

# Parsees – Going The Yankee Way ?

## CULTURAL AND COMMUNAL SUICIDE THROUGH IGNORANCE AND BLIND IMITATION OF THE WESTERN CULTURE.

### A Call To The Parsi Youths.

by Farrokh Bhot

What do you call a person, who acts blindly without thinking? What do you call a person, who discards the time - tested and the good, for something fleeting and flashy? What do you call a person who fails to think and discern between, what actually is and something, that merely appears to be so and thus gets addicted to its allure? What do you call those traitorous turn-coats, who rationally abandon the Kingdom of God, for the lure of the lucre & the razzle-dazzle of "modernism"? What do you call the person who transmutes, from tradition to transience, because of ignorance? What do you call the person who gets so close-minded, so as to think, that he can logically reason out everything, and thus thinks he is, the complete master of his existence?

Dear friends, just think. Is such a person an asset to those around him? Is such a person able to radiate warmth, joy & cheer around him, by being so totally wrapped up in his own personal selfishness? Nothing, or nobody, exists in isolation, in Nature. Would you like to associate yourself, with such a person? Would you like to BE such a person?

The Gatha Ushtavaiti (which is concerned with happiness & bliss for human beings) is based on the bed-rock foundation of the dictum, "He alone is truly happy, who makes others happy!" Can the above described person be following the Zarathustratian principles of the Ushtavaiti Gatha? Certainly not.

Now, we come back to this above person. Who is he? Sadly, he is the pathetic, "modern reformist Parsee!" Poor fellow, he fits the above description perfectly.

We Parsees had our hay-days during the British Raj. Newton's 3rd Law of Motion aptly states that for every action, there is an equal & opposite reaction. Our religion also states, excess of anything even the good, is bad. Our overwhelming prosperity & dependence on the Raj, poisoned our future. In it, were downed the seeds of our communal decline. Every rise is followed by a fall - that is only natural. Unfortunately, our fall is now proving, too sharp and calamitous. Intoxicated by success and the allure of western life-style, we began to ignore & forget our own roots. Therein lies the true reason for our current decline in prosperity. By blindly aping the west, in becoming "modern", we merely rushed in, where angels would fear to tread! No doubt, the rot set in.

**Modern historians are now beginning to realise that wherever the Western European culture spread, it has done so either by brutal force, or by guile & deceit at the cost of the well established & flourishing native cultures.** These ethnic cultures, often evolved from a deep understanding of Mother nature, as their people were in direct contact with her. Western culture on the other hand, evolved more from a materialistic origin. It was spawned by the Greeks, who had the egoistical misconception, that all other people & nations, were "barbarians", either meant to be destroyed, or converted to their way of thinking. These ideas were based on their system of linear rational thinking logic, which they are wrongly credited to have founded! The explosive growth of the physical sciences & technology in Europe, in the last 300 years encouraged & accelerated materialism as the foundation of Western culture. This fueled the spread of colonial rule, around the globe, & led to the rapacious plunder & downfall of ethnic cultures & civilizations.

Human history is full of such examples, world-wide. A classic case is the colonization of the American continent. The native 'Red Indians' lost their glory & their land to the Europeans, who also brought the African Negros, as slaves! They also wiped out the great Maya, Inca & Aztec civilizations. **A more recent example of how the Western "modernism", afflicts the mind, by its mesmerising allure of change is the decline in the traditional Buddhist & Shinto religions and culture of Japan after the second World War.** Also, isn't the modern world, money and power greedy, the typical symptoms of crazy, modern "prosperity"?

## CULTURAL SUICIDE

**It is good and sensible to change with times but to change so much that your original existence gets wiped out, is sheer stupidity.** To-days Parsees find "Parsipanu" inferior to Western culture. We have hung up our Sudro-Kushti, Topi & Mathabanu. We are even becoming ignorant of our mother - tongue Gujarati. Avesta & Pehlavi were anyway prehistoric, so who's bothered? O Parsees, is it so difficult for you to understand how, the newly & violently, arrived Europeans into America & Australia, annihilated the original Red Indian & Aboriginie cultures in the name of "progress". That is precisely what today "mod" Parsees are inviting upon themselves "cultural suicide!" By doing so, they're only making a dirty exhibition of their own ignorance and lack of cultural fervour. Parsees, beware! Keep away from such petty behaviour. Don't you want your children to enjoy the flavour of Dhanshak, for which we are quite famous? Then why stuff them with burgers & hot-dogs, unless you want your kids going the yankee way!

A new trend is now developing amongst the modern reframed "Parsees". After having thought out for themselves, that it was correct to transgress the religious tenets (by abusive misuse of "freedom-of-choice,") they still claim to follow & profess their religion, **after violating their personal commitment, given to the Almighty at the time of their Navjote,. They also claim their right to religious institutions. Every group, association & organisation has its rules laid down, for members to adhere to.** This is a must for smooth running of the organisation. Also, every country has its rules & laws, which its citizens are bound to follow. Willful breach of the rules is considered as a mis-conduct automatically inviting punishment or expulsion. A traitor is shot! **Then, how can a so called reformed "Parsee", who has consciously & willfully violated any religious tenet, still claim to follow the religion? It just exposes his hypocrisy & double standards. These non-conformists refuse to blend into the system, but are willing to go to great lengths, to twist the system, to suit their personal ends!** If the citizens of a country, behaved "independently" as per their fancy, chaos & anarchy would prevail! Nothing survives without discipline especially self-discipline. Renegades make a false show in public, or brow-beat their way with money or muscle power, but is it ever possible to deceive God? Disobedience to the Divine Law, surely loads to doom! Such people, are only deluding themselves! Unfortunately, it is not just our flamboyant youth, who get carried away by the craze; our elders are equally guilty - including some Akabars" & "Dasturs" too!

These alleged "reformists", because of their blindness, are forgetting a simple, basic truth. Whatever is reformed has changed. It just cannot be the original. This is obvious. So, the reformists better stop calling themselves "Parsees"! After all, they're different, now that they have changed!

Western culture is dependant on the physical, material perfection. It strives towards physical beauty, rather than spiritual purity. It is therefore fashion driven, & thus inherently unstable. On the other hand, the Zarathushtrian culture & ethos is based on the immutable Law of Asha operating in Nature. The reformists have fallen for the glamour of transient & fleeting change, abandoning their own rock solid, ancestral heritage & culture!

Let posterity not mock us scornfully, by saying that, "the Yankees were forced into oblivion, but the Parsees willfully chose oblivion, out of sheer stupidity & ignorance, through dumb acts of commission & omission!

This is the challenge facing the Parsee youth today! Nothing much will be achieved by blaming our parents, for not exercising to inculcate "Parsipanu", in us. No doubt, this was wrong & sad too, but as progressive and forward looking community, we need to look ahead and not wallow in past blunders. **It is for us to re-discover our roots.** It can certainly be done & must be done - where there is a will, there is a way! A tree gains all sustenance & nourishment, from its roots - if the roots are cut, it withers away & dies. Do our youth want to sever their communal & cultural roots & wither away into oblivion? We can surely regain our past glory, by following in our worthy forefathers' wise footsteps of preserving ourselves!

I'm sure, or today's youth isn't that dumb, to willfully throwaway their precious family heirlooms, merely because they are old! Then why are some of us, so stupid, to discard our Parsipanu & traditions (community's heirlooms) merely out of ignorance? "But all that is so ancient & no longer valid in to-days modern world," some ignoramus may say.

"Fine, then just toss away the Raja - Rani's gold guineas of yore, & the fine silve Rupee coins of the British raj, all carefully hoarded away in the antique "Shishum" cupboards. They are certainly not valid to-day. And also get rid of your antique furniture - it is not valid in to-day's plywood era! Will you stout-heartedly do

so, by your own logic?"

"Of course not. They have intrinsic value, irrespective of time," the ignoramuses will retort.

"That is precisely the point! **Before discarding our ancient religion, its traditions & culture, did you even bother to check out their intrinsic value & content, or were you merely blinded by the attractive flashes of an alien culture?** Be honest, it is the latter! You never checked how strong & deep our roots are, before blindly severing your own! **In your mad rush towards the West, you forgot that the Westerners often come to the East seeking spiritual solace, that eludes them in the materialistic plenty of the West! You forgot to look, before you leaped didn't you?"**

If we Parsees have retained our separate ethno-cultural identity over the ravages of centuries, it is certainly a tribute to the maturity of our religion, culture & heritage. They have certainly stood the test of time & have proven their lofty intrinsic worth gloriously. It is because of this background of ours, that we have earned a name for ourselves, and won the respect of our sister communities!

In our prayers, it is mentioned, thus,  
Let us not be blind, even though we have eyes,  
Let us not be deaf, even though we have ears!

Young Parsees, I hope this has flashed, the tube-light within you to shine! It is now time for serious introspection. Parsees, wake up & look deep & hard within your hearts. You will find tremendous power & strength therein, if you are pure enough to perceive. If there was no stuffing in our roots, we would have followed in the footsteps of the inosaurs & the dodos, long ago. The basic fact that we have survived the centuries, means a lot, in itself.

Let us all wake up now and act unitedly, before it becomes too late for all. If ignorance has led you astray, take pains to find a correct guiding "map". Make the effort to light up a torch, to now show you the correct path of Righteousness. This torch, may will be the "divo" in your "ses" at home, which you didn't bother lighting up, and hence went astray!

Our history is full of challenges & hurdles which we have successfully overcome from times immemorial. I'm sure, to-day's Parsee youth will lion-heartedly, (which we always have been) take up this challenge of becoming true Parsees once again, by upholding our tradition of Parsipanu. Only thus, will be able to once again regain our high position in life, both spiritual & material, as held in the past. This is the challenge, of conversion, from the low to the lofty as referred to, in the holy Gatha.

I pray, let our youth rise to the challenge, & succeed!!!

Amen! Amen! Amen!

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