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Parsiana

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"Milestones"

This is in response to a letter from Mr Rustom D. Patel from Hong Kong ("Milestones," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 1998). Like Mr Patel I too live in Hong Kong. I have never met him, but if I ever did, the following is what I would say. In doing so I am certain that I would echo the feelings of many intermarried Zoroastrians around the world.

Mr Patel, you question my mental maturity and state that I have a "lack of appreciation of the true Zoroastrian spirit" for having married a non-Zoroastrian. I was brought up in a Zoroastrian spirit, and I was taught principles. These principles are like a lighthouse, they guide you through life. They are natural laws that don't change and cannot be broken. They govern our growth and our happiness. They are not unique to my religion but are part of every endur-

ing religion or faith, and they exist in all decent human beings. I am referring to integrity and honesty which create the basis for our long-term interpersonal growth. I also refer to fairness, out of which equality and a sense of justice is born. I refer to service, and to the idea of making a contribution to our world. I was always instilled with the principle of potential as I grew and developed my talents. We will do the same for our children and regardless of whether they are "half Parsis," with these principles they will learn the solid foundation for lasting happiness and success.

Mr Patel, you also make the analogy of offspring from intermarriage with the mango trees at the Macau cemetery that "bore worthless fruits. Why so? Because the seeds had incompatible soil." You question whether one would "allow" a "pedigree Dalmation bitch to be mated with any other dog except a Dalmation and (thus) sacrifice the pedigree of the pups." To this I would say that what makes us different from animals and plants is the fundamental principle about the nature of man. We have an imagination, a sense of self awareness and a conscience. A conscience that teaches us right from wrong. We have an independent will and the ability to act free of influences. These human endowments lift us above the animal world. To what extent we exercise and develop these human rights empowers us to fulfil our human potential. If we were to compare ourselves to nature we would be limited to stimulus and response. But we as humans have the unique potential that between stimulus and response we have the greatest power — the freedom to choose. It is with this freedom to choose that we make our choices in life and in love.

TINA BALSARA VASVANI
Hong Kong

"The benevolent Baron"

"The benevolent Baron" (*Parsiana*, April '98) was a nice article. Could the author Hilla P. Guzder tell me something more about Sir Jamsetjee's connection with the Tabak family? She writes, "His first trip to China was as his cousin Tabak's *mehta* (accounts clerk)..." I am not so sure that he was a cousin but that he was taken in by Jamsetji Tabak and trained in the trade.

A Chinese soothsayer is supposed to have looked into their faces and prophesied the boy's brilliant future.

Dr H. S. ADENWALLA
Trichur

Hilla Guzder replies

Ratanji Behramji Madon in his book *Sir Jamsetjee*

Jejeebhoy, First Parsi Baronet written in Gujarati and published almost 100 years ago refers to Jamsetjee visiting Calcutta in 1799 with his *pitrai bhai* (father's brother's son) Seth Merwanji Maneckji

Tabak who had been trading with China since 1790.

Jamsetjee's first voyage to China was as Tabak's *mehta* or accounts clerk. Madon writes that one day while Jamsetjee was sitting in Tabak's office negotiating a sale of opium, a prominent Chinese merchant who had been closely observing him prophesied that Jamsetjee would later become a prosperous merchant himself and that his employer Tabak would become his employee. Later, Tabak suffered great losses in his trade and closed down his business, whereas Jamsetjee rose to fame and fortune. Madon states that Jamsetjee later sent Tabak to China as his representative.

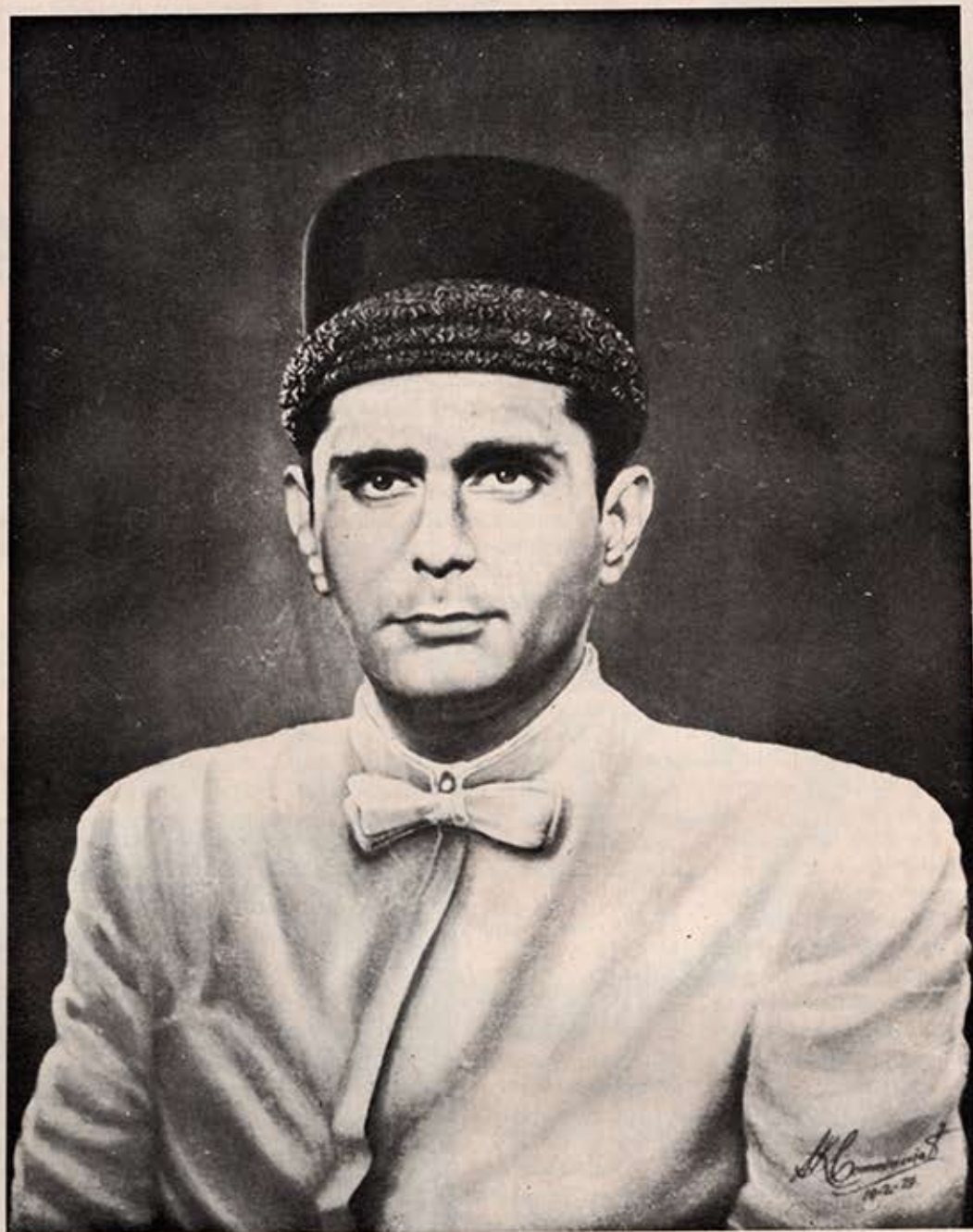
It might also interest Dr Adenwalla to know that Sir Jamsetjee's son Rustomjee married a member of the Tabak family. Rustomjee's marriage on January 14, 1836 to Soonabai Muncherji Tabak was celebrated with Jamsetjee hosting a splendid ball, with the governor Sir Robert Grant and other high officials being among the invitees. The bridegroom was all of 12 years old, the age of the bride is not mentioned!

Make Udvada yatra dham

It was reported in the Press that the central government has decided to declare six cities as *yatra dhams* (pilgrim centers) so that they can be developed accordingly with central assistance and the *yatris* (pilgrims) provided with all



The Tabak connection



In Memoriam
Mr Fali Meherji Variava
Ex-Director

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Udvada: a pilgrim center

modern facilities so as to make these pilgrims comfortable enough to attract more and more pilgrims there.

The six cities are Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, Ajmer Sharif, Bodh Gaya, Hardwar and Tirupati.

We are followers of one of the oldest, if not the oldest, revealed religion in the world — Zoroastrianism. For every Zoroastrian, wherever he may be living, Udvada has a special place in his heart and the omission by the central government to declare it as a pilgrim center is a letdown for the Parsi community, which has played a significant part in the development of the country. No less than the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi has acknowledged, "I am proud of my country, India, for having produced a splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers beneath contempt, but in charity and philanthropy, perhaps unequalled, certainly unsurpassed."

On June 19, 1998, I had addressed a letter to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet that as an apex body it should make a forceful representation to the central government to include Udvada as one of the *yatra dhams*.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

The Editor replies

As per a clarification issued to Marazban Patrawala, member of the Minorities Commission from P. K. Laheri, additional chief secretary, information, broadcasting and tourism, Government of Gujarat, "on revision of the previous government decision regarding declaring Udvada as a *pavitra yatra dham* the state government has decided that Udvada will be included as additional *yatradham* in purview of Yatradham

Board after the completion of development project for the six *yatradhams* namely Dwarka, Somnath, Palitana, Dakor, Ambaji and Girnar which (were) declared earlier by the state government."

Walk to the Hospital

The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital is an institution of which every Zoroastrian is justly proud. This institution is a godsend for poor and middle-class Zoroastrians who benefit immensely from the excellent medical facilities provided to the patients by the distinguished panel of medical advisers whose expertise and care compares most favorably with the best anywhere in the country and even abroad.

The WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Youth Wing fully supported by the main managing committee decided to make its contribution, however miniscule, by creating or rather accentuating the awareness of the excellent work being done by the Hospital.

To this end, we have organized a Walkathon on Sunday, December 20, 1998 which will terminate in the grounds of the Hospital at 10 a.m. Those who wish to take part in this Walkathon and function are requested to contact Mr Rusi Bhungara on 2012227 or Mr Sarosh Bana on 3679717 or the undersigned.

It is also decided to use this Walkathon as an occasion to collect maximum funds for the Hospital.

Through this open appeal addressed to each and every Zoroastrian, we request you to use this occasion to make your maximum contribution towards this most worthy cause. Cheques/drafts should be issued in the name of World Zoroastrian Trust. The advertisements in the Souvenir to be published to mark this occasion and contributions/donations to World Zoroastrian Trust are exempt under 80 G of the Income Tax Act. The total proceeds thus collected would be donated to the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital.

ROHINTON P. CHINYO, DARA T. MARFATIA
Joint Honorary Secretaries, World Zoroastrian Organisation

Saving sandalwood

Throughout the world an awareness has emerged to preserve and protect forests, particularly to protect trees which are ecologically vulnerable. In this category comes one of the finest and fast disappearing trees, vulnerable to the avarice of loggers and smugglers, viz. the sandalwood tree.

We Zoroastrians burn this scarce and precious wood in large quantities in innumerable fire-temples in India, during religious ceremonies and at the doongerwadi.

Keeping our holy fire burning continuously is very essential but can we not attain the same purpose by the use of cheaper wood while offering our prayers at the kebha? In any case the fires in all the fire-temples are kept burning continuously by the use of comparatively cheaper kathi wood and only the offerings from the devotees are made in the form of sandalwood.

Most of our agiaries are clamoring for donations for the present day high cost of upkeep and maintenance. I am not professing to save in any way the money that would have been spent on offering sandalwood to the holy fire. I suggest that the same amount may be



Holy fires consume precious wood

kept in a special box provided near the sale of sandalwood specifically for the purpose of upkeep and maintenance of our agiaries and decent sized kathi wood sticks be provided for offering to the kebha. If the sale of sandalwood is one of the perquisites of the panthakies and mobeds, an agreed percentage of the collection may be distributed amongst them as their legitimate earnings.

It has been pointed out that the Bombay Parsi Punchayet incurs a yearly loss of about Rs 22 lakhs to maintain the



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doongerwadi. At the same time, we are informed that for funeral rites for four days at the doongerwadi as much as Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,500 are spent only on the purchase of sandalwood. Assuming that about 1,000 funerals yearly are taking place at the doongerwadi, a whopping saving of Rs 12 to 15 lakhs can be achieved which could be used to maintain the doongerwadi if facilities to supply adequate and cheap kathi wood are made.

The *Avesta* mentions many different types of wood besides sandalwood which are suitable for offering to the fire. Hence it should be our duty to conserve sandalwood which is fast depleting and also becoming expensive and difficult to procure when alternate kathi wood is available in plenty and at cheaper rates.

It is very essential that we, as an educated and enlightened community, consider some changes in many of our present day rituals in keeping with the expected changes in the coming millennium.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

Vanishing vultures

The Parsi custom of disposing the dead in dokhmas is to expose the body to the sun and to the flesh eating birds. But now, as many dokhmas are in over-populated industrial areas, chemically polluted, vultures come rarely.

We read in Dr Sir Jivanji Modi's book *The Religious Ceremonies And Customs of the Parsees*, page 69, "The Zoroastrian religion strictly enjoins that dead bodies should not be buried in the ground, or burnt or thrown into seas, rivers, etc." In view of the present bird problem in dokhmas and the statement of the great Parsi author, what is to be adopted? Presumably, we can utilize some solar technique (wherein no electricity is consumed) at the towers. Our learned high priests and other respected figures may kindly oblige us with their authoritative views.

TEHMAS P. COMMISSARIAT
Ahmedabad

Premarital counselling

At the recent Anjuman Committee meeting held by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, community members had expressed their deep concern regarding the growing number of divorce cases. Also there is a problem of mixed marriages, late marriages and eligible girls and boys re-

maining single. The community needs to sit up and take notice of the problem.

For divorce cases there is a Parsi Matrimonial Court. What we must have is a premarital counselling center, medical check-up center and a strong and genuine matrimonial court. Great responsibility rests on the shoulders of the delegates to the Matrimonial Court, but recently we have noticed from newspaper reports that most of the delegates are not taking matters seriously. We must select dedicated persons for this delicate matter.

It has been observed over the years that there are less cases of divorce among couples married among their cousins, close relatives and also among neighbors. This may be due to better compatibility. There seems to be a fallacy that wedlock between cousins and close relatives result in deformed children. How far it is true can only be confirmed by experts but one point is certain that marriages among close relatives take



place in all communities around the world and you will be surprised to know that among South Indians, the marriage of a man with his sister's daughter is not only common but also encouraged.

In case there is already a counselling center in operation by the Punchayet, it should be made active and popular. If possible, checking of blood groups should be made compulsory. We have enough resources and talent in the community and I am sure they will all support and help the youth.

DALI J. GUNDEVIA

Problems facing Parsis

Allow me to enumerate the problems facing the Parsi community. After the collapse of South Asian countries many handins are perturbed about their investments, wealth and assets as well. The collapse of various finance companies, scams, various unscrupulous promoters of companies have resulted in loss of money (capital) invested in such companies. Low interest rates on deposits faced by retired persons and senior citizens are continuous sources of tension and anxieties in the ever rising cost of living. Handins need to be educated, guided and protected; not exploited or robbed by selfish brokers and individuals. Also, they need to be guided and informed to sell and book profits whenever possible and place money in fixed deposits with nationalized banks only where their capital is not likely to be depreciated.

Many middle-class families are ruined by unexpected and untimely illness in the family, hospitalization, etc. and if they are not covered by medicare they are placed in a difficult financial position.

Marriage and navjote ceremonies are performed with pomp resulting in waste of money. Ask handins one straight question — "After how many years will you be able to save that money which you have lavishly thrown away for four-five hours' pomp and show?" Other communities follow mass marriages but unfortunately Parsis have ignored this.

The craze for getting their children admitted in convent schools has considerably increased even when they have to pay high fees in such schools than that demanded by Parsi schools. Many big personalities who are educated from Parsi schools are ashamed to divulge their past education in Parsi schools.

Change of food habits is more important in these trying days. Consumption of vegetables, spinach of different varieties is necessary for health and growth. Consumption of breads should be substituted by wheat rotis. During lunch and dinner, salads (radish, onions, cucumber, beetroots, carrots, etc) should be eaten as they provide nutrition, vitamins, calcium and other necessities for good health, which are otherwise destroyed in cooked food.

Change of climate is more important for healthy growth and healthy life. We should be away for some time from the city, take fresh air and drink well water.

Our esteemed forefathers established sanatoriums and dharamshalas in different parts of India for the good and welfare of the community.

RUSTOM A. KOTWAL

Pledge your eyes

We write this letter to you in a bid to spread awareness about the plight of the visually handicapped in India.

There are at present more than three million corneally blind people in India, out of which 60 percent are under 12 years of age. It is sad to think that none of them will ever get a chance to see this beautiful world unless someone helps them to regain their eyesight through donations. But due to an acute lack of eye donations only one percent of them actually regain their sight.

All persons irrespective of age, sex or religion can donate their eyes. Eye donation in no way disfigures the face of the deceased and is permitted by all religions. Your eyes can restore the sight of two other people.

The procedure of eye removal must be done within four to five hours of death. The procedure itself takes about 30 to 40 minutes and involves removal of the cornea, the transparent layer in

front of the eyeball. If this layer is either shattered (by accident) or is opaque (due to sickness or at childbirth) it renders the person blind. The remedy is simple. The shattered cornea is surgically removed and replaced by a good cornea, obtained from a dead person.

However, due to lack of awareness and ignorance of the procedure, out of 1,50,000 people who died in Bombay in 1996, the sight of a mere 1,000 people could be restored.

You would be surprised to know that in Sri Lanka, it is a social obligation to donate eyes due to the efforts of the Buddhist monks. In Europe and USA, it is legal to remove eyes from persons who have died in hospitals even without the permission of the relatives. In fact a tiny country like Sri Lanka has a surplus of corneas which they export to India and other countries, free of cost to help the blind. Why can't we in India with a population of over 900 million restore the sight of our visually handicapped?

The Parsis have always been known for their generosity and charity to the needy. We would sincerely request all readers to pledge their eyes and change other people's lives. Don't let your

candle die out with you, use it to light someone else's life. Donate your eyes and you shall live on forever in the hearts and minds of those you have helped.

Mission for Vision is a project undertaken by The Rotaract Club of Bombay Hills South. Through this project we are trying to create mass awareness about eye donations. Please help someone see this beautiful world.

If you are interested in pledging your eyes for donation, please contact: Eye Bank Co-Ordination And Research Centre, Masina Hospital, Sant Savta Marg, Byculla, Bombay 400027, Tel: 3741343/72. For further information please contact the undersigned at 16/I, Pushpa Vihar, 3rd floor, Colaba P. O., Bombay 400005, Tel: 2152826.

NISHA VANVARI, NEHA THARANI

Rotaract Club of Bombay Hills South

Aids for the blind

May we request you to assist us in our efforts to help the blind and visually impaired in India by creating an awareness of the latest technology aids in the world for the benefit and interest of the blind population of our country?

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tion on Assistive Devices for the Disabled organized by the ministry of welfare renamed the ministry of social justice and empowerment, New Delhi in September 1998 displayed new technology products such as the Galileo text reading machine: a combination of the computer and text reader with clear English accent. It reads all sorts of printed text, books, magazines and text or document files stored on floppy disks, stores 20,000 pages of scanned text, transfers the same to a floppy or records it into an audio-cassette. It has the ability to read multiple languages and Indian languages can also be introduced along with English as soon as the Indian language software is developed. If these machines were installed in blind schools, colleges, universities, public libraries it would have a long-term and far-reaching benefit to the blind population of our country.

Aria Braille operated portable talking computer: It is the size of a video cassette and has features like word-processing, note-taking, clock and calendar, diary, telephone directory (with tone dialler), etc.

Mountbatten Electronic Brailier: an ideal solution for integrated education system for blind children. It converts braille to print when attached to a standard printer and print to braille when attached to a personal computer. The student will now be able to type his exam papers in braille and take a normal text printout so that his resource teacher who generally would not know braille can assess him along with the others in the class and also prepare braille copies of the question papers.

Index 4x4 PRO: The high speed and ease of binding makes braille text books available on command. A 100-page braille text book will be ready (embossed, stapled, folded and ready to go) in less than 20 minutes. Now blind schools can acquire these machines and have their own braille production facility to circumvent their long and tedious process of arranging for braille text books for the students.

For more information you can write to: Indian Association for the Visually Handicapped, Pradhan Building, 132, S. V. P. Road, Dongri, Bombay 400009, Tel: 3715675.

K. RAMAKRISHNA

Chairman, Indian Association for the Visually
Handicapped



With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

Events and Personalities

ZEND news discoverer

"To fulfil a long awaited need of its members," the Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara launched the first issue of its four-page bilingual newsletter *ZEND* in August 1998. As explained by the president of the Panchayat, Shavak Patel, "In the initial stage it will be a free quarterly issue... (which) will keep the members informed of the various news and activities of the panchayats."

"The need has long been felt for something to entertain and enlighten our thoughts, and we are emboldened by the initiative taken by Dara Hakim and his co-trustees of the Vadodara Parsi Panchayat for conceiving this idea of a house magazine," acknowledged the editor Pesi Muncherji in his introduction. "*ZEND* will present its views and opinions not only straight from the shoulder but also from a slightly adjacent angle, viz straight from the head," wrote the editor promising to hand out both bouquets and brickbats, when due.

Working with Muncherji on the editorial board are Hakim as coordinator, Yasmin Wadia as sub editor, Gujarati, Hutoxi Daruwala as sub editor, English, and Urvakshi Katpitia as copywriter. In each issue they propose to have a guest writer — an intellectual who specializes in his or her own field. Humor, women's page and religious knowledge will also form the staple fare of the newsletter which welcomes new ideas and contributors.

The newsletter titled *ZEND*, taken from the words *Zend-Avesta*, was the suggestion of 16-year-old Kurush Patrawala who was one of the 26 who responded to the Panchayat's circular inviting suggestions for a name and won

a prize of Rs 500. To Patrawala, *ZEND* is the acronym for Zoroastrian Educational News Discoverer.

The first issue featured 93-year-old Goolbanu Wadia, the oldest Parsi lady in Baroda, on the guest page. Besides this distinction, she is known for her multifarious commitments. She contin-



Jame'ie and Tabesh signing the visitors' book. Modi in the background Photo: Amavaz S. Mama

ues to be the head of the Mediawala Scholarship Trust, was trustee of the Panchayat for 29 years including 14 years as its president, was founder of a working committee of Baroda Parsi Ladies, and a keen sportswoman winning prizes in badminton and bridge.

Information regarding Panchayat activities in the form of disbursements, the constitution of the social and entertainment committee, the functions organized by them were the other items reported in English. News of navjotes, weddings and deaths in the community were reported in Gujarati.

Visiting the KRCOI

With K. R. Cama Oriental Institute's (KRCOI) trustee secretary Homai Mo-

di's exposure to Iranian officialdom as the Indian liaison of the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress held in Tehran, Iran, the Institute has become a de rigueur port of call for cultural emissaries from that country.

"You are the guardians of the Persian language and culture in this country. You are very famous in the country and the community for your liberality... (It is) an honor for us because you are of Iranian descent," Iran's deputy minister of cultural affairs and Islamic guidance, Ahmad Masjed Jame'ie said to KRCOI trustee Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Modi.

Jame'ie, who is concurrently advisor to the Iranian president Ali Khatami on youth affairs, was on a courtesy call to the Institute on September 24, 1998.

He was accompanied by Ali Reza Tabesh, director-general of the ministry of culture and Islamic guidance and F. Palizdar, director of the Culture House of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bombay.

Discussing ways of preserving books and publications and of restoring paintings in books and manuscripts, Jame'ie said they were ready to print a catalogue of KRCOI books and manuscripts in Iran. Noting the existence of a significant number of Persian manuscripts in the subcontinent, Jame'ie suggested microfilming some of the treasures at the KRCOI. He also offered to send a set of books pertaining to Firdausi, mainly in Persian, some of which have been translated, as well as catalogues of all books published in Iran, especially those pertaining to the Zoroastrian religion. He sought the Institute's cooperation in securing similar publications for the Iranian libraries.

A book entitled *Behdins of Yazd* was published in Iran last year. Already in several editions, the publication received the President's award, Jame'ie noted, adding that Khatami hails from Yazd.

Among those invited to meet the Iranians were Zoroastrian scholar Dr Homi Dhalla, SNTD University dean Dr Mani Kamerkar (whose recent articles in *Parsiana*, "Iranian influence," June-September 1997, have been translated into Persian as per Palizdar), St Xavier's College professor of Islamic Studies Dr Zeenat Shaukatali, Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer and Ervad Pervez Bajan. In answer to a query from Dhalla the Iranians informed that Avesta-Pahlavi was being taught at Tehran University in its department of ancient languages.

Arnavaz S. Mania

The worthy teacher

For outstanding service to the cause of education, Khorshed Maneck Bharucha, principal of the J. B. Vachha High School for Parsi Girls and The Cawasjee Jehangir Primary and Infant School was presented the National Award for the Best Teacher 1997 at the hands of the President of India, K. R. Narayanan on Teachers' Day, September 5, 1998.

Her responsibilities at the J. B. Vachha notwithstanding, Bharucha has devoted time to other educational activities like organizing a workshop for the heads of secondary English medium schools of north zone on provision of rules, another for supervisors of primary departments on conducting middle school scholarship examination, for primary school teachers to introduce innovative teaching methods and improving teaching skills. Following her experience as chief conductor of the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination in 1993 she has conducted seminars on how to prepare for the SSC examination and

held intensive revision classes for students of standard X free of cost. Parsi students have benefitted from her career guidance seminar and involvement with the Holiday Programme for Youth, according to the press release.

With 25 years of teaching experience, Bharucha serves on the Education Advisory Committee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, on the Co-Curriculum Activity Committee under the chairmanship of the deputy director of Secondary Education and is district commissioner of the Maharashtra state's Bharat Scouts and Guides. Nagpur born Bharucha graduated in science from Francis De Sales College, Nagpur after which she obtained her BEd and MED degrees from the Bombay University. In an interview with the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, September 17, 1998, Bharucha said, "Teaching is not a profession you can just drift into. You must be fully committed, and more importantly, love children...A teacher has a great influence on the child. If the teacher himself has high values, discipline, creativity, the child will automatically try to be like him or her..."

In addition to the recent award from the ministry of human resource and development, department of education, New Delhi, Bharucha is also the recipient of the Best Teacher Award from the National Welfare Teachers Foundation in 1994, according to her curriculum vitae.

Treasure trove of art

"I never think of these paintings as investments. They are like my children," says avid art collector Jehangir Nicholson who exhibited over 300 works from his private collection at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Bombay from September 11 to October 25, 1998. A *Collector's Eye*, as the exhibition at the

Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall was named, Nicholson's trove is considered "one of the finest private collections of post-colonial art in India (holding) works by masters belonging to several generations and stretches across a gamut of media, including oil paintings, water

Bharucha (right) receiving award from Narayanan



Nicholson (below): pursuing art

colors, sculpture, drawings and graphics," notes an article by Ranjit Hoskote in *The Times of India*, Sept 13, 1998.

Here, "Vivan Sundaram rubs shoulders with Anjolie Ela Menon and Gieve Patel...Ganesh Pyne shares the stage with



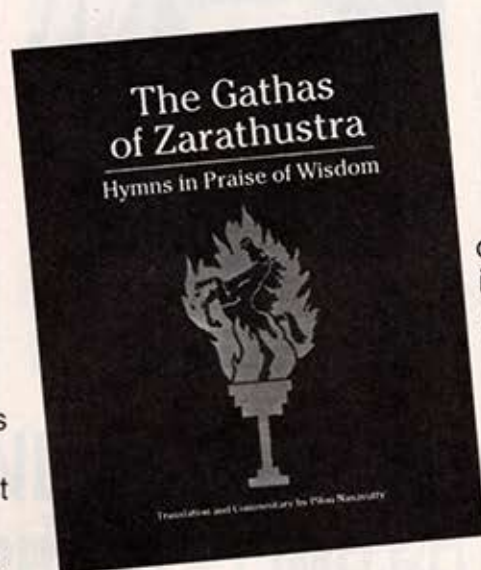
Shiavax Chavda and Jehangir Sabavala while Jamini Roy's creations dance maddeningly in synopsis with Tyeb Mehta's works," relates

the review in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (ADC), September 19, 1998. "Sculptors ranging from Pilo Pochkhanawalla and Adi Davierwalla to Nagji Patel and B. Vithal find inclusion here, and if any single artist is represented in the fullness of his chronological evolution...it is Laxman Shreshtha," adds Hoskote.

"In December 1968 he bought what turned out to be the first of a long series of paintings which have been the joy of his life and the despair of his auditors," comments Hoskote. In the company of gallery owners, the late Kali Pundole and Kekoo Gandhi, Nicholson first encountered the artists whose friend and patron he became. Unbelievable as it may sound, "I am not the stockholder of un-accounted money," reported Nicholson who has adhered to his early resolve of not paying for any painting in cash if the price exceeds Rs 1,000.

Firmly of the view that art has "no borders, only edges," in a 96-page hard bound publication in conjunction with the exhibition titled *The Jehangir Nicholson Collection—Selected Works* he clarifies, "To acquire good art has been my desire, no matter the mistakes that have been made... Mine is a collection... that tries to cover the 50 years —





The seventeen hymns of Zarathushtra, Prophet of Ancient Iran, embody the core of Zoroastrianism — the world's oldest revealed religion — which in turn has influenced the philosophy and theology of subsequent faiths.

With scholarship and the experiences of a lifetime Pilo Nanavutty translates and interprets this ancient text in straightforward idiomatic English. The commentaries elucidate the doctrinal allusions.

For the first time ever *The Gathas* are being published with relevant illustrations to emphasize and explain the text. The rearing horse on the cover symbolizes ascending prayer as per a Sasanian seal in the British Library, London. It is seen rising from the flames of the Sasanian Fire Altar whose three tiers signify Humata, Hukta, Huvarashta (good thoughts, words,

deeds). One of the illustrated plates features a rare Elamite figurine from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Also for the first time, the author examines the background provided by the Story of Creation and a page from an

unpublished manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris has been reproduced to help comprehension. Vedic parallels have been emphasized to aid the comparative study of these two ancient Aryan traditions.

The 192-page *Gathas* with 12 color and black and white illustrations, bibliography and glossary will be published in February 1999. A must for every Zoroastrian home, library and research center, the hard cover edition is priced at US \$ 22/UK £ 15 and the paperback at US \$ 14.95/UK £ 9.95 (approximately Rs 700).

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1948-98 — with works of art and particularly artists who count in the art world with works... considered as museum quality."

Seventy-four pages of this compendium printed at Tata Donnelley bear the imprint of the different artists Nicholson has admired followed by short biographical sketches of 46 artists. As comments Hoskote in the book, a good collection "acts as a nucleus of vision, as a space in which we may reflect on the aspirations, the hopes, the experiments of our artists... Significantly, Nicholson has never treated his collection as a private demesne; he has made every effort to share it with the public..."

"It's my heart's desire that my collection should be inherited by the city," the former sheriff of Bombay was quoted in the *ADC*. "I want the Maharashtra government to help me to find a sufficiently large space — 2,000 to 3,000 sq yards — to give the city a beautiful and hopefully a very well managed museum...to house not just my own collection but those of others whom the museum can acquire."

A chartered accountant by training, "taxation vigilante and gadfly to the makers of economic policy," in Hoskote's words, 83-year-old Nicholson says, "Every decade after the age of 60 is a period of grace for which you must be grateful. And if I'm in a hurry to get things done, it's because I'm in my third period of grace." Driving fast cars is yet another mode that helps Nicholson stay ahead of his peers.

Generously endowed

"Always affectionate, thankful, lavish with her gifts, loving, very sensitive when anyone said anything about her, kind, considerate, jolly, naughty, but at all times a child at heart." This description by former Miss India Meher Mistri (Castelino) sums up the nature of supermodel, Hollywood star and the successor to her Miss India title Persis Khambatta who succumbed to a heart attack on August 18, 1998 at a hospital in Bombay at the age of 49.

"Fiery, glamorous, opinionated, trail-blazer, doyenne, a woman of many firsts is how one would describe the quintessential Khambatta," wrote Ranjit Rodricks in *The Times of India* of August 21. Besides starring in movies like *The Wilby Conspiracy*, *Star Trek* (which won her worldwide acclaim for her bald pate after her long tresses were shaved



Khambatta: a woman of many firsts

off), *Night Hawks*, she enjoys the distinction of being the first Indian to present an Academy Award in 1982 and featuring in Blackwell's Best Dressed list that same year.

"She was one of the most punctual and professional models to deal with. She was hard working, sensitive but vulnerable. She had a great rapport with everyone in the industry," acknowledged Shanti Chopra who had done the Derby Fashion show with her last year.

More than fame and fortune, values and principles mattered to Khambatta as conveyed in an interview with *Parsiana* ("Beauty and the Book," February-March 1998). Having chosen to settle in India in the 1990s, her last major accomplishment was authoring the book *Pride of India* featuring the success stories of former Miss Indias. She was even contemplating doing a TV show based on this concept. According to Farzana and Behram Contractor of the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, "We loved the fact that she was so straightforward and candid. She was a real doer and she completed her book all on her own in a year."

Shortly before her demise she appeared in Khushwant Singh's serial *Not a Nice Man to Know* on Star Plus, which was aired on the eve of India's Independence day. As honorary member of the Rotary Club of Bombay Queen City she was to introduce her close associate Sanjeev Chowdhury, the vice consul and assistant trade commissioner, consulate of Canada, as guest speaker on August 27. While the introduction could not proceed as scheduled, Chowdhury used that platform to announce an annual award of a trophy and cash prize of

Rs 10,000 that he had instituted in her memory to recognize scholarship, accomplishment and character in a graduating fashion design student of the Bombay chapter of the National Institute of Fashion Technology. Khambatta had always been keen to expose the work of these students, revealed Chowdhury.

Just as she was excited about this event she was thrilled that only a few days earlier she had received by mail a rosary which the Archbishop of Bombay said he had had blessed by the Pope at her behest. Although proud of her Zoroastrian religion and heritage, of late she had found solace in the Christian Science philosophy. As recalled Castelino, "She loved life and in spite of all the glamor and glitz of Hollywood surrounding her she was a simple Parsi girl, very religious and down to earth... But every time she came to India she phoned and chatted...I'll miss that voice saying, 'Okay, honey, take care.'"

Religious reverence

Prayer books in memory of their dear departed are a fitting way to keep alive the religious priorities and commitments of noteworthy souls. Two such works to be released in 1998 are *Asha Vahishta* in English compiled by Narges Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji and dedicated to Pirojbai and Dinshahji Minochehr-Homji, Meherbanoo and Sohrab Bamji, Merwanji M. Cama, Sohrab J. Bulsara and Dr Irach J. S. Taraporevala, and



Minochehr-Homji: value the text

Zarathushtrana Gatha in Gujarati by Irach J. S. Taraporevala that was reprinted in memory of Banoobai and Manchershaw Bharucha, and Coverbai



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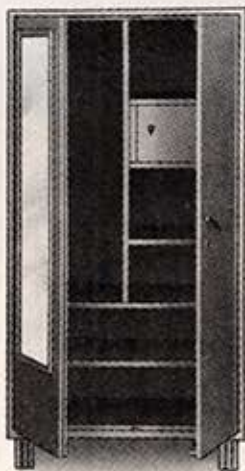
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The highlight of the 349-page Taraporevala reprint is that it is accompanied by simple Gujarati explanations while *Asha Vahishta*, as mentioned by Minochehr-Homji in her preface, "contains my husband's interpretations of the *Avesta* text. He spent his life endeavoring to understand the wealth of knowledge in our ancient texts. He was so engrossed in his study and in his teaching that he found little time to devote to writing and publishing." Dastur Nowrooz Minochehr-Homji, the late High Priest of the Fasli Atash Kadeh, "wished each individual to understand the value of the text he was reciting," states his wife.

"The book which is in Roman script accompanied by explanations in English will be a great boon to the youth of our community — to all those who are not familiar with the Avesta language and are not able to understand the meaning of our prayers," said jurist Nani Palkhivala in his foreword. Starting with the *Ashem Vohu* and *Ahuna Vairya*, through the navjote prayers, different *gahs*, *nyaishes* and *yashts*, the 352-page book printed with the assistance of Dinshaw Tamboly and the World Zoroastrian Organisation ends with an explanation of the festivals, the Gatha days and the gahambars.

Criminal acclaim

"This will probably be the first time an Indian crime writer will be featured in the Criminale...and also the first time a couple of Parsi detectives...will be making their bow to a foreign audience," states author Armin Wandrewala whose well received *Scheherazades Erbe*, the German edition of *The Turning*, earned her an invitation from her publishers Ullstein to Criminale, the festival for crime fiction fans in Berlin, Germany. Since Wandrewala knows *ein bisschen Deutsch* (a bit of German) she hopes to conduct the readings from the German edition of her book, herself.

According to a review of her book that appeared in a German newspaper, Wandrewala has "succeeded in creating an extremely entertaining crime

novel set in the sultry hot atmosphere of Bombay... despite descriptions of exotic lifespaces, the style is almost intimate," making the critic remark, "Books by Indian crime writers in this country are labelled as something exotic. The authoress Armin Wandrewala may well change that attitude with her novel... narrated in the style of the classic English detective novels."



Wandrewala: offers suspense in intimate style

For the Indian audience, the sequel to *The Turning* is a play tentatively titled *My Aunt Dina* scripted by Wandrewala. With the same characters she has crafted a different murderer and a different motive in the play "so that those in the audience who have read the book do not feel short-changed of the suspense, and those who (have still not read it) may do so without any qualms!" The play to be produced by Hosi Vasunia is scheduled to be staged in January-February 1999 when Wandrewala's next crime novel is also expected to be released.

A murder a month?

All the city dailies of July 3, 1998 carried news of 40-year-old Bombay hotelier Cyrus Khodadad Irani being shot dead on the narrow Mehalla Patel Agiary Lane the previous morning. In early August, the community got another rude jolt when they read of 78-year-old Tehmi Bhagat's murder at her Kemp's Corner residence on August 5. The police suspect that Irani is a victim of the Arun Gawli gang which "had targeted him since he could not meet its demand for so-called protection money," according to *The Times of India* report of July 3, 1998. The motive for Bhagat's murder is suspected to be robbery.

A resident of Mittal Apartments, Worli, Irani was on his way to the Mehalla Patel Agiary, as was his daily morning ritual before dropping in at his mother's residence in the vicinity when bullets were pumped into his chest, nape, shoulder and forearm, states a write-up in *Express Newslite*, July 3, 1998. The sound of the gunning was probably muffled by the heavy downpour. His driver rushed him to the Nair Hospital but he was declared dead on arrival.

He owned an office on the ground floor of Atash Apartment, barely 50 m

from where he was killed and also owned Dilbar Hotel nearby, mentioned the *Express* report. This director of Faronar Leasing and Investment Private Limited had as per news reports been assaulted by unknown persons in the same area over a year ago.

Bhagat who resided with her two sons Romi (57) and Pervez (48) was reportedly alone at her Doctor Building residence when she was clubbed to death with an iron rod. "Though no cash or jewellery was missing from the house, the family has reported that a few old pictures and a key are missing," stated *Mid-Day*, August 7, further quoting a police official, "the person behind this crime is known to the family, and we are looking for him."

As related in the newspapers, although there are contradictory reports about the timing, the younger son received a call at his residence that his brother had been grievously hurt in an accident and had been admitted to the Nair Hospital. On rushing there, he found that it was a hoax call. When he returned home, he found the door locked from inside, and had to break open the corridor lock to access the garden door which was also locked from inside. He found his mother in a pool of blood in the kitchen with the cooking gas on indicating that she might have been cooking.

While Irani and Bhagat lost their lives, businessman Hoshie Bomian, a resident of Bandra, lived to tell his tale after he was repeatedly stabbed by his masseur and an unknown accomplice on the night of June 14, 1998 as recounted in *Sunday Mid-Day*, June 21, 1998. As per the report, the masseur Abu Salem used to occasionally frequent Bomian who stays alone in a flat at Bomian Building, near Almeida Park. On that day too, he started his regular massaging routine but within a few minutes he and his accomplice whipped out their knives and stabbed Bomian repeatedly. While Bomian was fighting off his assaulters, he instructed his servant Mohan Das to fetch help from the neighbors instead of coming to his defence. Using his presence of mind Das had left the lift door open on the ground floor so that the offenders could not use the lift to escape. The attackers apparently broke the back door grill and fled even before the neighbors and the police arrived on the scene within 15 minutes, stated *Mid-Day*. While a disillusioned Bomian could not fathom the reason for the assault as not once was he

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asked to produce the keys of his treasury, the police suspect that there was some displeasure over payment, wrote *Mid-Day*.

In downtown Colaba, 69-year-old bachelor Nariman Dubash had to fend against four armed youth on the morning of September 9, when they forcibly entered his four-bedroom apartment on the third floor of Feroze Building opposite Dhanraj Mahal. Fortunately for Dubash who was trained in the ancient Chinese martial art of jiu-jitsu, and serves as advisor to the National Rifle Association, he was able to keep the robbers at bay for nearly half an hour until the police arrived on the scene.

While relating his escape to Dilnavaz Shroff, Dubash stated, "The doorbell rang at 6.15 a.m. and my old maid servant went to open the door thinking the cook had arrived. But to her surprise, three men savagely pounced on her and tried to gag her. A fourth man approached me and struck a blow to the back of my neck, causing my head to hit the table at which I was seated. Though I was completely taken aback, I turned and landed a 'point blow' (a type of stroke used in unarmed combat which I learnt in America) to my assailant's face as a result of which he fell down. The next was similarly put out of fray and his place was taken by yet another man who bodily lifted me and threw me on the table, but we continued to fight dodging each other's blows and kicks. Thereafter he attempted to stab me with a knife but I warded off the attack, felling him with a kick on his jaw.

"The fourth man who was holding my servant whilst I was being attacked, then came towards me but was afraid, as was the other man, to come closer. As my servant was being hurt, I said, 'Dekh baba! Aap kyko aisa karta hai? Apko paisa chahiye, to hum tumko paisa dega. Par aisa mat karo, mera naukar ko nuksan hota hai. (Look here, why are you doing this? If it's money you are after, I'll give it to you. But do not harm my servant.)' But as I proceeded to open my closet to take out the money, the police arrived, having been summoned by my neighbors who were alerted by my maid servant's son who lives in the

flat."

As reported in *Blitz*, September 19, Dubash had dismissed a domestic from service just four months earlier and whilst leaving, this woman had threatened to have him beaten up one day.

For Dubash who had been working



Dubash (right) receiving award

on his unfinished book *Aryanology* since 5 a.m. this rude interruption made him comment, "The future of this country seems to be bleak as the youth are being misguided under the corrupt influence of television and films." A graduate in automobile engineering from the Chrysler Engineering Institute, USA, Dubash was described as "a devout Parsi and a philanthropist (working) on the evolution of religion," explaining the similarities between Hinduism and Zoroastrianism in three volumes. As per the *Blitz* write-up, Dubash is credited with having disbursed almost Rs 1.55 crore to the clergy from his family charities.

In recognition of their exemplary courage, the commissioner of police felicitated Dubash, his domestics and his neighbors, the Damaniyas (who had summoned the police) at a simple function held at the conference hall of the office of the commissioner of police on September 12. As commented columnist Shobha De in "De-Time," "But what of those who do not possess Mr Dubash's training, skill and courage?... The most vulnerable of our citizens — the aged will kick themselves for not having taken jiu-jitsu lessons during their youth. Nariman Dubash is a hero today. But he could as easily have been a dead man last week."

While Dubash was able to fob off his attackers, 82-year-old Dr Jehangir Ferozshah Vajifdar apparently could not. He was found brutally murdered on October 26, in his first floor apartment at Awabai Mansion, Henry Road, Off Colaba Causeway. The doctor who stayed alone had been stabbed seven times in the neck and chest region, reported the *Express Newslite* of October 27.

The cardiologist was last seen driving away to visit a patient at around 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, October 25. But his body was discovered only the next morning when one of his patients frantically trying to reach him, telephoned the doctor's neighbor, Farida Dubash to convey the message. When she reached there around 9 a.m. she found the door to his apartment open and his body lying in the passage in a pool of congealed blood.

The police suspect the building's two watchmen who are missing from the scene with their uniforms and a blood-stained knife found in a ditch at the far end of the road to be behind the crime, according to *Express Newslite*. They believe the stabbing must have been around 11 p.m. Since he had neither changed his clothes or shoes, the police believe the watchmen must have followed Vajifdar to his flat and killed him. The house was ransacked and a wristwatch worn by Vajifdar was missing, mentioned *The Times of India* write-up.

"He had a wide range of clients — from maharaja to the poorest of the poor," said his close associate Vispy Unwalla, a share broker, and is believed to have done 50 percent of his work for free. "He was one of the last of the Mohicans, one of the few who really observed the Hippocratic oath, even if it meant making late night calls," senior counsel Fali Nariman's statement on Vajifdar was quoted in *The Times of India* of October 28.

A graduate from the Elphinstone College and the KEM Medical College, Vajifdar had qualified as a Fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons and had apprenticed with Dr M. Gilder before he set up his independent practice.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

Reaching for the Sky



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"How a charity is run"

Accountant Pesh Framjee says that charitable organizations must adopt modern management practices

Shernaaz Engineer

Pesh Framjee, a partner in Arthur Andersen, is one of England's top charity accountants. He believes that a charity organization needs to be run like a business — with expertise and skill. Considering the UK charity sector generates income of over £ 18 billion, this is not surprising.

Framjee says: "It is not just altruism that keeps a charity going. You need to monitor costs properly. This means that charities must adopt modern management practices that add value. At the same time you don't have to be obsessed with saving every penny. A lot of charities are very concerned about their administrative costs. But, at the end of the day, I believe that the outcome and impact of a charity is more important than its administrative costs."

This unusual approach to charities management may sound a little unconventional to people in India. For years most of us have believed that charities are to be run by retired folk who are expected to work for very little, or nothing. The compensation for charity work is supposed to be the sheer pleasure that the involvement with a noble cause brings.

In the West this concept changed. "In the UK," Framjee explains, "working for charities can pay well, although it is still lower than a corporate job. Nonetheless, for those who are interested it is a full career option, unlike India where working for a charity is not considered much of a career option for a young person."

Framjee got into the charity sector quite by chance. As a young lad, born and bred in Bombay, he had other ideas. After getting his commerce degree from

the Sydenham College, he joined the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), which he recalls as being some sort of 'one man and his dog organization' in those days. "And I was the dog!"

Valiantly, he held fort, went to game



Framjee: working for charities is a full career option

sanctuaries, got involved with Project Tiger, did leopard studies, kept snakes and monkeys as pets. Till a point when it all got too much for those around him.

The better wisdom of family elders ordained that he could not go through life with a backpack and a machete. He had to get on with a serious career.

So Framjee was sent to England to do his chartered accountancy, much to the amusement of his friends who promised him he would not get through. "In school and college I had managed to study as little as possible to bluff my way through

exams," Framjee recalls with a smile, "I was much more keen on sports like karate, boxing and rugby."

He did have a fine brain for accountancy though. When he qualified in 1983 and wanted to get back to India, he kept

finding that his firm had some interesting assignments for him elsewhere. They sent him overseas to audit the accounts of charities like Save the Children Fund and to produce reports for government. He enjoyed visiting places generally considered far-flung and back-of-beyond by the rest of his colleagues. "My clients liked using me for such assignments because I did not get sick. Eating food on the streets of Bombay meant that I had cast iron guts and could take it all," Framjee chuckles in recollection of the early days.

On one such assignment when he went to Sudan during the famine, he was very moved. "I had seen poverty in India all my life, but this really shook me. I began to change my perspective on life as I saw children dying before my eyes."

So Framjee's involvement with charities on a more personal level began. Currently, he is trustee and treasurer of the ASHA Foundation, a charity founded by Indo-British author and activist Zerbano Gifford, that is fund-raising in Britain for India's street children at the moment. The ASHA Foundation partook of a television charity appeal on Channel Five in September last year, after being chosen as the only non-British cause because of the integrity and commitment of its trustees.

Apart from this, Framjee is connected with several other charities as well. On several occasions he has been appointed by the charity commissioner in the UK

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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

(27) Wednesday 27th May was a relaxed day for Dame Meher in Hannover with dear friend and trusted Zoroastrian College supporter Marianna Luder who has steadfastly helped with the work of the College in Germany. A visit to the Clinic in Hannover of Prof. Siegfried and Dr. Lisa Hermerding was exceptionally helpful for Dame Meher to be initiated into the use of the Tachyon White Light Energy. Dr. Hermerding graciously donated a set of this precious equipment for the use of the Zoroastrian College in India. In the evening a two hours Seminar had been arranged for the Ars Regia Members at which Dame Meher was invited to speak on the Ancient Mazdayasnie Zarathustrian Daena and Prof. Siegfried and Frau Eva Raub showed her videos of the work done in the recently discovered Cultic places in Portugal. The Members of the Group came to see Dame Meher off around 11 p.m. for the overnight journey from Hannover to Warsaw via Berlin. Once again the parting with such dear and good friends brought such sadness mingled with the sense of contentment of good friendships.

POLAND

(28) The overnight train journey on the German Express train from Koln via Hannover, Berlin, Warsaw, to Moscow, was comfortable with the train guard bending over backwards to be helpful over Dame Meher's luggage. By early morning, the train reached Warsaw where His Excellency the Indian Ambassador had thoughtfully arranged for the Embassy Car and Staff Member to meet her at the station in Warsaw to take her to the best hotel in the City the Forum Hotel. THE POLISH ACADEMY OF MEDICINE was founded by Prof. Dr. Kazimierz Imieliński ten years ago in Warsaw. As

part of its 10th Anniversary Celebrations, the Academy had organised a very prestigious Awards and Conference Function at the Castle of the King in Warsaw. The Academy was conferring its most prestigious International Award, — THE INTERNATIONAL GOLDEN STAR MERIT FOR HUMANISM on 16 selected distinguished persons from all over the World among whom 8 were Noble Prize Winners. The only person from Asia on whom this Award is conferred was Zoroastrian College President Dame Meher. The Academy is interested to introduce the Ancient Indian Natural Herbal Medicine Systems and Drugless Therapy Methods into Poland and Eastern European countries. At this Function, the Ambassadors for India and Russia, 45 distinguished doctors from Medical Universities and Colleges in Poland and 35 Internationally renowned Scientists and doctors from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Armenia, Slovakia, Rumania, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, East European and former U.S.S.R. countries only were invited to this glittering gathering. Only 5 persons from outside the Old Bloc countries were invited - 3 from South America and one from U.S.A. Dame Meher was the only one from Asia. This ceremony was held on Friday

29th May morning. Poland is famous for Chopin Piano Music. The refined atmosphere in the Hall of the Castle of the King was punctuated with musical piano interludes between speeches and conferment of Awards. There was a formal luncheon after the function; and thereafter a Conference of Heads of Medical Colleges and Universities to discuss existing Medical Educational problems and future Course developments. It was an eye opener to realise how limited were the Alternatives and options for Health Care in the former Soviet Bloc of countries. Much need to be done to open up integrated medicines system for the public benefit. This will



Above: Awards Function at Poland Castle of the King on 29th May 1998. Lower: With Dr. Prof. Victor Inyushin and Madame Lydia Inyushin of Kazakhstan in Bombay.

also save the Governments of the various countries quite sizable amounts in Public Health Care expenditure from the National Exchequers. The program for the day concluded with a formal dinner at the Forum Hotel, one of the best in Warsaw.

(29) Finding Thursday 28th May a free day Dame Meher explored Warsaw and discovered in the old City the main source of genuine Amber in the World. There are very few places on the Earth which are a source of real Amber. One of them is the Baltic Sea Coast. The small sea-side towns of Gdansk and others for centuries have the Amber factories. At certain seasons, the sea washes ashore bits and fragments of Amber - fossilised gum from under water forests. These could be the forests of Atlantis, with the Gulf Stream carrying the bits across the Atlantic Ocean and washing them ashore in the Baltic Sea Coast. Finland, Latvia, Poland, the Baltic countries thus have this precious natural resource. Beach combers pick up the bits and pieces of pale white, creamish and light honey colour amber, which are taken to the factories for melting down; and moulding into beads, brooches, cuff links; and in the time of the Czar of Russia, the Army Officers Uniform buttons were also made of Amber. This precious Amber appears to be one of the main exports and dollar earner for Poland; and Warsaw was full of American tourists as well as Western European tourists celebrating May week French-Polish Festival. Amber is very expensive even in its source in the factories in Gdansk with tiny pieces fetching high prices of over fifty pounds sterling and large pieces carved and moulded fetching fortunes.

(30) Music flows through the veins of the Polish people. Opera abounds in Warsaw and other cities; and of course the famous Polish Composer Chopin's music is to be heard everywhere. On 30th evening Dame Meher attended the Chopin Piano Music Concert in the Palace Gardens Concert Hall where the Pianist was an accomplished young lady. There is great potential for development of Indo-Polish ties now that Poland has opted to become a Member of the European Union. 30th May Dame Meher availed of the Express 28 hours Coach services linking Warsaw to Victoria Terminus in London; and after a not too stormy Channel crossing, she reached London on 31st May evening.

ENGLAND

(31) The last week in England was a round of farewell visits to family and friends. The gracious hospitality of Persis and Keki, Karl and Darwin Singaporewalla and other members of the family of Rusi Singaporewalla, Hutokshi and Kashmira, was unforgettable. Visits to Jehan and Rukhshana Master, Jamsheed and Darius, Heidi Ram and Joyce Bastian and especially Mr. & Mrs. Shahrokh and Simin Shahrokh for Zoroastrian College development were most helpful. There is much that the Zoroastrian Community in London can benefit from the work of the Zoroastrian College in Europe through its activities of the Avesta and Scriptural Studies Department and the Research Library which has one of the finest collections of several thousands of books as well as Audio and Video Cassettes which can be used anywhere in the English speaking World. Dame Meher re-turned to Bombay by 10th June to receive the famous Khazakh Scientist Prof. Dr. Vistor Inyushin in India, as guests of the Zoroastrian College for a Global Co-operation project of purification of polluted waters of rivers lakes. This technology would be great boon to Indian villagers.

to turn around charities in distress. "It is fascinating to see how a charity is run," he says, "it is quite complex really. Our service takes a holistic approach; most charities are concerned about how best they can use their resources to achieve their goals and vision. So we work with them on areas such as management techniques, strategies, performance reviews, risk management, financial controls and advise on how to get best results."

"The Red Cross with total annual income of about £ 90 million," he explains, "is spending as much as six million to restructure and upgrade its systems and working practices over the next year. In the UK many processes are being re-engineered. Volunteer work no longer means amateur effort. A great deal of professionalism and skill is found in the voluntary sector, while at the same time the empathy and ethos of a charitable organization is being retained." Framjee has quite a nice definition for a charitable organization. It must encompass the three Es: Empathy, Enthusiasm and Expertise.

Framjee is now head of the charity unit at Binder Hamlyn, part of Arthur Andersen Worldwide. "I wasn't opting out of the mainstream," he stresses. "It is just that I had begun to see the benefit of specializing in the work that I was doing. Today, we advise over 350 charities every year and we are way ahead in the charities sector compared to other professional advisors. Charities are willing to pay for specialist knowledge and it is very competitive and there are regular tenders where we all pitch for business. My expertise helps because I work full-time with charities and understand their issues." He adds: "What is really important is that the sector has been working hard towards raising the standards. However, a lot still needs to be done."

Over the last 15 years, Framjee has written and lectured extensively on matters of governance, law, finance and management. He is joint author of *Charities — The Law and Practice*, and he has written a book on charity trading. And he is almost ready with his next book on accounting and management as well.

Framjee has also been instrumental in setting up the first MSc in charity finance and lectures at the South Bank University. "For me charity financial management is regular financial management 'plus' something rather than 'less' something. It gives me tremendous job satisfaction, and it is also fun," he smiles.

Yet, despite all the good work that Framjee is doing in England, India holds a special place in his heart. Although he has lived for the past 20 years out of the country, he still retains his Indian passport, and expects that someday he will return with his wife Yasmine, and son Rustum.

He would like to bring the professional skills of the UK voluntary sector to the Indian subcontinent. "People in the Indian charity sector are achieving so much, yet there is a notion that working for and with charities is not a real job and I wish that could be dispelled," he reasons.

However, despite his many preoccupations and the seriousness of his concerns, Framjee is keen to clarify that he is not "a boring accountant in sober pin-stripe suits." He retains his sense of enthusiasm for the outdoors with his interest in the environment and sport. And he displays a keen and infectious sense of humor, a rather Parsi trait one may add, that sees him through situations of different kinds with a degree of flair and finesse.

Managing the mergers

As president of the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India and managing director of Glaxo-Burroughs Wellcome, Homi Khusrokhhan is keen to improve health care facilities in the country

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Tablets and tonics, syrups and syringes invariably find shelf space in most urban Indian homes. Check the labels, the chances are high that the manufacturer's name will be displayed as Glaxo or Burroughs Wellcome, two major players in the pharmaceutical world who are now, worldwide, one giant company. The products of these companies along with those of the Biddle Sawyer Group of Companies which was bought over by Glaxo in 1998 account for almost seven percent share in the domestic market, the largest in India, says Homi Khusrokhhan who has been gradually strengthening the market standing of the company in India.

In 1995 he took over as managing director of Burroughs Wellcome (India) Limited, a year later he assumed the additional responsibilities as managing director of Glaxo India Limited, and since 1997 he has been chairman of the Biddle Sawyer Group. "We'd like to continue to be the number one company, not only as a provider of medicines but as a contributor to the health care needs of the country," says the soft-spoken Khusrokhhan summing up the objectives of his interrelated firms.

Giving guarded responses to the questions posed to him, often a smile, a grunt or a single sentence reply were meant to effectively convey the views of this reticent head as he sat with his arms folded, or toyed with a pen or his fingertips. The turnover of the Glaxo-Wellcome group in India, which is today over 1,000 crore rupees, was between 600-700 crore rupees in 1996 (when he took over as managing director) and just 35 crore rupees when he joined Glaxo Laboratories (India) Limited in the corporate finance division in 1972, declares Khusrokhhan. "The company has changed a lot. When I joined, it was the

second largest. Sarabhai was then number one." For the last 20 years they have retained their number one slot and with the acquisition of Wellcome worldwide



Khusrokhhan: setting priorities

by Glaxo plc, their market hold in India improved. Presently their immediate competitor is Cipla with around five percent of the market share, followed by Ranbaxy, states Khusrokhhan.

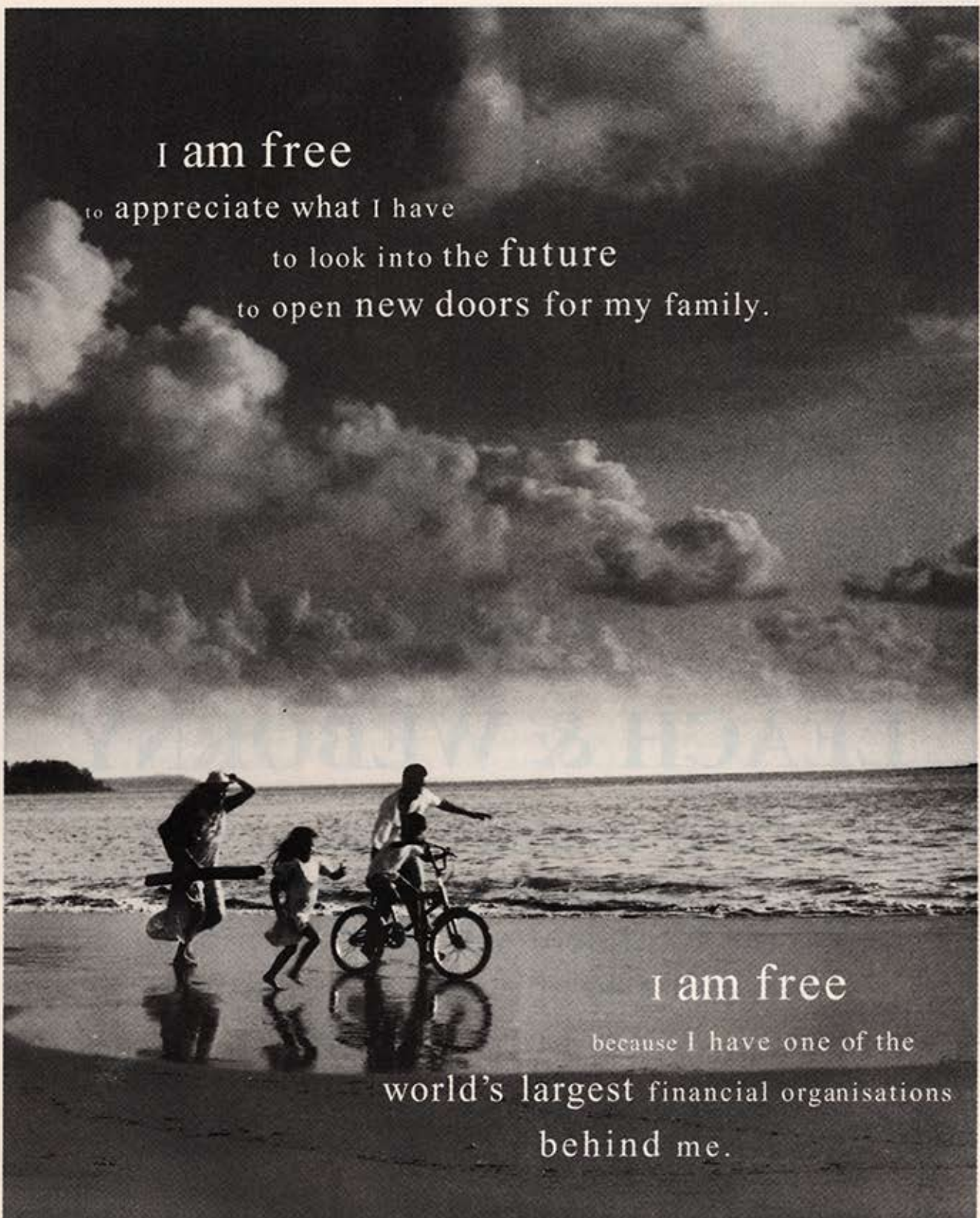
"The composition of the industry will change after 2005 when India starts recognizing patents for new discoveries," he declares. As of now companies in India have the freedom to copy the discoveries of others but with the new policy the role of Indian companies will change. "Certain Indian companies may therefore feel that it may not be profitable to continue the way they'd operated in the past and will put themselves up for sale to the larger companies," elaborates Khusrokhhan specifying that mergers

seen today in the Indian environment are an indicator of a "rush to consolidate one's market share before India changes its patent laws."

"Acquisition is a way of achieving rapid growth," Khusrokhhan had earlier conveyed in an interview with *Business Line*. "Managing of mergers and acquisitions is an art, and a learning process... (to) exploit the synergies... and absorb the best of both." Usually every pharmaceutical company specializes in medicines for certain ailments like cancer, heart disease... With mergers, the salient products of the associated companies can be offered to doctors and nurses from a common platform.

Speaking on behalf of his multinational parent company which ranks number two in the global pharmaceutical sphere, Khusrokhhan explained how difficult it was to operate in the Indian environment where besides rampant duplication of products, "the government policy on pricing is very stringent and does not recognize product quality which is essential for multinationals. We therefore have to operate with prices which are not commensurate with our cost of production," declares Khusrokhhan who has been chairman of the pricing committee and has been recently appointed president of the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India. As compared to other multinationals which prefer not to bring their products at all rather than underprice them in India, "we have brought all our new products to India irrespective of the low prices one gets in this market," he reveals. The consumers therefore are the beneficiaries in this scenario where they can get international quality products at controlled prices.

The reasons for Glaxo's commanding position despite the travails of the



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pharmaceutical industry where the growth rate has declined to around 10 percent is due to the "trust that people have in the name," candidly assesses Khusrokhani. "We are respected by doctors. The quality of our people, particularly our field force" are the other factors he identifies as having contributed to the company's success. "The Glaxo culture is a very strong performance-oriented culture, particularly in marketing," Khusrokhani had related to the *Dalal Street Investment Journal* in an interview in 1997. And his own strengths? "The ability to work hard, to work well with people, and a good grounding in finance," reveals Khusrokhani at the risk of "sounding immodest."

What about the Zoroastrian employees in his set-up? "Most Zoroastrians have integrity, honesty, dependability and therefore make excellent employees," is Khusrokhani's opinion. "At the same time there is a growing concern that the old Zoroastrian values seem to be crumbling especially when one hears of things which in the past would have been unheard of." Elaborating on this thought, Khusrokhani adds, "Generally, the moral values worldwide are coming down but it is sad to see it happening among Zoroastrians too."

Also disappointing for Khusrokhani is to see the "old Zoroastrian entrepreneurial spirit fading out. We used to have very good business sense. That generation of risk takers is no longer there." If a person is sufficiently enterprising, he would be able to find his own resources, believes Khusrokhani. "I don't think you need a purely Zoroastrian venture capital fund to make people more entrepreneurial."

The Zoroastrian community overseas as compared to that in India is "probably enjoying a better quality of life," observes Khusrokhani, "being well settled." Living in India has its advantages too "in terms of larger numbers of Parsis and ample opportunities for growth and development," says 54-year-old Khusrokhani who has been round the full circle.

After studying at Bombay's Cathedral and John Connon High School and the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics he qualified as a chartered accountant, serving his articles of association with Messrs A. F. Ferguson and Company. Two years later he com-



Khusrokhani with wife Dhanoo and children Shirzad and Behnaz

pleted his MSc (Economics) in finance from the London School of Economics and Political Science and stayed on in the UK for three years working with the Ford Motor Company. On his return to India he joined Glaxo where over the years he has functioned as finance director, director in charge of the pharmaceuticals division and joint managing director before he assumed his current portfolio.

His wife Dhanoo too has been a highly successful figure in the corporate world with years of experience at Air-India. Currently she is Air-India's chief marketing manager, national marketing division. Both their children are presently in the USA. Son Shirzad is working as a business consultant with James Martin and Company in Fairfax, Virginia, after graduating in economics and art from Lawrence University, Wisconsin. Daughter Behnaz is studying at Denison University in Ohio, keen to graduate in economics and dance. "We'd like them to return to India but will not impose our

views on them," says the father who will respect their choice. "We are a close, well-knit family," he maintains. Despite their busy schedules, both Dhanoo and Homi were able to find time for their children in the past. It is a question of "setting priorities and making time for the family whenever it is due," he explains.

Although music and tennis do feature in his interests, "any major involvement in community activities" is limited these days due to paucity of time. He likes to keep himself informed by scanning *Parsiana*. Helping out with charitable and good social causes is his way of showing his concern for the community. Khusrokhani was brought up by his parents to respect the traditions of the faith and frequent the fire-temple fairly regularly. Father Rustam who hailed from Surat was legal advisor and later managing director of E. D. Sassoon and Company and mother Tehmina (Dolly) although born in Bharuch spent her childhood in Calcutta. They have lived in Bombay since the late '30s. Homi is in favor of allowing children of Zoroastrian women who have married out of the community to be brought up as per the tenets of the Zoroastrian faith. At the same time he would not advocate active conversion from other faiths to Zoroastrianism, he specifies.

Anticipating that India could be the fourth most important economy in the world by the year 2020, Khusrokhani is now concentrating on gearing the pharmaceutical industry for the changes ahead. The emerging nations will, by the year 2005, account for 35 percent of the world pharma market as compared to 19 percent today, he feels. Sure, Glaxo-Wellcome would like to continue being the number one company, confirms Khusrokhani, where in addition to medicine they could offer services like disease management for chronic diseases. As head of the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India he is looking forward to "working closely with the government in developing health care policies for the country."

Capital concerns

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India debates the creation and working of a proposed venture capital body

Arnavaz S. Mama

By March 31, 1999 the Zoroastrian venture capital project will be in operation declared Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India president and Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Jamshed Guzder. He was speaking at the Federation's executive council meet at Bombay's M. P. Khareghat Hall on June 13 and 14, 1998. The idea of a fund to provide seed capital to Parsi entrepreneurs had first been mooted at the Federation's biannual meet in Baroda in 1994.

Delegates to the meet were informed of the establishment of the first Zoroastrian commerce senior college with the Charni Road based Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable (BJPC) Institution being upgraded by the University of Bombay from a junior college to a senior college beginning this June. With increasing difficulty in finding seats even in general colleges in Bombay, another welcome development was the ability of Parsis to claim seats in Gujarati founded and managed institutions on the basis of their mother tongue being Gujarati. Gujarati educational institutions enjoy a 50 percent reservation for Gujarati speaking candidates in Maharashtra.

Indore Zoroastrian Anjuman president Bomi Heerjee was the spokesman for the several small anjumans of Madhya Pradesh (MP) who feel that a new central zone should be carved out so that they can be adequately represented on the Federation's executive council. As the Federation's constitution currently stands, there are five zones — north, south, east, west zone A and west zone B. MP anjumans belong to the north zone.

The 5,000 sq ft property of the Thana anjuman known as Anjuman Cottage is allegedly encroached upon by the local Shiv Sena chief Anand Dighe. Its current market value is assessed at one crore rupees but the 20-year battle continues with scant hope for the anjuman.

A constitutional amendment to enable a youth delegate to be co-opted on the executive council continues to pend to the next meet due to a divergence of opinion among the youths as to the basis of selection of such a representative.

Copies of the new Pune directory were distributed to Federation delegates. Apart from individual addresses and telephone numbers, the directory provides a wealth of community based information.

The next meeting of the council will be held in Sanjan to coincide with a grand celebration of Sanjan Day, *roj Bahman, mah Tir* (November 21, 1998) which has been ritually celebrated since 1981 as the "memorial day" for the advent of Zoroastrians in India. The Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA) has offered to host the 1999 winter meet of the Federation in Udvada.

The delegates began by observing a minute's silence in memory of the recently deceased Keki Pavri, a former president of the Ahmedabad Parsi Punchayet (APP) and a former inspector general of police in Gujarat. APP delegate and FOZYA president Porus Karanjawalla spoke of the school Pavri had founded along with his wife Feroza where he ensured free education for Parsi teachers' children. Involved in the welfare of poor Parsis in Ahmedabad, the Pavris had sustained a severe blow in the death of their 31-year-old son. The former BPP chief executive and municipal commissioner of Ahmedabad Rustom Anklesaria described Pavri as a fine horseman and commended his work on the APP, particularly the beautification of its doongerwadi. The late Homi Tale-yarkhan paid tribute to the "devotion and dedication (of Pavri) to any cause he undertook." This Federation meeting was the last major community event in which the veteran politician-diplomat partook ere his demise a fortnight later.

Due to a delay in the circulation of minutes some delegates had not received their copy. With an apology honorary secretary Keki Gandhi deferred the passing of the minutes to the next day and informed the gathering that Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) trustee Farokh Rustomji and Hyderabad Secunderabad Anjuman trustee (and founding president of FOZYA) Jehangir Bisney "have volunteered to share my workload."

The only information on the formation of a world body — whereon Rohinton Rivetna, founding president of FEZANA and Rumi Sethna, president of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) are involved in a delicate balancing act — was that Sethna was "working day and night on drafting changes to the WZO constitution," as stated Gandhi. Federation vice president and Madras Anjuman president Nariman Mogrelia spoke of his concern that "the new (WZO) constitution... must be able to stand the scrutiny of any other body or individual" in light of the "objection of many people" to its present constitution.

Venture capital

As one of the businessmen and professionals co-opted by the BPP on its venture capital committee, noted businessman and philanthropist Khushroo Byramjee made a guest appearance to acquaint Federation members with the committee's discussions. He described it as a two pronged initiative with a vehicle to collect funds and an administration to disburse it.

The debate regarding a venture capital fund which is designed to provide seed capital to small entrepreneurs has been on whether it should be a trust or a limited liability company. Whereas a trust would be able to accept donations, the disbursement of loans on business terms would jeopardize its charity institution status. A public limited company on the other hand would be unable to

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Noting that "our brief (was) to create a modus by which well-wishers can contribute," Byramjee said the recent budget had permitted public charity trusts established prior to 1961 to raise funds and contribute. Thus "the dispersing arm will be a corporate entity," open to subscription while the generating arm would be through a public charitable trust like the BPP.

Asked whether the new body would provide for capital assets or working capital, Byramjee said it would enter as a shareholder (of the nascent company) and give whatever the unit requires. Rustomji felt that "if it's a matter of shares any anjuman would contribute but not if it's only a matter of dona-

tions."

BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz's concern was to "ensure that the man you are giving to is honest, isn't a gambler, hasn't got extra-marital affairs. Ask for a (character) reference from three or four respectable people who are not businessmen," he advised. Thereafter he suggested that the funders follow the feasibility of the proposal to its logical conclusion and not let the applicant wait unnecessarily adding that a bank nominee could be appointed on the board of the new enterprise.

Stating that "we need a promised contribution of two to three crores," Byramjee said that the "framework will be ready shortly." Then it'll be up to the BPP and other anjumans to decide what

to contribute.

Tirandaz and Mogrelia were of the opinion that the Zoroastrian corporate world be asked to participate at the initial stage. "Call the wealthiest Parsis... promise no more than 12 percent returns," advised Tirandaz. "Invite the Parsi corporate world to the Sanjan meet," suggested Mogrelia. "Create interest in the hearts and minds of youngsters..."

Taleyarkhan wanted budding entrepreneurs to make full use of SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) which is a subsidiary of IDBI (Industrial Development Bank of India). However "not even a fraction of the massive SIDBI loans are availed of by Parsis," he said. Byramjee noted that



L to R (top row): Gunder, K. Gandhi, Clubwala, Mogrelia, E. Irani, Shroff, Rustomji and B. Dastur; (middle row): Tamboly, Mehta, Engineer, Taleyarkhan, Tirandaz, Byramjee, Heerjee and Anklesaria; (bottom row): A. Irani, D. Irani, N. Balsara, Noshir Paghdiwalla, Kavarana, P. Irani and Karanjawalla

"the entrepreneur would be getting money from the Parsi community when all other avenues have failed." Taleyarkhan was also at pains to convince the gathering that Parsis tended to neglect the area of marketing: hence "the excellence of our products is wasted," he noted.

Gandhi requested "a written note regarding why a particular mode of organization (was required), properly documented... give it to experts to vet." He anticipated that solicitor Berjis Desai, in consultation with corporate legal eagle Soli Dastur would be able to put forward a properly documented scheme. Dastur, Desai and Byramjee will be joined by Gandhi and finance management expert and BPP trustee Minoo Shroff on a spe-

cial committee to finalize the proposal.

According to Tirandaz, BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana's cheque for one lakh rupees was ready. He urged her to send it in as seed capital for the new fund via the BPP but BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly objected that the matter had not been discussed by the BPP board.

Shroff believed "we are going about it amateurishly." Acknowledging the urgency of the matter and the imperative need for a spirit of reassurance Shroff nonetheless recommended, "Tell Parsis they won't get loans on a platter. Their boards must have independent professionals." Brushing aside the goal of a two to four crore capital for the fund, Shroff noted, "100 crores is a fleabite. What if you have 20 entrepreneurs? The

hit rate will be five or six... You must have a system... Package it well and the money will come. A fund is never raised on its own capital. You use loans for leverage (and) service the loans. Put more than adequate talent (available) in Bombay to use," he advised.

"Fully supporting Minoo Shroff," Anklesaria urged those involved to "do something concrete... put it up at the Sanjan meet," and used Mogrelia's success as an exporter of garments "from a seed to a tree" as justification for haste.

With his experience as consultant to medium scale industry behind him, BPP assistant secretary Behram Dastur pointed to some of the recurring causes of failure in enterprise: the management style and techniques, lack of marketing



L to R: Masani, Bisney, Cursetji, Paghdwalla and Pastakia

and financial expertise and family feuds. He urged the BPP to create "a core group to counsel entrepreneurs in management techniques so that they don't fall into the same pitfalls."

Nariman Balsara of Saronda referred to a 21-acre non agricultural property on the periphery of Saronda village with nine big poultry sheds and a 5,000 sq ft bungalow with staff quarters and infrastructure going "dirt cheap." The Khoja landlord is asking for 2.5 crores and may settle for less, but Balsara estimates its worth at four crores. With a new port coming up which may convert the whole taluka into a city zone, Balsara urged the venture capitalists to secure the property during the current recession in real estate and set up budding entrepreneurs there.

While on the subject of aiding new entrepreneurs Tirandaz announced that a polyclinic for Parsi doctors would be coming up in Bombay's Gamadia Colony (in place of the defunct Godrej Press) in the next six months.

Udvada

According to information received from the Zoroastrian member of the National Minorities Commission Marazban Patrawala, Udvada has been designated as a *pavitra yatra dham* (pilgrim center). Some ambiguities have however surfaced since then.

The matter of designating Udvada as a special religious holiday center had been under the consideration of the government for years and awaiting the completion of the Save Udvada Project, said Taleyarkhan who chaired the Save Udvada committee. New four and five storeyed buildings have come up there, he noted which "means that Udvada is more popular."

Taleyarkhan expected the offshore

breakwater, being constructed at a revised cost of Rs 50 lakhs (it had earlier been pegged at Rs 40 lakhs of which four lakh rupees had been contributed to by the community) to be ready in one year and acknowledged the cooperation of the Gujarat government and of Zal Tarapore, former director of the Government Of India's (GOI) Central Water and Power Research Station in Pune. Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA) vice

The 5,000 sq ft property of the Thana anjuman is allegedly encroached upon by the local Shiv Sena chief Anand Dighe

president Aspi Irani said he had objected to the concrete blocks being used and Taleyarkhan noted that corrective action had been taken.

Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) president Dara Irani raised a query regarding a *smashan bhoomi* (cemetery) being created close to the Parsi gymkhana in Udvada. According to Tirandaz, no local Zoroastrian was willing to support the lone objector Pervez Postwalla in court for fear of the local *sarpanch* (head) who was overstepping his authority while Taleyarkhan said he would try to have the project shifted, though Government sanction had been given.

A. Irani spoke of new buildings and row houses being served by the single road that leads to the Iranshah. He suggested that an existing *kacha* (dirt) road be developed so that the Atash Behram is bypassed. Tamboly deduced from "the fact that Udvada (has been) designated *yatra dham*" and that "the government (would be) willing to undertake infrastructure."

FOZYA secretary Pervez Irani of

Dahanu wondered if the *yatra dham* designation for Udvada would permit the restriction of properties around the Iranshah to be restricted to Parsi ownership. While Guzder felt "(We) can't ask government to do so," B. Dastur suggested that at best the community could appeal to the value system of their coreligionists who are selling their homes to non-Parsis. As lawyer D. Irani pointed out, "Unless it's a historical monument, anyone has the right to sell to whoever," adding, "You can't blame Parsis who sell to non-Parsis considering the offers they get!"

An entry/permit tax to Gujarat has affected pilgrim buses to Udvada, it was reported. The per capita fee of Rs 100 was proving to be a deterrent to such travel. While Anklesaria explained how transport operators who do not have the state's permit to traverse, have to pay the tax at the entry point and collect the proceeds from the passengers, Taleyarkhan said he had taken up the matter with the concerned minister in Gujarat.

Sir P. M. Bhavan

Guzder referred to the Sir P. Mehta Bhavan coming up at the Bombay University campus in Kalina. The two-storeyed structure, designed to house the University's department of civics and politics, is estimated to cost four crore rupees. Guzder has contributed Rs 10 lakh towards it and the Iranian philanthropists Mehraban and Faridoon Zarhosty have added Rs 90 lakhs. He now suggested that Zoroastrians from all over India contribute to the memory of the feisty fighter for local self-government and that they should channel their contributions through the BPP/Federation so that a tidy sum could be contributed on behalf of the community.

Quoting a letter from Prof Hoshang Mugat of Pune that Parsis are finding it difficult to gain admission into the three Wadia colleges there, B. Dastur sug-



L to R (top row): Master, Sharma, S. Ginwalla and Patel; (bottom row): Dara Pavri, Debara, Dick and K. Marker

gested that Guzder/the BPP "ask for two seats for Parsis... whenever you make handsome contributions (to) ensure that future generations are not left out in the cold." According to the Pune delegate the administration of the Wadia colleges is willing to reserve seats for Parsis if industrialist-donor Nusli Wadia gives a letter to that affect.

While Taleyarkhan felt that such a move would "put the chairman in an embarrassing position unless the law is changed," Guzder spoke of his meeting with a GOI appointee to explore minorities representation who "knew nothing about Parsis or reservation." Guzder said he appealed to Massey's "sense of morality and equity" after acquainting him with Zoroastrian contributions and how the first cosmopolitan school opened by Parsis in Gujarat 178 years ago had reared such a protégé as the late Kumudben Joshi who, as governor of Tamil Nadu, had accepted the school's invitation to grace an anniversary celebration. She had then recalled how she used to walk several miles a day in bare feet to and from school. Her career had taken her high thanks to the foundations

laid there.

BPP joint secretary Sheroo Master informed the council that Parsi children had received admission in general colleges administered by Gujarati trusts on the basis of their mother tongue being Gujarati. On the basis of a format provided by the college the BPP is issuing certificates that the child is Gujarati speaking, she said.

Tirandaz stated that the BJPC school and Junior College had been upgraded into a "full-fledged commerce college." The institution was in need of funds and Tirandaz urged Federation members to contribute through the Federation to enable it to ask for nomination rights.

Thana anjuman's Pervez Bhesania spoke of the B. Jeejeebhoy School there which was not functioning any more. A part of its area had been used for road widening. They had written to the Jeejeebhoy Trust but had not received any reply. Gandhi urged him to go to the Thana registry to find out who owns it. Shroff suggested that the Thana anjuman trustees work to revive it. "There is only one good school in Thana and a lot of pressure for admission," he said.

In Nagpur there are many educational institutions noted Nagpur delegate Thrity Patel who heads Nagpur University's department of law. She offered help to those seeking medical/

engineering admissions.

Individual anjumans

Rustom Cursetjee of Thana related a problem that has been baffling the Thana Anjuman for the past 20 years. An encroacher on a 5,000 sq ft property known as Anjuman Cottage unlawfully passed its possession to one Dutta Shanker Pandey. While the anjuman won their case in court, Pandey passed on the possession of the property to Dighe. "Dighe promises to vacate the property every two months. He shows respect, gives dates and doesn't keep them... On paper (we have been) given possession, but not physically," detailed Cursetjee.

BPP trustees Dadi Engineer and Shroff suggested that the Thana anjuman representatives contact Pervez Damania who is known to be close to the Shiv Sena leadership. "The legal system will take years," opined Engineer. Shroff noted that Damania "is well disposed toward Parsis" but the Thana representatives noted that Damania had promised to speak to Dighe but thereafter he had not been accessible.

With an annual income of 15-16 lakh rupees from the cultivation and sale of grass on its Palghar land, the IZA has stepped up its charity disbursements as related A. Irani, paying dole money by cross and order cheques. He re-

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L to R (top row) A. Nargolwala, H. Gandhi, B. Irani and Hormuz Dastur (alongside): S. Palkhiwala, Cooper, V. Gandhi and Mistry



quested outstation anjumans to bear out the authenticity of requests from their areas so that the IZA could provide more freely to those who are truly needy. Khurshed Pastakia, secretary of the Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association noted that Kavarana was the first BPP trustee ever to attend their Dae mah jashan. A regular feature of the Association is an annual boat cruise which is largely patronized. They have also been regularly holding religious lectures under the Zarthosty brothers' fund.

Balsara stated that the population of Saronda village was declining and it was very difficult to get a mobed for the village agiary as the salary was meager. On a recent visit Tamboly and well known solicitor Burjor Antia had assured the mobeds that whatever the anjuman paid would be enhanced from their other trusts to enable them to receive a monthly income of Rs 10,000. Balsara is trying to generate funds to provide for provident fund, pension, etc. (The scheme is to be administered in stages, depending upon the ceremonies the mobeds perform, Tamboly later informed *Parsiana*.)

Daulat Debara of Agra counted 26 active members of the Agra anjuman plus three non-resident members. Maintaining their dharamshala's nine rooms with bath and toilet is a drag on the

anjuman and is largely funded from the rent of the prayer hall, one room and a store room which have been leased out. "Taxes are high, the occupancy of the dharamshala negligible... we don't know what to do," said Debara sadly.

There are 680 Parsis in all walks of life in Nagpur amid a total population of 2.5 million. The last election saw the reelection of its office bearers for the 10th time in succession, reported Patel who is the Nagpur nominee on the National Human Rights Commission. Sixty-two families reside in the anjuman's seven multistoried buildings.

Mhow anjuman secretary Dr Behram Masani renewed his invitation to the Zoroastrians of India who might be ready to avail of their anjuman properties gradually falling vacant. With its population in the 65-70 year age-group Mhow is the only anjuman to have appointed the Federation as its custodian trustee which includes the appointment of a Federation representative on its board of trustees to ensure continuity of administration and ownership of its many properties.

In Baroda where the Punchayet held a camp for the seven to 14 year age-group, there were complaints that four days were too short!

The PPP is concentrating on building houses on its land and Pune's first 10-storeyed building will go into construc-

tion thanks to Tamboly who introduced the PPP to the donor. Construction work is expected to begin after the monsoon, said D. Irani. The bunglis at the doongerwadi have been renovated and painted thanks to a WZO donation. The increased PPP disbursements were due to the help of the Incorporated Trustees of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau.

The Calcutta Parsi Club's annual fancy dress contest, the felicitation of priests, the Amateur Dramatic Club's annual jashan are among the activities that maintain the communal spirit among Calcutta's 600-800 Parsis, reported Nauzer Batliwala. The Calcutta *Gavashni*, its bi-monthly newsletter keeps the community informed.

There is no regularity to the Secunderabad newsletter, admitted Bisney who noted that otherwise the anjuman faced no problems.

At Bharuch, monthly jashans at different agiaries get the community together, reported Sarosh Ginwalla. Fearing future encroachment at the Towers of Silence they have begun to enclose the land at a cost of two-and-a-half lakh to three lakh rupees. Since Bharuch is a cash-rich anjuman, the Punchayet chooses to help those who ancestrally belonged to Bharuch and may have migrated, especially with education and medical benefits. "What happens if we send a crossed cheque or demand draft

to a person hospitalized in another town? He/she may not have a bank account there," asked Ginwalla. Gandhi recommended the good offices of the BPP/ Federation or the local anjuman. Shroff suggested that the cheque be sent directly to the hospital or in the name of any individual known personally.

Adult franchise prevails in Ahmedabad and a general election is due in six months when the entire board of trustees will be standing for election, noted APP trustee Karanjawalla. The youths there help to keep the agiary and doongerwadi clean. Two Parsi youths from Ahmedabad have been outstanding in sports in recent months, Karanjawalla said.

Six ghambars are celebrated in Dahanu with vegetarian meals organized by the youth, related Banoogoshasp Irani. Their school, launched in 1991 had now reached the 10th standard and they were eagerly awaiting the results of their first batch. The school's second wing, constructed from Zoroastrian funds, is nearly complete. In collaboration with the National Heritage Society they were in the process of establishing and maintaining a mangrove plantation in the area around the school which has been supported by the Bombay Suburban Electric Supply.

The Madras anjuman is still looking for a second priest to assist the mobed at the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher who has been working single handed for the past three years, said co-opted member Mani Clubwala of Madras. As a temporary respite, it now appears that an SSC level lad from the Dadar Madressa will be sent on a short posting to enable the Madras panthaky to go on well-earned leave, informed Tamboly. They are also in need of a general assistant to help maintain the agiary who would be provided food and accommodation apart from his salary. The Madras dharamshala too needs publicity and a "morale boost" to augment its income. However, individual donations have started coming in on a monthly basis from the community which Mogrelia called a "new development." Get-togethers on the last Saturday of each month are proving to be an "umbrella for new arrivals to meet residents" and a Parsi teen band is doing well.

Ronny Dick of Jhansi spoke of a social problem in his region where a Parsi man was baptized in Christianity. Now married he wants his son's navjote performed. Dick wanted the BPP to tell

him what to do.

Before the BPP representatives could respond Gandhi clarified that it was not a matter for the Federation to decide. "If the Jhansi anjuman can find a priest who will do the navjote and the Jhansi anjuman will accept him, it's their privilege."

"Taxes are high, the occupancy of the dharamshala negligible...we don't know what to do"

lege. The verdict of the clergy is that both parents be Zoroastrians." Describing it as a social issue, Gandhi declared that each anjuman is free to decide on its own.

This led to an altercation with an irate Tirandaz: "You are now telling us that seven or eight Parsis decide among (themselves)! Let us have a uniform policy."

Gandhi: "The Federation is not the Pope. (We have) no dictatorial powers."

Tirandaz: "Interpret! Where's the question of dictatorship?"

Gandhi: "What's the point of interpreting if you can't lead?"

Tirandaz: "You can't say you can't judge on socio-religious topics... The BPP gave permission to Neville and Nusli (Wadia)!"

It was decided to entrust the matter (and the letters) to the one-man committee of Tirandaz who accepted the responsibility.

Later, speaking about the "humane aspect of the BPP" Tirandaz said that Kavaran quietly picks up destitute Parsis from railway stations or streets; that social worker Mithoo Jesia who had been inducted onto the BPP's doongerwadi committee has "changed the face of the lower bunglis and of the Wadia bungli;" if a dead body with sudreh-kusti is found and no one claims it, the police gets in touch with the BPP... "It's about time that the 350-year-old apex body gets its due recognition."

Youth activities

The 12th Zoroastrian Youth Seminar will be hosted by Jamshedpur, October 22-25, 1998, announced P. Irani. The host anjuman prefers to restrict the number of delegates to 250. P. Irani asked those anjumans who are not FOZYA members to write to FOZYA for entry

forms. On the cards are site visits to Tata Iron and Steel Company and Tata Electrical and Locomotive Company plants there.

Gandhi and Taleyarkhan urged the youths to take the opportunity of TISCO managing director Dr Jamshed Irani's presence to find a berth in the Tata organizations. Also, the Jamshedpur anjuman has plenty of accommodation in its hostel and is wondering what to do with the property if Parsi boys are not forthcoming, informed Gandhi. Calcutta youths are gearing up for the seminar, noted Batlivala.

The Baroda youth have produced a directory which extends to the entire district including the new industrial towns. They have also begun the practice of congregating every Sunday at the agiary where they have an excellent rapport with the panthaky and questions and answers on rituals are the order of the day, noted Farhad Wadia.

The Pune directory compiled by the youths there was released on Jamshedi Navroze. Sarosh Palkhiwala thanked Tamboly, Gandhi and Union Press proprietor Rohinton Chinoy for their help with the project.

The 106 plus 30 yellow pages of the *Directory of Pune Zoroastrians 1998* detailing some of the community institutions in Pune, a list of fire-temples in India and abroad, dharamshalas, sanatoria and charity funds, was distributed to the Federation delegates. Additional interest is provided by the names and addresses of individuals who have agreed to function as matrimonial bureaux.

Because the Baroda held 11th youth seminar and the Hyderabad-Secunderabad hosted Kaleidoscope were held in quick succession, Borivli youths, who are sponsored by the association, were given a choice, revealed Pastakia.

The dynamic young committee of the Madras Parsi Association organizes games, house, *antakshari* (singing songs starting with the last letter of the preceding song) and quiz programs, informed Clubwala. The surplus musical talent has resulted in the formation of a teen band of which the community is very proud. Clubwala estimated a third of the Madras population of 300 to be under 40 years old and Mogrelia described them as very self-disciplined thanks to the local culture. Mogrelia and the Madras Anjuman are ready to offer career opportunities to Zoroastrian youths from other parts of the country but it would



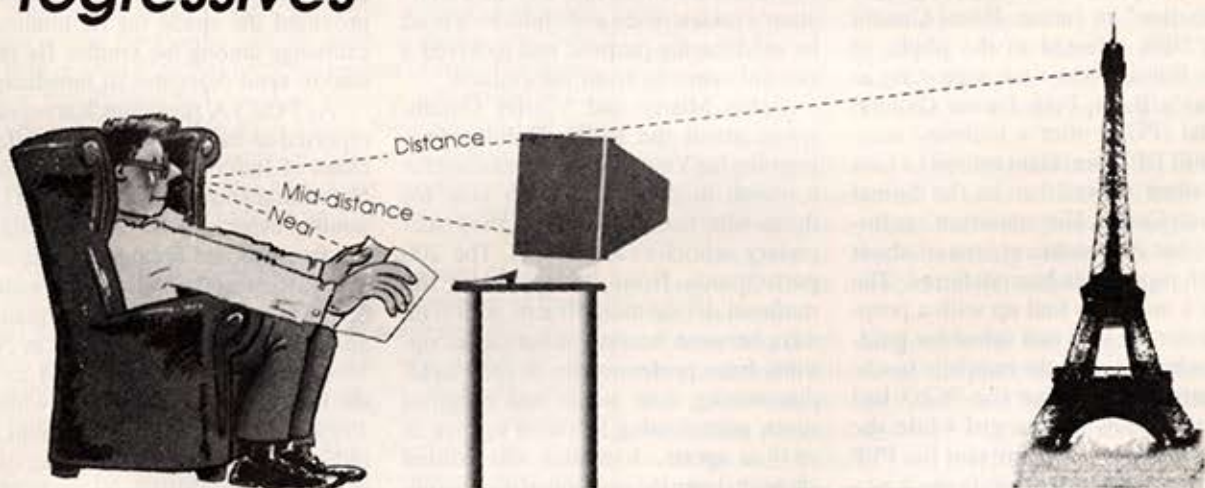
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depend upon individuals. "People who believe is building their own destiny are welcome," said Mogrelia.

P. Irani urged Madras representatives to send their youths to Jamshedpur but Clubwala thought it would be better for them to go to Sanjan to "know their roots."

Most youths in Mhow have moved away. Kerman Marker reiterated his father Group Captain Dhunjishaw Marker's earlier offer: "Any boy wanting to start an aerated water business can come and stay with us and learn the job."

Of Jhansi's 15 youths, four have found spouses at the annual youth seminars, announced Dick happily. He is prepared to send two or three boys to Jamshedpur but noted that some parents do not allow their children to go.

In Nagpur there is a stress on sports with intercity cricket matches. There are Navroze, Pateti and agiary functions as well as *nataks* (plays) based on the history of Nagpur Parsis, said Patel. The youths are encouraged to learn computers. She reported an increasing population and several of their children finding mates at the youth seminars.

DPA's Adil Nargolwala referred to its small youth wing which has not been in the mainstream of Zoroastrian youths in India and promised to "try for greater participation" in future. Homi Gandhi of the DPA referred to the plight of Sanam Rabadi who was vegetating at Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) after a highway accident until DPA president retired Lt Gen Adi Sethna moved her to the Spinal Research Centre. Her condition has improved but the treatment cost of about 2.5 lakh rupees has been deferred. The family's money is tied up with a property dealer, he said and asked for guidance on how to raise the requisite funds.

Tamboly noted that the WZO had raised 1.5 lakhs for the girl while she was in Bombay. D. Irani said the PPP had donated Rs 10,000 while she was a patient at the PGH. He was aware that the family had a row house in Pune which the grandmother was looking after. K. Gandhi said that one needed to know their needs and also the funds available to them so far, before approaching prospective donors.

Invitations for Kaleidoscope were dispatched a year ahead and throughout that time the Secunderabad-Hyderabad youth "refused to be sidetracked with any other event," informed Bisney, at-

tributing the giant success of the event to this single-minded pursuit: "We knew in our minds what we wanted. It was not just one more youth meet. The planning and implementation began in January 1997. Each event e.g. the money market game, took two months of preparation with the help of professionals and com-

"Not even a fraction of the massive SIDBI loans are availed of by Parsis"

puters in a room at a five-star hotel." Now the youths there are keen to attend the next seminar.

Saluting the wealth of talent that Kaleidoscope '98 highlighted, K. Gandhi noted Zoroastrian parents' reluctance to nurture music, sports and fine art talents to the extent that they promote academics. He had written to 30 such participants offering help with professional guidance, coaching, etc and had received a response from 12, some of whom were keen to pursue their fields of talent. K. Gandhi now suggested that money generated from conferences like the FOZYA seminars, Kaleidoscope and the Federation's own women and children's fund be used for the purpose and received a general sanction from the council.

Zelda Mistry and Vinifer Gandhi spoke about the BPP's Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) conducted for a month in April-May each year for those who had just finished their secondary school examinations. The 200 participants from Bombay and the mofussil divide their 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. days between hearing about career options from professionals in each field, discovering their social and religious roots, participating in social service as well as sports, dramatics and fashion shows to learn the strength of team work. After the course they have the option to join the BPP Youth Club where the current membership is 263. An attraction is the opportunity to learn to operate the internet from Cyrus Vaid at a modest Rs 300. The girls thanked the BPP for the opportunity and described Diana Marfatia who conducts the event as "the backbone of the HPY."

K. Gandhi reminded the gathering that while the BPP trustees had been very supportive, the program was the

brainchild of the late social scientist Prof Noshirwan Kaikobad who had planted this and other ideas for community service such as school and family counseling which had been absorbed by the BPP. But the most conscientious implementer of these programs had been Anklesaria who as chief executive of the Panchayet had shouldered the burden of encouraging and training the young social workers, notably Marfatia.

Tirandaz spoke of the boys of the Dadar Parsi Colony as having started "the world's first floodlit cricket, volleyball and football tournaments of Parsis... There used to be quite a few drug addicts (who are) now almost eliminated. (They) brought in Khojeste Mistry who spoke from 8.30 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. and (the youths) acquired a healthy pride... We adults have forgotten how to motivate (but) Zoroastrian youth can be self-motivated... They are doing an excellent job but not reporting it."

Approximately 30 percent of the 1,000 members of the Thana Zoroastrian Anjuman are under the age of 40, noted Cursetjee. Describing the Zoroastrian Youth Association of Thana as a vibrant, growing group which participates wholeheartedly in all the Anjuman's programs, he noted that the two community housing projects there had provided the space for an intellectual exchange among the youths. He promised to send delegates to Jamshedpur.

As FOZYA president Karanjawalla reported on the 25 youths from different cities of India who had made a trip to Nepal he acknowledged the help of Delhi youths, especially of Nargolwala and the free bed and breakfast made available to them at the Delhi dharam-shalla, courtesy the DPA. They were planning an intercity meet in Udvada in Nadir Modi's bungalow and offered to host the Federation meeting in the winter of 1999 in Udvada while K. Gandhi, in a oblique reference to the Federation's role in the establishment of FOZYA, smiled benignly: "I am very proud that the child had grown up enough..." and assured them that their offer would be availed if required.

Of office bearers/co-opted members

A. Irani was appointed joint honorary treasurer with Anklesaria and Shroff as joint honorary secretary with K. Gandhi. The positions were vacant since the retirement of Peshotan Nargolwala and Eruch Desai. Master takes the place of



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the late Gool Tata as executive secretary of the Federation.

K. Gandhi explained the nominations in terms of the BPP agreeing to join the Federation with a single vote on the general body despite "the population of Parsis in Bombay being more than the rest of the world and BPP work being greater than the combined work of all the other associations. The BPP enjoys five votes on the executive council versus 35 others... One honorary secretary and the executive secretary from the BPP is an unwritten understanding," maintained K. Gandhi who felt he would be "failing in (his) duty if (he) did not acknowledge" the BPP's graciousness.

On the question of co-opting a youth representative on the Federation's executive council the youth lobby was in disarray. FOZYA sought the right to recommend a youth under 40 years for the two-year term. To this PPP secretary and Federation vice president Eruch Irani sought to add the clause that the youth in question will be selected from a different zone on rotation each time. He claimed that it was essential to motivate youths from smaller towns and villages. He was supported by Cyrus Cooper of Baroda in a heated exchange with Karanjawalla which K. Gandhi was constrained to interrupt. "We are getting stuck with what we've got. Ensure youth participation; motivate a second in command," maintained E. Irani. Karanjawalla resisted this, noting, "If the executive council is willing for an 'x' person, it's their responsibility... He should be a member of the member associations of FOZYA," he maintained. Karanjawalla who has been president of FOZYA for six years may continue in the position, pointed out D. Irani implying that thereby new talent cannot enter. K. Gandhi noted that the prerogative lay with FOZYA and asked the dissenting parties to thrash out the matter outside and come to a consensus. In the meantime K. Gandhi read out the guidelines: FOZYA executive council will have the power to decide; the representative would be under 40 years; he need not necessarily be a member of the FOZYA's executive committee. There was no reference to the candidate's record of community involvement/service.

Mogrelia was strongly in favor of ex officio representation to prevent controversy and suggested a ceiling of two terms of two years each. B. Dastur found the age limit of 40 "funny." He

recommended that the representative be in the 20-30 year age-group. But Mogrelia objected: "Then where will people between 35 and 55 go? They won't be here nor there!"

Though Batlivala agreed in principle with E. Irani he noted how few youths there were in the north, east and

When parents hear of a child's need for counselling, they vehemently object and ask, "Is my child mad?"

south zones. "So, if FOZYA wants to nominate a competent person to the Federation twice a year, it's OK with me." Added Tirandaz puckishly: "Have one nominee from each zone of FOZYA. There'll be five nominees of youth to add to 35 already there!" adding, "If they have so much enthusiasm, take them all together. Are they going to scuttle your discussions?" But the youths did not rise to the bait and a disappointed Tirandaz castigated them: "Are you the leaders of tomorrow? Shame on you. You can't even fight for yourself!"

At a later stage K. Gandhi brought up the subject again, incorporating the proposal in the guideline that the same person should not be reappointed after a two-year term and that preferably the new representative would come from a different zone. He sought an endorsement adding that if the proposal proves unfeasible in practice, it could be amended.

K. Gandhi's conciliatory approach was rejected by E. Irani on the basis that there was no meeting among the youth to thrash out the point. He now noted that "the purpose will be lost if one person is given responsibility. Others may say there is no need to attend" and revived the older contention that every anjuman should bring one youth. "The whole youth movement is concentrated in a few people," he noted.

Anklesaria favored K. Gandhi's approach saying "once we concede the right to FOZYA to attend as member of the executive council... (it) does not mean that other youths do not attend." Gandhi had his hand on the pulse of E. Irani's reasoning: "(He) wants to put the ball in the court of the anjumans

(looking for) 20 youths from 20 anjumans rather than one representative."

E. Irani defended his view. "In Indore, Delhi was attacked (for not bringing youth delegates). Today there are two youth representatives from there. If we attack Madras, next time you will bring a youth from Madras... Let it be discussed threadbare in Jamshedpur. Then take a decision."

"Youths here are only invitees (They are) not members of the organization. Therefore FOZYA asked to be a member of the Federation," noted P. Irani. But K. Gandhi insisted that at the executive council meets everyone's views were heard, whether they were youth, invitee or member. Though Mogrelia continued to maintain that co-option is the right of the parent body (in this case, FOZYA) and begins with ex officio representation (he was supported by Cursetjee who argued that the reins must remain with the parent body as youths often move away from the mainstream. FOZYA communications addressed to some Thana youths go unheeded while the Thana Anjuman, which provides air transport to the youths to attend the annual meets, is left in the dark, he said.) K. Gandhi maintained FOZYA's right to come to a consensus and was supported by Tamboly who noted, "It's a historical fact that each generation is smarter than the earlier one. The youth are wise enough to realize their responsibility. Let them meet, discuss, come to their own decisions."

BPP programs

In the past academic year the BPP's school counselors had worked on 80 cases, reported BPP school counsellor Anupama Sharma. There had been progress in 20 cases which had been terminated. Based in the BJPC, the Avabai Petit and the Cowasji Jehangir (C. J.) High School, they work on individuals and through groups, the phases proceeding from personal interviews to meetings with families, matrons and teachers, leading to a diagnosis. Their main purview is scholastic disorders among children aged three to 19 years, emanating from personality disorders, emotional disturbances and stress caused by parental pressures, school competition, etc. The children are taught stress management and social techniques such as group sharing, learning to be receptive, etc leading to an increase in self-

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"One can't look after small, unprotected aramgahs in perpetuity. They are white elephants, a financial drain"

esteem. In case of ingrained mental or physical disorders the cases are referred to other professionals, said Sharma. The counselors have sought to sensitize the children to the work of the blind and leprosy associations, generate an awareness of AIDS, family life and family planning programs and expose them to the planetarium, the braille press, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, etc.

Anjumans with individuals in need of such help were encouraged to send them to Bombay as it was not possible for the short staffed program to extend its service to the mofussil.

Awareness and appreciation of such service is still a long way away, however. As Sharma noted, when parents hear of a child's need for counseling, they vehemently object and ask, "Is my child mad?" B. Dastur noted that the psychological barrier to counseling was much less in Bombay than in other areas and spoke of the high incidence of sexual abuse of children and the need to pull them out of their introspective shell.

While Anklesaria spoke of the BPP's disbursements under its multiheaded social schemes, the Federation was particularly enthused by the news that a Parsi girl, Kismet Turel, may have made it to the final rung of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) selection ladder thanks to the BPP's project that finances special training for the professions for those obtaining more than 75 percent marks at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level. While the BPP has spent over a lakh of rupees in training hopefuls for entry into IAS and military service, Anklesaria noted that an IAS officer at the peak of his/her career can do much more for the community than a few lakh rupees and hoped that the BPP would continue to try to get Parsi youths into governmental service at all levels. Balsara spoke of the village talati as more powerful than the Prime Minister, with a tremendous income and Anklesaria immediately interposed, "Get me five persons willing to opt for talati/mamlatdar. I'll get the BPP to help them."

Another high ranking Parsi in government service is Manijeh Kherawala, a senior member of the revenue service who Masani believes is on the level of the commissioner.

Defunct anjumans

In the absence of Sohrab Katpitia, the chief executive of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) who is the Federation's one-man committee on defunct anjumans, K. Gandhi provided a synopsis.

In Jodhpur the anjuman had an altercation with the local municipal corporation which sought to build a municipal hall over a *nalla* (stream) which flows through anjuman property while the anjuman wanted to acquire surplus land beyond the *nalla*. The matter reached the collector's court and while the municipality was stopped from building the hall on anjuman land, the anjuman was unable to acquire the surplus land.

B. Dastur reported that the BPP had received a letter from Deolali regarding encroachment on their aramgah land. Responding with a letter to the collector within 24 hours, the BPP told the anjuman to keep vigil and bear part of the legal cost. There has been no response from the collector or the anjuman despite reminders. Anklesaria suggested that the BPP contact Bejon Desai, trustee of Boys' Town public school in Nasik.

At Bhavnagar there have been allegations about the sale of the Parsi club land. Katpitia's investigations have revealed no cause for the Federation to intervene but has endorsed the belief that the land was gifted to the BPP in the event of the original use being discontinued. Two Parsis of Bhavnagar have taken up the matter to prevent the others from disposing of the property and the BPP may join in the action, noted K. Gandhi.

The Tarapore dokhma property trust which P. Irani is investigating is believed to own five acres of chickoo farms. He will keep Katpitia informed as more material comes his way. Karanjawalla who was looking after the Disa anjuman property had fractured his arm but was now back in commission to proceed with the necessary judicial proceedings.

Masani referred to two properties in Khandwa, a house and an aramgah where the case was lost in the lower court due to the failure of the man in whose name it was filed to go into the witness box. There are Rs 48,000 with Rajkot which if not used for ghambars or relief of poverty are earmarked for the SPP, he

added.

Dick referred to the Navroze jashan and dinner and Farvardian jashan that the community traditionally holds. He also spoke of the over one acre land of the Itarsi aramgah where a body was placed a month ago. There is another aramgah at Hoshangabad where the wall has been broken in and the bricks utilized by miscreants. Bhopal being the closest anjuman to Hoshangabad, Dick suggested they look after it.

Taleyarkhan and Masani brought up the matter of the Gholvad hostels. The five-acre plot held the BPP's C. J. boys' hostel which was closed seven years ago for want of beneficiaries. The same happened in the case of the C. J. girls' hostel located on another property. Master related that after their closure in 1991 the boys' hostel was handed over to the C. J. Trust. "They now want the girls' hostel," said Master but the matter is pending because the BPP needs access to the Domestic Science Institute where it is maintaining two people at an annual cost of 1.25 lakhs without any returns. There is no response from the Cowasji Jehangir family to the BPP request, said Master. Tamboly revealed that the WZO had prepared a scheme for these institutions five years ago but Cowasji Jehangir's sons did not respond. "Recently they called us to ask if we were still interested but we said 'No.'"

When the BPP became aware of the municipality's decision to build toilet blocks outside the Dadysett Atash Behram it addressed a letter to the municipal commissioner which was personally delivered by Tirandaz, informed B. Dastur. There was also the specter of mounting garbage outside the Atash Behram and the BPP's Adil Crawford, Dastoor and Ratan Lalkaka, chief executive, Dadysett Charity, went to Mr Waghmare, PA to the municipal commissioner Girish Gokhale to protest. A. Irani suggested that pictures of the atash be painted on the outer wall to prevent such misuse.

"We have a defunct anjuman committee but no clear cut policy on what to do with those properties," complained Rustomji. Referring to small, unprotected aramgahs in UP, Haryana and Rajasthan, Rustomji remarked, "One can't look after them in perpetuity."

They are white elephants, a financial drain," and urged the council to address the problem.

Clubwala cautioned against a hasty scrapping of the old aramgahs. "North American Zoroastrians are becoming conscious of their roots. They may take exception if their grandparents' graves are disposed of." Dick suggested that the names of the deceased be published in *Jam-e-Jamshed* and the surrounding land sold. Gandhi noted that the descendants of the dead in the Bhopal aramgah are unknown "and even where

we do know (who the descendants are) and write to them, there's no response. Rustomji is asking if 50 to 100-year-old graves can be disposed of." Gandhi suggested that where descendants were not forthcoming

ing the anjuman could take a decision on its own. "If today you don't sell the land someone may usurp (it) and sell it. (Either way) sentiments are defiled."

It was decided to publish the names in the *Fed Newsletter* after which the anjuman concerned could sell the land.

A. Nargolwala suggested that unemployed Parsis could be banded together, trained and sent to salvage Zoroastrian property in places where no Zoroastrian population exists. "You could get revenue from the land and provide employment." But K. Gandhi said the problem was to find young people willing to do the job. He felt the job was best left to local bodies to undertake.

Sanjan aavo

Balsara, who has been associated with Sanjan's Rohinton Davierwalla in the annual commemoration of Sanjan Day, urged the Federation to hold its next meet in Sanjan so that upcountry delegates could also participate in the memorial day celebrations. Normally a half-day celebration with jashan and ghambar, this year Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw has accepted their invitation to be the guest of honor, said Balsara. He expected a total turnout of 10,000 Zoroastrians this year, many hopefully from abroad, to celebrate the arrival of Parsis in India and sought cooperation and funding from Federation members. Balsara, who said the Devka and Dahanu anjumans will join Sanjan and Saronda

as cohosts, hoped it would be a match-making camp on a "world scale."

Reservations regarding accommodation for Federation delegates was quashed by Balsara who repeated what the 84-year-old general had to say about it: "Don't bother about me. I'll live as anyone else." The invitation has been accepted with Anklesaria describing the "fine gesture (as) a typical example of what a small anjuman can do."

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Dolat Debara from Agra; Porus Karanjawalla from Ahmedabad;

Parsi children had received admission in general colleges administered by Gujarati trusts on the basis of their mother tongue being Gujarati

Pervez Mehta from Bardoli; Cyrus Cooper and Farhad Wadia from Baroda; Sarosh and Pilloo Ginwalla from Bharuch; Dara Pavri from Bhopal; Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw

Mehta, Dadi Engineer, Rustom Tiran-daz, Dinshaw Tamboly, Behram Laskari, Behram Dastur, Sheroo Master, Adil Crawford and Gool Kias from Bombay; Khurshed Pastakia and Noshir Paghdwalla from Borivli; Nauzer Batliwala from Calcutta; Banoogoshasp Irani from Dahanu; Keki Gandhi, Farrokh Rustomji, Adil Nargolwala and Homi Gandhi from Delhi; Bomi Heerjee from Indore; Aspi Irani and Pervez Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Ronnie Dick and Gulnaz Dick from Jhansi; Nariman Mogrelia from Madras; Behram and Dolly Masani, Kerman and Firoza Marker, Urvakshi Bhote and Yasmin Bhote from Mhow; Dr Thrity Patel from Nagpur; Dara Irani, Eruch Irani, Firdous Kayani, Navaz and Sarosh Palkhiwala and Nazneen Vankadia from Poona; Homi Palsetia, Nariman Balsara, Freddy Balsara, Faranak Balsara, Frenaz Balsara and Dinshi Patel from Saronda; Jehangir Bisney from Secunderabad; Rustom Cursetjee, Pervez Bhesania and Rusi Gandevia from Thana; Commodore Jal Postwalla from Vishakhapatnam; Mani Clubwala from south zone; Rustom Anklesaria from west zone. Homi Taleyarkhan was a special invitee. Adil Maneckshaw, Urvashi Marolia, Delzad Captain, Zelda Mistry, Mehrab Nargolwala, Vinifer Gandhi, Merzeen Aga, Priya Balsara and Cyrus Debara were youth observers from Bombay. The press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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Gujarat Parsis: Near and yet apart — 6

Knotted in gifts

Marriage time was a happy occasion for the bride who received gifts from her in-laws on 21 occasions

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 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 ahri-man." 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 compendium which had been sent to us by the noted Bombay dentist Dr Dinshaw F. Boga have been edited and are being carried over seven 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 found a mention in the third instalment. With Parsis, eating and drinking are religious duties which help to drive away

the evil spirit, it was stated therein.

Their religious beliefs, their mode of celebrating auspicious occasions and feasts were referred to in the fourth episode. In the midst of this rejoicing 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 and navjotes were detailed in the fifth instalment. When a much awaited male child was born, instead of the child, some cowdung was shown to the mother, supposedly in the best interests of the mother and the child. Women who were barren after years of marriage observed different vows in the expectation of improving their fertility.

Elaborate were the marriage rituals too and as notes this sixth instalment, the poorest Parsi could hardly marry his son for less than Rs 400 or his daughter for less than Rs 250. In the first year after the betrothal, gifts were sent to the girl's house by the boy's parents on 21 occasions, but the girl's side had to reciprocate the presents on only five occasions.

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.

...

Village Parsis often marry their children while still in infancy. In days gone by children were sometimes conditionally contracted in marriage before they were born. When two families agree in wish-

ing their children to marry, they exchange their children's horoscopes, which are sent to an astrologer, generally a Parsi priest, who settles whether the marriage is likely to be fortunate. The offer of marriage may come either from the boy's or from the girl's family. It is generally made by the poorer family. If both families approve of the match and the stars are favorable, the marriage is agreed to. Soon after on a lucky day, the women of the boy's family go to the girl's to return her horoscope. They take with them a suit of clothes, silver foot ornaments for the girl, sugarcandy, curds and fish as emblems of good luck, and present the dress to the girl in front of a lighted *ghee*-fed lamp into which a rupee is dropped. The cost of the clothes ranges from Rs 15 to Rs 100 and of the ornaments from Rs 10 to Rs 75. The bearers of these presents are entertained by the girl's mother with sweetmeats and a few rupees are presented to each, the total varying in value from Rs 15 to Rs 30. According to her means the girl's mother sends her future son-in-law a silver, a gold or a diamond ring, a suit of clothes, and Rs 5 to Rs 25, in cash. This completes the betrothal which though not legally is practically binding.

During the uncertain interval between the betrothal and the marriage presents of fish and other tokens of goodwill pass between the families. On a lucky day 10 to 15 days before the marriage comes the turmeric-pounding ceremony. At both houses kinswomen meet and choose four young married and unwidowed girls to pound turmeric and shake it in a winnowing fan, while songs are sung. The time between the turmeric-pounding and the marriage day is set apart for merrymaking and during these days no ceremonies are performed in honor of the dead. About eight days before the marriage day comes the booth-building or *mandav* ceremony. A Parsi with a



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shawl or a woman's silk robe wrapped round his head and a red powder mark on his brow, digs a pit near the entrance to each house, some silver and gold are thrown into the pit, and mango and *samri* (*prosopis spicigera*) twigs are planted in it. Red and yellow marks are made on the wall and near the hole frankincense is burned and songs are sung.

Either before or after the turmeric-pounding, sometimes even on the marriage day, the *adarni* or inviting ceremony is performed. On the *adarni* day the mother of the boy with kinswomen and friends and with music goes to the girl's and dresses the girl in clothes and ornaments. The girl's mother entertains the party with sweatmeats and presents the boy's near kinswomen with dresses. After they leave, a party of kinswomen and friends set out from the girl's with clothes for the boy who in return presents the girl's mother with a dress. Next day the girl's mother returns this dress to the boy's mother accompanying it with a few rupees, as it is thought wrong for the girl's parents to receive presents from the boy's side.

On the third day before the wedding a suit of clothes and a large silver coin, a Persian rial, a Mexican dollar, or a

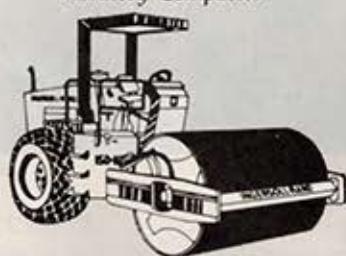
five-franc piece, are sent to the bride, who wears the coin round her neck till the marriage ceremonies are over. Towards evening the women of the family seat the boy and girl in front of their

Before the party starts a fisherwoman holds a fish near the bridegroom for good luck

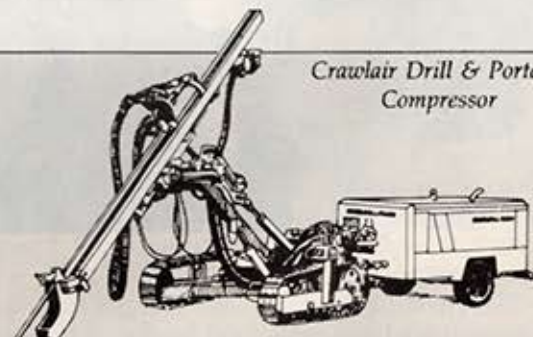
respective houses, rub them with the turmeric which was pounded 15 days before, and bathe them with fresh water. When the bathing is over they are seated on a wooden nail-less stool, are lifted into the house by four married and unwidowed girls, and carried seven times round the lucky chalk-marks in the center of the hall. A basin filled with clarified butter and raw sugar is held near them, frankincense is burnt before them, and they are asked to foretell what the various grains will cost during the year. If the bridegroom and bride are grown up, the bridegroom's turban or the bride's robe or sari is laid on the wooden stool and carried round the chalk-marks.

Next evening, in their own houses, the boy and the girl are again seated on stools and piles of sugar cakes and sweetbuns or *polis* are laid in front of them and yarn is wound round them. The sugar cakes and buns are handed round among friends and relations. A small dish of *khichri*, mixed rice and pulse, is cooked and in the mixture a lighted wick fed with clarified butter is set and placed near the boy or the girl. The feet of the boy or of the girl are made to rest on an earthen dish in which are a cowdung cake, a rice-biscuit *sario*, and a gram-biscuit *papad*. Along with four married girls the boy and the girl are made to eat mixed rice and pulse *khichri* and gram biscuits. As they rise they are made to break the earthen dish under their feet; the wick in the pulse and rice dish is put out, and the pulse and rice is made into a ball and eaten by women as a cure for barrenness. The next day is spent in religious rites and ceremonies performed by priests or mobeds in honor of ancestral spirits who are called to bless the marriage. At the same time five, seven or nine clay jars filled with water are set in a row marked with yellow and red, and crowned with rice-biscuits, gram-biscuits and sugared

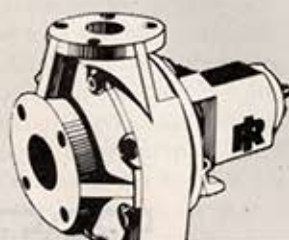
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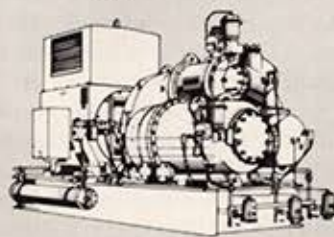
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wheat-cakes. Some of the women hold a new sari or silk robe over the pots. One of the women beats a copper dish, and, calling them by name asks the ancestral spirits to attend. One woman comes running in barking like a dog. The other women drive her away, and with fun and laughing eat all the things they can lay their hands on.

On the fourth day the marriage ceremony is performed. During these four days, if the families are rich, or only on the marriage day if they are poor, large parties of friends and kinspeople are asked to dine and sup. On the day before the feast the women of the family go to their female friends and ask them to join the marriage ceremonies and feasting. The men are called by a priest, who with a list of names goes from house to house and gives the invitation. Near relations and leading members of the community are visited and invited by the father or some member of the family. In towns some families send printed notes of invitation.

At dawn on the wedding day the women of both families sit in their houses on a carpet, singing songs describing the festivities and asking blessings. At their homes the bride and bridegroom un-

dergo the same purification as when they were invested with the sacred shirt and cord. At both houses carpets are laid and rows of benches are set in the streets and neighboring verandahs. About four

The bridegroom's father seats the bride on his lap if she is a child

in the afternoon the male guests dressed in white robes reaching to their feet and girdle round the waist with a long white cloth, begin to come and take their seats on the carpets and benches.

While the guests are gathering, a party of women come from the bride's to the bridegroom's, one of them bearing in a large tray presents of clothes and a silver or copper-brass hair-comb and a pot of curds, and another carrying, one over the other, three water-pots filled with water, the topmost crowned by a coconut. The water pots and the coconut are marked with red and yellow powder. This procession is called *sopara*. While they stand at the door of the house the bridegroom's mother or some other near

relation waves over the head of the present-bringer a small tray filled with water and with a few grains of rice in it, throws the water at her feet and breaks an egg and a coconut. When they have entered the bridegroom is called to dip his fingers in the water goblets, and while he dips them he drops one to five rupees in the water which belong to the bride's sister. The women give and receive presents and return to the bride's. Between five and six in the evening the male guests who have met at the bridegroom's with native music, and sometimes in the larger towns with music played on European instruments, follow the bridegroom and high priest to the bride's. Before the party starts a fisherwoman appears and holds a fish near the bridegroom for good luck, and for her service is given a few rupees. When the bridegroom begins to move, a coconut, a few sugar-cakes and dry dates are waved round his head and thrown away.

The bridegroom, who is called *Var-Raja* or the marriage chief, is dressed in new clothes, a Masulipatam cloth turban, a long white robe falling to his ankles with a strip of white cloth about a foot broad wound many times round



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his waist, a shawl thrown over his left arm, a garland of flowers round his neck, a red mark on his brow, and a bouquet and coconut in his right hand. Sometimes the bridegroom goes to the bride's on horseback, his place in the procession being after the male and before the female guests. The female guests follow the men, the bridegroom's mother leading them holding in her hands a large brass or silver salver containing a *paro* or paper-cone of sugarcakes, betel nuts and leaves, dry dates and rice with a suit of clothes for the bride and jewels generally worth Rs 300 to Rs 1,000. At every street corner, to appease evil spirits, a coconut is waved round the bridegroom's head, broken, and thrown away. On reaching the bride's the bridegroom is led to the door, the men of his party take their seats on carpets and benches, and the women stand behind the bridegroom at the door. At the threshold, as the bridegroom enters, the bride's mother waves seven times round his head a copper-brass plate with rice and water in it, throws the contents under his feet, breaks an egg and a coconut, and welcomes him into the house asking him to set his right foot first and puts a ring on his finger. The bridegroom's

father seats the bride on his lap if she is a child, and presents her with gold and silver ornaments. After this the wedding ceremony begins.

Bouquets and betel leaf are handed to

Bouquets and betel leaf are handed to all male guests

all male guests. The women sit round on carpets, and in the center the bride and bridegroom are seated on chairs facing each other. Their right hands are tied together with cotton thread and a curtain-like cloth is held between them. One priest posts himself near the bride and another near the bridegroom. While reciting prayers they pass twisted thread seven times round the bride's and bridegroom's chairs. When this is over the bride and bridegroom are shown a small basin containing clarified butter and molasses, one of the priests drops benjamin on a fire censer, and the bride and bridegroom throw rice over each other. Whoever is quickest in throwing the rice is supposed to be likely to rule. The guests closely watch their move-

ments and reward their sharpness by laughter and applause. When the rice-throwing is over the bride and bridegroom are set side by side, two priests stand before them with a witness on each side holding brass plates full of rice. The two priests pronounce the marriage blessing in old Persian and Sanskrit, at each sentence throwing rice on the bride's and the bridegroom's heads. At intervals in the midst of the blessing the bridegroom and bride are asked in Persian, "Have you chosen her?" "And have you chosen him?" They answer in Persian or if they are too young their mothers answer for them "I have chosen."

When the marriage blessing is over the bride's sister under the pretext of washing the bridegroom's feet with milk, steals one of his shoes and does not let it go till she is given a rupee. The bridegroom, leaving the bride at her father's house, starts for his own house with his friends and a bright array of torches. A feast is given at both houses and about midnight the bridegroom goes back to the bride's with some friends. The whole marriage ceremony described above is repeated. When this is over the bridegroom's and bride's robes are knot-

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and

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ted together and the whole party returns with them to the bridegroom's. The bride and bridegroom are made to feed each other from a dish of rice, curds and sugar called *dahi kumlo*, literally curds, and they hunt for a ring which each in turn hides in the dish and then gamble to show who is quicker and luckier.

On the marriage evening friends and relations present shawls and rupees to the parents of the bridegroom and bride. The presents are carefully noted that on like occasions suitable return presents may be made.

On the eighth morning after the wedding the wife goes to her parents' house and returns in the evening with a large vessel filled with wheat having its mouth covered with silk. From both houses sweet-bread and other choice dishes are taken to the sea or to a riverside and offered to the water spirits. In the evening at both houses relations and friends are feasted. On the first Behram, that is the 20th day of the month after the wedding, friends and relations are called to a feast. No chairs or tables are used at wedding feasts. A strip of cloth half a yard wide is spread on the ground and the guests take their places in a row. The women and children dine first and when they have

dined the men are called. Before each guest a piece of plantain or other leaf is spread, and, on the leaf, the servants lay a portion of each course. When all the courses are served the guests begin to eat. While the male guests are eating, small copper cups of the size of wine glasses are filled with *mowra* (bassia latifolia) liquor and the toast 'Glory to God' is drunk. As soon as this toast is drunk the cups are refilled and four more toasts, 'The Bride and Bridegroom,' 'The Fire-Temple,' 'The Host' and 'The Guests' generally follow.

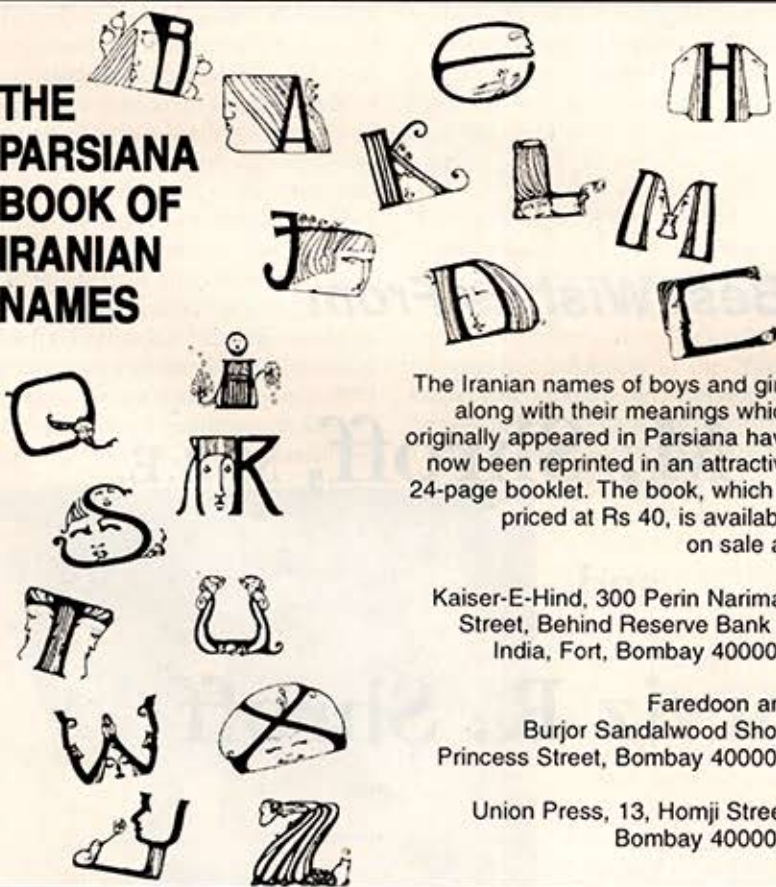
What with presents of dresses and ornaments, with feasting and other charges, the poorest Parsi can hardly marry his son for less than Rs 400 or his daughter for less than Rs 250. A middle-class marriage costs Rs 800 to Rs 1,200 and a rich marriage Rs 1,500 to Rs 4,000. During the first year after the betrothal on 21 occasions presents are sent to the girl's house by the boy's parents and on five occasions presents are sent to the boy's house by the girl's parents. The 21 occasions on which presents are sent to the girl's house by the boy's parents are, on the betrothal day when returning the horoscope; on the *adarni* or the fifth day preceding the

marriage day; on the *varni* or the fourth day preceding the marriage day; on the navjote or initiation; on the evening of the marriage day; on the midnight of the marriage day; on the *varovar* or eighth day after the marriage; on the husband's birthday; on the first new-moon day; on Jamshedi Navroze; on Meher jashan; on Avan jashan; on Adar jashan; on Bahman jashan; on Zoroaster's anniversary; on Pateti; on Khordadshah; on Holi; on Concut day; on Dassera; and on Diwali.

The five occasions on which presents of clothes are sent to the boy's house by the girl's parents are: the navjote; the *adarni*; the evening of the marriage day; Pateti; and the husband's birthday.

Among Parsis polygamy is forbidden. The authority of religion and custom which was against polygamy was often set aside till polygamy was made illegal under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (XXV) of 1865. When a wife or a husband dies remarriage is allowed and practised. The marriage of a bachelor and a maid and the marriage of a widower and a maid are called *Shahazan* or royal marriage; the remarriage of a widow, whether she marries a bachelor or a widower, is called *Chakarzan* marriage or *Nantra*. These are

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*Analgesics: Anetanilid, Acetylsalicylic acid, Aspirin, Acetophenetidin (Phenacetin), Antipyrine, Pyramidone.

Sulfonamides and Sulfones: Sulfanilamide, Sulfapyridine, N2 Acetylsulfanilamide, Sulfacetamide, Sulfisoxazole (Gantrisin), Thiazolsulfone, Salicylazosulfapyridine (Azulfadine), Sulfoxone, Sulfamethoxypyridine (Kynex).

Antimalarials: Primaquine, Pamaquine, Pentaquine, Quinacrine (Atabrine).

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Published in the public interest by Parsiana

the only two forms of marriage at present in use among Gujarat Parsis. From the *Revayets* or precepts, it seems that in earlier times there were five forms of marriage: *Padshazan* — the royal wedding — the same as *Shahazan*, that is the first marriage of boy and girl. It is recognized in both worlds. The merit of good deeds performed by a child born of this marriage rebound to the parents. *Yukzan*: If a man has a daughter and no son the marriage of the daughter is called *Yukzan*, because her son will be adopted by her father and made his heir. *Chakarzan* or the marriage of a widow with a widower. *Setarzan*: If an unmarried boy dies, a girl is at once united to him as his wife and their names are pronounced together as husband and wife in the boy's funeral service. The girl can remarry but only in the widow marriage form. *Khudash-rae-zan* literally girl's choice is a marriage made not by the parents but by the girl's choice. The *Revayets* order the high priest to unite such a pair even though the parents object. After the birth of a child from this union a second marriage ceremony should be performed. The second ceremony is given the rank of *Shahazan* or *Padshazan*, that is of a first marriage.

A widow's marriage differs from a maiden's marriage in the following particulars: The ceremony is performed once, not twice and at midnight instead of in the evening. During the ceremony the bride should be helped by a remarried widow and not by a virgin or an unwidowed woman. The sari or robe which the bride wore during the ceremony is washed as soon as the ceremony is over, as it is unlucky for any one to use it before it is washed; while the blessings are being repeated the rice is thrown from below instead of from above as in the royal or maiden's wedding. The dress to be presented to the bride is not taken in a salver as in the maiden's wedding but in a deep basin, so that it may not be seen. When a bachelor marries a widow, on the evening before the wedding he is married with *Shahazan* or royal rites to a twig of the *samri* (*prosopis spicigera*) tree and at midnight is married to the widow with the second marriage rites. No children of the remarrying pair may be present during the remarriage ceremony as it is believed that if any are present disagreements will arise between the children and the stepfather or stepmother.

To be continued

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 21 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 28 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 54 years, averaging at 34 years.

As compared to 21 babies born in October there were 74 Zoroastrians who died in Bombay. Twenty-seven patients succumbed to heart disease of whom 10 were above the age of 80. The other killers were pneumonia/lung disease (nine), cancer (seven) and old age/general debility (six). Three victims each fell prey to brain disease and bronchitis whereas pancreatitis, diabetes, liver disease, hypertension, septicemia and haemorrhage

and shock took a toll of two lives each. Among the isolated cases registered in October were deaths due to anemia, gastrointestinal bleeding, haematemesis, dehydration, malnutrition, kidney failure and head injury. The youngest and eldest to breathe their last were both females, one five-and-a-half and the other 98 years old. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for October, in Bombay, was 77 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman

do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the break-up 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.

Freny Pirojshaw Dumasia (79), B, The Reward, Tardeo Rd, 400007; October 6
Kersi Dossabhai Manekji (58), 8, Goolrukh Hsg Soc, T.P.S. IV, 4th Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; October 6
Parviz Edulji Bharucha (70), 606, Everest, J. P. Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; October 7
Jehangir Sorabji Contractor (71), C/o E. S. Pochee, 5-B, Sanjana Apts, 66, Carter Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 7
Rusi Ratanshaw Contractor (90), Jame Jamshed Bldg, Dadar T.T., 400014; October 7
Aspy Rustomji Bulsara (81), 4-A, New Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; October 8
Jaloo Rustom Choksi (76), G/5, Godrej Bldg, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400026; October 8
Meheru Kekhashru Contractor (92), D-11, Rustom Bldg, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 8
Soonamai Jalejar Hatara (85), 16/2, Rustom Bldg, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 8
Savak Babu Mistry (87), King George Home (Ashram), Tulsi Pipe Rd, Mahalaxmi, 400011; October 8
Tehmtan Nariman Nanavati (71), 201/A, Mangal Murti, M. B. Est, Virar (W), 401303; October 8
Noshir Jehangir Irani (53), 221, Haveliwalla Bldg, Bora Bazar St, Fort, 400001; October 10
Meherwanji Erachshaw Motafam (71), Society Bldg, 655, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 10
Alamai Rustomji Todiwalla (87), 36, Irani Bldg, Balaram St, 400007; October 10
Burjor Ardeshtir Bharucha (45), Amadi Bldg, 69/F, Breach Candy, 400026; October 11
Minocher (Minto) Erachsha Mukadam (87), K-10, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; October 11
Rustom Ardeshtir Dalal (85), 121, Acropolis A, Little Gibbs Rd, Malabar Hill, 400006; October 12
Dhunjisha Godrej Gandhi (76), 101, Vacha Gandhi Bldg

ALLAHABAD

DIED

Savak Nanavati (78), residing at 8/B, South Rd, 211001 on April 29, 1998

BANGALORE

MARRIED

Mehermaaz Khambatta of Bombay, daughter of Katy and Beheram, and **Ruzaan Choksey**, son of Pervin and Heroize; October 30

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to **Kashmira** and **Zubin Contractor**; September 26
A boy, **Jehan**, to **Kainaz** and **Khurshed Daruvala**, brother to Delna; October 1
A girl to **Meher** and **Farokh Cooper**; October 2
A boy to **Villoo** and **Amar Sinhi**; October 5
A boy to **Farzana** and **Percy Dhanbhoora**; October 7
A boy to **Roxan** and **Homyar Mistry**; October 7
A girl to **Dinaz** and **Zubin Shroff**; October 7
A girl to **Armin** and **Jamshed Daruvala**; October 11
A boy to **Zia** and **Ashad Mehta**; October 12
A girl to **Tanaz** and **Abel Pithawalla**; October 13
A girl to **Diana** and **Raj Tyagi**; October 14
A boy to **Shirin** and **Sam Jijina**; October 15

A girl to **Shernaz** and **Homyar Master**; October 19
A girl to **Jasmin** and **Zarkis Parabia**; October 22
A girl to **Delna** and **Jimmy Mistry**, sister to Pearl; October 23
A girl to **Farzana** and **Sorab Madan**; October 24
A boy to **Khurshid** and **Khurshed Bharucha**; October 25
A boy to **Putli** and **Minoo Bharda**; October 30
A boy to **Maneck** and **Yazdi Pundole**; October 31
A girl, **Simran**, to **Sanobar** and **Porus Tampal**; October 31
A boy to **Rashna** and **Dhanji Tangri**; October 31
A boy to **Khushnun** and **Shahbhehram Zaq**; October 31

MARRIED

Shehnaz Rusi Pardiwalla and **Kaiumarz Sohrab Sethna** of Poona; October 10
Binaifer Maneck Mistry and **Fardun Hormasji Powvala**; October 11
Dilzeen Zubin Lilaowala and **Ashtad Zal Engineer**; October 24
Yasmin Pervaz Aibara of Surat and **Maneck Eddie Behramkamdin**; October 25
Parizad Minoo Patel and **Firdosh Dhunjisha Subawalla**; October 26

DIED

Dosabhai (Dossu) Naoroji

Bharucha (78), 603, Namdar Hse, Hill Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; October 1
Sam Burjorji Jesia (64), 20/7, Panthaky Bldg, S. V. Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; October 1
Bahadur Ratansha Balsara (65), Room no 39, Hirabai Petit Chawl, Grant Rd, 400007; October 2
Saman Cavasji Durbari (90), Dadyseth Hse, Siri Rd, Malabar Hill, 400006; October 2
Najoo Homi Engineer (83), Sunil Raj Co-op Hsg Soc, Kopri Clny, Thana (E), 400603; October 2
Khoshed Bomanji Irani (73), 258/D, The Retreat Comp, Bellasis Rd, 400008; October 2
Ratan Nowrojee Nallaseth (75), D-9, Cusrow Bldg, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 2
Jehangir Rustomji Irani (84), Dubash Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; October 3
Thrity Behram Tarapore (74), 3/79, Kailash Apts, S. V. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; October 3
Faramroze Bozorg Chami (67), Nana Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400008; October 4
Coomi Ratanshaw Mistry (85), 17/303, A. M. Dinshaw and Jamasp Tata Block, 30th Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 4
Motu Dara Jehangir (91), Patropolis, 157, S. B. Rd, Colaba, 400005; October 5

no 2, Gamdevi, 400007;
October 12
Daulat Pirojshah Gonda (79),
C-13, Malbari Bldg, New
Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
400007; October 12
Mithibai Manchershaw
Divecha (98), 3/7-C, Tata
Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Rd,
Tardeo, 400034; October 13
Homi Meherwanji Kerawala
(82), 18/C, Marzban Clny,
Gilder Lane, 400008;
October 14
Raschid Ratan Majai (86), The
Panorama, 44, Pali Hill,
Bandra, 400050; October 14
Dinshaw Fakirji Wadia (89),
284/15, Toddiwalla Bldg, Dr
B. Ambedkar Rd, Parel,
400012; October 14
Gustad Burjorji Billimoria
(65), Q-10, S. B. Bharucha
Baug, Lallubhai Park Rd,
Andheri (W), 400058;
October 15
Freny Dara Daruwalla (80),
Room no 53, Panday
Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd,
Colaba, 400005; October 15
Nariman Dadabhoy Bhagat
(79), F. S. Parukh
Dharamshala, Hughes Rd,
400007; October 17
Jiji Maneckji Malia (79), 5,
Sayaji Bldg, Balaram St, Grant
Rd, 400007; October 17
Noshir Sorabji
Pochkhanawala (80), Buena
Vista, Pochkhanawala Rd,
Worli, 400025; October 17
Gool Shapurji Sidhva (92),
2/12A, Shanti Niketan, 11,
Padamji Rd, 400004;
October 17
Jalu Tehmuras Shroff (71),
B-14, Meherzin, Wodehouse
Rd, Colaba, 400005;
October 17
Banoobai Dinshaw Irani (83),
Chaman Chmbs, 1st Marine St,
400002; October 18
Jamshed Rustom Irani (76),
Readymoney Bldg no 2, Ratan
Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
October 19
Kati Navroji Mehta (85),
Patkar Nivas, Edulji Rd,
Charai, Thana (W), 400601;
October 19
Jalamai Bamansha Pithawala
(84), Arya Samaj Bhavan, 232,
Bazar Gate St, Fort, 400001;
October 19
Freni Sam Dinshaw (78),
2/207, Pradyu Sadan, Dr
Ambedkar Rd, Matunga,
400019; October 20

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*						
	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	1998*	This issue	1998*	This issue	1998*
BIRTHS						
Boys	12	86	—	1	—	38
Girls	10	73	—	4	—	28
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	5	160	1	7	—	14
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	14	—	1	—	1
Females married out	—	17	—	1	—	4
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	41	421	1	97	—	35
Females	33	436	2	80	—	34
CREMATED						
Males	—	7	—	—	—	—
Females	—	4	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1998 (January-November 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.

Shera Barjor Vakil (95), 401,
Vrindavan, 32, Mount Mary
Rd, Bandra, 400050;
October 20
Mehra Bapuji Charna (82),
S-9, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; October 21
Hormasji Dinshawji
Daruwalla (88), Pavwalla
Bldg, 40, Raja Ram Mohan
Roy Rd, 400004; October 21
Mehroo Dorab Warden (75),
Dorab Villa, 29, Perry Cross
Rd, Bandra, 400050;
October 21
Aloo Maneckji Dastoor (72),
Dr Freny Cama Girls' Hostel,
Gamadia Clny, Tardeo,
400007; October 23
Rustomji Jehangirji Merchant
(84), Razak Haven, Darabsha
Lane, Off Napean Sea Rd,
400026; October 23
Fareena Vispy Kapadia (5½),
12/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria
Rd, Byculla, 400027;
October 24
Rustom Framroze Randelia
(70), Gustad Mans, Tardeo,
400007; October 25
Jehangir Pirojshah Vazifdar
(81), Awabai Mans, Henry Rd,
Colaba, 400005; October 25
Rustom Khodadad Irani (80),
34, Irani Bldg, 7th Lane,
Khetwadi, 400004; October 26
Dara Jalejar Mobedji (68),

Room no 14, Mody Hse,
Padamjee St, Grant Rd,
400004; October 26
Firoze Jehangirji Rumwala
(80), 6A, Motla Mans, Motibai
St, Tardeo Rd, 400007;
October 26
Bachan Naoshir Vesuna (77),
Wimbridge Hse, 18, Sleater
Rd, 400007; October 26
Gool Jalejar Davierwala (66),
009/C-6, Bhagirathi, Lokgram,
Kalyan (E), 421301;
October 27
Minoo Burjorji Malegam (62),
2, Sutrim, 10th Rd, Khar (W),
400052; October 27
Burjore Eruchshah Mehta
(68), 5/5, Tata Clny, Tardeo,
400034; October 27
Earach Nariman Mehta (71),
2/293, Habib Hse, M. S. Rd,
400007; October 27
Mehroo Soli Pajnigara (61),
Room no 4, Karani Chawl,
Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400008;
October 27
Mani Pheroze Dastur (87),
15-A, Shirin Manzil, Sleater
Rd, 400007; October 28
Rusi (Rustom) Jehangirji
Doctor (82), 12, Contractor
Bldg, 30/31, Karwar St, Fort,
400001; October 28
Tehmina Kaikhushrou Katpitia
(95), M. Dalal Est, Lamington
Rd, 400008; October 28

Dara Phirojsha Panthaky (60),
14/5, Panthaki Baug, S. V. Rd,
Andheri (E), 400069;
October 28
Sherbanoo Nariman Master
(83), B-2, Shapur Baug,
V. P. Rd, 400004;
October 29
Framroze Temuras Gorimar
(76), Cuffe Castle, Cuffe
Parade, 400005; October 30
Dogdo Dadabhoy Tavadia
(83), Sanjana Bldg, D.
Mangeshkar Marg, Near
Bhatia Hospital, 400026;
October 30
Phiroze Savakshaw Bhansali
(78), 28/A, Todiwalla Bldg,
Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel,
400013; October 31
Sapal Maneckshaw Dubash
(92), Adenwalla Bldg, 626, A.
B. Homavazir Rd, Parsi Clny,
Dadar, 400014; October 31

MADRAS
DIED
Mehru Minoo Belgamvala
(80), 15, Nungambakam High
Rd, 600034; September 17

NAVSARI
DIED
Mani Seervai, mother of
Mehernosh; September 29

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

"A royal republican"

Arnavaz S. Mama

Photos, awards, files, books and cartons full of pens jostle for attention in Homi Taleyarkhan's study as did the many interests and activities of his crowded life. "On the strength of his ability and dynamism he occupied many important positions and made worthwhile contributions as a public figure, administrator, diplomat and scholar," attested the President of India K. R. Narayanan in a message to the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA).

"I have been asked to speak for five to six minutes," began governor of Maharashtra Dr P. C. Alexander at the public condolence meeting convened by the sheriff of Bombay, adding, "I could have spoken for 60 minutes and not done justice to Taleyarkhan's service to the state."

The 81-year-old former minister, governor and ambassador "died as he would have liked best — in harness with his boots on," senior Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Minoo Shroff alluded to Taleyarkhan's peaceful passage in the course of a brief afternoon nap after a successful meeting at the Nehru Centre in the morning, before an evening engagement which was never to be.

Wreaths and flowers from high dignitaries and public bodies, letters, cards and telegrams of condolence flooded in as the news of Taleyarkhan's sudden demise percolated through the city and the country (two months after that fateful June 27, 1998 well over 300 letters lay neatly filed in Taleyarkhan's study). At a number of public condolence meetings office bearers of institutions and individuals paid homage to his memory. They bore testimony to what Alexander called his "total, unreserved involvement" in the cause of AIDS, literacy, leprosy, TB, tourism, population control, environment, consumer protection, the national small savings movement and many more, apart from politics.

"His commitment to protocol was one of his finest qualities and it helped him to achieve results sought, long after he had relinquished office. For his dignity and sagacity he will be remembered as a man who played his part with decorum," noted the resolution adopted at



Thrity and Homi Taleyarkhan

the condolence meeting jointly convened by the BPP, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI), the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP), the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), the Save Udwada Committee, the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, the Navsari Parsi Association, the Bombay Parsi Association, the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman and various other organizations and associations.

Comparing Taleyarkhan's white congress cap to Jawaharlal Nehru's ubiquitous rose, noted Gandhian Dr Usha Mehta referred to his interfaith dialogues (he was chairman of the World Temple of Understanding — western region) and international friendships, dubbing him the "universal man." Iranian first consul Ahmed Shahveri said he will be remembered as a "good friend of this consulate, of Iran and the whole international family." It was a sentiment repeatedly voiced by the diplomatic representatives of innumerable countries,

including Britain, Indonesia, Poland, Italy, USA, Germany, Japan, in their letters of condolence. "I always admired the breadth of his activities, his vigor and his enthusiasm for everything he did," wrote British deputy high commissioner Michael Bates in a personal letter to Taleyarkhan's wife Thrity.

Chairman of the Godrej group of companies Sohrab Godrej who said he had "shared many a common platform on international affairs" with the late diplomat, recalled how Taleyarkhan had devoted himself to the development of tourism on proper scientific lines, but failed, and saluted his "pains-taking efforts for the environment and population control."

"But for his undertaking the task, the Save Udwada Committee would never have come up and the Gujarat government would never have given the money" for the Rs 50-lakh engineering cum forestry project to save the beach at Udwada from the ingress of the sea, noted BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder.

Whatever the problem, be it that of the individual farmer, of bawal kathi, of problems with a school, "for everything, the message was, 'meet Homi.' Large interest or small, he devoted himself totally," said SPP president Dr Sam Bhacca, describing Taleyarkhan as a "middle-of-the-road Zoroastrian for whom the problems of national integration came uppermost."

BPP trustee and WZO India president Dadi Engineer recalled Taleyarkhan's sterling contribution of getting a pukka road constructed from Udvada station to the township. Marazban Patrawala, who has been Taleyarkhan's successor in the National Minorities Commission and is the only other Parsi since Taleyarkhan to have been a member of the Maharashtra government handling the tourism department, found Taleyarkhan's notes and comments still



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on the files. "He had ideas. He knew where he wanted the people and the state to go. (It was) during his tenure in the Maharashtra government that he took the state to the number one position in small savings from the bottom of the list..."

When Patrawala was minister he said he had occasion to visit the government housing colony at Kalachowki where he found a portrait of Taleyarkhan. On inquiring he was told, "We got the housing colony because of Homi Taleyarkhan when he was housing minister. He was the only one to think of a housing colony for fourth and fifth grade public servants."

At the condolence meeting convened by the DPA, its former vice president Zal Nowsherwanji acknowledged Taleyarkhan's role in installing Mme Bhikhaiji Cama's portrait in the Central Hall of Parliament and in helping the DPA get vacant possession of additional aramghah land. It was also recalled that he had organized the import of special wool for kusti weaving from Australia to meet the local shortage.

True to Mahatma Gandhi's imprint, Taleyarkhan was a man of "impeccable integrity, honesty," in all that he did, testified Alexander. "His public life was transparent, but his private life was transparent also," added Akbarally's chairman F. T. Khorakiwala. Recalling Taleyarkhan's passion for horses and dogs (he was a very good rider and his dog routinely shared his morning porridge with him, informed Thrity) Khorakiwala noted, "A person who loves animals — how can he not love human beings?" adding that music (there was always music playing in the background) and poetry were the other pleasures in Taleyarkhan's busy life.

The only child of Jehangir Hormusji Taleyarkhan and his wife Tehmina, Taleyarkhan proceeded to London's King's College after schooling in Panchgani and graduating from Wadia College, Poona. He did not complete his course, informs Thrity. In the words of Alexander, he "belonged to a generation who could not help being influenced by Gandhiji — a whirlwind which blew across India and upset the minds of men by his words and example." An external symbol of that influence was the Gandhi cap that Taleyarkhan adopted and preserved to the very end. Joining the Congress party — to which his loyalty never wavered — he began his

public life as a municipal councillor, becoming the party's chief whip in the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

The witty social activist Nana Chudasama recalls his first encounter with Taleyarkhan when they were rivals, contesting a seat in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. "He beat me hollow," concedes Chudasama, adding "After he won, he became one of my best friends because he had no malice in his heart."

As wrote former prime minister I. K.



With Jawaharlal Nehru

Gujral despite his political differences with the Congress party, "All of us to whom he was so dear have lost a very valued friend. The country that he had served so valiantly in various capacities, is poorer by his death."

Taleyarkhan rose to be parliamentary secretary to then chief minister Y. B. Chavan, chief whip of the Congress Legislative Party and its general secretary in the Legislature. Over a course of 20 years Taleyarkhan held sway in Maharashtra as member of the Legislative Assembly and as its minister of health, housing, food and civil supplies, national savings, fertilizers, fisheries, tourism, family planning and printing, several of the portfolios being held concurrently.

As minister of health he was appalled to find patients on the floor in the government hospitals, recalls Thrity. "Somehow he got the funds and got more beds. He felt there shouldn't be floor patients." It was during his tenure that the first eye

bank in Asia was established at J. J. Hospital and corneal grafting became a reality for poor people. Recalling a poignant incident Thrity narrates how a poor sightless lady who had already borne four children, was operated. The doctors, who were sure of restoring her sight, asked her who would she like to see first when the bandage was removed. She asked to see the "minister saab who had made it all possible." The doctors were taken aback and tried to dissuade her saying ministers were very busy people and could not spare the time for such visits. She was in no hurry, she said. The bandage could be removed as and when the minister could spare the time. When the doctors informed Taleyarkhan about the adamant patient on their hands he was ready to be present at her bedside on demand. Thrity recalls that she was so taken up by the lady's request, she tagged along to witness the lady bless her husband. "May you live a 100 years," she told him."

As a minister's wife Thrity says she accompanied him to parties and dinners with presidents and prime ministers. "But he would also drag me with him to the slums and villages." As minister of civil supplies he had to implement the policy of "state purchase" to eliminate middlemen in the 1960s. "We travelled through every district of Maharashtra. It was amazing how they received us, with so much love."

Taleyarkhan's years of glory were when he was handpicked by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as the first resident Indian ambassador to Libya. Summoning the Taleyarkhans to her office Thrity remembers her saying, "It's a challenge and that's why I'm sending him. Because he's the only one who's got the guts to meet it!" She promised them every help except foreign exchange — India was then scraping the bottom of the barrel.

Their appointment was on the eve of the Bangla Desh war and thanks to unfriendly propaganda anti-Indian feelings ran high not only among officialdom but also among the common people. United Nation (UN) officials there privately advised Taleyarkhan not to wear his Gandhi cap and not to fly the Indian flag on his car. Both well-meant suggestions were given short shrift. Thrity says she quailed under the unrelenting hostility of the shopkeepers who often refused to sell her the items she required until she gave up the tell-tale sari and donned

western attire to go shopping. Homi meanwhile demanded again and again for an audience with Libya's strongman Col Gaddafi, until one Friday he was summoned. His driver being on his weekly holiday Taleyarkhan was provided Libyan transport. A long tussle ensued, narrates Thrity, when Taleyarkhan demanded that the car fly the Indian flag as it was officially transporting the Indian ambassador. The driver refused to fly the Indian flag and Taleyarkhan refused to step into the car until he did. The stalemate was broken when the driver telephoned his headquarters for permission to fly the flag and after much humming and hawing, got it. "By the time Homi left it was 2 p.m. He did not return until 9.30 that night," Thrity recalled her anxiety for his safety mounting steadily, especially when the UN officials she spoke to were aghast that he had proceeded all alone.

"When he came back, he was jubilant." In the course of that long evening he had convinced Gaddafi of India's secular credentials, her vast Muslim population and innumerable mosques, her willingness and ability to help Libya. Gaddafi asked for engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers and with Indira's staunch support from home Taleyarkhan was able to supply them by the plane load. "In a year's time we flooded Indians and did everything we could to make them comfortable." The high tide of hostility changed to a welcoming warmth — and in the course of his six years there India's construction and consultancy contracts in Libya, won in the teeth of western competition, earned her Rs 600 crores and an estimated 20,000 Indian professionals were employed there. Taleyarkhan's term as ambassador to Libya was extended at Gaddafi's request, says Thrity.

During Indira Gandhi's ouster Taleyarkhan preferred to be chairman of the Maharashtra State Finance Corporation rather than accept a gubernatorial offer from the opposition government and Indira appreciated his loyalty. Back in the saddle, she sent Taleyarkhan as the second governor of Sikkim after the frontier state joined the Indian Union. Going to the remote areas, walking through mud and dirt to see the conditions for himself, Taleyarkhan brought his influence and contacts in Delhi to help develop Sikkim, informs Thrity. He built hospitals, got cancer, TB and stomach specialists to come and tend the

patients there, organized eye camps for operations, says Thrity while she organized the Sikkim women's council and with the help of the Social Welfare Board provided the local women with knitting machines, helped them set up piggeries, schools, play centers, hostels for women. In his letter R. Narayanan, a former secretary to the Government of India, recalled "the happy days in Sikkim when as governor (Taleyarkhan) raised the



In happier times: Thrity and Homi with son Firdaus

status of office so considerably that people used to refer to him as Governor Taleyarkhan... His humane approach left an indelible mark." Wrote Pawan Chamling, chief minister of Sikkim, "We cherish the memories of his visits to the remote corners of our state and his active involvement in the development of the state."

By the end of the Sikkim tenure Taleyarkhan was keen to return to active politics at the center but was prevailed upon to go as ambassador to Italy and the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the UNO). Indira had promised to visit them there "if I'm still alive," recalls Thrity. Her prescient phrase reverberated with them when they learnt of her assassination. Thrity says she had never seen Homi so devastated as he was then. As wrote All India Congress Committee president Sonia Gandhi in her letter of condolence to Thrity, "He and my family have been friends for long."

At the end of the tenure in Rome Taleyarkhan was appointed senior member of the National Minorities Commis-

sion, the only one to serve two terms there, according to Patrawala. "He took innumerable tours of India to study the problems of the minorities, identified (them) and had resolutions to suggest," added Patrawala.

At various points of his long career he had been member of various Indian delegations and councils covering trade and development, energy conservation, shipping, housing reconstruction, tourism, tribal welfare. As a cub reporter Behram "Busybee" Contractor, editor of the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, recalled covering three to four meetings every evening addressed by Taleyarkhan. When he bunked his assignment, he said he phoned Taleyarkhan to enquire and Taleyarkhan "always obliged." C. Rajagopal, station director of All India Radio (AIR) wrote, "We have lost a valuable broadcaster and a keen advisor whose knowledge immensely helped AIR." Dr M. R. Srinivasan, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission who "had interacted with him in the affairs of the IBPL Urja Foundation (which dealt with energy conservation and related issues) of which Taleyarkhan was chairman" wrote of "his ability to spread goodwill and friendship — values that are in such short supply these days." Bombay University vice chancellor Dr Snehalata Deshmukh grieved the loss of "a great wise man who used to guide us."

Principal M. H. Ajwani of Bombay's H. R. College of Commerce and Economics wrote how long Taleyarkhan "advised us on the development of the Travel and Tourism Department in the College. We all were always looking eagerly for ITC's lectures which he used to conduct in H. R. College. We are going to miss him a lot." "Homi was so involved with CFBP's (Council for Fair Business Practices) activities that it is now very difficult for all of us to reconcile to the fact that the CFBP will be without him and his guidance," wrote its president Shekhar Bajaj. "As a former IAS officer from the Maharashtra cadre... I came in touch with him on a few occasions. He was full of encouragement and new ideas for the young bureaucrats... He was known for his zeal and commitment for the public welfare. He was always on time and he showed tremendous courtesy to one and all. He behaved like a royal republican, if I may use this funny phrase, in the sense that he combined the age old courtesy and

concepts with modern methods and thinking," wrote Dr V. S. Gopalakrishnan, director general of Bombay's World Trade Centre.

The Indian Red Cross Society, the Maharashtra State Anti-Tuberculosis Association, the St John's Ambulance Brigade were among the many organizations that moved condolence resolutions as did the Parsi anjumans and punchayets in various parts of India. In his letter Shahpur Captain, chairman of the WZO, placed on record its appreciation of the grand function organized by Taleyarkhan at Bombay's Raj Bhavan to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the WZO.

The flowers he received at the various functions were always carried home to Thrity. "We shared a lot. There was never anything he kept from me," Thrity expressed her contentment with their life together. He had been keen on BPP trusteeship. She always tried to dissuade him, she said. Describing him as a "man of uncanny conviction —

once he took a liking to a subject, he probed it to its roots," BPP trustee and former municipal councillor Rustom Tirandaz cited the example of his interest in public health services and involvement with the anti-TB Association — interests which never flagged. "The WZO and BPP were very unfair to him. (He) was one man who deserved to be trustee more than anyone else. The two greats who didn't get into the BPP were Pherozeshah Mehta and Homi Taleyarkhan — both were men of substance," opined Tirandaz despite the many verbal duels he had fought with Taleyarkhan at the executive council meetings of the FPZAI. "You loved him or you envied him but you could not hate him because there was no malice in him," he added.

There were many who recalled Taleyarkhan's fondness for occupying the first row at public meetings. He enjoyed the honors bestowed on him — the Padma Shri from the government of India, the Shiromani Institute Vikas Award, the Bharat Nirman Award and others. He enjoyed even more the deference that institutions and individuals showed him in public, even demanded

it. "It struck me as I came to know him better that he was a very simple and naive person who had a political ambition to be recognized," wrote solicitor general of India Tehmtan Andhyarujina. "He was so artless... (and) appeared to be quite unworldly in matters of daily life and finance and management," added Andhyarujina. "He was never interested in money," says Thrity who saw to it that his driver, personal assistant or peon had the necessary resources with them.

"Material things didn't bother him. He was never one for rich suits, he was simple in his ways. But he always wanted

typing articles, working on the many books he authored. "It was a job getting him to breakfast. And then, invariably, he'd be in a tearing hurry to go." After he returned home at 7.30 or so they would proceed to the Willingdon Club if there was no function to attend. At night he would read awhile no matter how late he returned and always do his kusti before getting to bed. He fell asleep very quickly and was refreshed even with a short sleep, like Napoleon — his hero and that of his son.

Both Taleyarkhan and their only child, Firdauz, had great will power and would "go out with 103° temperature if they had an engagement to keep," says Thrity. Temptations were aplenty when he was supplies minister and people tried all manner of ways to win his favor. "He hated underhand deals... Today we don't have even one flat to our name," says Thrity simply, adding that Firdauz used to insist that they close all accounts in foreign banks at the end of their ambassadorial

tenure to ensure that not even a speck of public doubt could touch his father's reputation.

"He could block out things that were unpleasant. It helped him to overcome his son's grief," reminisced Thrity. Firdauz, highly regarded for his legal acumen as well as his human qualities, was an outstanding rider and mountaineer who met a tragic end in the Grehwal Mountains. As Andhyarujina wrote, "I know how close Firdauz was to him and he to Firdauz." The Taleyarkhans' grief was dignified and private.

"Life is not eternal and one has, at some time or the other, to go to the next world," wrote B. K. Nehru, former Indian high commissioner to the UK, "but it is great satisfaction if one has spent one's life in the service of one's country as your husband did. We shall all remember him and the good that he has done to us."

Capturing the spirit of the man they came to praise, *The Bombay Samachar* editor Jehan Daruvala exclaimed, "Rest in peace? But that restless soul must be pleading with his Creator for incarnation after incarnation to come back and serve his nation and his people!"



With Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi and community members from Surat

me to be well dressed, well jewelled," smiles Thrity, adding, "the only thing he loved was pens and watches — the cheapest to the most expensive pens: With Mont Blanc and Cartier pens he would carry a 10-rupee pen! and cheap gimmicky watches." He was delighted with a "talking watch" a young relative had gifted him. Even Alexander commented on the "array of fountain pens, the gold (watch) chain, so elegant, so visible on his personality."

K. C. Nainan, former joint secretary to the governor of Maharashtra wrote of "his tenacity...his indomitable spirit and his courage of conviction, his willingness to help worthy causes." "We will think of him with affection and pride," noted K. T. Satarawala, former Indian ambassador to Mexico.

Thrity recounted a normal Taleyarkhan day which began around 5-5.30 in the morning: "Once he got up he made the whole house get up, unchained the dog. There was never a drop on his mouth till he finished his kusti." Then to reading, writing, collecting statistics,

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