

THE PARSEE VOICE

Vol. VI. 12, & Vol. VII. 1, 2 & 3

August – September – October – November 2009

For Private Circulation

What Do Rishad Naoroji & Dhun Baria Have In Common?

Gross Ignorance About The Working of a Consecrated Dakhma!

*Vultures Not At All Necessary
For the Successful Functioning of Dokhmenashini*

***Vendidad Emphasises only The Direct & Indirect Rays of The Sun.
Birds are Incidental***

***Is This A Gameplan By The Anti-Dakhma Lobby To Gradually
Close Down The Dakhmas?***

Rishad Naoroji is an avid bird watcher – the winged variety, that is. So, one has to treat with respect what this member of the Bombay Natural History Society has to tell us about the dire effects on vultures, of Diclofenac used in painkillers, administered to Parsee patients in hospitals. In a recent observation in the Mumbai Mirror, Naoroji stated that, “After speaking to scientists, we realised that we cannot go ahead with captive breeding because humans take diclofenac in various forms”.

Suppose, for the time being, if we allow this statement to pass without any questioning, what’s galling and totally unwarranted is his suggestion that the Parsee community look for alternate methods to bolster the traditional funeral

method, whatever that means!!

Ornithologists, like Naoroji, should talk only about the birds. They have no business to trespass on a territory they know nothing about. It is obvious that like Naoroji, Dhunmai Qawaal has been betraying gross ignorance about the functioning of a consecrated Dakhma and the indispensable role of Khurshed Yazad himself in the disintegration and dissolution of the body. (See our rejoinder in the Gujarati Section). In an article in Gujarati covering more than a page of Jame Weekly of 8th November, 2009, she rambles at length about the so-called “ravan” in the Dakhma being made to suffer. She, being a qawaal, opts for burial, but as a special gesture to all those who have propped her up, she talks of a bungli for

ceremonies of those who are cremated. The Wadia brothers of ARZ betray their chivalry by supporting her "cause"!

Homi Dhalla & Co. clamour for a shelter with a hole over the Banaji Dakhma!

Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastur, the High Priest of Udvada, alongwith Homi Dhalla, Ramiyar Karanjia, and a few other signatories, are once again pursuing their bizarre idea of the Banaji Dakhma to be virtually entombed!

The Dakhma is yet to be opened after 3 decades and here are our *hate-na-katkas* turning the Zoroastrian sacred institution on its head with their weird suggestion!

All of which prompts us to wonder aloud, if all these are not birds of the same feather, who want to ring the death knell of our consecrated and highly effective **Dakhmas**.

Faithful and devout Parsees/Iranis should be able to see through their gameplan!

Questions Asked For Half A Century

"I was born to Parsi parents;" "I continue to wear the Sudreh and Kusti;" "I have not changed my religion;" "Why can't I visit Fire Temples and perform Sezdo at Doongerwadi? Why should I not be considered a Parsi Zoroastrian? Why?... Why?... Why?"

A recent communication from a Parsee lady "married" to a non-Parsee for 18 years, sent to High Priests, scholars, Parsee press, BPP, WZO, WAPIZ etc., was also received by us. Although **The Parsee Voice** has tackled this subject earlier in great detail, we felt that instead of giving her a direct reply, it would be in the fitness of things if we share the reply with our readers.

Salient Points of the Letter: (1) A Parsee woman "married" a non-Parsee man, under the Special Marriage Act, in February, 1991.

(2) Her Navjote was performed by Parsee Zoroastrian priests, when she was a young girl.

(3) After the said "marriage", she has "not expressly undergone a conversion ceremony or ritual".

(4) She wears the Sudreh and Kusti and "daily prays to Dadar Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarthushtira Spitman".

(5) She wishes "to visit and pray at Dadgah Saheb, Agiary, Atash Behram", as also to attend Paidast, Uthamna and other after death religious ceremonies... being performed either at a place of worship or at a private place". She wishes that her "name be recited (Farmayashni) in religious prayers for departed family members".

(6) [Here comes the slight change in the tone and tenor – a subtle way of pointing a pistol at our heads] – She is unable to fulfill her "above wishes as some of the orthodox Anjuman members and Trustees of a Panchayet of my birth place consider me non-Zoroastrian, ignoring the laws of the land".

(7) "Can anyone, i.e. Anjuman members, Trustees of Panchayet, Head Priest of a religious place, custodian of Towers of Silence etc. restrict my right as Parsi Zoroastrian to enter such places and attend religious ceremonies at such places and fulfill my above wishes?"

Notice that the lady refers to the hackneyed "law of the land" argument and she talks of her "right" and "wishes", conveniently forgetting her responsibility, her duty and her obligations to the religion and the community in which she was born!

The heading under which she has penned her letter is: "Religious Status of Intermarried Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian Woman".

If she wants to know her "religious status", why talk of rights under one or the other secular act?

Anyway, we give a succinct reply covering all angles.

Marriage Under the Zoroastrian Religion: Marriage is not just a contract, but a sacrament, i.e. it's a pledge, an oath, that binds both the partners spiritually. You just can't sign on the dotted line before a marriage registrar, and say, "we are husband and wife"!

For a lawful marriage in the Zoroastrian religion, three conditions have to be fulfilled: (a) both the parties to the marriage should be Mazdayasni Zarthoshtis; (b) they should undergo the **Nahn** and the **Asheerwad** ceremonies (the **Asheerwad** ceremony consists of two powerful Avestic **Nirangs**: (i) *A Airyama Ishyo* and (ii) *Vangahu tu te...*); (c) the **Asheerwad** ceremony be performed by lawfully ordained Zoroastrian priests.

Among other things, the priests recite in this ceremony, the words, "**Avardaad va aaeen-i-Deen-i-Mazdayasni**", which means, "According to the foremost law and creed of the Mazdayasni Religion...", this marriage is solemnised!

Thus, the Zoroastrian religion and, the Parsee tradition do not recognise any

other kind of marital union except that mentioned above. We repeat, Marriage, according to the religion, is not just a contract but a sacrament. It is not a mere contract for the physical and emotional union of the couple but a precursor to the salvation of the soul. Thus, there is no "marriage" between a Parsee Zoroastrian and an alien.

Wearing Sudreh-Kusti, etc.: The querist talks of wearing Sudreh-Kusti and praying daily, etc. As far as she, as an individual, is concerned, she can do what she likes in the privacy of her home, although it is pertinent to add that she has flouted one of the basic canons of the Zoroastrian religion, namely, preserving her **Khoreh** (aura) which she had acquired at the time of her Navjote. This aura can only continue to be possessed by the **Navjotee** or Initiate, as long as he/she retains implicit faith in **all** the commands of our Prophet.

Marriage Under The Special Marriage Act, 1954:

Prior to this amended act, the earlier version enacted in 1872 asked the parties to the civil marriage to declare that they did not profess their respective religion. The 1954 Act did away with such a provision. In other words, if a Parsee marries under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, he/she need not make any specific declaration, that he/she will cease to profess the Zoroastrian religion.

The Act, however, gives no special right or privilege to Zoroastrians entering into a contract of civil marriage with non-Zoroastrians. There is no provision in the Act that confers a special civil right on a Zoroastrian woman marrying under the act, to enjoy the same religious rights and benefits, which she did earlier.

Federation Meet: Talking of Cabbages & Kings

A Report on the proceedings of the Meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrians Anjumans of India (FPZAI) held on 5th and 6th September 2009 at the Hall in the compound of the Cawasji Banaji Atashbehram

A Federation meeting normally evokes memories of stormy scenes of confrontation and rancour between the establishment and the delegates (thanks mostly to misreporting by a section of the so-called Parsee Press). However, the meeting held on the 5th and 6th of September 2009 was quite different from past meetings of the FPZAI in that it actually started on a positive note. A Jashan was held at the Banaji Atashbehram before the meeting. The new Board of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet under Chairman Dinshaw Mehta (also President of FPZAI) was putting their best foot forward and it showed!

After a humbandagi led by Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji and a minute's silence for the souls of the departed, the note of the meeting was set by President Mehta. After the perfunctory introductions by those present at the venue, Mehta stressed that the key word was 'Unity'. He was at pains to emphasize that the disharmony of the past needed to be left behind to forge a united front to face various challenges. The new BPP team had a clear mandate from the community and were confident of taking the community ahead in spite of attempts by a section of the losers to use extra legal means to thwart them.

The election of the 5 Vice-Presidents to the Executive Council was a tame affair with all of them getting elected unopposed, as under:

East Zone – Rumi Mehta
 North Zone – Tehemton Anklesaria
 South Zone – Kerfehgar Antia
 West Zone (A) – Pourushasp Mehta
 West Zone (B) – Areez Khambatta

The elections of the Zonal representatives also passed off uneventfully clearly indicating that all concerned had done their homework well to ensure smooth transition of power.

BPP Trustees Khojeste Mistree, Yazdi Desai, Jimmy Mistry and Arnavaz Mistry were also appointed as Executive Committee members. Khojeste Mistree and Pervez Mehta took over as Joint Honorary Secretaries from Cawas Panthaki and Keki Gandhi. Arnavaz Mistry was appointed Executive Secretary.

Oh, no! Not Again!

Just as we were about to breathe a sigh of relief on the much awaited departure of Keki Gandhi of Delhi, came the announcement from Mehta that Gandhi had been co-opted back to the Executive Council along with Dadi Mistry, Navroz Davar and Mani Clubwala.

In our opinion, this is a retrograde step. Gandhi has been associated with FPZAI since its inception and his stranglehold over the affairs of FPZAI was complete. His usually arrogant and high-handed behaviour had virtually terrorised smaller anjumans into submission, riding rough-shod over their views, coming out clearly in support of the deformist elements within the BPP and the Federation. His re-entry definitely does not augur well for the cohesiveness of the FPZAI.

Defunct Anjumans – Pioneering Role of Areez Khambatta

Various issues concerning the community were raised and discussed. **The poverty amelioration scheme spearheaded and**

funded to a large extent by Areez Khambatta (all strength to his shoulder!) was discussed. It was suggested that properties of defunct Anjumans be taken charge of and encashed and that money be used for poverty amelioration.

Another problem was the hesitation by some of the defunct Anjumans to let the Federation take over properties. Soli Katpitia, the expert in matters relating to recovery of properties of defunct Anjumans, gave a lowdown on the issues involved in this area and made suggestions for the way forward. Mehta made it repeatedly clear to him that he was in charge and should take all necessary steps as he deemed fit to do his task well. Mehta also suggested that one person from each of the Zones should be responsible to identify and deal with the defunct Anjuman properties within that Zone. One of the delegates suggested that it would be better to make people self reliant rather than dependent on doles. A proposal was also mooted for a Central legislation on the lines of the Muslim Waqf Act by which Parsees properties could legally vest in the Federation.

Jimmy Mistry's pet project of adopting an Agiary was resurrected and a Committee comprising Jimmy Mistry, Khojeste Mistree and Areez Khambatta was constituted for this purpose.

Dwindling Population & Languishing Agiaries

The dwindling population was raised as a concern by members. Mehta informed members of the BPP's schemes providing monetary help to couples begetting children. This assistance could be availed of by any Parsee in India in addition to any other assistance which the local Anjuman may be offering in this regard. Need was expressed for matrimonial meets to be organised between youngsters to enable them to identify and settle down with like minded spouses. Mehta mentioned that the hall at Khareghat

Colony was being refurbished for such matrimonial meets. Adequate housing was also an issue and attempts were being made to deal with that. Khojeste Mistree mentioned that BPP was now looking at building bigger flats, with an Agiary in the complex and other facilities like crèches, senior citizens home, doctors etc. (We sincerely hope that there won't be a single new Agiary when the old ones are languishing). The BPP's fertility project also found a mention.

The issue of shifting of Agiaries from mofussil areas without a Parsee population was also discussed. Borivali Anjuman's long pending requirement for an Agiary for Parsees residing in North Mumbai was also reiterated. Jimmy Mistry suggested that it was simply a matter of finding land, tagging a price for that land and working toward the acquisition. The Thane Anjuman representative mentioned that the Thane Agiary was 230 years old and the structure was dilapidated and hence funds were being collected to demolish the old structure and build a new one. Khojeste Mistree expressed reservations on this line of action and suggested that it would be far better to save the existing heritage structure. The knowledge to save heritage structures was now available and it would also help to save the spirituality that had been accumulated in the structure over the years.

Surat Parsi Panchayet

Yezdi Katpitia from Surat sought permission to place before the meeting facts concerning irregularities being committed by the Trustees of Surat Parsi Panchayat concerning the funds and properties. President Mehta did not deem it fit to let them continue on the grounds that the representatives of SPP were not present to defend themselves.

In our opinion, this was a debatable decision. The events taking place in Surat on this score are already public knowledge within the community. It would have given the Federation an insight into the goings-on in Surat and which

they had a right to know. **No one had prevented the Trustees of SPP from being present to defend themselves!** The same happened on day two, when members from Bardoli raised issues concerning their Anjuman but were prevented on account of the fact that the person complained against, was not present. This muzzling certainly does not make sense to us.

On the invitation of Mehta, Shernaaz Engineer, an independent correspondent, shared her views with the delegates. Giving an inspiring and thought-provoking talk, she pointed out that the community was at its lowest ebb today. She urged the community to walk on the path of Asha. Birth was not an accident and thus one had a duty to one's faith. She exhorted the community to negate the negativity which shrouded it. Where the future was concerned, it was necessary to nurture and strengthen the legacy to be passed on to the next generation. For this, it was necessary to put aside past differences and rekindle the sense of pride in ourselves. Development of youth through education and empowerment of priests was very necessary to move forward, she stressed. It was heartening to see that orthodox views were well received and appreciated by those present.

Jamsheed Kanga raised the issue of Parsee matters being brought out in the cosmopolitan press. Mehta and others present were quick to point out that this was the unfortunate outcome of the Parsee Press not providing equal space to both sides.

Kersi Limathwalla from the World Zarthushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) gave insights into the functioning and activities of the WZCC and its attempts at fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship within members of the Parsee community using a professional website, newsletters, circular, magazines, networking, mentoring, workshops, financing, handholding and other things.

Dinshaw Mehta also informed the delegates of the recent attempt made by the WZO International body to amend their constitution to admit any and every person who claimed to 'profess' the Zoroastrian faith as members of WZO. Fortunately, as Limathwalla had objected to this move and stepped down from the leadership of WZO, Mehta requested him to brief the members of the events leading to the same and reasons therefor. The representative from Delhi questioned the rationale for this discussion as he felt that it concerned another independent body and was not relevant to a Federation meeting. Khojeste Mistree gave a brief background on the origins of the WZO, its heterodox agenda and explained the reasons why the Parsees of India needed to be careful while dealing with WZO.

On day two, Mehroo Bengalee and Eruch Desai were the special invitees. Bengalee stressed on the community seeking representation at the local and state level as we were a religious and linguistic minority. Eruch Desai was categorical in mentioning that the community could not change the user of the Doongerwadi lands. This led to some heated exchanges between him and delegate, Jamsheed Kanga, both ex-Trustees of the BPP on the issue of the originating summons filed by Kanga and others for use of the Bunglis at Doongerwadi for prayers of those who used cremation/burial as a mode of disposal of the dead. Eruch Desai praised in no uncertain terms, the role played by Areez Khambatta, a true **Sethia** in the community today.

All in all, after the departure of the earlier lot of Trustees, the functioning and atmosphere in Federation meetings has definitely improved and kudos for that go to Mehta and the current BPP team who are doing their bit to contain and undo the damage caused by their predecessors.

Community Capers

New BPP Board Fails To Respond To “The Parsee Voice” Suggestions on The Two Maladies At Doongerwadi: the Tower coming up at Godrej Baug and the wretched Mortuary

Reminder 1

I. Both, the Chariman of the BPP, Dinshaw Mehta and his co-trustees have failed to react to our suggestions published in **The Parsee Voice**, Vol. VI- 8, 9, 10 & 11 – April, May, June, July 2009.

We reiterate with great emphasis that Dinshaw Mehta had, in May 2008, when he was with the old Board, assured **The Parsee Voice** Editors, alongwith Maneck Engineer, the then trustee, that the tower to be built in **Block M** of Godrej Baug won't be going beyond 11 floors.

The question is, is Dinshaw Mehta who now has become the Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, going back on his word by deciding to build a tower upto 18 storeys at that spot? Chairman Mehta and his co-trustees need to answer the following questions:

(1) The 18-storeyed building is supposed to have a swimming pool, with 3-4 storeys for car park. Each flat to be given on ownership basis and is presumed to cost Rs.2-3 crores! In other words, super-rich Parsees/Iranis, mostly NRIs will buy them. Can the Trustees give a solemn assurance to the community that, in none of the flats will there be a non-Parsee/Irani spouse? If they do, rest assured they are taking the community for a ride! **We make bold to assert that in another five years the flats will be swarming with non-Zoroastrians!** What then? Non-Parsees **living** just a few hundred yards from our sacred **Dakhmas!** And when that happens...?!

(2) What's the guarantee that the State Government, emboldened by the twin factors of non-Parsees already living in the BPP tower, and the tower being meant for the rich, who have obtained the flats on ownership basis, will not insist on constructing similar towers for its own personnel, like policemen? Can the BPP then refuse?

(3) Isn't it downright foolhardy on the part of the present BPP trustees to have a one-track mind and think only in terms of generating a few crores, from which the poor of the community can be housed? Have the trustees no other prime land in this urb where they can build at least a couple of such towers?

(4) If the present Board of Trustees has, say, two "builders", what are the other five doing? Have they not assured and reassured the community during the last year's election that they will do their utmost to protect and save the **Dakhmas?** Why are they not protesting against and dissenting from pursuing this extremely dangerous scheme?

On our part, we warn the BPP trustees not to play with fire. In their craze for "generating income", they will do untold harm to the sacred **Dakhmas** and the Doongerwadi land in the near future! In the final analysis, that, too, would amount to a quasi-desecration of our final resting place. Let good sense prevail!

The Mortuary Madness Continues – Unabated!

In our last issue, a detailed article was published, about "The 'Haunted House' at

Doongerwadi", namely, the mortuary, a convenient haven for scions settled abroad, who insist on the cadaver of their parent to be pushed inside the cold storage till their arrival from Timbaktu!! In spite of pointing out in details about the suffering and lamentation of a Zoroastrian soul for a couple of days, deprived of the legitimate and enjoined **Sachkar** and **Geh Sarna** ceremonies, **immediately after death**, in spite of our giving plausible suggestions on what steps the trustees need to take immediately, the septet at 209, D.N. Road, still looks the other way, and doesn't realise its grave responsibilities in Nature, if a Zoroastrian soul is made to suffer incalculable torments from Satanic forces, only because of the extremely selfish nature of the son or daughter of the deceased, who has to fly from Canada or USA to 'meet' the icy cold corpse!

A very recent, shocking example was that of a priest, a boiwalla in particular, who died in the beginning of October. A message was flashed, "Hold on till the daughter arrives!!"

Three whole days went by!!! The Sachkar and the Geh Sarna were performed AFTER the Chaharum was over!!! If the end of the Chaharum ceremonies, was, say around 6 or 6.30 a.m. the PAIDAST TOOK PLACE AFTER 9.00 A.M.!! To put it mildly, that is extremely anti-Zoroastrian and shameful! We fail to understand why the BPP trustees have unwittingly decided to carry the unconscionable burden of unforgivable sins on their head!

II. Kanga's Cacophonous Cackle! Re-playing A Worn-Out Cassette – His Favourite Pastime

Jamsheed Gulfam Kanga – to give his full name – an IAS, as Mumbai Municipal Commissioner was a reasonably good administrator, as far as the general public was

concerned. But, for his community, Kanga, an **athornanzaada**, has proved to be, to put it mildly, a big headache and a regular nuisance. Ever since he became a trustee of the BPP in the 1980s, he has excelled in producing a litany of woes for the Parsees!

If we were to enumerate the number of times he has caused immense harm to the Zoroastrian religious beliefs and practices, we may end up filling all the pages of this issue! A peculiar thing about this man, is that he goes into hibernation for some months at a stretch, and then, suddenly, like a Jack-in-the-box, pops up to harangue the orthodox with the worn-out replay of his **Dakhma-phobia** cassette, the moment he smells a whiff of controversy. He is once again riding his hobby horse of tilting at the Tower of Silence windmills. He began with his favourite pastime in 1991, when, as a BPP trustee, he was instrumental with some of his colleagues in introducing an extremely bizarre and totally unwarranted "affidavit" by Parsee women who had "married" non-Parsees, and who wished to be consigned to the **Dakhmas** after death.

A decade later, when he was no longer a trustee, he joined the DDD-AG bandwagon, wrote about the rotting, stinking corpses in the **Dakhmas**, about the "health hazard" at Malabar Hill etc. to all and sundry.

In 2007, Kanga with two others, filed an Originating Summons in the Bombay High Court, asking for a Doongerwadi bungli for rituals to be performed for cremated Parsees.

Recently, he alongwith another of his kind, has sent a notice to the BPP regarding the banning of the two **ashmogs** from reciting any prayers in any Doongerwadi bungli.

What is remarkable is that in most of these adventures, Kanga has come a cropper! The retired Parsee Don Quixote doesn't seem to want to improve in the evening of his life. His

latest is what he calls a challenge to the Dasturs and scholars to quote chapter and verse re: all the burning issues bothering the community. Well! Some people just never grow up.

III. Aggressive Action & Avesta

Going Great Chops! Remember *Osta* Rooyintan Mehenty? The cute little guy bent on breaking records? The frequency with which he goes on winning laurels in Karate, and learning Avesta texts through his father, Nozer, beats hollow the frequency of **The Parsee Voice's** publication! One of his latest laudable conquests was standing first in the Boys India Kumite event, for children under 6 years, from among 2,700 children who participated.



In the picture alongside, our **Osta Saheb** is seen with the Gold Medal and the certificate, signed among others by the Mayor, Dr. Shubha Raul and Vispy Kapadia, President of the Maharashtra Karate Association.

To cap it all, after learning by heart most of the Yashts and the Patet, our future **mobed saheb** is at present struggling with the 9th **Ha** of **Yasna**, also known as the **Hom Yasht**. We wish Rooyintan many more honours in life!

IV. Bingo! Book Your DeLuxe A/c Bungli in Advance!!

We are not joking. We reliably understand that the nearly 50-year-old Albless Bungli at Doongerwadi, (it was built in 1960), which has been undergoing repairs and renovation for months on end, thereby depriving many

faithful Parsees of its use, for 3 nights, will have an air-conditioned rest room, for those staying there!

A few questions arise and need to be answered. (1) In the recent past, there were 8 upper bunglis at Doongerwadi, where the faithful would stay till the Chaharum and perform their basic duty of **bhoen rakhvi** for the departed soul. After the two Wadia bunglis were combined into one, seven bunglis remained for one to stay for 2-3 days. Now with the Albless bungli under renovation for months, the community has to make do with just six, which is unfair to those who wish to stay and have the rituals performed near the soul's seat.

Whose asinine idea, therefore, it was, to have the so-called "rest room" inside the Albless Bungli air-conditioned?

(2) Do the trustees want people who stay there for religious duties, to doze off in A.C. comfort?

(3) Air conditioners anywhere are eco-disasters. To have one in a bungli, where only the soul of the departed matters, radiations or emanations from such machines, if any, vitiate the vibrations of the ceremonies and prayers recited there. Not doing anything about the mortuary next door, why are the trustees keen on piling up avoidable sins on their heads?

(4) Will the rates of the de-luxe A.C. bungli go up in future?

(5) Will the **Khandiyas** who bring the bodies ask the relatives in advance, "*Mai, A.C. ke non-A.C.?*"

Our heartfelt sympathies with the poor soul stewing in its own juice, outside!

V. BPP's New Logo – A Big Ugh!

Even without our asking, moments after the new BPP logo was officially released, three

versions were given. One said, they were two alley cats, with the letters BPP, sandwiched in between. Another said they looked like lions. A third opined that from a distance, they resembled long-tailed monkeys!!!

But none of them stated that they were "winged bulls" by a long chalk, as the logo's creator J.R. Mistry wants us to believe!

What he has done is to merely copy the logo he has at Udvada at his Della Majestic. However, there at least, the two creatures look at each other. In the BPP logo, the two look in opposite directions, and away from the letters BPP!! How on earth, then, are they going to "protect" the BPP worthies? On the contrary, the "BPP" is left to fend for itself!!

The wild interpretations of the earlier highly aesthetic "fire" logo, by Dinshaw Mehta and Khojeste Mistree, are nothing but their flights of fancy and imagination.

It was a stylised logo, done with vision and artistry. The new "crowned" creatures are nothing but scary caricatures of gargoyles with long tails! All this calls for a big "ugh"! Let's hope the internal wrangles don't increase.

VI. 'Be Prepared' and Have Fun!

The future of any community depends on the way the character of its younger generation is moulded. One of the ways to achieve this character building in our youth is through the time tested activity of Scouting started by Lord Robert Baden-Powell, which was officially founded in British India in 1909. Girl Guiding was introduced in 1911.

The mission of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law to help build a better world where people play a constructive role in society. The movement is a sure way to develop a strong character and helpful nature. It makes young

people socially responsible and creative citizens.

The Parsee community has some dedicated groups helping our youth to achieve these lofty objectives, two of which are the 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Bharat Scout Group and the 71st East Bombay Zoroastrian Bharat Guide group for Parsee boys and girls respectively. Under the effective leadership of Noshir Randeria (Group Leader Scouts) and Ms Mackie Majra (Group Leader Guides) and their dedicated band of Scoutmasters, Guiders, Rovers and Rangers, these groups are rendering yeoman services to the community in terms of the development of its youth. The Guides meet every Saturday at 3.30 p.m. at Godrej Hut at Azad Maidan and the Scouts at Gamudia School at 8 a.m. every Sunday morning for their activities. Their activities include playing baseball, games, hiking, elocution competitions, annual day functions, annual jashan etc. Scouts and guides are also taken on training camps twice a year.

Trip to Agra, Delhi and Nainital

These two groups had recently organized a camp to Agra, Delhi and Nainital. We parents were invited to join as guests and, to say the least, thoroughly enjoyed the trip. It is no mean task organizing a 10 day trip for about 140 people with ages ranging from 2 to 80. But the strong, silent and capable leadership of Scoutmaster Freddy Khapoliwala and his team was clearly visible from day 1. Under the able stewardship of this 'Officer and Gentleman', the young Scouts and Guides worked silently and tirelessly throughout the day and late into the night, making sure that every guest, Scout and Guide was safe and comfortable. Right from distributing food packets during the journey to guests located all over the train to patrolling the bogie where the young Guides were seated to loading luggage on to the carriages of the buses, to bringing hot bathing water at 5 o'clock in the

morning to looking after young cubs/bulbuls who were puking or wetting their pants, they did it all with a smile. The Scout Motto of 'Taiyyar' (Be Prepared) was clearly in action.

The central kitchen catered to the famous Parsee appetite and ably served delicious two course meals with sweet dishes. Separate meals were served for those with medical problems.

But it was not just hard work all the way. There was a lot of fun too. Where else would one experience the delight of having breakfast by the side of a flowing river with the scouts making tea from the river water and also the camp fires and the entertainment programmes put up by the Scout and Guide patrols to entertain us! Though we had to rough it out and were on the move all the time sightseeing, it was a GREAT EXPERIENCE! The success of the visit could easily be measured by the fact that many guests had already started making inquiries about the NEXT camp. The message was loud and clear – "Yeh Dil Maange More".

In a day and age when parents themselves are unable to devote quality time to their kids, it is really gratifying to see these fine men and women doing something for others' children; and that too completely honorary, with no expectations except that the children turn out to be the pride of the community and nation.

Readers, what better atmosphere than this for fostering the sprit of community service! The other benefit is the opportunity for Parsee youngsters to interact and, God willing, choose compatible life partners. There have been atleast 9 cases in the past where love blossomed and marriages took place.

For the sake of our future generations, it would be great if we could encourage parents and kids alike to give scouting/

guiding a try. And who better than the 16th East and 71st East groups to help mould our future Parsee generations into physically and mentally strong individuals.

It would also be worthwhile for community organizations and individuals to support them monetarily, by contributing to 'The Young Zoroastrian Society' so that Parsee children could benefit.

– Hanoz M Mistry

VII. Psst... Want some instant "asheerwad" for inter-faith unions?

Everyday that dawns brings in disturbing news of *fataaun* Parsees finding insidious ways and means to flout Holy Prophet Zarthushtra's teachings. One of the latest is that a couple of renegade priests of a South Mumbai Agiary (no, neither Madan nor Mirza), call the Parsee guy with his alien "bride-to-be" to a small hotel in central Mumbai.

They then make them undergo a pseudo-**Asheerwad** ceremony by throwing rice grains over their heads while reciting the **tandorosti** prayer! For this small mean ritual which pleases the newly-yoked couple and for thus condemning their (priests)' own souls to perdition, their fee is Rs.500/-.

Readers are requested **not** to contact **The Parsee Voice** for any inquiry in this regard. It's just one more sign of the highly materialistic times in which we live!

Pray for the Saviour to come soon!

Think it Over

- (1) "I have not made this World,
And He that has made it, Will guide"
- (2) "Take the World as it is and not as you would have it.
Take the World as it is, and try to leave it better."

ઊંડી ગાફેલ્યતમાં પડેલાં ઘનબાઈ બારીઆ, પારસીઓને મુંબઈનાં દોખાઓ અને તેમાં પડેલી લાશો વિષે બેફામ, બેહુંડા અને ખોટા પ્રચારો કરે છે! દખ્ખાની પાવીની ખૂબી અને ખુરશેદ ચઝદનાં મહાન કાર્યની અગત્યતાથી આ બાઈ સાવ અંજાણ છે! પારસીઓ સાવધાન! તમારી ખોટી લાગણીઓ ઉશ્કેરી, આ ભૂલાવામાં અટવાયલાં બાનુ તમને ગેરરસ્તે દોરવે છે!

અસલ “ફલી પેંગા”ની કચુંબર પારસીઓમાં જાણીતી હતી. હવે જ્યારે, કાંદા, ટમેટાં અને લીંબુ વિ. નાં ભાવ આસ્માને ચઢી ગયા છે, ત્યારે આજે ભાગ્યેજ કોઈપણ વ્યક્તિ જમણ સાથે કચુંબર પીરસે છે. પણ થોભો! હાલમાં એક ભાનભૂલાં, ગાફેલ બાનુ, જેઓ છેલ્લાં ૪ વર્ષથી દખ્ખાઓ વિરૂદ્ધ સરિયામ ખોટો અને જુઠો પ્રચાર કરે છે, તેઓએ. જામે વીકલી (૮-૧૧-૦૯)માં ફરીથી પોતાનું જુનું ખવાઈગએલી રણશિંગું જોરશોરથી વગાડ્યું છે.

આ ભૂલાવામાં પડેલાં ઘનબાઈ બારીઆ, તે પહેલાં, તા. ૨૨ અક્ટોબર, ૨૦૦૯ને દીને, ૧૩૩ નંબરની બસ જે સાંજે કોલાબાથી તાડટેવ તરફ આવતી હતી, તેમાં એમનાં ઘોઘારી અવાજે બે-ત્રણ પારસી બાનુઓને મોટેમોટે કહેતાં આખી બસમાં સંભળાયાં હતા કે, “ડુંગરવાડી પર પારસીઓની લાશો (એમના શબ્દોમાં, “રવાનો”) કોઈ, સડી જઈવાસ મારતી હતી, માટે હવે વખત આવ્યો છે કે પારસીઓએ પણ કબ્રસ્તાન કે ચંદનવાડીનો રસ્તો લેવો જોઈએ!”

ચંદનવાડી કહેતાં, વાંચકોની જાણ માટે જણાવવાનું કે ઘનબાઈએ નાના અનાથ બાળકો માટે એક ત્રસ્ત સ્થાપ્યું છે, તેનું એડ્રેસ પણ ચંદનવાડીનું જ છે!!

ભૂમીદાહની મોહિનીમાં અટવાએલાં ઘનબાઈ: જરથોશ્તીઓની અતિ પવિત્ર કિતાબ, વંદીદાદની અંદર જે ફરમાન છે કે ધોરસ્તાનની જમીનને, અને કબરોને તોડી, મુક્ત કરવી, તેજ વંદીદાદનાં ફરમાનને હોકરે મારી, આ ૨૧મી સદીનાં બુઝોર્ગ બાઈ પારસીઓને ઊઠા ભણાવે છે. એઓને ખાબો ખ્યાલ નથી કે દાટી રાખેલા કાલબુદ કે જેને વર્ષોનાં વર્ષો લગી કીડા, મકોરા, જંતુઓ, વિ. ધીમે ધીમે કમકમાટ ભરેલી રીતે કોતરી કોતરીને ખાય, તેને લગતી જમીન ઓછાં માં ઓછાં ૫૦ વર્ષ પાક થાય છે!!

જ્યારે વંદીદાદની ૭મી પરગર્દમાં ખુદ્દુ ફરમાવે છે કે આ ઘરતીની ઉપર એક વર્ષ લગી જો લાશ સુરજનું તડકું ખાતી પડી હોય, તો જમીન અવાવ થતીજ નથી, પણ ચોખ્ખીજ રહે છે!

અ વાક્ય ઉપર ૧૦ વાર ટ્રેક જરથોશ્તીએ મનન કરવાનું છે, કેમકે અહીં ઘરતીની કોઈપણ જમીન ઉપરનીજ વાત છે. તો વિચારો વાંચકો, કે એક ઈજાએલાં દખ્ખાની પાવી પર જરથોશ્તી લાશ મુકી હોય, તો તેની વ્યવસ્થા કેટલી જલ્દી થતી હશે, અને તેજ પાવી ઉપર સેંકડો વર્ષો સુધી લાશો મુકાય તો કાંઈ પણ રૂકાવત વગર, તે લાશોનો કુદરતને કાયદે નિકાળ થાય છે.

જામે વીકલીની કોલમોમાં ફૂંકાતો ફીમેશનનો પવન: અમને નવાઈ એ લાગે છે કે પારસી મર્ટો કરતાં, છાશવારે મોટી ઉમરની પારસી ઓરતો જામે વીકલીમાં દોખ્ખેનશીનીની વિરૂદ્ધ લખાણો કરે છે. તેઓ પોતાનાં અલ્પજ્ઞાન ને લીધે, એવો સરિયામ ખોટો પ્રચાર કરે છે કે દખ્ખામાં મૂકાય તો ફક્ત જરથોશ્તીઓજ બહેરતમાં જાય, અને બીજા બધા દટાય કે ખવાય તઓ નહિ જાય! વળી આવાં જુદી જુદી દીનોથી સાવ બેખબર બાનુઓ, જેમાં ઘન બારીઆ સિવાય, તેહમી મિસ્ત્રી ઉર્ફ કમલ જેઓ મહિલા જગતની કોલમનું સંચાલન કરે છે, અને પિરોજા જોખી પણ આવી જાય છે, તેઓ ફક્ત પોતાના મનનાં તુકકાઓ રચુ કરે તો કેટલાંક ભોલાં વાંચકો ખોટે રસ્તે દોરવાઈ જાય છે!

આ લખનારાઓને ભાન કેમ થતું નથી કે, (૧) જુદા જુદા ધર્મનાં લાવનાર મહાન આત્માઓએ તેઓનાં અનુયાયીઓને મરણને લગતી ક્રિયાઓ માટેનાં ફરમાનો આપ્યાં છે, તે પ્રમાણેજ તેઓ બધા અનુસરીને ચાલે છે. એક ખ્રિસ્તી કે મુસલમાન કોઈપણ દિવસ ક્રિસ્ટે થવા માંગે એવું સાંભળ્યું છે?

(૨) ઘન બારીઆ જેવાંઓ દાટવાની હિમાયત કરે છે, તેઓ પોતાની સાદી અકકળથી એટલું કેમ વિચારતાં નથી, કે ઘરતી તો માતા ગણાય છે. તેમજ જરથોશ્તી ધર્મમાં આ પૃથ્વી અને તેની નીચેની અણદીઠ જમીન ઉપર તો સ્પેનતા આરમદની, યાને સ્પેન્ટારમદ અમશાસ્પંદનું રાજ હોય છે! તો તેવી જમીનમાં મુડદાં, કે જેઓનો નસો ભયંકર ગણાય છે, જેને અવસ્તામાં “નસા ફુજ” તરીકે ઓળખ્યો છે, તેવું નરક આરમદનીને અપર્ણજ કેમ થઈ શકે?

(૩) દખ્ખુ, એક અગિઆરી, આતશબહેરામ જેવી, પાવમહેલની ક્રિયાઓથી ઈજાએલી સંસ્થા છે. ત્યાં “તાણો” પૂરવામાં આવે છે, ત્યાં કેટલી બધી બાજો ઘરાય છે, વિ. તો પછી આ બધા ટુંક બુદ્ધિવાનોને આટલો ખ્યાલ કેમ નથી જતો કે, દખ્ખાની પાવીઓ પણ મિનિટ મિનિટે કામ કરતી હોય છેજ? ત્યાં “કશો”, magnetic circuits, હોય છે, ત્યાં કુદરતનું મોટું સાંચાકામ (mechanism) હોય છે, અને તેથી ત્યાં જરથોશ્તી લાશો અઠવાડિયાંઓ પણ પડી રહે તો તેને કાંઈપણ નુકસાન થતું નથી, બલ્કે ફાયદોજ થાય છે, કે “stinking, putrefying” વિ. એકના એક ફૂયો થઈ ગએલા અંગ્રેજી શબ્દો વાપરી, જેઓ દખ્ખા વિરૂદ્ધ પ્રચાર કરે છે, તેઓ પોતાની, અકકળનાં દાના વેરીઆ સિવાય કશુંએ કરતા નથી!

(૪) વળી આવા વિદ્વજસંતોષીઓને એટલો પણ ખ્યાલ આવતો નથી કે દખ્ખા સાથે કુદરતની મહાનમાં મહાન શક્તિ, જેને આપણે ખુરશેદ ચઝદ કહીએ છીએ, તેઓ પોતાનાં દીઠ અને અણદીઠ કીરણો (નહિં કે ફક્ત રોશની) થી, જેની અંદર લાશોનાં અંગો અને અવ્યવો (જેને લીલો નસો કહે છે) નાં અણુઓ ને ખેંચવાનો તેમજ તેનો કીમિયો કરવાનો જબરજસ્ત ભંડાર હોય છે, તેઓ, ભલે તે લાશ ખવાઈ નહિં હોય, તો પણ તેને જો પાવી પર disturb નહીં કીધી હોય, તો કેટલોક વખત પછી, તે લાશને સુકું છોડું કરી નાંખે છે.

(૫) કુદરત રોજે અવ્યવળી પોતાના “અખ”ના કાયદા પ્રમાણેજ કામ કરે છે. યાને, કુદરતમાં ગેરવ્યવસ્થા જેવું હોતુંજ નથી. આવી ગેરવ્યવસ્થા તો પોણા બે બિલ્લસની અકકળ વાપરી, ઈસ્તાનજ ઊભી કરે છે, જેને લીધે આખી દુનિયામાં કુદરતનો કારોબાર ખોરવાઈ જાય છે! આજ પ્રમાણે, છેલ્લા ૧૦૦ વર્ષ થયાં, કોઈ જરથોશ્તી ટૂંબંકોળયાઓ, પેગમ્બર સાહેબ અશો જરથુશ્ત્રનાં ખુરશેદ નગીરશની નાં અતિ અગત્યના ફરમાનને બેશરમ રીતે હોકરે મારવા બહાર પડે છે!

(૬) ઘનબાઈ બારીઆ, જેઓ લાંબીલાંબી વાતો કરે છે કે એક નસેસલારે એમ કહ્યું બીજાએ તેમ કહ્યું તો એઓ તેજ વખતે કોઈ વર્ષો સુધી કામ કરેલા નસેસલારને માનથી પૂછતાં કેમ નથી, કે અગાઉ જ્યારે ગીઘો એકદમ ઓછાં થયાં લાગેલાં, ત્યારે લાશો કેમ અલગ અલગ પાવીઓ ઉપર રાખવામાં આવતી હતી? ત્યારે થોડાં વર્ષો સુધી કોઈએ બૂમરાણ કેમ કીધીજ નહિં હતી?

પરંતુ, આ બારીઆ બાઈનો તો એમનાં વિષેકોનાં ઉશ્કેરાવ્યાથી એકજ, એજન્ડા છે, અને તે મુંબઈનાં દખ્ખાઓને ગોયા તોડી પાડવાના! અગર એઓમાં જો મોટી ઉમરે પણ ડહાપણની દાઢ ઉગે, તો એઓને પેલા બુઝોર્ગ નસેસલાર સત્ય હકીકત કહેતે કે: જયારથી સોલાર પેનલો લગાવવામાં આવ્યાં છે, (યાને ઈ. ૨૦૦૧થી) ત્યારથી દખ્ખાઓમાં લાશોની સમસ્યાઓ શરૂ થઈ છે. આ વિષય ઉપર અમો આવતા અંકમાં વિસ્તારીને અંગ્રેજીમાં લખીશું. તેટલાં, ઘનમાય આ સોલાર પેનલ વિરૂદ્ધ પ્રચાર શરૂ કરે તો કેમ?