

Dastur Azar Kaiwan Saheb

The subject of dastur Azar Kaiwan's life has a special interest for most of us. Perhaps the younger generation would also like to know about him. The following brief narration is translated from a Gujarati booklet.

(Life Sketch of Dastur Azar Kaiwan and his deciples) by Burjor Bahramji Desai published in July 1969.

We have purposely taken pains to have the translation made, as far as possible in simple English, so that the younger generation could also learn something about Dastur Azar Kaiwan. It is not possible to translate entire Book and only important extracts have been translated.

— Gustadji

Dastur Azar Kaiwan was born in village Istakhar, Shiraz in Iran. His father's name was Gushasp and his grand father was Zardushi or Zardashi. He was the direct decendent of the Royal family of Jamshed, Faredun, Gushtasp and Lohrasp. His mother's name was Shireen, who came from the family of Naushirwan-e-Adil. His son's name was Kaikhushroo, though he is know by the name of Kaikhushroo-bin-Asphan-diar.

Kaiwan Saheb was the leading philosopher of the Ishraki group. "Ishrakian" means to illuminate. At the age of five, Azar Kaiwan had a great love for God and he engrossed himself in prayers throughout the day & night. He only used to eat food weighing just one oz. He continued this way for 28 yrs. and developed his will power. He used to meditate continuously and could easily perform miracles.

The dates of his birth and death are not clearly known, but one of the authors opine that :

- (i) He was born in Hizari 942 i.e. in 1533 A.D. and that he died in Hizari 1027 i.e.

in 1618 A.D. Mobed Fardoonji Marzban of Bombay Samachar and Ruttonji Sethna of "Gujarati Encyclopedia" support this view.

- (ii) Dasturji Maneckji Dhala in his "History of Zoroastrianism" and Dr. Jivanji Mody in "Oriental Conference Papers" suggest 1529 AD to 1614 AD.
- (iv) Dasturji Eduljie Sanjana states that he died in 1609 AD, while Bomanji Patel gives the year of death as 1614 AD.
- (iv) The English translations of "Dabestan" fixes the birth in 1588 AD and death in 1672 AD, which seems hard to believe. Perhaps it is possible that there is an error due to the count as per Hizari Calenders.

Despite the differing dates, Kaiwan Saheb died at the ripe old age of 85 years in India,

AT THE COST OF OTHERS

It is said that a disciple came to Mohammed one morning and said "Master, my six brothers are all asleep and I alone have remained awake to worship Allah."

Mohammed answered him, "And you had better been asleep, if your worship of Allah consists of accusations against your brothers."

Fault-finding and magnifying the mistakes of others are poor ways of changing the world for the better.

A bearer of God will detest the sin not the sinner. He will advance the cause of justice and peace and truth, yet he will not do so at the expense of the others. Always his motto will be better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.

at Patna in Aziz-Abad village, when his 'Kabar' is still maintained and some fortunate Zoroastrians have had the good fortune to visit the same.

Dastur Azar Kaiwan stayed in Shiraz and other towns in Iran and became an expert in Sufizam, Zoroastrian Religion, Iranian culture, Greek philosophy and came to India with his chosen disciples in the later part of his life. It is believed that he landed at Surat and then went to Navsari and then came to Patna in Bihar with a disciple from Surat named Rustom. From Patna he went to Lahore, Kashmir, Akbarabad, Agra, Delhi and a host of other places in North India. En route his group admitted new disciples. Besides Parsees, people from all religions were impressed by his appearance and Wisdom. About why he selected Patna as his main seat, it can be said that there is "Panj Pahri" i.e. five hillocks, which is a deeply revered place of Buddhists and there are ancient stupas there. Jain Munis seats are also there.

Ervard Bujorji Bajan states in his famous Volume પારસી દીન-આઈન અને તવારીખી ફરહંગ (Parsee Din-Aeen and Tavarikhi Farhang) (page 80) :

"Azar Kaiwan came to India in 1617 AD. He is considered to be a Dastur from the 'Baten' group. He spent 8 yrs. in a "Khum" in Iran. He was the leader of the Ishraki group and had passed four stages of "Mushadehat" and hence was called the Ustad of 'Jululum'. He had developed his spiritual power by leading a pious and asho life from a young age. According to "Furhang-e-Jehangiri he had dedicated his works "Jem-e-Kaikhushroo" to his son.

"Dabestaan-e-Mazhab" means School of Religions Creed or School of Manners. This original Persian Text has been translated in English, called "Dabistan" by David Shea Anthony Troyer. There were three large volumes and was printed in Paris in 1843 AD. There are lucid description of Dastur Azar

Kaiwan and his disciples in these volumes. The Gujarati translation of the original Persian Text was made by Ferdoonji Marzbanji. The original Persian Text is said to have been written by Mohsan Fani. Mr. W. Jones supports this view.

Hazrat Azar Kaiwan — A 'Kshnoom' View Point:

The Kshnoomists throw some more light re: Dastur Azar Kaiwan. Learned Scholar Dr. Framroz S. Chiniwalla has written a long note on this subject in the "Parsee Avaz" of 16-11-1947. A brief synopsis of the same is given below :

"Dasturan — Dastur Azar Kaiwan lived in the 16th & 17th Century and was considered to be the most highly progressed soul in the world, which in Avasta is called as "Nar" નર. No one else was anywhere near the zenith of Soul-Body-Mind as compared to Kaiwan Saheb. He was well-known throughout Asia during the reign of Emperor Akbar. He held a Unique

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place in the Zoroastrian Saheb-Dalans living in the Demavand Koh — amongst whom our own Ustad Behramsha had also lived. This has been told to us by our Ustad. He was attuned to the “Kash” of Demavand. Some Zoroastrians still receive his “Darshan.” But this is a highly secretive subject and only a passing reference is made here.

Hazrat Kaiwan’s Shroshavarez Saheb was Khudamurad. Kaiwan Saheb always used to argue that: ‘he would like to go out into the outside world with a view to help other souls also to advance spiritually. The prescribed path of each Religion is good enough but if they can attain salvation through the path of “Asiakeen”, why should I not guide them?’ This narration is our Ustad’s own and is not available publicly.

Akbar padshah had to go all the way to Punjab to meet Azar Kaiwan, as he was un-

willing to go to see the emperor. His disciples had spread far & wide but the chosen few lived in seclusion with him. What is the inner meaning of this “Seclusion” is unknown to the present world”.

A famous Kshnoomist disciple, Seth Nanabhoy Framjee Mama, in his book “A Mazdiyasan Mystic” published in 1944, states:

“Dastur Azar Kaiwan arrived in India in the 16th Century. It is recorded that he came from amongst the Irani Magav Council and was himself a “Saheb-Dil” i.e. “Peer-e-Moghan.” He came to India under certain circumstances, and through his own ability and piousness, had a large following. His descendants are still alive. He has written many books in Persian language which are couched in mysteries.

Dastur Azar Kaiwan, had attained the rank of a Magav and a Soshiyant and was in the

higher realms of existence known as “Pantham Khasteyim” (Path of no return), i.e. he had reached a stage when it was not necessary to take re-birth in this world. Yet, for the benefit of the entire mankind, he came out of the Demavand’s Kash and hence is worthy of our unflinching devotion.

The Sight of Dastur Azar Kaiwan’s “Kabar”.

It is said that Azar Kaiwan’s kabar which is in Azim — Abad (Aziz — Abad) village near Patna is kept a secret and is closely guarded with respects by the Muslims there. One Parsee Zoroastrian Scholar who had immense respects for Hazrat Azar Kaiwan Saheb, was eager to have a glimpse of his kabar and had gone to Patna about five years ago (this book was written in 1969) and his wish was fulfilled. The following note is an ad-verbatim description, as given by him.

“The road from Bombay to Patna is at a distance of about 3 days. I bathed at the Patna

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Station in early morning and started at about 7.00 a.m. on my mission to find the place. Patna city is divided in two parts — old and new. Presently, there is no Parsee population in Patna and hence people were looking at me with surprise. I enquired about Azar Kaiwan's kabar but people were unaware of its existence. On the way, I saw a beautiful Masjid built of marble and on its steps an aged Musalmaan was engrossed in prayers with 'Tasbih' in his hand. For sometimes, I stood and observed him. After a while he asked me: 'Son, why have you come here?' I answered that: 'I was in search of the kabar of our very respected saint, Dastur Azar Kaiwan who lived some 400 years ago.' After some interrogation, the aged man called a rickshawalla and gave him the name of a particular place, which I cannot make public, since the followers of Azar Kaiwan have instructed me not to reveal the identity of the place.

About 10 to 12 miles from Patna, near a sacred place, a man stopped us and asked: 'Who are you and why have you come here?' I answered. He made me wait and the man went in a big 'Haveli' round which there was a large compound. After a while, he came back and took me on the first floor of the Haveli, where some students were writing something in Urdu. Their style of sitting was quite peculiar and I also sat like them. From a perfumed bottle, some 'atter' was applied on both my hands and chest, whose fragrance was charming. There was also an agarbatti and a lamp. They enquired about my reason for travelling so far away and I said: 'I had a desire to bow before the kabar of Azar Kaiwan Saheb.' After that the elder one sent me with a student. We entered a huge Hall on whose glass doors there were some Arabic writings. There were three nice kabars one of which was of Dastur Azar Kaiwan. My dream was accomplished. I stood there for a long time and prayed. After half an hour, the door was closed. Near this place, there was a small river and alongside on a small hill, this place was

situated. There was a garden of lovely roses and other flowers.

Later they asked me if I wished to see the Chief Mualmaan Pir of the place. When I said 'yes' they informed me that he gave an audience only for about 15 minutes in a day and that the window will open at 12,00 noon. We went down to a tastefully decorated small room. When the door opened. I could see a very aged gentleman, who had a dignified glow on his face and had long white beard and hair. All the deciples were praying, clasping both their hands in reverence. I saw him also with reverence. The door was closed at noon and we came up again.

Thus, with the grace of God, my wish was fulfilled to visit the cite of Azar Kaiwan's kabar and have a darshan of his deciples and followers.



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