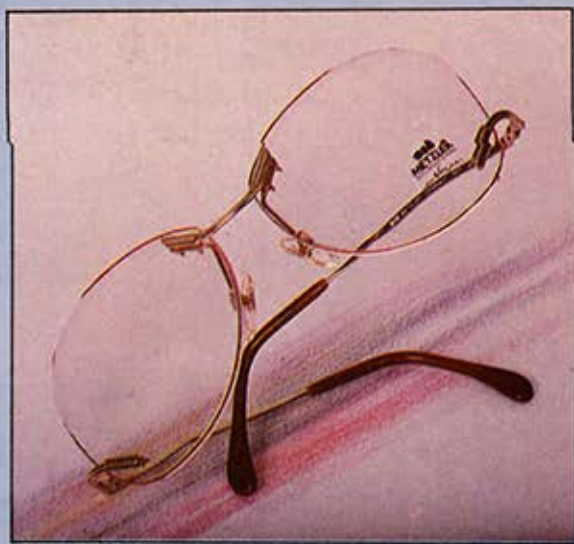


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Parsiana

July 1987
Volume 10 Number 1

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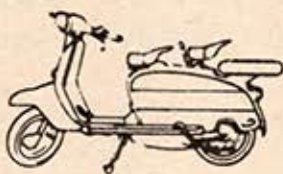
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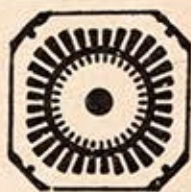
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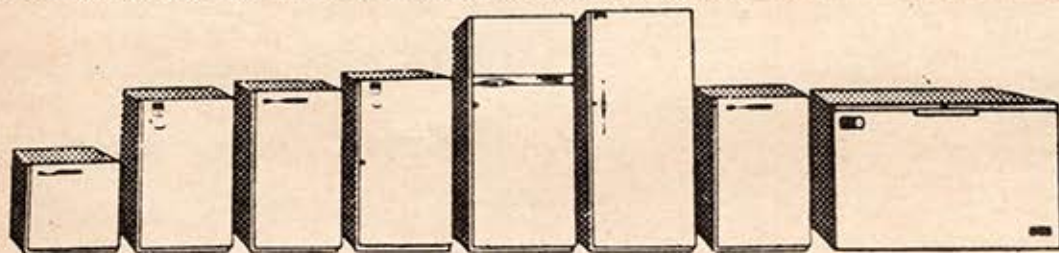
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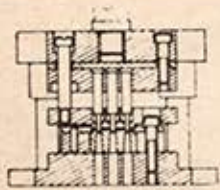
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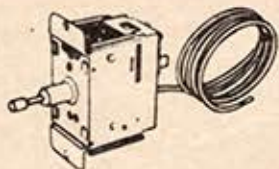
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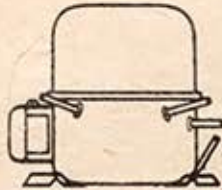
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"Katrak's crusade"

The ball-by-ball description of the first ever, crucial meeting at the Sethna Agiary Hall on March 31, 1987 called by vigilant Parsis like Ardeshir Katrak, Dinshaw Merchant and others, has been vividly portrayed by Arnavaz Mama in "Katrak's crusade" (*Parsiana*, April '87).

Never before in the history of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet has any trustee, and that too the chairman of the board of trustees, come so very close to being "impeached" by some spirited defenders of our *Parsipanu*, as was once strongly prevailing in our community, and as such was so highly respected by other communities.

Much has already been said in the Press, mostly against and somewhat

for the chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla and therefore, without much ado, I humbly suggest that there should be no witch-hunting of any individual. Instead of dragging these sordid happenings to a court, washing our dirty (Parsi) linen in public and making ourselves a laughing stock in the eyes of all other communities, it would be advisable to have some sort of an arbitration by a highly respected Parsi legal luminary, preferably a retired Parsi judge, with a view to bring this unfortunate episode to a conclusion acceptable to both sides.

In the interests of the Parsi community, such matters should not be allowed to die a natural death or even allowed to simmer, as otherwise rumors and gossip will continue and damage not only the credibility of both antagonists but that of the community.

JAL J. OLLIA

"Making crucial decisions"

A write-up under the heading "Making crucial decisions" (*Parsiana*, March 1987) needs one minor clarification. One of the paragraphs refers to a resolution passed by the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) "...the property based at 196 Annangrove Road...be sold and the money used to purchase another more suitable property for similar use."

It might make readers wonder that we are thinking of selling this property. Nothing could be further from our thoughts as we love this property. The resolution quoted is just a safeguard so that in case we want to sell it in the distant future, approval of 75 percent of AZA's financial members would be necessary. A simple majority of 51 percent just won't do.

KERSI MEHER-HOMJI
New South Wales, Australia

"Good seats reserved for..."

The higher denomination tickets (Rs 100 and Rs 50) for the two Gujarati plays enacted by the Surat troupe were available for sale with the secretary-cum-treasurer of the Hyderabad Parsi fire-temple for two weeks, but as no buyer came forward, he returned them to the committee members of the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal (ZSM) who

distributed them to various centers where the tickets were being sold (refer Keki Tarapore's letter "Good seats reserved for..." *Parsiana*, June 1987). He kept only the Rs 30 and Rs 15 ones. As there were not many seats in this category (the seating capacity of the auditorium being very limited), there was not much difference between the good seats and the bad seats.

However, the secretary-cum-treasurer would have preferred the complainant to come directly to him with his complaint instead of writing to *Parsiana*. He would have straightaway clarified the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant and thus avoided unnecessary correspondence regarding a trivial matter.

It was Mr Rustom Bisney who first approached our treasurer - Ms F.D. Cardmaster - in April 1986 with a 'sound proposal' as he put it, of staging two Gujarati plays in Hyderabad, by the well-known Yazdi Karanjia Group of Surat under the joint auspices of the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal and himself (see Rustom Bisney's letter, *Parsiana*, June 1987). On the Mandal agreeing to do so, there was an informal meeting of Mr Bisney with some of our committee members on May 2, 1986, at which some points were discussed about the plays, viz that Mr Bisney would be in charge of making part of the travelling arrangements (ex Surat and back), boarding, lodging, local transport, sightseeing, etc, for the troupe; and the Mandal would take full responsibility for the enactment of the plays i.e. enquiries and arrangements regarding props, furniture, stage and set-up, printing and sale of tickets at different centers.

Mr Bisney also wanted a 50 percent share in the profit. But later we pointed out to him that as the Mandal's work in this joint venture would involve a lot of time, effort and hard work, there should be a proportionate share of profit for it. Mr Bisney agreed to a higher percentage of profit for the Mandal, namely 60 percent, and the rest for himself. Thus this joint venture was undertaken in full collaboration with Mr Bisney as can be vouched

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by the inclusion of his name on the tickets and later by the acceptance of his 40 percent share of the profit after the settlement of all accounts.

As regards the brochure, it has been the practice of the Mandal for the past 27 years to bring out brochures in connection with any fund raising activity of the Mandal and it was done in this case also with a clear indication to Mr Bisney that as our committee would exclusively manage the brochure, he would have no share at all in its profits. Thus the question of Mr Bisney offering or permitting us to keep the brochure money does not arise at all!

As for my not thanking Mr Bisney in my speech during the interval on the second day i.e. March 23, 1987, I certainly did not consider it proper to do so, as the ZSM and Mr Bisney were joint partners, collaborators and beneficiaries in the undertaking. In his letter dated May 22, 1986 to our treasurer, he stated, "We should cooperate and work together for our mutual benefit and in all matters there will be joint responsibility." If the ZSM had not agreed to put up the shows jointly with him, there was no

other Parsi Zoroastrian charitable organization here, which could have helped him out. Thus the offering of thanks if any, should have been mutual!

The lady in question whom I thanked in my speech - Ms Perin B. Dittia - who is not on our committee - alone made a stupendous effort to procure about Rs 40,000 worth of advertisements for the brochure, because of which we went beyond the target we had set, and the gentleman, who helped us out with transport for the artistes, was an outsider and he volunteered because Mr Bisney, who was in charge of transport, expressed his inability to do so at the last minute.

After the second day's show was over, some committee members and I went on the stage to garland the actors. Mr and Ms Bisney were also there and he, I regret to say, uttered some remarks about us in an unbecoming language (which I do not wish to reproduce) in the presence of some principal members of the troupe, for not thanking him in my speech. However, we chose to ignore his ill-humor out of a sense of dignity.

A few days later when he sent an unpleasant letter to me and to all the committee members, we decided to take no cognizance of this petty matter in order to avoid any controversy, which would have, no doubt, created more unpleasantness in the future in a small community like ours.

Before I close this episode, I would like to enlighten your readers with the fact that Mr Bisney did not have the courtesy to approach the president of the ZSM (myself) first, with his proposal of jointly staging the Gujarati plays by the Yazdi Karanjia Group.

Dr (Ms) RASHIDA M. PATEL
President, Zoroastrian Stree Mandal, Secunderabad

"Not fire worshippers"

In response to "Not fire worshippers" (*Parsiana*, February 1987) I have the following clarification to offer:

Last November, Dr K. Havares from Jacksonville, Florida, called me to complain about an account on our religious practice which had appeared in *Florida Times Union*. I had requested him to forward a xerox copy of the write-up to enable me to send my response on the subject. As of to-

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day (April 24), I have not received it.

After a couple of weeks, a representative from the Associated Press called me on the phone to have my personal opinion. My first sentence was to the effect that in no sense and manner could we Zoroastrians be considered fire worshippers. We consider fire as the most sacred element in the entire creation of Almighty Ahura Mazda. Fire is symbolic from the spiritual point of view and not as an object of worship. Ours is the first monotheistic religion. We believe that Ahura Mazda has no equal.

As the conversation continued from fire worshipping to cross and statue worshipping, I stressed that the presence of fire is very essential during the performance of all our religious ceremonies. Most of the Zoroastrians, like my own family, keep an oil lamp burning in their homes. He accepted the reasonings for not tagging Zoroastrians as "fire worshippers." And at no time during the course of my conversation, did I ever say that I would not mind if called a fire worshipper. I certainly would detest it if told so. Finally, I asked him what was the source of

his assertion that Zoroastrians are fire worshippers and his reply was the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Encyclopedia Columbia*.

Towards end November, I met Homi Ranina and Homi Mehta of Mazda Industries and Leasing at a dinner party and drew their attention to the distorted image of our community as was published in the newspaper. My recommendation was that since Bombay Parsi Punchayet is the central body of our entire community, let some trustees take up the matter with the publishers of the two encyclopedias and have the wrong information corrected in their future editions.

Last week, a family friend told us that in one of the sermons on Easter, she heard a priest saying over the radio that some research work indicated that the practice of crucifixion was started by Zoroastrians since our religion does not allow the pollution of basic elements. And the Romans had adopted it. She did not know which radio station it was and who was the speaker. I discussed it with Professor Kaikhosrov Irani and, though it is very distressing to hear such callous remarks, there is

nothing we can do until we have the full information.

The more books and materials I read on our religion written by western scholars, the more I am getting convinced that some of them wind up saying what they believe in, irrespective of the truth. They are always looking for the exotic. Therefore, it would be in the best interests of all Zoroastrians if a scholarly explanation is made available in a booklet form on such a critical issue. At least "The Mazdeyasnie Connection" publication is making every effort in this direction and I congratulate them for their noble efforts to educate the young as well as the adult. It is a must-to-read for all children.

ERACH D. MUNSHI
New York, USA

Every now and then somebody gets up to say that Parsis are fire worshippers. So I want to bring to their notice the famous lines of Firdaosi Toosi, author of *Shah Namah*, who explains in one of his couplets that Parsis were not fire worshippers, they only worshipped God through the medium of fire.

Swami Vivekanand has defended

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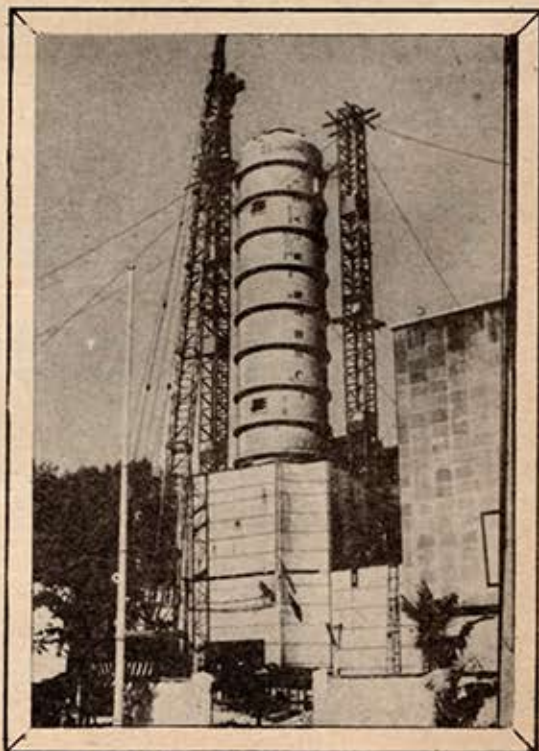


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idol worship saying that only the "realized soul" can relate to the abstract form of God - all others require some symbol through which to worship God.

Somebody had asked our revered Dastur Khurshed Dabu to relate his spiritual experiences in life. He replied that, to him, the light symbolized the purest form of God. The Bible says, "Let there be light and there was light." So truth and light are embodiments of God.

RUSTAM K. DOCTOR

Controversies not good

I hope future issues of *Parsiana* will, increasingly, be like the latest March issue i.e. with the very minimum space given to our usual controversies which cannot be good for the young and particularly for those who live abroad!

Articles by non-Parsis, who have studied our religion and our community, would be particularly welcome, also, excerpts from books written on our religion and community during the last century and the early part of this century for which no copyright is involved.

K.T.SATARAWALA
Mexico

"The 11 days' controversy"

It is very degrading to find that Shahpur Captain has declared the records of the minutes of the managing committee which he himself chaired and signed as "untrue" (*Parsiana*, January 1987).

These records are entirely at the disposal of all members of the association (The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe), and with special permission, you may be granted access to the same for the purpose of study or verification of the facts.

However, "truth" lies in the results of the last annual general meeting when Mr S.F. Captain contested as member of the managing committee, but failed miserably in the election. Subsequently Mr S.F. Captain stood for the election of the trustees. Once again, Mr Captain failed miserably and was not elected.

The above results clearly prove that Mr S.F. Captain had lost the confidence of the Zoroastrian anjuman of the U.K. Further, it undoubtedly indicates the community's ardent desire to preserve and to protect the time-honored customs, traditions, and tenets of their faith and religion, at

whatever cost and to whatever degree possible.

I feel that the chapter on this issue must now close, and should be noted as a sad episode in the history of the Zoroastrian community in the U.K.

DARIUS SETHNA
U.K.

Sponsor a book

I am working on a handy booklet on Zoroastrianism, a small volume of about 60 pages, for which I need a sponsor willing to pay a subsidy of Rs 5,000.

The booklet includes chapters on Introduction to religion, Zoroastrian religion, The life of Zoroaster, The cult of fire, Sudreh-kusti, Zoroastrian texts, Zoroastrian birth rites, Zoroastrian marriages, Zoroastrian religious ceremonies, Beyond Zoroastrian death, Parsis and their sects, The Parsi calendar, Festival days of the Parsis, and Why do the Parsis not admit aliens to their fold?

A sponsor will be given 200 booklets free and could utilize the back cover page for an advertisement. A copy of the manuscript will be given on specific request only, and collected the same day.

Those interested may contact me at 424, Anand, Khar Danda Road, Bombay 400052. Telephone 545251.

DARA E. DRIVER

Petit School's 100

The J.N. Petit Parsi Orphanage and Technical High School at Poona will be celebrating its centenary in September 1988.

All the ex-students who wish to participate in the celebrations are requested to get in touch with the Trustees, N.M. Petit Charity Fund, UCO Bank Building, fourth floor, Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Bombay 400001.

B.D.WADIA
Secretary, N.M. Petit Charity Fund

Directory lists trees

The Dadar Parsi Colony, which was founded by the late Seth Mancherji Edulji Joshi is aptly called a garden colony because of the beautiful flowering trees and the singing birds like koel, magpie, robin, bulbul and golden oriole.

In the directory of the Dadar Parsi Colony (pages 29 to 33), you will find a list of trees with their locations. The list was prepared by the Scouts of Homavazir's Eleventh Central Bombay Bharat Scout Group, four years back, under my guidance. Probably, this is the only directory of its kind to contain a list of trees of a residential locality.

B.A. PALKHIWALLA
Group Scribe

Homavazir's XI Central Bombay Bharat Scout Group

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Left: Dokhma surrounded by prime land

Below: Pundole Fire-temple at Udwada

Review dokhmenashini

The *Quarterly Review* (April-June '86), a publication of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, informs us that a sum of Rs 2,78,895 has been expended on the Doongerwadi, while the number of Parsis who were consigned to the dokhmas during this same quarter was 263. From this we may estimate that the surface overheads incurred by the Parsi Punchayet only on the maintenance and operation of the Doongerwadi premises exceeds Rs 1,000 per dead body consigned. This does not include the expenses incurred by the relatives of the dead for use of the bungli and on the *kriya-kam* (ceremonies) imposed upon us by the priests which amount to anything between three and five thousand rupees.

Leaving aside the entirely gruesome and macabre aspect of the system of dokhmenashini (as described by the Parsi Punchayet itself in its letter dated October 25, 1967, reference number 925), these alarming figures make it evident that dokhmenashini is definitely far too expensive a system of disposal when compared to either burial or cremation.

Let us also take into account the value of the Doongerwadi lands, which today is about 200 crore rupees. This vast amount is kept permanently anchored in the service of the dead alone. Also, we have 45 agiaries in Bombay, the approximate value of their premises being about 100 crore rupees, whose sole purpose is to burn away Parsi wealth unceasingly in the



false hope of succoring the dead.

The fundamental principle of Zoroastrianism, as basic to all great religions, is to help man's progress (*ravan-bokhti*) in life here and now. If, therefore, the trustees of our agiaries and our Parsi Punchayet were to allow all but half a dozen of these agiaries to be utilized in the welfare of our living community, as also the wealth from the Doongerwadi premises, then our community would no longer be impoverished and destitute as it is today. The present sorry plight of Parsis is in large part due to the unnecessary and irreligious obsequies im-

posed upon us by our commercial clergy.

Religion requires change and progress as much as any other walk of life. I feel it is high time that we reviewed our religion in the light of modernity, and effected such desirable reforms as are entirely necessary, if our once-great community is to live and prosper and not decline and disappear, all in the name of religion.

Ms R.B. SETHNA

Designing temple forms

The Christians have a characteristic design for their church towers, the Muslims have domes for the mosques, and gurudwaras have a cluster of domes; none of these have a cupola on top. We Zoroastrians should also have a characteristic design for our fire-temples, which would make them stand out as Zoroastrian places of worship. The Pundole Fire-temple in Udwada has made an effort in this direction.

I suggest any new fire-temple coming up in the New World in future should have a design like that of the top of the old Taj Mahal Hotel. There must have been some religious emotions involved to inspire Mr Tata to select this design.

Comparing the two magnificent edifices – the old and new Taj Mahal Hotel – always fascinates me. As dusk gathers, the dome of the old Taj stands out in silhouette, with lights emitted from within, making the cupola glow. It resembles very strikingly the *afarganya* we Zoroastrians use in the evenings to spread the perfume of sandalwood and *loban* (incense) in our homes. To be exact, it resembles the *afarganya* with its hood on, as the sparks fly out from within the opening in the hood.

Z.M. ZEND

Clarification

Photographs of the nassessalars which accompanied the article "Keepers of the dead" (*Parsiana*, June 1987) were courtesy Soonni Taraporevala. Credits were mistakenly given to *Imprint*. The error is regretted.

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**There are times when money doesn't merely talk.
It laughs all the way to the bank.**

It always costs more than first estimated.

— Murphy's Seventh Law



*Auditors always reject
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by five or ten.*

— O'Brien's \$ 357.73 Principle



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Events and Personalities

Election scheme update

An application for review of the Bombay High Court order of March 6, 1987 which established the amended scheme for the election of trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) will be heard by Justice Suresh on July 31. The review is sought by four members of the F (donor) Register on the ground that the donors were not informed of an impending change in their voting status.

The applicants contend that their "vested right" to directly elect trustees has been whittled down to an indirect right. Hitherto, all those donating Rs 5,000 and more could elect trustees of the Punchayet. Under the new scheme only 100 donors will elect trustees. First among these will be the donors of Rs 50,000 and more. The rest will comprise the elected representatives of the old donors of Rs 5,000 and future donors of Rs 7,500.

Although the BPP, the petitioners who sought an amendment to the original scheme, had twice advertised their revised draft in two Gujarati dailies - *The Bombay Samachar* and the *Jam-e-Jamshed* - the changes, as they finally emerged, were quite distinct from the drafts. The "radical and far-reaching alterations" had been suggested by Justice Suresh, in an oral order on February 6 and the BPP lawyers codified his suggestions into a scheme which was formally accepted on March 6. The applicants note that the community was unaware of the changes until they were published as part of a letter to the Editor of *The Bombay Samachar* on March 22, 1987.

The "notice of motion," as the application is called, first came up in the court of Justice Sam Variava and thereafter in the court of Justice (Ms) Sujata Manohar. Both judges, however, considered the matter outside their

purview and suggested that it be referred to the Chief Justice, whence it was redirected to Justice Suresh.

Agiary by the railroad

The little Igatpuri Agiary was all spruced up to celebrate its centenary on May 26, 1987. The four trustees of the Igatpuri Zarthosti Anjuman - Gayo Kharadi, Jal Patel, Rusi Daruwalla and Phiroz Echaporla - had extended an invitation to the community by way of a notice in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* and arranged for transport. Nearly 150 Parsis, largely from Bombay, attended a jashan by five mobeds including Ervad Rustomji Panthaki, principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar, and partook of the lunch in the Agiary compound, hosted by Hutoxi and Jimmy Irani, owners of the Irani stall at Igatpuri, notes the resident panthaky Ervad Tehemton Karanjia.

A 2,200-foot-high hill station whose life centers round the railway, Igatpuri once boasted a large Parsi settlement with nearly 300 students studying in the adjoining school, a 150-year-old dokhma and regular ghambars, says Karanjia.

The wooden beams of the still-solid Agiary building were the rejects from the supplies meant for the construction of the Deolali railway station, informs Karanjia. Nanabhoy Messman, a high railway official of the day, had arranged for the Anjuman to buy off the material cheaply. This enabled Mancherji Dadabhoy Bhavnagri, functioning on behalf of the Anjuman, to construct the Agiary together with the adjoining mobed quarters and a school from Rs 10,000 donated by Sir Dinshaw Petit together with the Anjuman's own funds. A marble plaque commemorates their deed. The school building was converted into a dharamshala in around 1950, says Karanjia,

when the exodus of Parsis made it no longer viable to run a school.

Karanjia, who had been collecting funds for the centenary celebration over the past 18 months, says he grossed about one lakh rupees, some of it from the Parsis of Dubai, Kuwait and Hong Kong. Builder Aspi Irani, vice-president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, has been helping the Agiary with plenty of materials for the repairs. Fans, wash basins, septic tanks and toilets have all been donated by individuals over a period of time.

Other help is forthcoming too: the tiling of the dadgah was undertaken by Dhun Patel of Nasik; Dinyar Madan of Dadar arranges for his truck to bring the kathi from Bombay free of charge every year; Boman Irani, who got a good job in the personnel department of the Indian Railways only after helping Karanjia's father to clean the dokhma several years ago, returns annually to renew his act of faith, narrates the priest.

Much still remains to be done. The dharamshala, whence one can view the monsoon clouds rolling in, needs funds for repairs. Though the dokhma is sound, its surrounding walls are not, and the prayer hall needs mending urgently.

But Karanjia is optimistic. On a plot of land behind the Agiary, an L-shaped building is in the process of construction and many of the flats have been booked by Parsis - so also vacant plots in the vicinity. According to Karanjia, the current count of five families has already been augmented to 10 and there is every hope that more Parsis will retire to this peaceful little haven of bird calls and train whistles.

HSC toppers

Science student Yezdezard Zerkesh Lashkari scored the fifth highest marks in the Bombay division merit list in

this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination of the Maharashtra State Board, according to an *Indian Express* report of June 13. Lashkari, with 92.83 percent, shared his rank with four other students, also from the science stream. Two lakh sixty-nine thousand students had appeared for this examination in March this year, notes a newspaper report.

A student of Ruparel College, Lashkari was expected to fare well, said his mother Ms Banoo Lashkari, and he was selected for the College's special coaching classes which have helped put so many of their top students onto the merit list in the past years.

With a continuous record of "outstanding" performance, Lashkari passed his ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) examination from St Mary's School in 1985, added *The Bombay Samachar* of June 21. He passed the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) entrance test, standing twenty-fifth in the Western Region and eighty-ninth in the all-India ranking, and will now study computer science at the IIT, Powai, said Ms Lashkari.

Ranked fifth in the arts stream of the 1987 HSC examination is Ms Sarvar



Above (left) Lashkari and (right) Kothavala

Firdaus Kothavala from the Nowrosji Wadia College at Poona, notes a press release.

Kothavala who, with 80.17 percent, stood first in her college, had passed her ICSE examination from St Mary's School, Poona. A "good swimmer (who) has won many prizes," she is also fond of dramatics, debating and reading, and is a student of Japanese and French, adds the release.

Obstetrical excellence

For standing first at the post-graduate Diploma examination in Gynecology

and Obstetrics (DGO), held by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Bombay, in April 1987, Dr Nozer Sheriar was awarded the Purandhare Gold Medal, notes a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of June 14, '87.

Passing his MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) degree examination from the G.S. Medical College in 1984, Sheriar had then



received the Purandhare Scholarship for standing first in the subject of midwifery and gynecology. He has also received various prizes such as the K.M. Masina prize, L.M. Shah Conference prize and the National Congress of Medical Women in India prize. He also writes scientific papers which are published in medical journals.

At present he is the senior registrar in the midwifery and gynecology section at the Nowrosji Wadia Maternity Hospital, notes the report.

Umpire of the Year

Seventy-three-year-old Ardeshtir Desai, a sportsman of yesteryear, was presented the Umpire of the Year award by the Association of Cricket Umpires, notes a write-up in *The Times of India* of June 29, 1987.

Desai has umpired 3,300 official matches of the Bombay Cricket Association. Of these, 60 were first class matches. He was close to "test status" when age went against him, notes the report. He had also refereed soccer and hockey matches, and swimming and water polo tournaments. He was first nominated as umpire in 1942 by the Bombay Port Trust.

A physical culturist as well as an athlete, Desai was also a good swimmer. In the 1940s, at Golwala's Victoria Swimming Baths, he swam the length of the pool with one hand, while holding an iron ball weighing 50 pounds in the other, adds the write-up.

He was also known for winning prizes in rifle shooting.

Community versus clergy

"The leaders of the community when it landed here, were priests...but today, even in agiary and atash bahram trusts and mobed amelioration trusts, there are no mobeds," noted well-known lawyer Ervad Nadir Modi. A



Above (left): Sheriar

Above: at Dharmik Yatra jashan (from left) Master, Shroff, Dastur, Modi, Aibara and Merchant

grandson of the late Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi - the respected Bombay Parsi Punchayet secretary and fabled author of innumerable treatises on Zoroastrianism and the Parsis earlier this century - Nadir Modi was the guest speaker at the annual jashan-cum-dinner organized by Ervad Fali Master on behalf of the Dharmik Yatra group at Albless Baug on June 16, '87.

Sharing the dais with Modi were Jehangir Shroff, the president of the Athornan Mandal and the day's chairman, Dastur Kekobad Dastur, high priest of Udva, Ervad Nadirsha Aibara, panthaky of the Karani Agiary at Cusrow Baug and joint principal of the M.F. Cama Athornan Madrasa, Dinshaw Merchant, businessman and community benefactor, Fali Master, secretary of the Athornan Mandal, and Homi Turel of the Iran League. Shroff, who contended that it was the duty of the behdins to mitigate the troubles of the athravans, recalled that Sir Jivanji Modi had spoken on the subject of mobed amelioration at the inauguration of the Athornan Mandal in 1915.

Building upon Zoroastrian scholar Richard Frye's remark made 25 years ago - "No mobed, no Parsi" - Nadir

continued on page 24

New PZO Dar-e Mehr

A Northern California Dar-e Mehr will soon be established by the Persian Zoroastrians Organization (PZO) on a "magnificent site at Crothers Road in San Jose," notes a press release dated May 1 issued by the PZO board of directors. The property was purchased with a donation from the late Rustam and Morvarid Guiv.

Planning to "designate and remodel an area for a sacred fire and an adjacent prayer room" which can accommodate 48 persons, in the existing building, the directors have invited the submission of designs for this reconstruction work. The final judge of the plans submitted will be Hooman Setoodehkhoo, a young man who is working for his doctorate in construction management at Stanford. "We chose him as arbiter because all committee work has deadlocked until now," notes the news bulletin.

Once the reconstruction work has been completed, the county will be able to inspect the premises and okay the work. This will then enable the PZO to "buy proper insurance for the temple and the community center ...because companies sell 'church' insurance only to temples or churches which the county approves as public places." It will also fulfil the Guivs' wish for one more religious sanctuary in their name, adds the bulletin.

Part of the existing building will be remodelled to serve as a community center and the directors, hoping that "helpful persons will come together to form committees and volunteer for specific tasks," suggest the formation of a garden club, a religious society (to oversee religious events), an interior decoration club and a food club.

Dasturs' Conference

The second North American Dasturs' Conference will be hosted by the ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago) board which agreed to do so at the request of Ervad Kobad Zarolia, president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, and chairman of the 1983 North American Dasturs' Conference, notes the ZAC newsletter received by *Parsiana* on June 8, 1987.

On the proposed agenda are a dis-

cussion on the Chicago seminary project (a proposal to build a facility adjoining the Chicago Darbe Mehr to provide residential accommodation to the athravans-in-training, classrooms, children's rooms and other amenities), continuation of efforts to standardize rituals and ceremonies, and consolidation of the 1983 Conference minutes.

The Conference will be held at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in Chicago; the dates and other details are yet to be finalized and will be announced later.

James Mobed, a senior mechanical engineering student at Northwestern, has been awarded a Marshall Scholarship by the Government of Great Britain, according to the ZAC May newsletter. The scholarship will support him for two years as he works towards a graduate degree at a university in Great Britain.

Mobed is one of the 30 students nation-wide who have received the award. Interested in engineering for outer space, he plans to earn his master's degree in aeronautical engineering at the Imperial College of the University of London. James is the son of Olive and Jehangir Mobed, adds the newsletter.

A patent application award has been given to Meherji Billimoria, manager of process engineering for "a new process of constructing a refrigerator cabinet which eliminates the front styrofoam seal (and) reduces the heat leakage," reported the ZAC May newsletter.

This method, which results in improved refrigerator operating efficiency, was developed by Billimoria and was introduced into the production process in February '87, adds the newsletter.

"In recognition and deep appreciation of his outstanding and meritorious services to the Zoroastrian community of Chicago," Rohinton Minocher Rivetna, ex-president of ZAC, has been made the Association's honorary member. This is "the most distinguished honor (the ZAC) can bestow," notes their May '87 newsletter. The sixth person on whom the ZAC has

conferred honorary membership, Rivetna is the first member of the local community who has been thus honored.

The presentation took place at the ZAC's Jamshedi Navroze function on March 28, 1987. In his tribute to Rivetna, ZAC president Kayomars Mehta said, "Rohinton's contribution and invaluable services to our community for the past 20 years, his sacrifice and his personal effort in building (the ZAC Darbe Mehr) is unparalleled and shall remain etched in the walls of this building."

"Almost all the members of (our) community are well settled in their vocations," but since "one never knows what the future holds in store," the ZAC has started an employment bureau, according to their newsletter.

Those looking for employment or a change of jobs, and those members who could help someone get a job are requested to contact the ZAC secretary, Aspy F. Daboo at 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521. "Confidentiality is assured," adds the newsletter.

Fund raising banquet

To generate funds for the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Bombay, the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC) planned a "charity banquet for fellow-Zoroastrians, friends and business associates," according to a letter from Dr (Ms) Homai Kasad in ZANC's May '87 newsletter.

The Hospital, which "renders free (medical service) and treatment to poor Zoroastrians without receiving any government grants," and whose efforts are now being limited by "inflation and the rising costs of food, drugs and services," is celebrating its platinum jubilee this year.

The fund raising function was slated for July 18, and the suggested admission fee was \$ 25 per head. The venue was to be decided depending on the response from the ZANC members, adds Kasad. Since Arvi Kasad's catering was to be at cost price, the organizers expected a large part of the collection to go to the Hospital.

The proceeds of the ZANC's Nav-
continued on page 40

A new scheme for the Tithal Sanatorium property



On July 20, after the original story had been written, Kaikhushroo Dastoor, counsel for the beneficiaries, had an alternate scheme ready for the Charity Commissioner in the form of a letter dated July 18 from Adi Contractor, a builder-cum-hotelier of Bulsar. In his letter, Contractor offered the trustees an annual rent of Rs 1,85,000 for a 98-year lease on 13 acres of the Trust property which he planned to utilize for residential accommodation for the Parsi middle class after completing the necessary legal formalities. The first year's rent was offered in advance. On the remaining two acres Contractor proposed to build Sanatorium blocks "in accordance with the plans approved by the trustees," the costs plus nine percent interest being recoverable in instalments of half the annual rent.

The Charity Commissioner has given the trustees up to August 7 to consider the proposal.

★ ★ ★

"If you bring a concrete proposal, we will consider... Work hard. We will test you now." Acting Charity Commissioner M.M.Tule's directive to advocate Kaikhushroo N. Dastoor on July

2, 1987 concluded the second two-hour session of arguments and counter-arguments (the first was held on June 25) on which hangs the fate of the dilapidated Tithal Parsi Sanatorium near Bulsar.

The Sanatorium's trustees, Ms Shireenbai Narielwala, Dr Rustom Patel and Jehangir Bamji, represented by their advocate M.V. Purandare, have applied for the Charity Commissioner's permission to "alienate" 14 acres of the Sanatorium Trust's 15 acres of land on a 99-year lease to non-Parsis at an annual rent of Rs 1,70,111 on the ground that the Trust has no other resources with which to rebuild and run the Sanatorium. The intervenors are Ms Benafshay Irani and Merwan Irani (who, along with Jamshed Aga, president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, Hormazdyar Dalal, secretary of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute, and social worker Ms Mani Wadia have established the Council for Protection of Zoroastrian Charities) The intervenors and their counsel Dastoor contend that such "alienation" is against the objects of the Trust and detrimental to its beneficiaries.

Winding up his arguments, Dastoor had stated, "We are prepared to help the trustees arrive at some solution...I don't want to fight with our friends; if they are cooperative, we will give all help."

On December 18, 1984 the Government of Gujarat had acquired about two acres of the Tithal Sanatorium's land for housing the landless but subsequently derequisitioned the plot on January 13, 1985. The Sanatorium's trustees — the board then included ex Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman B.K. Boman-Behram who subsequently passed away on January 31, 1986 — had signed two agreements to lease with land developer Vipin Shah, in October '85 and January '86, the first for 12 acres of the property and the second for the derequisitioned land.

In their application to the Charity Commissioner dated September 29, 1986 for permission to lease, the trustees of the Tithal Trust, bearing PTR No C 288 (Bombay), describe their holding as 11 pieces of land, all without an income, and moveable property comprising furniture and utensils worth Rs 10,000 plus "conversion



A Bulsar Parsi offers to preserve the land for the community

Arnavaz S. Mama

loans and bonds, fixed deposit receipts and cash of Rs 8,485.20 in current account." The application notes, "For want of any current income from the Sanatorium, most of the assets of the Trust are exhausted and it became impossible to conduct the Sanatorium or even to preserve the building...The trustees wanted to launch a program of putting the property to use by granting a lease on the property in such a manner as to preserve the property permanently for the Trust and at the same time carry out the objects of the Trust. Nobody came forward to answer the needs of the Trust."

Setting out the terms of the agreement to lease with builder Vipin Shah, which the trustees unanimously approved, the application to the Charity Commissioner describes how the lessee would build eight blocks of 450 sq feet on one acre for the Sanatorium at a total cost of Rs 7,00,000 with Rs 75,000 extra for a wire fencing. The trustees proposed to recompense Shah with six percent interest until the loan was repaid at the rate of 50 percent of the annual lease. Paragraph eight of the application notes, "It was further added that out of the constructed pre-

mises the lessees would be entitled to give on lease part or entire land to Gunabhadra Vijaya Trust."

"Thereafter the trustees went to the office of the Charity Commissioner when they were advised that it would be necessary to give more publicity to the intended transaction of lease in widely circulated newspapers in Gujarati and English," notes the application. Accordingly the trustees advertised in the Ahmedabad edition of the *Indian Express* and the *Dainik Loksat*, both of April 25, 1986 and say, "There were two offers only. The offer given by the lessee Shri Vipin Shah was accepted as it was thought that he was a very reliable man and would carry out all the terms of the lease as per the agreements already entered into with him." The trustees make no reference to the other offer received.

To justify their claim to "unfettered power" over the property, the trustees quote the Trust Deed of July 10, 1911 which specifies, "If at any time hereinafter the said Trust premises shall, for any reason, cease to be availed of and used as such Sanatorium, the same shall hereafter be applied to such purposes for the relief of the poor and



middle-class sick of the Parsi community as the said trustees or trustee in conjunction with the said committee of management in their absolute discretion may think proper," and they add, "Apart from this clause, and other clauses giving positive permission, it is most important to note that on careful reading of the whole document there is no clause directly or indirectly prohibiting the trustees from alienating the property or granting it on lease."

Among the documents on which the

trustees rely is a valuation report by Arun Banker and Associates, a firm of architects, consulting engineers and valuers of Surat and Bombay, which certifies the property to be worth Rs 16,29,679. According to the application, the report is dated March 9, 1985. Another is the balance sheet and income and expenditure accounts of the Tithal Sanatorium for the year ending December 31, 1974 bearing the registration number CG 246 (Surat).

In their affidavit filed with the application, the trustees speak of "compelling necessity" to grant (the Sanatorium) on lease: "By granting the lease the Trust does not lose the property but protects it and preserves it for all time to come...Nobody else has in fact come forth in spite of advertisements in two widely circulated newspapers like *Indian Express* and *Loksatta* in Gujarati...The material and debris also could not be preserved and were stolen and the plots had become vacant and were and are under constant danger of being trespassed upon by squatters and trespassers making it well nigh impossible for the trustees to recover possession...It may be noted that Shri Vipin Shah came forward in 1985 and has helped the trustees to drive away several intruders. He has kept guards and watchmen by spending money from his own pocket. It is due to his effort and monetary timely aid that the Trust property is preserved."

The opponents' brief begins by objecting to "inconsistencies, discrepancies, irregularities, anomalies, misrepresentations and concealments of facts in the application made by the trustees and the papers annexed thereto." They note that the accounting returns refer to Trust No CG 246 (Surat) while the application for lease deals with PTR C 288 (Bombay); that the returns are 12 years old; that there is no mention therein of the lands sought to be leased; that they refer to a bank balance of Rs 26,508 of which Rs 17,500 were stated to be invested on June 15, 1974 which is inconsistent with the trustees' claim that "the Trust has no money to fence the said plots and thus save them from being encroached upon." The opponents therefore infer that the accounting returns "relate to an entirely different Trust." Moreover, the newspaper advertisements quote the property as belonging to Trust No C 615.

The objectors argue that in the application to the Charity Commissioner the trustees have referred to an Instrument of Trust dated July 10, 1911 whereas in the two agreements with Shah the relevant Trust Deed is said to be dated March 4, 1923. "The Instrument of Trust dated July 10, 1911 refers to about seven acres of land. The remaining land appears to have been added to the Trust by different donors with the intention of carrying out the same charitable object for the benefit of the Parsis."

Noting that the objects of the Trust determine the kind of charity — a sanatorium or convalescent home and failing that, medical relief — and the class of beneficiaries — the poor and middle class of the Parsi community professing the Zoroastrian faith — the opponents submit that "the proposed alienation by way of leasing away 93 percent of Trust property to a non-Parsi organization is in gross violation of the objects of the Trust and the in-

"The proposed
leasing away of 93
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tention of the donors and infringes the rights of the beneficiaries who are exclusively Parsis...The said objects can be altered only by an application of *cy pres* (a court order permitting funds to be used for a similar objective) after following the procedures laid down in Section 55 of the Bombay Public Trusts Act, and that too not for any beneficiaries other than Parsis."

Charging the trustees with gross negligence and mismanagement for stolen moveables and derelict property, "the opponents reserve their right to file before this Hon'ble Authority such applications under chapter VI of the Bombay Public Trust Act as may

be advised." Referring to the trustees' own depiction of "barren land," Das-toor presented the Charity Commissioner with a photo feature in *Parsiana*, April 1983 and in contrast, photographs taken in February/March 1987 "to show that the buildings which existed in 1983 are no more in 1987."

Refuting the trustees' contention that the community showed no interest in the Trust property, the opponents' brief noted that the BPP, the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP), the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, and the Bulsar Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds (BPATF) had all displayed concern, and attached a copy of a letter dated October 15, 1984 from Mulla and Mulla, Craigie Blunt and Caroe — the trustees' solicitors — to Rusi Shroff, managing trustee of the BPATF. The letter noted, "Our clients intend to retire as trustees and appoint the trustees of the Bulsar Parsi Anjuman Trust Funds as trustees of the Tithal Sanatorium...as soon as possible...In view of what is stated by you regarding the proposed acquisition, our clients feel that you should immediately take over our clients' Trust and meet all the problems, including the renovation of the building and opposing the acquisition. We appreciate your generosity in agreeing to fight for our clients' Trust..."

A meeting was held in the BPP boardroom on December 14, 1984 presided over by BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla where Narielwala, Patel and Bamji were present along with the BPP's Rustom Anklesaria and Ms Gool Tata, the SPP's Soli Katpitia, and Percy Kajanwalla, joint secretary of the BPATF. Kajanwalla, describing the meeting in a letter in Gujarati dated January 12, 1985 addressed to Hormazdyar Dalal noted that he had come armed with current photographs and a description of the state of the Sanatorium together with a detailed offer from Phirozeshah Rustom Shroff, president and Rustom Phirozeshah Shroff, managing trustee of the BPATF. The Bulsar secretary informed the Tithal trustees that of the Sanatorium's furniture and fittings, mattresses and linen, nothing remained. Everything had been stolen by the cartful. The very doors and windows, beams, tiles, metal angles, etc were stolen and openly resold or remained in police custody.



Tithal Sanatorium photographs accompanying this article were taken by Ashvin Mehta in 1983

Tithal trustees had no intention of entrusting the Sanatorium to the Bulsar Anjuman and were unanimously resolved to sell the land and buildings. Kajanwalla further notes that Katpitia and Anklesaria had both tried to persuade the Tithal trustees to change their mind, but failed.

The letter adds, "It is our duty to maintain the properties bequeathed to us by the donors... The Zoroastrians of Bulsar and the entire community question the decision to sell it. We have repeatedly drawn the attention of the Tithal trustees to the state of affairs at the Sanatorium but they have chosen to ignore it."

Despite the rebuff, the Bulsar Anjuman secretary stated that his Anjuman would seek to save the Tithal land from being acquired by the government.

The opponents have attached three letters to the Editor of *Jam-e-Jamshed* as proof of the community's continuous concern with the Sanatorium and charged that the Tithal trustees "deliberately and calculatingly did not publish the advertisements in the Parsi

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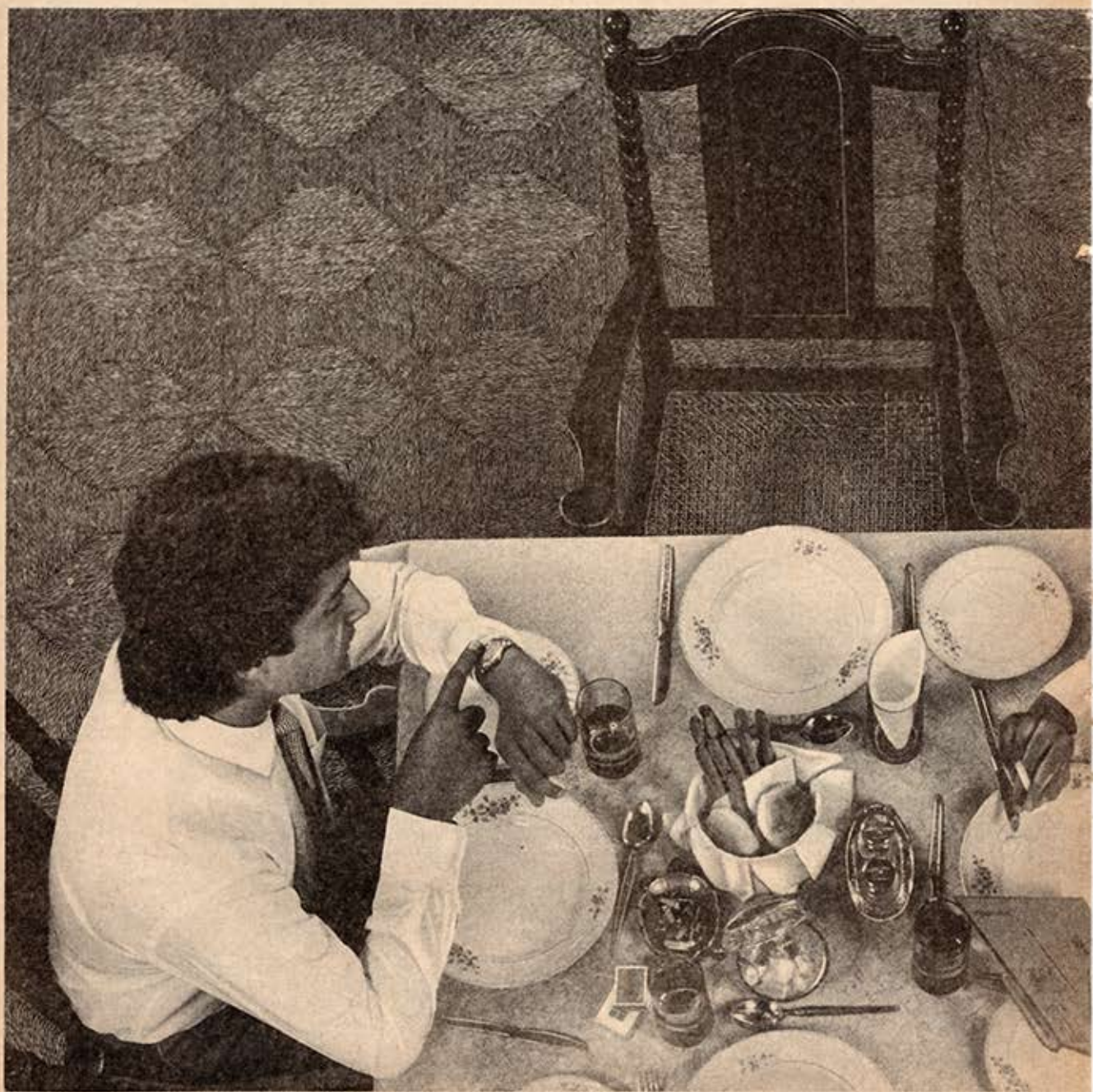
Kajanwalla notes that he had informed the Tithal trustees that it was still possible to repair two buildings; that there was a move to requisition the land; that it was imperative to sack the watchman-mali (gardener) who was hand in glove with the thieves. The Bulsar Anjuman stated that if the Sanatorium was entrusted to their care, they proposed to spend Rs 1,00,000 on the fencing of the compound, Rs 30,000 on the main gate and wall, Rs 3,00,000 to repair the two buildings, Rs 50,000 on furnishings, Rs

30,000 on saplings to create an orchard so that an income is assured, Rs 12,000 on a motor pump for the well, and Rs 20,000 on a tank and pipelines.

Apart from the capital outlay, the BPATF estimated a monthly outgoing of Rs 4,000. It urged the Tithal trustees to move the Charity Commissioner to induct new members on the board and also to reappraise its old inventories.

Kajanwalla's letter notes that when he finished relating the above to those present, Dr Patel announced that the

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Beyond the boundaries of growth

Trustees heed plea

Arnavaz S. Mama

An attempt by the Zoroastrian Building Trust Fund (ZBTF) to sell its three buildings plus unutilized FSI (floor space index) of 6,500 square feet at the Mancherji Joshi Dadar Parsi Colony was foiled by a neatly phrased letter co-signed by over 1,000 residents of the Colony.

Responding to a notice of the ZBTF in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of March 20, inviting offers for the above mentioned property, the petition dated April 14 addressed Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Jehangir Shroff, Cowasjee Dinshaw, Jamshed Aga, Dinyar Jamshedji, Rustom Kuka, Burjor Antia and Vispi Dastur as leaders of the community and trustees of the ZBTF entrusted with "the onerous task of administering the trust." The objects of the trust are to erect buildings to accommodate poor and middle-class Parsi Zoroastrians at cheap and moderate rates, to open and maintain charitable schools and dispensaries, and to provide and maintain a garden and recreation grounds.

The signatories to the petition included Sohrab Morris and Nariman Khurshedji, chairman and secretary (construction)-treasurer respectively of the Parsee Central Association Co-operative Housing Society Ltd (PCA), noted solicitor B.S. Bhesania, well-known lawyer Nadir Modi, internationally renowned athletic coach Jal Pardivala, social worker and trustee of the Mancherji Eduljee Joshi Trust Mithoo Jesia, and municipal corporator Rustom Tirandaz, among a host of others. The petition noted that the three buildings housed 18 middle-class Parsi families at rents below Rs 100 who would be delivered "into the hands of unscrupulous businessmen who would not hesitate to enhance their rents within the ambit of the law by curtailing their amenities and trying to evict them to profiteer from these flats on the ground of personal use."



The Zoroastrian Building Trust Fund cancelled the proposed sale of three buildings after a plea by Dadar Parsi residents

"The object of the trust is to buy lands and erect buildings for housing the poor and middle class of our community and not to sell the existing buildings with such Parsi tenants to outsiders who would eventually dishouse them. Thus to sell these buildings would tantamount to a breach and flagrant violation of the objects of the trust."

Though there has been no letter in reply from the ZBTF, a public notice by the trustees in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of April 18 cancelled the proposed sale.

The Committee for Economic Revival (CER) publication, *The Zoroastrian* of April '87, took the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees to task for neither trying to stop the sale nor buying off the property in the interests of the community. According to the community grapevine, however, the PCA has made offers to the ZBTF to sell the property to them or to permit them to develop it under mutually acceptable terms in the interests of the community, but the ZBTF has reportedly remained unresponsive.

Morris and co-signatories Modi and Jesia shot into community focus when

they successfully moved the court in 1980-81 to prevent properties in Dadar Parsi Colony which were covenanted for the community's use from being used or occupied by non-Parsis at exorbitant rates when the community is woefully short of housing for the lower and middle classes.

The PCA, which owns 14 buildings and manages nine trust buildings in the Colony, has been constructing tenements atop their buildings. Twelve new flats are ready for occupation, bringing the total score to nearly 87. The person most involved with its construction activity is Nariman Khurshedji, son-in-law of the late Mancherji Joshi, founder of the Colony.

Joshi, a clerk with the Municipality of Bombay, had the foresight to secure from the trustees of the Bombay Improvement Trust (BIT), a 99-year lease for 101 plots exclusively for Parsi Zoroastrians. The BIT was insistent that the responsibility for the development of plots be given to a registered body which would not indulge in profiteering and would strictly adhere to a disciplined building scheme. Joshi, ably assisted by Raton Dubash, a structural engineer, and

Adi Vasaigara, helped the already well-established Zoroastrian Building Society (ZBS) to enter into a building agreement, setting out a scheme which was accepted by the BIT in 1919.

The PCA, set up on May 20, 1920 by Joshi and his friends, collaborated with the ZBS and undertook the responsibility for developing 101 plots which now form the nucleus of the Dadar Parsi Colony with open spaces, parks and gardens ensuring a healthy residential environment. The PCA now holds the restrictive user covenants that each plot holder had signed, guaranteeing that only Parsi-Zoroastrians will occupy the premises.

Khurshedji and Morris note that the PCA flats are allocated to Zoroastrians on merit with overall emphasis in favor of those waiting to be married, those rendered homeless by a house collapse or facing an eviction order from a court, or those who are living in transit camps or moving from one sanatorium to another. Morris further elucidates how in the old Parsi buildings, in the Fort and Khetwadi areas, families used to share a common bath and toilet. Many Parsi families have moved out of those premises, selling off their residences to non-Parsis who have thereafter often harassed the remaining Parsis who continue to live with daily indignities because they cannot afford to buy new accommodation in the open market. The PCA views such cases with sympathy. It is, however, reluctant to provide accommodation to retired people whose children are grown up, and instead encourages them to go to Navsari.

Twelve to 15 years ago the PCA was able to provide 500 square feet accommodation at a cost of Rs 37,000. Today the amount runs into more than two lakh rupees, part of the money also being used to strengthen the old buildings, give them a facelift and improve the water supply, says Morris. Khurshedji says, the next tenements will be coming up on plot number 638 opposite the Wadia Vachha School where Joshi once lived.

The increasing business activity in the far suburbs of Bombay has rendered Dadar more central than Colaba or Warden Road. By the same virtue, it has become a community asset with appreciating value which needs to be guarded more zealously.

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES ... continued from page 14

Modi referred to the historical parallels of ancient Egypt and Assyria whose civilizations caved in after the priests were annihilated. Since the second decade of the twentieth century, western materialism has undermined our ancient social and religious foundations. "We got ahead because of our *Parsipanu* — honesty, sincerity, hard work, which characterized the community — but in the process of advancing, *Parsipanu* was decried and shed. In the old days, religious lectures were held in the homes of the sethias. Not so today. The community is now too attached to fun and high living. There are fashion shows after weddings and navjotes, hardly any religious discourses..."

Quoting from John Donne, Modi reminded the clergy, "The measure of all leadership is the amount it sacrifices for the people who are led." That community interest in Zoroastrianism is still very much alive and could be further nurtured is evinced by the fact that the new revised edition of Jivanji Modi's *The religious customs and ceremonies of the Parsis* (first published in 1912 and reprinted in 1986) is nearly sold out in less than a year. But if bitterness among mobeds persists, the differences between the community and clergy will increase. Mercenary attitudes on the part of the mobeds must be sternly admonished, Modi advised, even as he remarked that the amounts the community offered in the *boi* at agiaries and *atah bahrams* nowhere matched its 10 percent tips on restaurant bills. The community must be prepared to pay in accordance with the prevailing rates.

"The community will get the priests it deserves and the priests will get the community they deserve." In the *Vendidad* there is a reference to holy itinerant priests, said Modi. "We need the same arrangement again," he added, noting, "The *Vendidad* says that the mobed who does not study his scriptures and spread the word should be defrocked." To reestablish its moral leadership, Modi urged the clergy to avoid controversy and the use of harsh language and bitterness. "Change is the law of life and adaptability is the law of survival. The wise man remains between the two extremes of orthodoxy and reformism."

• Making a pragmatic plea on behalf of today's overloaded youth, Dastur

Kekobad suggested that the young athravans preparing for their navarmaratab ceremonies be spared the burden of learning all 72 *has* of the *ijashne* by rote and instead be permitted to pray the *Vendidad*, the *Visperad*, etc from the book. In parting, Kekobad advised the mobeds in the gathering, "Live such a life that you can always hold your head high." Merchant reiterated the Athravan Education Trust's salient flaws, viz that it was a cosmopolitan trust despite its name, etc, while Homi Turel reminded the audience that there were still priests in the community whose social involvement was reminiscent of their ancient stature, and referred to Ervad Aibara whose spiritual help was sought by many Zoroastrians in their hour of need.

The Gujarati talkathon, leavened by English phrases and quotations, was preceded by a thanksgiving jashan dedicated to the late Adi Marzban, Editor of the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. A contributory dinner followed where all athravans and, for the first time, their wives also, were the guests of the organizers.

SPOTLIGHT

Director of *The Bombay Samachar*, **Rustom M. Cama** was unanimously elected chairman of the Press Trust of India, noted a report in *The Daily* of June 28, '87. Cama is also the current president of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society.

Adi B. Rabadi has recently been appointed joint managing director of M.N. Dastur and Company Pvt Ltd of Calcutta, notes a press release. Rabadi was earlier the finance director and secretary in the same company.

Hindustan Lever's **Keki B. Dadiseth** has been appointed vice-president, personnel, noted a report in the *Indian Express* of June 3, 1987. Dadiseth formerly held a senior position in commercial management with Unilever PLC in London, added the report.

Cartoonist **Mickey Patel** of Delhi is among the 10 cartoonists of India to feature at this year's annual International Cartoon Festival to be held at Sierre in Switzerland, notes a report in the *Indian Express* of July 6, '87.

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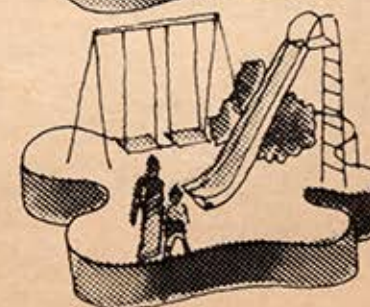
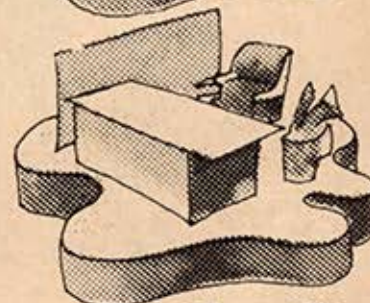
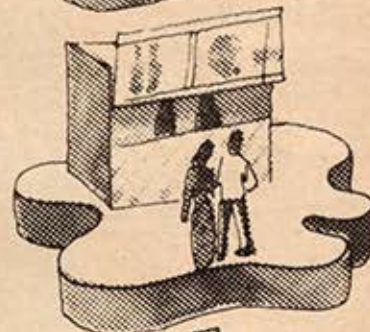
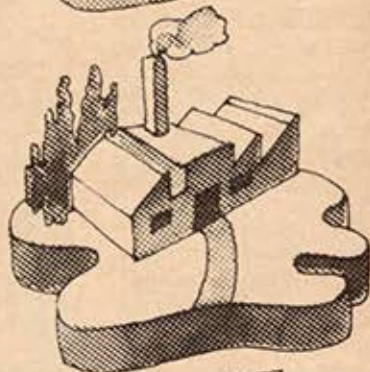
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"I imagine selling off valuable antiques to a *jaripurana-walla* (scrap dealer)—to a person who may not know their value and for an absurd price that he offers!" To the general public this may be an acceptable mode of discarding unwanted, space-consuming articles, but it is perceived as a tragedy by Ms Hilla Bharoacha, a partner in the reputed auctioneering firm of Bennett and Company which has been managed by her family for five generations, and is celebrating its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary this year.

When she hears of Parsis disposing of their family heirlooms, Bharoacha is at a loss for words, because, as her sister Ms Perviz Kapadia would explain, "Not being the richest community in India any more, few Parsis would be able to purchase such treasures" if sold at one of their auctions. Hilla's practical husband Col Pesi Bharoacha, the dynamic partner of Bennett, supplements, "They (the vendors) think they would be saving on the auctioneer's fees (Bennett charges 12½ percent on the item's sale price as its commission), not realizing the thousands they would be losing in the deal."

"Ninety-nine percent of the vendors are always satisfied with the price obtained at our auctions," says Pesi's brother Dr Rusi Bharucha who out of sibling loyalty has been actively assisting in the running of the auction show. "We assume that our buyers are also happy. Only then would they keep coming to make our auctions thrive...An auction is a question of supply and demand. But most often it is a question of how many people want an object at the same time. If only one person is interested, then he would get it for a low price, if two are keen on the same object, there is competition, and if four are interested, the sky is the limit...An art item is worth what one is prepared to pay for it."

If asked by a client to give a value estimate, any of the two brothers and sisters may do so. Their experience on the job has helped them to cultivate a discerning eye—to recognize genuine Dresden, Meissen, Satsumas, Lalique, Imari, Cloisonne and their imitations. None of them have received any formal training because there are no

institutes in India imparting such knowledge or conducting courses in auctioneering, yet their considered opinions are given due weightage. As government auctioneers and valuers, they have rendered professional service to the Government of India, ministry of defence, Government of Maharashtra, court receiver and liquidator, official assignee, Bombay Municipal Corporation, garrison engineers, Collector of Bombay, and in-

surance and banking companies.

Being valuers they have also assessed their own Bennett Company's contribution to the world of auctioneering. "We can't compare ourselves to Sotheby and Christie," Pesi Bharoacha admits, "but the prices we obtain at our auctions here, you won't get anywhere else." With great pleasure he recounted the incident when photographs of some antiques were sent to Sotheby and Christie for valua-



Free rein to bidders

Parinaz Toddywalla

Throughout its 150 years of operation, Bennett and Company has recognized the right of the highest bidders at its auctions



remote control mechanism, worth Rs 1,200, for Rs 6,600. If a seller were to ask, 'What price will it fetch me?' there is just no way an auctioneer could predict. A seller, this year, withdrew his refrigerator from the auction after paying the 10 percent fees on his reserve price of Rs 5,000 which he thought was a reasonable demand but for which no buyers were forthcoming. Soon after, at another auction at Bennett, a refrigerator of the same brand and the same model fetched Rs 10,000 to everyone's astonishment.

Bennett and Co has not always been dealing with antiques and consumer goods. When founded in 1837 by an Englishman Mr Bennett and his Parsi friend Pestonji Sukhlaji, the business mainly involved disposing of cotton and jute bales, a job contracted from the British. Pestonji was helped in business by his son Cawasji and soon they came to be known as M/s Bennett, so the surname changed. Cawasji's son having predeceased him, the old man adopted his sister's son Framji who managed the business single-handedly for several years until his son-in-law Behramji Sorabji joined him. Behramji died three years prior to his father-in-law so his wife Avanbai (mother of Hilla and Perviz) carried on the business with two other partners.

Recalls Hilla, "I was made a partner in 1953. I started taking an interest when I saw my mother being cheated. She did not care, but I did." Sister Perviz, also a partner, who until 1977 used to accompany her husband on his navy

Above: Pesi Bharoacha with wife Hilla
Above (left): Visitors previewing the goods
Left: Auction being conducted by Bennett Company. Rusi Bharucha at the mike

assignments abroad, has for the last 10 years been regularly helping out in the management of the company. But since her only daughter is a medical practitioner and Hilla has no offspring, the future of Bennett Company is uncertain. Basking in their reputation for honesty and integrity, their hundred and fiftieth year anniversary wish is only expressed in the hope "that some day somebody will carry on this business as honorably as it has been carried on till now."

"People have full confidence in us," reports Pesi Bharoacha. "Even strangers who don't know us, ask us to bid on their behalf if they are unable to attend the auction, knowing well that we won't just hike the prices because they have quoted a larger sum." Some of the precious antiques passing through the portals of Bennett attract the attention of avid collectors like Maureen Wadia (wife of Nusli Wadia of Bombay Dyeing) who often leaves behind a private bid with the auctioneers.

When the Britishers left India after Independence, many of them just departed with a simple instruction for Bennett Company: "Our possessions should be auctioned and the proceeds credited to our bank account." Even today, when foreign nationals get a transfer to some other country, they request Bennett to conduct an auc-

tion, by one of India's leading Parsi industrialists, and the value fetched at the Bennett auction was thrice the expected sum.

Sometimes bidders get disillusioned when they come in the expectation of making a fair deal only to find that the excitement of bidding hikes the price of an object to exaggerated amounts. "I can't stop the bidding just because it would fetch some absurd price," Pesi Bharoacha points out. In recent times, a shoe cupboard which was worth around Rs 500, went for Rs 6,500, a piece of marble worth Rs 50, for Rs 5,000, and a toy Mercedes car with a

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tion at their premises, and then take off for the week-end. While some foreigners are just happy to get away from the scene of hectic activity, quite a few, it seems, get so attached to their possessions that to make the parting easier they make sure they are not present at the auction.

Liquidating the assets of some propertied person also requires the help of the auctioneers. The maharajas of Baroda, Gwalior, Jaipur and Kashmir had availed of the auctioneering services of Bennett and Company. Executors to the will of a deceased Parsi who may have desired that his property should be realized for some charitable purpose, instruct Bennett to conduct an auction. At such auctions, many Parsi idiosyncracies have surfaced, recalls Rusi Bharucha. At the time of inspection, they have found cash kept hidden beneath the mattress of a bed, or a gold handle discarded along with castaway junk. On another occasion when the coolies were unable to shift the position of a cupboard because of its weight, it was discovered that the *chhupakhana* (secret compartment of the cupboard) was loaded with silver plated ware, unknown to any family members.

Except for an occasional "odd Parsi" who may try to throw dust in their eyes, the rest of the Parsis as encountered by the Bharoachas are "very honest." Before selling their wares, the Parsis, as also the foreigners, would truthfully reveal if there was some damage, or repair undertaken. Accordingly, the auctioneers would report those and any other known visible defects at the time of cataloging the articles. In the cyclostyled inventory are numbered and described the articles to be auctioned at each sale. Reiterated in their General Conditions of Sale is the rule that auctioneers voluntarily, "with a view to safeguard the interest of the buyers, make every effort to make known in their lists the visual defects, if any, observed at the time of listing and positively disown any responsibility for any omission in the matter...any such omission will not invalidate the sale of any articles. The sale takes place on the basis of the goods as they stand at the time of the auction and the principle of caveat emptor (purchasers beware) will apply."

A comprehensive insurance scheme covers all their items on sale. But when rare and expensive valuables like

jewellery are on auction, a separate insurance cover may be negotiated. "When I joined the firm, the business was very down. We had lots of creditors who had not paid any money over the years for the things they had taken at the auctions. There were two partners before me who had allowed the business to disintegrate," Pesi Bharoacha provided the background. "They had not collected dues worth lakhs. After joining I made sure that almost half the credits were recovered. The rest being time barred, they were written off."

A down payment of 50 percent has necessarily to be made by the buyer whose highest bid is accepted, and the balance 50 percent together with the sales tax, if any, has to be paid the next day before taking delivery of the item. This system was introduced in 1962 by Pesi who, after retiring from the Army, was urged by his wife to take up the family's auctioneering business.

In his thunderous voice Pesi sounds a warning. "If someone were to try and play the fraud we would threaten them with police action." However he would rather not go to the court to get judgment after seven long years but utilize instead the same time to build up and expand the business which has really gripped him now.

Organizing an auction involves a fortnight's work by the partners and their 15-member staff, a couple of whom, like their former crier, are over 80 years old, yet continue to assist. If it is to be conducted at the seller's residence, all the items have to be examined, listed, classified into groups and then the final catalog prepared in such a way that the auctioning of the most expensive items is scheduled for the peak hours - around noon - in the presence of the largest numbers. This catalog is then cyclostyled and sold at Rs 2 to those who attend the preview of the auction the day before. In India there are no expensively designed catalogs nor is attendance restricted to invitees only as is the practice among leading auctioneers abroad. An advertisement released in the newspapers would bring in a crowd of around 2,000 for the preview which is scheduled for Saturdays, so that the auction can be conducted on a Sunday, in the presence of hundreds who hope to utilize their weekly holiday in getting more than their money's worth.

Auctions at the Bennett premises

at Apollo Street are organized subject to their collecting a good number of saleable items from different individuals. The proceedings start at 9.30 in the morning and could last until sunset depending on the number of items, usually in the vicinity of 500, which need to be cleared at an auction. The crier opens the bid with a sum which is usually 20 to 30 percent higher than the going rate. He gradually descends the price rung, and as soon as he sees a semi-raised hand indicating assent to the price cried out, the escalation begins. Though the symbolic hammer is absent from the scene of auction today, crying out of the same amount thrice means that a good is spoken for.

The range of goods at each auction would naturally differ, but there is sufficient variety to interest all age-groups: fancy toys for the constantly bored child, hair curlers for the fashion conscious teenager, executive chairs for the self-propelling entrepreneur, electrical and electronic gadgets to ease the workload for an independent couple, a set of paperbacks and molded luggage for those planning to take off, sound systems which could drown the disturbing noise, and even ear buds to clear the aftermath of pollution. There have been occasions, however, when their auctions have been restricted to just cars, or even Jersey bulls for which the Parsi Dairy Farm had no further use.

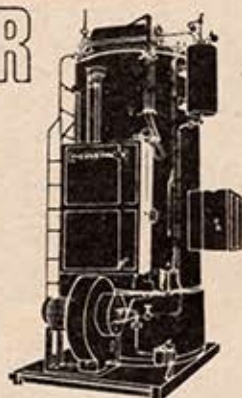
A story goes that once, in the excitement of bidding, a gentleman became the owner of a refrigerator. The next day he came and enquired of Pesi Bharoacha, "What do I do with the huge white machine I bought yesterday?" When told to use it for storing foodstuffs and provisions, he said he had no use for it. Bharoacha's prompt advice was, "Cool yourself in it, then."

On becoming the owner of new articles, one never knows what may be in store. There was one bidder who was fortunate enough to unexpectedly find, in a pugree that he had bought at one of the Bennett auctions, a couple of gold guineas. "If the buyers find something missing they expect us to rescind the sale, but when they get more than they have paid for, they would never think of returning it," Bennett Company's general manager Anthony Pinto pointed out. Accepting this attitude philosophically, Rusi Bharucha remarked, "This is known as the luck of the auctions."

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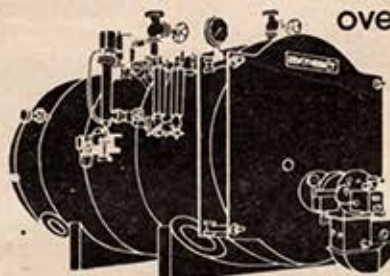
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Her latest ad-venture

Pheroza Bilimoria is the first woman to be elected president of the 33-year-old Bombay Advertising Club

Jeroo Irani

She wears her 36 years and new position as president of The Advertising Club, Bombay as lightly as a diaphanous shawl. Recently elected to the largest professional body in Asia, The Advertising Club's first woman president, Pheroza Bilimoria, has the air of an intellectual, more at home in a library than in the grubby world of commerce.

On discovering that we were classmates at St Xavier's College, Bombay, Bilimoria's slightly forbidding demeanor slips. "I was elated on being elected," she confides. "But I am surprised it took the Club 33 years to elect a woman." Bilimoria is following in the footsteps of well-known advertising and media personalities who were presidents, such as Roger Pereira, (former chief of Shilpi Advertising), E. J. Feilden, (former managing director of Hindustan Thompson), Burjor Patel of *The Statesman* and Parry Dholakia who runs his own agency.

An association of members belonging to various disciplines in the advertising industry, "The Ad Club has acted as a catalyst within the ad industry," states Bilimoria who is the marketing director of the *Business India* group of publications. "The Ad Club cannot be a governing body. We try to pave the way for the healthy growth of the industry. We have started various bodies such as The Advertising Standards Council of In-

dia (ASCI) for example, which was set up as a result of a session in The Advertising Club when we talked about ethics in advertising. The Public Service Activities Committee is a sub-committee of The Advertising Club which takes up public service causes."

Having served the Club in various capacities such as joint honorary secretary, chairperson, lunch and tea committee, chairperson, public relations and also as vice-president, Bilimoria would like to see more active participation from members. She regrets the fact that the advertising field has not been taken seriously by those outside it. "We have to strengthen our credibility by using forums like the Ad Club to air our views on matters pertaining to us directly or indirectly."

Few industries have been the subject of such passionate controversy as advertising. Though it has been denounced by some as a waster of resources and a sinister manipulator of minds, Bilimoria sees advertising as an engine of economic progress and the bulwark of freedom. "Advertising is in fact the bloodline of a free economy. It is not merely a glamour industry," she adds. "It allows free competition, acquaints the consumer with what is available, and helps promote a product which may not survive without advertising."

An important element in the "marketing mix, advertising is as im-

portant as the pricing of a product, its distribution, dealer promotion and point of sale promotion," she feels. Because of the vital role it plays, advertising is inextricably woven into the pattern of everyday life. "An ad man must understand the product, and he must have the marketing objectives clear," she says. "For any copywriter to come up with meaningful, striking copy, he must be totally involved in the whole marketing process. Otherwise, he will be working in isolation."

Ultimately, it is not what advertising people think they have put into an advertisement that counts but what the consumer gets out of it, she notes – a truism ignored by many advertising agencies which are often reluctant to check the communicative effects of their flashes of creative inspiration.

Considering the talent-intensive nature of the industry, can advertising sell a bad product? "It is a matter of opinion," she smiles. "Certainly, advertising shouldn't dupe or pass on incorrect information to the consumer." For as David Ogilvy noted in his best-seller, *Confessions of an Ad Man*, which has become a must for all aspiring copywriters, "The consumer is not a moron, she is your wife!"

On the other hand, a good product can languish on the shelves with poor or no advertising, she counters. For whatever the morality of propaganda, commercial or political, advertising is

intended (even if it doesn't always succeed) to affect human behavior, especially human purchasing behavior.

In this context, Bilimoria feels that since advertising is concerned with motivating people, a lot can be done to prod the younger members of the Parsi community to have larger families. "Information oriented advertisements, brochures and campaigns can make Parsis aware that by having more children the community can be saved."

Bilimoria, who is proud above all to be a human being as well as an Indian and a Parsi, is not actively involved in community affairs. If she does not exhibit the signs of becoming a Zoroastrian scholar, she certainly spouts advertising wisdom with the ease of an old hand at the game.

Way back in 1978 when she joined the *Business India* group, Bilimoria had no experience. "I had no idea what an artwork or release order looked like." After her return from England where she had worked in a travel agency, she joined *Business India* as advertising manager. Soon her part-time assignment became a full-

time commitment as the fledgling magazine took off. "*Business India* was a timely product which coincided with the magazine boom. We capitalized on the need, the vacant slot. We have since maintained a large lead

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the consumer gets
out of it

over our competitors. Our circulation is double that of our nearest rival."

In the *Business India* group which includes *Inside Outside*, the Indian design magazine and *The India Magazine*, advertising does not influence editorial policy. "Even if we carry an ad, we have no obligation to carry editorial matter and vice versa. If an ad seems sexist and we feel strongly about it, we reject it," she says.

Aside from steering the marketing department of the group, Bilimoria has to look after her home and family comprising her husband Jimmy and two children Rishad and Leila. Her busy schedule often drives her to make painful choices between the home and the office, and leaves little time for what she once enjoyed — painting.

"I spend a lot of valuable time with my children to make up for the lost time. I do things with them that they enjoy — like I take my son to the squash courts or help him with his homework; I bring my daughter to the office so that she can see that it is not an awful place that takes mommy away from her. All this makes them feel cared for."

Bilimoria feels that a working mother who has to travel a great deal creates some insecurity in her children. She tries to mitigate this by going on a three-week holiday with her kids every year. Rather than spend endless, meaningless hours with the family, with effective time management one can fit in valuable quality time for one's personal life as well, she says.

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Replay of rites

The second edition of Dr Jivanji Modi's authoritative work on the Parsis documents the religious practices prevalent in the early twentieth century

Homi Dhalla

The religious ceremonies and customs of the Parsis by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. Second edition (reprint) 1986 published by the Society for the Promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge and Education. (Office of Parsee Vegetarian and Temperance Society, Noble Chambers 'B', fourth floor, Parsee Bazar Street, Fort, Bombay 400001) Pp-455 + xxix + 40. Price Rs 45.

Rituals play an important part in the life of a practising Zoroastrian. They are performed on specific occasions, generally by the priests on behalf of the laity. The worshipping life of a Zoroastrian, while it is fundamentally personal, is basically that of an individual who is also an integral part of a group. In this context he has to make his own contribution to the group and also shoulder social responsibility. He is not expected to discharge his spiritual obligations by leading the life of an ascetic.

The Society for the Promotion of

Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge and Education reprinted last year the valuable classic, *The religious ceremonies and customs of the Parsis*, written by that eminent and erudite scholar, the late Dr Sir Jivanji J. Modi. Being a standard work on the subject, the book was in great demand by scholars here and abroad for many years.

It is a comprehensive study of the whole gamut of Zoroastrian ceremonies ranging from the socioreligious ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death to the purification and the initiation ceremonies such as the nahn and bareshnum, and the navar, martab and navjote respectively. The consecration of the fire-temple as well as the tower of silence have been described. The inner liturgical ceremonies such as the yasna, visparad, vendidad and the baj have been treated in a scholarly manner as also the outer liturgical services such as the

afringan, farokhshi, stum and other ceremonies.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1922; it documents the customs and ceremonies practised by the Parsis at the beginning of this century. For example Dr Modi writes that the room in the house where a woman was to give birth was consecrated by the performance of the afringan ceremony by a priest. A lamp was kept burning there for 10 days, and in most cases for 40 days, after the delivery of a child. He also refers to the custom practised in earlier times, of the mother drinking a few drops of the sacred *haoma* juice at childbirth. As regards the marriage ceremony, a part of the address was recited in Sanskrit so that the Hindu rulers who had offered refuge to the Parsis could understand it. There is also a reference to the marriage ritual being repeated once again at midnight. The practise of these customs has generally ceased among the Parsis of today.

A worthwhile addition to this book would have been the pointing out of changes that have taken place in the customs and ceremonies over the last few decades. A scholar conversant with Zoroastrian ceremonies could have been entrusted with this task.

In spite of this, it was worth reprinting this monumental work, which should find a place in libraries here and abroad, and in Zoroastrian homes.

Narrating home truths

Homi J. Rogers

Message of Zarathushtra: Religious Instruction—Volume One by Mobed Bahram Shahzadi. Published by California Zoroastrian Center, USA, second edition, 1986. Pp 73.

Many of us have often wondered why the Zoroastrian settled in America thinks and behaves differently from his brethren in India. Does the crossing of oceans symbolize a breakaway from

the convention-bound orthodoxy that envelopes the Parsi of the sub-continent? Or is it the exposure to a more liberal, more scientific climate that makes an 'Antia' of a Navsari-doctrinated priest (since officiating at the navjote of American engineer Joseph Peterson in 1983, Dr Kersey Antia of Chicago has become synonymous with the liberal lobby of Zoroastrians in North America)?

The publication of the first volume of *Message of Zarathushtra* by the California Zoroastrian Center has raised hopes of providing some answers to understanding the psyche of the 'American' Zoroastrian. Conceived as a "simple book that would teach their (the Zoroastrian community in Chicago) children the basic prin-

ciples and (provide) a brief history of the Zoroastrian religion," the book is written by Mobed Bahram Shahzadi, and acknowledges assistance in its compilation to Dr Kersey Antia, amongst other scholars ("I have plucked flowers from many a garden to prepare this bouquet"). Designed as a catechism, the book puts forth in a simple question-and-answer format the knowledge of the *Avesta*, the concepts of *Asha*, *Spenta* and *Angra Mainyu*, the navjote ceremony, the significance of *sudreh* and *kushti* (Shahzadi's spellings), besides taking a look at the Zoroastrian calendar, and naming its 30 days, 12 months, six gahambars, five gathas, and comparing it to the western calendar.

The exercise is plain. And non-

controversial. There are few traces in the book of non-conventional thinking. Probably the nearest it gets to explaining the difference between Parsis all over the world is through an innocuous statement that reads: "Parsis living in India speak Gujarati and live like other Indians do and Iranis speak Persian and Dari and live like other Iranians do. But here in America, both speak English and live, more or less, like other Americans do."

For the most part, the theory of the religion is put forth as by Indian mobeds, especially Ervad Ratansha Motafram, whose three-volume manual was published a few years ago by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Interestingly enough, though, Mobed Shahzadi does not expound the theory of duality, and settles for a rather pat "There is no evil in the good creation of Ahura Mazda, and therefore, no creator of evil." The statement, however, forms the pedestal for a showcase on freedom of choice, where the stock argument of American Zoroastrians to their convention-wrapped contemporaries elsewhere manifests itself: "Asho Zarathushtra explains it in his *Gathas*. He says, 'Hear the best with your ears and ponder with a bright mind. Then each man and woman, for his or herself, choose either of the two - righteousness or falsehood,' and again, a little later, 'Only ignorance (emphasis mine) and selfishness lead one to choose the wrong.'"

While the theory of Zoroastrianism is fairly the same as taught in India, the practice of the religion shows some signs of difference. The calendar put forth is the Fasli calendar, and English equivalent dates of some major Parsi festivals and ghambars, which we in India have ceased to celebrate, are calculated on the basis of the Fasli calendar. Thus Chicago children are taught that the death anniversary of the prophet (Zarathushtra *no diso*) falls on December 26. (Khor day and Dae month), while back home, the day normally marks the advent of the monsoons ("Zarathushtra *no diso ne kholyo siso* - the prophet's death anniversary marks the opening of the heavenly valve)."

Similarly, the five *Gahs* are demarcated on the commonly-misinterpreted continuous time period, whereas, according to the purer form of Zoroastrianism, the Aiwisruthem Gah does not start immediately from the end of

Uzirin Gah at sunset, but 36 minutes after sunset, just as Ushahin Gah is not from midnight to sunrise, but from 1.40 a.m. to the onset of dawn.

The book is illustrated with sketches and photographs which normally help in summarizing the text in visual terms. The language, especially by way of constant omissions of prepositions, and fluctuation of tenses ("What does fire stand in the *Gathas*?", "Why did he asked many questions?") comes as a rude surprise. Nevertheless, despite its few shortcomings, one hopes the task undertaken with noble intentions continues. *Message of Zarathushtra* has the right spirit; it is the fizz that is missing.

Rewriting legends

Gustasp Irani

The passing away of asho Zarathushtra by Ali A. Jafarey. Pp 76. Publisher and price unlisted.

Prophet Zarathushtra is old, 77 years and 40 days to be exact, his new religion is well established and flourishing under the protection of King Vishtaspa. He is in the holy fire-temple praying to his beloved Ahura Mazda, when suddenly Tur-i Bradrosh, the evil one whom Zarathushtra had foiled repeatedly when only a mere child, descends upon him and runs him through with a sword. Zarathushtra collapses, but before he dies he flings his rosary at his foe who is struck dead immediately, or so goes the story according to popular belief - a man of peace struck down by violence. A contradiction according to Ali A. Jafarey in his booklet, *The passing away of asho Zarathushtra*.

Jafarey's research is aimed at refuting what, he believes, is a misconception about Zarathushtra's death. He would rather that the prophet died peacefully, content that his religion of 'good conscience' has taken firm root and is prospering. The case he presents is convincing. He works his argument through Avesta literature, Greek historians, Pahlavi and early Persian writings to prove that there is nothing there to suggest that Zarathushtra died a violent death. Rather, the indica-

tions are that his death was a non-event, quiet and unrecorded. By contrast, the prophet's birth - he was born laughing - merits being recorded. "It is his birth that gives the world a new order, which his death did nothing to take back. So it is not as important as is his birth," writes the author.

Jafarey avoids the pitfalls of being ponderous as many writers who dip into early Iranian literature are prone to be. There is no hair splitting over words or endless agonizing over technicalities which scholars may enjoy but are lost on lay readers. He presents his case with a simplicity that is convincing ("As I see it - and Persian is my mother tongue..."). But that is as far as the booklet goes. It makes no pretense of telling us an interesting story of Zarathushtra's last days; it only seeks to correct a misconception in popular belief. Within this limited scope and its limited pages, it succeeds quite well.

The loss of Zarathushtra's final miracle in striking down his killer with a rosary should not detract from the message of his religion. For those who must have miracles to sustain their faith, there are others to fall back on. According to the *Denkard* there are 12 miracles before the birth of Zarathushtra, 15 from birth to prophethood, another 15 from the beginning of prophethood to the conversion of Vishtaspa, six more to the death of Zarathushtra, and three after his death during the lifetime of Vishtaspa.

Jafarey ends his book with a brief account of how he imagines Zarathushtra died, to replace the version in circulation. "Zarathushtra is happy... He has advanced in years, advanced in wisdom, advanced in work, advanced in mission..."

"One evening, as the sun sets in the west in the rosy ripples of the Hamun-i Hilmand, he calls his companions (and) delivers a moving message.

"He wishes the Magnanimity (Zarathushtrian fellowship) every success and his men and women every joy. He bids them farewell and enters his room, communes with his Lord Wise till late in the night.

"At dawn, Zarathushtra does not emerge for his prayers. They find him asleep, a smile on his face - he has been granted good life for ever, he has become immortal. Zarathushtra came laughing, made the world laugh and smile, and has gone smiling..."

continued from page 19

newspapers. They were published in those newspapers viz *Indian Express* (Ahmedabad) and *Loksatta* which are far remote from the readership of the Parsi community."

The opponents claim that Vipin Shah has "no locus standi in respect of the trust lands," the agreement with him being contrary to the trust deed and also because the agreement to lease itself notes that its validity would lapse unless sanctioned by the Charity Commissioner within six months of the signing of the agreement.

Claiming that the Council for Protection of Zoroastrian Charities has been assured active help by several prominent members and organizations of the community, the opponents note that a scheme which includes an adequate number of sanatorium blocks on part of the land and, on the rest, a housing project after obtaining a *cy pres* order, is on the drawing board.

In their reply to the opponents' charges, the trustees largely reiterate their original stand.

Clarifying the matter of the different numbers of the Trusts, Narielwala's affidavit notes that the Trust Deed of 1911 refers to Trust No C 288 while the deed of 1923 refers to C 615. Referring to the agreement with Shah, the brief submits, "The filing of the application amounts to a waiver and clearly indicates that time was not the essence of the contract...No question of termination of agreement can arise in respect of Mr Vipin Shah who has come as a lessee in pursuance to the advertisement."

Refuting the allegations of negligence and mismanagement, the trustees submit that they acted "as reasonable prudent men of common skill and knowledge." The photographs and photofeature notwithstanding, the trustees claim, "The buildings did not exist in the year 1983 as suggested by the intervenors...It is emphatically denied that several Parsi institutions offered to help except the Bulsar Parsi Punchayet which wanted to take over the property on a mere promise to preserve and maintain the same without any concrete proposal of funds for renovation, repairs and maintenance of the same thereafter." The *Jame* letters are dismissed as "vain anxiety on the part of the public without any concrete action or offer of monetary help."

Bamji, submitting his reply separately, noted, "The total area occupied by the old Sanatorium was hardly one acre of land and the remaining land was lying idle and wasted and not used even as a garden or a park and hence the intervenors' argument that by leasing 93 percent of the Trust property the objects of the Trust are violated is not accepted by the trustees and is not true." He reiterates that the lease provides for one acre of land for the Sanatorium, thereby maintaining the rights of the beneficiaries.

Asserting that "the trustees made desperate efforts to hand over the property to some organization or trust but their efforts did not fructify...no concrete offers of monetary help (were) received from any Parsi organization," Bamji says, "Nobody came forward with any concrete proposal and the trustees had no other alternative but to accept the offer of Mr Vipin Shah."

Denying that Shah is a trespasser, the trustees recalled that the opponents had to pay costs to Shah as a *precondition to taking part in the case*. Bamji accused the intervenors of aiming "to destroy the Trust by delaying tactics and wasting time and raising false and frivolous objections...The intervenors should be asked to deposit a substantial amount by way of security to indemnify the Trust for the losses caused by the action of the intervenors."

In his oral submission Bamji noted, "In India there are more than 30 Parsi sanatoria of which 20 are in a dilapidated condition because of paucity of funds. The J.J. Sanatorium (in Khandala) is lying vacant because the economic condition of the Parsis has gone down and their numbers have gone down. The sanatorium is not a priority. There is no food, no shelter for the Parsi community. *Cy pres* is a matter between us. The Sanatorium was derequisitioned 16 months ago. If encroachment comes up, who is responsible? I'm now old. What happens to the land? I have a letter from the BPP chairman. It was unanimously decided that the property should be sold and proceeds to be utilized. From 80,000 rupees can we even do the fencing? Can we have security guards?"

When the Charity Commissioner asked Dastoor to "suggest concrete proposals including compensation for Vipin Shah," Dastoor countered,

"Legally he was a trespasser" and wanted to know how the Sanatorium's debris had been disposed of. Shah shot back, "There are bricks, but bricks are of no value. Two hundred encroachments were vacated with difficulty because of my respect for Boman-Behram." It was maintained on Shah's behalf that he had succeeded in getting the land derequisitioned, and in ousting the encroachers. Noting that a lot of people including the BPP, the SPP and the BPATF, were taking credit for being instrumental in getting the land derequisitioned, Dastoor added, "If all this is correct, I salute him." A mollified Shah averred, "I'm willing to cooperate. Let him (Dastoor) say (whether he wants) 50 percent, 60 percent or even 100 percent Parsis (to be allotted residences on the Sanatorium land)."

Initially the Charity Commissioner was prepared to wait only one week for a concrete proposal from Dastoor, who sought a month. Purandare cautioned the Charity Commissioner in Marathi, "Don't give more than two weeks," and Shah added, "You are trying to gain time and then take a technical objection."

Earlier, the trustees had objected to the intervenors' arrival on the scene on February 16, 1987 when the hearings were over and the Charity Commissioner's order on the requested "alienation" was awaited. They had submitted that the Iranis had no locus standi but the Charity Commissioner had overruled them. In stating the reasons for his order granting them locus standi, the Charity Commissioner gave a resumé of the arguments for and against, and said, "It is pertinent to note that they (the trustees) have at no time issued an appeal to the Zoroastrian community to augment its funds nor have they made any attempts to raise or increase the funds... If it is a fact that the applicants in question (Benafshay and Merwan Irani) are the beneficiaries of the Trust in question, then I think their valuable rights to have their say in such a matter cannot be denied so easily." The Iranis were permitted to participate in the proceedings after paying Rs 250 each to the trustees and to Vipin Shah towards the cost of the proceedings.

The July 20 deadline meant that Dastoor, his assistant Homi Manekshaw, and his clients had to be ready with a concrete scheme in less than 19 days.

In response to persistent requests over the years, to carry information on births, marriages and deaths in the community, *Parsiana* publishes the first such listing.

The list is not comprehensive as certain institutions have still to supply us with the required information. We are, for example, still awaiting the Bombay High Court Chief Justice's permission to empower court officials to release information on Parsi marriages. The death roll from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) was received in Gujarati. Hence *Parsiana* must crave the indulgence of its readers, especially the bereaved families, if, in the process of transliteration, the names of the deceased are misspelt. Moreover, the names of those Parsis who chose to be cremated are not part of the present data, as such names do not officially reach the BPP.

Many of the outstation anjumans have also agreed to inform us of births, marriages and deaths in their respective communities.

With regard to births, the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital regretted its inability to supply us with the list of

names due to legal technicalities.

The data we have assembled is uneven. For example, the BPP death roll includes addresses but no family relationships; from other anjumans we have gathered the names of family members but no residential addresses. Though the information largely pertains to June, outstation information often refers to earlier months. The data is being presented city-wise, the events being listed in the city where they occurred, in chronological and alphabetical order.

Marriages of inter-community couples, as well as children of such unions, will also be listed.

In order to ensure the authenticity of the data, *Parsiana* only accepts information for publication if it is received from an anjuman, other renowned Parsi institution, courts or government authorities.

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

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to Veera and Maurice Harper on June 10, 1987

A girl to Ketayun and Cyrus Pithawalla; June 10

A boy to Leena and Rustom Dalal; June 12

A girl to Rashna and Reuben Alphonso; June 20

A boy to Bakhtavar and Merwan Irani; June 22

A girl to Khorshed and Jamshed Bharucha; June 26

A girl to Pervin and Kersi Medhora; June 26

A boy to Anahita and Khushrow Major; June 30

Married

Susan Sethna and Rashid Kotwal of Sydney on May 5
Tushnamaiti Keki Dadabhoy of Delhi and Phiroz Nadirsha Kotwal; May 25

Died

Piroja Sarosh Chami (85),

residing at Hirabai Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007 on May 31

Coomi Sohrabsha Karanjia (81), 204 Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; May 31

Homi Bhimjibhai Bamboat (63), Arsiwalla Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; June 1

Homi Ratanji Bharucha (82), Jehangir Mans, Dhobitalao, 400020; June 1

Jerbai Jamshedji Bhoot (87), Irani Bldg, Dhuswadi, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 1

Sohrabji Ardeshtir Chinoy (89), UCO Bank Bldg, D.N. Rd, 400001; June 1

Khurshed Jehangir Bady (79), S-15 Cusrow Baug, 400005; June 2

Nanabhoy Dossabhoy Billimoria (62), 10/6 Rustom Baug, Byculla, 400027; June 2

Savak Rustomji Dick (63), 401/59 Anand Nagar, Dahisar

(E), 400068; June 2

Marzban Nussarwanji Gandhi (91), 782 M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 2

Perin Rustomji Sethna (82), 358 BMC Bldg 'D', Worli, 400018; June 2

Parviz Jamshed Havevalla (67), Hirabai Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; June 3

Piroja Rustomji Sasuri (88), 101 Casablanca, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 3

Behram Darasha Bharucha (56), 275 Princess Bldg, Princess St, 400002; June 4

Darabsha Cooverji Cooper (76), Bhagat Mans, Parle Colony, Salsette Rd; June 4

Goolbai Pestonji Daruwalla (90), 665 Band View, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 4

Aimai Burjorji Dhanigara (94), 6/13 Chowdhury Mohalla, Kalyan, Dist Thana; June 4

Minoo Cawasji Tumboli (68), E-4 Dalal Estate, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 4

Khorshed Bomanji Vakil (63), Vatcha-Gandhi Bldg, Thakurdwar, 400002; June 4

Banubai Maneksha Elavia (82), 217 N.M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; June 5

Ratan Manekji Ponchkhanaawalla (79), 31 Mamaparmannand Marg, 400004; June 5

Goolbai Burjorji Ghadiali (80), T-1 Dalal Estate, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 7

Jehangirji Rustomji Rana (87), B-23 Jer Baug, Byculla, 400027; June 7

Jamshed Ruttonsha Vania (75), Doctors' Quarters, B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, 400036; June 7

Dhunishaw Edalji Makina (89), 676 Fareedon Terrace, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; June 8

Jhinibai Minocher Mullan (76), Crasto Bldg, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 8

Dinbai Minoo Barsiwalla (71), Harganga Mahal, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; June 9

Jehangir Khurshedji Jassawalla (84), 19 Taj Bldg, Gowalia Tank, 400036; June 9

Ratansha Pestonji Toddywalla

(84), 157 Nussarwanji Bldg, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400008; June 9

Perin Kaikhushroo Engineer (81), Ginwalla Bldg, E-16 Captain Colony, Tardeo, 400034; June 11

Jerbanoo Jamaspji Buchia (80), Engineer Hse, Khetwadi, 400004; June 12

Rusi Manekshaw Mehta (72), Rusi Mehta Bldg, Foras Rd, 400008, June 12

Minoo Ardeshtir Balsara (60), 607-B Sohrab Hse, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 13

Edulji Rustomji Jokhi (85), N-27 Navroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 13

Naval Edalji Meherji (66), 12-G Wadia Block, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; June 13

Eruchsha Naoroji Mamlatdar (74), B-25, Navroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 14

Shirin Dinshaw Rabadi (96), Mistry Bldg, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 14

Sheroo Keki Engineer (63), Wadia Bldg, 248 Shamaldas Gandhi Marg, 400002; June 15

Sohrabji (Soli) Ardeshtir Moos (58), F-10 Mody Bldg, Captain Colony, Tardeo, 400034; June 15

Phiroze Kaikobad Cooper (86), B-410 Jiten Co-op Hsg Soc, Andheri (W), 400058; June 16

Shera Kaikhushroo Peer (81), Jaiphal Terrace, Forjett St, 400036; June 16

Rupabai Kaikhushroo Wadia (72), E-34 Jer Baug, Byculla, 400027; June 16

Ardeshtir Dorabji Bulsara (82), Dahpada, Via Vapi (Western Rly); June 18

Khurshed Boman Irani (80), 9 Patel Bldg, Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, 400007; June 18

Ratan Pestonji Karanjia (52), Cassias Apts, I.C. Colony, Borivli (W), 400092; June 18

Maneckbai Behramsha Boatwala (78), A/2 Samrat, M.V. Road, Andheri (E), 400069; June 19

Banoobai Pestonji Mody (79), 10 Dady Santook Hse, Dady Santook Lane, 400002; June 19

Lily Kersi Patel (27), 3 Cama

Bldg, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 19
Roshan Nariman Patel (63), Flat No 4, 629 Homavazir Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 19
Ardeshtir Dossabhai Sukhia (92), 788 Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 20
Piroja Sukhia Sukhia (83), 14 C.Patel St, Fort, 400001; June 20
Perin Framroze Elavia (88), Kashinath Bldg, Opp Jam-e-Jamshed Press, Fort, 400001; June 21
Behram Framji Engineer (80), 799 Minoo Mans, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 22
Jamshed Jehangir Hakim (79), Jam-e-Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 22
Pirojba Hormusji Madan (80), Narielwala Agiary, Naigam Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 22
Bapaimai Hormusji Bogdawal (89), 191 Bazargate St, Fort, 400001; June 23
Bacha Framji Daruwala (90), Bharucha Bldg, Gilder Lane, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 23
Mani Ratansha Daruwala (70), 161 Golwalla Hse, Fort, 400001; June 23
Piroja Ardeshtir Behejan (94), Behejan Hse, 83 Mint Rd, 400001; June 24
Najoo Shapoorji Dubash (83), Abbas Bldg, Jalbhoy St, 400004; June 24
Behli Firoze (68), Parakh Dharamshalla, 34 Hughes Rd, 400007; June 24
Khorshed Hormuzdiar Izadyar (76), Suleman Manzil, Dr Ambedkar Rd, 400014; June 24
Najamai Hormusji Nariman (94), 208 Waterfield Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 24
Bomansha Jamshedji Paghdwalla (71), 2/B Soonawala Bldg, Tardeo, 400007; June 24
Aspandiyar Ardeshtir Rabadi (77), 2-B Bhatia Soc Bldg, Princess St, 400002; June 24
Sohrab Pestonji Jassavala (64), 11 Lalkaka Hse, Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 25
Ratanbai Khurshedji Jokhi (85), 1-A Tata Colony, Chembur, 400074; June 25

Freny Jal Shroff (87), Hormusji Bldg, D.K. Marg, Byculla, 400027; June 25
Nergis Nariman Warden (74), 43 Prabhat, Warden Rd, 400026; June 25
Fareedoon Jamshedji Balsara (73), F-3 Cusrow Baug, Colaba 400039; June 26
Sheryar Hormuzd Irani (73), Chaman Chambers, Dhobitalao, 400020; June 27
Keki Rustomji (84), 660 Parsi Colony, Dadar, 400014; June 27
Sorabji Pallonji Italia (84), A-28 Godrej Baug, Napean Sea Rd, 400036; June 28
Najamai Kaikhushroo Mistry (65), N-26 Navroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 28
Bahadur Ardeshtir Lashkari (64), B-13 Mistry Bldg, Lalbaug, Parel, 400012; June 29
Coomi Bomanshaw Madan (74), Pannalal Bldg, Perin Nariman St, 400001; June 29
Freny Minochehr Nazir (76), Nazir Hse, Cumballa Hill, 400036; June 29
Jerbanoo Behramsha Patel (90), B-603 Shalimar Apts, Cumballa Hill, 400036; June 30

CALCUTTA

Married

Meher Keki Cooper and Ribhu Chatterjee; June 16

Died

Moti Minocher Dubash (92), daughter of late Pirojba and Sorabjee Batlivala, daughter-in-law of late Jerbai and Framji Dubash, sister of Naju and Behram and the late Hirji, Behman and Hira; June 18

CHICAGO

Born

A boy, Eddi, to Jer and Fili Udvadia; June 13

Married

Shiraz Noshir Piroshaw and Spitaman Phiroze Tata (both of Jamshedpur); May 30

DELHI

Died

Alamai Patel, mother of Baimai and Daulat Patel and Katy Sethna; May 17

JAMSHEDPUR

Died

Ardeshtir Hormusji Sethna (75), husband of Manek,

father of Freny and Homi, son of Hormusji and Herabai Sethna; June 11

MADRAS

Died

Najamai Nariman Bam (95), mother of Pesi and Hoshang; June 17

POONA

Died

Cyrus Nusli Ichchaporia (3 months); June 2

Freny Mancherji Merchant (86); June 5

Dara Rustom Mulla (81); June 5

Bhicamai Dinshawji Coyaji (85); June 21

Pessy Merwan Irani (65);

June 23

SECUNDERABAD

Died

Maneckshaw R. Baria (76); May 13

SYDNEY

Born

A boy to Firuza and Adil Sarkari; March 27

Died

Pilloo Dhanjishah Bilimoria (78), wife of Dhanjishah, mother of Gulu, Jimmy and Vera Jessia, sister of Putli Tata, Perin Tata, Dina Langrana, Homai Dustoor, Feroze and the late Rustom, Shavax and Dhun Confectioner; June 12

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Guarding his ward

Died: Rusi Manekshaw Mehta, 72, municipal corporator of Bombay for nearly 20 years, victim of an assassin's bullet, on the night of June 12, 1987.

"Mehta was of a social nature, and he was always helpful to the poor and the downtrodden. He cooperated wholeheartedly in civic activities," recalled Bombay's mayor Dr Ramesh Prabhoo. Maharashtra Pradesh Congress (I) Committee president Prabha Rau stated, "In the death of Mehta, the city has lost a responsible and loving corporator."

First elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) in 1968, Mehta was elected for his fourth consecutive term in April 1985, securing the largest winning margin of votes, a performance unrivalled by any of the other councillors, notes the June issue of the Committee for Economic Revival (CER) newsletter, *The Zoroastrian*. Mehta was "an extremely popular man due to his efforts for the commonest of people in his ward," wrote *The Sunday Observer* correspondent in the issue of June 14. "He was fearless...and spoke out against all forms of corruption," continued the write-up.

As elected representative of municipal ward number 23, which included within its ambit the city's prime red light area and other localities known for drug trafficking and bootlegging, Mehta was sympathetic to the prostitutes and sought reforms for them but would come down heavily on bootleggers and other underworld characters, confirmed several newspaper reports.

While the BMC meetings would keep him occupied for the greater part of the day, Mehta would be busy at his Falkland Road office from 8 to 10 in the mornings and 7 to 10.30 in the evenings, attending to the "day-to-day woes of his ward members," informs his son Dinshaw. He had no time for entertainment and social get-togethers. Family functions he would attend only after a great deal of per-

suation and pressure. Dining in expensive restaurants was considered a "*khota kharach* (futile expenditure)" by him recalls his wife Dhun, because as he would explain, the cost of one dish could feed an entire family in his locality.

Even though his sons would insist that he shift his residence from Foras Road to Warden Road (a posh locality of Bombay where his three sons reside), Mehta would pay them no heed. He was of the firm opinion that his voters should find him accessible at all hours. As chairman of the works committee (city) and member of the public health committee, complaints of water shortage would be looked into personally by Mehta, who would often get up at 4 am in the mornings to check on the water situation in different buildings. He used to heavily criticize the Housing Board's policy of reflooring old buildings in cast stone which according to him was a poor substitute for reinforced cement concrete, and he would also urge the tenants to protest against this, mentions Dinshaw.

Often, at the risk of his own life, he would enter a building which had caught fire and rescue people within until the firemen reported on the

scene. Some time back, Mehta found a man, who had been stabbed, lying in one of the Khetwadi lanes. When no one else dared to intervene, Mehta took him to the hospital and a life was saved. These various anecdotes were reported by his wife.

Yet, Mehta was not concerned with protecting his own life. When his rivals reportedly wrote him anonymous letters early this year, threatening to kill him, Mehta was unperturbed. He would tell his relatives, "*Jaré marvanu hase tare marsu* (death will come when it is destined)." But when the family came to hear of a *supari* (contract for killing) of Rs 2,25,000 being issued for Mehta's life by some mobsters, a complaint was lodged with the police, said Dinshaw. He turned down the offer of police protection, believing that a police constable would find it difficult to guard him all through the day since he moved around on a scooter or alternately on a bicycle, reserving the car only for unavoidable emergencies. According to Dinshaw, he would tell the police, "Instead of offering me protection, you should curb the activities of the gangsters."

Mehta (right) being honored by Sushilkumar Shinde (circa 1977)



Reportedly, every night when returning home from office, his youngest son Noshir would escort his father on his own vehicle. But on the fatal night of June 12, Noshir's vehicle was out of order, and the family, after four months of no untoward incidents, was a little lax. Mehta was negotiating a turn on his scooter whilst returning from his Falkland Road office to his Foras Road residence at around 10 pm when the assailants fired. An old, ailing family assistant who was riding pillion rushed him to the Nair Hospital where he was declared dead. A post-mortem revealed three bullets in his body. The following afternoon the body was taken to his residence, and placed outside on a specially erected podium at Rusi Mehta Compound, enabling the gathering of around 5,000 colleagues, friends and admirers to pay their last respects. Later a procession, chanting a refrain of "Rusi Mehta *amar rahe* (may he live eternally)" accompanied the hearse on its way to the Doongerwadi, amidst heavy security arrangements by the police. Outside the Albless Bungli, the face was once again uncovered for public viewing, before the last rites were performed. Several restaurants, shops and establishments in the Girgaum, Tardeo, Grant Road and Lamington Road areas downed their shutters and observed a *bandh* (voluntary closure) for a day, notes *The Daily* report of June 14.

While the identity of the killers has not been revealed by the police and no witnesses are forthcoming, the city's several newspapers, which gave the grim event prominent coverage, cited various possible reasons for the murder: a tenancy feud in one of the buildings where Mehta was joint owner; Mehta's attempts to demolish unauthorized constructions; curbing the activities of bootleggers, gamblers, and drug peddlars, which antagonized them; and a crusade against one of the locality's gangsters, Noorali Khoja. At a meeting convened by the Bombay District South Central Congress Committee on June 14, member of parliament Murli Deora is reported to have said, "It has become impossible for the elected representatives to discharge their duties. Rusi Mehta is one of the victims of such a sad situation."

As a businessman, Mehta owned flour mills and a foundry adjacent to his residence. After his elementary

education, he started his career as a bus conductor, thereafter worked as an usher, and later assisted in a flour mill before setting up his own independent business. He also owned some gymnasiums in Bombay, and was keen that a hotel which he was constructing at Lonavla be utilized by the middle class who could not afford expensive holidays, notes Dhun.

Keenly interested in community affairs, Mehta made sure that at the recent Bombay High Court hearing on the amendments to the election scheme, his point of view as an F (donor) Register member was represented. One of his most cherished dreams was to see the additional floor space index at the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital utilized for the establishment of a Parsi medical college. His wife Dhun recalled that as an animal lover who opened his doors to all stray animals, Mehta would get up early in the mornings, cook for the animal and feed it himself, if she showed any resentment towards shouldering responsibility for yet another pariah! "In all his actions he was guided by the principle that justice should be done to the unfortunate," noted a family member.

He is survived by his wife Dhun, daughters Anahita and Parizad, and sons Dinshaw, Fili and Noshir by his first wife Silloo.

★ ★ ★

Courteous corporator

Died: Khurshed Jehangir Bardy, 81, former general manager (finance) and company secretary of Godrej and Boyce, the largest private limited company in the country, and an active community social worker, on June 2, 1987 in Malaysia following kidney failure.

In his 56 years of service with Godrej, which he joined as a junior accountant under Pirojsha Godrej, Bardy's interest in the welfare of his workers even extended to marital and vocational counselling, remembers his wife Jer.

A trustee of the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation and of the Kappawalla Agiary in Bombay, Bardy was actively



Bardy: helped recruits

involved in the Bombay Parsi Pun-chayet (BPP) trusteeship elections. In April last, he had vehemently opposed the Bombay High Court's judgment on the BPP electoral scheme which withdrew the direct voting rights of those who had donated Rs 5,000 and above to the BPP and its affiliated charities, on the grounds that the change would adversely affect the community's source of funds.

Born in a family of eight brothers and sisters, Bardy had schooled at Byramjee Jeejeebhoy. After a year at St Xavier's College, he successfully completed his articles for the GDA (Government Diploma in Accountancy). Later he qualified as ACA (Associate member of Chartered Accountants) and ACSI (Associate member of Company Secretaries of India). Many Parsi job seekers were recruited through his contacts. His wife recalls that when they were newly married and she, though a student, contributing to the family income, a nominal sum would be set aside each month to help a poor Parsi boy in his studies.

Keenly interested in cricket and bridge, Bardy was the secretary of the Zoroastrian Cricket Club which in those days used to operate from a tent at the Azad Maidan. He then joined the Elphinstone Club and served as trustee there.

An active member of Lodge Beaman, in 1985 he was presented with an appreciation award for "40 years of meritorious masonic service." His passion for travelling never abated and he died in Malaysia while visiting his son.

Bardy is survived by his wife Jer, son Aspi and daughter Dhanoo Khus-raukhan.

Welfare worker



Died: Mahyar Byramji Patel, 56, former Editor of *Parsiana* and one-time secretary - cum-treasurer of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, on May 6, 1987 following celebr-

ral hemorrhage at Masina Hospital in Bombay.

The Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman which Patel served for eight years "appreciated the services rendered by him" at its general committee meeting on June 11. He was instrumental in introducing community activities like elocution competitions for Irani boys, informs his son Adale, and if asked

why he never sought reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by him, he would say that the same amount could be utilized instead in helping a poor deserving family.

After serving the Iranian Anjuman for several years, Patel worked as secretary-cum-treasurer of an infirmary, the Dr Dosibai and Jehangir Ruttonsha Dadabhoy Charity Trust in the Masina Hospital compound.

Patel had studied the Avesta language and was the author of the English translation of *Gathas - Songs that Zarathushtra sang*, which was serialized in *Parsiana*. As Editor of *Parsiana*, a fledgling magazine which was then owned by Dr Pestonji Warden, Patel's duties ranged "from that of a manager to a peon" he would humorously inform his family members.

His study of the *Gathas* convinced him, recalls Adale, that after-death ceremonies should be restricted to

four days only as otherwise it resulted in unduly taxing poor Zoroastrians who could not afford the elaborate rites. He is also believed to have been very opposed to the idea of Parsis being a closed community who emphasized their ethnic and religious identity to keep off outsiders.

Born in Bombay, Patel had schooled first at Queen Mary and later matriculated from Master S.P. Tutorial. Initially looking after the family's ginning press business in Hubli, Patel later diversified into other business ventures like manufacturing radio transformers, and electrical servicing. After winding up the ginning factory in 1965 Patel, who was never materialistically inclined, was happy to devote his time to social and community activities, notes a family source.

Patel is survived by his wife Dogdo and son Adale.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD... continued from page 15

roze function - over \$ 500 (Rs 6380) - will be divided between the Parsee General Hospital and the Athornan Madressa, adds the newsletter.

Orchestrate at festival

Beginning his third season as music director of the Chicago Philharmonia, Farobag Homi Cooper has been appointed artistic director of the University of Chicago's PRISM Music Festival, writes Mark Epstein in the June issue of *Gavashni*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec. The Chicago Philharmonia will become the resident professional orchestra of the festival, and Cooper "will assume the directorship of the Sinfonia Virtuosi, the University's most advanced orchestra, and serve as music advisor for the chamber winds."

Born in 1957, Cooper emigrated from Karachi in 1966. He has also "performed on the piano at Carnegie Recital Hall, and participated as a chorus member in over 100 performances at New York's Metropolitan Opera House," notes Epstein. As a scholarship student in violin at the Manhattan School of Music, he continued his studies in piano, theory and conducting, at the Eastman School of Music while simultaneously enrolled at the University of Rochester as a de-

gree candidate in mathematics and philosophy.

Cooper was appointed principal conductor of the University of Chicago's Wind Orchestra in 1981, and was named music director of the Chicago Philharmonia in 1984, adds Epstein.

Mistry's short stories

Tales from Firozsha Baag, a new collection of short stories by Rohinton Mistry, has been described by *The Toronto Star's* book reviewer Ken Adachi as the "new jewel in Canada's literary crown," reports the June newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). Mistry's short stories have been featured in many of Canada's literary journals and anthologies over the years, and he has won the University of Toronto's fiction prize. The book, which is published by Penguin, is priced at \$9.95 (approximately Rs 95).

As the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Toronto in April 1988 will feature a display of photographs of previous congresses, the ZSO, in their June newsletter, has asked for such pictures to be sent for viewing and selection.

They are, in particular, looking for photos taken at the First North American Congress held at Toronto in 1968. Owners of such pictures are requested to contact either Phiroz Dastoor (244-

6728) or Dinshaw Kanga (226-1355).

"The community's response to our appeal has been overwhelming," writes Ms Putli Mirza in the ZSO June newsletter. "We have already reached the half-way mark to our goal of \$ 10,000 (Rs 95,300), and more donations are still coming in."

The ZSO is among the associations the Mobedjis had appealed to for aid when their three-year-old son Yazad needed extensive surgery to arrest the progressing deformity caused by Crouzon's disease.

Yazad, who is undergoing surgery at the Toronto Sick Children's Hospital, is accompanied by his father Jehangir - a mobed at the Dadysett Agiary in Bombay - and his mother Soona. "His heart operation was a complete success and he recovered from it in a week's time," reports Mirza. "Through all the pain and discomfort, his cheery smile greeted all who visited him...Yazad will be undergoing a few minor operations before the final major skull and face surgery scheduled for May 28."

The operations are free, but the donations will help to pay for Yazad's hospital stay and other medical expenses, and their travel. The remnant "will be kept in trust for Yazad's return to Toronto after three years for the completion of the entire surgical procedure," adds Mirza.

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