

In Memoriam- Behramshah Naoroji Shroff

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By : (The late) Khurshedji K. Suntoke.

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The author was a leading Advocate of the Bombay Bar. He was one of those intelligent seekers of Truth, who could appreciate the value of Behramshahji's teachings. Being a lawyer he examines critically the source of Behramshahji's knowledge and accepts the truth of his claim. He also points out that the truth of Behramshahji's teachings will be proved and appreciated more and more as modern science would reveal more of Nature's secrets. In the current last quarter of the twentieth century, this prophesy has come out to be so true that had the author been alive today, he himself would have been amazed to observe how modern science has begun to point its finger towards the mystic Truths taught in the Religion of Zarathushtra. The article ends with a stirring heart-to-heart prayer addressed to Bahramshahji].

I have great pleasure, and consider it a proud, though humble, privilege to contribute an article to this memorial number of "FrashoGard" in memory of Mr. Behramshah Naoroji Shroff; at the same time I discharge, though to a very slight degree, the deep debt of gratitude which I owe to him for that I have learnt, at his feet, of the esoteric teachings of our ancient Zoroastrian Faith. The Parsi community has been so much immersed in the ocean of materialism which has overtaken it after it attained material prosperity under European rule and has taken so heartily to the soft pleasures of an easy-going life that it has not appreciated the depth of his teachings nor even received even a superficial awakening from his discourses,

Mr. Behramshah claimed to have learnt the esoteric side of Zoroastrianism from Sroshavarez Marzban, Head of the Saheb Dilan Clan, which still leads a secluded life away from cities and even villages, right in the recesses of the Demavand Mountain, by a sojourn amongst them for a period of appro-

ximately four years. *His claim must be a true one* for it was with very great difficulty, and after considerable pressure, that he agreed to mention the fact of his sojourn, and to speak in public about what he learnt there, and he certainly did not seek to satisfy any craving for popular favor nor any desire to be in the lime-light, for he shunned and avoided both, and resisted for a long time attempts to drag him into public notice,

Another proof of the truth of his claim is furnished by the fact that his education, when he left his beloved city Surat, as a young boy in adverse and unfortunate circumstances had not proceeded beyond Gujarati Fourth Standard, and the *question naturally arises, where could he have learnt the technical Avesta Pehlavi. and pure Persian terms relating to the esoteric side of Zoroastrian theology and philosophy, in the use of which he was so fluent and proficient.* This humble writer in spite of the gift of strong memory has not been able to master even two or three of them. Mr. Shroff must have not only heard these terms, but he seems

to have completely stored them in his mind, and assimilated them, for-it had become an inseparable part of his mental equipment.

The Parsis, as a community, have not even been affected to any substantial extent by the shock, which his disclosures in his teachings would have administered to a people or nation less steeped in materialism and more awake religiously. Only a few felt that he was handing over to them the keys for approaching a most valuable stock of treasure, before which worldly pleasures and material prosperity would count for nothing. I am *of* opinion that the truth of his *teachings will be proved, felt and appreciated more more and more as Science is revealing more of Nature's secrets*, and the reason why the Parsis did not appreciate this, as coming from Mr. Shroff is that after we came into contact with European civilization, under European political domination, according to an unfortunate habit of mental servility, peculiar more or less to all Orientals but in a very accentuated degree applicable to Parsis, we have lost our own backbone, and have become servile to European culture, so much so that a Parsi generally would not accept a statement in his own religious books, but if any Tom, Harry or Dick from Europe were to mention it in his essay or book, then they would bow to it. I give an example; take the essential doctrine of "Khaitvodath". For the first time even in the experience of those who have studied ancient writings, Mr. Behramshah explained that it denoted the union or rather the re-union of the male and female souls, who became manifested at the original bifurcation *of* the human soul at the beginning of the *Nisti* stage of Cosmos. I know of several Parsis who discarded this and left it out, but they all believed it to be true when I showed them a somewhat similar passage in the series of articles contributed to the Strand Magazine by Sir A. Conan Doyle, in which he makes a

visitor from the spiritual World say that marriages on earth are only accidental unions of men and women, but that the real marriage is that of one man and one woman who, from the beginning, are kindred to each other and have certain affinities; and that Nature rejoices at such marriages. That beautiful passage reads us under;

"I wish you to understand that there is one man only one, for each woman, and one woman only *for* each man. When those two meet, they fly together and are one through all the endless chain of existence. Until they meet all unions are mere accidents, which have no meaning. Sooner or later each couple becomes complete. It may be in the next sphere where the sexes meet as they do on earth. Or it may be further delayed But every man and woman has his affinity and will find it. Of earthly marriages perhaps one in five is permanent. The others are accidental. Real marriage is *of* the soul and spirit."

- From "The Land of the Mist" by A. Conan Doyle, in "Strand Magazine" August 1925.)

Another instance of advanced teaching, which Mr. Behramshah imparted to us, is furnished by his discourses. He explained to us that when then the human soul starts on his or her career through *Arvahi* realm commencing with the bifurcation mentioned, above, fractions of his or her elements get into the mineral, vegetable, and brute kingdoms, and that when the soul, by a process of pure life starts on his or her career, so to speak, homewards, it picks up, all these fractions from the mineral, vegetable, and lower animal kingdoms, and being thus assimilated and the male and female counterparts being also reunited the soul proceeds onwards towards its original home, when it is said to be back in Hasti. And now we have to reflect whether the *latest* discoveries *of another Oriental viz. Dr. Sir Jagdish*

Chandra Bose do not confirm and corroborate this highly important lesson, for he has shown that there is sentient life not only in the vegetable but even in the mineral kingdom. Dr. Bose's discoveries have yet revealed only part of the truth, and time will show either by his further discoveries, or by those of some other persons, that the whole truth is what Mr. Shroff has shown.

In other words, it seems, as if mankind will shortly be in a position to realize that the doctrine of evolution as taught by Darwin is not a complete one, and that mankind did not start from the ape, but that there is a continuity (*silsila*) of life from the humblest part, viz., the mineral which is considered dead or inorganic matter, but wrongly, and the highest on earth, viz" Man and this is fully corroborated by a Mithraic mystery, for in a book "The Rites of Mithraism," we find a symbolic illustration of a child placed upon a block of stone, thereby signifying in a bird's eye view the ascent of man from the lowest rung, viz, the mineral.

It is unfortunate that the height of Mr. Behramshah's teachings has not been realized by the greater number of those who have heard him; there is always a certain fraction in every community, and much more amongst Parsis, which ridicules such high teachings, but even by the rest it has not been appreciated, and yet the irony of it is that in some quarters he has been blamed for not having taught us more, to which his reply always was a well known Persian formula, with which sensible people will agree:

"Bishyar mokhur, bish makhur, pish makhur, faesh masaz, geh geh khur, pineh khur, andak khur, chananke cheh khuri : Jam-I-Ilm-I-Khshnoom."

i.e. "Don't drink it (*i.e.* the wine of knowledge) much, don't drink it more than necessary, don't drink it before your time, don't give publicity, quaff it on proper occasions, quaff it in silence, quaff it little by little. What is it that you will drink? -The Bowl of IIm-e-Khshnoom.

This memorial *number* is only a very humble token of gratitude, which those like this writer feel towards the late Mr. Behramshah.

I appropriately conclude this article with a heart-to-heart prayer addressed to Mr.

Behramshah's soul:

Dear struggling Soul- -You felt and told us that the time was not yet for the promulgation of esoteric Zoroastrianism and that attempt to do so would fail though in our haste and impatience we urged you on. Your passing away from this life has proved the correctness of your contention. So we bow to Hormuzd's decree and realize that the time was not yet and shall wait in patience not for this lifetime alone but for another future life-time, for you believed and taught that all but those rare souls who, whether Zoroastrian or not, led a pure life strictly and practically in accordance with Zoroastrian tenets, have to come again and again on this Earth (*Khanirath bami*), till that high goal is attained. So, worthy Soul, when you come again, be it on your very next re-birth, may we also be thrown up by a kind Destiny with you in time, country and other environments, and may we be humble but very helpful co-operators with you in the grasp, understanding and subsequent propagation of the hitherto hidden secrets of esoteric Zoroastrianism, whose lamp in its pure vigour and brightness is kept burning on the Demavend mountains by the Saheb-e-Dilan Clan and by the side of the Chaichesta Lake by another-yet more

*[See page 11 of Vol. 3-no. 5. of Dini Avaz]

advanced- Clan, so that we may also have our part, however humble, in spreading its radiance amongst suffering mankind-at least those of them who are craving and thirsting for that divine knowledge; for, according to the third part of the most ancient formula the *Ahunavar*, "*Kshahremcha Ahurai A Yim Dregubio Dadad Vastarem*," which this humble writer quoted when he knocked at your door and came to receive at your hands religious instruction, Verily doth he establish the kingdom of Ahura on this Earth, who supplies food etc. (*i.e.* imparts spiritual knowledge) ,to the hungry.'

Meanwhile, worthy Soul, onwards, and onwards, may you attain *bukhtagi* for your soul so as to be still better equipped for your mission next life! Better luck next time!

"Atha Zamiad Yatha Afrinami"-may it even be as I pray!

Bombay,

7th September 1927.