

It is mentioned that during the month of Rajab 39 Hegira, Hazrat Ali (A.S.) had dictated to his son Imam Husain (A.S.) a treatise of rights in favour of the Zoroastrian community and presented to Bayram Shadeen Idris- their religious leader. It is said that the original script of this treatise was preserved for a long time in a respectable Parsee family in Surat-India and it passed on to Sir Jamshedji Ajipibhai. It was first published in the 'Jame Jamshid' (a Parsee daily published even today) on 1st November 1851. During the same year, it was published in a book form named MAZDIANSAs meaning strengthening of religion. This book consists of the said treatise by Hazrat Ali (A.S.) presented to Bayram Shadeen Idris as well as a letter of protection by the Prophet of Islam, which was handed to Mahdi Ferehin Shekhan- the brother of Salman Farsi. The book contains the ^{copy of the} original Arabic scripts of these with Persian and Gujarati translation. Printed in Jamshed press in Bombay during 1851, this book is still preserved in Salarjang library in Hyderabad and also ^{by} with the Parsee community Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay. Unfortunately with the passage of time, the whereabouts of the original treatise is not yet known, although the search of it from the Parsee community is still going on.

The English version of the treatise as adapted and translated from Sadaye 'a'afari 1st Oct 1983 is given hereunder :

Bismillahi Arrahmani Arrahim

" This treatise is from Ali ibn Abid Talch (A.S.) in favour of Bayram Shadeen Kheir Idris- the fire worshipper (follower of Zorastar i.e. Parsee) who is the leader in religious matter of the fire-worshipping community and whose line of ancestry goes back to Azar bin Mar Isfander the Persian.

I offer protection to your life, property, womenfolk and children. And in this respect, I promise you on behalf of Allah that I command the obedient followers of Allah and the Prophet, the faithfuls and the Muslims, the local officers and those engaged in Jihad as well as those in charge of guarding the frontiers that they should protect you and do away with every oppression upon you.

Besides also I exempt you and your children and ~~their~~ your descendants of capitation tax (Jizya) as well as tax on your cattle and sheep. You are free to repair your buildings (temples etc). Besides all the followers of the creed of fire-worship are free to follow their current religious customs according to their wish. And in view of your family's leadership, every member of your community should pay one dirham yearly to you. Whoever is your leader, I consider him ^a superior over the creed of fire-worshippers because I have heard from the Prophet (S.A.) that people of two different nations cannot inherit each other. I have come to know that you have a position of leadership in your community and you are concerned about the improvement of their condition. Besides they believe in your high position

and they obey you. Your community loves you and so ~~dece~~^{do} the Muslims in general.

Therefore all the faithful men and women and Muslim men and women ought to protect Bayram Shadeen Kheir Idris- the fire worshipper and not to put any restrictions in the way of fulfilling their customs. They should respect their honoured people and excuse the shortcomings. They should never collect any JIZYA capitation tax from them so long as their posterity prevails. They should not exercise force in religious matters because Allah has said 'There is no compulsion in religion'. (Baqara v. 256)

Thus all Muslims should be aware of my this command and comply with my this ~~injunction~~^{instruction} about their family members, whether they convert to Islam or remain in their faith. Compliance of my instruction is the pleasure of Allah and His Prophet. May the wrath of Allah and His Prophet come upon those who disobey my this command and work against it. Whosoever goes against it should be considered as my enemy till the Day of Judgement and would be considered as the one cherishing enmity against me." Wassalam

The above treatise was presented during the times of the caliphate of Ali (A.S.) who then was the supreme authority of the Islamic State. It was when the Islamic rule had already spread far and wide to countries adjoining Arabia including Persia. The contents of the said treatise portray the Islamic tolerance towards the non-Muslim minorities as well as their rights for protection and freedom of worship in an Islamic state. For Ali (A.S.) to go to the extent of exempting the Parsees from having to pay Jizya- the capitation tax and recognizing their leader with respect and emphasis of protection for them were matters of deep foresight on his part. It is possible that the Imam might have foreseen the future and the times to come when almost the whole of Persia would ^{not only} willingly convert to Islam but their formidable people would preserve and propagate Islam in its pristine purity across their boundaries to distant lands in the world as we see today.