

SPIRIT OF EXCLUSIVENESS

The spirit of exclusiveness is the essential of Zoroastrianism from the point of view of Ashoi or Holiness preached therein. The subtlest laws of magnetic purity, which are at the base of Zoroastrianism necessarily imply aloofness from all other people who are unable to observe these laws. Hence when the Parsees first came to India and saw themselves encircled by vast masses of people of different religious beliefs and practices, they could not but have the spirit of exclusiveness in all their dealings with the aliens of India. This exclusiveness did not result from the influence of the Hindu caste system, for in Zoroastrianism itself there are taught the four main classes of people-Athornan *i.e.*, the priest, Rathaeshtar *i.e.* the warrior, Vastryosh *i.e.* the farmer, and Hutokhsh *i.e.* the artisan. According to the laws of magnetic purity, the first or the Athornan class kept itself aloof and separate from the other classes though co-religionists. Naturally therefore all the classes of Zoroastrian people deemed it proper to keep themselves aloof from the alien people, whose number being legion compared with the number of the then Parsees of India, it was but natural that without this spirit of exclusiveness there was imminent danger of absorption into these vast numbers of alien people.

The Parsis who first came to India left their dear home in Persia with their immovable and movable precious belongings only for the sake of the feeling for their religion, and it was this intense faith in Zoroastrianism that gave them the choice of forsaking their mother-land rather than adopt Mahomedanism as they were oppressed to do by the Mahomedans of Persia. The Parsis of the day very well understood the spirit of exclusiveness of themselves as Zoroastrians taught in their own religion, and hence it is quite natural that they continued to observe the same spirit of aloofness and intactness of their kind from the aliens of India. This spirit of exclusiveness made them dislike the idea of their conversion into Mahomedanism equally with the idea of their absorption into the aliens of India by the conversion of the latter into Zoroastrianism. The Parsis of the day having this spirit of aloofness from other people well planted in their mind as an important mandate of their religion, feared therefore that their existence as a Zoroastrian community would be impossible if the community were swamped by the alien element which was quite undesirable according to their religious beliefs and observances of the laws of Holiness and rituals. They had come to India only to live and exist and die as true Zoroastrians, and thus a keen sense of their Iranian race – pride and consciousness of their being descendants of the mighty Iranians of old who lived and died for their religion led the Parsis of the time never to dream of having converts from among the alien people of India. Besides, as it generally happens, only the lowest classes of aliens of India would have been willing to be false to their own religion and to adopt Zoroastrianism, and such an admixture of racial blood would have naturally resulted in the extinction of the Zoroastrian community and in the creation of a bastardly race of people which could not be named. There is the same danger staring at the question of proselytism even today.

Slaves brought up in Parsi family and then regarded as Zoroastrian by the mere investiture of Sudreh and Kusti will do no more good in the matter of the upliftment of the community than the illegitimate children born of Parsi fathers and alien mistresses by the same sort of so called conversion. It is a very great sin for a Parsi to keep an alien or even a coreligionist mistress – the sin of 'Avarun Marzashni' or illegal intercourse and mingling of seeds. A Parsi must have married a co-religionist wife, and the legitimate children born of such originally Zoroastrian parents are regarded as Mazdayacnians till the age of seven, at or after which these children have a right to investiture of Sudreh and Kusti and they are thereafter regarded as Zoroastrian Mazdayacnians. Hence it is that in the 'Confession of Faith' formula (Yacna Ha 12) the child confesses to be a Mazdayacnian (Mazdayacno ahmi *i.e.* I am a Mazdayacnian *i.e.* born of Parsee Zoroastrian parents, born of the seeds of Zoroastrian origin) and then promises to be a Zoroastrian Mazdayacnian (Mazdayacno Zarathushtrish fravarane astutascha fravaretascha *i.e.* I confess to be a staunch believer and follower as a Zoroastrian Mazdayacnian, *i.e.* having been

born a Mazdayacnian and having been made a Zoroastrian by the investiture ceremony). The modern advocates of proselytism seem to be void of common-sense and logical reasoning.

It is a common error of the Iranians of the 18th century as of the Indian Parsees of to-day an error arising from the misunderstanding of the universal character of the Zoroastrian Law. There are some texts in the Avesta, which propound the universal nature of the Zoroastrian religion; that is to say, when the soul has advanced to a certain stage of spiritual development, it will have to follow the law of nature in its entirety or in other words the Law Zoroastrian for the attainment of the spiritual goal. There are passages in the Avesta and Pahlavi writings, which inculcate that at the time of "**Frasho-Kereti**" or Renovation of the soul, the entire universe will embrace the Zoroastrian Law, which is the entire Law of Nature. But this is misrepresented by the proselytists in the sense of the propagation of the Zoroastrian religion among people of all classes and in whatever stage of spiritual degradation. If such were the interpretation of those texts teaching the universality of the Zoroastrian Law of Spiritual Development, why should there be more than one religion and more than one prophet? If all the bringers of the great religions of the world assert that they have brought their Word direct from God and that therefore theirs is the true religion, we have in this case to solve a dilemmatic problem. Either God must have told them different things or the prophets must be liars giving out various diverse teachings to mankind. This problem can be solved only from the standpoint of there being various stages of spiritual progress of different prophets and their followers. The Law is One – but the eyes are many, and each of the great bringers of religion sees as much of the Law as comes within the compass of his own spiritual vision. Lord Jesus Christ, Lord Mahomed, Lord Buddha, Lord Moses and others tried their best to explain the Law in proportion to their own spiritual development. And the capacity of their followers to observe the law explained to them. The prophet Zoroaster saw the entire law of the universe with his own spiritual insight, and inculcated the entire law for the most advanced souls in order to enable them to march successfully towards the Spiritual Goal. If the law of gradations be kept in mind while discussing religion as in all other things – the law of gradations or degrees which is the fundamental law of evolution or progress, spiritual or material – we can have a clear idea of the grades or degrees of religions, of prophets and necessarily therefore of different sects of people in the eye of nature. This law of gradations is not kept in view by the proselytism party, and they leap at once in the dark with the sole idea of bringing all the people of the world into Zoroastrianism by means of the mere initiation ceremony of investiture.

It becomes a very serious question how Zoroastrianism – which teaches clearly in the ancient sacred formula that only a child **born of Zoroastrian parents** can confess on its investiture to be a Zoroastrian follower of Mazda – can be in favour of proselytism of aliens or of children born of **any one** alien parent! Zoroastrianism has never encouraged directly or indirectly that which is stamped downright as a **sin** in its scriptures, and the sin of 'Avarun Marzashni' or illegal intercourse with kept mistresses whether alien or not can never be supposed to have been encouraged by a permit to allow the illegitimate children of such to be invested with Sudreh and Kustih to be legitimately regarded as Zoroastrians. There must be a preventive remedy for such immorality if it is current among some black sheep of the community, and if no prevention is possible the curative remedy is not a conversion of the issue of such illegitimate intercourse but rather an **excommunication** of all – the father, the mistress and the issue downright. Instead of taking preventive or punitive measures against the immoral tendency of some few of the community, some so-called educated men of the present day suggest and preach the direct encouragement of immorality by advising and advocating conversion, and that too in the name of Zoroastrian scriptures, and this humbugging must not be passed unnoticed now by the major portion of the community. It can be proved that there is not a single Avesta or Pahlavi text **pro** proselytism.