

OUR DASTOORJIS MEET THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINORITY COMMISSION.

“EXEMPT PARSIS FROM THE ADOPTION BILL”

K. N. Dastoor

Recently a news-item appeared in the press that on 9th February 1982 a deputation of our Dastoorjis called on the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, and the Chairman of the Minority Commission Mr. Baig, the ex-Chief Justice of India at New Delhi, to plead for the total exemption to Parsi community from the application of the Adoption Bill. Here is a detailed account of the Dastoorjis' meetings,

The deputation consisted of Dastoorji Meherjirana of Navsari, Dastoorji Dr. Hormazdiyar Mirza of Udwada, Dastoorji Dr. Firozji Kotwal of Wadiaji Atash-Beheram, Bombay, Mobed Yozdathregar Ervad Faramroz Antia, formerly the Priest (for "Boye-Ceremony") of Wadiaji Atash Behram and Ervad K. N. Dastoor.

The meetings with the Prime Minister and the Minority Commission were arranged by, and due to the good offices of, Mrs. Aloo Chibber, M.L.C., ex-M.L.A., Hon. Treasurer M.P.C.C. (I), and Member of High Power Panel on Minorities. She was also present during the meetings.

The idea of sending the deputation of Dastoorjis was mooted by the Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee. They formed a special Committee consisting of Mr. Cawasji Nusserwanji Dinshah (Adenwalla) Mr. Bomanshah H. Minocherhomji, Mr. Jal H. A. Vakil. & Mr. Behram K. Mistry. The Dastoorjis' meetings were sponsored and organised by the Special Committee, with the active support of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat and other Doners.

Dastoorji Dr. Hormazdiyar Mirza was the Chief Spokesman before the Prime Minister. She gave a very patient and sympathetic hearing. She appreciated the anxiety of Dastoorjis for the survival of the Community, particularly because, as she said-the Community was very small. When she said that the Community seemed to be divided on the issue relating to the adoption Bill, the Dastoorjis pointed out that such division arose out of a small minority who had vested interests. It was urged by the Dastoorjis to the effect that Parsis had never demanded any special political rights; they are vitally concerned with their survival. The Prime Minister assured the Dastoorjis that the Government would look into the problems. A written represen-

tation signed by Seven Dastoorjis was handed over to the Prime Minister. The Signatories to the representation are Dastoorji Meherjirana of Navsari, Dastoorji Hormazdiyar Mirza of Udwada, Dastoorji Dr. Firozji Kotwal of Bombay, Dastoorji Kaikhushru Jamaspasha of Bombay, Dastoorji Noshervanji Dastoor of Surat, and Dastoorji Hormazdiyar Dastoor of Poona. The Deputation informed the Prime Minister that the Dastoorjis would meet the Chairman of the Minority Commission and present the case of the Community in detail before him. To this the Prime Minister assented.

The Dastoorjis then called on the Minority Commission, and presented the case in details. A written statement was handed over to the Commission. The text of this statement is being published in this magazine and starts from the present issue. The Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee is publishing a booklet setting out the issues why the Priests and a large part of the community pray for total exemption from the Adoption Bill. Therefore, here I mention only a few highlights of, and main indications flowing from, the discussions with the Chairman of the Commission.

The Latest Amendment

It appeared that the various amendments to the Bill suggested from several quarters were modified by the Commission and a final proviso was drafted out. The text of this proviso reads as under.

“Provided that nothing in this sub-section will be deemed automatically and by its own force to confer upon the adopted child any religious rights or obligations or affect the validity or invalidity or change the meaning, expressed or implied, of any religious or charitable settlements, Trusts or endowments or affect the operation of any rule of personal law which imposes or removes any bar on matrimonial alliances, but, between adopting parents and those related to the adopted child, subject to reservations mentioned herein, the rights, and duties of adopting parents and children will become those as exist between parents and their children born in lawful wed-lock according to the personal laws of parents”.

This proviso was arrived at keeping the materials and views furnished to the Commission by Muslims and Parsis. So far as the Parsi Community is concerned the proviso attempts to lay down to the effect that the adopted child will get all the social rights of the adoptive father but not his religious rights. The Dastoorjis, however, pointed out that in Parsi life there is no separation between the social rights and religious rights and that the two were inextricably interwoven; so much so that the adopted non-Parsi child would become a misfit in the family and would be subjected to hardships and heart-burning; such child would not be able to enter the Fire temples; would not get the benefits of Parsi Trusts and worse would not be

able to perform the death ceremonies of his adoptive father, which is the only aim of "Palak" custom. It was also pointed out that the Zoroastrian Religion is against conversion. After hearing these arguments, the Chairman was inclined to reconsider whether such amendments would at all be good.

Total Exemption, Constitutionally Invalid ?

On the total exemption, the Chairman posed a question whether the total exemption to Parsis and even Muslims would be liable to be struck down as violative of Articles 13 and 15 of the Constitution of India, which seems to bar any

CIGAR-SMOKE FOR DASTOORJIS

This happened at the Delhi Parsi Dharamshala on 10th February 1982, a day after the Dastoorjis met the Prime Minister and Minority Commission.

Having come to know about the meetings of Dastoorjis, Mr. Nargolwala of Delhi, the modern champion of conversion and genetic mix-up, came to see the four Dastoorjis and gave vent to his intrigues. During the talk which went on for more than an hour, he rewarded the Dastoorjis with a heavy cloud of smoke from a big cigar-pipe in his mouth. The smoke and the smell were in nauseatory contrast to the incense of Sukhad-loban-agar to which the Dastoorjis are accustomed.

And yet they were too noble to raise an objection and Mr. Nargolwala did not stop smoking in their presence.

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legislation which discriminates on the ground of religion. We pointed out that Articles 13 and 15 were to be read with Articles 25 and 26 which confer religious freedom on a Community.

The Chairman then gave a loud thought to the question whether the Bill can provide that it would not apply to those Communities whose Religions do not permit adoption. We pointed out that this would also lead each of the two Communities Muslims and Parsis to internal factions and the mother would in all probability go to Court for an answer to the question ! In each of the two Communities there would

at least be a few persons who would contend that there is no such prohibition in their Religion and try to have the question agitated in Courts.

Why the Bill, at all ?

It was pointed out to the Commission that if the Act was to result in internal disputes, quarrels and litigations within each of the two Communities, better that the whole Bill was dropped. Any social benefits intended by it would be outweighed by such breach of peace within each Community,

The impression we gathered at the end of the meetings was that the Government and the Minority Commission will certainly consider with utmost sympathy and understanding the materials placed before them by the Dastoorjis. The final Bill may have again to go to Law Ministry for considering the constitutional implications-particularly relating to the alleged discrimination. Government would also consider the high probability of breach of civil peace within the Muslim and Parsi Communities and the legal battle that might result.

What Lethargy ?

The Dastoorjis and I would like to invite the attention of the Community and its leaders to a serious state of affairs which was revealed to us during our meetings. We Parsis are opposed to any kind of conversion; during 1200 years we did not convert any alien; any attempt to do so had resulted in great uproar and opposition by the Community; for instance the alleged Navjotes in Bansda had met with the severest criticism and stiffest opposition from the Community; Dr. Dhalla's book "Zoroastrian Theology" advocating conversion was replied point to point in Ervad Phiroze Masani's "Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern", which was written under the patronage of Mr Justice Davar himself; Dr. Dhalla's evidence in Bansda case before the Bombay High Court was against effective conversion and genetic mix-up; the Parsis have opposed any genetic mix-up whether through a Parsi father or mother; Justice Davar had in his judgment taken note of this custom of the Community; the Community has passed Resolutions after Resolutions-right from 16. 4. 1905 (referred to in Davar's judgement) to the present day-opposing all conversions and all genetic mix-ups and mixed marriages. We hereby inform the Community that **all these materials were not so far placed before the Government and Minority Commission !** It was a shock to us when we were told that the best evidence so far presented before the Commission was that of Mr. S. D. Nargolwala of Delhi, who is a known champion of conversion and genetic mix-ups ! !

Vested Interests !

It appeared that the evidence and materials so far tendered and furnished to the Commission were largely from those who were directly or indirectly connected

with genetic mix-ups and Juddin marriages and had therefore, their own axe to grind ! I was just wondering how our leaders who had created much row on the Adoption Bill and thrown many parties and functions in the process, had never presented the solid and inexorable materials the Community has collected since a century. It was a regrettable failure, and we do not know how far the failure would hit our Community and Religion. It was the duty of the leaders to take the Dastoorjis before the Minority Commjssion when it was in Bombay. We saw that the Chairman of the Commission was surprised why these materials were not placed before him before 9-2-1982 ! There was the solitary voice of Dastoorji Mirza who had on 9-2-1981 -exactly one year before the meetings of 9-2-1982-written to the Prime Minister praying for total exemption. Except that, nobody was talking of exemption; everybody was talking of amendments. And, oh God ! what fuss, and what publicity-stunts, and what election gambles were involved in these amendments game !! What a show of one "monastrial" lady rushing on the stage and screaming with a screeching voice, and what triumph on the face of the Chairman on the stage !!

I can sum up the whole Adoption episode so far by saying that If we do not amend our ways, **ws** are fast on the way towards extinction. And some hlistorian may write in the Churchillian style on the first page of a book on the then almost extinct Community :-

"How the Parsi Community, through the ignorance of its own religious and cultural heritage, its lethargy and inaction, and the intrigues and trickeries of its own few, has come almost to the brink of disaster and extinction".
May God forbid

Representation of Dastoorjis to the Minority Commission on Adoption Bill

Following is the text of the written representation handed over to the Minority Commission by the deputation of Dastoorjis, on 9th February 1952, at New Delhi.

PALAK IN RELIGION :

1. In the Parsi community the only custom which comes near to the concept of Adoption is to designate a Palak son.

2. The Avesta Holy scriptures, as existent, do not contain any reference to Adoption.

3. The scriptures left with the Parsis are only about 1/20 the of the original, which were called Nasks and were 21 in number. Darmesteter writes in Sacred Books of the East Vol. IV :

"The twenty one Nasks were formed by Ahura Mazda himself out of the twenty one words of Ahuna Vairya, They were brought by Zoroaster to King Visptasp. Two copies of the complete scriptures were written by order of the king; one was deposited in the treasury at Shapigan; the other in the Record Office".

A very short summary of the contents of the said 21 Nasks is to be found in the Pahalvi called Dinkard written in.

4. the Religion of the Parsis has two sides : (i) scriptural and (ii) traditional. The traditions are not merely external rituals; they have a spiritual and mystical background and are preserved by the Parsi community since hundreds of years. A very important part of those traditions is the performance of the religious ceremonies after death.

5. Religious writings in Pahalvi and Perslan languages have references to Adoption. But that Adoption is not in the sense of a child being taken in a family with all the rights, social, religious or civil, of the adoptive father. It is not by way of conferring any right on the "adopted" son, but it is the imposition of a duty on him-the duty of getting performed the after-death ceremonies of the "adoptive" father for the progress and onward journey of his Ruvan (soul) in the next world. This is termed in the Parsi custom, as taking a "Palak" son. The elements of the Palak adoption are :

- i.) The palak must be a near relative of the person whose palak the former becomes;
- ii.) The palak must be a Parsi Zoroastrian, who alone is entitled and qualified, and has the religious sanction, to get the death ceremonies performed.
- iii.) On the palak is imposed the duty of getting the death ceremonies performed; no rights are intended to be conferred on him.
- iv.) Palak can be appointed by a childless Parsi during his life time; or if he has not done so, the near relatives appoint for him, a palak from amongst themselves, in consultation with the family Dastoor, and announce the appointment before the assembly gathered at the time of the performance of the Uthamna ceremony, on the third day after death.
- v.) The palak does not cease to be the son of his natural father.

6. This special type of "adoption" (if you call it one) is referred to in two Pahlvi works: Matikan-i-Hazar Dadastan and Dadastan-i-Dink, and the Persian work: 'Rivayat's; and is running as a custom particularly amongst the Parsi priestly class.

· PALAK ' IN LAW :

7. The concept of palak tried to enter the statute Book in 1865, In the report of the commission then appointed to draft the Bill of Intestate Succession, a suggestion was made to make a provision to the effect, "that nothing herein contained shall prevent the adoption by any Parsee of a palak in his life time nor the appointment after his death of a Dharamputra for the performance of his funeral ceremonies". This was however not incorporated. In the custom there was, and is, no distinction between palaks appointed before and after death, and it was not necessary to bring on the Statute a matter, which was manifestly religious and was not to affect any civil rights. The fact, that the provision was not incorporated and no provision validating civil adoption was incorporated, signifies that the civil adoption was not a custom amongst the Parsees and the Government had accepted this position.

8. The palak concept has been referred to in two judicial decisions. In *Jehangir Vs. Kaikhusru* (1915) 39 I L R Bombay 296, the will of a testator directed that if P. one of the sons, did not get a son, the testator's other son J should give away his son as P's palak. The Privy Council decided on the construction of the will and not on the general question of the rights, if any, of a palak. Lord Shaw however did refer to "the peculiar point as to the office of a palak to a Parsi becoming effectual only three days after the adoptive father's death". This reference points out to one of the elements of palak-adoption, set out in paragraph 5 above.

(To be continued)

Representation of Dastoorjis to the Minority Commission on Adoption Bill

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9. In Kersaji Vs. Kaikhusru 31 Bom. L. R. 1081 it was held by the Bombay High Court that the alleged custom, if any, of adoption (in the civil sense), would not prevail in British India in view of the statutory provisions governing Parsee succession, which did not recognise such adoption. The only adoption the framers of the Succession Act could come across was palak and the idea of incorporating even that religious kind of adoption in the statute was first entertained and then dropped - paragraph 7 above).

10. The conclusion emanating from the aforesaid paragraphs is that civil adoption is not recognised in the Parsee law and custom.

DASTOORJIS' REASONS FOR PRAYING FOR TOTAL EXEMPTION FROM THE ADOPTION BILL

11. The Priests - Dastooris and Mobeds - of the Parsee community and a large majority of its members are opposed to the application of Adoption Bill to the community and pray for total exclusion for reasons hereinafter appearing.

12. For a Parsee, the social life is not different from the religious life. The two are interwoven into one inextricable pattern. Social duties and obligations are, for a Parsee, religious duties and obligations, flowing from the commands of the Prophet Zarathushtra. For instance, marriage is a religious sacrament, not a mere legal contract. It is a 'tarikati', a path towards spiritual perfection. Every Parsee is required to wear, by religious command, the white garment and girdle, called Sudreh & Kushti, throughout his life, wherever he is and whatever he does. This Sudreh & Kushti is not a mere symbol but a spiritual 'Alaat', an instrument of yoga and advancement. Every Parsee is required by religious command to get the ceremonies of his deceased relatives performed. This not only helps the soul of the deceased to advance in his journey in the next world but also helps the living relatives spiritually.

13. A Parsee is socially and religiously commanded to lead an active and truthful married life in the service of his or her family, community, society, country and humanity. The religious tenets and commands are the prescriptions which liberate in him or her the spiritual energy and strength to discharge these duties.

14. Because of this interwoven social and religious structure, there cannot be a Parsee who is not a Zoroastrian and there cannot be a Zoroastrian who is not a

Parsee. Parsee means Parsee Zoroastrian. There cannot be a person who is not a Parsee by race but is a Zoroastrian by religion. The two are one. And that position flows from the Holy Scriptures, the tradition and the custom. Therefore, there cannot be a convert Zoroastrian; and no conversion is ordained or allowed or enjoined in the Zoroastrian religion.

SCRIPTURES AGAINST CONVERSION :

15. There is scriptural evidence from the Gathas in support of the truth that Zoroastrian Religion does not and cannot preach conversion. This can be very briefly set out as under :

- i) In the Holy Scriptures throughout, Zarathushtra's emphasis is on the RESISTANCE AGAINST EVIL within and without man. 'Daenao' - different Religions are different ways of life and the weapons to resist EVIL. (Gatha Ha 46-6; 31-1, 31-18; Jamyad Yashta 84).
- ii) Ahura has a Divine Plan to send different Religions ('Daenao') for different groups of humanity. (Gatha Ha 31-11; 46-6; Yasna Ha 19).
- iii) Every human has to resist evil by following the path prescribed by the Religion of his birth (Gatha Ha 46-6; 30-10; 33-13; 31-11).
- iv) Every human can attain salvation if he arrives at the central point of the Religion of his birth (Gatha Ha 34-13).

16. The whole idea of conversion is contrary to and inconsistent with aforesaid Truths.

17. When Ahura himself has ordained different religions, each should follow the religion of his birth. Any conversion from one to another is against the Divine Plan and therefore, a sin. Not only the prescriptions and yogas of different religions are different but also their devotions (Daenao; Vasao; Shyothnao-in Ha 31-11). Each human has a certain wave-length of devotion towards his own Prophet and Religion; and that wave-length is embedded in his gene. This wave-length should not be disturbed either by conversion or a marriage mix-up. That is why Parsis are anxious to preserve their racial gene, which has the religious germ of Zarathushtra embedded in it.

TRADITIONAL EVIDENCE FOR THE CONCEPT OF RACIAL PURITY :

18. The Zoroastrian Religion lays stress on its spiritual institutions and 'tarikats'. The sacred Fire in a fire temple is specially made and consecrated after a long drawn procedure; so also the Dokhma - the sacred Tower for the dead Parsis. These are regarded as the places of greatest sanctity. No non-Parsi is allowed to enter them. This does not arise out of any disrespect for a non-Parsi, but is based on a spiritual truth that because of different wave-lengths in a non-Parsi a disturbance is caused in the atmosphere. In the most modern times when ESP is an established fact, when psychotronic generators are at work, when the individual constitution

o the experimenter is found to enter into and affect his experiment, the fact of the wave disturbance by a non-Parsi cannot be ruled out. (See, for Instance, 'Psychic Discoveries behind the Iron Curtain' by Sheila Ostrander and L. Schroeder; "Supernature" by Dr. Lyall Watson).

19. Only a Parsi born of both Parsi parents is allowed entry in these sacred places; and In the interior room where the sacred Fire burns or where ceremonies are performed, only the Mobed-priest has entry and none else, though a Parsi. Any conversion or any genetic mix-up is therefore, entirely inconsistent with these Religious sanctions, commands, tradition and custom.

20. The alleged evidence for conversion from religious writings, relied on by some Parsis, is highly twisted and tortured. When Zarthushtra calls upon his disciples to fight evil, these evidence-twisters read fighting to convert! When Zarthustra commands to convert evil into good, they read conversion of a Mohammedan to a Parsi! For instance, Dr. Dhalla, the champion of conversion says on Page 198 of his Zoroastrian Theology, "The Dinkart sanctions even the use of force for the conversion of the aliens." Thank God, Parsis in India never dreamt of conversion, or use of force for conversion!

21. We submit that advocating conversion is a kind of fanaticism. A Christian trying to convert a Hindu will have to say, "My religion is better than yours" or "Christ is superior to Krishna". A Parsi cannot say that, because he is taught by his Prophet that all Religions emanate from Ahura's Divine Plan and for every man the Religion of his birth is prescribed as a path to his Salvation, If this Truth is appreciated in our country there can never be a communal riot!

22. Zoroastrian Kings of Persia were the believers in this Truth. For Instance, Cyrus the Great delivered the Jews from captivity in Babilon, allowed them to return to their country and helped them to rebuild the famous temple of King Solomon. For this magnanimity, Cyrus is remembered with reverence and praise in old Testament (Isaiah : 44-28, 45-1; Ezra : 1, 1-2; 6, 3-4; 6, 14-15).

JUDGEMENTS BY COURTS

23. Justice Davar has in his Judgement in (1909) 11 Bom. L. R. 85, stated that Zoroastrian religion enjoins conversion. We submit (i) that this is not a correct statement and (ii) that it is not binding on the Parsee Community.

24. The first point to note is that the question whether Zoroastrian Religion enjoins or encourages conversion was not directly and substantially an issue in that case. To quote from Beaman J's Judgement in the very case :

"And this clearly invites a precise statement of the real question we have to answer. That question is not whether the Zoroastrian Religion permits conversion, but when these trusts were founded, the Founders contemplated and intended that converts should be admitted to participate in them". (Page 150)

The answer of both the Judges to this question was in the negative. And that was the only binding issue answered in the case. All other statements are obiter; and therefore we have still a right to question the proposition that the Zoroastrian Religion permits conversion.

25. That the Judgements in the above case "travelled over much ground - indeed, in their Lordships', opinion, much unnecessary ground" is the statement made by Lord Phillimore of the Privy Council in 53 I. A. 42 (at page 53).

26. The Bombay High Court has in 52 Bom. L.R. 876 at Page 883 stated that the observations (on page 128) of Davar J. that the Parsee Community consists of three elements viz. those who are born of both Parsee Zoroastrian parents, the Iranis from Persia professing Zoroastrian Religion, and children of Parsee fathers by alien mothers duly admitted in the Religion are obiter (Chagla C. J). This has been again affirmed by the Bombay High Court in 68 Bom. L.R. 994 at Page 796 (Mody J.)

27. We therefore submit that the Davar's observation that Zoroastrian Religion enjoins conversion is also obiter. He held to the effect that **apart from such enjoining**, Parsee Community has never practised conversion since their arrival in India 1200 years back. Says he at Page 109 :

"I also find that such conversions are entirely unknown to the Zoroastrian Community in India, and far from it being customary or usual for them to

convert a Juddin, the Zoroastrian Communities in India have never attempted, encouraged or permitted the conversion of Juddins to Zoroastrianism".

Conversion - if at all was there "had fallen into utter disuse, and the long continued usage" has prevented conversion.

28. Davar J. has also recorded in his Judgment :

"That the Parsee Community of Bombay at a public meeting held on 16th April 1905, expressed its disapproval of any conversion being allowed, and is strongly opposed to any such conversion in the present times, and resolved henceforth not to admit even the children of Parsee fathers by alien mothers" (Page 110).

29. And that Resolution has been followed by several other resolutions from time to time wherein the Community has gone on expressing its disapproval towards conversion and any genetic mix up whether through a Parsee father or a Parsee mother, by a non Parsee spouse. Such Resolutions were passed in 1942, 1947, 1977, 1978. They are on record of the Institutions under whose auspices they were passed in public meetings. The Parsee Community has never encouraged conversion or any genetic mix-up. And we submit on Religious Authority that there is no distinction between the child of a Parsee mother and non Parsee father and that of a Parsee father and non Parsee mother. Both are not Parsees.

30. The conversion fanatics of the Community greatly rely on the late Dr. Dhalla and his book, Zoroastrian Theology. This book was written with the sole intention of encouraging conversion and genetic mix-ups. It contained twisted versions of religious scriptures and writings and advocated even force to convert ! (Paragraph 20 above). One brilliant Scholar Ervad Phiroze Masani has written a book "Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern", which is a complete answer to Dr. Dhalla's advocacy of conversion and mix-up. Erved Phiroze was encouraged to write this book by the same Justice Davar whose judgment is quoted as laying down conversion and mix-ups. This book is dedicated to Justice Davar. It refutes all the arguments of Dr. Dhalla in a scholarly style and with convincing evidence. The active association of Justice Davar with this Book clearly indicates that he was against any conversion and genetic mix-up.

31. In 1942, one priest by name F. A. Bode purported to perform the alleged 'Navjote' of a few persons, in Bansda state, born of Parsee fathers and adivasi mothers and their father mixed up progeny. There was a great uproar in the Parsee Community. It refused to accept the persons as Parsees. Two of them filed a suit in Bombay High Court claiming entry in a Fire temple. Dr. Dhalla appeared as a witness for the plaintiffs. His evidence was recorded for two days. He championed conversion and genetic mix-up with great zeal in the witness box; but in cross examination he admitted (i) that a large part of the Community was against such Navjotes or

conversions; (ii) that therefore he himself, would never perform such Navjotes and (iii) that if a son, born of a Parsee father and non-Parsee mother, marries a Hindu woman, he cannot be admitted as a Parsee. After this damaging evidence from their own witness, the plaintiffs had to withdraw the suit. This is recorded by Dr. Dhalla himself in his Autobiography (English translation - Pages 698 - 699).

32. And now we quote the same Dr. Dhalla's statement on "the collective conscience of the Community" in his same ardent conversion - advocating book "Zoroastrian Theology". He says : "The collective conscience of the Community has recently declared that it shall not legalise the marital connection with alien women, it shall not consecrate the investiture with the visible emblem of their faith on the children of alien mothers. it shall not legitimize the conversion of illegitimate children, and for the matter of that it shall have nothing to do with proselytizing at all."

33. We are firmly of the view that conversion and genetic mix up will lead our community to complete extinction; and adoption will be an active ingredient for such dissolution. This is a grave and serious threat to our very existence. It is a survival problem. We, Indian Parsis, have rendered meritorious service to the Country - right from fighting for its independence to fighting in the battle fields. We do hope that Government of India will not become a party to our extinction. A community and a Religion survives not by mere numbers, External stamping of large numbers as Parsi Zoroastrians without the inherent Fire and the in-born racial characteristics would never lead to survival, It would only accelerate a complete mix-up and therefore a total wiping of. Our strength has never been in number. Our spiritual and religious equipment is the only source of all our energies and services and the only secret of our survival for 12 centuries in this our great Country.

34. We also submit that any amendment to the Adoption Bill purporting to preserve religious rights would only lead to litigations and all the uncertainties attached to them. We, therefore, pray for total exemption.

The Religion of Culture

We are able to assert that the original form of Zoroastrianism, the philosophical and religious ideas of its founder and of its first professors can be represented at least in their general features, upon the basis of the Gatha texts, and that such a glimpse into the earliest ages of one of the purest and most sublime religions which have existed, must be considered as exceedingly instructive... The religion of Zarathushtra is a religion of culture of spiritual and moral progress and proficiency. It penetrates through all conditions of human life, and it considers every action of life, as for instance, the clearing of the soil, the careful tending of the herds, and the cultivation of the fields, from the standpoint of religious duty. "(Zarthushta in the Gathas, and in Greek and Roman classics." translated from the German of Drs. Geiger and Windischman, by Dastur Darabji Dastur Peshotanji Sanjana. B. A. P. 25.)