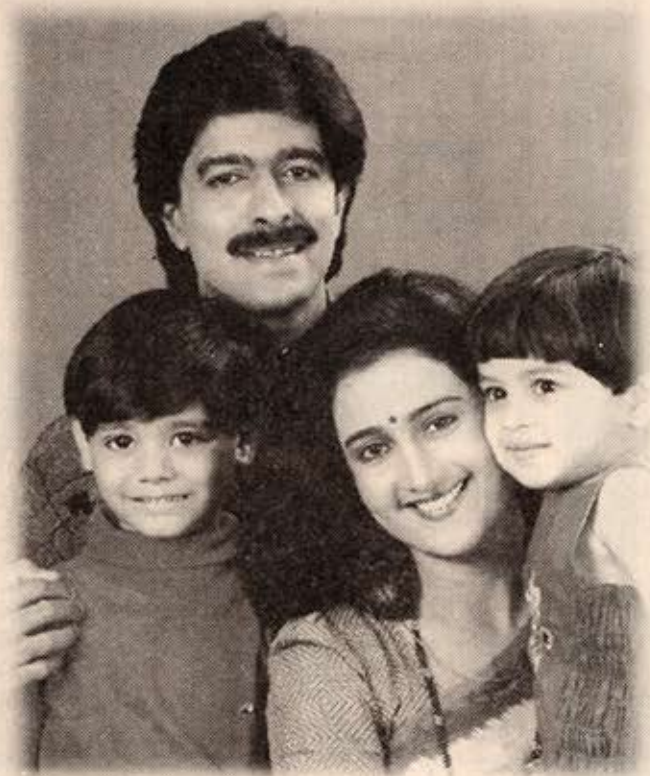
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- Do not surrender your soul to hell out of modesty or shame.
- Do not speak in a way which could be interpreted in two different ways.
- When you sit in assemblies, do not sit next to a liar so that you may not become unhappy.
- Be alert and vigilant so that you may realize your good wishes.
- Arise before dawn, so that your work becomes easy and is soon completed.
- Do not make an old enemy your new friend for an old enemy is like a black serpent who does not forget to take vengeance even after a long time.
- Renew friendship with your old (and trusted) friends for an old friend is like old wine — as it becomes older, it becomes better and better for kings to drink.
- Keep your heart happy by praying to the Creator for thus you will get more bounties from Him.
- Do not speak ill of the rulers, for they ensure the security of the town and do

good for their subjects.

- Intellect helps mankind greatly. Wealth may be lost and cattle may die, yet intellect remains. Secondly, strive to have full faith in your religion for what is the greatest satisfaction? It is wis-



Do not lend money to people lacking character

dom. And what is the greatest? Hope for the best in the next world.

- At all times think of your soul. Endeavor, so that you get happiness in the life hereafter.
- Do not forsake your good work for if you are without work, your prestige will suffer and people will hate you.
- Keep your hands away from stealing, keep your feet away from idleness and keep your mind away from vengeance for whoever practices good deeds obtains good reward and whosoever sins gets punishment.
- Whosoever digs a well for his enemies will himself fall into it.
- A good person will be happy but the evil one will suffer hardship and great pain.

- Marry a young woman.
- Drink wine in moderation for whosoever drinks wine beyond moderate limits commits many ill deeds.
- Though you may know several ways to catch snakes, do not frequently attempt it for if it stings you, you will die on the spot.
- Even if you know well to swim, yet do not frequent rivers and deep waters for the same water will one day carry you away and you will die at the same spot.
- Under no circumstances break your promise so that you do not invite disrespect.
- Do not rob the property of others or add it to your property for, with it your own property will vanish (text incomplete).
- The person who strives and does good deeds and does not refrain from being industrious, that person, with the help of good fortune, becomes a man of status.
- That person who is not proud and grieves over the smallest sins, he has not to seek remedies for the salvation of his soul.
- Those who do not use their limbs and senses, they unnecessarily blame their bad luck.
- One who endeavors for getting benefits, fortune favors him. The idle remain disappointed.



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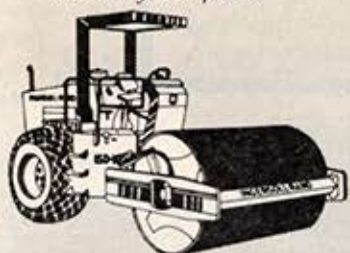
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- I have experienced that wisdom alone can keep away all ills in this world.
- Wisdom alone can solve difficulties and find appropriate remedies.
- Wisdom gives a man higher position and status and saves him from all terrible difficulties.
- Wisdom gives happiness in life and preserves it. Wisdom frees the body of pain and helps it.
- Wisdom is good even if you are rich. Even when you are poor, wisdom protects you.
- Wisdom is your best help in this world and wisdom alone gives you support and protection in the world hereafter.
- Wisdom is a very strong weapon.
- Wisdom gives respectability to your name.
- Wisdom leads to charity and generosity.
- Wisdom helps very greatly.
- Wisdom alone secures dignity and decorum for the family.
- Wisdom and knowledge are the best qualities for promoting religion.
- Wisdom in all matters comes easy with intellect.
- Wisdom makes all persons work harder; one with wisdom does good deeds; one who has wisdom has wealth. A solution

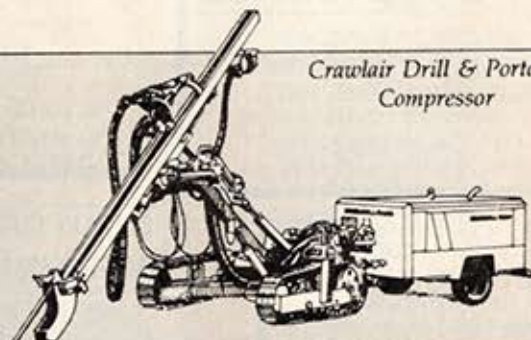
- for every good deed comes through wisdom.
- Even if one lives for a hundred years in this world, he has ultimately to cross the bridge.
- Hence you ponder. At that time your relatives and family members will not accompany you; rather they will separate from you. Whatever gains you have acquired through wisdom and good deeds, that alone will stand by you.
- A wise person recognizes and knows all problems from the beginning but a fool knows them only at the end, when it is too late.
- When health breaks down and the body cage gives way, then the soul forgets the body and marches on. The soul discards the body and the body cage is useless. At that point, the soul becomes restless for deeds it has done when the body was intact.
- When once the eyes finally close, they are never to open again.
- At that stage, the soul in sorrow will not move further.
- The hand, which has broken then, will not work again.
- The leg, broken at that time, will not work again.
- The walls of several fortresses will not

- keep death away at that time.
- After death the corpse remains for a while on the bier and from there, in sorrow, remains at the permanent last-place.
- At that stage, your family will be one with other families.
- Wealth and power will pass on to others and the widow will think and grieve for her husband.
- Wealth and property will go to the heirs.
- Soul remains separate, the body lonely and dogs and birds of prey will descend with vengeance.
- Whether big or small, whether master or servant, whether a beggar or a generous person, whether a person with status or lower status, they all have to pass on to the world beyond.
- Those who break the dictates of pious persons and indulge in disobedience, when they reach the world hereafter, like the boys who disobey their parents, after undergoing a mountain of repentance and pleading for justice, after passing over the great and bright Chinvat Bridge, they will reap the rewards of whatever they may have done when their souls were within their bodies (in this world).

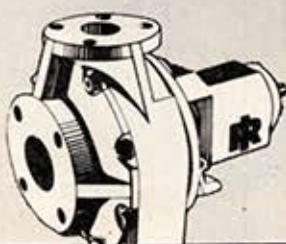
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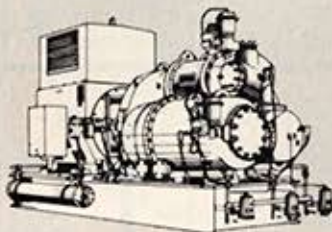
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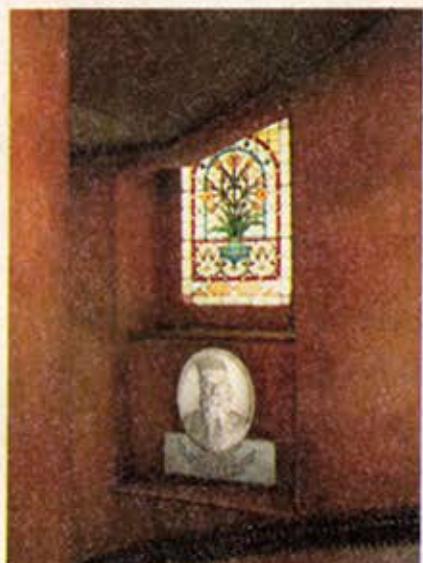


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A LIBRARY LEGEND continued from page 109

** Clockwise: Bust of
Jamsetjee N. Petit outside
main reading room; stained
glass windows on second
floor; stained glass window
and frieze of oriental
scholar Kharsedjee
Rustomjee Kama on
staircase; books stacked on
shelves on first floor; main
reading hall of library*

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publications.

There is a book and magazine committee headed by Patel and assisted by some members of the committee and other well-read personages like D. D. Damodar, Govind Kasbekar, Ardeshir Mulla and Shantaram Rege. As per their last annual report, 765 volumes were added during the year of which 237 were received as gifts. Altogether 197 periodicals were subscribed to by the Institute of which 153 were Indian titles and the rest foreign. To accommodate the new tomes on their premises they have a special weeding out committee with Boga and some other members of the book and magazine committee at the helm. Depending on the condition of the book, the number of times it was issued, the contents of the book and its value for scholars, they decide whether or not to retain the copies, narrates Mody. Three kinds of disinfection are regularly conducted on the Institute's premises by B. Kaikhushroo and Company. There is the general disinfection, the special treatment for white ants and cockroaches, and yet another treatment for rodents, explains the administrator.

Paucity of funds has continued to

handicap the Institution for the last nearly 50 years, as recorded in the centenary souvenir. Until its golden jubilee celebrations in 1948, the Institute had been growing in strength and reputation as witnessed from the congratulatory messages on their 50th anniversary. "I have no doubt yours is the biggest subscription library in India," wrote S. R. Ranganathan, president of the Indian Library Association. "Though the Imperial library at Calcutta is the biggest public library in India, the best public library in India is the Petit library," acknowledged G. Hanmantha Rao, librarian of the Mysore University Library. "It is a wonderful example of what enlightened charity and prudent trusteeship at their best can achieve," he added. According to B. S. Kesavan of the Imperial library, "The Petit family has done for Bombay what Carnegie has tried to do for Europe and America."

The library on its present palatial premises was opened for use on May 1, 1898 after it was registered as The J. N. Petit Institute. It was made possible thanks to a munificent donation of Rs 2,50,000 from Dinbai Nesserwanjee Petit who was keen to erect an edifice in memory of her predeceased son

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Jamsetjee. The land on which the Institute stands was reportedly obtained from the late industrialist Jamsetjee N. Tata and the government of Bombay. Prior to that they were operating from a big hall on the first floor of a house in Churchgate Street under the name of The Jamsetjee Nesserwanjee Petit Fort Reading Room and Library, following a donation of Rs 25,000 endowed to The Fort Reading Room and Library by Jamsetjee's father. Jamsetjee, who was a life member of the Library and elected one of its directors, is known to have taken a "most lively interest in its welfare and progress until his premature death in 1888" at the age of 32.

The Fort Reading Room and Library had its genesis in the Fort Improvement Library, opened on April 1, 1856 thanks to the collective effort of a dozen Parsi students of Bombay's Elphinstone College, among whom was J. N. Tata. By pooling the books in their possession, they formed a mutual lending library, operating from the fourth floor of a residential quarter in the Fort area. At the end of the first year there were 115 members, all Zoroastrians, with class one members paying eight annas per month, and second class members, five

annas. In 1857 it moved to a more spacious building in Rampart Row. At its second annual general meeting in 1859 the president claimed that "this institution being the only one of its kind in the Fort to which all classes of people could have easy access at the cheapest rate, its reading room has been made the chief resort of literary amusement."

In fact, this objective of the reading room was retained when the new one was planned atop the J. N. Institute premises which was then only one storey high. "A graceful combination of art and utility with perfect harmony of design and perspective," was undertaken in 1938 at a cost of Rs 2,31,000 as per the centenary souvenir of the Institute published in 1956. The large tiled terrace above it was meant to afford "a panoramic view of the Northern Bombay...ideal for open-air functions." The ornamental turret serves as a culmination of the architectural grandeur of the building.

"It is an interesting historical coincidence that the birth of Jamsetjee and the genesis of the J. N. Petit Institute took place in the same year, 1856," according to an article by the late B. K. Boman-Behram, former mayor of Bombay and

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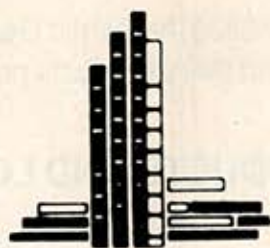
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chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, reprinted in the centenary souvenir of the Institute brought out in 1998. With a passion for poetry, Jamsetjee could compose effortlessly, rhymes as also blank verse in Gujarati, although he had mastery of the English language. One monumental work which he undertook was a compilation of nearly 10,000 Gujarati sayings and proverbs. A student of Zend as also Persian, he had reportedly translated parts of the Zend *Vendidad* as also works of some Persian poets. He was required to forego his academic career at the Elphinstone College when his father required assistance from the only son in the management of their commercial enterprises. With his shrewd judgment of commercial matters he was soon made director of seven companies. According to the write-up, "It was Jamsetjee who conceived the idea of founding the two magnificent institutions — the J. N. Petit Institute and the J. N. Petit Orphanage." He is even said to have refused medical treatment on his death-bed until he received an assurance from his father that the means for founding the orphanage would be provided.

To keep alive his dream is the en-

deavor of the present managerial team. The atmosphere and ambience prevailing at this Institute cannot be found at any other library, believes India's attorney general and the Institute's committee member Sorabjee who as a teenager was fairly regular here. The senior members of the committee at the J. N. Petit Institute who have availed of the facilities here during their youth would like to ensure that the coming generations too look forward to climbing up the spiral stairway; an ascent that could lead them to books, to knowledge, and to wisdom.

Errata

Through an oversight, the cover story on Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (*Parsiana*, April '98) was titled "The benevolent Baron" instead of "The benevolent Baronet." A baronet holds a rank of honor below a baron and above a knight. We thank our reader Dr Viraf Dhalla for pointing out the error.

The contents page of the April '98 issue stated February-March instead of April and Volume 20 Number 7 instead of Number 8.

The errors are regretted.

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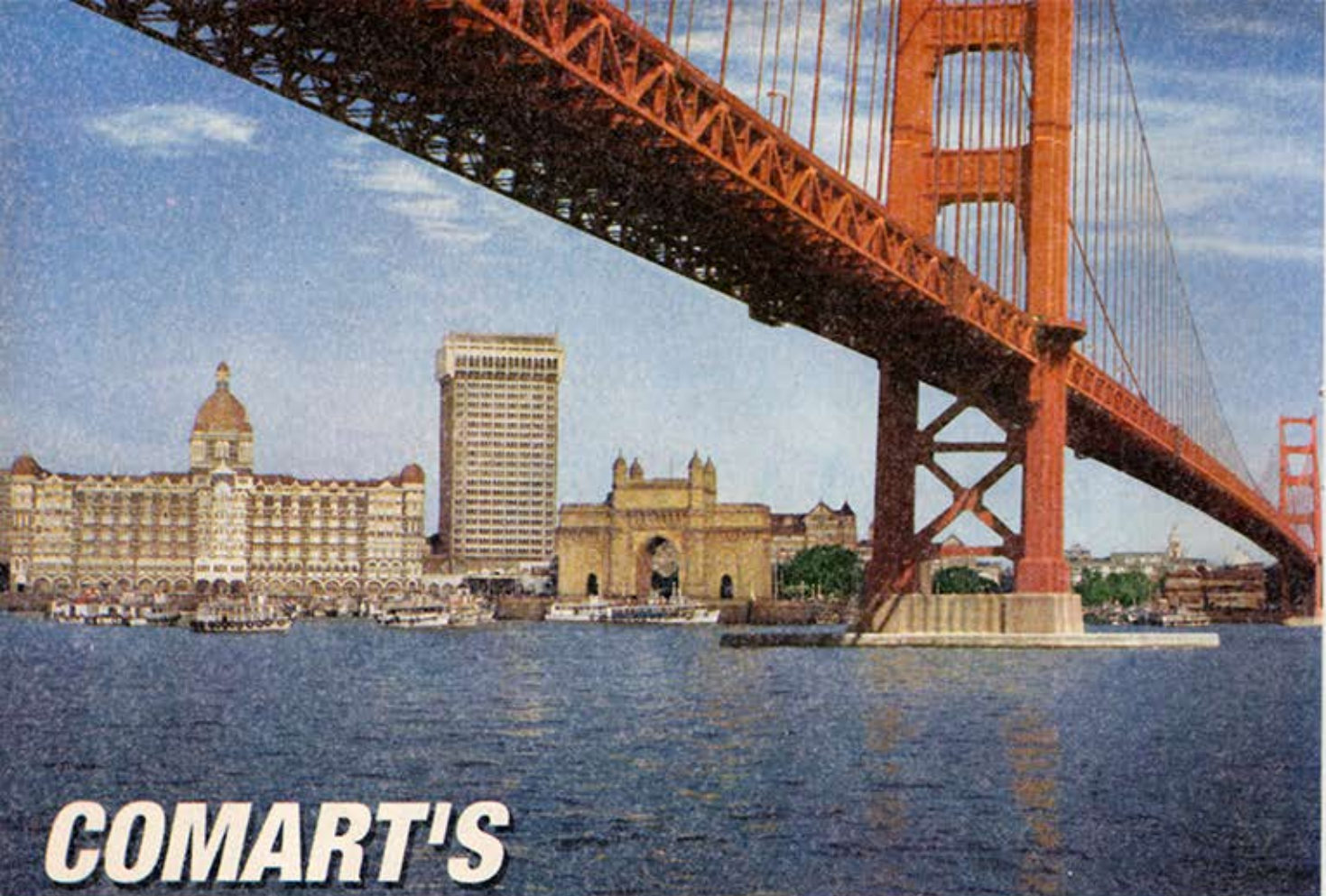
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ONE LOCATION, MANY VOICES

continued from page 114

UK today object to intermarriage (though a growing minority is marrying out) and enjoy visits to the old country as compared to the 1960 migrants. The highly educated, particularly the scientists, the career highfliers, those born in the west, those who came in the 1960s or live in scattered groups tend to marry out, especially the men.

Business oriented Hongkong is becoming more professional as the young people go west for higher education. An extremely wealthy anjuman, it is still "more traditional than any other community I know (with) emotional ties to Bombay and Navsari." With its full-time priest — Hongkong is the only center with one, according to Hinnells — it practices purity laws regarding women and non-Zoroastrians.

There are more Zoroastrian scientists in the US than anywhere else and the most highly educated. Also, levels of career achievement in the US are higher with 50 percent at executive levels compared to 25 percent in the UK. Also the US population is generally younger with "virtually no East Africans."

Canadian Zoroastrians are predominantly of Indian origin except for Vancouver which has a substantial Iranian community; are more highly educated than their British coreligionists though less than the US community.

"More people... described themselves as Canadian Zoroastrians than as American Zoroastrians," because of the Canadian government's multicultural policy ["the Ontario government gave a very big grant to develop the (community) center" in Toronto] while fears of the US melting pot seemed to keep many US Zoroastrians from calling themselves American. Hinnells attributed the increased attendance at Zoroastrian House in London to racialism frequently faced in employment, housing and education there. "If you feel you are facing discrimination you are less likely to assimilate," noted the professor.

"Religions are like chameleons. They change with the environs. To be meaningful, religion has to be relevant,"

hypothesized the professor reflecting on how the globalization process has led FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) and ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) committee members to attend executive council meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrians Anjumans of India. Citing the funding of the B. D.



Photo: Anant Maru

Hinnells (left) and Irani: networking the diasporic Zoroastrian community

Petit Parsee General Hospital by non-resident Zoroastrians, Hinnells noted, "The diaspora is no longer half a world away; what happens there affects Bombay... 9,000 Zoroastrians have left India in the last 30 years, most of them innovators, very bright, high achievers. We are seeing the future of Zoroastrianism moving from India to the New World... The 2,000 AD Congress is symbolic. If you lose the ties both groups lose out; keep together and both stand to gain."

One of Hinnells' lectures was devoted to restoring the image of Sir Muncherjee Bhownagree, the establishmentarian who had succeeded Dadabhai Naoroji, the popular liberal promoter of India's "swaraj," to the British Parliament. Various denigrated as "Busybody Bhownagree" and "Bow and agree" by the Indian Zoroastrian intelligentsia, Hinnells noted that while "Naoroji was remembered for his later, more radical stance, Bhownagree was remembered for his earlier pro-British stance."

Why did Bhownagree get a clear majority, as a conservative, from a labor constituency? Hinnells described him as a good orator who campaigned on local issues. He argued "more strongly than even Naoroji had done against British influence in India on matters of education: 'a nation of liter-



Photo: Naresh Vajda

ary scholars was not one to advance in prosperity... If India could advance in technology it would be less dependent." According to Hinnells Bhownagree campaigned for the building of railways which Naoroji had opposed on the basis of high costs but which Bhownagree saw as access to markets. He was, said Hinnells, an active campaigner

for justice: qualified Indian medical staff in the UK was denied promotion and received low salaries; the impact of the salt tax on the poor was termed 'intolerable'; he wanted free education and medical care for laborers' children in South Africa — a recurring theme of his second term in Parliament being the cause of Indians there. Though

Bhownagree was commissioned to write "The verdict of India" in 1916 to counter German propaganda during World War I, he had reservations, terming "many effects of British rule avoidable and unavoidable." In his letter Mahatma Gandhi noted Bhownagree's support for South African Indians and stated that his departure "deprives us of our greatest campaigner in the House of Commons."

"Naoroji refrained from attacking Bhownagree publicly and privately they cooperated," revealed Hinnells' research. Together they pleaded the cause of Iranian Zoroastrians and worked for community affairs in England. There are "memories in Zoroastrian House of Bhownagree cutting Sak (Labor MP Shapoorji Saklatvala who was said to have undergone baptism) in meetings and Sak walking out in protest." But it was during Bhownagree's presidency of the London association that "Sak's children's navjote took place and permission was granted for his remains to be interred in Brookwood (cemetery)."

The man "may have been pompous, may have been a social climber... (but) he had the capacity to reassess his views." Wearing his sudreh-kusti throughout his life Bhownagree worked for the Zoroastrian Parsi Association (as the London association was then formally called), drafting its articles and memorandum of association in the teeth of BPP (Bombay Parsi

Punchayet) disapproval because "a formal association meant independence from India." Actively seeking out members who had fallen on hard times, setting up a hostel for Parsi students, searching for a house for the Association, wanting a prayer room, a billiard room and card games, Bhownagree "transformed a burial club into a reasonably thriving community."

The message of Zarathushtra

Discussing the "Philosophy of Religion and the message of Zarathushtra," Kaikhosrov Irani, emeritus professor of philosophy at City College, New York, described philosophy as a "critique of what exists... a framework of concepts." He noted that most scholars working in Zoroastrian studies are linguists who get involved in complicated discussions on semantics. According to Irani only 10-11 lines of the *Gathas* are obscure — "hardly any scholar can doubt the message of Zarathushtra."

In ancient times science, technology and religion were locked into a single set of beliefs involving crops, fodder, metallurgy and spirits. The Greek view was one of doing "business with the Gods."

Irani distinguished between three kinds of religious communities: the dogmatic community with shared beliefs; the sacramental community where rites are performed together; the tribal

"There is no board 'Only for Parsi- Zoroastrians' in front of Chinwad Bridge"

community where religion depends on the religion of the forebears. "The religious community of Parsis today is more tribal than anything else," noted Irani.

Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Buddhism however are based on a "certain vision of the world." Because the ancient Jewish people were only ready for sacrifices not for commitment, Moses came with a formal contract of the 10 commandments (now increased to 606) and thereafter they identified themselves as "Children of the Covenant." The Buddha saw life as suffering and "unless you see this you are not a Buddhist." Zarathushtra's emphasis was on reflection: There is the ideal world —

"the truth of the entire nature of reality as it ought to be," embodied in Asha. The actual world is not perfect, with one vector towards the fulfillment of Asha and another to violate it. While the "totality of Asha is not given to the human mind," in each situation one has the ability to diagnose "whether it is as it should be" with the aid of Armaity (rightmindedness).

Three presuppositions are involved in this theory of Zarathushtra:

- that we are rational human beings
- that we are capable of formulating what can be done
- that we are capable of doing it

And yet we fail, despite Vohu Mano (good mind). Irani quoted the Sasanian high priest Adarbad Marespand's reason: "Our mind is clouded by confusion, grief and fear (which) make us veer away from the truth." This thinking of another objective apart from Asha is what Zarathushtra calls *druj* (falsehood), said Irani. An individual achieves internal integrity when parts of him are not in conflict. It is a psychological recommendation.

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to achieve, notes Irani. It was the ideal society called *Kshthraivarya*.

When a religion is institutionalized by its priests, they create practices that most times lose the message of the prophet and therefore the priests become the enemy of the prophet. In the case of Zoroastrianism, the pre-Zarathushtrian priests seized upon the charisma of Zarathushtra, remolded his message and created the *Yashts*. "The new prayers don't have the same form of religiosity as the *Gathas*."

In response to a question from Aspi Moddie, Irani admitted that existence — natural and social — becomes ideal when it is based on moral ground. In the real world however both seem to be violated: "animals survive through eating other animals... not a fitting moral order!"

In his second lecture Irani examined the major attitudes towards tradition — one of total maintenance, the other of complete casualism and noted that both attitudes are destructive because no change leads to ossification, loss of meaning, disuse and death of a tradition. No tradition means no community. Urging a rethink, Irani suggested that the community understand the nature of its practices which would lead to greater identification with their function, promoting belief and respect. Not all practices however are susceptible to this approach like the Vendidadic practices of the Magi which helped the community expand but have now been outmoded by new concepts of sterilization and antiseptics.

Regarding milestone ceremonies like wedding and death, Irani suggested that the community "add to the prayers something comprehensible and therefore more effective." Specifically he felt that one should "replace unrealistic (Pahlavi) blessings with the blessings of Yasna 60 with an appropriate translation," in the wedding ceremony. Also, the funeral "ceremony is for the consciousness of the bereaved since the soul will be judged by what it did. What is the purpose of the *Ahunavairi Gatha*?" he asked.

Responding to the conservative stance on the question of conversion

that the convert can believe in the doctrine of Zarathushtra but cannot be a member of the community, Irani noted, "There is no board 'Only for Parsi-Zoroastrians' in front of Chinwad Bridge."

Agreeing that "Zoroastrianism is a universal religion," noted solicitor Ervad Burjor Antia suggested separate fire-temples for converts as the trustees of present institutions cannot allow them to enter these precincts, "cannot allow the community to be divided."

Argued Irani, "But if we are Zoroastrians there must be something common to us!" Admitting that "trust deeds must be respected," Irani questioned the values of

community members who attend a jashan-speech-banquet function only for the food.

To another question Irani responded that there was no gender bias in Zoroastrianism. "The impurity associated with menstruation was not focussed on gender but on the Ahrimanic effect of shed blood (which was) considered evil and capable of promoting evil. It would affect a mobed who had cut himself."

The Zoroastrian identity?

Addressing the subject "Who are we? A global Zoroastrian identity problem," management consultant Aspi Moddie noted, "Where there is wholesome self recognition and self esteem (there is) no question of identity." Noting that this

problem is much stronger amid Zoroastrian settlements in the west Moddie referred to the younger generation as the "uprooted generation" wherein "very few have the stable environment of previous generations."

Moddie referred to the community as seen by their contemporaries through history: As expert horsemen, archers, tellers of truth; as fire-worshippers with a distinctive method for the disposal of the dead; as followers of a dualistic faith; as an endemically quarrelsome community; as given to great physical mobility and occupational versatility in non-technical, non-scientific spheres with a world affirming morality sans asceticism.

The advent of the Christian missionaries and the attacks of Reverend John Wilson had shown up the Zoroastrian clergy as intellectually vulnerable, interpreting custom as law, unable to defend their faith or to nurture questioning young minds. The dichotomy between religious and secular life with its western education has finally led to the angst — an intellectual despair as voiced by young participants like

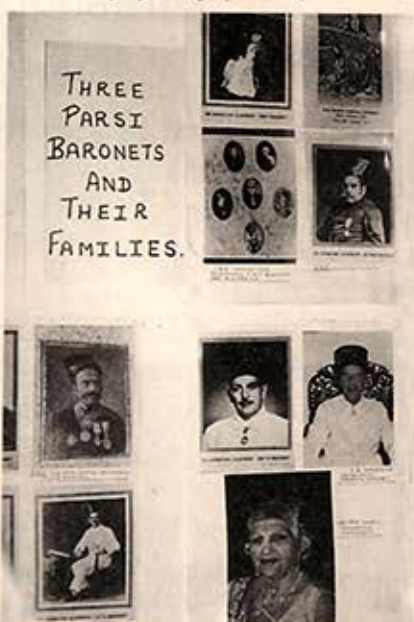


Moddie: "We need institutional reforms"



Left: Dhalla, Bates and Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, seventh baronet
Above: some of Dhalla's exhibits at the KRCOI's Sir J.J. Modi Hall

Photo: Arnavaz Mama



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Khurshed Khurody at an Interactive Seminar in Washington. Moddie also underlined the danger of "losing the most qualitative part of the community" as Prof Hinnells had pointed out weeks earlier.

Moddie faulted the community for want of "deep probing of the collective memory or history," for lack of "constitutions for governing ourselves. We don't need social reforms," he said, "we need institutional reforms. The clergy needs to ask itself what is its role now... We Zoroastrians have extended ourselves on the secular side and not on the spiritual side (while) Jews have moved to centers of gravity."

Founder commandant of the Border Security Force Khusro Rustomji noted the capacity to tell the truth as one of the community's continuing strengths, and a reason why non-Parsis continued to have faith in Parsi lawyers and doctors. He remembered watching with admiration as Manchershah Avari led a procession in 1924 to the high court in Nagpur, courting a lathi charge, arrest and hunger strike. Also "Rusi Banker who left class to picket." They were Parsis who felt a certain function needed to be performed. They were among the forefront of those who argued for change in the debate versus the loyalists. Those were also the days when the community began to lose its economic bearings and the affluence it once had.

Former BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga balanced the community's "remarkable capacity to adjust and survive wherever they've gone" with its "amazing capacity for self delusion."

Other speakers from the floor spoke of the need for spiritual teaching, the lack of which drives community members to other sources like Sai Baba. Also voiced was the feeling of alienation, of being "lost." Pointing to the Catholic church which now holds mass even on Saturdays and in regional languages, they emphasized the need for relevance. "Relate to the future, not to the past," was the message to Zoroastrian priests and lay leaders. On his part Marzban Giara, a compiler of religious literature, pointed to the number of publications about the religion in English for

those who truly wanted to learn about their religion and culture.

Bringing the evening's debate on the problems of survival to a close, retired Justice Dinshaw Mehta asked, "How did we survive? The faith of (our) fathers burnt bright. (But it) burns even among the young..."



Mehta, Cama and Dalal: launching Jamva Chaloji Photo: Arnavaz Mama

Past glory and food

After these six intellectually taxing functions the KRCOI gave Parsis a couple of events of the type that brings out the largest participation: an occasion to bask in past glory and food!

Dr Viraf Dhalla, grandson of the esteemed Dastur Maneck Dhalla of Karachi, has compiled the various honors received by such community stalwarts as Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and his successors, the Sir Dinshaw Petit family, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and his illustrious heirs and more recently, Sir J. J. Modi, Sohrab Godrej and the late Homi Taleyarkhan. Beautiful photographs and eye-catching memorabilia, each with a descriptive legend, were on display preceded by a high tea and followed by Dhalla's recount of the events at which the said honors were presented. As noted Michael Bates, OBE, the British deputy high commissioner in Bombay, in his presidential address, three of the five baronetcies granted to Indian families were to Parsis. "I have learnt to enjoy Parsi food and humor and do also my bit for Parsi employment," said Bates, noting that two-thirds of his staff are Parsis.

Dhalla enumerated the immense charities of these Parsi families, the

three founding baronets themselves having contributed more than Rs 80,00,000 mainly in the course of the 19th century. Nor were these only communally inclined, their cosmopolitan largesse and civic consciousness having left permanent marks not only in Bombay, Poona and Gujarat but in the more

distant Hyderabad in Sind. It was also pointed out that their contemporary society and government recognized the worth of their contributions with a constant flow of honors and patronage.

The call that predictably had the largest turnout was *Jamva Chaloji*, the launch of Dr Katy Dalal's first ever recipe book of that name. The ever hospitable Dalal's invitation mentioned tea and snacks after the function and with her reputation for producing delectable fare, few were inclined to refuse. So that the audience spilt out of the KRCOI Library Hall to the passage outside and thence into the office!

The 144-page illustrated cookbook published by Vakils, Feffer and Simons Limited, containing over 230 recipes, was snapped up by the Parsi matrons who dominated the audience. It would enable the aspiring housewife to produce a gamut of Parsi dishes from Panini achar to Govarsing-ne-Gharab-nopatio to badam pak and coconut macaroons! (For some of her recipes see "Of patia and papri," page 164.)

Dalal, a qualified archeologist and professor of history has not only presented papers and chaired sessions at the KRCOI, but with characteristic generosity has provided lip-smacking snacks and delicious meals in keeping with her reputation as an outstanding caterer.

The *Bombay Samachar* director and KRCOI committee member Munchi Cama released *Jamva Chaloji* with aplomb, genially citing his own substantial build as proof of the healthy nutrition of traditional Parsi food. Also complimenting the author was the publisher Arun Mehta, claiming to have a virtual monopoly on the publication of recipe books by Indian authors.

And so the function drew to a close with the author inscribing little messages in the oven-fresh copies to her many friends who walked away with the recipe scoop of the season.

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Gujarat Parsis: Near and yet apart —3

To dress and dine

The texture and tone of their apparel helped differentiate the affluence of the families

That the howl of a dog at night is believed to foretell a death or other evil in his master's family; that the persistent cawing of a crow is supposed to be the harbinger of bad news are some of the superstitions frequently repeated among the Zoroastrians. What may not be as well known is the notion that the spasm of breath in sneezing or in yawning is the work of an evil spirit which should be countered with the words "Broken be ahriman." And that a drawn tooth or cut nails are to be buried four inches below the ground whilst reciting the sacred texts.

Insights into the life-style, value systems, code of conduct, performance of elaborate ceremonies among the Parsis of Gujarat in the latter part of the 19th century can be had from perusing the *Bombay Gazetteer*. The relevant chapters of the journal which had been sent to us by the noted Bombay dentist Dr Dinshaw F. Boga are being edited and carried over six instalments of *Parsiana*.

In the first instalment we learnt how the Parsis landed on the shores of India, how circumstances led to subsequent migrations and an increase in their numbers. Though reputed to be kind and considerate, even at that time dissensions were known to exist among different factions.

Being shrewd traders and businessmen they were seen flourishing along the Malabar coast, recalled the second instalment. Not only were they known to own the most beautiful villas and gardens in Surat, but they were also reputed for not having a single beggar amongst them.

The dress and ornaments worn by the priests and laity, the nature of their dwellings, their life-style and preoccupations find a mention in this third instalment. With Parsis, eating and drinking are religious duties which help to drive away the evil spirit, it is stated herein.

Their religious beliefs, their mode of celebrating auspicious occasions and feasts will be referred to in the fourth episode. In the midst of this rejoicing

supposedly in the best interests of the mother and the child. Elaborate were the marriage rituals too and as noted therein, the poorest Parsi could hardly marry his son for less than Rs 400 or his daughter for less than Rs 250.

Most of the practices accompanying death rites seem to be preserved to this day as will be indicated in the last instalment. There were some noticeably different customs too: for three days after a death no food was cooked in the house of mourning, except for dogs. To save the soul of a Parsi man who died without a male issue, it was mandatory to announce an adoption on the uthamna day. Often too were donations to charitable causes made on this day.

...

The Parsis are one of the fairest, and, especially the village Parsis, one of the most vigorous classes in Gujarat. In most Parsi faces the eyes are large, black, brown or occasionally grey, the nose is long, straight and sometimes hooked, and the mouth and chin well cut. On the whole they are better looking and seem better fed and better off than the bulk of their Hindu and Musalman neighbors. Most of the younger generation are free from the

marks of small-pox by which many of their elders are disfigured. On the other hand the complaint is general that especially in towns the young men and women are less robust than their fathers and mothers.

Neither men nor women ever leave off either the sacred shirt called sudreh or the girdle called kusti. The men always cover the head with a skullcap and the women with a white headcloth called mathabana. Among the men, the village Parsi generally shaves the whole head except the topknot, wears a care-



Children in their festive best

they were also enjoined to observe a code of behavior that prescribed wearing of sudreh-kusti and covering the head and feet at all times, thanking God before every meal and keeping silence whilst eating!

The customs accompanying first pregnancies, births, navjotes and marriages will be detailed in the fifth instalment. When a much awaited male child was born, instead of the child, some cowdung was shown to the mother,

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*Stately demeanor of a young boy;
(Below) 19th century ivory statue,
Parsee girl* Courtesy: Prince of Wales Museum

lessly wound headscarf, a short white cotton coat reaching to the thighs, loose cotton trousers drawn up to the calves, and native shoes or sandals. At home he lays aside his short coat, and instead of his headscarf wears a skullcap of colored cotton or silk. On great occasions he puts on a roughly folded cloth turban in shape like a Bombay Parsi's or Surat Vania's headdress and a long white cotton coat. Town Parsis wear indoors a skullcap, a waistcoat, fine cotton trousers and slippers without stockings. Out of doors they put on a well-folded turban of dark Masulipatam or Bandri, that is Masulibandri cloth spotted with white. They wholly or partly shave the head, the

older and poorer keeping a topknot and two ear-locks. Of face hair they keep whiskers and mustaches but shave the beard. The turban does not differ from that worn by Bombay Parsis. The old and those who dislike change, both among the rich and the poor, generally wear a white longcloth coat, and sometimes a broadcloth or other woollen coat made in native fashion, and native-shaped longcloth or silk trousers. The well-to-do use light well-made native shoes with or without stockings, and in a number of cases light English boots take the place of native shoes. The poor use thick

heavy native shoes without stockings. Most of the younger men wear coats of cotton, silk or wool cut in European style, use silk or woollen trousers of European make, and stockings and boots of English pattern. The hair is worn short in English fashion. Most have whiskers and mustaches but almost all shave the chin. The priests may at once be known from other Parsis by being dressed wholly in white including the headdress, by wearing a full beard, and by not shaving the head. The dress and ornaments of a rich man are worth Rs 450 to Rs 2,000; of a middle-class man Rs 120 to Rs 270; and of a poor man Rs 30 to 35.

All Parsi women wind a white piece of muslin round the head and gather their hair in a Grecian knot at the back of the head. Over the sacred shirt and cord village women wear a tight-fitting sleeveless bodice. The trousers are generally of colored cotton. Over all they wind a silk robe or sari round the body, passing the skirt back between the feet and drawing the upper end over the right shoulder and out of doors over the right temple like the higher class Hindu women of Gujarat. On great occasions village women wear trousers of silk instead of cotton and silk robes. Slippers are worn out of doors and occasionally in the house. On high days their ornaments are a gold necklace, gold or silver bracelets, and gold earrings, but except that widows change them for gold or silver their only everyday ornaments are glass bangles: *chitals*. The dress of women in cities and large towns does not differ from that of village women except that in towns they do not draw the skirt of the silk robe between the legs in Hindu fashion, but wear it hanging in loose folds so as to hide the trousers. Middle-class and rich town



women always wear silk robes and silk trousers, and in many cases use a sleeved polka instead of the bodice. They also wear slippers with stockings indoors as well as out of doors, and in a few cases English shoes. Their ornaments are costly, of diamonds and pearls as well as of gold. Diamond and pearl earrings have almost taken the place of gold earrings, and in very wealthy families, pearl necklaces and pearl and



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diamond-studded bangles are also worn. A rich woman's wardrobe and ornaments are worth Rs 3,000 to Rs 10,500, a middle-class woman's Rs 620 to Rs 1,300, and of a poor woman's Rs 110 to Rs 200.

After they are six months old, children are clothed in a frock or *jabhlan* of cotton if the parents are poor and of silk if the parents are well-to-do. As they grow older, cotton or silk trousers are added, and between seven and nine, when the initiation or *navjote* ceremony has been performed, children are dressed like grown men and women. As far as they are able, parents are fond of decking their children with gold or silver finger rings, pearl earrings, gold bracelets and silver anklets. The wardrobe and ornaments of a child of rich parents are worth Rs 300 to Rs 400, of middle-class parents Rs 150 to Rs 250, and of poor parents Rs 60 to Rs 70.

Gujarati is the home tongue of all Gujarat Parsis. Most Gujarat Parsis can speak Hindustani and a few in the south of the province know Marathi. Large

numbers of Parsi youths learn English not only in Gujarat high schools but in the colleges at Ahmedabad, Bombay and Poona. The Farsi Zarhosti Madresa in Surat and the Tata Madresa in Navsari have been founded to teach Zend, the

Parents are fond of decking their children with gold or silver

name in common use for the language of the Parsi holy books, and Persian which most Parsi youths choose as one of their classical languages at the entrance and higher examinations of the Bombay University. In the cities and towns and even in some of the larger villages the local and Bombay Parsi Panchayet or council schools teach both boys and girls prayers in Gujarati and Zend. The education of poor and middle-class Parsi women is limited to what they learn as girls in primary schools.

Dress and decorum comes to the fore in a family portrait

Most of them can read and write Gujarati and work simple sums. Among the well-to-do and educated the higher education of women is encouraged.

Houses of town Parsis are generally large and well built, one or two storeys high, with walls of brick and mortar and tiled roofs. Village houses have generally mud walls and tiled roofs except in Ichhapur near Surat and Elav near Broach, where are a few two-storeyed houses as good as those in Bombay. All have a front veranda, and inside of the veranda a large hall filling the whole breadth of the house. All have a separate cooking room and a sick or lying-in room. Poor houses have only one more room or two more at the most. In rich houses the number of rooms varies from six to 10 according to space, means and requirements.

The furniture in a rich man's house varies in value from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 or even more. It includes sofas,

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chairs, tables, clocks, cabinets, mirrors, pictures, carpets and cushions, and in bedrooms bedsteads, boxes and wardrobes. In a middle-class house the furniture, including bedsteads, a few chairs, two or three wooden stools and a few boxes and cupboards is worth Rs 100 to Rs 500. In a poor house the furniture including one or two bedsteads, one or two boxes and one or two wooden stools is worth Rs 10 to Rs 20. A rich man's house has silver water-vessels, copper and copperbrass cooking and water-vessels, cups, dishes and trays, and silver and brass goblets, worth altogether Rs 1,000 to Rs 3,000. In a middle-class house the corresponding vessels are worth Rs 100 to Rs 500 and Rs 20 to Rs 30 in a poor house.

Though the knowledge of the original object with which they were done has passed away, the following Parsi observances on the occasions of building a house and of digging a well are valuable examples of the widespread belief in the place spirit and the fear that evil will happen to the builder or digger unless the place spirit is either pacified or scared. The freemason's practice of laying under a foundation-stone grain, oil, wine and coins, four of the greatest spirit scarers, seems like these Parsi observances have been handed down from times when the place spirit was one of the most dreaded of fiends.

When the foundation of a Parsi house is to be laid, at the bottom of the first pit that is dug a small copper box containing *panch-ratan*, literally five jewels, is placed but in practice the box holds a small piece of jewelled metal made of gold and silver mixed with atoms of diamonds, rubies and pearls. Besides the piece of jewelled metal which costs about Rs 1 1/4, the copper box contains a betelnut and betel-leaf, turmeric, fresh green grass, red powder, coriander seed and raw sugar. After the box is laid in the ground the sides of the pit are built up and its mouth is closed with brick and mortar. Over the mouth of the pit are strewn betelnut and betel-leaves, dry dates and flowers, a coconut and an egg are broken on it, an urn with burning frankincense is waved over it, and pieces of the broken coconut and some raw sugar are handed to the workmen.

At the time of fixing the first door the words 'Help of Ahura Mazda' are written in red paint on the door frame, a rupee is nailed at the top of the frame, a garland of flowers and two unhusked coconuts are hung from it along with a silk bag containing betelnut and leaf, dry dates, turmeric, fresh green grass, red powder, raw sugar and coriander seeds; an urn with burning frankincense



Covering of heads was deemed necessary for adults and children

is waved near the bag; a coconut is broken, and the pieces together with the raw sugar are handed among the workmen. The same ceremony is performed when the topmost beam or *mohb* is laid into which in addition the well-to-do drive a silver nail. When the house is finished the front gate is marked with turmeric and red powder, garlands of flowers and green leaves are hung on it, in one of the rooms is set a goblet filled with water with a coconut marked with turmeric and red powder in its mouth and garland of flowers over it. Priests are asked to read prayers and perform ceremonies especially in honor of the 33 yazads or angels, and friends and relations are called to a feast.

When a well is to be dug, at the center of the ground marked for the well, flowers are strewn, a coconut is broken and its water sprinkled on the ground, and priests

are engaged to recite prayers in honor of Avan Ardvisur, the water-spirit or angel who presides over water, and to perform ceremonies in honor of Aspadarmad, the earth-spirit or angel who presides over the earth.

With Parsis, eating and drinking are religious duties, because apparently, food and drink help to drive off the evil spirits and visions which haunt the fasting and weakly and which it is one of the chief objects of the Parsi religion to keep at a distance. Rich and middle-class Parsis take three meals a day, at morning, noon and night. Their morning meal or breakfast, which they take between six and eight, consists of tea, wheat or rice bread, eggs or minced mutton, and butter. Their mid-day meal or dinner consists of cooked rice, split pulse *dal*, fish or mutton, pickles, with especially among old men, a glass of *mowra* *Bassia latifolia* liquor. Their evening meal or supper, which they take between seven and nine, consists of wheat or rice bread, one to three or more dishes of mutton or fowl cooked with vegetables of different kinds, fish, pickles, and *mowra* spirits or English liquor and wines, followed occasionally by fruit. The poor

before going to work break their fast with cold thick millet bread prepared the night before and *chhaas* or curds. At noon they have cooked rice with split pulse or curds and pickles, and in the evening millet bread with some vegetable, cooked peas and pulse, and occasionally mutton or fowl. *Mowra* spirits are generally taken with the mid-day and evening meals. In seaside villages, fresh or dried fish forms the principal article of food; in other places dried fish, chiefly dried *bumalo* *Harpodon nehereus*, is used as a relish at all meals. Gujarat Parsis generally eat seated on a cloth from a copper or brass plate on which the whole dinner is piled. A few well-to-do families, in imitation of Bombay Parsis, use chairs and tables and eat off china plates. Most eat with their fingers. The well-to-do use mutton almost every day especially at the evening meal. *Tadi* or palm juice is a favorite drink at almost all meals and especially at feasts. The monthly cost of food in a rich family of six

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persons is ordinarily estimated at Rs 85, in a middle-class family at Rs 50 and in a poor family at Rs 10 to Rs 20.

Feasts or rather large dinners are given on three chief occasions, on the fourth day after a death, on marriages, and at the religious national festivals called *gambhars*. At all public dinners the guests are seated in rows on long strips of cloth about half a yard wide, spread in the streets, in long verandas, or in public places specially built and set apart for the purpose. On the ground in front of each guest is laid a large plantain leaf or plates made of the banian or other leaves called *patravals*. In some cases when feasts are given by the rich, chairs and tables in English fashion are used. The first course is rice or wheat bread, one or two vegetables, meat, fresh fish, and pickles. *Mowra* spirit is handed round to all who wish it. The second course is rice and pulse washed down with *tadi* instead of *mowra* spirits. Of animal food Parsis eat, of quadrupeds, only the flesh of goats and sheep. Of birds they generally eat only the domestic hen, but have no rule or feeling against eating other birds. They do not eat the cock after it has begun to crow, because from that time the bird is held sacred, the belief being that its crowing has the effect of driving away evil spirits. Parsis do not smoke tobacco. The cost of a feast for 50 persons is: Rice Rs 1½; pulse 8 annas; wheat 12 annas; butter Rs 2 ¾; meat Rs 4; spices 12 annas; vegetables Rs 2; leaf-plates 8 annas; liquor Rs 6; miscellaneous Rs 2; cook's wages Rs 3½; total Rs 24¼ or an average of about 8 annas a head.

The Parsis of Gujarat, both men and women, are early risers. The religious, who make a point of reciting prayers between three in the morning and dawn at which the Parsi day begins, leave their beds between three and four, and most others are up a good while before sunrise. All, on rising, standing at the foot of their bed, loosen their sacred cord *kusti* and recite the *kusti* prayer. When the prayer is finished they take some cow's urine *nirang* in the palm of the left hand, and while reciting a short prayer, rub it on their face, hands and feet and afterwards wash with water the

parts rubbed. The devout and those who have leisure bathe at once daily after the *nirang* prayer. The poor bathe once in three or four days. Every time they take a bath, that is before they commence to wash the body with water, they rub the urine three times over their whole person. After washing the body they clean the mouth and again recite the sacred-cord prayer.

They are now ready either to recite further prayers or to take a light breakfast, and go to work or visit friends or the fire-



Velvet robe for the well-to-do

Courtesy: Prince of Wales Museum

temple. At noon they dine, take a short nap or go back to work, or, in the case of leisurely or retired people, play chess or cards. Clerks, shopkeepers and traders have luncheon sent to them at their shop or office. Of the well-to-do, those that stay at home have tea between three and five, and in the evening go to the market, the river side, or any other place where they can meet friends and gossip. They return home at about seven. Traders, shopkeepers and clerks stay at their offices or shops till about seven. On returning home they wash their face, hands and feet, recite the sacred-thread prayer, and sup either at once or after reciting the night prayers, beginning with a short prayer before the lamp. After supper they play chess or cards or chat for an hour or two, or at once go to bed. After every call of nature all Parsis wash the face, hands and feet and recite the sacred-thread prayer. In places where palm liquor is plentiful as in Navsari and in the villages round Surat, *tadi* or

palm liquor parties of men and women are often arranged.

Parsi women rise about four, go through the sacred-thread and cow-urine prayers, wash, sweep the house and part of the street in front of the house, clean the vessels to be used during the day, bring the day's supply of freshwater from the well, sprinkle with water the whole house, the entrance, and the street in front of the house, and draw lucky chalk-marks on and in front of the threshold. In families which have several women, while some sweep the house and make the chalk-marks, others neatly dressed go out to fetch drinking water which is sometimes brought from a distance. By seven they have prepared tea and breakfast for the house, and cooking and other housework keeps them busy till about noon. When the family is not large or when there are more than one woman, they find time, in priestly families, to spin wool and weave sacred threads or in lay families to weave cotton tape and cloth. After the male members of the family have dined, the women dine, clean the dishes, rest or bathe, and spin or weave till about three. At three the house is again swept and cleaned and sprinkled with water, and at about five those who did not bring water in the morning go to fetch it. On returning home they light the lamps and carry over the whole house a small metal urn of burning frankincense, and, especially on new-moon day, hang garlands of sweet flowers round the lamp. They next bake the bread and make ready the other articles which have to be cooked for supper. They sup, when the men have done, clean the dishes, look after the children, see that all in the house is right, and go to bed. In rich families where servants are employed women do not fetch water or clean dishes. They pass their leisure in sewing, chatting, reading and visiting.

When about five years old, Parsi boys are sent to primary schools kept by Parsi priests or Hindu masters. The Parsi priests teach their pupils the Gujarati alphabet and the portions of the *Zend Avesta* which a child should know by heart for the sacred-thread ceremony which takes place when the

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child is between seven and nine. About seven, a boy goes to the public school to learn Gujarati and English. If he is the son of a priest, the boy continues to attend the priest's school both morning and evening to learn the portions of the *Zend Avesta* required for the *herbad* or ordination ceremony, the rest of the day being devoted to secular education in the ordinary schools. The boy becomes an under-priest or *herbad* at 12 or some-

**They fear that evil
will happen to the
builder or digger unless
the place spirit is
pacified or scared**

times, later. By this time he has gained a fair knowledge of Gujarati, arithmetic, and geography, and is able to read a little English. He is then taken from the public school and placed almost wholly under a priest from whom he learns the portions of the *Zend Avesta* required for the *maratab* ceremony by passing which an under-priest or *herbad* becomes a full priest or *mobed*. The compulsory education of Parsi children in the *Zend Avesta* extends to the portion required for the sacred-thread ceremony. Except for the sons of priests who mean to enter the priesthood any further knowledge of the *Zend Avesta* is optional. All that a layman requires is to be able to recite or to read fluently from books printed in Gujarati character the portion of the *Zend Avesta* used in daily prayers.

A Parsi girl when about six years old is sent to the girls' school where she is taught the Gujarati alphabet, the portions of the *Zend Avesta* required for the sacred-thread ceremony, and sometimes if she belongs to the priestly class, to spin wool. After the thread ceremony, till she is about 10 years old, a girl generally continues to attend school from 10 to five. She attends school to a later age if her parents desire her to pursue higher studies. During the rest of the day she helps her mother in housework. She is generally married between five and 12 and till she comes of age she goes to her father-in-law's house occasionally and on holidays. After she comes of age she is a member of her father-in-law's family and occasionally visits her parents' house. Marriages at a more advanced age are becoming less uncommon.

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Behind the screens

In the earlier days Parsis were more involved in the production and distribution of films than in their creation

B. K. Karanjia

A fact not often acknowledged is that Parsis have made a notable contribution to cinema in India. The same initiative and enterprise that marked their participation in various businesses and industries also distinguished Parsi involvement in the Indian film industry, confined not merely to producing films but also to distributing and exhibiting them. Their contribution was not restricted to feature films, but included in its purview documentary films and even children's films. It was not confined merely to the three major sectors of the industry, but extended also to artistes and technicians.

No one illustrated this more dramatically than the late veteran, K. M. Modi, who in his heyday was known as 'the J. Arthur Rank of India.' Keki won renown as the country's biggest distributor and exhibitor owning as many as 120 cinemas all over the country. The pride of place in this galaxy belonged to the New Empire Cinema in Bombay which he purchased in 1935.

Keeping up with the times, Keki renovated the cinema in 1947. In the same tradition, his worthy son Roosi, a chip of the old block, celebrated the 50th year of the country's Independence by once again renovating this Cinema, which has become a landmark in the Bori Bunder area.

Roosi took utmost care that while installing the latest equipment like Dolby Digital Sound, the old nostalgic ambience of the theater (as one that catered to the entire family) was scrupulously maintained. The woodwork, which imparted a warm, rich look of sophistication and elegance, has been retained and polished to look as good as new. So also, the old-fashioned push-back tip-up seats have only been made more comfortable with padding, and the air-conditioning system updated. The work was carried out by the well-known architect, Hoshedar E. Carnac.

Keki himself was inspired by another

Parsi entrepreneur who marked cinema's transition from tent to theater — J. F. Madan (1856-1923) who became interested in cinema at a very early age. At that time Calcutta, along with the larger industrial cities, was experiencing a rebirth of theater. Madan started as prop-boy at Calcutta's Corinthian Hall, later travelled to other cities of India as an actor, and eventually purchased the company in which he had started. Along with various relatives, Madan was involved in innumerable enterprises — import of liquors, foods and pharmaceutical products, and dabbling in insurance and real estate. Throughout his life he combined such activities successfully with his theatrical interests.

In 1902, having purchased film equipment from an agent of Pathe Freres, he launched a bioscope show in a tent on a maidan, The Green, in the heart of Calcutta. This was the beginning of what was to turn into a film production-distribution empire, a powerful factor for three decades, not only in India but also in Burma and Ceylon.

At that time American films were the rage in India. Universal became the first of the American production-distribution companies to establish an agency in India in 1961. Prior to them, however, Pathe India had been established in Bombay as early as 1907 as the concessionaire for the films of Pathe Freres. During the 1920s, the productions of some of the other American companies were imported by Madan Theatres Limited. It appears to have purchased American films in wholesale lots to secure the outstanding big name attractions. American films formed the staple of most Madan Theatres.

In 1923, on the death of J. F. Madan, control of Madan Theatres Limited passed to his five sons — BJ, FJ, JJ, PJ and RJ Madan. At that time, 90 percent of Madan imports came from the United States, the remaining 10 percent from

Great Britain, France and Germany. It is interesting to note that for one of the theaters in the Madan chain, a Werlitzer pipe organ was installed at the then fabulous price of Rs 65,000. Entrance prices at Madan Theatres ranged from two to three annas to two rupees. There were two or more shows every day.

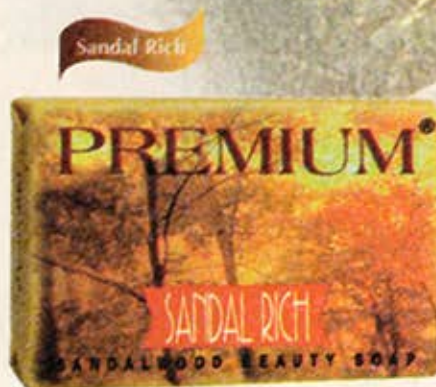
Unfortunately, this giant among cinema owners came to a sad end. After the death of its founder, J. F. Madan, the company underwent a reshuffle at the top, but before long J. J. Madan, the third of the five Madan sons, became managing director. Though disagreements between the brothers caused intermittent difficulties, JJ soon appeared to be giving effective leadership. Under his management, the chain of theaters continued to expand. The company had owned or controlled 51 theaters in 1920; these grew to 85 in 1927, and to 126 in 1931.

Throughout these years, rumors persisted that Madan Theatres would be sold to an American film company. These rumors had a basis in fact. During the course of his many trips to Europe and America, JJ did begin negotiations with Carl Leammle, president of the Universal Picture Corporation. They agreed on sale terms, but owing to differences among the Madan brothers, nothing came of it.

In December 1927, during the investigation of the Indian Cinematographic Committee, JJ testified for two full days on behalf of Madan Theatres, denying the charge of monopoly practices. The fact, of course, was that the Madan organization was merely more experienced and alert than its competitors who made these charges.

During a visit to America, JJ saw Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer* and witnessed at first hand its impact on film-goers. Hollywood was in a state of turmoil. JJ caught the fever, ordered sound production equipment and headed back for

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India. In 1929, Madan Theatres ushered in the first talking picture in India by premiering Universal's *Melody of Love* at the Elphinstone Picture Palace. JJ also proceeded to construct a soundproof studio on the outskirts of Calcutta at Tollygunge, soon to be dubbed Tollywood. An ambitious sound production schedule was planned.

Eric Burnouw and S. Krishnaswamy in *Indian Film*, the most authentic book on Indian cinema published thus far, vividly describe how things didn't go according to plan. In the autumn of 1929, the New York stock market crashed leading to a worldwide depression. The studio built by Madan Theatres was completed on schedule and production plans were launched, but their success would depend on the conversion of the chain of theaters to sound. The cash position of the Madan brothers was threatened as never before. The theaters reported declining revenues. The situation became so desperate that JJ began to sell his theaters in 1931. In less

than two years, only one Madan theater remained — the Regal in Calcutta.

In the meantime, Madan Theatres had become the first Indian film organization to release sound films. It made a number of short films and in March 1931 put on a program of these. They included a hymn chanted in Sanskrit by lady worshippers at the Temple of Siva, a girls' school chorus singing a Tagore song, a speech by Indian Nobel Prize physicist Sir C. V. Raman, and so on. Eight Madan pictures were released in 1931, 16 in 1932. The following year brought a slowdown in its production. The studio was offered on rent to other producers. Finally, it was sold. So it happened that the Madan empire simply went out of existence.

The 64-year-old Regal cinema in Bombay was said to be the first fully air-

Clockwise from top left: J.F. Madan; Ardeshtir Irani at his Jyoti Studios with son Shapoor; M.B. Billimoria with Jawaharlal Nehru; Sohrab Modi in Sikander; J.B.H. Wadia

conditioned theater not only in India but in Asia and was the star of Framji Sidhwa's Globe Theatres — a chain of cinema houses in Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon which included the Capitol (in Bombay). Framji's 'sleeping' partner was Kaikhushroo Kooka. Functioning on the maxim, "nothing but the best," the Regal was the first to provide an underground car park and neon signs. More significantly, it was the first to instal the wide Cinemascope screen when it presented *The Robe* and triumphantly screened *The Ten Commandments* for 31 houseful weeks!

It was Lord Brabourne who suggested to his friend Shiavax Cambata to buy the land that was vacated when the Churchgate-Colaba leg of the BB and CI Railway (now Western Railway) was wound up. In those days the sea swept

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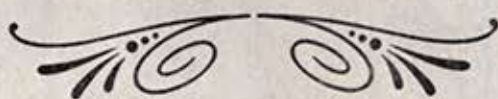
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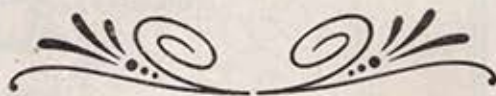
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Bombay's Regal; Eros (inset Shiavax Cambata); renovated foyer of New Empire; Alongside from left: (top) K. Modi and Peshotan Kuka; (below) K. Kooka and F. Sidhwa

up to the area where the Vulcan Insurance Building now stands and there were some defunct tennis courts, remembers his daughter Dhun Nargolwala. Cambata visualized an entertainment complex with a theater cum cinema, a ballroom, restaurant and skating rink surrounded by apartments and a shopping mall. Cambata had taken his family on a world tour in 1936. They had visited Hollywood and there Cambata's ideas were shored up with practical technicalities. He ordered equipment for the theater and the steel framework of Eros Cinema became part of the Bombay skyline.

It was again a Parsi, Ardeshtir Irani, whose Imperial Film Company was the first to release a sound feature *Alam Ara* (Beauty of the World). Born in 1885, Irani had started out in his family's mu-

sical instrument business, grown restless, gone into distribution of foreign films and finally joined with tent showman, Abdulally Esoofally, in buying the Alexander Cinema in Byculla in 1914 and building the Majestic Cinema at Girgaum four years later. After investing in several other companies, the Imperial Film Company, jointly owned by Irani and Esoofally, won the sound race among Bombay producers. The equipment Irani obtained from the United States was virtually junk but somehow, via its single-system process, he completed *Alam Ara*. The film was no artistic triumph but its impact was tremendous. Majestic Theatre was besieged, tickets disappeared into the black mar-

ket — four anna tickets being sold for four and five rupees.

Alam Ara was followed by 22 other films, all of which made money. Simultaneously in 1931, films were made in Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati and so on. *Alam Ara* did two things: it opened up avenues for films in regional languages and it marked the inclusion of songs in Hindi films. *Alam Ara* had almost a dozen songs.

A popular genre of films in that era were mythological and stunt films. Stunt films stemmed from the worldwide success of Douglas Fairbanks and the serials of Pearl White, Eddy Polo and others. It is interesting to note that Eddy Polo, now almost forgotten in the United States, was one of the most popular figures in India in the early 1920s. Among the persons inspired by him was J. B. H. Wadia whose education included an MA in English and a law degree. He was a tutor in English at St

Xavier's College in Bombay before taking up heroic films. His brother, Homi Wadia, joined him, directed *Hunterwali* and many others with success.

Hunterwali, featuring "fearless Nadia," was an outstanding box office hit in 1935. It tells of a princess who starts out to rescue her father, held captive by a scheming minister. She disguises herself as a man and roams the countryside robbing the rich to feed the poor. Meanwhile, she meets a peasant boy and they fall in love. They fight side-by-side against overwhelming odds and eventually rescue the king. *Hunterwali* and many such films made by Homi Wadia commanded a vast audience in several language areas. Although basically stunt films, they had political and sometimes social overtones.

One such film, *Jai Bharat*, pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity, anticipating the Film Finance Corporation (FFC)-financed *Garm Hawa* by four decades. When communal riots broke out suddenly in 1936 this film was actually revived and re-shown at the (then) Lamington Cinema in Bombay. The theater's management was somewhat worried that in the tense atmosphere the film would spark a riot. It was therefore a pleasant surprise that the audiences

appreciated the sequences of communal camaraderie and the film had a highly successful repeat run.

Along with stunt films the Wadias pursued a notable side interest. Like a number of other producers, they made

A terrible outcry against their participation in films was raised by the orthodox section of the community

occasional topicals — newsreel items and other short films. Their practice was to provide a newsreel free of charge to every exhibitor booking a whole feature. All this paved the way for the promising role JBH was to play in the Second World War in the field of government-sponsored newsreels and other documentaries.

During 1930, the Wadias produced in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu an average of three to four films a year. They even produced a children's film, a feat unheard of in those years.

Another great movie-making concern was Minerva Movietone founded by Sohrab Modi, an actor who had toured for years in a Hindi (Urdu) version of *Hamlet*, which in 1935 became a sound film. Modi, after studying at the University of Bombay, entered the film world in 1914, hand-cranking a projector in a small cinema in Gwalior. He left to become a stage actor, but after the coming of sound, returned to films as an actor, director and producer.

Minerva Movietone specialized in historical spectacles. Its greatest success was *Sikander* — the story of Alexander the Great's campaign to the border of India where he had to turn back. Made in Hindi in 1940 and released the following year, *Sikander* was approved by the Bombay Censor Board but later uncertified. Some of the theaters served army cantonments, and the mutiny of Alexander's soldiers was apparently not suitable entertainment for Empire troops!

While *Sikander* had rousing battles and was rated by a British writer "well up to the standard of the old masterpiece *Birth of a Nation*," its portrait of history was a shallow one of posturing heroes. However, its appeal to nationalism was

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Top row: A scene from *Pestonjee*, with Shabana Azmi as the bride and (right) Naseeruddin Shah on the set with author Karanjia (left) and Farokh Mehta (seated)

Second row: Homi Sethna; the making of *On Wings of Fire* with, from left Zubin Mehta, Khojeste Mistree and (center) director Bharucha Photo: Persepolis Production, Inc.

Below: *Kurush Deboo* in Percy, (inset) Ruby Patel and director Merwanji



so direct that it remained popular for years. It was revived in Delhi in 1961 during the Indian march into Goa.

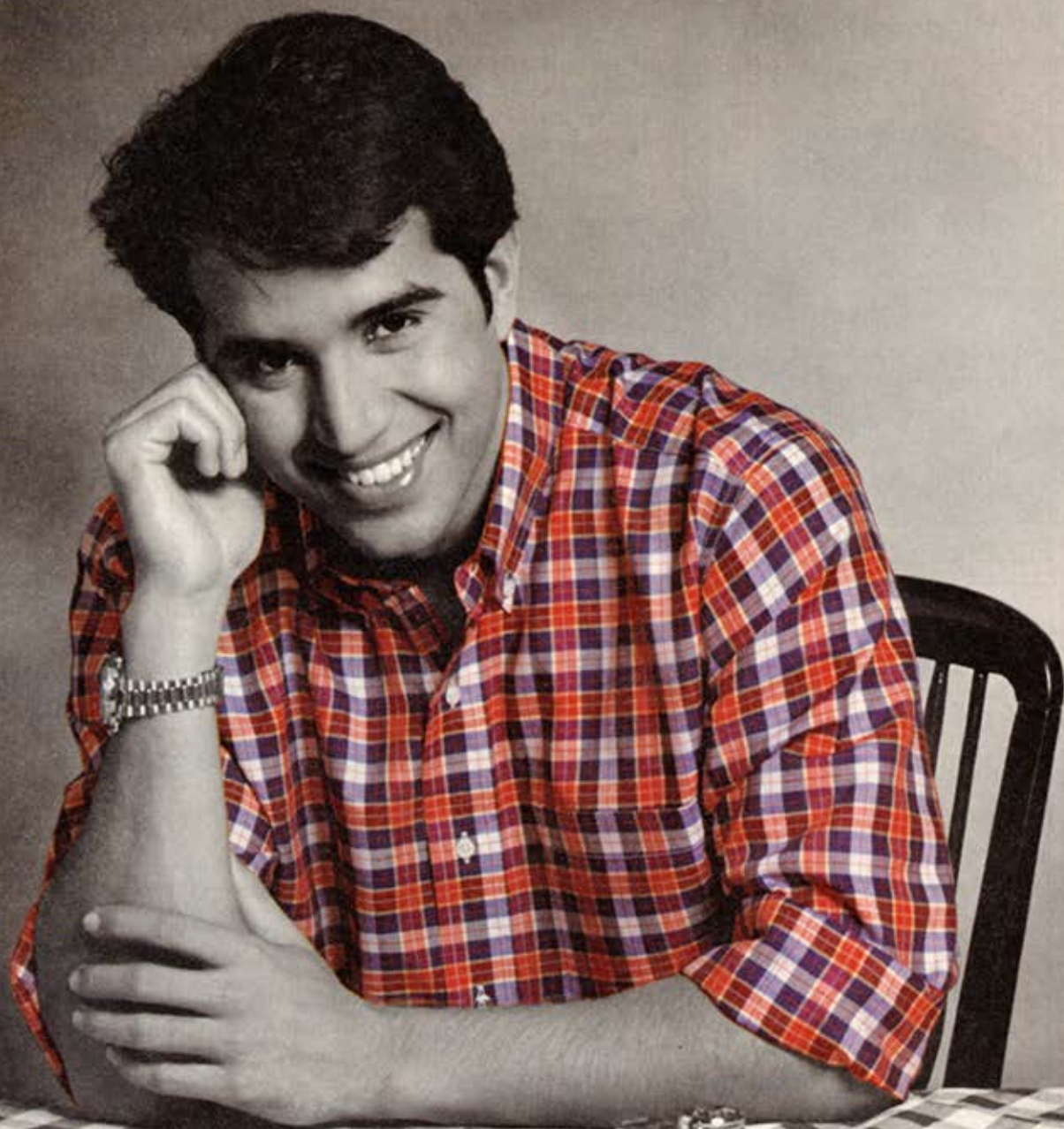
In the sphere of the documentary too, Parsis made a notable contribution. Outstanding among these was J. Bhowmaway who became chief producer of the Films Division. Another notable name was Fali Billimoria, whose *The House That Ananda Built* is recognized as a classic among documentaries. In 1965-67 Bhowmaway, who had gone to UNESCO (United Nations Educa-

tional, Scientific, and Cultural Organization on a special post, returned as chief advisor to the Films Division and generated an adventurous spirit. He took part in planning material for the 20th anniversary of Indian Independence. Under his inspired leadership the Films

Division caught the 'cinema verite' fever that was sweeping all continents.

One of the recommendations of the Film Enquiry Committee of 1951 was to establish a Film Finance Corporation. Unfortunately, in its earlier years the FFC entered the box office race with commercial film-makers, losing heavily in the process. Chaired at this time by a former income tax commissioner, perhaps the FFC wanted to establish a businesslike record with some outstanding films like Satyajit Ray's *Charulata*, Nayak and Gopy Gyne Bagha Byne. But most of the films financed by it lost heavily and almost the entire authorized capital of the FFC was wiped out. In the 1960s, when B. K. Karanjia became its chairman, the FFC shifted its policy to favor low budget, experimental proposals, based on the works of our own eminent writers in Hindi and various national languages. This policy paid off handsomely and the FFC was recognized a trendsetter in Indian cinema. And Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome*, Mani Kant's *Uski Roti*, Basu Chatterjee's *Sara Akaash* and Kantilal

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Rathod's *Kankoo* marked a watershed in the history of the FFC.

In the distribution field also, Parsis made their mark. The two topmost distributors of films in India were M. B. Billimoria and Sons, and Evergreen Pictures.

The Billimorias were among the earliest to devise the minimum guarantee scheme for distribution of films in India. The work of M. B. Billimoria is still being carried on by his sons and grandsons. Evergreen Pictures were not only distributors but also distribution financiers and sponsored almost all the films of Prakash Pictures. One of the outstanding films of Prakash Pictures was *Ram Rajya*, produced and directed by the veteran Vijay Bhatt. Prominent among the exhibitors was K. M. Modi. Notable among other veteran exhibitors were the Kuka brothers — Peshotan and Eruchsha — who owned the Novelty and Dreamland Cinemas in Bombay.

Coming now to the creative field. Two Parsi actors — the Billimoria brothers — played leading roles in Hindi films of the pre-Independence era. Two sisters — Khorshed and Maneck Minocherhomji — were among the earliest to provide playback songs for Hindi

films. The first film for which they provided songs was the Bombay Talkies film *Jawani Ki Hawa*. A terrible outcry against their participation in films was raised by the orthodox section of the

The mutiny of
Alexander's soldiers
was apparently
not suitable
entertainment

community, spearheaded by a popular Gujarati daily. Ultimately, the Minocherhomji sisters changed their name to Sarasvati sisters.

Some years ago, the well-known documentary film-maker Homi Sethna made a film called *Garam Coat* featuring Balraj Sahani. It is interesting to note that one of the financiers of the film was the house of Godrej. The film was a failure at the box office. Still later, a film entitled *On Wings of Fire* featuring Zubin Mehta and purporting to portray the dialectics of the Zoroastrian faith was also financed by renowned companies like Tata, Godrej, and other well-known

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houses. The film was directed by a young Parsi, Cyrus Bharucha, working in California. The film did scant justice to the Prophet and his teachings.

Among technicians also, Parsis have made their mark. B. M. Tata, chief technician of Raj Kamal Kalamandir, is one of the most respected technicians in the industry. So was Homi Wadia of Bombay Film Laboratories.

In early Hindi films, Parsis were in-

**The management was
worried the film would
spark a riot**

roduced as cartoon characters in the name of providing comic relief. The earliest film devoted entirely to Parsis was *Pestonjee* directed by Vijaya Mehta and based on a story by B. K. Karanjia. This film won the national award for the best Hindi film in 1989. *Percy*, directed by Pervez Merwanji, was declared the best feature film in Gujarati at the national film awards in 1990. At least two other films, one based on Bapsy Sidhwa's novel *The Ice Candy Man* and the other on Rohinton Mistry's *Such A Long Journey* are now in production.

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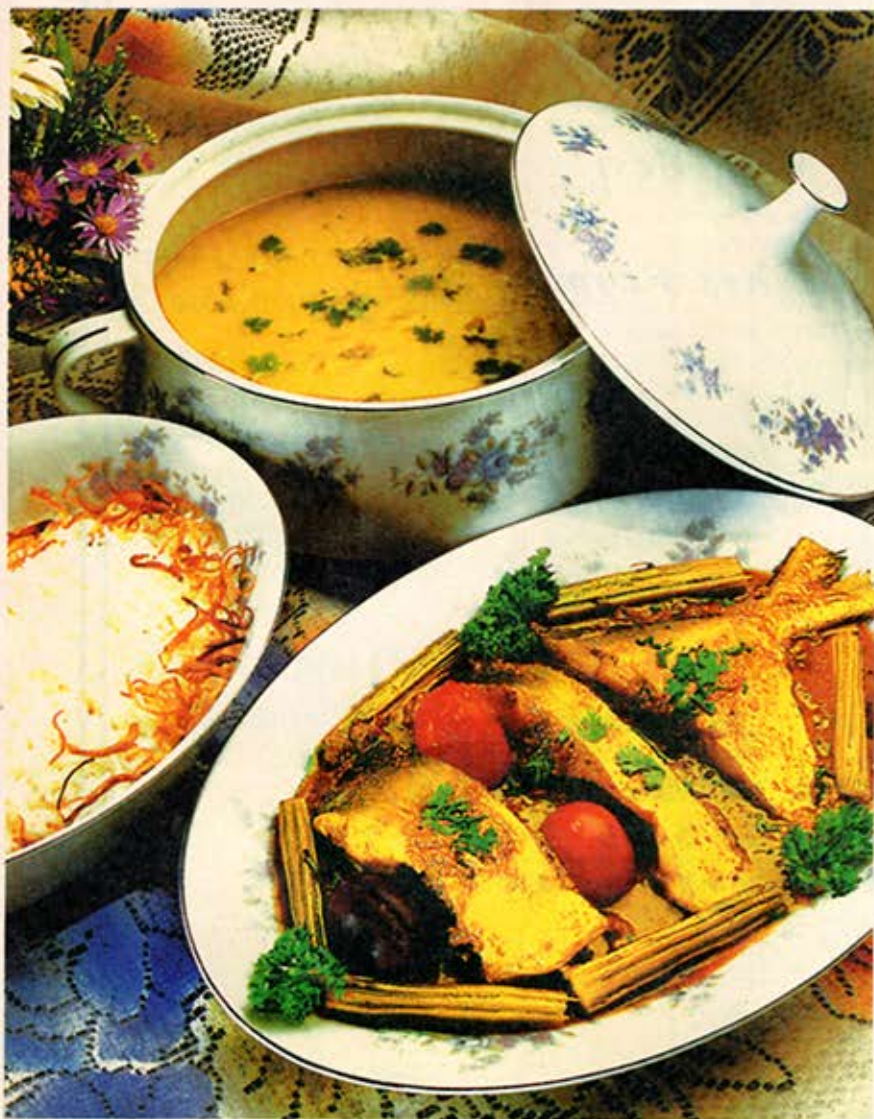
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Of patia and papri

Generations of experience and creativity surface in the cookbook *Jamva Chalaji*

"Don't do everything the cookbook tells you. If your fancy is caught by some exotic recipe, read it over twice," cautions the author, Dr Katy Dalal, in her introduction to *Jamva Chalaji* — Parsi delicacies for all occasions. A caterer of repute in Bombay, she has learnt "that good cooks are born. At the same time, even an uninspired person who is totally ignorant of kitchenlore, if sufficiently motivated, can learn how to produce good, wholesome meals."

Included in this 1998 publication from Vakils, Feffer and Simons Limited are recipes for all-time Parsi favorites, traditional ones like dhansakh as well as novel dishes like leeli keri ne vengnani akoori. Don't be surprised if, on opening the sub-title 'Ravo,' you find ingredients listed to serve 50! This 144-page book, priced at Rs 195 is enlivened by color photographs and has a variety of sections beginning with 'The Parsi Wedding Feast.' Pickles and

Dhan dar and Chamna-ne-kolmi-nopatio Source: *Jamva Chalaji*

preserves, breads and rice, fish, chicken, eggs, brain/liver/mutton, vegetarian food and sweet dishes add their aroma to the other pages.

Although an archeologist by training, Dr Katy Dalal who taught Ancient Indian Culture at different colleges in Bombay has put her special skills in cooking to good use. From small beginnings, sending home tiffins, to catering at the Freemasons Hall, Princess Victoria Mary Gymkhana and Ripon Club, she has established herself as a Parsi caterer at navjotes and weddings.

Some of the recipes from the book carried here were selected by Dalal for *Parsiana* readers.

FALOODA

This wonderful drink must have been brought by Parsis from their homeland in Iran. Its wonderful composition consists of rose sherbet or syrup, sweet milk, little black tukmaria seeds, cooked wheat milk drops, cream or ice-cream.

My mother makes Falooda faithfully every March 21 and I must admit it beats the Falooda made in the best of all restaurants.

Preparation time: 10 mins

Cooking time: 40 mins

Serves 16

Rose syrup (1 bottle)

Ice-cream (strawberry or vanilla — 1 block)

Rose water (½ cup)

Milk (12 glasses)

Sugar (2 cups)

Tukmaria seeds (¼ cup)

Wheat-milk powder (300 g — dried)

Soak the tukmaria seeds in four cups of water in a small vessel the day before and place in the refrigerator.

Soak the wheat milk in a large vessel in two cups of water, half cup sugar, half cup rose water and when dissolved place over a medium flame. Stir non-stop till you get a thick glutinous gel. This will take 30 minutes to cook.

Keep prepared beforehand a dekchi over which you can place a colander. Break two kilos of ice and place in the dekchi along with two cups of water. As soon as the wheat milk is cooked as thick as possible, place it in the colander and stir it with a ladle so that



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beads of wheat milk fall into the icy water and firm up immediately. If you do not use ice the beads will disintegrate and become a soggy mass. When all the mixture has been used up, place the vessel containing the beads in the refrigerator.

Take the milk, add sugar to it, mix and heat in a large vessel. Keep stirring till the milk thickens and remove after 20 minutes or so. Cool and refrigerate.

To assemble the Falooda, take 16 fancy, tall glasses. Place one tablespoon of swollen tukmaria seeds in each glass. Then place one tablespoon of wheat milk beads over the seeds. Then fill one inch of rose syrup in every glass. Pour milk in the glass till it is three-quarter full. Top with a scoop of ice-cream and serve.

CHAMNA-NE-KOLMI-NO-PATIO

(Prawn and Pomfret Patia)

Preparation time: 15-20 mins

Cooking time: 35-45 mins

Serves: 6-8

Prawns (300 g — large, deveined)

Pomfret fish (10 slices)

Onions (2 large — chopped)

Tomatoes (4 large — chopped)

Cherry tomatoes (10)

Baby brinjals (10)

Drumsticks (4 — cut into 4 pieces each)

Capsicums (2 — sliced)

Vinegar (½ cup)

Jaggery (½ cup)

Coriander (½ cup — fresh, washed, chopped)

Curry leaves (1 sprig)

Green chillies (4 slit)

Sesame oil (1 cup)

Refined oil (1 cup)

Salt

Grind together in ½ cup vinegar

Kashmiri chillies (12 large)

Coconut (½ — freshly grated)

Cumin seeds (2 tbsp)

Garlic (1 large pod)

Black peppercorns (8)

Parsi dhansakh masala (1 tbsp)

Mustard seeds (1 tsp)

Raw mango pickle sambar powder (1 tbsp)

Wash pomfret and prawns separately, apply salt and set aside.

Grind coconut, garlic, Kashmiri chillies, cumin seeds, mustard seeds, peppercorns and masalas with the vinegar on a grinding stone or in a mixer.

Put the sesame oil, onions and curry leaves in a heavy flat-bottomed vessel

and allow the leaves to crackle. Cook till onions are soft. Add chopped tomatoes, the ground masala, slit green chillies to the pan and cook over gentle heat. When a tantalizing aroma arises out of the masala, add the prawns and cook them over a slow fire. Add two cups of water. When the prawns are cooked, add the fish and crushed jaggery. Roll the dish from side to side by holding the vessel with two cloth pieces. Do not stir with a spoon. Add more salt only if necessary as the pomfret and prawns are already salted. Add cherry tomatoes. Remove from the fire.

Cut the brinjals into four pieces. Retain from the stalk. Place in salted water. Cut the capsicums into slices. Heat one cup refined oil in a frying pan or kadhai. Fry the baby brinjals and allow the oil to drain on a plate. Put the capsicum slices in the same pan and remove immediately from the oil. Boil the drumsticks in salted water and set aside. Chop the coriander.

Serve the patia fish by placing the prawns, fish slices and gravy on a flat dish. Decorate it with the fried baby brinjals, capsicums, drumsticks and coriander. Serve with hot parathas or yellow Parsi dal and white rice.

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GOVARSING-NE-GHARAB-NO-PATIO

(Sweet and sour cluster beans cooked with bhing fish roe — traditional favorite from Gujarat)

Preparation time: 45-50 mins

Cooking time: 25-30 mins

Bhing roe (2 pairs — fresh)

Govarsing (500 g)

Chilli powder (1 tsp)

Turmeric powder (1 tsp)

Tamarind pulp (½ cup — thick)

Jaggery (½ cup)

Tomatoes (4 large — finely chopped)

Onions (3 large)

Curry leaves (1 sprig)

Coriander (½ cup — finely chopped)

Salt to taste

Oil for cooking

To be ground finely in half a cup of vinegar

Coconut (½ — grated)

Sesame seeds (1 tbsp)

Cumin seeds (1 tbsp)

Black peppercorns (1 tsp)

Cinnamon (½" piece)

Cloves (2)

Badiyan or star anise (1)

Garlic cloves (1 whole pod)

Green chillies (4 seeded)

Kashmiri chillies (5 red)

Turmeric powder (1 tsp)

Wash the two pairs of fish roes very carefully and separate each of the two parts with a knife. Marinate the fish roe in salt, one teaspoon of turmeric powder and one teaspoon of chilli powder. Set aside in a cool place.

Grind the required masala to a fine paste on a stone mortar with half a cup of vinegar.

String the govarsing and cut or break into three pieces each. Boil in a pot of salted water and when soft strain through a colander.

Place the curry sprig and chopped onions along with one cup of oil in a large, thick-bottomed vessel and cook the onions until soft. Add the ground masala, tomatoes, tamarind pulp and jaggery and cook for 10 minutes over a low fire.

Meanwhile place an iron skillet or non-stick frying pan onto a stove. Add one cup oil and deep fry the four large pieces of roe and then cut each piece into four portions so that you will have 16 pieces. Fry well until golden brown.

To the masala gravy add the boiled govarsing and stir. Spread the vegetable evenly in the pot and place the pieces of fish roe on top. Cover the

vessel and gently cook over a low fire. After 10 minutes uncover, turn the roe pieces over and cook for five more minutes. Top with the chopped coriander.

Serve with rotlis or parathas.

LASAN-NE-KOTHMIR-NU-BHEJOO

(Brains with fresh garlic and coriander)

Preparation time: 20 mins

Cooking time: 15-20 mins

Serves 6

Sheep brains (6)

Onions (4)

Turmeric powder (1 tsp)

Coriander (3 cups — freshly chopped)

Ginger-garlic paste (1 tsp)

Garlic (1 pod — finely sliced or 3 bunches fresh garlic)

Salt

Oil

Grind together with 2 tbsp water

Cumin seeds (1 tbsp)

Green chillies (6)

Black peppercorns (8)

Wash the brains and remove all the skin and red portion in the brain. Wash well, apply salt and cut each brain into five pieces. Marinate in the ginger-garlic paste and set aside.

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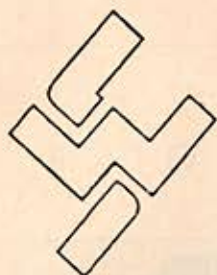
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Cut each onion into two pieces and slice finely. Deep fry along with the sliced garlic (if using dried garlic) till golden brown and set aside.

Take three tablespoons of oil in which the onions were fried and place the oil in a large frying pan. Fry the ground masala and turmeric in it and if necessary add half a cup of water. When the masala is cooked add a pinch of salt, coriander, fresh garlic if using it and the fried onion. Make an even level of the pan's contents, turn the flame low and drop the pieces of brain on top. Shake the pan from side to side and cover till the brains are cooked. Taste for salt.

Remove with the help of a spatula onto a serving dish and eat immediately.

BADSHAHI KESRI PULAO

(Emperor's Mutton Pulao)

Preparation time: 2 ½ hrs

Cooking time: 1 hr 15 mins

Serves 8-10

Mutton (1 kg — cut into chunks)

Basmati rice (500 g)

Saffron (2 g)

Silver leaves or vark (4)

Curd (300 g — thick)

Onions (2 large — finely sliced)

Onions (2 large — finely chopped)

Tomatoes (4 large — finely chopped)

Potatoes (4 large - skinned and cubed)

Bay leaves (4)

Ginger-garlic paste (1½ tbsp)

Wheat flour (1 cup)

Salt

Oil or ghee

Grind together

Cinnamon (1" piece)

Shahjeera (1 tsp)

Badian (1)

Cloves (3)

Black peppercorns (12)

Kashmiri chillies (4-6)

Cardamom and nutmeg powder (1 tsp)

Badisonf or fennel (1 tsp)

Coriander and mint (2 tbsp each — fresh)

Wash the chopped meat, apply salt and marinate in the ginger-garlic paste.

Grind all the spices in a mixer.

Heat the saffron on an iron skillet till crisp. Crumble between your finger tips, add to the curd and whip it lightly. Add the spices and the curd to the meat. Keep in a cool place for two hours.

After two hours heat half cup oil in a pressure cooker and put chopped onions. When they become red-brown, add the mutton mixture and allow to

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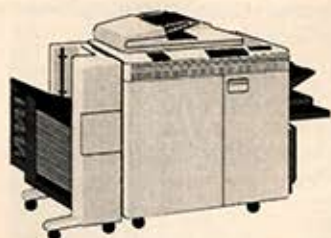
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sizzle. Cook for five to seven minutes, add two to three cups of water and the tomatoes, close the cooker. Cook the mutton till soft.

Fry the sliced onions till golden brown, then the cubed potatoes and set aside.

Boil the rice and bay leaves in salted water and strain through a colander before it becomes soft.

Take a large dekchi with a fitting lid. Place some oil about a quarter cup at the bottom. Then place a layer of rice at the bottom of the vessel. Then a layer of mutton on top. Spread some potatoes on the meat. Make these layers till all your rice, meat and potatoes are covered. Sprinkle on top sliced onions, cover with the silver pieces and close the lid.

Knead the flour with a little water till you get a thick dough. Roll out into a thick rope and place it on the lid and pinch it along the rim so that the vessel is firmly sealed. Then place the dekchi on a very low flame for half an hour.

When you are ready to eat, remove the wheat dough and serve the pulao with kachumber and if preferred with dhansakh dal.

SURTI-PAPRI-NU-UNDHIOO

(Surti Bean Casserole — a heavy traditional medley of beans, vegetables and bananas in green tangy masala and ghee gravy)

Preparation time: 1 — 1½ hrs

Cooking time: 1 — 1½ hrs

Serves 15-20

Field beans or papri (500 g)

Baby brinjals (150 g)

Tendli (tiny — 150 g)

Purple kamodio kand or yam (150 g)

Sweet potatoes (150 g)

Yam or souran (100 g)

Papri seeds/beans (100 g)

Bananas (8 large — sweet or better still raw panchdhari bananas each washed and cut into 4-6 pieces)

Ajwain seeds (1 tsp)

Turneric powder (2 tsp)

Sambhar masala (2 tsp)

Asafoetida (1 tsp)

Curry leaves (2 sprigs)

Cooking soda or baking powder (a pinch)

Grind together

Coconut (½ — grated)

Green chillies (10 — seeded)

Ginger (1½ tbsp — chopped)

Garlic (1½ tbsp — chopped)

Black peppercorns (15)

Cinnamon (1" piece)

Cloves (6)

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Green cardamoms (3)
Nutmeg (¼)
Cumin seeds (2 tbsp)
Sesame seeds (1 tbsp)
Mustard seeds (1 tsp)
Coriander (1 cup — fresh, finely chopped)

For the muthias:

Gram flour (150 g)
Onion (1 small — finely chopped)
Fenugreek spinach (1 bunch — large leaves)
Limes (2 — juiced)
Sugar (2 tsp)
Soda-bicarb (1 pinch)
Salt

Pure ghee (450 g)
Clean and prepare the vegetables. If using tiny papri keep whole and string it from both sides and place in salted water. Cut the brinjals into four and leave intact at the stem and place in salted water. Cut the sweet potato into thick slices and the yam into 1¼" pieces. Soak all three separately in salted water. Wash the bananas and slice at the end of the preparation. Slit the tendlis into fine strips and soak in salted water.

Grind the masala to a soft paste with a little water.

Prepare the muthias by placing the gram flour in a bowl. Add salt, fenugreek leaves, washed and finely chopped, onion, a pinch each of turmeric, soda or baking powder, the lime juice and sugar. Mix well and with the help of a little water — half a cup or so — make a stiff dough. Make even sized balls, about 20 to 25, and take each in your right hand and form in the shape of a fist. Heat a little ghee in a small kadhai and fry over medium flame till golden brown. Set aside.

Boil the papri in salted water, drain and set aside. Deep fry the baby brinjals, tendlis, kamodio kand, sweet potatoes and yam, separately, till cooked. Pressure cook the beans with salt, a pinch of turmeric and when cooked drain in a colander.

Take a large vessel and put the ghee in which the vegetables had been fried. Heat over a medium-low flame and add the ajwain seeds, curry leaves, turmeric, sambhar masala and asafoetida and after two minutes add the ground masala and any leftover ghee if necessary. Cook the masala over a low fire for seven to 10 minutes, add two cups of water and when the gravy boils add the vegetables in this order — beans, papri, yam, tendli, muthias, sweet potatoes, kamodio kand

and lastly the fried bananas with their skins on. Stir very carefully so as not to break up the vegetables and hold the vessel with both hands and shake it from side to side. Allow to simmer for 20 minutes and then serve after tasting for salt.

LAGAN-SARA-ISTEW

(Vegetable Stew)

Preparation time: 1 hr

Cooking time: 1 hr

Serves 8-10

Double beans or val papri (1 cup — boiled)

Carrots (1 cup — finely diced)

Sweet potatoes (1 cup — finely diced)

Yam (1 cup — finely diced)

Potatoes (1 cup — finely diced)

Lady fingers (1 cup — finely sliced, deep fried)

French beans (1 cup — finely diced, boiled)

Green peas (1 cup — boiled)

Vinegar (¼ cup)

Black currants or raisins (½ cup)

Sugar (¼ cup)

Onions (4 large)

Tomatoes (4 large)

Coriander (¼ bunch)

Ginger (2 tsp — chopped)

Turmeric powder (2 tsp)

Chilli powder (1 tbsp)

Dates (½ cup — stoned and chopped)

Nutmeg-cardamom powder (½ tsp)

Pepper powder (2 tsp)

Caraway seeds (1 tsp — roasted)

Salt

Ghee

Apply salt to the carrots, potatoes, yam and sweet potatoes and deep fry them separately. Drain and remove. Lightly salt and fry the boiled french beans.

Soak the black currants in vinegar and sugar. Chop the coriander and tomatoes and keep aside. Reserve some fried lady fingers and green peas.

Chop the onions and fry in four tablespoons of the leftover ghee till brown. Add the chopped ginger, turmeric and chilli powders, pepper, caraway seeds, nutmeg-cardamom powder and salt. Add two tablespoons more of the ghee, the tomatoes, coriander and after five minutes add all the fried vegetables, double beans, the boiled green peas, the soaked currants, dates and the vinegar mixture. Stir back and forth till the vegetables have absorbed all the masala. Cover and keep on a low heat for 20 minutes. Top with the reserved peas and lady fingers.

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A pilgrim's portrait

B. K. Karanjia

"Pilgrim, Exile, Sorcerer: The Painterly Evolution of Jehangir Sabavala by Ranjit Hoskote. Preface by Richard Lannoy. Published by Eminence Designs Private Limited, C/o Sneh Sadan Graphic Services Private Limited, Cecil Court, Landsdowne Road, Bombay 400001. Pp: 184. Price: Rs 1,900.

Charles Morgan described a portrait as the image of one spirit in the mirror of another. *Pilgrim, Exile, Sorcerer* presents the image of the well-known painter in two "mirrors" — one held by Richard Lannoy, the established English painter, photographer and writer, who has known Sabavala both as artist and friend, and the other by Ranjit Hoskote, a poet himself, gifted with insight and felicitous lyrical expression.

There is a third "mirror" too, held by the book's subject to himself, which in some ways is the most revealing of the three.

Both Lannoy and Hoskote suggest that with his distinctive looks and presence, Sabavala might well have been an actor rather than a painter. In fact his redoubtable mother Bapsy's fascination for the stage was well-known, and young Jehangir was made to take elocution lessons and acted in several amateur theatricals. Then again, Sabavala's numerous quotes on his life and work, interspersed throughout the book, hint also at a rare sensitivity that might have helped him to become a writer of distinction.

Lannoy suggests in his preface that what particularly drew him to young Sabavala when they were students at the Heatherley School of Art in London, was his critical prowess. Lannoy lauds him as possessing the most penetrating critical faculty from among his generation of Indian painters.

Sabavala in fact was brought up — long before he was trained as a painter — to be a sensitive and caring human being. As a member of a family of rank and distinction, he was always to remember that in addition to following the calling of his choice, he would to fulfil certain responsibilities that fell to him by virtue of his birth.

Noblesse oblige.

In his formative years, according to Lannoy, Sabavala faced two challenging problems: one, to find a mode of depiction subtle enough to express the complexities of his interiority; and the other to clarify his conscious identity in relation to India.

Sabavala's training began under the discipline of cubism and its master, the renowned Andre Lohte. Its stylish mannerisms may not have been anathema to Sabavala, but he did find them singularly constricting. "Abstraction was alien to me," he is quoted as saying, "I was the master's worst pupil." Yet the mysteries of cubism, of structure, proportion were paradoxically to provide the key to his inner nature. Besides, cubism imposed on him a discipline that was to stand him in good stead in later years.

Sabavala, under Lohte's training, soon began to fear that he might be driving up a blind alley, and this was confirmed during an encounter he had with Charles Fabri, the expatriate Hungarian archeologist and artist who met him at one of his early exhibitions in Delhi. "And where will you go from here?" challenged Fabri, counselling the young painter to plumb more deeply into the wellsprings of imagination and explore his own personality for some unexpected, hitherto unrevealed facets.

Now Paris beckoned him. Seeking to break away from cubism (1961-64), Sabavala found the remedial alternative in the works of Lyonel Feninger: "Through Feninger's pure, precise and yet very delicate and personal renderings of cloud and boat and sea, I discovered the joys of extending form into the beauty and clarity of light. I became interested in the source of light, its direction, its effect. Through these experiences, gradually my work changed."

It was in 1962 that he consciously broke free of his past. In a letter to Hoskote four years later, he recalled this moment when, suddenly, the landscape lighted up and yielded its secrets to him: "I discovered the suitability of landscape first, almost by wilful accident. For me, it was a liberation, for the first time, from the various disciplines and schools of painting which were my equipment. I felt instantly at home with a scene that could be molded into whatever form that I wished it to take. This eventually developed into my mountain/cloud/sea/dune forms. These became distinctly mine and not as depicted by anyone else. So that the idiom began to be personalized and now is extensively so."

This marked his gravitation to the theme of the visionary landscape. As



Hoskote puts it inimitably: "The identity of light as splendor, with its intensity assuming a spiritual dimension was to become Sabavala's enduring theme." Hoskote detects a latent Zoroastrian feeling for fire and light which "seems to flame within Sabavala as

the canvas gains amplitude, glowing with a luminosity that emanates from within itself."

Admitting that both he and others of his group then present in Paris, like Akbar Padamsee, Laxman Pai and Ram Kumar, could never really find the roots they were looking for, Sabavala is quoted as commenting: "I couldn't give a damn where a picture comes from. A critic's business is to judge a painter as a painter, not as a descriptive or a dramatic storyteller. In Europe they think my work is definitely Indian, in India they think it is European!"

In this context the noted art critic D. G. Nadkarni stresses: "It is essential to understand that Sabavala's art is as much Indian as the now traditionally-motivated folk art with which Western galleries seem to be familiar. The difference is that Sabavala's work travels beneath the surface and catches visually the spirit of this ancient mass of land called India."



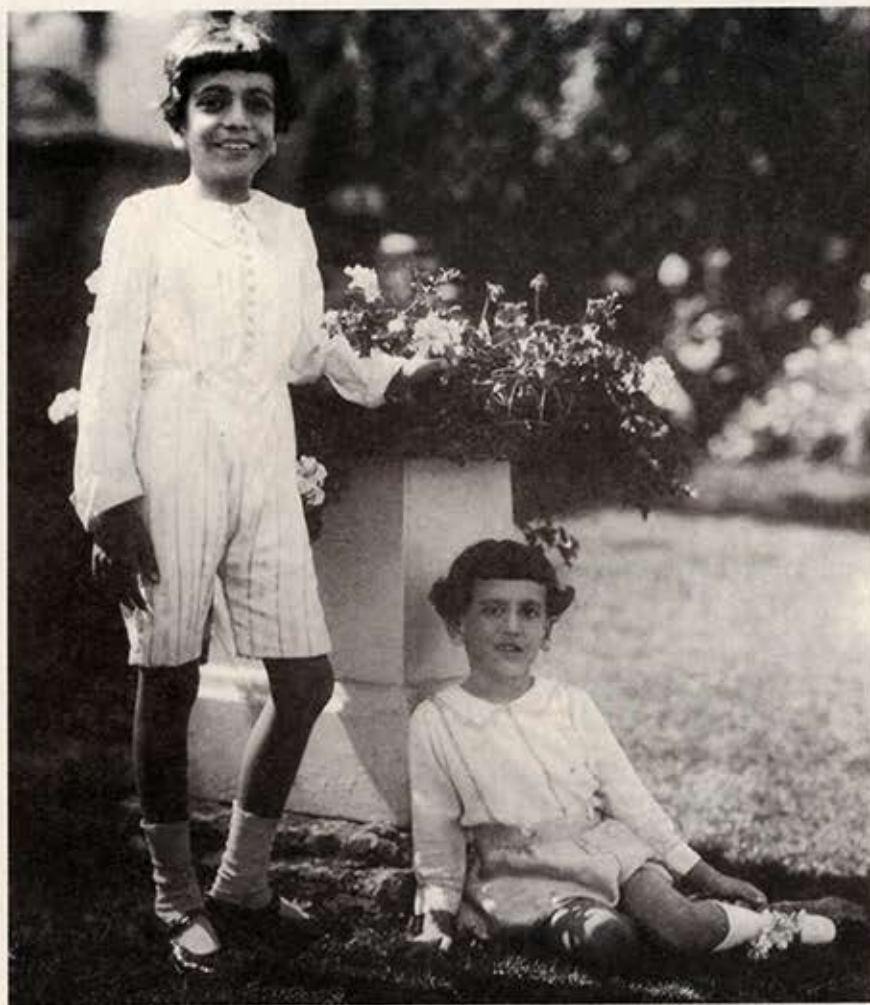
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Sabavala (right) with brother Sharokh in the garden of Readymoney House
(Below) Portrait of Shirin, 1949

"It is not surprising that in effect he projects a universally valid image of nature itself. It is interesting to note that despite Sabavala's multilateral predilections for the exuberances of the French and the Italian countryside, it is in the soil of India that his later paintings are moored, 'more drawn to the sea and sky of the western seaboard and to the ridges and dunes of our land.'"

It was his French training that induced him to look beyond the national to the universal and the eternal and seek the underlying structure behind nature's beguiling surfaces. This, according to Lannoy, was to combine with his deep empathy with the art of ancient India to make him a true classicist, his appeal being to India's immemorial capacity for absorption in the *murti*, aided by his almost uncanny ability to communicate in paint and in words.

The final transition in Sabavala's work was from landscape to cosmos, fully accomplished in the 1960s. In his own words: "A line is all that divides man between cosmos and chaos: order and harmony on the one side and hysteria and madness on the other," he muses. "I opt and fight for the former, which is so very demanding and so much more difficult than the latter. You only have to let go and almost at once you are on the uncontrolled shore."

Finally, the decade 1983-93 marked the artist's return to the human figure "long banished to the margins of the commanding visionary landscape." His figures of anchorites, monks, villagers, nomads "are not like any human being one knows but beings totally fulfilled and realized, possessing a repose in which, nevertheless, the

currents of life are circulating all the time." (Lannoy)

It is the story of the pilgrim's progress all over again: "Horizons widen and recede, and I am the pilgrim," writes Sabavala, "on a long and arduous journey of joy and sorrow, moving towards unknown vistas."

What makes this book a joy to read is that the biographer and his subject are ideally matched. The writing bears a luminosity similar to that which characterizes the paintings. In Shakespeare's telling phrase, "light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile." Sabavala, the man of great intelligence and taste, urbane, distant but courteous, curious but politely so, comes alive in these pages, and Hoskote's annotations on his paintings (several reproduced in the section entitled 'Gallery') help to a better understanding and deeper appreciation of them.

Endearing details as, for example, how Sabavala and his newly married wife Shirin organized their first show at the Prince's Room in the Taj Mahal Hotel, enliven the narrative. The young couple had to locate crate-makers, supervise the printing of the invitation cards, despatch them to the Press. And to cap it all, when the Taj management did not permit nails to be driven into their walls, the couple had to cover them with hessian before they could hang the paintings.

As the great-grandson of Sir Cowasjee Jehanghier Readymoney and the grandson of Sir Jehangir Cowasjee Jehangir, the responsibilities of Sabavala's heritage intruded on his passion to be above all else a painter. As he wrote in 1985 to Lannoy: "And then there have been numerous exhibitions, truly a plethora of them — and just when one wants to pull in, to be left

alone, to work and think again, to plumb one's own depths, such as they are. Not easy, when outwardly you carry a 'social' load which can't be totally ignored, placed as one is, in a city such as this. But little by little, I fight to work again, cocoon myself against the onslaught of living in this turbulent country with one's hopes and fears and dreams."

Sabavala takes his ex-



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The Sabavalas at an early exhibition; (Below) B. Sabavala with Sharokh and Jehangir

hibitions very seriously — he has held over a hundred of them — because he wants his viewers, even if not informed about art, to derive the maximum enjoyment from their visits. For him a work of art becomes a living reality when a dialog is established between the painter, the painting and the public.

No resident of some distant ivory tower, the country's interests are always close to his heart. Its overwhelming problems cause him anguish. Again in a letter to Lannoy in 1982, he writes of the need to have the "strength to participate and battle the terrifying age-old problems, without destroying oneself in the process. I have the deepest, but the deepest, admiration for those who attempt to meet India, understand and selflessly sacrifice their lives to its



quite overwhelming problems. One would have to be made of sterner stuff than most, and there really are very few — but they do exist — who live, work, and fight to improve the standards, from grassroots levels upwards."

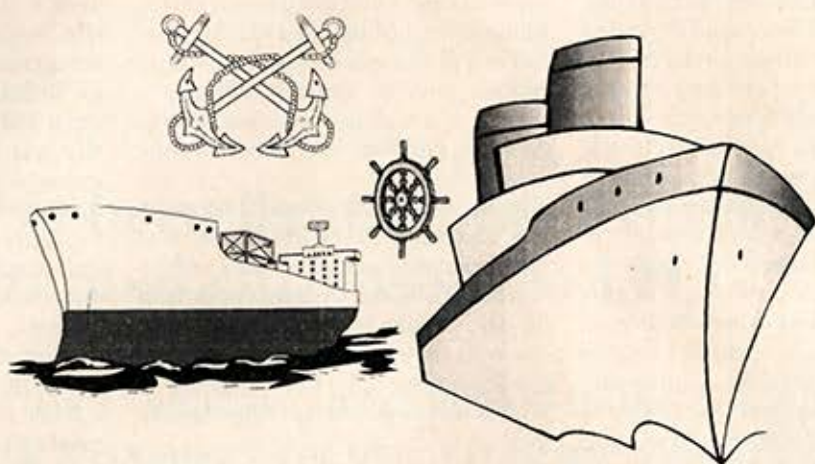
The reader, totally absorbed in this unveiling of a remarkable portrait, is rudely jolted when on page 79 C. R. Mandy's appreciation is left incomplete, and on pages 80, 81 and 83 certain paragraphs which have already appeared on pages 76 and 77 are repeated.

Most indifferent proofreading always be the bane of good writing?

For the rest, the book has excellent production values, dramatically designed and executed. Each of the chapters is strikingly entitled and introduced with appropriate photographs and drawings and prefaced by the evocative words of great philosophers and poets, past and present. Surprisingly,

no price is marked — on second thoughts, not so surprising, for what price would you attach to the love and care, the imagination and expertise that have gone into writing, designing, printing and publishing *Pilgrim, Exile, Sorcerer*.

This review couldn't do better than end with Hoskote's own summation of his subject: "It is the traveller who gains in awareness; the exile who came back as a pilgrim, to become, in time, a sorcerer, a master of the alchemical processes of transmutations."



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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 16

have the whole list of voluntary subjects and help students select what is best for them.

According to the Butler Act 1947, in England every school was compelled to maintain a record of the ability and aptitude test of each pupil from a young age. Our Parsi schools would do well to study modern methods prevailing in England and elsewhere and employ those that suit local conditions.

We should insist upon small classes, qualified teachers and devote some time in the company of our children at least on Sundays, holidays or certain days in a week so as to inspire our wards. To implement this, schools should drastically curtail homework for children so that evenings can be spent in the open air for physical exercise, games, etc. Simple, nourishing food for children is of paramount importance to have more energy and improved health.

This computer age provides a wide range of choice in various faculties. The *Education Times* every Monday provides very useful information and guidance.

BAHADUR M. BHARUCHA

"The Top Ten"

I would like to nominate Dadabhai Naoroji to the Top Ten of Parsi/Zoroastrians in the 19th century for the following reasons:

- He was the first Indian or 'native' from anywhere in the subcontinent to become an assistant and then full professor at a center of higher learning (at the Elphinstone Institute in 1852/3). Considering that he was born and grew up in relative poverty, the only child of a widow, and took just a decade or so to gain this position, it is a creditworthy accomplishment.

- Whilst striving for himself, he and a few others (the 'Sisoti' boys) strove to bring education to half of India's population, namely the women and girls of his day. Despite opposition, from 1849 onwards they almost single-handedly did the impossible; from teaching in private homes permanent schools were then set up.

- He came from a colony to the greatest trading nation in the world of that day and with two others established the first native company in Britain (in 1855).

- When he left the firm three years later it wasn't because of poor management but because his character would not

allow him to short change customers or pass on errors rather than account for them himself, nor trade in questionable goods (e.g. opium).

- He showed his patriotism by beginning at that time to campaign for Indians' rights and seek redress for their needs, when it was not a fashionable thing to do so.

- He continued to speak up and speak out against the ways of the authorities for 50 plus years which shows the resilience and dedication in his character.

- He was the first native to bring the message to the people of Britain. At first his message was for proper rights for natives, at the end it was both that and demands for self rule.

- He created a second front for India's millions, in a single-handed manner. By himself he set up campaign groups in the UK in the 1860s and 70s, to bring a fresh understanding of how Britain ruled and misruled at that time, so that he could get British people to also campaign for Indians. In this effort he was very successful and he became the unofficial ambassador for Indians living in the UK.

- He investigated the finances of India. His works were unique, in-depth stud-

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ies in their own day and are still referred to nowadays (e.g. by the United Nations). He was the most prominent Indian to turn to on financial matters and helped shape a future generation's thinking. He also set about reforms for entry to the Indian Civil Service. He encountered stiff opposition but saw the importance of having natives involved in running their own country.

- He became the first Asian and in fact the first non white person anywhere in the western world to gain a seat in an election. His result in 1892 was the fruit of seven years' hard campaigning, some of it spent rectifying the dissuasion of his own party.

- He went on to establish a Royal Commission and then became the first Asian to sit on one.

- He was called the 'Grand Old Man of India' by his compatriots. He earned that title and it was given with heartfelt recognition by millions of people, including Mahatma Gandhi, M. A. Jinnah and other leaders of his day.

- He was always open to people and gave of his time and efforts even when he held important positions. He could not be called proud or arrogant — he believed in "good words, good deeds, good thoughts" and served his fellow men.

- He encouraged the youth of his day and did not discourage them. Not that he would accept bad behavior, but he reckoned that they could do just as good a job as him. This was not a view held by many of his contemporaries.

- He provided an example in terms of his behavior and speech. He wouldn't use bad language or try and throw mud at an opponent. He'd answer with reason and thoughtfulness. He kept faith in his fellow men, even though that was very severely tried at times.

- He was a Parsi/Zoroastrian of the first order and should be awarded "The order of the outstanding Zoroastrian."

OMAR RALPH
London, UK

Contributions to "The Top Ten" will make interesting reading and also be educative, especially to the rising younger generation of Parsis who hardly know anything about our Parsi ancestors and elders who contributed to Parsi and Indian society.
19th century top...

I am quite sanguine that the entire Parsi community would join me if I pro-

nounce the name of the one and only Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, First Baronet as the greatest human being of these two centuries. Just go to the J. J. Hospital and see the lamps and incense sticks all around his statue, as if he is the saint who blesses all who bow down in reverence at his feet. A person so simple, so religious and so humble, he established hospitals, educational institutions, shelters for destitutes, homes for senior citizens of all castes and communities. There is an interesting story about 'Sir Saheb,' that even if a person was sentenced to death, if 'Sir Saheb' would turn his horse-carriage and pass by the jail, the sentence of death was changed to life imprisonment.

The next name that comes to my mind is of Dadabhai Naoroji also known as the *Hind-na-Dada*. He was the first and the only Parsi president of the Indian National Congress.

Next is a woman who designed and unfurled the first Indian national flag. Her name is spoken with awe, reverence and dignity — Madame Bhikhaji Cama.

The only 'lion' that really roared in Bombay was Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, who still stands erect with dignity and honor outside the Bombay Municipal Corporation offices.

A very simple but unparalleled businessman of deep insight and foresight was Jamsetji Tata who established the industrial empire of Tatas. Here was a soul so pure and serene, yet uncompromising on principles.

The field of education, which was almost closed to women of yesteryear, was opened up by two Parsis, Mr Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengali and Mr Byramjee Merwanjee Malabari, both of whom stood firmly for women's emancipation.

A learned judge who stands erect at Byculla (Ubha Parsi), was none other than Manockji Cursetjee.

The names of Jamsetjee and Manockji Petit, and so also another woman Bai Jerbai Wadia, will continue to be remembered for ages to come. According to one interesting story the government of those times had put up a very large plot of land for sale by auction. Some very well-to-do, famous Parsi families of the Wadias, Petits, Dadyseths, Camas, Banajees and more had gathered together at Lalbaug at the time of auction. (In those days 12 pies made one anna and 16 annas made a rupee.) The

bidding started with one pie. There was a great commotion as the Wadias and Petits kept on bidding against each other. The other sethies intervened and advised the two not to raise their bids as it was not going to benefit either of them or Parsi interests. A compromise was made and the plot was divided equally by the two families at a cost somewhere below one anna per square yard. The beauty of this high drama sale was that they both had purchased and shared this plot, only to be utilized for charity and not to amass their family's wealth. The Wadia family utilized the land for housing the poor Parsi families at subsidized rents and established the Jer Baug and Nowroz Baug at Lalbaug, and the Petit family established the Jamsetjee Nesserwanjee Petit Orphanage (since relocated at Poona) for poor Parsi children, and provided shelter, good food, clothing and top class education. The Petits also established a spinning and weaving mill at Lalbaug for poor Parsis to earn their daily bread. (The Petit Mill changed to Digvijay Mills.)

The miraculous touch of the late Dr Hormusji Masina cured the beloved daughter of Sir David Sassoon. As an act of gratitude Dr Masina was gifted Sir Sassoon's palace. Thus came Masina Hospital to Byculla from its original birthplace at Nagpada.

Shirinbai Muncherji Cama (a replica of Mother Teresa and Florence Nightingale combined) was a mother to the entire poor Parsi society of those years, and was called 'Maijee.' She and Dr Masina had an understanding that the Parsi patients who were treated in the hospital were to be sent to Bandra where women, old and young, girls and even boys below 10 years were to be provided with good nourishing food, good shelter, change of air (sea face), and even medical treatment at a Convalescent Home at Bandra founded and established at the turn of the century (1903).

There was a time called "Silent-no-zamano." There were no talkie films. In those years the Madons of Calcutta virtually had more than 100 theaters all over India and they also produced silent films (Madon Theatres).

In the field of militancy there was Ardesar Kotwal who was a military general of a Nawab's army at Surat. Having fought against the 'Pandharas' and other antisocial elements, he had achieved fame for his military adven-

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tures. People sing folk-songs about this valiant Parsi warrior.

20th century top...

I could not think of any person other than the man popularly known as JRD. A man who presided over the destinies of the business empire of Tatas for 50 years and over. He was a staunch patriot both in spirit and words, a jovial person, a rare intellectual of international name and fame. A businessman of exemplary character and discipline, he was ever helpful to his subordinates and colleagues.

Nuclear science owes its advancement to the vision and scientific wisdom of Dr Homi Bhabha. He was lost in the snow valleys of the Alps, a victim of a fatal air crash.

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, a witty wounded soldier, is a living legend, a Zoroastrian to the hilt, and an inspiration to the rising generation of Parsi youths to join the defence forces.

The Jakhis of Hongkong, Bai Avabai and Fakirji and family came all the way to India (Navsari) and gave away much to the poor Parsis and established a huge housing complex Avan Baug at Navsari (Gujarat) and also gave a large, magnanimous donation to a Parsi hos-

pital in Bombay.

Sorabji Pochkhanawala, a doyen of the banking industry, was the founder of the Central Bank of India with branches all over India and even abroad. In yesteryear, the 'dhansakia' Parsis dominated the Central Bank because of the generosity and helpful nature of this simple but scholarly banker.

There is one very quiet old lady, Scylla Vatcha, doing her work silently, giving away large sums in charity to hospitals, to homes for senior citizens, and many other institutions. Her charities, running into crores, are given to good causes and yet few Parsis have heard about this lady.

For dauntless bravery and for devotion to duty the name of Sohrab Palamkote will be remembered along with the 'Great Explosion' of 1944 (April 14, 1944) that exploded almost one-fourth of Bombay along its harbor (*Godi-no-dhadako*). He was the chief fire officer who daringly entered the burning chamber of the bunkers of a warship that had heavy explosives to be transported to South East Asia during the Second World War.

Sir Dhunjibhoy Bomanji (Dhanju Kalfati) led our Parsi braves in defence

of our Parsi community during the tragedy at the time of the arrival of the Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) and the unfortunate incident of the same era (of Govenji Vassenji) which had put the Parsi families in great jeopardy.

The abracadabra, both for the Godrej (with God within the name) family, and also the Parsi families who worked in the small and large factories, was their *chavi chhap* (key brand). Slowly their Godrej empire expanded (with soaps, cosmetics, locks and keys, steel cupboards and steel furniture, and now computers and other requirements of the modern age). The doyens of the Godrej industrial empire, Seth Pirojsha and later Seth Naoroji Godrej were both religious, honest and hardworking and an inspiration to others.

If through oversight some have not come to my failing memory today, their descendants may please pardon this humble author for any lapses, or unintentional failures. It would be now interesting to read about more and more other stalwarts from far off countries across the seas in other parts of the world.

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Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides in Bombay (as listed in this issue) ranged between 20 and 42 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 23 and 46 years, averaging at 32 years.

As compared to 81 Zoroastrians who were consigned to the Towers of Silence in Bombay in June, there were 14 babies born. The major killer — heart ailment — claimed 33 patients of whom 16 were above the age of 80. The other killers were cancer (10), pneumonia and lung disease (nine), old age and general debility (eight), septicemia (seven), brain or head injury (three). Two victims fell prey to hyperpyrexia (very high fever). The isolated causes of death in June were: tuberculosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, cerebral malaria, diabetes, cirrhosis of the liver and Duchennets Muscular Dystrophy. The coroner's reports were awaited in the cases of two deaths. The eldest to die was a 96-year-old man and the youngest, a 10-day-old baby girl. Three youths in their 20s and a 35-year-old lady were also lost

to the community. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay, in June was 74 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

AHMEDABAD

DIED

Bachoo Jamshed Lalkaka, (70), residing at D-6, Ushakiran, Opp Khanpur Gate, 380001 on May 3, 1998

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl to *Firoza and Zarir Dalal*; April 9
A boy to *Sanaya and Zal Sethna*; April 11
A girl to *Lata and Vispi Patel*; April 12
A girl to *Laila and Ricky Lamba*; April 22
A boy to *Azmeen and Behram Irani*; April 29
A girl to *Persis and Godrej Daruwalla*; June 1
A boy to *Shermaz and Jamshed Mistry*; June 7
A boy to *Farzana and Percy Bharucha*; June 9
A boy to *Rohiqa and Cyrus*

Mistry; June 10

A boy to *Banoo and Dinshaw*

Bhandari; June 11

A girl to *Armin and Nozer*

Irani; June 11

A boy to *Amaz and Phiroze*

Soonawalla; June 12

A boy to *Sanobar and Kersasp*

Patva; June 13

A boy, *Jal*, to *Nilufer and*

Rahul Cowasji; June 14

A girl to *Gulrukh and Behram*

Sahawala; June 15

A girl, *Sanaya*, to *Benaifer*

and Vispi Engineer; June 16

A girl, *Dilnaz*, to *Roxana and*

Aspi Driver, sister to *Dinaz*;

June 17

A boy to *Dipa and Minocher*

Darukhanawalla; June 26

A girl to *Shanaz and Sarosh*

Buhariwala; June 28

MARRIED

Anahita Bamansha Vakil and

Naryosang Jamshedji

Ichchaporia; April 27

Nilufer Dinshaw Davar and

Rohinton Noshir Nariman;

May 12

Meher Nozer Limbuvalla and

Percy Nadir Pavri of Pune;

May 14

Shaheen Adi Irani of

Dahanu and Varzavand Aspi

Mubarakai of Dahanu;

May 15

Anahita Soli Irani and *Neville*

Jal Bacha; May 16

Kamal Keki Wankadia and

Nozer Abadan Irani; May 17

Tanaz Minoo Engineer and

Aspi Minoo Driver; May 19

Pervin Jehangir Davar

and *Ezadyar Behram Irani*;

May 21

Mahabokhtar Kersi

Khadiwala of Navsari and

Daravus Shapur Broacha;

May 31

Armaity Bomi Palshetia of

Pune and *Syrus Behramji*

Dharwar; May 31

Daisy Kersi Khodaiji and

Khushrow Dinyar

Songhadwala; May 31

Firuzi Minoo Bardoliwalla

and *Farshosh Hoshang Nava*;

June 4

Khurshid Aspi Screwvalla and

Hoshi Homi Ragina; June 4

Pervin Dara Panthaki and

Farhad Minoo Narielvala;

June 5

Shermaz Minoo Tarapore and

Rohinton Bakhtyar Panday;

June 5

Maharukh Sam Patel and

Farokh Minoo Mistry; June 7

Delbar Kersi Dotiwalla and

Adil Dady Mehta; June 14

DIED

Rati Rustomji Bhiwandiwalla

(70), residing at Parsi

Punchayet Qtrs, Kemp's

Corner, Malabar Hill,

400036; May 29

Dinyar Pheroze Miller (45),

Mohammed Kesar Bldg,

14th Lane, Khetwadi,

400004; May 31

Mehernosh Eruch Bharucha

(65), D-17, Rustom Baug,

Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027;

June 1

Kaikhosro Khodadad Irani

(68), "Om" Guest Hse, Jain

Bhavan, 18-21, Lam Rd,

Devlali Camp, 422401; June 1

Ardesir Jehangir Laher (87),

C/o Dr G. C. Nagarwalla, 15,

Pushpa Milan, Off B. Desai

Rd, 400026; June 1

Pesi Vikaji Patel (65), Sai

Baba Hotel, Post Dehri,

Umbergam, Dist Valsad,

396170; June 1

Rati Behram Patel (80),

Empire Terr C, N. Petit St,

Balaram St, 400007; June 1

Adi Phirozshah Wadia (61),

Cambata Aviation Ltd,

Hanger No 3-A, Juhu

Aerodrome, 400054; June 1

Khorshed Rustom Cama (88),

B-33, Pipewala Bldg, 4th

Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005;

June 2

Boman Rustomji Daruwalla

(69), 46-Panday Sanatorium,

Wodehouse Rd, Colaba,

400005; June 2

Manekshaw Behramsha

Kodia (71), Talukdar Bldg,

Marzban Clny, Dr Nair Rd,

400011; June 2

Sherbanu Peshoten

Movdawala (82), 648, Kaka

Bldg, Firdausi Rd, Parsi Clny,

Dadar, 400014; June 2

Rustomji Nusserwanji Suntoke

(96), Patel Wadia Bldg,

Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034;

June 2

Dolly Framroze (Framji) Tata

(80), 583, Chira Bazar, Opp

Vijaya Bank, 400002; June 2

Najoo Maneksha Bhada (80),

39-Panday Sanatorium,

Wodehouse Rd, Colaba,

400005; June 3

Kayomaz Naval Ghadiali

(25), 258, Bazargate St, Fort,

400001; June 3

Freny (Jini) Hormusji Tampil

(80), H-21, Cusrow Baug, S.

B. Rd, 400039; June 3

Percy Rustomji Basta (75), 3,

Daruwalla Bldg, 3rd Marine

St, Marine Lines, 400002;

June 4

Pesi Framji Mistry (80), 695,

Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi

Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 4

Dhun Keki Rudina (70), G-2,

S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V.

Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;

June 4

Bomi Manekshaw Anklesaria

(65), Motibai Bhavan, Proctor

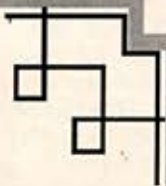
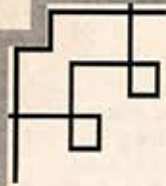
St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 5

Manekbai Shapurji Avari

(90), C-28, Gilder Baug, J. B.

Nagar, Andheri (E), 400059;

June 5



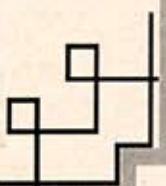
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Khorshed Kaikobad Dastur (91), 602-C, Indu Villa, Lady Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400019; June 6
Mani Maneck Bhagat (89), Soonaji Bldg, 51, Forjett St, 400036; June 7
Behram Rustomji Daruwalla (67), 275 C, Old Master Bldg, Zoroastrian Bldg Fund Est, 400007; June 7
Ratan Rustomji Mehta (54), Q-14, Dalal Estate, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 8
Dorab Ardeshir Surti (66), 2/27, Saraswati Sadan, Ram Mandir Rd, Kher Nagar, Bandra (E), 400051; June 8
Sherbanoo Nadirshaw Colabawala (95), Shroff Villa, Plot No 3, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; June 9
Minoo Burjorji Sanjana (75), 104-B, Shalimar Apts, 571, Cumballa Hill, 400036; June 9
Darabshaw Pirojsha Anklesaria (84), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 10
Aloo Burjor Dastur (76), Malegamwala Bldg No 1, Mahim, 400016; June 10
Burzin Hoshang Buhariwalla

(20), 642, Parsi Clny, Rd No 9, Dadar, 400014; June 11
Godafriid Boman Irani (68), 3/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 11
Dhumbai Hormusji Master (82), Nicolson Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; June 11
Goolmai Jehangirji Randeria (81), Parsi Sanatorium, Kemp's Corner, 400036; June 11
Darabsha Navroji Daruwalla (90), 5/4 B. S. Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; June 12
Goolbanu Faramroze Govadia (92), Mota Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 12
Female child of Beroze Firoze Mistry (10 days), 43, Jamasji Apts, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 13
Banoo Fali Bharucha (70), Petit Widows' Chwl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; June 14
Pilloo Dossabhoj Bulsara (79), 3, Skyscraper A, 74, B. Desai Rd, 400026; June 15
Soli Ratanshah Meherji (72), 56, Botawalla Bldg, Bomanji Master Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 15
Mani Minoo Mehta (74), Taj Bldg, C Block, Gowalia Tank,

400026; June 15
Meheroo Fakirji Mistry (74), Mackancee Mans, 7, Rustom Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; June 15
Gool Jamshed Bharucha (58), 20/6, B. S. Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; June 16
Ardeshir Ratanji Damania (88), B-506, Sunbeam, Raheja Vihar Complex, Andheri (E), Powai, 400072; June 16
Kersi Jehangir Khajotia (64), 62A, Grand Paradi, August Kranti Marg, 400036; June 16
Rustomji Dhunjibhoj Balliwala (84), 14, Dharbanga Mans, Carmichael Rd, 400026; June 17
Jal Manchershah Dadina (68), Bhiwandiwalla Terr, E Block, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 17
Noshir Sorabji Madan (76), 631-A, Meher Villa, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 17
Aloo Faramroze Bhagat (85), El-Cid, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Near Pali Hill Naka, Bandra (W), 400050; June 18
Byram Manekshaw Kanga (79), Seth Hse, 31, Agiary Lane, Bazargate St, Fort, 400001; June 18

Diana Peshotan Mirza (82), Accord Society, A-704, Lokhandwalla Complex, Andheri (W), 400053; June 18
Hilla Rustomji Mistry (71), Gool Mans, Homji St, P. M. Rd, Fort, 400001; June 18
Mani Jalejar Deboo (80), A-39, Godrej Baug, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; June 19
Freny Framroze Motivala (81), 730, Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 19
Khorshed Maneckshaw Padar (94), A-15, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; June 19
Hillamai Kaikhashru Pastakia (88), 91, Mariam Manzil, Trinity St, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 19
Gool Soli Tukina (71), Petit Block 1, Jamshedji Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 19
Tehmuras Rustomji Dalal (76), 4, Carmichael Rd, 400026; June 22
Ruby Adi Ghandhi (35), 9, Modi Hse, Padamji Rd, Near Dreamland Cinema, 400004; June 22
Homai Vicaji Panthaki (79), Suleman Manzil, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014;

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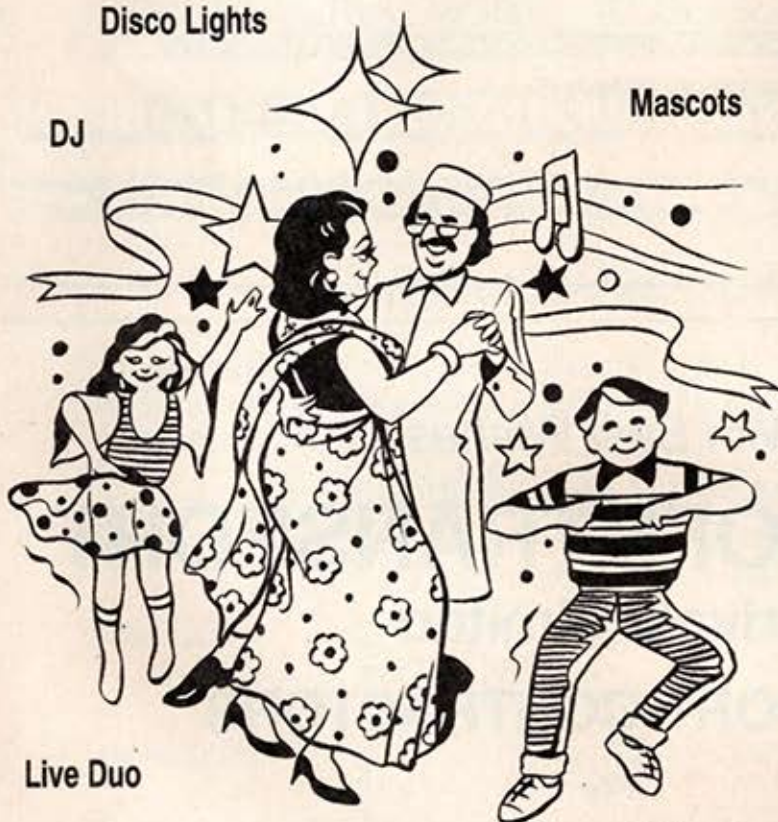
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June 22

Sheroo Fram Joshi (63),
Mohmadi Hse, 34/38, Jijibhai
Dadabhai Lane, Fort, 400001;

June 23

Nariman Burjorji Kasad (64),
2/14, A. H. Wadia Bldg, Parel
Tank Rd, 400033; June 23

Coomi Minocher Mistry (75),
11, Mithaiwala Bldg, 20/A

Ropa Lane, Chandanwadi,
400002; June 23

Dhanjishaw Cawasji

Daviewalla (84), Nimakwala
Bldg, J. D. Lane, Fort,

400001; June 24

Homai Kaiky Karanjia
(Rustomji) (84), 660, Parsi

Clny, Rd No 12, Dadar,

400014; June 24

Perinbanoo Bomansha

Jassawala (80), India Hse, 4,
Kemp's Corner, 400036;

June 25

Piloo Jehangir Pocha (80),
163, Rewa Apts, B. Desai

Road, 400026; June 25

Soona Kaikhushru Dastur

(82), Meher-Khushro Villa,

105, Swami Vivekanand Rd,

Khar (W), 400052; June 26

Kaiki Shapurji Tata (88), 2-B,

Ashoka Apts A, Arthur

Bunder Rd, 400005; June 26

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	1998*	This issue	1998*	This issue	1998*
BIRTHS						
Boys	10	49	—	—	5	26
Girls	9	42	—	4	6	14
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	17	141	—	3	—	4
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	14	—	1	1	1
Females married out	—	17	—	1	—	—
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	39	240	3	57	5	20
Females	44	266	3	45	1	18
CREMATED						
Males	—	7	—	—	—	—
Females	—	4	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1998 (January-July-August issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have a breakup of those cremated.

*These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

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Hira Nusserwanji Toddiwala (65), 672, Sherevar Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 26

Homi Jehangir Taleyarkhan (81), Currimbhoy Manor, 41, B. Desai Rd, 400026; June 27

Nargish Shavakshaw Tampal (40), C/o Dara S.

Mahuvawalla, 3, Marine Chmbs, Sir V. T. Rd, 400020; June 27

Jaloo Jehangirji Devadhvala (79), Gajendra Niwas, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400004; June 28

Amy Homi Doctor (68), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 28

Ardeshir Eruchshaw Mehta (84), Jaswanti Niwas, Modi St, Fort, 400001; June 28

Soli Fredoon Mehta (74), 705, Cumballa Crest, 42-A, Peddar Rd, 400026; June 28

Meherbai Ardeshir Irani (85), 749, Mithoo Villa, Parsi Clny, Rd No 6, Dadar, 400014; June 29

Jal Rustomji Mistry (94), 13-14, Ahmed Bldg, Gunpowder Rd, Mazagaon, 400010;

June 29

Bomansha (Boni) Burjorji Sethna (81), Wimbridge Hse, 20-D, Noshir Bharucha Rd, 400007; June 29

Dhunjishaw Manekji Daruwalla (75), 13, Lam Bldg, 173/B, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; June 30

Jal Sorabji Engineer (73), 141, Ashoka Apts, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; June 30
Anahita Rohinton Irani (21), 11, Todiwalla Bldg, 284, Soparibaug Rd, Parel, 400012; June 30

SURAT

DIED

Pirojsha Kawasji Bhatena (93), Rustompura, 395003; May 11

Nariman Manekshaw Doctor (72), Bibi-ni-wadi, Sayedpura, 395003; May 28

Bahadur Rustumji Patel (75), Choki Street, Nanpura, 395001; June 1

Homai Rusi Chiniwala (73), Chandramani Soc, Magdalla Road, Udhna, 394210; June 2
Hillamai Ardeshir Chiniwala (81), Palia St, Nanpura,

395001; June 18

...

CANADA British Columbia

BORN

A boy, *Nikiel*, to *Shafique* and *Behin Dhanani*; December 2, 1997

Vancouver

MARRIED

Cheryl More and *Cyrus Homi Driver*; December 20

DIED

Khodarahm Kiani (67), husband of *Houri*, father of *Nooshin* and *Shirin*; January 12, 1998

IRAN Tehran

DIED

Mehrbanoo Zartoshty, wife of *Feraydoon*, mother of *Paridokht*, *Homayoon*, *Iran* and *Farangis*; January 29

NEW ZEALAND Auckland

BORN

A girl, *Farrah*, to *Edwina* and *Darius Mistry*; March 6

SOUTH AFRICA Durban

DIED

Rustom Rustomjee, husband of *Khorshed* and father of *Zaver*, *Cyrus* and *Sohrab*; June 5

UK

London

BORN

A boy, *Rushad*, to *Delna* and *Viraf Doomasia*; January 8

USA

California

DIED

Burjor Colah, husband of *Sarah*, father of *Roshan Motiwala*; November 20, 1997
Arbab Rostam Anoosheh, husband of *Banoo*, father of *Khashayar* and *Mandana*; May 17, 1998

Houston

BORN

A girl, *Serena*, to *Fiona* and *Rustom Setna*, sister to *Kevin*; May 9

A girl, *Freya*, to *Laila* and *Raymie*, sister to *Zal*; May 16

DIED

Noshir Mama, husband of *Banoo*; May 11

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BORN

A girl, *Natasha*, to *Jasmin* and *Adil Dalal*; February 23

Minneapolis

BORN

A boy, *Darius Matthew*, to *Susan* and *Farhad Patel*; February 22

Missouri

BORN

A girl, *Dinaz*, to *Yasmin* and *Dinar Shroff*; November 7, 1997

New York

BORN

A boy, *Cyrus*, to *Nawaz* and *Hoshi Merchant*; January 8, 1998

Compiled by Bakhtavar R. Batliwalla

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A legacy of philanthropy

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Sir Dinshaw Manockjee (born Naswanji Dinshaw) Petit, fourth baronet, 63, president of several Petit Charities which monitored the affairs of family instituted schools, widows' homes, dispensary, sanatorium, gymnasium, on March 30, 1998 in Amsterdam following cardiac arrest.

"We shall miss Sir Dinshaw for all that he stood for and particularly his guidance and leadership," noted a condolence letter from the Bai Awabai F. Petit Residuary Estate Trust. He took a "very keen and active interest in all our trusts, was always very sympathetic and kind not only to all of us at the office but also to the poor and needy who looked to our trusts for help," further acknowledged the letter recalling the "flurry of activity during the few months that Sir Dinshaw spent in Bombay when he took the opportunity of overseeing the workings of the trusts and meeting members of the staff. Sir Dinshaw had great vision and many plans, some of which have remained unfinished."

Though he is known to have guided all the institutions which fell within the purview of his administration, his "two pets were the schools," mentions his elder son Jehangir, who is now the fifth baronet. Both, the Avabai F. Petit Girls' High School in Bombay and the J. N. Petit Technical High School in Pune which house boarders on their spacious premises, had earned his love and devotion. Being technologically oriented himself, he was instrumental in upgrading the schools' science laboratories, in introducing computer laboratories, recounts his son.

Every winter when he was in India, he would invariably give an inspiring talk to the girls at the A. F. Petit School on at least one occasion. Playing cricket with the boys at the J. N. Petit School was an annual event too when he would captain one team, and the director of the school the opposite team, recalls Ratan Lalkaka, chief executive of the Petit Charities who during his nine years of association with Petit regarded him as a

"very good leader, an excellent man, very fair and just."

To relive their memories of the president, on the occasion of the uthamna prayers organized at the Pune School's premises, they had put up a large notice board displaying three blown up pictures of Sir Dinshaw surrounded by photos of him taken during his numer-



Petit: kind direction and vision

ous visits to the School, wrote Commodore L. S. Mehta (Retd), director of the School. The previous day, Mehta eulogized Sir Dinshaw's contribution when addressing the staff and students, after which the hymn *Abide with me* and the School anthem were sung.

An unexpected tribute to Sir Dinshaw came from the members of the D. M. Petit Gymnasium at Khetwadi which is over a hundred years old. Although there is not a single Parsi member there today, Lalkaka noticed on one of his visits that they had hung a framed portrait of Sir Dinshaw next to that of Lord Hanuman and had even instituted a memorial trophy in his name.

Despite his wealth and fame he was "unassuming, easily approachable and ever willing to extend a helping hand to

the needy and deserving, be it an institution or an individual," mentioned a condolence resolution passed by the trustees of the Surat Parsi Panchayat. As pointed out the resolution, "Sir Dinshaw Petit, the first baronet, started the ball of charity rolling and his equally good and illustrious successors not only kept the same rolling but were vigilant to increase the utility and maintain the standard of efficiency attained."

"He had a great vision for our trust and wanted to do a lot for them (the beneficiaries)," confirmed Lalkaka. Realizing that the fixed income of the trust and the mounting expenditure was a financial strain, he was always keen to raise the revenue, hoping that the moneys generated from a sale of some unutilized plot of land could be plowed into improving the facilities for their existing institutions.

"I have to run my charities as a non-profit business," said Petit in an interview with *Parsiana* ("This business of charity," February-March 1997). Disappointed when his plans for construction of cosmopolitan ownership flats on a part of the F. D. Petit Sanatorium at Kemp's Corner were stalled, Petit had reasoned, "What's the harm in selling flats outside and taking in money to benefit the community?...My duty as a trustee is to get as much (money) for my trust as possible."

While many Parsis avail of the facilities at the two widows' homes run by the Petits at Thakurdwar and Fort, Sir Dinshaw's dream project was to build a home for the aged in the suburbs where the old inmates could stay comfortably and enjoy the greenery of their surroundings, relates Lalkaka. Commending his "kind direction and forthright vision," architect and urban designer Harshad Bhatia whose firm had undertaken work for him regarded him as "a truly committed and concerned leader who looked at the well being of the people first and foremost in his decisions."

The workings of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital were of con-

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cern to him too and when he was in Bombay he would give priority to attending the managing committee meetings on Saturdays.

He was also very fond of the Sakarbai Petit Veterinary Hospital at Parel, says the fifth baronet, and had served as trustee of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. A love for dogs has been a perpetual feature with the family, their beautiful home on Napean Sea Road playing host to some 10 to 15 canines.

Following the third baronet's demise in 1983, when the mantle of baronetcy fell on him, Sir Dinshaw dedicated himself exclusively to the progress of the family's numerous charitable trusts. Prior to that, he was with the Philippine General Sales Agent as manager of Benelux, France and Switzerland. Before this four-year stint, he had been associated with Air-India for nearly 17 years, joining as district sales manager, Nice and resigning as manager, Benelux.

After his early schooling at the Bombay Scottish Orphanage and Campion, Petit had studied at the Prince of Wales Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, and Malvern College, UK. At the age of 20 he took on his first job as engineering apprentice with Vickers Armstrongs UK after which he was with Chester Goldman and Company in New York as executive sales person in real estate.

Full of good humor, the late baronet "loved the good life and always did justice to good Parsi food," remembers Lalkaka. The Christmas week was in-

variably spent at his bungalow in Mahableshwar when every morning would see him walking for two to three hours.

Besides cricket he also played football, rugby, squash, tennis and enjoyed swimming, as notes his bio data. He had helped many Parsi boys and girls come up in sports and business. His main regret though was that the boys in the community were not as hard-working as the girls who liked to avail of opportunities that came their way, states Lalkaka.

Known to be a liberal who would have liked to see the community more progressive, he always had "the interests of the community at heart," notes Lalkaka. Sir Dinshaw's mother Sylla was the industrial magnate J. R. D. Tata's sister, his maternal grandmother therefore was the French 'Sooni' whose controversial navjote led to the famous Davar and Beaman judgment.

He was studying the history of the religion and was writing a book on the subject, believes the fifth baronet. Despite his liberal inclinations he respected the religious ceremonies and customs. "He preferred us to but never forced us" to wear the sudreh and kusti, says Jehangir. The message of the religion was more important to him. "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds" he "would keep drumming into my head," conveys the son. "He abided by that and expected us to live up to that as well."

The fourth baronet is survived by his Dutch wife Elizabeth, and sons Jehangir and Framjee by his first wife Nirmala.

A VOICE OF CONSCIENCE...

continued from page 70d

Not once was my G-1 asked her name, where she lived, or what had happened. No lawmen present asked for her car papers, or driving license, or expressed the slightest interest in the event. No questions, no hint of investigation. The motorbike too was taken away. The whole matter ended there, in the middle of the road in the middle of the night. No queries, no follow-up, nothing. This also was filed away as a coincidence, one of three within the space of three weeks...

Lastly, to the man who relieved me of my watch and ring. The ring has gone, melted down by now no doubt. Many years ago in England, a burglar cleaned out the flat of King George V's jockey, Gordon Richards. Richards wrote to the press, telling the burglar that he can keep all the rest of his booty but would he consider returning the gold cigarette case presented to him by the King, which bore the engraving "George V, R. I." as it had great sentimental value. The burglar obliged. Now, please will my night visitor... return to me my 40-year old Vacheron Constantin, specially made for me with loving care, shaped and sized to fit my wrist. I will compensate him.

In response to this article Air Marshal Asghar Khan, first chief of the Pakistani Air Force and later of Pakistan International Airlines, wrote to *Dawn*, (April 17, 1998) from Islamabad:

Ardeshtir Cowasjee's column (April 12) in which he has described his experience... should be of concern to those who value one of the few voices of conscience in the present state of our chaotic society. It is also quite possible that the "King" or one of his men thought it desirable to warn Cowasjee to use his pen discreetly when criticizing those in power.

Whatever the truth about the motives behind the two incidents, Mian Nawaz Sharif would do well to see that no harm comes to Ardeshtir Cowasjee. In the lawless society in which we live, the Prime Minister would be well advised to ensure that Cowasjee is protected as well as he is himself. Should any harm come to Cowasjee, it could have serious consequences for the government and reduce its dwindling credibility further to a dangerously low level.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama



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Zarin R. Mistry

August 3, 1958 -- August 5, 1998



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