

"MIRACLES" AMONG PARSEES

[Dini Avaz is glad to begin a new series of articles written by Mr. K. D. CHARGEMAN. The writer has incorporated in them some of his personal experiences, along with some other episodes which highlights the glory and loftiness of the Zoroastrian Religion]

Have you noticed that the Christian Religion flourishes, among other things, on stories of "miracles" put forward from innumerable pulpits on Sundays and other holy days. These stories create an impression on children, who grow up to be defenders of faith.

Unfortunately, we Parsees, have no weekly sermons like those of the padres in churches or of the Maulvis and Mullahs on Fridays in mosques. While Parsees are quick to salute the religious customs, traditions and rites of other religions, when it comes to our own religion, we begin to hair-split and pin-prick! Thus the feeble minded begin to seek solace in other faiths.

Our Hoshbam prayer indicates that just before sunrise and for some time thereafter, the doors of the Amshaspands and Yazatas remain open for receiving prayers by human beings. In return, blessings and guidance are poured forth by the Divine Beings.

This writer remembers at least three dreams which he had during the 72 minute period before sunrise, which warned him of dire consequences in a coming event. Those evil persons, who plan and plot against their chosen

victim do not know how the yazatas warn God's good men of evil designs of their enemies through dreams and save them.

Sometimes God gives you ideas to save yourself when dreams cannot be of help; for example, making you go before the time of appointment, or somehow delay you to reach the appointed place, thus unnerving the forces of evil.

Firdousi's Shahnameh is full of such dreams, like King Jamshed's for saving his flock: Kings Ardeshir Babekan and Noshirwan-e-Adil's regarding Iran's destiny. Firdousi has said that whatever he has written is from various religious texts and literature of Zoroastrianism available to him. Many episodes of the Shahnameh are corroborated by our religious scriptures.

"Miracles" always have behind them a supernatural hand. Life is full of mysteries which are revealed to persons who commit few sins and lead moral lives. Given below are some of these "miracles" which deserve to be noted, particularly by our younger generation".

NIRANG:

Our mobeds (yaozdathregars), even during these highly materialistic and polluted times, can still produce Nirang from our Varasijs' urine (Taro) which is used for religious ceremonies like Navjotes, marriages, Navar etc. This Nirang, which is produced during the Nirangdin ceremony, remains free from all kinds of putridities for years together.

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It is because of the high efficacy and power of the Nirangdin ritual which lasts for about seven hours, and because of the talismanic effects of the **Manthra** (prayers) recited therein, that the **Nirang** remains potable for many years. If this is not a "miracle" of our Religion even in these highly polluted times, what is?

(To be continued)

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MIRACLES

Dastur Arda Viraf: He was the Head Priest during the reign of the founder of the mighty Sassanian Empire, Ardeshir Babekan. A very highly advanced soul, Arda Viraf was one of the very few saints known in Zoroastrian history, who performed what is technically called Nirang-i-Var. This is a superhuman effort, in which the saint concerned proves in one way or another the supremacy and glory of the Zoroastrian Religion.

However, Dastur Arda Viraf's was not only different but unique, in that, he had to get the information from the World Beyond about the goings-on and happenings there, at the behest of King Ardeshir. Arda Viraf was selected from 4000 contestants to carry out this unprecedented assignment.

After a week of reciting certain very powerful Nirangs (incantations) in which he was assisted by other very pious Zoroastrian priests, Arda Viraf's soul took off towards the other worlds - both "Paradise" and "Hell" while his body lay inert but warm on earth, guarded by the holy priests.

For eight days, the great Dastur's soul, guided by Adar and Sarosh Yazads towards the highest as well as the nethermost regions. Thereafter, his soul re-entered his body, and what he dictated became known as the Arda Viraf Namah, which later influenced Milton and Dante to write similar works.

No one before or after Arda Viraf anywhere in the world achieved such

a unique feat, once again proving beyond doubt the glory of the Zoroastrian religion and its prayers and rituals.

Nar Asho Shiavaksh: Thousands of years before the Sassanian Dynasty, and even before the advent of Prophet Zarathushtra, during the Kyanian Dynasty was born to King Kaikaus, an illustrious, very holy son, Shiavaksh. He was trained and groomed from early childhood by the greatest paladin of them all - "Jehan Pahlavan" Rustom. The result was that Shiavaksh grew up to be a strapping, handsome young man of steel.

Though he was basically trained in the martial arts, he was a very pious soul. So much so, that in Avesta he has been described as "Hu-deed", meaning, "one with a benevolent eye", that is just a glance from him, and a lion would behave like a lamb, a prostitute would overnight become a nun, and so forth. That's why in our scriptures, he is referred to as Nar Asho Shiavaksh.

Unfortunately for him, however, his step-mother was greatly attracted towards him. But when she found that all her overtures were in vain, she decided to take revenge on him. She complained to King Kaikaus that he had outraged her modesty and that because of a miscarriage, the child she bore had died.

Thus Shiavaksh was made to undergo the ordeal of fire, because in spite of his protests, his innocence had to be proved the hard way.

Reciting the then prevailing Mazda-yasni Nirang, Shiavaksh went through the ordeal successfully and emerged unscathed. This was perhaps the first fire-ordeal for any human being. It was certainly the first Nirang-i-Var in Zoroastrian history, which proved the miraculous powers of our Nirang and Manthra.

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The Ijashne Ceremony: It is an established fact that if the Ijashne ceremony is properly and lawfully performed (wherein recited), if the two priests performing it (Yaozdathregars) have properly taken their Bareshnum and maintained it, when, after the ceremony, they take the consecrated water (libation) in a

small vessel to the well and hold it above the well waters, the latter rise to "meet" the "Zor" water which the Yaozdathregars held! Upto the 19th Century, this wasn't a rare phenomenon and there are recorded instances of many leading Zoroastrians incident, one among them being Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy, the first Baronet.

What actually happens is that the "Zor" water held by the priest possess such a powerful electro-magnetic force, that, on the principle of "like attracts like", the level of the well water rises considerably to "meet" the consecrated Ijashne water.

-- K. D. Chargeman

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