

# An Open Letter to Mr. PALKHIVALA

## Your 'PARSI' Speech, Inconsistent with your Pronouncements from Cultural Platforms

To :  
Shri N. A. Palkhivala,  
Bombay.  
Sir,

I refer to your speech of 12-9-1977 delivered to the Parsee audience, as reported by Kaiser-i-Hind and Mumbai Samachar.

To me it was a shocking speech and the shock was not towards the material of the speech but it was towards the astute and analytical mind from which it was emanating. The material is being spoken and written since last 75 years by those who have some vested interest or for whom the spiritual and mystical concepts are a sealed book. But coming from your goodself, who is acclaimed to be at least fond of ideas and ideals of ancient culture, religious insights and mystic doctrines, it appeared as if a great master of a language suddenly started reciting its alphabets.

You are reported to have said that the prophet Zarathushtra asked man to use his discretion and to make his choice. This has been said numerous times and often without referring to the original passage in the 'Gatha's (ha 30-2) alleged to be saying so. But apart from the fact that the passage does not say so, the proposition is entirely inconsistent with what you often say on other cultural platforms.

Choice and discretion is an intellectual act. If there are two sides to

choose from, the chooser has to **know all the facts** about both the sides.

Now the question is: is intellect capable of knowing all the data essential to make the choice?

You were, <sup>as</sup> sir, very eloquent in your speech at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (reported in Bhavan's Journal of 14-8-1977) in saying that man's five senses had limitations. "What man can perceive of the reality around him is distorted and enfeebled by the limitations of his organ of vision", you said so rightly and beautifully. We do not see beyond VIBGOYR and in the act of seeing whatever little we see, we disturb nature. (Heisenberg's "Principle of Uncertainty"). We do not hear infrasonic and supersonic sound; we do not smell, touch and experience all nature. The data fed in the intellect is therefore scanty, if not faulty. Will it then be able to select and choose?

And, sir, the yoga, of which also you have said much, is based upon one fundamental concept that man's intellect is not only incapable of understanding nature but is highly capable of misunderstanding it. Even yogis have experienced that intellect does not enlighten; it often obstructs.

मनोधर्मे वदनेधर्मे यथोच्यते :

"Just as heat is the nature of fire, so fickleness is the nature of the mind". Its 'Tamas' is to be removed and unless that is done by following the

yogic and spiritual disciplines, intellect will surely misguide.

Lord Krishna gives an excellent reason for this. He says in Gita, Chapter III - 40.

"The senses, the mind and the intellect are the abodes of Kama (the carnal desires); it is this Kama which covers up Knowledge and makes the jivatma immune." Are you, sir, asking man of Carnal desires 'to chose'? Naxalite has chosen with all sincerity to kill. Has he 'chosen' the right?

No religion therefore says and can say, "select yourself". All religions command implicit faith and obedience. They teach spiritual disciplines to conquer the mind and the thing which is to be conquered is, before the conquest, an enemy. The enemy is not to be asked "to select". "What is fit and unfit to be done, decide by Shashtra and not by your own will" says Lord Krishna in Adh. 16- (23, 24). Gatha — Ha 45-3 and 45-5 are on the same note.

Prophet Zarathushtra proclaimed the same Truth in a different way. Every atom of the body and the mind has in it the Divine Element ('Gava') and the Evil Element ('Dravao'), interwoven together. The evil is ever staring at us to attack. "Who will save me from the evil but only Thee, my Lord!" — is the first profound thought of 'Kem-na-Mazda' prayer. And to fight evil, special yogic disciplines like Sudreh-Kushti, Manthra prayers Yasna and others — are bestowed by Zarathushtra. They are not mere external rites as you, sir, perhaps are inclined to think. The Prophet who declares the evil content in man so emphatically and commands him to fight evil cannot give a license to the very container to choose and

select; it is sure to select evil — it is already there, very dominant.

And, sir, you in your Parsi speech said that you were proud to be born in Zoroastrian Religion, and in the latter part of your speech almost invited converts to the Zoroastrian Religion. Cannot a Christian say that he is proud to be born in the Great Religion of Christ? Are you asking him "to choose" between Christ and Zarathustra? Is he capable of doing that? And are you and I capable of offering a choice between the two Prophets? Are we qualified? Can you measure the distance between the the earth and sun by a foot-rule in a compass box? You may, sir, select a good employee by interviews in an air conditioned chamber, but you cannot select or ask to select between Christ and Zarathushtra in "the darkest chamber" viz. the human brain. Are we qualified and capable — with all those limitations of senses and sciences and with all those enemies staring? A Prophet, like a mother, is not to be selected by man. He is selected by God for each man.

Please, sir, Religion is deeper than law and requires deeper probe than merely "presenting a case".

Yours sincerely,  
K. N. Dastoor

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"At Edinburgh, I was able to affirm before 100 physiologists that our five senses are not our only means of knowledge and that a fragment of reality sometimes reaches the intelligence in other ways.... Because a fact is rare, it is no reason to hold that it does not exist."  
—Charles R. Richet

Quoted by Mr. Palkhivala in his Bhavan's speech.