

# Bombay Doordarshan's alleged "Pateti" Programme

## Inspiring Communalism and Hurting Religious Feelings of the Parsis

(Bombay Doordarshan (T.V.) telecast a programme on 'Pateti,' wherein Mr. Jehan Daruwalla answered pre-fabricated questions. He raked up his same old song of entry into Fire-temples, presence of non-Parsis before a 'sachkar'-corpse, alleged inefficiency of the Trustees of Parsi Panchayet and their election procedure, and the questions of conversion and Juddin Navjotesand marriages. Shri K. N. Dastoor has written a letter to Shri Arun Shroff, T.V. director, which we publish here. It can well be treated as an open letter to him. — Editor)

Shri Arun Shroff  
Director  
Bombay Doordarshan  
Bombay  
September 11, 1980

Dear Sir:

I refer to the question-answer programme you had telecast on the subject of 'Pateti'.

2. There is no doubt in the mind of every Parsi of Bombay that the questions asked by Madam Shah were given to her in advance by Mr. Daruwalla himself. The reason for this is simple enough. After becoming the editor of Bombay Samachar at an old age, this Mr. Daruwalla became a self-styled expert in raking up these very questions which he caused to be asked on Door-darshan and it was obvious that Madam Shah was blissfully unaware of the trap.

3. The said questions are not new for our community. They are older than Mr Daruwalla's age; our community has always reacted sharply when they are raised, for good many reasons. These questions are not merely social, but have a strong religious essence.

4. We, Parsis, have been in India about 1000 years. Our services to the nation and country are too well-known to be mentioned here. We have amongst us certain religious directions, dictates and traditions, for the protection of which our fore-fathers did not hesitate to leave their then motherland. There is a spiritual background to these directions and traditions which are not easy to understand for those who have not studied them carefully, and in depth. Mr. Daruwalla is one of those who is inherently incapable of understanding a simplest religious and spiritual directive, and is eminently disqualified to speak a single sentence on our religion, our society, our customs, our traditions.

5. While preserving our traditions and following our dictates we have never injured the feelings of the followers of other great Religions with whom we have lived for 100 long decades. It is the main teaching of Zoroastrianism that every Religion should be profoundly respected. Not allowing certain persons to enter our fire temples or certain other places, does not arise out of any disrespect to anybody. These Religious dictates have certain spiritual, mystical and even

scientific base. It is our experience for a 1000 years that all other communities have respected our sentiments and traditions, and they have never insisted or even requested for an entry in such places. Our community has proved itself so charitable and ever wanting to help all communities, castes and creeds that all right thinking non-Parsis have never taken any objection to our traditional rules. It is however, a handful of our own people like Mr. Daruwalla, who try to instigate such communal feelings in the minds of non-Parsis with ulterior motives and it is a matter of great regret that your Television has become a party to it.

6. There is such a vast, spiritual, mystical, ethical, philosophical and theological knowledge in Zoroastrianism that a programme giving glimpses of such knowledge would have been befitting the occasion, particularly

when several non-Parsis do have a craving to know about Zoroastrianism. Instead of adopting such a responsible and noble gesture, your Gujarati section thought it fit to arrange a programme, which has hurt the feelings of 50000 Parsis of Bombay.

7. Your counterpart, Vividh Bharati, was thoughtful enough to have a programme on the occasion of Pateti in their feature, Chitra Shala. They had asked me to speak on the message of Zoroaster, which I did on 29.8.1980. They had made a condition with me that I should not touch on any controversial aspect, which condition I accepted readily. Our religion has such a lofty divine message to offer to humanity that there is no reason to enter into quarrelsome areas. That is how such programmes should be arranged. Instead, your Gujarati section presented some non-entity, who had visibly

grown old in body and mind, and who had his own axe to grind in making your medium a tool for carrying on his own vicious propaganda.

8. I understand you may be induced to telecast another programme presenting "the other side." I will advise you not to do so. It will rake up an unending controversy and further involve your Doordarshan. A well-spoken apology would be sufficient.

9. I may inform you that Mr. Daruwalla and his so called Parsi columns of Mumbai Samachar are officially condemned by the Parsi community. Certain events had occurred in our Parsi public life in 1977-78 and Mr. Daruwalla through his paper was raising the same questions which he raised before your camera. A public meeting was held on 19.2.1978 under the auspices of nine Parsi Associations. Parsi Anjuman's from outside Bombay had whole heartedly supported the meeting. I enclose copies of three resolutions passed at the said meeting.

(These were published in Dini Avaz of March-April 1979 — Editor).

10. I would like you, Mr. Director, and your Gujarati section to read these resolutions carefully. The first resolution declares the faith of the community in its religious tenets, traditions, institutions and sacred ceremonies; condemns conversion and mixed marriages; and expresses its strong disapproval of the propaganda of the type raked up by Mr. Daruwalla on your screen.

11. The second resolution congratulates the Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat on their bold stand of withdrawing their membership from a certain Federation (of which Mr. Daruwalla was an ardent champion). These are the same Trustees who were blasphemed by Mr. Daruwalla on TV, and you may now understand why he did

so. He also said some nonsense about the election — procedure of the Trustees, which is according to a scheme prepared by the Bombay High Court and which is deliberately intended to avoid the usual mudbath of the so called free elections.

12. But the third resolution provides the climax for you. It condemns the anti-social and anti-religious propaganda carried on in certain newspapers in flagrant violation of all decent norms of journalism and which reflected ignorance, absence of study and glaring inconsistencies. These references, Mr. Director, are directed towards Mr. Daruwalla's Mumbai Samachar (I know it because it was I, who had moved that resolution).

13. You will also find in the third resolution a reference to our daily 'Jame Jamshed' and words of praise for its policies. You may perhaps be knowing that Mr. Adi Marzban, who has no little share in making your programmes lively and popular, is the editor of that daily. It is a matter of profound regret that your Gujarati section did not take advantage of his dominant presence at TV and did not take his advice on how to go about a Pateti programme and in particular how to avoid a Parsi controversy.

14. Now Mr. Adi Marzban as the editor of Jame Jamshed is flooded with letters from Parsi readers condemning your Pateti programme. Ask him.

15. And remember, the so called letters appearing in Mumbai Samachar in support of your programme are fabricated in the same manner and style as was adopted for the programme itself. Would you like to conduct an experiment? Arrange a programme wherein Mr. Kamleshwar asks questions on religion to Mr. Daruwalla. The programme will end in one second because Mr.

Daruwalla will not be able to answer any one single question. Such is his profound ignorance. (But no advance fabrications please).

16. I am forwarding copies of this letter to the concerned authorities of the Central and State Governments. I am also sending it to the editors of 'Jame Jamshed' and another two-monthly Zoroastrian Magazine, 'Dini Avaz,' for such use as they may think fit.

Your sincerely,  
**K. N. DASTOOR**



---

### Peace At Death

Charles Carol, One of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence, all his life was a good religious Christian.

He lived many years, and on his death-bed he made the following striking statement:

"I have lived to my ninety-sixth year; I have enjoyed fine health; I have been blessed with great wealth-property, and most of the good things which the world can bestow: Public approbation, applause, and general esteem. But there is something I now look back upon with far greater satisfaction than that with which I regard these things."

While those gathered around the bed waited expectantly, the dying man paused, and with misty eyes said softly:

"The thing I now look back upon with greatest satisfaction is that I have always practised the duties of my religion."

---

---

### Ask for it and you shall have it

During the bombing of London in the last War, a bomb had made a direct hit upon a hospital, and the horror of destruction, fire, and screams of the dying were almost indescribable. A passing priest had stopped to help a bomb rescue squad, which was frantically trying to clear away the wreckage so that the wounded might be removed.

One of the rescue workers, overcome by the horror of the scene, turned to the priest and said:

"Why don't your God put a stop to this?"

The priest without looking up from his work, answered quietly:

"Have you asked Him to?"

---

(Continued from page 12)

and his exemplary services in the education field for 57 years, and awarded him the title of Khansahib in 1930.

Manchershah Master died in 1935, on Roj Aspandarmad, Mah Aspandarmad in his beloved School, whilst teaching his beloved pupils at the ripe age of 79. Mourned and remembered by the people of Surat by his circle of Ilm-e-Khshnoom devotees, and by his colleagues in the education field, in which he gave his dedicated services for not less than 62 years.

