

JEHANGIR CHINIWALLA A UNIQUE PERSONALITY AND A LIFE OF SPARKLING COLOURS.

From "Pittal Master" To The Wakeful Dream of a Great Hindu "Tapasavi" in Satpuda Mountains!

- K. N. Dastoor

This time I am not going to mourn the death of Jehangir, as I did while writing about the life of Phiroze Masani, the first stalwart of Ilm-e-Khshnoom. I find myself in a different mood. I feel a small current of Mobeedic Ushta running within me. The memories of 25 years of living with him are so pleasant, and his radiant face, overwhelming, at times with a sparkling smile and at times with frightening anger, is so much imprinted on my psyche that I cant help smiling. I am not going to say woefully, "Oh Jehangir!" I say "Vah Jehangir, Vah"; and my smile has already become a laugh.

Imagine a Parsi with a well polished Fetan on his head and a long Parsi coat, but open below the neck to display a finely coloured tie. Face, white skinned, with glowing red cheeks which intensified in colour when he gave a radiant smile, or when he lost his temper, which was not an infrequent occasion. But somehow, his smile was more overpowering than his temper, like the smile of Professor Challenger, the most colourful character created by the literary giant, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (of the Sherlock Holmes fame).

His eyes were manifestly of the devotional type, big, seemingly a bit swollen. Normally this type is a sign of being easily carried away or hypnotised or overwhelmed by emotion. But no, that was not Jehangir. There was also quite a different streak and flash in his eyes. Devotion or emotion could effervesce powerfully in his heart, but the eyes, not to display it. Only the persons near to him could see a flicker and be moved.

He kept a small butterfly moustache below the nose tip covering only about 1/4th of the upper lip. Lawyers of those days had this fashion. Jehangir's lips were thin which displayed a golden character. One old knowledgeable Khshnoomist told me that thick lips were a sign of inherent carnal or sexual inclings. Jehangir had complete control over his senses. His glance towards a youthful woman was never impure. He had the habit of calling even a young girl "Maa" And when he chanted Avesta prayers, the eyes had a powerful spiritual glow and his voice was resonantly devotional. Oh! That voice! Hear a tape of his lecture, more preferably a Shahnameh-Kirtan, and you will be drowned in devotion. His voice had a rare gift of transmitting his feelings most effectively to the listeners. That emanated from Ustad Saheb's blessings Dua, Daham Aafriti.

Lest I forget, when he was angry, he had a habit holding a small part of his lower lip between the teeth. Often it was a signal of the gathering storm.

Strong hands and a powerful, almost athletic body, a habit of holding the hand thumb between the rest of the fingers, again a sign of approaching temper. I thought, that thumb exercise was to control his anger. Mars (Mangal) in the 12th house is a sure indication of easy-losing temper, but there may be other signs in his horoscope which could sweeten down his anger. The style of walking was weighty, impressive. Some people thought he was an ego-centered man. But that was not at all right. He had inherent humility which was often expressed in words like Hu t-o Guhnegar Behdin Chau - I am just a sinful Behdin. Ustad Sahebni Daham Aafriti Hoi Nahi t-o Marathi Kai Thai Nahi - "Without Ustad Saheb's blessings, I cant do any thing." My formidable teacher and amiable friend Dosabhai, who was an artist in humour, enjoyed and often mimicked Jehangir in his "Goonehgaur Behdin". "Goonehgaur" was the Persianised version, like when he said Vidvaon for 'Vidvan', the learned. "ahya ghana vidvaono bethela chae, teo tarafna ghana maaaon (Maan = respect) sathe kahyu shu ke khshnoom vagar avesta nahi samjhai...." he would roar in a lion like, but sonorously emotional voice, raising and waiving his right hand.

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The First "Darshan".

It was an evening in Surat. The place was a road called "Zanpa Bazar". There was a red tower - not very high - with a big clock at its peak. An intelligent looking boy with clean Parsi black cap, about nine years of age, a reddish radiant inquisitive face was passing by. He was on an errand assigned to him by his father. It was to bring a heap of grass for his she goats. The father was fond of having them and rearing them as pets. (Gandhiji kept one; in many news-paper cartoons, particularly in Jame Jamshed, he was shown with a she goat. Hiraji Kapadia, a formidable Tarikat-baaz Behdin and 'Shaagerd' (disciple) of Ustad Saheb used to have a she goat permanently, to have her milk.)

The youthful boy saw that a crowd had gathered below the tower and two Christian Priests (Padri) in their usual Christian robes were lecturing turn by turn at short intervals of time. The boy recognised them. One was a Hindu converted to Christian, and the other was a white European. The Hindu convert was the Bible teacher who taught Bible in the Irish Presbeterian Gujarati School, where the boy was a pupil. That teacher was known as "Pittal master" - (why I don't know). Perhaps the Surti people thought that from Hindu to Christian was like gold to copper (Pitral) - noble metal to base. The other priest was Dr. Shilady, who used to come to that school to take exams in Bible. He was lecturing before the crowd. The young boy could gather his words as saying that unless you became a Christian and followed Lord Jesus Christ, you could not attain salvation and see God. At that point a very impressive looking Parsi gentleman Chinai Khokhu - Parsi Behdin Pagdi, but red coloured, long coat, awe-inspiring face, shining eyes, a good sized beard, the whole demeanor as if a signature of profound wisdom - contradicted Dr. Shilady from the midst of the crowd. An argument ensued. The people hearing the Priest were greatly surprised - many of them pleasantly - on the Parsi Bavaji's challenge to the white priest.

The young boy heard the arguments. He was too intelligent not to understand that the priest was fumbling at the inherent strength of the Parsi Bavaji's solid arguments. He observed that Dr. Shilady was no less impressive in appearance - 6 ft. tall, long beard white robe. But his arguments started weakening at Bavaji's tornado. The discussion was in Gujarati; all the three were good at it. The crowd increased. Ultimately the two priests gave some excuses, wound up the debate and walked away.

The Parsi gentleman was Baheramshah Shroff. The 9 year old was Jehangir, the son of Sorabji Chiniwalla, the keeper of she goats. Here was the future disciple having a first glimpse of his Ustad standing in a crowd and arguing with two Christian priests!

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From "Pittal" to a Sparkling Diamond

I am not going to observe any Chronology in depicting Jehangir. The above Pittal incident occurred somewhere in 1906-07. Baheramshahji had not yet opened his treasure chest of ilm-e-Khshnoom. He did that later. I now jump to 1922. The name of Baheramshah Shroff as harbinger of the mystical knowledge from the Zarathoshti Abeds living in secret orbital place, had become well known amongst the Parsis. He often travelled to Mumbai. During his permanent stay in Surat, he used to have frequent seats at Sorabji Chiniwalla's shop. The nine years old, now nearing 25, remembered him. Those were the days when some out of ordinary events used to flicker often, during Baheramshahji's sittings at Sohrabji's shop. Rustom Chiniwalla, Jehangir's brother, was engaged in serious consultations with Baheramshahji on the subject of the Eastern Alchemy - conversion of base metal into gold through some experiments on certain special kinds of vegetation. Jehangir's other brother Jehanbux was a friend of one Ardeshir Tadiwalla, a highly advanced soul, who used to chant Manthra Prayers at a sacred place on the bank of Tapi river for hours and hours. It was the same place where the inner-circle man of Khshnoom, Bomanshah Hakim, used to pray long hours and had the heavenly fortune to have the 'darshan' of an Aabed Saheb from the Demavand-Kash (orbit), at this very place, in a dream. (This event is described by Bomanshah Hakim himself in Parsi Avaz of 15.11.1950, reprinted in "Ilm-e-Khshnoomni Maktabni Tavarikh" by Jehangir, published on his 25th Baj day - 13.10.1998.)

The place is within Surat, at the back of I.P. Mission School. It is the bank of Tapi, where a "Paataal Hanuman Mandir" is situated. There was a small Parsi prayer house - not an Aglary at such, but a tiny

building with a Fire kept burning. It was known as "Mulla Khadki Ibaadat Khaneh" or simple "Sagdi". The Prayer House was frequently visited by several Manthra loving Parsis of Surat and had acquired a holy field. Bomanshah Hakim had done long 'Amal's - manathon Manthra Chanting there. I know of a Parsi businessman, who had done Avan Yashta outside the Sagdi for forty long years (subject to unavoidable absence.) Hear my whisper, he was the father of our writer Mahrookh of the "Banoooni Anjuman". The Prayer Sagdi was facing straight towards the river. The area was (and is) quite big and in those days several holy saints - Hindu sadhu - sants and Muslim Dervish - Fakirs used to come and take a seat - Aasan or Khilwat (advanced Meditation stage) in the open area. The atmosphere was vibrating with spiritual currents.

Here, Ardesher Tadiwalla and Jehanbux Chiniwalla had met a Hindu Saint, Shyam Sunderji, and used to visit him. On one occasion they took with them Jehangir to the Saint Shyam Sunderji who was visibly delighted to see Jehangir and had a short talk with him on some spiritual matters, which created a powerful impression on Jehangir. The saint broke an apple, gave half to Jehangir to eat and himself ate the other half.

Few days after, Jehangir went to Prayer House for his own Manthra Chanting. As he was entering the Ibadat-Khana, he saw Shyam Sunderji at a little distance away, underneath a tree, in Samaadhi (a spiritual trance), his eyes closed and with a white cloth on him.

When Jehangir was praying before the fire, he suddenly heard a voice in his ears "Aaj mujhe akele milo" - "see me alone today". It was no doubt the voice of Shyam Sunderji. Jehangir met him; the Saint talked to him with great love. Jehangir thereafter visited him often.

On one occasion, the Saint talked to Jehangir about his Guru, "Puran-Bhaktaji," who, he said, had his hut (Parnekuti) in the deep interior of Saatpudaa mountains. Shyam Sunderji told Jehangir about the Guru's very exalted spiritual status and some miracles connected with him. Jehangir's heart vibrated with spiritual emotion. "Can I have his darshan?" Jehangir asked. "Darshan" means 'to see', 'sight', 'view'. "Yes, yes", Shyam Sunderji readily said, "I'll give you a "mantra", the chanting of which will lead you to the darshan of my great Guru"

Yes, But should be from Avesta!

By this time Jehangir had already come in close contact with Baheramshahji. He used to ask all kinds of searching questions to him. Baheramshahji was taking keen interest in the young man that was Jehangir, and answered his questions and even entered into significant arguments with him. Jehangir had already advanced in his intellectual journey towards mystical truths. He was aware of the great classification of human souls into different Religions of the great Shoshyant's, Prophets and Avatar's - the Truth about the 'Jiram's. He was already aware that every Religion had its own spiritual procedures - Tarikat's and Disciplines, and every human should follow his own Religion in observing them, and not dabble with the Disciplines of other Religions, although the final goal of each is the same. Jehangir therefore told Shyam Sunderji a little hesitatingly but firmly that he would recite only an Avesta Mantra. The Saint smiled, "Yes Betaa (my son), I'll give you an Avesta Mantra through which you will have the darshan of my Guruji". He gave the Mantra from Avesta - Gatha, to be recited in a specified manner for forty days. On the fortieth day, the Mantra culminated into an actual effect.

It was a dream, but it appeared to be a continuation of the wakeful life. Jehangir saw himself walking on a mountainous track. A little further, and he saw Shyam Sunderji waiting for him. "So, you have come!" he said, "Come on, we go". They took some turns and twists on the tracks amongst the dense woods. In a while, both were standing before a seemingly tattered hut of leaves. There a Yogi with long entangled beard and a high conical formation of very dense hair on his head was sitting in a Yogic posture (Aasan) of deep "samadhi" (a mystical trance) eyes closed, jut a human statue indescribable in human words, a sublime, divine, exalted transcendent Being!!! The cone of thick hair had the nests of birds all around! Overwhelmed, Jehangir stood stunned before the great Rishi. Suddenly the Saint's eyes opened a little and gave a flash of gaze to Jehangir, a faint smile appeared on his air-entangled lips for a fraction of a second and then eyes closed - as is where was.

Shyam Sunderji saw the great Guru smiling at Jehangir. They silently walked away... The dream was

gone.

Next day he met Baheramshahji, as usual, and a question was shot at him, "Jehangir! who is that Sadhu and what was the Isam (Mantra) he gave to you?" Jehangir was taken aback! How did the old man know? "How", apart, he did know. Both the brothers Framroze and Jehangir had often told me that Ustad Saheb had some mystical powers to know things, which had happened and were to happen. I was informed through personal contacts that he could gaze at the setting sun and predict the events which were to occur the next day, particularly who would come to him and even what would he say!

After hearing Jehangir's story, Baheramshahji said something to this effect that Puran - Bhaktaji was a very great Saint, a highly advanced Ruvan. He was aware of the Saint's existence.

I heard this fascinating incident from Jehangir's own mouth. It was tersely recorded by Jehangir in his series: "Ilm-e-Khshnoomni Maktabni Tavarikh" published in Parsi Avaz during 14.5.1950 to 25.5.1952 (91 installments). These are collected in a 259 pages large book bearing the same name published on 13.10.1998 (Jehangir's Baj day) by his son the late Sohrab (Soli) Chiniwalla on behalf of "Zarthoshti Ilm-e-Khshnoom Falavnari Committee." Shyam Sunderji incident is on p.187 of that book taken from Parsi Avaz of 12-8-1951.

The story of the aboundingly colourful life has just begun. "After the break": from black Parsi Cap - not velvety but of Gandhian Khadi, to singing the Shahnameh, to editing Parsi Avaz to roaring devotion on the stage.

(Parsi Pukar Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2003 - Vol. 9; No. 2)

JEHANGIR CHINIWALLA, LIFE OF SPARKLING COLOURS

THE LION OF A RATHESTAR FIGHTING AGAINST THE FAITHLESS.

By : K. N. Dastoor

So, here was Jehangir, age about 9 years looking with intelligent wonder at a bearded Parsi Bavaji arguing effectively with a Pittal master and a Christian Priest, against the alleged monopoly of the Christians alone to go to heaven, and the alleged fate of all others to hell.

And here was the youth Jehangir having the 'darshan' of a great Hindu Yogi of Satpuda mountains, in a dream inducted by a saint, Shyam Sunderji.

Both the incidents were connected with "the baavaajini Dukaan" - the father's shop where Beheramshahji used to have his seat.

Before we proceed further, let me clarify that Baheramshahji did not speak a word against the Prophet Lord Jesus Christ at that way-side debate below the Surat clock tower. What he argued vehemently was against the great folly of the Christian priests to preach that Christianity was the one and only path towards God. Beheramshahji was fully taught by his Ustad - Abeds in Daemavand about the great Divine plan of Ahuramazda to send different Faiths to different groups of humanity, as proclaimed in Gatha 31-11; and about the great Truth that any Faith, if followed fully and strictly, can lead to Salvation, as declared in Gatha 34-13. (For the translation and Taavil of 31-11 and 34-13 please see Vatlavvana Saval Babeno Vadvivad by Framroze Chiniwalla - pages 81 and 88).

[In fact, Baheramshahji had revealed to his disciples certain secrets about the lofty and divine stature of Lord Jesus, who is Saoshyant born to establish a new Religion.]

Jehangir came to Mumbai in 1916 and joined Elphinstone College. By this time Baheramshahji had opened his treasure of Ilm-e-Khshnoom before the Community, to a limited extent. The miracle of his sojourn with the Ashavan-Aabeds of Daemavand was then well known. Ilm-e-Khshnoom Institute was established in 1910, and Baheramshahji conducted regular classes under its auspices. By this time Jehangir's elder brother Dr. Framroze Chiniwalla was already in Mumbai practising as Ophthalmic Surgeon. Both the brothers attended regularly Baheramshahji's classes. They discussed Khshnoom as taught in the classes, amongst themselves and also with Baheramshahji. They were staying together in Dr. Framroze's house. In those days they had never imagined that they would be later called upon to propagate Khshnoom.

From 1917, Jehangir stayed in the college hostel. Freedom movement had erupted in India and Jehangir cultivated a great interest in it. He writes in "Ilm-e-Khshnoom ni Maktab ni Tavaarikh" that he had come into contact with the then stalwart leaders like Gandhiji, Jinnah, Tilak, Malaviya, Lala Lajpatrai, Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Sarojini Naidu etc. He was so much carried away in the stream of revolution that he used to wear Khadi clothes. Even his black Parsi cap was made up of Khaadi. (I know of an Ervad of those days, who tried to wear a white Mobedic Paghadi made up of Khaadi, but it turned out so fat and big that it was funnily out of proportion with his head.)

Jehangir was a first class orator from the student days. He used to give fiery speeches against the British rule in college debates. He was not allowed to stay in the college hostel after B. A. due to his revolting lectures.

However, his enthusiasm fell out after the then Hindu Parsi riots, and his interest in politics waned away. Obviously so. He was destined to do something else.

Baheramshahji was fully aware of the fiery political activities of Jehangir and used to take great interest in the freedom movement. He used to ask all kinds of questions to Jehangir on the then politics, and sometimes

blurted out some predictions about the future of India.

स्वराज स्वराज शूं करो छ? स्वराज
आवशे तो भड़ पड़ा हिंदना ये भागला पडी
जशे अने श्रीटीश सत्तनत अने हिंदनी
वश्येनो संबंध अेक सुतरना तांतएण जेयो
रही जशे.... स्वराजथी कंठ हिंदुस्तान सुभी
अने आबाद नथी थछ जवानूं. अेक पेटी
पाछी अने अेक व्याटली पाछीनी पर देखा
पडशे अने नवी डीसमनी गुलामगीरी पेदा
पडशे."

"Talking of self-rule? Self-rule will come, but India will be divided in two parts and the relation between the British Empire and India will be reduced like a thin cotton thread Self rule is not going to make India happy and prosperous. There will be tax on a loaf of bread and on bottle of water, and a new kind of slavery will be born."

How true? Today, Baheramshahji's words look like understatements.

In 1922, a new subject was introduced in the Ilm-e-Khshnoom Institute. That was the great Poet Firdosi's "Shahnameh." Baheramshahji revealed some amazing matters about the Zarathoshti Kings of Peshdaadian, Kyani and other known and unknown Irani dynasties. This generated such a keen interest that reading of Shahnameh became a part of the study classes of the Ilm-e-Khshnoom Institute. For some time Dinshah Masani, Phiroze's brother, used to read it. Later on, Baheramshahji directed Dr. Framroze Chiniwalla to present selected portions in the class-seatings.

One day, Dr. Framroze's voice was failing and he had to make an effort to sing the couplets. One Sohrab Nanabhoy Banaji, an ardent devotee of Khshnoom, stood up and respectfully told Bahermashahji that Dr. Framroze should not be put to such great strain. Baheramshahji reacted approvingly as if he was waiting for somebody to say that. He called Jehangir, who was sitting in a corner and asked him to read Shahnameh. Jehangir rose up with apparent hesitation and started where Framroze had left of. And the metallic sonorous voice started to sing. The assembly was electrified. It was like roar of a lion with the sweetness of the notes and words streaming out with a ringing resonance. Even Firdosi, if present, would have been moved to the core. The voice was modulating according to the feelings entwined in the couplets. At times it was a ringing metal and at times a sweet and low current of a cool spring.

The word spread out. Somebody sings Shahnameh and explains it like no body else. One Ardeshir Baheramji Homavazir was present once in the class and remained present often. Why not in a public function? He approached Jehangir and requested him to do a Shahnameh Kirtan (singing) under the auspices of "Karelwadi Thakurdwar Mandal," a local Parsi Organisation.

Jehangir declined politely but firmly. Ardeshir Homavazir was a teacher and stubborn like all old ones teaching their students: 'Never give up.' He could see that Jehangir was equally obstinate and the mutton would not cook. He went straight to Baheramshahji and requested him to persuade Jehangir to agree. Baheramshahji gave a cordially approving smile. He told Jehangir to do Kirtan, "that is the work you are to do." "No, Saheb, no" Jehangir said with reverence for his Ustad and firmness of his resolve chasing each other in his words. Baheramshahji did not say anything. Next day he called Jehangir in private and told him that he was destined to speak Khshnoom on public stage and also write it; he gave him the authority coupled with the command to do so; and he had to begin with Shahnameh.

The obstinacy melted, though not easily.

And Jehangir's public life began. The Kirtan was attended beyond expectation. Jame Jamshed gave a detailed report. Within a short time Jehangir became a public speaker in Khshnoom. He also helped Jame in its fight against the so called reformists.

With all this, Khshnoom movement has to face some obstacles at that time (1923). Some rifts developed. Baheramshahji wanted to establish Faslī Alaāt and failed. He handed over the Khshnoom classes to Dr. Framroze and returned to Surat. He died on 7th July 1927. As predicted and arranged by him, the propagation of Khshnoom went on through Chiniwalla brothers.

Jehangir went on giving lectures and Framroze went on writing on Ilm-e-Khshnoom till their last days.

Framroze died on 6th August, 1962, Jehangir on 13th October, 1973. In our previous Issues of this humble Parsi Pukar, the history and works of Khshnoom are narrated under the title: "**What is Ilm-e-Khshnoom and Why?**" In our last Issue we presented to our readers the events and circumstances under which Jehangir floated his Parsi Avaz on 7th July, 1947 and continued till his dying day.

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I REMEMBER.....

Here is your KND overwhelmed and suffocated with the memories of this lion of a Rathestar, spread over a period of 45 years. If I proceed to write about them, it will be a fat volume. Let me be swept away swiftly in the rushing river of reminiscences. I'll write whatever comes out from the remembrance cabinet, and dedicate it to him.

I remember the day, when you Jehangir agreed to take me as your junior and gave me ample opportunity to be with you and your pious and saintly brother Framroze.

I remember the days when we walked through the corridors of the Courts and you told me, while waiting for our case to be called out, several wonderful episodes in the life of your Ustad Baheramshah and his manifold aphorisms and quotes and observations on the Din and the Parsis.

I remember when a Parsi was being cross examined, you told me Ustad Saheb's dictum that Druj is more wakeful in the Parsis than in non-Parsis and therefore a Parsi requires greater control systems like Sudreh Kushti and Manthra Khaani.

I remember the days when you fired me about my faults and was pleasantly surprised when I showed gratitude in my eyes at what he said.

I remember the days when you talked to me about your spiritual experiences.

I remember the day when you introduced to me, in our office, a saintly looking Parsi with sparkling spiritual eyes and a long prominent beard, with a black cap and a demeanor which silently proclaimed that he was not this worldly, and had a gaze as if he was seeing things we could not see - none other than **Bomanshah Dosabhai Hakim**, the inner circle man of Ilm-e-Khshnoom Anjuman; and you asked me to write down his life's miraculous events as he spoke and you Jehangir transmitted in the Journalistic language. What an Ushtaa for me!

I remember the day when you similarly introduced me to an old man with a stick in his hands sitting in angry posture - something entirely opposite to Bomanshah Hakim, and dictating to me in firey words his arguments against Khurshed Daboo, who had blasphemed Ustad Saheb Baheramshah - none other than **Sheth Kaikhushru Burjorji Choksey** whose strenuous efforts had brought Ustad Saheb from Surat to Mumbai. (While dictating, he often pointed out his stick to me as if I was Khurshed Daboo.)

I remember the days when Jame Jamshed wrote defamatory articles against you and you reacted so sharply so as not only to stun and silence the blasphemers but to erase them from public life.

Above everything else, I remember a June 1949 - evening when I was walking with you and your four-five other friends and saw an aged but straight walking Parsi in a long white coat - open collared displaying a tie fixed with golden pin and talking with emphasis on some topic which I don't remember but reminding me of my Uncle Bapaji (Rustom Dinshah Dastoor Meherjirana). I was looking at him with an intent gaze as if questioning: "have i seen him somewhere," when i heard you saying "don't you know Dr. Saheb? He is Framroze," "Oh sir, I had not seen him before," i said....

I remember the days when you organised public meetings against the draft of 14 Dastooris" and "Burjorji

Bharucha episode," where you spoke inter alia on the legal position allegedly defining a Parsi.

I remember your Kirtan on Asho Zarathushtra as written in Shahnameh of Firdausi when every one in the audience was electrified.

I remember you speaking at the Baj Functions of Baheramshah with Dr. Framroze sitting behind you, presided for over 20 years by Dastoorji Hormazdiyar Mirza.

And I remember seeing you bearing heroically the game of fate in taking away your 15 years young, bright and brilliant daughter Pinky, whom I also remember once firing you in defence of her Kaka Framroze.

And to top it all, I remember your words, "Keka! I will never forget what you did for me when Pinky died," when I saw your eyes moistened for the second time (the first being at the Doongerwadi when Pinky's body was lifted for its last journey).

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I said in the beginning of this article in the last issue that I was not going to mourn the death of Jehangir as I did while writing about Phiroze Masani. But.... But.... I cant help it; my eyes are already moistened.....

(Concluded)

- K. N. D.

(Parsi Pukar Jan.-Feb.-Mar. 2004 - Vol. 9; No. 3)