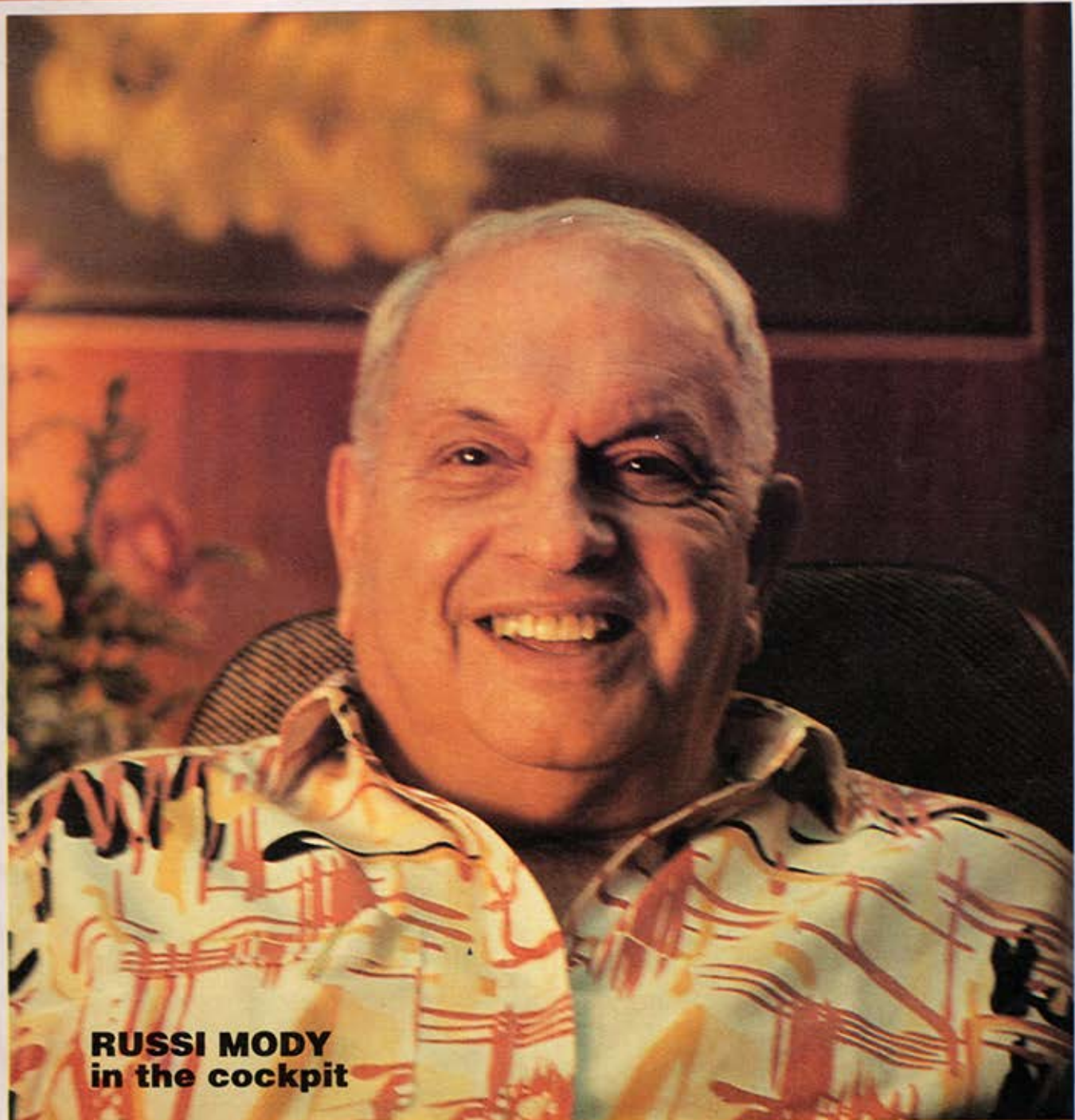


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Parsiana

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

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The Directory will be published by the end of the year and the same will be widely distributed among our baugs, Parsi conglomerates, doctors and hospitals.

Those wishing to register as donors may write to the undersigned at B-18 Aidun Building, 1st Dhobi Talao Lane, Bombay 400002, clearly indicating their desire to do so. Please state name, full address, office and residence telephone numbers,

blood group and age (as on January 1, 1995).

Please note that the organizers are only involved in the compilation and publication of the Directory and do not undertake to coordinate and line-up blood donation. This is being clarified as, invariably, requests are received for the same. The users are required to refer to the Directory and contact the donors personally.

KERSI LIMATHWALLA

For the aged poor

The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) is delighted to inform the members of the community that a 92-year-old Hindu gentleman, having enjoyed lifelong friendship with many Zoroastrians and love and affection for the Zoroastrian community, has donated to The WZO Trust a munificent sum of six lakh rupees. This donation will swell the Adelji Nusserwanji Kharas and Shirinmai Nusserwanji Kharas of Pune Fund which he had established within The WZO Trust with a donation of one lakh rupees in February 1994 to a total of seven lakh rupees.

The amount is to be capitalized in government securities and the income to be utilized for providing solace to and welfare of senior Zoroastrians who are poor and lonely by providing financial assistance, to remember the loved ones who have passed away, to provide items that would provide spiritual solace such as sudreh, kusti and prayer books, arrange modest get-togethers on occasions such as their birthdays which otherwise they would have had to pass disheartened and in solitude, to fund the performance of the last rites of the poor who pass away without any relatives, or whose relatives are too poor to have the obsequies performed, etc.

The essence of the spirit for which the Fund has been set up is to bring some joy and happiness, by way of small but meaningful gestures, into the lives of those who are economically weak, aged and lonely.

The WZO salutes this noble human being on behalf of the entire Zoroastrian community.

DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY

Managing Trustee, The WZO Trust

"Spineless Parsis"

The contents of Brig Grant's letter ("Spineless Parsis," Parsiana, January 1995), is a

typical illustration of the harm which some well-intentioned but misguided Zoroastrians try to cause.

My grandfather and father worked in the railways and I have spent the first 19 years of my life in railway quarters in Valsad and Surat very happily and amicably in the midst of sister communities, celebrating and enjoying with them all their festivals and ours in the true spirit of hamazor.

It is indeed surprising that Brig Grant who as an army officer might have been exposed to an equally, if not greater, cosmopolitan background and must have fought in battlefields shoulder to shoulder with jawans and officers belonging to sister communities, wants the Dastur Meher Road Zoroastrians 'to sour instead of sweeten' the atmosphere in which the Ganesh festival is celebrated.

Granted that in the streets of Poona the discipline and decorum with which the armed forces celebrate the festivals would be missing; granted also that the location of the pandal, the din and noise could cause plenty of suffering and inconvenience to the residents; but this situation exists in all locations. All residents irrespective of caste, creed and color put up with it at the time of each and every festival including the celebration of weddings, poojas, etc.

Brig Grant may recall that in his Delhi days in Defence Colony, the entire street was allowed to be blocked by mandaps (on payment of a fee of Rs 10 only) whenever a family residing in that location had a death or wished to celebrate a wedding, a janoi, a mundan or hold a satyanarayan or other pooja.

I would like to believe that the Zoroastrians of D. M. Road and the trustees of the Poona Parsee Panchayat did not proceed along the lines suggested by Brig Grant due to the spirit of hamazor with sister communities even at the cost of being dubbed 'spineless' by our Zoroastrian 'Don Quixote.'

I also hope and pray that those who read the "Spineless Parsis" are not motivated into urging Brig Grant to lead them into 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'

As regards the Federation being both toothless and gutless, I must admit that quite a few of the delegates who attend the Federation meetings have lost some of

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their teeth and their guts might also have been subjected to the cruel kindness of the surgeon's knife, but their hearts and their heads are in position.

KEKI J. GANDHI

Hon Secretary, Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian

Anjumans of India

"Past Ideals..."

A letter-to-the-editor from a former nurse at Sir J. J. Hospital, pointed out the missing information about Parsi nurses in an earlier article (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 1995). This prompts me to pass on some information about another nurse.

My maternal grandmother, Bomanbai Bhajiwalla (her maiden name) had served as a midwife at J. J. Hospital around the end of the 19th century. I had seen the many volumes of medical books written in Gujarati that she had studied for her practice.

Originally from Poona, where Bomanbai grew up with her parents Dorabji and Navajbai, and sisters Jerbai, Dinamai and Pirojbai, she later came and worked in Bombay for several years. When one of her sisters, who had married into the business family of the Wadias in Porbandar, Gujarat, died, leaving an infant son, Pudamjee, she married the widower husband, Merwanjee, to take proper care of the infant, as was customary.

When my maternal grandfather died at

an early age, after giving her two more children, Faredoon and Mehroo (my mother) who were toddlers, Bomanbai was left to fend for herself. The wealthy Wadia brothers gave her a very small allowance, but she did not lose heart. She raised some poultry, sold eggs, etc., and raised her children in Porbandar, later brought them to Bombay, and arranged for their marriages.

I will be proud of my grandmother always, a brave Parsi lady who ventured to study medicine, practice nursing in a big city, and fulfilled the obligations of family and society in spite of the misfortunes and obstacles that came in her way. I would like to hear from any relatives of hers from her paternal Bhajiwalla family.

MANECK NAWROJI BHUJWALA

"To Think Anew"

It was interesting to read the Editorial Viewpoint "To Think Anew" (*Parsiana*, November 1994). Over the years *Parsiana* has played its part and it is indeed an achievement that it has survived for such a long time in spite of the fact that the magazine caters to a small percentage of the smallest community in India and perhaps in the world.

The price of your magazine is rather tough, in spite of a large number of adver-

tisements. Can you not reduce the price in order to reach a larger audience in the community? I believe you have now moved into bigger office premises. How did you manage that?

Your article was educative for me. I had very little idea of certain events. You will do well to repeat the important and notable events that may have taken place in the past for the benefit of the younger generation.

I have seen the "Questionnaire" published in the *Parsiana*. It will be entirely futile for us to fill up the predictions, and it is not likely to serve any purpose. Instead I would suggest that you, along with the other publications namely *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *Mumbai Samachar* collect statistics on the community, which will be able to tell us the future. You may collect data on a wide variety of subjects and then make a summary. There must be some organization in our punchayets with data on the community. You may collect the same and publish the same for the information of the community.

Mr R. M. Rivetna has predicted Zoroastrians in North America will be over 50,000. I sincerely hope it happens. History tells us that in countries dominated by Christians and Muslims it is difficult for minorities to survive. Hindus are not fanatics and we in India have survived because of the indif-

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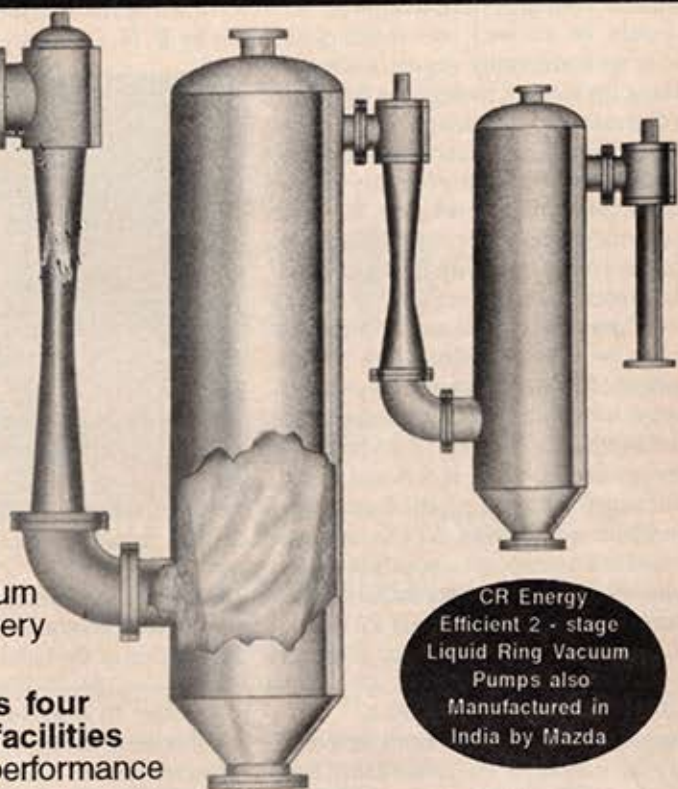
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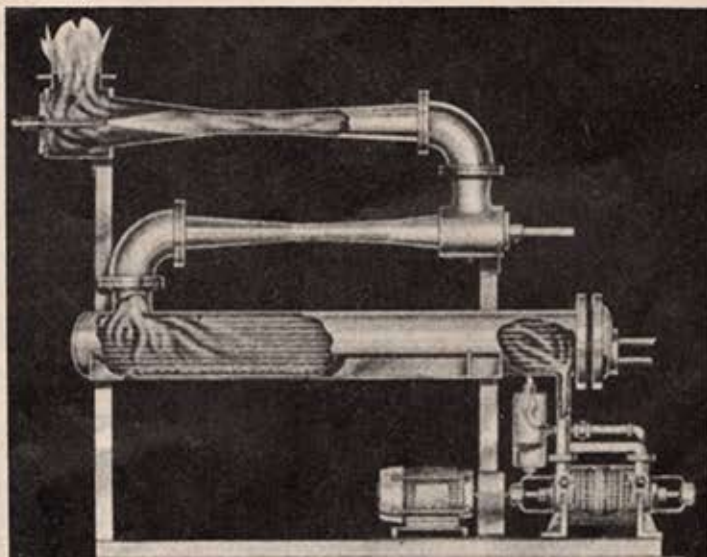
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ferent attitude of the Hindus. However I hope and pray that Mr Rivetna proves right. No doubt, I will not be there to see the event.

DALJI GUNDEVA

The Editor replies

Collecting census statistics is a difficult task and an expensive one. Unless substantial trained volunteers are available, the data could be skewed and incomplete. There is no community organization undertaking the job yet, though the need has been discussed ad infinitum. As even the municipality and the Government of India census office have ceased to identify births/deaths by community or religion, we have to be dependent upon our coreligionists to inform us. Not all do, with the result that the data tends to be incomplete.

The *Parsiana* questionnaire was not meant to provide statistical data but an indication of how our community thinks and what it expects. We do not expect to predict anything.

The price of *Parsiana* is dictated by the costs of paper and printing which are moving unrelentingly upward. As it is we have to subsidize the publication cost from other sources. We have been functioning from the same premises for the past 22 years. There has been no change in our address!

"A Zoroastrian again..."

You have performed a service to the community by revealing the remarkable and unedited correspondence between the well-regarded Mr Neville Wadia and the seven respected high priests ("A Zoroastrian again," *Parsiana*, October 1994).

The "again" in the title of your piece is misleading, as are similar statements in the correspondence like "re-appointment" to the Zoroastrian religion, "welcome me 'back' into the faith," "rejoin" our great faith, and "re-inducted" into the Zoroastrian faith."

This is a case of straight conversion, as Mr Wadia has never been a Zoroastrian at any time. Born a Christian of both Christian parents, he was duly admitted into the Church, has belonged to the Christian faith throughout his life, and has brought up his own children as Christians — these are, reportedly, the religious circumstances.

In their joint letter to Mr Wadia assenting to the "navjote," Dasturs (Drs) H. K. Mirza and K. M. JamaspAsa have thought it appropriate to offer the following as their sole religious evidence: "It has been stated in the Persian Rivayats that it is proper and allowable to take back a Zoroastrian man or woman who wishes to revert to his/her

religion which he/she has abandoned under certain circumstances and accepted an alien religion."

Although these Dasturs do not cite the full source or actual text of their reference, it seems to be from the Rivayat of Nariman Hoshang (c. 1478 AC). The following is the pertinent text from *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others* by B. N. Dhabhar, Bombay 1932:



Wadia: "roots are purely Zoroastrian"

•"Question: A behdin turns darvand (i.e. goes over to another faith). If he returns to the religion of the behdins, is it allowed or not?"

•"Answer: It is allowable. They should convert him to the religion in the way (prescribed). He should be advised and admonished, should perform a patet and (then) bareshnum should be administered to him. He should again engage himself in performing penitential acts and should recant (his former deeds). Let it be known that he should be allowed (to be retaken) in this way." (Note: no navjote prescribed or necessary — taken as duly performed during the then behdin's childhood.)

Mr Wadia is not a darvand/darvand. These terms are later variants of the Avestan word *dregvant* which Ervad K. E. Kanga defines as "deviating from the mandates of Zarathushtra; not following the doctrines of religion; an irreligious or evil person" (*Avesta Dictionary*, Bombay 1900). These Avesta-based definitions are inapplicable to Mr Wadia — a born, initiated and lifelong non-Zoroastrian belonging to another valid religion.

As Dastur Mirza has explained, "...neither in Avesta nor in Pahlavi of Sasanian times, was a non-Zoroastrian regarded as a darvand..." (*The Bombay Samachar*, October 4, 1992). As he further explains there, the words for a non-Zoroastrian are: in Avesta, *anyotkaesha* (one of alien faith);

in Pahlavi, *aner* (non-Iranian) and *yutden* (one of different religion); and in Persian, *juddin*, with like meaning.

A "darvand" is a former Zoroastrian who has gone over to another faith. Dastur Mirza again: "Dravand (is) one who has gone astray, a wicked person — this generally refers to a Zoroastrian who has neglected and discarded the Zoroastrian practices..." ("Conversion Caucus," Bombay 1971). Sir Ness converted to Christianity; but his son, Neville, always a Christian, never discarded Zoroastrianism for Christianity.

Likewise, Mr Neville Wadia has never been a "behdin."

Dastur Mirza defines this term (*Outlines of Parsi History*, Bombay 1974) as: "Behdin, 'a Zoroastrian, a member of the Zoroastrian laity.' The Zoroastrian religion is termed in the Avesta: *daenam vanguhim* 'the good religion.' From this term is derived the Pahlavai *vehden*, Modern Persian *behdin* 'one belonging to the good religion' — a term generally used in Pahlavai and Modern Persian to designate a Zoroastrian..."

Dastur Mirza helps us clinch the matter with an earlier comment of his on the same key question from the same Rivayat (Mirza, op. cit. 1971):

"Edujee quotes Nariman Hoshang's Rivayat in the following words:

'Question: A behdin turns darvand (i.e. goes over to another faith). If he returns to the religion of the behdins, is it allowed or not?'

"How can Edujee quote these words in support of conversion of non-Zoroastrians? Does he mean to say that 'a behdin' is a non-Zoroastrian?..."

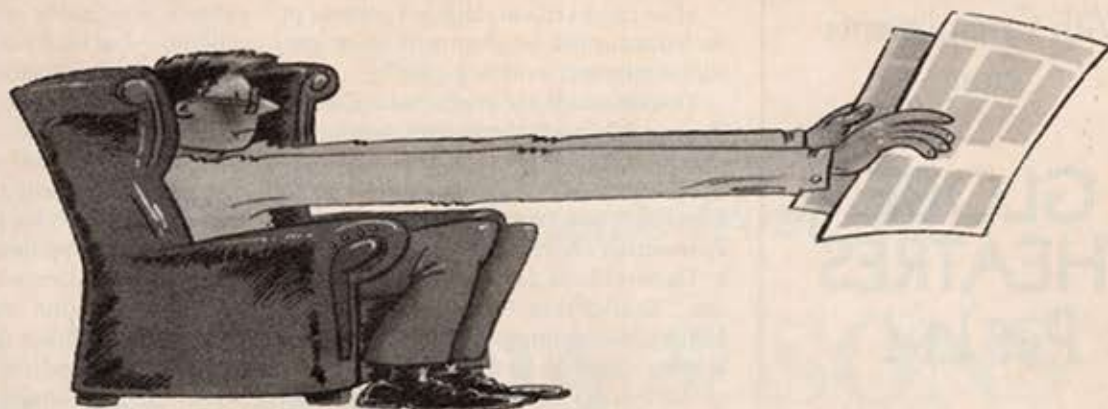
By precisely the same token, how can the Dastur envisage these words in support of conversion of a non-Zoroastrian like Mr Wadia? Do they mean to say that "a behdin" is a non-Zoroastrian?

In sum, Nariman Hoshang's Rivayat simply does not apply to Mr Wadia — he is not a "behdin-turned-darvand!"

Dastur (Dr) F. M. Kotwal offers no religious evidence. He only provides four non-religious "mitigating circumstances" of no ecclesiastical relevance, and in his first letter, he actually calls such a "navjote" the "most farcical element." Dasturs H. Dastur and N. M. Dastur echo the scholar-Dasturs, giving no further religious testimony.

Thus, all the five assenting Dasturs have provided inapplicable and hence irrelevant religious evidence, or none at all, in their correspondence giving the go-

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ahead to Mr Wadia's "navjote" and "conversion."

How can a critical religious consent of such dimensions be given with no or irrelevant religious evidence cited?

On conversion, the three scholars-Dasturs have already made themselves thoroughly clear in their published monographs titled "Conversion in Zoroastrianism — A Myth Exploded" and "Antia's 'Acceptance': A Zoroastrian 'Ahrmogih' (Heresy)" (both by Dastur Mirza, Jamasp Asa and Kotwal), and "Conversion Caucus" (by Dastur Mirza). Just the titles suffice to indicate the authors' findings on the subject.

To quickly convey something of the flavor of these comprehensive studies, here is part of Mirza's conclusion in his "Conversion Caucus":

"With confidence and with emphasis can one assert...that:

"(1) There is no word in the Avesta for 'to convert' or for 'conversion' in the sense of 'change of religion.'

"(2) Never in their long and chequered history have the Zoroastrians adopted a policy of 'conversion' of non-Zoroastrians."

To leave the reader with another enigma from the correspondence, Mr Wadia states in his letter to the seven high priests, "My own roots are purely Zoroastrian..." According to reports of his religious and parental antecedents, Mr Neville Wadia's "roots" appear to be as "purely" Zoroastrian/Parsi as they are "purely" Christian/British.

RONI K. KHAN
Nasik

Mr Neville Wadia had his navjote performed ("A Zoroastrian again," *Parsiana*, October 1994) and the orthodox segment of the community has not recorded any protest, as has normally been done in the past. In fact, letters of congratulations have been published, for his having entered the Zoroastrian fold!

It is surprising that the newspapers were not splashed with condemnations that a sacrilege was committed. Why? Why are the protectors of the faith sleeping? When dead people have not been spared, as in the case of Ms Roxan Shah, when a young boy who became a navar was termed a half-breed because his mother was a non-Parsi (which was indeed shameful on the part of those who used this term), why was Mr Wadia insulated from the wrath and vehemence of the great defenders of the faith? Why are they silent? Is it because he wields more power in the form of wealth? Are they cowered by the enormity

of his affluence and influence?

Each individual has the freedom to be modern or orthodox in his approach to his religion — but what I am trying to point out here are the double standards with which we treat our own people. It angers and disgusts me that there are people in our community who will condemn the ordinary man for a particular action, but will exonerate the rich for the same action.

For the self-appointed defenders of the faith to remain silent on the action of a rich man, which action would have caused grave trouble within the community had the same emanated from a man of ordinary means, is a very sad commentary indeed on the religious credibility of the community — it means these same people, who have been crying themselves hoarse over most religious issues which they deem will harm or demean the faith, are willing to deliberately close their eyes, to numb their religious sensitivities, to make compromises, when the people involved are people of means, whom they do not wish to contend with. It is only the defenceless that they dare to drag through mud in the name of a religion which does not really need their unreliable support. **Ms THIRTY E. BHARUCHA**

The third child

The trustees of Parsi Punchayet, Bombay have initiated a scheme to help those families in which a third child is born after July 1993. But I do not think it is practical for the following reasons:

- The food and medicine cost of each child is over Rs 1,000.
- The books and education and tuition fees come to over Rs 1,500.
- The majority of families live in less than 500 sq feet space which is just enough for husband, wife and two children.
- The wife will be obliged to give up her employment or employ full-time help which will cost nearly Rs 2,000 per month including food, plus a lot of things disappearing from the home.

I have got over 100 pairs married in the last 10 years. I visit their homes and see the difficulties they are facing in educating their two children for, even after paying heavily for private tuition, the mother or the father is compelled to see that the child has completed the lesson and in some places I have already seen the wife compelled to give up her job to save private tuition and daily worries from the ayah.

The third child is only possible for rich families having more than Rs 15,000 per month but the rich family girl will not be ready to bear the hardships of giving birth

to three children which will deprive her of enjoying freedom until the third child gets to be 10 to 12 years old.

I think it is far better to give very high education to two children so that they can get good jobs and face the world, for children of backward communities are coming up very fast and have become officers in banks and other reputed concerns whilst Parsis are only getting low-paid jobs of Rs 2,000 to 3,000 maximum and so they are obliged to marry later -- at the age of 25 to 30 years.

This is my personal view. I am 83 now. My house collapsed, my wife died after 51 years of a happy marriage and I have done social work for 30 years. I was an engineer in the last world war and thereafter worked on Haj ships till I fell sick and was obliged to give up my job. I attended the matrimonial court for 10 years and observed that married girls were forcing their husbands to leave their parents' home and so divorce had to be given.

TEHMURAS PESTONJI SETHNA

"Of baronets and knights"

With reference to the letter "Of baronets and knights" by Ms Freany J. Ashburner (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 1994) and subsequent additions to it made by Mr Behram S. Rustumji, I would like to add the following:

•Sir Dadiba M. Dalal was for a certain period the High Commissioner of India in England.

•Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, Knight, Companion of the Star of India (CSI), a leader of the Parsi community, a great philanthropist and industrialist, was not a baronet. It was his nephew and adopted son and heir, who became Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, first baronet.

•Baronets and knights alike bear the prefix 'Sir' before their names. It is interesting to note that two baronets, due to their personal achievements of a very high order, received titles from the British Empire, which were of such a nature that they could have used the prefix 'Sir' even if they had not been baronets. They were Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, fifth baronet, Knight Commander of the Star of India (KCSI) and Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, second baronet, Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire (GBE), Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (KCIE).

Dr VIRAF MINOCHER DHALLA

Boyce Agiary needs funds

The Boyce-Dhana Patel Agiary building is a landmark at Tardeo. It is centrally located and serves the spiritual needs of hundreds of Zoroastrian families staying within a one-mile radius all round. Built over half a century ago, it is served by dedicated priests who preserve the purest and most pristine form of ceremonials and rituals.

Funds are needed for extensive repairs. Cheques crossed and marked "Payee's Account only," are requested in favor of the "Boyce Dhana Patel Fire Temple Repair Fund." Of the estimated amount of over Rs 35 lakhs, we have already collected/been promised Rs 10 lakhs.

NADIR A. MODI
chairman,

J. P. F. SHROFF
secretary
Boyce Trust

A sign of vitality

Many are scandalized or saddened by the fact that Zoroastrians appear to be a house divided against itself. There should, in-

Boyce Agiary: where rituals are performed in their pristine form

deed, be alarm if this disunity produced lack of mutual charity — as it has, alas, sometimes done. But there need be no alarm about the fact of disunity itself. For the truth is that any great idea or movement, anything that appeals to people of every sort and is genuinely universal, is going to fragment.

Anything that absorbs the mind and is intellectually stimulating will provoke division; anything with emotional springs of action will appeal variously to different facets of the human psyche. Great political ideas, like religious ones, always split up into orthodoxies and heresies, though there may be occasions when brute force is able to deliver a deceptive semblance of stability or uniformity.

Because Zoroastrianism is entrusted to the agency of men and women it shares the experience of other movements in the world, and is subject to the same historical influences. Ideas that are held with passion and conviction are defended at high cost, and are taught to children as truth — not as vague possibilities. Who, today, teaches children about the evil of communalism as if it were a tentative hypothesis?

So Zoroastrianism has the capacity to inspire passionate differences precisely because it is a living idea. The terrible fact is that when people stop quarreling about religion it will mean that they will no longer regard it as of ultimate value. This is all very difficult for the modern mind: in the Western culture, and like ilk, the trend is to put welfare, material security and personal happiness above ideas.

Divisions among Zoroastrians arise from many causes. Some relate to variations of human personality itself: one person may like formal worship and another may prefer informality. Differences of social status have obtruded upon the life of the Zoroastrians. There are tensions between liberal interpretations and those who adhere to traditional belief, though these tend to produce lapses from the faith altogether rather than institutional divisions.

The historic disunity of the Zoroastrians was caused by incompatible understandings about the nature of the transmission of Zoroastrianism itself; about how the "people of Zoroaster" may be defined, and what is the nature of religious authority. These, are all signs of vitality.

Zoroaster spoke of the world as a place of discord, where even families would divide for his sake. And so it is.

FURHOK KEIKUSHROO TANGREE
La Roche-sur-Furon, France

continued on page 48



Events and Personalities

Extending the Parsi ward

As Hormusji Engineer, the longest serving inmate of Sir J. J. Hospital's Parsi ward cut the ceremonial ribbon on May 15, 1995, a new room with additional eight beds became operational at what once used to be a glaring sore in the Parsi community's social services and has, since some time, been metamorphosed into a showpiece. Engineer earned a garland of flowers from Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, seventh baronet.

The clean, newly tiled and painted ward bore a festive air as a jashan invoked divine benediction on the place and its inmates, all freshly turned out in new sudrehs, lenghas and dresses. A combination of geriatric ward, old people's home and hospice, no one who enters the portals of the Parsi ward ever leaves it alive — they have nowhere to go: their families are often unable and sometimes unwilling to maintain them.

To make amends for the isolation and desperation of their lives, several social workers have taken it upon themselves to provide the 25 old folks there with meals, medicines, clothes and, most of all, personal contact and comfort. So well are they looked after that there is a queue for those seeking admission.

Permission to use the new room (as well as one above which is yet to be done up), was given by Dr S. P. Shirolkar, dean of the J. J. Group of Hospitals, last year. It was used as a dump for hospital refuse by the PWD (public works department) and Rustom Jejeebhoy, in his welcome address, appreciated the cooperation of Shirolkar and Messrs Kakre and Kadam of the PWD for releasing the space for the use of Parsi patients.

Though the additional room has been renovated from funds provided by Sir J. J.

Charity Fund to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Sir J. J. Hospital, Rustom Jejeebhoy acknowledged with grace and pride the substantial aid of the community's social workers, presenting each with a floral posy: "We would be misguiding



Extending the ward (L to R): Dadi Mistry, Zal Contractor, Engineer and Parakh; (Right) Kavarana and Sir Jamsetji Photos: Adi Suder

you if you believe that what you see is all on account of us," he said. Arranging the resources to waterproof the entire roof of the Parsi ward has been the work of Ms Silloo Kavarana whom Jejeebhoy described as "not only the backbone of the ward but its heart and soul." The provision of new beds and accompanying bedside tables had also been undertaken by Kavarana.

Ms Arnawaz Mistry, Ms Roshni Damania, Ms Goolu Lala, Ms Viloo Bharucha, Ms Farida Khanna, Ms Silloo Limboowalla were profusely thanked for the good cheer and comfort they bestow upon the inmates; Ms Dolly Sarbanwalla, Ms Gool Karnac, Yezdi and Ms Zarine Daruwalla, Ms Mani Siganporia, Ms Amy Paymaster for supplying delicious home cooked meals on a daily basis; the Lions Club of Cuffe Parade through Ms Sunu Dadyburjor and Fali Poncha for providing essential commodities and medicines.

In earlier times, the inmates of the ward were not only bereft of decent food and company but of medical attention, despite being bedded on hospital premises. In contrast, now noted surgeon Adi Nazir not only visits the ward regularly but ensures that the young housemen on his team "are a source of strength to the patients." Jejeebhoy also appreciated the cooperation of the nursing staff with particular reference to head sister Tapke.

As for full-time social worker Aspi Parakh, "I have yet to see a social worker so dedicated to his task," said Jejeebhoy, adding that Parakh "does many caps — as adviser, benefactor, confidante, trusted and loyal friend."

Ere the function concluded with the sharing of *chasni* (consecrated food) and other goodies among the inmates and the invitees, the resources of the ward had appreciated by another Rs 50,000 — promised as a donation by Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Jamshed Guzder.

Arnavaz S. Mama

Welfare concerns

Seventy Zoroastrian families from 15 villages in south Gujarat were supplied groceries, provisions, sudrehs and towels by the Young Rathestars in mid-February 1995. One family in Vangan village was helped with Rs 20,000 to enable them to establish a small grocery shop to supplement their income. One family in Dharampuri village and another in Mankunia were given Rs 1,000 each to repair the roofs of their huts, according to Ms Silloo Mahava, joint honorary secretary of Young Rathestars who in her appeal for further funds has given a report of the work undertaken by their organization.



Mahava (with handbag) supervising distribution by the Young Rathestars and (right) WZO's Dinshaw Tamboli interviewing recipients



Besides distributing foodgrains and clothes to the needy in Bombay, an annual feature with Young Rathestars is their exhibition-cum-sale, their ghambars where they feed the poor, and their door-to-door collection drive, the proceeds of which are distributed to around 150 families. All the activities of the 52-year-old organization are geared towards the welfare of the community, writes Mahava.

"Young Rathestars are very eager to continue distributing foodgrains in the villages of Gujarat every year and complement the work that the World Zoroastrian Organisation is doing... To enable us to do this, Young Rathestars will continue to require the generous support of the members of our community." Cheques and drafts in the name of Young Rathestars are to be sent to Mahava at 788 Avanbai Mansion, Jame Jamshed Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014.

The Prophet's message?

A part of the "Thus Spake" series brought out by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* is a miniature pocket book of 136 pages conveying 324 sayings of the Prophet. Compiled by late B. S. Surti, author of *Shah Namah of Firdaosi*, this booklet is now in its second edition, with "additional, new but relevant material" being incorporated, and "a certain amount of regrouping and rearrangement of quotations (undertaken)... to enhance the informative value."

The book, with or without the additions and re-groupings, is a tidy bundle of complications with considerable duplication of thought, a serious lapse when the purpose of such booklets would be to encompass the thoughts of seers in a compact and condensed manner. Witness, to cite one example, Zarathushtra's sayings that "let us

not mourn over the sorrows of yesterday, forgetful of the joys that tomorrow has in store for us" (No. 145) and the advice in the very next quote, "let us not mope over the dead yesterday of despair when tomorrow is dawning with tidings full of hope."

More importantly, however, the compilation does not seem to distil the wisdom of the Prophet. The sayings chosen (or written) could have been uttered by any holy man, and the kernel of Zoroastrianism that makes it the world's oldest extant religion seems sadly missing. Equally lost is the poetry and imagery with which Zarathushtra 'spoke.'

The 324 quotes, preceded by a short, 16-page chapter/note on the Prophet, are divided into 26 categories. These subject headings range from prayers and optimistic faith, death and immortality to knowledge and wisdom, and even women and children. However, many a quote under a relevant section barely pertains to the subject heading. A fair amount of sayings under 'Philanthropy' deal with 'War,' including a gem that states "Ahghra (probably, Anghra) Mainyu, the evil genius, reaps his rich harvests on the battlefields (No. 279);" a strange kind of Zoroastrian charity, surely.

The booklet's last chapter has 19 quotes on the subject of "Think for yourself," the most quoted thought from the *Gathas* by a section of the community. However Surti's emphasis is on opposing superstition rather than promoting free independent assessment of set beliefs or dogmas.

Despite its shortcomings, the book is worth buying, for at Rs 2, it costs less than even a *popatji*.

Homi J. Rogers

Classic trainer

With 44 winners to his credit during the Bangalore racing season, Rashid Byramji

was declared the best trainer, notes the *Mid-Day* of March 28, 1995. A memento was presented to him by P. G. Beliappa, chairman and senior steward of the Bangalore Turf Club. At the end of the season, Byramji has reached the 200 mark in Classic winnings: a landmark which "will give Guinness some alteration and update work to do." Byramji already features in the *Guinness Book of World Records* with 100 wins to his credit, adds *Mid-Day*.

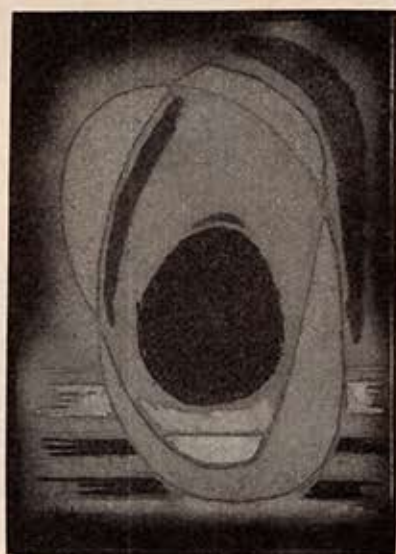
As admitted a brusque, bluff Byramji, "I am getting a little bored now; I would like to win a big race somewhere abroad." And the trainer whose life revolves around horses said, "I do not know what I'd do if I retire; I would probably die." H. J. R.

"Growing problem"

"According to the World Health Organization, the global life expectancy will be 63 years in 2000, and about 70 years in 2025. By 2025, about 20 percent of the population of the world will be more than 60 years old," write guest editors Dr Ruzva Bhathena and Dr Rustom Soonawala in *FOGSI Focus*, the newsletter of The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India. Through the special issue devoted to menopause and HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy), the contributors seek to bring awareness among the Indian populace which believes that "menopause is a natural event that should be left untreated."

While the 16-page newsletter has a lot of technical information of use to those in the medical fraternity, even a layman can pick up important tidbits of information. And Parsis in particular, known to be an aging community, could benefit from knowledge on menopause described as a "growing problem."

Menopause could be accompanied by degenerative changes in the cardiovascular system and bone structure making women "vulnerable to increased incidence of cardiovascular accidents and fractures and to psychological strain and other disabling complaints," mentions Dr V. B. Patwardhan, president of FOGSI. "Depression, nervousness, irritability, forgetfulness, lack of concentration, loss of confidence and decreased libido are the common symptoms occurring just before the onset of the menopause," states Dr Behram Anklesaria. He also writes that "women lose 50 percent of their skeleton by 70 years, while men lose merely 25 percent by 90 years. Spinal osteoporosis may lead to the typical dowager's hump, characterized by a loss of height, chronic backache and deformity."



The late Chavda with paintings Dancer I and Red Symphony, exhibited at the retrospective organized in his memory

HRT not only prevents osteoporosis in the elderly but is believed to have a significant beneficial influence on the health status of women 15-20 years after their menopause, according to the newsletter. HRT can be administered orally or non-orally depending on the circumstances. One of the possible repercussions of HRT is the risk of breast cancer if used for more than 10 years but as of now it has been established that the benefits far outweigh the risks.

Retrospective on Chavda

Pencil drawings, crayon pastels, Chinese ink on rice paper and oils — some 30 to 35 paintings of Shri Chhagva Chavda were brought together from private collectors all over the country to be exhibited at the retrospective in memory of the late artist from February 2-8, 1995 at the Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay. "Chavda's wide range is seen in the current retrospective: portraits, landscapes, abstractions, the sort of tantric designs which grace the foyer of the Tata Theatre," mentioned art critic Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni. It is a fine tribute to the man who had earlier been elected as one of the nine eminent artists of India by the Lalit Kala Akademi and subsequently been elected its fellow.

"He is interested primarily in observing

and rendering the good aspect of life. He avoids the grim, the tragic. As a result his art is decorative, entertaining, pleasant, reflecting optimism and expressing beauty and joie de vivre," S. I. Clerk had commented on viewing one of Chavda's earlier exhibitions.

The artist's personal favorite though was his series of line drawings on dancers, notes an article in *The Sunday Observer* of February 5, 1995. The grace and beauty of the dancer, the vibration, swirls, rhythm, balance, the creative energy came forth in hundreds of sketches and paintings he did on this theme. Acclaimed for his excellent draftsmanship, the line was considered "the life force of Chavda's art," in the words of art critic H. Goetz. "With just a few masterful lines, some indications of shading and touches of color he would create structure and even movement," he added.

And, in keeping with the sentiments of the artist who loved nature and animals, last year his family donated two of his works to a non-profit organization, People for Animals, which had organized an art show. One of his paintings was priced at two lakh rupees and another at three lakh rupees, reports *The Sunday Observer*.

Chavda's paintings are in the collections of connoisseurs all over the world, in

modern art museums, in many industrial houses and residential homes. The Navsari-born artist, as mentions the bio data, had studied at Sir J. J. School of Art in Bombay from where he proceeded to London and Paris to train under European masters. On his return he held his first exhibition in Bombay at the Princes Room at the Taj after which his works were displayed with regular frequency. His extensive tours of India, Malaya, Indonesia, France, Switzerland and USA gave him an insight into people and their culture. As Chavda is quoted in the invitation to the Retrospective, "From the point of view of art, I am attempting to tackle the problem of space and movement, the simplification of line and colour. There is to me nothing as throbbing with life, in a lightning release of energy as it were, as a serpent."

Super protection

Permission to incorporate the SP mark of Super Protection on Odomos Mosquito mat packs was recently granted to the manufacturers Balsara Hygiene Products Limited by Sumitomo Chemical Company, Japan. This distinction signifies a recognition of their "commitment to highest quality standards," as notes a press release.

Further reinforcement for this product came from the Fredrick Institute of Toxicology, Tamil Nadu which carried out laboratory investigations to evaluate the performance of eight commercially available mats and four coils after which they reached the conclusion that the "Odomos mat causes maximum repellency as against any other mats available in the market," mentions the promotional literature. A pack of 30 Odomos mats is available for Rs 39.

A relatively new product from the Balsara group is the Odonil anti-moth cupboard freshener that claims to prevent mildew, eliminate unpleasant odors and freshen the cupboard guarding the expensive zari saris and woollens against moths, cockroaches and other insects. Available in three fragrances — Old English Laven-



der, country spice and lemon fresh — the hanger and refill packs are priced at Rs 15 and Rs 11.25 respectively, mentions the press release.

Tops in sales

In the marketing and sales management examination conducted by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication and Management, Ms Maharukh Phiroze Siganporia secured the first position winning the Kulapati's award, a cash prize and a gold medal that was presented to her on March 4, 1995. Her market research on "Sales promotion of BPL audios in Nagpur" served as her study paper for which she scored 98 marks. She also gained distinction in three other papers, informs her father Phiroze Siganporia, editor of *Dharma Prakash*.

Presently working with Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd, Maharukh's prior work experience was at GR Electronic and Trading Company (stockist of BPL consumer electronic products for Vidarbha) and Shrinivas Training and Management Consultancy Services where her job first involved human resource development before she took up responsibilities as a marketing executive.

The Nagpur girl was a student of the J. N. Tata Parsi Girls High School and subsequently graduated in commerce from the Nagpur University, according to her curriculum vitae.

Record attendance

For the 13 years he studied at Loyola School, Jamshedpur, Maneck Kotwal has "not missed a single day's attendance," notes the citation on the Principal's Award that was conferred on Kotwal in April 1995.

"Soft-spoken and amiable," is how a family member describes the 19-year-old, six-foot-tall Kotwal who is not only good at studies, but is a keen sportsman too. He has represented his school and state in basketball and volleyball tournaments and was conferred the best sportsman of the year title for the year 1994-95. Actively involved in social service also, for two

years he was president of his School's Interact Club, the school wing of the Rotary Club.

Having just completed his 12th standard, Kotwal who aspires to be an engineer lists reading and watching English movies as his other interests, notes his father Pesi.

Roxan A. Driver

Role model

A dubious distinction has been conferred on young Parsi model Ms Sherie Meher-Homji. She is the first model in Indian advertising to be 'disrobed' by a computer. In what could have developed into a sensational and widely-reported legal wrangle had an out-of-court settlement not been effected, Meher-Homji alleged that a computer was used to strip her on the sly to make her appear completely nude in an advertisement for 'Bare Necessities' which she had modeled for with her boxer shorts on. 'Digital disrobing,' possibly the first of its kind in Indian advertising, made the term 'image manipulation' and the capacity of a computer to bring it about, widely known and discussed.

From left:
Siganporia and
Kotwal with trophies



Alongside: To mark the fourth anniversary of its foundation day, the Parvez Katrak Foundation organized a function on March 11, 1995 where Parsi lady journalists were felicitated.

(From left): Shernaaz Engineer, Rita Mehta, Bachhi Karkaria, Khorshed Deboo, Parvez Katrak, Kamal and Goshasp Limki. (Photo: Adi Suder)



By her speedy and stern action, which includes penalties on the offending advertising agency, a demand for a letter of apology and five lakh rupees in damages, Meher-Homji has nipped in the bud a possible trend of 'digital disrobing' by computer technology without the consent of the model. "The message I hope is clear," stated Meher-Homji in *The Times of India* dated April 2, 1995, "you can't get away with such unprofessional behavior." Sherie has proved that you don't have to grin and 'bare' it, if your contract doesn't state so.

H. J. R.

SPOTLIGHT

While Sam Katgara was declared the fastest driver of the day, Ms Shanteen Dastur was adjudged the fastest woman driver at the Veedol autocross held in Bombay on February 19, 1995, reports *The Times of India* of the following day. Katgara stood first in three events and second in two others.

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi

You'll find our **FRIDGES**



In virtually every second Indian home.

And more and more husbands bring home
our **MICROWAVE OVENS**



the delight of their wives.

Our **COMPRESSORS**



are found in more fridges

around the world than any other compressor made in India.

And more and more shops chill soft drinks in
our **VISICOOLERS.**



Our **DEEP FREEZER**



freeze more ice creams.

And our **CASH REGISTER**



are found in Hotels, Bars, Restaurants, Fast foods and Dept. Stores.

Kelvinator®

FEZANA founder president Rohinton Rivetna feels that Zoroastrians around the world need to be in touch with each other

"The greatest joy is to see the community flower, to be recognized in religious circles... Hopefully Zoroastrians will be known for their goodness, charity, hard work, industry. There is every sign that this is where we are heading."

Rohinton Rivetna, founder of FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) who stepped down as its president in July 1994 after eight successful years, was recapitulating the thrill of the high Zoroastrian profile at the Second Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago in September 1993. The behdin's involvement with the Interfaith Council and his unrelenting labor in the organization of the Parliament resulted in Zoroastrian high priest Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa being appointed one of the 14 presidents of the Parliament. Moreover, eight Zoroastrians were included among the assembly of 250 world leaders designated to perpetuate a Global Ethic to save the world from self destruction, with Rivetna as chairperson of the Council's international planning committee. This is a far cry from the vague and often faulty perception of Zoroastrianism in the world at large.

Rivetna has earned his place as one of the community's outstanding facilitators and as a visionary who passionately believes that all points of view are needed to contribute to the richness of human existence: "When you begin to work with other communities you soon realize that Zoroastrians have much fewer problems than the other traditions. We are much closer together than they are... Others have fragmented into hundreds of groups; other traditions, even small ones, tend to splinter. Zoroastrians, in spite of everything, have stayed together."

At the time of participating in the Parliament Rivetna says he advised his coreligionists that "we were about to participate in and be a part of a diverse group. In fact, we were going to celebrate diversity in humankind. If we were going to celebrate external diversity we must first



Photo: Varsha W. Menon

"We are much closer together"

Arnavaz S. Mama

celebrate internal diversity." This concept of each group celebrating its traditions in its own way fructified in the jashans around the world, as Zoroastrian settlements the world over programmed their jashans to coincide with the inaugural of the Parliament.

"At the Parliament itself we made certain we had no one group representing us or making presentations. The whole spectrum of ideology was presented — as did the other faiths," recounts Rivetna who has proposed to FEZANA that its members observe a unity day in North America to celebrate the variety of views on Zoroastrianism. Reiterating that he has "no trouble with diversity at all," the soft-spoken troubleshooter adds, "Any time I have an opposition, I make sure I advocate that (point of view)." Rivetna says he makes certain that various viewpoints are reflected in the *FEZANA Journal*, terming it an even handed approach. Accepting the idea that we have much to learn from each other, Rivetna notes that average Zoroastrians are quite happy to accept differences of outlook though "the leadership at both ends of the spectrum is sometimes not as tolerant — a viewpoint is not taken for what it is but a search for what is wrong."

The signing of the Global Ethic by the multifarious religious groups present was the Parliament's greatest achievement, says Rivetna. An initial declaration, the Ethic binds the signatories to the concept that every human being must be treated humanely. It advocates a culture of nonviolence and respect for life, of solidarity and a just economic order, of tolerance and truth and gender equality leading to a transformation of consciousness.

The assembly of religious and spiritual leaders signed the Ethic but dispersed without setting an agenda for the future. Regrouping after the big event was over, those who had labored to organize it decided to begin by developing an interreligious group in Chicago, working on a program to disseminate the knowledge and material collected at the Parlia-

ment, says Rivetna.

As chairperson of the international planning committee Rivetna says the first priority was the education of the international community on the concepts of the Global Ethic. A second and more onerous objective was conflict mediation in wars fought on religious grounds. A third and even wider area of work relates to "outreach — to make the human community feel connected with each other," as Rivetna phrases it.

The committee soon realized that "working (by ourselves) in Chicago is not going to get us close to our vision." Accordingly the 250 leaders of the world were invited for consultation to Chicago on September 26, 1994 of whom 80 came in person. JamaspAsa was among those who responded to a questionnaire. An ad hoc committee will provide direction for a global effort. It was Rivetna's hope that a 'precom' would be held in the spring of 1995 followed by a summit towards the end of the year with "someone with global visibility like (UN secretary general) Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali" present to give the needed support. It "would be a wonderful event if the world's religions make a declaration of coming together on the UN's 50th anniversary," Rivetna hopes.

If the leaders of the world's religions declare that they are coming together to work together, a formal constitution, etc could follow. Rivetna sees a significant role for Zoroastrians in the process "because Zoroastrians are accepted by all the different faiths; if not the first we're one of the first to have given the world the concept of religion. Therefore Zoroastrians can play a key role in the process, in making it happen."

Recalling the scheme he had presented to the Parliament which requires representatives of all faiths to come together and work on different issues facing the global community, meet at least once each year, Rivetna said that for sustained effort a body comprising of some members would need to work on a day to day basis. The project seemed to buttress the demand for a world body of Zoroastrians for, as Rivetna asks, "Who would represent Zoroastrians in the forum? When we orchestrated the Parliament, it should have been orchestrated by a body that had the support of all the Zoroastrian communities around the globe. Instead the Zoroastrian effort was primarily my effort. That's not the way we should be conducting our affairs. If we form a world assembly of religions, who is going to represent Zoroastrians?" he reit-

erates, adding, "We have to keep working for a greater understanding. The more entrenched (the position of mutually exclusive factions) the harder it is, but not impossible. People are coming around," he notes optimistically, citing the example of California's three warring associations who

"If we form a world assembly of religions, who is going to represent Zoroastrians?"

came together to host the first World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in 1993, adding happily, "That frame of mind is continuing."

Reflecting on his "rich, rewarding, satisfying" eight years as FEZANA president Rivetna notes, "It takes a tremendous amount of work to get things moving. (Wife) Roshan and I both work together on everything." After each of them putting in an estimated minimal 30 hours a week Rivetna claims, "We've just scratched the surface." But gauging from the euphoria that marked the presentation of the commemorative plaques and the standing ovation they received at the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress in July 1994, North American Zoroastrians don't quite concur with his estimation of their contribution.

According to Rivetna the challenge to Zoroastrian leadership in North America is to look 20 to 25 years ahead and set up systems and infrastructure to sustain the community as it doubles its present size. He estimates it will take two to three years before reliable figures of community settlement on that continent can emerge. Funding is a crucial problem and community needs are outstripping the contributions that philanthropists can provide. He is exercised with the need to inculcate the concept of collective funding (individuals committing to contribute a certain amount on a regular basis) as a community ideal.

One project that would need a lot of finance is participation in Hanne Strong's Global Village. Hanne and her husband Maurice (assistant to the UN secretary general who orchestrated the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and who chairs the Toronto Power and Light Corporation) have substantial property in Colo-

rado which they wish to turn into a Global Village. Chunks of the property have been offered to traditional religious groups to build whatever structure they might want. "Hanne is an admirer of Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians through her contact with Jamsheed Marker (Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN). She approached me at the 1993 Parliament when I (conducted) this workshop on a UN of Religions and offered to give Zoroastrians 40 acres of the property," says Rivetna. Just before his trip to India in October 1994 when this interview was conducted, Rivetna and a party of 30 plus Zoroastrians went to the site, spending the day there. Rivetna considers it to be an ideal place for a retreat — for contemplation, learning and recreation (ski slopes, etc are just a couple of hours' drive away) — though it is a 3½-hour drive away from Denver. It would be a wonderful opportunity for the youth to visit, especially if an elder Zoroastrian priest was available, on rotation, to give them the necessary guidance. According to Rivetna an anonymous Zoroastrian donor has promised to match whatever sum the community generates for the project.

A more critical priority in Rivetna's vision for the community is a World Council of Zoroastrian Federations (WCZF). "The primary need I see is networking between all the communities spread throughout the globe... Communities can help and guide each other (by) communication covering events, reactions, inputs. It's a two-way system (whose time has come)," as Rivetna sees it, because it's only in the past 20 years that people have been migrating and striving to maintain their identity. Earlier, "the Zoroastrians just disappeared. They were assimilated with very little trace because there were no local organizations that could... bring people together. When one doesn't have that, people find other ways to satisfy those needs," he says, implying the assimilation into the host culture which then follows. "Now we have the organizational unit in place in almost every part of the world. It satisfies the need to be together. Where there is no clear cut organization, Zoroastrians try to get together loosely. As the first generation's roots are in the mother country, we keep in touch through the mother country. But one more generation and that linkage would be lost."

Seizing on the opportunity of a number of international Zoroastrians gathered in Chicago for the Parliament, Rivetna held an informal constitutional convention to plumb their minds on the prospects of a

WCZF. A special invitation was extended to the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) "and we were delighted that Shahpur Captain and Rumi Sethna from the WZO also participated." The meeting was open to all interested persons and about 40 individuals attended, some as key participants, others as casual observers, all

"A viewpoint is not taken for what it is but a search for what is wrong"

participating in their personal capacity.

At the FEZANA annual meetings of '91, '92 and '93 Rivetna had been mandated to pursue the concept of a WCZF to work with the WZO. A draft constitution jointly prepared by Adi Davar, Dinshaw Joshi and Rivetna stressed that the WCZF would be only a coordinating body and the administrative and religious independence of its member associations and Federations would be preserved.

The WZO representatives had argued that most of the WCZF objectives were already incorporated in the WZO constitution, that a new body would be divisive for the community and that the WCZF could be incorporated into the WZO framework. The WZO representatives had agreed to consider a bicameral approach, said Rivetna, though no firm conclusion was reached in Chicago.

Accordingly two more draft constitutions were prepared, one as an independent body and the second as a body of Federations forming one of the WZO's two chambers while its original membership continued in the other. The seat of the WCZF could be Bombay, Chicago or London, according to the drafts. So far no firm response has been forthcoming, neither from the WZO nor from the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI), stated Rivetna.

According to a summary of discussions at the convention it was noted that there are more than 100 associations around the globe; the critical needs are good networking, communication and coordination between such Federations as exist e.g. FEZANA and FPZAI. Among the objects of the body would be to discuss, inform and make representations on behalf of Zoroastrians to other world or governmental bodies, to study, conduct and orchestrate re-

search on global issues concerning Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians; to coordinate Zoroastrian world congresses, providing continuity and follow-up.

"Though the primary purpose is networking there is the fear that it would become the lead organization. It may probably happen. There is no difference between a network and a world body... Everybody recognizes that networking is necessary. How it is to be orchestrated, is the question. Given a set of circumstances (e.g. the existence of the WZO) how do we synthesize all the forces? I am searching for an answer," says Rivetna.

The world has been divided into 13 regions for the benefit of Zoroastrian representation — Africa, Australia and New Zealand, Europe and UK, India, Iran, North America, South America, East Asia (Japan), Central Asia (Tajikistan...) Southeast Asia (Singapore...) South Asia (Sri Lanka...), Southwest Asia (Pakistan...) and the Middle East (Dubai...). "If a few of the regions decide to get together you would have a nucleus... It is a challenge to keep everybody together," notes Rivetna, confident that "there is a 100 percent chance of its happening by the turn of the century. There are events occurring like the Parliament of World Religions where we need to speak with one voice."

The man who helped to establish the reputation of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago as a stable, middle-of-the-road body as its president and committee member over the years; who enthused Chicagoans, particularly the youth, to participate in the construction of its Darbe Mehr; who has welcomed American engineer Joseph Peterson into the Zoroastrian fold and equally graciously accepted the ultra conservative and critical Traditional Mazdayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman of California into the FEZANA family; who has striven for a Zoroastrian identity in North America over the decades and is now venturing into the international sphere, remains the same low key, contemplative, concerned individual Parsiana had met in 1988. At that time FEZANA had been barely a year old and Rivetna had been concerned about this newborn offspring. Now the midwife is focussing on the safe delivery of a potentially more fractious infant, the WCZF.

Says Rivetna, "There is interest but we know that we're treading on soft ground. Everybody is very cautious that we don't tread on toes, don't cause divisions. I look at it as a challenge to our leadership to come up with solutions..."

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"We can't keep compromising..."

Religious beliefs evolve with the socio-cultural environment says FEZANA president Dolly Dastoor

Amavaz S. Mama



To shore up the community's self-esteem and hence its identity in the North American milieu the new president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), Ms Dolly Dastoor, is promoting the concept of nationhood without territory. "Together we can create our Zoroastrian nation — in our hearts and in our homes," she noted in the course of her acceptance speech at the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress where she was elected to fill the office occupied for the past eight years by founder president Rohinton Rivetna.

To define that 'nation' however, Dastoor envisages a physical, social, educational, administrative and financial infrastructure. An agiary in a high density area like Ontario or California is one of her hopes and "should come about in our lifetime," she noted in an interview with *Parsiana* last September. "To be able to lay down your roots and feel you belong, you need solid structures. The feeling you get when you visit a community which has such a structure — a place to congregate, to meet... (It creates) a sense of pride... A binding, solidifying force," she calls it, adding that the religiosity of people with a community *dar-e-meher* is different from those without it, as they begin to preserve religious traditions: "People in Toronto and Chicago have *muktads*," she notes in substantiation of her belief.

Another bulwork for the Zoroastrian identity would be the generation of greater awareness about Zoroastrians among the host community. But to project their image accurately, Zoroastrians need to have a clearer concept of how many they are, their

educational, age, sex and financial profile. The information would help FEZANA plan for educational courses, scholarships, a chair in Zoroastrian studies at an American university, the necessary post retirement provisions.

A consolidated North American directory would facilitate the creation of a Zoroastrian credit card on which Houston's Kaemarz Dotivala is currently working through a bank, informs Dastoor. It would also enable greater networking among professionals and business people. However, a section of the community, particularly the Iranians are worried that they may be open to harassment if the information about family origin, etc is easily accessible. Another blank spot is encountered as people are reluctant to divulge their age. Even if the directory misses out on five to 10 percent of the population, Dastoor feels it would still answer "the need for a database (as currently) we are throwing out figures, groping in the dark."

An investment policy "to better manage our assets" is a simultaneous goal, together with the need to create funds: "Even though we are considered a philanthropic community, we do not have a history of donating on a regular and individual basis. We need to change that mentality," Dastoor had noted at the Congress.

Though Iranians seem to be reluctant to divulge personal data, they are "much more nationalistic for the community and the religion than Parsis," admits the Bombay born and reared Dastoor. With a functional common language (apart from English), the Iranians have a greater sense of culture, have their own plays, music,

dancing. Their expression of religion is more pragmatic, she adds.

A common calendar would be a consolidating factor but if the ongoing attempt to ascertain grassroots opinion on the subject reveals that "people don't want to pursue it, we'll drop it," assures Dastoor.

A part of the nationhood concept is concern for Zoroastrian visitors. "Zoroastrian students should contact us and keep in touch. (They should) make provisions before coming but most contact us only when they're in trouble. We want an idea of how many people are coming (because) we have our own students to support." The ongoing recession has had its impact on the Zoroastrian community too, she notes.

Referring to Hanne Strong's offer of 40 acres of land at the proposed Global Village in Crestone, Colorado (see page 16) Dastoor notes the proviso that "within three years we must build something." Being a retreat not too easily accessible to most Zoroastrians, Dastoor would prefer it to be a longer term project.

In the context of the stresses and strains of varied and contrasting interpretations of the religion and its practice, Dastoor says "We can't keep compromising all the time. We need to take a stand — its the price of leadership." Defending the need of different Zoroastrian settlements to talk to each other on global issues, Dastoor reiterates that the survival of the community could be better ensured by "pooling people together in one nationhood, one commonality. The religion has to evolve with the socio-cultural environment (through) understanding and acceptance of the reality of the situation." She says we must create

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"structures to prevent outmarriage and absorb those that happen... We need to relook at our scriptures objectively, look at the source of our practices."

With a lifetime of work in geriatric psychology, Dastoor is an assistant professor at the department of psychiatry at

**We must create
"structures to prevent
outmarriage and
absorb those that
happen"**

Montreal's McGill University, and a member of the executive committee of its Centre for Studies in Aging. Ex president of the Alzheimer Society of Montreal she currently holds the chair of its Family Services Committee and is a doctoral candidate in psychology at Concordia University, notes the September 1994 bulletin of the Centre for Studies in Aging. Dastoor's phenomenal energy has enabled her to simultaneously serve as chairperson of Zonta International's International Committee on the Status of Women, attend the UN commission on the Status of Women in Vienna, serve as secretary-treasurer of the section on Adult Development and Aging of the Canadian Psychological Association. She has been past (and current) president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and secretary of FEZANA apart from her personal contribution to the community in raising a family of three children who have embraced different professions.

Asian Youth Conference

"We have made history, let us not become history" is the theme of the First Asian Zoroastrian Youth Conference scheduled to be held in Karachi on October 23 and 24, 1995. Conference chairperson Ms Toxy

Cowasjee notes in a letter that in case the conference needs to be postponed, it will be held in December.

Zoroastrians between the age of 18 and 40 years are eligible to attend, those with a single Zoroastrian parent being equally welcome.

The two-day conference hosted by the Zarathustrians of Karachi, Pakistan, will feature a keynote address, presentations and group discussions. Working sessions ranging from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. will be followed by a barbeque at the Yacht Club and a dinner dance respectively on the two nights. The cost of the conference, inclusive of dinner on the eve of the Conference, is Pak Rs 3,250, to be made payable to the Asian Zarathushtrian Youth Conference by bank draft on a Pakistani bank in Pakistani currency, to avoid exchange costs.

Four delegate categories are envisaged. Participants, expected to form a bulk of the audience, are assured of voicing their views during group discussions. Speakers need to submit papers of 15 minute duration on the Conference theme. Spreading awareness about the Zoroastrian religion and heritage, keeping the community united in the century ahead, preserving its identity and/or providing research and statistics are some of the suggested topics. Representatives of organizations or associations would need to brief the audience on the aims and objectives of the body they represent. Zoroastrians who wish to attend but do not meet the age specification may do so as observers, without the right to participate in group discussions unless specifically invited to do so. In all cases the uniform registration fee applies.

Further post conference activities have been planned at additional cost, for those who wish to participate, including, among several, a full day trip by air to Mohenjodaro, the site of one of the oldest excavations in the world and a sail in bunder boats at night to catch and feast on crabs!



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The Great Achiever

Chairman of Air-India and Indian Airlines, Russi Mody is testing his managerial skills in an alien environment

Burjor K. Karanjia

The image is larger than life. The man, as often happens, is smaller — apparently. The image projects him as joining the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) way back in 1939 on the modest salary of Rs 100 a month, and over the years turning the firm into the most successful and prestigious one in the country. It shows him promoting a unique management style in which the employees and he were colleagues working towards a common goal apparently beyond reach. His long-time chief, J. R. D. Tata, praised him for possessing “a matchless capacity for leadership” which sentiment was echoed, at the

opposite extreme, by V. G. Gopal, president of the Tata Workers Union, who praised his “deep sympathy and understanding of labor.”

But the man appears, at first sight, to fall short of the image — short, somewhat rotund, bespectacled, smiling, rather like an honest and successful stockbroker immersed in his own affairs than an outstanding leader of industry. But as we walk down memory lane recalling his experiences over 50 event-filled, epoch-making years, the man grows before our unbelieving eyes to fill the image and even to outgrow it.

Appearances are deceptive, but they can be helpful, too, as young Russi Hormusji Mody discovered during his first foray into industrial relations. It so happened that 15 or 20 men working directly under him at Jamshedpur were the only ones who had not joined the recently formed Mercantile Employees Union in Calcutta. An impressed chairman was curious to know why.

“I muttered something,” recalls Mody, “about the men wanting to show their appreciation for my sympathetic attitude to their problems and left it at that.” But J. R. D. Tata, who knew a good thing when

he saw it, asked him whether he would be prepared to work in the newly formed personnel department at Jamshedpur. Mody said he would. When could he start? Tomorrow.

It was smooth sailing till one afternoon, walking to his office after lunch, Mody saw an angry crowd surrounding his office, shouting, gesticulating wildly and assaulting the supervisors who were trying to



"My workers had the right to call me 'bloody fool,' so long as I could also call them the same!"

quieten them. To this day Mody wonders why he was not dealt with in similar fashion. None of the workers knew who he was or what he was doing there. Very likely it was his appearance, a rather unconventional one in khaki shirt and shorts, that saved him. But let Mody describe it in his own words in an interview he gave to *Business India* (January 1, 1994): "That was when I realized that all my education, training and background at Harrow and Oxford was not going to be of any use in dealing with this situation. In broken Hindustani I began by asking those nearest to me what was the cause of the trouble and whether I could be of some help. I felt that they would beat me up too. But to my amazement, they started telling me their grievances. I found myself naturally reacting to them with sympathy. I asked them again, in all innocence, whether they would like to sit down so that we could have a chat. To my great relief, after a little hesi-

tation, the anger subsided and they sat down to talk to me."

Mody feels that at this crucial moment a rapport was established between him and his workers that was to last for several decades thereafter and establish a bond that was never to be broken. The incident was revealing in other ways too. Mody's stocky appearance belies his flamboyance of style yet, paradoxically, sustains it. The common touch he exemplifies offers him immediate and easy access to his workers, so that to them he is one of them, in a position to represent and assert their common will.

This is in marked contrast to his mentor, the late J. R. D. Tata, who gave an appearance of aloofness, who was comfortable maintaining his distance. Mody, on the other hand, looks the sort of man who, while able to hold his own among the classes, mingles easily with the masses. Not only mingles, but — the secret of his success? — derives his strength from them. Again and again he has shown that he has the common touch — the Midas touch of success — making the impossible possible.

The case of the Tata collieries of which he was appointed deputy agent in 1955, comes to mind: suffering from low produc-

tivity, the company was incurring a loss of over Rs 50 lakhs per year. He sensed that the workers alone could lead him to the root cause of the poor performance, so he discussed the issue with them. They listed their grievances: no proper roads in the colliery, no electricity, a shortage of drinking water. In his mind Mody reckoned the cost — Rs 12 lakhs for new roads, Rs 23 lakhs for electricity, Rs 20 lakhs for providing water, adding up to the grand total of Rs 55 lakhs for a company that was incurring a loss of Rs 50 lakhs!

Undeterred, he wrote to the chairman making out a strong case for providing these facilities to the workers. And, to his surprise, the chairman wrote back within 48 hours agreeing to his demands. "I am certain that nobody but Mr Tata would have agreed," comments Mody. Nobody but Mody, it is equally certain, would have had the temerity, provoked by the justness of his case, to have made such a demand.

And he was proved resoundingly right. The company which thus far had been the last but one in productivity rating, reached the top in less than two years.

The same story repeated itself later after TISCO took over the Metal Box Bearing Plant at Kharagpur. Five million pieces were targeted for production every month. Less than half were actually produced. Characteristically, Mody went straight to the workers. "How can we produce what you want when our demands are not met?" they complained.

"Tell me, what are your demands?"

"We get fish twice a week. We want fish and meat."

"Noted. What else?"

"Our rates of payment are low. We cannot possibly cope with the rising cost of living."

"Noted. What else?"

"Our leave travel concession is absolutely inadequate. We are getting only Rs 40 a month when we should get at least Rs 80. However, since the company is losing, we are prepared to compromise on Rs 70 per month."

"What else?"

There appeared to be nothing else. All the workers, fiery youngsters, fell silent, shifting uneasily on their feet. Mody began laughing. "Sir, this is a matter of life and death for us and you are laughing?"

But Mody was laughing at the pettiness of their demands. He told them that they would get their fish and meat. Their salaries would be reconsidered, and as for the leave travel concession, they would get not 70, not 80, but Rs 1,000.

"Sir you are making fun of us!"

Mody shook his head. No, he was serious. The atmosphere was electrified. "Look, your demands total up to Rs 1½ lakhs. I am giving you Rs 11½ lakhs." The workers applauded. "But wait. I am giving you this on two conditions: First, absolute and complete discipline. And second, sincere efforts on your part to achieve the target of five lakh pieces."

The workers agreed. Comments Mody: "And you know something, not only was the target met, but the company made crores of rupees after giving workers concessions amounting to only 11½ lakhs. So you see, in matters like this, the timing is important, not *what* you do so much as *when*."

The common touch! So uncommon in fact, and the single biggest factor behind his many achievements. Great men are not all achievers. Russi Mody is a great achiever.

No holds barred

We were interrupted by a phone call. I looked around his spacious, tastefully decorated office on the 22nd floor of Air-India building. To the right, just across the wide sweep of the bay, the early morning mist was rising above the dimly outlined buildings at Walkeshwar. Almost exactly opposite, to the left, was a large portrait of Mody dressed in a Maharajah's costume, turban, gold braiding and all, greeting JRD, suited and smiling. This photo was taken, the courteous and helpful press secretary Ashok Tomar informed me, on Founders' Day, March 3, 1987.

The essence of Mody's work-style is to maintain close and constant contact with his men. He recalls his very early days when, shifting heavy machinery on the factory floor, he would earn eight annas a day, later increased to 10 annas. When he took charge of the ferro-manganese plant in 1965, he invited all the 410 workers in batches of 50 at a time to his bungalow.

He would keep open house on the verandah between 7 and 9 every morning: "Never had the workers seen the inside of a director's bungalow. I made them sit down and served them cold drinks. No one would touch his glass. For 15 minutes I couldn't get a word out of them. Then they all spoke together, making all sorts of demands. I went on sanctioning ... boots, helmets, all kinds of things for them, right there on the spot. From the corner of my eye I could see the manager almost collapsing, because till then to get any of these small things they had to go through 15 different tiers before receiving sanction!"

Cutting through red tape was a continuous process. It would, however, not be fair to give all the credit for TISCO's enviable record of harmonious industrial relations to Mody. After all, TISCO had a long history of enlightened management prior to his joining — an eight-hour day, leave with pay, accident compensation, provident fund, etc. There was also a three-tier consultative structure already installed. What then, I asked, was his specific contribution?

"Enlightened systems work. I was able to rid the workers of their ingrained suspicion that the management was against them. What I tried to do by cutting through red tape was to extract the maximum potential from the existing structure. Every working day I visited a different department or office and met 20 to 50 people individually. I answered all their letters personally; and whenever I had to say 'no' to a request, I made it a point to give the

reason. I fostered and encouraged management-labor meetings at departmental and plant levels and held collective meetings with all the supervisors every three months. Our talks were free and frank. No holds barred. My workers had the right to call me 'bloody fool,' so long as I could also call them the same!"

The acid test of the workers' loyalty came in 1978 when George Fernandes and Biju Patnaik threatened to take over the company's *zamindari* as they called it. A worried JRD rang up Mody, requesting him to speak to the union and find out where they stood. Mody was able to assure his chief that the workers were 100 percent with them. In fact, the Tata Workers Union

and Mody's. They seemed to be on their guard, only half-listening to the questions put to them, half-thinking of the replies they would give, choosing their words ever so carefully, so that a distance was established between them and me. Mody gave his total attention to the questions I put to him, answered spontaneously and freely, briefly and to the point, as if there was nothing whatsoever to hide. I was meeting him for the first time, yet there was an instant rapport. I felt he related totally to me. I understood, I sensed the spell he must exercise over those who work for and with him.

As if to bear this out, union leader Gopal revealed an interesting fact. Till 1936 when

"My concept of management is to make people happy in the work they do and so get the best out of them"

unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the nationalization demand.

Notwithstanding this, and in spite of TISCO's pending appeal in the Supreme Court, the Bihar government took possession of the township. An ironic situation arose. The government takeover was strictly limited to the nuts and bolts of the business. All the social responsibilities that Tatas, as enlightened industrialists, had taken on like schools, health services, markets, parks and other civic amenities, Tatas continued to bear. Some takeover!

Realization dawned on the Bihar government, albeit dimly, that they had grabbed something they could not possibly handle. Conditions deteriorated. Squatting and encroachments blotted the once efficiently run, clean township. All the planned development came to a standstill till, in desperation almost, Jamshedpur was returned to the company.

JRD gave all the credit for this to Mody: "This would never have happened without Russi Mody." Mody himself was more modest: "I had maintained good relations with the Bihar ministers. So when I thought the time was ripe, I argued the case with them. Frankly, between you and me, the Bihar government had no money to run the factory. They were relieved to be rid of the responsibility."

Exaggerated report?

Having interviewed several ministers, including a former Prime Minister, I noticed a striking difference between their style



the union was weak, it was militant. Once the management and workers changed their confrontationist stance, the union became an association vital to the workers' interests. Mody was shrewd enough to sense this. Not only did he not undermine the union in any way, he went all out to strengthen it.

I asked him: "Is it true, or is it just part of the legend that grows around a man in

your position, that on your birthdays, 30,000 workers used to pour into your bungalow, profusely garland you and make you ride an elephant in triumphant procession through the streets of Jamshedpur?"

"The report is slightly exaggerated. There were not 30,000 workers, only 20,000. The rest is true," he said quietly.

"So many qualities have been attributed to your success — inspiring your workers to think big, selecting the right people for the right job, delegating authority, getting to the heart of any problem, getting along with people, including Biharis which must have taken some doing. To which of these do you give the greatest importance?"

"Delegating authority. (Also) I feel strongly that in any undertaking the lowest of the low must get justice. I conveyed to the workers that the management was objective. I convinced them. And I never allowed my interests or whims or prejudices to stand in the way of my judgement. That, I think, was my major contribution."

There was also a comprehensive modernization program for which he claims no exclusive credit. It was a combined effort involving three stages, all successfully accomplished. Prior to Mody's retirement from TISCO, not quite voluntarily as it happened, he worked out a fairly successful voluntary retirement scheme.

Mody was so involved with TISCO, the company was so much a part of his life that the thought of retiring at the fullness of his powers was anathema to him. But the world goes by rules. There was the retirement age factor, and there were younger

"In TISCO I was not only head of the company, but head of the entire city of over a million people"

men waiting in the wings. There was some unpleasantness and a lot of recrimination that, with a little tact, could have been avoided. But nothing can dim the brilliance of his contribution to TISCO. And people waiting to write *finis* to his career were soon going to be disappointed. For Mody was invited by the Prime Minister to take up the chairmanship of the ailing Air-India and Indian Airlines. Mody accepted.

This chairmanship is, however, a far cry from TISCO's. I could not help recalling Bal Thackeray quipping, at the Damania Airlines' anniversary function when the airline was suspended for some infringement, that airlines in India face two hazards — air pockets and ministers' pockets. Mody agreed that corruption was at the root of almost everything that was wrong in the country. At the same time, talking of the public sector, he had once told the Prime Minister that there wasn't a single public sector undertaking that, given the chance, would not become profitable. He had added, however, that "under the present system there wasn't a chance in hell that this would happen."

Mody's experience so far with the airlines bears out that much is wrong with the system. In TISCO he had a towering figure

like JRD to support him, whereas now he has a minister hopelessly lost between the *ghulam* and *azad* in his name and a host of MPs who seem to take excessive umbrage at the off-the-cuff remarks Mody is wont to make, which are brutally frank, yet have humor and more than a grain of truth. If in TISCO he "rolled back the constraints," such as they were, now he has to learn to live with them. He is like the proverbial bull in the china shop — with this difference that he has the capacity and the urge to replace the china shop with a magnificent department store.

"Running an industrial culture and running a government department are two different things," declares Mody. "I can no more run a government department than a secretary can run a corporation. I cannot break or change the system. If I try to break the system, my head will break. Everything has to be solved within the system. In an industrial culture whatever I said was done. Now I have to deal with the managing director, the board of directors, the secretary, the joint secretary, parliamentarians, ministers, etc..."

"I have been able to make some improvement in the working of Indian Airlines, which passengers have acknowledged. But the ministers are not happy with the thought that an outsider has been responsible for these improvements. Many more such improvements are necessary without which — make no mistake about it — Air-India may have to close down and Indian Airlines cannot hope to flourish. In Tata's things were much better. JRD encouraged me and gave me a free hand."

Mody has certain ideas like avoiding duplication in routes and resources, merging the two airlines and giving employees a 20 percent equity stake in both the airlines. Effecting these and other improvements is, however, going to be an uphill task. At the same time, by refusing to be provoked into resigning by the minister's reprimand for his remarks (like calling Air-India the world's third-worst airline and so on), and by his dignified and mature response, putting his remarks in their proper context, Mody has emerged the bigger of the two men.

He also recognizes that he cannot afford to betray the trust that the thousands who travel by these two airlines have reposed in him. As for the obstacles in his path, well might Mody echo the sentiments of the poet Robert Browning: "I was ever a fighter, so one fight more, the best and the last..."

But to return to TISCO with which Mody's name will always remain linked.

Karanjia (left) interviewing Mody at the latter's office in Bombay, Rashna Ardeshir and an Air-India official

(All photos by Spectravision)



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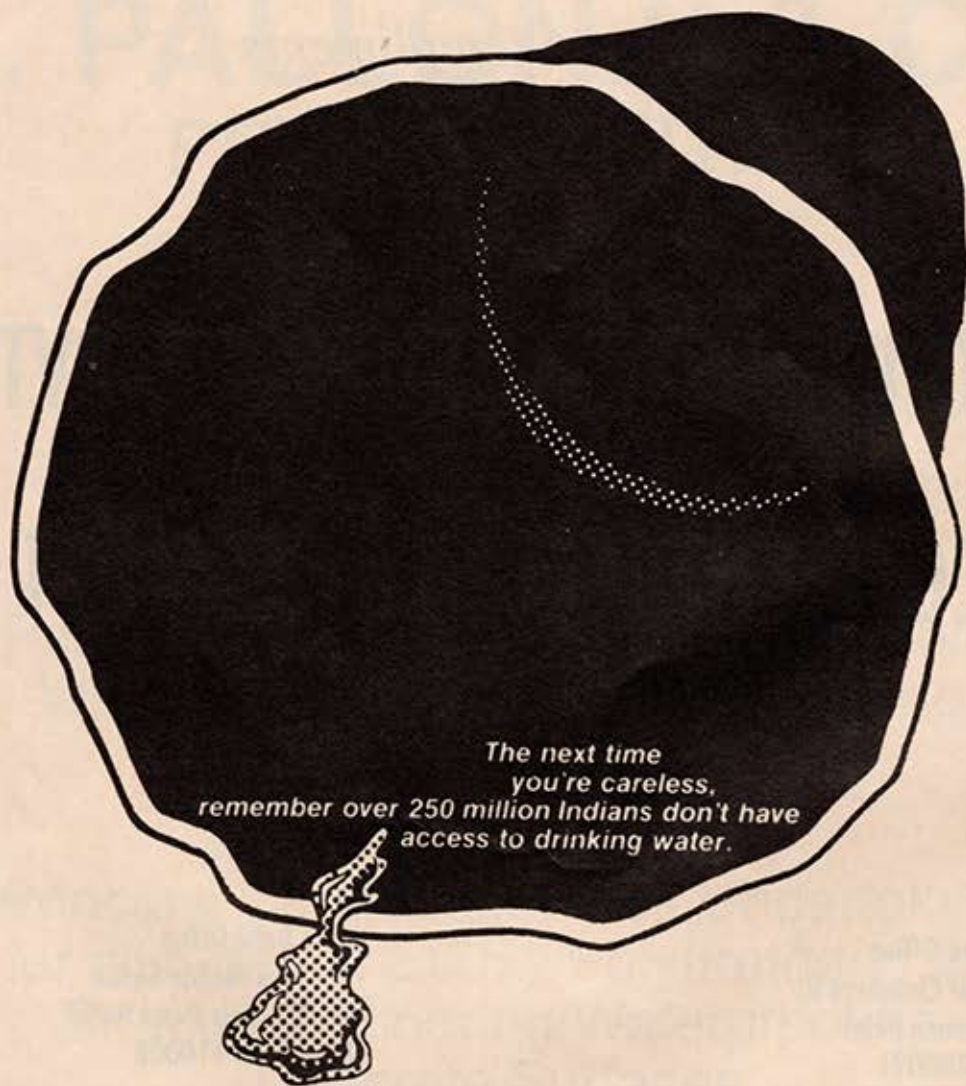
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"Goodness, I left the tap on!"



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He saw his responsibilities as reaching far beyond running the company: "We had a relationship with the government and with cultural trends. I was not only head of the company, but head of an entire city of over a million people. I tried to make life worthwhile for them in all ways open to me — to make them feel that they belonged to a unified, progressive, contented and happy family."

His work philosophy?

"I believe there are two categories of people, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' The former have to set the example by giving to the latter, for the latter have nothing to give. Do everything with a smile. If you can shake hands, don't say *namaste*. Physical contact is so much warmer."

When I referred to recent trends in management, scientific management followed by value-based management and so on, Mody brushed the idea aside: "Don't talk to me about this or that type of management. I have never read a book on management. My concept of management is to make people happy in the work they do and so get the best out of them. Two Biblical injunctions have guided me throughout my career, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' and 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

Referring to his extravagant lifestyle I asked whether he would agree that such a style would be inconceivable except within the Tata tradition.

"Of course I agree. But let me tell you something. I am not a rich man. Whatever little I have has come to me from my mother. But I have enjoyed life. I worked in Tatas from 1939 to 1993. I hugely enjoyed the perks given to me — a lovely residence, houses abroad, my own private plane, etc, etc, etc. Let me tell you something else. I am not a hypocrite. I enjoyed this lifestyle, lived it up to the hilt — as long as it lasted. I cannot afford it now. No more private planes and homes abroad for me. But I have taught myself not to miss these things. I have no time to look back to the past. I live for the present and the future."

In the evening of his life Mody counts his blessings in a sentimental mood: "One of the greatest blessings I have enjoyed is the kind of family life I had. Nothing in the world can be a substitute for that. My father (Sir Homi Mody) was a great sport. He was always shouting at me for my extravagances, but there was no ill will in his nature."

Since he has obviously inherited his

father's sense of humor, I asked him if he could recall any anecdotes about his father, his favorite joke or anything like that. To jog his memory I recalled Sir Homi presiding over a lecture by the late journalist D. F. Karaka to the Progressive Group of Bombay. Karaka was supposed to have an eye for pretty women, and he had just written a book entitled *I Go West*. So Sir Homi began his introduction with the words, "Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you my good friend, Dosu Karaka, author of *I Go Mae West*..."

Mody recalled an occasion when he played a joke on his father. "Once in London I told him, putting on a long face, 'Do you know Pops' — I used to call him Pops — 'it is 12 noon and I still don't know where I'm lunching.' Pops was quite concerned. 'Is that so?' he asked with a serious face. 'Yes,' I replied. 'I still don't know whether I am lunching at the Savoy Grill or Claridges...'"

Mody considers himself an Indian rather than a Parsi. It is deplorable that in India today an Indian is hard to find. As he said in a recent speech to the Rotary Club of Bombay: "We have millions of Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and so on; we have millions of Bengalis, Biharis, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, and so on; we have millions of Brahmins, Kayasthas, Rajputs, Backward Classes, Forward Classes, OBCs (other backward castes); but we can't find an Indian. Where is the Indian?"

The right leadership and a fulfilling work culture among the people are sorely missing today. As a panacea, Mody offers the LEED formula (Leadership, Efficiency, Education and Discipline). Another grave danger is the population bomb ticking away to doomsday. Our multiplying numbers negate all the advances the country is making in scientific, economic and other fields. It denies our people the quality of life to which they are entitled.

For five years Mody acted as president of the Parsi Association at Jamshedpur. He stoutly denies that today's Parsis have lost the pioneering spirit of their forefathers. He has great faith in young Parsi men and women. The only handicap the community faces is of dwindling numbers. Mody has no views on conversion at all, he'd rather leave that to the Parsi punchayet. He believes today, as he did six years ago, that Parsis should not ask for seat reservations, but rely on the talent they have in abundance.

Mody may not observe rituals, but confesses to being a deeply religious man with

an abiding faith in God. "I believe in a Supreme Being who regulates my life beyond myself and my work. I believe in that absolutely. I never go to bed without a prayer on my lips. Several times during the day before an important meeting or at crucial interviews I murmur the two prayers *Ashem Vohu* and *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* for His blessings. I don't believe in superstitions like not walking under a ladder or turning back if a black cat crosses my path. If God is omnipotent and on your side, you don't need to follow these silly practices."

I put him a final question to which he had already given an answer, though not in so many words: "Your life has been a richly rewarding one. Given the chance to live it over again, what changes would you desire?"

"I would not like my life to be changed even by an iota if given the chance to live it again. I have done my best in whatever I have taken up and a man can do no more. I have found fulfillment beyond riches. God has been very good to me and His blessing has sustained me."

B. K. Karanjia, veteran journalist, editor and author, and former chairman of the Film Finance Corporation (which grew into the National Film Development Corporation), is currently chronicling the Godrej story.



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A gentlemanly election

Despite a close contest
CER's Dadi Engineer won the
BPP trusteeship election

Arnavaz S. Mama

It was expected to be a close race. CER (Committee for Economic Revival) president and its candidate for trusteeship Dadi Engineer, noted solicitor, avid Rotarian and president of the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) India, was the first to file in his nomination for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship seat vacated by Jamsheed Kanga two years after his reelection in March 1993. As Rustom Tirandaz, municipal councillor honed in city politics for 27 years, joined the fray, the balance was evened. Homeopath Dr Viraf Kapadia, the third candidate, was no match for the heavyweights.

Prior to Kanga's resignation the CER dominated the BPP board by a majority of five to two and BPP watchers were wondering if the tide would turn against the CER to undermine the chances of Engineer, a self-professed orthodox in religious matters.

As it turned out, the two candidates seemed to run uncomfortably close through the morning of July 8, 1995 if the prospective electors registering with the respective supporters in the portico of the J. J. School were any indication. Two hundred votes were cast by noon and 567 more by 4 p.m. The final hour saw 100 more voters filing in (at least two arrived after the gates closed promptly at 5 p.m. and turned away disappointed) to make a total of 867 votes cast — over 56 percent

of the current Anjuman Committee (AC) total of 1,534, comprising 744 donors and 790 elected members (70 members of the AC have deceased since it was last constituted in 1992). Of those who voted, 341 were donors and the rest, elected members.

Overseeing the arrangements was Rustom Hormazdiar as the president of the election, aided by scrutineers Ms Homai Modi and Rusi Bhungara, and the Punchayet staff. Over a hundred voters had to be furnished duplicate certificates before they could vote.

At the final count Engineer was elected by a margin of 88 votes, getting 467 to Tirandaz's 379. Kapadia earned nine votes and nine were invalid. The CER, titting

on the brink of celebration since Tirandaz emerged a half hour earlier to announce matter-of-factly that in his estimate Engineer was leading by 100 votes, could openly jubilate after the official announcement at 7.15 p.m., made not by

the BPP chairman as in former years, but by a staff member.

It began with the presentation of a single rose to Engineer, followed by a garland which he whipped off to place, with a hug, on BPP trustee Ms Silloo Kavarana's frail shoulders as "the person most responsible" for his victory. Kavarana herself transferred the credit to fellow trustee Dinshaw



*The victor: promises to keep
The three contestants (below from left)
Engineer, Kapadia and Tirandaz*

Mehta, noting, "This is a real victory for Dinshaw Mehta."

Mehta, joint honorary secretary of the CER, has been an indefatigable worker and strategist whose energy and drive have served the CER again and again. However, his so-called backdoor entry onto the BPP board on Homi Ranina's retirement in July 1994 had upset many community stalwarts. (No other group nominated a candidate as Engineer had agreed to stand. Mehta filed in his nomination just before the deadline closed and Engineer withdrew in his favor, enabling Mehta to assume trusteeship unopposed.) Engineer was repeatedly questioned on the issue and though he explained away his earlier withdrawal on the basis of other commitments, the CER was far from sanguine about the electoral results.

Engineer, who addressed his meetings largely in Gujarati, had been campaigning on a program which included division of responsibility for the BPP's colonies among the seven trustees, "running the BPP as you would a corporation" with targets and incentives, including young people on the staff, providing legal aid services for Zoroastrians, revamping the outdated objectives of trusts within and without the BPP through meetings with trustees of parallel trusts to avoid duplication, increase in the dole amounts which remain pegged to their 1983 levels. Again and again he had reassured his listeners that he would give



up other work to provide time for BPP activities. At a joint meeting of the three contenders hosted by the Khareghat Colony and Aderbad Group on July 1, Engineer was pointedly asked, "Will you resign from the CER on election?" "Immediately," Engineer had responded.

Tirandaz's main plank was adult franchise for Parsis in the choice of BPP trustees, concentrating on their role as akabars to espouse the creation of an arbitration cell within the BPP: "Three hundred years ago the BPP began as an arbitration cell to sort out disputes between two groups of warring Parsis...It contained people of

the highest personal integrity, not merely respected but revered. They made sure that the community remained united. Thereafter they were entrusted with the wills of people. Parsis were builders of men, not donors of doles. Over time we lost that great objective...If the family court can come into being, then an arbitration cell of the BPP would get the support of the High Court." Describing himself as "a harbinger of change," Tirandaz noted, "When things are not going right I do everything in my power to upset the system so that there's

change." Tirandaz's harping on adult franchise may have turned off some F (donor) register voters who value their right to vote directly for trustee (see "What price adult franchise?") and may have contributed to his defeat.

According to Tirandaz's manifesto, "One of the reasons for the unpopularity of the Parsi Punchayet is the lack of public relations and transparency. Whether it is accounts or allotment of houses, why should the Punchayet, as a public charitable trust, be so secretive?" he asked. He also noted in his manifesto that "the bane of the community is lack of motivation. Trustees are generally seen as an uninspiring, undynamic and passive group of men and women sitting in ivory towers. I would like to change this concept. The Punchayet not only requires a face-lift but complete reconstructive surgery." At the Khareghat Colony meeting he promised "to the best of my available knowledge and belief...never to bring my ego into any-

thing...In an issue of who comes first, it'll always be the community...I'm standing 15 years after (ex BPP trustee) Dr Nelie Noble first asked me to stand because BPP trusteeship is not a badge to wear but a cross to bear." Tirandaz had also emphasized, "I have been available to every Zoroastrian at all times."

Engineer's manifesto, published in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* a week after Tirandaz's, though long on words was low key. A senior partner in Crawford Bayley — a leading solicitors' firm — Engineer is said to have had much interaction with various trade and industrial organizations like the Indian Merchants' Chamber, The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc. He claims the field of excise duties as his area of specialization. He now noted that these commercial contacts could be availed of in community interests. Known to be a peaceable, witty individual with an aptitude for interpolating a timely joke to disperse tension, his manifesto speaks of the need for a closer homogeneity in the working of trustees: "I could try to harmonize divergent views and suggest practical solutions." He is committed to promoting "optimum utilization of existing housing facilities by the BPP" i.e. officially permitting the sharing of underoccupied flats.

Both the youth and the aged find mention in Engineer's manifesto: "I would try to see to it that the necessary expertise and

(L to R) Mehta and BPP chief executives Rustom Anklesaria (ret'd) and Behram Lashkari (incumbent)



Top: J. J. School building houses the BPP; the seclusion of the ballot boxes
Below: Candidates with their spouses Silloo Engineer (left) and Armaity Tirandaz; Fali Master of the Athornan Mandal after casting his vote

infrastructure is made available to the youth of our community with a view to see that they are self-employed. The problem of drug abuse among our youth (in his addresses, Engineer estimated 500-600 Parsi youths on drugs) is another serious problem to which I could address myself." There is however no policy on the aged spelt out in the manifesto except that he "would like the BPP to tackle the various problems of the aged on a war footing." Engineer's legal base is best illustrated by his statement on adult franchise: "A fresh attempt could be made to introduce adult franchise (for which I stand) at the same time protecting the rights of the donors and providing adequate safeguards against misuse of this system of voting!"

Engineer, whose nomination was proposed by solicitor Rusi Sethna and seconded by businessman Zal Contractor, was supported in the Press by such heavyweights as legal luminary Nani Palkhivala, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw and industrialist Ratan Tata. Likewise, Tirandaz's candidature had been proposed by tax consultant Paeterasp Patel and seconded by Khshnoomist scholar Adi Doctor. He was supported by former member of the Minorities Commission Homi Taleyarkhan and most of the orthodox camp such as Ms Perviz Dotiwala, Ms Mithu Petit, Cowasji Dinshaw (Adenwalla), Hoshang Vania, Ervad Pervez Bajan, among others.

The voter turnout was a substantial improvement on the numbers attending the electoral meets that the candidates had addressed. When Engineer met the Nowroz Baug representatives at the Lalbaug Agiary (about 35 individuals) this so-called CER stronghold took the party to task. Frustrated by years of assurances regarding building repairs and rebuilding of the gate that was demolished when the municipality widened the road outside more than seven years ago, the voters demanded to know the reason behind the inaction. For example, when Mehta, who shared the podium with Engineer, tried to explain that the BPP had been unable to coordinate with the Wadia Trust (WT), he was asked pointedly, "Won't this continue even when Mr Engineer comes in?"

Engineer: "I have rapport with the Wadias." Heckler: "Mr Kanga also had rapport with Wadia!"

Cyrus Bhayya, an AC member from Nowroz Baug noted how Kanga had said at the time of his reelection that work on the gate would commence in 15 days. "Nothing happened," continued Bhayya. "Tenants say, 'Tamaraj trusteeo bethela che

tau bi nathi thatu (Your own trustees are in the chair, yet nothing gets done).' Tamé bi késo ké 'mè try kidhu pun nahi thayu (You will also say, 'I tried but didn't succeed). I'm sorry.' Mr Poncha has said this since the past two years. There's no follow-up. What can we say to our cotenants? Marubi monu nicchu thajé. Mané bi lagéché CER ma rahi né su fayedo (I will also lose face. I also feel, what's the purpose of supporting the CER)?"

Acknowledged Fali Poncha, "There are no excuses. No doubt it's (due to) lack of commitment. If the Punchayet told me to get the gate done, I could do it in three months. But the BPP does not want it."

Grumbled Mehta, "They don't tell us, don't call us. (BPP chairman) Jimmy Guzder and Kanga wouldn't let us get into the Wadia Trust." (Only the three senior trustees are on the WT.)

As there was no way to use the FSI (floor space index) released by the municipality at Nowroz Baug itself, the FSI was converted into a TDR (transfer of development rights) certificate and sold for two crore rupees. The money was to be capitalized and the interest used for the general betterment of the Baug. Nothing has been done so far and, it was stated, only a small fraction of the amount has actually come in. A continuing source of dissatisfaction with the Nowroz Baug residents is the stepchild treatment it receives at the hands of the WT in comparison to Cusrow Baug which is immaculately maintained. That the CER trustees, despite their preponderance on the BPP board, had been unable or uninterested in encashing their promises to the voters, was viewed as a betrayal.

Stepping away from the politics pervading the relationship between the BPP and the WT which is ostensibly one of the Punchayet's 18 subcommittees but is dominated by Neville and Nusli Wadia, the voters faced the party directly: "What is the CER doing for Nowroz Baug?" Party bigwigs were also asked why the CER failed to summon a meeting of its supporters on the AC before filing the trusteeship nomination: "A meeting should have been called... asked for nominations. Had the (trusteeship candidate been selected) by CER members, there would have been no need for Dadi Engineer to go everywhere."

At Captain Colony the meeting started 25 minutes late with barely 16 individuals in the audience although Guzder and Kavarana also attended. Among the issues there was the payment of the Punchayet's share in building repairs which had been

undertaken by the tenants who still pay a lowly Rs 27 as rent and the pending court cases against unauthorized residents of some of the flats. A couple — Banoo and Jamshed Gandhi — seized the opportunity to plead their case. According to the Gandhis they had stayed with a single old man who subsequently died and the BPP has served them with an eviction notice despite their efforts to settle with the BPP.

Engineer, who promised to attend board meetings of the BPP "100 percent," and noted that "trustees must be easily ac-



Top: Triumphant hoisting
Second row: Addressing voters at the Khareghat Hall and the Engineers with Kavarana
Third row: Nadir Modi and (right) a determined voter
Bottom: Candidates' supporters straddle the entrance; WZO's Dinshaw Tamboli (left) and CER's Kersi Limathwalla: future trusteeship candidates? and Guzder with community members



*
**"If I do not spare
 the time
 you may demand
 my resignation
 after one year"**
 *

cessible...it is the birthright of every Parsi to at least get a reply (from the Punchayet)," told the voters. "If I do not spare the time you may demand my resignation after one year." He also said that he would welcome "public criticism and public chastisement" if he failed to live up to his promises. In answer to CER members who demanded accountability ("CER trustees should be accountable to the CER," demanded Soli Shastri of Nowroz Baug) Engineer volunteered to report to his electorate at the end of three months. He told his Nowroz Baug audience, "Don't call me as chief guest like Tirandaz. I'll turn up on my own."

Well-known lawyer Nadir Modi who chaired the Khareghat Colony meet on July 1, had charged the electorate to know their candidates, "look at the track record, look for the reality behind the words: people don't change overnight...If change is needed who is likely to bring about change? Who has the initiative, courage, ideas?"

"By and large, Parsis are gentlemen," Modi had noted. Compared to earlier occasions there was no obvious mud-slinging apart from xerox copies of an unwholesome report in a publication called *Bombay Eye* casting aspersions on Mehta which had been circulated to some voters with the caption "Will you now vote CER." The CER was equipped with handbills denying the propaganda and stating that "Mehta is about to serve a defamation notice against the newspaper." Tirandaz denied having had anything to do with the report or its dissemination. Similarly, there was an allegation against Tirandaz regarding a deal about a flat which he firmly disavowed; nor was it taken seriously by the electorate.

On another ground Tirandaz was adamant: "I'll fight each and every election until I break the system and win — or I bring in adult franchise," he promised, even as a victorious but subdued Engineer and some of his CER supporters left for the agiary before attending a dinner hosted by Contractor who invited all those about to disperse, including the defeated candidates who very sportingly joined in the victory celebration.

It was, after all, a gentlemanly election.

What price adult franchise?

The Anjuman Committee (AC), as constituted by the Bombay High Court in 1908 to elect trustees, comprised 100 elected members and all those who had contributed Rs 5,000 or more to the Punchayet's funds in a single donation. By the early 1980s it was an established concept that the AC com-



prised of such donors and an equal number of members elected once in seven years. However, at trusteeship elections there had been cries of foul play as it was alleged that last minute donors beefed up the donor register in the interests of a particular candidate with "money power."

In the aftermath of the 1984 election of Homi Ranina the BPP agreed to file an amended scheme before the High Court by March 1985 (the price it paid to be allowed to proceed with the election). A variety of affidavits and ideas were submitted by community members, including direct adult franchise proposed by COVP (Council Of Vigilant Parsis) stalwart B. K. Mistry who was represented in court by K. N. Dastur. Rejecting adult franchise as inapplicable in this case, Justice Hosbet Suresh had opined in his oral judgement, "In all matters of Trust...the management...ultimately depends upon the persons who take an active interest in the day-to-day management of the Trust. It is not a question of one's popularity in the community as a whole; it is essentially a question of having proper personnel, efficient and active who ultimately desire to take the responsibility for managing the

Trust."

Indeed, Suresh tried to confine the burgeoning AC (by then more than 1,500 strong) to a total of 200 members — 100 elected by the community plus 100 comprising elected representatives of donors who had gifted between Rs 5,000 and Rs 49,999, and all those who had contributed Rs 50,000 or more. The judge observed, "The principle of parity has been recognized in this institution for a long time and I think the principle of parity will have to be maintained. But the number has outgrown to such an extent... it is necessary that this number be reduced so as to make it a feasible proposition."

The new scheme was challenged by four donor members who argued that "the vested right of any donor cannot be taken away without the specific consent of the donor." The old scheme was described as "a unique fund raising scheme (whose) chief aim was to create a continuous source of money."

The protracted litigation ended on December 17, 1991 with the appeal bench of the Bombay High Court restoring the direct right to vote of all pre-1985 donors of Rs 5,000, those who donated Rs 7,500

between 1987 and 1991 (the donor register was suspended between 1985 and 1987) and, prospectively, those who gifted Rs 15,000 and more. However the right of new donors to vote for trustee could be exercised only after a minimum moratorium of five years or the next AC election which would equate the number of elected members to that of the donors. By this proviso the original complaint of disparity between the donor and elected registers of the AC had been addressed.

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"It's either them or me. Somebody has to lose. And fortunately for me I was winning always," says 10 times national judo champion Cawas Kersasp Billimoria who in August last was conferred the Arjuna Award, the highest award for sports in India which earns the recipient a trophy, a citation and a cash gift of Rs 50,000. "It was a crowded hall at the Rashtrapati Bhavan with the best of sports talent in the country assembled, but what made us feel more proud was the presence of the President of India, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, at whose hands the Arjuna Award was presented to us," says Billimoria.

The secret of his triumph, reveals the six-foot-four-inch-tall Billimoria is "the way I think. After I win a particular competition I don't sit and bask in its glory because I know that I was the champion only for that particular moment. If I were to fight somebody the next minute I might lose. So I always start thinking of how to get prepared for the next tournament.

"The most important thing in judo is 100 percent concentration," believes Billimoria narrating his recent experience at the 1994 National Games at Pune. He was just seconds away from winning the Games title when he lost his concentration for a fraction of a second as he avoided giving his opponent a big point. His shoulder dislocated, he had to concede the bout and be satisfied with a silver. "Such injuries do occur during competition and they are part and parcel of the game," states Billimoria who has not yet recovered from that injury.

At international events too Billimoria has brought credit to the country: he won a bronze medal at the Asian Games at Seoul, South Korea, and a silver at the Commonwealth Judo Championship at Cardiff, Wales. One of the most exciting moments of his life, recalls Billimoria adjusting his specs, was when he, along with athlete Hirji Nagarwalla, entered the Asian Games Talent Contest after half an hour's practice. "This competition was open for the participants of the Asian Games. Alongside Hirji on the keyboard, I sang, and we picked up the first place," he recalls the event



Ten times title

Aspi Ustad

Cawas Billimoria's dedication to judo earned him the Arjuna Award recently

where for the first time in his life he sang in public.

Ever since his major break in 1984 when he won the National gold for the first time, he had been winning the same title year after year till 1993. "To win the nationals for such a long period is no mean joke," remarks Billimoria. "I train in Bombay by doing all sorts of exercises like jogging, cycling, weights, swimming. No judo as I don't have a sparring partner available in my weight category," he informs.

Billimoria was first drawn to judo in 1975 when, as a ninth standard student at St Mary's ICSE, he was taken by his uncle to watch a judo demonstration given by Parvez Mistry. He then decided to learn judo, not as a sport but as an exercise to keep physically fit and as an art of self-defence. The first time he participated in a competition was in 1979 when he struck gold at the Bombay City Championship. This qualified him to represent Bombay in the Maharashtra State Championship where he could manage a silver medal. In 1981 he represented his state, Maharashtra, for the first time at the Judo Nationals but lost in the preliminary round as he was choked by his opponent, Billimoria recounts in brief. This did not deter him. In fact, the following year he won a silver medal at the Nationals held at Delhi in the open weight category. He was able to repeat the same feat in the 1983 nationals at Bangalore. Thereafter it was all golds.

Along the way the judoka has received support from his family: his parents Kersasp and Persis and an understanding wife Tanaz

who gladly looks after their son Karl when Cawas is preoccupied with his sport. While judo is Billimoria's mainstay, he is also into sumo wrestling, playing the harmonica and keeping pet snakes which he lists as his hobbies.

An employee of The Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited, Billimoria is grateful to his employers who have "always supported and encouraged me by granting me leave and at times



Billimoria receiving the Arjuna award from Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma

With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

have foot my bill too." Others to whom he is beholden are "our Maharaja — Air-India which have given me free passage several times, and a few of our Parsi trusts...

"As responsible members of an enlight-

*"The most important
thing in judo is 100
percent concentration"*



ened community we should institute such awards, parallel to the Arjuna Award to be given to sportsmen and women of our community who have devoted their life to sports and brought glory to the country and the community by their achievements. This would further encourage youngsters to take up sports as a career," opines Billimoria.

Now officiating as a referee at national and international meets, 32-year-old Billimoria is keen to promote another generation of judokas who would be the future flagbearers of India. Presently he serves as a government representative on the national selection committee, runs his own judo classes at the National Sports Club of India (NSCI) and is engaged as judo instructor at different schools in Bombay like the Sir J. J. School at Fort and the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution (BJPC).

When asked whether he would like to train a couple of Parsi youngsters, he replies in the affirmative saying, "I would be more than happy to see a youngster come up, irrespective of whether he breaks my record..."

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The age of Zoroastrian brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 19 and 41 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 28 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 23 and 51 years, averaging at 32 years.

As compared to 12 births in Bombay in May there were 83 deaths. Twenty-four Zoroastrians fell prey to heart disease. Among these 19 were 80 years and above. The other major killer was pneumonia and lung disease claiming 14 lives. Old age and general debility took a toll of nine victims whereas four deaths each were attributed to brain disease and cancer and three to liver disease. Two patients each succumbed to uremia, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, hypertension, kidney failure and tuberculosis. Cerebral malaria, urinary infection, bronchitis, hypopituitarism (pituitary gland insufficiency), hemangioma (a malformation of blood vessels which may occur in any part of the body), malaria, nervous disorder, asthma, septicemia, gastrointestinal bleeding and atherosclerosis were some of the isolated cases registered in May. Apart from a stillborn baby that was lost to the community, there was a case of stabbing and one

death due to a vehicular accident. The eldest to breathe her last was a 103-year-old lady as compared to the youngest to die: a 46-year-old lady. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for May in Bombay was 78 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. We are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars. This information is not always complete or consistent. For example, the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals; births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to Zeena and Kurush Cooper on May 2, 1995
A boy to Yasmin and Afsad Motashaw; May 3
A girl to Roshni and Cyrus Taraporewala; May 5
A boy to Meher and Atul Ursekar; May 9
A boy to Firuza and Hoshedar Elavia; May 12
A girl to Roshni and Percy Lakdawala; May 15
A girl to Arnaz and Jamshed Antia; May 20
A girl to Rukhshana and Marazban Taraporewala; May 23
A girl to Yasmina and Kersi Avari; May 24
A boy to Shernawaz and Kekobad Batliwala, brother to Huzwak; May 26

A girl to Tanaj and Rohinton Contractor; May 29
A boy to Bakhtawar and Jimmy Godrej; May 31

MARRIED

Jennifer Rusi Canteenwalla and Jimmy Erach Dadrewalla; April 25
Yasmin Navroji Kharas and Soli Bhikhaji Kodia; May 2
Shernaz Sam Sethna of Deolali and Dosabhai Rusi Medhora; May 2
Parveen Aspandiar Irani and Cyrus Minocher Guzder; May 5
Zarin Nash Mehta and Behram Nariman Rabadi; May 5
Shernaz Pesi Ravji and Cyrus Rohinton Shroff; May 5
Khurshid Noshir Batliwalla and Vispi Phiroze Palkhiwalla of Goregan; May 6
Khorshed Jamshed Lelinwalla

and Homiyar Maneck Mehta; May 7
Armin Shavakshah Dalal of Bulsar and Kaizad Darayes Patel of Bulsar; May 7
Faryal Kersi Parabia of Navsari and Cyrus Tehmatan Wadia; May 7
Huzan Farrokh Mehta of Thane and Percy Kersi Mowdawalla; May 8
Ruzeen Noshir Mistry and Kersi Dara Daruwala; May 9
Gulshan Mehli Irani and Mhernoos Rattan Bhesania; May 12
Farida Yezdi Kotwal and Mehernosh Mino Billimoria; May 13
Hilda Maneck Driver and Jesper Rusi Dolasha; May 13
Pouruchisti Hoshang Driver and Cawas Keki Dubash; May 14
Afried Fali Khambatta and Furrokh Doshabhoy Kamdin; May 14
Armin Behram Vandrevalla and Kersasp Rustomji Wadia; May 14
Pervin Jehangir Siganporia and Hoshang Furdooon Variava; May 15
Parvin Noshir Patel and Homiyar Sam Aibada of Thane; May 16
Shiraz Bahadur Bhagwager and Hoshang Erach Dastur; May 16
Gospi Jal Suratia and Firdosh Rusi Patel; May 18
Rukshana Kersi Contractor and Adil Pesi Billimoria; May 19
Farida Erach Ghadiali and Naval Kersi Bodhanwala; May 19
Firozi Dara Contractor and Adarbad Dossabhai Motafram of Ajmer; May 19
Dhun Faredoon Mehta and Kersi Hormusjee Toddywalla; May 19
Sanaya Noshir Choksey and Zal Jamshed Sethna; May 20
Phiroza Phiroze Damania and Yezdi Mino Patel; May 26
Michelle Eddie Sapurji and Harry Fali Khumbata; May 28
Shiraz Feroze Mistry and Khushru Homi Dossabhoy of Rajkot; May 30

DIED

Kaikhushroo Hormusji Marolia (91), residing at 4/6, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; April 30

Yazdanyar Ardeshtir Bonshahi (56), A-4/44, New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 2
Putlibai Jehangir Gamadia (103), 31, Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; May 2
Bomanshaw Burjorji Patel (87), 358, Goa Hindu Association Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400007; May 2
Kaikhushru Nusserwanji Workingboxwalla (Billimoria) (90), Ripon Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 2
Khorshed Ardeshtir Irani (74), 38, Boman Hse, 9th Rd, TPS IV, Bandra, 400050; May 3
Roshan Jal Kapadia (64), D/105, Shree Shiv Dam, 62, Link Rd, Malad (W), 400064; May 3
Banoo Kavasji Karaka (87), Katgara Hse, 15, Nepean Sea Rd, 400026; May 3
Piroja Jehangirji Batliwalla (80), 645/A, Dhobitalao, Girgaum, 400002; May 4
Nariman Dadiba Boatwala (74), C/8, Satguru Apts, Behind Hotel Golden Palace, Thane, 400601; May 4
Homi Nowroji Gandhi (87), 764/F, Sarosh Court, Tilak Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 4
Nariman Hormusji Kaikhushroo Vacha (78), B, Shireen Mans, Gamadia Clny Rd, Tardeo, 400007; May 4
Sapal Muncherji Crawford (82), 6, Jalbhoy Sett Bldg, 279, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 5
Rustomji Nariman Mehta (79), 10, Modern Flats, 128, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; May 5
Dossu Rustomji Patel (62), C/o 14/A, Banaji St, Fort, 400001; May 5
Faramroze Peshotan Cooper (74), A/1, Palacimo, Silver Oak Est, B. Desai Rd, 400026; May 6
Naju Nariman Fanibunda (86), 7, Sharda Sadan, Kohinoor Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 6
Kaikhushru Ardeshtir Ghadiali (86), J/14, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 6
Coomi Shiavax Khambata (84), 63, Shermen, 22, Narayan Dabholkar Rd, 400006; May 6
Sheryar Dinshaw Wadia (83), 26, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 6

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Mehroo Eruch Daruwalla (46), 5/5, Om Sai Kripa Co-op Hsg Soc, Near Shree Ram Talkies, Vithalwadi, Kalyan, Dist Thane, 421301; May 7
Aloo (Allamai) Cawasji Desai (89), 31, Ruki Mhl, Colaba, 400005; May 7
Banubai Gustadi Sethna (90), 3, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg No 2, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 7
Jehangir Burjorji Treasuryvala (83), Dina Villa, 23, Pali Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; May 7
Pirozshaw Bhikaji Daruwalla (92), 45, Parijat, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 8
Allabai Minocher Kapadia (82), 808/C, Asha Hse, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 8
Rati Melhi Kapadia (68), G/29, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 8
Khorshed Jamshedji Kanga (84), 94, Ardeshtir Dadi St, Khetwadi, 400004; May 9
Noshir Barjorjee Secretary (77), 643, Goolshan Ter, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 9
Jal Behramsha Sukhadwala (70), J/5, Parsi Clny, Opp Shoppers' Stop, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 9
Dhunjisha Ardeshtir Dubash (89), 784/A, Mancherji Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 10
Jamshed Sawak Mehta (75), 16, Todywala Bldg, 28, Sun Mill Rd, Lower Parel (W), 400013; May 10
Minoo Jamshed Mistry (53), A/16, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 10
Nargis Feroze Mistry (71), Kavay Lodge, 5, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 10
Manekbai Hormusji Umrigar (85), C/301, Apeksha Apts, Sai Ngr, Vasai (W), Dist Thane, 401202, May 10
Tehmina Jehangirji Vazifdar (75), B/3, 104, Mapkhan Ngr, Andheri (E), 400069; May 10
Dolly Cawasji Bhesania (74), Fairy Manor, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; May 11
Daulat Dinyar Irani (82), 4, Shustry Bldg, Bellasis Rd, Above Raj Oil Mills, Nagpada, 400008; May 12
Baby of Khurshid Jehangir Mistry (stillborn), Engineer Bldg, Princess St, 400002; May 12
Rustom Behramshaw Pastakia (71), 5, Golf Links, Pali Hill,

Khar, 400052; May 12
Aloo Dinshaw Karani (78), D/2, Mehta Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 13
Banoo Coverji Kohiar (85), 584, Jillobai Wadia Bldg, Lady Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400019; May 14
Darabshaw Pestonji Panthaki (83), K/9, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 14
Phiroze Bomanji Wadia (90), Adam Mhl, 147, Tardeo Rd, 400034; May 14
Perin Shiavax Doctor (76), Jer Mans, Guzdar St, Chira Bazar, 400002; May 15
Peroja Framroze Moos (84), 6, Dubash Mans, 217/C, Mount Mary Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 15
Shirin Rusi Wadia (75), Parvati, 396/3, North Avenue, Santacruz, 400054; May 15
Eruch Jehangir Writer (77), Mani Villa, 23, M. Pasta Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 15
Pirozshah Khushru Irani (89), 598/C, Wadia Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; May 16
Nariman Eduljee Mandviwalla (79), 666, Orient Hse, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 16
Kaikhushroo Nadirsha Pardiwalla (90), B/301, Ahura Co-op Soc, Dr S. S. Rao Rd, Parel, 400012; May 16
Nargez Minoo Patel (80), 62, Iris Apts, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, 400005; May 17
Dinamai Navroji Amrolia (92), 15, Mehta Bldg, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; May 18
Nariman Dinshaw Bhagat (82), 12, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 19
Jer Rusi Davar (72), Silverett, Rd No 27-A/122, Sion (E), 400022; May 19
Khodaram Behram Irani (Roshni) (95), Adenwala Bldg, Pauwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 19
Najamai Ardeshtir Patel (75), 9, Navjivan Soc, Lamington Rd, 400008; May 19
Merwan Noshir Dubash (87), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 20
Homi Ratanji Lathiwalla (82), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 20
Boman Jalejar Bhandara (70), 3/7, Golwalla Bldg, Khetwadi 8th Lane, 400004; May 21
Perin Kaikhushroo Irani (81), Behjat Hse, 83, Mint Rd, Fort, 400038; May 21

Sheriyar Bapuji Tadwalla (74), Golwalla Bldg, Khetwadi 8th Lane, 400004; May 21
Din Dorab Banaji (83), C/o D. M. Batliwalla, 30, Sleater Rd, 400007; May 23
Mithan Ratanshaw Bhabha (84), Meher Mans, Tardeo Bridge, Off Lamington Rd, 400008; May 23
Khorshed Nariman Bulsara (74), West-View, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 23
Spitman Cawasji Desai (82), A/9, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 23
Roshni Faredoon Ginwalla (79), G/1, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 23
Minoo Faredoon Madan (55), 664, Roshan Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 23
Daulat Dinshaw Baria (80), J/5, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; May 25
Shirin Shawakshaw Turner (83), B/1, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; May 25
Framroze Cooverji Bhagwagar (83), SBI Alka Soc, Ceasar Rd, Amboli, Andheri (W), 400058; May 26
Manijeh Sorabji Engineer (87), 3, Patel Chmbs, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; May 26
Shirin Phiroze Talati (89), Tafti Bldg, South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; May 26
Ardeshtir Palonji Daver (92), 8/10, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; May 27
Dhunjmai Savakshaw Wadia (91), 7/A, Navjivan Co-op Hsg Soc, Lamington Rd, 400008; May 27
Jehangir Pirozsha Petigara (80), Habib Hse, 293, Grant Rd, 400007; May 28
Hormuzjee Rustomjee Pir (91), Q/16, Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 29
Kali Manchershaw Bhagat (76), R/23, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 30
Kekobad Darabsha Katki (83), L, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; May 30
Jer Boman Mehta (87), Empress Court, Churchgate Recl, 400020; May 30
Hiraji Ardeshtir Vankadia (70), B/24, Usha Kiran, Lallubhai Park, Andheri (W), 400058; May 30
Nargish Jehangir Batliwalla (74), Patel Bglw, Gholwad, Dist Thane, 401702; May 31
Tehmina Jamshedji Shroff (89), Lady Navajbai Tata Bldg, Tata

Clny, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; May 31
Mani Adi Vakil (62), Vakil Bglw, Opp Mission Church, Vadkun, Dahanu Rd, Dist Thane, 401601; May 31

CALCUTTA

BORN

A girl, *Kaizeen*, to *Aban* and *Cyrus Confectioner*, sister to *Yohan*; May 20

MARRIED

Zarine Antia and *Dinshaw Billimoria*; May 20

DIED

Perin Yezdi Hormusji, sister of *Jehangir Mehta*, *Nergish* and late *Pervez* and *Jolly*; May 14

JAMSHEDPUR

DIED

Sheroo Piroshaw (66), wife of *Noshir* and mother of *Shiraz* *Tata* and *Zaver Chowdhuri*; May 27

NASIRABAD, RAJASTHAN

DIED

Edulji Framji, father of *Zarine Dotivala*; January 1

POONA

DIED

Puran Boman Shroff (56), 10, *Hermes Towers*, 18, *Sachapir St*, Camp, 411001; May 3
Sam Faredoon Ghadialy (82), *Narsan Mitra Hsg Soc*, *Nagar Gaon*, *Lonavala*, 410401; May 4
Nerges Adi Contractor (75), E/4, *Hermes Park*, 30, *Bund Garden Rd*, 411001; May 5
Mehra Eruch Pastakia (72), 109, *K. P. Towers I*, *Fatima Ngr*, 411013; May 10
Nassarwanji Naoroji Engineer (81), 21, *Banu Villa*, *Ghorpadi Gaon*, 411001; May 31

SURAT

DIED

Eruchshaw Dhanjisha Variava (78), *Maachlipith*, 395003; May 1
Meharwanji Eruchshaw Patel (82), *Village Dumas*, *Dist Surat*, 394550; May 3
Savakshaw Mancharsha Tadiwala (75), *Maachlipith*, 395003; May 4
Alamai Kawasji Nalawala (91), *Nariman Home and Infirmary*, *Shahpore*, 395003; May 7
Baby boy of *Cyrus Noshir Jabbar*, *Village Bhatha*, *Dist*

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Surat, 394510; May 20
Najamai Minocher Ilavia (75),
 Village Kumas, Taluka Rajpipla,
 Dist Bharuch, 393145; May 21
Jaloo Fali Dadina (67),
 Engineer Bldg, Turki Wad,
 395003; May 22
Baby boy of Pervez Fali Cooper,
 Aganovad, Sayedpura, 395003;
 May 29
Khorshed Homi Mistry (75),
 Choki St, Nanpura, 395001;
 May 31
Ardeshtir Dorabji Vesuna (75),
 Village Vesu, Dist Surat,
 395003; May 31

CANADA

Montreal

DIED

Amy Mistry (50), wife of
 Faredoon and mother of Burjis
 and Avan; March 16

Toronto

BORN

A girl, *Emilia*, to *Sima* and *Joseph*
Rojas; December 17, 1994

DIED

Khorshed Daroga (90), sister of
Firoze Sethna; May 2, 1995

Vancouver

BORN

A girl, *Natasha*, to *Anna Marie*
 and *Babak Marzbani*; January 11

IRAN

DIED

Mirza Soroush Lohrasb (90),
 father of *Shanaz* and *Shah-*
behran; May 16

Tehran

DIED

Mahin Banoo Sohrab, mother of
Hida Mazdiyanshi; February 24
Bahman Urmezdyar Atashband,
 father of *Shahriar*; April 14

PAKISTAN

Karachi

BORN

A boy, *Shayan*, to *Dilshad* and
Firdous Irani; April 26
 A girl, *Anahita*, to *Perveen* and
Khurshed Katila; April 29

DIED

Jilla Mherwan Nanavati (95);
 January 21
Perin Rusi Mody (67);
 January 25
Minoo Nadirshaw Pajniagara
 (60); February 7
Byram Savakshaw Gandhi (71);
 February 18

TOTALS FOR 1994 AND 1995

	Bombay			India			World		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
BORN									
Boys	6	133	39	--	13	4	5	36	9
Girls	6	115	36	1	8	3	5	32	7
MARRIED									
Parsi	30	294	153	1	16	2	1	13	2
Intercommunal	--	78^	25*	--	5	--	3	5	5
DIED									
CONSIGNED									
Males	43	501	202	9	74	43	9	37*	11
Females	41	495	186	9	99	37	10	30*	16
CREMATED									
Males	--	12	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Females	--	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue

B: Running totals for 1994 (February-March 1994-May 1995 issues)

C: Running totals for 1995 (February-March 1995-May 1995 issues)

^ Males married out in 1994 -- 44

Females married out in 1994 -- 34

* Males married out in 1995 -- 12

Females married out in 1995 -- 13

* Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have any breakup of those cremated.

These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India or abroad.

Nariman D. Kapadia (84);
 February 19
Mershimine P. Dubash (63);
 March 11
Mehra Feroze Kerawalla (82);
 March 12
Mehrwan Burjore Dhatigara
 (73); April 17
Phiroze Jamshedji Bharucha
 (84); April 21

UK

London

BORN

A girl, *Rukhshana*, to *Navaz* and
Sam Sethna; February 20
 A boy, *Rehan*, to *Laila* and
Jehangir Petit; May 4

DIED

Nowshir Jungalwalla, husband
 of *Piloo*, father of *Hoshang* and
 brother of *Amy Bhabha*, *Siloo*
Vatcha, *Jean Moos* and *Tehmie*
Gazdar; May 8

USA

California

DIED

Noshir (Nick) Mullanferoze;
 February 19
Mana Khorashadi (5), daughter
 of *Zoreh* and *Mahmoud*;

April 18

Golestan Shahzadi (67), mother
 of *Fariborz*; May 17

Chicago

BORN

A girl, *Gordiya Parsi*, to *Anne*
 and *Zarir Khademian*; April 22

MARRIED

Gurpreet Masuta and *Farokh*
Kianipour, son of *Iranok* and
Keki; April 8
Ami Shah, daughter of *Hansa*
 and *Samprati* and *Neville*
Bilimoria, son of *Bachi* and
Maherji; April 14

Dallas

MARRIED

Sharnaz Ghadially and *Sohrab*
Mistry; December 11, 1994

Iowa City

MARRIED

Vanessa Behrana, daughter of
Zenobia and *Mehelli* and *David*
A. Jensen; May 20, 1995

Maryland

BORN

A boy to *Perviz* and *Vispi*
Gowadia; January 11

New York

DIED

Freny Mehta, wife of *Khurshed*
 and mother of *Farokh* and *Jer*;
 February 10

Towaco, New Jersey

BORN

A boy, *Neville*, to *Khurshed*
 and *Shailendra Dusaj*;
 December 2, 1994

Woodcliffe Lake, New Jersey

BORN

A boy, *Farhad*, to *Jerroo* and
Shiroy Ranji; January 19, 1995

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

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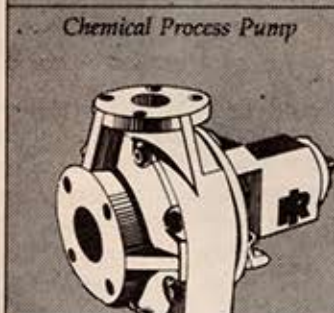
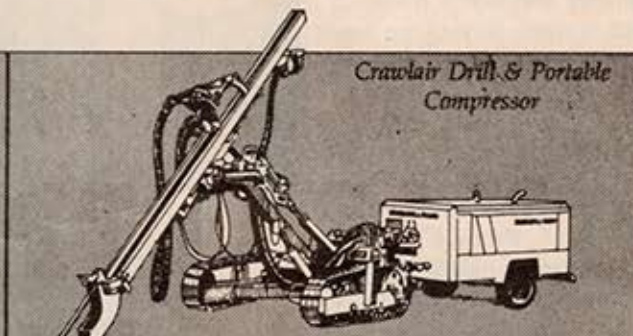
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Died: Bapoo Burjorji Mama, 70, leading cricket statistician, on March 18, 1995 at Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital following multiple organ failure.

"Not only was he an efficient cricket statistician but also one of the best of our times." This tribute to Mama came not from a junior, but a much respected statistician, Anandji Dossa, whom Mama considered his mentor. "When test matches began to be telecast (in India) in 1972-73, Bapoo became the first statistician to assist the new media and that he remained there for nearly two decades is a tribute to his awesome ability," mentioned Dossa in *Mid-Day*, March 22, 1995. His passion for cricket statistics started in 1954, four years before statisticians were required to assist radio commentators.

"Mama took great care to be accurate and would go to considerable lengths to secure the minutest of details," acknowledged sports enthusiast Sudhir Vaidya in *The Times of India* of March 26, 1995. "Inaccuracies and incomplete information in newspapers, his main source, would upset him and he would run from pillar to post seeking the correct scores," he added. Besides checking his facts with the print medium, he would also listen avidly to radio commentaries and watch televised matches played abroad, staying up late into the night if necessary, to make minute notes of all happenings singlehandedly, reports Dossa.

His flair for writing Mama put to use to present statistics in a readable and engaging style in the many columns he wrote like "Figures are fun," "Factfile," "Down memory lane," remember his colleagues. "He was an inspiration to me and to many other cricket writers," acknowledged Kersi Meher-Homji of Australia, recalling how Mama, "his personal friend for 25 years," once wrote from a hospital ward — with drips in one hand — to keep his deadline. His fair criticism of Indian sports brought him occasional censure but, as an unabashed Mama had explained to Meher-Homji, "I criticize what is chronically wrong with Indian cricket: our xenophobic tendency to boast about our cricket to the exclusion of all other countries."

"Although progressive in outlook, he was against senseless modern innovations which spoilt the good name of cricket. When others grumbled and did nothing, Bapoo was bold enough to write his strong protests to MCC and other cricket associa-

Matchless Mama

Parinaz Gandhi

tions of the world," notes Meher-Homji. Recently he wrote to the Australian cricket board for unofficially including an 'A' team in the Benson and Hedges world series which he feared would prove to be a nightmare for statisticians, reports Vaidya. There were files of such correspondence that he maintained. Being stationed in



Photograph courtesy *Mid-Day*

Panchgani due to health reasons, his inability to discuss the game to his heart's content led him to exchange notes with like-minded enthusiasts across the globe. "His letters, beautifully handwritten or neatly typed, had a human touch... and he was always prompt in his replies," states Vaidya.

He also had an enviable collection of books by renowned statisticians like Roy Webber, Arthur Wrigley and Bill Frindall, some of them personally autographed by the authors. All sets of the *Playfair Cricket Annual* (from its first issue in 1948), the *Playfair* cricket monthly and *Cricketer*

International as also the *Wisden Cricket* monthly he received regularly and insisted on retaining all those copies in his small house, much to his wife Mani's dismay.

"To the statistician, his work has not been a job, it has been a passion," wrote Behram Contractor in his "Round and about" column in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of March 20, 1995. Contractor who includes Mama among India's two greatest cricket statisticians also has memories of radio commentator Pearson Surita saying, "'At the end of this over perhaps Mr Mama you could tell us how many times has a left-handed batsman in a first-class match been out caught and bowled when his score was 97?' Mr Mama would of course be able to supply the information immediately... I could imagine them sitting in a row, AIR microphones in front of them, three commentators, the expert and their official statistician with his pile of books, his charts, his scorecards. None of them were seen, they were all heard, except the statistician who was neither seen nor heard... computer data finished all that..."

Regarded as a storehouse of information, Mama gathered his knowledge in the course of his varied readings triggered by a conversation with a fellow patient at the Bel-Air Sanatorium in Panchgani many decades ago. Mama's casual attempt then to discuss cricket despite his want of knowledge had so irked that cricket fiend that Mama decided he would bring up the subject the next time only after a thorough grasp of it, informs Mama's brother-in-law Keki Mama who had also been his co-student at St Xavier's College when they graduated with history and economics as their principal subjects. During his school days at the New Bhanda High School Mama was rated an outstanding student in English.

On completion of his education Mama served short stints at B. B. Nadodwala and Company, Calcutta's Merchants and Shipping Company, the executive engineer's secretariat, Public Works Department, Government of Bombay and the British Institute of Technology. A lung ailment forced him to seek treatment at the Bel-Air Sanatorium where he eventually took up residence and work as in-charge of the stores department while Mani worked as secretary to the superintendent. He had opportunities to attend several medical camps and help in the treatment of poor

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people in the course of his association with Bel-Air, according to Keki. His deep interest in Western classical music he was able to pursue at Panchgani too.

In memory of Mama who succeeded in putting India on the world map of cricket statistics Vaidya has suggested the setting up of a museum wherein his books, manuscripts, scores, statistics, audio and video cassettes could be housed. Contractor is in support of a move whereby the cricket board or some other body takes charge of his statistics and preserves them on the rationale, "You never know when the computers may fail and Mama may be required to answer a query."

Mama is survived by his wife Mani.

Vachha's care and control

Died: Dr (Ms) Silloo Manek Vachha, 71, former director of Central Food Laboratories and deputy director of health services of the government of Maharashtra, on October 16, 1994 in Pune following cardiac arrest.

Her extensive research in the fields of food adulteration and water pollution led to Vachha's expertise being sought not only by the government of India but also



by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). With the WHO she had collaborated for strengthening laboratory services in Maharashtra and the FAO had commissioned her to direct a project which monitored the use of food contaminants, par-

ticularly heavy metals, according to a report in *The Times of India* of July 11, 1994.

Besides being a fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry in London she was also elected member of the American Oil Chemists' Society.

Management of health laboratories too came under her purview and she worked towards improving the standards of hospitals and laboratories.

Recalling Vachha's "uncanny ability of motivating people" when she was president of the University Women's Association (UWA), Ms Sita Shahani also remembered her as being "warm, fair, friendly and understanding with a great deal of common sense and integrity of character."

The Pune-based scientist was also involved with other local bodies. She was an active committee member of the Poona Zarhosti Seva Mandal and of the Mandal's Ladies Club for many years where her guidance and help will now be greatly missed, acknowledges Ms Ratai Patell. She made time for The Poona Music Society too and for nearly a quarter century served as its committee member.

Vachha's academic foundation was at Parsi institutions: Sardar Dastur Noshirwan Girls' High School which deemed her "one of its most illustrious products," and the Nowrojee Wadia College from where she graduated in science. She did her doctorate in chemistry at the Agricultural College, Pune. Her post doctoral research was at the University of Illinois where she investigated the toxicity of different grades of mineral oils, detected as adulterants in edible oils. Vachha (née Naegamwalla) was one of the three women scholars from India, of the 40 worldwide, selected by the American Association of University Women to receive a fellowship that covered full tuition and living expenses at an American university, as reported the *Poona Herald* of May 28, 1965. She was then chemical assistant at the Public Health Laboratory.

Besides publishing research papers in different scientific journals Vachha also served as research guide in biochemistry for students doing their doctorate at the University of Poona. Commenting on Vachha's commitment to social and academic causes Shahani summed up, "In a world where care and attention to detail are fast disappearing, she showed a tremendous sense of caring for all things that appear trivial to most of us today."

She is survived by her husband Lt Col Manek Vachha, a retired army psychiatrist.

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 9

Declining numbers?

This is no time for introspection, neither is this the time to debate as time itself is our problem — it is running out on us. Why can't every single Parsi realize that we are a fast disappearing race, soon to be a had been?

Drastic steps and progressive reforms are the need of the day. No one can satisfy every one, but steps have to be taken to see that our tribe increases. It will be the saddest day on earth when no Parsi will exist — we are like the salt in the food; without us all joy, humor, camaraderie, selflessness, caring, sharing, brilliance, etc. will vanish into thin air. If I were Meherji Rana and history had to be rewritten, I'd have added salt to the pulav instead of sugar to the milk.

It's time to find recourse in certain practical steps. One that is of immediate concern is to allow all children of Parsi intercaste marriages to be accepted in our fold without preconditions and with open arms. Let the prodigals return to their roots.

I remember years back Dastur Bode had the gumption, guts and foresight to convert such kids of single Parsi parents, at Vansda, to our Zoroastrian *dharam* (religion). Now those children are very much a part of our faith. If he could do so then, why are we shying off it now.

Whatever *sanskars* you give your children, today the fact remains that it's terribly difficult to find suitable partners within our community, and this alone makes us venture out. Let fresh blood flow in and let's cherish the offspring of our intercaste marriages, accept them and the result will be a positive spurt in our numbers.

Ms RODA HAKIM
Vadodara

Matrimonial assistance

Your magazine makes good reading, which is informative, unbiased and above all amusing. I do not hesitate in suggesting that you should publish a separate matrimonial column to help the younger lot and their parents, often worried lest their children seek partners outside the community, more out of necessity than choice. We know there will be inhibitions initially, but once the momentum is gained it will be a great service to the society.

Lt Col J. C. FRAMJI
Bangalore

P.G.

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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