

# THE PERFIDIOUS POLL OF JAME JAMSHED WEEKLY

## A HOAX PERPETRATED ON THE COMMUNITY

When its own pulse is very weak, Jame Jamshed Weekly (JJW) has had the temerity to check the "Pulse of the Parsees". Since June 11, 2000, the sinking patient has begun this ludicrous exercise, so that it could keep breathing.

From the issue of June 11 to the present day, JJW has taken its readers for a ride. All that the gullible reader had to do was to tick one box out of the three boxes. "Yes", "No" and "Can't say" -no name, address, or signature required. The whole concept, of course, has been thoughtlessly lifted from the website of leading English newspapers. Every week a new subject has been taken up by this heterodox newspaper mainly, according to its Editor, a) "as a community service" and b) because "community leaders are generally intimidated and feel threatened when confronted with issues that are new or those that suggest changes to existing systems". (It's an easy guess who this community leader could be behind the poll.)

The very first subject (June 11) "In view of the shortage of birds at Doongarwadi at places like Mumbai, Pune, Udwarda... do you think an alternate system for the dead should be introduced", raised a legitimate hue and cry. The next week, the editor was compelled to write a special edit euphemistically called "Bouquets and Brickbats". The result of the first poll showed that out of the 528 vote received 63 per cent wanted "an alternate system".

All hell broke loose after this fraudulent poll result was published. A city evening paper carried this in banner headline immediately thereafter. The echoes of this big hoax perpetrated on the community were reportedly heard in Surat where traditional Parsees took out a morcha to the Collector's office in protest against the sale of the Dakhma lands. The lawyer appearing for the Surat Parsee Panchayat was said to be carrying a copy of the said evening paper quoting the result of this bogus poll.

In the fourth round of the Poll, the newspaper asked the readers whether it should continue taking up controversial religious issues, stick to innocuous ones or stop the poll altogether. This prompted some well-meaning and faithful Zoroastrians to start a signature campaign against the thoughtless poll.

On July 9, however, JJW came to know of this campaign and pushed the panic button. It came out with two editorials crying itself hoarse that "We are orthodox" and "Motive behind the 'Pulse of the Parsees' was community service" (sic) etc. The Editor exhibited his crass ignorance and gave himself away when he asked therein whether "the soul of those who die on foreign shores where the system of Dokhmenashini does not exist in many places in India reach Chinvat or not? To every faithful and knowledgeable Zoroastrian, the answer is obvious: They do not!

In less than a week, which included the day when record rainfall was registered in Mumbai (July 12), 2, 154 signatures condemning the poll outright and demanding that it be stopped immediately were collected and handed over to the Editor of the JJW on July 13 and 14- well before the deadline of July 16 when answers to the above question were to be published. But when the result of the poll was published, JJW claimed to have collected 4626 responses out of which 46% "includes readers who want Jame to continue the poll, but not on religious issues". This is incorrect. Who's going to account for the above 2,154 signatures which demanded a full-stop to the poll?

This gives rise to many questions:

- 1) JJW chose to ask the community to opine on the continuation of the poll. Now that the community has responded should not JJW respect that wish and put an end to the poll? On the contrary, it chose to publish a totally false result and ignore the voice of the community it professes to represent. WHY THIS DECEIT?
- 2) From where did they get the votes in favour of raising contentious issues in the poll when the earlier polls had evoked only 528 votes and 484 votes respectively. So how did the number of voters suddenly rise to 4626, especially when there was no report of any counter campaign in support of the poll?

JJW'S two-faced policy of professing orthodox credentials on the one hand while exhibiting just the

opposite has been evident for quite some time now. An orthodox newspaper would not do anything to hurt the religious sentiments of the community. JJW has been doing just the opposite. In the recent past, Jame has blatantly favoured and publicised the activities of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) (which is a heterodox organisation having amended its constitution to accommodate non-Zoroastrian spouses as members) e.g. the recent coverage of the WZO function where certain inter-marrieds were felicitated and its encouragement for the tirade against the formation of another world body.

The entry of Mr. Jehan Daruwalla as JJW columnist has also shocked traditional Zoroastrians. This is the same Mr. Daruwalla, who some years ago had hurt the sentiments of thousands of Zoroastrians by stating that *he would not even send his dog to the Dakhma* and who churned out article after article in Mumbai Samachar virulently attacking our religious tenets, its time-honoured practices and also a certain High Priest etc. all go a long way to show Jame's intention of pleasing its patrons and throwing all journalistic principles to the winds.

Money power has obviously overtaken principles. The premier Zoroastrian principle of TRUTH FOR THE SAKE OF TRUTH has been unabashedly ignored. Having lost its principles in the quagmire of community politics, JJW has ceased to be the voice of the orthodox Zoroastrian community and deserves to be boycotted!

**Dini Avaz Committee**

**Parsi Pukar Committee**

**Zarthosti Dharma Ane Samajseva Samiti**

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