

“THE EDITOR, DINI AVAZ...”

[As it enters its sixth year of publication, DINI AVAZ is pleased to introduce a new page, meant exclusively for its readers' views. Letters to the Editor on Zoroastrian Religion and allied subjects are welcome. They should be brief and to the point.]

MALIGNING ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION

Sir,

As an ardent reader of **DINI-AVAZ**, I cannot help but voice my disillusionment at your lack of “Ratheshtari” against the veritable rape of Zoroastrianism perpetrated almost every week by a certain Parsi owned Gujarati newspaper and half-a-dozen of its correspondents. I don't see why some of you gentlemen have not taken up cudgels on behalf of the orthodox Parsis.

In recent months, because of a lack of strong and effective opposition from anywhere, the Editor of this daily has been emboldened to write any nonsense and hogwash on religious subjects. Because he was pulled up by many Parsis for his pedantic interview on **Doordarshan** and particularly because he was hauled up for his thoughtless observations on **Sezdo** of a dead Zoroastrian, he unleashed a Niagara of brazen write-ups, including, (a) the views of that Athornan-barrister, Sir Jamshed Kanga, who with a cigar in his mouth pontificated on religious matters, (b) the baseless calumny against the late Dastur Dr. Peshotan B. Sanjana, who as per the statement of a gutless anonymous scholar(!), is alleged to have concocted a whole Pahlavi book, **Vajarkardi-Dini** for a handful of silver to help a friend take a second spouse, even when the first was living, (c) the constant championing of Juddin marriages and, last but not the least, (d) that unfortunate article by Mr. Nani A. Palkhivala, which was flaunted as a prized scoop of the year to awe and browbeat the

innocent readers.

Please **DINI AVAZ**! Do not sit by and let the perfidious pagans play havoc with religious tradition. Hope 1981 will bring a New Change.

— Armaity F. Dubash

Bombay.

MURDER MOST 'FOWL'!

Sir, —

Have you ever listened to the squawks, screeches and agonising cries of dozens of helpless, harmless, innocent fowls who are put to death by some of our heartless Parsee caterers, by pouring buckets of boiling steaming water on them?

I am sure several of you, humanitarian **Baste Kustians**, will surely sit up and feel the agony of these poor chicks you devour with much relish on auspicious occasions, when you try to invoke Heavenly Blessings on the couples or **Navjotees**. How can we expect Divine Blessings on the newly wedded couples or the Initiates in the Zoroastrian Religion when innocent, dumb creatures are made to suffer so callously?

What is worse is that such an inhuman act is committed in the very compound of an Agiary or Atash Behram!

I am told that most of our caterers keep live fowls huddled together in narrow baskets, which, in turn, are kept in some dark, dingy place in the Baug or compound, for slaughtering as and when required according to the number of guests arriving there. One wonders whether these caterers have any conscience!

I earnestly appeal to the inner conscience of all humanitarian Parsis to rise to the occasion, voice their inner feelings and persuade the caterers to bring the slaughtered fowls directly from the market.

— R. D. R. Wadia

Bombay.

ATHORNANS, BEWARE!

Sir, — Recently, **The Bombay Samachar** has, in its Parsee columns, started reproducing photostat copies of cheques received by the Editor from an Irani gentleman in England and from the famous Ayurved doctor, Dr. Chandrasekhar G. Thakkur, for the amelioration of Parsee priests. These donations have been received as a sequel to a suicide committed by a Parsee priest out of penury, some years ago, which was highlighted by the **Samachar** in a previous issue.

We are now informed that the Editor of the **Samachar** proposes to build up a big fund for our Mobeds.

The questions arising from this act are given below for your readers and for the Athornans in particular, to ponder :

(1) Is money going to solve all the problems plaguing the Athornans for the last 80 years?

(2) If that were so, why did various people and even committees, in the past, prepare long reports for the "oonnati" of the Athornans?

(3) The profession of a Mobed is a "Minoyi Udyog" and not one to make money from. Haven't the complete commercialisation, debasement of rituals and negligence about Tarikats brought the downfall of the Athornans?

(4) What guarantee is there that the **Samachar's** sudden concern for the Mobeds doesn't have a catch in it?

(5) What guarantee is there that this is not a strategy to entice the Athornans into the fold of the so-called "reformers", so that they can then do a "Vaandsa" with gay abandon and make the Athornans dance to their tunes, re:ceremonies for cremated

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ATHORNANS, BEWARE!

(Contd. from page 8)

Zoroastrians, Juddin Navjotes and weddings, etc.? All I shall say at this stage is, "Athornans, Beware! There may be more than meets the eye in this outburst of compassion for you by **The Bombay Samachar!**"

— Xerxes N. Pastakia.

Pune:

Vol. 6 No. 1

"THE EDITOR, DINI AVAZ....."

WAKE UP, BRETHERN!

Sir,

Time and again I have drawn the attention of our community through newspapers and written to the Trustees of the Parsi Panchayat about the ridiculing of the Parsis in some of our Hindi films.

Hindi film producers seem to be unaware of the fact that in order to provide cheap entertainment to the masses, they deeply hurt the sentiments of our community. Why should Parsis alone be made the target and butt-end of corny jokes? Only because we are a silent lot and don't believe in protests?

I can cite innumerable instances of Hindi films where Parsis have been singled out for being made the laughing stock of film-goers! Two recent examples are, **Muquaddar Ka Sikander** and **Qurbani**. Where was the need to include such sickeningly humorous interludes? A thousand pities that not a single Parsi has protested against this cheap entertainment!

Bombay.

— Pesi C. Wadia.

[We would like Mr. Wadia to take up the cudgels for the Parsees with the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association. It is also incumbent to point out that through the years, some Parsee theatre directors and producers themselves have made cruel fun of the Parsee way of life. How many Parsees objected then? — Ed.]

NO CHANGE IN DIVINE LAWS

Sir,

I am placing these few lines in the interest of our community, for your kind consideration and knowledge.

What is Religion? Religion means Nature's Divine, Immutable laws which cannot be violated.

Religious matters comprising ceremonies, rituals, fundamental commandments and principles are beyond the knowledge of ordinary Human beings because they are Divine and endowed by our Holy Prophet Zarthusra, the Prophet of Prophets, and his Divine followers to our Blessed community, and it requires Divine Knowledge to interpret them correctly. No body has any right to make any change in the present forms in which they are subscribed and handed over to us for thousands of years by our ancestors.

But unfortunately, some so called Reformists want to make some changes like cremation and Inter marriages which are not at all in the interest of the Community and are severely prohibited by our Religion. To gain their object, why should they involve others and the community and make others scape goats?

It is quite evident that any change in Religious matters or ceremonies, and other aspects will never be binding on the community.

Bombay.

— Darashaw R. Gheyara.

CER/CUZ

The drum beating, mud-slinging, ill-afforded campaign of both the above parties are over, and even the results have come, but now.....what?

All right-thinking Parsees know that all those who were in CUZ were not angels with wings, and all those who were in CER were not devils with horns. First of all there was no need for this bifurcation in our microscopic community nor was it necessary to make a laughing stock of ourselves in the eyes of other communities, via, Press, magazines etc. The responsibility lies

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on the shoulders of some interested people of both sides for dividing the community into two, for their personal vendetta, personal power, and personal gains.

Whatever it may be let us wait and watch what the winners are going to do in the coming months. Whatever Socio-Economic reforms they wish to carry out, albeit reforms should be always for the betterment of the Community at large and not for a few people or party gains, they should be supported and helped by all the Parsees irrespective of their being CUZ, CER or neutrals, and in the same breath, it can be said that if they try to bring about even an iota of reform in our pristine pure religious laws, ceremonies, or its institutions, directly or indirectly then every Parsee worth his name should rise up in arms or in whatever manner they can, and crush them.

Hope wise counsel will prevail, and the successful candidates will not get led away by some rebellious press or persons whose support they had and now find hard to dissociate with.

Bombay

R. PATEL

" THE EDITOR, DINI AVAZ..... "

Samast Anjuman Meeting and The Adoption of Children Bill.

Dear Sir,

I am surprised that in the din and clamour of the debate for and against the conduct of Mrs. Meher Master Moos at the Samast Anjuman Meeting held on 28th August, 1981, no one has pointed out other more glaring misdemeanours that took place at the said meeting, I am referring to the manner in which Mr. Kanga & Mr. Engineer used the platform of this Samast Anjuman Meeting to politicalise their radical views Both Mr. Jamshed Kanga and Mr. Dady Engineer, very emphatically, openly and catagorically stated that they DID NOT agree with the draft amendment placed before the meeting, but merely supported it with a view to avoid a show of disunity and only to put up a facade of co-operation. They have thus, publicly disowned any responsibility and disassociated with the proposed amendment. The biggest joke is, however, that the Chairman, Mr. Boman Behram profusely thanked Mr. Kanga for their open disagreement, instead of also debarring them from participating at the meeting as he did in the case of Mrs. M. M. M., Mr. Jal Vakil and the two Trustees, Mr. Vimadalal and Mr. Desai. Besides, both Mr. Kanga and Mr. Engineer, very cleverly and in their usual professional oratory, effectively used the Forum to say that for the first time, due to their efforts, the "Community" had been invited by the BPP--through the Anjuman Commi-

tee, which itself was now 'democratically' elected (again thanks to their efforts (!)) -- to participate in the affairs of the Community. Were these remarks at all relevent to the issues at hand? Mr. Kanga even had the impertinence of ridiculing the existing BPP by his so called amusing story of the young boy and the father, leaving no doubt in the minds of the audiance how contemptuously he treated the existing trustees individually and the BPP collectively, a body he hopes to represent shortly. Mr. Kanga earliar, also said something about the Anjuman Committee assuming the role of a Parsee Parliament! Of all the persons, Mr. Kanga should surely know that according to the prevailing Scheme as approved by the Bombay High Court, THE ONLY function of the Anjuman Committee is to elect the trustees as and when the vacancies fall due, and that any self-imposed unilateral, advisory role can only be against the Orders of the Court. But perhaps, the BPP itself is to be blamed for this impasse, since it has, in the first place, clearly erred by inviting a few handpicked individuals of the Anjuman Committee to advise and participate in the meeting of the Trustees. For the record, it is necessary to clarify here, that neither individuals, nor in fact any group or faction within the Anjuman Committee, nor the Anjuman Committee itself can, by any stretch of imagination, be said to represent the entire Community as a whole. There is a plethora of legal talent available outside the Anjuman Committee, besides the fact that even

within the existing Anjuman Committee, all available talent was not tapped. The Panchayat, should have thrown open the debate to the community at large, and invited opinions and considered all possible points of views, instead of merely thrusting a hastily drafted amendment on the Community. But perhaps the Trustees were woefully unaware of the impending legislation, else they would have been working at it, right from 1977 onwards! Perhaps, one can read between the lines and rightly presume that due to the **personality clash of a few self-imposed leaders**, the Community at large has suffered an irreparable damage. The shortsightedness of the Trustees and the blinkers put on by them, will cost the Community its individuality and the very basis of its survival.

Bombay.

Failure of Reformists in Juddin Case

Sir,

As I personally know some simple-minded Zoroastrians arguing in favour of taking the children of a Zoroastrian father and an alien mother, into our community, and myself feel much uneasy to note that they dare to quote the judgement delivered by Hon. Justice Davar & Hon. Justice Beamon in the very wellknown Juddin Case, at the dawn of XXth Century; I am quoting the most important words from the same judgement which will clear anybody's doubts, regarding the so-called victory of the persons supporting the conversion of the aliens to our Zoroastrian fold. Really speaking, it requires many many columns of "Dini Avaz" to narrate all these in minute details. However, I'll be

very brief and will use **only the most glaring part of the Judgement describing the failure of the Plaintiffs (Reformists)**.

Hon. Justice Davar says :-

"The Plaintiffs' side has spared no expense or labour to prove that it is the usage among the Parsis to convert Juddins and admit them to their religion... I think I am doing no injustice to the Plaintiffs when I say that they realised that their efforts hopelessly broke down. It was stated that they had more evidence of the same kind. Why did they not call it? The Plaintiffs form a powerful combination--powerful in possession of wealth, influence and position and if they so hopelessly failed to establish, to the satisfaction of the Court, one single instance of an authentic conversion of a Juddin to Zoroastrianism, it is not an unfair presumption that they failed--not for want of means to procure evidence, if it existed, and not for want of strenuous efforts; 'they failed because they attempted to prove a usage that never existed.'"

Hon. Justice Beamon says similarly that,

"They [Plaintiffs] spend money like water, to have this question thrashed out, they retain the most eminent men at the Bar, everything which human ingenuity can do is done to make out the strongest possible case for the converts... No one who has taken any part in this case, no one who has attended the hearings or read the reports really doubts

for a moment that everything that money, talent and energy could do has been done for the Converts, for more than any one -- or any dozen of them - could have done for themselves."

What is the result? Here are clear, unambiguous and unequivocal words used,

The Judgement :- "The result is that the Plaintiffs are not entitled to reliefs claimed by them in this branch of the case and I would dismiss their suit so far as it seeks relief on all points relating to the conversion of Juddins and their right to participate in the charitable Funds and institutions in the possession and under management of Defendants."

After a long discussion Hon. Justice Beamon also held that if we declare that all these religious and charitable institutions be made open for the use of converts also, "we should undoubtedly profoundly shock the sentiments of the whole community... we should be inviting immediate disruption of the whole ecclesiastical establishment." Hence, he agrees with Hon. Justice Davar and says that.

"... it was not the intention of the Founders of these Trusts to throw them open indiscriminately to any one and every convert".

Savak S. Madon

Definition of a Parsee

Sir,

On page 16 of Dini-Avaz Vol. 6. No. 1 it is rightly stated that we must educate

our fellow Zoroastrians on Definition of who is a Parsee, and also get a legislation passed on the Definition of a Parsee. Kindly consider the following definition of a Parsee.

i) A Parsee or a Parsee Priest should be one who believes in the Zoroastrian Religion, its customs and beliefs as practised till to date including Dokhmay-nashini and should not be a convert to Zoroastrian Religion.

ii) be born of both parents who are Parsi Zoroastrians who profess or professed till their death the Zoroastrian Religion.

iii) be one who has passed through the Navjot Ceremony and still believes in the practices and the principles laid down in the Navjot Ceremony.

iv) No one should be considered as Parsi Zoroastrian if one's Navjote Ceremony has been performed by a renegade Zoroastrian practising priest and whose one or both parents is/are not Parsi Zoroastrian.

One should be considered as ceasing to be a Parsi, although born of Parsee Zoroastrian parents as soon as he/she marries one who is not a Parsee Zoroastrian or who has a spouse who is not born of Parsi Zoroastrian parents as per terms given above.

K. D. Chargeman
Bombay.

"THE EDITOR, DINI AVAZ....."

Dear Sir,

" In Search of My God "

Reading an old Copy of your "DINI-AVAZ" Vol No. 6. No. 1 Jan-Feb 1981 on King Jamshed pages 13 & 14 "from Extracts of Dasturji DR. H. K. Mirza's book. "Outlines of Parsis History", I am constrained to point out an important misrepresentation made by a publication of the Zoroastrian Foundation, Los Angeles California, titled "In search of my God."

Though creditable in its effort to educate the world in our religion, it has borrowed too heavily from the Bible for its theological representation and presentation.

However, it has unfortunately depicted Zarthusstra as having been born in only 600 B. C., Vide their Time chart on page 141. This has been done, since they put the date just prior to Cyrus the Great's conquering of Babylon, because of the noting in the "Old Testament."

Unfortunately despite quoting portions of MR. J. M. Chatterjee's book "Atharvan Zarthusstra", and the fact that Harold Lamb in his "Cyrus the Great", acknowledges that King Cyrus came across the Zarthustrian religion as a mysterious everlasting religion — this first pictorial book belittles the ancient value of our creed by bringing it down to only 600 years B. C.

If J. M. Chatterjee's views are taken and the views of even Germanic historians noted, our creed lies between 5000 to 500 B. C. I am a firm believer that Zarathusht is the founder of the Bhrigu Sect of

Aryan worshippers and more so as to his longevity which causes confusion.

Sir, I beg the liberty of your columns and authority to draw their attention to this wrong dating and request them not to fall prey to western cultures which try to show Chistianity as the beginning of history as noted from the so-called advent of Adam & Eve, since this time chart is just copied from the old voluminous pictorial Bible.

Let no man tamper with our heritage, commercialise our loss.

I give credit to the effort of the Zoroastrian Foundation for bringing out the book but I decry the copying of the bible like sceneries of ancient Zarthustrian

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concepts, and even how earth was created or of Zarathustra's pictures preaching to the people. Even the clothes' style is jewish.

I may add Judaism and Christlanity have copied our lore so let us not be stupid to follow or imitate them and adulterate our own lore in return.

We to-day are so westernised in thought and scientific in approach that we tend to fear to speak the unexplainable for fear of being derided by other cults, and so as a result become Pavlovian Creatures.

Major N. F. Mullan - Pune

Sir,

Explain — P. Panchayat

I happened to be in Bombay on 25-2-82 and I thought of attending the Samast Parsi Anjuman Meeting Called by the Parsee Panchayat to condole the death of late Mancherjee Cama. One of the Speakers said that a building belonging to Mr. Cama was sold by the Parsi Panchayat for Rs. thirteen lakhs.

It is sad to learn that the Parsi Panchayat sold away valuable land for which Parsi Panchayat owes an explanation to the Community, for selling 'land' so cheaply and also when the other Trusts and panchayat themselves are wanting land to build low-rate housing for the poor Parsis!

Mrs. M. K. Mistry Ahmedabad

Sir,

"In Bombay" only ?

Thanks for your bold guidance in respect of "Unhealthy Practice" for men to offer Sandlewood to the Dadgah before

taking a bath after Paydast (at Bombay Doongerwadi), but it is incorrect to say that this is prevalent only in Bombay. (Dini - Avaz Vol. 6 No. 3) Moreover some people even enter the Atash Behram to offer Sandlewood similariy ! However, it is absurd to defend this practice only because of its prevalance in more than one City. It is not unfair to clarify that even the best understandings of the knowledge of Ilm-e-Khsnoom is not at all necessary to disapprove the above mentioned practice only Sound sober common sense is required.

S. S. M. - NAVSARI

Sir,

The Lament

Have you noticed, how a young Oxford scholer from whom the Community expected so much is committing faux pas after

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faux pas now-a-days in his lectures on our pristine pure Zoroastrian Religion. One can forgive him, for this,—taking as an excuse, that in his enthusiasm he has tripped, but that is not so, because this young Scholar thinks that he knows much only because he has learnt it from European scholars at Oxford ! His ego has become oversized, because some gullible young Zoroastrians are lapping it up, in their ignorance ! This young scholar refuses to listen to and acknowledge other more aged and experience Parsee Scholars then him. Being backed by a well-known Commercial House, he draws audience, but how long will it last ? The writing is on the wall—"you can't fool all the people all the time".

His first attack against all normal norms is on our dear prophet of prophets Zarthusht. He insists that the prophet had three wives, from whom he had six issues, three sons and three daughters. Oh ! well who would have thought, this would come from our young scholar. But it did and when opposition was launched against this utterance, it is known in some circles that one of his young foolish admirer's chirped 'why are you people so perturbed, if he says that the prophet had three wives, after all, isn't it a sign of the prophets virility ?'. — So much for their learning.

Next our young scholar makes a blunder in the procedure of "Ardibesht yast pichi" (ii) recitation of 2 yatha or 3 yatha in Baj (iii) Date of Zarthusht — he was quoting first only as 600 B. C. (Real 7000 B. C.)

But lately what he has preached really takes the Cake — he says that Daadaar Ahura Mazda is not Omnipotent.

Why our young scholar should do this is beyond my imagination. In the beginning, he delivered his subjects in fluent English, and with great respect, caution, and steadiness. Let us hope, that good counsel will prevail and he will "look before he leaps." For, it would be a crying shame if the community loses faith in him. The community would rather have him than lose him. —C. P. Bombay.

Rasti Mujib - e - Raza - e - Khuda Ast,
Kesra Nadidan, Ke Gum Shud Dar
Rahe Rast."

Shah Akbar had this (Persian) saying engraved on the coins of his reign. The English translation is as follows:—

To do the right, is the way to please God,
Those who walk on the Straight Path,
I Have never seen lost.

[From "Frashogard" Jan-June, 1942.
P. 169].

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"The EDITOR, DINI AVAZ....."

MR. KHOJESTE MISTREE?

Sir,

Late Mr. K. R. Cama on his 70th Birthday on 12-2-1901, among other things, stated as follows :—

"Nobody has taken steps to understand the esoteric philosophy nor made any research in our Religion. We do not understand the basis and it is necessary to speak out openly about it".

The same Late Mr. K. R. Cama, father of school of Philology after hearing the first lecture in Bombay of Late Mr. Behramshah Shroff in 1908, advised others "We have translated the words and nothing more. We have not been able to clarify the esoteric side of our scripture. I feel that this person Mr. Behramshah Shroff has something which we haven't got". Later on he had regularly attended many such lectures by Late Mr. Behramshah Shroff.

A pupil of late Mr. K. R. Cama and late Ervad Kavasji Kange published translation of Khorddeh Avesta etc., which are considered as standard work by majority but he has stated in many cases that he was not happy with the interpretation or "he cannot translate certain words and phrases".

The explanation of late Mr. Behramshah Shroff for these difficulties are lucid and acceptable or were accepted by all interested in the same.

Yet we Parsis do not want to see the light and have been ignoring his efforts which was given free of charge or the efforts of his followers who have further clarified various problems.

Mr. Khojeste Mistree however called late Mr. Behramshah Shroff as "uneducated loafer" in one of the Kathok Memorial lectures at K. R. Cama Hall in 1985.

A deplorable act unbecoming a religious preacher. Khojeste Mistree seems to think that his knowledge is more profound than even

Mr. K. R. Cama. In reality, he stands nowhere neither Ustad Saheb Behramshah Shroff or Mr. K. R. Cama. He has still miles to go. Hope his ego remains in check or a fall is in the offing?

Taroneesh

* * *

OMNIPOTENCE QUESTION?

Sir,

Browsing through some old Dini-Avaz I came across an article published in your March-April 1985 issue, you have rendered valuable service to the cause of the community and the religion by giving a well documented report of the lecture delivered by Mr. Adi Doctor on "Omnipotence of Ahura Mazda and the Concept of Evil in Zoroastrian Religion" at the very door-step of "Zoroastrian Studies" which is responsible for propagating the absurd hypothesis of non-omnipotence of God!

The May 1985 newsletter of ZS, contains a curt reference of this event, instead of intellectually countering or refuting in public the arguments and scriptural evidences presented by Mr. Doctor. This does not speak well of their scholarship of which ZS is so much enamour and goes to the extent of ridiculing in public, the religious school of thought which lays great emphasis on esoteric side of the religion, saying there is no scholarship there in. This only goes to indicate that their scholarship is only Skin-deep.

And finally the newsletter sermons for a greater unity and cohesiveness within the community without realising that the boot is on the other leg because the seed of discord of late have been sown by them only by propagating faith shattering concepts like this one, the freedom of choice, lowering the status of Prophet from sublime to ridicule etc.

S. Patwa