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Parsiana

May 1992
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Cover: Cover of Manek Daver's *Jazz Graphics* with inset of record album jacket featuring *The Art Tatum, Roy Eldridge, Alvin Stoller, John Simmons Quartet*

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

A jewel in his crown

Seldom has the Bharat Ratna been so well-deserved. As a young pioneer JRD gave wings to India and opened up the skies. Within a few short years he put the country on par with the leaders of aviation in the world, much to the astonishment, perhaps chagrin, of the West. A many-splendored life, lived with honor and high achievements in diverse fields in the service of the nation, has at last been recognized.

We are particularly happy that the award came to him during his lifetime, unlike many others. It does not add to his stature in any way. In fact the quality of his life and achievements should serve as a measure and set the standard for all future Bharat Ratnas, the highest honor in the country.

The "Ratna" had never gone to business and industry. But here is an exceptional man who, though from the world of

business, has steadfastly anchored his life to values and is wedded to excellence. In his early years in Tatas, this "uneducated" youth as he called himself, was driven hard by his own will to make himself worthy of his Tata heritage.

But that apart, throughout his life it is really the restless, creative impulse in him which has been the driving force, his grand motivation to scale new heights and pioneer new directions.

Jamsetji brought lustre to the Tata name. JRD enhanced it and lifted it to the skies.

DINSHAH MALEGAMVALA

"Republic Day honors"

In "Republic Day honors" (Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, March 1992) you have mentioned the names of four Parsi individuals who were recipients of national awards.

In this connection, I wish to bring to your attention that four Parsi individuals (not three) were awarded the Padma Shri. Your article has omitted the name of Dr Zal S. Tarapore of Pune who also was the recipient of the Padma Shri award in 1992.

Dr BURJOR DASTUR

The Editor replies

Parsiana regrets the omission of the reputed hydraulic engineer Dr Zal S. Tarapore from its list of Republic Day awardees. We offer our sincere apologies to Dr Tarapore. A supplementary story follows in the Events and Personalities column in this issue.

"A Zoroastrian in Japan"

I was touched by Mr J. M. Bilimoria's letter about my father, Rustomji Vasunia, a simple, soft-spoken, unassuming man who nevertheless did his bit to foster Indo-Japanese friendship in his quiet way in the early years of this century ("A Zoroastrian in Japan," *Parsiana*, February 1992). I would like to elaborate a little upon the contents of the article and to clarify a few points.

The spirit of adventure beckoned Rustomji, in his early 20s, to the shores of China. He landed in Hong Kong and then sailed to Shanghai. In Shanghai he was helped by a fellow Parsi, Mr Bejan D. Tata, who was looking after the firm of Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata (JRD's father).

After learning the ropes there, he once again took to the high seas and reached

Kobe, a beautiful seaport in Japan, where he started a small firm. In Kobe he was helped by a kind, hospitable Parsi, Sohrab Mehta, known as the 'bangle king.' Mehta specialized in exporting celluloid bangles which became the rage among women (especially trendy Parsi women) because they looked as if they were made of ivory.

My dad was also befriended by Mr Rustom E. Daver who had already established his business in Yokohama, another seaport near Tokyo. After visiting Yokohama my dad also established a small office there, and the two families remained very friendly for years. Mr Daver's daughters, the late Ms Shirin Dadabhoy and Ms Khorshed Naval Karanjia, were two of the nicest friends I've known.

In Rome, do as the Romans do. Likewise, in Japan, speak as the Japanese do! It is not difficult to speak the language which can be learnt within six months; but learning to write was a tough nut to crack as each character (symbol) in Japanese, represents a word and not a letter. My father was among the few who learnt to read and write in Japanese.

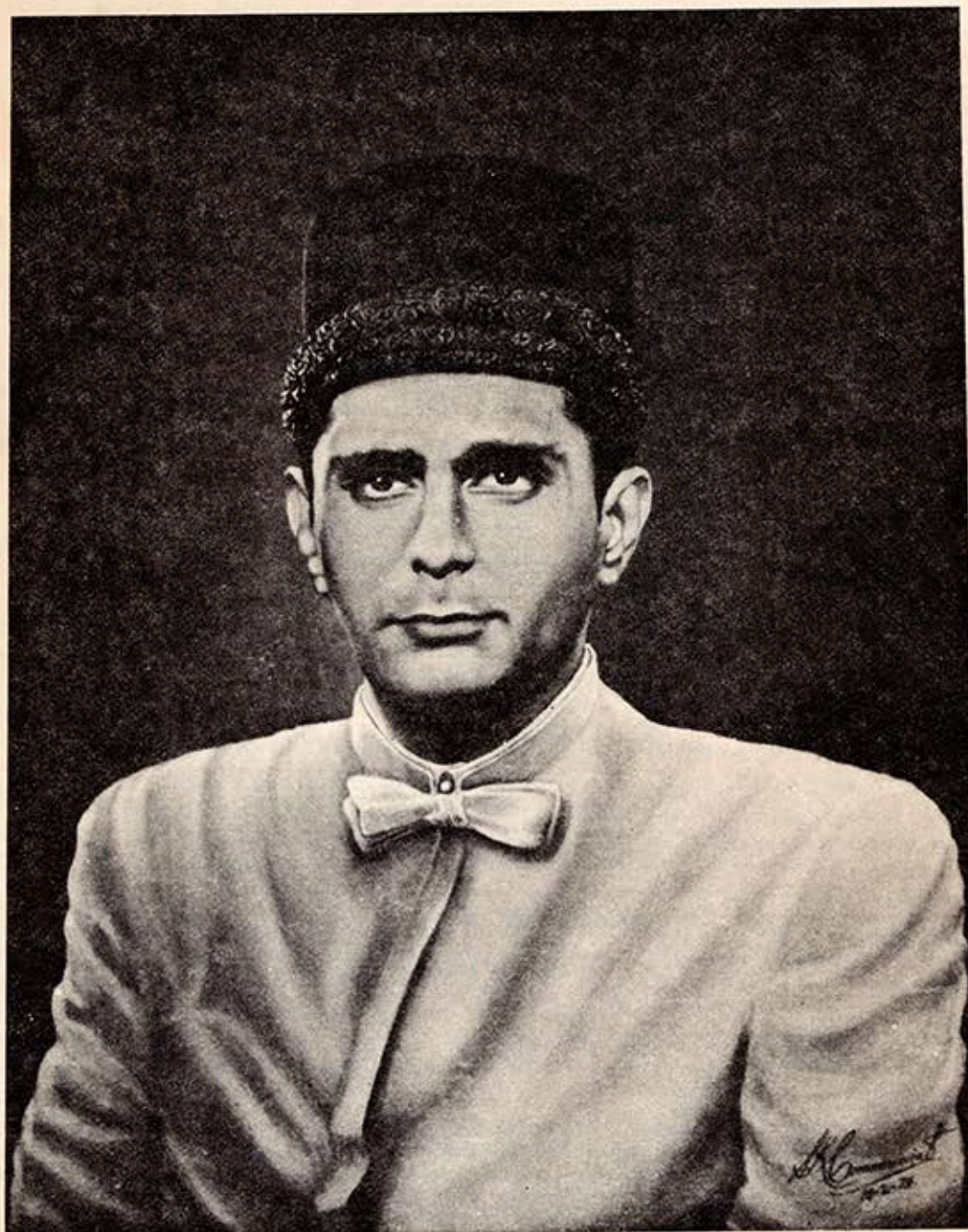
I am not the proprietress of Activity High School as Mr Bilimoria has said. After passing my BEd exam, I lectured in two colleges and then started the Activity School. It was an experiment in education, but when the School was well-established, a public charitable trust was formed by the parents as trustees who are now the proprietors of the School. I function as the principal and also take part in teaching.

Ms DOLAT HOSANG DOONGAJI

"Religion and..."

Dr Ali Jafarey, whose articles appear in your magazine, has in a way pushed our priests, scholars and community members to look closely at our religion (*Gathas*, *Yashts*, *nyaishes*, rituals, daily practices, history, etc). However, his perspective is limited to that of an outside academic scholar, lacking the living experience of a Parsi Zarthoshti.

In criticizing Ervad Jal Birdy's review of his writings ("Spreading the Good Word," *Parsiana*, June '91) Jafarey claims that only another scholar has the right to review and challenge his views, thereby trying to discredit Birdy's arguments against the acceptance of outsiders



In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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within our community as advocated by Jafarey.

Although Birdy may not know the meaning of all our prayers as well as Jafarey, he grew up as a Parsi, underwent training to become a priest, and obtained spiritual experience within the framework of our religious traditions and institutions, which Jafarey lacks. As a Parsi Zarhoshti, Birdy feels the burning concern about the potential loss of our community identity, via intermarriages and conversions, which Jafarey apparently does not.

Understanding the meaning of our prayers is important. Anyone can gain this knowledge by reading translations of the *Gathas* and the *Khordeh Avesta* by authors such as Irach Taraporevala and Ervad Kanga. But a lack of this knowledge does not necessarily impede one's communication with God. The vibrations created by reciting our prayers help us in our meditative state to achieve a spiritual union with God. Most saints were not scholars, and yet they were able to get close to God and advise others.

Philosopher and scholar Alan Watts said in his series of talks that the whole universe is made up of vibrations, and people can often learn more by ignoring

the words of a speaker, and just listening to the tone of the speaker's voice. Scholars often get caught up in the play of words and their meanings, and fail to grasp the simple spirit of the message.

All major world religions are universal and teach the same essential message. Instead of spreading this common message, of living a good, honest, hardworking, charitable and loving life, without attaching the labels of Hindu, Muslim, Zarhoshti, etc, some misguided souls with good intentions are pursuing the goal of converting people from one religion to another.

"Religion and realization," (*Parsiana*, December 1991), quotes the Vedic scholar, V. Panoli, "The religion of Zoroaster in particular is intended more for practice than for preaching... Zoroastrianism believes not in opposition, but only cooperation..." analyzed the scholar, appreciating the Zoroastrian principles of non-conversion — 'not disturbing the settled faith of another.'

Some people like Dr Jafarey may be justifying conversion on the basis of saving our religion from extinction. But, how can we explain away the insult to other religions resulting from this act of conversion? Some people look at it as a way of

saving our Parsi community from extinction. But, except for conversion or intermarriage with Persians who were previously Muslim or Bahai, etc, are we not actually hastening the extinction, through loss of racial identity? And, how can we allow conversion of Iranians, without cries of discrimination from other races?

Even though Dr Jafarey's conversion crusade is currently focused in the USA, it has already drawn the attention of the Islamic parliament of Iran. An article in *The Bombay Samachar*, November 3, 1991, titled, "Where Angels Fear to Tread," mentions the concern expressed by a member of Iran's parliament regarding Jafarey's activities, and fears the potential impact on Iran's Zarhoshtis.

This proves that in this age of global communications, decisions and actions in one part of the world can affect our community in other parts of the world, and therefore, we cannot neglect the global impact of local actions, taken in our haste to reform.

I had once invited Dr Jafarey to speak to our community in the San Francisco area, and enjoyed his talk which enlightened us about the greatness of our religion. I hope he would put a higher priority on such talks, to kindle the faith of



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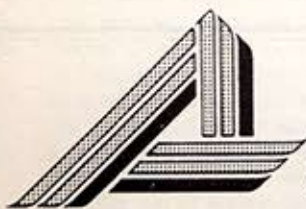
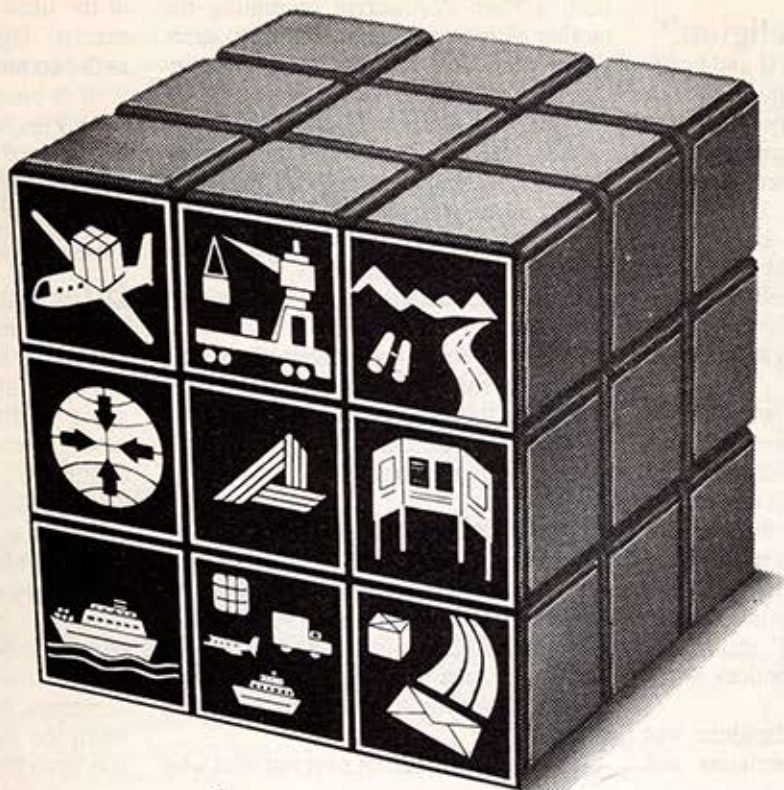
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Parsis, and let others convert from evil ways to good within their own religions.

MANECK N. BHUJWALA

Past president, Zarthosti Anjuman of Northern California

"The relevance of religion"

I am a moderate thinking Parsi and hopefully belong to the silent majority of our Parsi Zoroastrian community having a great deal of respect and sympathy for community members married to non-Zoroastrians.

Rightly or wrongly, the controversy arising from the tragic case of Ms Roxan Darshan Shah has enlightened the community of our ancestral heritage and kindled a new interest amongst the lesser informed Parsis like me.

But when one reads letters like the ones written by Mr Manek Daver of Japan and Ms Tee Golvala of UK (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 1992), one cannot help feeling that persons like these are either living in their own fool's paradise, or are intently trying to insult and hurt the feelings of the Parsi Zoroastrian community by enforcing their 'will' against all the religious precepts and practices of the community.

Daver writes, "But my daughter was born a Parsi Zoroastrian, remains and

continues so. I do not think any one can interpret dogma to take her birthright away."

No one can deny that his daughter was born a Parsi Zoroastrian (assuming the mother also being a Parsi) but, to arrogantly claim that she "remains and continues so" can only be seen as a false assumption on the part of Mr Daver. To further state that "I do not think any one can interpret dogma to take her birthright away," adds insult to injury.

Ms Tee Golvala claims that "I am a convert to Zoroastrianism." There is no such thing as conversion in the Zoroastrian faith.

Whatever these honorable writers may believe personally could be entirely their privilege, but to try and enforce their views on the Zoroastrian community is neither fair nor acceptable. J. S. ELAVIA

"Remembering Aibara"

I endorse Ms Nergesh Plumber's suggestion ("Remembering Aibara," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, December 1991) to include the name of the late Ervad Nadirsha Aibara in the prayers said by mobeds in our fire-temples throughout the world.

Ervad Aibara was an evolved soul who

rendered yeoman service to the community. The nirangs he prescribed were efficacious and a host of Parsis have benefitted, including myself. The breed of the likes of Ervad Aibara is becoming extinct. His passing away is a great loss to the community.

It is but just, right and proper that the Parsi Punchayet pass a resolution so that the name of Nadirsha Aibara is mentioned in the prayers said at the time of jashans and other prayers throughout the world.

SAM M. BILLIMORIA

Intermarriage statistics

I like and read *Parsiana* which gives important information about Zoroastrians throughout the world. However, I do not agree with your propaganda about intercaste marriages which according to your confirmed opinion will increase the Zoroastrian population.

In this connection, I refer to the advice given by Mr J. R. D. Tata during the congratulatory meet at Cusrow Baug and the statistics provided regularly by Mr Peshotan Nargolwala. These indicate whether the community has increased or decreased during the past 10 to 20 years when the number of intercaste marriages was at its highest.



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I am not an orthodox Parsi. I agree that Parsi ladies marrying outside our community, who keep their sudreh and kusti and follow our religion, should be allowed to go to atash bahrams and agiaris, and, after death, if their wish is to be consigned to the doongerwadi with full ceremonies, they have the right. I sympathize with the late Ms Roxan Shah for not being permitted to fulfill her last wish, when even a criminal, who is a Parsi, is allowed to do so.

If, as you say, intercaste marriages increase our population, can you give proof by statistics?

These intercaste marriages will wipe out our population within 30 to 40 years, and this notion of yours as well as others will remain a pipe dream. R. P. DARUVALA

The Editor replies

Contrary to Mr Daruvala's contention, at no stage has *Parsiana* stated that intercommunity marriages would result in an increased population. In intercommunity marriages, when a Parsi woman marries a non-Parsi, the children are not considered Parsis (though they may have the navjote performed and become Zoroastrians). Hence the population decreases. Even if the children were to be accepted (and they should be accepted as it is wrong to discriminate against the offspring of Parsi women who marry non-Parsis as versus Parsi men) the rate of population decrease may slow down but there is no way the population can increase. Late marriages, small families and an ageing population have assured a demographic decline if not demise for the community.

Minority rights

May I draw the attention of our esteemed former member of the Minorities Commission Mr H. J. H. Taleyarkhan to the fact that Zoroastrianism was not shown as a separate religion in the last all India census.

The need of the day calls for unity of will and purpose. We Zoroastrians who have contributed so much to the nation's progress are unfortunately totally overlooked in the burning reservation issue.

Let the Zoroastrians, as a minority community, get their proper due and the first step in this direction would be to see that our beautiful spring festival Jamshedi Navroz be declared a national holiday.

Ms Z. S. KHODABUX

Agra Parsi Dharamsala

The Agra Parsi Dharamsala is managed

by the trustees of the Agra Parsi Anjuman and is specially maintained at a large cost for the Parsi Zoroastrians visiting Agra. Popularly known as Rustam Bagh, it is centrally situated, being equidistant from the Agra Cantt Station and the Agra Fort Railway Station, at Pertabpura, Agra. It was fully renovated at first in 1952 and further renovated in 1992 at a cost of Rs 55,000.

The Dharamsala consists of 10 rooms with attached baths and toilets, all spick-

variety of migrating birds visiting this place during winter from Siberia, Russia, etc.

For bookings please contact the President, Agra Parsi Anjuman at Debara House, 38/5, Nagar Kanti Colony, Old Idgah, Agra, 282001 or phone him on 61536.

PORUS H. DEBARA

Agra

Young Parsi accountants

The Chartered Accountant (April 1992)



Rustam Bagh -- the Agra Parsi Dharamsala

and-span. Lodging is available at Rs 18 per adult per day with Rs 9 for children under 10. Food facilities cater to individual taste. The rates are seven rupees for breakfast and tea at Rs 2.50 per cup. Lunch and dinner, inclusive of a side dish, cost Rs 18 each.

Special orders for food are undertaken by the manager on request, at extra cost.

We recommend that visiting Parsis stay in Agra for at least two or three days to enjoy what Agra has to offer and not miss the opportunity of going on a shopping spree, specially footwear, for which Agra is very famous.

Agra has many historical places to visit. Apart from the Taj Mahal, there are Fatehpur Sikri, Etmad Ul Doula, Agra Fort, Dayalbagh, Sikandra (Akbar's tomb), Marium's tomb, etc. All the above places are worth seeing and government conducted bus tours are available. An interesting place to visit is the bird sanctuary situated at Bharatpur at a distance of 50 km from Agra. It is interesting to see a

published the following names of Parsis who have secured an all-India ranking in the CA exams held in November 1991:

Final examination: Viraf Ady Karanjia of Bombay (33rd); Ms Jasmine Framroze Billimoria of Bombay (45th).

Inter examination: Hormuzd Hoshang Madan of Bombay (36th); Nariman Jehangir Amalsadiwalla of Surat (50th).

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

A requiem for Kolah

Rustomji Jehangirji Kolah (88) who died on February 2, 1992 was a brilliant Bombay advocate who initially practised with Payne and Company and then became "the devil" of Sir Jamsetjee Kanga, the



leading luminary of the High Court. Russi then went on to carve out a career as a leading income tax consultant till the end.

There was a tussle between

his love of the High Court and his love for horse racing. He always said, "I do not know which will win if I had to pick."

After several years as steward of the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) Russi took the reins as chairman, continuing in the saddle for seven years. He introduced intercourse betting which helped the Club to withstand the onslaught of government taxation and overcome the frustration amongst horse breeders about their future and the future of all the stud farms in India. With his forthright advocacy Mr Kolah not only won the debate over this issue with the government officials and ministers concerned, but won them over. In government circles he was well known and liked for his frankness and his straight dealings and appointed on the government committee on racing after he retired as RWITC chairman.

Despite his stern, aggressive exterior he was warm and sincere, unassuming and gentle, and looked kindly on the underprivileged. Quick of movement, work was his rest: he was jittery if he had nothing to do.

He is survived by his wife Lorna. Their marriage, though late, survived for 37 years.

Ms MARIAM P. MODI
Mahableshwar

S. H. Majra remembered

Mr Shapur Hormusji Majra (Dastur) was a scholar in the language and history of Persia. He wrote the thesis *Cyrus the Great and his Times* in 1929 under the guidance and encouragement of that great Indologist Rev Fr Herras and the renowned oriental scholar Dr Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. It earned him the degree of MA (Hons). It was published in 1971 at the time of Cyrus's 2,500th anniversary. When he visited Iran in 1974 he was honored by the Shah's cultural and education minister.

After having served in Nargol and Bombay (Petit Orphanage), he served as principal and director of R. J. J. School, Bulsar for 31 years, the school in which he and Morarji Desai before him had studied. He ensured that the school was not closed down in the late 1950s and early 1960s when English ceased as medium of education there. He went from village to village and brought pupils. He raised the school from primary to middle and then to high school, and burnt the midnight oil in his effort to obtain the land and have a building constructed on it.

We remember him not only as a mild, unassuming scholar and teacher of history

and the Persian language but as one always willing to silently help the poor and the needy irrespective of caste or creed. He is survived by his sons Vispi and Khushroo.

F. S. MASTER

Hon Secretary, Iran League

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

HPY draws youth

"All we need instilled in us is the courage of conviction and constant reassurance and we'll do it... While we do have a lot of potential, what we definitely lack is a feeling of brotherhood... and therefore more programmes like the Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) should be organized." This viewpoint was expressed by Ms Havovi Homi Wadia, a participant of the Fifth HPY, who wrote on the subject "How do you see the future of your generation in India or abroad as contemporary Zoroastrians?"

An essay competition for the participants of the HPY was envisaged for the first time this year by the coordinators Ms Diana Marfatia and Ms Asheesh Tata working under the guidance of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. The students had an option to write on the topic selected by Wadia or on "One major problem of the Parsi community and your views on how to resolve it." The first four winners were awarded a cash prize of Rs 1,000, 750, 500 and 250 respectively gifted by the trustees of the Zartoshty Brothers Charitable Foundation. The trustees sought to laud the HPY's efforts in giving exposure to the youths of the community.

The essays of the four winners, Wadia, Burzin Mehta, Nekzad Shroff and Ms Mehernaz Siganporia, were later carried in *The Bombay Samachar* of May 24, 1992 to encourage the youngsters who

had spent time and energy on this assignment.

The four-week intensive Programme is organized annually by the BPP for Parsi students who have appeared for their school leaving exams. The identification of potential leadership qualities among today's youth is the aim of this Programme. As it gains in popularity, this year it drew a record number of 164 students from 61 schools in Bombay, with 26 adolescents coming from other parts of India. The "action-packed" Sixth HPY from April 4 to May 1 had sessions for the youths on subjects like vocational guidance, leadership training, effective communication, personality development, religious knowledge and self awareness.

Eminent Parsis and young achievers as well as successful professionals from various fields were invited to address the youngsters. Workshops were held in public speaking, parent-child relationships and creativity, and project work was assigned to one and all to give them a sense of participation. Outdoor field trips to the Piramal Sports Complex, Mani Bhavan, the NAB (National Association for the Blind) Workshop for the Blind, the Mint, the National Institute for Training in Industrial Engineering and the blood bank of the St George Hospital gave the youngsters practical exposure to the different institutions.

At the Sixth HPY it was not all work and no play. During the weekends the

girls and boys were taken to the Parsee Gymkhana grounds at Marine Lines for athletic events and games like football, kho, tug-of-war, cricket, throwball and volleyball.

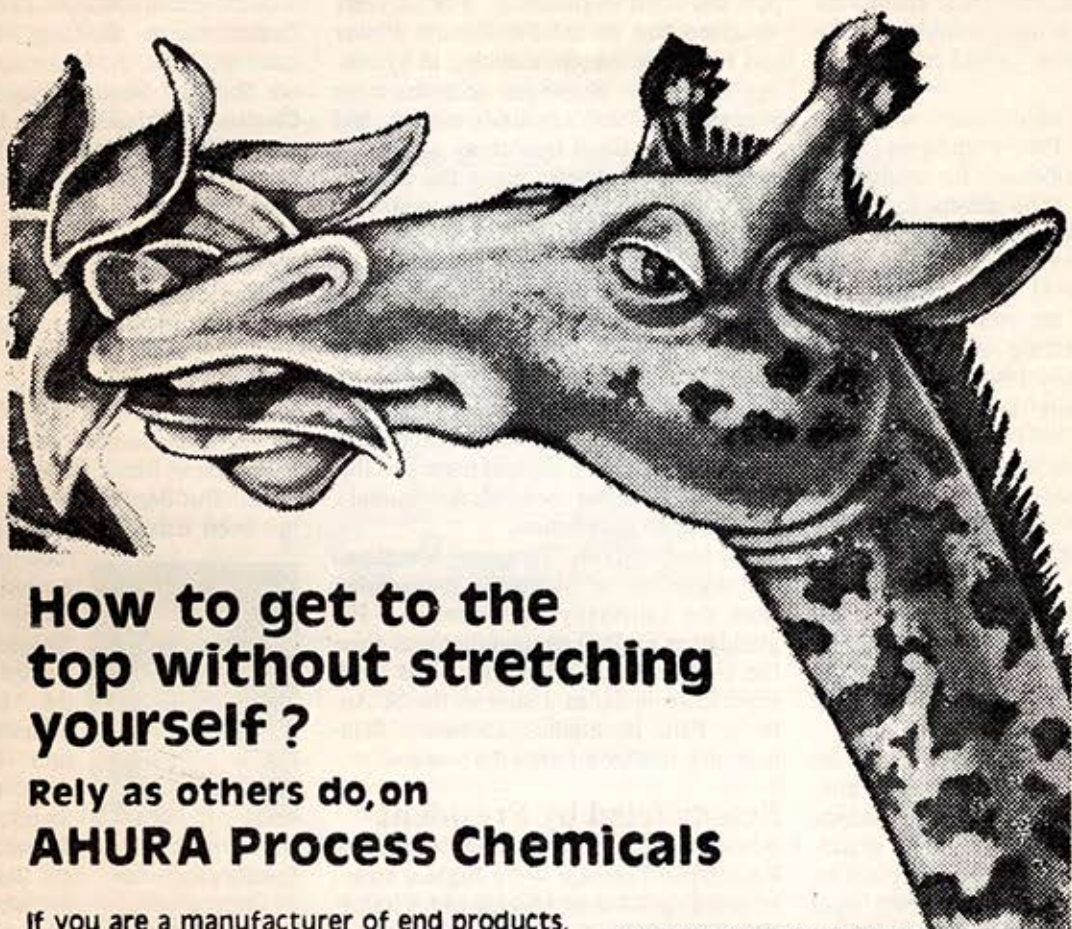
"I wish I was young again, I wish I were you and you were sitting here... Remember our life is in our hands and we have to make the best of it..." impressed Jamshed Bhabha, senior director of Tata Industries and chief guest at the HPY's inaugural function.

"What we spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway..." was the message stressed by Padma Shri winner Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan in his valedictory address on May 1. Taleyarkhan further donated a sum of Rs 5,000 in memory of his late son Firdaus who always took an interest in the promotion of education and adventure. Another financial contribution was extended by BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder who gifted Rs 10,000 to the HPY to be kept as "a corpus and the interest on that may be utilized for whatever purpose you may name."



At the HPY's inaugural function (from left): Sheroo Master, Marfatia, Eruch Desai, Bhabha, Coomi Desai, Anklesaria, Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia, Gool Tata and Asheesh Tata

(Above) At the valedictory function: Marfatia, Taleyarkhan, Guzder and Anklesaria



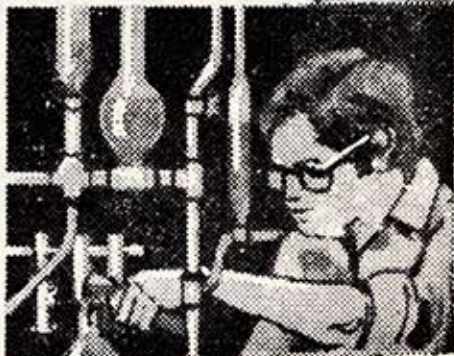
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Housing guidelines 1992

Recent amendments to the Parsi personal law have established legal equality between the sexes. Both the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act and the Parsi chapter on intestate succession have underscored the right of women to be judged on an equal footing with men.

Seemingly in conformity with this trend the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) has revised its guidelines for evaluating the eligibility of applications for housing. Thus, the guidelines published in February 1992 also permit a daughter to claim the benefit of an application for housing made by her parents while they were alive. According to the guidelines published in January 1991 (see "Housing guidelines," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, March 1991), this benefit was restricted to a son. And the same right has now been extended to the daughter-in-law and son-in-law. In each case the applicant would gain the benefit of the extra points if the original application of the parents was valid under the current norms. Also, in each case it is implied that the parents relinquish their own right in favor of son/daughter/daughter-in-law/son-in-law as the case may be.

A new clause labors the obvious: an applicant who is now in exclusive possession of a flat whose rent receipt stands in the name of a deceased parent, grandparent or relative would normally not be considered for allotment of a Punchayet flat. It is assumed that she/he would get the benefit of the Rent Control Act.

An additional clause states that when the applicants or their parents have rental or ownership accommodation outside Bombay, they would qualify for a one room and kitchen flat only.

Two family income ceilings are now applicable. In the case of allotment of newly constructed quarters at Godrej Baug, an income level of Rs 7,500 is valid to enable the occupants to absorb the higher municipal tax rates. For the older section of Godrej Baug as well as in other colonies the applicable ceiling on family income is Rs 4,500.

Amavaz S. Mama

Padma Shri recipient

Eminent hydraulic engineer Dr Zal Sohrab Tarapore of Poona was among the four Zoroastrian recipients to have been honored with the Padma Shri title early this year (his name was regrettably omitted in the write-up on "Republic Day honors," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, March 1992).

Currently adviser to Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Limited, Tarapore's chief contribution is in the areas of wave mechanics, sediment transport and coast engineering. For 38 years Tarapore had served the Central Power and Research Station, assisting in hydrology and water resources analysis, river engineering, ship hydrodynamics, and prediction of flood hydrology and water yield of major rivers, reads the citation accompanying the Padma Shri award.

The 59-year-old hydraulic engineer has also undertaken consultancy work on the Asian Development Bank projects in the Far East and the Middle East. A fellow of the Indian National Academy of Engineering and the Institution of Engineers (India), Tarapore has been appointed member of various national committees and has contributed papers to different national and international journals, according to the citation.

Hyderabad-born Tarapore completed his doctorate in hydraulic engineering from the University of Minnesota. His graduation in civil engineering was from the University of Edinburgh. His work experience includes a stint at the St Anthony Falls Hydraulic Laboratory, Minneapolis, further informs the citation.

Scouts feted by President

Among the four Bombay recipients of the Rashtrapati Puraskar — the highest award in scouting — was 15-year-old Viraf F. Chichgar. A student of St Xavier's College, Chichgar was the youngest among the winners, reports *The Daily* of January 7, 1992. The award was presented to



Scouts Chichgar (left) and Mistry

Chichgar, a member of the 41st East Bombay Scout Group, by the President of India, R. Venkataraman at a function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan last November.

Another scout to get recognition from the President was Burjor Rustomji Mistry. Retired works manager and district commissioner, scouts of Western Railway, Mistry's contribution to the scouting movement at the national level earned

him the silver star, reads a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of December 22.

Since his association with this movement in 1956, Mistry has been entrusted with the construction of a kitchen camp at Pachmarhi, the desilting of the Pushkar Lake at Ajmer, the formation of the Western Railway Scouts Training Centre at Gholvad and leading the Indian contingent which participated in the 20th Rover Mount in Sri Lanka. Apprentices have benefitted from guides compiled by him in eight spheres. Many an injured has been saved by the timely first aid rendered by this divisional superintendent of the St John Ambulance Brigade, the *Jamé* further informs.

Literacy award for Illava

Severe arthritis has confined Ms Homai Byramshaw Illava of Mhow to a wheelchair. But her helpfulness to society has not been hampered. Her work for promoting literacy among women recently won her the Tagore Literacy Award 1990 from the Indian Adult Education Association. The vice president of India Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma was to present Illava this award in March, informs



Illava: promoting female education

Gp Capt Dhunjishaw Marker, vice president of the Mhow Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman (MPZA).

In addition to steering the ship of the MPZA for 12 years as its president, Illava also finds time for vocational education and economic uplift of women and the destitute.

The President's award was conferred on her in recognition of her contribution to the Government of India's small savings scheme, the profits of which were used to promote women's and children's causes. As past president of the Indian Red Cross Society, she had helped it develop an effective hospital complex for the needy, further mentions Marker.

Athletic events

Ms Kamal Cooper was declared the Fastest Woman at both the 12th All Parsis Annual Athletic and Cycling Meet 1992 and the 10th Zoroastrian Athletic Meet. The Fastest Man of the Meet title at the All Parsis Meet was bagged by Firdosh Mehta while Burzin Mehta claimed the

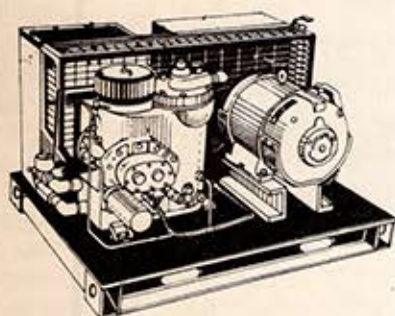


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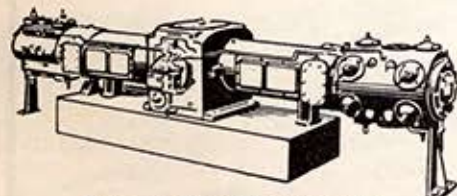
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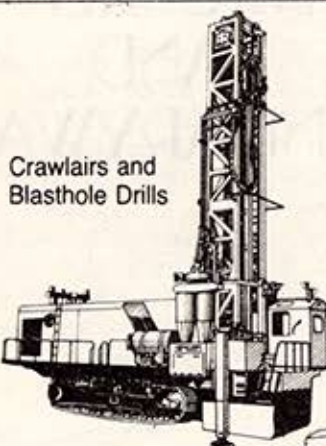
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same title at the Zoroastrian Athletic Meet. The men's and women's team championship trophies at both the events were carried away by the Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust (MEJMT).

Both the events were held in February this year but higher participation was at the All Parsis meet where there were 726 entries. Sportspersons from Surat, Poona, Nagpur, Secunderabad and Dahanu came to Bombay to participate in the meet. Altogether 16 new meet records were set and one equalled, informs a press release sent by Aspi Ustad, one of the organizers of the meet. The best performers under the different age-groups among females were: Arnaz Mistry (girls under seven), Delna Bhungara (girls under nine), Feroza Engineer (girls under 11), Zenia Daruwalla (girls under 13), Delna Avari (girls under 15) and Cooper (women). The males to excel in the different age-groups were: Zubin Anklesaria (boys under six), Farsheed Cooper and Mahir Mubarakai (boys under eight), Malcolm Anklesaria (boys under 10), Karl Irani (boys under 12), Yohan Wadia (boys under 14), Burzin Mehta (boys under 17) and Rayomand Elavia (men).

Deserving special mention is Cyrus Doomasia who won the javelin throw. Having created a new record in this event at the Maharashtra State Athletic Champi-

onships with his throw of 55.80 m, the 18-year-old is currently being trained in London under coach Jim Alford, mentions a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 23.

In the cycling event Aastad Palkhiwalla was declared the Fastest Man on Wheels while Firoze B. Fitter won a special mention for his distinction in the men's over 35 age-group. Barring Ms Shazneen Arethna, there were no contestants in the women's event, the release reports.

Air Marshal Minoo Engineer was the chief guest at this meet jointly organized by The Nowroze Baug Play Centre, the Zoroastrian Physical Culture and Health League, the Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League and the MEJMT. A silver salver was presented to veteran sports personality Jal Pardivala

in recognition of his contribution to athletics over the decades.

At the Zoroastrian Athletic Meet which saw 300 participants from Bombay, Surat, Nasik and Dahanu, 13 new meet records were created and one equalled. An outstanding performance came from nine-year-old Ms Feroza Engineer, a protégée of Adille Sumariwalla, who bettered two of Ms Zenia Ayrton's longstanding records in the 100 and 200 m run.

This meet organized by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare and Culture (FOZAWAC) saw Dr Keki Turel as the chief guest. A special felicitation was accorded to FOZAWAC's former president Dr (Ms) Aloo Billimoria for her longstanding association with this body, reads a report in the *Jamé* of March 15.



Victorious moments at the All Parsis Athletic Meet: (Above) Individual female winners in the different age-groups. (Left) Firdosh Mehta receiving the trophy from Gul Engineer (Right) The MEJMT team champions with the chief guests



Oberoi chain's president

As president of the East India Hotels Limited which runs the five-star Oberoi chain, 54-year-old Ratan Tata has now been placed at the vanguard of operations.

Prior to this assignment accepted in November last, Tata was senior vice president, Middle East, having contributed to the Hotels' expansion in this region since 1972. The Dammam Oberoi in Saudi Arabia, the Madina Oberoi and the Saudi Arabia Oberoi Company, a food processing joint venture, are the outcome of Tata's negotiations.

Having started his hoteliering career with the then Oberoi Intercontinental in Delhi in 1964, Tata has built up a reputation of being "very competent, thoroughly professional," according to an article in *Business India* (October 28-November 10, 1991).

Tata's other postings have been at Srinagar, Singapore and Cairo. His training in hotel management was at the Salzburger Hotel Fachschule, Austria, informs *Business India*.

The Indian 'curry' king

Four hundred and six entries were received in Scotland for the Indian Chef of the Year Competition. Only one was from an Indian, Rohinton Meherji Anklesaria. His recipes for lamb *kid gosht* (tender lamb pieces cooked with cashews,



Anklesaria

almonds and coconut milk), *murg vindaloo* (a spicy hot and sour chicken preparation), *bhaji ma papeta* (spinach with potatoes) and *chutney bharela vengna* (stuffed brinjals) convinced the judges to include him among

the six finalists, inviting him to Edinburgh. When he actually prepared these dishes in Scotland he was rated second, winning a certificate and a crystal bowl, notes the chef. This contest was organized by the Tommy Miah Curry Club and jointly sponsored by the British Gas of Scotland, Carlton Highland Hotel of Edinburgh, British Airways, Coca Cola, Nestles, Campbell's Prime Meat Limited, Raj Restaurant and Queen Margaret College.

Forty-four-year-old Anklesaria's experience in the catering line was honed at the Narang Hotels Private Limited (own-

ers of Ambassador Hotel), the Royal Western India Turf Club and through private catering assignments. Comfortable with all types of cuisines, Anklesaria's emphasis is on innovation, by adding rare ingredients to the popular favorites. "When I serve chicken *makhawalla*, I put in a little red wine and chopped mushrooms along with the usual ingredients of tomato puree, cream and boneless chicken," he says.

The chef's schooling was at the Don Bosco High School and his training in catering at the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition in Bombay. Presently he has taken up an assignment in the UK where he will be improvising on the regional cuisines from different parts of India.

Believes the chef, "A good restaurant is one where there is a minimum wastage of food — raw and cooked — and the place is as clean as an ICU (Intensive Care Unit) of a hospital." His ultimate ambition is to launch his own restaurant designed such that diners would need to first cross the kitchen and impressed by its style of functioning proceed to the dining enclosure, reads a report in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of January 30, 1992.

Hospitality award

At the first ever national awards for excellence in the hospitality industry, Dhunjishaw Kavarana was named the Food and Beverage Manager of the Year, reads a write-up in *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of February 3, 1992.



Kavarana

Towers, New Delhi, during his 15 years of association with this hotel chain, Kavarana has worked in different capacities from Madras in the south to Agra in the north. He is proficient in four languages — English, Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali, his bio data informs.

A commerce graduate from the Calcutta University, Kavarana did a three-year diploma course in catering from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition. Foreign exposure in this field has come to him from different courses he studied: restaurant, sales and marketing, and hotel accounting and financial management at the Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, USA, the front office managers program organized by the Sheraton Hotels, London, the food/bar service system program for hoteliers in Singapore and a hotel management program at the Washington State University, further informs his bio data.

Jeejeebhoy's Vijay Rattna

For enriching human life and other outstanding attainments, businessman Byram N. Jeejeebhoy was awarded the Vijay Rattna by the International Friendship Society of India, notes a press release.

Working in the family business of property development, 47-year-old Jeejeebhoy is managing director of Byramjee Jeejeebhoy (Private) Limited owning estates between Jogeshwari and Borivli. His London company, Abacus Crown Limited has helped develop two properties in the area of West End, London, his curriculum vitae reads.

He is on the board of 10 different companies like Brite Automotive and Plastics Limited, Heritage Estates Private Limited, Beeline Impex Private Limited, Madhu Builders Private Limited, etc, his bio data mentions.

After graduating in arts from Poona's N. M. Wadia College, Jeejeebhoy acquired a degree in business management from the London School of Economics. He also attended terms for his bar-at-law and was a member of the Grays Inn (Inns of Court London). Another distinction to come his way is that of honorary knight, conferred on him by the Society of Knights of the Round Table, further mentions his bio data.

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els, will be the new thrust of the Patuck Technical High School and Junior College, informs a press release from the institution. In its diamond jubilee year, one of the important projects planned is the construction of new buildings and an auditorium. Laying the foundation stone for the new structure on February 9 this year was Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee, then vice chancellor of the Bombay University who stressed the need for more vocational institutions of a like nature and a polytechnic exclusively for girls.

With nearly 750 trainees on its rolls, the Patuck institute at Vakola, Bombay presently offers technical high school courses in Hindi and Marathi, besides post SSC (Secondary School Certificate) education in English.

Started in 1932 by the late Rustomba Patuck, this institution has provided for Parsi students who can avail of special seats reserved for them in five subjects. Electronics technology, auto engineering technology, repair and maintenance of electric domestic appliances, and mechanical maintenance are the courses where performance will be evaluated by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. The mechanical draftsmanship course is certified under the Government of India's craftsmen training scheme, further informs the release.

Exhibition by schools

Different facets of India were brought to life at the exhibition on "Tourism in India-1991," organized by the Sett R. J. J. Primary School, a branch of the Sir J. J. Girls' High School.

Inaugurated by Dr Ishaq Jamkannawalla, former urban development minister, in early March this year, models and pictures depicting dress, food, dance, art, language and religion, were used to imbibe in the school students and the visitors a pride in their country and its cultural heritage, informs a press release.

Environment consciousness was aroused in the students of The Bai Avabai F. Petit Girls' High School. Their three-day exhibition in January on "Environment — Our Heritage," was inaugurated by Sir Dinshaw Petit who planted a mango tree in the School's front garden.

Effective use of models and charts reinforced the dangers of pollution and the need for a greener environment, the release notes. Believing that it is up to the schools to educate their children on environment conservation, through song and dance too was the message reiterated.



Exhibits on display at the Avabai F. Petit School (above) and the Sett R. J. J. Primary School (below)



Robbery or revenge?

The murder of 59-year-old Ms Gospi Sam Sanjana at her flat at Hari Om Apartments on S. V. Road, Borivli has reportedly left the police without a clue. No fingerprints have been found on either the knife nor the nylon rope that was used to murder Sanjana on March 8, 1992, informs a family source.

On that eventful day Sanjana had invited her neighbor Rekha to watch a film with her. So when the domestic help came to do the chores at her appointed time, she was asked to come back later. After the movie ended Rekha proceeded to her own flat around 1 p.m. The servant, as instructed, came back at four p.m., reads a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of March 15, 1992.

On finding that her mistress was not answering the doorbell, the servant approached Rekha, who in turn got in touch with Sanjana's relatives at Tardeo. Sanjana's sister Roshan Nanavati with her husband and daughter proceeded to Borivli where, with the help of a duplicate key, they gained entry into the flat only to find Sanjana lying in a pool of blood, informs Sanjana's brother-in-law.

A video cassette recorder costing around Rs 9,000 along with cash of Rs 1,000 were reportedly missing from the house. But the police have not been able to ascertain the cause of the murder done in broad daylight, notes the family source.

SPOTLIGHT

Managing director of Godrej Soaps Limited, Adi Burjorji Godrej has been elected president of the Maharashtra Economic Development Council, reports the *Financial Express* of February 16, 1992. In addition to being chairman of Godrej

Foods Limited, Godrej has served as past president of several national bodies connected with toiletries and vegetable oils.

Senior partner of Mulla and Mulla and Cragie, Blunt and Caroe, Burjor Hormusji Antia has been appointed on the advisory board of Mitsui Taizo Kobe Bank Limited (Bombay branch), now called The Sakura Bank Limited. This Bank is reportedly the second largest in the world, informs a press release.

Principal of Baroda's Saiyaji Girls High School, Ms Arnavaz Jimmy Havewalla was elected to the senate of the Baroda University. She bagged more than double the votes of her nearest contender, informs the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 9, 1992.

Cyrus Sarkari of the Panthaky Baug Welfare Centre was adjudged the Best Speaker at the All Parsis Elocution Competition, notes a press release. The competition was held at Malcolm Baug on January 12, 1992.

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

Art, music and life in Japan

Four generations of the Davers have carved a niche in Nippon

Arnavaz S. Mama



"Do you remember Radio Ceylon?" he queried. It was part and parcel of growing up in Bombay in the 1940s and 50s. How could one forget!

Indeed, Manek Daver's query was only the start of an explanation for his phenomenal interest in jazz music and his prolific collection of long playing (LP) records running into thousands. Then, "after 25 years as a full-time listener and collector," Daver says he began to acquire an interest in jacket covers as an art form. The interest grew into an obsession that fructified in an art book -- *Jazz Graphics: David Stone Martin* -- that has set the critics raving all over the world.

LP records of perennials and classics featured the usual photographic presentation of orchestras overshadowed by their conductors, bosomy songstresses or be-

loved crooners like Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra... They shared two qualifications -- they were well-known and generally looked good.

But the jazz stalwarts needed a different presentation. And so the covers were specially designed, initially as a necessity. As Daver encapsulated during an interview with *Parsiana*, they were "adventuresome covers for adventuresome music made by people who were either not known or not photogenic."

And what began as a necessity grew into an art form because the artist most involved -- David Stone Martin, known to the recording world as DSM -- set his

stamp on each new album and spawned a spate of imitations in his wake. His renditions of the musicians became as specific as the music they created, and became collector's pieces.

Dafer says his collection of original and first issue jazz records was largely made in Japan where his presence as president of R. E. Daver and Company marks the third generation of the family.

By the 1980s the advent of the compact disc (CD) began to make the LPs redundant. By then Daver had progressed from being a collector of DSM's works into a commissioner of new work and a friend of the artist who had suffered a stroke. Fortunately, it had left his painting hand unimpaired. In 1986 Daver loaned several items from his collection for a retrospective on the artist's work at Lincoln Center, New York.

And because "it is very sad that a pictorial artist does not keep his own work" and therefore has no record of his life's work, Daver decided to make a book of it.





Famous blind singer Ray Charles

In 157 pages with full color reproductions of DSM's work and a bilingual (English/Japanese) commentary, *Jazz Graphics* made its debut last summer. Daver says the book could only have been produced in Japan where the project was accepted as one which would bring credit to everyone associated with it. "In the US or UK each thing has to stand on its own, financially," he adds, obliquely illustrating the difference in the two points of view.

In February-March this year Daver made a trip to the US for research in connection with a forthcoming book, *Jazz Album Covers — The Rare and the Beautiful*. As was his wont, he visited, DSM. It turned out to be the day before the 78-year-old Martin breathed his last. "It was like he was waiting for me," Daver noted sadly. According to a listing in *The Los Angeles Times* obituary, DSM's work is housed at some of the finest US addresses — New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, the Smithsonian Institute, the Art Institute of Chicago...

When the foreigner was king

The history of the Davers' far eastern connections go back to the 19th century when Edulji Rustomji Tavadia, hailing from the village of Tavdi, a few miles away from Navsari, busily shipped silk from Hong Kong to Bombay, informs Edulji's grandson and Manek's uncle Bejan Daver. Now chairman of the board of R. E. Daver and Company, Bejan re-

sides in Hong Kong. When Tavadia retired to Tavdi after a successful innings at international trade, he was looked-upon as a man of experience and the village folk took their quarrels to him for settlement. This made him an honorary judge or *daver* and the subsequent generations took up the title as a surname, he explains in the course of an interview with *Parsiana* in Bombay.

It was Edulji's son Rustomji who forged the Japan connection, relates Bejan. A veterinarian with the horse drawn Bombay Tramway Company, Rustomji opted to follow in his father's footsteps as a China trader on hearing of the impending electrification of the trams. He began as an employee of Muncherji Patel in 1910. Patel had offices in Macau, Shanghai, Canton, Yokohama, etc. In 1914 Patel retired, closing his concerns and Rustomji Daver decided to establish his own business in Yokohama. From 1914 to 1923 R. E. Daver and Company prospered with its silk exports. Then the 1923 Yokohama

*Virtuoso trumpet
Dizzy Gillespie*

earthquake devastated the business as it did everything else in the region. Undaunted, Rustomji went on to Kobe as did the rest of the Indian community, pursuing his dream until 1936 when he retired to Bombay, leaving the business to his sons Dhunjisha and Bejan.

By 1938 Japan had taken the whole of North China and sunk a US gunboat in the Yangtze River provoking a US trade embargo, recalls Bejan. Dhunjisha and family, including young Manek, came away to Bombay in 1940. Bejan was caught in Shanghai during the war. In 1947, as Bejan recalls, Dhunjisha Daver was one of the first foreign traders to go back to Japan. He headed the company until his death in Bombay in 1950.

Born in Yokohama, Bejan lived and worked almost all his life in Kobe, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo. His marriage to Aloo 45 years ago cemented relations with another well-established Zoroastrian trader in the far east — her highly respected father Bejanji Tata of Shanghai and Hong Kong. In 1977 the Kobe born, Bombay educated Manek, together with his wife Dilnavaz (née Parakh of Mhow) and their two daughters Roxana and Tannaz joined Bejan in Tokyo. Manek's brother Minoo, also Kobe born, lives in Bombay with his wife Dina (née Billimoria of Bombay) and looks after the Bombay end of the business.

In the fourth generation, Roxana works as a marketing manager for a multinational firm and is married to a German currently posted in Japan. Their wedding reception at The Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay had been graced by the presence





of four consecutive Indian ambassadors to Japan: "Each made his own individual decision, as a personal friend, to come and surprise us. We did not expect them," informs Manek. Tannaz teaches maths in a Tokyo high school after a university education in the States. Minoo's daughter Nina is studying Japanese in a Tokyo University. His son Vispi and daughter Shernaz are in the US. Despite all their international connections, the Davers continue to be Indian nationals.

Both Manek and Dilnavaz (Dilly) are life masters of the Japan Contract Bridge League — two of the three Indians to qualify for the rank. "Tournament bridge keeps me mentally fit," says Manek adding that he hardly ever plays social or home bridge.

In all there are at most about 15 Zoroastrians now in Japan, says Manek. Bejan remembers a population of approximately 80 Zoroastrians in Kobe alone during the late 1920s and 30s. There used to be a Parsi club with dinners, billiards and tennis thrown in. "Every time a child was born, the wife went away for two to three years — at least a year or more. Mistresses were unavoidable. In those days the foreigner was king. It's only now that the local is king and the foreigner is not," notes Manek. "Even a Japanese born/educated abroad is looked down upon and has certain disadvantages. There are innumerable third generation Koreans who no longer have any Korean identity — their name and education is Japanese — but on their per-

sonal history their Korean origin is recorded and therefore they cannot rise to top positions," informs Bejan.

There are two Shroff families in Kobe now, informs Bejan. Both came in the late 1940s or 50s from Shanghai. In the foreign community cemetery in Kobe, there



Guitarist Tal Farlow

is a small Zoroastrian section, adds Bejan.

The Indian community in Tokyo/Yokohama comprises 1,200 persons, essentially highly educated professionals and business persons. Manek is the convenor of an organization called Indian Community Activities: "It's nice being a Parsi. Everyone believes in you as honest," he laughs. The organization arranges a major event at Diwali when they have a huge raffle of the items donated by the



Manek with India's finance minister Manmohan Singh and (above) with Tannaz, Dilnavaz, Bejan, Aloo, Peter and Roxana

many Indian business houses and the money keeps them going. When it is time to host visiting Indian dignitaries like President R. Venkataraman or finance minister Manmohan Singh, he convenes ad hoc committees. In a recent letter Manek writes that he is currently "busy with *tayari* (preparation) for the function we will hold for Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao to meet the community." The PM and his entourage will be on an official visit to Japan in June 1992.

Daver considers the Japanese, as well as the foreigners who reside in Japan, as "the most -- or least -- religious people in the world," though no time is spent on religion on a daily basis. The Japanese go to the temple once each new year, he says. "Curiously all of us Indians, including Hindus, start by doing *puja* (ceremonies) for an hour or so a month. But after a couple of months, it just stops. Not that we've forgotten our religion. We are model citizens, practising traditional kindness. We do all the things that prayer and religion ask us to aim at, just as a matter of course. Religion is life. If you live like a good man you are religious. Otherwise no amount of prayers (can make you so)."

Trying to explain Japanese attitudes Daver says, "Japan has no natural resources. Three-quarters of it is mountainous; half the land is earthquake prone. It's tucked away into a part of the world that's almost forgotten. Whatever Japan has made (of itself), its done by its own

continued on page 33



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The Tajiks: In search of a religion

Arnavaz S. Mama

*Denuded of their religious heritage, some Tajiks
have turned to the Zoroastrians
of India for help to revive their ancient faith*

They are a people in search of a past and a future. Seventy years of communism as a constituent unit of the Soviet Union has left the Tajiks with the primitive economy of a primary producer and a dim memory of their link to the "ancient religion."

Seeking help from fellow Zoroastrians took them to North America in 1991 (see "Zoroastrian Tadjiks?" Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, September 1991) and a sequence of events led to the planning of a special visit to India of an official goodwill delegation in consonance with the Tajikistan-Indo Zoroastrian International Development Friendship and Cultural Association (TIZIDFCA). The delegation comprised scholars, historians, archeologists and originally included a cultural troop.

Their mission was two-fold: to observe Zoroastrianism as a living faith, dialogue with priests and scholars and get the literature and technical help to reestablish their fire-temples on the one hand and, on the other, seek industrial collaboration to set up their economy in viable 20th century terms.

Severely landlocked between China, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, dependent on Soviet aviation for contact with the outside world, Tajikistan's plight was illustrated by the last minute postponement of the planned visit and the cancellation of the public folk dance and music performances scheduled to coincide with the Jamshedi Navroze festivities in India in March 1992. The 22-member delega-

tion was to have reached India on March 14. Instead only seven members were able to make a late arrival by March 18, reportedly because of sudden and successive fare hikes and demands for hard currency by Aeroflot even after the bookings had been confirmed. Those unable to meet the demands had to relinquish their plans.

With the exception of member of parliament Dr A. Subbotin, the only Russian member of the team, the rest

were Persian speaking Tajiks, led by Dr R. Ulmasov, vice president of the Tajikistan Friendship Society. The team included historian and senior academician Dr Ahror Mukhtorov, Avesta scholar Dr Dodikhudo Saimidinov, archeologist Dr Isuf Jakobov and director of the Tajikistan Film Studio Dr S. Rahimov. With them was a polyglot interpreter, the suave Mme Zagarova. Preceding the delegation by a few weeks, Dr Parvonakhon Jamshedi, president of the Asian Iranian Cultural Association, had passed through Bombay on his way back from London.

The only people of Iranian stock in the erstwhile Soviet family, the Tajiks maintained their link with the language even though at the height of Russian

power the script was first changed to Latin and then to Cyrillic. One of the earliest stated objectives of the now independent republic is to revert to the Persian script by 1996, they say.



Master-Moos (at the mike), Ervad N. Kanga and the Tajik delegation at the Federation meeting

"The Tajiks were the last (of the Central Asian Zoroastrians) to accept Islam," says Jamshedi. Islam is said to have arrived as late as the 19th century via the Turks. And insidiously, so that the Zoroastrians did not rebel against its im-

position: "When the Muslims came, they did not destroy fire-temples. They transformed them into mosques. The people came to the same institutions," but little by little the message changed!

The people in the plains and plateaux were the first to be converted to the Sunni sect to which the conquering Turks belonged. The hardier Zoroastrians dispersed further into the Pamirs, which include the highest peaks in the Soviet Union. The arrival of communism made the practice of all religions taboo for anyone with hope for a temporal career. "During these years people not only lost their sudreh-kusti but all religious books were burnt. Those who hid them were imprisoned. Some had buried them; now they



have disintegrated," relates Jamshedi.

And the young, be they of Zoroastrian or Muslim stock, progressively forgot their spiritual heritage. What endured along with the language — Farsi, spoken by all, plus Dari, known to Zoroastrians only — were some of the customs. March 21 continued to be celebrated by all Tajiks as their new year and Mehrgan in October as the harvesting thanksgiving festival. Hitherto observed in the quiet of the family, these have now been designated national holidays and the celebration of Navroze is very similar to the way the Iranis do it.

With the return of the freedom of religious practice in 1989 and the disbandment of the Soviet Union two years later, some 2,000 individual Tajiks searching for their Zoroastrian roots have banded together to form the Asian Iranian Cultural Association, says Jamshedi. "But there may be 10,000 more who may be inclined to Zoroastrianism," he adds.

Though intent on catching the rising tide of interest in religion, Jamshedi says, "We're not trying to force people into religion. We want to spread the old Iranian culture to the people... the old Iranian cul-



anism of Ali Jafarey who believes in spreading Zarathushtra's gospel of the goodness of truth, providing access to ideas and leaving people to accept them at their own pace. "We had a lot of forcing through the ages and the people are tired. There was Genghis Khan and Islam and the communists. If you press again, people could rebel," adds Jamshedi who says his great-grandfather had been Zoroastrian.

The little country of 14,300,000 sq meters and 5.5 million people was the Soviet

Members of the Tajik delegation relating the compelling circumstances that had made them forego many of their ancient Iranian customs.

Top: Reading in Avesta from the Khordeh Avesta to testify the Tajiks' interest in the ancient language



ture is more civilized than any other culture today. Everybody wants good thoughts, words, deeds; good ecology. (We want to) take it from the old teachings and offer it to the people... Let them read books, see films, learn Avesta. Then let them choose... Most people inclined to Zoroastrianism are intellectuals."

Jamshedi discerns two types of Zoroastrians: "The fundamentalists who say 'if you don't wear a sudreh-kusti you're not a Zoroastrian,'" and the second variety which he typifies by the Zoroastri-



Union's producer of fine fiber cotton, fruits and vegetables, the source of 10 percent of Soviet gold plus some of its silver, copper and an outstanding proportion of its aluminium production. Its two big hydroelectric plants primed power into the Union's grids, according to Subbotin.

Dependent on Moscow for its needs including such diverse requirements as communications and pharmaceuticals, now falling woefully short, Tajikistan is avidly shopping for collaborations to fill the gap. Meeting Indian industrialists at the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) the delegation sought offers for industries in such sectors as readymade garments, herbal medicine, toilet requisites, consumer goods, tourism, airport devel-

opment, banking and accountancy professionals and business management expertise, as noted IMC vice president Shekhar Bajaj.

According to Jamshedi there are eight fire-temples in Tajikistan currently in disuse. Although religious practice by the people was forbidden, studies of the old religions and the Avesta continued in the Institutes of Oriental Studies in Moscow, Leningrad, Tashkent and Dushanbe, and these Institutes possess an excellent collection of manuscripts, says Jamshedi. The Avesta was translated into Russian 10 years ago, he says.

There has also been a continuing exchange of students between India and Tajikistan, informs Jamshedi who adds that Hindi and Sanskrit have been regularly taught there. Jamshedi himself is fluent in English apart from Russian, Persian, Uzbek and the seven Pamir languages. A PhD from the Linguistics Institute of Moscow, Jamshedi had just fulfilled a month's lecturing assignment at Holland's Utrecht University and a 10-day lecture tour in Oxford, Edinburgh, Manchester and was due back in London for a six-month stint with the British Broadcasting Corporation's Asian studies program.

Dialogue with the delegates who came later was far more restricted due to the language barrier, the interpreter translating back and forth. According to

Mukhtorov, research work on Zoroastrianism has established Tajikistan as the homeland of Zarathushtra. Jakobov who heads the archeological society of Tajikistan says that linguistics have proved that Avestan was used in Tajikistan; that the names mentioned in the Avesta are names of Tajik villages; that the Aryans of the

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*There are eight
fire-temples in
Tajikistan currently
in disuse*
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second millennium BC were living in Tajikistan before they moved to Iran and India; that the ruins in Tajikistan are older than the Iranian ones. Saimidinov who is mainly engaged in the translation of Sogdian, Avestan, Pahlavi and Farsi texts claimed to be well acquainted with the work of high priests and scholars in India.

Ervad (Dr) Peshotan Peer who attended the first of the sessions corroborated some of the above statements: "In the nirang of the *Sarosh Yasht* in Pazend we actually pray for the Tajiks who wear sudreh-kusti." They are also mentioned in the *Sarosh Yasht* itself, he added.

When Pahlavi and Sogdian texts were compared, they were the same. Tajik marriage ceremonies are based on these texts, it was stated. At the time of death, a fragrant fire is put near the deathbed. On Sadeh, when the dead are remembered, candles are lit over the graves. The practice of investing a young child with ceremonial dress and belt is observed, the practice going back to pre-Islamic times. "There are many ceremonies but we don't know the source, whether they are Zoroastrian or Islamic. Young people don't have any idea of religion," they admit, most available information on the subject being ferreted out of the memory of elderly survivors. "You adopted the language of India but preserved the ancient traditions and ceremonies. We are the reverse. We preserved the language and not the ceremonies," Saimidinov informed the executive council members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India.

"The Indian people have greeted us warmly — more than we expected (but) we must develop relationships between children and families," urged Ulmasov, adding ominously, "After Tajikistan got independence, Iran was the first country

to establish its embassy in Tajikistan. The Arabic countries are helping the construction of mosques; in 1991 they sent one billion rials to central Asia and invited 5,000 people... If we try to follow the development of Iran, it would be the wrong way..."

While the Parsis of India can hardly hope to rival the wealth or determination of Islamic countries in the propagation of Islam, the initial inquisitorial reaction of the Federation and the community verged on the absurd. They sought our help to put Zoroastrianism back on the wheels in Tajikistan; we worried about their presence defiling our institutions! They are planning an Avesta conference in October 1992 when they hope to invite scholars from all over the world to take part. "You are the center of the Zoroastrian religion and you are in touch with the world. Tell us whom to invite," urged Dr Pulat Pulatov. He also sought Indian help in the printing of brochures for the conference" hoped "many of your people will attend the conference"; and sought a discussion on what needed to be done. The immediate response was mute though the next day the Federation exonerated itself with a soul searching discussion on its reaction to the visitors.

The visiting Tajiks were hosted by members of the TIZIDFCA and put up in their homes. The member organizations responsible for the visit included the Tajik Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Authorities, the House of Soviet Culture (Bombay), the Mazdayasnie Monasterie, the Shah Behram Baug Society, the Zoroastrian College and the Asiatic Travel Service; the individuals concerned included the former member of the Minorities Commission Homi Taleyarkhan, Russian consul Fyodor Rozovsky, Ms Meher Master-Moos, Ms Nawaz Marker, Ms Homai Farmarzian, Ms Hutoxi Doodhwala, Yazdanyar Bonshahi, Zal Contractor, Mme Maisara Kolonova, Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Dadi Mistry, Ms Mani Irani, Dara Deboo, Dr Sam Bhacca, Shavak Patel, Ms Jerry Kumana and Calvert D'Penha.

The exercise is supposed to have had a fortuitous beginning when Moos wrote to UNESCO suggesting a prize for the Tajik film studios in the year of Firdausi, for popularizing the *Shah Namah*. Her letter, she relates, was forwarded to Tajikistan and Kolonova desired to meet Moos when she transited Bombay. There followed an official invitation to Moos to

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visit Tajikistan and unknown to herself she became the first state guest of a free country. That she was a knowledgeable Zoroastrian added to the Tajiks' delight and her short stay led to a mutually fascinating experience for her and her hosts. Moos, a Khshnoomist and biographer of the late Behramshah Shroff, felt that the discovery of Zoroastrian Tajiks is part fulfilment of Shroff's prophecy. In a report on her visit to Dushanbe, Moos notes, "Late Ustad Saheb Behramshah Nowroji Shroff had indicated that the Saheb-e-Delaan living in remote mountain *vars* (enclosures) still practised our ancient faith and the spiritual ruler, Shah Behram Varzavand Saheb, whose advent is predicted in *Jamaspi* and the Persian Revayats, would come forth by the end of this century from such a *var*... He had indicated that in the remote, isolated mountaintop villages in the highlands of Central Asia there still survived groups of the Maghavs. These isolated mountain tribal people have Zoroastrian ancestry whose roots go back in unbroken line for over 3,000 years. In the area of the Pamirs, the Altai, Caucassian mountains, the Caspian/Black Sea/Sea of Azov region of the southern USSR Republics, the people are of Persian Zoroastrian origin. In Central Asia, in the area of Balkh, Karshi and the region of present Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Azerbaijan, the people are longing to get back to their original ancient faith."

Summarizing the achievements of the Tajik delegation's visit, a report from Lt Gen Adi Sethna, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, notes that Tata Chemicals, Lakmé, Zandu Pharmaceuticals and the House of Godrej had all shown a positive interest in doing business with the Tajiks. The Avari group from Pakistan is

likely to help in the travel and tourism sector and Dara Deboo of Navsari, representing the Jokhi family from Hong Kong, has agreed to build a dharamshala complex in Dushanbe in time for the October conference. Dr N. Sen Gupta, secretary of the government of India's Planning Commission has also assured the delegation of all possible help, writes Sethna. In Navsari, Dastur Meherji Meherjirana was said to be impressed by the Tajiks' genuineness in seeking to revive the Zoroastrian faith. "In Delhi, in answer to pointed questions on the subject, they were quite categorical that within the next year or so they will be able to show a live register of Zarthustis run-

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*"All religious books
 were burnt. Those
 who hid them
 were imprisoned"*
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ning into thousands which, in due course, will increase manifold," writes Sethna. They also seem to have acquired a large number of books and are all set to make a success of the Avesta conference, he notes.

Urging a study of the Tajiks by knowledgeable persons, Sethna suggests a fact-finding study and a detailed report: "We Parsi Zoroastrians in India and if I may say so, of the New World, are now likely to be a mere spec in this new sea of Zoroastrians and my major concern is that unless we Parsi Zoroastrians in India make an attempt to be in the van of this new movement, we shall be completely obliterated or swept away by this huge

new wave which is likely to begin sweeping from the old heartlands of Central Asia as happened many thousands of years ago..."

Urging a similar study, a contrary view notes, "Undoubtedly practicing Zoroastrians will face pressure from the Muslims who are already asking vigorously for Islamic rule... Under the other regime everybody was equally oppressed but now unless the Zoroastrians are helped to assert themselves and are helped to be educationally advanced and economically viable and progressive as they are here in India, they will again be reduced to the state that our people were in Iran."

The validity of the latter view is endorsed by Steven Erlanger of the New York Times Service. In an article titled "Islam returns to Central Asia" reprinted in *The Times of India* of June 13, 1992, Erlanger reports from Dushanbe, "...the very ideas of independence and democracy in the region have taken on Islamic hues... the (public) prayers (have) gradually increased from once to five times a day. Increasingly, women were seen with their arms, legs and hair covered..."

"Tajikistan is the only ethnically Persian-speaking land amid the Turkic-speaking Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. As a result, Tajikistan looks more towards Iran and Afghanistan where many ethnic Tajiks live, than to modern day secular Turkey which is Washington's preferred model for Central Asian development..."

"Some Russian women say they feel now they should cover their hair when outdoors to avoid harassment — but most people still do not. Some Russians say Tajiks come up to them on the street and ask: 'When are you going home?'"

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The reenthroning of the Banaji fires

The charity commissioner's ruling in the Banaji Atash Behram case, sanctioning a temporary shift of fires, may enable other fire-temples to repair their structures

Parinaz Gandhi

In the early hours of the morning, in the absence of the sun's rays and electric lights, the atash padshah of the Cawasjee Byramjee (Banaji) Atash Behram was ceremoniously brought to its original abode. The dish bearing the embers was carried by a few of the *boiwallas*. The rest of the *boiwallas* bore the swords and maces which were rehoused in the reconsecrated sanctum sanctorum. The shrine reverberated with prayers while the glow emanated from within. As the echoes of the last chants merged with the stillness of the surroundings, the nocturnal ceremony came to an end.

For three years a controversy had raged over the shifting of the holy fire but on May 15, 1992 (when the padshah fire was reinstalled) and May 20 (when the adarian fire was reshifted) the trustees' efforts to repair the 146-year-old fire-temple bore fruit. It was only following the joint charity commissioner's verdict that the trustees were able to pursue with the renovation work they had proposed since 1988. "The historic judgment closes the controversy" as to whether a temporary shift in the fire tantamounts to diminishing the "spiritual power and sanctity of the holy fire," happily declared managing trustee Burjor Antia, a partner in the law firm Mulla and Mulla and Craigie, Blunt and Caroe, whose legal guidance has contributed to the Atash Behram's victory.

A temporary shift of the fire when ne-

cessitated by certain conditions does not result in "damage, wastage or improper alienation of the trust property," ruled the joint charity commissioner on June 29, 1991 on a plaint lodged by the orthodox camp members Adi Doctor, Behram Mistry and Sohrab Patwa. He took into

fore shifting the fires.

Most of the fire-temples in India, being built around the turn of the last century, have aging structures which call for repairs. The Banaji Atash Behram case can thus be considered a landmark whose outcome could ward off disputes in the offing. But there is no knowing whether this precedent will need to be cited in the future for while controversies had arisen at the time of Surat's Goti Adarian fire shift in 1984-85 and Bombay's Dadyseth Atash Bahram fire shift contemplated in '88, there was no opposition at the time of shifting the fires of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram and the Iranshah at Udwarda when occasioned by repairs.

However the tussles that would not fall within the ambit of this judgment are those involving the Godavara (Gamadia) Agiary and the Doongaji Agiary where the

trustees were contemplating a permanent shift of the fires. The Godavara fire-temple at Fort needed major repairs, the cost of which the trustees felt would not be justified in light of the limited patronage there. So, it was proposed that the fire be shifted to Godrej Baug, the new housing colony off Nepean Sea Road. But that was before the regular devotees approached the charity commissioner, appealed to the High Court, and finally obtained a stay restraining the trustees from shifting the fire.

The decision to bring the Doongaji



Banaji Atash Behram at Charni Road

Photo: Noshir Gobhai

consideration the trustees' version that the walls of the *keblah* (sanctum sanctorum) have become black and require plastering and painting; the dome necessitates repairs; the columns and rafters at the roof level need to be strengthened — all such heavy repair work being beyond the scope of Parsi laborers. The trustees also gave an assurance that on the ceremonial front all the necessary stipulations would be met be-

Agiary fire from Bharuch to Bombay's Godrej Baug had been taken by the trustees in 1988. But subsequently progress was stalled by some Bharuch residents. Their appeal to the joint charity commissioner, Baroda division, resulted in a stay on the shift of the fire being granted early this year on the grounds that there are Zoroastrians in Bharuch frequenting the Agiary, there are sufficient funds for the upkeep of the Agiary, and there is a priest in regular attendance.

In this community some people want to create non-issues, believes Antia, referring to the opposition in the form of a protest meeting and judicial redress organized by the orthodox protagonists against the Banaji atash shift. Antia failed to understand the hue and cry when the trust deed itself clearly authorized the trustees with "liberty from time to time to take down, alter, enlarge, repair, rebuild and to make such other additions and improvements in the Trust properties... as may be necessary in the interests of the Atash Behram..." Besides, the fires of this very fire-temple had been shifted in 1958 when required by "heavy repairs" to the monument.

"You refer to him (the fire) as the spiritual king yet you shift him around like a piece of furniture," it was charged at the protest meeting. "No adarian anywhere need be removed and relocated," maintained Doctor in his article in *Parsiana* (see "Atash adarians: not for shifting," May 1988) "if the trustees and the priests perform their duties of preserving and maintaining the padshahs adequately." The dwindling strength of the Zoroastrian population and the consequent limited patronage for an agiary is no reason to shift the fire, believed Doctor. Neither do repairs to the fire-temple qualify for a shift of fires in his opinion. Only the sudden demise of a priest reciting prayers, an enemy attack or a natural calamity would come under the classification of "compelling reasons."

There are two religious tenets that the conservatives staunchly seek to preserve: "the holy fire should not be fragmented and shifted out of the sanctified building and the holy dome and divine atmosphere therein, and no non-Parsi should be allowed to enter the sanctified building." Disrespect towards these principles would result in the magnetic circuit inside the fire-temple getting disrupted and

leading to the deprivation of the spiritual authority of the fire, they believe. As explained by Doctor, a desecrated fire "does not have the strength required of a *rathaeshnar* (warrior), he is subjected to the incessant attacks of *gana min* (the evil forces operating in nature) and finds it impossible to act as a receiving and transmitting center vis-a-vis the spiritual



Godavara Agiary at Fort

world... Removal of an atash padshah tantamounts to a breach of trust in nature and a hurdle in the progress of the departed souls of the founders (of the fire-temple)."

However, as per their undertaking given at the charity commissioner's, the trustees of the Banaji Atash Behram took due care to observe the prescribed rites at the time of shifting the fires in December last to their transitory lodgings, and again after five months when they had to be reenthroned in the fire-temple which had been given a fresh lease of life. Under the guidance of Dasturs (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza, Dr Firoze Kotwal and particularly Dr Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa who being a trustee of this Atash Behram was personally involved in advising on religious matters, the stipulated *sarosh*, *vendidad* and *yasna* ceremonies were performed to sanctify the building and the fires.

Just as the trust deed provides for a building within the Atash Behram complex wherein the fire can be housed when it needs to be shifted from the fire-temple, so also there is a clause in the trust deed clearly stipulating that *boi* ceremonies in this Atash Behram or the adarian attached thereto "shall always be performed according to the Kadmi rites..."

However when donations poured in at

the time of the recent repairs to the Atash Behram, it wasn't just the Kadmis who contributed. The total collection was in the vicinity of Rs 15,00,000 towards the cost of the repairs which approximated Rs 14,50,000, informs Antia.

Unlike the Banaji Atash Behram which has comfortable resources, the Godavara Agiary devotees have been repeatedly appealing in the Press for donations towards the repair of the Agiary and have with difficulty managed to collect Rs 3,67,000, as stated in a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 26, '92. In their case contributions are of even greater consequence as the trustees have "pleaded their helplessness in the matter and have declared their inability to carry out the repairs due to paucity of funds," mentioned a public appeal.

The only agiary to be managed by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the Godavara Agiary has been bothering the devotees for several years. In 1987, the Agiary displayed a notice signed by the Punchayet secretary stating they had been "advised by their engineers that some portion of the building was in a dilapidated state and therefore the devotees had to enter the temple at their own risk... After this notice the trustees of the BPP went into deep slumber and all was forgotten and the 1987 notice somehow disappeared from the Agiary premises..." it was reported in the English Press.

Profuse leakage and roofing problems resulting in several other structural damages was the difficulty faced at the Godavara Agiary. Estimating a repair cost of nine lakh rupees was the Punchayet's architect Sam P. Rao of M/s Poonegar, Billimoria and Company who described the structure as requiring "drastic renovation... as bit by bit repairs would serve no useful purpose..." He advised the BPP to "consider shifting the holy fire to some other agiary and close down the Agiary on this site which would not materially put the devotees to any hardship as there are several other agiaries (five) in close proximity (within half a mile radius in the Fort locality)."

The devotees, chiefly Dr Hoshang Mobedji, Hoshang Tarapore and Ms

continued on page 44

Wedlock's end: 2

K. C. Vajifdar

Nonconsummation of marriage — wilful or otherwise — is the most frequent ground for an early divorce

What are the responsibilities imposed by marriage and what redress does one spouse have when the other spouse chooses to disregard them? Answers to the question have been a part of the general social environment, changing with time.

The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) was the first to codify such social expectations in 1865, becoming the most advanced concept of social justice in India at that time. It was amended in 1936 but, 50 years later, contemporary Parsis were chafing at the restrictions and prejudices of a bygone social era. What is more, in comparison to other, later legislation in the arena of personal law, like the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act, the PMDA had lost its preeminence as a legislation that was in keeping with the spirit of the times.

Legal personality K. C. Vajifdar analyses the main clauses of the PMDA since its last amendment in 1988. In a series of six articles Vajifdar explains the changes that have been incorporated as also the main heads under which either party to a marriage may apply for divorce.

In his second article Vajifdar discusses the problems of impotency and wilful nonconsummation of marriage. In the last issue Vajifdar had compared some features of the PMDA with the Special Marriage Act of 1954 and the Indian Penal Code. Subsequent issues will deal with bigamy, adultery, desertion, cruelty and change of religion.

Section 32a of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act permits a divorce when a marriage has not been consummated up to one year after its solemnization owing to the wilful refusal of the defendant to consummate it. Thus, a Parsi would necessarily have to wait for a period of one year after marriage before getting a divorce.

One party to the marriage may have entered it against his or her wish but marriage by itself implies the union of the



persons marrying and procreation is the watchword of marriage. That a husband or wife refuses to consummate the marriage because he or she was forced to marry is very astonishing as well as cruel. Sometimes, the parents of the boy get their son married despite being aware of his physical deformity.

A person can be called impotent if his or her mental or physical condition makes sexual intercourse and consummation of marriage impossible. Impotency implies an incurable incapacity to consummate the marriage.

The capacity for sexual intercourse does not depend on the capacity to conceive a child and the very fact that a woman cannot conceive is certainly not a ground for dissolution of marriage. Impotency, as contemplated under the Act, does not necessarily mean sterility but merely the incapacity to have normal sexual intercourse. The presence or absence of a uterus is quite immaterial.

Also, in deciding whether a state of impotency existed at the time of marriage and continues till the day of filing legal proceedings, the court must take into consideration future medical or surgical treatment which may remove the

cause of disability. Thus, if the party is ready and willing to be subject to medical treatment and get cured, then and in that event, impotency cannot be proved.

Many times, such incapacity to have normal sexual intercourse is cured with proper medical treatment. Such treatment is almost always without any danger to the life of the party accepting it. Thus, it is absolutely essential that an opportunity for cure must be given to the afflicted party before court proceedings are instituted to get a decree on the ground of impotency. However, when the defendant refuses to go through a medical examination, the court generally grants a decree of nullity.

In a particular case, the malformation of an organ was recorded as incurable and it was held that consummation was a practical impossibility. Thus, a divorce was granted on the ground of impotency.

In another case, the husband went on postponing consummation of marriage on the ground that the time was not ripe and the auspicious moment had not arrived. He contended that the "stars" were not in his favor for consummation of marriage. A week passed, a month passed, six months passed and yet the time was not right to consummate his marriage. The husband then came up with the theory that he would consummate the marriage only when the time was propitious. When the wife filed proceedings against the husband, the court held that the husband has failed to consummate the marriage and had given bogus reasons not to consummate the marriage.

There are psychological reasons also. In one case, the wife would simply not allow her husband to consummate the marriage. The medical examination of the wife showed that there was no structural incapacity. From the evidence which was produced, the court held that the wife's refusal to consummate the marriage was not due to obstinacy or caprice but to an invincible repugnance to the act of consummation of marriage resulting in a pa-

ralysis of the will and an incapacity for intercourse. As such, the husband was entitled to a decree of nullity.

A person may have full capacity for intercourse and yet be incapable of performing the act with one particular person. This may be due to certain reasons. A husband could be impotent with regard to his wife but may be very potent with another woman. If that be so, a decree of nullity can be passed.

In order to establish a suit for nullity of marriage on the ground of impotency on the part of one of the parties, such impotence must be fully proved. It must be proved that physical unfitness for consummation existed on the date of the marriage as well as at the time of instituting the suit for nullity of marriage.

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 also restrict petitions for divorce within one year of marriage subject to certain exceptions. Under those Acts the court may allow such a petition to be presented before one year has passed in the case of exceptional hardship suffered by the petitioner or of exceptional depravity on the part of the respondent.

For example, in the case of Meganatha Nayagar v/s Smt Sushila reported in *All India Reporter* 1957, Madras 423 the court held that adultery plus desertion by the husband in favor of another woman along with cruelty construes exceptional hardship. In another case, the husband drove the wife to the streets, profiteering by her immoral earnings. The court regarded this as a case of exceptional hardship and depravity.

Even if the court were to grant a decree of divorce under such circumstances, it has a right to suspend operation of the decree by adding the condition that it shall not operate until after the expiry of one year from the date of the marriage. If it is proved that there was misrepresentation or concealment at the time of obtaining a decree of divorce, the court has the right to dismiss the petition even after granting a decree of divorce.



Koover C. Vajifdar is an advocate of the Bombay High Court. He is a frequent contributor to the general Press on the implications of the Rent Act and the legal ramifications of marital problems.

ART, MUSIC AND LIFE IN JAPAN

continued from page 24

hard work. The Japanese think of themselves as poor because they can't feed 10 percent of their own people... (Yet) Tokyo has 10 times the cars of Bombay and the roads are narrow, but the traffic moves faster. And it's a very safe city with civic facilities — power, sanitation, water — always greater than required...

"The Japanese never over-engineer, they don't over-sell. In the pre-war days they sold cheap products; now they sell expensive products. But they've always been the world's biggest exporters."

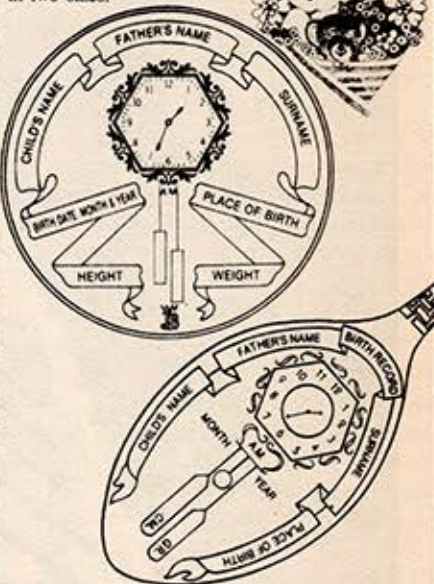
A faithful subscriber to *Parsiana* since it was first established by his friend Dr Pestonji Warden in 1965, Manek says he has observed a lot of changes in the community in his time. After all, he notes, "More Parsis have migrated to the US than the Zoroastrians who came from Persia." But not all the changes that are taking place are progressive according to him. For example, he cites the thanksgiving jashan which he remembers being organized in factories, offices and other places. "Now the priests are saying 'Baharna hoi to nahi karié (we will not perform if there are non-Zoroastrians present)' but *vadil* (senior) priests have done it... No religion is so practical to change as the Zoroastrian," he continues, adding that much more practical changes need to be accommodated. He remembers how his 46-year-old father died overnight from food poisoning and his mother had to be given painful injections because of menstrual taboos, before she could attend the funeral. Zoroastrians who came from Persia changed in time with local conditions, argues Manek. These now need to be modified, he adds. In other ways too the community has changed. "Education has removed all entrepreneurial spirit from the Parsis. (They've) become so professionalized. (That is why) so few go into business. In the pre-war years there were 30 to 35 Parsi (trading) families in Kobe alone."

Talking of changes inculcated in our lifestyles by technological advances, Manek illustrates, "It took four years before (Bing Crosby's famous song) *White Christmas* became known all over the world because there was no communication then. The Beatles were the first music group to attain instant world popularity because of TV and video. Who knows! In the years to come you may send *Parsiana* by fax to subscribers!"

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The prized punch

Homi Rogers

The first Indian on the boxing jury at the Olympics, Aspy Adajania was conferred the Padma Shri award this year



Petroleum and pugilism make a heady punch as it does for the padshah of Indian boxers, Captain Aspy Darabsha Adajania. For his meritorious service to Indian boxing, his name was included on the 1992 Republic Day list of Padma Shri winners.

Adajania who owns two petrol pumps in Bombay, besides having a share in a film laboratory at Worli, has been the spur in the growing stature of Indian box-

Adajania (right) receiving the Padma Shri from the President of India R. Venkataraman (above)

ing. Currently the president of the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation (IABF), and serving a second term as an executive committee member on the prestigious Association Internationale de Boxe Amateur (AIBA), the world body to which IABF is affiliated, Adajania was the moti-

vating force in the 1990 World Cup Amateur Boxing Championship held at Bombay. The city, incidentally, as Adajania tells us, has been the cradle of Indian boxing — the Bombay Presidency Amateur Boxing Federation (BPABF) being founded here in 1925, with direct affiliation to the Amateur Boxing Association (ABA) of England. It was the precursor of IABF, set up in 1949.

A few days before he left for Delhi to receive the Padma Shri award on March 28, *Parsiana* met Adajania at his petrol pump, barely a few blocks away from the Cama Baug Agiary.

Stockily built and of ruddy complexion, Adajania has the bearing of a boxer. And he also seems to have imbibed a fair share of the anomalies of a sport which refers to the perfect square in which its matches are fought as 'a ring.' For one, Adajania is shy and withdrawn when it comes to talking about himself, unlike the



boxing world's image of Mohammed Ali or Mike Tyson.

Since the '80s, Adajania has served on 48 international tournaments, either as a referee judge, or in the jury. In 1984, when he was upgraded as member of the Olympic jury, Adajania added yet another feather to his cap, or as we should say in boxing parlance — to his headguard. He was the first Indian on the boxing jury at the Olympics — a position in which he continued to serve at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and will be doing so again at the forthcoming 1992 Barcelona Games. Within barely 40 years, Adajania has established himself in the

firmament of sports promoters — a genus rather uncommon in the Indian milieu.

"Indian boxers," he boasts, "are the most disciplined and well-behaved among our sportsmen. They are aggressive only in the ring; outside it they are like lambs." Boxing, he avers, is not a violent sport, but that image persists because it is such a lucrative sport. "Six or seven of the top 10 earners in the sports world are boxers. In which other sport would you get a Tyson who made 20 million dollars in just 45 minutes to defend his title? The risk element is overplayed to justify the big bucks." Adajania further believes that the so-called violent element in boxing helps keep boys out of trouble, "as it channelizes their aggression into the ring."

While his son Homi (19) has been trained as a boxer, and has won the Western India Junior Championship, a reluctance to let their children learn boxing usually persists with many Parsi parents. Boxing is identified all over the world as a violent sport: "*Naak naskoru fodi nakhsé* (will break the nose and nostril)," caution the elderly.

As for injury to *naak naskoru*, Adajania (who has authored a handbook for referees and judges for the IABF) insists that "besides having a thorough

knowledge of the rules, the main ingredient or quality required (in a referee) is the instinct of compassion to stop a bout before a boxer is seriously injured in the ring." Adajania periodically conducts examinations for referees and opines that "far too many referees lack this basic quality which robs the sport of its glory and deters a young boxer from further pursuing this athletic activity."

With stricter clauses stressing compassion, and advances in protective equipment like headguards and mouthpieces, boxing can shed its false image. Currently, though, Adajania concedes, boxing ranks as the fifth most dangerous sport in the world on the grounds of fatality.

The *pahelwans* (strongmen) like Rustom and Sohrab, idolized in Parsi myths and scriptures, were wrestlers, not boxers, though recent findings have established boxing to be a sport of reasonable antiquity. Also, by the time Adajania took to boxing, many of the Parsi greats had become a part of history — a history which Adajania recalls with a gleam in his eye. He remembers Fali Billimoria, the first (featherweight) Indian boxer who turned professional; Muncher Wadia, one of the best flyweight and bantamweights

in India who wrested the Western India championship title by defeating a British soldier; and the Khatau brothers — Percy, Sammy and Cushrow — who created a record by bagging the trophies in their respective classes all in the same year.

"Today," laments Adajania, "there are no Parsis in boxing, though at one time in the mid-twenties and thirties, the Zoroastrian Physical Culture and Health League was one of the best clubs for boxing in the city." As a sport amongst Parsis boxing fizzled out in the '80s, and the All Parsi Invitation Tournament has not been held for over the past 10 years for want of contestants.

Adajania attributes this "disappearance" to the fact that Parsis prefer to get a job on the basis of education, though sports can hold a key to good money and equally good job opportunities. At the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), Jamshedpur, for example, the IABF has an arrangement whereby jobs are offered to boxers at a decent salary. The annual contract was initiated by Adajania's predecessor, A. K. Mattoo, when he was president of the IABF and a director at TISCO. It provides boxers with a chance to practise their sport and simultaneously learn a trade, like that of a foundryman,

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which would serve them in good stead after their boxing years are over. Similar job opportunities, Adajania elaborates, are available in the Railways and the Services. "But then, Parsi boys are happy in banks," he concludes fatalistically.

For one associated with a macho sport, Adajania was put through his first paces in a girls' school — Kimmins at Panchgani. But it was at the Cathedral and John Connon School in Bombay that he cut his first boxing teeth. "However, I did more boxing at the club level," says Adajania, "than in school." Even today, though boxing is a popular sport, and as Adajania stresses, "a middle-class sport" (a boxing club charges just around Rs 40 per month to teach and practise the sport), it is not included in many schools' curricula, but taught and practised in clubs. There are more than 80 boxing clubs in Bombay and Pune alone, as per Adajania's estimate.

By the early sixties, Adajania was in good fettle and boxing for the Bombay University, which he represented twice. In December 1962 he joined the Indian Army, and was commissioned to the 59 Gurkha Rifles. At the Officers' Training School in Madras, Adajania was ap-

pointed to train the battalion team in boxing. Within the next five years, he was to establish himself as the padshah of pugilists. By then his love for boxing had intensified so he did not hang up his boxing gloves even when he left the Army in 1976 to look after the family businesses.

The Adajanias migrated to Bombay from Adajan, a comparative backwater township near Surat, around the middle of this century. After the displacement suffered by the family when toddy-tapping was declared illegal, the senior Adajania decided to invest his family fortune in the management of two petrol pumps.

Additionally, the Adajania family controls three trusts for Zoroastrians which provide assistance to the needy after evaluating each case on its merits. During the course of the interview, Adajania was approached by a Zoroastrian bereft of arms which he claimed to have lost in a railway accident. Adajania solicitously noted for him the name and address of his family trust and told him to approach it for help. Then, unobtrusively, along with the address, Adajania slipped in a note to provide some timely relief.

Yet, the hurly-burly of Parsi politics, or Parsi philanthropy as practised by the

punchayets, is not for Adajania. "We contribute what we can to the community in our own way," he says, dismissing his prospects of becoming a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, or being actively involved in the forthcoming elections. Nor does he wish to trade punches with the community on the various recent controversies. "Yes, I am a staunch practitioner of our religion, but not a follower of all its rules and rituals," he gently asserts, parrying all questions with the ease of a professional boxer.

It may yet be some time before boxing attains the popularity of cricket, or the mega-money of tennis. But with the generous backing of a government that richly rewards pugilists, and the liberal encouragement of the Maharashtra state, which has been the cradle of Indian boxing (the state, recalls Adajania, contributed four lakh rupees to the center's five lakhs for the staging of the 1990 World Cup in Bombay), that day may not be far. Adajania is busy raising sponsorships and organizing the Super Nations Cup by the end of 1992. When he proclaims that event to be "bigger than the World Cup," we know here's no light-weight speaking!

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MILESTONES

A scanning of the marriage registers at Old Customs House revealed 17 intercommunity marriages and one marriage contracted between Zoroastrians over the four-month period of January to April 1992. There were seven intercommunity marriages registered at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the same period.

In the case of marriages between Zoroastrians in Bombay, the age of brides — as listed in this issue — ranged between 22 and 43 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 31 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 26 and 42 years, averaging at 33 years.

There were seven Zoroastrians who were cremated during the nine-month period of April to December 1991, according to the Chandanwadi crematorium registers, (*Parsiana* made only one trip to Chandanwadi last year in April, hence did not get the data for the latter half of the year.) The Chandanwadi registers did not appear to record any Zoroastrian cremations between January and May 1992.

As per the data available to *Parsiana*, in Bombay, there were 18 births as compared to 63 interments at the doongerwadi in April. Heart disease took 18 lives of whom three were above the age of 80. Nine victims fell prey to pneumonia and lung disease while eight succumbed to

cancer and five to brain disease. Hypertension and kidney failure claimed three patients each and old age and general debility, two. The isolated cases registered last month were: tuberculosis, asthma, nervous disorder, ulcer, burns, liver disease, accident, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), high blood pressure, hypotension, diabetes and septicemia. In the case of two deaths, the coroner's report was still pending. A stillborn baby boy and a 23-year-old youth were also lost to the community. Ninety-seven years was the highest age at death.

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. For example, the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals; births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to Monaz and Aspi Wadia on April 2, 1992
A girl to Hufir and Rohinton Javat; April 3
A girl to Jean and Peshotan Wadia; April 4
A girl to Kamal and Viraf Hansotia; April 5
A girl to Thrity and Homavand Jehangir; April 10
A girl to Khushnum and Shahberam Kaikhushroo; April 13
A boy to Ayesha and Adi Madan; April 16

A girl to Parveen and Mahendra Patankar; April 18
A girl to Tehnaz and Gustad Homavazir; April 19
A boy to Zarina and Framroze Mehta; April 20
A boy to Karmin and Behram Gheesta; April 23
A girl to Pinky and Rumi Bhathena; April 24
A girl to Tina and Keki Irani; April 24
A girl to Farida and Sarosh Aibara; April 25
A boy to Kashmira and Kurush Daruwalla; April 26
A boy to Binaifer and Yuzud

Karanjia; April 26
A boy to Nilufer and Noshir Bhiwandiwala; April 28
A boy to Arnavaz and Rohinton Rostami; April 28

Married

Shenaz Oomrigar and Amol Sabnis; January 1, 1992
Rohiga I. Chagla and Cyrus Pallonji Mistry; January 2
Gausia Mahmood Mukadam and Khurshed Kavas Sanjana; January 10
Renu Kishinchand Nasta and Firdaus Shapur Irani; January 20
Rockshan Sheriar Yazdani and Kevin Roger Creado; January 21
Gulshan Irani and Punit Shah; January 22
Keshmera Aspi Photographer and Ramesh Kalyanji Kamrejwala; January 31
Meena Laxman Rathod and Gev Irach Patel; February 3
Rashna Firoz Bam and Pervaz Noshir Mehta; February 4
Gulshan Framroze Pithawalla and Bharatram Nandlal Gaba; February 7
Viloo Italia and Jacob Williams; February 7
Madhavi S. Degaonkar and Farokh J. Umrigar; February 9
Behroze Kasad and Madan S. Pawar; February 10
Firozi Boman Kermani and Anthony Kuo; February 14
Vimla I. Macwan and Shahrugh Eruch Bhathena; February 27
Maharookh Munchersha Wadia and Sam Dady Billimoria; March 1
Meherzin Rusi Mistry and Sudipto Malay Das; March 6
Meher Firoze Shroff and Leigh D. Murzello; March 14
Razia Mohsinali Munji and Kersasp Khushru Dinshaw; March 20
Uma Rashmikant Sheth and Behram Jimmy Karbhari; March 27
M. Pakhota and Rayomand Hoshang Dadachanji; April 3
Coomie Noshir Kapadia and Adi Keki Motafram; April 5
Shagufa Merwan Zambat and Sarosh Pestonji Mistry; April 6
Daina Barjorji Bhagwagar and Darayaz Murzban Vavaina; April 7

Saraswati Muni Naidu and Dhunji Kaikhushroo Dubash; April 10
Jerro Sorab Chothia and Xerxes Framroz Irani; April 10
Dinaz Kersi Dhondy and Ramesh Padmanabhan; April 10
Khurshid Eruchshah Patel of Ahmedabad and Dinyar Noshir Adajania; April 11
Maharookh Noshirwan Kamdin and Hoshang Phiroze Vandrivala; April 16
Farzin Dosabhai Wadia and Zerkis Kaikhushroo Daruwalla; April 17
Rashna Minoo Kanga and Behram Sohrab Ghista; April 17
Shanoor S. Rustomji and Avinash Kothari; April 17
Farida Ratan Amra and Kurush Jamshed Charna; April 18
Ruby Framroz Dordi and Farrokh Minocher Rustomji of Delhi; April 18
Behroze Homi Daruwalla and Kersi Ratan Amra; April 20
Havovi Kavas Elavia and Rusi Jamshed Bachana; April 20
Kiran (Kalpana) Vishindas Khatanhar and Zarir Dhanjishaw Daruwalla; April 20
Farida Faredoon Wadia and Faredoon Hormusji Dotiwalla of Karachi; April 20
Anahita Freddy Daruwalla and Cyrus Behram Nagporewalla; April 20
Zarina Dhunjishaw Satha and Mehernosh Pirojsha Shroff; April 23
Nergis Vicaji Taraporevala and Andrew Shri Narayan; April 24
Parveen Behram Irani and Adi Cawasji Marolia; April 27
Kashmira Savak Bhesania and Mehernosh Manecksha Nazir; April 28

Died

Dhun Minocher Kalapesi (68) residing at Burani Mhl, 59, Lady Jagmohandas Marg, 400026; May 21, 1991 (cremated)
Eileen Homi Duggary (62), 37/D, Belmont, L. Jagmohandas Marg, 400036; June 21 (cremated)
Shireen Dinshah Guzdar (50), 1-3-B, Brighton, 68, D. L. Jamanadas Marg, 400006;

August 26 (cremated)
Piloo Jamshed Harver (76),
 Jenking Hse, 11, Henry Rd,
 Colaba, 400005; September 17
 (cremated)
Hilla Dara Cama (84), Bachan
 Mans, Bai Deenbai Marg,
 Tardeo, 400007; October 4
 (cremated)
Feroza Phirozsha Narielwala
 (95), Breach Candy Gardens,
 B. Desai Rd, 400026;
 October 10 (cremated)
Boms Nicholson, son of Dinoo
 and late Adi and brother of
 Sherna Adi Pandole;
 December 17 (cremated)
Meherji Edulji Fanibundar
 (67), Readymoney Bldg, 784,
 M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,
 400014; April 1, 1992
Yezdi Nariman Madon (23),
 13/1, Neeta Ter, No 2, Mangal-
 das Rd, Poona, 411001; April 1
Dhunji Cawasji Poonjiagi (63),
 C/14, Shapur Baug, V. P. Road,
 400004; April 2
Jayjee Earuchshah Daroga
 (87), 3, Niamant Manzil,
 N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007;
 April 3
Dadiba Nusserwanji Khambata
 (87), C/o J. D. Banatwalla, 19,
 Ravindra Mans, Sir Dinshaw

Wacha Rd, Churchgate Recl,
 400020; April 3
Roshan Darab Contractor (58),
 12/5, Rustom Baug, Victoria
 Rd, Byculla, 400027; April 4
Jimmy Bomanji Kapadia (69),
 Kashinath Bldg No 1,
 Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034;
 April 4
Homi Maneeki Vazir (74),
 Shernaz Manzil, Baram St,
 Grant Rd, 400007; April 4
Tehmina Phirozshaw Billimoria
 (58), 7/9, Rustom Baug,
 Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
 April 5
Tehmina Nariman Elavia (86),
 515/B, Ratan Mans, R. P.
 Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019;
 April 5
Dolly Heroyce Moos (77), 92,
 Bhiwandi Hse, Opp Gowalia
 Tank Post Office, Cumballa
 Hill, 400036; April 5
Maneck S. Elavia (61), P/18,
 Shapoor Bharucha Baug,
 S. V. Rd, Andheri (W),
 400058; April 7
Tehmurasp Nadirshah
Karanjia (83), A/17, Shapur
 Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; April 8
Bahadur Kaikushroo Kuka (62),
 Bacha Manor, 600, Jame
 Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar,

400014; April 8
Ratansha Fardoonji
Dadrewalla (83), Near
 Gurukripa Hotel, Kathiria,
 Nani Daman, 396210; April 9
Manijhe Pestonji Khambhata
 (93), 165, Manibai Bhuvan,
 Khetwadi, 10th Lane, 400004;
 April 9
Jamshed Kaikushroo Ghun-
nawalla (61), 94, Aderbad,
 Babulnath Rd, 400007; April 10
Daulat Rusi Pardiwala (55),
 Home-Coming, Waroda Rd,
 Bandra (W), 400050; April 10
Ardeshir (Adi) Dinshaw
Billimoria (72), A, Daruwalla
 Bldg, Frere Bridge, Grant Rd,
 400007; April 11
Amy Keki Laly (73), 10/A, Tata
 Block, Sir C. J. Clny, Tardeo,
 400034; April 11
Shapurji Pirojsha Divecha (77),
 Karani Bldg, 650, Firdausi Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 April 12
Putla Behramji Gilder (74),
 Gilder Villa, Perry Cross Rd,
 Bandra, 400050; April 12
Male baby of Rashna Vispi
Sanjana (stillborn), B, Avabai
 Petit St, Baram St, Grant Rd,
 400007; April 12
Sheru Jasi Kapadia (55), 284,

Jupiter, Cuffe Parade, 400005;
 April 13
Delber Maneck Karanjawala
 (57), 4, Bhaveshwar Sagar, 20,
 Nepean Sea Rd, 400006;
 April 13
Thrity Navroji Chothia (44),
 301/A, Manish Mhl, Off Veera
 Desai Rd, Andheri (W), 400058;
 April 14
Shirin Burjor Mithaiwala (65),
 Mithaiwala Hse, 97/C, Bazar
 Rd, Bandra, 400050; April 14
Jal Framroze Mistry (86), 174,
 Saikrupa, Khar Danda (W),
 400052; April 15
Piroja Nadirshaw Mistry (87),
 Room no 22, Bhabha Sanato-
 rium, Bandra, 400050;
 April 15
Dolly Aspi Patel (45), Batliwala
 Bldg, 721, Dinshaw Master Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 April 15
Coomy Jal Sagar (82), F. S.
 Parukh Dharamshalla, 34,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; April 15
Pirojshaw Edulji Vesuna (75),
 11, Hormus Bldg, Kasinath St,
 Tardeo, 400034; April 15
Burjor Furdoonji Dadachanji
 (80), 1/4, Seth Nusserwanji
 Tata Bldg, Bandra, 400050;
 April 16

With the compliments of

P. S. KUKA

Chairman

★ ★ ★

GOODWILL THEATRES PVT LTD
 BOMBAY

OWNERS:

"NOVELTY CINEMA"

THEATRE MAGNIFICENT
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**Luxuriously air-conditioned with
 latest 70MM Projection, Stereophonic and 4 Track Sound Equipment.**

Najamai Manchershaw Guzder (77), 816, Mistry Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 16

Rustom Ardeshir Mistry (54), Petit Bldg No 2, Jamshedji Petit St, Balaram St, 400007; April 16

Silloo J. Panthaki (65), 28, Daruwalla Bldg, (Ganesh Bhuvan), 1st Dhobitalao Lane, 400002; April 16

Minoo Savaksa Mistry (67), Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Trinity St, Dhobitalao, 400002; April 17

Sorabji Rustomji Bagwalla (87), Damania Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, 400007; April 18

Jamshedji Burjorji Gandavia (72), 3/11, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; April 18

Homai Askendar Irani (80), 1-A/5, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; April 18

Alan Framroze Poonawala (88), T-5, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; April 18

Jerbai Ratansha Wadiwalla (93), Albless Widow Chawl, Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400007; April 18

Mani Dorabji Vesuna (63), Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Rlwy Stn, 400007; April 19

Eruch Dinshawji Homawalla (93), 2, Rajsi Mans, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; April 20

Dolly Ferdoon Irani (61), 32/FF, Khareghat Clny, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; April 21

Katie Jal Kapadia (82), B/5, Dhun Bldg, 312, Lamington Rd, 400007; April 21

Kershasp Rustomji Kotwal (58), Empress Bldg, N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; April 21

Adi Cawasji Mistri (80), Dev Chaya, Haji Ali, 400034; April 21

Goolamai Jalejar Mukadam (68), Karanjia Bldg, 378, Grant Rd, 400007; April 22

Hoshang Pirojshaw Minbatiwalla (66), Jer Villa, 641, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 24

Meherwanjee Shapurjee Sepai (61), 5/34, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; April 24

Dossabhoy Jamshedji Kamdin (76), 4, Seth Hse, N. Sheth St, J. S. Rd, Thakurdwar, 400002; April 25

Sherbanu Manecksha Mistry (71), 1, Glass Bglw, Tukaram

Javji Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; April 25

Phiroze Merwanji Bisney (80), Gowalia Tank Bldg, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; April 26

Mehernosh Phirozsha Dastur (97), A, Taj Bldg, Gowalia Tank, 400007; April 26

Eruch Pirojshaw Maneckshaw (70), 784-A, Readymoney Bldg, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 27

Behram Adi Siganporia (42), 17, Nanabhoy Chmbs, Fort, 400001; April 27

Shara Savaksha Udwadia (79), 51, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400002; April 27

Pallonji Hormazdji Mehta (75), 12, Maneck Bldg, Lamington Rd, 400008; April 28

Sarosh Nadersa Batliwalla (52), A/301, Kailash Prabhat Co-op Soc, 173, Vidhyanagar Marg, 400098; April 29

Ardeshir Riponji Gazdar (70), 723, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; April 30

Rutty Manchershaw Madon (82), 28/A, Todiwalla Bldg, Sun Mill Rd, Lower Parel, 400013; April 30

Coomi Savak Mehta (86), Q/7, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; April 30

LONAVLA

Married

Dilnawaz Hosang Randelia and **Percy Maneck Shroff**; January 11

POONA

Died

Freny Behramji Grant (97), 16/A, Shankarshet Rd, 411001; April 2

Khorshed Eruch Ardeshir (85), 14/A, Deccan College Rd, 411006; April 15

Jeru Cowasji Dhanjishaw (82), Iron Gate, 4, Stavely Rd, 411001; April 15

Katy Pesi Press (59), Cecillia Bldg, Ardeshir Irani Rd, 411002; April 16

Kersi Merwanji Surveyar (70), 202/A, Manish Darshan, Fatima Ngr, 411013; April 17

Khudabux Behram Irani (91), 6, Ardeshir Baugh, Ardeshir Irani Rd, 411002; April 26

Boman Kaikhushroo Shroff (82), 10, Hermes Tower, Sachapir St, 411001; April 28

SECUNDERABAD

Born

A boy, **Dinyar**, to **Perveen** and **Viraf Mehta**; April 10

SURAT

Died

Hormusji Dhanjibhai Kodia (84), Maachli Pith, 395003; April 9

Piroja Pirojsha Bohariwala (84), Disney Hse, Navyug College, Randel; April 12

Hillamai Rustomji Bodhanwalla (81), Maachli Pith, 395003; April 14

Parinbanoo Dosabhai Bhagwagar (75), Parsi Wad,

Saiyedpura, 395003; April 23

Jalejar Jehangirji Patel (72), Parsi Wad, Illav, 394810; April 23

Darabsha Hormusji Mevawalla (Dudhwala) (86), Opp Kadmi Fire-temple, Shahpore, 395003; April 26

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Married

Nancy Lee and **Zubin Amroliya**; January 4

CALIFORNIA

Born

A boy, **Eric Hormuz**, to **Pervin** and **Jehangir Canteenwala**; March 29

HOUSTON

Born

A boy, **Bahram**, to **Mahnaz** and **Farrokh Firozgari**; December 2, 1991

KALAMAZOO, Michigan

Born

A boy, **Stephen**, to **Rashna** and **Hoshi Engineer**; February 4, 1992

KARACHI

Born

A girl, **Rashna**, to **Parin** and **Naozar Virji**; April 11

Died

Navroze Hormusji Manekji (77); March 1

Rashid Jamshed Irani (37); March 13

Pesi Edulji Behrana (82); March 18

Dolly Rustam Patel (72); March 19

MISSISSAUGA, Ontario

Married

Veera Behram Khajotia and **Jemi Nusserwanji Anklesaria**; November 17, 1991

VANCOUVER

Born

A girl, **Sabrina**, to **Mehrshid** and **Phiroz Irani**; November 13

WINNIPEG, Canada

Died

Rustomji Bhungara, father of **Soli**, **Hushtasp** and **Binaifer Patel**; January 18, 1992

Compiled by Roxana A. Mirza

TOTALS FOR 1992

	Bombay		Other Indian cities		Foreign cities	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
BORN						
Boys	7	40	1	2	2	3
Girls	11	52	--	--	1	7
MARRIED						
Parsi	20	104	1	2	--	2
Intercommunal	24	24	--	1	1	3
DIED						
Male	35	185	6	17	4	11
Female	28	150	7	26	1	6

A: Total numbers in this issue excluding 1991

B: Running totals for 1992 (February-May issues)

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 and abroad.

Madhivala's Mending Touch

Parinaz Gandhi

When few nonagenarians are stable on their feet, here was one who would deliver kicks. And a kick from Dr Manchershah Madhivala augured not spite but respite. The relief from pain that his mode of treatment offered made patients return to him for other cures, recommend his name to friends in distress and eagerly await his trips to Bombay which would receive advance publicity in the Press.

Though not a qualified medical practitioner, the faith and confidence inspired by the rustic Madhivala who had his base in village Madhi, far exceeded that earned by many modern, degreed orthopedic surgeons. His mastery in bone alignment was so respected that patients entrusted their arms, legs, spine and even their neck to his care. There were some who viewed his style of functioning with scepticism for not always did he treat fractures and spondylitis only after studying X rays, but those whom he treated said his tactile sense seldom erred. In fact, his death in Navsari on December 6, 1991, at 91 years of age following complications arising from pneumonia, has created a vacuum for his one-time patients who wonder whether another savior of his ilk will come to their rescue.

It wasn't just the ordinary man not able to afford a professional's fees who sought Madhivala's aid. From directors in the House of Tatas to sportspersons like Vijay Merchant, from dancers like Ms Shirin Vajifdar to graphic designers like Ms Mini Boatwala and authors like Dr Mulkraj Anand, people from all walks of life, from all communities and all strata of society came to him for treat-

Madhivala (inset) delivering a kick to a patient (above) and catching up on his reading at his farmhouse (below)

Photos courtesy A. V. Somaiya



ment. He was also invited to treat the then President of India V. V. Giri, informs Dr Jamshed Pithavala who had known "Kakaji," as they referred to Madhivala, for over 30 years, working first as his apprentice and later independently.

No patient of Madhivala's was charged fees but contributions were welcome in the donation box placed in his consulting room. Actually monies in the donation box are said to have subsidized not Madhivala's expenses but those of the very poor who could not afford even the cost of medicinal applications. Men of means did help him out otherwise too, inform his associates: In Navsari, a car would be made available to him by an executive at the Tatas; Vijay Merchant offered him a room at Hindustan Mills where Madhivala could treat patients on his trips to Bombay. Earlier he used to come to the city every two months; however, with increasing age the frequency declined.

His was a makeshift clinic: "Broken bodies were everywhere -- laid out on stretchers, bundled on the floor, collapsed in chairs, huddled in corners, their moans and shrieks filling the air... And at the center of it all stood the great bonesetter himself, surrounded by his loyal helpers. In appearance he was so ordinary, no one could have guessed what extraordinary powers he possessed. He wore a long white dughlo and a prayer cap, resembling one of those men in charge of serving dinner at a Parsi wedding..." This description of Madhivala appears in Rohinton Mistry's award winning book *Such a Long Journey* that captures the Parsi spirit. The storyline of the novel is fictitious but his reference to Madhivala therein could not be more accurate, confirm those who had known the bonesetter.

Brusque was the demeanor of the hot-tempered Madhivala. Yet his approach to the patients was always soothing, making time to explain how the ointment was to be applied or the exercises were to be done, relates Pithavala.

Cases which needed his urgent attention were taken to Madhi, a village near Surat, from where Madhivala, an agriculturist by profession, functioned. To monitor injuries or ailments requiring his constant supervision, he even made provisions for in-house patients. The adivasis around his village too found him easily accessible, practising as he did on the verandah of his bungalow every

morning. When a poor adivasi needed sustained treatment, Madhivala not only gave free medicines but also provided for the boarding and lodging free of cost, remembers a family friend.

The afternoons, the self-taught practitioner reserved for his reading. His herbal applications and potions were largely an outcome of his own study and genius, informs a family source. Of the several commonly in use, the most popular were *dhatura* (stramonium) or 'all powder,' recommended for several ailments. He never believed in using synthetics or giving fancy names. Whenever he travelled -- it did not matter whether it was a trip to the city or a village where a medical camp was organized -- his bags of medicines were his regular companions. For the convenience of his patients, Indigenous Drug Pharma Company in Madhi and Remedies Pharmaceuticals in Bombay started distributing his medicines. Standardization of dosage was introduced subsequently; originally the doctor worked by approximations, not realizing that a change in proportions could cause allergy to the sensitive skin of the city dwellers who lacked the rustic resistance, as notes an associate.

His years of service merited a Registered Medical Practitioner's degree being accorded to him by the Gujarat Government even though Madhivala is not believed to have studied for any university examination. After a short stint with the railways in Peshawar, the young Madhivala opted to settle in his hometown Madhi to pursue a pastoral life.

After Madhivala, who? Those who had benefited from his cures had been dreading this eventuality as each year passed. On his death, *The Bombay Samachar* had strongly recommended the institution of an orthopedic ward in one of the Parsi hospitals in memory of Madhivala's commitment to this cause. Fortunately the science and art of treating orthopedic disorders, the introduction to which Madhivala received at the hands of his uncle, is now being practiced by some of his onetime associates: Dr Jamshed Pithavala of Dastan comes to Bombay, Jal Amaria operates from different Parsi baugs in Bombay, Madhivala's brother's sons, Minoo Suraliwalla renders aid in Navsari and Homi Suraliwalla in Bular. Additionally the availability of his medicines ensures that the bonesetter's remedies have not been lost to posterity.

Gimi's outstretched hand



Died: Rusi Burjorji Gimi, 69, pioneer of outdoor advertising in India and Calcutta's popular social worker, on February 21, 1992 in Calcutta following a two-month struggle with acute haemorrhagic gangrenous pancreatitis.

"I am the most notorious beggar of Calcutta... Whenever I accost people (for donations) they call me not 'Gimi' but 'Give me.'" The congenial man with a ready wit who is known to have raised crores of rupees for the varied charitable projects which he served was quoted in the *Fed Newsletter* of April 1992.

In honor of this selfless worker a condolence meeting was convened at the Marble Arch at Raj Bhavan when the Governor of West Bengal Prof Nurul Hasan announced the inception of the Rusi B. Gimi Medal. The annual award which carries a cash prize of Rs 5,000 will be conferred on an individual or organization excelling in social work in the

state of West Bengal, informs the *News-letter*. Several schools, hospitals, halls have been renamed after Gimi as a mark of tribute to their benefactor.

Appointed sheriff of Calcutta in 1974, over the years Gimi is believed to have held responsible positions on 132 welfare committees, societies and institutions like the St John Ambulance Association, Rehabilitation Centres for Children (Orthopaedic), a school and training center for the deaf and mute, educational institutions for the underprivileged, a home for the aged, Lighthouse for the Blind, armed forces subcommittee, Calcutta Art Society, Lions Club, consumer protection and consumer action bodies. "He contributed not just money, but more important, time, energy and organizational ability. He was always willing to stand up and speak for a worthy cause... His interests were spread over so vast and diverse a field that one wondered how he kept track of them all," noted a write-up in the *Calcutta Gavashni* of February-March 1992.

One time president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Calcutta, a former pillar of the Calcutta Parsee Club, a steady supporter of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Stree Mandal, representatives of all these organizations plus spokespersons from the Saklat Physical Culture Institute

and the Calcutta Parsee Youth League recalled Gimi's contribution at the condolence meeting convened by the trustees of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds. Even though last year Gimi was among the 15 community members felicitated by the Anjuman, of late he had been devoting less time to the community, believing he should concentrate on helping those who are in greater need of his services.

Similarly the organization Selvel, started as a partnership venture, received less of Gimi's time although "to most of us his name still spells Selvel," read a citation. With the prominently displayed Selvel hoardings, effectively used to promote business, he pioneered the concept of modern outdoor advertising. He also served as founder-president of the Outdoor Advertising Association, notes a booklet *Mr Rusi B. Gimi — a remembrance* brought out under the aegis of the Socio-Legal Aid Research and Training Centre.

The booklet recapitulates Gimi's biographical details: born in Bharuch, spending his early childhood in Aurangabad, schooling at the R. S. Dalal High School in Bharuch (discounting a year that he spent at the Sarvajani High School, Surat), graduating from the

Wadia College in Poona with mathematics as his principal subject and physics and chemistry as his subsidiaries. Responding to Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India call, Gimi later joined the freedom struggle and was imprisoned at the Yerawada Jail for inciting college students. He drew inspiration from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Swami Vivekananda, besides many others. Before venturing into his own business and shifting to Calcutta, Gimi took up employment with an insurance company in Bombay.

His respect for the Bengali culture and his acceptance by the Bengali people enabled him to pick up their language too. He used to narrate in jest, "As I have been telling friends, all I had to do is to put a *rasgolla* in my mouth and speak Gujarati — out came Bengali."

The humanitarian further believed, "Bengal gave me a home and a reasonably fair scope to prosper... Life is not a one-way transaction; you have to give some of it back. And so when I find that some of my brothers and sisters are suffering tremendous hardship, I go out of my way to reach out with help."

Gimi is survived by his wife Zarin, and daughters Frenny Daroga, Prochi Mehta and Tehnaz Bahadurji.

P.G.

THE REENTHRONING OF...

continued from page 31

Naju Paghdwala countered the Punchayet architect's report by getting the expert views of four others: Former municipal engineer and ward officer D. F. Ichhaporia, and licensed surveyor and consulting engineer T. K. Santoke opined that the structure does not need complete demolition. Architect and interior designer Adi Darbary, and chartered engineer, architect and structural engineer R. J. Balsara held that the building can be repaired without shifting the holy fire outside the Agiary. Balsara further described the structure as "unique and monumental" deserving to be "preserved and well maintained."

To further buttress their case that there were sufficient patrons for this Agiary to warrant that the fire be not transferred and the Agiary building be repaired with the available funds, statistics were cited: About 75 families have their prayers said at this Agiary and about 14 tables are laid during the *muktads*.

In the course of the hearings, as reported in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 26, '92, Dr Aspi Golwala declared on behalf of the Punchayet trustees that they were "keen to carry out the repairs" but were "hampered by lack of finances." He further "committed a sum of one lakh rupees towards the repairs" and a willingness "to raise funds from other sources including the petitioners."

There are no further developments in court but as conveyed by both the sides, terms for negotiation are being worked out by the contesting parties after which they hope to commence with repairs.

"It is a question of our faith. How can we allow them to remove the fire which has been worshipped there for the last 150 years?" Tarapore had voiced his protest when the Godavara fire shift was contemplated. "It is faith alone that attracts you to one particular doctor, lawyer or agiary," some other devotees were quoted in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of December 30, '90. In case of the Godavara Agiary, there is faith reposed not only by the Zoroastrians but by a fair amount of non-Zoroastrians too who reportedly

offer sandalwood to the priest to keep the fire ablaze.

The allegiance to one specific fire is noticeable at the Doongaji Agiary too. Not more than three to five Zoroastrians are said to frequent it daily. Besides, Bharuch is said to have six agiaries catering to a dwindling Zoroastrian population of around 250. Yet the fire was not permitted to be brought to Bombay's Godrej Baug which, once fully ready and occupied, is expected to house nearly 500 Zoroastrian families.

Clearly not all community members are able to empathize with the view that a shift of fires under some circumstances may serve a dual purpose: providing a pilgrim center to a new concentration of Zoroastrian residents, and utilization of the funds released from the sale of the old agiary property for construction and maintenance of a new house of worship. Critics view the shifting with suspicion and question the bonafides of those advocating the move.

With the large number of fire-temples in the country, will this controversy continue to brew?



At didi's wedding Ustaad did such dhamaal! To get the dulha's Rasna he called his dog Bozo. And asked him to create a hangama. Everyone ran after Bozo. And while that happened, Ustaad finished off all of dulha's Rasna. You know why? Because Rasna is so mmmmmmm.....!

Isn't it? I love you Rasna.

THE DULHA'S RASNA

IRRESISTIBLE
soft drink concentrate

32 GLASS PACK

100 GLASS PACK

6 GLASS PACK

QUALITY ASSURANCE
IS-13019

Orange • Pineapple • Lime • Shahi Gulab • Kala Khatta • Kool Khus • Kesar Elaichi • Masala Soda (Jal Jeera) • Cola Cola • Mango Ripe
One glass = 180 ml



Duke's

*Gotta
get myself
the goodness of
Mangola!*

