

THE PARSEE VOICE

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For Private Circulation

Risen from the ashes

After nearly twenty years, **The Parsee Voice** stages a comeback. In the last two to three years, a vacuum has been noticed regarding the expression of the voice of the righteous, orthodox Parsees. We trust that the re-birth of "**The Parsee Voice**" will, to a large extent, fill this lacuna.

We earnestly request our dear readers to give us unstinted support in every form and manner. Both, bouquets and brickbats, are welcome. Let this fortnightly live up to its name and be the real Voice of our community. We seek Lord Ahura Mazda's blessings for its prosperity.

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– Editor

Editorial

A Supreme Irony ! Who Is A Zarthushti?

Yes, indeed! It is an irony that thousands of years after the Prophet and more than 1200 years after the advent of the Parsees in India – the only true followers of the Zoroastrian religion in the physical world – one has to take up the very elementary question of "Who is a Zarthushti?" today.

This is because imposters of all hues and shades around the world have begun usurping the title of the natural followers of our Prophet, for reasons that defy tradition and the basic tenets of the Zoroastrian religion! We shall come to that presently (see also the article in this issue by our Associate Editor). But let's begin from the beginning.

I. ONLY A MAZDAYASNI CAN BE A ZARTHUSHTI

In our *Kusti* ceremony, the *Jase Mey Avangahe Mazda* is recited. There, right in the beginning, it is said, "*Mazdayasno Ahmi, Mazdayasno*

Zarathushtrish" ... "I am a *Mazdayasni*, I am a *Mazdayasni Zarthushti*". Who, then, is a *Mazdayasni*?

Before the advent of our Prophet, the world had no established religion. The people belonged either to the white side of nature (the *Mazdayasnis*) or the dark side (the *Daevayasnis*). The former, as their name suggests, were the Mazda Worshippers and the latter were the demon worshippers. There were frequent battles and wars between these two groups. Many of these events and personalities of the *Peshdadian* and early *Kyanian* periods have been immortalised by the great Iranian epic poet, Firdausi.

It was when the dark forces gained immense strength and the White Side grew weaker, that the "Soul of the Earth" clamoured for a Saviour" (*Gatha Ahunavaiti*). Hence came Prophet Zarthostht, who brought the demons under control and even destroyed the more stubborn

ones. He cleansed the *Mazdayasni Deen*, which had been badly infected by the *Daevayasni* virus! The good *Mazdayasnis* then came to be known as *Mazdayasni Zarthushtis*. **Ever since, a Zarthushti is one who is born of Mazdayasni Zarthushti parents.**

II. WHAT ABOUT THE PARSEES?

Yet today, thousands of years after the Prophet, we call ourselves Parsee-Zoroastrians. Two questions arise: Is the term 'Parsee' the same as the ancient Avesta word, *Mazdayasni*? If so, when and how did the term 'Parsee' originate?

The answer to the first question is, yes! The word 'Parsee' is an ethno-religious term, signifying both the race and the religion.

It was in the inscriptions of Darius I (the Great) at Naqsh-e Rostam, that one first comes across the word **Parsee** in recorded history, as available to us. This is what he wrote:

"I, Darius, the Great King, the King of Kings... a Parsee, son of a Parsee, an Aryan, of Aryan lineage."

Linguistic evidence clearly suggests that the word, **Paarsa, Pars**, occurs as **Parsua** in an Assyrian inscription of the 8th century B.C.!

All this gives the lie to the belief that the term Parsee was only an ethnic term and had nothing to do with the Zoroastrian religion. **Only the Parsees of Iran during the Achaemenian times and thereafter, during the Parthian and Sassanian periods practised the Zoroastrian religion.**

Pars province, from which the Parsees came, was the only one in Iran which successfully resisted all attempts by foreign invaders to subjugate it by means of their culture and ideologies. As Prof. A.V. William Jackson, the mentor of Dr. M.N. Dhalla, said, "...the inhabitants of Farsistan, the original Parsis, have remained free from foreign element and have preserved more nearly the Persian type of Darius... **Purest of all, perhaps, though few in number, are the Zoroastrians who have maintained the old Iranian Religion and have never intermarried with alien races.**"

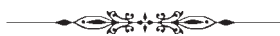
The founder of the Sassanian Dynasty, Ardashir Papakan, has been referred by an Indian astrologer, in the Pahlavi text, *Kārnāmak i Artakshir Papakan*, as, *Khvatây pārsikān* (*the King of the Parsees*).

It is more than evident from the above historical examples, that, the acid test of being a Zoroastrian is, as Darius the Great said 2500 years ago, *pārsa pārsahyā puthra, ariya ariyachithra*, and that the term Parsee was not used for us only after our advent in India.

III. THE FANCIFUL, LUDICROUS MODERN DEFINITION OF A ZARTHOSHTI

The highly materialistic, permissive culture of the west has today spawned many Janes and Johnnies, however, who, thoroughly ignorant of the fundamentals of the Zoroastrian religion (the pure genes and blood), and of Zoroastrian history, have vulgarised and prostituted the definition of a Zarthushti! **According to them, wholly aided and abetted by organisations like the WZO, which has played, and is playing no mean a part, in knocking out the very vital term, Parsee, from their name, a Zarthushti is one who professes the faith of Zoroaster!!** Thus, there are Rons and Dons, Alis and Marias in North America, now even Latin America and Europe, who under the aegis of organisations like the WZO, style themselves Zoroastrians!

Dear Readers, note very carefully that under the 'cloak' of charity, education, medicine, etc. the WZO and the new global world body (bodies?) that will come up shortly, will hijack our unique Parsee Zarthoshti Anjuman of India, which has successfully maintained a separate identity for more than 1200 years and merge it with the spurious, fraudulent "Zoroastrians" of the West! The Parsee race has been preserved and protected for over a millenium by our Holy Iranshah and the *Pav Mahal* associated with it. It can be obliterated as a separate race and community in just about 12 years, if organisations like the WZO have their say! This is a Wake-up Call for every devout, right-thinking Parsee of India!



Tentacles of an Octopus

The Flip Side of WZO – I

Parsees! Stop being mesmerised!

Through the years, the World Zoroastrian Organisation has, with its subtle propaganda and persuasion, hoodwinked the Parsee community of India into make-believing that its Indian offshoots, like the WZO Trust Fund of India and the WZO Trust Fund for Women & Children are the true benefactors of the community, through its multifarious social activities.

What gullible Parsees overlook is that the word "Parsee" has been deliberately omitted from the names of all organisations of Zoroastrians, established abroad! **There is a definite ulterior, mischievous motive in doing this.** How and when did this come about?

BEFORE THE 1960s

Since the end of the 19th century, a few Parsees from India began to settle in England. Gradually, in the early part of the 20th century, they felt the need for an organisation for the new immigrants. The name of the organisation underwent changes, with the word **Parsee** well entrenched therein! In the sixties, the association came to be known as the "Incorporated Parsi Association of Europe". The word "Zoroastrian" was nowhere to be found. They all rightly felt that a Parsee is always necessarily a Zarthoshti. Among the leading trustees of the Association was Mr. Jehangir Moos, whose daughter had married a non-Zoroastrian! So, in the early seventies, under the leadership of Mr. Moos, the word "Parsi" was removed for the first time and the word "Zoroastrian" substituted! Many innocent Parsees in India were blissfully oblivious of the game-plan of certain *maartey-miyas* of Europe. Supremely ironical as it may seem, the umbrella word "Zoroastrian" was, in later years, to cover a multitude of sins!! But a few sagacious Parsees of India did see through the game. They knew that this gimmick was to rope in not only those who were in the borderline, but even those who were not born of Zoroastrian parents!

Later, the incorporated Zoroastrian Association of Europe became the "Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe" (ZTFE).

In July 1980, a progeny of the ZTFE and the World Zoroastrian Congress, held every four years, was born. It was christened the World Zoroastrian Organisation. The founders of the WZO, in the beginning, played goody-goody. In a circular letter brought out at the time of its inauguration, one of the founder members,

Shahpur F. Captain, who was later to take a number of somersaults, said: "A small community scattered all over the world needs a central organisation to unite its members and to look after their interests in the modern uncertain times."

Mr. Bailey R. Irani, the first President of the WZO, said in his inaugural address on 18th July, 1980: "We owe to our children and the future generations a brighter faith and fire. The ancient heritage handed to us must be preserved, cherished and carefully handed over to the future Zoroastrians. Know thyself. Know who you are. Be proud to be a Zarthushti. Support your World Zoroastrian Organisation."

Mr. Irani was simply not aware that 13 years later, the new office-bearers led by Shahpur F. Captain, would toss that "ancient heritage" and the "Zarthushti pride" out of the window!

One of the perpetrators of this sleight of hand was Mr. Dinshaw K. Tamboly.

FRAUD ON THE RELIGION AND COMMUNITY

Article 4 of WZO was substituted with a new one in 1993. The new Article read, "The following can become Members of the Association (WZO):

- (a) persons born into and confirmed into the Zoroastrian faith; or
- (b) non-Zoroastrian spouses married to Zoroastrians, and/or
- (c) children of marriages described in (b) above."

The ostensible reason for the radical change, given in WZO's letter of 12th March, 1993 to the members, is "For several years now, our representatives and committee members around the world have been told by a very large number of Zoroastrians, that it is time the communal organisations admitted into membership, **those non-Zoroastrians who have married Zoroastrians and their progeny**".

In the last decade, after the flood-gates were opened, a whole jing-bang lot of people have penetrated the WZO as members and have started calling themselves "Zoroastrians"!! The WZO should, on just this one count, be ashamed to call itself a "Zoroastrian Organisation"!

Ellis Sorabji

(In our next issue, "Recent Shenanigans of the WZO")

WAKE UP, HUMDEENS, THY SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE!

The Parsee Voice is happy to make a comeback! As in the past, we shall, without fear or favour, take up cudgels for various issues which have an impact on our community, religion and religious institutions. The purpose of this article is to inform our Parsee brethren of certain dark clouds on our horizon which portend disaster for our noble community.

The Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly dated 22nd June 2003 carried a report by Mr. Marzban Giara that, at the meeting of The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FOPZAI) held on 7th and 8th June 2003 in Mumbai, the Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Mr. Minoo Shroff, who is also President of FOPZAI, was authorised by FOPZAI to pursue the formation of a World Body of Zoroastrians (WB).

We are informed that this World Body would constitute of two branches viz. World Zoroastrian Organisation (Individuals) and World Zoroastrian Organisation (Federations). There will also be a World Zoroastrian Organisation (International) which would comprise of representatives from these two organisations and which will be the governing body. We are also informed that individual Federations, which would join as constituents, would continue to be governed by their respective constitutions.

Now, the unfortunate problem is that many of these Federations actively encourage and solicit membership of non-Zoroastrian spouses, children of mixed parentage, **converts and neo-Zoroastrians**. These Federations would have no qualms in appointing a *self-proclaimed* Zoroastrian as its office bearer. Converts from South America, Brazil and parts of the former Soviet Union would also qualify for membership to this Apex World Body. Even a Muslim, Ali Akbar Jafarey and several like-minded individuals, who promote conversion and intermarriage, could sit as officials of the entire WZO (International) Board! Conveniently, the word "Parsee" has been omitted from the name of the new WB. **Thus, it is possible for a rank non-Parsee Zoroastrian to become the office bearer of a world body which should actually represent Parsee Zoroastrians. This is absurd!**

Under no circumstances can the over-1200-years old Anjuman of Parsee Zoroastrians of India be equated and put on par with the foreign persons who are *self-proclaimed Zoroastrians*! **Our migration from Iran to India was not just a flight from persecution. It was an intentional, planned one under the guidance of spiritually exalted Abed Sahebs and was for the avowed objective of preserving our religion and race!** It is wrong to put that Anjuman, which has more or less preserved its separate identity, on the same level with people who are hell-bent on making a backdoor entry into our age-old religion by distorting and deriding our canon law and religious customs and practices! We find that totally unacceptable.

What is even more strange is the cloak of silence which shrouds all this activity! Parleys on this matter have been going on since 1996 and the FOPZAI, of which the BPP is a part, makes a decision of this magnitude at a Federation meeting and the general Parsee populace is not even remotely aware of these goings-on.

Though the BPP is basically a Trust created to manage the properties in its charge, over the centuries, it has been looking after the interests and welfare of Parsee/Irani Zoroastrians in Mumbai as well as in India. The other Anjumans in India have also looked up to the BPP for guidance and leadership. We feel that the FOPZAI, which includes the BPP, joining the proposed WB would, besides creating a conflict of interest, grant legitimacy to such self-proclaimed Zoroastrians who are not born of both Parsee parents and whose Navjote cannot be lawfully performed. **We also strongly feel that the BPP has no jurisdiction to decide singly on a matter like this which has such far-reaching religious implications and about which, the community's views have not been solicited.**

The Editor and other concerned individuals have written to the BPP, asking for clarifications on this issue and are looking forward to a meeting with the Trustees to find out more on this.

Associate Editor

"The World Council of Zoroastrian Federation"

("World Body")

Dear Editor,

In service to our noble Parsi Zoroastrian community I present the following article of vital importance for publication.

Recently a good deal has been said and written about the need to form a "WORLD ZOROASTRIAN BODY" in the Parsi Media, which was Vehemently Opposed by the W.Z.O. (World Zoroastrian Organization) in 1997.

The W.Z.O. has gone out of its way to justify its unauthorized position as a "World Zoroastrian Body".

I, being one of the Founder Members of the W.Z.O. in the U.K. – who was involved in the formation of the original W.Z.O. constitution – can, safely say – that the current setup of the W.Z.O. cannot honestly be described as even a poor imitation of the original formation of the W.Z.O. – or its Aims, Objects and Purpose.

1. The W.Z.O. perhaps does not remotely represent 1% of the "World Zoroastrian Community" – who may be considered as truly Zoroastrians.
2. W.Z.O. in earnest could not be accepted as a 'Zoroastrian Organisation' by virtue of its 'Non-Zoroastrian' Membership. The majority of its membership consists of those who are 'Inter Married' and their progeny.
3. Their (W.Z.O.) Aims and objects as far as one could see or understand seems to promote – propagate and enhance the cause of 'Inter Marriages' and 'Conversion', both of which are totally against the Zoroastrian Precepts – Tenets and the Fundamental belief of the "Mazdayasni Zarathusti Faith". In fact, it is 'ANTI-ZOROASTRIAN'.
4. Amongst many self appointed Scholars that are invited to speak and impart their wisdom to our innocent 'Zoroastrian Community' in their (W.Z.O.) so called 'Religious Seminars' through which their Aims and Objects are projected, the most prominent Speaker is

supposed to be Prof. Helmut Humbach. His attempted translations of our most Holy Gathas – can only be described as an exciting plot for a 'Blue Film' and can put any modern pornography material to shame. And yet, highly honoured and respected by the W.Z.O.!

5. The most revered 'Speaker, Philosopher and Guide – is their exalted 'Guru' that Pakistani Muslim 'ALI AKBAR JAFREY'. The one who is a Self proclaimed 'MOBED' and now calls himself, a 'RATU' (First Divine, Entity). This so called 'RATU' of the 'Zoroastrian Faith', has considered our most sacred 'HORMUZD YASHT' a 'FORGERY' and one of our most sacred 'NUSK' (No. 19) the 'VANDIDAD' as some recently concocted nonsense. In his profound spiritual wisdom he has called our most essential 'ALAT' (Spiritual Instrument) the Nirang-E-Din as foul Urine. He (Ratu) has described our most respected ancient Zoroastrian Women as 'Temple Prostitutes' – and has implied that we the Parsi Zoroastrians are 'Not Aryans' etc.

And yet, he performs numerous fake and illicit 'Navjotes' of his own Muslim Sisters and Brothers to 'Convert' them into the Zoroastrian Faith. **And all this, with the blessings, approval and full knowledge of the W.Z.O.**

Considering the above factors the W.Z.O. has no place whatsoever in any genuine 'Mazdayasni Zarathusti Body'. Those unfortunate, who are directly or indirectly involved with the W.Z.O. must reconsider their original intentions and ask what are they aiding and abetting?

If W.Z.O. was truly a 'WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION', would it have propagated, promoted and supported such Anti-Zoroastrian – Heretic – and Blasphemous attacks on our noble Race and Religion? – OR – would they have found within their Solemn Duty to Preserve – Protect and Cherish this 'FAITH OF ALL FAITHS' as the 'custodians' of 'The Zoroastrian Religion'?

Ervad Darius N. Sethna

Noshir H. Dadrawala, Perfect Trustee Material

Will Mr. Tamboly Practice What He Preaches?

Harvesting the Power & Potential of our youth

[Dedicated to the Zoroastrian youth who
have always been an object
of my absolute admiration]

Under the above heading, Mr. D.K. Tamboly, in a front-page article in Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly of 16th March, 2003 stated *inter alia*:

History has established many times that our **hunger for achievement is highly developed and by far the strongest in the youth**. It is also a known fact that the real wealth of any community is its young generation. *Our youth is yearning for the present day leadership to support them to get moving. No community can rise above the quality of its youth.*

Our community is indeed blessed that our youth have the ability to achieve the very best in the world. Our youth have a fantastic mix of belief and knowledge that sets them apart from any other community on this planet.

They have a fantastic mix of dreams, beliefs, diligence, industriousness, and the capability to attain what they set out to do.

"The youth bring with them new thoughts. New thoughts lead to innovative actions that herald change and change, as we all know is the only thing that remains constant in life. Change in various areas of human endeavour is crucial if one is to progress".



Noshir H. Dadrawala

It will warm the cockles of Mr. Dinshaw Kaiki Tamboly's heart that, as per his righteous advice, 42-year young, Noshir H. Dadrawala, has taken it upon himself to heed Mr. Tamboly's clarion call and stand for the forthcoming election as a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. If Mr. Tamboly means what he says, he should as a leader of the community "support him to get moving." Will Mr. Tamboly live up to his word and pass on the baton to dynamic Dadrawala?

WE'VE GOT MAIL

Shahpur Captain's latest.....

Sir,

it's sickening to read the same crap about dwindling numbers of our community members. Although every single argument trotted out in this latest article by S.F. Captain in Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly of the 27th July, 2003, has been exploded sky-high, the banal arguments keep cropping up again and again!

Why don't the likes of Shahpur Captain mind their own business whether in London or in the USA? The Parsees of India don't want them to bother about us. We can certainly take care of ourselves! We have done so, for more than 1200 years! It is Shahpur Captain and his ilk, whose houses

are burning in the West, who must learn from us and our glorious history!

Arnavaz Savak Madan
Perin E. Joshi

[A little bird tells us, that though Jame's Editor has made all sorts of excuses about Captain's views, and Jame not necessarily being in agreement with them, the article, purportedly signed by some **umkas-tamkas** from U.K. and U.S.A., was brought by the mischievous string-puller, who has just returned from his England trip! Will Jame's readers stop being suckers? – Editor]