

THE CRUST AND THE KERNEL

The Juddins Are Coming! The Juddins Are Coming!

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To understand the concept of Bunyad better, it is imperative to note what the Pahlavi writers called Bun (seed) and Bunak (diminutive seed). In every seed of the male, there is this smaller seed. These may be roughly compared to a cell, the smallest unit of life, and the most important part of the cell, its nucleus, respectively. The cell dies if its nucleus is removed from it. In the Bunak of the male, the physiognomy, traits, qualities, perfections and imperfections (both physical and moral) of his ancestors of nine generations remain stored!

We know today that the nucleus of a cell is surrounded by a nuclear membrane and contains a material called DNA, the substance on which all life is based. DNA not only controls all the activities that occur in the cell but it is also the material that is passed on from one generation to another in the form of chromosomes. It is responsible for likenesses between parents and their offspring. The process of heredity is solely and entirely one of passing on DNA and their genes. Everything any person can inherit from an ancestor must be in the chromosomes received from each parent. While the Pahlavi writers talked of nine generations, modern biologists believe that once one goes more than five generations, the chances are that instead of a full chromosome, a part of a chromosome may be passed along.

The ancient Iranians knew the importance of Positive Eugenics and took adequate measures which led to the improvement of their stock by breeding healthy, intelligent, capable and loyal Zoroastrians. They were well aware of the fact that there are between people, genetic differences, blood — group differences, body-chemistry differences, etc. They were full conscious of the fact that if they intermarried, the chromosomes, which they had inherited in a certain symbolic pattern, were liable to be garbled and thrown into confusion. They were aware that the traits and characteristics stored in the Bunak for nine generations would be gradually destroyed if they contracted Juddin marriages. Their successors, the Parsis, from the time of their emigration to India in the ninth century A.D. to the end of the nineteenth century, largely preserved their physical, moral and spiritual heritage by inbreeding. They remained as an insulated group and developed an ethnic peculiarity. Inbreeding bred true to type and avoided scrambling of genes.

It is keeping these factors in mind that in every dynasty, Irani Zoroastrians declared boldly. Parsa Parsiha Puthra, Arya, Arya Chithra! It is because the Mazdavasni Zoroastrians swore by the slogan of Bunak Pashani that the reciter of the Chithrem Buyat prayer even today, desires that, may the Parsi community alongwith the special and peculiar traits of its Bunak last until the advent of the

next Saoshyant. Shah Behram Varzavand! It is also in this context that the greatest mystic poet of Iran, in the last thousand years, Firdausi wrote these memorable lines: Chun Tokhme Mehetar Aludegast, Buzorgi Azan Tokhma Poludegast (When there is an onslaught of pollution on an exalted Tokham, the sublime quality within it is thoroughly destroyed).

It is a shame, therefore, that today some aberrated members of our own community cock a snook at our scientific traditions and demand inter-communal marriages. On the one hand they clamour for pedigreed dogs and horses, on the other, they don't mind rearing hybrids and bastards among their children! Dasturji Dr. H. K. Mirza legitimately laments in his "Outlines of Parsi History" that, today, "the Parsis of Iran and also of India are thinking in terms of individuals, forgetting and neglecting their duty to the Religion and to the Community."

To those who pretend to have the welfare and survival of their community at heart, and who, therefore make an outcry for proselytisation and inter-communal marriages to boost up the Parsi population, brief extracts from a paper read before the 2nd World Zoroastrian Congress in 1964, by the famous Parsi ethnologist, Mr. Sapur F. Desai, provide a fitting reply. According to him, "Since their entry into India some 1200 years ago the Parsis have multiplied very slowly If we take only 10 pairs of Parsis to start with 1200 years ago and assuming six children to a pair and further assuming normal biological growth and decay (1½% net increase every year) the Parsis should have been 26 lacs or 2.6 million by the end of the 19th century." In this regard, it is very significant to note that until the 1941 census, the Parsis continued to increase in number and thereafter, the rot set in with the notorious Vansda Navjotes proving to be the causa causans of a radical decline of about 1% p.a. in their number (the political partitioning in 1947, notwithstanding)!

Thus, no matter what the Special Marriage Act may say, no matter if a Parsi man or woman executes an affidavit months in advance of his/her marrying an alien that he/she continues to profess the Zoroastrian religion, if the Parsis have even a vague idea of their rich genetical and cultural heritage, they will readily appreciate the fact that Juddin Navjotes and Marriages are anathema to their religion.

"Pasande Kardi?" asks the Parsi priest of the bride and the groom in the year of our Lord only knows when! "Yes, Sir": "Oui Monsieur"; "Si Signor": "Ja, mein Herr": "Jee Haan," could be the varied answers, as against an occasional, "Pasande Kardim," if our Juddin-o-phils have their way, at the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress, of unceremoniously thrusting some of their hare-brained 'reforms' (!) on an unsuspecting community. For, not only, according to some of them, can an unfortunate Parsi youth, who has married outside the community under the Special Marriage Act of 1954, and has claimed that he/she continues to profess the Zoroastrian religion, make use of various Zoroastrian places

of worship and the Dokhtas, but also according to some others, there's nothing wrong in a Parsi and his/her non-Parsi spouse undergoing the holy Ashcerwad ceremony. A little reflection is sufficient to show hollow and unsustainable these arguments are.

It should be emphasised even at the risk of repetition that there is no statute in this country which overrides or interferes with any religious custom or law. Those who claim to profess Zoroastrianism even after they are married to non-Parsis have every right to practise their brand of Zoroastrianism (!) the way they want to, in their own homes. They can even have separate places of worship created for themselves. But under no circumstances can they claim entrance to any of the existing consecrated, sanctified institutions which are exclusively for Parsi Zoroastrians. Even if they are married under the Special Marriage Act of 1954, they have no manner of right against any of the religious institutions. The founders of such institutions did not intend to give benefit thereof to those Parsis contracting inter-communal marriages. No amount of empty threats, that, because someone influential is near the seat of the government and can get any legislation passed with ease, will browbeat the knowledgeable!

It should be firmly entrenched in our minds, that according to the Zoroastrian Religion, marriage is not only a contract but a sacrament. Such a sacrament can only be given by qualified Parsi priests, when both the parties to the marriage are Zoroastrians.

According to the fundamental Law of Asha or the Law of Divine Order operating in Nature, all human souls, which incarnate on earth for their salvation, are divided and graded into five basic groups. These five groups of human souls are allotted five different religions. There are of course, five sub-groups and sub-branches of every major religion. A clear reference to these five major religions and their teachers or masters is made in Yasna Ha 19, paragraphs 14-16, the Avestic words used being Panch—Tkaesha and Pancha Ratu. The gist of these Avestic passages is that the Universe is created according to the Plan of Ahunavar and five fundamental groups of human souls are made and their five religions are fixed from the beginning!

Now, it is one of the basic tenets of Zoroastrianism that every human in these five groups of souls brings his religious faith with him at birth. The seat of this faith is in the male's Tokhum and the female's Audan — sperm and ova, respectively. Among other things, a person's faith, beliefs and thoughts are indelibly impressed on the Tokham and Audan. This principle, of every human being born with his faith, is alluded to in Yasna Ha 31.11 (Gatha Ahunavaiti). There it is stated that Mazda first established the terrestrial world and Man, alongwith the religions (Daenao), and each one for whom the religious was established, for him, i.e. for the one belonging to that particular religion, principles, deeds and faith were established.

Thus, it is evident that the five major religions of the world are in the fundamental scheme of things of Nature and are not man-made. Man's birth in a particular religion is predetermined by Ahura Mazda and forms a part of the Grand Design and plan of Nature. Man has, therefore, no business to meddle with Nature's plans and if he either indulges in a proselytising spree or if he gives his Tokham, which bears the seal of his faith to an alien, he senselessly revolts against Nature. This is the essence of Yasna Ha 31.11 read with Yasna Ha 19.

Sagacious Pahlavi writers, visualising the vicious, murky turns of events in the 20th century A.D. among the Zoroastrians, laid great stress on the preservation, perpetuity and purity of the Tokham and Audan. In Dinkard Book 6, we are told: "You must know that one who is of Mazadaysani Religion is said to be of that religion by virtue of one's continuing the thought (faith) of the Mazdayasnian Religion. This means that just as every species is known by its name on account of the seed within it, in the same way, a religious person is said to belong to the Mazdayasni Religion on account of his leading himself by the original connected thought (faith) of the religion." (Emphasis mine). A passage in Dinkard Book 2 hits the nail bang on the head and knocks the bottom out of the jejeune arguments of the advocates of inter-communal marriages: "Just as the offspring born of a fleet Arab horse and a country mare are neither fleet runners like the Arab horse nor long-standing like the country one, so is the mule born of a horse and an ass, an unworthy creature and does not resemble either of the two, and in this way, the seed is cut off and the generation does not proceed further, for this reason a good deal of benefit accrues from the preservation of the seed essential."

Mark the words "the generation does not proceed further," for we have a similar idea expressed in our Pazand, prayer, Patet Pashemani, where, among the host of sins a mortal can commit, are mentioned there pertaining to our subject: Gunahe Ravani Khaetudath Vasovasni and Doode Vehan Vasovasni. All these three levy an unmitigable burden on the soul. This oppressive burden on the soul is caused by a Zoroastrian male cohabiting with a non-Zoroastrian female, whereby the soul of the Zoroastrian gets unduly embroiled in the karmic debt with that of the alien, thereby deterring the progress of his soul. This is the sin of Gunahie Ravan. The encumbrance on the soul is also caused if a Zoroastrian throws a spanner in the works of his own Khaetudath (the act of blending together of the two correlative counterparts of a soul in the spiritual world). If a Zoroastrian marries an alien, his/her Khaetudath is unconscionably delayed (Khaetudath Vasovasni). Again, if a Zoroastrian contracts marriage with an alien he is guilty of breaking the ancestral family chain and commits the sin of Doode Vehan — Vasovasni.

The most scathing denunciation of a Mazdayasn Zoroastrian marrying outside his/her religion is voiced in the Vendidad, the only complete Nask of the

21 original Nasks, that survives to this day. There, in Chapter 18, such blasphemous unions are castigated as sinful adultery.

As already seen, our religion recognises only that union as 'marriage', in which both the spouses are born Parsi Zoroastrians and both profess the Mazdayasni Zarthoshti Religion. What is the nature of the wedding ceremony that such a couple undergoes?

First, there is the purificatory ritual, known as Nahan, the Avestic word for which is Frasnana — a sacred ablution. A few drops of the Nirang (consecrated urine of the white bull), which acts as a talisman, are administered to the couple by qualified priests, while reciting certain sacred chants. This Nirang can be given only to those, who, in our ceremonies, are described as 'Harke Avar In Jamin Pa Airi Va Vehdin.' i.e. those who on earth have the uncestral Mazdayasni seed and who belong to the Mazdayasni Religion only. The bull's urine is then applied to the body and allowed to dry up, after which a bath is taken. This is the first part of the marriage ceremony in which the purification of both the physical component of the bodies of the couple takes place.

The second part of the marriage ceremony is the Asheervad ceremony, comprising sacred Avesta and Pazand chants recited by the priests in the presence of fire and two witnesses. Here, it is specifically stated that this ceremony is being performed according to the Canons of the Mazdayasni Religion: Avar Daad U Aeen E Deen — E — Mazdayasni. Among the nuptial blessings, the priests enjoin the couple to call themselves always Mazdayasnis only (Khwaanaad Mazdayasni!) and to occupy themselves constantly in developing the radiance of their personal magnetism as Mazdayasni Zoroastrians.

The most important part of the Asheervad Ceremony is the recitation of two Avestic talismanic chants, powerful Nirangs, which bestow special benedictions on the couple, uniting their souls and their bodies and creating special affinity and attachment between them, which will ultimately lead to the salvation of the soul — the be-all and end of this incarnation.

Now, we have a Pazand Setayash called Chithrem Buyat, in which there is an Avesta fragment, which does not appear anywhere else in the extant Avestic scriptures. Three technical terms, used in this rare Avesta passage, deserve our attention: Chithra, Pithva and Tokhma Pithva. Chithra is the original seed, i.e. the influence upon it of the Civilisation, Culture and Religion of the ancestors; and Tokhma Pithva is the seed of the descendants that remains alive and vibrant with the nourishment derived from the day-to-day practice of the tenets of the Zoroastrian Religion, which, in its turn, springs from one's genuine faith in the Mazdayasni Zarthoshti Religion.

With this background in mind, we shall briefly see what happens when a Parsi male or female contracts Juddin marriage.

A Parsi Zoroastrian cannot practise even the daily elementary rituals like the Kushti — Padiav once he/she marries a non-Parsi because, living perpetually with an alien nullifies and invalidates any Avesta/Pazand Manthra-vani that he/she may recite or any ceremony that he/she may perform. The idea of observing and practising the tenets of the Zoroastrian Religion is completely misconceived by any such Parsi man or woman, who claims that he/she continues to profess the religion, wears the Sudreh-Kushti, attends religious ceremonies, etc. Such a person automatically loses the 'Khoreh' (Electro-Magnetic Aura) with which he/she was blessed after the Navjote ceremony, which, among other things, reasserted and rekindled the faith in the Zoroastrian Religion with which he/she was born. This Khoreh, acquired by the Initiate at the time of the Navjote ceremony can only continue to be possessed by the Initiate as long as he/she retains an implicit, genuine faith in all the commands of Prophet Zarathushtra. A Parsi marrying an alien spurns one of the most important commands of his/her religion, as the marital relations with the alien spouse completely destroys the 'Khoreh' to which he/she had become entitled after the Navjote ceremony.

While the Khoreh of both the Parsi male or female marrying an alien is thoroughly disintegrated, there is a distinction, from the point of view of Bunyad, between a Parsi male and a Parsi female marrying a Juddin. In Zoroastrianism, there are constant reference to and explanations of the preservation of the purity and continuity of the human seed and the Bunyad in it. When the seed of the Parsi male is 'planted' in the 'soil' of the non-Zoroastrian woman, the seed of the Parsi male deteriorates and is polluted, but when a Parsi female marries an alien, her 'soil' becomes subservient to the 'seed' of her husband and the religious faith attached to the husband's seed over-powers the faith attached to the ova in the female 'soil'. Thus, the Bunyad of the Parsi female is fully destroyed and lost and not just damaged when she cohabits with a non-Parsi male.

Traditionally, Parsis have not allowed the face of their dead to be seen by anyone except by their own co-religionists. Why? Before considering the reason as given in our sublime religion, it should be pointed out that those who deliberately raise a hue and cry about disallowing non-Zoroastrians from paying their homage to the departed Zarthoshti, betray nothing but a bizarre syrupy sentimentality that would do credit to a local celluloid tear-jerker. Once again, it is not the members of other communities, who respect the customs and practices of our religion, but some of our own brethren, who, through ignorance or because they have an axe to grind, create an unwarranted hullabaloo about depriving their non-Parsi friends and relatives (in these days of Juddin marriages) of doing a dekho of a dead Parsi!

What then is the *raison d'être* of this religious custom? The answer lies in the various post mortem happenings and goings-on and the necessity and purpose of the Sachkar ceremony.

As long as we breathe, there are two polarised elements entwined in every particle of our body, called Gava (the benevolent White element) and Drvao (the evil Dark counterpart), which compete with each other ceaselessly, with the Gava keeping some check over the Drvao. This quasiequilibrium which helps keep the individual alive and kicking is brought about by what the Avesta cryptically describes as Panchaas Dvaraam Vaasi (the 50 — doored Vaasi), the natural force and energy, which dwells in the Azda (the fluid counterpart of the physical body). While reciting the Haptan Yasht (Karda 8) one prays that one attunes oneself to this Vaasi.

The moment breathing stops completely, the roles of Gava and Drvao are reversed. Gava seeks instant escape from the body, while Drvao starts spreading rapidly in every atom of the body. This results in the creation of Druj — e — Nasu or Nasa Druj, putrid magnetic emanations, which produce destructive energy and evil vibrations. Every minute that passes accentuates the flow and emanation of Nasa Druj in and from the body. To add to it, the Nasa Druj prevailing in the atmosphere immediately outside the dead body is also attracted towards it. To prevent this, as soon as a Zoroastrian dies, the survivors are enjoined to light a fire and a lamp near the deceased and to recite constantly the Ashem Vohu prayer. Soon thereafter, the corpse is washed with bull's urine and the Sachkar, comprising mainly recitation of Avestic chants, the tying of seven bunds or knots on the different parts of the corpse in a certain way, the formation of talismanic circuits round the corpse with an iron nail, etc., is performed. The Sachkar ceremony has the ability to trap the Nasa Druj in a small area and prevent the external Nasa Druj from entering the corpse, thereby restricting putridity and contamination from spreading.

It is to maintain and preserve the efficacy of the Sachkar ceremony that not only a non-Zoroastrian but even a Zoroastrian Woman, in her menses, be she the wife, mother, sister or daughter of the deceased, is prohibited from viewing any part of the corpse. Why? What happens that neutralises the potency of the Sachkar ceremony?

It is common knowledge today, accepted by even the most recalcitrant, hard-boiled orthodox scientist, that every living organism, nay, all forms of matter, emit electro-magnetic radiations every second, and these organisms, of which the human being is a highly developed form, have their own individual frequencies and wavelengths of emanations. Zoroastrian Religion teaches that every human being has his own subtle circuit of thought forces (Mithra) and faith (Verena) which involuntarily gyrate in his mind all his life. These arise basically from that individual's Bun (seed, lineage or descent) and the Religion (Varna) in which he has been born. Every such thought carries with it its genetic blueprint, as it were. It is these rarefied thoughts that give to the bodily radiations, and the extraordinary organ from which these electro-magnetic emanations are sent out is the human eye. In Avesta, such radiations from the eyes are known as Vanthwo Frado, electro-magnetic currents of diverse wavelengths.

Because of the totally different wavelength of faith and of the subtle circuit of thought forces of a non-Zoroastrian, the moment he looks at the open face of a Zoroastrian corpse, two things happen: (1) the Nasa Drj, which has been bound and shackled and confined within a narrow limit tends to be accentuated and spreads and (2) the talismanic effect of the Sachkar ceremony is short-circuited! No more is the circuit closed and 'current' cannot flow round the corpse in a circle.

It is our crass ignorance about the 'finer' world of radiations, to which our senses are completely closed, that lead some of us to bawl out time and again against disallowing members of other communities from viewing an unshrouded Parsi corpse. No disrespect or insult is ever meant and most of them appreciate this point better than we do! None of them desires to levy an avoidable spiritual stress on the soul of the departed, if a proper explanation is offered. But when the situation in our own homes is akin to that of Bar Mun Tele Andharum . . . ?!

