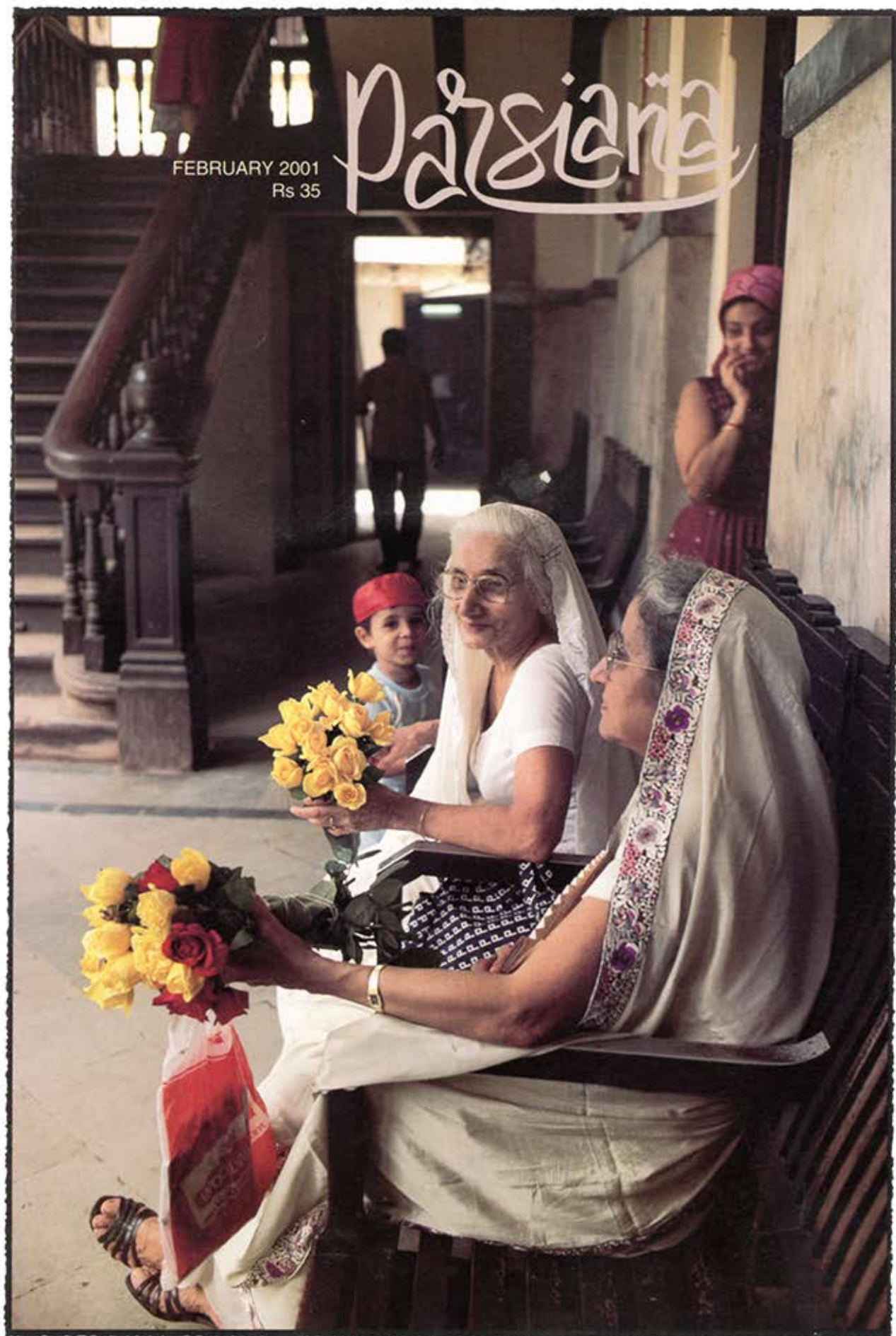


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Parsiana

February 2001
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Photograph by Soonil Taraporevala, Parsis

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Kisseh-Houston"

I am neither a traditionalist nor a reformist but a simple Zoroastrian who tries to follow the preaching of our holy Prophet Zarathushtra as closely as is realistically possible in this modern age of technology and dot com. Whenever I have had a question on an issue of religious complexity, I have referred the same to one of our worthy and noble head priests at one of the atash behrams/agiaries in Bombay or Ervad Rustomji Panthaki, ex principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa in Dadar. Not once have I been let down and have always been given a satisfactory explanation/interpretation to my query.

I was recently disturbed to read in "Kisseh-Houston," (Readers' Forum, Parsiana, October 2000) the portraying of our noble clergy as "not learned enough... unlike the Christian priests or the Jewish rabbis or Buddhist monks who have spent long years, not only in

studying the religion, but also theology and philosophy..."

Our learned high priests such as Firoze Kotwal and Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa not only have an in-depth wealth of knowledge supported by years of intense study but also practical experience, which makes the statement of the writer incorrect.

In the same article there is an unprovoked attack on the world-renowned scholar Khojeste Mistree who spent years studying about the Zoroastrian religion before attempting to impart the truth. We Zarathushtrians want to know everything but the fact that we as individuals choose not to accept what these renowned scholars tell us does not make our clergy and scholars any less knowledgeable than their Jewish and Buddhist counterparts. Even to compare heads of our religion to other religious leaders about whom we know little is an insult to the common man's intelligence.

The fact that we have no time to read the translation of the *Avesta* which is now available in Persian (Farsi), Gujarati and the Roman script, and then crib that we do not know what we are chanting is a reflection of our own ignorance, not that of our priests and learned scholars. In this day and age, everything is available. Search and you will find an answer.

Have we not already modified some of our traditional beliefs, rituals and customs to suit us? But we still have not discarded the Sunday dhansak as a difficult part of our culture.

What the reformist would like is for a decree by the head priest pronouncing intercaste marriages as acceptable, the closing down of our dokhmas (in the name of environmental issues) and a host of other reforms. What the traditional Zarathushti wants is the head priest to tell him exactly the opposite. The truth is that a head priest or true scholar will interpret what he has studied and back it up by facts, which is precisely what is happening. But we will not tolerate (forget acceptance of) what we believe is different to our own point of view. If we do not like an answer by our "gurus," we discard their views as unacceptable. But don't we then go and do exactly what we want to irrespective of whether it is right or wrong? Why then get embroiled in a slinging match?

I am not at all opposed to changes but the progress of our community lies not in change for the sake of change, nor in the throwing away of old traditions as being orthodox and therefore difficult to adopt.

As the 100-year-old lady Shirinbai Mubarakai ("Recipe for longevity," Events and Personalities, Parsiana, October 2000) points out, with an increasing exposure to a cosmopolitan environment, intercommunity friendships are bound to be struck. We would accept this as inevitable, but then come her golden words, "it is the duty of parents to instill moral values among their children and guide them to follow the tarikats of the Zoroastrian religion."

The way ahead lies in listening and accepting what our "gurus" tell us. Religion is not a science, where every formula needs a logical explanation, something that needs to be challenged every step of the way. We should learn to humbly accept the practices followed by our wise forefathers.

While Parsiana is a good way to express one's opinions, let us come up with more "positives" about our noble religion rather than continuously criticize and mock at our age-old customs. This will have a great impact on our future generation.

NAUZER BANA

New South Wales, Australia

This is in reference to the letter from Noshir Grant of Poona ("Kisseh-Houston," Readers' Forum, Parsiana, October 2000).

Since your magazine favors the liberals and the intermarrieds whose aim is obviously to dilute and ultimately destroy our sacred religion that our forefathers preserved for thousands of years, we are not surprised to see such letters being printed in the pages of the openly liberal and anti-Zarathushti magazine that Parsiana has turned into over the past decade, to the great sorrow and disgust of many religious Zarathushtrians the world over.

Grant obviously favors the Muslim Ali Jafarey, a renegade who has discarded his own divine religion of Islam and now seeks to distort and damage another great religion, the Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion of our forefathers.

First of all, may we ask Grant if he is in any way affiliated to this millionaire



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Muslim from America, and the Dr Goebbels-like Spenta University that the Muslim has started in Poona, in order to "re-educate the Zoroastrian masses" to the liberal anti-Zarathushti way of thinking? If Grant is so affiliated, then the bias he bears in this matter is obvious and he cannot be said to be an impartial observer.

Grant has erred in declaring "the chief antagonist against the Muslim's inclusion is Khojeste Mistree." Thousands of Zarathushtis, Parsi as well as Irani, protested against the inclusion of the Muslim renegade in a Zoroastrian Congress. The protestors included the high priests of our religion who were backed up by a strong anti-inclusion letter from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the largest body of Zarathushtis in the world.

Grant says, "None of us was ever born a Zarathushti but was converted to the faith by Zoroaster from whatever religion we were then following in Iran." This shows the minimal extent of the religious knowledge of Grant. Every student of the religion knows that our Aryan ancestors followed the Mazdayasna (worship of Ahura Mazda) religion for thousands of years before the arrival of the Prophet Zarathushtra who

re-revealed the ancient faith of the Aryan forefathers in all its pristine purity. From there on we called ourselves Mazdayasni Zarathushtis, followers of the Mazdayasni faith as taught by Zarathushtra. As such there was no "conversion" in the Muslim/Christian sense of the word.

Grant says the Muslim's "low opinion of our clergy" is "shared by most enlightened people in the community." Grant must mean, by the term "enlightened," the ingrates of our community who do not appreciate the great debt our religion owes to the dasturs and ervads who are the custodians and protectors of our religion over the centuries. Even the *Gathas* would not be around today if they had not been preserved by the faithful priests.

Grant says, "How else can one account for members of our community going in droves to visit shrines of Sai Baba of Shirdi or Meher Baba of Nagar, or Khwaja Pir of Ajmer, or the St Michael's Church at Bombay?" The fault for such activities lies with the followers who have become too liberal and dabble freely in all religions, like the hippies in the West did in the 1960s, rather than be steadfast and have full faith in the sacred religion they were born in. And the

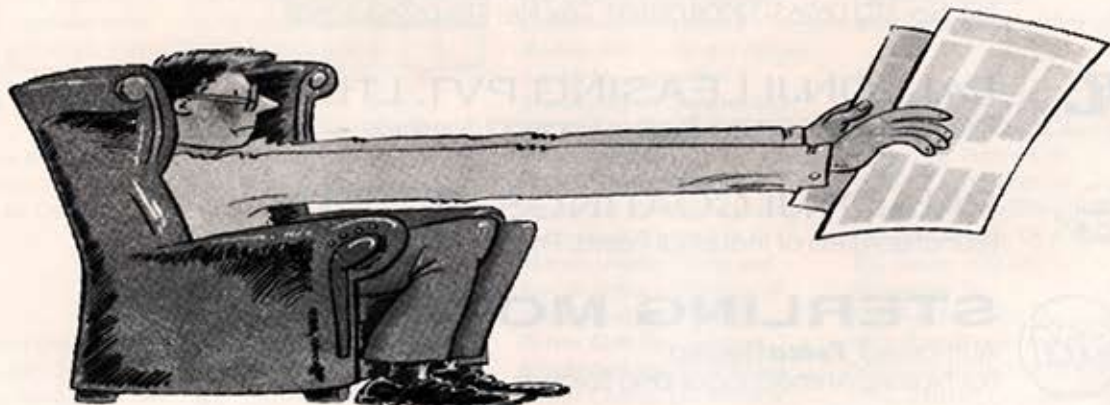
presence of Zoroastrian "adherents" such as Grant, who favor non-Zoroastrians attacking the very things their own father or grandfather believed in, does nothing to draw these people back to their own faith.

May I remind Grant that science does not understand the spiritual things in this world. The dog's gaze is considered by us Zarathushtis to be purifying and spiritual, and it drives away evil influences from the dead body. This cannot be replaced by a cold stethoscope or a brain scan.

Nirang is not just an antiseptic like Grant's Listerine or Dettol, but a powerful, spiritually sanctified liquid charged with the power of our manthravani so as to have the force to drive away evil, sanctify a place, create an atash behram or agiary and also be used in the purification of a navar maratab. It is the cornerstone of our religion and any attack on nirang is an attack on the very roots of our sacred religion.

Grant says, "It is therefore necessary for religion to bend to serve the needs of man in the time he is living in, and not vice versa." Does he know that the rules of righteousness, *ereta* in Avestan or *rita* in Sanskrit, are eternal and can never

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bend or change with time? Can the definition of good or bad ever change with time? Can Ahura Mazda, who is All Good, ever change with time?

It is not enough to have knowledge, one must have faith in the religion that our forefathers followed and preserved for so long. Without faith, knowledge is useless.

PORUSH H. HAVEWALA

Administrator, Traditional Zarathushtrian Mailing List
Sydney, Australia

An esteemed publication like *Parsiana* exists because of the Zarathushtrian community. If it keeps publishing such reports ("Kisseh-Houston") it will do untold damage to our youth who are easily led and influenced by newspapers and magazines although another point worth noting is that most such controversies are stirred up by old fogies and not by the youth.

As for his statement that religion is there to serve man and not vice versa, he seems to forget that both man and religion are there to serve God. In fact, God put religion into the life of man so that it would be the one thing that kept the people of the world together. Contrary to what people think, religion is supposed to bind people of the world in the one common thought that over all this material and spiritual universe there is only one all pervading force ("Harvesp Khuda") before which all humanity stands helpless. And the existence of the various faiths and prophets that have been sent down from time to time, and all the intricacies that go into making every faith unique, is all part of the divine cosmic plan.

Rituals have always been part of all important ceremonies. Take the symbolic body of Christ and the blood of Christ which the Catholics partake of during mass. Simple bread and wine that signifies the body and blood of Christ. Still an important part of a Catholic mass. The tradition of Easter eggs, Christmas trees, a 21-gun salute...all rituals. People that want no part of symbolic rituals and traditions just stay away from them. No one forces them upon any individual. But there is no need to poke fun or call for certain things to be done away with because one sees no personal need for it.

No tarikat of ours is without scientific basis. Naturopathy that is making a very big comeback and homeopathy, both use a lot of animal byproducts including snake venom to make medi-

cines and internal cleansers of all sorts, and given that this form of alternative medicine is becoming increasingly popular in the West, Grant should once and for all rest assured that nirangdin is a potent internal cleanser (physically) and a symbolic spiritual cleanser. People are into a form of therapy in which they consume their own liquid waste!

As for his point on conversion, it is not up to people to convert themselves to one faith or another; it is up to the Creator. This being the very reason one faith after another was sent down upon this planet, slowly bringing the entire human race under God's suzerainty. He converts or rather assigns the faith to a person. It is people like you, the editors, in whose hands the onus lies for spreading words of truth and not callous, blasphemous mumbo jumbo from ill informed individuals.

It's not from the likes of Jafarey that we face the real threats; it is from people like Grant that we need to protect our faith. For no attack is more deadly than the attack from within.

PASHMINA M. CONTRACTOR

Options at Doongerwadi

I wish to reaffirm my position, yet again, that I want to strengthen the system of dokhmenashini through the bringing back of the natural scavengers, the vultures, to be housed in Doongerwadi.

I have been informed, reliably, that the Government of India ministry of environment and forests favor a captive breeding program in order to stop the decline of the vulture population in India. Moreover, they have given the necessary permission in principle to build the appropriate housing and health-care facilities in conformity with the necessary statutory bodies, both at the local and national level. Hence I see this as a significant development in favor of the aviary project.

I am given to understand that in subsequent discussions with Jemima Parry-Jones, it has been resolved that no carcass/es of meat will be offered as supplementary diet to the vultures within the confines of the dokhma itself, which therefore does not transgress any doctrinal position. I have no objections, whatsoever, if the supplementary diet of carcass/es is placed in a nearby disused dokhma/choitra within the aviary complex for the greater good of bringing back the natural scavengers, on a permanent basis as there appears to be no

other alternative solution available by which the dokhma system can be preserved.

If the carcass/es are placed in a disused dokhma/choitra which was built to contain any form of ritual pollution or contamination in the first instance, the spreading of *nasa* and its adverse effects on the environment will not occur as the carcass/es will be devoured by the birds of prey, when hungry. This being the case, the issues of decomposition and of putrefying matter seem unlikely possibilities to contend with. After all, animal carcass/es were put in the disused choitra when the experiments for the effectiveness of powder were being conducted over a period of time.

I sincerely believe that the religiously sanctified system of dokhmenashini is the right one for the community to follow. In my opinion, the dokhma mode of disposal of the dead can be sustained by establishing an aviary with a population of captive vultures in order to resolve the present problem on a permanent basis.

Let us work together, unitedly with determination, to make our mode of disposal of the dead both efficient and efficacious for years to come.

DASTUR (Dr) FIROZE KOTWAL

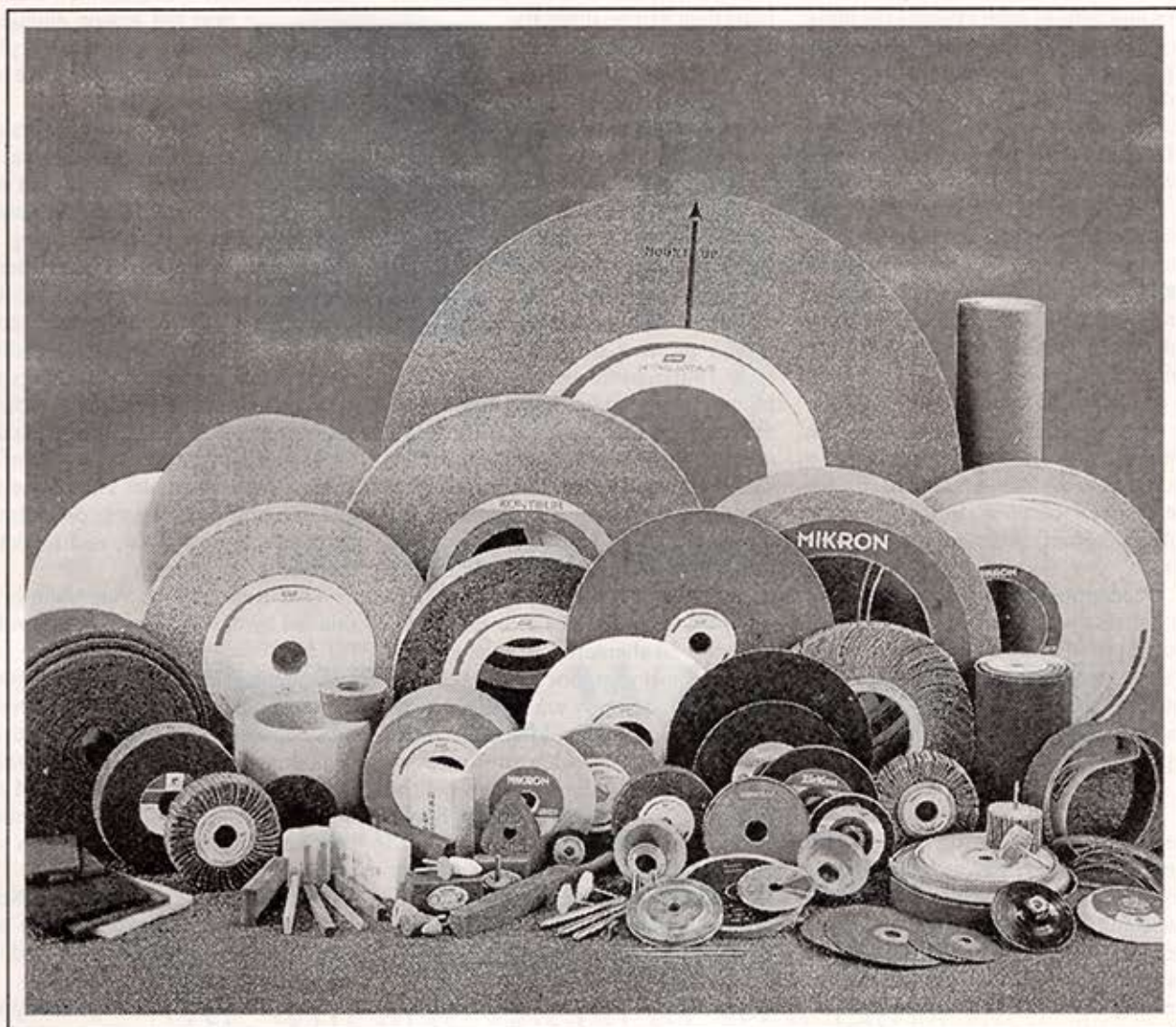
I attended the samast anjuman meeting held at Rustom Baug on December 15, 2000 basically to discuss the introduction of the two measures for the disposal of our dead, i.e. continuation of the present system of dokhmenashini by building an aviary at an initial cost of approximately three crore rupees and a recurring maintenance cost of Rs 25 lakhs per annum and the setting up of solar panels, where the initial cost is two



lakh rupees with a nominal maintenance cost.

I observed, and I'm sure so must have others present, that there was cheering and jeering from two groups, one favoring the aviary project and the other, the solar panel project. May I suggest to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees to consider an amicable solution to the prob-

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lem by adopting a more rational and cooperative (rather than a confrontational) attitude? There are currently three active dokhmas. Both the proposed systems viz. the aviary and the solar panels are in an experimental stage and no one, not even the proponents, can guarantee their success. Without going into the pros and cons of both systems (as these have already been discussed threadbare) my suggestion is as under: In one of the dokhmas we could build an aviary even though the cost is much more than the solar panels. If this succeeds then it would be a real blessing for generations to come as we would have saved our very sacred, religious and age-old system from closure. Till vulture chicks mature we could continue with the current system of disposal in the third dokhma. In the second dokhma we could build a solar panel system. This system, as I understood, could go into operation in a matter of five to six weeks. The families of the deceased could have a choice as to the method they prefer for the disposal of their dead i.e. by the dokhmenashini or the solar panel system.

By adopting this method we will have the satisfaction of having tried out both the proposed systems and within a period of two to three years we would come to know for sure which method is successful and more conducive and acceptable to the community at large.

BURJOR BHARUCHA

Dead human bodies are nothing else but flesh, bones and fluids, as bad as that of any animal, and how they are destroyed is absolutely inconsequential but it has a great sentimental value. The methods of disposing corpses are formulated depending upon the prevalent circumstances at that particular time and place. They must be reviewed, from time to time, and altered to meet present-day needs, in a pragmatic manner.

According to the priests and scholars, "the primary source of disposal are the rays of the sun or Khorshed Nagirashni and the role of the vultures, whilst secondary, is albeit important, not from any scriptural point of view, but because over the years it has proved to be very effective." Now we are talking as if the role of vultures is primary and the role of sun's rays is secondary. There were enough vultures in the past; whether you liked them or not, they were there to pounce upon the corpses and make a

meal of them. The scriptures may not have mentioned the vultures but nobody could have prevented them from coming to dokhmas where food was available in plenty. The vultures were sure that the Zoroastrians, being generous and lavish, had built an eating place for them to visit and have free meals. Realizing their helplessness, the Zoroastrians allowed them to stay at Doongerwadi free, without charging for boarding and lodging.

Enough confusion has been created in order to delay the decision making process. Will it matter much if I also add my two anna bit of insanity to make confusion more confounded?

Our trustees are trying to find alternatives and are experimenting with some unworkable and unconventional recommendations in consultation with priests and scholars, and are wasting money. Nobody knows how much and to whom the payments are made. We have readymade and well tested alternatives. Let us be bold enough to take a practical, sensible and widely accepted decision. The electric crematorium is an alternative to solar energy.

The Punchayet, priests and scholars have created frenzy amongst the poor gullibles, Sunamaijis, Pilamaijis. They are brainwashed to such an extent that they believe that they will not get the free pass to cross over the 'Chinvat Pool' if their bodies are not consigned to the dokhma and eaten by the vultures without the murmurings of the priests in front of their dead bodies. One question bothering me is: are the prayers recited for the souls or for the dead bodies?

DALI J. GUNDEVIA

Outsiders in agiaries?

Of late it has been brought to the notice of the Parsi public that many non-Parsi manage surreptitious entry into our fire-temples, including the much revered Iranshah.

It serves no purpose to merely attempt to lock stable doors after the horses have bolted, or to create a brouhaha in the Press long after the occurrence of the incident. One has to have the courage of conviction to catch the bull by the horns there and then, and tackle it head-on, as was done at the Rustomfaramna Agiary, Dadar in December 2000.

A Parsi gentleman, upon noticing the presence of a certain lady in the prayer hall, intimated to the two senior priests jointly in charge of administration about her questionable presence during the religious ceremonies of the dearly departed, by virtue of her being married to a non-Parsi. He was answered that that was not reason enough to debar entrance to our place of worship since she was Parsi by birth.

But it was impressed upon them that this was not a matter of race, but religious beliefs of the Zoroastrian faith. On being enlightened about another incident concerning another lady in the same Colony, the two new priests claimed

ignorance. They were prevailed upon to approach the concerned lady. After a slight altercation, her brother walked up to the debating group, in defence of his sister attired in typical Parsi-style sari and donning dark glasses, proclaiming her to be born a Parsi, and to date a practicing Zoroastrian.

That was until he was politely reminded by the accusing gentleman that the lady was married to a Jew in a synagogue. Marriage in a synagogue to a bride from outside their own community is permitted and acceptable to the orthodox Jewish sect only when the girl has renounced her own faith and embraced Judaism. Although very much like Parsis themselves, Jews don't convert.

The lady left the holy precincts. Needless to say the proceedings were conducted with utmost decorum and unknown to any curious onlookers.

The exercise of penning this happening is not intended to deprive a born Parsi her right to personal faith which is indeed a very private matter. What is sought to be underscored here is the impudence of the action by the concerned family members of a sitting member of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

MICKIE N. SORABJEE

Time capsule in Sanjan

Year after year Sanjan Day is celebrated by the minuscule Parsi community whose ancestors first landed on the soil of Sanjan from Iran. This year they celebrated by burying a time capsule at the historical site of the Sanjan column.

This occasion may come but once in





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a lifetime of a community and should have been celebrated by extending the celebrations for two days. Some of the dignitaries and guests were unaware of the time capsule site. Besides it is most baffling why it was done so quickly. When so many people came to see the time capsule there were no signboards or indicators or volunteers standing near the site to guide visitors to where the time capsule was buried.

DINSHAW D. NATERWALLA

Mysterious mummy

Reports emanating from the Pakistani Press state that a 2,600-year-old mummy of an Achemenian prince has been found in the possession of a Baluchistani tribal leader. It is further reported that this ancient mummy has the image of the Zoroastrian 'asho farohar' on its cover.

Iran has asked Pakistan to hand over the mummy to it in view of its 'Zoroastrian origin.' However, the matter is before the Baluchistan High Court which has admitted for regular hearing a constitutional petition on the seizure by the Karachi police and the shifting of the mummy from Baluchistan to Karachi.

The Pakistani government should permit world famous archeologists and anthropologists to inspect and research

the mummy. Our Bombay Parsi Punchayet may depute a three-member delegation, comprising a religious scholar, a historian and a journalist, to visit Pakistan and probe the Zoroastrian angle since the mummy carries an asho farohar image. The delegation's report should be presented to the Punchayet within two months of its arrival in Pakistan.

BHIKHAJIM. ADENWALLA

Dual loyalties

If you become a Moslem you can't turn back to your previous religion. It's called mortad in Iran and the so-called pious Moslems have a right to kill that person without being prosecuted. Parsis/Iranis often go to dargahs and mosques and some even saved Moslems from being butchered by Hindus (in and around Murzban Colony, Bombay Central) even though these very Moslems butchered so many Hindus at the time of the Babri Masjid being brought down in Ayodhya. Yet, these so-called faithful are not prepared to accept the Fasli calendar of March 21 as the original new year.

I'm not the least concerned about the stories you give regarding dokhmenashini, nirang, etc. At least here the Zoro-

astrians (though crooks too) are not fighting on petty things like the calendar, dokhmenashini, etc. Here everybody eats the bread at the day's price, as the Persian saying goes. It took me 10 years or more to think like Moslems and behave like them. You should stay here to learn to change. Piousness does not pay in some instances.

Here some Zoroastrians, instead of saying "Ya-Ahura," say "Ya-Allah." When I ask how the Jews, the Hindus, the Christians fight Moslem pressures, they tell me Allah also is God's name, instead of listening to what I mean. Zoroastrians are a dead entity I think!

FARHANG ABRISHAMI

Tehran, Iran

Education seminar

The third Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner) Education Seminar will be held from May 7-27, 2001. This three-week residential Seminar will be at the Bai Dhunmai Cawasji High School in Khandala.

Boarding and lodging at the School will cost Rs 120 per person, per day (Rs 2,520 in all) plus Rs 1,000 tuition fees (for the entire Seminar, per person). Please make the total payment in cash upon your arrival.

The Seminar will be conducted in



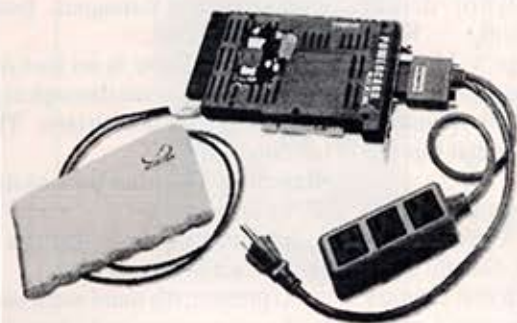
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two groups: Beginners and Advanced. The lecturers at the Seminar will come from the UK, Europe and Bombay. Participants, who are expected to have a good knowledge of English, will learn new ideas and methods in creative education and artistic activities for children of all ages. Some of the subjects in the Seminar will be: Anthroposophy — Dr Rudolf Steiner's philosophy; child development; the four temperaments; biodynamic gardening and ecology; Goethean observation of nature; The Waldorf kindergarten; The Waldorf school, classes one to eight.

Artistic and creative activities will include: eurythmy — an art of movement, water color painting, drawing — in color and black and white, form-drawing, singing and flute-playing, poetry and drama, classroom games and playground games. Those interested in registering for the Seminar should contact the undersigned at 5, Proctor Road, Grant Road, Bombay 400007. Tel: +91-22-3863799.

ABAN BANA
Coordinator

Budding dentist

Dr Yazad Gandhi of Allahabad is a

promising youth of our community. He passed his Master of Dental Surgery (1999) in oral and maxillofacial surgery from King George's Medical College,



Gandhi: oral
expertise

Lucknow during which time he was associated with the Gandhi Memorial and other hospitals in Lucknow.

He is presently senior resident in the faculty of dental sciences, King George's Medical College. For one year he served as consultant, oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi. After clearing his Dental Aptitude Test, conducted by the University of Michigan, USA in 1990, Gandhi studied for his Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS). He has also passed part A of the MFDS examination conducted by the Royal College of Surgeons of England [dental equivalent of the FRCS (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons) exam]. During his BDS course he won certificates of honor in 1992 and 1993 and the G. N. Mishra Award.

Capt H. P. DANDIWALLA
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Earthquake relief

The situation in earthquake ravaged Gujarat is grim. Thousands have lost their lives, hundreds of buildings have collapsed like a pack of cards, thousands are presently without shelter as their buildings have developed structural damage which needs to be assessed and repaired.

The information collated as on January 29, 2001 (10 a.m.), with particular reference to Zoroastrians in urban areas is as follows:

- Bhuj — There is only one Zoroastrian resident, Roda Sohrabji Boatwala, who is safe. Her property and the Khan Bahadur Pestonji Sorabji Bhujwala Daremeher (prayer hall) that she looks after have been damaged a bit.
- Rajkot — There are 40 Zoroastrian individuals, all safe with only minor damage to property. There is just a small crack in the agiary wall.
- Jamnagar — All Zoroastrians are okay; no reports of major damage. The agiary is safe.
- Porbunder — There are around 30 Zo-

roastrian families who are all safe although there is minor damage to property.

•Ahmedabad — Major disaster area — It is reported that all buildings more than three-storeyed high have cracks. Regarding loss of life, conflicting reports are coming in. One report has been received about a Zoroastrian casualty for which confirmation has been sought and awaited.

•Surat — There is no loss of life but properties are damaged. Both atash behrams are safe.

•Navsari — There is no loss of life although there is some damage to property belonging to Zoroastrians. The atash behram is safe.

•Baroda — There has been no damage to life or property.

Information about damage in rural areas is yet to be received.

At present, the main work being done by the government and other agencies is locating bodies under the debris, and providing food, water and blankets to those living on the streets in the open.

While affected individuals of all communities will be supported from the funds collected, it is proposed to extend personal support to Zoroastrians. The main function envisaged at present will be to assist in carrying out repairs to properties. Relief/rehabilitation in areas that we may not be able to reach will be co-ordinated with other non governmental organizations operating in such areas.

Whenever any national cause has arisen, we Zoroastrians have always responded with characteristic generosity and contributed in all ways possible. During a calamity such as this, we are sure that all Zoroastrians will once again rise to the occasion and do all that is possible to extend support to those affected.

Cheques/drafts made payable to "The World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust" may be forwarded to the Trust at Shanti, 5th floor, Banaji Street, Fort, Bombay 400001, e-mail: beedee@vsnl.com

Donations to The WZO Trust are exempt under section 80G(5) of the Income tax Act 1961. The WZO Trust is authorized by the Government of India, ministry of finance, to receive funds from overseas under The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY
Managing Trustee, WZO

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Events and Personalities

Religious conservation

For the first time the Zoroastrian faith was accepted at the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) at a conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal from November 13-17, 2000. An ecological movement started by the World Wide Fund for Nature under the patronage of the Duke of Edinburgh, ARC endeavors to unite different religious groups in an effort to preserve

Alongside: Karanjia (left) and Kotwal
Below (from left):
JamaspAsa with
Prince Philip; Peer,
Dadachanji and
Godrej



and Firoze Kotwal, Ervads Aspandiar Dadachanji, Dr Ramiyar Karanjia and Dr Rooyintan Peer, accompanied by Pheroza Godrej constituted the Zoroastrian delegation at the Kathmandu meet. The Zoroastrians were among the four new religious groups invited to join the

existing five at ARC. Godrej was quoted in the *Mid-Day* of November 26, 2000. "Reverence to nature is important to Zoroastrians. Now that reverence is being translated into action with a project undertaken by a major international organization," Karanjia explained to *Mid-Day*.

Reforestation and water conservation are the sacred offerings made by

in an addition of two million trees, mentions the ZARC booklet. Specific to the ZARC program, the house of Godrej has already planted 1,000 baval trees, it was further reported. Zoroastrian farmers would be given incentives to grow baval trees on their lands and to instill in the Zoroastrians a sense of care for their environment, educational programs would be instituted in fire-temples, trusts and other community bodies.

As part of their water conservation efforts, ZARC will identify the wells in Bombay, determine the potability of water, institute a cleaning program, monitor the wells and educate the public to preserve the wells.

Their 'wish list' identifies four objectives: greening of fire-temples and other sacred precincts, influencing the corporate houses to initiate new projects concerning the environment, reiterating the ancient emphasis on the creations which has been ingrained in the Zoroastrian philosophy, protecting and preserving wildlife, particularly the vultures which play a useful role to dispose of the Zoroastrian remains. Basically, 'enviro-educare' programs will serve to reinforce the Zoroastrian devotion to the creations which is brought to the fore in the literary works and ritual performance of the religion. As mentions their booklet, "The (jashan) ceremony propitiates the seven creations (sky, water, earth, plant, animal, man and fire) making a Zoroastrian conscious of the responsibilities towards reestablishing the pristine order of the universe as created by Ahura Mazda."



the earth. And the Zoroastrian Alliance for Religion and Conservation (ZARC), a specially constituted core group, hopes to create awareness of this movement by involving the Zoroastrian federating units, individual associations and trusts, industrial houses, schools, fire-temples, and other community structures like farms and publications, notes their promotional literature.

Dasturs (Drs) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa



ZARC. Realizing that an estimated 100,000 kg of wood per year goes into sustaining the fires at Bombay's agiaries and atash behrams, as a first step baval tree planting programs will be given importance to replenish the wood that is used. The house of Tatas' tree planting project in the last two years has resulted

Upgrading equipment

Diagnosis of cardiac illnesses and peripheral vascular diseases at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital will now be more effective with the acquisition of a new color doppler sonography unit



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B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital: upgrading surgical equipment

acquired at a cost of Rs 28,00,000 during the year 1999-2000. A new C-Arm image intensifier unit costing Rs 19,00,000 should help in the surgical treatment of fractures and hip surgery. The delivery room boasts a new birthing table as well as a neonatal resuscitation trolley and photo therapy unit. The dental clinic was refurbished with a modern dental chair at a cost of Rs 5,00,000. The update on the latest medical equipment acquired at the Hospital was provided in the 87th annual report of the Hospital.

The reconstruction work on the Extension A wing which was originally scheduled for completion by May 2001 should now be ready by the third quarter of 2001, according to the report. The total project cost, estimated at Rs 8,00,00,000 is meant to finance rooms with attached bath and toilet. It will be serviced by a separate lift. This was made possible "through very generous donations received from the Zartoshty brothers of Canada, the Jokhi family of Hong Kong, and the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao," notes the report. During the year, the largest donation of Rs 15,488,922 came from the estate of M. K. Sett Deed. The other donations of Rs 1,000,000 and above were: Rs 9,000,000 from Hong Kong trustees, Rs 5,032,280 from the estate of Shapoorji Jokhi, Rs 4,000,000 from Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund, Rs 2,808,000 from Hilla Kabraji, Rs 2,360,985 from the Settina Memorial Foundation, Rs 1,908,421 from the estate of Keki Gandhi, Rs 1,400,000 from Mottibai Nowroji Contractor Charities and Rs 1,000,000 from Bai Hirabai Mancher-shah Gilder Charity.

The statement of income for the year 1999-2000 showed that donations accounted for 20 percent of their income, 41 percent coming in from hospital charges, 33 percent from dividend and six percent from other sources. Maximum expenditure on the other hand was on salary (54 per-

cent), followed by medical supplies (16 percent), electricity (12 percent), others (10 percent), provisions (seven percent) and property (one percent).

The number of patients treated during the last financial year was 3,381 as compared to 3,907 the preceding year. While the number of paying patients decreased from 2,259 to 1,587, the number of free and subsidized patients increased from 1,648 to 1,794. The number of both male and female admissions were lower this year as compared to last year by over 200. The number of deaths had reduced from 306 to 232 and the number of births from 134 to 107 this year.

"The reconstruction project resulted in some disruption of hospital activity leading to a temporary closure of 36 beds which has had an adverse effect on paying bed activity," mention the joint honorary secretaries Hector Mehta and Zarir Bhathena in their report. "Fifty-eight percent of total bed days were utilized by patients who were treated totally free or at highly subsidized rates. Women and children accounted for 55 percent of total admissions during the year. Rs 4,03,83,536 were spent on the charitable objectives of the trust for providing medical care to the poor and economically weak members of our

community," they added.

The other principal office bearers of the Hospital are: president Homa Petit, vice president Aban Petit, honorary treasurer Ardeshir Vazifdar. Dr Nisar Siddiqui serves as chief executive officer, Dr Bejan Shroff as medical superintendent and Dr Anuja Sinha as assistant medical superintendent.

OBE for Pardiwala

"The British Deputy High Commission (in Bombay) has richly benefited from (Cavasji) Pardiwala's wisdom and counsel over the last 41 years and on behalf of the British government, I should like to acknowledge our sincere appreciation," declared Sir Rob Young, the British High Commissioner in India when investing Pardiwala with the honorary OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire).

At the award presentation ceremony on December 15, 2000, Young added, "Pardiwala is highly regarded within the local legal fraternity as one of the most knowledgeable solicitors in (Bombay). He is a specialist in property law and conveyancing and the British Deputy High Commission has constantly sought (his) expert advice on drawing up complex and difficult property agreements...With his expertise and considerable negotiating skills, he ensured that our major office move in the early 1990s (and dozens of estate contracts since then) went ahead smoothly and to our complete satisfaction."

Founded in 1917, the Order of the British Empire recognizes civilians for their public service and other achievements. Even those who are not British citizens but have worked directly or indirectly to promote British interests overseas qualify for this distinction, mentions the communique from the Commission's office.

Eighty-year-old Pardiwala is an eminent solicitor and a partner of Crawford Bayley and Company. He qualified as a solicitor in 1947, joined Crawford Bayley and Company in 1953, becoming a partner six years later, states the press release.



From left: Young, Pardiwala and Michael Bates



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Lifetime award

Recognized as a pioneer of the Indian garment export industry, Nariman Mogrelia of Madras was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Confederation of Indian Apparel Exporters at a function in Bombay on November 24, 2000. He was presented the award by Kashiram Rana, union minister of textiles. For the last 10 years



Mogrelia:
apparel advice

Mogrelia has been serving as president of the Apparel and Handloom Exporters Association, (Madras) and was appointed technical consultant by the Industrial Development Bank of India for reviewing export projects in 1998, notes a press release.

"Mogrelia's contribution to the apparel industry is invaluable and many exporters look up to him as a source of encouragement and advice," mentions the write-up. His firm Zoro Garments Private Limited, which he founded and manages since 1972, has been exporting readymade garments and fabrics to Europe, USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand with the assistance of his wife Mahbanu and sons Shahzad and Polad. Of the Apparel and Export Promotion Council, New Delhi which monitors and

At the BEWA launch (from left) B. L. Chovatia, Guzder, Ranganathan, Dutta, Chudasama, Sinha and Sagar Engineer

The Mole station in its earlier years (below) and Guzder (right)

regulates the annual foreign trade of the garments industry, Mogrelia was the first elected chairman in 1979-80. For eight years prior to that he was the vice president and chairman of the southern zone of the Clothing Manufacturers' Association of India.

His expertise in the field had earlier earned him the Niryat Rattan Award and the Vijayashree Award in 1993. The American Biological Institute had named him "Man of the Year" in 1997, his achievements have been listed.

Actively involved in the affairs of the Zoroastrian community, Mogrelia has been president of the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman since 1991 and is also vice president (south zone) of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of India.

Blueprint for restoration

From the architectural refinement of its heritage buildings — the Grand Hotel, Neville House, Old Bombay Port Trust (BPT) Building, Mackinnon Mackenzie and many more — to alleys of garbage, colonies of street dwellers, proliferating hawkers, roadside repair shops etc, Ballard Estate had over the years been

insidiously engulfed by the ills of urbanization.

Developed in the early 1900s as Bombay's first consciously planned commercial precinct on the waterfront adjoining the docks, Ballard Estate has 46 structures on the heritage list and is now poised for a major rejuvenation, spearheaded by the Ballard Estate Welfare Association (BEWA) with Major General (retd) S. Dutta as its honorary chairman and Cyrus Guzder of AFL Limited as its honorary vice chairman.

In partnership with Bombay First (a non-governmental organization floated by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry), BEWA released at the Grand Hotel on December 15, 2000 a summarized version of a report commissioned by the Association and presented by the Urban Development Research Institute (UDRI) under the guidance of well-known architect Rahul Mehrotra. *Ballard Estate — A Corporate District* contains the blueprint for restoring the heritage character of the precinct. It envisages opening up of the sea front to create a seaside promenade, the provision of well laid out food courts to replace the present unhygienic roadside stalls, service courts with public toilets, newspaper vending and photocopying stalls, the addition of aesthetic street furniture like street signs, garbage bins, tree planters, benches,



bollards and telephone booths which are currently almost non-existent. The western edge can be developed as a "restaurant street" with neat, open-air eateries, recommends the report, while the illumination of landmark buildings and promotion of heritage trails, the setting up of a museum on the history of the area as well as a maritime museum can reinforce the historic significance of the area and attract visitors as well. "We wish to express our earnest gratitude to Cyrus Guzder for initiating this project..." the report notes.



"BEWA will act as a catalyst. We are not alternate to the statutory bodies like



the BPT and the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) who are responsible for the upkeep of the area. Business organizations in the precinct should pool their resources," stated Dutta, lamenting that while there are 200 large corporate entities in the business district, BEWA has thus far only seven patron members and 33 corporate members. "Make it compulsory for corporates in Ballard Estate to become members of your Association," thundered Nana Chudasama, well-known social activist presiding over the function, to loud applause from the goodly audience.

"When we launched 'I love Bombay' (the plan to beautify Bombay of which he is the founder and president) there was absolutely no response from the public. People called me 'a waster' when we first illuminated a public building (the Rajabai Clock Tower). When we built public toilets, they said your public toilets look like restaurants! When we whitewashed compound walls (135 km of them), they called me not Chudasama but chunawala! We want involvement in the progress of a place. Let us salute the people who work. Make BEWA an outstanding association. 'I love Bombay' will back you up. Your honorary vice chairman (Guzder, an active participant in heritage conservation) is an asset not only to Ballard Estate but to entire society," declared Chudasama.

"We are not looking to higgledy-piggledy, hotchpotch upgradation of Ballard Estate. We are looking at a holistic picture," said Guzder in a concise, lucid keynote address. "We will look for sponsors, put in figures and numbers. As a child I remember the Ballard Estate of the 1950s; it has been wonderful to work here and we have an obligation to bring Ballard Estate back to cleanliness, security and dignity." Guzder bemoaned the corporate callousness which sees elegant facades defaced by ugly metal grills and ledges for split air conditioners, loud, gaudy signage out-of-character with the Edwardian neo-classical columns and stone rustication of buildings; courtyards used as derelict dumps; the additions and alterations alien to original architecture.

Municipal Commissioner V. Ranganathan (now state chief secretary), who was the chief guest, emphasized citizen-civic body partnership to achieve results. "You have enlightened citizens (in Bombay); this ability and motivation is not found in other cities. Exploit this

resource. The report, an outstanding example of corporate citizenship, becomes a starting point for us... and will improve motivation among civic officials."

The BPT is one of the biggest landlords in Bombay, and is proud of its assets, stated guest of honor and deputy chairman R. R. Sinha, signifying the BPT's readiness to participate in the project to restore Ballard Estate's 22 acres, originally planned and executed under the BPT's consulting architect George Wittet who also designed the Prince of Wales Museum and the Gateway of India, albeit in a different Indo-Saracenic style.

Hilla P. Guzder

Agents of change

"The earth is not dying, it is being killed. Drop by drop, leaf by leaf, species by species. It may not be a coordinated murder or even an intended murder but it is the result of millions of decisions taken every day by people all around the world...people like us," announced Sarosh D. Kumana at the launch of "The Foundation for a Sustainable Future," a venture that this San Francisco based NRI has chosen to adopt as "a new avenue for his creative entrepreneurial energy," as notes a press release. Held under the joint auspices of BAPSA (St Xavier's Boys' Academy Past Students Association) and YUVA (Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action), the function at Bombay's Patkar Hall on December 16, 2000 also accorded an opportunity to Kumana and the president of BAPSA Hemang Jariwala to publicly acknowledge the contribution of "their beloved teacher Amy Billimoria-Bhal," the longest serving teacher of the school.

A star named "Amy Billimoria-Bhal" in the constellation Sagittarius has been

registered with the Smithsonian Observatory as an eternal tribute to their mentor. As commented Kumana in his introductory remarks, "We got the finest education it is possible to get, and we, both students and parents, need to acknowledge our teachers for it. Their efforts and their sacrifices and their love for us are contributions that cannot be measured...Let's not forget our parents who have loved and nurtured us, whose values we have adopted, even though we rebelled against them."

Various projects around the world have been supported by Kumana including those of The Vidharbha Nature Conservation Society (VNCS) which he has been assisting through YUVA, states the release. A few of the benefits accrued are growing of trees, preventing the killing of birds and animals for food, protection of water resources and management of garbage, notes the release mentioning that they are training the youth to act as agents of change. Future training camps organized by VNCS and funded by Kumana are to be named The Billimoria-Bhal Young Environmental Projects. Thereby this activity would spread to other districts and villages. The Foundation also promises to provide funds for up to 500 University scholarships annually in courses on sustainable ecology.

"The first step is awareness. The next step is commitment, and the final step is effective action," noted Kumana in his speech as he tried to convince the audience to respect the environment considering that the worldwide loss of tropical forest is about 55,000 square miles per year (just under half the size of the state of Maharashtra). "We are being distracted by disputes among ourselves —

continued on page 45



Kumana (left) presenting a floral tribute to 'star' teacher Billimoria-Bhal (above)

Lobbying at the Taj

The 98-year-old Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay unveiled its newly renovated entrance and lobby at the hands of chairman Ratan Tata on December 22, 2000. Adorning one of the walls of the lobby is a 29x3-foot painting by legendary painter M. F. Husain, his biggest painting in the world made for any private collection, states a press release from



Tata (above) and refurbished Taj lobby (top right); Husain and his art

the Taj. Its bright red, blue and golden hues reflect the theme of eternal evolution as perceived by the 85-year-old artist.

With cascading water forming the backdrop in the driveway, the Hotel simultaneously inaugurated the refurbished Zodiac Grill with its "gourmet European cuisine" and Starboard, the new bar.

The Hotel's Heritage (old) wing houses one of the largest collections of artwork in any hotel in the country, notes the release, with suites embellished with original paintings and antiques. The nearly 600 rooms in the old and new (Tower) wings are equipped with high-speed Internet connectivity and interactive television, data ports for PCs and modems, complimentary in-room fax on request, two-line speaker phones and other prerequisites of 21st century living, adds the write-up.

India and South-East Asia's largest hotel chain, the Taj group has over 60 hotels in 43 locations worldwide, with six out of seven of its luxury hotels in India being members of the Lead-

Shroff and cloth creations



ing Hotels of the World, states the communique. Taj Air Caterers with operating units in Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta and Madras, prepare and deliver 11 million meals annually to nearly 30 airlines operating out of India, according to sources in The Indian Hotels Company Limited.

Shopping with Shroff

Going creative with cloth bags and proclaiming the perils of plastic is Bombay-based Zinobia Shroff who makes and markets a variety of eco friendly cloth, jute and canvas bags under the label "schroffbags." Shroff's range includes shopping and laundry bags, rucksacks, shoe bags, pouches for socks, kitchen dispensers, duffel and bottle bags, etc.



Washable, with convenient zips and compartments, schroffbags are emblazoned with colorful pictures of flora and fauna, with catchy



slogans advocating preservation of the environment: "Bags that won't cost the earth," "The Lost Forests - don't take trees for granted." If required, Shroff also incorporates company logos for clients to promote their product.

Current retail outlets include Swabal Stores at Colaba, the bag counter at Asiatic department store at Churchgate, the Yacht Club at Apollo Bunder and Crossroads at Tardeo, with prices ranging from Rs 20 - Rs 150. "The expensive ones, surprisingly, sell better," contends

Shroff. Her assortment of large and small clients include Indian Ocean Cruise Lines for which she executed an order for bags and caps, Make-A-Wish Foundation for cancerpatients, Technova Imaging Systems who bought 15,000 bags to give away for public awareness at a trade fair in Ger-





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many, etc. Bags are often purchased as gifts and giveaways, says Shroff. She is currently exploring the possibility of retailing the bags at clubs, gymkhanas and petrol pumps. On the anvil is a drive among school children to inculcate among the young an awareness of the dangers of plastic.

Bombay uses and discards approximately 50 million plastic bags each day, she believes. The Bombay Municipal Corporation ban on thin plastic bags has not really made any difference, she asserts — people have switched to thicker ones! It is estimated that there are 46,000 pieces of plastic in the ocean per square mile. Plastic kills one million sea birds, 10,000 sea mammals and countless fish each year and damages plants and the soil as well due to its non-biodegradable nature, Shroff reels off statistics. Not to mention the burning of plastic garbage which releases toxic gases that deplete the ozone layer.

"It was in 1990 when I was attending a garment fair in the UK that an Englishman came up to me, admired the bag I was carrying and asked if, prior to their expected arrival in India, I could make some bags as samples as the market in

UK was saying no to plastic," she narrates. "I am an artist myself, I draw and paint and I liked the idea of working for the environment." After the initial order for 250 bags, business picked up with WWF, UK (World Wide Fund for Nature), Amnesty International, art galleries, etc ordering consignments of up to 10,000-25,000 pieces. The bags are selling very well in England, she notes, and she also exports to a chain of prestige stores in Japan.

Soon to set up her own website, Shroff is seeking partners, particularly Zoroastrians, in Australia, New Zealand, etc who could liaise and market the product overseas. "People are very slowly taking to cloth bags and my main aim is to make them switch from plastic to cloth. Making money is secondary, there is no money in small orders anyway, only big orders are profitable. But I never say 'no' to anybody," asserts the lady who can be contacted at 784/B, Readymoney Building, M. Joshi Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014. Telefax 4135650. E-mail: mehta_ph@vsnl.com Shroff also tries to train the unemployed and the destitute and give them gainful employment. Some learn and carry on,

she says, and some don't. The slogan 'Save the Earth' is not quite correct, she believes, because the earth will exist — it is we who will perish!

SPOTLIGHT

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has granted registration to Aspi Noshir Gandhi as a member of the Ahmedabad Stock Exchange (ASE),



Gandhi (left) and Sethna

making him the first Zoroastrian stockbroker of the ASE, states a write-up forwarded to *Parsiana* by Gandhi. Gandhi and his partner Adil Sethna started business from Ahmedabad under the name of Gandhi and Sethna Brokers, in August 2000.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

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Zoroastrianism Indianized - I

Life in the first Zoroastrian diaspora

Though the community maintained its identity, it could not avoid the social, cultural and ideological pressures of a different way of life

Dr Mani Kamekar

In a two-part article Dr Mani Kamekar contours the intellectual profile of the Parsis in India. This first part depicts the regression of a diasporic community into ignorance of the true teachings of its religion, the acceptance of some of the beliefs of the host community and the confusion of social customs with religious dogma. After nearly a millennium of pervasive assimilation, the Zoroastrians were jogged into the need for theological understanding of their own faith when Christian missionaries succeeded in luring some Parsi youths into discarding their Parsi customs and beliefs for want of intellectual justification.

In the second part Kamekar focuses on the response of the new Parsi intellectual elite trained in liberal educational principles like K. R. Cama and his students who learnt and applied western philological breakthroughs in the understanding of the *Gathas*, the *Avesta* and other scriptures. The new knowledge revealed the original doctrines shorn of the encrustation of alien ideologies. But die-hard orthodox members of the community were hard to convince and controversies then born continue to simmer under the veneer of Parsi modernity.

...

Following the Arab invasion of Iran in 641 AD many Zoroastrians fled to remote parts of Iran and then, about 115 years later, in about 756 AD groups left for the western coast of India. They arrived on the shores of Gujarat at Sanjan where they met with consideration, and were able to establish some sort of communication, in spite of the barrier of language. It is possible that the Gujaratis of the coastal areas were already familiar with the Iranians with whom trade had been carried on for the past centuries during Sassanian rule.

Settling in Gujarat, they lived peacefully and contributed to the economic and social well-being of their adopted

country. They had settled as farmers and agriculturists, fruit-growers, toddy-planters, carpenters and weavers. The last group has given Gujarat her most ancient and beautiful textiles: the Surti ghat (soft satin silk), the garo and the tanchoi.

They had become a part of the socio-cultural and economic life of Gujarat by the 14th century, without disturbing the tenor of life of the local inhabitants and had generally been careful not to rouse the jealousy of their fellow citizens.

Having become very much a part of the social life of Gujarat from the eighth century onwards, the Parsis had adopted many social and religious practices of their neighbors, without any critical examination. Succeeding generations of Parsis fell into the error that these borrowed practices were sanctioned by their own religion. The result was that many of the usages, customs and prejudices of the Hindus were accepted by the Parsis as part of their own ancient traditions.

In fact the social customs adopted by the Parsis were not a part of their original life in Iran. Child marriage, polygamy, separate dining of men and women, and the generally low status of women were all superimposed on their original culture.

The advent of the European traders and adventurers from the 15th century onwards opened a vast area for the Parsis. In the absence of caste restrictions, with a limited concept of 'pollution,' the Parsis became the first to act as agents, mediators and intermediates to these foreigners: Portuguese, Dutch, French and English. Unfettered by any sociocultural barriers to these occupations they eagerly entered the new fields of economic activity.

The Parsis adapted to the new western education and were the first and foremost to enter the new professions as lawyers, technicians, doctors and professors. They were also the first to ac-

cept white collar and administrative jobs in the 19th century in the Bombay Presidency where they filled the posts of assistant collectors, translators at courts, sub-assistant surgeons and postmasters.

Their early contact with the British and acceptance of western education made them amongst the first in western India to adopt western liberal ideas. They were as much affected by the zeal for reform and the movement towards renaissance of their culture and society as any other community in India. Just as Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj and other organizations were propping the Hindu scriptures and going back to the past to correct the errors that had crept into Hindu society, Parsis went back to their roots to eliminate the outmoded and degenerated religious and social practices from their society.

The reform movement also included the purification of the Zoroastrian religion. The religion laid great stress on ethics and a positive way of life. In this religion, there is no denial of life or asceticism. On the contrary, the affirmation of life and the appeal to be active in shaping the world are expressed in no other religion as clearly as in Zoroastrianism. A denial of 'worldly' life is in fact considered a betrayal of the good powers. However, in the centuries since their migration to India, the Parsi community had, like their fellow Hindus, fallen into the grip of ritualism and forgotten the more important ethical aspects.

The priests — the dasturs and mobeds of the Parsis — are also a hereditary class like the Brahmins, and had through the ages become slothful and ignorant and adept at exploiting the lay public by emphasizing the rituals and ceremonial aspects, rather than the moral. They claimed that merit could be purchased at a price and sins could be expiated through rituals. To make matters worse, the priests as a whole were no longer ca-

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pable of giving any scholarly or religious direction to the community.

After their migration to India, it seems, much of the dogma had been orally transmitted from generation to generation and in the process many of the basic concepts seemed to have been mixed up with interpolations from the Hindu and other beliefs. Further interpolations occurred in the 17th century, with the introduction of mysticism based on Sufism and Hinduism of the *Desatir* and *Dabistan* schools of thought.

The *Desatir* school of thought suggested that Zoroaster was one in a chain of prophets, which is not anywhere to be seen in the Avestan books. It seems to be a mixture of Hindu, Buddhist and Platonic philosophies. As Dr Firoze Kotwal and James Boyd explain, "It is an eclectic work and extols the life of the recluse, encourages celibacy and self mortification and expounds other such philosophies which are dramatically opposed to the optimism, cheerfulness and dynamism of the Zoroastrian faith."

The *Dabistan* school also belongs to the 17th century and is derived from the *Desatir*. It mentions the existence of 14 so-called Zoroastrian sects, none of which can be corroborated by other Zoroastrian texts of the time. It seems to be a collection of crude metaphysics. Genuine Zoroastrian mystics like Azar Kaivan who had settled in Patna also produced mystic literature based on Sufism and Hindu mystic influences, including the use of yogic trances. These were also quite alien to the original teachings of Zarathushtra.

It was at this stage of the community's life that the scholarly Mobed Jamasp of Iran paid his historic visit to India in 1721. He was pained at the confusion of their priests and laymen in general. Mobed Jamasp Velaiyati, as he was known, took it upon himself to educate the chief mobeds of Surat, Navsari and Bharuch, who in turn became teachers of their flock later on. In fact, it may be interesting to note that one of them, Dastur Darab of Surat, taught the first European Zoroastrian scholar, the Frenchman Anquetil Du Peron, who later wrote the first exposition on Parsis in French.

Mobed Jamasp also let loose a serious controversy in the community regarding the calendar that the Parsis were following. According to Jamasp, the calendar of the Parsis was one month ahead of the Iranian calendar. He wanted

the Parsis to adopt the Iranian calendar. This problem aroused serious, heated and sometimes violent quarrels between the two sides of the community leading ultimately to the division of the community into the Shahenshahis (old, mean-

The Parsi reformers were the leaders in bringing their women out to public functions and dinners

ing the original Parsi) and the Kadmis (ancient-original Iran groups). For some time there was strained social intercourse between the two. But as time passed, and as all other aspects of dogma and ritual were the same, the two groups buried their bitterness. The majority of the community follow the Shahenshahi calendar. The controversy took a serious turn because all ceremonies and liturgies depend on the cycle of the months in the calendar.

However, there was a positive aspect to Jamasp's visit. This proved to be the beginning of a religious renaissance for the Parsis. It brought about the beginning of true religious studies, with scholars searching out the truth from the holy scriptures, commentaries and philosophical dissertations of their religion. A slow awakening had started and Parsi scholarship was taking concrete shape.

By the beginning of the 19th century, some stirrings and questionings had started in the community itself, irrespective of outside forces. The catalyst of exposure to the ideas of liberalism, humanism and rationalism of the west only accelerated the process, and brought to the fore the basic humanism of Zoroastrianism with its concern for the fight against evil, evildoers and all things decadent. Introspection about their religion became a major concern of the new educated elite.

A group of young Indians in Bombay, educated in the Elphinstone School and College and affected by the liberal philosophy and politics of William Bentinck, Mountstuart Elphinstone and Thomas Macaulay imbibed through the new English education, became the torchbearers of a new order. Paramount amongst them, both in number and stature, were the Parsi youth. They formed the Young Bombay group and through the Students Literary and Scientific So-

cietty they started their activities to arouse public opinion towards removing the 'inadequacies' of Indian society through all possible reforms. They were also the first secular group to start classes, and later schools, for girls in Bombay.

Side by side with these activities, certain Parsi members such as Dadabhai Naoroji, K. Kabraji and K. R. Cama started Gujarati journals and magazines such as the *Dynan Prasarak* (diffusion of knowledge) and the *Rast Gofar* (herald of truth) with the aim of spreading the idea of reform amongst the Parsis and the Gujarati speaking community at large.

Support for social reforms was quickly forthcoming within the community and the Parsis generally accepted legislation in support of such reforms as raising the age of marriage.

They also, more easily than other communities, accepted the equal status for women, opening the doors of education to them and giving them equal participation in social life outside the home. As sociologist Eckehard Kulke observes, Parsis were able to remove the social evils of child marriage, polygamy and prohibition of widow marriage much more expeditiously, without much opposition from their society because these elements, evidently adopted from the Indian environment, had only been superficially assimilated.

Women in ancient Iran had held a position of relative equality as compared to women in India. The community quickly accepted western liberal ideas of equal education for girls and within a generation in the 1870s nearly 1,000 Parsi girls had been educated up to the secondary level. The Parsi reformers were the leaders in bringing their women out to public functions and dinners from the middle of the 19th century. This transformation of Parsi women was a very important factor in the direction towards modernism that the community was taking.

Side by side with these social reforms, a more important movement was taking place in the sphere of religion. Here, since the movement touched the inner core of the community, stiff opposition was encountered by the reformist groups. Hence the transition from the old to the new was disruptive and took a much longer time. The young Parsi reformers, imbued with liberal and rational thought, were jolted out of their religious grooves by attacks on them by Christian missionaries in the first half of



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the 19th century, culminating in the conversion of two Parsi youths in 1839. This event brought into action both the orthodox and the reformist elements who sought to create conditions to prevent the repetition of such events. It made them realize the dangers to their community and the need to protect their own interests.

Their first attempt was to answer the false accusations of the Christian missionaries, such as Dr John Wilson, and in the process the reform group began a campaign to rid the religion of various superficial growths and impurities that had gathered around it. Wilson propounded the classical missionary view of Zoroastrianism in his book *The Parsee Religion*. According to him, Zoroastrianism was a pagan religion devoid of a divine mission and stated that Zoroaster's existence was not established by any evidences and therefore Zoroastrianism had no divine authority. He further maintained that the religion believed in dualism and therefore their God Ahura Mazda was not supreme. He accused Parsis of being fire worshippers and nature worshippers and therefore polytheists. He poured ridicule on the Parsi ceremonies and the method of disposing their dead in the dokhma (Tower of Silence). Above all, he claimed that the *Zend Avesta* had no claim to be considered a divine revelation and advised all Parsis to convert to Christianity.

The Parsi community reacted first by rushing to the Press, holding meetings and writing articles vindicating their religion. In the process they made many self-discoveries which brought about the realization that not only was it necessary to theoretically refute the accusations of Wilson which were palpably false, but that the community needed to remove certain undesirable customs and, above all, to educate its priests. It found that, when questioned, the priests were in no position to answer their accusers nor to guide their flock. This movement was extremely important and led, as Kulke said, to an independent 'community consciousness.' *To be concluded*



A historian interested in Parsi history, Dr Mani Kamerkar is vice president of The Asiatic Society of Bombay. She was former director, College Development Council, of the S. N. D. T. Women's University in Bombay. She has also served as principal of the Nanavati College.

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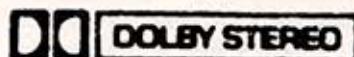


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Like fathers, like sons

Weightlifting has been the family's forte for many years, with brothers Vispy, Neville and Rusi Daroga having won honors in the sport in India and abroad. Raising the weight bar on strong shoulders now are 20-year-old Zubin, Rusi's son, and 14-year-old Ruhshaad, Neville's lad, who though relatively new entrants to the field have earned accolades in competition.

"I started just three years ago," explains Zubin. "I was a very thin boy and my dad persuaded me to join the gym where the other boys train, to watch them and practice just to build up strength." In Jalgaon in November last year in the 69 kg category, Zubin won the gold in the Maharashtra State Novices championship with a total lift of 205 kg — 115 kg in the clean and jerk, and 90 kg in the snatch.

Ruhshaad, starting much younger at age 11, lifted the bronze at the Greater Bombay Junior Weightlifting competition at Mazagaon in Bombay in the 69 kg category, with a total of 145 kg — 80 kg in the clean and jerk, and 65 kg in the snatch. "My father inspired me," states the youngster. "I used to see how the sport has helped him. Having started training, I developed a great liking for it." Adds Zubin: "Uncle Neville still participates in inter-bank competitions and has greatly inspired me too. I have seen my dad in competition, but I was too young at that time."

A third year BCom student at the South Indian Welfare Society's N. R. Swamy College of Commerce and Economics at Wadala, Zubin won gold in December 2000 at the inter-collegiate competition in Ratnagiri and a silver at the YMCA Weightlifting competition in the same month. Delineating on the benefits of weightlifting, Zubin says: "Once you reach state and national level, many job opportunities come your way — banks, railways, etc snap you up." Concurs Ruhshaad, currently a ninth standard student at Hindi Vidya Bhavan, "Even admission to college becomes easier. In the sports category (for jobs), salaries increase, you get time off for training, there are many advantages."

Ruhshaad's first appearance on a public weightlifting platform was at age 12 when he demonstrated his prowess at the Greater Bombay Novices Weightlifting championship and was given a

special cash award of Rs 100, as the rules of competition prohibited anyone below age 13 from competing. At the Greater Bombay Inter-School Weightlifting championship in December 1999, he stood first, representing Bombay a month later and picking up bronze at the Maharashtra State Inter-School championship in the 70 kg class.

Both boys train at the Vyayamshala (gymnasium) at Bellasis Road under the watchful eyes of Neville and Rusi. "Technique is as important as strength, in fact I would say it is even more important. Faulty training or excessive training gives rise to pain in the knees and the back," remarks Zubin. "Ruhshaad will benefit greatly as he has started early. My other cousin Hoshang (Vispy's son) also lifts weights but has not participated at competition level." Coincidentally, all three Daroga brothers have just one child each!

"When Zubin was young he was a very fussy eater. The choicest of foods wouldn't interest him," remarks his mother Lily. "Now he has become so sports-minded, he could do sports all day!" Ruhshaad's hobbies include listening to Western pop and reading classics like *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Says his mother Navaz: "Ruhshaad does well in school. We have never put any kind of pressure on him. Unlike most children today who quail at the thought of exams, Ruhshaad is quite relaxed, even the evening before his papers."

"Zubin has made good progress; he has to now keep it up," remarks coach Neville. "Ruhshaad can participate, and win, next year at the novices and the junior championship of Greater Bombay and Maharashtra, as well as the Maharashtra inter-schools competition. He has got the capability, physically and mentally. Weightlifting somehow seems to run in the family. Eighty percent of success depends on technique, 20 percent on strength."

Zubin used to train earlier at the Central Railway gymnasium near Parel under coach Geive Katrak. "In the mid-'70s and '80s, there were 15-20 weightlifters training at that gym, out of which around six were Parsis," asserts Zubin. Currently, he is not aware of any other Parsis doing weightlifting at competitive level. Of the senior Darogas, the eldest Rusi, who works with Central Bank of India, has been

national runner-up and participated in body building championships too, states his son. Vispy, who runs his own business, was six times national champion and seven times inter-railway champion. He won bronze at the Commonwealth Weightlifting championship in Auckland, New Zealand in 1981 and was honored with the Arjuna Award in 1983 and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Award in 1985. "My son Hoshang, who recently appeared for his Standard 10 exam, has done weightlifting but having taken up science in junior college, he has chosen to concentrate on academics," Vispy told *Parsiana*. Neville, the youngest of the three brothers, was a gold medallist at the national games for eight consecutive years. He also won bronze at the XII Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, Australia in 1982 and earned a fourth position at the IX Asian Games in New Delhi in the same year, states his bio data. Currently deputy manager with the Union Bank of India, Neville secured first place at the Inter-Bank Weightlifting and Power Lifting competitions for 11 years from 1988-1999.

Veterans all

"Six gold medals she wanted and six she got. For Prochy Mehta, the 11th Asian Veterans Athletic Championship was time to mint memories in gold," reported the *Deccan Herald* of November 11, 2000 in Bangalore.

"Each individual is allowed to participate in a maximum of four events and the two relays," states Mehta. Winning all the events she participated in was, she says, a lifetime achievement and a meet record. The 46-year-old from Calcutta, with a determined and disciplined performance, triumphed in the 100 meters (m), 200 m, 400 m and long jump and gave India a blistering start in the 4 x 400 m relay as the lead-off runner in the 45-plus age group, with India winning the 4 x 100 m relay as well.

Looking fresh despite the hectic schedule of events, Mehta said she was delighted with her showing, reported the paper. "The 400 m was the toughest mentally, while long jump was tough competition-wise," she stated. With a few participants from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, China and Philippines, the meet was "dominated through and through by India with very little challenge from elsewhere," the paper noted.



Veteran athlete Mehta's golden moments (alongside); the Daroga cousins Zubin (far left) and Ruhshaad (below and inset)



Chess champion Viraf Avari of Valsad (left) was presented the Eklavya Award by the minister of sports Mahendra Trivedi at a function in May 2000. This recognition from the Gujarat government also earned him a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000, notes a press release.

Mehta had won four gold medals at the 1992 Singapore Asian meet in the 100 m, 200 m, 400 m and triple jump, an event she quit because of back problems. A former national level basketball and hockey player, she has bagged around 40 medals in Asian level championships in the last decade, added the paper. "I train around the year and will continue to compete," stated the plucky veteran.

At the 22nd National Veterans Athletic Championship in Bhopal, Parsi athletes won three gold and three bronze med-

als, noted the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*, October 15, 2000. In the 60-plus age group, marathoner Khushru Patel ran away with the gold in the 21-km half-marathon in 1 hour, 56 minutes (min), 17 seconds (sec), nearly one and a half kms ahead of the second-placed runner! Patel, aged 61, also won a bronze in the 5 km walk, with a timing of 31 min 12 sec.

Lily Manek Khan of West Bengal stood first in the women's 55-plus age group in the 5 km walk, stopping the clock at 40 min 17 sec.

In the 40-plus category, Maharashtra

grabbed gold in the 4 x 400 m men's relay, state champion Rohinton Mehta's acceleration seeing him pass the baton almost 35 m ahead of his nearest rival! Former international athlete Mani Nanji won bronze in the hammer throw (12.92 m) and discus (11.35 m) in the women's 65-plus category, despite chronic knee problems. All three athletes were scheduled to participate in the Asian Veterans Athletic Championship in Bangalore, the *Weekly* added.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

The community in focus

An intent young navaria lights up the front cover. An old man looks out to sea in elegiac farewell. Sandwiched between them is the life of the Parsi community over two decades as witnessed by photographer and celebrated scriptwriter Sooni Taraporevala.

Parsis, the 252-page coffee-table album of a book (175 photo plates retailing at Rs 1,850) was launched in the resplendent Regal Room of Oberoi Towers on December 12, 2000 after the invitees had feasted on choice hors d'oeuvres (courtesy Oberoi vice president Sanjiv Malhotra) and hailed fellow Zoroastrians and pro-Zoroastrian friends. Enlarged photographs on easels and a few copies of the book on display kept everyone occupied until Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) chief executive officer Zarir (Zed) Cama ceremonially released the publication.

Cama recalled his family friendship with the Taraporevalas — the meetings and partings over the years during which



Enjoying a swing at a homestead in Udvada (1998)

Soonie earned her university degrees in the US and made her celebrated debut as a scriptwriter with the movie, *Salaam Bombay!* The financial support of a host of companies and individuals enabled this celebration of what Cama called "a young girl's dream and a young woman's

fruition of her dream." Overjoyed "to see so many of my friends and my family all here," an emotional Taraporevala thanked her various benefactors, then, blushing, excused herself to fix her sari, the folds of which were coming loose.

In an open dialog with Cama which followed, Taraporevala revealed how what started as a hobby snapping family and friends widened its ambit on the advice of veteran photographer Raghubir Singh who has since passed away.

The original plan to publish the pictures was relegated to the back burner while she successfully labored at a series of film scripts until her husband Dr Firdaus Bativala urged her on to "do it before someone else does it," said Taraporevala.

Distinguishing between her two activities, Taraporevala noted that she could click away at what pleased her, unlike her scriptwriting "where you have to take a lot of opinions into consideration," not all of them relevant.

To Cama's, "We're a very strange

Reaching for the Sky



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Left: Keker Manzil in Bombay (2000) Above: Taraporevala at the book launch

Below (left) rubbing shoulders in Bombay (1985), and at Bhaji Gully (1986)

Facing page (top): Young navarrias enjoying chess (1999) and heading for the Congress centenary celebrations (1984)



looking community. How did you choose?" Taraporevala replied, "I photographed people I found interesting. If the photograph worked as a photograph, it went in!"

She had invited all her photo subjects to the party and many had responded — some dressed like their pictures! Selected slides were beamed on two parallel screens with Taraporevala commenting on their genesis.

In his welcome address Malhotra, the evening's official host, quoted a frequent question: "Are you also now the Parsi address?" Referring to the Oberoi hotel as "a stage where several dramas of life are enacted," Malhotra noted, "We share in people's lives, in people's dreams..."

Arnavaz S. Mama



The faithful lost in prayer, the young navar-initiate absorbed in a video game, the swirl of a dance movement and the measureless moods and motions experienced by Parsis of different generations have all been captured by Sooni Taraporevala in her book *Parsis — The Zoroastrians of India—A Photographic Journey* (1980-2000).

Twenty years of painstaking efforts have gone into the making of this book. With each of her photographs dutifully captioned, introducing the subject or the event as the case may be, it appears that the bulk of her shooting was done in the first half of the 1980s and the latter half of the 1990s after a lull of almost a decade.

The *Journey* starts out with the author's introduction where she traces the genesis of her book and explains the origins of the Zoroastrian faith, the periods when it reached its zenith and nadir in Iran, and the new lease it earned when its diehard followers chose to settle in India. The first set of pictures are visible in her section on "Young Priests" where she gives an insight into the grooming of young ordained priests. The text accompanying these photos includes an interview with the erstwhile principal of Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa, Ervad Rustomji Panthaki and another with her young cousin Danesh on his becoming a priest. The book ends with "The Last Journey" which has but four photographs, including an appealing one of a peacock strutting outside a dokhma in Bombay.

The maximum number of pages, 64, are devoted to "The City," where anybody who is somebody and even some-



body who is nobody may peer out of the pages. There are photographs of Parsi philanthropists of yore, trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the different abodes, lifestyle and interests of those residing in Bombay, the various modes of transport in use by the community — be it the vintage car or the humble BEST bus, the institutions with which the community is associated, the Ripon Club, the Parsee Gymkhana, the Sir Ratan Tata Institute, and the Irani restaurants that dot the city. An interview with Jamsheed Kanga, former municipal commissioner of Bombay and Rashid Irani, the celebrated film critic and polymath who quit his career in accountancy to sit full-time at his Brabourne Restaurant provide interesting insights into the community. And sandwiched between these two interviews is a personal account of the Taraporevala household written in a very readable style by the author. In the context of the time spent with her by different members of the family she observes, "Those who are not consumed by their own ambitions have more time to spend with their children."

In the 23 pages earmarked for "The Village," most of the photos cover the homesteads in Udvada, and a few, the

establishments and priests in Navsari. This section includes a profile on her grandfather's cousin Ratanshah Katila of Udvada who was murdered in 1997 after his house was burgled.

Well respected figures like Zubin Mehta, J. R. D. Tata, Field Marshal Sam

"I photographed people I found interesting. If the photograph worked... it went in"

Manekshaw et al find a place among the "Legends" pages along with other well-known names in the fields of medicine, science, law, politics, industry, media, arts, literature, sports. Profiles of Manekshaw and singer Freddy Mercury (Farok Bulsara) bring to life these legends.

The only section which is fully in color is "Generation Next" depicting the brains and faces who have been contributing to the MTV channel, the fitness gurus, and the love for adventure and dancing associated with this community. A candid interview with creative artists Cyrus and Simeen Oshidar helps

The erstwhile King Hotel in Udvada (1980)

to gauge the pulse of the young generation.

But the most endearing pictures are in the section "Faith and the Faithful" where the many faces of piety, devotion, dedication, loyalty have been captured in different settings: inside and outside a fire-temple, on the waterfront, within the precincts of a residence or office... A chat with Mahrukh Madon reflects on the highs and lows experienced by a priest's family.

The maximum number of color photos are found in the chapter "Rites of Passage" where the paces associated with a navjote ceremony, the festivities involved, irrespective of whether the ceremony may be at Bombay or Mahabaleshwar, a baug or a palatial residence, are captured on celluloid. The navjote photos far outnumber the wedding shots but the missing links in the ring are more than compensated by her engaging narrative in "Ancient Prayers, Modern Celebrations." Particularly engrossing is her reference to her navjote day when a sudden government notification compelled them to greet their guests with, "So sorry, there will be no dinner served

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Alongside (from left): Malhotra, Cama, friends and relatives (father Rumi in the foreground) join Taraporevala at the book launch
Below: A regular devotee at the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram (1982)

today." Apparently one guest was seen retrieving cash from his gift envelope before presenting it to the family! These personal nuggets interwoven in the text help to keep the reader glued to the book. Not surprisingly there are innumerable photos of Taraporevala's family interspersed in the pages of this book. As the author relates in her introduction, "In 1982 I met photographer Raghubir Singh who saw in my eclectic collection of photographs, the subject that had been staring me in the face but that I had failed to see: a photographic study of the community to which I belong. What had begun nostalgically and personally, grew into a more objective project that encompassed a world larger than my immediate family." Thus accommodated within the tome (published by Good Books, 19, Kala Niketan, 47C, B. Desai Road, Bombay 400026. Website: www.parsijourney.com) are photographs of Taraporevala's granduncle Maneck kaka, her grandparents Aloo and Ader, her parents Freny and Rumi, husband Dr Firdaus Bativala and their children Jahan and Iyanah to whom this book is dedicated. "I... hope that the world of this book will not have vanished by the time they grow into adults," the author expresses her concern.

Bombay born Taraporevala had studied at the Queen Mary School before a scholarship took her to Harvard University where she graduated with English literature, film and photography as her main subjects. She then did her masters in film theory and criticism from the New York University and returned to India to work as a freelance photographer. Her photographs have been exhibited in India, America, France and Britain, mentions the profile on the jacket of her book. During her college days she had written a critical essay tracing the history of the Parsis. "Written in sarcastic undergraduate style," she had con-



tended that "Parsis had denied their 'Indianness,' ignored their own priesthood, turned their backs on their rural roots in their rush to be 'English,'" she recounts in the book. She then admits, "I'm older now, maybe wiser. I can look back and wonder at the hypocrisy of my undergraduate thought..." Taraporevala's literary skills, so evident in her screenplays for *Salaam Bombay*, followed by *Mississippi Masala*, *Such a Long Journey*, *My Own Country* and *Dr*

Babasaheb Ambedkar have earned her international acclaim.

In her acknowledgements, Taraporevala describes HSBC's Cama as the "book's guardian spirit who appeared with his support and belief at the moment when it was most needed—started the ball rolling by buying the first 200 copies, kept the momentum going by introducing the book to his colleagues." Cama in turn mentions in his message carried in some select copies of the book presented to HSBC's exclusive clientele, "Parsis were among the first Indian businessmen to establish trade links with Hong Kong. HSBC's close ties with India, Parsis and Indians in fact date back to its very origins. Rustomjee Dhunjeeshaw and Pallanjee Framjee were members of the provisional committee that met in 1864 to create the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation."

"This book, the first of its kind, is a portrait of the community in India—the faces and voices of a diverse cross section of Parsis... by an affectionate insider," states the text on the back cover. Looking through this glossy, an outsider would presume that here is an affluent community for Taraporevala has not touched on the poverty, the sufferings, the hardships faced by some members of the community as witnessed among the beggars, those residing at widows' chawls and the wards for the aged destitute. But then, to be fair to the author, how much would she be able to incorporate on a community that has left its indelible imprint on diverse sectors? The jacket says, "This is her first book of photographs." Will there be more in the offing?

Parinaz M. Gandhi





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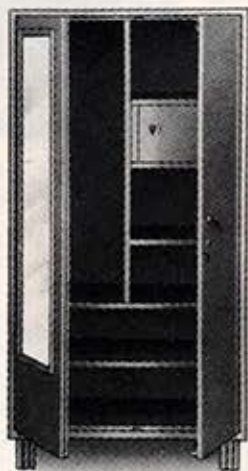
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Women of independence

The unsung role of women of all communities is highlighted in *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*

Hilla P. Guzder

"The women who took part in India's freedom struggle have remained unwept, unsung, unhonored — nameless, faceless individuals in a motley crowd," stated Prof (Dr) Y. D. Phadke, renowned scholar who has researched extensively on India's freedom movement. Not just society but historians and researchers too have largely ignored the role played by women, he added, and by bringing out the book *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, Dr Nawaz Mody has made a significant beginning in righting this wrong. Mody's book was released by former union minister Madhu Dandavate at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Convocation) Hall of the University of Mumbai on August 8, 2000.

Also launched at the function presided over by University vice-chancellor Dr Bhalchandra Mungekar was Champa Limaye's book *Galaxy of Indian Socialist Leaders*, released at the hands of Phadke.

Women in India's Freedom Struggle, edited by Mody, is a collection of 22 papers presented at a national seminar on "The Role of Women in the Indian freedom movement" on March 21-22, 1998. "India was celebrating the 50th year of Independence and since a lot of work had been done by women for the cause of freedom, we felt a tribute should be paid to them," Mody told *Parsiana*. The seminar was held under the auspices of the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations Committee of which Mody is the member secretary. She is also the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta professor of civics and politics and head of that depart-

ment at the University.

Presiding over the various sessions of the seminar were eminent personalities and academicians, including the late Homi Taleyarkhan and Dr Aloo J. Dastur. Well-known Gandhian and freedom fighter Dr Usha Mehta had delivered the valedictory address. Regrettably Mehta, who was



Dandavate releasing book as (from left) J. V. Naik, Mungekar, Phadke and Limaye applaud. Inset: Mody

Photos: C. C. Gandevia

present at the book launch function, passed away just three days later.

Mody's book covers the contribution made by women from all walks of life and all stratas of society, including tribal, illiterate and semi-literate women. Divided into four sections, the compilation highlights the role played by revolutionaries like Captain Laxmi Sehgal, Kalpana Dutt and Aruna Asaf Ali; crusaders like Mridula Sarabhai and Maniben Nanavati who worked with Mahatma Gandhi; the contributions of Muslim, Parsi and Christian freedom fighters and lastly the achievements of women of foreign ori-

gin like Dr Annie Besant, Meeraben (Madeline Slade) and Sister Nivedita (Margaret Elizabeth Noble). The book does not contain any paper on noted revolutionary Madame Bhikhaiji Cama as this had already been published earlier. Adding luster are some rare photographs, including one of Kavi Khabardar with Desh Sevikas, Meher Tata with Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Sarojini Naidu and Hansaben Mehta, and a photograph of Gandhi in 1914 at the Maritzburg railway station with "Parsee Rustomji" and others in South Africa.

Mody's own paper brings to the fore the part played by Perin Captain and her sisters in the freedom struggle. From the very beginning, mentions Mody, the membership of the Indian National Congress was open to women. Ten women, including Ms Maneckjee Cursetjee had attended the Congress session

in Bombay as early as 1889. A delegation of women led by Sarojini Naidu to England in 1916 included Hirabai and Mithan Ardeshir Tata.

Perin Captain and her sisters, Mehra, Goshasp (Goshi), Nurgish and Khurshid, were in close touch with their grandfather Dadabhai Naoroji. After her schooling at the Cathedral High School and a year of studies at Elphinstone College, Perin joined Sorbonne University in Paris where she came into contact with Cama and other revolutionaries like Sardar Singh Rana and Veer Savarkar.

"Dadabhai virtually put Bhikhaiji in charge of Perin when she was sent to Paris and Perin was very much groomed by her. The remarkable thing was that once Perin had embraced Gandhi's path of non-violence, she completely cast



Top (from left): Chattopadhyay, Meher Tata, Naidu and Hansaben Mehta; second row (from left) Perin Captain with Kamala

Nehru and Goshi Captain; (third row) Mithuben Petit (second from left and far right), flanked by Gandhi and Naidu

aside her revolutionary ways. For her there was no looking back," mentioned Mody in a brief chat with *Parsiana*.

Goshi, who studied at Oxford, and Perin had attended a congress of the Egyptian National Party in Brussels with Cama and Perin's sympathies also lay with exiled Poles in Paris in their struggle against the Russians. British intelligence reports around 1910 had mentioned that Perin was receiving instructions in the manufacture of bombs from a young Polish engineer.

Goshi and Perin's first introduction to Gandhiji was on Pateti day in 1906 at a party given by Jamsetji Tata on a boat on the Thames in London. Gandhi's attire at that time consisted of a morning coat, striped trousers and diamond tie-pin! In 1915, they met him again in Bombay at a garden party at the residence of Jehangir Petit, at which time he was clad in his usual dhoti. By 1918, the sisters had cast aside their silk saris and taken to wearing khadi saris, generally white, and they began the spinning and selling of khadi as well. They were arrested a number of times during the campaigns for freedom, at great cost to their health.

Goshi, Perin and Nurgish were married to three brothers, Maneckji, Dhanjishah and Dorab Captain, and were thus often referred to as the Captain sisters. "It was indeed ironical," states Mody, "that while Perin and Goshi were considered to be working against the laws of the state, their husbands as solicitors were supposed to be working to uphold the law." The Rashtriya Stree Sabha, one of the earliest women's organizations, had three Parsis out of its six office bearers — Goshi was the vice president, Perin, the joint honorary secretary and Serene P. Jeejeebhoy, the joint honorary treasurer. Perin often used to wear the orange (kesaria) khadi sari of the Desh Sevika Sangh, a separate volunteer corps of the Sabha, which "showed tremendous discipline, courage and boldness throughout the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-31... The soul of the Sangh was Perin Captain," writes Mody. The first of Perin's imprisonments was a three-month stint in the Arthur Road jail in Bombay.

The Captain sisters were also very close to the Nehru family, narrates Mody. Perin had worked with Jawaharlal Nehru on the issue of developing Hindustani as a national language, setting up the Hindustan Prachar Sabha on the lines

suggested by Gandhi. Nehru had stated in a condolence message on Perin's death in the Jehangir Nursing Home in Poona in 1958: "She was one of the bravest persons I have ever known." Unfortunately, the contribution of the Captain sisters too, opines Mody, remains largely unknown and unacknowledged.

Dr Mani Kamerkar, well-known research scholar, vice president of The Asiatic Society of Bombay and former head of the department of history at Bombay's S. N. D. T. University, presented a paper on Mithuben Petit, the great granddaughter of Sir Dinshaw Petit, first baronet. Mithuben was initially introduced to Gandhi at the garden party given by her aunt and uncle, Jaijiben and Jehangir Petit, on the grounds of Mount Petit at Peddar Road in 1915. Eminent personalities from the Parsi community like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Dinsha Wacha and Dadabhai Naoroji were already active in the political arena and Mithuben found her milieu when she joined the Rashtriya Stree Sabha in 1919 and soon became its secretary. She consigned her silks and satins to the bonfire during the Swadeshi movement, dressing in thick, off-white khadi, her only ornamentation a necklace of *kerba* beads

"While Perin and Goshi were considered to be working against the law, their husbands as solicitors were working to uphold the law"

given to her by her family priest Dosa Daru Tata who told her of the power of *kerba* beads to eliminate diseases from the body. Her family was horrified at this change of apparel, but Mithuben was not to be swayed.

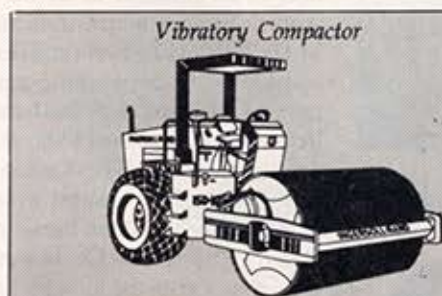
Using her sewing and designing skills she embarked on a program to make khadi more attractive, selling saris, tablecloths, napkins, etc to wealthy families, including the princely families of Mysore, Baroda, Bhavnagar, etc. Shoulder to shoulder with her in this were Khurshid Naoroji and Perin Captain. In 1922 with Congress secretary Burjorji Bharucha, Mithuben went to Surat and began selling khadi in the villages. Ap-

palled at the poverty and deprivation, she led the relief work in 1927 in the flood-hit Kheda district. For six months, describes Kamerkar, Mithuben led her band of women through slush, 15 miles a day, sleeping in mud huts, often on saris spread out on the floor. She also set up a vibrant organization called the Stri Swaraj Sangh.

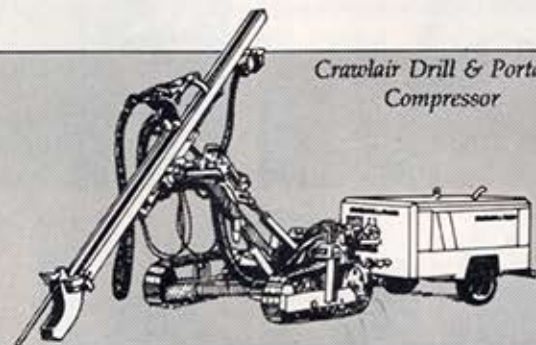
Her five-month involvement in the Bardoli campaign (protesting against the increase in land revenue by the British) in Surat district in 1928 proved to be "a point of no return for her with her family." Her parents, Hormasji and Piroja, found it unthinkable that she should actively oppose the British government. After repeated pleas to her to desist, they finally disinherited her.

Undeterred, Mithuben continued with her work. Seeking to break the *adivasis'* addiction to liquor, Mithuben and her band of women picketed liquor shops, cut down toddy trees, formed around 50 Bhajan Mandalis which propagated prohibition through song. Many of the liquor shops were owned by Parsis who "threatened her with dire consequences" but "threats did not deter her nor did appeals move her."

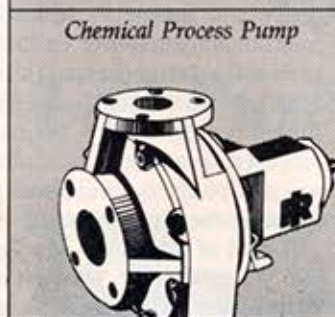
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The Parsis of Pakistan

The author outlines the history of the community in Pakistan

Burjor H. Antia

According to the *Parsi Prakash*, there were Parsis living in Sind in the year 916 AD. The Arab historian, Al-Masudi writes of Zoroastrian habitation near the bank of the Sindhu (Indus) river in the year 1184. Closer to our own time the Jassawala family was the first Parsi family who came to Sind, trading in the name of Messrs Jassawala and Company by 1820-1825.

By 1829, a great number of Parsis seemed to have settled in Karachi. Among them were the Readymoneys, the Pandays, the Markers, the Bhedwars, etc. The first athornan family that came to Sind was of Ervad Kavasji Framji Marker (Kotwal) who came not to practice the ancestral profession but to trade, opening a shop in 1839. After that the community arrived in large numbers as contractors and commissariat to the British army led by Charles Napier. Amongst them was Hormusji Dadabhoy Ghadialy, whose fifth generation scion Dhunjishaw Ghadialy is today a trustee of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund. Hormusji Ghadialy's house built in 1844 is the oldest Parsi house in Karachi.

Hormusji Jamshedji Rustomji started doing business at the age of 20. Such was the respect he enjoyed among European businessmen that his note of recommendation provided employment to hundreds of Zoroastrians. His offices on Bund Road (M. A. Jinnah Road), a grand and beautiful complex of buildings, had small tramcars ferrying goods between the offices and godowns. The site lured Governor of Bombay, Lord Harris, on a personal visit to the complex. A wealthy and prosperous personality of Karachi, Rustomji was completely devoid of pride or arrogance and worked from morning till night like an ordinary clerk.

Another who glorified the Parsi name in Karachi was Edulji Dinshaw with his princely charities worth lakhs of rupees. Starting with a small business, he undertook large contracts from government during the second Afghan War. After

this he tried his hand at real estate and made sizeable investments in land, accurately predicting that money invested in land would triple in the following year. Dinshaw became Karachi's premier landlord so that his family still owns large plots of lands and buildings. He also diversified into presses, factories and other businesses. Whatever he touched became gold. For many years he was a trustee of the Karachi Port Trust and a member of the Karachi Municipal Corporation. In recognition of his public services, he was awarded the distinction of C.I.E. in 1899, the first person in Karachi to be so honored. The Lady Dufferin Hospital was established by him as also various charitable dispensaries. Nor did he forget his community, opening many charitable institutions for his coreligionists.

Religious, kindhearted and a thorough gentleman, Shapurji Hormusji Soparivala, who came to Karachi in 1854, became the father of Parsi education there. Starting out as an assistant in the firm of W. E. Chamberlain, who used to take contracts from the commissariat office, he tried his hand at other businesses, greatly expanding them.

The most prominent among the Parsi leaders of the 20th century was Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta (1886-1952). Local newspapers and common men described him as one of the noblest sons of Sind, Maker of Modern Karachi, patriot, philanthropist, humanist, industrialist and, above all, a friend to all. Mayor for 11 consecutive years, he transformed Karachi into a large, modern, well planned city. He used his power and position for everyone who came into contact with him. Other Parsi mayors of Karachi were Rustom K. Sidhwa, Khan Bahadur Ardeshir H. Mama and Sohrab K. H. Katrak.

The Dinshaws, the Cowasjees, the Katraks, the Mamas, the Kotharis, the Mehtas, the Avaris, the Minwallas, the Kandawallas of Karachi and the Mark-

ers and the Patels of Quetta have been in the forefront in the public life of Pakistan, their success in business, commerce and trade providing financial momentum to their philanthropy.

The straightforward and upright Dorab Patel as a judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan had the courage to differ from other judges who found Zulfikar Ali Bhutto guilty by giving his dissenting judgment. He donated his entire wealth for the construction of the Kidney Hospital, and a multistoried hospital in Karachi has been named after him.

In the life of Parsis in Karachi, Dastur Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhallal also played a leading role by providing spiritual guidance from the day he became a Dastur on September 19, 1909 till he died on May 25, 1956.

The late Dinshaw B. Avari with the active cooperation of his energetic wife Khorshed made his name in the hospitality industry in Pakistan by constructing and owning the leading hotels, Beach Luxury and Avari Towers in Karachi and also Avari Lahore. After Dinshaw's demise his dynamic son Byram and his family continue to own and operate a chain of hotels not only in Karachi and Lahore but also in Dubai and Toronto (Canada).

The Avari family are also in the pharmaceuticals, liquor and travel agency business. Alongside his business activities Byram Avari finds time to promote religious and communal activities in Pakistan.

Another distinguished Parsi of Pakistan is Jamsheed Marker who represented the Government of Pakistan as a senior diplomat in various countries and has been its permanent representative at the United Nations Organization. Last year he was assigned the role of the UN secretary-general's personal representative in troubled East Timor where he successfully brokered peace.

Ardeshir Cowasjee has upheld the freedom of the Press and courageously exposed the wrongs of society and the



Top row: Mama Girls' School (left) and B. V. Soparivala School; (center row) Jamshed Baugh (left) and Wadia Dar-e-Meher; (bottom row) entrance to Katak Colony (left) and Behrana Dar-e-Meher Photos:

Parinaz M. Gandhi

government of the day. He expresses his views on the burning topics of the nation freely, frankly and fearlessly and even the courts of Pakistan have not found him guilty of contempt of court. He is like the late A. D. Gorwala of India.

Fardoonji K. Dadachanji, who passed away in July 2000, has written several books on the Zoroastrian religion and our community. His *Parsis Ancient and Modern and Their Religion* is a classic book.

Ervad Godrej Sidhwa, an ex student

of Bombay's M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, selflessly serves the community and its institutions in every possible way like an unofficial high priest.

Around 2,100 Parsis presently live in Karachi. Approximately 800 of them reside in about 248 flats managed by the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust. Jamshed Baugh named after Jamshed Mehta, the Katrak Parsi Colony, the Noshirwan Naman are other clusters of Parsi habitation.

Of the Parsi institutions in Karachi, the first school for teaching Parsi boys and girls Gujarati and the *Zend Avesta* prayers was established on May 23, 1859 by the Parsis from contributions collected amongst themselves. Nanabhoy Framji Spencer had taken the initiative in establishing the school then known as the Karachi Parsi Balak Shalla.

In 1870 Shapurji Hormusji Soparivala gave his Frere Street house worth Rs 10,000 as a gift, and the name of the



Minocher-Homji Hospital (above) and dokhma in Karachi

school was changed to Bai Virbaiji Soparivala Parsi School in memory of his late wife. The present strength of the students is around 1,200, of whom about 50 are Parsis, with Deena Minoo Mistree the present principal.

The Mama Girls' School was established in 1918 with a donation of three lakh rupees from Ardeshir Hormusji Mama, with a further one and half lakhs received as a bequest from Navroji Nusserwanji Pochaji. With over 1,000 students, the School under Zarine Temul Mavelwala is among the most popular in

Karachi.

The Seth Heerjibhoy Jamshedji Behrana Parsi Dar-e-Meher was consecrated on May 3, 1849 and reconstructed in 1875 by Heerjibhoy's widow Meherbai. In 1918 a beautiful large hall was added by Ardeshir Mama in memory of his late father, Hormusji.

The Seth Dosabhai Meherwanji Wadia Dar-



e-Meher was consecrated on May 28, 1869 by his nephew, Sorabji Dhanjibhai.

Hormusji Ghadialy built a dokhma in 1847 in memory of his father Dadabhoy.

With the increasing Zoroastrian population, the Ghadialy dokhma proved to be too small and the Anjuman dokhma was

constructed with funds collected from the Parsis of Karachi on June 6, 1875.

The Karachi Parsi Panchayat came into being on September 28, 1908, with Framroze Edulji Punthakey, Jamshedji Shapurji Soparivala, Nadirshah Edulji Dinshaw, Nusserwanji Rustomji Mehta and Kavasji Hormusji Katrak the first trustees.

The Bomanshaw Minocher-Homji Relief Amelioration Home and General Hospital contains about 28 beds.

Popular with the Parsis is the Karachi Parsi Institute, a club with grounds for cricket, hockey and football, a tennis court, swimming pool, etc.

About 62 Parsis reside in Lahore today though prior to the Partition there were 300. The driving force behind them was Tehmina Bhandara who developed the premises of the Bai Avanbai Ardeshir Cooper Agiary by constructing about 11 flats in its compound. Her imposing portrait adorns the Agiary wall.

The first to have arrived there was Jehangir Boga and his family in 1793 followed by the King family in 1907. In Lahore, the Bhandara family is prominent in business, political and social circles. Minoo Bhandara, former federal minister for minority affairs, is a

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leading beer manufacturer in liquorless Pakistan. Bhandara is also a fearless Press critic of Pakistan.

Another leading Parsi of Lahore was the late Rustom Sidhwa, a former judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Hailing from Udvada, Sidhwa gave his services to the Lahore Parsi Anjuman from 1959 to 1978 till he was appointed a judge of the Lahore High Court. Elevated to the Supreme Court of Pakistan in December 1989 where he served till August 1993, he was elected in September 1993 by the General Assembly of the United Nations to the 11-member panel of judges constituting the UN International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia at the International Court of Justice at The Hague. Sidhwa died on March 31, 1997, 15 days after the death of Justice Dorab Patel.

An agiary built by the local Parsis in Quetta in 1883 was rebuilt in 1926 but was destroyed in the earthquake of 1935. A new building was consecrated in 1939.

Well organized, well managed and well settled, the Parsis of Pakistan follow our religious principles and tenets scrupulously and are prosperous and happy. Though living in an Islamic state, they are held in high esteem by the general public and the government of Pakistan.

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 19

but we have a much bigger enemy — our own unconsciousness and carelessness, our own habits and behavior," noted Kumana who has been influenced by the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

SPOTLIGHT

Air Marshal Manek B. Madon has been posted as senior air staff officer, western



air command, New Delhi, effective September 2000, notes a communique from squadron leader R. K. S. Sisodia. Madon who was conferred the Ati Vishisht Seva

Medal in 1999 was previously the senior officer — administration, central air command headquarters of the Indian Air Force.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

WOMEN OF INDEPENDENCE

continued from page 40

Her constructive work included setting up a khadi ashram, girls' school, dispensary, etc. As a child she had been introduced to the world of plants by her great grandfather, Sir Dinshaw Petit, a keen botanist who had published a book on his findings called *Vaidak Tutchka-sangrah*. Mithuben began to use local herbal medicine to successfully treat ashram inmates, bringing out a book on her conclusions called *Nanela Nushka*. So well-known and well-loved in the district was she that she became widely known as "Maiji."

During the famous Dandi March in 1930, the frail, delicate Mithuben was alongside Gandhiji when he picked up salt from the sea during the Salt Satyagraha. With Kasturba Gandhi she set up the Kasturba Vanatshala at Maroli, a village in the adivasi area, and promoted cottage industries, particularly the weaving of khadi of a finer quality.

For the next 43 years, Mithuben rarely left Maroli and its surroundings, though she was arrested during the 1932 satyagraha and sent to the Sabarmati Central Jail for four months, not the first instance of her imprisonment. Her social work covered a range of 23 villages

around Maroli which she regularly visited, setting up boys' and girls' ashramshalas, dispensaries and balvadis. The setting up of a hospital for mentally challenged persons, the treatment involving patients living not in isolation but with their families in huts, was a unique achievement at that time. In recognition of her work, Mithuben was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1961.

Her grassroot level political and humanitarian activities are also described by Dr Shirin Mehta, retired professor of history at the University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad, who has extensively researched the economic history of Gujarat during the colonial period, particularly the textile and weaving sector. Mehta's case study of Mithuben Petit is included in her paper entitled "The Freedom Struggle and Gujarati Women as Grassroot Workers and Satyagrahis: 1915 to 1930."

In her acknowledgements, Mody records her appreciation of, among others, R. M. Lala and the trustees of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust for assisting in the publication of the 428-page book.

Women in India's Freedom Struggle, priced at Rs 350, is published by Allied Publishers Limited, 15, J. N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400001.

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 20 and 46 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 29 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 22 and 49 years, averaging at 33 years.

There were 85 Zoroastrian deaths in Bombay in December as compared to five births. The major killer as usual, heart disease, took a toll of 23 individuals, of whom nine were in the 80+ age-group. Pneumonia and lung diseases claimed 10 lives, while eight victims each succumbed to cancer and old age. Brain diseases and septicemia felled five patients each, diabetes and malaria four each, while asthma claimed two. The isolated cases registered for the month were liver disease, kidney complications, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, tuberculosis, gangrene, gastroenteritis, cachexia (a general wasting of the body during a chronic disease) and hypoxia (deficiency in the amount of oxygen reaching bodily tissues). There were two cases of head injury and four murders. The coroner's report is awaited in one case. The oldest to die was a 100-year-old male, the youngest, a girl of 13. Two

youths aged 19 and 30 were also lost to the community. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for December, in Bombay, was 75 years.

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

DIED

Tehmina Pheroze Kaka, mother of Jehangir, late Homi, Rusi and Cyrus on December 25, 2000

BARODA

BORN

A boy to *Khurshid* and *Kaymas Wadia*; July 26
A boy, *Ruzan*, to *Sanobar* and *Behramsha Contractor*; August 6
A girl, *Farzin*, 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

MARRIED

Katy Feroze Bavaadam and *Feroze Yazdi Anklesaria*; June 15

DIED

Bahadur Pestonji Merchant (76); July 14
Villoomai Jal Contractor (86); September 6

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Rustom*, to *Siminda* and *Firdosh Bhesania*; August 7
A girl to *Naznin* and *Mehernosh Gotla*; December 2
A boy to *Kamal* and *Godrej Fanibanda*; December 5
A boy to *Nandita* and *Mahabakht Kotwal*; December 6
A boy, *Baeshaz*, to *Havovi* and *Khushroo Pastakia*; December 10
A boy to *Perces* and *Hormuz Bulsara*; December 14
A girl to *Zenita* and *Zarksis Ichhaporia*; December 16

MARRIED

Jenifer Sorab Kharoliwalla

and *Danny Feroze Patel*; October 29
Benaifer Noshir Siganporia and *Homyar Rusi Gandevia* of Thana; November 4
Nilufer Jal Langdana of Surat and *Yazdi Noshir Medhora*; November 5
Dinaz Ardeshir Kapadia and *Rayomand Jal Velati*; November 5
Rashna Soli Elavia and *Pahali Firoze Billimoria*; November 6
Rukhsana Maneck Bajan and *Keki Furrokh Pastakia*; November 18
Sanobar Phiroze Gandevia and *Nevil Firoze Bhesania*; November 21
Parisa Khodayar Mondegar and *Zubin Boman Faramarzi*; November 22
Bakhtaver Jamshed Bhungara and *Cyrus Maneck Bhor*; November 23
Paricher Noshir Patel and *Minoo Shavaksha Bhathena*; November 27
Niloufer Zeheer Ginwalla and *Jersis Aspi Irani* of Dahanu Road; November 28
Dinaz Nasarwan Anklesaria of Dist Bharuch and *Kayomars Barjor Kapadia*; November 28
Anahita Dinshaw Ghaswala and *Zubin Minoo Fitter* of California; December 2
Rashna Sam Lalla and *Pervez Adi Mehta*; December 3
Armaiti Minoo Sopariwalla and *Rustom Fredoon Nariman*; December 3
Mahtab Ratan Tavadia of Ajmer and *Homyar Jamshed Sukheswala*; December 4
Shernaz Jimmy Elavia and *Sarosh Ratan Anklesaria* of Ahmedabad; December 5
Pervin Keki Bharucha of Jamshedpur and *Mehernosh Noshir Choksi*; December 5
Rashna Fali Dhondy and *Cusrow Sam Poonawala*; December 7
Yozmaiti Nariman Postwalla and *Adil Bejon Doctor*; December 10
Minaz Jal Guard and *Zubin Bomansha Patrawala* of Vasai; December 10
Arnaz Hormaz Tata and *Yezad Kavas Dehnugara*; December 11
Delnawaz Jal Irani and *Cyrus Ardeshir Contractor* of

Calcutta; December 12
Shireen Jamshed Kanga and *Firdaus Soli Dhabhar*; December 12
Benaifer Hosi Kias and *Yazad Hoshang Irani*; December 12
Nazneen Dara Engineer and *Malcolm Jamshed Kavarana*; December 12
Naaznin Rusi Karanjia and *Malcolm Rustom Dadina*; December 14
Farzana Rusi Patel and *Karl Keki Shroff*; December 14
Hufrish Firoze Mistry and *Homyar Kaikhushru Daruwala*; December 16
Zenia Dara Mistry and *Rustom Keki Hathi*; December 16
Shiraz Jalejar Davierwala and *Viraf Nariman Mohta*; December 17
Kashmira Darayus Tukina and *Khushru Adi Umrigar*; December 17
Charmayne Minoo Chinoy and *Khushroo Dinshaw Bhadha*; December 18
Shanavaz Kersi Elavia and *Farokh Hormaz Ghadially*; December 21
Dilshad Jehangir Rabbadi and *Dinyar Manek Vajifdar*; December 27
Najoo Rustom Mehta and *Parushpa Ardisher Aderbehan*; December 29

DIED

Lovji Dadabhoy Mistry (76), residing at A, Bhatia Society Bldg, 286, Princess St, 400002; November 30
Yasmin Cali Pardiwalla (59), 808, Khushnum, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; November 30
Gulchar Nariman Davierwala (67), Park Haven Annex, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; December 1
Munchershaw Manekshaw Karani (79), Buonacasa, Homji St, 400001; December 1
Jal Sorabji Munshi (80), 1/18, Dhanbai Wadi, Dadabhai Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; December 1
Faramroze Cawasji Bharucha, (86), A-2/22, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 2
Rustom Hormusji Bhot (89), 4, Vijay Villa, 79, Worli Sea Face, 400025; December 2

Sheriar Khudabux Irani (80), 2/3, Khudabux Bldg, Opp Sales Tax Office, Mazagaon, 400010; December 2

Rustomji Bomanshah Billimoria (Jamsetji) (87), 275-K, Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 3

Jiny Rustom Horamzdiar (74), M-55, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 3

Dhunjishaw Kawasji Kapadia (85), 19/290, Adarsh Ngr, Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli, 400025; December 3

Cawas Sorabji Billimoria (83), A-301, Silver Sands, Yari Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; December 4

Dadiba Faramroze Raimalwalla (84), 403, Patel Coop Hsg Soc, Paliram Path, Andheri (W), 400058; December 4

Noshirwan Dosabhooy Subedar (88), 20, Mody Bldg, Murzban Clny, Lamington Rd, 400008; December 6

Firoz Aderji Taraporwalla (68), Vangaon, Tal Dahanu, Dist Thana; December 6

Aban Noshir Patel (53), 104, Namdar Hse, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 8

Mani Jamshed Tata (82), 5, Ratan Manor, 511/A, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; December 8

Aloo Rustomji Wankadia (88), E-33, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 8

Freny Framroz Ayem (91), Shiv Sadan, 602-A, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Matunga, 400019; December 9

Sorabji Fardoonji Mulla (91), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 9

Mani Phirojsha Degamwalla (73), 47/E-79, Manish Ngr, Andheri (W), 400053; December 10

Phiroza Rustomji Kapadia (86), 11/3, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 10

Pallonji Faramji Mistry (84), D-5, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 10

Rustomji Naoroji Bharucha (80), 275-B, Captain Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; December 11

Aloo Firoze Daji (86), A-1, Satyabhama Nivas, Avabai Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034;

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*
BIRTHS						
Boys	5	85	4	14	—	15
Girls	2	79	3	10	—	14
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	36	127	1	10	—	19
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	20	—	2	—	2
Females married out	—	19	—	1	—	1
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	50	461	6	77	—	48
Females	37	461	4	57	1	36
CREMATED						
Males	—	5	1	1	—	—
Females	—	3	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-February 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.

December 11

Freny Jehangir Gazdar (83), 6/1, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; December 12

Hoshang Jivanji Mistry (75), A-9, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; December 12

Jeanie Cowasji Batliwala (83), 20, Anand Bhavan, Carmichael Rd, 400026; December 13

Dinsha Shavaksha Cambata (78), Cambata Bldg, Churchgate, 400020; December 13

Putli Bomi Colabavala (70), C. Khaluckdina Terr, A. K. Marg, 400036; December 13

Eruch Ardeshir Dastur (96), 23, Napean Sea Rd, 400036; December 13

Hillamai Jehangirji Fatakia (84), Sunbeam, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (E), 400102; December 13

Gaverbanoo Pirojsha Kapadia (70), 3/37, Tata Mills Coop Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; December 13

Burjor Darabshah Sahiar (74), 15, Contractor Chawl, 31, Sussex Rd, 400027; December 14

Dosibai Jamshedji Makhania (84), A/8, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 15

Tehmina Nariman Sarkari

(84), 7, Sheel, Neel Sheel Coop Hsg Soc, Old Police Line Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; December 15

Rustom Behramsha Vankadia (89), F5/81, Godrej Staff Qtrs, Hill Side, L. B. S. Marg, Vikhroli, 400079; December 15

Minoo Rustomji Vazifdar (87), 275, Princess Bldg, Princess St, 400002; December 15

Boman Dadabhooy Batliwala (82), G1/10, G-9, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; December 16

Nadirshaw Nanabhooy Cama (100), Shirinabad, 581, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; December 16

Homi Behramji Desai (84), B-10, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 16

Aloo Noshir Katrak (79), 21, Taj Bldg, 30/B, Gowalia Tank, 400036; December 16

Manek Nusservanji Sathavwala (68), 2, Fairy Manor, Rustom Sidhwa Marg, Fort, 400001; December 16

Jal Dinshaji Pardivala (88), 797, Jesia Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 17

Hoshang Navalsha Bacha (67), 3, Readymoney Bldg, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, 400034; December 18

Jaloo Naval Madon (82), Contractor Chawl, Dadaji Kondeo Marg, Byculia, 400027; December 18

Hirji Rustom Thanawalla (80), 31/A, Meher Apts, Anstey Rd, Cumballa Hill, 400026; December 18

Burjor Sorabji Daboo (77), 22C, United Chmbs, 347, Maulana Shaikatali Rd, 400007; December 19

Daisy Eruch Kambata (74), Sheri Hse, Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001; December 19

Rati Khurshed Madon (93), Coover Cottage, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; December 19

Pheroze Framroze Mehta (77), Avasia Hse, Darabsha Lane, 400006; December 19

Behram Kavasji Naterwalla (61), D-7, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; December 19

Jehangir Kaikhasru Irani (64), 7-407, Tulips, Anita Ngr, Lokhandwala Complex, Kandivli (E), 400101; December 20

Shirinzaban Behram Kaishruzada (Parvaresh) (68), 275, Perin Nariman St, Fort, 400001; December 20

Sam Shavaksha Peer (65), D-1, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 20

Banubai Homi Avari (93), 5,

Wadia Hse, 22, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 22
Roshan Rusi Avari (73), 5, Wadia Hse, 22, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 22
Rusi Homi Avari (71), 5, Wadia Hse, 22, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 22
Phiroze Jalejar Hatara (63), 16/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 22
Goolcher Shapur Irani (51), A/17, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; December 22
Noshir Jehangir Major (83), M-51, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 22
Bachoo Behram Mehta (85), Dubash Bldg, 20, Mount Mary Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; December 22
Dina Framroze Mistry (85), 186, Satnam Sagar, 30th Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; December 22
Dhunjisha Faramji Shastri (94), Damania Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; December 22
Homi Nowroji Udawadia (82), 675, Amy Villa, Rd 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 23
Freny Eruchshaw Bharucha (65), 11/8, Mody Block, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 24
Homi Maneckshaw Bhesania (30), D/35, Gilder Baug, J. B. Ngr, Andheri (E), 400059; December 24
Aloo Pesi Damania (78), 165,

Manibai Bhavan, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; December 24
Villie Keki Mehta (78), 94, Mehrdad, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 24
Homai Eruch Elavia (78), 215, R. K. Mans, N. M. Joshi Marg, 400013; December 25
Siloo Jamshed Kanga (71), Sea Breeze, V. P. Rd, Santacruz, 400054; December 25
Banaji Hormusji Karani (88), D-2, Mehta Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 25
Khudabux Sheriar Raisi (90), 4, Rajsi Mans, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; December 25
Mehroo Noshir Bulsara (76), 1-A-9, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; December 26
Naju Bomanji Marshal (78), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 26
Rumi Shivax Mojia (67), A. B. Merwan Bldg, Grant Rd (E), 400007; December 26
Bomansha Dinshawji Nasikwala (86), 17, Ullas, Laburnum Rd, New Gamdevi, 400007; December 26
Kariman Pirojshaw Ankleswari (90), 11/23, Panthaki Agiary, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 27
Mehrab Rusi Elavia (19), N-11, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; December 27
Aspi Dinshaw Master (68),

F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 27
Naval Pestonji Sukheshwala (56), 2/14, Malegamwala Bldg, Chotani By Rd, Mahim, 400016; December 27
Sarosh Jal Banaji (66), 204, Navratna, Kadamwadi, Santacruz, 400098; December 28
Kersi Dhunjishaw Mehta (75), Dadachanji Bldg, Murzban Clny, Lamington Rd, 400008; December 28
Natasha Shapoor Boomla (13), Holland Hse, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 29
Jehangirshah Jamshedji Katila (88), C/o A. Sarkari, 36, Panday Sanatorium, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; December 29
Dr Lily Aspi Irani (54), 275/C, Chothia Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; December 30
Banoobai Nusarwanji Laina (90), 24, Ram Nivas, 16, Khambata Lane, Off Khetwadi 7th Lane, 400004; December 31

DELHI

BORN

A girl to *Sharoo* and *Malcolm Anjirbaug*, sister to *Nirvan*; December 26

POONA

BORN

A girl, *Sanaya*, to *Benaifer* and *Sarosh Bodhanwala*; November 22

SECUNDERABAD

DIED

Dali Jamshedji (75), brother of *Barjor* and *Mehramai*; December 10 (cremated)

SURAT

DIED

Nergeshben Savakshaw Todiwala (83), 12/1317, Wadia St, Machhlipith, 395003; December 1
Minoo Savakshaw Todiwala (60), 12/1317, Wadia St, Machhlipith, 395003; December 6
Bahdoor Sorabji Cama (68), 12/1721, Vakil St, Shahpore, 395003; December 9
Jerbai Jehangirji Daruwala (97), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; December 10
Sam Dhanjishaw Bhatporia (66), Sarkari St, Village Adajan, Dist Surat; December 11
Hilla Faramroz Bhesania (83), Parsiwad, Village Olpad, Dist Surat; December 30

NEW ZEALAND

DIED

Meher Kasad (51), wife of *Coover Eruch Kasad*, mother of *Jasmine Amarsingh*, *Diana* and *Sherry* in Auckland; August 15

Compiled by Bakhtavar R. Batliwalla

Do you have a G6PD enzyme deficiency?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Published in the public interest by *Parsiana*

ADDENDUM

On the cover of *Parsiana*, January 2001, the illustration of the vulture was by the late Mickey Patel, and the Parsi gentleman by Homi Bamboat.

We regret the necessary credits were not given on the contents page of that issue.



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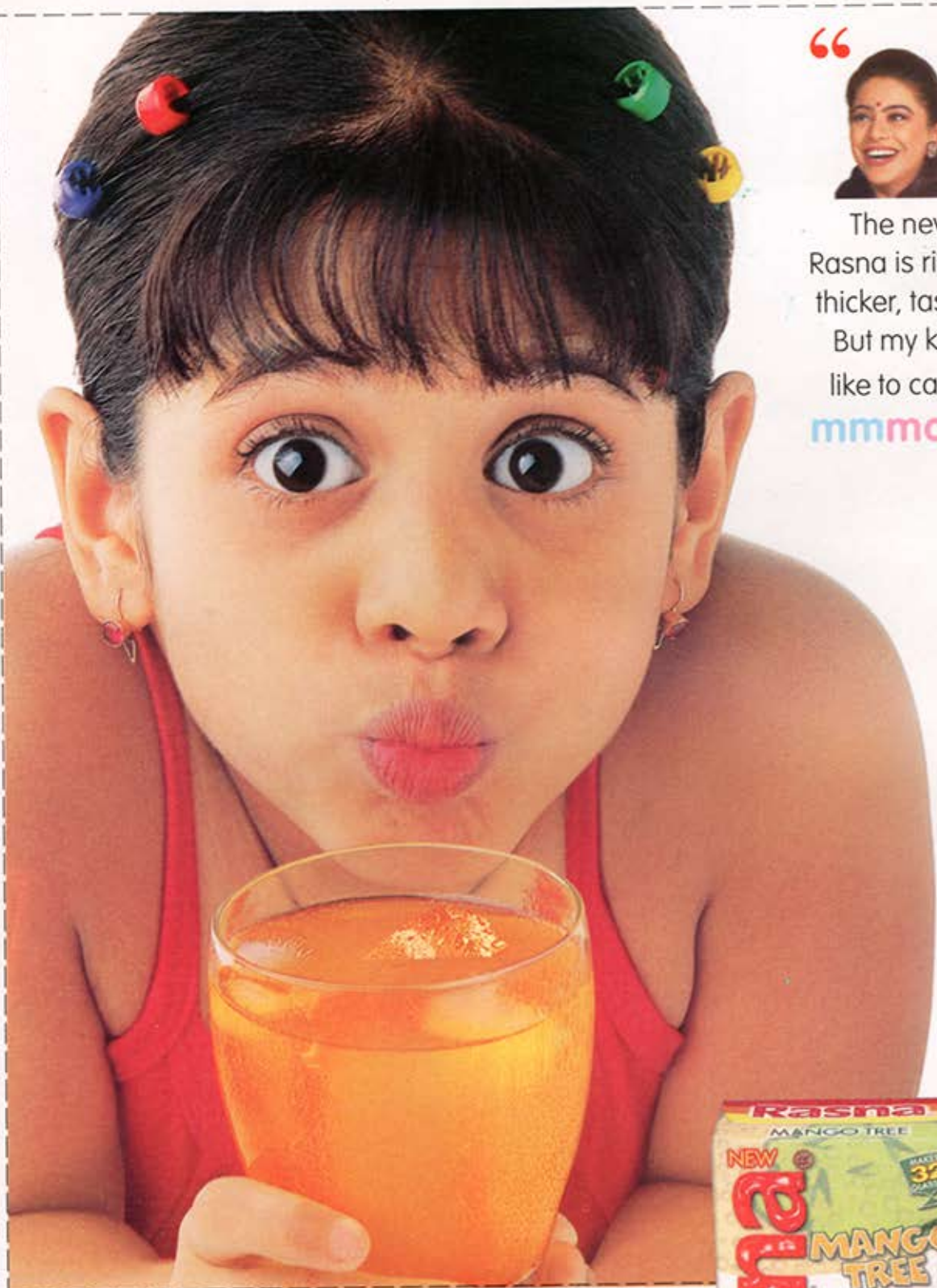
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like to call it,

mmmore!”



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SMART
NEW
PACK