

EXTRACT FROM PROJECT REPORT OF VASAI PARSEE DOONGARWADI

by Curset Patel

Nature is not easy to perceive for it works in wonderful and strange ways. It is beyond human faculties and limitations to see through Nature. Religion with its supreme Truth takes us closer to it.

There are some souls who have higher degree of consciousness. They are endowed and entrusted by Nature to transfer the astral visions of the Absolute into the planes of matter and act as physical medium. Such appointees are awarded accomplishments of some sacred missions.

Likewise through Nature's Will few devoted Zarathushtrians are inspired to raise and are entrusted to act in accordance with the divine commands to provide a new place of disposal of the dead for the parsi community in and around Mumbai.

Most of the human endeavours fail because these are only on selfish and material base having no spiritual inspiration. Somewhat this is the case existing at Mumbai Doongarwadi. The system has weakened. The conditions are undesirable.

This is the result of long pending indecisions and ignorance of the caretakers. Due to endless controversy to make Dokhmas work artificially, an atmosphere of chaos and confusion is prevailing in the community members.

Nature is taking its own course by inspiring few devoted Zarathushtrians to rise in time and exert in right direction to provide a second place of disposal of the dead, within reasonable distance from Mumbai and its suburbs, to continue the sacred practice of "Dokhmenasini", which is being in force since avestan times.

This preliminary project report is bought to the notice of all Zarathushtrians in India and abroad, who are destined by Nature to

participate in this religious mission, either monetarily or in any other way.

Such deeds are certainly noted and rewarded by Ahura Mazda whose Will always prevails; as there is no court higher than His holy court.

This is purely the mission of the Lord accomplished through Nature. We are nowhere in it. In the spirit of total surrender and devotion we submit to His will.

Manijeh Pirojsha Sachinwalla Charitable Trust - Vasai Dokhma Committee.

Details of Infrastructure, Amenity Structures, Location, Ecology.

The beneficiary for this center shall be members of the Parsi or Irani Zarathushtrian Community who are **Baste-Kustiyan** and **followers of Mazdiyazni Zarthushti Din only.**

The mode of disposal for this center shall be strictly "Dokhmenashini" only; and under no circumstances any other mode.

The implementation and management of this center is through "**Vasai Dokhma Committee**", under the affiliation of "Manijeh P. Sachinwalla Charitable Trust; having office at 275, Village Valiv, Taluka; Vasai; Dist. Thane. Pincode 401 208 - Maharashtra State.

The purpose of this center is to continue "Dokhmenashini" system as the mode of disposal for the community. For Zarathushti Community in Mumbai and around, there is a desperate need to have a new place of disposal based on "Dokhmenashini". In Mumbai due to various reasons this mode of disposal seems to be not working. Before the mode of disposal is changed out of desperation, it is necessary to provide new center, under the conducive circumstances where it works.

For materialization of the proposed aim it is necessary to have a vast strata of land admeasuring in acres.

It is indeed encouraging to note that required land admeasuring about 23 acres in one composite holding is being given free of charge by the owner **Shri. B.P. Sachinwalla**, who incidentally is the key person inspired by the divine Will to promote this center.

The center is located within 85 Kms. of Mumbai. It is approachable through Western Express Highway, Via. Vajreshwari Road. The nearest railway stations on the western line are Vasai Road and Virar; both being equidistant.

The aspect of ecology is the fulcrum of the project. The site is ideally suited for the purpose as it is surrounded by forest on three sides. There are hectares and hectares of dense tropical forest adjacent to the site. Very few vast stratas of green-forest patch are in Maharashtra like this vicinity. The adjoining forests are classified as "Reserve Forests", that means they shall remain so, as forest department is committed to its maintenance and proper vigil.

The adjoining surroundings are of rural character with no nearby developments. There are no possibilities of occurrence of nearby urbanization for long stretch of time. As stipulated in our scriptures no agricultural activities are carried out near the site.

The normal needs of daily life are easily procurable within 4 to 5 Kmts. of the site in Vajreshwari and Ganeshpuri, which are small towns, whereby every commodity is available.

To safeguard the sancity of the place further, and to ensure the presence of green cover of tropical trees, we intend to obtain high areas of forest land (say 50 acres or more) on lease from the forest department. This is in accordance with the latest enactments of the forest laws. This will give to us authority to safeguard forest, and plant more trees to preserve the ecology.

The existing transport system is by way of State Transport Buses and Auto Rickshaws. To substantiate conveyance facilities the Trust is planning to acquire a mini Bus, of its own and other mode of conveyance together with a "Hearse" to carry dead bodys.

All access roads right from the National Highways, Vajreshwari Road, Medhe-Phata and uptill internal village Vadghar are perfectly tarred motorable roads. The last patch of only about 1.5 Kmts. approaching the proposal site is for the present metal road but sufficiently consolidated. All access roads from village Vadghar to the proposed site shall be repaired and constructed by the Trust; the maintenance of the roads also shall be under the Trust.

The soil conditions of the proposed site and its vicinity are good from vegetation and growth of forest points of view, giving almost equal contents of clay and humus. Being hilly Strata there is no water-logging.

Two Tower of silence shall be duly consecrated having internal clear diameter of 63'-0" and 54'-0" respectively with all it's details as prescribed in our holy scriptures. There shall be well built stonewall enclosure around both the towers to provide safety and sanctity.

Sagdid Structure with Kebla for the holy fire, prayer room etc. will be built having 1000 Sq. ft. or thereabouts. The location of Sagdid structure shall not abet Dokhma enclosure wall.

Bunglee (for the ceremony) admeasuring about 1200 Sq. ft. or so will be built, with normal facilities for simple living.

The Pavilion will be built for non-parsi persons coming to pay homage to the dead.

Office premises, store room, toilet block with two bathrooms urinals, w.c. for men and women will be constructed. Two structure will be built for preists, two structures each admeasuring 600 Sq. ft. shall be built for Nasessallars. Landscapping and gardening, as well as parking place shall be provided.

The estimated cost of all mentioned above shall be Rs.1,50,00,000/- at this stage.

The main parent body is :

Manijeh Pirojsha Sachinwalla Charitable Trust, having at present Shri. B.P. Sachinwalla, Shri. Adi. J. Bhiwandiwalla, Smt. Pinky R. Patel and Shri. Aspi P. Sachinwalla as Trustees.

Vasai Dokhma Committee members are Shri. Bomi Mistry and Shri. Naval Homi Mistry.

Vasai Dokhma advisory committee members are Ervad K. N. Dastoor and Shri. Curset M. Patel.

Statement on the crucial issue of availability of vultures

The community is at present in the state of confusion and shock over the reports of worldwide Non-availability of Vultures.

The reports are exaggerated and contrary to the facts. Scarcity of Vultures in some regions of the world cannot be constructed as total global non-availability of the same. Moreover the research is conducted by foreigners abroad. This cannot have any relevance to our conditions here.

Therefore the reports on declining existence of Vultures in the country are blown out of proportion. Or are there some other Motives behind its propagation?

We have no concern whatsoever over the issue as **there are plenty of Vultures in and around our site**. Northern areas of Vasai taluka have huge hilly stratas of dense tropical forest cover, serving as breeding place of the Vultures. MOTHER NATURE through WILL OF THE LORD, is already sustaining various Aviary centers in thick forest, ofcourse free of charge.

This forest cover is classified as reserved forests and therefore forest department is committed for its security for the long time to come.

The Vultures are peaceloving docile birds and would like to be away from humans. This adds to the credibility of our project, as the proposed site is distinctively away from the human habitations and aggression of development will never reach the center for atleast 150 years or so.

The population of Vultures is also enhancing in Vasai taluka on account of numerous existing cattle farms around, which offer regular food to Vultures through dead he-buffalos, who are intentionally killed by the owners to save on fodder.

The promoters are enthusiastically confident over the availability of Vultures, which contributes significantly towards the fulfillment of the objectives of 'DOKHMENASHINI' proposed for the new place of disposal of the dead for the community.

Vasai Dokhma Committee

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VULTURES ARE THERE AT VASAI DOKHMA SITE

A Lecture meeting was held at Cusrow Baug Agiyari on 18th April, 2001 to explain and give details of the proposed Vasai Dokhma and to prove vultures presence at the site.

The meeting was addressed by Mr. Bomi Sachinwalla, who has donated his own 23 acres of land for setting up the Dokhma at Vasai. Mr. Sachinwalla said he was inspired by the Divine will to promote this venture, saying that while one door was closing, Nature instituted another one to open up.

“He stated that the Dokhma would be situated about 85 Kms from Mumbai and is approachable through the Western Express Highway and is equi distance from Vasai and Virar railway stations. While the project would mainly provide a suitable alternative to residents from Andheri to Dahanu, those seeking to use this avenue from proper Mumbai would also be accomodated.

The aspects of ecology is the centre of this project. The site is ideally suited for the purpose since it is surrounded by dense forests on three sides which are classified as “Rescue Forests” and hence the authorities are committed to their maintainance and vigil. There is virtually no possibility of urbanisation of nearby areas for a long time to come.

Proper access roads right upto the Dakhma property will be built up and those alerady existing will be properly maintained. Two Towers of Silence will be built up with all proper infrastructures such as Sagdid Structure (with Kebla), prayer rooms, bungees for normal facilities, a separate pavillion for non-Parsees coming to pay their final homage, residential structures for priests and nassessalars/khandhias, toilet blocks, office premise etc., The Dokhmas will be properly, adequately and docrinally consecrated.

Ervad K. N. Dastoor also addressed the meeting. He stressed that the site is abundantly suited for the purpose, **as vultures are available in plenty**. While reports about worldwide scarcity of vultures may be true to an extent, there is

virtually no concern whatsoever about their **existence** as the proposed site. He also suggested that when this avenue opens up, the stress on the existing Dokhma in the city will be considerably eased up, thus relieving the pressure on that unit.

This was later followed up by a video demonstration wherein the **existence of vultures was proved beyond doubt**. The video site with Vultures shown on tree tops was shot on 7-1-2001. However, the site of vultures devouring a dead buffalo was shot on 9-4-2001. The Video clip was shown for the first time, to allay fears that vultures have vanished.

While concluding, Shri Bomi Sachinwalla aptly answered queries of the audience and stated emphatically that the **MOTHER NATURES THROUGH THE WILL OF THE LORD** will certainly see the project finally emerging. He implored the audience and the public at large to open up and donate generously for this very righteous project.

Those willing to Donate, may send their cheques in favour of :

Manijeh Pirojsha Sachinwalla Charitable Trust
Vasai Dokhma Committee

at their Registered office at :

275, Green House, At Post Valiv, Taluka Vasai,
Dist. Thane. Pin - 401208. Phone : 912-455182 /
912-455557.

Contact Nos. :

Bomi Sachinwalla : 912-455182 / 912-455557

K. N. Dastoor : 4932238

Naval H. Surty : 471 0363

Godrej Dandiwalla : 640 8627

Shri Sachinwalla said that if other Baugs and colonies were interested in such audio/video presentation, such a meeting could be easily arranged.

N. B. : Subsequently, such a presentation was made in the Dadar Agiary on 12-05-2001.

WHAT IS DOKHMENASHINI?

(In a Nut-Shell)

The mode of disposing of dead bodies is one which does no injury to the living and restores the corpse quickly to the elements of which it is composed

- Annie Besant.

*One marvels to see here (DOKHMA) a perfect system for the protection of the living from contagion derivable from the dead- I mean one marvel to see this proof that **modern science is behind the ancient** in this so important matter.*

- S. L. Clemens (Mark Twin)

Throughout the world Savants and Sages have acclaimed Dokhmenashini and dubbed it as the most scientific mode of disposal of the dead. TRUE, But why? Because as in life, so in death a true Zarathushtrian will not pollute the basic four elements of Nature - **Fire, Water, Air and Earth.**

Dokhmas are not merely round well of brick and mortar but a Consecrated place where during the time of its construction following ceremonies are performed:- Jamyad Yasht Nirang, **thirteen** Baj Ceremonies of various Yazads, Jashan with Afringan of Daham Yazad, "**Kudali Marvani-Kriya**" meaning 21 strokes of axe on the word Shyothananam while reciting 21 Yatha-Ahu-Vairyos, **Taano- Purvani-Kriya** i.e. pegging of **301** nails at very strategic points: and a **thread** is bound connecting every nail following a particular pattern. The thread is not bought but made from cotton-wool which is exposed to the Sun's rays for several days; and then purified by religious rituals, like taking out **101 threads** of cotton whilst reciting 101 names of Daddar Ahurmazad.

In "**Bhandar**" well-like hole ceremonies are performed. **Pavis** (for keeping corpses) are done methodically in accordance with the instruction laid down in the Zarathushtrian Din. Thus Dokhmas are not mere resting place but a **vibrating-living force in Nature.**

Vultures

The world's purifiers and the nature's Scavengers- the vultures, exterminate the flesh-in no time. They are able to finish off a full grown jungle buffalo in forty-five minutes, so

it is left to the imagination of the reader as to how much time – for a human corpse. Due to the extremely high body temperature of these birds and their peculiar body chemistry, they give to the mother earth, within **3 days**, through their excretion concentrate form of "**Anasars**" - atoms of body, which via sun-rays reach '**Daham-Yazad**'.

On fourth day of the dead (charum) during the time of 'Hoshbam' Daham-Yazad Afringan is performed in our ceremonies. Bundahish says that when men die, the soul sits for three nights near the place where his head was- — on the dawn of the fourth day, the good soul meets Sarosh Yazad and starts its journey upwards. Thus the 'soul' and the 'Anasar' will meet up there, which will go in the **custody of 'Daham Yazad'**. This is only possible if **all** the above are fulfilled. Hence, together with the Rays of the Sun- khurshid Nagirashni, Birds of prey like Vultures and Construction of the Dokhma and its "**Talesam**" all play an important part in ones journey from here (Geti) to there (chinvet).

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Shri Curset M. Patel

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