

# ARDAVIRAF ARDAFRAVASH ON "A PERIOD OF UNREST"

— ADI F. DOCTOR.

[In the 1988 Nov-Dec issue and the 1989 Jan-Feb. issue of Dini-Avaz, in the Question & Answer columns, we had tried to give both the religious and the scientific viewpoints on menstruation. This subject has assumed even more significance today, what with young and not-so-young minds being bombarded on the satellite T.V. channels with completely misleading commercials on sanitary napkins. So, on this silver jubilee of **Dini-Avaz**, we present a detailed factual account of what a Zoroastrian woman has to undergo if she brazenly flouts the basic teachings of her religion, regarding **Dustaan Parhiz** or abstinence during menses.

What is shown as punishment or retribution for the soul after death, is to be taken as, (a) the torment the soul has to go through on Chinvat, because it wants to release the body from the grip of sins, and (b) the fate that awaits the body and mind of the entity in the next birth]

## A short note on Dastur Ardaviraf

Ardaviraf was a very saintly Dastur in the time of Ardeshir Papakan, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty in the 3rd century AD. Among other things, King Ardeshir entrusted Dastur Tansar with the task of collecting all the fragmentary texts of the religion that had been scattered all over Iran, Central Asia, etc. However, by and large, a great many of the millions of Zoroastrians seemed to be leading a materialistic life, full of sloth and worldly pleasures.

So, Ardeshir decided that a very holy person should visit the realms, where departed souls are meted out justice, and bring back a detailed account of what fate awaits the souls of the sinners and saints.

On a smaller scale, similar circumstances prevail in the Parsee community today.

The Arda Viraf Nameh contains 100 small chapters, each dealing with different subjects. The consequences of violating the fundamental rules regarding menses are given in chapters 20, 22, 72 and 76.

**Chapter 20** : Arda Viraf narrates his account of hell, where, "I saw a soul of a woman at one place. She was given platefuls of putridity, which included body-emanations like urine, excreta, perspiration, sweat, pus, etc. I asked Sarosh and Adar Yazads, why this soul had to undergo such a punishment.?"

They replied that this woman did not practise abstinence during menstruation. She did not observe the rules of segregation during her periods. Instead, she had touched water, fire, humans, etc."

The putrid emanations that emerge from her at that time are called in Avesta **Druj-i-Buji**. If the woman, at that time, does not practise abstinence and mixes in society, she spreads the **druj** in the atmosphere and pollutes the **Ushtan** (life-breaths) of trees, animals and men! She vitiates the **Khoreh** (aura) of everyone. All this results in untimely deaths all around! The pure atmosphere inside the sacred institutions, like the fire temples, etc is destroyed.

Since waters, fires, etc. are defiled, pollution spreads in the society, resulting in big quarrels, mayhem and murder and an increase in illnesses and diseases.

Thus, this **Druj-i-Buji** spreads all over the creation, and like a boomerang, returns with ten times the force to attack the thoughts, astral body and life breath of the concerned woman. The result is that every month, when

she brazenly mixes in society during her period, her **Azda** (etheric body), which props up the physical body during life-time, gets considerably weakened, and the **jaan** or life that circulates inside the Azda gets snuffed out prematurely.

In other words, such a woman, as it were, spreads pollution in the world, which rebounds on her every month, even when she is alive! This is indicated by her getting putridities to eat after death. But, during lifetime, because her mind, consciousness and **jaan** were operating, she was not aware of the untold harm she caused to herself. It is only after death that the soul actually perceives this retribution and becomes very unhappy.

**Chapter 22** : "I saw the soul of a man in whose mouth was poured the menstrual flow of a woman and other putridities. He would murder his own children and eat them!" Sarosh and Adar Yazads explained that in the terrestrial world, this man had sexual relations with a menstruating woman.

The meaning behind it is that when a man has sex with such a woman, his semen and sperm go waste, that is, they are destroyed. The reaction seen by the soul after death is that the man himself eats his own offsprings!

**Chapter 72** : Here, the example given is almost similar to that of Chapter 20.

**Chapter 76** : " I saw souls of women, who with their hands and teeth were tearing their breasts, and some dogs constantly attacked them and further tore the breasts. These sinful women had their legs kept on molten brass and lead."

Sarosh and Adar Yazads explained that these very sinful women had cooked food during their menses and gave it to good and saintly men to eat. These women used to entice the men with the food they cooked during menstruation. They defiled everything

between the sky and the earth. Their **Druj-i-Buji** penetrated the earth and harmed the **Gahambar** currents and forces that fortified the earth.

These extremely deleterious influences had to be checked by Sheherevar and Spendarmad Amshaspands and Mino Ram (Yazad). They tore the **Druj-i-Buji** to ribbons. In return, the Druj tore the breasts of the women responsible for creating this cardinal sin.

*[The entire interpretations of the four chapters of the Ardaviraf Nameh have been taken from the splendid Gujarati translation by the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla.]*

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