

# **Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 339: Us Parsis - Where did we come from? When and to where? - Kisseh-I Sanjaan - Dastur Bahman Dastur Kekobaad- 1600 AD**

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Let all of us take a step back and ask:

**Us Parsis: where did we come from? When and to where did we settle?**

Unfortunately, we have a very few written records for these questions and one of the most important one is: **The Kisseh-I Sanjaan (KS) – The Story of Sanjaan!**

This is a 432 couplets Persian poem written by Iranshah Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaekobad Sanjana in 1600 AD when Iranshah was in Navsari. Even though this poem is devoid of any particular dates, giving approximate years for all events, which makes it very difficult to ascertain exact dates of all events mentioned in the poem, it is the only account we have of our Parsi ancestors leaving their dear homeland Iran and arriving in India.

There are many translations in Gujarati and English of KS.

The oldest English translation of the KS was made in 1844 by E. B. Eastwick. Eastwick's manuscript was far from correct and his version is full of errors. A more correct version in Gujarati had been printed along with other pieces in a volume of very unequal merit by Dastur Framji Aspandiarji Rabadi in 1831.

A more accurate English translation was made in 1920 by our Parsi scholar Shapurji K. Hodivala and is available at:

<http://www.avesta.org/other/qsanjan.htm>

Also, prolific author JJ Modi also has written about KS in English with a sample of original Persian couplets in Persian script in his booklet, *A Few Events in the early History of the Parsis and their dates*. (its cover photo is attached).

However, Dr. Alan Williams, Reader in Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester, published his book: *The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and settlement in the Indian Diaspora* (its cover photo is attached) in which he gives the English transliteration of the original KS Persian Couplets on the left page of the book and its English translation on the right for all 432 couplets.

In order to give a taste for the original Persian couplets of KS, I have selected Dr. Williams' presentation of KS from this book in this WZSE.

## **The Author of KS**

The author of KS as mentioned above is Iranshah Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaekobad Sanjana and he 'came of a family noted for its literary tastes and aptitude for the composition of

Persian verse.' (Hodivala)

The names of his grandfather, father, himself, his brother and his grandnephew have been mentioned in the Persian Rivaayets of Kaaus Maahyaar of 1601 and of Bahman Asfandyaar of 1626 – 1627.

KS author Bahman Kaikobad was no ordinary priest as he may have let his readers believe from KS. He actually was appointed as one of the two Dasturs of the Sanjana families from Mirza (at that time Dastur) family. In fact, our own late Udwada Dastur, Dastur Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza is the 14<sup>th</sup> Dastur (and 14<sup>th</sup> descendent) after Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaikobad from the Mirza family.

Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaekobad completed KS poem in 1600 CE in Navsari when Iranshah was there from about 1419 – 1740 CE.

## The Source of KS

KS narrates the stories and legends passed on to Dastur Bahman Kaikobad from a contemporary Dastur. He mentions the name of the wise Dastur from whom he heard this story as follows:

“I heard this tale from a wise Dastur who was famous for his piety; May the Dastur, whose name is Hoshang, and whose wisdom is excellent, live long. He knew the Avesta and the Zend; he had driven out Ahriman from his heart. In his city his word on religion was final and he instructed all in the secrets of the religion. This is the story this Dastur told me and I am repeating it. May he be revered through all posterity.”

This learned Dastur was the second Sanjana Dastur, Dastur Hoshang Dastur Asha from the other Sanjana Dastur family. In fact, the current Udwada Dastur, Dastur Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad is also the 14<sup>th</sup> Dastur (and 12<sup>th</sup> descendent) after Dastur Hoshang Dastur Asha from the Dastur family.

In that respect, I am also from this Dastur family and I am the 11<sup>th</sup> descendent from this Dastur Hoshang Dastur Asha.

Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaekobad completed this historical account on:

“I wrote this history in the year nine hundred and sixty-nine of the Yazdegird era and completed it on *roz Khordad mah* Fravardin. I now beseech God's mercy and indulgence and the blessings of the reader. I have told this story according to what I heard from the Elders, and polished it and showed it to my teacher who added to it many a rose from his garden - may God grant him long life; may all the years of his life be like spring-time! In telling this story I have followed the path of Truth. Praise be to Zarathustra!”

As mentioned by Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaekobad in KS above, he completed the KS story on *roz Khordad, maah Fravardin, 969 YZ (1600 AD)*.

Due to his efforts and his teacher's help, our forefathers' story of migration from Iran to India is well preserved! We salute Dastur Bahman Dastur Kaekobad and Dastur Hoshang Dastur

Asha!

## The Original Persian Couplets and their Translation by Dr. Alan Williams:

Let us now present the KS story as presented by Dastur Bahman Kaekobad, using the original Persian couplets on left and their English translation by Dr. Williams on right. In this WZSE, we will present the KS story from Kohistan mountains to the city of Hormuz. In the next WZSE, we will present the rest of the couplets from Hormuz to Div Island in Kaathiaawaar (currently Sauraashtra).

I have given the numbers of the Persian couplets as given by Dr. Williams. I have attempted to recite the Persian couplets in my Parsi pronunciations and I ask for understanding from my Farsi friends for my incompetence.

[\(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation\)](#)

Original Persian Couplets	Williams's English Translation
96. <u>chu</u> az <u>Shaah</u> Yazdegar <u>shaahi</u> behrafteh keh joddin aamad o <u>takhtash</u> gehrefteh	96. When kingship went from Yazdegerd the king, the infidels arrived and took his throne.
97. az aan moddat <u>shehkasteh</u> <u>gasht</u> Iraan darigh aanmulk din aftaad viraan	97. From that time forth Iran was smashed to pieces! Alas! That land of Faith now gone to ruin!
98. bedaangaahi <u>shudeh</u> har kas paraagand haraanku <u>daasht</u> del bar Zand o Paazand	98. And at that time all those who fixed their hearts upon the Zand and Pazand were dispersed.
99. <u>chu</u> behdinaan o dasturaan saraasar zeh kaar din nehaan <u>gashtand</u> yaksar	99. When every layman and <i>dastur</i> at once went into hiding for Religion's sake,
100. magaam o jaay o baagh o <u>kaakh</u> o ayvaan hameh <u>bagzaashtand</u> az bahr <u>din shaan</u>	100. Left homes, lands, gardens, villas, palaces, they left all for the sake of their Religion.
101. bakuhestaan hami maandand sad saal <u>chu ishaan</u> raa bedinguneh <u>shudeh</u> haal	101. They stayed in Kuhestan a hundred years, for them conditions had become like this.
102. zeh bahr din <u>khud ishaan</u> beh yakbaar tafakkur kard daanaa-yee neku kaar.	102. One day a wise and virtuous man was thinking, and pondering the fate of their Religion.
103. beh yaaraan goft injaa niz <u>chandin</u> bamaandan <u>moshkelast</u> az bim juddin	103. He told his friends, 'It is so difficult for us to stay here, fearing infidels'.
104. abaa dastur o behdin yegaaneh basuyee <u>shahr</u> hormuz <u>shad</u> ravaaneh	104. He set off for the city of Hormuz, with laymen and <i>dasturs</i> beyond compare.
105. dar aan <u>keshvar</u> <u>chu</u> saal aamad dah o panj zeh durvandaan <u>keshideh</u> har yaki ranj	105. When fifteen years had passed in that domain, each one had suffered grief from infidels.

## **SPD Comments:**

Hodivala translated these couplets as follows:

“When the sovereignty departed from Yazdagar, the Unbelievers (Arabs) came and seized his throne. From that period Iran was shattered. Alas for the land of the Faith which was rendered desolate.”

“During those days all were dispersed, everyone whose hearts were attached to the Zand and Pazand. When all the laymen and Dasturs suddenly went into hiding for the sake of the Faith, they left their homes, dwellings, gardens, palaces, and halls and abandoned them all for their Religion.”

“In Kohistan (Khoraasaan), they abode for a hundred years. When they were in this plight, a virtuous sage once bethought him seriously of their state and said to his companions, "It will be difficult for us to remain here much longer for fear of the Unbelievers.”

“So, the Dasturs and laymen incomparable departed for the city of Hormuz. When fifteen years were spent in that clime, every one of them had endured much trouble from the Miscreants.”

**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!**

**In HIS SERVICE 24/7!**

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

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli

*Alan Williams Kisseh-i Sanjan:*

# The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran and Settlement in the Indian Diaspora

*Text, Translation and Analysis of  
the 16th Century Qeṣṣe-ye Sanjān  
'The Story of Sanjan'*

Alan Williams



BRILL



*JJ Modi Kisseh-i Sanjan:*

A FEW EVENTS  
IN  
THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE PARSIS  
AND  
THEIR DATES

BY  
JIVANJI JAMSHEDJI MODI

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