

UNIVERSALITY OF ZOROASTRIANISM DOES NOT IMPLY PROSELYTISM

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In this age of rank materialism it is but natural that most of the people can have no idea of the subtle laws of nature working in all human activities. The cumulative Law of Asha implies all the beneficent forces in nature carrying out the Divine Moral Order of the Universe as inculcated in the Zoroastrian Law. When the community begins to decline in its number on account of the inexplicable disturbance caused by the people themselves to this Moral Order by not living a life parallel to and in strict accordance with the Law of Asha, a strange remedy for the increase of the population is suggested by a few of the community viz. that of proselytism. This suggestion has caused much provocation of late in the community when attempts have been made by some philologists to prove the advocacy of proselytism from the extant Zoroastrian scriptures by their usual practice of twisting and perverting the texts so as to render them suitable to their views.

This subject of proselytism and marriage with the aliens is one which can be viewed from many standpoints-Sociology, Biology, Embryology, Anthropology, Philosophy and Religion. Whether alien marriage is disastrous to the social stability of a community, whether pure species can be continued, whether there is extinction of the generating power by the blending of seeds of different genera and species of mankind, whether there can be harmony of thought compatibility of temperaments resulting from such marriage, – these and many more are the subjects which lie outside the scope of the present undertaking. Here we have to see whether alien marriage and proselytism are advisable, not from the scientific, economic, social or moral point of view, but only from the point of view of religious scriptures and that too from the extant remnants of original Zoroastrian scriptures only. There are also other interesting questions relating to the subject, such as the object of nature in the institution of the different religions of the world according to the various differentiated stages of progress reached in the course of evolution by different groups of souls according to their varying constitutions.

Our task is to make out whether modern proselytism is a **Farman** or Mandate given by Zoroaster himself or met with in any of the extant Avesta Scriptures, or whether it is only a figment of the imagination of a meagre portion of the present-day community.

Some want to convey without any scriptural evidence that the only remedy for an increase of birth-rate in the community and the panacea for the perpetuation of the Parsee community is proselytism. If proselytism served as remedy against the extinction of a race, why should nature have made so many varieties of the races of men instead of one homogeneous group of all mankind on earth? If only one religion was suitable for the progress of all these various classes of men, why should nature have sent so many prophets with so many different messages of religion? If the extinction of a race was preventable simply by an addition of people or 'grafting' from different races, why should there be rise and fall of nations or races on the earth?

A religion always has its life, so long as it is put into practice in every day life by each individual member thereof. Zoroastrianism seems to die out and is dying out at the present day, not because there are only one hundred thousand souls belonging thereto, but because most of these have imbibed very nasty materialistic views from outside by which their life is guided, and are abandoning day by day all the precepts of Ashoi or Perfect Rectitude worthy of observance in every day life, and are crying for a religion of physical convenience and material ease with no sanctity or spiritual purity or responsibility.

The vitality of Zoroastrianism can never be expected in the nature of things to be upheld by an addition of some Hindus or Mohammedans or Christians into the community and by making an external stamp on their designation as "Zoroastrians". The vitality of Zoroastrianism can only

be upheld by making faith a living force and sincerity the basic virtue in every present member of Zoroastrian fold who should be quite willing and ready to observe all the tenets of Purity as taught in that great religion. It is thus by adding to the quality and not to the bulk of the community, that stability can be maintained and increase can be made in the number of the community in the near future. First teach your own religion to the members of your own community, 99% of whom are quite ignorant of the tenets of their sacred religion. In the Yacna Haftanghaiti Ha 35 we find a very fine passage regarding the teaching of religion. There it is stated that –

"Then a man or a woman knowing the Truth may practise it as such, and may teach it to those who are capable of practising the same as it ought to be practised."

From this it is seen that it is the duty of every Zoroastrian first to know the Laws of Ashoi taught by the prophet, then to practise the same himself or herself, and then as a practical observer he or she will have a natural right of preaching the same to other coreligionists who are capable of practising the same. Thus we learn that without the qualification of strict profession of a religion by its own members, mere number of adherents can never help to sustain the life of that religion. Nature requires truth or intrinsic value of everything, and not mere show of things. Alien people who are nominally styled Zoroastrians by the 20th century innovators of proselytism would not give life to Zoroastrianism but on the contrary take away the life therefrom.

The adoption of Zoroastrianism by King Vishtaspa and other Paoiryō-tkaesha souls of the time was never conversion or change as it is understood at present from the profession of one established religion to that of another, but it was simply an adoption of system where there was formerly no organization in their belief.

In fact there was no prophet nor any form of established religion such as Hinduism, Buddhism etc. before the advent of Zoroaster, and hence it is very improper to say that Zoroaster converted the people of primitive faith to his own faith. The Paoiryō-tkaesha people were Yazdan-Parast or God worshippers no doubt, and Zoroaster who expounded the entire Law of Nature to them only pointed out the straight path which was the short cut to the goal of highest spiritual progress.

As has been pointed out there was no established form of religion either in Iran or the neighbouring country of Turan before the advent of Zoroaster, and the Paoiryō-tkaesha or further advanced souls of Iran, Turan and many other countries are laudably remembered in Avesta scriptures. Just as the Iranian Paoiryō-tkaesha people were put on the track of Zoroastrianism, in the same way the Turanian good people (not all the Turanians of course) followed the path of Zoroaster, but this adoption of Zoroastrianism by the Turanians cannot therefore be termed Conversion. Iran and Turan implied only a distinction of locality or country and not one of religion. The fact that all the holy ones of Iran, Turan, Sairima, Sainina and other places are equally remembered in the Fravardin Yasht, does not show that all those who lived beyond the limits of Iran professed a faith different from that prevalent in Iran then. This memory of those holy ones in the Fravardin Yasht, never for a moment implies the advocacy of the present day proselytism by Zoroaster, but simply points out to us that Mazda-worshippers were not confined to Iran only but also inhabited neighbouring and distant regions alike.

In the first place we admit emphatically that **Zoroastrianism is a universal religion**, but it must be clearly pointed out **wherein** the universality of Zoroastrianism consists. This can be explained in two ways. The religion taught by Zarathushtra or the 'Daena-Zarathushtri' is the law of the entire universe, not a fraction thereof as taught by Zarathushtra. The twenty-one Nasks covered all the laws governing all the planes of the universe viz. the Spiritual, the Subtle and the

Physical. Zoroastrian Law is universal in as much as it is the law which teaches all the laws of life for the emancipation of the soul out of the physical vesture which imprisons it and dwarfs its powers and it is the law which is the Greatest, the Best, the most Excellent of all the laws that ever taught about the evolution of the soul.

In Yacna Ha 12 or the confession of Faith formula, the Law of Zarathushtra is depicted in the following terms. –

"I attune myself with the Good Mazdayacnian Law, – which is efficient in putting down the dual incessant fight between good and evil principles in man – which helps one to put down the weapon of body by effecting liberation of the soul – which leads to the union of the soul with its self counterpart, divorced so far down here for a purpose; – which teaches the Divine Moral Order governing the entire Universe, – which is the best, the greatest and the most excellent, of all the laws leading to the evolution-stage of the soul, and even to the most advanced goal of the soul – which pertains to Zarathushtra of Ahura".

Thus the universality or rather the universal greatness, because of the universal application, of the Law of Zarathushtra is to be noticed in more than one Avesta passage.

In the Vendidad Fargard V, the Universal Character of Zoroastrianism is depicted very beautifully with the same implication of the greatness of the Law of Zarathushtra. There it is said that the Law Mazdayacnian as taught by Zarathushtra is greater in size, beauty and excellence than any other law, just as the Sea Vourukasha is greater than all other seas or just as a big tree covers all the smaller ones, or just as the sky covers the entire earth round. This idea of the universality of the Zarathushtrian religion from the point of view of its greatness and dignity is to be found also in the Gathas.

The line in the Gathas 44:10 is in the Avesta put thus "Tam Daenam Ya Hatam Vahista" – i.e. 'that Law which is the best of all-laws-leading-towards-the-evolution-of-the-Soul; – thus it is a direct reference to Zoroastrianism as the Universal religion because it is all-exhausting or **including each and every law of the universe**. It is universal because of its greatness as the **Supreme Law** including in it all the other laws of nature.

Having understood the universal characteristic of Zoroastrianism from the point of view of its greatness we shall now try to understand why Zoroastrianism is a universal religion from the point of view of its universal efficacy resulting from the observance of all its tenets by its adherents. Every law of nature when observed by the people has its practical effect visible or invisible on the different planes of the universe including the physical. The law of vibration is at the bottom of this effect. Now the laws inculcated in the twenty-one Nasks by Zoroaster are the original Laws of Nature in obedience to which the multifarious activities in nature are carried on; and a Zoroastrian attunes himself with Nature or remains parallel with the functions of Nature, when he observes all the laws of his religion. The effect of this parallelism is accumulated invisibly in Nature, and this effect extends **all over the globe** as it rotates on its axis and revolves in space as well as over different planes of Nature from time to time besides this material one, thus reaching and affecting each and every member of all the kingdoms-animal, (including human,) vegetable and mineral, on this earth. Thus it is the nature of observance of the tenets of Zoroastrian religion and not the mere quantity or number of nominal adherents, that marks it out as universal in its effect, upon the creation universally, as explained above. The universal characteristic of Zoroastrianism can never be taken to imply proselytism or conversion of all mankind on the earth all at once-from the Red Indian to the greatest scientist – into Zoroastrian faith.

In Gatha fig:6 if the whole context is properly borne in mind the prophet explains what the Law of Asha in a nutshell implies, viz, the recognition of what is Right in Nature through the higher wisdom of the Good Mind, and then the sentence "Yatha-i Sravayaema tam deaenam Ya Khshnavato ahura" which literally implies "thus we can remained ourselves of viz., that law of thine, O Ahura."

In Gatha 53; 1, when the whole piece is translated literally, it is seen that no meaning of proselytism can be deduced from this paragraph – It can be seen that the eternal beatitude is bestowed upon the prophet himself, and not to any underlying or has even remote idea of proselytism.

Zoroastrianism is a universal religion in as much as if it is the complete Law of Nature taught by Zoroaster and possesses universal Superiority or transcendency and efficiency of universal application if properly followed by its adherents.

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