

WHAT ARE YOU TEACHING US ABOUT OUR GREAT RELIGION?

A Parsi Youth of America Laments.

by Ervad Burzin Peshotan Unwalla

[Note: The author of this article is a budding Youth. He is bred in America from his early childhood. Is this really our Religion, which is 'taught' by the pompous "scholars" of that country ? What are they "teaching" ? What are we getting *from* them? Burzin asks. He has some glimpses of the mystical beauty of our Din *from* his father, Ervad Peshotan, who has taken the full training of a Pucca Mobed in Udwada, the holy abode of Pak Iranshah Saheb. Burzin himself has passed through the Navar ceremony, as a result of his own and his daddy's exertions. Having tasted the spiritual and mystical flavour of the Daena, he can not help grieving at the repetitious torn-tom of "freedom to choose" and "Gatha alone cult", put forward in America in the name of so called "Zoroastrianism". A lamenting sincerity flows *from* every sentence written by Burzin.

You are welcome to write regularly for this humble Parsi Pukar, Burzin. And hearty thanks for speaking out your mind - **Editor.]**

As each day passes by in this "Gatha Only" society, where we Zarthoshtis live in today, more and more of our beautiful religion is lost. We are brought up in the New World with this idea that we have the freedom to choose. But where does this choice take us, and what is it doing for our religion? Where has the faith that was forever the backbone of our religion gone?

We are asked to follow the laws of Asha, and then told that Asha is different for every individual. We are asked to preserve our religion, yet try to modify it to fit each one's fancies. We are asked to sing the words of praise for our prophet Zarathushtra, yet we ignorantly argue on his teachings. We are taught to show the utmost respect to God, yet we question his omnipotence!

Mind is a terrific thing to waste. We must use our mind to stop and think for a second. **Can this all be the Great plan "Ahunvar" that we emphatically pray in our Yatha Ahu Vairyo? Or is there something else? Something that living in this modern society has blinded us to see?**

There are always two sides to a story, and it is the dire need of the day, here, to provide us with a glimpse of the other side, a window, so to speak, to a whole other real a world full of mysticism, beauty, and the pure essence of our great Mazdayasni Zarathoshti religion, which we are deliberately made to ignore.

Learning about our religion in this modern era can be quite difficult. For a youth growing up in America it can be quite a task to keep our religion alive. We are told to do things only because our parents tell us so. We are not provided with answers or justifiable reasons allowing us to see the real meaning behind their please to us. In no way trying to disrespect them, maybe they don't know. Maybe they are just following what was taught to them. No problem, for faith is *one* of the strongest ways of showing love and devotion to your God.

In an attempt to educate ourselves we attend sunday school classes, which can be a good source for basic information on our religion. But what exactly are these religious classes teaching us ? They tell us that we have the freedom to choose, and that we have a mind, and that we should use it. **In my many experiences with such classes, I have noticed that they some-how neglect to show the beauty and uniqueness of our religion. Instead of coming back with more knowledge, I found myself returning with the chance to talk to friends and eat good Parsi food, and nothing more.**

What is our purpose in life? Have we come here to eat Dhanshak every Sunday? Have we come here to celebrate every Navroze with dancing and rejoicing? Have we come here to spend time fighting about our religion while splitting our community in halves. These are questions that should be churning in one's mind.

Today many say that wearing the Sudreh and Kushti is just a form of one's identity. It is a symbol of our religion and should be worn proudly declaring one's Zoroastrian heritage. If this is the only purpose of our Surdreh Kushti why is it asked to be worn in contact with our body? Why 9 stitches to a Sadra and 72 threads to a Kushti ? If it were just a mere symbol of our religion, wouldn't we wear a nice colorful T-shirt for everyone

to see who we are?

Should we not wonder... and find out?

(Parsi Pukar April 1997 Vol. 2; No. 10)