

WE ARE GETTING WIPED OUT. WE HAVE CEASED TO BE CONSCIOUS OF OUR RELIGION.

by Dr. Freddie Mehta

[Note: The following article expresses the views of *Dr Freddie Mehta*, the well known executive in the Tata house.

Are we imparting any religions knowledge to our children? Dr Freddie asks. Every other community does it, but not we. Our youth has no idea whatsoever about our own Religion and the way of life taught by it. One of the fatal consequences of this is inter marriages, the surest way to dissolve the "Self" of the community in the vast ocean of the humans on the globe.

Upto, at least, the fourth decade of this century practically all the Parsis, from the highest to the lowest, had the same thinking and the same attitudes, the present lack of which is so ably lamented by Dr. Freddie. They had the same burning feeling of preservation and protection of the Community on the solid foundation of the Zarthoshti Din and its tenets, traditions and teachings. They had the same strong apathy for mixed marriages. Since about last fifty years, these currents started reversing their direction; and by the last decade of the century, nobody bothers about the threat of being wiped out.

Dr. Freddie Mehta's views are like a sprinkle of ice-cold water on the hot and parched soil of the Parsi lethargy. The article is by courtesy, Parsiana magazine - **Editor**]

We are dead and dying community. 62 percent of the boys and girls in colleges do not know one thing about our religion other than that Zarathushtra was there and he was a very great prophet. As many as 25 percent of our women - and I may say - as many as 18 percent of our boys every year marry outside - while proclaiming that they love Zoroastrianism. The trick is a very simple and very clever one but it ought to be exposed. So many boys who marry non-Parsi girls do not register themselves in the census as Parsis. ***These Parsi boys have forgotten what it is to be a Zoroastrian, they have forgotten what it is to be a Parsi.***

Do our Parsi parents spend even half an hour teaching Religion to their children? The Catholics take their children to the church every Sunday. The Muslims do so religiously on a Friday. Where are the Parsi boys and girls ?" **Unless and until you plant the knowledge about our religion into our boys and girls, do not expect them to feel proud about their community or to feel knowledgeable about their religion.** You get a person like Freddy Mercury who was absolutely brilliant, who left Rs. 72 crores as a legacy, but not one rupee to the Parsi community. Why? Because. Freddy Mercury had never been taught by his parents what is the Zarathushtrians Religion. What is the use of having brilliant people who don't feel they are Zarathushtrians.

The priests have been reduced to poverty and ignorance, almost to a joke; and therefore, all this tall talk about conversion is nonsense. You can produce a brilliant chemical technologist. You can produce a brilliant orchestral conductor. But if they don't feel that they are Parsis, what the hell are we ? They are great as individuals, we salute them as individuals. But as Parsis what are they?

Pherozechah Mehta said that you have to make your contribution to India but you are also to remain a Parsi and you do not have to be integrated out of existence by intermarriages. If everyone starts intermarrying, then this is what is going to happen; but like Pherozechah Mehta you will have to say, "we are not going to be integrated out of existence. We are going to remain and maintain our identity."

Finally let me tell you what Mr. Govalkar, one of the greatest founder members, and close to 32 years, the president of the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS) said in 1973 : "I do not understand why the Parsis want to

modernize. I do not understand why they want to integrate themselves out of existence. **I do not understand why Parsis are ashamed of their Sudreh and Kusti... Why do they want to do that?** Why don't they want to keep their identity? We Hindus don't want to convert the Parsis, as we don't want Parsis to convert us.

Why do you want to modernize yourself? Foreign technology, yes. Foreign capital, yes. Foreign education, yes. But not at the cost of extinguishing our community. No. : Are we going *to* remain as Govalkar said, "long after the Hindus have ceased *to* be Hindus? I hope the Parsis remain the last Hindus of India"

* **"TOKHMAK PASPAN" , THE PRESERVERS OF THE RACIAL GENE** *

By the help and encouragement of the famous **Justice Dinshah Daver, Ervad Phiroze Masani, the erudite Athornan and unparalleled scholar, wrote a book, "Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern."** Although written primarily by way of refutation of one Dr. Dhalla's book "Zoroastrian Theology", Phiroze's book is an excellent treatise on the Zarathustrian Daena and its tenets, teachings, traditions and way of life. It is more relevant today than it was at any other time.

On page 102 of the book, Ervad Phiroze Masani quotes a passage in the Paharvi language, from "Dinkard", an old maratho volume depicting the life and thought of the Parsis in Iran, the sole foundation of which was the Daena - Religion. The following is Phiroze's translation of the passage: -

"Now wisdom consists in taking a wife **regarding her as beautiful from the standpoints of spiritual benefit and not considering her to be ugly from without.** Among several people a marital union from amongst themselves is not practised from this point of view, but they do it in an awkward manner just as it comes to their mind. **Hence in accordance with what wisdom we have received from the Creator, we give birth only to children fit for receiving spiritual rewards, and for this only reason we are the preservers of seed, and keep the procreative power in the naturally sound condition, and continue the origin of species pure, and keep our thoughts supremely great.** Since a child entertains hopes of spiritual benefit, **of continuing the race,** and keeping the procreative power in good condition, we consider fit for marriage one who is sweet tongued, more cheering less injurious, more beneficent, serene tempered, clever-in-many-arts, beautiful with other manifest merits, **helping on salvation of the soul,** deliverer from pain and calamity, fearless, full of the lustre of self-hood, and regardless of outward show. All our forefathers and ancestors have chosen this very routine and adopted it for practice. They used to regard one as beautiful who was publicly well-known for spiritual salvation. The sensible evidence pointing out this very principle of marriage-selection is briefly to say that we should never do anything which is unworthy and improper."

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