

# **CONVERSION CAUCUS**

By

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## **FOREWORD**

The origin of the present controversy and the necessity of this book have been explained in the Introductory remarks.

The work of writing this book was completed about the end of February 1971, and the work of printing was entrusted to the Press about the beginning of March 1971. Only minor changes and minor additions were made thereafter.

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## CONTENTS

		Page
	INTRODUCTORY ... ..	1
	Present Controversy–The Matter of Grave Importance Treated in a Flippant Manner–The Game of Hide and Seek–Serious Trouble for the Community.	
I.	MAIN BASES OF THE CONTROVERSY ... ..	4
	The Word "Convert, Conversion."	
II.	"THE EVIDENCE FROM THE AVESTA" ... ..	6
	Yasna 31.3 does not Preach Conversion–Dhalla on Yasna 31.3–Unsound Method of Cataloguing the Views of Others–Eduljee's Conclusions are Unwar- ranted and Misguiding–Hypothetical Question based on Fabricated Statement.	
III.	EDULJEE'S EVIDENCE FROM PAHLAVI LITERATURE	13
	Explanations of Some Pahlavi-Persian Words–Haug's Translation–The Dinkard–Emphasis on Non-existent Word–Quotation from Dadistan-i-Dinik–Significant Changes and Omissions by Eduljee–Eduljee Com- pared with his Unnamed Source (1) - Shkand Gumanik Vijar–Eduljee fails to Understand a Glaring Instance of Anachronism–Wishful Thinking on the Part of Eduljee–Conversion was Never a State Policy in Ancient Iran–Persian Rivayats.	
IV.	SOME EVENTS OF ANCIENT HISTORY ... ..	26
	Zoroastrians in Armenia and Asia Minor–Anti- Zoroastrian Stance of the Christian Writers–Heretical Sects among the Zoroastrians–Aggressive Alien Religions–Zoroastrians in Armenia–"Strange Things Concerning the Sassanides"–"Almost Worthless"– Unreliable writers – "Hostile Witnesses"–Harsh Mea- sures for Political Reasons.	

V.	ALLEGED PERSECUTION OF NON-ZOROASTRIANS ...	33
	An Insinuating Statement—"The Picture is Black" only in the Eyes of Eduljee—Manichaeism and Mazdakism—King Khusro's Declaration—Special Emphasis on Non-existent Words—Inscription of Kartir—"The Total Picture"—Christian Stratagems Thrown round the neck of the Zoroastrians!—Tolerance to Jews and Christians—Alleged Proclamation of Mehernarsih.	
VI.	ELISAEUS THE BISHOP IN ARMENIA ..... ..	44
	How Eduljee introduces Elisiaeus—Vartan the Mami-gonian: "The Moving Spirit of Insurrection" Against the Zoroastrians in Armenia— <i>The History of Vartan</i> : A Hostile Witness—Mutilations and Interpolations—Zoroastrian Record Destroyed—Who is Proselytizing? and Whom? Where is Persecution?—"Given to a Particular Race"—Fire-Temples Destroyed—"We have Massacred the Magi without Mercy"—The Bishop "Persecuted the Magi in Every Possible Manner."	
VII.	EDULJEE ON "DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS" ..... ..	52
	"Treaty signed and Made" is No Treaty At All!—Eduljee Compared with his Unnamed Source (2) – Most Important Facts are Suppressed—Eduljee Compared with his Unnamed Source (3) – Hostile Attitude.	
VIII.	CONCLUSION ..... ..	58
	Eduljee Does Not Wish to take Part!—Eduljee Ignores his own Advice and Violates his own Principle—With Confidence and with Emphasis.	
	ADDITIONAL NOTES ... ..	60

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## INTRODUCTORY

### PRESENT CONTROVERSY

The present writer had bitter experiences of popular controversy in newspapers. Many years ago he was invited to contribute an article to the Annual Number of a Bombay weekly. His article on *The Kisse Sanjan*, a controversial subject in those days, was returned with a surprising note that it could not be published "for want of space"! On another occasion his article in a controversy was not only watered down, but was reduced to absurdity by the omniscient red-pencil of an omnipotent editor. Besides this, in a popular controversy of this type one has often to deal with ill-informed, ill-equipped, irresponsible, and unscrupulous writers. Hence generally it is not advisable to enter into such controversy.

Some months ago, the Editor of *Parsiana* sent to the present writer a type-script of "A Letter to the Editor" entitled ON CONVERSION, by H. E. Eduljee (15/B, Bakhtavar, Opp. Colaba G.P.O., Bombay 5) with Eduljee's covering letter dated 16th September 1970 addressed to the Editor. The Editor asked the present writer to send a short rejoinder, but the latter replied that it was not possible to send a short rejoinder, and that one must either keep quiet or deal with that letter in a suitable manner.

On Saturday, 19th July 1970, the present writer delivered a lecture in Gujarati on "*Dini Tavarikhni Ketlik Babato*". The lecture was reported in *Jame Jamshed*, 22nd July 1970, and also in *Parsiana*, August 1970 (pages 47-49). Mr. Eduljee feels that the said reported lecture "deserves a reply", and hence he writes his article in the form of "A Letter to the Editor". The said article of Eduljee is published in *Parsiana*, January 1971 (pages 5-9).

### THE MATTER OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE TREATED IN A FLIPPANT MANNER

Eduljee writes his article: ON CONVERSION. This is a serious matter of grave and vital importance affecting the very existence of the community. Eduljee treats this very serious matter in a flippant manner. He has no qualification – literary, linguistic or historical - to raise and enter into this controversy. He cannot read and understand properly the ancient texts even in translations. He reads them like novels. He picks up words from here and there, makes up his own sentences and passes them off as "translation" of ancient texts. He has no linguistic qualification. Evidently he does not know any of the ancient and middle

Iranian languages; and I doubt he knows even Modern Persian. He has no historical qualification. Ancient texts cannot be understood properly without the knowledge of history. In short, Eduljee has not studied the subject in a proper manner, and he does not even know the method of study.

### THE GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK

Regarding his article Eduljee declares (page 5) :

"I will attempt, in this letter, to put the record straight. As the subject is important, I will quote extensively and fairly fully even at the risk of being prolix."

Eduljee quotes "translators" of the Gathas. Among them I read the name of a gentleman, who joined the Madressa for studying Avesta-Pahlavi. He could not cope with the work in a systematic manner, he fumbled for three or four months and then just failed to turn up and remained absent. Now he is "translating and interpreting" the Gathas! And Eduljee quotes him!

Eduljee does not see anything wrong in copying from others without acknowledgement. Not a single quotation has been given by Eduljee with proper reference. Some quotations bear incomplete and vague references and some others are given without any reference at all. In some cases Eduljee carefully and cleverly conceals the sources from which he borrows and which he blindly copies. In some cases the sources are misrepresented by changing the original text.

While writing his article Eduljee seems to play the game of hide and seek – Eduljee cleverly hides his sources and one has to seek them! The dual purpose of adopting such tactics is evident: misrepresentation and misappropriation. Eduljee does not disclose his sources evidently to avoid scrutiny. Thus Eduljee has smuggled many quotations into his article. I have traced all such smuggled quotations to their respective sources and restored them to their rightful authors. I have shown also how in some cases Eduljee has tried to misrepresent his unnamed sources.

Eduljee claims that he quotes "extensively and fairly fully". But this is not borne out by his article. He may be "prolix" as he writes, but in acknowledging his sources he is secretive.

Regarding "translators" of the Gathas, Eduljee writes (page 6) :

"In order not to be accused of being selective in my choice of translators, I am quoting a large number, famous and not so famous, Parsis and non-Parsis, early versions and more recent ones."

Eduljee should know that among "not so famous" he includes those who can only copy others without understanding the text. When Eduljee writes the words quoted above, he does not understand the problems of Iranian studies in general and the study of the Gathas in particular. As Moulton notes, only "the, life-long specialist" can claim authority (*Early Zoroastrianism* by James Hope Moulton, London 1913, p. 343).

Further, it is necessary to point out that Eduljee vaguely quotes these "famous and not so famous, Parsis and non-Parsis" without any reference to their books and other particulars. It is also necessary to remind Eduljee that while he mentions "famous and not so famous, Parsis and non-Parsis", although only by name, he entirely forgets to mention those famous authors, Parsis and non-Parsis, whom he silently copies, whom he silently quotes and from whom he silently borrows. Such famous authors, Parsis and non-Parsis, whom Eduljee quotes but whom he does not mention even by name, are listed below:

- (1) B. N. Dhabhar,
- (2) M. N. Dhalla,
- (3) E. W. West,
- (4) James Darmesteter.
- (5) L. H Gray, and
- (6) R. C. Zaehner.

This has been explained in detail at proper places.

#### SERIOUS TROUBLE FOR THE COMMUNITY

It may be argued that Eduljee's article has no value in the world of scholarship, and it should have been ignored. But there are other considerations. Eduljee's article can easily mislead and misguide people, who generally are not conversant with the subject. Further, if Eduljee's article is allowed to pass unchallenged, and if it is sometime produced before a court in a law-suit, it can create serious trouble for the community. Hence, it should be suitably dealt with.

## I. MAIN BASES OF THE CONTROVERSY

The article ON CONVERSION by H. E. Eduljee, published in *Parsiana*, January 1971 (pages 5-9), is written in reply to the lecture delivered in Gujarati and reported in *Parsiana*, August 1970, pages 47-49. Without quoting or referring to any of the words from the reported lecture, Eduljee Writes :

(1) Page 5 :

"The first startling statement that Dr. Mirza makes is that nowhere in the Avesta - the Gathas, or any other part - is there any mention of conversion. He claims that Taraporewala and Chatterjee are the only two translators of the Gatha who have wrongly translated an Avestan word as "convert"."

(2) Page 8 :

"The second surprising statement made by Dr. Mirza is that at no time in the entire history of Iran did the Zoroastrians persecute other religions. "

These two statements made by Eduljee form the main bases of his article and of the present controversy.

In connection with the first statement of Eduljee quoted above, the relevant words used in the said lecture and reported in *Jame Jamshed* and in *Parsiana* (p. 48) are:

"અવસ્તામાં 'વટલવા' કે 'વટલાવવા' માટે કશો શબ્દ નથી. એરવદ કાવસજી કાંગાની અંગ્રેજી-અવસ્તા શબ્દકોષમાં 'convert' શબ્દ મળતો નથી. ડો. તારાપોરવાલાએ ગાથાના તરજુમામાં એ અંગ્રેજી શબ્દ વાપર્યો છે, પરંતુ અવસ્તામાં એવો અર્થ ઘરાવનારો કોઈ પણ શબ્દ નથી. ગાથાના અનેક તરજુમાઓ થયા છે. કોઈક સાહેબો માત્ર તારાપોરવાલા અને ચેતરજીનાજ તરજુમા માન્ય રાખે છે અને તે સાથે વળી દરેક જરથોસ્તીએ એજ તરજુમા માન્ય રાખવા એવી જીદ કરે છે! ખરી વાત આ છે માત્ર તારાપોરવાલા અને ચેતરજીનાજ તરજુમા માન્ય રાખવાની અને રખાવવાની જીદ કરનાર પોતે, વખત આવે ત્યારે પોતાની મતલબને ખાતર, તારાપોરવાલા અને ચેતરજી બંનેના તરજુમાઓ બાજુએ મુકે !"

This clearly shows that regarding the word "convert" only Taraporewala is mentioned, and not Chatterjee. Both Taraporewala and Chatterjee are mentioned in quite different context, as can be seen from the words quoted above. Hence Chatterjee has been wrongly mentioned by Eduljee in his first statement. It is equally incorrect to state, as done by Eduljee, that Chatterjee "also has been accused of mis-translation".

Regarding Eduljee's second statement quoted above, the Gujarati words used and reported in *Jame Jamshed* and *Parsiana* are "*Vatal pravrivitti*". It is not correct to translate this Gujarati term by "persecute", as done by Eduljee. The Gujarati term simply means "conversion, conversion activity". There can be persecution without conversion, and conversely there can be conversion without persecution.

#### THE WORD "CONVERT, CONVERSION"

The English word "convert, conversion" may mean only "the change of mind, change of view, change of heart" without any idea of "the change of religion", or it may mean "to discard one's own ancestral religion, and to adopt an alien religion", in short "the change of religion". I. J. S. Taraporewala writes (*Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, Bombay 1951, p. 1078) :

"Conversion, change of heart, a completely new outlook on life".

Further, in *Chants of Zarathushtra*. (Bombay 1951, p. 40), and in "*Asho Zarathushtrana Gatha*", English and Gujarati translation (Bombay 1962, p. 219) Taraporewala translates the last part of the last line of Yasna 31.3 (brackets by Taraporewala) :

". . . .so that I may ever convert all the living (into the Right Path)."

Here Taraporewala uses, the words 'conversion', 'convert', in the sense of 'the change of heart', and not 'the change of religion.'

But it should be noted that what Taraporewala writes in connection with the same Yasna 31.3 in *Divine Songs* (p. 182) and also in his Gujarati translations, shows that in the same stanza (Yasna 31.3) he uses the term 'convert' in the sense of "the change of religion".

This shows that Taraporewala is not confident as to the meaning of the word "convert". He is vacillating between "the change of heart" and "the change of religion". One may argue that in 1951 Taraporewala in one place writes in favour of "the change of religion" and in another place in favour of "the change of heart"; and later he rejects "the change of religion" and in 1962 he decides in favour of "the change of heart".

However that may be, since Taraporewala uses "convert" in the sense of "the change of religion", it is necessary to examine Taraporewala's explanation of the Avesta word in detail.

## II. "THE EVIDENCE FROM AVESTA"

### YASNA 31.3 DOES NOT PREACH CONVERSION

Eduljee gives "the evidence of the Avesta". In this he particularly mentions Yasna 31.3. For this Gathic stanza, he mainly relies on Taraporewala's "translation", and he quotes that "translation" of that stanza. But he does not state *from* which of the books of Taraporewala he quotes. A comparison of the books on the Gathas by Taraporewala with "translation" given by Eduljee in his article shows that Eduljee quotes from Taraporewala's "Free English Rendering" given in *Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*; but he wrongly calls it "Taraporewala's translation."

Eduljee (pages 5-6) refers to "the last line" of Yasna 31.3, and he writes that he quotes various translations of "that last line". But this is incorrect. Perhaps he does not know where the last line of that stanza (Yasna 31.3) begins. Again these "translations", as written by Eduljee, begin with a capital letter, suggesting that what he writes is an independent sentence having no connection with other parts of the stanza. This also is incorrect and misleading. What he quotes as "the last line" is only *the last part* of the last line of Yasna 31.3; and it has vital semantic and syntactical connections with the preceding sentences and clauses.

Eduljee quotes Taraporewala's "Free English Rendering" (which he wrongly calls "Taraporewala's translation") of Yasna 31.3; but he specially emphasizes only the last part of the last line of the stanza (not even the whole of "the last line" as he writes). In considering the matter, he entirely ignores the rest of the stanza, and concentrates only on the said last part of the last line, as if it is an independent sentence having no relation with other parts of the stanza. He quotes also "translation" of this last part of the last line from various other translators (including those who merely rely on translations of others), which, according to Eduljee, mentions 'conversion' in the sense of 'the change of religion'. But Eduljee does not care to see, or more properly he has no competence to see or to examine, how the words are explained and derived by even anyone of the translators quoted by him. Since he mainly relies on Taraporewala, it was his duty (if he had competence) to examine derivation and explanation of the important word or words in at least Taraporewala's translation, if not of others.

The key-word in the said sentence is Av. *vauraya*. Taraporewala derives the word from Avesta root *var-*, Sanskrit, *vri-*, which he translates "to turn", and hence he renders the Avesta word : "I-may-ever-convert". But this root meaning 'to turn' is attested neither in Avesta nor in Sanskrit. Kanga *Avesta Dictionary* (Av. Dic.) (pp. 467-469), and Bartholomae *Altiranisches Woerterbuch* (Wb.) (1360-

1363) have exhaustively treated this Avesta root in various forms, with or without prefixes, as it occurs in the Avesta, but neither of them has assigned to the root such a meaning as 'to turn'.

In connection with the same root Av. *var-* used in Yasna 28.5, Taraporewala remarks (*Divine Songs*, p. 106) :

"The original meaning of, the root is 'To turn'."

In support of this statement, in the footnote Taraporewala quotes Bartholomae (*Wb.* 1360-62). But this is not correct. The original meaning assigned by Bartholomae to this root is "wählen" 'to choose, to select' (*Wb.* 1360). For Yasna 31.3 Bartholomae gives a secondary meaning 'to turn, to convert' in the sense of 'to convince' in the following context (*Wb.* 1361 in English translation) :

"Convincing on religious matters, that is, to bring to faith, to convert."

Further, in his Dictionary (*Wb.* 1361) and also in his translation of the Gathas, Bartholomae translates Av. *vauraya* :

'... ich ... ueberzeugen kann' ("... I may convince").

Similarly such a meaning as 'to turn' is not attested also for the Sanskrit equivalent root *vri-*. Like Avesta, the Sanskrit root also means 'to choose, to believe', or 'to cover, to hide', and never 'to turn, to convert', - see the following dictionaries :

- (1) *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by V. S. Apte (Bombay 1912), p. 883.
- (2) *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Monier-Williams (Oxford 1960, p. 1007).

Further, see also *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages*, by R. L. Turner (London 1966, p. 698). In this Dictionary Turner explains root *vri-* 'to cover', or 'to choose'; and never 'to turn'. In none of the numerous Indo-Aryan languages this root occurs with the meaning 'to turn' as can be gleaned from the said Dictionary of Turner.

Similarly, the same root occurs in Old Persian with the meaning 'to believe, to make believe, to convince' (R. G. Kent, *Old Persian*, 2nd edition, New Haven 1953, p. 206). In later languages the derivatives are Pahlavi *varravastan* 'to believe', *var* 'belief, ordeal', *vavar* 'belief'; and Modern Persian *bavar* 'belief'.

This shows that neither in Avesta nor in Sanskrit, nor in any of the numerous later Iranian as well as Indian languages does this root occur with the meaning 'to turn', as given by Taraporewala. Such a root meaning or original meaning is imaginary. Hence Taraporewala's translation of the said Avesta key-word is baseless and misleading.

The said key-word Av. *vauraya* (Yasna 31.3) is generally derived from Av. root *var-*, Sanskrit root *vri-* 'to choose, to Select, to believe'. With the exceptions of Taraporewala and Khabardar, generally all translators (including Bartholomae, Kanga, Jackson, Punegar, and Chatterjee) derive this Av. word from this root with this meaning. Some of them see in the Av. word the idea of 'conversion' in the sense of 'the change of religion', and some of the popular writers, who simply rely on translations of others, have blindly copied them; and all of them have been quoted by Eduljee in his article - evidently to swell the number of "translators" in favour of "conversion" !

But the said Avesta key-word simply means 'I may cause to believe. I may convince', derived from root *var* 'to believe'. There is no idea of 'the change of religion', there is no reference, direct or indirect, to Zoroastrian or any other religion in the entire stanza (Yasna 31.3). The stanza may be translated :

"Through the Spirit, and through the Fire Thou hast ordained, and through Asha Thou hast promised, that reward for the two fighters (*ranoibya*) - that (is) the ordinance for the wise ones – that, O Mazda, teach us to learn through the tongue of Thy mouth, so that I may convince all living ones."

Av. *ranoibya* (dual – 'two fighters, combatants, contenders, rivals, competitors') used in this and other Gathic stanzas represents 'two parties' - of good and bad.

In this stanza Zarathushtra wants to convince about 'reward' ordained for 'two parties'. In other words, he wants to convince about the principle of divine justice - that bliss for the good and punishment for the wicked, as explicitly stated in connection again with *ranoibya* 'two fighters' in Yasna 51.9 also. This divine justice will ultimately be administered to all mankind at the Renovation. Zarathushtra emphasizes this fact and wants to convince "all living ones" about the fact that this is the Universal Principle of Divine Justice, applicable not only to the Zoroastrians, but to all living ones.

Pahlavi version of Yasna 31.3 (translation given below) understands the stanza in the same manner, and confirming the same in addition it refers twice in the glosses to *nerang i var* 'the rite of ordeal'. This rite of ordeal shall take place at the Renovation, as stated in Pahlavi books. Sanskrit translation of the

Avesta-Pahlavi word: *prabodhaka* "instruction, admonition, knowledge"; and of the relevant words:

" . . .instruction to all living ones. . . . ."

#### DHALLA ON YASNA 31.3

Further, it is interesting to note that a staunch proponent of proselytism has interpreted Yasna 31.3 in the same sense of 'Universal Principle of Divine Justice' – see M, N. Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, New York 1914, p. 61; *History of Zoroastrianism*, New York 1938, p. 109 :

"At the time of the final Dispensation Ahura Mazda will judge the souls of the righteous and the wicked by the test of his blazing fire."

For this statement, Dhalla quotes in footnote 9: Yasna 31.3, 19; 43.4; 47.6.

#### UN SOUND METHOD OF CATALOGUING THE VIEWS OF OTHERS

As stated above, some scholars read the idea of 'conversion' in Yasna 31.3; and some other scholars read the idea of "Universal Judgement" in the same stanza. It is curious to note that Dhalla reads both these ideas in Yasna 31.3– see pages 13 and 61 of *Zoroastrian Theology* and pages 17 and 109 of *History of Zoroastrianism!* This is the awkward result of the unsound method of merely cataloguing the views of others without any critical appreciation.

#### EDULJEE'S CONCLUSIONS ARE UNWARRANTED AND MISGUIDING

Eduljee draws conclusions (page 6) from "translations" of the last part of the last line of Yasna 31.3. Although he quotes Taraporewala's free rendering of the whole stanza, he takes into consideration only the last part of the last line, and ignores the preceding sentences of the stanza. These conclusions are unwarranted and misleading. In his conclusions he adds the word 'religion' or 'faith' at various places; but there is no such word in the entire stanza on which he relies.

In these conclusions Eduljee raises the question :

"To what end is all this if it is not to mean the conversion of the people to Zarathushtra's faith?"

But he could not have raised such a question if he had read and understood the stanza as a whole.

Further, in his conclusions Eduljee quotes "translation" of Yasna 46-10 *in a mutilated form*, although he does not so indicate. He writes (page 6) :

"For example, another Gathic stanza, Ys. 46, 10 says:  
 What man or what women, O Mazda Ahura  
 Gives me in this world the best that Thou knowest;  
**With all these** go I forward to the bridge Chinvat."

Thus "man" and "women" (plural)! Further, Eduljee does not quote the said stanza, as he writes; but he quotes only three lines – the first two and the fifth (last), and he does not indicate the omission. Here he ignores Taraporewala's translation and free rendering; and he does not state whose translation he quotes.

It appears that none of the translators, quoted by him for the last part of the last line of Yasna 31.3, is suitable to him here. He therefore, seems to try a process of blending of various translations for the three lines (1st, 2nd and 5th) of Yasna 46.10. Most probably he tries to blend: (1) Gujarati translation of Kanga, (2) Free English Rendering of Taraporewala, and (3) English translation of Bartholomae's German done by Taraporewala.

However that may be, Eduljee simply relies on "man or woman" of Yasna 46.10 as if the Zoroastrians cannot be addressed as "man or woman", as if these terms are not applicable to the Zoroastrians!

This shows that Eduljee's conclusions are based on :

- (1) wrong translation,
- (2) wrong construing,
- (3) neglecting the stanza as a whole, and
- (4) unwarranted addition of the word 'religion' or 'faith', which does not occur in the original.

These conclusions are unwarranted and misleading.

#### HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION BASED ON FABRICATED STATEMENT

Regarding Vandidad (Vd.) Eduljee writes (p. 6):

"The Vandidad is equally specific."

Then he refers to Vd. 3.40, but he does not give the translation of that or any other paragraph as a whole. He gives mutilated sentences, partly purported

to be his own paraphrase (without quotation marks) and partly purported to be translation of Vd. 3.40 (with quotation marks). But he is discreetly silent as to the source or authority of this so-called translation of Vd. 3.40.

If we compare *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. IV, p. 32 with Eduljee's mutilated sentences, we can at once say that Eduljee has borrowed without acknowledgement from Darmesteter's translation. But it seems Darmesteter is not suitable to him. He, therefore, makes adaptations at his sweet will. He borrows some words from Darmesteter, adds some of his own, and makes up sentences to suit his purpose. He presents the so-called evidence of the Vandidad in the following words (omissions, inner quotation marks by Eduljee – pp. 6-7) :

"In Fg. 3.40, Ahura Mazda tells Zarathushtra that there is no forgiveness for certain sins if the offender is a 'professor of the Religion of Mazda. But if he is not a professor of the Religion of Mazda..... then his sin is taken from him if he makes confession of the Religion of Mazda...!'"

The conclusion one can draw from this fabricated statement is : If a sinner is a Zoroastrian, there is no forgiveness for him; but if a sinner is a non-Zoroastrian and if he makes confession of the Religion, he is forgiven!

Eduljee makes this absurd statement in the name of Vd. 3.40, and then relying on this absurd statement he raises the question (p. 7) :

"How can a non-Zoroastrian 'make confession of the Religion of Mazda' unless he is first converted to that religion?"

This is, therefore, Eduljee's method of argumentation: To present in the name of the scripture fabricated sentences containing absurd statement, then to base hypothetical question thereon, and then to draw conclusions therefrom!

Regarding Vd. 3.40, it is evident that Eduljee does not and cannot realize, and does not and cannot understand:

(1) that Av. *anastuto* does not mean "a non-Zoroastrian". It means "one who has no faith, one without faith" (Kanga *Av. Dic.* p. 29; Bartholomae, *Wb.* 125).

(2) that Av. *aiwisravano* does not mean "make confession". It literally means "one who is hearing," used in the sense of "one who is instructed" (Kanga, p. 6; Bartholomae, 94, 1641).

(3) that there is no reference to "the confession of the Religion" in Vd. 3.40; and that it is taken up by Darmesteter from the Pahlavi commentary, as clearly stated by Darmesteter in footnote 3, which Eduljee does not care to read or he is unable to understand.

The passage (Vd. 3.40) may be translated thus (the words enclosed in the brackets are added for elucidation) :

"If there be one with faith and instructed in the Mazdayasni Religion, then if there be one without faith and not instructed in the Mazdayasni Religion - (then) that (i.e., the Religion) shall remove (sin) for those who have faith in the Mazdayasni Religion, who would not be committing thereafter untimely (i.e., sinful) deeds."

The passage (Vd. 3.40) simply states that if a Zoroastrian has faith and is instructed in his religion, he knows how to atone for the sin and to resolve not to do it again. If he so atones for the sin and if he so resolves and acts accordingly, he is forgiven. But there is no remedy for a Zoroastrian who has no faith and who is not instructed in his religion.

### III. EDULJEE'S EVIDENCE FROM PAHLAVI LITERATURE

#### EXPLANATIONS OF SOME PAHLAVI-PERSIAN WORDS

Before scrutinizing Eduljee's "Evidence from Pehlevi Literature", it is necessary to discuss the meanings of some of the relevant Pahlavi-Persian words. These words are: *aharmok*, *dravand*, *judden*, *aner*, *akden*. Generally these words are understood to mean "a non-Zoroastrian". Much confusion has been created by this wrong and inexact meaning generally applied to all these words. There are subtle differences, and these words are used for special types of Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians as explained below:

(1) *aharmok* "a heretic", *ahrmokih* "heresy" - this generally refers to the heretical sects among the Zoroastrians in Sasanian times (see below).

(2) *dravand* "one who has gone astray, a wicked person" - this generally refers to a Zoroastrian who has neglected and discarded the Zoroastrian practices. Secondly, this term is used also for an infidel, and as a derogatory term applied particularly to a Zoroastrian convert to Islam.

(3) *judden* "a person of an alien religion" - generally applied to a non-Zoroastrian.

(4) *aner* "a non-Iranian" - generally refers to an Arab. Hence *aneri* "non-Iranism", generally used for 'the religion of the Arabs, Islam'.

(5) *akden* "a person of bad religion" or "a person of wrong religion" - This is a crucial word, and it is generally applied to a Zoroastrian convert to Islam.

The Pahlavi term *akden*, *aghden* is derived from Avesta *agha daena* 'bad religion' (Vd. 18.9). According to this Avesta passage, that person teaches 'bad religion' who does not put on sacred shirt-girdle, who does not recite the Gathas, who does not offer prayers, as applied to a Zoroastrian. In other words, 'bad religion' means discarding one's own Zoroastrian religion and instigating others to do so.

Further, in Vd. 3.40 Av. *anastuto* is translated into Pahlavi: *an-astavan* 'one without faith (in Zoroastrian religion)', and it is explained in a gloss *akden*. This shows that *akden* is a person, originally a Zoroastrian without faith in his ancestral religion, who has adopted an alien religion. This is corroborated by *Denkart*, edited by Madan, p. 201, lines 8-10 :

"Discarding the praise (of Zoroastrian Religion) is of two categories : (one) satanic (*ahrmanik*) - such as to consider (the religion) as non-existent, (and second) of bad religion (*akdenik*) - such as to consider the Good Religion (*vehden*, Zoroastrian Religion) as not good."

Here 'heresy, not believing in any religion' is regarded as 'satanic, demonic', and considering one's own Zoroastrian religion as 'not good', and hence adopting an alien religion, is regarded as an act 'pertaining to bad religion'.

This clearly proves that Pahlavi *akden* 'a person of bad religion' is a Zoroastrian convert to Islam.

#### HAUG'S TRANSLATION

Eduljee gives what he calls "Evidence from Pehlevi Literature". He refers to "the Pehlevi version of the last line of Ys. 31.3". Then he writes (p. 7) :

"Haug translates the Pehlevi version thus: "

Even after these clear words, clear reference to "the last line" and translation of Haug, Eduljee does not quote fully even that last line of the Pahlavi version, as given by Haug. Again he does not write which book of Haug he refers to. Evidently, he copies without acknowledgement from Haug's translation done about a century ago, and posthumously published by E. W. West in *Haug's Essays on the Parsis* (Munich 1871, p. 349). In this translation of Haug, the said last line runs thus:

"Through Thy tongue, in (my) mouth all kinds of living creatures believe, and afterwards it is said of it that I speak."

As said above, in spite of his clear words Eduljee does not quote this line fully. He omits the coma after "believe" and omits also the rest of the line, without indication as to the omission.

However that may be, mark that there is no word for 'religion' or any other word suggesting that idea in the text, and also in Haug's translation of the last line or of the whole stanza.

Translation of Pahlavi Yasna 31.3 may be given below (based on the text *Pahlavi Yasna*, by B. N. Dhabhar; (a), (b), (c) indicate number of lines, square brackets indicate commentary or glosses in the original Pahlavi version, round brackets indicate the words added for clarification) :

"(a) Since Thou, through spirituality, through fire, and through Ashavahisht, didst ordain, and Thou didst teach the reward unto the

fighters [i.e., Thou hast made manifest innocent and guilty]; (b) and Thou didst ordain (that principle) also for those who have faith in that one who is taking the account [ordained the rite of ordeal] – that unto us, O Ohrmazd, give knowledge [with wisdom] [(about) that rite of ordeal]; (c) through Thy tongue, through (Thy) mouth (so that) all living ones shall believe [and then by Him (i.e., by Ohrmazd) it will be said: 'I declare'].”

There is no word for 'religion' in the whole paragraph. The principal clause is: "that unto us, O Ohrmazd, give knowledge". This is the knowledge about "the reward unto the fighters". By this knowledge about the reward, Zarathushtra wants to convince "all living ones" that there is such principle of divine justice, applicable to all mankind. Pahlavi translation with commentary explains the same principle as in the Avesta original.

Further, mark that the Pahlavi version in a gloss refers to 'the rite of ordeal', which will take place at the final dispensation at the renovation as stated in a number of Pahlavi texts. This mention of 'the rite of ordeal' further confirms that the Gathic stanza (Yasna 31.3) and its Pahlavi version refer to the Universal Principle of Divine Justice. On this "rite of ordeal" see Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 430-431.

## THE DINKARD

Eduljee now mentions Dinkard. He writes (p. 7) :

"There should be no need to quote the several instances in the Dinkard where conversion is mentioned; Dr. Mirza must be familiar with them. However, I will mention only one here."

What does Eduljee mean by these lines? Such words simply misguide the readers, who generally are not conversant with the subject. One does not understand why Eduljee fights shy of quoting "the several instances" from the Dinkard! It is evident that when he writes these words he has before his eyes a full printed page crammed with "several instances" from "Dk." and "SBE"! Eduljee has read these "several instances" not in the Dinkard, but in *History of Zoroastrianism*, by M. N. Dhalla, page 325, although he fights shy of acknowledging the same.

In spite of "no need", Eduljee obliges us by quoting "only one" instance. The words quoted above gives an impression that the unnamed source of "the several instances" is the same as the source of "only one" instance! But that is not so. For "several instances" Eduljee's unnamed source is Dhalla, as noted above. But, while quoting "only one" instance he discards Dhalla, and from

Dhalla he jumps to Zaehner! What a jump – from Karachi to Oxford! A very big, wide and high jump, indeed!

But this "only one" instance gives up the game. It is evident, Eduljee has no idea of the Dinkard. He has not seen the book, leaving aside the question of reading it even in translation.

#### EMPHASIS ON NON-EXISTENT WORD

Eduljee mentions "only one" instance from the Dinkard in the following words (bold types and omissions indicated by Eduljee – p. 7) :

"His present Majesty, the King of Kings, Khusraw. . . . . issued the following declaration : The truth of the Religion of the worshipper of Mazdah has been recognized. Intelligent man can with confidence **establish it in the world** by discussion."

Again a mutilated sentence, and no reference to the text. Eduljee is again discreetly silent as to whether this is his own translation or done by someone else.

The fact is that Eduljee has copied, again blindly and again with discreet silence, from R. C. Zaehner, *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London 1961, p. 176). Zaehner gives translation of *Dinkard*, Madan, pp. 412-415. He has given transliteration and translation of the same passages of the Dinkard also in his another book *Zurvan* (Oxford 1955, pp. 7-9, 31-34). But evidently Eduljee has copied the sentences quoted above from Zaehner's *Dawn and Twilight*.

Zaehner's translation, blindly and silently copied by Eduljee, is incorrect. Eduljee does not and cannot realize and does not and cannot understand that Zaehner has changed the text at a crucial point. The sentence may be translated as follows (*Dinkard*, ed. Madan, p. 413, lines 12-14) :

"The truth of the Mazdesn Religion is recognized, the intelligent ones can see it in the world with steadfastness by deliberation."

The crucial Pahlavi word in the text is HZYTWN-t (*dit*) ; and it is changed by Zaehner (*Zurvan*, p. 32) to read *est(ent)t* 'establish'. Whatever may be the meaning of the word 'establish' there is no such word in the original text. Therefore, the word printed by Eduljee in bold types for special emphasis does not exist in the original!

If one reads the whole paragraph, it would be clear that the statement or (he decree is defensive. It was issued to defend Zoroastrian Religion against the attacks of the heretical sects and the aggressive alien religions. These heresies

are mentioned in the same paragraph of the Dinkard, but the relevant words are omitted by Eduljee. These words are:

*ahrmokih u sastarih* 'heresy and oppression'.

Against this "heresy and oppression" the said decree was issued. The words omitted here by Eduljee are quoted by him (although in wrong translation silently copied from Zaehner) elsewhere in his article. Hence we shall have to discuss the paragraph again, and also the historical setting in which the statement or the decree might have been issued.

QUOTATION FROM DADISTAN-I-DINIK  
SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AND OMISSIONS BY EDULJEE

Now Eduljee quotes Dadistan-i-Dinik 41 in the following words (bold types and omissions by Eduljee – p. 7) :

"The Dadistan-i-Dinik is also very explicit on this subject. Question 41 asks: How is the man judged who saves others from a foreign faith and prevents others from going over to a foreign faith? And the answer given is: "..... he is much extolled, happy, exalted ..... And every good work that is manifested in the good religion by **those who are transferred by him from a foreign faith and irreligion.....becomes his.....**" "

"Again mutilated and fabricated sentences – partly purported to be paraphrase by Eduljee (without quotation marks) and partly purported to be translation (with quotation marks). Again studied silence as to the source or sources, as to the text and translation!

Here is one more classic example of Eduljee quoting "*extensively and fairly fully even at the risk of being prolix*", as he claims!

Even if we accept these mutilated sentences without any question, they show that the text deals with a person "*who saves others from a foreign faith and prevents others from going over to a foreign faith*". In other words, the text is against conversion; and, as shown below, the words deliberately omitted by Eduljee prove this.

One must not forget that the said Pahlavi text was written in Iran about the middle of the ninth century, when the aggressive Islam was converting the Zoroastrians by force and persecution. *Dadistan-i-Dinik*- 41 refers to a-Zoroastrian who saves other Zoroastrians from conversion to Islam.

## EDULJEE COMPARED WITH HIS UNNAMED SOURCE (1)

One wonders where Eduljee read these words and sentences written by him! What is the authority for writing these words and sentences in the name of the Dadistan-i-Dinik? Evidently Eduljee borrows as usual without acknowledgement from E. W. West's translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVIII (Oxford 1882, pp. 139-140). But he does not quote fully; and the changes and omissions made by Eduljee are very significant. West's translation, the unnamed source of Eduljee, runs thus (italics by West indicating the words added for clarification) :

*"As to him who remains in the good religion of the Mazda-worshippers, whom men shall make the protection and assistance of the good religion, who shall save men from a foreign faith and irreligion (akdinoih), and then holds back some of those who have the idea that they should go over to a foreign faith and irreligion, and they do not go over to the foreign faith, but become steadfast in the religion of the Mazda-worshippers, what is then the nature of the decision of the angels about him, and what is the nature of their (the men's) good works and sin ?"*

See also Gujarati translation done about 1868 by T. D. Anklesaria and S. D. Bharucha, and posthumously published *"Dadestan-i-Dini"*. Bombay 1926, p. 117.

According to West's translation quoted above, which is the unnamed source of Eduljee, the Pahlavi text refers to a steadfast Zoroastrian, who is regarded as "protection and assistance" of Zoroastrian Religion. About this steadfast Zoroastrian, West notes in his footnote 4 :

"Some one placed in authority, such as a high-priest or judge, is evidently meant."

Such steadfast Zoroastrian *"holds back some of those who have the idea that they should go over to a foreign faith and irreligion"*; and by the action of such a steadfast Zoroastrian *"they do not go over to the foreign faith, but become steadfast in the religion of the Mazda-worshippers"*. In other words, the text refers to a Zoroastrian, preventing other Zoroastrians from discarding their ancestral religions, and from adopting the alien religion, namely Islam. The text does not advocate "conversion"; on the contrary, the text is strongly against "conversion", and against "the change of religion".

Comparing West's translation (the unnamed source of Eduljee) with the hash served by Eduljee in his article, we mark very significant changes and omissions made by Eduljee as noted below:

<i>West</i>	<i>Eduljee</i>
(The unnamed source of Eduljee)	
(1) "As to him who remains in the good religion of the Mazda-worshippers, <i>whom</i> men shall make the protection and assistance of the good religion."	(1) "the man"
(1a) ( <i>West's note</i> )	(1a) . . . . .
"Some one placed in authority, such as a high-priest or judge, is evidently meant"	
(2) " <i>who</i> shall save men from a foreign faith and irreligion (akdinoih), and then holds back some of those who have the idea that they should go over to the foreign faith, but become steadfast in the religion of the Mazda-worshippers. . . . ."	(2) "who saves others from a foreign faith and prevents others from going over to a foreign faith? "

This shows that the determinative clauses are omitted by Eduljee. The person referred to as a protector is a steadfast Zoroastrian, "*who remains in the religion of the Mazda-worshippers*", who is a protector of the Zoroastrian Religion, and according to West "a man of authority, a high-priest or a judge"; but Eduljee simply writes "*the man*". Again, those who are to be protected and saved are also expressly stated to be Zoroastrians, "who have the idea that they should go over to a foreign faith and irreligion". For this Eduljee simply writes "*others*" ! And such Zoroastrians are to be protected against and saved from *aneri*h and *akdeni*h. These terms are explained:

- (1) *aneri*h the religion of the Arab, Islam; translated by West: "a foreign religion"; translated by Anklesaria-Bharucha : "*juddini*".
- (2) *akdeni*h "bad religion", the religion of a Zoroastrian convert into Islam; translated by West "irreligion"; by Anklesaria-Bharucha: "*baddini*".

The Pahlavi text definitely refers to a steadfast Zoroastrian, preventing other Zoroastrians from adopting Islam. By changes and omissions Eduljee quotes this text in favour of conversion of non-Zoroastrians! These changes and omissions are deliberate, and they are made with a design to misguide and mislead inattentive readers and those who are not conversant with the subject.

#### THE TERM 'INFIDEL' IS NOT USED FOR NON-ZOROASTRIANS

Further, Eduljee writes (bold types by Eduljee - p. 7) :

"The Pehlevi Rivayet to the Dadistan-i-Dinik says: "Of the good works of an infidel this is the greatest, **when he comes out from the habit of infidelity into the good religion.**" "

Again studied silence as to the source. Evidently, Eduljee has copied this from E. W. West's translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XVIII, p. 415. although, as usual, he does not say so.

Here Eduljee relies on the word "infidel" in translation. Eduljee should know that the members of a foreign religion are *not* termed "infidels"; and foreign religions are *not* referred to as "infidelity" in Pahlavi. An infidel may belong to the Zoroastrian community or a non-Zoroastrian community. In the original text the words used are *akden* referring to a Zoroastrian convert into Islam, and *akdenih* referring to the religion of such a convert. The sentence quoted by Eduljee refers in reality to a convert, and it is again an evidence against 'conversion', against 'change of religion'.

#### SHKAND GUMANIK VIJAR

Eduljee writes (bold types, brackets, and omission by Eduljee - p. 7) :

"The Sikand Gumanik Vigar (10, 67) says that "Kai Spendadad (the son of Gushtasp) and Zargar (i.e., Zarir, the brother of Gushtasp) and other royal sons instigating the many conflicts. . . . accepted the religion as a yoke, while they even wandered to Arum and the Hindus, outside the realm, **in propagating the religion.**" "

Once again Eduljee silently and blindly copies from E. W. West's translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIV (Oxford 1885, p. 171). Eduljee mentions "10.67"; but what he copies has a bearing on "10.67-68". Translation is again inaccurate. The Pazand words are: *anda o arum u hindvan* "up to Arum and (the land of) the Hindus"; and not "to Arum and Hindus" as given by West and copied by Eduljee. Pazand *franaft hend* should mean "they went", and not "they wandered". The passage may be translated thus (the asterisks indicate corrected Pazand words) :

"(67) and Kay \*Spandyat and \*Zarer and others belonging to the realm accepted \*on (their) \*neck many battles, struggles, and bloodshed for the sake of the Religion. (68) And they went up to Arum and (the land of) the Hindus outside the realm for propagation of the Religion."

The Pazand words *anda o* meaning "till, up to" indicate direction, and not location. The passage quoted above indicate western and eastern boundaries of the Sasanian Empire – the border of Arum in the west and the border of (the land of) the Hindus in the east. Hence Arum and India are excluded from the territory mentioned. The author of the text has in his mind Iran proper and the outer provinces of the Empire *in Sasanian times*; and he simply states that the Religion was propagated in all parts of the Empire - up to the border of Arum in the west and up to the border of India in the east.

#### EDULJEE FAILS TO UNDERSTAND A GLARING INSTANCE OF ANACHRONISM

Evidently, this is a glaring instance of anachronism, which Eduljee fails to understand. We have historical details of the religious activities of Spandyat and Zarer both in Avesta (*Yashts*) and in Pahlavi (*Ayatkar i Zareran* and *Dinkard*), but we do not find any reference to such event or any reference to Arum or India in these more authentic and more reliable sources. According to the said Avesta and Pahlavi texts, both Spandyat and Zarer took active part in the battles between Iran and Turan, when Turanian King Arjasp attacked Iran, because Kayanian King Vishtasp refused to denounce the Religion of Zoroaster as demanded by Arjasp. But nowhere do we find any reference to Arum and India, and nowhere do we find any idea of Spandyat and Zarer going to any other country.

Eduljee does not state, or perhaps he does not know, that the said Pazand text was originally written in Pahlavi about the end of the 9th century, while the said event mentioned therein appertains to pre-historic times. During the time of Zoroaster, Kayanian Vishtasp, Spandyat and Zarer, Arum was not known in history. Even in Achaemenian times, Rome was unknown in world history.

Rome became city state in Europe about the end of the 5th century B. C., became a leader of the neighbouring cities in Europe about 340 B. C., and it had superior power in Italy as late as 280 B. C. Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus, was victorious over the Romans; but it was the proverbial "phyrric victory", and he was defeated by the Romans about 276 B. C. Thus the Romans can be said to have entered world history about the middle of the 3rd century B. C. (see *Shorter Atlas of the Classical World*, by H. H. Sculard and A. A. M. Van der Heyden, London 1962, pp. 115-130).

Pahlavi "Arum" is used not for Rome in Italy or for Greece. It is generally used for the Byzantine (or the Eastern) Roman Empire – roughly the countries of Asia Minor, and upper West Asia. The Romans established their power along the coast of the Mediterranean in the 2nd century B. C.; and they entered Asia when the city of Pergamum in Asia Minor was bequeathed to them in 133 B. C. Gradually they extended their power in Asia Minor.

It appears that the Romans first came in contact with the Iranians when Mithradates, the king of Pontus (121-63 B.C.), overran the Asiatic Roman provinces about 88 B. C. About the same time, the Romans first came in contact with the Parthians and with Iran proper. These provinces of Asia Minor, thus occupied by the Romans in the 2nd century B. C., are generally termed 'Arum' in Pahlavi.

This shows that one can quote the said Pazand text in connection with the events of Kayanian history only if one believes that Zoroaster, Kayanian Vishtasp, Spandyat and Zarer lived in or after the 2nd century B.C.! In his misplaced enthusiasm to quote "the evidence" in favour of "conversion", Eduljee has not cared to see and to understand a glaring instance of anachronism! Eduljee should know that historical details of pre-historic times, given in such books of very late origin, are not acceptable unless supported by independent evidences. No conclusion regarding details of Kayanian history can safely be drawn from such books without independent corroborative evidences. This is a very well known fact, and no ghost is *to* be called to say that.

#### WISHFUL THINKING ON THE PART OF EDULJEE

Further, with characteristic wishful thinking Eduljee makes the following statement in connection with the quotation from the said Pazand text (p. 7) :

"Whether Arum is considered to be Rome, Greece or Asia Minor, it was certainly not inhabited by Mazdayasnians nor could one so classify the Hindus."

As explained above, both Arum and India are excluded from the territory mentioned in the Pazand text. Pahlavi Arum does not mean Rome (in Italy) or Greece, but it stands for the countries of Byzantine Roman Empire – particularly the countries of Asia Minor. Eduljee should know that the countries of Asia Minor and Armenia were under the Achaemenian rule, and the Zoroastrians had settled in these countries in those days. Even under the Roman rule the Zoroastrians were living in these countries. This has been shown below while discussing Armenia, and Eduljee's "diplomatic documents".

## CONVERSION WAS NEVER A STATE POLICY IN ANCIENT IRAN

Quoting "Evidence from the Persian Rivayets", Eduljee writes (p. 7) :

"It may be argued that the Pehlavi literature refers to a time when Iran was a great empire and Zoroastrianism was a state religion, and therefore conversion of non-Zoroastrians was a matter of State policy".

This is also wishful thinking on the part of Eduljee. The Pahlavi texts refer to the time of the empire *only in exceptional cases*. They generally mention "evil times" and "evil rulership". This clearly refers to the post-Sassanian times. No one can argue validly and with justification that conversion of non-Zoroastrians was a matter of state policy in Iran. Conversion was never a state policy in ancient Iran.

What Eduljee writes as general comments regarding Persian Rivayats after the words quoted above is based on the flights of imagination on the part of Dhalla, blindly borrowed by Eduljee as shown below.

## PERSIAN RIVAYATS

Then Eduljee quotes (pp. 7-8) from various Rivayats, but as usual he does not mention his source or authority. What he quotes in the name of Rivayats has been copied by him without acknowledgement from *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framroze and Others*, by B. N. Dhabhar (Bombay 1932, pp. 275-276).

Eduljee quotes Nariman Hoshang's Rivayat in the following words (brackets and bold types by Eduljee - p. 8) :

"Q. A Behdin turns darvand (i.e.. goes over to another faith).  
If he returns to the religion of the Behdins, is it allowed or not?"

How can Eduljee quote these words in support of conversion of non-Zoroastrians? Does he mean to say that "A Behdin" is a non-Zoroastrian? This clearly is a case of a Zoroastrian convert into Islam, and it is not applicable in the present controversy. Further, the answer quoted by Eduljee is incomplete. Important words unpalatable to Eduljee are omitted (Dhabhar, p. 275).

Then Eduljee quotes another question regarding "slave-boys and slave girls". But their religion is not mentioned. Eduljee argues (p. 8) :

"As Parsi boys and girls were never slaves and in any case were already Zoroastrians, this can only refer to non-Parsi servants."

This is borrowed from Dhalla, written without any evidence or authority. On the other hand, there is evidence to show that there were Parsi slaves taken by the Mohammedans in India. Sir Thomas Herbert travelled in India in 1626. In the account of his travels, he writes (*Travels into Africa and Asia the Great*, quoted by R. B. Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*; Bombay 1954, pp. 41-42) :

"The Seventh December we took ship in the *William* from Gom-broom in Persia: the *Exchange*, the *Hart*, and other gallant ships went along with us, and about 300 slaves were put aboard whom the Persians had bought in India; viz., **Parsees**, Gentews, Bannares and others."

That the slaves referred to in the Persian Rivayats were Parsis appears also from *Persian Rivayats*, by B. N. Dhabhar, p. 415; see also *Early History of the Parsis in India*, by R. B. Paymaster, pp. 78-79, 81.

Then Eduljee quotes Kaus Mahyar's Rivayat, copied without acknowledgement from Dhabhar's translation. This Rivayat mentions "a grave-digger, a corpse-burner, and a dravand"; but their religion is not mentioned. There is no reason to believe that they belonged to an alien religion. About 300 or 400 years ago, some Parsis, particularly those settled in places away from the centres of Zoroastrianism, had adopted non-Parsi customs, habits, and practices. This appears from the Persian Rivayats (Dhabhar, pp. 108, 160, 162), and also from some suggestive Parsi surnames, used even at present. In some cases, the Parsis in far-off places were forced to adopt certain professions, and to do certain work. Even at present, there are Parsis bearing the surname *Ghorkhodu* "grave digger". The ancestors of this family were forced by the Mohammedans to dig graves. In 1670, Ogilby writes about the Parsis (*Early History of the Parsis in India*, by R. B. Paymaster, p. 45) :

"In course of time, these settlers forgot their origin, their religion, and even their name."

This may be an exaggeration, but it shows the general condition of at least some Parsis, particularly those living in far-off places in those days.

However that may be, none of the quotations copied by Eduljee refers to the conversion of non-Zoroastrians.

As stated above, the quotations given by Eduljee from the Persian Rivayats are silently copied by him from Dhabhar's translation. What Eduljee writes (p. 8) in connection therewith by way of general comments is either inexplicable or irrelevant. This is due to the fact that in these general comments he tries to sum up what Dhalla writes in chapter LIII of *History of Zoroastrianism* (pp. 474-

476). Copying from Dhalla, Eduljee writes that the slaves were "non-Parsi servants", that "the applicants for conversion belonged to the lower classes of society", and that "their problem appears to be sociological rather than religious.' But Dhalla does not give any authority or any evidence for what he writes in this whole chapter LIII; and hence Eduljee also does not, and cannot, give any authority or any evidence to show that the slaves were "non-Parsi servants". What Dhalla writes in this chapter are flights of imagination on the part of Dhalla, and it is silently and blindly copied by Eduljee.

#### IV. SOME EVENTS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

Under the title "Persecution of Non-Zoroastrians" Eduljee deals with historical materials. His article shows that he is ignorant of ancient history, and he makes some wild statements. Before we examine these statements, it is necessary to explain some relevant events of ancient history.

##### ZOROASTRIANS IN ARMENIA AND ASIA MINOR

During the Achaemenian times (559-330 B.C.), Armenia and the countries of Asia Minor were under Iranian rule. At that time, Zoroastrians from Iran settled in Armenia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and further west in the countries of Asia Minor – in Lydia, Phrygia, Galatia (Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 19).

##### ANTI-ZOROASTRIAN STANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN WRITERS

Christianity came to Iran and Armenia about the beginning of the 3rd century; and since then the Christians were living peacefully enjoying political and religious freedom. About 302 A. C., Armenian king Tiridates and the Armenians were converted to Christianity, and Armenia became the first Christian country – the country with Christianity as the state religion.

At that time political rivalry between Iranian and Roman empires was acute. About 313, Roman Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity. In *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, Rawlinson notes (p. 147):

"Constantine. . . . had assumed the character of a sort of general protector of the Christians throughout the world."

The Christian Romans began to interfere with the state affairs of Iran on the pretext of protecting the interest of the Christians living in Iran. About the end of the 4th century, Christianity was proclaimed the state religion of the Roman Empire. Assured of the royal patronage of the Romans, the Christians living in Iran began to create trouble, and showed their pro-Roman leanings in the state affairs. For these reasons, the Sasanian Emperors had to adopt proper, at times harsh, measures. Hence the anti-Zoroastrian stance was taken up by the Syrian and Armenian Christian writers of the 5th century (as shown below).

##### HERETICAL SECTS AMONG THE ZOROASTRIANS

In Sasanian times, there were heretical sects among the Zoroastrians. In Pahlavi books, they are generally referred to as *ahrmokih* 'heresy'. For these sects, see Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, pp. 203-219; *History of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 330-349; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 7-34.

## AGGRESSIVE ALIEN RELIGIONS

Where there is an aggressive religion, making converts by persuasion, by inducement, by force, or by combination of all these, there is always trouble. During Sasanian times there were aggressive alien religions in Iran; and the Zoroastrian priests had to defend their own religion against the attacks of the heretical sects and also of the aggressive alien religions. Under the title **Judaism and Christianity penetrate into Persia as the formidable rivals of the national faith**, Dhalla writes (*History of Zoroastrianism*) : -

(1) Page 326 :

"Ardashir had established Zoroastrianism as the state religion of Persia, but there were in the empire colonies of people following other religions. Iran had long ceased to be a religious unit, and the vast number of Jews, Christians, and others of divergent faiths and creeds contributed towards disunion. Referring to the presence of the people professing different religions in his kingdom, King Hormuzd IV once remarked that his throne rested on four feet; and troublesome these outside elements certainly proved to the sovereign occupying the throne. A fairly tolerable latitude was conceded to these adherents of the alien faiths, though occasional persecutions of them were not unknown. These non-Zoroastrians frequently occasioned heated polemics in which virulent criticism and derisive terms were exchanged between the Zoroastrian priests on the one side and the prelates of the rival faiths on the other. Iranian society was often convulsed with the storm of controversy."

(2) Page 327 :

"The Jews had settled in Persia in large numbers from very early times, and had planted their colonies all over the country. They thrived peacefully and were given privileges to manage their own civic affairs without molestation from the state."

(3) Page 328 :

"Of all the alien faiths in Persia, Christianity was the most aggressive. The pertinacious attempt of the Christians to win over converts to their faith from the ruling nation, often caused shedding of human blood. There was a state of perennial war between Sasanian Persia and

Byzantine Rome, which had embraced Christianity. The sympathy of the Christian population naturally went to their Roman co-religionists and caused disturbances in Persia. Moreover, the fanatic zeal of the priests on both sides fomented communal strife, which often resulted in the destruction of the Zoroastrian fire-temples and Christian churches, and the consequent persecution of the Christians."

(4) Page 328 :

"Reckless utterances of the Christian priests often aggravated the ill-feeling between the two peoples, and violent scenes ensued. An enthusiastic bishop once regaled his congregation by saying that the soul of the king would, in his future life, be born in hell fire with Satan, whereas the Christians would be translated to heaven, while another patriarch urged the Roman bishops to free them from the accursed rule of the Persians."

(5) Page 329 :

"The seceders from Zoroastrianism were persecuted; apostasy was made a capital crime by the Zoroastrian Church, and the renegades were put to death. Notwithstanding such harsh measures adopted by the Iranian clergy, numerous converts were made throughout the whole time of the Sasanian rule from Zoroastrianism to Christianity."

Further, see *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, New York :

(1) Vol. 11, p. 203 :

"Christianity spread widely and was well organized in the Persian Empire under the Sasanians, especially in its Nestorian form. At the moment of the Musalman invasion it counted seven metropolitan provinces and 80 bishopries, stretching from Armenia to India. Not infrequently Christians enjoyed high favour at the court, especially during the great reign of the first Chosroes."

(2) Vol. 16, p. 244 :

"A christiology of the kind usually called Nestorian was eagerly and successfully propagated in Syria and Persia by Ibas, bishop of Edessa (435) and Barsumas, bishop of Nisibis. In Persia the old churches were stimulated into vigour and new ones founded. Their centre was at Ctesiphon on the Tigris, a busy trading city."

Ghirshmann notes that Sasanian King Yazdgard I was "so well disposed" towards the Christians that they called him 'the Christian King'; and regarding him he notes (*Iran*, by R. Ghirschmann, Pelican series 1954, p. 298) :

"He convoked a council, installed a *Catholicos* at Seleucia and five metropolitans in the provincial towns, and permitted the free movement of clergy throughout the country. But the Christians apparently abused their privileges, and were guilty of violent demonstrations against the Zoroastrian sanctuaries and clergy. In view of this attitude, the king was compelled to revise his policy."

This shows that in ancient Iran even the aggressive alien religions flourished. Aggressive Christianity had its centre at Ctesiphon, the Capital of Iran. It had organized bishopries throughout Iran in Sasanian times. Some of the Sasanian emperors were tolerant to a fault; and Eduljee himself admits that they were going to the "extreme of practically losing their own religion".

But when the aggressive religions crossed the limit, and interfered with Zoroastrian institutions, the Sasanian emperors and priests had to take suitable action in defence of the Zoroastrian religion. Harsh measures were adopted particularly against the heretics and the Zoroastrian converts to the alien religion.

Where, then, stands the charges of proselytism and religious persecution levelled against the Zoroastrians of Sasanian times? Dhalla (pp. 326-329) contradicts himself (pp. 325-326), and leaves Eduljee in the lurch, who is blindly and silently copying him! The harsh measures taken against the aggressive religions in the circumstances explained above have been wrongly interpreted by interested persons as the measures for conversion of non-Zoroastrians.

## ZOROASTRIANS IN ARMENIA

As stated above, Zoroastrians were living in Armenia and Asia Minor since Achaemenian times. These Zoroastrians were influenced by the religious thought of foreign peoples, but basically they were Zoroastrians in those days; and they had their places of worship in those countries. Armenia was ruled over also by the Parthians and the Sasanians; and it was a bone of contention between the Iranians and the Romans for a long time. Many battles were fought by these nations for the occupation and possession of Armenia with fluctuating results.

In his article on **Armenia (Zoroastrian)**, M. H. Ananikian writes (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 1, p. 802) :

" , , , , , the old religion of Armenia was mainly Iranian, and may be described as Zoroastrianism of a corrupt type."

The Armenian language contains Iranian elements to such an extent that Huebschmann has devoted a special section of his book on Armenian Grammar to the Iranian loan-words in the Armenian. Common Iranian words, Iranian proper nouns, Iranian words of official ranks appear in the Armenian. Just as we use Zoroastrian religious terms in Gujarati, they were used in the Armenian. *Aramazd* (Hormazd) was used to translate *Zeus* (Greek name of God). The names of the Armenian months were Zoroastrian in origin. Other Armenian religious terms of Zoroastrian origin were: *den*, *Mazdesn*, *hrashkart*, *apastan*, *jatagov*, *kerb*, *dev*, *vnas*, *patuhas*, *datastan*, *ashakart*, *patruchak*, *anderjpet*. These ancient Armenian words are of Iranian and Zoroastrian origin, although in some cases they were used in modified sense and changed meaning.

It appears that Christianity came to Armenia as an aggressive religion about the beginning of the third century of the Christian Era; and it was in full force in the beginning of the fourth century. Iranian King of Armenia Tiridates (Tirdad), and the Zoroastrians of Armenia were converted to Christianity about 303 B. C. – See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, New Edition 1964, Vol. X, p. 960 :

"Gregory, Saint, the Illuminator (c 260-330), the "Aposle of Armenia", the greatest though not the first missionary to his nation, and organizer of its distinctive national Christian tradition. Under his influence King Tiridates, formerly a persecutor, accepted Christianity and proclaimed Armenia a Christian nation about 303."

Mark the words "*formerly a persecutor*". Here Tiridates is called 'a persecutor', evidently because he must have defended his ancestral religion before he was converted to Christianity! Further, it should be noted that Gregory the Illuminator himself was an Iranian convert to Christianity. He belonged to the Arsacid royal family. He took refuge in the Roman territory, studied at Caesarea, adopted Christianity and he was consecrated a bishop (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 1, p. 803).

#### "STRANGE THINGS CONCERNING THE SASSANIDES"

Due to continuous political and religious rivalry, there were frequent struggles and strifes between defending Zoroastrians and aggressive Christians in Iran and in Armenia during the Sasanian time. For this reason the Christian writers of those days were often partial and unreliable, and at times even hostile to the Zoroastrians.

C. F. Neumann, in his translation of Armenian Bishop Eliseaus, remarks (*History of Vartan*, London 1830, p. 74) :

"Zeal for the fire-worship was peculiar to the whole Sassanide family. Tabari and Mirkhond agree, that the father of Artashir was superintendent of a pyreum (De Sacy, Mem. 275). The uncritical ecclesiastical historians therefore make Ardeshir a Magus, confounding, as usual the Magi and the Mogk, and relate many strange things concerning the Sassanides. "

We shall meet Eliseaus again in detail.

#### "ALMOST WORTHLESS"

George Rawlinson quotes Armenian writer Moses in connection with Sasanian Emperor Ardeshir I, and remarks (*The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, by G. Rawlinson, London 1876, pp. 38-39) :

"But this entire narrative seems to be deeply tinged with the vitiating stain of intense national vanity, a fault which markedly characterises the Armenian writers, and renders them, when unconfirmed by other authorities, almost worthless."

#### UNRELIABLE WRITERS

E. W. West refers to the Greek and Armenian writers of the Sasanian times, and points out that in the matter of Zoroastrian religion they are unreliable; and he remarks (*The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. V, Oxford 1880, p. lxx) :

"This shows that how little reliance can be placed upon the assertions of foreigners regarding matters which they view with antipathy or prejudice. "

#### "HOSTILE WITNESSES"

W. B. Henning is more outspoken and more precise. He writes (*Zoroaster*, London 1951, p. 50) :

"But these foreign sources, chiefly Syrian and Armenian Christian writers, are undeniably hostile witnesses."

#### HARSH MEASURES FOR POLITICAL REASONS

It is true in some cases the Sasanian Emperors had taken harsh measures against the Christians, but that was in defence of Zoroastrian Religion against

the aggressive attitude of the aliens, as noted above. Further, it was due to political reasons, and not for religious reasons, and definitely not for conversion of the non-Zoroastrians.

Quoting Thomas Ardsrun, the Armenian writer of the ninth century, Neumann (*History of Vartan*, Preface pp. xvi-xvii) observes that in ancient Armenia two rival factions of the Christians - the Nestorians and the Catholics - were at loggerheads with each other. The Nestorians were loyal to the Iranian kings of Armenia, and friendly with Sasanian Emperor Peroz II (459-483); but the Catholics were suspected of leanings towards the Romans. Further, on the authority of Justi and of Brandt, L. H. Gray remarks (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 8, p. 751) :

"The persecutions were political rather than religious in motive, the Nestorians enjoying State protection and even favour, whereas the Catholics owing allegiance to a non-Persian power, were objects of hostility. "

Edujje is blissfully ignorant of these important facts of ancient history.

## V. ALLEGED PERSECUTION OF NON-ZOROASTRIANS

### AN INSINUATING STATEMENT

Now we shall examine the historical materials mentioned by Eduljee under the title **Persecution of Non-Zoroastrians**. Eduljee writes (p. 8) :

"It is true that we have no records of persecution during the Achaemenian and Arsacid (Parthian) periods."

Mark the insinuating statement, suggesting that we have "no records", but "persecution" was there!

Further, Eduljee writes (brackets by the present writer - p. 8) :

"The Achaemenians appear to be genuinely tolerant, although it would also have been wise statesmanship on their part not to have antagonised (so!) their subjects."

Mark the word "appear" in face of satisfactory overwhelming evidences on the subject. Evidently, as the statement shows, Eduljee is disheartened to find that the Achaemenians adopted "wise statesmanship" and did not proselytize!

### "THE PICTURE IS BLACK" ONLY IN THE EYES OF EDULJEE

Further, Eduljee writes (p. 8) :

"But when we come to Sasanian times, we have voluminous documentation and the picture is black."

Eduljee's "voluminous documentation" tells a different story; and "the picture is black" only in the eyes of Eduljee. Really speaking the picture is painted in black colour in Eduljee's article by incompetence, wrong construing, misrepresentation of unnamed sources, and relying solely on one of the "undeniably hostile witnesses"!

Further, in connection with the same "voluminous documentation" and "the picture" that is "black", Eduljee writes (pp. 8-9) :

"It is surprising that. . . Dr. Mirza could shut his eyes to the evidence. Has he not heard of the cruel persecution of the Manichaees and the Mazdakites ?"

This question of Eduljee constitutes at least a part of his "voluminous documentation" and a part of "the picture" that is "black", and his entire "evidence" regarding "the cruel persecution of the Manichaees and the Mazdakites"! Further, it is necessary to state once again that the word "persecution" does not necessarily mean or suggest "conversion". Evidently this story of "persecution" has been vaguely brought in as a part of Eduljee's "voluminous documentation" to paint the picture of Sasanian Zoroastrians in black colour !

#### MANICHAISM AND MAZDAKISM

Regarding "the Manichaees and the Mazdakites", referred to by Eduljee, it should be stated that these were the sects among the Zoroastrians in the Sasanian times.

Manichaeism was based on the principles culled from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. This eclectic creed flourished and influenced the royal court and royal family in Iran. When it became aggressive it was put down. About Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, Dhalla writes (*History of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 339-340) :

"He began his propaganda under Ardashir, but worked with greater vigour under Shapur I, who embraced his faith. Manichaeism flourished with varied success side by side with the state religion until the time when Bahram I ascended the throne. The teachings of Mani acquired a strong hold over the minds of many, and threatened to be a powerful rival of the ancient faith. The national spirit rebelled against the encroachment of the new cult, and the king strove to extinguish the heresy by the exercise of a firm hand."

Mazdakism was a social system, based on communistic principles. Mazdak, the founder, advocated community of wealth and women. About Mazdak and his teachings, Dhalla writes (*History of Zoroastrianism*, p. 349) :

"These revolutionary teachings thrilled for a time Iran, and exercised a powerful fascination on the masses. The crisis was brought to a head when, far from taking any initiative to stamp out the heresy, the king encouraged it, and finally embraced it. His son, Prince Noshirwan, summoned the Dasturs and Mobeds to consider the situation. It was certain that the cult would spread and the young prince adopted severe measures to suppress it, lest it should menace the public peace. The clergy who viewed the new heresy with great alarm, advised rigorous measures to extirpate the threatening creed."

[Note : The king referred to in this quotation is King Kobad (488-497; 499-531.)]

It is evident that there is no idea or suggestion of conversion in the measures taken by the Zoroastrians against the Manichaeans and the Mazdakites, as Eduljee tacitly wants us to believe.

## KING KHUSRO'S DECLARATION

### SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON NON-EXISTENT WORDS

Under the title **Persecution of Non-Zoroastrians**, Eduljee refers to "the Dinkard", and the decree or declaration of King Khusro I, already mentioned. He quotes the said declaration in the following words (bold types and omissions by Eduljee – p. 9) :

"His present Majesty . . . . after he had put down irreligion and heresy **with the greatest vindictiveness** according to the revelation of the Religion in the matter of all heresy....."

This mutilated and incomplete sentence is one more instance of Eduljee quoting "extensively and fairly fully, even at the risk of being prolix" !

In this mutilated and incomplete sentence, Eduljee specially emphasizes two points (p. 8) :

- (1) the king's attitude - "one of the greatest vindictiveness",
- (2) "that the king claims scriptural authority for his attitude."

Again Eduljee does not mention his authority or his source. He blindly and quietly copies from Zaehner (*Dawn and Twilight*, p. 174) as already pointed out; and he prints in bold types for emphasis the words which are non-existent in the original; and then he expressly mentions the same non-existent words for special emphasis!

Eduljee does not and cannot realize:

(1) that Pahlavi *cigon* is wrongly translated 'after', and that it means "as, just as, like", showing manner.

(2) that "irreligion and heresy" is not correct translation, that the Pahlavi words wrongly translated "irreligion and heresy" are *ahrmokih u sastarih* "heresy and oppression"; and they refer to the heretical sects among the Zoroastrians; and that they do not refer to alien religions.

(3) that translation **with the greatest vindictiveness** is incorrect; that the Pahlavi words so translated are *spurr hamestarih*; and that these words cannot be translated as done by Zaehner, and blindly copied and specially emphasized by Eduljee, and that these Pahlavi words mean "with complete opposition".

(4) that "the scriptural authority" referred to by Eduljee, is mentioned not in relation to the non-existent "vindictiveness" or to "put down"; but it is mentioned in relation to "knowledge and deliberation".

The Dinkard passage may be translated (*Dinkard*, ed. Madan p. 413, lines 9-14 – the asterisk indicates the Pahlavi word corrected) :

"His present Majesty Khusro, King of Kings, son of Kavut – just as he put down heresy and oppression with complete opposition, he greatly increased by manifestation from the Religion the knowledge and deliberation in details about every heresy, 4 professions; (and) he declared this also with angelic \*wisdom: The truth of the Mazdesn Religion is recognized; the intelligent ones can see it in the world with steadfastness by deliberation."

The declaration simply says that just as Khusro put down heresy, he also encouraged and held deliberations and argumentation in detail with the help of the scripture of the Zoroastrian Religion, which the wise men can see in the world.

There is no idea or suggestion of "conversion" in the Dinkard passage, as Eduljee wants us to believe. No translator, no interpreter, not even Zaehner (from whom Eduljee borrows and whom he copies) has ever seen or read any idea of "conversion" of the non-Zoroastrians in the Dinkard passage quoted by Eduljee.

#### INSCRIPTION OF KARTIR

Further, without quoting any authority or any source Eduljee writes (p. 9) :

"Karter, the High Priest under Shahpur I, was the principal agent in Zoroastrian revival. His inscription shows that he persecuted Jews, Christians, Manichaees, Buddhists and Brahmas. Karter claims to have 'chastised' all these."

These are vague statements having nothing to do with conversion. From these words one must not believe that Eduljee has read the inscription of Kartir either in original or in translation. Eduljee has quietly borrowed this

from Zaehner, *Dawn and Twilight*, p. 186. Here Eduljee tacitly plays upon the words: "revival, persecuted, chastised". But none of these words means or suggests any idea of conversion of non-Zoroastrians. Again these words should be construed in the light of contemporary history.

It is, therefore, necessary to see what Kartir says in his famous inscription at Kaaba-i-Zardost. Kartir records that he established fire-temples in Iran and also in other countries of the Empire (namely, Armenia, Cappadocia, and Asia Minor); and he further records (*Third Century Iran, Sapor and Kartir*, by M. Sprengling, Chicago 1953, p. 52) :

"And I did not permit damage and pillaging to be made, and whatsoever pillaging by any person had been made, those (things) also by me were taken away, and by me again to their own country they were left."

In his Introduction to this inscription, Sprengling notes that Kartir worked particularly in religious sphere; and then he remarks (p. 13) :

"The only note to the contrary, and in fact the only truly ethical note in all the material that is known to me about Kartir, is Kartir's concern for the prevention of looting and the return of loot to its owners in non-Iranian lands overrun by Shahpuhr's armies, in which Kartir had orders to establish Mazdayasnian shrines, priests, and services. This is truly an extraordinarily high ethical thought and action for those times and circumstances."

Further; commenting on the work and career of Kartir, Sprengling remarks (p. 43) :

". . . .Kartir's position and powers, however great, and his interests are distinctly limited to church affairs. In such matters he reaches, atleast in Shahpur's time, beyond Iranian boundaries. In the main, however, his work is to make Iran a good Mazdayasnian empire according to his lights, to raise the standing and glory of his church there, and to remove thence all possible obstacles to the rise and expansion of that church. In short, he is the founder and creator of the Sasanian Mazdayasnian state church, very probably the first Zoroastrian state church ever to be organized in this full and formal fashion."

We hope Eduljee does not jump at the word "expansion" used by Sprengling. It refers to the establishment of the Fire-temples in the non-Iranian countries of the Empire for the Zoroastrians living there.

Further, as stated above, Kartir's action against Jews, Christians, Manichaeans, and Buddhists should be construed in the light of contemporary history. Explaining Kartir's action, Ghirshmann writes (*Iran* pp. 316-317) :

"In the east, Buddhism was at the height of its expansion and had been adopted as the State religion of the second Kushan dynasty by the founder, King Kanishka. In the west, centres of Christianity had sprung up in the northern Mesopotamia, Judaism was active in Babylonia, Mazdaism was not only faced with these rival religions on the frontiers of the Empire, but in Iran itself was menaced by the Manichean faith and priesthood."

Further, Ghirshmann observes (p. 318) :

"With the support of the temporal power, Zoroastrianism drove out Manichaeism and held Christianity in check on the line of the Euphrates and Buddhism on the Hilmand."

Neither Sprengling (translator and commentator of the inscriptions *of* Kartir), nor Ghirshmann (archaeologist and historian), nor Zaehner (whom Eduljee copies) has read any idea of conversion of non-Zoroastrians in any of the inscriptions of Kartir, as Eduljee tacitly wants us to believe.

#### "THE TOTAL PICTURE"

Eduljee writes (p. 9) :

"It is true that some Sasanian kings were very tolerant – in fact, going to the other extreme of practically losing their own religion – but we must see the total picture."

For this "total picture" Eduljee relies on "diplomatic documents" and on Eliseus (whom he wrongly describes as "the historian of Armenia"). What Eduljee writes on the authority of Eliseus has been borrowed by him from Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism* (pp. 325-326), although he does not say so. But Eduljee discreetly suppresses the fact, noted by Dhalla, that Eliseus was a "bishop *of* the Amadunians in the fifth century A. D." As noted above. Henning has pointed out that the Armenian Christian writers are "undeniably hostile witnesses" (Henning, *Zoroaster*, p. 50); and Eduljee is relying on the hostile witness when he paints "the total picture" !

Further, both Dhalla and Eduljee are blissfully ignorant *of* important events *of* ancient history. Neither of them realizes that Armenia was under Iranian rule,

and the Zoroastrians were living there in good number since the Achaemenian times. Christianity came to Armenia as an aggressive religion centuries after that time, and Iranian Tiridates (Tirdad), the king of Armenia, and the Zoroastrians living in Armenia were converted to Christianity about 303 A. C. How can one see "the total picture" without taking into consideration these important facts of history?

Dhalla's whole paragraph (pp. 325-326) on **An Armenian Account of the Zoroastrian Propaganda** is solely based on Elisaëus, *History of Vartan*; and Dhalla is silently and blindly copied by Eduljee for his "total picture"! How can one see "the total picture", relying solely on "undeniably hostile" witness?

In order to paint "the total picture", Eduljee writes (bold types and inner quotation marks by Eduljee – p. 9) :

"Elisaëus, the historian of Armenia, shows what it was like in one corner of the Empire: "Yezdegird II tried both force and persuasion to convert the Christians of Armenia. His minister, Mihr Narsih, proclaimed that those who do not acknowledge the Mazdayasnian faith are deaf and blind and are misled by Ahriman. The attempt to proselytise spread also to Georgia and Albania". Apparently the Sasanians, the Champions of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, not only persecuted but also proselytised !"

This writing of Eduljee gives an impression that the paragraph with the inner quotation marks is quoted from Elisaëus. But it is not so. The said paragraph, as written by Eduljee, does not occur in this form either in Elisaëus or in Dhalla or in any other author. This paragraph is made up of the sentences borrowed from what Dhalla writes in *History of Zoroastrianism* pp. 325-326. Eduljee picks up sentences as he likes from Dhalla, makes his own paragraph, and puts it in quotation marks in the name of Elisaëus! To say the least, this is highly objectionable.

Further, Eduljee significantly ignores the fact, noted by Dhalla, that Elisaëus, was a Christian Bishop. It must also be recalled that, as noted above, the Armenian Christian writers are uncritical, partial and unreliable as pointed out by Neumann, Rawlinson, and West; and Henning categorically states that these writers are "undeniably hostile witnesses".

Further, as noted above, Eduljee's story of "force and persuasion" relies on Dhalla's story of "high positions and court distinctions", etc., which Dhalla ascribes to Elisaëus. But, as Elisaëus says (p. 35), the story was narrated by the Chiliarch of Albania to the Bishop Joseph of Armenia (see below).

It is necessary to examine in some details "the total picture" painted by Eduljee.

### CHRISTIAN STRATAGEMS THROWN ROUND THE NECK OF THE ZOROASTRIANS!

The title of the Chapter XXIII of Dhalla's *Zoroastrian Theology* and the corresponding Chapter XXXV of *History of Zoroastrianism* is: **The Active Propaganda of the Faith**. If "Faith" means "Zoroastrianism", as it does in the present context, the title is misleading. Greater part of the said chapter deals with the Jewish and Christian propaganda against Zoroastrianism in Iran.

In the said chapter, Dhalla writes a paragraph on **An Armenian Account of the Zoroastrian Propaganda**. For this account Dhalla quotes Armenian Bishop Elisaeus, *History of Vartan*, pp. 8, 9, 11, 12, 26, 31, 32, 35. No other authority is quoted. Eduljee, as usual, blindly and quietly copies Dhalla !

Relying solely on Elisaeus, Dhalla writes in the said paragraph (*History of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 325-326) :

"The Christian subjects of the Persian king in Armenia, we are informed, were promised high positions, court distinctions, royal favours, and the remission of the taxes, if they accepted the national faith of Iran."

Dhalla writes this under the undesirable shelter of vague: "we are informed". Of course the informant is Elisaeus. Further it should be noted that Elisaeus writes the story of the promise of "high position, court distinction", etc., on the report he heard. Elisaeus reports (*History of Vartan*, p. 35) that the Chiliarch of Albania came to Bishop Joseph of Armenia and the Chiliarch narrated to the Bishop the story that the Magi promised the king's "honours and presents", etc., to the Christians of Albania. We have no means to ascertain how Elisaeus heard this report.

However that may be, it is vitally important to note that even under the vague shelter of "we are informed", neither Elisaeus nor Dhalla nor Eduljee can quote a single instance of a Christian or any non-Zoroastrian convert into Zoroastrianism, leaving aside the stories of "high positions, court distinction, and royal favours"! On the other hand we can quote instances of Zoroastrian converts into Christianity having received high positions and divine favours in the Christian Church!

Dhalla writes (*History of Zoroastrianism*, p. 329) :

"Notwithstanding such harsh measures adopted by the Iranian clergy, numerous converts were made throughout the whole time of the

Sasanian rule from Zoroastrianism to Christianity. Some of the greatest saints were won from the Zoroastrian community. A noted Zoroastrian preceptor embraced Christianity, and later became the Patriarch under the Mar Aba the Great."

Saint Gregory, "the Illuminator", was an Iranian convert to Christianity and he received high position and title in the Christian Church. The Christian titles *Rabbin* 'master' and *Mar* 'lord' are of Aramaic-Hebrew origin, and they were generally used as titles for the Christian saints. The title *Mar* was applied even to Christ by his disciples. Sasanian Emperor Hormazd IV (579-590) was favourably inclined towards the Christians, and hence in the Syrian writings of the Christian saints he is called "*Rabbin* and *Mar* Hormizd" (George Hoffmann. *Auszuege aus syrischen Akten persischer Maertyrer*, Leipzig.1880, p. 19). This Christian saintly title was awarded also to other Iranian converts to Christianity, who were regarded as "Martyrs". Such Iranian converts are mentioned by name: Mar Behnam, Mar Sabha, Mar Muain, Mar Pethion, Mar Grighor, Mar Giwaris (Hoffmann, pp. 17, 22, 28, 61, 78, 91).

Further, see below: **Elisaeus the Bishop of Armenia.**

Hence we may conclude that while there is not a single quotable instance of a Christian or any non-Zoroastrian convert into Zoroastrianism, there are quotable instances of Iranian converts into Christianity, and there are instances of such converts having received saintly titles and high positions generously conferred by the Christian Church on the converts to Christianity. Evidently, these titles and positions were inducements and attractions.

This clearly proves that the Christians themselves of those days are guilty of employing the stratagems of persuasion, inducement, and force to convert the Zoroastrians, and in order to cover it up, and as a counterblast and a subterfuge, they level against the Zoroastrians the same charge of which they themselves are guilty!

This further shows that "persuasion and force" and the promises of "high positions, court distinctions, royal favours" mentioned by Elisaeus quoted, by Dhalla, and silently copied by Eduljee, can be regarded in reality as the stratagems employed by the aggressive Christians in Armenia and elsewhere against the Zoroastrian community. And, adding insult to injury, Elisaeus, Dhalla and Eduljee throw the millstones of these stratagems round the neck of the Zoroastrian, community of Sasanian times !

## TOLERANCE TO JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

Immediately after this story of so-called Zoroastrian propaganda in Armenia, Dhalla writes a paragraph under the title: **JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

**PENETRATE INTO PERSIA AS THE FORMIDABLE, RIVALS OF THE NATIONAL FAITH.** In this paragraph, Dhalla writes (*History of Zoroastrianism*, p. 326) :

"When the Zoroastrian Church was thus engaged in promulgating the faith of Zoroaster outside Persia, her religious supremacy was challenged at home by Judaism and more aggressively by Christianity."

Further Dhalla writes (pp. 326, 327) :

(1) (Regarding Judaism and Christianity) :

"A fairly tolerable latitude was conceded to these adherents of the alien faiths. . . ."

(2) (Regarding Jews) :

"They thrived peacefully and were given privileges to manage their own civic affairs without molestation from the state."

The Jews and, the Christians were living in Iran since pre-Sasanian times, and, as Dhalla notes, they were living peacefully and following their respective religions without molestation. Further, Zoroastrianism was challenged by them in Iran.

In such circumstances how and why should the Zoroastrian kings and priests of Sasanian times go to, or send orders to, Armenia and to other countries "outside Persia", to molest, to persecute, and to convert the Christians living there? They could have easily molested, persecuted, and converted the aggressive and challenging Jews and the Christians, their "formidable rivals", living in Iran under their rule. *But they did not* ! This speaks volumes against the proponents of the policy of conversion in Sasanian Iran, and in favour of those who deny the same.

#### ALLEGED PROCLAMATION OF MEHERNARSIH

Then Dhalla refers to Mehernarsih's alleged "proclamation to the Christian population of Armenia". Eliseus claims to have a copy of this "proclamation", and he gives it along with a lengthy reply thereto by the Christian Bishops (*History of Vartan*, pp. 11-21). In this so-called "proclamation", the absurd idea of Zarvan is ascribed to Mehernarsih. Such an idea was unknown in Sasanian Iran, and was never current among the Zoroastrians, as already pointed out by West and also by Henning as noted above. Hence the story of the so-called "proclamation" can be proved at best spurious.

Since Eliseus is the mainstay of Dhalla's exposition of Sasanian religious policy in Armenia, and since Dhalla is copied blindly and silently by Eduljee, it is necessary to meet Eliseus proper, and to examine the statements made by him in some details.

## VI. ELISAEUS THE BISHOP IN ARMENIA

### HOW EDULJEE INTRODUCES ELISAEUS

It is interesting to notice the manner in which Eduljee introduces Eliseus to his readers, and to compare the same with that of Dhalla, whom he copies. Dhalla writes (*History of Zoroastrianism*, p. 325) :

"Eliseus Bishop of the Amadunians in the fifth century A. D., in his historical work states. . . . ."

Here Dhalla rightly introduces Eliseus as "bishop". Eduljee (p. 9) introduces him as "the historian of Armenia" ! This is simply because Dhalla refers to "his historical work" ! But Eduljee significantly suppresses the fact, noted by Dhalla, that Eliseus was a "bishop" !

As Neumann notes in *History of Vartan*, Preface, pp. xiv-xv, Eliseus was the secretary to Vartan Mamigonian, the Commander-in-Chief of the Christian army fighting against the Zoroastrians in Armenia. In the *History of Vartan*, Eliseus describes the exploits of Commander Vartan in Armenia. Eliseus became the Bishop of the canton Arakadsoden in the province of Ararat, and he was a member of the Synod of Artashad in 450. Regarding Eliseus' other works, Neumann writes (preface p. xv) :

"Besides his historical work now before us, Eliseus wrote exegetical illustrations of Joshua, of the book of Judges, of the fourth book of Kings and of the Lord's Prayer, together with numerous sermons."

Further, Frederic Mader mentions Eliseus as one of the Saints of the Armenian Church; and he writes (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 1, p. 807):

"In the province of Oudi many names recall their Armenian origin; at Gis is found a much venerated sanctuary of St. Eliseus. The Musalmans as well as the Christians make pilgrimages to it, light candles, and address very fervent prayers to the saint; and in several villages in the neighbourhood of his sanctuary the Musalman Armenian swear by Eliseus."

This shows that Eliseus cannot be described as 'a historian'. He wrote *History of Vartan*, describing the exploits of his master. Besides this, he wrote no article or book on history. His works mainly were on Christian Religion. Pri-

marily he was "a Bishop, a Saint". It is, therefore, not proper to describe him as "the historian", as done by Eduljee, particularly when Eduljee suppresses the fact that he was a bishop, as noted by Dhalla, the unnamed source of Eduljee.

#### VARTAN THE MAMIGONIAN

#### "THE MOVING SPIRIT IN INSURRECTION" AGAINST THE ZOROASTRIANS IN ARMENIA

It is necessary to introduce Vartan the Mamigonian, whose exploits in Armenia Eliseus describes in *The History of Vartan*. As noted above, he was the Commander-in-Chief of the Christian army fighting against the Zoroastrians in Armenia in the first half of the 5th century. According to Frederic Macler, he was "the moving spirit in a general insurrection and in the struggle of Armenian Christianity against the Zoroastrian religion" (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 1, p. 805).

Vartan has been mentioned as "Saint of Armenia", and Macler notes (p. 805):

"St. Vartan is the national saint and patriot *par excellence*."

Vartan was killed in battle in 451.

#### THE HISTORY OF VARTAN: A HOSTILE WITNESS

Now coming to Eliseus proper:

*The History of Vartan, and of the Battle of the Armenians: containing an Account of the Religious Wars between the Persians and Armenians*, by Eliseus, Bishop of the Arnadunians,<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Armenian by C. F. Neumann, London 1830.

Eliseus wrote in the later half of the 5th century. He was a Christian Bishop in Armenia; and Vartan, whose history he writes, was a *Sparabed* (or "the commander") of the Christian army fighting against the Zoroastrians in Armenia.

If one reads Eliseus' *History of Vartan*, one is convinced that the account of Zoroastrianism given by Eliseus is partial, unreliable, and even hostile to the Zoroastrians. In this book, Eliseus and other Christians quoted by him describe Zoroastrianism as "heathenism", "idol-worship", "sun-worship", "ungodly belief" (pp. 6, 22, 23, 25, 35, 39). They talk of Zoroastrian "gods" (pp. 9, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 54), and Christian "God" (pp. 14, 15, 16, 34, 36, 39, 41). Zoroastrians are stated to be holding the religious views (pp. 8, 16, 17, 26, 27) which they never held. To command authenticity, such absurd views are embedded in the alleged "proclamation" ascribed to Mehemarsih, the Grand Vazier of Sasanian Emperor

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1. So printed for "Amadunians".

Yazdgard II, 438-457 (pp. 11-12). The so-called copies, given by Elisiaeus of lengthy "declarations, proclamations, decrees, speeches" by various persons, both Zoroastrians and Christians (pp. 4, 6-7, 9, 11-13, 14-20, 42-43, 54) are at best spurious. Elisiaeus emphasizes utter wickedness of the heathen Zoroastrians (pp. 3, 10, 10-11, 21, 22, 23, 53), and he speaks of spiritual help received by the pious Christians, and of spiritual strength of his holy flock (pp. 8, 22, 25, 35, 52). The Iranian kings and priests are heathen, Godless Zoroastrians, while Iranian people generally were Zoroastrians only for the outward show, and they were Christians or pro-Christians at heart (pp. 20, 24, 26, 42).

Sasanian Emperor Yazdgard II and the Zoroastrians were "wicked tyrant", "accomplices of Satan", "cruel wicked", "evil spirit", "wicked devil", "apostate", "adherents of unbelief", "poisonous serpent" (pp. 3, 6, 8, 21, 23, 25, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 53, 57), but the Roman Emperor Theodosius was "the Excellent" (pp. 4, 36). Iranian Prime Minister Mehernarsih and the Zoroastrian priests were "caluminous High Priest", "old poisonous serpent", "evil-working", "agent in all evil deeds", "the unbeliever", "the apostate priests" (pp. 21, 39, 44, 45: 46), but the Christian priests were "holy priests", "holy Bishops", "venerable priests" "the excellent priests", "distinguished priest", "virtuous priests" (pp. 14, 33, 35, 53, 63, 66)!

Indeed, no ghost is to be called to say that "strange stories concerning the Sassanides" have been related (as noted by Neumann), and that the account of Zoroastrianism given by Elisiaeus is partial and unreliable (as noted by West), and it is, therefore, "almost worthless" (as noted by Rawlinson), and that Elisiaeus is one of the "undeniably hostile witnesses" (as noted by Henning).

This is Elisiaeus, quoted approvingly by Dhalla for his **Zoroastrian Propaganda**, and Dhalla is silently and approvingly copied by Eduljee in order to paint "*the total picture*" !

#### MUTILATIONS AND INTERPOLATIONS

Neumann (Preface, pp. xv-xvi) notes that Elisiaeus had divided his *History of Vartan* in seven chapters, but in all manuscripts the fifth chapter is missing; and the editor of the earliest edition, therefore, divided the sixth chapter into two parts to count seven chapters. Besides this, Neumann noticed mutilations also in other parts of the manuscript. Neumann writes (p. xvi) :

"The manuscript of Elisiaeus appears in other parts to have been mutilated designedly, and to these mutilations attention is directed in the notes to the present translation. The diligent Chamchean has also given some indications of a similar kind (II. 464). If a chapter had been really

destroyed by the copyist of the Doctor's manuscript, we may be confident that it had some reference to the Christian Church and its doctrines."

Neumann notes also interpolations in later times: p. 22 note 37 (p. 92), and p. 36 notes 14 (p. 98), Further, Neumann omits "several spiritual reflections" and other matters given by Elisaeus (pp. 4, 8, 28, 34, 44, 52. 53).

These mutilations and interpolations are not accidental; they are intentional and made "*designedly*" with a purpose!

#### ZOROASTRIAN RECORD DESTROYED

In the Preface to *History of Vartan*, Neumann notes that the Zoroastrian records of Armenia were destroyed, except what was required to suit the purpose. Neumann writes (p. vii) :

"Well might the Christian priests, Moses and his friends, feel but little satisfaction at the accounts furnished by the servants of Armisd, or Aramasd, as the God of the Armenians was called. Well might they, like Esrik, endeavour to cast the creeds and superstitions of their heathenish ancestors into oblivion, and only relate so much of them, as was deemed indispensable for their refutation. The whole of the literature of the sons of Haik, which had grown out of the religion of the Parsi, and was intimately connected with the particular customs and peculiar superstitions of the Armenian people, was annihilated : only what they thought themselves able to disprove was transmitted to posterity, by the followers of the new doctrine, and all other written monuments, relative to Paganism, were given to the flames. The existing cultivation and literature of Armenia is, consequently, entirely Christian, and but very rarely the faded lustre of a former civilization is seen, gleaming from ages long since past away."

[Note: (1) In this writing, most probably 'Esrik' is wrong for 'Esnik', the Bishop of Pankrevant in the 5th century.

(2) 'Haik' is the ancient name of Armenia - see Neumann's note page 73. The terms 'heathenism' and 'Paganism' are used in their Christian sense.

(3) "Armisd, Aramazd" in this quotation is "Hormazd".]

#### WHO IS PROSELYTIZING? AND WHOM? WHERE IS PERSECUTION?

According to Elisaeus, eighteen Bishops of Armenia replied Mehernarsih.

In their reply they state, addressing Mehernarsih (p. 14) :

"As regards the epistle sent by thee into our country, we call to mind that in former times one of the Mogbeds, who was very learned

in your doctrine, and whom you held to be something more than man, did believe in the God of life, the creator of heaven and earth, and that he disproved and annihilated every position of your doctrine. It being found that nothing could be done against him by reasoning, he was stoned by King Vormist. Shouldst thou be now really wishful to know our principles, his books are to be found in all parts of your country : read and learn from them."

Here "King Vormist" is Sasanian Emperor Hormazd II (303.310): and "stoned" may mean "deposed". Mark the word "Mogbed" - the Armenian form of Pahlavi *magavpat*, *magopat*, *mogpat*, later *mobed*.

The words of the eighteen Armenian Bishops, quoted above, clearly show :

- (1) that a very learned and leading Mobed was converted to Christianity.
- (2) that he was "stoned", but he was free.
- (3) that he was free to write books in favour of Christianity.
- (4) that he was free to write books against Zoroastrian Religion.
- (5) that his pro-Christian and anti-Zoroastrian books were *found in all parts of Iran!*

Then, who is proselytizing? And whom? Where is persecution? The writing of eighteen Bishops of Armenia shows that complete freedom, including that of conversion and propaganda, was accorded to the Christians in Iran as well as in Armenia.

Later, in the sixth century the Christians were forbidden to make converts (see below).

#### "NOT GIVEN TO A PARTICULAR RACE"

Elisaeus (pp. 21-22) writes that the Bishop Joseph and the Christians of Armenia, "the believers in Christ", went to Iran to plead their case "before the mighty monarch on the great festival day of Easter 450". In this pleading they propounded their philosophy of religion; and Elisaeus writes that while pleading their case, "all the noble princes raised their voices simultaneously and declared" (p. 23) :

"Religion is no glorification of kings, no art of the speakers, no discovery of the wise : it is neither the spoil of valiant armies, nor the deceit of evil spirits. Yonder sun, and whichever you may name among

the hosts of heaven, the great as also the small, none of these has ever founded a church; but it is a blessing from the great God, not given to a particular race, but to all rational beings who dwell beneath the sun : its foundation is established on a steadfast stone, which neither those above nor those below can overturn, and that which neither heaven nor earth can cast down, will never be shaken by man."

This long quotation is given here in order to construe some vitally important words in proper perspective. Mark the very significant words "*.....not given to a particular race. . . .*" in this context. Taking into consideration the general trend of the pleading, the proselytizing zeal of the Christians, and the fact that the words were addressed to a Zoroastrian monarch, one can state that these words "*. . . . not given to a particular race. . . .*" must be the Christian counter-argument against a non-proselytizing people; and this must be a clear reference to the Zoroastrians and no other people.

This along with other evidences shows that the Zoroastrians of Sasanian times did not practise conversion of non-Zoroastrians. This further shows that the Zoroastrians of those days were fighting defensive battles for self-preservation against the aggressive Christians, and not aggressive battles to convert the Christians. The aggressive attitude of the Christians of Armenia against the Zoroastrians can be proved conclusively by the statements made by Eliseus.

#### FIRE-TEMPLES DESTROYED

Eliseus informs us that the Christians of Armenia armed themselves and imprisoned the Margrave (p. 33). Regarding them he writes (p. 34) :

"Now they fell upon the strong-holds and places which the Persians had everywhere in the land, and drove out and destroyed those who dwelt therein. At first they took the great Ardashad with its boroughs : then they approached the almost inaccessible fortresses as the city Karni, Ani Ardakers, and its boroughs. . . . ."

The Cities and places are here mentioned by names at the end of the paragraph.

Further, regarding these and other places mentioned by name at the end of the paragraph just quoted Eliseus writes (pp. 34-35) :

"All these places and provinces, together with their troops and officers they took in one year (450). They destroyed the places, and carried away the men and women, together with their property and possessions, treasures and riches, into captivity. They pulled down and laid waste

their dwellings, and burned the houses of idolatry, - the houses for the worship of fire. They removed the horrors of false worship, and taking the utensils away from the fire-temples, they placed them in the holy churches, where they were consecrated by the priests to be ornaments to the altar of the Lord. Instead of idolatry which had been performed in all the heathenish places, they now set up the cross of Christ the Redeemer; they purified all the holy altars, established holy and life giving principles, and appointed priests and curates and all in the land gave themselves up to steadfast hope."

Further, Elisaesus informs us that the people of Armenia rose in rebellion in the province of Aderbadakan (Atarpatakan, Azarbaizan in Iran proper), "spread devastation all around, and overturned the fire-temples and reduced them to ruins"; and he further writes (p. 35) :

"Those who were present at the great fortress made the sign of cross, and rushed upon the troops, and the two walls of the castle, which were so situated as to be scarcely approachable, fell of themselves. This great miracle filled all the inhabitants of the land with terror; they destroyed the fire-temples with their own hands, abandoned the laws of the Magi; and turned to the holy gospel."

It is, indeed, strange that Dhalla quotes this very page 35 of Elisaesus, still these words were not noticed by him.

Further, Elisaesus writes (p. 39) :

"Now the Armenians with no less valour fell upon the towns and cities which the Persians possessed in the land of the Albanians – they attacked them boldly and liberated the strong places from oppression. They put to the sword all the evil-working Magi whom they found in the strong places, and gave their flesh to the birds of heaven and to the wild beasts of the earth. They purified all those places from the iniquitous burnt-offerings, and freed the churches from the grievous ill of Heathenism. "

**"WE HAVE MASSACRED THE MAGI WITHOUT MERCY"**

Regarding the "insurrection" in the Iranian part of Armenia, the Sparabed (Vartan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Christian army), addressing the Christian Armenian princes and their followers, says (p. 52) :

"In two and three battles the Lord himself hath stood by us with great power; so that we have earned for ourselves the surname of the

brave, that we have sent the King's troops home in disgrace, that we have massacred the Magi without mercy, and on every side extinguished the absurdity of fire-worship."

The Armenian *Sparabed* or *Sbarabed* was used for "the generalissimo" of the army (Neumann, p. 75). The Sparabed Vartan boasts of merciless massacre of the Magi, the Zoroastrian priests, and of extinguishing the fire-worship in Armenia.

#### THE BISHOP "PERSECUTED THE MAGI IN EVERY POSSIBLE MANNER"

According to Elisiaeus, Sasanian Emperor Yazdgard II appointed Adromissd (Atar-Ohrmazd) as the Margrave of Armenia. The Margrave called "the holy Bishop of the Rhesdunians, Sahag, before him" for investigation. Regarding Bishop Sahag and others, Elisiaeus writes (p. 63) :

"Although this Bishop had destroyed a pyreum, and caused much suffering to the fire-worshippers, still he had no fear in appearing before the public tribunal. Nor did the virtuous priest of the house of Ardsrunians, named Mushe, who was the first in the province of the Ardsrunians, and who had also destroyed a pyreum, and had persecuted the Magi in every possible manner, feel the slightest fear in appearing before the Margrave. And two other venerable priests, named Samuel and Abrahm, who had overthrown the pyreum in Ardashad, and had been formerly thrown into prison by the apostate Vasag, were on the present occasion led forth with their friends, Joseph the Great, Leont, Kadjaj, and Arshen, also assembled at the same place."

The word *pyreum* used here is of Greek origin, and it stands for 'fire-temple'. Elisiaeus here boasts of the Christian Bishops destroying fire-temples, harassing the Zoroastrians, and also persecuting the Magi *in every possible manner*.

Who is persecuting? And whom? Who is destroying? And what?

This is the total picture! Eduljee's "total picture" is painted with anti-Zoroastrian colours, and hence it is "black" but it is so only in his eyes !

## VII. EDULJEE ON "DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS"

"TREATY SIGNED AND MADE" IS NO TREATY AT ALL!

(Now Eduljee takes up "diplomatic documents". In connection therewith he uses the words (p. 9) :

- (1) "Diplomatic documents signed by Persian Kings. . . . "
- (2) "The treaty reads. . . . ."
- (3) "Convention attached to the Peace Treaty. . . . ."
- (4) ". . . .governed the status of Christians in Persia."

The language used by Eduljee gives an impression that he has in his possession, these "diplomatic documents" and "treaties", he has identified the signatures, and read these "treaties" in original or at least in translation! The fact is : what Eduljee writes in the pompous name of "diplomatic documents" has been copied by him without acknowledgement as usual from **Formal Peace-Negotiations and Peace- Treaties between pre-Muhammadan Persia and other States**, by Louis H. Gray, published in *Dr. J. J. Modi Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1930; pp. 136-153.

"Eduljee writes (p. 9) :

"Diplomatic documents signed by Persian Kings are likely to give a true picture of the times. Valagash (or Balash) who reigned from 484 to 488 A. D. made a treaty with Vahan, the Manikoman of Armenia."

Here Eduljee uses the word "signed" and "made"; and he thereby expressly states that the so-called treaty with Vahan "the Manikoman (!) of Armenia" was "signed" and "made" by the Sasanian King. Now Gray, whom Eduljee copies, writes (p. 146) :

"Peroz's successor, Valagash (484-488), sent Nikor Vashnaspat as an envoy to Vahan the Mamikonian of Armenia, who offered to make peace on the three following terms : . . . . ."

Mark the word "*offered*" in this context. This clearly shows that what Eduljee passes off as a *treaty, signed and made*, was merely the terms *offered* by Vahan. Gray does not say that it was a 'treaty' and it was "made" or "signed", as Eduljee expressly states! Further, see below for more decisive words in this matter.

Vahan was the Margrave of Armenia in the 5th century. He belonged to the Christian family of the Mamikonians or Mamigonians (and not "Manikoman" as Eduljee writes). As noted above, Vartan, the Commander of the Christian army and the Armenian saint, also belonged to the same family. Vahan's Margravate lasted upto 485.

## EDULJEE COMPARED WITH HIS UNNAMED SOURCE (2)

Proceeding further, Eduljee writes (bold types, brackets, omissions by Eduljee - p. 9) :

"The treaty reads, in part, as follows. . . . ." to make no Armenian a Magian (i.e. to **convert** none to Zoroastrianism). . . . ."

One must remember that what Eduljee writes here in the name of "the treaty" is no treaty at all; it is only a statement of terms offered by Vahan. Further, the words enclosed in the brackets do not belong to the original statement of Vahan. They are added in square brackets and printed in ordinary types by Gray. Eduljee has printed the word 'convert' in bold types for emphasis. Here Eduljee emphasizes the word which does not exist in the original statement of Vahan.

Vahan offers three terms, and he characterizes the first term as "most essential, and most important of these three" (Gray, p. 146). In this first term there are six conditions. Two of these six conditions (1st and 3rd) are omitted by Eduljee, and the 5th is not fully quoted by him. It is, therefore, necessary to quote below these six conditions (as given by Gray, p. 146), with suitable remarks on each of them by the present writer enclosed in square brackets:

(1) "to guarantee us the laws of our country and our fathers".

[This is omitted by Eduljee. The Christian Margrave wants legal freedom to treat the non-Christian population of Armenia according to the Christian law.]

(2) "to make no Armenian a Magian".

[Mark the word "Armenian" in this context. The word is *not* "Christian". This is very significant. This simply means that the Zoroastrians of Armenia must not bring up their children as Zoroastrians. This does not mean "to convert" as Gray understands, and Eduljee emphasizes, silently copying him.]

(3) "to accord no one duties and honours because he exercises the functions of a Magian".

[This is omitted by Eduljee. This is meant to wipe out Zoroastrians from the state affairs of Armenia.]

(4) "to remove the fire-temples from Armenia".

[This is to wipe out Zoroastrian Religion from Armenia.]

(5) "no longer to cause the Church to suffer outrages as has hitherto been the case because of infamous and despicable men".

[The last six words are omitted by Eduljee. The churches might have been damaged in battles. Most probably the "infamous and despicable men" referred to by Vahan might be the Zoroastrians of Armenia defending their ancestral religion. These words are omitted by Eduljee. It appears Eduljee fights shy of quoting the offensive words used by the Christians for their opponents.]

(6) "to permit Christians, (both laity) and clergy, to practice freely and fearlessly the rites and laws of the Christian religion where and as they will....."

[The brackets and omission indicated by Gray. Eduljee removes the brackets used by Gray, and changes the last word "will" to "like".

This last condition of Vahan demands freedom to put aggressive policy of conversion into practice, and to make converts in full force. It must be remembered that in the Sasanian Empire the Christians were accorded full religious freedom, but in later times they were not allowed to practise conversion. This is the express condition (omitted by Eduljee) laid down in the convention to a treaty between Sasanian and Roman Emperors, as noted below. For this reason, in the said first and sixth conditions offered, Vahan demands freedom to practise conversion.]

As stated above, the 1st and 3rd conditions are omitted by Eduljee, without any indication as to the omissions except the vague, ambiguous and misleading words: "The treaty reads in part . . . .". Eduljee writes in such a way that the 4th and the 5th conditions, quoted above from Gray, change places in the article of Eduljee.

Further, in connection with this statement of terms offered by Vahan, Eduljee omits very significant words. In the same statement, Vahan Mamigonian writes to the Sasanian Emperor (Gray, p. 147) :

"If you grant us these conditions and place these promises in our hands confirming them by the Royal seal and signature, summon us, and we shall come, we shall submit, and obey the King's command, and carry out all that he shall command."

These words decisively smash the claim expressly put forward by Eduljee that this was "the treaty" and it was "signed" and it was "made" by the Sasanian Emperor! Significantly enough, these decisive words are entirely ignored by Eduljee. These words prove beyond any shadow of doubt that what Eduljee wants to pass off as "the treaty", "signed" and "made", is in reality a statement offering terms and conditions made by Vahan the Mamigonian, the Christian Margrave of Armenia.

Further, as noted above, this first term, which is regarded by Vahan as "most essential and most important" is evidently meant for wiping out Zoroastrian Religion from Armenia and for demanding freedom to convert Zoroastrians of Armenia to Christianity.

MOST IMPORTANT FACTS ARE SUPPRESSED

EDULJEE COMPARED WITH HIS UNNAMED SOURCE (3)

Eduljee writes (brackets, omissions by Eduljee - p. 9) :

"Convention attached to the Peace Treaty between Khusraw Anushirwan and the Roman Emperor Justinian, signed in 533, governed the status of Christians in Persia. It reads in part : '(The Christians) may build churches, practice their religion and sing hymns..... inter their dead; they may not be constrained to attend Zoroastrian religious rites or to worship Zoroastrian deities against their will . . . . .! "

This is silently copied by Eduljee once again from Gray; but Eduljee has made unwarranted alterations in the text of Gray. He has changed some words and omitted some other important words! It is, therefore, necessary to quote Gray, and to examine the changes made and the words omitted by Eduljee.

Eduljee is here once again compared with his unnamed source, namely Gray (italics and capital types by the present writer):

GRAY (p. 151)

EDULJEE (page 9)

(Italics indicate the words changed by Eduljee, and capital types indicate the words omitted by Eduljee.)

(Brackets and omissions are indicated by Eduljee.)

*"they might* build churches, *prac-*  
*tise* their religion and sing hymns OF  
THANKSGIVING FREELY, AND inter their  
dead; they *could* not be constrained to

"(The Christians) may build churches,  
practice their religion and sing hymns  
. . . . ., inter their dead; they may  
not be constrained to attend Zoroas-

attend Zoroastrian religious rites or to  
worship Zoroastrian deities against  
their will; BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND,  
THEY WERE FORBIDDEN TO MAKE  
CONVERTS FROM ZOROASTRIANISM TO  
CHRISTIANITY. "

trian religious rites or to worship  
Zoroastrian deities against their will  
.... "

Gray's 'might' is changed by Eduljee to 'may', and 'could' also to 'may'; and the last most significant and vitally important words in the present controversy are omitted. The alterations and omissions are intentional and deliberate, and made with a design to misrepresent and to suppress the facts, and to paint the Sasanian Zoroastrians in black colour!

Further, mark Eduljee's words: "*It reads in part*". Once again Eduljee uses these ambiguous, vague, and misleading words in order to suppress a very important historical fact that the Christians were not allowed to practise conversion in Sasanian Empire!

In connection with "churches" in the words quoted above, Gray gives an important foot-note, which is very significantly omitted by Eduljee. It is quoted below (see p. 57) with suitable remarks.

One must not forget that according to Gray these are the terms of treaty contracted by the Sasanian Emperor Anosharwan and the Roman Emperor Justinian; and, as noted by Gray and copied by Eduljee, they governed the status of the Christians in the Sasanian Empire. In these terms it is expressly laid down that the Christians "*were forbidden to make converts*"; but, more important, *there is no counter-condition forbidding Zoroastrians to make converts* ! If the Zoroastrians were converting the Christians, this counter-condition would have been inevitable and absolutely necessary. Perhaps Eduljee realized this necessity, and hence he very significantly omitted the words forbidding the Christians to make converts.

It is absurd to believe that the Zoroastrian priests of Sasanian times were performing religious ceremonies in the presence – and that too forced presence –of non-Zoroastrians, as Eduljee wants us to believe by changing Gray's 'could' to 'may' !

The convention, as given by Gray, expressly lays down that the Christians *could not* be constrained to attend Zoroastrian religious ceremonies, and they *could not* be constrained to worship Zoroastrian deities against their will. While reading this term one must not forget that the Christians in Iran included the Zoroastrian converts to Christianity, most probably majority of them were such

converts. It appears from this condition of the convention that if such converts wanted to worship the Zoroastrian deities, they were free to do so. But mark the words: "*to worship the Zoroastrian deities*" in this context. Here admittance to fire-temples is not mentioned. This further shows that while such converts were free to worship Zoroastrian deities as they liked, they were not allowed to enter the fire-temples.

#### HOSTILE ATTITUDE

The terms of the said convention may be summarily interpreted in the following words :

*In Sasanian Iran full religious freedom was granted to the Christians, but they were not allowed to make converts from Zoroastrianism to Christianity.*

But Eduljee paints an anti-Zoroastrian picture by his alterations and omissions. One more point may here be noted to show Eduljee's hostile attitude to the Zoroastrians of Sasanian times. Gray puts footnote No.1 for the word "churches" in the quotation given above (p. 55). The said footnote reads:

"1 At-Tabari (Noldeke, p. 228) adds that Justinian was equally bound to build fire-temples for Zoroastrians in his dominions."

This important note is also ignored and intentionally omitted by Eduljee ! Mark the words "*for Zoroastrians*" in this note. This further shows that the Zoroastrians were living in good number in Byzantine Roman Empire ('Arum' of Pahlavi); and that the Zoroastrian fire-temples in the Roman territories were meant "for Zoroastrians" living there.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

### EDULJEE DOES NOT WISH TO TAKE PART!

After all these, Eduljee writes (p. 9) :

"I do not wish to take part in the present controversy on proselytization."

No comment is necessary.

### EDULJEE IGNORES HIS OWN ADVICE AND VIOLATES HIS OWN PRINCIPLE

And finally Eduljee writes (p. 9) :

"All I wish to point out is that when protagonists of either view wish to use scriptural or historical authority to buttress their case, then they should at least get their facts right."

Perfectly reasonable and agreeable. But one may be allowed to state that Eduljee has not followed his own advice. In some cases he has ignored it, and in some cases he has deliberately violated this principle laid down by himself. Further, it should be added that the "protagonists" or the proponents of either view ought to have necessary qualifications and proper equipment for raising and entering into such controversy, and, more important, they ought to have scruples to acknowledge their sources and authorities, and to present facts properly and correctly without twist or torture; and they should be conscientious and be aware of their responsibility for what they write.

### WITH CONFIDENCE AND WITH EMPHASIS

With confidence and with emphasis can one assert, as the present writer did in his said lecture, that:

(1) *There is no word in the Avesta for 'to convert' or for 'conversion' in the sense of 'the change of religion'.*

(2) *Never in their long and chequered history have the Zoroastrians adopted a policy of 'conversion' of non-Zoroastrians.*

With confidence and with emphasis can one assert, as it is stated at the outset, that:

*In a popular controversy one has often to deal with ill-informed, ill-equipped, irresponsible, and unscrupulous writers.*

Further, leaving aside incompetence and unmethodical ways of Eduljee, with confidence and with emphasis can one assert that:

*Instead of putting the record straight, and instead of getting the facts right, as he writes in his article, Eduljee has tried deliberately and intentionally to twist, to torture, and even to murder the records and the facts.*

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### I-FIRE TEMPLES IN ARMENIA (See above pages 29-30)

There were Fire-Temples for the Zoroastrians living in ancient Armenia. One of these Fire-Temples, most probably belonging to the Parthian times, is mentioned in the Armenian writing as *Hurback*. Huebschmann derives this name from Pahlavi *Farnbagh* (*Armenisch Grammatik* I, Leipzig 1897, p. 181). Pahlavi *Farnbagh* is the name of one of the three celebrated ancient Fires of Iran.

### II-THE CHRISTIANS IN ARMENIA AND IRAN (See above pages 31-32)

In connection with this, Professor Pour-e Davoud writes (*K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Government Fellowship Lectures*, Publication No. 11, Bombay 1935, page 129) :

"The persecution of the Christians in Iran no doubt occupies considerable space in history. It was mainly on political grounds and had nothing to do with religious fanaticism. In 294 A. C, the Christian saint, Gregory Illuminator, went to Armenastan and exhorted the people to follow Christianity. From this time onward, a large number of Armenians became Christians. Tiridates, the king of Armenastan himself adopted Christianity and died in 314 A. C. The whole of Armenia was gradually christianised and this was the cause of the constant tussle between Iran and the Byzantines. The Byzantines intrigued and instigated these Armenian Christians to create mischief in Iran. They insulted the Mubads, burnt the fire temples and behaved disrespectfully towards them. The Iranians curbed with firmness these instigations made with political motives. The great German Iranist, Justi, notes that Iranians must have been angels, not to take revenge on such great ruin and disrespect. On the other hand, we know that the Nestorian Christians, who had nothing to do with the Byzantines, were liked and respected by the Iranians and were very friendly to them. We can say with certainty that this persecution were purely on political grounds and had nothing to do with the Roman church, but it was out of necessity only to save the honour of the Iranian race and religion."

NOTES: (1) The term 'Armanastan' stands for 'Armenia'.

(2) The term 'Byzantines' stands for 'the residents of the Eastern Roman Empire'.]