

Protest Meeting Of 30-5-1991



From left : Dastoorji Phirozee Kotwal, Mr. Homi Ranina, Mrs. Aramaity Dhalla, Mr. Cawasji Dinshaw, Mr. Adi Doctor, Ervad Darias Sethna

On 30th may 1991, a historic meeting of the Parsee Community was called by the Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee, Athoran Mandal and the Dader Jashan Trust at the Birla Hall, to protest against the Resolution of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet passed on the 9th April, 1991 permitting Parsee women married to non-Parsee men to be consigned to a specific Dokhma after their death, against an "Affidavit". The resolution condemning the Trustees and seeking a mandate from the community to take suitable action against the BPP wa passed near unanimously by the thousand-strong audience. Among the galaxy of speakers was Ervad Darius Sethna of London, whose speech is reproduced here.

HISTORY HAS PROVED - THAT THERE IS NO RACE WITHOUT RELIGION - AND THERE IS NO RELIGION WITHOUT PRIESTHOOD.

For those who believe in their Religion no explanation is necessary - For those who do not believe - No explanation is possible.

Those of us who doubt our own Origin and History - Deny the Wisdom of our Prophet, Defy our own Religious Doctrines - Question our own Holy Scriptures - Condemn our own Priesthood - Redicule the beliefs of our own Forefathers - Challenge our own time honoured customs and traditions - and above all blatantly violate the most fundamental and cardinal precept of the Zoroastrian Religion - that of Bunyad - 'Pasbani' (Preservation of the hereditary Seed) - then surely - by the virtue of our own thinking and actions- it must become quite evident, that we neither believe in - nor belong to our noble "Mazdayasni Zarthosti Din".

How can we then honestly profess or claim to be followers of our Zoroastrian Religion ? - and even if we assume to be so - rightly, who is going to accept or believe us ?

Therefore, I suggest to you my fellow Zoroastrians that any Parsi - Zoroastrian female or male who marries outside the Zoroastrian fold under the Amended Special Marriage Act, 1954 or any other legislature - could never be accepted as a follower of the Zoroastrian Religion - and any 'Affidavit' as required by our five wise Trustees - made by anyone, to this effect, can only tantamount to be a 'perjury' in any Court of Law.

Our five wise men of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet state in their Resolution passed by them on the 9th April 1991 - that 'for a long period or more than 80 years the Children or Parsi fathers by alien mothers have been admitted into the fold'. They further state that 'for a long period of time, our predecessor Trustees had also allowed the facility at the Doongerwadi to Parsi ladies married outside

the community, with the only difference, that their bodies were placed in a separate resting place (in fact they fail to mention that the separate resting place as stated by them is known as a 'CHOTRA' and is mainly used for criminals who had suffered capital punishment - persons of doubtful identity and prostitutes and their children) according to the Trust Deeds of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet.

However, this, now they say is our custom.

The definition of the word 'Custom' as we all know is something which is followed or practiced by a group of people, a Community or a Race, over a long period of time totally unopposed - unobstructed - unchallenged and unquestioned.

When in this case - both these practices as mentioned by the BPP Trustees have been opposed - obstructed challenged and question by our learned Dasturs, Stalwarts, Scholars, various Samast Anjuman Saabhas and even today by our seven Vada Dasturji Sahebs, and most important by the vast majority of the Parsi Zoroastrian Community. Since, the very time this foul practices came into existence. Thus it is obvious that what these (5) five Pandits choose to call 'Customs' in fact is not a 'Custom' at all. Then what is it ? Well, I suggest to you my fellow Zoroastrians it can only be construed as 'MALPRACTICE'. Malpractice which has been continued over a long period of time due to the power of money and influence of the benevolent Parsi Zoroastrian families who planted the seeds of destruction of our Community by marrying outside their noble Religion.

Of course, we ourselves as the members of the Parsi Zoroastrian Community are equally guilty by our own default having allowed these so-called elite of our Community to continue with this Malpractice. But the most regrettable section of our Community who have permitted this Malpractice to continue us our own Priesthood, may be because of intimidation -

poverty or sheer corruption. We must all admit that we all are responsible for this wrong doings, which now we all must put right, before this Malpractice destroys our very Identity and Religious base.

One thing is certain we cannot and must not allow this Malpractice of accepting 'JUD-DIN' navjotes and the abuse of our consecrated 'DOKHMAS' to continue.

Parsi Zoroastrians who through their own choice have married outside their Religion are Religiously unacceptable as Zoroastrians according to our basic tenets and precepts and therefore have no communal or Religious rights whatsoever. Remember there is no such thing as a Half Zoroastrian."

Even the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the Holy Scriptures of "Ahad Namah" clearly tells us the Zoroastrian creed, that "The people descending from parents of two Religions Do not Inherit."

Please note, this is not a matter of Law. This is strictly a matter of Religion.

No Law or an Act of Parliament can impose or enforce upon us any such thing which would either be detrimental to the welfare and self interest of the Community and Religion or which proves against the precepts tenets, beliefs and practise of any established religion by which a community is governed and lives.

The crux of the matter is that certain members of our community who are directly or indirectly involved in this tragic phenomenon of 'Inter Marriages' is the only section of our community which is trying to change the established Rules of our Religion, to suite their selfish and vested interests.

Certainly the entire Parsi Zoroastrian community need not have to pay an unjust penalty of 'Extinction' of their religious beliefs, tenets, customs and traditions. In fact the 'EXTINCTION' of their very race, for the sake of a few

selfish and thoughtless members of our noble community.

The solution is very simple, although only one in choice, those who wish to blatantly violate the basic canons of our religion and disapprove of our established customs and traditions must now separate from us, and from their own Institutions - places of worship and create their own Resting place for the disposal of their bodies.

They are free to form their own Rules - Customs and Traditions to suit their own requirements and needs - thereby saving the Zoroastrian Community the disgrace and indignity of defending their own religious heritage, from once, the members of their own community.

We only have one 'Doongerwadi' and only a handful of consecrated 'Dokhmas' for the use of our Zoroastrian Community in Bombay, where we can lay the mortal remains of our dear ones with dignity and proper rituals as per the Laws of purification of our Religion.

So, let us all appeal to the good sense of the Trustees of the Bombay Parsee Panchayet and these so called Reformists not to inflict the consequences of their actions, upon the entire Zoroastrian Community, which can only lead us to Racial Suicide.

In conclusion I wish to leave you with the words of the late Honourable Mr. Justice Daver in his famous Judgement in what is now commonly known as the JUDDIN CASE I quote -- "IF THEIR CONTENTIONS ARE TO PREVAIL, THE RUIN OF THE COMMUNITY WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN AS MANY DAYS AS IT HAS TAKEN GENERATIONS TO ATTAIN, TO THAT POSITIONS OF PROMINENCE AND PROPERITY WHICH THE PARISI OF INDIA HAVE NOW ACHIEVED."

HAMA ASHO - HAMA ZOR