

Parixinda

SEPTEMBER 2001 Rs 35



"Of all the healers, O Spitama Zarathushtra, namely those who heal with the knife, with herbs and with sacred incantations, the last one is the most potent as he heals from the very source of disease." "The basis of medicine is the doctor-patient relationship — a symbolic bond of trust, faith and friendship between the physician and his patient. The more a patient knows about the trials and tribulations, the endeavors and achievements, the faults and virtues of physicians through the ages, the closer the bond with the physician, the greater the strength of medicine and the greater the benefit to man." But it cannot be denied that the ancient medicine man convincingly demonstrated the power of the mind in counter-ing disease. His attempts to heal, to protect and to care were amongst the first milestones in the history of civilization. He played an important role in guiding prehistoric man through the darkness and mists of time into the dawn of the civilizations of the ancient world. Medicine became a priestly craft rooted in the religious sanctuaries of antiquity. "Of all the healers, O Spitama Zarathushtra, namely those who heal with the knife, with herbs and with sacred incantations, the last one is the most potent as he heals from the very source of disease." Day and night, however weary, he be engaged, thou shalt endeavor for the relief of thy patient with all thy heart and soul. Thou shalt not desert or injure thy patient even for the sake of thy life or living. "The warrior-physicians were aware of the rough anatomy and function of the muscles, tendons, joints and bones of the human body.

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Where movement is a science

Parsiana

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Cover: Miniature of a physician checking a patient's pulse

Photo courtesy: Wellcome Institute Library, London

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

Antiquity and necessity

The July 2001 issue of *Parsiana* appears to be devoted to two aspects concerning Zoroastrians — the antiquity of their landing in India and what befell them thereafter; and the necessity of a vegetarian diet.

As far as antiquity is concerned I shall leave it to the historians to dabble over what is of no use on the true spiritual path. For, as a great mystic pointed out 2,000 years ago: "What shall it profit a man if he gained the whole world but lost his soul?"

The article by Edal Jal Cassad on the subject of vegetarianism was read by me avidly. If modern day Zoroastrians care to delve into the lives of their erstwhile high priests whom they invoke in their prayers it will be found that almost all were strict vegetarians. Why they did not instill this into their flock is, I would say, a serious lapse on their part. I can only hope that the priests of the present

day will set things aright by precept and example.

Apart from the religious angle, even knowledgeable doctors agree that a vegetarian diet is excellent for body and mind. Some decades ago I read a book on vegetarianism by a Parsi doctor. I was so impressed by its contents that I decided to become a vegetarian (I am one since 1966 and am in as good health as can be expected from a person now approaching 80). I had the whole book photocopied (in those days xerox was unheard of) before returning it to the owner. The film roll is still in my possession and I am willing to give it to any society which may desire to propagate vegetarianism.

HOMEK. BEHRAM

"Celebrations clouded"

The letter by Kali Cawasji, the president of the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman, ("Celebrations clouded," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 2001) is based on misinformation on several matters. To put the record straight it needs a rejoinder.

I was invited to attend the Dar-e-Meher's celebrations as a guest of the Anjuman. I was in communication with the Anjuman regarding the income-tax benefit in respect of donations to the Dar-e-Meher. The issue was discussed by me with some trustees and the auditors of the Anjuman on January 20, 2001. There was therefore no necessity to discuss it at an Anjuman meeting since the members at such meeting were not concerned with the same.

On January 21 just before the commencement of the meeting I was informed that I would be one of the speakers in the morning session. I agreed and stated that I would make some observations regarding the declining population of Parsis. No objection was then taken about the same.

It is true that I was not invited as a guest speaker, but I was requested to address the meeting. It is not correct to say that I was allowed to address the meeting on my giving an assurance that I would confine myself only to the income-tax exemption. When there was no discussion with any person (including the president) in the matter, the question of assurance did not arise.

No request was made by me to address the meeting, nor was I enamored

to do so. Statements made by the president in this behalf are merely hearsay based on information or misinformation given by others, far removed from the actual reality of the matter. I unequivocally and categorically reiterate and affirm that the meeting was addressed by me only at the request of the trustees.

I commenced my address by making observations on the declining population of Parsis and causes relating thereto. While I was making some observations on adoption, inter-caste marriages, navjotes of children of such marriages, etc, suddenly I was rudely interrupted by some self-styled "youth leaders." The president pointed out that I was expressing my personal views in the matter. They did not even have the patience to hear me as a guest of the Anjuman. In view of the interruption I ended my address soon. There was no "act of defiance" on my part as alleged. Similar views on the above subjects were expressed by me at meetings of the Federation and the World Zoroastrian Congress without any interruption or disturbance. At none of these meetings did I have the bitter experience as at the meeting in Bangalore. Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution of India. That right was however denied to me at the meeting.

It is significant to note that the souvenir brought out by the trustees on the auspicious occasion contains inter alia acknowledgments of "Our honored guests." As regards my presence on the occasion the president himself graciously observes "he was in our midst because of his credentials and stature." However, the souvenir is conspicuous by the absence of my name in the list.

In the end I would earnestly appeal to Cawasji and his colleagues to examine the entire matter in an objective and detached manner and give a proper lead to the Parsis of Bangalore.

RUSTOM S. GAE
New Delhi

"Options at Doongerwadi"

B. S. H. J. Rustomji's letter ("Options at Doongerwadi," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, May 2001) contains some points and misplaced arguments which may prove to be misleading, especially for laymen. He speaks about some scholars



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who doubt the existence of dakhmas in Zoroaster's time and, to emphasize the point, he cites Prof Wadia's views about the "grave of Cyrus," but we know that what are often taken to be Achemenian graves or tombs were nothing but astodans (ossuaries). Again, he quotes Wadia about Tehran and Kerman where the Zoroastrian mode of disposal of the dead has been "voluntarily given up in favor of burial." The truth is that there was considerable pressure on our brethren there to discard the traditional mode.

Rustomji's suggestion to build a zoo at Doongerwadi having, among other animals, wolves and foxes, lions and leopards is nothing short of dry snidery. Moreover, it hardly behoves an advocate of anti-traditional outlook to quote from an Avestan text, as Rustomji has done, regarding *atar* (fire).

As a propounder of electric cremation, Rustomji dubs such a system "the cleanest, quickest, purest" and what have you. It is equally instinctive for him to cite the following English translation of M. N. Dhalla's original in Gujarati: "Dakhmenashini is merely a tradition! The demolition of a tradition is not the destruction of religion! Tradition is not religion." It may be noted that in *Dastur*

Dhalla: Ek Atmakatha (pg 487, 2nd edition, Karachi, 1946) the author writes: "Dakhmenashini *ék tarikat chhè*." Considering the context, the use of *tarikat* would be justifiable when, and only when, it is used for "rite." However, Dhalla's translators — the Rustomjis — wrongly replace the Arabic word by "merely a tradition." But leaving aside the question of nuances and statements lacking in direction and certitude, it would be impossible for any profound man to ignore the truth contained in René Guénon's following observation: "Actually, religion being essentially a form of tradition, the anti-traditional outlook cannot help being anti-religious; it begins by distorting religion and, when it can, ends by suppressing it altogether."

Notwithstanding the efforts of some zealots to bring about the "death" of orthodoxy, it must be mentioned that Dhalla himself had strong reservations about such a pipe dream. Declares Dhalla (op cit, pg 484): "...orthodoxy *tau daadaarji paaséhi lamba 'ji' maangi laavéli chhè. Té èm marvaani nathi. Jyaan sudhi maanas jivshé tyan sudhi é tau jivvani* (orthodoxy has been blessed by God with long lasting existence. It cannot be done away with easily. As

long as man continues to exist, it will remain alive)." One can only hope the anti-orthodox would keep in mind this fact attested by their champion.

FARIBOURZ NARIMAN

"Test your knowledge"

With reference to Phiroze Modi's letter ("Test your knowledge," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, May 2001) I would like to set the record straight.

Jamshed Vesugar was an old friend of my parents whom I had known since my days as a schoolgirl in Simla. When my father was briefly posted in Washington in 1948 Jamshed was head of the India Supply Mission there. He and his wife (a former "Miss America") were extremely kind to us and we met frequently.

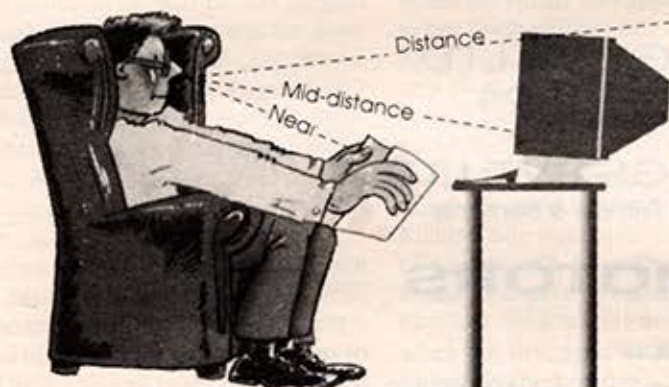
After he left that appointment I do not know what he did, though my mother and Estelle Vesugar corresponded until my mother's death. He may have gone as an ambassador to some Latin American country, but he was never Indian Ambassador to the USA.

KHORSHEED R. K. S. GHANDHI

Change in name

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Nishant Bharat Udeshi has changed his name to Yazad Hoshang Bilimoria according to item No X-15265 in the Government of Maharashtra Gazette Volume 5, No 1922.

We shall be grateful if you could kindly alert your readers about this occurrence and request them to ensure as far as possible to prevent this person from using any of the facilities meant exclusively for Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians.

GODREJ N. DOTIVALA
Public Relations Officer
Bombay Parsi Punchayet

Whither, Parsiana?

I have read *Parsiana* with interest for the past few years. Recently I read an article by Dilnavaz Bhagwagar that reminded me of my medical school days in Nagpur in the late 1950s. *Parsiana* has succeeded in its primary purpose of bringing awareness of interests and activities among the Parsi community in India and elsewhere. Your articles on our history, culture, traditions and significant individuals have also been excellent.

Parsiana has the potential to do more. It is ideally placed to serve as the focus of a network linkage among Parsis. This can be done by urging all pockets — large and small — to select a contact person or spokesperson with an e-mail address who could be listed in *Parsiana*. An e-mail linkage would allow individual contacts, group surveys and regional or wide notification of special issues! Thus a traveler to Nairobi or Auckland could contact the local community and meet with them or bring things they may need. What a boon, specially for our young.

There could be sections on our folklore, our food; a section for young readers, where they could contribute short stories, poems or essays in certain issues.

Perhaps we can ease up on our focus on burial and death rituals, and on who should and should not be a 'Parsi.' The wealth of positive goals before you make such preoccupation unnecessary.

PHIROZE HANSOTIA
Wisconsin, USA

The Editor replies

As much as *Parsiana* would like to be of more service to the scattered worldwide Zoroastrian community our limited resources barely suffice to publish the magazine on schedule. Therefore undertaking any additional projects of this

kind is not feasible.

In service of the fire

With a view to keep the flame of the Parsi community's faith in our holy padshah saheb ever burning and bright, three Zoroastrian devotees and I have been mainly instrumental in helping different trusts shift the holy padshah saheb, aalats, etc to other suitable agiaries, dadgahs.

We offer our services anywhere in India, free of cost to any Parsi anjumans, organizations, trusts, etc for any such work with the same objective. If such removal and installation is for any place abroad, we would expect the anjumans or the trusts to bear the actual traveling and other incidental costs only. This offer is open for all time to come to all anjumans, organizations, trusts, etc in India or abroad with the sole purpose of serving our religion and the Parsi community.

Those interested are requested to contact Darius Gotla on 3085020, 3087032; Mobile: 9820094848. DARIUS GOTLA

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In the light of the valuable services that are being rendered by this Dispensary we appeal to our community brethren to donate freely and generously. If the donation is Rs 5,000 or more, the covering letter should specify: "Please accept the cheque to Dispensary Corpus account and utilize the income therefrom year after year in the administration and objects of the trust."

Donations may be sent by cash, A/c payee cheque or demand draft in the name of Sheth M. C. Damanwala Charitable Dispensary to: Z. M. Dastur, Honorary Secretary, Damanwala Dispensary, Dr D. N. Road, Udvada 396180 or

to K. S. Dastur, A-19, Tardeo Chambers, Kashinath Road, Tardeo, Bombay 400034, Tel: 4940375. We have opened a savings account with a Bombay bank to save commission and for the rapid encashment of cheques and demand drafts.

K. S. DASTUR
President

Sheth M. C. Damanwala Charitable Dispensary

Parsi stand on abortion?

A young Iranian gynecologist friend working in India would urgently like to know if there has been any official Zoroastrian stand vis-à-vis medical termination of pregnancies/abortions. Is there anything in our religious scriptures for or against it or have any of our high priests, Zoroastrian associations/assemblies/anjumans/organizations/punchayets ever expressed their views on it?

While this doctor would like the information for a talk she has to deliver, I am sure there would be many amongst your readers who would also be interested in the topic. Therefore may I through your columns request researchers, scholars, senior priests and presidents of Zoroastrian organizations to share their findings and views to enlighten the lay Parsi on this subject?

RUSI R. SORABJI
California, USA

Missing monajats

Jehangir B. Karani and Sons were once famous for publishing religious books and especially our *Khordeh Avesta*. At the end of our prayer book they used to publish many monajats.

Alas, with the passage of time, Karanis are no more and the monajats are slowly fading away from our memory.

The most popular monajat was *Khudawind Khawind Parverdegah* (asking blessings from Dadar Ahura Mazda) to be recited before retiring to bed at night. Other monajats that come to mind are *Ahura Mazda ni setayash*, *Asho Zarthoshti sifarma* and a monajat to be recited in the morning on waking up.

We should revive all beautiful monajats either in a book form or on a cassette, explaining the meaning of the monajat, what role it plays in our daily lives, who was the composer, etc.

Which Zoroastrian scholar or institution will take the lead?

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

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Unite to show might

Dear Parsi sisters and brothers all!
To survive, never put aside
Zarathushtra's call.

Unite like a rock, for every good
cause,
Stray controversies can never get
applause.

Yes, everyone has a right to say —
But never to dictate to others to have
their own way.
Vohuman - good mind, is with us as a
guide,
Opinions may differ but should never
divide.

There is no *din-dushmani* from
outside,
Within us some intentionally with
malice decide
Divide and rule policy. Then start to
complain,
Continuing controversies, without any
concrete gain.

What happiness we have is due to the
holy fire,
Our Parsipanu is what all communities
admire.
How can we lose the prestige of our

forefathers?
Preserve our goodwill, while
respecting others.

Welcome, what may come, with
endurance,
Do not rush to the media to disclose
our difference.
Try to remove the hurdles coming in
our way,
Remove them with dignity, "Well
done!" all will say.

Our community is alive with some
purpose divine,
And for our good, religion with
welfare combine.
The torch of faith will never be
extinguished, I assure
To survive, unity is the only cure!

NOSHIR DABOO
Ahmedabad

Scars to stars

A psychologist attached to a Bombay
hospital has a successful practice. How-
ever, being a dyslexic, she is unable to
distinguish left from right. She ties a
ribbon on her left hand while driving so
that she can find her way. In another
instance, a collegian gives rapid fire

instructions, heavily sprinkled with com-
puter jargon to a group of "computer
illiterate" adults on net surfing. Every-
one is awestruck by this whiz kid, not
realizing that this was the same boy
labeled a slow learner in school. A
middle-aged executive has a lucrative
pharmaceutical business. He is street-
smart and has excellent oral expressive
skills. However, he cannot write a simple
sentence without spelling or grammati-
cal errors. Yet with the help of an effi-
cient secretary for writing his letters and
a word processor, he is able to clinch
multi billion dollar deals. These are three
real life instances of dyslexics who suc-
cessfully turned their scars into stars.
The list is endless — Einstein, Leonardo
da Vinci, Hans Christian Andersen,
Woodrow Wilson, Nelson Rockefeller
are just a few examples of famous dys-
lexics.

There are three types of learning dis-
abilities — dyslexia, dysgraphia and
dyscalculia. Physically these students
appear normal. They are neither retarded
nor do they have vision problems of
reading backwards. Often they are ex-
tremely gifted. There is no universally
accepted definition of dyslexia. The one
presented by the World Federation of



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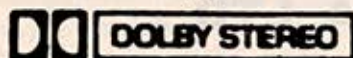
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The common signs and symptoms of dyslexia are:

- problems with reading accuracy, speed and comprehension;
- repeated spelling errors;
- reversals in letters e.g. b for d, saw for was, quite for quiet;
- additions and omission of letters e.g. contact for contract;
- delayed spoken language;
- lack of awareness of sounds in words;
- clumsy and lacking sequential skills;
- confusion about space or time (right and left, up and down, days and months);
- efforts in study do not match scholastic performance;
- inconsistent learning. May reproduce an answer accurately on one day and become totally blank the next day.

Research studies reveal that as many as 15 percent of US schoolchildren are dyslexics. Preliminary research in our country also supports this alarming statistic. Our problem is ignorance. Teachers label the child lazy, slow or stupid without realizing the fundamental difference between a student who does not want to study and a student who cannot study. Such a child struggles through his failures with a crushed ego and a low self-esteem.

Equal educational opportunity as a fundamental right is often denied. If the child cannot learn the way we teach, should we not change and teach the way he can learn? Early detection by a perceptive teacher is the key to a good prognosis. A detailed psychological evaluation can give a profile of the child's IQ (intelligence quotient), strengths and weaknesses. An individualized education program (IEP) is then tailored by the special educator to suit the unique and specific needs of the child. An IEP is not the same as a tuition. Since dyslexia is not a disease, there is no cure. Through appropriate education, understanding and support a dyslexic can cope with reading and writing by developing his unique talents and abilities. In other words, he learns how to learn.

A special educator in school does remedial work with the student three to four times a week. She sets special pa-

pers during exams. The school counselor in conjunction with the psychologist and special educator deals with the student's emotional and behavioral problems. She liaises with the parents and teachers to form a support team.

Sadly very few schools employ special educators and school counselors. Yet another lacuna in our education system is the lack of funds to help parents who cannot afford the expenses for tests and remediation. At the level of both Stds X and XII, the state board has given several concessions to dyslexics such as extra exam time, appearing for five papers instead of six, paper to be read out to the student, dropping maths and science for non academic subjects such as art and cookery, use of calculators for the maths paper.

National Open School (NOS) is another option for those who are severely dyslexic and also slow learners. NOS has a simple and smaller curriculum. It also gives the student the flexibility to appear for exams over a two-year period, breaking up the subjects over a six-month interval. After NOS completion the student can go to college or opt for a vocational course.

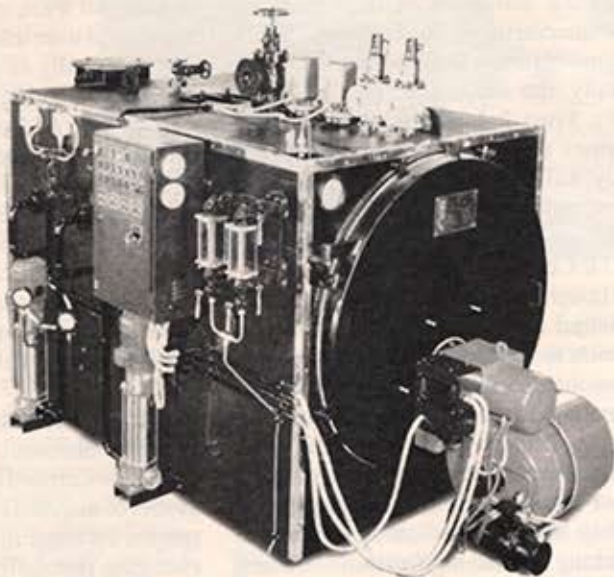
Dyslexia is hereditary. Parents are advised to talk about the problem and seek counseling to overcome their own bewilderment and frustration. Home is a "learning place" not a "remedial teaching place." A teacher in class finds it difficult to cope with a dyslexic and an untrained parent would probably find it more so. Encourage extra curricular activities where a child has a chance to excel and enhance self-esteem. Establish routine and keep distractions during study time to bare minimum. Simplify instructions.

Learn as much as you can about the problem. Join the Maharashtra Dyslexia Association, 003/101 Amit Park, 1st Floor, Lala Jannadas Gupta Marg, Bombay 400088, Tel: 5565754. Psychological evaluation and remediation services can be obtained from the Institute for Exceptional Children, Lamington Road, Bombay 400007, Tel: 3868501 or Dr Hutoxi Bana, Occupational Therapy Department, Harkisondas Hospital, Bombay 400007, Tel: 3855555.

NOS centers are located at the S. R. E. School, Haji Ali; Nalanda School, Hormuzd Mansion, Breach Candy; Our Lady of Salvation, Dadar; Dominic Savio

continued on page 53

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Events and Personalities

On the RITE course

A child is first and foremost a child, and his/her ability, disability or giftedness is secondary. Based on this premise, the RITE (Research in Integrated Training and Education) Centre has been endeavoring to create an awareness that while there may be variations in children's pace, extent, limits and inputs to learning, the education system must learn to respect and absorb these differences into an integrated system. This would be contrary to the present practice of segregating children into multiple education systems like general education (for the able), special education (for the disabled), remedial education (for specific learning disorders), compensatory education (for the culturally disadvantaged), the open school (for the vocationally oriented) and the Navodaya Vidyalayas (for the talented from rural areas), according to a paper presented by Dr Roda Billimoria, one of the trustees of the nearly three-year-old Sir Shapurji Billimoria Foundation under whose auspices the RITE Centre functions.

Sir Shapurji Billimoria, Roda's grandfather, had served as her inspiration, she reveals, giving glimpses of his professional stature as founder of S. B. Billimoria and Company, among the first professional chartered accountancy firms in India. Despite his very humble beginnings, he rose to become one of the most respected members of the community who had served as chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (his tenure as trustee lasting from 1933 until his death in 1958 at the age of 81). The establish-



S. Billimoria:
inspiring life

ment of the Foundation was undertaken with the assistance of the Centre for Advancement in Philanthropy. While the initial funds came from the Billimoria family, the support of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust helped them launch their various activities. "Since ours is a totally different concept, we need support, moral support more than financial" to promote the workings of the RITE Centre, emphasizes Roda.

Integrated education is important for children as it fosters a humanistic approach to education and creates a compassionate society whilst recognizing that every child has a potential, no matter how limited. It also provides opportunities for optimal development, prevents children from being segregated, discourages labeling and provides a unitary system of teaching and training. Instead of stressing on the child's disability it provides an enabling environment to utilize the child's special talents, notes the literature from the Centre.

To promote integrated education, the RITE Centre has identified four-fold objectives: adopting an eclectic approach to integrate varied teaching methodologies, integration of subjects, integration of professional courses for teachers and integration of children of differing capacities. To meet these objectives the Centre has been conducting workshops, teachers' training courses, has developed a small library of relevant literature, and publishes a newsletter called *The Rite Step*. This reports on their orientation courses and exposure visits, and in its columns "Our concerns" and "Overheard" refers to the new developments related to this field. This newsletter is also accommodated on their website riteeducation.org.

Their board of trustees includes Prof Suma Chitnis, Darius Udawadia, Sarosh Ghandy, Pranay Vakil and Dina Daver

with Ranjan Amin as educational consultant. All these individuals have been associated with integrated education either personally or professionally. Roda explains the rationale behind the selection of her co-trustees. The Centre's future plans include the establishment of an institute of education which would accommodate a demonstration school (initially pre-primary and primary), a center for teachers' training and a research and documentation unit with material not only in English but in Hindi and Marathi as well.

Rise from the ashes

While the absence of vultures is compelling some Zoroastrians to consider other modes of disposal of the dead, shrinking spaces, increase in infectious diseases, changing perception of health and hygiene, rampant migration that makes burials in native places difficult, increasing avarice of land grabbers, encroachers and gravediggers could be the various reasons for Christians preferring cremation over burial in today's world, notes an article "From dust to ashes" in *Outlook*, July 2, 2001. "The grace and tolerance with which their religion is supporting (the) choice...made by a small but significant section of the 25 million strong community in India...is truly remarkable in these times rife with religious bigotry," mentions the write-up.

At Delhi's Prithviraj Road Christian cemetery, a cluster of smaller graves wherein are interred the ashes of those cremated, stand beside the older, conventional graves that crowd the place. Rev Pritam Santram, pastorate-in-charge of Delhi's Cathedral Church of Redemption, was quoted as saying, "The last rites are about reverently disposing of the physical remains of those we love with hopes and aspirations attached to this life and to life after death...Cremation



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doesn't contradict the dogma of resurrection."

An electric crematorium was being planned at the St Sepulchre Cemetery in Poona too, reported an article in the *PuneNewline* (April 15, 2001) giving credit to the leaders of the Pune Christian Cemetery Society for initiating this reform. "Leaving acres of land to the dead hardly makes any sense when masses of people are forced to live on footpaths owing to space constraints," wrote Rahul Fernandes in *Citizens' Voice* in the *PuneNewline* of April 16, adding, "I hope other communities also take a leaf out of the book of the Christians."

The Roman Catholic Church which once forbade cremation has since repealed its law, mentions the *Outlook* write-up clarifying that at present it "earnestly recommends" burial but it "does not however forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to the teachings of Christ." "To cremate and then inter the ashes is the most hygienic and space saving solution, common in the UK and Japan," believes Ranajoy Bose of Calcutta's Christian Burial Mission.

As sums up Father G. Gispert Sauch, professor at the Vidya Jyoti Roman Catholic College of Theology, "Man has made symbols and rituals for himself...It's understandable that man is attached to the rituals he has crafted. He sometimes doesn't want to change tradition, but to change it is not sacrilege."

A fund for feathers

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet is not alone in its endeavors to bring the vultures back to the Indian skies. The Bombay Natural History Society has announced its plans to set up an international research and breeding center for the scavenger birds at Pinjore, near Chandigarh, according to a report in *The Indian Express* of August 20, 2001. In collaboration with the environment ministry and the UK-based Royal Society for Protection of Birds which has reportedly sanctioned £ 1,00,000 for this project, the center will be set up on a one-acre plot of land which is part of the 1,800-acre reserve forest area that was once the official hunting ground of the Maharaja of Patiala. Permission though is still awaited from the Haryana government to rear vultures free of the mysterious virus that is threatening the species and then releasing the birds in areas where they were once found in plenty, states

The Indian Express.

Conservation of yet another endangered species, Panama's national bird, the harpy eagle with its beak the size of a jackknife, a plumed crest and talons as long as a grizzly bear's claws is the inaugural project of the Peregrine Fund's Neotropical Raptor Center near Panama City, notes an article by David Dudenhofer titled "Captive breeding puts birds of prey on flight to recovery" carried in *Rotary News* (July 2001) and forwarded to *Parsianaby* Rotarian Arun H. Joshi of Poona. A global conservation group which has been in existence for the last 30 years, the Peregrine Fund has worked in more than 40 countries and has succeeded in helping endangered species like North America's bald eagle and the East African bearded vulture, writes Dudenhofer.

Biologists in Panama pair up the eagles — on loan from zoos — in isolated cages to encourage mating. Within a year the chicks are separated from their parents and moved to a rain forest platform where they are provided animal carcasses for the next six to 12 months until they learn to hunt for themselves. UK's Jemima Parry-Jones too, when consulted by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, had envisaged careful nurturing of vulture chicks in the aviary proposed on the Doongerwadi grounds to compensate for the total absence of vultures.

Originally focussing on reintroducing the peregrine falcon in regions of the United States from where it had completely disappeared, the Peregrine Fund has since expanded its scope. Thanks to its captive breeding and other conservation efforts to save the endangered Mauritius kestrel, now more than 700 kestrels have been sighted on the Mauritius island, states Dudenhofer. "But despite the successes, captive breeding remains controversial due to its high cost — the Peregrine Fund's 2001 operating budget is around US \$ 5,000,000," mentions the article.

Purifying Powai

The 111-year-old Powai Lake in Bombay which has been in the news recently for the initiative taken by the local citizens and supported by the

government to clean and conserve the water body was actually built by the British on the estate of Framjee Cowasjee Banaji, mentions an article in *The Indian Express* of June 27, 2001. The property was given on lease to this Parsi merchant in 1826. Regarded as "one of the greatest of Bombay's scientific agriculturists" the efforts he made on his estate at Powai had earned him the title of "Lord Leicester of Western India," notes a write-up in *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*.

The artificially created lake built by the British in 1890 at an initial cost of Rs 6.5 lakh was meant to provide two million gallons of water to the city. When Tansa Lake became a more viable option, Powai was turned over to the picnic-

ers, until the refuse and sewage from the neighboring colonies made it an unfit haven, noted the news report.

An estimated 1.5 lakh additional populace has taken up residence in this north-eastern suburb in the last 10 years even though the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has not developed any new sewage system, alleges the write-up. The reputed Indian Institute of Technology and the swanky Hiranandani Gardens complex are neighbors to this Lake.

Included along with 20 other lakes by the ministry of environment and forests and the Centre in the National Lake Conservation Plan, the union government has sanctioned Rs 6.54 crore for the Powai Lake's clean-up, states the report. An action plan to revive the Lake includes stopping further erosion, purifying water, desilting, beautification, maintenance and corporate participation for the 104 acres of the total 334 acres of the surface area of the Lake which are believed to be polluted, according to the *Express* write-up. With the concerted efforts of the Save Powai Lake Abhiyan and local member of parliament Kirit Somaiya, it is hoped that the Powai Lake will come alive again in the next 18 months.

Kith, kin and kidney

When Texas based Feroze M. Patel, "the top man of a multi million dollar company, Tranter," was diagnosed as suffering from total renal failure, his



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doctors informed him that he would need to be put on peritoneal dialysis 12 hours a day, seven days a week until they found a kidney replacement, reports Bombay's Noshir Sanjana. His name featured on the national list for kidney recipients which would normally have taken four to five years until a cadaver kidney with a good tissue match was found, adds Sanjana.

Fortunately for him, his cousin in Bombay, Shapur J. Bhagwagar, instantly offered to donate his kidney, disregarding his own multifarious health problems. The medical tests at Jaslok Hospital confirmed that Bhagwagar would be



From left: Patel, sister Zarine and Bhagwagar

a suitable donor. His wife Michelle and children Shazad and Sharon supported his decision. Bhagwagar's only stipulation was that his feeble mother should not be intimidated of the transplant until the surgery was over.

In March 2001, Bhagwagar with some relatives proceeded to the States where at the Dallas Baylor Transplant Center he was made to undergo a battery of medical and psychological tests, a prerequisite to establish the donor's history and physical condition, and his compatibility with the recipient. The transplant was a total success and today Patel has a new life to look forward to, states Sanjana.

An unbending shopkeeper

Nauzer Nowrojee went for his walk in the forest around McLeod Gunj. The Dalai Lama, returning from his visit to Belfast saw him and stopped the car to greet for the final time the friend who had offered him a home over 40 years ago. The next day, October 24, 2000, Nowrojee breathed his last at the age of 85, recalled an article in the UK publication, *The Times*, of October 30. He had been a resident of McLeod Gunj in Upper Dharamsala since 1938 when at the age of 23 he took charge of the sole general store founded by his great-grand-

father in 1860 to service the nearby army cantonment. After Independence in 1947, with the departure of the British and the nearby cities cut off behind the Indo-Pakistan border, McLeod Gunj had almost become a ghost town and there were reportedly days when Nowrojee barely earned a single rupee from trading.

His initial efforts to revive the town's fortunes met with failure until 1959 when on hearing that the Dalai Lama had taken refuge in Mussoorie, Nowrojee suggested that the Tibetan exiles make the area around Dharamsala their base. The Nehru government, according to *The Times* article, was happy with the idea and secluded the Tibetans in a remote town secured by a military camp. So in 1960 when the Dalai Lama established his government-in-exile, he along with his family and thousands of Tibetan refugees occupied the area around McLeod Gunj which came to be known as Little Lhasa, serving as the headquarters of the Tibetans in India and a showcase of Tibetan art and culture. In time McLeod Gunj became a place of pilgrimage with Nowrojee's store a focal point which everybody in town passed several times a day, being located at an intersection.

And although Nowrojee as also his wife Mani continued to remain a good friend of the Dalai Lama, over the years Nowrojee was not happy with the transformation of the town which had become overcrowded, filthy, noisy and polluted. His sons opted to move out of the area (see "Height of hospitality," *Events and Personalities, Parsiana*, June-July 2000) but Nowrojee could not bring himself to sever his connections with this terrain and was reportedly the model of the unbending shopkeeper who featured in his nephew Rohinton Mistry's award winning novel, *A Fine Balance*.

As activists, film stars and western converts to Buddhism flooded the town, hotels, restaurants and traffic multiplied, destroying the peaceful haven. But through all of this Nowrojee and Son continued to trade in its ancient shop with its giant sweet jars, enamelled advertisement boards and its antique glass-topped counters, all "like a time capsule from the 19th century, a reminder of the town's past as a British hill station."

To the local Gaddis, he was their "sethji," their unofficial doctor who would readily deal with emergencies, dispensing medicine for free. He knew the local language and the dialects and later learnt

a smattering of Tibetan as well. Equally familiar with the flora and fauna of the



Nowrojee: habits and habitat

region, he was genuinely concerned about preserving the natural habitat. "With him passed into history the beauty, the fragrance and the serenity that was McLeod Gunj," notes a write-up in *The*

Indian Express of April 13, 2001.

Mounting murders

Seventy-three-year-old Tehmoras Patel, living alone on the ground floor of Pavwala Building at Grant Road was found murdered on the night of August 1, 2001. "He was the eighth senior citizen murdered this year (in Bombay)," noted a news item in *The Times of India* of August 3. "This makes it a murder a month in a city slowly turning into a crime capital of senior citizens," reported *The Indian Express* of the same day. "Prima facie it appeared that the victim was strangled to death after being gagged with cloth...with his hands tied behind his back," *The Express* quoted the police. The murder apparently came to light after the victim's two sons, who being employees of Godrej reside at Vikhroli, came visiting their father.

While initially it was suspected that robbery could be the motive behind the murder, according to a subsequent report in the *Times* of August 5, the police have ruled out robbery as a motive. Inspector Ramakrishna Kothawale was quoted in the *Times* as saying, "There is nothing of significant value missing from the house. The old man used to receive his pension which was deposited in his bank account every month. We have questioned his two sons and a daughter in this connection and are still to make a breakthrough in the case."

The police in the meanwhile had yet not nabbed the killers of Jeroo Dalal who was murdered on February 5 this year or the three members of the Avari family, Banubai, Rusi and Roshan who were bludgeoned to death in December last. In fact after grilling over 100 suspects, the police are yet to find a lead in the murder of Dr Mehroo Jussawalla whose dead body was found at her residence on February 17, 1999, reported

continued on page 30

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The need to nurture

The Sydney-based Australian Zoroastrian Association has reached a fork in its development, says former vice president Dinaz Mistry

Arnavaz S. Mama

Dinaz Mistry's public agenda is "to make the religion and the community more relevant, more meaningful." The community endorsed her work by naming her "Zoroastrian of the Year." The award was presented to her at AZA's (Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales) annual general meeting on September 9, 2001 by trustee Akhtar Ostawari.

A year into her job as vice president of AZA, Mistry had realized that the community in Australia is changing. Growing disillusionment and apathy are sapping the will to serve on the AZA's executive committee, she avers.

To overcome these mental blocks, Mistry decided that the "women have to unite and contribute... review social and cultural practices for future benefit, identify areas of neglect." Why women? "Because they are the nurturers of the family."

But how do you get the women to read and think the matter through? Mistry watched her daughters' friends bond together and organized a workshop with 12 other likeminded ladies titled the "Secret Women's Business (SWB)" luring 70 Zoroastrian women to participate in the sleepover.

A peculiarly Australian (and North American) institution, the sleepover has been used as a bonding agent for children and teenagers who spend the night together soaking in ideas on a particular subject as they dialog, dine and sleep, spending quality time together. The SWB name was borrowed from a court case fought by the women of an aboriginal tribe in south Australia to preserve their sacred rites which had captured the Australian imagination, Mistry provides the explanations.

What the exercise revealed was that "on the one side there were certain groups that needed help, on the other, not many people knew about it."

Though only 43 of the women who

attended responded to the questionnaire provided to them, the responses, as presented by Mistry in her report, are revealing. Intermarriage, the care of elderly parents, divorce, unemployment and child custody were seen to be the overriding problems, in the order listed. Alcoholism, drugs, physical abuse and homosexuality were faced by about 30 percent of the respondents. The women identified the need for doctors, social workers, counselors and lawyers, child support and AZA assistance.

In her report Mistry notes that the community has no structure in place to which families in crisis could turn. The tendency of the community to gossip encourages people to suffer alone and in silence. Even as "adult inflexibility does not appeal to the youth," a growing group of seniors feels redundant and unwanted. Mistry argues that the knowledge and foresight of more established members could help newcomers. Instead, the latter feel isolated and uncomfortable at AZA functions. There is "no register of new migrants arriving in Sydney; no follow-up procedure on their settlement," adds Mistry. Language, ideology and parochialism based on the area of emigration have been accentuating the tendency to separate into groups.

The location of AZA House and lack of transport facilities further impede participation in AZA activities which rank low priority in terms of time management for a number of Zoroastrian residents. "The community is rather thin-skinned and cannot take constructive criticism," writes Mistry, leading "those who have worked in the past to stop active participation in AZA run activities." Also programs begun by one

committee are changed or terminated by the next, "causing a linkage problem," she notes.

On the religious and cultural front, the coalescing of the two and the obsession with rituals daunted the youths who felt the need to incorporate Aussie cultural traditions in keeping with their new home. "Children felt that their parents' limited knowledge and explanations were embarrassing," as also the older Zoroastrians' concept of being superior to other communities. The youths "wanted



Mistry: keeping Zarathushtra's vision alive

to be comfortable with their peers... They felt that the older people were living in the past... They wanted more choices. They did not like being compelled into doing things the 'old' way."

Significantly, 80 percent of the participants were pro-change on social issues and 74 percent on religious and cultural issues. In both sectors five percent resisted change. The rest have been bracketed as "fence-sitters."

"If like the Jewish community, we nurture our own, there are more chances of survival as a healthy and strong community," says Mistry, convinced that the way to begin is through "healthy discussion... people have to be informed." She credits Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree with having "raised the consciousness of people." She is also sharply aware of Prof Kaikhosrov Irani's interpretation of the Zarathushtrian doctrine that "every individual counts" and is happy that the younger generation is responding to this message. "I see ourselves as change agents. People don't like change," she adds ruefully.

Daughter of the late Jal and Mehroo Sadri, Mistry was born and brought up in Kanpur where her father was secre-

Reaching for the Sky



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tary of the Kanpur Parsi Anjuman for 25 years. "He inspired me," she adds nostalgically. After completing her graduation in arts and law, the tall, well built Dinaz came to Bombay for a successful foray into the public services. However, on being offered the taxation branch, she opted to work for a year with the accountancy firm Dalal, Desai and Kumana before acceding to her mother's desire that she work with Zoroastrian women. She joined the RTI (Ratan Tata Institute) as assistant general secretary — her mentors were Gulistan Billimoria and Simone Tata — until her marriage to cousin Dinyar, who had won his doctorate from Oxford University before settling in Australia. Her forte now is human development; his is information technology.

"Migration is a hard process. Sociability is difficult. (There are) problems of adjustment in the new society... Parsis are used to being top dog. We have to earn it back. (To) give up a preferential existence to go into a new (society) is like transplanting an organ — you have to live through it and survive!" says Mistry, adding, "the first priority is economics and encouraging the children to be intellectually challenged." She notes happily that three Zoroastrian youths scored 99 percent marks at the last Higher Secondary Certificate examination in Sydney.

Believing that the Zoroastrians of Sydney are at a watershed, Mistry wonders, "Where do we look now? Is Zoroastrianism the answer? Or do we blend with the mainstream (as is said to have happened to an earlier wave of Zoroastrian settlers in Australia)?"

At the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston Mistry had noted, "In the worst of circumstances, we and our forefathers and mothers kept the flame alive — we kept it alive in the hope that one day, we would be blessed with the opportunity to openly practice our religion, to see it thrive, not just survive, for the betterment of all humankind! That time is now! No longer are we in danger... After thousands of years of preserving and protecting the religion, we are free! Let's rejoice and continue to carry out Zarathushtra's vision!..."

"Zarathushtra envisioned an eventually perfect world, a state of Hauvertat, which may be achieved through the conscious decisions of the Good Mind to choose the righteous path. Zarathushtra did not limit the use of the religion to his

first followers — his vision was to be spread to all of humanity!

"Because his vision is universal, we, alone, cannot reach that eventual utopian state without sharing his message with those who choose to accept it.

"In fact, to keep Zarathushtra's vision alive, it is our obligation to educate, encourage and welcome into the religion all who have made a conscious decision to embrace it."

On a more restricted scale Mistry writes in the concluding paragraph of the SWB report, "Mindful of our past the women's group asked for unity, acceptance, tolerance and an open-door policy. The younger girls had a simple message: 'We love and respect you but please stop fighting, gossiping and grow up, otherwise how do you expect us to come and feel happy at AZA.'"

Dissent in Sydney

At its annual general meeting (AGM) on September 9, 2001 a new team of office-bearers have taken charge at the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales (NSW). The team includes Noshir Irani, Freny Kolsawalla, Villie Meher Homji, Arnaz Bana, Mithie Daver and Gulu Katrak, according to an email received from former vice president Dinaz Mistry. Noted outgoing president Capt Noshir Sachinwalla in his presidential address, "Today although I would like to stay and continue, we have a group of enthusiastic voluntary workers who are keen to take on the reins. This is a record break from previous years when we struggled to find people to come on board. May I be emboldened enough to say that perhaps we have raised the consciousness of the community!"

The divisions among Sydney Zarathushtris had been showcased at the extraordinary general meeting of the AZA of NSW held on June 11, 2000 to discuss and vote on five propositions on the future of AZA House. The Annangrove property that had been rescued for the community in the teeth of trenchant legal neighborhood opposition in the 1980s, seemed to have reached a new phase in Zoroastrian life and lifestyle in Sydney. The options were:

- To build a separate structure adjacent to the main hall, presented by Purvez Kolsawalla
- To construct an extension of the present structure in a similar architectural layout, presented by Bomi Wadia

•To purchase a prefabricated structure and place near the present structure, suggested by Tim Desai

•Do not change or alter the present structure for the time being, offered by Sherna Kotwal

•Analyze whether the current property is, and will continue to be, appropriate to the needs of the community and our future generation, presented by Filly Madon and Farida Irani.

"Some of the presenters spoke in great detail and utilized overhead transparencies," AZA secretary Sorab Davar had noted in his report in *Manashni*, the AZA newsletter. After a robust question and answer session, the votes garnered by the five options were seven, 13, five, 23 and 21 respectively. "The decisive majority of options 4 and 5 has sent a clear message to the management committee and the community, that prior to building a new extension or structure, we need to re-evaluate the usage of the current structure. Or rather, how to optimize the usage of our current facilities. It was mentioned that at the present we do not utilize our current facilities more than once or twice a month — for a variety of reasons: council restrictions, community apathy, disinterested youth, etc. Thus, option 4, in the words of the presenter, Sherna, was not a case to do nothing, but rather a case for not spending any more money on a new building or structure, until we as a community get 'our act together.' A word that was used by more than one presenter was 'curfew' — the current structure has several restrictions on the usage and it was stressed that we need to re-visit the issue of approaching the (municipal) council for re-evaluating these restrictions," Davar analyzed the reasoning behind the votes.

In this context it may be recalled that Sachinwalla had presented a strong case for a separate structure to house the AZA Sunday school which now operates in the Dar-e-Mehr hall with some discomfort when he had met *Parsiana* in early 2000 (see "Culture is the key to survival," *Parsiana*, April 2000). However, in the December issue of *Manashni* Sachinwalla noted, "Recently, Sunday school teachers expressed their concern, that the Sunday school is not functioning well. A number of students do not attend classes. A number of parents bring their children late thus disrupting the class. The committee had a meeting with teachers and coordinators to solve

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this problem. Sunday school is the backbone of our culture and religion. Efficient running of the school is important for our children. The teachers are busy structuring syllabii for Gujarati, Farsi/Persian and religion. I feel we should have readings from *Shah Namah* which gives more insight into our culture. Soon we will be sending a questionnaire to be filled in by parents. Your cooperation is vital for the survival of Sunday school and our Zoroastrian culture."

The May-July 2001 issue of *Manashni* carries a letter from Desai, a long-time stalwart, jubilating at the seventh anniversary of the Dar-e-Mehr which "is being used off and on, maybe not to the same extent that one would have liked; but symbolically it is the focal point for Zoroastrians in Sydney." He refers to the addition of new trees planted on the campus and the construction of a "pavilion" which now needs to be paved. Another need is the installation of storage cabinets in the kitchen. Desai estimates the combined cost at approximately \$ 10,000, seeking 100 families to contribute \$ 100 each. Thirty members had already agreed to contribute.

The AZA's AGM scheduled for September 9, 2001 had the topic FEZAA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of Australasia) on its agenda. AZA is one of three members of FEZAA, the others being the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria and the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand.

"The main aim for the formation of FEZAA was to act as a coordinating body for various associations in our region as well as for Zarathushtris who reside in towns where there are no associations. Each association is autonomous in dealing with local issues with the Federation coordinating issues which affect all the Zarathushtris in the region," notes its proponent and AZA representative Purvez Kolsawalla in *Manashni*. He sees FEZAA representing Zarathushtris at the national and global level on issues like immigration, refugee status, etc, in providing Zarathushtris who need priestly services, religious education, etc as also the coordination of visits by religious scholars. The downside of FEZAA according to Kolsawalla is the cost of \$ 250 per annum to each participating association and the need for three dedicated Zarathushtris from AZA (and the other organizations) to spend time, money and effort on it.

Presently, the bone of contention seems to be the mode of selection of AZA representatives. Kolsawalla wants three representatives from AZA to FEZAA to be elected each year by the general body at the AGM, the term to extend to a single year with a minimum break of a year between terms. In the case of disputes between the AZA board and its representatives Kolsawalla proposes that "the guideline set in the constitution of FEZAA and the Model Rules will apply."

Opposed to Kolsawalla is the resolution for selection endorsed by Sachinwalla whereby the AZA management committee elects three representatives (one necessarily a member of its board) to represent it on FEZAA with a three-year term of office and a three-year break between terms. Also, the decision of the AZA management committee would rule over any disputes among its representatives.

A third resolution put to vote at the AGM questions the need for FEZAA, noting "even though FEZAA is yet in its infancy, it has the potential for splitting up our community in Sydney... Once FEZAA gets up and running, we could have two separate viewpoints, two separate agendas, two separate official publications and most importantly, AZA will face competition for raising funds for our own activities. Do we really want this?"

Manashni (May-July 2001) had traced the genesis of this controversy to the call from the president for the resignation of two members who had refused to dialog with the AZA managing committee, citing "independence of one body over another." When "the community was invited to break the deadlock as work in the committee was stuck in the FEZAA/AZA debate," leading to demoralization among committee members, one of the two individuals attended, passionately stated his case and handed in his resignation at the end. The president accepted the resignation explaining to the gathering "why such serious measures had been taken." Though the community decided that no legal action should be taken and the matter was defused through the good offices of the high priest Dr Peshotan Katrak, "the incident revealed that there are flaws in the present system and a much-needed review of governance is required for the community," noted *Manashni*.

In the same issue of the newsletter

however, Capt Noshir Sachinwalla, in his President's Column notes: "I would like to draw your attention to the fact that on June 10, 2001 Purvez Kolsawalla had stated that he would resign from FEZAA in the presence of Dr Peshotan Katrak. However he has now changed his mind. After involving the whole community and arriving at an amicable settlement Purvez Kolsawalla and Sam Kerr have further approached the NSW attorney general's department to intervene in the matter. I am quite astounded at this new development."

The letter from the NSW attorney general's department of August 3, 2001 addressed to Sachinwalla notes, "We were contacted by Purvez Kolsawalla, Dr Sam Kerr seeking assistance in resolving differences between you."

"The Community Justice Centres offer a way for people involved in a dispute to come together with specially trained mediators to try to resolve their differences. The Community Justice Centres are committed to providing a speedy, neutral and informal service to all sections of the community, free of charge."

"Attendance at a mediation session is voluntary and all matters discussed are confidential. Sessions can be held outside office hours at a time convenient to you."

"We would like to discuss this matter with you and it would be appreciated if you would contact us as soon as possible."

The house registered a near unanimous vote against FEZAA, notes Mistry's email. *Parsiana* learns that the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria has also similarly rejected FEZAA.

Markers' highs and lows

An e-mail from Framroze Patel, president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, conveyed the sad tidings of UN under-secretary Jamsheed Marker, his wife Arnaz and daughter Firoza sustaining multiple life threatening injuries in a road accident in upstate New York. On their way to attend his step grand-daughter's wedding, their taxi was hit by a van from the wrong way that crashed into them, writes Patel.

Family support from all sides was instantaneous, both locally in North America and from Karachi. While a prayer vigil was being held in New York, Zoroastrians the world over express their

concern and join in praying for the Markers' recovery.

The horrendous car crash is particularly unsettling, coming as it does a month after Jamsheed's mother's happy centenary celebration, as recounted in the August 2001 issue of *What's On*, the newsletter of the Karachi Zarthosti Banu Mandal (KZBM). On July 21, 2001 Mehran Kekobad Marker was presented a manpatra by the Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund (KPATF) with messages from various organizations in a printed booklet — Marker's involvement with the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) Baluchistan and the Girl Guides had won the Zarathushti community national recognition, notes the report — including a tribute from the KZBM. The function was held on the lawns of Jamsheed and Arnaz's Karachi residence.

KZBM had a special gift for the stalwart — a handmade book titled *This is your life...* recounting highlights from each of the 100 years of Marker's life in the context of simultaneous major events taking place in the world. Pressed foliage evoked her beloved garden in Quetta where she has lived since her marriage in 1921. While KZBM president Toxy Cowasjee felicitated the centenarian, KZBM secretary Yesmin Madon presented her with 10 pink carnations, each symbolizing a decade of fruitful existence, and the committee's youth member, Farahnaz Irani, was chosen to present the KZBM compilation.

It was Marker's granddaughter Aban who summed up the lady's contribution to life around her: "She set standards of integrity, honesty, behavior and decorum. Of hospitality, generosity, noblesse oblige and charity. She commanded respect from all and expected it as her due. If anyone deserves to live to be 100, it is her."

A life restored

An uncommon form of polyneuritis, the Guillain Barré Syndrome manifests itself in a loss of muscle strength, loss of sensation and sometimes paralysis. When Pakistan's Kaumars Kiani, 26, fell prey to it in early 1998, it seemed as though his fate was sealed. Initially even survival seemed to be at stake, according to *What's On*. Sixteen months of hospital care however rehabilitated him and restored his mobility, but the faculty of speech was lost. Sent to the US through the United Nations, Kiani was subjected to further surgeries until Toxy Cowasjee received a call on June 29, 2001 and heard him speak!

Kiani recounted the painful trip back to normalcy: "First I was in Buffalo, but since I realized that the only doctor who could cure me worked in Cincinnati, I moved to Cincinnati almost one year ago. My physician whose name is Dr Robin Cotton, is one of the best otolaryngologists in the world. I was told about him in Pakistan. I had a very complicated surgery on September 13, 2000. I got a T-tube at that time. However, I was not able to talk because the T-tube was passed through my vocal cord. After nine months, the doctor said that he wanted to remove the T-tube. He did it and after a few days he performed another surgery. Finally, I got my voice back. It was just like a miracle to me."

Kiani's grit must have gone a long way towards his cure. He got a high school diploma while he was in hospital and enrolled himself with the Cincinnati State College where he is currently majoring in Associate of Arts, a combination of humanities and science, working towards an eventual bachelor of science degree. He is president of the International Student Association and works part-time in the media department.

Earlier, Kiani had been a filmmaker

and plans to return to Pakistan some day to make a movie of his life there. *What's On* adds a postscript to the story: "To all the people who assisted monetarily during his illness, you have the satisfaction of knowing your money was well spent."

Ontario innings

The archives subcommittee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), chaired by former ZSO president Moti Balsara, is organizing and updating ZSO data under the advice and guidance of the Archives Association of Ontario, as per the association's newsletter of May 2001. Executive committee minutes, historical data, early and old copies of newsletters, minutes of annual general meetings and extraordinary general body meetings are considered archival material.

The newsletter also notes that Zoroastrian Parsi families with young daughters are being targeted by a female caller introducing herself as Dr Zarine Mehta and asking explicit personal questions of a sexual nature. Mehta claimed to belong to a Parsi Doctors' Association and spoke of setting up a hot line where the girls could discuss their personal problems. When one of the fathers tried to speak to "Dr Zarine Mehta" the line went dead, notes the newsletter.

The ZSO executive is unaware of Mehta or the Parsi Doctors' Association and the matter is currently under investigation by the police, notes the report. The call was initially traced to a telemarketing telephone number.

The ZSO newsletters have been detailing interesting achievements of Zoroastrian individuals:

Zenobia Homavazir who is completing her degree in environmental studies at York University simultaneously with a postgraduate program in international project management at Humber College, has been awarded an undergraduate scholarship in India for development studies from the Indo-Shastri Institute. She had earlier participated in overseas community projects in Northern India, Costa Rica and Guyana and is working towards a career in international development and humanitarian aid.

Freddy Langrana has created a unique website with the sole purpose of community service. If you visit www.parsibazar.com, details on antiques, cars, catering, coins, cookbooks, continued on page 56



Centenarian Marker (above and seated extreme right) with Jamsheed, Arnaz (seated second and third from left) and a few APWA members



Scheduling change

The 74-year-old Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Limited is "confident of being classified as a scheduled bank in the near future," states the Bank's 74th annual report and accounts 2000-2001. Having crossed the aggregate of Rs 100 crores in deposits, the Bank is eligible for a shift in status and the necessary application has been made to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the report adds.

The Bank plans to extend its reach by opening new branches in Thana and New Bombay, and has sought RBI permission for opening a branch in Udvada town. In August last year, the Bank opened its ninth branch, opposite the Borivli railway station in a predominantly commercial area. Its Dadar premises, which were on lease, have been purchased by the Bank along with the adjacent area, thus providing better amenities, the report notes.

The new board of directors elected for a five-year term has Hoshang S. Kohina and Keressie N. Wadia as chairman and vice chairman respectively, while Khushroo P. Byramjee and Nalin K. Vissanji were co-opted to the board. The Bank recorded its appreciation of the role of outgoing chairman Jehanbux J. Gandevis and vice chairman Cowasjee N. Dinshaw, who continue as directors on its 17-member board, according to the report. With Keki H. Taraporevala continuing as the managing director and Farokh K. Banatwalla as general manager, the Bank elevated Aspi N. Katgara and Maneck N. Bhathena as assistant general managers.

Shareholder strength increased from 8,800 to 9,822 as on March 31, 2001 and the Bank declared the maximum permissible (under the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960) dividend of 15 percent (Rs 3.75 per share). On the anvil is an increase in its authorized share capital from five crore rupees to seven crore rupees.

"It is heartening to note that despite adverse market conditions, the Bank has registered an impressive growth (27.84 percent over the previous year) in deposits," states the report. While NPAs (non-performing assets) have raised many a problem in the banking industry in general, the Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank "has been prudent in releasing

credit facilities to only genuine borrowers so that the NPAs are minimal," the report adds. The Bank showed a profit of Rs 434.47 lakhs for the year ended March 31, 2001.

Among the numerous facilities offered by the Bank to customers are loans against demat shares up to Rs 20 lakhs at 15 percent interest, as also vehicle and housing loans at competitive rates. The Bank has entered into agency arrangements with Citibank, HDFC Bank, Union Bank of India, etc by which the Bank can draw "cheques payable at par" on the branches of these banks at a nominal cost. "This service is widely utilized and appreciated by the Bank's clientele," notes the report. The Bank also markets ICICI Bonds through all its branches under an agency arrangement.

Expanding port-folio

Capt Jimmy Sarbh, managing director of the Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal (NSICT) has been appointed chairman from July 3, 2001, states a press release from NSICT. "It is very satisfying to take over the chairmanship of the state of the art NSICT exactly four years from the date of the signing of the concession agreement," stated Sarbh. With a capacity to handle third, fourth and fifth generation container vessels, the Rs 1,000 crore project has set new benchmarks in India in every sphere of container handling — safety, ship, train, yard and gate moves, etc, he added.

On August 9, 2001 in Madras, Sarbh, who is also regional director P&O Ports, South Asia and Middle East, and P. Baskaradoss, chairman of Chennai (Madras) port, signed a concession agreement to privatize and develop the Chennai Container Terminal (CCT). The 30-year concession will see a consortium of P&O Ports (75 percent), the Chettinad Group of Chennai (20 percent) and the M. B. Eduljee Cassinath Group of Bombay (five percent) implement the US \$ 170 million project, with P&O Ports required to invest a minimum of \$ 100 million in the Terminal within the first five years, states their press release. Said Sarbh: "We are delighted with the project and are looking forward to working closely with Chennai Port Trust."

The agreement marks another mile-

stone in the port privatization process in India as Chennai is the principal port on the east coast and the only one, apart from Calcutta, that is able to handle substantial container volumes, notes the company's handout.

NSICT is India's first private container terminal (see "The challenging port-folio, *Parsiana*, May 1999). With 80 percent of its workforce being project-affected people, NSICT has, as part of its commitment to the development of the region, adopted the Wajekar ASC College and T. H. Wajekar School at Phunde village, Sheva. NSICT will initially contribute Rs 33 lakhs towards developing the infrastructure for the School and College, states the July issue of the NSICT newsletter.

Managing Money

"There are only two sources of income — man at work or money at work," states Jehan Wadia, Bombay-based financial planner, recommending that all families keep concise records of what they own, as well as list their liabilities, location of important documents, etc. To make their task easier, Wadia has published the *Record book of what my family should know*, now in its 10th revised edition (see "How much are you worth," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, June 1996).

Priced at Rs 100 (plus Rs 20 for registered postage), the 30-page book is published by Parchure Prakashan Mandir, 203/4, Mehta Bhavan, 311, R. R. Marg, Girgaum, Bombay 400004.

Wadia's Sterling Services also conducts seminars on personal finance, tax planning and planning your retirement. "Nine out of 10 people cannot afford to retire, monetarily or mentally," he asserts. His seminars and programs prepare people over the age of 50 cope with the pleasures and pitfalls of retirement, including its psychological and social adjustments, fitness and health. Wadia also has special modules for those opting for VRS (Voluntary Retirement Scheme). Visiting faculty at the K. C. College of Management Studies in Bombay, Wadia has conducted programs

continued on page 40



L to R (first row): Taraporevalla, Dara Contractor, Jehanbux and Thrity Gandevia at the inauguration of Zoroastrian Bank's Borivali branch; the staff of the branch with (seated) Viraf Chinoy, Behram Pavri, Noshir Paghdwalla and Ajay Prabhu; NSICT chairman Sarbh. (second row): Chiniwala (second from left) with Sheriff Ashok Mehta; and with wife Shavin, Solveig and Josef Renggli and daughter Shazneen



Under the chairmanship of Pallan Katgara (above left), the New York chapter of PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association) was awarded the 2001 "Spirit of PATA" Award at the hands of PATA chairman Mr Bezbaruah at the 50th PATA annual conference held in Kuala Lumpur in April. Katgara, who is the New York-based director of

Travel Corporation (India) Limited (TCI), is the first person of Indian origin to be chairman of the New York chapter in its 38 years of existence and the first to be so honored, states a press release from TCI. PATA has 80 chapters throughout the world comprising 17,000 travel professionals, notes the release.

Nazir receiving the Rashtriya Nirman Ratan from ex Governor of Tamil Nadu Bhishma Narain Singh (right) and former chief election commissioner Krishnamurthy

A sentimental sojourn

The author takes a trip to Iran to rediscover his roots, Iranian cuisine and the scenic outdoors

Zend M. Zend

I was advised by one and all not to travel to Iran in July. I was told it would be too hot, 35 to 40°C, but I'm glad I did. It was hot but not sticky. The cool, clean mountain air made it bearable. But no venturing out between 1 and 3 in the afternoon.

At this time of the year you get the best of fruits which grow practically in the backyard of the houses: plums, peaches, pears, cherries, watermelons. They are so unbelievably juicy and sweet. When you bite into the fruit, the juice pours out of your mouth. Vegetables like cucumber and salad are fresh, tasty and sweet. Even chillies are dark green and not so pungent. Nor are the onions.

Calculating 1,000 toman as the equivalent of Rs 60, fruits work out to Rs 30 per kg, almonds to Rs 300 per kg and saffron to Rs 39,000 per kg. Petrol works out to Rs 3 per liter and diesel to 70 paise per liter — unbelievable! An eight-hour inter-city bus ride will cost only Rs 60.

Tehran is a beautiful city, much bigger than Bombay. It is surrounded by mountains which are bleak and barren, with hardly any trees; but, miraculously, there are mountain springs which supply it with cool, clean water. Iranians are proud of their city and see to it that it's kept clean, even by tourists.

The roads are lined with trees nourished by cool water flowing from the mountains along small canals. In the city we don't see plastic rubbish heaps or for that matter beggars or hutments. The air is unpolluted. You just enjoy breathing it, and it keeps you hungry throughout the day. The roads are remarkably free of potholes. A man with a painful back will find travelling in Iran no problem.

The basic food is rice and chello kabab, without masala: not even ginger or garlic is used. Breakfast starts with

fruits, nan, cheese (paneer) and tea without milk. As far as butter is concerned, you can get only saltless butter in the market. Sometimes honeycombs are eaten. All food is practically oil free, that is why you feel so hungry and healthy. There is not much of variety: no curry, fish sauce or even dal fry. Not even omelettes. At dinner or lunch it is chello kabab, day in and day out. The kababs may be called murg, khoresh or jukeh, depending on whether it is chicken or meat pieces that are skewered and grilled. The pieces may be in chunks or minced form. The only flavoring is done with curds, lime and salt.

The rice is of the long-grained white quality, boiled and served hot. No gravy in the form of dal or curry is served. Instead you get a blob of butter to wet the rice. If you are brave enough they serve one raw egg to mix with your rice, which is piled up in the form of a volcano. You are supposed to break the egg in the center of the crater, mix it with the rice, and eat it with relish. One dish I liked was osh: rice and lamb meat cooked with lentil grams. For variety you can try goulash, which is called ab gusht in Iran. You must try the caviar here, but first develop a taste for it. Alcohol is not served or sold anywhere. Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians can make their own homemade arak from fermented raisins. They can drink it but not sell it.

There is hardly any difference between an expensive restaurant and a mediocre one as the food served is of the same quality in both. The expensive restaurants have gardens at the back where fountains play. Table-cum-beds, covered with carpets are laid out where you can lie down and have a short snooze. They even provide you with hookas (hubble-bubbles).

In my travels in Iran I did not come across a single Indian restaurant, for that matter neither a Chinese restaurant. Only

chello kabab restaurants. Iran, a land of one language, one chello kabab and one race of handsome, vigorously stubborn people! The language is Farsi, and all consider themselves to be brothers. A sweeper and a millionaire have both to be addressed politely. Iranians are basically polite and helpful people if approached with proper salutations. They are also egotistic. Every conversation starting with a long salutation becomes a bit of a bore. Farsi is a sweet language spoken in a singsong way.

Tehran is full of beautiful parks. One park called Park-e-Mallet covers 10 acres in the middle of the city. People stay till 1 a.m. in the parks. Instead of taking walks in the morning, Iranians climb mountains in the vicinity called Levazon. You see a seven-year-old child with a 70-year-old grandfather on an hour's climb up the mountain.

North-east of Tehran and 6,000 m high, Mount Damavand is perennially covered with snow. It is claimed that the melting snow provides water to the city.

Iranians enjoy picnics. Any green grassy patch they spy as they drive along the countryside makes them stop, spread a blanket and have a picnic. North of Iran is Hamadan. There is nothing remarkable about it, except that en route you pass the Ali Sadr Cave which was discovered only 40 years ago. In this cave you find the longest internal water canal in the world, 16 km long and still not explored. Of particular interest to Parsis is the Rustom Baugh for Zoroastrians in Tehran, Pars; and on the way to the airport there is a Bhikha Behram Atash-kadah.

I saw one museum and had enough of it. They say the crown jewels are worth seeing and there is also a carpet museum, but I missed out on both.

It is worth attending a party or a reception to observe how Iranians enjoy their functions. The party starts at 7 p.m.



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Clockwise from above: Mount Damavand, fire housed in the Pir-e-Sabz, a Zoroastrian dharamshala in Esfahan built by the Zarthosty brothers, atash kadeh in Taft

Photos: Zend M. Zend



with tea and fruits served first. After the main function like a *navjote* is over, the usual *chello kabab* and rice are served and a roast lamb for a change. Music and dancing start after dinner. You and your partner dance to a jerky tune. You can sway your arms and jerk around but no holding your partner. This goes on till

Any green, grassy patch they spy as they drive along the countryside makes them stop, spread a blanket and have a picnic

the early hours of the morning.

Males can dress as they wish except they cannot go around in shorts. The fair complexioned females with finely chiselled features have to cover their heads and wear a big overcoat up to their ankles called *roopush*.

Shiraz is a beautiful city with centrally located *pezereshka* or Zoroastrian dharamshalas. The best was on Khayabans Zand or Zand Avenue. In Shiraz I was surprised to see American almonds sold in stores. They are uniform in size. Chunky, but no individual taste like Iranian almonds.

Travelling on an overnight bus from Shiraz I reached Yazd at dawn. In the early morning sky I spotted Venus and Jupiter. Yazd was a real trip in time. One learnt how Iran must have been 100 years ago with houses plastered with mud (to keep them cool), with underground storerooms (*zirzamin*), ground level houses (*kadahs*) and terraces (*boon*). Every house here has its own tandoor or oven where *nan* is baked. And a small distillery where *arak* is brewed.

In Yazd I met an 80-year-old gentleman who had worked in my father's bakery in Bombay when he was a teenager. When I introduced myself he cried with the joy of recognition, bringing tears to my own eyes.

One must visit Pir-e-Chak Chak, a holy place for Iranians, 90 km from Yazd, with greenery smack in the middle of a barren range of mountains. Here, history says, a Zoroastrian princess



From top: Ancient water reservoir in Nasarabad; Pir-e-Herisht; Khayam Restaurant en route to Hamadan

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prayed for deliverance from pursuing
Arabs. Ahura Mazda heard her prayers.
Mountains opened and closed behind
her; and where she was entombed, water
started gushing out (sounding like *chak*
chak) as if tears were pouring out of her
eyes. On certain days over 1,000 Iranian
Zoroastrians stay up to pray and party all
night. It is a good communal feeling
when so many Iranians collect to pray
and enjoy together.

In Esfahan I saw a unique Armenian
church called Churuch-e-Vanak, having
a dome instead of a steeple and a spire.

Persepolis in Greek means a burnt
out city.

To be able to swim in the Caspian Sea
was an achievement. It is 28 m below
sea level. I found the water comparatively
sweet.

Iran is good for two or three weeks.
Then back to messy old Bombay with
oily but tasty *batata wadas* and nourishing
broon maska.



Zend M. Zend writes on various
topics and is an avid photographer.
He and his family run the Yazdani Bakery in the
Fort area amongst other businesses.

A set of the following five
books is available for sale at
the Bombay Parsi Punchayet

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 16

the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of
May 24, 2001.

According to an officer of the Crime
Branch who was quoted in the *After-*
noon write-up, there is a possibility of
some nomadic tribals being involved in
the murder. Describing them as "hard-
ened criminals who plunder and loot
vulnerable targets at opportune mo-
ments," the police officer mentioned
that "they mostly come from neighbor-
ing Thana and Raigad districts and sneak
into the city through the swamps sur-
rounding the island city. Soon after strik-
ing at their target they make good their
escape through the same routes."

Nearly four months after Parsi
Guards, a corps of dedicated volunteers
striving to identify and protect vulner-
able senior citizens, first announced their
presence, they admitted that after their
initial burst of enthusiasm their progress
has since been limited. They started
identifying senior citizens in the 12 major
Parsi colonies in the city, distributing
handbills that carried telephone num-
bers where senior citizens could call in
case of emergency. They were also sup-
posed to convince senior citizens to get
security gadgets installed in their flats.
But with many of the senior citizens
surviving on limited means of liveli-
hood, they were not willing to spend on
security devices and services, reported a
news item in the *Sunday Mid-Day* of
April 29. Besides finance, a dearth of
volunteers too has been a constraint for
the Parsi Guards.

SPOTLIGHT

Active in the field of student welfare and
alleviating the conditions of bonded child
laborers and probation homes, Ajmer
based Lioness **Marook Gandeia** was
honored as the Best Lioness District



President
by Vinod
Dattani at
a confer-
ence in
Jaipur on
April 12
and 13,

2001. Within 14 months of its inception
Lioness District 323 E-2 under
Gandeia's leadership has doubled its
membership whilst setting a record of
adding 12 new Lioness clubs to the
District, notes a press release.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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"How little I knew..."

Dr Farokh Udwadia's new book on the history of medicine was born out of the need to know more about his medical forebears

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Some doctors inspire faith. People flock to them. It's not just the skill of the doctor — others may be better. How it works no one knows. I wish I knew the scientific explanation on faith's role in healing. It's a very subtle role, but a role..."

It's a rare Saturday afternoon as Dr Farokh Udwadia, physician par excellence and a doyen of Bombay's medical world, shares his ruminations with a journalist. The easy familiarity in the comfort of his drawing room is a happy change from his well-known aversion to publicity of any kind. The man who pioneered intensive respiratory care in India, who was awarded the Padma Bhushan and the Dhanvantari Award and on whom the American College of Chest Physicians conferred the award of Master Fellow, is a shy individual who had politely but persistently negated *Parsiana's* requests for interviews as that of other publications.

It is the enthusiasm generated by his research on the history of medicine resulting in the monumental *Man and Medicine: a History*, (review "To take away suffering..." pg 43) already into its second edition, that seems to have overcome the barrier of reticence. Seated on his favorite chair, the fine patrician features mellowed by time, the septuagenarian doctor provides no trace of the famed Udwadia temper that keeps hospital staff on their toes while he takes his morning rounds as consultant physician at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) and the Breach Candy Hospital.

"I was struck by how little I knew of the roots of my profession," he recalls the genesis of the publication. "I knew some great names, knew my subject reasonably well, but how did it begin and progress?" In view of medicine in the modern context Udwadia decided to

go back to the beginning "to see what it did through the ages." It turned into major research, increasing in fascination as he progressed.



Vera and Farokh Udwadia: "You try your best" Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

His diagnostic skills honed over more than 40 years of practice, Udwadia was an honorary physician at J. J. Hospital and professor of medicine at the Grant Medical College for 30 years and continues as professor emeritus, teaching when invited to teach. "I love teaching, because teaching teaches me... It's something I miss a great deal," particularly because "young students ask very naive questions and you find you don't have the answer. (It makes you) start thinking about them."

A drove of housemen normally trail Udwadia on his morning rounds. Finding young people today "dismally ignorant" in general knowledge, Udwadia felt it would be good if they, particularly his staff, "at least had an inkling of what had happened in years gone by." So, in addition to teaching his seven or eight housemen from the Breach Candy and the PGH every Wednesday and Friday evening, he says he decided to publish his year and a half of research and writing carried out largely at the Wellcome Trust Library in London which has the

largest collection of books on the history of medicine (an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 including first editions of epoch-making works). Among the handsome acknowledgements in the book's Preface Udwadia thanks his brother-in-law Homi Khusrookhan, then Glaxo managing director, for liaising for the facility with the Wellcome Trust. And the financial assistance of Hindustan Lever, thanks to its then chairman Keki Dadiseth, that has enabled *Man and Medicine* to be priced at a rate affordable by younger readers.

An alumnus of St Mary's School, Wilson College and the K. E. M. Hospital Medical College, Udwadia says, "In my time medical education was very good." He recalls how they were largely taught at the patient's bedside, the doctor-teacher explaining the significance of the history recounted by the patient. "A good teacher teaches how to examine a patient. You learn how to use your eyes, ears, hands, to cultivate your senses." Udwadia's eyes light up as he recalls all that he learnt from his mentors at the K. E. M. Hospital — Dr Rustam Vakil, Dr Nathubhai Patel, Dr Raghvan... He learnt from them that it is the "duty of the teacher to point out the essence" of clinical observation until it becomes "a part of your own blood stream. You should be able to get up in the middle of the night and say what's what!"

Unfortunately that approach has been "relegated to the background... The true bedside clinic is rare." Now the attitude is, "why examine the chest when a CT scan is available," rues Udwadia. While most teaching in Bombay today is through tutorials and lectures, says Udwadia, he maintains that "you can't learn medicine in a library or home." An intelligent person may know the contents of



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a medical compendium after two or three readings, but that doesn't make him/her a doctor, emphasizes the physician. He is sad that the medical student today "looks at superfluities which he could ignore... Partly because there's such a burst of knowledge, he tends to wander around in the shadow!"

As a reading of *Man and Medicine* reveals, many of the outstanding doctors of yore were also philosophers, authors, poets, painters. "Medicine was just a part of the stream of knowledge in which they swam. They had a very wide and balanced perspective," says Udwadia. He tells us that until recently many western universities required the prospective medical student to first graduate in the humanities. "A study of the humanities makes a better doctor. It also leads to maturity" as the student is that much older when he studies medicine. "Medicine deals with human beings and to know human beings well, you must know life well. You cannot know life well if you concentrate on only one aspect. The wider the perspective the better one is as a doctor," he argues.

Udwadia's father, Dr Erach Udwadia, was a general practitioner who devoted his professional life to the really poor at his two dispensaries at Parel and Dongri. The "good and noble man" had a great influence on his eldest son, the dining table discussion generally focusing on gravely ill people in their charge until his death in 1984. Among Zoroastrian medical practitioners of the older generation Udwadia cites Drs Phiroze Bharrucha, Adi Kohiyar, Minochehr Mody and Rustam Vakil among the physicians, Rustom Cooper and Ardeshir Bacha among the surgeons. Even today, the memory of these good people, the reading of a good book, is all that Udwadia needs to emerge from a spell of the blues, for the cases that reach the consultant physician can be depressing. He is also known to take refuge in music with his violin or indulge in a game of cricket with his grandchildren.

Udwadia describes his Parsi patients as "very transparent, trusting, very honest — and individualistic of thought to the point of being idiosyncratic." He finds them "very amusing by and large and humorous also." (An old lady under Udwadia's care at the PGH Intensive Care Unit told this reporter the other day: *Mè tau éné tatraavij kaaryo. Kétla divus mané ahinya paari raakhwano ché* [I fired him (Udwadia). How long

does he think he's going to keep me in here]!

We ask Udwadia about the impact of Parsi diet and lifestyle on health and he laughs: "Parsis love to eat and they live to a ripe old age! (Do the normal strictures about diet and exercise) apply to this community?" Pressed for an explanation for the increasing longevity of the community he notes, "If you have a gene that conditions you for longevity, it suppresses other genes that predispose you to disease. Hence you live to a ripe old age barring accidents beyond your control." In the past Parsis, like the others, fell prey to infectious diseases like plague, cholera, diphtheria, smallpox, pneumonia, he reminds us. As these have been controlled or eradicated one is now left with degenerative diseases of the bones, arteries, brain; metabolic diseases like diabetes, hypertension. And then there is cancer. "If you miss the early events, you run into this cluster and for these medicine has absolutely no cure," he adds gravely.

The infertility of the community Udwadia ascribes to late marriages and social attitudes. "It would make a big difference if (people) married early," he assures us, adding that community attitudes should change to encourage such a phenomenon. Otherwise, 25 years from now there will be a larger percentage of the aged in the community. "I just hope that in 50 to 75 years we don't become a tribe," he adds fervently.

Scepticism about the need for all-out medical treatment of elderly patients — the general age range at the PGH is 65-99 years with very few exceptions — provokes a stern response: "It is one's bounden duty as a doctor to take even a small chance if there is hope of recovery... If you start playing god with very ill people, you can never draw the line. But you must temper medicine with common sense when you deal with very ill people... You see what the patient's antecedents are. If the patient has been healthy and vigorous even at 80, you take the chance... But if it's only prolonging the act of dying, one should stop... You try your best to ensure that the death is as dignified as possible, not horrific for the patient or (ruinous for) the family..."

With the high cost of treatment allocating resources has become an increasing problem leading to "a clash between the human rights of one individual and the social right of the group," admits

Udwadia. Though it has not become a major problem in India yet, because neither the insurance industry nor the state bears the burden of medical treatment, it is so in the West. In the US where the "insurance companies are running the medical profession," doctors are told just how much hospitalization, medical/surgical procedures may be allowed for a given ailment. Beyond those limits the doctors are not paid, says Udwadia, hence they conform to insurance norms because the cost of critical care is astronomical. "The load on resources can be impossible to bear," he notes.

In India the system is different, with the patient defraying the cost and reclaiming it from insurance. In the majority, the earning capacity is low which does not allow for sizable insurance premia and the poor do not receive the treatment they may need at municipal and government hospitals.

But the burgeoning cost of medicare "needs some sort of scheme for as many people as possible (in the community) to be insured and to be taken care of reasonably well," acknowledges Udwadia. It would need to be a very huge group for the actuarial curve to even out and even then there would be great problems as in the US, cautions the doctor who has authored several books on various aspects of medicine including *Principles of Critical Care*.

Udwadia and his gentle wife Vera are known to take periodic sabbaticals from the city. *Man and Medicine* is one example of how they are spent. Dedicated to Vera "for her love, support and care," the Preface to the book notes her role in studying and summarizing numerous references for her preoccupied husband, though to *Parsiana* she admitted to "only some proofreading." Of their two children their son Zarir (married to Gool, an artist) is a sought-after physician like his father. Their daughter Shireen (married to businessman Jehan Sethna) is a qualified lawyer. A flock of four grandchildren inherit this Udwadia tradition.

Noting that the potential of contemporary medicine to do harm almost matches its ability to do good, Udwadia has argued in the book, "...the more potent the drug, the more sophisticated the gadgetry and the more invasive the procedures used in diagnosis or treatment, the greater the risk of harm to patients... There is no drug worthy of the

continued on page 53

The Bawa diaspora

The author takes a humorous,
pun filled poke at the Congress delegates

Bachi Karkaria

At the World Zoroastrian Congress held in Houston several global Parsis made *Such A Long Journey* to tackle the Mistry of the Vanishing Community. There was Lily from London, Nellie from NuYorrrk, Tina from Toronto, Billis from Billimorea, A. Baad and Y loo from Nagpore, Perrys from Phantankot, Mikie and Ronnie, Babs and Rusty Surtty from Canada, Gus Tad from Austria, Daisy in her stunning Gwalior garo, Zesty Zaa from Zulluland, muscell man Musa-Dick from Iran, El-elegant Amu E-Leven from Abu-Dabawo, Tehruna from Patelvia, Dee Naz Carburry from Cantebury, Jamie the Tabak-o-nist from Germany, Misstress Moos (née Master) from Mooscow, Maary Massalawalla from Mumbai, Polly Popwatski (née Popatji) from Poland and Russi Sorabski (who ain't Russian) from California. Rosh and Bowman Boated all the way.

There was also Sid Sidney who used to be Soli Saliboti before he emigrated to kangaroo country. No, Kawas Kolah didn't change his spelling to Koala when he followed suit! There's a limit even to what the Parsis will do to show that they can integrate like 'sugar in milk' wherever they may go. The Congress (no relation to that of *apro* Feroze Gandhi and heirs) assured whoever hadn't fallen asleep after the dhansak that the Zoroastrians aren't yet history. Their numbers have allegedly dwindled to a fraction of any self-respecting scam. Personally, however, I think that all this extinction scare is simply a conspiracy to get Bombay's Dadar Parsi Colony designated a UNESCO world heritage site. This would not only give it an impressive ring, but also help rid it of those pesky Sharbatwallas. No, that's not a Parsi family; it's the guys who sell the khus and kala-khattas.

Maybe the visiting delegates went on a nostalgic tour of what is unkindly called the Dadar Prostate Colony. They paid homage to the agiary and to the dimly-lit lanes where they loved and lusted after Ivory Ava. Perchance, Laila Lawyer

dropped in on Soli Solicitor whom she wanted so much to marry: alas, his mother didn't give him a divorce. Maybe Homai, homing in from Hong Kong, pulled on her tights and tighter tee shirt to pump iron with her old pal, Jimmy Gymkhanawalla. Or Adelaide's Adi

simply rested his Adidas on the well-worn railings of Five Gardens, and guffawed, "Eh sala Dinsu, don't do such dahi!"

Time has stood still, even without the arthritis; Homi Homeopath is still trying to win the affections of Ami Arnica, unmindful of her look of sheer Nux Vomica. Glad-Eye Gustadji is still casting it on the lissome nymphets, unmindful of his worsening glaucoma. The bawa studs continue to Shiamuck around, and the bawi fillies prance about like Mehrrs.

The heroes are still polishing their Hondas, though Kawas is still devoted to his Kawaskaki. And here is our Bomsie who has done so well. That's his brand new Mercedes on which his mother is performing the ceremonial *acchu-michhu* with flowers, coconuts and eggs. Yes, the Parsis love their tomato *par eeda* and their *bheeda par eeda*, but no, this ritual is not

called *Merc par eeda*.

The bawa diaspora (which is dying to eat por) will be happy to attend a rare wedding where the groom and bride are both pure bred and inbred members of the clan. *Apri doll jevi* Dolly will glide down the cement compound of the Jeejeebhoy Agiary while the band strikes up *Here Comes the Bride*. Later on it will play such Parsi folk songs as *Congratulations* and *A Little Bit of Nusli All Night Long*. Her groom, however, isn't Nusli the Asli Nankhatai-maker but Pesu the Promising Purser. He purses his lips and tries to ignore his mother who is frantically signalling to him not to leer at Flighty Farida, who had tried so hard to trap "my *bholo-bhalo dikro*." "Eternal vigilance is the price of motherhood," sighs Silla Siganporia as she promises to offer a thanksgiving prayer for her son being spared a fate worse than intermarriage. As soon as the wedding ceremony is over, our visitors and their hosts will rush to the long tables. They will use a fork and spoon to dine off the traditional banana leaf, gorging on kid gosh and gossip. "So whom did Bapsy Boobs finally marry? With headlights like those, she would have dazzled any poor little dear in her path! Ha-ha. Waiter, ice-cream soda *laoni*, *kitni vakhat boléga?*" They'll double up over jokes about breasts and legs as they tackle the succulent *sali ma murgi*, and they'll ask for a second helping of *saas ni machhi*, which isn't a fishy mother-in-law but a dishy wedding speciality.

Zoroastrians from abroad still relish *khichree né kolmino patio* as much as *pâté*. Any Roshan-massie or Freny-fui can tell you that!

The author, group editorial director of Mid-Day Publications, first penned the piece as

"Ms Readymoney's Parsimoney" in January 2000. It has made many rounds on the Internet without her byline. But when people repeatedly ask her if she has read the piece since the style is similar to hers, her initial amusement has now turned to annoyance.



Amending the marriage law

While the government is revising laws applicable to maintenance matters, the community should seize the opportunity to amend the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, as recommended by the author

Rustom S. Gae

An impression is fast gaining ground, not without justification, that in this country divorce is unfortunately looked down upon by society as a moral failure (if not a moral turpitude). There is an element of stigma attached to divorce, specially to the concerned wife. Divorce is often not viewed as a legitimate remedy available to the parties to the marriage to terminate their contractual relationship by due process of law and thereby put an end to the agony and misery of their unhappy married life. Religious sacrament attached to the solemnization of marriage remains in the background. The perverse truth is that this kind of dichotomy has been institutionalized not only in society but in the judiciary as well. Persons thinking otherwise are dubbed as being out of touch with reality.

Presently section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 empowers a magistrate to order a person to pay a monthly allowance for maintenance of his wife, children and ageing parents at a rate not exceeding Rs 500 per month, if he neglects or refuses to maintain them. Section 127 empowers the magistrate to make alteration in the allowance on proof of a change in the circumstances of any person receiving or paying the allowance. A summary remedy is thus provided to all persons irrespective of any personal law or custom governing the parties.

The Government has now decided to amend these sections and to remove the present ceiling of Rs 500 as maintenance allowance and to impose a time limit of 60 days to dispose of any application for interim maintenance. The Government's decision will also necessitate the amendment of four marriage laws, namely, the Indian Divorce Act,

1869, the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

The Government's decision would unequivocally be hailed by the public.



Fixed way back in 1973, the maintenance ceiling was long overdue for upward revision. Further the legal process is so time consuming that many persons give up the proceedings in sheer frustration rather than wait indefinitely for redress and some even prefer not to move the court at all.

Though the summary procedure for expeditious disposal of maintenance applications is welcomed in principle as a step in the right direction, it is a moot issue whether it will produce satisfactory results. Experience gained from other enactments where a similar procedure is evolved is far from satisfactory. There is no effective remedy available under such enactments if the proceedings prolong, as is usual, beyond the stipulated time limit. For some logical or other reason the magistrate or the judge may plead his inability to dispose of the case within the specified period. In such cases the proposed amendments will fail to alter the existing position and will thereby frustrate the object of their enactment.

The quantum of maintenance allowance is entirely left to the discretion of the magistrate or the judge. In deciding cases of maintenance on merits, the approach of the court should be pragmatic, keeping in view the status of the parties, the social environment in which they live, the potential paying capacity of the husband and the extent of requirements of the claimants. The court will no doubt link the allowance with the husband's income. It should also be linked with the cost of living index as in the case of

computation of capital gains under the Income-tax Act, 1961. This object can well be achieved by making an application to the court for alteration of the allowance as and when required. The matter would become all the more complicated when conflicting assessments of the husband's income are made. For the purpose the court should have due regard not only to the letter of the law but also to the spirit behind it, so that full effect is given to the proposed progressive legislation. Personal predilections of the magistrate or the judge play a significant role in cases relating to maintenance and divorce. Women's subordination on marriage is prominent. The dowry system prevailing in society causes conflict in married life. The gender role is reversed, casting the woman in the role of a breadwinner as opposed to home keeper. The judicial approach in such cases should be changed so that the efficacy of the proposed beneficent legislation is not jeopardized in any way.

While amending the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, opportunity may as well be taken to suggest other amendments to the Act. It is a well recognized policy of the Government of India not to effect any amendments in the personal laws of any minority community until the initiative for such changes comes from the community itself. Thus the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi agreed to amend the Act, the personal law of Parsis, only in 1988 when there was consensus in the community for the amendments. So far as the Parsi community is concerned it is the usual practice of the Government to consult the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and the National Commission on Minorities before effecting any amendments in the personal law of Parsis and to amend the law on the basis of the recommendations made by

them to the Government.

The Act was last amended by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce (Amendment) Act, 1988 enlarging the scope of some of its provisions so as to bring them on par with the provisions of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

Further amendments should now be considered. Part III of the Act deals with Parsi Chief Matrimonial Courts. In proceedings brought under the Act, all questions of fact are to be determined by these Courts established in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, etc. The judge constituting the Court is aided by five (seven before 1988) Parsi delegates. The system of delegates is the last vestige of the jury system then prevailing in India. Criticism of this system has been voiced from several quarters. Several times the judge and the delegates arrive at contradictory conclusions. The above system does not operate in the personal laws of any other community. The sufficient number of delegates is not easily available even in big cities like Delhi, Madras, Calcutta, etc where the population of Parsis is small, leading thereby to undue delay in matrimonial proceedings. When the Constitution contemplates uniformity in personal laws of all

communities, the system of delegates prevailing under the Act should be dispensed with. Further the jury system is abolished throughout the country. It is therefore appropriate that the system of special courts as Parsi Chief Matrimonial Courts including the system of delegates is abolished by omitting provisions of Part III dealing purely with the above matters and other incidental provisions relating thereto (e.g. section 46 containing the special provision for determining questions of facts by the delegates).

Section 32B dealing with divorce by mutual consent was inserted only in 1988. For the purpose both the parties to the marriage together have to file a suit for divorce on the ground that

- they have been living separately for a period of at least one year,
- they have not been able to live together, and
- they have mutually agreed that the marriage should be dissolved.

After hearing the parties the court may pass a decree declaring the marriage to be dissolved.

This is an expeditious remedy to obtain divorce. It is conceivable that though the marriage between the parties has

been a failure and there is no likelihood of reconciliation, one party may not, for ulterior motives, give his or her consent to the other moving the court under section 32B. In such cases divorce by mutual consent cannot be obtained with the result that the other party to the marriage is put to great misery resulting from the unfortunate failure of their married life.

To obviate such a situation, irretrievable breakdown of marriage may be included as an additional ground for divorce under the Act. Either party to the marriage may present a petition to the court for dissolution of marriage by a decree of divorce on the ground that the marriage has broken down irretrievably.

In such cases the divorce is granted by the court once it is proved that the marriage between two parties has actually broken down, and that the parties to the marriage have been continuously living apart for a period of at least three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition, irrespective of any fault or other circumstance relevant to the conduct of the parties concerned with the matter.

The court must be satisfied that the



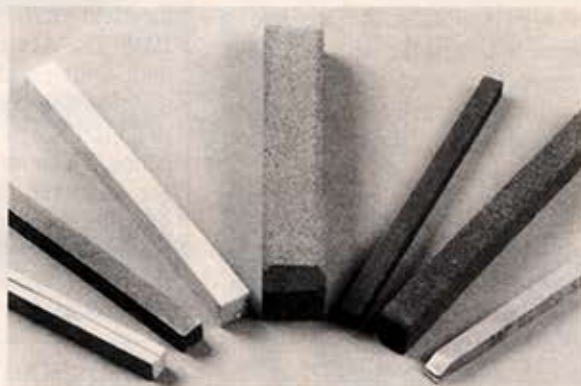
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relationship between the parties has reached such a stage of breakdown that there is no possibility of any reconciliation. That would suffice for obtaining divorce, making it thereby unnecessary for the parties to produce evidence of acrimony or such other incidents of unhappy married life to the detriment of the parties concerned. This is really a crucial factor for obtaining divorce. It will obviate the necessity of washing dirty linen of married life in public.

As regards the application of this additional ground for divorce in the case of Hindus and other communities, fear is entertained in some quarters that this might be used as a handle to harass women belonging to the downtrodden or weaker sections of society and thereby deprive them of the rights and privileges enjoyed by them on marriage. The issue needs consideration on a wider range, having regard to personal laws of the communities concerned.

Provision for expeditious disposal of matrimonial proceedings may be inserted in the Act on the lines of section 21B of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. This section broadly provides that the trial of a petition under that Act shall ordinarily be continued from day to day until its conclusion and that every petition shall be tried as expeditiously as possible and endeavor shall be made to conclude the trial within six months from the date of service of notice of the petition on the respondent. These special provisions are aimed at avoiding agony or misery to the parties resulting from the failure of their marriage.

Cases arise where Parsis who have their marriage registered as a special marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 have it subsequently solemnized as a Parsi marriage by undergoing the ashirvad ceremony under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936 or vice versa. The question arises under which law the rights, obligations and status of such Parsis are governed.

Marriages under the Act of 1954 are solemnized between any two persons, irrespective of their religion, caste or community. Inter-caste marriages (marriages between a Parsi and a non-Parsi, commonly known as "civil marriages") almost invariably take place under the said Act. A Parsi continues to be a Parsi even after he or she marries a non-Parsi. Normally persons belonging to different religions, castes or communities have their marriage solemnized under the said

Act. It is, however, open to two persons belonging to the same faith or religion (e.g. two Parsis) to register their marriage under the said Act.

The requisite to the validity of a Parsi marriage is the performance of the ashirvad ceremony under section 3 of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936. A "Parsi marriage" solemnized

Bill passed by parliament

Since submission of this article for publication in *Parsiana* the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2001 and the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2001 revising laws relating to maintenance matters have been passed by both Houses of Parliament and await assent of the President.

The former Bill removes the ceiling of Rs 500 per month for maintenance allowance prescribed in section 125 and section 127 of the Code. It further provides that during the pendency of the proceedings the magistrate may order payment of interim maintenance allowance as he considers reasonable to the aggrieved person. This order shall be made ordinarily within 60 days from the date of service of the notice.

The latter Bill amends inter alia the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936. The Act does not contain any time limit for disposal of applications for alimony pendente lite (while litigation is pending) or the maintenance, education and custody of minor children. The Bill accordingly provides that such applications shall be disposed of within 60 days from the date of service of the notice on the respondent.

under the said Act presupposes that both parties to the marriage are Parsis. Solemnization of a special marriage requires fulfilment of the conditions specified in section 4 of the Special Marriage Act, 1954. The expression "Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force relating to solemnization of marriages" shows that this section prevails over section 3 of the Act of 1936. Rights, obligations and status of parties to a registered marriage are regulated by the Act of 1954 and not by the personal laws by which the parties are governed, e.g. the Act of 1936. Succession to the property of a Parsi

married under the Act of 1954 is regulated by the provisions of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 and "Special Rules for Parsi Intestates" (Parsis dying without leaving any will) contained in Chapter III of Part V of the said Act will not be applicable in the matter (section 21 of the Act of 1954).

If Parsis have their marriage first registered as a special marriage under the Act of 1954 and have it subsequently solemnized as a Parsi marriage under the Act of 1936 or vice versa, rights and obligations of parties to the marriage would be governed by the provisions of the Special Marriage Act. To avoid any doubt in the matter section 3 of the Act of 1936 may be amended accordingly.

Section 52(2) provides that a Parsi who has contracted a marriage under the Act shall remain bound by the provisions of the Act, even though such Parsi may change his or her religion or domicile, so long as his wife or her husband is alive and so long as such Parsi has not been lawfully divorced from such wife or husband or such marriage has not lawfully been declared null and void or dissolved under a decree of a competent court under the Act. This is a unique provision contained in the Act and is not found in the personal laws of other communities.

This section has been construed by the Bombay High Court as excluding by implication a Parsi married under the Act from obtaining a divorce or having his or her marriage dissolved in any other court in any country of the world even where he or she had acquired a domicile. A Parsi married under the Act is thus governed by this personal law of marriage, divorce, alimony and maintenance, wherever he may be domiciled.

This section may be amended by substituting the words "in accordance with law" for the words "under either of the said Acts." This amendment is consequential to that suggested in section 3 as above and is intended to make legally effective divorce granted under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 or otherwise in accordance with private international law.

The last amendment relates to the definition of the expression "Parsi." Section 2(7) defines "Parsi" as meaning Parsi Zoroastrian. The definition does not clarify the position in the matter. The absence of precise definition of the expression has caused genuine difficulty in practice. The expression "Parsi" con-

templates a double qualification, namely, being a Zoroastrian, a follower of the Zoroastrian religion, and a racial Parsi. It has only racial significance and has nothing to do with his religious profession.

The expression "Parsi" has been the subject of judicial decisions. In 1908 the Bombay High Court held in Sir Dinshaw Petit's case that the Parsi community in India consists of:

- Parsis who are descended from the original Persian emigrants and who are born of both Zoroastrian parents and who profess the Zoroastrian religion,
- Iranis from Persia professing the Zoroastrian religion, who came to India, either temporarily or permanently, and
- children of Parsi fathers by alien mothers who have been duly and properly admitted into the Zoroastrian religion.

Children of a Parsi mother by a non-Parsi father are not included.

In 1926 the Privy Council in *Bella's* case took the similar view regarding the term "Parsi" when it held that Parsis are racial Parsis or people deemed after a long lapse of ages to be racial Parsis.

The law on the subject judicially interpreted as above and followed since then applies to the Parsi community even

today. The decision of the Bombay High Court in the above case is in the nature of cause célèbre applicable to the Parsi community in India. In the absence of

The irretrievable breakdown of marriage may be included as an additional ground for divorce under the Act

any precise statutory definition of the expression "Parsi" the above decision of the Bombay High Court has virtually the force of law, until it is superseded by a higher judicial decision on the subject.

Inter-caste marriages of Parsi women marrying outside the community are on the increase, causing thereby a serious problem for the survival of the community. This is the main cause of gradual diminution of population of Parsis in India, since children of such women are not considered as Zoroastrians, though

children of non-Parsi women married to Parsis are not subject to any such bar. Such Parsi women are ostracized and looked down upon by the orthodox lobby of the community, though there is no bar against such marriages in the holy scriptures.

It may unequivocally be emphasized here that just as children of a non-Parsi woman married to a Parsi are considered as Parsis on performance of their navjote ceremony, similarly children of a Parsi woman married to a non-Parsi should also be considered as Parsis on performance of their navjote ceremony with the consent of the parents. This is the sine qua non for the survival of the minuscule community of Parsis in India.

We must be patient and wait for a meaningful consensus for the purpose. It will not be in my lifetime, but hopefully it will be in the lifetime of some readers of this article and other younger members of the generation. After all, customs are not eternal and ancient customs in a modern society are fast changing. Children of parents (one of whom is a non-Parsi) have been freely admitted into the religion and have fervently professed and practised the religion in for-



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eign countries and some places in India (e.g. Delhi).

It is considered that if the matter is agitated in a court of law the judgment would very likely be in favor of recognition of such children as Parsis, more so after the commencement of the Constitution of India providing for the equality of sex. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure the survival of the small, but still unique, ethnic group of Parsis in India by recognizing such children as Parsis.

It is therefore advisable to amend the definition of "Parsi" contained in section 2(7), having regard to observations made as above.

The trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet should examine and give a lead in the matter.



Rustom S. Gae, a former law secretary to the Government of India, is presently a senior advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India. He is known for his expertise on subjects relating to fiscal laws, company law and constitutional law. He writes frequently

on legal issues pertaining to the community.

BUSINESS

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Wadia can be contacted on E-mail: jehan@vsnl.com or jehan@poboxes.com or at A-2, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, Bombay 400007. Tel: 3870652, 3862017.

Architecture accolades

Percy Phiroze Nazir has been awarded the National Gold Star Award (Rashtriya Nirman Ratan) for the year 2000-2001 by the International Business Council (IBC) for outstanding achievements in the field of architecture, town planning and environmental conservation, states a write-up forwarded to *Parsiana* by Bomi Heerjee of Indore. Nazir, the chief engineer (architect) with Coal India Limited, Nagpur, received a silver salver and citation in New Delhi on May 4, 2001. The IBC, a government recognized, voluntary non-profit organization, promotes development in the economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific and technological fields all over India. Nazir was also awarded the

Rashtriya Shiromoni Award 2001 by the All India Achievers Conference.

Graduating in architecture from Nagpur in 1967, Nazir later specialized in industrial architecture. He was selected in 1971 as assistant commandant (technical) in the Border Security Force (BSF) where he was associated with several important projects, including the training institutes at Gwalior, Indore, Bangalore, etc and the setting up of townships for BSF units in remote areas, states his bio data.

In 1983 he was sent on deputation to Coal India Limited and later absorbed into the organization. More than 70 model townships which he was instrumental in setting up in distant locations in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, etc have served to enhance the working conditions and quality of life of the employees. His architectural skills, encompassing homes, offices, schools, stadiums, shopping centers, hospitals, as well as city beautification in Nagpur and Chandrapur, "exhibit a strange sense of simplicity and utilitarian character, very much like the man" himself, adds the write-up.

A regular contributor of technical papers, Nazir was also a prominent member of the special task force of Coal India Limited which sponsored the rehabilitation of an entire village after the Latur earthquake, completing 150 housing units and development infrastructure in a record time of six months.

Swiss links

It was a joint celebration of independence — the 711th National Day of Switzerland (which falls on August 1) and the Independence Day of India (August 15). As the oldest democracy and the largest democratic nation, Switzerland and India are linked by a common bond, said Viraf N. Chiniwala, president of the Indo-Swiss Society. Chiniwala, who took over as president of the Society in April this year, was presiding over the 32nd joint celebration held on August 11, 2001 at the Regal Room of the Oberoi Towers in Bombay.

The Indo-Swiss Society was founded in 1971. Switzerland was the first country with which India established a treaty of friendship in 1948, soon after independence, states Chiniwala's message in the souvenir brought out on the occasion. "Despite obvious discrepancies in terms of size and population of both countries, I realize quite a number of similarities between India and Switzer-

land," stated consul general Josef Renggli.

Chiniwala, who is proprietor of Veldon Coats, specialists in the renovation and structural repair of buildings, aims to promote goodwill visits between Swiss and Indian members as well as students of both countries. On the anvil are Indo-Swiss film awards as Switzerland has become a major center for the shooting of Bollywood films, says Chiniwala.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

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Zeenia's skating skill

On a roll is 15-year-old Zeenia K. Patel. Stepping into her roller-skating shoes just about three years ago, Patel's commitment to her chosen sport has seen her participate and win medals at district, state and all-India level roller-skating meets.

Representing J. B. Petit School, Bombay at the 46th National School Games Roller-Skating championship held in Panchkula, Haryana in December 2000, Patel annexed a bronze medal in artistic skating. Two months earlier she had represented her club, Bombay Roller Skating Association, at the state level championship in Nagpur and won

evening from 6-8.30 p.m. at the Fellowship School at Gowalia Tank, Patel's practice timing escalates up to six hours daily before a competition. "We skate on a kota (stone) floor. A wooden or kota floor is suitable, but it should be clean, not dusty," she elaborates. There are no foam mats or other cushioning to soften the impact of a fall. On Sundays and bank holidays, the rink in the center of the garden opposite Bombay Scottish School at Mahim is her practice arena.

Last year as well as this summer she sharpened her skating skills under an individual tutor in Canada. "The coaching there is much more intensive. Because you are not part of a class, the teacher's attention is solely on you. You pick up things much faster. Just three hours there can be really tiring!" she asserts. As important as the technique is the presentation. "I used to have my costume tailored here in the beginning, but now I wear a foreign costume. The shoes bought abroad last a long time. You may need to change the rollers (wheels) but you can go on wearing the shoes till you outgrow them!" Patel chooses the music for her routine carefully: "It should be both slow and fast, but not too fast, tuneful and easy on the ear." Choreography has been worked out with her teacher in Canada. "Skating is an important activity there, from the

point of view of leisure and pleasure, as well as from the financial viewpoint," she declares.

In India, she rues, they don't even recognize roller-skating as a sport, narrating an incident where a fellow skater presenting his winning certificates to a college was informed that they did not count!

Zeenia's first lessons in skating came from her father Khushru, partner in JAK Printers. "Dad is a total sports enthusiast," she smiles. Hiring a pair of skates, she would skate on the road, not the safest of propositions in a megapolis like Bombay! Her first competition was speed skating in New Bombay, but a bad fall put paid to any hopes of a medal. "I don't get discouraged," she says cheerily. Taking skating classes with the Bombay Roller Skating Association, her talent was spotted by coaches Jaspal Khurana and Smita Shah. "Zeenia is a very promising skater, very enthusiastic and hard working. She will surely repre-

sent her country one day, go to international level. She has it in her," Khurana told *Parsiana*. Zeenia currently also trains with Tinu Zaveri and has set her sights on winning in the nationals this year. Two years hence, when the pressures of academics are less at the junior college level, Zeenia aims to participate in the Asian roller-skating championship. "For me, because I started late, figure skating (where you trace the outlines of the drawn circles and are judged on various parameters including edges and turns) has more scope," she says. Zeenia voices her disappointment that skating as a career in India is not a very promising proposition.

Currently in standard nine, Zeenia commends her school, the J. B. Petit High School for Girls at Fort, for nurturing her talent by giving special leave for practice and competitions, but not at examination time! Her mother Mehroo has also been very supportive, she says. Younger sister Parvana too used to skate, but has given it up after she hurt herself a few times, explains Zeenia, whose interests prior to skating included ballet, classes with Shiamak Datar and athletics at Priyadarshini Park!

Fond of music and painting, the teenager says she has little time to go out with school friends as "I don't want to bunk skating. But I need people around me always and I have good friends in skating."

Vintage Kapadia

"We were taken in wheelchairs to the starting line. There was such a cold breeze that I had a blanket on over layers of clothing," 95-year-old athlete Jehanbax Kapadia told Sudeshna Banerjee of *The Telegraph Metroof Calcutta*. Being hard of hearing he missed the starter's gun. "Suddenly I saw the man in the next lane running. So I too took off. I was feeling a cramp in the left leg but I ran like a deer," continued Kapadia. His 100 m sprint in 35.25 seconds won him the gold at the XIV World Veterans Athletic Championship in the "above 95" age group in Brisbane, Australia in July 2001. But his elation was somewhat clouded by the fact that it was 101-year-old fellow competitor Les Amy of Australia, who ambled across the finishing line in almost double that timing, who was mobbed by the local girls! Australia's *The Sunday Mail* summed up the fate of



Patel: artistry and technique

silver medals in artistic and figure skating. "I started skating rather late, when I was around 11, whereas other students start when they are three or four," explains Patel. "I can do spins and doubles (jumps), but not triples (three rotations in the air) as yet. You practice hour after hour, fall so many times, save yourself so many times, so it feels just amazing when you participate in competitions and win."

Practicing every morning before school from 6.30-7.30 a.m. and in the

the local hero: "Against a whippersnapper like India's Jehanbax Kapadia, he (Amy) didn't stand a chance!"

The 200 m race two days later was a golden walkover, with no other contestant on track in the 95-99 age group! Kapadia completed the distance, which has left many a trotting youngster out of breath, in a time of 1 min 13 sec. Kapadia's sprinting double came four summers after a heart attack! Affectionately known as Uncle Kap, the veteran athlete was a part of the 60-strong Indian squad for the Brisbane meet, according to information forwarded to *Parsiana* from Calcutta by his daughter Zarin D. Rustumji.

While hockey, tennis and football had been earlier interests, Kapadia took to competitive athletics at the age of 78, a time when many a man finds it difficult to distinguish the creaking of his rocking chair from the creaking of his bones! "Jehan" means the world and 'baksh' means giving. I run to give something to the world," he said. His first golden sprint was at the West Bengal Veterans Athletics Meet in 1984 and he followed it up in succeeding years with medals of different colors, breaking for good measure his own and other athletes' records in the 100m in the 80-84 and above 85 age group!

Kapadia's first international athletic outing in Melbourne, Australia did not produce a medal, but he outran nimble, 80 to 84-year-old feet from USA, Canada, Japan, Norway, etc to place fourth, with a new Indian record of 39.54 sec in the 200 m.

From bronze in Buffalo, USA in the age group 85-89 years in the 200 m and 400 m in 1995, Kapadia climbed the silver step on the podium in 1997 in Durban, South Africa in the 100 m, 200 m and 400 m races, crowning it with gold in Brisbane in the new millennium!



Variava (third from left and above) with other officials at a shooting championship in Mhow



Nonagenarian athlete Kapadia: the spirit of triumph

Back at his 4, Saklat Place residence in Calcutta, his hometown for the past 45 years, Kapadia's daily regimen includes yoga in the mornings, a walk down the street where he lives in the afternoons, past Chowringhee Road and on to the Parsee Club for a bit of fresh air and exercise, then a walk back home. Born in Bharuch, Gujarat, on April 22, 1906, one of Kapadia's memorable recollections was "to see Mahatma Gandhi at Birla House just two hours before he was killed," reports the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* of July 13, 2001. Kapadia's wife and a son have predeceased him, the paper noted; daughters Yasmin and Zarin take good care of their father, with Zarin accompanying him to Brisbane.

With fortune and age, but for a hearing problem, favoring his frame, Kapadia looks forward to 2003 and a couple of successful sprints at the next world veterans meet in Puerto Rico!

Variava on target

As a technical official/range officer of The National Rifle Association of India, New Delhi, Mehernosh N. Variava has assisted in the successful conduct of shooting competitions all over India —



from Coimbatore in the south to Asansol in the east. "Our duties include target control, point classification, declaration of results, etc," explains Variava who has also successfully completed the course for range officials approved by the International Shooting Union (UIT) which enables him to officiate as judge/jury. International Shooting Sport Federation, Germany.

Variava has also participated in shooting competitions at the national level. "My favorite is the big bore, 300 m range event," he explains, adding that the shooting season in India will soon commence, with competitions in Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Mhow, etc. Variava has been participating in shooting events, as competitor or as an official, since 1993.

Variava participated as a competitor representing Maharashtra in the National Games in 1994, and as an official in the Fourth National Games in Bangalore/Mysore in 1997, according to his bio data. "We would like to place on record our high appreciation of your valuable services rendered for the successful conduct of UIT World Cup 1997... and the Second South Asian Shooting Championship (in March 1997) at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Ranges, Tughlakabad, New Delhi... Your contribution towards the success of the international, prestigious championships... has brought a good name to our country," wrote Baljit Singh Sethi, secretary general of the

continued on page 56

"To take away suffering..."

Man and Medicine — A History by Farokh Erach Udawadia. Published in 2000 by Oxford University Press, YMCA Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110001. Pp: xvi+496. Price: Rs 995.

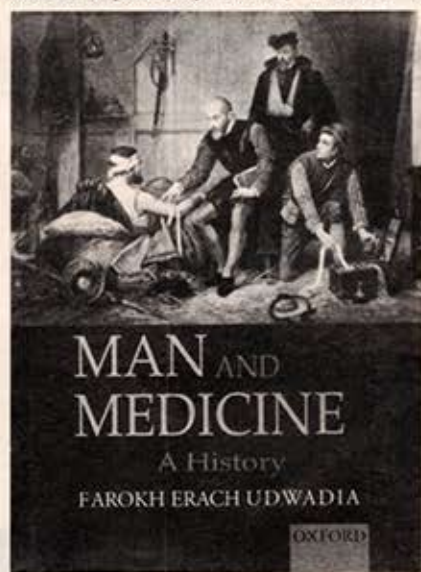
The enormity of the task Dr Farokh E. Udawadia set himself takes one's breath away. In his own words, "There is no greater saga in the history of man than the epic of medicine." So Udawadia set out to encapsulate five millennia of medical events and discoveries "against the background of the history of man and of evolving civilizations."

The 452 pages of text and illustrations introduce each epoch with its philosophy and religion, economic and social structure, art and culture, creating a backdrop to the "heroes and imposters, the caring and the uncaring," who shaped the concepts of medicine down the ages. In the process the author has tried to demystify the arcane world of medicine and science for the lay reader, because Udawadia believes, "The basis of medicine is the doctor-patient relationship — a symbolic bond of trust, faith and friendship between the physician and his patient. The more a patient knows about the trials and tribulations, the endeavors and achievements, the faults and virtues of physicians through the ages, the closer the bond with the physician, the greater the strength of medicine and the greater the benefit to man."

Through a process of reasoned conjecture based on the study of paleolithic paintings, and human and animal remnants of prehistoric times Udawadia recreates the prevailing state of health: "The typical features of tuberculosis of the spine found in the skeletons of the mummified bodies of ancient Egypt have also been observed in a few Neolithic skeletons... Fossil teeth of both ancient history and of prehistoric times have shown evidence of erosion, caries, abscess and pyorrhea... In the mummies of early Egypt there is ample evidence to show the prevalence of tuberculosis, urinary infections, urinary stones, parasitic infections and advanced athero-

sclerosis. Scientific proof that these were a continuum from the prehistoric past is unfortunately lacking."

Affirming on the basis of paleontological and anthropological evidence that medicine originated in magic and flourished as a priestly art, Udawadia reasons, "Prehistoric or primitive man could never have understood an epileptic fit that seized a perfectly healthy man, or a



sudden abdominal pain due to a perforated viscus, or the sudden loss of consciousness due to an intracerebral bleed. He was helpless and powerless when struck by what he considered unknown forces. His imagery now attributed illness, suffering, pain and death to be the work of invisible demons who unleashed evil forces against him. But then he needed an explanation for the pleasant occurrences in his personal life. He attributed these to kinder divinities. Thus, the concept of good and evil forces was born... He conceived that the best way to counter these forces was by appeasing and placating them through worship, ritual and sacrifice. It was thus that magic came into being and magic medicine evolved."

Udawadia explains the ability of the shaman to cast spells through the psychophysiological mechanism: "The sorcerer's great power of hypnotic sug-

gestion induced a strong death wish in the victim who became thoroughly convinced that he had to die. In a primitive community the victim's friends and relatives shared this belief and he was looked upon and abandoned as being already dead. The terror and fear within the victim probably unleashed a severe disturbance in the autonomic nervous system that profoundly affected the heart and circulation, producing a state of shock leading to death."

The author dwells at some length on the evolution of the physician-priest: "In the forbidding hostile environment of the prehistoric age, it was the shaman who offered man the hope to cope with life and to come to terms with the strange powerful forces around him. The physician of today would consider the shaman a charlatan, his rites and rituals spurious and fake. But it cannot be denied that the ancient medicine man convincingly demonstrated the power of the mind in countering disease. His attempts to heal, to protect and to care were amongst the first milestones in the history of civilization. He played an important role in guiding prehistoric man through the darkness and mists of time into the dawn of the first civilizations of the ancient world. Medicine by then had become a priestly craft rooted in the temples and religious sanctuaries of antiquity."

Belief in the supernatural dominated attitudes to life and living in the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. "Magico-religious beliefs and sorcery, which had earlier formed the basis of medicine, were now supplemented by the use of herbs and minerals and by simple practical methods for treating injuries and diseases" in Mesopotamia where the duties and responsibilities of physicians as well as the rules for public health and hygiene were codified and displayed for the first time in history.

The strong belief in afterlife led to the preservation of the dead body in Egypt. Describing the art and science of embalming the dead Udawadia notes that the brain was first drawn out through the

nostrils with a hook and the cranial cavity washed out with salt water. Three-and-a-half-inch insertions on both sides of the abdomen enabled the removal of the viscera after which the cavity was cleansed with wine and aromatic herbs and stuffed with a combination of preservatives (whose "secret remains unfathomed to this day") before being immersed in a soda bath for 70 days. Wrappings smeared with gum were used to enfold the body before being laid in a "mummy case" which in turn was put into a stone tomb.

Medical specialization seems to have begun in Egypt with "physicians of the eyes, teeth, nose, belly and even a 'shepherd of the anus'" reflecting the different gods governing different organs of the body.

In Achaemenid Persia the use of herbal medicine prevailed along with surgery and the priest-physicians' incantations and prayers. Udwadia cites the *Ardibehest Yasht*: "Of all the healers, O Spitama Zarathushtra, namely those who heal with the knife, with herbs and with sacred incantations, the last one is the most potent as he heals from the very source of disease." The evil force according to the *Avesta* had harnessed man with nine times 10,000 diseases, notes the author on the basis of the *Avesta*. Though it produced great rulers who offered good governance and "a great prophet who blazed an untrodden trail," ancient Persia made no major contribution to philosophy, art, literature, science or medicine, says Udwadia.

By contrast the Indian system of Ayurveda recognized that suffering could be physical, mental and spiritual and that good health included "a healthy body, sound mind and a good soul." *Charaka Samhita* — the compendium of Charaka whose exact date is unknown — the earliest of the ayurvedic texts, speaks of anatomy, fetal development, the cause, nature and management of consumption, asthma, epilepsy, insanity and a vast variety of other conditions, its materia medica comprising vegetable,

animal and mineral products. The treatise refers to different medical specialties, offers a code of ethics, describes customs, traditions, diets, exercise et al.



Hippocrates: banished the gods from medicine

The *Charaka Samhita* prescribes an ethical code for the medical practitioner: "Day and night, however thou mayest be engaged, thou shalt endeavor for the relief of the patient with all thy heart and soul. Thou shalt not desert or injure thy patient even for the sake of thy life or living. Thou shalt not commit adultery even in thought. Thou shalt not covet other's possessions. Thou should be modest in thy attire or possessions... The peculiar customs of the patient's house shall not be made public. Even knowing that the patient's span of life is coming to a close, it shall not be mentioned by thou there, where if so done, it could cause shock to the patient and to others..."

Susruta, an eminent surgeon who is believed to have lived a couple of centuries before Christ, bequeathed to posterity the *Susruta Samhita* which was frequently revised and updated before 500 AD in which form the world knows it today. Susruta was supposed to have innovated major operations and surgical techniques, including the removal of

cataracts, kidney stones and dead fetuses — marvels of his time and age. "Cutting off the nose was a commonly practised punishment in females for adultery and in males for a variety of offences. Plastic surgery to reconstruct the nose or torn ear lobes was innovated by this great surgeon," marvels Udwadia, ascribing the origin of plastic surgery to Susruta. One of Susruta's fascinating innovations was the use of black ants for suturing. Udwadia describes the procedure: "The technique was to bring the edges of a wound very close together and then have a black ant join the edges by biting through them with its mandibles. The ant's body was twisted off but the head remained, approximating the edges of the wound."

The great Indian universities trained the medicos. Susruta is said to have taught his students at the patients' bedside.

As early as the Chou dynasty (1027-256 BC) specialization had begun and Chinese physicians were required to submit an audit of their successes and failures which determined their professional status. By the seventh century AD an examination system prevailed — four centuries earlier than the first licensing system in the West, notes Udwadia. Midwives had ruled obstetrics for centuries and by the 14th century women were officially recognized as physicians. The legendary art and science of acupuncture probably antedated Chinese

herbal medicine. The insertion and twisting of needles within the skin has been shown to release endorphins, naturally formed within the body, resulting in the relief of pain, observes Udwadia.

The founders of rational medicine in the West were the Greek philosophers. In the heroic age of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* every warrior was a physician, writes Udwadia. "Homer mentions how these warrior-physicians were adept at removing arrow-heads and javelin-points from wounds. They knew the use of pressure to stop bleeding, the importance of cleaning and washing wounds, the use of compresses, balms and salves to promote healing and of bandages to protect wounds. References are also



Portrait of Andreas Vesalius dissecting the forearm of a corpse All photos courtesy: Wellcome Institute Library, London

found about medicines made of herbal extracts, of potions to relieve pain, and of wine to revive the injured...

"The warrior-physicians were aware of the rough anatomy and function of the muscles, tendons, joints and bones of the human body. They observed how an arrow that pierced the heart would quiver with each heartbeat and how death occurred quickly from blood loss if the arrow was plucked from such a wound. They knew that the wounds in the forehead and through the windpipe were among the most dangerous of all, that a javelin thrust or an arrow piercing the breast could go through the lung, and that a thrust in the buttocks could pierce both the rectum and the bladder.

"It is evident from a study of Homer's work that medicine even in the early years of Greek history followed a path distinct from that in Egypt. It divorced itself quickly from magic and priestcraft. It went on to become secular — being practised by laymen in times of peace and by warriors in times of war."

But the star of the Greek medical firmament was Hippocrates, born around 460 BC on the island of Cos. His opinions collected as the *Corpus Hippocraticum* come through as straightforward and precise. Said he on the art of medicine: "I must first say what I believe its scope to be: to take away suffering or at least to alienate it. The fact that those who do not believe in it can be cured by it is strong proof of its existence and power." The gods had no place in his concept of disease: "I am about to discuss the disease called sacred (epilepsy). It is not in my opinion any more divine or more sacred than other disease, but has a natural cause, and its supposed divine origin is due to men's inexperience, and to their wonder at its peculiar character."

To this day practitioners of Western medicine take the Hippocratic Oath which notes, *inter alia*, "I will use my power to help the sick to the best of my ability and judgement; I will abstain from harming or wronging any man by it. I will not give a fatal draught to

anyone if I am asked, nor will I suggest any such thing. Neither will I give a woman means to procure an abortion... Whenever I go into a house, I will go to help the sick and never with the intention of doing harm or injury. I will not abuse my position to indulge in sexual contacts with the bodies of women or of men, whether they be freemen or slaves. Whatever I see or hear, whether professionally or privately, which ought not to be divulged, I will keep secret and tell no one."

Hippocrates inculcated the practice of the observation of the natural history of disease at the bedside. "The art of diagnosis was related to a holistic understanding of the patient's character, diet, habits, lifestyle, to a meticulous bedside history-taking and to an astute power of observation through the use of the eyes, ears and hands," writes Udwardia. Hippocrates emphasized the overriding necessity to help the healing processes of nature. He taught the virtue of intellectual honesty — to report failures as well as successes with equal objectivity. He conceived of a physician as a man of ethics who was also kind, caring, modest and devoted to the patient without yearning for glory or money.

"To the Greeks, philosophy, science and medicine were closely related fields. Medicine, like science and philosophy grew out of the curiosity to know more

One of the first operations with the use of ether as an anaesthetic agent, performed at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, on 16 October 1846. William Morton administering ether

about man and his environment," notes Udwardia. These were not Roman strengths. It was in technology that Rome dominated. "Bridges, roads, aqueducts for water supply, sewage for drainage and public baths were constructed using advanced engineering skills." These resulted in superior public health and hygiene, assesses Udwardia.

The greatest physician of Rome was a Greek — Claudius Galen. Ranked next only to Hippocrates in the history of medicine, Galen was the most influential writer of all time, writes Udwardia, crediting him with the combined attributes of an excellent bedside clinician and an experimental scientist. Galen was, however, an extreme egoist: "It is I, and I alone, who have revealed the true path of medicine. It must be admitted that Hippocrates already staked out this path... he prepared the way, but I have made it possible." Comments Udwardia, "Galen made many mistakes as most men do. The tragedy of his mistakes is unique in that they were perpetuated for over 1,500 years after his death. There must indeed be few mistakes in any other field of human endeavor which would equal this unenviable record."





Louis Pasteur in his laboratory, using a microscope

The reason for this unique power over the minds of succeeding centuries lay in the authoritativeness of his writing and the morality underlying his work that was acceptable to the Christian church as well as Islam, both of whom frowned upon and forbade the dissection of the human body. Thus Galen's errors remained hidden until Andreas Vesalius of the Renaissance and William Harvey even later separated fact from fiction in Galen's work.

While Europe slipped into the Dark Ages after the fall of Rome, art, literature, science and medicine flourished in the "civilized belt of Islam" which preserved ancient learning and the classic Greco-Roman heritage for the modern world. Outstanding scholar physician al-Rhazes treated his patients to a proper diet, rest and the use of nature's healing power like Hippocrates. He stressed the importance of hygiene with frequent washing and bathing, and advocated music and the game of chess to overcome melancholia. Avicenna attempted to combine the medical doctrines of Hippocrates and Galen with the biological doctrine of Aristotle in *al-Quanun* (the Canon) whose five volumes remained a standard medical text in Western universities until 1650. Abucasis' encyclopaedic work *al-Tasrif* (Method) became a source of information on surgical practices with 200 illustrations of the surgical instruments used by the Arabs. The book dominated the teaching of surgery in Europe till the advent

of Ambroise Paré.

Another significant contribution of the Arabs was the establishment of hospitals used both for the care of the sick and the teaching of medicine. The most famous of these was the one in Cairo which had a special ward for mental diseases and fever wards cooled by fountains. "It contained lecture halls, a library, male and female nurses, and had both a Christian chapel and a mosque. Musicians helped patients to sleep and storytellers distracted patients from their suffering," appreciates Udwadia. Since the *Koran* enjoins humanity and care for the insane, the first hospitals for them came up in the Arab world, the first one in Europe being in Granada, Spain.

The Middle Ages were characterized by the horrific Black Death and other epidemics that decimated the population. A quote from Michele di Piazza gives a clinical description of the plague that came from the East, probably China via the Italian merchants trading with Central Asia and the Byzantine Empire: "The sailors brought in their bones a disease so violent that whosoever spoke a word to them was infected and could in no way save himself from death. Those to whom the disease was transmitted by infection of the breath were stricken with panic all over the body and felt a terrible lassitude. Then there appeared on a thigh or on an arm, a pustule like a lentil bean. From this the infection penetrated the body and violent bloody

vomiting began. It lasted for a period of three days and there was no way of preventing its ending in death."

Another disease that raged was leprosy with the victims being subjected to cruel taboos. They were segregated in special houses called lazarettos. By the mid 13th century an estimated 20,000 such places sheltered the afflicted, yet by 1350 leprosy in Europe was on the decline. Though the reason for this fall is not known, Udwadia hazards that the Black Death may have led to the shrinking of the "reservoirs of infection."

The humanism of the Renaissance had its own tale to tell. When Pope Pius IV decreed that the doctorate of medicine could only be conferred on Catholics, the Venetian senate opposed this decree, insisted on secularism in the universities and appointed a procurator to confer degrees on all worthy students regardless of caste, creed or faith, notes Udwadia.

Their search for perfection as painters and sculptors led Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti to learn the secrets of human anatomy by dissecting human bodies by candlelight. Leonardo's notes include 750 anatomical illustrations. Apart from the muscles, the coronary arteries and valves within the veins, cranial nerves and fetal membranes all were examined, dissected, noted, illustrated. "He would have surely been considered the father of modern anatomy if his notebook had not remained undiscovered for two centuries," comments Udwadia.

Girolamo Fracastoro published a poem *Syphilis Sive Morbus Gallicum* (Syphilis or the French Disease) in which a French boy Syphilus, who insults the god Apollo, is smitten by a scourge which causes "the flesh from his limbs to decay and fall, his teeth to break loose, his breath to become fetid and his voice to be reduced to a whisper." It described the 'great pox' which had made a dramatic entry in 1493. Initially called the Neopolitan disease because it came to attention during the French siege of Naples, after Fracastoro's poem the disease became universally known as syphilis. The Latin poem in three volumes referring to the origin and treatment of the disease is perhaps the most widely read poem in medical literature, observes Udwadia.



Florence Nightingale nursing a patient

Five years of dissection, observation and experimentation led the Flemish Andreas Vesalius, professor of anatomy at the University of Padua, to publish his seven books on the structure of the human body at the age of 28. Galenic myths were shattered. The shocked world of medicine hounded Vesalius with charges of vivisection, tormenting him until he made a bonfire of all his unpublished works and fled Padua. After some years as the physician to the kings of Spain, Vesalius was shipwrecked while returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and died on the Ionian island of Zante — a great man “destroyed by the bigotry, jealousy and hate of lesser mortals,” regrets Udwardia.

The accepted treatment of gunshot wounds consisted of cauterizing them with burning oil of elder mixed with treacle. With trepidation Ambroise Paré, as a novice barber surgeon in the French army, followed the prescription. He ran out of oil, so he innovated a mixture of egg yolk, oil of roses and turpentine to dress the remaining wounds. Contrary to his fear of finding the uncauterized men dead the next morning, he found that these men felt little pain and their wounds were not inflamed while those who had been cauterized were in great pain with inflamed wounds. Compassionate, considerate and modest, Paré is known to have said when a badly wounded officer recovered, “I dressed him, God healed him.” Udwardia re-

counts Paré’s restoration of life and health to a badly injured aristocrat at death’s door. Apart from his revolutionary treatment of gunshot wounds Paré practised ligation of arteries to arrest hemorrhage, popularized harelip operations, pioneered modern obstetrics and devised surgical instruments and prostheses for cripples.

While Galileo Galilei charted the heavens on the basis of what he saw from the telescope he had devised, William Harvey studied the movement of blood in the human body, eventually describing the circulation as we know it today. He applied the principles of research in natural sciences as followed by Galileo, Newton and Kepler to medicine. He experimented on over 80 animals to measure the rate of flow of blood and calculated it to be 8,640 oz/hour, “a quantum that could not be replenished by food or tissues hour by hour.”

The publication of his book on circulation “divided the world into two hostile camps.” His other great original work was in embryology where he postulated that all living beings develop from an egg.

The invention of the microscope and the stethoscope led to the division of medicine between those who focused on the laboratory, pursuing animal experiments under controlled conditions and chemical investigations as in the German universities and the emphasis on physical examination of patients in

public hospitals and the study of pathology in the autopsy room by which medical students benefitted in Paris.

The scope of surgery was limited by pain. “Surgeons worked with furious speed and operations had to be completed within five minutes, else the anguish of unbearable pain could result in shock and death,” records Udwardia. Until the advent of anesthesia “a strong dose of opium fortified by a heavy dose of alcohol” was all that could be used but their effect dissipated on the first cut of a sharp knife.

Udwardia traces the drama as awareness of the effect of nitrous oxide, ether and chloroform changed this scene — happily for surgeons and their patients; not so happily for some of those involved in the discoveries.

Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis realized that the dreaded childbirth fever with its high mortality of young mothers was caused by the attending doctors who customarily carried out autopsies before attending to patients in the ward. The simple expedient of ensuring that hands were thoroughly washed before touching patients and the cleaning of the wards with calcium chloride brought the mortality rate down to almost zero in two years. When Semmelweis announced his findings to the medical society of Vienna claiming that childbirth fever was a form of septicemia, he was hounded by the obstetricians and forced to resign from the Vienna Krankenhaus, the largest maternity clinic in the world. Doctors and students stopped washing and disinfecting and the mortality rate soared again. Semmelweis pursued his convictions at his new post as head of obstetrics at St Rochus Hospital in his native Budapest and childbirth fever seemed a nightmare of the past. He tried to convince the world that “the simple act of handwashing could save thousands of lives.” He published his beliefs but the book provoked a hostile reaction. An embittered Semmelweis began to show signs of mental instability and died in a mental asylum.

At the same time Joseph Lister, as a medical student, first witnessed a dreadful epidemic of hospital gangrene. Over the years he saw it happening many times until he read a paper by Louis Pasteur giving proof that microorganisms suspended in air caused putrefac-

tion. Lister introduced meticulous cleanliness in his ward and tried out various antiseptic solutions finally falling into a routine where lint soaked in carbolic acid was introduced into a wound after removing clotted blood. Another similarly soaked piece was placed on top with a covering of tinfoil to prevent evaporation of the antiseptic. Absorbent wool was packed round the wound.

Lister sprayed the operation theater, the instruments and the patient's skin with carbolic acid before starting an operation. During the operation the air continued to be sprayed with carbolic acid, soaking all those present with it. "The technique involved antiseptics i.e. killing all microorganisms in the wound and asepsis i.e. preventing bacteria from entering the wound." None of his 11 compound fracture patients died of infection, notes Udwadia.

Udwadia takes the reader through the travails and triumphs of the great discoveries: Louis Pasteur's conception of sterility through heat which enables the transport of fresh milk over long distances without curdling; the control of anthrax and the creation of the anti-rabies vaccine; Robert Koch's identification of the microbes that lead to tuberculosis and cholera; Waldemar Haffkine's discovery of the plague vaccine; the understanding of the human immune system, the arrival of chemotherapy and the increasingly sophisticated diagnostic tools...

As the reader walks with the consummate physician through the corridors of time and learns of the medical developments that have snowballed in the past century, he is cautioned against the euphoria of victory over disease: "HIV infection may well be an example of the danger the world is exposed to when the ecological balance between man and his microscopic fellow creatures is seriously disturbed. It is a warning to remember, for the future may well bring with it even more cataclysmic 'new diseases' that have the potential to annihilate humankind."

The increasing mechanization, commercialization and cost of medicine is diluting the doctor-patient relationship. "The modern physician, in his love for science and technology, has forgotten to appreciate that faith and nature are two of the greatest healing forces that can mend and restore the mind and body," rues Udwadia.

Man and Medicine is an ambitious



Marie Curie and daughter Irene: the discovery of radium

project by any standard. To have been undertaken and completed by one who is generally the first among the honourees to start the morning round at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, visiting the seriously ill again at night, is a matter for jubilation. Nine pages of bibliography and a 34-page index attest to Udwadia's scholarship. There are only a couple of flaws obvious to a lay reader. Though the art paper adds to the beauty of the illustrations, its weight makes the tome unwieldy and the reflection of light from the pages detracts from its readability. One also wishes that the work had received equally dedicated proofreading.

Apart from those minor pimples *Man and Medicine* is a mine of information that gathers increasing interest as the journey through time reaches our contemporaneous milieu. Despite the many promises of its burgeoning specialties, amazing to visualize, the sensitive author is aware that the medical scene can be less than reassuring to one desperately ill. Knowledge and experience have bred the humility that acknowledges at the very outset that "there are limits to medicine" and that the "expectations of people from medicine have always been far more than what medicine can meet." Also, the historical lesson that "truth is relative," leads the aging physician to caution that "many aspects of contemporary medicine of which we are so proud, may 100 years from now prove to

be false, and perhaps even harmful and dangerous... Alternative forms of medicine therefore need our tolerance and even respect..." ARNAVAZ S. MAMA

Cricketing clans

Famous Cricketing Families: from Graces and Headleys to Chappells and Waugh's by Kersi Meher-Homji. Published in 2000 by Kangaroo Press, an imprint of Simon and Schuster (Australia) Pty Limited, 20, Barcoo Street, East Roseville, NSW 2069, Australia. Pp: 232. Price: Australian \$ 29.95.

"One of the great joys of cricket is that although it produces many boundaries, the game in fact has none," writes Australian cricketing legend Richie Benaud in his foreword to Kersi Meher-Homji's *Famous Cricketing Families*. So here we have a Parsi whose family originally moved from the tranquil village of Udvada to the chaotic metropolis of Bombay, who emigrated later to Australia, writing about grandfathers, fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, nephews, brothers-in-law and second cousins who have played the gentleman's game on greens in all corners of the globe!

"It was a lost book that sparked off my obsession on cricketing families. For my birthday in 1950, my eldest brother Behram (who had represented Bombay University as a wicketkeeper) presented me with Dudley Nourse's autobiography *Cricket in the Blood*. It opened new horizons for me; I was well and truly smitten," writes Meher-Homji. Then tragedy struck! In the course of relocations the book got lost and Meher-Homji overcame the pangs of his loss by collecting over the course of almost 50 years anything he could lay his hands on regarding members of the same family, albeit generations apart, playing cricket.

Famous Cricketing Families features 34 well-known families, covers five generations and eight countries! In over a double century of pages, Meher-Homji takes us through family sagas, of grand comebacks and waits in the wilderness, the sweet sound of willow on ball echoing through genteel village greens or the volatile cauldrons that are stadia in India and Pakistan. We read about "Star Waugh's" — talented twins Steve and Mark Waugh who between them have worn Australian colors 231 times in test cricket, scored 14,966 runs, taken 139 wickets and gobbled 224 catches (up to July 1, 2000)! Their statistics for ODIs (one day internationals) are even more

impressive — 512 ODIs, 14,222 runs, 274 wickets (up to the time of the book's publication). Meher-Homji points out however that the book is not an encyclopaedia on cricketing families, but a selection of the best known among them.

Leafing through test cricketing history we read of the time when "cricket was grace and Graces were cricket!" — the legendary Dr W. G. Grace, born more than 150 years ago who played cricket with his long, flowing beard and portly girth, smacking 54,896 runs in a career that stretched from age 16 to 60! For many years a notice appeared on county grounds: "Admission three pence. If W. G. Grace is playing, admission six pence." In present times, when cricket is sometimes played with a double cross instead of a straight bat, sweaty palms occasionally outstretched to receive catches as well as greenbacks, it might interest the cricket buff to know that in the year 1891, during a visit to Australia W. G. Grace received in all the phenomenal sum of £ 3,000, with all expenses paid, including a locum for his medical practice!

It was in 1980 that Meher-Homji first researched and wrote a book, *Cricket's Great Families*, on cricketing clans. "However the publisher in his wisdom left out important families... Also, in the 20 years since the first edition important families have sprung up. An update (more like a revamp) was overdue," writes Meher-Homji. "Kersi, with a versatile approach to the world of cricket rather than just one country, is ideally suited for the pleasurable task of gathering together information about families and, with his knowledge of the game, he always adds a sympathetic touch to proceedings," notes Benaud. Thus we read of the Flower power of Zimbabweans Andy and Grant Flower, appearing together in 42 tests out of a possible 43; the pacey Lees, Shane and Brett, with the latter's 100 mph snorters breaking not just batsmen's wickets but one

West Australian batsman's forearm as well! We read about 11 English brothers making up a team in 1845, of siblings whose career took a knock because older brothers were certainities in the national eleven; of legendary New Zealander Sir Richard Hadlee being a reluctant cricketing student under his father's coaching, of a four-year-old Colin Cowdrey taught by his Englishman father to play offside shots on a tennis court in Ootacamund in colonial India!

Of particular interest to Indian readers may be the chapter on father and son Iftikhar and Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi — two generations of Oxford blues, named *Wisden's* cricketers of the year in 1932 and 1968, both of whom captained India. Overcoming the loss in vision in his right eye following a car crash in 1961, Mansur became India's emergency captain in the Caribbean in 1962 at the age of 21, following the near fatal injury to captain Nari Contractor. In test history, there are only two instances of both father and son captaining the country, Meher-Homji informs us.

Written in a chatty, informal style, peppered with catchy captions and titles, Meher-Homji infuses life into each page, savoring the cricketers' triumphs and aching with their tragedies. What cold statistics do not tell us, he says, is that the immortal Prince Ranjitsinhji (later the Jamsahib of Nawanagar) who played for England and not for India (India did not enter the test arena till 1932) suffered from asthma which left him awake most nights, yet he could score at a dizzying rate of 55 runs an hour; that his nephew

Duleepsinhji, the touch artist with the wiry wrists and swift footwork, had his promising test career cruelly cut short by tuberculosis at the age of 27. We read about the Amarnath trio — stormy petrel Lala, sons Mohinder and Surinder, with Mohinder, the man of the final in India's World Cup triumph in 1983, now a familiar face and voice on TV.

Tidbits of trivia raise many a chuckle: "This young bowler has a fine change of pace," remarked the great Frank Woolley standing as umpire in a charity match, blissfully oblivious to the fact that identical twins Alec and Eric Bedser had bowled three balls apiece!

The legends are all there — "The Mighty Khans of Pakistan" who produced five test players including three captains, of whom Imran, the tall Pathan with the Hollywood actor's looks, lifted the World Cup at the age of 40, leading a talented but temperamental Pakistani side; the Chappell charisma, the Kiwi Crowes, and many more. For quick reference, Meher-Homji has included four pages of family statistics, compiled country wise and record wise. It is a pity indeed that no cricketers from Meher-Homji's own community feature among famous cricketing families. Meher-Homji's own claim to cricketing fame lies in his eight books on cricket, including *Out for a Duck* (1993), *Six Appeal* (1996) and the best-selling *The Waugh Twins* (1998), cricketing genes inherited from an uncle (Kharshed Meher-Homji) who played test cricket for India in 1936 and a granduncle (Rustom Meher-Homji) who toured England with an official All India team way back in 1911!

Living in Sydney and indulging his hobby by freelancing for Australian and Indian newspapers, the *Wisden Cricket Monthly* (UK), etc., Meher-Homji is also the sports editor of *The Indian Down Under*. A virologist by profession, Meher-Homji acknowledges his gratitude to his wife Villie for tolerating his "magnificent obsession" of converting their tiny study "into a pigsty" dotted with cricket which is, by his own admission, the great love of his life!

HILLA P. GUZDER



Clockwise: Book cover, Imran Khan: the world in his hands; Meher-Homji (left) with Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi (Photo courtesy: The Indian Down Under)

MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* publishes intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the six-month period of September 2000 to February 2001. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

The Old Customs House registered 27 intercommunity marriages plus two civil marriages, whereas the MHADA office registered 16 intercommunal nuptials only.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi crematorium registers revealed the names of 19 Zoroastrians cremated between September 2000 and July 2001.

As per the data collected by *Parsiana* there were 79 Zoroastrians who were consigned to the Towers of Silence as compared to 12 babies born in the month of July 2001. The major killer — heart disease — felled 29 victims of whom 13 were in the above 80 age group. Pneumonia/lung disease claimed 14 lives. Seven patients died due to cancer and four each to liver disease and old age/general debility. Septicemia, gastro-intestinal bleeding and asthma took a toll of three lives each whereas two Zoroastrians each fell prey to uremia and diabetes. Among the isolated cases were gastroenteritis, atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty substances in the arter-

ies), Parkinson's disease, hypertension, cellulitis (inflammation of connective tissues), epilepsy, anemia and kidney failure. The eldest and youngest to die were both females at 105 and 37 years respectively. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for July, in Bombay, was 77 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 or vice versa. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Pashan*, to *Kamal* and *Hormazd Sidhwa* on May 5, 2001
A girl, *Taira*, to *Kayomi* and *Murzbani Engineer*; July 1
A boy to *Farzana* and *Kayomarz Sidhwa*; July 3
A boy to *Shireen* and *Shapoor Bhavnagri*; July 4
A boy to *Karen* and *Maneck Mulla*; July 8
Twins (boys), *Aarman* and *Auhun*, to *Perviz* and *Carl Avari*; July 14
Twins (boys) to *Kashmira* and *Cyrus Sarkari*; July 15
A boy to *Nazneen* and *Viraf Vatcha*; July 19
A girl to *Hema* and *Viraf Majra*; July 21
A boy to *Ketayun* and *Sarosh*

Taraporewalla; July 23
A girl, *Alysa*, to *Rashna* and *Carl Daver*; July 24

MARRIED

Hutoksis S. Lakdawala and *Mehernosh H. Dubash*; September 22, 2000
Elsa Dorothy Parker and *Homiya Piroshah Wankadia*; September 22
Sireesha Chandana Venkata and *Zubin Minoo Ghiara*; October 13
Delna R. Tambuvala and *Dravida Balvenkatesh*; November 10
Shilpa Varadraya Pai and *Zubin Keki Dumasia*; November 10
Kamal Bugwadia and *Tehmasp Printer*; November 18
Nafisi Jakkiuddin and

Malcolm Purvis Solina; November 18
Jennifer Gazder and *Aloysius Furtado*; December 7
Rhea Rajat Mitra and *Kurush Ferozeh Dalal*; December 10
Monaaz Rohinton Irani and *Suraj Arjun Bhatia*; December 11
Candice Margaret Nazareth and *Homi Khushrao Captain*; December 18
Rukshan Tehmtan Mistry and *Jason George Sheasby*; December 19
Preeti Kandan Shahani and *Percy Neville Bengali*; December 27
Devyani Vinayak Paranjape and *Romin Khushru Irani*; January 3, 2001
Tehrat Aspi Wadia and *Vaibhav Udaykumar Vinzaneer*; January 3
Sulakhana Dilip Shah and *Shahrookh Manchi Bharucha*; January 4
Sony Vithal Kharwat and *Dara Byram Divecha*; January 4
Pearl Baji Tavadia and *Asif M. Seth*; January 8
Ayesha Monani and *Cyrus F. Broacha*; January 11
Meenakshi P. Karer and *Cyrus Jehangir Kharas*; January 11
Shaheen Gandhi and *Sanjeev Fernandes*; January 12
Farah Sohrab Lawyer and *Riyad Rashid Oomerbhoy*; January 12
Radha Bhaskar Nadkarni and *Jamshyd Rusie Sethna*; January 12
Tabassum Rizvi and *Cyrus F. Fitter*; January 13
Kainaz Pervaz Doomasia and *Nitin Satish Bhambani*; January 14
Zarin Manek Gardin and *Ajay Ram Dularey*; January 14
Sanobar Rumi Mehta and *Ramanuj Mandayam Anandampillay*; January 15
Sanobar Sabawala and *Valerian D'Souza*; January 15
Sushila Deepak Solanki and *Jamshed Dhanjishaw Bodhanwalla*; January 17
Hoofrish Soli Variava and *Chetan Raj Krishnamurthy*; January 17
Hetal Ramesh Dave and *Arfaraz Aspi Khambatta*; January 18
Anjali O. Singh and *Zubin F. Dastur*; January 19

Trupti Babubhai Patel and *Hoshi Behramji Lal*; January 21
Behroz Maneck Sethna and *Shivendu Govardhandas Aggarwal*; January 25
Rekha Tiwari and *Darius C. Watchmaker*; January 25
Alina Victoria Grigore and *Rumi Behram Balsara*; January 29
Monica Tikamdas Sachdev and *Khazat Aspi Kotwal*; January 29
Delnaz Pesi Ravji and *Aloke Vijay Panikar*; February 7
Meeta Kewalkumar Gundhare and *Navroze Dadi Bharthania*; February 13
Farida Jamshed Balsara and *Gunanath Govind Desai*; February 15
Jyotika Sabrina Mahendragir and *Dinsha Pallon Shroff*; February 16
Vaishali Shantikumar Kapadia and *Yazad Kersi Cooper*; February 17
Sonali Raman Wagh and *Cherag Dinshaw Sarkari*; February 18
Shiraz Homi Bhabha and *Kaustubh Harshad Sanghani*; February 27
Pinkie Firoze Chinoy and *Nitesh Mahesh Sharma*; February 28

DIED

Khorshed Dady Adenwalla (69), residing at Wyoming, Little Gibbs Rd, Malabar Hill, 400006; October 5, 2000 (cremated)
Eruch Burjorji Fanibanda (70), C/1, Amarchand Mans, 16, Madame Cama Rd, 400037; November 23 (cremated)
Nashir Maneckshaw Patel (77), 3/D, Ben Nevis, Warden Rd, 400036; November 28 (cremated)
Pestonji Kavasji Pavri (79), 7, Kala Niketan Bldg, 95, Maharshi Karve Rd, 400020; December 10 (cremated)
Hilla Zal Talyerkhan (86), 3, Navroze Apts, Warden Rd, 400026; January 6, 2001 (cremated)
Clementine Dhan Daruwala (39), 12, Munshi Bldg, Banaji Lane, Fort, 400001; January 10 (cremated)
Fali Rustomji Bilimoria (78),

Mount Eminence, Gamadia
Cross Rd, 400026; January 14
(cremated)

Aloo B. Daver (76), A. S. S. I.
Bhavan, Saibaba Complex,
Goregaon (E), 400063;
February 3 (cremated)

Firdaus Dhanjisha Guard
(39), B. Negi Palace, Navghar
Rd, Bhayander, 401105;
February 14 (cremated)

Maneck Khurshed Nariman
(91), Mody Mans, 49,
Mereweather Rd, 400039;
March 14 (cremated)

Jehangir Nusserwanji Chubb
(92), Crystle Bldg, 13/D,
Altamont Rd, 400026;
May 21 (cremated)

Dhun Ardeshir Cama (76),
8/A, Orient Bldg, Wodehouse
Rd, Colaba, 400005; June 15
(cremated)

Sorab Bezoni Shroff (84), 58,
Iris, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
June 16 (cremated)

Hilla Rustom Bhagat (85),
1/10, Tata Blocks, Guru
Nanak Rd, Bandra (W),
400050; July 1

Soli Kaikhushru Chanduwadia
(79), 12, Lentin Bldg, Gamadia
Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 1

Dinoo Dara Doctor (77),
Mangal Chhaya, 15th Rd,
Bandra (W), 400050; July 1

Goola Rusi Deboo (82), H/20,
Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; July 2

Tehmul Minoo Divecha (54),
D-1, 3-8, Sector 1, Vashi, New
Bombay, 400703; July 2

Alan Burjorji Marfatia (94),
2/D, Karai Est, 248, Tardeo
Rd, 400007; July 2

Freny Eruchsha Vadigar (82),
47, Sneh Sadan, Opp Colaba
P. O., Colaba, 400005; July 2

Mitha Dadiba Powvala (91),
A/34, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; July 3

Minoo Ratanji Jokhi (86),
4/13, B. S. Panthaki Baug,
Andheri Kurla Rd, Andheri
(E), 400069; July 4

Rati Cavasji Sheriarjina (65),
36, Adi Marazban Path,
Ballard Est, 400038; July 5

Perin Hormusji Mistry (80),
2/11, Malegamwala Bldg,
Station Rd, Mahim, 400016;
July 6

Kamal Phiroze Rustomji (85),
Mody Mans, 49, Mereweather
Rd, 400039; July 6 (cremated)

Bombay: The Telling Figures

The number of Parsi marriages in 2000 was the lowest ever in the last four decades. The Registrar of Parsi Marriages showed 131 community marriages in Bombay for the period January-December 2000. The intercommunity marriages figure also dipped to 50 from 74 in 1999. As compared to a total of 335 marriages in 1999 there were 181 in 2000. The year 2000 being a leap year may be the cause for the lower marriage rate. In previous leap years i.e. 1996, 1992 and 1988 the figures also dropped significantly.

The number of Parsis marrying out as versus within the community in 2000 was 28 percent as versus 22 percent in 1999, if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to the total number of marriages (50:181). If calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to com-

munity marriages (50:131) the percentage rises to 38 as compared to 28 in 1999.

The number of births which was 171 in 1999, shows the same figure in 2000 too, as per the data available to us from two hospitals in central Bombay. But while the birth count of boys, 87, has risen by 10 from last year's total of 77, the count of females has correspondingly declined by 10 to give us a total of 84.

As compared to 945 deaths in 1999, there were 936 deceased in 2000 of whom 924 were consigned to the Towers of Silence and 12 were cremated. Among those opting for dakhmenashini there were 463 males, an increase of eight over the 1999 count of 455, and 461 females, a decline of 16 from the preceding year's tally of 477. Eight males and five females opted for cremation in 1999 as against eight males and four

females who were cremated in 2000. Our data on cremation is confined to the records accessible at the Chandanwadi crematorium.

The Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB) calculated for those consigned at Doongerwadi remains 76, the same as last year. It was highest in the months of January and July, and lowest in November 2000.

Given below are the 2000 figures pertaining to the Bombay Zoroastrian community as gleaned by *Parsiana*:

Born: 171
Males 87, Females 84
Marriages: 181
Parsi 131
Intercommunal 50
Died: 936
Consigned: 924
Males 463, Females 461
Cremated: 12
Males 8, Females 4

Borivli (W), 400092; July 7
Gulbai Rustomji Bardoliwalla (105), 9/A, Nagoji Sayaji Bldg,
Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007;
July 7

Dina Maneckji Daruwala (97),
P/21, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
400039; July 7

Sohrab Edulji Mody (86),
Jairaj Peerbhoy Bldg, Forjett
St, 400036; July 7

Phiroze Jamshedji Gandhi (84),
Varun Apts, 503, Dr Ambedkar
Rd, Parel, 400012; July 8

Dhunjishaw Faramroze
Ichhaporia (70), 21/B, Jer
Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd,
Byculla, 400027; July 8

Ketayun Aspi Irani (63), G/2,
J. N. Mody Co-op Hsg Soc,
Mahakali Caves Rd, Andheri
(E), 400093; July 8

Good Hoshang Parbhu (70),
C/o J. R. Patel, Adenwalla
Baug, 285, J. Dadajee Marg,
400007; July 9

Aloo Mancherji Bharucha
(98), H/5, Cusrow Baug, S. B.
Rd, 400039; July 10

Mini Dara Hathiram (87), C/o
C. Kanga, Wagla Cooper Bldg,
Khetwadi 12th Lane, 400004;
July 10

Feroze Padamji Patel (70),
4/10, K. Shroff Bldg, Gamadia
Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 10

Khorshed Nadarshaw Gazdar
(87), 273, Mani Bhavan,
Thakurdwar Rd, 400002;
July 11

Perin Kaikhushroo Khambata
(92), 512, Meher Muncher
Mans, Sir R. P. Masani Rd,
Matunga, 400019; July 11

Noshir Pallonji Mistry (54),
Patel Apts, Patel Agiary
Compd, Tembi Naka, Thana,
400601; July 11

Omar Fred Irani (76),
Mahaynoo's Casbah,
Chowpatty Seaface, 400007;
July 12 (cremated)

Silloo Kavas Mistry (64),
Wadia Bldg, 394, J. S. S. Rd,
Chira Bazar, 400002; July 12

Jamshed Hormusji
Taraporwala (78), 3, Bharucha
Bldg, 2nd Srikant Palekar
Marg, Chira Bazar, 400002;
July 12

Darayush Kaikhershrroo Irani
(45), A/12, Hakim Bldg, Guru
Nanak Market, Grant Rd,
400007; July 13

Tehmi Faramroze Motiwala
(77), 730, Jehangir Vimadlal
Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
July 13

Jal Sorabji Nagporewalla
(73), 13, Jal Palace, 214,
Shraddhanand Rd, Vile Parle
(E), 400057; July 13

Bapuji Ardeshtir Keravala (91),
811/17, Jame Jamshed Bldg,
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
July 14

Mithoo Tahemtan Bhatena
(37), 302, Zoroastrian Co-op
Soc, Behind Umra Police Stn,
Athwalines, Surat, 395001;
July 15

Rusi Ardeshtir Jijina (54),
36/A, Satya Vijay Shopping
Center, Goddev Naka,
Bhayander (E), 401105;
July 15

Jehangir Dady Mody (86),
7/A, Oyster Apts, Pilot Bunder
Rd, Colaba, 400005; July 15

Shirin Rusi Irani (67), 233/12,
Chirag Bldg, Above Bata Co,
Matharpakadi Rd, Mazgaon,
400010; July 16

Sehroo Sorab Sookhadwala
(76), E/9, Shapur Baug, V. P.
Rd, 400004; July 16

Hilla Navroji Carpenter (88),
3/18, J. C. Toddywalla Bldg,
28, Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel,
400013; July 17

Dadi Jamshedji Dandiwalla
(75), B, Wassiamul Bldg,
Grant Rd, 400007; July 17

Homi Dorabji Dastur (73),
14/A, Sukhia Bldg, Cawasji
Patel St, Fort, 400001; July 17

Feradoon Jamshedji Awari
(79), C/o J. B. Bhatena, B/41,
Bina Apts, Sir M. V. Rd,
Andheri (E), 400069; July 18

Pillo Pestonji Billimoria (85),
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
July 14

Mithoo Tahemtan Bhatena
(37), 302, Zoroastrian Co-op
Soc, Behind Umra Police Stn,
Athwalines, Surat, 395001;
July 15

Rusi Ardeshtir Jijina (54),
36/A, Satya Vijay Shopping
Center, Goddev Naka,
Bhayander (E), 401105;
July 15

Jehangir Dady Mody (86),
7/A, Oyster Apts, Pilot Bunder
Rd, Colaba, 400005; July 15

Shirin Rusi Irani (67), 233/12,
Chirag Bldg, Above Bata Co,
Matharpakadi Rd, Mazgaon,
400010; July 16

Sehroo Sorab Sookhadwala
(76), E/9, Shapur Baug, V. P.
Rd, 400004; July 16

Hilla Navroji Carpenter (88),
3/18, J. C. Toddywalla Bldg,
28, Sunmill Rd, Lower Parel,
400013; July 17

Dadi Jamshedji Dandiwalla
(75), B, Wassiamul Bldg,
Grant Rd, 400007; July 17

Homi Dorabji Dastur (73),
14/A, Sukhia Bldg, Cawasji
Patel St, Fort, 400001; July 17

Feradoon Jamshedji Awari
(79), C/o J. B. Bhatena, B/41,
Bina Apts, Sir M. V. Rd,
Andheri (E), 400069; July 18

Pillo Pestonji Billimoria (85),
Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
July 14

13, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 18
Dolly Faramroze Engineer (70), 96, Rajesh Bldg, D. B. Marg, 400007; July 18
Freny Homi Batliwala (72), Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Zoroastrian Blocks, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; July 19
Sorab Framroze Randeria (64), Hira Manzil, 21, Gilder Lane, 400008; July 19
Maki Homi Sethna (82), C. Geeta Bhavan, 93, Warden Rd, 400036; July 19
Jimmy Sorabji Captain (68), 1, Central Bldg, Bomanji Master Rd, Dhobitalao, 400002; July 20
Dara Nusserwanji Kadva (65), 8/82, Aderbad, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 20
Jehangir Framroze Mody (80), 74, Shangrila, Opp Colaba P. O., Colaba, 400005; July 20
Perin Burjor Albless (74), 28, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 21 (cremated)
Perin Bomi Billimoria (75), T/3, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; July 22
Jamshedji Burjorji Fitter (67), 1/11, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; July 22
Piloo Fardoonji Parbhoo (83), Cooper Bldg, 617/B, Girgaum Rd, 400002; July 22
Tehemurasp Bejorji Buhariwala (73), P/39, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 23
Phiroze Godrej Dhabhar (81), 2, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; July 23
Perin Jal Mistry (86), 347/C, United Chmbs, Grant Rd, 400007; July 23
Jal Burjor Aibara (82), 25, Napean Sea Rd, 400036; July 24
Dali Noshir Daruwalla (64), 16, F. D. Petit Sanatorium, Kemp's Corner, 400036; July 24
Nariman Ardeshir Davierwala (72), 5, Park Haven Annexe, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; July 24
Merwan Hormasji Gandhi (58), 121, Beach Tower, P. Balu Marg, Prabhadevi, 400025; July 24
Behram Khodadad Irani (62), C/3, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; July 24
Mehroo Dara Lalla (83), 787, Bhagat Manor, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*								
	Bombay			India			World	
	This issue	2000*	2001○	This issue	2000*	2001○	This issue	2000*
BIRTHS								
Boys	10	87	51	—	15	3	5	23
Girls	3	84	61	—	14	3	3	20
MARRIAGES								
Parsi	3	131	163	1	13	12	—	20
INTERCOMMUNAL								
Males married out	25	27	18	—	2	—	—	4
Females married out	18	23	14	—	2	1	1	1
DEATHS								
CONSIGNED								
Males	38	463	249	6	79	38	1	58
Females	41	461	269	2	57	28	1	45
CREMATED								
Males	9	8	8	—	1	—	—	—
Females	7	4	9	—	—	—	—	—

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

○Running totals for 2001 (January 2001-September 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.

July 24
Khorshed Manekji Rana (87), 5/C, Billimoria Bldg, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 24
Dhun Dosabhai Pithawala (85), F2/98, Hillside, Pirojshanagar, Vikhroli (W), 400079; July 25
Kersasp Dinshaw Khambata (84), 5, School Bldg, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 26
Minocher Beramsha Kerawala (98), 3/26, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; July 27
Najoo Sohrab Panday (79), 804/B, Sai Niketan, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 27
Roshan Sorab Pardivala (82), 797, Jesia Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 27
Banoobai Hoshang Photogra-pher (92), 5, Sai Ashish, Dr Peter Dias Rd, Bandra, 400050; July 27
Jamshed Behramji Vesoona (80), 2, Petit Block, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 27
Banoobai Pestonji Bhatena (84), C/23, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; July 28
Homi Sorabji Captain (87), 4/5, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 28

Jehangir Darabsha Pundole (90), 14/10, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 28
Gulshan Homi Irani (65), 2-A/501-502, Salsette Parsi Clny, Andheri (E), 400093; July 29
Ketty Sorab Gutta (67), A/18-20, Kooka Bldg, Corner of Grant Rd, 400008; July 30
Roshan Jehangir Karbhari (75), 23, Petit Bldg, Thakurdwar, 400002; July 30
Hoshang P. Mistry (60), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 30
Banoobai Byramji Mody (91), 15/4, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; July 30
Banoobai Eruchsha Vakil (84), Hira Manzil, 21, Gilder Lane, 400008; July 30
Ratanshaw Rustomji Havaladar (80), 401, Rukmani Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd, Plot no 36, Sector 2, Charkop, Kandivli (W), 400067; July 31
Behram Dinshawji Pithawala (96), Shirin Mans, 60, Sleater Rd, 400007; July 31

CALCUTTA

DIED
Homi Nanabhoy Langrana, husband of Perin and father of Viraf; July 19
Putli Hoshang Tangree,

mother of Rati Jehangir Kharas, Roshan Roozva Master and Aspi; July 28

NAGPUR

DIED
Dinshaw Bapuna (84), father of Aspi, Abad, Adil, Aban and Pervin; July 31

SECUNDERABAD

MARRIED
Naznin Toddywala, daughter of Gool and Dinshaw, and *Cyrus Gandevia*, son of Kety and late Erach; February 14

DIED
Keki Dorabji Sarkari (81); July 30

SURAT

DIED
Soli Burjorji Malesaria (72), 1/919, Adagra St, Nanpura, 395001; July 6
Homi Pirojshaw Vandriwala (68), 107, Dizni Hse, Near Navyug College, Rander Rd, 395005; July 12
Pillamai Dhanjishaw Patel (82), Parsi Wad, Near Parsi Agiary, Rander, 395005; July 14
Minoo Kaikhushroo Pooniwala (71), Kamleshwar Apt, Vakil St, 395003; July 20

CANADA
British Columbia

BORN
A boy, *Maverick Lucas Behram*, to Anita and Michael Traquair in Vancouver; July 15

Ontario

BORN
A girl, *Avan*, to Maneck and Jamshed Homiar, sister to Shireen in Brampton; July 5
A girl, *Persez*, to Sonita and Rustom Amaria, sister to Zarmesh in Mississauga; July 25

MARRIED

Goolnar Patel, daughter of Katy and Khurshed, and *Lee-Michael Haw*, son of Anita and Forbes in Mississauga; July 1

PAKISTAN

Karachi
DIED
Perin Firoze Giara (82), mother of Arnawaz Baijan Aga, Dinaz and Minoo; July 27

UK
Surrey

BORN
A boy, *Arya*, to Kaizarin and

Maneck Kalifa, brother to Kiyan; July 23

USA
Florida

DIED
Khurshed K. Irani, brother of Gooloo Sam Polad in Miami; June 24

Ohio

BORN
A girl, *Parinaz*, to *Kashmira* and *Kurush Aga* in Cincinnati; June 1

Texas

BORN
A boy, *Zubin*, to *Sharmeen* and *Percy Master*, brother to Katie in Houston; June 16
A boy, *Shahvir*, to *Rukhshana* and *Gustad Anklesaria* in Houston; July 17

Wisconsin

BORN
A boy, *Deryus*, to *Selena* and *Vispi Jijina*, brother to Farhad and Delnavaz in Waukesha; May 27

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

READERS' FORUM
continued from page 10

School, Andheri East; Don Bosco School, Wadala.

Remember dyslexia need not be a disaster. Teachers and parents can successfully team up and change a setback into a comeback. Once the shackles are freed from the young mind nothing can stop the spirit from soaring to great heights and achieving excellence.

BINAIFER BHARUCHA

School Counselor

Bai R. F. D. Panday Girls High School,

J. B. Vachha Girls High School

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

"HOW LITTLE I KNEW..."

continued from page 34

name that is totally free of side-effects. Yet dreadful illnesses often demand risky procedures or potent drugs with inherent toxicity to the human system. The practice of medicine forces a physician to take a balanced risk if a critically ill patient is to be salvaged. It is not just a knowledge of the science of medicine that determines this risk; it is also determined by experience, judgment and wisdom — it involves in equal measure the art that constitutes medicine even today."

Legions of community patients are known to have been treated free by Dr Farokh Udwadia with the above mentioned combination of skill and understanding — a statement he may hotly deny. They will continue to knock on his door whenever they face a medical emergency. It is a matter of faith...

With Best Wishes From

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

and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff

Grace and graciousness

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Soonu Naoroji Godrej, 78, instrumental in starting the Udayachal School and expanding the Pragati Kendra, a welfare center for workers' wives, at the Godrej township in Vikhroli, on April 23, 2001 in Bombay following cancer.

"Her great virtue of service with self-effacement will not be forgotten by all who came to know her. She knew she had to carry forward the great traditions of the House of Godrej, and she did so so well without any publicity," wrote Dr Freddie Mehta, chairman of Forbes Gokak Limited, stating that Bombay, "indeed India, has become the poorer by (her) demise."

"It is a monumental loss considering the role she played not only in being a great source of inspiration and support to (husband Naoroji who was the managing director of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited until his demise in 1990) but also to the various social causes she promoted and led," noted Atul Kirloskar, chairman and managing director of Kirloskar Oil Engines Limited.

When a school for workers' children was being contemplated at Vikhroli, Soonu used to trudge from one worker's house to another to convince parents to send their children to the classes which had commenced in the makeshift store-room. With Soonu's determination and professional help from Cooverbai Vakil, the Udayachal School grew into a model high school in the metropolis. For the fun-loving Soonu, education was meant to be enjoyed, not a dogmatic exercise, recalls her daughter Smita Crishna. With her love for children, she could come down to their level and at other times she could be seen conversing with savants on a variety of subjects,

being well-read herself. Her role at the Pragati Kendra, a welfare center for workers' wives at Pirojshanagar, has also been lauded. Whether it was yoga, nutrition, batik work or well-baby clinic, she always encouraged them to try out new ideas.

"Our mother was a pillar of strength to us all — an example of fortitude, grace and dignity in all she did," acknowledged her son Jamshyd, the present managing director of Godrej and Boyce, when responding to the condolence messages.

"Her enthusiasm knew no bounds and was infectious, and she pursued her many interests with great energy and in minute detail," he added. Her quality of "graciousness" was referred to in many condolence letters just as her "high-spirited and warmhearted" nature was referred to by art connoisseur Dr Jamshed J. Bhabha, sentiments echoed by Dr Ketayun Dinshaw, director of the Tata Memorial Centre.

"I will always remember her for two things," recalled photographer Ashvin Mehta. "She was one of the first patrons of my art, and secondly, her love for nature was very genuine. I remember how she used to call us (in the '70s) when the first paradise flycatcher was sighted in (her) garden..."

For the greening of Vikhroli and laying out of the gardens, Soonu has been given credit. She would spend entire days there, interact with the personnel from the garden department as also the architects. "A stickler for detail, her hand was seen everywhere," observed Crishna. At the Naoroji Godrej Centre for Plant Research she served as director.

"A true friend of The Yoga Institute" she was admired for her "qualities of

head and heart," by the directors of the Institute. "We at the Maharashtra State Women's Council will always remember her for her spontaneous and generous help and support towards our various welfare activities," wrote president Tannaz Tarapore. "We will always remember Soonu as a wonderful human being, so kind and helpful to all those in need," mentioned Eva Khambatta, president of the Time and Talents Club in her condolence letter.

"Her determination and gentle charm will always be an inspiration," acknowledged Tasneem Mehta, convener of the Greater Mumbai Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage.

The Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research in Poona also gained from Soonu Godrej's support, as conveyed director Erach Bharucha. "She came and spent a whole day with me in Poona even though she was very unwell and smiled brightly at all the efforts we were making in the cause of educating children from the lower socioeconomic strata of society. I think it was this personal interaction which prompted her to donate Rs 25 lakhs for the audiovisual hall at (the) Institute."

Whether it was the cause of women's empowerment, education of the crippled, or assisting the wives of the army officers, Soonu was willing to lend considerable support behind the scenes although she shied away from working on committees.

Simplicity and spirituality were inculcated in her since her early days. Her mother Goolbai Dastur, among the few women then to earn a college degree, was an avid reader and a theologian who supported the freedom movement. Father Dinsha was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi and the Swadeshi movement and always wore khadi. Dinsha had once taken an impressionable Soonu to meet Gandhiji. When she requested Gandhiji for his autograph, he is known to have replied that being a *bania* (merchant) he could not give her anything for free. If she promised to wear khadi, he would willingly give her his autograph. For many years thereafter she wore only khadi, Crishna relates the rationale behind her mother's attire. Till the end she continued to remain very



Godrej: infectious enthusiasm

Indian in her views, observed Crishna. If not wearing khadi, she would wear very indigenous clothes with sari blouses sporting Kutchi embroidery and Indian motifs, long before they became a fashion statement.

In later years she made a significant contribution to the Craft Council of India. Always enthusiastic to promote Indian culture, it was on her initiative that Sanskrit was introduced to the children of Udayachal School. The malkhamb form of physical training was yet another activity with which the children were acquainted. Her artistic and aesthetic predilections enthused the children and staff to improvise — create sculpture from scrap, or pursue the 'hands project' to explore the infinite potentialities of creating art with the use of hands.

At an Indian Machine Tools Exhibition in Delhi, for the Godrej stall Soonu had once designed a huge mural out of lock wastes, discarded keys, shackles, pins, etc. "It became the cynosure of all eyes, including (then) Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's when she visited the exhibition," reported a write-up in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of April 24, 2001.

Born in Karachi, Soonu's education was at the Mama Girls' High School. Fond of swimming and cycling, trips to the school were invariably made on her bicycle. Before marriage to Naval, her cousin and confidante, brought her to Bombay in 1947, Soonu had been familiar with the Bombay scenario, spending vacations with her paternal family (her father and Naval's mother were siblings) and making friends there. At the end of one such trip, an ebullient Soonu, then still in school, was persuaded by her friends at the penultimate hour to stay on in Bombay while her parents, who had already boarded the ship, looked on helplessly as the steamer's whistles kept blowing before sailing off for Karachi. Her one year of academic studies was thus pursued in India.

With her parents, Crishna recalls going on nature treks, expeditions in the countryside... Weekends were sacrosanct for both Soonu and Naoroji who loved sailing. The routine holiday destinations did not fascinate Soonu as much as her sojourns to Mexico, Machu Picchu in Peru, Alaska, China and Outer Mongolia. Within India it was the wildlife sanctuaries, temples and architectural marvels that filled her with awe.

"A staunch Zoroastrian, she did not believe in the outward forms of religion or in its rituals though she did live by the tenets of the religion," reveals Crishna. Initially both Soonu and Naoroji did not wear the sudreh-kusti regularly. But after the stabbing incident in 1979 when Naoroji, his mother-in-law Goolbai and daughter-in-law Pheroza were attacked at their residence, the couple opted to wear these religious garments, mentions Crishna.

"Soonu was one of the first members of the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians (AIMZ) and actively supported our cause, never afraid to speak out and voice her opinions. In that she was a true Zarathushti living by the tenets of our religion of good words, good thoughts and good deeds," noted a tribute in the AIMZ newsletter *Aavedan* of August 2001. "People should change with the times," Crishna recalled her mother's statement when she observed that dakhmenashini had ceased to function as a quick and clean system of disposing the dead. Thus her mortal remains were consigned to the Shivaji Park crematorium with the after-death prayers being said at her residence.

"She made one feel so special in her capacity to listen with total attention," wrote one of her associates, adding, "Today I planted a coconut tree for Soonu — It is no monument but I felt that the gesture would blend with her code of ethics."

Soonu Godrej is survived by her children Jamshyd and Crishna, and brother Naval Dastur.

Keys to success

Died: Zenobia Vakil-Patel, 67, well-known Indian concert pianist, on April 30, 2001 in Bombay following cardio-respiratory arrest.

Among her many concerts both in India and abroad for over five decades was the memorable one she had performed in Salzburg in 1955 when the Austrian government held a big reception for the visiting Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the famous Rittersaal where the Kaiser used to attend state banquets. Twenty-two-year-old Zenobia was selected as the soloist at this command concert before the glittering assembly, noted an article in the

Sunday Chronicle of July 31, 1955. To this day, the family has preserved the invite to the function which bears the autographs of Nehru, his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit and his daughter Indira

Gandhi. Nehru was so impressed by her talent that he granted Zenobia a scholarship for higher studies in music, mentions her husband Jehangir Patel.

"A concert pianist does not merely give concerts. You have to earn a degree recognized the world over," Vakil-Patel had conveyed in the course of an interview (see "Music at her fingertips," *Parsiana*, June 1987).

Believed to be the only Indian to have graduated with honors as a concert pianist from the Mozarteum, she fulfilled the necessary condition of appearing for the examinations in German, having attended lectures too in German, states Jehangir. Her proficiency in German in later years equalled her command over the Gujarati and English languages. A condolence letter from Shireen and Kaikobad Mistry of Germany testified to her "cheerful and gutsy approach to life" and commented on her brilliant musical ability and her excellent German conversation.

"A new world with a lot of concerts had been offered to me in India by her," acknowledged renowned singer Dr Frank Wingler in his condolence letter. Being more than a proficient accompanist, she had the distinction of performing as soloist with the Camarata Academica, Salzburg, with the Bad Reichenhall Philharmonic Orchestra in West Germany and had given recitals in many corners of the world and often in India under the sponsorship of the Max Mueller Bhavan and the Indo-German Cultural Society. Several times she was invited to perform for the radio and television too. Banners across the roads in Poona announcing her forthcoming pianoforte recitals in the late 1960s were a common sight, reminisces Jehangir. On innumerable occasions she performed for charities and social service organizations and was for many years the anchor for the Cantata Choir and the Bombay Christian Choir.

She was reportedly the first Indian to be awarded the West German Academic Exchange Society Scholarship for Music and studied at the Music Academy in



Vakil-Patel: gutsy approach to life

Munich under the internationally renowned Prof Friedrich Wuehrer. At the 200th birth anniversary celebrations of Mozart in Salzburg she was conferred the prestigious Mozart Prize, notes her curriculum vitae.

Zenobia began to play the piano when she was but four years old and made her first concert appearance in Bombay at the age of nine, her early tutelage in music being at the hands of Sarah Titina, Shanti Seldon and Tehmina Patel. At the age of 13, when still schooling at Bombay's Fort Convent, she performed the *Mendelssohn Piano Concerto in G Minor*. Her elder brother Jal Vakil who was the former additional chief presidency magistrate at the Criminal Court of Mumbai (see "The meticulous magistrate," In Memoriam, *Parsiana*, May 2000) used to play the violin and was the founder of the Amateur Classical Ensemble which he led for over 28 years.

Initially her parents Dinbai and Hormusji Vakil were contemplating sending Zenobia to England for further studies when a chance meeting between her brother Sarosh and a brilliant music conductor who was fated to be his travel companion in Europe changed the course of her destination, relates Jehangir.

"There was no sign that the lady had called it a day and among her innumerable performances was a recent and memorable rendition that she gave last year for the Festival of France in Bombay," recalled her friend Piya Mahtaney in the *Mumbai Newslines* of May 2, 2001. "The effortless manner in which she played the piano made it look so facile, but then the ability of making the most difficult look easy is the ultimate endorsement of a true artist," she added. She also referred to the 35th wedding anniversary which Zenobia and Jehangir celebrated in November 2000 when she enthralled the guests with an hour of music.

When she was not performing, Vakil-Patel was teaching piano to the next generation, her most recent protégées being a batch of Japanese children. Her sound training was gratefully recognized by other sets of parents too. Kitty and Dadi Darbari wrote how their daughters "always enjoyed their moments with her and it was her basic training that still enables them to pick up any music by ear." Dr Firoze Mirza and his wife Elinor too were appreciative of her influence on their boys.

If not music, she would have found

her vocation in the diplomatic service, Vakil-Patel had conveyed to *Parsiana*. She was an avid reader and enjoyed travelling too, if not to distant exotic places at least to their family house in Panchgani a couple of times a year. There too she would avail of any opportunity to play the piano at the Billimoria School, remembered Homai and Rusi Billimoria. Her maternal grandmother being the founder of Bombay's Sethna Agiary, Zenobia's religious upbringing remained with her over the years with two-three hours of prayer invariably accommodated in her daily schedule, observed Jehangir. Religion, refrain and rhythm continued to abide with her till the end.

The pianist is survived by her husband Jehangir and son Karl. P. M. G.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

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photographs, properties, etc are available at the click of a mouse.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) is celebrating Dr Bapai Batliwalla's lifetime of learning, teaching and overcoming challenges. Retiring from a distinguished career as a psychiatric social worker, therapist, teacher and consultant, Batliwalla earned herself a doctorate from York University at the age of 63 and went on to publish *Psychoanalysis, Its View of Man* in 1995 at the age of 77. Undeterred by the loss of sight nine years ago, she established the Batliwalla Endowment Fund, a permanent legacy to the CNIB, to which she makes annual donations. The income from the Fund supports staff as well as community training and educational programs. She is also a generous supporter of the CNIB Library for the Blind.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

SPORTS

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National Rifle Association of India.

In 1995, Variava placed third in the air pistol event at the championship organized by The Maharashtra Rifle Association. No license is required for an air weapon, he asserts. "Shooting was very popular with the Parsis of yesteryear," he says, adding that his father Noshir was a member of the Parsi Pioneers Rifle Club which is one of the oldest rifle clubs in India. After the death of most of the life members of the



17-year-old swimmer Zeba H. Wadia receives the Shiv Chhatrapati Award for 1999-2000 at the hands of Maharashtra Governor Dr P. C. Alexander on July 21, 2001 in Poona. Wadia has since proceeded to the US to further her swimming career, while undergraduating in liberal arts at Adelphi University, New York.

Club, there seemed to be no one in the next generation willing to take over, he explains. "I would like to revive this Club," he declares, more than willing to provide Parsi youngsters with free pellets and coaching. "I am a shooter but I do not like hunting," he adds.

Variava, who is a class I officer with Central Bank of India, Mumbai Main Office, Fort, believes he is the only Parsi from within the banking industry to participate in shooting competitions all over India and the only shooter from Central Bank. The Bank's house magazine *Centralite* profiles his achievements in its Volume XVIII 2000, No 1. "Sports-persons do get certain privileges from the Bank such as leave to participate in competitions, special job opportunities, etc," he elucidates. Among the officials of The National Rifle Association of India, he is the only 'bawa,' he avers. Variava practices at the Municipal Rifle Range of The Maharashtra Rifle Association at Worli Sea Face, or does "dry practice" (without ammunition) at home. Shoulder strength is enhanced by swimming in the YMCA pool.

A resident of Grant Road, Variava has been a member of the D Ward Rifle Club Committee since its beginning in 1991, he informs us. There are some Parsis in Hyderabad and other places in south India who are good marksmen, he notes, laughingly adding that for him, being a bachelor, his rifle is his life!

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder



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