

THE PARSEE VOICE

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For Private Circulation

HAARYO JUGARI BAMNUN RAMEY!

A Bad Penny Has An Uncanny Knack Of Returning Again And Again In Circulation

Therefore, What Is Maneck Engineer Up To, Once Again? Is Chivalry Dead, Manecksha?

He has done it again! Maneck H. Engineer has thrown his hat in the ring for the fourth time! *Aadat se mazboor*, perhaps? May be, he thought that the three candidates who have got themselves nominated for the trusteeship are relative featherweights? But then, he has not reckoned with Armaity Rustom Tirandaz, who is expected to win hands down, Engineer's cousin, Arnavaz Mistry, who is campaigning for him, notwithstanding!

Track Record: In June 2001, Maneck H. Engineer, who wrongly claims himself to be the "architect" of Godrej Baug, a job he was assigned as an employee of one of the companies of the illustrious Godrej family, first staked his claim to the post of a trustee of the BPP, against Dinshaw Mehta, who stood for re-election in June 2001. Engineer lost by 120 votes.

More than a year later, he tried his luck again, this time against Rustom Tirandaz, who, stood for re-election. Engineer won. He continued to be a BPP trustee for almost six years, till October 2008, when, for the first time, an election based on direct franchise was held. The election was made possible because the six trustees, who held fort after Mrs. Silloo Kavarana's death, had decided to quit and abide by the High Court's order

regarding the new scheme of election. Maneck H. Engineer was one of them.

Two of these erstwhile trustees stood for re-election in September-October 2008: Dinshaw Mehta and Maneck Engineer. Mehta won. Engineer lost.

Thus, since 2001, Engineer lost two elections and won one.

But the man seems to be incorrigible. Like a losing gambler, he keeps playing for higher stakes. **Last time, in October 2008, Engineer was truly humbled at the hustings. He stood tenth from among the 32 candidates, inspite of his standing from the then Adult Franchise for Progress (AFP) platform. Of the 13564 voters who voted, 327 votes were found to be invalid. Thus, the actual number of voters was 13,237. Maneck Engineer, who stood 10th in rank, got only 4224 votes, that is, just about 30%! If Engineer were to take a school or college examination and were to get 30 marks out of 100, he would have been declared as "failed", 35 being the passing marks. No teacher would have been permitted to give as many as 5 grace marks!!**

So, the long and short of it is that Engineer was a 'failed' candidate for the BPP trusteeship

just four months ago. No self-respecting person would even dream of standing for an election for the same BPP seat, where he had been trounced so miserably only about a **hundred days ago!**

But since he has dared to put forward his candidature, we shall question him on at least one point, which, though we had alluded to in one of our election issues (July-August 2008), had not queried him about it.

In December 2006, when the BPP trustees heard that an Originating Summons regarding the giving of a Bungli at Doongerwadi for rituals performed for those who want to be cremated or buried, was to be filed in the Bombay High Court, a meeting was called to consider rescinding the decision taken on 6th February, 2001, which agreed to allow such a use. The decision, however, was held in abeyance all along. The whole community knew about this crucial happening. Maneck Engineer was no exception!

But in December 2006, Engineer and his guru-cum-godfather, Tamboly, **did not** attend the meeting. Tamboly had a reason for doing so. Within days, he wrote a letter to his co-trustees, that instead of rescinding the decision, they should have allowed the use of a bungli for the anti-Zoroastrian deed!! Tamboly, not surprisingly, went ahead and joined the pro-cremationist's bandwagon, by filing an affidavit in their favour!

Engineer couldn't do that. He hesitated to follow his master, lest he lose all future chances of becoming a BPP trustee! So, what he did was to write a letter to his colleagues – a couple of days after Tamboly did – stating that (a) he was not a trustee in 2001, when the decision was taken, and (b) he wanted a thorough discussion on it, before rescinding it.

Today, we ask Engineer openly, is he in favour of giving a bungli or some place in Doongerwadi for rituals to be performed for corpses to be cremated or buried? His latest manifesto is deafeningly silent on

the point. Again, how come Burjor Antia, who had joined the BPP board a few months before Engineer, readily agreed to rescind that nefarious decision? Why did Engineer fight shy of attending that crucial December 2006 meeting and take a stand?

Even in his latest candidature statement, Engineer, has taken recourse to untruths. For example, he says, "I am and have always been an independent person,... and have never been nor will ever be 'influenced' by the views of any individual or group", to give just one example. **Besides what we have already stated above, which gives the lie to his 'statement', he owes a reply to the community regarding his total silence when Dhan Baria & Co. raised a hue and cry re: the so-called stinking, rotting corpses in the Dakhmas, photographs of which were allowed to be taken and splashed all over the world?** Is this how Engineer, who always took the cue from his "boss" in the BPP, of either keeping absolutely mum about any inconvenient event or disappearing Down Under for months, remain independent? Today, how can you, Manecksha, talk of working "with great determination and commitment for strengthening the system of Dokhmenashini..." when truth sobs in a corner? Where did you disappear when there was fire in the Bisney Dakhma? Not a whisper from you thereafter in that regard, right till the time you quit in October 2008?!

Is Chivalry Dead?

We had at least expected that since he has completed the Biblical life-span of "three score and ten," Engineer would gracefully withdraw in favour of Armaity Tirandaz by the 15th of March, 2009. But nothing of that sort has happened.

Postscripts: (1) While this issue was in the press, we received, courtesy Maneck Engineer, around Navruz, a flier in English and Gujarati, with a greeting card mentioning phone numbers of Dadar doctors, some Mumbai hospitals and Doongerwadi! As our Kolanmai

would have said, "**Saare saparme dahade, apshookan maagech? Aavaa trusteee aapuney nahin joiye, bawa!**"

(2) In the section, "Religious beliefs and traditions", he writes: "I am a trustee of an Atash Behram and two Agiaries. This is proof enough of my love for my religion and our insitutions". What shall we say to that, except that it truly deserves a horse laugh!

(3) The Gujarati version of his English rejoinder to his detractors, has this sub-heading, "અસો શુ બોલે છે..." which had us completely stumped. Another gaffe below that reads "હું ધીક્કાર (sic)ને ધીક્કાર ચા ફેરને ફેરથી મારવામાં માનતો નથી." The

word "ફેર" had us scampering for the Gujarati dictionary. But, needless to say, we drew a complete blank!

(3) N.H. Dadrawalla, the lone ranger in the BPP who sat moping and brooding on a bench outside the Banaji Atash Behram, on the day he was elected as a trustee in October, 2008, is feeling so lonesome, that he longs for Engineer's company in the BPP. He writes, "A vote for Maneck Engineer is a vote for me." Wouldn't it be better and easier if both of them gave that company **outside** the BPP? Will save all the hassles for everyone concerned!!

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Empowering Armaity!

Carrying Rustom's Torch To Greater Heights

An Earnest Appeal To All Voters To Come Out In Large Numbers And Vote For Armaity Rustom Tirandaz

5 days earlier, Rustom Sheryar Tirandaz had met us at Doongerwadi, where we were attending a funeral. He proudly showed us his blue electric car near the pavilion.

On 27th February, 2009, Rustom himself was no more! None of us had even dreamt that the Great Reaper would strike at the doughty newly-elected trustee within four months of the formation of the Board of the BPP trustees! What took our breath away was the unprecedented number of mourners, both Parsee and non-Parsees, on all the three days at Doongerwadi. It's doubtful if any BPP trustee in the past had evoked this phenomenal response during the obsequies. It was amazing to witness so many non-Parsees shedding tears both at the Doongerwadi and during their condolence visits at the Tirandaz residence! Many of us didn't know that right from the time Rustom was a corporator, till the day before he died, he had never hesitated to extend a helping hand to any and everybody, who asked for succour.

Not only that. Unsolicited testimonies from different community members came pouring forth, as to how Rustom would go out of his way and reassure them with a *Main Hoon Na!* **The Parsee Voice** prays for the soul of the latter-day Irani Zarthoshti paladin, whose booming voice has so suddenly been silenced.

Cometh The Hour, Cometh The Woman

But is it? Behind every man there is a woman. And when the man departs, the woman takes over. This was the role played by the courageous Iranian and Hindu women in the past. They did not hesitate to pick up the swords of their late husbands, to continue the battle against the enemy of the religion.

Armaity Rustom Tirandaz is such a present-day warrior who, less than a week after her husband's death, picked up the gauntlet to tackle the common enemy, against whom her late husband had fought throughout his life.

When we hear uncharitable remarks like, "she will get sympathy votes" or "she is only an

animal lover and a social worker, what will she do, etc." we feel like telling them: "Go jump!"

The two sterling qualities that we have noticed in Armaity, and which are absolutely necessary for a successful BPP trustee, even though she spoke to us for a few minutes, are: (a) a firm determination and will and (b) a mind of her own. Thus, if any one expects that, if elected, she'll become a yes-woman he/she is sadly mistaken. Above all, she is a staunch traditional.

All these years, Armaity has worked silently with her husband and is well aware of the shenanigans at the BPP office. Her love for animals, particularly dogs, is an added advantage. Our most sacred text, the **Vendidad**, is replete with injunctions about our duty to the various species of dogs.

Not only that. A dog and a Zoroastrian are on par while alive, in that, both remain alert in fighting **druj** (putridity/evil). But even after death, the bodies of both the dog and a Zoroastrian have to be disposed of in the same manner – by exposure to the rays of the Sun. Thus, a Zarthoshti, who cares for and nurtures dogs has an innate sense of duty in Nature. And Armaity has that in abundance.

An Appeal To Voters

We, therefore, earnestly appeal to all the voters – both General Register and Donor, – particularly women voters – to shed any complacency or lethargy and come out in large numbers to vote on any of the 5 voting days at booths convenient to them, and unhesitatingly vote for Armaity Tirandaz. If you hesitate, you will be lost!

Udvada Dastur Creates History!

Goes Out Of His Way To Fulfil FDU's Agenda

*Toilets, Lights, Fans Installed
Near The Nahnkhana*

Breaks Age-old Tradition Of Sanjana Mobeds To Perform The Bui On Iranshah After Shifting Him To The Renovated Building

Sacred Varasiaji Connected With Iranshah Passes Away Exactly A Month Later!

**Is It A Mere Coincidence?
Sign Of The Times To Come? Perhaps!**

The High Priest of Udvada, Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor celebrated Valentine's Day with great fanfare! That evening, he, along with three other mobeds, including Ervad Pallon Dastur, Panthaky of the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhai Agiary at Colaba, Mumbai, who gets his

turn to serve Iranshah once a year and who, among other things, (**Parsee Voice** readers will remember) had played a prominent role in performing the Navjote of one Ratilal, who became Ronnie in Tarapore, some years ago.

The concerned Dastur of Udvada, the Chairman of the Foundation for Development of Udvada (FDU) has created dubious records, first by undergoing the nine-nights' ablution (Bareshnum) only to shift the Fire, and secondly by performing the **bui** ceremony twice thereafter!!

Years ago, those who were **pucca** Iranshah **buiwallas** had informed us that it was an age-old tradition in the Sanjana sect that before he dons the **Dasturi** shawl, the priest performs the Iranshah **bui** for the **last** time. **Thereafter, he cannot offer the bui to Holy Iranshah.** That was the **sudamati riwaj** (the healthy, ancient tradition) of the Udvada priests for centuries! Dastur Khurshed did not bat an eyelid in knocking off this tradition, which has a deep religious significance.

Once he is appointed a High Priest, he is supposed to lead a sober, dignified and highly religious life, befitting his status. Since he is not required to perform the **bui** ceremony ever, there is no need to undergo the **Bareshnum** ritual, again.

We checked this aspect of a High Priest with another present-day Dastur of a different sect, who also informed us that the High Priest does not offer **bui** to the **Atash Padshah**.

Recently, on the WAPIZ page, Dastur Dr. Firoz Kotwal has given historical instances of Dasturs (High Priests) performing the **bui** ritual. There is a world of a difference between what he has cited and what has happened recently in Udvada. Dr. Kotwal's examples are those where the High Priests themselves had taken part in the consecration and enthronement of **Atash Behram Padshahs** and, therefore, had the right and authority to offer the first **Bui**. In Udvada, on the other hand, the **Padshah**, more than 1200 years old, was shifted from His throne – for the umpteenth time – and then had to be taken back to His **gumbaz**. Thus, the Udvada High Priest took over the role of a **Yozdathregar**, after taking the Nahn, thereby flouting the

unwritten tradition of the Udvada priests!

FDU's Agenda

What's more, a dispassionate observer must have noticed through the years, that ever since he was made the Chairman of the FDU in 2003, Dastur Khurshed, who has roped in a coterie of yes-men, has not only behaved in a supercilious manner, overruling all and sundry, but has also followed to the T, the FDU agenda of making Udvada a tourist centre, thereby completely jeopardising the sanctity and the ambience around Holy Iranshah. We have given ample details of some of the irreligious acts in the past issues of **The Parsee Voice**.

Today, we once again ask: For more than 250 years, the complex and compound housing Holy Iranshah, never had toilets and urinals. Is it that Dastur Khurshed and his specially selected core committee members have suddenly realised that modern Parsees have problems with their bladders and kidneys, that they need to have a loo in the vicinity? We understand that two toilets each (Indian and Western) have been built for men and women, near the **nahnkhana**. Add to that a couple of urinals so that men could conveniently zip down and up, without bothering about the Vendidad injunctions!

The priests of yore toiled, laboured and sweated it out performing the **Yasna**, **Vendidad** and **bui** ceremonies. But when the remaining veterans are gone, young priests, **who have never been taught the religion in its pristine sense**, would require amenities like lights and fans (solar operated contraptions also have to run on batteries!) , which their ancestors made do without, to preserve the hallowed atmosphere.

Why do you think all this plus the crores of rupees spent on renovating the Wadia trust building have been undertaken? For the Parsees of India? Think again of the FDU agenda and the pseudo "Zoroastrians", who will start visiting the place and admiring the "3½-star" marble "lobby"!

Ideally, toilets etc. should be outside the magnetic circuits (**Kash**) of an **Atash Behram Padshah**. There should be no urinals at all. In Mumbai, only the Anjuman Atashbehram has urinals, which are also used by non-Parsee workers, watchmen, etc. The Wadiaji Atash Behram trustees closed down the urinals some years ago.

But in the complex in which Holy Iranshah is located, on which the only **Pav Mahal** of the physical world rests, it is sacrilege to have four toilets plus urinals, even though, as we are told, the septic tanks are in a neighbouring building, where the human filth is passed on by means of pipes!

In 2004-2005, Dastur Khurshed cried himself hoarse in public, that the septic tanks of the toilets in the newly constructed buildings near Iranshah were responsible for the Atash Behram wells getting dirtied and choked! Today, the same man has had the audacity to have toilets constructed bang next to the Holiest of the Holy!

Dear readers! Anyone with a little foresight can aver that spending hundreds of thousands of rupees on botoxing and giving the complete makeover to the Iranshah building is certainly not for the faithful Parsee/Irani Zarthoshtis o India. **It is the beginning of a grandiose plan, step by step, as dictated by the FDU, in its trust deeds of 2003 and 2004, to bring the hordes of "neo-Zoroastrians", who claim to "profess the Zoroastrian faith", right at the door of holy Iranshah!**

Don't believe us? Read this true story of what happened just a few weeks ago. A gentleman, who was within earshot of the shocking event, that took place inside Iranshah, told us that a Mumbai gentleman, who was praying before the **Padshah**, was stunned to see a non-Zoroastrian couple enter right upto the prayer hall! To top it, the woman sat in the **buiwalla's** chair!! The concerned gentleman informed Dastur Khurshed, who is said to have coolly replied, something like this: "Don't such instances

happen in modern Iran?!" So, when we talk of the Dastur's game-plan for the future, you better trust us and watch out!

Death of the Varasiya

Exactly to the day, after Iranshah was shifted back by Khurshed Dastoor and his helpers, the Varasiya connected with Holy Iranshah passed away on the 14th March! Coincidence? Think again.

Four months ago, an agitated Parsee lady rang us up in the morning to complain about the Udvada Varasia's condition. She was agitated that he was tied with a thick rope and that he wasn't looking good at all!

Some of our friends saw to it that representatives of the Udvada Anjuman were informed about this matter.

Many of the readers may not be aware that in Udvada, the Varasiyaji is kept at Doongerwadi, and not near the Atash Behram. Nowhere, where a Varasiya exists, is he kept near a **Dakhma**. A Varasiya, first and foremost is an **alaat** (consecrated spiritual apparatus or implement). Without a Varasiya, whose **varas** and **nirang** are used in inner liturgies like **Yasna, Vendidad** and **Nirangdin**. A **Varasiya** is an indispensable adjunct of the **Pav Mahal**. He is, therefore, supposed to be the foremost co-worker of all the Dasturs (High Priests). **That is why a Varasiya has to be kept in the pavi-cut area in the Fire Temple complex.**

This is not done in Udvada. He is kept a few kilometers away, near the **Dakhma**, and the **Sagdi**, where a Parsee caretaker is employed during the day. The other employees are all local non-Parsees. About 6-7 years ago, this editor had drawn the attention of a senior **buiwalla**, that the Varasiyaji is not properly looked after and that no priest from the **gaam** regularly goes there to keep a check.

Some well-wishers from Mumbai of the Varasiyaji repeatedly requested the authorities that a separate pen or an

enclosure be built for him, so that he can move about freely, and not at all be tied to one place. But then, call it red-tapism or indifference on the part of those concerned, the whole issue was not taken for consideration till the time – February 2009, – when the Varasiyaji took ill. He had developed severe infection, particularly in the liver.

On the 14th March, this silent "Deen-Dastur" breathed his last. **His was certainly an untimely death, as he had at least a couple of years more to live if he had completed his Natural life-span! Sheer indifference and a callous attitude, coupled with the jo-hukami raj of Dastur Khurshed and his chosen committee members, who are hell-bent on introducing the materialistic FDU agenda has resulted in a severe crisis for the nav-kutumbi anjuman, as all Pav Mahal rituals have come to a standstill and no priest can undergo the nine-nights ablution!!**

Finding a genuine **Varasiya** today, is like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack! The most incorrigible optimist among us are aware that things have started collapsing around us. Add to that, those responsible for the protection of the very source of the community's existence, the very sacred **Pav Mahal** of India, are themselves chipping at its foundation!

Postscript: Events in the community are happening so fast that we have to call back the manuscript from the printers to give you the latest on the sequel to the Varasiyaji's death. By the time you read this, a meeting called on the 27th March, 2009 at Udvada will have decided that the Udvada Anjuman can use the **alaat** of the Pundole group, next door...! Call it the peak of **Kaliyug** or the dirtiest **Hashemi** times! Thank goodness the late Ervad Ruttonshah Katila is not here to see his herculean efforts go in complete vain! "The times we are a-living!"

An Open Letter To The Trustees Of The Cowasjee Byramjee Banaji Atash Behram

*[On 12th November and 3rd December 2008, **The Parsee Voice's** two letters to Mr. B.H. Antia, the Managing Trustee of the Seth Cowasjee Byramjee Banaji Atash Behram Trust, highlighted various points regarding the "misuse" of the Gahambar Hall in the Atash Behram complex.*

*We had particularly complained about the filth and dirt right upto the Varasiyaji's enclosure, created by Parsees and non-Parsees who indulge in revelry and merry-making at and after dinner time in close proximity of the **Atash Padshah**. We had also drawn the trustee's attention to the deplorable fact that at such functions and gatherings in the hall, young ladies, some who may be having their periods, mingle freely both in the hall and in the compound of the **Atash Behram**.*

Attention was also drawn to the recent giving of the hall for three days for the counting of votes in the BPP election, amounting to a clear breach of trust, etc.

*Trustee B.H. Antia replied on the 12th December, 2008, stating **inter alia**: "Please note that we are trying our best to keep the area clean, and after receipt of your letter, we have requested our Manager to keep watch at site.*

"Regarding the use of the Hall for counting of the votes of BPP Trustees Election, we have noted your contention, and in future we will not allow the same".]

Dear Mr. Antia,

While we are thankful to you for your

reply, we have come across some gross irregularities going on in and around the hall, which we have to bring to the immediate attention of both the trustees and the community.

First of all, the extremely high decibel level of the so-called music that is played inside the hall even till 11.00 p.m.! **Isn't there any time limit for the ear-shattering noise that passes off as music being played inside the air-conditioned room? We urge Mr. Antia himself to be present inside the Atash Behram premises, around 10.00 p.m., whenever there is such a raucous noise emanating from the hall. We bet that you, Ervad Antia, will find it simply impossible to recite even your Sarosh Baj near the Padshah, with the constant boom-boom-boom shattering your ears!**

You are first and foremost trustees of the Atash Behram, and you owe it to yourself to stop this racket of deafening, disturbing music at once!

Some Parsees who come there, behave like revellers at a rave party without any sense of proportion. Heavily sozzled, they shamelessly smoke inside the hall, just a few yards away from the Holy Fire!! If the trustees want to increase the revenue of the trust, we will suggest other ways to do so. **Tell those who wish to book the hall that any guest found smoking inside or outside the hall, will be thrown out. The urgent need is to have a couple of paid Parsee toughies who will monitor and inculcate some discipline in the congregation.**

Shocking State Of Affairs Near & Around The Ghumbaz Of The Gahambar Hall

A few weeks ago, we were shocked and appalled to learn that the caterers' men, who, naturally, are unaware of any discipline vis-a-vis the **Atash Padshah, cook and/or warm the meals just outside the Varasiaji's shed. They use**

the entire area, which is covered with some sort of a tarpaulin. A makeshift iron staircase leads them right upto, and just outside the top of the Ghumbaz, which is filled with filth and muck, including beedi stubs thrown around carelessly!!

Surely, the trustees simply cannot abdicate their responsibility by passing on the buck to the manager who is only a day-time employee. **It is the bounden duty of you, the trustees, to ensure that, (a) no food of any kind is allowed to be cooked outside the Varasiya's shed and in such close proximity of the Holy Fire; (b) no non-Parsee caterer's employee can go up the iron ladder and treat the ground outside the Ghumbaz as a place to litter with left-overs, bottles and glasses; (c) in no circumstances should tables and chairs be laid out for dinner anywhere on the ground floor! Do the trustees forget that the same place/area and the Ghumbaz hall are those where the Holy Fire will be lawfully installed, as and when the genuine need arises to shift the Padshah? Do you want this sanctified area to become so hopelessly wretched that no amount of scraping and cleaning can wash away the impurities and putridities? Don't you gentlemen have any compunction of what your souls reply to Meher Yazad will be, after you are no more?** Before you came in, we had trustees of this Atash Behram of the likes of Piroja Boyce, Dadabhai Boyce, Ervad Dr. Minocher Karkhanawalla and others, who never allowed such sacriliges to be perpetrated near the Atash Behram building!

Many members of the community are so agitated that we won't be surprised if one night, the police are summoned. Let's hope that saner counsels will prevail and that you will act fast!

Yours sincerely,
Editors

Our Mailbox

Sir,

It is nearly four months since the Parsee Panchayet elections are over and the same period has also passed for felicitations, events and functions to honour our new trustees. After the initial jubilation, it is time for the trustees to get back into the business of keeping their election promises.

Since 1990, an anti-Christ movement, fashionably calling itself "Reformist" movement has started an agenda to liquidate the Parsee community and its assets from within, brilliantly and smoothly executing its agenda that very few members of the Parsee community can even understand the amount of "Destruction" already carried out. The movement had a group through its nominees over the BPP for the last 15 years. The new trustees of BPP will have to do everything in their power to reverse the destructive trend which has infiltrated our religion and community, so that they can survive and prosper. The damage caused by the Anti-Christ Movement are as under :

1. Mumbai Doongerwadi Destruction:

The first action of the Anti-Christ movement was to destroy our Doongerwadi which is one of the pillars of the Zoroastrian religion. Vultures were allegedly shot and poisoned, **palm trees, the breeding ground of vultures in and around the Doongerwadi were cut-off.** Thus, it became impossible for vultures to stay and breed near the Doongerwadi. This first step to liquidate Doongerwadi and its assets had already begun in early 1990s. Next, the propaganda machine of the "Reformists" started demanding the closure of the Dokhmas at Doongerwadi, on health grounds together with propagating

cremation of the dead, as an alternative measure. At present, the destroyers of Doongerwadi are heavily campaigning with the government authorities for the closure of the Dokhma and Doongerwadi. Are the BPP trustees going to wait for the day when the entire Doongerwadi estate will be lost? What is their plan of action as promised in the election agenda?

Only a start of an aviary can bring back vultures. It is time for the BPP to start funding the aviary for breeding of vultures, to save the Doongerwadi. The time to act is now, before the excuses and alibis are put forward. It is no use of taking help of somebody who does not respect our religious traditions. An european christian orthodox family has successfully bred an extinct vulture group. They would be more than willing to help Parsees to start an aviary at Doongerwadi.

2. Surat Doongerwadi and its properties

Surat Parsee Panchayet, is at times guided and advised by the BPP trustees. From 2004 onwards, certain misled trustees started selling Surat doongerwadi land located in prime region in Surat, worth hundreds of crores, at throwaway prices, to builders!!

The method used for sale was a long licence to builders to construct buildings, since sale of trust property is not an easy way as direct sale is often prohibited under the Surat Parsee Panchayet trust deeds. Flimsy excuses were given for such sale at throwaway prices by Surat Parsee Panchayet trustees. However what man at time proposes, God at the same time disposes. An 81 year old lawyer from Mumbai came into the picture to save the Surat Doongerwadi land. He has been running from Surat to Ahmedabad and back in various courts to prevent the Doongerwadi land from destruction in Surat. This 81 year old solicitor/lawyer is valiantly fighting cases against builders and

the Surat Parsee Panchayet to stop them in their act of liquidation of religious property in Surat. If at such a mature age, a single man is doing his best to save the religion in Surat, the present BPP trustees should support him and save our Doongerwadi land in Surat.

3. Stop Brain Drain

The Anti-Christ movement not being satisfied with by a direct attack on religion started an "Indirect Method" of destruction of the Zoroastrian community in Mumbai. They started financing in large numbers youth to emigrate to New Zealand and elsewhere. Special transit facilities were set up in New Zealand and Canada where youth and their families were sent, kept for a few months and finally helped to settle. So large was this programme, that youngsters started disappearing from Mumbai. Plan was simple. The young emigrating from Mumbai would turn the Parsee community into a group of retired elders in India. At the same time, the youth sent abroad would lose their roots and mix with the alien cultures. A brilliant plan of destruction of the community and its culture. To prevent such a planned and financial emigration, it is time for the BPP to help the local youth in successfully completing exams like IAS, IPS etc. Special training must be given and it must be financed by the BPP. A seed, when properly watered will give a tree full of fruits for a long time.

Some of the non-Parsee IAS and IPS officers are at loss of words as to why the most progressive community is more interested in doing menial jobs abroad when most powerful and respected offices are available to them in the country. Cannot BPP do something to educate our youth? The election promises of the Trustees need to be turned into reality.

4. Stop world voting rights

The earlier BPP trustees, by some strange and perverse interpretation of law, had

almost brought world voting rights, where for the election of BPP trustees, even those settled in USA and elsewhere around the world can vote in the BPP election. Next, the "Reformists" plan to approach the courts to allow proxy voting by the "Reformists" staying in Canada, New Zealand and USA. If this happens, the orthodox will be outnumbered by them, and the BPP will once again be in the hands of their nominees. What the "Reformists" lost in a straight election, will come back through the back door in by-elections. The BPP trustees in the election promise had said they would stop world voting.

Two other issues not directly concerning the BPP but affecting the Parsee community, where BPP cannot continue to remain a mute spectator are :

(a) Attack on Dadar Parsee Colony

The non-parsee builders along with the help of some Parsee builders want to see Dadar Parsee Colony turn cosmopolitan. The financial benefits for builders would be huge, running into thousands of crores. Builders are known to use tricky and deceitful methods. Three trustees of BPP are from Dadar. Can they not lobby with the Government authorities in Mumbai to save this heritage colony? If necessary, BPP, with its strong reputation, can also lobby with the top legal minds to help overcome any legal issues. BPP will not spend a rupee in this activity. But by action, it will be able to save the best Parsee colony in Mumbai.

(b) Help in financing Parsee agiaries in small towns:

In each of the small towns in Gujarat and elsewhere, an Agiary exists among a small but dedicated Parsee population. In each of these cases, a senior single trustee is fighting a financial battle to preserve our agiaries.

Can the BPP not finance the maintenance of kathi and salary of mobed or will it wait for the closure of agiaries by being a mute spectator?

Each one of the above issues directly or indirectly affects our pillars of religion and community. What is the plan of action of the trustees newly elected of BPP to save them?

It is a well known fact that the mandate by public is given only once. Seven years of trusteeship may seem long but time moves faster than wind! If nothing is done on the election promises of orthodox-

minded trustees, it is only a matter of time when the so-called "Reformists" will rout the present trustees in elections whenever the next election comes. Opportunity to serve comes only once in a life time. Please do not waste it. My small request to the present BPP trustees "Let your actions speak louder than your words."

(Mrs.) Meher K. Zaiwala

અમારો અર્થપિપ્પ

પારસી કોમના પ્રતાપી પૂર્વજો

તેર તેર લાંબી સદીઓ પહેલાં જ્યારે ઈરાનના તાજ અને રાજદંડ જમીન દોસ્ત થયા ત્યારે મુશ્કેલીઓના સૌથી ખરાબ દિવસોમાં સર્વેને ખુદાએ ટકાવી રાખ્યા, અને મોટા તોર્તીંગ વહાણો બાંધનારા અને શૂરાવીરા આપણા પૂર્વજો ઈરાનથી હિંદ દેશ તરફ આવતા રહ્યા હતા.

સૌથી પહેલાં ગુજરાતનાં સંજાણમાં હિંદુ રાણાએ પૂર્વજોને આસરો આપ્યો હતો, અને સંજાણ પર હુમલો કરનારા મુસ્લિમોનો સામનો કરવા પારસી જરથોસ્તીઓએ રાણાને મદદ કરી હતી, અને સંજાણમાં આતશને ઊભા કરી રાખ્યા હતા. ત્યાર બાદ સંજાણ પાસે આવેલા બાહરોટ ડુંગરની ગુફાઓમાં આતશને રાખ્યા હતા. ત્યાંથી આતશને વાંસદા, સુરત, ભરૂચ, ખંબાત અને વલસાદ થઈ છેવટે ઉદવાડામાં કાયમ કરવામાં આવ્યા હતા. પૂર્વજો ગુજરાતના ગામોમાં ઠરીઠામ થઈ, ખેતી, બાગામત અને વહાણો બાંધવાના કામો કરતા હતા.

પશ્ચિમે નારગોલ બંદરથી દસ કીલોમીટર દૂર નદી મારફતે સંજાણ વહાણો આવતા હતા. હિંદ દેશ પર પોર્ટુગીઝો અને અંગ્રેજોએ પશ્ચિમ કીનારા પર આવી, ગોવા, દમણ, વસઈ, માહીમ વગેરે પર સત્તા જમાવી

હતી. મુંબઈ ટાપુ તે વખતે માછીમારો અને કોળીઓની વસ્તી ધરાવતો હતો, અને છેવટે અંગ્રેજોએ કબજો લેતાં, પૂર્વજો બેળગાડાં અને વહાણોમાં મુંબઈ આવતા થયા હતા. આપણાં પૂર્વજોએ જોખમભર્યા સાહસો ઉઠાવી, દૂરપરદેશમાં જઈ વસી, જમીન અને જળમાર્ગે લાવેલી દોલતને કોમ પરકોમો માટે છુટી મુકી હતી. ગામેગામ અને શેહેરોમાં અગીયારીઓ, શાળાઓ, હોસ્પિટલો અને રહેઠાણો બંધાવ્યા હતા, અને કોમ અને ધર્મ તરફથી ફરજ બજાવી હતી.

પ્રતાપી પૂર્વજોએ આસરો આપનાર દેશનો બદલો વાળવા માટે દુન્યાની સૌથી નાની કોમ છતાં પ્રમાણમાં, બીજી કોમો કરતાં બીજાઓને વધુ આપ્યું છે.

આપણે બધા ધર્મો તરફ માન ધરાવ્યે છીએ, છતાં આપણી જીંદગી અને સરજત જરથોસ્તી ધર્મ સાથે જોડાયેલી છે. આપણે પારસીઓ જરથોસ્તી ધર્મનેજ વફાદાર રહી, સુધારાવાદીઓની જાળમાં નહી ફસાઈએ, અને મારો ધર્મજ મારે માટે ઉત્તમ છે એવી ખુદા પાસે દુઆમાંગીશું.

મર્ઝબાન ખંધાડયા

આતશ બહેરામ - અગીયારી

આજ કાલ આપણાં પારસી ભાઈ બહેનો પોતાના બચ્ચાની નવજોત તેમજ લગ્ન આતશ બહેરામ તેમજ અગચારીઓના હોલમા કરે છે, તે સારી વાત છે. પણ એ લોકો ત્યાં આગલ બિલકુલ શાંતી રાખતા નથી. તેમજ ત્યાં આગલ આવનાર ભાઈ બહેનો ને પોતાની ભણવાની તકલીફ પડે છે. **બનાજી આતશ બહેરામમાં જે ભણવાનો હોલ છે ત્યાં લગ્ન અથવા નવજોત હોય તો આપણાં ભાઈ બહેનો ખુબજ મોટે મોટે બુમાબુમ તેમજ જે ગમે તેવી રીતે બોલાચાલી કરતા હોય છે.** બહેરામ રોજે, સોમવાર ને દીવસે તેમજ શુકરવાર હોરમઝ રોજે બેઉ દીવસે લગ્ન હતા. લગ્ન થઈ રહ્યા પછી જે ભાઈ બહેનો મોટે મોટે બુમાબુમ કરી તેમજ ફોટાઓ પાડવાને સમયે બીજા ભણવા આવનાર માણસોનો બિલકુલ ખયાલ નહિ કર્યો. **પછી ઉપરના હોલમા પણ મોટે મોટે બુમાબુમ તેમજ મ્યુઝીક પણ કુલ વોલ્યુમમાં મુકેલું.** (બરજોર બાવા, સાંભળ્યું કે?-તંત્રી) આપણી પારસી કોમ શીખેલી ભણેલી છે ને આવુ કરે તે કંઈ શોભે? તમે મજા મસ્તી કરો પણ કયા અને કેવી રીતે કરવી તે સમજીને કરો. તેજ પ્રમાણે અગીયારીઓમાં પણ એમજ કરે છે. નાના બચ્ચાંઓ પણ બુમ બરાડા તેમજ અગચારીમાં

દોડતા હોય છે. શું માય બાપો બચ્ચાઓને આવી કેલવણી આપે છે. શુ કહી નહિ શકે કે આપણે અહિયાં સારી રીતે વર્તવું જોઈએ. પણ માય બાપોજ આ રીતે કરે છે તો બચ્ચાઓ શુ કરવાનાં. પહેલ્લા જ્યારે એ લોકો નવજોત અથવા લગ્ન કરવા આવે ત્યારે જ્યારે ફોર્મ ભરે ત્યારે ત્યાનાં મેનેજર તેમજ ત્યાના દસ્તુરજી, પંથકી સાહેબોએ, કહેવું જોઈએ કે તમે લોકો શાંતી રાખજો અને બીજા આવનારાઓનો વિચાર કરજો. **પણ નથી મેનેજર આવી ને જોતા કે નથી ત્યાંના મોબેદ સાહેબો એ લોકોને શાંતી રાખવા કહેતા. બનાજી આતશબહેરામના હોલમાં જમ્યા પછી પણ ત્યાં સાફ સફાઈ બીજા દીવસ સુધી થતી નથી.** માટે, જ્યારે પણ આવો સારો દીવસ હોય ત્યારેજ ત્યાનાં ઘરના માણસોને કહેવું જોઈએ કે તમારા કેટરરને જમ્યા પછી બરાબર રીતે સાફ સફાઈ કરી જવા કહેજો. ત્યાંના ટ્રસ્ટી સાહેબો જેવી રીતે મોબાઈલ ફોન ને વાસ્તે બોર્ડ મુકે છે તેવીજ રીતે ત્યાં બીજુ બોર્ડ મુકવું જોઈએ કે, મહેરબાની કરીને પાદશાહ સાહેબના મકાનમાં બુમાબુમ વગર શાંતી થી રહેવું.

-એક જરથોશ્તી

THUS SPAKE THE 'TODDLER'

It is in the air that the atmosphere at the BPP meetings is marred by the behaviour of one trustee. A suggestion: BPP should keep all its weekly meetings open to the community. Use cameras, mikes and speakers, so that the voters can know what exactly is happening and no allegations/mud-slinging are made thereafter!