THE DESECRATION OF A DADGAH!

- ADI F. DOCTOR

These days, in Mumbai, it seems, the trustees of some Agiaries are vying with one another in denigrating and even desecrating the holy fires handed to them in trust. How else to explain what will happen to the Lalbaug Wadia Adaran, after the monstrous sky-scraper comes up just a few feet away in the next year or so, and what has already happened to the second oldest Agiary of Mumbai, the Maneckji Sett Agiary on Perin Nariman Street (Bazar Gate Street) in the Fort?

In the first case, the devoted litigants, all credit to them (they were shamefully dubbed "undesirable elements," "oestructionsts" and "base elements" in the Jame weekly) went right up to the Supreme Court to save the sanctity of the Aderan Saheb, but could not succeed.

In the second case, however, not a dog barked when the trustees and the Panthaky took it upon themselves to demolish the Urvis Gah containing the Dadgah so as to convert the structure into a hall to be used for public/Parsee functions! The reason? The same as given year's ago by the Banaji Atash Behram trustees, when they bartared away the adjoining hall meant for Jashans, lectures and as occasional marraige, for weddings, navjots, birthday parties and what have you! All this to generate income to run the Atash Behram? Read ditto for the Manekji Sett Agiary. That both happen to have a common Trustee is not just a coincidence!

It all began on April, 2002. The 269 Salgreh of the Agiary was round the corner and the Satanic plan was put into action. While the front portion housing the Adaran was being 'renovated', the death knell for the Dadgah was sounded.

Neither the trustees of the Agiary nor its Panthaky bothered to know that:

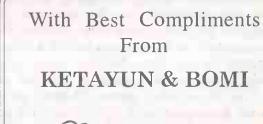
- (a) the Dadgah (Avesta, Daityo Gatie, lit. "lawful place") is the very king pin, the foundation on which rests the spiritual strength and power of the Atash Adaran. It is the heart and conscience of the Adaran.
- (b) the Dadgah, placed in the Yazashne Gah, if lawfully consecrated and maintained, attracts the glory and splendour of Vispe Ratu, the 23 Ratus or Divine Chiefs overseeing the Pav Mahal and its currents.

(c) the Dadgah's lawful place is in the Urvisgah where all the Pav Mahal ceremonies, like the Baj, Yasna, Vendidad and Nirangdin are performed. You knock out the Urvisgah and the whole unseen Pav Mahal structure collapses!

This is exactly what has happened in the Manakji Sett Agiary. The old Dadgah has gone. In its place fire burning in a small, latter day afarganiya has been placed in a corner of the front side of the building. So colossal is the ignorance in both Athornans and Behdins, that this travesty of a make-shift pseudo - Dadgah is worshipped as the real one! And where is the Urvisgah? What's that?

Gloss, glamour, shine and sheen! O, what a preety Agiary! Pix and write-up in Jame Weekly! "Don't talk of Chahrum and Chinvat. We will cross the Bridge when we come to it! Alexander and the Arabs would have hesitated to do it.

Today's Parsees have done it : demolished the Yazashnegah and desecrated the Dadgah! Not a dog barked!





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