

THE ZARATHUSHTRIAN DAENA IN A NUTSHELL

TO BE 'GOOD' REQUIRES SPIRITUAL ENERGY GENERATED BY 'TARIKAT'S

Who is a Parsi?

Whenever this question is asked, a heap of legal, social and highly argumentative babbles are thrown in the answer. Poor Justice Davar is brought in, 'the big change in times' is put forward and a number of why's and why not's are shot out, with hollow vehemence, like "if men, why not women?" (The question is too worn out by repetition to need any elaboration.)

All this endless discussions are hopelessly tangential and off the mark to the main issue, which is: **a Parsi is basically a person of Religion - the Zarathushtrian Daena.** Her or his life is required to be totally founded on the Daena. For a Parsi, Life and Religion are not only equal but congruent. Each point of the one should coincide with each point of the other. Every breath should inhale and exhale Daena and he or she must be aware and conscious of this.

Three Good's and Freedom of Choice

What is the Daena? Ask any common Parsi; the answer by nine out of ten will be: Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni - Good thoughts, words and deeds. But if you ask: "What is your definition of Good?", he will stare at you as if you have gone mad. "You don't know what is good?" "No", you can pursue the argument, "the definition varies with every person; what is thought as good by one is stamped as 'horribly bad' by the other. Hitler thought, killing of jews was very good. My good may be your bad. Who decides?" You may leave the matter at that. If he is intelligent enough (not a very common phenomenon to-day in the matters of Religion), he will start thinking on the commands and sanctions of Religion. "Perhaps Religion itself defines what is Good", he may ponder, "but in that case you have to accept the definition as true without question. But then what happens" to my freedom of choice" stated to be conferred on me by my Religion?.....".

The champions of Good thoughts, words and deeds are also the champions of "Freedom of Choice" - a huge inconsistency which only a Parsi can swallow, just because European Scholars have found this out in the Gatha! (Another huge misnomer,!) Both, the 'good' and the 'freedom of choice' are illogical escapisms to avoid the Minoi (spiritual) disciplines of the Religion.

Do's And Dont's of All Religions

How is, then, 'Good' defined in the Zarathushtrian Daena? Think good, speak good, do good is primarily a MORAL axiom.. Every Religion prescribes a moral code of Do's and Dont's, and the codes of all Religions have a common undercurrent. All their do's and dont's are in-effect the same but expressed in different words and terminologies. Love God and all His Creation; be selfless; give away, do not snatch away; allay the suffering of others; be compassionate, merciful, charitable, obliging; above all, be truthful - these are the main common do's of all Religions. And dont's are: beware of your enemies within; they arise in you because of the fault of your flesh and the storms of your senses; the enemies are several: carnal passion, anger, greed, intense attraction towards worldly objects and wealth, ego, envy, Godlessness, shamelessness, faithlessness; control these enemies; control your senses; cultivate a psyche which can shun the vices and which can remain immersed in virtues - both as defined; gratification of physical senses

is not to be totally avoided, but is to be controlled - according to the religious tenets and kept within bounds.

Transmutation of Evil into Good

This moral code is not just a social necessity. It is a spiritual exercise. It leads man on the path of God and towards his final aim, call it Frashogard or Liberation or Mukti. Morals are "immediately related to cosmic reality", as a Benedictine monk so aptly put it.

The Zarathushtrian Daena explains that the Code is meant to convert the evil within to 'good'. Man is like a garment woven of black threads and white threads. He has to exert in this life to convert the black threads into white ones. When all the black are converted to white, he shall shine with Godly light; he accelerates towards God, he is freed from births and deaths.

This sacred code of life is taught by all Religions. **And all Religions are ordained under the Divine Plan of Ahura.** They cannot, in the very nature of things, be contradictory to each other. That, man has emanated and separated from God and has to go back to Him, is the aim declared universally by all Religions. We are lost and have to find our way home. They have also declared that the path leading to God consists in the fusion of Religion and life on this path.

Why Several Religions?

Then, where do the Religions differ? And why are there so many? The answer is that different groups of humanity are ordained to be born in different Religions according to their spiritual situations. Although their aim is the same, there are variations in their physical, mental and spiritual compositions. To dissolve and convert the evil within, different Religions prescribe different 'Tarikats's i.e procedures, practices, methods and methodologies.

The Earth is like hospital where different groups of patients arrive. The common aim is to cure them. But each group has different disease in them and therefore requires different medicines and different treatments. These are prescribed by the different Religions. A malaria patient cannot be cured by a cough syrup or T.B. patient, by quinine. Wrong treatment may even aggravate the disease. Therefore every one should follow the tarikat's of his own Religion. That is his treatment. Let a muslim observe Roza with fervour and devotion; let the Hindu worship his Devtaa's; let a christian wear the cross; **let a Parsi wear sudreh Kushti. These are their own respective medicines prescribed by the respective Divine Doctors, the Prophets and Avatar's and Sages and Saints.** No patient in a hospital hates the other patient just because he takes a different medicine! I have malaria, I am on chloroquine, but the patient on the other bed has severe pneumonia, so he is on a strong antibiotic; how can I tell him 'hey! take chloroquine, it is fast curing me?" The quarrels of Religions are that senseless.

The question then is: what does the tarikat's do? Why are they necessary? If the Moral Code is the Path towards God, can we not just comply with it and forget the tarikats?

The Downward Current.

No! That won't do. Every Prophet, every Avatar, every Saint, every Scripture has declared in emphatic terms that **THE MIND OF A NON SAINTLY HUMAN IS PRIMARILY INCLINED TOWARDS EVIL.** The evil wolf within him is stronger than the good cow. The wolf induces him to think, speak and act contrary to the Moral Code prescribed by Religion. And he is easily lured away. The physical pleasures of the senses constantly drag him towards excesses, inviting spiritual ruin. Human mind is like a boat drifting in a strong downward current towards evil thoughts, words and deeds. **To be drifted away is very easy, to be able to swim upwards against the down current is extremely difficult. It requires will, strength and energy. The**

will is provided by FAITH, and the energy, by TARIKAT. The Path of Good is a difficult upward climb on a mountain, the path of evil is an easy rolling down. Tarikats are the most essential energy tonics to brace oneself to swim up the strong current; to climb up the steep mountain. They are not merely psychological. They actually work on our physical and non-physical bodies and invoke the energy centres - chakra's which then liberate the spiritual energy to resist the onslaught of evil. Tarikats are the ropes pulling the senses out of the clutches of the evil. **The Moral Code can ride only on the horse of Tarikats. It cannot walk alone on its feet. The mind is too weak not to succumb. The evil within is too powerful to be resisted.** It is therefore to be **alchemised**. Its quantity within us is required to be reduced, so that the quantity of the good may enhance. Therefore to say that I will just be moral and I do not require Sudreh Kushti or Manthra Prayers is the babble of an ignorant mind. It is only the pride before a fall.

In the Parsi Religion, the Moral Code is tersely described as "**MEHER-PATET**". To observe "Meher" means to endeavour sincerely and truthfully the Religious Code of do's and don't's. It is an endeavour, an effort. The mind and the senses, as they are, resist the effort and often do we fall. Fall means commit a breach of the code. That is defined as a sin. If that happens, immerse your mind in 'Patet'. This is the Religions Decree. Patet has three elements: (i) to repent, to feel a sense of deep sincere regret that the mind and the senses have slipped inspite of best efforts, (ii) to pray to Ahura to confer strength and will or resist the temptation to sin when it comes again and (iii) to pray further that let Ahura impart strength and energy to bear the Karmic reaction of the sin. The third element arises from the truth that every thought, word or deed, good or evil, has a reaction; evil brings in suffering and pain; good, the opposite. Hence the principle is that the strength, the energy, the will to tread on the path of Meher-Patet are generated within us by the observance of Tarikat's like Sudreh Kushti, Manthra Prayers, Atash-Parasti - praying before Atash, Boonakpasbani (preservation of the racial gene), Kriyakam (performance 'Kriya's-rituals, ceremonies for the dead), Dokhm-e-Nashini. .

The Final Definition of a Parsi

Therefore, the question "who is a Parsi?" has the answer: **One who is (i) born of Parsi parents, (ii) who observes in all sincerity, and as far as is possible and practicable, all the prescribed Tarikat's and (iii) is ever vigilant to follow Maher-Patet.** This was the definition of a Parsi, which we stuck to for 1200 years. It is a package definition, a holistic requirement. All the three elements are interwoven. They cannot be segregated. There is no question of 'converting' a non-Parsi to a Parsi by an alleged Navjote. Navjote is not a touch-stone to transmute a non-Parsi to a Parsi. It is a 'Kriya' of preparing a Parsi child to face and resist evil, as he or she is now on the threshold of his or her adult life. The very meaning of Kushti-Prayer makes this abundantly clear.

Our experience of the last hundred years clearly indicates that it is this definition that was the solid foundation of the survival of the Parsi community and that any dilution of any of the three elements was a step towards extinction. "The freedom of choice" and conversion alleged to have been taught and sanctioned by the Parsi religion has resulted in frightfully dwindling the number of the Parsis on earth. A Parsi is not made up by just a census stamp. Birth as a Parsi and the ways of Parsi life makes him a Parsi. Without them, the ink on the census stamp is fast fading away.

What have we done to the Parsi way of Life?

Since the above definition of a Parsi is holistic, any crack in any of its ingredients results in cracks in all others and the grand mansion of the Parsi life weaken in all its pillars. From the first two decades of this century, the Parsis started developing the cracks, aggravating the process

since last about 50 years. The result: **bells of extinction.**

We do not teach our children anything about the Daena. Parents don't know much and there is no machinery to impart religious instructions. Neither the parents nor the child has any idea what a powerful religious exercise Navjote is. Sudreh Kushti is taken as an identity symbol and not an 'Alat' -a powerful spiritual equipment. Very few Navjotes are done according to the prescribed rules. Children are not taught when and how they should do Kushti throughout life.

Trustees of the Fire Temples have no idea about the spiritual sanctity of the holy Padshah Saheb's. They are not aware of the Rules of preservation of the holy Fires. They are misguided by mobeds and Dastoor. Banaji Atashbeheram Hall is a place of cigar smokes and women in menses attending marriage functions there. Hoardings and selling the sacred well waters is their idea of becoming Trustees.

Mobeds do not perform the ceremonies rightly and according to their own prescriptions. Afringan and Farokshi take 15 minutes each, a horrifying mockery. Nirangdins have become show pieces of high priestly commercialism. Full Yazashney and Vendidad are hardly performed.

An alleged journalist of ripe and senile age blasphemes Dokm-e-nashini by saying inter alia that he would not send his dog to Dokhma!

The so called High priests opposed fiercely the 'Navjote' of Patterson and supported fiercely that of Neville Wadia! For one of them, Dr. Kotwal, what was a farce in May became a religious sanction in September. Another proclaimed his monopoly of opining on Juddin Navjote on the basis of Gatha 31-12! A Dastoor quotes a scripture to justify his volte-face! In western translations of the Gatha, anything goes. You can prove "a is b" and with equal vehemence, "a is not b". It depends on either the 'Padika' or publicity passion, or both.

As, to the so called Akabars, **Surat Punchayet is a boiling pot of corruption. Bombay Punchayet differs only in degree. Land, housing, tenancies, leases, licenses are the hall marks of corruption in our 'Satyamev Jayte' India. Parsis could have been an exception, but alas!** Look at poor and middle class Parsis going to and coming back from the Punchayet office a thousand times in search of a tiny flat. Look at the egoistic and Hitleer-brand treatment given to them not only by the Trustees but also by their staff.....

Look at the talks of lakhs for getting a punchayet flat.

In the 6th to the 8th decade of this century the strong currents of mixed marriages swept the community. The trend has marginally slowed down but the damage is done.

The world famous morality of the Parsis has gone to dogs. Whereas in thirties and forties hardly any Parsi was named as 'accused' in the criminal courts, to-day we can boast of some of the best criminals.

The equation is obvious. As the Parsis drifted away from their Religious Disciplines, the Tarikats and the Parsi way of life, the downfall set in, similar to what has happened to the whole of humanity when it drifted from the path of God ordained by the Prophets, Avatars, Saints and Sages. As the humans on the earth are swept away towards the devil, the Zarathushtrian Daena also shrinks. That is a historical equation.

But there is HOPE. There are quite a few Parsis, who pray through Manthra. There is a

mobed or two here and there who would like to perform the Kriyakam fully and with all sincere conscience. There are a few Parsis who shed tears in silence at the plight of the Daena and its followers, and pray for the advent of the Saviours, who will alter the whole course of human civilisation from the material to the spiritual.

This Parsi Pukar is meant to keep the Fire of Faith burning in the hearts of the Parsis, until the divine Saviours arrive.

This is our fervent appeal to the faithful Parsis. After finishing your daily Avesta Prayers, just emanate a thought from your heart: "May the Saviour come soon, and till He comes, may we, the faithful, be able to comply with the Commands of the Daena". That is the prayer embedded by the last 'Raiuidar', Dastoor Aderbad Maraspend in his Pazend Manthra Setayesh: Chithrem Booyad".

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