

Quo - Vadis Mobeds?

By C. M. Patel

Recently a Japanese anthropologist who is doing research on our Zoroastrian Religion at Navsari posed an apt query to the Vada Dasturjee there, as to how many 'Navaria's (boys passing through Naver|Maratab ceremonies) were there that time in Navsari? The reply was, 'about 8 or 9'. To this the Japanese scholar asked, "How is it that when so many boys are being ordained as priests, still your Community laments about shortage of Mobeds?"

Why is there such a dearth of Mobeds in the Community? What is the real reason? Where lies the fault? Why is the son of an Athornan not willing to do Dastoree even if he becomes Naver|Maratab? Is it correct to become Navar|Martab and then just forget all about it? These questions have been discussed in many conferences and by many people. But if one answers all these questions with an open mind, in the final analysis it would boil down to this: Till true knowledge of our 'Daena' and real significance and effect of our ceremonies, rituals and Manthra are not understood by Athornans, nothing can be achieved even though funds of thousands of rupees and all other

worldly facilities are made available to our clergy.

Correct understanding, love, respect and awe for the Daena, should spring up in our mobeds. The concept of clergy should change. It is not commercialisation of religion. The Mobed should think that whatever he is praying, whether for the living or for the dead, is not out of any monetary consideration but for spiritual gain for himself and others. The clergy must have faith that Ahuramazda is the only giver and He will not forsake his true lovers. The Mobed must feel proud to be a Mobed. Then and then can any change take place for the better. It is the duty of the Behedins to respect the clergy, and for the clergy to gain that respect.

The sons of Athornans should not become Naver and Maratab just to earn money during Muktaf time! They

BY FAITH ALONE. . . .

**Strong Son of God, immortal Love
Whom we, that have not seen thy
face,**

**By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.**

— Tennyson

should give their services to Religion. Even if for better prospects they join other professions, why can't they come forward and lend their services for let's say two or three days in a month or volunteer to pray during Muktaḍ some days free or at nominal charges? Even if few come forward to do this, how wonderful and helpful it would be! They will pray slowly and properly because they have not to hurry up to finish a fixed quota. The Panthaki's headache of finding mobeds will be relieved to some extent. Average rates of ceremonies will come down. Above all, the behedins, will be satisfied and their shaken faith will be

restored. Let us hope fervently that this may happen!

The Behedin must realise that the clergy is the life blood of the Community and that they must be preserved and protected. "No Mobed, no Parsi" — is a good slogan; but there should be another: "No faith, no Mobed". And faith arises best from nowhere else but knowledge.

Athornan and Behedin both have let each other down. Let us, pray that good counsel will prevail with one and all to uphold faithfully and truly all the tenets and canons of our Mazdayasni — Zarthusti Din — Amen.

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