

# THE PARSEE VOICE

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For Private Circulation

*[Where Have We Been? What Happened? These and similar questions were thrown at us by many readers of this news / views letter. We felt like telling them, "Bhagwan jaane, what happened!" Anyway, we profusely apologise to our thousands of readers and well-wishers for the inordinate delay in coming out with the first combined issue of 2006 in March. – Ed.]*

## THE ESTABLISHMENT STRIKES BACK!

### **Federation Bosses Gang Up To Stifle The Voice of Democracy!**

### **Hyderabad-Secunderabad Parsi Anjuman Becomes An Unwitting(?) Tool In The Hands of Dictators!**

Remember December 2004, when the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held in Ahmedabad, created a furore in certain sections of the community? Only because, some small Anjumans of Gujarat and Maharashtra, were represented by proxy members, who successfully thwarted the malicious attempts by the Hon. Secretary, Keki Gandhi, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and some BPP trustees, to join the World Body of Zoroastrians. Till then, these Anjumans were taken for granted and their voices, if any, stifled. It is the proxy members who, for the first time, challenged the collective might of the BPP and its satellites!

That was when more than 41 out of the 69 Anjumans gave a resounding **No** to joining any World Body of Zoroastrians; and that was when the Parsee press (Parsiana, Jame Weekly and the Mumbai Samachar) shrieked from the roof tops about the 'rape of democracy' and rampant "hooliganism" etc.

**In fact, that was democracy functioning at its best, maybe a bit unruly, where the hoi polloi got a chance to voice their grievances and drive home their point!**

Nine months later, in September 2005, in Mumbai, the bulldozing minority of vested interests were

foiled from imposing their will on the different Anjumans, for a second time!

That is when the plot was hatched to keep out many of these small Anjumans from participating in the Federation meetings! How best to do it?

#### **The Executive Council**

Call a special meeting of the Executive Council of the Federation, where only those invited can attend. Propose radical changes in the different clauses of the Rules and Regulations of the FPZAI, which is registered as a Society, under the Society Registration Act.

The first step to throttle democracy was finding an Anjuman, which would propose these radical changes. In Parsee parlance, a **bakra** was required to do the dirty work, so that the likes of Keki Gandhi, Adi Sethna, D.K. Tamboly, etc. would say, "our hands are clean. If an Anjuman proposes changes, we are duty bound to consider them!"

Enter the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (PZASH), which, in December 2005, proposed substantial and sweeping changes in the rules and regulations. This is what appeared in the form of a letter dated

17th December, 2005 (which the “Editorial Viewpoint” of Parsiana had been clamouring for, fortnight after fortnight, since December 2004!) signed by Gulbanoo Y. Chenoy, the President of PZASH: “Our representatives Mr. Omin M. Debara (Trustee, PZASH), Mr. Aspi S. Debara (Mg. Committee Member, PZASH) and Mr. Jehangir R. Bisney (Trustee PZASH and Vice President, South Zone, FPZAI) have been attending Federation Meetings for the last several years. **They observe that during the last few meetings, due to several reasons, the Federation has not been able to achieve its aims and objects for which it was formed.**” (Emphasis ours)

Oh really! Do these three gentlemen of PZASH mean to tell us that upto December 2004, these FPZAI meetings, which were mere formalities, where “you-call-me-Rao Saheb-and-I’ll-call-you-Khan Saheb’ – atmosphere prevailed, succeeded in achieving the aims and objects of the Federation?

What were these “aims and objects”, which were torpedoed in December 2004 and September, 2005? Not a word! Silence!

Read what Mrs. Chenoy’s letter states further: “Thus, they recommend certain changes to the Memorandum and Rules and Regulations of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in order to have proper representation and transparency and to let the affairs of the Federation be run smoothly to achieve its aims and objects for the Parsi Zoroastrian community at large”. **How come the lady and the three gentlemen of PZASH forgot to mention that once the Memorandum is altered, the first item on the agenda of FPZAI will be, how quickly and effectively to hitch the wagon of the Parsee community to that World Body of Zoroastrians?** As you know, time is fast running out, particularly for BPP’s Chairman, Minoos Shroff, who will have to retire after 21 years in office. So, before that, he has to be at least the (figure) head of the International Zoroastrian Organisation?!

To our mind, the whole amendment scheme was planned and prepared by vested interests mentioned above and the PZASH abjectly surrendered to the game-plan of the likes of Keki Gandhi, etc!

### **FPZAI Forgets Its Own History!**

Before letting our readers know some of the radical

changes and alterations proposed to be made at, of all places, Thane, on 25th and 26th March, 2006, it is worthwhile tweaking the ear of the Jt. Hon. Secretary, who was perhaps the only one of the present office-bearers of FPZAI, an office-bearer in the late seventies of the last century. That is when the BPP, alongwith a few Gujarat Anjumans had left the FPZAI in disgust, because the Delhi Parsi Anjuman began discussing “controversial subjects”, like admission of children of Parsee women married outside. Those were the days when the late Shiavax Nargolwalla, the President of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman ruled the roost. They thought that if “controversial” discussions were smuggled in at the Federation meetings, hardly any one would mind. But they had not reckoned with B.K. Boman Behram, the Chairman of the BPP, who lead the walk-out from the FPZAI.

As we have already shown in a past issue, the strong orthodox lobby had held a public meeting at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, to compliment the BPP and the other Anjumans who had left FPZAI.

This retribution was too much to stomach for the likes of Keki Gandhi, the Jt. Hon. Secretary and the Delhi Parsi Anjuman.

They asked Nani A. Palkhivala to take over as President of the Federation. That is when the late Mr. Palkhivala expressed his anguish and said that he wouldn’t like to preside “over a rump”!

Thereafter, when Dr. Aspi Golwalla took over as the BPP Chairman, in the eighties, the DPA, Keki Gandhi, etc. pleaded with and cajoled the BPP to rejoin, promising that all controversial issues would be put in cold storage. That is when the BPP and many of the Anjumans of Gujarat rejoined the FPZAI.

**Today, when the same Keki Gandhi, with his supporters in the BPP want to bring in draconian amendments to the rules and regulations, so that many of the small Anjumans automatically lose their voting rights, they forget that they will be riding rough-shod over those very Anjumans, they had begged, some years ago, to rejoin the Federation!!**

### **Gestapo’s Boots!**

If the Executive Council has its way in Thane on the 25th and 26th March, 2006, latter-day Gestapo’s

boots will trample over the fundamental rights of the small Anjumans affiliated to the FPZAI.

Their voting rights will be reduced to below decimal point, their power to appoint proxies will be snatched away and, above all the fees that they were paying every year for the membership of the Federation, will be hiked to astronomical levels. For example, until now, "Every member of the Federation shall pay a minimum annual subscription of Rs.50/- to the Federation." One grants that in these times Rs.50/- per year is a very small figure. But, if the Executive Council has its way at Thane, the minimum subscription will be increased ten-fold: Rs.500/- for Anjumans having less than 100 members. The highest amount of Rs.15,000/- per annum has been mooted for Anjumans having the auspicious (?) number of 10,001 or more members!

Clause 6 of the Rules and Regulations at present, says, "An Anjuman being a member of the Federation shall by a resolution of its Managing Committee or other Body or by writing under the hand of its duly authorised Attorney, authorise from time to time any one or more persons, being preferably members of such Anjuman, as it thinks fit and in such order as it specifies to act as its representatives at any meetings of the Federation..."

It is mainly to amend this clause, that the likes of M/s. Bisney, Gandhi, Tamboly, et al, have decided to summon the Executive Council meeting on the 25th and 26th March, 2006. Whatever the outcome of that meeting, one fact is crystal clear: Gestapo's boots are once again used to trample the voice of democracy and that of the small Anjumans!

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## ***Succulent Nugget From The Past :***

***"It is pertinent to note that the Indian Federation will never agree to join a world body which has non-Zoroastrian members".***

Readers will never be able to guess who said this. Well, it was none other than the somersaulting Jt. Hon. Secretary of the FPZAI, Keki Gandhi,

who, in a "Note containing personal views of Keki J. Gandhi on the Draft Constitution of the Proposed World Body, prepared by Mr. Rumi Sethna of WZO", and sent to all members of the FPZAI, had written these lines in 1998!

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***[Sop To Cerberus: While this issue was in print, reports have come in of a two-month moratorium on any final decision to be taken by the Executive Council, to enable the Anjumans to discuss the matter with their members! The question of questions is: Who is a "member" of the BPP?!]***

## **WHAT'S GOING ON? - I**

### **Is This A Case Of Conversion By The "Front" Door? Bizarre Happenings In A Parsee Anjuman!**

***"The fact, however, remains that the community of Bombay Parsis, as a whole, with the exception of a most microscopic minority, are most unmistakably opposed to the admission of Juddins into their fold, and the reasons are most obvious, throw the door open and thousands of undesirable aliens, such as Bhangis, Mahars, Kahars and Dubras will seek***

***admission... Plaintiffs say there should be no restrictions to the admission of all Juddins. If their contentions are to prevail, the ruin of the community would be accomplished in as many days as it has taken generations to attain to that position of prominence and prosperity which the Parsis of India have now achieved."***

How prophetic these words of Mr. Justice Dinshah D. Daver, nearly a century ago (1908), were, is evident from a startling revelation that **The Parsee Voice** has stumbled upon.

In Tarapore or Tarapur, every second Parsee was/is a “Tarapore” or a “Taraporewalla”. Until some years ago, there were many such Tarapores. One of them was Adi Adarji Tarapore, who lived with his brother Savak until death snatched him away in 1995. Long before that, in House No.11.1 alongwith these two brothers, there lived a big joint family of mother, brothers and sisters, as in most Parsee households. And, as in such households all over Gujarat and parts of mofussil Maharashtra, they had servants and domestics mainly comprising *dublas (dubras)* and *laliyas*.

Similarly, this particular Tarapore family, it seems, had a woman named Yashoda working for them, with her two young boys, Ratilal and Raman. Well, as time passed, the boys grew up and completed school etc.

In October, 1974, the mother, Alamai Adarji Taraporewala, passed away. Her daughters, too, in the meanwhile had married and settled elsewhere.

In the death announcement in Jam-e-Jamshed for 17th October, 1974, [among other relatives] the names of Alamai’s grandchildren and grand nephews and nieces had appeared.

Adi Adarji Tarapore owned vast fields in Vangaon (one station after Boisar), where hay and grass grew. Through the years, he made a pile from their sale. With Adi lived his brother Savak, while Sheriyar and Dinshaw lived in Mumbai.

The young domestics, Ratilal and Raman, in the meanwhile grew up. To enable the readers to follow the sequence of events more easily, we give them in their chronological order: **Note carefully the events taking place in the year 1995.**

**10th September, 1995:** Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly announces the death of Adi Adarji Tarapore in its **Martyuk** column. The details given therein were: “Son of the late Alamai and Adarji Taraporewala, brother of Dinshaw, Savak, Sheriyar, Jaloo, Hilla, Silloo and Nancy; uncle of Adil, Persis, Rashna, Gev, Sharukh, Meher and Marazban.”

Quite a long time before that, the services of Yashoda and her two sons, Ratilal and Raman were terminated.

**Assembly elections were to be held in Palghar District. Therefore, the Palghar District Vidhansabha electoral roll of 1995 mentioned in serial order the names of voters and their addresses.**

- (i) Patel Niloufer Ratilal
- (ii) Patel Ratilal Arvind ..... House No.9
- (i) Patel Raman Arvind
- (ii) Patel Geeta Raman
- (iii) Patel Yashoda Arvind ..... House No. 9-1
- (i) Taraporewala Savaksha Adarji
- (ii) Taraporewala Adi Adarji ..... House No.11-1

**From the above electoral list of 1995, it is amply evident that the Patels lived in Houses Nos.9 and 9-1, while the Taraporewala brothers lived in house No.11-1.**

In between, in House No.10, lived the Champanekar family and in House No.11 lived a Parsee family, the Govekars. The Patel family was a distinct, separate non-Parsee family, living in a totally different house, vis-a-vis the Taraporewala brothers. The very first name in the Patel family voter’s list given above, is that of Niloufer, whose maiden surname was Tarapore, and who had married Ratilal Patel in 1986.

**Events Occurred At Breakneck Speed Between September and December, 1995!**

Before taking up these events, it would be pertinent to look at the scenario in Tarapore and Vangaon at the time of Adi Taraporewala’s death: His only brother in Tarapore, Savak, was in indifferent health. The other two brothers, Dinshaw and Sheriyar lived in Bandra, Mumbai. There was no other successor.

One of the first things that Ratilal, who had married (Niloufer) under the **Special Marriage Act**, in 1986 did was to get his name changed in the Maharashtra Government Gazette of 30th September, 1995, from (this is how his old name appeared) Ratilal Adi alias Arvind Taraporewala Patel to Roni Adi Taraporewala.

Notice the ‘alias’ applied to Adi’s name, **after his death** and the double-barrelled surname, “Taraporewala Patel”, which only some married women use today!!

**The other, immediate act was to get Ratilal’s “Navjote”(?! ) performed, on 25th October, 1995,**

**at the age of 39!!** Who performed this fake “Navjote”? Adil J. Bhesania. The same day, **25th October, 1995**, he got his civil marriage to Niloufer, solemnised – **after 9 long years!** – at **Hotel Sahil**. Who performed this ceremony? M/s. Adil J. Bhesania, and S.S. Mirza! Under the column, “Condition at the time of Marriage, it was shown as, “First Time”!

To many discerning readers, this will be reminiscent of the Petit vs. Jeejeebhoy (or “The Parsi Panchayet” Case 1908, where a French lady who married R.D. Tata, and re-named Soonu or Sunai, had her “Navjote” performed in the morning and her marriage performed with Mr. Tata, the same day by a Parsee High Priest!

As we shall show below, Ratilal himself had admitted all this in a rejoinder to a report in the now defunct, “Parsidom” in 1998. Therein, Ratilal admits that after his “Navjote” at the age of 39, he “became a true Parsi Zoroastrian (sic), with my name as Rony Adi Taraporewala” – no more Arvind or Patel.

What happened to his brother, Raman? He, too, followed the same procedure and changed his name to Raman Adi Taraporewala, but had married a non-Parsee woman, Geeta and continued to follow the Hindu religion!!

Ratilal alias Ronny has two daughters, Benaz and Diana. Even their names were changed as under, in the Government Notification:

- a) Benaz Rati/Ronny Patel/Taraporewala to Benaz Ronny Taraporewala.
- b) Diana Rati/Ronny Patel/Taraporewala to Diana Ronny Taraporewala.

The ‘Navjote’ of Diana was performed on 27th May, 1996 at the Sethna Agiary Hall, by none other than Adil J. Bhesania!

#### **Parsidom’s Allegations:**

In its issue of 15th August, 1998, **Parsidom’s** editor, the late Dara Kadva, published a report entitled, “It Happened at Tarapore”. Most of the allegations therein were similar to the remarks made above by us. However, more than seven years ago, Mr. Kadva wrote: “This whole shocking episode has been narrated to **Parsidom** by several deeply concerned residents of Tarapore, headed by Mr. K.S.N., who are even more perturbed that this Ratilal (self-styled Ronny) regularly visits the Tarapore Agiary and also

goes to religious places elsewhere, including Mumbai, as a Parsi.”

Exactly two months later, in its issue of 15th October, 1998, **Parsidom** published a lengthy “Clarification” from “Ronny Taraporewala,” pertinent extracts from which are reproduced here:

(1) “My late father, Mr. Adi Adarji Taraporewala a Parsi practicing Zoroastrian faith, had married a Hindu woman, Yashoda, at Tarapore and had on his own will integrated himself into her family and was also known as Arvind Patel (Govekar). My mother had filed an affidavit with the Gram Panchayet at Tarapore, saying that she had married Adi some 45 years ago when she was 20 years old. Arvind Patel was only an alias name of my father but no person actually existed by that name.”

“(2) Through Yashoda, my father had four children. I, Ratilal (now known as Ronny) and the eldest. My younger sisters and brother are Leela, Roshan and Raman.”

Thereafter Ratilal, alias Ronny, wrote that, his “father” owned properties in and around Tarapore and Vangaon, which he had divided amongst my mother, younger brother, younger sister Roshan and me as his legal heirs.

He then stated that his “paternal uncles” were dissatisfied as they did not get anything from their brother, Adi Taraporewala. “They would not let my father in peace and constantly put pressure on him to change his Will. But he had refused to yield to such tactics.”

Ratilal then talks of his Navjote and marriage by Parsee rites **a month after the death of Adi Taraporewala**, how he with his brother had brought Adi’s dead body to Mumbai’s Doongarwadi, etc.

He then complains that his uncles had prevented him from attending the last rites at Doongarwadi. So also, in the death announcement, “they also did not mention the names of my mother, my sisters, brother and myself.”

His uncles, he said, had thereafter filed a case in the City Civil court at Palghar, “praying for restraining me and my family members from possessing the properties ... claiming **inter alia** that there was no marriage between Adi and Yashoda and we are only the children of Arvind Patel and her.” “But, in its order

on 13.8.1996, the Civil judge rejected the case and first issued an interim injunction restraining the uncles from interfering with our possession of the suit properties until final disposal of the suit. They had gone in appeal in the same court and that too was dismissed by the learned judge last month.”

For **Parsidom's** satisfaction, Ratilal alias Ronny enclosed certain documents like announcement of Adi Taraporewala's death, the Maharashtra Govt. notification regarding the change in his name, his birth certificate from a hospital in Tarapore, certificate from Gram Panchayat dated **2.6.1996**, another one from the same Panchayat dated **27.6.1996** about his children. He also enclosed copies of his bank accounts jointly with “my aunt, uncles, my father, my wife and our children.”

**Parsidom's** Editor, the late Dara Kadva, in a short note below the above clarification, acknowledged among other things, and very surprisingly so, that, Adi Taraporewala had married Yashoda, that **Arvind Patel** was only an alias of Adi Taraporewala “and no person actually lived by that name”, etc. etc.

In fairness to Mr. Kadva, it must be said that he never saw the voters' list of 1995 with the names and addresses of both the Patel and the Taraporewala families, which was omitted to be enclosed by Ratilal alias Ronny.

### **Raking Up The Matter After 10 years!**

Why has **The Parsee Voice**, taken up this issue once again, today? **The main reason is that during the last few years, Ratilal, alias Ronny has become a trustee of not only the Cowasji Mobed Dharamshala but also of the local Dakhma and Dar-e-Meher, which the latter was first built 185 years ago, in 1820!**

In 1820, the Dar-e-Meher was known as the Vicaji Meherji Dar-e-Meher. 75 years later, Mr. J.N. Petit built a new building and it was called the J.N. Petit Dar-e-Meher. 20 years later, Ratanji J. Vakil consecrated the first **Dadgah** in September, 1895. Today, it is known as the Jamshedji N. Petit Dar-e-Meher.

The rules and regulations of the Shri Tarapore Parsi Zarthoshti Anjuman's Religious Funds and Properties, published in 1947, are very strict, as they should be!

For example, under the heading, “**Daremeher – Sagdi, etc.**”, clause 56 states: “**Prohibition against entry of non-Parsees (પરજોશી)**” “Entry should not be permitted in the building of the Dar-e-Meher or sagdi to members of other communities or progenies of Juddins or anyone married to a juddin – mobeds and Parsee paid workers should maintain a proper vigil in this regard; for which they will be held responsible. Any lapse on their part will entail taking of proper steps against them by the trustees.” Clause 58, entitled, “**Right to prevent any Zarthoshti in non-Parsee dress or bare-headed, from entering**”: “Every faithful Parsee Zarthoshti has a right to enter the **Dar-e-Meher** or the **Sagdi** – even then, no Parsee Zarthoshti can enter these institutions bare-headed or, wearing on English dress or any other community's dress. So also, any doubtful person who claims to be a Parsee Zarthoshti if he doesn't show his Sudreh-Kusti and if it is not proved that he is a Parsee Zarthoshti, he can be debarred from entering by any Zarthoshti...” (Free translation of the two clauses in Gujarati).

The founder-members of the Tarapore Parsi Zarthoshti Anjuman laid down such stringent conditions even for an entry into the religious institutions! **However, today, a person like Ratilal alias Ronny, has become a trustee of both the Dharamshala and the Anjuman at Tarapore!!** There are more than half-a-dozen trustees of these institutions, who have been holding office for donkey's years! One of them is Ervad Pallonji Dastur, the Panthaky of Jeejeebhoy Dadabhai Agiary at Colaba! We understand that in the beginning, Pallonji had objected to Ratilal alias Ronny even entering the Dadgah. But, today, Ratilal Arvind Patel, who calls himself Ronny Tarapore, is a co-trustee with the likes of Pallonji Dastur, etc.

The Parsee Voice is not bothered about Ratilal taking over the properties and assets of the Tarapore family, **but it vehemently objects to Ratilal alias Ronny being a trustee of Parsee Zoroastrian religious institutions.** The FPZAI authorities, instead of expending their energies on finding ways and means of joining the ‘cosmopolitan’ World Body of Zoroastrians and dabbling in other controversial issues, would do well to tackle **this** issue and take immediate action.

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## WHAT'S GOING ON? – II

### Are Mumbai Agiaries Up For Grabs?

Have Mumbai Agiaries suddenly become “orphaned”? Or have their trustees abdicated their duties?

In the Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly of 29th January, 2006, Jimmy Mistry of Della Tecnica, is supposed to be pained “to see our agiaries slowly sliding toward (sic) wreck and ruin, and this has prompted him to come forward and adopt two agiaries of his own will and volition. However, he realises that a lot more needs to be done and in an individual capacity this is not going to be possible”.

So, the new Parsi Resource Group he has established, steps in, which, among other things, will have an ‘Adopt an Agiary’ programme.

What is this “Adoption”? The normal meaning of ‘adopt’ is ‘to take as one’s own, to take over,’ etc.

That is why we asked the two pertinent questions at the beginning of this article. Every Agiary has its own trust deed. It has its founders, settlers, who have established these places of worship for the benefit of the Parsee Zoroastrians. They have been succeeded by other trustees, who are duty bound to carry out the objects of the Trust. When the building housing the **Adaran** needs repairs, the trustees ask for donations from all members of the community, and not a single ultra-wealthy donor! These donations are invariably forthcoming. **Besides, most of the 40+ Adarans in Mumbai, some of which are more than 200 years old, have stood the test of time without anyone having to “adopt” any of them!**

If one were to read between the lines, the programme of “Adopt an Agiary”, one immediately realises that this is a gimmick where two entities

*(continued from page 10) – Golden Words Of Wisdom*

**hilt, is degenerated, which was industrious, has become lazy.**

**“The civilized of the present day, call themselves rational. But the first rule of rationalism is broken by them, that one should never pronounce an opinion, about which one is ignorant.**

benefit in the form of getting tremendous publicity: (a) the Parsi Resource Group and (b) the donor. **Ironically, the trustees of the Agiary not only take a back seat, but virtually abdicate their responsibilities!**

In the same report in Jame, Mistry urges: “There are barely 100 Agiaries across India. I have already adopted two (Rustom Framna at Dadar and Langrana in Fort)”.

The above quote deserves both brickbats and bouquets. Brickbats, because as this Editor had pointed out at length, in the columns of “The Bombay Samachar”, three years ago, the so-called ‘adoption’ of Rustom Framna has completely ruined the sanctity and piety of the **Adaran, which is what alone matters in any Agiary and NOT the superficial edifice that houses it.** In the last three years, all that has happened to this Dadar Parsi Colony Agiary, including the totally unnecessary and even wrong craze of obtaining some heritage award – once again for the glorification of the cement-concrete or stone structure... is a sad story, which we shall keep for some other time...

Bouquets, because Mistry talks of other Agiaries in different parts of India. If Mistry and his Resource Group train their sights on **Adarans and Dadgahs**, languishing for years in different parts of Gujarat, and even big towns like Bharuch, cut off all their personal materialistic claptrap, and concentrate on resuscitating these religious places in the real sense of the term, they would be rendering a yeoman service to the community.

**Otherwise someone’s “dream” will become another’s nightmare!**

“A Parsi is supposed to be intelligent, magnanimous, bold, resolute, virtuous, law-abiding, because he follows his religion very closely. But a present Parsi has become very cold to the practical canons of his religion. This coldness certainly affects the noble traits of the character of his forefathers. Parsis have allowed home education to decay, with the result that the progeny is becoming destitute of noble Parsi qualities and religiousness.”

– (The Late) Dr. F.S. Chiniwala

## OUR MAIL BOX

### I. Tamboly's "Fourth Estate"

Sir,

In this age of Kalyug, anything is possible when evil is at its peak. Charlatans are worshipped as gurus, politicians who make money in the name of the poor, are hailed as heroes by a gullible public.

This is true of the Parsi community, which worships false heroes and considers them to be modern-day Sethias! Take the example of D.K. Tamboly, the WZO strongman. In the Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly of 19th March, Tamboly has written an award-winning(?) piece on "The Fourth Estate", and goes on to enlighten the public on the role of the media and the need for it to be balanced.

Now, here is a man, who has been widely perceived to have undermined the function of the Parsi media, specially the Jame Weekly, which he uses week after week to fire his missiles on the traditionalists. Of course, the dirty job is never done by him, but via the two letters, "Ed."

For the past six years now, long time readers of Jame have been appalled to read almost every week, the most disgusting attacks in the most disgusting

language, against certain individuals and traditionalists.

It is, therefore, highly amusing how Tamboly gets away by writing a long, rambling article on the Fourth Estate.

Incidentally, Tamboly now also seems to wield some clout over the other Parsi publication, "The Parsiana", whose attacks and diatribes have got more and more vicious over the past one year! Its editor, Jehangir Patel, one of the finest journalists of our times, has, unfortunately given up all semblance of balanced writing.

With the Parsi main media in such a pathetic state, it is for D.K. Tamboly to introspect and do some soul-searching, before he writes such hypocritical nonsense and expects everyone to swallow it!

– Darius Writer

[Editor's Note: *Tamboly's "Fourth Estate" went for a spin when, on the morning of 25th March, 2006, "The Parsee Voice" was refused entry to cover the FPZAI Executive Council's meeting at Thane!!*]

### II. The Election Circus

Sir,

Be prepared to witness the Grand Circus likely to hit the city of Mumbai, shortly. The circus is sponsored by the ringmasters – the pretenders, as shrewd as the foxes and as sharp and hungry as the vultures. They are assisted by the high caliber experts, well-experienced in the art of *goondaism*, churning up lies, making false and malicious propaganda, indulging in dirty tricks and other astute acts as required by the ringmasters from time to time. The actors are sixteen hundred. The number is likely to be increased, as the BPP is working overtime, to solve the puzzle in order to keep the undesirable elements away.

#### The Mystery

**The mystery baffling many, is that why the community gets so much excited and worked**

**up, during election time, as only about two per cent of the community, exercise their right to vote during the elections, while the other ninety-eight per cent of them, twiddle their thumbs, as they have no role to play whatsoever, in the process of election. Another mystery is that why many respectful, level headed persons aspire for trusteeship of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP)? On the one hand, they complain that the job of a trustee is thankless and that the community is ungrateful, not to recognize all the good work they are undertaking, as being reported in the BPP Review from time to time, and on the other hand, they move heaven and earth to get elected as trustees, treat it as a life and death question, and are known to spend lakhs to realize their dream. When questioned, their pat**



reply is 'service to the community.' We have heard enough of this crap. It seems obvious, there is some vested interest. *Kuch under ki baat hai.*

### **Donations Extracted By The BPP For The Right To Vote**

The existing practice of the BPP to extract money, from the voters, in order to give them their right to vote for the trustees of BPP, though unbelievable, is not only highly objectionable, but seems morally incorrect and illegal too; instead a more appropriate and acceptable solution would be to collect donations of Rupees twenty to thirty lakhs, from the candidates, wishing to stand as candidate for the trustees of the BPP. The candidates have been showing their anxiety and desperation to go to any length, and spend lakhs, to achieve their cherished goal to becoming trustees of the BPP. Instead of undergoing all the trouble to make all arrangements for holding elections, undergoing lots of mental stress and agony and spending a large sum of money/muscle power, giving a donation of twenty to thirty lakhs would be peanuts for them. **Has anyone ever heard of any agency, Government or otherwise, demanding money from the public in order to permit them to exercise their right to vote their trustees/office bearers?**

### **The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and its Trustees**

Once well spoken of and highly respected – the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, has fallen from grace, specially after the disgraceful and sordid incident, when a trustee had illegally managed to occupy the chairman's seat and had to vacate the same, grudgingly as per the directive of the court. It is no secret that there are divisions within the BPP and that the trustees and members of the staff are indulging in petty politics.

This is what was said by Mr. Behramji Malbari in the year 1882, which was published in the Jam-e-Jamshed column, *'Mumbai-no-Varghodo.*

*“The Punchayet is a highly respectable body, but it seems to be a body without soul; for none of its many members, it seems, can call his soul his own. The Punchayet Sheth is often a prime old individual, well shaven, well washed and scented. This faultlessly white being walks as if he were a basket of newly-laid eggs.”*

An ideal trustee is the one, who is noble, polite, honest, with unquestioned integrity, candid, impartial, conscientious, and principled, with clear sense of vision: Dedicated to the welfare and upliftment of the needy, deserving and the downtrodden. Having affection and love for God and his fellow beings.

**In the past, kind, noble and benevolent philanthropists, who had contributed huge sums of money from their own pockets, for providing places of worship, dwellings, hospitals, libraries, and other charities for the welfare and upliftment of the less fortunates, used to retain the financial and management control with themselves, to ensure that the money contributed by them was appropriately utilized for the purpose dear to their heart and that the money did not slip into other pockets. They had genuine filial affection for the community. Since the money came out of their own pockets, there was no chance of it being misappropriated. They were highly successful, were ardently adored and immensely respected.**

With the passage of time, after the exit of the original donors, their successors/nominees were either not available or were not interested of were eased out by the new breed of professionals, who were eagerly awaiting to grab the opportunity to become trustees of the BPP. The glaring example of the Wadia Baugs will prove the point. Nawroze, Jer, Rustom, Cusrow and Ness Baugs, worth crores, were built by the Wadia family from the money, out of their own pockets, for use of the deserving and less fortunate human beings, at a nominal rent starting from eight annas. The maintenance/management of the baugs, was with the N.N. and R.N. Wadia Trust, the residents of the baugs were satisfied and happy with the Wadia Trustees. However under one pretext or the other, the BPP seems to have practically taken over the control of the Wadia baugs. The flats are auctioned to the highest bidder, at a premium, normally not affordable even by the upper middle class families, instead of allotting the dwellings, to the needy and deserving as originally envisaged by the Wadias. It is for the community to decide to what extent the BPP, is justified in auctioning the Wadia flats.

The Dictionary definition of a trustee is “*person or member of board given possession of Property with legal obligation to administrate solely for purposes specified.*”

Though, there may not be a possibility to debar anybody from contesting elections of the trustees of the BPP, there is a general perception, among many,

that persons, whose professions are such that force them not to speak the truth or conceal the truth for their livelihood, such as lawyers, account advisors and traders should be debarred from holding the office of the trustees of the BPP.

– Dali J. Gundevia

## Golden Words Of Wisdom

“The human physical body with its metabolic heat energies, in presence of its thinking powers and volitional powers, powers of senses and sensualities, constantly emit *druj* or infection in howsoever a meagre degree. On (certain) physiological occasions, like defecation, urination, menstruation and semen emissions, the outburst of the *druj* is considerable, affecting the person’s own *khoreh* (aura) and also that of other outsiders, in a certain degree.

It is on account of this, that ablutions are ordained to be performed and *tarikats*, that is certain procedures which lessen the intensity of the destructive *druj* activity (are to be practised), so that

the evil destructive magnetism is easily overpowered...

**“As long as the Parsi community ardently observed such *tarikats*, it was honest, powerful and respected. Present day education has broken the usage of these old customs, damning them as superstitions, with the result that, the community, which never had produced a single prostitute during its exile of 12 centuries in India, is showing signs to the contrary; a community which was honest to the**

(continued on page 7)

## Iski Pagdi Uské Sar Pé!

*So typical of the WZO philosophy of “Acceptance”, WZO Trustee, Dadi Mistry of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, plonks his pagdi on the head of a **firang**, at the recently held Silver Jubilee function of the WZO, in Mumbai.*

# મુંબઈની આસ્પાસની અને ગુજરાતની નાની અંજુમનો, સાવધાન! ફેડરેશન તમારા હક્કો છીનવી લેવા તત્પર!

ફેડરેશન ઑફ પારસી ઝોરાસ્ટ્રિયન અંજુમનઝ ઑફ ઈન્ડિયા, જે છેલ્લાં ૨૫ વર્ષોથી કાર્ય કરે છે, તેમાં ૬૦ ઉપર નાની-મોટી અંજુમનો અને પંચાયતો સભ્યો છે, તેઓ ઉપર નજદીકનાં ભવિષ્યમાં જે તવાઈ આવવાની છે, તે કેટલીક અંજુમનોને તો ખબરજ નથી! કારણ કે માર્ચ ૨૦૦૬નાં છેલ્લા અઠવાડિયામાં ખાસ ૨ દિવસની “એકઝીક્યુટિવ કાઉન્સિલ” ની સભા ઠાણેમાં મળી હતી, જે સીકંદરાબાદ-હૈદરાબાદ પારસી જરથોશ્તી અંજુમનનાં કહેવાથી, બોલાવવામાં આવી હતી.

આ સભા બોલાવવાનો મૂળ હેતુ એ હતો કે, ફેડરેશનનાં મોટે ભાગનાં બધાજ કાયદા-કાનુનમાં જડમૂળથી ફેરફાર કરવાનાં, જેથી, અત્યાર સુધી જે કેટલીક નાની અને મધ્યમ અંજુમનોએ પોતાના મૂળભૂત હક્કો ખોઈ દેશે, જેવાકે પોતાનાં મતાધિકાર છીનવવા (જે અંજુમનનાં સભ્યોની સંખ્યા અતિ નાની હોય, તેઓને ૧ “વોટ” થી પણ નીચેનો ‘વોટ’ મળશે: ચાને કે, ૦.૩, ૦.૨, વિગેરે મત કરવાનો હક્ક મળશે!!), જે અંજુમનો બહારની વ્યક્તિ ને પોતા તરફથી મતદાન કરવાનો અધિકાર આપતી હતી, તે હવે તેમ ભાગ્યેજ કરી શકશે, અને જો તે બહારની વ્યક્તિ મતનો અધિકાર મેળવવા માંગે, તો

તેને પોતે ૧૨ મહિનાં તે અંજુમનવાળા ગામ યા શહેરમાં રહેવું પડશે (!?); તેમજ વળી જે વાર્ષિક લવાજમ હાલ રૂ.૫૦ છે, તેમાં ભયંકર વધારો, અંજુમન/પંચાયતનાં સભ્યોની સંખ્યા મુજબ, કરવામાં આવશે. નાનામાં નાની અંજુમને પ્રતિ વર્ષે રૂ.૫૦૦ ભરવા પડશે.

આ અને બીજી બધી ચાલબાઝી અને વખોડવા લાયક પેતરાઓ શા માટે કરવામાં આવે છે? કારણ કે હાલમાં જે અંજુમનો, કેટલીક વ્યક્તિઓને “પ્રોકઝી” આપી ફેડરેશનની સભાઓમાં મોકલાવે છે, તે હવે તેમ કરી શકશે નહિં! અને દિલ્હી પારસી(?) અંજુમન, મુંબઈ પારસી પંચાયત, કોલ્કાતા અને મદ્રાસ અંજુમનો તેમજ આ ફેડરેશનનાં નામચીન જોડ્યા સેક્રેટરી, કેડી ગાંધીને છક્કાં થાય, કારણ કે પછીથી પેલાં નામીયાં “વર્લ્ડ બોડી” માં જોડાવાનો રસ્તો આ દીનદૂબાઉ વ્યક્તિઓ માટે ખુલ્લો થઈ જાય!

માટે, આ નાનકડા લેખથી અમો ગુજરાતની તમામ અંજુમનોને ચેતવીએ છીએ કે અત્યારથીજ તમારો પ્રબળ અવાજ ફેડરેશનનાં જોડ્યા સેક્રેટરીને સંભળાવો. નહિં તો તમારા વર્ષોનાં હક્કો છીનવાઈ જશે!

## કોલાંમાયની કટકટ

(કોલાંમાય, તે લગભગ ૮૦ની ભરતીમાં આવેલાં, અમારા કુટુંબી વડીલ. એમનું મન હજીએ ઘણું ચંચળ અને ચબરાક. એઓ અસલનાં મેટ્રિક પાસ, પણ દુનિયવી ભંડોળ જબરજસ્ત! જરથોશ્તી ઇર્મ માટે આજે પણ એમની ફિદાગીરી અજબ-ગજબની. પારસી કોમની બધી દિશામાં પડતીથી એમનું દિલ બહુ દુઃખી થાય. તબિયેતે પણ એઓ ઠીકઠાક. સિવાય કે આંખો નબળી.

કોલાંમાયનાં મોટાં કુટુંબમાં ઘણાકો ગુજર પામ્યા. હવે જે રહી ગયા તે અમો - એઓનાં નાનાં કઝિનો, જેમકે, હું, તે કાકાનો હોમી; બીજાઓ જેઓ એવણને ઘડીઘડી મળવા આવે, તેમાં, મામાનો મીનુ, કુઈની ફેની, અને માસીનો મહેરનોશ. સૌથી નાનો તે આ મેહેરનોશ, જે

હજી નોકરી કરે છે અને ગામનાં ગપાટા કોલાંમાયને લાવી આપેય.

બાકીનાઓ, જેઓ અમારા માયજીની ચાલુ ખબર રાખે, તે પાસેનાં પાલનજી, નીચેનાં નાજાંમાય અને ઉપરનાં ઉકરજી!)

[આ નવી કોલમ, જ્યારે આ નાના અખબારમાં જગ્યા હશે, ત્યારેજ છપાશે, જેની અમારા કદરદાન વાંચકોએ નોંધ લેવી]

-તંત્રી

તે દહાડે, ૨૦મી માર્ચની સાંજે, હું અમારા માયજીને નવરોઝ મુબારક ઈચ્છવા ગયો, ત્યારે કોલાંમાય નાં

હાથમાં એક દિવસ અગાઉનું જામે હતું. તેઓ તેને વાંકુ, સીધું કરી, ફેરવી, ફેરવીને જોયા કરે.

“શું છે, માય એમ પેપર ફેરવ્યા કાંચ કરોચ?” “અરે, હોમી દિકરા સાંચું થયું તું આવી લાગો તે. આય ફોટો કેમ જોવાનો તે કઈ સમજ નહિ પરતું!”

“માયજી, આય એમ પેપર આરું કરીની જોવા!” “અરે, મરેરે! તે જામે તો દર અઠવાડિયે સીધું આવતું; તે એમ કેમ?”

“એ તો તમેજ હર્મેશ કેઓચની કે, ‘જમાનાની તાસીર...’

“એટલે?” “એટલે એમ કે હવે બિચારું જામેબી પોણી બસો વરસનું બુકું થયું, તે આસ્તે આસ્તે હવે vertical નું horizontal કોઈ કોઈ વરા થાયેચ!”

“પણ આય આવો મસમોટો ફોટો કોણનો છે?” “અથોરનાનોનો!”

“અથોરનાનોનો?” તે એ લોકને આવો મોટો ફોટો પરાવવાનો અભખરો થઈ આવ્યો, સું?”

“નહિ માયજી. આય તો પેલા જીમી મિસ્ત્રી કરીને એક ભાઈ છે જેવણ આપરી અગિયારીઓ દત્તક લેવા માંગેચ અને મોબેદો માટે જાતજાતની સ્કીમો કરવા માંગેચ, તેઓએ એક મેળાવડો યોજેલો!”

“અરે વાહ, આંચ તો બહુ સારી વાત છે. એમ તો ગએ વરસે જીભરું ખોજસ્તે મિસ્ત્રી વિ. એ પણ બધા મોબેદો અને દસ્તુરોને એકઠા કરી માન-ચાંદ આપેલાં. મને તો રેસ કોર્સ પર મામાનો મીનુ પોતાની ગારીમાં લઈ ગયેલો. સાથે વરી નીચેનાં નાજાંમાયબી આવી ગએલા! શું સરસ ખુફી જગા! બધા મોબેદોબી બનાજીનાં પાક આતશબહેરામમાં જસન કરી, તાં આવેલા. પેલી કોઈ નવી સંસ્થા-હું તો એનું નામબી ભૂલી ગઈ - તે ઊભી કીધેલી ને પછી બધાં પેટ ભરીને જમેલાં...”

“માયજી, તે સંસ્થાનું નામ તો વાપિઝ. પણ આય વખત તો ફકત સફેદ પાઘરીવાલાઓ અને તેઓનાં બૈરીઓને બોલાવેલાં. અને આય મેળાવડો તો લાલબાગ પરનાં એક 5-star hotel માં કીધેલો...”

હજુ તો હું કંઈ આગળ બોલું, તેટલાં મમઈતો એકદમ બાંગ મારી ઉઠ્યાં: “સુઉઉ...? ફાઈવ-સ્ટાર હોટલમાં, ચાને પંચતારક દરજીનાં ધામમાં? [કોલાંમાય જેને ‘દરજીનું ધામ’ કહે છે, તેનો અર્થ એમ થાય, કે એવી

જગા જ્યાં આખો વખત અભડાત અને અપવિત્રાઈજ હોય. અંગ્રેજીમાં એને putridity યા pollution કહી શકાય. આજની બધીજ આધુનિક સંસ્થાઓ, જ્યાં પવિત્રતાનાં નિયમો બિલકુલ જાળવવામાં નહિ આવે, તેને પારસીઓ “દરજીનું ધામ” કહે.] અરે ઘરી પરે રે આવા મેળાવડાઓ કરનારા અને તેમાં ભાગ લેનારાઓ! સું આય બધાને ખ્યાલ નહિ આવ્યો કે, અમે નાહી-મોટી ક્રિયા કરનારાઓ આવા અભેખરનાં વાતાવરણમાં કેમ જઈએ? સું એ લોકો બધા નાયવા કુદવા ને ખાવા-પીવાજ ગએલા? અરરરર... આંચ કેવો કળયુગ!

અરે, બાવા હોમી, તું આવતાં જતાં આય જીમી ને પીઠ પખોરીને કહે કે કોલાંમાય તુંને અત્તરઘડી મળવા માંગેચ!”

“અરે માયજી, રહેવા દેવ. આંચ બધાઓ તો પૈસે પૂર, તે વરી હું કહાં એની આગળ જાઉં. આજે જમાનો કેવો છે તે તો તમે જાણોચ: પૈસા ફેંકો, તમાશા દેખો!”

“જા, જા! એમ કઈ હોય કે? હું હમણાંજ આપરા એદલદાઝને ફોન કરીને પુછુંચ કે તમે બી ગએલા કે, ને ગયા હોવ તો પહેલે નાહનમાં બેસો ને પછીજ મારે તાંહની ક્રિયા કરજો!”

“માયજી, આય ફોટામાં જોઈ લેવ કે તમારા એદલદાઝબી તેમાં છે કે. મારી એક ફેન્ડે તો એક એક જણાને ગણયા, તો કહે કે, ૩૫૦ને બદલે તેમાં ૨૯૬૪ સફેદ પાઘરીવાળા સાહેબો છે.”

“અરે, અરે, અરે... આય જતે દહારે હું સું જોઉંચ ને સમજુંચ! ખરેખર, અત્યારે જો એક જેહાંગીર ચીનીવાલા હતે તો કોઈની મકદુર નહિ કે આવી અભેખરની જગાઓમાં મોબેદોનાં મેળાવડાઓ કરતે! ખરેખર, એવણ ઘરી ઘરી લખતાતા કે, મોર નાચી નાચીને પોતાનાજ પગને જોઈને રડે!” તેવી વાત અહીંયાંબી થવાનીજ છે!”

“માયજી, મને નાકાપરની કેમિસ્ટની દુકાન બંધ થઈ જાય તે પહેલાં જવાનું છે, તે હું જાઉંચ,” એમ કહીને હું ઊઠ્યો, કારણ નહિ તો કોલાંમાય હજુ આગળ lecture આપતે. પણ રસ્તામાં એઓનાં શબ્દો કેટલા વાજબી હતા, તેનો વિચાર આવ્યાજ કીધો. ખરેજ, આ નાની કયામતનોજ જમાનો છે!

-હોમી