

THE PARSEE VOICE

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FDU Goes Ballistic!

Chairman & Managing Trustee Join Hands To Denigrate *THE PARSEE VOICE* – With The Help Of Lies, Misinformation & Falsehoods! They Go All Out To fool The *Gaamvaasis!* & The Parsee Community!

BOXING DAY – 26th December, 2005. That was the day selected by some of the Foundation for Development (?) of Udvada (FDU) trustees to launch their broadside against **The Parsee Voice**, in a tiny town called Udvada! The immediate provocation? No, not any write-up in **The Parsee Voice**, which had last exposed the surreptitious shenanigans of FDU, six months ago, in June, 2005!

What sent the mercury of a few individuals gathered that day in Udvada soaring, although Gujarat was facing cold-wave conditions, was a press conference held a week earlier, on 20th December, by the President of the Bardoli Jarthoshti Anjuman, Jamshed Mohta and his colleagues.

Mr. Mohta had called press representatives from Gujarat mainly to protest against the additions in the objects of the FDU Trust Deed. The gravamen of his charge was that instead of concentrating on improving the infrastructure of Udvada, the FDU trustees seem to be on a binge – flying at everything between the sky and the earth, except the main points at issue! About 50-60 persons, mostly from the Gujarat press, attended. At least half-a-dozen newspapers, like **Gujarat Samachar, Pratap, The Indian Express, Dhabkār**, etc. carried detailed reports about the conference.

Six days later, four of the FDU trustees, Dastoor Khurshed K. Dastoor, D.K. Tamboly, Homai Mody and Homi Dhalla, called a meeting, presumably for the *gaamvaasis*, in the same Mirza Hall in Udvada.

Again about 50 people, mostly non-Parsee locals, attended.

Our Associate Editor, who happened to be there, reported *inter alia*: (1) For more than an hour Dastur Khurshed spoke. None of the other three FDU trustees present, said anything. (2) He said he was clarifying FDU's stand regarding objections raised by 'someone' (read Jamshed Mohta). (3) However, right from the word 'go', Dastur Khurshed, who had brought with him copies of the relevant issues of "**The Parsee Voice**", launched a vicious tirade against this journal. **And right from beginning to end, TRUTH was the biggest casualty!**

FICTION:

FDU Chairman said, "**At a festival, 'Vibrant Gujarat,' Chief Minister, Narendra Modi had expressed a desire to Jehangir Cama of Ahmedabad, another FDU trustee, that he wanted to do something good for the Parsee community – a symbol of peace in Udvada for the world to see how minorities are safeguarded.** Mr. Cama approached Mr. Tamboly, who in turn, approached friends, religious scholars and me, and a trust was formed."

FACT:

The original Notification of the Gujarat Government, dated 16th December, 2002, signed by P.K. Laheri, the then Commissioner of Tourism, Government of Gujarat, had this to say: "**At a meeting held at Ahmedabad in**

January 2002, during the 'Foundation Stone' laying ceremony of the Institute of Hotel Management, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Minister (Tourism and Culture), Govt. of India, Shri Jagmohan, who were both present, acknowledged the positive role of Parsis in nation building ever since their arrival from Persia over 1300 years ago.

"Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat mentioned that the most sacred religious place of Parsis was Udvada, where the Holy Fire – Iranshah – was perpetually maintained. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat appreciated that ever since the Parsis arrived as migrants they had abided by a code of conduct, which preserved their identity without offending the sensitivities of any other community."

"A proposal was thereafter submitted to the Government of India for providing certain basic facilities, which would enable the State of Gujarat to project Udvada as a unique place in our country, symbolising traditions of tolerance, harmony and progress through partnership with the Parsi community."

[The Notification subsequently mentions:] "After discussions with various members of the Parsi community, it was decided to form a core group comprising well-known Parsis and nominee of the Government of Gujarat, who would ultimately get registered as a NGO and undertake responsibility of directing and executing the project. It has now been decided that the core group would consist of the following individuals:" [The names given were: D.K. Tamboly – President, P.K. Laheri, Jehangir R.J. Cama, Mino R. Shroff, Burjor H. Antia, Homai N. Modi and Homi B. Dhalla.] **Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor was then one of the two High Priests of Udvada!**

In February 2003, Dastur Kaikobad passed away and his son Khushru/Khurshed succeeded him. **Then, what happened is very pertinent. THE PARSEE VOICE (Vol.I 23) 1–15 July 2004 speaks for itself:**

Dastur Khurshed's Protest

"From among the protestors, most of whom wrote to the authorities and the press in Gujarati, the most prominent was the then newly appointed High Priest of Udvada, Dasturji Khurshed, who published a long statement, which was carried by leading Gujarati papers of Gujarat ("Sandesh", "Gujarat Samachar", "Gujarat Mitra" etc.) in April 2003.

"Dasturji very rightly pointed out that,

(i) the huge amount, given by the two governments, should be used only for solving the perennial problems of Udvada *gaam*, namely, improvement in the basic infrastructure, like the road from the station to the Iranshah Atash Behram, regular supply of electricity to Udvada village, saving the village from the ravages of the sea, improvement in bus service from the station to Udvada village, stoppage of Flying Ranees and other fast trains at Udvada, having an open maidan for children to play in, etc.

(ii) "Finally", Dasturji wrote, **"with great regret do we have to inform the Gujarat government that our *gaam* has been given the title of 'Cultural Tourist Centre' and the Committee that has been formed, does not consist of any permanent resident of Udvada. Our Iranshah High Priests and other important local persons have been completely given the go-by! How can people from Mumbai and Ahmedabad, who are totally ignorant about our basic amenities and problems, raise the issues about our *gaam*? We, therefore, request that in this committee, important local residents should be appointed"**.

It was only after that, that the FDU Trust formed in May 2003, took on Dastur Khurshed as a Trustee of the FDU and made him the Chairman!

FICTION:

FDU Chairman said :

Dastur Khurshed told the *gaamvaasis* that some persons wanted him to get out of the Trust. "I refused to leave as I saw no reason to do so." [He made a similar statement in a so-called "interview" published in Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly of 1.1.2006. More on that later.]

FACT:

After meeting Cyrus Guzder, then with the Mumbai Heritage Conservation Committee, on 10th September, 2004, Dastur Khurshed, who had given a lift to this Editor in his car, was, requested by the Editor, to quit while the going was good, had replied, "Yes, I think, I should. There's too much pressure on me!"

He's now singing a different tune, obviously composed by someone else!

[This is what the same issue (Vol.I 23) of **The Parsee Voice** had to say then, on the matter.]

“That 'core group' has now been registered (Sept. 2003) and has been christened, "Foundation for Development (read, 'Disaster') of Udvada", with an additional name, Dastur Khurshed K. Dastoor of Udvada, as the Chairman. Since Dasturji had rightly complained earlier in the Gujarat press that locals were ignored, he himself was made a trustee. But, he had also asked for other well-known persons of Udvada to be on the project, who have still been ignored!

Everything is so hush-hush and under wraps that no one outside the "Foundation" knows who the trustees are and whether the sum of over Rs.1 crore plus has already been disbursed to the 'Foundation'! WHY THIS SECRECY? Doesn't the community have a right to know what's happening in their own pilgrimage centre?

FICTION:

The FDU Chairman said :

After the FDU was formed, headlines appeared that the Trust was not for Parsees. ‘As a Dastur, should I not work for Udvada?’ They (FDU’s detractors) said that the word ‘Parsee’ was not there (in the Trust Deed), ‘I replied that, Udvada was not only for Parsees’. They had apprehensions that there would be non-Parsee trustees in the Trust!

FACT:

***Bahut Khoob*, Dasturji Khurshed!!**

(We should not forget that sitting bang next to him at that meeting on 26th December, was the Managing Trustee, D.K. Tamboly himself!) So, the non-Parsee *gaamvasis* must have lapped up this newly trumpeted canard!

First of all, let us get the optics of all concerned, right.

Dastur Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor is one of the two Dasturs, of Holy Iranshah, the other being Dastur Dr. Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza. Dastur Khurshed surprisingly even signs as “Vada Dasturji”, which is not correct.

Vada = chief or head, can only be one. All Dasturs are **not Vada**. If we know our protocol right, only the Meherjirana **gaadi** Dastur of Navsari can be called, **Vada**.

Secondly, **The Parsee Voice** had in five different issues in 2004 and 2005, objected to the structure and composition of the FDU and criticised the objects of its

Trust Deed and the subsequent Scheme for Management and Administration of the Trust!

This is what **The Parsee Voice** said then (**and maintains every word of it today!**) as far as the absence of the word “Parsee” in the Trust Deed is concerned:

(a) “Mr. Laheri's statement published in December 2002 (mentioned above), stated at the end that, ‘we hope that Parsees all over the world will welcome these steps taken by the Central and Gujarat governments...

In order that the whole project is successful and to meet the day-to-day expenses, the Parsee community will have to contribute to the Fund. The W.Z.O. has agreed to collect the funds for this project...

Notice that throughout the notification, Mr. Laheri (the Gujarat Government) uses the words, "Parsees" or "Parsee community". None of those in authority know that, some of the main persons to whom they have entrusted the project, just do not have the word "Parsee" in their vocabulary or dictionary. For them, it's the stylish Persian word, "Zarthushti", which means, ANY ONE, who professes the Zoroastrian religion!

That is why members of the Parsee community saw red and objected right from the beginning, both regarding the purpose of the project and the persons entrusted with the task of executing it.” (Vol.I. 23 1-15 July 2004).

(b) The issue of September 2004 expressed shock and dismay at the FDU Trust Deed **not mentioning** a word about Parsee Zoroastrians at all! This is what we said:

“All along, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Mr. Narendra Modi and Mr. P.K. Laheri, now the Chief Secretary of Gujarat, in their very first communique, two years ago, had emphatically stated that the whole project was for Parsee Zoroastrians only!

IN THE ENTIRE TRUST DEED OF 21 PAGES, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE MENTION ABOUT PARSEE ZARTHOSHTIS. WORST STILL, IF A TRUSTEE DIES OR RETIRES OR RESIGNS, THE REMAINING TRUSTEES CAN APPOINT “ANY OTHER PERSON OR PERSONS TO BE A TRUSTEE OR TRUSTEES”.

THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL IN THE ABOVE TRUST DEED, ABOUT MAINTAINING THE

SANCTITY OF HOLY IRANSHAH OR EVEN A REMOTE SUGGESTION THAT UDVADA IS TO BE A YATRA DHAAM FOR PARSEE ZARTHOSHTIS!!!

IN FACT, THE “FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF UDVADA” HAS NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THE PARSEES OF UDVADA, THEIR HOMES AND PAAK IRANSHAH OR WITH THE PARSEE COMMUNITY!!”

It is unthinkable that the Chairman of the FDU, standing just a few yards away from Holy Iranshah, on 26.12.2005, would so twist and distort the allegations made in The Parsee Voice in 2004 and, just to placate and please the non-Parsee *gaamwasis*, would further state that, “They had apprehensions that there would be Parjaat trustees in the Trust”.

Why did the FDU Chairman bend over backwards to please the local people of Udvada on 26th December, 2005? **Because, just two hours earlier, some of them who had been called at his house at about 1.00 p.m. to brief them on how they should vote for the “resolution” to be passed at the meeting and how they should support the FDU trustees, had remonstrated to the FDU Chairman, as to why, the non-Parsee residents of Udvada were kept in the dark by him for more than two years! “It was my mistake!”, he had replied. Thus came into being a “Local Committee” of selected non-Parsee residents...**

In fact, **The Parsee Voice** fully supports these residents of Udvada who were bitter about things happening behind their back, as, right from the very beginning, not only Udvada men and women but the entire Parsee community was deliberately kept in the dark about the formation of the FDU and its trust deed!! **Accountability and transparency are just not to be found in the vocabulary of the top brass of FDU!**

FICTION:

FDU Chairman said :

These people (The Parsee Voice) started a signature campaign in which signatures were falsely taken by Parjaats approaching unsuspecting people in the afternoon! They raised the bogey of outsiders entering Iranshah, i.e. they were referring to **you (gaamwaasis)** entering Iranshah!

FACT:

To nail such canards and lies, it's high time “The Parsee

Voice” held a public meeting both in Udvada and Mumbai to demonstrate once and for all, among other things, that these “outsiders” are the fake, fraudulent “Zarthushtis” from abroad, total aliens, who have converted themselves to the “Zoroastrian religion”, fully aided and abetted by the WZO and **not the gaamwaasis!**

The FDU Chairman will not be able to fool the local people of Udvada for long, as he will soon realise.

FICTION:

The main opposition against FDU was that D.K. Tamboly was buying people with money and sending money outside. I am from Udvada. I have a conscience. I have to show you my face. I will not let any trouble come to Udvada!

Mr. Tamboly is only a trustee of WZO!! I will tell you what he does :

380 Zoroastrian families are taken care of. 105 wells have been dug. In Udvada, mobeds have taken money for repairs; interest-free loans have been given, children have been educated by WZO. Non-Parsees are also helped by WZO. How much money has been given by people who give lectures?

FACT:

We leave it to you to decide whether this deserves a loud guffaw or a horse-laugh!

Then came the *coup de grace*: If ‘D.K. Tamboly is doing good work, we will work under his thumb!’

That is exactly what the FDU Chairman has been doing since May 2003, when after raising legitimate objections against the Gujarat Government’s notification, he was taken in the Trust and made its Chairman. Wasn’t that Tamboly’s thumb that the FDU Chairman now invoked?

After a few sympathisers and FDU satellites spoke, the Boxing Day stage-managed meeting, came to an end!

Mendacity Continued To Rule The Roost In The So-called Jame “Interview”!

After temporarily winning over the hearts and minds of the gullible Udvadians, the FDU Chairman, with full support from that ‘THUMB’, gave an ostensible interview, published in the Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly of 1st January, 2006. Many of the meeting’s accusations were repeated while some statements of the “interviewer” and the “interviewee” were so fused and hazy that one didn’t know who was saying what! A fine example is that of the then (20-year-old) “Parsee Voice” criticising the

Athravan Educational Trust (AET) being cited in that "interview"! Wonder where the FDU Chairman got this information from!

However, there has been one topic, that of "Heritage", which, like so many others, has been deliberately convoluted to show "**The Parsee Voice**" in poor light.

Heritage Hiccups!

A totally futile and unnecessary controversy has been raised by vested interests, who claim that **The Parsee Voice** is against 'Heritage' status for Udvada:

We shall first reproduce relevant extracts from what was stated in our two issues of July, 2004:

Vol I. 23: 1-15 July, 2004:

Does Udvada village/town need to be "developed" or "preserved"?

All right-thinking Parsees will strongly object to the word "Development" in the name of the trust formed. "Development" **necessarily means, 'evolution', 'growth', 'advancement'. Do we need anything of that sort anywhere near the fountain-source of our very existence and survival, Holy Iranshah and the Pav Mahal built thereon? Or, is the need of the hour to preserve and protect the spiritual atmosphere, the sanctity and the purity of the environs of Holy Iranshah?**

The WZO-infested "Foundation" is going full-steam ahead with the implementation of the first phase of the project: Notifying Udvada as a "Heritage Precinct" and stalling demolition of all existing structures (**No objection!**)*; Declaring the street leading up to the Atash Behram as a 'Pedestrian Plaza' and a 'Silence Zone' (**No objection!**);

**However, Mg. Trustee D.K. Tamboly's grandiose plan to make the Udvada Village precinct a "World Heritage Site" is highly objectionable.*

Vol. I. 24 : 16-31 July, 2004 :

"In our last issue, we had stated that if Udvada **gaam** is made a 'heritage site', there need be no objection. But now we strongly feel that if preserving the heritage also means, besides maintaining the milieu and ambience of the place, and saving the old heritage homes of the Parsees and preserving and protecting the sanctity of the Holiest of Holy Iranshah, making it an official "Heritage Precinct or Site" and placing it in the control of a Heritage Conservation Committee as is done in Mumbai, strong objection should be taken against that too!

Wider ramifications of an official Heritage Site

For, what will happen is that Udvada **gaam** with its old houses and bungalows, alongwith Holy Iranshah will be graded! Many of them will be graded as say, I or II. So, then, everything about them will be official.

We feel that the Government of Gujarat like those of other states, must be having a Heritage Conservation or Preservation Committee. Such a Committee will then wield **the authority** to decide what should or should not be done to the heritage structures, according to the guidelines provided.

In short, while possession and ownership will remain with the original proprietors (the Wadia Trust, in case of the building that houses Holy Iranshah), the AUTHORITY will vest in the Heritage Committee! It will be the Heritage Committee then which will call the shots if any changes are to be made, including, say, painting of the building or the Gumbaz (the dome), etc., which till now is jointly decided by the Udvada Athornan Anjuman and the Wadia Trust. Permission will first have to be taken from such a Heritage Committee, say, to remove the soot from the Gumbaz and give it a coat of paint! One shudders to think of the other consequences that will follow therefrom. Preservation of heritage buildings is one thing and transferring the authority to preserve them is totally another!"

Notice carefully the words used in the above paras of I.24. Firstly, a "Heritage Precinct" was considered the penultimate step to making Udvada a "World Heritage Site", under UNESCO, which was very much on the cards!

Secondly, we have NEVER objected to preserving the old buildings in Udvada gaam! What we have emphatically drawn attention to is the hard fact that Holy Iranshah's building should be kept out of the ambit of any Heritage Committee.

We reiterate today that the Udvada Athornan Anjuman is fully capable of looking after the day-to-day affairs of Holy Iranshah. The **buiwallas**, along with the trustees of the Bai Motlibai Wadia Udwada Atashbehram Trust, who administer and manage the building housing Holy Iranshah, alone can and should decide if any repairs are to be carried out. No bureaucrat of any Heritage Committee should be allowed to interfere in this matter.

Finally, there's this unfair, odious comparison between the Dadyseth Atash Behram, for whom we have clamoured for the highest grade heritage status, and Holy Iranshah!

Dadyseth Atash Behram, like all other Atash Behrams and Agiaris in Mumbai are governed by trust deeds with different trustees administering these trusts. Many of these trustees take advantage of generating income, by having nexus with builders, because of the excess FSI

and TDR available as per the policy of the Maharashtra Government. Holy Iranshah has its own unique Anjuman and the trustees of the Motlibai Wadia Trust act only in consultation with this Anjuman and the **yaozdathregars!**

Pertinent Posers For The FDU Chairman

(1) You had become the Chairman of the FDU ever since the trust was formed in May, 2003. Some of the meetings of the FDU were held at your home in Udvada. Yet, when this Editor was in Udvada, a year later, in June 2004, how come even the permanent Parsee residents, including some priests were blissfully unaware of what was going on under their nose? Why didn't you reveal the FDU activities to your own people?

(2) What was so secret about the FDU trust deed and its objects that, when "The Parsee Voice" first broke the story in July 2004, hackles were raised and letters/articles under your signature, appeared in Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly? Why did you want to hide the facts?

(3) On 10th September, 2004, a meeting was held in the office of Mr. Cyrus Guzder, then a member of the Heritage Committee, where Dastur Dr. Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza, too, was present among others. Both Dastur Dr. Mirza and this Editor had made it very clear that FDU, as it was composed, with its omnibus trust deed, was not wanted in Udvada! Thereafter, you were requested to leave the FDU, and, as pointed out earlier, you had stated that

you were thinking of quitting, because of pressure. But, thereafter, you not only continued with the FDU, but, instead didn't mind putting your signature to the baseless, malicious propaganda against "The Parsee Voice". Why?

(4) You have kept repeating in the last two years that "the sanctity" of Holy Iranshah will always be preserved. But, you have never elaborated on it. Would you tell the Parsee community in detail, how you propose to preserve the sanctity, what with all the tourist claptraps coming around the Saviour of the community?

*(5) In December, 2005, you called a meeting of the local non-Parsees of Udvada, who roundly criticised you for withholding information from them for more than two years! So, once again you made "The Parsee Voice" the whipping boy and aroused the **gaamvasis** against it, by false insinuations! Why?*

*(6) How long will you permit the **DK Thirtyseven** to be perched over your burly shoulders, so that vested interests can take pot shots at those who differ from them?*

Lest We Forget...

Barring Dastur Khurshed, All The Remaining High Six High Priests of India Had Sent This Strong Protest Letter To The Government of Gujarat, on 19th September, 2004. The Protest Still Stands!

Shri P.K. Lahri
Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat,
Block No.1, 3rd Floor, Near Sachivalya
Gandhinagar 382 010, Gujarat.

Dear Sir,

Re.: Preserving the sanctity of Udvada and our Holy Iranshah Atashbehram

We, the **High Priests of the Parsee/Irani community of India**, are deeply disturbed to learn about the plans to turn Udvada gaam into a cultural-heritage-tourist centre

under the auspices of a trust titled 'Foundation for Development of Udvada' (FDU).

As you may be aware, Udvada is the sacred,

spiritual citadel of the Parsee community because therein is enthroned the Holy Fire, "Iranshah Atashbehram", the fountainhead of the community's spiritual strength, survival and progress in India through the centuries. Thus it is the sacred duty of all Parsees to ensure that no harm befalls the Holy Fire or its immediate environs, which have to be maintained with sanctity and care. Promoting Udvada as a cultural-heritage-tourist centre, will result in the very opposite.

A very important issue to be noted is that today, there are, in several parts of the world, non-Zoroastrians who are unauthorizedly converting to Zoroastrianism. These so-called converts don the sacred Sudreh and Kushti and masquerade as neo-Zoroastrians. Turning Udvada into a cultural-heritage-tourist centre will attract all these so-called converts. **Many of them will surely attempt to enter the precincts of Iranshah Atashbehram, thereby causing grave religious disorder. That will be totally intolerable and unacceptable to us Parsees.**

We are sure you will understand that it would be an impossible task for the priests tending to the Holy Fire, to monitor every person entering the precincts of the Atashbehram and to restrict entry of these converts into the Atashbehram, the FDU having invited and welcomed

them (via tourism), virtually to its doorstep.

Another equally important issue to be considered is the stringent ritual purity standards required to be maintained by the attendant Priests (Boiwalla Sahebs) of the Iranshah Atashbehram. In spite of the quiet and tranquil conditions prevailing at present in Udvada, it is still difficult for them to safeguard their purity levels. **An influx of tourists will make it virtually impossible for them to lead a way of life very necessary for them to serve Iranshah Atashbehram with the requisite purity, care and diligence.**

With the objective of preserving and protecting the serenity and sanctity of divine Iranshah Atashbehram, we appeal to you to call an immediate halt to the cultural-heritage-tourism Agenda proposed for Udvada and withdraw any authority given to the FDU and/or any other organization to pursue it. We seek your co-operation in allowing Udvada to remain a quiet, serene and holy place of pilgrimage for our community. We look forward to your positive response, and immediate action which may be sent **c/o. Dastur Dr. Peshotan Mirza, High Priest, Iranshah Atashbehram, Udvada Anjuman at 4, Babulnath Road, Ground Floor, Mumbai 400 007.**

Yours in His Service,

Sd/-
Dastur Dr. Kaikhusroo
M. JamaspAsa
(Mumbai)

Sd/-
Dastur Dr. Firoze Meherji
Kotwal (Mumbai)

—
Dastur Khurshed Kaikobad
Dastoor
(Udvada)
Sd/-

Dastur Cyrus Noshirwan Dastur
(Surat)

Sd/-
Dastur Meherji K. Meherjirana
(Navsari)

Sd/-
Dastur Dr. Peshotan
Hormuzdyar
Mirza (Udvada)

Sd/-
Dastur Nadirshah P. Unvalla
(Bangalore)

cc.: **The Collector**
Collector's Office
Dharampur Road
Valsad 396 001, Gujarat.

cc.: **Shri Jayandra Sinh Chudasama**
Addl. Collector &
Addl. District Magistrate
Collector's Office
Dharampur Road
Valsad 396 001, Gujarat.

cc.: **The Parsee Press**

Nauzer Bharucha Bags The Prestigious Best Investigative Journalist Award

Times of India's Joint Metro Editor, **Nauzer Khurshed Bharucha**, was recently awarded a rare award – Ramesh Raikar Bose Smruti Puraskar – by the Mumbai Marathi Patrakar Sangh – the best investigative journalist of the year 2005! 'Rare', because it is uncommon and seldom that a journalist writing in English is given this award by a Marathi journalists' organisation. One of the other journalists writing in English, some time ago, who got this award was Ms. Sucheta Dalal.

In an appreciative letter written to Nauzer in Marathi, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Vilasrao Deshmukh has praised Nauzer's contribution to investigative journalism and has suggested that he continue doing such exposés and scoops in future!

The Parsee Voice heartily congratulates 35-year-old Nauzer for this honour and sincerely wishes that he earns many more laurels in the field of journalism in the future! Way to go, boy!

Hi-Fi Jashan In The Sky!

We do not know if all the 5 Otis lifts at “Hilla Towers” were in working condition that Sunday morning in December. But the one that took the entourage of Z. Bhathena, Dastur Khurshed K. Dastoor, the mobeds, some legal eagles, the ARZ men with perhaps denizens from the “seven climes of the world”, way up to the 20th floor, definitely was. Unlike the one in November, carrying the **buiwalla**, who was stranded in it for more than two hours in the middle of the night!

What were the Udvada High Priest Khurshed, along with all those who carry the stigma of desecrating the Wadia **Adaran** at Lalbaug, doing on the 20th floor of Hilla towers? No, they were not taken that high to get a bird’s eye-view of Navroz Baug or the distant slums, nor even of the Wadia Agiary below, for which they would well have needed a telescope!! They were performing a 21st century **jashan!** If marriages can take place in the air or under water, why not a sacred Zoroastrian ritual way up in the sky? Wouldn’t that be nearer God?

What’s wrong with performing a **jashan** on the 20th floor? you may ask. That question should be directed to Dastur Khurshed K. Dastoor, who glibly talks of protecting the sanctity of Holy Iranshah, every now and then!

At this juncture, we have no intention of going into the nitty-gritty of our religious injunction and tradition, but the least that any common-sensed Parsee Zoroastrian will say is that, in these days when **Kalyug** is at its peak, the ideal place to perform any ceremony, big or small, or inner or outer liturgical service, is an **Agiary** or **Atash Behram**. Where there are still old Parsee homes with proper arrangements made for rituals to be carried out, as in parts of Gujarat, all the ceremonies are **always** performed on the ground floor! Hilla Towers has a row of non-Parsee shops, with the shopkeepers residing on the first floor!

In ancient Zoroastrian Iran, they had special, exclusive buildings for performing important **Jashans**, like **Meherangan**, **Navroz** and **Jashan-e-Sadeh!**

But then, it was obvious that, that day, the motley group of people gathered there were hardly bothered about a sacred Zoroastrian ritual. It was very much a social event, with the invitees thereafter being taken from Hilla Towers to the nearby Grand Central Sheraton & Towers. What does one call such a **Jashan** — **Jashan-e-Jokers?**

OUR MAIL BOX

Will the Dadyseth Charity Trust Trustees Please Pay Attention?

Sir,

I visit the oldest **Atash Behram** of Mumbai, the Dadyseth Fire Temple at Fanaswadi from time to time. I have been doing this for many years.

Of late, I have noticed certain undesirable elements frequenting the surroundings of this 222 year-old **Atash Behram**.

First of all, the population of cats, which are considered **druj** in our religion has increased considerably. They haunt the corridors of the Atash Behram building which is totally unwarranted and deplorable. A gentleman, a regular, told me that one day a jet black cat came up right before the **Padshah’s** altar!

Secondly, the number of non-Parsees moving around the compound and near the **Atash Behram** building, throughout the day and even, at times, at night, has assumed alarming proportions! Who on earth are they and what business have they to lark around? One can

understand the presence of the gardener along with a couple of assistants. But, recently, this number has multiplied.

I remember that when I was a kid, no non-Parsee man or woman was allowed to saunter along the pathway next to the Atash Behram. That discipline no longer exists, with the result that anyone and everyone takes this route!

There is absolutely no security **inside** the Fire Temple, what with two of its entrances - front and back - being unguarded. It is meaningless for a security man to be posted at the gate of the compound when there are so many non-Parsee men loitering inside it!

A new Trustee

Lastly, I am told that the Dadyseth Charity Trust has taken a new trustee, some months ago, in the form of the very famous builder, Mr. Shapoor Pallonji Mistry. While he is a scion of a very reputed and highly respected Parsee family, isn’t it strange that Shapoor, who was keen to demolish “Dadyseth House” and build a 7-storeyed

building in its place, should now be taken up on the board of trustees itself? As a lay person, I genuinely wonder how a famous builder could become a trustee of a Fire Temple, without having any ulterior motives?

I must hasten to add that occasionally I have seen Shapoorji himself praying before the Holy Fire. But, in

general, isn't there some sort of a conflict of interest in a builder becoming a Fire Temple trustee?

R. Sorabjee

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હડહડતાં જૂઠાણાંઓનો આશરો લેતું એફ.ડી.યુ. અને તેના પ્રમુખ!

આ અતિ દુઃખની વાત છે કે “કડવું ઓસડમાંજ પાય”, એ કહેવત મુજબ, કેટલાક એફ.ડી.યુ. (ફાઉન્ડેશન ફોર ડીવેલપમેન્ટ ઓફ ઉદવાડા) નાં ટ્રસ્ટીઓને સત્ય ભાવતુંજ નથી, એટલુંજ નહિં, પણ સચ્ચાઈ તરફ નજર કરવાની પણ તેઓને કાંઈ પડીજ નથી!

“ઘી પારસી વૉઈસ” ઈ.સ. જુન ૨૦૦૫નાં અંકમાં “એફ.ડી.યુ.”ની પોલ ઊઘાડી પાડી હતી! તે અંકમાં “એફ.ડી.યુ.”નાં મેનેજિંગ ટ્રસ્ટી, ઈ.કે. તંબોલીએ છૂપા-છૂપ નવી કલમો ટ્રસ્ટ ડીડ માં ઉમેરી હતી અને તેમની આવી નબોજી ચાલને લીધે, જે ગુજરાત સરકારે આ “એફ.ડી.યુ.”ને ઉદવાડામાં અમુક પ્રવૃત્તિઓ સોંપી હતી, તેનેથી કેટલે દરજેજે હદની બહાર જઈ, આંતરરાષ્ટ્રિય પ્રવૃત્તિઓને આ ટ્રસ્ટ ડીડમાં સમાવી દીધી હતી, તેનો ખ્યાલ વાંચકોને આપ્યો હતો.

આ પછી, છ મહિના સુધી, આ એફ.ડી.યુ.નાં પ્રમુખ દસ્તુર ખુરશેદ દસ્તુર કેકોબાદ દસ્તુર અને મેનેજિંગ ટ્રસ્ટીએ બિલ્કુલ ચૂપકીદી જાળવી હતી. કોઈ પણ ટીકાટપ્પણ તેઓએ કરી હતી નહિં!

હવે, જ્યારે તા. ૨૦મી ડીસેમ્બર, ૨૦૦૫ને દીને બારડોલી જરથોશ્તી અંજુમનનાં ટ્રસ્ટીઓએ તેમણાં પ્રમુખ જમશેદ મોહટાનાં આશરા હેઠળ એક પ્રેસ કોન્ફરન્સ, ઉદવાડા ગામમાં બોલાવી હતી અને ત્યાં આ નવાં - મે ૨૦૦૫નાં - ટ્રસ્ટ ડીડ વિષે છણાવટ કરી કેટલીક ટીકાઓ કરી હતી, જે ગુજરાતનાં છાપાઓમાં પ્રગટ થઈ હતી, ત્યારે “એફ.ડી.યુ.”નાં ટ્રસ્ટીઓને ભાન થયું કે પાણીનો રેલો છેક ઘર આંગણે આવી ગયો હતો!

એટલે આ લોકો વીફરયા અને “એફ.ડી.યુ.” ટ્રસ્ટનાં પ્રમુખ અને મુંબઈથી ખાસ પધારેલા ત્રણ ટ્રસ્ટીઓ, જેમાં

મેનેજિંગ ટ્રસ્ટી, ઈ.કે તંબોલી પણ હતા, તે બધાના ભેગા આશરા હેઠળ, ગામવાસીઓની એક સભા ૨૬મી ડીસેમ્બર, ૨૦૦૫ને દીને બપોરે બોલાવી હતી!

આ સભાની અંદર લગભગ પચાસેક ગામવાસીઓ, જેમાં મોટે ભાગે ગેરજરથોશ્તીઓ હતા, તેઓ હાજર હતા. પ્રમુખ દસ્તુર ખુરશેદ દસ્તુરે શરૂઆત થી છેવટ સુધી, જમશેદ મોહટા કે બારડોલી અંજુમન નું નામ પણ લીધા વગર, “ઘી પારસી વૉઈસ” સામે સરાસર જૂઠા આક્ષેપો કરી, નિર્દોશ ગામવાસીઓ, જેઓને તે દિવસ સુધી “એફ.ડી.યુ.”ની પ્રવૃત્તિ વિષે અંધારામાં રાખ્યા હતા, તેઓને ભરકાવવામાં આવ્યા!!

આવી ગેરદોરવણી કરતી ચાલ ચાલી, ગામવાસીઓને ઊંઘે રસ્તે દોરવી, “ઘી પારસી વૉઈસ” સામે ખોટા આક્ષેપો કરી, આ “એફ.ડી.યુ.”નાં ટ્રસ્ટીઓ તરફથી તુરતજ “જામે જમશેદ વીકલી”માં તેટલાંજ કાલ્પનિક ગુલબાંગો પાનાઓ ભરી ફેંકવામાં આવ્યાં પરંતુ, તેથી કાંઈ સત્ય કદી છૂપું રહેવાનુંજ નથી!

હાલ તુરતતો અમો ફક્ત આ અંકનાં અંગ્રેજી વિભાગમાં વિસ્તારીને આવાં ગુલબાંગો નો રદિઓ આપ્યો છે. પણ જરૂર પડશે તો નજદીકનાં ભવિષ્યમાં ગુજરાતીમાં પણ દરેક વાહિયાત આક્ષેપનો જવાબ આપીશું!

શ્રી લહેરી સાથેની અમારી મીટિંગ

અત્યારે તો અમારાં ગુજરાતી વિભાગનાં વાંચકોને આટલું જરૂર જણાવીશું કે તા. ૧૨મી ઓક્ટોબર, ૨૦૦૪ને દીને “પારસી વૉઈસ” નાં બે તંદ્રીઓ, દસ્તુર ડો. પેશોતન મીરઝા, જેઓ શ્રીજી ઈરાનશાહનાં બીજા દસ્તુર છે અને દરેક રીતે દસ્તુર ખુરશેદ દસ્તુર જેટલાજ હકો અને તેટલોજ મહત્વનો દરજ્જો ધરાવે છે, તેઓ અને બીજા

એક અથોરનાન ભાઈ, તે વેળાનાં ગુજરાત સરકારનાં મુખ્ય સચિવ, શ્રી. પ્ર.ક. લહેરીનાં આમંત્રણથી તેઓ શ્રીને મળવા ગયા હતા. શ્રી લહેરી, જેઓ પોતે “એફ.ડી.યુ.”નાં એક ટ્રસ્ટી છે, તેઓને મળીને વિસ્તારીને વિગતો સમજાવી. તેઓ શ્રીએ ત્યાર પછી અમારી વાતોને સમર્થન આપી, તે વેળાનાં વલસાડનાં કલેક્ટર, શ્રીમતી વત્સલા વાસુદેવને અમારી સામે ટેલીફોન ઉપર સૂચનાઓ આપી. તેમાં એઓએ જણાવ્યું કે જે જરૂરી સુવિધાઓ (infrastructure) માટે અમોએ

ઉદ્દેખ કર્યો હતો, તેનેજ માટે ગુજરાત સરકાર જે ભંડોળ ફાળવવાની હતી, તે વાપરવું.

એમ માલમ પડે છે કે આ વાતો જહાંગીર કામા, જેઓ એફ.ડી.યુ.નાં ટ્રસ્ટી છે, તેઓને કાને ગઈ, કે જે પછી તુરંત તેજ દિવસે ટી.કે. તંબોલીને તે પહોંચી હોય! આના સંદર્ભમાં અમો અત્રે શ્રી લહેરીએ ગુજરાતીમાં લખેલા એક પત્ર ઉપર વાંચકોનું ધ્યાન દોરીએ છીએ.

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તા. ૧૮.૧૦.૨૦૦૪

સ્નેહીશ્રી દિનશા,

આપના તરફથી પાઠવવામાં આવેલા ૧૪.૧૦.૨૦૦૪ નો પત્ર મળેલ છે. આ બાબતે મેં જહાંગીર કામા જોડે વાતચીત કરી છે. પ્રશ્ન એ છે કે ગુજરાત સરકાર કે ભારત સરકાર દ્વારા પારસી જેવી શિક્ષિત કોમના અંગત વિવાદમાં પડવાને બદલે ઉદવાડાના વિકાસ માટે જે પ્રાથમિક જરૂરિયાતો છે, તે પૂરી પાડવાની કામગીરી સ્થાનિક અધિકારીઓ મારફત કરાવવી, જેથી આ અંગે વ્યક્તિગત વિરોધ વચ્ચે મહત્વનું કામ વિલંબમાં ન મૂકાય. આ કામ સાથે સંકળાયેલા સૌની ઈચ્છા કામ યોગ્ય રીતે થાય તેવી છે. પરંતુ કમનસીબે સમગ્ર બાબતને જો વિવાદોનું સ્વરૂપ આપવામાં આવશે તો મને લાગે છે કે, સમગ્ર કાર્ય સંપત્ર થઈ શકશે નહિં. ઉદવાડા અંજુમન સાથે ચર્ચા-વિચારણા કરી સ્થાનિક લોકોનો સહકાર લઈ કામ આગળ વધે તે માટે સૌ પ્રયત્નશીલ રહે તેવી મારી આપને વિનંતી છે.

કુશળ હશો.

આપણો સ્નેહાઘીન

સહી

(પ્ર.ક. લહેરી)

(શબ્દભાર, પારસી વૉઈસ નો)

આ પત્ર લખ્યા પછી, એફ.ડી.યુ.નાં ટ્રસ્ટીઓએ કેવા અને કેટલા પરાક્રમો કર્યા હશે, કે જેથી, ઉદવાડામાં મ્યુઝિયમ સ્થપાય તો સરકાર તરફથી પૈસા જલ્દી મળે, વિગેરે વિગેરે નાટકો કાંચ થયા તે અમો અમારા સૂક્ષ્મદર્શી વાંચકો ઉપર છોડીએ છીએ.

ફક્ત એક વાત યાદ રાખવી ઘટે: ઘી પારસી વૉઈસ આ સંપૂર્ણ ચળવળ તેના માસ્કેડ પર લખાયેલા શબ્દો, ને ખાતરજ કરે છે અને શ્રીજી પાક ઈરાનશાહની આસ્પાસ નું વાતાવરણ, તેનો માહોલ અને તેની ગરિમાને કાંઈપણ ગુક્સાન પહોંચે નહિં તેને માટે આ પત્ર હમેશા કટિબદ્ધ રહેશેજ!

ભૂલચૂક લેવી દેવી

અમારા ગયા અંક માં જે ચર્ચાપત્ર પ્રગટ થયો છે, તેમાં ભૂલથી, સુરતની “તમના” ધર્મશાળા ને “તનના” તરીકે વર્ણવી છે. અમારું ધ્યાન આ બાબત ઉપર અમારા એક વાંચક, એન.ટી. ઉદનાવાલા તરફથી ખેંચવામાં આવ્યું, તે બદલ તેઓનો આભાર!

-તંત્રી