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Parsiana

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Cover: Lighthouse at Daman Photograph: Gustasp Irani

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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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

Navsari's Tata heritage

In a narrow lane in Navsari, two historic houses standing cheek by jowl are closely associated with the father of modern Indian industry, the visionary Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata (1839-1904). The smaller of the two is Jamsetji's birthplace, and I was informed by my local guide that while this had belonged to his mother's family, the larger one adjacent to it had been his paternal home.

The birthplace is a modest but charming structure with a narrow frontage that belies the depth of its interior, and halfway inside on the ground floor my guide pointed out the lilliputian room where the great man was born. Happily, the house is in good condition, well cared for and complete with a marble plaque over the front door recording, inter alia, that it was handed over in trust to the Parsi community of

Navsari by J. R. D. Tata in 1939.

The paternal edifice, which all but dwarfs the adjoining birthplace, is a palazzo by Navsari standards, its neo-classical facade looming over the lane. Sadly though, its hauteur is not matched by its condition, which is pathetic. Forlorn and abandoned, locked and barred, its broken windowpanes, rotting woodwork and moldering masonry give it the appearance of a crumbling ghost mansion.

Unless something is done quickly, the community and the country may well lose a piece of heritage. Are any conservationists listening?

RONI K. KHAN

Nasik

"Stained glass Zarthost"

You have reversed the negative/slide ("Stained glass Zarthost," *Parsiana*, October 1995). There was no need to do so. I had already done that as you can see from the print I gave you.

You have omitted my army rank. Why? You don't seem to do this with your other readers with military rank. Why me? When one retires one does not lose his rank.

I think you should explain yourself on the above two points. Apologize if you are in the wrong. There is no shame in apologizing.

LT Col BEHROOZ S. IRANI RAMC (Retd)

Parsiana apologizes.

Free copy of the *Gathas*

Homage most fitting is paid to the great teacher, scout master, athlete, sportsman and physical culturist of Surat, Master (Ustad) Keki Vaid, who lived a life of purity, dignity, nobility, service and sacrifice. In his long career, the great master trained hundreds of youths, many of whom made a mark in various fields of life.

His golden words to his pupils were, "Everyman is endowed with some gift by God. If he recognizes it and nourishes it, he will surely shine out."

Sahitya Aane Sanskruti, a cultural organization, has solemnly dedicated its publication of *Zarathushtra's*

Jamsetji Tata's maternal (top) and paternal homes

Gathas, an English version in verse by Rusi Pardiwala, to the late Ustad Keki Vaid. Dusturji Nasserwanji of Surat's Shehenshahi Atash Behram released the booklet at the wedding ceremony of Zarir, son of Meher and the late Keki Vaid, and Khushnum Parvez Aibara at Surat on December 7, 1995.

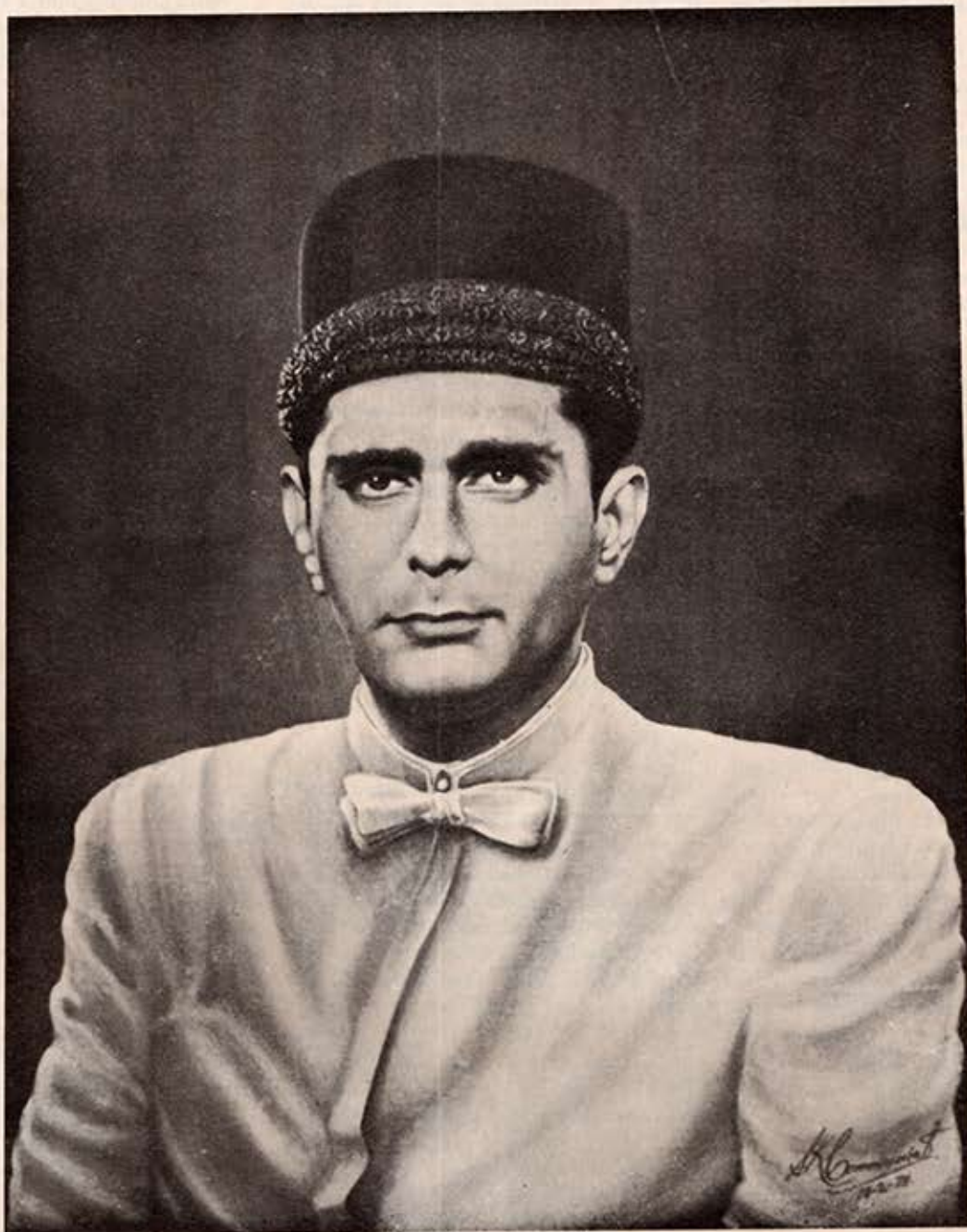
Ex-students and trainees of the late Ustad, as also anyone else who is interested, may contact the Sahitya Aane Sanskruti office at Room No. 4, Mahavir Chambers, second floor, Banaji Street, Fort, Bombay 400001 for a free copy of the book.

T. P. WADIA

Nagpur school needs funds

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service of society the J. N. Tata Parsi Girls' High School is in its platinum jubilee year.

The building of the School was originally designed to cater to the needs of a small number of children. Over the years the pressure of admissions have increased and a dire need is now felt for its expansion. The blueprint for a new building behind the teachers' quarters is ready. The construction work for the same will be the most important task to be undertaken during this jubilee year.

This is an earnest appeal to all to contribute generously towards this noble cause. Your contribution in cash/cheque/demand draft may be sent in the name of J. N. Tata Parsi Girls' High School, Nagpur. The names of those who donate Rs 25,000 and above, will be inscribed on marble. Contributions are entitled to income-tax exemption under section 80-G of the Income-tax Act.

Ms F. N. HAMZA

Principal, J. N. Tata Parsi Girls' High School, Nagpur

Destiny of the spirit

Religious controversies have become the bane of our times. Religion is in a state of turmoil, so much so that the spirit with which it was first introduced by the prophets is dead and only the form — the rituals and the conventions — now remains and a lot of heat is uselessly generated. Zarathushtra, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammad made their appearance and dispelled many of the myths. They all said "God is One. Call Him what you wish, He will come to you in that form. Seek Him in the hearts of fellow beings, in nature and in this beautiful world which He has given us to enjoy and live happily." But the original message is lost and we are fogged in controversies of who is really God.

Who is He? Where does He stay? Is He Real? The answers to these questions are unknown, but not unknowable. Somewhere in the recesses of our innermost being He dwells and can be contacted in the silence of our spirit — the intuition which rises like the kundalini and floods us with so many answers. To Arjun's query of "Who are you Lord?" Sri Krishna replied, "Main? Main hoon." To Moses He said, "I am that I am." Jesus said, "My father and I are one." Mohammad found Him in Allah and Buddha saw Him in the profound suffering of his fellow human beings. Zarathushtra found Him in truth and the beauty of Nature and her various elements. The underlying message was the same — God always existed and always will. He is here, there and everywhere, the Prime Creator who out of love for humanity incarnated in

various forms.

Instead of taking cognizance of the prophets' revelations we are busy arguing about rituals and forcible conversions or no conversions or who is a real Parsi or whatever. All the inventions, the technological advancement, the sciences, the arts, the journey to the moon pale into insignificance as we realize that we have lost the greatest heritage of mankind and the main message of the prophets that "God is love."

Being born in the Zoroastrian faith, I wish to thank my soul for gravitating towards this great democratic religion of my ancestors. For selecting such noble and wonderful parents who gave me birth and all the family who are so dear and loving to me. I am proud to be a Zoroastrian and will die as one. We Parsis have a long heritage of charity, sincerity, friendliness and living the good life. We love laughter and fun and can mix and match with others with the same charm and proximity we have for our own. Who cares if I am burnt, buried or eaten by the birds? or argued about my disposal by persons I have never seen in my life? Who cares if a family member is married to an outsider? It's their life and their choice. Why should I interfere in their decision?

At some point during Reiki (healing meditation) Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi made His appearance and said, "Forget all these useless feuds and controversies. Go back to the spirit of the message. The message is that if one link breaks in the chain, the chain is broken and has to be reset."

Babaji is not an ordinary run-of-the mill saint who can grant boons at the drop of a hat! When my young son was dying of cancer, all my raving and ranting and pleas to "take me but spare him" met with a stern gaze. "No ma, death is inevitable — He will always be with you. After all what can

this poor fakir do near Allah's will?" That is Baba.

After knowing him, I am a better Parsi — I can feel the presence of the Holy one when I pray in the fire-temple. The *Gathas* have acquired a new meaning and I find a sea-change in my attitude towards my own faith. Our priests have only created confusion saying one thing and doing another; so much so that no one takes them seriously. When I go to Udvarda I can feel the profound silence of the holy fire as it crackles and glows in the evening dusk. When I go to Shirdi, I touch the soil where Baba once walked and visit him as one would a loving friend. We do not perform any aartis or poojas. We enter Dwar Ka Mai (door to the mother's house) and sit on the steps. Soon Baba makes his presence felt and we talk. I cry, I scold, I rant. He listens as much as to say "OK. I have heard all this; now go home and relax. Leave everything to me." Baba is not a prophet. He offers no religion, no conversion. He only teaches acceptance, adherence to one's own religion — and offers His Grace.

It is not necessary for others to agree or disagree. Think, and set your house in order! The false presumptions, the fanaticism, the entire facade of untruth with which we cover ourselves will slowly come crumbling down.

Let us unite and fight against forces of corruption, communalism and useless propaganda which demean the spirit and turn it away from its real destiny. The goal becomes more distant, more impossible to reach as we have forgotten what it is to love.

Ms GOOLOO R. MEHTA

Whither, Parsiana?

My family and I enjoy reading *Parsiana*. To make the magazine more interesting to
continued on page 48



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Events and Personalities

Dental Congress

The Third World Zoroastrian Dental Congress (WZDC) is to be held in Goa at the Hotel Leela Beach from 20th to 23rd September 1996 by the Zoroastrian Dental Organization (ZDO) in association with the Goa State Branch of the Indian Dental Association, notes a press release issued by the congress chairman Dr Porus S. Turner.

The ZDO comprises around 120 Zoroastrian dentists from all over the world with the majority being from Bombay, notes the release. "Although few in members the group is very active and holds preventive dentistry programs regularly in different Zoroastrian colonies of Bombay, Udvada and other places in Gujarat. They also have continuing education seminars for its members at least twice a year." "The greatest achievement of this small dedicated group is that till today they have been instrumental in sending six Zoroastrians to a private dental college in the south to become dental surgeons," states Turner.

The First WZDC was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, and the second in Karachi Pakistan at the Avari Towers (courtesy Byram Avari).

The congress is open to Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian dental surgeons from around the world. The co-chairmen of the Congress are Drs Keki Mistry and Rumi Sukhia and the president of the ZDO is Dr Fali P. Driver.

Delegates from neighbouring countries as well as from the USA, the UK and Canada are expected to present their clinical and research papers at the conference, states the release. The theme of the conference is 'Light the way with Knowledge.' Preconference courses will be conducted on esthetic dentistry, crown and bridge dentistry and dental implants.

Dentists who wish to present a paper or join as delegates are requested to contact

Dr (Ms) Daisy Sidhwa, organising secretary, Third WZDC, Queens Chamber, M. Karve Road, Bombay 400020.

Few votes for Parsis

"All Parsis must vote Parsis. Let Parsi voice be heard in Parliament... Now or never vote for Mr Marazban J. A. Patrawala, Dr Shapoorji C. Surty, Mr Parvez Damania," read an advertisement in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of April 21, 1996. As it turned out, none of these Parsi contestants were able to win seats to the Lok Sabha — not Samajwadi Party candidate Patrawala from the South Bombay constituency; nor independent Surty from central Bombay; nor Shiv Sena fielded Damania from south Ahmednagar.

When former member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Patrawala was denied a seat by Congress (I) who preferred to nominate sitting member of Parliament Murli Deora for reelection, Patrawala opted for the cycle symbol of the Samajwadi Party, hoping that he would have the support of 43 percent of the votes from the Muslims, scheduled castes, Uttar Bharatiyas and Parsis plus some more to win the majority at the ballot.

His intervention during the Adoption of Children Bill as also help extended to young boys and girls to get admission into schools and colleges was acknowledged by the likes of Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees Jamshed Guzder, Ms Silloo Kavarana, legal luminaries Justice Bakhtawar Lentin, Justice Dinshaw Mehta, Tehmtan Andhyarujina, doctors Rustom Soonawala, Aspi Golwalla, Temhton Udawadia and Kekobad Mody. In their joint appeal they mentioned, "He has always been a pillar of support to all the members of the public in general and to the members of the Parsi community in particular... We are sure that he will be a responsive and responsible Member of Parliament..." Other commu-

nity stalwarts like Nani Palkhivala, Vice Admiral R. K. S. Gandhi, Homi Taleyarkhan, Adi Godrej, Jamsheed Kanga however supported Deora, referring to him as "a progressive, clean and effective politician..." With the votes divided between these two contestants, the winner was Ms Jaywantiben Mehta fielded by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

For businessman Damania who was conferred a Shiv Sena ticket, it was no secret that his close ties with the Thackeray family had earned him that favor. Damania himself maintained in an interview with Deepak Lokhande that the Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray "wanted the candidate to be young and well-versed in Hindi and English. He also wanted articulate people who had the ability to communicate and understand the intricacies of representing the Shiv Sena in Parliament." Damania knew that he was contesting in a constituency where the Congress had not lost a seat in the last 50 years. But he was fairly confident on the grounds that he had provided a fair amount of employment in the area, all his companies — never mind that they are not prospering — being registered there. Leaving his suits in the closet and opting for the kurta-pyjama attire, he addressed issues like providing medical facilities, proper irrigation and drinking water, and employment. Then why hadn't his party done anything about it after coming to power a year ago? Why had the local Shiv Sena MLA Anil Rathod done nothing to improve the situation in Nagar? This was the grilling he received at the hands of political reporters who found his political naiveté quite appealing and realized that though he would make a colorful MP if elected, his dangerous frankness could be exploited by his opponents.

When the backing of their respective political parties could not save the situation for Patrawala or Damania, Surty as an



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New Mhow agiary kebla, overview of agiary, gathering at the jashan on 21st March 1996 Photos: Kerman Marker
Lower right: facade of agiary
 Photo: Silloo Buhariwalla



independent candidate was almost a non-entity in the fight. "Let your voice be heard rightly in Parliament," "Vote only for the rising sun symbol" were the slogans adopted by him. But unfortunately he could make little headway in a constituency dominated by the Shiv Sainiks.

Mhow fire ablaze

"Dedicated to the faith that inspired and benevolence that financed this adarian saheb," reads the inscription on the kebla of the reconstructed fire-temple in Mhow wherein was housed their nearly 150-year-old fire on March 21, 1996.

In pitch darkness, in the early hours of the morning of March 21, the procession of over 100 Zoroastrians led by Dastur Meherji Meherjirana of Navsari accompanied the fire carried by four priests. Acting as

ratherstars or guardians for the atash were two senior trustees of the Mhow Anjuman and the president of the Ratlam Anjuman, each carrying swords.

The heaps of sandalwood offered with prayers created a "glorious blaze (which) brought renewed hopes that this light will for ever survive all difficulties and pessimism lurking in the minds of many," wrote Group Captain Dhunjishaw Marker, vice president of the Mhow Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, in his report on the proceedings.

Later in the morning the panthaky of the Mhow Anjuman Ervad Rumi Panthaki led a jashan, accompanied by his assistant Ervad Jimmy Panthaki and the two priests from Surat, Ervad Jehangir Turel and Ervad Farrok Turel. The mobeds from Surat were specifically invited to organize and conduct the requisite prayers involved in

the shifting of the atash padshah from its temporary abode to the palatial new agiary which continues to be the only adarian in the whole of north and central India, according to Marker.

In fact, the festivities had commenced the previous evening with the video screening of *The Voice of Zarathushtra* followed by a sumptuous dinner. The catering for all the meals, including breakfast and lunch on Jamshedi Navroze, was under the supervision of Marzban Khajotia of Baroda.

When faced with the gargantuan task of rebuilding the Agiary, considerable help was extended by architect Jehanbux Bili-moria of Bombay, building contractor Adil Marfatia from Indore and structural engineer Phiroze Ghadiali of Bombay, all of whom worked in an honorary capacity, acknowledge the Mhow office-bearers.

"Goodness, I left the tap on!"



The next time
you're careless,
remember over 250 million Indians don't have
access to drinking water.

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The local team substantially involved in this project included their octogenarian president Ms Homai Illava, honorary secretary Dr Behram Masani, purse-string holder Firoze Illava and members of the managing committee. Their well-laid garden was designed by Zal Cowasji. Others who have been singled out for their involvement are Naval Cooper, Ms Pervin Jehangir and Ms Nargesh Buchia who helped raise the necessary funds.

On this significant occasion when community members had assembled from the neighboring towns, an inter-city meet of Madhya Pradesh Zoroastrians was organized to discuss material problems and the future course of activities for the welfare of their youth.

In pursuit of tolerance

"It took two months to write the United Nations' charter. It is hoped that United Religions will accomplish the task in two years." Bishop of California, Rt Rev William E. Swing was addressing a gathering in the Library Hall of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) on March 15, 1996 on the "Creation of an International Organization for the World's Religions."

The talk by the visiting Bishop had been jointly hosted by the KRCOI and The World Conference of Religion for Peace. The co-sponsoring organizations included Anjuman-I-Islam, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, St Xavier's College's Department of Religious Studies, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Temple of Understanding.

Predicting that the ascendancy of military fundamentalism will be so pervasive in the coming century that a United Religious Organization would be necessary to counter it, Swing noted that the signing of the charter of Global Ethics in 1993 (after the Second Parliament of World Religions) was a relevant first step in that direction. ("Young children adding yoga and dharma to their catechism," was another.)

The charter writing is expected to be undertaken in two phases, at meetings scheduled for June 1997 and June 1998. Both will be hosted by Swing's diocese of San Francisco where the Bishop had hosted the UN's Interfaith Service last October to commemorate the United Nations' golden jubilee in the city where it was born in 1945 [Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal was invited to speak at the UN celebrations in New York. See "Zoroastrianism at the UN," *Parsiana*, February-March 1996.]

But the priest was at pains to observe that the parallel between the UN and the

envisaged body, though convenient, was difficult to sustain. For one thing, the concept of the autonomous sovereignty of nations was well defined and understood but how many religions were there and how many subgroups? "If subgroups inside a religion won't deal with each other, how will they get together in a council?" Swing cited a basic concern. At the other end of the spectrum are those who think "Wouldn't one great religion be wonderful?... Don't all religions believe the same thing?"

Swing noted that a primary concern of the new body "would be to discern the spiritual content of global issues and take steps" accordingly. The constituencies of the great historical religions would be respected; religious autonomy would be preserved just as national autonomy has been preserved, while giving each representative a voice in the world's arena. "There was more to religions than their code of ethics," he noted, and stressed the need for them to "sit together to discuss issues and action for global good" on a regular basis.

Citing examples of conflict between England and Ireland, Israel and the Arab states and Bosnia — all of which have been rooted in religious misconceptions — Swing said, "I am in awe of nations who gather to deliberate and seek peace... These talks are painful" and there are always efforts to derail them. But there is "no occasion for hard dialogue between religions... Religious leaders view it (compromise) in repugnant terms."

Yet, the world is changing — "who could have predicted that France and Germany (historical enemies) would be partners (in the European Union)?" — and imagination at the grassroots needs to be "set ablaze," noted the priest who is a member of the executive committee of the American Foundation of AIDS Research and runs an organization that feeds 2,000 persons every night, provides them bank loans to set up their own enterprise and housing, as noted Dr Homi Dhallal in his introduction.

Though the great religious leaders of the world have never been asked to come together to discuss for "global good," Swing is convinced that "a united religion will happen because it has to happen: humanity has always stretched to find its soul in new and foreign settings," and religious cowardice and parochialism are out of place in the world's new global civilization."

The Swing lecture marks the increasing involvement of the KRCOI with interfaith activities. "Unless people know more about other religions, there can be no tolerance,"

notes its trustee-secretary Ms Homai Modi.

Thirty-five students have been attending its elementary interfaith classes since January this year. The two-hour sessions divided into two lectures each, every Saturday afternoon, have covered eight major religions. A token fee of Rs 100 includes xeroxed notes, tea and payment to the lecturers. Each religion has had four lectures devoted to it taught by professors of standing. Thus Zoroastrianism has been taught by Dr Ramiyar Karanjia, principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa, Hinduism and Buddhism by Prof S. A. Upadhyaya of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Christianity and Islam by Rev Lancy Pereira and Dr (Ms) Zeenat Shaikat Ali respectively, both of St Xavier's College, Jainism by Ms Uthpala Mody, professor of philosophy at G. D. Somany College, Bahaism by Vahid Fozdar, a doctoral student at the California University, Berkeley, USA and Judaism by Rabbi Hyim Shafner.

Another popular activity at the KRCOI are conversational classes in elementary Persian conducted by Burjor Bastawala on Monday evenings. The first six-monthly course which began last October may now be succeeded by an intermediate class as well as a second primary course. Bastawala, who has taught Persian in five local schools, had qualified for his masters from Bombay University. Having retired from his Union Bank job, Bastawala wrote to the KRCOI offering his free service in the propagation of Persian, informs Modi.

The KRCOI is also offering four fellowships to promote research. So far there are two takers as per Modi — Karanjia who is working on the Avesta/Pahlavi/Zend aspect under Dastur (Dr) Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa and P. V. Pathak who is pursuing Vedic studies under Upadhyaya.

All these activities are helping to create an awareness of the KRCOI and its facilities among the citizens of Bombay, says Modi.

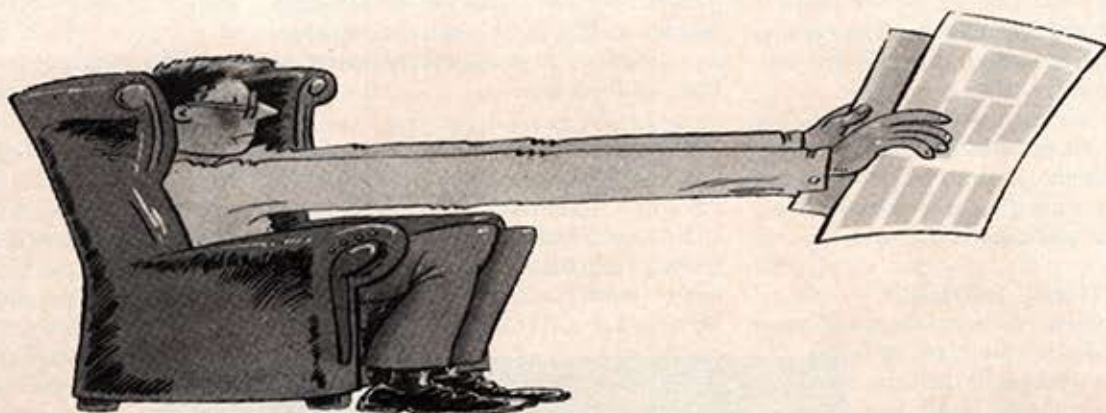
Arnavaz S. Mama

Shah Nameh dismembered

"Cannibalizing of an artistic monument" was how the *International Herald Tribune* described the auction by Sothebys of four pages of the legendary *Shah Nameh*, reports *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (ADC) of May 7, 1996.

This immortal work by Firdausi Toosi, with writings dating to the period of Shah Tehmurasp in 1524, was dismembered as the auctioneer sold four exquisite pages. The leaf featuring the divine and daring Shah Kekobad fetched the highest amount of £ 793,500. The next highest sum, £ 63-

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4,000 was quoted for the episode of Shah Faredoon. The artistic depiction of Rustam deflecting with a kick the boulder hurled at him went for £ 397,500; and the page featuring Shah Mancherji earned £ 353,000, according to the ADC report.

It was a great day for commerce but hardly for the preservation of cultural treasures, adds the paper, while bringing an awareness among the Zoroastrians, heritage lovers and historians in Bombay.

Advertising acumen

As the oldest outdoor advertising company in India, 50-year-old Selvel has a couple of firsts to its credit: it claims to be the first in the world to advertise on the airport; and also to have the largest advertising billboard in the world, admeasuring 180 ft by 16 ft, situated at Bombay's Chowpatty Bridge.

Founded by Sorab K. Nicholson in 1945, the present chairman of Selvel Publicity and Consultants Private Limited is his widow Ms Gool Nicholson Engineer with their son Kaikhushru Nicholson serving as managing director. According to their press release they have 11 branches and five associate offices in different parts of India. Their first clients were Air India and Coca-Cola with the former advertising their message on the hoarding at Kemps Corner.

Following the demise of her husband, Gool Nicholson took charge of the firm. At the second World Outdoor Advertising Congress in Cannes she was the only female delegate and among the two Asians present at the meet. Sponsorship by the French Outdoor Advertising Association was assured to her after she confirmed that she would deliver her speech in French, we are informed.

"A shift in life-style to consume fewer

Engineer (left) and Nicholson



goods and waste less is one factor in balancing economic growth with environmental reality" — one of the messages propounded by Selvel on recycled paper, accompanies the news item intimating of their achievements.

Judicial humanism

The Chief Justice of India A. M. Ahmadi has urged The Bombay Bar Association (BBA) and The Firdauz Taleyarkhan Memorial Foundation (FTMF) to set up a center under the frame-work of the legal services act of 1987 to enable the settle-



Ahmadi (left) with the Taleyarkhans.

ment of disputes by negotiation to reduce the huge pendency in the City Civil Court. The center could take up cases referred to it by the court and help to "introduce a culture of settlement by negotiation. That's what this country needs. It would be a worthy tribute to the lawyer who passed away in the prime of youth — the most appropriate tribute to Firdauz," said the judge who had earlier ceremonially garlanded Firdauz's photograph.

The Chief Justice made the appeal while concluding the Firdauz H. J. Taleyarkhan Memorial Lecture on "Legal Aid, Precept, Practice and Prospects" at the Convocation Hall of Bombay University on April 27, 1996, the fifth anniversary of the brilliant lawyer, horseman and mountaineer's tragic death in the Garhwal Mountains.

In the course of the lecture, held under the combined aegis of the BBA and the FTMF, the judge referred to the late Firdauz's "enduring interest" in issues of legal aid and environmental protection. Placing these within the "larger issue of access to justice," Ahmadi noted that the

Indian legal framework continued to be what the British had introduced in the 19th century — one catered to secure the needs of a system which enshrined great inequalities and concentration of wealth. "Despite benevolent legislation," the poor continued to be "victims of hostile inaction." The feeling of insecurity which prevented poor people from taking advantage of the facilities provided "could be avoided if the legal system could embolden them" by safeguarding their rights and launching a "legal literacy drive." In the meantime the people, especially in rural areas, were more comfortable with the Panchayet. They were yet to accept the Lok Adalats, although 13,000 of these have disposed of 67 lakh cases (including 2.7 lakh motor accident cases).

Referring to the backlog of over one lakh cases pending in the country's highest court, the judge noted that more than 50 percent of them "do not involve questions of law, only questions of fact" and could reach "negotiated settlements with the help of people of common sense." The huge backlog has since been reduced to 32,000 in one year: computers identified state statutes which were common and lawyers and judges cooperated in seeing them through, informed Ahmadi.

Noting that there is not a single institution in this country that has expertise in court management techniques, Ahmadi revealed that experts from abroad had been invited to help build up a management module, "train 100 youngsters to take charge of management of court dockets." He urged the bar associations of the country to set up committees of lawyers with "insight into court dockets."

Matrimonial cases are tough, take a longer time, Ahmadi conceded, but noted that quick settlement would help the parties who would otherwise be spending their youthful years in court corridors. Though there was an understanding with the legal aid system in the UK, he also drew attention to the plight of Indian citizens sued abroad who desperately needed legal assistance.

Addressing an audience overflowing with legal luminaries, the Chief Justice referred to the country's legal scenario: "Of 100 cases, how many are settled in lawyers' chambers? Do they take the interest to settle the disputes by bringing the parties

Try it



*The feel and
fragrance of Satin*

together? That culture is not in India." Noting that 90 percent of cases are settled outside the court in other countries, his lordship added that in India "even in court 75 percent of cases have to be tried. The burden on the judiciary can be shared by informed citizens: non-government organizations and legal activists."

Referring to the recently instituted Alternative Disputes Resolution which enables the Chief Justices of India and of its high courts to nominate an arbitrator for specialized litigation, Ahmadi suggested that only when attempts at negotiation fail should a suit reach arbitration level and only when arbitration does not work, should it come to trial.

There are now three tracks in the Supreme Court — fast, medium and slow. By grouping similar cases 500 could be disposed of together, he revealed. The disposal of case law has been hastened by delegating cases to the judges who specialize in it. "What is important is judicial management — a very important branch neglected in the past" which needs to be rectified, he stated.

Iqbal Chagla, president of the BBA recalled Firdaus's life of "immense promise and vitality," his love of music, reading and of law as a "vital living experience Even in death Firdaus infuses content and purpose, being remembered as he would have liked to be remembered." A hundred volumes have been gifted to the Bombay High Court Library in his name — books beyond the reach of the average lawyer.

Bearing in mind Firdaus's great concern for legal aid, two young lawyers received special recognition on the occasion: Ms Maharukh Adenwalla for fighting the unlawful demolition of the Shantilal Temple and human rights abuse and for her unstinting aid in the rehabilitation of earthquake victims; and Ms Mantri Shah for assisting victims of the communal riots before the Srikrishna Commission and her balanced stand in the cross examination of witnesses.

In his vote of thanks Jimmy Pochkhanawalla of the FTMF referred to the Supreme Court under Ahmadi as "not just a court of judicial activism but a court of judicial humanism." He noted that the FTMF annually awards "any young lawyer who best embodies the concept of legal aid," and acknowledged the dedication of Firdaus's friend and partner Shyam Diwan in the work of the FTMF. A.S.M.

Joy in cooking

Dhansak, dhan-dal... bhakra, ghari... and

many more all-time Parsi favorites find a place in Ms Jeroo Mehta's *101 Parsi Recipes* which was printed for the fifth time in 1995. "The idea of the book is to enable well-known and well liked Parsi recipes to gain even wider appeal and to offer enjoyment not only in the eating, but in the cooking of them as well," notes the introduction.

The well-illustrated, 146-page book, priced at Rs 175 is printed at Vakil and Sons Limited, has photographs by D. F. Poonawalla, and engravings by Commercial Art Engravers Private Limited. Of the eight sections into which the book is di-



Cover of fifth edition

vided, maximum number of recipes, 20, find a place under the 'Meat' head for, as states the author, "the day's fare is not complete without it" for a Parsi. The rice, curries and dals section has 16 entries and so does the vegetarian section. Included in the latter are some unusual recipes like drumstick akoori, red pumpkin cutlets, carrot and brinjal bake and a couple of mundane ones like friend bananas. The fish and the eggs section include 14 dishes each, the chicken section, seven. Chikkis, paks, bhakra, ghari find a place under the miscellaneous head; and custard, sev, ravo, doodh pak puri, chapat and doodh powva under the head of desserts.

Meant to be used by the connoisseur and novice alike, Mehta's style of writing makes the instructions easy to follow. Fortunately there are only a limited number of typographical errors. Having studied journalism at the New York University, she had contributed articles to publications like *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and

The Sunday Times supplement and also served as associate editor of *Eve's Weekly*, according to the publisher's note. Basically it is her experience of cooking and entertaining in India and abroad that has enabled her to bring out this book, dedicated to her mother Lily, which has "authentic Parsi recipes that can be cooked by anyone, anywhere."

Particularly helpful are the chapters on hints and suggestions, and substitutes, reference to which can make life easy for a busy housewife looking for short cuts and ready-made masalas. Unfortunately, in the case of most recipes we are not told how many people could partake of the dish from the quantities of the ingredients specified therein.

Since this publication is introduced as an "award winning book" the reader would surely have appreciated further details on the nature of the award.

Tarapore made doctor

The honorary degree of doctor of law of The University of Sheffield, UK, was conferred on the deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Savak Sohrab Tarapore by the University's vice-chancellor, Prof Gareth Roberts on January 6, 1996 in Bombay, informs Dr P. D. Sunavala.

Later in the evening the vice-chancellor hosted a dinner at The Oberoi for the alumni of the University. Two years ago the University of Sheffield Alumni Association had been established with Dr J. J. Irani, managing director of the Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited serving as its first president. Besides Irani and Tarapore, Sunavala's name also features in the list of the Parsi alumni of this University.

SPOTLIGHT

Yachtsman **Farokh Tarapore** has been appointed chief national coach for all classes of boats by the Yachting Association of India, notes a report in *The Times of India* of March 1, 1996. By imparting the knowledge and experience gained by him in his 25 years of competitive sailing at national and international events Tarapore is expected to help India win more medals at world races.

Rumi Guard of Hotel Leela Kempinski was among the three Indians who won the "30 under 30" award for 1996, rated among "the 30 most outstanding and promising professionals in Asia" in the hospitality industry, as notes a press release. Following nominations invited by Caterplan, Hongkong, Guard was selected for this

continued on page 42

Reaching for the Sky



Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

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Daver: covering jazz

"I have encountered in my lifetime very few creative sponsors, sponsors who have unselfishly and unstintingly given the world artistic works of art; and not only without profit to themselves, but in many cases at a loss. Manek Daver is one of a dwindling group of people who throughout history has kept art alive."

The tribute from impresario Norman Granz is part of his foreword to the bilingual (English and Japanese) book *Jazz Album Covers: the rare and the beautiful* by Daver. This is the second volume compiled by the businessman and jazz buff whose first book *Jazz Graphics — David Stone Martin* (see "Art, music and life in Japan," *Parsiana*, May 1992) had reaped rave reviews in specialized international publications related to the music and recording industry.

Daver is not only devoted to jazz music, he is a dedicated connoisseur of the illustrated jackets in which the original long-playing records were launched. "The records used for illustrations are the original first issues. I felt this was essential to capture the exact colors and lettering of the original design," the author acknowledges, adding, "It also accounts for why some of the jackets are not pristine."

The introduction to the book traces the history of sound recording — the arrival of the "Flat Disc," the experiments with speeds, diameters and base raw materials, the triumph of the 78 RPM (revolutions per minute) records and their eventual supersession by the 33 1/3 RPMs, better known as "long play (LP)" records that were eventually marketed in albums of two or more. As careless handling of the 10 or 12-inch LPs could ruin their microgrooves, protective jackets were required which then acquired "the function of describing the nature of the music on the record" as well as advertising other offerings under the same label. Hence, "the designer suddenly became a crucial factor in the production and presentation of recorded music."

Daver's appreciation of the work of these designers revealed that they were usually lovers of jazz music, were present



Daver and the cover of his second book

during recordings and in tune with the musicians themselves. Some had additional interests like Gil Mellé's collection of microscopes. "It was typical of jazz that the jacket often had an 'inside story,'" notes Daver and that "the designers of classic jazz recordings of the 1950s and 1960s were walking archives of jazz history."

The author estimates that 50 percent of jazz album designers will never be identified — "too many jackets carry cryptic signatures impossible to read... At times, credits were incorrectly made."

What holds Daver in thrall is partly explained by the fact that most of these jazz recordings were a labor of love: "Few people today realize that the issue of jazz LPs in the 1950s and 1960s was hardly a commercial proposition."

With the advent of the compact disc (CD) — its "postage stamp" format providing scant scope for design — the jazz album covers are now a "store of art to enjoy," says Daver whose long research and correspondence with the designers/producers has resulted in stories by and about seven of them. David Stone Martin, to whose work Daver's first book was

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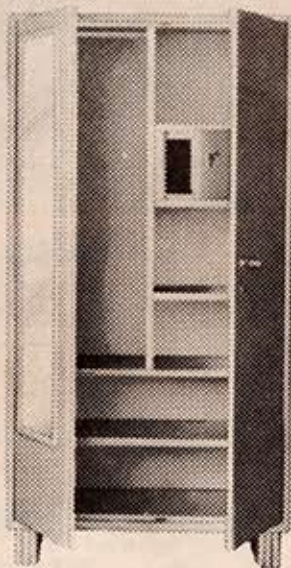
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devoted, was the kingpin whose style and concept influence many another. Some of them were jazz musicians too, like Mellé. "Mellé's uniqueness is that he is one of the very few, perhaps the only, jazz musician who also designed great record jackets."

The story of how photographer-designer Herman Leonard learned his craft from Yousuf Karsh of Ottawa, acknowledged to be the world's greatest portrait photographer, is revealed. Leonard's "Images of Jazz" series are to be acquired by Washington's Smithsonian Institute and housed in their musical history department, informs Daver. His photocovers of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Billie Holiday and others have been reproduced with tender loving care. The story that accompanies Holiday's cover by Leonard is poignant: "In 1954, Norman Granz asked me to shoot a cover for her recording session in New York; but when she arrived, I was so appalled at her appearance — so drawn and so pathetic — that I said to Norman, 'I can't shoot that for a cover — it's too tragic.' He pushed me into the studio saying 'Get in there and shoot! It may be your last chance!'... and it was."

The changes in recording technology led the artists too into other fields. Pierre Merlin for example reverted to his original training as an architect and went on to specialize in designing railway stations.

In his postscript to the 144-page oeuvre Daver traces life after the LPs. "It saddens me, as it must sadden the reader, to see record companies now truncate and otherwise mistreat designs intended for the LP... True, we bought the record for the music. But the essential point is that the music, the musician, the liner notes and the jacket created a seamless whole for the music itself. And the jacket promised what it delivered; often enough the jacket would resonate with a kind of superior knowledge. Drawing upon all his resources, his wit, his imagination, his finesse and circumstances far from ideal, the record designer created the ambience and the intimacy for which the music itself seemed to be designed."

A third generation Zoroastrian in the Far East, Daver had been born in Kobe, Japan, but educated in Bombay because of the exigencies of World War II. In 1977 he and his wife Dilnavaz (née Parakh of Mhow) and their two daughters returned to life in Japan. An outstanding figure among Indian businessmen in Japan, Daver has been known to organize the Indian community receptions to visiting dignitaries. His contribution "towards establishing friendly relations between India and Japan for many years" was acknowledged with a medal and a certificate of commendation from the Governor of Tokyo some time ago.

WTF award for Sethna

The Washington Times Foundation (WTF) National Service awardees for 1996 includes a Zoroastrian — Dr Beheruz Sethna. The first member of an ethnic minority to be nominated president of West Georgia College in 1994, Sethna "provides young people with an environment of academic excellence and promotes multicultural understanding and cooperation," notes the WTF publication listing the awardees.

Sethna is one of five recipients of the award from the state of Georgia, as listed in the brochure. The Foundation's letter of March 27, 1996, however, is addressed jointly to Dr Beheruz and his wife Madhavi — the only recipients of Indian origin — informing them of their selection for the award which honors those who seek through their service "to cultivate moral character and responsibility, strengthening the sometimes frayed moral fabric of our society." The four areas of endeavor recognized by the Foundation include promoting the integrity of the family, encouraging the peaceful solution of conflict, contributing to the

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Sethna: encouraging understanding

moral betterment of society and supporting youth in the achievement of worthwhile goals. The WTF letter notes, "You have made impressive efforts to encourage understanding between people of different cultures, and to delineate the role of institutions of

higher education in peace education in the next millennium. We applaud your work, and wish to recognize you with this National Service Award."

The souvenir cites the process of awardee selection: Community groups, churches, civic organizations submit nominations for consideration by the national service award committees in each state of the USA. These committee members include elected officials, ministers, community activists and prominent public figures. The state committees' selections are ratified by a national committee.

The son of Mithu and Nariman Sethna of Bombay, Beheruz completed his PhD at

Columbia University followed by post doctoral programs at Indiana and Harvard Universities. His genius for instructional innovation in marketing, product management, management information systems, decision support systems, etc has earned him merit from the Decision Sciences Institute for six consecutive years.

Now the younger generation is ready to garner a few laurels of its own, informs his mother in a letter to *Parsiana*. Their granddaughter Anita who has just graduated from high school "with all possible honors and more than half-a-dozen scholarships" has been selected from among 100 others to carry the Olympic torch on one of its laps through Atlanta as also to play in the Olympics Band at the opening and closing ceremonies. Is she the first Zoroastrian to be so picked? Ms Sethna would like to know. Do our readers have the answer?

Fighting slavery

"Many people don't know that slavery still exists in its many ugly forms or that some of the goods they buy are made by slaves," says Ms Zerbanoo Gifford (née Irani) internationally known political campaigner, fundraiser and author who has been appointed director of Anti-Slavery International (ASI), said to be the world's oldest international human rights organization.

She shares the job with Ms Barbara Rogers, a lecturer and writer on the third world and women's issues.

"We're determined to remind people that there are millions of people living in slavery, and make them eager to help end this inhumanity. I am particularly sickened by the trade in children as laborers, domestics and prostitutes. We all have a responsibility to make sure children are healthy, educated and loved," Gifford has been quoted in the write-up.

The ASI is campaigning to raise public awareness, lobby governments and international bodies, and coordinate activities with other groups with similar concerns, notes its press release. The rights of indigenous peoples is also an ASI priority.

Gifford visited India earlier this year to discuss setting up the Charities Aid Foundation India to celebrate the golden jubilee of Indian independence in 1997. She has just finished writing *Thomas Clarkson, the Father of Modern Campaigning and his Fight Against Slavery* and is working on her fifth book, *Asian Philanthropy, the Art of Giving*. Among various awards Gifford has received is the Nehru Centenary Award for her worldwide championship of women and the minorities.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Brush with Fame

Meher Marfatia

Leading portrait painter Jehangir Ardeshir Lalkaka's works feature at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Parliament House and many ancestral homes

The visages of rajahs and maharajas, viceroys and governors, were captured in every regal detail by the deft strokes of his brush. His portraits of public figures adorned palatial mansions throughout the country. Indeed, the works of Jehangir Ardeshir Lalkaka were so dramatic, they earned him the distinction of being considered our leading portrait painter in the first half of the 20th century.

What possibly gave Lalkaka that certain edge over contemporaries endowed with similar skills was the finesse he imparted to his style in later years. Progressively in the course of his career, his pictures came to be marked by the manner in which he focused light on a figure, as well as the overall elegance with which the finished effect was rendered. Granddaughter Anahit Wadia proudly points out as an example a portrait of Queen Alexandra (specially commissioned by the Government of India in 1930 along with one of King George V in coronation robes, this stands today in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi) in which her delicate skin is strikingly clear and visible beneath the lace on her arm.

Daughter of the artist's son, Rear Admiral Sarosh Lalkaka, Wadia offers interesting anecdotes from her grandfather's life—her parents chipping in with incidents too far back for her to recall.



Born in 1884 in Ahmedabad where he schooled, Lalkaka joined the Elphinstone College in Bombay before going on to the Sir J. J. School of Art in 1903. After studying here under Cecil Burns for four years, the promising young man caught the keen eye of his grandfather Sir Navroji

Vakil who, discerning immense artistic aptitude, sent Lalkaka to Europe.

The years there proved extremely beneficial. Attending St John's Wood and Westminster Schools of Art, Lalkaka assiduously spent five years learning portrait painting in London and Paris under eminent masters like A. Stanhope. Art galleries and museums there fired his imagination—he confessed to having been profoundly affected by the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Rembrandt and Velasquez. Having travelled extensively on the Continent, he returned to India in 1913 and set up a studio at Chowpatty in Bombay.

Work soon started pouring in. Actually, the initial assignment came while he was still a student in England, from Shrimant Raja Sahib of Aundh. The result must have been a study so accurately essayed that, on wandering into Lalkaka's room at Chowpatty, Raja Sahib's little grandson—no more than about three or four years old—raised a chubby finger to the frame and exclaimed in excited Marathi,

"*Hé Dada!* (This is grandpa!)"

Among the other personalities Lalkaka was invited to paint were Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Sir Dinshaw Vatcha, Rajendra Prasad, the Nawab of Rampur and Lord Brabourne. His best portraits may be presently seen at



Rashtrapati Bhavan, Parliament House and the Rampur State Galleries, besides a fair number scattered widely through handsome ancestral Parsi homes and fire-temples in Bombay.

What was truly remarkable about Lalkaka's creative persona was his uncanny ability to look beyond the charmed circuit of royal and political celebrities, to touch the common man and his world. The affable gentleman-artist who never failed to step out in an immaculately pressed suit,

complete with a carnation, delighted in the expressive face of the humble cobbler, barber, tailor or farmer. "Any face he found interesting became a valuable subject; 'Chalo tumhara chitre nikaléga' (Come on, let's paint you)' he'd say," son Sarosh reveals. Accordingly, his "sitters" hailed from various walks of life.

A touchingly amusing story is affectionately told by his daughter-in-law Roshan. Once, captivated by the face of a traveling fakir he came across in Banga-

Facing page: Lalkaka with painting of former President of India Rajendra Prasad

Clockwise from top left: Portrait of Dadabhai Naoroji; the artist's sons, Cawas and Sarosh, A. L. Covernton, principal of Elphinstone College and Lalkaka's in-laws Ratanbai and Jamshedji Kharas

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*The gentleman-artist never failed
to step out in
an immaculately pressed suit,
complete with a carnation*



lore, Lalkaka brought the poor mendicant to his house. There, revelling in the delicious aroma of lunch being routinely prepared in the well-stocked kitchen which wafted over to where he posed, the fakir longed for a meal. Kind to a fault, Lalkaka invited him to eat — only to discover that thereafter his “sitter” would return regularly for prolonged sessions!

Friendly and humorous, a lover of all the good things his privileged life extended him, Lalkaka had a passion for music — and sang to the accompaniment of his own dilruba. He was elected a Fellow of the prestigious Royal Society of Arts in 1949.

A relatively lesser known fact about Lalkaka's art concerns his repertoire of landscapes. Sketching a series of these on regular summer visits to picturesque hill stations, he covered a fair amount of the breathtaking scenery in Ootacamund, Mussoorie, Kashmir, Ranikhet and even Ladakh. Nevertheless, these were seldom simply landscapes; with his fascination for physiognomy, the scenes were peopled. From local tillers to Bhutanese weavers, it was the human factor that held his attention. Be they subdued pencil and wash drawings or ebullient watercolors, his



works were inspired by the inhabitants of the place he chose to paint.

Apart from these, Lalkaka's Bombay sketches should also appeal to those reveling in the historic beauty of this city. *Harbour from Malabar Hill, The Museum Gate, Corner of Victoria Garden, The Rocks at Nepean Sea Road and Versova with Juhu in the Distance* are settings that appear almost unrecognizable to the eye today. In fact, Nepean Sea Road was where he set up a studio following the one at Chowpatty, before ultimately leaving for Bangalore.

Lalkaka amply repaid his debt to the Sir J. J. School of Art which had served as the introductory institution fostering his talent: in 1932 the Governor of Bombay appointed him the first Indian to head the school as its deputy director. Thus, a flourishing private practice was relegated to second place for at least four years, on completion of which Lalkaka found him-

The artist at work, water color sketch by Lalkaka and at a family navjote (from left): Jehangir, Roshan, Sarosh, Anahit, wife Tehmina, Cawas and grandchildren Cyrus and Sehernavaz

self the proud recipient of the award of Their Imperial Majesties' Silver Jubilee Medal.

The veteran artist saw a bright future for Indian art and artists on the country's achievement of Independence. In a public talk addressing the issue, he voiced his firm belief that the artist primarily owed a duty to society, best discharged by ensuring that works of art were seen by the largest possible number of people. Accessibility of art, its message and meaning, “should permeate every side of public and home life,” he observed.

Lalkaka had, as well, predicted an amazing evolution in the field of modern Indian art. Sheer imitation of classicism was inadvisable, in his opinion. The old masterpieces of Ajanta and Ellora, the exquisite renderings of the Mughal and Rajput miniatures should ideally function as inspiration; but art ought to be a living force, not dead imitation.

When Lalkaka died in 1967, Bachoo Dadyseth wrote in his obituary: “The record of his career may be described in just one word. Brilliant.” Lalkaka lives on through his evocative works for his family, his friends and for posterity.

An unnecessary election?

Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee
Minoo Shroff's reelection was almost a certainty

Amavaz S. Mama

By 4 p.m. the number of voters who had cast their ballot was below 300. By 5 p.m. the number inched up to 341, a new low for a Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship election since 1980 when a voter registration drive was launched to make Bombay Parsis aware of their voting rights.

The winner by a landslide was sitting trustee Minoo Shroff, a noted management consultant, and director and chairman of several leading companies. Shroff received 320 of the 341 votes cast, while his three rivals — Eric Dhatigara, Edulji Gotla and K. S. Irani — received 16, three and one votes respectively. (Irani reportedly had sought to withdraw from the contest after the deadline had passed.) One voter registered ire at the unnecessary poll by voting for all four!

The 114 donor and 227 elected voters who bothered to cast their ballot on June 8, 1996 comprised less than a quarter (22.28 percent) of the total strength of the Anjuman Committee which currently totals 1,530 (74 members have died since the last Anjuman Committee election of 1992. There are now 735 donor and 795 elected members on the live register of voters). The reduced number could be attributed to the foregone conclusion that Shroff's fellow contenders had nothing to match his credentials. It could also be argued that interest, demonstrated to be waning in the course of the three elections in 1995, had now taken a nosedive. Whatever the interpretation, the expense of holding an election, estimated at more than Rs 70,000, seemed a sad waste of funds and manhours.

The reticent, low-key Shroff had initially intended to retire at the end of his 10-year term but had been persuaded to offer himself for election. "Everybody is aware of his professionalism, sense of fair play and the balance and calming influence that he brings in the functioning of the board of the BPP, with particular reference to the



Minoo Shroff: outright majority

present volatile board. He is possibly the only trustee whose services are appreciated by all sections of society," noted well-wishers Soli Shroff, Yezdi Mehta, Ms Nergish Irani and Ms Katy Meherhomji in a letter to *Jam-e-Jamshed*. "We trust that aspiring candidates, realizing this, would not seek to deprive the BPP of his services nor waste BPP funds by contesting for this vacancy, especially as another vacancy is due within the next three months," they added.

A week later Shapur Irani, Ms Roshan Vakil and Ervad Kersi Sanjana issued their letter to *Jam-e-Jamshed* stating, "All who know Mr Minoo Shroff, a sitting trustee seeking reelection, know him to be a dedicated worker for the benefit of the commu-

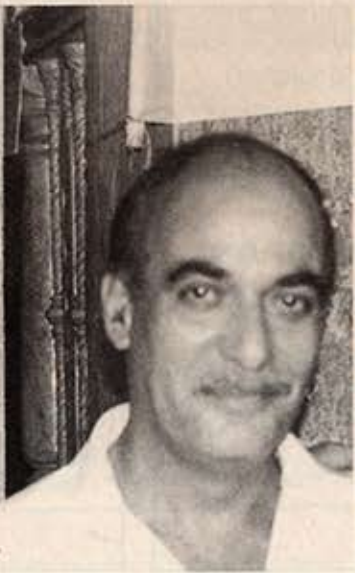
nity. Apart from his enormous experience as a leading businessman being executive vice-chairman of Raymonds, a Rs 1,000 crore industrial group, he has brought to the office of trusteeship dignity and decorum, humility and a will to perform. His views are respected by his colleague-trustees notwithstanding different ideologies which they may hold..."

"We would, therefore, urge the other three candidates to withdraw their candidatures as not only is Mr Minoo Shroff the outstanding candidate, but the community would be saved an unnecessary expense of around Rs 60,000 if an election is avoided."

The same issue of *Jam-e-Jamshed* carried an advertisement from Gotla noting that the "automobile engineer is contesting the ensuing trustee election to safeguard the future of 'Bombay Parsi Punchayet' and 'Parsi community.' All outstanding grievances will be Mr Gotla's priority and he will support all honest and fair projects for the community."

Speaking to *Parsiana* on election day Gotla said his priority was to fight alleged corruption at the BPP and at doongerwadi. Gotla, 47 and father of two, says the "trustees are spreading stories against me but I believe in God." Gotla's eight-point manifesto, "My plans for Parsees," ended with this gem: "Henceforth Mumbai Parsi Punchayet will function six days a week between 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. if elected."

An ex-student of Bishop's School in Pune, with a diploma in automobile engineering, Gotla says he has served as chief mechanic at United Motors and in the Gulf countries. He apologized for the umpteen spelling and grammatical mistakes in his manifesto — which speaks of him as a karate expert, a swimming, boxing and motorcycling champion — as having been erroneously sent to the printer without checking.



Top row: Counting of votes with scrutineer Bhungara at right and voter casting ballot under watchful eye of scrutineer Homai Modi
Second row: Votes being removed from box under supervision of president of the election Hormuzdiar and Guzder announcing results.
Bottom (from left to right): BPP joint secretary Gool Tata with BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana; Dhatigara and Gotla

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Dhatigara, whose manifesto projected him as "young, educated, enthusiastic, adamant, sincere and has the capability to bring back the lost glory of BPP and to restart the functioning of the jeopardized system on the right track," is known as co-founder of the now almost defunct Parsi Sena started in 1989. Dhatigara "pledged" he "will try and solve the three main problems viz housing, adult franchise and gaining special reservation" if he is elected.

At the end of the 12-page printed pamphlet which carried the endorsement of ex-MLA Marazban Patrawala, Dhatigara urged his voters, "Awake, arise or be fallen forever." They preferred to sleep it off!

At the end of this day of much ado about nothing, BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder was considering the addition of a clause in the BPP's scheme for election of trustees (with the permission of the Bombay High Court) seeking a deposit of about Rs 10,000 from each trusteeship candidate which would be forfeited if the aspirant failed to earn a stipulated percentage of the votes cast. It might help to keep frivolous contenders out of the running and preserve BPP funds for, hopefully, more constructive use!

Always remember



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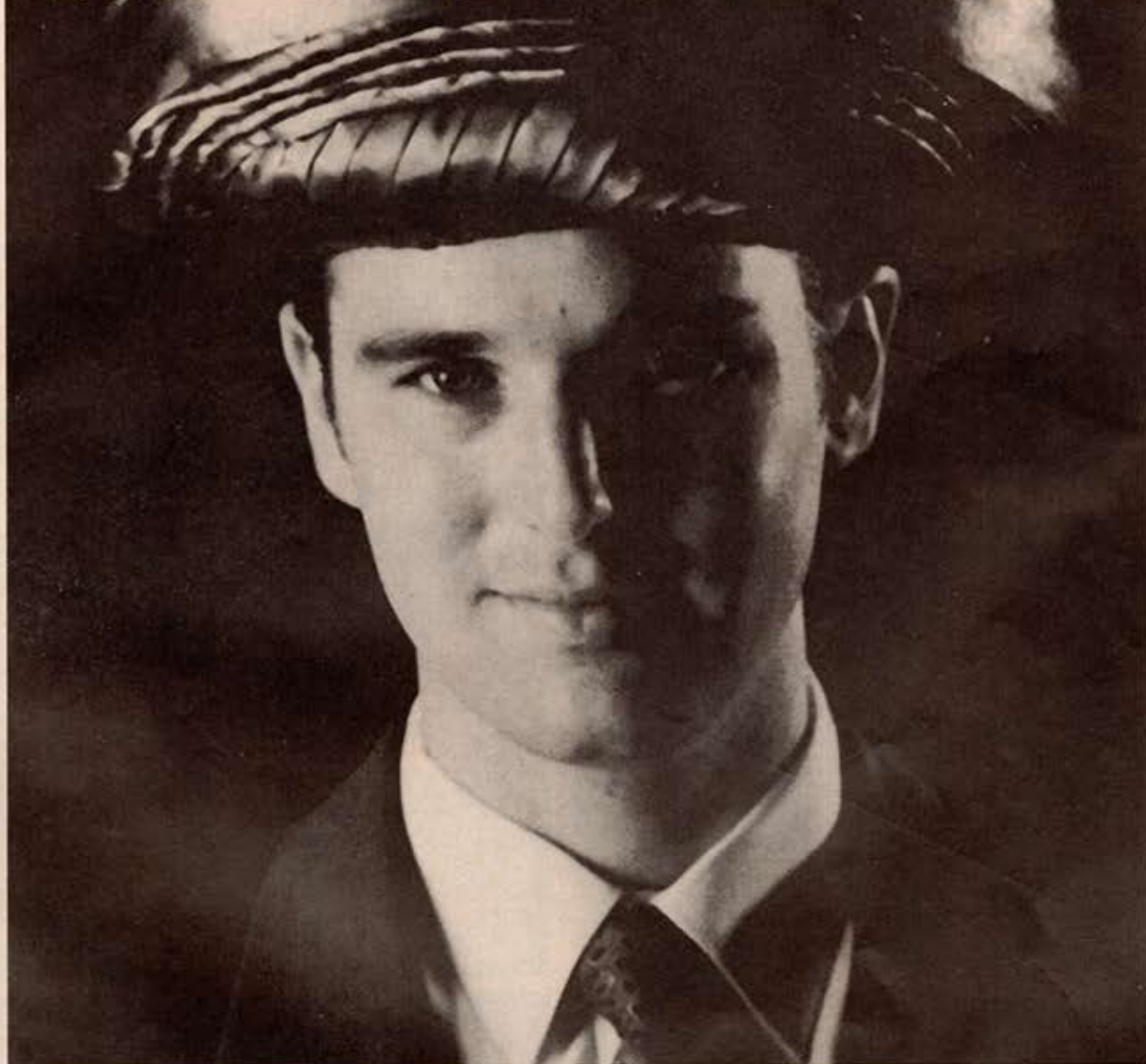
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Drawn to Daman

Today Duke and Marina are the only two Parsi-owned hotels remaining in Daman to offer tourists their distinctive brand of hospitality

Gustasp Irani

Clippity clop! Clippity clop! On the ribbon road across the Daman and Devka countryside dotted with palm trees, our horse-drawn buggy would tap out a soothing rhythm. Occasionally we passed a few villagers ambling home after a day in the fields. The golden-red sun, spent for the day, hovered in the western sky as a cool breeze washed through our open carriage. We experienced a sense of well-being and

peace on the return leg of our half-day excursion to the 72 sq km Union Territory.

And the *tongawalla* (buggy driver), tanked up with toddy, would nod and drift into peaceful slumber. He had warned us that he would be doing just that; assured us that it was nothing to fret about as his horses knew the way back to Udvarda. But he did caution us to wake him just before we entered the town or the horses would

head straight for the stables rather than our hotel.

Sadly, the *tonga* ride, that we had so looked forward to every time we visited the Iranshah, is a thing of the past and today the Daman and Devka trip is made in a bone-rattling, ear-jarring autorickshaw. And if you drive past the Devka beach after dark, you discover roads lit up by neon lights from hotels that line the stretch. And



live bands, entertaining diners in the restaurants and discotheques of the bigger establishments, pump the raucous music of popular Hindi film songs into the night air.

There is one section of the road, however, where the lights and music die away; it is the stretch where you find Dosabhai Oliaji's Duke Hotel, more popularly known as Oliaji's. You may be forgiven if for a brief moment you believe that the area has been untouched by time. Oliaji's is the traditional small town Parsi hotel at its best where independent cottages ensure privacy, a home away from home where the proprietor is more a family friend than hotelier, and where home-cooked meals — delicious *ta-mota par eeda* (eggs on tomato), fried *boi* fish and mutton pulao — are served on the verandah of your cottage room.

You will have to drive all the way into town, Nani (small) Daman, before you reach the next and only other Parsi hotel — Hotel Marina. The building, once a sprawling 19th century Latin-style house that belonged to a senior Portuguese nobleman, used to be a popular landmark in the social life of Daman's colonial rulers who flocked here to play a game of billiards or waltz across its waxed wooden floors to the music of a pianist's keyboard. On a wall in the reception area hangs an old picture of Jesus and Mary that came with the house, and opposite it hangs one of the Prophet Zoroaster. The billiard table and the piano have gone but you still find wooden floors, a sitting room with exquisitely carved furniture, and rooms that are clean and cosy; and by the end of your stay the proprietor and his wife — Tehmtan and Behroz Wadia — will probably have become family friends. Yes, there is something distinctly Parsi about Hotel Marina.

Indeed, there is something distinctly Parsi about Daman. In fact, sudrehs tied to sticks were waved when the Portuguese overlords of the territory finally surrendered to the advancing Indian army in December 1961. According to T. Wadia, it was Daman rather than Goa or Diu that put up the fiercest resistance during the liberation war, and its defiance was answered with 56 hours of ceaseless bombing by the Indian army. Finally three prominent resi-

dents, two Parsis — Nariman D. Wadia (Tehmtan Wadia's uncle) and Dr Phiroshah Luth — and a Hindu, approached the Portuguese commanding officer and convinced him that further resistance would only result in the needless killing of innocent people. When the general, who by then had lost one limb and was bleeding profusely, agreed to surrender, the three gentlemen rushed off to inform the advancing Indian army of the decision. However, as they approached the battle lines they were

since the Indian authorities frowned on this new project that would connect the Portuguese territory directly by air to Lisbon and Goa, they blacklisted everyone — including Oliaji — associated with it, and denied them entry into the country.

The blockade, according to Oliaji, greatly benefitted the residents of Daman, for now, instead of making do with second grade goods from India, the Portuguese began to import prime quality produce — from food to consumer durables — directly from Europe and at prices that were very affordable. Yes, memories of the excellent cheese and wine available then still linger.

The liberation of the territory in 1961 brought that chapter of its history to an end. Oliaji went back to doing what he did best, and reopened Duke Hotel. Sadly, most of the other Parsi hotels did not follow his lead and remained shuttered even after Daman became a part of India (Wadia would reopen Marina, earlier run by his family, as late as 1980).

For long Duke was the only hotel

on the Devka stretch of the beach which, though rocky, pebbly and unsuited for swimming, was a popular watering hole for thirsty Parsis (as also members of other communities) wanting to add a little cheer to their pilgrimage to neighboring Udvada on the prohibition side of the border.

Later, as the Union Territory started to boom industrially — 40 percent of the country's molded plastic is said to be made in Daman — new hotels sprang up along this stretch to cater both to the growing business community as well as tourists who came here to relax and sip the nectar of the palm trees, toddy. But Oliaji refused to compromise or change his style; he continued to maintain Duke as a traditional Parsi family run hotel where guests stuff themselves silly on wholesome and delicious home-cooked food and relax on the verandah of their cottage in their sudreh and pyjamas. That Oliaji has been elected the president of the Daman Hoteliers' Association (DHA) is a tribute to the grand old man and a pioneer of the trade in the region.

The role of the other Parsi member of DHA, Tehmtan Wadia, is equally significant. He not only played an important part in the formation of the Association but now as its secretary is actively involved in promoting its interests and that of Daman as a tourist destination. Yes, today Daman



Oliaji and Wadia: upholding tradition

greeted with a hail of bullets. Thinking fast, the two Parsis removed their sudrehs, tied them to sticks and waved them in surrender to Colonel Bhosle, commander of the Indian liberation forces.

There were earlier brushes with India too. Oliaji recalls the time in 1954 when

Most of the other Parsi hotels remained shuttered even after Daman became a part of India

the country sealed its borders with Daman and this directly affected the hotel industry in the territory, as it largely depended on business from India. Indeed, at the time almost all hotels in Daman were Parsi owned and run — these included Marina, Sovereign, Europea, Brightlands and Ambassador — and all were forced to close down. "I had no option but to look for other work," says Oliaji. And work he found at the construction site of the new airport that the Portuguese started to build. However,

Top: Duke Hotel and sit-out

Bottom: Marina Hotel and sitting room

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is an important industrial center and has a lot more to offer the tourist than the glass that cheers: the beautiful Jampore beach (better suited for swimming than the stretch at Devka); two splendid forts at Nani and Moti Daman; churches of Bom Jesus and Our Lady of Remedios with their elaborately carved altars, and the spooky ruins of the Dominican Monastery and other such attractions.

Wadia recalls his early struggles in 1980 when he decided to return to Daman from Bombay, where he had gone to study, to claim his family property. "Relatives and friends thought I was crazy, especially since I knew nothing about the hotel business," he says. "But I was determined to make something of my heritage here rather than abandon it."

The tragedy today, according to Wadia, is that many Parsis have abdicated the spirit of entrepreneurship which had once gained high respect for the community and played a significant role in the social and economic life of Daman, even though their numbers had never exceeded 300 at any given time. (He estimates that there are currently around 100 permanent Parsi residents and another 25 to 50 who shuttle between Daman and Bombay.) As we drive past the Jampore beach, Wadia draws our

attention to large tracts of land and plantations that had once belonged to a Parsi called Mr Khabardar, well known for his stern mien and no-nonsense style of functioning. Today the lands have been sold and his heirs have settled in America.

Significantly, a few buildings away from Hotel Marina, the fire that burns in the Daman agiary is about to get a new lease of life and will be housed in a building that is being erected for it from funds donated by the Parsis of Daman, Bombay, the rest of India, and indeed the world over. As we offer a stick of sandalwood to the holy fire we recall the sudrehs that had served as banners to end hostilities during the war of liberation, and hope they will continue to be worn proudly in the Union Territory.

Parsi Hotels of Daman

- Duke Hotel, Devka Beach, Daman 396210. Tel: 02636, 32251. 18 rooms, Rs 250-275 per head, inclusive of all meals. With restaurant and bar.
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*Status of Women: sacred and secular - 6***Women's singular status**

Dr Ketayun H. Gould

The high proportion of never-married Parsi females is inaccurately attributed to their socioeconomic independence

The image of a liberated Zoroastrian female on par with the male is only an illusion, an ideal that has yet to be realized. There is no denying that in certain spheres she has been granted equal opportunities but she has had to suffer discrimination too. This article which has run into six instalments analyzed the relevant texts and traditions to study the status of women in the ancient, medieval and modern periods.

As it originally appears in *Religion and Women* (a publication of the State University of New York Press, 1994) the paper entitled "Outside the discipline, inside the experience: women in Zoroastrianism" is a researched, academic presentation. Since Parsiana carried an abridged version of the text to make it simpler for the lay reader, we have not detailed the sources that the author painstakingly cites at each instance.

In the first five instalments we learnt that certain divinities perceived as female entities were venerated, that the soul of a dead man was said to be met by a female figure on its upward journey. Yet within the stronghold of the aristocracy and priesthood in the pre-Zoroastrian era, paradise was denied to women. With the advent of Zarathushtra, both men and women were deemed allies of Ahura Mazda to fight the evil forces. The domestic routine though was considered to be of prime concern to the females in the ancient period.

While marriage and the begetting of children is advocated in Zoroastrianism, the prevalent belief was that menstruation causes a woman to lose her ritual purity and spread impurity if she comes in contact with others. Even though religious equality was denied to females in ancient times, within the confines of a patriarchal society women were ceded certain economic and legal rights. Women had to bear considerable hardships and suffering in the medieval period when Zoroastrianism was relegated to the status of a minority religion. Also noticeable were the double standards that condoned remarriage and adultery among men but censured females who dared to take the same liberties. With the introduction of formal education for girls in modern times they were able to assert their socioeconomic independence. However within the religious sphere they continued to be discriminated against, and the privileges enjoyed by men who had married out of the community were denied to their female counterparts.

Pockets of Zoroastrians overseas, inclined to accept females as equal partners to men, no longer turn to the community in Bombay for guidance as this sixth and last instalment reveals. This study of Zoroastrian women reveals that an educated Zoroastrian female's tiger-woman reputation comes in the way of initiating measures to improve her lot in current times.

Recently, the question of conversion has assumed a new urgency (see, Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 1990) because there is a sentiment in some liberal quarters that part of the solution to the

demographic decline might be to accept the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis as Parsi Zoroastrians—an issue that has not been dealt with at all since the prior question of the Parsi woman remain-

ing a Parsi Zoroastrian has not been established in practice. The supporters of the idea of initiating the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsi men into the Zoroastrian faith point out the fact that the 1908 judgment in the Parsi Punchayet case was clearly discriminatory against females; that Parsi males married to non-Parsi women were provided an option that was never even considered for females—the right to decide whether they wanted their children to be initiated into their religion. They argue that a new legal precedent needs to be established which gives equal religious standing to both females and males (Rustom S. Gae, *Parsiana*).

These divisive issues have been exacerbated by the disputes over the locus of authority in terms of making final decisions regarding community matters. As mentioned previously, the Zoroastrians (both Parsis and Iranians) have emigrated to various parts of the world. John R. Hinnells, in his study of what he calls the "diaspora communities," has found that for the older Parsi diaspora, particularly in Hong Kong and until recently London, the "center" is still Bombay. In this context, it is very important to point out that the rules of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) go so far as to decree that only three of the seven trustees at any given time can be women—not a very positive venue to decide issues of concern to Parsi women. (There is no gender qualification for the seven trustees of the BPP under the current scheme for election as sanctioned by the Bombay High Court in 1991—Editor.) No wonder the Zoroastrian communities in the United States and Canada, and now London, seem to harbor the thinking that the Bombay branch is out of touch with current community concerns (Hinnells).

Hinnells also reports that the belief that overseas communities have to determine their own fate has led to the decision to "quietly" initiate the non-Zoroastrian spouses and children of Zoroastrians married to "outsiders" into the faith—a practice that the communities do not view as wholesale conversion. In Iran itself, the Tehran Zoroastrian anjuman, after "stormy sessions," has decided that spouses and children of interfaith marriages should be accepted into the religion if both partners agree (Ervad Rustam Shahzadi). In fact, the Iranians are increasing their numbers by accepting back into the religion those Zoroastrians who had converted to Islam, but have maintained their religious fervor and now wish to rejoin the community.

Their initiation ceremonies are carried out publicly, and have also been sanctioned by the Zoroastrian anjuman of Tehran. Thus, the 1986 Iran census lists the Zoroastrian population of Iran as 90,891 — a figure that is considered to be inflated in view of past reports on community numbers (Ava Khullar). However, the Iranian Zoroastrians resent unfounded speculation on the census figures, and the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in January 1990 witnessed an open confrontation between the Parsis and the Iranian Zoroastrians on this and other issues — disputes that have also erupted in some cities on the American continent (Gustasp Irani, *Parsiana*).

Despite the heat that the subject of intermarriage and conversion has generated, there is no reliable data to judge whether statistically this is a significant problem (Ketayun H. Gould). Hinnells found that 15 percent of his population of "overseas" Zoroastrians had married non-Zoroastrians. A more recent study by Huzan Kharas (Parinaz Gandhi, *Parsiana*) shows that intercommunity marriages accounted for barely one-tenth of the factors that contribute to declining numbers. Khullar reports that out of a small Parsi population of 219 families in Delhi in 1978, 69 families (approximately one-third) were

"mixed." Moreover, the number of Parsi females marrying out of the community was more than double the number of males (49 versus 20). However, a 1980 update of the survey found that the ratio of males marrying outside had increased considerably: out of 49 "mixed" marriages, 20 were males.

These scattered statistics in these studies are only representative of a very specialized universe — hardly the basis for deciding the extent of the "problem." Unfortunately, the orthodox sentiments of the community prevent it from recognizing the benefits of keeping or collecting reliable data on intermarriages that would help in making rational decisions regarding this sensitive issue.

The ambivalent attitude towards women is also evident in the fact that although the Hindu code puts the daughter on the same footing as the widow and the son in the matter of inheritance, Parsi women did not enjoy the same privileges till the Indian Succession Act (amendments) was passed in 1991. The changes have been long overdue. The 1962 amendments to the Act improved the situation over the Parsi Succession Act of 1865 and the Indian Succession Act of 1925 but the Act displayed discriminatory attitudes towards women. The 1962 amendments decreed that the

daughter gets half the share of the son and widow instead of the original language that stated that the son gets double the share of the widow, and the daughter received half the share of the widow. In the interim years, organizations like the Women's Association were very active about changing the law and giving an equal share to the daughter when the father died intestate. The effort was particularly strong during the 1930s when a new law — act no. 17 of 1939 — was about to be passed to update the 1865 law. It is safe to say that the discriminatory attitudes toward women in matters of inheritance have also had a long, checkered history like the issue of intermarriage and conversion.

Up to the early part of the 19th century, the Parsis had no special law that applied to them, as was true of some other communities. In 1835 when a Parsi male, who was the eldest son of an intestate Parsi, instituted a suit to be declared the sole heir on the basis of English common law, the community petitioned the legislative council for relief. The resulting Chattles Real Act (act 9) of 1837 declared that the property was to be divided according to the English statute of distribution: a third would go to the widow and the residue was to be divided equally among the children. The moffusil Parsis were exempted from this

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law. They continued to be governed by the regulation of 1827 by which the usage of the place or the law of the defendant would govern the decision.

At this point, it is interesting that it was the Parsis of Bombay — the urbane community — who showed their displeasure with the law, especially the fact that the wife was allowed to exercise independent control to dispose of any property she wished. They wanted to control this right on the wife's part during the lifetime of the husband, including the right to dispose of any property she might have inherited from her own family. They appealed these regulations, pointing out that "if a son and a daughter got equal shares, it was invidious as the son had to carry on the name of the father" (Sapur Faredun Desai).

In 1855 the Parsi Law Association was formed to draft a uniform code that would apply in all communities. The moffusil Parsis were unhappy at this venture, since they objected to women inheriting property, and the recommendation that the widow get half the share of the son and the daughter get half the share of the widow. They also wanted to eliminate the recommendation that married women could hold and dispose of property. However, the Parsi Succession Act, 1865, incorporated these points, and established a uniform law for

the community.

Although the present law has tried to minimize the distinction along sex lines, the Parsi association has not eliminated the problem. In cases where a Parsi dies leaving lineal descendants, and if the descendant happens to be a daughter who has died in the lifetime of the intestate, only her children can inherit her share. Her spouse is not entitled to a share of the property. When the situation is reversed, the widow of a deceased son is entitled to a share of the property along with her children. Some community leaders have speculated that this discrimination in the wording of the law is based on the fear that "with many Parsi girls marrying non-Parsis, the wealth would be lost to the family and the community (Parinaz Toddywalla, *Parsiana*). The article, however, reflects some sentiment among the leadership circle to "make amends" on this issue, stating that the fear of non-Parsi spouses inheriting property does not make logical sense: "If the non-Parsi spouse does not get it, the non-Parsi children will get it."

Aside from examining these various laws and regulations affecting women in Zoroastrianism and the Zoroastrian communities, it is also instructive to examine some demographic data to see if the stereotypes regarding the socioeconomic inde-

pendence of Parsi women are correct. For example, the high proportion of never-married Parsi females has been blamed on the fact that these women do not think that Parsi males measure up to their standards, because of their own achievements — high education, employment and personal income. My demographic studies of 551 households in the rural and urban areas of Gujarat, India, revealed that these factors were not significant in differentiating between never-married women who rated themselves "likely" and "unlikely" to get married. Moreover, in complete contrast to the theory that education is a "sterilizing factor" for women (Desai), it was the females who considered themselves "likely" to get married who happened to be the most educated group rather than those who rated themselves unlikely to get married. Furthermore, contrary even to my expectations, an utterly traditional resource, household income, turned out to be the most significant factor in differentiating "likely" from "unlikely" females in terms of their prospects for marriage — which indicates how slowly old customs die (Gould).

A small footnote on this finding might help stress the point even further that the position of women in the Zoroastrian community is still shaky. When the results of



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this study [that it was not the educated women who were the "cause" of the community's demographic downfall (by non-marriage)] was presented to the secretary of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, his only comment was that he did not believe the findings. The so-called tiger women's reputation was intact, at least in the mind of the community's leading proponent of demographic studies.

Since the educational achievement of Parsi women has generated so much discussion (especially in comparison to Parsi males), it is worthwhile to examine data from the previous demographic study to check the following: if there were sex differences among school-age persons in enrollments at different levels of age and education; and if families of current students provided equal educational opportunities to their daughters and sons.

The respondents' definition of "educational opportunity" was based on two factors: receiving education in schools that had the English medium of instruction, and for best results, being sent to elite English medium boarding schools, since these tracks were the accepted avenues for upward mobility. The results of this study indicated that in the rural areas, 26.9 per-

cent of the women who studied in the Gujarati medium (the vernacular language) dropped out of school after four to seven years, compared with eight percent of the males — a sex differential that did not show up statistically for any other group. When parental characteristics were considered, it was revealed that even in a patriarchal framework, the mothers' medium of instruction was the strongest variable in the rural areas in predicting whether the daughter went to English medium schools: 60 percent of the female children in families where the mother was educated in the English language received that extra boost to be sent to English medium schools. Moreover, when these female children received the opportunity of studying in the English medium, they also got the added advantage (even more than the boys) to attend the elite boarding schools — 63.6 percent of them were sent outside the rural areas, versus 46.2 percent of the boys to attend these prestigious schools.

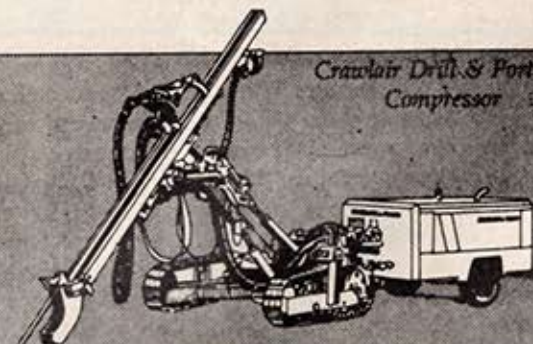
The urban picture was more encouraging in closing disparities between the education of girls and boys. Yet it is worth noting, that only 10 percent of the urban females who had completed their education in the Gujarati medium had some

college compared to 30.2 percent of the males (Gould). In general, the comparison of all of the subgroups revealed that conditions had to be perfect before females received equal educational opportunities as males, while men received these opportunities regardless of external factors.

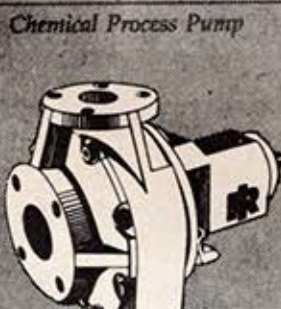
Finally, the discussion about the status of women in Zoroastrianism during the modern period has to consider the decline in observance of beliefs and practices relating to purity and pollution. Undoubtedly, the elaborate scripturally prescribed rituals connected with women's status — menstruation and parturition — are not adhered to as strictly today, and the practice of complete seclusion of women during these periods is definitely on the decline. But Jamshed K. Choksy is mistaken when he asserts that "only a few orthodox elderly women still maintain the practice of staying at home." Here he is underestimating the strength and numbers of orthodox Parsis — both among priests and laity — who believe in the power of menstruation in endangering the purity of all beings. Thus, sitting separately during menstruation, albeit not in a dark secluded corner, is a phenomenon that involves more than elderly women in orthodox households. as



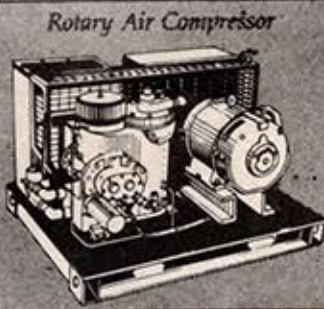
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I found in my demographic studies (Gould). Moreover, even the educated, urban working women from orthodox families might leave the house during menstrual periods to conduct their "public" working lives, but will come home and observe the practice in "private" of sitting separately from other family members.

I have statistical data from my demographic studies of urban and rural Parsis that demonstrate that the beliefs about menstruation are so deeply and so unconsciously ingrained that even today, none of my respondents had sexual intercourse during menstruation (Gould). In Iran, Mary Boyce and H. Michael Simmons found the same pattern that I observed in India — that segregation of women during menstruation is still practiced, and abstinence during menstruation is a common pattern (Simmons).

The question then arises whether any of these beliefs and practices regarding purity and pollution have consequences for the status of women in Zoroastrianism. Unfortunately, it prevents the consideration of women to be ordained as priests since they are afflicted by the "pollution" of menstruation which manifests itself regularly. Thus, even if there is an effort to remove the restriction that priests have to belong to the hereditary, priestly caste [in Iran they accept the young laymen as assistant priests (Ervad Rustam Shahzadi)] women would not qualify, because of the misogynistic beliefs about menstruation. Boyce does report that in Iran women who had passed menopause and had undergone the proper ritual ceremonies to purify themselves could be "appointed the guardians of lesser shrines" and play an active part in the religious life of the community.

The remaining question has to do with the effects of such patriarchal religious attitudes on the personal and spiritual identity of women in Zoroastrianism. Boyce has maintained all along that although Zoroastrian women have suffered under these menstruation taboos the orthodox observe them voluntarily. "The rules are stern, to observe them is often a struggle, but they are part of the fight against evil, and so to be strictly kept (Boyce)." Boyce believes that Zoroastrian women are not "warped by a sense of physical degradation" because of these scriptural definitions of women's being, and are "stoic" about the rigors involved in following the rituals. Emily E. Culpepper, on the other hand, asserts that "to feel one's self so primordially unclean... is severely damaging to one's self concept." It must have left Zoroastrian women feeling

"vaguely in league with evil."

In fact, Boyce goes a step further and puts forth the arguments used by many priests and orthodox laity — that the enforced rest involved in seclusion during menstruation is beneficial to health. Moreover, she argues, if women suffer a "monthly eclipse," they also reemerge every month to enjoy the freedom that was taken away from them for a few days. As a Parsi Zoroastrian, who has an experiential understanding of the problem, I can only reiterate that both Boyce and Culpepper present a unidimensional view. On the one hand, the notion that the women actively feel that by suffering passively they are helping positively to restrict the infection of evil (Boyce) is a projection on the part of a scholar who is very strongly identified with the religious tradition and the living faith. On the other hand, Culpepper's theoretical interpretation is an equal and opposite problem from Boyce, since Zoroastrian women are not so naive that they would suffer severe damage to their self-concept by buying some priestly assertions that women are carriers of the "sin" of menstruation.

Ultimately, however, important as it is to consider the personal beliefs or practices of Zoroastrian women, the religious quest for true sexual equality and partnership cannot be based on individual opinions. The focus in Zoroastrianism has to be the same as in all patriarchal religions: to examine and analyze the systemic problems in religious thinking and practice, and deal with the structural problems and politics that have allowed generations to victimize women. Zoroastrianism, like all religions, needs to write a new script whereby the religious and societal lives of all individuals can take on meaning.

Concluded.

Dr Ketayun H. Gould is professor emerita in the School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the United States. She is a partner, along with her husband, in Independent Scholars Association in Stafford, Virginia. She opted for early retirement to pursue her research and scholarship. Her writings have dealt with two main areas: feminist theory, models and practice frameworks in the area



of women and ethnic minority concerns, and historical and demographic studies of the Parsi Zoroastrian community in India. Currently she is authoring a book on the historical and demographic decline of the Parsi Zoroastrian community in the rural and urban areas of Gujarat.

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Female, Parsi and far from home

Dina Mehta

An American Brat by Bapsi Sidhwa. Published in 1994 by Penguin Books India (Pvt Ltd), B4/246, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029. Pp: 317. Price: Rs 125.

Ms Bapsi Sidhwa's new novel is about the coming of age of a 'brat.' Ms Feroza Ginwalla, the intractable adolescent in question, has a particularly trying time of it because she is female, Parsi, Pakistani, and in the process of emerging from her chrysalis far away from home as an immigrant in the USA.

To be born a female in the liberal Parsi community has its plus points. Indeed, it is Feroza's outspoken mother Zareen who, alarmed by Islam's increasingly suffocating slide into fundamentalism in Pakistan and its damaging effect on her daughter's psyche, packs off the 16-year-old to America to visit her uncle Manek, a student at the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and only six years older than his niece.

Manek's three years' sojourn in the States has already made him a shrewd operator on the American scene and it is under his not-so-tender tutelage that Feroza forms her first impressions of the new country: she is at once enchanted and appalled. Enchanted by its luxuries and magic utilitarian efficiency (telephones work, showers work, electricity does not fluctuate, etc). Appalled by the smells of New York city, the absence of family ties, the degradation of the homeless, the furtive drug scenario featuring flamboyant toughs and stoned, emaciated kids, and other glaring inconsistencies of a society with dual standards.

By no means a personification of avuncular amiability (as a child he had resented Feroza as one would a sibling), Manek is

most likeable when he brings his Parsi humor and histrionic talents to the fore. He alternates his clowning with an exaggerated sangfroid to hide the corroding anxieties of the immigrant who has been buffeted by a system that perpetuates injustices that are "cynical and brazen." When he is out to 'skim' this system (as when he orders an expensive lunch for two in a 'decorous' restaurant that he won't pay for by

canization of Feroza is completed: she dresses, talks and acts like an American girl — and even falls in love like one. Copying Jo's impetuosity, she writes home to Lahore to announce her intention to marry David, who is a Jew.

This throws her mother into a tizzy and Zareen takes off for the States, hell-bent on preventing her daughter's marriage to a non-Parsi. Epic battles are fought by mother and daughter over David. Ultimately what makes Feroza give him up is Zareen's loaded argument that if she marries out of her community she can no longer practise her Zoroastrian faith (which has been Feroza's solace in every crisis: for instance, *Kemna Mazda* and the 101 names of Ahura Mazda leap to her mind when she fears a sexual assault); nor will she be allowed to bring up her children as Parsi Zoroastrians. (Editor's Note: A Parsi Zoroastrian woman who marries a non-Parsi but does not give up her religion nor converts to another religion, continues to enjoy all the privileges and rights

accorded to a Parsi Zoroastrian. Her children will not be considered Parsis, but may undergo the navjote ceremony and be thereby initiated into the Zoroastrian religion.)

Yet Parsi males are not subject to the same constraints! Marriage to non-Zoroastrian women does not outlaw their children from the Parsi fold. This discrimination against women makes Feroza realize that some of the "educated customs" of her own community are on par with the "mindless current of fundamentalism sweeping the world like a plague." And though her sense of not belonging, of dislocation in America is acute, she decides to stay on



pretending that the steaks were only partially edible), Manek embarrasses Feroza till she is ready to sink through the floor. He is only giving her a crash course in survival, he solemnly assures her; and he is the one to encourage her to stay on in America as a student in a strictly supervised Mormon college in Idaho. But here her roommate, Jo Miller, helps to emancipate the girl from Pakistan in ways her uncle (or family at home) had not bargained for.

Jo drinks liberally, eats compulsively, smokes a lot and runs through an assortment of boyfriends. The two girls become fast friends and transfer together to the University of Colorado, where the Ameri-

because of the freedom it gives her to be her own person and pursue her own goals. Then if she wanted to marry one day, it wouldn't matter if he was not a Parsi, for no one would be allowed to frighten her again into acquiescence in unfair codes and moth-eaten norms. "As for her religion, no one could take it away from her; she carried its fire in her heart."

This is the point at which Sidhwa takes leave of Feroza (so do we), and it seems a distinct future possibility — and a great pity — that a loyal, intelligent, spirited Parsi girl will be left out in the cold by a community so intent on stewing in its own juices that it fails to recognize its desiccated visage, and do something about it before it is too late.

If Sidhwa is too fine an artist to conduct a crusade through the medium of her novel, her perceptions are sharp, her concerns wide and humanistic. Shrewdly she uses the differences in US and Pakistan cultures to highlight Feroza's traumas. This comparison is also a source of much of her humor — as are the bounce and bite of her words; and she paces them with the dramatist's sense of timing to heighten the impact of her scenes. For example, so graphically does she describe Feroza's panic and disorientation when trapped on the dark, foul and endless stairway of the YMCA building, that I felt the skin on my own scalp tighten and "lift the roots" of my

Insights into history

Dr Zeenat Shaukat Ali

Ahd-namaha (Covenants of Faith) by Mithoo Coorlawala. Revised edition published in 1995 by The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 136 Bombay Samar Marg, Bombay 400023. Pp: 76. Price: Rs 125.

Ever since the first Islamic century, Muslim idealists throughout the ages have sought to re-create that magical moment in history, the period of the Great Teacher, in their own time. Such a "utopia" can only be realizable with a revitalization of its idealistic past and the values of tolerance found in this classic proclamation: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (*Holy Quran* 2:256).

Ms Mithoo Coorlawala's study of the *Ahd-namaha* (covenants of faith) or charters granted by Prophet Muhammad to the Zarathushtrians, the Jews and the Christians in early Islamic times, guaranteeing protection of person, property, freedom of worship and exemption from military service upon payment of a poll tax reveal, as their texts show, a refreshing expression of the "conciliatory, open, generous" spirit of Islam which is a remarkable though rarely disclosed feature of this religion.

The author's own interest in the *Ahd-namaha* was awakened decades ago by an English translation of an extract from the *Ahd-nameh* given to her by her father, Nadirshah Chinoy. From a unique background of history, law, Persian and Western scholarship, he had distilled within himself the best values and accomplishments of both worlds, and by sharing this interest he started his daughter on a long and exciting route of exploration.

This study and publication of the *Ahd-namaha* granted by Prophet Muhammad to the Zarathushtrians, reflects Coorlawala's exceptional personal gifts and high aims as a student not only of history, but of peace and tolerance. The genuine difficulties en-

countered during the course of her pursuit of this dissertation and her determination to overcome these obstacles are reflected in her work. Libraries often yield few clues as this area of research is generally considered "obscure and obdurate." A manuscript of the *Ahd-nameh* together with two later charters given to the Zarathushtrians were discovered after much investigation and these opened avenues for further research.

Though the authenticity of these firmans has been questioned, this research provides unusual insights, disclosing a freshly perceived, composite understanding. Clearly, Coorlawala's reading is unusually extensive. Her research sources have been meticulously investigated and the text reveals a positive and uniformly mature underlying structure. An interesting feature of this book are the informative footnotes used, where necessary, to supplement the text.

What is notable is the author's scholarly detachment. She does not offer judgments, but she does challenge the reader to think and evaluate by offering clearly documented information and fresh insights into the realities of history. Her handling of much debated subjects such as *Ahl-e-Kitab* (People of the Book) and the dates of Prophet Zarathushtra, is deft and well-informed.

Coorlawala has a sharp eye for revealing vignettes and nuances of environment, and one receives the impression that she has an intuitive understanding of her subject which is, however, balanced by objectivity and fidelity to the truth. That unique personage *Salman-e-Farsi* whose life, though well-documented in Islamic writings, remains shadowy in the Zarathushtrian tradition, is clearly delineated here.



*She dresses, talks
and acts like an
American girl —
and even falls in love
like one*

hair. The prose, like the narrative, is fluent and structured to move.

The only time Sidhwa gets a little sticky is when she switches styles midstream to write about David and first love. She talks, for instance, of the "blue, oceanic depths" of his eyes "in which she (Feroza) swam as easily as a fish." Again, looking into his eyes was like "viewing a solar eclipse without protection." And we sample honied things like "these were his innermost secrets, fragrant with his commitment to his parents."

It's hard to accept these lines from *aapri* Bapsi, but they are merely the notes on writing that is triumphantly on the beam. A novelist has come of age.

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In what is one of the most interesting chapters of the book, Salman's life emerges with clarity through the various stages of his long physical and spiritual journey from the luxuries of the Sasanian Court, his acceptance of Islam to the austerities and fulfilment of Prophet Muhammed's Medina. And we are told how until his death as governor of the fabled city of Madain, Salman lived in splendid simplicity, untouched by the seductions of wealth and power.

Written with elegance and ease, this significant work will contribute to an atmosphere of conciliation and harmony in our troubled world. For the historian and general reader alike, this is an informative and thrilling reading experience. The cover and layout of the book have been professionally designed and the production quality (on Zanders Art Paper) is of a very high order. The 76 pages include five chapters plus the Ahd-Nameh in Arabic and Persian (translated into English) in the Appendices.

Dr Zeenat Shaukat Ali, professor of Islamic Studies at St Xavier's College, Bombay, is an author and researcher in the message of Prophet Muhammed and the intricacies of Islamic laws.

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 14

award by a panel of judges from the industry's most prestigious institutions, adds the release.

Noted industrialist **Sohrab P. Godrej** has his own silent way of communication: when he is disappointed with national events he wears a black tag on his shirt sleeve that day; if something nice happens, he displays a white tag. "It is heartbreaking that someone who has contributed as much as him be so disillusioned; the rest of us need to do something about it," stated the report in *The Times of India* of April 7, 1996.

Dr (Ms) Zarin Bharucha and **Dr (Ms) Shehnaz Pardiwala** of the department of transfusion medicine at Bombay's Tata Memorial Hospital were invited to participate in the 24th congress of the International Society of Blood Transfusion held at Makuhari, Japan from March 31 to April 5, 1996, according to a press release. Scientists from all over the world were to share their research findings at this meet.

Compiled by Parinaz Gandhi.

With
best wishes
from

Farah & Tanya

MILESTONES

As the register for Parsi marriages was not accessible at the Bombay High Court last month, the data on marriages registered in the months of March and April 1996 is published in this issue.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 19 and 40 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 22 and 45 years, averaging at 30 years.

As compared to 11 babies born in May there were 74 Zoroastrian deaths. Thirty patients succumbed to heart disease of which 10 were 80 years and above. Pneumonia and lung disease claimed 11 lives whereas five deaths each were attributed to brain disease and septicemia. Diabetes and cancer

took a toll of four lives each, hypertension, three, and anemia, head injuries and asthma of two lives each. Gastro-intestinal bleeding, kidney failure, paraplegia (paralysis of the lower limbs usually including the bladder and rectum), old age, high blood pressure and liver disease were the isolated cases registered for May. The age range fluctuated between 37 and 93 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth, in Bombay in May, was 74 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. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not

furnish the particulars; 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.

AHMEDABAD

BORN

A boy, *Cyrus*, to *Naushad* and *Noshirvan Randeria* on May 11, 1996

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Pearl*, to *Zenobia* and *Percy Avari*;

November 19, 1995

A boy, *Anoshaq*, to *Rashna* and *Percy Master*; March 23

A boy to *Marzbin* and *Sheriar Irani*; May 4

A boy to *Pearl* and *Hafeez Contractor*; May 5

A girl, *Jenai*, to *Arnaz* and *Rustom Irani*, sister to *Nushad*; May 7

A girl to *Ferozie* and *Muncher Wadia*; May 11

A girl to *Pouruchisti* and *Rustom Wadia*; May 22

A girl to *Firuzeh* and *Kaikhushroo Vacha*; May 23

A boy to *Behroze* and *Shahrugh Mody*;

May 24

A boy to *Fida* and *Jamshed Shaw*; May 25

A girl to *Delna* and *Tushad Cooper*; May 26

A girl to *Manek* and *Aspi Deboo*; May 26

A boy to *Firuz* and *Yazdi Nagla*; May 27

MARRIED

Monaaz Rusi Gandhi and *Zarir Burjor Sarkari*; December 29, 1995

Tanaz Dadi Wadia and *Neville Dara Buhariwala*; January 25, 1996

Ashish Minoo Italia and *Aspi Adi Kerawalla*; February 8

Veera Jamshed Mistry and *Marazban Darabshah Dalal*;

February 19

Maharukh Homi Bhappoo and *Shiamak Fali Marshall*;

February 20

Farah Jimmy Baria and *Nader Astad Parakh*; March 1

Khurshid Feroz Captain and *Kurush Jamshed Vazifdar*;

March 1

Benaifer Farrokh Pastakia of *Thane* and *Feroze Sorab Mehta*;

March 2

Behnaz Dhun Udachia and *Khushrano Parvez Kapadia*;

March 8

Aban Pervez Engineer and *Mehernosh Firoz Dhamodi-*

wala; March 10

Anaita Rusi Kapadia and *Mehli Parvez Colah*; March 11

Hoofreez Parvez Patel and *Shiavux Adi Batliwala*;

March 14

Mani Nariman Bulsara and *Viraf Eruch-Vakil*; March 14

Parizad Tehmuras Sidhwa and

Homiar Naval Pestonjamaspi; March 15

Nilufer Minoo Engineer and *Sarosh Nariman Elavia*;

March 21

Niloufer Minoo Olpadwala of *Calcutta* and *Zarkis Dinshaw Italia*; March 24

Coomi Marzban Pardiwalla and *Cyrus Maneck Pardiwalla*;

March 25

Farida Keki Elavia and *Rohinton Jal Patel*; March 26

Seema Dinyar Irani and *Homiyar Nariman Patel*;

March 29

Shiraz Noshir Elavia and *Kerfegar Darabshaw Patrawala* of *Thane*; March 29

Bakhtavar Burjor Kapadia and *Farhad Jehangir Hormazdi*;

March 30

Jasmine Framroz Billimoria and *Sherzad Cyrus Desai*;

March 31

Kainaz Dara Kapadia and *Zubin Sam Saklatwalla*; April 2

Arnavaz Homi Variava and *Parvez Minocher*

Pochkhanawala; April 8

Tanaz Kersi Meherji and *Godrej Nariman Bhathena*;

April 13

Binaifer Russi Gheewalla and *Bomi Burjor Randelia*; April 14

Armin Noshir Desai and *Farzaan Kali Wadia*; April 19

Shanaaz Hoshang Daruvala and *Khushroo Keki Khambata*; April 20

Janice Soli Pastakia and *Zubin Savak Mogal*; April 21

Zahver Shereyar Vakil of *Poona* and *Cyrus Phiroze Dhabhar*;

April 26

Neena Minoo Patel and *Jerasph Sam Valvadia*; April 27

Firanghish Darab Aspar of *Kalyan* and *Jehangir Burjor Gai*; April 28

Shyra Rohinton Mogul and *Jehangir Sorab Pocha*; April 28

Farzana Farokh Karai and *Rohinton Adil Motafram*;

April 29

Kashmira Cawas Waghaiwalla and *Adil Rusi Fitter*; May 2

Delna Rustom Hakim and *Viraf Dara Doomasia*; May 5

Hoofrish Noshir Mullan of *Poona* and *Farzad Aspi Mullan* of *Navsari*; May 5

Zeiba Hoshang Sadri and *Homyar Noshir Randeria*;

May 10

Monaz Cyrus Kaka and *Naushirwan Sohrab*

Commissariat; May 11

Farzana Nari Maneckji and *Zubin Medioma Bhada*; May 12

Hutoxi Adi Cooper and *Jamshed Sorabji Sopariwalla*; May 19

Jasmine Sam Dalal and *Adil Jehangir Madon*; May 27

Phirooza Rusi Dalal and *Zarir Noshir Shroff*; May 29

DIED

Pilloo Framroz Bhathena (65), residing at D, Dinbai Petit

Chawl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; April 30

Gev Pirojsha Dubash (66), C-6/009, Bhagirathi Bldg, Lok

Gram, Kalyan (E), 421301; April 30

Baimai Nariman Golwalla (91), 32, Bakhtawar Annexe,

Narayan Dabholkar Rd, 400006; May 2

Pilloo Minocher Madon (67), Captain Hse, Nana Chowk,

400007; May 2

Coomie Naoshier Printer (84), 764/E, Umrigar Bldg, Tilak Rd,

Dadar, 400014; May 2

Freny Rustom Bamji (74), 658, Khorshed Abad, Firdoshi Rd,

Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 3

Jimmy Kaikhushroo Dholoo (50), 15/2, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 3
Viru Kershasp Khandhadia (84), D/4-35, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 3
Marzban Eruch Mehta (69), Sethna Bhabha Bldg, B. Jakar Marg, 400002; May 3
Pesi Phiroz Daruwalla (70), 22-C, Sakarwadi, Nawab Tank Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; May 4
Freny Kaiki Tata (81), 2-B/A, Ashoka Apts, Near Strand Cinema, 400039; May 4
Coomi Dhunjishah Bengalee (70), C/12, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 5
Dina Jal Dalal (75), 18, Ameeta, Foreshore Rd, Opp Sachivalaya Gymkhana, 400021; May 5
Lovji Ardeshtir Jasumani (85), 5/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 5
Noshir Dhanjisha Bharucha (84), 685, Sun Ville, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 6
Meherji Faramji Bodhanwalla (81), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 6
Adi Rustomji Daruwalla (77), 13/3, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; May 6
Yasmin Darabsha Marolia (44), 3, Parsi Panchayat Qtrs, Doongerwadi, Cumballa Hill, 400036; May 8
Najoo Ardeshtir Vesuwalla (79), 207, Pradyu Sadan, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Matunga, 400019; May 8
Phirozsha Kawas Kharas (85), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 9
Filli Ardeshtir Adarian (65), 609, Pateti Blocks, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 10
Coomi Shiavux Parakh (63), B/2, Dr Kerawala Bldg, Tata Blocks, Opp Bandra Talkies, Bandra, 400050; May 10
Kaikhushroo Pestonjee Mistry (66), 4/A, Mehernosh Park, Patel Pada, Dahanu (E), e, Dist Thane, 401602; May 11
Kersi Maneckshaw Palsetia (60), 9, Citizen Apt, 30th Rd, T.P.S. III, Bandra, 400050; May 11
Tehmi Dinshawji Fitter (68), 3/10, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 12
Gool Rustomji Kolah (63), 781,

Mancherji Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 12
Themina Minocher Billimoria (69), H/2, Tarachand Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 13
Bakhtawar Kaikobad Dastoor (62), Dastoor St, Udva, 396180; May 13
Dhunmai Sorabji Fitter (83), 25, Asha Kunj, Parsi Wada, Khetwadi, 400004; May 13
Boman Merwan Irani (74), 80, Janmabhoomi Marg, Fort, 400001; May 13
Sam Sorabji Kapadia (90), 18, Heera Meher, 108/112, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; May 13
Tehmina Jamshed Mistry (75), 9, Patel Chmbs, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; May 13
Khusroo Jami Daver (64), 721/A, Choksey Charity Trust Bldg, Rd no 4, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 14
Bachoo Bai Pestonji Moos (89), Dilpazir, Bhulabhai Desai Rd, 400026; May 14
Havovi Pesi Bala (37), L-1/51, M. Cama Park, Andheri (W), 400058; May 16
Kobad Khurshedji Boga (77), 87, Matar Pakhadi Rd, Mazgaon, 400010; May 16
Coomi Pesi Mistry (85), 12, Moonlight, 158, M. Karve Rd, 400020; May 16
Jamshed Rustomji Mullan (92), C, Bhatia Soc Bldg, 280, Princess St, 400002; May 16
Perviz Minocher Dubash (87), Scholar Bldg, 13, Hendry Rd, 400039; May 17
Rusi Sheriar Modi (72), 90, Cleave Hse, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; May 17
Freny Jamshedji Daver (78), Seva Sadan Annexe, Pandita Ramabai Rd, 400007; May 18
Rodabe Pestonji Limbuwala (93), 3/382, Suman Breeze, 15th Rd, T.P.S. III, Bandra, 400050; May 18
Dhun Nariman Tadiwalla (83), 19, Malegamwala Bldg, Khareghat Clny, S. Patkar Marg, 400007; May 18
Mehroo Edalji Panthaky (79), 31/A, Madhav Bhuvan (Sagar Samrat), M. Karve Rd, 400004; May 19
Soli Jamshedji Kathawala (67), 731, Jehangir Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 20
Nariman Jamshedji Wadia (71), 653/B, Shirinmai Cottage,

Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 20
Homi Burjorji Dandiwalla (66), G/41, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 21
Mani Jal Patel (74), 748, Rd no 6, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 21
Adi Sorabji Pavri (92), C, Banoo Mans, Cumballa Hill, 400036; May 21
Shawak Darashaw Aga (70), A/11, Mistry Bldg, Dr Shirodkar Rd, Parel, 400012; May 22
Freny Kaikhushroo Sanga (89), 31, Jaiphal Ter, Forjett St, 400026; May 23
Freny Firoze Sarkari (74), 11, Petit Widows' Chwl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; May 23
Shirin Limji Banaji (69), Gold Mist, 133, Carter Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 24
Cooverbai Jamshedji Chothia (89), R/6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 24
Aloo Framroz Engineer (87), N/13, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 25
Silloo Rusi Bharucha (65), Dosamai Home, Masina Hospital Campus, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 26
Dinshaw Palanji Mistry (80), 3, Niamat Manzil, N. Petit St, Behind Apsara Cinema, 400007; May 26
Dina Noshir Bhajiwalla (81), Sethna Bldg, Princess St 400002; May 27
Sunnu Dhunjishah Kapadia (70), 40, Hoshang Baug, Vakola Village Rd, Santacruz (E), 400055; May 27
Burjor Behramshaw Medhora (64), Santosh Bldg, 100, Dada Saheb Phalke Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 27
Dinbai Sorabji Mistry (88), C/o Thrity K. Mehta, Room no 5, 4/B, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 27
Jehangir Hormusji Turel (72), 12/2879, Turel Wadi, Sayedpura, Surat, 395003; May 27
Dadi Framroz Katrak (72), Soona Mans, 301, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 28
Erachshaw Shavakshaw Mehta (88), 33-A-3, Khan Block, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; May 28
Sorabji Pestonji Patel (81), 731, Polson Bldg, J. Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 28

Rati Dhunjishaw Working-boxwala (66), 811, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 28
Putlamai Minocher Patel (85), 16, Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; May 29
Hormazdiar Dhunjishaw Bharucha (67), A/7, Central Bank Colleagues Co-op Hsg Soc, Dadabhoy Cross Rd No 3, Irla, Vile Parle, 400056; May 30
Banubai Fakirji Buhariwalla (88), 23, Bacha Mans, Gilder Lane, Dr Bhadrakamkar Marg, 400008; May 30
Mehroo Pilloo Mistry (78), M/27, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 30
Pesi Framroz Shroff (56), Jevanji Mistry Bldg, 10th Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; May 30
Nariman Kaikashroo Warden (72), 16, Hormazbaug Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; May 30
Kaikhushroo Ratansha Daver (91), F/15, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 31
Farrokh Nadirshah Ghadially (79), 275/J, New Cama Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 31

CALCUTTA

MARRIED

Perveen Deboo and Shahrukh Cassad of Nagpur; May 21

DIED

Jal N. Medhora; February 14

COONOR

DIED

Jal Naoroji Mehta; January 16

POONA

DIED

Daulat P. Irani (70), 72, Rasta Peth, 411001; April 1
Dhunjishah Faramji Wadia (85), 826/9-3, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; April 5
Firoze Dorabjee Tamboli (76), 19, Banu Apts, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; April 23
Themurasp Dosabhai Cooper (96), Nirmal Apts, Dhole Patil Rd, 411001; April 24

SURAT

DIED

Bhikaji Dosabhai Sidhwa (63), Udva, 396180; April 6
Tehmina Navroji Bhesania (83), Village Bhatia, Dist Surat,

394510; April 8
Pirojshah Sahpurji Dumasia
 (89), Village Vesu, Dist Surat;
 April 9
Pervez Dhanjishaw Guard (64),
 Sayedpura, 395003; April 11
Perses Barjor Pawari (55),
 Nariman Home and Infirmary,
 Shahpore, 395003; April 13
Burjorji Nasarwanji Tadiwala
 (83), Rani Talao, 395003;
 April 15
Darabshaw Dhanjisha Ilavia
 (82), Village Zakharda, Taluka
 Magrol, Dist Surat; April 17
Silloo Soli Timbervawala (73),
 Pandol Charity Block,
 Turkiwad, 395003; April 19
Bachamai Dinasaji Bhagwager
 (67), Village Adajan, Dist
 Surat; April 21
Navalshah Dhanjisha Kharadi
 (82), Lal Darwaja, Station Rd,
 395003; April 24
Minochar Beharamji
Motafaram (81), Sayedpura,
 Surat, 395003; May 1
Shera Hormasji Appu (92),
 Nariman Home and Infirmary,
 Shahpore, 395003; May 2
Dosabhai Dhanjisha Dawar
 (73), Village Ichapore, Dist
 Surat; May 2
Jarbanu Minocher Karanjia
 (74), Nariman Home and Infir-
 mary, Shahpore, 395003; May 5
Jamshed Barjorji Jasawala
 (82), Nariman Home and Infir-
 mary, Shahpore, 395003; May 7
Sam Ratansha Patel (60),
 Frampura St, Rustompura,
 395002; May 21
Hosang Rustamji Sanjana (67),
 Nariman Home and Infirmary,
 Shahpore, 395003; May 21
Banubai Manackji Nariyawala
 (94), Vanki Bordi, Shahpore,
 395003; May 22
Nadarsha Kharshadi Dubas
 (70), Nariman Home and
 Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003;
 May 26
Pilloo Ratansha Sahuna (76),
 Nariman Home and Infirmary,
 Shahpore, 395003; May 26
 ...

AUSTRALIA New South Wales

BORN
 A boy, *Kaizad*, to *Prochi* and
Khushrow Mehta; February 29
 A girl, *Auriel*, to *Ana* and *Toos*
Sachinwalla; April 9

CANADA Edmonton, Alberta

DIED
Sam Burjour (55), husband of

TOTALS FOR 1995 AND 1996									
	Bombay			India			World		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
BORN									
Boys	6	112	40	1	11	4	5	37	6
Girls	7	109	32	--	6	1	4	26	5
MARRIED									
Parsi	43	284	106	1	15	3	1	14	--
Intercommunal	--	94 [^]	17 [*]	--	2	3	1	10	1
DIED									
CONSIGNED									
Males	34	473	176	17	91	43	8	36 [^]	21
Females	40	464	207	9	94	28	6	36 [^]	12
CREMATED									
Males	--	3	----	--	--	--	--	--	--
Females	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A: Total numbers in this issue
 B: Running totals for 1995 (February-March 1995-May 1996 issues)
 C: Running totals for 1996 (February-March 1995-May 1996 issues)
[^] Males married out in 1995 -- 43 *Males married out in 1996 -- 9
 Females married out in 1995 -- 51 Females married out in 1996 -- 8
[^] 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.

Pam and father of Jason and
 Cyrus; March 20

Hamilton

DIED
Alamai Manchershah
Bhagat, mother of Homai,
 Mehroo and Sammy;
 May 29

Ontario

BORN
 A girl, *Natalie Jasmine*, to
Mary Jane and *Persius Kanga*;
 February 17

Quebec

BORN
 A girl, *Jessica*, to *Mary Lou*
 and *Hanoz Kapadia*;
 December 21, 1995
 A boy, *Dillon Darayoush*, to
Freny and *Gary Dickson*;
 February 9, 1996

Toronto

BORN
 A girl, *Sanaya*, to *Arnavaz* and
Jamshed Dhabhar, sister to
 Humin; November 28, 1995

MARRIED

Christine Harman and
Jamsheed Darayus Mehta;
 November 11

DIED
Dara Eruchshaw Patel, husband
 of *Avan*; January 25, 1996

DUBAI

BORN
 A boy, *Nazban*, to *Khushnum*
 and *Malcolm Darukhanawalla*,
 brother to *Nushzaad*;
 February 14

HONG KONG

BORN
 A boy, *Kerfegar*, to *Meher* and
Tehmasp Parekh; March 27

IRAN

DIED
Hormaziar Satoudian, father of
Shajehan; May 15

Tehran

DIED
Dinyar Ardeshir Moigani (85);
 March 3

PAKISTAN

Karachi
 BORN
 A boy, *Danesh*, to *Nazneen*
 and *Percy Bharucha*; April 4

DIED
Dollat G. Confectioner (69);
 March 1

Khorshed D. Engineer (85);
 March 4
Ratan F. Patel (61); March 13
Khorshed D. Patel (82);
 March 19
Sharebanoo M. Dotiwala (84);
 March 25
Homi Cursetji Virji (84); April 1

USA Bolingbrook, Illinois

DIED
Jal Eduljee Damkevala (86),
 husband of *Banoo* and father
 of *Rustom Kevala*, *Bomi*
 and *Shirin Viraf Kanga*;
 April 8

Chicago

MARRIED
Yasmin Crawford and *Antish*
Alleck; May 19

Houston

DIED
Burjor Hormusji Mehta,
 father of *Armaity*; March 19

Irvine, California

DIED
Maharukh Charna, wife of
Sohrab and mother of *Zarine*
 and *Cyrus*; May 26

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

A collector's convictions

Homi Rogers

Karl Jamshed Khandalavala, was amongst those rare individuals in the world whose avocation differs sharply from their vocation, and he strode like a colossus in two disparate fields of endeavor.

A barrister from London's Middle Temple, with a long and distinguished legal career, the erstwhile chairman of the board of trustees of Bombay's Prince of Wales Museum (POWM) had strayed into the world of Indian art more by accident than design. Casual visits to borrow books on European painting and records of Western classical music from a relative, Burjor N. Treasurywalla, drew the young and impressionable Khandalavala into a vortex of Sunday tea meetings hosted by Treasurywalla (whose collection forms the cornerstone of the National Museum in New Delhi), to hear discourses by stalwarts such as O. C. Gangooly, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Father Heras.

Providentially, around the same time Khandalavala's father Jamshed sent his son, an alumnus of Bombay's Elphinstone College, to England to obtain his degree at the bar. The visit gave Khandalavala access to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum where he spent most of his free time absorbing Indian and European art. Khandalavala was a self-taught scholar, and probably this was the reason why all through his long life (he was 92 when he died in Pune on December 23, 1995) he strove to make art friendly and accessible to those interested in it, rather than a matter of academic pursuit. Baburao Sadwelkar of the Jehangir Art Gallery recalls that it was the simple language Khandalavala used in his books that "inspired us (students) to go through them, and learn about Indian art and history at a time (in the late '30s) when no formal training was imparted in these subjects, and different schools of Bundi or Basholi were grouped by professors at the J. J. School (of Art) as representative of Indian style." Khandalavala's study of the Pahari school, published in 1958, still remains the most definitive work on this subject.

Interestingly, Khandalavala never sought to forsake one profession for the other, but used the opportunity provided

by both to enhance his progress in the two fields. Often it was his legal work that took him places and gave him the chance to pursue his fascination for the arts. Krishnakant Desai, a senior advocate at the Bombay High Court, remembers how Khandalavala seized the opportunity to represent the Government of India as a senior lawyer on revenue offences as it



Mary and Karl Khandalavala: a persistent romantic strain

allowed him to travel around the country. Indeed, in an interview three years ago (see "Khandalavala's art and acumen," *Parsiana*, June 1993) Khandalavala had related how he had come to acquire one of his favorite paintings — a Pahari depicting the death of Vali, the monkey king, at the hands of Lord Rama.

"It was the first painting I bought as an art collector," he said. "I bought it in Lahore, where I had to fly during my stint as a navigator (yet another facet of the man, generally unknown) in the Royal Air Force." What an incongruous sight it must have been: a skilled navigator poring over maps and miniatures during the height of World War II. But that was to be the hallmark of Khandalavala. He was to be inundated with briefs and Basholis; summons and sculptures; and he was to bring to them his own perceptions and erudition. "His way of conducting prosecution was different from the established manner," mentions Desai who regards Khandalavala as his guru. And the same informality that he extended to the practice of law, distinguished him from his more academic peers in the world of art.

It was Khandalavala, for example, who put Amrita Sher Gil on the map of Indian art, discovering the talents of this beautiful half-Sikh, half-Hungarian artist, and writing a monograph on her — among the first written on a contemporary Indian artist. The monograph, it has been insinuated by art critic Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni, could have been the result of a romantic dalliance between the two; but it remains, like his other works, a seminal study on this artist. That Khandalavala was a man-about-town in his youth is also amplified by Sharukh Sabavala, a senior director with Tatas, whose late wife Roshan was one of the co-founders with Khandalavala and Mulk Raj Anand of *Marg*, the country's premier art quarterly since 1948. "We used to attend dance classes at Apollo Hotel, and thrice a week a dashing young man would come to fetch the prettiest girl in our class. Sparks would fly if she kept him waiting," narrates Sabavala with a smile.

Maybe it was this persistent romantic strain that some two decades later caused Khandalavala to take up the case of Cawas Nanavati, a Parsi naval officer who shot his wife's paramour, and then surrendered himself to the police. So brilliant was Khandalavala's defence of Nanavati that the jury pronounced him "not guilty" of the crime. This verdict led to the abolishment of the jury system in India,

because the judge pronounced it 'perverse' and indicted Nanavati. The trial, however, remains one of Khandalavala's major triumphs — not just because of its controversial nature but because, as in art, Khandalavala had given law a human touch and taken it from the confines of dusty courtrooms into people's hearts. It was this approach to both spheres that endeared Khandalavala to all those who heard him, or came in contact with him.

Ms Homai Modi, secretary of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) echoes a similar feeling as she speaks of the deep impression Khandalavala left on her and on an audience of scholars when he expounded with clarity and simplicity on the influence of Persian art on Mauryan Indian architecture, at the first international conference on Indo-Iranian studies organized by KRCOI in 1989.

If Khandalavala brought to art the clinical precision of a legal mind, he brought to law the art-lover's meticulous devotion to detail. Sabavala recalls the many times when the savant would be invited by his wife Roshan to determine the genuineness of the antique additions to her collection. Khandalavala would ruminate rather sadly on the kitsch she had acquired from overzealous art dealers when suddenly, spotting a genuine piece, he would jump up excitedly and exclaim in quaint legalese how it was the real thing, "beyond a shadow of doubt."

Perhaps it was his excellence in each sphere that helped Khandalavala to advance simultaneously in both. Dr (Ms) Saryu Doshi, an eminent art historian herself, and for several years editor of *Marg*, recalls how on innumerable occasions Khandalavala would disagree with her interpretation, but remained "very tolerant if you could support your arguments."

Dr Sadashiv Gorakshkar, curator and long-time associate of Khandalavala at POWM has a similar tale to tell. "He once broke journey in London while returning from New York, to call on the ailing art critic W. G. Archer, whose views on a certain matter he had criticized vehemently. It was apparent that Khandalavala was at heart a true lawyer: he would not carry an argument outside the court."

Nor from case to case, evidently. Which is probably why Khandalavala was the Shah Commission's special prosecutor of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the Janata regime; and a few years later, the defendant of her protégé, Maharashtra chief minister A. R. Antulay, for his role in the cement scandal.

Khandalavala won the case for Antulay.

Examples of his professional integrity are legion. Writes Pratapaditya Pal, senior curator of Indian and South-east Asian Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in a tribute to Khandalavala published in *Marg*: "Such integrity is extremely rare... There can be no better example of it than his ceasing to collect (as an individual collector) from the moment he became associated with the POWM as a trustee in 1950."

For Khandalavala, the POWM has been 'a second home,' and for over 35 years he worked ceaselessly to elevate the Museum to its present national and international level, offering advice freely and helping to replenish its collection. It was only fitting that his own remarkable collection of around 700 items amassed over just 13 years (1937-1950), was bequeathed by him to the POWM, to be administered by a trust, 'The Karl and Mary Khandalavala Collection' named after him and his wife Mary (Meherbai) of 58 years, who predeceased him in 1994. An announcement to this effect made by his nephew, Dr Farrokh F. Wadia, was greeted with an appreciative response at the condolence meeting called by the POWM on January 22, 1996. Some more plans to enshrine the memory of Khandalavala are in the offing, and include those put forth by longtime associate and friend Dr Mulk Raj Anand to set up endowments and scholarships for the promotion of art and the holding of a memorial lecture.

Besides the POWM, Khandalavala was closely associated with the Jehangir Art Gallery, the Asiatic Society of India, Heras Institute, Museum Society of Bombay and the KRCOI. The founder general editor of the *Ancient Series* published by the Lalit Kala Akademi, he introduced a prestigious art journal for the Akademi, of which he remained an honorary editor for over 35 years; and a portfolio series, which immensely helped in popularizing Indian miniature paintings. And for *Marg* he continued faithfully to write articles and edit books until his death.

A Padma Shri, Khandalavala was the recipient of several awards like the Ramaprasad Chanda Medal, the Dadabhai Naoroji Prize, and the Asiatic Society's Gold Medal in 1993. But for those who came in contact with him, he will long be remembered not so much for his awards and accolades, but for his sterling qualities as a human being. "He was very lively and had a quaint sense of humor," states nephew Wadia. Doshi, who spent many afternoons

Madras Medallion



Design: Kali Rustomji Billimoria

The 20-gm, 38 mm diameter silver medallion encased in plastic, commemorating 200 years of Parsi settlement in Madras, is available for Rs 300 (plus Rs 20 registration and handling charges).

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Madras 600013

or

Mr Marzban Giara,
Dhunmai Building,
667 Lady Jehangir Road,
Dadar, Mumbai 400014
(Tel 4166204).

conversing with him in his Pune house, and accompanying him on his travels looking for art objects and studying paintings in various museums, agrees. "Once when we were in Rajasthan, Karl (that's what he insisted we all call him, though we were years his junior) enquired of a mahout the name of his camel. On receiving no reply, he promptly proceeded to christen the beast 'Sunil' — prompted by a cinema billboard which carried the name of its star, Sunil Dutt."

Khandalavala was very cosmopolitan in his mien and manner. Renamed Karl by his schoolmates and masters in Panchgani who found it difficult to pronounce his name Kaikhusroo, Doshi mentions that Karl would reverently touch the feet of Lord Vishnu at the National Museum before entering it. He was free of hang-ups, and would not hesitate to seek clarifications or be corrected by even the youngest of scholars. And, till well into his 80s, he would commute between Bombay and Pune by the Asiad, a slightly improved version of the local state transport buses.

Khandalavala is survived by his nephew Dr Farrokh Wadia (Wadia's mother and Karl's wife were sisters), his art collection which many museums in the world would be proud to possess, and a number of published works which remain the most authoritative statements on their subject. A manuscript on Rajasthani paintings in the National Museum, which Khandalavala had been working on since the late '60s, was completed before he died, and is almost ready for publication.

Marshall's patient care

Parinaz Gandhi

Died: Dr (Ms) Freney Ratan Marshall, around 80, erstwhile superintendent and chief medical officer of Surat's Parsi General Hospital, the Parsi Maternity Hospital and the Nariman Home and Infirmary, on March 23, 1996 in Ahmedabad.

When the gynecologist went to Surat in 1950 there were few lady doctors of eminence in South Gujarat. She was soon able to win the hearts of the Parsi populace of Surat, especially its womenfolk, mentions her husband Dr Ratan Marshall. Initially she was labelled the 'lady doctor' but with her congenial temperament that endeared

herself to all, she affectionately came to be addressed as 'Frenymai.'

Actually it was to fill the newly created post of lady doctor at the Parsi Hospitals that the gynecologist reached Surat. At that time the Panchayat was dogged by a controversy surrounding the appointment of a chief medical officer and finding no competent incumbent they offered the post to the new lady doctor. "Seeing her effi-



ciency and the trust and confidence" reposed by the anjuman, the Panchayat had no hesitation in assigning to her the affairs of their institutions which she served for 20 years until her retirement in 1970, notes a Panchayat source.

"Under her care and guidance the Nariman Home and Infirmary became an outstanding (institution) accommodating about 115 inmates. The institution, its noble object and the efficient management" with Frenymai working in an honorary capacity drew so much attention that many Parsis donated liberal amounts, remembers her husband. "Today the Nariman Home and Infirmary is the only institution of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) which has a satisfactory financial position," adds Dr Ratan Marshall, who had labored with his wife to build up these establishments, first as secretary of the SPP and subsequently as special officer.

Another medical institution of great repute in south Gujarat with which Frenymai was associated was the Parsotamdas Thakordas Surat General Hospital which she served in an honorary capacity for nearly 25 years.

Prior to settling in Surat, Frenymai (née Freney Hormasji Billimoria) had gained work experience at Bombay's K. E. M., Wadia and Allbless Hospitals. She was the gynec registrar at K. E. M. when Dr Jivraj

Mehta (who subsequently became the first chief minister of Gujarat) was the dean, notes a press release. Her education in medicine was at the city's G. S. Medical College from where she passed her MD winning the coveted Dr Desa Medal.

Failing health compelled her to take up residence with her son in Ahmedabad in the last three years of her life. But the Surat residents continued to remember her for the care, attention and affection she had bestowed on them, states the write-up.

Frenymai is survived by her husband Dr Ratan and son Rustom.

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 4

the overseas Parsi youth the magazine needs to address their issues and interests like the latest fashion in clothes in India for the younger generation, music, activities, etc. I have asked several young Zoroastrians what topics would interest them. They would like to read about the following issues:

- What does the Zoroastrian religion have to say about abortion?
- Is euthanasia frowned upon in the Zoroastrian culture?
- What are the origins of some of the surnames like e.g. Chichger?

The magazine needs to be a little more lighthearted to make it interesting for the younger reader.

A. B. CHICHGER
Buckingham, UK

I have some suggestions for incorporation in *Parsiana*:

- The advertisements are widely scattered. To improve their utility both to the advertisers as well as the readers, I suggest you also include an advertisement index after the main index.
- The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth should also be finally calculated for the whole calendar year (January-December) so that our community figures can be compared with UNDP (United Nations Development Program) data.
- I believe two more stamps on Parsis have been issued — viz J. N. Tata and J. R. D. Tata. They can also be included in the stamps collage in Readers' Forum.

P. D. SUNAVALA

The Editor replies

All these suggestions from Dr Sunavala bear merit and consideration. *Parsiana* will begin work on them as soon as it is feasible.

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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