

Antia, ARZ Rebuffed By The Parsees Of Mumbai

Report of The Public Meeting of the Dasturjis and Scholar Priests held on Friday, 15th February 2008 at the Framjee Cawasjee Institute, Mumbai.



Meeting gets off to a flying start with Humbandagi (L to R: Mr. A.F. Doctor, Ervad Parvez Bajan, Ervad Dr. Rooyintan Peer, Dasturji Dr. Peshotan H. Mirza, Dasturji Cyrus N. Dastur, Ervad Ramiyar P. Karanjia, Ervad Kaikhushroo N. Dastoor and Mrs. Pervin J. Mistry)

Since 2005, the Association for Revival of Zoroastrianism (ARZ) has been carrying out an unscholarly misinformation campaign with the full connivance of and cooperation from the so-called Parsee media, to mislead Parsees about the tenets of their exalted religion and the teachings of their holy Paigambarasheb Zarathushtra.

To further their objective, a lecture was organised on 2nd February 2008 at Y B Chavan Auditorium, Mumbai by ARZ and the Association of Intermarried Zoroastrians (AIMZ) where their Guest Speaker, Dr Kersey Antia gave a most **unscholarly** talk on why the Parsee community should follow the practice of 'Acceptance' i.e. **acceptance of intermarried non-Parsee spouses as Zoroastrians**. In short, conversion was sought to be introduced in a blatant manner.

To counter this unholy and anti-religious propoganda, a meeting of the Dasturjis and Scholar Priests of India was convened on Friday, 15th February 2008 at Framjee Cawasjee Institute, Mumbai at 6 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Adi F Doctor started the proceedings by stating that this meeting was convened to rebut the issues raised at the meeting held on 2nd February. He mentioned that for the last 100 years, the Parsee community has had a fascination for anything that's foreign. **For the first time now, even personalities are being imported.** One Dr Kersey Antia from Chicago, who was a psychologist by profession and was (in)famous for the so-called 'Navjote' of one Joseph Peterson, was invited by ARZ and AIMZ. He calls himself 'Dastur' of Chicago.

Doctor cautioned that if each of the many associations in America appointed a Dastur, confusion will be worse confounded. Distorted, twisted versions of the Gathas and other scriptures were sought to be spread.

The Zoroastrian religion emphasised the law of **Asha**, which contained Dadaar Ahura Mazda's blue print, the **Ahunavairya**, thanks to which the whole mechanism of nature functioned and Divine Law and Order existed. But we humans were distorting things and going against nature and against its laws.

He then invited the first speaker of the evening, Dasturji Dr. Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza, the High Priest of Iranshah, to deliver his talk.

Aberrated American Parsees and Jafarey

Dasturji Mirza mentioned that, of late, certain persons and associations were carrying out activities against the religion and community. They were conducting sacrilegious propoganda and misleading the public. In the past, a large number of Parsees had migrated to western countries to find greener pastures. But with material prosperity, some had started ignoring the religious customs and traditions and indulged in anti-religious activities. To suit their own agendas, they were trying to alter the various traditions and customs and were now pressuring the whole community to do likewise. They were now insisting that the whole community follow suit in their irreligious activities.

These Parsees had found a leader in the form of a Muslim named Ali Akbar Jafarey. Though there is no background of conversion in our religion, Jaffrey said that he had converted to Zoroastrianism. The people who had made him a leader were some Parsees of America. One of Jafarey's students was Dr Kersey Antia. Some years ago, Antia performed a fraudulent 'Navjote' of one Mr Peterson, who was a Christian by birth. **Dr Mirza said that Antia and Peterson had insulted both, the Christian and the Zoroastrian religions.**

The Navar Ceremony

The priestly class of Zoroastrians was referred to as 'Athravans'. To become priests, people had to pass through a ceremony called 'Navar'. However educated or qualified a person was, he could not become a Navar on his own. He required assistance from two other fully qualified Mobeds, who in turn had to acquire certain ritualistic qualifications. During this Navar ceremony, the initiate had to recite a prayer called 'Dasturi', which was an oath/assurance to Dadaar Ahura Mazda, Paigambarsaheb Zarathushtra and other divine beings that he will follow the principles of the religion and only then will he become a priest. **Antia had insulted this Dasturi prayer and made a mockery of our religion and though staying in America, had opted to come to brainwash the Parsees of India by lecturing here.** Two associations, ARZ and AIMZ encouraged him. They had gone against the religious tenets and hoped that the whole community would accept these irreligious activities.

Dasturji continued by saying that we were Parsees, our Religion was Mazdayasni Zarathushti, our scripture was the Avesta. **Conversion/acceptance is unknown in the Avesta and Parsee history. He stressed that in the thousands of years of our history, there had been no conversion or acceptance and there was no reference in the Avesta to conversion. Our religion forbade and condemned conversion/acceptance by any method.** We were a monotheistic religion. We recognized Dadaar Ahura Mazda as the sole Creator and absolute Ruler of the Universe.

Gayomard and Zarathushtra

The Avesta referred to Gayomard, the first mortal who was the first to listen to and comprehend the word of Dadaar Ahura Mazda and spread it to the people. **He taught the precepts of the Mazdayasni religion. Through him, Dadaar created the Tokham (gene) of the people of Iran. Gayomard is referred to as a Saoshyant, the human benefactor, the term given to the**

person who works for the moral, ethical, material and spiritual benefit of mankind. Many such Saoshyants like Hoshang, Faridun etc. followed Gayomard. But with the passage of time, non-Mazdayasni beliefs and practices started creeping into the Mazdayasni religion. The situation became so grim that Geush Urva, the soul of Mother Earth, appealed to Dadaar Ahura Mazda for a saviour. In response, Zarathushtra was sent forth. He absorbed the message of Dadaar Ahura Mazda. **He never converted King Vishtasp or any other person from the original faith. He convinced King Vishtasp to follow the Mazdayasni Deen as it should be.** King Vishtasp became the royal friend of Prophet Zarathushtra. Since then Mazdayasnis began to be called Mazdayasni Zarathushtis. Even now we pray every day in the 'Jasa me Avanghe Mazda' prayer - "*Mazdayasno Ahmi, Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish*" (*I am a Mazdayasni, a Mazdayasni Zarathushtrish*). **Thus, Prophet Zarathushtra never converted any one. It was always the conversion of Dushmata, Doozukhta, Dujvarshta (bad thoughts, words and deeds) into Humata, Hookhta, Hvarshta.**

Pars and Parsees

For many centuries, the south western province of Pars in Iran was well-known as the centre of the Zarathushti religious activities and culture and the residents of Pars were called Parsees. About 2,565 years ago, a resident of Pars, Cyrus the Great, rose to power and extended his rule all over Iran. Since ancient times, residents of Pars were known as Parsees. Since those days when Cyrus established the Achaemenian empire, the Greek historians referred to the Mazdayasni Zarathushti residents of Iran as Parsees. **Hence, the word 'Parsee' acquired a religious connotation. Thus, Parsees always meant 'followers of the Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion' and a Zarathushti was always a Parsee Mazdayasni Zarathushti. Hence, Parsee and Mazdayasni Zarathushti are inherent to each other. No King or ruler of Iran ever converted.** There were exceptions, but they do not make the rule.

If we believe in Dadaar Ahura Mazda, that the birth is according to the plan of the Holy Creator, that our life has some spiritual value and we believe in the law of Divine Justice, then no man can preach or practice conversion or acceptance. He has to follow the religion of birth, the religion given according to the Divine Plan by the Creator. Any person who believes otherwise, is an atheist. He does not require religion. But certain fragments like ARZ and AIMZ and people like Ali Jafarey and others want the

benefits of religion and at the same time want to alter religion, carry out anti-religious activities and insist that we accept them.

Doctor thanked Dr Mirza for a lucid speech. **On the issue of conversion, Doctor quoted from the Gospel of St. Mathew to show that Lord Jesus Christ himself had cautioned people against converting.** He then invited Dasturji Cyrus Noshirwan Dastoor of Surat to speak.

**Dasturji Cyrus Dastur Noshirwan Dastoor
How Can One Be Faithless To One's Own Religion?**

Dasturji Cyrus stated that according to the will of God, people were born to certain parents. Just as we cannot change our parents, we cannot change our religion. A person who is born into a certain faith is also shown the way to salvation through that faith. **He wondered how a person who does not remain faithful to his own faith and its practices could ever remain faithful to another faith.**

Our Zarathushti religion and our Parseepanu are like Siamese twins which cannot be separated. Similarly, Parseepanu and the Zarathushti religion are welded to each other. If we sacrifice one, the other will vanish into thin air. Just as putting on a black coat does not make one an advocate and putting on a stethoscope does not make one a doctor, so also putting on a Sudreh and Kusti by a so-called Navjote ceremony does not make anybody a Zarathushti!

He mentioned that after a child's Navjote, he was frequently required to pray the holy 'Jasa me Avanghe' Mazda prayer in his mandatory Kusti ritual wherein he affirms that he is a 'Mazdayasni, a Mazdayasni Zarthushti'. Since a child of non-Parsee parents was not a Mazdayasni, he could never recite this holy affirmation. He stressed that even if a Navjote was performed a thousand times on such a non-Parsee child, that child would never become a Zoroastrian and such a Navjote would be invalid.

He was convinced that as long as there is the holy fire burning within our hearts, Parsees would never be wiped out. **Religion of every human being is determined before his birth by God.** One disturbs his spiritual journey towards God, by pretending to change the religion gifted to him by God at the time of his birth. **When a person converts to another religion, he insults the religion of his birth. How can one be faithful**

to a new religion when he has deserted his God-given religion. It is necessary to open our eyes to the truth and preserve our religion as our forefathers did, instead of twisting and bending it to suit our convenience. To be born as a Parsee is a proud spiritual heritage. To safeguard this heritage and to pass it on to our children is our holy duty. Dasturji hoped and prayed that intermarriages and conversion would be permanently stopped.

He said that the Zarathushti faith was passing through difficult times and it was our duty to save it. **He exhorted all traditional groups to stay united to face those acting against the interests of the religion.**

Doctor thanked Dasturji Cyrus and remarked that he had shown his mettle as a young Dastur and indicated the direction he would take in future. He then invited Ervad Dr Ramiyar Karanjia to speak

**Ervad Dr Ramiyar P Karanjia
Where Is The Need For Conversion?**

Ervad Dr Karanjia started out by reading the joint message of Dasturji Dr Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa and Dastur Firoz M Kotwal, which categorically rejected the idea of conversion/acceptance.

In the last 100 years, this topic of conversion had kept on raising its head and over the years, various scholars like Taraporewala, Dasturjis JamaspAsa, Kotwal and Hormuzdiyar Mirza, Framroze Chiniwalla and Khojeste Mistree had been giving scholarly rebuttals to the theory of conversion through their writings. Unfortunately, there was a lot of ignorance on this subject in the community. Before the study of any religious literature, it is important to know when and in what circumstances it was written and who wrote it. The Gathas are the very words of Prophet Zarathushtra. When in those days no other religion existed, how could Zarathushtra even think of conversion, he asked. **Our religion espouses the principle of divine justice. Be good and you will go to God. There is no need to convert from one religion to another to go to God. There is no shortcut to God. People assume conversion to be a shortcut to God but the principles espoused in the Gathas clearly nullify this belief.** Whenever in the Gathas Zarathushtra says that he wants to improve something, it means that he is trying to convince those Mazdayasnis who have adopted wrong practices of worshipping the negativities who are referred to as *Dregvant, Druj, Khrakfastar* etc. by him. Some misguided people interpret these to

mean people of other faiths. But that is wrong because in those days there was no other faith. There were only those misguided Mazdayasnis who were not following the Mazdayasni belief system.

Many people say that the Gathas are universal. There are certain principles in the Gathas which are universal in the sense that they apply to all people e.g. principle of Divine Justice (Yasna Ha 30.11). But where is the need to change religion to be part of this universal message: the principle of being ethical, righteous. Those who follow this principle will always be entitled to happiness. But where was the need to convert to being a Zarathushti to follow these principles, he questioned. **Our religion does not require people to change their religion to reach heaven.**

Out of the 72 chapters of the Yasna, only 17 chapters constitute the Gathas. Those who believe in conversion / acceptance quote Yasna Ha 30.2 as being in favour of the alleged freedom of choice where Zarathushtra is stated to have said that 'see with your eyes, think with your mind and make a choice' i.e. make a choice of your religion. Dr Karanjia wondered how anybody could believe that a Prophet could ever say something like this. But what did Zarathushtra actually say? Loosely it is, listen with your ears, think with an illumined mind and before the great happening, make a choice between **the two**. What are these two comes in the next stanza. They are the two spirits viz. the good and the evil. Thus, Zarathushtra asks us to make a reasoned choice before judgement between these two, and not any other thing.

There were 22 such quotations from the Gathas frequently used by the pro-conversionists to further their arguments. **But all these arguments had been repeatedly refuted in the past.**

Another favourite stanza of the people who favour conversion is Yasna Ha 31.3. Gathas being so old and difficult to study results in people coming up with different meanings. Hence, just because a couple of people mention that the word 'conversion' appears in the Gathas does not mean that it is a proper translation. It is necessary to read what other scholars say before coming to a conclusion.

Not just Zoroastrians but also other great leaders have warned against conversion like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Dalai Lama, Ramkrishna Paramhansa. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, he cautioned. So where all these angels have cautioned against something, let us not rush in. **The grace of Dadaar Ahura Mazda, the Ameshaspands and the Atash**

Padshah sahebs descends on all irrespective of race, caste or creed. There is no need to convert to receive this grace. He hoped that good sense would prevail.

Ervad Dr Rooyintan Peshotan Peer

Ervad Dr Peer first read out the message of the Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee which supported the meeting of the Dasturjis and Scholar Priests.

Historically, Conversion Is All Bunk!

He mentioned that ARZ was floated as a front organization about 3 years ago by certain leaders of the community to further their agendas. Though the word 'revival' normally indicated improving a hopeless situation, ARZ, through their advertisements and arguments were following a plan of action which was clearly nowhere near revival. They frequently raise a query that how had the spread of one religion affected another. In the times when Cyrus and Darius the Great ruled the world, it was very easy for them to convert the conquered nations. **But that was never done! On the contrary, these Kings gave money out of their treasury to restore the temples and institutions of the conquered nations and to follow their own religion, something unheard of in those days.**

He mentioned that the current idea of separating the Parsee identity from the Zoroastrian religion is highly dangerous and not supported by historical evidence. Firdausi Tusi, the great poet who wrote the Shahnameh, has often used the word 'Parsee' for the Parsee/Irani Mazdayasnan people therein. After the conquest of Iran, many were forcibly converted. **But those who managed to hold on to their Mazdayasni Zarathushti religion were specially referred to as 'Parsees'. So the oft-repeated argument that it was only after the advent of Zoroastrians in India that they came to be referred to as 'Parsees', was completely wrong.**

In the 3rd century A.D., during the Sassanian times, the Christian religion came into existence and the Christian missionaries had entrenched their influence in the royal Iranian court. King Shahpur II and his royal household were so influenced that they were about to adopt the Christian faith. It was then that his Prime Minister, Dasturan Dastur Adarbad Mahrespand, who was a saintly soul, performed the miracle of pouring molten brass on his chest to prove the exaltedness of the Zarathushti religion. This convinced the King of the loftiness of his own religion and he firmly drove out the Christian influence. Thus, we were the first victims

of the conversion drive. During the last years of the Sassanian empire, the instances of intermarriage increased due to various reasons, especially in the nobility, and these non-Zarathushti elements started conspiring against the ruler and consequently the empire collapsed.

When the Arab conquest started, again the Zarathushtis were the first victims of the Islamic conquerors and their conversion drive. The whole Iranian empire collapsed due to intrigue. So no person could say that the spread of one religion did not affect another.

After their advent in India, the Parsees settled in Diu for about 19 years. But as the Arabs attacked Sind province which is close to Diu, the Parsees settled in Sanjan and slowly began to spread to other towns of Gujarat. But those Parsees who moved on to various destinations were unable to remain in contact and slowly they began to run the risk of getting assimilated in the local populations. Many were without Sudhreh-Kusti. Realising the danger, one Parsee named Changa Asa of Navsari called a religious conference of all Parsees and guided them back to the correct path. Those who were poverty stricken, were helped economically and given land to settle in Navsari. That area is today known as Malesar. As is being sought to be done today, the Parsees in those days could easily have given up everything and abandoned their religion. **But they did not do that. Instead of misguiding everybody, they guided them back to the correct path of religion. Ervad Peer stressed that this was the real 'revival', an attempt to correct what was going wrong, not compound it further as was being suggested today.**

Thereafter, Parsees settled in Thana for many years. The Portuguese then had political control of Vasai and its neighbouring areas. They used religious conversion as a political weapon. They summoned the Parsees and asked them to convert to Christianity. The Parsees asked for 3 days time to consider this request. **But instead of succumbing, they quietly left the Portuguese territories in the middle of the night, leaving behind all their properties and belongings only with the object of saving their religion.** Ervad Peer commended this spirit. It was only after the defeat of the Portuguese at the hands of the British after about 200 years did the Parsees resettle in Thana.

In 1840s, the British had consolidated their hold on Bombay. A Father John Wilson had come to Bombay and was on a conversion drive. Two Parsee boys fell victim to his propaganda and converted to Christianity. This caused an uproar in the

community. The leaders in those days were very close to the seat of power and could easily have encouraged conversions with a view to getting political favours. **But instead they stood firm.** To stem this kind of tide, Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy, the first Indian to be knighted by the British, established the Parsee Benevolent Institution. **The typical Parsee thinking of resisting any kind of religious conversion was again visible.**

Giving the example of erstwhile Yugoslavia, Dr Peer explained that its leaders like Marshal Tito had tried the way of intermarriages for uniting the various Yugoslavian states. Initially it had worked, but after a few years, the system collapsed and the reaction was a terrible genocide perpetrated on the hapless people leading to the balkanization of Yugoslavia into smaller states.

Mr Doctor then requested Ervad Parvez Bajan to read out the message of Dasturji Nadershah P. Unvalla of Bangalore, commending the organizers for organizing this meeting.

Ervad Parvez Bajan

Bajan referred to the writings of his teacher late Dasturji Dr H K Mirza, who had mentioned that, forget finding the meaning of the word 'conversion', there was no idea of conversion in the Zoroastrian religion.

He mentioned that there are two types of followers of religions, one type which believes that man goes to heaven based on the strength of the merits/demerits of his own actions in this material world and the other group of religions which believe that man cannot go to heaven without the help of that religion's Prophet. Zoroastrianism and Hinduism belong to the first category whereas present-day Christianity and Islam belong to the second category,

In various places in the Avesta, it is clearly mentioned that as you sow so shall you reap. There is no vicarious salvation/liability. Hence, there is no idea, instruction, prayer, ceremony for conversion / acceptance in the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Bajan reminded people of the words of the learned President of India, Dr S Radhakrishnan who mentioned in one of his speeches, 'spiritualise politics but do not bring politics into religion'.

Giving references from the book of Dr. M N Dhalla, who himself was a pro-conversionist, Ervad Bajan mentioned that it was written therein that in pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian Iran, marriages were contracted between the members of the Mazda worshipping

community only, mixed marriages between the Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians were discouraged and those between the faithful and the daeva-worshippers were detested as subversive of the purity of the Zoroastrian fold. Mixed marriages were looked upon as detrimental to society's solidarity. There were social and religious barriers raised against inter-marriages between Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians. The Dinkard condemns such union in strong terms.

In his book 'Some Problems facing the community', Dr Mirza wrote that the remedy is more dangerous than the disease. Conversion by marriage was very dangerous and the religion was being made a hand-maid to intermarriage.

In the *Ashirvad* ceremony recited at the time of marriage, it is prayed that this ceremony is in accordance with the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion.

In the Kisseh Sanjan, a book written in 1599 by Boman Kaikobad, a priest from Navsari, which is the only available book giving an account of the exodus of Zoroastrians to India, it is written that they all, for the sake of religion, left their places of abode, gardens, halls and palaces. Being afraid for their lives and for the sake of their religion, they fled to India. Many times it is alleged that the Parsee men fled to India leaving their women and children in Iran. But it is clearly written therein that they made their women and children sit in their ships and set sail for India. Under the leadership of Dasturan Dastur Neriosang Dhaval, in their promise to Jadiv Rana, the King of Sanjan, the Parsees mentioned that they were the worshippers of Yazdan and had left unbelievers for the sake of religion and had come here.

He mentioned that the bard of Iran, Firdausi Tusi wrote a 1000 years ago in the Shahnameh that he had toiled for 35 years and written 60,000 couplets to resurrect the dead history of the Parsee religion.

Resolution Condemning Conversion Unanimously Passed

Mr Doctor then read out the following Resolution, which was proposed to be passed at this meeting:

"RESOLVES that the Parsi community affirms and asserts its full faith and belief in the tenets, traditions and practices of the Zarthushti Religion observed for thousands of years and reiterates its commitment to maintain its distinct identity and preserve and practice the Zarthushti Religion as handed down to us by our ancestors.

FURTHER RESOLVES that the Parsi community firmly declares that the Zarthushti Religion forbids 'acceptance'/Conversion by any method including adoption of non-Parsi-Irani-Zarthushtis to our religion and considers such an act to be a religious sin.

FURTHER RESOLVES that the Parsi community strongly deplores and condemns the anti-religious attempts being made by the Association for Revival of Zoroastrianism (ARZ), Association of Intermarried Zoroastrians (AIMZ) and other misguided individuals to subvert the tenets and traditions of the Zarthushti Religion and spread a distorted version of its sublime teachings as enshrined in the Holy Avesta.

FURTHER RESOLVES that this Meeting strongly condemns and disapproves Dr. Antia's views on 'acceptance'/conversion as it grossly deviates from the established religious norms and the opinions of the Vada Dasturjis expressed by them from time to time.

FURTHER RESOLVES that the Parsis who have lived in India for centuries are grateful to the Hindu Community and the Hindu Religion for allowing us to preserve and follow our religious disciplines and practices and to protect our religious institutions.

FURTHER RESOLVES that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Parsi Panchayat, Athornan Mandal and various Anjumans and Associations of India".



**All in favour of the Resolution
- A cross-section of the audience**

An 800-strong crowd passed this Resolution unanimously, WITHOUT a single vote being cast against it.

Mrs. Pervin Mistry then read out a letter by the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman addressed to the Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran which contained a Resolution, unanimously passed, mentioning that no conversion was permitted of persons following different faiths into the Zoroastrian religion. She thereafter read out the message of Dastur Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor supporting the meeting.

K.N. Dastoor's Summing Up

Ervad Kaikhushroo Navroze Dastoor then read out the Gujarati message of Dasturji Meherji Dastur Meherjirana extending wholehearted support to the cause of the meeting.

He said that Nature had made arrangements for different religions and for the religions that would follow. Zarathushtra had used the word 'Daenao' in the Gathas. All religions had one basic truth which was man's spiritual journey on this earth towards God, for which different religions, faith, and prophets were given. Unfortunately, Antia used these as references in favour of conversion!

Parsees had respect for other religions and hence were held in high esteem by others, he said.

Conversions necessarily entailed denigrating the religion of the converttee. **Conversion by force or persuasion necessarily involved blaspheming another Prophet. Did man have the capacity to decide which Prophet was better than the other?, he questioned.**

He stressed that Navjote was not a conversion ceremony. This farce had crept into the community in recent times. He commended Pervin Mistry for holding this meeting.

He averred that every community had a constitutional right to conduct its religious affairs in a certain manner and no court of law/judge had the right to intervene in that. He believed that the Resolution passed at this meeting would stand up in a court of law to prove that the Parsee community did not accept the principle of conversion.

Adi Doctor thanked Mrs Mistry for organising this meeting for which all the orthodox groups had united to make it a success.

Mrs. Pervin Mistry then offered a vote of thanks.

H M Mistry

THINK PARSEES, THINK!! WHY THIS DEATH WISH????

While most Parsees of today have a penchant for dashing off to Udvada at the drop of a hat to pay obeisance to Holy Iranshah, the spiritual monarch of the Zarathushtis, sadly 95% have no idea of who He actually is and what His role in nature is!

Holy Iranshah is a living, throbbing, vibrant entity having an aura and magnetic circuits (Kash). He receives the divine blessings of the Ameshaspands and the Yazatas and passes them on to His devotees. He also transmits the divine vibrations of the Manthravani recited by devotees to the spiritual realms. He radiates divine energy over long distances. He is a Ratheshtar (a warrior) of Dadaar Ahura Mazda in the fight against evil forces which attempt to overpower all creation. He is the Lord of our destiny. He has guided the destiny of this community for over 1300 years. His blessings have seen the community safely throughout its existence in India. If the Parsees have prospered, it is because of His

spiritual prowess. Hence, we owe a great debt of gratitude to this Holy Padshah Saheb.

A visit to Udvada, home of our Holy Iranshah, always evokes mixed feelings within me. While there is the profound inner satisfaction of being in His holy presence, there is also the sadness for the insensitivity exhibited by many of my fellow humdeens who happen to do all sorts of crazy things in His divine presence.

Scourge of mobile phones

In spite of large notices being put outside and facilities thoughtfully provided to deposit the same in safe custody boxes, devotees mindlessly carry their mobiles into the precincts of Iranshah and the Petit Daremeher which houses the Holy Dadgah Saheb. And invariably you hear a ringtone inside! The poor Boiwalla sahebs, who are striving to maintain the holiness and dignity of Iranshah, have to actually chastise people and chase out the errant devotee. Dear Humdins, we are supposed to be a