

REFUTAION OF DR. DHALLA'S ZOROASTRIAN THEOLOGY

The Religion Of Zarathushtra Does Not Preach Conversion

By Late Ervad Phiroze S. Masani

Dr. Dhalla's book "Zoroastrian Theology" was written mainly with a view to propagate Proselytism i.e. conversion. The late Justice Davar was so much against the views expressed in Dhalla's book that he encouraged the late Ervad Phiroze Masani to write a book in refutation of "Zoroastrian Theology". Ervad Masani, therefore, wrote his magnum opus "Zoroastrian Ancient and Modern".

The following is an extract from Chapter II of Ervad Masanis Book.

The word "Writer" in the following extract refers to Dr. Dhalla and the quotations are from his book "Zoroastrian Theology".

In this our attempt we cannot treat the subject of proselytism intact even from the purely Zoroastrian point of view, showing the classification of various stages of different souls, and their different grades of progress. Here we have only to point out how the writer of Zoroastrian Theology who seems from his views expressed therein to be an enthusiast of proselytists makes the best attempt to allude to this advocacy throughout his work. We shall take up, one by one, such attempts and try to see the strength of the arguments advanced by him. Attention is here drawn of the reader to one point which he is requested to bear in mind throughout — which is — that although the writer of Zoroastrian Theology

seperates the Gathas as purely Zoroastrian and the other Avesta as pseudo-Zoroastrian, he bases his arguments in more than one subject not on the Gathas but on the so-called Later Avesta also, and that wherever the references quoted from the Later Avesta go against his personal views they are run down as Younger or Later or post-Zoroastrian, but whenever they seem to be in favour of his Idols-of-the-Mind, he supports them as if they shared the first-rate authority with the Gathas.

As for instance on P. 4 he says—

"The sacred books designate these pioneers in Iranian religion as the *paoiryotkaesha*, 'of the primitive faith',"

From a wrong interpretation of the term '*paoiryotkaesha*' the writer intends to convey that there were people in Iran before the advent of Zoroaster, who had their own religion and who underwent conversion or proselytism into Zoroaster's teachings. This word "*paoiryotkaesha*" literally means "the first or advanced ones in faithful practices of devotion," and is applied throughout the Avesta only to saintly souls advanced in spirituality. Those only who expedited their evolution or spiritual progress by following '*dataish paoiryash ahurahya*' i.e. the original first laws of Ahura in their leading of life are put under the class '*Paoiryotkaesha*.' We have in the

Avesta, three chief classes of souls always occurring together as in Yacna Ha 26. The three terms 'Ashaonam Fravashinam, Paoirya-tkaeshanam Fravashinam, and Nabanazdishtanam Fravashinam' imply three graduated classes of souls advanced in Ashoi. The first class 'Ashaonam' is the generally advanced class of souls that have left the earth for good and are progressing still further in the unseen world. The second 'Paoiryo-tkaeshanam' is the higher one and includes all souls who have achieved their liberation and spiritual development to a certain degree, and the third 'Nabanazdishtanam' which literally means 'the nearest to the centre or the creator' includes the highest group of souls who have nearly completed their spiritual progress in the heavenly regions and are being drawn close to the centre. Even the prophet Zarathushtra himself is styled a "Paoiryo-tkaesha" in the Fravardin-Yasht, for he was himself an advanced soul. Thus, we see that the word 'Paoiryo-tkaesha' which has a technical sense is wrongly rendered as "people of primitive faith." 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 Paoiryo-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 attainment of the goal of highest spiritual progress.

Then in Chapter II under the heading "Zoroastrianism in its early Missionary Stage" the writer wants emphatically to preach the advocacy of conversion in Zoroastrianism. He terms Zoroastrianism 'the new religion,' which implies that there must have been some old religion before Zoroastrianism whereas in fact as we have seen there was no form of established religion before the time of Zoroaster. Then

by the heading. 'The proselytising zeal of the crusaders' under the same chapter, he tries to convey to the reader that proselytism is openly allowed in Zoroastrianism. On the same P. 12 he puts in sentences like the following—

"When Zarathushtra won as a convert (!) Vishtaspa;"

"Conversions to the new religion followed rapidly;"

"With all the zeal and fire characteristic of converts Zarathushtra's followers worked actively for the promulgation of the faith both within and outside of the country;"

"Zoroastrianism soon became a church militant".

All of these are fired off only to betray his enthusiasm for the advocacy of proselytism. The adoption of Zoroastrianism by King Vishtaspa and other Paoiryo-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. The speculative tendency of the writer goes further when he says on the same page—

"Zoroastrianism implanted itself not alone among the Iranians that practised the primitive faith, but also among the daeva-worshippers, or accursed followers of demoniacal beliefs, and even among the Turanians, the national rivals of Iran. The prophet immortalizes in his holy hymns the Turanian chieftain Fryana and his family, who came over to his religion".

A highly unwarranted statement, indeed. There is not a single evidence whether direct or indirect to prove that Zoroastrianism spread among daeva-worshippers. This is mere firing off of the writer's own brain. The writer contradicts his own statement

Bombay Athornan Mandal's reply to Mr. Sarosh Khambatta of Illinois, U.S.A. on account of alleged Juddin Navjote of Mr. Joseph Peterson in response to his letter published in Jame. Extract :—

We very much deprecate, deplore and condemn in no uncertain terms the disgraceful action of Mr. Kersi Antia and his associates Hormuzdear and Naryosang Karanjia. The incident is without doubt a blot on the fair name of the Community and the precepts laid down by our Lord Zarathushtra.

In fact, if the "Self Styled" Scholar Mr. Joseph Peterson, had really studied the religion and scriptures of our faith and had understood them properly, he would never have opted for conversion. This speaks of his alleged Scholastic Studies. There were in the past and are in the living present many non-Zoroastrians, Indian as well as Foreign, erudite Savants of our religion who have never proclaimed that Zarathushtra preached conversion nor have they traded to be converted to the Zoroastrian faith.

We may mention that "this Navjote" has no legal or religious status as the so called Navjotee will be debarred from all fire-temples or making use of any of our funds, trusts and benefits including death time facilities.

of the conversion of the daeva-worshippers into Zoroastrianism when on page 118 he says under the heading 'Those privileged to recite the spells'.—

"The Manthras or chanters are those who are privileged to recite the spells. The knowledge of the secret formulas is to be zealously guarded; it is to be imparted only to the veriest few in the closest circle, Teaching a Manthra to an infidel is equivalent to giving a tongue to a wolf".

In view of such statements how can proselytism be allowed then? Page 12 and page 118 exhibit a pair of inconsistent ideas which is the characteristic defect of the writer throughout his work. If we admit the statement on page 118 taken from Yasht 4 according to the writer to be authoritative, then the statement on page 12 regarding the conversion of daeva-worshippers turns out to be untrue. Then again the favourable light in which the Turanians are held throughout the Avesta does not imply proselytism at all. As has been twice pointed out there was no established form of religion either in Iran or the neighbour-

ing country of Turan before the advent of Zoroaster, and the Paourya-tkaesha or further advanced souls of Iran, Turan and many other countries are laudably remembered in Avesta scriptures. Just as the Iranian Paouryo-tkaesh 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.

REFUTATION OF DR DHALLA'S ZOROASTRIAN THEOLOGY (2)

Late Ervad Phiroze S. Masani

Continued

"The prophet beseeches the Lord, together with Asha as the genius of righteousness, to let him know their divine will, so that he and his disciples may be able the better to teach the religion to man."

He quotes this from Gatha 49; 6. Here again, the meaning of the original is entirely perverted by the writer in order that the meaning may help him preach his gospel of proselytism direct from the Gathas. The original Avesta words "Yatha-i-sravayaema tam daenam ya khshnavato ahura," do not contain any idea of preaching the religion and of preaching to mankind in general. There is no reference "to man" at all in the original and these two words are added by the writer besides the perversion of the meaning of the original Gathic words. In Gatha 49; 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 quoted above in the Avesta follows which literally implies "thus this we can remind ourselves of viz., that law of thine, O Ahura." Instead of this obvious philological meaning, the writer according to his practice throughout the book wilfully perverts, adds and omits, as he pleases, in order that his favourite theses can be shown to be borne out by the scriptures to a lay reader. In the same way, he says on same page further—

"The prophet is convinced that the religion which his Heavenly Father has commissioned him to preach is the best for all mankind."

We have already quoted this sentence as an instance of perversion. The writer quotes this from Gatha 44; 10 which runs thus "Tam Daenam Ya Hatam Vahishta," which literally means "that law is the best of the laws-leading-to-real-existence or evolution." Grammatically the word "Hatam" is in the genitive plural and yet the writer puts it in the dative from "for all mankind." This is to say the least an undesirable means of trying to force the writer's own views upon the lay reader by putting a perverted rendering. A third instance on the same page 13 of such undesirable artifice may be cited here. He says—

"Ahura Mazda has promised that he will give the riches of beatitude for all time to the devout followers of the new Faith."

This is pointed out as a quotation from Gatha 53; 1. The writer in his own peculiar way of rendering tries to convey that some inducement is presented to the people for adhering to the Zoroastrian Faith, and that therefore proselytism is encouraged by means of this inducement even in the Gathas. When the whole piece is translated literally, it is seen that no such meaning of proselytism can be deduced from this paragraph, and that therefore the writer's attempt is one more instance of perversion. The literal rendering is as follows—

"The best aspiration of Spitama Zarathushtra has been vouchsafed, because Ahura Mazda gave him on account of Rectitude the blessed reward of eternal beatitude, and because those who harassed him began to teach about the word and deed of the good law."

REFUTATION OF DR. DHALLA'S ZOROASTRIAN THEOLOGY (3)

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(Continued)

Zoroastrianism is a universal religion inasmuch as 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 as we have already seen, the writer deplors that Zoroastrianism has not been universal, in these words—

“Though possessed of all the best elements that fitted it to be a world creed, Zoroastrianism has never shown any signs of becoming a universal religion.”

The writer regards Zoroastrianism as remaining only a “national religion” or “the communal religion of a hundred thousand souls.” This deploration of the writer points out the wrong connotation of the term “Universal” as applied to Zoroastrianism. The Gathas speak of the Universality of the Zoroastrian Law but the writer even misrepresents that passage and harps upon the same string of conversion of the people of the world. As for instance he quotes Gathas 31; 3 and says.

“From the very mouth of Mazda the prophet yearns to know the divine truth in order that he and his adherents may convert all living men to the excellent faith.”

In this passage there has been originally pointed out the universal effect of the Zoroastrian Law upon the entire living creation including all the Kingdoms of nature, and thus the achievement of universal evolution by means of the observance of Zoroastrian Law in the Golden Age has been spoken of. This passage

which implies a very deep meaning regarding the collective progress of the entire creation does not at all refer to the proselytism of all people from the most illiterate to the most intellectual as the writer wants to convey. A similar reference is made by the writer under the heading ‘The prophet guides mankind to Asha’s righteousness’, and there also the writer brings in the idea of conversion by the queer heading.

(Continued from Page 12)

from BURJISHI VOHUTRYAN frequency, the Rathya Chakra collapses and becomes A — RATHWYA!

As internal evidence, to support what has been said above, we shall cite the AFRINAMI KARDS of the JASHAN Ceremony itself. There it is shown how a JASHAN becomes successful and efficacious. The priest says, “May we conquer and vanquish all those enemies who bring all kinds of diseases and curses, and all those who are selfish, vindictive people (who upset the canons of the Faith and thereby bring upon Nature’s wrath), their A-RATHWYA thoughts, words and deeds, i.e. those who aid and abet GANAMIN in overthrowing RATHWYA CHAKRA.”

Thus, a JASHAN Ceremony performed carelessly, indifferently, in the presence of JUDDINS or when JUDDINS may have been present on the spot where the ceremony is to be performed (i.e., before the JASHAN begins), etc. etc., is not only invalid, but it provokes Nature’s ire on the community, for flouting the canons, laws and practices of the Zoroastrian faith and for tinkering with the sacred rituals!!

Hutoksh