

ASSAULT ON OUR ADARANS!

Adi. F. Doctor

A persian **Rivayat** states that where there are 10 Zoroastrian families, there should be an **Adaran**. In Mumbai, Parsees of yore took this advice at face value. The result is a proliferation of **Adarans**, particularly in South Mumbai. What our forefathers did not realise was that the Iranian maxim was meant for better times, when there were Zoroastrian empires.

Most of these Agiaries are more than a hundred years old. The old Parsee population in South and Central Mumbai has either moved further north, to the suburbs or a part of it at least, has emigrated to foreign lands.

Today, therefore, many of those Adarans are virtually languishing for want of adequate worshippers and Mobeds.

Before we take up the problems facing these Agiaries, it will be appropriate to consider the salient features of an Adaran Fire. What follows in parenthesis has been taken from the excellent articles by the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla.

[In the evanescent Nisti realms, there are five basic elements (Gava Chitra, Fire, Air, Water and Earth). The Gava Chithra element cannot be found on Earth. Again, in the Nisti worlds, there are four Fire energies - Mino Karko, Vazisht, Urvazisht and Spenisht. In our Geti (earth), there are only 3 Fire energies. The fourth, Mino Karko appears as a latent Fire energy, only when any object is burned.

For generations, there was only the Pak Iranshah Fire, in India. Later very few Adarans came up in some parts.

The Adaran Fire consists of four types of Fires : (a) Athorman's (b) Rathaestar's (warrior class), (c) Vastriyosh's (farmer's) and Hutokhsh's (Lay craftsmen, artisans, etc.,) They are purified and consecrated. After the purification ceremony (Passing the earthly fire through a certain number of pits, which helps remove the grassiness from

the fires and eliminate the dross from the basic elements in the fire). The purified fires now become devoid of putridities (naso). The Gava (benevolent) element now manifests itself in these fires. That is, they now possess natural properties of benevolence and a philanthropic disposition : to burn for the benefit of mankind.

Thereafter, ceremonies are performed for four days - Yasna + Vendidad rituals. This is when the latent Mino Karko not only becomes active, but gets attuned to the main Mino Karko Fire Energy. So also, the 3 other Fire energies get in tune with their original counterparts in Nature.

When all the four fires have been merged, there emerges the Adaran Fire, who is consecrated and enthroned. At this time, it starts getting nourishment from Adar Yazat. This Yazad now connects his Divine Energy, Attar-e-Adar with Nature's Mino Karko, the Aderan's Mino Karko and the currents of the Gahambaras. All those now focus themselves to meet in the Aderan's Mino Karko energy.

Moreover the Ushtans (Life forces) of the four merged fires begins to contact the Ushtans of all Yazatic forces. It should be remembered that the entire building housing the Adaran Fire has to be consecrated. The Urvisgah (Yazashnegah) including the Atash Dadgah has to be consecrated. The enthroned Fire now gets Divine Authority and he is called a Padshah (a Spiritual Monarch).

On the 4th and last day, when the Yazashne of Dadaar Hormuzd and Sarosh are recited, the six megnatic circuits of the Adaran start operating. The very first primary circuit (Kash) is formed in the Sarposh the tray of the Afarganya which has the burning fire). This is a Yazatic circuit around the Khuan (pedestal on which stands formed the Afarganyu. The remaining four circuits devolve in an outward movement till the last Kash is formed just inside the compound wall. All these six circuits are interconnected. The Adaran Padshah

has become a living, pulsating entity. The visible fire in the Sarposh, is his head, his legs stand on the Khuan. His body comprises the Urvishgah where the Dadgah is his conscience. In his Aipee, personal atmosphere, compound wall, there dwells the glory of Nature's Khoreh. If any of those 6 Kashes are tampered with or disturbed, the Adaran saheb gets defiled! His Khoreh, Ratheshtari and monarchy are irreparably harmed).

When they first consecrated the Adarans in Mumbai in the 18th and 19th centuries, our ancestors, must have taken extreme care and pains to establish the Agiaries that we have inherited. But, alas! Their descendants and the Trusts in whom the Agiaries have been vested have demeaned and desecrated the Padshah to an unimaginable extent. In any other civilised society, the trustees would have been hauled up for breach of trust! Letter-day trustees don't even care two hoots for the Holy, Consecrated, enthroned Fire! All they are concerned with and bothered about is the brick-cement concrete/stone structures that house the Padshahs. But even here, they and the mobeds "working" under them (the jee-huzoors who are supposed to tend and protect the Padshahs) turn a complete blind eye to the basic fact that the whole makaan has been consecrated!! No one is least bothered that the magnetic circuits inside the building are systematically destroyed!

In recent years, it is absolutely routine to observe juddin masons, carpenters and painters take hold of the Agiary building for "repairs and renovation", simply because the Salgreh of that Adaran is fast approaching! The fault also lies with our gullible Behdins, who shell out vast sums of money, without making any inquiry as to whether repairs are really necessary!

In most Agiaries, the Ushahin Geh Bui ceremony is hopelessly wayword. The correct time for it is the beginning of the Gashak period - 12.40 a.m. onwards. The ideal, period would be between 1 and 1-30 a.m. This ideal can be observed by a mobed who has taken proper Barashnoom and observes Khub. But alas! Today,

perhaps no agiary has mobeds who observe these tarikats and hence, instead, in some Agiaries, the Ushahin Bui is offered around 3-30 a.m. and at times, even after 4 a.m.!! One can well imagine the agony and hardships of the Aatash Padshah during the critical period, when Ahriman's hordes attack him viciously!

But, even worse is the condition of the Atash Dadgahs in many Agiaries : they are just allowed to languish, and, at times, shockingly, it has been found by some Behdins that even the embers are just not there — at best, only warm ash!!! These Dadgahs, who, as mentioned above, are the very conscience of the Adaran Sahebs are callously treated, both by the Mobeds and the Behdins. Complete lack of devotion and adab are the order of the day!

In our next instalment, we shall deal with some of the individual Agiaries in Mumbai, that have been renovated or "restored"!

(To be continued)

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ATROCITIES ON OUR ADARANS (II)

(Continued from the last issue)

Adi F. Doctor

Towards the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, a couple of Agiaries in Mumbai underwent more than a face-lift: they were expanded. The Patel Agiary at Andheri and the Banaji Limji Agiary in the fort, were felt to be too small for the growing clientele.

The way they went about tackling (breaking) the building that housed the Holy fire in Andheri, one wonders what must be left of the Adran Saheb's Aipee, Khoreh, Karsh and Talesam ! It pains us to see the typical "bhaang-phorni" mentality of letter day trustees of fire Temples! The building the makaan-that's all they see and are bothered about. How to make everything more glamorous ..! The Atash is like a piece of furniture, to be shunted from one place to another.

The Nov.-Dec. 2002 issue of Dini Avaz carried an article on the "renovation" of the Manekji Seth Agiary (the second oldest in Mumbai). What was not mentioned therein, is the shocking fact that where the original Urvisgah, with the Dadgah stood, we now have modern style toilets!! The Managing Trustee of this Agiary, who calls himself an Ervad is now also a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat!

The trustees of two other Agiaries in the Fort, Area, the Godavara (belongs to the BPP) and the Langrana, have recently found a new way of raising money: every evening, you will find water tankers outside the premises, with huge hose pipes connecting the tanker with the well inside. Granted 'that the water may not be in use for rituals, but what about the unlawful paivand (contact) established between the tanker on the road and the circuits of the Agiary?

The Wadia Agiary at Lalbaug, alluded to in our Nov.-Dec. 2002 issue, is in a pathetic state. The high-rise, coming up cheek-by-jaw, all because

of a Parsee builder's intransigence, has left nothing to be mentioned about its Kash, Khoreh, etc. One has hope only in the justice to be meted out at the dawn of Chaharum, which is inevitable for each one of us.

Finally, the Rustom Framna Agiary at Dadar, which underwent "restoration"! six months ago. It typifies the Gujarati saying, "Mog bhanjiney gilli karvi". More than Rs. 23 lakhs were spent by a young Parsee mechanical engineer, in doing up a perfectly well maintained building, this year. At least 70 workers swarmed almost all over the place, breaking flooring and walls, ripping off electrical fittings.... The atrocities perpetrated on the sanctum sanctorum and the Atash Dadgah were to be seen to be believed! The Khuan (pedestal) of the Adaran Saheb was removed. The ostensible reason given was, that it had developed cracks ! The entire flooring of the Koh or Gumbaz was replaced by glossy Italian marble. One wonders if the requisite Pavis inside the Gumbaz have been restored. You touch one switch and four lights come on - these lights falling inside the Koh and even on the Khuan and Afarganiya!

The Dadgah was shunted and virtually brutalised as per the dictates of the workmen, sanctity was hopelessly at a discount during the one month that the work was carried out.

Padshah ? Mazeeshta Yazata? Rathaeshtar? Perish the thought! Just look at the building that has been given a face-lift! How beautiful ! It is only the "lunatic fringe" that cribs about the Adaran and the Dadgah!

Parsees will have to pay very heavily on their chaharum day for their lethargy, listlessness and indifference not forgetting the breach of trust perpetrated by the glamour-crazy trustees of these sacred institutions.