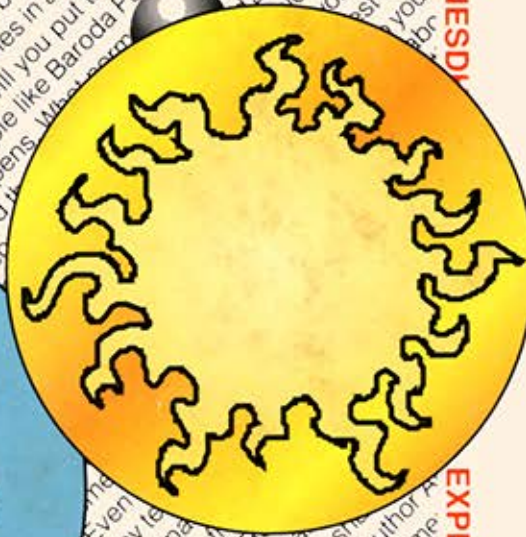


JANUARY 2001
Rs 35

Parsiānā

NOTING THAT THE DOONGER WADIPROBLEM WAS THREE PRONGEDSMELL, DEHYDRATION AND DISPOSAL OF BONES. DHALLA



CLOSED DISTANCE OFF FIVE FEET THEY
DEHYDRATED THE BODY WITH OUR RAISING THE TEMPERATURE AROUND IT. EVEN

Essential ingredients in a Maharaja Mac.

Ever wonder why a McDonald's burger tastes so great? The buns so soft, the lettuce so crisp.

Exactly like McDonald's burgers the world over. That's because they don't compromise on the quality of ingredients. Even if it means getting them from all over the country.

Which in India, is done by the man in the picture, and others like him at AFL.

In real terms, that means moving ingredients by the tonne. In refrigerated trucks. Everyday.

The cheese comes from Baramati.

Lettuce from Ooty, Dehradun,



Delhi and Talegaon. Ketchups,

saucers and sandwich spreads from Ludhiana.

And the meat patties from Hyderabad.

But it's not only the Maharaja Mac, everything on the menu at McDonald's is just as fresh.

This is where AFL's command over food supply-chain planning comes into play.

After McDonald's place their order on our

intranet, our trucks arrive at multiple supply points.

These trucks, with three temperature zones each, are loaded to McDonald's specifications. The Data

Recording System inside each truck records and



maintains temperatures

during transit. Getting ingredients, as fresh as possible, to the McDonald's hubs.

So what made McDonald's choose AFL as the co-ordinator for their supply chain?

The answer lies in fifty years of expertise.

And investments.

In 1945, AFL launched air freight forwarding in India. From there we've come a long way to

become the one-stop movement conglomerate.

Today, we provide business solutions to moving anything, anywhere, anytime, by air, or land.



or through water.

For this, we have upgraded our technology and systems at every step. Evidence of our providing the finest infrastructure, are 1200 PCs connecting over 200 offices, hubs and key customers.

This dedication has allowed our turnover to exceed Rs. 550 crore today. We believe it will help us cross the Rs. 1000 crore mark by 2002.

We believe we have the ingredients to make it.



Where movement is a science

Parsiana

January 2001
Volume 23 Number 6

EDITOR Jehangir R. Patel
MANAGING EDITOR Arnavaz S. Mama
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Parinaz M. Gandhi
SENIOR EDITORS
Dina K. Mehta, Hilla P. Guzder
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Roxana A. Driver
SENIOR DESIGNER Kranti M. Shilotri
DESIGNER Nivedita A. Potdar
MARKETING DIRECTOR Veera J. Patel
ADVERTISING MANAGER Jasmine D. Driver
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE Susan Hadvaid
FINANCE B. L. Arora
DTP Bakhtavar R. Batliwalla, K. P. Ravi
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Khurshid Panthaki
ASSISTANT SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Selvan Mark
ACCOUNTANT Anagha Korde
ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT
Sampada S. Patwardhan
ADMINISTRATION (ACCOUNTS)
Swarupa Bhagwat
ACCOUNTS ASSISTANTS Indu Pillai,
Sreevidya Narayanan
OFFICE ASSISTANTS Umesh Poojary,
Sunil Sakhare, Govind Salgaonkar, Mahipat
Jadhav, Manish Pawar

2 Readers' Forum

12 Events and Personalities

22 Zoroastrians Abroad

25 Dr Frene Ginwala: "Democracy is difficult" by Arnavaz Mama

30 Dastur Hall: The priest's personal property by Parinaz Gandhi

32 Samast anjuman meeting: "A doctrinal crossfire"

39 The Federation: Seeking new directions

46 The venerable verdict on dokhmenashini by Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli

48 Books

60 The Bawaji Rap by Jasmine Patel

62 Milestones

Cover: Dilemma at Doongerwadi

Parsiana is edited and published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, A-191, Road No 16A, MIDC, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thana (W), 400604. All rights reserved. Processing Comart Lithographers. Editorial enquiries: 2078183. Advertising: 2078104, 2072915. Subscription: 2665661, 2662709. General: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541, 2075572. Press: 5804162. E-mail: parvo@glasbm01.vsnl.net.in parsiana@yahoo.com For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. ISSN: 0971-3786.

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



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

Rethink the issue

I read your September issue with interest, and was pleasantly surprised that on two occasions ("Marrying out, staying in" and "Paths to progress") leading intellectuals of the community have called for rethinking on the subject of allowing the children of Zarathushti mothers (married to non-Zarathushti men) into the religious fold.

It is my humble opinion that our community must rethink these issues. In the *Gathas*, Zarathushtra constantly asks us to strive for Ahura Mazda's attributes, one of the finest being Spenta Mainyu — the benevolent, progressive mentality. He gave us a timeless, ageless religion whose fundamental principles are as valid today as they were in his time. Why then are we remaining stuck to archaic traditions which were not even given to us by the Prophet?

Nowhere in the *Gathas* (which are the only true words of the Manthran

himself) has Zarathushtra advocated a patriarchal system. He believed in absolute equality of man and woman. As far back as 3,700 years ago, he asked his daughter Pouruchisti to choose her husband wisely, consulting her best wisdom and having perfect faith in her Vohu Mana (*Vahishtoishd Gatha* — Y. 53.3). There were no other criteria for selection that he gave his daughter. The groom could have been younger or older, poorer or richer, of stately background or a peasant or any other class or caste or religion. As long as the two of them chose each other with the counsel of the Good Mind and with the goal of living their lives together in righteousness!

Through the Internet I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of Zarathushtis all over the world. It might come as a surprise for many readers that a lot of these Zarathushtis have converted to our Mazdayasna faith! They have read our texts, have become fascinated by the beauty of Zarathushtra's progressive and timeless religion, have chosen to abide and live by its tenets, and finally converted to it by having their navjotes done. And they are not just from UK, USA or Australia where Parsi-Zarathushtis are settled. They are from countries as diverse as Sweden and even Brazil! All of them are intellectuals, thinkers and scholars! For those who may be interested, and have access to the Internet, I would recommend reading the article "Why Zarathushtrianism?" by one such intellectual, Antonius Karasulas at www.vohuman.org. It seems to me that Zoroastrianism is being rediscovered in the West by all those thinkers who cherish the ideals of freedom of choice, the quest for truth, equality and brotherhood of man, human rights and safeguarding the environment. And these are all the teachings of a man called Zarathushtra who was light years ahead of his time in thought, word and deed!

I do not have any statistics. However I am fairly certain that if some sort of survey was conducted among young Zarathushtis who have been brought up in secular, post-Independence India, most of them would opt for the equality of allowing the children of Zarathushti mothers (married to non-Zarathushtis) to bring up their children as Zarathushtis. And perhaps many of them might even

advocate conversion of people who have studied the good religion and want to convert to it!

Our daily prayer *Jasamé Avanghé Mazda* tells us, "Of all the religions that have been or will be, the greatest, the best, the loftiest and the most sublime is the religion of Ahura Mazda, as revealed by Zarathushtra." Let us carry on the flame of Mazdayasna as Zarathushtra intended for it to be carried on. Let us not get bogged down in the quagmire of archaic, outmoded thinking and traditions, or a day might soon come when the Parsi-Zarathushti community in India (where the number of deaths are three times the number of births as per a study made by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay) will get extinct and Zoroastrianism will flourish elsewhere in the world! MAHARUKH SHROFF

"Common calendar"

If one has read Dali Gundevis's letter ("Common calendar," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 2000) about why our community ought to adopt only the Fasli (Fasal) calendar as their official religious and cultural calendar, he/she would have understood the significance of one uniform system.

The Fasli calendar has got great scientific significance to it. Its New Year (Navroz) begins on March 21, the day of the spring equinox. The New Year day is also of great importance to those who till the land for it is the time when spring begins and the bitter winter days come to an end, a time when the birds begin to chirp and flowers carpet the land!

It is so sad that modern Zoroastrians insist on following systems which are not only inaccurate, but completely different from what our ancestors followed.

Why can't we go back to the original system? What makes the Shahenshahi and Kadmi calendars better than the one our forefathers followed? Why can't we Zoroastrians open our minds and accept the fact that we are following something that has no proper base? I thought that the noble religion preached by Prophet Zoroaster and Shah Jamshed was based on "practicality and truth?" Then why not listen to the words of the wise saints and choose the right path? Won't one uniform system put an end to all the complications and help reunite the entire Parsi-Zoroastrian community once again?

ENGINEERING & AGENCIES

Private Limited and

CAMBATTA ENGINEERING Co

Represent

1. **W. Schlafhorst AG & Co. - Germany** for Automatic Winding Machine 'Autoconer' and Open End Spinning and Winding Machine 'Autocoro'
2. **Picanol N. V. - Belgium** for Airjet and Rapier Weaving Machines
3. **Sucker Mueller Hacoba GmbH & Co. - Germany** for Indigo Dyeing and Sizing Machine, Emerizing, Shearing and Raising Machines and Sectional and Direct Warpers
4. **Babcock Textilmaschinen GmbH - Germany** for continuous scouring and bleaching ranges, continuous dyeing ranges, pad-dry and pad-steam lines, washing, ranges, stenters, curing chambers, loop steamers, etc
5. **Fong's National Engineering Co. Ltd. - Hongkong** for atmospheric and high temperature dyeing machines for all kinds of knitted and woven fabrics, high temperature package dyeing machines and dryers including Radio Frequency Dryer
6. **Otto Funke GmbH & Co. KG - Germany** for high class energy efficient jiggers for atmospheric dyeing having directly driven rollers without any kind of gear boxes
7. **Barco N. V. - Belgium** for Monitoring Systems and cotton sorters
8. **Loepfe Brothers Ltd. - Switzerland** for Electronic Yarn Clearers and Monitoring Systems
9. **Verbrugge N. V. - Belgium** for all Weaving accessories
10. **Textilmaschinenfabrik Dr. Ernst Fehrer AG - Austria** for Friction spinning & Non/woven plants
11. **Crosrol Ltd. - U.K.** for Bale Pluckers, Blow Room Machinery and High Production Cards with Autolevellers
12. **ECC Card Clothing Ltd. - U.K. & ECC Card Clothing (Asia) Pvt. Ltd., Pune - India** for Metallic Wires and Card Clothings and tops

For full particulars please contact at:

Ahmedabad office: Cambatta Central, Bharat Bobbins Ltd Premises, Rakhial Road, Ahmedabad 380023

Phone: (079) 2740925/2744500

Fax: (079) 2742651/2743649 E-mail: engamd@enaindia.com

It was due to this same calendar difference that so many Zoroastrians in the past fought amongst themselves unnecessarily. Doesn't it feel ridiculous to celebrate the Prophet's birthday thrice in a year? Or as a matter of fact, any other religious occasion?

We have entered a new age, a time in which we face many challenges, which only if overcome will save our community from extinction. It is necessary for us to stand united and resolve all differences amongst us. Let us be as original as possible for only originality can help us maintain our special identity in this world.

FARZAN B. MAZDA

Dahanu

Sun for the soul

Khurshed Nagirasnee is the best for the upliftment of the soul,
Has powerful sun energy which plays magnetic cosmic role.
Universal approval for least pollution of natural elements,
Rays of the sun are the natural purifier and hygienic ingredients.
Sun energy has a continuous circuit with *tana* underground.
Has a miraculous spiritual protection against any decay found.

Eye witness is not profound for stink and deterioration,
Dokhmenashini is a solarium, a place for hygienic isolation.
Natural scavengers, vultures, were cruelly driven away,
And now create problem with false alarm of stink and decay.
God's efficient plan of welfare is His definite concern,
In Tower of Silence, bodies sleep peacefully before disposal by sun.
Rays of the sun have effective heat to dry *anasars* without decay,
Avoid fire by direct pinpoint concentration on the corpse anyway.
Strengthen sun energy by some scientific research outside the Tower,
No selfish controversy is beneficial, we have to endeavor.
Even biochemical powder may be effective to enhance disposal,
Evil intention to support crematorium is an un-Zarathushtrian proposal.

NOSHIR DABOO

Ahmedabad

"Sanctity of the dokhmas"

In matters concerning dokhmas and dokhmenashini one sadly notices the abundant misinformation printed, with-

out editorial comment (why so?), in your columns. Is *Parsiana* averse to truth on which our eminent religion depends? And should not our religion therefore be taught truthfully?

Let us unambiguously affirm: the 3,000-year-old system of disposal of the dead through exposure within the dokhmas was the best sanitary system which could be devised by a Median priesthood for their time and place. Thus, even parts of inner Asia and central Iran safely and hygienically practiced this enclosure system of exposure to the open skies. The expression *khwarshed nigerishnih* sums it up precisely. Our much misquoted *Vendidad* devotes several chapters to the practice and regulations with sufficient details of postmortem observance, the circumstances surrounding disposal of the dead, and the cleansing procedures for the route to the dokhma and of mortuary assistants (today's *khandias* and *nassessalars*). Only the latter figure in the *Vendidad*.

What formerly was sound traditional practice in ancient Iran and parts of India, and especially at the Doongerwadi complex in Bombay, is no longer based on safe anti-contagion considerations but on pseudo-religious expediency.



Sir J. J. College of Commerce

On-going Workshops (Commencing every month)

☒ Presentation Skills. How to Sell your Ideas.

How to plan, deliver and sell your ideas. Through expert guidance and seeing yourself on video, you learn to be much more effective. Four sessions: 2.00 to 5.00 p.m.

☒ Marketing. How the Leaders develop Winning Brand Strategies.

Using case histories and common sense, you'll soon learn what "marketing" truly means. The essentials for anyone who wants to know the basics of the business. Three sessions: 2.00 to 5.00 p.m.

☒ Copywriting: The Starting Point of Great Advertising.

Creating interactive and internet strategy. Covers all media. The only one of its kind for over 15 years. Twelve sessions: 6.00 to 8.00 p.m.; Mondays and Thursdays

☒ Web Site and Interactive Media Strategy and Designing

Job-Oriented Courses

☒ Public Speaking Course

☒ Secretarial Courses for various cadres

☒ Personality Development programme



Enrol at: 14, Nanabhoy Lane, Hutatma Chowk, Mumbai 400001

Tel: 2871058, 2844329 Fax: 2871185 E-mail: jjcc@vsnl.com

Also contact us for

In-house Training Programmes and Placements

Reaching for the Sky



Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

Both built by Shapoorji Pallonji of course!



SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

Shapoorji Pallonji Centre, 41/44, Minoo Desai Marg, Colaba,
Bombay - 400005. Phone: 2870211/2870195/2870197

Underlying this is a mindless stubbornness sustained by ignorance of the facts and fear of "what so-and-so will say!" Fears that vultures were disappearing had been voiced since the 1950s when these concerns were constantly aired but never followed up. The reason then given for the drop in number of the carrion-eaters was noise and pollution from vastly increased traffic; another reason, put forward plausibly for recent times, was through some natural cause, perhaps viral. Observant naturalists had indicated that vulture populations were decreasing throughout the subcontinent with the expansion of urbanization and fast vanishing wildlife. Naturalists have a habit of being right in such matters, yet we are urged to consult overseas experts who at great expense will finish up telling us exactly the same thing!

The breeding program and some bizarrely extravagant measures to ensure its success is as preposterous as it is impracticable. Vultures follow sight-lines rather than scent (*Bundahishn*, Ch 24), and they do not breed properly in captivity or semi-controlled conditions. They are creatures of the wild.

The much-vaunted threat to fire and earth as sacred elements, strangely neglects water and completely ignores air. From a recent *Parsiana* report one learns that some residents of nearby baugs are frequently subjected to unpleasant wafts from decomposing corpses in the dokhmas. The *Vendidad* precautions against pollution were formulated to protect humanity at large, and not just Parsis. Smells, pleasant or offensive, both travel on air currents, and whereas in earlier times populations and dwellings were safely distanced, nowadays, with encroachments and high-rise building developments it is simply unhygienic and socially irresponsible to continue this practice in drastically changed conditions.

To forestall howls of "reformist," it should be pointed out that the dokhma system itself was a reform against the burning or burial of corpses, and indeed that yesterday's reformers are today's traditionalists. Honest traditionalists will no doubt confirm that the root *dah* — which underlies the word dokhma — has always meant "to burn" and when applied to its derivatives, clearly indicated a long employed method of disposal by cremation. The dramatic change in perception and practice which we see in the *Vendidad* was the evolution to-

wards a reform urged by environmental considerations and acute concerns for living beings and their protection from the contagion which arose from corpses. Readers are asked to consult our priestly "Bible" to ascertain the truth for themselves.

One notices with despair the continuing tendency of traditionalist enthusiasts to divulge only those parts of our texts which suit their argument, and to leave out or distort the rest which do not. A serious example is the contention that dokhmas are "sacred": they are nothing of the sort, and, in fact, the text unambiguously informs us that the places where the enclosures are erected are places of the greatest contagion (VI. 44-51: on early dokhmas and the *hvardaresya* or *nigerishnih*; VII.55-59: on the filth therein and their unholy denizens, and the stench emanating therefrom) — all absolutely un-sacred, for goodness' sake! Furthermore, in response to Zarathushtra's earnest enquiry as to in what (third) place on the sacred Mazda-created earth is occasioned the greatest misery, Ahura Mazda's unequivocal answer comes: *yat ba paiti fraeshtem dakhma uzdaeza kiryeinte yahmya naro irista nidhayeinti*: "It is the place where the most dokhma enclosures are erected in which deceased men are laid down (III.9)." As though to ensure that this fact firmly registered with our Prophet, Ahura Mazda specifies: "That man who demolishes most of those dokhmas wherein human corpses are deposited rejoices the earth! (III.13)." According to the early exchanges of socioreligious queries and replies, such dokhmas were to be demolished 50 years after their last use, and the land on which they were constructed was to be restored to its original condition. Those who waver between attachment to our time-honored sanitary code and claims of eco-friendliness will indeed have some soul-searching to do, and one hopes that these early guidelines will figure in their deliberations on this crucial community issue because both emanate from the same priestly text in which there was no contradiction in the matter!

Bearing uppermost in mind the *Vendidad* directives and warnings, we must question the role accorded to the *nassalaras*. The text is very exact on the layout of the *barshnum-gah* or cleansing-ground and the strict sequence of lengthy purification which these corpse-carriers must ever undergo. Again, we

stress that it was very carefully formulated, and always with the object of purification of the living after corpse-contact, constantly the source of the greatest contamination.

In view of the severe disabilities inflicted upon these poor functionaries (no fire-temple visits, no commensality with coreligionists, etc) and their families, do we as a self-acclaimed civilized, eco-conscious, and often pietistic people, have to tolerate the maintenance in the 21st century of a Parsi Zoroastrian underclass which we have created in our midst? Would we turn over male members of our families to this lowly, extremely hazardous, wretched occupation, and have them suffer the indignities which these poor folk have to endure?

There remains the all-important subject of the souls of the departed. Among the most movingly beautiful Avestic texts is our *Hadhokht Nask*: it depicts the earthly condition of the disembodied soul which sits by the head of the deceased for three whole days and nights chanting the *Gathas*. On the dawn of the fourth day it sets out on its perilous journey to meet with its *Daena* before being led to its ultimate destination. Attentive readers on the subcontinent will know that the body is removed within hours to the dokhmas. The question arises: where now is the deceased's soul? Certainly this unperishable spiritual counterpart of a once pious Zoroastrian cannot inhabit an area of utmost physical corruption. What honest spiritual solace can the priests truly give to the bereaved? And why should a priest whose duty it is to comfort the living hold back just because the remains have been committed to the flames of a crematorium or to the grave in a burial ground? Is it not a dereliction of duty on the part of a Mazdayasnian Zoroastrian priest, justified on the feeble ground that it is the elements which have to be protected and not the mourning family from the affliction of grief? Zoroastrianism has always been Spenta, salutary and life-enhancing. May it be so through the wisdom, not obfuscation, of our beautiful age-old faith!

FARROKH VAJIFDAR
London, UK

Perhaps very few in the Parsi community know that there are certain species of vultures like the griffon who were responsible for the disposal of the dead, and no other species of smaller birds

**Buy Your Maruti
From**

Sah & Sanghi Auto Agencies Limited



**Dealers for Maruti Udyog Limited
Maruti 800, Omni, Esteem, Baleno, Wagon R,
Zen Models, Gypsy Hard
and Soft Top and Maruti 1000 CC.**

Sales Office:

"Giri Kunj", 11-C N. S. Patkar Marg,
Near Kemps Corner Flyover, Mumbai 400007
Tel No: 3803423/380-4225 Fax No: 022-3803788
E-mail: rsanghi@bom5.vsnl.net.in

Workshop:

Prakash Mills Compound, Off Globe Mills Passage,
Opp T.V. Tower, Worli, Mumbai 400013
Tel No: 4925452/53/54 Fax No: 4973275
E-mail: ssaa@bom8.vsnl.net.in



Sah & Sanghi Group

would even touch the dead body. Also certain species known as andian condors who build their nests only in tamarind and palm trees are now almost extinct. England had a similar problem of shortage of birds like the vultures because extensive use of insecticides and viral diseases in British homes and fields and forests led to the disappearance of these species and a sudden increase of the American grey squirrels with a substantial decline in other species of red squirrels within a few years.

It is believed that birds of prey do not go near corpses which have been afflicted by incurable diseases like AIDS, cancer, etc. Whether this is true or false has to be verified. The proposed scheme of creating an aviary for vultures will be a most expensive proposition for the Panchayet, difficult to maintain in the long run.

Our Zoroastrian ancestors who were residing in Bombay possessed real foresight, building Towers of Silence at Kemp's Corner and also one at Andheri (Salsette). The structure at Andheri was closed down 15 years ago after which was built the Salsette housing colony for Parsis. At this stage, if the community had Towers of Silence in two localities it would ease the pressure in many ways.

DINSHAW NATERWALLA

Excellence recognition

In my dictionary, success is defined as "to take the place of," "to obtain one's wish," "to end with advantage," "the prosperous termination of anything attempted." Most of those who climb to the tops of hierarchical ladders succeed in these meanings. In the course of careers they "take the place of others," they obtain "their wishes," they "end with advantage," they "prosper till termination." They may sit in *kursis* of distinction and importance at the end of a long haul. But, where is the excellence in the person himself and his work beyond these? One may even be an Excellency without being excellent in any field.

The same dictionary defines excellence as "surpassing others in some good quality or great virtue or worth." The implication here is that it must be intrinsic to the person and his very meritorious performance in any field of human activity, within or without organizations, with or without official titles. For example, Octavio Paz may have been an Excellency when he was Mexico's am-

bassador to India; but his excellence was as a poet. Alternatively, one may be what the media regards as the most powerful man in the world, the President of USA, but no one would suspect most of them excelled in any field beyond politics.

When it comes to our Parsi/Zoroastrian community, do our standards for excellence have to be low, or confused with success or holding a distinguished post? It amazes one to see "qualifications" as one of the first criteria for excellence awards. Shakespeare was no DLit in literature, but who questions his preeminence as a playwright? Maqbool Hussain, one of India's top artists, internationally recognized, never went to an art school; but, in the eyes of art critics he excels. The early Wadias, who built ships and Jamsetji Tata never had qualifications in shipbuilding or steel-making. So qualification may be an organizational need, not a criterion of excellence in working life.

At a time when other communities are taking the lead in 'sunrise' fields of the future, in information technology, biotechnology and molecular science, in space engineering, in non-conventional energies of the future; where are Parsi Zoroastrian names in these, either in the Federation's lists, or the University of Bombay's Contributions of the Parsi community to India, 1920-2000, or that of the World Zoroastrian Congress Excellence Awards? We may have had excellence in the past in quite a few fields, but where are the lights of excellence of the future?

Could we give excellence seeking a rethink in the cultivation of excellence, besides awards? And could we give community recognition to well-deserving persons, who may not have excellence in any field, nor reach the top rung of organizational ladders? I refer to those who have and are making solid, sustained social welfare contributions to the community. This category may be termed devotion to social welfare.

ASPI D. MODDIE

No Parsi on Crorepati show

The TV quiz show "Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)," anchored by cinestar Amitabh Bachchan, is a popular program introduced by the Star Plus channel. This show tests your general knowledge. If you are intelligent and well-read, chances are that you may win the jackpot of one crore rupees.

It is more than four months since KBC was inaugurated on July 3, 2000. Those of your readers who watch this show carefully and regularly would have noticed that not a single Parsi, man or woman, boy or girl has reached the 'hot seat' opposite Bachchan.

What is the reason for the absence of any Parsi candidate on the show? Just as in the KBC show where the contestant has to choose the right answer from the four options given, readers can choose any one of the following four options given:

- He or she is not interested in getting one crore rupees or fractions thereof;
- He is too shy to appear on the show;
- He is too lazy even to complete the preliminary test to qualify to be a participant;
- He would not allow his ego to be hurt if a wrong answer is given to a simple question.

BHIKHAI M. ADENWALLA

Indian MPs in Britain

India is justly proud of her stars who have shone in different fields such as science, arts, politics, economics, sports and lately in the beauty contests.

In British politics and public life three Indians have made their mark, and by coincidence all the three belonged to the tiny Parsi community. Dr Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree and Shapurji Saklatvala all entered the British Parliament as elected members.

They were all Bombay born but the three had different political philosophies. Naoroji was a liberal, Bhownagree, a conservative and Saklatvala was elected on a Labour ticket, being a convinced communist.

Naoroji was born in 1825 and went to London when he was about 30 to join the business firm of the Cama family.

He won the seat in the British Parliament in 1892 with a wafer thin majority of five. As luck would have it, this figure emerged after a recount. We have known him as the founding father of the Indian National Congress and the first Indian to be appointed to the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure. In his first speech in the Parliament he said neither his election nor his age of 67 had in the slightest dimmed his progressive instincts.

The purpose for which he sought election to the British Parliament can best be described in his own words in his maiden speech: "I have not the least doubt that though our progress may be

BLOOD CAN KILL



AIDS BEWARE !

We are Concerned as a Corporate Citizen.

KRUPP INDUSTRIES INDIA

(An ISO 9001 Company)



(From left) Naoroji, Bhownagree, Saklatvala: in the House of Commons

slow, and we may at times meet with disappointments, if we persevere, whatever justice we ask for we shall get."

During the last few years of his life he lived in quiet retirement at Versova, a beach resort about 15 miles from Bombay, where he once received an unusual visitor, Lord Willingdon, the then Governor of Bombay. Till the last, he was in full possession of all his faculties, full of ideas for the advancement of his country and his countrymen. The great simplicity and purity of his life continued to inspire the generation which came after him and hopefully will continue to inspire the generations yet unborn.

Bhownagree walked the corridors of the British Parliament for more than 10 years, the longest among the three Indian MPs.

Born in 1851, he went to England at the age of 30 to qualify as a barrister, which he did in 1885.

He was a man of unflinching convictions, firm of purpose and reliable in judgment. His stamina was remarkable.

His punctiliousness and seeming tirelessness, his self-imposed discipline, exemplary and contagious, were the very essence of his remarkable personality. He impressed the House by the vigor and eloquence of his speeches on subjects touching India and the people of his country. He was the author of a booklet *The Verdict of India*, designed to counter the German propaganda injurious to the then British rule of India.

More significantly he was the first amongst the Indians to press forward the need to raise the educational standards of women, to be brought on par with men.

Born in 1874 Saklatvala's mother was the sister of J. N. Tata, the founder of the Tata Iron and Steel Works.

After preliminary education in Bombay he moved to England to study law, and became a member of Lincoln's



540 votes.

In 1925 he was appointed a member of an inter parliamentary delegation which was scheduled to visit USA but he was refused a visa on the ground that the USA did not want revolutionaries in their country. This created a stir in England in those days.

Saklatvala was jailed for two months for a speech he made in Hyde Park, London.

The following year the prodigal son returned to India and his permit to re-enter UK was cancelled, at the instance of none other than the government of India.

He was a very strong critic of the Indian National Congress and being a fiery figure he strongly opposed the British rule in India too.

He was married to an English lady and had three sons and two daughters who were initiated into the Zoroastrian religion for which he fell foul of the Communist party. JASHWANT P. THACKER

As others see us

Stefan Hasselblad, an American of German-Swedish descent, digs enthusiastically into his dhansak and kebabs and answers easily to the name of "Soli." Another recent convert? Not really. But Stefan is certainly yet one more admirer of the Zoroastrian religion and Parsi culture.

From Oregon, USA, Stefan has come to Nagpur, India, as part of the Rotary International youth exchange program. While India, as a country, was his first choice, having Annu and Shiraz Doongaji as foster parents was "not in my hands but I am so glad it was them," said 17-year-old Stefan staying in the large Doongaji household, with grandma, mum and dad, three sons around his own age, cousins and friends who are constantly in and out of the house, and ducks and dogs to add to the confusion!

Inn, London. Saklatvala was twice elected to the British Parliament. First in 1922 he won on the Labour ticket but he lost his seat in later elections. In 1924 he contested again as a communist and won by about

"Quite a change from being an only child and having my father away from home for long spells."

His father is part of a non-governmental social service agency that helps set up health care systems in Third World countries. Stefan has traveled extensively with his parents, spending as long as two years in Sudan and two years in Indonesia. Interestingly, Stefan's father was born in Assam and lived in India for the first 16 years of his life. Stefan's grandfather worked with lepers in Assam. Caring for the less fortunate seems to be a way of life for the Hasselblad family. Stefan's mother is a nurse. "My dad didn't pressure me," said Stefan, "but suggested that India would be a good place to go to."

Had he heard of Parsis or Zoroastrians before coming to India? "I had heard of Zoroastrianism and knew that the religion had something to do with fire but that was about all," Stefan replied candidly having "learnt a lot more since, living with a Parsi family and being involved with the community."

What impresses Stefan about Zoroastrianism is that it is uncomplicated and open, giving its followers a freedom of choice. There are no strict taboos as found in other Indian religions or threats of eternal hell and damnation as held out in Christianity. "It seems simple enough to live one's life, trying to adhere to good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The Doongaji family whom I stay with come close to practicing these precepts."

During the agiary salgirah celebrations held in Nagpur recently, Stefan took an active part in all the programs along with his host family. It gave him an opportunity to know the community at close quarters. He likes the liberal and less orthodox lifestyle (as compared to other Indian communities) and loves Parsi food. At the same time he appreciates and endorses the fact that not everyone can walk into an agiary, that conversions are not possible and that marrying outside the community is frowned upon. "You need these measures to preserve your unique identity," says Stefan.

Stefan himself is a Protestant belonging to the Presbyterian Church but he is



Hasselblad (left) and Zubin Amroliwalla

continued on page 61

Your Rupee's Worth

Value of the Indian rupee per unit of foreign currency
as on December 30, 2000

	BUYING	SELLING
U.S.A. dollar.....	45.65	47.45
U.S.A. dollar T/C.....	45.90	47.20
Sterling pound.....	67.15	69.70
Sterling pound T/C.....	67.50	69.35
Euro T/C.....	41.25	43.90
Australian dollar.....	25.20	26.60
Australian dollar T/C.....	25.50	26.45
Austrian schilling/100.....	296.90	
Bahrain dinar.....	118.55	128.65
Belgium franc/per 100.....	101.25	
Brunei dollar.....	23.00	
Canadian dollar.....	29.10	31.20
Canadian dollar T/C.....	29.40	
Cyprus pound.....	66.60	
Danish kroner.....	5.45	
Deutsche mark.....	21.25	22.55
Deutsche mark T/C.....	21.50	22.35
Dutch guilden.....	18.60	19.65
Dutch guilden T/C.....	18.60	
Egyptian pound.....	11.90	
Fiji dollar.....	17.50	
Finland mark.....	6.85	
French franc.....	6.30	6.80
French franc T/C.....	6.35	6.70
Greek dracmas/per 100.....	11.95	
Hongkong dollar.....	5.65	6.15
Irish pound.....	51.85	
Italian lira/per 100.....	2.10	2.30
Japanese yen/per 100.....	39.60	42.20
Japanese yen/per 100 T/C.....	39.60	
Kuwait dinar.....	145.45	154.45
Malaysian ringgit.....	11.10	
Malta pound.....	91.25	
Mauritius rupee.....	1.25	
New Zealand dollar.....	19.40	
Norwegian kroner.....	4.95	
Oman rial.....	115.80	123.55
Pakistan rupee.....	0.50	
Portugal escudos/per 100.....	20.15	
Qatar riyal.....	12.25	13.40
Saudi Arabian riyal.....	11.90	12.70
Scottish pound.....	67.15	
Seychelles rupee.....	4.00	
Singapore dollar.....	25.90	27.65
South African rand.....	5.40	5.80
Spanish peseta/per 100.....	24.30	
Swedish kroner.....	4.60	
Swiss franc.....	27.50	29.00
Swiss franc T/C.....	27.75	28.85
Syrian pound.....	0.60	
Thailand baht/per 100.....	105.05	110.70
UAE dirhams.....	12.15	13.10

1). Rates are subject to change without notice.

2). Errors and omissions excepted.

3). For current exchange rates (including rates for currencies not listed above) and your foreign exchange requirement contact:



INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY DEALERS

Branches

Mumbai:

Kalpataru Chambers,
6 Nanik Motwane Marg, Mumbai 400023
Tel: 2671566, 2671432,
2671452, 2666529, 2666530
Fax: (022) 2624837

Mumbai Airports:

Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport:
Terminal (i) Tel: 6156121 Fax: (022) 6156732
Terminal (ii) Tel: 8327913 Fax: (022) 822-4532

Mumbai Docks:

Ballard Estate, Mumbai

Mangalore:

F-10, Crystal Arc,
Hampankatta Balmatta Road,
Mangalore 575001
Tel: 410401, 410402
Fax: (0824) 410403

Pune:

8, Nalin Chambers,
173 Dhole Patil Road, Pune 411001
Tel: 6050565, 6050566
Fax: (020) 6050564

Goa:

8, Mahalaxmi Chambers,
Dr. Shirdgaonkar Road, Panaji 403001
Tel: 421398, 421985
Fax: (0832) 220129

New Delhi:

UGF-8, Indraprakash Building,
21 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi 110001
Tel: 3352547, 3310028, 3352548
Fax: (011) 3357008

Bangalore:

GF, Richmond Plaza, Richmond Circle,
Rajaram Mohan Roy Road, Bangalore 560025
Tel: 2227194, 2211025.
Fax: (080) 2211064

Tours & Travel Services

Mumbai:

52 White Hall, August Kranti Marg,
Mumbai 400036
Tel: 3620005, 3642512, 3671455, 3680303
Fax: 3630656

Events and Personalities

Time capsule in Sanjan

The Sanjan Day celebrations which have become an annual event were made memorable this year when a "time capsule" was embedded adjacent to the Stambh (Memorial Column) at Sanjan," on November 20, 2000, notes a press release issued by Godrej Dotivala, public relations officer of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP). "It is in the fitness of things that the historic event took place at Sanjan where the Parsis established their first settlement when they migrated from Iran 1,370 years ago," he adds. The purpose of this endeavor was "to retain Parsi/Zoroastrian culture, religion and artifacts for posterity," mentioned Rohinton Daviervala, president of the Sanjan Memorial Column Local Committee.

Commissioned by the BPP trustees and fabricated by the House of Godrej, the time capsule contained replicas and miniatures of artifacts symbolizing Parsi heritage and culture. In written form were the Zoroastrian scriptures, the *Shah Nameh*, historical records and trust deed of the BPP, and Parsi newspapers; in pictorial form, there were photos of Parsi saints, atash behrams, agiaries, dharamshalas, and a replica of the *farman* from emperors Akbar and Jehangir. The traditional attire worn for festivities, a priest's robe, items included in a *sés*, objects used for funeral and other religious ceremonies, a copper scroll giving the contents of the capsule, the Godrej logo and a set of locks made

by Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited are all accommodated in the time capsule.

The other firsts on the occasion, as observed Daviervala, was the attendance of all seven BPP trustees and the coverage the event received on three television channels: Alfa Gujarati, Doordar-

shan Metro (*Subah Aaj Tak*) and Zee News (Beyond Headlines).

The function started with a jashan ceremony performed by Ervad Khushroo Kaikobadji in conjunction with other priests from Udvada, Sanjan, Nargol and Saronda. Chief guest Eruch Desai, former BPP chairman, complimented the organizers and the BPP team for conceiving the idea of a time capsule and emphasized the importance of prayers and the need to encourage and promote our priests and scholars.

BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz was appreciative of the religiosity and piety of the poor and middle-class Zoroastrians when the rich had become modern and cosmopolitan. He remarked that a larger community of Red Indians could not survive, but the Zoroastrians have because of their faith in religion.

How happy he would be if the Zoroastrian population was 50,00,000 instead of 70,000, noted BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder, appreciating the rising attendance at the Sanjan Day celebrations whilst promising an annual donation of one lakh rupees to the organizers.

The other speakers on the occasion were BPP trustee Dadi Engineer, BPP chief executive Behram Dastur, Surat Parsi Panchayat president, Dr Sam Bhacca, Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji of Bombay's Vachaghandhy Agiary. Committee member Dosabhai Oliaji thanked the donors, especially Guzder, Bhacca, Sohrab Katpitia, Meherbai Katpitia, Wadi Bunder Gahambhar Fund, Parsi Dairy Farm and Phiroze Sethna for sponsoring



Daviervala (standing) and Dastur; (below, from left) Guzder, Engineer, Dinshaw Mehta and Dinshaw Tamboly with time capsule



*Flavor your New Year
at Leopold
a turn-of-the-130 years old cafe*



Leopold Cafe

Since 1871

Colaba Causeway, Mumbai 400039
Tel: 2873362, 2020131 Fax: 91-22-2852037

the community lunch, buttermilk and cold drinks that were freely distributed on the occasion.

Hopefuls for HeartMeet

Nearly 150 marriageable Zoroastrians from India and overseas are expected to participate in the first ever HeartMeet - 2001 to be organized by the Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth (BUZY) from April 7-8, 2001. "A common forum will be provided to the youth for one-to-one interaction which may act as a catalyst for inducing matrimony," notes their statement of purpose clarifying that the Meet would create "a conducive environment for matrimony rather than arranging a conventional matchmaking meet."

Addressing the problem of the declining strength of the community attributed to late marriages, marriages outside the community, preference for small-sized families, HeartMeet hopes to provide the delegates the opportunity "of a formal as well as informal interaction." Further, expert consultants present at the Meet will be available for guidance to the delegates. "The success of the Meet lies more in the...firsthand in-

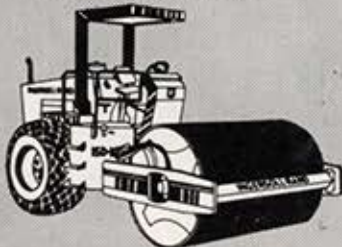
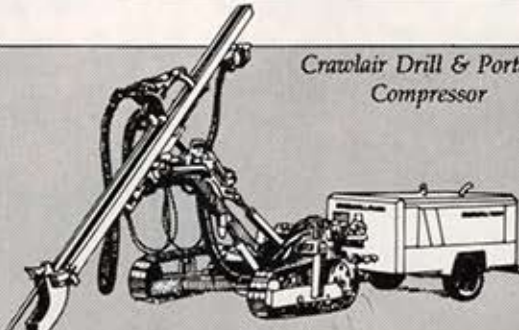
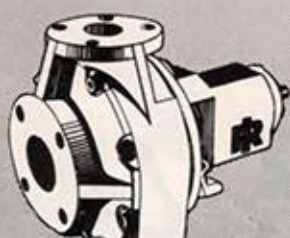
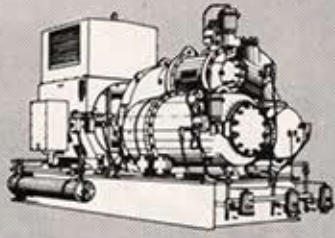
teraction of the youth with each other rather than animated matchmaking processes," believe the organizers, a specially constituted working committee functioning under chief coordinator Homiyar Anklesaria.

Those interested in participating in the Meet are required to fill out a registration form giving personal details of themselves and their immediate family whilst specifying the attributes they are seeking in a prospective spouse. Since the delegates are only required to pay a nominal registration fee for the three-day Meet, the organizers who will bear the total costs are soliciting funds to finance the venture this year and keep it running on a regular basis. Donations supporting this cause may be sent in favor of the "Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth" at C/o Parsi Panchayat Office, B. N. Seervai Dharamshala, Hirabaug, Fatehgunj P.O., Vadodara 390002. Enquiries can be made at their website: www.buzy.org or e-mail: contact@buzy.org

Formed in 1993, BUZY was initially conceived as a youth league of the Vadodara Parsi Panchayat to "inculcate a spirit of Zoroastrianism in the Zoroas-

trian youth of Baroda." In 1997 it was institutionalized as a charitable trust registered with the office of the Assistant Charity Commissioner and has since taken upon itself the responsibility of organizing cultural, social and sports events, after gaining experience of hosting the XI All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar.

The organizers of HeartMeet have been fortified with the words of encouragement from some of the leading members of the community which have been publicized in their promotional literature. "A positive effort has to be made to get...members of our community together...BUZY has taken the lead and I do hope that their endeavor meets with success," wrote Dr Jamshed Irani, managing director of Tata Steel. "This project needs full support and wide publicity," stated Lt Gen (Retd) Adi Sethna, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, adding, "Their sound preparations, making full use of existing data banks, will bring best results." The chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat Jamshed Guzder opined, "The object of the Meet is wonderful — to keep our children within our fold and thereby retain our

<i>Vibratory Compactor</i> 	<i>Crawler Drill & Portable Compressor</i> 
<i>Chemical Process Pump</i> 	<i>Centrifugal Air Compressor</i> 
Air and Gas Compressors Chemical Process Pumps Construction, Mining & Waterwell Drilling Equipment Aircraft Ground Support Equipment	



INGERSOLL-RAND

Ingersoll-Rand (India) Limited, Rhône-Poulenc House, S. K. Ahire Marg, P. O. Box 9138, Mumbai - 400 025. Tel : 022-493 6765, Fax : 022-495 0516.





PEEKAY WINE MERCHANTS

Private Limited

Sitaram Building, Near Crawford Market, Bombay 400001

Telephone (Shop): 3413680, 3421822, 3445515

**Special services for Navjote
and Wedding purchases**

The Zoroastrian Wine Merchants of Crawford Market

Sole distributors in Maharashtra
for exquisite Darjeeling teas
from **LOPCHU TEA** Gardens

For the first time in India

A soap that makes you fairer

New Godrej FairGlow



New Godrej FairGlow Soap contains Natural Oxy-G, a **—with—** unique bio-Natural Oxy-G extract that makes you fairer, naturally. Natural Oxy-G reduces the dark melanin without changing your skin's natural balance. It also removes blemishes to give you a clear and smooth skin.

Natural Oxy-G Action



What's more, Godrej FairGlow gives you an all over fair and glowing complexion through your daily bath. New Godrej FairGlow provides fairness for your entire family. Try it and see the difference.

This is an introductory offer. Offer available till stocks last. Offer available all over India on 75 g. pack and in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi on 125 g. pack. 125 g. pack available only in Punjab, Haryana & Delhi. Net wt. 75 g.: MRP Rs. 10. Net wt. 125 g.: MRP Rs. 16.50. 125 g. pack available for Rs. 16.50

Mudra:GS:8372



Katgara family at the inauguration of the Katgara Wing and (alongside) Jamshed Guzder doing the honors

15 deluxe/semi deluxe rooms, making a total of 50 beds. Jeena and Company will provide a corpus amount which will be invested by the

religion, beliefs and culture intact." Co-trustee Dinshaw Tamboly noted, "HeartMeet is yet one more example of the initiative of our youth in preserving our community."

Katgara Wing at Masina

The centenary of Jeena and Company, among the top three freight forwarders in India, was observed with the inauguration of the Katgara Wing at Bombay's Masina Hospital on November 7, 2000 (the birth anniversary of the late Nariman J. Katgara). "Instead of spending a large amount in wining, dining and gifting our customers, principals and well-wishers, we felt that this would be a more effective and useful gesture to society," remarked the company's senior partner Adi J. Katgara.

The tie-up with Masina Hospital will result in the renovation and equipment of 10,000 sq ft of space on the third floor of one of the Hospital buildings, notes a press release issued by Meher Bhandara, general manager, corporate communications. The Katgara Wing will house two general wards, a maternity ward and

Hospital trust and the interest earned therefrom will be utilized to maintain the Wing on a permanent basis. The Hospital has in return agreed to provide medical treatment facilities to all employees of Jeena and Company, whether based in Bombay or elsewhere, adds the release.

The Katgara family, owners of Jeena and Company, felt the new Katgara Wing would help "increase their contribution to society," according to the press communiqué. The main objectives of the Katgara Foundation, formed in 1981 as a public charitable trust, are to provide medical assistance, education subsidies and help to the deserving. The Foundation has built up a corpus of over Rs 1.5 crores and has assisted more than 1,500 people over the years, mentions the press release.

One of the parent companies of Travel Corporation (India) Limited, Jeena and Company, presently managed by the fourth generation of Katgaras, has a workforce of 700 professionals at 23 offices in 10 cities, notes an introduction to the firm.

Rising Sun for Shroff

The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, the highest award that the Japanese government gives to a civilian, was conferred on eminent management expert and economist Minoo Shroff on December 13, 2000 by Japan's consul-general Yuzuki Kaku. This distinction was conferred on Shroff in recognition of "his outstanding contribution to the promotion of business and friendship between India and Japan," notes a press release. Honored with this distinction, Shroff told the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of December 4, 2000 that he viewed it as "a gesture that makes me feel very grateful, more so probably because I am the only professional in the country to be (so) honored..."

Invited to Japan as a business leader by the Government of Japan in 1981, Shroff has continued to retain his ties with that country having visited it at least 20 times. He was president of the Economic Cooperation Council of the Indo Japanese Association between 1981 and 1986, and took over as president of the Association in 1986. During the six years he served as president, he changed the scope of this hitherto cultural organization focussing on bonsai and ikebana to a more comprehensive body by introducing trade and commerce, economics and finance. "Culturally we are doing well, but India economically has not developed as fast as Japan has. There is a lot of difference between promise and performance," Shroff who also helped build relationships between Japan and the Middle East was quoted in the *Afternoon*. Known to have authored many publications on Indo Japanese relations Shroff has addressed several groups in India and Japan to promote economic collaboration between the two countries.

A strong advocate of market economy, 71-year-old Shroff is currently the president of the Forum of Free Enterprise, chairman of the Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy and senior trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Whilst appreciating some of the recent reforms initiated in the Indian economy, in an interview with the *Mid-Day* of November 15, Shroff opined that the Indian economy will have to grow at a rate of around 10 percent annually if the country plans to achieve any substantial growth in per capita income.

A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of



From left: Yuzuki Kaku, Viloo and Minoo Shroff and Takako Kaku

Photo: Godrej Dotivala

Management Accountants, London, the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants, India and the Institute of Directors, London, Shroff has been past president of the Bombay Management Association and The All India Manufacturers Organisation. He is presently vice chairman of Raymond Limited and group companies and concurrently serves as chairman/director of several other companies.

Mantralaya's new officer

Having passed the Administrative Service examinations of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission at the first attempt this year, Alice Kersi Pastakia has been designated as section officer at Bombay's Mantralaya, notes a press release. She is reportedly the first Parsi to earn this distinction.

Pastakia was fortunate to have for her guide Dr Nawaz Mody, head of the department of civics and politics, University of Mumbai. She also benefitted from the expert training and coaching provided by the University Grants Commission coaching center for minority women recently set up at the University. To clear this examination she was required to appear in six written papers: two in general studies, compulsory English, compulsory Marathi and two optional subjects of one's choice. Fluency in Marathi, written as well as oral, is most essential, realized Pastakia who after passing her



Pastakia: administrative distinction

dissertation on "The role of the Indian Armed Forces and the question of human rights in the Valley — a balanced perspective."

Besides academic brilliance, Pastakia has retained her interest in allied activities, winning the Ruia Alumni Association Award for proficiency in curricular and co-curricular activities during her graduation days. She had then also excelled as the best cadet in the combined annual training camp conducted by the National Cadet Corps and was subsequently selected for the Indo-Bangladesh Youth Exchange Programme, mentions the write-up.

Kaiwan's heroic feat

When 10-year-old Kaiwan Aspi Panthaki fobbed off an armed burglar who attempted to break into his fourth floor flat at Dhobitalao in Bombay, he made front page news in the *Mid-Day* of September 29, 2000.

Happily playing by himself on a swing at 10.15 p.m. on September 21, while his mother Pervin and grandparents were in their room, Kaiwan realized that their front door was being forced open. The sneak thief was halfway through the door when Kaiwan, commanding all the strength at his disposal, rushed to push the door shut. Caught unawares, the housebreaker was trapped between the door and the wall but before retreating he managed to remove "a long knife from somewhere and slashed my thigh," Kaiwan reported to the *Mid-Day*.

The 11 stitches on his thigh bear testimony to the heroic feat of this fifth

written examination had to face a gruelling interview conducted by a panel of experts, relates the write-up.

Currently pursuing her MA at the department of civics and politics, Pastakia had done her postgraduation diploma course in human rights when she submitted a

standard student of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution who claimed that he derived his courage from Hindi movies. Although pleased with his performance and the adulation he has been receiving in the Press, from family, friends at school and neighbors at Aidun Building where he resides, Kaiwan admitted that initially he "could not even think of shouting," to alert his family. "My voice was choked. There were no words coming out from my mouth," he recalled.

When Kaiwan was finally able to summon help from his mother, she was shocked to hear his story. He was rushed to the Azad Maidan police station where they lodged a First Information Report after which he was taken to the G. T. Hospital for treatment, it was reported in *Mid-Day*. Both his parents work for the Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi.

Done to death

The murder of 48-year-old Ruinton Rusi Satha which came to light in November 2000 had been causing the community, especially the residents of Cusrow Baug, considerable anguish. But while the police were reportedly able to nab the culprit, alleged to be the carpenter working at Satha's residence, they are yet on the lookout for the domestic servant who is believed to be behind the murder of 82-year-old Dr Mani Jamshed Tata who lived at Ratan Manor in Dadar (East). She was found murdered on December 8 while her son Pervez was away at work.

Satha's body with wounds on the head and chest was found lying on the floor on November 1 at his F-23, third floor flat at Cusrow Baug. The assailant had slit his throat, stated *The Times of India* of November 8. When his neighbor noticed that flower garlands remained uncollected at Satha's door, she alerted the chairman of the security committee Behram Khajotia who along with some others forced the door open. The police found a piece of paper with a name and pager number in Satha's flat, according to the news report in the *Mid-Day* of November 8. The number belonged to Roshanali Noor Mohammad, who when questioned, reportedly told the police that his brother had been doing carpentry work in Satha's house. The police team, added the newspaper, took Roshanali to Lucknow to arrest the accused.

Formerly an article clerk with a solicitor's firm in Bombay, Satha who



Kaiwan Panthaki: young braveheart

Raju is so late...too late ?



Before your child
is ready for the road—
for school,
for riding buses,
show him how to
watch out
for traffic;
most pedestrian casualties
on the road are children.

Please teach your child the pedestrian safety code

The rules are simple:

- Walk on the footpath; if you have to walk on the road, walk facing oncoming traffic and keep to the edge of the road.
- While crossing the road, use the zebra crossing wherever available. Whether there is a zebra crossing or not, always practise the 5-point "kerb-drill" - *Stop at the kerb *Look to your right * Look to your left * Look to your right again * Walk straight across the road if no approaching vehicle is nearby, don't run.
- If there is a pedestrian traffic signal, obey it; cross the road only when the Green- Man is on.
- Wherever subways or foot overbridges are available, use them for crossing the road.
- Never cross the road at a blind curve or from behind parked vehicles.
- While alighting from a bus, always check for speeding vehicles coming from your left.

Watch out - traffic can be cruel !



Loss Prevention Association of India Ltd.
Warden House, Sir P. M. Road, Mumbai - 400 001.
Issued in the interest of road safety

GLOBE THEATRES Pvt Ltd

Established
April 3, 1915

Pioneers of Show Business
in India for
the last 85 years

We rededicate ourselves
to the ideals we have
cherished and practised all
along --namely to show

**NOTHING BUT
THE BEST**

to our ever increasing
number of Patrons

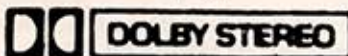
Controlling:

**REGAL
BOMBAY**

•
**CAPITOL
BOMBAY**

•
**GLOBE
CALCUTTA**

All the above Cinemas have
now been equipped with



Sound System

lived alone in Bombay had for a while been employed in Dubai, his neighbor was quoted in *Mid-Day*. Living a comfortable life thereafter, he used to spend his summers in Geneva with his brother and used to give to charities too.

Cusrow Baug has "15 security guards working in three shifts," Khajotia told the *Times* and they have identity cards issued to domestic workers, bread and milk vendors. "Residents are also responsible to some extent. They should not discuss personal and money matters in front of domestic workers and strangers," reminded Khajotia.

In the case of Tata's murder too, the police suspect the involvement of her recently employed servant Manoj who has been absconding since the day of the incident, it was mentioned in the *Times* of December 9. As reported in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of December 9, Tata's body bore at least six stab wounds on her chest and abdomen. The attack is believed to have taken place between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. since the blood on the floor had coagulated when the police reached the spot in the evening. The knife used in the crime was lying near the body.

The incident is believed to have occurred after her son Pervez, who is general manager of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited, had left for work. The mobile phone as well as the diary in which his mother had kept the address and photograph of the servant from Bihar were found missing. Since neither the jewelry on her person nor other valuables from the house were found missing, the motive for the murder had yet to be ascertained. The neighbors reported to the police that they had overheard a quarrel between Tata and the servant the previous night.

Since Tata is the ninth senior citizen to be murdered in Bombay during the year, the police once again reiterated the need to verify the credentials of domestic servants before employing them. Themy Aga, president of the Senior Citizens Association of Five Gardens, Dadar, Wadala and Matunga was quoted in the *Times* of December 11, "There are about 650 elderly members in our Association. A majority of them have not checked the bonafides of their domestic workers till date."

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

- Ready hand and machine made Parsi garas available as well as made to order ones
- We transfer old jari saris/garas onto new materials
- Ready original jari borders and zardosi net borders available as well as made to order ones
- Japanese crepe, butter crepe, Italian crepe, Georgette and plain materials are also available.

Mahavir's Embroidery

Mahavir Building Compound,
Bhandarkar Road, Opp Kabutar Khana,
Matunga (C.R.), Mumbai 400019
Tel No. 4025070 C/o 4021818
Telefax: 4313328
Website: www.mahavirgroup.net
E-mail: contactus@mahavirgroup.net

Sunday closed





With Best Compliments From

LEACH & WEBORNY

When in Bombay Contact us
for attending to your laundry.
We are Launderers & Dyers of repute.
We will also attend to your carpets
for cleaning or dyeing.

66, Off E. Moses Road, Worli, Bombay 400018
Phone: Head Office 2654294 Factory: 4924384, 4925644

Australasian Federation

The Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ), the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV) and the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales have joined together as the founding members of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of Australasia, as per their website www.geocities.com/fezaa1

With three representatives from each association on the committee, the administrative responsibilities seem to have been absorbed by AZA for now: AZA's Noshir Sachinwalla chairs the body while Sam Kerr and Purvez Kolsawalla hold office as secretary and treasurer respectively.

Zarir Choksy, Darius Mistry and Rustom Dubash represent ZANZ while Jimmy Jamsaji, Navroz Narielvala and Hormuz Vazifdar are the ZAV nominees on the board.

The website has been created by Vazifdar of Melbourne as per an e-mail message from Kerr.

Titan in the making

Classics professor at the University of Southern California Phiroze Vasunia's maiden screenplay, *Titan*, co-scripted with documentary filmmaker Michelle Taghioff, has been purchased by the first Hollywood production company that had a chance to read it, states Michel Potts writing in *India-West*.

Titan is based on the Greek myth of Perseus, the hero who battles the snake-headed Medusa and the Kraken monster to save Princess Andromeda and her father's kingdom and, in the process, finds himself.

Potts quotes Kinowelt USA co-chairman Chris Sievernich who has described *Titan* as a "timeless, heroic tale that is ripe for a big screen adaptation. The opportunity to tell this story employing today's digital effects technology is extremely exciting." Budgeted at over \$120 million, the film is expected to be a "fast track" production by Propaganda Films



Vasunia: scripting success

and Kinowelt USA.

Both Bombay born, 34-year-old Vasunia is the son of Bombay theater veteran Hosi Vasunia and his wife Dinoo while Taghioff's father Moses is a neurosurgeon in the USA and mother Nafisa, an artist and an actress.

Vasunia studied engineering at the University of Bombay before he quit to major in classics, earning his doctorate from Stanford University in 1996.

The duo began by tightly structuring their story. Then, setting aside a few hours, four days a week, three months later they completed their first — and only — draft, writes Potts. The completed script handed over to brother and entertainment lawyer David Taghioff who had initiated the idea, the authors took off — Taghioff to Turkey to work on her documentary and Vasunia for a family visit to India. What to them was a literary exercise was over and both were agreeably surprised to learn that they had hit the jackpot, as Taghioff indicated to Potts.

Their next project is a historical epic and, maybe 10 years hence, a film set in India. Vasunia has also written the soon-to-be-released *The Gift of the Nile*, a book on Greek perceptions of Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries BC, and is currently completing a project on Greek and Latin sources concerning Zoroastrianism for the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, states the University website usc.edu

Zoros at the Olympics

Two Zoroastrians taking part in the Sydney Olympics were Beghzad and Freeya Bana, writes Kersi Meher-Homji in the Sydney monthly *The Indian Down Under* (October-November 2000). Beghzad was one of the few schoolboys, selected from thousands, to escort official Olympic torchbearers on September 15, 2000, perhaps the only Zoroastrian ever to do so. Beghzad's stretch of 1.6 km was along the Wakehurst Parkway in Sydney. Freeya participated in the closing ceremony at the main Olympic Stadium, in the item called Island



Beghzad (above left) and Freeya Bana (alongside): Olympic participation



Home, notes Meher-Homji.

The children of Nauzer Bana, former president of the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales, and his social worker wife Arnaz, 17-year-old Beghzad as well as his younger brother Homeher are navars. Beghzad, who completed high school this year winning the best all-rounder gold medal, a sports trophy and an award for maths, is planning a career in business, writes Ruby Lilaowala in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, October 15, 2000.

Tennis pro Engineer

Zubin Engineer, managing director of the Bangkok based Zubin Sport Online Company Limited, may be the only Parsi professional tennis coach as per the profile submitted by his father Dorabji Engineer of Poona. The Company, with a registered capital of two million baht, is involved in developing national teams and training Asian players for international events.

Working in close association with Thai national coach Paul Dale of New Zealand, Engineer has trained the Thai national team for the Asian and South-east Asian Games as well as the World Youth Cup, adds the profile. At the Asian Games in December 1998, Thailand won a gold in the men's doubles and silver in the women's singles — its best performance in 30 years, notes the



age of 10, eventually representing his Loyola College in intercollegiate events. A telephone call from the Vijay Amritraj family, 10 years ago, changed his career from that of player to coach.

As part of the Britannia Amritraj Tennis (BAT) scheme which aimed at producing India's next generation of Davis Cup players and a Wimbledon champion, Engineer shared the BAT glory when Leander Paes won the Wimbledon and US Open junior titles. "The program was the first of its kind



and the most successful junior development program in Asia," notes the press release, and BAT boys became a regular feature of the Indian Davis Cup team.

Engineer is on the search for young Zoroastrians wanting to excel in tennis. Given the current surge for sports in Asia he feels he is positioned to help any Zarathushtis, who share his love for professional tennis, with the right guidance and expertise (e-mail: zubin_dara@yahoo.com website: www.pauldaletennis.com)

Engineer: promoting tennis talent

write-up. A year later, at the Southeast Asian Games in Brunei, Thailand bagged four gold, two silver and five bronze medals.

Engineer, 31, hails from Madras where he started playing tennis at the

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

SHARES

We buy all
listed/non traded/
not transfer/lot/odd lot/
physical/demat shares/
bonds and all schemes
of Unit Trust of India

Payment on the spot
cash or demand draft

Rajan Shah
Shah Investment

B/4, Shivdham
Opp Rajesh Building
Shankar Lane
Kandiwali (West)
Mumbai 400067, India
Phone: (O) 8078987
(R) 8642552
Mobile: 98211 77080
Fax: 022-8014593
E-mail: rajan_shah@bol.net.in

With Best Wishes From

Mr Rusy M. Shroff, M.B.E.

and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff



O.K.



Good



Excellent



Outstanding

HSBC. It's a sure sign that you're dealing with a world-class financial services organisation.

We've been around for more than 130 years. Now we're in 79 countries and territories, serving over 20 million customers.

Those are the numbers. But it's our integrity and common sense solutions that you can truly count on.

Wherever you are in the world, wherever you are in your life, HSBC will be there for you.

Call us - Bangalore: 559 1381. Calcutta: 220 0905. Chennai: 522 3227. Gurgaon: 359 786. Hyderabad: 335 6367. Mumbai: 498 2424.
New Delhi: 335 4499. Trivandrum: 331 269. Visakhapatnam: 568 936. Fax - (022) 265 1605. E-mail - hsbcindia@vsnl.com

HSBC 

YOUR WORLD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited.

"Democracy is difficult"

Dr Frene Ginwala, speaker of the South African National Assembly, speaks of a nation in transition

Arnavaz S. Mama

The short, sari-clad lady with the close cropped white hair emanates power. It would be tempting to describe Dr Frene Ginwala, speaker of the South African National Assembly as regal, even at the risk of provoking an ascerbic response. Having grown up in apartheid-dominated South Africa (SA) and fought the regime from exile for 30 years, Ginwala's democratic convictions would militate against an adjective etymologically derived from privilege and position.

Accepting the Priyadarshni Academy's Global Award for outstanding contribution for promotion of human rights and dignity as an "honor not to an individual but to the people of South Africa (who) for more than a century have faced repression," Ginwala described "the success of South Africa today as ... the product...of many individuals over many, many decades; people of all races, men and women, inspired by the same principles as inspired you in India."

Ginwala was the first of seven international and seven national awardees felicitated by the Academy at its 16th anniversary international awards function at Hotel Oberoi Towers in Bombay on September 19, 2000. The Academy, chaired by Nanik Rupani, describes itself as an institution "fostering the growth and development of social, cultural and educational aspects of society."

It wasn't easy to get an interview with Ginwala. "I would like to be with my family," she responded tersely when she had finally extricated herself from the crowd an hour after the Priyadarshni function. Official protocol made mincemeat of a dearly-won first appointment. The reward was an affable Ginwala as

she warmed to subjects close to her heart on day three.

Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Africa Region; of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum; and co-chairperson of the Global Coalition

for Africa, Ginwala is currently into her second term as speaker of SA's democratically elected National Assembly.

"Our constitution does not allow any discrimination on any ground," declares Ginwala. "If you exclude women, you exclude 50 percent of the population," she points out, adding that one-third of all African National Congress (ANC) candidates are women at the local and central levels.

Demonstrating the ANC's political will to spread the benefits of an independent society at all levels are "a whole range of disabled people" in Parliament with attendants to wheel quadruplegics to the podium. They submit papers in braille and sign language is as acceptable as any of SA's 11 official languages, we learn. For, says Ginwala, "If Parliament does not educate society that the disabled can function how will the people (learn to accept them)?"

Proportional representation and the ward system are two criteria that have been accepted by the ANC in selecting its candidates, informs Ginwala. Skill, knowledge and life experience have been the qualities on which they have focused almost to the exclusion of formal education. "See how widely educated were the whites. See how badly they governed," says Ginwala pointing to apartheid SA and Nazi Germany. Also "if you do not have experience of problems you are going to solve, how will you

decide (except) in an ivory tower sort of way? Otherwise the solutions are only good for the people whose experience you put in... Judges who know nothing about poverty, rape, violence against women, cannot do justice to women..."

"Very few of my colleagues have been through school. We provide training on (their) entry to Parliament." Technical affairs like rules and procedures are explained, financial management is inculcated, they learn how to run their constituency office, manage diversity and imbibe gender awareness, says Ginwala, adding that 38 percent of ministers and deputy ministers are women. "What has been significant," Ginwala points out, "is that placing women in positions of power, a poor country without a high level of education (has shown that) people can govern, people can deliver much better!"

Another aspect of parliaments everywhere is that they make laws which people are expected to obey. "But how many people understand the laws?" asks Ginwala. So now SA has begun the process of writing laws in simple English. Moreover they may be framed in any two of its official languages. Because "the cost of providing standing translations in 11 languages is prohibitive — we cannot afford it," anybody choosing to address the Assembly in a language other than English (as the majority does) is required to indicate the language beforehand. Then, before starting the address, "they say, 'Mr President, please put on your earphones.'" Ginwala believes that it is "important to introduce ideas and implement them and solve problems as we go along. Once you start deferring you forget their importance."

A member of the ANC since her student days, Ginwala, as Shabnam Minwalla notes in an article in *The Times of India* (September 22, 2000), was sur



Ginwala: "one's roots are important"

MATRIMONIAL

Wanted an educated, warm-hearted, intelligent and cheerful Parsi girl for a 28-year-old, 5 ft 10 inches Parsi boy from a cultured family. Boy works in an established bank, is drawing a handsome salary and he lives in Mumbai. Parents have established business in North India. He is well-travelled, fond of music and reading. Girl should be preferably between 23 and 28 years. Please apply with a photograph and detailed information to:

The Advertiser

**Parsiana, Matrimonial (Jan/2-2001)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001**

*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here.

SPACE AVAILABLE

Office — 500 sq. ft —
prominent location in
Fountain area.

2 adjacent shops — 241 sq. ft
each plus godown in very
decent Banaji Fire Temple
Building, Thakurdwar.

Please contact
Telephone no. 2184155

GOOLKHUSH RESORT



Bordi (Station Gholvad)

5 Days, 4 Nights, A/C Deluxe couple
Rs 7,500/- includes lodging, boarding &
free access to pool, half day sightseeing to
Daman & Udvada, taxi/bus free to & fro
pick-up from Gholvad Station/Resort.

A/C Deluxe room per couple Rs 1,350/-
Semi Deluxe room per couple Rs 1,000/-

Non-A/C room per couple Rs 800/-
(Inclusive of Lodging & All Meals, free
access to Swimming) [Group Discount
10% for five persons in one Room]

Contact Bombay - 3821494
Bordi - 02528 41182-41336

MATRIMONIAL

51-year-old Parsi lady of
Baroda wishes to marry for
companionship in life. She is
from respectable family. Parsi
gentlemen may send their
profile with photograph to:

The Advertiser

**Parsiana, Matrimonial (Jan/1-2001)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001**

*Please make sure the reply envelope
bears the reference number cited here.

prised by a cryptic telephonic suggestion in 1960 from prominent ANC leader Walter Sisulu to visit her parents who were out of the country. "A few days after she left, the ANC was banned and a reign of terror unleashed in South Africa," writes Minwalla. Ginwala who graduated in law from London's King's College set to work setting up ANC missions in other countries.

Though "depressed at times," Ginwala says, "We wouldn't have gone on if we weren't convinced we were doing the right thing and that we were

**"See how widely
educated were
the whites. See
how badly they
governed"**

going to win." Surviving raids on ANC offices in Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia where she remembers the white SA government sending paratroops and assassins "saying they would liquidate all of us," Ginwala maintains it was different from the day-to-day harassment that dogged people at home. "When you looked at that you didn't have the right to be depressed," she reasons.

While in exile Ginwala set up the research department of the ANC which worked to analyze and create awareness about events in SA. "By the 1980s there was no way out for the government... Our campaign was, don't let the instruments of apartheid work... They had to recognize the acknowledged leaders... Seven people had been arrested and charged for the same crime as Nelson Mandela and were released between 1989-90. Mandela was the last to be released... After that there were four years of negotiations to force government to accept that the type of change SA needed was a full democracy and a constitution that allowed for that."

Describing herself as an agnostic and not a practicing Zoroastrian, Frene, the second child of Banoo and the late Nusserwanji Ginwala, was born in Johannesburg in 1932. "My parents and family were very much practicing Zoroastrians," she adds, but she has grown to believe that "humans make their own destiny... use whatever opportunity



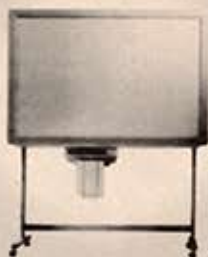
With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

**All you need for
Better Conferencing is
RIGHT HERE**



Multimedia Projectors from
Panasonic, Kodak, Davis



Electronic White Boards
from Panasonic



Overhead Projectors
from Godrej & Boyce



Direct Projectors
from Plus



Slide Projectors
from Kodak



Audio Conferencing Equipment
from Polycom

Range
of
conferencing
products
from

Godrej *Presentation
Equipment*
PRIMA
DIVISION
MAKE AN IMPACT

Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd., Prima Division,
Plant 6, Pirojshanagar, Vikhroli, Mumbai 400 079
Tel. : 577 3535, 577 3636, Ext.: 3656, 3657, 3658
Fax : 91-22-518 1526 E-mail : shp@godrej.com
Visit us at : www.godrej.com

(they) can." She accepts that "family ethics (become) a part of your culture."

Her life experience has made her receptive to prevailing circumstances. Thus she has a suggestion for the shortage of priests plaguing the highly dispersed Zoroastrian community: Put the Zoroastrian prayers and ceremonies on the computer so that they can be accessed even by individuals in areas remote from Zoroastrian centers, she says.

Acknowledging that all Zoroastrians in SA are "friends or relatives" and come together for social functions, they may have numbered about 100 at their peak, spread between Durban and Johannesburg, she hazards. "I don't deny or want to deny that I'm a Zoroastrian. It's not a hostile relationship," but she clarifies, "I don't see my identity as being a South African Zoroastrian. It comes from being South African."

Never having had "the leisure to seek people out," Ginwala was nonetheless acknowledged as a Zoroastrian by the Islamic Republic of Iran when she visited the country as part of the ANC delegation after the fall of the Shah. But "the relationship was a political one, not religious," she asserts, simultaneously maintaining, "I would want to go and see Iran. One's roots are important," adding parenthetically, "I'm a historian."

What was it like to grow up in white SA? "Children adapt... you grow up where you are. Black kids in SA learnt early about discrimination: You could see a fun fair and couldn't go in because you weren't white; your school did not have the facilities of white schools. After a while you tend to question."

For Ginwala it was a thesis on "Indian South Africans — an analysis of class conflict and color" which won her a PhD from Oxford about a decade after her initial graduation.

On her return from exile Ginwala became a member of Mandela's secretariat in the ANC president's office (Mandela became ANC president a year after he emerged from prison when the incumbent president Oliver Tambo sustained a stroke) and headed the party's research department between 1991 and 1994. She also served as the deputy head

of the ANC Commission for the Emancipation of Women and was the ANC representative on the Science and Technology Initiative, notes her bio data. A founder member and the first national convener of the Women's National Coalition, Ginwala led the South African parliamentary delegation to the Beijing Women's Conference.

After the end of her current term as speaker Ginwala hopes to research and write about the issues of racism and development that beset the political economy of SA.



Ginwala: democratic views

Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

The Parsi contribution to South African politics begins with the Rustomjee family. Frene's sister, Dr Khorshed Ginwala, free SA's first ambassador to Italy, is the granddaughter-in-law of the famed Parsi Rustomjee who had sheltered Mohandas (later Mahatma) Gandhi from the violent South African mob in the early years of the 20th century.

Khorshed's husband Rustom died in 1998. Her uncle-in-law Sorabji Rustomjee had fought on behalf of India at the United Nations, recalls Frene. A Parsi named Camay had been postmaster general of the Transvaal Republic, then a racist government. A descendant, Phiroshaw Camay, was a founder of SA's trade union revival in the 1970s which began as an NGO (non governmental organization) but is now a government body called Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), the main arbitration body in SA today, says Frene.

The Indian National Congress (INC) was very large and popular and embraced all people of Indian origin in SA. As notes Frene Ginwala, "They were very much a part of the early struggle, (many being) killed in frontline states." She recalls how leading human rights lawyer Phyllis Naidoo lost her son to a bomb attack while in exile. Indians were prominent in the anti-apartheid movement in Natal and the Transvaal and the INC was a part of the negotiations with the white SA government which began in the 1990s with Mahatma Gandhi's granddaughter being an ANC nominee to Parliament.

Since then however Indian mass support for the ANC has dwindled. While it netted 80-90 percent of the African vote at the second general election in 1999, it received less than 10 percent of the Indian vote. Ginwala ascribes the falloff to "fears and perception." During their long history of overt racism, the resources of the country were "spent largely on four million whites, then on Indians (who were) relatively privileged...not at the bottom, and very little on Africans. Now (we're) distributing the same amount to 38 million people. Poor Indians feel threatened... now (find it) difficult to accept equality... We at the ANC have perhaps not done enough for them," hazards Ginwala, amazed that Indians chose to vote for the National Party after having experienced its rule for 40 years. "But then there are Indians who would have liked to vote for the Raj!" she exclaims, drawing the analogy to the Indian situation.

Referring to the superb urban infrastructure of Cape Town contrasting with the stark poverty and underdevelopment a mere 10 miles outside the city — no electricity, schools without doors, books or taps — Ginwala told Minwalla, "Our challenge is to bridge the two terrifyingly different nations that make South Africa." As she had said to columnist Pippa Green in 1995, "The problem is not whether you can do it. The problem is getting people to know you can do it."

What irks Ginwala is the current tendency to label all Africans as racist. "There is ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, in Spain... But nobody says all Europeans are like that. But all Africans are like that!" She refers to the military dictatorship in Pakistan, the repression in Burma, the racial strife in Ceylon and asks how Indians would react to being bracketed with them under the catchall "All Asians are like that!"

The almost 90-year-old ANC was founded in 1912 to establish a non-racist SA and has won two Nobel Peace Prizes — once under its president Albert Luthuli in the early 1960s and then with Mandela in the early 1990s, exults Ginwala. But it has inherited a society that is "socially, morally and economically corrupt, (with) institutions built on privilege and race. Therefore we must transform the entire society. It's a gigantic task... Dictatorship is easy... Democracy is very difficult and very time consuming."



ARMAYESH

We Have Designs
on You!

Armayesh can
hand-embroider
your fantasies on to
sarees, dupattas,
ghagras, cholis,
jackets, vests, hand
bags, cushion
covers and other
products.

(Exquisite Parsi
Garas are our forte.)

An Armayesh
creation is a duet
between needle
and fabric, labor
and love, for we
are a world-leading
manufacturer-
exporter of
the finest
hand-embroidered
designs.

International quality
and timely delivery
are our hallmarks.
In our case beauty
isn't skin-deep.

Armayesh
hand embroidery
lasts!

The Finest Hand Embroidery - Forever

Please telephone Ms NILOUFER IRANI or Mr ARMAND N. AGA on 91-22-2658071, 2661364, 2662987 to
finalise the date and time of your visit to our Design Studio and Showroom.

Armayesh Fashions Pvt Ltd. Design Studio and Showroom, Kamariwala Chambers, 2nd Floor, Sir P. M. Road
Fort, Mumbai 400001 Fax: 91-22-2662183, E-mail: armayesh@vsnl.com Website: www.armayesh.com

The priest's personal property

The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower courts that Dastur Hall in Poona is the private property of Dastur Hormazdiar Dastur

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Dastur Hall is the private property of Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar Noshirwan Kaikobad Dastur and not part of the Sardar Sorabji Ratanji Patel Trust, ruled the Supreme Court of India in its judgment delivered on September 29, 2000. The ownership rights to this property in Nana Peth, Poona had been disputed since 1987 (see "To whom does Dastur Hall belong?" *Parsiana*, January 1989 and "Decree for Dastur Hall," *Parsiana*, July 1989) when Eruch Irani with his co-petitioners Burjor Sadri, Firdous Kayani and Farrok Irani alleged that 1,178 sq m of land which Dastur sought to sell belonged to the Trust and was not the personal property of Dastur who also happens to be the chairman and managing trustee of this Trust. It was Dastur's contention that only 5,332.66 sq yd of land belonged to the Trust, the balance constituting his family asset.

Justice M. Jagannadha Rao and Justice K. G. Balakrishnan of the Supreme Court ruled that the findings of the lower courts — the Charity Commissioner, the District Judge and the High Court — which held that the disputed land is not Trust property "is correct and does not warrant any interference." Considering that some parts of this property were sold in 1949, and then again in 1975-76 when 27 flats were constructed thereon yet no objections were received from either members of the Trust or outsiders, the judges inferred that the land is not Trust property.

The judges also cited the evidence of the applicants (Irani and others) wherein it was "clearly admitted" that within one month of Dastur's refusal to permit Irani

to organize a fun fair on some lands that Dastur manages, the petition was filed before the Charity Commissioner in 1987.

"The crucial document" upon which the Commissioner had relied was a registered deed of trust dated July 2, 1884 which while describing the Trust property showed the disputed property as belonging to the priest and serving as a boundary for the Trust land. Joint Charity Commissioner P. V. Kakade had then stated, "The fact that (Dastur Hormazdiar) has not conclusively established as to how his original predecessor in title came to possess and own that property is quite immaterial for our present purpose... Since it is evident that the office of high priest has come by hereditary rights, it is quite logical that the Dastur Hall residence was given to the private ownership of the family for the purpose of their residence..." Kakade further noted, "It appears from the records that S. R. Patel (the original settlor who died in 1852) executed a

that only 5,150.41 sq m of land belonged to the Trust.

As reported in *Parsiana*, while Irani viewed the 1843 document as the one that established the religious trust, Dastur Hormazdiar's daughter Mehernavaz Vakil maintained that this was but a deed of gift and the Trust was established by the 1884 document. According to Irani, the 1884 document only reconfirms the existence of the Trust after the fire-temple (originally built in 1824) was reconstructed and reopened to the Zoroastrian community in 1877. Irani had also based his premise on the Poona city survey records according to which the properties on which the Agiary and the Dastur Hall stand are both revenue free as they are supposed to be used for religious and charitable purposes. Further, when the Bombay Public Trusts Act came into force in 1950, only the land on which stood Dastur Hall was shown as Trust property and not the adjacent fire-temple plot. This erroneous interchanging in the two survey numbers of the adjacent plots was rectified in the Charity Commissioner's records in 1973 and finally only the fire-temple plot was shown as Trust property. But Irani insisted it was not a mistake.

He went into appeal before the 5th Additional District and Sessions Judge, Poona who upheld the Joint

Commissioner's order in 1990. Thereafter in April 2000, the same order was affirmed by the High Court. Irani and his supporters "failed in their case throughout" as observed the Supreme Court judges. While V. J. Francis represented Irani in the Supreme Court hearing, there was a battery of advocates to represent Dastur: Ranjit Kumar, S. R. Setia, L. C. Tolat, Dr Roxna Swami, R. N. Keshwani and C. K. Nayak.



Dastur Hall: Family asset and (top) Dastur

document in 1843 transferring the said property unto Dastur Noshirwanjee Jamashjee Dastur, entrusting him with the sacred duties of maintaining the fire-temple and the Patel Hall for the purpose of the Parsi community." Vacating the earlier interim injunction against the sale of land, Kakade mentioned in his order

MASTER GROUP OF COMPANIES



www.mastergroups.com

Corporate Office:

22/D S. A. Brelvi Road, Fort, Bombay 400001

Tel: 2873567-2886642-2886643 Fax: 91-22-2870139

Cable: "MOORINGS" Telex: 118-2119 MMSB Email: mmsplb@mastergroups.com

Administrative Office:

55A/63A, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Opp G.P.O., Bombay 400001

Tel: 2692787 (10 Lines) Fax: 91-22-2652841 Cable: "SHIPMENT"

Email: prudential@mastergroups.com



**MASTER
MARINE** *Services*
१९९३ १९९३

*Certified Marine Surveyor
(Govt. Licensed) and Loss Assessors*



**Prudential Shipping Agencies
Private Limited**

*Shipping Agents, Cargo Brokers and
Multi Transport Operators*



**Meher Container Terminals
Private Limited**

(A division of MMSPL)

Yard and CFS management



Kalson Power Tech Private Limited
Hydro-Power

** Where Growth Is A Way Of Life **

“A doctrinal crossfire”

Divergent views on how best to preserve the traditional mode of disposal of the dead were expressed at the samast anjuman meeting in Bombay

Arnavaz S. Mama

Even as six Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees (Silloo Kavarana was abroad) and its senior executives faced the approximately 1,000 persons who had responded to their invitation for a samast anjuman meeting at Rustom Baug on December 15, 2000, a small but strident group seemed prepared to hijack the meet.

Pro-aviary and anti-solar panel literature was freely handed out to community members as they entered the grounds. The pro-aviarists had also been known to address groups of Zoroastrians in the days preceding the meet and the community grapevine hummed with indignation that students from religious classes conducted by Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) were mobilized to collect signatures of recommendation for the aviary project.

The arrangements made by Dr Porus Turner, president of the Sir Ness Wadia Club and his team, included a substantial fenced off area for the video cameras and audio recorders between the gymkhana verandah housing the BPP team and the community. On the anvil was a discussion of the various measures the Punchayet has been taking to preserve the traditional Zoroastrian mode of disposal of the dead: dokhmenashini.

Though BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder stressed the need for “dignity and decorum” in a discussion of such a sensitive issue, the “pro-vulture breeders” mercilessly heckled the “solar panelists” in what BPP trustee and solicitor Dadi Engineer euphemistically called a “doctrinal crossfire.”

The simultaneous demographic decline of the Zoroastrian community and the vulture population in India has put the BPP in a fix. With more and more deaths and few, if any, scavenging birds to dispose of the bodies, a miasma of

worrisome realities hovers over Doongerwadi. It is reported that the stench of putrefying corpses forces Spenta residents to keep their windows shut and Godrej Baug tenants to avail of electric fans irrespective of temperature variations.

Experimenting with four different — though not incompatible — probable solutions to the problem, the BPP has faced a barrage of criticism, much of it due to the community's ignorance or misinformation.

Two of the four approaches to the problem are relatively free of controversy. One is the use of herbal cum chemical powders evolved by chemist Zarir Lashkari through several permutations and combinations to help curtail the odor while speeding up decomposition of the bodies, as informed Engineer who officially presented the scenario to the gathering. The other is the pumping of gases like ozone to absorb the offensive smell of decay. As the high priests and scholars refused to permit any breach in the dokhma walls to allow the installation of the necessary equipment, a duct in the form of a “hanging garland” has been improvised at a cost of Rs 10-12 lakhs, recurring expenses like electricity and air-conditioning excluded.

The two controversial projects are the building of an aviary to breed vultures and the installation of reflectors to concentrate solar heat on the dead bodies. The proponent of the aviary is ZS founder and public speaker Khojeste Mistree supported by Rishad Naorji, an authority on birds of prey. Dr Homi Dhalla, inter-religious scholar and founder of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, has been advocating the harnessing of solar energy to dry out the decaying corpses faster. Engineer presented both projects, impartially list-

ing their advantages and disadvantages.

The aviary project anticipates the construction of a massive mesh dome over the dokhma (the main aviary) along with a smaller one where juvenile birds, trapped from the wild, would be nurtured on a diet of special meats before being introduced to the contents of the dokhma. This is an experiment that has never been tried before, requiring international expertise to set up the project, construct the aviaries and trap the birds. Suggested by Jemima Parry-Jones, one of five international experts on the subject, according to Engineer, the aviary is expected to cost Rs 1.55 crore to build and Rs 22-25 lakhs a year to maintain. While the Government of India's (GOI) ministry of environment has okayed the concept of the project it will require the assent of the state governments from where the vultures are to be procured and of Maharashtra before any of these birds can be transported, which “may not be granted... on an enduring basis,” cautioned Engineer.

Detailing the advantages of the project Engineer noted, “If the project is implemented and if it is successful, we'll be continuing dokhmenashini, our age-old system of disposal.” Also, if there is a constant inflow of vultures, it may mean a permanent solution to the Doongerwadi problem.

Referring to the grave, logical reservations of some of his fellow trustees, Engineer listed the disadvantages beginning with the high cost:

- Though the BPP has earmarked rupees one crore 25 lakhs, additional funds will have to be... found and those loudly rooting for it would need to dip into their pockets, he noted.

- The Doongerwadi deficit which has been running at Rs 23 lakhs per year will also be higher now because of the instal-



From top (left column): Guzder as seen on the screen at the samast anjuman meet; a view of the podium; a cross-section of the audience; (center column): Guzder, Dhalla and Tamboly; (right column): Engineer, Mistree, Shroff, Tirandaz and Mehta Photos: Sarosh Daruwalla, Mazda Audio and Video Lab

lation of air fresheners and the reforestation program.

- The support staff would need to be augmented with an ornithologist and veterinarians.
- Procuring baby vultures may prove to be fairly difficult.
- Baby vultures would need a variety of meats in their diet, though this would not be fed to them in the dokhmas. [Engineer reassured the gathering, "The whole of Doongerwadi is not sacrosanct. Only the dokhmas and sagdi (dadgah) is sacred," he added.]
- There is no certainty that the exercise will produce the desired number of vultures.

Answering the generally heard criticism that the trustees would be frittering away Punchayet funds by embarking on the project, Engineer noted that the final decision would only be made after three BPP trustees — Minoo Shroff, Dinshaw Tamboly and Dinshaw Mehta — report to the board after visiting Parry-Jones' setup in Gloucestershire in the UK which they will do at their own cost. He also reassured the community that a much larger share of Punchayet funds go into housing, education, medicare, etc. This was in reply to the oft levelled criticism

that the Punchayet is more concerned about the dead than the living.

The solar energy project which envisages the installation of parabolic reflectors some distance from the dokhmas would aim concentrated heat at a controlled temperature on the corpse so that the dehydration that occurs in five to six months would be effected in five or six days. Distinguishing between *leelonaso* and *sukko naso* (wet and dry dead matter) on the advice of high priests and scholars, Engineer noted that the fluids in the body must dry out before it can be removed from the pavi and relegated to the bhandar (well).

Noting that the original name of dokhmenashini is Khorshed Nagirashni (exposure to the rays of the sun), Engineer said the use of solar energy is in keeping with the religion and thanked Ronnie Sabawalla and Baman Cama, both of Baroda where experiments have been conducted on goat carcasses and chickens witnessed by Shroff, Tamboly and BPP deputy chief executive officer Mehli Colah. "In 16 hours the weight of the goat was reduced by one-third... The human body will not char if the heat is contained at 200°C or less. It ignites only at 600°C," he noted to quell fears of

a solar crematorium. Nor is the heat pervasive, as it was feared that the ground could become too hot for nassessalars to walk on in the afternoon and would affect the surrounding foliage as well.

The system's main disadvantage is that it would be ineffective in rainy and cloudy weather. Three solar panels per dokhmas cost about five lakh rupees.

Many Zoroastrians have been interested in the establishment of an alternate form of disposal at Doongerwadi but Engineer noted, "We hold Doongerwadi under 17 deeds of trust and the only method demanded under these deeds is exposure to elements of nature." However, with high-rises in the area permitting a view of the contents of the dokhmas, the trustees have commissioned the construction of a very large screen designed by architect Rustom Hathi estimated to cost between Rs 30-40 lakhs, said Engineer.

Recalling that all seven trustees had sworn to uphold dokhmenashini, Engineer urged the community to show itself capable of problem solving with a sense of responsibility and logic.

"To all who are in favor of solar panels: What will it do after it dehydrates the body? Will vultures touch it?

King of Caterers
Godiwalla's
Neville
Service with a smile

'For all your
auspicious occasions'

Big or small

* Give us your budget
and we will fit you in *

Telephone: 3775360, 3775842, 3717036

Fax: 91 022 373 2022

E-mail: ushtate@bom8.vsnl.net.in

Sai Niketan, 'B' Wing 13/13, 345 Mount Road,
Mazgaon, Mumbai 400010



'The Gourmet' Restaurant

Buffet
Breakfast
from 7.30 a.m.
to 10 a.m.

Buffet
Lunch from
12.30 p.m.
to 3 p.m.

Buffet
Dinner
on request

Continental
Food
including
Sizzlers

Tandoori
Food

Take away
&
Tea Time
Snacks



Fish
Specialities

Pure
Vegetarian
Food

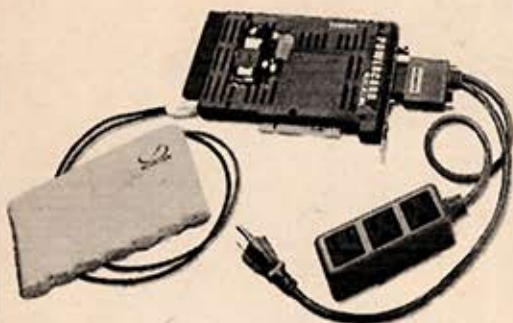
West End Hotel

Open From 7.30 AM to 11.30 PM

45, New Marine Lines, Bombay -20

Tel: 2039121, 2057484 Fax 91-22-2057506

WORLD'S FIRST INTERNAL UPS



FITS INSIDE ANY PC.

CAREPHONE



PERSONAL SECURITY RESPONSE SYSTEM

An innovative hotline for immediate
Help, Care and Peace of Mind.

MIBI MOSER BAER

CD-RECORDABLES

74 minutes • 650MB • 8X Compatible



The finest quality
CD-Recordables from Moser Baer.

FUN FRUITS

SEMI CANDIED FRUITS

Fun Fruits are delicious, semi-candied natural fruits, that contain all the nourishment that fresh fruits do. They can be added to cereals, put in desserts or kormas, or simply eaten as a snack.



AUTHORISED DISTRIBUTOR

TROPICANA ENTERPRISES PVT. LTD.

C-37, PAMPOSH ENCLAVE, NEW DELHI-110 048. TEL: 6292739, 6284951.

TELEFAX: 6291931, 6291932. E-mail: tropican@ndf.vsnl.net.in

DISCOVER THE LUXURIES OF A PREMIUM BATH



Sandal Rich



Imparts natural richness
of Sandal to your skin

Deo Fresh



With TCC which cuts down odour and
gives you freshness for hours together

Luxury



With 80% TFM to prevent
afterwash dryness



Luxuriate in a skin friendly PREMIUM bath *J.K. Halse Carter's Limited*

Will the stench be worse? The next step (will be) a solar crematorium," the first querist began, accusing Dhalla who had taken the mike of "the devil quoting scripture."

Except for correcting Engineer's statement of the cost of the panels (Rs 12 lakhs) Dhalla reiterated most of his comments on the solar panels. Responding to criticism of them being against religion, he referred to two letters from high priests (Dasturs Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Hormazdyar Mirza) and international scholars which considered the concept within the parameters of the religion. Even as Dhalla spoke the earlier mentioned group started booing and protesting that Mirza is 90 years old.

Noting that the Doongerwadi problem was three-pronged — smell, dehydration and disposal of bones — Dhalla noted that the experiments in Baroda at 175°C dehydrated the body without raising the temperature around it. Even at a close distance of five feet they could stand comfortably and there was no heat or stench, Dhalla said, adding that solar reflectors could be modulated to any temperature.

Sabawalla increased the heat to 400°C in a different concentrator and a 14-inch long bone, over 1-inch in diameter, had broken into three parts with a partly powdery residue in the course of two-and-a-half to three hours. "A unit can be used wherever there's a lack of birds," noted Dhalla, adding, "It can be ready in five weeks — we don't have to wait" ("We don't want it," shouted the group). With free solar energy, no maintenance except for cleaning every fortnight and a cost of Rs 6,000 to replace a unit (20 panels make up a unit) Dhalla argued that with 285 days of sunshine every year, the scheme could work well in Bombay.

While a few speakers agreed to the feasibility of the reflectors especially in small towns, the original heckler returned to accuse Dhalla of "not giving the correct picture. The goat was shaved. The temperature at which hair burns is much lower than that for the skin. If the body is wet, will it not boil?"

The pitch and tone of the queries led lawyer and author Armin Wandrewala to observe that the meeting was "in a spirit of confrontation. Can we raise queries in a better tone?" she asked.

"It is untrue that the environment can't be heated... If the heat is on for 16 hours it will get cooked, roasted. What

will you do? Will you put the bodies in the cupboards of the BPP?" persisted the querist.

Dhalla answered, "What is the sun doing for a long period of time?" Refer-

"Do you get rid of the patient if the medicine is expensive?"

ring to people like Baroda Parsi Panchayat trustee Baman Cama who has been a volunteer pallbearer over the past 25 years, Dhalla urged the querist, "Ask him what happens. What normally takes a long period of time happens here in a short period."

The restive group fielded its star speaker, solicitor and ZS member Bapsy Dastur. "The key question here is what will happen to the bodies after they are dehydrated?" she asked. Without stopping for a reply she demanded, "Give sufficient time to Mistree to explain the aviary project."

At this point some humor was injected by Kersy Shahbaraz who wanted Engineer to describe the smell emanating from the dokhma. Not getting a satisfactory answer he described vari-

ous foul smells: of a guy removing his socks; of a bucket of rotting prawns; of the Hamburg sewage plant, adding, "A decomposing corpse smells much worse. There's no such smell at Doongerwadi!"

"Every Parsi can shell out Rs 2,000 to repay the BPP for spending two crores (on the aviary). Let Zoroastrians spend and give life to these vultures!" said another aviary enthusiast.

Taking the stand Mistree faulted Engineer for omitting to mention what he called the aviary project's greatest advantage "that it's doctrinally the best." He also contested the view that the high priests had accepted solar panels and that they could become operational "end January." Depending on "how we deal with the first governmental permission," Mistree was sanguine others would follow. The supplementary diet for the vulture babies could be placed in a disused dokhma or chotra, he suggested, stressing that with the aviary we will get the system back on track in two years. "The entire world recognized the Zoroastrian vision of environmental conservation," he noted and offered "to step down from the aviary project" to prove he had no vested interest in it.

continued on page 64

Matheran's Only Hotel with Mountain & Valley View



A 100 Years Heritage charm • New swimming pool • Unique Narrowest Gauge Mountain Railway • Horse Rides and Cool Walks in the Rain Forest
Pollution Free • Vehicles Banned

Lord's Central Hotel

MATHERAN 410102, INDIA

Phone 02148-30228 Fax 02148-30595 Email: lord@wspl.net.in



TATA FINANCE LIMITED

Corporate Office: Tata Finance Ltd., Dubash House, 15 J.N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400 001, Tel: 022-2661471

Regional Head Quarters: Calcutta Tel: 033-2296867/8468 * Chennai Tel: 044-8232748/49/50
* Delhi Tel: 011-3316299 * Mumbai Tel: 022-8240000

Seeking new directions

Bold new decisions were in the interests of the community, said delegates to the Federation meet in Jamshedpur

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Over the last 20 years or so many religions of the world have increasingly started looking inward, and I fear that we are among them, I think this is unfortunate. We have always been a progressive community ready to accept modernity and new ideas. This has been our strength and it should continue to inform our lives and attitudes," Supreme Court judge Sam Bharucha counseled the delegates at the executive council meet of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in Jamshedpur on December 2-3, 2000.

Speaking as "an ordinary, reasonably educated, middle-class, concerned Parsi," Bharucha, a stickler for judicial propriety, forthrightly addressed the three major problems besetting the community—dikhmenashini, intermarriage and demographic decline.

"We should not permit what was, essentially, a social and climatic necessity of life in ancient times to become an overbearing religious requirement... It is no respect to the Parsi dead to leave them in the dikhmas to decompose and decay... The time for change has come and [turning to Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman and Federation president Jamshed Guzder] you 'Namdar trustee saheb' must, in the interest of the community, look for other means for the disposal of the dead which are not opposed to the essential tenets of the Zoroastrian faith..."

"The anjumans and punchayets should consider the admission into the faith, by the performance of the navjote, of a child born to a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father, provided such child is the product of wedlock and the father is a consenting party..." (see "Thus spake Bharucha," pg 56 for the full text of Bharucha's speech).

With such a forceful lead from the eminent jurist, not only was the overriding problem—dikhmenashini—debated in and out of the council meet but

an 11-point note from BPP chief executive officer (CEO) Behram Dastur became an adjunct to the Federation agenda. Presented at the Mhow meet of the Federation, Dastur's paper detailing socioreligious issues besetting the community had been shunted aside in Madras.

The council meet had begun slightly earlier than scheduled but was adjourned for the formal inauguration which awaited the arrival of Bharucha and his wife Perin from Delhi. The ceremony began with the lithe, immaculately suited judge lighting a traditional Parsi diya in a *sés*, then joining palms in a brief namaskar. The young mobed Anosh Chenna who intoned the Avestan benediction also recited the English translation, instructing the congregation to repeat line by line after him. Master of ceremony Belli Bodhanwalla then summoned a group of seven girls to sing a monajat in Gujarati.

Referring to his "first exposure to a Federation meet" in Madras last July, in his welcome address Tata Steel (TS) managing director and president of the Jamshedpur Parsee Association (JPA) Dr Jamshed Irani said he was "struck by the diversity of views in our small community... Diversity is good but not to the extent of (our) destroying each other." Describing his anjuman as "very, very liberal in our views, a closely-knit... happy-go-lucky, peace-loving lot," Irani added, "As far as I am aware, there is no *khit-pit* (disharmony)!" And JPA chairman Jehangir Ardeshtir voiced his thanks to the chief guest who had "brought into the open what is in the hearts and minds of many Zoroastrians."

With 80 third-born children on the Rs 1,000 subsidy roll of the BPP, the program has now been extended to the fourth child "at my expense," said Guzder, adding that he had donated Rs 30 lakhs to the BPP for this program and "will write in my will that annual dona-

tions of Rs 30 lakhs (will continue towards it) for the next seven years." The BPP's third and fourth child subsidy program covers the whole of India and is not restricted to Bombay-based Parsis, he noted.

As is his wont, Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president and Federation vice president Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna, who is the Zoroastrian member of the National Minorities Commission (NMC) considered it "mandatory to explain" the progress and rituals associated with Zoroastrian rites of passage to both Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrians and urged other anjumans to do so to offset the ignorance, misinformation and disinformation within and without the community.

The entombment of the time capsule at Sanjan, the participation of youths sponsored by the BPP to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress at Houston in December 2000 and the contents of BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz's letter to the delegates were other topics of discussion.

The delegates stood in silent remembrance of Iranian philanthropist Faridoun Zartoshty, Shirin Guzder, Homai Bodhanwalla (wives of Federation president and vice president respectively) and Sam Poonawala who recorded Federation meets in Bombay on a couple of occasions.

The central courtyard of the anjuman complex had been covered with a shamiana, its pillars and walls festooned with lifelike greenery. Strategically located, colorfully blooming plants and painstaking rangoli designs attested to the enthusiasm and zeal of the host committee.

Every evening a brief, entertaining performance by the children, youth and young adults of the Jamshedpur community rejoiced the delegates after the long talkathons. Luncheons and dinners were catered by community members.



From left (top row): Ardeshtir, Guzder, Gandhi, Sethna and Tamboly; (second row): Rusi Billimoria, Jamshed Irani, Daisy Irani, Bailey Bodhanwala and Chehna; (third row): Dastur, Colah and Master; (fourth row) a section of the audience with the Bharuchas in the forefront, Bapsy and Adi Rabadi, and Cama; (last row): Shireen and Homi Dandiwalla, Palsetia, Punawalla and Talati Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama

The educational highlights were conducted tours of the Tata Centre for Excellence and of the flagship company, Tata Steel, the social highlight was a candlelit dinner hosted by Irani and his gracious wife Daisy on the manicured grounds of their official residence. Irani's welcome set the style for easy, informal ambience even at the executive council sessions and his asides added a touch of lighthearted repartee (he asked Federation joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi, "Well, bandmaster, how's the band playing?") that jostled other wits into play at deliciously incongruous moments! Unfortunately, only 11 of the Federation's over 60 members were present to discuss crucial community affairs.

With a youth seminar planned for December 8-10, 2000 FOZYA (Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India) members were conspicuously absent, highlighting the organizational lag between community bodies.

The next meeting of the Federation will be held in Bombay on June 9-10, 2001. Normally every alternate meet is held in Bombay but the last three successive meets have been hosted by upcountry anjumans.

Dokhmenashini

After the inaugural formalities, Gandhi launched a debate on the contentious and potentially dangerous issue facing the BPP and other anjumans like Poona and Baroda where community numbers are substantial and the mode of disposal is by dokhmenashini. The fall in the number of vultures observed and reported by *Parsiana* readers over the past two decades — and steadfastly denied by traditionalists — has now led to the nightmare of no scavenging birds to assist the sun's rays in reducing dead bodies to bleached bones as of yore. The resulting putrefaction results in a "smell so intense (I get) telephone calls from Spenta residents late at night," attested Guzder.

Though several smaller anjumans have the same problem of no vultures, their situation is not as desperate because of the small annual number of deaths — about three or four — and the comparative vastness and distance of the dokhma property from human settlements.

Although a growing trickle of Bombay Zoroastrians are opting for the electric crematorium, the priests' offi-

cial body, the Athornan Mandal, has decided not to perform prayers for the first four days after death. By the trust deed of 1874 which governs the BPP, it is obligatory for the Punchayet to maintain the Towers of Silence, said BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly. In the absence of scavenging birds, the trustees have been considering the installation of solar panels known as Scheffler Reflectors — somewhat like concave mirrors placed a slight distance away from the dokhma — that focus the light and heat of the sun onto the pavis where the dead are placed. Experiments tried at Baroda on bird and animal carcasses have demonstrated that these take a third of the time they normally would to dry up without the body being burnt or charred, with heat ranging between 80°-170°C, noted Vadodara Parsi Panchayat trustee Baman Cama.

The experiments are being conducted by Ronnie Sabawalla. According to a write-up by Zoroastrian scholar Dr Homi Dhalla which was circulated along with a technical write-up on the reflector, it is expected to cost two to three lakh rupees, approximately. Sabawalla is basically experimenting on behalf of the Sai Baba Trust, noted Cama.

The problem is that after initially agreeing to the concept the high priests have changed their stand, said BPP trustees. The negation by the priests may increase the laity's hesitation to accept any new concept, especially in the mofussil where levels of education are low, as maintained the Bharuch delegates.

Citing the example of the late Shiavax Nargolwala of Delhi who had volunteered to pray for a DPA member who had opted for cremation on the priest there refusing to do so, Gandhi asked, "Are you prepared to give the community a choice? Are you prepared to tell your people that if you want to bury or cremate, the Bharuch Anjuman will provide the infrastructure?" He urged anjumans to mobilize non-practising athravans in this behalf to motivate the priests. Though "finance is no problem" Bharuch preferred to wait for Baroda to implement the change. "If it starts in Baroda we can use it as an example," noted Sarosh Ginwalla.

Homi Palsetia of Saronda maintained that bodies in their dokhma shrivel up and become powder dry in seven days (subsequently changed to seven weeks) but Tamboly countered, "In Bombay it

takes six to seven months" for a body to completely dehydrate. Dastur maintained that the "bodies remain in a horrendous condition" in the three major dokhmas in Bombay and that the same applies to Mhow, Bangalore and Bular. He further cautioned, "Even on sentimental grounds if they want to continue, people with an eye on the property will raise problems with the local health authorities."

When Palsetia triumphantly announced that Bomi Sachinwalla was thinking of constructing a new dokhma in Vasai, a visibly shaken Tamboly described the concept as "the most tragic thing happening. A new dokhma in Vasai will enable the government to confiscate the Cumballa Hill property!"

Calcutta's Nauzer Batlivala referred to a referendum held there about two years ago when "more people felt that a new system was viable, but a close minority wanted to continue with the old system so the trustees are continuing with the old system." Adi Rabadi, a trustee of the Mehta Agiary in Calcutta who attended the meet in his current avatar as vice chairperson of the West Bengal Minorities Commission, wanted the BPP to give the lead noting that "priests always ask for clearance from the Bombay high priests."

Interjected Gandhi: "The high priests have said 'No navjotes of the children of intermarried couples may be performed.' But such navjotes are done." Mobeds are worried about being blacklisted, Gandhi explained and asked, "Will the Calcutta agiary trustees be willing to provide them with lifetime employment? Will you use your power?"

Rabadi chose to use Gandhi's final question as an out-of-context escape clause: "I will never use power to force a priest!"

He also noted that with trees growing inside the Calcutta dokhma the bodies remained in the shade. These trees are too dense for volunteers to axe; and professional tree cutters would not be allowed in. He feared "grave danger of public interest litigation."

"The Punchayet should explain to the community that the BPP is not going to sell the land," suggested Jamshedpur's Sam Antia. "It is cemetery land. We can't even build housing for anyone except people employed on the Doongerwadi," explained Tamboly. "Prepare to revert to an aramgah," volunteered Gandhi.

Ervad Meher Modi, a Jamshedpur youth studying in Bombay and serving at the Aslaji Agiary quoted the authority of the *Rivayats* and the *Vendidad* in favor of maintaining the dokhmas. While in favor of solar panels so long as temperature in the dokhma did not reach flammability, Modi suggested the import of red necked vultures from North America. Gandhi reminded him that the *Rivayats* were of very late origin as compared to the *Gathas* and that there were many injunctions in the *Vendidad* which have now been abandoned and asked, "What is the basic duty of a mobed? It is to spread the message of Zarathushtra irrespective of the parentage of his listeners. It is to serve the needs of the community, not to dictate to them. (The latter) borders on emotional blackmail." Then Modi volunteered that four-day services were being performed by some priests even for those opting for cremation. "Whenever behdins have led, mobeds have followed," he averred, adding that mobeds have only recently begun to assert themselves. However, when Tamboly asked, "Why did mobeds change the muktads from 18 days to 10 days, 20 years ago?" he had no answer.

According to Dastur there are 10 to 14 mobeds who perform four-day ceremonies for the cremated at the client's residence. Dastur opined that if the trustees decide to provide Doongerwadi infrastructure to community members choosing burial or cremation a greater number of priests would be forthcoming. He recalled how Ervad Sorab Panthaky had declared in Mhow that practicing priests would embrace change if their views were elicited by a secret referendum. Gandhi and Sethna concurred that it was fear for their livelihood that prevented mobeds from accepting change.

The spiraling controversy about raising vultures in captivity had led the BPP trustees to invite a samast anjuman meeting at Rustom Baug on December 15, 2000 where any Zoroastrian from any part of India was free to express his views though no decision was to be taken at the meeting. The concept of spending over one crore rupees on building an aviary to sustain an ancient form of disposal of the dead, when more and more funds are required for education and medicare, has left most rationalists dizzy.

Sethna, who had been asked by BPP trustees to speak with the ministry of

environment for permission to create an aviary to breed vultures at Doongerwadi, said he has got a conditional clearance. The flutter in the national Press about Parsis and vultures tended to focus on the concentration of wealth in the form of land in Bombay, he warned. The

"It is no respect to the Parsi dead to leave them in the dokhmas to decompose and decay"

environment ministry "wants me to report to them regarding the bodies that are lying uneaten. My duty as NMC member is to represent the community at government and national level. It may be possible to stall for a while but if it is reported that 30/40/50 bodies are lying around, the community will have to bear the consequences."

Spending three crore rupees on an experimental aviary could leave the trustees open to the charge of breach of trust, averred Gandhi. "We are a litigating community... When holding the samast anjuman meeting let whoever speaks in favor of the (proposed) aviary give in writing that that they will raise the money and not the BPP trustees," he cautioned.

"Let us not kid ourselves," said Tamboly, admitting that the BPP had been served a notice from the municipality in January 2000 that "our system is becoming a health hazard." Noting that he was to meet Jemima Parry-Jones (a specialist in breeding birds of prey who would be implementing the project) and see her center in England on his way to the Houston Congress, Tamboly promised to "go public" with his observations and declared that the chairman has agreed to issue a joint statement on their findings.

A community in crisis

From demographic decline to the legal niceties of intermarriage and its implication on BPP housing, the question of non-Parsi sezdo, the pros and cons of community involvement with education, the cost of maintaining consecrated fires in localities deserted by Parsis, the boost for entrepreneurship and the need to curtail the leeching of community funds under various guises were among the

topics addressed by Dastur.

Some of the traditionalists disputed the discussion of Dastur's marathon agenda, saying that when the community is in danger a savior will come as promised by Zarathushtra. Crackling with mischief Gandhi asked, "Shall we rename Behram (Dastur) Behramshah Verjavand?"

Dastur's suggestions had been circulated twice to Federation members along with the agenda notices. In Madras the delegates had asked if the BPP trustees had endorsed Dastur's suggestions which were xeroxed on a BPP letterhead and as this was not the case, had shelved them. A similar move this time was fended off by Tamboly commending his CEO for placing the problems on paper. "Why brush (them) under the carpet? (They) deserve to be discussed. The BPP has started cutting off red tape," he asserted.

Reassuring the anjumans of their autonomy, Gandhi added, "Behram is not trying for legislation, just trying to bring the problems into the open... Let members think over them."

Intermarriage

"For over 80 years we have sat on the fence and patience is running out in one section of the community," Dastur noted referring to the gender bias against outmarried Parsi women and the latter's appeal to the BPP about three to four years ago to open the Punchayet governed Godavara Agiary to their children. He urged the council to come to some decision which can then be debated with the priests.

Asked about the current legal position Gandhi cited the Privy Council judgment in the Bella Case of 1925 which had held that it was up to the trustees of a fire-temple to allow the navjoted children of intermarried Parsi women to attend as their presence in no way detracts from the benefits enjoyed by other beneficiaries. Gandhi presented the example of the Delhi Anjuman whose amended constitution had, according to Sethna, enabled the DPA to embrace and maintain the 33 percent intermarried population which had originally tended to move away from the community fold.

Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) and Federation vice president Eruch Irani represented the traditional, conservative viewpoint, arguing that "trustees of agiaries may not agree even if the anjuman does." He also contended, "We don't have the



Celebrating one hundred years in global freight forwarding.

Jeena
& COMPANY
ESTD. 1900
GLOBAL LOGISTICS

Elphinstone Building, 1st floor, 10, Veer Nariman Road, Mumbai 400 001, India. Tel.: (22) 204 2032 Fax: (22) 202 6853 E-mail: info@jeena.co.in

BANGALORE • BARODA • CALCUTTA • CHENNAI • COCHIN • GOA • HYDERABAD • KANPUR • NEW DELHI • PUNE

www.jeena.com

numbers to fight, they (non-Parsis) have. (By admitting) non-Parsi fathers' children (into the fold) you are reducing the slice available to community children. Go to places like Poona and Bombay where the interests are different, where problems exist... (We are) not qualified to speak on religion. I am bound by the rules of my trust. If you (a non-Parsi) want to be a Zoroastrian, go ahead but (there is) no need to be a member of the anjuman, because then you are thinking in terms of enjoying anjuman privileges!"

Sethna enunciated the debate in bald terms: "*Aapri milkat chaali jasé* versus *aapri kaum khalaas thai jasé* (the community will lose its wealth versus the community will die out)." Noting that mothers and grandmothers play a greater role in the religious upbringing of children, Sethna asserted that the DPA had turned down the request for the child's navjote of those intermarried persons "who only want the show without the knowledge or the commitment."

But an unappeased Eruch Irani held the Lt Gen guilty of "totally misleading people... giving youth encouragement to do what they feel like." He argued, "Every effort should be made to educate children (in the traditional concept of marrying within the community). Bring them together from everywhere. Let them interact. They will marry if they interact."

When Jamshedpur's Zenobia Madon protested, "We are (only) four girls of our age (and no men)," Eruch Irani counseled them to "move out, interact," suggesting e-mail correspondence and attendance at youth meets where they may find a match. "Girls from Karachi have got married in Bombay," he noted.

But Rohinton Pithawalla, a Parsi youth from Jamshedpur who is married to a Parsi pointed out the case of a well-settled Parsi boy working for Tata Steel with his own house in Jamshedpur who waited 15 years to find a Parsi girl before marrying out of the community. Tamboly referred to the similar case of a community activist in Bombay who was to marry a non-Zoroastrian after seeking a suitable Parsi spouse for 15 years.

Strangely, Eruch Irani's response underscored the same ground realities that Gandhi, Sethna, Dastur and others were alluding to, though he did not seem to realize it: He said there used to be hockey and football tournaments in

Bombay where Parsi youths gathered but now "each one is very busy. When each one is ready to settle, it's too late. We have not been seeing new youth faces (at the Federation) even though Keki (Gandhi) has gone out of his way to give an executive council seat to the youth. But there is no enthusiasm."

For each married Parsi in Gujarat there is one who is unmarried

For each married Parsi there is one who is unmarried, in Gujarat, noted Sethna whose work on the NMC and on the UNESCO project documenting Parsi history and culture has necessitated frequent visits to older Parsi settlements on the west coast of India. "Even in Poona how many children have you lost? Are we going to lose man, woman and their children?" he challenged.

As Dastur had referred to the ambiguous position of non-Parsi spouses and their children in the community Tamboly clarified that the BPP has evolved the policy of making the Parsi boy married out give a written undertaking that on his demise the tenancy would devolve on his children and not on his non-Zoroastrian wife although the lady can continue to reside there. Referring to the 350-year-old BPP as the "second oldest surviving trust in the world after the Papacy," Tamboly noted that change, though slow, was recognized by it as "the only constant." Emphasizing the need to spread awareness through discussion and education, Tamboly noted, "Unless we change, none of us may be able to survive."

"The Parsi mother's child is at least half Parsi — not necessarily the Parsi father's child," opined Rabadi.

Jamshedpur's Dicky Mody recalled that only one youth had accepted Jamshed Irani's offer of jobs in Tata Steel at the FOZYA meet in 1998. A Jamshedpur girl said she was unable to attend FOZYA meets because her parents were too busy to accompany her and did not approve of her going alone. Pithawalla added that Jamshedpur youths leave the steel city after completing their 12th standard because they are "aware that if they go back to Jamshedpur it would be very difficult to find a Parsi

spouse." Eruch Irani replied, "Send us the bio data of eligible boys and girls and we'll try our best."

Commented Khurshed Bhesania, "We all see ground realities with blinkers."

"We have these problems because we have mixed up community and religion... A priest of Zarathushtra has to follow the dictates of Zarathushtra," noted Gandhi, advocating a more humane, inclusive approach towards spouses from other communities.

Sezdo

One of Dastur's points concerned sezdo by non-Parsis after the paidust. "How can our powerful prayers be so feeble as to pollute a Parsi corpse just by the offering of sezdo by non-Parsis?" he challenged.

The issue is relevant to all Parsi communities, and more so in the mofussil areas.

Dastur's paper had been circulated along with the Federation's minutes, etc but there had been no response, complained Gandhi, with particular reference to Bombay and Poona.

"Even if we discuss, (our response) will still not be binding on mobeds. We have no intention of discussing this since our concentration is on housing and other projects on hand," declared Eruch Irani.

"We are taking the view that since it was not done in the last 20 years, we shouldn't do it in the next 10 years!" retorted Dastur, recalling the flak his family had faced when his maternal grandfather, "a great one-man benefactor for Deolali-Nasik" had died.

"It is a big problem for all small anjumans," agreed Cama adding, "We should have a common code of conduct." His statement triggered protest from the orthodox anjumans of Gujarat seeking a ban on the discussion from the chairman.

"This is not a law-making body," conceded Gandhi but he defended the need for discussion saying, "The chairman can stop discussion only on the ground of it being against the interest of the community."

Sethna reiterated how Sir Rustom Vakil, a member of the Governor's council had been presented a guard of honor at Doongerwadi in 1909. "In Valsad, as a boy, I remember bodies being taken open to the Tower of Silence," he noted.

continued on page 53



Corporate Office:

Prop of: Taj Printing Works, 46/A, Cawasji Patel Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.

Tel: 2042432 ♦ 2854218 ♦ 2853058 ♦ 2853080 Fax: 022-2855325

E-mail: mpgoc@bom3.vsnl.net.in Website: www.mpallonjigroup.com



M. PALLONJI & CO. PVT. LTD.

Leading Contractors for Industrial Painting and Coatings, Anti-Corrosion, Waterproofing, Construction, Diving, Dredging and Offshore Contractors
Members of S.S.P.C. (USA) & N.A.C.E. (USA)

PALLONJI INVESTMENT & FINANCE PVT. LTD

Manufacturers of Waterproofing material

AquaEpoxy

Manufacturers of Longlasting Exterior coating material

Kenitex



TRAVOTEL (INDIA) PVT. LTD.

Hotel Maya Balrampur
Member of International Hotel Association & FHRAI
Situated at: Balrampur, Dist. Gonda, Uttar Pradesh 271 201.
Tel. No. STD 05263-32208/32507 Fax No: STD 05263-32508



PALLONJI LEASING PVT. LTD.

Hire Purchase, Leasing & other Financial Services



PALLONJI COATINGS PVT. LTD.

Manufacturers of Industrial Paints, Primers & Sealants



STERLING MOTORS

Authorised **Telco** Dealers
For Nashik, Ahmednagar and Solapur



for **TATA** Passenger Cars and Commercial Vehicles
Sales, Service and Spare Parts

NASHIK (Main Dealer)

Old Agra Road, Nashik 422 001. (0253) 598298/591598/594576 Fax: 596598

E-mail: sterling@bom6.vsnl.net.in

Spare Parts Shop: Swastik Chambers, New Agra Road, Nashik 422001 tel: 591090

SOLAPUR (Dealer)

74/3, Bale, Solapur-Pune Road, Taluka North Solapur, Solapur 413006. Tele/Fax: (0217) 720337
City Office: Super Mkt, Murarji Peth, Solapur 413001. Tel: (0217) 720458

AHMEDNAGAR (Dealer)

Opp. S. T. Stand, Bableshwar 413737, Dist Ahmednagar. Tel: (02422) 53594
Apt. No. 202, Office No. 106, Raj Chambers, Kothala Road, Ahmednagar.

The venerable verdict

According to Zoroastrian tenets all sources of pollution should be destroyed promptly and with dignity, reiterates the author

Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli

It was extremely disheartening and denigrating to read the responses of Dasturs (Drs) Firoze Kotwal and Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa to the plea for guidance forwarded by Adi Rabadi of Calcutta concerning the severe crisis related to dokhmenashini. While I fully respect the position of both the Dasturs as custodians of the Zarathushtrian faith, I would have valued their guidance in evaluating the importance of the traditional mode of disposal vis-à-vis other alternatives.

There is no question in my mind that "natural dokhmenashini" is perhaps the best mode of disposal of putrefying matter, as when the dokhma towers are located in the wilderness away from civilization. Khorshed Nagirashni is the ideal mode of cleansing decomposing organic matter, when the sun's rays are accessible in abundance.

When the dokhma towers were constructed centuries ago in Bombay, Bangalore, Calcutta, Poona and other places, they were significantly removed from civilization. Then, they served their purpose. Time however does not stand still and the system today is atrociously inadequate because of spreading human habitation, changing weather conditions, depletion of scavenger birds, shortage of nassessalars and last, but not the least, shortage of funds.

The modalities suggested to strengthen the "venerated time-tested system" are:

- Harnessing solar energy to expedite dehydration
- Improving air quality control through the use of ozone gas
- Generating a species of microbes by using a spray of herbal composition
- Breeding vultures in aviaries.

The inadequacies of all these modes of 'strengthening' has been discussed by Dr M. D. Disawalla (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 2000, August 2000). He also suggested, "The only



A dokhma (circa 1960s): "system today is atrociously inadequate"

logical solution is to erect a modern electric crematorium at Doongerwadi." The idea is worthy of discussion from the vantage point of Zarathushtrian theology.

Mention of fire in the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra has sanctified this element of nature which was already used in the religious rites long before the time of the Prophet. In fact Asho Zarathushtra equated this element to an incarnation of Mazda in the physical world. This we recognize in the metaphor of *Athra Ahuremazdao Puthre* in the liturgy of *Atash Nyaish*. The liturgy clearly distinguishes the fires that are worthy of worship, viz atash-e-behram, atash-e-adarian and atash-e-dadgah. These are the consecrated fires that are sanctified through prayers and rituals and elevated to usher within them an embodiment of Ahura Mazda. They are the very representa-

tion of absolute purity and absolute righteousness, the very implication of the concept of Asha in the physical world.

The generalization that "fire is sacred in the Zarathushtrian religion" and that the act of cremation desecrates the holy fire is a notion that is grossly overrated and demands understanding. History has recorded that fat from sacrificed animals and pieces of omentum, together with dry wood, was a customary Zaothra (offering) made to the hearth fire to keep it aglow (Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol I, pp 153-155).

Apart from Zarathushtrian theology, it must be understood that fire, by its very nature, is a preserver and a destroyer. It can destroy good as well as evil. It has the awesome power to transmute organic substances to gases and to reduce inorganic substances to ashes. This duality of the holy fire of Mazda is also reflected in the *Gathas*. The great Manthran Zarathushtra reveals (Yasna 31.19, 20; 34.4) that the sacred fire is the preserver of the righteous (good) and the destroyer of the deceitful (evil).

"Thy fire Lord, which possesses strength through truth and which is the swiftest/forceful thing to be of clear help to thy supporter but of visible harm./with the powers in his hands, to Thy enemy, Wise one (Insler, Yasna 34.4)."

A fire that engulfs a house of another human being is not sacred by any measure and must be swiftly extinguished. In contrast, a pile of waste matter that is being put ablaze must be allowed to incinerate until all the polluting matter is converted to gaseous elements. A human dead body is nothing more than decaying waste matter, a source of con-

tagion. Any contagion by Gathic precepts must be removed from the environment of the living as it violates the Gathic principle of Asha. The purity laws of Zarathushtrian religion demand that such a source of pollution be destroyed promptly and with dignity.

An analysis of the present system reveals that we have been using the natural source of that eternal fire — the sun — that is continuously aglow in the universal space to destroy the evil of putrefying matter. The surface temperature of the sun is 10,000-12,000°F. It is the heat of that natural fire from an average distance of 93 million miles that carries out a slow degeneration of decaying matter. The birds of prey only selectively remove some portions of the carcass, while much of the cadaver is left to be slowly cremated by the heat of the sun. Thus the age-old tradition of Khorshed Nagirashni is nothing more than a process of slow cremation.

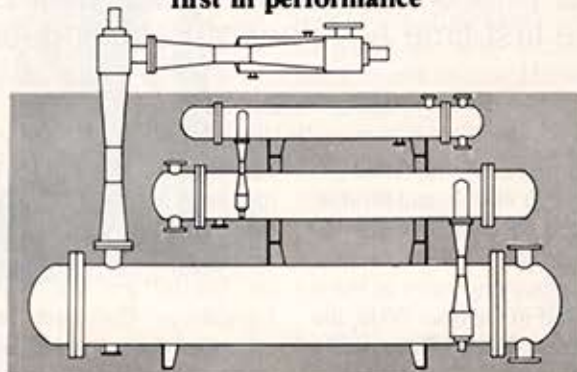
The modern electric crematoria are designed to provide sufficient heat to cremate the organic matter to ashes within a short period. The concept that such an act is a desecration of the holy fire has no doctrinal base. The flames involved, if any, are not of a consecrated fire. More importantly, any flames emitted are being fully utilized to destroy the evil of contagion, to prevent pollution, to purify the environment for the living and to refresh the world. All this is entirely consistent with the Zarathushtrian canon. The use of the heat of fire in cremation can be visualized as analogous to the fire that will arise out of the molten metal to affect the final purification and resurrection to Frashokereti (*Bundahishn*, Ch 34.18-20).

It is sinful to drag the current unhealthy situation to its extreme in the name of Zarathushtrian tradition, endangering the lives of those who work in the vicinity. The distressed community in India needs clear guidance. This must come in unequivocal terms from the custodians of our faith. In the absence of the facility of dokhmenashini, Kotwal, in his true wisdom, has said, "the method of choice should be cremation over burial as Zarathushti tenets forbid the preservation of nasa-neganih — dead matter" (*FEZANA Journal*, Winter 1998, pg 11). The facilities in India are fast approaching extinction. It is time for the prelates to show divine wisdom in their guidance. May Ahura Mazda enlighten their path.

Quality Steam-Jet

VACUUM

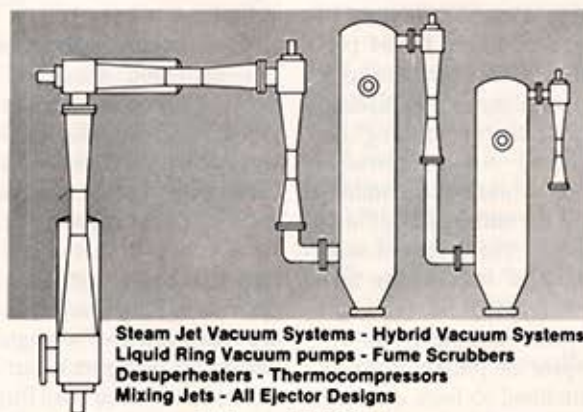
Systems for the process Industries
first in performance



Performance Test Facility

Mazda guarantees overall vacuum system performance to 100% of the Heat Exchange Institute (HEI) Standards. All ejectors except the very largest (over 300 mm) are 100% factory tested for performance before shipment.

**This facility is the only of
its kind in India today**



Steam Jet Vacuum Systems - Hybrid Vacuum Systems
Liquid Ring Vacuum pumps - Fume Scrubbers
Desuperheaters - Thermocompressors
Mixing Jets - All Ejector Designs

Designed in USA by :

CROLL-REYNOLDS

Manufactured in India by :



Mazda House, Panchwati 2nd Lane Ambawadi, Ahmedabad 380 006 INDIA.
Phone : 6431014, 6431151, 6431654, 6405277 Fax : 079-6565605
E-Mail : mazda@ad1.vsnl.net.in Website : <http://www.mazdalimited.com>

Marble memories

Author-publisher Marzban Giara records for the first time a history of Parsi statues

Hilla P. Guzder

They have adorned city streets for decades, memories in marble and bronze, oftentimes reduced to mere perches for pigeons or pegs for peddlers' wares. Resurrected to deserving glory in *Parsi Statues* published in October 2000, the author Marzban J. Giara spent "nearly three years of intense effort and personal visits around (Bombay), Udvada, Navsari, Surat and Vyara" to bring to light the heritage immortalized in sculpture over the past 150 years in India, Pakistan and Iran. The book also contains a section on stamps, first day and special covers issued between 1950-2000 in these three countries.

Not surprisingly, of the 226 statues (including busts and medallions) listed with color photographs, as many as 134 are in Bombay, accounting for 61 percent of the total. In some cases, the book notes, the original plaques are missing, in others the statue itself is missing! An alphabetical listing makes reference easy. Giara quotes in his book Sir Stanley Reed, at one time the editor of *The Times of India* who wrote: "No city owed more to the generosity of its citizens than Bombay. The Parsis led the way. One fine endowment after another bears witness to their spirit of philanthropy. If anyone were inclined to look askance, let them find a parallel in Asia for this outpouring of Parsi philanthropic generosity."

The book tells us of statues in places which were at the time of their installation far from the beaten path — a statue of noted builder Shapoorji Pallonji at Wai in the Satara district of Maharashtra, a medallion of Bai Ratanbai Pestonji Kapadia atop the entrance gate of a market in Matheran, a bronze replica of "butter man" Pestonji Edulji Polson at the Polson Model Dairy in Patna (Bihar) and Anand (Gujarat) etc. The Tata family, with 25 statues listed, have the larg-

est number, with Jamsetji Tata accounting for no less than 12 statues in Bangalore, Nagpur, Jamshedpur, Navsari, Bombay and Sisodara in Gujarat. Not far behind are the Wadias, Petits, Jejeebhoy, Cowasjee Jehangirs and other well-known families, with numerous details of their life and work bringing the statues to life.

The earliest individual to be commemorated in marble appears to be Framjee Cowasjee Banaji (1767-1851) whose statue in the Banaji Atash Behram at Thakurdwar in Bombay bears no date. The book however lists Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, first baronet, as the first Parsi statue erected in 1849 at the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution at Fort.

From interesting nuggets of information provided we learn that Coomi Sohrab Bharoocha, founder of the Happy Home and School for the Blind at Worli was not only a dedicated social worker but a talented painter and dancer as well, winning prizes in ballroom dancing; that Dr Rustam Bomanji Billimoria, who founded the Bel Air Sanatorium for TB patients at Panchgani, would travel every weekend to Panchgani by "train, horse cart or bullock cart" to treat patients; that Sir Shapoorji Burjorji Broacha donated three lakh rupees for building a hostel in Banaras; or that Sir Muncherjee Merwanjee Bhowanagree had a corridor built in memory of his sister Avanbai who died in 1888 at a cost of £ 4,000 in the Indian museum attached to the Imperial Institute of London!

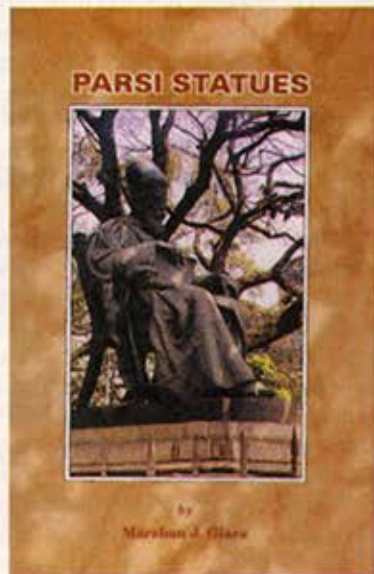
We are told that Sir (Dr) Tehmulji Nariman, founder of the Parsi Lying-in Hospital, was married for 86 years, having tied the nuptial bond at age five; that Sir Dorabji Tata, famed for his benevolences, was a keen sportsman who rode on horseback from Bombay to Khadki, a distance of 106 miles in over nine

hours; that Kaikhushroo R. P. Shroff whose marble bust in pheta and dugla stands on the 25th floor of Jeejeebhoy Towers (the new building of the Stock Exchange) had an unbroken tenure of 43 years as president of the Bombay Stock Exchange; that Avabai Petit gave Rs 20,000 to the government to build a separate ward for Parsis at the lunatic asylum in Poona or that Sir Dinshaw Petit donated a hospital for lepers at Ratnagiri. Among the more recent statues cataloged are those of the Jokhi family.

Statues in Pakistan include those of the Dinshaw, Mehta and Soparivala families, Khan Bahadur Sir Kavasjee Hormusjee Katrak, Ardeshir Hormusji Mama, etc. Some of these have been relocated at the residences of the Cowasjee family in Karachi as a few had, stated Giara, earlier been vandalized.

Statues of Iran which have been documented include a 20-foot one of the Sassanian king Shapoor I, who died in 271 AC, which was lying at the mouth of a cave on a mountain near Bishapur and was re-erected on the orders of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. A bronze image of Firdausi Toosi, weighing two and a half tons and presented to the people of Iran by India's Zoroastrian community, was unveiled by Reza Shah in 1945. Statues of Firdausi are also to be found in the Iran League office at Navsari Building on Dadabhai Naoroji Road at Fort, in the 13-hectare Ferdowsi Park in Tehran and outside his tomb in Khorasan in Iran. A bronze bust of the venerable Maneckji Limji Hataria is located in the atash behram in Yazd; one of Pestonji Dossabhoy Marker at the Marker School also in Yazd.

Not content with descriptions of the statues and their subjects, Giara has incorporated details of canopies and fountains, including a detailed description of the well-known "Ubha" or "Khada Parsi" (Cursetjee Manockjee Shroff) at Byculla Bridge, standing almost 50 feet above the ground on an elegant Corinthian column, regal in dress and deportment, a replica of a prize-winning sculpture made for the Chilean government and displayed at an international exhibition in 1862 in London. Sadly, the statue, which used to serve the dual purpose of



Surveying the scene (from left, first row): Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit at Bhatia Baug; Sir Cowasjee Jehanghier Readymoney outside University Convocation Hall; (second row) Manockjee Eduljee Allbless at Allbless Baug; Lady Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit at the Hospital for Animals at Parel; Dadabhai Naoroji on book jacket

fountain and public lighting (lit by gas lamps) is today dwarfed by the adjacent flyovers, the carbon monoxide of roaring traffic its constant companion. The book also mentions the Sanjan Stambh and the War Memorial at Khareghat Colony.

Unnoticed in the anonymity of a bustling city are medallions like the one of the second baronet Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy on the facade of the Central Railway headquarters at Victoria Terminus (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus).

To add further interest, Giara has also mentioned the names of the sculptors, how the money was raised, who did the unveiling, etc. Dates of the subjects and events include the Parsi year, *mah* and *roz* wherever possible.

The colorful section on philately, though not complete, includes a first day cover of the charter of Cyrus the Great, issued on his 2500th anniversary by Indian Posts and Telegraphs and the stamp issued by Iran.

At a slide show cum talk on the book organized by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and the Rahnuma Mazdayasnan Sabha at the K. R. Cama Library Hall on November 22, 2000, Cowasjee Dinshaw (Adenwalla) commended Giara, who authors, publishes and distributes books and cassettes on Zoroastrian themes, for his "consistent track record in bringing out new publications on his own resources, without sponsorship." Among the "firsts" to Giara's credit, besides *Parsi Statues*, are the pictorial *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples* and *The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide* published in 1998 and 1999 respectively.

The inspiration for *Parsi Statues*, narrated Giara, arose during a "Walking Tour of Parsi Landmarks in Bombay" in February 1998 led by Khojeste Mistree and organized by the British Council Library, when a young girl asked him (Giara) if he could give her a list of Parsi statues and where they were located in Bombay.

"A striking quality of the statues is their character," long noses et al, stated Giara. Parsis used to poke their noses, he jested, into a variety of social causes, seeking to uphold human values, liberty and rights of individuals, particularly women and children, against obnoxious practices like child marriage, etc. Most of those commemorated in sculpture came from very humble backgrounds,

he stated, and acquired their wealth by sheer dint of industry, yet never flaunted it, preferring to leave their footprints in the sands of time through their catholic charities.

Errors of proofreading and other minor errors notwithstanding, the book provides a valuable springboard for further research on the subject. Published by Giara, printed at Jenaz Printers and sold at Rs 2,000, the 336-page book was released by Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute on November 10, 2000.

Parsi Statues is available from Marzban J. Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Tel: 4166204. E-mail: giara@vsnl.com

A salute to Seervai

They were discussing the legal merits of the ban on a book on the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Extracts were being read from the book titled *Gandhi Hatya Ané Mee* (Gandhi's Assassination and I) written by Gopal Godse, one of the conspirators in the plot when Hormusji (Homi) M. Seervai saw a resemblance to Shakespeare's Mark Antony in the passages. He rose, strode up and down the chamber and recited by heart Antony's speech from *Julius Caesar* which begins with the words, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him."

After reciting the entire

Jahagirdar (left) releasing the book on Seervai (above) while Ookerjee looks on. Right: Feroza Seervai



speech Seervai asked what time it was and upon being told it was about five, he adjourned the meeting for the day stating that he had to leave as his wife "Feroza must be downstairs" waiting in the car.

The incident demonstrated three characteristics of the late noted jurist, narrated retired Bombay High Court Judge R. A. Jahagirdar. They were Seervai's "depth of knowledge of English literature, his phenomenal memory" and his commitment to the family. Chief guest Jahagirdar was addressing a gathering at The Asiatic Society of Bombay in the Town Hall on Seervai's birth anniversary on December 5, 2000 while releasing the book *The Seervai Legacy: Essays, Speeches, Tributes, Letters* edited by his wife, Feroza.

On truth or courage Seervai would never compromise, recalled noted jurist and Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Fali Nariman who like Seervai also practiced in the chambers of Sir Jamshedji Kanga, the renowned jurist. Once when Seervai stood by his opinion in a particular matter even though Kanga took an opposing view, Seervai offered to resign if Kanga so desired. Kanga would not hear of it, said Nariman.

"Maharashtra never had a more illustrious advocate general than Seervai and probably will never have," stated Nariman. Seervai was the "bulldog of the government of Maharashtra," guarding the State's interest, he said. Referring to Seervai's magnum opus, *Constitutional Law of India — A critical commentary*, Nariman termed him "the leading constitutional historian of his time."

Dr Sheryar Ookerjee, a former professor of philosophy at Bombay's Wilson

College and a long-time family friend of the Seervais, recalled how Feroza had stated that after obtaining her

BA she did not intend to get married for 10 years in order to continue research. When she married Seervai, Ookerjee asked her why she changed her mind to which she replied, "I'll learn a lot more from Homi."



It was Seervai's practice to buy three small bars of Cadbury chocolate every day for his children, recalled Ookerjee. Once when he was in Lonavla, another lawyer M. P. Lad took him to a local shop to purchase the chocolate. On being informed by Lad that Seervai was the advocate general of Maharashtra, the shopkeeper pulled out some imported, smuggled chocolate assuming they would be more to Seervai's liking. The jurist declined, noting, "We don't do such things."

Ookerjee recommended four chapters in particular for lay readers from the 212-page book published by Feroza Seervai and distributed by the Universal Law Publishing Company Private Limited (C-FF-IA, Ansal's Dilkush Industrial Estate, G. T. Karnal Road, Delhi 110033, e-mail: unilaw@vsnl.com; price: Rs 350). They are "Goodness," "Religious Freedom Under Our Constitution and Social Reform," "Babri Masjid" and "Prof J. C. P. d'Andrade" (Seervai's professor).

Noted jurist Atul Setalvad recalled Seervai's generosity. Strangers would walk into his office asking for assistance and Seervai would ensure they didn't leave empty-handed. This, Setalvad

noted, was in addition to the "regular and systematic" donations he would make to charitable and other deserving organizations.

"Maharashtra never had a more illustrious advocate general than Seervai and probably will never have"

"At 6.45 p.m. he and Ms Seervai met for a walk," said Setalvad. Seervai would daily read extracts from books to his children.

Seervai "never gave any wrong information in court... he was an outstanding, fearless advocate," asserted Setalvad. When his uprightness and honesty did not find favor with the Maharashtra government they "created a situation" whereby he was forced (after a 17-year tenure) to resign on principle. They didn't have "the courage to ask him to leave," remarked Setalvad.

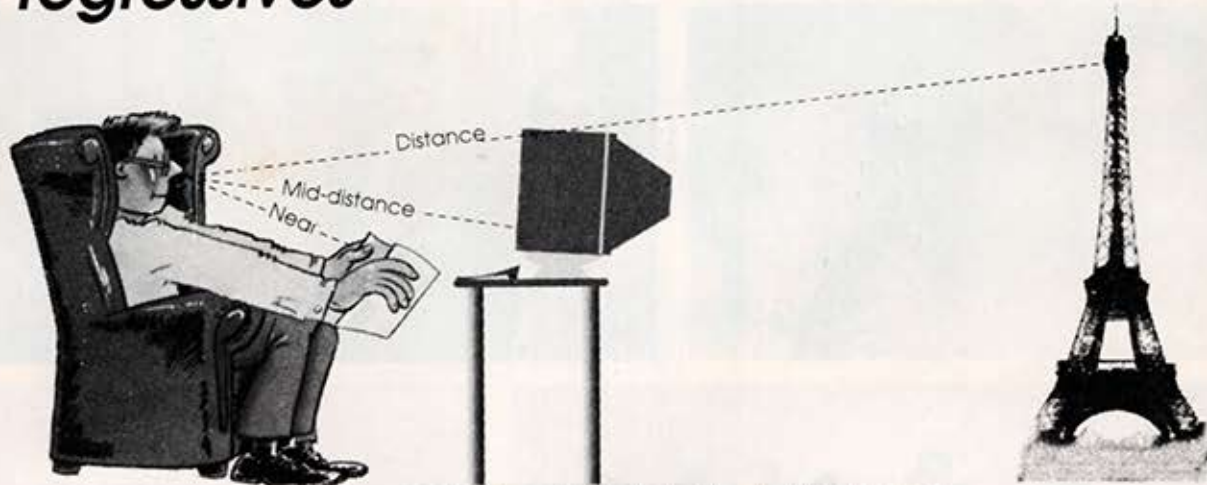
Civil libertarian and member of The

Asiatic Society managing committee Yogesh Kamdar, while thanking Feroza for bringing out "such a wonderful book about Seervai," pointed out the couple's son Navroz's contribution in preparing the volume.

Addressing the gathering briefly Feroza mentioned that Homi and she were married for 56 years. She recalled how The Asiatic Society had played a part in their courtship. She was researching a subject, "The right to revolt," (a remark that evoked considerable laughter from the audience) and was to meet Homi one evening at the Society to help resolve a friend's problems. Homi was uncharacteristically late for the meeting and when Feroza asked him the reason, he replied the tram in which he was traveling had caught fire. "It was probably symptomatic of his heart catching fire" shortly thereafter, she opined!

Dr B. R. Rairikar, president of the Society, chaired the function and Vimal Shah, honorary secretary, welcomed the gathering, informing them that Seervai was an honorary Fellow of the Society. Dr Mani Kamerkar, chairperson of the public lectures and cultural events committee of the Society, was also present.

Progressives



*The lens for uninterrupted vision at different ranges
distance, mid-distance & reading.*

Progressives are multifocal lenses without the tell-tale lines of bifocals.

Progressives need professional care.

*For the best results come to **Baliwalla & Homi**.*

One of the finest optometrists & contact-lens practitioners in the country.



Baliwalla & Homi
Private Limited

Flora Fountain: 365, Dr. D.N. Road, Bombay 400 001 Tel: 287 4916, 287 1762 • Dhobi Talao: 614, J.S. Seth Marg, Bombay 400 002. Tel: 201 4906
Parel: J. Merwanji Street, Parel, Bombay 400 012 Tel: 412 6051



SEEKING NEW DIRECTIONS

continued from page 44

Added Bhesania, "In Jamshedpur we allow non-Parsis even to carry the coffin."

Education

Dastur recommended that "the community stop investing in educational institutions" since less than two percent of the student population in Parsi controlled schools are Parsis. Instead, he suggested free funding of "cutting edge" education like medicine and engineering to help students compete for the limited number of open seats. In one case the Federation was told, the BPP has sanctioned an outright grant of two lakh rupees (from the five lakh required) and one crore has been set aside by the BPP for the purpose.

Responding to critics who complain that students who go for studies abroad never return, Dastur said, "Wherever they go they'll remain Parsis. Rather than get some inconsequential job here, let them stay there and contribute so that the next generation can be educated."

Sethna suggested that such funds should also cover new technologies like genetic engineering, information technology, entertainment technology, etc. He reminded the delegates that the late politician-diplomat Homi Taleyarkhan had secured two reserved seats for Parsis in Karnataka and Gujarat "but we don't push and we lose them."

Noting with pride that Lt Gen Rustom Nanavati has taken over as chief of staff, Northern army command, Air Marshall Manek Madan as air staff officer Western air command and Air Commodore Fali H. Major as air officer commanding Leh Ladakh, Sethna added unhappily that there were very few flight-lieutenants or cadets to take their place in future.

The special coaching for civil and

military services instituted by the BPP under its former CEO Rustom Anklesaria in the 1980s had resulted in only one entry — that of Alice Pastakia from Godrej Baug who has been inducted into the Maharashtra Public Service Commission, informed BPP senior executive Sheroo Master.

Sethna believed that coaching for the services and the professions should begin with special teaching aid to students of standards X and XI and Tamboly assured him that high school students were being coached for cutting edge results at the Spenta Coaching Classes on payment of Rs 5,000 for the whole year. He acknowledged the Hongkong anjuman's contribution to the scheme. Gandhi suggested additional general knowledge grounding to enable Parsi children to take advantage of programs like *Kaun Banega Crorepati*.

An ancillary discussion focused on the misuse of funds for general education by some students. Master noted that some students go from trust to trust collecting funds for the same requirements, spending the excess on unnecessary luxuries. "We ask (other) trusts to stamp the amount donated on their fee or book receipts," but few trusts care to do so. In the Panchayet where this system is followed, "people tell us, don't stamp the front, only the back!" which, said Master, can then be covered up.

Sethna recalled that Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) president Dr Sam Bhacca had told him that "people come in brand new cars and demand the few missing books" among the lot provided by the SPP.

Delegates like Rusi Billimoria of Delhi and Pithawalla suggested the institution of a coordinating body of trusts to prevent such unscrupulous leeching of community charities. Master informed them of efforts dating back to 1945 which had repeatedly run aground on the power perception and egos of trustees of individual trusts. Guzder, as chairman of the Liaison Committee (a body instituted for the purpose in the 1940s), had written to each trust on the matter but did not receive a single response, said Dastur, adding, "This is the apathy on which misuse is based... We are trying to create a system, but (our words) are falling on deaf ears!" Gandhi recalled the Federation's effort to found a Council of Trusts to spare students seeking higher education from sending forms and annexures to each individual trust and from multiple interviews "but the

trusts said 'If students want money they'll do what we want!'"

Even the simple expedient of asking students for an account of the money given is too much trouble for some trusts while others do not have the machinery to implement it, as noted Master.

Does the money provided for education return to the community or does it get totally dissipated? asked Jamshedpur's Zarine Mody. To this Tamboly replied that a "large number (of donees) do start repaying" but the source is so far "only a trickle." Dastur further noted that loan scholarships have a 20-year frame and that in 1998 two students who could not generate their total requirements returned what the Panchayet had granted them. The BPP had also written to parents and guardians of students they had helped and received more than Rs 11 lakhs. It also established that the students were "studying and not philandering."

Merger of fires

With unfrequented agiaries always asking for nibhav (maintenance/repair) funds, Dastur advocated the merger of fires of proliferated agiaries like the ones in Neemuch and Uran where a few residents/picnickers offer kathi. Having gone through a series of religious texts, Dastur said he has found no argument against such merger. Nor have the high priests, who vetoed the proposition when consulted, been able to pinpoint scriptural authority in support of their contention, maintained Dastur. With six agiaries in Bharuch, eight in Surat (and 20 in its environs according to Tamboly) with hardly any votaries and an acute paucity of priests, Dastur recommended that such fires be merged and the real estate converted into badly needed educational and medical funds for old age relief. Based on their experience of two agiaries in Bombay, the BPP is said to be spending Rs 110 a day on kathi per fire. Though the Nargol and Saronda anjumans have planted bawal on their lands, the trees will take 25 years to grow, he added. Noting that "fires are dying out," Cama proposed the filing of *cy pres* petitions to divert agiary funds to other uses.

Gandhi suggested the practical alternative of moving several fires under a common roof. Then "only the kathi expense will remain and we will carry the high priests with us," he contended. "Only the hurdle of trustees and beneficiaries would remain."

From left (top row): Dara Mahudawala, Sarosh Ginwalla, Batliwala, Pilloo Ginwalla, Shirin Mahudawala and Mandviwalla; (second row): Patel, Havovi and Sam Antia, Dicky and Zarine Mody, and Marazban Wadia; (third row): Pesi Wadia, Debara, Khurshed Bhesania, Coomi Bhesania, Madon and Banoo Billimoria; (fourth row): Jamshed and Tehmi Sidhwa, Gool Ardesir, Vandrevalla, Dotivala and Rubina Bodhanwala; (last row): youngsters regaling the audience and girls singing a monajat

Eruch Irani described it as a religious problem for Bombay and Bharuch and suggested that such agiaries be identified and their trustees approached. "How will it help to discuss it here (at the Federation)?" he asked. But Ginwalla felt the need of the Federation's advice. Sethna identified the problem as a need to "create awareness in the community. Only after that trustees will pay heed."

"Influential people in the Federation should take up the matter with people concerned," advocated Gandhi citing the example of Bharuch's Doongaji Agiary fire whose move to Bombay's Godrej Baug had been blocked by a local Zoroastrian's protest. (There was a similar episode with the Langrana Agiary fire in Bombay.)

Marazban Wadia of Davier voiced the conservative viewpoint: "We have come to the Federation to help save our institutions. You (are not able to) remove a single Muslim tomb or Hindu temple," he contended, implying the Federation's impotence when it came to challenging other communities. He then launched into the virtues of the Davier Agiary and noted that there was enough space around it, only two hours' journey from Bombay, which could be used to

build homes for Parsis. Cama tried to reason with him that Dastur was "only talking of agiaries which are not being maintained," but Wadia grumbled, "Nobody knows how many problems we have with non-Parsis."

Begging

Claiming to have identified 500 Parsi beggars in Bombay Dastur informed the council that the BPP has decided to "stop doles to able-bodied 60-year-old males who have remained unemployed for five or more years." Contending that "indiscriminate dole giving emasculates any community," Dastur asked, "Can we train them in a craft to become self employed?" He said he was thinking in terms of 40-45-year-olds, exempting pathological cases and wondered if the BPP should try to set up STD/ISD booths for those under 70 years of age.

When the delegates dissented from Dastur's estimate, saying there existed only 40 to 50 Parsi beggars, Dastur invited them to sit in with Master and "see how many who do nothing come to Sheroo."

Ginwalla concurred, saying such unemployed in Bharuch own "fridges

and motorcycles without working by writing to anjumans all over the country (while) refusing our efforts to provide xerox machines," etc which would provide an honest income.

Attributing the problem to the "surplus incomes of charities in Bombay" which encourages people, including 30-35-year-old men, to subsist on doles, Tamboly noted that such income has to be spent by March 31 each year to avoid taxation. A better course would be to apply for cy près so that the funds could be utilized for entrepreneurship/medical care, etc.

Referring to "very old, very sick ladies in Gujarat," Sethna felt that it might be better to substitute doles by establishing soup kitchens, providing them cooked food instead of *anaj* (food grains). It would necessitate "an attitudinal change at all levels of the community, looking at the question of charity as a whole," as poverty is leading to major socioeconomic problems.

Entrepreneurship

With the registering of the Zoroastrian Investment Corporation Private Limited and the Centre for Promotion of Entrepreneurship, the "legal ground-



For Pure Diamonds

K. WADIA

JEWELLERS (Since 1901)

324, Grant Road, Bombay 400007. Telephone 3099648 Fax 3073483
APPOINTED VALUERS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

work has been done." The BPP's initial contribution has been Rs 20 lakhs. The goal, in the primary phase, is to raise three crore rupees, said Dastur.

He suggested that the community harness advancing technology to improve the efficiency of traditional pursuits like farming, kusti weaving, etc by the use of drip-irrigation and mechanized looms and wondered if local anjumans could benefit from the expertise of Zoroastrians of outstanding merit like Prof. Soli Arcivala who is currently with one of the UN group of organizations.

Tamboly who, in his capacity as managing trustee of World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) trusts, has been helping farmers and their families in Gujarat over the past decade, ruled out drip-irrigation as too expensive even to install. But with compulsory training for marginal farmers whose land is less than five acres at the Tata Institute of Marginal Farming, modern methods of agriculture, dairy and poultry farming have been introduced and "the farmers are now on the road to prosperity in Gujarat," he noted. Also in Navsari more than 50 Parsi ladies earn between Rs 2,000-3,000 per month. Would mechanizing kusti weaving start another controversy? wondered Tamboly. Billimoria and Eruch Irani suggested a survey of kusti makers for suggestions/problems.

"What happens to farmers whose lands are eroded by floods?" asked Ginwalla. "Each and every family is rehabilitated (though) we can't help with soil erosion" of land on river banks, explained Tamboly. Learning from experience (they once harvested a bumper crop of watermelons which proved to be too far away from the market to be lucrative) the farmers under the WZO umbrella are concentrating on sugarcane with due regard to maintaining the water table. On the marketing side the emphasis is on "trying to eliminate middlemen."

Religious education

The last of Dastur's marathon non-official agenda dealt with religious education. He suggested the English translation of all Zoroastrian scriptures and their free distribution to community institutions. It was the request from the Lahore Anjuman for scriptural books (which the BPP and the Union Press dispatched) which prompted him.

Rabadi's reaction was that such publications only "gather dust," Sethna noted

that most people are "averse to reading," but renditions of Zoroastrian history and scriptures acted out by children as in Delhi, Madras and Jamshedpur helps them and the audience to receive the message. He cited the instance of people telling him at a public meeting in Gujarat that they had "received more religious instructions from the tots than they had received ever before." (Delhi's Farohar Club, for children aged three and above, had toured Gujarat a few years ago giving renditions based on their understanding of the religion as taught them by Piloo Jungalwalla.) The basic requirement is to buttress the "ability to understand the faith," stressed Sethna.

Individual anjumans

DPA's Jamshed Sidhwa announced that they had inducted a second mobed at a salary of Rs 7,000 per month plus medicare, welfare and leave travel amounting to Rs 21,000 per annum. The seven lakh rupee donation from Piloo Jungalwalla towards a library-cum-meeting room in her husband's memory will include a computer room for the benefit of dharamshala residents. The Travel Corporation of India has provided the computer.

After a closely contested three-yearly election a new board of PPP trustees has been elected which will take over from January 1, 2001, Eruch Irani informed the gathering. Besides Eruch Irani it includes Firdosh Kayani, scion of the renowned bakery, chartered accountant Mancher Irani, former principal of Dastur School Bapsy Postwalla, advocate Dara Irani, businessman Porusasp Mehta and entrepreneur Jamshed Bokdawala.

The PPP's preoccupation with housing has resulted in three buildings which are complete except for painting and lift installation. The 120 flats of 700 sq ft will be allocated to Parsis from all over the country on leave and license basis at a rent in the region of Rs 500-600. As the total cost of Rs 10 crores has been borne by donors, the PPP is bound by an agreement that permits the donor trust 50 percent allocation rights and a say in the format of the allocation forms, noted Eruch Irani. Two more buildings are expected to be completed in 2002.

In order to repair its agiary the Saronda anjuman is seeking Rs 1,20,000 to build a gumbaz (9' x 9' x 16') to house the fire

while the work is in progress as also to repair its hall, as per Palsetia. Guzder pledged Rs 20,000 and Ginwalla on behalf of Bharuch and Ardeshir on behalf of Jamshedpur pledged Rs 5,000 each.

Piloo Ginwalla (née Vakharia) of Bharuch recounted agiary renovations and construction of a dokhma wall. But their current preoccupation is the restoration of Jamshed Baug and the H. B. Vakharia Dare Meher, a property formerly used for weddings and housing a dharamshala, but which has completely deteriorated due to the ineffectiveness of its last surviving trustee who passed away in August. "The property is without an owner or keeper. The Bharuch Parsi Punchayet has asked other descendants of that family to take it up." Hence Piloo Ginwalla is involved in the project where they want to establish a guest house cum dharamshala with a small dadgah and, more specifically, an old age home as "more than 70 percent of (Bharuch's) population is over 70 years old."

Sarosh and Piloo Ginwalla and Dara and Shirin Mahudawala were representing the Bharuch anjuman at the Federation at the request of its current trustees.

Secunderabad representative Omin Debara reported that there was no change on the issue of the anjuman's legal status vis-à-vis the State Endowment Fund. The matter had been substantially debated in Madras. Nor was there any new report on the matter of the Surat dokhma lands which have been requisitioned by the Gujarat government.

The Davier anjuman would like to retrieve its old library rented to non-Parsis at Rs 40 per month, reported Wadia. Allahabad's jashan hall needs repair estimated at Rs 1.5 lakhs, according to its president Capt Homi Dandiwalla. Its aramgah has also been damaged by floods.

Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth is planning to host an all-India Zoroastrian matrimonial meet titled "HeartMeet" on April 7 and 8, 2001. Bomi Talati informed the council that they had invited noted social worker Mithoo Jesia and her team to set the ball rolling for the mix-and-match session for marriageable youth.

World Congress

In addition to the 15 students from all over India sponsored by the North

American community who were to be quartered with individual families, the BPP had sponsored 14 with travel grants and two fully, noted Master. These 16 youths were also to participate in a tour of North America after the Congress, added Guzder.

To commemorate the first World Congress held in North America (where one of the special events was the burial of a time capsule), a similar one was buried on Sanjan Day in a spot adjacent to the Stambh. The capsule, donated by the house of Godrej, enclosed copies of the *Gathas* and *Avesta* and miniatures of items like the gyan, chamach, chipyo, afargan, pichori, padan and a copy of the manpatra to the first Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, elaborated Dastur and thanked the Sanjan and Saronda anjumans.

Udvada

The delegates had been concerned about the status of Udvada as a yatradham/pavitra yatradham as first noted by the late Marazban Patrawala.

Sethna explained that yatradham is a place that the government supports to make it attractive for people to visit; a pavitra yatradham being a holy site open to tourists. This would be "impossible in Udvada unless something very drastic is done by the community and the government," he noted.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Capt Homi and Shireen Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Sarosh and Pilloo Ginwalla and Dara and Shirin Mahudawala from Bharuch; Jamshed Guzder, Dinshaw Tamboly, Behram Dastur, Sheroo Master, Mehli Colah and Gool Kias from Bombay; Nauzer Batliwala, Adi and Bapsy Rabadi from Calcutta; Marazban Wadia from Davier; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Keki Gandhi, Rusi Billimoria, F. Sidhwa and Jamshed Sidhwa from Delhi; Omin Debara from Hyderabad-Secunderabad; Dr Jamshed and Daisy Irani, Jehangir Ardeshir, Belli Bodhanwalla, Khurshed Bhesania, Firdose Vandrevalla, Navzar Dotivala, Dicky and Zarine Mody, Sam and Havovi Antia, Pesi Wadia, Rohinton Pithawalla, Zenobia Madon, Banoo Billimoria and Coomi Bhesania from Jamshedpur; Eruch Irani from Poona; Homi Palsetia, Sarosh Punawalla, Dinshaw Patel and Jehangir Mandviwalla from Saronda; Baman Cama and Bomi Talati from Vadodara. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

Thus spake Bharucha

The community needs to adapt to its present environment, believes Supreme Court judge Sam Bharucha

"I am greatly honored to be asked to inaugurate this meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and it is a great pleasure to be in Jamshedpur, a city that my wife and I have always wanted to see.

"I claim no special knowledge of the problems that the Parsi Zoroastrians face in India that entitles me to address you. My only qualification is the office I have the honor to hold; but I will speak to you as an ordinary, reasonably educated, middle-class, concerned Parsi.

"The advent of the British in India transformed what was essentially a community of small farmers and traders into an influential community of entrepreneurs, industrialists, professionals and businessmen. Jamshedpur is perhaps the best exemplar of that spirit of enterprise. I have read the biography of Jamsetji Tata and marveled at his great vision. The departure of the British dismayed us and led for a time to the flight of the youth of the community abroad. The young people that remained in India seemed for the most part to be content to take on white collar jobs. From what I see now, there is a favorable change in attitude, and there is a substantial presence of the community in the professions, particularly, as has always been, in and around Bombay.

"As I see it, what we need now to do most is to provide our youth with excellent education and the opportunity of residing in accommodation which will permit them to start a family.

"When I say that we should concentrate on providing our youth with good education, I do not suggest that we should set up our own schools. Far from it; our youth should be educated along with the

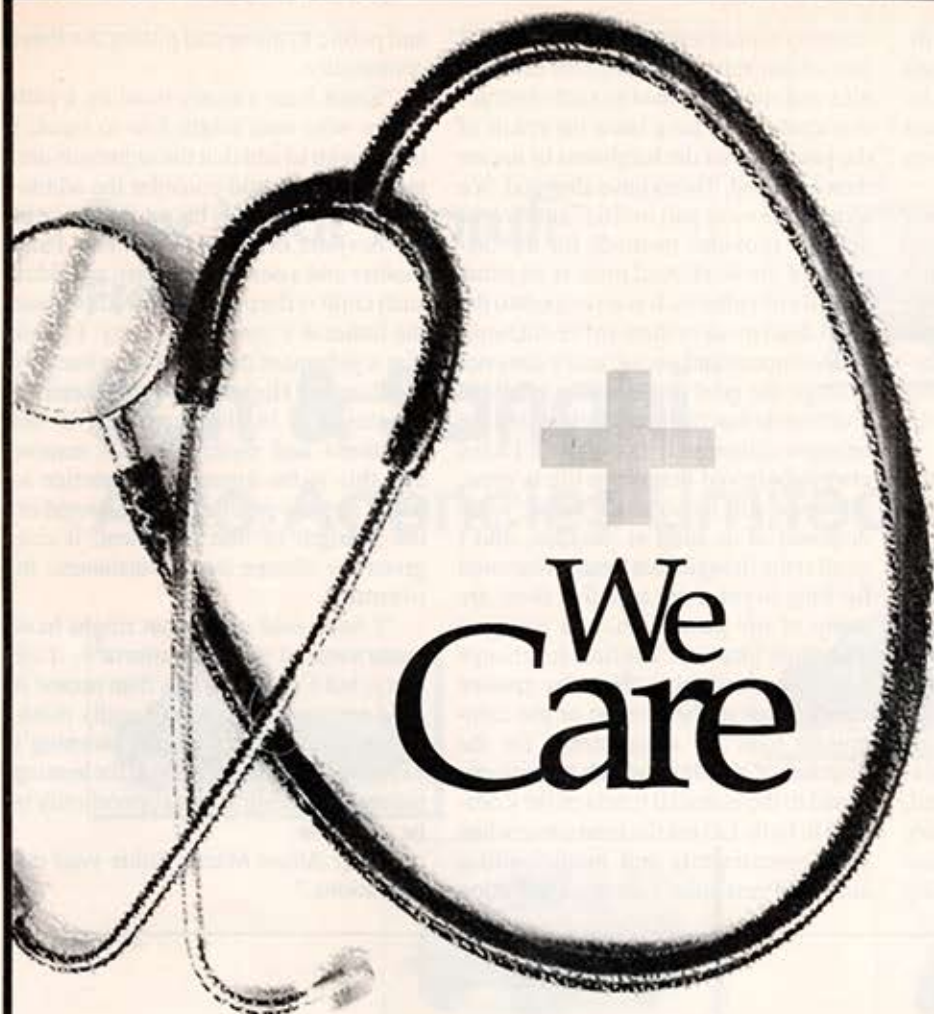


Bharucha: "we shall survive"

youth of other communities in the country. But they should be given the financial backing that would enable them to receive a good education up to university level, and thereafter, in appropriate cases, as far as the student is capable of going. Not all the income of the funds and properties that the anjumans and punchayets possess can, I know, be utilized for the purpose of education, the donors of the funds and properties having earmarked them for other specific objects. Many of these objects are in today's day and age of little or no relevance and it would be a great help if the income of such funds and properties could be spent for the purpose of education. In the law of charitable trusts there is a doctrine called the doctrine of cy pres. It contemplates that, with the permission of the civil courts, the income of trust funds and properties devoted to objects which are no longer capable of being achieved may be utilized for other charitable purposes. I should think that the anjumans and punchayets would do well to review the trusts in which they hold funds and properties and, in cases where their objects have become defunct, make applications to the civil courts of competent jurisdiction for permission to use the income therefrom for educational purposes.

"Many in the community worry that the community faces extinction because of its rapidly dwindling numbers. Rapidly dwindling numbers are inevitable when the young people of the community do not have the residential accommodation necessary to start families. The provision of reasonable accommodation to young people starting out in life and getting married would be of great help in increasing numbers. The anjumans and punchayets might consider gathering monies with the specific object of providing subsidies towards rents payable by young husbands and wives.

"While on the subject of dwindling numbers, I must say that I for one am not much perturbed. We have survived 1,200 and odd years in this country, we who



Education + Vaccination + Family Planning

"Health is Wealth". So it's our duty to protect ourselves and others in our neighbourhood from diseases.

Since the 70's, Forbes Marshall has run the Shehernaz Medicare Centre on its factory premises providing free services not only to its own employees and their families but to the neighbouring townships of Kasarwadi and Bopkhel.

Another example of our philosophy of giving back to the community we operate in.



Mumbai-Pune Road, Kasarwadi, Pune - 411 034, India.

Tel: 91(0)20 - 7124495, Fax: 91(0)20 - 7127413

A-34/35 MIDC Estate, 'H' Block, Pimpri, Pune 411 018, India

Tel: 91(0)20 - 7470171, Fax: 91(0)20 - 7477049

URL: <http://www.forbesmarshall.com>

came in a few boat loads to start with, and I have the gut feeling that we shall survive for many centuries yet. If it be God's will, the faith will survive not only in India but also in the diaspora abroad.

"Over the last 20 years or so many religions of the world have increasingly started looking inward, and I fear that we are among them, I think this is unfortunate. We have always been a progressive community ready to accept modernity and new ideas. This has been our strength and it should continue to inform our lives and attitudes.

"I say this, at least in part, in the context of the great problems that the Towers of Silence face in Bombay and elsewhere by reason, principally, of the absence of vultures in the Indian sky. We should not permit what was, essentially, a social and climatic necessity of life in ancient times to become an overbearing religious requirement. The climate and the soil required our ancestors in Persia to expose the dead to the elements. The corpses were destroyed, among other things, by the predatory vulture. That the Parsi Zoroastrian dead should be disposed of only by being

eaten by vultures cannot be an essential part of our religion. Religious ceremonies and rites attendant to such destruction cannot but have been the result of the practice that the harshness of nature then ordained. Times have changed. We live for the most part in cities and towns. Science provides methods for the disposal of the dead. And there is an acute scarcity of vultures. It is no respect to the Parsi dead to leave them in the dokhmas to decompose and decay; and it does not assuage the grief of surviving relations and friends that their dearly departed are being so dishonored. For myself, I have always believed that when life is gone, my body will be so much refuse to be disposed of as soon as possible, and I quail at the thought that it may lie around for long to rot. I am sure that there are many of my generation, and younger, who think likewise. The time for change has come and you 'Namdar trustee saheb' must in the interest of the community look for other means for the disposal of the dead which are not opposed to the essential tenets of the Zoroastrian faith. Let not the time come when state governments and municipalities and the Press raise issues of pollution

and public hygiene and pillory the Parsi community.

"Since I am already treading a path where wise men might fear to tread, I must go on to add that the anjumans and punchayets should consider the admission into the faith, by the performance of the navjote, of a child born to a Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father, provided such child is the product of wedlock and the father is a consenting party. I know that a judgment delivered long back by the Bombay High Court would seem to be standing in the way, but if the anjumans and punchayets all resolve that this is the appropriate practice to adopt and the practice is challenged on the strength of that judgment, it can, given the change in circumstances, be overruled.

"I have said much that might have made some of you uncomfortable. I am sorry; but I would be less than honest if I did not say to you what I really think, which is the object of this morning's exercise. I am obliged to you for hearing me and for giving me this opportunity to be with you.

"May Ahura Mazda guide your deliberations."

Tanaz R. Godiwalla

Caterer

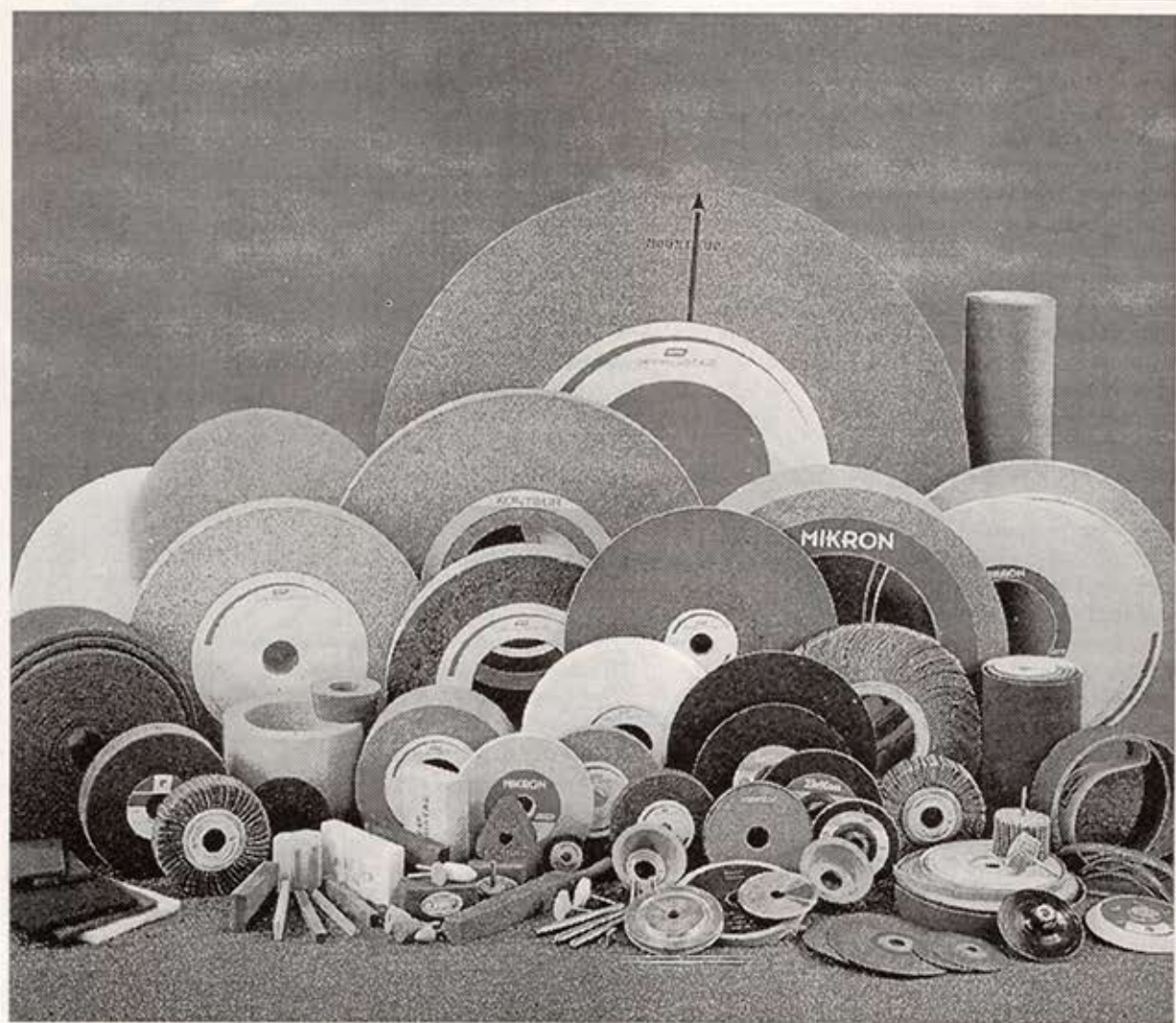
Call

3736136, 3736194

For instant access

mobile 98201 33399

NORTON



**Your only full line source
of all abrasive products**

NORTON

• Ahmedabad • Bangalore • Baroda • Calcutta • Chennai • Coimbatore • Delhi • Faridabad • Indore
• Jaipur • Jamshedpur • Kanpur • Ludhiana • Mumbai • Nagpur • Pune • Rajkot • Ranchi • Secunderabad

**GRINDWELL
NORTON LTD.**

The Bawaji Rap

Oh Bawaji, Oh Bawaji
Wherefore art thou Bawaji?
We are all somehow related
Often times even belated
The numbers are getting smaller and smaller
But Bawajis are not getting taller

At reproduction they're not the best
And when they start gossiping, they can be a pest!
By working in banks they get their rest
They are even good at taking tests

Of crows they are not too fond
But the crows seem to want to bond
Cawing their way to the bawaji beat
Sometimes they may get a treat

Went out to dinner the other night
With friends forgot to make a right
Got there in time for dhansak and cake
Even saw a view by the lake

Waitress came and said, "Cute guy at table four"
Oh that's just my cousin — what a bore!
The gene pool is tremendously shrinking
Everything is certainly stinking

Eccentricities sure do abound
Soon we will all be funny and round
We will all have the big, long nose
We may even have funny toes

Went out dancing the other night
Why can't Bawajis even dance right?
Why do they all have two left feet?
And why do they always miss the beat?

During the waltz he stepped on my toes
Because he thought anything goes
For the tango he had no time
It's a good thing too, because he danced out of line

Came back home and went to bed
Dasturji called and said, "Avesta have you read?"
Got back up and began to pray
Oh God, why must it be this way?

Then there are the Bawajis of colony fame
They are always playing some game
Going on a picnic or to the beach
They are always easy to reach

The girls, they do not want to get married
They say, "Oh no, we'd much rather be buried"
This one is not right for me
That one doesn't know how to make tea
The other one makes less money than me

And I wish Phiroze would just let me be!
To fall in love they know not how
They keep saying the time is not now

The boys are also just the same
Now where to put the blame?
She is too tall, she is too fat
Oh my God! That one looks like a rat!
Roshni's feet are much too big
And Piroja eats just like a pig!
The attraction is just not there
The elders will have to grin and bear

Orthodox dastur says conversion is a no-no
Because our blue blood cannot go-go!
Reproduction is at its lowest rate
If we don't allow conversion, what will be our fate?
Will we all die and wither away?
Or will someone come to save the day?
I suppose we will have to wait and see
Just what will become of thee

Thoughts turn to Iran the motherland
So few of us have seen her glorious sand
One day we may come to see
The beauty nature has given to thee
The mountains, the valleys, the trees so green
The children with rosy cheeks so clean

We hold to our tenets of good thoughts, words and deeds
We don't pray the rosary beads
Our God is the One, all knowledgeable being
He is the One who is all seeing
Heathens we certainly are not
And our religion cannot be bought
We don't think of others ill
Because to God we pay our bill

We don't come witnessing at your door
We'd much rather feed the poor
We won't tell you that you need to be saved
Because your road is already paved
We are all headed to the same place
You just make sure you can show your face

My thoughts go out to all those who read
Remember it is with you I plead
Remember that we are all one and the same
We are all playing an identical game
You are not better than all the rest
We will all be put to the test

Love everyone equally well
Then you will not go to hell
I end this rhyme with love to all
Remember, sometimes even angels fall
Just be good and do your best
Ahura Mazda is merciful and will do the rest

Jasmine Patel

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 10

disillusioned with religion as practiced in the West. "Going to church every Sunday is more a social thing than a religious one. Catholicity of spirit has been lost somewhere along the way. Looking at the wars that have been fought and the number of people who have died in the name of religion, I think the world would be a better place without religion," opines Stefan. "Then again, it helps a lot of people find an anchor in life and hope in despair."

What surprises and impresses Stefan is the way Parsis stick together as they "drive Tata Sumos, eat Dinshaw's ice-cream and support other Parsi businesses!"

Like the Doongaji sons Shezad, Danush and Yohan, Stefan also calls Najamai "Bapaiji" with much affection. He has picked up a smattering of Gujarati and says he can differentiate Gujarati from Hindi "because of the 'chhè'."

Stefan né India *gaméch*, Nagpur *gaméch* and Parsis *ghana gaméch* (Stefan likes India, Nagpur and Parsis a lot)!

DILNAVAZE BHAGWAGAR

Nagpur

Marriage site

Choosing a spouse is probably the big-

gest and most important decision of one's life. A right decision makes the couple live together joyously as an inseparable unit but finding the right spouse has been until now the most difficult proposition worldwide. This is due to non-availability of complete information.

www.marriagetoday.com is the first global click and mortar matrimonial site promoted by 38-year-old B. K. Jhaver who is a chartered accountant also into international business and 49-year-old Prem Rathi who is a management graduate and an experienced marriage counselor.

The site has two sections: matrimonial and wedding bazar. In the matrimonial section an individual can register free a matrimonial bio data in general or VIP categories. He/she can converge the search and find the right match as per the individual's choice from amongst the bio datas listed. Also available is free online horoscope by janam kundli, zodiac way and auspicious time (muhurat). Detailed medical guidance on sex and gynecology is available. There is another free facility whereby personal queries can be posed to seven different experts in varied fields such as gynecology, sex, marriage counseling, fitness, travel, astrology and beauty.

A chat with the mate is permitted after prior appointment, A-Z wedding tips involve 26 useful hints related to the marriage ceremony and the wedding event, right from the invitation card to bridal/groom trousseau, venue, wedding finance, etc.

Through the second section, wedding bazar, one can buy wedding related products/services in all categories. Wedding related suppliers, vendors and service providers can list their products and services (city wise and product wise). We have already entered into a strategic tie-up with a US based organization and have 50,000 gift products on the site.

Created in April 1999 this is one of the first comprehensive sites on marriage. The site is registered with many social organizations and communities of the world who are making use of it. We are in the process of appointing matrimonial franchisees in India and elsewhere.

The site also offers a large bio data bank for handicapped, widowed, deaf/dumb, divorced applicants who can register on the site and get a suitable match.

B. K. JHAVER

Indore

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

With Best Compliments From



VELDONTM

COATS

Guniting, Civil & Painting Contractors

Specialists in renovation of multi-storied buildings

1st Floor, 7, Cassinath Building, Cassinath Street, Tardeo, Mumbai 400034

Phones: 4923560/4938949 Fax: 4925601

Gram: VELDCOATS

MILESTONES

The data on Parsi marriages solemnized in the months of November and December 2000 will be carried in our February 2001 issue.

There were 80 deaths as compared to 19 births in Bombay in November. The major killer, heart disease, took a toll of 25 lives, of whom 11 were 80 years and above. General debility/old age claimed 10 lives, cancer and lung diseases nine each, diabetes eight. Four, three and two individuals fell prey to kidney, liver and brain diseases respectively. The isolated cases registered were gastrointestinal bleeding, dehydration, hypoproteinemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma), hemorrhage, asthma, septicemia, stroke, deaths due to bullet injury and stab wounds. The coroner's report is awaited in one case. A stillborn baby and a 28-year-old youth were lost to the community. The oldest to die was a 96-year-old lady. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for November, in Bombay, was 74 years.

The data on births, marriages

and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by 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.

BANGALORE

BORN

A boy, *Shahzad*, to *Nilufer* and *Jamshed Panthaki* on November 7, 2000

BARODA

BORN

A boy to *Khurshid* and *Kemus Wadia*; July 25

A boy, *Ruzan*, to *Sanobar* and *Behramshaw Contractor*; August 5

A girl, *Ferzin*, to *Hutokshi* and *Homyar Wadia*; August 12

A boy, *Xerxes*, to *Hilla* and *Percy Kodia*; August 15
A boy to *Behroze* and *Cyrus Cooper*; September 20

DIED

Bahadur Pestonji Merchant (75); July 14
Villoomai Jal Contractor (85); September 5

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to *Aashish* and *Adil Dhalla*; July 14
A girl to *Bakhtawar* and *Viraf Kapradewala*; July 27

A boy to *Navaz* and *Behram Mohta*; October 5

A girl, *Friyan*, to *Navaz* and *Kaizad Patel*; October 5

A boy to *Delna* and *Rohinton Peer*; October 9

A boy to *Farzana* and *Sorab Madan*; October 12

A boy to *Khushnoor* and *Farshid Nooshian*; October 18

A boy to *Pinky* and *Malcolm Dhalu*; October 24

A boy to *Firuzi* and *Nawzar Satarawala*; October 24

A boy to *Parizad* and *Yazdi Pesuna*; October 30

A boy to *Tanaz* and *Gerard Fernandes*; November 1

A girl to *Zarin* and *Aspi Ravji*; November 1

A boy to *Vahbiz* and *Jamsheed Vachha*; November 1

A girl to *Nazneen* and *Faridoon Gamadia*; November 2

A boy to *Shiraz* and *Hormazd Mistry*; November 2

A boy to *Zinnia* and *Ardeshtir Modi*; November 4

A boy to *Kamalrukh* and *Adil Mehta*; November 5

A boy to *Monaz* and *Adil*

Elavia; November 6

A boy to *Anahita* and *Freddy Gonda*; November 7

A boy, *Shiruy*, to *Armin* and *Cussrow Patel*; November 7

A girl to *Tannaaz* and *Sheriar Irani*; November 8

A girl to *Binaifer* and *Rayomand Pastakia*; November 11

A girl, *Aazmeen*, to *Armaity* and *Jal Amrolia*; November 12

A boy to *Binaisha* and *Ravi Sundaram*; November 12

A girl, *Benafsha*, to *Monaz* and *Adil Kavarana*, sister to *Arzan*; November 13

A boy, *Zydon*, to *Sunnu* and *Kersi Patel*, brother to *Zeus*; November 18

A boy to *Zenobia* and *Khorehmond Mehta*; November 22

A boy to *Rashna* and *Zubin Wadiwalla*; November 28

A boy, *Farzad*, to *Roxana* and *Aspi Driver*, brother to *Dinaz* and *Dilnaz*; November 29

DIED

Ruinton Rusi Satha (48), residing at F-23, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; October 31

Noshir Framroze Khadiwalla (79), 12/G, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; November 1

Jal Dorabjee Sepoy (81), 404, Ahura Coop Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; November 1

Homai Dinshaw Umrigar (82), 580, Patel Palace, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; November 1

Banoon Fardoonji Manobehram (86), 52, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; November 2

Framji Phirosha Elavia (85), 8, Kashinath Bldg, Kashinath Clny, Tardeo, 400034; November 2

Eruch Dinshaw Kotwal (89), 19/32-C, Mulla Manzil, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; November 2

Edul Ardeshtir Karkaria (73), 646, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 3

Mani Framroze Rabady (82), 162, Khushnuma Apts, 29, Carmichael Rd, 400026; November 3

Minoo Bomansha Narielvala (78), Gulshan, 3rd Pasta Lane,

Colaba, 400005; November 4

Neville Kaikhushroo Baria (62), Dawn, 6, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; November 5

Kattayun Homi Javeri (68), 131, Casablanca, Cuffe Parade, 400005; November 5

Havovi Minu Soonawalla (46), Meherali Mans, Opp Victoria Gardens, Byculla, 400027; November 5

Silloo Soli Vasaigara (82), 6/721, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 5

Homai Ardeshtir Desai (87), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; November 6

Dinshaw Jamasp Jesia (84), T-6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; November 6

Najamai Aspi Malaowalla (87), M-5, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; November 6

Pervez Manchershah Patel (76), 17, Mistry Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; November 6

Dara Eruchsha Bharucha (72), Hongkongwalla Cooper Chawl, 10, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; November 7

Nariman Ardeshtir Gandhi (79), 2/692, Chinoy Bldg, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 7

Fardoon Firozshah Variava (72), D-2/25, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; November 7

Jal Khurshedji Variawa (78), 19, Ratan Abad, Grant Rd, 400007; November 7

Jehangir Sorab Jehangir (52), 4, Darbhanga Mans, 12/A, Carmichael Rd, 400026; November 8

Nergish Cawas Kanga (78), Crown Bldg, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; November 9

Jimmy Minocher Kapadia (76), 402, Lavender, Raheja Gardens, Wanowri, Poona 411040; November 9

Dhun Gev Luth (80), Shri Krupa, 32, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400002; November 9

Homai Keki Wankadia (72), 21, Gul-Sorab Bldg, Khetwadi, 7th Lane, 400004;

November 9

Rustom Sorabji Siganporia (51), 203, Namdar Hse, 89, Hill Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; November 10

Katy Maneck Tata (59), 3/150, Navyug Ngr, Forjett Hill, 400036; November 10

Zubin Jimmy Batiwalla (28), B/1, Shireen Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400007; November 11

Ruby (Rati) Pheroze Chinoy (74), 160-70, Sangam, Bazargate, Fort, 400001; November 11

Villoo Rusi Balaporia (80), 609, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 12

Jer Dali Bhesania (76), 7/2, Malegamwalla Bldg, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; November 12

Jimmy Sorab Canteenwalla (58), 5/Y, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; November 12

Aloo Jal Mehta (81), 4/1, Sir Dorab Tata Bldg, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; November 12

Prochi Edulji Menesse (87), C/o Phiroze Dubash, A-5, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; November 12

Rusi Ardeshir Sherdiwalla (76), G-1, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, 618, J. S. Rd, 400002; November 12

Mehroo Pheroze Shah Umrigar (82), D-3, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; November 12

Minoo Jehangir Dumasia (78), 202, Rajgir Court, 6, Kohinoor Rd, Dadar (E), 400014; November 13

Nergish Phiroze Gandevia (74), Bhedwar Bldg, Khan Est, Chhotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; November 13

Minoo Ratansha Marawalla (63), 1-4/1, Tata Hsg Clny, Lalubhai Park, Andheri (W), 400058; November 15

Ratan Kaikobad Meherji Rana (75), Dadiseth Atash Behram, Fanaswadi, 400002; November 15

Dhun Gustad Tarapore (56), N-21, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; November 15

Behram Framji Batliwalla (77), B/8, Blue Nile, 39, Waroda Rd, Off Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; November 17

Roshan Jehangirji Vevai (78), 803-C, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 17

Goolbanu Behramji Wadia (87), 14/32-C, Mulla Manzil, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; November 17

Keki Jal Wadia (74), 20-D, Seervai Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 17

Rusi Behramji Buchia (56), 24/947, Vikrant Coop Hsg Soc, J. P. Rd, D. N. Ngr, Andheri (W), 400053; November 18

Hilla Faramroze Elavia (83), 21, Pundole Bldg, Jehangir Daji Cross Lane, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 18

Jeroo Kersi Mehta (65), Dadachanji Bldg, Murzban Clny, 29, Dr Nair Rd, 400008; November 18

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*						
	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*
BIRTHS						
Boys	21	80	5	10	—	15
Girls	8	77	2	7	—	14
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	—	91	—	9	—	19
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	20	—	2	—	2
Females married out	—	19	—	1	—	1
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	43	411	6	71	1	48
Females	38	424	5	53	—	35
CREMATED						
Males	—	5	—	—	—	—
Females	—	3	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-January 2001 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.

(87), 14/32-C, Mulla Manzil, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; November 17

Keki Jal Wadia (74), 20-D, Seervai Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 17

Rusi Behramji Buchia (56), 24/947, Vikrant Coop Hsg Soc, J. P. Rd, D. N. Ngr, Andheri (W), 400053; November 18

Hilla Faramroze Elavia (83), 21, Pundole Bldg, Jehangir Daji Cross Lane, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 18

Jeroo Kersi Mehta (65), Dadachanji Bldg, Murzban Clny, 29, Dr Nair Rd, 400008; November 18

Rustom Jal Pavri (82), Alexandra Hse, Dr K. Navrang Marg, New Gamdevi, 400007; November 18

Nesserwanji Dinshawji Shroff (92), Pundole Bldg, Jehangir Daji Cross Lane, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 18

Khorshed Jamshedjee Singaporewala (94), 13/8, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; November 18

Gool Jal Vachha (89), Bhatia Bldg, 276, Princess St, 400002; November 18

Nergish Burjor Billimoria (69), 12, Fakri Manzil, S. S. Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; November 19

Pesi (Peshotan) Dinshaw Nargoliwala (84), 53-A, Meher Apts, Off Altamont Rd, 400026; November 19

Nergish Naval Vachha (87), 6, Moonlight, 158, M. Karve Rd, 400020; November 20

Meherbai Sorabji Dumasia (95), 764/C, Baliwalla Bldg, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; November 21

Mana Savak Ghadiyali (69), Village Khusgaon, Tal Maval, Lonavla, Dist Poona; November 21

Chandan Rustom Patel (77), 704, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; November 21

Parivaz Bomi Irani (61), Shapurabad, Masoli, Dahanu Rd, Dist Thana, 401602; November 22

Najamai Maneckji Damania (91), 2, Madhuban, Sector 3, Charkop, Kandivli (W), 400067; November 23

Shaharukh Rustom Irani (30), M-8, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; November 23

Noshir Framji Mistry (65), 463, Kerawalla Bldg, Chira Bazar, 400002; November 23

Keki Eruch Vakil (47), Hormuzd Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; November 23

Dorabji Sorabji Nagporewalla (85), 73, West Minister, Duncan Causeway, Sion, Chunarabati, 400022; November 24

Freny Mehelli Rustom (75), 55, Temple Ter, Forjett St, 400036; November 24

Nariman Nadershah Chinwalla (78), G-29, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; November 25

Adi Manchershaw Lakdawalla (87), B, Aidun Bldg, Dhobitalao, 400002; November 25

Jer Shiavakshaw Khambatta (93), Motiwala Bldg, 44C, Proctor Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; November 26

Najamai Shavaksha Contractor (96), 7, Wadia Block, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; November 27

Kali Savak Khambatta (52), 9, Panday Sanatorium, Colaba, 400005; November 27

Dinshaw Sorabji Kharas (93), 304, Jupiter Apts, Cuffe Parade, 400005; November 27

Silloo Noshir Panthaki (81), G-3, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; November 27

Baby of Shekoofa Cyrus Aryana (stillborn), Aryana Villa, Jehangir Meherwanji Rd, Kalyan (W); November 28

Maneck Kaikhasru Surdas

(85), F. S. Parukh
Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd,
400007; November 28
Goolamai Meherji Todiwalla
(93), G-226, Gitanjali, Seven
Bglws, Andheri (W), 400061;
November 28
Khurshed Cohyar Coyajee
(47), Dilkush, 40, Ridge Rd,
Malabar Hill, 400006;
November 29
Sorabji Bharamji Umrigar
(77), 2, S. B. Bharucha Baug,
S. V. Rd, Andheri (W),
400058; November 29
Aloo Sarosh Lilaowalla (77),
16, Dubash Bldg, Gamadia
Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
November 30
Farrokh Rustom Sidhwa (63),

A/2, Rustom Palace, 222,
Tardeo Rd, 400007;
November 30

CALCUTTA

DIED

Ervad Dinsha Rustom Navdor;
October 23

GULBARGA

BORN

A girl, *Homai*, to *Zenobia* and
Navroze Irani; October 22

SECUNDERABAD

DIED

Ervad Edi Aibara (86),
husband of late Nargis;
November 7
Behram Jal Mody (68),

husband of Mehroo, father of
Shahrookh and Shernaz;
November 21
Avabai Mandvewala (94), wife
of late Jamshedji, mother of
Dina, Mabanu, Amie;
November 24
Pesi Dhanjisha Kalyaniwala
(74), husband of Narges, father
of Jereer, Viraff and Benaifer
Daraius Mistry; November 29

SURAT

DIED

Fali Edulji Elavia (64), Post
Rajpardi, Dist Broach, 393115;
November 7
Sehra Jamshedji Panthaki
(88), Parsiwad, Near Parsi
Agiary, Village Dumas,

394550; November 11
Soonamai Maneckshaw Jasa
Patel (72), Ashirwad Apt,
Popat Mohallo, Nanpura,
395001; November 19
Ratamai Nausherwan
Karanjia (90), Rati Villa,
Bhavnagari St, Surat,
395003; November 25

USA

Indiana

DIED

Kaikhushroo (Kaiki) Rustom
Alpaiwalla, husband of Zarin
and father of Feroze and Hira
Toos Daruvala in Indianapolis;
November 6

Compiled by Bakhtavar R. Batliwalla

"A DOCTRINAL CROSSFIRE"

continued from page 37

"As Zarathustis we are beholden to preserve our practices in the best possible way... If you are worried about the system not working, is it not better to try? Do you get rid of the patient if the medicine is expensive?" Mistree put his best oratorical foot forward.

Shahbaraz questioned, "Apart from finance and expertise, what about people at the doing level? Do you have skilled people?"

Mistree's response was short on specifics. He spoke of hiccups and difficulties of new projects and that the GOI permission had been acquired in four weeks. "The doing level falls into place. Like any project (it) means training people. There are scientists in India who're willing to work for us. Doing people will come on board."

Openly voicing his "grave reservations" on the aviary project, Tamboly said he considered it his duty as a trustee to safeguard

funds and properties as well as to provide direction. "Where will we get the birds and at what cost?" he asked.

Quoting from the report of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) which had conducted an international seminar in Delhi recently he noted that the construction of a holding facility for 25 pairs of vultures would cost Rs 1.55 crores to install, plus Rs 22 lakhs per year for three years plus a price escalation of Rs 4.62 lakhs. The amount works out to an investment of nine lakh rupees per vulture pair, he announced.

Adding that the virus that has killed 90 percent of the vulture population has not been identified nor a cure suggested Tamboly asked, "If the same virus strikes, will we not be back to square one?" He also alluded to Parry-Jones' fees plus the fees of a foreign architect to build the aviary and the cost of foreign bird catchers to procure the chicks from the wild.

"Is committing ourselves to (this project) wisdom or lack of it? Parry-Jones has established that we would need 200 pairs of vultures to clear the dokhmas, looking to the age pattern of the community. The assumption is that the BPP undertake the project on the basis that international agencies will help..."

Cut in Dastur: "(Are these) your personal views or that of the BPP?"

Tamboly: "The figures are based on reports."

Dastur: "Opinion yours or BPP's?"

Tamboly: "At the moment speaking for myself... Only fair that I let (my opinions) be known... I am fully behind dokhmenashini (but) my personal belief is in favor of solar energy."

Wandrewala, a BNHS member who had earlier interceded in favor of a less confrontational attitude, wondered if there could be "a divergence of goals between conservationists and Parsis who want (vultures) for a purpose."

Acknowledging that Tamboly was quot-

ing from reports from Parry Jones and the BNHS that the vulture population in India had declined by 90 percent, Mistree held it possible to acquire 100 birds from different parts of India in small batches. "It is very easy to talk of 200/300 birds (required). The body also dehydrates." He referred to a 30-year-old Punchayet survey which had counted 107 birds. "There were no problems then," he reminded the audience. Despite Parry-Jones' estimate we can make our system work with 100 birds. The cost does not increase with the number of birds... The Punchayet has it on record that The Peregrine Fund is ready to contribute if the BPP gives the seed capital. We keep talking; Pakistan has already set up a facility." That a foreign architect would be required is "news to me," said Mistree.

"The topic of a foreign architect was brought up by Khojeste and Rishad at a BPP meeting," countered Tamboly, adding, "There is not a single paper on our record regarding The Peregrine Fund."

Ignoring Tamboly, Mistree chose to respond to Wandrewala's earlier query and noted there was "no conflict between conservation and religious perspectives," adding that he had "marketed the project to the government as religion cum conservation."

Stating that the BPP was going ahead with four projects, BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz noted, "The controversy was because of ignorance and misinformation. Give us a helping hand, one by helping and the other by not hindering."

"Totally stumped by the controversy," senior trustee Shroff concluded that the trustees will take a "managerial decision" after the visit to Gloucestershire next week. "There are a lot of questions to which we'll find answers," he promised.

"Put your decision to the community," urged someone from the audience. "The final decision will be with us," Engineer had the last word at the three-and-a-half-hour talkathon.

MATRIMONIAL

Parsi parents invite matrimonial correspondence for their only son, 28 years of age, fair handsome, height 5'11" who is currently working in USA after completing his postgraduation there. Girl should be about 25 years of age, educated, pleasant looking and essentially having good, kind nature. Kindly apply to:

The Advertiser

Parsiana, Matrimonial (Jan/3-2001)
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here..



Kala Niketan

www.kalaniketangroup.com

Silk • Sarees • Ready-mades • Accessories • and much more...

For Trade Inquires :
HEAD OFFICE :

Tel.: (91-22) 2005001

Fax : (91-22) 2000229

E-Mail: kala@barris.vsnl.net.in

B
Juhu :

Tel.: (91-22) 611 5689

Fax : (91-22) 610 2564

P
Pune :

Tel.: (91-020) 553 4754

Fax : (91-020) 553 3530

H
Baroda :

Tel.: (91-0265) 33 5882

Fax : (91-0265) 33 5883

E-Mail: kala@barris.vsnl.net.in • Kala Niketan has no Branches or Franchises overseas • All Logos & Names are Registered Trade mark of Kala Niketan Group.

“



The new
Rasna is richer,
thicker, tastier.
But my kids

like to call it,
mmmore!”



One sip and - mmm - the new Rasna is deliciously different! A smart new pack, 13 tongue-tingling flavours to choose from. As many as 32 mouth-watering glasses with each pack...and an exciting gift inside for your kids! Make sure you bring home this extraordinary refreshment.

Richer
Thicker
Tastier



SMART
NEW
PACK