

THE PARSEE VOICE

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For Private Circulation

The Community Has Spoken!

Will the Powers-That-Be Heed This VOICE?

Report of the public meeting of the Parsee/Irani community held under the auspices of The Parsee Voice on Friday, 21st November, 2003 at Framjee Cawasjee Institute, Mumbai.

The Public Awareness Meeting, called by **The Parsee Voice** on Friday, 21st November, 2003 at Framjee Cawasjee Institute, Mumbai, commenced at 6.15 p.m. Mr. Adi F. Doctor

welcomed the audience, the special invitees and the speakers. Dasturji Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa was the Chief Guest of the meeting. The other speakers were Dasturji Khurshed Kaikobad Dastur of Udvarda, Ervad Dr. Rooyintan P.

Peer and Mr. Khojeste P. Mistree. Ervads Aspandiar Dadachanji, Aspi Nalladaru, Pervez Bajan and Ramiyar Karanjia also graced the dais.

The meeting commenced with a Humbandagi led by Dasturji JamaspAsa. In his opening remarks, Mr. Doctor drew the attention of the assembly to the meeting of the Federation of Parsi

Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (Federation) held in June 2003, the unfinished agenda of which was sought to be continued at Bardoli in November 2003.

Mr. Doctor recalled in brief the past history of the Federation, when, under the Chairmanship of the late B.K. Boman-behram, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) had withdrawn from the Federation and a meeting had been held at K.R. Cama

Hall to congratulate the BPP on this principled stand. It was under the Chairmanship of Dr. Golwala that the BPP had rejoined the Federation **consequent upon Dr. Golwala giving assurances that no controversial issues would be dealt with by the Federation.** The present CEO of the BPP, Mr. Behram T. Dastur, preferred to ignore this

A FOREST OF HANDS : A section of the audience voting in favour of the Resolution.

promise of the former Chairman. Mr. Doctor highlighted the four controversial issues sought to be raked up by the CEO in the Agenda for the Bardoli meeting viz.

- Adoption amongst Parsees
- The institution of Khandhias and Nassesalars
- Intermarried women and the religious status of their progeny
- Unification of the 3 Zoroastrian calendars.

As regards Adoption amongst Parsees, the speaker recalled the time when in 1982, High Priests and other scholars had personally met and convinced the late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the Minorities Commission to specifically exempt the Parsee community from the provisions of the proposed Bill. **The matter stood resolved as on date.** This brought into question the CEO's attempts to rake up this resolved issue. He wondered where parents would find Parsee children to be adopted. Gone were the days when parents had a dozen children. **This would inevitably lead to the adoption of non-Parsee children only.**

Mr. Doctor drew attention to a letter sent by the BPP Chairman, Mr. Minoo Shroff, through BPP's PRO, Mr. Godrej Dotivala, which Mr. Shroff requested be read out at the meeting. Mr. Doctor read the letter which *inter alia* conveyed that though discussions on the disputed topics would take place at the Federation meeting, **no resolution would be passed thereon.**

On the issue of Khandhias and Nassesalars,

Mr. Doctor read out the CEO's comments in the Agenda about how the children of these Khandhias and Nassesalars were educating themselves and not entering into the profession of their fathers, resulting in a decline in the future availability of Khandhias and Nassesalars.

Mr. Doctor was quick to point out that, over the years, the practitioners of this profession were brought from various places in Gujarat and were rarely the progeny of existing Khandhias and Nassesalars.

HIGHLIGHTS

☆ *All the 7 High Priests of India fully supported the cause of the Public Awareness Meeting.*

☆ *4 ex-trustees of the BPP – Mr. Eruch Desai, Dr. Nellie Noble, Dr. Mehroo Bengalee and Mr. Rustom Tirandaz – sat throughout the meeting.*

☆ *Mr. Godrej N. Dotivala, the P.R.O. of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, was one of the important members of the 700-strong audience, who sat for all the three hours of the meeting.*

☆ *Not one member of the audience voted against the resolution!*

☆ *The clarion call given out by the meeting was, that the BPP and the Federation, have no business to discuss/debate the religious issues mentioned in the agenda of the Bardoli meeting, and that the Parsee Zoroastrian community of India will never join, or be a part of, any World Body or Organisation!*

Mr. Doctor also drew the attention of the assembly to a certain memo issued by the BPP CEO a couple of years ago wherein he had advised the winding up of the system of Khandhias and Nassesalars within a few years and **on which suggestion he had been complimented by the Trustees.** This clearly showed the CEO's intentions as far as the system of *Dokhmenashini* was concerned.

Inter-married Parsee Women

On the issues of religious rights of children of inter-married women, **Mr. Doctor reiterated that there were no case laws on this subject as was being bandied about by the CEO.** The words

'gender bias' and 'totally unconstitutional', which were attributed to Mr. Sam Bharucha, purported to have been made when he was Chief Guest at a Federation meeting in Jamshedpur, were in fact the CEO's own creation. The comments made by Mr. Bharucha in favour of the rights of progeny of intermarrieds were his personal beliefs and not a considered legal opinion. Mr. Doctor drew attention to

the statement made by Sir Jivanji Mody, the then secretary of the BPP, in a public notice, before the famous 1905 Parsi Punchayet case as to who could be considered as 'Parsees' viz.

- Those who were born of both Parsee parents.
- Those whose either or both parents were Irani Zoroastrians.
- Those whose fathers were Parsees.

Since the BPP had accepted that children of non-Parsee fathers could not be considered as Parsees, where was the need to rake up this issue now?

Mr. Doctor drew the attention of the audience to the fact that in 1967, the BPP had sent out a detailed questionnaire to all the High Priests of India and several religious scholars on the religious rights of progeny of non-Parsee fathers. **20 out of 23 scholars had opined that such progeny could not be considered as 'Parsees'**. Even in the famous Mewawala Agiary case in the early 1940s, the leading exponent of conversion and rights of intermarrieds, Dr. Maneckji Dhalla, had turned into a hostile witness and averred that though he personally believed in these things, **he himself would not perform the Navjote of such a progeny, since a majority of the community members were against recognising such children as 'Parsees'**.

On the calendar issue, Mr. Doctor mentioned that there were solid religious reasons for following the 3 calendars and it would not be possible to convert to a Fasli calendar on account of the absence of a Fasli *Pav Mahal* and *Alats* (spiritual implements). It would lead to violent disorders in nature.

The Proposed World Body

Mr. Doctor mentioned that all these changes were sought to be made with an eye on the proposed World Body of Zoroastrians. He pointed out that in areas of the Central Asian States and other Latin American countries, attempts were being made to 'convert' unwary people into Zoroastrians. **The very basic fact that**

Zoroastrians are born and not made, was being ignored.

It was these four issues, which we are concerned with, that distinguished the over 1200-year old Anjuman of Parsees of India from the Zoroastrians elsewhere. Mobedan Mobed Neriosangh Dhaval was spiritually delegated the task of settling the Parsees in India for safeguarding their religion and separate identity. The Parsees had thus settled and prospered in India under the benevolence of Pak Iranshah. Removing these 'hurdles' would put them on par with Zoroastrians elsewhere, paving the way for their entry into the proposed World Body and putting them on par with the pseudo-Zoroastrians from the Emerging Regions for whom membership status had been provided for in the proposed World Body. This was totally unacceptable.

Dasturji Dr. JamaspAsa

The next speaker was the Chief Guest, Dasturji JamaspAsa who voiced deep concern for the recent developments in the community. He recalled that two years ago, when the Doongerwadi issue was a cause for concern, the majority of the community had voiced their opinion against the wrong act of the BPP in consenting to allow the use of a Prayer Hall for the obsequies of those who opted for alternate modes of disposal of the dead and status quo had been maintained.

Dasturji mentioned that another round of controversy had now been started by the BPP. The points which the BPP CEO had raised in the Bardoli agenda were religious issues. **It appeared that the whole thing was politically motivated at a sensitive time and, as a High Priest, he could not endorse or support such a move.** Issues like mixed marriages, etc. were against the Zoroastrian doctrines. Attempts to rake up issues like conversion when the situation in the country was tense would put the community at great risk.



He saw no point in fuelling a national crisis or adding to the Government's problems. He was also astounded that the CEO has sent letters to discuss these inflammable issues at Bardoli, which was situated in an already tense Gujarat.

Dasturji pointed out that with intermarriages, the downfall of the community would be total. The way to prevent this downfall was to increase the importance of

least concerned about their spiritual welfare.

On the question of adoption, he drew attention to the fact that it was not legal. The Zoroastrian religion, however, encouraged guardianship to promote performance of after-death ceremonies. However, adoption would result in conversion. **He felt that, when the Constitution of India protected our rights and the Government itself had bent backwards to exempt us from the Adoption Bill, there was absolutely no need to revisit this issue.**

On the issue of the community following 3 calendars, he averred that this was being done over the centuries and had functioned very well. Besides, there was no sanctity in following the Fasli calendar, as presently, there were no Fasli *alats*. Thus, there was no religious necessity to change this situation. Also, **this was a religious issue which affected the ceremonies performed in Atash Behrams and Agiaries.**

 Pix show a section of the 700-strong audience listening to the speakers in rapt attention 

religion in daily life. The responsibility was that of the parents to encourage children to attend religious classes and make them aware of their ancestry. He suggested that the Trustees should actively encourage events where youth could interact.

He advised the BPP Trustees to learn from history. That part of the Iranian population which had migrated to China, Turkey, Greece and Asia Minor had intermarried and lost their identity and there was no evidence of their existence in such places. **He averred that it was our sacred duty to marry within the community to enable us to survive till Frashokereti.**

He pointed out that though certain renegade priests did perform the Navjote ceremony of children born out of intermarriage, the parents of these children knew little of religion and were

On the issue of Khandhias and Nassesalars, Dasturji wondered why the CEO was so adamant to close down the system. Two years ago, he had circulated a memo suggesting winding up the institution of Khandhias and Nassesalars. While conceding that their job was not a pleasant one, Dasturji explained that they were performing an important religious duty and they deserved the highest respect and support from the community

to preserve the system of *Dokhmenashini* in its original form. He also asked why the BPP was stalling the Aviary and installing solar concentrators instead. **He exhorted the BPP to bury controversies and not raise them.**

He also decried the attempts to join the proposed World Body which did not mention the Parsee/Irani identity. He exhorted the people to safeguard our community and preserve and protect the religion and uphold our ancient faith.

Dasturji Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastur
Mr. Doctor then welcomed the next speaker of the evening, Dasturji Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastur, High Priest of Iranshah Atashbehram, Udvada. Dasturji had come all the way from Udvada after performing a Navjote in the morning. MR. DOCTOR ALSO MENTIONED THAT ALL THE SEVEN HIGH PRIESTS OF INDIA HAD PLEDGED FULL SUPPORT TO THE MEETING AND ITS AGENDA.

Mr Doctor also referred to a pamphlet which Dasturji had been given on Sanjan Day regarding the formation of a new group christened 'Zoroastrian Universal Brotherhood' (ZUM). The people behind this organisation were involved with the Tajik movement who claimed to have reconverted to the Zoroastrian religion. Mr. Doctor explained that while the forefathers of the Tajiks had been Zoroastrians, intermarriages over the centuries had completely eroded their original Zoroastrian identity and hence they could not be considered as Zoroastrians.

Dasturji Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastur proclaimed that he was proud to be a Zoroastrian and rightly so. He reminded the people of the inscription on the tomb of Emperor Darius '*I am a Mazda Worshipper.*' On the issue of universal brotherhood, he commented that our community had been the first to follow universal brotherhood in terms of charities, hospitals, schools and colleges. **But Universal Brotherhood did not mean that we had to invite all and sundry**

to join our religion. Conversion and intermarriages did not solve problems but created them.

He wondered what steps had been taken to solve these problems at the grassroots level. He questioned whether religious classes had been organised for children, Navjotes had been performed, children had been taught to pray? He reiterated that mixed marriages could not solve our problems.

For those who were keen on increasing the numbers, Dasturji pointed out to the historical fact of the advent of the Parsees in India under the leadership of Dastur Neriosangh Dhaval, and to whom the then King Jadi Rana had given shelter. The problem of conversion had been dogging our footsteps since the 19th century. **He wondered why we had to do something which was against the will of the Almighty One Himself!**

He averred that adoption and conversion were akin to adulteration and that was what we did not want. **Quality was much more important than quantity.**

He pointed out that the community had prospered for over 1200 years under the benevolent influence of Pak Iranshah and there was no reason to fear now. We were but a handful even then but had still prospered and assured the community that we would prosper even in future.

Ervad Dr. Rooyintan Peer

Mr Doctor then invited Ervad Dr Rooyintan Peer to address the audience. He also informed the audience that after the conclusion of the same a resolution would be passed.

Ervad Dr. Rooyinton Peer stated that conversion was never a practice in the Zoroastrian religion. Even Emperor Cyrus gave freedom to the Jews when they were freed from the captivity of the Babylonians. And he helped them build their temple. Therefore, the statement "Zoroastrianism enjoins conversion" is not at all proper. Even

Justice Davar himself mentioned in the judgement that there was not a single case of conversion known among the Parsis after they came to India.

About mixed marriages, Dr. Peer pointed out that there were countless references in the Zoroastrian scriptures to show that mixed marriages were not supported by the Zoroastrian religion. In practice also, it was the same case. **History shows that out of the several groups which migrated**

Resolution:

"RESOLVED THAT the Parsee/Irani Zoroastrian community strongly disapproves of the attempt by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI)/ Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) to table, discuss and debate inter alia the following issues having disastrous religious consequences with a direct bearing on the traditional fabric of the community, at the meeting of FPZAI scheduled to be held in end-November 2003 at Bardoli, India, viz.

1. Dismantling the institution of Khandhias and Nassesalars;
2. Legalising adoption amongst Parsees;
3. Acceptance of children of Parsee women married outside the community; and
4. Unification of the three Zoroastrian calendars viz. Shahenshahi, Kadmi and Fasli.

RESOLVED FURTHER THAT the above four matters directly affect the religious life of the Parsee community and its religious and spiritual institutions wherein the Trustees have no right whatsoever to interfere and that interfering with and purporting to change the tenets, traditions and practices of religion and religious institutions will be a violation of the fundamental rights of the community as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

RESOLVED FURTHER THAT the duties of the BPP Trustees be confined to the intentions of the Settlers of the Trust and that the Trustees have no right to change or alter such provisions, intentions and aims and shall be committing breach of trust if they become a party to any violation of the aims and objects of the Trusts and the intentions of the Settlers.

RESOLVED FURTHER THAT in no circumstances should the over-1200 years old Anjuman of Parsees of India be equated and put on par with the foreign persons/pseudo-Zoroastrians who claim to profess the Zoroastrian religion, as our migration from Iran to India was an intentional, planned one and was for the avowed purpose of preserving our religion and race and our spiritual and religious institutions.

RESOLVED FURTHER THAT with a view to maintaining this separate identity and for preserving our religion as practised and handed down to us by our ancestors, the community thoroughly disapproves of FPZAI and/or BPP joining or associating with any World Body of Zoroastrians existing as on date or proposed to be set up.

RESOLVED FURTHER THAT this assembly calls upon the Trustees of the BPP not to be bound by any decision or constitution of any foreign 'Zoroastrian' Anjuman/ Federation/ Association/Body which will result in any change in the religious tenets, traditions, principles, practices and prescriptions of the community as practised over the centuries in India and for the preservation and protection of which the Parsees are here in India.

RESOLVED FURTHER THAT the organisers of this meeting be and are hereby authorized to take all such steps as will be necessary to ensure implementation of this resolution with the BPP and/or any other Federation/Anjuman/ Association/individual/ appropriate authority."

elsewhere, **no other group except that which came to India, has survived.** And for the group in India, **this was solely because of the adherence to the practice of avoiding mixed marriages.**

He pointed out that cross-breeding was not favoured by nature itself; neither among animals nor birds nor vegetation. All hybrid forms among such groups were either terminated in the third generation or a totally different group would emerge out of the first two.

He also pointed out to the classic example of Yugoslavia, where, in the name of secularism, intermarriages were encouraged to strengthen brotherhood. However, this intermarrying paved the way for a bloody civil war which disintegrated Yugoslavia.

He averred that the unique concept of 'Khoreh' among the Zoroastrians was very important to study. If people were to learn about this concept, nearly 50–60% of the problems would be solved. The 'Khoreh' of a community is built up over a number of generations and hundreds of years. The 'Khoreh' is the reflection of the characteristics of a community. **And this 'Khoreh' would then be destroyed within no time, if inter-marriages were to be practised.** The 'Khoreh' is the spirit or the binding force of a particular community.

Mr Hanoz Mistry was then requested to read out the resolution.[See Box on pg. 6]

All those in favour of the resolution were asked to raise their hands. The response from the audience was overwhelming.

Then, all those against the resolution were asked to raise their hands. NOT A SINGLE MEMBER PRESENT RAISED HIS HAND IN DISSENT.

Thus, the Resolution was passed nem. con.

Mr Doctor then invited Mr Khojeste Mistree to address the audience.

Khojeste Mistree takes BPP to task

Mr. Mistree pointed out that the constant pressures to change the rules of our ancient religion and the willingness of some community members to change the precepts and practices of the religion had all added to the cauldron of trouble facing the community today. The matters which the Bombay Parsi Punchayet wished to raise at the forthcoming Federation meeting at Bardoli in Gujarat, **were of grave concern as they affected the core of our traditions and practices. They formed part of an anti-religious agenda for misplaced reform and**

change being pushed by a powerful liberal lobby, of influential people, for some time now. Moreover, these changes were being sought with the intention to bring the long-held policies of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the practices of the Parsi and Irani Zoroastrians of India in line with the constitution of the newly proposed World Body. **He lamented that the Trustees of the BPP were ignorant about our great and glorious history and are even more ignorant about our religion.** He stated that religious issues must be dealt with by our High Priests and those who were academically trained, learned and skilled in the religion and not part-time priests sitting abroad or professionals and businessmen who have no knowledge about the ethno-religious fabric of the community.

Mr. Mistree drew attention to the fact that the role of the Punchayet had always been to uphold, strengthen and to follow the voice of tradition and orthodoxy. **"The word 'orthodoxy' means 'the right path'. Why are the Punchayet trustees afraid to tread the right path?" he questioned. He also questioned the decision of the BPP to arrogate to themselves the task of speaking on behalf of 45,000 Parsi/ Irani Zoroastrians of Mumbai without referring the matter to the High Priests and scholars and then to the community.** He wondered why the Punchayet trustees were so desperately keen to create controversy and divide the community, unless they had a hidden agenda which the community did not know about?

No conversion in Zoroastrianism

He stressed in particular on the dangers of supporting these issues and the dangers of joining a World Body which left the very definition of a Parsi and an Irani out of its new constitution. The terms Parsi and Irani define our distinct Iranian race and identity and in a sense our *Tokhma* – while Zoroastrianism is our sacred religion. Unlike Christianity and Islam, in which you can be a Chinese Christian, African Christian or European Christian or a Muslim because ethnicity and racial identity to these religions are

immaterial, in Zoroastrianism, it is exactly the opposite, **race and religion are inextricably linked.** Zoroastrianism, throughout its history, has been linked only to those of an ancient Iranian lineage and therefore the great King Xerxes declared, **"...I am the son of an Achaemenian of Aryan lineage."**

He challenged anyone to show him, whether in our history, Zoroastrianism as a religion had ever included people beyond the borders of ancient Iran, of non-ethnic Iranians being admitted into the Zoroastrian fold. He mentioned that Iranian kings ruled lands from the River Indus in the East to the River Danube in the West and from the steppes of Central Asia in the North to Ethiopia and the Arabian peninsula in the South. But conversions of non-Iranians, as a routine practice and as a tool to spread the religion, seems seldom to have occurred. Zoroastrianism in its present form had remained the religion of the Iranian peoples only, namely by the Irani Zoroastrians and the Parsis of India. **Therefore, when the "to be formed" World Body, promoted by the mandarins of North America, and some in the UK deliberately omit the terms Parsi and Irani in order to accommodate the so-called converts to Zoroastrianism from South America, Mexico, Europe and elsewhere, it was definitely a move to disenfranchise and marginalize the original Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian communities in order to bring in non-Iranians, neo Zoroastrians in large numbers.** He cautioned that if large numbers of so-called converts become members of the World Body, then we the Parsis and Iranis the world over, because of our small numbers, would be swallowed up by these new members who in time to come will be in a position to dictate to us, **how we should practice our religion. To be sidelined and marginalized, are grave and deliberate injustices, which will shatter the very fabric of our community well-being. We should strive to avoid this future predicament at all costs.**

A Trojan Horse

He likened the World Zoroastrian Body in its present form to a Trojan Horse brought into India by the North American and some UK Zoroastrians via the vehicle of the BPP in order to destroy our traditions and practices. The new World Body was detrimental to the overall interests of the Parsi/Irani Community living peacefully in India! The commitment made by the BPP to the new World Body was suicidal.

Mr. Mistree emphasized that it would be foolish, for the BPP trustees to follow blindly in the footsteps of the Reformists of North America, as those from North America and abroad, promoting the World Body, had nothing to safeguard, they had neither *Dakhmas* nor Agiaries nor ritual precincts where the high inner liturgies of the faith were performed, the three most potent sign-posts of an established religion which we as a dynamic and ritually committed community had in our midsts.

Issue of Inter-marriage

On the issue of inter-marriages, Mr. Mistree pointed out that over the last 80 years, on account of rising liberalism, lack of clear guidance from the Panchayet, a new era of materialism, secularism and over-westernization, had contributed to this state of affairs. Another point to be considered by those who advocate that by marrying out we will increase our numbers and thereby safeguard our religion, are both sociologically and historically wrong. Other small communities like the Jews have proved otherwise. With diminishing religious values, a fragmented understanding of the faith, and a weak formative base, with little or no allegiance to the community, could such inter-married parents succeed in their attempt to make their children practising Zoroastrians, he wondered?

Adoption

He averred that adoption was just another form of conversion that would weaken our religious values, affect our ethnicity, and cultural

integrity, and in modern terms, also alters our gene pool.

Solutions

Mr. Mistree suggested that the Panchayet trustees needed to be educated in matters of religion. By adopting a non-traditional line, the Panchayet was attempting to change the living legacies of our faith. By changing the boundaries of the religion, the BPP was making the religion vulnerable to a cultural and religious take over which, by the sheer weight of its numbers, will overtake us. A fear of being challenged by a vociferous few, should not push the BPP towards reform, where none was needed. It is better to acknowledge that these, and other religious matters, are beyond their purview, than history judge them, as those who made unacceptable compromises which in turn tolled the death knell of the religion, he stated.

He exhorted the assembly not to take cognizance of what the Panchayet recommended or decreed, on issues such as divorce, inter-marriage, adoption, Nassesalars and conversion, without it being given the stamp of authority from our High Priests and our accredited religious scholars.

He also opined that the BPP could not decide without the community's assent, to join the World Body and without first seeking the opinion of the specialists and thereafter the entire community on this and other issues on the now infamous agenda.

He urged the people to remain united and be clear, that our tenets and our practices, could not be decided away by the trustees of the BPP, whose primary role is to look after the Funds and Properties of our community in Mumbai.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Mr. Doctor thanked Mr. Mistree and proceeded to read the message of support received from Dasturji Meherjirana of Navsari. He then requested Mrs. Tannaz Parakh to read out the

messages of Dastur Dr. H.K. Mirza and Ervad Dr. Peshotan H. Mirza, as well as that of Dasturji Nadirshah Unvalla of Bangalore. After the messages were read by Mrs. Parakh, Mr. Doctor also mentioned that messages of support had been received from Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathushtee Anjuman of New Zealand Inc and Traditional Zarathushtris Mailing List (TZML).

Ms. Bengalee speaks her mind

Ms. Mehroo Bengalee, ex-Trustee of the BPP, then addressed the audience. She said that she was totally disgusted and agitated by the behaviour of the BPP Trustees and their CEO for continuously bringing up contentious religious issues, in spite of the clear diktat from the High Priests and religious scholars.

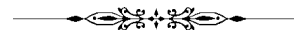
She asked the community to once and for all let them know, in no uncertain terms, that we shall not permit any children of intermarriage in our Mazdayasni faith, which stands on purity and cannot be besmirched. We shall retain our 'Tokham' and 'genes', till the last breath of our lives and keep our identity untainted, she said.

She also exhorted the CEO to prepare a detailed report on the composition, functioning and future plans of the various committees appointed by the BPP and circulate the same to the Federation members.

Mr. Doctor then thanked all the attendees as also the special invitees who included Mr. Eruch Desai, Ms. Mehroo Bengalee, Ms. Nellie Noble and Mr. Rustom Tirandaz, all ex-Trustees of the BPP, for lending their support to the meeting. Floral tributes were offered to all the speakers and eminent attendees.

He also thanked all those who had contributed their time, effort and money in making this meeting a great success.

H.M. MISTRY



પારસી કોમની યાદગાર સભા: ફેડરેશન માં ધાર્મિક બાબતો ચર્ચાવા સામે સખત વિરોધ! વિશ્વ જરથોશ્તી સંસ્થાની જરૂર નથી!

શુક્રવાર તા. ૨૧ નવેમ્બર, ૨૦૦૩ ને દિવસે, મુંબઈનાં ધોભી તળાવપર આવેલા ફરામજી કાવસજી ઇન્સ્ટિટ્યુટ હોલમાં, એક ઇતિહાસીક સભાનું આયોજન આ અદના પત્રએ કર્યું હતું, જ્યાં લગભગ ૭૦૦ જેટલા પારસી નરનારીઓએ સર્વાનુમતે જે મૂળ ઠરાવ રજુ થયો હતો, તે પસાર કર્યો હતો.

મુંબઈની પારસી પંચાયત અને ફેડરેશન ઑફ પારસી જરથોશ્તી અંજુમનજ ઑફ ઇન્ડિયાએ બારડોલીમાં નવેમ્બર ૨૯-૩૦ ને દિવસોએ બોલાવેલી સભામાં જે ધાર્મિક વિષયો નહિં ચર્ચાવા જોઈએ, જેની વિગતો અમો અગાઉ આપી ગયા છીએ, તેનાં વિરોધમાં આ મુંબઈની યાદગાર મીટિંગ મળી હતી.

હિંદુસ્તાનનાં સાતે સાત દસ્તુરો, અથોરનાન સાહેબો, કેટલીક બહારગામની અંજુમનો, મુંબઈની પારસી પંચાયતના ચાર આગળા ટ્રસ્ટીઓએ, “ધી પારસી વૉઈસ” ની આ સભાને પોતાનો સંપૂર્ણ ટેકો આપ્યો હતો.

આ મીટિંગનો વિગતવાર રીપોર્ટ, આ અંકનાં અંગ્રેજી વિભાગમાં આપ્યો છે. આજનાં આ ગુજરાતી વિભાગમાં નવસારીના માનવંત વડા દસ્તુરજી સાહેબ મહેરજીરાણા કેકોબાદ દસ્તુર નો ખાસ સંદેશો, જે ઘણું બધું કહી જાય છે, તે પ્રગટ કર્યો છે. આશા છે જે ફેડરેશન આવી ધાર્મિક બાબતો ઉપર ચર્ચાવિચારણા કરવામાંથી બચાવશે!

નવસારીનાં વડા દસ્તુરજી મેહેરજીરાણા કેકોબાદ દસ્તુર નો ખાસ સંદેશો!

“મુંબઈમાં તા. ૨૧.૧૧.૨૦૦૩ ને દીને મળનારી મીટિંગ માટેનો આપનો પત્ર મળ્યો છેજી. જાગાવવાને દલગીર છું કે એ મીટિંગમાં હમો હાજર રહી શક્યે એમ નથી, તેમ છતાં આ મીટિંગ અને તેમાં થનારા ઠરાવોને હમારો સંપૂર્ણ ટેકો અને સહકાર છે.

“પારસી કોમમાં વખતો વખત આવા નકામાં ધાર્મિક ફતવાઓ ઊભા કરવાનો ઘણાંને શોખ હોય છે, અને જ્યારે તેઓને કોઈ સત્તા મળે યા ઓધ્ધો મળે ત્યારે એ શોખ પૂરો કરવાની કોશીશ કર્યા કરે છે.

“પારસી કોમનો ઇતિહાસ સાક્ષી પુરે છે કે ભૂતકાળમાં અનેક વખતે આવા ફતવા ઊભા કરવામાં આવ્યા હતા, છતાં તે બધા તેને કુદરતી ફેજે પુગી ગયા છે, અને તે ફતવા ઊભા કરનારા પોતે પોતા માટે નહીં માફ થઈ શકે તેવા ગુનાહ ઊભા કરે છે. આ વખતે પણ મને ખાતરી અને વિશ્વાસ છે કે હમેશ મુજબ ‘દસ્તે ગએબ’ કોમની મદદે આવશેજ અને આવા ફતવાઓમાંનો જે ભૂતકાળમાં થયો હતો તેવોજ ફેજ જરૂર આવશે.

“પારસી કોમે વરસોથી આવા અનેક સવાલોનાં જવાબો આપી દીધા છે. કોમનાં સ્કોલરો અને અભ્યાસીઓએ એ સવાલો ઉપર લંબાણ ટીકા કરી, ધાર્મિક

શહાદતો સાથે પુરવાર કરી આપ્યું છે કે, એ બધું કોમની હસ્તી જોખમમાં મુકે છે. તેમ છતાં વખતો વખત આવા સવાલો ઊભા કરવા એ તેઓની અજ્ઞાનતાની નીશાની છે.

“ફેડરેશનનાં બંધારણ મુજબ કોઈપણ ધાર્મિક તકરારી બાબતો ચર્ચા કરવાનો એઓને હક્ક નથી અને એવા કીધેલા ઠરાવો અમલમાં મુકવાની એલોકોને સત્તા પણ નથી. એમાં તો કોમના નાણાંની, વખતની અને કાર્યશક્તિની નુકસાની છે.

“આ બધી બાબતો આપણે જાણતા હોવા છતાં આપણે ફરજ બજાવીને કોમમાં જગૃતિ લાવવાની છે અને કોમને આવા જુ ઠા ફતવાઓથી આગાહ કરવાની જરૂર છે.

“આપણાં આ કાર્યમાં મારો દિલોજન ટેકો આપું છું અને આપને સંપૂર્ણ સફળતા ઈચ્છું છું.

“ભલી દુવાઓ સાથે,
દુવાગો,
મે.દ.કે. મેહેરજીરાણા”

Mr. Adi F. Doctor, Editor of "The Parsee Voice", delivering his talk. Looking on are (left to right) Dasturji Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastur, Chief Guest - Dasturji Kaikhushroo M. JamaspAsa, Ervad Dr. Rooyintan Peer and Mr. Khojeste Mistree.

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