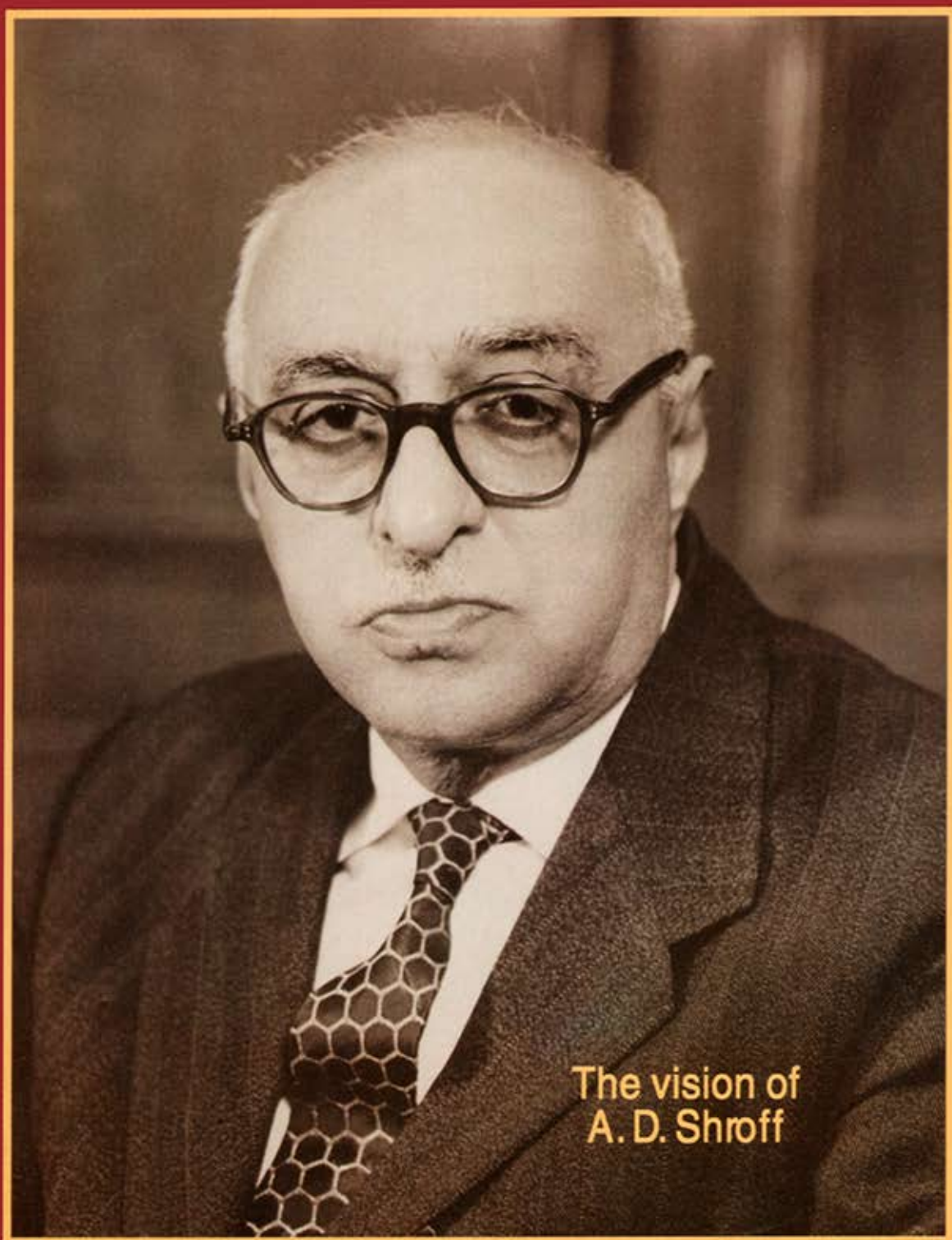


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Parsiana

November 2000
Volume 23 Number 4

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"A man of many causes"

Sohrab Godrej ("A man of many causes," *Parsiana*, August 2000) was for me a friend, philosopher and great soul. His death and the last few days I spent with him in the hospital's intensive care in London is imprinted in my very being.

When I first met Sohrab I was a young politician visiting India and I was given the seat of honor by him. He courteously asked me if there was anything he could do for me to which I cheekily replied that I wanted to meet the Queen (Elizabeth II) who was then launching the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference in Delhi.

The next day I received an invitation to join the Queen at the British High Commission for a party. Sohrab was to escort me to the function. The Queen had arrived but not Sohrab! The British

High Commissioner sweetly informed me that he was the only person in the world who could arrive after the Queen!

Loving memories of Sohrab are so many. Once he asked me to join him in solidarity by wearing a black band in mourning for India's corruption. When I explained that I couldn't wear the black band because it clashed with the color scheme of my clothes, he laughed!

There was nothing that he would not do. When he stayed with us in London he always had the same bedroom overlooking a neighbor's (a former chairman of Heinz) exquisite garden. Sohrab would always say he'd love to be under house arrest in our home. I had to explain that we would run out of trout: the fish was his favorite food, served at breakfast, lunch and dinner! He, in turn, always remembered what I loved to eat and while my younger son Alexander was shooting the movie *Bombay Boys*, Sohrab organized his 18th birthday party at Godrej Bhavan where my favorite fried bananas were served as dessert!

He was a Zoroastrian to the core — one of the greats of the 20th century — and so involved in everything that even when dying he was concerned to tell me that he still had work to do educating street children, saving the tiger and controlling India's population, and urged me to continue his work.

I shall never forget taking Sohrab to the hospital and being confronted by a rather stern consultant who asked if he had had any drinks, to which Sohrab replied that the last time he'd had a drink was with Stalin! The doctor's eyebrows went up and down as Sohrab then continued to tell him that he had given up drinking on Mahatma Gandhi's request. The poor English doctor was convinced he was hallucinating! I had to explain to

him who Sohrab Godrej was and that he too was one of the great Indian figures of the 20th century.

I loved him dearly and his photograph in my office reminds me every day how lucky I was to have known such a unique being.

ZERBANOO GIFFORD

London, UK

"Review the system"

Adi Rabadi of Calcutta deserves congratulations for his bold and frank article, "Review the system," (*Parsiana*, August 2000), connected with the failure of the dokhmenashini system in its present form as a way of disposal of dead bodies of Zoroastrians, more so as he was brought up in the strictest orthodox traditions, having gone through the navar and maratub ceremonies. In exposing the ghastly state which exists inside the dokhmas in Calcutta where dokhmenashini is practiced in the absence of vultures and Khorshed Nagirashni being hardly a factor to consume a corpse, he has shown moral courage.

Rabadi has put several pertinent questions to two of our learned Dasturs for their advice and opinion. It is noted with regret that it took nearly three months for these learned Dasturs to give their replies which have neither answered to the point nor given any satisfactory explanation to the queries raised by Rabadi. In fact, as expected, evasive answers were given under the protective facade of our age-old customs and practices.

To my knowledge, nothing has yet been published to assuage the public that use of ozone gas and some chemical solution or powder has decomposed and deodorized the corpses in the dokhmas.

Deodorizing and decomposing are two entirely different problems. Ozone gas in stated dilutions can help to an extent to minimize the odor from the decomposing corpses. There are also some other products sold under the name of "Stercel" and "Herbocel" which are widely used to minimize the foul odor emanating from garbage.

In my earlier letters in *Parsiana* (August 2000 and February 2000) I had explained in detail that none of the methods suggested, viz solar energy, use of ozone and herbal preparations, as also any attempt to breed the vultures in captivity can ever solve the existing problems.



Godrej: the only person in the world who could arrive after the Queen



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Of late the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) is on a welcome spree to beautify the precinct of Doongerwadi. This may attract Zoroastrians to visit the cool, quiet ambience of Doongerwadi. It would be a fallacy to assume that the beautification of Doongerwadi will ever attract vultures to nest and breed. The vultures are essentially birds of the wild and the present noise and pollution at Malabar Hill will never attract vultures.

It is now suspected that the worldwide depletion of vulture population may be due to a viral affliction. Governments are keen to preserve the vulture population as a part of environment protection and hence it is most unlikely that any government will ever permit disturbance of the wild habitat of vultures by giving permission for the capture of young vultures in the wild for captive breeding just to satisfy the needs of a minority community, to perpetuate its system of disposal of the dead when more scientific methods are available.

So, the time has come for some rethinking. It would be prudent if the BPP forms a new committee consisting of doctors, scientists, environmentalists, etc to advise them on the alternatives, as the earlier committee has led them to paths which are unworkable, unfeasible and unattainable.

Let our enlightened community not face the ignominy of legal sanctions if we fail to provide a sensible alternative to dokhmenashini as it exists in its present form.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

BPP assurance

During the past few weeks, the community media and individuals have been incensed after perusing reports that appeared in a few overseas publications in which it has been mentioned that Jemima Parry-Jones of UK, one of the leading global authorities on birds of prey, has seen the insides of the Towers of Silence in Bombay.

The trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, fully understanding and appreciating the sentiments and emotions behind the community outrage, have made an effort to determine the veracity of the reports.

Parry-Jones was invited to a meeting with the board of trustees on September 22, 2000 when she categorically assured the trustees that various media persons have been contacting her to discuss birds of prey. Parry-Jones assured the trustees

that at no stage has she mentioned what has been actually attributed to her, but the comments have been twisted out of context to provide a sensational twist for the reading pleasure of their subscribers.

The trustees are satisfied with the explanation provided and urge community members not to get incensed over the display of fertile imagination by the authors of the article. They are making efforts in multiple directions to strengthen our ancient and venerated system of dokhmenashini and believe that the proposed aviary project holds out potential and promise.

The trustees urge community members and the media to continue to repose confidence in them and assure them that at no stage will any decision be taken that is not in harmony with our established customs and doctrines and that our high priests and scholars have been kept informed and involved in all areas of strengthening our system.

The trustees will be very grateful if the members of the community and the media would play a constructive role in the matter and allow them to continue this very important community project without the infusion of any avoidable controversy.

J. N. GUZDER

President, Bombay Parsi Punchayet

Harness solar energy

In May 1998, I had submitted a "Report on the Doongerwadi" to the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP). Therein I had pointed out that due to the scarcity of vultures, we should harness solar energy for the disposal of corpses in the dokhmas. Fortunately, the trustees took cognizance of this suggestion. Hence when experiments on other projects commenced, I was asked to be the focal person for the solar energy project. Ronnie Sabawalla launched experiments on this in Baroda. It now appears that this project holds out great promise in solving our serious problems at Doongerwadi. I wish to discuss the various facets of this project briefly.

The basic concept of our dokhmenashini system of disposal is Khorshed Nagirashni — exposure to the sun. Our ancestors in their wisdom had thought of using the timeless energy of the sun for this. By using a solar concentrator we are merely using a modern and more effective method to bring about the desired result. Thereby we are strengthening the existing system. The pillar on

which the solar concentrator will be supported shall be placed outside and away from the wall of the dokhma. (It shall not touch the dokhma at all.) The 20 mirrors of the solar panel will reflect the solar energy directly onto the corpse which will be kept on the pavi exactly as it is done today.

I had addressed separate letters to two High Priests to evoke their response to this project. I am happy to state that Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza, High Priest of the Iranshah Atash Behram and Dastur Kaikhosroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram in Bombay have both given their consent to the use of solar energy at Doongerwadi.

At present the problems that we are faced with are twofold. Due to the paucity of vultures, dehydration of the corpses has been very slow. As a result of this there is also a stench being emitted at times. With the introduction of the solar concentrator, dehydration will be hastened and thereby the problem of stench will be hopefully eliminated.

The initial trials were conducted on a hen after removing the feathers, but with the skin in place. The weight of the bird was two kg and at the end of two hours of exposure, the weight reduced to 1.1 kg. During the whole process, the temperature of the hen varied from 80-170°C.

The same experiment was conducted on a goat carcass. Over a period of three days, total 16 hours of exposure to concentrated sunlight, there was a weight loss from 26 kg of initial weight to 8.5 kg of final weight. The temperature was in the range of 80-150°C. It is pertinent to note that the carcass did not burn during the experiment. These are just preliminary experiments which have shown very promising results. Further experiments are on the way.

Sabawalla informed us that he would require about five weeks more to complete these experiments on carcasses. After this, experiments would also be conducted on corpses.

After the experiment on corpses is completed, it would take about six to eight weeks to complete the manufacture of this equipment.

The initial experiments cost between three to four lakh rupees. Now that the technique is known, the equipment itself is very affordable as it will cost below two lakh rupees. Cities such as Calcutta, Poona, Baroda, etc where we have dokhmas and which face the same



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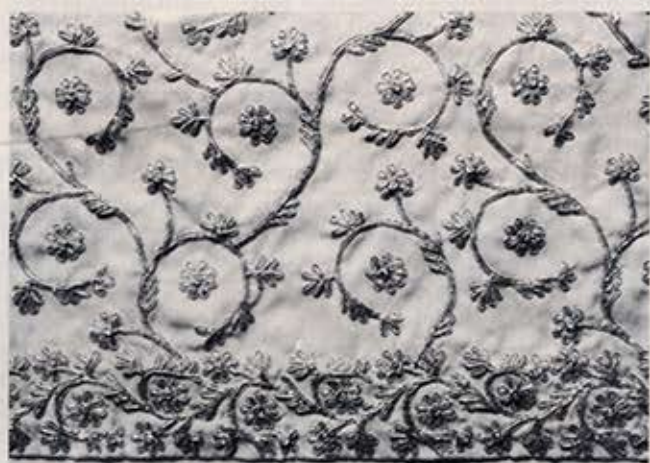
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problems as Bombay can easily use a solar concentrator. It will be a quick, effective and cheap way of solving our problem.

If the panels of the concentrator are large, only 20 are to be used. If they are smaller, about 42 would be required. These would normally last for about 18-24 months. Replacing all these panels would amount to only Rs 6,000 and the cost of labor would be merely Rs 2,000.

Besides this, since sunlight is free, the running cost would be minimal. One trained person would be required for this equipment. In mofussil areas where deaths occur at long intervals, the solar concentrator can be used only when required.

It was claimed by some that the area around the focus of the experiment will become so overheated that it would not be possible for the corpse-bearers to enter the dokhmas. Moreover, they also claimed that the trees in the environment would be affected. I am now convinced that this is a myth. It is pertinent to state that although we were all standing five-seven feet away from the focal point i.e. the carcass, we could not feel the heat at all.

On October 8, two BPP trustees, Minoo Shroff and Dinshaw Tamboly, accompanied me to Baroda to see the experiments for themselves. They were quite impressed with the results of the solar concentrator. I am confident that after a few more experiments, this project would solve our problems at Doongerwadi.

Dr HOMI DHALLA

"Mohammed Chhel"

Bhikhaji M. Adenwalla has given an account of the exploits of the magician Mohammed Chhel (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 2000). Let me elaborate on the wizard's uncanny feats from the tales I've heard from my father, the late Dhunjishaw Framji Sunavala who was a solicitor.

Chhel was a regular visitor on the local railways and was immediately spotted in the compartments because he used to come prominently dressed, wearing medals and medallions on his coat.

The reported incident about Chhel producing a plethora of tickets when asked for his ticket is correct but such was his clout that no ticket collector could dare to throw Chhel out of the compartment for fear of facing the consequences of Chhel's magic. It seems Chhel asked the ticket examiner whether

he knew whom he was talking to and when the examiner said he didn't care who he was, the train stopped. When the train didn't move for half an hour, the passengers begged of the examiner to leave Chhel alone and get the train moving.

However Adenwalla has missed citing another incident. It seems Chhel knew that a certain passenger was carrying a gold pocket watch, and he asked the person to show him the said watch. Chhel then took out a small hammer from his pocket and damaged the gold watch. When the man raised a hue and cry, Chhel asked a man in the far corner of the compartment to produce the same gold watch from his pocket.

People believed that Chhel had developed powers to invoke the spirits to do his bidding, but yet he was respected as a magician because he performed his magic only to show his powers and he never caused any financial loss or bodily harm to any person. It is said that Chhel did not reveal his secrets even to his own son because he feared that his son might misuse the powers for some evil purpose.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

"Kisseh-Houston"

The contents of "Kisseh-Houston," (*Parsiana*, June-July 2000) reflect the spirit of journalism instead of sensationalism. However as authors of Kisseh-Houston we feel that the subtitle — The orthodox-liberal divide widens over the question of including Dr Ali Jafarey as a speaker — may have misrepresented our core purpose to the Zarathushti community.

Throughout the Kisseh-Houston saga our purpose has been completely focussed on the principle, not on any individual. No names have ever been quoted by us in any of our Kisseh-Houston stories. Now these are our thoughts on the principle of inclusion which have been previously circulated by e-mail.

The principle of inclusion means communication with dignity for all. This includes the K. N. Dastooris, the Jafareys, the Porus Havewalas as well as the Cyrus Coopers of our community and many more. We may or may not support their viewpoints but we do support their right to express those viewpoints, as long as it is done in a dignified manner.

Since the time Shahriari and I started the Kisseh-Houston movement, our focus on the principle has been the basic reason why we received tremendous

support from the world Zarathushti community. If we wanted to have Jafarey at all costs at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (7WZC), we would have wholeheartedly supported the concept of a concurrent independent session that is presently being planned for Jafarey during the 7WZC. We did not support that suggestion simply because that is not how we had envisioned the "principle of inclusion" at the 7WZC.

Our purpose has been focused on bonding the community, not on binding the community. To create unity within diversity in our community... not "widening the divide" as your subhead indicates.

SHAHRIAR SHAHRIARI

North Vancouver, Canada

MEHER AMALSAD

Westminster, USA

Arnavaz Mama replies

We appreciate and applaud Amalsad and Shahriari's impeccable avoidance of individual names in their crusade for the "principle of inclusion."

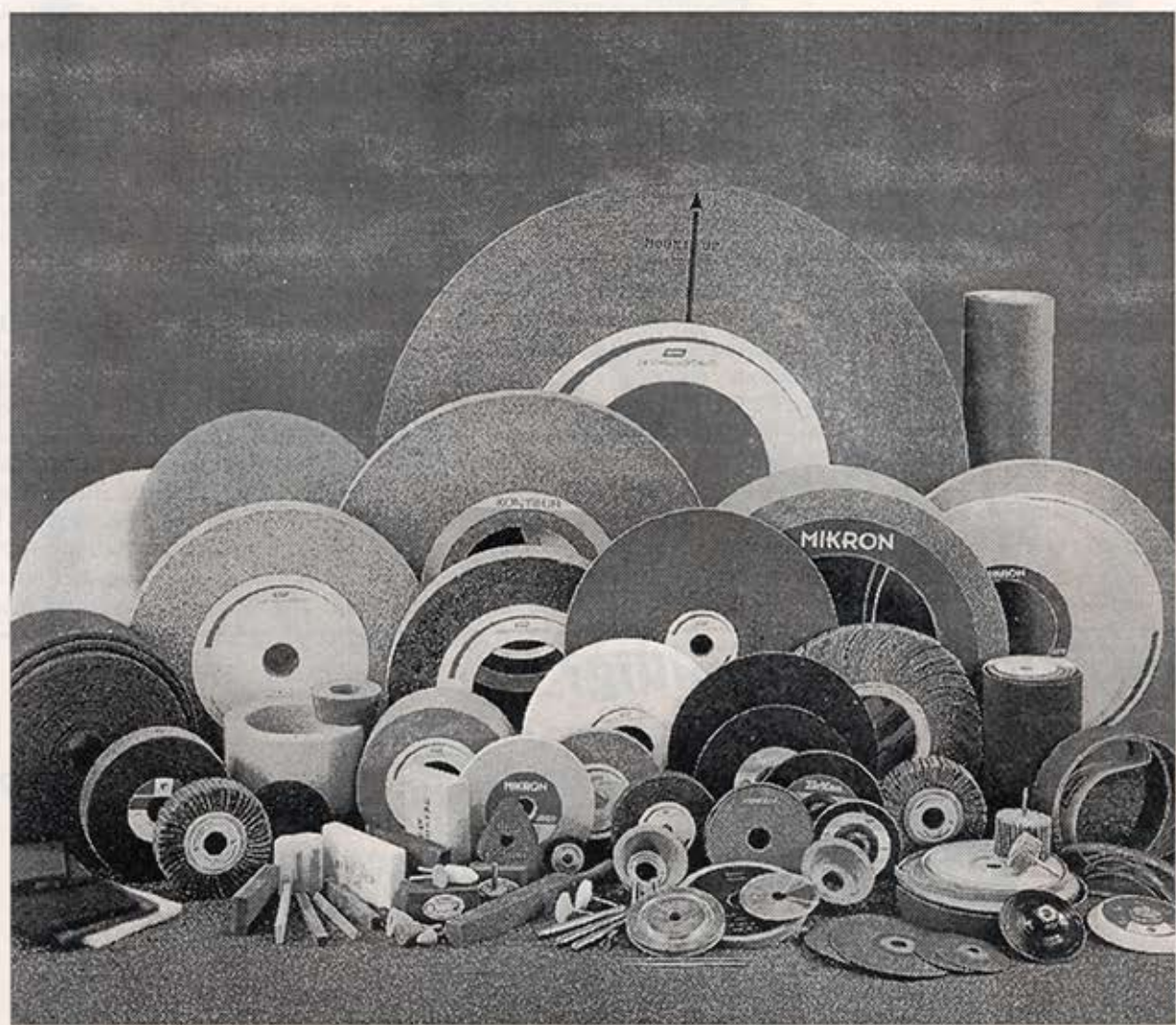
The abovementioned *Parsiana* article, however, also deals with the not so judicious avoidance of personalities by others in the debate. Moreover, the battle, in essence, has focused around a single individual and it was *Parsiana's* intent to demonstrate the folly of believing that a religion that has survived the vicissitudes of more than three or four millennia can be undermined by a single scholar voicing his version of its scriptures.

Jafarey has often contributed to *Parsiana* in the past and some of the interpretations for which he is being currently pilloried were published in our columns almost a decade ago!

...

Several bricks/impediments seem to be aimed at Dr Ali Jafarey, in what seems to be efforts to debar his active participation in the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress 2000 scheduled in Houston ("Kisseh-Houston," *Parsiana*, June-July 2000). One of the main reasons given for this apparent intolerance and rejection of human rights by diverse Zoroastrian organizations is that he is a non-Zoroastrian, among other claims which do not seem consistent with objectivity but impress as being emotive and bereft of realism. One may well cite — in the hope of invoking sanity — Firdausi Toosi, writer of the *Shah Nameh*, whose real name was Abdul Quasaim Mansur and although a real Muslim, he was

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Acknowledgement

My family members and I express our sincere gratitude to all our relatives and friends for their support and condolences extended through phones, telegrams and letters on the passing away of my dear brother **Mr Faridoon Zartoshty** on Friday, 17th November 2000. We regret our inability to acknowledge individually.

Mr Mehraban Zartoshty
San Diego

deeply in love with the ancient history and culture of pre-Muslim Iran. His father's name was Fakhruddin Ahmed and his birthplace was Toos in Khorasan, near modern Mehshed. Those Parsis and Iranian Zarathushtrians who are able to understand the meaning of his life's work surely bless Firdausi...a fact today!

Gunning to engender the exclusion of Jafarey impresses as a failure to distinguish between comment, conjecture and fact. Straight talking clears the air much faster than the aromatic fog of religiously correct rhetoric.

The scenario of communal (Zoroastrian) disunity clearly emphasizes the need for people who are experts in the only really important field — that is the field of plain, old-fashioned common sense. What has weakened the Zarathushti community is the lack of the higher direction of the precepts of Zoroastrianism without which the true liberation of the collective mind and body cannot be safeguarded. People respond to transparency and honest explanation.

The reported stance taken by the head priests is indicative of denying authorized access to Jafarey as a speaker at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress.

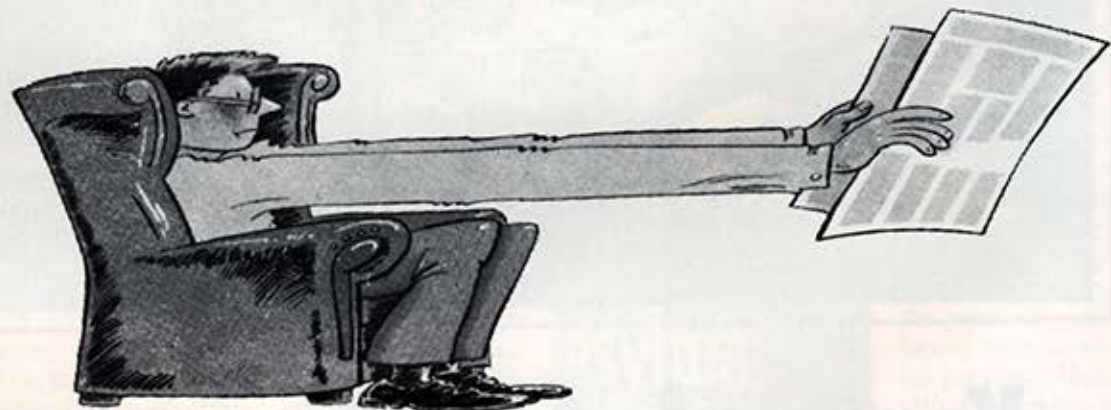
Surely, human rights, applicable to all by law, demand a recognition of responsibility by all. Until this is installed as an aspect of religiously correct contemporary dogma it could be a recipe for the decline of our Zoroastrian community into an uncaring society seeking compensation for natural human frailties and accident with which we are all from time to time beset. Denying authorized access to Jafarey is akin to a totalitarian constitution, one that is alien to a quintessentially Zoroastrian power, the freedom of choice, the cardinal doctrine and the greatest of the principles of Zarathushtra that sets out to bring the light of understanding into the darkness.

FURHOK K. TANGREE
La Roche-sur-Foron, France

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means to pay for the same or not. This
vision is not a utopian dream; it can be
achieved.

Our revered forefathers acted very
wisely and with great foresight in con-
structing the various baugs and colonies
which not only fulfilled the basic need
of housing for more than 50 percent of
the Zoroastrian population in Bombay,
but it has also helped considerably in
knitting the community together.

The cost of maintaining the baugs
and colonies is so huge that it is straining
the finances of the Bombay Parsi Pun-
chayet (BPP) even though many tenants
bear 50 percent of the total expenses.
This does not leave much funds in the
hands of the BPP to cater to other more
pressing needs. To continue to spend
crores every year on maintenance of the
buildings in baugs and colonies I con-
sider a colossal waste/misuse of BPP's
funds because a majority of the benefac-
tors now no longer need such help.

Competition for our youngsters is
becoming extremely keen in all disci-
plines, and I feel that our youth needs to
be helped to excel in all spheres through
specialized and where necessary, subsi-
dized education. In my view, the focus
of BPP's efforts and disbursement of

funds must shift from housing to educa-
tion. To create massive funds for educa-
tion, I suggest the following:

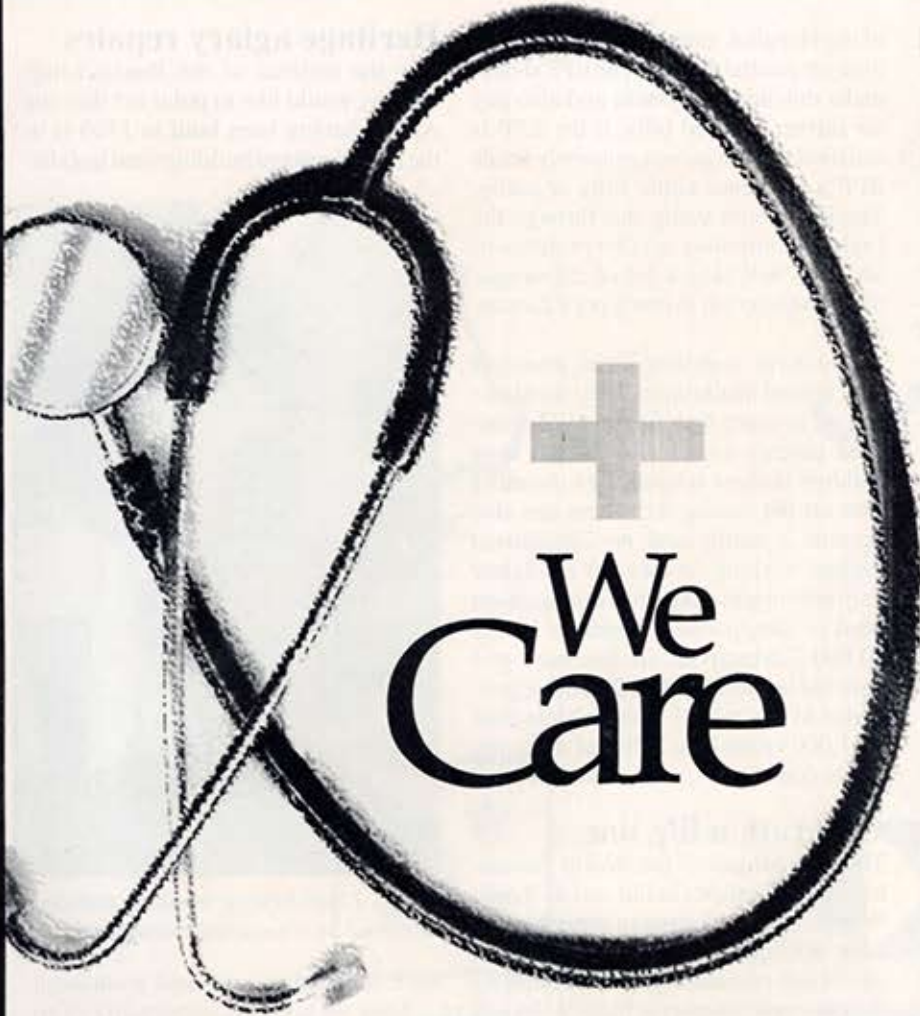
The flats in colonies/baugs should
be offered to the tenants for purchase at
a fair price, say 50 percent of the market
value. The lands on which the buildings
stand should be leased to the coopera-
tive housing societies formed by the
tenants in these buildings for a period of
99 years at nominal rates. The lease
should contain suitable negative coven-
ants precluding any member from
selling/leasing/letting the flat to any per-
son other than a Zoroastrian. Our legal
experts should be able to ensure by
proper documentation that flats in these
societies could only be sold or let to
Zoroastrians. The BPP can continue to be
the owner of those flats whose tenants do
not wish to purchase their flats.

To protect themselves against induct-
ees and recalcitrant tenants who in spite
of having sufficient means are ungrate-
ful and refuse to pay contribution for
repairs out of cussedness, I suggest that
BPP should apply to the Government of
Maharashtra and claim exemption un-
der Section 3(2)(ii) of the Maharashtra
Rent Act. This will also arm BPP ad-
equately to evict rank inductees instead

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of fighting them in courts for years and years at large expense and waste of time.

This will have a two-fold benefit: The BPP will garner immense funds and the constant drain on BPP's resources by way of expenditure on maintenance shall also cease. The BPP should use these funds to ensure that every Zoroastrian gets the best education; that no Zoroastrian who has the talent/knowledge/expertise is held back because of lack of funds. Entrepreneurs and professionals should be encouraged and given loans to set up their industries/businesses and practice their professions.

To implement these plans, there should be a sea-change in the administration of the BPP. It should no longer remain an office of a trust. It should become a most vibrant institution, a management institute/university/IIT/Planning Commission, all rolled into one. It should employ the best brains, talents in the fields of humanities, education, finance, trade, industry, science, engineering, computers, law, sports and all other major professions, not only from within the country but also from abroad. It should provide complete information for all these professions/study courses/business/industry at the touch of a computer key. It should chart out plans and policies to ensure that in the next 10-15 years all the eligible youth and all other Zoroastrians in service/business/professions could be provided with all inputs/facilities required by way of money/space/ideas/literature/guidance, so that each and every one of them could pursue careers of their choice and achieve excellence in their respective fields. Zoroastrian athletes/sports persons should bring Olympic medals to India in 12-16 years from now; there should be Zoroastrians in every national sports team.

The ultimate objective and ideal should be that we Zoroastrians should be looked up to not only in our country, but all over the world as the most outstanding, the most honest, the most compassionate, the most helpful, the most sporting and the most fun-loving and fun-spreading people in the world.

There is one more avenue in which poor Zoroastrians need help which I feel the BPP should provide for. The BPP should enter into agreement with the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital that they should not turn away any Zoroastrian who wishes to avail of the facilities

of the Hospital, even if he/she is unable to pay the initial deposit. The BPP should make this initial payment and also pay for further hospital bills, if the BPP is satisfied that the person genuinely needs BPP's assistance either fully or partly. The BPP could verify this through the Liaison Committee or other professionals. This will save a lot of embarrassment and anguish to many poor Zoroastrians.

We have excellent Parsi managed educational institutions. They should be helped in every way so that all Zoroastrian parents would wish to put their children in these schools. The dream of Zoroastrian managed colleges can also become a reality and no Zoroastrian student wishing to take up medicine/engineering/management education need be disappointed. There are hardly 50,000 Zoroastrians in Bombay, and with the huge funds which will be generated by the sale of flats (not less than Rs 1,000 crores) the BPP can make my vision come true.

DARAFATIA

Gujarati, a life line

The next project of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (India) and its Youth Wing is to try and spread a better knowledge of Gujarati among the young and old of our community. We feel that all Zoroastrians (whether in India or abroad) should have at least a good working knowledge of Gujarati and be able to speak and write the language, because Gujarati is perhaps one of the life lines that links Zoroastrians the world over. Moreover, although now our basic prayer books are also available in English, a majority of the members of our community use Gujarati prayer books. A better acquaintance with Gujarati is therefore necessary.

We request those who are willing to devote about three to four hours a week to teach Gujarati on a part-time basis, to please contact any of the following: Rusi Bhungara, Tel 4163128/2811227/2811075; Mehernosh Dumasia, Tel 4011118/4013438; Sarosh Bana, Tel 3679717/3616025/3820639; Dara Marfatia, Tel 3884296/3860354.

Those who wish to learn Gujarati and/or desire that their children may learn Gujarati may also contact any of the above four gentlemen. We request all Zoroastrians to give their support to this project.

DADI B. ENGINEER

President, World Zoroastrian Organisation (India)

Heritage agiary repairs

We, the trustees of the Banaji Limji Agiary, would like to point out that our Agiary having been built in 1709 is in the list of heritage buildings and has also



Banaji Limji Agiary: heritage building declared as a national monument

been declared as a national monument.

May we take this opportunity of requesting the readers of *Parsiana* for donations towards the repair work which has exceeded the original estimate by a few lakhs? Any amount will be gratefully accepted. Money could be deposited in a special box in the Agiary or cheques could be made out in the name of "Banaji Limji Agiary" and sent to the Banaji Limji Agiary, Banaji Street, Fort, Bombay 400001.

D. K. BANAJI

Senior trustee, Seth Banaji Limji Agiary Trust

Rehan's Parsi connection?

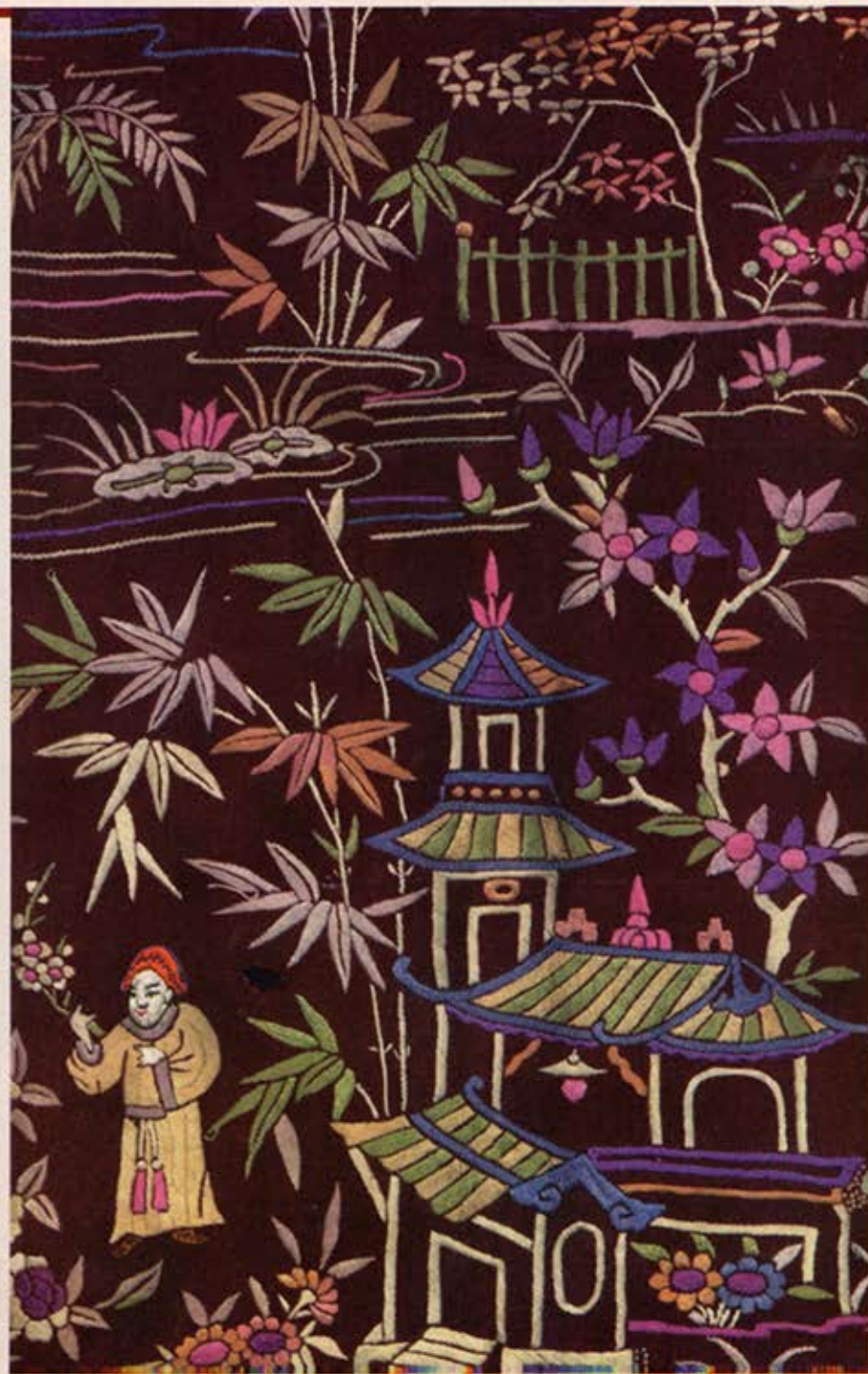
It was reported in the Press that Priyanka (daughter of Sonia and the late Rajiv Gandhi) and Robert Vadra's son who was born on August 29, 2000 at New Delhi has been named Rehan.

It is further reported that Rehan is a Parsi name which means compassion. So, if the name has any Gandhi connection, it is with Feroze Gandhi.

Readers of *Parsiana* are requested to enlighten whether Rehan is a Parsi name.

BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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Events and Personalities

New sports arena

A newly constructed sports stadium on a 1,800 sq ft plot of land is among the latest additions to the 80-year-old Bai Ratanbai Jehangirji Chinoy Parsi High School in Secunderabad, notes a report by Mithi Chinoy. Playgrounds for volleyball, basketball and badminton, an indoor games room, a gymnasium and an arts and crafts room were also declared open to extend the School's existing facilities of a pavilion, a library and reference room, two science laboratories, a computer section and 50 classrooms accommodating almost 1,500 students.

After the inaugural jashan on September 3, 2000, trustee and alumnus Polly N. Chinoy spoke on the history and achievements of the School. Referring to the School's motto of "Truth, labor, service," she hoped that future generations

of students learn to keep away from "the sinfulness of wasted time." Lauding the dedication of the first principal Framroze Hirji-Khoorshed and his successors, Chinoy referred to the efforts of the 47 trained and experienced teachers and several non-teaching staff who try to inculcate among the students a sense of discipline, moral values and the dictum that "true living is right action."

Run as an unaided minority institution on a no-profit, no-loss basis, the School, which reports 92 percent successful results at the SSC board examinations, encourages students to excel in

debates, elocution, dramatics, painting and drawing, NCC (National Cadet Corps), scouts and guides. The children also host and attend science exhibitions regularly and benefit from yoga classes, notes a write-up in *The Hindu* of September 13, 2000.

When Jehangirji Jamshedji Chinoy built the School in 1919 in memory of his wife Ratanbai it was meant to provide the fundamentals of the school curriculum and religious instruction. It earned recognition as a middle school from the Government of Nizam VII, Mir Osman Ali Khan. In 1950 when it was made cosmopolitan, it was granted temporary recognition as a High School, it was reported. Over the years the trustees have sought to continue expanding and modernizing the amenities at the School.

Jehangirji's largesse had also extended to other institutions in Secunderabad: He established the Bai Ratanbai Jamshedji Chinoy Dispensary in memory of his mother, financed the construction of the Jamshed Hall at Secunderabad's Parsi

Dharamshala, and donated a vast property on which was constructed the Seth Edulji Sohrabji Chenai Dar-e-Meher.

Conservation catalysts

A fresh lease of life has been infused in the treasure trove of literature at Navsari's First Dastur Meherjiroona Library where microfilming of archival material was made possible on the initiative of the UNESCO assisted Parsi Zoroastrian Project, notes a report by Lt Gen Adi Sethna, the Zoroastrian representative on the National Commission for Minorities. Microdata India has re-



The new sports stadium at Secunderabad's Bai Ratanbai Jehangirji Chinoy School



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corded this national heritage on microfilms which meet international standards and a microfilm reader has already been imported for use by researchers in Oriental studies, adds the write-up. While one copy of the microfilm will be kept for use at the Library, the original will be kept intact. "Thus a wealth of information will be preserved for future generations," he writes.

Established in 1872 by the members of the Meherjirana family, the Library in Tarota Bazar boasts important Mughal documents and letters from the courts of Emperors Akbar and Jehangir. It also has a gold embossed Sansad or deed of gift from Akbar to the first Dastur Meherjirana who visited his court and introduced Akbar to Zoroastrianism. The Library's collection of handwritten manuscripts in Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazand, Persian and old Gujarati is often the only available source material for Zoroastrian literature and other subjects of historical and religious interest, states the press release. Books on astrology, astronomy, geomancy, medical cures from Unani and other ancient systems, Tansen's songs, ballads as also Rameshgari and Kashmiri music are the other attractions in this Library.

The credit for this conservation effort should go to UNESCO which has acted as a catalyst, author Piloo Jungalwalla and the National Archives of India who have financially sponsored the project, Dasturs Meherji Meherjirana and Firoze Kotwal who served as ad-



Deolali's Bai Ratanbai J. Chinoy Agiyari celebrated its 84th anniversary on October 6, 2000 with a jashan and khushali nu dinner. The function included a talk by chief guest Rustom Chothia on "Are Parsis fire worshippers?" and felicitation of the donors, priests, volunteers and outstanding achievers in the field of education and sports from Deolali, Nasik and Nasik Road, notes trustee Dhan B. Patel.

sors, librarian Bharti Gandhi who has protected this heritage for many years, the trustees of the Library, especially Katy Antia for her involvement, Sethna, Tirlochan Singh and Dr Shernaz Cama, the Parzor Project team who have contributed their time, experience and knowledge, details the release.

Microdata has reportedly agreed to donate a website exclusively dedicated to this project. Until then those seeking further information on the project can log onto www.unescoparzor.com or send an e-mail at info@parzor.com or write to The First Dastur Meherjirana Library, Tarota Bazar, Navsari 396445, India.

Adoption in motion

The first adoption among Christians in Bombay was officially sanctioned by Justice R. J. Kochar on July 28 this year following the landmark ruling in October 1999 when it was held that the fundamental right to life included the right to be adopted, to have a home, a name, a nationality. After two years of guardianship under the Guardians and Wards Act, parents with a sound financial and health background were permitted to apply to the Bombay High Court for adoption.

The judgment had made the adoption contingent upon securing either a birth certificate or registration of the birth of

the child, noted a report in *The Indian Express, Mumbai Newslines* of August 19, 2000. The difficulties in obtaining birth certificates were resolved this year after a circular from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Office of the Registrar General (Vital Statistics) dated July 14, 1999, received by the adoption agencies in July 2000, clarified that an application for registration of the birth of a child offered for adoption will have to be made before the local magistrate along with an affidavit from the agency. On approving the details, the magistrate will direct the Registrar of Births and Deaths to issue a birth certificate where the column for the mother's name will be shown as a blank and the adoptive parents' names entered in the 'remarks' column after the adoption is approved by the High Court and the magistrate gives the final sanction. These guidelines will now help adoption agencies obtain registration and birth certificates for the children which was hitherto difficult, Madhavi Hegde-Karandikar, secretary of the Bal Asha Trust, was quoted in the paper.

While Parsis too may now adopt, a non-Parsi child taken for adoption will not be deemed a Parsi and will not therefore be entitled to inherit the estate of the deceased parent on intestacy nor be able to claim any benefits relating to fire-

First Dastur Meherjirana Library: preserving a wealth of information





temples, aramgahs, dokhmas, baugs, etc meant for Parsis only, the status of the adopted child was enunciated by Rustom Gae, senior advocate practicing in the Supreme Court of India, in "Adoption by Parsis," *Parsiana*, March 2000.

Nagpur's religious bonding

A mix of religion, songs, dances and games marked the four-day celebrations from October 5-9, 2000 on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of Nagpur's Bai Hirabai Mulla Dar-e-Meher. Functions such as these bring the community together, commented Edul Bhagwagar, vice president of the Nagpur Anjuman, in his speech on the final day of the proceedings as he urged the Parsis of Nagpur to remain one happy, united family.

The valedictory function commenced with a jashan by 12 priests. Mazda's Children, as the Sunday school of Mazdayasnis is called, then regaled the audience with a medley of English songs ending with *We are proud to be Zoroastrians*. This was followed by a 25 strong all-Parsi choir singing old Gujarati songs set to foot tapping music. Both the choirs were ably conducted by

Khursheed Masani.

The celebrations had started with a fun filled games evening when panthaky Darius Karanjia was the chief guest. The next day's program presided over by Viloo Bapuna included a group dance competition followed by an antakshari anchored by Tauby Bhagwagar and Fermin Poacha. The keenly contested dance events saw a Hawaiian dance by little children swaying in grass skirts, a Gujarati garba to the old-time favorite *Talion né talé* by the mothers and grandmothers, the prize winning Scottish reel performed to perfection by teenaged boys and girls in kilts and the finale, a Rajasthani ghumra.

The evening of October 8 started with a drawing competition for children followed by a talk and slide presentation by Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji on the shifting of the holy Tavri fire from Navsari to Bombay's Godej Baug. He then conducted a quiz mainly on the Zoroastrian religion. Presiding over the deliberations was Navroz Davar, managing director of the Maharashtra State Handloom Corporation.

Held under the aegis of the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana, the salgirah celebrations are an annual feature and are greatly looked forward to by the Parsis of Nagpur. President of the Gymkhana Shiraz Gimi, secretary Mehru Watchmaker, compeer of the programs Rusi Godha and a host of other helpers worked hard



At the salgirah celebrations of Nagpur's Bai Hirabai Mulla Dar-e-Meher (alongside): Edul Bhagwagar (in dagli) presenting an achievers' prize to Gulrukh and Shiraz Mehta; the choir rendering old Gujarati songs



to organize the functions. On this occasion were distributed the Anjuman merit

prizes and the Dadi Bulsara Indoor Sports Prizes where Rashid Karbhari bagged the gents championship, Dilnavaz Dastur the ladies championship and Armaity Davar the junior championship. Dr Feroze Bharda who had been conferred a Bharat Gaurav was honored with a shawl. Jamashp Bapuna had the rare distinction of bagging both the best bowler and the best batsman trophies.

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

Memorable bus rides

"We Calcuttans are a lucky and pampered lot," noted a write-up by Mary Bharucha in *Calcutta Gavashni*, February-April 2000, reporting on the excursions for senior citizens that have become a regular feature with them thanks to the magnanimity of Zarine Gimi who provided an air-conditioned bus.

As reported in the same issue of *Calcutta Gavashni* by Soli Kotwal, the Calcutta Parsee Anjuman was gifted a spacious air-conditioned bus by the Gimi family as an extension of their patriarch, the late Rusi B. Gimi's many innumerable deeds of charity. Intended as a convenience for the community members to attend various functions when transport becomes a problem, "It is to be greatly hoped that the community will utilize this facility as and when required under the guidance, supervision and dis-

continued on page 28

The sheriff of Bombay Dr Augustine Pinto (second from right) convened a condolence meeting for Sohrab Godrej on June 3, 2000. Other dignitaries present were (from left): Nana Chudasama, David Good, Godrej Dotivala, Usha Mehta and Jamshed Guzder.



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A new Zoroastrian Centre for London

Seven years of dedication to the project provides a new home for Zoroastrians in London

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) held its first jashan on October 22, 2000 at its new home: the Grosvenor Cinema (which closed down about 10 years ago) at 440 Alexandra Avenue in Harrow. The announcement was jointly issued by ZTFE president Dorab Mistry and Shahrokh Shahrokh, chairman of the New Premises Steering Committee as they invited the community to visit the site that day between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The purchase provides 26,000 square feet of usable space for religious, cultural and social use for the Zoroastrians of London as well as addresses the abiding bugbear of adequate parking space. The deal for the new landmark in ZTFE's 140-year history was completed on September 29, 2000.

The association had some anxious moments before it acquired what is described as a classic Art Deco property. Its joint honorary secretary Paurushasp Jilla had issued an e-mail appeal to the Zoroastrians of the world in September 2000 to help bridge a shortfall of £ 400,000 in the total estimated cost of £ 1.55 million in the course of two weeks. A matching donation of £ 400,000 had been promised by the philanthropic Zartoshty brothers Faridoon and Mehraban. In an "unprecedented outpouring of community giving" almost £ 200,000 were received in donations that ranged from two figures to five in the course of five weeks, noted Mistry and Shahrokh.

While £ 500,000 had been collected by the New Premises Steering Committee through various fundraisers since its inception in 1993 up to August 2000 the shortfall of £ 600,000 was made up by the Zartoshty family donating £ 500,000 (instead of the promised £ 400,000 — a total of £ 750,000 to the project according to the ZTFE report and probably the final charity of Faridoon who passed

away in North America on November 17, 2000) simultaneously providing an interest-free loan of an additional £ 100,000. £ 58,000 were drawn from ZTFE general funds after the membership so authorized the managing committee at the annual general meeting in 1999.



Grosvenor Cinema's new avatar as the Zoroastrian Centre for Europe

The final payment of £ 1,358,000, reduced from the original estimate of £ 1.55 million, was also the result of the imaginative efforts of ZTFE trustee Noshir Avari and his firm Avari and Associates whose senior consultant Peter Salter successfully blocked the VAT (value added tax) charge on the purchase price and saved the association £ 175,500, note Mistry and Shahrokh.

"In retrospect, we first got to know of this property on August 14, 2000. Within 17 eventful days, we exchanged contracts. And within the next 28 days we raised the funds and completed the purchase. We have no doubt that we could only achieve this milestone with some divine blessing from Ahura Mazda as we crossed one hurdle after another," write Mistry and Shahrokh.

As a first step towards establishing a consecrated fire on western soil, the managing committee is committed to maintain an atash dadgah at the new premises

after they have raised a further £ 750,000 to pay for the cost of refurbishment. "Thanks to the foresight of our benefactors, we already have within the ZTFE a mobed fund," notes the letter. According to their report for 1999-2000 the association is served by 18 ervads. Several donors have promised further contributions

in the next 18 months and two have even named the ZTFE as a legatee in their wills, add Mistry and Shahrokh.

The decision to seek a mandate from the general body involving 75 percent agreement from voters was the "special business" at the AGM on November 7, 1999. The special resolution put to vote asked, "That this house (authorize) the managing committee of the ZTFE to take such steps as are appropriate to achieve the establishment of a new Zoroastrian Centre for Europe with a place of worship, in or around London; including taking such steps as the raising of funds and loans, application to donors and public bodies, preparation of plans, application for planning consent, purchase of land, employment of professionals and contractors; and that the managing committee is authorized under Article 18(b) to expend sums necessary to execute the project." An explanatory note attached to the AGM notice added, "The passing of this special resolution will also enable the managing committee to demonstrate the wide support that this project enjoys. It will help to unlock the various doors of assistance that are available. This mandate will greatly assist in approaching potential donors and public bodies for assistance, grants, matched-contributions and even special consideration of planning proposals."

The three-hour debate on the special resolution included strong opposition from past president Shahpur Captain according to the ZTFE newsletter of



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January 22, 2000. By his letter of November 3, 1999 Rohinton Irani had bridled against what he termed the "carte blanche authority" sought by the managing committee. Arguing that the mandate was either not required or imprudent as the raising of loans could jeopardize the community's assets, Irani asked, "Why at this stage, after seven years, is the place of worship not defined? We already do have a place of worship at Zoroastrian House. We do not have a consecrated fire which to me was the nucleus for the 'new premises.' Simply a big hall and ample parking space was not the reason behind the 'new premises.'"

Stating that he was neither a member of the ZTFE nor of WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Cyrus Mehta's letter of November 1, 1999 addressed to 'Dear Zarathustis' raised similar issues and noted in the interests of the solvency of the association that "the committee have not stated in black and white how much it will cost per annum to run this new place (gas, electricity, maintenance, repairs, cleaning, housekeeper, insurance, rates, etc) and how will this cost be offset by income from subscriptions, donations and dividends/interest."

The secret ballot conducted by returning officer Percy Writer and his team of scrutineers docked a "resounding mandate" for the managing committee with 84.5 percent of votes cast in its favor. A letter from Mistry informs us that 290 members attended the AGM.

At the AGM on November 19, 2000 (attended by about 150 members including 100 life members and 21 ordinary members as per Mistry) the special business concerned an increase in subscriptions for the ZTFE membership with both life and ordinary membership more than doubling from £ 70 to £ 150 and from £ 7 to £ 15 respectively. "The fee rise was approved by 120 votes to one on a show of hands," writes Mistry. Old age pensioners (men over 65, women over 60, known as OAP members) are exempt from paying fees but have no right to vote.

Trustees Avari and Dr Firoz Munshi were elected uncontested. On the managing committee Adi Billimoria, Ervad Rustom Bhedwar and councillor Filly Maravala were reelected. Joining the team is Kobad Avari.

Mistry continues into his fourth year as president aided by joint secretaries Malcolm Deboo and Jilla.

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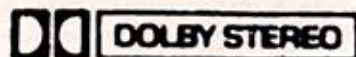


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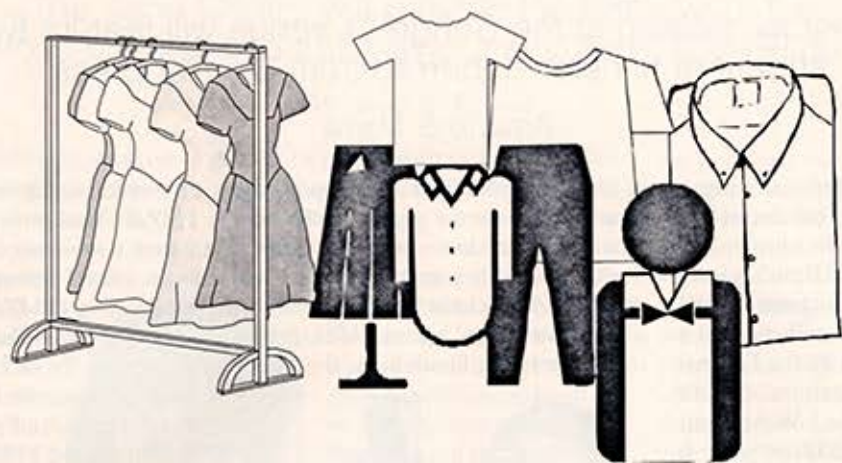


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The right to be heard

A special session at the Congress venue will feature two speakers hitherto debarred from the Congress

Arnavaz S. Mama

After much debate and soul searching: a workable compromise. Founder of the Los Angeles based Zarathushtrian Assembly Dr Ali Jafarey and Bombay lawyer and Khshnoomist lecturer Ervad Kaikhushroo N. Dastoor will speak at a special event sponsored by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) at the J. W. Marriott Hotel on December 30, 2000 between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Chaired by FEZANA vice president Firdosh Mehta of Alberta, the talks will be followed by a question-answer session, notes the announcement from FEZANA president Framroze Patel. A subsequent posting informs us that the topic under debate will be the "Meaning and message of Yasna 30.2" which refers to humanity's freedom to choose as enshrined in the *Gathas*.

The arrangement, with FEZANA as sole organizer and sponsor, hopefully lays to rest the controversy that has dogged the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (7WZC) over the right to speak and the right to nominate speakers. It results from a mandate from FEZANA's member associations as they passed the ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York) and IZA (Iranian Zoroastrian Association) motions by a majority in September 2000. "Since then, the Board has been working out the finer points of implementation with the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) Executive Board (EB) and the WZC2000 (World Zoroastrian Congress) EB," notes Patel. The arrangement "represents a compromise (which) has come about through the willingness of all parties to give a little and at the same time maintain their core beliefs. It has taken (the) time and effort of many people," states Patel. Though the event will be held at the venue of the Congress, it remains outside the official purview of the Congress and is not endorsed by the WZC EB.

The issue of inviting Jafarey to speak

at the Congress had been gathering momentum over the year (see "Kisseh-Houston," *Parsiana*, June-July 2000). Starting with the premise that the Congress would include all interpretations of Zoroastrianism, a principle enshrined in its Operating Guidelines, the EB of



Stormy petrels: Ali Jafarey (left) and K. N. Dastoor

the Congress had buckled under conservative pressures and refused to permit Jafarey to speak. When the issue was raised as a 'request of motion' by ZAMWI (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc) and seconded by ZAGNY at the FEZANA AGM in Houston in May 2000, ZAQ's (Zoroastrian Association of Quebec) and ZSO's (Zoroastrian Society of Ontario) proposal to indefinitely postpone it was carried. Thereupon ZAMWI and PZO (Persian Zoroastrian Organization) had walked out of the meet (see "FEZANA AGM," *Zoroastrians Abroad*, *Parsiana*, June-July 2000).

However, the matter was not permitted to rest there. The following reconstruction of events is based on numerous e-mails received by *Parsiana*. The IZA submitted a motion requesting the compliance of the Congress EB with the Operating Guidelines endorsed by FEZANA member associations in 1997 and 1998. ZAGNY sought the community's vote to permit Jafarey to speak at the Congress. Both motions were sent for a postal ballot by the FEZANA secretariat with the returning date being fixed for September 14.

Perhaps expecting that the commu-

nity vote would not be in their favor, TMZA (Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman), Jafarey's most vocal critic, raised a number of technicalities questioning the IZA's legal status, the order in which the motions could be voted upon, the lack of procedural guidelines for discussion and debate, and alleged a breach of parliamentary rules. The attempted TMZA filibuster sought a suspension of voting until such clauses were incorporated in the FEZANA constitution. They also wanted to enforce voting on the issue by the general body of each association. Moreover, these demands were made shortly before the voting deadline expired on September 14.

A simultaneous rearguard action was also fought by ZAH. A September 11, 2000 e-mail from IZA president Farshid Bakhtyari to the FEZANA secretary notes, "We have just received a copy of the ZAH motion, seconded by ZAPA (Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania), asking that we vote on whether or not to continue the indefinite postponement of the issue of Jafarey speaking at the Congress... We would like to point out that the ZAH motion is superfluous because the very first item of the ZAGNY motion already moves that we 'end the indefinite postponement of the original motion by ZAMWI.' The ZAH motion is an attempt to gag the community."

That the results of the two ballots were withheld until September 22, 2000 on the instructions of Patel leading to some uneasiness among the other FEZANA executives is evident from the e-mails received by *Parsiana*. It also prompted conjectures among the community: "The silence speaks to me very loudly... It tells me that the community has spoken and the vote has come in. And it... is not in favor of the exclusionary policy of the EB. It tells me that the community has asked FEZANA and (by extension) the (WZC) EB to go for in-



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clusion. I do not need an official announcement from the FEZANA president to confirm this for me. His silence and his extension has already done that," noted youth activist Shahriar Shahriari on September 16. He further ventured that "the current executive is looking for a dignified way of resolving the issue."

On September 19 attorney and community activist Dina McIntyre noted, "The TMZA has attacked IZA's standing as a member of FEZANA, in an attempt to get its motion thrown out. The TMZA has made a point of order, to stop the voting on the IZA and ZAGNY motions. ZAH has made a motion, seconded by ZAPA, which in essence also is an attempt to stop the voting on these two motions."

"Notwithstanding all these legal and parliamentary maneuvers to keep the community from voting, 18 or more associations are believed to have voted on the ZAGNY and IZA motions, and a majority of the votes are in. So regardless of what happens to these two motions from a parliamentary or legal point of view, morally and factually, it makes no difference. The community has spoken."

On the basis of information from seven "highly credible" but unofficial sources McIntyre estimated 41.5 'ayes' on the ZAGNY motion for inclusion and 29.5 'ayes' on the IZA motion requiring the WZC EB to abide by the Operating Guidelines. In both cases the 'nays' according to McIntyre amounted to 9.5 (with 12 abstentions for the IZA motion). Her estimates exclude TMZA's two votes which, if counted, would not change the balance.

"Now we come to the acid test. Are the people who have opposed these motions, people of good will? Will they accept the community's wishes and come to the table, and work out an honorable resolution of this situation? Please remember, we are not asking anyone to abandon their religious beliefs. We are asking for their tolerance for one hour (two different views at half an hour each) at a Congress. Is that too much to ask for the well-being of the community?" she queried.

Nonetheless on September 20 ZAH president Kersi Engineer was suggesting a further 10-day extension on the voting deadline or an indefinite postponement, quoting a letter of clarification from ZAGNY president Gev Nentin as the reason.

Adding to the crossfire have been allegations from the traditionalist lobby that the progressives have also been guilty of breaching the inclusive principle of the Operating Guidelines. In his posting of August 28, 2000 Ervad Jal Birdy, president of the North American Mobed Council and vice president of TMZA, quotes an e-mail posted by Dr Ardeshtir Anoshiravani, FEZANA co-vice chair on the WZC EB, on August 13, 2000: "It is my position that we do not need to bring in speakers whose opinions basically have nothing to do with the religion of Zarathushtra but are more representative of the pre-Zarathushtra era. I do not think that we will serve our religion by inviting an obscure person (such as a Pundolite or Khshnoomite) to address the world Zarathushtri community about the backward, superstitious and almost delusional mumbling about 'the invisible wise men of Damavand.'" Former president of the Zoroastrian Association of California Maneck Bhujwala's note to Shahriari of August 30 explicitly refers to the exclusion of Dastoor.

Dr Mehrborzin Soroushian, who chairs the Zarathushtra Vision track of the WZC and had sought to invite Jafarey as speaker, was himself allegedly accused of reneging on the issue. In an e-mail to Bakhtyari of August 31, Soroushian clarifies: "Late last year, I was asked by Anoshiravani to chair the Zarathushtra Vision track. I informed the EB that I would accept on certain conditions which included the freedom to put the program together as I saw fit, without any restriction as to speakers."

"I subsequently received a call from Patel while he was in Houston informing me that the WZC2000 EB had agreed to all my terms."

"In December there was a rumor on the Z lists that there was a blacklist of people who would not be approved as speakers. I immediately wrote to (Congress co-chairs) Homi Davier and Dolly Dastoor, asking if there was any truth to this. No response stating that any speaker had been blacklisted was received. I proceeded with my programing and submitted my speaker list for the EB's approval. Jafarey was one of the speakers on my list. It turned out the youth track had also listed him as a speaker."

"I was not able to attend the February meeting in Houston in person where the subject of excluding him became an issue although I participated a few times

by telephone. The decision to withdraw Jafarey as a speaker was mine as I noticed his name was being used as a political football which was not fitting of a Zartoshty person who has dedicated his life to furthering of our understanding of Zarathushtra's message..."

"When the Kisseh-Houston initiative was launched by Meher Amalsad and Shahriari, I became aware for the first time that the effort to exclude Jafarey from the program was a serious violation of the Operating Guidelines. I was informed that...Davier engaged Amalsad and Shahriari in a discussion on making the Congress inclusive by having a panel with Jafarey, Khojeste Mistree, (K. N.) Dastoor and others participating."

"I was also informed that Davier had told some individuals in connection with the exclusion of Jafarey as a speaker... that the blame should go to the chair of the Zarathushtra Vision track for withdrawing his name. If his name had not been withdrawn, Jafarey would have been considered. These activities by Davier, combined with the violation of the Operating Guidelines, and the continuing aggressive, un-Zartoshty campaign to falsely vilify and discredit Jafarey, convinced me that something must be done to restore honor to the process, and justice to this situation which, with every passing day, was bringing more shame and discredit to our community."

"In response to a directive by the EB to reduce multiple appearances by the same speaker, I had speaker vacancies to fill. I selected Jafarey to take a spot previously considered for Prof Kaikhosrov Irani who had three appearances. The EB was formally informed of my intention. The rest is history."

Describing the IZA motion as one "that deals with principle," Farrokh Mistree, a former member of the WZC EB noted in his message of August 30, "This motion in effect questions the 'constitutionality' of a few key decisions taken by the WZC2000 EB." Drawing an analogy with the US political machinery Mistree notes, "The laws passed by the Congress are subject to a test of legitimacy by the judicial system. Similarly, any decision taken by the FEZANA EB or the WZC2000 EB must stand up to a similar 'judicial' scrutiny. In the case of the FEZANA EB, its actions must be judged in the context of the FEZANA charter and in the case of the WZC2000 EB in the context of the



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Guidelines for the WZC2000 that were formally ratified by the member associations at FEZANA AGMs in 1997 and 1998.

"In the absence of a mechanism for testing the 'constitutionality' of a decision taken by the WZC2000 EB, IZA through its motion is asking each member association to review a few decisions in the context of WZC2000 Guidelines and then to declare whether or not the WZC2000 Guidelines have been violated. This, in my opinion, is at the very core of deciding how each member association should vote..."

Earlier, Bakhtyari had noted in a mis-sive addressed to FEZANA colleagues, "We know that ZAH is well-intentioned. We respect their interests as the host organization. We are especially grateful for the efforts of the many individual volunteers who have been working very hard to make this Congress a success. It is precisely because of these good people, and our community, that IZA is trying to resolve these problems within the system, instead of pulling out, and advocating boycotts. We need to make the system work if we are to have any credibility. We need to keep faith with our youth."

In what ZAGNY's Lovji Cama described as "a wonderful, balanced and totally Zoroastrian position taken by a priest who is knowledgeable and confident in his understanding of what it means to be a Zoroastrian," Mobed Zarir Bhandara of California had stated on the Internet: "Imbibing the qualities of the seven Amesha Spentas in everything we do in this physical world, we should not just permit (if we are the authority) Jafarey to speak at the Congress, instead invite him to speak at the Congress and have (an) equally knowledgeable speaker talk on the same subject. This will allow both speakers to give diversified opinions...that way we can spread more knowledge in this world. This would be in accordance with the Zoroastrian doctrine. Namely, let the people choose what path they want to take and they shall be responsible for the same... If you stop or try to shut somebody up from speaking, it clearly shows you are scared, fearsome and do not have enough knowledge to substantiate your practice and beliefs. It is not in accordance with the tenets of our religion."

Youth activist Natalie Vania asked the community as it readied to vote on the three motions, "Is your position one

that can be upheld before the wider cultural milieu in which we live and to which our living commits us?" She was referring to various human rights bodies, political and civic organizations like United Nations, Amnesty International, the US Commission on Civil Rights, etc.

Amalsad, Shahriari, ZAH member Yezdi Rustomji (who went on a protest fast until ZAH accepted the FEZANA arrangement) agreed that "The principle of inclusion means communication with dignity for all. This includes the Dastoor, the Jafareys, the Porus Havelas as well as the Cyrus Coopers of our community and many more. We may or may not support their viewpoints but we do support their right to express these viewpoints as long as it is done in a dignified manner."

While the weary negotiators (probably) breathed a sigh of relief, Birdy had not given up on his mission to save the community from the jaws of Jafarey: He now challenges the authenticity of Jafarey's doctorate in Persian literature from the University of Karachi...

7WZC Awards

The World Zarathushti Community Awards — 2000 will comprise of a trophy based on the winning entry of Tehran's Shahram Akhtar-Khavari.

Selected by six judges from among the 90 entries received by the 7WZC (Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress) Awards Committee, Akhtar-Khavari's design will eventually grace the mantlepieces of the world's five most honored Zarathushtis, as per the announcement from the committee chair Dinshaw Joshi.

The outstanding quintet comprises:

- Philosopher-scientist, speaker and teacher Prof Kaikhosrov Irani of New York who will be presented the Outstanding World Zarathushti Award;
- Vancouver's Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty, whose profuse but quiet charities have won him the love and respect of the Zoroastrian world, will be presented the World Zarathushti Award for Humanitarian Service and/or Philanthropy;
- Chairman and managing director of India's Tata Steel Dr Jamshed Irani who has been chosen for Excellence in Business or Profession;
- Charismatic conductor of the New York and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras Zubin Mehta for Excellence in the Performing Arts, Painting or Literature;
- Chairman of the Young Zoroastrians

wing of London's ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) Kerman Jasavala for the Youth Award for Outstanding Leadership which he displayed in organizing the Second World Zoroastrian Congress in 1997.

Forty-nine judges from nine countries sifted out the winning five from among 79 nominations from six countries. Each category was assigned an international panel of eight or nine respected Zoroastrians with no more than two members from the same country. The Awards Committee remained uninvolved with the evaluation process, except for the final collation of the results, writes Joshi.

The separate and distinct criteria for evaluation in each category had been included in the nominations package so that sponsors could include the relevant material regarding their nominees. A quantitative system of judging based on the evaluation criteria ensured an objective approach, adds Joshi.

The trophies based on the winning design will be presented at a special function on December 30, 2000.

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 18

creation of our trustees," adds Kotwal. The first outing on this bus was a trip for the senior citizens to Korna village on March 17, 2000.

Their trip on May 19, 2000 was particularly memorable as the bus kept "hiccupping" and refused to move on the return journey, recalled Bharucha. All the passengers were made to climb down while the driver contacted the service garage on his mobile. But since the bus was blocking the toll lane, the policeman insisted it be moved out. "So our three male seniors gallantly pushed the bus to a safer location. With no other option than to abandon the bus, we were herded into two taxis and taken to the Parsi Club for high tea..."

"On the lawns of the Club with a gentle breeze coming up, we silently wished the bus would take a while to be fixed so we could chat and enjoy the beautiful evening. Surprisingly, the bus arrived all too soon and once again we piled in but not before giving a hearty 'Three cheers' to the organizers, the volunteers and Gimi," noted Bharucha.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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Dedication at Davar's

A pioneer of commerce education in India, the Davar's College of Commerce celebrates its centenary

Hilla P. Guzder

Her office reflects her personality — dignified, neat. Four framed certificates hang unobtrusively on a side wall, an old ship's lantern sits atop a corner cabinet. Age rests but lightly upon octogenarian Dr Khorshed Dinshah Madon's slim shoulders. "I get deeply involved with my work here," states the elegant



lady who has had a long innings as principal (she was joint principal earlier) of the 100-year-old Davar's College of Commerce, Banking, Computers, Secretarial and Language Studies (First Counter).

Says Madon's daughter Deena Thacker, vice principal of the College, "My mother has a tremendous staying capacity, a coping capacity which enables her to work even now from morning to evening with never a complaint. If the air-conditioning is not working, even if the lights and fans go off and everybody around her is complaining, she can calmly conduct a seminar or training program and not even notice the heat!

She is one human being I really admire."

Reputed as a pioneer of commerce education in India, the College was founded by Prof Sohrab Davar, Madon's father, in the year 1900 when he himself was but 20 years old. The College has a series of firsts to its credit — introducing as early as 1908 accounting and auditing as a profession, the company secretary's course in 1914 followed by specialized courses in banking, insurance, sales management, Gregg shorthand, etc, according to the College brochures. As examinations in these subjects were unheard of in India, Prof Davar used to take batches of students by ship to England, states a historical background to the College, to appear for examinations there!

Located at Flora Fountain in the heart of Bombay's central business district, the College split in 1985 into three parts,

with each of Sohrab's three children, Khorshed, Rustom and Nanabhoy (Nani) who had been joint principals earlier, heading their own separate divisions. "We separated for various reasons," explained Madon. "Ideas did not match. It was also better from the point of view of succession, so that each one's children could take over smoothly." Rustom closed down what was known as Davar's Second Counter last year as he is not keeping well, narrates Madon. Nanabhoy's Third Counter, though adjacent, functions as a completely separate entity.

Madon's First Counter now also includes new millennium subjects like computer graphics, web-designing, e-commerce, etc. The College pioneered over 35 years ago, she says, the first personal secretary's course in India as well as the first grooming course now



called Elegance — Davar's Finishing School. "The personal secretary's course helps young girls and even older women to earn well," asserts Madon, adding that even today, years later, ex-students send her greetings and thanks from places

far distant for the firm foundation Davar's gave to their careers. "Girls sometimes come to us totally confused, from broken homes or broken marriages. They may not have been the cream of students but today they have become the cream of society," maintains Thacker. "Many years ago we had a young wife who lost her husband in an air crash. I taught her English on a one-to-one basis, she completed our course successfully and is today an accomplished businesswoman in her own right."

"Not just students, so many of our staff members have done well for themselves here and abroad as well," reports Madon. Narrates Moti Antia-Irani, who was Madon's personal secretary for 25 years: "She is like a mother to all,

the staff members are her children. She has her own special way of dealing with problems. From peons to higher-ups, she will never utter a harsh word to anyone. If she is very annoyed she will at most say, 'Aré sooo! (What is this?) Don't you think this is not right?'" When Moti's husband Phiroze Antia (the well-known playwright who scripted the much-performed Behram series of plays) died in 1965 when Moti was still very young, "the Madons took it upon themselves to treat me like their daughter. I was very lucky to have excellent bosses, that's what makes you work!"

The College also conducts training programs in business communication, socialization skills, etc. "From typists to top management, we have conducted in-house courses for companies like Hindustan Lever, Bharat Petroleum, Glaxo, Tata Administrative Service and many more, teaching them the art of table manners, etiquette, etc. These are delightful sessions," smiles Madon who has also been the consultant, script writer and commentator of two video films shown on Doordarshan on innovations in office procedures and the role of telephone operators cum receptionists. Madon holds a PhD degree from Bombay University and is an advocate (Original Side) of the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court of India, a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of England, past chairman of the board of studies in business law of the All India Management Association, and has been associated with a host of other organizations in various capacities.

In the pipeline is a new book authored by Madon on the tasks of a personal secretary — illustrated with case studies, checklists, cartoons, etc. "I'm the drafter over here, I love reading and writing," avers Madon who already has two books tucked under her belt — *Business Letters for all occasions* co-authored with Thacker and Dr Homai McDowell who is her second daughter and *Administrative and Office Management* written jointly with McDowell.

Though girls form the bulk of their students, a number of boys enrol for the computer courses, typing, executive office assistant's diploma, etc. "Our GCD (government commercial diploma) is



Shirin and Sohrab Davar (facing page) and (alongside) turn-of-the-century students and faculty Earlier top floor premises in old Bank of India building and (below) guest speaker Palkhivala



Madon (top) enlightening prospective personal secretaries and (center and bottom) adding the finishing touches

popular and government recognized," Madon declares, adding that not all similar institutes can claim this. The College also offers a placement service for their own students as well as outsiders — an innovation introduced by Thacker. "Our branches in Vashi (New Bombay) and two branches in Goa (one in Panjim, the other in Ribander, outside Panjim) have been my babies," informs Thacker who has inherited, she says laughingly, the gregarious personality of her father, the late Justice Dinshah Madon. "I enjoy solving problems and interacting with people. I won't hesitate, though, to call a spade a spade. It's Mummy and sister who are the big diplomats!" quips the dynamic, on-the-go vice principal who holds a degree in commerce and law and who has worked for some time with Pace University, New York. "Our interior designing, tailoring and fashion designing courses are very popular in Goa, as are computer courses and accounts. There are a large number of foreigners who come for our English classes too. The branch in Vashi is also doing well," she relates. Arabic classes are in demand with Indians going to the Middle East on work, as are French, Italian and Spanish, with one company wanting them to teach five junior executives Spanish, German, French and Arabic all at the same time, laughs Madon. Davar's also provides translation services for a variety of Indian and European languages, Japanese, etc, states their brochure. The College has staggered timings throughout the day, with students selecting the slot most convenient to them.

Well patronized too are their short courses which familiarize women with money matters, taxation, how to make their own will, etc. "We make women aware of the pitfalls in their own situation," specifies Madon. Eminent personalities like Nani Palkhivala have been guest speakers and College annual days and special anniversaries have been presided over by an array of vice chancellors, governors, heads of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and many others at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall, Taj Mahal Hotel, etc. Their CAIIB (Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers) courses have seen ex students like Pravinchandra V. Gandhi and Z. G. Rangoonwalla rise to top positions in banks (Dena Bank and The Bombay Mercantile Co-operative Bank Limited,



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respectively). Jamshed N. Mehta (ex mayor of Karachi) was a student as early as 1903-04, as was Muncherji Cama, managing director of The Bombay Chronicle Company Limited and a long list of others, states the College booklet.

Reminiscing about her marriage to Dinshah Madon, Khorshed terms her years as a judge's wife "the happiest of our lives." He was appointed a judge of the Bombay High Court in 1967, became chief justice in 1982 and was elevated to the Supreme Court in 1983, the first Parsi to achieve this distinction. "When Dinshah died in 1994 following several heart attacks (he retired in 1986), there was a full reference in his honor in the Supreme Court. The chief justice spoke, with all his fellow judges sitting alongside, the room was packed and even some of the men, who had known and worked with Dinshah, were crying," she reveals softly. The Madons went through a traumatic experience in 1970 when Dinshah was appointed the One-Man Commission of Inquiry to probe the unprecedented communal disturbances in Bhiwandi and other places in Maharashtra. "Dinshah's hair went grey during that time. There were some horrible photos presented as evidence and Dinshah was a sensitive person," relates his wife. Though he had been receiving threatening letters from both parties to the communal carnage, Hindus and Muslims, he hid the fact from the police, with the police commissioner stumbling upon the secret by accident during one of their visits to the site.

"We really enjoyed our years in Delhi. Dinshah's court was very popular, particularly with young lawyers who would often sit in, if they had no other matter in hand, to glean some of his wisdom. He was very well-read, would often quote from literature and was always quipping!"

"My father was very forthright. He believed in sticking to his principles and we were taught that too," says Thacker, adding in a somewhat peeved tone that not much has been written about Dinshah Madon's achievements as he was never one to seek publicity. "Both my parents have done a lot of quiet charity, helping the underprivileged with monetary and educational assistance to set them up on their feet. My

husband Shardul (her classmate in Sydenham College to whom she has been married for 26 years) is also very supportive," asserts Deena. Shardul is a partner in the reputed solicitors' firm of Mulla and Mulla and Craigie, Blunt and Caroe whose offices are located in the same building, now known as Mulla House (it was called Jehangir Wadia building earlier) after it was bought



Three generations: Madon (center), Deena (right) and Purnima Thacker

Photo: Hilla Guzder

over by the firm. "My father-in-law Jashwant Thacker is Mulla and Mulla's seniormost partner so if ever we need legal counsel, there's plenty at hand!" laughs Deena.

Recalling her childhood, Deena notes that Davar's has been a part of her life ever since she was a schoolgirl in Cathedral and John Connon School nearby. "I was the only kid among eight of us (siblings and cousins including celebrity Shiamak Davar) who was groomed to be with the College. I used to come here from school and help out, filling envelopes, sticking stamps, etc." Though she cannot much recall her grandfather Sohrab who passed away when she was but a child, Deena remembers her "Aunt Ma" (Sohrab's sister Homai) who was very much a part of the College and who lived with them as well. "Every morning in a dressing gown and mathabanoos she would supervise the kitchen for a joint family of 16 people, send us kids to school, come to the College and be here all day, managing The Progressive Corporation Limited, our publishers and book sellers. After school we would go shopping to Crawford Market or Grant Road. She was the matriarch, even in those days she knew how to juggle home and career!"

Khorshed has vivid recollections of her father. "He had a tremendous sense

of humor. When he taught a subject, you had no difficulty remembering it! His textbooks were the first in their respective fields in India in those days. He used to wear coattails like an English gentleman, and he was a Masonic grandmaster. His friends would come to the College quietly to seek his help in writing their speeches or rehearsing their lines! In the evening, when everyone had gone,

he would workout in the College with dumbbells," she remembers. Born in 1879, Sohrab had started classes in a small room in his father Rustom's office at Elphinstone Circle. They were then known as The Davar's Commercial Training Classes. In 1925/26 they moved to the third and fourth floors of the Great Western Hotel building at Lion Gate, says Khorshed, and later to the top floor of the old Bank of India building at

Mahatma Gandhi Road. In 1941, they settled into their present premises. As a pioneer of commerce education, Sohrab helped to establish the Sydenham College of Commerce and the Indian Merchants' Chamber and held the chair for mercantile law and business organization at the Bombay University, says his daughter. Sohrab was the first Indian to pass the final examination of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries of Public Companies, London and of the Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors of the UK. A barrister from Gray's Inn, he presided over the first Bombay Legislative Council, declined to be mayor due to ill health and passed away in 1949 at the age of 70, according to the College fact file.

Legal genes are in profusion in the family! Madon's son Dinyar, the youngest of her three children, is a practising advocate in the Bombay High Court. Homai McDowell holds a doctoral degree in business administration from the University of Southern California, has been assistant dean and director of undergraduate programs at the University of Maryland College of Business and Management and now works as a realtor in the US. She takes guest lectures at Davar's on her trips to India, says her mother.

Of the fourth generation, Deena's daughter Purnima holds an LLM degree from the UK and will shortly be joining a solicitor's firm in London. She is no stranger to Davar's, assisting her grand-

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mother at company training programs, etc. Son Siddharth works with Mulla and Mulla and is doing his LLB alongside. The youngest, Tanika, is a schoolgirl in Cathedral. "I would have liked my children's navjotes to be performed. In fact,

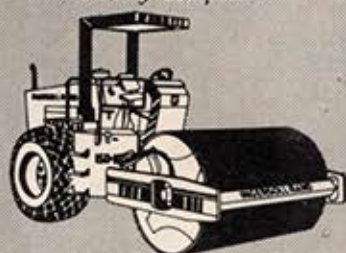
Davar used to take batches of students by ship to England to appear for examinations there!

the children themselves were quite keen on it," declares Deena, adding that each couple should be given the freedom of choice. Regarding the ongoing controversy about dokhmenashini, Deena opines that, in her own case, she would prefer to be consigned to the Towers. "If there is a shortage of vultures, they should do something about it, make the environment friendly for them to return." Opines Madon, "I'd feel claustrophobic if I were to be cremated. I'd rather go with the tide. In any event, I wonder if things are as bad as they are made out to be. Most of the vociferous opinions are by those who want the system to change."

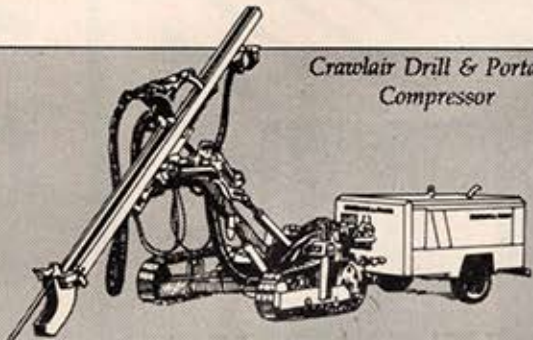
Mother and daughter see hope for the community ahead. "We (Zoroastrians) are more involved now than we were before, particularly abroad. We are trying to improve things," believes Madon. "I most sincerely hope the community doesn't die (out)," adds Thacker.

Davar's too faces the future with confidence. "Mummy and I have worked a long time in partnership. I foresee a smooth succession with the next generation as well," states Deena buoyantly.

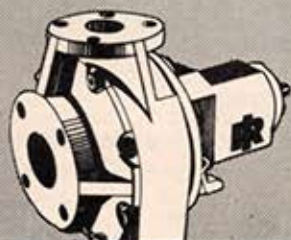
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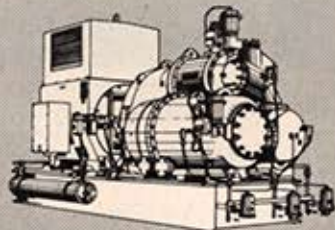
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Power to people on society's edge

The Asha Centre will provide the framework for cross-cultural understanding, says Zerbanoo Gifford

Arnavaz S. Mama

"We have gone beyond tolerating diversity ... it's now important to celebrate it," Zerbanoo Gifford introduces the estimated £20 million Asha Centre coming up on 10 acres of land — a multicultural center in the heart of multicultural London where she reckons 274 languages are spoken every day. As its honorary director Gifford (née Irani) is scouting for funds to match the £10 million allocated by the Millennium Foundation.

Aimed at giving people from different religions and cultural backgrounds a chance to explore common bonds, the Centre has already received the support of all the major religions in Britain — Baha'ism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism, plus the United Religions Initiative. As a focus of hope or justice or divine righteousness — depending upon one's interpretation of 'Asha' — the Centre will limelight the "minorities' enormous contribution to our lives," notes the press release.

As per the literature provided by Gifford, the Centre will comprise: a Shared Heritage Museum including exhibitions, computer archives and outreach programs; Faith Galleries with displays illustrating the major world religions and sacred sites around the world; a Garden of Tranquility for quiet meditation; a Children's World of Discovery with exhibitions on global environment, a treasure trail to rouse their botanical interests, a dovecote and tree of words to combine literacy games with physical activity; a Youth Centre providing music, video and photographic workshops apart from coordinating youth activity like scouting.

The Healthy Living Centre is ex-

pected to promote links with complementary and alternative systems of health promotion like yoga, homeopathy, acupuncture, tai chi, etc and includes support for those undergoing difficult medical treatments. The National Resource Centre will provide a wealth of information, facility and support for women. Culture and cuisine from around the world will be showcased at the Asha Arts Complex and an international restaurant, while conventions and social gatherings are envisaged in the multipurpose auditorium, notes the executive summary of the project.

Anticipating its functioning in time to come Gifford told Sarida Brown of *Caduceus* magazine, "You can come for a training course with a voluntary organization, and also visit an exhibition or see a play or eat at a restaurant catering to the various world cuisines. All the focuses are impacting on each other. If the police are being trained in community awareness, they're not just sitting in a room being told that they are a bunch of racists — Asha will give them the opportunity to interact with different communities and to meet people face-to-face. It is a place where people are going to be making conversation, meeting each other as equals — and being part of dynamic outreach programs using the best of modern technology."

The Asha Centre initiative was launched in North London in January 2000. "The meeting drew together representatives of the police, the judiciary, ethnic organizations, local community groups, the borough council, media, arts, unions, Blue Peter, educationists and people of many interests and occupations. There was a sense both of excitement and awe at the experience of so

many people from such varied interest groups, cultures and faiths, speaking and listening intently and respectfully to each other, in plenary and small group sessions," writes Brown.

Responding to Brown's wonder at the size of the project, the optimistic, effervescent Gifford said, "We have been educated into thinking that we can't actually make a difference, which is why there has been so much apathy and disillusionment, especially among young people... Everybody thinks that everything is so difficult and therefore they don't try to do it. It's the doing that matters, then you can hand it over to the higher beings."

Gifford believes, "You have come into this world with certain things that you have said beforehand that you wanted to do." She hopes that young people will not only create music together at the Centre, they will also learn to be quiet and listen to their inner voice and that "if young people see other young people who are fulfilled, that might have more of an impact. They need the chance to create the qualities that they admire themselves, instead of being shown unattractive role models by the media and being fed junk food and being told that success is about being selfish."

Noting that the 20th century "underplayed" the need for people to communicate with each other, Gifford considers that Asha is a 21st century center because it aims at empowering those who have hitherto been marginalized, simultaneously enlightening those who have traditionally played the role of the oppressor. "It is an indictment of our times that bigotry, dogma and exclusion are a reality for so many in Britain today," states the press release. Hence Asha's mission is to bridge religions, nationalities and cultures. While harnessing support for charitable projects the Centre will encourage and develop the contribution of diverse communities, as notes the press release. It

continued on page 55



Gifford: bridging religions, nationalities and cultures

A. D. Shroff

"The articulate maverick"

Personal repercussions could not prevent A. D. Shroff from trenchantly criticizing Nehru's economic policy

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Have you seen these? These are clean hands, you cannot do anything to stop me," replied Ardesir Darabshaw (AD) Shroff to the Government of India's minister of commerce Manubhai Shah. Shah had personally conveyed Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's displeasure at Shroff's irrepressible campaign for free enterprise and trenchant criticism of the government's economic policy in the late 1950s. The Forum of Free Enterprise (FFE) which he founded in 1956 when the Government nationalized life insurance remained an uncomfortable, though officially ignored, thorn in the government's side.

The anecdote contained in *A. D. Shroff: Titan of Finance and Free Enterprise* by Sucheta Dalal illustrates Shroff's uncompromising intellectual integrity, outspokenness and courage. Published earlier this year by Penguin Books for the A. D. Shroff Memorial Trust, this authorized biography, based on Shroff's personal papers, the Tata Central Archives, the papers and libraries of the Bank of India and other associated institutions, was a project generously supported by the Bank of India in memory of its most illustrious chairman. Together with a special stamp issue by the Government of India in October 1999 and a seminar titled "A. D. Shroff — Economic Visionary and Institution Builder" jointly sponsored by the Trust, the Indo-Japanese Association and the FFE on January 22, 2000 at the Cricket Club of India, the book commemorates the birth cen-

tenary of the economics and finance wizard who, at the height of his career, was the chairman of a dozen powerful companies and financial institutions and a director of 60 others.

"He was a man before his time, and though his relentless campaign did not succeed in changing government poli-



Delegates to Bretton Woods: A. D. Shroff in foreground third from right

cies at the time, almost all his predictions about the implications of following wrong policies have come true in the 35 years after his death," writes Dalal who, as financial editor of *The Times of India*, had broken in 1992 the story of Harshad Mehta's stock market scam.

Shroff's life (1899-1965) was full of irony. He worried about the results of his graduation exam: whether he would emerge "a graduate of the Bombay University or a disappointed drudge," as records his diary. In fact he topped the University list in his chosen subject of history and economics but missed the first class because he scraped through the paper on Indian economics. Having

caught the eye of Sir Dinshaw Wacha, one of the governors of the Imperial Bank of India (IBI) as a keen debater on economic issues in his days at Elphinstone College, he was advised to complete a BSc in banking and currency from the London School of Economics and secure an apprenticeship with a London bank. The idea was to ensure his eligibility for covenanted service with the IBI at the then (1923) princely salary of Rs 500. But the project failed as no British bank was prepared to accept an Indian apprentice despite letters of recommendation from Wacha, R. D. Tata, F. E. Dinshaw (chairman and financial advisor of Tatas, respectively), shipping magnate Narottam Morarjee and others. "When R. D. Tata heard of my desperation, he simply took me by hand to a small bank in those days called Equitable Trust Company of New York, an

American bank which was subsequently absorbed by Chase Bank. He introduced me to the manager and fixed me up as an apprentice," Dalal quotes from a later public speech by Shroff. But IBI spurned his experience in an "American bank!" Years later, the IBI invited him to be a member of its board of directors. It was with some asperity that Shroff turned them down.

In 1936, when Sir Osborne Smith, the first governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), sought to induct Shroff as a deputy governor because of his "two priceless attributes — ability and honesty," the appointment was vetoed by Sir James Griggs, the finance member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, because Shroff was considered a "Congress economist, inimical to the interest of the Raj," noted his nephew Minoo Shroff, vice chairman of Raymonds, who has succeeded legal doyen Nani Palkhivala to the chairmanship of the FFE. It is interesting to read in Dalal's book that the RBI deputy governor's salary then was a substantial Rs 4,500 a month, but it amounted to less than one third of Shroff's earnings at the time. According to his income tax return, his annual income in 1935 was Rs 1,67,000!

In the meanwhile he had learnt from

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R. D. Tata the impact of influential help on people's lives: "For the next 40 years of his brilliant and influential career, one of Shroff's big contributions was to be the number of individuals he would help find jobs, set up industry and raise finance, purely on the basis of his judgement about their abilities," writes Dalal.

Unable to find a banking job to his satisfaction, Shroff began his working life as a stockbroker with Batlivala and Karani (B&K) — the biggest and most influential firm in the business — at the instance of R. D. Tata, and found his métier. He could read balance sheets in the spirit of a whodunit, writes Dalal. His prodigious memory computerized entire stock portfolios of hundreds of clients verbatim and his instinctive analyses of market trends combined to produce a formidable stockpicking ability which enriched his clients (which included several Indian princes) and himself. When B&K started a weekly bulletin in 1933 Shroff contributed his analysis of market trends and investors rushed to buy the scrips he recommended, writes Dalal. Nor were his analyses restricted to Indian stock markets. Events in London and America were closely studied and the telephone rang routinely in the Shroff household as markets there opened for trading, his son Noshir informed Dalal.

"Both Sir Nowroji Saklatvala and I were so impressed by the soundness of his advice that we persuaded him to join Tatas on a full-time basis and requested Batlivala and Karani, of which he was a partner, to release him to us... in 1939," recorded J. R. D. Tata at Shroff's condolence meet in 1965. As managing director of the Investment Corporation of India, a company promoted by Tata Sons, he experimented with venture funding, syndicated underwriting, negotiating foreign joint ventures, lobbying for setting up a unit trust in the private sector and helping create industrialists out of scores of budding entrepreneurs, notes Dalal. Being simultaneously chairman of New India Assurance (which grew to be the largest composite public sector insurance company under him) and as director and later chairman of the Bank of India, his clout in the financial market was unmatched: he became the destination for anyone who wanted to raise

public funds. This ability to raise finance accounted for his success in inducing Ceat Tyres, Volkart Bros, SKF and a multitude of other foreign companies to set up shop in the country, recounts Dalal. "A stickler for research-based investment, Shroff insisted that research analysts at both New India Assurance and Investment Corporation make visits to factories and meet man-

changed his views and praised him for his very constructive and realistic presentation of India's case," said Minoo Shroff.

His nephew recounted Shroff's work on the various committees appointed by government — pre and post-Independence: As chairman of the RBI committee on Finance for the Private Sector in 1953, its recommendations for the flota-

tion of a unit trust to mop up small savings and the creation of industrial development banks and institutions to provide long-term industrial finance and to underwrite new public issues led to the formation of the Unit Trust of India, the Industrial Development Bank of India and the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India, the last with the support of

George Woods, president of the World Bank who recognized Shroff's genius and unswerving patriotism with a deep and abiding friendship. Shroff also promoted and chaired the Indian Reinsurance Corporation in 1956 so that the country could develop expertise in the reinsurance field which hitherto had been a British preserve. He nurtured the Indian Banks Association and was the founder president of the Indian Society of Advertisers.

In post-Independence, post-Partition India, one of the major administrative problems was the consolidation of the railways, some of which had belonged to the British Government, some to the East India and other private companies and some to the independent princely states. There was no coordination between the purchase and utilization of stocks with staggering surpluses piling up in some areas and crippling deficits for the same items in others. Union railways minister Gopalaswamy Ayyangar and minister of state K. Santhanam chose Shroff to head the Railway Stores' Supplies Committee in September 1950. Within six months its authoritative and hard-hitting report demanded the immediate cataloging of surpluses, a ban on further indents and the regionwise distribution of the piled up spares. "Delivering the A. D. Shroff memorial lecture after Shroff's death, Santhanam said that the report had recommendations so reasonable and practical that they were implemented fully and promptly," notes Dalal.



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agement before making their recommendations. Forty years later, with the entry of foreign institutional investors, this is a common practice," comments Dalal.

"AD was an ardent advocate of good corporate governance. He used to be a very well informed participant and on occasions a strong critic of managements at annual general meetings. His particular targets were the Imperial Bank of India and some of the Tata companies," Minoo Shroff noted in his address at the seminar.

Despite his brushes with officialdom — both British and Indian — over economic issues, "there was a grudging admiration for the man's enormous intellect and even more for his independence of judgement and patriotic fervor," noted Minoo Shroff. He was selected as one of the two non-official delegates to represent India at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 which established the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. "AD's brief was to present India's case for sterling balances (money owed by Britain to India), which he did with such vigor and clarity that he attracted the ire of Lord John Keynes, the leader of the British delegation and one of the greatest economists of his time. Keynes described Shroff as an 'articulate maverick' and a 'snake in the grass trying to catch the British out.' (But) after listening to Shroff's exposition Keynes

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Shroff's honeymoon with the Indian National Congress (INC) had ended abruptly in 1936 when Jawaharlal Nehru enunciated the socialist pattern of society — the ending of private property and the profit system — as India's future pathway to development in his presidential speech at the Lucknow session of the INC. As vice president of the Indian Merchants' Chamber Shroff argued publicly against such evocation of class hostility between the haves and the have-nots, pointed to the contradiction between the goals of rapid industrialization and abolition of private property and predicted that such policies would lead to a flight of capital from the country. On May 20, 1936 when Nehru visited Bombay, 21 business leaders published a manifesto in *The Times of India* to send him a public message which was generally believed to be Shroff's handiwork, notes Dalal. When G. D. Birla opted to help Nehru and wean some of the 21 signatories away from this opposition to the INC, trade and business associations followed. Shroff's election as president of the IMC was opposed. There were those who sought to persuade him against contesting. Shroff was prepared to lose the battle (and did) but not his right "to express his views freely and frankly, whatever the cost — a trait that made him the most persistent but a rather lonely voice against government," writes Dalal. Thanks however to a rapprochement brokered by admirers of both men, Shroff was invited by the INC to be a member of the first Planning Committee under Nehru's chairmanship constituted by Congress president Subhas Chandra Bose.

In 1944 Shroff was one of the eight architects of the Bombay Plan — "a 15-year blueprint for India's post-war economic development." Based on the assumption that the national government and Indian industry would jointly harness India's resources to address the country's grinding poverty, its three main assumptions were that the entire country would be treated as a unit; that only a national government could generate the

confidence for the scale of sacrifice that economic development on a war footing required; and that the government would play an effective economic role beyond the traditional one of maintaining law and order, etc.

According to Dalal, former RBI gov-

ernor H. V. R. Iengar, in the Second A. D. Shroff memorial lecture in 1967 attributed the change "from the high noon of the Bombay Plan to the wintry despair of 1960 in this all-important matter of state intervention in the country's economy" to the difference between the idealistic expectation of sacrifice for the common good and the imperfections of human nature and social rigidities born out of historical causes. "One reason for the growing intolerance of the Congress regime towards criticism of its policies was the fact that it became monolithic as an organ of the State, wielding power both in the center and in the states," he said. The result was the businessmen had to choose between their duties as citizens and 'their overriding interest as seekers of permits from government.' Almost everybody chose in favor of their business interests. Even J. R. D. reacted to the situation by withdrawing into a shell. '(But) Shroff had never any doubt as to where his duties lay,'" Dalal quotes Iengar.

Immediately on becoming chairman of the Bank of India (BOI) Shroff started the practice of distributing the chairman's statement together with the working results to the shareholders in

advance so that they could have a better opportunity to study its working, BOI chairman and managing director S. Rajagopal noted at the seminar. "Shroff has guided the Bank throughout in ensuring the highest standards of morality, ethical values, and (striven) for increasing the shareholder's value. What corporate governance, transparency, etc we talk of today, he evolved and implemented in 1962," Rajagopal told the gathering. The Bank's five-point star emblem created by Shroff, symbolized the five continents where the Bank has its presence with the elongated top prong signifying the thrust towards the highest goals, explained Rajagopal adding, "Some time ago, to keep up with the fashion of changing names and emblems, a suggestion was put forward to change the emblem of the Bank of India. I firmly resisted this move to change our star, which has indeed become our true identity, both symbolically and for the principles we stand for."

"For individual banks, the ability to attract more deposits is intimately linked up with the range as well as the efficiency of the services provided... Unless we are able to offer better services to our customers, we cannot hope to attract more depositors," Shroff had said at the 1963 AGM of the BOI. Rajagopal recalled his stress on expanding industrial production and export promotion as the needs of the national economy. Much ahead of the nationalization of banks in 1969 and the state gospel of social responsibility of banks, he had believed in serving the needs of small industries and borrowers who lacked both experience and credit-worthiness by instituting a special department for the purpose and had innovated mobile banking on an experimental basis, attested Rajagopal.

As chairman of New India Assurance, Shroff was deeply agitated by the nationalization of the commercial airlines, the Imperial Bank of India and life insurance. He had been consistently drawing the government's attention to the malpractices indulged in by some private insurance companies over the years. Instead of bringing the errant com-



Standing as witness at the wedding of Minoo and Viloo Shroff

42 Parsiana November 2000

panies to book, the government nationalized the industry which included some companies with an excellent track record like New India, recalled Minoo Shroff. Within a few years of the institution of the LIC its investment in the companies of Haridas Mundhra was questioned by Nehru's son-in-law Firoze Gandhi in Parliament. During the judicial inquiry conducted by M. C. Chagla, former chief justice of Bombay, Shroff was summoned as an expert witness. "His clinching and unequivocal evidence established that the investment decisions in question were not made on sound business grounds, but on extraneous considerations," recalled Minoo Shroff. Chagla held finance minister T. T. Krishnamachari morally responsible for the deed, leading to his resignation.

But the more long-term result of the nationalization of life insurance was the institution of the FFE of which Shroff remained chairman until his death in 1965. Eternally interested in educating and helping youth he would tell Forum secretary M. R. Pai, "teach students how to think, not what to think."

The publication of the Forum's manifesto on July 18, 1956 sparked a heated debate around the country. Within days of its publication over a thousand letters poured into the Forum office "from villages, talukas, districts, some scrawled on little postcards," writes Dalal. "To Shroff, it was a gratifying sign that the idea of the Forum had supporters across the country, cutting across economic barriers. The government disapproved of the Forum and found different ways of making this known. Industry, taking its cue from government, also kept its distance. Nobody had doubts that under Shroff's leadership it was bound to be controversial as well as stringently critical of government... A whisper and innuendo campaign (claimed) that the Forum was foreign-inspired and was financed by the United States." The forthright Shroff countered the allegations openly, claiming the Forum to be as "genuinely swadeshi in its genesis and operations as any other national organization, not excluding the Congress."

He resisted all suggestions to start a political party with the FFE as nucleus. Not only did it remain totally apolitical, its funding is provided in small amounts by a large number of people on an annual basis. (*Freedom First* editor S. V. Raju notes that Shroff played a crucial role in the founding of the Swatantra

Party in 1959.)

"Shroff's notion of free enterprise was one with a social purpose," writes Dalal. Hence he evolved a Code of Conduct to be followed by all those engaged in free enterprise, whether businessmen or professionals. The FFE's code of conduct predates the Corporate Govern-

"A whisper and innuendo campaign (claimed) that the Forum of Free Enterprise was foreign-inspired and was financed by the United States"

nance Code of the 1990s by 40 years, she adds. The FFE endorsed honesty, hard work, courtesy and continuous initiative. It advocated quality at reasonable cost for the consumer; welfare as a social obligation of employers, ensuring dignity, honor, security and fair wages. Welcoming stable and democratic trade unions, it accepted "the role of labor as one of creative cooperation." An accountable management owed a fair return to investors while simultaneously providing reserves for expansion, modernization and research. Hoarding, black marketing, profiteering and tax evasion were condemned as antisocial and evil.

It was Shroff who inaugurated the tradition of post-budget analyses aimed at experts and economists at the Greens Hotel and Palkhivala, a Forum 'discovery,' who perfected and popularized the annual event, reaching out to the general public until the Brabourne Stadium barely accommodated the crowds till he discontinued the practice in 1994.

Shroff "was among those great Indians who (cared) for Japan when the Japanese people felt themselves disliked and (rejected) by the rest of the world immediately after the end of that remorseful war," Yuzuki Kaku, consul general of Japan, acknowledged at the seminar.

"In those days Japan was bankrupt. Japanese business houses could not export because no other country was willing to provide them insurance and reinsurance," he added. Shroff's visit to

Japan in 1953 as chairman of New India Assurance led to the establishment of two branches to insure Japanese business. "He had a clear foresight into what the shattered Japan could achieve in terms of its future economic development by way of hard work, discipline and commitment to national rebirth as a constructive force in the world," said Kaku.

On his return to India Shroff established the Indo-Japanese Association and was its founder-president until his death.

"With his large hooked nose, crooked teeth and a piercing look, he would puff away at his cigarette... elegantly tucked into an ivory-tipped cigarette holder... and listen to people with intense concentration, interjecting the occasional question, and then making snap decisions. On the other hand, those meeting him with foolish suggestions were given short shrift," Dalal describes the man whose vast network of contacts meant that the first visitor of the day called at Shroff's Juhu beach bungalow at 7.30 a.m. Fond of good food and totally averse to physical exertion, Shroff's weekends were spent reading or playing bridge in Poona and most Xmas holidays were spent with his close friend, industrialist M. S. Ghia in Baroda. He had sustained a nervous breakdown, a heart attack, serious bronchial illness and high blood pressure.

His passion for teaching did not stop with economics but embraced good grooming including dress codes and social etiquette, taking the youngsters around him to good restaurants to enable them to learn the fine art of recognizing different cuisines and ordering food and wine correctly. Dalal learnt from Shroff's many admirers. "He had a grand lifestyle. From simple things like never shaving himself and calling the barber in everyday to shave him, to the grand parties that he liked to throw and attend, he did everything on a larger-than-life scale," Shroff's daughter-in-law Parvin Shroff told Dalal. Married to Jerbanoo (née Panday) he had two sons, Noshir and Homi, but "his constant stream of visitors made his family feel extremely neglected," that is until the grandchildren arrived on the scene, learnt Dalal.

During his student days Shroff had studied Zoroastrian scriptures in Avestan, winning gold medals along the way, and had helped arrange and clas-

continued on page 60

Damania's different strokes

Hockey stalwart Arnavaz Damania officiates for the second time at the Olympics

Hilla P. Guzder

Hockey judge at the Sydney and Barcelona Olympics, tournament director for women's hockey at the Hiroshima Asian Games, member of the competitions committee of the FIH (international hockey federation), long-time president of the Indian Women's Hockey Federation, owner of The Gazelle Health Spas, Beauty Parlors and Academy in Poona — Arnavaz Damania's credentials are long and impressive.

Recently returned after an eventful 22 days in Sydney as technical official for women's hockey, Damania delineates the duties of a judge: "We are appointed to keep time, watch over substitutions of players, keep count for red, yellow cards issued, etc. The tournament was very well-organized, as they usually are. The hockey umpires at Sydney were so good and held the match together in such a professional way, it was a real pleasure to watch, particularly the men's and women's finals. The volunteers at the Games too were wonderful — happy, smiling and so friendly. They saw to it we didn't want for even a thing."

Though there was no representation of the Indian team in women's hockey, the men's team, notes Damania, made a good showing with the match against Australia being the best game the Indians have played for ages, even though they drew 2-2. "It was really unfortunate we did not win. Mukesh and Dhanraj Pillay were superb," Damania wrote in her "Postcard from Sydney" column published in the *Pune Times* over the Olympic fortnight in September. Providing interesting behind-the-scenes tidbits about the goings-on at the Olympics, Damania wrote in her column of September 20 that the Olympic movement might not have survived into the 20th century, let alone the 21st, had it not been for stamps. "A set of stamps...

paid for the construction of four of the 1896 Athens games venues... The most valuable Olympic stamps are a set of 12 issued on March 25, 1896... today estimated to be worth \$ 367,000."

An energetic and dynamic administrator in women's hockey in India over many decades, Damania disappointedly states that it is akin to fighting a losing battle all around. In Maharashtra, "we train sub junior and junior teams, organize competitions, bring them up to district and state level. There are no proper grounds, children find it very difficult to cope with academic pressures, parents do not want to send their children for competitions." Having overcome crunches in finance, accommodation, transport, etc to bring the teams up to senior level, "big corporations like Air India, Railways, etc pick up the best girls. With a skeleton team remaining, the few who are left lose interest."

Presiding over the Indian Women's Hockey Federation from '89-'94, Damania describes her role there: "We had five teams in waiting, players from age 12 onwards." Often witness to the machinations in the ministry and the games officials play, Damania states that the national body organizes too few tournaments a year for the girls to attain any kind of international standard. "I have been on the international body for a long time — I'm happy to be on it and they appreciate my knowledge." Damania was appointed a judge at the Champions Trophy at Amstelveen (Netherlands) in June 2000, tournament director at the four nations' tournament at Canberra and Perth in Australia in April/May '99. Globetrotting substantially, Damania was in Paris in November to attend an international hockey seminar there.

Recalling her earlier years, Damania terms her tenure as tournament director at the Hiroshima Asiad "a real chal-

lenge. An Indian judge did not perform well in her first outing at the Games. As tournament director I did not post her again for any other match," much to the appreciation of the FIH, only too familiar with officials who give their countrymen more than a second chance. A former international umpire, Damania has also officiated as vice president of the Indian Olympic Association and is vice president of the Maharashtra Olympic Association, states her bio data. She was deputy chef-de-mission for the Indian contingent to the Beijing Asian Games in 1990 and manager of the Indian team for the Moscow Olympics in '80. Reluctant to offer comments on the Indian Olympic scene, Damania says what she really enjoys is being on the Maharashtra Sports Council Board and selector for the Dadaji Konde Award. She has been honored with the Shiv Chhatrapati Award for her contributions to women's hockey. Damania was herself a player in the Women's Hockey Association of Maharashtra team for 10 years.

Believing in versatile interests, Damania obtained her international health and beauty teachers' training diploma from London. She has been running her Poona beauty parlors since 1982, with three branches at Dhole Patil Road, Bhandarkar Road and Kalyaninagar. She also trains beauticians: "I am very strict with instructors about how to deal with clients." Hydrotherapy (sauna, steam and chill shower), gymnasium, personal training, aerobics, etc are among the range of facilities provided. A recent innovation has been the import of "beautiful, exotic soaps" from Europe made from fruit extracts, says Damania. Daughters Feruzan Ovalekar (who earlier wore India colors as part of the Indian women's hockey team at the Beijing Asian Games) and Anahita Kohli run the beauty parlors and Academy



Top row (from left):
 Arnavaz (Photo: Spectravision Labs) ;
 Danish, Nicole, Dara,
 Anahita and Feruzan
 Middle row:
 Arnavaz (right) with fellow
 official in Sydney;
 The Gazelle gym and
 (below) beauty parlor

shoulder to shoulder with their mother. Eldest daughter Danish Innis is a computer programmer in Toronto.

"It was my husband Dara, a gem of a person, who encouraged me to launch my beauty parlors," declares Arnavaz. Dara retired two years ago as managing director of Krupp Industries (now called Thyssen and Krupp) and is currently head of representatives of the group in Asia. "He was the first Indian managing director to be on the board of directors of Krupp Industries in Essen, Germany," says his wife with pride. "Both of us have started our careers from scratch. Being a sportsman at heart he was also the one to encourage my activities in the hockey arena."

Winner of a best entrepreneur award, of immense satisfaction to Damania too are her social welfare activities. For almost a decade in the '80s, the Zoroastrian Association of Poona (ZAP) used to organize summer camps in the month of May for school and college students and even grown-ups to enable the participants to utilize holidays constructively. "There would be morning and afternoon sessions at the Parsi Gymkhana. The children were so good they

would put up plays, do art and craft, enjoy outdoor and indoor games. We even succeeded in tarring the basketball court! ZAP boys were given cycles and some even came to Bombay to participate in sports competitions. All of us (volunteers) used to manage around 300 children!" When this annual event petered out due to a variety of reasons, Damania started similar camps at the factory for workers' children. "It was so beautiful, so satisfying," she muses. As a member of the National and Pune Women's Councils in the '70s, social work involved creating jobs for women, be it setting up kiosks, earning money from catering, etc.

"Heavily involved" for a number of years with the well-known Dastur Schools in Poona (which have primary, girls' and boys' sections), Damania says: "We have just started the Ex-Dasturian Association. It is still on fledgling legs and I will be most happy if ex students read this and contact the School." Forthrightly stating that bickerings within the community turn her off, Damania asserts that she has always gone out of her way to help a fellow Zoroastrian. "It's a sad story. Small, narrow-minded people

do so much harm. Abroad Zoroastrians are trying to get together, but here in India no one bothers much! Where is it written in the scriptures that the navjotes of children of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers cannot be performed? It is the mother who is always closer to the child. If the husband gives his consent, it is entirely a matter to be decided by the family itself. Wake up, older people, or we will all soon be extinct," she asserts in a no-nonsense way. "Ours is a most beautiful community, rich in thought, manners and culture."

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"My clients are not scared to put their face in my hands," says Havovi Rustomji who despite her loss of vision has continued to remain in the fore of her profession as proprietor of Style Beauty Clinic. Some of the loyal patrons who have grown with her over the years have now become grandmas and send their daughters and granddaughters to her, happily announces the 62-year-old beautician who continues to operate in her maiden name.

A steady stream of customers were in and out of the parlor located in one corner of India House at the junction of Cumballa Hill and Pedder Road in Bombay. Sitting just within the entrance of her shop where a panel of mirrors on opposite walls give an instant account of the movements therein, Rustomji is able to recognize her regular patrons from the familiarity of their voice. "My clientele had been established when I had a little vision, plus those who come here after reading about us in the papers" would know what to expect at Style, points out Rustomji.

The eight assistants presently in her employment have all been trained by Rustomji and now since the last seven years when the sense of sight has totally eluded her, she has come to depend on her chief helpers when she needs advice on where they have spotted the pigmentation or which area needs a facelift or whether there are any stray strands of hair that need trimming after a haircut.

Trained in Germany, Rustomji learnt hair cutting and hair styling at the Wella Institute and the finer nuances of massaging and facials at Nemectron. She was in her mid thirties then and had already lost 25 percent of her vision when doctors in India who could not diagnose the cause of her failing eyesight advised her to consult leading ophthalmic surgeons in Germany. "I wasted a lot of money on treatment," points out Rustomji regretting that no cure could be found even abroad. Her condition was identified as coroditis migraine. Over the next few months they tried to treat her and even surgically replaced a cornea, but there was no improvement. Finally when one of the German doctors told her that "only a god man from India" could cure her Rustomji knew that she would have to take charge of her



Style in her stride

Parinaz M. Gandhi

When her vision began to desert her, Havovi Rustomji's confidence spurred her to launch her beauty parlor, Style

life. "You can't sit back and cry. You have to face life; make adjustments; grab opportunities."

Her stay in Germany accorded her a chance to train as a beautician. Prior to adopting this profession she was in the business of buying and selling antiques

and fabrics, operating from her residence. When she started out as a beautician, first at Figure Fine at Century Bazar before she launched Style, she had two Chinese girls assisting her. At that time she was able to handle all aspects of the business. In the next few years she real-



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ized that dyeing hair for customers was becoming difficult for her as was stringing eyebrows. Preparing for the worst, she trained able assistants who could manage the beauty parlor as also her domestic responsibilities. Just as reading has become impossible for her so to is she totally dependent on others to handle her cash and finance. "But rather than dwell on what I cannot do and unnecessarily assume tension," Rustomji would prefer to focus on her strengths.

Facials are her forte. Specializing in all types of facials — herbal, aroma, thermoherb, gold — to gauge which product would best suit a particular skin, at Style they first apply their product called dead skin remover on the face of the client. After 10 minutes, it is peeled off to indicate the texture and tonal quality of the skin. Next comes the application of oils and scrubs, massaging and exercising to rejuvenate the features. The beautician has definite views on how a facelift should be given. "Although we are equipped with the latest in gadgets and technology, we prefer not to use them for facelifts," reveals Rustomji whose experience over the years has led her to formulate her own beauty aids like miracle oil and miracle face pack, free of outside chemicals, which are used at the parlor and sold to the customers. "Indians are very lazy. They don't want to do facial exercises for 10 minutes a day (see "Therapeutic tips"). They are happy to lie down at the parlor and let the beauticians take over," comments Rustomji who prides herself on her glowing skin.

Those aged 20 and above are advised by Rustomji to go in for a face clean-up "to avoid pimples;" facials may be needed beginning 25, if there is a problem; and those in the 35 plus age-bracket are recommended to have a face-lift to tone up the skin.

A strong advocate of naturopathy, Rustomji believes that drinking four glasses of water on an empty stomach in the morning is the ideal way to start a day. Avoid flour, sugar, butter and fried foods and your skin won't need artificial treatment, she declares. She has also noticed that those on a predominantly rice diet are likely to have a better skin than those who eat a lot of wheat products. And being a strict believer in vegetarianism she recommends how the food intake should be controlled: instead of drinking fruit juices which can create acidity, eat the natural fruit, she urges.

"Hu aasté aasté yogi banti gayi (I've gradually turned a yogi)," smiles Rustomji as she tugs at the shawl draped around the shoulders of her loose flowing white dress. "After a certain stage

Rather than dwell on what she cannot do Rustomji would prefer to focus on her strengths

(of meditation) your body doesn't accept these foods," she believes, attributing the change in her once hectic circuit as a well dressed socialite to the spiritual influence of her guru Gagangiri Maharaj who resides in the Sahyadris.

A chance meeting with Gagangiri Maharaj proved to be the turning point in her dark world. Whilst he could not restore her sight, he gave her the courage to overcome her diabetes and depression as also her obesity and high blood pressure, she acknowledges. The yogic exercise pranayama, where controlled breathing through the correct usage of muscles and organs can cure many ills, has helped, she vouches. The first time she was asked to meditate, she did not know on whom and what to focus her mind. It was the vision of Zarathushtra that abided with her during that spell, she confides. Presently, she does not feel the need to go to fire-temple, "not that I go to mandirs either," she clarifies. "God is with you, where you are. God will meet you everywhere," she is confident. Concentration in a temple is difficult, she points out.

Her current lifestyle involves waking up at 3 a.m. and meditating for a couple of hours. Daily exercises are a must too for Rustomji who refers to her participation in shot-put and hockey events at the all-India level in her younger days. She then has to complete her chores at home where she resides with her husband Parvez Mogrelia who was employed with Century Industries and ran a business in chemicals before his interest in wildlife inspired him to make a film, *The Last Stronghold*. Her appointments at the beauty parlor start from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and then again from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. (Tel: 3863591). On weekends, she is busy making her herbal applications which are used and sold at

Style.

There are innumerable people including family members to whom Rustomji must have imparted her skills. While tinting hair golden and brown may be in vogue today, Rustomji was using this knowhow three decades ago, she declares. The beauty parlor Style in Navsari is run by her sister Gulshan Kasad who was trained by Rustomji. Style in Madras is managed by Rustomji's daughter-in-law Mahrugh Mogrelia. Since son Noshir has opted to make his home in Madras where also resides his *kaka* (paternal uncle) Nariman Mogrelia (president of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman), Rustomji is not inclined to expand Style in Bombay. Mahrugh and Noshir's two children Khurshed and Benaz who attend primary school are into modelling, happily announces the grandmother. With her handicap she notes there is "already excessive pressure on me, draining my energy."

Born in Navsari and educated at the Tata School there, her fluency in Gujarati has enabled her to retain her Gujarati customers who must constitute 75 percent of her clientele, says Rustomji. With greater affluence, Gujaratis can afford to patronize select outlets where they will encounter familiarity and comfort which is the hallmark of Style, she adds. Parsi customers mainly come for a haircut for which they are charged Rs 150-200, mentions Rustomji, "and then they will ask for such a short cut that they don't need to come for the next four months," supplements her niece Farzan Kasad, one of her main pillars at Style. And yet there are certain loyal customers like this Parsi gentleman, receiving his pedicure whilst *Parsiana* was interviewing Rustomji, who are willing to travel great distances to ensure a welcome at Style.

For this beautician, the rewards of her labor lie not in profits for much of her income is directed to charitable causes, it was reported in the *Mid-Day* of June 29, 1999. (She likes to support the cause of education and extend help to destitute widows, she declares.) Nor too does she get to see the transformation in a client's appearance after treatment at Style. Rustomji is sustained by the inner satisfaction that comes from bringing to the fore the beauty in others.

Therapeutic tips

Around five years ago Rustomji was trained in facial exercises by Ava

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Hoffman of Germany and has since evolved a seven-day course where clients are taught the different movements recommended for the jawline, nose, undereye, forehead, temples. A more difficult exercise regimen involves the controlled usage of only half the facial muscles, of the jawline, of one nostril, of one undereye region... Exercising the neck and shoulder region is essential too, she impresses upon her clients.

At Style they are equipped with gadgets like electrolyzer, cold laser wax spray which is ideal to remove blackheads, pimples and bacterial infection, and another machine which dispenses ozone steam to make the skin tighter. Their gold facial, wherein 24-carat gold dust is used in the formula, comes for Rs 550, almost half the rate charged by some of the others in the neighboring Kemp's Corner locality of Bombay, mentions Rustomji. A facelift recommended at Style involves sessions once

in a fortnight over 10 sittings with a flour thermoherb paste applied on every alternate sitting.

Her remedy for pigmentation patches

requires soaking one tablespoon of plain wheat (without oil) in a cup of water in the morning. In the night, remove the wheat from the water and tie up the grains in a clean cloth. Throw away

"Indians are very lazy. They don't want to do facial exercises for 10 minutes a day"

the water. Take 15 black currants (not red) and soak them in another cup of water. The next morning after brushing the teeth but before having tea or breakfast, eat the wheat, currants and drink the water in which the currants were soaked. You can then have tea, coffee and breakfast. At the same time take half a cup of lukewarm milk, add a teaspoon of curd to the milk and keep it covered for two hours. Drink this loose mixture after two hours. If the mixture turns into curd it will not help. You can have this mixture five minutes early but not late. Continue with this remedy daily for the next six to 12 months.



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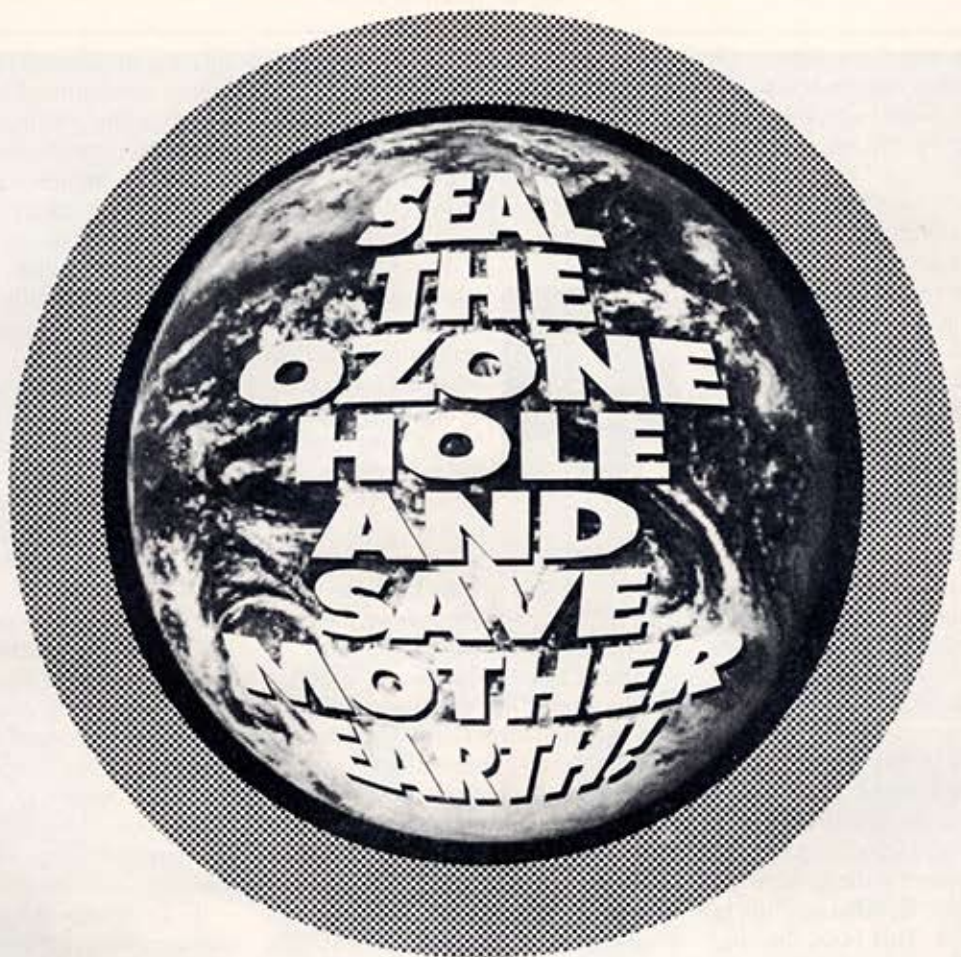
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Asylum for the alienated

Dr Nilufer E. Bharucha

Asylum, USA by Boman Desai. Published in 2000 by HarperCollins Publishers India Private Limited, 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002. Pp: 277. Price: Rs 195.

Asylum, USA is Boman Desai's second novel, the first having been *The Memory of Elephants* which was published in 1988. In that novel he had traced the complicated trajectories of his Indo-Zoroastrian roots and also brought in his protagonist's brief and disappointing flirtation with immigration to the West. Homi, the hero of that book lived in a disoriented world on which the memoscan he had invented imposed a semblance of order and which enabled him to live simultaneously in the past and the present. From a technical point of view this was a very ambitious text and used several post-modernist techniques such as the elements of the fantastic and disjunctions of time and space. The novel also had a vast canvas that took a more than casual look at the Indian Parsis' Iranian past, their rapid growth as a colonial elite during the British Raj, then the downslide during the postcolonial era and the move to the West to get away from this downgraded position in independent India. This book thus belonged quite squarely to that group of novels written in the 1980s and 1990s by Parsis such as Rohinton Mistry, Bapsi Sidhwa and Firdaus Kanga that provided details of the Zoroastrian religion, Parsi customs and cuisine, in short focussed on Parsipanu.

Asylum, USA too has a Parsi character Noshir Daruwala at the center of the narrative but this is not a Parsi novel, in the sense that *The Memory of Elephants* was. However, like its predecessor, this book too is a rites of passage discourse. The passage, however, is not so much through time and space, as in the earlier novel, but through the psyche of the hero as he comes to terms with living in the USA and dealing with adult relationships.

To put it baldly, this is the story of Noshir, or Riff as he begins to call himself, who goes to the USA — Chicago to

be precise — as a student, yearns for a Green Card that would enable him to stay on and like many Indian students before him enters into a 'marriage' with an American woman that would get him this magical passport to stay on in God's chosen land.



Desai: tracing Indo-Zoroastrian roots

of mediocre self-indulgence.

Noshir's wife, Barbara, is a lesbian and he shares her apartment with her live-in Latino lover Carmen and several dogs and cats. Interestingly enough Noshir is still a virgin and loses his virginity only months later and not to his wife, although she seems not too certain about her lesbian identity, but to a girl called Blythe. This person though is anything but blithe, unless she is helping lame dogs over fences — something of a power freak, to use American pop-psychospeak. Noshir eventually moves in with Blythe and now finds himself sharing her apartment with several of her female friends and former boyfriends. Noshir's middle-class, puritanical Zoroastrian sensibilities are titillated by this sea of forbidden female flesh — and that too pink! The readers are told how two of these female friends ran around in nothing but their birthday suits in the apartment.

The time frame of the book is not very clear but there are hints that

In itself this is a rather trite tune that has been played out many times over, so what does Desai do to make it sound different? He embellishes it with several trills, 'riffs' if you prefer that word, twists and turns that sadly fail to raise the book above the level

this is in the immediate aftermath of the hippie revolution of the 1960s. So this could be the 1970s, still the innocent pre-AIDS days when everyone did drugs and casual, unpremeditated sex. So our Noshir, the Bombay boy too, drifts in and out of several relationships, strums 'riffs' on his guitar, as he lies in his hammock in an attic in the house he shares with a woman who is not his lover.

To raise the tone of this self-indulgent discourse, Desai from time to time treats the reader to short bursts of pseudo-philosophy. This is after all a quest, a metaphysical one, on which his hero has embarked. Through all this pneumatic flesh and one border-line nymphomaniac lover, Noshir is in search of his self. In almost textbook post-modern technique, Desai's philosophical sources/inspirations move from John Lennon to Bob Dylan, loop over to take in the occasional European 19th century philosopher and then loop back to denizens from the American underworld and Hollywood films. An eclectic mixture of references to operas and pop music is also thrown in for good measure.

In the midst of all this fluff there are passages of sharply incisive irony and self mockery as Noshir does some soul-searching not just regarding his Parsi past but also his bohemian present. He admits to embroidering the truth quite

often and ponders on the possibility of his having been unfair to his partners. There is also an underlying seriousness about the diasporic/immigrant's deeply engrained sense of alienation and displacement from both his home as well as host society. This feeling of displacement surfaces from time to time as Noshir hops in and out of beds and lives.

Yet on the whole, Desai has failed to bring



off this novel. The pop psychology, the pop philosophy, the entire pop culture oriented postmodern craft of the contemporary novel as practised by Salman Rushdie, among others, has failed to

Puritanical Zoroastrian sensibilities are titillated by this sea of forbidden female flesh

cohere into credibility and readability here. *Asylum USA* has appeared 12 years after Desai's first novel and belies the expectations that had been aroused by its elder sibling. Sadly, the vigor and the authentic voice that had surfaced with such piquancy and strength in *The Memory of Elephants* seems to have got lost somewhere in the screech of Chicago's trains. To misquote John Lennon with whose words Desai has begun his book — it almost appears that this was a book that happened to Desai while he was busy doing other things.

POWER TO PEOPLE ON...

continued from page 37

sees itself as a tool to complement the government's quest for greater race equality.

The architect having responded to this call for the unbiased celebration of diversity with "a design worthy of our vision," the communities of the world are being approached to help with the balance funds. £101 will find a mention in the Asha Millennium Book; £1,001 will enable the donor (individual or organization) to be commemorated at the Centre; very large donors will have the option of naming buildings. But people can also opt to plant trees, lay out gardens or offer other abilities towards the development of the Centre by contacting the organizers directly.

Gifford's involvement in local and national politics and sprawling charities like Shelter and UN involvement for peace and anti-slavery has been an ideal training for work on the Asha Centre. Having edited a women's magazine and written books on women and slavery as well as a Channel 4 book for schools, Gifford believes she has been divinely guided through interrelated jobs: "My life seems to be coming together in

Asha," she told Brown.

The concept is supported across British society, its well-wishers including a number of Zoroastrians there. Now Gifford's intent is to involve the community across the world, even as she seeks and finds the blessings of Sai Baba, the Dalai Lama and others as she made a recent whistle-stop tour of India to raise funds. As she told Brown, "All the charities I have been involved with

**"Everybody thinks
that everything
is so difficult and
therefore they
don't try to do it"**

are interrelated, in the sense that all the problems they address have their origin in the way we behave towards each other. Unless we tackle the root cause of poverty we will always have these unhappinesses around. There have to be people who are magnanimous, who realize that money is there to be used in a magnificent way."

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 45 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 33 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 29 and 62 years, averaging at 42 years.

There were 74 Zoroastrian deaths in Bombay in October as compared to 16 births. The major killer as usual, heart disease, felled 30 victims of whom 10 were in the 80+ age-group. Ten patients each succumbed to old age/general debility and pneumonia/lung related diseases and six to brain disease. Septicemia and cancer took a toll of four lives each whereas two Zoroastrians each fell prey to liver disease, multi organ failure and diabetes. There were six isolated cases registered for the month — vehicular accident, hypertension, Parkinson's disease, anemia, asphyxia due to strangulation and peritonitis (inflammation of the serous membranes that line the abdominal cavity). The age range fluctuated between 38 and 100 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for October, in

Bombay, was 75 years.

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

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

AHMEDABAD

BORN

A girl, Ashoina, to Mahazarin and Sami Kapadia on August 22, 2000

ALLAHABAD

DIED

Naju M. Nanavati; August 8

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to Monaz and Jimmy Guard; October 3
A boy to Havovi and Kaivan Antia; October 4
A girl to Gulshan and Ardeshir Contractor; October 4
Twins (girls) to Tasneem and Shiraz Poonevala; October 4
A girl to Feeroza and Vishal Kapoor; October 7
A boy to Tushna and Rustom Kapadia; October 9
A girl to Mehernavaz and Rustom Vesavevala; October 9
A girl, Shania, to Daisy and Nariman Zorabi; October 10
A boy to Azmin and Zal Balsara; October 11

A boy to Anaita and Vijay Punjabi; October 18
A girl to Reena and Zarir Engineer; October 23
A girl to Tinaz and Hooshaan Bharucha; October 25
A girl to Anahita and Phiroz Kerawalla; October 27
A girl to Meher and Freddy Bhesania; October 28
A girl to Persis and Viraf Mistry; October 31

MARRIED

Jeroo Dinshaw Khodaiji and Sam Phirozshaw Marfatia; October 2
Goolu Gustadji Marolia and Jehangir Dinshahji Bulsara; October 6
Ruzmehr Rustam Irani of Dahanu Rd and Percy Soli (Sorab) Devlatiwala; October 14
Ferzeen Zubin Lilaowala and Cyrus Adi Engineer; October 26

DIED

Ratanshaw Byramshaw Carnac (88), residing at 733,

Katpitia Bldg, Rd no 4, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 30

Erach Kaikhushroo Mohta (62), 16, J. Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, Bandra, 400050; September 30
Rumy Phiroze Chinoy (50), 518, Jehangir Mans, H. R. Mahajan Marg, Matunga (E), 400019; October 1
Nergish Jehangir Randeria (82), 6, Chotani Bldg, Proctor St, 400007; October 1
Dina Dadi Adajania (67), 7/C, Dubash Bldg, Kashinath St, 400034; October 2
Khorshed Jehanbux Barsiwalla (85), Harganga Mhl, Dadar T. T., 400014; October 2
Sheriyar Aspendiar Irani (78), C/o K. N. Tavakalli, C/157, R. B. I. Qrts, M. M. Marg, 400008; October 2
Noshir Sheryarji Palsetia (64), C/o Dadi P. Pithawala, 602, Niagara, N. P. Marg, Colaba, 400005; October 2
Ranibai Kaikhushroo Panveliwalla (100), 628, Turel Ter, Homavazir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 2
Pila Framroze Sachinwala (85), A/8, Malegamwala Bldg, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; October 2
Jamshed Nadirshah Bharucha (74), Maneck Mans, Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; October 3
Jimmy Nusserwanji Engineer (86), A/21, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 4
Jerbai Cawasji Sidhwa (80), 3, Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; October 4
Eruch Sorabji Bhathena (75), B, Aidun Bldg, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 5
Daulat Khodabux Irani (81), Gangadevi Bhavan, Uranwala St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 5
Sam Sorabji Rabadhy (82), 31, Jaiphal Ter, Forjett St, 400036; October 5
Minocher Cawasji Colabewalla (88), Memorial Bldg, Marazban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; October 6
Najamai Shapoorji Mistry (84), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; October 6
Darayas Phiroze Sarkari (46), C/12, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 6

Framroze Jamshedji Shroff (87), C/15, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; October 6
Goola Framroze Aspar (89), Evershine Residency, I. C. Clny, Holy Cross Rd, Borivli (W), 400113; October 7
Dilber Rashid Irani (67), 108, Bazar Ward, Kurla (W), 400070; October 7
Perin Minocher Jassawala (73), 5, Petit Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 7
Yazdi Khushroo Satarawalla (54), H/7, Captain Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; October 7
Pilloo Nanu Heerjee (82), Broacha Hse, Garden Rd, Apollo Recl, 400001; October 8
Darabsha Framji Mistry (96), 22/A, Wellington Ter, Wellington St, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 8
Dolly Dorab Nazer (67), C-3/48/49, Prince Town, Kalyani Ngr, Poona, 411006; October 8
Homi Nadarsha Lodhawala (78), Makawee Mans, R. Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; October 11
Keki Dinshaw Adajania (65), 80A/15, Brindavan Soc, Thana (W), 400061; October 12
Parvez Ardeshir Daruwalla (68), R/5, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; October 12
Motibai Sheriar Irani (68), 2, Khudabux Bldg, Mazagaon, 400010; October 12
Khorshed Kaikhushroo Mistry (85), Silverene, 32, Altamount Rd, 400026; October 12
Amy Dhunjishaw Pardiwalla (71), E/7, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; October 12
Shirin Behram Irani (83), Perin Villa, Gunpowder Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; October 13
Behram Ardeshir Merchant (74), P/11, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; October 13
Dhunjhi Palonji Bhiwandiwala (76), A/1, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; October 14
Dorabji Pestonji Dadadamri (89), 13, J. J. Bldg, Khan Est, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; October 14
Tehmina Ruttonshaw Kapadia (94), 2-A/5, A. H. Wadia

Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; October 14
Yazdi Dinshaji Kasad (51), 1B/20, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; October 15
Khorshed Dinyar Pavri (88), 6, Four Oaks Crescent, London, Ontario, NGJ 4B7, Canada; October 15
Shirin Jamshed Guzder (87), Windmere, 55, Cuffe Parade, 400005; October 17
Jal Bomansha Kapadia (84), 9, Jaiji Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007; October 17
Kety Pesi Shroff (75), 222E/B, Rustom Palace, Tardeo, 400007; October 17
Rustom Naoraji Mullan (83), 11, Firuz Ara, 160, Maharshi Karve Rd, 400021; October 18
Khorshed Eruch Engineer (84), C/15, Vatchha Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; October 19
Jerbai Byramji Ranji (96), 204, Royal Gate, Yari Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; October 19
Shirin Bahudur Palkhiwalla (80), 785/A, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 20
Jamshed Kaikhushroo Italia

(62), 23, J. Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; October 21
Hira Tehemtan Anklesaria (51), 802/C, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 22
Alan Jal Avari (87), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; October 22
Perin Darabshaw Balsara (71), 21, Transval Ter, Grant Rd, 400007; October 22
Mahiyar Pirojshah Bhojti (43), M/4-22, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; October 22
Sam Manekshaw Poonawalla (65), 1/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 22
Bachu Lavji Mistry (77), A, Bhatia Co-op Soc, Princess St, 400002; October 23
Behram Pirojshaw Bharucha (87), 725, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 24
Bacha Erach Kapadia (86), 26, Nariman Cottage, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; October 24
Banoo Dara Mewawalla (80), 113, Sona Villa (Nahid Villa),

Dolly Studio, S. V. Rd, Khar, 400052; October 24
Bomi Burjorji Ogra (47), B, Tapia Bldg, Jalbhai St, Charni Rd Jn, 400004; October 24
Dosan Kaikhushroo Avasia (79), B, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 25
Goola Nariman Patel (73), H/6, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; October 25
Putlie Piloo Sidhva (93), 5, Sea Shells, 13, Darabsha Lane, 400036; October 25
Tehmuras Rustomji Cama (80), K/4, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 26
Dinamai Eduljee Kumana (92), Kerawalla Lodge, Station Rd, Santacruz (W), 400054; October 26
Keki Jivanji Randelia (86), Motibai Bhavan, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 27
Neville Homi Sagar (43), 1A/18, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; October 27
Rustom Pochaji Ichhaporia (64), 55/A, Kalumal Est, Opp Juhu Post Office, Juhu, 400049; October 28

Mazarine Darab Kakaria (38), 742, Batliwalla Bldg, Rd no 5, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 28
Sohrab Jehangirji Pagdiwalla (78), 658, Khorshedabad, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 28
Abad Jalejar Taraporevala (79), 793, Family Hse, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 28
Khorshed Jal Parekh (84), S/6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 29
Dady Jehangir Bharucha (75), Pallanji Hse, 35, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd, 400004; October 30
Roshan Kekhashru Marolia (72), Avabai Petit Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 30
Cavas Hormusji Mistry (76), A/10, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; October 30
Dolly Keki Siganporia (74), New Chinoy Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; October 30
Perin Pestonji Wadia (95), 9/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; October 30

ADDENDUM

The photograph of The B. E. Albless Obstetric Hospital carried on the cover of *Parsiana* October 2000 was shot by Gustasp Irani.

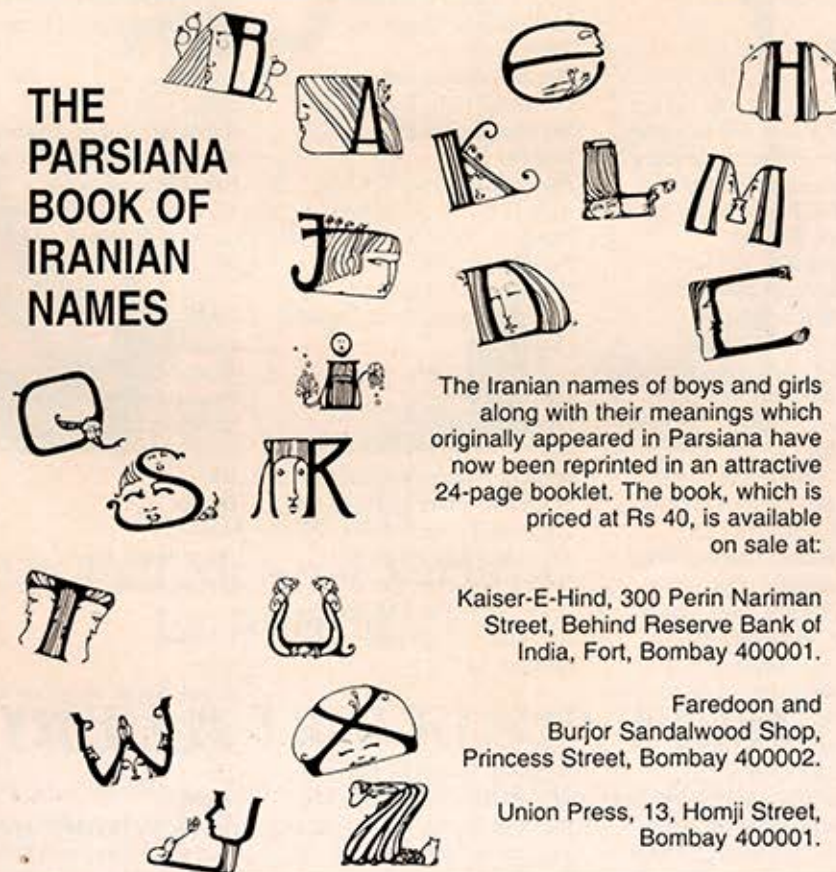
We regret the omission on the contents page of that issue.

Situation Vacant

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Union Press, 13, Homji Street, Bombay 400001.

Fareedoon Kaikobad
Mobedjina (72), 681/B,
 Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; October 31

CALCUTTA

DIED

Minoo Pestonji Bulsara,
 husband of late Kolla and
 father of Hormuz, Jeru
 Pherozsha, Maku and Keki;
 September 7
Dossabhoj Jehangir Dalal,
 husband of late Jerbanoo and
 father of Zenobia and Gulistan;
 September 22

POONA

DIED

Dhun Ratanji Ratnagar,
 husband of late Bhikhu and
 father of Diana Noshir Irani;
 August 27

SECUNDERABAD

DIED

Darabsha Gustadij Edulji (80),
 husband of late Amie and
 father of Aspi and Feroza D.
 Chhotia; September 27
Bomanshaw F. Irani (94),
 husband of late Dhanmai and
 father of Minoo, Homi,
 Tehmuras, Jamshed, Feroze,
 Dhanjibhoj, Behroze and
 Jarbanoo; October 10

SURAT

DIED

Pesi Naoroji Tavadia (65),
 Nariman Home and Infirmary,
 Shahpore, 395003; September 20
Sam Maneckshaw Bhathena
 (45), Joshi Block, Vakil St,
 Shahpore, 395003;
 September 22
Kersi Rustomji Italia (77),
 Dehla St, Rustompura,
 395002; September 23
Allamai Kaikhushroo Kapadia
 (72), Nariman Home and
 Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003;
 September 25
Nozer Nariman Sadri (49),
 Station Rd, Vyara, Dist Surat,
 394650; September 25
Noshir Bhikaji Jabbar (62),
 Khadi Mohollo, Opp old
 Agiary, Bhatha, Dist Surat,
 394510; September 27
Baby boy of Marazban
 Jamshedji Sadri (15 days), C/o
 Homi Bhathena, E/3, Vaisali
 Apt, Bhaya St, Nanpura,
 395001; October 1
Hillamai Maherjibhai Dubash
 (78), Nariman Home and
 Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003;
 October 3

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*						
	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*
BIRTHS						
Boys	5	59	—	5	1	15
Girls	11	69	1	5	3	14
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	4	91	—	9	2	19
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	20	—	2	1	2
Females married out	—	19	—	1	—	1
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	36	368	13	65	7	47
Females	40	386	6	48	3	35
CREMATED						
Males	—	5	—	—	—	—
Females	—	3	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-November 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.

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-November 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.

Aspi Cooverji Patel (53), 101,
 Palav Park, Dr Behramji St,
 Vanki Bordi, 395003;
 October 4
Minocher Sorabji Siganporia
 (85), Siganporia Mans,
 Machhlipith, Shahpore,
 395003; October 9
Dinaben Rattanshaw
Ghadiyali (70), Toorava St,
 Sayedpura, 395003;
 October 12
Perinbanoo Pestonji Chini-
wala (74), 2/A, Gita Apts,
 Nanpura, 395001; October 15
Perinbanoo Behramshaw
Sachinwala (91), Namane-
 Hosang, Vanki Bordi, 395003;
 October 23

CANADA

Ontario

DIED

Maneck Mistry, husband of
 Edith and father of Jamie and
 David in Toronto; October 2
Khorshed Minocher
Boovariwala, mother of Bomi,
 Freny Moosa and Meherengiz
 McMahon in Ottawa;
 October 12

IRAN

DIED

Ardeshtir Adorbehi, husband
 of Katayun Haquiquat and
 father of Parvin, Khodayar,
 Rostam and Parvez in Tehran;
 October 2

PAKISTAN

Karachi

MARRIED

Rukhshana Writer, daughter of
 Bacchi and Homey of Irvine,
 USA, and *Minoo Cowasjee*,
 son of Pervin and Firoze of
 London, UK; July 7

DIED

Banoobai Mobed, mother of
 Shireen Vatcha, Jimmy and
 Fali; October 14
Minocher Bhikaji Anklesaria,
 husband of Homai and father
 of Bomanshaw; October 22

UAE

MARRIED

Flora D'costa and *Eric*
Taraporewala in Dubai;
 September 14

UK

Dorset

DIED

Dhun Jessie Mistry (59), in
 Bournemouth; October 1

London

BORN

A girl, *Zoish*, to *Spenta* and
Cyrus Unwalla, sister to
Yazad; September 14

MARRIED

Afsana Mehraban Behrami of
 Horten, Norway and *Rustom*
Shahriar Khosravi of Horten,

Norway; October 12

Middlesex

BORN

A boy, *Eric*, to *Havovi* and
Barsis Deboo, brother to
 Neville and Meher in
 Wembley; July 26

DIED

Dara Hirjibhai Randelia (72),
 96, Uxendon Hill, Wembley
 Park; July 24
Vera Jal Dastoor (86), 4,
 Orpwood Close, Hampton;
 July 26
Rustam Wadia (79), 29,
 Bourne End Rd, Northwood;
 July 27

Northamptonshire

BORN

A girl, *Mahya*, to *Navaz*
 and *Zubin Sethna*;
 October 5

West Sussex

DIED

Sheriar Hormaz Irani (73),
 in East Grinstead; August 5

USA

Kentucky

BORN

A girl, *Maya*, to *Neena* and
Cyrus Joshi, sister to Kaizad in
 Louisville; August 24

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

"Simply noble, nobly simple"

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Nargesh Nani Palkhivala, 82, noted social worker who has left her indelible mark on different charitable and educational organizations where she was chairperson and trustee, on June 4, 2000 in Bombay following cardiac arrest.

"We will miss Nargesh's presence and help to our organizations," noted a condolence letter from the committee members of the Sir Ratan Tata Institute (RTI) where Palkhivala was president. Commending her loyalty and dedication to the Stri Zarhosti Mandal and the RTI, they added, "For many, many years (she) helped not only the organization financially but also extended her generosity to those employees who needed help." During her 30-year tenure as managing committee member she willingly visited employees having domestic problems and helped them out, mentioned Bakhtavar Tarapore, former administrator and general secretary of RTI. She further referred to the crisis period in the early 1990s when RTI was rocked by severe labor problems and faced a financial crunch. It was thanks to her contacts and ability to procure a loan in time that the amounts due to the staff could be paid. "All employees of RTI—past and present—should bow their heads in gratitude to her for their continued employment," added Tarapore.

"The trust has lost an able administrator," noted a condolence letter from the trustees of The Framjee Dinshaw Petit Parsee Sanatorium situated at Cumballa Hill where Palkhivala had been associated as trustee since 1983, taking "keen interest in the day-to-day affairs of the Sanatorium." Her colleague on the trust board Jehangir H. C. Jehangir wrote, "I had developed a great respect for her abilities as a trustee and as a fine person." Her grand-niece Statira Ranina recalls how Palkhivala's total involvement with these charitable trusts required

her to make a thorough study of every applicant's case history and how on one occasion she firmly refused to permit a Sanatorium stay to a person even in the face of many threats.



Nargesh Palkhivala with Nani (left) and encouraging a handicapped child (below)

Involved with The Nesserwanjee Manockjee Petit Charity Fund since 1955, "her advice and guidance" benefitted the trust for over four decades, recorded the condolence resolution. "She took keen interest in the welfare of the widows in our two widows' homes (and) in our J. N. Petit Technical High School, Poona in fund-raising especially at the time of centenary celebrations..." added the resolution.

Many other educational institutions too gained from Palkhivala's expertise. As noted the principal of the Girton High School, Navaz Sanjana, in her tribute to their chairperson, "We were aware that she had been ailing for the past two years but her interest in the School work remained unabated and she had always insisted on holding the School meetings at her residence. At all times she displayed a great interest and devotion for her alma mater and she never failed to guide and support all the school projects which were presented to her." Commented founder-trustee Silla Ardesir, the Girton School "owes a deep and sincere debt of gratitude to her." Supplemented Banoo N. Cama, trustee of the Old Girtonians' Association, "Nargesh was a

very gentle, kind and soft-spoken lady who could also be firm when occasion demanded. It was a pleasure to work under her chairmanship...She was ever ready to give of her valuable time and name in order to solve any problem of the institution."

For the J. B. Petit High School for Girls too she made "an excellent chairperson of the board of trustees...(who) carried out all her duties promptly and efficiently," as remarked principal Shirin Darasha. Palkhivala's colleague Mehroo Kotval declared, "Her contribution in the J. B. Petit committee was always sound and thought out; her perspectives new and farsighted..."

As chairperson of the Gulistan School Trust "she was always there for us, solving problems big and small," noted the condolence resolution commending, "Her intelligence was par excellence and she was blessed with a wonderful power of judgment. Under her guidance we flourished." Usha Bhatt, principal of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Nand Vidya Niketan at Hazira, Surat referred to "her pleasant vitality (which) was a continuous source of inspiration to all of us."

Among the other institutions where Palkhivala had made her benign presence felt were the Maharashtra State Women's Council where she was viewed as a dedicated volunteer supporting all their projects; the Society for Human and Environmental Development where she was treasurer for 17 years; the National Association for the Blind whose funds she helped build up in the formative years; the Shankara Netralaya Eye Hospital in Madras where her name is engraved on top of



the building entrance; The Indian Council for Mental Health (Hygiene) and The J. N. Petit Institute (library) which she supported by virtue of her sanctioning powers as trustee of the Seth Hormusji Mody Trust of Hongkong, Matbar Trust, and Sheherdeshir Trust; the Time and Talents Club where she was one of the oldest members; the Nariman Point Churchgate Citizens Association which valued her guidance... About five years ago she was presented an award at the inauguration of the National Centre for Cerebral Palsy.

With her husband Nani being one of India's leading jurists, director of many Tata companies and one-time India's ambassador to the US, she was expected to play the role of a gracious hostess on innumerable occasions. "She was a quiet but indispensable pillar of strength" to Nani, believed Bachi Karkaria, group editorial director of Mid-Day Publications. "All the power, position and money meant nothing to her," recalled her good friends Daisy and Hector Mehta. And although a very outgoing person who loved socializing, her long stay in the US when accompanying her ambassador husband made her feel homesick, recalls Ranina to whom "Nini (Nargesh)"

was like a second mother. The couple had no offspring.

The friendship between Nargesh Matbar and Nani dates to their college days at St Xavier's from where Nargesh completed her BA in mathematics in 1940. One of her classmates S. S. Sethna remembered, "Nargesh was a quiet and innocent looking, unassuming girl...sitting on the front bench...whom (Nani) used to come and meet during the mathematics period..." Reportedly, Nargesh's affluent parents were initially opposed to this match but she was determined to marry her soul mate. Many years later, without the knowledge of her husband, she earned herself a degree in law as she felt obligated to increase her knowledge of the subject. Despite her failing health in the last two years when she required several blood transfusions and there was deterioration in her mental faculties, her mathematical abilities were "excellent till the end," observed Ranina who throughout her school life relied on Palkhivala for assistance in math.

Very good at ballroom dancing and adept at playing the piano, she also tried to instill in Ranina a passion for the fine arts. Daily prayer was a must too for this

religiously inclined lady who during her sojourns in India and abroad would insist on visiting a fire-temple if there was one in the vicinity, notes Ranina.

People from different walks of life attest to her nobility. Justice Sarosh Kapadia of the Bombay High Court wrote, "An encounter with her was a lesson in humility, a quality which I would like to emulate in my life." Chartered accountant Jal Dastur registered his appreciation of her graciousness more than 30 years ago when he made a mental note that this was a lady who was "nobly simple and simply noble." Testifying to her thoughtful nature, one of the condolence letters referred to her determination to visit an ailing friend at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital when her own physical condition was weak. She made a trip there in the company of her nurse!

As stated her friend Simone Tata, chairman of Trent Limited, "She is leaving behind a great number of admirers, of people she helped with so much compassion and kindness — because Nargesh was nothing but kindness."

Nargesh Palkhivala is survived by her husband Nani.

A. D. SHROFF: "THE ARTICULATE... continued from page 43

sify old books as part of the activities of the L. B. Scouts Troop, eventually becoming a trustee of the Zoroastrian Boy Scouts Troop, Minoo Shroff informs us. Though convinced that a lot of the prayers and ceremonies followed by the Parsis were borrowed from Indian rituals to make up for what had been lost when the community fled Iran and that those that survived lacked meaning, he would pray religiously every morning and night, says his son Noshir.

A junior contemporary to Sir Cowasji Jehangir and Sir Homi Mody, they became his friends and supported Shroff's public activities. In the early 1940s Cowasji Jehangir wanted him in the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and though not enamored of the idea, AD put up his candidacy in 1944. Despite being a radical — he favored cremation — he did not want to "make traditions stand on their head," informs Minoo Shroff. While the orthodox were against Shroff, Jamé and the Parsi Press reportedly supported him. Already preoccupied with the Bombay Plan, the Government of India chose to send him to Bretton Woods just before the Punchayet election. With

his personal presence missing at the time of the contest, he lost by a single vote to solicitor Nadirshah Mulla, recalls Minoo Shroff. Thereafter Shroff

"Teach students how to think, not what to think"

withdrew from Parsi politics though he remained a great supporter of the community in the marketplace.

Minoo Shroff recalls the verbal sparring between Shroff and lawyer Phiroze Wadia who always took up cudgels on behalf of shareholders at the various annual general meetings. "With his knowledge of company law and corporate affairs Wadia would pulverize Premier Tyres but he wouldn't be able to get his way with AD," notes Minoo Shroff.

Describing his uncle as a "staunch Parsi at heart," Minoo Shroff notes, "Other things being equal, if he took a liking to you, he'd make you." Nor did he restrict himself to his own family members. "He'd come up the hard way. He had no godfather," added Minoo

Shroff. Also charitably disposed, he gave his own and was instrumental in getting other donations for the relief of the blind and for those suffering from cancer and leprosy as noted the BOI's obit in 1965.

Dalal recreates the frolicking atmosphere at Bombay House when Shroff's caustic wit, J. R. D. Tata's sense of fun and Sir Homi Mody's humor and pranks combined for daily hilarity and animated discussion in the board lunch room. But Tata and Shroff were both of volatile temper and eventually Shroff's outspoken criticism of government policy and its repercussions on Tata interests led to a cooling off between them. Dalal quotes D. F. Karaka's obit in the *Current*: "There was much more to the man than can be put down in a brief obituary. He was no saint, but to such a suggestion, had he been alive today, he would have said: 'I don't think a halo would have suited me. I much prefer my sola hat.'"

Quoting Sir Winston Churchill Rajagopal said, "One mark of a great man is the power of making lasting impressions upon the people he meets; another is to have so handled matters that the course of after events is continually affected by what he did. Shroff fulfilled both these hard tests."

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