

# WHAT ARE WE UPTO?

With the names of Ahura Mazda and Prophet Zarathushtra in our hearts and minds and with homage to all the Saints and Sages who came to this earth to guide men towards HIM, we begin .....

As is done in all scientific inquiries, let us start with an observation. What does the Zoroastrian Religion, as we observe it to-day, consist of?

There are two main elements in Zoroastrianism. The one consists of Holy Scriptures, writings and literature. The other consists of certain spiritual and moral discipline, institutions, exercises and practices.

## SCRIPTURES AND WRITINGS

The Scriptures are mainly in Avesta language; they are Gathas, Yasna, Vendidad, Visperad, 'Yashta's, 'Niyaish's and others. Other writings and literature are in Pazend, Pahalvi and Persian languages. Most of the Holy Scriptures and Pazend Texts are not treated as mere writings; they also form part of our prayers and ceremonies.

## THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL

Our spiritual institutions, disciplines and practices have their own peculiarities.

1. We are required to wear a specially designed Shirt — **Sudreh** — touching our bodies, and wind around it a specially designed girdle — **Kushti**.

2. Our prayers consist in reciting long long passages in an ancient language, which most of us do not understand. (We shall call these, "Manthra-prayers".)

3. Fires in our Temples are prepared and enthroned after performing curious ceremonies and are kept constantly burning for decades and even centuries.

4. In the Fire-temples, long ceremonies are performed to help the souls of dead Zoroastrians in their journies and tasks in the other world. Some curiously designed utensils and things are used in these ceremonies. Some of them are performed from midnight to morning. (We shall call these ceremonies "Yasna Ceremonies".)

5. The dead bodies of Zoroastrians are taken in a specially prepared well after certain specified ceremonies are performed on them and exposed to the sun and vultures.

6. On the theological and philosophical side, Zoroastrianism, like all other Religions, teaches that God (Ahura) exists; man has in him a Soul; it is his goal to lift up the Soul to Ahura by following the Path prescribed by Religion; man has in him certain faults which induce him to abandon that Path and to indulge in sins; this leads him away from his prescribed goal.

7. On the moral side, which follows from the theological, Zoroastrianism teaches Manthra-Patet meaning: speak the truth, stick to the truth; resist and fight the evil within, which drags man towards sins; repent if conquered by the evil; and resolve not to fall a prey to it again.

## DOUBTS — QUESTIONS

Doubts arise: Are these institutions and practices — nos. 1 to 5 above — any good? Are they essential for a Parsi?

Are they not mere symbolic ceremonies from a primitive civilisation? Are they tenable in the light of the marvellous discoveries and inventions of modern science?

Are they consistent with the education and enlightenment of the Community?

Can we not keep with us only the theological and moral teachings — nos. 6 and 7 — and dis-

card the rest? Would good thoughts, words and deeds be not the be-all and end-all of the whole of Zoroastrianism?

### INQUIRIES WITHOUT BIAS

Natural doubts! Obvious questions! But, for the answers, we must have an unbiased and inquiring mind. The questions themselves suggest that they are not simple.

If we are going to bring in modern science, we will have to know a bit of it.

If we are asking about the ceremonies, we will have to get at least some idea about how they are performed, what utensils and things are used, what passages — and from what scriptures — are recited and what is their meaning.

If Fire-Temples and Dokhmas are to be our subject matter, we shall have to know something about how they are made and built.

To dismiss our institutions and practices without making such inquiries would be unscientific and irrational.

### OUR OBJECT

The Magazine in your hand is meant to provide the answers to these doubts and questions, or at least such materials and evidence as would induce you to get the answers by yourselves.

### OUR ANSWERS

But we cannot provide the answers or materials for the answers, unless we ourselves are clear about them. In this first address to you, my reader, let me just enunciate our answers in most general terms to those questions. Materials, evidence, arguments, proofs will follow in various ways as you will read this and subsequent issues.

### ENUNCIATIONS

We will show that all elements Nos. 1 to 7 above constitute **one composite structure of Zoroastrianism**. You cannot discard the first five

and retain the remaining two. Any attempt to do that would logically lead to discarding the whole of Zoroastrianism and even religion in general.

Further, each of the seven elements — Sudreh-Kushti, Manthra-prayers, Yasna-ceremonies, Fire-temples, Dokhmas, theological doctrines and moral teachings has a profound mystic and spiritual significance and effect. It will be our endeavour to indicate this to you with materials from **modern science** and **Zoroastrian Mystic Science**.

### MODERN SCIENCE

Let me first talk a little about modern science. Fantastic feats are performed by science. Atomic bombs and thermo-nuclear explosions, trip to the moon and journey to the mars, man made satellites and shake-hand in space, fight against cancer and biological warfare — all keep us amazed. We are tempted to think that all this cannot be achieved without knowing the mechanisms and secrets of nature; and therefore science must have understood the world around us; if so, we should try to fit in our religious institutions and disciplines in the frame-work of scientific theories, and if they fail to fit in, we should discard them.

But — here comes the horror — **science has not understood even a speck of dust!** All the amazing achievements of science are based on-hypothesis and theories which are admittedly not the ultimate truths or real secrets of nature; they are adopted because they work. We shall, in support of this truth, present before you ample materials. Our first article on the subject, 'Whither Science' appears in this issue

### SCIENCE

**The highest wisdom has but one science — the science of the whole — the science explaining the whole creation and man's place in it. ....**  
**Tolstoy**

### BIBLE ON FAITH

**Faith is the substance of things hoped for,  
evidence of things not seen.**

(Hebrews — 11:1)

**The just shall live by faith (Romans — 1:17)**

**We walk by faith, not by sight.**

(Corinthians — 5:7)

We will show that it is unwise and risky to rely on scientific theories for the justification of religious disciplines and institutions.

Further — and here comes another amazing fact — whatever little science has understood about nature knocks the door of **Mysticism**.

And it is now time to say what is meant by mysticism, mystic science and Zoroastrian Mystic Science.

### SCIENCE OF MYSTICISM

In the observation and experience of mankind, numerous events and incidents are recorded, which defy any rational or scientific explanation.

A ten year old girl, Bernadette, inspired by a miracle. Being, digs a slit in the ground with her tender nails; negligible quantity of water oozes out; within few weeks it becomes a big spring; the spring has flown since about a century and its water has cured thousands of men women and children suffering from diseases declared by medical science to be incurable!

Another woman, Theresa Newman, goes into a trance of devotion and suffers all the agonies, which Lord Christ suffered on the Cross with all the visible physical effects like oozing of blood from the head, chest and palms!

A die-hard atheist, Narendra, sits before a simple looking sage, closes his eyes for some minutes, 'sees' something, and becomes Swami Vivekanand.

A Yogi, Swami Yoganand, writes an autobiography with amazing miracles described on every page.

An Englishman, Paul Brunton, goes round the world and comes across many secrets defying the sense and science of man. Ultimately, he finds all 'explanations' before a frail looking, silence-loving sage, Raman Maharshi.

And ordinary men and women have experienced some 'revelation' in themselves, which changes their lives.

And man have experienced ghosts, spirits, exorcism.

Even modern science has dashed with **Extra Sensory Perception** — telepathy, clairvoyance pre-cognition.

Even Cambridge University has recently declared a scholarship for volunteers to study the phenomena of ghosts!

### NATURE BEYOND

All this points out to the great truth that nature does not come to an end where our senses cease to register it or our science fails to observe it or to experiment and mathematise on it. In nature such regions occur. Such events and incidents happen and such beings and things exist, which do not enter the world of experience of ordinary man. Sometimes, certain indirect effects are produced in our world, pointing out to the existence of something beyond ordinary human senses, intelligence and experience.

### OBSERVATION AND AUTHORITY

Mysticism or mystic science is the study of this 'something beyond'. By the very nature of things, this science cannot adopt all the methods of physical sciences. Its study has two main ingredients:

### BEYOND

**This grey spirit yearning in desire**

**To follow knowledge like a sinking star**

**Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.**

— Tennyson

- (i) the observation of the indirect effects in the world of experience, and
- (ii) the authority of those few humans who directly experience 'the Beyond'.

(Here 'the Beyond' does not mean only regions far away in space. It exists even within us and in our own world outside us. 'The Beyond' is meant to be "beyond ordinary human experiences")

### RELIGION, A MYSTIC SCIENCE

And here enters Religion. The Prophets of all Religions are those few Humans who have the experience of the Beyond and the Authority to guide ordinary humans towards the path of God. Prophets are necessary because an ordinary human has something in him which is like a dark screen between him and God. Prophets teach how to make the screen transparent and ultimately to break it, so that man can see God and even be God!!

### THE FIRST LESSON

Thus, Religion cannot be without mysticism and mystic science. The very first Truth of all Religions that 'God exists', is mysticism, because God is beyond our day-to-day experiences. It is not possible to prove His existence on the intellectual arguments based on our limited experience. We have to believe in Him on the Authority of the Prophets. That is the basis of all Religions: "Faith in God and the Prophet". And that is an exercise in mysticism and a lesson in the study of mystic science.

The subject matter of this Science covers God, creation and man. It contains the basic Truths (not theories) about all that is going on within and without us. It explains about the universe and its relation to man, and about man and his relation to God. It, therefore, covers all physical sciences and goes much further.

### THE IMPASSE

It will be our endeavour to acquaint you with both — modern science and Zoroastrian Mystic

What Zoroastrianism  
revealed yesterday,  
Science will discover  
tomorrow !

— A Zoroastrian

Science. We will show that modern science, in its attempt to explain nature, arrives at certain points and is unable to go further. Zoroastrian Science can pick up the thread from those points and reveal the great Truths behind. It uncovers the mystery behind the baffling experiences of modern sciences relating to matter, life and universe. The only condition is that you should be prepared to accept the Truth that nature has its mystic regions, existences, events and phenomena. Evidence for this Truth is in abundance and we shall put it before you from time to time.

### A WAY OF LIFE

Zoroastrianism does not merely reveal the spiritual and mystic Truths regarding God and His Creation, but it also teaches us a practical way of life. Man has a place in Ahura's Plan; he has a goal to achieve; he has to follow the way of life ordained by the Prophet. All the seven elements mentioned earlier constitute that way of life and are spiritual necessities for a Zoroastrian. Why they are so and how do they take a Zoroastrian near and near to Ahura, are again the subjects of that Mystic Science, a glimpse of which we shall try to flash before eyes,

## FURTHER ENUNCIATIONS

We are going to lay before you materials and evidence for the following Truths:

1. That Sudreh-Kushti are not mere symbols for a Parsi; they are the **apparatus** for the practices of **Zoroastrian Yoga**.
2. That Mantra-prayers are not meaningless murmurs; they have a positive vibratory effects in nature and within us.
3. That each word in our Mantra-prayers has a profound mystical meaning and is associated with a deep spiritual thought; **to make the prayers more effective, a Zoroastrian has to know the meanings of the passages and while reciting them has to focus his or her mind on those meanings and thoughts**; this is a very difficult yoga and a religious exercise and discipline, which leads a Zoroastrian further on the path ordained by his Prophet and nearer and nearer to Ahura.
4. That our Fire-temples are not mere symbolic places of worship but are specially designed power-houses of spiritual energy, and the specially consecrated Holy Fires burning in them **consciously** emanate subtle and divine energies, which produce certain spiritual currents in the Zoroastrian praying before them.
5. That our Yasna-ceremonies are not meant to purchase forgiveness for the sins in life of a dead Zoroastrian, but they are prescribed to help him in his journey and task in the life after death.
6. That our Dokhmas are not a mere method of disposing of dead bodies; they are designed to have certain tasks performed on the dead body of a Zoroastrian, which has a great relevance to his journey and task in the life after death.
7. That Zoroastrianism describes in details the life after death.
8. That Zoroastrianism describes in details the unfathomable Cosmic Geography of Creation, the place of earth and man therein and the seen and unseen internal composition of man.

## THE AUTHORITY

**The Scripture is the only authority for you to decide what is fit to be done and what is not fit to be done; therefore whatever actions the scriptures have ordained to be done, it is proper for you to know and do.**

— Lord Krishna-Bhagavad Gita-6-24

9. That the concepts of God, soul, and the good and evil have profound explanations in our Religion.
10. That good thoughts, words and deeds are not merely matters of social and worldly obligations and benefits, but they also constitute a practical Yoga for the spiritual upliftment of each human being.
11. That to decide what is 'good' and what is 'bad' in life is left to the Prophets and not to the mortal man.

## HIDDEN TREASURE

Friends! Many of us, Zoroastrians, do not know what treasures are hidden in our great Religion and how they are revealed to us in the present century. This magazine is an humble attempt to bring this to the notice of the Parsis, and to drive home to them that all existing practices of our Religion are a 'must' for the spiritual evolution of each of us and for the survival of our tiny community.

With a prayer that may the humans return to humanity;

With a craving for the Blessings from Ahura, Zarathushtra and all the Good Forces operating in the Universe and within man;

With a sincere desire to enrich you spiritually by offering to you the divine gems and diamonds from the Treasures of Zoroastrianism and all other Religions;

With an earnest wish to wake up the slumbering and to enlighten the unknowing;

With good will towards all and malice towards none ..... WE BEGIN .....

— K. N. Dastoor