

Parsiānā

APRIL 2000 Rs 35



*Rustam Gagrāt
The Legal Centenarian*

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Where movement is a science

Parsiana

April 2000
Volume 22 Number 9

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Parsiana is edited and published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, A-191, Road No 16A, MIDC, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thana (W), 400604. Processing Comart Lithographers and Scana Color (India) Ltd. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0971-3786. Phone: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541. For editorial enquiries: 2078183. E-mail: parvo@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in Parsiana@yahoo.com For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. Phone: 2665661, 2662709. Fax: 2074541, 2075572.

Annual inland subscription for one year (11 issues) Rs 350; for two years (22 issues) Rs 675; for three years (33 issues) Rs 1,000. Foreign subscription rates: Seamount for one year Rs 600/US \$ 15/UK £ 9/Euro 15; for two years Rs 1,150/US \$ 28/UK £ 17/Euro 28; for three years Rs 1,675/US \$ 40/UK £ 25/Euro 40 (please allow six months or more for seamount delivery from the time of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 875/US \$ 21/UK £ 13/Euro 21; for two years Rs 1,650/US \$ 40/UK £ 25/Euro 40; for three years Rs 2,475/US \$ 60/UK £ 37/Euro 60. For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 20 for bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5; for UK cheques add £ 3; for Euro cheques add Euro 5. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana.



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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"The Kuppawalla..."

In the article "The Kuppawalla Connection" (*Parsiana*, January 2000) there is reference to the pulleys — *kuppa* — made by my paternal grandmother's forefathers whence they derived their surname. As stated therein, in the early 19th century Shapoorjee Sorabjee and Company delivered pulleys for the Royal Navy ships then being built in the Naval Dockyards by masterbuilder Jamsetjee Bomanjee Wadia and others. The photograph of the pulley in the rigging of *H.M.S. Trincomalee* shows how they were used on a sailing ship in those days. The pulleys fixed to the ropes holding up one of the masts are seen clearly.

KERSIT. SATARAWALA
Poona

Pulleys fixed to ship's ropes

A burning need to merge

The community has not seen any tangible progress towards the consolidation of our fires on the basis of the community's needs: maintenance costs, local population and radial distances.

Bharuch, with a population of under 150, has six agiaries; Surat, with about 2,500 has nine agiaries (besides the two atash behrams); Bombay had 44 agiaries (besides four atash behrams). Two more were added in '99 and one in 2000, taking the figure to 47.

The maintenance of our fire-temples is a costly affair. Firewood alone costs Rs 400 per quintal, to say nothing of the other expenses of staffing, civil maintenance, water and taxes.

It is high time that the trustees of the different regional agiaries got together, held a colloquium and discussed the best possible ways to merge some fires. The worshippers' convenience should be of paramount consideration. The physical condition of the structure and the availability of mobeds should be the other two considerations.

In the larger interest of the community the trustees of some of the agiaries should relent and let the fires be merged.

I want to reassure the readers that there is nothing in our scriptures preventing such mergers. Some of the priests, scholars and pseudo-scholars seem to be disinclined towards this proposal for no valid reason. I have researched enough before making this categorical remark.

There is an appalling sickness and quite some poverty among the Parsis. Very bright students aspiring to study abroad have to struggle to find adequate funds. The monies saved through mergers can be utilized towards these three

burning needs of our community. The trustees of such agiaries do not have to surrender their trusts to anyone. They can continue to operate their trusts and use the funds for these three specific purposes. The respective charity commissioners will see the reason behind the different requests and permit them to change the objects of the respective trusts. Let me cite one instance, dating back to 1955.

There was a Hindu trust created with the purpose of distributing one lakh rupees worth of laddoos to the sadhus of a particular sect on Guru Purnima day. The trustees found it impossible to fulfill the object of their trust.

With the permission of the High Court, the original object of the trust was permitted to be altered and the earnings from the corpus were allowed to be used for other socioreligious needs.

B. T. DASTUR

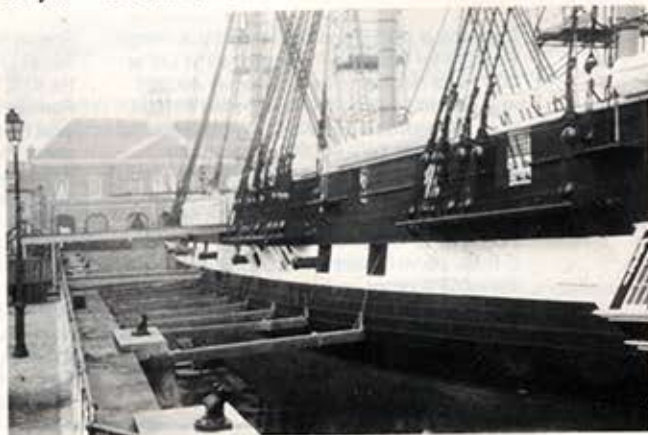
A grave issue

The Parsi community of Bombay has to take a quick and firm decision regarding the Doongerwadi. There are three options before us:

- Continue to use the present arrangement despite mounting criticism from people in the locality, many of them Parsis, about pollution and the danger of epidemics.
- Use the existing crematoria in the city, or the burial grounds in the suburbs or the interior.
- Build a crematorium in the Doongerwadi, for the exclusive use of Parsis, with an architect's design that stresses our faith in the sun, which is confirmed by science. The present method can continue with it side by side.

I expect there are some critics of cremation, and there are some others who are convinced that the present arrangement is unworkable. This may land the Parsi Panchayet in legal consequences.

We have been discussing the matter for the last 25 years and have been unable to agree. We have to find a workable and scientific method of disposal. If we go on postponing the issue for the next 25 years, we may



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find that the law has forced us to abandon the site, go out 100 miles to another one, or build a crematorium on modern scientific lines at the present location.

To those who believe in the sun, as I do, and have faith in fire, its symbol, there is much comfort in consigning our dead to fire — our symbol of power, purity and hope, recognized by the ancients, and by science today.

K. F. RUSTAMJI

Ingenious elections

When announcement for an election is made, the community unnecessarily gets ablaze and a lot of heat is created for nothing at all. Perhaps the community is not aware that they have no role to play in selecting trustees of their choice. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet has devised, over the years, an ingenious scheme which has debarred almost 97 percent of the population from selecting trustees of their own choice. Only a handful of Parsis whose names are listed in the Donors and Anjuman Committee registers numbering about 1,400 are eligible to vote. Past experience shows that between 500-600 only turn up to cast their votes, which means that only about one percent of the total population of Bombay is voting for selection of the Punchayet trustees. Is this acceptable to the community?

Many anjumans/associations, except the Bombay Punchayet, have adopted universal adult franchise and are allowing all their adult members to select trustees of their own choice.

DALI GUNDEVIA

Funds for Frohar Films

It is sad to learn that the TV serial *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshita*, produced by Frohar Films and directed by Cyrus Dastoor which was being screened on DD Metro, had to be discontinued for lack of funds.

The efforts made by the producers, though on a modest scale, should have deserved the support of every Zoroastrian man, woman and child and also of Parsi institutes, big and small, as the serial would have then run for 52 episodes.

The serial, if it had run, would have covered all aspects of the religion in an informative and educative manner, attempting to satisfy the queries of our children and adults, both in Gujarati and in English.

There were to be interesting inter-

views with prominent Parsis, discussions by learned priests and scholars, enactment of pages from Zoroastrian mythology and history.

Unfortunately, for want of financial help, this serial had to be discontinued as the producers could not afford Rs 40,000 for each episode from their own modest resources.

If prestigious organizations and philanthropists extend generous financial support, the serial which is the first of its kind by our community for the community, may be revived.

BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA

Singularly sinful

Sinfulness is something we tend to ascribe to others and not to ourselves: it is the oldest human failing. In the modern world, mass education, the emergence of the collective state, the multiplicity of information supplied by television, all encourage us to see evil in collective terms too. For us, sin is a matter of wrong ideology, or vicious opinions about race, or religious bigotry, or social prejudice. Rarely do we acknowledge the evil in ourselves. Yet it is in us that the seat of corruption lies. We do not see it. The idea of a fallen world is not part of modern culture.

Men and women are regarded as basically good, as possessed of numerous rights which extend so far as the right to a happy existence, and as endowed with considerable personal significance which others ought to respect. This last, which many take for granted and elevate to the level of the sacred when speaking of the sanctity of human life, is a recent concept. For most of human history people were thought of as miserable creatures, corrupt and given to wickedness. They needed the sanction of authority if social order was to be maintained. Modern people, in contrast, are virtually incapable of appreciating self-discipline. Ours is a culture of self-indulgence of the emotions.

People in traditional society knew that human sinfulness was such that without disciplined living there would be moral chaos. And so it is proving to be. Discoveries about the nature of creation are tending to confirm the ancient belief in the insignificance of humanity — an excrescence on the surface of a speck of space debris — just at a time when modern ideology is insisting on the sovereign importance of human life. Human life discloses the dignity of those

Reaching for the Sky



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who are called to transcendence. But human life is borne by individuals who remain inherently sinful and are in relation to Zarathushtra without rights.

What modern society needs is instruction about personal sin. There is plenty of decimation about the large errors of racism, sexism, ecological irresponsibility and all the rest of it — necessary, doubtless, but nonetheless in practice distracting attention from the priority, which should be placed on the individual sinfulness of each of us. Human life is not sacred, and we are not sacred. We are however, the wretched bearers of an extraordinary gift: the promise, which Zarathushtra holds out to those who acknowledge their corruption and ask for His forgiveness. It is such a simple thing. And, if we accept the responsibility of our own sinfulness we shall be much better able to cope with the collective sinfulness of human action in the world. FURHOK K. TANGREE

La Roche-sur-Foron, France

Let's save Bahrot

When we Parsis first landed on the shores of Gujarat about 1,200 years ago, the king of Gujarat permitted us to live peacefully in the province of Sanjan.

When Gujarat was invaded by the victorious Muslims, a small group of Parsis from Sanjan sought refuge in the Bahrot caves nearby. These caves are situated near the town of Dahanu, about 1,100 feet above sea level.

In order to preserve their dear religion and protect their holy fire, these people lived up there in harsh conditions for about 12 years. Legend says that the Parsis had built a long underground tunnel connecting Sanjan miles away with Bahrot using rudimentary tools.

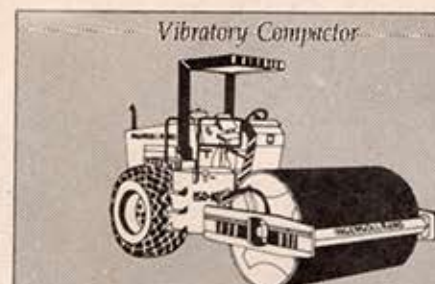
Unfortunately today, these lovely caves are decaying and collapsing. Being a great historical site for us Zoroastrians, although I am only 14 years old I believe it's our duty to preserve and maintain these caves. After all, they had protected us and our holy fire. Nowadays, it's not uncommon to see babas performing black magic in these ancient



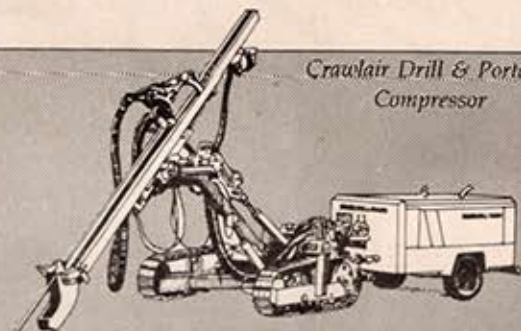
The main cave at Bahrot

caves. Many people also go up there and litter the place without knowing its historical importance. It's really very sad to see all this happen but if we just sit discussing the matter, we will get nowhere. We can organize trips to the Bahrot caves, learn more about them and study their environment. We can also teach the local villagers about Bahrot's importance and request them to give a helping hand if needed. It's only when we take such action that our

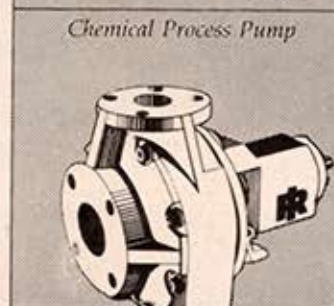
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Events and Personalities

Surat's securities

Under the stewardship of its chairman Dr Sam Bhacca, the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) showed a gross total income of Rs 21,987,686.63 for the year ended March 31, 1999 as per their audited statement of accounts and balance sheet. The expenses borne by the SPP were highest for education, Rs 7,878,240.29, the next in line, Rs 1,618,546.28 for establishment expenses, and with relief of poverty Rs 767,070 and medical expenses Rs 419,194 coming lower down in the priorities.

"It is reported to us by one of the trustees that a fraud has taken place in the xerox department and the amount of liability has not been ascertained. Management is taking necessary steps for the same. No provision for any liability has been provided in the books of account during the year," notes an annexure to the audit report signed by the chartered accountants D. N. Shukla and Company. Also enclosed are the accounts for the different establishments managed by the SPP: Surat Parsi Boys Orphanage and Properties; Nariman Girls Orphanage; Bai P. M. Patel Singanporwala English School; Seth K. H. Alpawala Industrial Institute for Women and Girls; Seth Sorabji Nausarwanji Parukh Polytechnic Institute; Seth R. D. Tarachand Parsi General Hospital; Bai G. N. Mehta Maternity Hospital; Nariman Home and Infirmary; The First Dastur Meherji Rana Trust Fund; The Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust Fund; Sorabji Burjorji Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust.

When comparing the corpus of the different community institutions in Surat, the SPP showed Rs 54,676,785.43 as compared to Rs 48,421,398.48 last year. The lowest corpus of Rs 113,203.37 was

seen in the Parukh Polytechnic. Last year it was the Maternity Hospital which had shown the lowest corpus of Rs 788,228.62.

The immovable properties in the account of the SPP stand at Rs 14,049,839.12, the same as at last year. The Parsi General Hospital continued to show the lowest at Rs 243,518.71, not counting the Alpawala Institute, the Parukh Polytechnic, the Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust, Sorabji B. D. D. Pahlana Trust and the Dastur Meherji Rana Trust which have no immovable properties listed in their assets.

Ahmedabad's assets

As per the trend of the preceding year The Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat once again showed an excess of expenditure against income in their last audited statement of accounts for the year ended March 31, 1998. The excess expenditure of Rs 4,18,846.36 in the year under report included total depreciation of Rs 8,59,684.12 as the Panchayat had constructed new immovable properties and new flats that financial year, notes the report from the joint honorary secretary Fali D. Makhania. Their balance thus stands at Rs 3,696,240.10; with immovable properties in their assets valued at Rs 13,023,060.98, and movable properties at Rs 812,260.26.

From the funds at their disposal, a maximum, Rs 2,17,347 were expended as medical aid, Rs 1,00,170 as financial aid, Rs 75,018 as education aid, Rs 40,150 on gahambar and Rs 38,075 on kathi. Their expenditure on the objects of the trust totalled Rs 929,832.26, establishment expenses Rs 1,049,717.25, and expenses in respect of properties Rs 637,720.60. To enable the Panchayat "to spend more for worthy causes," president K. J. Sheethna seeks further dona-

tions in a letter to *Parsiana*. His co-trustees on the board are T. P. Commissariat and A. P. Khambatta. The Panchayat address is Parsi Agiary, Bukhara Mohalla, Khamasa Gate, Ahmedabad 380001, Tel: 5350439, 5350449.

They have shown income from immovable properties as Rs 1,599,974 and income from other sources as Rs 914,200. Their donations amounted to Rs 103,342 of which the largest sum, Rs 88,691 was for the Kathi Fund, followed by Rs 10,602 for the Medical Fund, Rs 7,000 for the Education Fund, Rs 1,050 for the Roovan Aval Manzil and Rs 500 each for the Foodgrain Fund and the Parsi Dharamshala. At the end of the year the standing balance among their different funds showed the highest sum of Rs 347,989.20 in their Hunnar Udyog Fund with their Khandia Fund at the lowest end indicating but Rs 1,837.50.

"With a view to (instil) a stronger religious fervor in our community (the) Panchayat has maintained low rates for the performance of various religious ceremonies, which are probably the lowest in the country," writes the joint secretary.

ZOSTA's zest

"Twelve years ago, I was one of ZOSTA's (The Zoroastrian Student Teacher Association) 'proud possessions.' I still value the certificate you gave me and the recognition accorded by my community, its teachers and my peers," stated chief guest Dr Nozer Sheriar, recalling the time ZOSTA felicitated him in 1988 for standing first at the MD exam. "You are our pride and promise," he told the students. "Future ZOSTA functions will see many of you giving away prizes to young achievers."

Speaking at ZOSTA's annual prize



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Clockwise from top left: Nozer Sheriar, Nawaz Sanjana, Commissariat, Daroga, Ruby Sheriar, Jasmin Bhathena, Ghadiali, Freny Mehta and Zarir Bhathena; Sheriar honoring Marfatia; Lakdawala (left) and Mehta; Bhathena with Bacha; Gandhi

Photos: Cyrus Shroff



distribution at Patkar Hall on February 28, 2000, Sheriar exhorted the over 200 prizewinners (up from last year's 116) to fly, like the bird in the well-known novel *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, ever higher and faster. The bird aimed for heaven, but heaven is not a place, heaven is being perfect, he said, quoting from the novel. Dispensing encouragement, Sheriar pointed out that Microsoft started in a garage, Azim Premji (chairman of Wipro and reportedly the third richest man in the world) began his working life in the family business selling vegetable oil, so small beginnings do not preclude success. "I had no time" is no excuse for lack of success, he asserted, as Einstein and Newton had the same 24 hours as everyone else! Complimenting the doctor on his achievements, vice chairperson of ZOSTA and Bai Ruttonbai F. D. Panday Girls' High School principal Silloo Commissariat prescribed: "May Dr Sheriar (a reputed gynecologist and obstetrician) deliver hundreds and hundreds of healthy Zoroastrian babies to increase our tribe," to robust applause from the audience!

The meeting observed two minutes' silence in memory of the late Roshen Driver, former principal of the Byramjee

Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution (BJPCI), who had been ZOSTA's chairperson for 14 years. "I miss her familiar figure on the dais," said guest of honor Zarir Bhathena who once again this year donated four 22-carat gold medals in memory of his parents Hillamai and Manchershaw Bhathena. Walking away with the honors with 91.67 percent in the March 1999 HSC examination was Freddy Gandhi, while Farzeena Lakdawala with 92.83 percent and Farhan Mehta with 92.66 percent won the gold medals for the ICSE exam. Tanaz Bacha, a student of the Sett R. J. J. High School in Navsari, secured for herself the gold with 94.71 percent in the SSC exam. "When ZOSTA speaks silver, Bhathenareplies in gold," quipped Commissariat, thanking Bhathena and other donors for their benefactions which enabled ZOSTA to distribute prizes worth Rs 60,000.

Taking over as chairperson of ZOSTA after Driver's sudden demise is Zenobia Daroga, the principal of the Bai B. S. Bengallee Girls' High School. "She has lifted a heavy burden from our shoulders with her ready and timely help," commended Commissariat. ZOSTA also

felicited Diana Marfatia, the "newly born" principal of the BJPCI and the youngest Parsi principal today and, in absentia, Zarine Basla, principal of the Maneckji Cooper Education Trust School for their numerous achievements. The Parsi principals at the helm of so many schools are the "unsung heroes" of our community, noted Gool Ghadiali, ZOSTA committee member and principal of the New Era School. Receiving honors for their long and dedicated service were Bejon Desai, secretary of Boys' Town, Nasik (in absentia), Shirin Choksey of Udyachal Primary School, Rati Wadia of Queen Mary High School and Perin Bagli of Activity High School. At the top of the long line of teachers whose contribution ZOSTA recognizes annually were Kaikhusru Daruwalla and Ervad Ratanshaw Motafaram of the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute with 60 and 45 years of service respectively!

Heading the list of 'rare achievements' awardees was Zenobia Bardi who stood first at the exams conducted by the Delhi-based National Council of Hotel Management at 18 centers all over India. Doing her BA from the Institute of Distance Education simultaneously

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with her hotel management, Bardi won a silver medal from ZOSTA for that as well! "I feel very honored receiving this recognition in front of my own people," she told *Parsiana*. "Community conscious" Jehangir Bhada, a 'veteran' of numerous youth congresses, received a 'rare achievement' award for his 75.10 percent in the MSc exam. He does not normally set much store by medals or awards, he said to *Parsiana*, but the ZOSTA gathering is a good "inspirational" meeting ground. "Yes, Sheriar's speech really did inspire me," endorsed Gandhi. "There are not too many seniors around who provide the right guidance."

In addition to its numerous other activities, to spark an interest in the Gujarati language ZOSTA has for the past two years been conducting Gujarati classes on Saturday mornings at Girton High School under the auspices of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, with expenses including free books and snacks being sponsored by a benevolent well-wisher.

Hilla P. Guzder

Acclaim and award

For her "lifelong work in literature and education," 85-year-old Piloo Jungalwalla of Delhi was rewarded with the Padma Shri announced by the Government of India at the last Republic Day on January 26, 2000. She was to be felicitated by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman on February 20, she wrote in a letter to *Parsiana*.

In the last week of March, she was invited to London for the release of her English translation, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* at Zoroastrian House at the hands of Dr Almut Hintz, Zarathosty



Jungalwalla: rare contribution

Brothers fellowship holder at the School of Oriental and African Studies. The book has already been released in India (see "Gathas that bridge," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, January 2000).

Among the other publications to Jungalwalla's credit, some of which are under her maiden name Nanavutty, are *The Parsis*, a series on *Our Religion*, *Fravaran*, *Our Sacred Calendar*, *Songs of Zarathushtra* in collaboration with the late Dastur Framroze Bode. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, S. E. Asia

Nagporewalla (left) receiving the 'Best Teacher' award from Rane

Region, which will be out in its new edition in June 2000 carries an update on Zoroastrianism by Jungalwalla, notes her curriculum vitae.

In the mid 1930s and 1940s she was engrossed in research work on William Blake and had an occasion to publish her findings in various leading journals. For the first 14 years of her life she was educated at home and after passing her Senior Cambridge examinations she studied at St Margaret's School, London, and the Girton College, Cambridge University, England from where she graduated in English literature, Indian anthropology and archeology. Thereafter she was awarded the MLitt degree and a titular MA degree. For several years she was lecturer at Bombay's Wilson College and was concurrently appointed literacy officer by the Bombay University Senate, according to her bio data.

As principal of Delhi's Janki Devi College, she was instrumental in raising the standards and reputation of the institution. During this time she was also the University's representative, the only woman on the 11-member board of directors of the National Council of Educational Research and Training, and elected member in charge, Committee on International Relations of the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations, adds the write-up.

While her husband Dr Nowshir (since deceased), consultant, World Health Organization, accepted assignments in different countries, Piloo also made her mark on foreign soil. In Geneva she was representing the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) at the Human Rights Committee and the Status of Women Commission at the United Nations, according to the write-up. Earlier she had served on the executive board of the AIWC, manning the UN desk. Several are the institutions in India, London and Scotland where she was invited as guest lecturer.

Remarkable educationist

Declared the best teacher for the year 1998-99 by the Government of Maharashtra, Dr Gulestan Behram Nagpore-



walla was presented her award by the then education minister Dattaji Rane at a function at Bombay's Sydenham College on Gandhi Jayanti day, October 2, 1999. The award was in recognition of her services for over 21 years at the S. N. D. T. Women's University where she was head of the department of commerce, postgraduate studies and research, and dean of the faculty of commerce, states a press release.

In fact, at the S. N. D. T. University, Nagporewalla was instrumental in establishing the commerce faculty at the graduate and postgraduate level. For 15 years prior to that she was affiliated with the Bombay University. She was appointed lecturer in statistics/commerce at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics on completing her postgraduation in commerce, which followed a brilliant performance at the BCom examination where she topped the batch of first class students, mentions the press release. The subject of Nagporewalla's PhD thesis was "Evaluation of labor welfare in chemical, textile, pharmaceutical and engineering industries."

Her teaching career started in 1960 as a Dakshina fellow. Later she was awarded the Commonwealth Universities Senior Travelling Fellowship to visit universities in the United Kingdom and Canada where she conducted a study on the examination systems and methods of instruction at these institutions, adds the release.

Naval command

During his career with the Indian Navy spanning almost 29 years, Commodore



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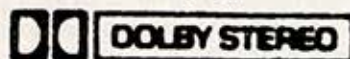
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Aspi Marker has assumed manifold responsibilities. His most recent appointment was as naval officer-in-charge, Gujarat, with his base in Porbunder, according to a brief profile.

Marker's tenure as directing staff of the National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla, the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and the College of Defence Management, Secunderabad is an achievement "very few armed forces officers have to their credit," notes the write-up. With an MSc in defence studies and yet another masters in management studies, Marker has "always motivated and ably led officers and sailors placed under him."



After fighting in the 1971 Indo-Pak War, he chose

to specialize in navigation and direction. Some of the Indian Navy ships he was deputed to command are *Nipat* and *Nirghat* of the Eastern fleet, *Shakti* and *Khukri* of the Western fleet, and while ashore the *INS Agnibahu* and the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron, his accomplishments are listed.

Marker: motivated officer

Preserving portraits

"It was a beautiful old portrait in Rustom Jejeebhoy's office that set me thinking," says Khorshed Gandhi of Gallery Chemould. The agaries and atash behrams, private homes, Parsi institutions have so many lovely pictorial pieces of heritage, often lying dusty and decrepit, she elaborates, which should rightly be preserved. And so in the latter half of '99, a committee of like-minded individuals got together to launch "Portrait of a Community" — an independent project conceived by Gallery Chemould under the aegis of the Chemould Publications and Arts Trust.

"Ours will be more than just an exhibition of restored portraits," points out Gandhi. On the committee under the chairmanship of Gandhi are Bachi Karkaria, Burjor Poonawala, Cyrus Guzder, Homai Modi, Kayan Marshall, Kersi Treasurywala, Mehlii Gobhai, Nancy Adajania, Pheroza Godrej, Rustom Jejeebhoy, Sam N. J. Maneckshaw, Saker Mistri and Yazdi Karanjia of Surat. "We will take help from re-

continued on page 60

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Culture is the key to survival

Cultural awareness can preserve the diasporic communities, believes AZA president Capt Noshir Sachinwalla

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Unless we bring up our children in the proper way, Zoroastrian culture will be lost," says Capt Noshir Sachinwalla, a former shipmaster who is president of the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales (NSW). Without such nurturing Zoroastrian identity would vaporize amid the encompassing host culture as happened in other, earlier Zoroastrian diasporas east and west, he fears.

The issue is particularly important to the Sydney community whose 45-50 children in the 5-13 age group attend Sunday school at the Arbab Rostam and Morvarid Guiv Darbe Meher. They are being taught Gujarati which AZA espouses as its mother tongue. But the Association also hopes to introduce Farsi "to keep them in touch with the original language of the fatherland," says Sachinwalla. And a boost is provided by the Australian government by way of a small grant to preserve ethnic traditions and culture.

On the AZA agenda, vigorously supported by Sachinwalla, is new construction on its spacious AZA House property to provide facilities for the kids. The present hall in the Darbe Meher currently serves as the venue and some classes are held in the open. But, explains Sachinwalla, the hall has been made for sound effects where divisions don't work. And the weather is not always favorable for outdoor classes.

An adjoining building compartmentalized into classes with a 250 seater hall suitable for lectures and/or indoor sports and residential accommodation for a caretaker for the property is envisioned and an extraordinary general meeting of the Association was summoned on April 9, 2000 to seek "consensus and approval" of the project which had been given the initial green signal in August 1998.

With A \$ 50,000 in the kitty as against a project estimate of A \$ 300,000, the resource crunch is formidable. Added to that is the need for speed. Unless the project begins before July 1 this year, the bill will rise by an additional A \$ 30,000 as the new Australian 10 percent goods and services tax will come into force. Sachinwalla, a member of the building and fund-raising committees, was feeling his way around Zoroastrian organizations and industrialists willing to support the project while he was in Bombay following the meeting of the regions to discuss the world body in January 2000. But if the local community is serious, it must lead the way by endorsing the project with contributions, he maintains.

Another requirement in Sydney is land for burial for which there is no community provision thus far. Cremation is the cheaper alternative and Sachinwalla notes that a consensus has emerged for the provision of a burial/memorial park on another site in the near future, "not in the same premises as the Darbe Meher."

Into his second two-year stint as president of AZA, Sachinwalla had been asked "to keep Zoroastrian culture going" when he had initially joined the managing committee of the Association in the mid 1970s. It remains his preoccupation. "For the Zoroastrian community to survive in Australia, it needs a place like Cusrow Baug with an agiary," he says, referring to the tremendous advantages of the arrangement as the younger generation would meet more often leading to marriages within the community, it would be easier to look after the older generation in the neighborhood and there would be more time and opportunity to participate in social and cultural activities. "A bride and groom coming from

overseas into a completely different cultural environment would get support, information and encouragement to cope," he adds. The project would be feasible if some "Zoroastrian entrepreneurs get together to buy a big plot and use the Australian system of ownership housing," states Sachinwalla.

"Zoroastrian culture is not the monopoly of the Parsi community," avers Sachinwalla. "The message of the *Gathas* and other scriptures is for the people of the world, not for Parsis only... Zoroastrianism is a progressive culture. We have survived because we have adapted certain things from other cultures without compromising ours," he maintains. Accordingly, he believes that spouses from other communities should be encouraged if they wish to follow Zoroastrian culture.

During his first term as president there was a controversy in the managing committee about installing a gifted portrait of Zarathushtra painted in the German style along with the traditional presentation. It was claimed that Zarathushti children would be bewildered by such an alien presentation. To settle the issue, Sachinwalla called a referendum of the community. The vote was in favor of both portraits being enshrined. A similar controversy about which calendar to follow had also been settled by a referendum with the AZA general body voting for the Fasli calendar (starting March 21). Since then all gahambars etc are celebrated in the Darbe Meher according to the Fasli reckoning.

Efforts to form a federation of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Hongkong have not fructified so far, informs Sachinwalla. A group of six worked hard with other members to prepare a constitution, he narrates. It was revised four times, but the purported members have not confirmed acceptance nor given their comments, he rues. His conjecture is that the asso-



Sachinwalla: expanding Sunday school

ciations are "suspicious of each other for unknown reasons."

Commenting on the three-day deliberations on the formation of a world body, the bluff seaman is willing to "look at the other point of view," but is emphatic that you must "also express your own clearly. (There should be) no false diplomacy when you want to establish a certain principle." At a meeting at Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Jamshed Guzder's office that continued till 10 p.m. on the second day, he says he "told him we want one world body, not two." He was displeased that "the WZO delegates insisted they had no authority to deal with us. (If so) they were wasting our time... In future if the WZO wants to deal with the world body they should send principal officers."

The Karachi born, *Dufferin* trained Sachinwalla was a master on the Scindia ships before he opted to serve as harbor pilot, initially at Karachi, then in Ghana and finally in Singapore. In Australia he worked as a tug boat captain in the dredging section. With his late wife Helga, a Scandinavian lady (his mother called her Homai) who wholeheartedly accepted the Zoroastrian way of life, he took his family of four children for a two month trip to Iran, tape recorder and movie camera in hand, to record "how the Zoroastrian community functions" in Tehran, Kerman, Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazd.

The navjote of the first three children was celebrated in Singapore with Hongkong's Ervad Jal Kooka, Singapore's Ervad Behram Vakil and two mobeds from Bombay officiating. "I invited the heads of all the religious groups in Singapore because I wanted them to know that Zoroastrian culture was alive." The fourth navjote was performed by Ervad Peshotan Katrak in Sydney and Sachinwalla made sure that non-Zoroastrians saw it "in the authentic way." Afterwards people said it was not authentic because it was not done in India, he laughs, disregarding the criticism "because navjote is a matter of satisfaction to the initiate and the parents, not the community." Among the Sachinwalla children school teacher Hutoxy, who taught Sunday school for 10 years, and radiologist Toos are married to non-Zoroastrians. The latter has two offspring. Electronics engineer Caevan is married to a Zoroastrian and they have three children. Ruxana owns her own drama company where she produces and directs skits, plays, etc.

Having retired from the sea, Sachinwalla describes himself as a hypno-therapist and dowser (one who devines underground water) and consults on energy clearing. There are two types of energy, he says. "Electro-magnetic energy because of gadgets in the home affects the human brain by slowing it down, (resulting in) tiredness and fatigue in the morning." The second type is "earth energy. (If there are) black water veins under the house, (they lead to) various sicknesses and cancers." If caught in the early stages and shifted away from sleeping directly above such water veins, the patients recover, he claims. According to Sachinwalla much research in this direction is being conducted in Germany, Britain and the US. He states he has been studying it for seven to eight years and still learning, though he is vice president of the Dowser Society of NSW which was established one-and-a-half years ago. A non-commercial profession based on personal integrity and integrity of the society, he says they do not advertise.

"I like to get things moving," says Sachinwalla. "I want to serve my community to the best of my ability. If my community does not wish it, I'm willing to move away. I don't want to impose myself."

A farewell to Ron

When Prof Rointan F. Bunshah lost his gallant fight against leukemia on October 24, 1999 colleagues, friends and former students joined the bereaved family in eulogizing his long and varied service to education in general and to the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in particular. Cremated after the geh sarna by Ervad Zarir Bhandara and the deceased's brother Keki Bunshah, his ashes were bequeathed to the Pacific Ocean on whose shores he had lived, as per his wishes.

Seventy-one-year-old Bunshah's research on vacuum metallurgy and coatings was internationally recognized. During his 30 years as professor at UCLA's School of Engineering and Applied Science Bunshah's dedication to departmental, school and campus services, teaching and research had earned him the Distinguished Teaching Award of the School of Engineering in 1971, informs a press release. An authority on metals and alloys with significant contributions to the deposition technologies encountered in semiconductors, ceram-

ics, diamond coatings, etc. his prolific research resulted in 280 publications and the editorship of numerous books, notes the write-up from UCLA.

A former president and honorary life member of the American Vacuum Society (AVS), he was co-founder and first chairman of their Vacuum Metallurgy Division (VMD) in 1960. In 1983 the VMD-AVS established the R. F. Bunshah Award and Medal for the best paper published annually.

At the memorial meet at the UCLA Faculty Center tributes were led by Frank



*Bunshah:
honored teacher*

Wazzan, dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science, Jenn-Ming Yang, vice-chair UCLA, former adjunct professor Dr Morris Steinberg, one of Bunshah's many former PhD students Dr James Parsons and UCLA

associate dean J. D. Mackenzie. They recounted the many professional plaudits that had come the way of Bombay-born, Benaras Hindu University (BHU) graduate and Carnegie Institute of Technology doctorate Bunshah through a crowded life which included the organizing of numerous national and international conferences.

Through it all Bunshah had represented the BHU in cricket, was an active tennis player and a highly gifted violinist, playing with the Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra (1969-77). An active member of the Zarathushtrian Assembly (ZA) from its inception, Bunshah never missed a function, whether it was Navroz, Asho Zarathushtra's birthday, Sadeh, gahambars or religious classes and remained one of the Assembly's teachers until his illness got the upper hand, attested ZA founder-director Dr Ali Jafarey, recalling Bunshah's aptitude for Parsi cookery which added to the flavor of potlucks at the Assembly.

Omar Khayyam's poetry in the original Persian as well as the English translation, accompanied by Iranian stringed instruments, was recited by Zhila Jalali, Farzad Firouzabadi and Bunshah's step-son Mohammed Tangestani along with recitations from the *Gathas* in English.

Bunshah is survived by his wife Zoreh.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

Fertile fortune

A hundred years after Ardeshir Irani planted the first chikoo saplings in Gholwad, his family celebrate the success of his orchards

Lyla Nicholson

Our story goes back to the year 1900 when a big dream took shape on a small plot of land in the village of Gholwad in Maharashtra. Christened *Bague-Eram*, Persian for 'Garden of Paradise,' the farm was pioneered by my great-great-grandfather Ardeshir Irani who set up the very first chikoo and papayas (grape-fruit) orchard in India, giving birth to what is now the most fertile chikoo belt this side of the Atlantic. Today it is with great pride that my family celebrates the centenary of the farm where a flourishing industry first took root.

Ardeshir was a second-generation Zoroastrian Iranian born in Bombay in 1856 to parents who had fled Iran, like many others, to escape oppression under Muslim rule. He began life as a mill worker in his mid-teens. It was only years later that his destiny took a different turn when his sister Shirinbai introduced him to Sir Dinshaw Maneckji Petit who had a plethora of exotic plants cultivated in his garden at Nana Chowk. Among these was the chikoo sapling, a

South American native alien to India. Ardeshir soon became indispensable to the Petit household in his new role as estate manager.

In 1896 Petit gave Ardeshir the task of selecting a two-acre plot along the railway line anywhere between Palghar and Daman for the construction of a Parsi sanatorium. Ardeshir chose Gholwad for its untouched coastal beauty as well as proximity by rail. On successful completion of the Parsi sanatorium, Petit gifted Ardeshir the extra building materials for a bungalow of his own in the same area, and it was this mission that brought Ardeshir to the birthplace of his calling.

It is said that prayer may be you talking to God, but intuition is God talking to you. Ardeshir followed his intuition and left Bombay with some chikoo saplings. He set up a small chikoo garden on his modest one-acre plot around the bungalow and in due course was able to purchase eight more acres in the same area. Thus from a handful of saplings, a flush orchard was born. Many of his fellow Iranians who were forced

to flee their farmlands took chikoo saplings from Ardeshir. From the rich plains of Persia to the dark soil of the Deccan, they carried with them an inborn understanding of fruits and the earth, and farms spread like wildfire over a thousand acres, all the way from Palghar to Umargaon.

Ardeshir worked into his mid 80s, passing away in 1939, survived by his only son Homi and his wife Jaloobai, who also toiled till the age of 90 in the chikoo gardens. Homi's son Keki, then a small boy, recalls

his grandfather well. He speaks of how Ardeshir used to wipe each leaf of his precious saplings with his handkerchief and whisper lovingly to each tree, a practice unheard of and scoffed at in those days. Today it has been scientifically proven that talking to trees encourages their growth and fertility. Once again, Ardeshir was way ahead of his time, and little did he know it! Today my grandfather Keki is also aged 80, as he continues to live on the farm with his wife Kitty, my grandmother. Three generations dedicated to a farm that grew on love, fresh air and, of course, the chikoo.



Chikoo pioneer Irani (above); the American native in India (top)
Photo: Varghese Fernandez and the family residence Bague-Eram (alongside)



I have seen my grandfather Keki brood over those trees, tending to their diet and well-being just as his grandfather Ardeshir had done. As the sap flows from the branch to the fruit, the secrets of tending these redwoods trickled down from generation to generation. Many a sleepless night was spent pacing up and down the bungalow, fretting over approaching storms. Trips to see the grandchildren were cancelled when his trees needed him more. Ardeshir barely enjoyed the rewards of his labor, enduring years of hardship before the trees gave fruit. My grandfather Keki had the privi-

lege of seeing the magic unfold, watching the saplings grow as he grew. The years have gone by. They have aged together. Gracefully. Symbiotically. The trees are nearly a century old, towering majestically above all other orchards in Gholwad where their saplings continue to bear fruit in reckless bounty.

The papanas grove, planted and replanted by Ardeshir and Homi, with Keki in tow, is now cleared for the tired soil to rest a few years. The chikoo trees have passed their prime, the annual crop is declining. The storms have taken their toll, the fallen branches have returned to

the earth that nourished them, but the saplings Ardeshir first planted around the bungalow still stand strong. And the fruit tastes sweeter and sweeter with each passing year. Give me a hundred to taste at the Bombay market, and I'll pick out the fruits of *Bague-Eram* from the others. Because I can taste the efforts of four generations in every slice.

Change is inevitable. Over five generations, life has taken a different turn. My grandparents Keki and Kitty have three children, but the family has scattered all over the globe, with fourth and fifth generation children settled in New York, Australia and New Zealand.

As we all come together to celebrate *Bague-Eram's* centennial year, we look forward to many successes ahead and thank Ardeshir in our prayers for his service to family and community. Hundreds of once destitute Zoroastrians have reaped from the seeds that Ardeshir sowed unselfishly way back in 1900. Seeds he sowed without the slightest intention of personal gain, but with the hope that those who came after him would prosper. And today, by the grace of God, *Bague-Eram* stands for 100 years of fertility and prosperity.

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The tussle for trusteeship

Candidates, trustees and press people all participated in a keenly contested election campaign marred by muckraking

Text and photographs: Arnavaz S. Mama

The first Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship election of the 21st century was a fight to the finish. Of the 855 votes cast at the Khareghat Colony's Muncherji Khareghat Hall on March 11, 2000 sitting trustee Silloo Kavarana bagged 429, beating challenger Zarir Bhathena's 406 by barely 23 votes. Unhappily, it reversed the trend for clean campaigning of the past five elections with strident attacks and counter attacks in the Parsi Press. Indeed, prominent members of *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly's* editorial team and the editor of the fortnightly newsletter *Parsidom* were actively involved in trading charges.

The pitch was queered because Kavarana, 80, a much loved and respected social worker, had earlier conveyed the impression that she would opt for retirement, then changed her mind and decided to recontest. In the meantime reputed chartered accountant and joint honorary secretary of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) Bhathena, 49, who also has a stake in his family firm, Hilla Builders, had announced his nomination.

To an extent this looked like a reenactment of the 1995 scenario when BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder had reversed his original decision to retire and opted for reelection. On that occasion World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust's managing trustee Dinshaw Tamboly, who had already declared his desire to seek BPP trusteeship, withdrew, stating that he respected Guzder too much to challenge him. Tamboly's restraint had earned him plaudits from the Press and public alike.

Unlike Tamboly, however, Bhathena decided to continue with the contest which was also joined by Ervad Yezdi Panthaki, president of the Godrej Baug Residents' Association and Dara Kadva, editor and publisher of *Parsidom*, earning nine and two votes respectively.

(Nine votes were invalid.)

Serving on the managing committee of the PGH for the past 15 years, the last five as joint honorary secretary, Bhathena has also been associated with educational institutions through ZOSTA, the Zoroastrian Student Teacher Association. With quiet concern for the community reflected in individual acts of service and charity, Bhathena had been proposed by Scylla Vatcha, trustee of the Maneckbai Jeejeebhoy Charitable Trust, amongst the richest and most active donor trusts in Bombay today and seconded by Pesi Jagus, a retired ACC director who has been a long-time member of the PGH managing committee. Bhathena's candidature was supported by doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, educationists, dasturs (Dr) Firoze Kotwal and Kaikobad Dastoor of Udvarda, industrialist Aspi Balsara as well as the Khareghat Colony and Aderbad Group. He was also the obvious favorite of the *Jamé* with associate editor Noshir Dadrawala and columnist Ruby Lilaowala campaigning with him at some of his election addresses, notably at Lalbaug and Godrej Baug.

Kavarana's supporters were largely her CER (Committee for Economic Revival) colleagues, fellow social workers and beneficiaries of her kindness and concern. Legal luminary Nani Palkhivala had also endorsed her candidacy: "Thank God she has more stamina and greater will power than persons many years younger to her — but above all, she cares and makes all her time available to those who are in need..." Substantially involved was noted businessman Khushroo Byramjee (who is Bhathena's colleague on the PGH and Zoroastrian Bank boards). Businessman Zal Contractor conveyed his support by way of a long letter in the *Jamé* berating Bhathena. Kavarana also enjoyed the covert support of several sitting trust-

ees. She was compared to Florence Nightingale and Mother Teresa. P&O's Capt Jimmy Sarbh referred to her as "a *faresta* (angel) personified."

While Kavarana has been universally respected for her single-minded devotion to the cause of ameliorating suffering whenever she encounters it, she has been perceived by her critics as a simple person open to manipulation. That she sought reelection for seven years at the age of 80 made people pause, especially when a suitably qualified younger man was offering himself for community service. "Personally I am of the view that our community leaders should, after a maximum of 70 years of age, voluntarily relinquish office paving the way for other capable aspirants," wrote consumer activist and unsuccessful trusteeship candidate in the 1993 polls Phiroze Amroliwalla in *Jamé* (March 5, 2000). Much the same message was conveyed in a letter from *Jamé* reader Gev Bharucha.

The usual apprehensions regarding a professional man's ability to spare time for Punchayet work were voiced regarding Bhathena which he had anticipated in his manifesto: "My professional training has taught me the value of time management. It is not how much one devotes but, it is rather how much does one achieve in qualitative impact. Also I personally believe that a trustee who is all over the place at all times may be popular, but often not effective."

No sooner had Bhathena announced his candidature than Kadva, in attempts to belittle Bhathena, attacked the PGH and its managing committee, tarring that august institution with numerous allegations in his newsletter. *Parsidom* also questioned Bhathena's professional ethics and the involvement of Hilla Builders in various deals.

In its issue of February 29, *Parsidom* asked the voters to decide "if they re-



spect seniority, veteran status, selfless service and proven track record of Silloo Kavarana or opt for an amateurish upstart like Zarir Bhathena who — like his ilk in the rest of the country — believes that money is all that counts in life. Money buys votes, money buys Press, money buys journalists and columnists (not all anyway) and money can be used

to amass more money through any means...

"We know who and what Kavarana is, and therefore we know in advance what benefit we will get from her continuance as the only lady trustee of the BPP."

Such continuing support for Kavarana from one who claimed to be a contes-

Clockwise from top left (L to R): Kavarana and Guzder; Rusi Dhondy, Wania and Bhathena; Farrokh Kavarana (rear), Panthaki and supporters; Hector Mehta, Dina Golwalla, Dinshaw Mehta and Byramjee; ailing voter helped by social workers; Kadva and Phiroze Bookbinder



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L to R (top) Kavarana with Freddie Mehta and Pheroze Bugwadia; Bhatthena and Ardeshtir Vazifdar. (Below) Bhatthena pavilion and social workers outside BPP stall, Mahakurshid Byramjee (extreme left), Thrity Taleyarkhan (sari), Silloo Engineer (glares) and Arnavaz Mistry (standing)

tant, particularly the statement that copies of the January 15 issue of *Parsidom* were mailed to all Anjuman Committee (AC) members, drew flak from the *Jamé*: "Where did the money come from to print and post 1,600 additional copies which is more than double the regular print order? The same editor has been publicly grieving time and again about the lack of regular advertising support... The genius of the BPP's omnipresent trustee popularly known as 'Millennium Magician' is there for all to see, and has his signature written all over the newsletter (February 20)." A week earlier the *Weekly's* "political correspondent" asked, "Is the BPP really such a gold

mine for vested interests that they will stoop to any level to see that the BPP board remains a closed club where only pliable individuals become and remain trustees in perpetuity?"

In the *Jamé* of February 13 chartered accountant Hoshang Wania, a Bhatthena supporter, raised the bogey of AC members who had died but whose names continue on the registers, open for impersonation. Harking back to the 1993 election of Kavarana when he had also been a contender, Wania wrote, "nearly a hundred Parsis who were dead and gone...managed to cast their votes!" In the same letter Wania noted, "It is sad that Zarir is forced into a contest with a lady (presently a sitting trustee) who had earlier told him that she was not interested in continuing for a second term. In fact Zarir asserts that he announced his name for the proposed candidature only after checking with the lady (through Byramjee) if she was interested. Of course, she may deny it." Wania goes on to explain that he had had

a similar experience in 1993.

Terming Wania's allegations, made after seven years, "highly unethical" BPP chief executive Behram Dastur noted that Wania had then "submitted a list of voters who, according to him, were dead... Imagine our surprise when these so-called dead voters came to vote. After a proper scrutiny by the independent president and scrutineers of the elections, they were allowed to vote." As a final squelch Dastur added, "...it is pertinent to note that in the 1993 elections Kavarana secured 624 votes as against Wania's 337 votes and hence these allegations hardly matter (*Jamé*, February 20, 2000)." Nonetheless Wania urged the BPP to demand photo identification from every voter by way of passport, driving licence, club card, etc.

After accusing Wania of alleging that Kavarana had indulged "in impersonation and bogus voting" in 1993, M. F. Spencer (whom the *Jamé* later dubbed a ghost writer) noted, "At one time she (Kavarana) did consider not standing in

favor of Khushrooh Byramjee but when he declined for personal reasons, she decided to stand again for a second term...

"Wania has recently been appointed as joint auditor of the PGH by Bhathena... Perhaps this was Wania's way of saying 'thank you' to Zarir by attacking and maligning his opponent... (February 20, 2000)."

A pained Bhathena noted in *Jamé* (February 27) "I do not know the person who is writing articles under the name of 'political correspondent.' I have not told Hoshang Wania to write any article in *Jamé*... Previously M/s Dalal, Desai and Kumana were the joint auditors of the Hospital for the last many years. One month before the AGM M/s Dalal, Desai and Kumana had expressed their unwillingness to continue... Since Wania (previously a partner in M/s Dalal, Desai and Kumana) was handling the audit of the Hospital, the committee thought it fit to appoint Wania as honorary joint auditor of the Hospital and the said appointment was approved in the AGM. The said appointment was proposed by Khushrooh Byramjee and seconded by Pesi D. Baria... The Hospital pays a paltry sum of Rs 10,000 as honorarium for the whole year's audit fees..."

In the same letter Bhathena noted, "One day before the announcement of my candidature (in November 1999) I asked Khushrooh Byramjee since Kavarana was not contactable, as to whether (she) was standing for reelection, and he replied... 'I have asked Silla aunty and she says that she is not interested for reelection.' And he told me to go ahead and announce my name as a prospective candidate." A month later rumors led Bhathena to seek a second clarification from Byramjee and was told that Kavarana "has not made up her mind..." Bhathena continued, "Kavarana is going around telling everybody that 'Even after Zarir announced his candidature we have met at several social functions and there also Zarir did not ask me whether I was going to stand for reelection or not'... I have no reason to doubt Khushrooh's words as, knowing him since the last two years I find him to be an honest person with integrity and therefore I did not ask Kavarana in

public." Bhathena urged Byramjee to clarify the situation "because it is a question of prestige as to whether Zarir is speaking the truth or is lying."

Confirming what Bhathena had stated regarding Kavarana's earlier decision not to stand for reelection Byramjee added, "a lot of us hoped that some lady would come forward who could fill Kavarana's shoes and ensure that there will be at least one lady trustee who would act as a spokesperson for the



H. Modi, Mehli Kolah, onlooker, Hormuzdiar and Bhungara tallying the figures

ladies of our community. It was only when no person of any caliber came forward that several of her friends and well-wishers prevailed upon her to seek another term and in about December 1999, a full three months before the election, she agreed and made her candidature known...

"In any case I do not think that anyone should base a decision to stand for election for serving the community on the basis of who his opponent is going to be (*Jamé*, March 5)."

Questioned *Jamé* reader Jamsheed F. Mehta on March 5, "If Khushrooh Byramjee had filed his candidature, you (Kavarana) would have not contested and then what would have happened to all the great social work that you want to continue to do as a trustee of BPP?"

Another *Jamé* reader Rohinton C. Padder accused Kavarana of "abdication of authority" because she had opted out of serving on the Wadia Baug's management committee (where the three seniormost BPP trustees join three members of the N. N. and R. N. Wadia Trust) in favor of co-trustee Dinshaw Mehta (March 5, 2000).

Kavarana's sternest critic had been *Jamé* columnist Ruby Lilaowala, questioning Kavarana's claims made in her statement (*Jamé*, March 5) and for the fact that Kavarana failed to honor the invitation of the Godrej Baug and Khareghat Colony residents when these two organizations had invited all the candidates to present their views. In both cases the lady had sent a letter excusing herself on the basis of a prior commitment. Wrote Lilaowala, "It is an open secret that Kavarana's self-appointed advisors have told her not to go to meetings or face voters because they know very well that she would stand completely exposed as their 'rubber-stamp.' Though an excellent social worker, she has no leadership qualities, has done nothing worthwhile in BPP in the last seven years and understands nothing that's going on behind the scenes... Kavarana's only

fault seems to be that (she) allows herself to be easily manipulated (*Jamé*, February 27)."

It turned out to be a case of overkill. Several ailing people came to cast their vote, among them a young lady on dialysis who seemed determined to repay some of Kavarana's kindness. As in the past, a fleet of cars were on standby to fetch and return aged voters from and to their homes. Elderly donor voters routinely receive phone calls from candidates at election time offering transport, though on this occasion traffic jams on Pedder Road substantially delayed transit. But Pesi Shroff (87) had come from Poona "for the sake of Silloo Kavarana (because) the old lady is working very hard."

Even so, of the 1,457 effective voters of the AC, 307 donors and 547 elected members cast their ballots and 92 duplicate certificates had been issued by the BPP staff.

The suspense was palpable as the votes were separated by the eight-member team consisting of senior BPP staff together with independent scrutineers Homai Modi and Russey Bhungara in the Khareghat Hall in the presence of the candidates and their representatives and under the eagle eye of election president

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The return of Kavarana

Silloo Kavarana's long years of social work won her a second term on the BPP board

Arnavaz S. Mama

Like Winston Churchill, Britain's doughty wartime prime minister, she fought an election at the age of 80 — and won. Despite her frail, white-robed person, Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Silloo Kavarana illustrates the belief that Parsi women are strong and will not easily take 'no' for an answer.

A lifetime of social service has earned Kavarana her position as materfamilias of the Parsi community — a mantle once possessed by the late Lady Hirabai Cowasji Jehangir. She is a trustee of the Sir Ratan Tata Institute (RTI), a committee member of the Red Cross Society, the leader of the group that ensures the welfare of patients at the J. J. Hospital's Parsi Ward and a committee member of the F. D. Petit Parsi Sanatorium. Did she really need to be a member of the BPP board of trustees to continue what she has been doing?

"Authority is really needed," affirms Kavarana, referring to her experience at Doongerwadi in 1984: "(Dr) Nelie (Noble) used to look after the Doongerwadi garden. When she retired (as BPP trustee) I wanted to take it up," but the workmen were reluctant to take instructions from her. Not that she would have abandoned her work if the electoral mandate had been denied to her. "I would have continued with the BPP committees even if I was not elected," she says, her serenity unaffected by the prospect.

"It was the first article in the *Jamé* regarding Zarir (Bhathena) that made me enter the contest," she says. It made her decide to "go and prove" whether she was untruthful or they. She is also riled that BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder was attacked in the politicking. "I went on my own. Why did they bring Guzder

into it? The contest was between Zarir and me! Guzder is the only living sethna," she adds.

Unhappy at the "character assassination" during the election campaign, Kavarana says she advised her supporters,



Kavarana: doughty and strong-willed

Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

"keep up your dignity, don't answer." Disclaiming any connection with *Parsidom* editor-publisher Dara Kadva's strident attacks on the B. D. Petit Parsi General Hospital (PGH) and its managing committee, Kavarana expressed her belief that they stemmed from "his problem with the Hospital and (trusteeship candidate Zarir) Bhathena." Referring to an earlier *Parsidom* article on the RTI by way of illustration, Kavarana recalls having advised Kadva "to make sure before writing," because even on that occasion he had "written before consulting us."

Kadva, who had also announced his candidacy, had at one stage declared that he would withdraw. "I told him, 'if you withdraw I'll also withdraw.' (If he withdraws) it looks bad on my part. People would accuse me of playing politics which I didn't want to do."

Involved, as all seven trustees are, in the allotment of BPP flats, Kavarana says she has taken it upon herself to visit the homes of provisional allottees to ensure that the allotment is genuinely required. Apart from that she works on the Punchayet's Doongerwadi, Parukh Dharamshala, Gamadia Boys' Hostel committees as also those overseeing education and social welfare benefits for the community, notes her manifesto.

Much work has been accomplished in recent years at the Doongerwadi — the bunglis have been spruced up with fresh paint and new accessories, the gardens enlivened with new plantings.

Kavarana describes how each of the bunglis was adopted by a committee member e.g. Arnavaz Mistry worked on the Wadia Bungli, Silloo Engineer on Albless and Mahrugh Noble on Hodiwalla; Kersasp Mistry from the Pallonji group of companies provided the paint and the Tata and Carnac nurseries gave dozens of plants; Mithoo Jesia brought in a donation for stained glass at the sagdi.

Crediting the contributions of her co-trustees at Doongerwadi, Kavarana says Dinshaw Tamboly concentrates on dokhma cleaning. The new scheme of volunteer nassessalars in Bombay is Tamboly's contribution, says Kavarana, appreciating his "great interest in doing work."

However, the eviction of the trespassers at Doongerwadi, who had established themselves, in what looked like a hut but later turned out to be a well-furnished abode of two to three rooms, was largely Dinshaw Mehta's contribution, says Kavarana. Rustam Tirandaz had first brought the issue to the community's attention. Armed with a court order, before a stay could be obtained by the respondents, Mehta and Tirandaz went with a truck and physically got their paraphernalia removed. Some payment to mitigate their hardship was paid by Mehta on the spot and the BPP subsequently agreed to pay a compensation of five lakh rupees. "From 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. *kém é chokro doryoch* (this boy was on the move)!"

According to Kavarana, it is thanks to Mehta that three buildings in Panthaky Baug are nearing completion. Because he is the "only one who runs for permissions." He also prevailed upon the Punchayet "(to get) rid of litigation because we were spending lakhs on lawyers while the law is in favor of tenants... He is wrongly blamed... We need funds... according to law (now) *pagdi* (compensation by the incoming tenant to the

outgoing tenant and the landlord is permissible). Everything goes into the BPP coffers by cheque, everything is passed by the board," she notes. Mehta, who is one of the three BPP trustees on the Wadia Baug's board of management, has even convinced Nusli Wadia to compromise with unauthorized tenants in return for donations to the Trust, says Kavarana. She rates Tirandaz's knowledge of developments highly.

Happily building bridges between the Punchayet and underprivileged members of the community since her initial election in 1993, Kavarana makes herself available at the Punchayet office between 3 and 6 p.m. every Thursday. But people are known to contact her even at odd hours of the night when faced with an emergency. When a lady with high blood sugar levels fainted recently, the family panicked and phoned Kavarana whose happy contact with Aban Petit, vice president of the PGH, enabled the patient to be hospitalized "even at midnight."

The J. J. Hospital's Parsi Ward seems to be Kavarana's favorite institution though she doesn't say so. Her conversation however often veers towards those poor inmates whom their families sometimes tend to forget. With accommodation for 33, Kavarana says she transfers chronic cases encumbering the PGH to the J. J. Parsi Ward when vacancies arise. Currently there are two young men, drug addicts, whom Kavarana rescued, one each from the mental hospitals in Poona and Thana. Detoxified in J. J.'s psychiatric ward, they sometimes regress. At the age of 33, the brain of one of them has shrunk, resulting in restricted body movement, informs Kavarana. Though he has a brother and sister in Vancouver who send money for his maintenance, he has no one locally and "people take advantage," notes Kavarana referring to some unprincipled people's nefarious attempt to raise funds in his name. Kavarana only came to know about the venture when a prospective donor decided to double-check on the appeal's authenticity.

The Parsi Ward got a J. J. award as the cleanest in the entire Hospital, Kavarana notes with satisfaction. The social workers and the J. J. Trust that runs the Ward

register their appreciation with gifts to the nursing staff and dhobi. A fallow area on the first floor above the Ward is ideal for an extension but the J. J. Trust and the social workers are looking towards the Hospital for a commitment of 12 more staff members to service the additional patients, says Kavarana. If and when that assurance is received the Trust and the social workers will work toward making it habitable for an increased number of patients.

Kavarana and her group of ladies arrange to take these patients in the Parsi Ward to the atash behram twice a year in the months of Ardibehest and Adar, transporting them in their cars, along with the wheelchairs where required. "Now they want to go to Udvada!" she laughs.

With ample faith in the "power of prayer and *Khodaiji*" Kavarana says she had always counselled her children, "*thorubi bhano* (pray even a little)." Her son Farrokh, a chartered accountant and MBA who is now executive director of TELCO, had been religious-minded since childhood. Her daughter Goolu Austin, a speech therapist settled with her husband Marazban and sons Phiroze, Nowroze and Aashish in Ontario, Canada, became religious after marriage and motherhood and now conducts religion classes in her home and wants her children to marry within the community. Both the Kavarana children were still studying when their father Kaikhushroo died. The framed photograph of her three grown-up grandsons sits prominently in her drawing room.

Content with her family and her work Kavarana says, "I don't keep a grudge. I just forget." When the RTI staff gheraoed her because they had been denied a bonus, she spent two placid hours in "*dookh-sukh ni vaato* (sharing tales of joy and sorrow)," then persuaded the management to accede to a certain percentage for bonus for the staff.

"*Gariboni tau kharekhar laagni che* (the poor have genuine love and appreciation)," says the lady, her eyes misting over as she recalled their good wishes and how some people came to vote for her despite severe illness and/or disability. She felt that her labor of love had been required.

"Everything goes into the BPP coffers by cheque, everything is passed by the board"



With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

"Never touch any institution"

The attacks on the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital were out of line, says unsuccessful BPP challenger Zarir Bhathena

Arnavaz S. Mama

Eleven days after the event, successful chartered accountant Zarir M. Bhathena reviews his lost foray in the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship election. That he failed to attract the majority vote is not what hurts as much as the "mudslinging of 15-20 days," particularly the attacks on the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) where he officiates as joint honorary secretary. He also realizes that his inability to control some of his supporters resulted in sympathy votes for his opponent.

Bhathena speaks of "one principle in one's life... never touch any institution." Accordingly, he says he had told his volunteers not to drag any of the institutions with which Silloo Kavarana is connected, viz the Red Cross, Sir Ratan Tata Institute (RTI), Parukh Dharamshalla, etc into controversy. "My supporters did not touch them," he notes with some satisfaction. He recalls that a former inmate had complained to him about the rise in charges at the Parukh Dharamshalla which he had been unable to meet. Bhathena says he told the man, "You can't expect everything free."

Most of these institutions have labor problems, as does the PGH, he notes. He is happy with one plus point of the labor agreement currently in force at the Hospital where the union has agreed to rotation of staff. "It is a major achievement due to (noted labor lawyer) Maneck Gagrati, (joint honorary secretary) Hector Mehta and other members of the labor committee," Bhathena notes his appreciation, for it is his belief that "if a person sits for 10-15 years in one position he/she becomes arrogant."

Bhathena applied the same reasoning to the BPP when he stressed rotation of staff in his manifesto. "No one is

indispensable. People die. Then what happens? People should be clear about the remarks/points they put on the file. (For example) there should be transparency regarding the number of points allotted to housing allottees and others on the waiting list under each head, giving the breakup of the total number of points." He believes this demand in his manifesto alienated the BPP staff. This reaction has confirmed his perception of the need for change of portfolios among them.

Some years ago Bhathena had found that the quantum of meat ostensibly supplied to the Hospital did not tally with the disbursement figures.

Even after allowing for wastage the discrepancy was too high. Unable to get to the root of the problem he says he reached the Hospital one morning before the mutton delivery truck arrived at 4.30 a.m. and hopped on to it as soon as it entered the compound. Supervising the delivery he found the carcasses floating in large tubs of water from which they were lifted and placed on the scales for weighing. By the time the cooks began working on them, several hours later, the carcasses had dried out, shedding the weight of the water. Bhathena says he appraised the managing committee who terminated the contract with the supplier immediately thereafter and found a more honorable one. Despite being caught red-handed the fraudulent supplier vilified Bhathena on the community grapevine but the latter says he didn't care so long as the Hospital benefitted.

Another unpopular decision of the board was to invest the funds donated to it directly and not through the Punchayet. In the process Bhathena says he got the broker to return 85 percent of the commission earned by him from PGH in-

vestments by way of a cheque donation to the Hospital. He has also been criticized because the Hospital's chemist shop was not entrusted to a Parsi. But when Parsis were asked to quote the return that the Hospital could expect from them, they responded with Rs 8,000 per month while the Cumballa Hill Chemist who runs the pharmacy offered Rs 50,000 per month to the Hospital in 1995, explains Bhathena. "They know how to do business." They employed five boys on cycles to deliver to the residents around the Hospital. They are not allowed to charge more than the maximum retail price and the shop is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and half-day on Sunday whereas the in-house pharmacy department of the Hospital (which the shop has replaced) had functioned only from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bhathena emphasizes the plus points of the deal, adding with a trace of asperity, "Pragmatic appreciation is not there in our community."

Another PGH issue that was flailed again and again was that its current medical administrator is a non-Parsi. "We believe that the Hospital should work whether (the incumbent) is a Parsi or non-Parsi," says Bhathena noting that the post had been advertised in the *Jamī* as well as *The Times of India* but no suitable Parsi doctor was forthcoming.

Accused by *Parsidom* of bulldozing his decisions at the PGH, Bhathena mentions some of the individuals who are part of the PGH managing committee: "We have individual persons well-known in their own field, having independent minds of their own like (chartered accountant) Yezdi Malegam, (solicitor) Jangoo Gagrati, (attorney and tax expert) Homi Ranina. They are not the types who can be bulldozed!" The extent to which medical service is subsidized at the PGH can be gauged by the figures proffered: As against the cost per bed, per day of Rs 1,054, hospital patients at the upper end



Bhathena: No appreciation in the community
Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

pay Rs 600. Only in the extension A Wing do the charges range between Rs 1,000 to 1,200. "Where will the poor and middle-class persons of our community be if the Parsi General Hospital is not there?" Bhathena asks pointedly.

Questioned about the overt support of *Jamé* associate editor Noshir Dadrawala and columnist Ruby Lilaowala, Bhathena says,

"They were never my people. They have an independent mind of their own and they are senior persons," adding, "As any community man I would see the *Jamé* on Sunday morning. I did not know what was going to be published until Sunday morning." Bhathena notes that Dadrawala and Lilaowala were invited to speak by the associations and

baugs who organized his meets with their members. This he says happened at Lalbaug, Malcolm Baug, Panthaky Baug, Godrej Baug and Dadar but because of the controversy that arose "Khareghat Colony organizers did not call Ruby or Noshir." He claims that Jal Rabadi of Nowroz Baug, Khurshed Dastur at Panthaky Baug and Silloo Mahava at Dadar Parsi Colony would vouch for his statement.

"At the very first meeting at Lalbaug, Dadrawala introduced me. Lilaowala went all out against Silloo Kavarana and Jamshed Guzder. I told her I don't agree. I believe if persons are absent their image should not be tarnished. They should be given a chance to defend themselves. But there was no moderator to stop her."

Bhathena traces Kadva's vendetta against him to the time when a large tree was felled in the PGH compound. He says they had taken the permission of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and according to its rules planted five trees in place of the one felled. Kadva, then working for *Jamé*, reported that no permission had been taken and held to his story despite PGH rejoinders. When Nanabhoy Jeejeebhoy, a PGH donor came to know of the articles in *Jamé* he reportedly put an end to them. "Kadva left (the *Jamé*) on that note and still carries a grudge," states Bhathena ruefully recalling veteran solicitor Rustamji Gagrati's advice to him on that occasion:

"Never fight with a journalist because the journalist always has the last say!"

Bhathena says when he announced his candidacy, *Parsidom* started maligning the Hospital. "I wrote to him (Kadva) saying don't tarnish the Hospital, say about me. He went to the extent of going to the Company Law Board and stating in his magazine that Hilla Build-

ers (Bhathena's family concern) is bankrupt and filing a loss for the last three years!" Explaining that according to chartered accountancy convention a construction company can follow either of two methods — booking profits as they accrue, or when the project is completed after perhaps three or three-and-a-half

years — Bhathena clarifies that in the intervening period routine expenses are debited showing a loss of Rs 10,000-15,000 per year. "Without verifying the facts, he (Kadva) just printed it!"

Quoting an old Indian adage that "trust work should be handled by a person whose stomach is full," Bhathena registers his contentment with his business and professional practice. With his wife Jasmin helping him in the construction business and his only son Berges in H. R. College, Bhathena says he has no intention of earning so much "*ké mari paach pehri khaé* (that five generations after me can survive) without doing anything." Hence he took up community work at the Hospital "because of the crying need for medical aid." Refusing to spread himself being trustee of seven or eight trusts, Bhathena says he "always believed you do one thing properly." Thus every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. he is at the Hospital with the committee members and also attending to core committee meetings on odd days held at Gagrati's or Mehta's or Khushroo Byramjee's office.

"Disheartened by the mudslinging" Bhathena says he is so far unable to respond to people who ask if he will stand again. What should lend him some cheer is the historical record that Bombay Parsis had rejected even such stalwarts as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and A. D. Shroff. By that reckoning he is in august company.



Bhathena (center) with wife Jasmin (right) and supporters Lilaowala (left) and Dadrawala

Do you have a G6PD enzyme deficiency?

The G6PD enzyme deficiency, common among the Parsis, makes them highly susceptible to certain drugs.* The deficiency may cause jaundice in the newborn and severe hemolytic crisis (destruction of red blood cells) in adults. Ask your family doctor to arrange for a blood test to detect whether you have G6PD enzyme deficiency. If you happen to be a G6PD-D patient, it is essential that you carry your card at all times so that in any emergency you would receive appropriate treatment.

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

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

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

Nonsulfonamide antibacterial agents: Furazolidone, Nitrofurantoin (Furadantin), Chloramphenicol, Para-aminosalicylic acid.

Miscellaneous: Napthalene, Vitamin K (Water soluble analogues), Prodenecid, Trinitrotoluene, Methylene blue, Dimer-caprol (BAL), Phenylhydrazine, Quinine and Quinidine; Sulpha containing compounds including Septran, DDS and Daraprim; Nitrofurantoin, Nalidixic acid including all derivatives of this group, Antistine, Diphenylhydramine, Pronestyl, Nitrites, Large doses of Chloroquine, Chloromycetin, Vit. C & K.

Published in the public interest by *Parsiana*

No voters, no voice

Unless the electoral college is expanded the community will remain indifferent to its affairs, states the author

Ruby Lilaowala

Over 200 years ago, Edward Gibbon in his book *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* had offered reasons as to why that civilization had deteriorated, withered and finally died. One of the reasons was that the leaders of the community undermined the dignity and sanctity of their post. Gibbon had asked what hope any society has when its leaders become worthy of disdain instead of admiration!

History has the unfortunate habit of repeating itself. The last Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship elections provided a new low.

The BPP is a 350-year-old institution with a glorious past. A lot of eminent Parsis have been on its board of trustees. It was a great prestige for anyone to become a trustee of the BPP but what is the position today? Yes, a certain amount of prestige is still there in being a trustee but it is diminishing and always there is some loose talk about some trustee or the other, some of it true, some false! I squarely blame the trustees of the last 50 years or so for bringing about this change in people's perception of them. The need of the hour is complete "transparency" and "accountability" which is missing as can be illustrated by a few examples.

Housing aspirants are allotted "points," the principle being that the most needy or deserving persons should get the maximum number of points so that houses can be allotted to them. The waiting period is also taken into consideration. Fair enough.

But all the housing aspirants must know by a properly generated computer statement at least once in six months where exactly they stand. The statement should show essential details like dates of all applications, names and addresses, points allotted to each applicant in the last six months, brief reason for allotment of points and the rank in which

they stand. This is called "transparency."

The flats in Cusrow Baug are transferred on the 60:40 system. The tenant who vacates the flat gets 60 percent and the trust gets 40 percent by cheque. But these deals are made in a hush-hush manner without calling for bids. What is one to presume under such circumstances? Flats are also sold to the NRIs (Non Resident Indians) under the above scheme. These NRIs will keep the flats locked up for 11 months of the year. Is that fair?

Shops in some baugs frequently change hands. We know that businesses can be legally sold but each new shop that comes spends lakhs in renovations, moves walls, builds lofts and mezzanines for which permission is required from the trust and the same seems to be readily available on the tap for them.

The question is how much "goodwill" have the trusts collected before giving permission to renovate and where is it shown? If no "goodwill" has been collected, then why has it not been collected as per market practice?

Why are dozens of flats kept locked? In spite of these matters coming out in the Press, the trusts are silent. How come?

The election process

Can you believe that out of 55,000 Parsis in Bombay, only 1,600 i.e. less than three percent of the Parsis have a right to vote in the trusteeship elections? Out of these 1,600, if you take away those who have expired or have become very old or infirm, the voting strength drops to two percent or nearer that figure.

Since 1947, there have been a dozen elections based on Universal Adult Franchise (UAF) to our parliament, state legislatures and civic bodies but we Parsis who are the most literate and educated community in India are denied voting rights for electing trustees to our apex body. This is not only sad but

pathetic. In the UK, North America and Australia, the Parsis adopt the proper democratic process.

At present, only 800 donor members and 800 Anjuman Committee members have voting rights against the present community strength of 55,000 in Bombay. Much is made of the "rights" of donor members but by contributing only Rs 15,000 (previously only Rs 5,000), how does the donor acquire rights over the BPP funds and estate running into not hundreds of crores but probably a few thousand crores at today's market price? The argument is advanced that the donors ensure who the trustees are and whether their donated money will be managed well before parting with money and hence some rights accrue to them (the donors). This is stretching the thought process a bit too far.

I may decide to give Rs 25,000 to the Parsee General Hospital after convincing myself that it is a well-managed Hospital but does that confer any rights on me to interfere in the working of the Hospital if subsequently, God forbid, I find that it is not managed well? A donation is a donation — one gives it with the best of intentions and forgets about it!

Also, the trustees of the BPP say that only the Bombay High Court can change the present pattern of voting. The BPP has recently put a proposal before the Bombay High Court for electing two Anjuman members for every donor member i.e. they want to make the scheme in the ratio of 2:1 instead of the present 1:1. Good, but they could also make it 5:1 or 6:1. No court in this country will object to extending the principle of UAF to the citizens of this country in any election, big or small. It is only the reluctance on the part of the majority trustees that prevents the electoral college being expanded.

continued on page 65

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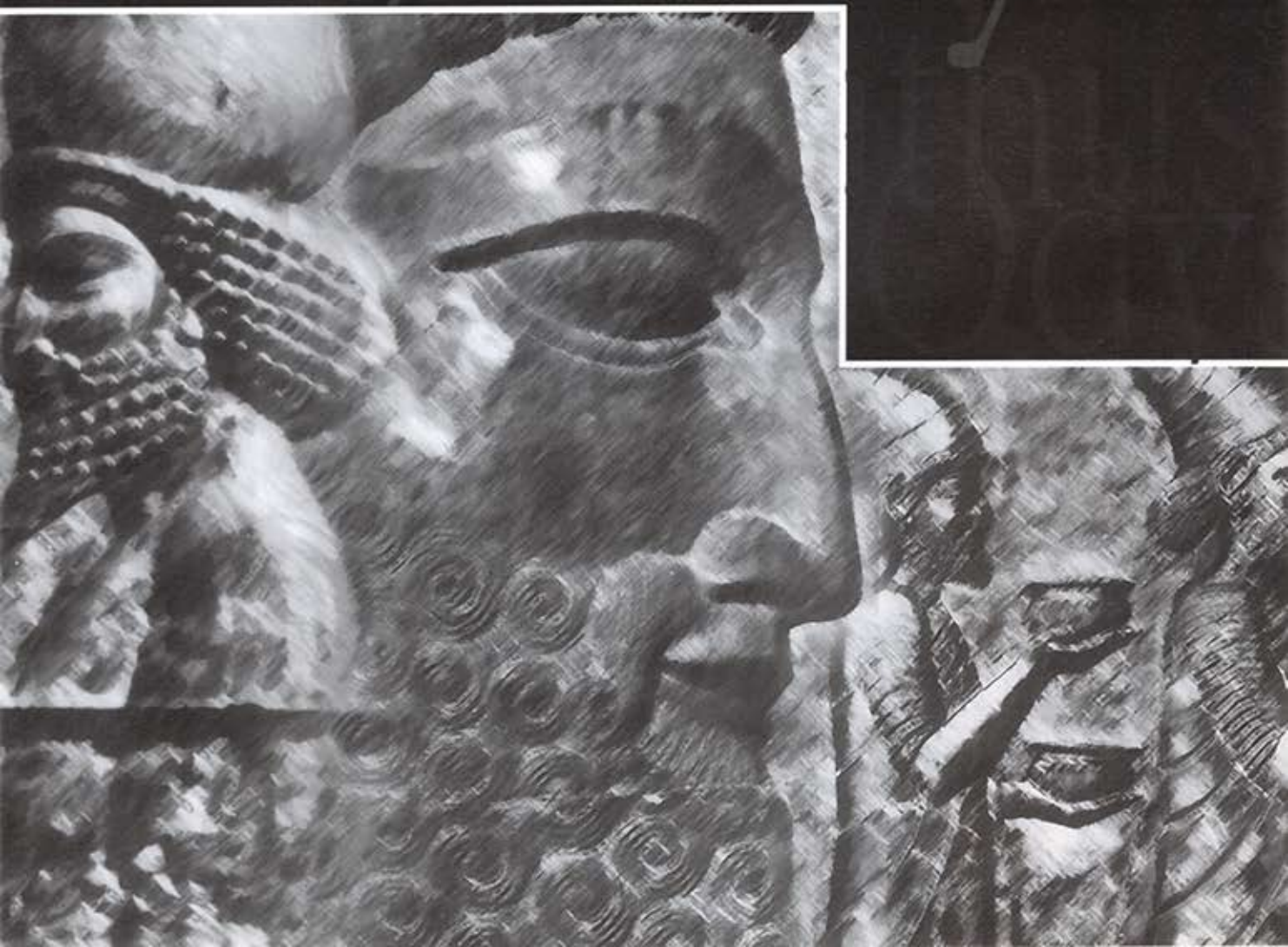
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SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

HOUSTON, TEXAS
December 28, 2000 to
January 1, 2001

SEVENTH ZARATHUSHTI GAMES

HOUSTON, TEXAS
December 26, 2000 to
December 27, 2000



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FELLOW

Zarathushtis

On behalf of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston and the World Zoroastrian Congress 2000, we take great pleasure in inviting you to Houston to participate in the Seventh Zarathushti Games and the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress from December 26, 2000 to January 1, 2001.

We have planned Congress 2000 to be inspiring, energizing and exciting – a Congress that will allow you to exchange fellowship with Zarathushtis from around the world and be enlightened by thought provoking programs on issues relating to religion, culture and social aspects. We will celebrate our past, rejoice in our present and prepare for our future.

We look forward to welcoming you to Houston and to the shores of North America.

Dolly Dastoor
Co-Chair

Homi Davier
Co-Chair

همکیشان زرتشتی

بنمایندگی از سوی فدراسیون انجمنهای زرتشتیان آمریکای شمالی، انجمن زرتشتیان هوستون و گروه برگزارکننده کان کنگره، با شادمانی بسیار از شما دعوت میکنیم که در هفتمین کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان و هفتمین دوره بازیهای جوانان زرتشتی که از ۲۶ دسامبر تا ۱ ژانویه سال ۲۰۰۱ در هوستون برپا میشود شرکت فرمایید.

ما کنگره ۲۰۰۰ را بگونه ای برنامه ریزی کرده ایم که آموزنده و شادی بخش و شور آفرین باشد. این کنگره جایگاهی خواهد بود برای آشنایی با زرتشتیان سراسر جهان، شرکت در برنامه های اندیشه برانگیز درباره نهادهای دینی، فرهنگی و اجتماعی. ما گذشته خود را بزرگ خواهیم داشت و برای آینده خویش برنامه ریزی خواهیم کرد.

ما چشم براهیم تا ورود شما را بشهر هوستون و کناره های دیگر آمریکای شمالی خوش آمد بگوییم.

همی داویر

دالی دستور

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SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

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Tel/Fax: 713.779.0330
<http://www.fezana.org>



SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS REGISTRATION FORM

SECTION I - PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I.: _____

Address 1: _____

Address 2: _____

City: _____ St.: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

Fax: _____ (Circle Home/Work)

E-Mail: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

SECTION II - CONGRESS REGISTRATION AND MEAL TICKETS (SEE NOTES 3 AND 6):

No	DESCRIPTION:	PERSON NO. 1:	PERSON NO. 2:	PERSON NO. 3:	PERSON NO. 4:
1	Last Name / Surname				
2	First Name / Middle Initial				
3	Type of Meal: Veg / Non-Veg. (Circle)	Veg. / Non-Veg.	Veg. / Non-Veg.	Veg. / Non-Veg.	Veg. / Non-Veg.
4	Navar willing to participate in Jashans	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐
5	Age / Sex (Optional)	/	/	/	/
6	Congress Registration Fees	\$	\$	\$	\$
7	Lunch on Dec. 28	Included	Included	Included	Included
8	Dinner on Dec. 28, US \$40	\$	\$	\$	\$
9a	Women's Lunch, Dec. 29, US \$25	\$	\$	\$	\$
9b	Business Lunch, Dec. 29, US \$35	\$	\$	\$	\$
10	Dinner for Dec. 29 & Lunch for Dec. 30	Included	Included	Included	Included
11	Millennium Dinner/Dance Dec. 31, US \$75	\$	\$	\$	\$
12	SUB-TOTAL for Congress / Meals:	\$	\$	\$	\$

SECTION III - SPORTS REGISTRATION (SEE NOTES 4 AND 5)

13	Sports Registration Fees	\$	\$	\$	See Note 5
14	Breakfast & Lunch for Dec. 26, US \$10	\$	\$	\$	\$
15	Breakfast & Lunch for Dec. 27, US \$10	\$	\$	\$	\$
16	SUB-TOTAL for Sports / Meals	\$	\$	\$	\$

SECTION IV - TOURS (CIRCLE DATE BELOW AND SEE NOTE 7)

17	Tour A, US \$55: Dec. 26 or Dec. 30	\$	\$	\$	\$
18	Tour B, US \$85: Dec. 27 or Dec. 30	\$	\$	\$	\$
19	Tour C, US \$85: Dec. 29	\$	\$	\$	\$
20	SUB-TOTAL for Tours:	\$	\$	\$	\$

SECTION V - PAYMENTS AND METHOD OF PAYMENT (SEE NOTES 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12)

21	Add Payments from Rows 12, 16 & 20	\$	\$	\$	\$
22	Sub-Total for Persons 1, 2, 3 & 4	\$	\$	\$	\$
23	Additional Donations	\$	\$	\$	\$
24	GRAND TOTAL US \$:	\$	\$	\$	\$

25 Payment Method: Check One ☐ Check in US \$ only ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Money Order

26 Print Credit Card Holder's Name _____

27 Credit Card Number _____

28 Expiration Date Month: _____ Year: _____

29 Credit Card Holder's Signature X: _____

REFERENCED NOTES AND GENERAL NOTES:

Note 1: Make check payable to:

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON (WZC-2000)

Note 2: Mail the completed Registration Form with payment to:

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON

8787 WEST AIRPORT BOULEVARD

HOUSTON, TX. 77071 (U.S.A.)

Note 3: Congress Registration Fees:

If Rec'd Before June 1, 2000: General: US \$151

Students with I.D.: US \$101

If Rec'd After June 1, 2000: General: US \$201

Students with I.D.: US \$125

If Space Permits: US \$251

Note 4: After Dec. 20, 2000: Sports Registration Fees:

If Rec'd Before June 1, 2000: Individual: US \$25 for all events.

Family: US \$75 for all events.

Individual: US \$35 for all events.

but Before Sept. 30, 2000: Family: US \$90 for all events.

Breakfast & Lunch: US \$10 per person, per day.

Sports for kids under 9 years are free but they must pay for breakfast and lunch.

Note 5: Person No. 4 is free only when 3 of the same family register.

Note 6: Optional Meal Tickets for registrants must be purchased with this registration. Meal Tickets to non-registrants will be issued on an "As Available" basis only.

Note 7: Each tour needs a minimum of 35 people to operate.

Note 8: Only registered attendees will be allowed into sessions.

Note 9: Registration deadlines shall be strictly enforced.

Note 10: To guarantee reservations, full payment must accompany Registration Form. No registrations guaranteed after Dec. 1, 2000.

Note 11: Cancellations received after Nov. 1, 2000, will be charged a 10% cancellation fee. All cancellations must be in writing.

Note 12: No Refunds will be made after Dec. 15, 2000.

Note 13: WZC 2000 Phone / Fax No. is: 713-779-0330.

CONGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

AWARDS

Awards will be presented to an Outstanding World Zarathushti, to a Zarathushti Youth for Outstanding Leadership and to other Zarathushtis for Humanitarian Service and/or Philanthropy, for Excellence in Business or Profession and for Excellence in Performing Arts or Literature.

GLOBAL SCHOLASTIC COMPETITION

A scholastic essay competition, with a first prize of \$5,000 and a second prize of \$3,000 is open to all the Zarathushti youth between the ages of 17 and 21.

ART & ENTERTAINMENT

A variety of entertainment including three banquets is planned for the Congress. The themes for the evening are:

Our Heritage

Our Western Culture

The Millennium Ball

In addition, talent in the performing arts will be showcased. A Zarathushti orchestra with musicians from around the world will perform at the various ceremonies. A classical ballet will be performed to Zarathushti themes.

Art by Zarathushti artists will be on display.

LEGACY AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Books that will be unveiled:

A Zarathushti's Guide to the Gathas.

A Zoroastrian Tapestry - Art, Religion and Culture.

The Concordance of the Gathas.

Philosophy of Zarathushtra.

Memoirs of a Beloved Iranian in North America.

A Millennium Time Capsule - A capsule containing Zarathushti artifacts from the 20th century to be buried as a legacy for the future.

Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce - A forum for promoting Zarathushti businesses and entrepreneurs world-wide.

Unity Quilt

A quilt, composed of the logos of Zarathushti organizations from around the world.

World Zarathushti Orchestra

Zarathushti musicians from around the world will perform a special musical composition by a Zarathushti composer revolving around the theme of the Gathas.

Zarathushti Field Student

Thirty Zarathushti youth from India, Pakistan and Iran will be sponsored to attend the Congress free of charge.

Daughters of Mashyani

A workshop for Zarathushti women, inducting Zarathushti women to a Hall of Fame and a showcase of Zarathushti apparel and fashions.

International Book Fair & Exhibition

To showcase literary works and manuscripts that are relevant to our Zarathushti world.

Exhibition of Artifacts

Zarathushti artifacts such as Sasanian coins and kusti weaving will be exhibited.

The Story of Zarathushtis - Exhibition

Film & Video Festival and Photography Exhibit

CONGRESS

OUR THEME

A Zarathushti Odyssey

OUR MISSION

To learn about our religion, heritage and culture and to celebrate together as we launch our Zarathushti Odyssey into the new millennium.

December

26-27²⁰⁰⁰



ZARATHUSHTI GAMES

As an integral part of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, a two day sporting event, the

7th World Zarathushti Games, will be held on December 26 and 27, 2000. The Houston Zarathushti Sports Committee, in cooperation with FEZANA's Zoroastrian Sports Committee, is organizing the Zarathushti Games. Contestants from around the world are invited to enter the competitions and meet fellow Zarathushtis in a friendly test of athletic skills. The competition will feature: basketball, table tennis, volleyball, swimming and track & field events. All Zarathushtis are invited to compete or to participate as spectators to cheer the contestants.

<http://www.fezana.org>

December

28 2000

Zarathushti Meets Zarathushti A Festive Reunion

The opening day of the Congress is devoted to forming new friendships and renewing the old.

Prayers performed by mobeds from around the world.

Opening ceremonies with dignitaries and eminent Zarathushtis welcoming the participants.

A Festive Reunion [*mela*] with various cultural and artistic events, presented by Zarathushti associations, anjumans and punchayets from around the world.

Chashni [prayer offerings] and other snacks will be served.

A theme dinner, [not included in registration cost]. A celebration of our Zarathushti Heritage with a performance showcasing our Iranian and Parsi Culture.

December

29 2000

The Zarathushti First and Second Millennium

A retrospective look at our Zarathushti past.

Featured events of the day:

Keynote address.
Plenary panel discussion to introduce the theme of the day.
Concurrent tracks. Each track consisting of three daily sessions.

Tracks are: religious, social and cultural, youth/future and Zarathushti's vision.

Two special lunches [not included in registration cost].

- *Daughters of Mashyani*, an induction ceremony for outstanding women of this century to the Hall of Fame. *On Wings of Time*, a special show on the evolution of Zarathushti apparel.
- *A Business Forum* - Inaugurating the Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce.

Evening dinner - Go Texan Night
[included in registration cost].

December

30 2000

Anchor Religion Zarathushti

Emphasis on life in our current

Featured evening keynote address and the conclusion

- Awards Luncheon for achievers. [Included in registration cost]
- The Unity Q
- Time Capsule: Zarathushti Centennial Memorabilia - century religious life placed as for future generations

The evening tour the city

FEZANA

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America [FEZANA] is an umbrella body formed on June 2, 1987 as a not-for-profit religious and charitable organization. Today there are 22 registered bodies [18 from USA and 4 from Canada] and numerous small groups of Zarathushtis, who are yet to be registered, all federated under the banner of FEZANA. The members of the Federation are jointly responsible for making policy decisions and setting goals and objectives for the community. Five elected officers implement these policies and conduct its activities through a committee structure, which is the real backbone of the organization.

The activities of FEZANA range from promoting the study, understanding and practice of the Zarathushti faith and welfare of Zarathushti communities, to disseminating information about the Zarathushti Din and representing interests of its membership in national and international forums, to building a strong community of Zarathushtis in North America.

FEZANA has Category III Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] of the United Nations.

FEZANA is proud to sponsor the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress and welcome the world community to the shores of North America.

ZAH

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston [ZAH] has thirty individuals. Since then it has grown to over seventy families pledged seed money. In April 1998, the dream of the few became a reality. The Zarathushti Cultural & Heritage Center is increasingly becoming a part of the social life. It is the communal place for Avesta religious study classes as well as for events in the community.

The Houston Zarathushti community has bridged the gap between the different Zarathushtis by jointly honoring festivals.

The ZAH has an enthusiastic team, and is looking forward to welcoming you to Houston in December.

December

31 2000

January

01 2001

ng in a shti's Life

how to live a Zarathushti
ent environments.

ts of the day will follow the
ss, the plenary session
rrent tracks.

neon to honor Zarathushti
cluded in registration cost].
ilt to be unveiled.
e ceremony at the Houston
Cultural & Heritage Center.
representing our twentieth-
ious and cultural heritage will
a remembrance of our times
nerations.

g is free to visit friends or
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Preparing for the Third Millennium

Focus on the future of our community. The format will follow that of the previous two days. Plans and strategies for carrying ourselves into the next century will be explored.

Global Scholastic Competition winning essay will be read.

"The Millennium Ball" to celebrate our Zarathushti Odyssey into the new millennium and to bring in the New Year and the new millennium as a united Zarathushti community. [not included in registration cost].

Passing on the Torch

On the fifth and closing day of the Congress, a unique *Jashan* performed by our mobeds. It is through this action that we symbolically pass on the torch to the next generation. These are our leaders of tomorrow, and it is to them that we entrust our future.

Closing Ceremonies will follow the *Jashan* as we bid each other a fond farewell until we meet again at the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress.



WORLD CONGRESS

ston [ZAH] was founded in 1976 by
rown to over 500 members. In 1981,
to help construct a cultural center. In
came a reality for the many when the
ter [ZHCC] was inaugurated. The
athering place for both religious and
for Sunday School and Gatha and
all as the hub of social and cultural

y has a wonderful mix of cultures from
other parts of the world. We have
nt cultures of the Parsi and Irani
ivals celebrated by both communities.

which is actively working to make the
s a great success. We look forward
ember 2000.

In 1960 the Zarathushtis of Iran under the able leadership of Arbab Rustom Givv convened the first World Zoroastrian Congress with a view to establish contacts between the various Zoroastrian communities and to develop a program for the 2500th anniversary of the Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus the Great.

This Congress recommended to continue with future Congresses and that a Permanent World Organization of Zoroastrians be formed.

In 1961 the Iran League of Bombay appointed an ad hoc committee, which requested the Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet, Mumbai to take a lead.

The subsequent Congresses have been held at:

Bombay 1964
Bombay 1978
Bombay 1985

Bombay 1990
Tehran 1996

TOURS

HOUSTON AND VICINITY

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PACKAGE NO. 1 Tour A

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and NASA**
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and the Space Center

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guide and admission to NASA

Ticket charge:
\$ 55 per person

Scheduled days:
Dec 26 & Dec 30, 2000



PACKAGE NO. 2 Tour B

City of San Antonio
(12 hours required)

See the charming riverwalk,
historic missions and
colorful Spanish markets.

Includes the coach, the
guide, admission
tickets and lunch

Ticket charge :
\$85 per person

Scheduled days:
Dec 27 & Dec 30, 2000



PACKAGE NO. 3 Tour C

**City of Galveston and
Moody Gardens**
(8 hours required)

Includes the coach,
the guide, and
admission to two
Moody Gardens
attractions and
lunch.

Ticket charge:
\$85 per person

Scheduled day:
Dec 29, 2000



For latest information, keep
in touch with our web site:
www.fezana.org

HOTEL ACCOMODATION - REQUEST FORM

In the heart of Houston's dynamic, thriving Galleria district, the JW Marriott Hotel combines luxury, attentive service, superior meeting facilities and exceptional convenience. Located across the street from the Galleria shopping complex, the hotel offers guests an endless variety of shopping and entertainment choices. Within the hotel you will find amenities and services designed for your comfort, including superb dining, a relaxing lounge and a variety of sports facilities, including a lavishly equipped health club. The oversized guest rooms are luxuriously furnished. Downtown Houston is only 10 minutes away, while Hobby airport and the Intercontinental airport are 30 and 40 minutes away respectively. The JW Marriott Hotel provides a perfect blend of international style and Texas hospitality.



Register under

World Zoroastrian Congress

December 26, 2000
- January 1, 2001

\$79.00 + tax

Single/Double/Triple/
Quad per night
Reservations
accepted from
February 1, 2000 -
Cut off date
December 5, 2000

**Reservations
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directly with
the Hotel.**

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 3. Estimated arrival time (Check-in 3pm, but efforts will be made to room you as soon as possible)
- The JW Marriott regrets that it cannot hold your reservation without a credit card, or first night's room deposit by check or money order (do not send cash)
Deposits will be refunded only if cancellation notification is given up to 24 hours prior to arrival. If more than one room is requested, please enclose list of names with addresses, indication which guests share rooms.

Name _____ Co. _____
Please Print or Type

Address ☐ Company ☐ Home
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone # _____

For arrival on _____ day _____ date _____ time _____ Depart on _____ day _____ date _____

Room type preference: ☐ King ☐ Double/Double ☐ Room and smoking preferences will be honored
Smoking preference: ☐ Smoking ☐ Non-Smoking subject to availability

Which preference is more important: ☐ Bed type ☐ Smoking preference

Please list names of guests sharing your room _____

Special requests: _____

☐ Check or money order enclosed Amount \$ _____ ☐ American Express ☐ Carte Blanc
☐ Master Card (Please include interbank # directly below card #) ☐ Visa ☐ Diners Club ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

I authorize the JW Marriott Hotel to charge my account for one night's room charge in the event I do not cancel my room by 6pm the day of arrival.

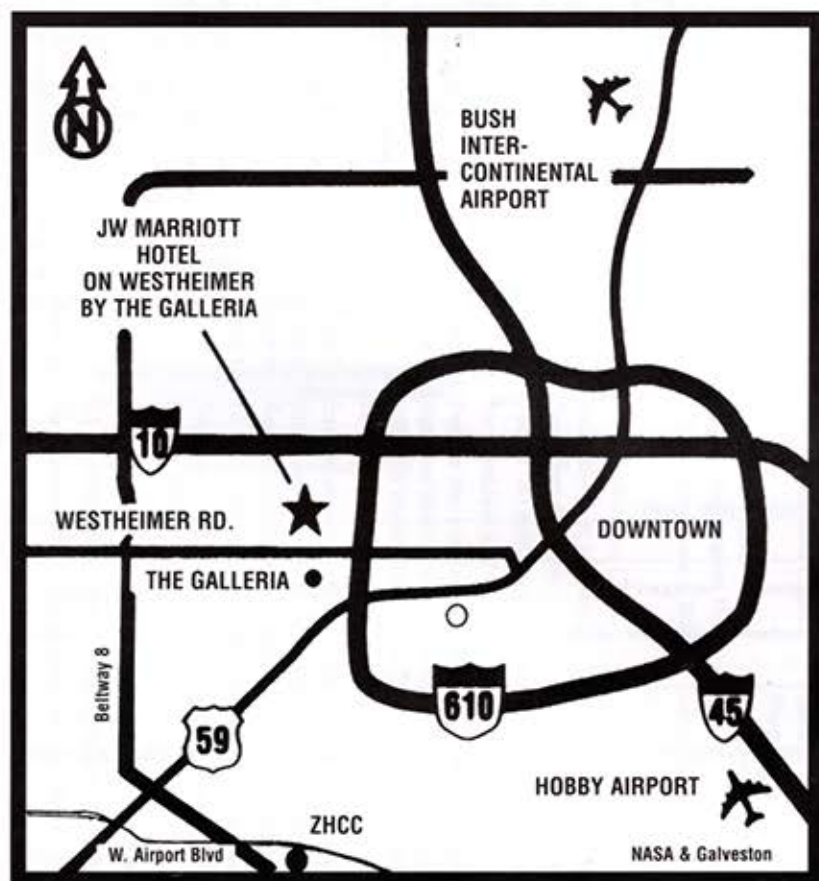
Signature _____ Phone # _____

Check out time is noon. Rooms may not be available for check-in until after 3pm. Reservations requested beyond the cut off date are subject to availability. Rooms may still be available after the cut off date, but not necessarily at the above rate. Please apply 17% sales and lodging tax to the above rates. (Tax rates subject to change)

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HOUSTON AT A GLANCE



DIRECTIONS TO THE JW MARRIOTT HOTEL ON WESTHEIMER

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Take Highway 59 South onto Loop 610 West, proceed around Loop to 610 South. Turn right onto Westheimer - pass 3 lights. Hotel is on the right.

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Take Interstate 45 North onto Loop 610 West, and proceed around the Loop to 610 North. Turn left onto Westheimer - pass 3 lights. Hotel is on the right.

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- Museum district, IMAX Zoo, Medical Center & Rice University
- Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC)

SPORTS REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE SEVENTH ZARATHUSHTI GAMES (DEC. 26 & 27, 2000)

SECTION I - PERSONAL INFORMATION			
Last Name:	First Name:	M.I.:	Phone: (Home) (Work)
Address:			Fax: (Circle Home / Work)
Address (cont'd):			E-Mail: (Home)
City:	St:	ZIP:	E-Mail: (Work)

SECTION II - SPORTS REGISTRATION					
No:	DESCRIPTION:	PERSON NO. 1:	PERSON NO. 2:	PERSON NO. 3:	PERSON NO. 4:
1	Last Name / Surname:				
2	First Name / Middle Initial:				
3	Age / Sex: (Required):	/	/	/	/
BASKETBALL FOR AGES 13 THROUGH ADULTS (SEE NOTES 2, 4, 7 & 10)					
4	Do you have a team?	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐
5	Team's Name:				
6	Team Color:				
7	Captain's Name:				
VOLLEYBALL FOR AGES 13 THROUGH ADULTS (SEE NOTES 2, 3, 4 & 10)					
8	Do you have a team?	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐
9	Team's Name:				
10	Team Color:				
11	Captain's Name:				
TRACK AND FIELD FOR AGES 13 THROUGH ADULTS. (SEE NOTES 5, 6, & 10)					
12	100 M:	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	400 M:	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	1500 M:	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	4 X 100 M Relay: Have a Team?	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐
16	Shot Put:	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	Discus:	☐	☐	☐	☐
TABLE TENNIS FOR AGES 13 THROUGH ADULTS. (SEE NOTE 7)					
18	Singles:	☐	☐	☐	☐
SWIMMING IN AN INDOOR POOL FOR AGES 13 THROUGH ADULTS. (SEE NOTES 5, 6, 10 & 11)					
19	Freestyle 50 Yd:	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	Backstroke 50 Yd:	☐	☐	☐	☐
21	4 x 25 Yd. Medley Relay: Have a Team?	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐
YOUTH EVENTS FOR AGES 9 THROUGH 13. CHECK EVENTS YOU WANT TO ENTER. (SEE NOTES 8 & 11)					
22	Track 100 M:	☐	☐	☐	☐
23	Swimming Freestyle 25 Yd:	☐	☐	☐	☐
YOUTH BASKETBALL FOR AGES 9 THROUGH 13. CHECK EVENTS YOU WANT TO ENTER. (SEE NOTES 9 & 10)					
24	Do you have a team?	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐	Yes: ☐ No: ☐
25	Team's Name:				
26	Team Color:				
27	Captain's Name:				

REFERENCED NOTES AND GENERAL NOTES:

Note 1: The Fees for the Sporting Events need to be entered in

Section III of the Congress Registration Form.

Note 2: Choose either Basketball or Volleyball, but not both due to scheduling conflicts. Fill out team member names below.

Note 3: Volleyball Games will be co-ed. Minimum of 2 females/team.

Note 4: A maximum of 9 players per team shall be allowed.

Note 5: Men & women compete separately in Track & Field events and Swimming events. Fill out team member names below.

Note 6: If you choose Track & Field, you cannot choose Swimming.

Note 7: If you play Table Tennis, you cannot participate in

Basketball or Volleyball, due to scheduling conflicts.

Note 8: Fun events are scheduled for kids under 9 years, that are not included in this registration form.

Note 9: Youth Basketball Games may be co-ed.

Note 10: Participants with no teams may sign up as individuals. You will be notified of teams later.

Note 11: Participants will be grouped by age for Swimming events.

Note 12: All participation will be on a first come first served basis.

Note 13: No entries will be guaranteed after Sept. 30, 2000.

Note 14: Late fees will be charged according to the date received.

Note 15: A 10% cancellation fee will be charged after Nov. 1, 2000.

All cancellations must be in writing.

Note 16: If you have more than 4 members in your family, or you want to give others a copy, please make copies of this form.

Team Name: Event:

Team Member Names:

Team Name: Event:

Team Member Names:

Team Name: Event:

Team Member Names:

Team Name: Event:

Team Member Names:

Sports awards ceremony will be on December 30, 2000 followed by Disco Night.

Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress
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Bonding in Bandra

For 50 years The Bandra Parsee Association has assisted local brethren towards educational, medical and social welfare needs

Hilla P. Guzder

It was almost an all-Parsi, all-Bandra audience at the plush, 1,000-seater St Andrew's Auditorium situated in the leafy lanes of Bandra in Bombay. Capturing conviviality on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebrations of The Bandra Parsee Association (BPA) were local families, some of whose ancestors, enchanted by the quaintness and quiet of this "queen of suburbs," had built many a graceful retreat on its hill and dale.

With several Parsi-established institutions like the Bai Avabai F. Petit Girls' High School, Cama Convalescent Homes for Parsi Men and Boys and for Parsi Women and Children, Bhabha Hospital, Bhabha Sanatorium, etc., Bandra boasts a substantial Parsi populace. Some make their home in the Tata Blocks, others in villas that have survived the onslaught of the builders or in apartments in the glass and concrete monoliths standing in their stead.

As part of its year-long celebration, the BPA presented on November 27, 1999 a play entitled *Monkey Business Plus* by the well-known producer Bharat Dabholkar. Among the audience were 60 young Zoroastrian boarders — especially invited by the BPA from the Bai Avabai F. Petit Girls' High School with their supervisor Yasmin Charna to spend a pleasurable evening.

"Bandra Parsis are a good, friendly community," asserts Prof Khurshed Sheriar, president of the BPA, adding tongue-in-cheek that there may, however, be a few who live in an ivory tower! Sheriar joined the Association as a member way back in 1969 and became vice president in '71, taking over as president three years ago. The residence of Sam Choksey, who has been on the committee for a quarter century and officiated as joint honorary secretary

for 20 years, is the address from which the BPA functions. "We lack a suitable place the BPA can call its own," states Choksey, with the result that functions have had to be held in hired halls or on a terrace obligingly given by a member.

**BANDRA PARSEE ASSOCIATION
WELCOMES YOU**



Sharing camaraderie (l to r) Dabhoiwalla, Sam and Dinaz Choksey, Sheriar, Hansotia, Pavri and Desai Photo: Hilla Guzder

Mahrookh Mistry is the joint honorary secretary and Khorshed Daruwalla, daughter of one of the founder members Gool Masani, officiates as treasurer. "It is from my house that we disburse the monthly assistance we give to a few deserving Parsis," she notes, with obvious pride in the task at hand. Dr Zenobia Bhathena, Dara Desai, Maki Hansotia, Dolly Tata, Homai Mistry and Nergish Tata are on the managing committee. "Our main handicap is that we have too few workers who put in time for the Association," explains Sheriar.

The golden jubilee celebrations were kicked off on June 13, '99 with a jashan at Bandra's Tata Agiary and a well patronized dinner at a hall in Khar. The especially constituted golden jubilee celebrations committee consists of Sheriar, Choksey, Roshan Dabhoiwalla,

Burjor Pavri, Dinaz Choksey, Hansotia, Desai and Dolly Tata. "Everyone chipped in and did a good job," notes Sheriar, adding that obtaining donations is always a tough task, achievable for a small association like theirs through persuasive personal rapport and good contacts.

The golden jubilee souvenir gratefully acknowledges a donation of Rs 51,000 from Darab C. Pader of Veera Tanneries, Rs 50,000 from the Noshirwan and Goolbanoo Trust, as well as a long list of donations ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 25,000.

Pegging the Zoroastrian population of Bandra at around 5,000, Sheriar states that membership of the BPA is open to all Zoroastrians between Bandra and Andheri, though the bulk of their membership comprises Bandra residents.

"We have around 360-370 families as members," he states. Life membership consisted of the princely sum of Rs 75 when they started in 1949, currently it is Rs 300. "The Bandra Tata Blocks residents have their own association too, but ours is older," remarks Sheriar.

Elaborating on the BPA's welfare activities, Sheriar declares that the Association has 'adopted' the Tata and Panthaky Agiaries, expending a sum of Rs 20,000 last year to distribute new clothes, linen and toiletries to the staff of the Agiaries, as well as to other deserving beneficiaries. To reinforce the value of a sound education, the BPA disbursed during the year about Rs 30,000 as educational scholarships in the form of subsidies for school fees, professional courses like medicine and engineering, computer courses, etc., and provides assistance for surgery, according to their press release.

The BPA was founded by a group of public spirited Zoroastrians which in-

continued on page 65

On Bordi's beaches

The coastal town of Bordi provided the backdrop for the XIIIth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar

Kimi Dangor

"Save the culture, heritage and grandeur of the Zarathushtis," urged chief guest Dinaz Contractor at the inauguration of the XIIIth All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar hosted by the Zai Bordi Parsi Anjuman from November 6-9, 1999. Addressing "the future and backbone of the community," Contractor, a versatile personality who is an agriculturist, hotel owner and renowned social worker of Valsad district, encouraged the youth to take the initiative and keep the pioneering spirit of the Parsis alive. "Keep a high ambition in life and endeavor to reach it," said Contractor.

"Your deliberations will give a new focus to the youth of future generations," said Rohinton Batliwala, president, Zai Bordi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund, when welcoming the youth to the idyllic tourist destination with its sunny beaches. Zai Bordi is also close to many a historically and religiously significant place. Sanjan is situated about 25 km away. The Bahrot caves, where the holy Iranshah was housed for 14 years, lie to the east of Bordi. Moreover, Udvada, where the Iranshah continues to spread its blessings and piety, is easily accessible from Zai Bordi. He spoke of the educational facilities available in Bordi and the endeavors made in that direction by the local Zarathushtis.

Special invitee Ervad Khushru Dastur of Udvada commented on the dressing habits of the youth and instructed the gathering on appropriate conduct on their impending visit to the Iranshah, which was on the itinerary.

Welcoming the youth to "the last seminar of the millennium," Porus Karanjawalla, president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India (FOZYA), said that in a survey conducted after last year's youth semi-

nar, the delegates requested that activities should begin after 10.30 a.m. and no hard talk or competitions immediately after lunch. His announcement that the schedule had been revised in keeping with the



At the valedictory function (from left): Sarosh Palkhiwala, Yasmin Charna, Lilaowala, Karanjawalla, Kasad and Debara

requests of the delegates was greeted with applause from the audience.

For the 150-odd delegates from Ahmedabad, Agra, Baroda, Bombay, Dahanu, Jhansi, Madras, Navsari, Poona, Surat and Thana who were gathered at the Petit Sanatorium it seemed an ideal opportunity to interact, make new friends and renew old acquaintances against a backdrop of the blue sea and miles of golden sands. In fact, the cool waters were often a major distraction for the delegates.

"What makes you proud to be a Zoroastrian?" was the question Noshir Dadrawala, assistant editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed* asked the gathering of delegates. The question was a prelude to a discussion on "Ethics of Zoroastrian Religion" in the course of which Dadrawala attempted to explain the significance of prayer and the relevance of the Zoroastrian doctrines in today's times. Quoting passages from religious texts and scriptures he pointed out the positiveness of the religion to the youth. "The Parsi spirit of philanthropy

is alive and kicking. You have to keep the spirit alive," said Dadrawala. But some of his interesting comments and conjectures were lost on the youth who were becoming increasingly restless and distracted by the incoming tide.

The other speaker of the afternoon was the learned Dr Homi Dhalla, a Harvard graduate, who is at present teaching and conducting research in Iranian studies. His talk focussed on whether the teachings of the Zoroastrian religion are relevant in the new millennium. Reiterating the importance of 'Asha' he said that 'Asha' is the cornerstone of the Zoroastrian religion. He discussed the concept of fire and light and tried to clear the misunderstanding that Parsis are fire worshippers. He stressed that for Parsis light is the symbol of Ahura Mazda, a reminder of his radiance. Light stands for knowledge, which can dispel the darkness of ignorance. He also explained the importance of the concept of 'Hamazor': harmony and unity with the entire universe, which is especially relevant today in times of war and strife.

By now the delegates were squirming in their seats and there were a couple of instances of indiscipline which were strongly reprimanded by the organizers. The talks were followed by a question and answer session attended by some enthusiastic delegates while others rushed to the beach for a dip in the sea.

The second day saw a chastised audience in attendance for the talks by Prof Khurshed Sheriar and Dr Peshotan Mirza. Sheriar spoke on the topic, "Zoroastrian priesthood and its role in the survival of our community." He traversed the history of the existence of the Zoroastrian religion in India and related the role of the priests in "preserving the sanctity and identity of the religion" through their preservation of literature,



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Top row (L to R): Mirza, Contractor, Sheriar, Dhalla and Dadrawala
Above: youths in attendance (left) and enjoying a meal Photo: Nawaz Palkhiwala

scriptures and rituals. He discussed the situation of the mobeds in India today, the problems and discriminations facing them and stated that "without mobeds there will be no Zoroastrian religion and without the religion there will be no Parsi community." Mirza explained in layman's terms that fire is heat and light energy. But according to Zoroastrian cosmogony Ahura Mazda created divine light and through this divine light all creations are made. Referring to the acute paucity of mobeds plaguing the community and its impact on the survival of our fire-temples and dokhmas as well as the continuity of rituals, Mirza said that there is an urgent need to provide proper provisions for maintenance of the priests. In the course of the discussions a lot of pertinent questions were raised by the youth and the speakers answered them with alacrity. Fielding questions regarding the legality of navjote ceremonies, Mirza agreed with some of the youth who recommended that just as marriage certificates are issued, navjote certificates also should be issued. The youth were of the opinion that since priests differed in their viewpoints they could appoint a counsel as an authority with a spokesperson or an om-

budsman to arrive at a consensus on religious questions. The audience favored providing protection to priests against onslaughts of any sort.

The talks were followed by a debate on the topic "Am I an Indian first or a Zoroastrian?" The debate judged by Porus Debara, honorary treasurer, FOZYA and Nauzer Kasad, committee member, FOZYA, saw two very strong teams competing for the honors. With the firm belief that she is an Indian first, Farah Bharucha, a delegate from Poona, said that through our Zoroastrian beliefs we should become better Indians. Opponents Aashita Bomanshaw and Pashna Munshi from Bombay who believed that their true identity was their religion contradicted this statement. Their teammate Mahiar Byramshaw from Madras claimed that Zoroastrians were, in fact, world citizens and that nationality can be changed but one's religion cannot be changed and in the process walked away with the award for best speaker. The judges gave a verdict in favor of the team that believed they were Zoroastrians first.

At the valedictory function columnist Ruby Lilaowala who was the chief guest commented on the growing indifference towards religion, change in values and beliefs due to the media boom and growing psychological trauma amongst the youth. "Modernism does not mean cutting off the roots. You cut off the roots, you cut off the tree." Young

people invite me into their lives with a view to learning from me, but I end up learning from them, she added. Her views on love, marriage, education and hobbies had all the delegates cheering and applauding. She ended on a positive note, "Ask not what our community can do for you. But ask what you can do for your community."

Earlier that day the delegates were taken on a guided tour of Sanjan and Udvada. At the Sanjan Stambh they were briefed on the history of the Stambh and the significance of its establishment. But the most important leg of the tour was the visit to the Iranshah at Udvada which took on a special significance for some delegates as it was their first ever to the abode of the holy fire.

Yet another diversion for the youths was a round of Pictionary in which a participant had to describe a word to his teammates through sketches and they in turn had to guess the given word. The game was won by the team from Poona, while the Bombay team came a close second. Pictionary was followed by a quiz in which two teams from Bombay walked away with both the first and second positions.

"Overall the management was good. Though there should have been an atmosphere for interaction, through more games, which was lacking," said Delnaz Dalal from Ahmedabad. According to

continued on page 65



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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 6

history and past can be preserved. So let's save Bahrot.

FARZAN BEHRAMSHAH MAZDA
Dahanu

Avestan usage

Here are some Avestan sentences for daily conversation:

How is life (i.e. your life)? *Katha thawa javaiti asti (thawa=your)?*

I wish you a long life of happiness. *Azem ishti tu vispayum javaiti ushtatem.*

(Please note: *ushta* can be rendered as 'happiness' but primary meaning is 'desire.' *Ustatem*=your desires and *vispayum*=all, so it could be *Azem ishti tu vispayum ushtatem*=I wish that all your desires be fulfilled. The word *javaiti*= 'life' is not used in this sentence.)

Where did you go? *Katha xshma ancha?* [*xshma*=thou (in respect)]

or *Katha tu ancha?* [*tu*=you (when you know a person as equal)]

Please go back. *Xshnavaya paiti zash.* Like father, like son. *Yatha patar, atha puthrem.*

I extol you with joy (or adulation). *Azem ufyani staota.*

Soon I will be a rich man. *Ishar mavaiti shaeetavant.*

Soon all of you will be rich persons. *Ishar vispa xshamaka shaeetavanti htamncha.*

Dr PALLAN R. ICHAPORIA
Pennsylvania, USA

Angel to Ahmednagar

We shall never forget Meher (Meher Behram Nagarwalla), a kindhearted, loving yet disciplined "aunty" to her "remand home children" (District Probation and After Care Association, Ahmednagar), a nature-loving environmentalist, dedicated, active and selfless social worker and a philanthropic human being.

Meher's sad and unexpected demise was on February 15, 1999. She was "wife, friend, philosopher and guide" to Billy — Behram Sarosh Nagarwalla — proprietor of M/s Cursetjee Nusserwanjee and Sons, the oldest trading firm of Ahmednagar established in 1803. On marrying Billy she joined the traditional family business of construction material and liquor trade. At the time of her death she was a senior partner of Victory Wine Stores.

Apart from being an able housewife



Nagarwalla (right) handing over a child for foster care

she was a "busy-bee." She started and edited the Ahmednagar Parsis' newsletter *New Horizon* for a number of years. She collected the detailed history of Parsi families residing there. As a result Meher was known as 'the unofficial historian' in her community. She also wrote the biography of principal N. D. Nagarvala in 1990 which has been published in two editions.



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Meher was an ardent western music lover and excellent piano player, delighting all with classical and modern tunes. She taught music to a number of people, wrote, composed and conducted for a number of occasions in schools, churches (for weddings) and for the last three years she was in charge of the choir of Ahmednagar Christ Church, which delighted all of us during the Christmas festival. One program was also broadcast by the All India Radio, Ahmednagar.

Meher was not lagging behind in her social work. She joined the National Education Society as trustee in 1993 and was an active managing committee member of The Shishu Grah (Center for abandoned babies — District Probation and After Care Association). She also took keen interest in the Marathi Mahila Mandal of Christ Church where she was known as "aamchi Meherbai" and gave medical assistance to old, poor and needy women. She was member and secretary of Christian Neighborhood Fellowship (CNF). At the same time she was a working member of Green Globe, an organization creating environment awareness among the common man and she was instrumental in preparing a highly praised rose garden in the remand home compound.

Born in Hong Kong on January 23, 1949, she had her formal education and did her secretarial course there. She joined Tri-Union, a textile machinery and cotton trading firm. She came to Bombay in 1970 and served with INARCO Limited as secretary to the managing director.

She was an ardent lover of animals. The Nagarwalla household consisted of seven street dogs (not counting one Alsatian) at the time of her death.

She was loved by young and old alike. A newspaper article commented on the multi-religion condolence meeting held by CNF at St John's Church under the heading "Meher Nagarwalla smruti prarthana sathi aadarsh darshan." A unique condolence meeting for her attended by people of all religions at Christ Church is a wonderful precedent for national integration.

SUDHIR CHATE
Ahmednagar

Change of cards

Percy and Govher Antia of Toronto were in town for a couple of days and came to visit me at my Bakery. Both are 66 years old, married for the last



Percy and Govher Antia (left) and the family prior to migration

45 years, and have eight children and 14 grandchildren.

When Percy married Govher, both then aged 21, he was staying in a small back room on the ground floor of Talati Building at Khetwadi. The eldest son of a well-to-do family, Percy's father was a dealer in greeting cards, importing and selling them all over India during the British Raj. Percy failed his exam at St Mary's School and joined the coeducational J. J. School where he met Govher. His father had great plans to send him abroad to marry an English girl. A typical Parsi hang-up. His father objected to his choice of a future wife as the girl's father was a taxi driver. So Percy left his father and moved to the girl's house, but nights he had to spend on Grant Road station, with rats for company. The Irani girl's father said he must have a job before he married his daughter, so he took his first job, cleaning and dusting Sukh Sagar Stores at Breach Candy on a salary of Rs 40. He married her with only Rs 15 in his pocket, five of his own, 10 from his mother-in-law. Their honeymoon was at Bandra's Bhabha Sanatorium and next day he was back at work. Now that he was married, he gave up the job and started selling Japanese dolls from house to house. Then he went into a business he was familiar with: making and selling greeting cards, i.e. recycling old cards and using them.

He operated his business from the pavement of Flora Fountain. His first stringed stall was on the pavement below Petit Library but he was forced to move to the opposite pavement of Vacha Agiary. There the trustees kindly allowed him to use the outside wall to display cards and panthaky Bhikhaji Jijina would give him papdi and malido which he would take home.

Percy's brother Minoo moved to Toronto at the age of 34. After settling down, he called over Percy's eldest



daughter Jerroo, aged 17 in 1974. After getting married and becoming a citizen of Canada, she called her father and the rest of her family to Canada in 1983. Percy settled down in Toronto. The government there subsidized him for he had more than two children and they wanted to increase the population of Canada.

He started working as a paper boy for *Toronto Star*. After this initial success he started importing children's apparel from all over the world and supplied them to big stores. It is here that he made his money.

He made several trips to Bombay and got all his boys married to Parsis from Bombay and helped their respective spouses to move to Canada.

So Percy and his wife are a standing example of what perseverance, practicality and faith in Ahura Mazda can achieve.

ZEND M. ZEND

Why second helping?

The old custom of second helpings at wedding/navjote functions and parties continues unabated as it is more advantageous to caterers who make bumper profits. They argue that each guest gets two pieces at functions. In fact only five to seven percent take for the second time. No wonder the number of caterers among our community has increased considerably during recent times looking at the advertisements in the newspapers.

At the time of second helping, the bearers walk very fast and try to save as much as possible. It is high time this practice is stopped to save both the guests and hosts from increasing pehramnis and mounting expenditure in the interest of our community.

RUSTOM A. KOTWAL

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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The legal innings of the century

Outspoken, courageous, decisive, 100-year-old solicitor
Rustam Gagrati nurtured outstanding institutions and individuals

Arnavaz S. Mama

He sat in the leafy bower of Gallops (the restaurant at the Bombay Race Course), the smiling cynosure of a gathering of 150, epitomizing an old-world patriarch in a new world setting. Almost everyone there was related to him by ties of blood or of gratitude and devotion that sprang from the recognition that it was Rustamji Gagrati's pioneering toil and ethical professionalism, his example of unrelenting integrity and moral courage that had guided their own steps up the ladder of achievement. Family and friends, close associates of bar and bench, dignitaries in their own rights, had come to congratulate the wizened Gagrati on his 100th birthday. Unlike previous occasions, there were no speeches this time.

The doughty founder of the 66-year-old Bombay-based Gagrati and Company, advocates, solicitors and notaries, with branches in Delhi, London and Dubai, Gagrati's life has run concurrently with the 20th century. Thus personal milestones have coincided with societal ones. In 1994 Gagrati and Company celebrated its diamond jubilee while the prestigious Bombay Incorporated Law Society registered 100 years against Gagrati's own 94. As the seniormost practising solicitor at that juncture the Society called upon Gagrati, a former managing committee member (1944-70) and past president (1960-68), to reminisce in its centenary souvenir. The 10-page published article, a personalized account, attests to the changing scenario in Bombay as much as it reflects Gagrati's own personality:

The dedication of educationists to the youth in their care is gratefully recalled after three-quarters of a century as Gagrati writes of the affection and guidance provided by Jalbhai Bhada and Kaikobad Marzban of Bhada New High School. Continuing to treasure the

prize books awarded in elocution and Shakespeare declamation competitions, Gagrati writes, "I am of the view that the Debating Society of the School and these competitions were the main beginnings



J. Gagrati (left) with Bombay Mayor Hareshwar Patil presenting shawl and flowers to Rustamji

of my interest in entering the legal profession."

An incident during his Wilson College years reflects the temper of the time. The Prince of Wales was visiting India in 1921. Legal luminary Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, as vice chancellor of the University of Bombay, had convened a meeting of the students to felicitate the visiting Prince. The students, in their own meeting in which three Setalvad offspring participated, objected to the proposed felicitation and the convening of such a meet without consulting the student community. The khadi-clad Gagrati was elected spokesman of the students to voice these objections. Hence, when the meeting began under the chairmanship of Setalvad, Gagrati articulated the students' demand that Setalvad step down and that Prof P. A. Wadia replace him in the chair. As per earlier arrangement between the students and Wadia, the latter took the chair, declared that the students of the University

of Bombay were not agreeable to the meeting and dissolved the same. The event was the first of many instances of public outspokenness that have highlighted Gagrati's legal career.

The first of Ardeshir and Piroja Gagrati's 11 children, Rustam was born in Porbunder where Ardeshir was employed as chief engineer of the Tata Cement Company. Living with his uncle Dr Dinshaw Gagrati in Bombay during his student years, Gagrati's only connection with the notoriously closed legal profession was his uncle Bomanji Gagrati, a senior managing clerk at Crawford Bayley and Company, one of Bombay's leading solicitors, which did not accept Indian articulated clerks. The rule was relaxed by apparently pro-Indian Scotsman Thomas Gavin Steel Little, the firm's seniormost partner, in light of Bomanji's long service to the firm and Rustam signed his articles of clerkship after paying the firm a premium of Rs 5,000 plus Rs 250 as stamp duty — a sum borrowed from his two paternal uncles and his maternal uncle Dr Kaikhushru Sethna. At that time articulated clerks received a stipend of Rs 30 per month but when Little's personal clerk succumbed to sudden illness, Little drafted Gagrati to serve temporarily in his place, paying him Rs 300 a month while on the job. Money apart, "I learnt a lot from him in regard to the manner in which he interviewed clients in his chambers and advised them," notes Gagrati. By 1926 Gagrati had appeared for his solicitors exam, gratefully returned his uncles' loan and was enrolled in the firm as a solicitor at Rs 350 per month.

That English solicitor assistants were given cabins while qualified Indian solicitors were made to sit outside with the clerks was a source of dissatisfaction. A year after his appointment Gagrati broached the topic with Little who plead-

ed shortage of space but agreed to make arrangements after consulting his partners. Two years later, when two cabins were erected for two English solicitor assistants, Gagrath again asked Little for a cabin. On pressing the issue he was asked to appear before a meeting of the partners on a Saturday afternoon. After the nine European partners had heard him out, one of them "Blair, whose name I still recollect," told him, "Mr Gagrath, you forget that we do not have a separate cabin for an Indian solicitor in our firm," narrates Gagrath. "Promptly I told them that I at that very moment was tendering my resignation from the firm and would write to the firm confirming it after the meeting. The partners were taken aback. Little persuaded me not to take this step, but I insisted on doing so. Later I wrote to the firm confirming my resignation," writes Gagrath.

During those years at Crawford Bayley Gagrath had made the acquaintance of Barjorji Bharucha, a staunch Congressman who was chief accountant of Greaves Cotton and Company. Gagrath's interest in the political movement was a common bond and when he thus resigned from Crawford Bayley on the issue of national pride, Bharucha provided the Rs 25,000 he needed to go into partnership with a

Parsi solicitor who offered him a 25 per cent share in his firm. Thus was born Chubb and Gagrath, later to be amalgamated with E. B. Ghaswalla and Company into Chubb, Gagrath and Ghaswalla. Ghaswalla however chose to pursue an advocate's career and retired from the firm, to be followed out by Chubb shortly thereafter.



On April 1, 1934 Messrs Gagrath and Company was born as a proprietary concern in the old Bank of India building — a site now occupied by the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation — funded by loans from two well-wishers. Its four employees, all of whom grew with the firm until their death, have since risen to 100, 12 among them, with services to the firm ranging between 27 years and 46 years, having being specifically honored on the celebration of Gagrath's 90th birthday in 1990.

Absorption seemed to be the principle on which Gagrath and Company grew. Still a fledgling in 1938 (Gagrath taught mercantile law at Davar's College and worked as a freelance journalist to supplement his income and functioned as a Bombay University examiner for the LLB degree) the company employed its first solicitor assistant. An uncle's friend urged that his son Chandrakant Mehta be employed. "Whatever salary I offered

would be acceptable to him," Gagrath recalls the interview. Mehta joined on a modest salary and was inducted as Gagrath's first partner in 1942, a cherished association that continued until Mehta's sudden death in 1978. Mehta's daughter Meenakshi Desai and son Ashok have since been inducted in the partnership. Mehra Shroff (née Cooper) came in as the first articled clerk in 1941 and was later absorbed as partner, today ranking in seniority next to Gagrath.

Gagrath's son Jangoo signed articles with his father in 1951, passed his solicitor's exam in 1954 and was admitted as a partner in 1955, the same year that the Delhi office was established. Jangoo's son Rustam qualified as solicitor in Bombay and London and was inducted as a partner in 1981.

In his felicitations to Gagrath in 1990, senior partner A. R. Jani recalled his own advent into Gagrath and Company in 1971. Representing Nusli Wadia in a property sale, he encountered Gagrath who, representing the purchaser, insisted on viewing certain documents which were in the sub-registrar's office. Jani recalled telling Gagrath that if he could wait, certified copies would be available for his inspection. "He said he could not wait and that he would come to the sub-registrar's office."

(Above) Gagrath and Palkhivala in happier times. (Below) With the partners of Gagrath and Company at the centenary celebration





Gagrat (standing 3rd from R) with daughter Bachoo. Seated center trio (L to R): Ardeshir with baby Jangoo, Piroja and Mani. (Right) With immediate family at grandson's wedding

It created an affinity between them and Jani who, possessed of a green card, was about to leave his original employer to settle in the US, was startled by Gagrat asking, "Can you be with us?" "The whole talk was over within five minutes... because there was no bargaining, there were no negotiations, I was received with open arms... Within five minutes he could win me over and make me a member of the family of Gagrats," remembered Jani, two of whose children, Chandahas and Priyahs, are now also partners of the firm.

Seeing in Gagrat the personification of the saying, "What you have to do tomorrow, do it today; what you have to do today, do now," Balmukand Agarwala, a partner of the Delhi firm, updated Jani's 20-year-old experience with what he had witnessed the day prior to the function. "We had an appointment; someone was to come to meet Mr Gagrat at 11 a.m.... Gagrat was in the office at 10.45 a.m.... I came 10 minutes (before) 11 and Jangoo came 10 minutes after 11. At 11.30 Gagrat got impatient. We phoned the gentleman who was to come. He informed us that he was not well and could not come. Gagrat said that he would go there and in a few minutes took the cane and we all went out to meet



the gentleman at Metro, went up three (flights of) stairs and met him and got the work done. There are many who would say that it can be done tomorrow. But Gagrat, at the age of 90, immediately got the work done which was pending for more than 10 years."

Gagrat has been the father figure to his 10 siblings, their children and grandchildren. Noted labor lawyer Maneck Gagrat, his youngest brother — a 21 year age difference separates the two — learnt his legal lore here. Addressing Rustamji on his 90th birthday as "my guru, my brother and my father," Maneck noted, "(He) has been a caring, loving brother not only for myself but for all our brothers and sisters... Not only has he been my father figure, but he has been my guide and mentor." Maneck spoke of the freedom and facility to learn at Gagrat and Company, the courage which Gagrat and Mehta instilled in them to draft petitions independently

and the discipline demanded in return: When Maneck handed him a copy of the newly promulgated Industrial Disputes Act without reading it first, he remembered the ridicule that he had to face. "The training you get in Gagrat you don't get anywhere else!"

Speaking at the firm's diamond jubilee celebration in 1994 Gagrat's favorite advocate, legal luminary Nani Palkhivala, who had graced earlier Gagrat milestones, recalled their first meeting. "I am celebrating 50 years of my association with the firm. In 1944 I

joined Sir Jamshedji Kanga's chambers. Rustam Gagrat came to deliver a brief to Sir Jamshedji." When they were introduced, Gagrat was clad in a cream suit, recalled Palkhivala, whose phenomenal mental and physical attributes were untouched by illness at that point of time. Sadly, Palkhivala was unable to attend the centenary function on March 25, 2000. On the 1994 occasion Palkhivala had referred to the "great human relationship" that characterized Gagrat and Company and described its founder as "spirited and public spirited... (who) fought cases not because of money but because they had a role to play in the development of the nation."

A first edition copy of the famous *Law of Income Tax* by Kanga and Palkhivala, inscribed with the words, "To my dear Rustam, the first attorney to brief me... Nani" is a cherished memento in the Gagrat household, attests

continued on page 66

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In the forefront of freight

The Katgaras of Jeena and Company have unitedly kept the century-old company at the top rung of cargo agents in India

Hilla P. Guzder

They have been moving for a century. Giraffes in 20-foot open-tops imported from Germany for the Calcutta zoo, a horned rhino exported from India, live human organs with a short life span sent to Stockholm for research, giant gantry cranes customs cleared at Cochin port, heavy duty equipment moved to Bhutan for the Tata hydel project — Jeena and Company has propelled a wide range of cargo to destinations worldwide.

It is now the third and the fourth generations of the Katgara family that pool their acumen and resources to fast forward their freight business. Seventy-one-year-old Adi Katgara is the patri-

arch, presiding over corporate policy along with his two sons Pallan and Homi and his nephews Jehangir, Cyrus and Sam who are the sons of his late brother Nariman. "Jeena and Company is into global logistics solutions," states Sam. "We provide a complete package of air and sea freight, customs clearance, import/export services. We function as overseas agents and provide door-to-door delivery."

With 10 offices at 23 locations in India and a combined storage area of 100,000 square feet, Jeena ranks among the top three cargo agents in India, with a quality management systems ISO 9002

certification to boot, according to the company fact file. Expressing his views with clarity of thought and economy of expression, Adi points out that being innovative is at the core of the company's business philosophy. Jeena has throughout its 100 years often taken a dive into uncharted territory. The company's printed history enumerates that Jeena was the first in India to start a travel department way back in 1925. Their special train tours from Bombay to Gwalior, Agra and Delhi then cost all of Rs 98 per person for a seven-day, first class tour! In 1933, second generation businessman Jehangirji Katgara (father of Nariman and Adi) personally conducted what was believed to be the largest Indian group of holidaying homo sapiens travelling overseas — at an unbelievable Rs 4,000 per person for 100 days, by first class!

In more recent times, Jeena has explored possibilities of business in New Zealand and Australia early, say the partners, before anyone else (from India). Europe, they note, is the company's number one market, but American business philosophy has sometimes been a bit too much to cope with! "We had so many experiences of our overseas agents there being bought or sold by rival firms, many have even wanted to buy us over!" quips Sam, a 'racing' man whose love for cars and fast driving has won him the crown five times already at the Autocross in Bombay. Jeena was also the first to offer cold storage facilities to their clients (a 'frozen' godown near Sahar airport in Bombay) and are awaiting permission from the customs for a 10,000 square feet warehouse at Panvel established for bonded warehouse activities i. e. completion of customs formalities at the warehouse itself, thus avoiding



The partners: Left to right (seated) Adi and Jehangir, (standing) Cyrus, Homi, Sam and Pallan



Clockwise: Pallonji, Jehangirji and Kaikushroo; Nariman in the 1940s; downtown headquarters



i. e. completion of customs formalities at the warehouse itself, thus avoiding delays, storage expenses and pilfering of goods.

Their 'quality inspection centers' at Delhi and Bombay (with one more coming up in Bangalore) were also an innovation e. g. exporters of shirts can bring their goods for the final inspection by buyers to a centralized place — instead of the earlier method of buyers' representatives travelling to scattered locations, with the inherent possibility of being 'wined and dined' to ensure favorable reports! Sticklers for conducting business in an ethical manner, Sam declares that dubious customers often come to Jeena, banking on the company's 'dependable' reputation to see their goods through! "We are choosy when it comes to customers," he remarks, preferring to deal with reputed companies like Siemens, Crompton Greaves, Whirlpool, Daewoo, Fed Ex, etc., who are among its long list of clients. A printed history of the company states that when the outbreak of World War II forced the Japanese out of India, Jeena and Company was made custodian of the goods

and property left behind by the Yokohama Specie Bank (now known as the Bank of Tokyo) and Mitsui Bank. The Bank returned decades later to find everything well maintained for them to take over. Jeena and Company was an official clearing forwarding agent for the defense services at that time and specialized in handling armaments, according to their company profile.

Currently, the top 10 forwarding firms of the world are already in India to tap a potentially huge market, but the Katgaras believe they are well positioned to meet the competition. "For the last eight years we have been working on our IT (information technology) solutions in-house," notes Homi, while multinationals, they believe, are having problems adapting their IT to suit Indian conditions. Jeena believes in providing a mix between the latest developments in freight forwarding, including tracing and tracking of consignments, combined with the personal touch, rather than by recorded messages on the phone which is often the practice with large forwarders. Procedures at ports can be cumbersome and bureaucratic, with Bombay customs,

Delhi customs, air and ocean customs having their own variety of ways! Nor has the economic liberalization in the country helped much. "Whereas earlier we had to deal with the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) for permits, it has now thrown the burden on to the banks, who have passed the buck on to us. Nor has EDI (electronic data interchange) helped much, so if there were 10 stages to a transaction earlier, now there are 14," jests Homi.

With a professional workforce of 700 spread all over India, the management notes with pride that a good 20 percent have been with the company for over 15 years, with around 40 people having put in more than 25 years of service. "There are many Parsis at the clerical and managerial level, both in Jeena and in TCI (Travel Corporation of India Limited)," asserts Adi who is also a director in sister concern TCI, reputed as one of India's premier tour and travel organizations which has won for a record 14 times the Government of India Tourism Award for maximum foreign exchange earnings in Category I. "The creation of TCI in 1961 is one of the main memories that has stayed with me through my years in the business," remarks Adi. Firmly imprinted in his mind also is his induction into the family firm 53 years ago. It was during his Inter-Commerce days at Sydenham College when, as a lad of 18, he joined Jeena and Company during the summer of 1947. "My elder brother Nari (Nariman) had joined three years earlier and my father Jehangirji was very pleased that the second son too was coming into the business," he softly narrates. The very next day his father was dead, stricken by a sudden heart attack.

What followed was a 50-year partnership of the two brothers which ended with Nari's demise in 1997. "Nari and I



Savoring the sights in Egypt and (below) moving cargo for thermal power project

were opposites in almost every way, in likes and dislikes, friends, views, etc. Yet we never had a quarrel," remembers Adi. Both brothers have won the prestigious Agastya Award given by the Travel Agents Association of India, received so far by only 12 persons in the travel and tourism industry and are the only two people from one family to be so honored. Both have won the Hall of Fame Award from the Indian Association of Tour Operators, among the slew of accolades that have come their way. The brothers have served on various advisory committees of the government and industry.

Adi was also a founder member, he says, of the Indian chapter of the YPO (Young Presidents' Organization, wherein one becomes the head of an organization before the age of 40), immortalized in Indian minds by US President Bill Clinton's visit to the Zoroastrian-owned Cafe Royal opposite Regal cinema to meet some of the top under-40 entrepreneurs of the Indian chapter. Adi became a member of the World

Presidents' Organization, its senior wing, after the age of 49.

The fourth generation of Katgaras has already been in the business for 20 years. "I am pleased with my family, the brothers and cousins are also the best of friends," remarks Adi, adding that even if there is a divergence of views, there is no reason why matters cannot be resolved by discussion and acceptance. "Many years ago we decided that this family will stay united," declares Meher Bhandara, Adi's daughter, who is the general manager, corporate communications, at TCI. Her sister Hilla Mazda who was with TCI in Bombay before

she moved to Madras some years ago is now back in Bombay.

Of the present partners, Cyrus, Sam and Homi "are heavily into Jeena," says Bhandara. Cyrus marshals Jeena's resources in north India, heading a strong establishment in Delhi. Operational aspects, consignee sales, dealing with foreign agents, etc are mainly Cyrus and Sam's domain, while "Homi is most important when it comes to the purse," informs Adi, with Homi being in charge of administration, finance, taxation, etc. While Pallan is US-based, looking after overseas markets, Jehangir's energies are more focussed on TCI management,

notes Bhandara. Sam is currently the honorary secretary general of the Air Cargo Agents Association of India while Cyrus has officiated as its honorary treasurer. Homi and Sam have been past presidents of the Air Cargo Club of Bombay. Nari had been founder member and past president of both associations.

A common thread weaving the family together is their love of sports. "Cricket crazy" Adi can never sit still, laughs Bhandara, adding that her father was also a school and college swimming champion. From tennis, squash, badminton to swimming,





Suburban air freight office

riding and judo, the cousins love the outdoors. Besides Autocross, Sam is into aeromodelling, informs Uncle Adi, adding that Sam is also into mountaineering and had bagged the distinction of being "No 1 cadet from Maharashtra" during his days with the N. C. C. (National Cadet Corps). "*Hoon Jeena maan bhi kaam karooch* (I also work for Jeena)," quips Sam.

"God has been good to us," avers Adi, adding that it is a "very good sign" that the new generation abroad is "more Parsi-minded," seeking information about their ancestors, customs, etc. The religion will survive abroad, he believes, because "they are doing something about it," and it won't die in this part of the world either as "strong-minded individuals will see to it that it survives." Regarding the differing viewpoints in the community regarding dokhmenashini, Adi enunciates matter-of-factly: "Once one is dead, does it really matter if the worms eat you or the fish eat you? If facilities are available the system can continue," with nephew Sam concurring and children Meher and Homi (present at the *Parsiana* interview) personally opting for freedom of choice. "Ours is a good religion, easygoing with no restrictions like other religions," reasons Sam. "It is also the most difficult to keep," adds Bhandara because of its philosophy of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, in keeping with which the family set up in 1981 the Katgara Foundation. "We started with a small corpus of Rs 10,000, which has grown to one crore rupees today, with a percentage of business profits going into the Foundation each year," conveys

Homi. With an annual distribution of Rs 15 lakhs, the Foundation has so far helped 1,500 people in various ways, he says.

Lamenting that Parsis seem to "feel a stigma" against work they consider "de-meaning" ("they would rather earn Rs 2,000 as a clerk than Rs 7,000 as a loader,") it has been the family's experience, observes Adi, that Parsi employees

sometimes have to be pushed from behind, but once they do take the plunge, they believe that Parsi employees are trustworthy, dependable and conscientious. Most Parsis are averse to transfers, laughs Sam, they would rather stay in Bombay than take promotions outside.

There is a lack of (business) leaders, says Adi, of energy for enterprise of the kind that spurred his grandfather Pallonji and his partner Jamshedji Dastoor to make the beginnings of a business, with no money and no experience, by setting up a small indenting office, named Jeena and Company after Dastoor's uncle Jeenabhai who gave them Rs 3,000 on condition that the company's name remain unchanged. Pallonji's sons Jehangirji and Kaikushroo consolidated the business by opening the clearing, forwarding and warehousing departments as early as 1911. Jeena and Company pioneered 'exhibition trains' (shops on wheels carrying traders all over the country) and were one of the first recognized agents for Indian Railways, Tata Airlines (now Air India), P&O (The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company), Lloyd Triestino, etc. For the past five years, Jeena has been appointed official freight forwarders for India's largest leather exhibition, states their website www.jeena.com. They have participated in clearing and forwarding goods for the Industrial Fair in Delhi in 1955 and for private exhibitions such as the British Aerospace Exhibition, Rolls Royce Exhibition project, etc, notes their website.

"It is now time to let the younger generation take over," reflects Adi, to carry, in cricketer parlance, the company's bat towards a double century.



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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES *continued from page 14*

searchers and historians not just for the restoration but to establish who the artist is (if unknown), who are the persons whose portraits have been painted and what was their contribution to the community," states Jejeebhoy. The search might unearth a Manchershaw Pithawala or Pestonji Bomanjee work in the possession of individuals or institutions who may be oblivious of its intrinsic value, note the organizers.

At the initial stage, between 300-500 of the best portraits will be selected on the basis of the paintings' aesthetic value — the dress depicted, the period in which they were painted, etc. "We are not looking at run-of-the-mill paintings," asserts Jejeebhoy. "Old photos interest us as well," observes Gandhi. "I would love to have, for example, pictures of the first cricket team to go to England which consisted of Parsis."

The project is estimated to cost around Rs 14 lakhs, including documentation on CD-ROM, the publishing of a catalog and presentation of the most outstanding works at an exhibition in the National Gallery of Modern Art at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall. The project will scout around western India to start with, as travel costs, transportation and follow-ups will otherwise prohibitively escalate costs, declares Jejeebhoy, adding that restoration of paintings is itself an expensive proposition with costs varying from Rs 2,000 to Rs 20,000 depending on the severity of the damage. The project, which seeks financial support from individuals and trusts, will be complementary to, but independent of, Dr Shernaz Cama's UNESCO-spon-

sored project for preserving Parsi heritage.

"During Art Fest 2000 organized by the Kala Ghoda Association, Gallery Chemould presented an unusual exhibition of two sensibilities — art and architecture — coming together. Four artists and four architects, working in pairs, had a look at the Kala Ghoda area with its beautiful heritage buildings and reinterpreted it. They brought the Kala Ghoda Street into our Gallery," narrates Shireen Gandhi, daughter of Khorshed and Kekoo Gandhi of Gallery Chemould. Large cutouts of Sir Cowasji Jehangir and David Sassoon, for example, focussed attention on the well-known personages of the district, while the scale of buildings was miniaturized. Black and white boats were painted on the Gallery wall in different angles, screwed onto another were architectural drawings of the C. J. Hall, Elphinstone College, David Sassoon Library, etc. The response was overwhelming, says Shireen, with laymen and art aficionados flocking to see it during its run from February 1-14, 2000.

Art Fest is an "inside/outside" exhibition which seeks to focus attention on the Kala Ghoda area as an art district, elaborates Shireen. The different art galleries displayed works on the pave-



Top left to right: Scions of the Wadia and Jejeebhoy families, priestly portrait, Cursetji Parekh (along-side)

ment galleries outside, there was an exhibition of Russian icons at the Prince of Wales Museum, a Potters Tea Party (exhibition of teapots made by potters from all over India) and display of old photographs at

the National Gallery of Modern Art, poetry and play readings at Wayside Inn, etc.

The Kala Ghoda Association, of which Gallery Chemould is a member, was formed in 1998. Though the imposing bronze equestrian statue of Edward VII, which gave the area its name, has been relegated to the Byculla zoo for a large number of years, 80-year-old Kekoo Gandhi's "latest campaign, one in which he is joined by (prominent social activists) Pramod Navalkar and Nana Chudasama, is to bring the Kala Ghoda back to Kala Ghoda, as a purely decorative statuary," writes Busybee in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of February 9, 2000. Kekoo's association with the art world began around 1941 when his framing shop at Princess Street, Chemould Frames, saw artists like Ara, Raza, Chavda, Hebbar, Hussain, etc

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bring their paintings to be framed, notes a press release from the Gallery. It was in 1963 that Gallery Chemould started from the first floor of the Jehangir Art Gallery as a sponsoring gallery, the first of its kind in Bombay.

Through the years, Gallery Chemould has been in the forefront of innumerable events and exhibitions, among them being the two Bombay Arts Festivals in '74 and '87, Hussain's retrospective entitled "21 years of painting," the Festival of India in Great Britain in '65 for which the central ministry of education and culture invited Kekoo to accompany the exhibition to London. In recent years, notes their profile, Shireen has been actively associated with museum directors in Australia for interaction with the art world there.

H. P. G.

Awareness through art

"To say that he just dabbles in water colors would be criminal. Each of his works are a reflection of life and an attempt to shake people out of their apathetic reverie...Cyrus Wadia has been fighting an ongoing battle of making himself heard and seen over the din and the melee of an art world gone materialistic," notes an introduction to the "artist in agony" or the "artist of pain" in *Citadel Pune*.

Whether it is depicting child prostitution or the superficial attempts at cleaning the environment, Wadia's paintings "disturb you in the extreme as each of his powerful water colors are the kind that make you squirm, avert gazes and shuffle your feet in discomfort. They have the power to move you, yes. But feel good? No. Not if you have a conscience," writes Corina B. Manuel in the



Khambatta and her creations

August 1999 issue of *Citadel Pune*.

"Art is about talking, about messages, creating awareness. It is powerful," Wadia was quoted in the article. "It's very disheartening to continue working when you have no response...We need somebody to see the work, appreciate it. If not buy it, then at least appreciate it! Though, buying it helps us to live," he continued. He was referring to the poor feedback to his work on child prostitution exhibited at Bombay's Jehangir Art Gallery even though it was specified that the proceeds would help children. "It's basically a very unfair profession," believes the artist, adding, "I'll keep doing my statements and pushing them."

There are times though when he wanted to throw in the towel but was motivated to continue on the insistence of his wife Gayatri whom he described as his "biggest strength...biggest inspiration." He commented on the three



months of efforts, eight hours a day that go into creating a meaningful painting, the rewards for which are oftentimes lacking, and was planning to pursue a course at Photo Studio for computer graphics so that if he needed to get into the commercial field or do advertising to sustain himself and his family, he would

have the wherewithal. His earlier training was at Bombay's J. J. School of Art and the Columbus College of Art and Design in USA, mentions the article.

Ceramic creations

For her, painting is a passion, a means of expressing her spontaneity. From fabric and oil painting to images on glass and acrylic (see "Mirror Images," *Parsiana*, September 1997), Ahmedabad-based artist Delna Khambatta has now moved to creations in ceramics which she terms 'Cerafusion.' "Glass painting has become too common. I always like to do something different," she observes.

Khambatta explains that crafting stoneware is a very difficult process, requiring firing temperatures varying from 750°C to 1,200°C and any mistakes made during the process can in no way be rectified later! Before stoneware is fired it is more fragile than even glass, she notes. Each piece is painstakingly handmade, designs painted on it and embellished with a final glaze.

Khambatta laughingly narrates the adventures that attended the making of the 230 ceramic creations — vases, plates, frames, tiles, jewellery, etc — she displayed at an exhibition in Ahmedabad in October 1999. Each day



Wadia with his haunting painting

Photo: Citadel Pune

would bring a new disaster — the kiln would break down, or the compressor taken on hire would play truant, or it would decide to rain just when the artefacts had been put out to dry in the sun in the spacious compound of the family home in Ahmedabad! It is imperative that stoneware is thoroughly dried as any moisture remaining means cracks will appear while it is being fired, she elucidates. "For a crucial 24 hours I have to be with the objects and have umpteen heart attacks! I would sit guarding the artefacts every afternoon, making sure visiting postmen or intruding dogs wouldn't knock down the delicate objects," she grins.

Khambatta animatedly delineates the art of beautifying each piece — with brush-painted designs or cone work, flowers stuck on, each petal made, folded and joined in a time-consuming process. Two months of hard work went into the exhibition, she observes. "Though I do attend a few classes on ceramic-making when I come to Bombay, most of the time I learn things entirely on my own through trial and error," she discloses, as new art forms continue to fire her imagination.

H. P. G.

Add life to the years

"India is aging rapidly and soon will be an aging society. So far our response to the aging process in the country is lukewarm and services are hardly available for the aged... there is little understanding of the issues of elderly in the country to formulate any meaningful policy... To gain proper understanding of the issues related to the elderly it is necessary to study the existing literature in this field," writes Dr C. A. K. Yesudian, professor and head, department of health services studies in his foreword to *Elderly in India* — Healthy? Happy? Helpless? Respected? Rewarded? Rejected? — An Annotated Bibliography in Search of Answers In the Year of the Older Persons — 1999. Published by the Documentation Cell, Centre for Health Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Deonar, Bombay, this 332-page compilation is the work of Dr Malini Karkal and her assistants.

Karkal would be known to the Parsi community because of her research paper entitled "Demographic situation and factors responsible for decline of population of Parsis" presented at the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress based on a survey conducted in 1982 under the

joint sponsorship of the International Institute for Population Sciences and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

Since Karkal had revealed in that paper that 36 percent of the Parsi population was aged over 55, this book is of special relevance to the community. Those ailing in the 55 plus age-group had maximum complaints of heart disease followed by diabetes, arthritis, blood pressure and digestive disorders.

The 884 articles, listed alphabetically, authorwise, dealing with the subject of gerontology — the physiological, psychological, social, economic and other parameters — are summarized in one paragraph each to serve as a ready reckoner for those interested in the subject. They constitute 287 pages of the book. A listing of books and theses takes up another 16 pages; the subject index, 10 pages; the author index, five pages; and the United Nations' principles for older persons, two pages.

"To add life to the years that have been added to life," the United Nations General Assembly has recommended 18 principles under the heads of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment. It concludes on the note: "People are created to give something



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back to the world. The best way to solve problems is to work together with compassion towards betterment of human life through helping improve the quality of life of all individuals."

Dogged determination

Dev had been promised a puppy for his 10th birthday. He was looking forward to taking custody of his own, beautiful, golden puppy when the sight of a dejected Rajah, about to be shot, contributed to a change of heart. "Mother, do you suppose there are lots of people who are cruel and unkind to animals?" enquires Dev of his mother, prompting her to reassure him, "People are generally kind and decent."

The highs and lows in the life of the levelheaded Dev, the trials and torture encountered by Rajah are all related with compassion and understanding by Nergis Dalal in her 87-page book for children, *The Birthday Present*. "It is based on a true story," mentions Dalal in a letter to *Parsiana*.



Dalal:
sensitive to life

middle in *The Times of India* of December 29, 1999. First published by Orient Longman Limited in 1972, this book was issued as a Gul Mohar book (an imprint of Orient Longman, 3-6-272 Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500029, Andhra Pradesh) in 1997.

As notes an introduction to the author, "Nergis Dalal is passionately fond of animals and writes articles and stories on the environment and on preventing cruelty to animals. She has three children and lives permanently in Dehra Dun." Her eight-year-old granddaughter Meenakshi's stamp of approval on the present slim volume with a declaration that "this is the best book I have

"It made me cry every time I read it, but no one else seemed to like it. It was a complete flop. It was therefore with surprise that I read a letter from my publishers saying they would like to re-issue the book," confessed Dalal in her

ever read," has reassured Dalal that her efforts were not in vain.

The images created by Dalal and the illustrations by Shahnaz Arni remain with the reader long after the narration of the story. Priced at Rs 40, the book is a welcome read for all animal lovers and those seeking to cultivate responsible and humane attitudes among their children.

SPOTLIGHT

Having served the Inner Wheel organization in different capacities for 25 years, **Gulnar Noshir Marfatia** of Ajmer has been elected vice president of the Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in India for the year July 2000 to June 2001, notes a press release. Among the other institutions in Ajmer with which she is involved are the Blind School, the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, the Rajasthan Social Welfare Board and the Ajmer Paripakva Nagrik Sansthan.



Marfatia:
social
involvement

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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THE PARSIANA BOOK OF IRANIAN NAMES



The Iranian names of boys and girls along with their meanings which originally appeared in *Parsiana* have now been reprinted in an attractive 24-page booklet. The book, which is priced at Rs 40, is available on sale at:

Kaiser-E-Hind, 300 Perin Nariman Street, Behind Reserve Bank of India, Fort, Bombay 400001.

Fareedon and Burjor Sandalwood Shop, Princess Street, Bombay 400002.

Union Press, 13, Homji Street, Bombay 400001.

THE TUSSLE FOR TRUSTEESHIP *continued from page 23*

Rustom Hormuzdiar. Throughout the day these representatives had sat with the registers, dutifully ticking off the voters as they came. It prevented the fracas that had erupted 10 minutes before closing time at Tamboly's election in October 1996 when an angry

Several ailing people came to cast their vote, among them a young lady on dialysis

Hormuzdiar had refused to comply with Rustom Tirandaz's late demand for such a count.

Even so the day saw verbal skirmishes between the lone Kadva and the strategically located Bhathena team facing him which occupied the first left pavilion on the approach road to the Hall as voters often turned to it for guidance. Further up the slope sat the BPP staff in their shamiana verifying certificates and issuing duplicates and facing them, across the road, sat veteran Kavarana supporters of the erstwhile CER, notably BPP trustee Mehta whose 20-year involvement with community politics has yielded much experience and an equal measure of confidence.

Some pudding was on hand when the result was satisfactorily established and Bhathena personally fed a piece to Kavarana ere she was whisked away to receive the ovation of her supporters in the compound below.

Jamé's Navroz issue carried Bhathena's full page advertisement thanking his supporters and congratulating Kavarana. It also noted how the battle at the hustings had helped him winnow his true friends "from the few who pretended to be my friends," adding, "I have emerged stronger, wiser and more aware."

On her part Kavarana despatched a letter of thanks dated March 21 to individual AC members "for giving me another opportunity to serve our dear community and continue the work which I set out to do seven years ago... My sincere thanks to all my supporters, well-wishers, co-trustees, friends and colleagues of the CER for all the help and encouragement that I was given during the elections."

BONDING IN BANDRA *continued from page 43*

cluded Dhunmai Mehta, Masani, Nusservanji Khariwalla, Shera Nanavati and others, with "lofty aims" of assisting the needy Zoroastrians of Bandra and bonding together the suburb's residents through group activities. Sheriar makes special mention of the late Ratti Kapadia, "almost a 'one-man institution,'" who functioned as honorary sec-

In 1860, Byramjee Jeejeebhoy built his summerhouse at Lands End, donating land for a park and recreation ground

retary for three decades. The BPA was registered as a public charitable trust in 1954 and Navroze Baria was BPA president for around 30 years. "Lady Hirabai Cawasji Jehangir was the patron of our Association and presided over our silver jubilee celebrations," he recalls.

Between 1980-1996, the BPA Youth Wing, comprising 100 boys and girls, infused energy and enthusiasm into the activities, organizing quiz programs, fashion parades, etc which provided frolic and added to the Association's kitty, narrates Sheriar. At the moment the Youth Wing is rather dormant, he rues, because many of the earlier members have gone abroad and others like his son, Dr Nozer Sheriar, well-known gynecologist and obstetrician, are professionally preoccupied. "We are looking out for a 'third string' (generation) to revive the activities," he says.

Tracing the history of Bandra Parsis, the BPA write-up narrates that community migration to the suburb began about 150 years ago. In 1860, Byramjee Jeejeebhoy built his summerhouse at Lands End, donating a large parcel of land to the government for a park and recreation ground. The road leading to the Band Stand, where Bandra residents and visitors gather of an evening to savor the balmy sea breeze and roadside refreshments, was named after him. The House of Tatas built the Tata Blocks in the 1930s, adding to the area's Zoroastrian numbers. In Sheriar's view those who have once stayed in Bandra "never want to leave!"

NO VOTERS, NO VOICE *continued from page 28*

If the electoral rights, as a first step, are extended to at least 5,000 people in our community, the elections in my opinion will be made more meaningful and representative and the community, by and large, will take greater interest in its affairs.

Everyone knows that there is polarization on the board of trustees on many important matters. The Parsi Press has a very important role to play in molding public opinion so that the BPP trustees, who are but human, can have the benefit of various opinions and take constructive criticism into account while arriving at important decisions.



Ruby Phiroze Lilaowala is a freelance writer/columnist. She was a special correspondent for *The Gulf Times* and was a censorship officer for the government of Qatar. After graduation she studied law and lectures in India and abroad on religion, theosophy and other subjects.

ON BORDI'S BEACHES *continued from page 46*

another delegate, the beach and the ocean more than made up for all the long, agonizing lectures he was made to sit through. Certain other delegates shared the view that though the speakers were knowledgeable and spoke very well the discussions on religion were a little too intense. "There should be lesser lectures and more interaction," suggested Monaz Vakil of Ahmedabad. But the youth did have their share of fun by dancing into the wee hours of the morning. They also sang their hearts out in a game of Antakshari conducted one night around a bonfire. No matter what complaints or suggestions were made, in retrospect, the three-day seminar was a success in more ways than one.

Thirteen may seem an unlucky number to many, but for FOZYA, the hosts, and this batch of delegates the combination proved to be a lucky one. The youth were provided with a platform to express their ideas and views and they came up with many a productive suggestion. And the thinking youth of a community can be sure to propel it to greater heights of achievement.

THE LEGAL INNINGS...
continued from page 54

Jango. The book has its own history. When it was first published in 1950 Kanga and Palkhivala were sued for plagiarism and breach of copyright by Sampath Iyengar whose own book on income tax law had been the reference work in use till then. At the request of the authors Gagrath undertook to defend the action in the Madras High Court, informs *A narration of events* compiled by the partners of Gagrath and Company on the firm's golden jubilee in 1984. Initially R. J. Kola and subsequently H. M. Seervai appeared for Kanga and Palkhivala. "After Palkhivala stepped into the witness box and gave evidence disproving the false allegations levelled against him in what Gagrath recalls as one of the most brilliant testimonies given in court, the judge dismissed the suit with a certificate for Kanga and Palkhivala. The plaintiff in the suit saw to it that the judgement is not reported in any of the authorized *Law Reports*. Thereafter the editions of Kanga and Palkhivala have never looked back."

Tehmtan Andhyarujina, who thereafter became solicitor general of India, had recalled at the '94 celebration the long friendship between Gagrath and his own father Rustomji that had begun during their school years. "Both started life with great disadvantage and rose the hard way." Briefly with the firm at the inception of his legal career, Andhyarujina remembered Gagrath teaching him "how to talk to the judge." Referring to the company as a "khandaani firm — you can associate the highest things with Gagrath and Company," Andhyarujina noted, "If a professional person, a judge, wants help, they turn to Gagrath and Company; put their children in Gagrath and Company for training (because it is an) ennobling experience..."

In 1990 Agarwala had emphasized Gagrath's high professional and

moral standards and values. "He never works for himself. He works for the firm of Gagrath and Company and he inculcates the same feeling in everybody. When a notice is sent by any partner, it is sent by Gagrath and Company and everybody knows what a notice from Gagrath and Company means, and what will be the kind of document if it is given to Gagrath and Company for drafting. He may not be there, I may not be there and some of you may not be there, but he has seen to it that this firm grows on the foundation laid by him on solid ground and the foundation is deep and this firm will go on for a very very long time."

As a young attorney Gagrath had had to brief the redoubtable Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and in later years his son Motilal. Speaking to *Parsiana* in March 2000 Gagrath recalled that Chimanlal dyed his hair black while Motilal, who was fully grey, did not, raising confusion as to who was the father and who the son. His association with them was a happy one.

In the Law Society article Gagrath recalled how impressed he was with Mohammed Ali Jinnah's oratory. Ashonary secretary of the Bombay Students Brotherhood which was interested in the political movement in the country he had invited Jinnah to address them. And as attorney he had briefed

Gagrath at Wilson College Literary Society (standing, 5th from left) and one of the rebellious Setalvad progeny (seated, 2nd from left). Below: With Chagla

the fiery advocate. He recalled an instance when they appeared in a chamber matter before Justice Mirza who was hostile to Jinnah and passed unfavorable orders and dismissed them before their submission was complete. Jinnah sent for Gagrath later, remarked that the chamber summons was wrongly dismissed and suggested that the client be advised to file an appeal. When Gagrath noted that his client had not the means to file an appeal, Jinnah told him to go ahead anyway, assuring him that there would be no charge for his appearance in the chamber summons nor for the appeal. The matter was pursued, the appeal court set aside Mirza's order and the particulars asked for in the chamber summons were directed to be given. "From this time my relations with Jinnah became closer and I used to frequent his chambers often," wrote Gagrath.

It was in Jinnah's chambers that Gagrath first met M. C. Chagla, then a junior advocate, and had occasion to brief both on many occasions. The friendship with Chagla endured through his years as a judge (Chagla became the first Indian chief justice of the Bombay High Court in August 1947), his ambassadorship in the US, his years in the central cabinet and later as counsel at the Supreme Court. In his birthday greetings to



Gagrat in 1974 Chagla had written, "I will always remember your great kindness to me as one of the roses in December of my life."

From its first decade the firm had taken up public interest litigation, specifically the cause of citizens against the state, challenges to the legislative competence of laws and the legality of executive actions, notes the *Narration*. Such cases increased with the Constitution of India coming into force and the promulgation of new laws.

In 1948, on the consecration of a dokhma in Bangalore, an attempt was made by the orthodox elements there to put the hitherto functioning aramgah out of use. Prof A. R. Wadia of the University of Mysore, a community scholar, decided to oppose the orthodox view and to defend the right of community members to opt for either mode of disposal of the dead. At Wadia's request Gagrat personally handled the legal proceedings. The evidence of eminent scholars in the community like Dastur (Dr) Maneckji Dhalla, Dr Jamshed Unwalla and others was recorded on commission in the Court of Small Causes in Bombay. The orthodox view was rejected by the court. Wrote Wadia in his book on the case (Bangalore Parsi Anjuman Vs State of Mysore) fought in the Mysore High Court, "We have established the principle that dokhma is not a matter of religion and we have done this through the mouths of the orthodox witnesses for the plaintiffs... (Gagrat's) conduct of the case in Bombay broke the back of the so-called orthodox witnesses. Our thanks to him and particularly for his having taken up the case more as a labor of love than of business."

A rationalist and a freethinker Gagrat carried the banner of revolt against blind orthodoxy in the community. When noted solicitor and Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Shrivastav Vakil had sought to apprise the community of the woeful conditions of the dokhmas in 1973, Gagrat supported him throughout the ensuing bitter controversy. When 25-year-old Roxan Shah (née Nazir) was denied funerary rights at doongerwadi in 1990, Gagrat's letters of remonstrance were prominent in *The Bombay Samachar*. It was he who spearheaded the legal action that won Parsi women married to non-Parsis the right to vote at BPP elections in 1981 and he goaded them into forming the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians in 1991 that finally won from the

Punchayet the right to be consigned to the dokhma at the end of their lives. Rustamji had been chairman of the Zoroastrian Cooperative Bank Limited for 13 years, was a director of the *Jam-e-Jamshed* until orthodox philanthropist Nanabhoy Jeejeebhoy took it over and served diligently on the governing board of the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital. "I've lost interest in the affairs of my community," Palkhivala had confessed, adding "not Rustamji."

During the Emergency (1975-77) the firm acted on behalf of leading members of the Bombay bar and former judges of the High Court. When the executive effected preventive detention of political opponents, Gagrat and Company filed habeas corpus petitions; when detainees were ill-treated, there were applications for their human and civilized treatment; censorship orders were challenged. When former chief justices Chagla and J. C. Shah and former judge N. P. Nathwani wanted to hold a public meeting and were banned from doing so, Palkhivala, Ram Jethmalani, K. S. Cooper, A. B. Divan, Soli Sorabjee and 153 other advocates instructed by Gagrat and Company appeared on their behalf before the division bench of the Bombay High Court which struck down the prohibitory orders of the police commissioner and upheld the right of dissent and the maintainability of writ petitions challenging the legality of such orders even when Article 19 of the Constitution was suspended during the Emergency.

This and many other landmark judgments were secured by meticulous preparation. But even 10 years ago Gagrat was repelled by the declining standards of professionalism in the world around him, noting in his forthright way, "Those who have to work with me know I have a peculiar temperament for perfection... and I am always anxious that any lawyer who wants to practise must have proper knowledge of both law and facts. But today I find the situation has completely changed... I am really disappointed how matters are nowadays attended to in court and even in our office. It may be that I may be highly critical but that is my reaction to what is happening around here. I am really sorry."

Responding to his partners' speeches in 1990, the 90-year-old Gagrat had registered his regret: "Never in my life have I addressed any gathering sitting as I am doing today but it is the signal of

age and I wish that all your wishes (for a) long life may be negated soon, because it is at my expense." His wife Mani had predeceased him after 56 years of marriage, as had his daughter Bachoo. Two years after the celebration he had to confront another blow when his daughter Najoo succumbed to cancer. The devotion of his son Jangoo to himself and the firm has sustained him and he acknowledges his gratitude publicly. Listing the four major happy events in his life as the establishment of the firm, the first partnership with Chandrakant Mehta, the establishment of the Delhi office, said to be the first firm of solicitors there, and the arrival of Jangoo as a partner, Gagrat had said, "I must admit that after he joined the partnership of the firm the work of the firm has considerably increased and he has practically taken over the leadership of the firm." Happy to list three Gagrats, three Janis and three Agarwalas in the firm, Gagrat declared, "Today I have the satisfaction that I have the goodwill, affection, regard and respect from my partners... and members of my staff right to the level of sepoy. At the end of my life I have got this great satisfaction. There is nothing more that I can want."

Voyage

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Marshall's tender tales

Narinan Haiyan Sonanan Haiyan – Parsi Sansari Tukki Vartao by Dr Ratan Rustumji Marshall. Published in 1999 by Harsh Prakashan, near Fuwara, Gandhi Road, Ahmedabad 380001. Pp: 30 + 258. Price: Rs 110.

This collection of short stories by Dr Ratan Marshall covers the social life of Gujarat's Parsis. The other collection of short stories in Gujarati by Bapsy Engineer dealt with the same theme, but the period covered in it took you back by about 100 years. In this book Marshall writes about the changing currents in the lives of people in general and how these have affected the Parsis: like the end of the joint family system, divorce and its traumas, the concept of individuality and of equal status of man and woman, the influence of higher education, etc.



Marshall: understanding women's hearts

A comparison with Engineer's collection published in 1999 is inevitable. Apart from her elegant language, the central themes of her stories are the valor, heroism and tenderness of women while the stories in *Narinan Haiyan...* give its readers only one message: that women have "golden hearts," soft, full of delicate feelings. This may be so, but the statement is not universally true. Still, this perception is supported by stories like 'Vahu Avi,' which depicts the life of Gulshan Khambatta. Gulshan is a godly soul. The story balances gross human failures against the great verities of life. A very humane piece, it touches the heart.

Another such story is 'Jodia Bhaio' (the twins), Armin and Ramyar. A sensitive story, it will remain in the reader's mind for a long time.

A few more stories may be mentioned: 'Hataria House' which is a portrait of Dina Hataria and her grandfather, Dosabhai. The two characters in 'Salgiri,' Siloo and Bahadurji Uncle, are both loveable. One is old and lonely, the

other a very young girl. Siloo, who has tender feelings for her old neighbor, Bahadurji Bastavala. 'Dhanabad' has a theme similar to that of 'Hataria House' — the influence of city life on the younger generation which conflicts with the love of old people for their limited village life and their friends still living there. The old desire to live in a past that is fading away, while the young long to taste the glamor of the new age. The principal characters are usually one young and one old, the elderly ones rather pathetic in their longing for by-gone days.

The trauma of divorce is another theme Marshall handles in 'Ansu' (tears), 'Shikelan-Bhanelan' (educated beings), 'Jeevan-Hai-Sangram' (life is a grim tussle) and in some other stories. They depict the failure of relationships with its sorry effect on children and on adults who have to struggle with guilt and remorse.

By and large, these stories read rather like good essays than roundly etched short stories. They are readable but fail to grip the imagination. This reminds the reviewer of famous writers whose later work turned out to be weaker than their prize-winning literary creations.

HORMAZDYAR S. DALAL

The muse and Master

Sanchayika, Kavi Khabardarni Kavyayatra compiled by Dr Dharmendra M. Master (Madhuram). Published in 1998 by Rashtrakavi A. F. Khabardar Janmashatabdi Prakashanmala and Ajit Prakashan, 50, Kalavihar, 2nd Floor, Jayanagar, Usmanpura, Aurangabad 431005. Pp: 500. Price: Rs 160.

This is one more work brought out by Dr Dharmendra Master and the granddaughter of the poet, Manek K. Khabardar. The volume also contains a well researched 24-page critique on the poetry of Kavi Khabardar followed by 300 pages of selected poems in Gujarati and English.

Khabardar was a prolific writer. In all, he wrote and published about 21 collections of poems in Gujarati during his lifetime. He also left behind work which saw the light of day only when

Master came along. Except for a few titles, the quality of Khabardar's unpublished work was not known. *Mamuraj*, for instance, was an unpublished work in Gujarati. Lovers of Gujarati language and literature knew about its existence at the time of the poet's death. Similarly, lovers of his poetry were aware of his collections in English, *Silken Tassel*, for example, but other work also existed which had yet to be published. But where was it, was the question. Who possessed the poems? And would they be available for posthumous publication?

Madhuram made all possible attempts to answer these questions. From the time he decided to do his thesis on Khabardar in Gujarati, he came to know that some prose work existed too. His preliminary research led him to explore the poet's writings in Gujarati as well as in English. He discovered that not only was Khabardar a fine poet — one of the front rank poets of Gujarati literature along with Kavi Nanalal and others — but also a good prose writer.

On completing his thesis, Master did more research and discovered where the unpublished works of the poet were lying in obscurity. He approached the persons for the manuscripts and organized the financial deals involved in their publication. Not an easy task but Master worked at it and got the required monetary help from Parsi men and women, from Parsi charity funds and trusts, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the Surat Panchayat and other community organizations. It was a stupendous task, which he performed creditably.

It is not to be concluded from this that all Parsi individuals and trusts who subscribed to Master's project were lovers of Gujarati literature or had even read Khabardar. This reviewer firmly believes that it was the universal reputation of the poet of *Gunvanti Gujarat* and *O Bharat-Ma Pukar* and *Khappar Bharo Bharo Ho* that was chiefly responsible for the help Master received to attain his cherished goal.

Hundreds of Khabardar's poems were popular all over India. He was a poet who wrote national songs or songs of freedom before Gandhiji appeared on the scene of the Indian freedom movement. He was also the poet who gave Gujarati literature a vast canvas. He wrote bhajans, songs of freedom, *Gandhi Bapu, Bapuno Pavado*, etc, garbas and ras, poems of nature; and

who does not know of his *Darshamika*, the elegy written on the death of his daughter Tehmina? It is replete with philosophical musings on life and nature, of the equation of this world with the other, of the seen and the unseen.

Rarely had a Gujarati poet covered such a wide variety of poetic themes. Is there a Zarathushti who is ignorant of Khabardar's *Shri Iranshah No Pavado* (1942) and of his classic work, *Asho Zarathushtra-ni Gatha-o-par Navo Prakash* (New light on the *Gathas* of Asho Zarathushtra). This work of research is available both in Gujarati and English.

It could well be said that Master has once again made a valuable contribution to Khabardar's work and to the Parsi community. The present volume of collected poems will certainly prove as worthy as *Khabardar-na-Patro*, a collection of Khabardar's letters, published in 1992, and *Khabardar-na-Gadya Lekho*, prose articles written by Khabardar (1996). Master has also published works of the poet in English. They are worth having in one's personal library for reference and for reading some of his beautiful poems when the mood permits.

H. S. D.

Of songs and stage shows

Parsi Rangabhumina Geeto compiled by Dr Dharmendra M. Master (Madhuram). Published in 1999 and distributed by Gurjar Granthratna Karyalaya, Gandhi Marg, Ratanpole Naka, Ahmedabad 380001. Pp: 152. Price: Rs 100.

The Parsi Gujarati theater has a hoary history. The Bombay Theatre (in Bombay) was established as far back as 1750, with the purpose of entertaining British soldiers.

Dadabhai Naoroji took the cue and ventured to stage a Parsi Gujarati play in a theater located at Grant Road on October 28, 1853. This first Gujarati play was based on an episode selected from the *Shah Nameh*. More plays in Parsi Gujarati followed. In the beginning, the language of the plays was Gujarati, but they were interspersed with farces in Hindi. The plays did not have songs.

Three years later, in 1856, the Parsi Natak Mandli was established and the professional Parsi Gujarati theater lasted

for nearly 86 years. The New Baliwala Dramatics was the last company. In all about 29 Parsi companies were active, and between them they staged 165 plays and had a troupe of 58 Parsi players.

To begin with, social problems of the community formed the theme of these plays; the tone was usually serious. But as the movement progressed, the plays became lighter. Laughter, hilarious laughter was the main ingredient, and humorous entertainment continued to be the objective of playwrights till Adi Marzban and his followers came on the scene. The plays now staged were not always original but adaptations of English plays. Also plays based on mythological themes, episodes from Indian and Iranian history, social evils of the day, etc were performed. The ultimate aim of the theater was to reform society.

In the collection under review, Dr Dharmendra Master has given us 142 songs authored by different writers. For the play *Gopichand* and a number of others, songs were composed by Edulji Khory, Kaikhasru Kabraji, Nanabhai Ranina, Ardeshir Patel, Dara Mehta, Dolly Palkhivala and many others.

Songs were not part of the play script before the days of Kabraji. It was he who introduced songs and for this purpose founded the Natak Uttej Mandli. He himself took extensive training in classical Indian music under an ustad and composed songs for his famous play *Rustom-Sohrab*.

Religious songs, songs of nature, love songs, songs for tiny tots, ghazals and garbas were written and presented. Not only songs in Gujarati but also in English were included in Parsi Gujarati plays like *Najan-Shirin*, *Kantanu-Katesar*, *Dhun Dhun Dhoori*, etc. Hindi songs too were included, e.g. *Dil Farosh* written by Nanabhai Ranina had songs in Hindi. The play was staged by the Alfred

Natak Company.

Apart from the songs from Parsi Gujarati plays, the volume compiled by Master also includes introductory ar-

ticles on Parsi Gujarati theater; life sketches of Khurshedji Rustomji Cama (1831-1909), Madame Bhikhaiji Cama and Nani Palkhivala; nine appendices to cover noteworthy plays staged by Parsi theater companies; notes on Parsi playwrights and their plays, well-known Parsi

actors and actresses; a list of first plays staged by Parsi theater companies; and some Parsi Gujarati plays with songs and their first lines. This information is likely to be very useful to the reader seriously interested in the subject.

Master has surely rendered good service to theater lovers in general and the Parsi Gujarati stage in particular. Not much has been written on the subject, except for

a couple of books, the latest one being a thesis by Dr Gopal Shastri. Dr Ratan Marshall has also done some work in this area.

It is sad that a vibrant medium like the theater — particularly the regional theater — ended by the '30s of the 20th century. A few professional theaters like the Bhang Wadi in Bombay did survive but soon they too had to close their doors. Also theater houses in which to produce the plays were simply not there.

When Adi Marzban came on the scene, he had to begin his activity by booking cinema theaters on hire, or by engaging public halls. He continued the old tradition of Parsi Gujarati plays. Others like Feroze Antia, Homi Tavadia, Dorab Mehta and Yazdi Karanjia (Surat) followed suit, and wrote and staged Parsi Gujarati plays. The revival by Adi Marzban also influenced Vijay Tendulkar, P. L. Deshpande and others to inject new life into the Marathi theater. Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati theaters in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona and Delhi began to function actively. Calcutta was another city famous for highly professional theater.

But this is past history. The death of the theater movement in India, as also in England, was due to the introduction of the cinema. First the silent pictures, then the talkies replaced the theater. Theater requires enterprise, sponsors, experienced playwrights, producers and actors. It demands a lifelong dedication.

H. S. D.



Master: bringing Khabardar to the masses

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 40 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 55 years, averaging at 31 years.

There were 67 Zoroastrians who were consigned to the Towers of Silence in February 2000 as compared to only 11 births. Heart disease took a toll of 30 lives, 19 of whom were in the 80+ age-group. Nine patients succumbed to cancer and four each to old age/general debility and lung related diseases. The other killers were diabetes and brain disease (three each) and hypertension and kidney failure (two each). Immunodeficiency syndrome, osteoporosis (loss of bone density due to excessive absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the bone), diabetic gangrene, asthma, hypothyroidism (symptoms caused by deficiency of thyroid secretion), toxoplasmosis (an infection by toxoplasma parasites), Opitz syndrome, psoriasis (a chronic skin disease in which the reddened skin areas are covered with scales), malnutrition, jaundice, dehydration, hyperpyrexia (excessive body temperature), septicemia, hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body) and liver disease were the isolated cases

registered for February. Two youths, both males aged 28 and 30, were also lost to the community. The youngest and eldest to breathe their last were also both males: a three-day baby and a 98-year-old. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for February, in Bombay, was 76 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the break-up of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

AHMEDNAGAR

DIED

Meher Nagarwalla (50), wife of Behram on February 15, 2000

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to *Nazneen* and *Zubin Karkaria*; February 3
A boy to *Meher* and *Kursed Poonawala*; February 3
A boy to *Heena* and *Adil Engineer*; February 7
A girl to *Hilla* and *Kurush Amrolia*; February 10
A boy to *Naheed* and *Rushad Divecha*; February 10
A boy to *Havovy* and *Pancham Hariramani*; February 10
A girl to *Anita* and *Anosh Shroff*; February 11
A girl to *Bitu* and *Shahrukh Irani*; February 15

A girl to *Navaz* and *Neville Mehta*; February 15
A boy to *Shiraz* and *Dosu Sarkari*; February 22
A boy to *Khushnoor* and *Sarosh Tangri*; February 26

MARRIED

Anaitha Dhanjisha Marfatia and *Pourus Khushru Vakil*; January 28
Yashnaaz Homi Bhagalia and *Jimmy Phiroze Vesuna*; January 30
Pearl Dali Todiwalla and *Zubin Dara Hiloo*; January 31
Gulmohur Freddy Dariwalla and *Farrokh Pheroze Tarapore*; January 31
Yasmin Minoo Khambatta and *Khushroo Khurshed Bhadha*; February 1
Dinaz Nariman Wadiwalla of Karachi, Pakistan and

Homi Peshotan Nanavaty; February 3
Arzan Viraf Dodhi and *Rustom Sam Dhanbhora*; February 6
Rashne Rusi Munshi and *Farzad Noshir Patel*; February 6
Binaifer Jal Contractor and *Hormuzd Dady Billimoria*; February 8
Meherangiz Edal Kolah of Navsari and *Hoshi Bejan Bharucha*; February 10
Mehroo Homi Engineer and *Firdos Minoo Karai*; February 10
Binaifer Kersi Mistry and *Raymond Aspi Pastakia*; February 10
Brenznitar Sarosh Sarkari and *Vistasp Dara Bhesania*; February 12
Zena Minoo Master and *Yazdi Jal Mistry* of London, UK; February 12
Roozmehr Minoo Karkaria and *Cherag Firoze Bardoliwalla*; February 14
Firoza Framroz Desai and *Daravus Bomi Daroga*; February 14
Khurshid Adi Bharucha and *Adil Keki Kotwal*; February 17
Navaz Pervez Bavaadam and *Neville Dinyar Bharucha*; February 18
Humin Kersi Bhagat and *Burzin Manek Daver*; February 20
Tinaz Aspi Jassawalla and *Doryush Sohrab Jangi*; February 21
Khushnum Hoshedar Basla and *Persy Xerxes Avari* of Ahmedabad; February 22
Zenobia Yezdi Mehta and *Sohrab Rustomji Captain*; February 24
Burzana Danny Jalnawalla and *Guraz Hoshang Wankadia*; February 24
Benaifer Rusi Irani and *Kersi Farrokh Tata*; February 26
Kamal Jehangir Pastakia and *Daneshmand Homi Unwalla*; February 26
Bitu Fariborz Jadidi Kalantari and *Jahanbux Eruch Irani* of Dahanu Rd; February 27
Berafrid Bomi Umrigar and *Rohinton Adi Madon*; February 27

DIED

Kenneth Nadir Pedder, residing at Sister Bglw, H. K.

Bhabha Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; December 16, 1999 (cremated)
Behram Mellashaw Khandhadia (51), 8, Fab, Ekveera Co-op Hsg Soc, Opp Sai Marbles, Talegaon, Dabhade, 411507; January 31, 2000
Sheroo Jal Talati (82), 66/D, Soonaiji Ter, Gwalia Tank, 400036; January 31
Macakmai Manecksha Damania (82), C/o Freny Damania, 7/B, Navjivan Soc, Lamington Rd, 400008; February 1
Nargish Dinshaw Vania (80), Room no 9, Sidhwa Bldg, Balam St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 1
Nergish Tehmurasp Wadia (81), C/17, West Wing, Contractor Bldg, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 1
Shirin Kaikhushroo Dotiwala (91), 757, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 2
Sheroo Darabsha Kolsawala (84), Readymoney Bldg no 2, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; February 2
Jal Nadirsha Bilimoria (77), 402/A, Rajgir, Kohinoor Rd, Dadar TT, 400014; February 3
Mehroo Jal Kharas (83), 7, Mohamedbhoy Mans, Patkar Marg, Kemps Corner, 400036; February 3
Feroze Keki Pardiwalla (59), Readymoney Bldg no 3, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; February 3
Munchershaw Edulji Variava (98), F/50, Cusrow Bldg, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 4
Dara Motabhai Bilimoria (79), Sethna Bhabha Bldg, B. Jaykar Marg, 400002; February 5
Jehangir Ardeshtir Deboo (79), B/2, Petit Block, Balam St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 5
Coomi Homi Sidhva (79), 101/6, Dadgar, Behram Bldg, Parsi Clny, Oshiwara, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; February 5
Phiroze Sorabji Talati (75), 15, Walchand Ter, Opp A/C Market, Tardeo, 400034; February 5
Hilla Rusi Ankleseria (78), 3/7, Lady Dorab Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 6
Sarosh Jimmy Damania (30),

C/31, Baney Compd, Tardeo, 400034; February 6
Baby boy of Meher Kursed Poonawala (3 days), 122/B-A, Grand Paradi, Kemps Corner, 400026; February 6
Manek Kaikhushru Bhada (70), H-5/1, Godrej Hillside Clny, Vikhroli, 400079; February 7
Banoo Sorabji Bhesania (82), 2/10, Mistry Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; February 7
Jehangir Nusserwanji Katrak (83), Sheri Hse, Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001; February 7
Avan Jehangeer Mistree (85), Farm Manor, Mistree Lane, Orlem, Malad (W), 400064; February 7
Khorshed Firoze Mistry (89), 3, Gool-Dhun Abad, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; February 7
Nergish Ardeshtir Mody (86), A/18, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; February 7
Roshan Ratan Balsara (83), Kerawalla Mans, Carnac Rd, 400002; February 9
Bapsy Burjorji Khurshedji (61), A/20, Shapur Baug, Congress Hse, Lamington Rd, 400007; February 9
Phiroze Dorabji Motiwala (80), 7, Narielwala Bldg, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 9
Homai Jehangir Wadia (89), Motlibai Wadia Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; February 9
Yazdi Jal Kapadia (55), 9, Jaiji Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 10
Freny Gustad Tampal (64), R/34, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 10
Keki Nowroji Khambatta (89), 8, Sea Shell, Perry Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 11
Hilla Fakirji Mistry (84), 38, Dubash Bldg, Walchand Hirachand Marg, 400001; February 11
Najamai Jalejar Bengali (82), Damania Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; February 12
Keki Jehangir Framji (75), 664, Roshan Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 12
Aflatoon Kaikhushroo Irani (71), Sorab Hse, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 12
Piloo (Piroja) Jal Dhondy

(84), Porbunder Castle, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; February 13
Spenta Pallonji Madan (79), 11, Sai Ashish, Tertulian Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 13
Minoo Rustomji Palkhiwala (89), E/37, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 13
Nariman Framroz Sahiar (73), 803/A, Mistry Manor, Dadar, 400014; February 13
Noshir Jalbhaj Dhanbhoo (79), Bag-E-Shirin, Tithal Rd, Valsad, 396001; February 14
Jehangir Meherwanji Bhungara (72), C/20, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 15
Minocher Jamshedji Rivetna (95), 681/A, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 15
Adil Jal Unwala (53), 666, Orient Hse, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 16
Kersi Kaikhosroo Irani (69), 194, Talati Bldg, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; February 17
Burjor Dinshawji Tantra (82), Oomer Mans, 394, Grant Rd, 400007; February 17
Ami Ratanshaw Elavia (80), 32/A, Todiwalla Bldg, Sun Mill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; February 18
Putla Phiroze Dossabhoy (97), Jaiphal Ter, 31, Forjett St, 400036; February 19
Ratanbai Cooverji Mithawala (94), 405, Sibylla Apts, 65, Worli Hill Rd, 400018; February 19
Gool Phirozsha Master (93), Hormuzd Mans, Opp Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo, 400007; February 20
Rustom (Rustomji) Maneksha Bhadha (85), M/28, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 21
Dara Framroze Rogers (76), 7-C/5, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, Sir C. J. Clny, Tardeo, 400034; February 21
Eruchsha Cawasji Sutaria (80), C/o 5, Ravan Chawl, Doongerwadi, Kemps Corner, 400036; February 21
Daulat Pheroze Bana (70), A/3, Godrej Baug, Off Nepeansea Rd, 400036; February 22
Sam Erachshaw Kanga (75), 19, Datta Apts, Ramkrishna Mission Rd, Khar (W),

400052; February 22
Rati Erach Sarkari (74), Sethna Bldg, 87, Matarpakdi, Mazagaon, 400010; February 23
Piloo Jal Wadia (78), 701, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; February 23
Gool Navroji Motiwala (86), 622, Palia Mans, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 24
Vispy Phiroze Patel (28), M/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 24
Sorab Rustomji Balsara (62), 201, Raj Laxmi Apts, Near Suyog Mangal Karyalay, Dombivli (E), 421203; February 25
Dara Cawasji Engineer (56), 785/A, Readymoney Bldg, Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 25
Phiroze Rustomji Governor (84), 635, Munsiff Bldg, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 25
Gool Faredoon Irani (83), B/14, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 25
Kitty Framroze Panthaky (80), Terrace Cama, 26, Altamount Rd, 400026; February 25
Aloo Homi Kapadia (78), Alpawalla Bldg, M. M. Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 26
Lily Hirji Vacha (73), 16, Hampton Court, 125, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; February 27
Freny Kali Mehta (80), C/o Kali Mehta, Roxana, 109, M. Karve Rd, Churchgate, 400020; February 28
Meherbanu Jal Vakli (95), 904, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; February 28
Rata Nariman Hansotia (76), D-38/4, Godrej Staff Qrts, L. B. S. Marg, Vikhroli (W), 400079; February 29
Katayun Framroze Kanga (77), 1, Jumbo Co-op Hsg Soc, 1st Rd, T. P. S. IV, Bandra (W), 400050; February 29
Jimi Nadirshaw Kathawalla (75), 4/2, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; February 29
Goola Darabsha Mistry (78), 36/133, Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; February 29

Neville Dara Mody (67), Joanna Villa, 28th Rd, T. P. S. III, Bandra, 400050; February 29

CALCUTTA
 MARRIED
Jasmine Tarapore and Sourav Majumdar; February 23

DIED
Jerroo Soli Pestonji, mother of Mithoo Vatcha, late Aban Oonvala and Zarine Sahai; February 24

MADRAS
 MARRIED
Kamini V. R. Sukumaran and Neville Billimoria, son of Niloufer and Jamshed; February 13

POONA
 DIED
Arnavaz Bharucha, sister of Dariush Irani; January 30

SURAT
 DIED
Perinbai Jehangirji Dhanjishaw (87), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; January 21
Coomi Hormusji Sidhwa (85), Meher Ngr, Village Adajan; January 22
Baby boy of Noshir A. Coachman (six mths), Chimanlal Clerk Rd, Shahpore, 395003; January 27
Nadirshaw Aderji Patrawala (80), Karai Mans, Dangore St, Nanpura, 395001; January 28
Dadiba Dosabhai Gaiwala (74), Shakti Apt, Vakli St, Shahpore, 395003; February 14
Tehmul Sorabji Vaskooiwala (38), Opp Dumasia Petrol Pump, Madhi, Surati; February 14

AUSTRALIA
New South Wales
 BORN
A boy, Farzan, to Armeen and Noshir Khan, brother to Simin; November 22, 1999

MARRIED
Persis Bhandara of Essex, UK, daughter of Shirin and Pervez, and *Kaizad Bhandara*, son of Roshan and Hoshang in Sydney; September 4

CANADA

Alberta

MARRIED

Juliana Sanchez and Raj Gohill, son of Zarrein and Lal in Calgary, July 24

British Columbia

BORN

A girl, *Parvin*, to *Mehrbanoo* and *Ardeshir Mayan* in Vancouver; December 23

DIED

Banoo Mehin (Khanizadeh) (79), mother of Houshang, Kourosh, Manouchehr and Rashid in Vancouver; January 2, 2000
Souresh Yazdani (101), father of Paridokht Kamdar in Vancouver; January 23

Quebec

BORN

A girl, *Vanessa*, to *Leena* and *Aurelio Useche* in Montreal; November 22, 1999

IRAN

DIED

Rashid Mobed Namdar Khorshidian (72), husband of Mahin and father of Farshid, Abteen and Kaveh in Tehran; February 2, 2000

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED

Jamshed Dadabhoy Soparivala (66); October 16, 1999
Nariman Irani (12 days); November 22
Maneck Rustom Kakalia (70); December 8
Minocher Eruchshaw Mehta (68); December 26
Tehmina S. Bharucha (75), mother of Adil and Kashmira Bhadar; January 4, 2000
Soona Jal Panday (92); January 18
Dosi B. Patel (80); January 18
Minocher Sidhwa, father of Roshan Kapadia and Homai Anklesaria; February 15

UK

DIED

Dhun Patel (82), mother of Darius; January 6

East Sussex

DIED

Jal Eruch Daboo (73), Four Beeches, The Glebe, Felbridge, E. Grinstead RH19 2QT;

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	This issue	Bombay 1999*	2000 ^o	This issue	India 1999*	2000 ^o	This issue	World 1999*	2000 ^o
BIRTHS									
Boys	7	77	13	—	12	—	2	30	1
Girls	4	94	6	—	8	—	8	36	1
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	27	260	44	—	17	1	3	15	—
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	28	—	1	2	2	1	6	—
Females married out	—	20	—	1	—	1	—	6	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	34	455	83	4	91	6	14	56	6
Females	35	477	70	4	71	11	10	43	7
CREMATED									
Males	1	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Females	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1999 (January 1999-April 2000 issues)

^oRunning totals for 2000 (January 2000-April 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.

January 1

Essex

BORN

Twins (girls), *Jenai* and *Jesmin*, to *Naheed* and *Jimmy Chinoy* in Stock, sisters to Jehan; September 9, 1999

London

BORN

A girl, *Tamara*, to *Pervin* and *Hector Shroff*, sister to Nicole; September 10

DIED

Shahriar Mehani (73), 1, Downhills Way, N17 6AN; December 28

Middlesex

BORN

A girl, *Amy*, to *Diana* and *Kersi Tamboly*; July 1

DIED

Eric Framroze Sethna (74), 30, Bankside Close, Twickenham Rd, TW7 7EW; October 31
Kollan Rustam Tavaria (77), 1, Chase Court, 12, Talbot Rd, Wembley, HA0 4XB; November 28

Nottinghamshire

DIED

Dhun Jal Banaji (73), 3, Lavender Close, Bridge Green; November 26

USA

California

BORN

A girl, *Jaden*, to *Zenobia* and *Kevin Husser*; December 30

MARRIED

Kashmira Irani of Bombay, India, daughter of late Morvarid and Behram, and *Behram Irani*, son of Purviz and late Fali; December 4

DIED

Jamshedji Patel (98), father of Jiji, Nozer and Soonu in San Francisco; November 25
Banou Hormozdyari, mother of Behram; December 28

Louisiana

DIED

Meherbai Navroji Bhujwalla (85), mother of Maneck, Minoo and Ketty Aspi Wadia in New Orleans; January 9, 2000

New Jersey

BORN

A girl, *Pearl*, to *Dinaz* and *Minoo Bengali*, sister to Shawn; February 13

Texas

BORN

A boy, *Narius*, to *Natash* and *Naushad Mehta* in Houston; January 13

MARRIED

Shaireen Bharucha and *Zubin Vakil* in Houston; December 26, 1999

DIED

Jal Godiwalla, husband of Soonu and father of Sherry, Boman, Arnavaz and Simin in Dallas; December 13
Sam Eruch Patel (74), father of Ronnie and Meher Maxa in Houston; January 1, 2000
Piroja Nanavati, mother of Willie Bhappu; January 2
Dinshaw Khudabus Irani (69), husband of Katie and father of Adel and Maynaaz; February 22

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver



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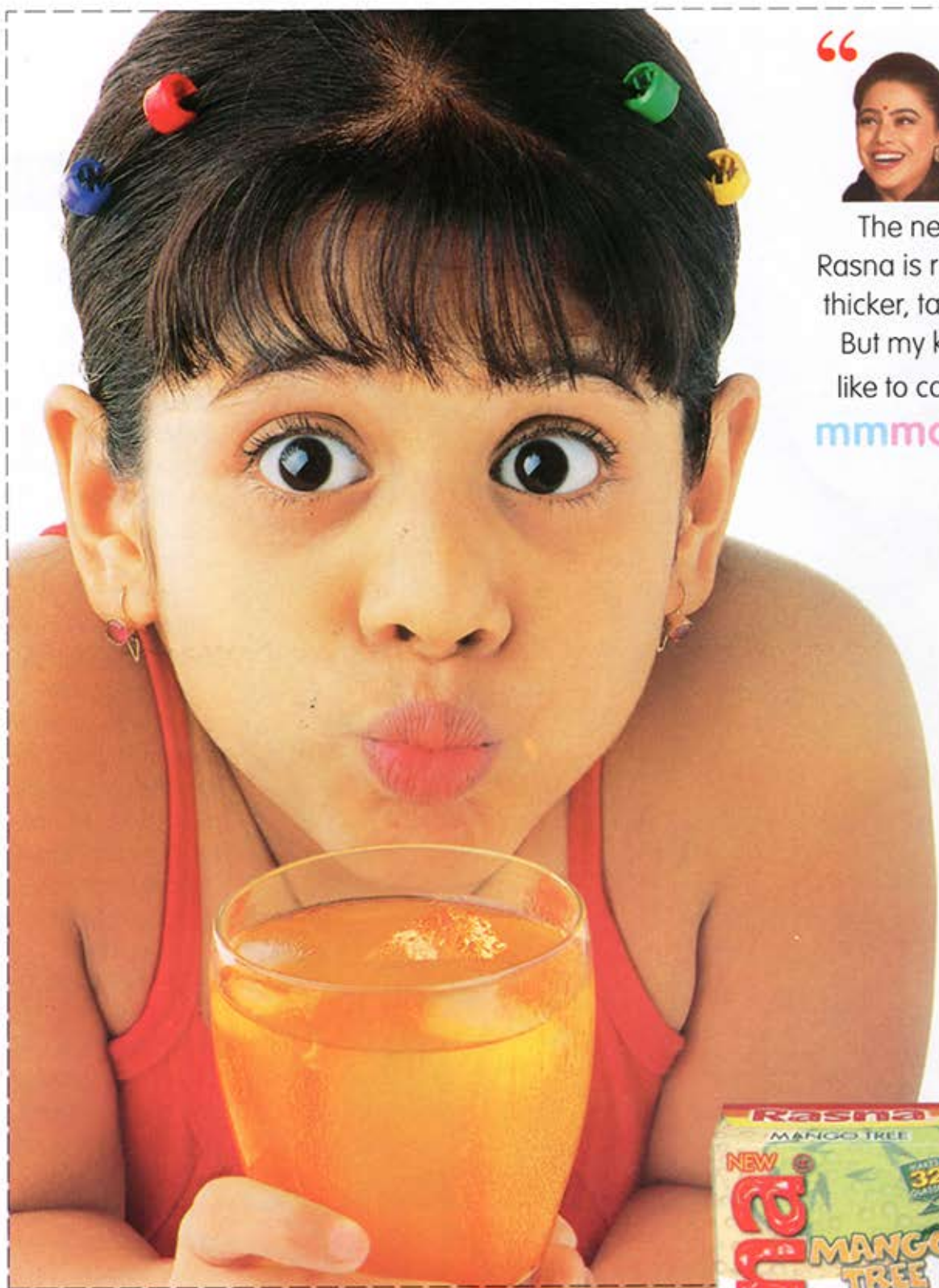
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