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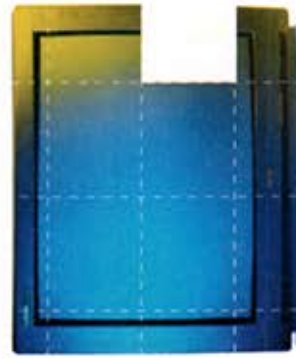


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Parsiana

April 2001
Volume 23 Number 9

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Indian MPs in Britain

A postscript to Jashwant P. Thacker's informative offering ("Indian MPs in Britain," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 2001). Some time during my earliest years in London I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of an elderly His Majesty's Prisons visitor. Learning that I was a Parsi, he recounted this brief anecdote anent Shapurji Saklatvala, the universalist-minded Zarathushtrian:



Saklatvala:
universal
socialist

Upon enquiring whose was the foreign face in the Warmwood Scrubs inmates' mess, a knowledgeable fellow internee chirped that he, Saklatvala, was "a Parsi 'had up' for sedition." Sak had exhorted the armed forces not to break the General Strike, for which action he

became an enforced "guest" of His Majesty for two months. In due time this intelligence had reached the farthest tables from where it was announced that Sak was "a parson 'had up' for sedition!"

On a saner note, we were privileged to meet Sak's youngest daughter Sehri, a very gracious lady full of affection and goodwill towards Parsis everywhere, during the 1990 World Zoroastrian Organisation London seminar. There she gave a delightful talk on the life of Comrade Sak upon which she enlarged in the following year with an utterly absorbing 500-page tome, *The Fifth Commandment*. That great "parson's" memory is still very much kept alive in socialist circles, and Sehri's wonderful book commemorates that amazing Parsi, her beloved father. FARROKH VAJIFDAR

London, UK

"A doctrinal crossfire"

At the samast anjuman meeting in Bombay on December 15, 2000, the proponent of the aviary project, Zoroastrian Studies founder and public speaker, Khojeste Mistree declared: "Do you get rid of the patient if the medicine is expensive?" ("A doctrinal crossfire," *Parsiana*, January 2001). I thought comparing the cost for the survival of the living with the costs for the disposal of the dead was a ludicrous comparison.

In the same article Dinshaw Tamboly has expressed several grave reservations on the aviary project but there are so many further uncertainties in the proposed scheme that if at all embarked upon it would be the costliest gamble by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP).

Let us consider some of these intangibles:-

- The vulture is now considered an endangered species. Will any foreign country even permit export of such endangered species from their country?
- Will the government of Maharashtra permit import of baby vultures on a permanent basis?
- Will any other state government permit capture and transport of baby vultures on a permanent basis?
- Who is going to bear the cost of the project if it exceeds the BPP budget of Rs 1.25 crores?
- Will not the regular transport of mutton and beef for feeding the baby vultures

become an eyesore in Doongerwadi?

•If a net is to be laid over the dokhmas to prevent the vultures from flying away how will the vultures exercise to digest the eaten corpses?

Tamboly was right when he queried whether the BPP making a commitment to the project would be wisdom or foolhardiness, because if the virus strikes the vultures endemically again the whole scheme will come to naught and make our community the laughingstock of the populace.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

Zoros at the Olympics

For the record the following Zoroastrians, in addition to the Banas, have taken part in the Olympics in various capacities: Kaiser Austin as Olympic torchbearer; Zarir Reporter as VIP executive officer; Hutokshi Hira, Rumi Hira, Rakshandeh Hira, Bakhtawar Kadwa, Banoo Bengalee, Mithi Daver, Faribaz Jamshidi, Noshir Sachinwalla, Dinaz Lentin-Batliwalla, Roxanne Minbatwalla, Rustom Naoroz and Jamshed Rustomjee as volunteers. I hope you will publish this to glorify more Zoroastrians.

GUSTAD KADWA

Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia

"Taaraa moné saakar"

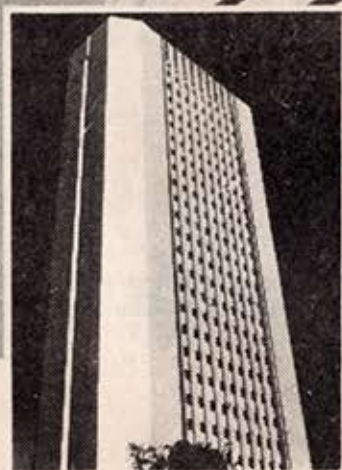
In "Taara moné saakar" (*Parsiana*, December 2000) you have mentioned:

- Boodhi gheree, laal lagaam. This is completed thus — Boodhi gheree laal lagaam, dosi taro su damaam.
- Nahi maamaa kartaa kaanaa maamaa saaraa. I interpret it as: It is better to have something than nothing.
- Rarto chanaawaalo nahi parvaré. It is not the chanaawaalo but any child or adult who whines and complains always who is not welcome.
- Utaavalé aambaa nahi paaké would mean haste is waste.

Here are some more idioms:-

- Laakh rupiyaa nee handi, mithaa vagar nee khandi. You may have lots of wealth, but just as a 'khandi' without salt is tasteless, so is your life without happiness.
- Rakhadi raan, né rajhartaa poreeyaa. When a mother is galavanting the whole day, her children are neglected.
- Dhobi no kutro nahi ghér no, nahi ghaat no. A rolling stone gathers no moss.
- Khali chano vagé ghano.

Reaching for the Sky



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An empty vessel makes the most sound.
 •Jyaa maati na choola, tyaa halla khakhré.
 When the head of the house is not strong
 enough the family ties are shaken.
 •Vaaki aangli vagar ghee nahi niklé.
 Self help is the best help.
 •Aakhai khata gosai neri.
 Not satisfied with what he had, he lost all.
 •Mor naachi naachi né pag taaré joi.
 Pride goes before a fall.
 •Bhoolee-ayan tia thi pachha gano.
 If you have failed, try, try again.
 •Rartee né ghér bhartee.
 Though rich she always feigns poverty.
 •Sobat tévi asar.
 A man is known by the company he
 keeps.
 •Paano to put parna maa thi janai.
 An intelligent child can be noticed from
 birth.
 •Ghoda chhooté tyaré tabéla bandh
 karva jai.
 There is no use crying over spilt milk.
 •Mohné Ram né paggé machhala.
 To take God's name in vain.
 •Énathi bhoojio papad bhi nahi bhangai.
 Not capable of any work.
 •Dikri né gai jehan doravé tia jai.
 A daughter and a cow will always fol-
 low you.
 •Khabar khaatlé né daulat darvaajé.

No news is good news.

•Anjaan ghau kartaa jaaneeti jovar saari.
 Better a known devil than an unknown.
 SILLOO DOSSABHOY KALYANIWALLA

"Matrons of medicine"

The cover story, "Matrons of medicine," by Dr Mridula Ramanna, (*Parsiana*, October 2000) interested me as it mentioned that (Dr) "Dhunbai Hormasji Wadia practiced in Ahmedabad." I have been unable to corroborate this information at my end, hence I obtained the original publication *Indica* and have also been in correspondence with the author. Would any of your readers be able to throw some light on the matter? I am in the process of compiling data on the Parsis of Ahmedabad and those Parsis who contributed something or the other towards this historic city. I would therefore appreciate it if readers of *Parsiana* would contact me at 167 Sunrise Park, Ahmedabad 380054 if they have information in this regard. RASHID S. MEDORA

Ahmedabad

"Options at Doongerwadi"

As the discussions and seminars and arguments rage on the topic of disposal of the dead, one is inclined to believe

that Parsis deserve to be called "ghéla bawajis!"

But there are wise, mature, sensible voices too, as in "Thus spake Bharucha" (*Parsiana*, January 2001) and Dali J. Gandevia's letter "Options at Doongerwadi" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 2001). And my faith in my community tiding over holds fast.

We are wasting time, energy, money, resources on extraneous issues instead of giving thought to the human needs, both spiritual and physical, in these fast changing times: education, housing, mofussil Parsis and their vast properties lying unattended and attracting the land mafia. The situation would be ludicrous if it was not so frustratingly serious.

Tell me, how does it matter whether the dead body is eaten by animals, birds, worms, dissected by medical students or consumed by heat? Let us give up this notion of being the purest of the pure, the chosen of the Almighty, whereas others are "mua darvan (infidels)." All humans are the children of the one true God.

My humble suggestion is — let each Parsi express his or her choice of the method of disposal in writing; then it becomes incumbent on the relatives and community to see that it is carried out,

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with the accompanying prayers and ceremonies.

SOONU JAL

Neemuch

Now that three of the past trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) have openly expressed their opinion, Dr Aspi F. Golwalla and Jamsheed G. Kanga having signed the letter of the Disposal of the Dead with Dignity — Action Group, and Eruch B. Desai by his letter to the Press, I felt that I should also let my views be known to those Zoroastrians who may not be aware of them.

It was in the year 1874 that the fight to preserve and protect Doongerwadi lands came to the attention of the public. Two persons by the name of Jacob and Jamal constructed a structure on Doongerwadi lands to which the then trustees of the Parsi Punchayet objected. But when the two trespassers persisted in continuing with the construction the trustees, with the help of some tough members of the community, got this illegal structure demolished overnight.

These brave men, when arrested by the police, openly declared that they were not afraid since they knew that the BPP trustees were behind them.

The then police commissioner Mr

Souter came on horseback to inspect the site, but a very staunch and tough Irani Zoroastrian would not allow him to proceed further and threatened to throw the commissioner and his horse down the hill.

The case came up in court, and barristers of the stature of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Anesty fought the case. They were men of stature and not of straw. All those who had been arrested were honorably acquitted.

Again in the year 1922 the question of the method of disposal of the dead came up before the community. The elite group at that time consisted of Sir Dorab and Lady Tata, Sir Ratan and Lady Tata, F. E. Dinshaw, Bahadurji Barrister, Lady Dinbai Petit, Jehangir B. Petit, Jehangir Hormusji Bhabha, who formed the "Parsi Cremation Society," and applied to the Bombay Municipal Corporation for a piece of land to establish a Parsi crematorium. But the Parsi community rose up in arms, and they, under the leadership of Sir Jamshedji Jejeebhoy opposed the very idea of having a Parsi crematorium.

In the Corporation at that time were municipal corporators like Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Sir Homi Mody and Sir Feroze

Sethna who would not succumb to any glamor of becoming municipal commissioners, nor of pomp and self aggrandisement. They were not prepared to give away an inch of Doongerwadi lands, nor for having a Parsi crematorium elsewhere.

And the idea of a Parsi crematorium was scrapped. Thereafter in 1972 under the bogey of lack of vultures a move was made to have a crematorium on Doongerwadi lands. At that time also young educated men and women opposed the idea and took a deputation (morcha) to the BPP office and the idea was dropped by the trustees.

I would appeal to all my fellow Zoroastrians to desist from hurting the religious feelings and sentiments of the Parsi community.

I quote the words of the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta:

"These are our sacred grounds,
The abode of our dear departed,
The bones of our forefathers rest here,
The peace of heaven reigns here,
He, who disturbs this peace
Shall do so at his peril."

May wise counsel prevail.

Dr NELIE RUSTOMJI NOBLE

continued on page 42

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Events and Personalities

Fare thee well

After 45 years of service to the community, 23 years of which were as president of the Nagpur and Kampti Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman, 84-year-old Dinshaw F. Bapuna will shortly be stepping down. A special felicitation was organized for Bapuna and another veteran Keki Bala who too was retiring after 47 years of service to the Anjuman, 23 of which were as honorary secretary, according to a report sent by Shiraz Gimi, president of the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana which had organized the function on March 21, 2001.

The two stalwarts were presented citation scrolls, shawls and silver salvers on behalf of the Gymkhana and the Anjuman. The head priest of the fire-temple Ervad Darius Karanjia also felicitated the duo.

An industrialist of repute and doyen of the Bapuna family, Dinshaw has made a mark as a philanthropist. "His family is a major donor to social organizations, charitable institutions and sports bodies. Under his able leadership Nagpur's Bai Hirabai N. M. Mulla Dar-e-Meher was renovated during its centenary year making it one of the most beautiful agiaris in the world. His support to the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana for conducting the Parsi Pentangular Cricket Tournament and many other sporting events like bridge, snooker, tennis and the Ranji Trophy Selection Tournament has been a source of inspiration to the youth," writes Gimi. The citations for Bapuna and Bala were read by Dr Thrity Patel. Acknowledging the love and affection showered on him all these years, Bapuna promised continued support to the community.

Under Bapuna's stewardship the Anjuman's trust fund corpus stands at

Rs 6,085,193.92 which includes the surplus of Rs 3,00,000 transferred from the preceding year, as per their balance sheet as on March 31, 2000. Their immovable property valued at Rs 4,612,116 includes the dar-e-meher building with staff quar-



Gimi (left) presenting a memento to Dinshaw Bapuna as Aspi Bapuna and Bala (right) look on

ters, the cemetery road, and other residential buildings. While the Aramgah Fund shows a balance of just Rs 91,490.67, the Shri Dar-e-Meher Centenary Fund shows a comfortable Rs 3,196,385.25. Maximum expenditure during the year, Rs 155,681.70 was incurred on religious objects of the trust. Salaries accounted for Rs 107,755 of their expenses while Rs 56,400 were disbursed to the needy, Rs 31,567 was medical expenditure and Rs 29,945 educational costs.

The cloth banners on the truck and Tata Sumo reading "Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana, Gujarat Earthquake Relief" were a passport to unhindered driving and evoked spontaneous respect. Accompanying the relief material were three volunteers from Nagpur, Cyrus Watchmaker, Sharukh Cassad and Shiraz Doongaji who set

aside their personal commitments and problems to drive 3,500 km to the disaster hit area and distribute the relief material to the devastated survivors. Before departure on February 6, 2001 all three took shots against gastroenteritis and other communicable diseases. They also carried food and water for themselves for four days so as not to deprive the quake victims of anything.

Rightly believing that aid delayed would be aid denied, the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana, under the presidency of Shiraz Gimi, had swung into action without wasting any time. A meeting was called, appeals printed and members fanned out among the community to make the collection.

They were choosy in what they accepted...money, dry rations, blankets, clothes, torches, cells and candles. Within three days a cash collection of Rs 1,75,000 was made apart from donations in kind. From this money they bought and assembled 60 home kits constituting a tent, mat, blanket, clothes, bucket and a few other basic necessities.

Working conjointly with SRISTI (Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions), on reaching Nilper near Bhachau, they were directed to the village of Panderghat which had a population of 60 families. Recounting their experiences, Doongaji said, "The villagers crowded around us, clamoring for help. Of the 60 homes, 40 belonged to Hindus and 20 to Muslims. Of course, no houses existed any more. All the mud and brick homes were reduced to rubble. But by some miracle, not a single person or even head of cattle had been destroyed." Despite a calamity of this magnitude, the communal divide remained, with the schoolteacher, the most literate person

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in the village, representing the Hindus, and the Maulvi, the Muslims. A hardy and poor community, their mainstay was dairy farming. "When our volunteers distributed cartons of bottled water to the villagers, they found it unpalatably sweet," said Cassad. "They wanted to add some salt to make it drinkable."

"There was scant evidence of government machinery or aid all over the earthquake affected area," lamented Watchmaker. "The army on the other hand was present everywhere and working around the clock to alleviate the sufferings of the people."

The roads and byroads between Ahmedabad and Nilper were reportedly a moving mass of humanity. A villager stopped the Sumo for a lift, which they willingly gave. Conversation was easy because everyone spoke Gujarati. The turbaned villager had heard of 'Asho Zarhostis,' as he called them, recalling, "Mota bapa kēhata tha varso pahēlē Asho Zarhosti darya thi avi, Sanjan bandar ma utrēla (My grandfather used to tell me of the Zarathushtris who landed on the port of Sanjan many years ago)."

Watchmaker's brother and his family live in Ahmedabad. Although they were safe, his sister-in-law was still in a state of shock seeing houses on their street come down like a pack of cards. Their older daughter was in school for the Republic Day celebrations, while the younger son, still lolling in bed when the killer quake struck, shouted excitedly, "Mamma, I think a dinosaur is shaking our house!" Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

Preserving property

A sum of Rs 1,675,300.67 was shown as expenditure on properties by the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) Funds and Properties during the last financial year ending March 31, 2000, as per their income and expenditure account. On repairs and maintenance the SPP expended Rs 1,295,532.03, and just as well for even after the devastating earthquake in Gujarat in January 2001 "we have not heard about collapse of any property belonging to Parsis," wrote SPP president Dr Sam S. Bhacca. "Some of our structures are historical but we are experiencing that the old (ones) stand while the new ones crumble down," he added, reporting, "Some of our old buildings will have to be repaired and one building which was used so far for the primary J. J. School is found unfit for use. Though it is standing, it will have to



Above: Nagpur volunteers surrounded by Panderghat villagers
Left: shattered homes and dreams



be pulled down and we shall have to think about the new structure on that spot."

The single largest expenditure for the Panchayat this year, Rs 10,724,712.62 as in the previous year, was on account of education of which salaries totalled Rs 5,084,795. Last year the expense on education was Rs 7,878,240.29. Establishment expenses which in the preceding year were shown as 1,618,546.28 had declined to Rs 1,308,641, whilst relief of poverty expenses had reduced from Rs 767,070 to Rs 718,914.50. Medical expenses showed a rise from Rs 419,194 to Rs 783,513.

Donations during the last financial year totalled Rs 312,026.71; Rs 208,297 from individuals and Rs 103,729.71 from public trusts. Among the institutions managed by the SPP, the Surat Parsi Boys Orphanage and Properties earned the maximum donations, Rs 116,357 from individuals and Rs 21,752 from other public trusts. The Bai G. N. Mehta Maternity Hospital earned the lowest donations, Rs 545 from public trusts and Rs 70 from individuals.

As explained in the booklet in Gujarati giving information on the various facilities managed by the SPP for the approxi-

mately 3,500 Zoroastrians residing in Surat, the Orphanage actually serves as a boarding school for the Zoroastrians residing in the rural areas. In the year 1999-2000, there were 50 Zoroastrians studying there of whom 33 had come from the villages and 17 from the cities. Whilst 42 hailed from Gujarat, there were five from Maharashtra and three from Madhya Pradesh. Of these 50 students, 20 were studying in Gujarati medium schools, 19 in English medium schools, three were in college, two were specializing in engineering and six pursuing technical and computer courses.

In the Sir J. J. Primary School and High School there were 1,972 students in the academic year 1999-2000 of whom 157 were Parsis. The Gujarati medium Bai P. M. Patel Girls' High School had 1,309 children of whom 20 were Parsis, mentions the booklet. The Seth K. H. Alpawala Industrial Institute for Women and Girls showing a corpus of Rs 198,071.69 offers training in stitching, embroidery, knitting, etc to encourage ladies to be self-supporting members of society.

The Seth R. D. Tarachand Surat Parsi General Hospital with its corpus of Rs 14,283,593.55 had to expend Rs 1,218,456.82 on medical relief during the last financial year. The Nariman Home and Infirmary in a more comfortable position with a corpus of Rs



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28,601,924.76 had to expend Rs 1,799,597.74 towards medical relief.

The other establishments managed by the SPP whose accounts are appended are the Nariman Girls Orphanage, the Bai P. M. Patel Singanporwala English School, the Seth Sorabji Nauserwanji Parukh Polytechnic Institute, the Bai G. N. Mehta Maternity Hospital, The First Dastur Meherji Rana Trust Fund, The Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust Fund and the Sorabji Burjorji Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust.

Welcome religious research

A museum of Vedic and Avesta cultures to inspire, inform and serve as a research laboratory for scholars, Oriental and Occidental, is being planned by the 73-year-old Poona based Vaidika Samsodhana Mandal, notes a report forwarded by Brig (Retd) Adi K. Sahukar.

"It is essential that Zoroastrians in India and abroad should take interest in the activities of the Vaidika Samsodhana Mandal and assist this institute in accomplishing its aims and objectives and in building up the library of ancient literature and the museum," recommends Sahukar. Zoroastrians residing in Poona or visiting Poona should visit this institute to encourage the efforts put in by the staff and research scholars, he advocates.

Founded in memory of the late Lokmanya Tilak, this research body was meant to promote Vedic study, research and publications. Among their first projects was an authentic edition of the *Rig Veda* followed by other research works including an edition of the *Avesta* in Devanagari script and *The Avesta Praveshika*. Realizing the close affinity between the *Vedas* and *Avesta* in respect of language, thought and culture, the Avesta study center was formally inaugurated in 1951. Dr I. J. S. Taraporewala was the first honorary director of the center, followed by Prof M. F. Kanga. The present director is Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer who visits Poona periodically. It is essential for the research workers in the Mandal to study the *Avesta*, it was reported. The Avesta classes conducted by Peer are held free of tuition fees and admission is open to anybody who has an urge to learn Avesta.

In addition to the scheme of Avestan studies and research, the Mandal has also undertaken an ambitious task of compiling an etymological dictionary of the Avesta. Such a dictionary will deal with the etymology of every Avestan

word, giving parallels from Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages as also Saka, Sogdian, Turfan and other Iranian dialects as far as possible to make the work standard and up-to-date. Religious, philosophical and such other information would also be included in this work, reports Sahukar based on the information conveyed to him by the director of the Mandal, Dr Bhagyalata Pataskar. Among the Parsi trusts known to have supported this body are the Tata trusts, the N. M. Wadia Charities and the Lady Hirabai Cawasji Trust.

Choicest calendar

Their maiden entry in the 51st International Calendar Show 2001 earned JAK Printers of Bombay a silver award, reportedly the first for any printing company in India. Partner Khushru P. Patel received the award from chief guest Dr Horst Mehrlander, secretary of state, economic minister of state of Baden Wurttemberg at a function jointly hosted by the State Business promotion authority of Baden Wurttemberg and the Grafiheer Klub on January 18, 2001, notes a press handout. There were 780 entries for this Calendar Show in Stuttgart, Germany, mentions Patel. For Patel and Aspi M. Forbes, partners of JAK Printers "good quality work distinguishes itself, irrespective of its origin."

Commissioned by Infrastructure Development Finance Company Limited, the calendar depicting oriental scenery was conceptualized and photographed by Antonio Martinelli and was designed by Gianni Vianello Vinci. Two hundred years of India's artistic and architectural

heritage are featured on the calendar. Each month of the calendar bears an aquatint depiction of India's leading sites as captured by artists Thomas and William Daniell (1795-1808) in their book *Oriental Scenery*. In conjunction with the image, every page bears a photograph of the same site as seen through the lens of Martinelli with a brief introduction to the historic monument. Dr Maurice Shellim of London notes in a foreword, "Martinelli, with his artistic flair has succumbed to the magic of the Daniells. In order to reproduce the same views which thrilled the Daniells he has visited the same places which they visited and reproduced the same views where possible, but in another medium, photography. The skill and artistry involved in this project necessitated much the same expertise, hard work and dedication as was exhibited by the Daniells over 200 years ago." Starting with the Jantar Mantar in Delhi and ending with the Taj Mahal, Agra, among the other sites on view are the Gangadhareshvara Temple, Bangalore, Waterfall, Papanasam, Tomb of Princess Ninnar Begum, Allahabad, Indra Sabha, Ellora, Cave Temple, Elephanta, Tirummalai Nayaka Palace, Madurai...

"The idea that printing is a mechanical job often overlooks the fact that the men behind the machine count... This particular calendar is an excellent portrayal of the dedication to quality, en-



JAK partners Patel (left) and Forbes with one of the calendar pages depicting the mosque at Jaunpur as portrayed by Daniells (top) and Martinelli



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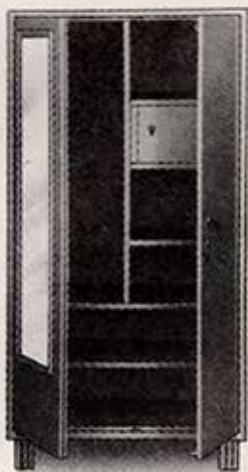
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hancing every aspect to the ultimate, the light, the shade, the hues, the overall composition. From the abstract thought to the reproduction on paper, printing has breathed life into the subject," claims the calendar.

When it was established 16 years ago, JAK Printers had a third partner, Patel's sister Jasmine. So the first letter of their first names was used for the firm's name. Presently specializing in publicity material, they pride themselves on "experimenting with any new methodology and application, the direct benefit of which are the clients." While Patel specializes in the pre-printing processes, Forbes oversees the post-printing jobs.

Senior scientist award

Emeritus scientist at Dangoria Charitable Trust, Hyderabad, Dr Mahtab S. Bamji was conferred the Senior National Women Bioscientist Award for the year 2000 by Prof Murli Manohar Joshi, minister for science and technology, HRD (Human Resource Development) and ocean development, on March 8, 2001 which happened to be International Women's Day. The Award, recognizing her lifetime contribution, excellent research and application for the benefit of society, carries a cash gift of one lakh rupees along with the citation and a gold medal, notes a press communiqué.

The Government of India's department of biotechnology has instituted three awards for the best women bioscientists in the country every year. This is meant to provide an incentive to women scientists for their outstanding contributions in the field of biology and biotechnology, notes a publication introducing the awardees.



Bamji: research acclaim

Bamji is known for her original and significant contributions in the field of basic and applied nutrition. She established a modern animal house facility at the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad and has developed an enzymatic test for early detection of Vitamin B₂ deficiency and used it to assess the Vitamin B₂ status of the Indian population, notes a profile of Bamji. Having worked for nearly 30 years in various capacities at the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad,

Bamji is presently engaged in developing science and technology based models for the health and nutritional well-being of the rural poor through community participation, adds the profile.

A fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Indian National Science Academy, Bamji's accomplishments have earned her many awards and scholarships from the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Indian National Science Academy, the Indian Institute of Science...The National Science Foundation of USA conferred on her their travel fellowship, it was reported. Known to have over 139 publications to her credit in various national and international journals, Bamji, an alumnus of the Bombay University, has guided 11 PhD theses.

Heading for hope

"Surgery for epilepsy is now possible and a large number of hitherto incurable cases can get a new meaning to their lives, easing the social and financial suffering on the patients and their families," notes a press release from Dr Keki E. Turel, president of the Asian-Oceanian Skull Base Society, and head of the department of neurosurgery at the Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences. The success of the "awake craniotomy" surgery that Turel undertook on January 6, 2001 on 17-year-old Vikas Sashidharan of Abu Dhabi who has been a victim of uncontrolled epilepsy since the first few months of his life, has made him optimistic of the other applications of this procedure.

"Awake craniotomy is yet another accomplishment of modern neurosurgery by which the disease in the brain can be removed from eloquent or vital areas with the awake patient guiding the surgeon to its safe removal. Its application is not just restricted to treatment of epilepsy but more useful for removal of vascular malformations and brain tumors," adds the release.

In awake craniotomy, local anaesthesia is administered to the scalp after which the head is opened and the brain exposed. Soon the anaesthesia is withdrawn and the patient is brought fully to his senses in the next couple of minutes. Using an electroencephalogram (EEG)



Turel: awake and alert

which examines the electrical activity of the brain, areas which are diseased are then mapped out before they are surgically removed. During the operation, the patient is asked to speak and move his limbs on the opposite side to ensure that the abnormality which is being removed with great precision does not impair his normal speech and motor functions. EEG recordings are again done to confirm that the epileptic waves have either disappeared or diminished.

Fortunately for Sashidharan, there has been a complete cessation of fits, according to the report, although he will have to continue receiving antiepileptic drugs for some more time. His neurological function has not suffered any setback except for a mild transient weakness of the right hand and foot which are both recovering each day, adds the report commending him for his cooperation "during this painstaking operation and...valuable help (in) deciding when to stop."

Lest the dead...

Just as Zoroastrians believe that contact with a dead body needs to be followed by a purificatory bath, there is a sect of Navajo Red Indians who are very strict about not touching the dead believing that evil spreads from there. According to a reference found on the Internet by Karl Sahukar and forwarded to *Parsiana* by Khurshed Pastakia, the Navajos fear that the dead hold *ch'iindis* or evil spirits which should not be tampered with. While the good part of the person departs with the spirit on death, the evil remains with the physical body, they are given to understand. There are some Navajos who prefer to take their dying relatives to hospitals rather than see them die at home. Others are convinced that hospitals are filled with *ch'iindis*.

According to the Internet information sourced from Lori Arviso Alvord and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt, the Navajos are familiar with stories of how one woman became a skin walker, how another became lame after touching a lame dead horse, a third died in his sleep after touching the body of his dead uncle and therefore fear to even utter the word "death" lest it hold bad karma.

There is a possibility that this belief has its origin years ago when a dead body may have been infected with contagious diseases and touching that corpse might have unknowingly spread disease, it was reported.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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London's new center

Posters of *Star Trek*, *Return of the Jedi*, *Star Wars*, *Dracula*, *Godzilla*, *King Kong*, the Beatles greet the visitor at the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE)'s new premises — the Grosvenor Cinema in London's Harrow district. A great two-star structure of the architectural design of 1936, certain features of the precincts, like the sunken foyer, the ceiling with its built-in lighting, etc are protected under the heritage rules. Its 20,000 sq feet of usable space already has Zoroastrian minds buzzing with ideas and "the Harrow Council and fellow conservationists are working with the ZTFE to bring it back to usable level without affecting the fabric of construction," assures Rustom Sutaria who lives in the neighborhood and keeps an eye on the property.

The Grosvenor functioned as a cinema for 50 years before commercial reasons changed its use into a dance club. Its lower auditorium can easily accommodate over 300 persons; the balcony, 200 more. The initial intention, when *Parsiana* stopped by for a visit in December 2000 en route to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress at Houston at the urging and invitation of ZTFE president Dorab Mistry, was to convert the balcony to a dining area and offer it as an alternative venue for weddings and navjotes, informed Sutaria. And though the beautiful staircase is part of the heritage, he noted that



The Grosvenor exterior and an angle of the foyer Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama

mehr, long-time ZTFE executive secretary Behroze Mody informed us.

Though there had been plans for arranging functions at the new center in the first flush of acquisition, it was found that the building's heating system was in disarray and could not cope with the winter chill. Also, drainage from the roof needed repair. The seeping moisture and lack of heating combined to create a musty odor that pervaded the structure. Once these are rectified, there are plans to show Bollywood movies.

With experienced architect Shahrokh Shahrokh who headed the ZTFE's New Premises Steering Committee to advise them and contacts with the UK Cinema and Theatre Associations and Liberal Democrat councillor Christopher Noyce, the association is hoping to get planning permission to start work by August-September this year and see it through in six to eight months. There is also a chance that the English Heritage Trust would help in the restoration work.

Once the basics are in place, the Lon-



Sutaria (left) and Mody: keeping an eye on the new property

don community is all fired up to see their library, conference room and offices in operation here along with the auditorium, adds Sutaria.

there were plans to "install an elevator as the majority of the population is elderly."

The new center's other assets are its proximity to public transport as well as substantial public parking space. Its own car park could be the site of a darbe

An agiary in London

As has been the case since the mid '80s, London Zoroastrians have been working on duplicate models. Simultaneously with the above developments, the European Zarathushti Fire Temple Trust (EZFTT) has been established with the only avowed purpose of setting up a consecrated agiary in London, as per missives from its administrator, Rohin-ton Irani. Its other administrators are Rumi Sethna and Dinshaw Tamboly, respectively chairman and vice president of the World Zoroastrian Organisation.

Describing themselves as a religious charity trust, Irani writes, "We are committed to provide that place where we, and more importantly our children, can at last feel the strength, warmth, beauty and devotion of the Zarathushti community. We will establish our atash adaran in the UK. We are of the united and strong belief that our agiary is our necessity of utmost priority for our community. Our determination for this holy edifice was conceived on January 11, 2000.

"With the help of gentle-minded Zarathushtis, our charity trust was approved and registered in the UK on October 25, 2000 (the death anniversary of Iranian philanthropist Mehraban Farhangi) as The European Zarathushti Fire



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Temple Trust. We are not an association. Establishing the agiary and an associated bungli is our one and only goal."

According to Irani the Trust will create a corpus enabling it to invite and support three residential mobed families on three-yearly assignments from India, Iran or Pakistan. He notes that funds pledged/collected so far amount to over £ 200,000.

Quoting Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, that "No religion can survive without rituals and no ritual can function without a visible symbol," Irani faults the "local association" (ZTFE) for not venturing beyond the concept of an atash dadgah which already exists in the form of the Setayesh Gah at Zoroastrian House.

Estimating the total scattered Zarathushti population of the UK at 5,000 plus 2,000 more in Europe, the venue of choice will be within the vicinity of the international airport at Heathrow — approximately three acres costing about £ 700,000. If Heathrow proves unavailable, a site in Chessington is also being considered.

Irani estimates the total cost of the facility (inclusive of land, building, mobeds' residence with modest amenities) at approximately one million sterling. He computes the annual maintenance of one mobed family at £ 50,000 and of three such families at £ 100,000 as against an approximate annual income from various sources in the region of £ 50,000.

Aware of the rough road ahead, Irani notes, "The most important and herculean task now is to secure the planning permission for the use of the identified land — an upward struggle with the authorities." In the interests of a "community that prays together and stays together" the EZFTT seeks financial and moral assistance from Zoroastrians around the world.

Venturing forth

When one stops equating the Zoroastrian community with the Parsis of Bombay, the picture brightens. Instead of bemoaning the Parsi youths who fail to grasp opportunities in other parts of India, a wider perspective brings to the fore plucky individuals who have eyed the world and found opportunity in distant parts of the globe. Like their illustrious forebears who fought the elements and revelled in the peace and beauty of Quetta, Muree or Srinagar, *Parsianna*

Zoroastrian frontiers new and old: Bodhans in Caracas (left); Poonawallas in Bonn

Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama



briefly met two brave couples during the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston — one based in Caracas, Venezuela, the other in Bonn, Germany.

Having cut his engineering teeth at Wanson India in Poona (which later became the prestigious Thermax), Jimmy Bodhan migrated to Toronto, Canada where, along with Jamshed Bhathena, son of Wanson founder Adi Bhathena and brother-in-law of the late Thermax architect Rohinton Aga and Noshir Mirza he established Canadian Boilers Limited in Mississauga, Ontario. The firm made high pressure steam boilers for the petroleum based industries.

Looking for new business they sought to explore the possibility of cutting a deal with the oil industry in Venezuela where oil prices then (in 1983-'84) were low.

While Jimmy and Zareen were sizing up opportunities in Venezuela, Canadian Boilers was bought over by a Canadian businessman from Montreal, says Bodhan and they were faced with a new choice: "whether to come back (to Toronto) or remain in Venezuela." They decided to stay and start their own company, Calortech de Venezuela, and have remained in Caracas since 1986.

The Ontario connection continued unbroken, with the family routinely shuttling between the North and South American continents. The children finished schooling at the American School in Caracas, going on to Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario where Farhad, now 21, is pursuing computer engineering while his sister Minaish, 19, is studying psychology there.

The Bodhans describe Venezuela as a "beautiful country of 20 million people, full of resources... the people very friendly and hospitable." Having picked up the language, which Zareen notes is "not that difficult," she continues to work in the school library two days a week as she has been doing for the past 13 years. She also helps organize an annual event called the International Fair where she mans the Indian booth. In-

deed, they say, "We look like them and they respect Indians a lot. Everybody is called 'Indu.'" They are enamored of Indian culture, many being followers of Satya Sai Baba and a plaza in the capital is named after Mahatma Gandhi. The new Indian ambassador has been bolstering trade relations between India and Venezuela by promoting Bajaj scooters and textiles there while Reliance Industries is importing Venezuelan oil, says Bodhan.

Bodhan's five sisters are settled in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona and Surat while Zareen has a cousin in Bombay and uncles in Navsari.

In this, "most Americanized country in South America...life is good," notes Zareen, despite the "economic problems because of mismanagement." South Americans live life extravagantly. To see them dance is a pleasure," adds Jimmy, though he would perhaps like to see more Parsis and Zoroastrians there.

Drs Nariosang and Pilloo Poonawalla (née Bhabha) have lived in Bonn, the former West German capital, ever since they reached there as students in the 1950s as part of a group of 40 Indian students. Though now retired, Pilloo pursued her career as an ophthalmologist; Nariosang as pharmacist.

Respectively hailing from the Jer Baug and Grant Road localities of Bombay, they returned to India to get married but chose to have their two sons born in Germany. Cyrus is a qualified homeopath and computer programmer; Jamshed has finished business management and is studying pharmacy. The boys have been taught Gujarati but "the contact is missing," says Pilloo.

To keep up in Germany one has to maintain the German ethos of hard work, say the Poonawallas. German affluence has also brought in a lot of foreigners, so competition has increased and there has been much change following the unification of the two halves of the country.

continued on page 36

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Bangalore's fire: *Burning Bright*

The 75th anniversary of the Bai Dhunmai and Cawasji Dadabhai Dar-e-Meher was celebrated by the Parsis of the garden city

Noshir H. Dadrawala

On *roz* Ardibehesht, *mah* Shahrevar, three High Priests, Hormazdiar Noshirwan Dastur, Meherji K. Meherjirana and Nadirshah Unvalla along with 15 other mobeds including scholar priests Peshotan Mirza, Pervez Bajan and Ramiyar Karanjia performed a jashan to mark the platinum jubilee of the Bai Dhunmai and Cawasji Dadabhai Dar-e-Meher over the weekend of January 20-21, 2001. This was followed by a humbandagi and unveiling of a beautiful portrait of Prophet Zarathushtra.

Thereafter the congregation of over 500 humdins dressed in traditional daglis and pugrees and women in elegant *kor ni saris* walked across to the Kothari Hall compound. Prior arrangements were made to divert traffic for about half an hour. This silent, regal and dignified procession, sans any loud and vulgar display of religiosity, showcased the Parsis before other sister communities in the true Zarathushti spirit.

Senior trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) Minoo Shroff was the chief guest in the absence of chairman Jamshed Guzder who could not participate due to ill health. Shroff felt that today, globally, Zoroastrians number about 1,50,000. He lamented that as a community we are highly individualistic, though we have many other positive qualities as well. He was optimistic about the future of the community and reposed considerable faith in the innate wisdom and aspirations of our youth. He however felt that those who do well in life must make way for others. "We must break this heavy dependence on the BPP," he said.

In his brief history of the agiary and of the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman Unvalla gave a fascinating

account of the struggle, noble aspirations, steady growth, high values and that all-endearing Parsi quality of philanthropy. Early Parsi settlements in Mysore and Bangalore date back to 1880. However in the beginning of the last century a few Parsi families got together to form an association with a monthly subscription ranging between four to eight annas.

During the decades 1900 to 1920, the Parsi population of Bangalore rose to 100 and a need was felt for a proper place of worship. Noted businessman and philanthropist D. Cawasji (father of the present president of the Anjuman, Kali Cawasji) responded with a generous contribution to build a fire-temple in memory of his late parents Dhunmai and Cawasji Dadabhai.

The holy fire which is of the *dadgah* grade was consecrated 75 years ago, on *roz* Ardibehesht, *mah* Shahrevar 1295 YZ. The late Pestonji Unvalla was the first panthaky and he served the holy fire and the Anjuman with selfless dedication for 40 long years, while his equally dedicated son Nadirshah served as panthaky for 31 years. Even today Nadirshah, despite his age and frail health, continues to guide and inspire the community in Bangalore with unflagging dedication and zeal. His involvement with the Parsis of Bangalore now spans a period of 65 years.

Cawasji thanked Nadirshah Unvalla for his long and meritorious service to the community in Bangalore and for working so tirelessly for close to a year for the platinum jubilee function. He declared that the Anjuman, largely due to the efforts of Nadirshah, was able to raise a sum of Rs 40 lakhs by way of donations and advertisements. Grateful

members of the Anjuman gave him a standing ovation. For Parsis in Bangalore, Nadirshah is a legendary figure. He is not just a priest who blesses them or performs religious ceremonies for them. He is their friend and guide in happy and difficult times, widely connected with various government authorities and organizations and has helped many a Parsi family in times of calamity.

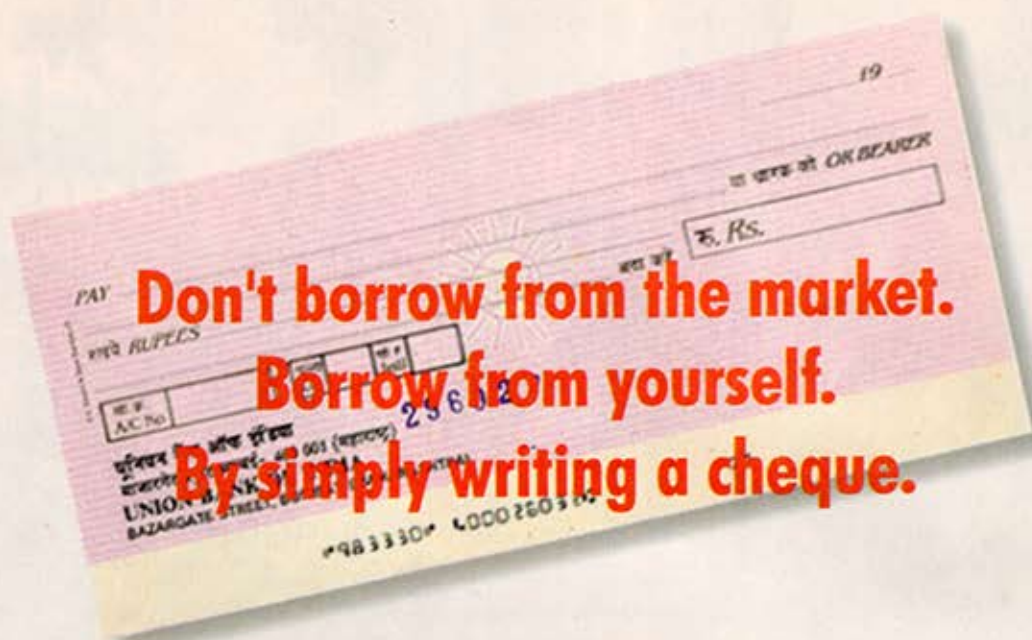
Among the other dignitaries who graced the occasion were Lt Gen Adi Sethna, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Rusi Gae, former law secretary to the Government of India, BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana, Dr Sam Bhacca, president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat and others. All special invitees and guest speakers were felicitated with flowers, shawls and specially embossed timepieces created by Titan Industries to commemorate the auspicious occasion.

Sethna urged all members of the Parsi community to respond to the national census 2001. "We know we are small in numbers. But we need to know how exactly small we are and what are our strengths and weaknesses," he said.

After a hearty lunch, members of the community congregated once again in the evening to hear Karanjia speak on the meaning and message of the *kusti* prayers. This was followed by a soulful rendition of the Rustom-Aspandiar episode from the *Shah Namah* by Bajan. Finally Noshir H. Dadrawala spoke on the theme, "Why I am proud to be a Parsi Zarathushti."

The next morning began on a slightly unpleasant note with Gae bringing in the topic of intermarriage and the law. This caused considerable unrest among the audience, especially the youth. Youth leaders like Adil Govadia and Shernaz Lala protested and urged the president and secretary of the Anjuman to prevent the speaker from raising a controversy on such a happy occasion. Dadrawala was requested by the president to respond to Gae, which he did, demolishing some of the "legal myths" surrounding the celebrated Davar-Beaman judgment.

Tempers cooled with Manijeh Unvalla once again chanting a beautiful invocation. Thereafter Mirza delivered a lucid account of the predecessors of Zoroastrians in Peshdadian and Kayanian times. In logical sequence, Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer spoke about early



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progress; Bangalore
stalwart Unvalla; a
procession from the
Dar-e-Meher to
Kothari Hall and the
renovated agiary
hall*

Alongside: Shroff releasing souvenir while Cawasji (standing) looks on

Below (L to R): Bharda (at mike), Karanjia, Mirza, Bajan, Peer, Kavarana, Meherjirana, Shroff, Cawasji, Dastur and Sethna; (center) Bangalore ladies led by Vakil entertaining the audience



Parsi settlers in India. Finally Khojeste Mistree gave a scholarly explanation of the sacred *Yatha Ahu Vairyō* prayer.

In the evening, 11-year-old Pearl Bhungara enthralled the audience with her magic show. The confidence and ease with which this little wonder performed made many a Parsi heart swell with joy. The Parsi spirit of creativity and excellence continues to flourish.

The festivities concluded with some humor thrown in by the Bangalore Zoroastrian team led by young Sheriyar Vakil and the singing of *Chhaiyé hamé Zarathoshti*.

Thanks to the efforts of a young Parsi architect, Darius Billimoria, today the old agiary structure stands beautifully restored. Though it wears a modern and cheerful look, the creative architect has retained much of the old classical elegance. The new portrait of Zarathushtra was donated by Katy and Soli Pochkhanawalla.

The Parsis of Bangalore and especially the youth are a wonderful group, modern and forward looking in their social life but traditional and conservative in their religious outlook. What is it that makes the Parsis of Bangalore tick? Possibly it is their upbringing and the leadership of its elders. In a recent letter, Sherry who is now well settled abroad wrote to her father Pheroze Bharda, "Burjor and I want to make this gift to the Anjuman. It's not much but it's given with all our good wishes... We owe a large part of our formative years, our wonderful childhood, to the Parsi club in particular and to the community at large. Few children have the good fortune to grow up in a community like ours where friendships are forged forever and the community as a whole shoulders the responsibilities of all its children."

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The Doongerwadi divide

A once effective system in decline has spawned a host of problems for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet

Arnavaz S. Mama

Though no clear-cut solution was reached, the generally polite airing of views on both sides of the great Doongerwadi divide generated hope of a peaceful resolution when smaller groups representing the Disposal of the Dead with Dignity — Action Group (DDD-AG) and the Save Doongerwadi Action Committee (SDAC) meet with the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees. No date has however been set for the meeting.

Eight secular heavyweights of the Zoroastrian community of Bombay shared the BPP conference table with nine defenders of the faith and the seven trustees on the evening of April 11, 2001. Many more SDAC supporters sat in as observers.

The meeting marked phase three of the ongoing controversy triggered by the BPP's majority decision to permit the use of Doongerwadi bunglis for prayers for those deceased who choose to opt for cremation or burial instead of the conventional consignment to the Towers of Silence. The decision to withhold implementation of this resolution at the end of a four-hour impromptu debate between the trustees and the SDAC protesters on March 6, 2001 marked phase two.

Always a gracious host, BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder thanked everyone for coming and expressed hope of a "successful, productive, unanimous" resolution and all present were served snacks and tea midway through the long (three-and-a-half hour) meet.

Reminding everyone that our fellow communities consider us "highly intelligent, educated, cultured," BPP trustee Dadi Engineer, in his role as moderator, set the rules: each side would have 45 minutes to present its case, address the trustees and refrain from dialog. His aim was to "arrive at a consensus," warning that "otherwise the consequences could

be disastrous."

"We have not come to challenge or argue about who's right and who's wrong," began eminent solicitor Jangoo Gagrati. "The community is too small to be divided." Considering this to be a "crisis situation in the life of the community," he assured the gathering that the "crisis is not created by us (but by) events beyond our control." He was referring to the disappearance of vultures who earlier were said to strip the body of its flesh and entrails in 24-36 hours, leaving the sun-bleached bones to disintegrate with the lime in the bhandar (central well). The vultures have disappeared at a time when more deaths are occurring than ever before due to the aging of the community.

Reiterating what the DDD has asserted in the Press, Gagrati reminded his listeners that their plea for alternate modes of disposal was necessitated by the current situation where bodies lie decomposing over six months to a year because of the lack of scavenging birds and are then given a mass burial. It was only around mid 2000 that DDD members became acquainted with the current scenario. "If the system was functioning as it should, we would have no qualms because all our families have followed dakhmenashini."

Gagrati's plea was two-fold:

- allow alternate disposal with ceremonies to those whose sentiments rebelled against the current indignity to the dead;
- acquaint the community with the true state of affairs, "not create a mask over reality." Give them an "informed choice." He assured all present that the DDD "respects the views and choice of those who opt for dakhmenashini... We have never advocated that the traditional system shouldn't be strengthened, revived... We are aware of the trustees' endeavors. We are not here to criticize."

Until that happy day when the

dakhmas are returned to normalcy, the DDD urges the Punchayet and the community "to think afresh... learn with practicality... take preventive steps." A large number of doctors subscribing to the DDD point of view believe that the accumulation of dead bodies in the dakhmas could constitute a health hazard — a concept hotly disputed by the SDAC. "Don't be so naive as to believe that because nothing has happened so far, nothing will happen," warned Gagrati. The lawyers on the DDD are concerned that secular law would override Parsi minority rights if the authorities perceived a risk to public health.

"The Doongerwadi complex does not belong to the trustees or to any group. It belongs to every Parsi Zoroastrian. Every Parsi Zoroastrian is entitled to use of the complex for rites and ceremonies," asserted Gagrati, bolstering his statement by the opinion of eight other outstanding lawyers and that of India's attorney general Soli Sorabjee, adding, "I am not speaking of the affluent but of the poor and middle class. Where do they go?" he asked. The DDD is willing to provide its own hearse if necessary and to accept the bungli or bunglis allotted for its use without quibbling over its right to use all bunglis: "Exercising our right under the trust deed is not a matter of religion. It is a right vested in us. We are not asking for a favor or obligation... Let us work out a practical solution so that no member of the community feels rejected. ...Do you want the community to drift away? No government can touch the land so long as the Zoroastrian community is using it... Devise a method by which we can share," emphasized Gagrati.

According to the lawyers the Doongerwadi trust has two independent objects — the "exposure" of the dead and the performance of rites and ceremonies.

Gagrat was "pained at being maligned... when we are so rational, have no time or energy for maligning," and noted, "There is a lot of misinformation, that we are trying to get into the complex... If you are not able to come to a decision we will have to sue you for breach of trust... We have nothing to hide. We are not politicians; we are not interested in the land... It will be a death wish if this matter goes to court or the government. Please don't drive members of our group to do so."

Outstanding physician (and most Parsis' first choice in a medical emergency) Dr Farokh Udwardia assured his SDAC opponents, "I am as good a Zoroastrian as any of you on the opposite side... I will be the first to go to the dakhma if you can provide the birds... but we have now ascertained that bodies lie for six months to a year... and then the putrefying bodies are buried... In my opinion that is not what the Zoroastrian faith entails."

Responding to the argument based on a World Health Organization (WHO) report that "cadavers can't produce disease," Udwardia explained how dead bodies putrefy because of micro-organisms within and without — increasing in number the longer the body lies. Quite a few diseases persist through these micro-organisms and chances of contamination exist through air, dust, water and vectors like rodents, flies and birds, he said. "Medicine is not an exact science like maths or physics. (These are) simple basic facts," he noted, adding that the WHO quote should be read within its context of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, etc, when all energy is focussed on saving the living. "The time limit for salvage is usually 10 days. Then the attention is diverted to disposal of the dead. Medical teams visiting Gujarat after the earthquake said it was imperative to cremate (the dead) individually or en masse to prevent vectors from spreading disease. The United Nations teams are well protected with masks, gloves, etc. If in the middle of Geneva they had 100 dead bodies in a confined space would they say it's all right?" asked Udwardia.

Referring to his many patients in government and the bureaucracy who spontaneously question him about what the community is doing, now that the birds are gone, Udwardia noted somberly, "Sooner or later someone will raise a complaint. If they ask for inves-

tigation, there is a possibility you may have to shut down." With a mixture of sorrow and asperity Udwardia commented, "This community has a death wish. People are so involved with the Parsi community, they've forgotten the Zoroastrian faith. If this system works all of us would go for it without the slightest hesitation. But would you call it a system if bodies remain lying for six months to a year? You provide the birds and we'll all follow it. But till then don't expect me to allow myself or my family

"The Doongerwadi complex does not belong to the trustees or to any group. It belongs to every Parsi Zoroastrian"

members to lie like this. Till such time as this system is set right, we should allow another way of disposing of our dead."

Leading gynecologist Dr Rusi Soonawalla reminded the gathering of fairly frequent newspaper reports of bodies hidden in cupboards being located because of the smell. Endorsing "every word said by Farokh and Jangoo," Soonawalla noted, "I wouldn't want my loved ones' bodies to be taken out after six months and buried in a mass grave."

Former BPP trustee and ex-municipal commissioner of Bombay, Jamsheed Kanga cautioned that the matter is fast "reaching a state when it will not remain in our hands." The municipality has already started informal questioning; a senior officer who lives at the hydraulic bungalow had complained to him about the smell. "I told him we are taking care of it. It was said in good faith but (I) now realize it may be out of our hands. Understand the problem of the trustees. They may not be able to argue that it's a traditional system and therefore will continue. Does your system say you can apply chemicals, (pump) ozone gas, then eventually bury? (The municipal commissioner) will send a team of experts to go in and examine. If the situation is still the same, he would say dispose of all bodies and stop any more. You (trustees) can be criminally liable for continuing with a system that is no longer working" — that too in a locality where bigwigs reside. Would the Parsis of Cusrow Baug have tolerated a similar

facility, belonging to another faith, next door? he asked. Stressing that an order of the municipal commissioner on health grounds cannot be challenged in court, Kanga narrated the case of a Jain muni who died in the middle of a building complex. "According to their system, they wanted to bury the body in the compound, but his son was arrested... We are only against the danger we see... Let us practice according to our conscience... If we are so confident of our system... why are we not discussing openly?... We feel very hurt that (the SDAC are) taking signatures (from community members) on the basis that we are trying to close the dakhmas. Misinformation (is being spread) under the guise of religion. Such lies are being told in agiaries!"

Describing himself as "a paradox of a Parsi," who smokes a pipe yet goes to agiary every morning, who would go for cremation only if the ceremonies can be openly performed, solicitor Rusi Sethna expressed sympathy with the trustees and wished Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree's plan of an aviary works. "Optimistically, it will take two-three years. We don't want confrontation. But what happens in the interregnum? And what happens if the system can't be restored?"

Sethna was happy that the trust deed had shattered the myth of Doongerwadi being government land. It was private land held in trust with two objects: the performance of ceremonies, rites and practices and the disposal of dead bodies, he said. Referring to the practice of offering a maachi at the sagdi in the Ushahin or Havan gah on the third night/ fourth morning, he asked, "If I, as a relative of a cremated Parsi, go for a maachi, can I be stopped? Every Fravardigan there is a large gathering. Is everybody praying only for the dead consigned to the Doongerwadi?" He also recalled that J. R. D. Tata's ceremonies at Doongerwadi were led by Dastur JamaspAsa even though he was buried in Paris and that a panthaky of the Sethna Agiary died while on a visit to Agra and was buried there. All his ceremonies were performed at Doongerwadi.

Stressing that the constitutional right to profess and propagate religion is subject to the three provisos of public order, morality and health, Sethna noted, "There's a lot of jealousy of this little community that is fast joining the Indian bustard and the vultures. It controls too



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much land and makes a mark. We have a problem. Let's solve it, not become a part of it." Sethna recalled that when his mother died the Bennett Bungli was under repair and all other bunglis were occupied. Responding to the Sethnas' request, then BPP trustee Maneck Hodiwalla, who was in charge of Doongerwadi, halted the repair work to enable the funeral to be held. The rest of her ceremonies were performed at the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram. "You say there is a connectivity between the bungli and the dakhma. What happens when non-Parsi painters and masons work there? Some people say an *ijashni* ceremony is performed." He noted that no such ceremony was performed before his mother's body was brought there. "Let's not call each other names. Let's not flash legal opinions. Five centuries ago the infallibility of the Pope was questioned by Martin Luther..."

Referring to statements in the Press that vultures exist in Vasai and that there was a move to erect a dakhma there, Sethna said, "I for one may have my ceremonies here and my body sent there... We don't want to come in your way. Please don't come in ours."

The DDD presentations having run into one-and-a-half hours, the SDAC sought and got equal uninterrupted time. Executive secretary of the Centre for Philanthropy and noted columnist Noshir Dadrawala agreed with Gagrut's observation that "the community is too small to be divided" adding, "the breaking of unity is not from the side of the traditionalists." Claiming to have sighted five vultures outside Spenta recently, he sought "time to work towards a solution." Responding to Gagrut's claim that the Doongerwadi belonged to all Parsi Zoroastrians, Dadrawala noted, "Doongerwadi is the right of all Parsis provided you follow the protocol, qualifying for the right. The tradition is flouted by using an alternative system." In answer to Kanga's comment regarding the Parsi reaction if such a system was instituted near Cusrow Baug, Dadrawala cited the smell and the layers of soot that settle over buckets of water in the Chandanwadi area.

Sethna had quoted from Herodotus, the Greek historian, that ancient Persians left dead bodies on hilltops to be devoured by wild animals and birds. To that Mistree added another observation from Herodotus: Zoroastrians worship fire and will not desecrate it by putting a

dead body in it. Mistree was categorical: "Taking dead bodies for cremation was not a Zoroastrian act and therefore the ceremonies were vitiated." These ceremonies were for the soul of the dead and by such an act we'd be "creating problems for the soul of the near and dear ones." He also noted that according to the Rivayats the souls of the living who consign the dead to fire go straight to hell. "Change the system within your turf, not for the whole community. If we are talking from a religious perspective, how can the trustees legitimize what is doctrinally wrong?"

"No government can touch the land so long as the Zoroastrian community is using it"

Challenging Udawadia, Soonawalla and all the doctors who had described the piling of bodies in the dakhmas as a potential health hazard, Mistree demanded a scientific basis: "Show that known diseases are coming from the dakhma. Find from the municipal sources what diseases affect people in the vicinity. The nasasalars live beyond 50 years... They would have died regularly, as also mourners and those walking in the Doongerwadi area. For you to establish a health hazard, (undertake) a 10-year analysis of soil, water and air... Rather than feeding us with sweeping statements, ascertain scientifically. A team of forensic pathologists should do a study at Doongerwadi."

Availing that the DDD presentation was old wine in new bottles, Mistree referred to the initial controversy on the dakhmas generated in 1973 when then BPP trustee and noted solicitor, the late Shiavax Vakil had written about the dakhmas after a personal visit. "Change the date from 1973 to 2001 and its *déjà vu*: the stench, no vultures, the barbaric practice, etc," said Mistree.

Adding another angle to the discussion Mistree said, "The texts never say that only vultures can devour the body. So can the crow and the mountain kite. A disproportionate increase in the population of crows and kites is keeping the system going quite well. The rays of the sun draw the soul to the bridge of the separator. Cremation defeats that."

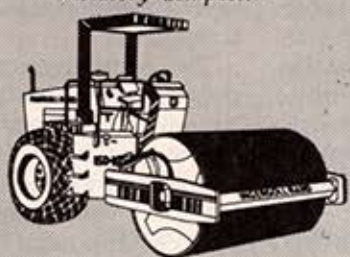
Photographs of dead bodies lying haphazardly in various stages of decay have been making the rounds. Mistree identified them as photos of the bhandar, not of pavis. He called it "sukko naso," telling the DDD-ites, "If you don't know that skeletons remain in the bhandar, it's lack of knowledge on your part." He noted that the contents of the bhandar were exhumed into pits, which he called *astodans* or bone sanctuaries, which were dug until a layer of stone was reached, then lined with lime and straw, as per traditional practice. By then these skeletons are not considered impure. "A lot of information has unnecessarily come to light because of the media blitz," complained Mistree adding, "We have more than enough ammunition to deal with the health angle. It is the least polluting system compared to cremation in Bombay or burial... What do you expect to find in a dakhma? A tea party? A bed of roses? Or skeletons at various stages. The photos show that the system is working and working well. Only (problem is that) people believe that only vultures are required."

[If all that Mistree said was accurate, one wonders if there is need for the BPP to invest so heavily in the aviary project. One also wonders why the aviary enthusiasts were then so critical of the solar panel project at the samast anjuman meet on December 15, 2000 with repeated cries of "What will you do with the (dehydrated) bodies?"]

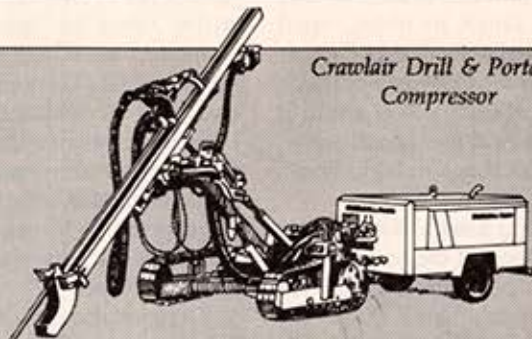
Mistree counselled the DDD protagonists to "have all prayers done as *zinde ravan* (before death) like the old soldiers of empire," to obviate the need for after death ceremonies.

Athornan Madressa principal Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar Karanjia gently faulted some liberal assumptions, essentially that dakhmenashini is a custom and tradition and is not a religious tenet. "Dakhmenashini is a very, very integral part of religion," he averred and referred to elaborate prescriptions in the scriptures on how to deal with a dead body. "All elements are sacred. You insult them (when you use other systems of disposal)." Also, the problem of birds is not only of recent times. In the scriptures there are queries concerning the lack of one or other bird, said Karanjia. Ever since the advent of the electric crematorium about 80 years ago, the more Europeanized Parsis have ridiculed the dakhma system as barbaric. In those days vultures were in plenty. Now, when

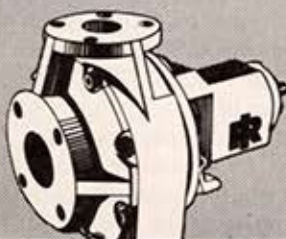
Vibratory Compactor



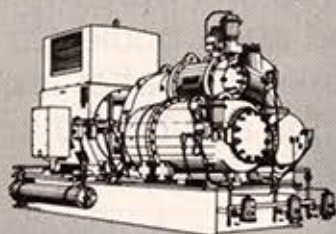
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there are no vultures, it is claimed that the system has failed, he noted. Apart from the doctrinal objection to the performance of ceremonies when the body was cremated, Karanjia was afraid it would be cited as a precedent two or three generations hence to legitimize a crematorium at Doongerwadi.

Lawyer Minoo Siodia concentrated on the legal aspects of the controversy. "Astonished to hear that the trustees would be criminally liable when they are doing their best to strengthen the system," Siodia's interpretation of the trust deed involved "what the donors (of the land) thought in 1669, not now. No donor ever thought this place would be given for any other purpose." Lawyer Bomi Zaiwalla's opinion runs along the same lines and includes quotes from the scriptures, he noted.

A free-for-all followed. "A document has to be construed in law," noted Gagrati. "A document has to be construed in the time in which it was made," maintained Siodia.

After noting that his brother Homi Sethna, the former head of the Atomic Energy Commission, had mentioned a "new crematorium in Germany where the body is disposed by a mere flash," Sethna asked, "What happens to the souls of Parsis (who are) buried or cremated? What happened to the soul of Homi Bhabha whose body was never found?" No one attempted an answer.

"Be objective," said Kanga, "because the decision on the issue will be taken by other people. Get a body of experts without preconceived notions. Our religion is said to be scientific. We shouldn't be afraid. If the system is working, prove the fact."

Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer noted that at the samast anjuman meet only the solar panels and the aviary had been discussed and the trustees were said to be strengthening the system. "When the trustees gave permission in February (for the use of the bunglis by those opting for other methods of disposal) it meant that they agree that the system has failed."

The hitherto decorous meeting disintegrated into loud recrimination as an irate Rustom Tirandaz, dissenting BPP trustee and SDAC hero, came down heavily on Kanga for his "nauseating" article in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* (April 8, 2001). Kanga had implied that the chemicals used to help early disintegration of the body were manually ap-

plied to the bodies leaving the interpretation open to sexist overtones. Tirandaz's usual high decibel outpouring led DDD's Dhun Palkhivala to protest, "You are vitiating the atmosphere!" Tirandaz complained that the nasasalars had lodged a strong protest against the allegation and he was insistent that the meet prevail on Kanga to issue a public apology to the nasasalars via the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly*.

Tirandaz also castigated Lt Gen (retd)

"I wouldn't want my loved ones' bodies to be taken out after six months and buried in a mass grave"

Adi Sethna, the president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and Zoroastrian member of the Government of India's National Commission for Minorities, holding him responsible for dissuading the Government from giving "permission to Bombay Parsis for a barbaric system." No proofs were cited. One assumes that Tirandaz was referring to further authorizations regarding the aviary project.

In the resulting pandemonium Gagrati got up and walked out of the room. Dadrawala, who was almost physically trying to get Tirandaz to stop, asked if he was coming back and on receiving a negative response, followed him out with Siodia and persuaded him to return.

Admitting that the workers at Doongerwadi were offended, Engineer clarified that the bodies are not touched, the chemicals are sprayed/sprinkled on them after the clothes are ripped off with an iron rod as the birds don't touch clothed bodies. (In a subsequent clarification in the *Jamé* of April 22, 2001 BPP CEO Behram Dastur noted that four days after consignment liquid chemicals are sprayed on the body and a powder sprinkled thereafter. By then the body is already in an advanced stage of rigor mortis. At no stage is the naked corpse touched physically, wrote Dastur.)

"A Sophocles, a Euripides or a Pericles would have spoken as you did!... I was enlightened by your religious discourse... but the basic question remains: Do you have something to offer those who are upset with the present system?" Udwadia addressed Mistree. Responding to the latter's demand for scientific

evidence, Udwadia noted, "An epidemiological study is extremely difficult and needs enormous resources. Do you have any evidence to say there is no health hazard?"

The doctor suggested an objective group of experts examine the issue but "it could be a double-edged weapon," he cautioned. Kanga likened the idea to the opening of Pandora's box. But Gagrati felt that a three-member commission with a representative from the SDAC, the DDD and the Punchayet would clear the doubts. "If there is no health hazard, there is no issue," he added. Agreeing that the "municipality can step in if there is a health hazard or even a likelihood of health hazard," Engineer supported the idea of an independent commission appointed expeditiously.

As Mistree reiterated his earlier demand for a scientific study with Udwadia repeating the community's inability to do so, community activist Phiroze Amroliwalla of the DDD told Mistree, "We have accepted the religious issue without challenge, without asking you to prove anything. We are now asking you not to ask for proof from Farokh Udwadia, Rusi Soonawalla and a host of other doctors who feel that there's a very good chance that the health hazard may be very grave."

Noting that Dadrawala and others had expressed serious doubt about the aviary project earlier, raising a fund of imponderables, Amroliwalla noted that it was on record that vultures were conspicuously absent after the devastating Orissa floods and the Bhuj earthquake. "Is there a special visa from Ahura Mazda for a soul from Delhi but not if (the host is) buried in Bombay?" he asked pointedly.

"Doing some loud thinking," Engineer noted that the DDD have said they would accept dakhmenashini if the aviary succeeds. "What happens in the interregnum?" Noting cases of venerable old community members whose families were loath to see exposed with such indignity, Engineer wondered if the use of the lower bungli or prayer hall or even the mandap could be converted to such use. "If a growing section of the Zoroastrian community asks for the use of a part of the property to do prayers, are we doing anything wrong? According to the traditionalists, these people will go to hell (cries of "that's O.K., it's our responsibility" from DDD members). Can we not give them the opportunity to fulfil their desires?"

"No section of the community can say nothing should be given," said Gagrut reminding the trustees that they had hived off land to build Godrej Baug and that some kharwa trespassers continued to occupy a part of Doongerwadi land. "Can't you hive off a part for us?"

Kanga was reminded of a similar emotional issue when the high priests had opposed the BPP decision to permit out-married Zoroastrian women to be consigned to the dakhma. Mistree however brushed aside the Godrej Baug and kharwa examples as "not germane" because they had not altered a

**"The rays of the sun draw the
soul to the bridge of
the separator. Cremation
defeats that"**

religious tradition. "If it's theologically wrong how can the Punchayet philosophically legitimize it?" he challenged.

Dadrawala baited Gagrut: "Your request is only for a small part?"

Gagrut: "We are willing to bend as much as possible."

Dadrawala: "Does that mean you are willing to close your eyes to the health hazard?"

Gagrut: "If given a separate area and peace and harmony, we are willing to live with it."

Dadrawala: "Give a child a lollipop and it will shut up!"

While Gagrut maintained a dignified silence Sethna spoke up: "The first fallout of the segregated section will be to contribute to a diminishing health hazard!"

Accepting that "this may bring about peace," Dadrawala wanted to know "what will happen two or three generations down the line?... We fear that if something is given at Doongerwadi it will be the first nail (in the coffin of dakhmenashini)."

"Don't drive the community to pieces... We don't want anything more than a place to perform ceremonies," urged Gagrut.

"We can give you the nassakhana at Chandanwadi," offered Dadrawala and was instantly caught by Kanga: "When you say 'we can give,' who's the 'we?'" While Dadrawala backed off, apologizing for the gaffe Gagrut noted that it was too small and dingy a place to serve DDD requirements.

Refusing to look into the distant future, Engineer noted: "Our conscience is clear, we are doing all we can to strengthen the system... But the question of interregnum is not rhetorical," adding that a growing section of the community is seeking an alternate system of disposal until then.

Since the Doongerwadi complex belongs to the community Siodia suggested another samast anjuman meet to decide the issue but Engineer responded categorically: "It will be packed by one side or the other." He felt that a smaller conference of both sides with the trustees was more likely to be productive.

Dignity at Doongerwadi

"We are not orthodox, radical, reformist or students of religion. We are realists," Gagrut defines the mindset of the eminent doctors, lawyers, businessmen and other professionals who have banded together under the banner of DDD-AG. Now numbering close to 1,000 as per the member list inclu-

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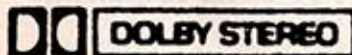
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sive of telephone contacts provided to *Parsiana*, Gagrut says these people have chosen to be counted of their own volition — lists of names are spontaneously deposited in the Gagrut office or with one or other member. "The Dadar community are silent supporters," he notes.

Sometime last September "some of us came to know that dakhmenashini is not functioning and that the Bombay Municipal Corporation has forwarded a complaint to the Panchayet," recalled

**"Every Fravardigan
there is a large
gathering. Is
everybody praying
only for the dead
consigned to the
Doongerwadi?"**

Gagrut. Describing the system as one in which "vultures played the pivotal part — the flesh and organs can only be disposed by scavengers," Gagrut says that the Panchayet has been trying to keep the deterioration in the system due to the disappearance of the birds "under the carpet by sprinkling chemicals and powders on the bodies." Hearing that bodies pile up in the dakhmas for six months to a year before a "crude mass burial" is organized, Gagrut, Udwadia, Soonawalla and a few others, all practising Zoroastrians, sought an appointment with the BPP. Over a dinner meeting at the Bombay Gymkhana their fears were confirmed by the trustees, noted Gagrut.

None of these gentlemen are advocating the closure of the dakhmas. In light of their fear that a non-working system could lead to municipal/government intervention, they feel that alternate methods of disposal could and should be open to those who are prepared for them so that the present pressure on the dakhmas is relieved until the system is properly revived. But, they say, this should not deprive such a section of the community of its right to rites and prayers at the venue traditionally associated with Zoroastrian death ceremonies. Simultaneously, they say, Zoroastrians who continue to opt for dakhmenashini could use the ailing facility after making an "informed choice," fully aware of the prevailing circumstances. For that, the trustees should

continued on page 60



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"The complete man"

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet felicitates economist Minoo Shroff for his outstanding contribution to Indo-Japanese industrial relations

Arnavaz S. Mama

"If everything that is said is recorded it will get me the Bharat Ratna!" quipped management doyen and economist Minoo Shroff, responding to the encomiums showered on him by industrialists, professional managers and his co-trustees on the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) board. Apart from the 20 point Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, Japan's highest civilian honor, reflecting the camera flashlights from his chest, the vice chairman of Raymond, chairman of the Forum of Free Enterprise (FFE) and the Leslie Sawhny Programme, was his usual, immaculately groomed, soft-spoken self, expressing his appreciation of Japan's enormous economic achievements in the 20th century.

The felicitations, organized by the Punchayet at the Bombay House auditorium on March 23, 2001, celebrated the signal honor conferred on Shroff in the name of the Emperor of Japan by the Japanese consul-general Yuzuki Kaku on December 13, 2000. Shroff had been recognized for his outstanding contribution to Indo-Japanese trade and industrial relations.

In his presidential speech noted businessman and BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder spoke of Shroff's managerial expertise in promoting new companies in India and overseas which made him also a prized lecturer in management institutions here and abroad. BPP chief executive officer Behram Dastur's welcome address focussed on Shroff's leadership of the Bombay Management Association (BMA) and the All India Manufacturers' Organisation during India's socialist regime.

Leading the galaxy of speakers that had been organized alphabetically by

BPP public relations officer and master of ceremonies Godrej Dotivala, Dr Sam Bhacca, president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat referred, in Gujarati, to the



Posing with the commemorative salver (L to R) Tamboly, Dotivala, Guzder, Dastur, Shroff, Kavarana and Engineer

achievements of the late A. D. Shroff — the maverick protagonist of free enterprise who refused to buckle under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's socialist pressure — whose mantle had now descended on his nephew and intellectual heir Minoo Shroff.

Referring to Shroff as "my philosopher and guide," former BMA president M. K. Chouhan said he had learnt of Shroff's long-standing achievements when he researched the BMA archives to create a history of the 43-year-old Association and found that Shroff, then 38, was its youngest president ever in 1966-67. As vice president of the BMA, Shroff had been invited by the USA as a catalyst for a special meet in 1963, observed Chouhan, adding, "Even at this (present) age he is still willing to learn and gives due recognition to those he learns from, even those younger (than him)." Chouhan likened Shroff's words

of encouragement to young talented people to a tonic. Alluding to the popular Raymond advertisements, Chouhan exclaimed, "He could have been 'The complete man' long before he became Raymond's vice chairman!"

According to former sheriff and political wag Nana Chudasama, "If in this country, you are born a Parsi, your future is made! I pray to God that next time I'll be born a Parsi." Saluting Shroff for having given "a tremendous record of himself," Chudasama described him as "a man who believes in democracy, talks for freedom, works for free enterprise... has his facts and figures (and) talks to the point."

Acknowledging that the Japanese never give awards without proper investigation, he commented sardonically on India's apathy to its own talent until it is recognized by a foreign country and joked about the "Order of the Rising Sun" in the context of our own environment: "Here we have many setting suns!"

Videocon chairman Venugopal Dhoot, who heads the Indo-Japanese Association's Economic Cooperation Council, acknowledged that Shroff's advice had contributed to the establishment of Videocon in collaboration with Japan's manufacturing giant Toshiba. He felt that the award had been overdue by a decade.

"On Minoo's neck hangs a ribbon. On the rest of us hangs a rope!" noted solicitor and BPP trustee Dadi Engineer's characteristically humorous remark referred to the controversies plaguing the Punchayet in and out of the Press. He described Shroff's style of work at the Punchayet as listening very carefully, and responding with a very well-balanced argument for or against, bringing



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Viloo Shroff (4th from left) with some of the speakers on the dais; Shroff with the 'Rising Sun' (Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama) and a section of the audience

all his economic skills and knowledge of finance to bear on the subject in an environment "reminiscent of Parliament, because everyone speaks at the same time!"

The president of the All India Association of Industries Vijay Kalantri described his first exposure to Shroff where the latter listened to everyone for 45 minutes before presenting a brief and lucid clincher. Complimenting Shroff on his well-versed economic analyses, Kalantri noted with asperity, "The more good qualities you have, the later you are recognized" in this country and suggested that a delegation to the prime minister ensure that a suitable national award is bestowed on Shroff.

Consumer activist and FFE vice president M. R. Pai recalled the philosophy of A. D. Shroff that apart from earning money one should do something for one's country and fellow beings — a philosophy that has guided his nephew. He recalled Minoo Shroff's assistance — moral and financial — in the establishment of the A. D. Shroff Conference Hall at the Indo-Japanese Association and in underwriting the publication of the collected writings of A. D. Shroff and upheld him as a role model for the younger generation.

Ajay Piramal, chairman of Piramal Enterprises who was recognized as one

of the global leaders of tomorrow at the Davos meet of the world economic forum in December 2000, recalled how his working life was shaped by what he learnt from Shroff who has been on the Piramal board since the 1960s. In the 1980s, before globalization became the common term it is today, Shroff had advised them to adopt an international outlook; his swift analyses of balance sheets indicated precisely where each company of the group stood at any point of time; and in a quiet but firm manner raised issues of corporate governance and business ethics.

Complimenting Viloo Shroff as the proverbial woman behind the successful man, BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz spoke of Shroff's large heart and well-endowed head, "working silently but very very effectively," increasing the BPP's coffers four-fold.

"The Japanese are very discerning. (In honoring Shroff) they have honored Indians and Parsis," commented BPP trustee and World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) vice president Dinshaw Tamboly. He described Shroff as "a gentleman to the core (who had perfected) the art of remaining low-key while being extremely effective."

Noted tax consultant and former president of the Indian Merchants' Chamber Yogendra Trivedi acknowledged learning from Shroff even during their walks at Priyadarshini Park and compared him to Minoo Masani in mental agility and the ability to get to the heart of the problem. Like almost every

speaker before him, Trivedi commented on Shroff's gentlemanliness, making particular reference to his speech: "I have never known Minoo to use Parsi Surti language!"

Expressing his "great pleasure to receive something from a government without any solicitation," Shroff noted that he had retired from the Indo-Japanese Association more than six years ago. Tracing the advent of Japan into the international arena after pulping the Russian navy in 1904, Shroff described her roller-coaster history: a leading industrial and military power by 1940, abject humility after defeat and devastation in 1945, return to prewar status by 1955, and a world power by 1960, second only to USA with the largest foreign exchange reserves by 1972, buying off prestigious US real estate in the 1980s. This she achieved despite a lack of natural resources: "no iron, no bauxite, not even enough fish or drinking water." He attributed Japanese success to their great eye for detail and conscious pursuit of perfection, the tremendous harmony of their labor-management relations, their sense of punctuality. On trips to the US, Shroff observed the respect meted out to the Japanese while their Indian counterparts were treated as poor cousins because neither Indian policy nor character could deliver comparable results.

But India had extended the hand of friendship in the early 1950s and Japan responded by becoming the largest aid giver to India for two decades... There was an element of nostalgia about Shroff as he reminisced, caught in the warp of economic history, and a hint of disappointment at the time India lost in her socialist pursuits: "Success in life goes not only to the clever man, but to the one who is faster..."

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 18

Nonetheless, life is comfortable and, compared to Bombay, Bonn remains smaller, almost suburban, they note.

For the past many years the Poonawallas organize a get-together for Zoroastrians in Europe to celebrate Jamshedi Navroz. The function is held on the first Sunday after March 21 every year. They urge Europe's Zoroastrian readers to contact them on e-mail (family.poo@GMX.net) or telephone (0228) 464143.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

In the vast complex of the J. J. group of hospital buildings, there lies a forgotten but imposing structure of solid stone, of the style reminiscent of the British raj. It evokes a feeling of quiet grandeur and one imagines the inmates to be descendants of British baronetcy, still clinging to the borrowed lifestyle of English aristocracy. Imagination proves to be far from the truth.

The folks who live there are a motley crowd of helpless, mangled, old and disowned members of society who once held their own as professors, businessmen, farmers, housewives et al, but are now considered defunct and dumped.

The first time I walked into the 'Parsi Ward' as it is known today, my feeling was one of horror. I had no idea such people could exist, hanging on to a thread of life, counting the hours in terms of the meals served, passing their time in the mechanics of living, indulging in happier memories of their youth or just sleeping.

These are the old, some blind, some deaf and some both blind and deaf members of the Parsi community left here by relatives with promises of regular visits which eventually taper off leaving the patient clinging to empty hope.

On my very first visit, I met Phiroz Vakil, mangled stiff by arthritis and blind, lying on his back, a twisted packet of bones. The ayah was serving lunch and came and left his plate on his locker beside his bed, and walked away to serve the others. "How is he going to feed himself?" I thought. So I went over, a lump rising in my throat and started talking to him, stroking his head and cheek. He turned his vacant eyes towards me, and

The lonely crowd

Visiting the elderly at the Sir J. J. Hospital's Parsi Ward has its own rewards, says the author

Veera Dastoor

I realized he was deaf as well as blind. I filled a spoon with dal chawal and was about to feed him, when someone observing us said, "Don't bother. He refuses to eat and turns away his face. Many ayahs have tried." I persisted and as I stroked him with compassion and touched the spoon to his lips, he opened

his mouth, took in the morsel and started chewing with toothless gums. The gentleman observing us was surprised and said, "This is the first time he has eaten in five days." On my next visit, I learned that he had died of starvation. It was starvation for love.

I continue to visit them. They are my friends now. I sit near many bedsides asking them about their youth, and they are never more happy

than to narrate their tales of prosperity and achievements. Some small tidbits of khari biscuits, mava cakes or chocolates livens their mood further and Dara, in particular, who lives to eat, wants something more exotic. He will "order" a puri bhaji, or cheese cubes or samosas to be brought on my next visit and will meticulously remember his "order" and will ask for it as soon as he sees me. Then he will go into deep thought and say, "Now, what will you bring for me next week?"

Dara is jolly and though a paraplegic (he crawls on the floor), has a joie de vivre. For a while he used to brandish a mouth organ and play tunelessly on it for your pleasure or till someone asked him to shut up. He has also entertained me by singing *Oh my darling, Clementine*.

Khurshed is dead now but in his youth was a debonair man about town, running a business of selling foreign cars. In those days, the sturdy old Buicks, Dodges and Chevrolets were names to reckon with. He seemed to have enough money, and though physically immo-



J. J. Hospital's Parsi Ward and its residents



"They are my friends now":

1. Hormusji, 2. Minoo, 3. Savaksa,
4. Shirin, 5. Cyrus, 6. Khushroo,
7. Rustom, 8. Dara, 9. Keiki



Old-timers Homai and Jehanbux

bile, was mentally very alert till he died. Having a great fondness for cheese, he lived only on cheese and biscuits, feeding his regular meals to the dogs that roam in the ward. He would insist on paying for the tins of cheese which he asked me and others to bring for him, and when he died, I believe 20 tins of cheese were found tucked away in his locker and trunk. He liked western music and I would bring my own tapes and play them on the little tape deck belonging to the Ward.

Shirin is sweet. Bent at right angles, she walks with a stick with white hospital gauze for a scarf. She has taught me

some unique beauty aids which are worth writing about. "What do you clean your teeth with?" she had asked. "Colgate," I replied. She made a gesture of utter scorn. Then drawing close to me, in a conspiratorial voice she said, "Table salt and lime juice! See how your teeth sparkle... You know what you should do to lose weight? Crush an onion. Mind you, never cut it. Crush it, mix with vinegar and have it with your food. Your husband will say, 'Aré vah, you look just like a London madam!'" I was actually tempted to try it. All I got was acidity for a whole day!

There was Ratansha who made me write and print out a long list of his ailments which he showed the doctor



the following Wednesday and Ratamai who held up her thick spectacles with a safety pin. Reluctantly she parted with them for a week till a new frame was procured. Homai, also mangled and frozen with arthritis, has her back scratched by anyone willing to do it. Jalamai likes to dress well, and indulgently parts with her favorite old recipes of sadhna and popatji. Jehanbux and Hormusji, old-

timers both, have many interesting tales to tell of snakes and silver coins...

There are sad tales to tell too. Another Jalamai lived with her husband in one of those big old apartments. On his death, a relative and the landlord joined hands in an evil scheme to sell the premises, share the booty and put her away in this sanctum at the J. J. Grieving, and always depressed, she has recently turned blind.

Among the real angels of mercy who keep this place running, doing their work unsung and unnoticed is Aspi Parekh who comes every morning supervising the bathing, breakfast, lunch and the patients' general health. He is their mainstay, friend and father figure. Arnavaz (Arnie) Mistry is an angel personified. She is mother to them all. She trims their hair, their nails, brings or makes goodies, and even scolds them when they are uncooperative. Amy Panthaky supplied food for 30 years and there are others who silently help in cash, kind or personal service. Dr Adi Nazir and Dr Phiroza Bhabha have, for years, been making free visits on Wednesday mornings and behind the scenes, our grand old lady, Silloo Kavarana, trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, gives financial and moral support.

The place has a strange charm for me. I don't do any charity there. I go because it enhances my own well-being. I never otherwise get the opportunity to pour out love in such abundance and receive it in equal measure. Nowhere, not even in a fire-temple, do I feel so grateful to God for all that I have. Nowhere do people appreciate so much for the little they receive. Nowhere do I see such quiet acceptance of one's fate, such enduring patience and a complete surrender to the forces that be, calmly awaiting death's knock on their door.

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DAME DR. PROF. MEHER MASTER-MOOS, & RUBY LILAOWALA'S BOOK ZOROASTRIANS WORLDWIDE AT THE MILLENNIUM

BOOK REVIEW

ZOROASTRIANS WORLD WIDE AT THE MILLENNIUM

Joint Editors: DAME DR. PROF. MEHER MASTER-MOOS & RUBY LILAOWALA

This Historical Book is a record of the achievements of Zoroastrians World Wide at the turn of the Millennium. Of large coffee table proportions - 15 by 10 inches and running into over 550 pages with illustrations and photographs on nearly every page, this unique book is a Treasure for every Zoroastrian family to keep for succeeding generations. It makes a valuable gift for your children and grandchildren as a Wedding, Navjote or Birthday present.

The educational contents of this book can be used for general knowledge quiz for children and adults. Every Parsi school should have a copy, and also a copy should be kept in every Agiary by the Trustees for the benefit of the Zoroastrians coming to worship there, for their educational improvement.

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This book is an encyclopaedia about the Zoroastrian people, their

history, culture, customs and achievements. It deserves to find a place in every Parsi home.

THE BOOK RELEASE was first done at the WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS, Houston, USA. By Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master-Moos and Dr. Dolly Dastoor in December 2000, with a follow-up INDIA RELEASE Function with Ruby Lilaowala on 25th March 2001 at Russian Cultural Centre when the TAJIK FILM STUDIOS FIRDAUSI SHAHNAMEH FILM - RUSTOM & SOHRAB was shown along with the Tajik episode of the Frohar Films.

The book is available by donation from MAZDAYASNI MONASTERIE Charity Trust office at Mustafa Bldg., 2nd Floor, Sir. P.M. Road, Fort, Mumbai-400 001; Tel No. 266 02 14 ; 266 29 50 ; Fax 266 27 35

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1. Ruby Lilaowala and Meher Master-Moos presenting a copy of the book to the Staff and Students of the M.F. Cama Athornam Institute, Andheri on the 25th March function.
2. The Joint Editors.
3. Mrs Freny Bhagat, Mr Samsul Mondal, Mr Satayawan Sarang, Ms Khurshid Cooper



READERS' FORUM

continued from page 6

I find it extremely difficult to understand as to why an intelligent, advanced and sensitive community like ours always finds it so difficult to "sift the corn from the chaff" on issues which have to my mind no reason to be debated. Can we not understand that religion and custom are poles apart? Our mode of disposal of the dead is an ancient custom born out of necessity and is not a part of our religion. A good custom no doubt, which now due to various and obvious reasons has become untenable.

If a certain section of conservatives want to continue with this system, pray let them do so. Let them spend the rest of their lives and all their money on breeding vultures and keeping them contained while our poor go hungry and our youth are deprived of education for want of funds. But when they deny a Parsi Zoroastrian his last rites and prayers, if he chooses to be cremated or buried, then I am afraid they will be denying him the comfort and solace of his religion, and that to my mind is a sacrilege unforgivable in the eyes of God and man.

To them, I say, "You have driven thousands of young people out of our

fold on the issue of intermarriage and conversion and now you are driving out the liberals because they choose to depart this life with dignity."

While reading through the views expressed in *Parsiana* on this subject, I could not help but say to myself, "Those whom the Gods wish to destroy they first drive mad." Dr H. S. ADENWALLA

Trichur

In *Newsweek* (March 5, 2001) there is a small box which reports that the city of Austin, Texas, has been invaded by hundreds of vultures. The photo with the note shows almost 50 vultures sitting on power lines. The Bombay Parsi Zoroastrians, I know, would welcome such a sight of vultures sitting on the Tata power lines in Sion-Dharavi. These federally protected birds, unfortunately, face the blasts of shotguns since their droppings threaten to cause short circuit in the Austin power supply lines, according to *Newsweek*.

Perhaps if the Doongerwadi aviary experts and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) can act fast enough, a good number of these vultures can be had for the asking from Austin. The only cost would be air freight. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), who have

a strong lobby here in the US, are vociferously protesting the killing of these vultures. Perhaps they can also be approached to help in the airlift of these birds to Bombay since they are about to be destroyed. Of course, whether these birds remain at Doongerwadi or fly back to Texas is another matter, but it would be a very economic solution to the problem compared to the crores of rupees the BPP is spending or intends to spend on breeding vultures in captivity; a project whose successful outcome is doubtful at best.

ARDESHIR DAMANIA

California, USA

Spotting a vulture

According to a write-up in the local Marathi paper *Sakal*, a rare species of long billed vulture known as *swachhak* in Marathi (meaning cleaner, and not scavenger, since it cleans off the carcasses of dead animals in jungles) was spotted at the Panch-Bol point of Chikhaldara forest near Amravati in Maharashtra.

Since birds of prey is currently a hot topic in *Parsiana* and the rarity of such birds is a matter of anxiety for the Parsi Punchayet, this information may be of some help to the Parsi community.

ARUN H. JOSHI

Poona

MATRIMONIAL

Parents of an enterprising, educated daughter, aged 30, 5'3", running her own e-business invite matrimonial alliance from well placed boy in business or profession.

Girl is involved in the Internet and web designing.

Please reply with details and photograph (optional/returnable) to:

The Advertiser
Parsiana, Matrimonial (April/8-2001)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

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

MATRIMONIAL

A 44-year-old divorcee (with no children) is interested in finding a suitable Parsi life partner who is well established in life and settled abroad. Single, divorced/widowed men, with or without children, are requested to contact by e-mail: venus434@hotmail.com

Forget about the alternate methods suggested to replace the defunct system of dakhmenashini under the prevailing conditions. The alternate methods suggested even by experts viz. captive breeding of vultures and use of solar panels to dehydrate the corpses in the dakhma are expensive, unimplementable and non-starters.

The vultures are not like pet birds to be bred in captivity in an aviary. These birds are denizens of the wild and need constantly to fly high both for exercise and their innate instinct for foraging. Enough and more has been written, argued and discussed about the futility of breeding more than 200 birds in captivity, in a span of two to three years at an exorbitant cost of more than two to three crore rupees and a maintenance cost of Rs 25-30 lakhs per year. All these in the fervent hope that at the end of their growth period, they have not been afflicted by a viral infection and will be ready to consume the corpses in the dakhmas.

The protagonists of the solar panel system have no clue whatsoever how to

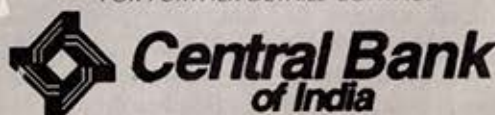
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dispose of the dehydrated corpses. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) has no choice at that stage other than to bury the corpses in a ritual called astodan. If that be the case, why should we not give a decent burial at the time of death with due religious ceremonies?

There also seems to be no logic in allowing the corpses to first decompose and then introduce some herbal preparation (the nature of this preparation is not yet revealed) and ozone gas to reduce to some extent the foul smell emanating from the decomposing corpses. Have the protagonists of this method ever witnessed the condition of a dead body, 48 hours after death when kept in government hospital mortuaries and post-mortem rooms? Our community stands ridiculed in the eyes of other communities when the aforesaid methods are justified as ways of disposal of our dead. The only sensible option left for us is to adopt burial or cremation in an electric crematorium. These methods in due course are bound to be enforced by the government in the light of the following Gazette notification:

"The Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Government of India has notified under Gazette notification No. SO 630 (E) dated 20-07-1998, under Schedule I, Category No I, the method for disposal of anatomical waste (human tissues, organs and body parts) which will require treatment and disposal by incineration or deep burial."

The anatomical waste could be an amputated limb, tumor, organ, etc. If even a part of the human body has to be disposed of in a manner as stated in the Gazette notification, how will it be possible for our community to justify the decomposition and putrefaction of a large number of corpses in our dakhmas adversely affecting the environment, even if we raise the issue of protection given to minority communities in our constitution?

Let us hope that our parent body, the BPP, will not waste any more time and money and be pragmatic in its approach as far as dakhmenashini is concerned, even if the BPP trustees are jointly committed "to strengthen the existing venerated and time-tested system of dakhmenashini" which has completely failed due to drastic reduction if not total absence of the vulture population. The one and only solution to be seriously considered is the introduction of an electric crematorium. We must also stop our frequent assertion that dakhmenashini

is the most hygienic, quick, environmentally friendly and pollution free method of disposal of dead bodies, when in fact, it is exactly the contrary.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

We need a messiah

I have always felt that we Parsis spend long, unproductive hours on all big or small, relevant or irrelevant, issues that face us.

Issues like conversion, intercaste marriages, how to stop us from being an endangered species, where and how to consign our dead and more such issues are being thrashed out but it all boils down to storm and fury, signifying nothing. What is the end result of all these discussions? No results! Why can't we conclude one issue at a time and then go further?

To my mind we are a rudderless community without any spiritual leader who can steer his flock over the century. What we need is a Moses who separated the sea to allow his herd to cross over to freedom, a Satya Sai Baba who can join us together through love and seva, a Meherji Rana who can teach us to adapt, assimilate and tolerate and still live and let live our lives, with dignity. We need a messiah to reinstate the simple principles of our religion (good thoughts, good words, good deeds) which have been distorted beyond comprehension, giving way to rituals and rites that leave us with light pockets and no understanding.

If this goes on longer we will be gobbled up by vested interests who are waiting in the wings to take over our lucrative holdings. This is a wake up call for all of us, to take stock and pray such a man comes before it's too late.

RODA D. HAKIM
Baroda

"Health literature"

I am grateful to you for publishing "Health literature," (Readers' Forum, *Parsiiana*, May 2000) on our organization HELP (Health Education Library for People) where I work as the medical information manager. We had an encouraging response from Parsis in India and abroad. Those residing abroad sent health queries by e-mail and a few Parsis in Bombay dropped in themselves and were helped with health resources and information.

There was a Parsi engineer from Melbourne who visited us when he was

in Bombay. He had unfortunately met with an accident 11 years ago in Australia, thanks to a drunk driver. He has lost his job ever since. He has developed a post-traumatic Tarlov cyst. He has been denied any compensation and his case has been brushed aside. Worse still, he has been branded psychologically unbalanced and has been told by the legal system in Australia that there is no condition called "Tarlov cyst." For the last few years he has been trying to find some information on his condition on the Internet and has corresponded with many people all over the globe. He managed to get a few articles and scanty information on this rare condition but they were not sufficient to build a strong case.

When he visited HELP in December 2000, I found him 161 articles on Tarlov cyst. We found 16 articles which were relevant to his case and which matched his signs, symptoms and medical history. He has taken all this material back with him to Australia and hopefully this will help him fight his case and obtain rightful compensation which has been denied so far.

I earnestly hope that more people will visit us and tap the gold mine of health information and resources that we have at HELP (e-mail: help@lib.giasbm01.vsnl.net.in; help@bigfoot.com; web site: www.healthlibrary.com; tel: 3683334, 3681014; fax: 91-22-2150223

Dr HUFRIH SURALIWALA

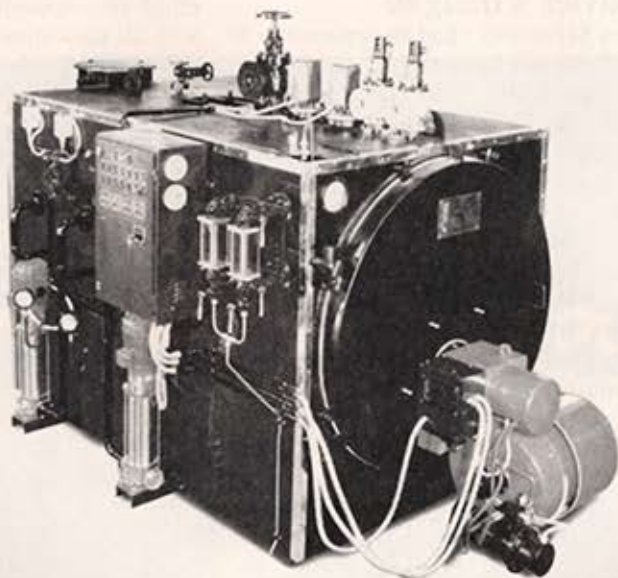
Benefiting boarders

The Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School is an institution with a rich tradition and background of charity and generosity. Started in the year 1913 as an orphanage for Parsi girls, today it is one of the city's premier institutions where girls from all sections of society are imparted all-round education and a disciplined upbringing.

We at the prestigious boarding section of the School firmly believe that the developing years of the child are crucial and have a tremendous impact on their adult life. We feel the five 'D's, viz dedication, discipline, determination, devotion and diligence have a great impact on the moral, mental and physical growth of today's child.

Amongst the various activities conducted by the School for the benefit of its residents is the athletics training program for running, shot put, long jump, high jump, javelin and discus throw, etc.

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Bai A. F. Petit School: a rich tradition
Photo: Homyar Mistry, Homz Prints

Last year, karate coaching classes commenced for all the residents of our school under the guidance of Sensei Jehangir Shroff, 5th dan black belt. Other activities include girl guiding, rangoli, cookery, handicraft and dance competitions.

Amongst educational and promotional activities are the essay, drama and quiz competitions (both on religion and general subjects). Every Thursday, Khojeste Mistree and Shernaz Munshi deliver religious and Zoroastrian lectures to Zoroastrian students under the auspices of Zoroastrian Studies.

Further religious activities include talk shows by eminent personalities of our community under the auspices of the Zartoshty Brothers' Fund. Our latest achievement is the formation of the Petit Zoroastrian Choir under the patronage of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF). The Choir was highly appreciated amongst others by the Dalai Lama at the World Festival of Sacred Music in Bangalore in April 2000. Under the WZCF banner additional activities are conducted for the resident section, namely the kusti-weaving classes and Gujarati/Avesta classes and monajat recitation. Subsequently, a short film on these activities was shot in December 2000 which was shown at the World Zoroastrian Congress at Houston, USA.

Several cash awards/trophies are also won by our residents in the competitions held by the Zoroastrian Student Teacher Association, Iran League, The Bombay Parsee Association, the All Parsis Athletic Meet, bringing laurels to the School.

On the academic side, experienced tutors have been employed by our trust to give group wise tuitions to the residents from classes I-X, so as to ensure personal attention to all the students. This has enabled them to show good results in their tests and board examinations.

Our sincere gratitude reaches out to all our well-wishers, donors and sponsors for their unstinted support and assistance given to the needy and deserving Zoroastrian residents of our School.

YAASMIN N. CHARNA
Superintendent (Boarding)

The Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School

Davie's dadgah

Last September I had an opportunity to visit a small fire-temple, better known as dadgah, at Davier which is a small village bordering Maharashtra.

When we went inside the dadgah to pray and offer sandalwood, to my great surprise I noticed the place was quite dilapidated. There was no one to look after it. It is a pity that the temple roof was leaking during the rains. The place must have been built more than a century ago but apparently there have been no repairs for many years. It is a pity that there was no priest to perform the sacred ceremonies. I hope the trustees of this



N. F. Goiporia Dar-e-Meher at Davier: in need of repair

dadgah will appoint a person to maintain and protect this sacred place. The archeological department of India should take care of this dadgah as a heritage building.

DINSHAW D. NATERWALA

A dedicated driver

A Parsi hearse driver, Nariman (popularly called Nari) Shavaksha Nalawala, expired on February 1, 2001 after 14 uninterrupted years of service with the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP).

In appreciation of his long and useful services, the BPP had earlier extended

his term for a further two years, even though he had reached the retiring age. Unfortunately, he passed away before he could complete the term in March 2001.

He would help relatives of deceased persons in small or big ways. If need be, he would accompany a few of them to the jury house and ease their worrisome minds. He would strongly plead for the welfare of khandhias either with the Punchayet or with the relatives of the deceased.

All the pallbearers of Doongerwadi were present during his paidust. It is a very rare sight to witness all the khandhias accompanying the body all the way till the corpse is consigned to the dakhma. All other staff members of Doongerwadi were also present.

Rustom Tirandaz, one of the BPP trustees, attended the funeral ceremony and gave "maan" to the deceased driver, and two other trustees, Silloo Kavarana and Dinshaw Mehta, had reportedly come to Doongerwadi to do sezdo. BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

The Top Ten

I consider the late Pirojsha Godrej of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited as amongst the greatest outstanding Zoroastrians of our time.

In August 1960, through recommendation, I was called for an interview with the late Pirojsha at about the same time I was to proceed to the UK for higher studies in business management. It was his keen desire that I should accept the job

offered at a salary of Rs 350 plus bonus, and help my poor parents. When I declined his kind offer I was sent to the late Khurshed Bardi, chief accountant at that time, hoping he could persuade me.

After I went to the UK, he wrote a three-page letter to my parents in Gujarati, which I still preserve as a piece of gold. My family's poor financial circumstances had melted his heart. Today if we had a few Parsi sethies like him, no one would be unemployed in our community.

F. N. DARUWALA
Wembley, UK

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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Godrej's genetic garden

Hilla P. Guzder

It is a book to gladden conservationist hearts. It tells us that Pirojshanagar, the sprawling Godrej industrial township of men and machines in the suburbs of Bombay, is also abode to about 180 species of birds, 150 varieties of flora and has under its protective wing 1,450 acres of mangroves!

"One of the most interesting visits during my stay in India was the Vikhroli Mangrove Park in (Bombay). There is hardly another big city in the world that can offer such an original habitat and ecosystem within a city... Although my visit lasted for a couple of hours of an afternoon, I could spot 30 species of birds, many of which are Arctic migrating birds and for which the mangrove area will offer an ideal place to rest or stay over the winter. Among others I could mention the flock of over 10,000 sandpipers," Mauri Rautkari, the secretary general of World Wide Fund for Nature-Finland, is quoted in *Godrej — A Symbiosis of Industry and Nature — Flora and Fauna of Pirojshanagar*.

The approximately 150-page hardcover book published by the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation and produced by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is a visual delight and is dedicated to the late Sohrab Godrej, a conservationist to the core, who often wore his heart on his sleeve for crusading wildlife causes. Through its pages we learn about the calls, the colorings, the courtship of feathered tribes. We read about the wiles of the redwattled lapwing which lures away intruders approaching its ground level nest with its characteristic call, 'dihedoit,' (did he do it), while 'hewillbeatyou,' (he will beat you) is the breeding call of the spotted babbler! We are told that giant wood spiders weave the largest orb webs in India — one-and-a-half meters — and the females show amazing enthusiasm in cleaning the web! We know that the 'common crow' is not a bird but a butterfly; that the constant clattering of the pods of the shirish, a handsome, deciduous tree, has rather ungallantly earned it the name woman's tongue in-

stead of the more appropriate whistling pine!

"The Godrej group makes a conscious effort to inculcate a concern for our environment, not only within its



At the launch: Deshmukh (left) with Pheroza Godrej Photo: P. P. Hirani

family, employees and friends, but also in all those who are interested in the conservation of our earth," writes Pheroza J. Godrej, art connoisseur, writer and founder of Cymroza Art Gallery, in her foreword to the book which is for private circulation. "I grew up running around in the gardens (of Pirojshanagar)... Today my 20-month-old son Aryaan is doing exactly the same. His eyes light up with glee every time we drive into Pirojshanagar," writes Tanya Dubash, daughter of group chairman Adi Godrej, in the chapter entitled "Reflections." "As we drive along this stretch of the Eastern Express Highway, it hardly shows evidence of an industrial workplace and it is harder still to believe that Pirojshanagar is a part of (Bombay)," observes Navroze Godrej, son of Godrej and Boyce chairman and managing director Jamshyd and Pheroza.

The mangrove project, the apex of the environment program of the Godrej Group, was started in 1985 and the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Marine Ecology Centre has initiated several measures to preserve the mangroves (extensions of tropical rainforests found in the inter-tidal regions of estuaries, bays and creeks which contain their own ecosys-

tem), which are now protected by law. The Pirojshanagar mangroves are maintained at great expense by the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation.

The book notes that though Bombay is the only metropolis in the world to have a national park within its municipal limits, with a sizable population of large cats (the leopards of Borivli), Pirojshanagar does not harbor any large mammal. "The biggest mammal found at Hillside and Creekside (Thana Creek area) is the jackal and that too is unfortunately dwindling," the book states. There are however over 90 species of winter guests of the feathered kind. The pink celebrities, the flamingos who visit in winter, remain in the mudflats of nearby Sewri for more than six months and drop in on the Pirojshanagar mangroves. "Waders (plovers, curlews, storks, herons, egrets, etc) are important visitors of our Creekside and their numbers have increased in the past few years. One flock of waders which passed overhead remained visible for about seven minutes. There were at least three hundred thousand individuals in that flock," notes the book, adding that as important as the waders are the variety of raptors (birds of prey) like the marsh harriers, white-eyed buzzards, falcons, eagles and shrikes which can be seen on a balmy Bombay evening, as also a diversity of smaller birds like warblers and babblers.

The book mentions three species of vultures visible in Pirojshanagar — the whitebacked vulture, the commonest, the Indian longbilled vulture and the Egyptian or scavenger vulture which is listed as a winter visitor. The main reason for the large number of these birds in the past was the Deonar dumping ground (adjacent to the Pirojshanagar mangroves) where waste from the city abattoir is deposited. An update from Godrej sources informs us that whereas the whitebacked vulture was last sighted three-and-a-half years ago, the other two varieties have not been seen for over five years.

Indicative of Vikhroli's earlier natu-



Pirojshanagar mangroves
(above) Photo: Vivek Kulkarni
Whitebreasted kingfisher
(alongside) Photo: Bombay Natural
History Society

ral environment when it was but a tiny village within verdant hills and dales, the book tells us that over 100 Russell's vipers have been rescued over the years from the residential and factory areas and released into the mangroves. Thirty varieties of reptiles are mentioned as inhabitants of Pirojshanagar.

The profusion of flora at Pirojshanagar is listed over 22 pages! It ranges from venerable trees like the banyan and pipal to venerated plants like the tulsi. The tidbits of information provided include the original habitat of the trees, when they were imported into India and the uses to which each part of the tree, plant or herb can be put. Thus we know that wood chips of the teak, the king of furniture, can be distilled to obtain oil that is excellent for treating eczema and ringworm; that henna, popularly used to beautify crowning glories, is a coolant for sore feet; that the yellow oleander, whose fragrant flowers are offered in temples, is so poisonous that consumption of eight to 10 seeds can kill an adult!

While elaborating on the benefits of various flora, the book carries a disclaimer that such medicines should not be used without the supervision of quali-

fied medical practitioners. Besides the scientific names, the common English, Hindi, Marathi and other vernacular names of each species of flora and fauna are indicated for the benefit of the lay reader.

The 31 pages of 'checklists' carry a wealth of educative information—enumerating the vegetation, the fish and prawn species and crabs inhabiting the mangroves; indicating whether the birds are common, occasional or migrant as well as the season in which they can be spied.

The compilation of the text is a "unique Godrej 'parivar' effort," states Pheroza Godrej. The photos and illustrations are courtesy the BNHS and a host of individuals including Godrej employees, particularly of the garden department at Vikhroli. Well-known



heritage writer Sharada Dwivedi provides a historical background of the Godrej property at Vikhroli.

In her acknowledgements, Pheroza Godrej makes special mention of Rishad Naoraji, Pirojsha's grandson who is "passionately involved in the preservation of wildlife and amongst our generation a full-time conservationist." The book was released in Bombay on October 17, 2000 by B. G. Deshmukh, president of the BNHS at the Max Mueller Bhavan in Bombay. Interested readers

may contact the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation C/o Godrej Bhavan, 4A Home Street, Bombay 400001.

Designing women

Perin Jamshedji Mistri was probably the first professional qualified woman architect of India, declares *An Emancipated Place*—Women in Architecture - 2000 Plus, a coffee-table publication profiling within its pages the path breaking, though sometimes unknown and unacknowledged, achievements of women architects.

An Emancipated Place is the crystallization in book form of the proceedings of the first ever conference of women architects of South Asia held in February last year in Bombay, attended by delegates from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, with some representation from Singapore and Australia as well. The three-day discussions and exhibition were organized by the HECAR (Heritage, Education, Conservation, Architecture and Restoration) Foundation which seeks to enlighten the layman on issues of architecture, urban design and heritage conservation.

Releasing the book at a function on January 29, 2001 at the National Gallery of Modern Art at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall, noted filmmaker Shyam Benegal expressed his surprise at being given that honor! "In films we work with the present, and what is present becomes instant past the moment you see it. The challenge is different for architecture. What architects design today will establish the habitation patterns of the future," he asserted. "Women are no longer anonymous designers. More and more women today have independent practices," remarked HECAR founder trustee and well-known architect Brinda Somaya, the driving force behind the conference and book. Somaya was the chairperson of the Women in Architecture (WIA) meet and co-compiled the book with WIA organizing secretary Urvashi Mehta.

The 1990s was the decade in which women came into their own in the field of architecture in our country, stated Somaya. "These wonderful, exciting and fulfilling tasks have taken many of us from being hi-tech professionals to being 'barefoot' architects, and from working in large urban sprawls to deserts and wilderness." Somaya acknowledged the

"generous and spontaneous support of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust" towards the project and thanked MK India and the Travel Corporation of India Limited, the two other main sponsors of the conference.

Working within the constraints, clamor and chaos of the cities of South Asia, blending technology with the demands of nature, the architects' vocabulary encompasses not just the building or restoration of magnificent edifices but the upgradation of slums and low cost housing, as well as the building of a 50,000 sq ft factory or a tree house on the banks of the Narmada! We read of Anupama Kundoo's ecofriendly and energy efficient habitats in Auroville using alternatives to conventional building trends; Somaya's 'lung of the locality' Colaba Woods, an eight-acre restoration of a refuse dump sponsored by the Tata Electric Companies in the 1980s; Abha Narain Lambah's focus on the rejuvenation of Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Road, the only Grade II-A listed heritage streetscape in India. It is pertinent to note that for many of the architects mentioned in the book, the first building blocks of their architectural careers were laid during

Mistri (right) and Ahmednagar's Shelter for Salvation Army



Benegal (center) with Somaya (left) and Mehta Photo: Chetan Mistry

their years at the Sir J. J. College of Architecture founded by the first baronet Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy.

"We really owe a lot to the Parsis of our city (Karachi) because they built all the major landmarks. They were the great philanthropists. They were the ones who donated and the greatest mayors of Karachi were the Parsis. Muslims became mayors much later and there were Hindus as well, but the Parsis were the first and the best," stated Yasmeen Lari who is, the book informs us, the first woman architect of Pakistan and the president of the Institute of Architects, Pakistan.

With its focus on the work of practicing architects, Mistri's legacy finds a mention in the book for historical reasons, along with the pioneering achievements of the late Minnette De Silva, the first Sri Lankan woman to be trained as an architect.



Born in Bombay in 1913, Mistri joined the Miss Kimmin's High School in Panchgani as a boarder till the age of 10 when she proceeded to England, completing her schooling from the Croydon High School. She then returned to Bombay and obtained her diploma in architecture as early as 1936 from the Sir J. J. School of Art and practiced for almost 50 years as a partner in her father's firm Messrs Mistri and Bhedwar which was established in 1891 and which

opened a branch in Karachi in 1916, the book informs us. The Mistri family had been in the construction business for four generations before Perin, and their accomplishments included the Royal Mint (later demolished and replaced by the New India Assurance Building), the Colaba and Cuffe Parade sea walls and the first runway for Bombay airport. One of Perin's earliest designs was for Sir Behramji Karanjia's bungalow on Carmichael Road. Her creativity ranged from residences to industrial units like the Khatau Mills and religious institutions like St Stephen's Church. Mistri's versatile interests spanned hockey to gardening to the study of snakes at the Haffkine Institute. She passed away in 1989.

Panels of pictures in the book illustrate each architect's creations. The designing skills of Ahmedabad-based Zoroastrian architect Ismet Khambatta depict the Tata Telecom Transit House at Gandhinagar and the residence of the Handas, a prominent industrial family of Ahmedabad. With a Bachelor's degree in architecture from CEPT (Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology), Ahmedabad, Khambatta completed her Masters in Urban Design from Rice University, Houston, USA in 1987. She is currently a partner in 3D Workshop, Ahmedabad and an associate architect with HCP Design and Project Management Private Limited. She is also involved in furniture design and manufacturing. Winner of several awards and scholarships, Khambatta has worked with architects in Switzerland and USA. She was between '91-'95 on the visiting faculty at CEPT and is currently on the juries, she stated in a brief chat with *Parsiana*, also mentioning in response to *Parsiana's* query that none of her structures were in any way af-





Khambatta and her designs — an Ahmedabad residence (right) and garden bench



fectured by the devastating earthquake of January 26. Khambatta is married to architect Bimal Patel and they have two children — Aara (10) and Shaan (eight).

Conservation architect Kirtida Keki Unwalla was involved in the restoration of the Bhikha Behram Well as well as a study of Dahanu and its environs. She teaches at many city colleges.

After four years in Iran, Renu Mistry and her husband Shahrugh launched Mistry Architects in Bangalore. Renu, a graduate of IIT, Kharagpur who is also a Bharat Natyam dancer, has worked on group housing and conservation projects.

It is interesting to read in the book the remarks of Eli Giannini of Australia who attended the conference: "There is virtually no woman (in Australia) practicing on her own or practicing in conjunction with other women who could possibly show the kind of scale or variety of work that we've seen (in Bombay) in the last three days... I'll have to protest very loudly when I go back home!"

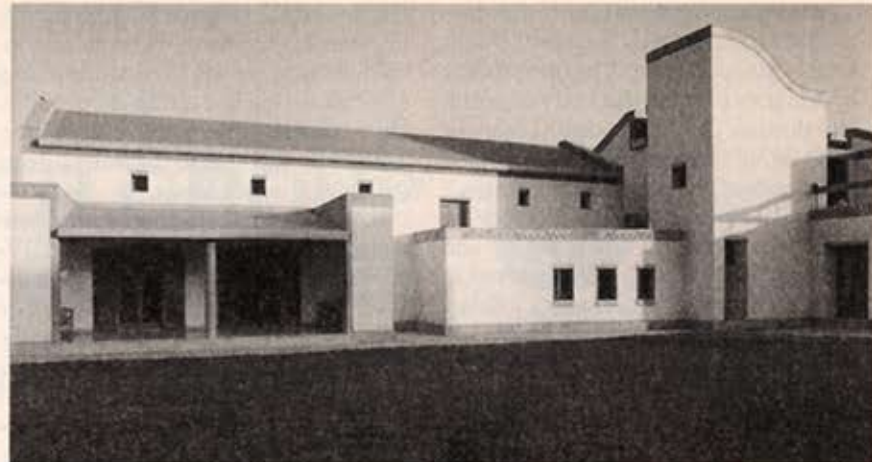
The glossy 159-page book provides brief biographical sketches of each of the participants and has its main text edited by Seán Mahoney, an Irishman who jocularly terms himself an 'honorary Parsi,' being married to a Parsi and resident in India for the past 28 years!

An *Emancipated Place*, priced at Rs 1,200, is published by HECAR Foundation, C/o Somaya and Kalappa Consultants Private Limited, National Insurance Building, 27, A. K. Nayak Marg, Opposite New Excelsior Cinema, Bombay 400001. E-mail: snk@bom8.vsnl.net.in Website: www.hecarfoundation.org

H. P. G.

The romance of medicine

"The method of medicine is really the



science of detection. The disease process is the villain, the patient is the victim and the physician the detective," wrote Dr Jamshed S. Moos in *The Epic of Medicine*. The 97-page compendium "over which he had toiled long and lovingly," as mentions his wife Dr Jean Moos, was released within a year of his demise in March 2000.

"This work introducing the wonders of medical science is written in non-technical language and can be appreciated by everyone, whatever his or her vocation. It should be read by every young person contemplating a career in medicine," recommends an introduction to the book and the author. Endeavoring to give the reader a glimpse of the methods employed in the practice of medicine, Moos describes medicine as a "unique blend of art and science" requiring that the ailing patient be treated with "compassion and humanity, to understand and appreciate the effects of disease on the lives of diverse individuals... This is what makes it a fascinating study to which there is no end."

Known to be a painstaking, meticulous physician, columnist Ayaz Memon recollected in the *Sunday Mid-Day* of August 27, 2000 how he was "treated by the remarkable Dr Moos," some years ago when a pain in the glands below the jaw refused to subside. Examining him from toe to head, spending nearly three hours in making his case study, asking for a few pathological tests and then re-examining

him from head to toe, Moos' verdict was, "The salivary gland openings have lost their elasticity which allows particles to collect inside, which then becomes an infection." His line of treatment required drinking of lime juice concentrate to irritate the glands. Within a few days a date-sized pellet was expelled from the salivary glands, the swelling subsided and the pain vanished. Memon was thankful that there were no antibiotics, no CT scan, no visiting other specialists and no huge medical bills. The good doctor's rationale was, "We take an oath, don't we?"

In fact, featuring among the first few pages of Moos' book is The Hippocratic Oath: "I will impart this Art by precept, by lecture and by every mode of teaching not only to my own sons but to the sons of him who has taught me and to disciples bound by covenant and oath, according



ing to the law of medicine. The regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of my patients according to my ability and judgment and not for their hurt or for any wrong. I will give no deadly drug to any, though it be asked of me, nor will I counsel such and especially I will not aid a woman to procure abortion..."

Moos: "experience mellows a physician"

The Epic of Medicine



by Dr. J. S. Moos, MD, FRCP (London)

Moos explains that a miraculous cure ascribed to a doctor is "no tale of witchcraft or the supernatural, but the product of centuries of scientific study of health and disease, of life and death, years of painstaking research and the combined experience of generations of physicians."

The 23 chapters in Moos' book begin with "The Romance of Medicine" and end with "Manufacturing Human Parts to order." The reader is taken on a journey from the Egyptian civilization (1900-1200 BC) when disease and death were attributed to demons and spirits to be propitiated by spells and prayers, to the recent advances of diagnosing through scans and imaging, and correcting disorders through transfusions and transplants.

Among the eminent physicians and scientists who contributed to the growth of medicine and earned a mention in this book are Hippocrates, traditionally known as the father of medicine, William Harvey who studied the two basic motions of the human body — pulse and respiration, Dr John Hunter who is regarded as the founder of modern surgery, Edward Jenner who discovered the smallpox vaccine, Louis Pasteur, the great healer who enunciated measures of preventive medicine, Sigmund Freud who probed the mind, Robert Koch who

discovered the tubercle bacillus known to cause tuberculosis. Tuberculosis infection "may be acquired while riding on a bus, eating in a restaurant or enjoying a cinema show. It lies everywhere. This form of a spread naturally affects the lungs," writes Moos.

Diabetes, high blood pressure, rheumatism, cancer, heart ailments, HIV-AIDS, have a separate chapter each devoted to these ailments. In his chapter on "The War against Infection," where the author refers to the use of broad spectrum antibiotics, he reiterates, "It behoves us to use these powerful weapons with judgment and discrimination, always mindful of their dangers. They should not be used for minor infections which the body can control anyway. Used improperly they may do more harm than good and provoke resistance to a drug which may later be required for a serious infection."

A frequent contributor to medical journals, Moos was always "very interested in teaching and wanted to impart his knowledge to others," mentions his wife. Poona-born Moos' advanced studies in science commenced at the Nowrosjee Wadia College. When he went to the UK for further studies, he impressed his seniors, as per the testimonials re-

ceived by him. "It was soon apparent that he was perhaps the most outstanding student that has attended here," noted Dr B. Barling, the consulting physician of the Wandsworth Hospital Group in 1952. The Postgraduate Medical School of London too recognized him as "one of the best Indian graduates we have had in this School. His theoretical knowledge of medicine is unusually wide and in addition, he has shown himself to be a careful, observant and competent physician." He had held many prestigious appointments in London teaching hospitals during the four years he spent there. On his return to Bombay in 1954 he was appointed honorary professor of medicine at his alma mater, the Sir J. J. Hospital and Grant Medical College. He was also examiner in medicine for the Bombay University's MBBS and MD examinations, notes an introduction to the author. Among the distinctions to come his way was the emeritus Fellowship of the American College of Chest Physicians and his election as Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.

With his extensive private practice Moos had remarked, "Experience mellows a physician as time progresses, to understand more and more..."

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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* carries data for two months, February and March 2001.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 44 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 23 and 53 years, averaging at 30 years.

There were 147 Zoroastrians consigned to the Towers of Silence in Bombay in February and March as versus 23 babies born. Heart disease as usual was the major killer claiming 49 lives of whom 21 were 80 years and above. The other diseases that Zoroastrians fell prey to were

pneumonia/lung related diseases (22), cancer (16), septicemia (nine) and brain disease and old age/general debility (eight each). Four patients succumbed to hypertension, three to anemia and two each to diabetes, liver disease, head injury and malnutrition. Among the 20 isolated cases registered for the two month period were asphyxia due to strangulation, kidney failure, emphysema (gaseous distension of the tissues), breathlessness, hernia, sepsis (the state of being infected with pus-producing organisms), multi organ failure, Alzheimer's disease, uremia, asthma, Parkinson's disease, fever, ulcer, gastro-intestinal infarction, gangrene, urinary tract infection,

diarrhoea, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), bleeding from the stomach and shock. Four youths, aged 18, 33, 36 and 39, were lost to the community. The highest age at death was 96 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for the two month period, in Bombay, was 74 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 break-up of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

BANGALORE

BORN

A boy, *Danush*, to *Nina* and *Neville Dumasia*, brother to *Jeshad* on February 8, 2001

BARODA

BORN

A girl, *Sanaya*, to *Khushnum* and *Zarir Bodhanwalla*; October 9, 2000
A girl, *Varzin*, to *Sanu* and *Parsang Bavaadam*; January 7, 2001

MARRIED

Diana Zarir Patel and *Denzan Neville Wadia*; January 23
Firuz Khushru Lashkari and *Ruhsha Boman Cama*; February 12
Nilufer Rohinton Gai and *Cyrus Nahir Laher*; February 19

DIED

Sorabji Nusserwanji Charna (73); January 14
Dhunmai Nariman Contractor (93); January 28
Keki Sorabji Contractor (50); February 5
Homiyar Phirozsha Khambhat (59); February 9
Kersi Savaksha Kavina (67); February 13

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to *Zarin* and *Zubin Minocheherhomji*; February 6
A girl to *Tanzan* and *Rohinton Patrawala*; February 6
A boy, *Hushaan*, to *Dilshad* and *Farrokh Khambatta*;

February 8

A girl to *Anita* and *Marzban Patel*; February 16
A girl to *Farida* and *Kobad Gheewala*; February 17
A boy to *Delnaz* and *Hanoze Contractor*; February 23
A boy to *Farahnaz* and *Kayomerz Irani*; February 24
A boy to *Mahnaz* and *Erach Sachinwalla*; February 28
A boy to *Anahita* and *Behram Tafti*; February 28
A girl, *Avan*, to *Daisy* and *Phiroze Navdar*, sister to *Rudabeh*; March 1
A girl to *Tanaaz* and *Phiroze Dumania*; March 2
A girl to *Pearl* and *Boman Bulsara*; March 3
A girl to *Shamaine* and *Shyam Mehta*; March 4
A girl to *Meher* and *Khurshed Poonawala*; March 13
A boy to *Ashish* and *Nauzer Billimoria*; March 15
A boy to *Mahzarin* and *Rohinton Wadia*; March 15
A girl to *Felicia* and *Ravi Albert*; March 17
A boy, *Farhaan*, to *Avan* and *Rustom Cavina*; March 17
A girl to *Zenobia* and *Minoo Buhariwalla*; March 19
A girl to *Fartush* and *Adil Irani*; March 19
A girl to *Ayesha* and *Burzin Somandy*; March 19
A girl, *Zeshah*, to *Zenobia* and *Shahrookh Davar*; March 24
A boy to *Phirooza* and *Zarir Shroff*; March 28

MARRIED

Shernaz Boman Dubash and *Rohinton Keki Sumariwala*; December 31, 2000
Khushnam Sam Karkaria and *Percy Noshir Sutaria*; January 12, 2001
Ashish Manek Sathvawala of *Baroda* and *Zubin Pesi Mohta*; January 26
Mehernaz Darab Dupattawala and *Eric Jangoo Lath*; January 27
Khushnum Khushroo Karadia and *Zubin Homi Bagwadia*; January 29
Binaifer Vispi Dhala of *Aundh*, *Poon* and *Murzbani Kaikobad Mogal* of *Poon*; January 30
Nilufer Faramroz Bhesania of *Navsari* and *Riyaz Hosi Mistry*; February 1
Ferzay Savak Daboo and *Meherab Jehanbux Saher*; February 1
Armin Hoshang Dorabjee and *Pourushasp Jehanbux Dhamodiwalla*; February 2
Ferzin Maneck Cooper and *Aspi Rustom Eraneer*; February 2
Meher Farokh Amroliwala and *Jehangir Burjor Katrak*; February 2
Navaz Minoo Kotwal and *Kaizad Kersi Wadia*; February 2
Perbin Jamshed Irani and *Hanoze Pervez Mistry*; February 3
Shiraz Viraf Wadia of *Nagpur* and *Freddy Noshir Avari*; February 4

Sanobar Kersi Khambatta and *Kekobad Jamshed Chacha*; February 4
Mahzarine Homi Doctor of *Ahmedabad* and *Fredy Bomi Chinoy*; February 4
Ferzeen Adi Faroodi of *Dahanu Rd* and *Khushru Darius Randelia*; February 5
Dilnaz Rohinton Shroff and *Cyrus Fali Choksi*; February 6
Armin Eruch Kharas and *Zarir Edul Sodawaterwala*; February 6
Shezreen Khushroo Wadia and *Bomi Pervez Tampal* of *Nala Sopara*, *Dist Thana*; February 8
Faranak Noshir Kasad and *Phiroze Dali Vandrewala*; February 8
Binaifer Shavak Dubash and *Xerxes Kurush Randeria*; February 9
Kamal Shapoor Hataria and *Khushru Minoo Vakharia*; February 9
Benaifer Marzban Toddywalla and *Karl Maneck Photographer*; February 10
Benaifer Darayes Hormusjee and *Percy Aspi Fatakia*; February 11
Delnavaz Kekas Engineer and *Vizakh Hosie Sooi* of *Gurgaon*, *Haryana*; February 12
Nancy Rusi Davar and *Cyrus Jamshed Taraporewalla* of *Dahanu Rd*; February 13
Dilkhush Bomi Dastur and *Mehernosh Nariman Rabadi*; February 15
Daugdo Aspi Bhada of *Navsari* and *Farokh Homi Ragina*; February 15

Sharmen Sohrab Commissariat and Sarfaraz Tehmuras Shaw of Poona; February 16
 Monaz Minocher Ghadially and Kayomurzd Kersasp Billimoria; February 17
 Jasmine Homi Engineer and Ruzbe Dinyar Daruwala; February 17
 Khushnam Aspi Tampal and Aspi Khurshed Shroff; February 18
 Firuzi Mehernosh Tantra and Khushroo Sam Deolaliwalla; February 19
 Roshan Nariman Zaiwalla and Ruzbe Pallonji Mistry of Poona; February 19
 Nazneen Homi Dalal and Porus Noshir Randeria; February 19
 Vahbiz Kersi Udwadia and Rumi Zarir Bilimoria; February 20
 Veera Firdaus Engineer and Ruzbe Maneck Daruwala; February 20
 Sheroo Kaikhasroo Photographer and Savak Phiroze Bhansali; February 24
 Rukshana Homi Irani and Shahrulkh Zarir Bilimoria; February 25
 Gool Erach Mama of Dombivli, Dist Thana, and Hoshang Phiroze Chacha; February 25
 Anaita Bahadur Siganporia and Hanoze Sarosh Elavia; February 25
 Ferzin Darayus Irani and Vispi Rusi Elavia; February 25
 Arnavaz Jehanbux Majra and Maher Roozva Master; February 26
 Naaz Darabshaw Gubba of Surat and Teshtar Ardeshir Mirza of Udvada; February 26
 Yasmin Adi Bhesania and Hoshang Homi Parekh; February 27
 Firozi Dadi Gamir and Adille Rusi Unwalla; March 1
 Shanaz Keki Minbativala and Vispi Rusi Dadimaster; March 2
 Tina Adi Karbhary and Burzin Arnez Sarbhanwala; March 4
 Queenie Kersi Surti and Neville Adi Marshall; March 10
 Roxana Baman Limzerwala and Porus Fredy Vazifdar; March 11
 Farzana Cyrus Patel and Zubin Firoz Mithaiwalla; March 12
 Farida Minoor Patel of Panvel, Dist Raigad and Dinshaw

Noshir Kudianiwalla; March 14
 Shazneen Shapoor Irani and Rustom Syrus Irani; March 16
 Piroja Minoor Bharucha and Vispi Framroze Pardiwalla; March 18
 Farzana Dady Morena and Savak Phiroze Bhada; March 19
 Monaz Fareedon Mistry and Zubin Khurshed Broacha; March 19
 Tina Hoshang Buhariwalla and Kersi Kekhasaru Vandriwalla; March 23
 Daisy Navalshaw Pithawala and Fardoon Firoz Gole; March 29
 Farah Homi Cooper and Yazad Rustom Gandhi of Allahabad; March 30
 Firuzi Bahadur Langrana and Farhad Tehemton Dholoo; March 31

DIED

Hormusji Burjorji Balsara (88), residing at Talukdar Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; January 31
 Dali Kersasp Daruwalla (64), 15, Mody Hse, 9, Padamji Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; February 1
 Adi Rustamji Havewalla (83), 2/10, Tata Colony, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 1
 Nari Savaksha Nalavala (62), Doongerwadi Parsi Qtrs, Kemp's Corner, 400036; February 1
 Kaikhushru Ardeshir Bulsara (85), The Reward, Tardeo Rd, 400007; February 2
 Jemi Kaikhushroo Choksey (70), 19, Noor Mhl, Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 2
 Dina Kaikhushroo Choksi (93), Shiv Shanti Bhuvan, Opp Oval Maidan, M. Karve Rd, 400020; February 2
 Freddy Feroze Gheewala (33), B, Motiwala Bldg, Patanwala Marg, Byculla, 400027; February 3
 Rati Kaikhashroo Patel (73), 20, Dhunjibhoy Bldg, 7, Lady Pochkhanawalla Rd, Off Sleater Rd, 400007; February 3
 Alamai Rattansha Bamboat (87), 576, Chira Bazar, Girgaum Rd, 400002; February 4
 Dinu Khudabux Irani (65), Piloo Villa, Teen Lakdi, Igatpuri, Dist Nasik, 422403; February 4
 Sehroo Naoraji Wadia (80), C/o F. H. Wadia, K-2/12, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri

(W), 400058; February 4
 Sheroo Purvez Bhesania (73), 18, Surti Chmbs, 2nd Dhobitalao Lane, 400002; February 5
 Jiloo Tehmuras Dalal (80), 8, Chateau Marine, 133, Marine Drive, 400021; February 5
 Dhunjishaw Hormusji Guzder (88), 14, Badat Manzil, Mehla Patel Agiary Lane, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 5
 Bomi Burjorji Marolia (75), Boyce Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; February 6
 Arnavaz Rustom Motiwala (72), E/39, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 6
 Kety Jasi Pardiwalla (52), M/7, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400026; February 6
 Bomi Rustomji Pithawalla (73), 721/A, Choksey Bldg, Rd no 4, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 6
 Banoo Faramroze Antia (89), 662, Apoorva, Sohrab Palamkote Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 7
 Mehroo Sam Shroff (86), C/o Beramji Hosp, 266, Patel Bldg, Girgaum, 400004; February 7
 Perin Rustomji Shroff (90), C, Harganga Mhl, Khodadad Circle, Dadar T. T., 400014; February 7
 Homi Ruttonshaw Wadia (74), Siddik Ebrahim Mans, 180, Lamington Rd, 400007; February 7
 Bachan Phirozshaw Asha (88), B, Wassiamul Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; February 8
 Pervaz Boman Cama (55), J/14, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 8
 Khorshed Rashid Irani (77), 3, Imperial Mhl, Khodadad Circle, Dadar T. T., 400014; February 8
 Kitty Nasarwanji Gharda (89), 4, Avabai Mans, 15, Henry Rd, Apollo Recl, 400001; February 9
 Rusi Navroji Katrak (79), 729, Society Bldg, J. Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 9
 Mani Rustomji Umrigar (86), G/33, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 9
 Rusi Hiraji Bhiwandiwala (80), 792, Dina Manzil, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 11
 Jaloo Sohrab Dadachanji (75), Dadachanji Bldg, Dr A. Nair Rd, 400011; February 11

Banoobai Minocher Daruwala (84), D/62, New Chandra Soc, Veera Desai Rd, Andheri (W), 400053; February 11
 Jangirji Burjorji Variava (61), 701, Sharda Bldg, Natwar Ngr, Rd no 3, Jogeshwari (E), 400069; February 11
 Nariman Shavaksha Kuka (88), 683/A, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 12
 Shavaksha Nusserwanji Toddywalla (91), 511/C, Amrut, Adenwala Rd, Matunga, 400019; February 12
 Vicaji Bapuji Zaiwalla (88), M/10, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 12
 Khurshed Nadirshaw Cama (83), B/4, York Hse, Alana Marg, Colaba Causeway, 400039; February 13
 Kerman Naval Cooper (42), B/45, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 13
 Dinyar Kaikashru Dastoor (48), 6, Shri Ganesh Chawl, Ganesh Ngr, Dombivli (W), 421203; February 13
 Bapsy Dinshaw Khambatta (71), 10/17, Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 13
 Dinshaw Dhunjisha Bilimoria (70), 1/3, Najoo Mans, Nawab Tank Bridge, Mazgaon Dock, 400010; February 14
 Jal Khodadad Irani (63), 2, Lovelita Co-op Hsg Soc, Juhu Tara Rd, Juhu (E), 400049; February 14
 Dina Soli Nanji (68), 16, New Contractor Bldg, Byculla, 400027; February 15
 Shanaz Cyrus Izadyar (46), 56, Dadi Suntoke Hse, Dadi Suntoke Lane, Dhobitalao, 400002; February 16
 Meheramai (Jini) Ardeshair Variava (73), 682/B, Kapadia Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 16
 Hoorish Bomi Adajania (55), 666, Orient Hse, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 17
 Nergish Minoor Merchant (65), Contractor Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; February 17
 Kamal Tehmasp Printer (39), 41, Vaibhav, B. Dargah Rd, Wadala (E), 400037; February 17
 Rumi Pirojshaw Amroliwalla (50), L1/G1, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 18

Zarine Dadabhoy Dumasia (78), India Hse no 2, Kemp's Corner, 400036; February 18
 Sorab Rustomji Govadia (87), 18, Banaji St, Fort, 400001; February 19
 Tehmi Fardunji Katrak (78), 4, Shroff Hse, Dadi Suntoke Lane, Dhobitalao, 400002; February 19
 Jalamai Dosabhai Daver (83), New Khan Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; February 20
 Silloo Dorabji Patel (78), C/o Farida N. Patel, D/8, Vanashree, L. T. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; February 20
 Dinbai Rustomji Bhamgara (96), A/2, Dinbai Petit Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 21
 Dinoo (Dina) Phiroze Daruwalla (84), Dina Lodge, Garden Rd, Apollo Recl, 400001; February 21
 Tirandaz Kaikushroo Perry (80), 8/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 23
 Keki Dorabjee Tarapore (86), Meher Mans, Lower level bridge, Tardeo, 400008; February 23
 Ruby Noshir Billimoria (47),

E/19, Amrut Tara, Yari Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; February 24
 Dolly Nariman Fatakia (52), 757, Rd no 7, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 25
 Jaloo Vicaji Zaiwala (79), M/10, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; February 25
 Ketty Framroze Engineer (83), Danawalla Bldg, Dr S. S. Rao Rd, Lalbaug, 400012; February 27
 Shavaksha Hormusji Baria (82), R/32, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 28
 Homi Jamshedji Khansaheb (52), A/25, Sai Ashirwad, B. P. Rd, Bhayander (E), 401105; February 28
 Homi Ratanshaw Patel (71), 3, Parsi Anjuman Bldg, Doodhnaka, Kalyan, 421301; February 28
 Jal Nariman Daruwalla (81), Malegamwalla Bldg no 21, M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 1
 Hosang Behramji Baria (76), G/2, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; March 2
 Jamshed Framroze Bhamgara (70), A/206, Salsette Parsees Association, Andheri (E),

400093; March 2
 Piloo Firoze Engineer (72), 6, Rusi Mehta Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; March 2
 Beheramshaw Edulji Italia (87), 21/5, Kapadia Bldg, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; March 2
 Navaz (Naju) Ardeshir Jehangir (Godiwalla) (73), 24, Mistry Court, 208, Dinsha Vachha Rd, Churchgate, 400020; March 2
 Dinaz Nariman Mehta (72), 204/A, Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; March 2
 Rusi Maneckshaw Mistry (74), L-1/32, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; March 2
 Freny Kekhsru Calagopi (84), Shankar Mhl, Sophia College Lane, 400026; March 3
 Kaikobad Jamshedji Daruwalla (68), C/o Dinaz R. Guard, 106-B, Krishna Nivas Co-op Hsg Soc, M. B. Est, Virar (W), 401303; March 3
 Rutton Jamshedji Ghadiali (87), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 3
 Katie Nariman Minocherhomji (80), A/11, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; March 3
 Darayus Sam Mistry (36),

14/A, Dallas Bldg, Dyan Mandir Rd, Dadar (W), 400028; March 3
 Pervaz Khurshedji Mistry (88), 55, Kashinath Bldg, 64/65, Cadell Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 3
 Kaikushru Nusserwanji Toorkey (82), 5, Park Darshan no 1, Opp Lallubhai Park, Andheri (W), 400058; March 3
 Perin Sorabji Contractor (81), B, Wassiamul Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; March 4
 Jamshed Ardeshir Tamboowala (74), 637, Le Repos, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 4
 Jehanbux Sheriarji Tavadia (79), 21, Gool Sorab Bldg, Khetwadi 7th Lane, 400004; March 4
 Farokh Maneckshaw Billimoria (56), 4, Billimoria Bldg, Clover Co-op Hsg Soc, Sleater Rd, 400007; March 5
 Mani Pesi Kerawalla (74), K/3, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; March 5
 Piliu Maneck Wadia (84), 501, Amit Apts, Veronica Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; March 7
 Hosi Naval Cooper (50), B/45, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007;

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March 8

Eruch Kaikashroo Nanji (64), 742, Batliwalla Bldg, Rd no 5, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 8

Rati Darabshaw Patel (87), 75, Shreeji Hse, Mint Rd, Fort, 400001; March 8

Pesi Navroji Karkhanawalla (75), 3, Dr Hse, 113, Bora Bazar St, Fort, 400001; March 9

Gool Dinyar Kolsawalla (88), 275, Ratanbai Chinoy Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, 400007; March 9

Banu Jal Sutaria (75), 7/3, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; March 10

Mehera Noshir Wesmawalla (90), 665, Band View, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 10

Jal Byramji Cooper (89), B/26, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; March 11

Burjor Cawasji Guard (73), 29/5, Capadia Bldg, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; March 11

Noshir Hormusji Karanjia (83), Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; March 11

Kamal Homi Kavarana (50), 621, Khush Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 11

Cooverbai Pestonji Khambatta (83), N/14, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 11

Pilloo Nariman Langrana (80), Bai Jeevanbai Tata Bldg no 1, New Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; March 11

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*									
	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	2000*	2001○	This issue	2000*	2001○	This issue	2000*	2001○
BIRTHS									
Boys	10	87	21	1	15	1	7	20	2
Girls	13	84	29	4	14	1	7	18	3
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	61	128	113	4	12	4	—	19	—
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	20	—	—	2	—	2	4	—
Females married out	—	19	—	—	2	—	—	1	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	72	463	115	12	79	15	15	58	5
Females	75	461	119	8	57	11	12	45	3
CREMATED									
Males	—	5	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Females	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-April 2001 issues)

○Running totals for 2001 (January 2001-April 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.

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-April 2001 issues)

○Running totals for 2001 (January 2001-April 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.

5, Dubash Bldg, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; March 14

Ratamai Dinshaji Ragina (78), M/25, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 14

Aloo Shapurji Sanjana (76), 811, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 14

Keki Motabhooy Contractor (73), 6/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; March 15

Gaver Merwan Khosravi (Irani) (68), Tyre Ter, Lamington Rd, 400007; March 15

Coomi Homi Mapra (87), 3, Batliwalla Bldg, Khan Est, Stn Rd, Mahim, 400016; March 15

Rustom Sorabji Patel (83), Old Petit Mans, 85, Sleater Rd, 400007; March 16

Sam Hormusji Maravala (92), 1/14, Pushpa Vihar, Opp Colaba Post Office, Colaba Rd, 400005; March 17

Dina Jimmy Billimoria (65), B/13, Rustom Palace, Tardeo, 400007; March 18

Jamshed Kaikashroo Tata (56), C/o Perviz Adi Kanga, 1001, D. N. S. Tower, Opp Town Hall, Court Naka, Thana (W), 400601; March 19

Jamshed Rashid Irani (76), Near Railway Stn, Vangani (E), Dist Thana; March 20

Meherwan Jehangirji Bamboat (88), B/3, Susnehi Bldg, 22, Bandra Recl, Bandra (W), 400050; March 21

Rustomji Sorabji Bhadha (91), Saher Agiary, Opp Anand Bhavan, 51, B. Desai Rd, 400026; March 21

Banoo Dinshaw Colabawalla (82), Readymoney Bldg no 1, Sir Ratan Tata Marg, Tardeo, 400034; March 21

Rusi Jamshedji Vajifdar (63), C/41, Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Dhobitalao, 400002; March 21

Godrej Darabshaw Bhagwager (63), F2/73, Godrej Hillside Clny, L. B. S. Marg, Vikhroli (W), 400079; March 22

Roda Faramroze Patell (71), 11, Tardeo Court, Tardeo Rd, 400061; March 22

Peshotan Tehmuras Rustomjee (68), 24, Suleman Ter, Colombo, Sri Lanka 5; March 22

Gool Jamshed Irani (65), B/404, Palm Beach, Yari Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; March 23

Shirin Kekasroo Mehta (93), Tehmina Captain Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo Rd, 400007; March 23

Nargis Nadir Sethna (75), E/9, Jinwalla Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; March 24

Lovji Ratanshaw Gorimar

(76), Wadia Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; March 25

Parvez Savaksha Kapadia (70), C/o G. G. Irani, 25/7, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 25

Behram Rustomji Mistry (85), Ness Baug Annexe 3, Nana Chowk, 400007; March 25

Jehangir Meherji Mistry (69), 1/8, Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; March 25

Alamai Dorabji Sidhva (94), P/G1, Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; March 25

Banoobai Behramsha Sui (81), Umrigar Fire-temple, Mora Bunder, Uran, Dist Raigad, 400702; March 26

Dhun Gustad Dehnugara (85), 65, Piroj Villa, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; March 27

Dina Jamshedji Hansotia (96), 27, Silverett, Sion (E), 400022; March 27

Dara Firoze Kapadia (76), 8, Sakina Manzil, Opp Hinduja College, Charni Rd, 400004; March 27

Cawas Ratanshaw Katrak (77), Gamadia Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; March 27

Minoo Pestonji Polson (92), 8, Moti Mhl, Dinsha Vachha Rd, Churchgate, 400020; March 27

Maneckbai Sorabji Acidwalla (92), 640/B, Khorshed Villa, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 28
Pheroze Kaikobad Bookbinder (86), Queens Chmbs, 89, M. Karve Rd, 400020; March 28
Soonu Homy Contractor (77), Mani Mans, 63, Pedder Rd, 400026; March 28
Dady Maneckshaw Elavia (72), 782, Patel Bldg, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 28
Gool Phiroze Pagdiwalla (75), 694/5, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 28
Katy Hormusji Printer (70), 10, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 28
Goolu Dhanjisha Gandeia (52), B/31, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; March 29
Jangu Gev Dharwar (69), Yusuf Manzil, Byculla, 400027; March 30
Silloo Ader Tarapor (75), B/11, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; March 30

CALCUTTA

BORN
 A girl, *Mihira*, to *Farida* and *Savinder Singh*; November 21, 2000
 A girl, *Aakansha*, to *Lisa* and *Varun Shukla*; December 14

MARRIED

Benaifer Modi and *Cyrus P. Modi*; November 12

DIED

Nariman K. Mistry; November 1

COIMBATORE

DIED
Silloo Manekshaw, wife of Sam and mother of Sherry Dinky Batliwala and Maja Dhun Daruwala; February 13, 2001

SURAT

DIED
Sunamai Eruchshaw Amaria (73), Wadia St, Machhlipith, 395003; February 1
Aloo Nadirshaw Gotla (84), E/14, Old Ava Baug, Navsari, 396445; February 6
Roshanbanoo Darabshaw Tayala (62), Village Suwali, Dist Surat; February 9
Homai Rustomji Lakdawala (76), Nariman Home and

Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; February 17
Firoze Nariman Parekh (78), 30, Sangna Soc, Rander Rd, 395003; February 20
Dorabji Tehmurasp Nadirshaw (78), Sagar Complex Lane, Adajan Rd, 395003; February 22
Eruchshaw Jamshedji Kapadia (86), Parsiwad, Sayedpura, 395003; February 23
Banoobai Kawasji Patel (79), Faram Mohallo, Rustompura, 395002; March 1
Hillamai Fardoonji Todiwalla (85), Dehla St, Rustompura, 395002; March 14
Jalbhaji Hormusji Adajania (72), Vaishali Apts, Bhaya Mohallo, Nanpura, 395002; March 17
Rustomji Naorajji Vajifdar (89), Aga-no-wad, Sayedpura, 395003; March 20
Barjorji Hirjibhai Ichhaporia (77), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; March 25
Ardeshtir Jehangirji Roowala (82), Parsiwad, Opp Rander Fire-temple, Rander; March 31

AUSTRALIA

BORN
 A boy, *Yohan*, to *Kamal* and *Carl Kavina*, brother to *Zhea* and *Tanya* in Adelaide; December 9, 2000

New South Wales

DIED
Dhun Jal Bulsara, husband of *Zarin* and father of *Erach* and *Noshir*; December 26

CANADA

Ontario

BORN
 Twins (boys), *Araash* and *Fravash*, to *Pearl* and *Khushru Chothia*, brothers to *Zruvan* and *Spenta*; December 17
 A girl, *Nina*, to *Mikiyo* and *Cyrus Gazder*; February 2, 2001
 A boy, *Kai*, to *Ginette* and *Kourosh Fallahzadeh* in Kapuskasing; February 6

IRAN

DIED
Faridoon Zartoshty (92), father of *Paridokht Adeli*, Homayoun Goshtaspar, Iran Bakhtiar and Farangis Manesh-ni in Orange County, California, USA; November 17, 2000
Banoo Kayvani, mother of

Shirin Khodavahn Bonshani in Tehran; December 14

PAKISTAN Karachi

BORN
 A boy, *Darayus*, to *Meher* and *Dinshaw Kohory*; July 27
 A girl, *Fareezeh*, to *Spenta* and *Danny Sidhwa*; December 23
 A boy, *Xerxes*, to *Diana* and *Firdous Divecha*; January 7, 2001

DIED

Khudamurad D. Irani (82); August 13, 2000
Freni Jamshedji Aga (84); September 8
Persis Behramji Patel (54); September 17
Rustom Cawasji Sethna (90); September 20
Ardeshtir K. Zandian (71); October 19
Faridoon Rustom Irani (69); October 29
Faramroze R. Appoo (73); November 7
Soona Challa (96); November 11
Pesi Meherwanji Nanavati (75); November 12
Naja Rustomji Dubash (88); November 21
Mahakurshid D. Dastur (64); November 26
Bejonji K. Commissariat (86); December 4
Freny Hoshang Sidhwa (70); December 25
Aloo B. Billimoria (76); December 27
Parin Dara Edulji (88); December 28
Jerbano Hormusji Dotiwala; January 29, 2001

UK

BORN
 A girl, *Ariana*, to *Delnar* and *Christopher Dowse*, sister to *Laila*, *Theo* and *Naomi*; February 8

Essex

BORN
 A girl, *Freyan*, to *Zenobia* and *Veraf Khambatta*, sister to *Sanaya*; October 27, 2000

London

DIED
Jer Phiroze Dastur (85), 20, Templewood Point, Granville Rd, NW2 2AX; January 14, 2001

Middlesex

BORN
 A boy, *Berzin*, to *Anahita* and *Fraser Daruwala*; October 17, 2000
 A girl, *Ruxshin*, to *Shiraz* and *Kerfegar Bajina*, sister to *Yazad*; November 23

DIED
Furaidoon Nasarabadi (66), 1/A, Bedford Rd, Harrow; January 2, 2001
Jalbhaji Pestonji Suratia (92), 93, Iris Court, Nursery Rd, Pinner, HA3 2AS; January 11

Nottinghamshire

DIED
Kaikobad Gandhi (68), 36, Warrender Close, Bramcote, NG9 3EB; October 25, 2000

Surrey

DIED
Pirojshaw Sethna (98), 10, Woodcote Lane, Purley, CR8 3HA; September 13

USA

California

DIED
Nergish Mistry, mother of *Kersi* and *Nilufer Vania* in San Francisco; January 31, 2001

Connecticut

BORN
 A girl, *Dilshad*, to *Nina* and *Bomi Dinshaw* in Norwalk; March 3

Illinois

MARRIED
Courtney Picotte and *Zubin Shroff*, son of *Farida* and *Rohinton* of Naperville in Chicago; September 29, 2000
Meghan Bruckert and *Raiomand Krishnayya*, son of *Pervize* and *Krish* of New Jersey in Chicago; October 7

DIED

Rohinton (Rumi) Engineer, husband of *Beverly* and father of *Kashmira* and *Rustom* in Chicago; December 18
Rustom Hormusji Dalal (90), brother of *Naval* in Chicago; March 13, 2001

New York

BORN
 A girl, *Lila*, to *Yasmin* and *Reji Kothari* in New York; December 29, 2000

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

The gift of giving

Arnavaz S. Mama

They say it's tough to make money, but it's tougher still to spend it wisely. No Zoroastrian of the 20th century would quibble with Faridoon Zartoshty's capacity to do both.

He worked 15 to 18 hours a day, as recalled his younger brother Mehraban at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress. "Innovative, entrepreneurial and energetic" as Prof Farhang Mehr described him in his editorial tribute in the quarterly publication *Humata*, Faridoon nurtured and consolidated his father's export-import business, adding to it a string of other enterprises, including the Asiatic Travel Service in Bombay and Iran's first plastic manufacturing plant with Mehraban as partner.

Not only were the brothers united in creating wealth, they shared a passion for anonymous charity and philanthropic works done shyly, from the wings, away from media glare. "Their donations to Zarathushti institutions in Iran, India, England and North America amount to several million dollars, earning them the accolade of being the most outstanding living Zarathushti philanthropists of our time," noted Mehr.

Bombay, where he acquired his secondary education at Bharda High School and later St Xavier's, becoming a navarmartab along the way, was the Yazd-born Zartoshty's second home and retained his loyalty to the end.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), the Dadar Athornan Madressa, the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, the Parsi Ward at the J. J. Hospital, the University of Bombay were beneficiaries of their largess as these institutions launched programs that appealed to the Zartoshtys. In his tribute in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of November 26, 2000, veteran

journalist Jehan Daruwalla recalled Zartoshty's uncharacteristic disquiet after his first visit to the Parsi Ward at J. J. Hospital. The dilapidated enclosure housed the castaways whose families were unable or unwilling to look after them and rarely came to visit. His substantial aid helped Zoroastrian social workers to refurbish the ward and maintain its growing number of inmates with dignity and reasonable comfort.

Drawing his inspiration at the main-spring of Zarathushtra's message, Zartoshty's abiding interest in the religion prompted him to donate generously to the

BPP fund to spread the knowledge of the religion within the community as also for the benefit of the athravans who he had seen living and working under adverse conditions. "I used to give write-ups about young boys of the priestly class passing the stages of navar and martab. Immediately, on reading this, he would send cheques for handsome amounts for the young boys, asking me to hand them over to them and to urge them to carry on their noble work with complete dedication," writes Daruwalla.

Great believers in the value of education in the uplift of the community, the Zartoshtys' commitment to help authors and scholars led them to donate liberally toward the reprinting of old books by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. According to Daruwalla it also led them to support committed scholars like the late Rashid Shah Mardan, who lived for many years in Bombay, frequently visiting Iran. Not only did they help Mardan publish his works but supported his missionary activities, performing the navjotes of tribal Iranians whom history and circumstance had forced to give up the Zoroastrian faith.

Zartoshty donations have helped several North American communities to purchase and/or refurbish/build extensions to their darbe mehrs. This same generosity extended to their timely aid to the London community to acquire a new property for their center last year.

An episode, documented by Daruwalla, that attested to Zartoshty's clarity of mind, patience and persuasiveness in the disentanglement of religion and social habits was his persuasion of the Zoroastrian women of Yazd to abandon their resistance over several years to the shifting of the Yazd Atash Behram fire from its old, dilapidated abode to the new structure constructed at the behest of the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund on the model of the Navsari Atash Behram. The women had been persuaded by obscurantist priests that the shifting of the fire would be a harbinger of calamity for the community.

Even the Bombay community's long-standing problem of accommodation moved him. Daruwalla, then editor of *The Bombay Samachar*, frequently highlighted the plight of community members on the BPP's waiting list for accommodation that refused to shrink. Zartoshty strode into Daruwalla's cabin one morning. "Someone wants to do something for the problem which you are highlighting. How should we begin and where?" Daruwalla quotes him. Daruwalla writes that he took Zartoshty to the late Shiavax Vakil's office where the former BPP trustee was in conference with the late Naval Tata. Hearing of the laudable cause that brought them there Tata remarked that it required sizable funds. The bush-shirted Zartoshty wrote out a cheque and asked, "Can we begin with this?" Daruwalla adds, "If I recall properly, it was for about Rs 30 lakhs."

This spontaneous giving was also attested to by Sylla Motivala, his former associate at Asiatic and Morvarid Taft, daughter of his particular friend and partner in Bombay, Aspandiar Azarmi of Leopold Cafe. Both ladies had been witness to such events of individual generosity when Zartoshty sensed urgent need though he was not one to be taken for a ride, Motivala assures us. "Our office (Asiatic) was their headquarters," says Motivala who shared the cabin with the Zartoshtys, describing Faridoon as a short



Faridoon and Meherbanoo Zartoshty on their last visit to Bombay in 1993



Together long ago: Zartoshty, Arbab Rustom Guiv and Morvarid Guiv (standing 1st, 2nd and 4th from left), Meherbanoo and Parkhanda Azarmi (seated, 2nd and 4th from left). Below: a youthful Zartoshty with Azarmi

man with a good personality, a ready listener with a sense of humor. Social workers Banoo Irani and the late Mani Siganporia merely had to cite a deserving case to receive the wherewithal to alleviate the problem, be it medical, educational or social, remembers Tafti.

On his frequent trips to Bombay he stayed at the Taj but spent long hours with the Azarmi family. Tafti, who grew up knowing the jovial man, short on words, long on thoughts and deeds, remembers the trips to Udvada they made with him where he loved to stay at the Majestic Hotel. When he came in the '60s with his whole family, they travelled to Panchgani, Mahabaleshwar and Matheran also. Of course, they had also travelled the world together, adds Tafti. While in town he would walk from the Taj to Dadysett Agiary or the Bhikha Behram Well, continuing on his way to Asiatic after a half-hour prayer. Though Iranians have their own way of having tea, Zartoshty enjoyed the Indian dhaba version (boiled with milk and sugar). Dhansak, pomfrets, doodhma-cauliflower and lagan nu custard and achar were favorite foods along with coconut water. "Mori dar né taréli machhi was more welcome than a multicourse meal" to this man who was "absolutely non-fussy." If anyone from Bombay was visiting Tehran, all he wanted was agarbatti, sandalwood and lagan-nu-achar, she recalls with a laugh.

Married to Meherbanoo ("he and his wife were like two lovebirds"), they had four daughters. The family-oriented man wouldn't let a day pass in Bombay without calling or receiving a call from one of his daughters, says Tafti.

He slept early and woke early and loved to walk, enjoying the sights. Khelwalas, hawkers, Irani restaurants, all were able to charm the soft-spoken,



fun-loving man with the gift to read people and appreciate their worth. In Tehran he lived, even after the Islamic Revolution, in his huge mansion on Villa Avenue opposite the dharamshala, and had no problems with the Islamic government, says Tafti. "If you sat with him for about half an hour, you would learn a lot about the hardships they had been through in their younger years and also how to help others," she adds.

Despite the pain of losing his dear wife and two sons-in-law who predeceased him, he pursued "his life of good thoughts, good words, good deeds, never saying anything bad of anyone or refusing a genuine case for charity. It gave him a genuinely happy life," says Tafti.

He made his last trip to Bombay with his wife in 1993 when he was 85. "He liked to say he was 58," laughs Tafti. When Azarmi passed away the next year with a massive heart attack one night, Zartoshty "cried like a baby on the phone." She remembers him saying, "Only good people go this way." But, "after that he refused to come."

Zartoshty survived into his mid nineties, dependent on his hearing aid and other medical sustainers, as he told Daruwalla. Though he passed away in Los Angeles on November 17, 2000, his body was taken to Tehran for burial as per his wishes, Tafti informs us. He is survived by his daughters Paridokht Adeli, Homayun Goshtaspour, Iran

Bakhtiar and Farangis Maneshni.

Siganporia's selfless help

Died: Mani Dhunjshaw Siganporia, 78, well-known social worker and founder of the Zoroastrian Ladies Committee who had touched the lives of innumerable poor Parsis, on May 28, 2000 following cardiac arrest.

Shy of publicity, Siganporia maintained, "I have not done anything special." But to the countless members of the community to whom she had extended timely help in their moments of distress, she was a guardian angel. "After a long time they found out that there was someone who not only cared for them but also tried her best to improve the quality of their life," noted columnist Jehan Daruwalla in his tribute in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of July 16, 2000.

To the inmates of the widows' chawls, the workers at Doongerwadi, the patients at the Parsi Ward at the J. J. Hospital, the poor Parsi patients at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and the Masina Hospital, Siganporia's was a known face for 50 years.

Twice a year, during Jamshedi Navroz and the Shahenshahi New Year, she would distribute over 1,000 packets, each of which would contain essential commodities like rice, lentils, cooking oil, toiletries, etc from the donations in cash and kind that she had garnered. Discarded clothes, newspapers and bottles too would be gratefully accepted by her, recycled and the resources optimally utilized, mentions one donor. Twice a week Siganporia arranged for wholesome meals for the patients at the Parsi Ward at the J. J. Hospital. Needy students (at the Bai Avabai Petit School, the Home for the Rural Parsi Zoroastrian Girls in Gholvad, and Dadar's Athornan Boarding Madressa) whose uniforms, books and school fees were financed also benefitted from her charitable inclinations, it was recalled by the many assistants who supported her in her endeavors.

"She came from a lower middle class family. Her father having died when she was still young, she realized the difficulties her widowed mother had to face," mentions Siganporia's daughter Zarin Jathar who is now endeavoring to take over her mother's mantle. "So as soon as she was well settled, although we were not rich, she felt obliged to reach out to others," adds the daughter.

Personally approaching benefactors

and beneficiaries, she soon came to be respected and appreciated for her social work. With the cooperation of Banoo Irani and Rati Tarachand she started the Zoroastrian Ladies Committee, an institution which came to be recognized for its dedication to the cause of the underprivileged. She gathered data, approached well-wishers and friends and told them that she was willing to devote her time and energy to serve the poor if she was assured of financial resources. "People were impressed by the burning zeal of Siganporia and the joy that she brought into the hearts and homes of the poor people. Once they were convinced about (her) sincerity...and her noble mission, money started pouring in," added Daruwalla.

Among the donors who supported her projects was Percy Bhaya from Oman who described her as "a champion humanitarian who brought hope and happiness to thousands of less privileged people." "Society as a whole owes a debt to such selfless workers," wrote



Siganporia: protector and provider for the poor

well-wisher B. M. Motafram. "I have no doubt that she leaves behind fond remembrances (among) those whom she has helped and also those who assisted her in her untiring efforts," he added.

"The poor and downtrodden...have lost a protector, a provider, a savior, a soother, a friend, philosopher and guide," summed up Rati Jogina who being employed with Rallis India Limited would collect donations from the Parsi staff of Rallis and forward them to Siganporia twice a year. "Mani aunty as she was so lovingly called by one and all was no doubt an institution by herself and it will be very difficult for anyone to emulate and match her tireless work," noted Jogina. Invariably dressed in white following her husband's demise,

Jogina referred to "Mani aunty's ever smiling face and ever readiness to stand up for any noble cause..."

Giving Siganporia and her team credit for changing the face of the Parsi Ward at the J. J. Hospital, Kumi Daruwalla of the Zoroastrian Winter Relief Fund wrote, "The transformation of the entire

wing is and will remain a monument to the zeal and effort of a handful of ladies, especially Mani." From arranging for their mattresses to looking into their individual needs, Siganporia was among those who ensured that they were well cared for, states Jathar.

Barring her social work, and family, to whom she was totally committed she did not engage in any leisure activities, mentions her daughter. Educated at the Princess High School in Bombay, she led a simple life. Although she had great faith in the Almighty convincing others too that "Ooperwalla chhè, badhhanu bhalu karsé (God above will look after everyone)," she was not one of those who sat down with a prayer book. To her, practice was more important than preaching, notes Jathar. Many are the Parsi children from the rural areas whose navjotes she arranged to finance, states Daruwalla, adding, "Work such as this has lasting effect. We can only hope and pray that (she) will inspire others to carry on her noble mission. We owe it to her, to ourselves and to the reconstruction of our community."

Siganporia is survived by her daughter Zarin Jathar and son Jal.

Parinaz M. Gandhi

THE DOONGERWADI DIVIDE

continued from page 32

take the community into confidence, not hoodwink it into false beliefs.

A long-time assumption was that the Doongerwadi land was cemetery land provided by government and that it could be withdrawn if misused. A study of the 300-page trust deed, which was formalized in 1884, has revealed that it is a private property entrusted to the community for the dual purpose of "exposure of the dead" and for the performance of religious rites and ceremonies, notes Gagrati.

Though the traditionalists seek to restrict the use of the Doongerwadi complex to the ceremonies of those opting to be consigned to the dakhma, Gagrati and eight other outstanding Parsi lawyers — T. R. Andhyarujina, K. S. Cooper, Dara Zaiwalla, P. R. Vakil, Sethna, F. Devitre, E. P. Bharucha and Aspi Chinoy — in their opinion cite liberally from the trust deed to argue that "the two objects and uses of the trust in respect of this trust property are separate and reference to 'religious rites and ceremonies' is not relatable only to religious rites and cer-

emonies connected with the exposure of (the) dead." Their interpretation has been endorsed by Sorabjee.

"Why are you arm-twisting the priests?" Gagrati asks angrily. There are "priests ready and willing to perform" ceremonies for those opting for alternate means of disposal but are afraid of Athornan Mandal pressure which could affect their livelihood. "We are a reasonable lot but we won't submit to bully-boys!" promises Gagrati. "Eight to 10 mobeds want to join DDD if they can be assured of a monthly income," he says, adding that his group will "sit and sort out the modalities."

Willing to settle for the lower bungli or a part of the unused land where a hall can be constructed for such use at their own cost, Gagrati notes that while they want to achieve their objective without getting into conflict, they "wouldn't want to waste time with irrational people" and hence avoided the samast anjuman meeting last December.

According to Sethna there is a better chance of a working dakhma at Vasai than at Malabar Hill. We are "talking of a change of geographical

location, not of the system," amplifies Amroliwalla.

Udwadia notes that only "50 percent of the body is water. The rest is solid. You cannot dehydrate all of it," hence the need for effectively scavenging birds.

Rueful of the hate mail several of them have been receiving, Udwadia noted wryly that one caller told him, "Tamé aakhi Parsi kom né bachawi hosé tau bi tamé dojuk ma jaso (You may have ministered to the entire Parsi community but you will go to hell, nonetheless)!"

Says Gagrati, "The land belongs to all Parsi Zoroastrians... The trustees are not doing any favor... If they don't behave properly, ultimately it will be sorted out in the court of law."

ERRATA

Due to an oversight the contents page of March 2001 credited Dr Malini Karkal as the author of 'Zoroastrianism Indianized - 2' instead of Dr Mani Kamekar.

Parsiana regrets the error.



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