

Dear Friend,



VOTE PHIROZE AMROLIWALLA for Trusteeship of BPP:

Better Parsi Panchayat

**TRUSTEESHIP IS NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE AN OFFICE OF PROFIT OR
PLEASURE BUT IN FACT AN OPPORTUNITY TO SACRIFICE AND SERVE**

After over 15 years I have once again filed my nomination as a candidate for Trusteeship of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. The reason being that for the first time in the history of the BPP all Parsi/Irani Zarthostis Adults who have registered as voters before 30/06/08 totalling nearly 30,000 voters will have a right to vote, as against the Anjuman Committee comprising about 1800 voters who used to be the 'Vote Bank'.

Achieving Universal Adult Franchise itself was not an easy task and this was one of the election promises I had made in 1993, and I followed it up by intervening at every stage in law courts, and even managed to secure voting rights for the youth of our highly educated community, by getting an amendment approved in the court, lowering the voting age to 18 years against 21 years proposed in the election scheme.

There is also perhaps another first: There are SEVEN vacant seats to be filled at one go.

At my age of 66, my past record of public service speaks for itself. I have without fear or favour served my community and society as a Special Executive Magistrate, and also through the various offices and associations that I held with the MTNL Telephone Advisory Committee, MTNL Adalat, the Western and

Central Railway Zonal Railway Users Consultative Committee, Maharashtra State Consumer Protection Council, the Indian Merchants Chamber besides many others.

Having regard to the present scenario, especially the fact that the entire present Board of Trustees would resign and pave the way for seven new faces, as also the fact that I have a rich, current, and in-depth experience of the working of the **BPP**, earlier with their **Vigilance Committee** and currently as an active member of the **HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE** and its **Sub- Committee**, I was persuaded by those who know me well, to put to good use and share the knowledge gained over the last few years through my interaction at the grassroot level. Through my writings in the Jame- Jamshed and other columns I have an excellent feedback from the community and being a resident of a parsi colony have also been in touch with, and felt the pulse of the commoner. It is a closer view of the everyday 'Bawaji' and not a view of one sitting in an ivory tower.

The **Housing** problem does seem complex, more so due to the Maharashtra Rent Control Act, which tilts largely in favour of the tenants, who would not like to surrender their premises without encashing their tenancy rights which now, even the law permits. The BPP therefore is starved of vacant flats coming in its kitty. The merit rating scheme as it stands, needs to be completely overhauled as, in my view, it has to some extent contributed to some really needy and deserving people having to wait for sometimes 40 years and more for a home.

Those who have read my columns will know that I have been making sincere efforts to get the BPP to transfer tenancy rights and rent receipts to genuine heirs of tenants and I have always guided such tenants NOT to accept Leave- n -License as a substitute to tenancy. I have time and again appealed to the Trustees for several years now to stop inflicting avoidable litigation on fellow Zoroastrians for petty and minor issues. If elected I promise to make all possible efforts to avoid litigation between the BPP and its beneficiaries, and try and resolve disputes across the table. All these and such other burning problems I hope to be able to resolve only by being in the drivers[□] seat.

The one logical solution, besides others, is to create more housing stock thereby reducing the demand, and hopefully reduce, if not eliminate the waiting list. The new housing stock of reasonably decent sized flats, should be created within the city, so that the truly poor and needy do not have to commute long distances from far-flung suburbs. Though it seems easier said than done, given the will it is POSSIBLE and land and funds would not be a constraint. Channelising and judicious use of available funds and introducing complete transparency and accountability would itself, to a large extent take care of the housing issue.

Though housing is an important subject and a major activity of the BPP, it is certainly not the only one. Many others such as **Community Health and Welfare, Education, and protecting and preserving our heritage and other properties including Doongerwadi lands**, possibly require far more attention, but which have been eclipsed due to the focus on housing alone.

Religion, to me, is one□s private communication with God, and is best left to the individual with guidance from our religious leaders. BPP as an institution, should be more pro-active in caring for our Mobeds, some of whom today live in pecuniary circumstances and definitely need help and support, which should be institutionalized rather than adhoc. Even charity should be done with grace and dignity.

Though the BPP has had ladies and gentlemen of repute to lead it, it seems that the image has for sometime now suffered due to wrong perceptions and priorities, which hopefully an entirely new Board might change, bringing in the much needed credibility, and thereby restoring Donor confidence which to a large extent can help to achieve the goal.

On all the above subjects one has to dwell deeply and I do believe that for the hungry it is better to teach the person to fish than to give him a piece of fish which will only momentarily satisfy his hunger. Therefore it is important that the youth get the education they need, not only at school and college levels but also for post-graduation and high specialisation courses, so that they can stand on their own feet rather than depend on charity.

I do not make grand promises and raise false hopes in an already frustrated fellow parsi Zoroastrian, which if unfulfilled, will only create more heart -burning and ill-will. But I promise an honest effort to wipe the tear from the weary eye and bring a smile on the depressed face of my brethren.

It is not without reason that my nomination has been sponsored by a wellknown and humane doctor who has taken care of the community's physical health, and seconded by the popular and famous humourist, theatre and stage personality Mr. Dinyar Contractor, who for decades has brought a smile on the face of every parsi. Like these gentlemen I too will make a determined effort that EVERY parsi who I meet will have reason to smile. The beginning will be made when he or she steps into the office of the BPP----He or she will be received with respect, dignity and grace and will feel most welcome. THIS IS A PROMISE.

I have retired from my business and I devote most of my time to social work. Therefore when in town, I am only a phone call away and will be available to the public at large **without prior appointment** at least to hear their grievances and thereafter to make a sincere effort to resolve the issue.

At election time many common agendas emanate from different candidates and groups. However it is you the voter who will have to decide the right candidate based upon his/her past performance, credibility, integrity and sincerity, as well as the time he/she can spare for the community. For after all Trusteeship is all about responsibility and accountability.

The common man's issues can best be understood and resolved by a common man.

Let there be no YOU and US, let it be a team -- Parsi Partners in Progress for a Better Parsi Panchayat.

In the words of poet Robert Frost:

**"The Woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep".**

In God I Trust,

PHIROZE AMROLIWALLA

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