

Dokhm-e-Nashini, B P P, Jame Jamshed and Opinion Poll.

Coming Events Casting Their Shadows on Jame Jamshed.

Two major events have rocked the Parsi Community in the Lord's Year 2000. One is: Dokhm-e-nashini in Mumbai is in doldrums. The other is: Jame Jamshed is on its way to woo the "reformists", also known as liberals or non-conformists.

And the two events have combined to form a terrible black smoke of confusion on the Parsi Community.

The Trustees of Parsi Panchayat declare that they are for "the system" of Dokhma. They have sworn an affidavit to that effect "on Rs.20 stamp paper" in presence of a Notary. (Jame Jamshed 16-7-2000 p.13). Sounds funny. One swears when one fears or feels that one's word will be doubted. These seven soft men led to swear! Why! Afraid of your word being not believed? You are supposed to be honest and truthful. Why swear?

Well! Oath they have made; but they have not told us that there is an almost fierce debate going on amongst themselves on Avairy Vs. Solar Energy; and nobody is clear on the subject. Their separate statement, through their President on the same page of Jame, 16-7-2000, raises more questions than answers, and a strong current of uncertainty and hesitation is running throughout. But let this rest here for the time being. Let us look at the other event namely the monkey-jumps of Jame Jamshed (JJ) on the smoky question.

One fine morning the editor had an inspirational flash of taking polls. First question: "In view of the shortage of birds at Doongerwadi, do you think an alternate system for the disposal of the dead should be introduced?"

A blind man in a dark room looking for a black hat which is not there!

Is the community equipped with the spiritual, religious and mystical truths behind Dokhm-e-nashini? Is the editor himself so equipped? How many Parsis are aware:

1. That Dokhma is not just a "system" of disposal of corpses, but a spiritual Institution directly connected with the journey of the departed soul in the next world?
2. That there are three "Talesems" (fields) in Dokhma : Vultures, Sun-Rays and the religious Kriya of consecration of the Dokhma?
3. That all the three should exist as a package i.e. a holistic combination, and one cannot exist without the other?

Is the editor aware? Is this not a case of the ignorant asking the unaware?

About these three foundations of Dokhm-e-Nashini, we will open a series in this humble magazine. Here, for the present let us see how JJ has behaved all throughout?

The poll answers were received. Out of 528 votes, 63 percent were stated to be for an alternate system. "Midday" was jubilant. The hollowness of this poll ('pole' in Gujarati means hollowness) is made out by JJ itself in an article of Noshir Dadrawala in JJ of 2nd July 2000.

"Considering the fact that according to the 1991 census of India figures, Parsis number 76,382 in India and 53,794 in Mumbai, the poll reflects, in a sense, **the views of 0.69% of the Community in India or 0.98% of the community in Bombay**".

Good Noshir ! But why do you write such hesitant words as "in a sense"? The above figures from the census have full sense! Is there a chain bound on your wrist?

And why does, then, Jame still try to justify the poll action? **What editorial wisdom is this when you**

provide a handle to the non-orthodox to condemn the system (as your new invention, Shriman Jehan Daruwalla was doing) and then declare with a hollow pomp that "Jame has always stood for orthodoxy, supported the orthodoxy and will continue to do so" etc etc, vide the 5th page of JJ 9-7-2000?? And does not the P.P's Affidavit– adorned statement in Jame of 16-7-2000 strongly signify that it was a grave error to have the poll in the first place?

But more follows. Another poll question was: to be or not to be. The poll on the poll itself. Should the poll continue? JJ says, 4626 answered, of which 469 voted to discontinue the poll. **4626? What is the circulation of JJ?** First question was reported to have invoked 528 responses, and this, 4626! **On 12-7-2000 and 13-7-2000 JJ was handed over a statement with 2154 signatures condemning the 'system' of poll! In this background read a hand bill circulated by three committees**, on 6-8-2000 reproduced on page 23 here. You will see this journalistic poll racket thoroughly exposed.

But much more interesting event in this ping pong is JJ's editorial on **p.12 of 27-8-2000** issue, under a big heading "A wake-up call" etc, in reply to the said hand bill. It is amazing to see an editor stooping so low in yellow journalism! **Not a single fact raised in the hand bill is controverted or even referred to.** IT is a reflection of the complete confusion of the writer! He has come out with just abuses and glaring contradictions. The article speaks for itself and exposes itself. It is hilariously pathetic. Is this the way the newly sold out Jame is going to serve the Comm? Journalism is often a ground of healthy controversies. But what is this shower of all slime and no substance? Buyers Beware! Judge yourself. Whenever Jame has flouted orthodoxy, it has stumbled and suffered!

ORTHODOXY IN JAME IS GONE!

Since writing the above, further evidence of JJ's nervous fumbblings have come to light. After the editorial rumblings of 27-8-2000 this humble servant of yours sent a letter to JJ for and on behalf of the three committees, in response to the editorial tantrums of 27-8-2000. This is published in JJ of 10-9-2000 (page 15) with a commenting note of equal length. **Which makes it abundantly clear that JJ has eased to be orthodox.** (For the meaning of "orthodox" and "reformist", please see 1st column of page 18 of this issue.) Again, the following crucial points remain unanswered:

1. JJ should not have gone on poll on religious issues. (It is like a crafty ignorant seeking opinion from an innocent unaware.)
2. The polls on Dokhma and the poll method itself do not reflect the correct situation and are not consistent with the signature campaign and the undoubted sentiments of the majority of Parsis. The figures reflect this convincingly.
3. The editorial stance of JJ was helplessly self contradictory, pretending to be orthodox but wooing the unorthodox. Money power seems to flow from the latter.

These three vital points remain unanswered. In the 10-9-2000 commentary, the following has surfaced:

1. There is a question to the orthodox. What were you doing:
 - i) when many Mobeds refused to pray before the Ruvan, and (ii) did not follow the laws of Ashoi, and (iii) smoked; (iv) when Neville and Nusli Wadia's "Navjotes" were performed; and (v) when Muktd days were curtailed from 18 to 10.

This reads like: what I am doing now is justified by your not doing some other things in the past! But the most amusing part is that all these questions are inherently aimed at JJ itself. "You claimed to be an orthodox paper; what were YOU doing?" This is as if Jehan Daruwalla asking Rusi Dhondy : where were you when I was having several non-orthodox campaigns in my columns in Mumbai Samachar?" That question can be asked to JJ in several other matters too. A grand piece of self indictment is this "Parsi Paradox" comment in JJ of 10-9-2000.

There are other interesting sidelights:

1. "Thesaurus" is the converse of a dictionary. It does not give the meaning of a word. It is a search for a right word from a loose one lurking in mind. (Read Roget's own Introduction).
2. The editorial rigmarole says they respect me and that I am a very busy lawyer. Thanks! But a lawyer does not sign any paper without reading and digesting it.

3. Deenparast Vs. Din dubav should be an extreme embarrassment to Noshir Dadrawalla, the editor of Deenparast magazine!

- K. N. D.

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