

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 165 – In Memoriam - Dasturji Peshotan Dasturji Hormazdyar Mirza - a gentle and noble soul!

Hello all Tele Class friends:

As all of you know, our beloved scholar, gentle and noble soul, Iranshah Vada Dasturji Dastur Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar passed away in Mumbai at 12:26 PM Indian time on June 26th 2016, 2:56 AM ESDT, a tremendous loss to his wife Mahrukh, daughter Aban, son Darius, all his family and friends, and personally to me, his student and friend!

In our relatively short life span, you meet thousands of people but a very few leave an indelible mark on your soul: and for me, Dasturji Peshotan has left that mark in my heart which will remain there for ever! His noble and gentle soul, his scholarly knowledge of our religion, customs, rituals, prayers, his ever willingness to help me out with many a questions on these subjects, his ready help to find a book on our religion, his generous gift to me of some rare books, I can go on and on, but that was Dasturji Peshotan to me.

And yes I never forget his ever present sense of humor with stories of his very mischievous childhood especially in our beloved MFCAI Athornan Institute (MFCAI), his severe reprimands from his dear dad who was our amazing scholar and Iranshah Vada Dasturji Dastur Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza, some of his funny stories by his dad, etc..

I am lucky to have our MFCAI all student “daftar” (ledger) meticulously kept by our Acting Principal Faramroze Patel and may be our wonderful teacher Kaikhushroo Daruwalla for a total of 608 students from its inception in Jogeshwari on March 22nd 1923 with 36 students to June 1999. I looked for Dasturji Peshotan in it and could not find it. Then I realized that he was admitted as student number 384 Pesi Hormazdyar Mirza on June 11 1954, 3 months after I left MFCAI. According to this ledger, he was ordained as Navar in Iranshah on November 12th 1958 and Martab on March 21st 1960, 5 months before I left India for USA.

So I did not know him until much later when I met him in Iranshah in 1990 when for the first time I realize that he was also an ex-MFCAI student. I was there to witness his investiture to the exalted position of Dastur (High-Priest) of Iranshah Atash Behram in Iranshah by Udvarda Samast Anjuman on 13th May 2004, after the passing away of his dad Dasturji Hormazdyar Dasturji Kayoji Mirza. [\(Please see the attached photos\).](#)

He is the 15th generation of the Sanjana Iranshah lineage of Dasturs from the famous Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaikobad, the author of Kisseh-e-Sanjan poem written in 1600 when Iranshah was in Navsari.

The above meetings started a relationship with increasing involvement of mine with Dasturji. He helped me to understand some of our prayers like Sanjana Tandoorasti and its 3 additional parts, the “kha kha, gha gha” prayer we Sanjana Mobeds recite with the Navjotee, meanings of many of our prayers, etc. He also gifted me a copy of the Vernahede book containing explanation of the prayer “kha kha gha gha”. On inquiry about our prayers in Avesta script which I really like to read from, he shared with me Anklesaria Avesta script book of our Aafringaans, Aafrians and Farokshi which I scanned and have it with me.

In 2004, I was requested by my good friend Jamshid Zartoshty, Minsk, Belarus, who was the first person to point out to me the Gujarati book of Dr. Ervad J.J. Modi on “*My Travels Outside Bombay*” which contains some interesting facts about the Atash-Kadeh of Baku, Azerbaijan, described by Sir Modi in this book.

He wanted to have pages 266-276 to be scanned from the book and sent to him for one of his friends. I took up his request and ask for help of my nephews, Zarir Darbari and Cyrus Dastoor, to find out if we can get hold of this book, and if so, can Zarir scan the above pages from it and send it to me so I can translate and forward them to Jamshid.

As always, Zarir persisted in following up on this request, consulted the newly ordained Dastoorji Peshotan with whom he was working, who approached Dastoorji Kaikhushroo Jamasp Asa, who in turn obtained a copy of the book from a library and loaned it to Zarir.

Zarir then scanned the pages and send them to me which I translated in English and forwarded to Jamshid.

What an International co-operation for Scholarly work! I do have the whole scanned book in Gujarati, thanks to Zarir.

I requested to borrow Kangaji’s Yasna-Ba-Maeni and Vendidad-Ba-Maeni and Dasturji and Ramiyar Karanjia right away replied that they have a copy and can loan me when I will be in Mumbai this April-May. At that time, his eye sight was failing and his wonderful dear daughter Aban used to communicate with me for him. Alas when I went to Mumbai he was seriously sick.

On my first day in Mumbai, April 14th, I went with my nephew Kurush Dastoor to see Dasturji. He was bed ridden and we talked to him just sparingly. In first week of May, I went with my nephews Cyrus Dastoor, Zarir and Cyrus Darbari to see him in ICU thanks to Aban for making the arrangements. He had his first operation day ago and still had tubes in his mouth and cannot talk. However, he grabbed our hands very tightly and tried very hard to communicate with all of us. I can still feel that strong touch on my hand and it will remain always with me.

If I can borrow and paraphrase the words from Mohammad Rafi’s famous song Bapuji ki Amar Kahani :

“Jao Dasturji, Jao Dasturji, Rahega Naam tumhaaraa.
Jaba taka chamkeh chaand seetaareh, chamkeh naam tumhaaraa!

“Go on Dasturji, Go on Dasturji, your name will always be with us,
As long as the moon and the stars will shine,
your name will shine with them (in the whole Zarathushtri Community of the world)!”

And then the words of the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his poem: A Psalm of Life:

“Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us, Footprints on the sands of time;
Footprints, that perhaps another, Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother, Seeing, shall take heart again.”

Well for me, Dasturji has left his big footprints on my life
and when I am faced with problems like Dasturji faced innumerable of them in his life,
he still kept his smile and faith in Dadar Ahura Mazda and Iranshah,

and I will do the same and and I urge all of us to do the same!

On the lighter side of Dasturji, he would regale me with some of his shenanigans in MFCAI. He told me about stealing a “fanas” (jack fruit) from the back of our sick room with his other cohorts and were regaling by trying to eat the whole big fruit but could not and so they stored the remaining fruit in one of the lockers and the smell of it got the attention of the duty teacher and yes it was discovered and Dasturji and his friends were severely punished by the teacher as well as himself by his dear strict dad.

He also used to tell me stories about his dear dad. The best one I remember is about Chinvat Bridge. Their home in Mumbai is right across walking distance from the Vaatchha Gandhi Agiary in Mumbai across very busy Hughes road.

Dasturji will accompany his dad to go to the Agiary quite often.

After a treacherous crossing one day across the Hughes road, he turns to Dasturji Peshotan and said:

You know it will be easier to cross the Chivat bridge than to cross this treacherous Hughes road!
I will never forget the humor in this by his dad!

So here we are on the second day of his demise, we should remember this gentle and noble soul of Dasturji Peshotan!

And per our religion, on the fourth day dawn Chaahrum, the soul is in front of a tribunal of Meher, Sarosh and Rashne Yazads who balance all the deeds of the soul during its entire life and if its good deeds out weigh the bad, it is allowed to cross the Chinvat Bridge to Garothmaan, Garo Demaana – the House of songs.

I am sure that with the pious and holy and humble life Dasturji has lived, and with the practice of crossing the Hughes Road Chinvat Bridge (?!), his soul will surely advance over the Chinvat Bridge to Garothmaan!

And Zarathushtra promises to escort such holy souls across the Chinvat Bridge in his Gatha Ushtavaiti, Yasna 46, Verse 10 as follows:

Zarathushtra escorts the Holy Souls across the Chinvat Bridge - Yasna 46 – Verse 10

(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation)

**(10) Yeh vaa moi naa genaa vaa Mazdaa Ahuraa,
Daayaat angheush yaa tu voistaa vahishtaa,
Ashim ashai Vohu Khshathrem Mananghaa,
Yaanschaa hakhshai khshmaavataanm vahmaai aa,
Fro taaish vispaish chinvato frafraa peretum.**

Zarathushtra escorts the Holy Souls across the Chinvat Bridge - Yasna 46 – Verse 10

**The man or woman who performs the work
which has been declared as best by Thee, O Ahura Mazda,
in this world such a person shall enjoy Asha and Khshathra's reward
which is spiritual strength and serving of humanity.
the said spiritual strength can only be achieved through Vohuman.
I shall teach them, O My Lord, to worship Thee alone,
and shall guide them when they march across the Chinvat Bridge.**

*(From Translation of Gathas the Holy Song of Zarathustra, from Persian into English by Mobed
Firouz Azargoshasb, March 1988, San Diego, California. Abbreviated AZA.)*

SPD Explanation:

1. I have no doubt that our holy prophet Zarathushtra, per his promise, is at the Chinvat Bridge to escort the holy soul of our dear beloved Dasturji Peshotan Dasturji Hormazdyar Mirza at his Chaahrum!
2. May Dadar Ahura Mazda, our holy prophet Zarathushtra and holy Iranshah give strength and resolve to his wife Mahrukh, daughter Aban, son Darius and all his family and friends
to pass this sad times of losing Dasturji.
3. Please remember that his body may be gone, but his soul will always be with them to help them successfully live their lives in his pleasant memories.

**May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Respect for all burn ever
eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and
eternal enthusiasm!**

Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli