

Parsiāna

Sept-Nov 1980

Volume 3

Number 5

Price Re. 1

World Zoroastrian Organization Limited

Ever since the Zoroastrians became an international community, they have felt the need for a world body. Over the past two decades at various forums, in newspapers and magazines, at world congresses and in newsletters, speaker after speaker and writer after writer have voiced the necessity of forming a body that would serve to link Zoroastrians all over the world.

At the Third World Congress held in Bombay in January 1978 under the auspices of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, once again talk of a world body was mooted, largely at the initiative of the influential and moneyed Iranian Zoroastrian delegation. The subsequent jettisoning of the Federation by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat trustees served as a set-back to the formation of a world body while the recent upheavals in Iran crippled support from the once powerful Zoroastrian centre.

Faced with the prospect of an international community in search of a world body, the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Incorporated), with the support of several Iranian Zoroastrians, formally launched the World Zoroastrian Organisation Limited (WZO) in London with a *Jashan* on 20 July.

Open to "persons born into and confirmed in the Zoroastrian faith," the organisation's objectives as stated

in the memorandum of association are amongst others, "advancement of the Zoroastrian faith", "relief of poverty amongst persons of the Zoroastrian religion", "to invite and receive... contributions" and "to provide and maintain burial grounds."

Open to "persons born into and confirmed in the Zoroastrian faith".

Addressing the first committee meeting of the WZO on 18 July at Zoroastrian House in London, the organisation chairperson Dr Ms Shirinbanoo Kutar, a medical practitioner, and a former head of the London Zoroastrians noted, "there is an awakening of consciousness among many Zoroastrians in different parts of the world to revive (the) knowledge of Zoroastrianism. Is this awakening out of fear of extinction, of both religion and community?... It is with these fearful sobering thoughts in mind, that the past and present committees of this Association (Europe) have worked for months to bring about the formation of the World Zoroastrian Organisation."

Bailey Irani, a well-to-do, London hotelier and president of the WZO proclaimed that the body had laid the foundation, "on which the future Zo-

roastrians can build a great edifice... we have been in the wilderness for too long... (the world) will, when they realize who we are, make certain that the faith and fire will never die."

Shahpur Captain, a chartered accountant, president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe and vice-president of the WZO said that, "individual Zoroastrians should join the WZO to give it the grass root support... we consider it essential that every individual Zarhosti (belong) to the world body, (have) a say in its affairs".

Jehan Daruwalla, editor of *The Bombay Samachar* who was present at the WZO deliberations stated in his *Parsi Tari Arsi* editorial column of 10 August, "an important and significant development has taken place... (the WZO) is a great step forward and must command the attention and cooperation of Zoroastrians the world over."

The Kaiser-E-Hind said the first committee meeting of the WZO had rightly been called a "great event".

In two letters Captain sent to *Parsiāna*, he noted that the WZO (Incorporated 1980) is "a legally constituted body with its registered office in London with a committee of 21 chaired by Dr Mrs S. S. Kutar. The committee includes the following overseas members at present: Dr Farhang Meher, Mehraban Zartoshty, Noshirwan Muluk Irani, Rostam Ya-

ganegi, Dr Kersi Antia, Dr Rostam K. Sarfeh and Dadi E. Mistry...

"Is this awakening out of fear of extinction...?"

"The Committee was pleased to have two additional members, namely Mr Shiavax D. Nargolwalla from Delhi and Mr Noshir Irani from Australia. The Committee will be approaching various well-known Zoroastrians all over the world to join the Committee. It is our intention to ensure that the Committee is broadly based with members from all parts of the world to give it a truly international flavour. We shall do our utmost to achieve this.

"The Committee has adopted the *Farohr* as its emblem and *Zoroastrian Unity Worldwide* as its motto. It believes very strongly that unity is of the essence as unity is strength.

"Those interested in knowing more about the WZO in India should contact Mr Dadi E. Mistry at A-215, Defence Colony, New Delhi-24 and those in U.S.A./Canada Dr Kersi Antia at 8352 West 138th Place, Orland Park, Ill. 60462, U.S.A.

"Our first aim is to publicize the formation of the WZO to every Zoro-

astrian and seek to enlist everyone of them to become members. It is our aim to seek co-operation from all Anjumans/Associations etc. to join the WZO under Article 5' of the Articles of Association.

"Now that the WZO has been launched, we intend to make it work and hope that all the Zoroastrians would take it upon themselves to see that they join together for the good of our community.

"We have been in the wilderness for too long..."

"Apart from publicising the WZO to all concerned, the very first project the Committee has decided to take in hand is the compilation of a record of all Anjumans/Charities/Organisations, operational as well as non-operational, active or dormant throughout the world together with details of their communal assets etc. so that a permanent record is available in one place of the total number of bodies and the financial strength of the community. We would therefore request all Zoroastrian Anjumans/Charities/Organisations and individuals to send us the information in as much detail as possible. The let-

ters should be addressed to the Joint Hon. Secretaries, WZO, 88 Compayne Gardens, London, NW6 3RU, U.K."

History

"We in the U.K. ...only wanted to get the ball rolling," declared Captain in this address to the Committee on 18 July, and were "not desirous of stealing the limelight." The Zoroastrian Association of Europe (ZAE) has attempted to get the ball rolling since 1962, when the Incorporated Parsi Association of Europe authorised Bailey Irani to suggest the formation of a world body at the First World Zoroastrian Congress held in Tehran, according to Captain.

Since then efforts have been made by the ZAE Committees to seek legal advice, for the formation of such a world body and also for its incorporation with the United Nations as a "minority religious community residing in many parts of the world," notes Kutar. Dr Jal F. Bulsara, a noted scholar and sociologist, who served for 11 years as the secretary to the Bombay Parsi Panchayat and has also worked with the United Nations Social Affairs Bureau for eight years, according to Kutar, was consulted in this connection by the members of the ZAE

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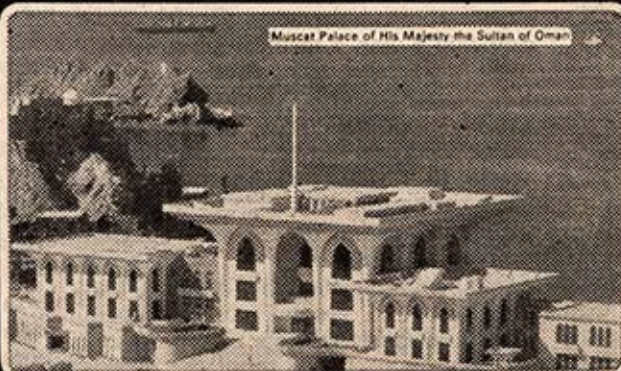
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managing committee in 1977. The result of this was the general agreement to hold a seminar "promoting a World Zoroastrian Organisation... unfortunately, little progress was made after that for various reasons," recalled Kutar.

The reasons, according to her were the reluctance of the managing committee at that time in allowing the headquarters and the money collected to be in India, and the delay in working out a constitution for the body. The committee was awaiting the result of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in 1978, at which the formation of a world body was up for discussion on the agenda.

"The Setting up of an Organisation to provide a link between World Zoroastrians and Continuity of Action after each World Zoroastrian Congress," was the topic at the congress. Amongst the speakers were: Farangis Shahrokh Engineer, Keki Ruttonshaw Bhote, Erach Dinshaw Munshi and Rustom C. Suntook. According to Captain, all the speakers were unanimous that a world organisation should be formed, "the sooner the better."

"In March 1978, we received a letter from the Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress," says Captain, "asking us to nominate a delegate for a link body of special delegates of various continents to consider the constitution and modus operandi of a world body... Nothing whatsoever has transpired since then."

Since then, "urgent requests," were considered by the ZAE committee at numerous meetings to discuss the setting up of a world body, says Captain. These requests came from "Zoroastrians from all walks of life coming to London" and according to Captain, asking the ZAE to "go ahead unilaterally and form the WZO at London. These Zoroastrians felt that an Association like ours, which has been in existence for 114 years now and situated in a politically mature country was ideally suited to take on this work. They also felt that London being an international financial centre was a better place to site the headquarters of the WZO."

As Captain told the gathering after the *Jashan* ceremony "This is but a beginning and we have a long, long road to travel. Centuries of neglect have to be studied, analysed and remedied. A considerable amount of work has to be done... it will require understanding and dedication from all. We will have to learn to sink our dif-

ferences for the betterment of the Zoroastrian community."

The committee of the WZO according to a press release dated 11-10-1980:

Dr (Mrs) Shirinbanoo Sohrab Kutar, Chairman, Bailey Rustom Irani, President, Shahpur Framroze Captain, Vice President, Soli Pestonji Master, Jt. Hon. Secretary, Shahrokh Shahrokh, Jt. Hon. Secretary, Dinyar Jal Modi, Hon. Treasurer, the Com-

mittee Members are: Shrivastav Dinshaw Nargolwalla, Nani Palkhiwala, Mrs Roda Mistry, Dr Freddie A. Mehta, Dadi E. Mistry, Noshirwan Muluk Irani, Dr Farhang Meher, Mehraban Zartoshty, Rostam Yagane-gi, Bahman Mobed, Dr Kersi Antia, Noshir Irani, Dr Rostam K. Sarfeh, Jal Rustomji Modi, Mrs Ruby Nari Contractor, Ervad Burjor Maneckji Magol, Ervad Zal Nariman Sethna, Mrs Manijeh Bhumgara, Meherwan Shapurji Sepai.

Who can be a member?

Extracts from the Articles of Association

1. For the purpose of registration the number of the Members of the Association is declared to be limited to 50,000 consisting of Grand Patrons, Patrons, Life Members, Ordinary Members, and such other classes of Members as the Committee of the Association may from time to time elect. The Committee of the Association may, whenever they shall think fit, register an increase of Members.

2. These Articles shall be construed with reference to the provisions of the Companies Acts 1948 to 1976 and terms used in these Articles shall be taken as having the same respective meanings as they have when used in those Acts.

3. The Association is established for the purposes expressed in the Memorandum of Association.

Qualification of Members

4. Persons born into and confirmed in the Zarathustrian faith only shall, subject to election as hereinafter provided, be qualified to become Members of the Association.

Qualification for Registration

5. Anjuman of Zarathustrian faith only shall, subject to election hereinafter provided, be eligible for registration under Article II.

Admission of Members

6. Save as aforesaid persons shall be admitted to Membership of the Association by election only.

7. The election of Members shall be

vested in the Committee and be made in such manner and at such times as the Committee may from time to time determine.

8. Every person shall be deemed to have agreed to become a Member of the Association who shall have signified his (or her) desire to become a Member, and shall have been duly elected.

9. The Members of the Association shall be those persons whose names are for the time being upon the Register of the Association.

10. The Secretary shall from time to time enter on the Register the names of such persons who shall have been duly elected to Membership of the Association.

11. Membership of the Association for individuals may be either (1) Grand Patron, (2) Patron, (3) Life or (4) Ordinary Membership.

12. Anjuman (organised bodies) may register with the Association for an annual registration fee.

Honorary Members

13. On recommendation, Members of the Managing Committee may elect, by not less than three-fourths majority, as Honorary Member any Zarathustrian who may have rendered meritorious services to the community in religious, social, economic or intellectual advancement of the community or whose public services and achievements may have reflected exceptional credit on the community.

ESSAY CONTEST

"A Zoroastrian abroad wishes to create a charitable foundation either in India or in Canada of Rs. 10,00,000.00 (Rupees One Million) to serve as seed money for the benefit of Zoroastrians of India to enable them to engage in activities of self-employment.

Suggestions are invited in

the form of a typewritten essay of not more than 2,000 words with particular reference to Indian Income Tax considerations.

Send entries not later than December 15, 1980 to: G.P.O. Box No. 892. First Prize Rs. 1000; second prize Rs. 750 and Third prize Rs. 500.

AEK ATMAKATHA

The Life of Dastur Dhalla-IX

THE BURNING QUESTION

Dastur Dhalla: The Saga of a Soul, the autobiography of Dr Maneckji N. Dhalla, the reputed Zoroastrian scholar and the high priest of the Pakistan Parsis, has been translated from the Gujarati 'Aek Atmakatha' by Gool and Behram Rustomji, and published by the Dastur Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi. This is the ninth condensed extract from the book.

THE STORY SO FAR

Born into a poor dastur family in Surat on 27 August 1875, Dhalla moved with his family to Karachi in 1878. He started schooling at six and by eight he was married to five year old Cooverbai.

Failing to pass his school exams, Dalla sought various forms of employment while educating himself in religious matters which brought him public acclaim and arrangements were made for him to study Iranian languages at the Sir Jamsetji Jeejibhoy and Mulla-Pheroze Madressahs in Bombay. He arrived in the city when the Parsi orthodox and liberal factions of Bombay were engaged in controversies and the Parsi Theosophists were gaining ground.

Dhalla met Shapurji Dorabji Saklatvala, a nephew of Jamshedji Tata, Jeevanjee Modi and other prominent Zoroastrians of the time. Dhalla obtained his masters degree in Iranian languages from Bombay University, and with the help of Saklatvala, Tata and others fulfilled his ambition of studying at a western university. Dhalla enrolled at Columbia University, New York, U.S.A., under the guidance of Professor Jackson, a well known Zoroastrian scholar of the west.

Columbia University's dormitories were to be completed after two months so Jackson had arranged for my stay at the residence of a doctor opposite the college.

My arrival caused Jackson great joy. The Parsi community had sent me to study and he considered me to be the representative of the Parsis of the sub-continent at Columbia. He took a special interest in my education and was extremely eager to give me the benefit of his knowledge and experience. To see me working as though competing with him in diligence and perseverance gave him great satisfaction.

I would rise at dawn by four. The seminar room of the library closed at ten on winter nights and at eleven in summer. I was always the last to leave. Even during the four months' summer vacations, I would be working as usual in the seminar room. Time and again Jackson would persuade me that I was straining beyond limits. I replied that I was shouldering a very grave responsibility. I had come to study at the community's expense, hence I must show such satisfactory results that the community would not hesitate in future to help other youths for similar studies.

We had to choose one major and two minor subjects. My major was Iranian languages and Sanskrit. My first minor was philology or the science of languages, while philosophy was my second minor. Besides these, I had taken French and German. In order to understand the rules of grammar and syntax, I had taken Latin and Greek also for one term. Learning by rote had no place in the overall system of education, but it aimed entirely at developing the student's inherent thinking capacity through his powers of comprehension, discrimination, assimilation and discussion. No

particular emphasis was laid on examinations. Daily, while lecturing, our professor of philosophy would lead us into discussions and arguments regarding important problems and would evaluate our worth according to our participation and contribution and no examinations were taken. Besides the books prescribed for the course, we were obliged to read many additional books on each subject at home.

Seven months after reaching New York I received a wire conveying the tragic news of the passing away of my noble father. He had toiled till the end of his life and was ill in bed for four days only before he returned to his Creator.

The Ardibehst Yasht gives greater importance to faith healers than to herbal cures, medicine or surgery.

From the monthly allowance that I received from Bombay, I saved and sent Rs. 50 for the upkeep of the family. With the death of my father the 10 or 15 rupees which he had contributed towards the household expenditure had stopped. Besides running the home, an interest had to be paid every month. I started sending Rs. 25 per month extra and practised more rigid economy. Washing, boot-polishing and other similar tasks I performed myself. If I had to cover a distance of three or four miles, I always walked. Hence there was no further scope for economising except to cut down on food.

We dined in the university dining-hall which chanced to be directly opposite Professor Jackson's class-room. On an average students spent \$7 to \$8 a week on food. I always spent

\$3 to \$3.50. I curtailed that too and brought it down to \$2.50. Quite often I would eat just a slice of bread and a banana at home. People normally have two meat meals a day there—in fact three, including the ham and bacon breakfast. I took only two meat courses in the whole week.

Jackson was a very kind and tender-hearted person so he made secret attempts to help me. Jeewanjee Mody used to send money from Bombay to the branch of the Tata Co. on Wall Street and I collected it from there. Once the bank manager told me that an anonymous donor had written from Bombay to pay me \$15 a month. As this sounded unbelievable I refused to accept the money. At last the truth came to light. Professor Jackson had made arrangements that the money be deducted from his own account.

Every Sunday I went to churches of different denominations but I had not been able to visit a Christian Science Church. A distinguished surgeon had examined a patient and had decided to operate upon him. His friends and relatives had no faith in medicine or in surgery but were staunch believers in the science of mind-healing, so they kept the patient under their own mode of treatment. He happened to die, so a heated controversy arose in the press whether or not the government had the right to ban such sects in order to prevent untimely deaths.

This reminded me of our ancient system of healing as given in the *Ardibehst Yasht*. In olden days people believed that all ailments originated from evil spirits or through magicians well-versed in black magic. It was assumed that the particular spirit of the disease of which a person was suffering entered the patient's body and took possession of him, hence it was necessary to exorcise that spirit with magical and mystical charms. Due to this, the *Ardibehst Yasht* gives greater importance to faith healers than to herbal cures, medicine or surgery. If such cures are effected, they are not so much through so-called magical or mystical prayers and mantrams, as through auto-suggestion. Science has now discarded such primitive customs and has discovered more sure and scientific methods of treatment.

The ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian or Indo-Iranian religions had not clearly defined the individual immortality of man's soul or spirit. In the history of religions, Zarathushtra for the first time revealed such teachings in a flawless manner. It is the principle on which all great religions

are founded. The spirit of the dead can maintain contact with the living; on certain days of the year dedicated to their sacred memory, they visit their dear ones on earth; they are invisibly present in ceremonies performed in their honour; such are the teachings found in these religions. Each generation has, therefore, tried to convey messages to their departed ones or to converse with them.

Seance, the experiment of recalling the spirit of the dead through a medium, which is prevalent today originated in a small town near New York in 1848. Later it spread everywhere. A friend once took me to one such exhibition. Eight of us met in a small room where two gentlemen were going to demonstrate the phenomenon. The room was darkened by drawing thick, black curtains. The room was fragrant with some sort of an incense and soft strains of music emanated from an organ. We were made to sit in a circle and each firmly held the hand of his neighbour. Thus all hands were securely fastened. Within minutes a pure, white apparition of soft, silken lamb hair was visible. On enquiry by the medium the apparition introduced herself as the spirit of Effie, a maiden who had recently died. The apparition began talking in English in an effeminate voice. At intervals those present felt that something was striking against their heads. When it hit me I felt it was some kind of a small, light, shallow instrument like the horn used by a ship's officer to amplify his voice. The demonstration came to an end. The apparition vanished. Its voice ceased. Of those present one believed the apparition to be a real spirit, two became doubtful, while five of us refused to give it greater credence than a sleight of hand or the skilful play of electric lights, the voice control of a ventriloquist and the dexterity of the demonstrator.

I delivered my first public lecture in America on the Zoroastrian religion at the University under the chairmanship of Professor Jackson. Together with the Bishop of New York and other priests, I was invited to speak at the centennial celebration of a church. Those affiliated to the Unitarian Church are more broad-minded.

Besides delivering a sermon in one of their churches, I had also conducted their Sunday service once. The day following one of my lectures on the Zoroastrian religion, an American gentleman came to my house with a book containing Darmesteter's trans-

lation of the *Vendidad*. Every page of his book had notations. He informed me that he was interested in the Zoroastrian religion and that he had been studying its literature since a long time.

He added that members of the Vendata Society were spreading the Hindu religion in America; Buddhists were propagating their teachings; Bahais were publicizing their faith; Muslims were expounding the thoughts of Prophet Mohammed; but nothing was done about the Zoroastrian religion. There were members of the Mazdaznan Society but they could not be credited as preaching pure Zoroastrian precepts.

He, therefore, prevailed upon me not to return to India but to establish such a society in America and to be its leader. He was prepared to take the initiative and shoulder all the financial responsibilities. I informed him that I could not accept his offer as I had to serve my community in my own country. He was very sorry that I had turned down his offer.

American leaders of the Bahai sect often met me and tried to draw me to the new religion that they had adopted. I always silenced them with the superiority of my own faith.

Shortly after Professor Haugh and Darmesteter, Professor Jackson had visited India, hence any questions that were being debated in the community were sent to them inviting their opinions. During my stay their opinion was invited from Bombay on two such important questions at short intervals.

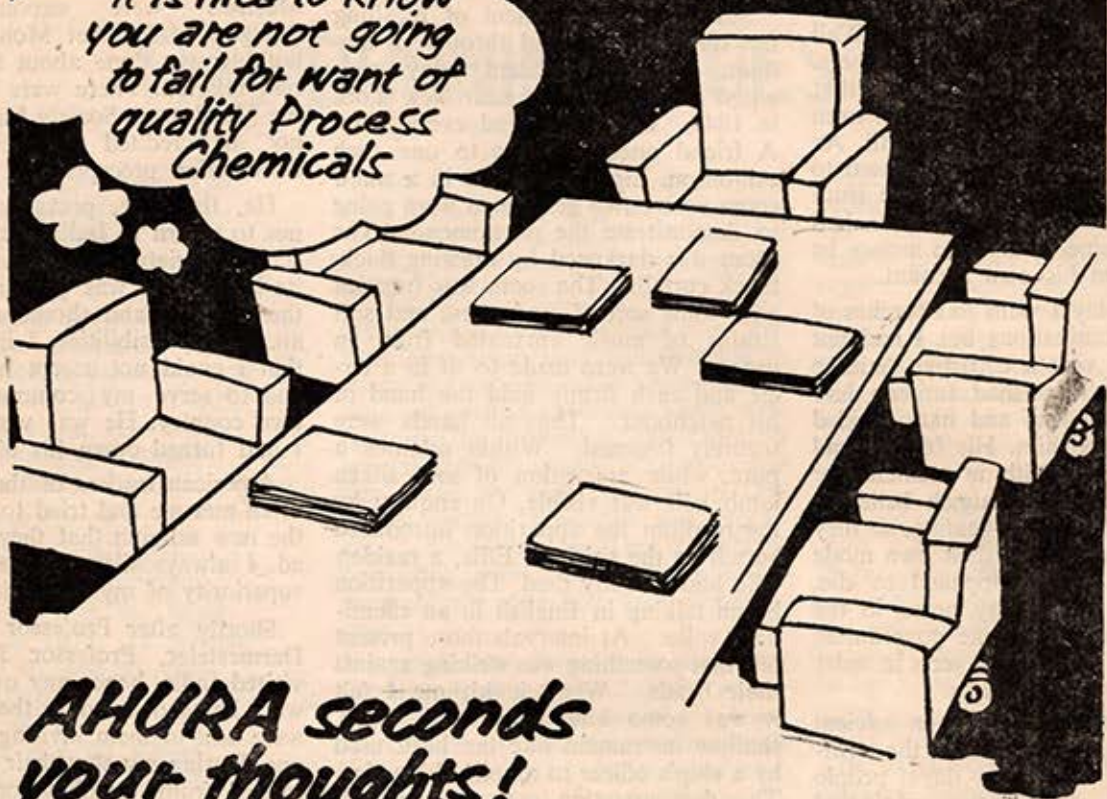
Great care was taken to bid a befitting farewell lest they stay behind and take along with them some other inmate of the home.

Traditionally the *Farvadeghan* days dedicated to the sacred memory of the *Farohars* of the dead and commonly known as the *Muktads*, were prolonged for 18 days. It had become a custom to have the *Muktad* for the five days of the ending year, the five days of the *Gathas* plus eight days of the dawning year.

As the difference between soul and spirit had been lost sight of, a 100 years ago everyone believed that the *Muktads* were dedicated to the souls of the dead. It was believed that the souls invisibly descended during those days and partook of the consecrated food. *Amerdad Sal*, the 18th and final day, was termed the 'day of return'—

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i.e. the day on which to extend a 'farewell' to them on their return to the other world. It was as though they were supplied with rations for their journey back to their spiritual abode. According to our forefathers, on this day the souls were given an affectionate 'send-off' and entreated to return some day.

The custom of according a welcome and bidding farewell to the souls of the dead either on the day of their death or on their death anniversary, when they visit their earthly abode, comes down from ancient times and is prevalent amongst various nations. Great care was taken to bid a befitting farewell lest they stay behind and take along with them some other inmate of the home. Due to this fear, the corpse was not taken out of the front entrance but through another exit, so that the soul of the dead may not remember the door and re-enter to carry away someone else!

The Rahnumai Mazdaznan Society was the first to enlighten the community that the soul and the spirit are not the same.

This superstitious fear of death stretches to such extremes that even today the custom prevails among certain people that if perchance someone dies during the *punchak* days, bundles of clothes numbering the *punchak* days are given to the corpse-bearers to place on the bier so as to prevent further deaths during those days!

The Rahnumai Mazdaznan Society was the first to enlighten the community that the soul and the spirit are not the same. They published the paragraph in the *Fravadin Yasht* relating to the 'ten nights' and supplied information that only 10 and not 18 were dedicated to the *Farohars*. As this directly concerned Zoroastrian ceremonies a heated debate resulted. When Professor Jackson's opinion was invited he voted in favour of 10 days basing his reply on the *Yasht*.

Recently the question of cremating a corpse was being debated vehemently in our community in Bombay for the first time. Opinions of western scholars of Iranian literature were being invited from Bombay. Professor Jackson was also asked to give his opinion. This method of disposing the dead body had commenced recently even in the West. Public opinion was still opposed to it. Traditions die hard. They are always considered sacred and infallible and people are

not prepared to listen to arguments regarding new methods, however sensible they be. Speaking against the crematorium, at times some priests do not fail to present the most ridiculous protests. They declare with genuine belief that on the Day of Judgement all the dead will be made to rise in their earthly form, hence if their bodies be cremated how would God Almighty find their flesh and bones.

Although Professor Jackson was a staunch Christian, he was in favour of cremation. Later, according to his own wishes his body was cremated. Yet, while expressing his opinion, he was careful not to wound the sentiments of the Parsi community.

Incidentally, I came into close association with this burning question of cremation. The sons of an enterprising family of Mora Sumari had, in the beginning of the last century, established branches of their Bombay business at Aden, Hodeida, Madagascar, London, Paris and later at New York. Mr. Rustomji Behramji, the head of their firm at New York had left Bombay 40 years ago and had resided in New York since. This elderly co-religionist was most anxious that when he died his body should be cremated. He happened to die after a short illness.

Sensing that the end was drawing near, in the presence of five people he expressed his desire to be cremated

If their bodies be cremated how would God Almighty find their flesh and bones.

and I was requested to deliver a speech befitting the solemnity of the occasion before those who had assembled at the funeral. Everything was done according to his wishes. This was the first time I saw a crematorium and witnessed a cremation. Two men slowly brought a stretcher on rubber wheels somewhat similar to the one used to convey a patient from the operation theatre. They were clad in pure white garments and wore white gloves. The trolley was as high as the oven itself. Small wheels had been fixed to the coffin that was placed on the carrier. The doors of the oven were opened with due solemnity with two long rods resembling billiard cues and the two men gently pushed the coffin into the oven and closed the door. Thus the corpse, fully clad together with its coffin, burnt to ashes within an hour and a half. After that the ashes were stored in a glass jar and

disposed of according to the wishes of the dear ones. Our good friend's ashes were sent to London and buried in the Zoroastrian cemetery.

A very large majority of people bury their dead. There is a very strong resentment against this system in our religion. The *Dakhminishini* system does not occupy so much space and does not disturb the peace and comfort of the living as happens in burials. The buried corpse lies in the ground rotting for years. On the other hand, after deep consideration, I came to the conclusion that the Zoroastrian custom of exposing the body to the rays of the sun would be impracticable and impossible in large cities like New York and London with a population of nearly seven to eight million, where the daily death-rate would exceed 75 and where flesh-eating animals were not available. I read some more literature concerning cremation and during my leisure hours visited the crematorium again and very minutely examined this scientific method of disposing of the dead body in the least possible time. Of the existing systems of disposing of the dead body, from the point of view of sanitation and safety of the living, I found this new method the quickest and the best.

My study-course at Columbia University had come to an end. In 1906 I secured the master's degree. In 1908 I got a Ph.D. Making the best use of the money that my beloved community had spent on me during my four years' stay in America, I did all I could to widen the horizons of my mind. I tried to garner as much knowledge as I could. I lived a pure life. Neither the fashions of the day nor the glamour of the west captivated me. In dress and behaviour I remained as simple as I was before coming to America. Just as I had gained a great deal from my studies at the University, I attained much from my wide, personal reading, from listening to innumerable lectures and by keeping my ears and my eyes wide open, hearing all, seeing all and living a life of quest and questioning.

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DO YOU KNOW?

That any Parsi Zoroastrian over the age of 21, that means *you*, may participate in the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) elections

— that there are around 45,000 persons eligible to become voters from the Bombay Parsi community

— that the present membership of the BPP is about 7,000

— of these only about 1,500 voted in the last BPP elections

— that the present trustees of the BPP owe their election to three percent of the community

— that community assets with the BPP are reportedly around Rs 9 crores at book value and many times more at market value

— that most Parsis do not know how the election system works that the system, to present it graphically, works as below.

— All persons or donors on the 'F' Register automatically become members of the Anjuman Committee

— The number of persons to be elected to the 'E' Register will equal the number of persons on 'F' Register as of 31 December 1980

— 'E' Register elections are held once every seven years

— A term of a Trustee is for 10 years

'E' Register elections: February 1981
Final date of registration: 31 December 1980

Register Yourself and Vote

You owe that responsibility to yourself and the community. Only then may you expect the BPP to fulfil its responsibilities.

How to Register

Registration forms for BPP membership may be obtained either directly from the BPP office at 209 Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Bombay 400 001 (phone 267421) or the local association of your baug or the one nearest your residence. The form is common for the 'A', 'C' & 'D' Registers.

A complete application consists of:

— Registration form: filled in either in Gujarati or English

— Application fee: Rs 5 for 'D' Register and Rs 7 for 'C' Register.

— For 'C' Register: copy of graduation certificate.

— For 'A' Register: Proof of donation of Rs 500 to Rs 5,000 to any BPP charity.

Complete applications may be submitted either directly to the BPP office or to the local associations. The associations will make arrangements to submit the application to the BPP.

BPP Identity Certificates will be issued by the BPP office. Persons using the assistance of associations may collect their Identity Certificates from the association office.

In order to vote for the BPP elections the Identity Certificate *must* be produced.

A person once registered remains a member for life.

Request:

Enroll in 'D' Register even if you qualify for the 'C' Register, because:

i) 70 percent of the 'E' Register is elected by the 'D' Register as against only 10 percent by 'C' Register.

ii) Present enrollment in 'D' Register is around 6,500 as against only about 350 in 'C' Register.

Issued by the Committee for Electoral Rights (CER).

