

# THE PARSEE VOICE

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## THE COMPLETE LOW-DOWN ON THE HISTORIC "DADYSETH HOUSE"!

It took a great deal of effort to delve deep into the secrets buried in the "Dadyseth House", the building across the Dadyseth Atash Behram, which some thoughtless persons want to demolish!

Dastur Mulla Firoz *bin* Mulla Kaus, the first Kadmi High Priest, who helped his father, Mulla Kaus Rustom Jalal, enthrone the Holy Dadyseth Atash Behram in 1783, passed away at the age of 72 in 1830. However, before that, he had willed that, among other things, his highly valuable library, in which there were 522 priceless Persian, Arabic, Turkish, English as well as Avesta-Pahlavi, Pazend books and manuscripts, should be bequeathed to the leaders of the **Kadmi** Anjuman.

Accordingly, his disciple, Mobed Fardunji Marzbanji, the founder of "The Bombay Samachar", and, later, "Jam-e-Jamshed", prepared a list of all the books, as desired by the **Kadmi** leaders.

**"After the Chaharum of the learned High Priest, this Mulla Firoz Library was established on 18th August, 1842, in the front *Deewankhana* (hall of audience) of the building opposite the Dadyseth Atash Behram, which was the residence of the Kadmi Dastur."**

The roster of names of persons, who took charge of the Mulla Firoz Library, in the initial stage is very impressive. Some of them were: Cursetji Ardeshir Dadyseth, Framji Cowasji Banaji, Dastur Rustom Kaikobad Mulla Firoz, Maneckji Limji Banaji, Framji Bhikaji Pandey, Cowasji M. Ashburner, etc.

When the library was taken in their charge, 94 more books were added by Dastur Rustomji Kaikobadji Mulla Firoz, the nephew who had succeeded the late Dastur Mulla Firoz, making a total of 616 books.

### **The Mulla Firoz Madressa**

In 1854, the second Dastur Mulla Firoz, too, passed away. When the Kadmi Anjuman met the next day, on 24th April, 1854, to appoint a new Dastur, (who was his son, Dastur Ardeshir Rustomji Mulla Firoz), it was proposed by Mr. Khurshedji Nusserwanji Cama and seconded by Mr. Framji Nusserwanji Patel that: "In our community, there has been a dire necessity for a long time to start a Madressa where, Zend (Avesta), Pahlavi and Persian languages are taught. So, if the leaders of our Kadmi Anjuman, can raise funds for such a purpose, it can be named after the late Mulla Firoz, and it would benefit greatly those who wish to study Zend, Pahlavi and Persian."

**Further, Framji N. Patel proposed and Ardeshir K. Dadyseth seconded that, "the library of the late Mulla Firoz should be attached to the Madressa, and the books in the library could be copied and translated, for the benefit of the people."**

Those attending that meeting, coughed up the then astronomical sum of Rs.8270/- for the establishment of the Madressa. A Managing Committee to administer the Madressa was promptly appointed.

The Mulla Firoz Madressa was established and inaugurated on 27th August, 1854, at the Dadyseth

Atash Behram (then known as Dadybhai Nosharwanji Atash Behram).

**Thus, both the Mulla Firoz Library and the Mulla Firoz Madressa were lodged in the building across the Dadyseth Atash Behram, today known as the "Dadyseth House".**

But it was realised in a few months, that students found the Madressa to be at a long distance, so the Madressa was brought to the Fort. From 1860 to 1871, five students were paid a grand sum of Rs.5/- per annum.

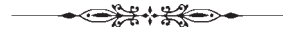
From 1861, the Madressa also allowed students of Mr. Khurshedji R. Cama, who were learning comparative philology at Mr. Cama's residence, to study there for two years.

### **Mulla Firoz Library shifted**

In August 1862, the library, too, was moved to a rented building in the Fort area.

**But, once again in June 1878, the Mulla Firoz Library was shifted to the Dadyseth House, in front of the Dadyseth Atash Behram, until it was moved to the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute at Fort, in the beginning of the 20th century.**

**Thus, every brick and stone in this edifice, is literally embedded with history! Were it to be in any other country, it, alongwith the Atash Behram, would have been placed in Grade/Class I of the Heritage authorities and preserved at all cost!**



## **The Times We Live In...**

# **Present Trustees of Fire Temples Just Don't Do Their Homework!**

Our ancestors, who in the 18th and 19th centuries, established fire temples in Mumbai, took great care to draft the objects of the trust deeds pertaining to their Atash Behrams and Agiaries. Although they never had the faintest notion that their successor trustees, 100-200 years later, would try to find ways and means to circumvent the fundamental objects of the trust deed, by some lacuna or loophole here or there, or by exploiting a new avenue open to them (like the availability of extra FSI, as at present), our forbears took pains to ensure that the basic religious purpose of the trust could not be sidelined.

What then was the true intention of the sagacious settlers? To maintain and preserve the sanctity and the holy atmosphere, in and around the fire temple. To ensure that even with rapidly changing times, the **Agiaries** and **Atash Behrams** remained, as much as possible, fortresses of **Ashoi** (piety).

**These trustees of yore knew at least one thing: however much times may change they would stick to the original purpose for which the trust was created.** They became trustees of fire temples, either because they were the grandsons or grand nephews, with sound religious background, of the families that founded these places of worship, or

because they were sincere, straightforward persons, who were true devotees of the **Atash Padshahs**.

Today, in many cases, as we have seen through the years, trustees of fire temples are hardly bothered about the religious/spiritual aspect of their precious asset, whether the sanctity of the **Agiary** or **Atash Behram** is maintained or not throughout the year! We know several trustees, who will pay a visit to the Fire Temple, just two-three times in a year!! The rest of the months, the employees of the trust may pay an occasional visit, to open the steel boxes, to collect the funds for Kathi, repairs etc!

So dismal is the state of affairs today, regarding the calibre and competence of many trustees of our Fire Temples, that these worthies don't care if the institutions under their care, go to seed. At times, buildings are deliberately allowed to go into a state of disrepair, so that they can then declare to the authorities that such and such a building has become dilapidated and, therefore, should be demolished. That's when they get their extra FSI to raise monumental monsters, as is already the case with the Lalbaug Leviathan!



## **Sad Demise of Dastur Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza**

We note with great regret the death of a well-known traditional scholar of the Zoroastrian religion and of the Avesta-Pahlavi languages, Dastur Dr. H. K. Mirza, on Tuesday, the 11th May, 2004, at the ripe old age of 96.

Dastur Dr. Mirza was the High Priest of the Holy Iranshah Atash Behram for nearly 60 years.

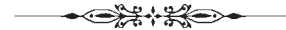
At one time, he held the post of the Principal of the J.J. Zarthoshti Madressa for many years.

Many a student of the religion, fondly remember his gentle way of teaching.

His written output is phenomenal: books, treatises, essays, tracts, etc. both in English and Gujarati. But, his **magnum opus** will always remain his "Outline of Parsi History."

He was a traditionalist to the core, and for many long years supported Mr. Jehangir Chiniwalla in his campaign against the radical "reformists."

Dastur Dr. H.K. Mirza will be remembered in scholarly circles for a long, long time! May his soul continue to progress in the higher realms!



## **Welcome Dastur Dr. Peshotan H. Mirza!**

'The Parsee Voice' has great pleasure in congratulating the new High Priest of Iranshah, Dastur Dr. Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza. May he follow in the footsteps of his illustrious father and guide the community in these difficult times!

## **From Bardoli to Bombay To Barcelona (via London)!**

Last November-end, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held its meeting in Bardoli, a detailed report of which was published in this journal. The next meeting will be held on the 12th and the 13th June, 2004.

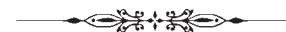
**For us, Bardoli was a fiasco, as far as the reponse of the representatives of the various Punchayets and Anjumans was concerned!** Hardly any member raised his voice to turn down the concept of a World Body of "Zarthushtis"(!). We ask the Presidents of the Ahmedabad, Pune and Surat Parsi Punchayets, "What did you achieve at Bardoli? Just heard silently what the BPP trustees and their CEO, not forgetting the Hon. Secretary of the FPZAI, Keki Gandhi, who has recently found his voice, had to say? Mr. Khojeste Mistree, an invitee at the Federation meeting, was the only one to express strong reservations about the World Body! And when some BPP panjandrums gave him a dressing down, what were the young and old members of the Anjumans doing? Surely, you are not a bunch of **jee-huzoors**, who can't think independently?! Then, why keep mum?"

**Is it too much to request Mr. Areez Khambatta, Mr. Dara Irani and so many others of different Anjumans to stand up and be counted?** At least, they should make it abundantly clear that they will have no truck whatsoever with the pseudo-Zoroastrians now being "manufactured" all round the world! **Please do not fail your Anjumans in this vital matter at the next Federation meeting to be held in Mumbai on the 12th and 13th of June, 2004.**

At present, as far as the World Body is concerned, for no reason whatsoever, things are kept under wraps by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Why? Shouldn't the Parsees of India openly discuss the goings-on regarding the World Body?

Thereafter, the pow-wow is supposed to continue in London in July 2004, en route to the World Parliament of Religions in Barcelona, where, we are told, "many Zoroastrians are likely to attend".

Which ones, the real or the fake? *O Tempora!*



# Dadyseth Atash Behram Public Meeting Notice – Change in Date

The meeting of Parsee-Irani Zoroastrians, which was to be held on the 4th June, 2004 to protest against the demolition of "Dadyseth House" will now be held at the Framji Cowasji Institute, Dhobi Talao on Thursday, the 10th June, 2004.

Please ensure attendance in large numbers to preserve our heritage and the sanctity of the Holy Atash Behram!

## આ તેજ ઈતિહાસીક “દાદીશેઠ હાઉસ” છે...

જે સધ્ધાર હોવા છતાં, ટ્રસ્ટીઓ આજે તોડી પાડવા માંગે છે;

કે જ્યાં પાક દાદીશેઠ આતશબહેરામનાં સંયુક્ત સ્થાપક દસ્તુર મુદ્દાં ફીરોઝ બીન મુદ્દાં કાઉસ ડસ્તમ જલાલ, રહેતા હતા;

કે જ્યાં દસ્તુર મુદ્દાં ફીરોઝના મરણ બાદ, એઓનાં લગભગ ૬૦૦ ઉપરનાં, કિમતી હસ્તલેખો, પુસ્તકો, વિ. નું કિતાબખાનું હસ્તી ધરાવતું હતું;

કે જ્યાં એઓનાં નામની મદ્રેસા - મુદ્દાં ફીરોઝ મદ્રેસા - થોડો વખત માટે સ્થાપવામાં આવી હતી. ત્યાર પછી, આ મદ્રેસા કોટમાં લઈ જવામાં આવી હતી!

આવી ઐતિહાસિક ઈમારત, આજના કોઈ કમઅક્કલી પારસીઓ, તોડી પાડીને “ગરીબ જરથોશ્તીઓ” માટે નવું, હાલની ઢપનું મકાન બાંધવા માંગે છે!

જ્યાં લગભગ ૭૦ ‘ફ્લેટો’, અને તેની સાથે ‘કાર’પાર્કો, મેલાં પાણીનો નિકાલ કરવાની ગટરો, તેમજ મળમૂત્ર, ઈ. નાં નિકાલ માટેની ગટરો, બહારનાં ફેર્યાઓ, વેપારીઓ વિ. ની આવણ જવણ હદબહારની વધશે!

તો પછી થોડાકજ ફૂટ લાંબે આવેલાં મુંબઈનાં સર્વેથી પુરાતન દાદીશેઠ આતશબહેરામની કેવી કફોડી હાલત થાય, એ તો તમે કલ્પનાનાં ઘોડાઓ ઘોડાવો, તો પણ ખ્યાલ ન આવે!!

અને વળી, આજ બધી ગંદી ગટરોમાંથી મેળું આ પાક આતશબહેરામનાં એકનાં એક કૂવાને ન લાગે, એની ગેરંટી ટ્રસ્ટીઓ આપશે?

શા માટે આવા પાપનાં કામોમાં કોઈક પારસીઓ અટવાવા માંગતા હશે, તે અમને સમજજ પડતું નથી! છે કોઈ ધનધન ધોરી આ લોકોની અક્કલ ઠેકાણે લાવવા માટે?!

## ઘરડી ઘોડીને લાલ લગામની સ્થિતિમાં કેકી ગાંધી!

પારસી વૉઈસના માર્ચ અંકમાં ફેડરેશનના સેક્રેટરી કેકી ગાંધીએ બારડોલીની સભામાં ઉચ્ચારેલા વાહીયાત શબ્દોવિષે વાંચી નવાઈ લાગી હતી. વર્ષો પહેલાં કેકી ગાંધીએ પરજાત સાથના લગ્નોથી પેદા થયેલી ઓલાદને ઉદવાડા ઈરાનશાહ અને બીજા ધાર્મિક સ્થાનોએ લઈ જવાનો ઈરાદો જાહેર કર્યો હતો, તેની સામે વિરોધ થયો હતો, છતાં ગુપચુપ પોતાનો ઈરાદો પુરો કરી પાપ કર્યું હોય તો ખુદા જાણે?

ફેડરેશન મારફતે બહાર પડતા ફેડ ન્યુઝ લેટરની ગુજરાતી આવૃત્તિ મુંબઈ પારસી પંચાયત ઓફીસમાંથી બહાર પડે છે, તેમાં કોમ ઉપયોગી કોઈપણ માર્ગદર્શન નથી છતાં દરેક અંકે સાત થી આઠ હજાર રૂપીઆ વેડફાઈ છે એમ જાણવા મળે છે. તે ઉપરાંત ફેડરેશનના સભ્યોને આમંત્રણ આપી ખાણી પીણી કરાય છે. ફેડરેશનના આમંત્રણમાં હાજર રહેનારી અંજુમનોના કેટલાક સભ્યો બીજા અંજુમનોના સભાસદો પર કાદવફેંકવા સિવાય કશું કરતા નથી એવું પણ જાણવા મળે છે.

પરદેશ જઈ વસેલા પારસીઓના (WZO) આવતા પૈસા તરફ લલચાતી આપણી ધાર્મિક સંસ્થાઓએ પણ સાવચેતી રાખી તે પૈસાનો સદુપયોગ કરવો જોઈએ. (WZO)ના સભ્ય થનાર પરજાત સ્ત્રી, સભાસદ થવાના ફોર્મમાં “હું પારસીની “બીન પારસી” ધણીયાણી છું, જાણાવે છે!!!

સેક્રેટરી તરીકે ઘણા વર્ષો સુધી રહેલા કેકી ગાંધીએ હવે બીજા કોઈ પ્રમાણિક, મહેનતુ અને કોમને ઉપયોગી થનાર વ્યક્તિ ને જગ્યા કરી આપવી જોઈએ.

વિ.

દુવાગીર

મર્ઝબાન ખંધાડચા

મેનેજીંગ ટ્રસ્ટી - શ્રી નારગોલ જશન કમીટી

- નારગોલ, જી-વલસાડ-૩૯૬૧૩૫