BOMBAY
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BOMBAY, Persian communities of.

i. The Zoroastrian community.

ii. Persian Muslim communities.

i. The Zoroastrian Community

The Bombay Zoroastrian community is of considerable importance for many reasons. Bombay has the largest Zoroastrian population of any city in the world, estimated by Karkal in 1984 to be 62,478 (though the 1981 Census of India records only 56,866 in the whole state of Maharashtra, of which Bombay is the chief city). The Zoroastrians of India (numbering 71,630 in the 1981 census) are known as Parsis or "Persians." There is a strong consciousness among them of being racially, religiously, and culturally different from the host or majority population, and the Iranian origins are a prominent element in this consciousness. Typically, Zoroastrianism is seen by Parsis as the religion of Iranian blood. Most traditional Parsis throughout India have for the last hundred years considered Bombay to be their main center, not only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of authority. Bombay Zoroastrians are also important because they, as much as any other community, have been responsible for the development of the city, the commercial capital of India. Finally the community is important as being the home of most Zoroastrians

who have migrated to the West.

This article will consider (I) a brief overview of Bombay history; (II) the Zoroastrian contribution to Bombay history; (III) Bombay as a center of Zoroastrianism; (IV) Bombay Zoroastrianism and Iran.

I. Brief overview of Bombay history.

Originally Bombay consisted of seven islands. The history of the city falls into five main periods. (1) The earliest era, termed the Hindu period, stretches from the earliest known history down to the 14th century, but little is known of Bombay because of its isolation from, and insignificance for, mainland history. (II) The Muslim period (1348-1534). The first Muslim incursion of Gujarat was in the seventh century and thereafter Muslim traders, including Persians, were to be found in the region. Gujaratis, notably the Muslims, were active in the seaborne trade along the north west coastline of India, and in particular with Hormoz, over the succeeding centuries. The Muslim period of Bombay began with the domination of the Sultan of Gujarat. (III) The Portuguese era (1534-1661) saw the arrival of various European trading powers. The Portuguese, the first such power to conquer Bombay, pursued an active policy of converting local peoples to their Catholic faith. (IV) The British era (1662-1946) was the time when Bombay really emerged into the light of history and grew to its pre-eminent position in the Indian economy. The islands passed into British control as part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza in 1662. The resident Portuguese authorities were, however, reluctant to cede possession and it was not until the 1730s that the British became the dominant power in the islands, by which time authority had passed from the Crown to the East India Company operating under a charter from Parliament. From the British perspective Bombay history during the British era can be subdivided into five periods: (i) 1662-ca. 1720 a period of only partial British authority with the continued presence of Portuguese power and a subservience to senior British officials in Surat to the north. (ii) ca. 1720-1813, a period of British rule, but not of financial success due to the high maintenance costs of the garrison necessary for preventing invasion; the threat to seaborne trade from pirates and political troubles on the mainland. The financial drain led to serious discussions about the closure of the station. (iii) 1813-46 was a time of dramatic economic improvement due to the introduction of private trade under the renewal of the Charter in 1813. (iv) 1847-1907 was a period of political change following the so-called “Mutiny” (alternatively referred to as the “First War of Indian Independence”).

Authority now lay not with local officials but with the Viceroy or with Parliament in England. Bombay's political importance grew as a staging post on the international route, as a major center of Indian education which equipped many Indians to engage in international politics, and as a center of the Indian Industrial Revolution. (v) 1907-47 saw the growth of the Indian Independence movement throughout the sub-continent with political activity in the north (especially Delhi and Calcutta), but Bombay remained an important political center and the major commercial base. (vi) Since Indian independence in 1947 the state boundaries have been redrawn so that Bombay is no longer the foremost city of Gujarat but rather of Maharashtra, of which it is the state capital. As India's largest city (approximately 8,000,000 people), as a port, banking, commercial, and industrial complex it remains unequaled in the sub-continent. (See M. D. David, *History of Bombay 1661-1708*, Bombay, 1973; J. Douglas, *A Book of Bombay*, Bombay, 1983; *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island* I-III, Bombay, 1909, repr. Bombay, 1978; M. N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, Delhi, 1981; S. T. Sheppard, *Bombay*, 1932; G. Tyndall, *City of Gold. The Biography of Bombay*, London, 1982.)

II. The Zoroastrian contribution to Bombay history.

Zoroastrians have been central to the city's development since the arrival of the British, and their contribution is best considered under the subdivisions outlined in (I) above.

1662-1720. The first Zoroastrian known to have lived in Bombay was Dorabji Nanabhoy, who came in approximately 1640. He was employed by the Portuguese to transact trade with the local population. He was later employed by the British to collect taxes. Another early settler was Kharshedji Ponchajee Panday, who came in approximately 1665 and was a supplier to the Portuguese for the building of the fortifications. In 1692 most Europeans in the island fell victims to the plague, and Muslim forces gathered to capture Bombay. A Parsi, Rustomji Dorabji (son of the first Zoroastrian resident), raised a militia from the local population and repelled the Muslims. For this the British conferred on him the hereditary title of "Patel" (lord or chief), and hereafter the Patel family were leading Zoroastrians in the island (see B. B. Patel, *The First Parsee Patells of Bombay*, Bombay, 1937). One of the earliest references to Bombay Parsis was made by Gerald Aungier, Governor of Bombay 1669-77. In a report dated December 16, 1673 he wrote: "There is also another caste of people called Persees which are those flieing the cruelty of the first promoters of the Mahometan religion in Persia, settle themselves on

India, where they enjoy their own rights and customs unmolested, their religion being very ancient left them by their prophet, Zertusht, differing from all others in these parts of the world. They are an industrious people and ingenious in trade, therein they totally employe themselves, they are at present but few of them, but we expect a greater number having gratified them in their desire to build a bureing place for their dead in the Island." The reference to a funeral ground alludes to the first *daxma* in Bombay which is variously dated between 1672 and 1675. The first temple, the Mody Hirjee Wacha Dar-e Mehr, probably came into existence in the same year and was established by the same man. Aungier's prophecy of a Parsi influx was fulfilled. Two conditions in British Bombay attracted minority groups in general and the Parsis in particular, namely, the promise of freedom of religion and of equality before the law. Neither of these conditions was assured under either Muslim or Portuguese rule at the time.

1720-1813. A particularly important Parsi arrival in Bombay was Lowje Wadia who was brought by the British from Surat in 1736 to build the dockyard (see R. A. Wadia, *The Bombay Dockyard and the Wadia Master Builders*, Bombay, 1972). There were several reasons for the British interest in Bombay—one was the freedom from the Hindu-Muslim political conflicts of the mainland, another was that it provided a better alternative to the port of Surat, which was silting up, and another was the potential of trade from there with Persia (thus many of the boats built in the dockyard were designed specifically for the Persia trade). The building and running of the dockyard was, therefore, to play a crucial role in Bombay's development and it remained in the Wadia family for 150 years. With the western trade in British hands, the hinterland trade in Hindu or Muslim control, the Parsis turned east and developed the Bombay-China trade. The first known individual in this was Hirji Jivanji Readymoney in 1756. The dominance Parsis acquired in what emerged as a lucrative trade is shown by the fact that in 1833 there were 35 Englishmen and 52 Parsis in China (A. Guha, "Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850," *Economics and Political Weekly*, August, 1970, M-107). The Zoroastrian who was to dominate the community's history in the next period, Jamsetji Jijibhoy, made his first visit to China in 1797 and acquired much of his wealth from that trade. By the turn of the century Parsis were involved in the earliest stages of the Indian Industrial Revolution, owning the first printing press in India in 1780, the first Gujarati printing press in 1812, and various other forerunners of the dramatic technological changes ahead.

1813-46. This is, perhaps, the peak period of Parsi commercial enterprise. Many owned their own fleets of ships, notably the Banajis (with as many as 40 ships in the 1840s), Wadias, Jijibhoy, Dadysetts, and the Readymoneys. The influx of private trade into Bombay required a rapid growth in the number of agents, suppliers, etc. Parsis flourished as middlemen in trade for various reasons: their lack of caste restrictions in terms of employment; the willingness of many leaders to mix socially, unlike high caste Hindus; their reputation for honesty and reliability and the readiness with which they became fluent in English. One indicator of their influence is that when the Bombay Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1836 all 10 of the Indians involved were Parsis. They were also pioneers of various banks in the 1840s and 50s, notably the Bombay Bank, the Oriental Bank, and the Chartered Mercantile Bank. It was estimated in 1850 that Parsis owned half the island of Bombay. The embodiment of Parsi aspirations of the period was Jamsetji Jijibhoy (1783-1859), important not only for his wealth and influence on the British but also for his magnificent charity. One foundation alone, which he established, the Parsi Benevolent Institution, ran 21 schools by 1864. It was a pioneering institution in that its schools had equal numbers of boys and girls as early as 1875. He funded temples, rest homes, hospitals, dispensaries, art and technical colleges, and wells, and made numerous donations for victims of fire, flood, and plague. For such work he was the first Indian to be knighted (1842), made a Freeman of the City of London (1855), and a baronet (1857). He, and others like him, brought influence and prestige to the community which continues to the present (see Hinnells, "Anglo-Parsi Commercial Relations in Bombay Prior to 1847" and "Parsis and British Education," *Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute*, pp. 5-19 and pp. 42-64 respectively and bibliography there cited).

1857-1907. This represents the peak period of Parsi political influence. Their industrial enterprise continued notably in the textile trade. The first steam cotton mill was founded in 1854 by Cowasji Nanabhai Davar. The Petit family were particularly active in this industry. By 1870 Parsis owned nine of Bombay's thirteen mills. It was a Parsi, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata (1839-1904), who founded India's steel industry. Railways, telegraphic communication, publishing (especially newspapers) were other areas in which Parsis led the field. A crucial factor in this achievement was the provision for education which Zoroastrians like Jijibhoy had made in the earlier period, which now produced highly educated, skilled, technologically orientated innovators. This same educational achievement produced a number of political initiatives and

outstanding politicians. Two of the most important early political associations were the Bombay Association (1852) and the Bombay Presidency Association (1885). Both were funded, inspired and led by Parsis. When the Indian National Congress (INC) was founded in Bombay in 1885 many of its leaders were Parsis, notably Dadabhoy Naoroji (1825-1917), commonly known as “the Grand Old Man of India,” the only man to be President of the INC three times; Sir Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915), popularly referred to as “the uncrowned king of Bombay” because of his dominance of municipal politics and Sir Dinshah Wacha (1844-1915) who was Secretary of the INC for 20 years. The changed political situation with India being governed from the British Parliament required leaders who could argue with the British in the West, consequently there were a number of attempts to have an Indian elected in an English constituency as a Member of Parliament. The only three to succeed (prior to 1987) were all Parsis: Dadabhoy Naroji (in parliament 1892-95), Sir Muncherji Bhownagree (1895-1906), and Shapurji Saklatwalla (1922-24, 1924-29). (For an overview of the period with extensive bibliography see E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India*, Munich, 1974.)

1907-47. This was an era of greater political “militancy” than before in Bombay. Since Parsis typically favored British rule, understandably since it had given them an opportunity to flourish in contrast to the vivid memories of Muslim persecution in Iran, the Zoroastrian community was not as central as it had been in political developments. Nevertheless a number were involved. The INC became dominated by the “radicals,” and Parsis moved to the “moderate” National Liberal Federation, specifically its Western branch based in Bombay. The leading figures were Sir Dinshah Wacha, Sir Pheroze Sethna (1866-1938), and Sir Cowasji Jehangir (1853-1934). Others were active in the INC. One of the most radical speakers was Madame Cama (1861-1936), exiled to France by the British for her political campaigns. A rising star in the INC was K. F. Nariman (1885-1948), the leader of the Bombay Congress, until he was ousted, probably for criticizing Gandhi, ostensibly for engaging in communalist politics. Another Parsi active in the pre-war years was Feroze Gandhi who married Indhira, Nehru’s daughter, in 1942. As Mrs. Gandhi she dominated Indian politics in the 1970s, and was succeeded after her assassination by their son, Rajiv, Since descent is reckoned through the father many Parsis consider Rajiv Gandhi one of them (see Kulke, pp. 182-215).

1947-87. Popular Parsi literature commonly refers to the community’s decline since India’s independence, but this can be exaggerated. The giant of Indian

industry, Tata Industries, is a Bombay-based Parsi firm, as is South Asia's largest private company, Godrej Brothers. The instigator of the new Bombay Stock Exchange was a Parsi, and three of Bombay University's vice-chancellors over this 40-year period have also been Parsis (Masani, Wadia, and Bengalee). Parsis have also held high municipal office, including the post of municipal commissioner. They have also held many professional posts in education, medicine, and law. (This omits the community's achievements in other centers, e.g., Delhi in parliament and as Indian ambassadors overseas, and as heads of the armed services.) A study of Bombay Parsis in 1982 (Karkal) showed that by whatever means one might test the standard of living (size and type of accommodation, luxuries owned) the Parsi community is markedly better off than is the general population of Bombay. Demographic studies show that since the independence Zoroastrians have moved increasingly from the villages or towns of Gujarat to metropolitan Bombay. In 1941 it was estimated that 52 percent of India's Zoroastrians lived in Bombay, compared with 73 percent in 1981. The impact of the trend on Gujarat communities will be discussed elsewhere. In Bombay there are the following problems. Because of high expectations regarding living standards, the number of Parsi women pursuing education (in 1982 the female literacy rate in the community was 97 percent) was consequently taking up careers (72 percent of Bombay Parsi women aged 25-30 were gainfully employed, compared with only 12 percent in the Bombay female population), fewer are getting married (21 percent of Bombay Parsi women in their 40s were unmarried). Those women who do marry are typically delaying marriage (the average marriage age for the women was 29 years and 3 months), consequently even those who are marrying are having fewer children (the average family size is 3.7). The result is that the community is declining in numerical terms, by as much as 20 percent in the decade 1971-81. Since 28 percent of the population are currently over 60 years of age the rate of decline can be expected to continue (figures from M. Karkal, *Survey of Parsi Population of Greater Bombay-1982*, Bombay, 1984, and from the decadal Census of India, particularly that for 1961, which produced a separate volume on the Parsis; the only historical study of this modern period is Hinnells, *An Ancient Religion in Contemporary Exile: Modern Zoroastrianism*, Oxford, forthcoming).

III. Bombay as a center of Zoroastrianism.

The material presence of Zoroastrianism in Bombay. Within the city boundaries there are four Ātaš Bahrāms (founded 1783, 1830, 1845, and 1897) and 40

*agiari*s or *dar-i Mihr*s. These were mostly built in the 19th century (of the 52 whose building has been recorded, 6 are pre-19th century, 20 from 1800-50, 42 from the 19th century and five in the twentieth century; see B. B. Patel, *Parsi Religious Buildings*, Bombay, 1906, in Gujarati). With the declining population it is increasingly difficult for the temples to be maintained. In a 1984 thesis it was estimated that the temples were served by 249 priests, but the number taking up the hereditary priesthood are dwindling, and the plight of those who serve is serious in terms of morale and finance (H. Kharas, M.S.W. thesis; the thesis provoked continuing controversy in the community).

The largest Zoroastrian institution in Bombay is the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP). A Punchayet is a traditional form of Indian government by five elected respected elders. The British pressed the various Bombay communities to elect Punchayets so that they had respected leaders with whom they could deal. The BPP was formed in the late 1720s. At first it was a paternal body overseeing community needs, morals, and discipline. In the twentieth century it has become primarily a charitable institution overseeing a vast number of trust funds of divergent types including funeral grounds, an industrial estate, college of commerce, children's homes and schools, medical center, rest homes, educational and matrimonial bureaus, and hundreds of charities for the poor, disabled, orphans, and widows. Its major current concern is housing. The Panchayet's governing body, now consisting of seven persons, commonly see themselves, and are seen by Parsis in many centers, as having an authority extending beyond Bombay. Thus when a Federation of Zoroastrian Associations (*Anjoman*s) was formed in 1971 the question of seniority arose, and the Federation split in 1978 partly because of personality clashes but largely over the question of Bombay's authority. (The split was later healed.) When a World Zoroastrian Organization was founded in London in 1980 a controversy quickly developed over the status of associations in general and of Bombay in particular. Zoroastrians who have migrated to the West decreasingly recognize the BPP authority, but the trustees generally see themselves as having the duty to speak out for traditional values for Zoroastrians overseas as well as in Bombay. (See bombay parsi panchayat.)

The distinctiveness of Zoroastrianism in Bombay. Bombay Zoroastrians are typically well educated (with a literacy rate of 98 percent; 43 percent completing high school and 21 percent of men graduating from college or university). They have a fondness for educational and social organizations. There are several libraries, notably the Petit Library and particularly the K. R.

Cama Oriental Institute (founded 1916), the best collection of books and papers on the Parsis in the world. The Institute also has its own journal and organizes lectures and occasional conferences. There are two priestly seminaries, the Cama Athornan Madressa in Andheri and the Dadar Athornan Madressa. In 1977 an educational organization, "Zoroastrian Studies" was started to revive knowledge of the religion, particularly among the youth. In 1985 a separate body, the Athravan Educational Trust, was set up, though involving some of the same leaders. This was concerned with the education of priests and with the raising of funds to pay and care for them. In 1979 a Zoroastrian Development Institute was founded, again with educational and social issues as priorities. There are numerous specifically religious organizations, notably the "Jashan Committee," which for much of the century has been concerned to organize religious celebrations and classes. It tends to be associated with more orthodox traditions. The Mazdayasnie Monasterie was established in 1977 to publicize the secret teachings of Behramsbah Shroff. The first distinctive feature of Zoroastrianism in this city, in contrast to rural Gujarat, is therefore its organizational and educational focuses.

Religions are inevitably affected by the environment in which they are practiced. Bombay Zoroastrianism is no exception. The financial success, political power, and educational achievements which characterized the community during the period of British rule inevitably had their effect. This was reflected in dress, hobbies (theater, music, sport) and in religion. Because of their education many Parsis read Western scholarly accounts of their religion, notably those of M. Haug, A. V. W. Jackson, and J. H. Moulton and came to accept many of the contemporary religious assumptions, all significantly of a Protestant nature. This influence is particularly seen in the contrast drawn between priestly and prophetic religion; the authority attached to "holy scripture" over evolving priestly or "ecclesiastical" interpretation; the importance of establishing and returning to the "pure" teaching of the prophet; the allegation of "superstition" associated with "ritualism." Thus "protestantizing" movements developed in late 19th-century Bombay in a way they did not in the rural areas where such Western scholarly influence was negligible. A notable example of this movement was K. R. Cama (1831-1909), a business man who set out about acquiring a knowledge of his religion from various scholars in Europe and then transmitting it to his community. The Institute was erected in his memory (see J. J. Modi, *K. R. Cama*, Bombay, n.d.-approximately 1933).

In time a reaction occurred which spurned this rationalism and sought religious experience in the occult, first in the Theosophical Society when its headquarters were in Bombay from 1879 until 1907. One of its founders, Col. Olcott encouraged Parsis to search for their religious treasures in Iran and in "occult science." When the Theosophical Society moved to Madras and became more associated with the Home Rule League these twin interests—Iran and the occult—were taken up in a movement known as Ilm-i Khshnoom (ʿElm-e Ḵošnūm), "The path of knowledge" founded by Behramshah Shroff (see Hinnells, "Social Change and Religious Transformation among Bombay Parsis in the Early Twentieth Century," in P. Slater and D. Wiebe, *Traditions in Contact and Change*, Ontario, 1983, pp. 105-25).

Since India's independence Western influences have declined, and Hindu influence is more evident both in general religious assumptions, for example the doctrine of karma, rebirth, and ideas associated with caste. A number of modern Hindu sages, from Ramakrishnan to Sai Baba have also found a following. The Hindu social practices and religious customs (for example parts of the marriage ceremony) may be found in Zoroastrian communities outside Bombay, but the impact of the sages is mainly restricted to those living in cosmopolitan Bombay, where new religious movements flourish. (See H. Langstaff, *The Impact of Western Education and Political Change on the Religious Teachings of Indian Parsis in the Twentieth Century*, Ph.D. thesis, Manchester, 1983; an extensive bibliography is Hinnells, "The Parsis: A Bibliographical Survey," *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, 1980, pp. 100-49.)

IV. Bombay Zoroastrians and Iran.

Despite the influences from the British or from Hindus, there has always been a strong and conscious continuity between Bombay Zoroastrianism and the Iranian homeland. If anything that connection has strengthened rather than weakened over the last 150 years. Contact between the two communities was minimal after the initial migration. It is said that the first settlers sent back to Iran for ritual implements with which to consecrate the first Ātaš Bahrām. Then from 1478 to 1773 there was a series of *Rivayat*s, 26 letters wherein the Irani Zoroastrians answered a number of questions mainly relating to ritual practices, sent by the Indian community (R. B. Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, Bombay, 1954, chap. 4; B. N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others*, Bombay, 1932). But such contact was rare, and was with the Gujarat not the Bombay community.

A number of Iranian priests managed to travel from Iran to Bombay during the nineteenth century, some bringing with them texts and knowledge of the texts which they passed on to coreligionists in India. In 1720 a dastur from Kermān, Jāmāsp "Welāyatī" (lit. "from the mother country") was invited to Surat to pronounce on various funeral customs. His manuscripts and teaching brought a realization of a discrepancy between the calendars followed by Irani Zoroastrians and the Parsis, and so began the Kabisa controversy. Its early history was in Surat, where in 1746 what became known as the "Kadmi" "sect" was established to follow the Iranian calendar (See kabisa controversy). The Kadmis encouraged allegiance to other Iranian customs. The division spread to Bombay, where the Kadmi following was centered on the Dadysett Ātaš Bahrām (fire installed September 29, 1783). It was to this temple that migrant Zoroastrian priests from Iran tended to move, and it became something of a center of what might loosely be termed an "Iranizing movement." It was such priests who brought with them ancient texts and traditional knowledge and who increased Parsi interest in their Iranian heritage, as much as, if not more than, Western scholars did at the end of the century. (A further element in the increasing Parsi awareness of fellow Zoroastrians in Iran was the wealth of publications by European travelers who had traveled in the two countries, see N. K. Firby, *European Travellers and Their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, German Archaeological Institute, 1988.)

One particular priestly family was instrumental in this process of increasing eighteenth-century Parsi awareness of their Iranian links, namely the Jalals. In 1768 Mulla Kaus Rustam Jalal (to use the full title he assumed later), a leading Kadmi teacher, and his son Peshotan were sent from Bombay to Iran to enquire further about calendar and other religious matters. During their twelve year stay the father, and especially the son, studied languages and traditions assiduously, first of all in Yazd where Peshotan was initiated into the priesthood. He went on to learn Persian and Arabic in Isfahan. Because of success in debate in a Muslim seminary he was called "Feroze" (= victorious) Mulla. Later in Baghdad, it is said, he was honored as *mollā* by the caliph (the story is extremely dubious since the caliphate had long finished there, it seems more likely that it was bestowed rather by a local *ḥākem*; he then became known as Mulla Feroze).

He returned to India in 1780 and settled in Bombay in 1782. He wrote an account of his travels in Persian, brought back a number of religious books

and published the *Dasātīr* in 1818. Mulla Feroze was active in the educational realm. He was, for example, praised in the Annual Report for 1819 of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Government of Bombay for the support he gave to the society's schools: "By far the greater part of the native children in these schools are Parsees; and the Society is much indebted to Mulla Firuz, the learned editor of the *Desatir*, who has taken considerable pains in explaining to his country-men the views of the Society, and encouraging them to send their children to school" (p. 22). In 1822 he was one of the four Parsis appointed to the Managing Committee of the most influential educational body of the day in Bombay, under the presidency of Governor Mounstuart Elphinstone, namely the Native School and School Book Society. He was also an important source of information on Bombay Parsis for some Western accounts of the city and the community, notably Sir James Mackintosh, Maria Graham, and Sir William Ousley (see Hinnells, "Parsis and the British," *Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute*, 1978, pp. 33-35). He taught the governor, Jonathan Duncan, Persian and was employed by the government to write the *George Nama* in 40,000 Persian couplets, conceived as a grand epic of the British conquest of India from 1724-1820, covering the reigns of George I--III, and dedicated to Queen Victoria. Governor Duncan also sought information and guidance from Mulla Feroze before his official visit to Iran. The Iranian-trained priest, therefore, played a significant role in the projection of the Zoroastrian image of learning to the Western rulers in India.

He was also an important priestly figure within the community. First the father, Kaus Jalal (1783-94), and then the son, Mulla Feroze (1794-1830), were the first dasturs of the Dadysett Ātaš Bahrām. In 1794 he was appointed to the Bombay Parsi Panchayat in succession to his father, and then re-elected in 1818 when the Panchayat had to be revived. His name was commemorated in the Mulla Feroze Madressa in 1854, an institution for the training of Parsi priests (later amalgamated with the Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy Madressa), and in a library (now incorporated in the Cama Oriental Institute). Mulla Feroze's fundamental contribution was the strong consciousness he brought to Parsis of their Iranian heritage. (See R. B. Paymaster, *Biography of Mulla Feroze bin Mulla Kaus Jalal*, Bombay, 1931; I am indebted to Dastur K. M. JamaspAsa for help in consulting this Gujarati volume.)

A further dramatic step in Parsi-Irani Zoroastrian relations followed the marriage of a young Iranian Zoroastrian refugee, Golestan, to a Parsi merchant, Framji Panday. Her beauty had attracted a wealthy Muslim in Yazd,

and her father fled with her to Bombay. She and her family, notably her two sons when they grew up, dedicated much of their lives to helping Zoroastrians in Iran. They started collecting funds for the Iranis and in 1854 founded the Society for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Zoroastrians in Persia. This resulted in the sending of an emissary, Manekji Limji Hataria, to Iran in 1854 to learn about and assist his coreligionists. He eased the crushing tax burdens; enhanced the status of Zoroastrians in Muslim eyes; renovated sacred Zoroastrian buildings, previously forbidden by the authorities; obtained a measure of legal redress for some unfortunate Zoroastrians and built schools (M. Boyce, “Maneckji Limji Hataria in Iran,” *Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume,* Bombay, 1969, pp. 19-31).

It is certain that in the mid-nineteenth century there were heroic individuals who traveled, at great risk, from Iran to settle in India, but their stories are unknown. One whose life is briefly recorded is Jamshedji Rustomji Irani, 1810-66, nephew of Golestan, and who achieved commercial success in the China trade (Darukhanawala, I, pp. 508f.); another who started the famed Iranian tea shops was Khodadad son of Mehrabab in the early nineteenth century (Darukhanawala, II, pp. 775-81).

Later in the nineteenth century several leading Parsi politicians, notably Dadabhoy Naooroji, used their influence to press the Iranian government to ease the repressions on Zoroastrians in Iran. In the early years of the twentieth century more charity began to flow from Parsis to their coreligionists in the homeland, notably from the Petit, the Marker (based in Quetta and Karachi), and the Irani families (Hinnells, “The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence,” in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, Acta Iranica 24, 1985, pp. 262-326; K. A. Marker, *A Petal from the Rose*, Karachi, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 163-86; *Peshotanji Marker Memorial Volume*, Bombay, 1966, pp. 1-23). As conditions in Iran eased towards the end of the Qajar period, and especially under the Pahlavi dynasty, increasing numbers of Irani Zoroastrians traveled to India. Indeed it has been reasonably said that at the start of the twentieth century Zoroastrians in the south of Iran turned more to Bombay than to Tehran. Thus it was in Bombay that Pūr-e Dāvūd’s work on the *Gāθā*s was published (1927). The main organization concerned with fostering links between the two branches of the religion was The Iran League founded in Bombay in 1922 under the presidency of Sir Hormusji Dinshah Adenwala (see A. N. Joshi, *Life and Times of Sir Hormusjee C. Dinshaw*, Bombay, 1939). Its main role in Bombay was the dissemination of information about

Iran, which it did through numerous publications, notably the monthly magazine *Iran League Bulletin*, which in 1930 became *The Iran League Quarterly*, edited by G. K. Nariman and I. J. S. Taraporewala respectively. The travel and contact thus generated resulted in the influence of some Parsi teachings, commonly of a "reformist" kind, percolating through to the Irani Zoroastrians. The Zoroastrians coming to India became famous for their tea shops. These and earlier settlers formed the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay, founded in Bombay in 1918 under the presidency of Dinshaw Jijibhoy Irani (Darukhanawalla, II, pp. 32-34; and the *Dinshah Irani Memorial Volume*, Bombay, 1943, pp. i-xxix). Its aims, stated in the *Memorandum of Association and Rules*, included caring for the needs of poor Zoroastrians in India, although its focus of concern was primarily in Iran and the vulnerability of the Zoroastrians there. It owned various properties in Iran, schools, orphanages, and dispensaries, for example, but the ownership was transferred to Iran in 1968 because of political difficulties in transferring money from India.

In the twentieth century there has been a growth in Parsi "tourism" to Iran. In the 1920s it became fashionable for Parsi youth to cycle to Iran; books were produced to help those traveling in greater comfort (e.g., R. Kharegat, *A Tourist Guide to Iran*, Bombay, 1935), and books were produced on Iran as distinct from Iranian Zoroastrianism, for example M. N. Kuka, *Wit, Humour and Fancy of Persia*, first published in 1894 and republished in 1923 and again in 1937. An example of a book written about modern Iran specifically for Parsis is A. M. Moulvi, *Modern Iran*, Bombay, 1938. One of the most prolific authors in the 1930s on Iran from diverse points of view was G. K. Nariman, a man so imbued with the love of his perceived homeland that he rejected the traditional account of the Zoroastrian "exodus" to India, as related in the *Qeṣṣa-ye Sanjān*, being due to persecution (see R. B. Paymaster, *Writings of G. K. Nariman*, Bombay, n.d., pp. i-x).

Throughout much of the twentieth century there have been voices calling for the Zoroastrian return from India to the Iranian fatherland. As militant Hindus became more powerful in the Independence movement, and with the formation in India of the Muslim League in 1906, Parsis began to fear for their future as violent religious intolerance threatened to follow communal militancy. Some called for a small new kingdom, either around the priestly city of Navsari in Gujarat, or in the mountain fringes of Iran, and some called for a return to Iran itself, with appeals to the shah for security of employment

and religion. Thus Reżā Shah, the first monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty, replied to a Parsi delegation in 1932: “You Parsis are as much the children of this soil as any other Iranians, and so you are as much entitled to have your proper share in its development as any other nationals. We estimate our Empire’s resources to be even greater than those of America, and in tapping them you can take your proper part. We do not want you to come all bag and baggage; just wait a little and watch. If you find the proposition beneficial both to yourselves and this land, then do come and We shall greet you with open arms, as We might our dear brothers and sisters . . . We suggest that the Parsis who are still the sons of Iran though separated from her, should look upon this country of to-day as their own, and differentiate it from its immediate past, and strive to benefit from her developments . . .” (see A. A. Hekmet, *Parsis of Iran*, published by the Iran League, Bombay, 1956). The Parsis did, on the whole, wait, not least because of the troubles of the Second World War, but in the 1970s, after the oil boom and the 1971 celebrations at Persepolis marking the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian empire, a number (details unknown) decided the time had arrived to “come all bag and baggage,” a move encouraged by the shah. There were in Bombay numerous lectures and pamphlets encouraging Parsis to develop business links with Iran, if not to return. Since the Revolution of 1979 such calls are no longer made. Contacts do, however, continue with, for example, deputations from Iran attending Zoroastrian conferences in Bombay, the one in 1986 being led by the Zoroastrian representative in the Majles. In calling themselves Parsis, Persians, the Indian Zoroastrians continue to be very conscious of their distinctiveness from the majority Indian population, however appreciative they may be of the secure hospitality they have received in India, and still see themselves as in a deep and real way, part of the Iranian world, indeed as being of Iranian blood. (See M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London, chaps. 12-14; H. D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, Bombay, 1939 and 1963; E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India*, Munich, 1974, pp. 142-44.)

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(John R. Hinnells)

ii. Persian Muslim Communities

Persians among early Muslim traders in India. The history of the Persian Muslim communities in Bombay is part of the general history of migrations from Iran to the western coast of India. Already in the Sasanian period (a.d. 224-652) ships from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea were calling at the commercial ports of Konkan, the coastal strip of India between what is now Bombay and Goa; Ṣaymūr (modern Chaul, south of Bombay), Kalliyānā (Kalyan), and Sūbāra (Sopara). In this period the stable Sasanian silver dirham was widely accepted, and Persians were thus able to import large quantities of jewels and other luxury goods across the Indian Ocean (Lombard, p. 105). Flourishing maritime commerce with India opened new opportunities for Persian merchants and adventurers, which expanded still further after the Arab conquest of Persia (31/651-52). Muslim traders from all lands of the Near and Middle East ventured to India and even as far as China. Maritime trade reached an apogee in the 2nd-5th/8th-11th centuries, and the Muslim communities in Konkan were augmented in the same period by successive waves of political refugees (cf. Jang Bahādor, pp. 26, 28; Lombard, pp. 54-55).

Early sources do not distinguish between Konkani Muslims of Arab and Persian descent, to whom the local term Naitya was applied equally. That Persians were active members of this community is, however, clear from accounts by early travelers. For example, in 237/851 a Persian merchant, Solaymān al-Tājer, who had traveled in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, reported that the raja of “Komkam” (one of the rulers of Malkhed in the western Deccan who bore the title *balharā*EI[1], s.v. Balharā; *Ḥodūd al-ʿālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 238) and his subjects were hospitable to Muslims (pp. 26-28; tr., pp. 24-26). It was again the strength of the early ʿAbbasid monetary system, based on the gold *dīnār*, that promoted expansion of the coastal trading colonies in Konkan (Lombard, pp. 115-20, 221-23). They were originally located in Sūbāra, Thāna (Bīrūnī: Tanna; Rašīd al-Dīn: Tāna; modern Thana), the Bombay islands, and Kalyan and along both banks of the river at Bankot. In 304/916-17 ʿAlī b. Ḥosayn Masʿūdī visited Ṣaymūr, where he found about 10,000 Muslim inhabitants, many having migrated from Baṣra, Sīrāf, ʿOmān, Baghdad, and other cities; others, known as *bayāsera* (sing. *baysar*), were descended from earlier Muslim settlers who had intermarried with the indigenous

population (*Morūj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 248; cf. Wilkinson; Ferešta, tr. Briggs, II, p. 370; Elliot, *History of India* I, pp. 77, 85-86; II, p. 85). Apparently the rajas permitted regular prayers in the mosques and allowed the Muslim community a measure of internal autonomy, for Masʿūdī reports that at the time of his visit the chief of the Muslims at Ṣaymūr was Abū Saʿīd known as Ebn Zakarīyāʾ. The contemporary ship captain Bozorg b. Šahrīār from Rām-Hormoz was acquainted with a man from Sīrāf, ʿAbbās b. Māhān, who was chief (called *honarmand*) at Ṣaymūr at a slightly later date (Bozorg, pp. 142-44; tr. Sauvaget, pp. 279-80; cf. Moḥyi'l-Dīn, pp. 76-86).

Muslim settlement at Bombay. In the mid-8th/14th century Ebn Baṭṭūṭa (IV, p. 66; tr. Husain, p. 179) visited the west coast of India and met several religious leaders of the Naitya community, which was predominantly Sunnite and Shafeʿite. In what is now the city of Bombay the Konkani Muslims first settled on Mahim, the northernmost of the seven original islands. In 693/1294, when the reigning dynasty in the Deccan was unseated by ʿAlāʾ-al-Dīn Ḵaljī of Delhi (695-715/1296-1315), a younger son of the last raja, Bhīmdēv, made Mahim his capital under the name Mahīkāvitī (Edwardes, 1902, pp. 22-27). In 618/1318 the Delhi sultan Mobārakšāh extended his dominion over Mahīkāvitī (Edwardes, 1902, p. 35), but Muslim control was not fully consolidated until Ẓafar Khan, later to become the first sultan of Gujarat (810-13/1407-10), became governor in 793/1391, renaming the city Mahāʾem. It remained a military outpost and an important trading center of Gujarat until the Portuguese took it in 1534, causing a large migration of Naitya families from the mainland of Konkan to the islands of Bombay, where they established a substantial colony (Edwardes, 1902, pp. 60-63).

Shiʿite communities. Bombay formed part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza at her marriage to King Charles II of England in 1661. The king transferred it to the East India Company by letters patent on 27 March 1668. Under the new masters the port of Bombay became a center of intense commercial activity, and the lives and property of merchants and manufacturers were guaranteed (Douglas, I, p. 76). Among the many newcomers were members of three well-known trading groups from Gujarat, Bohrās and Ḵᵛājas (Khojas; both Ismaʿili Shiʿites) and Memons (Sunnis), all descended from Hindu converts to Islam.

By the end of the 12th/18th century the port of Bombay had come to dominate the coastal maritime trade, and the other port cities had declined. In Iran meanwhile the steady deterioration of the economic situation, caused mainly

by the campaigns of Nāder Shah (1143-60/1730-47), resulted in a major exodus to India (Farīdī, p. 3). In Bombay the newly arrived Persians tended to concentrate along a rocky ridge that came to be known as Dongri; their descendants, known as Moḡūls (Farīdī, pp. 9-10), still form a distinct community of Twelver Shiʿites in the city. After the conquest of Iran by the Qajars (1200-1342/1786-1925) the Persian economy gradually revived, and in the early part of the 19th century a thriving trade in Iranian and Arabian horses, especially for the British army of India, attracted many new Persian immigrants to Bombay. From Bombay Persian traders shipped textiles, especially calicoes, muslins, and Thana cloth (woven of velvet and buckram), ebony, European broadcloth and hardware, leather, and from Iran they imported raw silk, dried fruits, rose water, Shirazi wine, and luxury articles like books and silk shawls (Jahn, p. 321; Edwardes, 1909, I, p. 161, 425, 438-39; Douglas, I, p. 19; Sheppard, p. 122). In 1830 trade with Iran was Rs 350,000, while in 1858-59 the import of horses alone amounted to Rs 2,625,000 (Edwardes, 1909, I, p. 425).

The Persian Shiʿite scholar Aḥmad b. Moḥammad-ʿAlī b. Bāqer Eṣfahānī, commonly called Behbahānī (b. 1191/1777), visited Bombay in 1220/1805 en route to Hyderabad and has left a graphic account of the city at that time (*Merʾāt al-aḥwāl-e jahānnamā*Jān-e Bambaʾī in 1818 provides a more intimate glimpse of the social and commercial life of the established Muslim communities, as well as those of recently arrived foreign settlers, including Arabs, Persians, Armenians, and Jews. In particular the author’s descriptions of Muslim burial sites and shrines offer clear evidence that the settled communities had by that time dispersed throughout the entire territory of Bombay (cf. Edwardes, 1902, pp. 60, 236-37). A certain Ṣafdar ʿAlīšāh Monṣef from a noble Persian family of Hyderabad also spent a short time in Bombay; he dedicated to his patron, the English scholar William Erskine, a *maṯnawī* on the British wars in India entitled *Jerjīs-e razm* and composed in 1229/1814 (Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts* II, p. 725).

The Census Report of 1901 lists 3,000 speakers of Persian, but it gives the total Muslim population of Bombay, immediately following a severe epidemic of bubonic plague as 155,121, including 27,000 Shiʿites. Linguistic data are not always accurate, because most speakers of Persian are also fluent in Urdu, and as the figure for the Shiʿite population also includes native adherents of the various Shiʿite sects, it is fair to assume that the Persian constituent of the population was over 3,000 (Edwardes, 1909, I, pp. 177, 205). During the

Constitutional Revolution in Iran (1906-09) a fresh influx of Persian merchants and political refugees arrived in Bombay, most of them said to be from Fārs and engaged in supplying gold coins, horses, and carpets to India. A further influx of Persian refugees followed establishment of the military dictatorship of Reżā Shah (1344-60 = 1320 Š./1925-41). The census report of 1951 lists 6,527 speakers of Persian.

The Persian community. The Moḡūls continue to speak Persian among themselves, and most still maintain family ties with Iran. For many years the Shiʿites in Bombay followed the dictates of *mojtahed*s (jurists) in Iran, but from the time of Shaikh Abu'l-Qāsem Najafī Kāšānī (d. 1350/1931; see below) qualified *mojtahed*s from Najaf and Qom were deputed to Bombay to administer the religious affairs of two major groups: the Moḡūls and the Twelver Ḵᵛājas (*Šīʿīān-e ordū-zabān*). The office of *mojtahed* to the Moḡūl community became hereditary in the family of Shaikh Abu'l-Qāsem Najafī, a prominent Shiʿite theologian through whose efforts many Ismaʿili Ḵᵛājas were converted to Twelver Shiʿism and who helped to found the Shiʿite mosque in Dongri. His son Ḥojjat-al-Eslām Shaikh Moḥammad-Ḥasan Kāšānī Najafī (d. 1967), the author of several tracts on Shiʿite doctrines and a versified hagiology entitled *Armaḡān-e Eslām*, was imam of the main Moḡūl mosque in Bombay, constructed on Jail Road with funds provided by Mīrzā Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Šīrāzī (Edwardes, 1910, III, p. 311; Sheppard, p. 141). With the death of Shaikh Jawād Kāšānī Najafī in 1983 this *mojtahed* family came to an end. Another Persian *ʿālem* of some prominence at Bombay was Ḥājj Shaikh Moḥammad Taqī, imam of the mosque in Dongri.

Members of the Moḡūl community send their children to private *madrasa*s (seminaries), which were established to impart basic Islamic teachings. Trained *āḵūnd*s (teachers), *mollā*s, and other Shiʿites have been active in preparing suitable pedagogical works. Ḥājj Moḥammad-Ḥasan b. Hājj Moḥammad Eṣfahānī of Bombay published a collection of Shiʿite precepts called *Majmaʿ al-masāʾel* in 1315/1897. The *Ṣaḥīfa* of Moḥammad Ḥasan Šoštarī, published in 1315/1898, contains Shiʿite prayers. Ḥājī Moḥammad-Ebrāhīm, a prominent figure in the Anjoman-e Īrānīān (Iranian society) of Bombay in the 1920s, wrote several books and pamphlets, as well as translating from Arabic a hagiology entitled *Menhāj al-sālekīn* (1346/1927). Other works on such topics as ethics (*aḵlāq*), traditions (*ḥadīṯ*), religious law (*dīnīyāt*), and refutation of the Bahai doctrine were published by Iranian residents of Bombay (*Maharashtra State Gazetteer*, chap. 8).

The main mosque with its adjacent *emām-bāra* (hall for mourning the Shiʿitemartyr Ḥosayn) is the focal point for Twelver Shiʿite gatherings during the month of Moḥarram, when ten days of mourning are observed in commemoration of the death of Ḥosayn at Karbalāʾ in 61/680. The celebrations originally followed the same traditional pattern as in Iran. A description of one such ceremony that appeared in *The Times of India* in February 1908 highlights the salient features. The *taʿzīa-gūʾī* (passion play) was performed in the house of the Āḡā Khan (imam of the Nezari Ismaʿilis) in the Mazagaon section of the city; such performances have now almost disappeared. At present mourning assemblies (*majāles-e-ʿazāʾ*) are held in four *emām-bāra*s: Šoštarī, Amīn, Nemāzī, and Darbār-e Ḥosaynī (in the Bhendi *bāzār* near Dongri). Miniature replicas of the shrine of Ḥosayn (also called *taʿzīa*), standards (*ʿalam*), and images of the open hand (*panja*) symbolizing the five holy ones (*panjtan*, i.e., Prophet, Fāṭema, ʿAlī, Ḥasan, Ḥosayn) are carried in procession through the streets. The Iranian Shiʿites also recite *marṯīa*s (elegies) in Persian, beating their chests with their fists (*nawḥa o sīna-zanī*) or flogging themselves with chains. Bombay has never been a center for the kinds of conflict between Sunnites and Shiʿites that characterized northern India and the domain of the *neẓām* of Hyderabad in the 18th and 19th centuries. On the contrary, the Sunnites in and around Bombay join in celebrating Moḥarram with street processions, just as the Shiʿite communities celebrate the ancient Zoroastrian Nowrūz.

The first printing business in Iran had been established in 1240/1824-25 in Tabrīz, and a second began operating in Tehran in 1253/1837-38. Mīrzā Moḥammad b. Moḥammad Rafīʿ Šīrāzī (b. 1269/1852-53), an entrepreneur from Shiraz, opened the first Persian-language publishing firm and bookshop in Bombay in 1285/1868-69. He was so successful that he came to be known as Malek-al-Kottāb (king of scribes). Among the publications issued by his firm were new editions of such Persian classical works as *Taḏkerat al-šoʿarāʾ* by Dawlatšāh Samarqandī (1887), a prolific writer on diversified subjects. The same author's *Āyāt al-welāya* (Bombay, 1898) is a defense of the claims of ʿAlī and his successors to the Islamic caliphate. S. M. Edwardes, author of the well-known *Rise of Bombay*, published an edition of Dawlatšāh's *Alf nahār* in 1313/1896.

The best-known books by Mīrzā Moḥammad Šīrāzī himself are *Taḏkerat al-ḵawātīn* (Bombay, 1306/1889), containing biographical notices on eminent Persian, Arab, and Indian Muslim women poets, and *Toḥfat al-ḵawātīn*

(Bombay, 1325/1907), which deals with the hygiene of married women (cf. Storey, *History of India*, no. 662, p. 492). He also published four works on historiography: *Eksīr al-tawārīḵ wa sīar al-aʿemma* (1309/1891), *Merʾāt al-zamān*, *Tārīḵ-e Englestān*, and *Tārīḵ-eYūnān-e qadīm*.

Indeed many Iranian scholars in Bombay wrote historical works, though most relied on secondary sources or simply translated original works. For example Mīrzā Moḥammad-Alī Kaškūl published a Persian translation of John Malcolm's famous *History of Persia* under the title of *Tārīḵ-e-Mālkolm* in 1290/1873. A contemporary, Mīrzā Naṣr-Allāh Khan Eṣfahānī, compiled *Torktāzān-e Hend* (1311/1893), a history of India from the time of the Ghaznavid sultan Maḥmūd (388-421/998-1030) to the "twilight of the Mughals." In 1312/1894 Āḡā ʿAbd-al-Majd rendered into Persian an account of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 written by an English lady, Mrs. Horstestet, herself an eyewitness to the event. Ḥājī Āḡā wrote a critical work on the history of Persia, entitled *Enteqādāt-e tawārīḵ* (1325/1907).

The Anjoman-e Īrānīān, with offices located near the main mosque, was founded at the beginning of this century; it serves as the main center of social activities for the Moḡūls. In 1926 a society called Oḵowwat-e Islāmīa-ye Īrānīya-ye Bambaʾī (Iranian Islamic Brotherhood) was established; it sponsored political addresses, which were then published in Persian. Traditionally there have been two distinct groups within the Iranian community of Bombay. Those who originated in cultural centers like Shiraz, Isfahan, and Kāšān were engaged mostly in commerce, whereas after 1947 a group of immigrants, primarily from Yazd, tended to operate restaurants, bakeries, and groceries. In the 1970s the Iranian restaurants of Bombay, with names like Café Shah of Iran, Café Pahlavi, and Café Ferdowsī were popular rendezvous for Urdu-speaking poets, journalists, college students, and hangers-on. Most of the Yazdi owners of these restaurants sold them and returned to Iran on the eve of the 1978 revolution (Azizur Rahman), and now they are patronized primarily by Arab tourists and Indians returned from the Gulf. As a result of the departure of the Yazdis the Iranian population in the city has declined to an estimated 8,000 people. In 1972 the Indo-Iranian Cultural Center was founded; it sponsors and publishes lectures, and its center on Queens Road serves as a meeting place for the Iranians remaining in Bombay.

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Some of the information given in this article is derived from personal interviews.

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