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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Address Access"

You have done an excellent job of compiling the list of Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian associations and dharamshalas all over the world in your December 1999 issue.

However, if as stated by you, 90 percent have not responded to *Parsiana's* circular and you have incorporated only those who have responded, then it would imply that there were another 2,205 associations and dharamshalas which have become defunct which is simply staggering.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

The Editor replies

When we stated that nearly 90 percent of the associations have not responded to our circular letter, we meant to indicate that of all the addresses listed by us only 10 percent had responded (only 10 percent of the data could be verified). We carried a listing of all the associations and institutions, irrespective of whether we were able to authenticate the infor-

mation featured in *Parsiana*.

"Deadly deficit"

The November issue of *Parsiana* contains my article under the heading "Deadly deficit."

The editor of a newspaper or a journal has no doubt the right to edit or alter the article, taking care to see that, while doing so, its accuracy is maintained and the efficacy of the article (especially an article of a legal nature) is not affected.

The heading of the article as altered by you, namely, "Deadly deficit," is drastic and is not appreciated by several persons [including myself and the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP)]. It forecasts a gloomy financial position in respect of the Doongerwadi complex and may deter potential donors from making donations to the complex. The heading may be "Heavy deficit."

The subhead further states that bunglis, when notified, earn "rebate for Zoroastrian donors." Section 80G of the Income-tax Act, 1961 refers to "deduction" of the amount donated while calculating the total income of the donor as assessee. This is not "rebate" from tax allowed under the Act (e.g. sections 88, 88B, etc.). Further the deduction is allowed to any donor and not to "Zoroastrian donors" only. The expression in quotations used in the subhead is not accurate and is misleading and may be read subject to aforesaid observations.

The commencement of the article refers to encroachment by non-Parsis on the complex. This is over-simplification when it is carried without any background in the matter. As your journal is read by persons in Bombay and outside, some background on the subject is called for. Its absence deprives them of the correct picture in the matter and thereby affects the importance of the article. For the purpose the article may commence as under: "Maintenance and upkeep of the Doongerwadi complex is the primary duty of the trustees of the BPP. To keep the complex in pristine condition is an uphill task. Encroachment by non-Parsis on the complex is one more problem to be resolved. It is, however, gratifying to note that the trustees make all efforts to provide reasonable comforts and assistance to relatives and friends of the deceased participating in funeral and other obsequies performed in the bunglis

in the complex on the solemn occasion of the death of their dear and near ones."

RUSTOM S. GAE

New Delhi

"Reach the inner fire"

This is the last time I am responding to Perin Divecha. I admire and appreciate her tenacity for endless debate. However, I see no point arguing with her endlessly at the expense of boring the readers and wasting *Parsiana's* valuable column space. Divecha is welcome, however, to communicate with me, personally, by letter or e-mail.

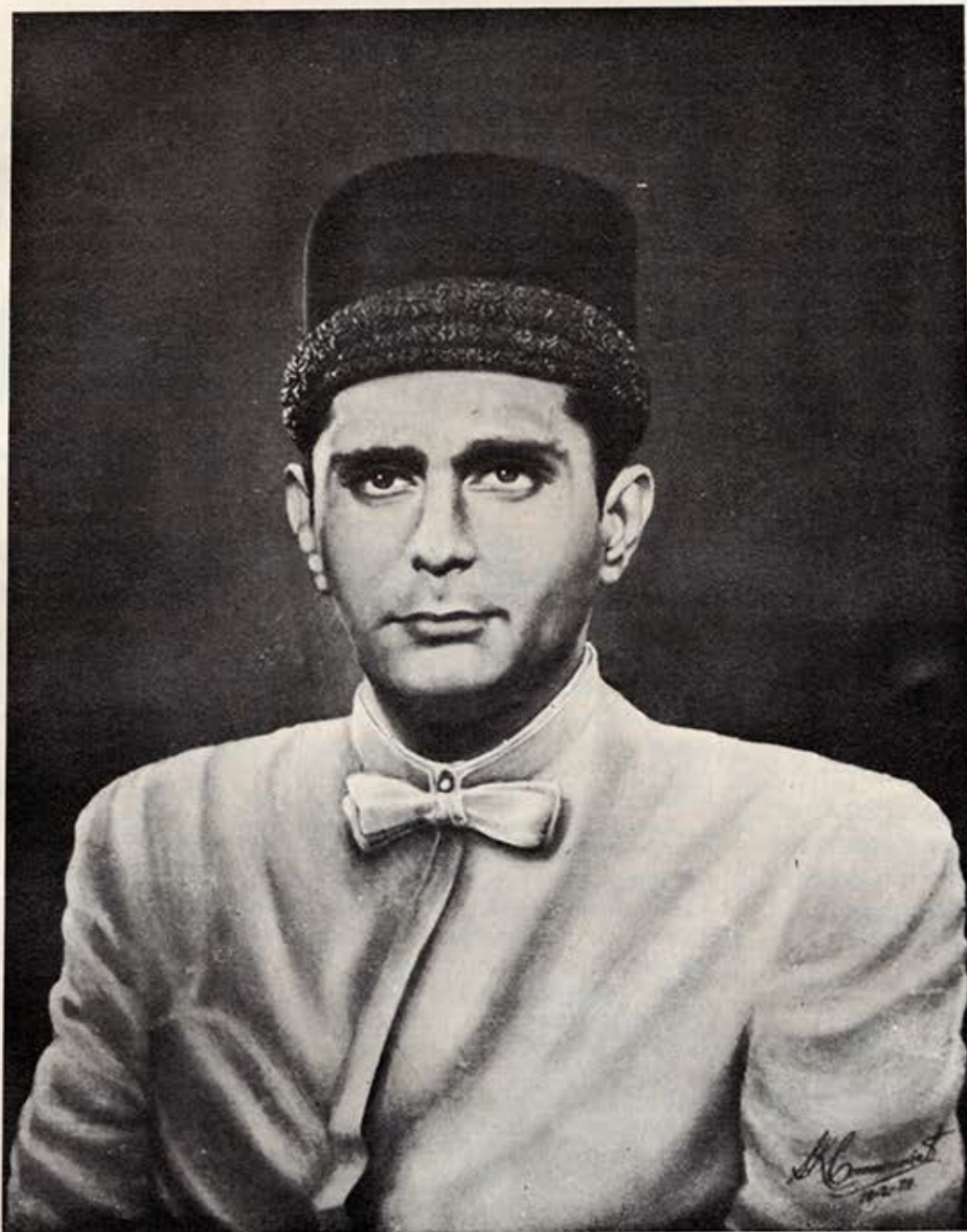
Divecha apparently belongs to a section of the community which believes in and swears only by the *Gathas*. She says in her recent response ("Reach the inner fire," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, November 1999), "So how can my worship stop with the physical fire? (Has anyone asked her to do so?) How can I base my religion and my worship on the *Atash Nyaish*, instead of listening to the voice that speaks through the words of the *Gathas*? The voice of Asho Zarathushtra."

How can I argue any further with one who has such scant regard for one of the most beautiful litanies in the Zoroastrian tradition—the *Atash Nyaish*—the litany around which the boi ceremony in every atash behram, adarian and dadgah revolves.

In my very first response to Divecha, I had indicated the "context" in which I had made the statement — "I am not ashamed to say that I worship fire." I have no desire to take readers through the explanation all over again. Suffice to state that the fires burning in our agiaries and atash behrams are no ordinary matchstick fires. They are consecrated fires (*ijaila atash*) which, doctrinally, are regarded as conscious living entities, worthy of our reverence and worship. This, of course, is without prejudice to the fact that Ahura Mazda is the ultimate spirit/divinity we worship through the consecrated fires.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the word "consecrate" as "make or declare sacred." Divecha, in all likelihood, may consider consecration rituals to be "pagan" and un-Zoroastrian.

However, I believe religion (Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Judaism, Chinese or Islam) comprises both the doctrine



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Mr Fali Meherji Variava
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and the practices of the faith. In other words, theology as well as ritual practices of the faith go hand in hand. Rituals may be seen as a process of falling in step with life, as it unfolds within the frames of time and space. Rituals such as the *boi* ceremony or offering a *Nyaish* before a consecrated fire give us an understanding of our relationship with both the material and spiritual worlds. When performed with understanding and feeling, rituals can both educate as well as lift the spirit. They help us to experience and recognize the harmony that exists between the material and spiritual worlds.

The *Upanishads* (the Hindu equivalent of the *Gathas*) state "*Sarvam khalu dam Brahma*" or everything existing in the universe has God-consciousness. In the Hindu tradition, consecration of an idol involves a ceremony known as *prana-pratistha* or "investiture with life" and *chakshudana*, i.e. "opening the third eye" (of the idol). The items of worship, namely, the holy water of the river Ganga, the flowers, the grass and the various leaves are all addressed in intimate terms as if they are on par with the worshipper himself apropos their respective levels of consciousness. Says noted historian Will Durant, "Such animism is the poetry of religion and the religion of poetry (*Story of Civilization*, Vol 1, Chapter IV)." The universal love and fellow feeling which this animism is bound to generate in the "idolatrous" Hindu is only to be matched against his toleration. Durant remarks, "No blood has been shed for religion in India except by the invaders. Intolerance came with Islam and Christianity (*Story of Civilization*, Vol 1, pg 524)."

Like the Hindu, a Zoroastrian also believes "consciousness" as fundamental. He regards matter as derivative from consciousness. Supports scientist Max Planck, "Everything we talk about, everything we regard as existing, postulates consciousness."

There is nothing pagan therefore in a Zoroastrian praying before the sun, the moon, the waters, the mountains or fire. Says Prof Max Mueller in his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (pg 93) "Their (Aryans') worship is not, as has been so often said, a worship of nature. But, I should venture to call it a worship of God in nature." Max Mueller's worship of God in nature really means, for all practical purposes, the worship of life in nature.

In the words of Byron, "My altars are the mountains and the ocean, earth, air, stars, all that springs for the Great Whole, who hath produced and will receive the soul."

In offering worship at an *agiar* or *atash behram*, one is, in essence, offering worship to Ahura Mazda through fire — doctrinally considered His son. For it is this son that carries the will of his Father in sustaining this entire universe.

It is of this son of Ahura Mazda — I repeat — I am not ashamed to be a worshipper. For it is through the worship of fire that I worship Ahura Mazda.

NOSHIR H. DADRAWALA

"Preserving Parsi..."

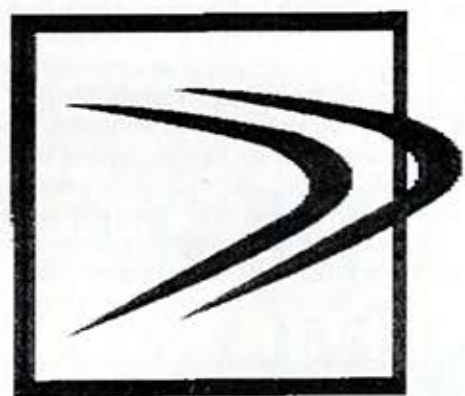
The October issue of *Parsiana* included a four-page questionnaire "Preserving Parsi Zoroastrian Culture and Heritage" and one of the questions asked us to name a Parsi Zoroastrian of the past and the present whom one most admired.

This immediately brought to mind a true life story. It might prod other Zoroastrian readers of *Parsiana* to look back into the past and see if they can come up with similar tales of heroism and nobility.

About a hundred years ago, there lived a Parsi widow, Mithibai Sohrabji Dalal, with her only son in a township called Malegam. As was the custom in those times, she lived in a sprawling bungalow in spacious grounds at the far end of which were situated the out-houses and the stables. It was the time of the dreaded bubonic plague with its own dark history of death and disaster that befell so many. It did not spare Mithibai's household. The young *ghorawalla* (coachman), who lived in the servants' quarters with his large family, fell victim to the scourge. Such was the fear of this disease that all his near and dear ones abandoned him and fled for their lives. He was left alone to die.

Unmindful of the consequence to herself, this gentle lady set about the task of single-handedly nursing the desperately sick servant, feeding him and ministering to his needs day and night. Such was the quality of her care that by and by the dying man recovered — a near-miracle for those times.

But the spectre of death had visited the household and, once whetted, would not be denied. It was inevitable that her frail body would succumb to the ravaging onslaught made upon it. She was



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only 42. It had to be wondered what manner of woman this was who, with sublime indifference to her own safety, relinquished her life to save that of a "mere" servant. The British civil surgeon who attended on her asked the same question. As she lay dying of this excruciating disease, she answered simply: It was nothing, anyone would have done the same. How could the poor young man be left to die?

Unlike soldiers who risk life and limb in the service of their country, there was no call of duty for Mithibai, only that of an extraordinary conscience. Her supreme sacrifice went completely unknown and unsung except to her son who told his daughter who told me. She was my great-grandmother.

It is inconceivable in these modern and more selfish times that anyone would be inspired to act so instinctively on the fundamental concept of Vohu Mana. To this simple Zoroastrian lady, *humata, hukhata, huvarshata* were evidently not mere words but natural urgings to be acted upon.

The gentle Mithibai lives on as the epitome of compassion and nobility to us, her descendants. We will keep it alive in our minds and hearts to pass on

to distant generations for of such stuff are Zoroastrian legends made.

DINA SUNTOOK NAYAR

"Faith and mountains"

In the article "Faith and mountains," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, October 1999, Farzan Mazda has rightly pointed out that the micro minority Parsi community requires to maintain unity for their survival. As we are aware "union is strength."

When I was interviewed by Ahmedabad Doordarshan, on "Parsi Culture," the interviewer posed an important question: When Parsis meet together to solve their problems, they scream, shout and fight, while they have kept their promise to behave peacefully and amicably with other communities in India, like sugar in milk. Why should they not behave with the same sweetness among themselves?

There is no problem that cannot have right solutions if we sit across the table, with good intentions and manashni. We are an intellectual community and have more than enough resources to come to correct conclusions. Prolonged discussions on trifling matters and controversy in public papers cannot solve anything. Kunashni is more important than

only gavashni as the foundation of the Zoroastrian religion is karma-yoga. Let us have foresight and fortify ourselves in the new millennium. NOSHIR DABOO

Ahmedabad

"Treasured on the..."

It was with delight and pride that I have been reading your articles entitled "Treasured on the Island," particularly the one in the issue of September 1999, as that deals with my family, the Khans.

My maternal grandfather was Munchershaw, son of Framji Bhikhaji Khan (co-founder of the firm Framji Bhikhaji and Company in Colombo). He married Shirinbai Cooper of Lahore. They had four daughters and two sons. The eldest daughter Frany was my mother. She and her sisters and elder brother spent their early childhood in Framjee House, and till the day she died spoke fondly of the years they spent there. Her baby sister Rupa was born in Colombo and died there at about one year of age and is buried in Colombo.

My paternal grandfather was Pestonji, son of Dinshawji Bhikhaji Khan (co-founder of the firm Dinshawji Bhikhaji and Company in Bombay). He married his cousin Goolbai, the daughter of

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From top (left column): Pestonji Khan, Munchershaw Khan's children Frany, Thrity, Amy and Byram; (center column) Dinshawji Khan,



Framji Khan, Pesy Khan, Col Olcott; (right column) Bhikhaji and brother Munchershaw Khan, Khan Clock Tower. Bottom: Framjee House

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Framji Khan. They had two sons and one daughter. The younger son Framji, my father, married his cousin Frany.

The two sons of Dinshawji Bhikhaji Khan, Bomanji and Pestonji, and the sons of Framji Khan, namely Bhikhaji and Munchershaw, carried on and expanded the business both in Colombo and in Bombay. After the death of Bomanji, the three other partners, Pestonji Khan and his two cousins, Bhikhaji and Munchershaw Khan continued. My mother often referred to them as the "Big Three." That was the era of honest business practices, and the "Big Three" prized honesty and integrity above all. Under their able guidance the business prospered, both in Bombay and in Colombo.

Pestonji Khan was a theosophist and a close associate of Dr Annie Besant, and Col Olcott who during his stay in Colombo was also a guest at Framjee House. It might interest you to know what the late Lady Jena Duggan told me years later. She and her husband Sir Jamshedji were on their honeymoon. When their ship docked at Colombo, they were invited to Framjee House where they spent a few very enjoyable

days as guests of my grandfather. Pestonji also had the gift of healing by laying on of the hands. He was a great traveller and had been all over the world, including Russia.

Bhikhaji married Avabai, daughter of Dinshawji Khan. They had four daughters, the youngest of whom, Banoobai, married her cousin Nusservanji, the eldest son of Pestonji. Unfortunately Nusservanji died young, leaving behind a widow and three small daughters, the youngest of whom was barely six months old. His death was followed by that of his father Pestonji, then in quick succession that of his uncles Munchershaw and Bhikhaji who was also his father-in-law. So within a space of five years all the senior partners died.

My father Framji, a qualified civil engineer, with a Masters degree from Cambridge and an Associate Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, had to leave his profession and take charge of the business and the execution of the wills of the senior partners. This was during the recession, in the aftermath of the First World War. He had the sad task of liquidating the assets of the business, selling Framjee House and the

Colombo Oil Mills for the price of machinery.

My brother Pesy, together with Munchershaw's youngest son Khurshedcher, tried to carry on as best they could, but finally had to close down the business because of the policy of the Ceylon Government.

ARNAVAZ F. KHAN

"More Parsi myths"

I was very much impressed to read the views expressed by Dr M. D. Disawalla ("More Parsi myths," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, July-August 1999) on our present outdated system of dokhmenashini. Orthodox Parsis would acquire some true knowledge after reading Disawalla's views. Disawalla states in the end: "Let us remove our blinkers and be not afraid to discard unnecessary, impractical and out-of-time rituals and customs as we face the coming millennium." I fully agree with his views. The late solicitor Shiavax Vakil, who expired last year and who had visited dokhmas about 25 years ago when he was a Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee, had described the unhygienic conditions inside dokhmas. Similar views about filthy dokhmas have been expressed



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since November 1999 in *The Free Press Journal*. For over two years, no vultures are visible at the Bombay Doongerwadi. They seem to have disappeared.

Orthodox Parsis do not want to change to any hygienic and civilized system. Under the circumstances, those Parsis who prefer to be electrically cremated after their death can fulfil their wish by handing over the following in writing to any Hindu doctor: "I, the undersigned, hereby authorize my wife/husband/son/daughter/son-in-law (as the case may be) that after my death my body should be electrically cremated and not consigned to a dokhma at the Doongerwadi." (My wife and I have also gone in for this arrangement.) Also, the first four days' religious ceremonies should be performed according to Hindu religious rites, if Parsi priests do not perform Parsi religious ceremonies either at the Doongerwadi or at fire-temples.

Take the signature of the doctor or person willing to fulfil your desire, give him/her one copy, and pay the charges for the first four days' religious ceremonies according to Hindu rites. D.R. ANTIA

The Editor replies

Even if an undertaking is given, there is

no guarantee that the next of kin will observe the wishes of the deceased. The choice of disposal would ultimately rest with those in whose custody the corpse finally lies. As in most legal matters, possession would determine the course of action.

"Cama's maiden century"

You had carried an article on Dr Hambai Cama ("Cama's maiden century," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, October 1998) who died in the early hours of November 17, 1999. "How nice it would be if you could all come to wish me on my 200th birthday!" she had said on her 100th birthday on August 15, 1997. But alas! Though she had the courage, the will power and the spirit to live and serve humanity for another 100 years, her body and flesh said no.

Though a doctor she never practiced medicine for money and always gave medicines and treatment to all, not only to the villagers around her but also to roadside dogs, cows, goats,

birds and abandoned donkeys.

Her life has been one of dedication and service to her family, friends and humanity. Even in death she found a way to further medical science by donating her body to Gangadharshastri Gune Ayurved Medical College and Hospital, Ahmednagar. If the objects of dokhemenashini are non pollution of the elements of nature and the desire to utilize the flesh in service of other living

beings, then why could I not ask my priest to perform her paidust and four days' prayers which was her desire? Surely all these objects were met and more, in donating her body to medical science?

Avatar Meher Baba had said that the way to know a true *atma* (soul) of a higher plane was the behavior of that soul. Is it the same with the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak?

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with her the two most vivid images that I shall always remember are: Cama bending over a stray dog with her sudreh and kusti visible at the back and saying: "Soo thayu, khato kêm nathi (What is wrong? Why are you not eating?)" and her meeting with Mother Teresa with both their faces radiating the same divine reflection.

Her life mission of service to humanity is aptly summed up in the words of Dr Abhay Vaidya, chief trustee, S. M. Joshi Foundation, who with her nephew and closest male relative Adil Godrej Bharucha were in the process of setting up a charitable diagnostic center in her name after her passing: "We believe we shall be 100 percent successful when we can serve 50 percent of the people that Cama did. Aiming at a higher percentage many prove too frightening to attempt a beginning."

BEHRAM SAROSH NAGARWALLA
Ahmednagar

Funds for Frohar Films

Many Zoroastrians must have seen the program *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta* — Suvichar, Suvachan, Sukarma — on DD-II Metro Channel which was aired on Sunday afternoons from 12.30 p.m. to 1.00 p.m. starting August 22, 1999.

It was a very major breakthrough that Cyrus Dastoor and his team of Frohar Films achieved, having had to face many odds in gathering funds to make the serial. Financial help was not forthcoming from many Parsi stalwarts he had approached. Dastoor had to work on a penny-pinching basis, all participants having rendered their time and energy in good faith, free of cost.

Had Dastoor received financial help, given his fine reputation as a director of Gujarati and Hindi plays, the serial that he directed would have borne the stamp of quality that marks his work. I was disappointed at the quality of the serial. Today it is off the air as Frohar Films does not have even Rs 40,000 to pay for the processing of each episode.

Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta was an eye opener for the world at large regarding the Zoroastrian religion, the way of life and culture. After 19 episodes made against all odds, the serial has died a natural death. Could not our business houses, professionals and entrepreneurs have created a corpus so that we can show the world a better quality of serial about our community, culture and religion?

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Let the community know that we have talent which we fail to support. Our community needs to wake up fast and put aside its divisive tendencies, identify and encourage people who are willing and able to work for a better understanding of the community.

Dr KETAYUN MADON

Godrej Baug agiary

In the words of a plaque on the Agiary hall, "With the blessings of Ahura Mazda this holy fire was enthroned at village Tavri near Navsari before 1869 (YZ 1238). Due to migration and consequent absence of Parsi families from Tavri, the holy fire was entrusted to the trustees of Dowager Avabai Jamshedjee Jejeebhoy Trust for enthronement at their Agiary at Navsari on February 29, 1964 *roz* Ardibehesht Ameshaspand, *mah* Meher Yazad. YZ 1333. The holy fire was shifted to (Bombay) and enthroned to rest in perpetuity in Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary belonging to Bombay Parsi Punchayet on Tuesday December 21, 1999, *roz* Bahman Ameshaspand, *mah* Amardad Ameshaspand, YZ 1369."

The Agiary will fulfil a long-felt need for spiritual guidance for the residents of Godrej Baug whose number is steadily growing. For others, transport is the main problem. Yet, for them, a little hardship can be overcome and forgotten when the devotees enter the Agiary precinct, pray before the holy fire and seek its blessings. **BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA**

Portraits for posterity

"Portrait of a Community" is an independent project conceived by Gallery Chemould under the aegis of Chemould Publications and Arts Trust. The Trust was specifically created in 1983 to promote art and cultural events which would be of value for the furtherance of research and documentation.

It was felt that a rich and significant record of Parsi heritage has remained unknown and is decaying in several of our homes, fire-temples and charitable institutions. These are the paintings and photographs of our sethies and their families, depicting the enterprise and lifestyle which gave this tiny community so distinguished a place in the Indian ethos.

Thus a special committee of concerned individuals has been formed and the project proposes to:

- accomplish the task of identifying significant portraits, paintings and photo-

graphs scattered across Bombay and other Parsi habitations in western India; •create an exhaustive database of the available pictorial record, along with brief details of the artist, the subject, social context, etc;

- document each work through a photographic inventory;

- identify those paintings which are in urgent need of cleaning, restoration, reframing, etc;

- select the most outstanding and relevant works and hold an exhibition of these works;

- publish a catalog.

We believe the considerable amount of time and effort required to accomplish these tasks will have been well spent if it:

- checks the unconscionable decay in these works of art,

- gives the community a valuable record of its rare heritage,

- sensitizes the owners of these works (whether individuals or public trusts), thereby leading to continued care and preservation, and

- leaves a legacy to inspire future generations.

Soon after our project was launched, it was heartening to learn that Dr Shernaz Cama is pursuing a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) supported project for preserving and identifying the Parsi Zoroastrian culture and heritage. "Portrait of a Community" will be thus fulfilling a part of Cama's objectives, but will be independent of it.

We have estimated our project to cost around Rs 14 lakhs. This will include: cost of advertisements soliciting information regarding the works; fees payable to professional photographers, with travel costs, etc; printing of catalog, invitations, posters; exhibition expenses of gallery rental, advertisements, etc; courier, packing, transport, etc; insurance of paintings; documentation on CD-Rom; salary of a temporary coordinating secretary; incidental expenses.

We are hopeful that charitable trusts and like-minded individuals will generously donate to this vital project. Donations are exempt under Section 80G of the Income-tax Act, 1961. Cheques are to be made payable to "Chemould Publications and Arts A/c Portrait of a Community." Together we can make this venture a reality so that our distinctive heritage remains on the global map

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Russian interpretation

We are pleased to inform our community members that a new book in Russian on Prophet Zarathushtra is available in Moscow, Russia.

Velikie Proroki Zarathushtra meaning "Great Prophecies of Zarathushtra" is written by Dobrovina Tatyana Artemiyavna and Laskareva Elena Nikalaevna. The publishers are Olimp from Moscow.

The book is divided into six segments and it covers vast subjects from the history and religion of the Aryans, the creation, the holy *Avesta*, Gayo maretan to Peshdadian kings, Zurvan, resurrection, the Chinvad bridge, morality, calendar, the gahambars and Zoroastrian astrology.

The authors explain in detail the prophecies of Lord Zarathushtra, the coming of the saoshyants and the end of the world.

Lord Zarathushtra is said to be a very handsome person, an Aryan, born in Airyana Vaejah which is in the north of present Russia. His name means the

ever-shining golden star. Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom, is the holy spirit, without form, present in all creations and visualized in the holy fire.

The authors explain that the Aryans were super intelligent, living in the temperate zone of Arctic regions which is now frozen land and Lord Zarathushtra is from the same race.

The present day Russians are the descendants of the same Aryans and the mythological and religious knowledge of the Russians comes from Lord Zarathushtra.

BURZIN E. ATASHBAND

The Zoroastrian Association of Russia, Moscow

The millennium man

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw was felicitated by the Baroda Parsi Panchayat during their awards and scholarship function to which he was invited as the chief guest. A living legend of our times, we were fortunate to have him for three full days and that's when the man emerged from the field marshal. He came across as a very unaffected, humane, kind and lovable rascal (pardon).

To use a common cliché, he is a man who walked with kings but never lost the common touch... so wherever he

went his name acquired a new connotation e.g. Sam Bahadur from his Gurkha Regiment... Sam Babu in Bengal... Sam Manek Shaw from the Frontier Province... and *Apro* Sam from us Parsis.

He brought forth a blush on the face of every girl he met in the age-group of two to 95 years. He said to a 95-year-old dowager, "Darling, I still have 10 years more to reach your age..."

His energy and commitment to work he carried beautifully on his 86-year-old frame. His service spans from the early British Raj to present times. What pleases him most, in his words, is that "A field marshal never retires, he only goes out on the gun carriage..."

An officer par excellence, he was just as comfortable dining with the president or happily guzzling a big peg with a jawan in a snow clad bunker. He has a cheery word with his ever ready infectious smile for anyone. "Naam kya hai? Kaunsa muluk ka hai... (What is your name? From where do you hail?)" is how he makes it a point to affectionately greet a hotel doorman... a chowkidar...

When he spoke to the Parsi youth and the officers of the army, it was a pleasure to see that everyone heard him with

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interest and awe, no generation gap was prevalent at any stage. "Give me a person with common sense and I will make him a leader," he bellowed.

A multifaceted character, he didn't hesitate to tick off a defence minister or the prime minister if he thought they were wrong and this he did time and again, not for personal glory but to accomplish a tough job he was handling.

Recently when a police jeep banged into his car, the man seated in it had the audacity to offer a 100 rupee note. "I couldn't contain my laughter, as my driver in rage asked 'Janta hai yeh kaun hai? Field Marshal Manekshaw hai (Do you know who this man is? He's Field Marshal Manekshaw),' to which the other replied, 'Rahané dé... Rahané dé, sab léte hai (Keep it, everyone accepts it).'"

No sirens or security men surround him, his reason being, "Who would wish to harm me in my own country?"

To reach such heights it would not have been possible without the contribution of his wife Silloo, whose name he often incorporates in his anecdotes, sometimes naughtily and at times with love... "Two people I was always scared of: one was Indira Gandhi, the other, my

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wife..." About his family he said, "I never wanted sons and I have two daughters," but all of us could see the pride and gleam in his grey blue eyes when he said, "one of my grandsons has changed his surname to Manekshaw as he didn't want the lineage to end..."

This charismatic figure is a pucca Parsi... that aristocratic Parsi nose, *goro goro* (fair), *hasmukho* (jovial), *khanar pinaar* (fond of the good things in life), *milansar* (gregarious) human being. He most certainly is the man of the millennium, not for us Parsis alone but for all Indians.

RODA D. HAKIM
Baroda

Insulting Iranis

I am an ordinary Zoroastrian who was born in Bombay, grew up in Tehran, was educated in London and married in Bombay. I visit my native land as often as I can.

Let me state (at the risk of sounding patronizing) that of all the Zoroastrian publications I have read, I find *Parsiana* to be the most educational and forthright. Needless to say, it is for this reason I have chosen *Parsiana* in which to express my views.

The main reason for my writing this

letter is to highlight the plight of Zoroastrian Iranians in Iran. Over the past 1,300 years at least, they have suffered terrible persecution. It was common to see Zoroastrians hanged in public by their own kusti for no other reason than for being what they were — Zoroastrians! Many were tortured to death in front of their own families for not being able to pay the *jazia* (minority tax). Even to this day, should a Zoroastrian kill a Muslim in a driving accident, he or she must support the dead man's family for life. However, when the situation is reversed, the Muslim has to discharge a nominal penalty. Moreover, should a Zoroastrian convert to Islam, then he or she automatically becomes the owner of the family's entire estate.

For a Zoroastrian to sustain his faith under such desperate conditions is bad enough. But when such Zoroastrians are labeled "Irani jungle" by their fellow Zoroastrians, then I am sure you will agree insult has been added to injury.

Fortuitously I personally have never been denigrated in this fashion. But many, sadly, have. In the new millennium, I believe the time has surely come to give such despicable prejudice, within

our own faith, an honorable burial.

FAROKH FALAHATI
London, UK

Rare winter solstice

For the benefit of those friends unaware of what Yalda is, it's the ancient Zoroastrian/Iranian celebration of the winter solstice. In most communities a *jashan* is performed, followed by feasting till late, story telling, recitations from the *Shah Namah*, singing and dancing. The celebration is for the victory of good over darkness, the days now grow longer than the nights and there is promise of spring. Last year, the winter solstice, December 22, was the longest night of the year. It was special because the solstice coincided with a full moon. Not just any full moon but when the moon was at its closest point to the Earth, appearing about 14 percent larger than usual. Being only 10 days from the Earth's perihelion, its closest point to the Sun, the moon also appeared seven percent brighter. These events occurring conjointly are a rarity. RUSI SORABJI

Mission to Bahrot

In the last week of January, a group of 23 Zoroastrians, the oldest being 64, stayed

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overnight in Dahanu. The group included three veterans of Bahrot. The next day after morning tea at 5 a.m. we reached Karaj Gam.

We then drove to the foot of the Bahrot Hill and after a short prayer started climbing the tough 30° incline at 7.10 a.m. The climate was cold and pleasant but we had to stop along the 420m high, eight km climb for short breathers. After



a two-hour ascent, we reached a flat spot on a ridge. Before us, on one side was a view of Gujarat and on the other side, Aswari Dam and Maharashtra.

We reached the top of Bahrot mountain at 10.30 a.m. where we found a natural spring. The spring water must have sustained the Zoroastrians during their 13 years' stay at the top. We then joined in a jashan at Bahrot caves led by

The natural spring atop Bahrot Hill rejuvenates pilgrims

Ervads Dinyar Vazifdar and Bomi Bhada.

We reached the base camp by 1.30 p.m. after one-and-a-half hours of sliding down and caught the evening train to Bombay feeling happy that we could accomplish our mission. Do it now

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ZEND M. ZEND

"The Top Ten"

I am originally from Karachi, presently living in Ottawa. My wife is from Dadar, Bombay. I like reading the various articles about our community — in India and overseas — in *Parsiana*. As you were calling for nominations for outstanding Parsi personalities, I would like to propose the names of the following two outstanding Parsis of Pakistan who have contributed to their country: Ardeshir Cowasjee who was recently awarded a bipartisan Citizen's award by the citizens of Karachi for his honest, fair and gutsy views on the situation in Pakistan and Jamsheed Marker, outstanding diplomat, cricket commentator and advisor to various governments of Pakistan.

FALI PATEL
Ottawa, Canada

Our community has produced very many talented personalities in various sports who have achieved great heights playing at the state/national/international level in an individual sport. The lady I refer to, Shireen K. Kiash (née Contractor), has represented India in three different sports (basketball, hockey and



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cricket) which I can assure you no Zoroastrian or an Indian has ever achieved.

In table tennis she represented the Bengal Schools and Calcutta University.

In hockey she represented West Bengal at the national level, India in the Third Asian Women's Championship in New Delhi in 1968, participated in the Japan-India tournament in Japan in 1970 and in the Hongkong-India tournament in Hongkong in 1970, and was awarded the "Player of the Week" in the 1968 nationals at Trivandrum.

In basketball she represented West Bengal at the national level and India in the Asian Women's Basketball Championship in Kuala Lumpur in 1970.

In cricket she represented West Bengal at the national level and played in the India vs Australia three-test series in 1975. In the same year she was awarded the "Best Batswoman" award at the Calcutta nationals.

The *Limca Book of Records* has a section on her for her sports achievements. She also comes up in quizzes as the only Indian to represent India in three sports.

The crowning glory for her came at

the age of 26 when she was chosen as one of the 300 famous sons and daughters of the soil of Bengal in the 300 years of Calcutta brochure which was published by the *Calcutta Skyline* magazine. She also received the "Most Outstanding Sportswoman Award" and a citation from a Ladies Study Group at the hands of Mother Teresa, which to her was a memorable experience.

Besides her sports achievements on the field she has coached school and club teams in basketball and voluntarily coached the students of the Hearing-Impaired School in basketball.

She has also been associated with various associations in West Bengal. She was secretary and then president of the Women's Hockey Association of West Bengal. She revived this Association after it was lying defunct for five years and organized many tournaments and sent West Bengal teams for junior and senior nationals. She had served as selector of the Indian women's hockey team. She had served too as the vice president of the women's Association of West Bengal for many years and was manager of the Indian women's basketball team which went to Singapore for

the Asian Women's Basketball Championship in 1980. For a number of years she was selected as the "Best Referee" by the West Bengal Women's Basketball Referees Association.

I doubt if all this could have been achieved had Shireen not been a Zoroastrian. After shifting from Bombay to Calcutta at the age of seven years she stayed in a Parsi block, Khorshed Madan Mansion, affording her the opportunity of honing her sports skills and acquiring tremendous experience by playing with the boys of the buildings. Credit should also go to the Calcutta Parsis and to the Parsee Club for their full hearted support (including financial) without which she would have been nowhere.

This exceptional woman has borne me two of the most beautiful children and performed her motherly role with equal aplomb.

KHUSHROO S. KIASH

Fire will never die

Every year my wife and I make it a point to participate in a muktad ceremony at the Zoroastrian House, UK. As soon as we entered the large hall on Sunday, we noticed it was packed with Zoroastrians, most of them in white clothes with their

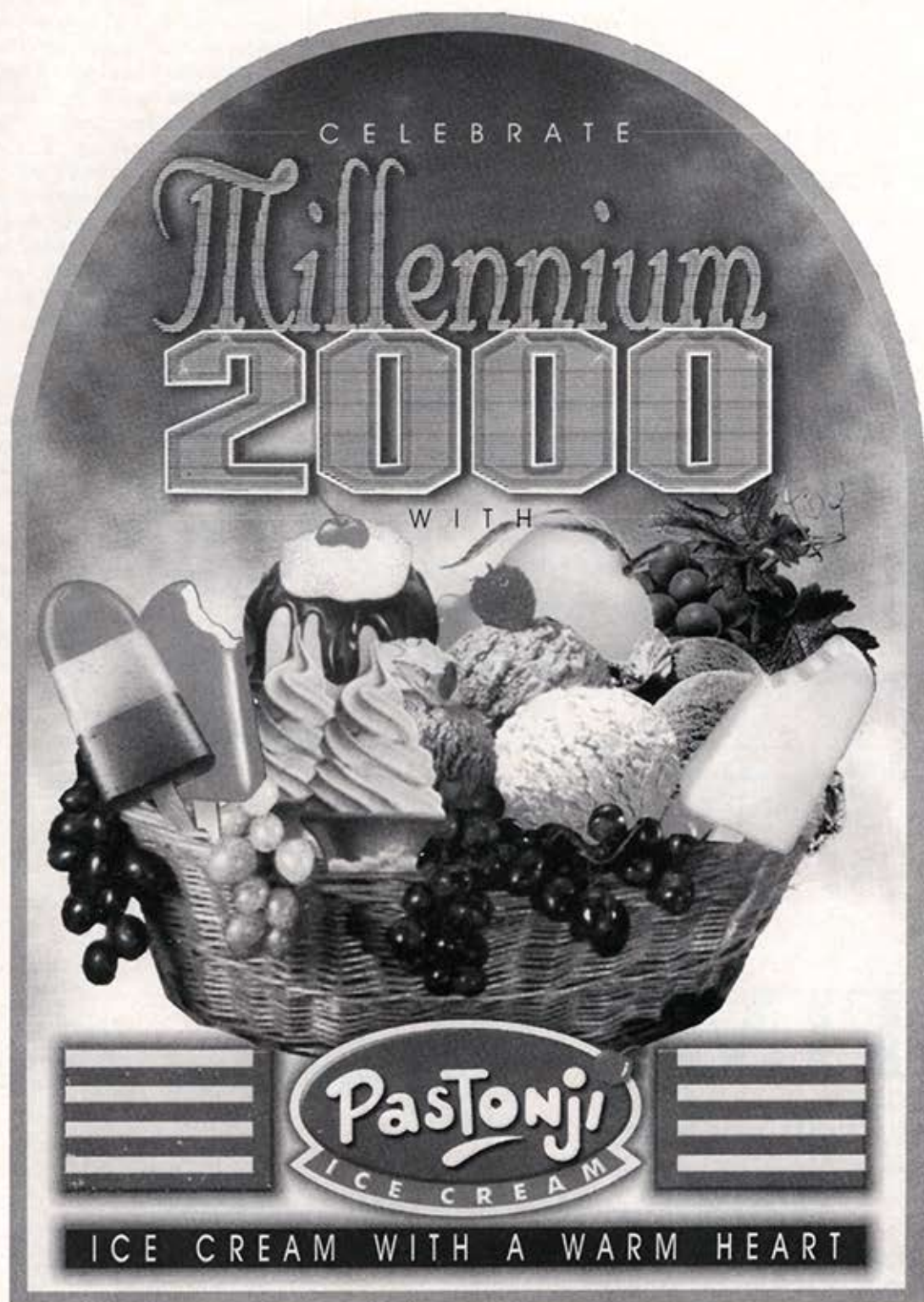
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heads covered with caps or scarves. On one side of the hall were white marble tables with tall, shining silver vases full of beautifully arranged flowers. On a slightly raised platform, eight mobeds, donning starched jamo, pichhori and padan, were reciting in unison the afrinagan and farroxshi prayers. The fragrance of sandalwood and loban permeated the hall along with the fragrance of flowers. The shining white vases lent a spiritual aura. Never in my career of 40 years in this country have I ever experienced such a unique, divine, serene atmosphere.

Apart from muktads, it is an experience to witness the jashan ceremony performed by Ervads Jal Karkaria, Zal and Darius Sethna in a loud, clear voice, capturing the spirit of the atmosphere. One feels you are in a different spiritual world.

A visit to Zoroastrian House would not be complete without observing the maachi ceremony performed by my friend Ervad Rusi Bhedwar, chanting prayers to the fire in the Setayash Gah on the first floor of the building in a loud, clear voice, when the atmosphere is once again charged with purity and divinity.

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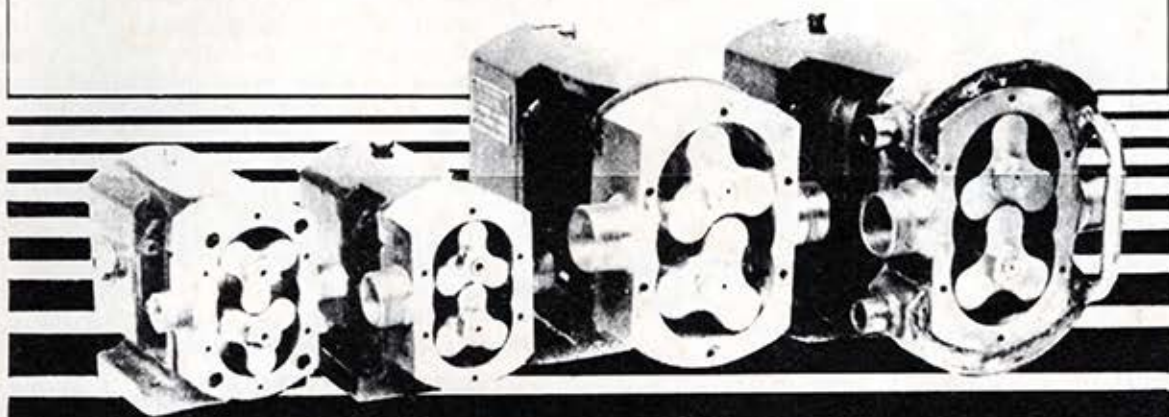
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Educate Parsi couples

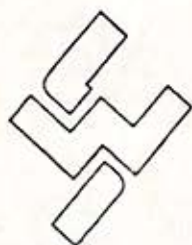
The Parsi population has gone down considerably in recent years. When other communities are galloping with their birth rate, Parsis are remaining depressingly behind, creating significant problems for the community.

I want to point out three main factors which, if properly tackled, will help to increase our population to a certain extent.

Experience has shown that there is always considerable difference of opinion among the newly married partners whether to have a baby immediately or not, due to family, housing, financial and other reasons. And they are so independent-minded that they won't listen to wiser counsel from the elders, relatives and even friends. An effort must be made to provide them some religious and psychological counselling. Otherwise such couples soon end up in divorce at an early age, aggravating the community's social problems.

Many recently married couples openly say they still want to "enjoy," whatever that means. They insist on a carefree life and want to move around to different places for their own selfish motives. Some of them even argue that they will "think" about babies after five or seven years, not realizing that they will soon pass the child-bearing age and will not be able to reproduce if they try belatedly.

Figures show that divorce among couples between 25 and 40 years of age has considerably increased during the past three decades. And, although we have an army of female



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Courtesy: www.zoroastrian.net

social workers, attempts to reconcile such couples are significantly lacking. Parsis do not look on favorably towards a divorcee, male or female, and attempts to get them married again do not always succeed happily. They should stick to the partner they have already chosen and married, and live happily ever after with children and grandchildren.

Let me thank the Bombay Parsi Punchayet for introducing the third child scheme under which a couple having the third child gets Rs 1,000 per month and a promise of a bigger flat to fit the family's size. I think the scheme has positive features and is attractive enough for the couple to make up their mind and have the third child for their own as well as the child's and the community's benefit.

RUSTOM A. KOTWAL

Whither, Parsiana?

I am very happy with *Parsiana* magazine and enjoy it a lot. But I have some suggestions. You should try and have interviews of people from Parsi schools. You should have a column for young Parsis of different age groups. Your subscription renewal form asks for details of occupation, company name, age group... You should bring in their names

and activities in your magazine.

MEHER POCHKHANAWALA

Meaningful prayer

Here is a Zoroastrian prayer written years back by my late father Lt Col Dr S. J. Bhathena, not only for the benefit of us his children but also for the section of our community who do not read Gujarati or understand our prayers. I recite this prayer daily, morning and night, which gives me solace in my old age (80).

O perfectly pious Prophet Zoroaster!

Our holy guide and guru

Let thy sacred fire burn

The roots of the evil which are within us

And which are surrounding us

So that our souls may get free

from worldly impurities

And rise to the sublime height

of spirituality

To enable us to receive the spark

Of the divine dazzling light

Radiating from the benevolent

Creator of the universe.

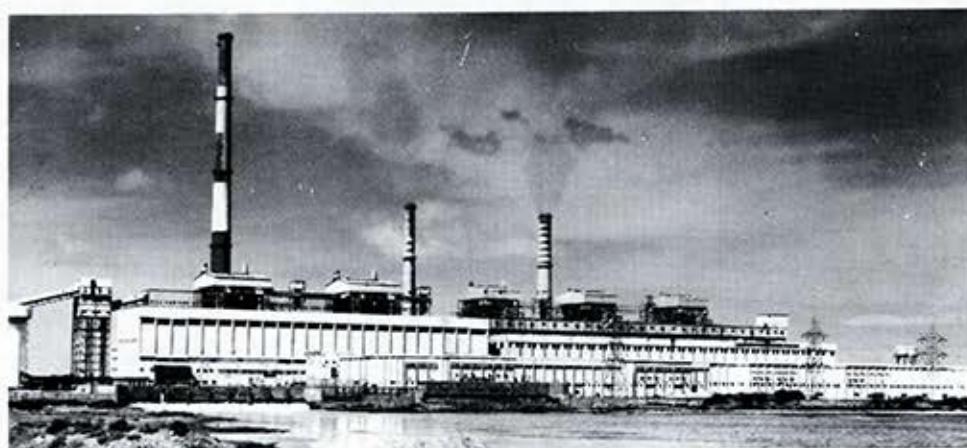
O Lord! help our erring souls

Reach thy glorious kingdom! Amen!

M. S. BHATHENA

Poona

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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Events and Personalities

Hospital gears up

By May 2001, the renovation and reconstruction of the Extension A Wing of Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) which is currently under way is expected to be completed at an estimated project cost of Rs 8,00,00,000, mentions the 86th annual report of the Hospital for the year 1998-99. The renovated wing which will accommodate rooms with bath and toilet plus other ancillary facilities will be serviced by a separate lift.

The reconstruction has been made possible through generous donations from the Zartoshty brothers of Canada, the Jokhi family of Hong Kong and The Incorporated Trustees of Zoroastrian Charities of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao. The valuable donations received during the year were Rs 5,00,00,000 from the executors of the will of the late Sorab Manekshaw, the other donors above Rs 1,00,00,000 being the trustees of the Bai Manekbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund who contributed Rs 3,50,00,000, Keki Jokhi from the estate of the late Shapurji Fakirji Jokhi, Rs 2,175,672, Settna Memorial Foundation, Rs 1,50,00,000, and Mottibai and Nowroji Contractor Charities, Bai Hirabai Manchershah Gilder Charity Trust and Gool Dhunjishaw Karaka, Rs 1,00,00,000 each.

In response to a commonly voiced complaint that the Hospital keeps increasing its bed charges without providing commensurate services, the annual report indicates through a pie chart that

just 40 percent of its income is derived from hospital charges. The balance 37 percent is from dividends and interest, 20 percent from donations and three percent

financial transactions, pharmacy, central and kitchen stores, ward management and medical records — will be conveniently accessible.

The principal office bearers of the PGH are president Homa D. Petit, vice president Aban H. Petit, joint honorary secretaries Hector H. Mehta and Zarir M. Bhathena, honorary treasurer Ardeshir N. Vazifdar.

Adoption rights

"The fundamental right to life for an orphaned, abandoned and a similarly placed child includes the right to be adopted by parents, to have a home, a name, a nationality, and this is an en-

forceable right, justiciable through a civil court," held Justice F. I. Rebello of the Bombay High Court in a landmark ruling in October 1999 reported in *The Indian Express* of November 14. As stated in the report, all those within the jurisdiction of the Bombay High Court holding custody of children under the Guardians and Wards Act (as would be the case for many Zoroastrians), could seek to adopt their wards provided a two-year period has lapsed since they got guardianship rights.

This is subject to the court ascertaining that the financial status, the health and the medical reports of the adoptive parents are sound, states the write-up, clarifying that the progress reports of the child will have to be collected and the views of the Indian Council for Social Welfare obtained.

Since there is no law in the country that permits adoption except by Hindus, all other minorities are presently governed by the Guardians and Wards



B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital: under renovation

from others. During the year, 3,907 patients were admitted of whom 1,758 were males and 2,149 were women and children. The number of paying patients increased from 2,129 in 1997-98 to 2,259 in 1998-99. There was a corresponding rise in the number of free and subsidized patients too from 1,469 in the preceding year to 1,648 in the year under report. Likewise there was an increase in births at the Hospital from 103 in the preceding year to 134 in the current year, and in deaths from 283 to 306.

With the installation of a new IBM Netfinity 5,500 server connected by Local Area Network to about 30 PC based terminals and commissioning of a Hospital Management Information System Software all functional areas of the Hospital — including admissions, discharges, transfers, utilization of diagnostic services and operating rooms,



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Act, 1890. The pathbreaking judgment "that has freed adoption from the clutches of religion and has seen it from the point of view of the child is being hailed as a bold step towards undoing the 50 years of injustice to orphans," notes the *Express* article.

Besides giving the adopted child their name by rectifying the Register of Births if they so wish, the adopted child would also be governed by the personal laws of the adoptive parents and be entitled to the same right to inheritance as a natural child, according to the newspaper. The rationale of this judgment, as explained by Rebello, was to "awaken the sensitivity of our lawmakers so all children in the new millennium can have an opportunity to enjoy the joys of childhood."

Millennium prayers

Zoroastrians throughout the world were invited to tune in to a novel humbandagi for the "peace, prosperity and happiness... of the entire creation," organized by the trustees of the Karani Agiary on December 31, 1999 at 5.30 p.m. Indian Standard Time, corresponding to 12 midnight according to the New Zealand clock.

"All you have to do is log on to the Internet and visit www.cusrowbaug.org and go to the 'Hum Bandagi' page. We are also trying to arrange for this facility on more web sites so that there can be maximum participation," noted a communique from managing trustee Bomi Hansotia. A Zoroastrian high priest was to recite a short Avestan prayer, the translation of which reads as: "May in this world obedience triumph over disobedience, peace over discord, generosity over miserliness, humility over arrogance, truth over falsehood and righteousness over wickedness."

A convenient time chart providing the corresponding time in different countries of the world was also appended to generate maximum participation. Special provisions were made at the Cusrow Baug Pavilion to log on at the Cusrow Baug web site to join the world prayers, writes Hansotia. This novel mode of welcoming the new millennium preceded the hama anjuman maachi offered at the Baug's Karani Agiary in the Uzirin gah on January 1, 2000 at 3.45 p.m.

Gratefully assembled

Instead of wasting time on controver-

sial issues like dokhmenashini and adult franchise, follow the advice given by Ahura Mazda and concentrate on increasing the Zoroastrian population. This was emphasized in the keynote address delivered by solicitor Burjor Antia who spoke on "What should be our strategy for the next millennium?" at the Sanjan Day celebrations observed on November 21, 1999, *mah Tir, roz Bahman*, according to a press release issued by the organizers, the Sanjan Memorial Column Local Committee. Lamenting that we have more leaders than followers, Antia advised the gathering of over 1,500 Zoroastrians to cultivate the three 'D's — devotion, dedication and discipline.

The function in Sanjan commenced with a jashan ceremony performed by seven Udvada mobeds led by Ervad Framroze Sidhwa. After the humbandagi followed a course of speeches. When we eat the best food and wear the best clothes, why should we not offer the best Malabari sandalwood to the Iranshah, Sidhwa's query was reported in the write-up.

President of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP), Dr Sam Bhacca, who after briefly attending the executive council

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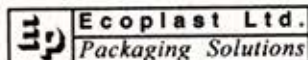
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At Sanjan (from left): Balsara, Bhacca, Rohintan Daviervala, Varvadewala (standing) and Oliaji

meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in Mhow had returned to Surat and with only one hour of sleep through the night had hurried to Sanjan, remarked that Parsis had many good qualities which seem to be diminishing. Gratitude, however, continues to characterize the community considering that Jadi Rana's contribution is gratefully recalled 1,279 years since he granted refuge to the first set of Zoroastrians who came from Iran, mentioned Bhacca.

Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Rustom Tirandaz whose speech was described as "humorous, enlightening, though highly controversial," opined that there must be unanimity even on controversial issues instead of the present attitude of brushing contro-

versial religious topics under the rug. Dr Meher Master-Moos referred to the contribution of the late Manekshah Daviervala to the development of modern Sanjan and mentioned that Varoli River in Sanjan where Dastur Neriysang Dhaval consecrated the Iranshah, is the only unpolluted river between Bombay and Surat. It is also the location of her Zoroastrian College.

On behalf of the other members of the Sanjan Memorial Column Local Committee, Nariman Balsara, Gustasp Jussawala, Dosabhai Oliaji and Dara Varvadewala, president Rohintan Daviervala acknowledged the contribution of all those who had helped to

make the Sanjan Day function a success, particularly the day's speakers, the Press, the Western Railway, Firoz Sethna, Jamshed Dotiwala and the Parsi Dairy Farm. He added that the main object of observing Sanjan Day is to remember two great souls — Dastur Neriysang Dhaval who sought refuge and Jadi Rana who granted it to the Zoroastrian ancestors. The guests were then treated to a sumptuous lunch provided by the Wadi Bunder Ghambar Trust and prepared by the SPP under the personal supervision of its chief executive Sorab Katpitia.

The honorable auditor

After handling crores of rupees during his checkered career as finance minister, accountant-general of Gwalior state, accounts officer in the Imperial Service of the Government of India as also the Royal Indian Marine Dockyard, Ardeshir Edulji Cama died in penury. A copy of his accomplishments as corroborated by the *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil* was forwarded to *Parsiana* on the occasion of his 120th birth anniversary on November 29, 1999 by Dr Gurdafrid A. Cama.

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Bombay's Cama Hospital, Ardeshir used the legacy of Rs 20,000 received from his grandfather to leave the shores of India for further studies abroad and to qualify as the first Indian member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales in 1908. On his return to India he built up a reputation as a freelance auditor and financial adviser who was responsible for bringing to book many financial frauds perpetrated by the managers of leading institutions like the Credit Bank of India Limited, Gorakhpore Bank Limited, Kayastha Trading and Banking Corporation, Gorakhpore.

Cama was also instrumental in bringing to light the irregular financial deals at the hands of high-ranking government officials during his tenure as accounts officer of the Royal Indian Marine Dockyard, in charge of the financial affairs of 23 prize steamers of World War I brought to Bombay for detention.

Known for his financial integrity, just the association of his name as auditor for a couple of companies like Alembic Chemical Works Limited of Baroda and the Hindustan Co-operative Insurance Society Limited of Calcutta, changed the credibility of these firms. He had also served as auditor of The Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited in 1930-31. A tribute from Sir Dinsha Wacha read, "I have known him as an auditor of most complicated accounts and one whom I greatly esteem and regard for his conscientious work and perfect integrity."

As accountant-general of Gwalior in 1918, it has been put on record that "his financial acumen and utmost integrity had saved the state a colossal sum of 12 crore rupees." The late Sir Madhav Rao Scindia appreciated his sincerity and rewarded him by conferring on him powers of a prime minister which aroused considerable enmity and ill-feeling among his competitors, ultimately prompting him to submit his resignation.

If India is to progress economically and politically, business integrity is essential, Cama had written to the Government of India in 1926, recommending the setting up of an Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and an Indian Institute of Banking.

The following year he once again proceeded to London, this time to study law at the Bar. Insufficient funds however compelled him to alter his course of studies. For nearly a year he daily

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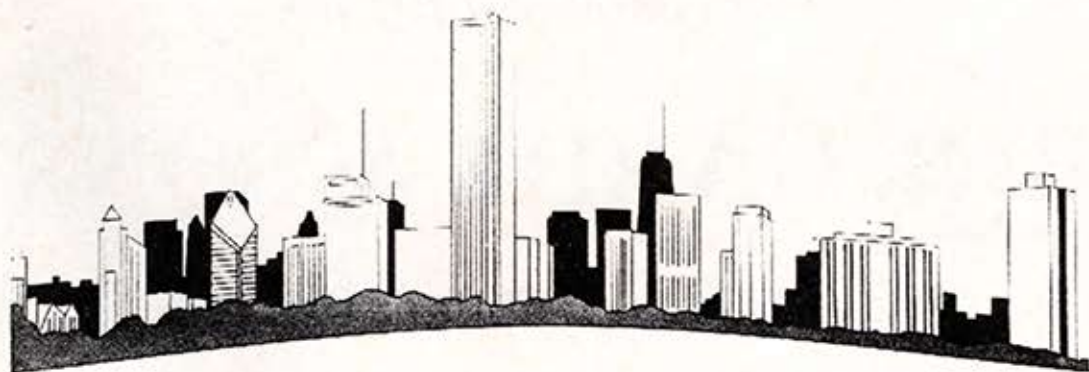
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visited the Reading Room of the British Museum to study astrology and soon became proficient in the subject, earning praise from authorities in this field. His spiritual leanings evoked a desire to travel to India's ancient pilgrim sites which he

Cama: perfect integrity did in the company of his wife Jerbai and thereby exhausted all his resources. Father of seven children, Cama died in Bombay on November 26, 1948.

Vatican calling

Among the 200 scholars and religious leaders invited by the Vatican from different corners of the world to the last interfaith conference of the millennium was Dr Homi Dhalla, president of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF), Bombay. The five-day meet from October 24 to 29 deliberated on the theme, "On the eve of the third millennium: Collaboration among the different religions."

Dhalla, who had served as moderator of one of the subgroups, was one of four persons involved in drafting the

final message which constituted the recommendations of all the groups and was asked to present it to the assembly, according to a press release.

On the final day when representatives of different faiths were asked to recite prayers before the public, Dhalla performed the kusti in front of a blazing fire and recited a few Avestan prayers with their English translation on the theme of harmony and brotherhood, states the report. This was televised by the National Italian Television after which Dhalla was interviewed on Zoroastrianism.

At the final function where Pope John Paul II addressed a gathering of nearly 20,000 persons at St Peter's Square, Dhalla was among the privileged few who were introduced to the Pope.

Recently Dhalla and his WZCF were instrumental in bringing nearly 1,600 books on Zoroastrianism in English and Gujarati to Poona's Albert Edward Institute and Cawasjee Dinshaw Hall and Library, noted the October '99 issue of *Rapport*, the newsletter published by The Poona Parsee Panchayat. The Foundation had been entrusted the collection by Ervad Hormusji Pavri of Nagpur.



Dhalla (left) greeting the Pope
Photo: Servizio Fotografico

The cupboards where these books are showcased are kind courtesy Anu Aga, chairperson of Thermax Limited, adds the report.

The call of the caterer

A crowded Cowasjee Jehangir Convocation Hall testified to the personal popularity of caterers Katy and Feroze Dalal as much as to their culinary skills, observed TV personality Siddharth Kak. The formal launch of Katy's second pub-

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Katy Dalal (far left and right) with (from left) Kak, Silloo Kavarana and Jamshed Guzder at the release of her new book, *Delicious Encounters*



lishing venture — *Delicious Encounters* — on January 28, 2000 follows the sellout success of her first book, *Jamva Chaloji*, which, said Kak, "brought out the innate spirit of the community ... No other community has learnt to love life the way the Parsis of India do!"

Unlike the first book which concentrates on traditional Parsi fare, *Delicious Encounters* presents a range of Parsi, Indian and Western cookery — innovative recipes that encourage the housewife to blend, modify and create her own culinary triumphs. "It had to be light and colorful and include not only Indian recipes but also some world famous recipes that we had been cooking for our clients down the years," notes the author's introduction. The 204-page paperback published by Vakils, Feffer and Simons (VFS) priced at Rs 230 contains 242 recipes divided into 20 sections, some of the sections sporting an introduction.

"Over the years, one's awareness increases that there is much to know outside our own warm and comfortable circle," writes Dalal, exulting in the joys of nature at her Lonavla abode. Hence there are suggestions for al fresco meals, Chinese cookery and meals "without chilies."

There are tips on which cooking utensils are intrinsic to an efficient kitchen, how to store the kitchen cupboard in holiday homes, etc. "The knack is to know what items in your store cupboard will last longest and what items will perish quickly so that you can plan your menus suitably," advises the chef.

Tracing her culinary lineage over three generations, Dalal recalls with gratitude and love the early lessons in housekeeping she imbibed from both her grand-

mothers. Reminiscing about her paternal grandmother's tough life she paints the picture of a lady of immense fortitude who conquered early widowhood and near penury to raise her children and to educate herself to enjoy the works of Wordsworth and Shakespeare and who "left behind her a legacy of loyalty and forthrightness, courage and the message that there was no shame in honest labor of any sort." Dalal, in turn, has passed on these gifts of love to her two sons and one daughter, so that the whole family is to be seen pulling together at major catering events.

An archeologist by training, a former professor of history and a scholar, polysyllabic Greek and Persian names trip easily off her tongue when speaking publicly at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI), as noted its trustee, former justice Dinshaw Mehta. At the recently concluded Third International Congress at the KRCOI Dalal had presented a paper on the *ijashne* ceremony as well as catered on the occasion. Her generosity is a byword there, as remarked KRCOI trustee secretary Homai Modi who compered the function. In his brief address VFS's Bimal Mehta wished "all our authors were like her," so professional had been the manuscript and pictures she presented for publication.

But for the large number of fans and well-wishers, Nawaz Mody's vote of thanks was a prelude to the snacks that awaited their tingling appetite!

Arnavaz S. Mama

A taste of *UpperCrust*

"Because the time is ripe and the pot is boiling over. Because the world has accepted Indian food beyond chicken tikka, basmati rice and alphonso mango... because an admission to a catering college in Bombay and New Delhi is more difficult than admission to a medical college; because Indian cooks are

being treated as corporate executives and paid their salaries; because Indians are themselves recognizing their 179 regional cuisines..." editor and publisher Farzana Contractor explains the rationale for launching *UpperCrust*, "India's food, wine and style magazine," early this year.

The 200-page inaugural issue, priced at Rs 200, accommodates within its pages entrees, special features, restaurants and reviews, special section, wines and spirits, travel, cooking for *UpperCrust*, entertaining and home. The cover story, "Tashreef Laiye," detailing the Hyderabad lunch with Air Marshal Idris and Begum Bilkis Latif, has been written by husband Behram Contractor, editor of *Afternoon Despatch and Courier*, better known as Busybee.

As continues Farzana Contractor in her editorial, "But where do I fit in? I don't know. I can't say I am crazy about eating but I certainly love cooking. My kitchen is my study, my laboratory, my hobbyhorse where I experiment, cook, entertain... And what I cook, I photograph... I started with my Nikon. Nawab Shah Alam in Hyderabad, the Indage Chougules at Narayangaon. Then I commissioned talent, including the in-house Busybee, to write around the pictures. Suddenly we had a magazine on our hands — India's first ever genuine glossy food and wine magazine" printed at Tata Donnelly Limited. The editorial advisory board includes Asit Chandmal, Behram Contractor, Tarla Dalal, Shobha De, Jiggs Kalra, Vithal Kamat, Dinesh Khanna, Sanjiv Malhotra, Sabira Merchant and Hemant Oberoi, listed in alphabetical order.

The quarterly includes health sections like salads and cooking for health while those who are addicts may get a high from reading on the pleasures and passions of smoking. Those who like to eat out may enjoy reading of the recommended eateries whether in Bombay,

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Farzana and Behram Contractor releasing UpperCrust's inaugural issue.



London, New York and Dubai, others may like to experiment with the Thai, Mexican and Italian recipes recommended by Dalal or Karen Anand. In fact, there is a special recipe index. With a colorful visual on every page of the issue, it is a delight to turn the pages over and over again.

"Tell us what you think about the inaugural issue," invites *UpperCrust*. Bouquets and brickbats will be accommodated in Letters to the Editor. If there is a restaurant recipe that you would like to have, ask them, they will get it for you (Favourite Restaurant Recipe). "Are you dying to share your great, great, great grandmother's recipe? Send it to us. We will test it out (Recipes Section)...Avail of all the special discounts in this issue...Interact with us." They can be contacted at *UpperCrust*, Oriana Communications Private Limited, 9, Parker Niwas, Ground Floor, 5, Rambhau Salgaocar Marg, Sassoon Dock, Colaba 400005, Tel:2154748 or website: www.uppercrustindia.com or e-mail: busybeeindia@hotmail.com

The percussion pandit

"It is not only a book but an encyclopedia too," commented Prof Sudhirkumar Saxena in the *Journal of Indian Musicological Society*, Baroda, referring to Dr Aban Mistry's 355-page tome, *Pakhawaj and Tabla — History, Schools and Traditions*, published last year. This work is a translation of Mistry's earlier thesis published in Hindi in 1984, the second edition of which is reportedly now in print.

Following her discovery of a stone mural in a dusty rock cave in Bhaja, Western Maharashtra, Mistry pursued 15 years of exhaustive research to establish that this instrument and female artistes were in existence 2,300 years

earlier, disproving the centuries-held belief that the tabla was brought to India by the Persian Amir Khusrau.

"The interviews, the revelation of the secrets of ustads and the detailed genealogy of pakhawaj and tabla gharanas and paramparas makes this tome a rare jewel in musicology," notes an introduction to this book. "Considering the absence of any literature concentrating on pakhawaj and tabla playing, this extensive research volume must be regarded as an important landmark in the history and development of percussion instruments. It thus becomes a source book on the subject," wrote Vamanrao Deshpande in the *NCPA Journal*. Priced at Rs 1,000 or US \$ 30,

further enquiries regarding this book can be made with Zaveri Jiten Ramniklal, Oberoi Towers Shopping Centre, 2nd floor, Nariman Point, Bombay 400021. Tel: 2023435, e-mail: katila@vsnl.com

Hailed in the *Limca Book of Records* (1995) as "the first performing Indian female tabla soloist," Mistry has earned her doctorate in the male-dominated arena of tabla, sangeet alankar and sangeet praveen in vocal music and sangeet visharad in sitar. Initiated in sitar and tabla



Mistry: distinctive beat

under the tutelage of Pandit Keki S. Jijina, Mistry received her advanced training in tabla from Ustad Amir Hussain Khan and in vocal music from Pandit Laxmanrao Bodas, notes a profile on the author. She is presently affiliated to several universities in India where she

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conducts workshops, lecture-demonstrations, seminars and guides research students. She is also co-founder of Swar Sadhna Samiti, a 40-year-old non-commercial institution devoted to promoting talented artistes, according to a profile of the respected musician.

Live by the religion

"Most Parsis are unable to explain their religion: they only live by it: which is because (simply put) it is a religion of good morals...The ordinary Zoroastrian's faith, even the one who says his daily prayers from the *Avesta*...is very much routine and traditional, and yet to him it is an abiding source of deep inspiration and consolation," noted legal luminary Fali S. Nariman in his paper on "Zoroastrianism — the Faith of the Parsis in India," delivered under the monthly lecture series organized by the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness The Dalai Lama at the India International Centre, New Delhi in August 1999.

The contents of Nariman's speech together with the two appendixes constitute a 72-page booklet which makes interesting reading, giving some rare insights into the community, the religion and the speaker too. "I work best

under pressure, and in preparing for this lecture I have learnt more about my creed — one for which I have always had immense respect and reverence, but not enough knowledge," candidly states Nariman.

According to his interpretation, "Resist evil" is the Zoroastrian battle



*Nariman:
credible creed*

cry...What is demanded of his followers by the Prophet of Iran is active cooperation with the spirit of God in fighting the forces of evil. It is not enough that he should ignore or not cooperate with evil. He should abhor it wholeheartedly and fight it vigorously."

While his summation of the religious content of the Zoroastrian religion is succinct, citing several authoritative texts, Nariman's references to the evolution of laws applicable to Parsis make delightful reading. Referring to September 1, 1865 as "the doomsday for the Parsi male!" Nariman explained how with the introduction of the Parsi Intestate Succession Act and the Parsi Marriage and Divorce

continued on page 144



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"We will not only survive but succeed"

Having thrived on community support, FEZANA president Framroze Patel's mission is to ensure its preservation

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Our lives revolve around community work. If there was no Darbe Mehr, ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York) or FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America), God alone knows what we'd be doing!"

Founding treasurer of FEZANA and currently its president, the soft-spoken, mild-mannered, bespectacled Framroze Patel says he has chosen to pattern himself on the likes of such self-effacing personalities as Vinoba Bhave and Gulzarilal Nanda whose dedication to the causes they espoused was legendary. "I am a Gandhian rather than an American administrator," he smiles.

At the FEZANA AGM (annual general meeting) on June 19, 1999 the bedevilled structure and functioning of the Congress 2000 Executive Board (EB) and Program Committee that had been forcefully challenged by Dina McIntyre and Keki Bhote and refuted by the EB and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (see "Zoroastrians Abroad," *Parsiana*, October 1999) were given patient hearing. "Considering that this was a very important topic Framroze Patel allowed extra time so that all views could be heard," notes the AGM minutes. In the upshot the turbulence was quietened, it seemed, to everyone's satisfaction.

Referring to another contentious issue, the creation of a World Council of Zoroastrian Federations, resolved upon by regional representatives meeting in Bombay, January 11-13, 2000 (see "A world body of federations," *Parsiana*, February 2000) Patel's report of February 8, 2000 to FEZANA member associations and other associates seeking their endorsement notes, "I can assure you that the signatories took the right course of action for the right reasons. We have not moved away from the

concept of one world body, and we have faithfully adhered to the mandate given. Our aim is to form the Council, work with WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) and merge with WZO when its constitution is acceptable to all regions."

Though he has held a tenure as president of ZAGNY (1980-82) and is trustee of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, his preferred corporate structure would be that of a "gurdwara...where there are no positions." A self-employed professional public accountant, Patel works as honorary CPA (certified public accountant) for a gurdwara in New York. He had yearned for a legal career but the Surat Parsi Orphanage that supported and educated him all the way was not disposed towards the law as a career for dispossessed community youth in those days.

Though there is a FEZANA board conference every month, Patel says his own style of functioning is "to get an opinion from others before I act," staying in touch with the major associations like Toronto, Houston, Washington and Chicago. On a personal level he likes to bounce his ideas off such "personal advisors" as Prof Kaikhosrov Irani ("At times my children say I'm bothering Kaikhosrov too much!") and current FEZANA treasurer Rustom Kevala and recalls with affection his seven initial years on the board of FEZANA with founder president Rohinton Rivetna.

Patel's own priorities are the more active spread of religious knowledge "at all levels" and the enhancement of funds available to FEZANA to pursue its policies. Accordingly he was most appreciative of Dr Jerry Kheradi's donation of \$ 50,000 towards FEZANA's Scholarship Fund in memory of his father Merwan and of \$ 20,000 in stocks from Yasmin Cumming towards the Critical

Assistance Fund donated in memory of her father Hormazdyar Damkevala.

Lavish with his praise, Patel says Kaikhosrov Irani can explain the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* to a three-year-old; that Rivetna is so "service-oriented, he sees the need and jumps at it." Referring to the *FEZANA Journal* whose editorial coverage and quality seems to increase with each issue, Patel notes that a truck is needed to ship the magazine to the post office and shudders, "If Roshan (Rivetna, the *Journal's* editor-in-chief who also does most of the computer entry, ever) refuses to do it, the magazine will fold or we'll have to pay four-fold to the printer!" The December 2000 issue of the *Journal* is expected to be a commemorative edition in keeping with the Congress.

It was a characteristically glowing tribute that Patel paid the late Dr Kaikhosrow Harvesf, chairman of FEZANA funds and finance committee, "a man of vision for our North American community... He gave us substance and encouragement at every step of our formative years." Harvesf had suggested that if every North American Zoroastrian contributed \$ 10 annually, the community would be able to amass \$100,000 every year. "As a tribute to my *murrabbi* (respected elder) Kaikhosrow, let us foster and encourage his ethic of collective giving and let us begin with each of us," Patel told the delegates at the FEZANA AGM.

Patel said he lost his father Kaikhosroo when he was six months old but though his mother Goolbai was widowed after barely six years of marriage and three children, he "never saw her cry." While his brother was admitted to the Petit Polytechnic in Poona and his sister was educated at the Avabai Petit School in Bandra, Framroze spent his youth in Surat, living at the Orphanage, until he had passed both parts of the examination of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of London. After



Patel: addicted to community service

apprenticeship at TISCO (Tata Iron and Steel Company) he worked at Sarabhai Chemicals and Union Carbide where its large American workforce spoke of the US as a "land of gold and honey." Lured by the hype, Patel got his MBA from St Joan's University in New York and acquired his CPA and Business Valuation Licences from two other institutions. Being based in New York, he got "involved with ZAGNY from day one," he muses. His wife Armaity, who is manager of computer systems at Panasonic, and he have generally preferred to work behind the scenes, he says, though Armaity was the ZAGNY secretary when it hosted the 11th North American Zoroastrian Congress. Patel's daughter Arnavaz works for a financial institution as a computer helpline; his son Pashang is into E-commerce at Columbia University.

Patel's heart has remained in Gujarat. He wants to know what is happening in Surat and Bharuch and is saddened by the economic problems the Surat Orphanage has to face. "In our time there were 180 students. Now (there are) hardly 35-40."

Noting that the redoubtable former chief executive of the Surat Parsi Pan-

chayat Dr Ratan Marshall "is getting his second PhD," Patel recalls how Marshall had encouraged him all the way to his masters degree in commerce, propelling him into all-India elocution competitions. Another outstanding influence in Patel's young life had been Ervad Eruch Daboo and he can never forget the benefaction of Jaijimai (Kuka) Peston Jamasp who paid his fees through those long years.

Another illustrious mentor was the soft-spoken Naservanji Vakil, chief justice of the Gujarat High Court and vice chancellor of Baroda University whose credo was "We want to create not the cream of society but the core of society," recalled Patel.

Nor can he forget Noshirwan Karanjia, father of Surat's well-known thespian Yazdi Karanjia, who conducted coaching classes for the London college of commerce even though he was himself a non-matriculate!

"I was very lucky to have had my education in the Orphanage... I just want to pay back," the nostalgia is palpable. He says his "addiction is community service."

What of the next 25 years in North America? Patel sees the community "not

only survive but succeed in spite of (Zoroastrian) children marrying out." As mother Goolbai always said, "Tomorrow will be a better day..."

The Houston beehive

The first day (December 28, 2000) of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC) will be dedicated to a festive reunion, according to Congress Executive Board (EB) cochair Dolly Dastoor who passed through Bombay in December '99. Different foods, shows, photo exhibitions, with rare coins on display, books, artefacts borrowed from museums "will help the rest of the world see the assets in the West," she told *Parsiana*. The legacy projects will be particularly attractive to the youths and the EB is trying to get "30 youths from India, Pakistan and Iran in addition to what the Bombay Parsi Punchayet does," says Dastoor adding that New York Zoroastrians have offered to look after them for a week and there are plans to "inculcate leadership qualities."

This Zarathushti Field Student (ZFS) project, coordinated by Aban and Purvez Rustomji (Tel: 281.493.1275; Fax: 281-4936145; e-mail: purvez@coating engineers.com), aims at sponsoring 30

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youths aged 15-23 years in a selection process based on financial need together with scholastic achievement, community involvement and an application form which includes a 250-word essay on "Why I want to attend the WZC 2000," informs the press release cosigned by project coordinators.

Mani Clubwalla of Madras (Tel: 044-4938458) is the ZFS representative in India. Iran and Pakistan were expected to have their own representatives when the project was announced in September '99. The rest of the world will liaise with an authority in Houston. Anticipating an overall cost of \$60,000

for the program, donations are being solicited.

While applications are invited, the lucky 30 will be selected by the ZFS committee which will pay for airfare, registration, lunch and banquet charges, sports, entrance fee and other incidental charges. The youths will be boarded and lodged with individual families during their 25-day stay, December 20, 2000 to January 15, 2001 in Houston and in Greater New York. Though exceptions may be made, the lucky ones will have to bear their own US visa charges, local transportation in the home country and personal expenses.

Describing the Seventh Congress as "an effort in community building and future planning," Dastoor believes the lectures and other activities will enable the community "to feel good about (itself)" and pull together unitedly.

Among the 'legacy projects' is the Zoroastrian Millennium Time Capsule, being coordinated by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) vice president Firdosh Mehta of Alberta. To contain "Zarathushti artefacts, articles and memorabilia of a contemporary nature," the capsule is meant to be buried at the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston during the Congress proceedings and visit to the Center by the delegates to the Congress. Donations for inclusion as also financial support and volunteer activity are invited worldwide and may be ad-



*Dastoor: the
Congress is for
future planning*

dressed to Mehta at 10444-18 Avenue, NW, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6J 4Z8; e-mail: fmehta@RNG.com. Cheque donations may be addressed to Dr Yasmin Ghadiali, 686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, NY 11510-3937, USA, captioned "Time Capsule donation."

A WZC2000 Photo Exhibition is being sponsored by the Congress EB with O'Shihan Cultural Organization during the Congress sessions at Houston. The theme is Zarathushtrian Ceremonies and displays are invited worldwide which would highlight "our glorious ceremonies, rituals and traditions," notes the press release. In black and white or color (the predilection is for old pictures), the printed copy must be at least 21.5 cm by 28 cm, though this specification will be waived for older pictures. The more favored alternative is a negative which would be processed locally.

An attached entry form with each photograph is required to state the name of the ceremony/ritual/tradition and preferably some narrative associated with it along with the date of the photo, identification of the location and famous personages (if known), the name of the photographer (if different from the sender), together with mail and e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers.

There is a possibility that the photo exhibits may be published in book form after the Congress is over. The organizers also ask to be allowed to retain the prints in their archives for future use. Those who want them returned are required to state so clearly.

The entries must reach O'Shihan Cultural Organization, 2092 Gordon Ave, West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V7, Canada (Tel: 604-9269891; Fax: 604-9269889; e-mail: feridem@netcom.ca) by end September 2000 by registered mail only. Readers may contact them for entry forms and other details.

The same organization is floating the First Zarathushtrian International Film/video Festival (ZIFF) with the object of promoting Zarathushtria's philosophy; demonstrating "good rituals, traditions, ceremonies and also our heritage and history;" encouraging community members to produce films/videos regarding our community and its issues; appreciating the efforts of those who have already done so; and to create a base for a universal Zarathushtrian Film/Video Archive.

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To be held on a biannual basis, beginning 2000, selected offerings may be screened at the Houston Congress after coordination with its EB. Envisaging "competitive" and "non-competitive" divisions, the first is reserved entirely for the amateur producer, while the latter would be open to professionals.

The competition rules require that the subject of the entry will be Zarathushtrian, though the producer may not be one. The best film/video will be awarded a trophy while the runners-up will receive certificates. Among the additional awards there are provisions for the best Farsi/Dari entry, the best English/Gujarati entry, best subject/story/scenario and best entry by teenagers 13-19 years.

The entries will be judged by a panel appointed by the ZIFF. Each entry must carry an entry fee of US \$ 10 (entrants from Pakistan, India and Iran are exempt from the entry fee).

The ZIFF reserves the right to include the entries in public exhibitions, to exhibit them in various North American cities and to make duplicate copies for the purpose. However, the responsibility for copyright infringement rests solely with the entrant.

Readers interested in participating

— the films/videos must reach by midnight August 1, 2000 — may write/e-mail/phone/fax ZIFF c/o O'Shihan Cultural Organization as mentioned above for specific technical details of participation and modes of transfer of the entries.

An international book fair cum exhibition (December 28-31, 2000) is expected to display the widest spectrum of printed material on Zoroastrian religious and cultural literature, authored by Zoroastrians as well as non-Zoroastrian observers. The exhibition will be divided into historical literature defined as roughly before 1800s and contemporary, referring to the period thereafter. The exhibition will include wall-mounted posters as well as manuscripts in locked glass cabinets which however, due to their innate pricelessness, may be hard to obtain, admits the press release.

The ninth century Pahlavi text, the *Denkard* or "the acts or deeds of the religion," by AdurFarnbag Farrohzadan and Adurbad Emedan has been chosen as the reference point "because it is the only known book that actually lists the contents of the Sasanid Avesta. By selecting the *Denkard* as a reference point,

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the exhibit highlights the fact that all Zoroastrian works derive textually from the Sasanian era. From this point, the exhibit will divide into six sections: the Avesta, old Iranian literature found on inscriptions, alphabet activity designed to have participants write their names in several scripts, Pahlavi literature, Persian and Gujarati literature, and translations into European languages," notes the press release.

The contemporary section "highlights thematically" the more interesting works that relate to heritage and culture. "This section of the exhibition begins chronologically with 18th, 19th and 20th century Gujarati and Farsi poetry and literary works. It then displays known and lesser-known 20th century novels, short stories and plays in Farsi and English, including a sub section on literature written about or referring to Zoroastrians. Also included will be the works of journalists and prominent publications and social reformers and politicians. Space allowing, other works in the sciences and humanities will also be displayed."

The book fair will enable purchase of books at site as well as booking of orders to the publishers so that the publications can be delivered by mail.

The project is chaired by Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) librarian Malcolm Deboo and his team of coordinators including Dastoor, Cyrus Mehta, Aban Rustomji, Nerina Rustomji and probably also Jamshed Varza. Their consultants, in alphabetic order, include Jamsheed Choksy, Vesta Curtis, "Dastur Dhalla," John Hinnells, Almut Hintze, Kaikhosrov Irani, Khorshed Jungallwalla, Khojeste Mistree, Firoza Punthakey-Mistree and Jenny Rose.

According to FEZANA president Framroze Patel in his message to the annual general meeting, the EB had decided in October '99 that there would be four tracks in all for the Congress — religion and education; social and historical; youth; and Zarathushti's vision, this last being headed by Dr Meherborzin Soroushian from San Diego.

A ticklish problem that the EB had to resolve was whether the issue of a "balanced program" meant balance at every session or for the Congress as a whole. In the event it was resolved that "the track chairs meet, discuss and coordinate amongst themselves to produce and

bring about a balanced and non duplicative program by the virtue of providing balanced tracks and sessions which provide for and present (within the sessions) all viewpoints and ideologies," notes Patel. The complete program including a list of speakers was expected to be finalized at the EB's meet in February 2000.

Mehr vs Khatami

Former vice premier of Iran, acting finance minister, director general of economic affairs and



Mehr:
"outstanding
educator"

monopolies, president of the National Insurance Company and governor for Iran in OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), Dr Farhang Mehr has been all these and more.

The former president of the prestigious Shiraz (Pahlavi) University has served on the boards of several other universities and colleges in Iran. He was also a founder of the Tehran College of Insurance while serving the Zarathushti community as leader of the Tehran Anjuman for 12 years. During that time he founded Iran's Sazeman-e-Javanane-Zarathushti (Young Zoroastrian Association) and the Ancient Iranian Cultural Society.

Currently professor emeritus of international relations at Boston University where he recently founded the Center for Ancient Iranian Studies in Boston, with its quarterly journal, *Humata*, about our faith and heritage, Mehr's address to Iran's President Mohammad Khatami and the latter's responses (English translation from Farsi), at a meeting of Iranians on September 20, 1998, at the United Nations in New York are recorded here as extracted from the World Zoroastrian Organisation journal *Hamazor* (Winter, 1999) and the Winter 1998-1999 issue of *Humata*:

The Moderator: Dr Farhang Mehr, professor of Boston University.

Khatami: Dr Mehr is an outstanding educator to whom the Iranians are much indebted.

Mehr: As your excellency knows I am a Zarathushti.

Khatami: All of us have Zarathushti roots.

Mehr: As a Zarathushti I belong to a

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religious minority. We are proud to have been one of the founders of human rights in the world. In this connection I am thinking of the edict of Cyrus the Great issued after the conquest of Babylon.

The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, like the constitution of Iran before it, has recognized three religious minorities in Iran: Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism. As a result each of them has a representative in the Islamic Consultative Assembly. Also the Islamic Civil Code, like the Iranian Civil Code before it, has allowed the followers of these religions to be governed by their own religious laws and customs in matters of personal law, i.e. marriage, divorce, inheritance and making wills.

Unfortunately seven years ago the Islamic Assembly passed a law — section 881 bis in the Islamic Iranian Civil Code — according to which, if there be a Muslim individual in a religious minority family, that individual will collect all the inheritance of a deceased person in the family to the exclusion of all the others. The relationship of that individual to the deceased person, whether by consanguinity (descent) or by affinity (through marriage), and the

degree of relationship are immaterial. This law is arbitrary and unjust and has rendered ineffective the provisions of the Islamic Civil Code, previously mentioned, giving protection to religious minorities in matters of personal law. Furthermore in my research I have not found anything in the holy *Koran* to justify this arbitrary provision.

According to a universally accepted legal principle, it is the personal law of the deceased person that governs inheritance. This legal principle has been accepted by all nations including Islamic nations with reference to all that you said today in praise of a civil society in which all citizens should enjoy the same rights. I earnestly entreat you to issue an order for the subject to be investigated so that the rightful may gain the right.

Another issue that I would like to bring to your attention relates to blood-money (*Dieh*). In the Islamic Criminal Code there are provisions for payment of blood-money by the perpetrator or his/her heir to the victim or the heir of the victim when the victim has been murdered, killed through manslaughter or injured as the result of an accident caused by the perpetrator. These provi-

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sions are applicable when the victim is a Muslim male; and the blood-money of a Muslim female is half of that of a male. But if the victim is a Zoroastrian, a Christian or Jew these rules do not apply. Consequently they are not entitled to any compensation of blood-money. Evidently this is discrimination and, as such, unjust!

Again with regard to your statement today that in a civil society all people must enjoy equal rights and those who have been treated unjustly should demand their rights through the existing legal channels, I hereby earnestly entreat you to issue an order for these matters to be investigated and the injustice be removed. I am so impressed by your expressed love for justice in your statements. I believe that in the Iranian civil society all people who are proud to be Iranian should enjoy human dignity and make every effort within the legal framework to attain equality.

Khatami: I thank you for your remarks. Let me make a point about our dear Zoroastrians. Of course as a Yazdi I grew up with Zoroastrians. We lived together in Yazd. Yazd is one of the centers of Zoroastrians and there has always been a friendly relation between

us and them. Some of my best friends were Zoroastrians and still are. Concerning its background and its link with Iran, Zoroastrianism has always had a great place in Iranian history and for all Iranians. The fact is that after the Arabs took over Iran, they did not know what to do with Zoroastrians. It was His Holiness Ali who, quoting from the *Koran*, said Zoroastrianism is a religion with a book: Zoroaster is a prophet, and *Avesta* is a holy book. Thus a disaster which might have happened was in fact prevented; and since then, the Zoroastrian religion along with Christianity, Judaism and Islam stands as one of the great four heavenly religions.

Of course I am not familiar with the laws you mentioned. You have the right to express your views. However, so long as these laws are on the books they will be implemented. But if there are different views these views must be expressed and we must make efforts to bring our views closer to what goes on in today's world and try to understand them. Mindful of the prevailing interests in the society, our laws should be more encompassing and citizens of whatever religion, just because they have accepted the citizenship, must benefit from all the

rights of citizenship. And presently all this exists to a great extent, and if it seems that in some cases there are any shortcomings, they must be resolved through discussion and dialog. What is important is the peaceful coexistence which has existed between Zoroastrians and Muslims throughout history, and God willing this will be even more strengthened at this juncture of history, and we shall all work together for the pride of Iran.

Straightening The Times

In its review of the film *Earth, The New York Times* referred to the Parsis of India as "descended from the Muslims who fled Persia in the ninth century..."

Correcting the "historical misrepresentation" Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) public relations officer Sarosh Sukhia gave *The Times* a short course in West Asian history: "The Parsis of India and Pakistan are descendants of the Zoroastrian refugees who fled Persia in the seventh century. The Zoroastrian empires had been in existence the millennia preceding the birth of Christ, marked by the reigns of Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes. The *Torah* and the *Old Testament* refer to the Persian kings and their dynasties which prevailed well into the eighth century before succumbing to the onslaught of the caliphs from Arabia. As our Muslim coreligionists can confirm, the *Koran* makes several references to prophets preceding Mohammed — including Zarathushtra, Moses and Jesus."

Standing tall

The Pakistan daily *Dawn*, in "The Review" dated December 30, 1999-January 5, 2000 presented "a gallery of pictures of 39 prominent women and men of our country 'who stand for excellence or inventiveness or have the ability to overcome the odds and yet stand tall,'" notes Noshir B. Mana of Karachi in a letter to *Parsiana*.

"What stumped me was that four of those portrayed in the distinguished 'Gallery 1999/2000' were Zoroastrians... Late Justice Dorab Patel, Bapsy Sidhwa, Dr Faridon Sethna and Jamsheed Marker. It was indeed heartening that four members from a minuscule community of about 2,000 got listed from the entire national population pool of over 12,24,09,000... Zoroastrians being

continued on page 105

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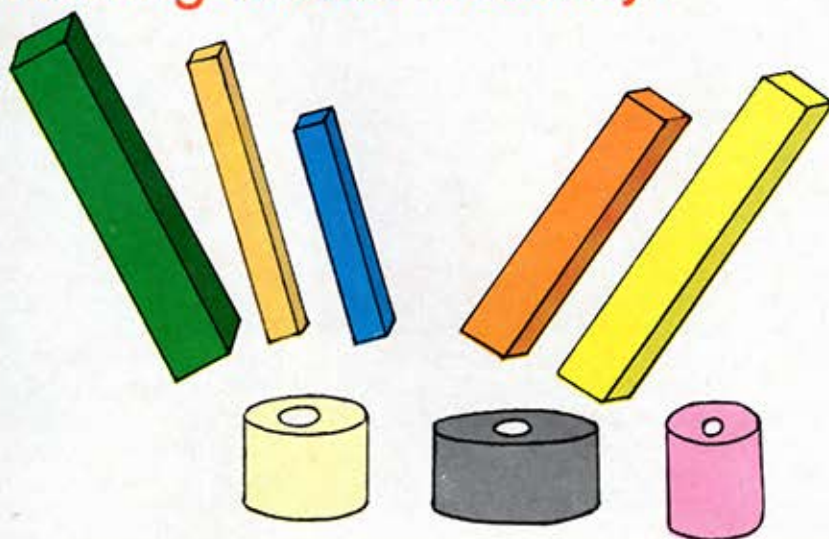
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A time for change

A change of public opinion through all means is preferable to legal battles in court, advises Attorney-General of India Soli Sorabjee at the Federation meeting in Mhow

Arnavaz S. Mama

Even as Group Capt Dhunjishaw Marker, president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Mhow, welcomed "the last Federation (of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India) meeting of this millennium" in his hometown on November 19, 1999 a new elan seemed to have gripped the delegates from the major Zoroastrian settlements of Bombay, Delhi and Madras. Though no significant resolutions were adopted there was an overall outspokenness and a reluctance to shun controversial topics, as has not been the case hitherto.

"If (according) to the earlier charter controversial issues will not be discussed, the Federation is not worth its salt," declared Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) chief executive Behram Dastur. He tabled a list of community ailments winning the support not only of BPP trustees Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff and Dinshaw Tamboly but also of Federation vice presidents Lt Gen Adi Sethna, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) and Nariman Mogrelia, president of the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman. Staunch intellectual support was also forthcoming from former IAS officer and current president of the Indore Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman Bomi Heerjee. Of course, this meant that the usual repetitive topics like the reports from the anjumans, the youth bodies, the world body, etc were truncated or eliminated.

Objections to this change of course were limited to statements by Banoo-goshasp Irani of Dahanu, Federation vice president Eruch Irani of Poona, and Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations president Porus Karanjawalla of Ahmedabad and Homi Palsetia of Saronda.

Overall there was the benign presence of chief guest Soli Sorabjee, Attorney-General of India, both humorously evocative and legally sobering. "Honest

introspection is necessary (for the) spirit of betterment of the community," he commented, adding, "If you are afraid of ideas you are not ready for democracy... Please don't lose one virtue, the virtue of tolerance." Sorabjee promised to donate one lakh of rupees "to any agency working for the betterment of mobeds."

Federation stalwart and joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi being absent from the meet, the void was filled by joint honorary secretary Shroff, Sethna and Farokh Rustomji of the DPA. Also missed was Surat Parsi Panchayat's (SPP) Sorab Katpitia, the Federation's one-man committee pursuing defunct anjuman properties across the country to salvage their worth through mediation or legal battle.

The occasion also marked a truncated awards ceremony as the Federation's Awards for Excellence were presented to five awardees by Sorabjee before the deliberations commenced — a businesslike procedure bereft of the pomp of earlier occasions.

The house stood in two-minutes' silent remembrance of the youthful former member of the National Minorities Commission and MLA Marazban Patrawala. Also condoled were the deaths of Minochaher Bharucha of Bhavnagar and Hoshang Baldawala of Bardoli.

Apart from generalized topics like the initiation of the children of Zoroastrian women, a last view of the face of Zoroastrian dead by non-Zoroastrians, the paucity of mobeds, etc, the agenda item discussed in some depth was the provision of medical insurance for the community as a whole by the member-in-charge Hoshang Wania, president of the Nargol Anjuman.

The tiny Mhow Anjuman, of barely 100 individuals, had produced a bumper souvenir on the occasion of the Federa-

tion meet that its honorary secretary Dr Behram Masani called "the biggest project we have taken up in (this) generation." (Indeed, it made front-page news in the local press.) Containing much relevant information, the publication contains several period pictures of historical value. The Anjuman, including master of ceremonies Zal Cowasji, was at pains to depict the natural and community resources Mhow has to offer the zealous entrepreneurs. With 10 cars and a bus mustered to receive the delegates trickling into the settlement, all committee members remained alert throughout the three days including vice president Dr Jimmy Appoo, Kersy and Jeroo Masalawala, Brig Farokh Bulsara, jt secretary Eruch Merchant, Yasmin and Kersy Bhote. Masani together with wife Dolly and daughter Pervin Jehangir remained at the heart of the operations. Raju Pawar had created the prominent Farohar at the venue and Sheikh Hasan had been the contractor in charge.

The task of providing the transport to ensure that the variously quartered delegates assembled in time for the sessions as well as three meals a day and caught their respective return train or air connection was shouldered by young Bobby Masalawala while Ruby Khajotia of Baroda and her team of caterers ensured that each meal was a pleasure.

The next meeting of the Federation's executive council will be held in Madras on July 15 and 16, 2000 at the invitation of Mogrelia so that the delegates can participate in the 90th anniversary celebrations of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher on July 17.

Zoroastrians as bridge builders

Even as Masani began introducing the chief guest, a twinkle-eyed Sorabjee chimed in: "Date of birth *na kaheta* (Don't mention the date of birth)!" Not

'We are the Pilgrims, master;
we should go always a little further;
it may be beyond the last mountain
barred with snow across
that angry or that glimmering sea.....'



29th July, 1904 – 29th November, 1993.

J.R.D. Tata was fond of this poem by James Elroy Flecker, indeed he was the very embodiment of it. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to his vision. And we will go a little further, beyond the last blue mountain...





L to R (1st row): Gunder, Sethna, Bhacca, Mogrelia, E. Irani; (2nd row): Marker and Sorabjee, Masani, Shroff, Tamboly; (3rd row): Heerjee, Kavarana, Rustomji, Dastur, Wania; (alongside) Awardees: Birdy, Avari, Ginwalla, Bhesania, Lahewala

to be outdone, Masani, a lawyer himself, concluded his remarks by stating, "A good lawyer knows the law. A better lawyer knows how to get around the law!"

Professing to be "a bit speechless with the introduction," Sorabjee recalled his fascination for Mhow — Military Headquarters Of War — since the time he played war games on his own as a child. Appreciating the deep concern for the community that had gathered these Zoroastrians together, Sorabjee who had read the minutes of the past meetings said he was "disturbed by the problems;" at one time Parsi names in the services were legion; not any more. "We haven't had Parsi cricketers for decades," and there are "very few of us..." in the decision making process" of the country.



He attributed the lack of mobeds to their low incomes and scantier respect, especially in Bombay and Delhi. "You need a body of well-fed, well respected mobeds if you want to preserve the faith," he emphasized while noting the Zoroastrian priests' inadequate grounding in theology and philosophy which prevented them from rising to the intel-

lectual level of the Jesuits.

Firmly against any demand for reservation from the community, Sorabjee noted, "For 50 years we have stood on our own feet and will do much better in the future without reservation."

Enumerating the two true tests of a democracy, viz "a dissenter in a democracy must feel at home" and that result

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L to R (1st row): Master, Patel and Cama, Dandiwalla, Dittia; (2nd row): Anklesaria, P. Irani, Pagdiwalla, Ginwalla, Palsetia

ism results from consensus freely given, Sorabjee maintained, "We Zoroastrians are equipped to be bridge builders... As

true missionaries we do not (need to) proselytize but to spread Zoroastrian values and the message of tolerance and respect for different ways...of life when forces of fanaticism (are rampant) around us... (If we could) combat religious fanaticism we'd be making a greater contribution to the nation than by producing

brilliant lawyers or great doctors."

Aware that Zoroastrians outside Bombay are willing to work hard but the children of his friends in Bombay are disinclined to make the effort, Sorabjee was categorical that "there should be no complacency... (It) has led us to be overtaken in business and public administra-

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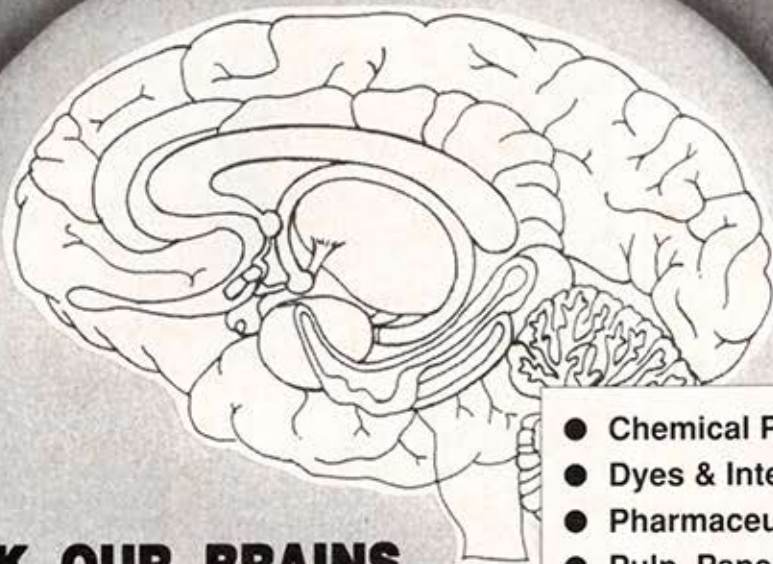
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tion." Recalling the plays of Adi Marzban ("how we could laugh at ourselves"), he proposed "we should have a book of eccentrics. We'll outplay any community, anywhere in the world!" Extolling the virtues of Parsi Gujarati — "a unique language with such flavor — it can't ever be translated," he recalled phrases like "*Kétla intelligent ché pun kaaré bhi kor vali désé tau malam nahi parsé* (he is still mentally alert but you never know when he will cross over)... *É tau bicharo* was-not *thai gayo* (the poor fellow is dead and gone)... *Éni tau wicket pari gai* [In cricket terminology, he's gone back to the pavilion (God)]."

Unmindful of the "prognosis of the prophets of disaster who say Zoroastrianism is dying and will disappear," Sorabjee maintained sturdily, "As long as the commitment to Zoroastrian principles and values continues, (there will be) Zoroastrian footprints on the sands of time. We will sing *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti* even in the next millennium!"

Community flash points

Two years in the saddle as the chief executive of the BPP, Dastur presented a list of community problems to the assembled delegates. It included:

- The demographic imbalance of too many deaths (including those of infants) to too few births.
- The growing poverty: 15 percent of the Bombay community lives at or below the poverty line, congested, jobless, poorly educated, indifferent to the need for hard work.
- Interfaith marriages and the need to assimilate their offspring.
- Paucity of mobeds.
- The need for professional management of idle assets. He quoted Katpitia's estimate of Rs 100 crores worth of Parsi property lying idle which may slip out of community hands.
- The increasing urbanization leading to problems with the conventional mode of disposal of the dead.
- The need to avail of spare land to nurture bawal trees to ensure kathi for the fire-temples.
- The rising disinclination to speak Gujarati.

•Too many agiaries.

Shroff referred to a Tata Institute of Social Sciences survey commissioned by the BPP which has projected the Parsi population at the national level at around 80,000 by 2001. Whether the change in figures (the 1991 census enumerated 76,382 Zoroastrians in India) was due to a decline in emigration, a rise in the age at death or an increase in the birthrate, remained to be ascertained,

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but fertility remains 25 percent lower than replacement level, according to the report.

Bazun Dittia referred to twin births in Hyderabad and the anjuman's offer of a bonus in the case of multiple births.

Accepting that "the points which (Dastur) has raised need much examination," Sethna noted there are "more people

over 65 than under 18... Everytime I go to Gujarat I find the loss of two or three resource persons... Do not allow a single Zoroastrian to be lost: even one Zoroastrian parent's child should be initiated into the faith," he advised quoting the example of the group of Little Farohars — children of endogamous and exogamous marriages in Delhi who get together to learn about Zoroastrian religion and culture, the community wealth that "in our peculiar westernization mode we are spurning."

Questioning the value system that sends Zoroastrians to London and further west but will not enable them to seek a good life in a place like Mhow, Sethna noted that there are now more opportunities in the mofussil than in Bombay and where occupations as rickshaw drivers, agriculture and horticulture beckon.

Tracing the attitudinal change awareness brings over a period of six to seven years, Mogrelia related how he had invited the representatives of the three Zoroastrian bodies in Madras (viz the Anjuman, the Madras Parsi Association and The Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher Trust Board) to ask whether they were in favor of the children of mixed marriages being allowed into the religion. The reply then was wholly negative. Repeating the exercise after about three years produced a 50 percent change. Recently when the now 380 Zoroastrians were asked to vote, the

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result was "100 percent acceptance." There is "unity in the diversity of opinion," claimed Mogrelia. "Eventually something is bound to happen with pushing," said he, advising the BPP to send out a small questionnaire to the community. "You will find your hands strengthened so much that no high priest or conservative lobby will be able to say anything! Instead of pushing it under the carpet, bring it out and thresh it out. This could be your strongest achievement!"

Congratulating Dastur "for highlighting some of our problems," Heerjee asked, "How do we face them? If controversial issues are not to be dealt with (at Federation meetings) and these meetings are only for bonhomie and backslapping, we are not going to get anywhere. What we should aim for is consensus. Put it up to the house... (Then) it would be difficult for anjumans to take a different path."

Considering it "presumptuous on my part to say what you should or shouldn't do," Sorabjee explained that though Justices Davar and Beaman had noted that the "Zoroastrian faith is for spreading, economic considerations (had come) in

(and) therefore only Parsis by birth and religion (are allowed the use of community facilities)." The judges had recognized the children of Parsi fathers and non-Parsi mothers as Parsis. As for the Privy Council judgment in the Bella Case of 1921 "when it was given there was no equality of sex." (Bella was the daughter of a Parsi mother and Goanese father reared in a Parsi Zoroastrian family and initiated into the faith who was prevented from entering the Rangoon agiary.) Referring to the disparity in accepting the children of Parsi men and not of women as "blatant inequality of sex (and) a very serious constitutional issue," Sorabjee advised the community leaders to think "what is in the ultimate interest of the community. Religion may be above reason but it can't be contrary to reason." Challenging anyone to find the textual source which prevents the acceptance of the children of Parsi women into the faith, he attributed the problem to "deep-seated mental attitudes." Using the Ecumenical Council as a guide — "50 to 60 years ago the idea that Catholics and Protestants can work together when the Ecumenical Council

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Clockwise from right: Agiary façade and hall; meals venue Dotiwala Hall and entrance to Anjuman complex



was first established, was considered unworkable" — Sorabjee advised, "Let not mental fetters of the past prevent a reasonable approach." He suggested however a persuasive change of public opinion by "all the means available" rather than a legal battle in the courts.

This led Heerjee to suggest a "small core group of diverse opinions" to fully discuss the contentious issues like allowing non-Parsis to see the face of the Parsi dead, the acceptance of the children of Parsi women, etc fearing that "if these decisions are put off, we are heading for litigation."

Dissent was voiced by Dahanu, Poona, Ahmedabad and Saronda. Banoogoshasp Irani informed the gathering that her anjuman was working towards a bar even on the navjote of the children of Parsi men married to women of other faiths. Ahmedabad's Karanjawalla "strongly objected to some statements from the dais." He contended that this trend could lead to another break in the Federation as each anjuman is an autonomous body. "What if the anjuman asks for reforms and the mobed refuses? We have to take the anjuman and the mobeds along... 30-40 years later the trend may change."

This reference to priestly refusal to go along reminded DPA's Adil Nargolwala of an incident nearly 20 years ago when a Mr Kapadia had wanted to be or



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cremated but the priest had refused to pray. "My father (the redoubtable Shiavax Nargolwala, the late president of the DPA) said, 'Give me the prayers and I will pray with the anjuman.' The priest felt bad and agreed to perform (the ceremony)," related Nargolwala.

Guzder spoke of the repeated requests to the BPP to keep the face of the deceased open for the non-Zoroastrians to see, as happens in Delhi. Sethna noted that up to 1921 the face was left open. The system of covering the face resulted from the influenza epidemic. He further recounted that in the early 1930s Sir Rustom Vakeel, a minister in the British-India government was given a state funeral with his face open and a guard of honor. He said he showed a picture of the funeral to Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal who responded that Vakeel had been a "big man and at that time (there was) no anxiety about the face being open."

Sethna seconded Heerjee's suggestion of a small think tank of about five persons and suggested that it include Shroff, Tamboly, Heerjee, a FOZYA representative and Dastur as member secretary, the suggestion being endorsed from the floor by Viloo Motishah of Indore. Phiroze Illava of Mhow sug-

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gested that a list of 10-15 names be presented for the anjumans to make a selection. Bombay social worker Mahrukh Noble stated that nothing could be binding on the community without a referendum and Mhow's Dr Pheroze Bharucha asked, "What do I do if my president's views are forced on me?"

Respecting its constitution, the Federation had not discussed controversial matters all these years, noted Mogrelia but he feared that unless they are threshed out now, these issues will become disruptive. "Youngsters with conservative views do not have the knowledge or experience. Five years ago I too was a conservative," he added. He argued that if we were to avoid litigation, the best modus operandi would be a referendum. The law at present is infringing the basic human rights of Parsi mothers. "It was on the same basis that Air India hostesses won their case," he cited as example. "When the priests are pre-

L to R (1st row): Cowasji, Bharucha, a speaker from the floor; (2nd row): Panthaky, Jehangir and Dolly Masani; (3rd row) Kersy and Bobby Masalawala, Larry

sented facts and figures... the same story as Madras will be repeated," he opined.

Dastur was equally forceful, arguing for an amendment of the Federation constitution if necessary: "Say (we) will discuss controversial issues if they affect the community." Agreeing that their inability to view the face of their deceased friend was "a burning question with non-Parsis, they felt very hurt," and that the convention to cover the face dates no further back than the late 1920s, early 1930s, Dastur favored an initial colloquium with the high priests and, failing that, a referendum.

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ters. The very topic should not have been raised without being mentioned on the agenda," objected Eruch Irani.

Heerjee explained that his suggestion of a core group was "not to take decisions but to thresh out matters in all aspects. Religion touches different aspects of the community. Discuss them, come back to the Federation. No decision will be thrust on anjumans. Make the core group more representative. Let there be interaction with the clergy. Set the ball rolling... This type of discussion is not taken up at all."

"Make the role of the Federation more meaningful... Amend the constitution if need be," stressed Mogrelia.

"Will the verdict of the Federation be binding on anjumans if the role of the Federation is more meaningful? What about the implementation?" asked Karanjawalla.

"How do you change the rules of the Federation?" enquired Nargolwala.

"How do we close our eyes to the reality?" countered Dittia.

In light of the foregoing discussion it needs to be highlighted that according to clause 35 of the Federation Consti-

tution's Rules and Regulations (R&R), only the President of the Federation can stop discussion of a controversial matter if he deems it prejudicial to the community. His mandate can be overruled however if 80 percent of the members present and voting demand that the discussion continue. Also, an object of the Federation [3(vii)] is to educate Zoroastrian public opinion on all matters affecting Zoroastrian religion and culture. However, all member anjumans are free to manage their own affairs, implementing Federation recommendations if deemed fit (R&R 5A).

Tamboly noted that while the view of the earlier BPP trustees had been that no controversial issues will be discussed at BPP board meetings, "the present board does not believe that anything should not be discussed. We have taken the community into confidence regarding dokhmenashini." Dittia remarked, "If the BPP speaks with one voice, there is no doubt that others will fall into line."

In the post-lunch session Motishah, dissatisfied with the increasing materialism of life, endorsed the suggestion for a core group "to which we can ad-



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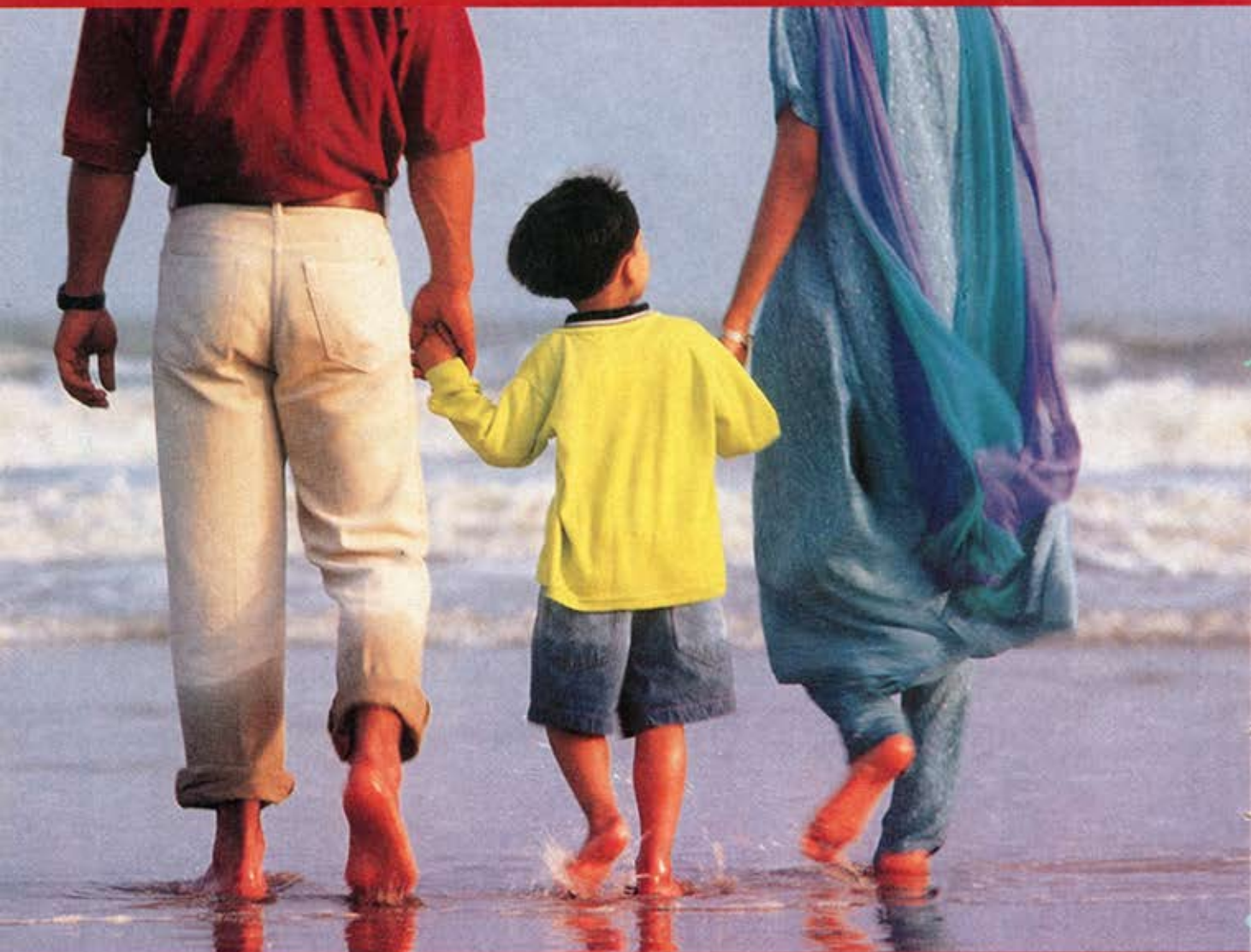
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dress our queries on religion." Appoo suggested that the decision to cover or expose the face of the deceased should be the prerogative of individual families. But Dittia noted, "Individuals and individual families are in the hands of the priests. If the priest refuses to perform the ceremony, there is nothing that individuals can do. If not direction, at least a consensus is required."

Support came from an unexpected quarter. Recalling that the *Parsee Prakash* records that the face was once left open and thereafter covered because of flies and insects converging upon it during the long trek from the residence to the Towers of Silence, Mhow mobed Ervad Sorab Panthaky indicated that "many athornans will support your views if the voting is by secret ballot."

Mobeds

Tamboly reminded the delegates of the World Zoroastrian Organisation's Rs 90 lakh donation to the Athornan Mandal in the interest of producing educated, articulate mobeds devoted to the profession full-time. Twenty-four to 26 mobeds receive supplementary benefits which also depend upon the number and caliber of the ceremonies they perform. The Mandal has invested in Deep Discount Bonds to provide for terminal benefits as the occasion requires. So far "the response has been quite encouraging," said Tamboly.

Guzder referred to the Rs 50 lakh donation from Iranian philanthropists Mehraban and Faridoon Zartoshty with its two-pronged aim of helping mobeds and disseminating religious knowledge to the community in the form of one or two lectures a month. "But there is not too much response," mused Guzder. "Hardly 10-15 persons come."

Bharucha suggested the institution of websites instead to overcome the time restrictions people face. Pervaz Irani of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman referred to the time slots reserved for Muslims and Hindus on cable TV and wondered if the Zoroastrians could make a similar bid. Tamboly offered that the lectures could be periodically held in other Zoroastrian centers.

Masani informed how Mhow had overcome its mobed crisis. But it was at the expense of the Panchgani agiary. The weary refrain of mobeds unwilling to leave Bombay to serve mofussil anjumans was heard again with Guzder and Shroff enumerating the benefits

mobeds seem to enjoy in Bombay: housing in Godrej Baug and an eight crore subsidy from the Maneckji Sett Trust for Bhagaria mobeds. Masani volunteered that the Mhow anjuman would sponsor a student at the Athornan Madressa on condition that the institution agrees that their graduates serve "not only in Bombay but in other anjumans." "They do volunteer to go for a month or so," responded Tamboly noting that he would pursue the matter with the Athornan Mandal committee.

With his focus on long-term requirements Dastur quoted the needs of 44 agiaries and four atash behrams in Bombay, four agiaries in Bharuch, nine agiaries and two atash behrams in Surat. Though the high priests have opposed the idea, Dastur believes that merging the fires will produce "surplus mobeds." He says his research among Avesta and Pahlavi documents has revealed no scriptural reason against the idea. At an earlier Federation meet noted solicitor Burjor Antia had espoused the same thought, though his reason had been to free property for housing, as now recalled Tamboly. In any case, since November 1999, three more agiaries have been added in Bombay and its environs, while Borivli has been lobbying for one since some time past.

Surat will be celebrating the 178th anniversary of the P. K. Vakeel Atash Bahram in March 2000, informed SPP president and Federation vice president Dr Sam Bhacca. Their prayer hall, sagdi and bungli at the Doongerwadi was recently renovated and a new building to house mobeds is on the anvil thanks to donations from Guzder and the Maneckbai Jeejeebhoy Trust, he added.

A suggestion from Bharucha, which failed to elicit response, was whether the BPP would publish a list of mobeds willing to perform the navjote of children of mixed marriages.

Mhow chaloji

Describing the current Indian Zoroastrian mindset as "a crisis of collective consciousness," Mhow's Jehangir Larry considered the present scenario as on the brink of "a phase transition," such as the one degree change in the temperature of water from 1°C to 0°C which changes its physical feature, from liquid to solid. From that background he has developed a plan which had the Mhow Anjuman agog. Larry dedicated his nine-page effort to the memory of J. R. D.



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"Our forbears built this lovely cantonment. The town owes to them whatever it has — from roads and lakes to the army establishments and schools. Before nationalization we even owned and operated the electric power supply company. In 1900 we were 1,000 strong and growing. Our properties lined both sides of all the main roads in Mhow. We ran factories and restaurants. Shops were ours and we were major contractors, suppliers and builders.

"Our plan is simple... the Anjuman and its members will join hands to promote industry, providing employment to Parsis." Larry's concept rested on promoting Parsi products on the basis of community brand equity and felt that Mhow had the necessary infrastructure to offer interested entrepreneurs.

Mediclaim

Group mediclaim is the brainchild of Wania who had been authorized at the last Federation meeting to form his own sub-committee and proceed with preliminary enquiries. He reported that he had inducted Tamboly and BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta as well as two upcountry members and that the scheme, when formulated, will be vetted by an eminent lawyer like Homi Ranina.

He explained to the members the difference between the workings of the individual and group insurance schemes. In the case of individual insurance the patient must first pay the hospital bills and then claim the amount from the insurance company. In the case of group insurance, the insurance company, on receiving the premium, issues a card to the group members on which are listed the names of hospitals all over India. These hospitals will liaise directly with the insurance company for payment.

Secondly, individual mediclaim ceases at the age of 75 years. As part of the group scheme, which becomes effective two months after the initial premium is paid, it continues for life and even covers chronic diseases, maintained Wania. The family includes all dependents named. Moreover, a "floater" policy ensures claims up to five lakh rupees for even a single family member, said Wania.

The snag is that a hospital like the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital cannot afford to wait until the insurance company effects payment, informed Wania. This prompted him to suggest that the community create a corpus trust of between 50 lakh to one crore rupees which could ensure that the money is rolled around by giving deposits to the hospital until the insurance payment is forthcoming. The trust could avail of the 80G Income Tax exemption to donors under the women and children scheme. The premium amounts would need to be paid by this trust via a second trust as not all beneficiaries would be women and children.

An income level would have to be set above which the families could contribute and below which the premium could be provided by the anjumans/panchayats for the annual policies, suggested Wania. He recommended that premia for senior citizens (65-75 years) should be paid out of community

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The mode of creating the corpus and working out the nitty-gritty remained open. In answer to Rustomji's query about OPD (out-patients department) reimbursements, Wania said he would work in a Rs 1,500 per person clause.

Wania's assumption that the BPP would shoulder the administrative responsibility of the project was shot down by Shroff and Dastur:

"It would be too much of a load for the BPP to take on. What sort of corpus would the hospitals require?" questioned Shroff noting that the same group of benefactors have to be approached each time. Besides, he added, "Self reliance should be built in. The dole system is not helping the beneficiaries. They should be made to contribute."

"Go cautiously on subsidizing the premium," said Dastur. "You know how people juggle figures in housing." Referring to administrative expenses, he noted, "the present staff of the BPP can't be expected to take it on... we need a separate secretariat."

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awards for excellence have lost much of their elan since the retirement of former BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. This year only five awards — a mixed bag of achievements dating between 1994 and 1998 — were presented of a total of 17. While Zoroastrians forge ahead in innumerable fields, assessing them and tracking them in later years seems to be presenting a daunting task, calling for more time and energy than the organization can muster.

The Mazda Education Foundation Award for excellence achieved in the sphere of education, research, science and technology in 1998 was presented to Merzban Lahewala. The Ahmedabadi businessman's claim to fame lies in the production of an outsized agarbatti whose dimensions have earned him a place not only in the *Limca Book of Records* but in the *Guinness Book of World Records 2000*.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet Award for excellence achieved in the study of Zoroastrian history, culture and scriptures during 1997 went to Surat historian Rusi Besania.

The Jiji D. Irani award for excellence in sports in 1998 was presented to chess wizard Viraf Avari of Bulsar.

The Jamshed and Shirin Guzder Award for the best youth sportsperson of 1998 was claimed by athlete Karishma Birdy of Bombay while the Peshotan Nargolwala Award for excellence in sports in 1994 was bagged by young roller skater Zubin Ginwalla.

Engaged in the manufacture of incense sticks and perfumery items, Lahewala's magnum opus is 14'9" tall, 6" thick and weighs 6.3 kg, burning for 60 hours with a change of three fragrances. The idea of outsized agarbattis had first occurred to him when he experimented with six 12' long pieces, earning encomiums during the Ganesh Utsav in 1997, records the citation.

With an academic career that yielded two gold and six silver medals plus prizes in elocution, authorship and drama, Besania's achievement as president of the Parsi Pragati Mandal together with the late Dr Minocher Contractor was the long overdue investiture of a portrait of Mme Bhikhaiji Cama in the Central Hall of Parliament. The citation ascribes to him 19 biographies including those of Dastur Meherjirana, Homaji, Behramshah Shroff and Shapoorji Jokhi. He has also authored histories of several fire-temples including the Anjuman Atash Behram.

Wrestling champion and prize weightlifter in Gujarat, Avari first earned his chess spurs in the All-India Open Chess Tournament of 1978-79, diligently and steadfastly working to a gold medal and 'master with fide' rating of 2,200 at the World Amateur Championship in 1997-98 in which 60 players from 16 countries competed. Avari runs his own Avari Chess Academy whose five programs cover the gamut of the game from the foundation course to chess exhibitions.

The only one to seek to make a presentation on the occasion, Besania regaled the audience with a list of Parsi firsts:

- Jijibhai Chapgar first introduced block printing in Gujarat which is still used by some presses, he said.
- Mobed Fardunji Marzban started the first newspaper 178 years ago — *The Mumbai Samachar*.
- Dinsa Taleyarkhan started *Gujarat Mitra* 137 years ago.
- Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy helped start the *Jam-e-Jamshed* 168 years back.
- Dadabhai Naoroji began the *Rast Goftar* and Hirji Behadinwalla the *Kaiser-e-Hind*.
- Ratanji Sethna compiled a *Gujarat Encyclopaedia*.
- Nanabhai Rustomji Ranina compiled the *Gujarati-English*

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VIRJEES of Panchgani

Dictionary.

- Gujarati shorthand was introduced by Noshirwan Bapuji Karanjia of Surat.
- Bhikhaji Bhimji Parekh established the first press in the Devnagiri script.
- The *Khordeh Avesta* was first printed by Fardunji Marzban.
- Gujarati and Urdu Rang Bhumi (drama) was established by Parsis.

Youth

Since the Federation meeting was held within a week of the XIII Youth Seminar at Bordi, youth representation at Mhow was poor, explained Karanjawalla. Reporting on the recently concluded seminar he enumerated the main thrust of the youths gathered there:

- With opinions of high priests often in conflict, who should they follow?
- Navjote certificates, to be vetted by a committee of high priests, should be instituted.
- All mobeds who perform the navjote of children of non-Parsi fathers should be censured.
- Acknowledging that FOZYA had contributed little by way of social service, they had resolved to visit old age homes and hospitals.

Individual anjumans

For the first time in many years Hosang Debara of Agra reported a "slight increase" in the occupation of the dharamshala. Among the changes effected there are the installation of a generator, a change in the flooring and a direct telephone connection.

Baroda's population is increasing, claimed its trustee Baman Cama and 305 individuals took a blood test for G6PD (Cama did not announce the result). February 14, 2000 marks the 75th anniversary of their agiary and its renovation and that of the Godrej Hall were proceeding at the time of the Federation meeting.

Borivli president Noshir Paghdwalla referred to the need for constant activity every alternate month to keep the community interested. So boat cruises, dinners, religious lectures, felicitation to cricket umpires, tours to Iranshah, etc are dovetailed to optimum effect.

"Only the Bombay Port Trust has more flats than us," declared Tamboly. Despite 490 buildings and an annual outlay of Rs 45 lakhs, there are 20 applicants to every new flat so that each flat allotted generates 19 disgruntled families. Shroff added that the BPP was trying to raise Rs 35 crores to provide 350 flats, but "housing is only one of the issues, not the only issue."

Guzder referred to the defeatist mindset of "not being able to compete" as also to the hiatus between the "rather snooty," highly educated girls holding good jobs and suitable spouses. In light of the difficulty the community faces with college admissions Guzder felt that the recent Supreme Court decision that "reservation is not applicable in super speciality courses" should be taken full advantage of by a minority like ours. The BPP is currently helping 269 students through college at a cost of Rs 6,19,000 and 127 through vocational and technical education at an additional five lakh rupees, informed BPP joint secretary Sheroo Master. The higher education committee had

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Millennium Day Navjote

Jimmy, son of Thrity and Burjor D. Daruvala had his navjote ceremony performed on the 1st day of the New Millennium at Albless Baug. Welcome into the Zoroastrian fold
Jimmy



Navjote Mubarak

screened 42 students, providing Rs 8.2 lakh rupees as gift and Rs 8.4 lakh rupees as a loan to those proceeding abroad and Rs 1,55,000 for those continuing with their postgraduate studies in India.

"The youths are doing brilliantly... It is very difficult to decide between them. It is a misconception that they are not doing well or that they are lazy," noted Master adding, "It was very difficult to shortlist the applicants for the Dadabhai Naoroji Scholarship from 62 to 18."

While 190 students attended the 13th Holiday Programme for Youth last May, "People who come from Surat, Baroda, etc don't make very good use of the program because of the medium of instruction," she noted, requesting that the anjumans guide the students properly before sending them.

While there are 68 children on the third child scheme costing the BPP eight lakh rupees per annum, the Punchayet provides Rs 300 each to 22 parties who are dependent on daycare centers, she added.

Over 16 Zoroastrian males, largely from Nowroz Baug, have volunteered for emergency khandia duty with BPP and an "awareness campaign" has been mounted regarding the problems at

Doongerwadi, as per Dastur. In a subsequent conversation with *Parsiana* Tamboly credited Cyrus Sigantoria with the development of the volunteer corps of khandias. Moreover a geological survey of the area has been conducted by St Xavier's College students and certain boulders on the property, contiguous to the main road going up, reinforced.

A polyclinic with 24-26 cubicles is expected to start functioning on the Gamadia Hunnarshala property which would benefit young doctors on the threshold of their careers.

The Bombay report led to rapturous congratulations from Sethna on the "fantastic initiatives taken by the BPP."

In Calcutta eight rooms with attached baths in the old dharamshala are being offered to old Parsis as an old age home on a trial basis, informed Nauzer Batlivala. The community contributed Rs 17,000 plus one lakh rupees from the trust funds towards the Kargil fund. The growth of the city has required an increase in the height of the boundary walls surrounding the dokhmas, he added. At the 87th anniversary of their atash adaran the community feted Dr Russi Anklesaria and Adi Rabadi who

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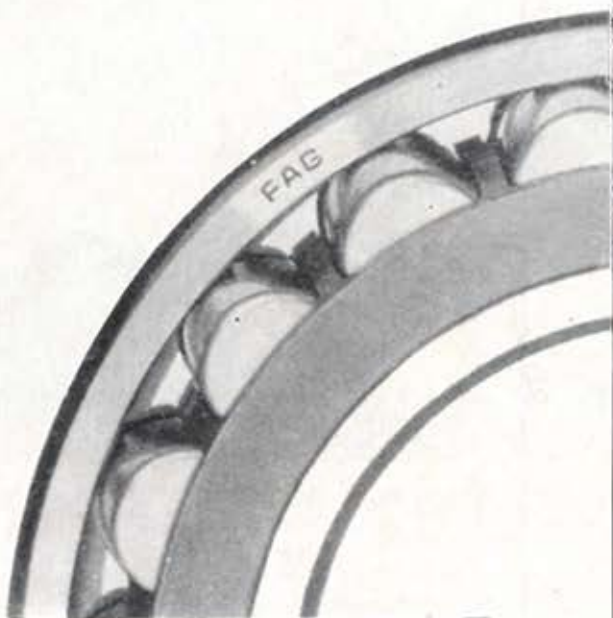
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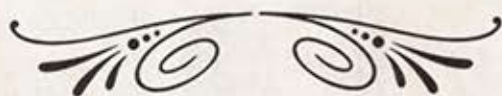
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L to R (top): Dolat and Hosang Debara, Silloo and Eruch Surti, Dick and Marker; (alongside) Batlivala, Nargolwala and B. Irani

had completed four and two terms as trustees, respectively. Camping, rock-climbing, amateur dramatics to raise funds for scholarship, continue as perennial activities.

Rustomji referred to the diamond jubilee celebrations of the DPA in January 2000 when their program included several non-Parsi speakers of distinction to present their concept of the Zoroastrian community. Variety entertainment was provided by Yazdi Karanjia's team from Surat and the Dar-e-Meher and the



Bhiwandiwalla Hall were spruced up for the occasion.

Octogenarian author Piloo Jungallwalla's new illustrated book, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, was presented to the President of India and is said to have generated much interest at the Hanover Book Fair where it was exhibited. Jungal-

walla, a long-standing author and teacher, has presented the linkages of the *Gathas* with other languages and belief systems, noted Sethna.

Lectures by Roni Khan and Noshir Dadrawala were the high points of Dahanu activities as recounted by Banoogoshasp Irani. Their basketball

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team members have been selected for the Maharashtra state team and a taluka level exhibition was to be held in the hall of the school they had established with the help of Guzder and others.

Having completed their two year project of rebuilding their dharamshala, the Indore Anjuman, which had hosted the Federation meeting in early 1998, has taken up the waterproofing of its dar-e-meher as the next project, informed Heerjee.

In a bid "to catch them young" the Jamshedpur Anjuman has utilized the surplus energy of school kids on vacation to washing the agiary — a job that quite turned them on, according to Silloo Surti. Elocution and antakshari programs are popular, but there are "more awards than participants," she noted. The birth centenary of Ardeshir Dalal, former director-in-charge of Tata Iron and Steel Company and director of Tata Sons, was celebrated by the community. Surti also described the pain of watching the alienation of a foreign lady in Jamshedpur who was not allowed to witness the funerary rites of her husband of 45 years by members of his family.

Three new couples and a bachelor have joined the 318 individuals at Madras who meet 15-18 times a year, according to Mogrelia. A newly emerging trend that is a cause for concern is that of people who lock up their community property homes when they go away — "a selfish attitude that needs to be curbed strongly," noted Mogrelia. On the other hand he reported the success story of Dinyar Nimachwalla who started as a rickshaw driver and his wife Dolly who began a beauty parlor. Now they run over seven establishments — a tribute to their pluck and hard work.

Illava requested the PPP to guide Mhow in their plan to build flats on the 12 acres of Doongerwadi land. They tried planting bawal trees but the growth is very slow due to lack of water.

Mhow is still stuck with its problem of finding a second mobed and that of absentee tenants in the Anjuman properties and Masani narrated that the Anjuman had been forced to file a case against a 90-year-old tenant who had gone away to Calcutta without ceding his flat. Masani acknowledged the BPP donation of Rs 20,000 (to which Guzder added Rs 30,000 to round it off to Rs 50,000) and fervently hoped the Mhow *chaloji* project would generate interest.

The Fravardigan jashan at Nargol was attended by 350 people even though the normal residents there are so few that 100 chairs had to be urgently donated, informed Wania. He believes that such a scene would be repeated in every mofussil village that keeps up its contacts with those who have migrated elsewhere.

Two buildings of the Poona Parsee Panchayat's 120 flats will be ready by December 2000, announced PPP trustee-secretary Eruch Irani. A sample flat open to view has been modified as per changes suggested. In all, 424 flats are in the pipeline and though the PPP had not begun to distribute forms at the time of the Federation meeting, "tremendous pressure (and) requests from all over the country," were already building up, he noted. The Pune Municipal Corporation has sanctioned construction on 7,75,000 sq feet of land donated by the late Rustom Aspandiar Irani. On the cards are an old people's home, a hospital, school

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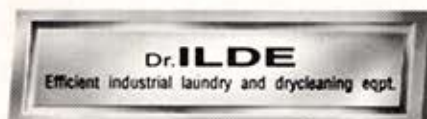
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or college. Papers for urban land ceiling clearance have been submitted for an additional 8.5 acres of land, Eruch Irani added.

The PPP quarterly *Rapport* has been keeping the public informed of the activities of the youthful, energetic team synchronizing work in Poona. Finding the amount collected from the original payment schedule at Doongerwadi insignificant (Rs 200 whereas costs per funeral amount to Rs 1,000-2,000) they have discontinued making any mandatory charge and kept donation boxes which they hope will generate more funds. Four hundred to 500 trees are planted at the doongerwadi each year during the monsoons of which an estimated 50 percent survive. Finding the wire fencing periodically cut, the trustees are in the process of erecting demarcating boundary walls especially where encroachments are high.

Miscellanea

Pervez Irani thanked the BPP trustees as well as the local Stambh Committee for the repainting, planting and borewell that has upgraded the visual impact of the Sanjan Stambh. According to Palsetia, the beautification project cost 1.5 lakh rupees (to which Guzder had donated one lakh earlier and now volunteered the balance).

Master and K. R. Cama Oriental Institute trustee-secretary Homai Modi are coordinating the Indian participation at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress at Houston in December 2000. A major concern is to enable 100 Indian youths to avail of the exposure but as each sponsorship would cost about one lakh rupees, how do we raise a crore, wondered Sethna. To Guzder, 100 "is a dream... We can at least collect 35 lakhs" to send 30-35 youngsters. He suggested that advertisements should be published seeking applicants from among whom a selection could be made according to certain criteria. Surti suggested that Indian students studying in the US who have been funded by community trusts should be asked to attend.

Master noted that efforts are on to arrange for group bookings and group visas and that anjumans have already been requested to select their best candidates. While there is no age qualification for delegates or sports competitions, the essay competition is restricted to those between 17 and 25 years.

Shroff suggested that Zoroastrians make a bid for the chairmanship of the National Minorities Commission and Sorabjee offered his help with a Zoroastrian appointment, informed Guzder. (Since then Lt Gen Adi Sethna has been nominated as the Zoroastrian member of the Commission.)

Guzder noted that attempts to persuade Bombay University to reserve four seats for Parsis against their recent donations to the construction of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan at its Kalina campus had been unsuccessful.

Dr Homi Dhalla and Ervad Pervez Bajan had been sponsored by the BPP to attend the Third Parliament of World Religions at South Africa last December.

Every alternate Saturday Gujarati classes are being conducted at Bombay's Girton School by the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation and there was an attempt to revive old Parsi songs and plays and record them on CD Rom, noted Tamboly. Sethna traced the history of the Interfaith Movement to Ardeshtir Kotwal in Surat 100 years ago. Kotwal, he said, had rid Surat of

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years of crime and the head of the Swaminarayan group had handed over his pagdi as a tribute. Even today there's a "huge gathering of all communities when it is ritually exposed," said Sethna.

In Delhi, eminent counsel Fali Nariman had discoursed at the Dalai Lama Foundation and on Diwali day Star News had programmed the first decade of 1900 as seen through Parsi eyes. Guzder had taken the team to Cusrow Baug. Sethna was interviewed and Delhi mobed Cawas Bagli said a *doa tandarosti* for the Pope on international TV.

The UNESCO project on the Parsi community, coordinated by Dr Shernaz Cama of Delhi, is tapping the scholarship of Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal and scholars like Mary Boyce and Armaity Desai have been inducted on the team. Thanks to a munificent five lakh rupee donation by Jungalwalla, the manuscripts and rare books at the Meherjirana Library at Navsari will be documented on CD Rom. At the moment there is not a single fire extinguisher in the wooden structure which houses Arabic, Persian, Urdu and

Sanskrit manuscripts under layers of dust, said Sethna who is hoping to involve the Gujarat Government in its resurrection. Dastur suggested that the Tarapur Anjuman library was also a treasure trove worth salvaging. Other donations to the UNESCO project included five lakh rupees through Tamboly, Rs 20,001 from Bharuch and Rs 500 from Ronny Dick of Jhansi.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Hosang and Dolat Debara from Agra; Porus Karanjawalla and Perzid Daruwala from Ahmedabad; Homi and Shirin Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Shavak Patel, Baman Cama and Kaizad Engineer from Baroda; Dara and Shirin Mahudawala and Sarosh and Pilloo Ginwala from Bharuch; Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Tamboly, Behram Dastur, Sheroo Master, Mehli Colah, Gool Kias from Bombay; Noshir Paghdwalla, Rohinton Siganporia and Kersy Mistry from Borivli; Hoshang Havaladar from Burhanpur; Nauzer Batlivala from Calcutta; Banoogoshasp Irani from Dahanu Rd; Marazban Wadia from

Davies; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Farokh Rustomji, Yazdi Pithawalla and Adil Nargolwala from Delhi; Bomi Heerjee, Dara Unwala, Gev Thanevala, Jasmine Bharucha, Gulu Satarawalla, Phiroz Madan and Minoo Engineer from Indore; Pervez Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Eruch and Silloo Surti from Jamshedpur; Ronny Dick from Jhansi; Nariman Mogrelia from Madras; Gp Capt Dhunjishaw Marker, Phiroze Illava, Yasmin Bhote, Behram and Dolly Masani, Dr Jimmy Appoo, Eruch Merchant, Zal Cowasji, Brig Farokh Bulsara, Kersy Masalawala and Behram Mehervaid from Mhow; Hoshang Wania from Nargol; Shahzad and Khurshid Vesuna from Navsari; Eruch Irani from Poona; Tehmtom Anklesaria and Godrej Kabir from Ratlam; Dinshaw Patel, Jehangir Mandviwalla and Homi Palsetia from Saronda; Nevil Buhariwala from Vyara. Attorney-General Soli Sorabjee was chief guest and Bazun Dittia from Hyderabad was an invitee. A large number of observers from Mhow, Indore and other centers were present. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 64

an infinitesimal .0016 percent of the whole," adds Mana.

Parsiana quotes verbatim the four brief eulogies from *Dawn*:

Justice Dorab Patel

"Born in 1924 in a Parsi family residing in Quetta, Dorab Patel rose to be one of Pakistan's most prominent judges who resigned from his judgeship after General Zia made judges take an oath to uphold martial law under the infamous Provisional Constitutional Order.

"In an increasingly lawless land, Justice Dorab Patel continued to represent all the values that a civilized country and its people aspired to (uphold). A man of many interests, Justice Patel represented Pakistan at the UN (United Nations) and other international forums, where he addressed subjects as diverse as the future agenda of the UN or the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

"His famous judgment in the contempt case against Yusuf Ali Khan in 1977 completely changed the law established in the Snelson case of 1963. After leaving the bench, Justice Patel rose to further heights as the chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan where he lent his strength and character to this fledgling organization. Justice Patel died in 1997 and is remembered for his diverse contributions: to the cause of justice, democracy and human rights."

Bapsy Sidhwa

"Bapsy Sidhwa is Pakistan's first English language novelist who has been published in the West to wide acclaim. Her novels show her sensitivity and her passion for storytelling coupled with a complete lack of pretension. Her novel *Cracking India* which describes Partition through the eyes of a nine-year-old Parsi girl, Lenny, has been made into a film, *Earth*, which has also clinched an Oscar nomination in the best foreign film category."

Dr Faridon Sethna

"Dr Sethna's stature in the field of obstetrics and gynecology is undeniably huge. In Karachi, his skills and methods have earned him the ungrudging respect of countless mothers, grandmothers, daughters and even husbands. Dr Sethna is the medical superintendent of the Lady Dufferin Hospital where meticulous hygiene and cleanliness control is clearly

the norm. Today this Hospital stands proud thanks to the innumerable contributions of private donors, certain governments and the indefatigable efforts of men and women like Dr Sethna and the trustees of the Lady Dufferin Foundation Trust. He is known for his sympathetic stance towards poor patients and his ability to work with everyone. 'People with my sort of reputation would be considered to be extremely wealthy but I am not... What are riches when they are carved out of human misery?'"

Jamsheed Marker

"One of our best known diplomats, Mr Marker was for many years Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations (UN). After his retirement from the foreign service, he was then hired as a special envoy of the UN secretary general for quite a few conflict zones. Erudite, articulate and extremely well respected, Mr Marker has been one of the few outstanding lights of an otherwise generally reactionary and non-innovative foreign service. Perhaps, some of our ambassadors need to learn a few diplomatic skills from this old master."

Indeed, on November 22, 1999 *Dawn* had featured a longer piece on Marker, also forwarded by Mana. Recounting the diplomat's savoir-faire which led him to resolve the 15-year-old East Timor issue on which the Timorians had been locked in an impasse with Indonesia, *Dawn* noted that Marker had been hand-picked for the job of chief negotiator and special envoy by UN secretary general Kofi Annan.

Holding the Guinness record for serving continuously as ambassador for 30 years, Marker has represented Pakistan in Ghana, Guinea and Mali; Rumania and Bulgaria; the USSR and Finland; Canada, with concurrent accreditation to Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago; the German Democratic Republic; Japan; the UN's European office in Geneva; the Federal Republic of Germany; France and Ireland, and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Three years as ambassador to the United States and Jamaica were followed by five more as ambassador and permanent representative to the UN in New York ere he retired.

Fluent in English, French, German, Russian, Urdu and Gujarati, the Hyderabad (Sind) born Marker is an alumnus of the Doon School in Dehra Dun and

Forman Christian College, Lahore, whence he graduated with a gold medal in economics, *Dawn* traces his career. After a three-year stint in the Royal Indian Navy, he joined the family-owned pharmaceutical and shipping business in Quetta and Karachi. His interest in industrial labor relations thus activated, he was included in Pakistani delegations to conferences at the International Labour Organization in Geneva.

Along with these onerous responsibilities *Dawn* notes that Marker became a well-known radio commentator for cricket and indulged his interests in music and the opera, sports and the arts, especially contemporary Pakistani painting.

Thanks again to Mana, *Parsiana* learnt of the "Citizens' Award 1999" conferred on feisty journalist Ardesheer Cowasjee on January 7, 2000. Prominently featured in *Dawn*, which has supported his valiant exposés of the Pakistan establishment, the citation has been cosigned by 2,000 citizens of Karachi. Cowasjee has been recognized for "his outstanding and fearless contribution, that he made through his writings and actions, for upholding the cause of citizens and civil society in Pakistan."

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

Silloo Kavarana re-elected to BPP

Contesting the election on the termination of her seven-year term as trustee on the board of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Silloo Kavarana was reelected by a majority of 27 votes. Kavarana polled 429 votes while her challenger Zarir Bhathena received 406 votes. The other contenders were Ervad Yazdi Panthaky and Dara Kadva. Of a total Anjuman Committee of 1,457 voters, 846 voted at Khareghat Colony's Muncherji Khareghat Hall on March 11, 2000. *Parsiana's* detailed coverage will follow in the April issue.

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

The MILLENNIUM WORLD CONGRESS of MEDICINA ALTERNATIVA - HOLISTIC HEALTH SPIRITUAL SCIENCES

Held at Russian Cultural Centre Mumbai 7th-9th January, organised by the Zoroastrian College The Congress attracted high quality speakers on variety of topics concerning preventive health care, early diagnostic methods and non-invasive drugless therapies of 21st Century vibratory frequencies healthcare methods.

The Congress highlighted WATER purification of wells, rivers, building overhead tanks to provide clean drinking water supply using the natural Khazakhstan-technology of Prof. Dr. Victor Inyushin - the first and only demonstration unit is located in the Zoroastrian College grounds at Sanjan in collaboration with Z.C. President Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master-Moos. Dr. Ram Gopal Director Defence Laboratory Jodhpur highlighted the work of the Defence wing to provide water in drought stricken areas of India. The new technology prevents bacteria from breeding in water thus preventing health care problems caused by water borne diseases.

Dr. Thornton Streeter of U.K. demonstrated the latest diagnostic equipment based on one drop of blood specimen and Kirlian Aura new computerised equipment. The latest equipment surpasses everything hitherto available and gives the complete full physical body and aura diagnosis of every organ and part. Currently priced at Rs 10 lacs it is excellent for hospitals.

Prof. Dr. Siegfried Hermerding of Hannover Germany demonstrated energy healing methods based on Ancient Atlantis civilisation techniques and Tachyon light energy to heal the Aura, Chakras and Physical body.

The Bruno Groning German Spiritual Healing methods and American Dr. Warren Stagg's Special Kinesiology techniques were demonstrated as also Chigong - Ancient Chinese method by Dr. Russel Des Marais, of U.S.A. who is currently running training courses in Bombay.

H. H. Yuvraj Dr. Digvijay Singh of Wankaner presided as Chief Guest over the Opening day ceremonies; Dr Ramanand Sagar gave a moving performance of Ancient Indian Culture excerpted from the Ramayan and Sri Krishna T. V. serials; and Dr. Vishwanath Karad of UNESCO Chair for Peace, MIT Pune, Mr. D. V. Gupta Chairman of Airport Authority of India; and Padmashri Dr. Vijaykumar Shah presided over the closing ceremony. Mr Bejan Desai beloved Principal of Boys Town School had Prof. Dr. B. B. Puri founder of Vastu Research Architecture Centre Delhi were conferred Doctorate degrees for their outstanding work spanning a lifetime. 100 selected personalities worldwide were conferred the prestigious MILLENNIUM AWARD led by Lord Pandit Prof. Dr. Sir Anton Jayasuriya Chairman Medicina Alternativa International.

Ganesha Bejan Daruwalla's brilliant astrological predictions indicate India leads the World into the New Millennium, the year 2002 being the year of Women worldwide.

Acupuncture, Nature Cure, Ayurveda, Unani, Magnet Therapy, Spectrochrome Metry, Gems, Colours and Crystals Therapy, Pyramid Therapy, and a wide range of Natural Health Care Methods were discussed

by the experts - including the presentation of the only Silver Baby patient in India by Dr. Mirza Baig.

The Millennium World Congress also attracted large variety of exhibition stalls including the valuable air and water environment purification equipment of Mr. A. M. Solanki.

Holistic Health Magazine and Life Positive covered the three days event, providing complimentary copies to all the Delegates. Swamiji Akhileshji of Bihar City of God, Dr. Mrs. Zarin Turel, Head of Bio-Chemistry Dept. of Bombay University, Prof. Dr. A. R. K. Pillai, President of Indian Leprosy Foundation, Dr. Dinanath Rai, President of International Kundalini Yoga Institute, Dr. Malti Sirsiker, Astrologer, Dr. Harishbhai Dhutia, President International Federation of Astrologers, Dr. Sashikant Seth, Spiritual Healer, Dr. Mrs. Mangala Chavan Acupuncturist Dr. Punamchand Rathi Magnet Therapist, Dr. Mahmud Hasan on Unani Medicine, Prof. Dr. R. RamaMurthy Retd. Vice Chancellor of Tirupathi University, Prof. Dr. B. B. Puri President of Vedic Architecture Institute, Prof. Dr. S. Nagendran of Indian Holistic Health Academy, Dr. B. Lakshmi Bio-Therapist, Dr. Ricswee Assunta of Singapore and many other specialists were present.

The prestigious Millennium Award was conferred on 100 selected persons worldwide; including posthumously on late Dr. Dara R. Hakim, Late Padmashri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, late Shri M. C. Bhandariji, late Mobedan Mobed Jehangirji Turel, late Dr Mrs Harprakash Sahani, late Dr. A. Gosalia, late Mr. Jai H. A. Vakil late Dinshawji B. Avari and late Justice Madhukiran Kenia. Amongst the worldwide recipients of the Millen-

nium Award are Mr Jamshed N. Guzder, Jam-e-Jamshed, Mumbai Samachar, Mr. Mehraban Zarhoshty, Dr. Jehangir Medora, Dr. Purviz D. Kolsawalla, Dr. Farhang Mehr, Dr. Mehraban Sharvini; Mrs Doliy Dastur; Dr Keki and Mrs. Tehmi Grant Dr. Pulat Pulatov, Madame Maisara Kolonova, H. E. Emomaly Rakhmanov, Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, Mr. Adi B. K. Dubash, Mr. Pallonji Shapoorji Mistry, Prof. Dr. Siegfried Hermerding; Dr. Anton Jayasuriya amongst others.

Consul D. Chelyshev of Russian Cultural Centre, Consul A. Makani and Mrs. Makani of Costa Rica and Dr. Mrs. Tatiana Makles of Poland Consulate were amongst the distinguished guests of honor.

NAOROJI - THE FIRST ASIAN MP - A BIOGRAPHY OF DADABHAI NAOROJI, INDIA'S PATRIOT AND BRITAIN'S MP

(2) BHOWNAGGREE - PARLIAMENTARY CENTENARY OF BRITAIN'S FIRST ASIAN CONSERVATIVE MP - 1995

BOOK REVIEWS BY

Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master-Moos, President, Zoroastrian College

Omar Ralph, son of Zeena Bharucha and Brian Ralph was fascinated by his Parsi Maternal pedigree which led him to research these two well written books on the First two non-Englishmen to be elected Members of Parliament at Westminster.

1. NAOROJI - THE FIRST ASIAN MP - is a well researched biography of the Grand Old Man of India - DADABHAI NAOROJI The First Parsi and Non-Englishman to be elected a Member of Parliament at Westminster. The biography covers his life from childhood, through his young days when the East India Company was administering trade in India, and his keen interest in foreign affairs. It was thanks to him that Manekji Hataria was sent to Iran to relieve the Iranian Zoroastrians of the injustices suffered by them. He was a social, educational, political, and religious reformer. In 1855 he went to England to join the firm founded by the Camas, and re-



Photo No 1: Ganesha Bejan Daruwalla being conferred the prestigious "MILLENNIUM AWARD" by Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master-Moos and Dr. Zarine Turel, Head of Bombay University Bio-Chemistry Dept
Photo No 2: Lord Pandit Prof. Dr. Sir Anton Jayasuriya, chairman, Medicina Alternative International being conferred MILLENNIUM AWARD by H. H. Yuvraj Digvijay Singh, Prince of Wankaner, Dame Meher and Dr. Shashikant Seih



turned to India in 1881. He took active part in Politics in British India, and worked for the self rule of India; he coined the term "Swaraj." In March 1886 he stood for Parliamentary election in England, and received good support from the British press - The Pall Mall Gazette recorded that "if 254 millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are ever to be represented, it would hardly be possible to find one more worthy of the position or more fitted than the Honourable Dadabhai Naoroji." However it was not till the July 1892 election that he succeeded in becoming the MP from Finsbury Central. He espoused social reforms including women's education and women's rights and freedom-Swaraj for India. He was a great upholder of Justice and actively participated in Parliamentary debates. The Author has painstakingly researched Hansards volumes to trace the trend of Dadabhai's thinking and development over the years. Baroness Shreela Flather, the first Indian Woman to be appointed a life-peer in the House of Lords, and several other MP's have written admirable forewords to the book which should be read by every young Zoroastrian Worldwide and find a place in the bookshelf of every Parsi family.

2. The second book about SIR MANCHERJI MERWANJEE BHOWNAGGREE K.C.I.E. is a slim volume jointly authored by Prof. John Hinnells and Omar Ralph with a Preface by Rusi K. Dalal. This book traces Bhownaggee's election to the British Parliament. He was twice elected in 1895 and 1900 through the conservative party. His main concerns were the British India economy and develop-

ment of educational facilities in India so that Indians would not need to depend upon the English educational system. He lost his third election in 1906 and then devoted himself to Parsi community affairs transforming the religious funds of the Zoroastrians of Europe into the incorporated Parsee Association of Europe and the establishment of the Zoroastrian House in London. He continued to live in England till his death in 1933. This book makes enjoyable reading for every educated Zoroastrians. Both the books are available from Mazdayasnie Monasterie Office at concessional special rates for India.

ZARATHUSTRIANS IN OLDE IRAN - Published and released in June 1999 covers the history of Zoroastrians living in the Olde Iranian Achaemenian Empire of Darius the Great, extending from Central Asia China Border to Ukraine and Greece. The book specially covers the two World Avesta Conferences sponsored by the Govt. of Tajikistan in 1992 and 1996 held in Dushanbe and contains some selected papers about revival of Zoroastrian religion in its original homeland of Olde Iran. The book also has photographs of archeological excavations of sites of Ancient Fire Temples and Dokhmas; of the "Golden Man" whom the archeologists believe is the original Jamshed Padshah.

This and many books on Zoroastrian religion, health and Aura and World Congress Brochure and other interesting subjects are available. Contact office telephone 2660214/2662950 for books list and other information.

Salsette's spiritual sustenance

The Seth Ardeshir Bhicajee Patel Dadgah at Andheri is the newest Zoroastrian house of worship in Bombay

Hilla P. Guzder

It is the third Zoroastrian house of prayer to be inaugurated in the Bombay area in just over two months. On January 23, 2000, the Seth Ardeshir Bhicajee Patel Dadgah in the Salsette Parsis Association (SPA) housing complex at Andheri (East) opened its portals to worshippers. On November 14, 1999 the Manijeh Pirojsha Sachinwalla Dar-e-Meher had been consecrated, followed by the Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary on December 21.

Situated amidst verdure and spacious surroundings, ringed by a cluster of new buildings, the Dadgah and adjacent community hall were designed by architect Dara B. Mistry and constructed free of cost by builder Hosang B. Mistry, managing director of Persepolis Construction Company Private Limited which developed the property (see "Concretizing dreams," *Parsiana*, June 1997). With a total of 767 flats (671 on ownership basis and 96 on rent), this is one of the largest Parsi housing schemes in Bombay in recent times (see "Salsette on schedule," pg 113).

After four days and nights of religious ceremonies which included four *ijasnes* and one *Vendidad*, the dadgah fire was installed on January 23 as thousands of people from all over Bombay poured in to reiterate their faith. "Seeing the crowds coming in, I must confess I was a bit nervous at first, as we could not estimate how many people would come all the way to Andheri, that too on a Sunday morning," states Adi M. Patel, chairman of the Association. "On the day itself we received about one and a half lakh rupees as donations from the public with our volunteers maintaining lists and handing out receipts on the spot."

The day saw a morning and evening *jashan*, with high priests (Drs) Firoze Kotwal, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, Hormazdyar Mirza and Hormazdiar Dastur of Poona participating along with other mobeds. All the high priests had been

invited but were unable to come for different reasons, explains Jerbanoo Moos, trustee and honorary secretary of the SPA. Speaking on the occasion, Kotwal said that in the prevailing circumstances in the community where there was a paucity of full-time priests, it was advisable to set up a dadgah grade fire wherein even three bois would suffice and the fire could be tended, if necessary, by any *behdin*. Khojeste Mistree, scholar-teacher and founder of Zoroastrian Studies, explained to the lay audience the meaning of the *ijasne* ceremony and the long hours of *kriya-kaam* (ceremonies) that go into the making of a holy fire. The *Vendidad* that preceded the installation was performed by Ervads Adil Bhesania and Dinyar Vajifdar, with Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji of Vachaghandhy Agiary participating in the prayers and being an inspiring force. "Dasturji Kotwal and Ervad Dadachanji guided us all along," relates Moos. "They visited the site on two-three occasions and advised on the laying of the pavis, kebla, etc."

"The time of actual installation (when the fire is lifted from the small *afargan* and placed into the main one) is a very poignant and rewarding moment," reflects Patel's wife Arnavaz. "It is difficult to control one's emotions at that time." The Dadgah's newly appointed *panthaky* is Ervad Nozar Behramkamdin who has a flat in building No 1 and who has taken early retirement from his job following bypass surgery.

The inauguration was scheduled for *roz* Spandarmad, *mah* Shahrevar (January 23) as that was the day his grandfather, after whom the Dadgah is named, had passed away, informs Adi Patel. Ardeshir Bhicajee Patel had been one of the founding members of the SPA in the 1920s.

Present among the numerous invitees at the function were Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Jamshed Guzder, trustees Silloo Kavarana,

Rustom Tirandaz and Dinshaw Mehta and former trustee Eruch Desai. In addition to Patel and Moos, the other trustees of the SPA — Nadar Mullan, Jal Contractor, Eruch Hodiwalla and Shaharouk Irani — participated in the felicitations offered to the numerous individuals who had contributed towards the establishment of the Dadgah. "We received donations in cash and kind," informs Moos. Darabsha C. Pader gave 350 chairs, Hoshang Billimoria fabricated the prayer tables, the Khodaiji family spent for the ladies' *kusti* room, etc, she says, and there were many others too numerous to enumerate. Yasmin Taraporevala, Ratamai Peer, Kersi Katila [the *panthaky* of the Seth Pirojsha Ardeshir Patel Daremeher at Andheri (West) which is undergoing extensive renovation] and Ratoo Dastoor are among the individuals she names as having been of great assistance.

"I cannot forget the youngsters of Salsette colony and Cyrus Siganporia's team of young men from Nowroz Baug who washed the entire premises and helped in the preparation for the ceremonies," she notes. Not to be outdone, the ladies of the colony chipped in too, awakening early in the morning to do the chalk-toran at the Dadgah on all four days, as well as at the entrances of the individual buildings on the day itself. Colony resident Persis Wadia compered the function and took on other tasks along with Maheet Desai, manager Dara Saklat and others.

"The evening function saw a larger crowd," notes Adi Patel. The flowers and felicitations were followed by *Parsi geet* (songs) by musicians Jaloo Bhesania and Kersi Mistry and a live band entertained the diners. Jimmy Caterers did a good job of feeding over 1,500 people on the grounds of building No 1, remarks Patel. Dinner coupons priced at Rs 120 had been sold earlier at the Cusrow Baug's Karani agiary, the Patel



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- 1, 2 and 3. At the Dadgah
consecration
4. Section of congregation
5. Trustees and high priests
6. (L to R) Contractor, Engineer,
Dara Mistry and Irani
7. Moos honoring Hosang Mistry



8



9



10

8. Patel (left)
felicitating Guzder
9. Mullan (left) with
Patel
10. Hodiwalla (right)
with Engineer. 11.
Behramkamin
(right) and Patel.

Photos: Spectravision Labs
3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11
Aalok Sadanand 2, 7
and 10



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agiar at Andheri (West) and at the site. Recording for posterity the events on video was Nazneen Vajifdar of Spectra-vision Labs.

Providing a glimpse into the past, Patel points out that the disused dokhma on site had been set up in 1927 on the initiative of the Zoroastrian residents of Santa Cruz, Vile Parle and Andheri. The initial effort had been made as early as 1915 when the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman Mandal of Andheri was established. The *tano* (foundation) ceremony

in 1927 was attended by a large gathering including eminent personalities like Dadabhai Naoroji, Khan Baha-dur M. C. Marzban, Sir Jivanji Modi, etc. The present senior-most trustee of the SPA Nadar Mullan had also been present at that time as a lad of 12, informs Patel.

With the proliferation of population in Andheri and surrounding suburbs and the presence of planes landing and taking off from the nearby domestic and international airports, the dokhma had fallen into disuse for decades. "We

have planted creepers on the old dokhma wall to cover it. A walking path has been laid out in the complex too," states Hosang Mistry. "I feel great when I come here," opines Colaba-resident Hodiwalla, appreciating the "beautiful atmosphere" of the complex, due in large measure, he says, to Amee Mistry's green thumb and the "active but silent" role she has played. "I would like to say a big thank you to (technical consultant, Aspi) Engineer's wife Piloo too for all her support," adds Hodiwalla, also grate-

Salsette on schedule

The construction of the whole complex will be complete by the year 2000, Hosang Mistry, managing director of Persopolis Construction Company Private Limited, had told *Parsiana* in May 1997. Well on schedule, all the six buildings and Dadgah and community hall at the Salsette Parsis Association (SPA) housing complex at Andheri (East) with well laid out internal roads, gardens landscaped and planted under the supervision of Hosang's wife Amee, are complete and partially occupied except for building No 5 whose possession will be handed over shortly. The ownership flats, which form a cooperative housing society, have been sold well below prevailing market rates, at prices fixed by the charity commissioner, note the developers. The flats

range in area from 310 sq ft to 565 sq ft, according to information provided by the developers.

"We have been in contact with Hosi (Hosang) throughout and it is his perseverance and fairness that has seen this project through," commends SPA trustee Eruch Hodiwalla. Technical consultant Aspi Engineer too has played a leading role, obtaining the necessary clearances from various government departments, the charity commissioner and local bodies, he points out.

"The developers have taken a lot of

trouble and have had to face many hassles," says Jerbanoo Moos, trustee and honorary secretary of the SPA.

As per the agreement, the tenanted building No 2 was also built free of cost by the developers.

Mistry has also provided fixtures like lights and fans in the Dadgah and community hall at his own expense, including neat rows of lights to illuminate the terrace, though this was not specified in the agreement. "It is a small but fine terrace which can be given out for navjotes, etc," remarks chairman Adi M. Patel.



Hosang and Amee Mistry and view of the complex (below)

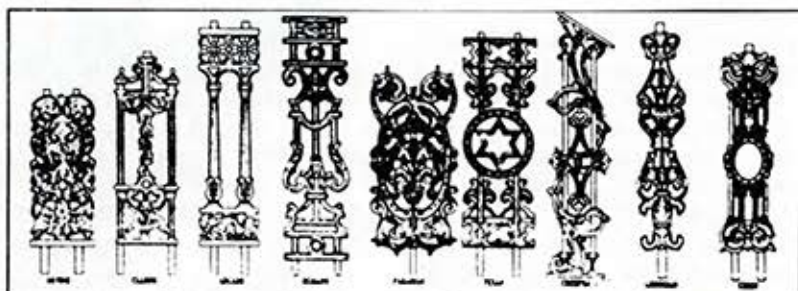
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fully acknowledging the "tremendous hard work" over a long period by the office staff of Persepolis Construction and sister company Bomanji Jamsaji Mistry and their staff on site, including project manager Nagin Doshi.

"Over the last few years, we have spent lakhs of rupees as counsels' fees, tackling the various cases filed against the trustees and other legal matters. We have become half solicitors ourselves," with loads of legal paperwork going back and forth! laughs Engineer. "This has been one of the most complicated and challenging projects we have handled," he says, due to the fact that the vast, 38,000 square meter undulating plot was beset by encroachments and had to be released from the urban land ceiling regulations even before the project could get off the ground. Mistry's proposal to name the complex the "Bomanji Jamsaji Mistry Baug" to perpetuate the memory of his late father, himself a reputed builder, is still pending, with the trustees unable to arrive at a consensus.

Just six years ago this land had been a mass of weeds and grass, Adi Patel had informed the gathering at the inauguration. "My thoughts now are for future generations," asserts Moos, "that they should securely preserve the inheritance they have received."

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TITAN

The consecrated convoy

The enthronement of the Tavri fire at the Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug fanned the community's embers of faith

Text: Arnavaz S. Mama Photos: Kersi M. Pooniwala

Wishing the community "a great future for the new millennium" a misty-eyed Keki Jokhi expressed his gratitude to the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) "for giving me the opportunity of establishing this agiary in memory of my great brother Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi." A standing ovation to the Jokhi family, whose donation of Rs 75 lakhs had culminated in the enthronement of the sacred 99-year-old Tavri fire in the empty shell of the Godrej Baug Agiary, now called the Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary, climaxed the joy and devotion with which the community had greeted the four-day event. The fine irony of the late Shapoorji's high profile in a neighborhood to whose development he had expressed his inability to contribute in the early 1980s as per the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation's architect Maneck Engineer, could not have been lost on the Navsari-born Hongkong philanthropist who was surely present in spirit.

Godrej Baug residents maintained an all-night vigil (December 20-21, 1999) as the sacred fire (ensconced in the same perforated covered cauldron of white metal that had been designed to salvage the Aden Agiary fire in the 1970s) was now carried by Ervads Hormuzd Dada-chanji and Hormuzd Govadia up Hughes Road and Gibbs Road and through Ambawadi to reach its destined throne well in time for the Havan *gah* maachi. A vanguard of a water carrier with sprinklers, followed by volunteers with new



Overview of the Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug

brooms organized by Cyrus Siganporia, cleansed the streets so that pavis of sand could be laid to demarcate the path of the atash. Shielded by a swathe of white cotton held by the priestly entourage, escorted by an armed guard of athravans in symbolic readiness to fight evil on its behalf and an army of devoted Zoroastrians variously estimated between 4,000 and 5,000, the procession wended triumphantly to the foot of the Agiary where a one-way entrance and exit of controlled numbers ensured orderliness. The euphoria cut through all categories of the community, the exalted and the hoi polloi marching harmoniously together, professional and amateur photographers alike recording the fervor. The novelty of the proceedings made

front page news in the national Press.

By the time of the commemorative jashan commissioned by Jokhi on December 21 (*roj* Bahman, *mah* Amardad being Shapoorji's birth anniversary) at 10 a.m., the file past of devotees had reduced to a trickle but the hall was full to overflowing. Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, who led five fellow high priests and 14 mobeds at prayer, followed up the ceremony by recounting in Gujarati the history of the Tavri fire.

While thanking the Godrej family, in passing, "for these magnificent surroundings," BPP trustee Dadi Engineer enumerated and extolled

the philanthropy of the Jokhi family: Avan Baug, named after their mother which houses 2,000 Parsis in Navsari, the renovation of the Rustomji Jejeebhoy School and Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Agiary there and the provision of the Rs 4.5 crore Jokhi wing at Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH). A second three crore contribution to the PGH has enabled the Hospital to undertake a total renovation of its nursing home wing. He concluded by dedicating to them John Bunyan's words in *Pilgrim's Progress*, "He who bestows his wealth upon the poor will have as much and 10 times more," adding fervently, "not 10 but 100 times more, 1,000 times more!"

BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly, who had been instrumental in obtaining the Jokhi donation, focussed upon the contribution of those who had worked "be

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The fire container; the original Tavri agiary; the Sumo carrying the atash; BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta, Dali Mistry, police inspector Viraf Chinoy and Gotla; placing the fire into the Sumo at Navsari; Aspiandiar Dadachanji (center) with his team of athravan drivers and mechanics Facing page: Sumo leaving Navsari agiary; farewell jashan at Sir J. J. Agiary; Aspiandiar Dadachanji answering queries on the patio of the Sanjan Agiary; Khojeste Mistree (extreme left) explaining a ritual detail; the Jokhis, the Meherjiranas and others chatting with Tamboly (center) outside Navsari's Sorab Hall

hind the scene with complete dedication and devotion." Ervad Aspiandiar Dadachanji and his team of mobeds comprising Ervads Farrokh Govadia, Hormuzd Govadia, Hormuzd Dadachanji, Homiar Nasirabadwalla, Sorab Bharucha, Khushroo Vaid and Aspy Rao "who had travelled with him in cramped condi-

tions bringing the fire to Bombay;" Darayus Gotla who procured police permission and organized police escort through all the stages of the journey; Dali Mistry, Gustad Irani and Farrokh Govadia for maintaining the vehicles not just in running order but within the ritual specifications of the job at hand;

the BPP's administrative staff led by chief executive officer Behram Dastur and including Mehli Colah, Sheroo Master, Noshir Medhora, Bakhtawar Dastur, Jime Poonawalla, Pervez Aibara and Jokhi Agiary pan-thaky Pervez Madon and his wife Mahrukh.

Shawls, commemorative silver sal-

They had even performed a "dry run" a few days earlier to establish a workable timetable for the transfer



vers and flowers were presented by the BPP trustees to each of the high priests, viz Drs Hormazdyar Mirza and Kotwal, Kekobad Dastur, Hormazdiar Noshirwan Dastur and Meherji Meherjirana, to Nadirshah Unvala, to Keki Jokhi and his two sons, to Aspandiar Dadachanji and

his team members, to Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, to former trustees Eruch Desai, Dr Mehroo Bengalee and Dr Nelie Noble, to Noshir Kasad and to Cyrus Unwalla who carried out amendments to the Agiary's existing structure, to BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder, who acknowledged the BPP's

debt to Jejeebhoy for the fire, and to the senior Punchayet staff members. Former BPP chairman, Dr Aspi Gollwalla, former trustee Jamsheed Kanga and former chief executive Rustom Anklesaria did not attend. Neither did any member of the Godrej family or their senior staff.



Clockwise from right: Awaiting the emergence of the atash outside Vachaghandhy Agiary; gate of the Jokhi Agiary; entering the Godrej Baug Agiary; laying the sand pavis on Hughes Road

Facing page: In the vanguard of the fire; priestly entourage surrounding the atash; washing and scrubbing Hughes Road





Clockwise from top left: The jashan; Madon and Tamboly; Shroff and Dastur; Silloo Kavarana and Master; Tirandaz and Yezdi Panthaki; Maneck Engineer; Dadi Engineer at the mike; Keki and Javer Jokhi (first and third from left) with Guzder and Tamboly





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The enthronement

The story of the Godrej Baug Agiary is a skein of many strands, of the fire and the building and nearly two decades of planning and frustration that was eventually rewarded, though not quite as originally envisaged.

A Zoroastrian settlement two miles out of Navsari, Tavri already possessed two dadgah fires ere this adarian fire, a consecrated compilation of the fires from the homes of priest, policeman, agriculturist and potter was gifted to the 250 strong community in 1900 by Cooverji Cavasji Tavarria in memory of his deceased son Hormusji, enthroning it in a new building constructed for the purpose, informed Kotwal. [He also narrated how the popular Gujarati adage "Guya Tavri ne aya ravri (went to Tavri and got left high and dry)" had gained parlance when some of the estimated 8,000 Zoroastrians who attended the consecration ceremony of the dokhma there, being carried away by the local attractions, missed the special return train arranged by Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and had to journey back under great discomfort.]

However, by 1964 with only one Zoroastrian family left in Tavri, the holy fire was brought to Navsari and housed in Sir J. J. Agiary managed by the Dowager Bai Avabai Jejeebhoy Trust whose trustee Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy suggested that the BPP enthrone it at Godrej Baug. Among those who had escorted the fire from Tavri to Navsari on that occasion were Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly, now charged with the major task of organizing its evacuation to Bombay.

Generations of the athravan Dadachanji family had tended the Tavri fire. By poetic justice the move from Navsari to Bombay was executed by a descendant of the same family — Ervad



Aspandiar Dadachanji, panthaky of the Vachaghandhy Agiary at Hughes Road — under the overall guidance of Kotwal.

Dadachanji, himself a driver of the rallying kind, together with his band of motorist mobeds and dedicated technicians, got together a fleet of cars, two Sumos of which were specially adapted for the task with all but the front seat removed — one being the atash's designated vehicle, the other on emergency standby. Other vehicles transported the rest of the priestly entourage and the varied paraphernalia required for the rituals. They had even performed a "dry run" a few days earlier to establish a workable timetable for the transfer, informed Dadachanji.

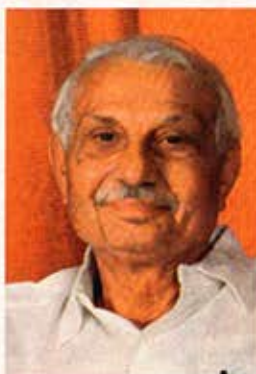
In the van travelled Gotla with his police friends, clearing the way for the 16-vehicle convoy that preceded and followed the VVIP, starting from Navsari on January 19 at 1.30 a.m. after the Ushingah boi, reaching Sanjan's Dasturji Kookadar Dar-E-Meher at about 4.00 a.m. (Consecrated fires are ritually moved during the dark hours to prevent other light rays and/or alien gaze contaminating them.) Removed from the confines of the travelling receptacle on to the afarganyu prepared to receive the sacred embers in the Agiary's urvisgah, the fire and its tenders rested for the day, providing prayers and maachi offerings through the five gahs. Again at 1.30 a.m. on 20th December 1999 the process was repeated on the second lap of the journey, reaching Bombay's Vachaghandhy Agiary well in time for the Havan gah boi. With a jashan in the afternoon offered by the Vachaghandhy Agiary trustees and a spate of devotees bowing before it, the Tavri fire had begun its transition to the third and most glorious phase of its illumined century.

By 2.30 a.m. on December 21 a



(From top left) The Jokhis: Fakirji and Avabai and Shapoorji and Manijeh; Jejeebhoy and Guzder; Naoroji Godrej (left)

Photos: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints



legion of well-wishers had gathered without the Vachaghandhy portals.

They ranged from babes in

arms to the platinum brigade and their presence, with ardent hopes and prayerful longings, was a miracle in itself. Whatever restlessness there might have been was dispelled by a good-natured mix of truisms and commentary in Tirandaz's booming voice until the phalanx of mobeds, jealously guarding the atash on the last stretch of the journey to its new home, began its brisk walk.

Hughes Road had been cleared of traffic although traffic signals continued to blink. Gibbs Road was a dense mass of Zoroastrians, some panting to keep up with the priests, others indulging in small talk within the ambit of the history they knew they were making. The narrow Ambawadi entrance proved a bottleneck and by the time the majority of the walkers got through, the Agiary seemed to be surrounded by a human moat.

Inside, the process of enthronement proceeded with clockwork precision, followed by the pealing bell of the first boi at 6 a.m. Concerned that the horde hungry for spiritual salvation may also need material sustenance, the BPP had thoughtfully commissioned caterer Dr Katy Dalal to provide steaming hot tea, batasas and sev.

Fractured hopes

Jejeebhoy's welcome invitation to avail of the second consecrated fire at Sir J. J. Agiary in Navsari for the benefit of Godrej Baug's 1,700+ Parsis ended nearly 15 years of frustration for the Punchayet.

When first conceived in the early 1980s, the agiary was expected to house two sacred fires — one from the Panchayet's own Godavara Agiary and the other from the Langrana Agiary, both located in the bylanes of Fort, Bombay, where of the six sacred fires some languished due to the exodus of Zoroastrians to the developing suburbs (see "Construction under criticism," *Parsiana*, November 1986). It was anticipated that the sale of the released real estate would provide funds for the maintenance of the new agiary at Napean Sea Road. There were ample precedents, the fires of the Karani Agiary at Cusrow Baug and of the Kuppawalla Agiary at Tata Colony having been shifted from their original sites where the depreciating localities had witnessed the departure of the community.

To the consternation of the BPP a few community members, as beneficiaries of the institutions, demanded — and got — a stay order from the charity commissioner against any attempt to relocate the sacred fires. Having lost both, the fires and the means for their sustenance, plans for the new agiary remained in suspension until the Doongaji family of Bharuch and Bombay, led by the late

Hoshang Doongaji, offered the 254-year-old fire from their agiary at Bharuch along with Rs 10 lakhs towards the cost of construction. Accordingly, Godrej and Boyce architect Maneck Engineer's hexagonal conception, with provision for two or three fires, then estimated to cost Rs 45 lakhs, was modified to provide a single gumbaz plus an urvisgah for baj and ijashni ceremonies. Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza led six mobeds in a jashan ceremony on January 31, 1988 as Golwalla, the then BPP chairman laid the foundation stone (see "A new home for an old fire," *Parsiana*, March 1988).

Even as the trustees were exercised in the nitty-gritty of moving the sacred fire, the earlier scenario recurred in a bleary déjà vu with Sam Sethna and a couple of other beneficiaries in Bharuch winning a stay order from the charity commissioner against the project. Repeated entreaties and arguments in favor of the greater good proved of no avail. Sethna held his ground. The now 266-year-old Pestonji Aslaji Doongaji fire may, in all probability, be reduced to ashes.

Engineer soldiered on, building the agiary with whatever funds trickled in,

encouraged by the late Naoroji Godrej's own personal, emotional commitment to Godrej Baug, while the ding-dong parleys continued. To his dismay, when work in the partially built structure gained momentum thanks to Jokhi's donation, Engineer was not consulted. In a letter to *Parsiana* he notes, "On the day of the consecration of the fire and later on my subsequent visit to the fire-temple, I have noticed that some changes have taken place not only on the façade of the building but also inside the building without involving me in doing the same. To be frank... I have not been to Iran nor have I done extensive studies on fire-temples, but considering the fact that the Sasanians were iconoclasts, most of the temples constructed in Iran were not having any images on the façade of the temple and therefore whilst designing I had only considered circular columns and RCC grills on the façade. Further...the building was designed considering the importance of natural ventilation in (a) public place. The existence of fire at the center of the structure creates a sort of pressure difference and the air was supposed to move (inward and up). However, as the openings on the inner

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side of the hall and the passage around the kebla have been closed this will result in accumulation of smoke and heat in and around the kebla area. A raised platform was made in the hall, but no door was provided between the kebla door and the hall. Now that the same has been provided, if the raised platform is used for any ceremony or jashan purpose, then the rays of the fire inside the Agiary will mingle with the rays of the fire which will be placed in a small afarganyu on the center of the platform which, according to my knowledge, is not acceptable."

Even as Engineer questioned the figures on the façade of the fire-temple, Firoza Punthakey-Mistree, Nauzer Bharucha, Percy Balsara and Ervad Marzban Hathiram have identified them as of Assyrian, non-Zoroastrian origin in *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* (Jan 23, 2000). The faux pas is compounded because the figures depicted are historically associated with barbaric and brutal cruelty. Urging the Punchayet to rectify the situation Punthakey-Mistree writes, "Not only is it an affront to our religion and illustrative of our limited knowledge, but it sends out a wrong message to the community as generations of Parsis will grow up wrongly thinking the Assyrian gods to be Zoroastrian icons of worship."

The colony that almost never was

The beautiful Godrej Baug has seen the steady deterioration of relations between the House of Godrej and the BPP. When the Punchayet salvaged the prestigious area from the Government's grasp under the Urban Land Ceiling Act thanks to the intercession of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi circa 1982/83 as per Golwalla's article "The Birth of Godrej Baug" (*Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, February 6, 2000) it lacked the funds to develop it urgently in the face of political pressure. The land was hilly and totally lacking in infrastructure. At that juncture the House of Godrej offered to provide the basic amenities — roads and foundations and general layout — at cost. In return the Punchayet agreed to name the new colony after the family patriarch Pirojsha Godrej and allow the Godrejs 50 percent allotment rights in the buildings they constructed plus 15 percent of their donation infrastructural development computed as the difference between what the BPP paid and the prevailing market price. This principle

continued on page 149

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Conception to Consecration

The contribution of several factors made possible the consecration of the S. F. Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug

Text: Behram Dastur Photos: Kersi M. Pooniwala

In the lives of Zoroastrians, the consecration of a holy fire comes about once or twice, and that too after a long period intervening between two consecrations.

Planning for an agiary is, in principle, only slightly different from planning for a modern factory. The purpose of this article is not to go into the religious aspects of the consecration itself but of the logistical and financial planning which precedes and follows the consecration, specifically the details connected with pre-consecration, consecration and post-consecration activities, concerned with the world's largest agiary (17,500 sq ft) christened on December 21, 1999 as the Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary, at Godrej Baug, Bombay.

The trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) had the sprawling land

at their disposal and the House of Godrej had the money. Way back in 1978, the then trustees, in their collective wisdom, envisioned the creation of what is called Godrej Baug, the cynosure of our community in south Bombay (the other cynosure is Malcolm Baug in the north-western suburb of Jogeshwari, set in sylvan surroundings).

What is to be appreciated is the larger vision of the then trustees to provide for an agiary which would service the inhabitants of 474 flats at Godrej Baug/Mobed Quarters.

The contribution of the Godrej family was massive and monumental in that an extremely rocky terrain was converted into a habitable place for Zoroastrians seeking a respectable shelter. A special mention needs to be made of the

detailed engineering skill and physical endeavor put in by Maneck Engineer (vice president, construction, Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited) and Darius Khergamwalla. Solid rock was subordinated to man's desire to live over it, in peace and in tune with Ahura Mazda's holy fire.

Progressively, a corpus was created for the upkeep of a giant-sized agiary. The civil engineering aspects, plumbing and electrical connections, the drainage system, gardens and lawns, and

Anticlockwise from below: Hall outside the kebela; kebela entrance; well from which water is pumped up to the Agiary; sanctum sanctorum with the gleaming new afarganyu awaiting the fire



pathways had to be planned, as meticulously as for a factory. The several permissions from the municipal and state governments had to be obtained, and put in place, progressively. While an agiary may not have to seek permission from the factory inspectorate, or

the directorate of explosives and the inspector of mines and the like, all the other permissions have to be sought with a total eye on safety and environmental protection.

The full board of trustees of the BPP had entrusted the job of overseeing all

the operations, connected with the consecration, to Dinshaw Tamboly. He was directly involved with every facet of that activity, and I had the good fortune to work under and with him, along with a very able team of senior managers like Sheroo Master, the manager of the wel



fare division, Pervez Aibara, manager (estates), Noshirwan Medhora, chief engineer (maintenance), Jime Poona-walla, the manager of our Doongerwadi, M. L. Bhagat and M. M. Wagle, the two custodians of Godrej Baug and a junior, but a dedicated team of supporting staff. I was directly aided by Mehli Colah, the deputy chief executive officer and financial controller. The other staff from the welfare division who were deeply involved in that activity were Bakhtawar Dastur and Adil Crawford.

The message is very simple: when you want to do a job well, fast and within a budgetary stipulation, you have got to pick the brains of your superiors, your peers and your juniors.

The dream of an agiary became a reality as soon as Tamboly managed to get a massive contribution of Rs 75 lakhs from Keki Fakirji Jokhi of Hong-kong. His able lieutenant, in Bombay, was Noshir Kasad who worked with all of us, not only closely but cordially.

It was not as easy as walking into a ready-made structure. Renovations had to be carried out, costing over Rs 15.5 lakhs, and the time bound job was ably done by civil contractor Cyrus Unwalla and architect Rusi Khambatta.

How did the exercise begin?

Three brainstormers sat with me, and we divided the activity into four major phases, and catalogued nearly 40 items. Each item was given a time-tag, and main and subsidiary responsibilities were fixed for each activity. "A" meant sole or prime responsibility. "B" meant subsidiary responsibility. For some items, the subsidiary responsibility was shared between two or three persons specializing in a particular activity, like obtaining the permission of the water and power departments of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the shops and establishments department, etc.

In the initial stages, all the activities were monitored every three weeks, involving site visits. As the activities got completed, progressively, those were deleted, and the attention concentrated on the remaining activities. As happens with factory planning, so with our agiary, we had to modify some dates and either advance or retard others. Deviations from cost estimates were plotted every month and major expenses scrutinized, in advance of their incurrence.

With the direct help of Jamshed Guzder, the chairman of the BPP, the

Dowager Bai Avabai Jejeebhoy Trust agreed to part with the holy Tavrī fire at their Agiary in Navsari. We had to check with the said Trust the paraphernalia that would accompany the holy fire, and that which we would need to provide from our own stock, or buy out. Purchases, either from the BPP's own funds or from those provided by the Jokhis,

The contribution of the Godrej family was massive and monumental in that an extremely rocky terrain was converted into a habitable place

involved: items for civil renovations to the original structure; a grilled main door and molded, life-size, concrete figurines; solid brass rods and a solid wooden door for the sanctum sanctorum; furniture, prayer books, a life-sized painting of Zarathushtra, paintings of the deceased members of the Jokhi family; strongboxes for donations, steel cupboards for the panthaky's office and a fridge for his residence; fans and fixtures, sliding mesh-covers for the well, granite steps, were among the host of items that had to be provided.

Then came the fine-tuning of transporting the holy fire in stages, from Navsari to Godrej Baug. I found it no different from sending materials from Bombay, Delhi and Jaipur, in stages, to a factory in Sopore, Bara Mulla District, in Jammu and Kashmir state.

In order that the status of the holy fire as an adarian saheb be retained, we had to transport it by road, in stages. In order to do that, all the five *gahs* bois had to be performed, as if the fire was in situ. The lifting of the fire, from Navsari and its final resting at the Godrej Baug Agiary, involved dedicated work by Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji, the panthaky of the Vachaghandhy Agiary, Ervad Farokh Govadia, Darayus Gotla and Dali Mistry under the aegis of Tamboly. Trustee Dinshaw Mehta also accompanied the fire, from Navsari to Bombay.

Its transportation, in safety, involved

approaching the police authority in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, along with the requisite permissions from the respective RTOs.

A volunteer band of Zoroastrians escorted the holy fire throughout its journey.

Even here, as in planning for an industrial undertaking, we had to undertake contingency planning. An additional Sumo van, with temporary alterations in it, accompanied the holy fire, right through. The zonal police in the two states readily helped us and the holy fire could journey, without any hindrance. In the concluding stages, trustee Rustom Tirandaz was also involved in seeing to it that all the 'i's were dotted and all the 't's were crossed. Trustee Silloo Kavarana, Sheroo Master and Bakhtawar Dastur did a lot of legwork in buying the shawls for some dignitaries and the dasturs, getting the silver salvers made and commemorative coins struck, for the staff, as mementos. Extremely elaborate measures were taken for catering, illumination, festoons and torans.

Vital advice was given to us by the panthaky Pervez Madon, and his wife Mahrukh, on the do's and don't's of readying a functionally perfect adarian.

The volunteers from Godrej Baug and Nowroz Baug made elaborate arrangements for laying the pavis and washing the street, with tanker-water, for the carriage of the holy fire between the last two termini.

There were lessons to be learnt from the foregoing exercise and I have jotted down a few of those:

- There is still a lot of 'fire' and passion for our great religion in the minds of Zoroastrians from all walks of life. The congregation, en route and at the Jokhi Agiary, had to be seen to be believed.
- Activity-wise, time-scheduled planning is mandatory and 100 percent feasible.
- Reviews, at increasingly shorter frequencies, become a compulsion.
- Good guidance, by itself, is not enough. But teamwork and good guidance together can bring about timely miracles!
- A managerial touch to planning makes the exercise effective, quicker and self-satisfying.
- Fiscal discipline is an inherent part of planning.

With all these in place, the great Lord Ahura Mazda gave the finishing touch to our labor, our success, our pride and our devotion.

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Faith and fervor

For the residents of Godrej Baug, the arrival of a sacred fire in their midst has increased their religiosity

Parinaz M. Gandhi

A basket of scarves and topis is left at the entrance as a watchful dog sitting nearby keeps an eye on all the devotees who enter the portals of the Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug. At the priest's desk within the sanctum, there is a packet of sweets for free distribution to the many tiny tots who frequent the Agiary daily. In the absence of a community hall at Godrej Baug, the fire-temple



"some sense of security and well-being" that the fire-temple provides.

For Natasha Mistry too, a visit to the Agiary in the morning prior to the arrival of her school bus is part of a new routine, mentions her mother Khurshid who does not have the time to do the same before or after work on a week day but happily accommodates her daughter's religious

serves as a meeting point for residents of all ages. The proximity of the Agiary to their place of residence is the greatest motivator for those residing at Godrej Baug. The peaceful ambience and scenic locale are yet other factors that draw devotees to this Agiary.

It serves as an evening outing for M Block resident Gool Pithawalla who comes here daily in the company of her neighbor Bepsi Bilimoria. "The Agiary is the best thing that has happened since we came here," elaborates Bilimoria. To them, the Agiary serves a multipurpose function as it offers them a walk plus an opportunity to interact with God within religious precincts, a place which they feel is "something our very own."

"I like to begin the day with a visit to the Agiary," says Shazneen Khan, a student of Sophia College. On those days when she cannot make it in the morning, she frequents the place in the evening. And there are yet other days when she comes to the Agiary in the morning and in the evening enjoying

inclination. For them, hearing the boi bells from their fourth floor residence at N Block is also a moving experience each time. The family formerly used to frequent the Thoothi Agiary at Walkeshwar, being close to Godrej Baug and offering parking facility. The after-death prayers which are presently said for Khurshid's late husband Phiroze at the Vachaghandhy Agiary will continue there, mentions the wife, feeling no need to change the venue.

For Mehazad Divecha who studies commerce at Hinduja College, when he is at Godrej Baug, he invariably goes to

the fire-temple daily. When he is at his grandmother's place at Tardeo, it is the Kuppawalla Agiary where he pays his obeisance.

"When it is just a few steps from my home, so peaceful and so quiet, and especially since it is my colony Agiary, I like to come here everyday," asserts Ketayun Khambatta. Her daughter Kainaz who is a student of Villa Theresa School goes to the fire-temple daily too, though on no prompting from her mother. "It is something that has to come from within," maintains the mother.

Visiting the Saher Agiary at Breach Candy or any other in the vicinity was a routine practice for Armaiti Adajania, a teacher at New Activity School. But now she and her little son Frahim "don't have to depend on husband Adil" to ferry them around, the Agiary being just a short walk from their home, she reveals. She is disappointed however that some devotees in the sanctum face the north when praying.

Considering that first he was not an agiary goer, Bomi Tamboli is surprised that now he "doesn't miss any day" at the Agiary. "It feels good. I feel comfortable coming here," are his reasons for being counted amongst the most regular devotees at Godrej Baug.

Being a resident of the colony since 1985, Erik S. Patell says a place of worship is "something I've been desiring for a very long time." Being the past president of the Godrej Baug Association he recalls having written letters to Bharuch pleading that the Doongaji Agiary fire be allowed to be brought here when a stay order was sought from the charity commissioner. Despite his hectic work schedule, he makes it a point to visit the Agiary almost every day and is contemplating shifting his



Jokhi Agiary dome Photo: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints

First navjote at the Jokhi Agiary Photo: Superstar Video Labs

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Above (left) Guzder inaugurating the playground (Photo: Kersi M. Pooniwala) and members of the GBRA committee (front row, from left): Shernaaz Lilaowalla, Dumasia, Farhad Hozdar, Mehernosh Deboo, Panthaki, Minoo Majra, Rustom Nargolwalla, Jasi Pardiwalla and Nergish Majra; (back row, from left) Urvax Dhanda, Noshir Shroff, Beroze Mistry, Neville Velati and Jime Poonawalla

family prayers here. A maachi on every Bahram roz, according to the Fasli calendar, he has already booked at the Jokhi Agiary. The fact that there is no Fasli calendar hung there is a handicap, according to him.

The area around the kebla should have been bigger to accommodate more Zoroastrians, opines Nergish Majra, a committee member of the Godrej Baug Residents' Association (GBRA). She is

also pained to see footwear being left just outside the kebla. An Agiary in their midst means that members can pray at length in peace without the minor irritations so common at home, says Majra who is content to visit the fire-temple on the important rozs in a month. The fact that little children of their own volition choose to pay their respects to the fire daily pleases her particularly, knowing that an abiding faith in fire will remain

with them over the years. The problems of distance and commuting, so commonly heard from Godrej Baug denizens, especially during the monsoons and the Shahenshahi muktads in August, can be overcome if more choose to have their prayers said at this Agiary, she believes.

It will take five to six years for the residents of the colony to optimally utilize the facilities for more prayers, states the panthaky of the Agiary Ervad Pervez Madon: "People are so sentimentally attached to their agiary that they want after-death prayers performed there only. They are reluctant to shift the family table during muktads or to have separate

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prayers said for deceased members of the family at different agiaries... Godrej Baug is full of young blood."

For the convenience of the residents the timings at the Agiary are presently 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. barring the two hours in the afternoon from 1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. when the doors are closed. Certain exceptions though are permitted. Perin Bagli, principal of Bombay's The Activity High School and her son Arzan entered the portals one afternoon after ringing the doorbell. They however had not come only to pay their respects. Arzan having been trained as a maratab by Madon, his mother was keen that before his return to the United States for further studies he should perform one boi at the new fire-temple.

Madon who also handles the panthakyship of the Soonaiji Hirji Agiary at Gowalia Tank is assisted in his priestly duties by his two sons Harvesp and Farshogar plus others like Arzan who have trained under him. In fact the Madons are equipped to help out some other fire-temple like the Mithaiwalla and Mehla Patel Agiaries at Grant Road when there is pressure of work there. The decision to take on the panthakyship of a second agiary was in the interests of the sons. Since both the boys want to

take up mobedi as a profession although the elder one is studying commerce now and the younger one is still at school, the parents want to ensure that the young mobeds do not face the same predicament encountered by their father and *kaka* (paternal uncle) when their grandfather Faredoon had the panthakyship of only one, Aslaji Agiary.

Their mother Mahrukh says that she was able to convince them that they are in a rare position to tend the sacred fire unlike the laity and should use the opportunity that God has sent them. The children were specifically sent to the B. K. M. High School at Babulnath which gets over by 12.30 p.m. so that they could accommodate their religious duties. Initially the elder son would get tired after praying one afringan (one of the outer liturgical ceremonies, divided into three parts which can be performed by any priest, being an expression of love or praise). Today he can manage 10 afringans in a day, proudly claims the mother. She is also happy that in their free time one or the other will be seen polishing the afarganyu which holds the sacred fire, during the hours that the Agiary is closed to the public.

The cleanliness of the Agiary is the responsibility of the Madon family in

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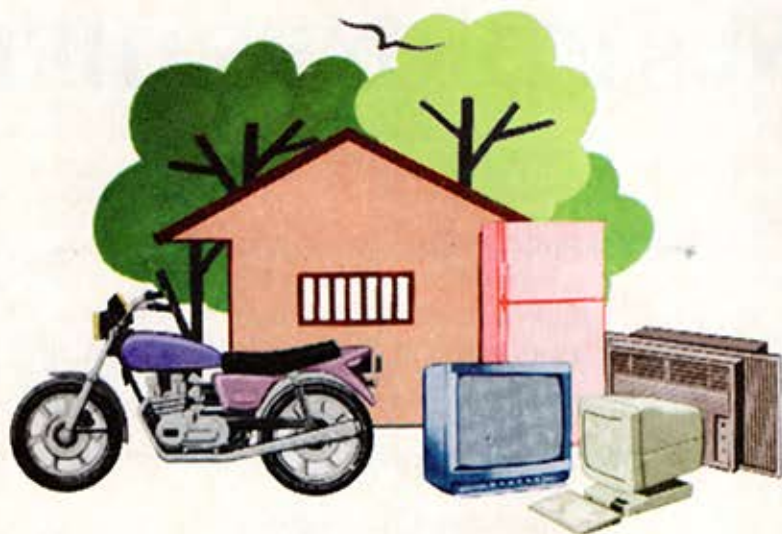
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conjunction with the three chasniwallas employed by them. "When they see us go down on our knees, they automatically work with us. Whatever we eat, we share with them," says Mahrukh Madon, the mainstay at the two agiaries. She also explains that the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and the Jokhi family has offered them a very fair deal by paying them Rs 1,000 per month plus providing for the kathi. The income generated at the Agiary may be retained by the panthaky, she adds. Ninety percent of the electricity bill is also paid for by the Punchayet who arranged to get them two cupboards, a refrigerator, chairs and furnishings. The maintenance of the Agiary is in the hands of the Punchayet.

Although the Madons were not directly involved in the consecration of the Godrej Baug Agiary, they had the responsibility of looking after the comforts of the priests Adil Bhesania, Darius Pervez Bajan, Aspi Bajan, Godrej Panthaky, Dinyar Vajifdar who were instrumental in performing under the personal supervision of Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal the three Srosh-ni-ijashni, one vendidad-ni-ijashni and one vendidad, the ceremonies performed during the preceding four days which constituted the Gumbaz ijvani kriya. Several residents availed of the opportunity to sit in at these ceremonies and what surprised the Madons was that some even came for the vendidad ceremony which started at 1.30 a.m. on December 19. When a couple of old devotees dozed off in their chairs during the course of the prayers, Mahrukh Madon admits being frightened lest they fell off their seats.

The fervor among the Godrej Baug residents was palpable soon after BPP chief executive Behram Dastur sent a circular requesting members of the colony to desist from using the Agiary grounds for playing cricket and receiving driving lessons and to prove to be good hosts to the throngs who were expected to visit the Agiary on the memorable morning of December 21. The cooperation from the residents was instantaneous. Thereafter the GBRA president Ervad Yezdi Panthaki made a call for volunteers to assist in the cleaning of the Agiary and to ensure that the scheduled program be conducted smoothly, as also for volunteer mobeds for the jashan that was organized by the GBRA. An overwhelming response for these duties heartened the president who

says he was happy to lead the 23 mobeds as zoti at the jashan performed in the Uzirin gah on January 21, with son Jimmy officiating as atravakshi (the one who tends the fire). From the funds collected from the residents, they were able to offer a five-kilo maachi and distribute chaasni, including 20 kg of malido, specially catered for the occasion.

After the jashan Kotwal had given a talk on "*Hindustan ma Parsionu aagman ane Iranshah padshah sahabni sthapna* (The progress of Parsis in India and the establishment of the Iranshah)," followed by a slide show by Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree when a special screen, 20' x 12' with a projector had to be organized to permit maximum visibility.

Referring to the cooperation extended for the cleaning of the Agiary beginning December 16 when the contractors were asked to hand over the charge of the Agiary, Panthaki could not help referring to the labor involved in installing the *taaj* (metallic tray or crown which traditionally adorned the kings of yore, the fire being granted majestic stature and said to be positioned on a throne) inside the sanctum sanctorum. In the absence of an iron chain pulley which would have served the purpose beautifully requiring just six to eight people to handle the heavy apparatus, nearly 15-20 Zoroastrians strove for nearly four hours to accomplish the task with a plastic twine. And just when they thought the mission was accomplished, the heavy *taaj* almost collapsed on some of the volunteers who had a miraculous escape. So the effort had to be resumed all over again.

In the interests of cleanliness and purity, they undertook to clean the premises twice over, the final cleansing being undertaken only by the men with the help of nirangdin, states Panthaki. A chain telephone system ensured that there was coordination among the volunteers with each committee member being given earmarked responsibilities.

A specially chartered bus carried 33 zealous pilgrims from Godrej Baug to Navsari who went there to bid a special welcome to the fire and accompany it on its road journey to Bombay. In the past there is reference to men mounted on horses and armed with swords being called upon as guardians when fires had to be shifted, mentions Panthaki.

The response to the vegetarian ga-

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hambar organized by the GBRA on the night of December 21 was overwhelming too with 1,500 diners enjoying the meal catered by Tehemton Dumasia of K. K. Caterers. With meal coupons priced at just Rs 20 and the euphoria of the day not yet over, many residents and visitors were able to get together for a common meal at the Godrej Baug playground, the initial contribution of Rs 10,000 coming from the Parsi Punchayet and the residents giving generous donations too, making the Association plan to make it an annual event. The live band by Mehernosh Tantra who gave his honorary service for the occasion added gaiety to the solemn occasion.

The playground which was inaugurated the same day is presently just a plot of level land. There are plans to make the playground into an eco-park, says the president.

As the committee members and some volunteers sat down for dinner at the last sitting by which time it was the early morning hours of December 22, they could not help remarking that this was a special winter solstice not only because the moon was to appear the brightest in the last 135 years (its orbit being in close proximity to earth), followed by the brightest rays of the sun, but because it had made possible a spiritual rejuvenation at Godrej Baug.

Two children Jessica and Michael from the Jokhi family were the first to be initiated at this Agiary. A jashan, a religious discourse, uthamna and sarosh prayers are the other events that have taken place in the Agiary hall. Whether the premises outside the Agiary should be let out for special occasions is under deliberation by the trustees. In the meanwhile, those who need to keep their physical bodies in shape or take their dogs out for a walk happily circumambulate the hexagonal structure. Those in need of spiritual sustenance need just climb the flight of steps that will bring them closer to the sacred fire.

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 50

Act in 1865, "illicit proliferation of the community" came to a halt. Why a commission was set up to recommend a code of laws for the Parsis is also explained: "Rather than face the highly explosive situation of a meeting between two Parsi women married to the same husband, (the bigamous) Ardasher Cursetjee took the less hazardous but more expensive course. He appealed to the judicial committee of the Privy Council — the court of last resort for litigation in British India. He was successful; their lordships set aside the decree of the Recorder's Court (and held) that the ecclesiastical law of England could only be applied to Christians!"

Nariman dwells on the famous Parsi Punchayet case of 1906 wherein Justices Davar and Beaman held that the properties vested in the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet were only for members of the Zoroastrian religion who were also racially Parsis. A similar judgment delivered by the Privy Council in the less famous Saklat vs Bella case — where a Goanese Christian child, presumably born of a Parsi mother, was reared by the Cowasjis (a well-known family in Burma)

and initiated into the faith when she turned 14 but barred from entering the fire-temple in Rangoon — is also quoted by Nariman. He adds here, "The consequence of this decision — a decision personally regrettable to me — was that Bella (though married to a Parsi Dhanjisha Kolapore whom I and my parents knew well) turned her back on the community in Rangoon. She abandoned her wardrobe of saris, donned Burmese clothes, became a Buddhist, spoke only Burmese and never once attended any of the functions organized by the Parsi anjuman."

Drawing his speech to a close, Nariman maintained, "To me, it is not important whether Zoroastrianism as a religion survives in the next century as long as its moral teachings continue to inspire its adherents as they have in the past..."

Sinor stabbed

While earlier it was the senior members of the community staying alone in affluent localities who were assaulted and murdered, this time it was a 40-year-old Parsi doctor. Rohinton Siavax Sinor was brutally stabbed to death at his residence at Cosy Cottage at Four Bungalows, Andheri in the early morning hours of October 16, according to a

report in *The Times of India* of October 28, 1999.

Owner of the Banaji Group of pharmacies that ran several homeopathic dispensaries at Andheri, Ghatkopar, Borivli, Byculla and Breach Candy, the hefty Sinor "had his own gymnasium and a sauna where he exercised every morning," one of his acquaintances told *Bombay Times*, believing that it must have taken at least three to four persons to overpower him.

As narrated in *The Times*, on the morning of October 16, when Sinor's cook and household help reported for duty, they found no response to their doorbell. They tried to call him from a local phone but when they got no response to that too, they alerted Sinor's neighbors. His body was found lying in a pool of blood. "Sinor was stabbed in the stomach and probably strangled to death," mentions the newspaper. The "warmhearted" widower had been staying alone following the death of his wife in a train accident. The motive behind the murder had yet to be ascertained at the time the report appeared in the Press.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Adoption by Parsis

The recent Mumbai High Court decision on adoption by Christians, while applicable to the community, is subject to the personal law of Parsis

Rustom S. Gae

In the absence of any law regarding adoption by Parsis the matter is left to be governed by the case law or decisions of courts on the subject. The custom of taking a son in adoption by way of *datak* or *dharmaputra* prevalent in the erstwhile Baroda State is no longer applicable to Parsis in India. The position prevailing in the matter at present is that if a Parsi wants to adopt a child, whether a Parsi or non-Parsi, he must in the first instance obtain a guardianship order by having recourse to the procedure laid down in the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890, (the Act) applicable to minors of all castes and communities. In the selection of guardians and matters relating thereto, courts have regard to the personal law of the adoptive parents and the welfare of the minor, his age, sex and religion, and the character and capacity of the proposed guardian, his nearness of kin to the minor, etc. The position regarding the adoption order was not clear. This is now authoritatively laid down by a recent decision of the Mumbai High Court referred to below.

On a petition filed by a Christian couple (appointed as guardians of a minor child) seeking direction that the child may be given to them on adoption, the Mumbai High Court gave a landmark judgment regarding adoption by Christians. The Court held that in the absence of any general law regarding adoption, persons who have taken a child in guardianship under the Act will have the right to move the court to adopt that child. The right of a child to be adopted flows from Article 21 of the Constitution of India guaranteeing life and liberty to every person. The fundamental right of a child includes a right to be adopted by parents and to have a home, name and nationality, enforceable as a civil right in courts of law.

Absence of any law regarding adoption cannot prevent guardians appointed

under the Act from seeking relief from courts by filing a petition to adopt the child.

Parents appointed as guardians under the Act can move the court for adoption of their minor wards and the court will pass an order for adoption subject to adequate safeguards. The court must be satisfied that the guardians appointed under the Act will be suitable parents for the minor child. After the passing of the guardianship order a period of two years must elapse before an adoption petition is filed. The court will ascertain that the financial status, health and medical reports of the adoptive parents are sound. A progress report of the child will be obtained. Views of the Indian Council for Social Welfare will be taken into account before the adoption order is passed. Common civil code is not necessary for enforcement of the right to adoption.

The legal consequence of an order for adoption passed by the court will be that the personal law of the adoptive parents will apply to the adopted child whose right to inheritance will be the same as that of a natural born child. Adoptive parents have the right to rectify the register of births and, if they so desire, to give names to the child.

Principles laid down by the High Court regarding adoption by Christians will, so far as may be, be equally applicable to adoption by Parsis. This is no doubt subject to the personal law of Parsis as adoptive parents, which will be applicable to the adopted child, whether a Parsi or non-Parsi.

It is now well settled that the Parsi community in India consists of:

- Parsis who are descendants from the original Persian emigrants and who are born of Zoroastrian parents and who profess the Zoroastrian religion;
- the Iranians from Persia professing the Zoroastrian religion, who came to India

either temporarily or permanently; and • the children of Parsi fathers by alien mothers who have been duly and properly admitted into the Zoroastrian religion.

The position emerging from judicial decisions is that a Parsi can only be a Parsi by birth and cannot be a Parsi by conversion or absorption, e.g. adoption. A non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi does not fall under any of the aforesaid three categories and cannot therefore be called a Parsi. Such a child would not be entitled as of right to enjoy any of the rights and privileges available only to members of the Parsi community.

It is a long-standing custom and usage prevailing in the community that conversion or proselytization to the Zoroastrian religion, even though permitted by the religion, is not recognized by the community. As the right to freedom of religion or religious practices is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution of India, it cannot be taken away or affected by the legislature or the executive. Hence a non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi will not automatically become a Parsi, i.e. a Parsi Zoroastrian.

Though the adoption order virtually assimilates the position of an adopted child with that of a natural born child to the maximum extent possible, it cannot affect the basic practice of the Zoroastrian religion against conversion. As a non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi cannot on adoption become a Parsi, the child cannot be taken into the Zoroastrian faith by performing his *navjote* ceremony. The child cannot, on attaining majority, solemnize his marriage under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, which applies only when both the bride and the bridegroom are Parsis. The child is not entitled to enter and offer prayers in fire-temples meant for Parsis only. Similarly relatives of the



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child, on his death, cannot avail of the dokhmenashini or aramgah facility. Trust deeds or schemes regarding these places or institutions almost invariably contain a provision that they are meant only for Parsis.

All this shows that a non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi cannot claim any right or benefit under such trusts or schemes relating to dokhmas, aramgahs, baugs, agiaries, atash behrams, etc meant for Parsis only. Similarly a behdin child adopted by an athornan will not automatically become an athornan on adoption.

The Mumbai High Court has held in the above case that the effect of the order of adoption will be that the personal law of adoptive parents will be applicable to the child whose right of inheritance will be the same as that of a natural born child. An adopted son, not being a Parsi, cannot be equated with the natural born son. Chapter III of Part V of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 contains "Special Rules for Parsi Intestate." The word "Parsi" used throughout the chapter should be construed judicially interpreted as earlier. A non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi pursuant to the adoption order passed by the court cannot be called a Parsi and cannot therefore inherit the estate of the deceased parent on intestacy (without leaving any will). The decision of the Mumbai High Court regarding the right of an adopted child to inherit the estate of the adoptive parents dying intestate is thus distinguishable and will not be applicable to inheritance by a non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi

dying intestate. Such a child can succeed to the estate only if a bequest is made to him under the will of the deceased parent. This practice is followed by Parsis at present in respect of an adopted child, being a Parsi or non-Parsi.

Disabilities arising in the case of an adopted child, being a non-Parsi as mentioned above, will create an embarrassing situation regarding the adopted child vis-à-vis the natural born child, so long as the personal law (including customs and usages) applicable to Parsis remains as at present.

A general law on adoption on the lines of the Adoption of Children Bill, 1980 (which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 16, 1980, but could not be enacted as an Act of Parliament) is advisable. That will simplify the procedure regarding adoption and give status to the adopted child. However, it will not be much helpful, unless the personal law applicable to Parsis is amended with a view to removing the disabilities referred to above. The policy of the Government of India is not to interfere in the personal law of any minority community unless the community itself asks for an amendment.

Rustom S. Gae, a former law secretary to the Government of India, is presently a senior advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India. He is known for his expertise on subjects relating to fiscal laws, company law and constitutional law.



board of trustees (see "The Godrej exit," *Parsiana*, October 1986).

The celebration of the consecration of the Agiary was boycotted by the Godrej family. The Punchayet trustees, with the exception of Tirandaz, made scant reference to the Godrej contribution. In his normal jesting style Tirandaz noted, "For the first time there are more young people than old people... If there had been no Naval Godrej there would have been no Godrej Baug. If there had been no Maneck Engineer this lovely Agiary wouldn't have come up. And if there had been no Khojeste Mistree around, there would have been no enthusiasm among our youngsters..."

If the resplendent Godrej Baug Agiary is a measure of fissiparous effort, one wonders what would be the magnitude of the community's achievement if everyone pulled together.

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THE CONSECRATED CONVOY
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applied to all donors and several buildings at Godrej Baug have been constructed by various individuals and trusts, including the Rayomand Committee of Zoroastrian ladies among whose pillars was the redoubtable Jer Bardi. Personal rivalry and increased politicization led to Godrej being accused on two counts: of using Punchayet land to house their personnel and of making money on the flats they allotted (because Godrej made their allottees pay Rs 40,000 on the premise that the bonanza of a flat then worth Rs 3.5 lakhs on Napean Sea Road should generate funds for further construction for others on the waiting list as had explained Naoroji Godrej to *Parsiana* in 1986). A disgusted Godrej resigned from the Punchayet after 19 months on the

Representation without responsibility?

The cost of good governance by the BPP needs to be shouldered by the community, argues the author

Aspi D. Moddie

The September 1999 issue of *Parsiana* had three articles ("BPP deficit: 1.39 crores," "What price Universal Adult Franchise?" and "The case for universal adult franchise") which bring to life the Bombay Parsi millennium bug, bedeviled issues of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) — now sought to be immodestly made into "the apex body of Zoroastrians" in the hour of its clamorous decline — despite, may I add, the presence of a few good representatives in the Anjuman Committee (AC). The articles give the impression of acute "financial stringency" with a deficit of Rs 1.39 crores; and the vexed question of representational election and UAF (universal adult franchise), discussed by Arnavaz Mama, Dinshaw Tamboly, Rustom Tirandaz and Dinshaw Mehta. On this question of the nature of governance and financial management, the BPP and the Bombay Parsis seem to be on common ground with India as a whole. UAF has not helped India in its financial bankruptcy since 1991. May be it has worsened it by populist expenditures by irresponsible 'representatives of the people,' not made really accountable. UAF has not exactly been the answer to people's prayers even in developed countries, and certainly not in most of India!

On the other hand, how long can the Bombay community depend on a limited franchise system, with 90 percent of the community not involved in its own management?

Perhaps the first need is for clarity of objectives and issues, which this article attempts to offer. The three basic objectives of any society are good representative governance, financial viability for sustainability, and public accountability in a transparent system of democratic governance. The BPP needs to honestly examine its own performance, within its limitations as a trust, over a long period of time.

Mama's article shows gross

misallocation of resources and wrong priorities: Repairs to property Rs 139.19 lakhs, changing the facade of Doongerwadi including planting of trees Rs 40-50 lakhs, education Rs 15 lakhs, support to aging members Rs 11 lakhs, renovating Doongerwadi bunglis Rs 7 lakhs, subsidizing rent of deserving tenants Rs 2.2 lakhs, etc.

The highest figure of Rs 139.19 lakhs on repairs to properties occupied by rich and middle-class Parsi tenants at pittance rents of Rs 17 to 30 makes a mockery of the right to vote, without concurrent responsibility to pay fair community dues. Any basis in Zoroastrian values, before making claims to being an apex body "with the largest Towers of Silence complex and the biggest troupe (unfortunate expression usually used for actors, dancers and acrobats!) of qualified priests anywhere in the world?" Doongerwadi improvements to the order of an extravagant Rs 40 to 50 lakhs seems in ignorance of economic forestry practices in natural regeneration of plants with adequate protection and faster growth than planting new trees, especially in Bombay's climate. Three-quarters of this money could be saved with sound protection for natural regeneration as any good forester will confirm. Education, aging elders, and subsidized rent to the poor, a high community priority, accounts for less than 18 percent of the above expenditures. These expenditures could be doubled or trebled if the well-off in baugs cease to be community parasites, if they also want to vote; and if the BPP adopts natural regeneration with minimum plantings as good forestry practice. One would have thought that bleeding democratic hearts for UAF would have thought of such revised priorities for students, the aging, and the poor. Parsis, once taking pride in charity, need to discard community parasitism, and adopt community civic sense (vohuman), by putting their money where their mouths,

votes and future housing lifestyles should be.

Is it enough for the AC to be "a ventilating chamber," as expressed by Dadi Engineer? Is it not also a performing body? Do years of *Parsiana* convey any coherent idea of that to the Bombay Parsi public? So, even before the constitutional issue of larger representativeness in the AC, UAF or proportional representation, the BPP needs to take honest stock of its performance and the quality of its leadership in a modernized community in the last two decades at least if it also aspires to "apex" leadership of the wider community, and 21st century aspirations. This implies going beyond the legal niceties of a trust organization, accountable only to the minority who elect the trustees. Can the BPP at least begin by articulating its 2010 aspirations, plans and resources?

If larger representativeness or UAF is the issue now raised by new populist leaders whose grounding has been in BMC (Bombay Municipal Corporation) politics, the long historical lesson of democracy-making in England and the USA shows that long before a wider franchise and UAF, the principle of taxation and representation was at the root. From King John's barons in Magna Carta (1215), to the American War of Independence (1774-83) on the fundamental principle of "No taxation without representation" led to the need for the lower house to sanction all money bills on taxes and expenditures since. This is mentioned not as an academic point, but to make clear that wider representativeness carried the wider obligation to pay the system for services, and to make the executive accountable in taxation, expenditures and financial management generally. UAF only followed in the 20th century. Most democratic history is about paying, not just getting. This is not an aspect taken into account by Tirandaz and Mehta. In fact, all the evidence points to a community-wide

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failure in this fundamental of democratic resource-raising responsibilities. The right to vote is not enough, as one can see in the mafia politics of Bihar and North India, where people want power and water services without proper payment even as Bombay Parsis want costless housing.

If some trustees believe that UAF should be introduced, what is the basis for them to believe that the enlarged electorate will automatically assume responsibility for raising resources for community services provided when:

- 80 percent of the beneficiaries of BPP housing pay pittance rents between Rs 17-30, and do not contribute 50-75 percent of repair costs;
- the BPP had to incur expenses of Rs 1.4 crores in excess of rent received;
- rich car owners fail to pay reasonable parking charges;
- 40 to 50-year-old community buildings may not survive more than another 10 to 15 years in a city of annual house collapses.

Why have Tirandaz and Mehta evaded this cardinal financial responsibility of representative democracy? They talk of "a crying need" for UAF, but with no responsibility for payments of services, just as Indian populist democracy has led to the bankruptcy of Indian states, even the richest Punjab. Indian populist politicians have created a culture of freebies for public goods and services, leading to state bankruptcies and non-performing assets. Well-to-do Bombay Parsis have been behaving like rich Punjabi farmers, the richest in India. Our practising local politicians complain of the "play of power politics," as if they were innocent of this in the BMC, their stamping ground. When they again allege "power politics, cliques and coteries" in bodies like CER (Committee for Economic Revival) and CUZ (Committee of United Zoroastrians), they appear to pose as innocent Alices in the Plunderland of the BMC. And when they lay claim to the BPP's "apex body" recognition, on the basis of unclaimed corpses in the city's morgue, one wonders if there could be any more macabre claims to BPP apexhood!

The real issues before the BPP are:
•leadership of a performing management, with 21st century vision and the right priorities, with transparency, good community communications and well-conceived yearly and five-year plans!

•a modernized professional management with vision and mission statements based on a broad consensus;

•a steady expansion of a responsible electorate who will pay for community property and services even as it votes. The community and trustees should evolve certain fair principles for the payment of higher rents and repair charges for community property, based on anticipated inflation say for periods five years ahead. Similarly, moderate parking charges of Rs 100 (scooters and motorcycles) to Rs 500 a month (for large cars) may be seriously considered in a city where space is big money.

•a search for commercial income from community properties, as in Delhi and Calcutta anjuman. Some agiaries have done this to upgrade and sustain themselves.

•More than any other investment, trustees of the BPP, leaders of the 'baugs,' and influential Parsis need to invest in innovative ways and means of changing Parsi public opinion towards more responsible, less parasitic attitudes to its own assets and long-term resources and lifestyles. Not least the youth, who should be made aware that unsustainable economics is bound to impair their lifestyles decades down the road in degraded, collapsing housing; and the less parasitism, the more money to invest in the social priorities of youth education, priests, the aging and the poor.

Leadership does not mean being pulp to your perceived vote banks. Good leaders make better days happen. That is why they are elected! Or else who wants these worthies? Witness Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu's performance: his vision, his modernizing, reforming performance with information technology. This CEO chief minister has been the most triumphant politician, despite non-populist measures like lifting prohibition, reducing subsidies on rice and raising power tariffs. Will the Parsi apex-obsessed leaders make this their lesson for 2000 AD? And CEO Naidu their political model?

A management consultant, Aspi Moddie is a former IAS officer who early in his career opted for the private sector. His voice was evident at the 4th and 5th World Zoroastrian Congresses. His book, *Zarathushtra's "Frasho-Kereti": Renewal In Our Time* was published in 1996.



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How should we keep our faith?

Whilst adhering to time-honored principles the community needs to face the changing scenario, advocates the author

Cushrow Irani

Although my name is Irani, when I was in school my exercise books and other identification marks used to say 'Cushrow Russey Aga.' My grandfather would take great pride in the fact that Aga was a distinction conferred on one of our ancestors by the old Iranian monarchy and he was very anxious to emphasize that we were not Agas from Turkey who were Muslims. The commander-in-chief of the Turkish Army was called the Aga. As we grew up my grandfather used to insist that people who wrote letters to us should say Irani in brackets to emphasize this. But there was no way we could control how people addressed us. And one of my childhood memories is of my father and my uncle going in petition to the grand old man and saying, "If you feel so strongly about it let us just drop the Aga and say Irani." And that is how it comes about that I am today able to bridge perhaps both sides of the divide — and there is a divide.

The new surname had more advantages. On the only occasion that I went to Iran, my enthusiasm was ahead of my common sense and I forgot about the necessary visa. This was in 1964. I landed at the airport at 2 o'clock in the morning and was refused admission. After arguing with the immigration officer for a very long time I suddenly said that if he thought that somebody with my name could not enter Iran, I did not know who could! So he looked at the passport again, grinned from ear to ear, stamped my passport with a special thump and let me through.

We human beings as Zoroastrians have a role to play. We are constantly exhorted to so conduct ourselves as to advance the cause of righteousness and move this creation towards perfection. We have a choice, a choice between good and evil. Hence, the need for good thoughts, for good words and for good deeds. This is the philosophical core of our religious faith — beautiful in its simplicity, profound in its implications

and as relevant to the modern world in which we live as it was when it was first propounded 30 centuries ago. We have been reminded that religions do not perish by reputation, but by misuse when they have outlived their relevance. By this test, Zoroastrianism is alive, very much alive.

Let us remind ourselves that intolerance is not a virtue and willingness to listen to other points of view is not a weakness, it is a measure of civilized behavior. I cannot help making this point because, time after time in congresses and meetings where Zoroastrians gather, we seem somehow to lapse into intolerant attitudes. Many years ago when I was a student of law, our professor used to tell us of the advice given by a very great British judge to a newcomer at the Bar. He said, "Young man, if you are weak on the facts and strong on the law, stress the law; if you are strong on the facts, and weak on the law, stress the other way. If you are weak both on the law and on the facts, thump the table."

In all walks of life and not just at Zoroastrian congresses we come across people who seem to go through life with the sublime conviction that they can do no wrong, that they never make mistakes. They suffer neither doubt nor anxiety. Their minds have been firmly shut and locked and the key seems to have been thrown away. It must make for an easy life; sleep must come very easily to them because they are not troubled in any way. Such persons can very rarely be mystic; they may be very mature souls who have outgrown their environment. But more often than not, they are likely to have the characteristics of a schoolboy, well birched but none the wiser. They have not yet learned that the applause they sometimes excite will soon cease to sound, and if they were a little less conceited they would sense the contempt in which they are held by their fellowmen.

How should we keep our faith, the

core of our teachings and beliefs and, at the same time, be ready to adapt to a changing environment? Let me submit for your consideration a few propositions: First, there is a legitimate pride in our traditions. Traditions explain the faith in a particular historical context. Second, traditions and respect for them should not lead to the inference that we are in any sense a chosen people and that those who do not share our beliefs and faith are somehow beneath us and doomed to perdition. Zoroastrianism, as I understand it, does not accept the proposition that some human beings are more or less human than others. Humility and a constant striving towards perfection is the hallmark of our faith, not complacency or arrogance. Third, Zoroastrianism is a universal creed, valid for all mankind. And therefore, it seems to me to follow, it is not a creed limited to those who happen to be born Zoroastrians. On the other hand, it does not follow either that we should be setting out to proselytize the world. But this is a social and political problem, if you will, not a problem in religion.

Finally, I would suggest that charity is a strong plank in the Zoroastrian ethos. We hold service to humanity to be a form of worship. We lay great stress on human values and the equality of the sexes. We also claim that the first declaration of human rights was propounded by Cyrus the Great.

I have been talking to our young people and I think they understand that prayers and rituals are a part of our tradition. There is a complaint, however, that we do not understand what we say in our prayers. When we go to view performances at the opera it is well-known that they are in Italian, French, German or other languages. If we really want to enjoy those performances, then we take the trouble to study their translations, to learn the theme or the plot if you like, to make the necessary effort. Is that spirit of endeavor and enterprise

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strange when it comes to our prayers? Can we not also try to understand what our prayers are about? The language of Avesta is not in use at the moment, but

all language is beautiful, there is a certain resonance about it. When I intone *Jashmé Avangé Mazda* three times I feel a certain qualitative difference, from saying "Come to our aid, O Lord." I also suggest that the effort is its own reward; the struggle to overcome our handicaps also builds character. May I, therefore, make a personal submission and say that we should try

and understand what our prayers are about rather than expect the prayers to come to us in a readily packaged, and perhaps, predigested form.

Zoroastrianism is a missionary religion. It was a state religion at a certain time in our history. Let us approach this problem of conversion in a spirit of understanding, of tolerance and retain at the same time a sense of proportion. I do not think anyone is suggesting that the time has come to unsheathe the sword and to force people to accept a certain faith. We have to understand also at the same time that for a community as small as ours the prospect of opening our doors wide raises an apprehension that we will be swamped. It is a perfectly reasonable apprehension. And yet, for a religion that stresses the importance of the individual and the need for each of us to work out his own salvation, it seems to me a little strange that we should be refusing all comers absolutely.

If we are honest with ourselves, I think we will recognize that Joseph Peterson whose navjote was performed in 1983 has a better grasp and understanding of our faith than many of us who are simply born into the 'right' families. Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee led the life of a humble clerk in an office in the city of Calcutta. He had another major interest. Attracted to the *Gathas* of Zoroastrianism since a very early age he taught himself Avesta in order to study the *Gathas* in the original and then

he wrote a book tracing the relationship — and he claimed that there was a relationship — between the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra and the Vedic scriptures of



Peterson (center) being initiated into the faith

the Hindus. For me it is enough that this humble man gave 10 years of his life in studying the *Gathas* and in writing a book. I only helped him in a small way to get his book published. He did not ask to become a Zoroastrian, but if he had what would have been our response? There must be something sublime in our religion to inspire such devotion in Chatterjee. I also suggest that there must be some-

thing rather odd about ourselves if we believe that had Ahura Mazda known that Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee was a worthy soul, he would have arranged to have him born into a Zoroastrian family.

We Zoroastrians are a highly individualistic community. Some time ago the foreign minister of Japan had come to Bombay and was asked, "Mr Minister, how is it that your country which has a total lack of every natural resource has made such a success of its economy? We in India have every natural resource worth the name and we continue to flounder. Do you have a simple, perhaps oversimplified explanation?" He said, "In Japan we have so many million citizens. In India you are so many million individuals." Now that is true of all Indians. It is much more true of Zoroastrians.

We are highly individualistic and we have to account for it. And that, perhaps, is also our safety valve — that no one will be able to ride roughshod over us, no one will be able to weld us into a determined, oppressive community harassing our neighbors in the countries where we have chosen to reside. I take great pride in the fact that Zoroastrians, wherever they have settled, have been a credit to the country of their adoption. I am delighted that our young people are being recognized, because they are the

essence of the changes that are coming upon us. I have the greatest respect for their sincerity and for their capacity to get things done. There is serious questioning in their minds. Their questioning, I am convinced, is born of a desire to learn, to understand, and only then to accept. As a journalist, questioning is my stock-in-trade — that is how we get our stories — so I am more than normally sympathetic to this view. This world is changing rapidly, sometimes a little too rapidly for comfort. Do we have a talisman, a test, a warning that we can apply and that we can take to heart?

As I was thinking how to formulate this thought I recalled a story about Gautama Buddha and I think it is very appropriate because we have learned that there is great similarity between Zoroastrianism and the religion of the Buddha. I think this is true. Both stress the importance of individual salvation and both stress that salvation is in our own hands. And this is a true story by all accounts. The Buddha was dying and Ananda, his senior-most disciple, was trying to get whatever more advice or wisdom he could glean before the Buddha passed away. One question was preying on Ananda's mind and he raised it at this point. He said, "What should be our attitude to women, O Lord?" The Buddha answered, "Do not see them." Ananda asked again, "But if we do see them and meet them, what do we do, Lord?" He replied, "Do not talk to them." Ananda persisted, "If they talk to us, Lord, what shall we do?" The Buddha answered, "Keep wide awake, Ananda."

Religions do not perish by reputation, but by misuse when they have outlived their relevance

I am not suggesting that the attitude towards women in Buddha's time and age is central to Buddhist doctrine. It is not. It is no part of our doctrine. The world has moved a great deal since that time but what is relevant, perhaps, to our situation today is the final admonition — "keep wide

awake!" In a rapidly changing world, all we can do is to hold fast to our principles, hold steadfast and true to them, and for the rest keep wide awake.

Edited excerpts from a paper presented by the author, who is the Editor-in-Chief and managing director of The Statesman, at the 5th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Los Angeles in 1985.

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Memorials and men

Centuries later the contributions
of three prominent Bombayites are recalled

Marzban J. Giara

His concern for health and education, his foresight and charitable disposition are recalled 100 years after Nowrojee Nusserwanjee Wadia's demise. The Nowroz Baug, a residential colony of Parsi Zoroastrians at Lalbaug, and the Nowrojee Wadia Maternity Hospital at Parel are named after him.

A street in Bombay's commercial Fort area and another locality in Khetwadi stand as a tribute to Cawasji Rustamji Patel, 200 years after his death.

Yet another prominent figure whose 200th death anniversary is observed this year was Mancherji Bamanji Saithna, a leading trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet whose counsel even the Mayor's court respected.

Their sterling contribution has been summarized here for the benefit of *Parsiana* readers.

Born on August 30, 1849 *roz* Dae-pa-Adar, *mah* Spandarmad, 1218 AY, Nowrojee Nusserwanjee Wadia CIE, died on December 19, 1899, *roz* Khordad, *mah* Tir, 1269 AY. *The Times of India* of December 21, 1899 carried a tribute under the heading "The late Mr N. N. Wadia, a Remarkable Career." Some excerpts:

Nowrojee Nusserwanjee Wadia, 50, father of Cursetjee, Nusserwanjee and Rustomjee, had been to England for his education in 1861, at the age of 11. He attended a school at Liverpool and returned to Bombay in 1866 when he served as assistant engineer at the then Royal Mill. In 1874 he was given the post of manager in the famous Maneckji Petit Mills for which he designed and erected one of the largest engines in the world. It was he who introduced the manufacture of hosiery and making of socks and sewing thread in India.

He started a special factory for dyeing yarn and cloth in Bombay called The Bombay Dyeing Company. In 1877 he

started an agency for importing textile machinery and his business grew from humble beginnings. Through his firm boilers, engines and other machinery started coming to Bombay and many mills here have been established with machinery imported under his supervision. He designed and built the National, the Neriad, the Dhun, the E. D. Sassoon, the David, the Presidency, Currimbhoy and Wadia, Indo-China, Tricumlal, Jehangir Wadia and Calicut Mills. Besides, he established two mills called Century and Textile Mills and himself managed them.

From 1885 he was vice president of the Bombay Mill Owners Association. One of its most active members, he was appointed a committee member for 15 consecutive years. From March 1887 he was the honorary secretary of the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute (VJTI). He was able to secure much of the machinery for the VJTI workshops as a gift through the munificence of Sir Dinshaw Petit. As Lord Reay, the then governor of Bombay, observed, Wadia was well versed in technical education, had brought his special knowledge and skills to the board, and given of his time and labor ungrudgingly.

If there was one son of India who had advanced the cause of primary education in the presidency, it was Wadia. Since 1888, he was appointed a member of the joint schools committee by the government, and became its chairman in 1894. His endeavors were directed

towards improving the position of underpaid teachers and securing healthy accommodation for ill-housed schools in various parts of the city. He took a prominent part in the introduction of a

large number of Urdu schools for Moham-medans and also in starting a better class of schools for girls and backward classes. Besides introducing the kindergarten system of education, he advocated physical training for boys and girls.

As a member of the Municipal Corporation, Wadia served on the building bylaws committee, the house connections committee, the health department reorganization committee and the disposal of the town

sweepings committee. His many suggestions and recommendations were generally adopted and he got the Corporation to pass a resolution for the appointment of a commission to enquire into the sanitary condition of Bombay. He showed great concern for town conservancy.

In 1889 he was awarded the title 'Companion of the Indian Empire' (CIE) by the government. In August of the same year, Lord Reay appointed him a member of the Government of Bombay's Legislative Council, which honor he held four times till 1897. He rendered great assistance in the passing of industrial and sanitary measures for Bombay. The part he took in the discussions on the Boiler and Factory Acts reflected great credit on him as an expert engineer.

In June 1896, he established a chari-



Wadia: introduced hosiery to India Photo: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil



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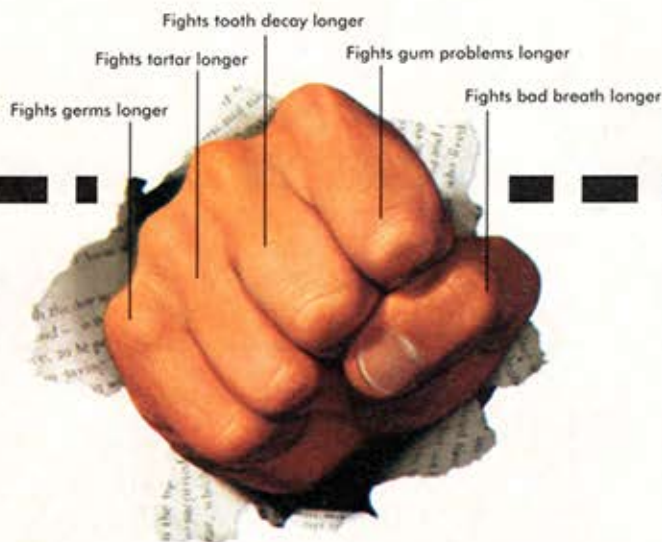
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table dispensary at Khandala at his own expense. The same year he was appointed as a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and an official of Sir Jamsetjee Institute. During the famine of 1896, he raised a fund to sell foodgrain at a cheap rate to poor Zoroastrians. In 1897, he was appointed a fellow of the Bombay University and a trustee of the Bombay Port Trust.

Wadia was connected with numerous educational institutions and served on various hospital committees, chairing some of them. He was a director of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, a member of the committee of the Fergusson College and Victoria High School at Poona, and also of the Zoroastrian Girls' School Association. He largely contributed to the funds of the Fergusson College, the Sardar Nusserwanjee Zoroastrian Girls' High School and Victoria High School (Poona), the Poor Boys' Seminary, and the Sangamner English School.

The promotion of physical education was a thing upon which he had set his heart. It was he who secured the present excellent site at Backbay now occupied by the Parsi Gymkhana of which he was an active member. He took a prominent part in the establishment of the Bombay High Schools' Athletic Association and contributed regularly to it.

He was a member of the committee of the Parsi Maternity Hospital for the endowment of which he contributed Rs 18,500, and maintained five beds at an average cost of about Rs 100 a month. He was a member of the board of the Bombay Native Dispensary, the Free Dispensary at Khandala (maintained by him), the Lowjee Wadia Dispensary, the Leper Home and the Nurses' Home. There was not a charitable institution in Bombay to which Wadia was not connected. He maintained many indigent families and defrayed the cost of educating several poor but deserving students. He was known for his benevolence and charity without distinction of caste or creed.

In the start of 1898, seeing the rise of plague among the Zoroastrians, he took the lead and founded the Zoroastrian Fund for Relief of Hardships (Sankat Nivaran Fund). In 1899 he had the Indawalla Agiary at Dhobitalao merged with his paternal grandmother Bai Avabai A. K. Wadia Agiary and had it newly consecrated. He showed great enthusiasm as the chairman of the

Bombay Zoroastrians' Death Benefit Fund.

He died at Bournemouth, England. As a mark of respect to his memory all port and port trust flags were ordered to be placed at half mast. The VJTI, Sir J. J. Parsee Benevolent Institution and other Parsi establishments remained closed.



C. P. Tank benefactor Patel

Photo: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil

At his uthamna on December 21, a sum of Rs 3,51,000 was contributed out of his estate as stated in his will to establish a fund for the benefit of the Parsi community. His wife, sons and relatives contributed another Rs 45,706 in charity.

At the end of the uthamna, Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Darabji Peshotanji Sanjana proposed to the athornans that his name be recited in public ceremonies of the Zoroastrian religion along with the names of other elders. This was seconded by Ervad Nusserwanji Burjorji Desai.

The Nowroz Baug, a residential colony of Parsi Zoroastrians at Lalbaug, and the Nowrojee Wadia Maternity Hospital at Parel are named after him.

Wadia's sympathies were catholic and his energy and private charity unbounded. Entirely a self-made man, the story of his life shows what sound common sense, compassion and indefatigable industry can achieve.

With his keen commercial spirit, liberal views and pursuit of excellence, Wadia raised the Parsi community to the unique position it holds amongst the races domiciled in India.

Cawasji Rustamji Patel died on August 6, 1799, *roz Bahman, mah Bahman*, 1168 AY, at the age of 55. He was the eldest son of Rustamji Dorabji Patel who organized an army of Kolis and local people to fight the Siddis and held Bombay for three days till British reinforcements arrived. He was therefore referred to as Rustam General. Cawasji's grandfather Dorabji Nanabhoy Patel was the first Parsi to come to Bombay.

After Rustamji's death in 1763, his son Cawasji held the post of 'Patel' of Bombay. Besides, in 1774 when the British government took Thana and Vasai from the Maratha Sardar Raghunathrao Dadasaheb, he was entrusted with the 'patelship' of villages like Charni bunder, Manpesar, Turambu, Madh, Marve, Manori, Vesave, Danda, Kalyan, Bhiwandi, etc which he administered with his brother Dorabji Rustamji Patel. He settled many Parsis in Thana village and in 1780 built a dokhma, an atash dadgah, dar-e-meher and a nasakhana for their use.

In 1770 the East India Company allotted him a 'boat contract' to provide barges for the army. In 1775, William Hornby, the governor of Bombay presented the handsome Cawasji a 'dress of honor.' He built a large pond in Khetwadi in 1776, which is still known as Cawasji Patel Talao — C. P. Tank. Also, a street in the Fort area of Bombay named after him is still known as Cawasji Patel Street. He planted the largest mangos in Bombay which were used for making *murrambo* and jam known even today as Caswasji Patel *no ambo*. In 1790 he built a nasakhana at Baharcote for the use of the anjuman. He was the owner of *Shah Jehangir*, a ship of 705 tons, which was engaged in the China trade. He was a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

In 1795 when the son of governor Jonathan Duncan went to England, Cawasji presented him with half a ton of dry Bombay ducks and two and a half dozen dry pomfrets. The gift was gratefully accepted.

Mancherji Bamanji Saithna died on August 8, 1799, *roz Shahrevar, mah Bahman*, 1168 AY, at the age of 88. He was the third son of Bamanji Rustamji

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Saithna. Bamanji was the second son of Rustam Maneck of Surat. In 1741 Mancherji came to Bombay from Surat and traded with foreign countries along

**There was not a
charitable institution
in Bombay to which
Wadia was not
connected**

with his brothers. Thereafter, in 1748, after the death of his cousin Maneckji Navroji Sett, he administered the Sett Trust till 1785. He was a leading trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and being a learned elderly person himself, his opinion was sought in the Mayor's court on questions pertaining to Parsi customs.

His son, Sorabji Mancherji built a dar-e-meher at Baharcote in his name and had it consecrated on November 24, 1796. It continued to function in its original building near Sheikh Memon Street, Baharcote till June 11, 1923. As the Parsi population in the locality declined, a new dar-e-meher was opened at Tardeo on March 27, 1927.

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The humble maestro

A mechanical engineer by training Pandit Jal Balaporia preferred to respond to the call of music

Neville Bastawalla

Jal saheb looks, behaves and lives like a typical guru should. To this date he goes all the way to Fort by train, daring the rush to teach Hindustani shashtriya sangeet as a visiting professor at the University of Mumbai. Such is his stature that when his pupils go up to the stage to perform, they first touch Pandit Jal Balaporia's feet, then touch the stage and only then mount the steps.

Musicians perform for the public, Jal saheb performs for the musicians. The respected musician was invited to sing at the *chhatra* (grave) of the legendary Sangeet Samrat Mian Tansen at Gwalior some years ago. To quote Panditji, the Gwalior Gharana is like a seed-bed of musical imagery that embodies the fundamental principles of Hindustani classical music. His repertoire consists of various forms such as khayal, tarana, thumri, tappa, hori and the ashtapadis, (which are in Sanskrit). The pièce de résistance for Jal saheb is his presentation of the bandish. This of course is completely followed by bolalap, boltaans, taans, behlave and layakari, he patiently explained the finer points of his art in simple language.

Trophies and awards adorn Jal saheb's sitting room at Shapoorji Bharucha Baug in Andheri. The adjoining room where he does his riyaz has sparse furniture, an altar with a diva, a photograph of his guru, and an idol of Ma Saraswati (received as a trophy some years ago). There are also two tanpuras resting against the wall on a couch. (The word tambura is incorrect. The correct word tanpura signifies completion of a taan and is an instrument accompanying all vocalists.)

In 1997 he was conferred the Sangeet Research Academy Award and in 1998 the Maharashtra State Cultural Award. He is also the proud recipient of the Parvez Katrak Foundation Award and

Why have so few people heard of let alone listened to them or to the tabla maestro Aban Mistry or the sarod maestro Zareen Daruwalla?

When asked why the Parsi community was so ignorant about Hindustani classical music Panditji was reticent and just said such is life! Music is his hobby, his passion and his life. That he has made it his profession is something of nature's gift, which few mortals are blessed with. Panditji is one who speaks little, but always speaks on a high intellectual-spiritual plane.

Jal saheb is the son of Kaikhushroo Balaporia who worked for the Indian Railways, as many Parsis did at the turn of the century. Kaikhushroo had a sweet voice with a reservoir of talent that remained largely untapped. The initial exposure of Panditji to music came at Sholapur where his father was posted, but when the family moved to Bilimora a change of fortune occurred.

Kaikhushroo's brother Sohrab had a son named Sapal who lived in the joint family. Sapal was many years senior to Jal and, in a way, was a catalyst that inducted him into the art of music. Sapal was studying at M.T.B. College, Surat for a Bachelor's degree in science and had impressed everyone by his rendering of the Rag Bhimpalasi at a college function. (Sapal did not pursue his talent and became a metallurgist who was later to become the assistant director of inspection, Government of India Inspectorate and Laboratory at Jamshedpur.) Jal, of course, excelled since the initial influence was so strong that the winds of change were unable to erase his footsteps on the sands of time.



The maestro in concert

the Swar Sadhna Ratna Award. Other felicitations and honors are too many to enumerate.

His cassette *Tanas and Tappas* was released four years ago when Panditji was felicitated in Dadar. His music has been put on CDs by a French music company two years ago. But the tragedy is that very few Parsis actually know of this. Why are the two living Parsi legends of Hindustani classical vocal music: Pandit Pheroze Dastur of the Kirana Gharana and Pandit Jal Balaporia of the Gwalior Gharana not known beyond a select elitist circle?



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His father encouraged Jal to sing as a child. But his formal tutelage began at the age of 14 years under the well-known Pandit Sitaram Eknath, the son of the famous Pandit Eknath Vishnu of the Gwalior Gharana. His mentor was Rehmat Khan of Gwalior but his intensive training was however received from a renowned dental surgeon Dr H. G. Moghe, himself a disciple of Pandit Eknath. The musical lineage is indeed impressive but what is more impressive is that this humble maestro always credits his gurus for his success.

It is claimed, he said, that the origin of Hindustani shastriya sangeet began with the Rag Bhairav which, legend has, flowed out from the vocal cords of Lord Shiva. He went on to say that if one were to remove the legend of Lord Krishna from Hindustani shastriya sangeet only 40 percent of what has been sung will remain. That is primarily because of the predominance of Shyama Sangeet (in praise of Goddess Kali) which has engulfed eastern India and the mystic chants of Lord Shiva, which have become popular in the Madhya Pradesh-Uttar Pradesh belt.



Left to right: Balaporia (with award), former Cultural Affairs Minister Pramod Navalkar and Governor Dr P. C. Alexander

The language used is usually Braj Bhasha for songs relating to Lord Krishna and Bengali when it comes to Shyama Sangeet. But what we did not know is that there is a strand of Hindustani shastriya sangeet which has a strong (Farsi) Persian base and which Panditji was adept at. He had studied Persian in

school and can still speak it. His Marathi is extremely fluent and he can pass off as a Maharashtrian with ease. Jokingly his close friends call him Jal Saheb Balapurkar.

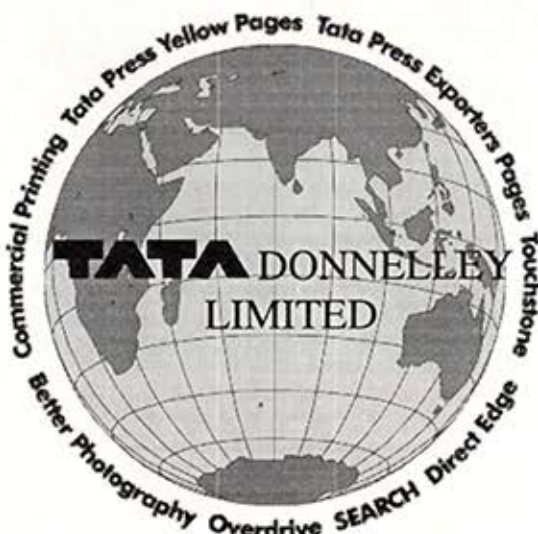
Jal saheb is a mechanical engineer who graduated from the famous VJTI (Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute) in Bombay and had many years of distinguished service with Air India.

Panditji is a soft-spoken, sedate man with a mischievous smile, a dry sense of humor and an articulated logic that makes the most intricate facts about Hindustani classical music sound

so simple. His hospitable wife Roshan, well-known for her excellent cuisine, is talkative and down-to-earth.

Such is his relationship with Mother Nature that he is a God-loving person rather than a God-fearing one. He has definite ideas about ethics and morals but is far from being a fundamentalist. A wine loving vegetarian (by choice), he is also a qualified priest. His greatness is his humility. The maestro gave us a small lesson in Hindustani classical music and a great lesson in humility.

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A Parsi at heart

Should we identify ourselves with our ethnic and religious labels or nationality?

Roshan Rivetna

Thoughts from a slightly confused Parsi-Indian-Iranian-North American Zarathushti

Growing up in Bombay the question of who I was or what I was, was pretty much cut and dried. In fact it was a moot point, to which I gave very little thought.

I was born a Parsi, in a hospital endowed by Parsis, lived in a nice Parsi neighborhood, frequented the agiary down the lane to remember loved departed ones and ask for Ahura Mazda's blessings, most especially on exam days. On very special occasions such as Pateti and Navroz, I dressed up in my new clothes and went to the Atash Behram and then on to an *Adi Marzban natak* (comic play). The whole family — all the aunts, uncles and cousins then got together for a seam-splitting meal of pullav-dar, sali gos, patra-ni-machhi, falooda, kalingar, kulfi (from Parsi Dairy Farm of course) and more.

Most of my friends were much like me. After school every evening we hung out at Hanging Gardens, which is also called Pheroze Shah Mehta Gardens or at the rocky oceanfront at Scandal Point.

The schools, hospitals, libraries, art galleries, museums and theaters I went to were endowed by our illustrious forefathers, Cowasjee Jehangir, Bhabhas, Petits, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. I enjoyed the fruits of the great industrial empires built by the Tatas, Wadias and Godrejs. I traveled in their railways and airplanes. I walked down streets named after them and passed by their statues. With their scholarships I came to America.

Here in America the question of my identity is not as clear cut as it was in the little Parsi world I came from. My loyalties are being pulled between calling myself a Parsi and calling myself a

Zarathushti or a Zoroastrian. With the turn of history that has brought Zarathushtis from Iran and India to this continent after centuries of separation, I am told, "We should not call ourselves Parsis or Iranis, we are all Zarathushtis."

While my mind tells me that this is the right approach and I must separate my ethnicity from my religion, my heart is very sad about the thought of giving up the Parsi appellation.

I find it very difficult to make the separation. In fact I also throw my nationality into the pot — of India, the country of my birth, North America, my country of adoption, and sometimes also Iran, where my fore-

fathers came from, the motherland of my religion. I really think of myself as a Parsi-Indian-Iranian-North American-Zarathushti and have much difficulty deciding which comes first and what to drop, if any. Am I a Parsi first, or a Zarathushti? I know my passport says I am an American, but at heart am I not still an Indian? And do I not still have a strong attachment to Iran, the land of my ancestral heritage?

And what about my children? Having been born in America, are they Parsis, or are they yet another new breed of 'North American Zarathushtis'? Will their children be Parsis? For how many generations?

In the last few decades, Zarathushtis are spreading from the mother countries of Iran and India (and Pakistan) to the corners of the earth — to Britain, North America, Australia, New Zealand, the

Far East and Africa.

Zarathushti groups are emerging in Russia, Tajikistan, Kurdistan and Ukraine. 'Neo-Zarathushtis' are being initiated into the faith. The Zarathushti community will have to learn how to deal with these diverse ethnic groups, their different cultures, traditions and even beliefs.

Of course, as we all know, Zarathushtis are spread far and wide across ideological boundaries, from the extreme traditional to the ultra reformist, and a million stances in between. To date, we cannot even agree on our name. Should we call ourselves 'Zoroastrian' or 'Zarathushti' or one of the multitude of spelling variations in between?

Some associations of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America are making efforts to define "Who is a Zarathushti?" (see pg 170) and writing membership guidelines.

It is a monumental task for our small community to learn how to deal with this burgeoning diversity — ethnic and ideological. Is it really possible to come up with and agree on a common, unified profile of a 'Zarathushti'?

Instead of trying to unify, can we maybe spend our limited energies at understanding, respecting and celebrating our differences?

As for me and my family, can we go back to being simply Parsis — no ifs, ands or buts?

Edited and reprinted with permission from FEZANA Journal, Spring 1999



Rivetna: ethnic diversity



Who is a Zarathushti?

A survey of the definitions of the term 'Zarathushti' or 'Zoroastrian' in the constitution of different associations of USA and Canada

Nina DiLucci

Listed here are the relevant sections in the constitution and bylaws of different associations in North America that pertain to the definition of a 'Zoroastrian.' This compilation was undertaken (for the *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 1999, from which it is reproduced) with the hope that it would be a useful guide for new organizations and those who wish to make future amendments and is not an attempt to offer any judgments.

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)

[Article III.1]: Membership to the Federation shall be open to any North American Zoroastrian organization/association/society that fulfills the following requirements:

B. Has been formed exclusively for the purpose of representing and serving the religious and charitable needs of a group of Zoroastrians resident in a geographic area in Canada or the USA.

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA)

4.1 Membership in the Association shall consist of one category: regular membership.

4.2 Regular membership shall be open to any person who is of the full age of 18 years and over and a resident of Alberta, who shall undertake to fully abide by the objects, rules and regulations of the association as herein set out in the Association's bylaws.

(The objectives of the Association require its members to "maintain, promote and disseminate the knowledge of the fundamentals, doctrines, traditions and cultural heritage of the Zoroastrian faith as propounded by the Prophet Zoroaster, his teachings, prayers and interpretations thereof, as laid down in the *Khordeh Avesta* and other Zoroastrian scriptures," etc.)

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Arizona (ZAA)

[Not available]

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC)

[Section 1.1.21]: "Zoroastrian" means an individual who attests to be a true believer and follower of the religion as propounded by Asho Zarathushtra in the *Gathas*, and who subscribes to established Zoroastrian habitual or customary practices.

4.2 Member

A Zoroastrian, his spouse or his child resident in British Columbia shall be eligible to become a member of the Society if he is:

4.2.1 born of two Zoroastrian parents and initiated into the Zoroastrian religion;

4.2.2 born of two Zoroastrian parents but not initiated into the religion due to circumstances; or

4.2.3 born of one Zoroastrian parent but not initiated into the Zoroastrian religion; provided that he is not practicing another religion and he declares his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion; or

4.2.4 not born of at least one Zoroastrian parent but initiated into the Zoroastrian religion.

California Zoroastrian Center (CZC)

Any Zoroastrian person 18 years of age or older of good character dedicated to the purposes of this corporation shall be eligible for regular membership.

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC)

Article VII, Section I: The membership of the Association shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children, subject to their payment of the annual membership fee.

A Zoroastrian is a person who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith by a navjote ceremony and who descends

from Zoroastrian parent/s.

Persian Zoroastrian Organization, California (PZO)

Membership requirements — none formulated

Zarathoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)

Article 3, Section 1: The membership of ZANC shall be open to all Zoroastrians and all other persons who express interest in the objectives of the Organization and agree to abide by the constitution and its bylaws.

(The primary objective is "to promote the study, understanding and practice of the Zoroastrian faith ...")

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman, California (TMZA)

Membership requirements: The membership is open to all Mazdayasni Zoroastrians who practice the Zoroastrian faith, who have not renounced this faith and who have not married outside the Zoroastrian fold.

Definition of a Zoroastrian: A Mazdayasni Zoroastrian is a person who has descended from both Mazdayasni Zoroastrian parents and who has been traditionally initiated (by a navjote or sudreh pushi ceremony recognized by TMZA) into the Mazdayasni Zoroastrian religion by Mazdayasni Zoroastrian mobeds.

Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF)

Membership is open to all Zoroastrians and their spouses.

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC)

Article VI, Section 1: The membership of the Association shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children, and all other persons who express deep interest in the objectives of the Association and agree to abide by its constitution and bylaws.



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2.a Ordinary membership shall comprise of all Zoroastrian individuals and family units.

(Only Ordinary Members have the right to vote and hold office.)

Article IV, Section 1: A Zoroastrian, for purposes of the constitution and bylaws of the ZAC is defined as a person who is a believer or follower of the religion as propounded by Prophet Zoroaster, and one who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practices followed by Zoroastrians.

Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAK)

Article III, Section 1: Membership shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children and to all other persons who express deep interest in the objects of the Association...

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA)

Article 4, Section 1: The membership of the Association shall be open to all Zoroastrians, their spouses and children and all other persons who express deep interest in the objectives of the Association and agree to abide by its constitution and bylaws.

2a. Ordinary membership will be open to all persons who have been formally initiated into the Zoroastrian religion and their spouses and children, whether natural or adopted.

(Only Ordinary Members have the right to vote and hold office.)

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Iranian Zoroastrian Association, New York (IZA)

Article II, Section 1: Classes of members.

(a) Class "Z" members: Iranian Zoroastrians and only Iranian Zoroastrians are eligible for class "Z" membership as class "Z" members.

(b) Class "O" members: All persons including Iranian Zoroastrians are eligible for class "O" membership. Only class "Z" members shall be entitled to vote ...

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY)

Article III, A: All Zoroastrians and their immediate family members are eligible upon payment of the stipulated membership fee to become members (immediate family being defined as spouse and children).

All non-Zoroastrians who have demonstrated an interest in Zoroastrians



are eligible upon payment of the stipulated membership fee to become Associate Members.

(An Associate Member is not eligible to vote or hold office.)

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) Constitution, Section 4: Zoroastrians, their spouses and their children shall be admitted to membership in the Society...

Section 1: For the purposes of the constitution and bylaws, 'Zoroastrian' is a person who is a follower of the religion as propounded by the Prophet Zoroaster and who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith.

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA)

Article III, Section 1: Any Zoroastrian, and his or her spouse, widow or widower, and children, may become members of the Association.

Article 1, Section 3: No Zoroastrian may be excluded from membership...because his or her views differ from the views of the majority on matters of principle, interpretation or application of the Zoroastrian faith. Holders of a minority view shall be treated with

the same consideration, and shall be eligible for all the same rights and privileges in the Association, as holders of a majority view.

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ)

Article III, Section A: Any person desirous of promoting Zoroastrian cultural, educational, social and religious activities and their immediate family members

are eligible upon payment of the stipulated membership fee to become members. (Immediate family shall be defined as spouse, children under 18 years of age, and retired and/or dependent parents.)

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ)

Section 5.05: An Ordinary Member must be a Zoroastrian resident of good standing...

Section 4.01: A Zoroastrian for purposes of these by-

laws is defined as "a person who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by our Prophet Zoroaster, who has not only signified his willingness to be initiated into the Zoroastrian religion, but has been so initiated in accordance with the practice(s) followed by the Zoroastrians and whose parents and/or grandparents have been initiated into the Zoroastrian religion.

Zoroastrian Association of Rocky Mountains (ZARM)

Article III, Section 1: Membership of ZARM shall be open to anyone who subscribes to its objectives, pays its dues and abides by its constitution.

(The main objective is to spread and foster knowledge about Zoroastrian culture and religion.)

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH)

Article 3.01: Membership is open to all individuals, regardless of race, sex, creed or color subject to the membership requirements.

Article 3.02: Regular Members: All Zoroastrians and their spouses and children are eligible for regular membership, subject to the payment of the ap-

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proprie dues.
(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT)

Article 3.01.1: For purposes of membership in this Association a Zoroastrian shall be defined as: A person who is a believer and a follower of the religion as propounded by Zarathushtra and one who has been initiated in the religion in accordance with the customs and religious practices followed in the community in which he or she currently or previously resided.

Article 4.03: Only Zoroastrian members are eligible to serve on the board of directors.

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc (ZAMWI)

Article 4, Section 1: The Ordinary Membership of the Association shall be open to all persons who have been formally initiated into the Zoroastrian religion and their spouses and children whether natural or adopted.

(Term 'Zoroastrian' — undefined)

Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS)

Article IV, Section 1: A person who is born of Zoroastrian parent(s) and who is initiated into the Zoroastrian faith, is a Zoroastrian.

A person who is born of Zoroastrian parent(s) but is not initiated due to the prevailing social and political conditions, is also a Zoroastrian, provided he/she has practiced the Zoroastrian faith since his/her birth.

A person who is not born of Zoroastrian parent(s), but who is a believer or a follower of the religion as propounded by Zarathushtra, has studied our scriptures, has learned the navjote (sudreh/kusti and sudreh pushi) prayers and has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith in accordance with the Article III of the Articles of Incorporation, is a Zoroastrian member of the Society...

Nina I. DiLucci was born in Bombay and immigrated to the USA in 1983. She is a



certified public accountant with a Master's degree in taxation who after actively working in the accounting profession for seven years, is now a full-time housewife and an active member

of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) in Dallas.

Thoughts on the "Who is a Zarathushti" survey

The Zarathushti religion is at the threshold of yet another redefining moment in the history of its struggle for survival. Zarathushti Americans are facing new challenges of assimilation into the American mainstream and a loss of our identity. However, instead of focusing on our problems of survival, many of us are lost in arguments among ourselves over the differences in the practice of rituals by Zoroastrians from India/Pakistan and Iran.

In these times, it is important that we put aside our differences and stand united in our effort to redefine ourselves and keep the torch burning. The actions we take today will determine whether our religion will continue to thrive or become a relic of the past.

I am married to a catholic American and our 6-year-old daughter, Jasmine, is growing up with mixed religion parents. It is important to my husband and me that Jasmine grows up knowing her roots on both sides. As parents we would like to teach our daughter the culture and religion of both sides of her parentage. When she is an adult (does not have to be 18) she would then choose to practice the religion of her preference.

However, as a community, we take away this choice when we start eliminating children like her because they do not fall under their narrow definition of a

Zarathushti (Zoroastrian).

Zarathushti Americans are facing two major challenges today. The first challenge is to understand and accept the differences between our Zarathushti brothers and sisters from Iran and India/Pakistan. They have lived apart for centuries in very different political and cultural environments. Therefore, the practice of our religion, especially the rituals, have evolved differently.

Our second challenge is to arrest the exodus of future generations born to mixed religion parents. Our small numbers, the lack of a fire-temple around the corner, not growing up in a neighborhood/colony where one is surrounded by Zarathushtis — these are some of the many reasons why inter-religion marriages are inevitable, if not in this generation, certainly in future generations.

One way to keep our community together and growing, would be to allow for the diversity to exist happily under one umbrella. Eventually, American Zarathushtis will evolve a culture of their own. As I worked on gathering the data for the article on "Who is a Zarathushti?" I felt that a good place to start to overcome these challenges would be to broaden the definition of the term Zarathushti (Zoroastrian), or possibly not define it at all.

Nina DiLucci

"The passion that fills the room"

I am sitting in the back row looking at the semi-full room of Zarathushtis my parents' age or older. They have come together to discuss the only remaining part of the ZSBC (Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia) constitution — the section regarding who is a Zoroastrian qualified to be a member of this community.

The room is alive with their mutual passion for the subject. One by one they stand to voice their thoughts and I listen. I am listening, yet that is not all I am doing. I have come here with the goal of giving everyone's thoughts a sincere and equal chance. Therefore, as each speaker gets up I find myself in a powerful inner challenge to clear my mind, so I can listen with an open mind.

When the speakers share points in accordance with my thoughts and be-

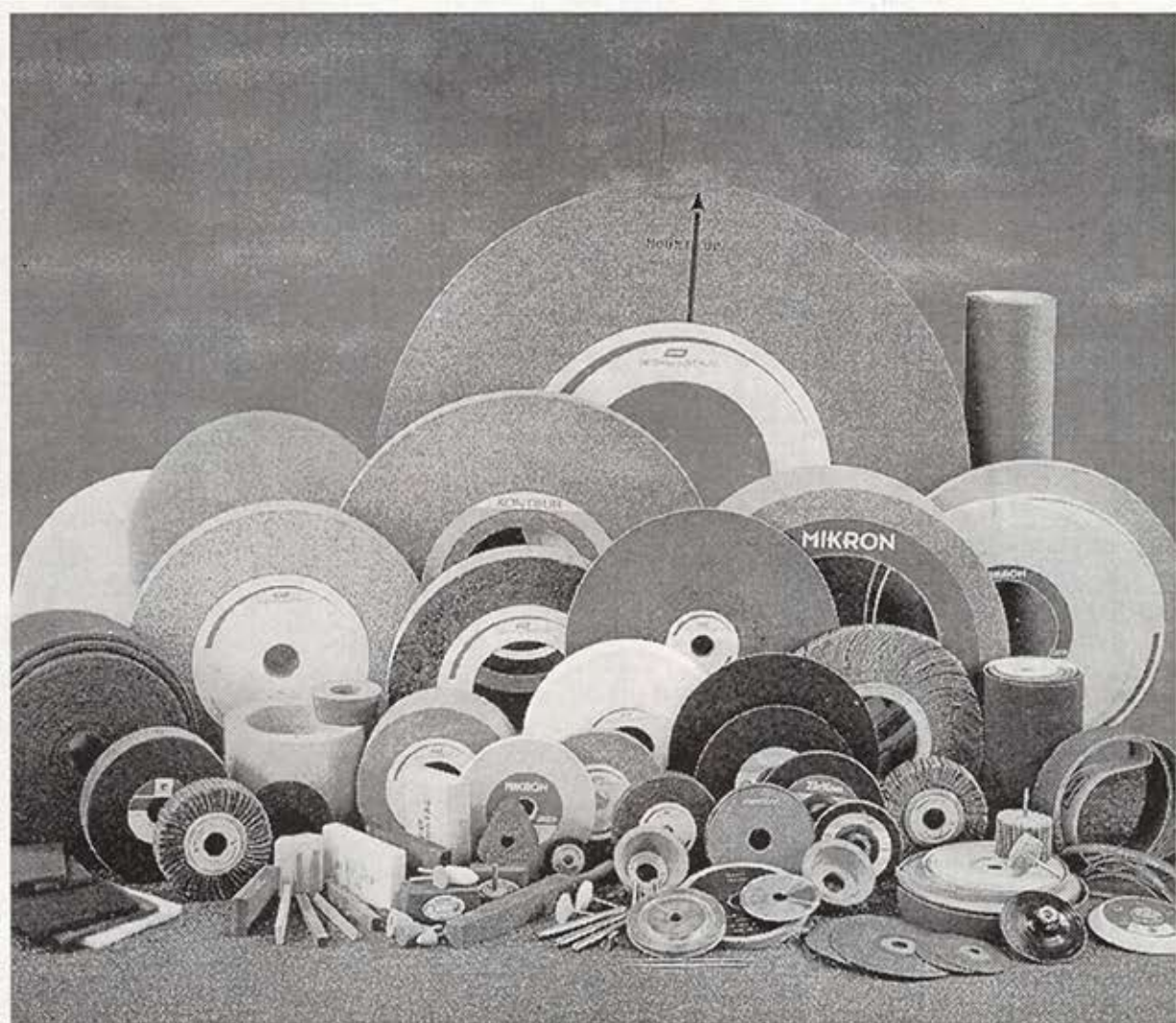
liefs, it is natural and passive for me to listen. What is difficult is to listen to all the points with the same openness. I find my heart racing as I strive to find why it is that I am mentally and physically objecting so strongly to some of the statements.

A few hours and several speakers later, I find myself losing concentration and withdrawing from the scene before me. I am focusing on the passion that fills the room. A passion stemming from caring Zarathushtis. Zarathushtis who are proud of who they are but are overwhelmed with the fear that in the rapidly approaching future, all that they cherish, all that had made them who they are, will fade into history.

It is this common fear for the future that is fueling the passion in this room.

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Decades of distinctive dentistry

With the fourth World Zoroastrian Dental Congress to be held in Bombay in September 2000, the author narrates the pioneering role of Parsi dentists in the country

Dr Dinshaw F. Boga

In common with other sciences, dentistry had a crude beginning, being practised by goldsmiths, blacksmiths and barbers. It began as a craft, not a science or an art.

Organized scientific dental education began in March 1840 at Baltimore, USA, with the establishment of the first ever dental college by Dr Horace H. Hyden (1769-1844) and Dr Chaplin A. Harris (1808-1860). *The American Journal of Dental Science* was also started by those two pioneers.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the foundation of the Odontological Society of London was laid in 1856 and the first dental school and hospital was started in London in 1858. The first lady dentist was Lady Mellonby who qualified in 1889.

The first official book on dentistry was written in 1828. Harris in fact wrote and published the first recognized textbook, which was translated into several languages. The first dental journal in Britain appeared in 1856, and in India in 1925.

Before dentistry was organized in India, there were no colleges and few went abroad to study it. They learnt their trade as apprentices with foreign practitioners. Dental legislation came through in 1948, when Parliament passed the Dentists' Act. Thereafter, all practitioners had to register with the Dental Council, a government body. The number of qualified dentists in India was 15 in 1950, which has risen to more than 30,000 today.

In India, the first dental college was founded in 1920 in Calcutta by Dr R. Ahmed. Dr M. K. Patel started his school in Karachi in 1927. Bombay saw the founding of the Nair Dental College in 1933. This was immediately followed by De Montmorency Dental College in Lahore in 1934, the first government dental college in India. Organized dentistry was placed on a firm footing in India in 1945. At present there are al-

most 100 dental colleges in the country.

The premier association of local dentists was formed in Calcutta in 1927 while in Bombay the first meeting of dentists was held on February 21, 1938. The All India Dental Association was formed in 1946 when the First All India Dental Conference was held in New Delhi.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were about a dozen Indian dentists in Bombay, of whom eight were Parsis who always wore Parsi dress, including a Parsi cap. The early Parsi dentists prospered in Western India and charged as little as Re 1 for an extraction, Rs 5 for a filling. The usual practice was to advertise in various newspapers and magazines.

In 1885, Dr B. E. Vacha, born in 1860 and a science graduate from Wilson College, started learning dentistry under Dr Clark, an American dentist, opposite the Clock Tower in Bombay. Vacha started his own practice at Pydhonie in 1892, the first Indian dentist to do so. Dr Sorab Cama was his first student. Cama started his practice at Bori Bunder in 1902, and retired in 1957.

Dr Jehangir Nariman, born in 1878, received an Honors degree from the University of Ohio, USA, and started his Bombay practice in 1902. He died in 1962. His son Hoshang is still in active private practice.

Dr Gimi, born about 1865, practised at Churchgate Street for many years. He specialized in third molar removal.

Dr Jamshed Jivanji Mody qualified from the Royal Dental College, London. A professor of dental surgery at the Grant Medical College, he was also attached to the J. J. Hospital — the first dentist to be attached to a hospital. He was instrumental in establishing the Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim Memorial Dental College and Hospital (now part of St George's Hospital near VT), and was the first Indian to write a dental textbook. According to him, India and not

Greece or Egypt was the cradle of dentistry.

Dr Manchershah Nicholson (1882-1960) started his Bombay practice in 1903. He was fortunate to have both his sons become dental surgeons.

Dr Framji Patel, L.M.D.S. (Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery), started about 1905 and practised for many years at Churchgate Street. His son Dr Jal F. Patel qualified from the Royal Dental College, London and carried on his father's practice for many years until he retired in 1955.

Dr Sorab P. Kapadia, L.M.D.S., born in 1882, also studied under Dr Clark. He started his practice in 1907 in Bhendi Bazar and later shifted to Hornby Road. Kapadia was the first Indian to use a dental x-ray machine. He was also the District Grand Master of the English Freemason Lodge, a founder member and past president of the Indian Dental Association and editor of its journal for eight years, practising past the age of 90.

Dr Nadir Cooper, DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery), qualified from New York around 1925 and practised at Flora Fountain, Bombay. He died in 1954.

Outside Bombay, some of the pioneering Parsi names were Dr Cama of Colombo, Dr Ghista of Karachi, Dr Romer of Ahmedabad and Dr Sethna of Lahore.

Dr Sam Dastoor, who passed away in 1958, was the first to open a dental clinic in Surat. Dr Eruch Kasad was an MBBS who was the first honorary dental surgeon to be attached to the Civil Hospital in Surat. He conducted his private practice for more than 30 years.

Dr Cawasji Toddywala began his practice in Surat in 1903. Later, he was the first dentist to start in Navsari and Bulsar and practised for 60 long years.

Dr Kaikhushru Jilla (1887-1960) practised in Navsari and was a prolific writer, having authored 58 booklets on dentistry for the public, distributing them free of charge. He also regularly wrote

in local magazines and newspapers. His daughter Banoo was the first qualified lady dentist in India.

Some of the other Parsi dentists born in the 19th century were Dhunjisha Anklesharia, Ardehsir Avasia, Amaria, Andhyarujina, Rustom Bhagat, P. M. Bhajiwalla, Minocher Bilpodiwalla, Bowman (Boman) Chothia, Sorab Cama, Kaikhushru Choksi (Bhavnagar), Sohrab Engineer, Jehangir Gimi and Burjorji Kapadia (Ahmedabad), Kaikhushru Sanjana and Tehmuras Kapadia (Belgaum), Jehangir Kapadia, Karanjia, Shavak Katrak and Maneck Sethna (Baroda), Framroze Masani, Sorabji Mewalla (Gujarat), Keki Mody, Jamshed Naigamwalla, Sorabji Oomrigar, Rustom Patel, Phiroze Rana (Navsari), Shroff, Thanavalla, Rustom Vacha, Nariman Vaid and Ardehsir Vasunia (Junagadh).

Among the old-time dentists, Dr F. N. Mehta of Bombay should be in the *Book of World Records*. Born in 1900, he started his practice in 1922 and was very active as a full-time practitioner until his death in the early 1990s, having to his credit almost 70 years of practice. He served 12 years at the King Edward Memorial Hospital and 36 years at the Masina Hospital.

Another name that comes to mind is

Nadirshaw Kawasjee (center and inset) with the staff of Nadirshaw Printer and Company



that of Dr Noshir Kapadia of Dehra Dun. Born in 1905, he started his practice in Dehra Dun in 1933 and passed away in 1999.

Dr Gustad Patel, born in 1907, qualified in 1940, was a part-time teacher until 1955 and was in active practice even at 90 years of age. He died in 1997.

Dr Homi Guzdar of Baroda was born in 1910. He practised from 1931 to 1994, although he was almost 85 years old.

Dr Jasi Jagose was born in 1913, started practice in 1935 and worked until his demise in 1970.

Zoroastrian dentists have ventured into almost all parts of the world. But the maximum concentration is, of course, in Bombay. All figures are approximate. At the moment there are around 50 of them within the limits of Greater Bombay. Another 50, who practised in the city, have passed away. The next highest number happens to be in Ahmedabad and Poona. Besides this, Parsi practitioners have settled in places like Aurangabad, Baroda, Belgaum, Bhavnagar, Bhusaval, Calcutta, Dehra Dun, Delhi, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Jamshedpur, Junagadh, Madras, Mhow, Nasik, Navsari and Surat. In short, there would be 75 Zoroastrians in the dental profession in India.

Outside India, the UK has more than a dozen Parsi dentists, USA about the same number. About four each have settled down in Australia, Canada and

Dubai, one each in Israel and Libya, about 10 in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. That brings the grand total of more than 80. I am told a Parsi dentist in the USA owns a private aeroplane, which he flies himself to commute from place to place.

Dr Sorab Warden was the first Indian to start practice in the UK way back in 1922. Passing his MBBS in 1914, he graduated in dentistry in London in 1922 and was in practice for several decades.

In the field of dental education, Parsis have excelled. More than 40 dentists have been in the teaching

profession, here in India as well as abroad. Half of them have been elevated to the post of professors and heads of departments: Drs Fali Antia, Dhun Bativala, Phiroze Bativala, Katie Billimoria, Nozer Daruwalla, Dinyar Doctor, Behroze Hiranek, Kali Kapadia, Sarosh Master, Fali Mehta, Keki Mistry, Minoo Sanjana, Aspi Surveyor and Mehroo Turner. Turner was the first Indian lady to be made a full professor and head of department of Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim Memorial Hospital. Dr Minoo Ginwalla held the post of dean of the Nair Hospital Dental College. Soon after he retired his wife Dr Tehmi Ginwalla took over the deanship of the same College.

Dr S. B. Master was affiliated to the Tata Memorial Hospital in Bombay and has contributed on prosthetic rehabilita-



Banoo Avasia: India's first lady dentist



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*Standing (from left): Faramroze Antia, H. D. Merchant, Fali Mehta, Tehmi Ginwalla, Ratan Doctor, N. N. Berry and Minoo Ginwalla
Sitting: Nariman Vajifdar (center) and Jal Patel (right)*

tion in two books on oral cancer. He is also editor of the Zoroastrian Dentists' Organisation (ZDO) newsletter, and serves as librarian there.

Dr A. M. Malaowalla's position is unique, in as much as he organized the first dental college in Gujarat from scratch and remained its dean until 1985. Half the Parsi dental teachers have been examiners in various universities. A few of them have also authored books on dentistry. In USA and UK several Parsi dentists are in top positions in university dental schools. Among the several doc-

tors who took up part-time teaching when dentistry in India was in its infancy were Dr Gustad Patel and Dr Nariman Vaid.

The impressive performances of some of our dentists have received international recognition. Dr Ratan Doctor became the president of the Asian Pacific

Dental Federation. Dr Keki Mistry followed him in this responsible position. That a few Parsi dentists have been awarded the coveted Dr B. C. Roy Award is a testimony to their high level of excellence. Several of them have been elected Fellows of the International College of Dentists. Three have reached the highest position that the College offers, viz, the mastership.

Almost all Parsi dentists and dental students are members of the Indian Dental Association, the official organ of the profession in India. Some of them helped found the All India Dental Association and reached the pinnacle position of president. Several Parsi dentists are members and past presidents of the different specialist societies in various branches of dentistry.

Nearly 50 percent of fresh dental graduates are ladies, the proportion being roughly 1:5 in the Parsi community. The first qualified lady dentist in India was Dr Banoo Avasia, née Jilla. Born in 1914, she passed her LDSC (Licentiate in Dental Science) examination in 1936.

Regrettably, today there are hardly a dozen Parsi students in dental schools in India (which is curious, for Parsi girls are studying dentistry in Australia and other universities abroad). This is due to the fact that admission is strictly on the percentage of marks obtained and, however much they try, Parsi students find it difficult to hold their own in the rat race for marks. To mitigate this, the ZDO started a fund to enable a student get admission into a dental college in Karnataka. We have been successful in seeking admission for four to six Zoroastrian students — in Manipal as well as in Mangalore.



From left (top row): Sorab Nicholson, Mehroo Turner, Rusi Rustomji and Sarosh Master; (Below) Keki Mistry, Gulshan Dossabhoy, Ratan Doctor and Jasi Jagose

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Although several Parsi dentists joined the defence services, they left in a short period of time. Dr Rusi J. Rustomjee persisted and retired with the rank of surgeon commodore. He is the only dental surgeon to have served all the three wings of the defence forces. There have also been a few Parsi brigadiers in the Army Dental Corps, one of whom is Dr Sorab Nicholson. Some have been given honorary ranks because of their association with the defence services.

Charity plays an important role in the hearts of Parsis. Dr Fali Mehta, the late Drs F. N. Mehta, Minoo Ginwalla and Nariman Vajifdar founded the ZDO. Its objects were to assist students of the economically weaker sections of the community, to help retired, aging and needy dentists and to organize scientific lectures, seminars and social get-togethers. A notable feature is that each dentist pays only a small sum to become a life member and every student attends all the functions (meals included) totally free of charge. In this way, we meet in Bombay about four times a year for scientific activities, followed by socializing. News of our activities is mailed to all Parsi dentists wherever they may be and at our meetings dentists of all communities are welcome.

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Another landmark — and feather in our cap — was the holding of a World Zoroastrian Dental Congress in Bombay early in 1988. This was followed by similar congresses in Karachi, 1992, and in Goa in 1996. A total success each time, with participants from all parts of the world, the World Zoroastrian Dental Congress has now become a regular feature. The fourth one is scheduled in Bombay in September 2000. These conferences are thrown open to dentists of all communities.

Several of our Parsi dentists have graced the president's chair in service organizations such as the Rotary Club and the Lions Club. Some of them have been justices of peace, honorary magistrates and special executive magistrates.

Almost half the Parsi dental population in India are Freemasons. A majority of them have been masters, while two have been honored with the highest position one can achieve in India. Dr S. P. Kapadia was a district Grand Master of the English Constitution, and Dr S. M. Khambatta held a similar position under the Scottish Constitution.

In sports, one recalls the names of Dr H. Hathiram and Dr A. Surveyor as chess champions. Dr Gulshan Dossabhoj (née Sunawalla) is an athlete of

national repute. Dr Farokh Bharucha is actively involved in scuba diving, and has passed the instructor's examination. Dr Phiroze Motiwala has captained the combined varsities hockey team.

The first Indians to plunge into dental business were Parsis. Nadirshaw Kawasjee was the sole proprietor of Nadirshaw Printer and Company. Born in 1892, he was the first Indian to start the import of dental goods in 1921. With his headquarters in Bombay, he opened branches at Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Lahore and Bangalore. This business has now closed down.

After having served in several firms, Cawasji E. Bhandara started his dental business in 1928. He opened a branch in Bangalore in 1932 and was later joined by Boman Avasia.

Born in 1901, Jehangir C. Godiwala worked as stenographer, salesman and manager of a firm dealing in dental goods in Bombay and Calcutta till he started his own dental business in 1922. Two more generations joined him in the business.

Dr Ratan H. Doctor obtained his BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) degree in 1952, and soon after graduation started manufacturing simple chairs and units as a one-man show, together with his private practice. A high-powered sales-

man, over the years he steadily built up sole agencies for India from some of the best manufacturers in the world. During his lifetime he was ably assisted by his two children, Pervina and Viraf. Unfortunately, he met with a sudden, premature death during one of his frequent trips abroad.

Dr Cawsi Naterwalla, a dental graduate with a very sophisticated practice, has obtained agencies to import goods from Europe and the USA.

It can be safely concluded that Parsis pioneered dentistry in India. They have served it well in all spheres, be it in education or as a trade, in the defence services, freemasonry and the social services. They have excelled because of their dedication, courage, integrity and sound judgment.

Past president of the Indian Dental Association, Dr Dinshaw F. Boga practices at the Northcote Nursing Home in Bombay. He



passed his Licentiate in Dental Surgery from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1954 and was subsequently elected Fellow of the International College of Dentists and the

Royal Society of Health.

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Dexterously, through the nervous web

President of the Asian-Oceanian Skull Base Society Dr Keki Turel speaks of the complexity of neurosurgery

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Today, there is no other branch of medicine that has the thrust and rewards of neurosurgery. To enable a blind person see; to make a paralysed one walk; to remove the limp in his gait or the intractable neuralgic pain from his face, arm or leg; to bring back the senses, intelligence, understanding that were lost due to tumors..."

Neurosurgeon Keki Turel is a dreamer who pities those who cannot dream. The self-dependent architect of the 5th Asian-Oceanian International Congress on Skull Base Surgery (AOICBS) held in Bombay in November 1999, Turel says that organizing the Congress taught him that if you "do not lose your vision, your goal will come through!"

At the pre-Congress press conference we were told that the base of the skull is the entry and exit point of major arteries and veins and 12 pairs of nerves that control all the functions of the body. It houses the organs for vision, hearing, smell and other vital senses. The intricacy and complications inherent to the area involves the multidisciplinary fields of ENT, head and neck, maxillofacial, ophthalmic and plastic surgery and was unthinkable 20 years ago. It is the advent of modern imaging techniques like CT Scan and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), angiography and the creation of endoscopic and microscopic surgical techniques which has enabled the doctors to diagnose the problems and to address them. The base of the skull is a thick and tough structure which requires drilling expertise to enable the installation of microscopes to view deep areas of the brain from outside. To acquire that expertise requires long and tedious hours of labor on animals and cadavers — and exemplary discipline and sacrifice.



Turel: "It's your attitude that counts"

Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

Apart from the normal exchange of papers which had characterized the four earlier two-day Congresses in Tokyo, Beijing, Seoul and Islamabad, the eight-day Bombay Congress had a 20-hour

'cadaver workshop' where aspirants from India and abroad were trained in the use of this sophisticated gadgetry by 46 tutor-demonstrators in the huge anatomy hall at KEM Hospital. Midas Rex, the instrument company that creates drills for boring holes and scaling bones, Zeiss, the microscope company and Storz, the endoscopes maker, flew in their wares for the use of the participating surgeons. The exchange of papers when

some frank and courageous doctors discussed their mistakes was followed by live surgery by participating teams that was not only videotaped for classroom use later but was viewed (on Internet worldwide) with two-way communication between the audience and the surgeons. However what most thrills the doctor who has twice successfully removed brain tumors weighing over half a kilo, setting a world record, is the triumph of the acronym TEAM which underscored the Congress literature. Standing for "Together Everyone Achieves More," it encapsulates the philosophy of skull base surgery and the Congress.

Following the success of this congress Turel has been nominated to organize The Golden Jubilee Conference of the Neurological Society of India in 2001. "It is an honor for us because the last time Bombay hosted this Congress was in 1971," he notes with satisfaction.

Turel, who was unanimously elected president of the Asian-Oceanian Skull Base Society by its 20 executive committee members in Islamabad in 1997 when he was least expecting it, consid-

ered it his "obligation (to his) country" to enable upcoming Indian surgeons to take full advantage of the Congress. Though the foreign delegates from 35 countries including those from the UK, US, Canada, Europe and 24 Asians were housed at the Hotel Leela Kempinsky with a registration fee of US \$ 450, many of them from the poorer Asian countries were exempted from payment as Turel's aim was "to help Asian countries come together on a common platform, irrespective of economic status." Speaking to *Parsiana* at his office at the Lady Ratan Tata Medical Research Centre after he had recovered from the hurly-burly of hosting the ambitious gathering, Turel noted how rich India is in comparison to some of its neighbors, both intellectually and financially. "India is rich in talent... (she has produced) some of the top scientists thanks to her fantastic genetic pool... the sharpness of brain, the spirit of hard work is second to none... (Also) some of the richest people in the world live in India."

If at all he was in doubt, the Congress taught Turel "not to be mesmerized by the external view of things." Scrounging for the financial resources to organize the Congress, he was dismayed by the "very, very bad response from business houses" and thought at one time "that we're not financially strong (enough) for the Congress." Numbering some of "the topmost industrialists, jewellers and glitterati among (his) patients" Turel received a fund of unkept promises from rich people with the exception of modest sums from Sir Dorab Tata Trust, Godrej and singer Jagjit Singh who went out of his way to help. Apart from some medical companies, by and large it was his ordinary patients and his friends who contributed. "The rich are rich because they don't spend! It's wrong to expect anything from them," he lamented.

The eldest of five children of sewing machine salesman Edulji Turel and his

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wife Jalu, Keki inherited his father's great memory — Edulji could remember the parts of each generation of Singer machines — as well as his fantastic mechanical sense — the doctor has created and patented several surgical appliances. Raised at the Panday Sanatorium with limited resources and unlimited discipline Turel imbibed his religious values and love of nature at an early age. His parents respected his desire to turn vegetarian at the age of six even as they accommodated the stray puppies he sheltered though a square meal was not always guaranteed for the family. The family

moved to Rustom Baug when Keki was about 12 (and to Dadar Parsi Colony after he became a neurosurgeon), his entire education was supported through St Xavier's School and College and Grant Medical College by community endowments and scholarships. Along the way he entered scouting, becoming the leader of the Bombay State Scout Group, maintained the family's priestly tradition by becoming a navar and maratab, played cricket with Sunil Gavaskar in the team and joined Lalas as tour conductor. A sports and physical fitness buff, Turel was an international judge at the World Amateur Body Builders' Association meet in Geneva in 1981. Reflecting on the way these activities shaped his early career Turel says, "Scouting, vegetarianism and the strict and modest upbringing taught me self-denial." Since his operations average 10-12 hours in duration (some go on to 24 and even 27 hours when he had to revive assistants who had collapsed, he says), Turel's morning intake on operation days — thrice a week — is "a little fruit juice" and nothing till dinner. It eliminates the need for toileting during the operation, he observes matter-of-factly.

The fravashi and the winged bulls adorn the wall leading to his inner office; Zarathushtra overlooks his desk. The Hippocratic oath and the Interna-

Turel with Burgese (left), Mazda and Khursheed, and (above) with UNESCO art book

tional Code of Medical Ethics flank a framed picture of Dhanvantari, the Hindu god of medicine, in the waiting room. The rest of the walls display choice artistic reproductions gifted by his patients. The morning of the interview Turel has received a particularly beautiful and weighty UNESCO publication on the Iranian artist Mahmoud Farshchian — his pleasure is contagious.

An avid photographer, Turel has 1,00,000 slides "on anything and everything," he says. A separate enclosure in his office suite houses them along with the videos of his operations which he not only uses while teaching his students — he is professor and head of the department of neurosurgery at the Bombay Hospital and Institute of Medical Sciences — but views personally to improve his own performance. He has made presentations on radio and TV in fluent Hindi, converses with his Arabic patients in their own language and learnt German while he worked in Germany for two years under the world's famed neurosurgeon of Iranian origin, Dr Madjid Samii. Along the way he learnt to play the banjo, harmonium and the harmonica. Two quotations on the wall of his consulting room encapsulate the doctor's approach to life: "In life there are neither rewards nor punishments, only consequences." "It is your attitude, not aptitude, that determines your altitude."

Turel is a great believer in the effectiveness of the Parsi gene. Because of

our genes "we are both long living and decent citizens," he says. "No Parsi business person would be tainted with the reputation of smuggling or trafficking in women, drugs or alcohol. It's completely alien to the community... Not that we don't want to earn money but we want to do it in a clean way, without cheating, by excelling." For the same genetic reasons Turel's ideal is to avoid mixed marriages "which result in confusion and lack of identity." He advocates more community get-togethers sponsored by the wealthy like the gahambars of old, but acknowledges that "aapra Parsioma tichka bahu thai gayach (the Parsi community has become snobbish), that's where we are suffering; that's our biggest drawback."

Though aware that we are gradually dwindling, he "cannot imagine India without Parsis." What is required, according to him, is to "know the diagnosis and the potential of the body to fight disease... The problem is proper leadership and getting the act together." Remembering the soft voice, ordinary apparel and rubber slippers of the "so humble and so generous" Bhikhamai Kharas who gave away more than a crore of rupees of personal wealth to found the Burns Unit at Masina Hospital, Turel asks, "Where have these Parsis gone?" Recalling how Mahatma Gandhi sacrificed his personal life to be like the common man in order to be able to lead him, Turel feels that Parsi leaders should emulate Gandhi by forfeiting their expensive habits. "Our religion is based on spirituality and health factors. Meat and alcohol are not health foods. Beyond a point alcohol is detrimental to health and society is suffering because of meat." Referring to the cysticercosis parasite which lives in the flesh of animals Turel notes that if the cyst is not destroyed with cooking it enters the human body,



producing convulsions and swelling of the brain. He adds however that improperly washed salads could also produce this unhappy result.

"People have stopped thinking of the community. They think only of themselves and their survival. Some collective leadership should emerge (with the necessary) political will. We need leaders for the cause — not for the name or the chair. 'United we stand, divided we fall,' is an old saying but an important message for a small community such as ours." Referring to the AOICSBS logo of Govinda where the broadest shoulders and stoutest limbs bear the burden of nimbler ones who stretch towards the traditional pot of pelf, Turel notes that "the leaders are people at the bottom who encourage the young and dynamic spirits to go up... Like-minded people could put order into the chaos (where there is) argument instead of debate" and there is no headway because participants come away more disgruntled after the meet. "We Parsis are too argumentative, and often too self-opinionated," he adds.

"Prepared to give time for community work," Turel is unhappy that there are not many Parsi doctors in the profession

today. "I sincerely wish Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy had nominated seats for Parsi doctors rather than a ward for Parsis." At the moment the younger generation of Parsi doctors are generally the children of eminent practitioners who are disadvantaged by the automatic comparison with their seniors. "It is a damaging comparison unless they take up different specialities," says Turel who wonders about his own two sons, Burgese (22) and Mazda (18) who are into their final and first year MBBS respectively. His wife Khursheed, a clinical psychologist now, was also a denizen of Rustom Baug when they met.

There is no reason why the community cannot start a medical college, he avers. "It is within our capacity and it will do Parsis and other communities a world of good. If you accept everyone who wants to join the profession, it could prevent migration," he declares. In fact he visualizes a Parsi university like Shantiniketan where people can live together. Otherwise "we are going to be wiped out because millions are competing against us. The BPP (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) is missing out in providing education. Parsis from abroad will pump in money," believes the doctor who

treats priests and teachers free of charge "because they are the guardians of our community."

While Turel does not oppose the concept of euthanasia per se, he feels it should be done "very sacredly" and not as an easy way out. It is the "duty of science to find solutions," he notes, emphasizing that small pox, TB, malaria, cholera were all killers at one time. He recalls a 93-year-old female patient whose brain tumor when removed restored to her the joy of playing the piano and of painting until she died of old age. Turel believes that the best judge of the need for euthanasia should be the family doctor and rues the fact that "our nouveau riche society has made (general practitioners) into jet setters (complete with) mobile phones and swanky cars, (seeking) commissions."

According to Turel the good doctor is one who combines the art of medicine with the science of medicine. "We have forgotten so many great people on whose shoulders we stand today. People who don't know history, don't know anything. Doctors today don't know the history of medicine. Without the glory of history we are losing the romance of medicine..."

*"Whom shalt Thou send, O Mazda, to protect
Us all, when Untruth threatens us with hate,
Other than Thine own Fire and Thy Love?"*

*When both these are roused within our hearts,
Asa shall be fulfilled, O Ahura; —
May my Soul realize this Sacred Truth."*

Translation by I. J. Taraporewala of Yasna 46.7
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Mastering a magazine

Commending the quality of life in Poona, *Citadel Pune* editor Farida Master believes the city provides ample opportunities for growth

Hilla P. Guzder

The ambiance at the office is restful — in a profession traditionally associated with pressure and daunting deadlines! In the bungalow's compound, custard apple laden boughs bend in the breeze, birds chirrup in the bushes, an occasional mongoose eavesdrops on visitors on the front porch!

"Yes, it is wonderful to work here. Our colleagues in Bombay envy our quiet surroundings," says Farida Master, editor of *Citadel Pune*. Master moved to Poona a decade ago after a nine-year stint with the monthly film magazine *Stardust*, four of which were as joint editor. "Everyone told me it was professional suicide, leaving the gloss and glamor of the film world to settle down in a pensioners' paradise!" she laughs. But her instinct told her, she says, that it was a good move, that as long as she was footloose and fancy-free working with *Stardust* was fine ("it was not a 24 but a 48-hour job, eight days a week!"), but *Stardust* and marriage would not go together.

The decision to move did not come easy, however, and for the first year she had what she terms a "weekend marriage," with husband Khushroo commuting from his home in Poona to Bombay where she lived and worked. A difficult pregnancy necessitated rest and recuperation in Poona and a rethink about the future. Around that time, Nari Hira, publisher and managing editor of the Magna group of publications, was looking at starting a Poona magazine which would chronicle events in the city, she

explains. Master's baby daughter Sanaya and the magazine were born around the same time and the first issue of *Citadel Pune* was launched in September 1990.

"At first it was a frightening thought, editing a magazine every month of a city you knew very little about," she remarks. "But Poona welcomes you with open arms. In Bombay you may get lost, but in Poona every little good you do is acknowledged and appreciated. I found that very refreshing." During her sojourn at *Stardust*, life had revolved around the world of Indian movie stars — the rumors and the retorts, the acrimony and adulation, the flips and flops of Bollywood. "It was a kind of blinkered existence," she opines.

Acquaintances in Bombay had foretold a dull existence in Poona, bereft of social life! "But that's not true, there is so much happening here. *Citadel* is now my life line. I can't imagine living without it!" she grins. Why was the magazine named *Citadel*? "Poona is a city of forts, so we thought it an appropriate name," she responds. *Citadel* provides an eclectic mix of views, interviews and

investigative articles — from profiling the progressive men and machines of the city's industries (Poona's pride, says the magazine), to the achievements of the upcoming IT (information technology) nerds, to the activities of the irrepressible ex-municipal commissioner and 'demolition man' Arun Bhatia, to the analysis of somber issues like cancer therapies and euthanasia. To lighten life, there are articles on food, fashion and fun, illustrated by glossy color pictures and catchy captions.

With the magazine being published and printed by the Bombay-based Magna Publishing Company Limited, lasers, page layouts, etc shuttle back and forth from Poona to Bombay! Besides *Stardust* and *Citadel Pune*, Magna publications include the monthly *Society*, *Savvy*, *Showtime* and *Health and Nutrition* and the glossy quarterlies *Society Interiors*, *Savvy Cook Book* and *Society*



Fashion which is also edited by Master. "*Society Fashion*, priced at Rs 100, is currently on hold for a variety of reasons," informs Master. Launched over

two years ago, Master laughingly states that for its first issue, she had worked "like a woman possessed!" Seeking to showcase the creative work of India's couturiers, bringing out the magazine involved a huge amount of legwork as well — rushing to



Master (center) with Khushroo and Sanaya

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Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, etc, meeting the best designers. "It was a 'if it's Tuesday, this must be Delhi' kind of situation!" she jests. A big launch at the capital's Ashoka Hotel saw the country's glitterati in attendance, she says. *Society Fashion* also co-sponsored with Godrej the Ford Supermodel of the World Contest in Bombay. "Model Bipasha Basu was discovered at this time," elaborates Master. Coordinating with the entertainment agency, publicity agency, frantically drawing up guest lists, working alongside celebrities like Parmeshwar Godrej and Mehr Jesia (who coached the models) was a great learning experience, Master points out.

Citadel too had hosted a grand extravaganza in 1993 in which top Bombay models like Madhu Sapre, Jesia, Rhea Pillai, etc had participated. "We had invited Amitabh Bachchan — it was his first visit to Poona," states Master, adding that people still recall the event and ask for more! Each September, *Citadel* celebrates its anniversary with a bumper issue priced at Rs 50, while regular issues cost Rs 15. "Every day is some kind of a challenge. We are continuously looking at new avenues. Monotony should not set into the magazine. We



Judging a beauty contest with ex Miss India Meher Castelino (left)

have to constantly compete with ourselves," she notes. Goals are sometimes not very distant, she laughs, it's usually the next deadline!

On a reflective note she muses, "I see myself more as an editor, though I do like to write articles on those who inspire me, like, for example, Dr Keki Grant of Ruby Hall Clinic or Lila Poonawalla, chief executive officer of Tetra-Pak." Does the publication have an editorially free hand? "Oh, yes, Nari Hira is a great boss that way, in fact there are times when we wonder why he's not reacting!" she remarks, adding that there were occasions when their NRI (non

resident Indian) boss would ask for articles in *Stardust* to be faxed to him in New York!

Acknowledging the support she has received in her career from Khushroo, Master says: "I am what I am because of him." It was Khushroo who told her if she wanted to take up the editorship of *Citadel* she should do so, despite having a baby daughter. "So I was never on a guilt trip," she smiles. Mother-in-law Thrity has also been a tremendous help and Sanaya is extremely fond of her grandmother, says Master. Khushroo, she relates, is into car rentals and events organization and has presented cultural shows in India and abroad.

Master has also recently taken on the task of editing *Rapport*, the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) newsletter. PPP secretary Eruch Irani asked her for help, she explains, as the lady who was editing the newsletter was getting married and moving to Bombay. "I find Poona Parsis the mixing sort," she comments. On Parsi New Year, there is a big gathering of the community at the Sir J. J. (Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy) Agiary and her parents Freny and Dhunjishaw Balsara even come from Bombay to enjoy the camaraderie. Master observes that she is "very impressed"

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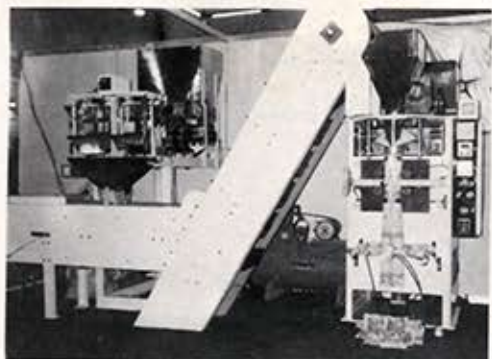
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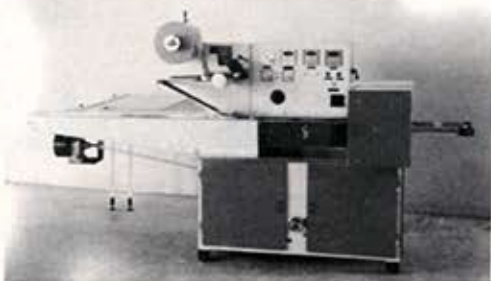


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by the way Poona agiaries are maintained and feels some of the Bombay agiaries could take inspiration from them! "I have my own personal dialogue with God," she maintains, regretting however that she doesn't "know too much" about the religion, though she is spiritually inclined, being interested in reiki as well.

She loves to sing old Parsi songs, she avers, and has even teamed up with teenagers to sing *sagan na geet, garbas*, etc at the celebrations of the 106-year-old Komra-ni-agiary (Kadmi and Shahenshahi Anjuman Daremeher). Along with Sanaya, now nine years old and a student of St Anne's School, Master goes once a week to Sardar Dastur School music teacher Soonu Doctor's singing classes (which she conducts free of charge) to learn *khushali na geet* — a most enjoyable way, she believes, of spending a Saturday evening! "Finally materializing," she announces, is a Parsi colony in Poona being built by the PPP with flats on lease and license basis. "The model flat (a prototype of the other 240 flats) is ready," she states and the Panchayat has been "flooded with inquiries."

Master joined the journalistic profession "quite by accident." After her BCom from Bombay's suburban Mithibai College, she was keen to take on a summer job, she narrates. A cousin working in the advertising department of a film magazine roped her in and she was hooked! From apprentice to editor, Master states she has never felt hampered by the lack of formal training. Today, she is a guest lecturer at the Symbiosis College of Mass Communication and Journalism and officiates on its standing committee and interview panel for admissions. "The recent batch of students was terrific," she asserts, whereas earlier she had felt that there was much to be desired. *Citadel* does take on trainees for short periods, sometimes at the cost of "coming in the way of work," she quips. Commending *Citadel's* compact editorial and advertising teams, she terms them "creative, sincere and dedicated."

The quality of life in Poona is good, she maintains. "Even if you have a small amount of enterprise in you, you can get started and get noticed. I feel I have grown in Poona as a person," she asserts.

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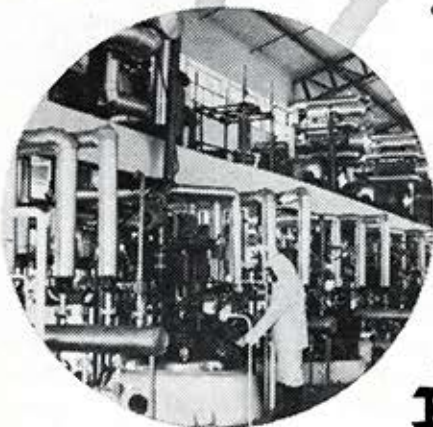
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A serial for the faithful

Through the TV serial *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta* Frohar Films were endeavoring to educate both Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians

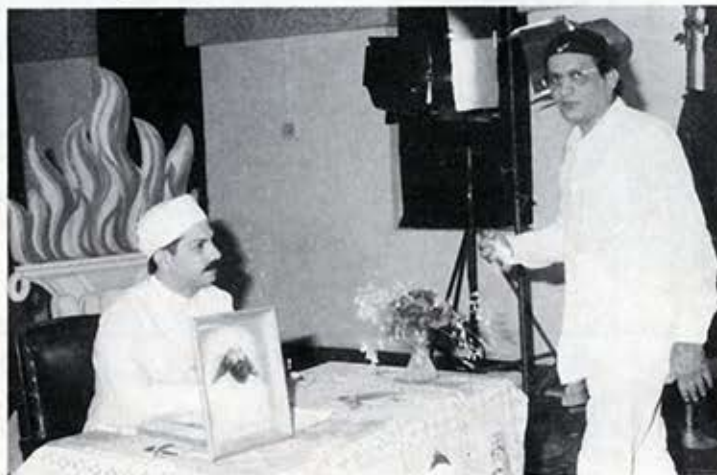
Parinaz M. Gandhi

"*Majani serial chhé. Tu joich ké*" (It is a good serial. Do you view it?) When members of the community unknown to him enquire whether he is familiar with the television serial *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta*, director Cyrus Dastoor finds it amusing but reassuring that the team effort of Frohar Films is not in vain. When he learns that the devout fold their hands in prayer at a passing glimpse of a fire-temple that constitutes one of the many backdrops of the low-budget teleserial, Dastoor is convinced that the community respects this maiden venture. To avoid disturbance during the crucial half an hour when the serial is telecast, some ladies reportedly keep the phone receiver off the hook. That non-Parsis too stay tuned in to learn more of the community from Doordarshan Channel II at 12.30 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon is also heartening for Dastoor.

The stars of Frohar Films have been endeavoring to provide "an insight into Zoroastrianism focussing on the teachings of Prophet Zarathushtra," according to a publicity handout. Every episode would start with a short speech by a scholar of eminence like Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, Dastur (Dr) Kaikhushro JamaspAsa, Dastur Kekobad Dastur... with the latter half being devoted to interviews of interesting personalities like astrologer Bejan Daruwalla or gynecologist Dr Rustom Soonawalla or showcasing some talent within the community.

The introduction of music and entertainment to what several viewers termed a staid program broke some of the monotony. But the episodes bereft of lighter

material evoked listlessness among some youngsters. The sermon-type delivery of the speakers in a classroom atmosphere provoked even a few elders to surf other livelier channels, happily tuning in to other serials while appreciating the theoretical efforts of the com-



Dastoor (right) on the sets with Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia

munity.

The sets that they had created for the episodes at Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa evoked mixed reactions from the community. For the future, Silloo Mahava, in charge of production and public relations at Frohar Films, realizes the need "to improvise, to change sets, make it more pleasing to the eye," this being their first experience of creating a serial. Some viewers want more of Gujarati on the serial. Others, more of English; the director and producer trying to strike a balance to appease both demands. "We would welcome good script writers as also ideas and suggestions for improvement," notes Dastoor. Among the speakers, Ervad Kaikhushro N. Dastoor's discourse on agiary etiquette evoked the maximum feedback from the viewers. Noshir

Dadrawala's insight into gahambars found favor with the audience too.

The only cause for despair is that after 19 episodes the serial had to be suspended for financial reasons. The substantial goodwill they generated earned them encomiums and approval

from the middle class and even the financially weaker section who along with their words of encouragement would enclose some token sum of Rs 500 or Rs 251, reports Mahava. But it is the large industrial houses and prospering business establishments who need to support this venture considering that the per episode cost works out to nearly Rs 40,000, reiterates Dastoor. Among their major supporters were the Bombay Parsi Punchayet,

The World Zoroastrian Organisation, Naryman Dubash and of course, the philanthropic well-wisher who started the ball rolling with an initial contribution of Rs 50,000 to promote religious education within the community. His promise that once the project gets under way, he would donate another Rs 50,000 has also been honored.

So now the optimistic Frohar Films team is hopeful that a windfall may come their way from Zoroastrians in India and abroad to enable them to complete their self-undertaken mission of 52 episodes. "We have enough in the pipeline," says Mahava whilst gratefully acknowledging the support from speakers, the performers, the technical crew, some of whom have been rendering honorary service to make the serial financially viable.

Along with Dastoor and Mahava there are others working behind the scenes to promote community aware-



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ness: Yaasmin N. Charna handles administration and projects; Dr Arnavaiz Havewala is the project coordinator; Rashmikant Javeri, the production executive; cinematography is in the hands of Parvez Irani; set design with Sam Kerawala; music, Kersi Mistry; editing, Aziz Khan; computer graphics and special effects, Saundarya Graphics; rare and antiquarian books and engravings, Dilnavaz M. Mehta. Their child artistes too showed exemplary cooperation, some of whom had to sit from 8 a.m. to 1.30 a.m. when they were working on the two episodes for children.



From the dasturs to the doctors who have been interviewed, they all respected the Frohar Films' request not to make any controversial statements. The only subject where a difference of opinion arose was the dress code prescribed for ladies: They were requested to drape a sari in the Parsi style with a *sor* covering their head. While some women felt this attire looked too artificial they chose to go on the sets a second time without the *sor*. They were astonished when they received telephone calls to say how much better they looked with the *sor*, disclosed Dastoor (who with his fondness for caps always keeps his head covered), happy that he was able to predetermine the pulse of his viewers.

If they succeed in going back on the air, the consecration of the Godrej Baug Agiary will feature in their immediate priorities. Time and resources permitting they would like to cover all aspects of Parsi and Iranian history and even episodes from the *Shah Nameh*, mentions Dastoor. Mahava is keen to introduce a special episode for the teens just as there was for little children. Her past involvement in organizing the Parasika exhibition at Bombay's Prince of Wales Museum has convinced Mahava that the contribution of the community to the progress of India is little known and needs to be highlighted. While the entertainment section of this serial was in her charge, for religious topics she relied on Dastoor's better judgment be-



Top: Mahava (left) and Dastoor Center and below: Scenes from different episodes featuring Kotwal and children's quiz program

lieving the orthodox ordained priest to be more knowledgeable on the subject.

The great, ancient Zoroastrian religion has not been projected the way it should be. Dastoor says he was toying

with this thought when he got an offer from the Gurjari channel to ready programs on the community for the last Shahenshahi New Year and Khordadsal. These same programs constituted the first two episodes for the *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshata* serial telecast by Doordarshan Metro Channel II in their regional language time slot. "Dastur no dikro bijoo soo kari sake" (What else can

be expected from a priest's son)?" he rhetorically asks.

Whilst Dastoor had past experience of acting and directing about 10 plays for Doordarshan, and performing in serials like *Ek Kahani*, *Choti Badi Bate*, *Hum Sub Ek Hain*, this was his maiden experience in directing a serial. Under the Universal Theatres banner Dastoor has directed innumerable plays starting with *Makaan Maru Lafroo Taru* in 1980, with his 1999 directorial effort being titled *Naas Bhag*. Altogether he has directed and produced 16 plays and acted in 50 full length and one-act plays, according to his bio data. Since he holds a job with the Union Bank of India, the bachelor thespian has to accommodate his theatrical interests accordingly, often staying up late in the night to complete his assignments.

Dastoor has his roots in Udvada but had studied at Bombay's Cama Athornan Madressa after which he graduated in commerce from Burhani College. As founder secretary of the Khareghat Colony Youth Association, Dastoor had started the All Parsi Drama Competition which discontinued after some years, he mentions. "I am keenly interested in reviving old Parsi theater as far as pos-

sible," says Dastoor who first acted in *Mari Jagya Kaun Leche* under the tutelage of the late Adi Marzban, it was recounted in *The Times of India* of December 11, 1999. In addition to his contribution to the Gujarati and Hindi theater, Dastoor has also participated in Marathi plays and directed a Sindhi play for one of his Union Bank functions.

While Dastoor had acted in *Pestonjee*, Mahava had been cast in *Percy*, the two feature films projecting the Parsi lifestyle. "Silloo Aunty," as she is respectfully known in the theater and social welfare circles has enacted roles in innumerable plays being first associated with the Eruch Pavri Drama Group and then with Adi Marzban's *Aavo Maari Saathe* program on TV. Among the Hindi TV serials where she features is *Dillagi*, *Kabhi Idhar*, *Kabhi Udhar*, *Raja Rani*, *Captain House*... Interested in dramatics since her early school days at Panchgani's Batha School, Silloo (née Bhesania) recalls having to forego the stage due to family pressure when she was brought to Bombay to study at the English High School. She was hoping to become a doctor when circumstances compelled her to seek employment at

the age of 16. It was only with the encouragement of her late husband Parvez that she was able to realize her histrionic potential and perform roles for dramas like *Sharda* and *Band Muthi Lakhni* which have audiences even in the USA, she adds.

As president of Young Rathestars, Mahava is involved in organizing entertainment programs to raise funds to alleviate poverty, organize gahambars, distribute alms to the needy, help the patients at the J. J. Hospital and the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, the old inmates of the Parukh Dharamshalla and Navsari infirmary, support the poor Zoroastrian farmers in the villages of south Gujarat... Like Dastoor she is also active with the Athornan Mandal, and says that being a moderate she tries to go to the agiary daily.

Even as the fate of this serial hangs precariously Dastoor has plans to make a telefilm of *Fourth Day*, based on a collection of short stories by Burjor Karanjia where the soul of a father talks to a small child. Next on the director's cards is a mega serial on Parsi culture and Iranian history. Determined he is "to educate the lay public in the salient features of the religion."

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A visual *Paradise*

Inspired by their religion the two protagonists strive to make the ancient values applicable to modern times

Burjor K. Karanjia

Paradise (video film), written and created by Shahriar and Shervin Shahriari. Director: Mojdeh Shahriari. Director of Photography: Peyman Parsa. Sponsored by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia and other individuals, foundations and associations. Duration: Approx one hour. Price: US\$ 15 + \$3 for the first video and \$ 2 per additional video with the same order for shipping and handling. Cheques payable to "FEZANA" to be sent C/o Dolly Dastoor, 3765 Malo St, Brossard, PQ J4Y 1B4, Canada. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.



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Above: Shervin and Shahriar Shahriari in meditation. Below: Stills from the video depicting Cyrus the Great (left) and Zarathushtra

ing voices to the good Mazdayasnian religion. A faith which cuts short all controversies, which is a dedication of the self, which is holy, and which of all religions is the first revealed and most excellent, the Ahurian Zarathushtrian religion. Did our allegiance include arguing about whether to allow conversion or not? Or which of the three calendars is the right one to adopt? Or making distinctions between Parsi husbands married to non-Parsi wives and Parsi wives married to non-Parsi husbands, and other such time-consuming inanities and futilities?

These were the questions that came to mind as I watched Shahriar and Shervin Shahriari's documentary *Paradise*, which if rather static and heavy on monologue, has great inspirational content, reminding us of our great past, the paradise our forefathers knew and enjoyed, how it came to be lost and how it may yet be regained.

The film's two protagonists, both young and ambitious men obviously eager to learn, are depicted in the film as going back centuries in time; and the

Prophet Zarathushtra is imagined as being reincarnated to answer their questions (a rather beefy and heavily bearded incarnation), which are the usual ones agitating the community today — how do we survive, how do we stop conversion, and so on. The Prophet brushes aside such questions, reminding them that his philosophy teaches not how to be a success in life, but *how to be*, a way of being that the true believer can transform into a way of life. The true believer is endowed with the Good Mind and has the heart of a champion. He is given freedom of choice and expected to take responsibility for the choices he makes.

"Be a great Zoroastrian," the Prophet tells the duo, "and Zoroastrianism will be great again."

King Vistaspa of Bactria was the first in history to publicly embrace the new creed that Zarathushtra preached against that of the wicked courtiers and hypocritical priests, the Kavis and Karpans who fattened on the ignorance and credulity of the people, calling upon them to worship diverse gods and propitiate them through meaningless sacrifices. But it was Cyrus the Great, King of Kings who, in his wisdom, armed with righteousness, built a most magnificent and glorious empire, based on Zarathush-



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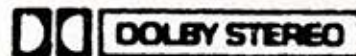
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tra's teachings, which to those who lived in those times appeared to be paradise.

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The eager young protagonists ask the Prophet whether paradise can be built again. By way of answer he introduces them to a reincarnation of the great Cyrus himself, adequately played by an actor who, however, lacks the regal dignity associated in our minds with that majestic king. "Hear ye, hear ye, as I am Cyrus your King," he says, then pauses to look closely at the duo. "I can see fear, not hope in your eyes." He tells them man's worst enemies are fear and ignorance; truth and creativity are needed to fight them. "Strive for the higher altitudes," he urges. "Do not let the avalanche of fear deter you."

He asks them to develop a vision of paradise so that they may be able to recreate it. Cultivate the values that Zarathushtra preached 25 centuries ago. These core values continue to be the driving force that impels its followers to excel in all fields of human endeavor and contribute vastly to the benefit of mankind. True

values are never time-bound.

Finally, and most importantly, he bids them realize the greatness that is within. And to make righteousness their weapon, than which there is nothing more powerful. For Zoroastrianism makes of life a battlefield, with man ranged on the side of good to fight the forces of evil.

The two protagonists are inspired. What is more to the point, they are ready to act. They resolve not only to revive the ancient values but to make them relevant to modern times. A Zoroastrian Bollywood, a Zoroastrian Broadway, a Zoroastrian Centre of The Performing Arts, a Zoroastrian Orchestra...

The paradise they set out to build will keep up with the times: an Internet Communication Network, the best creative use of modern technology. The film's protagonists are convinced that "this nation, which now calls itself a community, can once again rise with the sun and glow in the face of history." One problem remains, however. With the best will in the world the protagonists cannot go it alone.

That's the film's epicenter, its throbbing heart, reviving lost memories and forgotten allegiances, showing the way.

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"Make life more simple..."

Keep the kitchen well stocked, plan your meals and follow your instincts, advises the author

Bhico J. Manekshaw

When the *Parsiana* editor suggested that I might give here a few easy-to-cook dishes for the working woman/man, my initial reaction was, how boring! But after some thought I said to myself, how selfish can you be! Must you write to please yourself or to be helpful to those wonderful persons who work late hours, come home exhausted, then cook a meal for the family?

So, shamefacedly, I'm going to try to help those who need to make life less complicated for themselves.

At the risk of sounding like a schoolmarm, I'd suggest to the working person (after all I'm in the same category despite my 77 years!) that to simplify the work for yourself you must be organized: that is, your storage cupboard and refrigerator must be well stocked. If you like both Indian and continental cuisine I suggest you keep the following in your kitchen:

Garlic paste (250 g), ginger paste (250 g) kept separately, for there are times when only one of them is required. I would rather store them in glass bottles instead of plastic, unless you use the plastic jars especially made for storage of food.

Brown about 1 kg sliced onions on a holiday or any spare time you may have, portion them off, cover in cling wrap and deep freeze. Make about 1/2 to 1 ltr of demi glaze depending on the size of your family and keep in deep freeze or simply refrigerate it. Make a good stock and keep that also in the fridge — a good stock will jell.

Instead of making a vinaigrette dressing (sauce made of oil, vinegar, onion, parsley and herbs), every time for your salad, make some in a bottle with a sprinkler and store in your store cupboard. If mayonnaise is used often, make the mayonnaise without the vinegar and store it covered or bottled in the fridge and it will stay for over a month. Then add a little vinegar when

you need to use it.

When tomatoes are cheap in winter, buy a couple of kilos, and purée them; then cook in a pan till thick, adding a pinch of salt. Cool and pour into an ice tray with compartments and freeze. Wrap each cube in cling and keep in a plastic box. Remove a cube of tomato paste and use when needed.

I buy my meat, fish and poultry in



bulk for a week or two. Have the butcher cut the meat as needed and the fish filleted or cut as desired, then washed. The meat is portioned off per meal and wrapped in plastic or cling wrap and deep frozen; the same is done with the poultry unless needed for roasting.

The fish, for better preservation, is individually wrapped — especially if filleted — in cling wrap and deep frozen in suitable packets as needed per meal.

Potatoes and onions may be stored for at least two weeks. If other vegetables are bought for the week as I do, I use the ones that have less staying power, such as the greens, first; and vegetables such as green peas, cauliflower, pumpkin, later.

Decide and plan your meal for the night. Remove from the freezer the meat or fish or poultry and keep in the fridge to thaw out slowly. This is important.

In these ways you save many hours

of unnecessary labor.

Yes, I agree that the grinding and frying also takes time. But if that is done at one time, then life is made much easier. All you have to do when you come home, is reheat the onions, add your masala, add meat, fish or chicken and cook till done. All the preliminaries are over and so you can relax! If you are well organized, cooking is not a bind, even if you are very tired.

If you do not feel like cooking, make an eatable soup with the stock already in the fridge by adding mixed vegetables or pasta, meat or a bit of any mixture you may fancy. Make some toast and you have a delicious meal in 15 or 20 minutes. Keep different types of cheeses, now available in the market. Keep your favorite pasta.

If you like ham and bacon, store some of these, including different sausages, packed cold cuts, etc. Also keep some dried herbs in your store cupboard. Bring home a lettuce, boil up some potatoes, mix with mayonnaise, sprinkle some vinaigrette dressing on the lettuce — with a little imagination, you can cook up a delicious meal.

STOCK

There are many recipes for stocks. Some are very rich, some are light. Given below is one of my current favorites.

- Chicken carcasses (2)
- Chicken wings (6)
- Lamb shins with the meat on it (2-3)
- Chicken feet with the nails removed (4)
- Turnip (1)
- Carrot (1)
- Onion (1 large)
- Ginger (2" piece)
- Bay leaves (2-3)
- Black peppercorns (4-6)
- Celery (1 stick or few leaves)
- Salt

Break up all bones and shins. Wash vegetables well and coarsely cut keeping the skins on. Put all in a pan and add

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water to about 3" above the bones. Bring to a boil, skim, lower heat, half cover and simmer for about 1½ hours. Strain, cool and refrigerate. Next day remove any fat from top of the jellied stock and use as needed.

Note: If a brown stock is needed, brown the bones well in a little oil then add the vegetables, lightly brown them and add water and proceed as above.

DEMI-GLAZE

Jellied stock (rich brown —
1 imperial pint or 20 oz)

Oil (3 tbsp)

Carrot (1)

Onion (1)

Celery (1 stick)

Flour (1 tbsp)

Tomato purée (1 tsp)

Bouquet garni

Remove any fat from jellied stock. Finely dice the vegetables. Heat oil in a small pan, add vegetables and cook on low heat till vegetables are lightly colored. Stir in flour, continue to cook on low fire stirring till brown. Remove from fire, slowly pour in ¾ of stock and remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil, half cover and simmer on low heat for

about 25-30 minutes. Now remove lid, tilt pan slightly and add the reserved cold stock. The fat will rise to the top, remove the fat. Strain, add seasoning and keep in refrigerator and use for any brown sauces or add in casseroles.



Given below are two delightful recipes sent to me by my dear friend Meher Banaji, daughter of the famous eye specialist, the late Dr Firose and Zenobia Banaji. Our unusual friendship began when she read my book *Parsi Food and Customs* and wrote to me. Not only did she fly to Delhi to meet me, we are still in constant touch.

SPAGHETTI WITH TUNA AND PARSLEY SAUCE

It is suggested that the pasta should be cooked just before serving, for best

results. If cooked earlier it has a tendency to get stuck together and reheating is never the same. But if you have to reheat, put pasta in a sieve and plunge it in very hot water for a few seconds. Drain well and use. To prevent pasta from sticking, grease your hands with oil and toss pasta with your hands so that the oil on your hands covers the pasta lightly.

While boiling pasta cook in a large quantity of water in which you have added a tablespoon of oil. This also prevents pasta from sticking.

Spaghetti or penne (500 g)

Olive oil (1 tbsp)

Butter (30 g/2 tbsp)

Black olives (pitted for garnish)

Sauce

Tinned tuna (drained — 200 g/7 oz)

Tinned anchovy (fillets or whole, —
drained 60 g/2 oz)

Olive oil (1 cup/250 ml/8 fl.oz)

Parsley (fresh, roughly chopped — 1
cup/30 g/2 oz)

Crème Fraiche (⅔ cup/150 ml/¼ pint)

Salt

Pepper

Make the sauce first.

Remove any bones from tuna (and



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

— The First Viscount Leverhulme



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anchovy, if whole). Put in blender with anchovies, olive oil and parsley. Blend till smooth. Sauté sauce till hot but not boiling. Keep warm while the pasta is being cooked.

Spaghetti

Boil water in a large pan, add the olive oil and pasta. Add salt when pasta is half done. Cook "al dente," drain in a colander. Return to pan, add butter and toss thoroughly to coat the butter. Spoon in a warm serving platter with the sauce spooned over it or serve the sauce separately. Or as four individual servings.

PASTA WITH LEMON OR LIME CREAM

Pasta (spaghetti or fettucine or cappelini — ½ kg or 1 lb)

Lemon or lime peel (freshly grated — 2 tsp)

Butter (280 g/10 oz/10 tbsp)

Cream (1½ cup)

Paprika powder (1 pinch)

Parmesan (freshly grated — ¼ cup)

Fresh lemon or lime juice (1 tsp)

Salt

Pepper

In a large frying pan, melt 5 tbsp butter. Add rind. Cook for one minute. Add

wine. Cook for just 30 seconds. Add cayenne and cream, cook for two minutes stirring continuously. Remove from the fire and keep warm. Cook pasta in a large pan of boiling water with a tbsp of oil. Drain and add to cream mixture tossing for one minute.

Remove pan from heat and add rest of butter cut into cubes, juice, parmesan and salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with chopped chives or parsley or roasted bell peppers or crisply fried bacon bits.

Note: If the cream is not pasteurized, add a pinch of bicarbonate of soda to prevent curdling.

CREME FRAICHE

Buttermilk (1 tbsp)

Cream (1 pint or 20 oz)

Stir buttermilk into cream and warm it over gentle heat. The cream should feel slightly cool to the back of your finger. Remove from heat, pour into a warm bowl, cover and keep warm (at about 24°C-75°F) either in a bowl of hot water or in a warm place, to set, which will take from eight hours to 24 hours depending on the temperature it is held at. At a pinch you could use drained creamy curd.

Pastas are quick to cook and filling. There are also other quickly cooked dishes such as fish and vegetables or grills. Salads with shellfish or chicken or meats are also filling in summer. Chilled and hot soups, which can be made in bulk and kept in the deep freezer can be heated when needed. We also have our great vegetarian food which can be made quickly and be very satisfying.

So now relax. You have just come home from a tired day at work. Have a cool drink, allow your imagination to run wild — and do exactly what your instinct tells you to do.

If you are born with a love for food and have that rare common sense, you will produce superb meals. If not, well just try, try and try again — don't give up and suddenly, in front of you will be a new creation of culinary art! Bon appetit!

Bhicoo J. Manekshaw, a graduate of the prestigious Cordon Bleu School of Cookery, London, and author of *Traditional Recipes of India and Parsi Food and Customs*, has been associated with many haute cuisine organizations in the country.



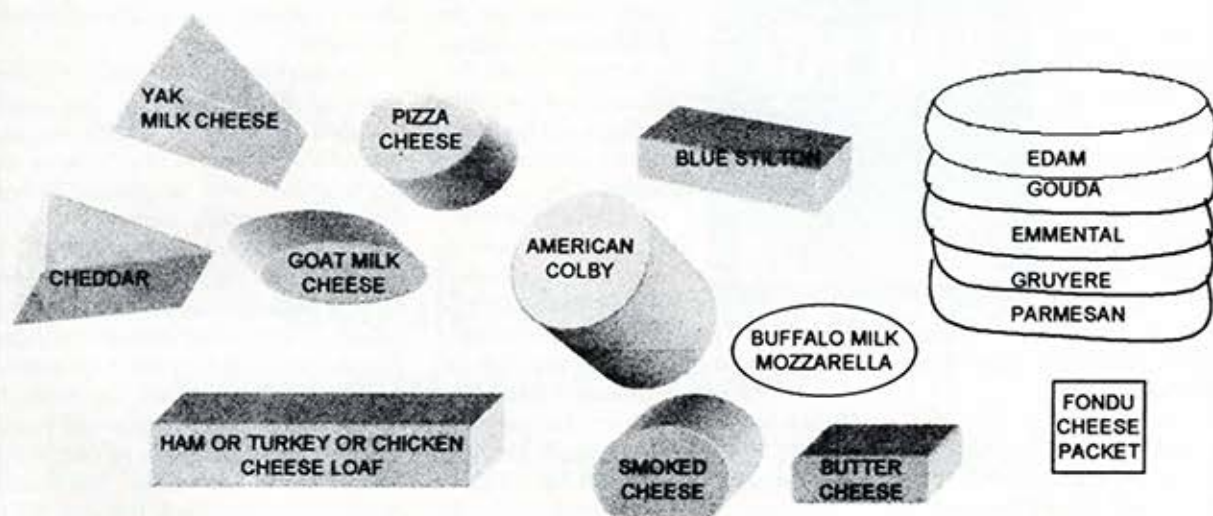
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A gentleman's challenge

His childhood and later brush with politics are related in these extracts from the book *Naval Tata Remembered*

K. D. Skandan

Naval Tata Remembered compiled by K. D. Skandan, edited and produced by M. R. Pai, advisor to the Employers' Federation of India. Published in 1999 by M & J Services, Mohan Kunj, Jyotiba Phule Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Pp: 79. Price: Rs 50.

Naval Tata Remembered is a tribute offered with much affection and admiration to his erstwhile employer by K. D. Skandan, personal secretary. Excerpts from this short volume are reproduced here to afford our readers intimate glimpses of the industrialist and the man. Section one of this compilation begins with a reprint of an article written by Naval Tata himself in 1987 referring to his early brush with poverty. His motivation to join politics is explained in the second section.

...

It was my sad lot to lose my father when I was only four years old. My father, who died in 1908 of sudden heart failure, was only 42 years old. His father and the founder, the late J. N. Tata, were cousins. As a spinning master in Tatas' Advance Mills at Ahmedabad, my father had prospects of stepping into the shoes of the manager in a couple of years. Alas, his sudden death was a tragic blow to my mother. For a widow with four sons to support on an income unbelievably meager was indeed an ordeal. Those were the days when there was no gratuity, provident fund to sustain and support dependents of such tragedies.

After temporary relief from family members in Bombay for a few months and a further few months of shelter in the humble house at Navsari in which... J. N. Tata was born, my mother finally

settled down in Surat on her modest resources, further supplemented by her income from embroidery work at which she excelled.

It was at this point a cousin of my parents — Sir Dorab Tata — came to our rescue. Through his generous assistance, two of my brothers were taken up as boarders at the J. N. Petit Parsi Orphanage. A year later, in 1916, it was my turn to be accepted 'gratis' as one of the Foundationer's students on the roll of the Orphanage, in view of the fact that two of my brothers were already paying boarders.

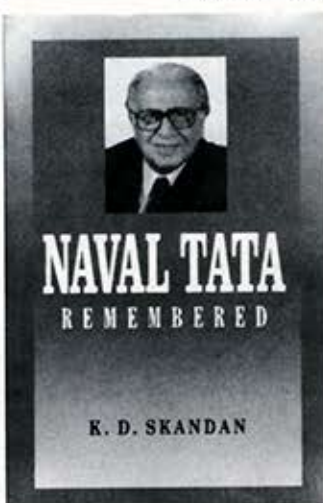
If I have tried to describe pangs of poverty which a family like ours faced, it is not for enlisting (the) pity of the readers but only to convey to people who are unaware about the great blessings which the Petit family have showered on our community by establishing this Orphanage. It was certainly a hard life for 300 poor boys supported on an extremely slender budget for food, clothing and health care. True, it was like a penitentiary, since inmates did not even have a chance to peep at the world outside. Once in two or three weeks, the boys in batches of hundred were taken out to the Victoria Gardens which was their only glimpse of the world outside. Despite such limitations of amenities, let me make a candid admission that for the 300 boys it was a heaven. They were the unfortunate offspring of parents who could have hardly afforded their children food, clothing and shelter. In addition, they got free education up to matriculation, and even vocational training for the drop-

outs.

In my case, however, I was lucky enough to be blessed by Dame Fortune. In the year 1918, another cousin of my parents, Sir Ratan Tata, died suddenly in England, at an early age of 47. Whilst his grieving widow was still in the UK, the Tata family headed by Sir Dorab Tata and Lady Meherbai, along with Sir Nowroji Saklatwala, at a family meeting felt that an adopted son was necessary for the uthamna ceremony. As luck would have it, their choice fell on me, since my mother was Sir Ratan's favorite cousin.

On (her) return from the UK, Lady Navajbai Ratan Tata took the family decision as a moral obligation and played the role of a fairy mother for which I shall ever be grateful to her. Suffice to say she wanted me withdrawn from the Orphanage on her return from the UK, but the authorities refused on the grounds that I was a non-paying Foundationer student and therefore the rules did not permit my release from the School. I had, therefore, to continue as a paying boarder till I completed my matriculation as one of the students of the Orphanage. Needless to say that thereafter I was transplanted to a life of luxury, thanks to my adoptive mother. In any case, I am grateful to God for giving me an opportunity to experience pangs of poverty which, more than anything, molded my character in (the) later years of my life.

It is indeed difficult to forget my debt of gratitude to an institution which, despite its limitations of amenities, looked after all the needs (of) unfortunate boys like me. In the absence of such institutions, they would have been neglected by the society and withered in wilderness, uncared for. Hence, the benign gift of Petits that fulfilled their elementary needs deserve the blessings



Skandan: rare glimpses



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of the poor and needy.

As I grew up in life I was extremely happy that the late Sir Byramjee Jeebhoy one day rang me up and wanted me to be a member of the Trust's managing committee and later on I was invited on the board of trustees. Ever since that time I have considered it a pleasure and privilege to serve this institute in order to pay my debt of gratitude.

What impressed me most was (the) late Sir Dinshaw Petit's enterprising thought of transforming the humble Orphanage into a dynamic training institute by building an extensive complex in an enviable site in Poona. In its new garb, the present Technical Training Institute, run on non-communal basis, offers to the inmates a way of life which, compared to the original Orphanage in Parel, could be described luxurious. It offers hundreds of aspiring youth, regardless of caste and creed, educational facilities up to school leaving examination as also an opportunity for a technical education by way of vocational bias. This is a trend we need in our educational policy in our national interest to eradicate the stagnation of the educational system we inherited from our colonial government.

On the demise of Sir Dinshaw Petit, it is gratifying to note that his young son Nusli is taking an equally keen and lively interest in the institutions endowed by his family. I have not the slightest doubt that under his able stewardship, these institutes will fulfil not only the hopes and ideals of the founder but will undergo further development to earn the blessings of the general public.

From: 'A Reminiscence' by Naval Tata, 1987.

Elections '71

Naval Tata always felt that there was not a single member from industry in Parliament who could speak freely and answer any charges made against it in general, and employers in particular. Even if there were a couple of them in Parliament, they were not able to speak freely because of the dictates and manifestos of the parties which got them elected to Parliament. Whilst there were members to project and protect the interests of all lobbies, cotton, sugar, et al, and more so the trade

unions to represent workers, the number of effective members from industry was negligible.

When the Congress party first split in 1970-71 with Nijalingappa representing Congress (O) — what was known as the Syndicate — and Indira Gandhi representing Congress (I) — Indira or Indicate — they had to face the electorate for



Tata (in jeep, second from right) during his election campaign

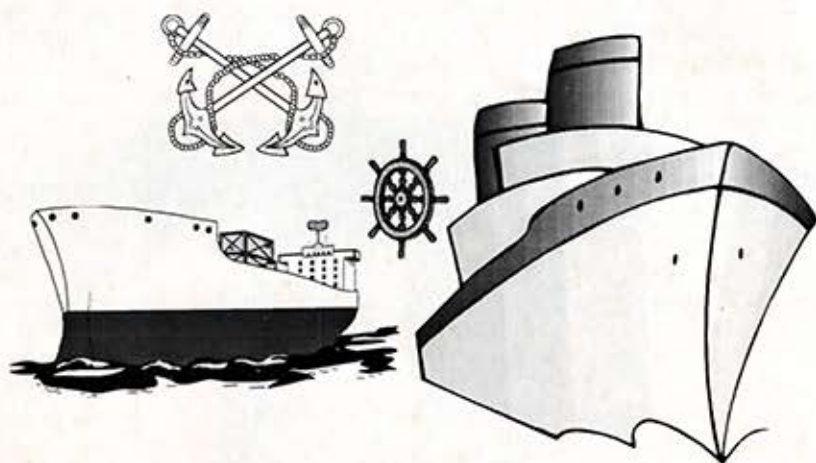
the parliamentary election in 1971. All the well-known senior leaders were with the Congress (O), and Gandhi, with the socialists within the party, with Congress (I).

In the South Bombay constituency, George Fernandes was the candidate of the Socialist party. He was a sitting member having defeated the late S. K. Patil of the undivided Congress in the previous election, and getting the nickname of "George the Giant Killer." The Congress party announced the name of Dr N. N. Kailas. Fernandes, very well known at that time for stopping the wheels of industry (and its progress?) and pulse of Bombay city by holding charge of unions in the essential services like the BEST, municipality, etc was sure to win the election against a not well known candidate like Kailas. However, some industrialists who had to face the wrath of Fernandes' militant trade unions in their establishments were bent upon defeating him at all costs. Spear-headed by the late Babubhai Chinai, Nusli Wadia and other industrialists approached N. A. Palkhivala to contest the election. While he declined, it seems that he suggested Naval Tata's name and all of them approached Tata with their request. Tata felt that his presence

as an independent candidate would give him a chance to talk freely in Parliament and defend the attack against industry and employers, especially from the members of Parliament representing trade unions and agreed to their request. He also felt that this was a 'Godsent' opportunity for him. Before filing his nomination, his industrialist friends approached the Shiv Sena chief and sought his help. This was necessary, since out of the six assembly segments falling under the South Bombay Parliament constituency, the Shiv Sena had a stronghold on a couple of them. The Shiv Sena promised a clear lead of 10,000 votes for Tata from the Girgaum constituency which was their bastion and they fulfilled their promise.

After filing his nomination, Tata told Swaminathan, his executive assistant, whom he used to consult on all matters, about his intention to fight the election. I still remember what Swaminathan told Tata: "All throughout your life, you have been successful in your terms of office in the ILO (International Labour Organisation), Employers' Federation of India, Indian Hockey Federation (in fact, it was during Tata's presidency of IHF that India won three consecutive Olympic gold medals in hockey — in 1948 in London, in 1952 in Helsinki and in 1956 in Melbourne) and therefore, at the fag end of your career, you should not lose that image. Personally, I am unhappy about your decision to enter into politics." Tata told Swaminathan that he was contesting the election only to protect the interests of employers and defend them on the spot. He further told him that his very presence in Parliament would create a good impact for the industry, though his voice may be weak.

A confidential message was sent from Gandhi to Tata that if she had known of his intention to enter Parliament even as an independent candidate, she would have put a very weak candidate against him so that he could win but since Congress (I) had already announced the name of their candidate who had filed his nomination, she felt it was too late. However, it was learnt that she wished Tata success in the election! Incidentally, I remember Tata telling me during the election time that the Jan Sangh had offered him a seat to contest from Mad-



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hya Pradesh in 1957 which he declined since he did not want to contest on any party ticket. The Congress party also offered a seat to Tata in 1957 from the South Bombay constituency, but Tata refused as "the free enterprising House of Tatas cannot see eye to eye with the Congress policy of state enterprise."

The election campaign started in right earnest with daily *padayatra*s in the mornings, visits to various groups of people, press conferences, meetings, processions, etc. Tata's entry in the fray shook Fernandes since he knew that if there was to be a triangular contest with a heavyweight like Tata, his chances of winning were not bright. Though some of Tata's colleagues had reservations about his decision to contest the election, he received spontaneous and unsolicited support from all quarters like the Jan Sangh, Communists and workers from various trade unions cutting across party line. This was because as a man he had created an image of a friend of the weak and poor.

Nana Chudasama, the ex-sheriff of Bombay, was one of the contestants who had filed his nomination as an independent candidate. However, he withdrew later on and supported Tata and campaigned for him wholeheartedly. During the election time his banners on Marine Drive in support of Tata read:

"Trust the man who mans the trust;"
"Two Ns together are unbeatable — Nana backs Naval."

Every afternoon there used to be a press conference and Tata used to give answers to any charges levelled against him and his campaigning. I give below a couple of questions put to him by the Press and his answers.

Q: "There is a report that you put up a vulgar display of wealth in your election campaign. What have you to say? I am referring to the report of your using costly terrycot cloth banners, instead of cheap cotton cloth banners during your election campaign."

A: "Yes, it is true, but I would like to tell you that there is a charity angle behind it. Normally, after the election, the political parties throw away their banners. But I suggested going in for good quality cloth for making banners because after the election, I could donate it to charity organizations for making clothes for poor people and students." He further said that his friends had formed a Tata Mitra Mandal and

after the elections, they would take care of the banners and distribute the clothes whether he won or lost.

The phrase 'siphoning off profit' was as allergic to Tata as the word 'profit' to Pandit Nehru. At another press conference, one reporter asked Tata: "George Fernandes has levelled charges that some Tata Companies siphon off their profits." Tata retorted: "Never use that word



At the release of the book (from left) Skandan, Simone Tata and Sohrab Godrej

again; say, 'avail of the profit' from one company for another within the group." He continued that if Empress Mills (which was the Founder's first venture in Nagpur) had not made use of its fortunes, TISCO (The Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited), TELCO (The Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Limited) and various other companies would not have been established during that time. By availing of the profit of one company for another, the Tata group was able to start new industries, thereby creating more employment and contributing to revenue by ways of excise duty, sales tax and other levies to government. Therefore, in availing of profit of one prosperous company by another sick company which the management felt viable, there was no harm in doing so and it was not bad business. He however conceded that there were 'black sheep' in every walk of life — industry, trade unions, medical profession, legal profession, etc and to single out industry alone was not fair. It there was a feeling that availing of profit from one company by another within the group was for any purpose other than saving a sick unit, the government and financial institutions have all the powers to stop it. He concluded that availing of profit to save another company which was viable was not a crime.

At one of the election meetings of

the Congress candidate, Kailas, the late Y. B. Chavan, who was a cabinet minister at the Center at that time, said: "I am surprised that a 'capitalist and exploiter' like Tata is contesting the Parliamentary elections and what role would he play in Parliament?" Tata replied to him through the Press that if trade union leaders, doctors, lawyers, cotton/sugar lobbies, etc could contest an election, why can an industrialist not do so to protect the interests of the industry? He further stated that Tatas were the first to put into practice trusteeship capitalism and their record can be appropriately traced to Jamsetji Tata and his sons, who placed virtually the whole of their wealth in philanthropic trusts for the people to be used exclusively for their benefit. The concept was to complete the cycle and ensure that what came from the people went back to them many times over, which was much before Mr Chavan was born....

Talking about corruption in politics, he put a counter question to a reporter: "You know what is the difference between a pickpocket and a Congressman?" He himself gave the answer. "The former first picks the pockets and goes to jail, while the latter goes to jail first and then picks the pockets. I have done neither!"

In reply to another question, Tata said that the ILO is a triangle with equal rights to government, employer and worker. However, the MRTA (Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices) Act has exempted trade unions in the matter of holding office-bearership. Whereas there is a restriction that an employer cannot become a director of more than 20 or 25 companies, a trade union leader can become president/chairman of any number of unions. Tata always felt that this was most unfair to employers. He, therefore, pleaded with government that a trade union leader could have a hold of only a certain number of unions or, say, 10 lakh workers, whichever may be higher. This was in consonance with the ILO philosophy.

Talking about the "right to strike" Tata had this to say: If trade union leaders feel that "the right to strike" is a fundamental right, then employers should also be given that right to "lock out." Otherwise, this would be something like a man holding a gun at one end of the table and the other unarmed during negotiations.

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Talking about absenteeism in industry, Tata used to cut a joke: "A supervisor went to his shop floor and found nine machines working but the 10th machine was idle because the worker was not present. After waiting for five, 10 and 15 minutes, the worker who was supposed to be operating the 10th machine coolly walked in. The supervisor asked him: 'Where had you been?' The worker replied: 'Sir, I went for a haircut.' The supervisor was surprised and further asked him: 'You went for a haircut on my time?' to which the worker replied: 'What can I do Sir, it grew on your time.'"

Talking about retrenchment/dismissals, Tata used to say that the labor laws are framed in such a way that today it is very easy for (him) to get a divorce from his wife, but impossible to get rid of a worker from (his) factory.

While talking about 'tripartism' in dealing with issues pertaining to industrial relations, Tata used to have a dig at the Indian Communists and their trade unions who drew inspiration from their big brothers — Russia and China. In India we practice 'tripartism' in the real sense i.e. government, worker and employer, while the Communist countries also practice tripartism but it is more in

the form of "army, navy and force."

Tata's election campaign was conducted in a very clean way and he never made any personal attacks against the other contestants. However, if others did, he defended himself by giving proper and convincing replies.

During one of the sharing-the-platform meetings with all other contestants, when a member from the crowd wanted to ask him a question, he was shouted down by Tata's supporters. Tata immediately intervened and allowed him to have his say. Tata was asked what would be his stand, if he is elected to Parliament, on an issue which he feels is against the interests of employers. He replied: "If I feel that the issue is in the overall interest of the nation as a whole, I would wholeheartedly support it, irrespective of whether the proposal emanated from Congress (I), (O), Jan Sangh or even from the Communists."

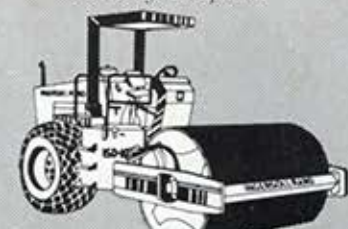
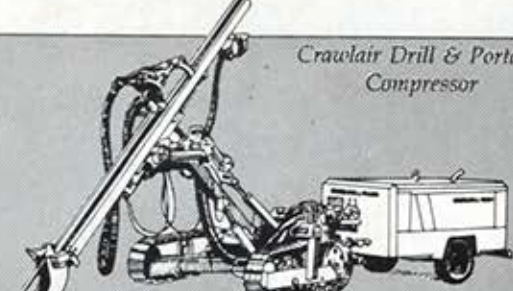
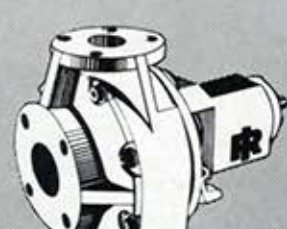
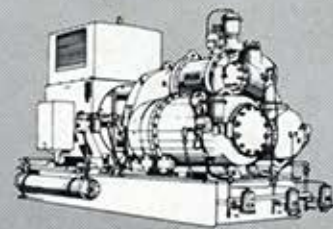
Tata had the advantage in the sharing-the-platform meetings over other contestants. The rule for such meetings was that all the speakers should be present till the entire meeting was over and they should not go away after their speech. Since the speakers were selected in alphabetical order, Tata was

the last speaker and the advantage he had was to listen to all speakers and give them proper replies.

In my opinion, Tata would have definitely won the election had not Fernandes hit him below the belt. As Tata's election campaign gained momentum and he was getting support from all quarters, Fernandes became nervous and he was smelling 'defeat.' However, he never wanted Tata to win the election and he did not mind Kailas getting elected. Therefore, just a couple of days before the polling, he sent word to his supporters to divert his votes to Kailas since he did not want a 'capitalist' to win the election. Otherwise, how can a sitting MP, and a 'Giant Killer' lose his security deposit?

Finally, the difference in votes between Kailas, who ultimately won the election, and Tata was only just below 20,000 votes and it was the narrowest as compared to the election results of other industrialists in other parts of India, all of whom were defeated by a margin of over one to two lakhs of votes because that election witnessed an 'Indira wave.'

From 'Naval H. Tata's Parliamentary Election Campaign in South Bombay in 1971.'

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Researching the *Gathas*

The Gathas Of Zarathushtra by Piloo Nanavutty. Published in 1999 by Mapin Publishing Private Limited, Chidambaram, Ahmedabad 380013. Pp: 173. Price: Rs 650.

There have been many translations of the *Gathas* — the songs of Zarathushtra — before this one. Indeed the author herself, in collaboration with Dastur Framroze Bode, produced one which was well received. But Piloo Jungalwalla who writes under her maiden name Nanavutty, felt she still did not know enough about the subject and thus it needed seven long years of dedicated research and scholarship to produce this book.

According to the late Eckehard Kulke, lecturer of sociology at Freiburg University and author of the book *The Parsees in India*, the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Parsis, was attributed to Zoroaster himself and was originally supposed to contain 21 books. Today it contains only four, of which the *Yasna* is one. The famous 17 hymns, divided into five *Gathas*, are part of the *Yasna*. This new version has been put together in a way which enhances understanding and necessitates a new approach to their content.

The *Gathas* are one of the oldest texts of mankind in which Zarathushtra (or Zoroaster as the Greeks called him), speaks of the truth revealed to him by the one God, Ahura Mazda. Zoroastrianism is believed to be one of the most ancient of the revealed religions, but also the least known.

It is not known exactly when Zarathushtra lived or when these hymns were composed. The Greeks placed him around 6000 BC but western scholars believed he lived between 2000-1000. Sasanian priests thought he lived 258 years before Alexander conquered Iran, which works out to 600 BC. Whatever the facts, it is widely acknowledged that Zoroastrian beliefs influenced the four major religions — Buddhism, Judaism,

Christianity and Islam.

The introduction to this text explains various Zoroastrian concepts — the six attributes of Ahura Mazda, the one God: Asha, the cosmic order; vohu mana, the good mind; khashathra, sovereignty and power; armaiti, loving devotion; haurvatat, perfection; amaretat, immortality.



Nanavutty: dedicated to the task

The text starts with a creation myth, not a part of the *Gathas*, and then goes on to translate and explain the five extant *Gathas*. Perhaps the most important part of this translation of the songs of Zarathushtra are the detailed and illuminating commentaries which explain, elucidate and vividly capture the essence of the teachings,

combining analysis and elegant writing, with a style that is both disciplined and transparent. Vedic parallels to the *Gathas* are provided all along, thus aiding in comparison and research, for students of this ancient Aryan tradition.

The *Gathas* begin with the lament of *Gaush Urva*, literally the 'soul of the cow,' symbolizing the suffering and oppressed of the world. She appeals to Ahura Mazda for help and he sends Zarathushtra to her. In the next *Yasna*, Zarathushtra prays to Ahura Mazda, "May I reach you in fullness of knowledge that comes from the good mind," and he promises to uphold truth and goodness forever. The following *Yasna* deals with the origin of evil, while *Yasna* 31 provides important guidelines for those who wish to lead a life dedicated to Mazda.

"Oh Mazda from the beginning/you fashioned for us/physical bodies and awakened conscience and a/directive intelligence/through your own Mind./ You infused life breath/into mortal forms./You granted us/capacities to act and true teaching to guide us/so that we could choose to be with you or against you."

A person who understands truth

through the good mind and upholds it, becomes Ahura Mazda's ally in creating a perfect world.

Monotheism is the guiding principle of the religion and this is strongly reflected in the *Gathas*. Passive acceptance, or only trust in God, is not required. The world is far from perfect. It is rather a battleground between good and evil, existing from the beginning of time in order, perhaps, to provide freedom of choice, a concept always emphasized in Zoroastrianism, for without such freedom, goodness has little meaning. As each person sees the truth and acts accordingly, the world becomes perfect and suffering is destroyed.

Every Zoroastrian knows the essence of the religion: *humata, hukta, huvarashta* — good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Zarathushtra's insistence was that all three must be combined into a single unity for the greatest benefit and effect. Good deeds must extend not only to one's fellowmen but also to the environment, to plants and to animals. All living things must be cared for and treated with love.

Thus, while for a Zoroastrian the *Gathas* form the basis of the religion, for a non-Zoroastrian they provide a subtly different understanding of the relationship between God and humanity, in which the essential role of the individual is to fight for good against evil.

This is a beautifully produced book with relevant illustrated material to enhance and explain the text. One illustration is from a page from an unpublished manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, which examines the Zoroastrian version of the Story of Creation as interpreted in the *Gathas*. The beautiful illustration on the cover depicts a Sasanian seal in the British Museum, London. It shows an *afargan* or fire censer with leaping flames, in the center of which is a horse with forelegs and head reaching upwards — a symbol of the ascending power of prayer.

The task of truly translating such a work is indeed formidable. The author is deeply sympathetic to the spirit of the original. It portrays the spiritual struggle

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of the human soul for goodness and perfection and the vision of God in all things.

Juan Mascaró in his introduction to his translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* writes:

"The spiritual visions of man confirm and illumine each other. We have the cosmic greatness of Hinduism, the moral issues of Zoroaster, the joy in truth of Buddha, the spiritual victory of Jainism, the simple love of Tao, the wisdom of Confucius, the poetry of Shinto, the one God of Israel, the redeeming radiance of Christianity, the glory of the God of Islam, the harmony of the Sikhs. Great poems in different languages but they are all poetry and in them we have lamps of fire that burn to the glory of God."

The *Gathas* were written to celebrate the glory of God. NERGIS DALAL

* * *

Palkhivala's portfolio

Nani Palkhivala, Selected Writings edited by L. M. Singhvi, M. R. Pai and S. Ramakrishnan. Published in 1999 by Viking/Bhavan's Book University, Penguin Books India (Private) Limited, 11, Community Center, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017. Pp: xxxiv+330. Price: Rs 395 (hardcover).

I remember today, with some amusement, how the first time I accompanied my husband to the spacious lawns of the Cricket Club of India (Bombay) to listen to a public lecture on the Union Budget, I had protested all the way in the car. I was not remotely interested in fiscal policies or the philosophy of taxation; and my monthly household budget I managed competently enough by juggling an assortment of envelopes in which I deposited cash earmarked for 'daily bazaar,' 'milkman,' 'dhobi,' etc. So why had I agreed to sit through a dusty sermon on debts and interest rates and borrowings and — heaven help me — what else?

But the evening turned out to be magical. And the magician behind the mike was Nani Palkhivala. The overflowing audience he had attracted (this was in the late '60s), told me that I was present not at a discourse but a national event.

Why, this man was a wizard! I marvelled that one head could store all the

facts and figures and statistics he tossed at us without a single note to aid his memory. I marvelled at the elegance of his language, the persuasiveness of his arguments.

This man was a honey-tongued orator! His post-budget speech that evening was replete with humor and irony, punctuated with quotations from literature and references to history, to wise, ancient Indian texts and modern physics. He had the sensibilities of a Renaissance man.

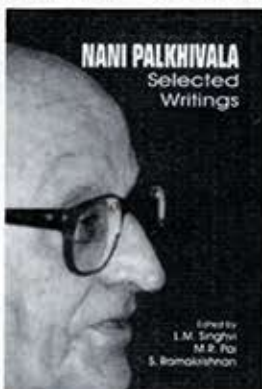
As the numbers at Palkhivala's yearly talks increased, the venue was shifted from the Club lawns to the extensive grounds of the Brabourne Stadium (home turf of cricketers), and a photograph on the dust jacket of the book under review has captured one such pensive, disciplined audience for posterity. (In a past incarnation the grounds had resounded with shouts and whistles, raucous witticisms and sporadic bursts of firecrackers from cricket-crazed spectators, so different from this hushed crowd participating in a cerebral exercise that was somehow so chastening...)

Offered as a labor of love to commemorate the 80th birthday of this brilliant public educator, *Nani Palkhivala, Selected Writings* is compiled by a three-member editorial committee: Dr L. M. Singhvi, eminent jurist and Member of Parliament; human rights and social activist M. R. Pai; and S. Ramakrishnan, director general of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan worldwide. The 16 pages of

black and white photographs illustrate the vast canvas of Palkhivala's boyhood, family and public life.

The book covers a wide arc of subjects from the temporal to the spiritual and is divided into segments like environment, law, democracy, taxation, education, personalities, etc. Palkhivala's contributions as lawyer, teacher, author and economic developer are immense, even so it is evident from the first few pages that the man himself towers over his achievements. And in the profile at the beginning of the volume the editors concede that it is easier to define a national and international persona than the essence of a man who walks in grace. For how do you describe the fragrance exuded by an honest man?

That he is able to combine integrity with pragmatism is what makes Palkhivala a living legend — and a Zoroastrian par excellence. He seeks for meanings of his principles and concepts in their practical application (the good deed is not far behind the good thought and word), and apparently agrees with philosopher William James that the function of thought is to guide action. Most powerful men have no time to deal with social morality but for Palkhivala commerce and ethics move in tandem. And this collection — culled from his essays, prefaces, speeches, profiles and correspondence — bears ample testimony to Palkhivala's efficient and impeccable style of functioning whether in the courtroom or the corporate field, as India's



Palkhivala addressing a spellbound audience

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ambassador to the United States or as activist and reformer in the public arena at home.

A highbrow Palkhivala may be, but he has never been an ostrich: he sees things as they are. He sees the moral crisis writ large on our political scene. He sees that while the poor in our country endure injustice with feudalistic servility, the trader/businessman prefers to circumvent an unjust law or wriggle out of an unfair levy rather than fight for its repeal. He sees that state controls have suffocated our enterprises and entrepreneurship and damned the majority of our people to subhuman squalor — and spells out ways and means by which wealth must first be created before it can be distributed.

He sees what is happening to our cities. In his elegy on the Bombay he once knew and loved, he expresses as much regret and nostalgia as Salman Rushdie in his fictive representations of the city. In the last seven decades Palkhivala saw Bombay grow, bloom, then sadly decay. "Surfeit and claustrophobia" sent the protagonist of Rushdie's latest novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, haring out of Bombay. This citizen, we fervently hope, is not going anywhere even while endorsing the comment made by *The Economist* (London): "Bombay is the most expensive slum in the world." (Here I may add that Palkhivala surely sees the necessity for humor in these bleak days if a man is to work with a degree of sanity for the causes he holds dear.)

Farsighted enough to believe in quality education (with spiritual undertones and millennial overtones) for the regeneration of our country, Palkhivala's advocacy of this 'priority of priorities' as the universal panacea for all our woes is impassioned and unrelenting. You have to start with the youth, he believes, particularly the girl child. "Education... must be inwardly appropriated," he writes; and what you claim for your own when you are young colors your entire life. He quotes: "In the lost boyhood of Judas/Christ was betrayed."

"Without the guidance which can be derived only from liberal education," he writes, "a whole generation has grown up which is content to see crime and violence, casteism and communal frenzy become the order of the day. More criminals have openly entered public life than ever before." His disenchantment with our ignorant professional politicians is

total, his criticism of them trenchant and deliciously quotable: "Their critical perception is no higher than 40 watts." And again, "...for portly politicians, goodly in girth, poverty is good business: they talk continually about *garibi* (poverty) without having the will, the expertise or imagination to eradicate it." And "Elections have been reduced to a horse race by contesting politicians — the difference being that the horse is highly trained."

Palkhivala is perhaps the most articulate and formidable critic of what is distorted in the Indian scenario. Yet as I put down his book I was left with the feeling that he had from a hidden source imbibed the spirit of optimism; and that with our ancient seers and sages and *mahayogis* (Aurobindo leaps to mind) he shares a buoyant faith in the ultimate high destiny of India.

DINA MEHTA

* * *

Outlines and insights

Outlines of Parsi History, Zoroastrian Religion and Ancient Iranian Art, a restructured edition of *Outlines of Parsi History* by Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza. Condensed and edited by Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia. Published in 1999 by the Society for the Promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge and Education and the Zartoshty Brothers Fund Sub Committee, R-11, Central Bank Bldg, Sir Homi Modi Street, Bombay 400023. Pp: xxxii + 215. Price: Not mentioned.

Dastur (Dr) Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza, seniormost High Priest and revered scholar of the Parsi community, had brought out in 1974 a book titled *Outlines of Parsi History*. A magnum opus, and the outcome of a lifetime of scholarship, the title of the book really does not reflect the magnitude of the subject under review. Dastur Mirza has covered the entire Parsi history from the first King Gayomard to the present time, both in Iran and India. Not only that, but he has covered the entire gamut of Zoroastrian religion, culture and art. These have been corroborated by innumerable references and copious footnotes,

thereby making this volume one of the most authentic works on this subject. A second revised edition was brought out in 1977.

At the same time, because of the nature of the work involved, the book has become quite heavy both physically (about 525 pages) and technically. The Society for the Promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge and Education therefore decided to make available this voluminous

work in a lighter version for the benefit of lay people. Founded in 1903 by a large number of eminent Zoroastrians of the time, this Society has worked in the field of religious knowledge and culture for nearly a century. With the help of the Zartoshty Brothers Fund, the work was entrusted to Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia, principal of Bombay's Athornan Boarding Madressa, who carried it out diligently and has now brought out the original work of Dastur Mirza in a condensed and restructured edition.

This new work contains about 215 pages but retains all the chapters of the original work. The book is beautifully designed with the front and back covers displaying photos of the remnants of the Achaemenian dynasty. It is divided into three major parts: 'Parsi History,' 'The Zoroastrian Religion' and 'Iranian Art.'

In order to understand the nature and importance of this work, it is appropriate to quote Ervad Nadir Ardeshir Modi,

president of the Society: "This book is an attractively presented compendium of authentic information not only on Zoroastrian history but also on Zoroastrian religion and culture by a distinguished scholar-duo — one blessed with age and experience and the other with youth and vitality — and both being devotees of knowledge and wisdom."

"In the Zoroastrian



Mirza: lifetime of scholarship

OUTLINES OF PARSI HISTORY, ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION & ANCIENT IRANIAN ART



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In fact, both the books, the original and the present abridged one ought to be owned by every Zoroastrian — one for the detailed study and reference work, the other for the simple narration.

ERVAD (Dr) ROOYINTAN P. PEER

* * *

Sagas of the *Shahnameh*

The Iranian epic... Shahnameh... in serialised stories — Kayan by Ramiyar P. Karanjia. Published in 1999 by Havovi and Ervad Dr Ramiyar P. Karanjia, Athornan Madressa, 651-52, Firdausi Road, Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Pp: 278. Price: Rs 150.

The *Shah Nameh* or book of kings is not about ordinary people like you and me. It is about kings and queens, princes and princesses. About strong and brave soldiers and warriors.

The original *Shahnameh* is set in verse. One gets lost in the beauty of its words and rhymes, but in this book one focuses on a different grandeur, the historical grandeur that the venerable Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia refers to in his introduction: "Some people believe that the Peshadian and Kayanian dynasties are mythological and not historical... However, one should remember that these... (are) in the realm of pre-history where the art of writing was not evolved... (But)... it may not be long before archaeological evidences from the sixth and seventh millennium BC are available." The book focuses on and brings great clarity to the history of the ancient Kayan dynasty.

Mulling over its pages, I was struck by the author's high quality of documentation and his familiarity with the original *Shah Nameh*. And that he does not seek to put an interpretation to his faithful narration of events, but leaves it to the reader to go where it will take him. It reminds me of the first holy name of Ahura Mazda in the *Hormazd Yasht* — *Nama Ahmi* — I am! This book seems to

affirm the same thought through the ancient saga that Firdausi penned centuries ago.

Yet as a Zarathoshti I wanted the



Karanjia: quality of documentation

book to reveal the meaning behind the countless wars, battles, duels and deaths recounted on page after page after page. The knowledge came. Its very length made me internalize the work to discover

that it elucidates aspects of power, conflict (good verses evil), fame and fortune in the personae of Rustam, Sorab, Piran, rival King Afrasiyab and many other kings who ascended the Iranian throne, including King Gushtasp and the holy prophet Zarathushtra (spelled Zartosh in the book).

Also touched on are the softer aspects of loyalty and love (as for example between a horse and its owner). A great sense of righteousness was felt by the heroes as they fought for their king, country, family and even for themselves. Prayer and devotion also find a place in this story. Warriors prayed before attacking the enemy, during difficult moments and even for miracles and miraculous powers. And in this saga the prayers are heard, wishes granted, desires fulfilled. The strenuous efforts are followed by relaxation, repose and feasting. And the unswerving worship of Ahura Mazda by the great King Kae Khushru toward the end of his reign epitomizes the meaning of detachment: he shed worldly pursuits in his quest for things spiritual.

Initially I was startled by Gulshan Dalal's illustrations. The civilian clothes worn by men are a prototype of Zarathushtra's garb as depicted in all popular pictures of him. It's like seeing the Prophet's extended family and community! And the *Shah Nameh* may well be the context in which Zarathushtra lived and preached.

The book makes good reading for adults and older children. Portraying as it does a very ancient human saga, its theme and world-view must be savored within the context of the times in which it was written. HUTOKHSHIP COOPER



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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 46 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 34 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 44 years, averaging at 37 years.

There were 84 Zoroastrian deaths as compared to nine births in the first month of the new millennium. As usual the major killer (heart disease) took the lives of 26 patients, 18 of whom were 80 years and above. The other killers were: lung related diseases (nine), diabetes, brain disease, old age/general debility and hypertension (five each), kidney failure and cancer (four each) and septicemia, arthritis and epilepsy (a recurrent disorder of the cerebral functions) (two each). The isolated cases registered for January were senescent

(normal changes of mind and body in increasing age), Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, ulcer, burns, gastro-intestinal bleed, head injury, Alzheimer's disease, hypoproteinemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma), malnutrition, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arteries), liver disease, Falciparum malaria and quadriplegia (paralysis of all four limbs). Two premature female babies, aged four and 21 days respectively, were also lost to the community. The eldest to breathe his last was a 96-year-old male. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for January, in Bombay, was 78 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 con-

sistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

January 14
Meher Namdar Kotval and Jimmy Dhunjisha Elavia;
January 16
Parizad Kersi Fitter and Pirooz Pervaz Movdwalla;
January 18
Vera Shapoor Jalnawala and Cusrow Kershasp Sadri;
January 20
Parizad Aspi Machhliwala and Gev Neville Bharucha;
January 22
Khushnoor Khurshed Patel and Farshid Jamsheed Nooshian;
January 22
Nazneen Minoo Master and Mehmoosh Rustom Golla;
January 24
Nainaaz Behram Irani of Bordin and Gustaad Boman Irani;
January 24
Dilber Zarkis Khandhadia and Merezban Pilo Katrak;
January 27

DIED

Homai Palanji Golwala (74), residing at 5, Ocean Crest, Warden Rd, 400036;
January 1
Khurshedji Byramji Lalla (93), F-8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Road, 400039;
January 1
Pari-Banoo Tirandaz Lohrash (92), 3/25, Anil Bhuvan, Jerbai Wadia Rd, Parel, 400012;
January 1
Minoo Darabshaw Ukaji (65), C/o Doongerwadi Office, Kemps Corner, 400036;
January 1
Jal Jahangir Bharucha (79), Hirabai Petit Charity Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Stn (E), 400007;
January 2
Maneck Khorshed Mehta (81), 2/6, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
January 3
Dossabhai Ardesir Turner (80), 3, Gladhurst, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050;
January 3
Perin Rusi Billimoria (63), Wilson Bldg, Gokuldas Pasta Rd, Dadar, 400014;
January 4
Pheroze Barjor Sanjana (71), 161, Hassa Mhl, Dalamal Park, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
January 4
Baby girl of Armaity Shroff (4 days), 104/A, Salsette Parsis Association Bldg no 4, Pump Hse, Andheri (W), 400058;
January 4

AHMEDABAD

BORN

A girl, Haavani, to Jennifer and Firdose Kapadia, sister to Kaazvin on December 24, 1999

BARODA

BORN

A boy, Sharukh, to Farzana and Gev Jabbar; October 21
A boy, Eric, to Mahafreen and Neville Jambusarwalla; October 24
A girl, Kezvin, to Armaity and Cyrus Patel; October 28
A boy, Farzan, to Monaz and Adil Randeria, brother to Delzad; December 11

MARRIED

Sharmin Sam Mehta and Rushad Adi Hirjibehdin; November 20
Maharukh Jamsheed Bhungara and Neville Firoze Soonawalla; November 28
Nilufer Rusi Rabadi and Tehmuras Sam Kavina; December 10
Roshni Percy Bharucha and Kaizad Dinyar Kasad; December 26
Veeraz Sarosh Dangore and Rayomand Darayus Sarkari; December 26

DIED

Tehmulji Hormusji Cama of

Bhavnagar (81), brother of Burjor; November 22
Behranji Faramroze Chinoy (86), father of Viraf, Dhunjisha, Pervin, Shirin, Aspi and Burjor; December 7
Khorshedbanoo Rustomji Patel (87), mother of Rohinton, Aban and Nozer; December 13

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl to Armaity and Farrokh Shroff; December 31
A boy to Kerman and Darius Khambata; January 1, 2000
A boy to Nilufer and Kaiyomerz Palia; January 4
A boy to Firiza and Khorshed Doctor; January 9
A girl to Gulshan and Sheriar Irani; January 9
A boy to Jasmin and Marazban Maney; January 10
A boy to Roshni and Keki Bapuna; January 12
A boy to Aban and Nari Chothia; January 14
A girl to Shernaz and Kurush Daruwala; January 28

MARRIED

Ruksheen Feroze Elavia and Fredy Jehangir Aga; December 2, 1999
Tanaz Firoze Deboo and Abadaan Hosi Viccaji; December 14

Parizad Dali Cooper and Ardafarvash Ratansha Zaroliwala; December 19
Pervin Nariman Batliwala and Kushru Rusi Batliwala; December 26
Perin Eruch Patrawala and Firdaus Eruch Fanibanda; December 30
Shiraz Sam Daruwala and Zubin Jazeel Mehta; December 30
Katayun Darius Nakra and Percy Meher Bharucha; January 4, 2000
Shernaz Noshir Kapadia of Thana and Fram Dinshaw Desai; January 4
Dilshad Farokh Antia and Jimmy Behram Khajotia; January 7
Khushnooma Sam Batliwala and Cyrus Kersie Khambatta; January 9
Tina Rusi Delvadavala and Malcolm Dhunjishaw Mistry; January 9
Dilshad Nariman Daruwala and Kersi Hoshang Vakili; January 9
Yasmin Rustomji Daruwala and Maneck Jamsheed Manecksha; January 10
Zenobia Percy Driver of Daund and Dicky Percy Antia; January 14
Nilufer Parvez Mullanfiroze and Jamsheed Keki Panthaki;

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Roshan Rustamji Mistry (78), Madhu Bldg, Evershine city, Vasai, 401201; January 5
 Sorab Dinshaw Nargolwala (83), C/o Piroja Nargolwala, 53A, Meher Apts, Altamont Rd, 400026; January 5
 Tehmuras Fakirshaw Anklesaria (75), 2, Petit Bldg, J. Petit St, 400007; January 6
 Lady Manekbai Dossabhoy Bhiwandiwala (80), 11, Rockdale, L. D. Ruparel Marg, 400006; January 6
 Kaikhusroo Rustomji Marfatia (83), 102, Dadabhai Jijibhoy Bldg, Parsi Clny, Diwan Marg, Vasai, 401201; January 6
 Macca Edulji Vaid (92), Mackawee Mans, R. Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; January 6
 Pestonji Sorabji Bamboat (72), Ness Baug, Annexe 3, Nana Chowk, 400007; January 7
 Dosa Rustomji Bharucha (78), 8, Patropolis, S. B. Rd, Colaba, 400005; January 7
 Noshir Jalejar Kalyaniwala (61), 600, Bacha Manor, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; January 7
 Eruch Hormusji Katrak (96), C-2, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; January 7

Erachsha Framroz Pavri (93), 672, Shehrevard, Rd no 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 7
 Pallon Jal Billimoria (53), Pallonji Hse, Next to Charni Rd, 400004; January 8
 Adi Jehangirji Karaka (90), A-2/15, Narayan Pujari Ngr, Abdul Gaffar Khan Rd, Worli, 400018; January 8
 Rustom Hoshang Nanavati (87), 41, Queen's Rd, 400002; January 8
 Maneck Ardeshtir Daruvala (83), Cassinath Cottage, Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; January 9
 Behram Nawroji Bharucha (75), A-602, M. A. Patel Co-op Hsg Soc, Paliram Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 10
 Godrej Rustomji Kotwal (67), B-103, Pathik, Thakur Complex, Kandivli (E), 400101; January 10
 Silloo Nariman Master (84), 666, New Orient Hse, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 10
 Vahista Khushroo Vandrewala (21 days), S-25, New Ava Baug, Navsari, Gujarat,

396445; January 10
 Chandan Piroz Gotla (81), G-7, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 11
 Perin Naval Lalca (83), A, Sajid Tower, Amboli Naka, Andheri (W), 400058; January 11
 Nariman Jehangirji Palia (86), 17C/21, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 11
 Dolat Beheram Patel (69), Tardeo Chmbs, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; January 11
 Rusi Cooverji Vasanani (86), Roda (Salamat) Bldg, South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; January 11
 Tehmi Dinshaw Acidwala (95), 640-B, Khorshed Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 12
 Perin Shavak Bhowanagri (81), 2-B/12, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; January 13
 Villy Kaikasroo Khergaumwala (71), 672, Ashtad, Rd no 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 13
 Framroze Rustomji Naravala (84), 26/3, Tata Mills Co-op

Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; January 13
 Nurgesh Dhunjishaw Shroff (81), G-6, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; January 13
 Perin Darabshaw Printer (84), 3, Jehangir Mans, Next to Metro Cinema, 400020; January 14
 Meherji Kaikhushroo Karkaria (70), D, Contractor Bldg, Avabai Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; January 15
 Perin Mehelli Kasad (61), 17-C/27, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 15
 Nadirshah Ramjibhai Patel (96), 20, Chhatrawala Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; January 15
 Cusrow Shavakshaw Patel (77), 3, Kalaniketan Bldg, 95, M. Karve Rd, 400020; January 15
 Tehmuras Naoroji Athugar (81), Damania Bldg, 275, Tardeo Rd, 400007; January 16
 Piroja Dinshaw Sadri (80), 1-A-34, Tata Hsg Soc, J. B. Marg, Parel, 400012; January 16
 Lovji Ardeshtir Sethna (93),

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168, Hilla Mans, Bora Bazar, Fort, 400001; January 16
Adi Desai (88), 304, Zaveri Bldg, Corner of Grant Rd, 400007; January 17
Khorshed Darabshaw Siganporia (73), 39, Ahmed Bldg, Gunpowder Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; January 17
Dara Sorabji Fitter (68), Jorawar Bhavan, Marine Lines, 400020; January 18
Phiroze Meherji Kiroliwala (79), 17/B/11, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; January 18
Putla Jal Patel (82), Clover, Sleater Rd, 400007; January 18
Fardoon Khodadad Irani (84), 40, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; January 19
Nergish Jal Poonegar (80), 730, J. Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 19
Hosang Jamshedji Zaiwala (72), 212-C/24, Shivganga Co-op Hsg Soc, Gorai II, Borivli (W), 400091; January 19
Gool Adi Bharucha (70), 622, Palia Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 20
Piloo Jehangir Maneckji (77), 7, Rajab Mhl, 144, M. Karve Rd, 400020; January 20
Piroja Savaksha Popat (96), Wadia Bldg, 248, Princess St, 400002; January 20
Piloo Perosha Shavaksha (87), 14, Naoraji Mans, Wodehouse Rd, 400039; January 20
Noshir Dosabhai Variava (79), Karanjia Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; January 20
Shiavax Khurshedji Anklesaria (84), 1, Manek Mans, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 21
Cavasji Dadabhoy Driver (96), 4/41, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; January 21
Gover Mundegar Irani (77), B-7, Ashirwad, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400051; January 21
Sheran Kaikhusru Dastoor (87), 3/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; January 22
Sam Kaikhusru Khambatta (64), 275 N, New Khan Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; January 22
Tehmi Nariman Thakraji (85), Pimenta Hse, B. P. Rd. Charai, Thana, 400601; January 22
Keki Nusserwanji Dalal (93), 72/A, Grand Paradi Apts,

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*								
	This issue	Bombay 1999*	2000 ^o	This issue	India 1999*	2000 ^o	This issue	World 1999* 2000 ^o
BIRTHS								
Boys	6	77	6	3	12	—	—	29 —
Girls	3	94	2	2	8	—	—	29 —
MARRIAGES								
Parsi	23	260	17	6	17	1	—	12 —
INTERCOMMUNAL								
Males married out	—	28	—	2	2	1	—	5 —
Females married out	—	20	—	—	—	—	—	6 —
DEATHS								
CONSIGNED								
Males	49	455	49	4	91	2	—	48 —
Females	35	477	35	8	71	7	—	40 —
CREMATED								
Males	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	—
Females	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1999 (January 1999-March 2000 issues)

^oRunning totals for 2000 (January 2000-March 2000 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.

A. K. Marg, 400036; January 23
Mehera Dhunjisha Daruwala (87), 461/463, Kerawalla Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; January 23
Jamshed Maneckshaw Mistry (72), Ali Manzil, 11, Nasarwanji Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 23
Behram Hormusji Vazifdar (76), 5/2, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; January 23
Aloo Jamshedji Adajania (84), 795, Dosal Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 24
Khorshed Boman Shroff (85), Room no 6, Ahmed Bldg, Gunpowder Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; January 24
Sheroy Boman Irani (41), 33, New Navrang Society, Off Peddar Rd, 400026; January 25
Parvez Jamshedji Maney (74), 1, Mehta Bldg, Khan Est, M. M. C. Rd, 400016; January 25
Dara Behramji Turel (73), 786-A, Readymoney Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 27
Savak Hosang Bharucha (63), 11/9, Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 28
Jamshed Tehmurasp Bhatthana (80), 10/12, Bhiwandiwalla

Hse, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; January 28
Ratan Jehangir Patel (81), P/23, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; January 28
Sam Keiki Bilimoria (62), B-11, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; January 29
Jamshed Earachshaw Dhalla (65), 33/3, Wood Arch, Sher-e-Punjab Soc, Off Mahakali Caves Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; January 29
Pulvi Fali Mistry (78), Edena, 97, M. Karve Rd, 400020; January 29
Loveji Dorabji Cooper (76), Mirador, 67/H, B. Desai Rd, 400026; January 30
Shiavax Rustomjee Mistry (92), 5-B, Shireen Mans, 228, Tardeo Rd, 400007; January 30
Mani Godrej Paghdwalla (80), A/3, Vasudeo Ter, Kastur Park, Shimpoli Rd, Borivli (W), 400090; January 30

CALCUTTA

MARRIED
Rituparna Sengupta and *Kersi Darius Antia*; December 13, 1999
Cynthia Pieretli and *Darius Madan*; January 8, 2000
Ketayun Patel and *Danesh Kiash*; January 20

DIED
Perinbanoo Keki Bulsara; January 8

JHANSI

DIED
Dhunjai Jehangirji Dick (90), mother of Ronny; January 25

SURAT

DIED
Silloo Jamshed Dumasia (66), Faram Mohalla, Rustompura, 395002; January 2
Ratanbai Sorabji Joonvanwala (89), Mathiya Faliyu, Vanki Bardi, 395002; January 5
Banoomai Jehangirji Cooper (73), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; January 8
Perinbanoo Eruchshaw Vatchha (88), Wadia St, Machhlipith, 395003; January 14
Maneck (Maki) Dadiseth Commiseriate (77), Rusi Raj Apt, Diwali Baug, Athwalines, 390001; January 15
Minoo Faramroz Variava (74), Saher Bakery, Maccaipool, Nanpura, 395001; January 19
Pirojshaw Nariman Turel (91), Parsiwad, Village Adajan, Dist Surat; January 20

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

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Patrawala's Portfolio

Arnavaz S. Mama

When a group of Zarathushtis gathered together at the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) board room on October 20, 1999 at 10.30 a.m. to bid adieu to homeward bound Iranian consul general Sayed Kamal Yasini, there was no inkling that it would be one among them that the rest were to see for the last time. A low-key Marazban Patrawala (50), looking fairer than his normal fair self — but quieter — took his place at the crowded table only to slip away as the proceedings progressed. It was a busy day for politicians in Bombay as some of the legislators had been sworn in a day earlier and more were to be sworn in this day. Perhaps the recently reelected Congress MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) was preoccupied...

By midday Bombay's political, legal and community circles were accosted by the shock of barrister-politician Patrawala's passing. On returning home in increasing discomfort, he had suffered a fatal heart attack before medical help could reach.

After the swearing in of some MLA members, Maharashtra chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh moved the condolence motion in the House highlighting Patrawala's learning and legal skills; it was seconded by the leader of the opposition, Narayan Rane, who spoke of the loss of "a dear colleague;" deputy chief minister Chhagan Bhujbal noted that Patrawala was to be inducted into the cabinet at its next expansion; former deputy chief minister Gopinath Munde referred to Patrawala's openness to criticism even from opposition members, paying due attention to their views and suggestions, according to the *After-*

noon Despatch and Courier (ADC) of October 21, 1999.

After paying its tributes to its departed member the House adjourned, lending a constant stream of visitors to the Patrawala residence in Cusrow Baug to pay their last respect. Thus it was only in the late evening that the body was removed to the Doongerwadi where the available Bhabha bungli fell woefully short of the substantial turnout of mourners at the funeral the next morning, a large number being accommodated in the open space outside.

Patrawala's "crucial role" in helping the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party with legal opinion to form the government in Maharashtra after the recently concluded elections has been documented by *The Indian Express* of October 21, 1999: "He was one among those who had drafted the letter addressed to the governor in which the Congress staked its claim to form the next government."

Former minister of law and judiciary and senior advocate Ramrao

Adik spoke to *Mid-Day* (October 21, 1999) of his 20-year association with Patrawala dating from 1978 when Patrawala, a long-standing Youth Congress leader, became more involved with mainstream politics as general secretary of the Bombay Regional Congress (I) Committee. With an LLM and master of management studies from the UK, Patrawala then practiced at the Bombay High Court while Adik was advocate general of Maharashtra. When the latter became the minister of law and judiciary in 1990, Patrawala was his minister of state. Adik remembers him as "a non-controversial and straightforward person... always in good health."

However, as notes *Express Newline* of October 21, 1999 Patrawala was denied the Congress ticket for the Legislative Assembly poll in 1995 and unsuccessfully contested the 1996 Lok Sabha election as a Samajwadi party candidate. He rejoined the Congress in 1997.

The resolution passed by the National Commission for Minorities at an emergency meeting on October 21 notes, "We fondly remember our long and lively association with him and find it extremely difficult to believe that he is no more alive. Patrawala will always live in the hearts of those who have known him as an eminent member of the Parsi Zoroastrian minority, a brilliant lawyer, an active statesman and above all, a very fine and charming human being."

Detailing Patrawala's career, the BPP resolution passed on October 26, 1999 acknowledges, "Patrawala was always available for advice to the trustees when requested and this meeting places on record its appreciation of his meritorious services to the Parsi community."

"I had the privilege of knowing him for some years now and had great esteem and regard for his erudition, vast reading and

continued on page 240



Patrawala (above) with Rajiv Gandhi (alongside)

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Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Roshen Phiroze Framji Driver, 63, principal of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution (BJPCI) and College and chairperson of the Zoroastrian Student Teacher Association (ZOSTA) on October 9, 1999 following cardiac arrest in Bombay.

"She worked selflessly with utmost dedication towards the cause of giving our Parsi boys and girls a solid platform to grow and develop a true Zoroastrian identity. She brought the Zoroastrian teachers, past and present, together too," commended the condolence resolution from ZOSTA referring to her expertise and leadership in nurturing ZOSTA for over two decades. Within the course of a fortnight there were three condolence meetings summoned in Driver's memory. While the ZOSTA condolence meeting was held on October 26, the one convened by the BJPCI was on October 18, and the meeting by the 32nd West Bombay Pioneer Scouts on October 31.

"The south zone schools have lost a true friend, a zealous worker and a very noble lady," noted a tribute from Manthan, a Forum of Principals formed at the initiative of the Secondary Education Department. "Her cheerful, positive attitude to life has helped so many principals, teachers, parents and students," mentioned a condolence letter from Bapsy Chubb, principal of the Cumballa Hill High School. Referring to her as a "stalwart Zoroastrian soldier," principal of the Bai Ruttonbai F. D. Panday Girls' High School Silloo Commissariat wrote, "I shall never forget her spontaneous laughter, her large-hearted hospitality, her charities, her generosity to the needy and her love and compassion for her children." Driver was described as "a pillar of strength for all to lean on," by Dr Armaity Boyce, trustee of the Bai Ratanbai F. Pavri Girls' High School. "A visionary leader, her spirit, enthusiasm and spunk," were worth emulating, com-

mented Rati Wadia, principal of Queen Mary School, remarking how Driver was respected by the department and ministry of education.

During the 28 years she was principal of the BJPCI, she succeeded in raising the standard and reputation of the school. By converting it into a co-educational, cosmopolitan institution, introducing self-defense classes, job oriented courses, remedial training, the school band, she ensured that her students had opportunities for overall development. "Energetic, enthusiastic and full of foresight, she had contributed greatly to the... progress and welfare of the pupils, staff and the school," noted the condolence resolution passed by the trustees of the Institution on October 13, 1999. To her also goes the credit for starting the junior

college for commerce and science, (even introducing electronics as a subject with considerable persistence) and thereafter seeing the senior college in commerce through its infancy along with trustee Ketu Mehta, noted solicitor and social worker, mentions her successor Diana Marfatia. "The BJPC Institution was like a *mandir* (temple) to our dear Roshen and she always (made reference to) 'my school, my children, my staff,'" mentioned a letter from her sister Zarine and brother-in-law Maheli Amalsadvala, being her neighbors at Shapur Baug with whom she shared an emotional bond following the demise of her husband Phiroze. When her school building which she would oftentimes describe as "*maaro pathar no dikro* (my solid son)" was declared a heritage building, she was as radiant as the beautifully illuminated structure, noted Wadia.

Return to this Institution after graduation, Driver had told Marfatia during her first assignment with the BJPCI in 1983 as a student social worker deputed by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Little expecting to heed Driver's words,

Marfatia was surprised how the succeeding years brought her closer to the Institution and to the principal in her capacity as counselor, headmistress of the primary section and assistant principal. "Ma'am treated me like her daughter. She trained me, she projected me and I am very grateful to her for all that she has taught me of administration," acknowledges Marfatia.

Involved as she was with several administrative responsibilities, Driver found time to tutor only select classes, child development being one of the subjects she specialized in. Yet being the person she was, teachers and students always found there was a lot to learn from her. As recalled Godrej J. Khandadia in the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, "I had the good fortune to work as a science-mathematics teacher for 24 years under her able principalship, but had never found her losing her temper or speaking in harsh words to any of the staff members or to any parent or to the general public...She never allowed any one of us to feel that she was our...superior. She always remained cheerful and active even under difficult situations."

After her early education at the Princess School, Driver (née Mistry) proceeded to study for her BA from Bombay's Wilson College, MA from St Xavier's College and MEd from St Xavier's Institute of Education and she is known to have won several prizes in oratory, debate and essay-writing. Before her long innings at the BJPCI she was a teacher at the Queen Mary School and the Birla Trust School. Extremely religious by nature, Driver would never miss out on an occasion to hold a jashan in the school premises, states Marfatia. And yet, the principal was rational and logical in her beliefs, not fanatic, she adds. She was actively involved in organizing the first seminar at her school to impart religious knowledge to Zoroastrian students of ICSE (Indian Council of Secondary Education) schools, recalls Wadia. Her determination to climb up to Pir-e-Saabs in Iran five years ago, her heavy frame notwithstanding, was also remarkable, according to her colleagues.

Despite her preoccupation with all educational activities, Driver made time to serve as treasurer of the International Tourism Council for over a decade, was involved with the Indian Heritage Society and the Youth Hostels Association.



Driver: all for education



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The Youths' Own Union commended her interest in their activities as per their condolence letter. She was vice president, west zone, of the Bharat Scouts and Guides.

For the cause of the underprivileged too Driver expended her energies and resources. She encouraged her students to participate in collection drives for the Red Cross, the National Association of the Blind...For the class IV employees of her Institution she organized vocational training classes. "Her special love for the poor will always be cherished," declared the ZOSTA resolution.

Referring to her as a "most competent person in the field of education" who supported and guided her activities, the condolence letter from the Liaison Committee for Organisation of Parsi Charities and Social Services added that Driver will "ever be remembered...as a 'guru.'"

The educationist is survived by her sister Zarine Amalsadvala.

PATRAWALA'S PORTFOLIO *continued from page 236*

commitment to service. His demise is indeed a great loss to the public life of Maharashtra and particularly (Bombay) city," wrote Maharashtra governor Dr P. C. Alexander.

In extolling Patrawala two politicians opposed to each other spoke a common tongue: While Congress president Sonia Gandhi noted that "the party has lost a devoted and popular leader," Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar recalled that Patrawala "worked all his life for the welfare of the masses and conquered the hearts of all those with whom he worked." But it is Nadeem Nasrath, national secretary of the Indian Youth Congress who respected the departed leader's "genuine display of warmth and guidance towards the young party activists like me."

Najma Heptulla, deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha grieves the loss of "a good friend and close colleague... His death has left an immense emotional vacuum."

A swath of legal luminaries attest to Patrawala's acumen and integrity. The redoubtable former justice of the Bombay High Court Bakhtawar Lentin writes, "I had known Marazban since the past several years. And I had known him to be a person of loyalty and integrity. I shall miss him very much." Attorney general of India Soli Sorabjee describes him as "a warm, generous and

caring person... full of ideas and enthusiasm."

Patrawala's potential had been noted early in life. An alumnus of Bombay's Bharda High School and Wilson College, Patrawala was a student activist progressively involved with the college council and the university council until he became founder convenor of the National Students' Union of India in 1970. In her letter to his wife Dinaz *Bombay Samachar* director Banoo Cama, who was associated with the Bharda School as counselor, writes, "I had known him as a small boy in school, full of promise of a good career in later life."

"After seeing his performance at... our very first training camp in Lonavla in May 1968, I had predicted he would go far and make good in politics," writes Arvind Deshpande, honorary secretary of the Leslie Sawhny Programme.

Fellow student Gul Sheikh recalls how "Marzi would talk about his step-by-step plans to enter politics and progress to be a minister..."

Involvement with political interests was manifest early in life. Dinaz remembers his parents Jal and Hira relating that even as a child he would sit with newspapers and keep tabs on "where each minister has gone," rather than play or fly kites. Though the Patrawalas had been married 15 years, they had known each other much longer. Over 21 years Dinaz says he never once shouted at her or their 14-year-old son Kaarl. A typical intellectual, he retained his calmness and dignity even in the worst situations. A patient man with a photographic memory, Dinaz recalls how he would call from abroad and ask her to read out to him extracts which she could locate exactly as per his instructions. "He was always so immaculately dressed, my friends would joke 'Do you iron his clothes every hour?'"

On the obverse, "He didn't listen to his body," rues Dinaz, "never showed his inner feelings... He so wanted that he should really shine out." Particularly well-versed on law, politics and technology, "he could speak on the level of each of the persons he spoke to." And he



The Patrawalas on Kaarl's navjote

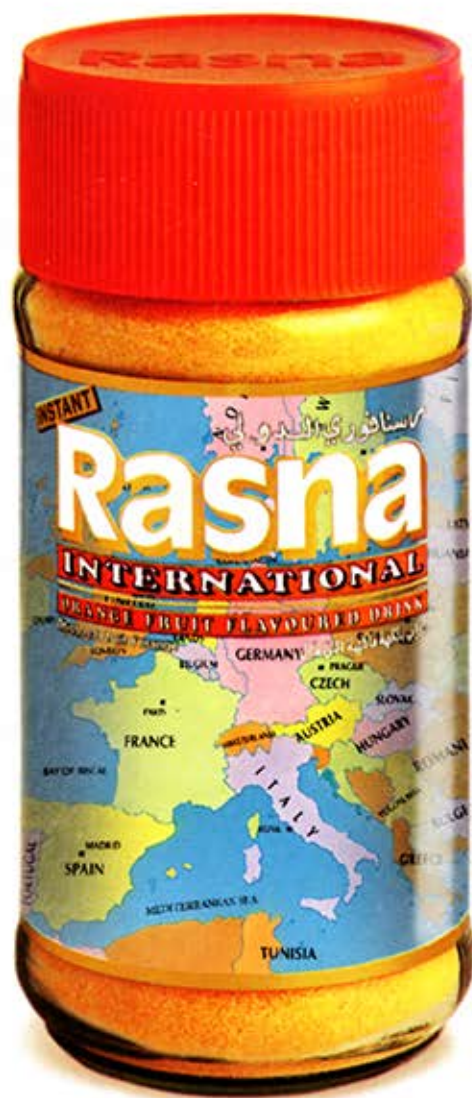
was devoted to their dog Snoopy who always demanded — and got — his share of attention.

At the condolence meeting convened by the Congress (I) - RPI election campaign committee 1999 on November 1, 1999 a number of emotionally affected persons of slender means saluted Patrawala's portrait as they had done his inert body, as informed surgeon Dr Sam Mahaluxmiwala. Paying a "humble tribute" on behalf of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) and himself, BPCC president Murli Deora quoted Carl Sandburg's tribute to Abraham Lincoln: "The height of a tree is best measured when it is fallen."

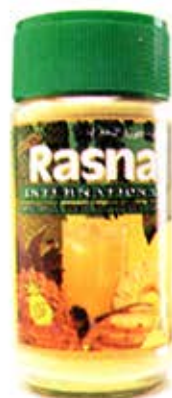
There were calls to Dinaz to stand for election in her husband's place. Initially undecided, she admitted, "My heart bleeds for these people in the *zoppadpatis* (slums). If I can get a tap into their homes, at least they can go to the bathroom and not expose themselves."

In the words of MPCC treasurer Vijay Kalantri, as quoted by ADC, "A young leader whose services were crucial in building up the city of (Bombay) and the state of Maharashtra has left us at a time when his services were most required."

Dinaz says Kaarl is willing to share his mother with the people of Bombay, even as he had shared his father. Denied the Congress ticket, Dinaz Patrawala opted to stand as a Shiv Sena candidate — and won.



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