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Managing Editor : P. B. WARDEN, M. S. (Bom.). D. P. M. (Bom.)

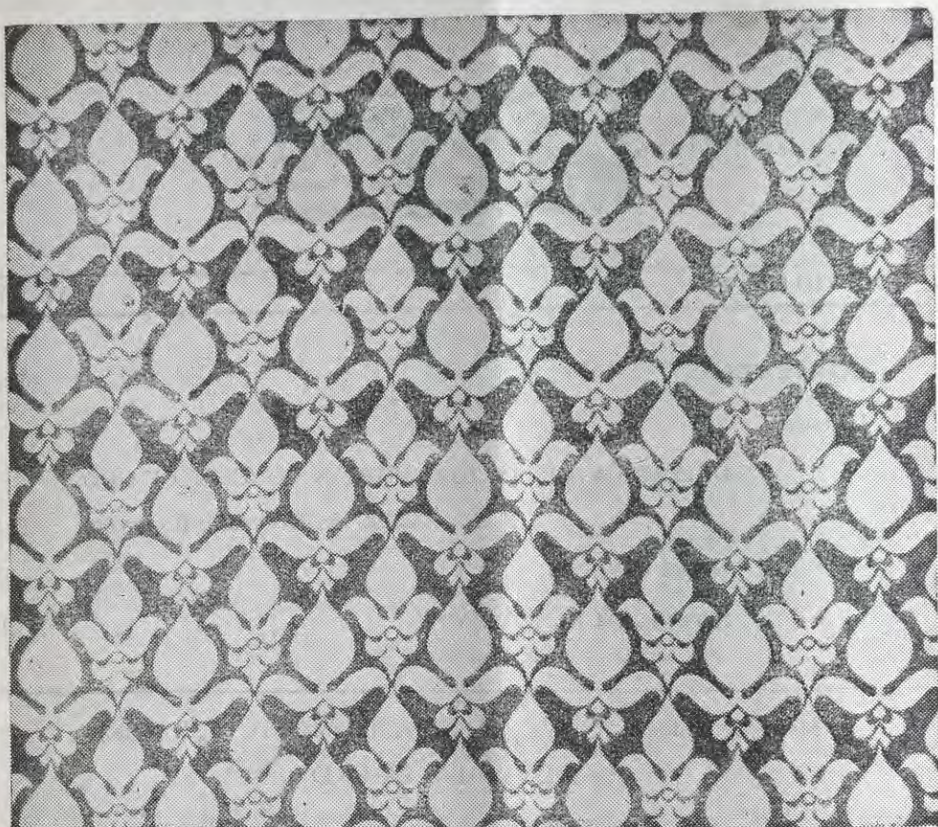
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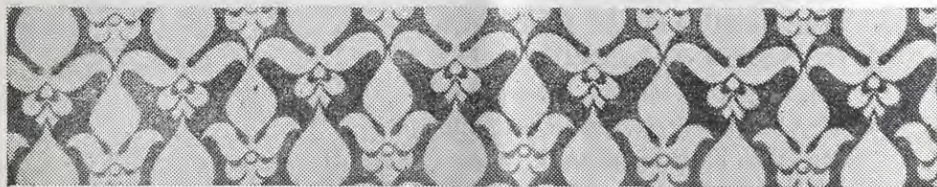


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Parsiana May 1972.

EDITORIAL.

Major Sorab Banji writes to Parsiana a letter dated 22nd. June 1972 regarding Shri Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee as under:

"I have read the suggestions made in your journal suggesting that the learned scholar be invited to come to Bombay and be properly honoured.

I may inform your readers that some years ago I had sent personal invitation to Shri Chatterjee and to stay as my guest as I had a programme for his lecture and also to honour him.

He had replied that due to advanced age and feeble health he could not accede to my request. I suggest a public meeting be held and a suitable resolution be passed and a suitable gift be granted to him.

All are of one mind that the community should not delay offering recognition to its ardent scholar whether he can or cannot come to Bombay. Several readers of Parsiana have misread Mr. Mahyar Patel when he expressed anxiety over Mr. Chatterjee's failing health as the end and the closing chapter on our duty. That duty is yet to be fulfilled and shall be fulfilled by the admirers of the grand old man. Let someone take lead.

Parsianais happy to inform its readers that our scholar Late Shapurji Hodiwala's essay which appeared in our recent issue on Sixteen Shlokas recited by Dastur Nairiyosang Dhaval before the benevolent King Jadi Rana has been appreciated and one S.V.Katkar of Deccan College, Poona, has sent me a request to supply the original essay together with its Sanskrit text, and Sanskrit Commentaries thereon by Aka, Anchiyaru as they will be printed in the Sanskrit Magazine published from Poona. Arrangements are afoot to send the volume to Poona.

Meanwhile Shri. G.V.Bavadekar, one intimately connected with Marathi Book Foundation and a publisher associated with all forward movement in Maharashtra-literary, social and political has inquired of Parsiana to extend the subject of Shlokas and give greater details of promises given and fulfilled by the Parsis as per mutual understanding and arrangement between King Jadi Rana and the succession of the immigrants. I request the readers to supply all such relevant information and references to enable Parsiana to bring them to light.

NEWS AND VIEWS.

Gandhian philosophy to the rescue of present day human society was virtually the essence of the speech of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, who attended the Conference on Environment held in Stockholm. (Sweden) under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation. Gandhiji once remarked to Edward Thompson, a British friend of his that "wild life is decreasing in the jungles and increasing in the towns". There is an intangible but very telling influence of environment on human personality and truly enough environment moulds, remoulds or disrupts personality with every significant change in or of the environment. Industrialisation of India was one such factor now operating on the humanistic core of socialism endangering its stability and at this crucial hour transformation could be quick and ruthless or slow as a revolution by consent. India has preferred the latter course that she may preserve the values while achieving the goal.

A correspondent asked the Prime Minister which was important bread or spirit. She replied "One cannot do without material needs but in fulfilling the aim the sense of spiritual value must also be retained." The West is in the throes of a struggle arising out of the impact of automation and other radical changes coming from the new environment of industrialisation on innate personality. Man has to retain his sense of integration with nature in the face of grave erosion threatened by the machine age, and its many destructive off-shoots. To escape from them man will have to imbibe Gandhian ideals to save self and society or slowly but immistakeably drift to destruction.

DETERIORATION IN THE ZOROASTRIAN CONCEPT OF GOD.

BY

FRAMROZ RUSTOMJEE (OF COLOMBO).

Introduction.

The Zoroastrian concept of God is discoverable in its pristine purest form in the Holy Gathas, the Divine Songs of Zarathushtra, the Prophet of ancient Iran over 6,500 B.C.. Since then it had undergone many vicissitudes, which brought about gradual deterioration, so much so that the modern Parsis, who follow the faith of Zarathushtra can hardly give any instructions thereon, even to their little children in their homes. This is wholly due to our utter disinterestedness in the History of Zoroastrianism and in the good Religion of the Holy Prophet. In every Parsi home may be found a picture of the Prophet Zarathushtra, and the innocent children are taught to revere it by using the term 'DADARJI'. The parents erroneously mean by that term 'The Holy One.' They teach the children to recite parrot-wise, a few prayers from the 'Khordeh Avesta', and then to stand or kneel before this picture to express their fervent wishes for the family. The children do not hesitate to express their wishes for material objects, like toys-a doll or a steam engine, in the firm faith that the 'Dadarji' will never fail to fulfil their wishes. When their dear wishes never get fulfilled they bear even a dislike for the 'Dadarji.' This wholly fallacious idea that prevails today, does very little good to the children, and in fact helps to destroy their genuine faith in the prayers they recite, in their understanding about our Prophet, in their concept of the God of the Universe, and above all in their faith in the nature of a genuine religion, which is sacred to Parsi homes and the very lives of the Parsis of the world. Many realise this sorry plight in which they find themselves. They sincerely deplore it, but seek no way out of it, as they never elect to help themselves. They now have the wherewithal to stem this tide, which drifts their lives into materialism. Where, O where is the potent Fravashi of Holy Zarathushtra, the mighty Daena, revealed to Zarathushtra by Ahura Mazda, in the hearts and minds of the modern followers of the faith of this Prophet? His was a religion established for all the nations of the World, and it serves today as the beacon light for all religions. The causes for deterioration of His Concept of God are many.

Conquest of Persia by Many Nations.

A few hundred years after the death of Zarathushtra and the break-up of the Kainanian dynasty of Iran, the country fell into the hands of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and the Medes. The pristine pure concept of the Gahtas got adulterated. The earlier concepts of many Gods of Nature, trickled in with the deities introduced by the conquering countries. This period of decadence lasted for many centuries. Zarathushtra's religion was once again revived in Persia from its embers, under the Achaemenians, but became firmly established in the times of the Sassanians, when the prayers of the Khordeh Avesta began to be compiled and collated, with the help of the Athravans who had committed many prayers of the Older Avesta to memory. The Athravans helped materially to place our prayers on record, after the fiendish destruction of all our religious books in the libraries of Persepolis, which were burnt on orders of Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedon. Then came the conquest of Persia by the Muslim hordes of Arabia, under conditions that were appalling. Persia was conquered in the last days of the period of the Sassanids. Persia's Shahanshah (ruler) named Yazdagird-Shahriar, abandoned his glorious ancestral throne and went into obscurity. His death was cruel and gruesome. The once redoubtable, invincible army of Persians, underwent ignominious defeat. Scattered and battered, routed and demoralised, the Persian soldiers roamed about in utter abandon, over the hilly terrain of their motherland, in utter consternation, with every vestige of their great and noble religion desecrated, their temples and fane destroyed with barbaric severity.

Zoroastrians Lived In Mountain Fastness.

Those Zoroastrians, who remained unproselytised at the hands of the conquering Arabs, holding their religion and their sacred Fire sacrosanct and more precious than their lives, abandoned their wealth, homes and material possessions and betook themselves into the mountain fastness, undergoing incalculable privations and distress. They believed that the Aura of their sacred ancient Iranian Fire of their Temples, eternally constituted the Glory of their once renowned Iranian Empire. It had been venerated for thousands of years and had conserved the prestige of the Persians of yore, who had founded the mighty 'Laws of the Medes and the Persians'.

The Cause of the Above Catastrophe.

For generations, the blame was laid on the shoulders of the conquerors, but the Persians were themselves mainly responsible for this plight. Wealth and power had intoxicated them. The people

and the army had sunk into the lowest depths of decrepitude and degradation. They were deeply steeped in the raging tide of inebriety. The stupefying narcotics to which they had become addicted in utter thoughtlessness, imagining themselves to be the invincible scions of an insuperable race had made them oblivious of their religious precepts. They lived an irreligious life of reckless abandon, resulting in moral decay. The once intrepid army was unable to withstand even the stray undisciplined assaults of the Arabs, who had entered Persia through stratagem and treachery. The Persians were outnumbered. The Arabs pillaged and plundered the vast Persian treasures, ruthlessly crushing and killing all who refused to abandon their ancestral faith, to embrace Islam. The Persians clung to the unpillaged remnants of their sacred books and their sacred Fire, and rushed into the hills amidst cries of rape, rapine and destruction, which rent their Fatherland from end to end.

Ancient Concepts Undergo Change.

The Persians having few leaders and spiritual teachers, the priests lived to perform the ceremonies of their faith, while all vital original concepts had undergone changes. The Iranian-Aryans, who were Zoroastrians, came over to India, where they found a more congenial home to live in and to practise the tenets of their faith. The ancient concepts had got distorted, until time and later events have helped the Parsis to dive deeper into the truths of the Gathas and the Khordeh-Avesta.

Rationale of Our Faith Discoverable in the Gathas.

For want of correct interpretation of the Gathic ideas, the rationale of our religion continued to remain obscure. French, German and other Savants have rendered immeasurable help to understand and interpret the meanings of the ancient Avestan texts, with the aid of Philology. But the translations they were able to arrive at do not disclose the rationale of the Religion. The Parsi Savants of the 19th and 20th Centuries who have helped the translations and who have relied on the works of the Philologists have not faithfully reproduced the rationale of their religion. Their translations, as versified by them, do little justice to the meanings they themselves seek to impart. Thus the ancient concepts continue to be confounded, and the layman is at his wit's end. This again is a sorry plight for the Parsis.

Efforts are still being made, to translate the Gathas and the Daily Brayers into English, for elders and students, but the prevailing

profound lethargy among the elders to study these works and to explain the rationale to their dependants calls for a genuine impetus.

Our Ceremonies Based on Later Avestan Texts.

Much misconception prevails over our Ceremonies. Some scoff at them. Others elect to get rid of them, many consider that the expenses incurred on ceremonies is an utter waste. Our entire life is one vast ceremonila. Every act of life is a ceremony, good bad or indifferent. Our Urvan(soul) is the doer of these ceremonies. The Urvan is in incessant need to progress towards Perfection through the development of our intelligence. It requires to be pure and in a constant state of reverential adoration towards the great Creator, Ahura-Mazda. It requires to prove by its own attitude towards our faith the means by which all others can attain to Virtue and Progress. Throughout the ages, man who desires to lead a sanctified condition of existence, has devoted his mind and attention to the promulgation of his faith within his body, which he has learnt to regard as his Temple. Thus man's heart must eternally turn to some laid down form of worship, through ceremonies that bring him in closer touch with the symbology of his religion. Zoroastrianism is replete with symbols, through which man can help himself by the performance of his religious ceremonies to fit and acquaint himself for the greater ceremonies of his life, which serve as the wherewithal for the existence of himself and his family and dependants on earth. Man also has to prepare his Urvan for his future condition of life in the spiritual realm. All this demands active efforts in daily life. The Temples of our faith have to be kept clean and in a state of utmost sanctity, to enable the sacred Fire to be maintained in a dignity, which helps to maintain the ancestral Glory of the Iranian race. This demands the maintenance of a staff of Athravans, who have undergone the purificatory rites to be able to work in a Fire-Temple. The religion of the Parsis and the entire race of the Parsis cannot afford to do away with our Temples, Ceremonies, and Priests, so long as we elect to conserve the essential tenets of our faith. It is upto each person to perform most minimum of ceremonies for any purpose, in keeping with his means. Elaborate forms of ceremonies are not laid down for any Parsi Zoroastrian who is indigent. It is entirely due to blatant ignorance about the importance and necessity of ceremonies on the part of Parsis, who see the poor drifting into penury by getting over-much ceremonies done in utter ignorance that there has arisen a wholly uncalled for out cry against Athravans and our ceremonies. The cure lies in educating ourselves, spiritually, and learning to understand our great faith, without vociferously leading a mob to thwart the good actions and intentions of Zoroastrian customs, religion, conventions and ceremonies. We have adequate

books in different understandable languages to know the essentials and importance of different ceremonies. Read, digest and comprehend fully, discuss with equanimity, every point that requires to be elucidated for self and others, and you will feel comforted in your own mind that we have a great religion for observance, ceremonies attaching thereto which serve to guide a Zoroastrian to accommodate himself in regard to any form of ceremony. We owe to our Athravans our reverence and the deepest debt of gratitude for the cause of our religion and its continuity. Very few Athravans now want to follow this most valuable calling. There are many causes for this, but as we all see, the treatment they receive, when functioning in this calling, seems to leave them no other alternative. The entire Parsi community should, with one voice, demand that our Athravans should have better living quarters and conditions for accomplishing their sacred calling.

The Truths We Seek to Explore.

We must seek to fully understand the term God, as Ahura Mazda, as Holy Zarathushtra had comprehended Him. We must seek to fully understand the Amesha Spentas, Spenta Mainyu—the Bountiful Spirit of Ahura Mazda. We must seek to fully understand Fravashis or Farohars are what distinction exists, if all between Ahura Mazda, Spenta Mainyu and Fravashis? What does Zoroastrianism teach on the subject of 'Urvan' and 'Fravashi'? What is the Zoroastrian concept of Life after Death? Why should there be Zoroastrian Temples with the Sacred Fire kept ablaze, at all times? Why should there be an out-cry against Parsis being cremated, should they so desire? Is the cause of Gaomez in Zoroastrian religious ceremonies a necessity? Most of these points tickle the minds of intelligent Parsis today, and give rise to bitter squabbles, ventilated on the platform or the press. An oft-repeated round-table conference of Parsis can serve very little purpose. It is bound to deepen controversy, without achieving any finite purpose. Conferences even though controversial can be directed towards exploring all possible avenues of approach to every question. The notes kept of such conferences can prove immensely helpful for future, even though no finality on any such points can be reached. For each such conference a new chairman may be deemed most advisable. The chairman should be one who is highly intelligent and genuinely accommodating towards the views expressed by anyone. There should be no voting for and against any set of views on any subject. The atmosphere has to remain calm, cool, collected and most congenial, by trying to fully understand the views of every speaker, who should be allotted a fixed time limit. A number of leading legal luminaries can help draw up a set of simple rules to be followed by the chairman and the speakers attending the meetings. This matter has been referred to, owing to the growing tensions in the community on many of the matters stated.

Sceptics have lived in all ages.

Many of them are most intelligent, and consciously believe in the wisdom of their ways. When, however, a sceptic seeks to deny the existence of a Universal Power as that outlined in the Holy Gathas, whom we refer to as God in His Manifestation, then they deny consciously or unconsciously their existence. They live in a state of benightedness. Their joys are short-lived, their harmony will appear disturbed. They possess the equilibrium, but it does not respond to the many demands of their mind, which is in a state of eternal ferment. This reflects the truism that they are not on the Path of 'Asha', but remain far removed from the Grace of the Divinity they seek to deny. In moments of anguish, they are bound to revert to the Mighty Universal Power, they had once denied. But God of the Gathas helps to bring every man on to the Path from which he has happened to digress.

Great truths of life are not solved over a round table but if we can make some people come round to the acceptance of some common concept we hold of the God of the Gathas much of the useless tension can be relieved. The subject will be continued as some false aphorisms on the concept of God in Zoroastrianism, which have distorted the old God, yet made God understandable to many who would have been totally blank otherwise.

HOSHBAAM.

Hoshbaam is a prayer drawing into the soul slumbering in lightless laziness the awareness of the dawn bringing in the new day with its light and life.

Mr. Dinshaw Paowalla of Hongkong in his little booklet The Pathway to God describes dawn as the Heavenwards Home and writes:

"Friends! do you know how precious is our first early morning hour? Can you realise the influence it has upon the successive hours? Can you imagine the marvellous power it has to change the whole nature of our beings?"

My friends! make it a practice without fail to pass the hour quietly - cheerfully, lovingly and peacefully day after day. Persistently struggle in this direction first of all, and then enjoy the fruits in a loving, peaceful, sane and serene life!"

Few people know that Late Dr. Alfred Adler, the founder of individual psychology used curtailing the last hour of so-called so many sleep hours as a therapeutic weapon against neurotic personality trait of doodling and dawning, tossing about in bed, fondling one's own self for avoiding day dawning on him or her. Dawn is the hour "to change the whole nature of your being. is the basis of this technique. One who overcomes doodling against his own inclination learns the method of overcoming many other wrong inclinations - for at dawn straight we may reach Him, as we wish in this prayer, by coupling all our inclinations with Asha (Righteousness) that is uprightness in all our thoughts.

ASHA VAHISTA,

(Weth) Ashoz excellent,

Asha Shraeshta,

Ashoi the best,

Daresame thwa

(May we) see Thee,

pairi thwa jamyam

near Thee reach,

Hamem thwa bakhm

permanently your friendliness (to secure).

The above idea is expressed somewhere in the following lines:

"Be this my portion here on Earth

PARSIANA MAY. 1972

And through Eternity;
That I may know Thy saving grace
That I may sometimes see Thy face."

In Mr. Paowalla's words "Thou hast given to everyone of us, however weak we may be, the right to make a search for Thee whenever we feel the desire for it.....O! the searcher after Light and the seeker of God awake! And Listen! It is through the mind (the thoughts) alone that you have to begin and end. So keep your mind ever alert, quiet and clean that you may see and behold Him seated in the hearts of all beings and things. It is only when the mind is pure----- senses are quiescent that you may see and realise the Lord, Law and Light, all and all in one. Time, space and circumstances may help or hinder but they can never stop you unless you are so inclined---- no matter what obstacles come in your way you will always find a way out. And you will continuously receive and enjoy slow sweet breezes of high and noble aspirations and loving help from the visible and the invisible sources far beyond your utmost expectations."

Oshen Gah is the period of total silence in nature around, from midnight to dawn, and is the best receptive period for help from infinite. Hoshbaam is the prayer for arousing awareness (Hosh means awareness) and apart from early morning prayer reciting of Hoshbaam is recommended during any part of Oshen Gah as an aid to developing awareness and is then known as Oshen-ni-Hoshbaam. It is a short and convenient prayer "as most people do get out of bed in those hours and a fair trial will yield its return; as every prayer is our autosuggestion for self-improvement whether we understand its written language or not."

Ordinarily the best psychological moment, for reciting and meditating, the Hoshbaam should begin 36 minutes before Sunrise and not last 36 minutes beyond sunrise.

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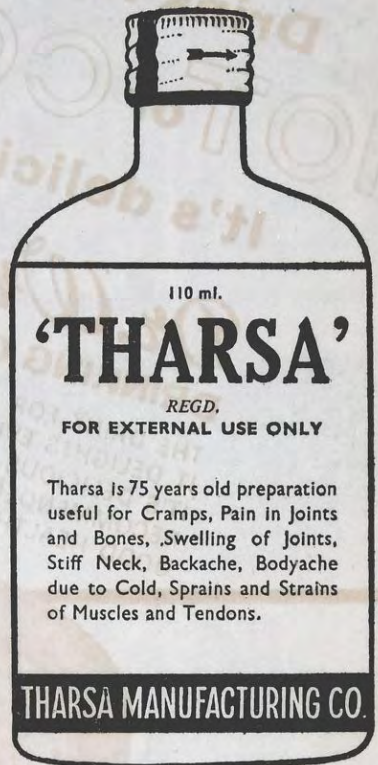
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