THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS OF THE PARSEES.

I.—SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS.

CHAPTER I.

Birth Ceremonies and Customs.

The ceremonies and customs, that fall under the head of "Socio-Religious Ceremonies and Customs," may be subdivided, according to the three principal events of man's life,—birth, marriage and death—under the following heads:—

I.—Birth Ceremonies and Customs.

II.—Marriage Ceremonies and Customs.

III.—Funeral Ceremonies and Customs.

I.—Birth Ceremonies and Customs.

The birth of a child, an auspicious event.

The birth of a child is a very auspicious event in a Parsee house. It was so also in ancient Persia. According to the Vendidad,[1] Ahura Mazda says:—"I prefer a person with children (*puthrânê*) to one without children (*aputhrâi*)." Even the very ground, where lives a man with his children, is described as feeling happy.[2] Cultivation and a good supply of food to people are recommended, because they make mankind healthy and able to produce a healthy progeny.[3] To be the father of good children was a blessing from the Yazatas, like Tishtrya,[4] Mithra,[5] Haoma,[6] and Atar,[7] and from the Fravashis.[8] To be childless, was a curse from the Yazatas.[9] Domestic animals,

1 IV, 47. 2 Vendidad, III, 2. 3 Vendidad, III, 33.

4 Yasht, VIII, Tir, 15. 5 Yasht X, Meher, 65.

6 Yaçna XI, Hom Yasht, 4, 7, 10, 13, 22.

7 Yaçna, LXII, Âtash Nyâish, 10; Vendidâd XVIII, 27.

8 Yasht X, Meher, 3; Yasht XIII, 134.

9 Hom Yasht, Yaçna Hâ, XI, 3. *Cf.* The blessings and the curse of Cambyses (Herodotus III, 65). *Cf.* also those of Darius (Behistun Inscriptions, IV, 10, 11).

when ill-fed and ill-treated, cursed their masters, that they may be childless.[1] Childlessness was something like a punishment from heaven.[2] Kingly splendour[3] was associated with those who were blessed with children.[4] According to the Shâyast lâ Shâyast, one of the advantages of having children was "that the duty and good works which a son performs are as much the father's as though they had been done by his own hand."[5]

A Zoroastrian woman often prayed for a good, healthy child.[6] A Zoroastrian man and woman prayed before their sacred fire for a good, virtuous child.[7] A woman without a child felt as sorry as a fertile piece of land that is not cultivated.[8] She prayed for a husband who could make her a mother of children.[9]

Among the Achœmenides, a wife who gave birth to many children was a favourite with her husband, who did not like to displease her in any way.[10] Children being the choicest gift of God, their lives were, as it were, pledged by parents for the solemn performance of an act.[11] We read in Herodotus:[12] "Next to prowess in arms, it is regarded as the greatest proof of manly excellence to be the father of many sons. Every year, the king sends rich gifts to the man, who can show the largest number: for they hold that number is strength." Strabo also says a similar thing.[13] We learn from the writings of the Christian Martyrs of Persia, that the ancient Persians, did not, for the above reasons, like the prohibition against marriage among the Christians in the case of holy young Christian girls.

Pregnancy.

In the Avesta itself, we find no references to any ceremony or rite during the state of pregnancy. The only allusion we find is this:—Women on finding themselves *enceinte* prayed before Ardviçura for an easy delivery,[14]

1 Yaçna, XI, 1-2. 2 Yaçna, XI, 3; Yasht X, Meher, 38, 108, 110.
3 Kavaêm Kharêno. 4 Yasht XIX, Zamyâd, 75. 5 Chap. X, 22 XII, 15. S. B. E. Vol. V, pp. 325, 345.
6 Yaçna, IX, 22. 7 Âtash Nyâish, Yaçna LXII, 5.
8 Vend. III, 24. 9 Yasht V (Âbân), 87.
10 Herodotus, IX, 111. 11 Herodotus, IX, 10.
12 *Ibid* I, 136. Rawlinson's Translation, Vol. I, p. 277.
13 Bk. XV, 11, 14 Yasht, V (Abân), 87,

and then for a copious supply of milk at their breast for their children.[1] The allusion to these prayers suggests, that there may be some formal ceremonies accompanying those prayers, but we do not know what they were.

Coming to later Pahlavi and Persian books, we find, that the Shâyast lâ Shâyast directs, that, when it is known that a lady of the family has become pregnant, a fire may be maintained most carefully in the house.[2] The Saddar also gives this direction.[3] We have the remnant of this injunction in the present custom of some of the modern Pasees, who, on the occasion of the completion of the fifth and seventh months of pregnancy, light a lamp of clarified butter in their houses. The reason, assigned for this in the Pahlavi and Persian books, is, that the fire, so kindled in the house, keeps out *daêvas i. e.*, evil influences from the house. Again, a fire or a lamp is even now taken to be symbolical of the continuation of a line of offspring. For example, it is not rare to hear, even now, words like these "*Tamâro cherâg roshan rahê*", *i. e.*, "May your lamp be always burning." This benediction is meant to say: "May your son live long, and may your line of descent continue." The ancient Iranians believed, that there were many chances of the children to be born being males, if the males were stronger than the females at the time of conception. (Bundehesh, Chap. XVI).[4]

According to the Avesta, in the state of pregnancy, a woman is to be looked after very carefully. It is wrong for the husband to have sexual intercourse with her in her advanced state of pregnancy, which, according to the Revâyets, commences with the fifth month.[5] She is to abstain from coming into contact with any dead or decomposing matter, even with a thing like one's tooth-pick which may contain germs of one's disease.[6]

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1 Ardviçura Nyâish, 3.

2 Chap. X, 4; XII, 11. S. B. E. Vol. V, pp. 316, 343.

3 Chap. XVI, 1. S. B. E. Vol. XXIV, p. 277.

4 *Vide* my Anthropological Papers, Part II, p. 207.

5 Four months ten days. *Vide* Anquetil Du Perron, Zend Avesta, Vol. II, p. 563.

6 Shâyast lâ Shâyast, Chap. X, 20; XII, 13, (S. B. E., Vol. V, pp. 323, 344); Saddar, XVII, 2 (S. B. E., Vol. XXIV, p. 278).

During pregnancy, the modern Parsees have no religious ceremonies or rites. On the completion of the fifth month of pregnancy, one day is celebrated and known as "*Panch mâsiân*," *i. e.*, the day of the fifth month. Similarly, a day is observed on the completion of the seventh month, and is known as Agharni. These days are observed as auspicious days of rejoicing only in the case of the first pregnancy. They are observed not in accordance with any religious injunction or with religious ceremonies or rites. The expectancy of a child being a joyful event as said above, these days—especially some day after the completion of the seventh month—are observed as joyous occasions, when the lady who is *enceinte* is presented with suits of clothes by her parents, relatives and friends and especially by the family of her husband. The husband, is in turn, presented with a suit of clothes by the wife's family. Sweets are sent out as presents by the husband's family to the bride's house and to near relations and friends. In these sweets, one prepared in the form of a cocoanut,[1] has a prominent place. A cocoanut typifies a man's head[2] and so it is a symbol of fecundity. Some of the customs observed on these occasions are more Indian in their origin and signification than originally Persian or Zoroastrian.

The fifth and the seventh months of pregnancy, observed as days of rejoicing.

In the case of the first delivery, it generally takes place in the house of the wife's parents. A room or a part of a room, generally on the down-floor, is prepared and set apart for the purpose. As the Vendidad[3] says, the place for delivery must be very clean,

Place of delivery, and its temporary consecration.

1 Among the Rajputs of India, the acceptance of a cocoanut is a symbol of the acceptance of a proposal for marriage (*vide* Tod's Annals of Râjasthân, edited by C. H. Payne, p. 25).

2 The following story connects the cocoanut with a man's head. An astrologer once said to a king that, whatever was sown or planted on such and such a coming auspicious day, would grow well. The king said: "Suppose somebody sows a man's head on a stony ground, will that also grow up into a luxuriant tree?" "Yes," said the astrologer. The king, thereupon, cut off the head of the astrologer and sowed it in a stony ground. The cocoanut palm grew out of it. (Journal of the Ceylon Asiatic Society, January 1891.)

3 Chap. V, 46.

dry and least-frequented by others. It appears, that in former times, such places were specially provided in Parsee houses on the down-floors. Parsee houses in those times had generally spacious down-floors that were used for all purposes. The upper floors were low, and were rather like lofts. So, the down-floors provided proper places for delivery, as enjoined in the Vendidad. But, as, with changed circumstances, Parsee houses of to-day are not what they were before, and as, at present, in storied houses in big towns, the down-floors are generally the worst part of the houses, places of delivery at the down-floor are now-a-days properly condemned as unhealthy. In the case of a house or a place where no delivery has taken place before, religious-minded persons generally take care that a religious ceremony may be performed there before the delivery. In other words, they get the place consecrated. A priest or two say and perform the Afringân prayer and ceremony over the place. At times, even the Bâj prayer is recited. It seems that one of the lost *nasks* (books), the Hûspâram, had special chapters on the subject of parturition.[1]

A lamp lighted on the birth of a child.

On the birth of a child, a lamp is lighted and kept burning, for at least three days, in the room where the lady is confined. The Saddar says: "When the child becomes separate from the mother it is necessary to burn a lamp for three nights and days—if they burn a fire it would be better—so that the demons and fiends may not be able to do any damage and harm; because when a child is born, it is exceedingly delicate for those three days."[2] Some people keep the lamp burning for ten days and some for forty days, the latter number being generally observed as the period of confinement.

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1 Dinkard, Bk. VIII, Ch. XXXI and XXXV. 9, S. B. E., Vol. XXXVII, pp. 100 and 109. Dastur Darab Peshotan's Dinkard, Vol. XVI, pp. 20 and 28. The second of the above two chapters, refers to various subjects of obstetrics.

2 Chap. XVI, 2; S. B. E. Vol. XXIV, p. 277; *vide* also the Persian Farziât-nameh of Dastur Dârâb Pâhlan; *vide* the Gujarat Farziât-nameh (1843), p. 5.

On delivery, the mother is enjoined to remain apart from others. She is not to come into contact with fire, water, and other furniture of the house.[1] In the case of those that give birth to still-born children, it is enjoined in the Vendidad,[2] that they must thus remain apart for 12 days. This period has been latterly extended, as described in the later Pahlavi and Persian books, to forty days in all cases of delivery. Now-a-days, a Parsee lady has generally forty days of confinement after delivery. The Saddar says: "During forty days it is not proper that they should leave the child alone; and it is also not proper that the mother of the infant should put her foot over a threshold in the dwelling (*i. e.*, leave the house) or cast her eyes upon a hill, or it is bad for her menstruation."[3]

Period of confinement on delivery, 40 days.

Some families, following the Hindu custom, observe the fifth day after birth, known as *pachory* (*i. e.*, the fifth day), and the tenth day, known as *dasori* (*i. e.*, the tenth day), as gala days, but these days have no religious signification.

During the above forty days, the lady is in a state of isolation. She is not to come into contact with anybody and with any part of the ordinary furniture of the house, especially wooden furniture and linen articles. Her food is to be served to her on her plate by others. Those who have to come into contact with her have to bathe before they mix with others. Even the medical attendants had to do so, but, now-a-days, this sanitary rule is more honoured in the breach than in its observance. The original injunction may, among some other reasons, have been intended to observe "purity" in order to prevent the spread of the diseases to which women in this state are subject.[4]

Perfect isolation and purification.

1 Vendidad, V. 45-49 2 Vendidad, V. 55-56.

3 Chap. XVI, 4; S. B. E., Vol. XXIV, p. 277.

4 *Vide* the chapter on "Maternity and its Perils" in Mr. Havelock Ellis's "The Nationalization of Health" (1892), pp. 123-143. It says that in England and Wales, where 4,500 women die every year in child-births "about 70 per cent. of this mortality is due to puerperal fever" and that "almost the whole of this mortality might be avoided." It is the careless medical practitioners and midwives, that are responsible for this mortality, because they do not take sanitary care, and therefore carry germs from

At the end of forty days, which is the period of confinement, the lady has to purify herself by a bath before ordinarily mixing with others. At first she takes an ordinary bath and then goes through what is called 'nân,' a contraction of the Sanskrit word "snân" which is a sacred bath.[1] A priest, generally the family priest, administers that bath with consecrated water.

All the bedding and clothes of the woman, used during the forty days of her confinement after delivery, are rejected from ordinary use. They are enjoined to be destroyed, lest they carry germs of disease among others. But, now-a-days, that injunction is not strictly followed. They are given away to sweepers.

The first drink after birth.

Formerly, a mother in child-birth first drank a few drops of the sacred Haoma-juice, which was squeezed and consecrated in a fire-temple. The Persian Farziât-nâmeh of Dastur Dârâb Pâhlan says, that a new-born child should be made to drink a few drops of this juice. If the consecrated Haoma-juice *(para-Haoma)* may not be had, one may pound at home a few Haoma twigs and a few leaves of the pomegranate tree *(urvarâm)* in water with the recital of an Ahunavar and give the juice for the first drink. In the Hom Yasht,[2] Haoma is said to give fine healthy children to women. Haoma was emblematical of immortality. Anquetil Du Perron[3] refers to this religious custom as prevalent in his time. But, now-a-days, this custom is rarely observed, and in place of the Haoma-juice, a sweet drink made of molasses or

one woman in confinement to another. The midwifery writers of old said to their disciples: "Thine is a high and holy calling; see that thou exercise it with *purity*." In the enjoined isolation of the Parsee women during their confinement, the original intention seems to be that of observing *purity*. Some of the later Pazand and Persian writers have not properly understood the original good object of the early writers, and so, have carried the rigour of isolation too far. But anyhow, the original injunction of isolation is intended for the *purity* referred to by old midwifery writers. *Vide* Dastur Jamaspji's Sad-dar (સદ્દરે બેહ્દરે તવીલ) pp. 142-46, for some further medical opinion.

1 *Vide* below, Chap. IV, Purificatory Ceremonies.

2 Yaçna IX, p. 22. *Vide* my paper on "Haoma in the Avesta" for the health-giving properties attributed to the plant. *Vide* my Asiatic Papers, Part I, pp. 225-43. Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. VII, pp. 203-21.

3 Zend Avesta, II, p. 564.

sugar is given to the child as a first auspicious drink. The Farziât-nâmeh asks the mother to feed the child with her own milk for 18 months, if the child be male, and for 15, if it be a female.

Naming the child.

Herodotus[1] refers to the custom of naming the child among the ancient Persians. We infer from what he says, that the parents waited for some time after birth, and then, watching the physical and mental characteristics of the child, gave them such names as indicated their characteristics. In the case of modern Parsees, many name the child after an immediate deceased ancestor. A Parsee name is made up of three names. The first is his own personal name. The second is his father's name and the third is his surname or family name. Now, it is the first of these three, that is the proper name of the child; and in the case of that name, many prefer to call a child by an immediate ancestor's name. Suppose a person named Jivanji had his father named Jamshedji, and his mother named Âwânbâi. Then, on the birth of a child, if it is a male child and his own father (Jamshedji) was dead, he would prefer to name it Jamshedji. If it were a female child, he would like to name it Âwânbâi after his deceased mother. Some resort to a so-called astrologer and name the child as advised by him.

This process of naming the child has one particular religious significance, and it is this: In all religious ceremonies, during life or after death, a person's name is recited as he or she is named at the time of his or her birth. This name is called *Janam-nâm* or birth-name. In his or her Naôjote, *i. e.*, sacred shirt and thread ceremony, marriage ceremony, or any other ceremony enjoined by him or her during life-time (Zindeh-ravân), the birth-name is recited together with the father's name. In all the ceremonies after death (Anôsheh-ravân), the name is similarly recited. In the case of a female, her personal name is recited together with that of her father as long as she is not betrothed. But after betrothal, her name is recited together with that of her husband.[2] As a lady's name is recited with her husband's

1 Bk. I, 139.

2 Among the present Zoroastrians of Persia and those of the Kadmi sect in India, who follow them, her name is recited with that of her father.

in all ceremonies after betrothal, the ceremony of betrothal is known as "*Nâmzad shudan*" in Persian, meaning "to be named," or *nâm pâdvun* in Gujarati meaning "to give a name."

Herodotus says of the old Achæmenian times, that "their names, which are expressive of some bodily or mental excellence, all end with the same letter."[1] Looking to the names as given in the Avesta, we find that they mostly end in 'a'. The same or similar names when given by Greekwriters end in 's'. This can be easily seen from a list of Iranian names given by Rawlinson[2] with their corresponding forms in Greek writings.

We find from stray allusions here and there in the Pahlavi and Persian writings, that, at times, children were named after, or in memory of, some particular events at the time of their birth. For example, names like Rustam and Kobâd are associated with some particular events at the time of their birth. Herodotus[3] speaks of Persian names as expressive of their physical form. Thus, we read in the Khushro Shirin of Nizami, that the father of Khusro Parviz named the child, Khusru, because he saw him 'kinglike' (Khusravi) in appearance.

Most of the modern Parsee names end in *ji* (ज, Avesta 'ji', Persian *Zîstan* 'to live'). In the recital of prayers in honour of the dead, this suffix 'ji' is generally dropped, especially among the priestly class. It is taken to be a suffix-appellation of only the living. Modern Parsee names can be traced to certain few sources. For the males, they are the following:—(1) Some of them are derived from the names of some of their Yazatas or angels. They are Hormusji (from Avesta Ahura Mazda Hormuzd, the first Yazata), Bahamanji (Avesta Vohumana, Persian Bahman, the 2nd Yazata), Âdarji (Âdar, the 9th), Khorshedji (Avesta Hvaré Khshaêta, the 11th), Meherji (Avesta Mithra, Persian Meher, the 16th), Behrâmji (Avesta Verethragna, Pahlavi Varahrâm, Persian Behrâm, the 19th), Din (Avesta Daêna, the 24th), and Homji (Avest Haoma the 32nd in the list of the Sirouzâ). (2) Some names are derived from some

1 Bk. I. 139. Rawlinson's Herodotus, Vol. I, p. 279.
2 *Ibid*, Vol. III, pp. 550-63.
3 Bk. I. 139.

precious jewels; for example, Dhanji, Hiraji, Maneckji, Ratanji.[1] (3) Some names are adopted from those of their Iranian ancestors, as mentioned in the Shah-nâmeh and in other Iranian writings; for example, Ardeshir, Burjorji, Bezonji, Dârâshâh, Dârâbji (Dorabji), Edalji (Adalji), Erachji, Furdunji (Fredun), Firozji (Pirozeji), Frâmji (Framroz) Godrezji, Gustâdji, Jâlbhai, Jamshedji, Jâmâspji, Jehângirji, Kaikusru, Kekbâdji (Kaikobâd), Kerbâdji, Kâvasji, Khodâbux, Minochehrji (Mancherji), Meherwânji (Meherbân), Nâdirshâh, Nowrozji, Noshirwânji, Pâhlanji (Pâhlûm), Pestonji (Peshotan), Rustamji, Shiâvakshâh, Shâpurji, Shehriârji, Sohrâbji, Tehmulji (Avesta Takhma-Urupa, changed in Pahlavi into Tahamurasp, then contracted, by dropping the final *asp*, into Tahmur, then changed into Tahmul.). (4) Some names have been taken bodily or with slight changes from the Hindus. For example, Bapuji, Bhikhâji, Dâdâbhâi, Dâjibhâi, Dosâbhai, Fakirji, Ghândhibhâi, Jijibhâi, Jivâji, Jivanji, Kuvarji, Lavji, Limji, Motâbhâi, Nânâbhâi, Pochâji, Santok, Sukhlâji, Ukarji.

Coming to the names of the female sex, 'Bâi' the last part of their names corresponds to the last part 'ji' of the males. One can divide them under the following groups:—(1) Names derived from the names of the Zoroastrian Yazatas or Angels. These are Bahmanbâi, Âdarbâi, Âvânbâi (from Awân the 10th Yazata), Khorshedbâi, Meherbâi, Dinbâi, Hamâbâi (from Homa or Haoma). (2) Names derived from wealth or precious metals or jewels. They are Dhanbâi (wealth), Hirâbai (diamond), Jarbâi (Persian Zar gold), Maneckbâi (ruby), Motibâi (pearl), Ratanbâi (jewel), Rupâbâi (silver), Sunâbâi (gold). (3) Names derived from old Persian names: Bânubai (Persian Bânu lady), Freni, Gulbâi (Persian, Gul flower), Navazbâi (contracted from Persian Arnavâz, a sister of King Jamshed), Pirozbâi, Pourouchisht, Tehminâ. (4) Names derived from expressions for sweets: Mithibâi (sweet), Shâkarbâi (sugar), Shirinbâi (Persian, Shirin sweet, also an Iranian name). (5) Names taken from the Hindus: Âimâê, Âlibâi, Bachubâi, Bhikhibâi, Châdanbâi, Dosibâi, Jâibâi (Jâiji), Kuwarbâi, Nâlibâi, Sukhlibâi, Virbâi.

1 *Vide* for their meaning, the similar names of women given in the next para.

We find from these above lists, that some names are common to males and females. It is only the suffix 'ji' or 'bai' that makes it a male or a female name.

As for the names derived from the Zoroastrian Yaztas or angels, children are, at times, named after some particular Yaztas, if they are born on the days of the month bearing the names of those Yazatas. For example, a male or female child, born on the day Meher, the 16th day of Parsee month, may be named Meherji or Meherbai respectively.

Birth-day.

The birth-day of a Parsee child—and especially the first birth-day—is an important day. No religious rites or ceremonies are enjoined as necessary. But the parents generally like to celebrate the day in, what one may call, a religious way. After a bath and a new suit of clothes, the child is generally sent with some sandal-wood to an adjoining Fire-temple. There, the ash of the sacred fire is attached to its forehead. Some of those, who can afford, get a religious ceremony, known as Fareshtâ,[1] performed. That is generally done on the first birth-day. This ceremony consists of the recital of prayers in honour of the 33 different Yazatas or angels, and indicates, that God's blessings are invoked upon the child, and that it is wished that it may be blessed with all the physical characteristics and mental virtues over which God has directed these Yazatas to preside. According to Herodotus,[2] "of all the days in the year, the one which the ancient Persians observed most was their birth-day."

Childhood.

From a strictly religious point of view, there is nothing special to be remarked in the case of the childhood of a Parsee child. It is held to be innocent and not liable or subject to the performance of any religious duties or rites. If God forbid, the child dies before the Naojôte or the investiture of the sacred shirt and thread, its

1 Pers. فرشته *i. e.*, angel.

2 Bk. I. 133. *Vide Ibid.*, Bk. IX. 110—14, for the king's birth-day feast 'Tykta.' The king soaped his head and gave gifts on this day. He refused no demands of gifts on that day. For the meaning of the word 'tykta', *vide* my "Asiatic Papers," Part II, p. 242.

funeral ceremonies are on a lower scale. In the recital of the funeral prayers, the child is spoken of as 'Khûrd,' *i. e.*, small or young. This appellation signifies that the deceased person was too young and that it had no responsibility for duties or rites as a Zoroastrian.

At or about the age of six, the child has to learn by heart a few religious prayers—especially those falling under the head of, and attached to, the Nirang-i-Kusti,[1] *i. e.*, the recital for putting on the sacred thread. These must be learnt by heart for the coming occasion of its Naojôte, when it is to be invested with sacred shirt and thread. After this investiture, the child's name ceases to be recited as *Khûrd* in the prayers accompanying religious ceremonies but is recited as Behedin or Oshtâ as the case may be, *i. e.*, as it belongs to the layman or the priestly class.

According to the Farziât-nâmeh, when the child first begins to speak, the first word to be taught to it is the name of God and the next that of Zoroaster. At the age of seven, it may be entrusted to a Mobad or priest for religious instruction. At first, the Sraosh Baj prayer, then the Nyâishes, and then the Yashts may be taught to it.

The Pahlavi Aêrpatastân[2] has a chapter on the subject of the childhood of a Zoroastrian child of old and of the responsibilities of its Mobad preceptors. The latter were to take no children under their charge without the permission of their parents or guardians.[3] There seemed to be a custom whereby some children lived with their preceptors, whose fee for the whole period of tuition is mentioned in one place as 500 drachms, or about 600 rupees. The preceptors had, as it were, a kind of lien on the children if the stipulated fee was not paid. If, at the end of the stipulated time, they found that the guardians were not the proper persons to whom the children could be safely restored,

1 Spiegel, translated by Bleeck, Vol. III., p. 4, "Le Zend Avesta," par Darmesteter, Vol. II., p. 685.

2 Aerpatastân and Nirangastan, by Mr. Sorab Jamshedji Bulsara, M. A. Aerpatastân Bk. I., Chap. IV.

3 *Ibid.*, Chap. IV. 1.

they withheld the restoration.[1] The Pahlavi Andarz-i kutakân speaks of a few duties of children from a religous point of view (Dr. Freiman's Text and Translation. Dr. Hoshang Memorial Volume, pp. 482–89).

1 The following subjects are referred to in the Dinkard as the contents of a section of the lost Huspâram *nask* on the subject of child-birth and children: "Begetting a son; conception; tokens of a sex; formation of the limbs; *Fravâhars'* power of making the sexes; child-birth and care of a child; spiritual vision of the child; habits tending to beauty and other good qualities." (Dastur Darab Peshotan's Dinkard, Vol. XVI, contents, p. V.)

CHAPTER II.

Marriage Ceremonies and Customs.

Marriage, a good institution, according to Parsee books.

According to the Parsee books, marriage is an institution that is favoured by the Almighty God. According to the Vendidad (IV. 47), Ahura Mazda says: "O Spitama Zarathushtra! Indeed, I thus recommend hereunto thee, a man with a wife above a Magava (*i. e.*, an unmarried man) who grows up (unmarried), a man with a family above one without any family, a man with children above one who is without children." The very ground where a married man lives is represented as feeling happy. Zarathushtra asks: "O Creator of the physical world! Which is the second place on the earth that feels happy?" Ahura Mazda replies: "That (place is happy), over which a holy man builds a house with fire, cattle, wife, children and good followers". (Vend. III, 1.)[1]

The reason why marriage is recommended in Parsee books is, that there is a greater likelihood for a married person than for an unmarried one to be able to withstand physical and mental afflictions and to lead a religious and virtuous life (Vend. IV, 48, 49). We read in the Gathas (Yaçna, LIII., 5): "I say (these) words to you, marrying brides and bridegrooms! Impress them in your mind. May you two enjoy the life of good mind by following the laws of religion. Let each one of you clothe the other with righteousness. Then assuredly there will be a happy life for you."

To help marriage is a meritorious act.

Mrrriage being thus considered a good institution and well-nigh a religious duty, recommended by religious scriptures, a Parsee considers it a meritorious act to help his co-religionists to

1 Compare with this, the following lines, wherein also the poet describes the house of a married couple as feeling happy:—

"What a delicious breath marriage sends forth
The violet's bed not sweeter! Honest wedlock
Is like a banqueting house built in a garden,
On which the spring flowers take delight
To cast their modest odours."

marry. The Vendidad (IV, 44) says: "If a co-religionist—be he brother or friend—comes to thee with a desire for a wife, get him married to a wife."[1] To bring about the marriage of a maiden, who has reached her puberty, with a good righteous man, is considered to be very meritorious and an act of atonement for a sin (Vend. XIV, 15).

The authority of Herodotus.

We learn also from Herodotus (Bk. I., 136), that in ancient Persia, the State encouraged married life. He says: "Next to prowess in arms, it is regarded as the greatest proof of manly excellence to be the father of many sons. Every year the king sends rich gifts to the man who can show the largest number: for they hold that number is strength."[2] Thus, from very ancient times, marriage is considered among the Parsees to be a most important event in one's life.

The religious part of the marriage ceremonies is originally Persian.

After the several vicissitudes of fortune that the community has passed through, it is difficult to determine how many and which of the present several marriage customs of the Parsees are originally Zoroastrian or Persian. But this much can be said with well-nigh a certainty, that the strictly solemn or the religious part of the ceremony, wherein the priests take part, is more or less originally Persian. M. Harlez seems to be correct when he says on this point: "Nous ne trouvons pas non plus,

1 It is not unusual for Parsees to enjoin by their last testament or by a Trust, that a certain amount of their wealth may be spent in charity in the way of helping poor brides to marry. A similar provision has been made by the first Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Baronet, in his charitable Institution known as the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution; and even now, about 60 years after his death, poor brides are helped to be married. The Parsee Punchayet funds also have a similar provision. At present, about Rs. 75 are given to help the marriage of every bride. When parents lose by death a young son of marriageable age, they take consolation in this special kind of charity. This custom can be compared to that of the "funeral doles" of the ancient Christians, wherein pious Christians provided for the marriage of poor unmarried girls. Among the ancient Greeks, the State thought it its duty to provide dowries for the marriage of the poor maidens of the country.

2 Among the Romans, the State encouraged marriages. A tax known as uxorium was imposed upon the unmarried. Celibacy was an affliction among the ancient Jews (Judges XI., 37; 1 Samuel I., 11; Proverbs XVII., 6).

dans ce qui nous reste des livres avestiques, de cérémonies particulières pour le marriage; il est probable cependant que l'origine de celles qu'observent encore les Parses modernes remonte aux temps les plus reculés." [1]

In the very commencement of the Âshirvâd or the marriage Blessing-prayer, known as the Paêvand Nâmeh, and recited at the wedding ceremony, the officiating head priest says, that the ceremony is "according to the rules and customs of the Mazdayaçnan religion (avar dâd va âin-i-Dîn-i-Mazdayaçni)." We gather from stray references in Herodotus (Bk. IX. 108) that the Achœmenides observed some ceremonies for marriage. Firdousi also refers to the existence of some marriage customs (*âin va kîsh*. Mecan's Calcutta edition, Vol. I, p. 320).

The marriageable age.

According to the Avesta, a person came to manhood in ancient Irân at the age of fifteen (Yt. VIII., Tir, 13-14; Yt. XIV, Behrâm, 17; Yaçna IX., 5). The Pahlavi Bundehesh also gives the same age (Chap. III., 19, S. B. E. Vol. V., 16). So, fifteen was the marriageable age for males. For the females also, it was 15 (Vendidâd XIV., 15). The very fact, that in the Avesta we find brides praying for suitable husbands, shows, that there were no early marriages (Yt. V, Abân 87; Yt. XV, Râm, 40; Yaçna IX, 23). The Paêvand Nâmeh, recited at present at the marriage ceremony, also shows that early marriages were never contemplated. The bride and bridegroom are asked to express their consent after "truthful consideration" (Tâ andâzandi paêmân pa râst manashni pasand kardehid). The book of Herodotus also points to a grown-up age for marriage. The marriageable age at present is generally after 21 for the males and after 16 for the females. The Parsee Marriage Act enjoins 21 for the males and 18 for the females. When they are not of that age, the marriage-certificate must be signed by the parents.

The betrothal.

The nuptial ceremonies of the marriage-day are preceded by several other ceremonies. When the match is arranged, an auspicious day is fixed for the betrothal. The new moon day, or, the first day (Hormazd) of the

1 Harlez, Avesta. (Introduction) p. CLXXI.

Parsee month, or, the twentieth day, over which Behram, the angel of Victory, is believed to preside, are generally considered to be auspicious days. Now-a-days, the parties generally fix such auspicious days or the days most convenient to them. But still it is not rare, especially in the Mofussil towns, for the parties to resort to Hindu astrologers to name one or more auspicious days for the betrothal or marriage or such other auspicious events.

Matches are generally arranged by the parents with the consent of the children, though, now-a-days, there are many cases of marriages where marrying parties make their own choice. In the latter case, they generally consult the parents. Mutual friends of the two families generally carry messages and bring about the arrangement. The Pahlavi Pand-Nâmeh of Aderbâd Mârespand recommends this process (§42). The marriages of the three sons of Faredun and the marriages of Rustam with Tehemina and of Kâus with Soudâbeh, were, as we learn from Firdousi, thus arranged. Upto late, and even now to a certain extent, professional match-makers were not unknown.

On the betrothal day, at first, the ladies of the bridegroom's family go to the house of the bride and make her a money present in silver coins. Then the ladies of the bride's family go to the house of the bridegroom and make him a similar present. These reciprocal presents of silver coins form the only important part of the ceremony.

The ladies return to their houses, after a little refreshment, mostly consisting of fish, sweets, curd, plantains and sugar. The modern Parsee term for this ceremony is *Adrâvvûn*, but the older[1] term is *Nâm pâdvûn*, which is derived from the Persian

1 An unbetrothed girl was said to be "unnamed," (nâ kardeh nām) *Cf.* Firdousi's statement about the daughters of the king of Yeman, *mar ân har sê râ nûz-nâ kardeh nâm.* (Mecan's Text, Vol. I, p. 51). According to Anquetil du Perron (Tome II, p. 557), the marriage ceremonies of the Parsees in Surat, at the time of his residence there (A.D. 1760), were of two kinds, (1) *Nâmzad* (betrothal) and *Nekâh* (marriage). Now-a-days, in Bombay, the priests do not take any active part in the first ceremony, but it appears from Anquetil (II, p. 557) that they did so in former times. The intended bridegroom and the bride, and their families, met together,

term 'Nâmzad kardan,' *i.e.*, to name. It is so called from the fact that after the betrothal, the brides took the names of the bridegrooms.[1] According to the Parsee custom, a girl's name is always connected with her husband's in religious ceremonies after the betrothal, even if, by some chance or accident, marriage does not take place. This shows that betrothal[2] was considered to be a solemn ceremony for a marriage contract. Nuptial songs are generally sung on this occasion.[3]

The Divô, or the kindling of a lamp.

The next ceremonial occasion is that of Divô, *i.e.*, a light. It is so called, because, early in the morning of a day fixed for the occasion, an oil lamp is lit in the house of each party.[4] The ladies of each of the two families go in turn to the house of the other, and place a silver coin in the lamp there. This occasion is considered more important than that of the betrothal, because, on it, formal presents of clothes and rings are made. When the matches are arranged, the betrothal is hastily determined upon, to give a formal stamp, as it were, to the arrangement. The parties then

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and the family priest of the bridegroom said that "That was the will of God". He then recited the Tandaruçti and the Profession of Faith prayer and gave the hand of one into that of the other. In some of the Mofussil towns like Naosari, the family priest or a friendly priest still takes an active part in the betrothal. On the day of betrothal, he carries a formal message from the family of the bridegroom to that of the bride and asks for the bride to be given in marriage to the bridegroom. The parents express their pleasure to do so, and stamp, as it were, their pleasure to do so, by presenting the priest with a few rupees. Afterwards, a priest from the bride's family goes on a similar errand to the family of the bridegroom.

1 *Vide* above, p. 9, the section of "Naming the child" in "The Birth Ceremonies."

2 Betrothal is so called, because, in it, a 'troth' or a promise of truthful adherence to a marriage contract is given: *cf.* the promise of *Mithro virô mazô* (Vendidâd, IV, 2), which is considered by the Revâyets to be a marriage promise, to break which is considered to be a great sin.

3 For some marriage songs, *vide* my Marriage Customs of the Parsees. *Vide* Journal, Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. V of 1899.

4 *Cf.* the custom among the ancient Greeks, according to which the bride's mother carried in her hand the bridal torches kindled at the family hearth, and the bridegroom's mother carried torches and awaited the procession from the bride's house. (The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks, by Blümner, pp. 139-140).

have no time to prepare mutual presents and gifts; so, this second occasion, the day for which is fixed leisurely, is more important than the betrothal, for the formal presents of gifts. The first wedding rings are generally presented by both the parties on that day.

The Âdarni.

The next important occasion is that of Âdarni. It is the occasion, on which, the dowry given by the bride's father, is presented to the bridegroom's family. On several other occasions of holidays between the betrothal day and the marriage day, several presents are sent to each other's family, mostly from the family of the bride to that of the bridegroom. The marriage occasion is one, when the mothers of the bride and the bridegroom, expect presents of clothes from their own parents. If the parents are dead, it is considered to be the duty of the brother or brothers to present a suit or suits of clothes to sister. A nuptial song is generally sung on such an occasion.

The fixing of an auspicious day.

An auspicious day is fixed for the marriage. In some families, even now, it is the astrologer who determines which day is auspicious for the marriage.[1] The new moon day and the full moon day are auspicious.[2] Tuesdays are inauspicious.[2] The

1 In some families an astrologer's services are engaged before the marriage also. When matches are being arranged by the intercession of mutual friends, the horoscopes of the intended bride and bridegroom are submitted to him to observe whether there was or not any *râç* between the two, *i.e.*, whether the stars predicted or not that there would be harmony between the two. If that harmony is declared not to exist, nothing further is done.

2 According to Strabo, the vernal equinox was considered to be the best season for marriages among the ancient Persians, because it was, as it were, the birthday of Nature. Among the ancient Greeks, weddings took place in the winter. "A favourite time was the month Gamelion (the end of January and beginning of February) which hence received its name. Certain days regarded as auspicious were generally chosen, and the waning moon was specially avoided." (The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks, by Blümner, p. 136). "The Athenians preferred the time of the new moon, while some of the Greeks considered the period of full moon as the most favourable" ("The Knot Tied" by W. Tegg, p. 63). Among the ancient Jews, "the fourth day of the week, *i.e.*, Wednesday, was an auspicious day for the marriage of virgins and Thursday for that of widows." (W.

marriage festivities generally last for four days. The first of these is called mândav-saro, when a twig of a tree, generally a mango-tree, is planted near the door, symbolic of a wish for fertility.[1] The second and the third days are known as Varadh-patra days when religious ceremonies in honour of the dead are performed.

The sacred bath.

Coming to the ceremonies of the day of marriage itself, the bride and the bridegroom take in the morning or in the afternoon, a sacred bath with consecrated water.[2] This sacred bath is known as *nân*.[3]

The time of the performance of the religious ceremony.

The Parsee marriages are generally performed in the evening, just a little after sunset.[4] The bridegroom generally sits in the compound of the house or *bungalow* in a prominent place in the midst of a company of several male friends and relations. The bride and the lady guests are accommodated with seats within the building.

Tegg, p. 53). Among the ancient Romans, "certain days were reckoned unfortunate for the marriage as the Kalends, Nones, and Ides, and the days which followed them, particularly the whole month of May. But widows might marry on these days. The most fortunate time was the middle of the month of June" (*Ibid*, p. 174).

1 *Cf.* The custom referred to by Mrs. Philgot in her "Sacred Trees," pp. 88-91.

2 We learn from Firdousi, that this seems to be an old custom. King Behrâm Gour took his Indian wife Sepinoud to the Fire-temple of Âder Goushasp for the purpose. Among the ancient Greeks, "among the ceremonies bearing religious character which preceded the wedding, an important part was played by the bath. Both bride and bridegroom took a bath either in the morning of the wedding day, or the day before, for which the water was brought from a river or from some spring regarded as specially sacred, as at Athens the spring Callirhoe, (or Enneacrunoe) at Thebes the Ismenus." (The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks, by Prof. Blüümner, translated by Alice Zimmern, p. 37).

3 *Vide* below Chapter IV. The Purificatory Ceremonies.

4 It is just the time when day and night unite together. So, perhaps, that hour is chosen to indicate, that just as day and night, light and darkness, unite together and melt into each other, so the marrying couple may unite together in prosperity and adversity, in happiness and grief, in danger and safety. The ancient Romans also performed their marriages at night-fall, because they said it was the time when Venus, the goddess of beauty, which personified beauty in the marrying bride, shone.

Marriage is considered to be an event which must be celebrated, not quietly, but with some éclat. It must be celebrated in the presence of an assembly,[1] (Anjuman), who can bear witness to the event. According to the Dinkard, marriages were perfomed, in ancient Iran, with éclat. It says, that the drums and fifes which played at marriage gatherings announced the marriage to the people of the town or village. The assembly of males that gathers on marriage occasions is called Shâhjan, (*i. e.*, the assembly for the royal bride).

Marriage performed with éclat in ancient Iran.

The bridegroom puts on the usual ceremonial dress—Jâmâ-pichhori—of the Parsees, which is a loose flowing dress, full of folds and curls.[2] This flowing dress is always white in colour.[3] The bridegroom holds a shawl in his hand, a shawl being considered in India a symbol of respect and greatness.[4]

The dress of the bridegroom.

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1 In ancient Rome and Greece also, a similar view was held about marriage. But the assemblies began to be very large, and consequently extravagance in marriage expenses crept in. Hence, it was found necessary to limit the number of guests invited. Plato allowed 10 guests to each side, *i.e.*, in all 20 guests were allowed at the marriage gatherings. A law of the fourth century fixed that number to be 30. A censor had the right of going into a house where the marriage took place and he removed out of the house any number that exceeded 30.

2 A loose flowing dress is, in all ages, considered to be necessary for solemn and state occasions. In courts, churches, and universities, the gowns and robes, which were similar flowing dresses, played an important part. The folds of such dresses carried the idea of a kind of mystery, respect and rank. Women, therefore, generally put on such flowing dresses.

3 White colour is generally the symbol of purity, innocence and faithfulness. The Roman bride used to wear a white gown on the occasion of her marriage. The ribbon-knots which the guests put on among the Romans on marriage occasions were also white in colour.

4 Fifty years ago the chief leaders of the Parsee community used to carry shawls over their shoulders. The head-priests of the community still carry shawls, as the insignia of their office. The presentation of shawls to friends on important ceremonial occasions, as marriages, is still common to a certain extent.

He has the mark of a *Kunkun*[1] (red pigment) on his forehead.

The signification of the mark of *kunkun* on the forehead and of flowers.

The red pigment mark on the forehead of a bride is always round and that on the forehead of a bridegroom always long and vertical. The reason is this: the long vertical mark of the male symbolizes a ray of the sun, and the round mark of the female symbolizes the moon. A handsome man is compared by Oriental writers with the sun, but the beauty of a woman is always compared with that of the moon. The sun is always represented in ancient pictures, as a round disc with shooting rays. Again, the sun, through his rays, is a fructifying agent, but the moon is represented as a conceiving agent. She absorbs the rays of the sun. Just as the sun is a fructifying agent, and the moon a conceiving agent, so is man in his relation to woman. Hence it is that the mark on a man's forehead is long and vertical like the rays of the sun, and that on a woman's forehead round like the moon.

The bridegroom has a garland[2] of flowers round his neck as a symbol of sweetness and geniality. The bridegroom is

1 *Kunkun* or the red pigment plays an important part on marriage, and such other gay occasions in India. Various explanations are given about its use. Some say, that this red pigment is the symbol or substitute of blood, and that its use is the remnant of the custom of using blood on such occasions. They say that formerly they used to sacrifice animals on gay occasions like marriage, to avert evil from the married life of the couple. The blood of such sacrificed animals was applied to the forehead of the marrying couple. The application of the red pigment is considered to be a remnant and substitute of that custom. I have heard a story of a Divân of a native State, that on the coronation of his Prince, he made a slight cut on his thumb, and with the blood oozing from the wound, made the usual mark (*tilâ*) on the Prince's forehead. That was a prevalent custom among the Rajputs of Oodeypore (*vide* Tod's Râjasthân). In old Christian art also, an angel is shown stamping a mark on the forehead of the elect (*vide* The Life of Christ as represented in Art by Dr. Farrar). The legend explains the subject as the sign of the letter T which was originally a † (cross) and was a symbol of felicity, safety and salvation.

2 Garlands play a prominent part in the marriage customs of many nations. They were common among the ancient Greeks, Romans and Jews. In old Anglo-Saxon churches, the priest blessed the pair, and put garlands of flowers round their necks.

called *var-râjâ*, *i.e.*, husband-king. For this particular occasion of marriage his position is taken to be elevated.[1]

Presents to the bride and bridegroom and to their parents.

Some of the assembled friends and relations then make their presents to the bridegroom and his father. The presents mostly consist of shawls or rings, or money in cash. The bride and her parents receive similar presents from their friends. Up to a few years ago, these presents, especially those in cash, were very common. Small presents of cash up to Rs. 5 were not necessarily paid into the hands of the parties, but were given into the hands of a friend or relation, who acted as a receiver or collector for the occasion. He put down in a book the names of the donors and the amount of their money-gifts. Such money-presents were used to pay off a part of the marriage expenses.[2] The memo kept by the receiver proved to be of use to the parties when, on similar occasions of marriages in the family of their friends, they had to make similar presents in return.

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1 They say, that in ancient times, among several nations, the marrying couple put on crowns. Among the ancient Greeks, the priest put crowns on the heads of bridegrooms. In Athens, the friends of the bride carried a crown for her. In Egypt also, the bride put on a crown. Among the Hebrews the marrying couple was made to walk under a canopy resembling a crown. In Norway, the bride put on a jewel resembling a crown. In ancient churches, they kept a metallic crown, which was lent to the marrying couple for the occasion.

2 This custom reminds one of the "marriage-contributions" of ancient Wales and the "penny-weddings" of ancient Scotland. In Wales, a herald went round in the town, announcing the marriage, and saying, that presents would be received very thankfully and returned on similar occasions. Individual givers of small cash presents did not feel the burden of the small payment, but to the marrying couple and their parents, the total amount of these individual small presents was most welcome, as it enabled them to pay off the wedding expenses, and to put up a new house. In the case of the penny-weddings of Scotland, at times, the people of the whole village paid in their small contributions, and took a part in the wedding festivals. In some cases, the neighbours collected among themselves and presented to the marrying couple, sufficient corn that would last during the whole of the first year of their married life. In old England, they say, the nobleman in possession of the adjoining estates presented meat, and the milk-men milk, cheese, eggs, &c., for the wedding feasts. The schoolmasters and the priests generally lent their cooking utensils.

Marriage gift and dowry.

It appears from the Avesta, that in old Irân, it was more customary for the bridegroom to give marriage gifts to the bride than for him to take from her. The duty of the father of the bride, and in his absence or death, that of the brother, was confined to that of presenting an ear-ring (gaoshâvarê) to the bride. The sum of 2,000 silver *dinârs* and two gold *dirhems*, referred to in the Pahlavi Paêvand Nâmeh, recited at the marriage, seems to be the average standard which an ordinary bridegroom of moderate means was expected to provide for his bride.

Marriage processions.

An hour or two before the celebration of the marriage, the ladies of the bride's family and the bride's friends, form themselves in a procession, and carry for the bridegroom, to his place, presents of clothes and some other valuables. The houses of the bridegroom and the bride have a kind of wedding powder called *chauk* spread over their thresholds on such merry occasions.[1] A nuptial song is again sung on such an occasion. They return to their place after this presentation. The assembly, then, forms itself into a procession, headed by the officiating priests and the bridegroom and follwed by the ladies who carry with them what is called *varni*, *i.e.*, a present from the *var*, (*i.e.*, the bridegroom) to the bride. The procession is sometimes preceded by a band of music. According to the Pahlavi Dinkard, one of the objects of playing music on the occasion of a marriage is to inform the whole town, especially the neighbourhood, that a marriage has been celebrated.[2]

The parties receiving these presents kept a note of such presents, and were generally ready to give similar presents on the occasions of marriages in the families of those who had given them those presents. In Cumberland, they placed a plate on a prominent spot at the place of marriage, and the assembled friends put into it their mite. In ancient Europe, on the marriage day, the bride used to sell ale to her friends and to her husband's friends at fancy prices. The money so acquired helped them in putting up a new house. In ancient Egypt, the bride held in her hand a soft substance called *henâ* and the friends put in silver coins in that substance.

1 *Vide* my paper on "The Wedding Sand in Knutsford (Cheshire, England) and the Wedding Sand (ચોકડ) in India" (Journal, Anthropological Society of Bombay, 1912, Vol. IX, pp, 471-80). *Vide* my Anthropological Papers, Part II, pp. 31-39.

2 Dastur Peshotan's Dinkard, Vol. II, p. 96. *Vide* "Notice Sur les Yezedis," Journal Asiatique of January-February, 1896, p. 119.

The procession[1] goes to the house of the bride, where the marriage generally takes place. A nuptial song is generally sung on this occasion.

The procession goes to the place of the bride, and its members are accommodated with seats, the males in the compound and the females within the house. The door of the house of the bride is decorated with a hanging string of flowers, called *toran* (*i. e.*, arch) and the sideposts which support the doors are marked with Haradh (turmeric) mixture.[2] This kind of decoration is observed on the door of the bridegroom's house also. A nuptial song is sung on this occasion.

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1 Such marriage processions played an important part in many nations. In the Isle of Man, the marriage processions entered the church after going round three times. In ancient Greece, marriage processions were generally accompanied with musical bands and torches. The whole procession went on foot to the house of the bride, but the marrying couple were seated in a carriage. Up to about 70 years ago in Bombay, and about 45 years ago in Naosari, and such other Mofussil towns, it was common to see the husbands—generally boy-husbands—riding on horses. In Naosari, some marriage processions were accompanied by men carrying guns which were fired at intervals. It is said, that this is the case even now in some parts of Scotland. This seems to be a remnant of the ancient custom of marrying by capture when tribes attacked other tribes, and carried off marriageable girls.

2 Among the ancient Romans, the door of the house of the bridegroom was similarly decorated with flowers when the bride first went to her husband's house. She herself applied oil to the door-posts, oil being considered a symbol of prosperity. In Indian and other architectures, the *toran* (archway) played a very prominent part (*vide* History of Indian Literature by Harrowitz, p. 72). It is a symbol of marriage, suspended at the portal of the bride (Tod's Rājasthân, p. 26).

The custom of applying Haradh (turmeric) to the door-posts is common in India. The word Haradh comes from the Sanskrit root *har*, which means "to be yellow, to shine." Its colour is like that of sun-light. So turmeric and other drugs of its colour are taken to be the symbols of sun's light, and also of the prosperity and plenty brought about by his fertilizing power. Hence, the marks made with turmeric are considered auspicious. Instead of the red pigment (Kunkun), some use turmeric for the auspicious marks on their foreheads. It is for its being a symbol of plenty and prosperity that the new account books, commenced to be used on the Dewali and New Year's day by the Hindus, are marked with turmeric marks.

According to Dr. Dymock, one of the different Indian words for turmeric is *Rajni*, *i.e.*, light. They say that in ancient times, young wives decorated their foreheads with auspicious marks of turmeric, a little before

Welcoming ceremonies before crossing the threshold.

After the assembly is seated, the bridegroom enters the bride's house. He is welcomed at the door by the mother of the bride. He is made to stand at the threshold where several ceremonies are performed to welcome him and to wish him good luck. A fresh *Kunkun* mark is made upon his forehead, and a little rice is stuck upon the moist *Kunkun* mark and thrown over his head. Rice is considered to be the symbol of plenty and prosperity. Hence the sprinkling of rice plays a prominent part on many occasions of joy for wishing good luck. The officiating priests also, in performing the religious ceremony, and in invoking the blessings of God upon the couple, sprinkle rice over them.[1] Before the recital of the marriage blessings, the bride and the bridegroom also throw upon one another a handful of rice. Some fond mothers make the bride and the bridegroom eat a few grains of rice thus besprinkled over them in the marriage ceremony.

An egg is then passed round his head three times, and then thrown upon the ground and broken. This seems to be the

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sunset, when they expected their husbands to return to their homes from out-door work. This was intended as an auspicious thing, signifying, that as the sun, whose symbol the turmeric was, fructified the creation, so they may be fructified and blessed with children at the hands of their husbands. This custom is said to prevail even now in some of the Indian villages. Even young ladies, when visiting lady friends in the evening, have their bodies marked with turmeric. These visitors are then allowed to return to their husbands' houses after sunset, which is considered to be the auspicious occasion for the coming of the goddess Laxmi, which presides over wealth and prosperity. According to the Iliad, Juno, in order to entice Jone, had her bed prepared of turmeric-coloured saffron.

1 In Poland, the father of the bridegroom, after the nuptial benediction, welcomes the married couple into his house by throwing over them grains of barley corn. The grains are picked up again and sown, and if they grow well, that is considered very auspicious. Among the Hebrews also, grains of barley were thrown in the front of the couple, and that was meant "to denote their wishes for a numerous progeny." In Nottinghamshire and Sussex, the sprinkling of rice on the couple was a prevalent custom. In ancient Spain, not only the parents of the couple, but other passers-by in the streets, also sprinkled corn. According to Dalton's Ethnology (p. 148), among the Buniyas, the bride and the bridegroom threw over each other seven handfuls of rice, and moved seven times round a pole buried in the middle of a hut.

remnant of the old custom of animal sacrifice.[1] It signifies that if there be any evil destined for the person it may pass off to the egg and be destroyed with it.

A cocoanut is then similarly passed round the head three times and then broken.[2] A little water is then poured in a tray, which is passed round the head three times, and then the water is thrown at the feet of the bridegroom. Once in the evening, the ladies of the bride's family present before the bridegroom a water-pot (called *var-behedoon*, *i. e.*, a pot presented to the husband, *var*, as a part of the dowry), and make him dip his hand in it. While doing so, he drops a silver coin into it as a return gift, and as a mark of his appreciation of their gift.[3] At one time it was customary that the feet of the couple were washed with water just after the performance of the marriage ceremony. When Parsees began to put on English-fashioned boots, it being a little

1 Among the ancient Romans, on similar occasions, "a hog was sacrificed. The gall of the victim was always taken out, and thrown away, to signify the removal of all bitterness from the marriage."

2 In Scotland, they used to break a cake over the head of the bride at the threshold of her husband's house, when after marriage, she entered it for the first time. Among the Hebrews, after the marriage ceremony, they present before the bridegroom a wineglass which he breaks as a sign of good omen. All present then shout out "mazzletown, mazzletown," which means "good luck, good luck." This ceremony among the Hebrew is variously explained. Some say, it is to remind the Hebrews that their people are all scattered in different countries, just as the pieces of the glass lie scatterad over the ground. Others say, that it is to remind the marrying couple of the transitory state of this life, which may be as easily broken as the glass.

3 Water is considered to be a symbol of prosperity and also of humility. According to Herodotus, the ancient Persians, when they went to conquer foreign countries, asked for dust and water from those countries as tokens of submission. Ths act of the Athænians and Spartans of throwing the Persian messengers into a pit and into a well respectively, to receive with their own hands therefrom the desired earth and water, was one of the immediate causes of the Persian invasion of Greece, which led to the famous battle of Marathon. In one of the tribes of Bengal, they give earthen pots full of water and rice to the marrying couple, and sprinkle water over them from those pots. A person going out on an important business, considers it a good omen, if he meets one with a pot full of water.

troublesome to remove the boots, the custom was to wash the tip of the boots with a little water.[1]

After the welcoming ceremonies on the threshold, the bridegroom is made to cross the threshold without placing his foot upon it. The bride also, when she goes to her husband's, is made to cross the threshold.[2] The threshold is crossed with the right foot, which is always considered auspicious.[3]

The waiting for the bride.

When the bridegroom enters the house to be married he is further welcomed with a song. Having entered the house, the bridegroom takes his seat first, and waits for the bride, who comes in, after a short time, to take her seat.[4] The bridegroom sits on

1 In Scotland, in the last century, the unmarried friends of the bride washed her feet on the evening preceding the marriage. The custom is still known in some parts of of Scotland as that of "feet washing." It was known among the ancient Hebrews and is known among the modern Hindus. Among the ancient Romans also they washed the feet of the couple. Among the Persian Zoroastrians, they still wash the feet of the couple, and make them dip their hands in earthen water-pots.

2 According to Plutarch (Life of Romulus), among the ancient Romans, the bride, when she first went to her husband's, was lifted up over the threshold. A similar custom is said to prevail in Lincolnshire. They say, that in old England, when the couple first left the house after marriage, the house servant washed the threshold with hot water "to keep the door-step warm." This was to indicate a wish that another marriage may soon take place in the family.

3 In some countries of Europe, the bride, while entering the Church to be married, is asked to put her right foot first into the building and then to leave it also with the same foot. In former times, when some royal marriages took place by proxy, the nobleman representing the royal bridegroom placed his right foot on the bed of the royal bride. The right hand side is always considered auspicious. Among the Dhankar tribe of Mâhâbleshwar, to determine whether the time for marriage is auspicious or not, a calf in the hut is let loose to be fed by the cow which is kept outside the hut. If the calf, while going to the cow, passes by the right hand side of the marrying couple sitting in the compound, the time is auspicious. If it passes by the left hand side, it is inauspicious, and the marriage is postponed for some time.

4 To make the bridegroom wait for the bride for some time, seems to be a custom prevalent among many people. Among the Zoroastrians of Persia, when, at the marriage time, the members of the bridegroom's family go to ask her to be present for the marriage, the bride does not go at once. Her

the right hand of the bride. The right hand side is a place of honour, and so it is occupied by the husband who is considered to be the leader of the bride.[1]

The bridegroom and the bride take their seats facing the East.[2] There are two stools on one side of each of the chairs. On these are placed two metallic trays full of rice, which is to be thrown by the officiating priests over the couple while reciting their marriage benedictions. On the stool by the side of the chair on which the bride is to take her seat, stands a small metallic pot containing ghee (clarified butter) and molasses.[3]

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relatives keep her away and say that "She has gone to the garden for picking flowers," or that "She has gone to her brother's." When the match is arranged, a few members of the bridegroom's family go to the bride's house to have her final consent. When they ask her, "Are you willing to marry such and such a person?" she is not expected to reply at once. The question is repeated several times, and then finally she replies in the affirmative in a low voice. In some tribes, when the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's, the latter's house is kept closed for some time and opened after some knocking. Such customs and evasive answers are intended to signify, that it is the husband who seeks the wife and is anxious to have her, and not the wife.

1 In Christian marriages also, the bridegroom stands on the right hand of the bride.

2 "We modern Christians perpetuate this custom of Orientation in the position given to our churches and in turning to the East when we recite the creeds or general assent to the articles of the Christian Faith. (Mrs. Ainsley's Symbolism of the East and West, p. 33). This custom is a relic of the ancient Sun-worship that was generally prevalent.

3 Ghee being a soft, slippery substance made out of milk, is considered to be a symbol of gentility, courtesy and obedience. The ancient Roman bride, for similar reasons, applied oil on the thresold of her house when welcoming the bridegroom into her house. Even now, some fond Parsee mothers, while giving a bath to their children on their birthdays apply milk to their bodies. "Have a bath with milk, and be the parent of many sons," is a common form of benediction among Parsee ladies on marriage occasions. Curd, which is a kind of milk production, also plays a prominent part on joyous occasions like birthday and marriages. Molasess being a sweet substance is a symbol of sweetness and good temper. So, these two substances are produced by the family of the bride as symbols of good omen, wishing gentleness, peace and contentment to the couple. After the ceremony, the pot containing these substances and the remaining rice are presented to the family priest.

A servant stands there holding a censer with burning fire in one hand, and a little frankincense in the other.[1] On the two stands there are two burning candles, one, by the side of the bridegroom, and the other, by the side of the bridegroom.[2]

Fire.

Then two persons are made to stand before them, one by the side of the bridegroom and the other by that of the bride. These are the marriage witnesses.[3] The nearest relations generally stand as witnesses. It is usually married persons, not bachelors, who stand as marriage witnesses.[4]

Marriage witnesses.

As to the ceremony itself, we find, both from the ancient writings and the modern customs, that the following are requisite for a proper marriage :–

The ceremony proper.

(1) The marriage should be celebrated before a specially-called assembly (anjuman jasta-isted)[5] which need not be very large. As the later tradition says, five persons may for the purpose form an *anjuman* or assembly. The assembled guests served, as it were, as further witnesses to the marriage.

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1 Fire is held as a sacred and most important symbol among the Parsees. So, it is present in most of the Parsee rituals. It is a symbol of purity and plenty. Among the ancient Greeks, fire and water were held as symbols of purification, and the bridegroom himself held them in his hand while welcoming his bride in his house. According to some, the Roman bridegroom held fire and water before his bride as "necessaries of life," signifying thereby, that he would supply her with all necessaries of life. Among the Romans, the marriage ceremony was performed before the altar of their Atrium where their sacred fire was burning. In some parts of Australasia, the brides carry fire to the houses of their bridegrooms.

2 These burning-candles remind us of the "bridal torches" of the ancient Greeks, among whom the mother of the bride carried these torches in marriage processions. They were kindled from their family hearths.

3 It is the custom of many nations to have witnesses to testify to the event of marriage. The ancient Hebrews also had two witnesses. The Christians also have two. Among the Romans, the Pontifex Maximus performed the marriage ceremony before the witnesses. In ancient Persia the nearest relations stood as witnesses. According to Firdousi, in the marriage of Siâvash with Firangiz, Afrâsiab, the father of Firangiz, stood as a witness for his daughter.

4 In the Greek Church of Russia, it is only married priests that can perform the marriage ceremony.

5 Pahlavi Paewand-pâmeh.

(2) The officiating priest questioned the marrying couple whether they consented to be united in marriage.

(3) He united them by joining their hands, a process known as Hâthevârô, *i. e.*, hand-fastening. A symbolic knot also played a prominent part in the ceremony.

(4) The process uniting them was followed by a benediction which was accompanied with a sprinkling of rice or such other things.

Preliminary ceremonies. Tying the marriage-knot.

Before being seated by each other's side, the bride and the bridegroom are first seated opposite each other, separated by a piece of cloth held between them as a curtain. Now begins what we may call the religious ceremonies. Two priests present themselves for the performance of these ceremonies. The senior officiating priest gives the right hand of one into the right hand of the other. Then a piece of cloth is passed round the chairs of both so as to enclose them in a circle. The ends of the cloth are tied together. This is, as it were, strictly speaking the tying of the marriage-knot. This is done with the recital of the sacred formula of "Yathâ Ahû Vairyô."[1]

Hathêvâro, *i. e.*, hand-fastening.

After tying the knot of the ends of the cloth, which, as it were, encloses them into a circle of unity, the priest fastens with raw twist their right hands which are grasped by each other. This rite is called Hathêvârô, *i. e.*, hand-fastening.[2] The above

1 A knot is a symbol of love, friendship and faithfulness. In old England, the bride carried, on her gown, a number of ribbon knots which the guests plucked off from her body and carried them with them as tokens of the event. That the custom of tying marriage knots among the Parsees is very ancient appears from Firdousi's Shâhnâmeh where Zâl's marriage with Roudâbeh is said to have been celebrated by tying marriage knots. (Bê bastand bandi ba âîn o kîsh.)

2 Up to the eighteenth century, there was a custom in England that the marrying couple went to the river adjoining the town, washed their hands, and each, grasping the other's hand, took the oath of marriage. This was known as hand-fastening. Among the Christians also, it is the priest who joins the hands of the couple. Among the ancient Greeks, the ceremony of hand-fastening was considered as the ratifying agreement of marriage. Among the ancient Romans, the priest made the marrying couple sit on

sacred formula is recited during this rite also. It is the family priests who are entitled to the fee of hand-fastening, even if the ceremony is performed by other priests.[1]

In the ceremony of hand-fastening, the raw twist is put round the hands seven times.[2] After fastening the hands, the raw twist is passed round the pair seven times, and then, finally, it is passed seven times round the knot of the cloth which passes round their chairs. During all this process, the sacred prayer of Yathâ Ahû Vairyô is recited.

The union.

At the end of this ceremony, at a signal given by the senior priest, the servant who holds the fire-vase places frankincense on the fire. At this signal, the curtain of cloth, which is held between the couple, is dropped, and the couple throw on each other a few grains of rice which they hold in their left hands. This throwing of rice is accompanied by a clapping of hands by the friends and relations who have assembled there.

The above ceremony of holding the cloth-curtain between the bride and the bridegroom, and then dropping it after the fastening of the hands, signifies that the separation that hitherto existed betheen them no longer exists now, and that they are

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chairs which were put together, and on which wool was spread, and then fastened their hands. The modern Hindus also unite the hands of the couple. In Finland, it is the father of the bride who fastens the hands. Among some tribes, slight cuts are made on the hands before their being fastened, so that the blood of one may flow into that of another. It is the right hand of each that is fastened because the right hand is considered to be the witness of one's faith. Among the Assyrians, it was the father of the bridegroom who fastened the hands of the couple with a woollen thread.

1 This reminds us of the custom among ancient Christians, that the marriages generally took place in the parishes in which the couple lived, But when they were performed in other parishes, it was the priest of the parish in which they lived, that took the marriage fee.

2 The number 7 plays a prominent part in this ritual of hand-fastening. Seven was a sacred number among the ancient Persians. There are seven Ameshâspentas, or archangels, seven heavens, and seven Keshvars, *i.e.*, the zones or regions. *Cf.* the seven archangels of the Hebrews and the seven Spirits of the Christians.

now united into the bond of matrimony.[1] As long as the curtain was held, they sat opposite each other, but on its removal, they are made to sit side by side. This also signifies that they, who were up to now separate, are now united together.

The putting on of raw twist round the couple seven times also indicates union. The raw twist itself can be easily broken, but when several threads are twined into one, they cannot easily be broken. So it signifies that the tie of union into which the couple is now bound may not easily be broken.

The throwing of rice.

The throwing of the rice by the marrying couple upon each other is watched with great interest by their friends, especially by the ladies, who urge their respective friend, the bridegroom or the bride, to look sharp and throw the rice first when the signal is given. The one that throws rice first over the other is said to win. This is, as it were, a race of love. "Who won, the bridegroom or the bride?" is a question often heard in the assembly.[2] This is to signify, that one who throws rice first, thereby indicates that he or she will be the foremost in loving and respecting the other. The clapping of hands expresses the approval and good-will of the

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1 Among the Hebrews, the bride at first put on a veil which was removed immediately after they were united in marriage. Among the ancient Christians, when the couple was kneeling in the sanctum, four of the assistant clergy held over their hands a poll or care-cloth which was afterwards removed. Among the Russians of the Greek Church, "a curtain of crimson tafetta supported by two young gentlemen, now parts the lovers, and prevents them from stealing any anxious glances from each other's eyes. ("The Knot Tied" by W. Tegg, p. 106).

2 In some parts of Wales, the friends of both parties went after marriage at the church to an adjoining inn to partake of the marriage repast. A few members of both parties ran to an inn. There was a kind of running race between them. The party who ran first and reached the inn first, guaranteed, as it were, that the bride or bridegroom, whom they represented, would be the first to show all love and respect to the other. In some parts of the south of France, when the couple is kneeling at the altar after the marriage, a lady goes before them, and pricks them with a pin. Both try to bear that as much as they can. The one that bawls out or expresses the feeling of pain first, is believed to be the one that would turn out less patient than the other in suffering the troubles, if any, of married life in particular, and of this world in general.

assembly for the union.[1] The priests also, during the recital of the benedictions, throw rice over the marrying couple. To throw rice or some such other thing over the marrying couple as a symbol of good luck and prosperity seems to be an old custom. Firdousi refers to it in the case of Zâl's marriage (akik va zabarjad bar afshândand).

The strictly religious part of the ceremony.

Then follows the most important or the solemn part, or, what can be called, the strictly religious part of the ceremony. Two officiating priests stand before the couple. The senior priest at first blesses the couple in the following few words: "May the Creator, the omniscient Lord, grant you a progeny of sons and grandsons, plenty of means to provide yourselves, heart-ravishing friendship, bodily strength, long life and an existence of 150 years!"

Then, he puts the following question to the person, who stands by the side of the bridegroom as a witness to the marriage, on behalf of the bridegroom's family:—"In the presence of this company that has met together in the city of.....[2] on .....[2] day of .....[3] month of the year .....[3] of Emperor Yazdagird of the Sassanian dynasty of auspicious Irân, say, whether you have agreed to take this maiden.....[4] by name, in marriage for this bridegroom, in accordance with the rites and rules of the Mazdayaçnâns, promising to pay her 2000 *dirams* of pure white silver and two *dinârs* of real gold of the Nishapur coinage.[5]

The witness replies: "I have agreed."

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1 This corresponds to the custom of saying "Amen, Amen" in some of the village churches of England, when, after the third reading of the banns, the clerk of the church says, "God speed them all."

2 Here, the name of the town where the marriage takes place is mentioned.

3 Here, the particular Parsee day, month and the year on which the marriage is performed are mentioned.

4 Here, the name of the bride is mentioned.

5 This sum seems to have been fixed in ancient Persia as the sum to be generally presented by the family of the bridegroom to the bride.

Then the following question is put to the witness on the side of the bride: "Have you and your family, with righteous mind, and truthful thoughts, words and actions, and for the increase of righteousness, agreed to give for ever this bride in marriage to.....?" [1]

Reply: "We have agreed."

Then the priest asks the consent of the couple in the following words: "Have you preferred to enter into this contract of marriage up to the end of your life with righteous mind?"

Both reply: "We have preferred."

To make the matter doubly or trebly sure, the questions are repeated three times.[2]

The Ashirwâd, *i.e.*, benediction.

Then follows the recital, by both the officiating priests, of the Paêvandnâmeh or Ashirwâd (*i.e.* benediction), which is an address made up of admonitions, benedictions and prayers. Here is a translation of the address.[3]

Admonitions.

The first part of the address, consisting of admonitions to the marrying couple, is as follows:—

"By the helping name of Ahura Mazda may your happiness increase. May you be brilliant Try to do good deeds. Be increasing. Be victorious. Learn to do deeds of piety. Be worthy of doing good deeds. Think of nothing but the truth. Speak nothing but the truth. Do nothing but what is proper. Shun all bad thoughts. Shun all bad words. Shun all bad

1 Here, the name of the bridegroom is mentioned.

2 Among the Christians, the banns are proclaimed three times. Among the modern Greeks, the priest, after putting on the blessed ring, declares the marriage three times. He repeats the benediction three times. In some of the tribes of Central Asia *e.g.*, in Dardistân, the priest asks the marrying couple and the assembled company three times, whether they all consented. In the Greek Church in Russia also, the priest puts a similar question to the couple three times. His question is "Whether they sincerely consent to and approve their marriage, and whether they will love each other for the future as is their bounden duty so to do?" ("The Knot Tied" by W. Tegg, p. 107).

3 I had the pleasure and honour of contributing the translation of a large part of this address to Mr. Dossabhoy Framji Karaka's very excellent book," "The History of the Parsees" (Vol. I., p, 182). So, I quote it from that work. The rest, I had translated specially for my paper on "Marriage Customs" before the Anthropological Society of Bombay.

actions. Praise-deeds of piety. Commit no acts opposed to piety. Praise the Mazdayaçnân religion. Do nothing without mature consideration. Acquire wealth by good means. Say what is true before your superiors, and act according to their orders. Be courteous, sweet-tongued, and kind towards your friends. Do not indulge in scandals. Avoid being angry. Do not commit sins for the sake of avoiding shame. Do not be ambitious. Do not torment others. Do not entertain wicked jealousy. Do not be haughty. Avoid evil thoughts. Avoid evil passions. Deprive not others of their property. Keep yourselves away from the wives of others. Be industrious in following good professions. Do good to the pious and to the virtuous. Do not quarrel with the revengeful. Never be a patner with an ambitious man. Do not become a companion of a back-biter or a scandal-monger. Do not join the company of persons of ill-fame. Do not co-operate with the ill-informed. Fight with your enemies only by fair means. Treat your friends in a way agreeable to them. Do not enter into any discussion with persons of ill-fame. Speak in an assembly after great consideration. Speak with moderation in the presence of kings. Be more glorious than your father. In no way annoy your mother. Keep yourselves pure by means of truth. Be immortal like Kaikhosru. Be well informed like Kâus. Be as brilliant as the Sun. Be pure as the Moon. Be as illustrious as Zarathushtra. Be as strong as Rustam. Be as fertile as the Earth. As soul is united with body, so may you be united and friendly with your friends, brothers, wife, and children. Always keep good faith, and preserve a good character. Recognise only Ahura Mazda, the Omniscient Lord, as your God. Praise Zoroaster as your spiritual leader. Treat Âhriman, the evil spirit, with contempt."

After the above admonitions, follow a few benedictions, in the first part of which the priests pray to God to confer upon the couple, certain moral and social virtues which are said to be the characteristics of the Yazatas (angels) who give their names to the thirty days of the month.

Benedictions invoking the favour of virtues over which the Yazatas preside.

"May Ahura Mazda bestow upon you good thoughts through Bahman, good words through Ardibehesht, good actions through Shehrivar, perfect thought through Spendârmad, sweetness through Khordâd, fruitfulness through Amerdâd. May God bestow upon you increasing lustre through Âdar, purity through Âbân, exalted position through Khurshed, increase through the cow-like Mohor, liberality through Tir, temperate habits through Gosh. May God bestow upon you pure justice through Meher, obedience through Srosh, truthfulness through Rashnu, increase of strength through Farvardin, victory through Behrâm, constant delight through Râm, strong power through Goâd. May God bestow upon you knowledge through Din, collection of wealth through Arshisang, a number of good talents through Ashtâd, great activity through Âsmân, firmness of place through Jamyâd, good sight through Mârespand, and nourishment of body through Anerân."

Then follow a few other benedictions: "Oh, you good men! May that come to you which is still better for you than good, since you find yourself worthy as a Zaota, (a pious and virtuous man). May you receive the reward which is earned by the Zaota as one who thinks, speaks, and does much good. May that come to you which is better than good. May that not come to you which is worse than evil. Oh good men! May that accrue to you which is better than good. May your relations be worthy of goodness. May you get that reward of which you have made yourself worthy. May good accrue to you as the result of perfect good thought, perfect good words, and perfect good actions. May that piety come to you which is better than good. May not that sinful life, which is worse than evil, come to you. May it be so as I pray. May the much desired Airyaman come for joy to the good mind of Zoroastrian men and women. May he grant the desirable reward according to the law of all purities. I prefer that purity which is considered the best by Ahura Mazda. Righteousness is the best gift and happiness. Happiness to him who is righteous for the sake of best righteousness.

"May they (*i.e.*, the marrying couple) have light and glory, physical strength, physical health and physical victory, wealth

that may give a good deal of happiness, children blessed with innate wisdom, a very long life, and the brilliant happy paradise, which is due to the pious. May it be so as I wish it."

Benedictions in the names of the departed worthies of Iran &c.

Then are recited a few benedictions in which certain departed worthies of ancient Irân are mentioned by name, and it is wished, that the pair may be blessed with the virtues and characteristics which had made them famous. Certain grand objects of Nature also are mentioned, and it is wished that the couple may be blessed with the physical qualities manifested by them. The following is a free translation of these benedictions:—

"By the name of God, I bless you in the City of Bombay[1] as was the wont of our forefathers in Irân. May all your desires be fulfilled as were those of God in the creation of the world. May you be as great in dignity as king Kaikhosru.[2] May you be as friendly as angel Meher, as victorious over your enemies as Zarir, as handsome as Siâvakhsh, as splendid as Bejan, as pious as King Gushtâsp, as strong as Sâm Nariman, as powerful as Rûstam, as good a lancer as Aspandiâr, as good a helper of religion and far-seeing as Jâmâsp, as holy as the Holy Spirits, as generous as Tishtrya, as sweet as rain water, as brilliant as the Sun, as righteous as Zoroaster, endowed with a life as long as Time that rules over the world, as fertile as the Earth, as united as a river united with a sea, as full of joy as Winter, as gay as Spring, as fragrant as musk, as well-known as gold, as current, (*i.e.* favourite) as a coin, as good a doer of virtuous deeds as God in His creation. May these good wishes be fulfilled. May you be as useful as the Sun, the Moon, Water, Fire, Wine, Myrtle, Jassamine, Rose and the sweet Marjoram. May .....and.....[3] with their children and their pro-

1 Or, any other city, where the marriage is performed, may be mentioned.

2 Kavi Husrava of the Avesta. For this and other proper names mentioned here, *vide* my Dictionary of Avesta Proper names.

3 Here are mentioned the names of the bride and the bridegroom.

geny live for a thousand years. Be fragrant and good as the basil and the amber. May you have such pious children as may be illustrious, and victorious over enemies, and as may add to the glory of the family. May it be so as I wish it."

The address in Sanskrit.

A part of the address is, if so desired by the family, repeated in Sanskrit. They say, that when the Parsees first emigrated to India, in order to make it intelligible to the Hindu Râjâ and his courtiers who had given them a home on the Indian soil, they repeated the address in Sanskrit, which was then the language of the Court. That practice they have continued up to now, though there is no longer any necessity to do so at present. There is no written authority about the above statement.

Then follow another set of benedictions in the Pazend language known as Tandaruçti. The following is a free translation of these benedictions.

Tandaruçti *i.e.* benedictions for the vigour of body.

" By the name of the bountiful, merciful and kind God, who is a kind and just Lord, May..... .....[1] have health and long life. May they be worthy of piety and splendour. O Omniscient Lord! let joy and pleasure, ease and plenty reach them and let Divine light and royal justice reach them. May they have courage and victory. May they be firm in their knowledge of the good Mazdayaçnân religion by means of honest endeavour and good demeanour. May good relationship, the birth of children and long happy life be their lot. May their body be blessed with happiness and their soul with good government. O Omniscient Creator! May the religion of Zoroaster prosper.—Amen. O Great God! May you grant long life, happiness and health to the ruler of our land, to the community and to.....[1] Grant them all these for many years to enable them to help the worthy. Give them a long life for many generations. May there be thousands of blessings upon them. May the year be happy, the month auspicious and the day propitious. Grant that for several years, several days, and several months, they may be found worthy and fit to perform religious rites and

1 Here are mentioned the names of the marrying couple.

deeds of charity. Keep them pure for works of righteousness. May health, virtue and goodness be their share. May it be so. May it be more so, as is the wish of God and His Archangels."

The marriage ritual is repeated at midnight.

The marriage ritual repeated at midnight.

Anquetil du Perron says that it is a remnant of the old custom of Persia where, in the town of Kermân, the marriage ceremony was performed at midnight. In many families, the practise of repeating the ceremony at midnight and of the address in Sanskrit is not resorted to now. The performance of the above ceremonies and the recital of the address, complete, what we should call, the solemn part of the celebration of marriage. But there are certain other customs and observances, which, though very rare in Bombay, are observed to a certain extent in the Mofussil towns. It is the ladies who observe them. Moreover, they are now rather looked on more with an idea of merriment than with that of any solemnity.

The first observance of that kind is that of uniting *Chheda chhedi*, (છેડા છેડી) *i.e.*, of fastening the skirt, of the garments of the couple.[1] The nearest friend or relation of the couple ties the skirts of the *jâmâ* (the flowing dress) of the

Chedda chhedi, *i.e.*, fastening the skirts of the garments.

1 Among the Hebrews, the bride and the bridegroom were made to walk under a canopy or a sheet of cloth. This signified unity of protection. This custom seems to be another form of the custom of fastening the skirts of each other's garments. The Hebrew spouse in the above custom said: "His banner over me was love." (W. Tegg, p. 55). A Hebrew bridegroom at one part of the ceremony also spread the skirt of his garment over the head of his bride. That was meant to signify that the bride was now under his protection. The old Azlec priest used to ask the consent of the bride for the marriage. Having received it, he fastened the end of a part of her long veil to the skirt of the bridegroom's coat, and thus united, the bride went to the house of the bridegroom. This custom prevails also in Nicaragua. In some tribes the officiating priest gently knocked the head of the bridegroom against that of the bride. This also had the same signification of unity. According to Dalton (Ethnography, p. 148), among the Buniyers, on the appearance of the stars at nightfall, the skirts of the garments of the couple were joined together and they passed the night alone in this way. The next morning both were taken to an adjoining tank for a bath and the knot was untied there. On their return home, they stood at the threshold of their house with pots of water over their heads. A part of the water was then poured over their heads.

bridegroom with that of the *sâree* of the bride. Thus united, the bride goes to the house of the bridegroom. The process of fastening the skirts is accompanied by a song. This custom also signifies the act of uniting the two into the bond of marriage.

"Washing the feet."

The next rite is that of "washing the feet" of the couple with water.[1] That was more practicable about forty years ago, when almost all Parsees put on native shoes without stockings. But now, owing to the inconvenience of taking off English shoes and stockings, only the front tips of the shoes are washed with a little water. The signification of the custom may be that of washing away all past mistakes and driving away all evils and misfortunes. More probably, it signifies a kind of welcome. In India, visitors, who come from some distance, are first given some water to wash their feet soiled by a long walk. At times, a lady hid the shoe thus removed and did not return it unless the visitor paid a rupee.[2]

Dahi-Koomrô.

The next rite was that of making the couple partake of food from the same dish.[3] In doing so, each gives to the other, morsels of food of which *dahi* or curd forms a part. This rite signifies, that now, being

1 In Scotland in the 18th Century, according to an old custom, the maids of the bride washed the feet of the bride on the eve preceding the marriage. Among the ancient Romans, "both she and her husband touched fire and water, because all things were supposed to be produced from these two elements; with the water they bathed their feet" (W. Tegg, p. 75). The custom of washing the feet is prevalent among the Zoroastrians of Persia also. This custom of feet-washing prevailed among the ancient Hebrews also. It is now prevalent among the Hindus.

2 "At Hindoo weddings, the brother or nearest relative of the bride hides the bridegroom's shoes and will not restore them until the bridegroom pays him at least a rupee and a quarter. (The Shoe, a Moral Essay, by Mr. Tribhuvandas Mangaldas, p. 5).

3 Among the ancient Romans, one of the forms of marriage was *confarreatio* which was a "ceremony in which the bridegroom and bride tasted a cake made of flour with salt and water in the presence of the high priest and at least ten witnesses. This rite was said to symbolize the community of life, of property, of family worship, that henceforth united them." Among the Roman Patricians, many generally resorted to this form of marriage, and the couple was made to sit on one and the same piece of

united in the bond of marriage, they have to board together and to share each other's happiness and grief. This repast is known as "Dahi-Koomro" from the fact that *dahi* (curd), which is considered an auspicious subtance of food on gay occassions, formed the essential part of the dish.

Eki Beki i.e., odd and even.

Another peculiar custom, now almost obsolete, is that of making the couple play *Eki Beki* which is a form of play. Both have several rupees in their hands. One, without letting the other know, takes a certain number in the right hand, and asks the other whether the number is *eki* (odd) or *beki* (even). If the other guesses the number right, he or she is said to win. Perhaps the signification is the same as that in the rite of throwing the rice referred to above, wherein the one who won, guaranteed, as it were, his or her desire to love the other more ardently than she or he would do.

A nuptial song is sung at the close of the wedding ceremony.

The bride taken to her husband's house.

After the celebration of the marriage, the bride accompanies the husband to his house. A nuptial song is sung by the ladies, when the bride is taken to her husband's house, and another is sung when the bride enters the house of her husband

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leather prepared from the skin of a sheep killed for the marriage sacrifice. The bridal cake of Christian marriages seems to be a relic of the ancient Roman custom. Colonel Dalton in his Ethnography, gives several instances of tribes that have still prevalent among them this custom of making the couple eat together. As the Romans sat on one and the same piece of leather in their "*confarreatio*," so, some of the tribes sit together on one and the same piece of cloth. Among the ancient Hebrews, the couple were made to drink from one and the same cup of wine which was consecrated and blessed by the Rabi (W. Tegg, p. 54). In Russia and Scandinavia also, the couple are required to drink wine from the same cup. In Hesse, the couple eat from the same plate and drink from the same cup. According to a writer of the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, in old Lombardy, the only marriage rite was this, that the marriage couple drank from the same cup and kissed each other. Latterly, when the clergy protested against this simple rite without any religious element in it, the benedictions from the priest and a sermon were added to it. Among the Melanasians, the couple gave each other three morsels from a dish called "*sagomash*." The bride then gave a little tobacco to the bridegroom who, in his turn, gave a betelnut to the bride. (Featherman, p. 32).

Entertainment of the assembled guests.

After the celebration of the solemn part of the marriage ceremony most of the guests are entertained at a marriage feast. The following are the toasts generally proposed at Parsee marriage feasts:—

1. *Yazdân-ni yâd, i.e.,* In remembrance of God.
2. The married couple.
3. The sacred fire temples. May their sacred fires burn for ever. May they be the means of helping all.
4. The guests.
5. The host.
6. His Majesty the King.

All, or some of these, except the fifth, are proposed according to the directions of the host, and some one among the guests proposes that of the host. At some marriage feasts, a piously inclined host adds to the above list that of the dear departed ones as "Asho Farohar ni yâd," *i.e.*, "the remembrance of the pious departed ones." In other communal feasts, while proposing this toast, and the first on the list, *viz.*, that in remembrance of the sacred name of God, fragrant frankincense is ordered to be placed on the family hearth. No speeches are made while proposing them. At large gatherings, there are professional toast-proposers. Loud and clear voice is their only qualification for the work. They simply give out the toast with a loud voice, and at times, when the dining parties are very large, they go round the tables, repeating the words for giving the toasts several times, so that all may hear. These toasts are drunk generally while dining, not at the end of the dinner.

The menu.

As to the menu, fish, which is considered a symbol of good omen and luck, is essential. No marriage feast can be complete without it. Again, a course of some kind of sweets is essential. Meat is not generally eaten in marriage feasts. It appears from Anquetil that the reason why meat was prohibited in India, was that formerly, at Surat, which was at first the head-quarters of the Parsees, a large number of Hindoo guests was invited. As Hindoos consider it

irreligious to slaughter animals for food, to spare their feelings, meat was prohibited. But, from an account of the proceedings of a meeting of the community, held in Bombay on the 18th of October 1823, and convened to consider some steps to regulate funeral and marriage expenses, it appears that meat was prohibited on marriage occasions from the point of view of economy[1]. Meat courses were thought to be expensive.

Divorce.

In connection with this subject of marriage, we will say a few words here on the subject of divorce and on that of adultery, which generally leads to it.

It appears, that in ancient Irân, a husband was entitled to have a divorce from his wife in case of adultery. Besides adultery, aggravated perpetual quarrels also seemed to be a legitimate cause of seeking divorce. The parties had to go to court for a divorce[2]. There seemed to be a set form of speech for the husband to give divorce.[3] The Pahlavi word for divorce is *zan-tajâ*.[4]

Another cause of divorce on the part of the husband was the sterility of the wife. To be the father of children, being considered a good, important and religious act, it is natural that this was thought to be a valid cause. It was considered a valid reason, even in India, upto so late as about 50 years ago. There was no clear divorce, until the wife wished to have one in such a case, but there was a permission for the husband to marry a second wife. Even upto 50 years ago, the Parsee Punchâyet of Bombay permitted such husbands to have second wives during the life-time of their first wives, but on one condition, that they were to maintain their first wives. At times, the first wife finding herself sterile, of her own accord asked her husband to have a second wife, and continuing to act as the mistress of the house, treated the second wife with affection and kindness.

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1 Parsee Prakâsh, by Khan Bâhâdur Bomanji B. Patel, Vol. I., p. 172.

2 Dastur Peshotan's Dinkard, Vol. II, Chap. LXXX, 16 pp. 98-99 S. B. E. XVIII, pp. 406-7.

3 S. B. E. XVIII, p. 407. 4 Ibid, p. 419.

A passage in Herodotus also leads us to the same conclusion (Bk. IX, III). Xerxes asks his brother Masistes to divorce his wife. Masistes urges, as a reason not to do so, that she had borne him many children.

The Parsees, now-a-days, are governed by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (Act No. XV of 1865) passed on the 7th April 1865. According to that Act, the following serve as grounds for a divorce (sections 27–30) :—

"1. Lunacy or mental unsoundness, at time of marriage, of which one of the contracting parties did not know.

2. Impotency.

3. Continual absence of one of the parties for seven years, without being heard of as alive.

4. Adultery of the wife.

5. Adultery, or bigamy with adultery, or adultery with cruelty, or adultery with wilful desertion for two years or upwards, or rape or unnatural offence, of the husband."[1]

Adultery.

Adultery is the principal cause that leads to divorce. "The Avesta raises its voice with great force against misconduct in every form and lays down very wise restrictions to assure lawful birth."[2] It looks with dislike even at marriages between persons of unequal position, from moral and religious points of view. (*Vendidâd* XVIII, 62). The very fact that the ancient Iranians attached much importance to marriage, showed that they looked upon adultery with horror. In the case of a maiden who had lost her father, it was incumbent on the brother to give her in marriage at the proper time. That was accounted an act of righteousness on his part. It was considered inadvisable or almost sinful to allow a girl of marriageable age to remain unmarried.

In the Gâthâ Vahishtôishtî (*Yaçna* LIII, 7), there is a carefully worded warning against, what Dr. Mills calls, 'solicitations

1 Parsee Law, by Mr. F. A. Rânâ, p. 57.

2 Avesta, par C. *De Harlez*, Introduction, p. *CLXXI.*

to vice.'[1] There, it is said: "But yours be the recompense, (O ye righteous women !) of this great cause. For while lustful desire heart-inflamed from the body there beyond goeth down where the spirit of evil reaches (to ruin, still) ye bring forth the champion to help on the cause, (and thus conquer temptation), &c."[2]

The female Yazata Ashi (*Yasht XVII*, 47-60) complains bitterly against this vice. She says that it "is the worst deed that men and tyrants do,"[3] when they seduce maidens from their path of virtue. In some parts of the Avesta and in the Pahlavi books, this vice is personified as 'Jahi.'

The Yazata Haoma is entreated to withstand the evil influence of vicious women, whose lustful wavering soul is like a cloud which often changes the direction of its motion according to the the direction of the wind (*Yaçna* IX, 32). The Amesha-Spenta *Asha Vahishta* (Best Righteousness) is similarly entreated. (*Yasht* III, 9). An adulterer or adulteress is, as it were, an opponent of Gâo, the good spirit of the Earth or of the animal creation, the idea being that such a person comes in the way of the progress of the world (*Vendidâd* XXI, 1). The progress of the world in the different spheres of activity, physical and mental, acts against the influence of this class. (*Vend.* XXI, 17). Eredhat Fedhrî is the name of a good pious maiden, who is considered as a prototype of maidenly virtue, and whose guardian spirit is invoked to withstand the evil machinations of Jahi, the personification of this vice (*Yt* XIII, 142). In the Pahlavi *Bundahish* (Chap. III), this Jahi is said to be an accomplice of Âhriman himself. Her work is said to be "to cause conflict in the world,"[4] wherefrom the distress and injury of Aûharmazd and the archangels will arise.

In the Pahlavi *Dâdistân-i-Dinik* (71st question),[5] adultery is spoken of as one of the most heinous sins. The mother of

1 S. B. E. XXXI, p. 189.
2 Ibid, p. 193.
3 S. B. E. XXIII, p. 281.
4 S. B. E. Vol. V, p. 15.
5 S. B. E. Vol. XVIII, Chap. LXXII, 5.

Zohâk is said to be the first woman in the world, who committed this offence. It is said to be a sin which disturbs all lineage, which puts an end to all control upon one's desires and to the legitimate authority of a husband. It is more heinous than theft or spoliation (77th question).[1] It is a crime which leads at times to murder, because the woman brings about abortion at times.[2] There is another way in which adultery leads to murder. It is noted in our account of pregnancy,[3] that sexual intercourse during pregnancy is prohibited, because it is thought that it leads to an injury to the life of the child in the womb. Now, a woman, who yields to lust and gives herself up to an adulterous life, is likely to commit adultery, even in pregnancy. Such sexual intercourse may cause the loss of the life of the child in the womb.[4]

Again, adultery is a canker in society in another way. When a man commits adultery with a woman, he, according to the injunction of the *Vendidâd*, is bound to support the woman whom he has seduced and the children that may be born of the illicit intercourse. It is his duty to bring up his illegitimate children along with his legitimate children. In that case, the company of the illegitimate children is likely to spoil the good manners and morals of the legitimate children.[5] But, if he does not bring up the illegitimate children properly, if he does not give them proper training, he is responsible for, and guilty of, all the wrongful acts and sins that the children may commit in their childhood or in their grown-up age.[6]

Atonement for the sin.

The sin of adultery is very heinous in itself. But what little atonement can be done for it can be done by the following good acts :—

(*a*) The guilty person, especially the adulterer, must help by money or otherwise, in bringing about the marriage of four poor couples. (*b*) He must assist with money poor children

1 S. B. E. Chap. LXXVIII, 3. 2 Ibid, p. 5.

3 *Vide* above, p. 3, "Birth Ceremonies."

4 *Dâdistân-i Dinik* 77th Question, Chap. LXXVIII, 6.

5 Ibid, 8–9. 6 Ibid, 1–9.

who are not cared for by others and bring them up decently and educate them. (*c*) If he sees others in society leading a vicious life, he must do his best to retrieve them. (*d*) He must perform certain religious rites like those of the Dvâzdeh-Homâst.

In the *Viraf-Nâmeh*, the adulterer is represented as punished by being thrown in a steaming brazen cauldron (Chap. LX), and the adulteress as gashing her own bosom and breasts with an iron comb. (Chap. LXII).[1] The adulteress who brings about abortion, meets with worse punishment. (Chap. LXIV).

In all cases of adultery, the *Vendidâd* (XV. 18) enjoined, that the person seducing a woman, whether married or unmarried, should maintain her, and the children that may be born of her, until they come to age. Any attempt at desertion was considered a great sin (*Vend.* XV, 11–14).

The Pahlavi Madigân-i-Hazâr Dadistan named the Social Code of the Parsees by Prof. Darmesteter, and proposed to be called a Law-book (Rechts buch) by Prof. Bartholomae is a book of a judicial type containing old Iranian Laws on marriage and cognate subjects.

1 Hoshang-Haug-West, *Virâf Nâmeh*, pp. 186–87.

CHAPTER III.

Funeral Ceremonies and Customs.

We will treat the subject of the Funeral Ceremonies and observances under two heads :

Division of the Subject.

I. The Ceremonies that relate to the disposal of the body.

II. Those that relate to the soul.

I. Ceremonies that Relate to the disposal of the Body.

The main principle at the bottom of the customs and ceremonies for the disposal of the body.

The main principle, at the bottom of the Parsee custom of disposing of the dead and at the bottom of all the strictly religious ceremonies enjoined therewith, is this, that the body, when the immortal soul has left it, should, preserving all possible respect for the dead, be disposed of in a way the least harmful and the least injurious to the living. For properly understanding the Parsee ceremonies that relate to the disposal of the body, one must look to the ancient Zoroastrian ideas of sanitation, segregation, purification and cleanliness as expressed in the *Vendidâd*, one of their Avesta Scriptures.

The object of observances summed up in two words.

As Prof. Darmesteter (*Zend Avesta* II) says, all the ceremonies of this order can be summed up in two words, which are the same as those which sum up to-day all the prophylactic measures in the case of an epidemic, *viz.*, (1) to break the contact of the living with the real or supposed centre of infection; (2) to destroy this centre itself. Though all do not die of an infectious disease, it is dangerous and difficult to leave it into the hands of all, to distinguish which case is infectious and which not. So, for the sake of precaution and safety, it seems to have been enjoined, that all cases of death should be supposed as infectious, and that people should come into as little contact as possible with dead bodies.

Again, an idea of simplicity is observed in these ceremonies. Sâdi, the Persian poet, says :

The idea of simplicity and equality

Chun âhang-i-raftan kunad jân-i-pak

Chê bar takht murdan chê bar rui-i-khâk.

i.e., when the pious soul thinks of departing, it is all the same, whether one dies on a throne or on bare ground. The Parsee custom of the disposal of the dead illustrates, as it were, the above words of the poet. The method of carrying the body for disposal, from beginning to end, is the same for all.

Washing the shroud, and the part of the house where the body is placed.

When a person's case is given up, the relations begin to make preparations for the disposal of the body. At first, a part of the house on the down-floor, where the body is to be placed before its removal to the Towers, is washed clean with water. The shroud or the dress with which the body is to be covered is also washed beforehand in the house. The shroud or the dress with which the body is covered is white and made of cotton. It need not be new. Old clothes may be used or the purpose, after being washed. Unnecessary wastage of clothes over the dead bodies is forbidden. (*Vendidâd*, V, 60).

Akhiânah.

When a case is given up as hopeless, the relations send for two or more priests, who assemble round the sick bed of the dying person and say, for his benefit, the Patet, which is a prayer for the repentance of one's sins. The priests are paid in money and corn for their services. This is called the Akhiânah[1] ceremony because during this ceremony, priests are presented with grain. This part of the funeral ceremonies is not generally performed. The origin of this custom seems to lie in the fact that a person must always say his repentance prayer, and repent of his

1 The grain presented to priests, both on unhappy occasions like death, and happy occasions like Naôjote or Marriage, is called Akhiânah, (perhaps corresponding to Av. akhehaêna, *i. e.*, that which prevents weakness.)

sins. If he is conscious and able, he must do so at the approaching moment of death. His near relations and friends may join in the last prayers. If the recital of the whole Patet is not possible, the recital, a short time before death, of the Ashem-Vohû formula by the dying person himself, if he is able, or by some relation, if he is unable, is considered meritorious. The *Hâdokht Nask* (I, 31-32) says, that the recital of the Ashem-Vohû formula[1] at the very end of life, praising good thoughts, good words and good actions and condemning evil thoughts, evil words and evil actions is, in point of greatness, goodness and excellence, equal in value to the whole of the region of Khanirath with its cattle and leading men. The purport of all this is to say, that if a man at his dying moment could honestly say that he led a pious life and repented of all his sins, that life is worth more than the country of Khanirath with all its riches.

In the *Vendidâd* (XII, 1-19), a shorter period of mourning is enjoined on the surviving relations of a righteous person (Dahma) than on those of a sinful person (Tanu-peretha). According to tradition, the Dahma or the righteous in this case is one who has said his repentance prayer or recited the Ashem Vohu; and the Tanu-peretha or the sinful is one who has not said that prayer or recited that formula. A longer period of mourning is enjoined for the sinful, because, in his case, the surviving dear ones have not only to mourn his loss, but have to mourn for the fact, that he has not led a good life, and as such has to meet with punishment.[2]

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1 It may be thus translated: "Righteousness is the best gift and happiness. Happiness to him who is righteous for the sake of best righteousness."

2 *Cf.* the words of Hamlet's ghost:—

"Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, unanointed, unanel'd
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head. (Act I, Sc. V).

Cf. "Tears for the dead, who die in sin,
And tears for living crime;
Tears for the lost—but Heaven's own voice
Says for the Christian dead—Rejoice." —*Fewsbury.*

Communion with a few drops of the sacred Haoma juice.

Upto a few years ago, a short time before death a few drops of the consecrated Haoma juice were poured into the mouth of the dying person. The Haoma[1] plant being an emblem of immortality, its juice is poured to impress an idea, that, after all, the soul of a man is immortal. The Haoma plant reminds one of "The Tree of Life" of the Christian Scriptures (Genesis, II, 9) in the garden of Eden and of the Sidra or Lotus of the Mahomedan Scriptures (The Qurân, LIII, 14-20: S, B. E., IX, p. 252). As the Tree of Life is guarded by the Cherubim and the Sidra by 70,000 angels, so the Haoma-i-Saphid, or the White Haoma, is guarded by 99,999 Fravashis or the guardian spirits. Sometimes, instead of the juice of the Haoma plant, if it was not available at hand, the juice of a few grains of pomegranate, the leaves of which are considered essential in some of the Parsee ceremonies, is dropped into the mouth of the dying person.

The final bath.

A short time after death, the corpse is washed throughout, first with a little application of *gaomez* and then with water, generally with well-water. A clean suit of clothes, washed at home, is then put over the body. It is afterwards destroyed and never used for any other purpose. The Kusti or the sacred thread is then put round the body by some near or dear one, with the recital of the Nirang-i-Kusti, or the Ahura Mazda Khudâe prayer.[2] The corpse is then placed on a cot. Then two persons keeping themselves in touch with the body sit close by, and somebody recites the Ashem-Vohû prayer very close to the body of the deceased. The relations then meet or embrace the deceased for the last time. In Persia, the person washing the corpse puts on woollen gloves.

Cf. "Come, come; no time for lamentation now;
Not much more cause. .....
Nothing is here for tears. Nothing to wail,
.....Nothing but well and fair.
And what may quiet us for death so noble."

1 *Vide* below, the Haoma Ceremony.

2 In some cases, generally those of old men, when they were given up as hopeless, the final bath was, upto a few years ago, given during the last moments of life.

Contact stopped to prevent infection.

After this time, the dead body is supposed to fall under the influence of Druj-i-Nasush, *i.e.*, the evil influence of Decomposition or Destruction. It is considered that to touch the body then is dangerous for the living, lest they should catch contagion and spread disease. Only the corpse-bearers are allowed to come into contact with the body. If somebody else touches the body, he has to go through a process of purification or a sacred bath taken under the directions of a priest.

Putting on of the shroud.

The body is now given in charge of two persons who are generally trained to their work. They are first required to take a bath and put on a clean suit of cloths. They perform the Kusti,[1] *i.e.*, ungird the sacred thread and put it on again with a prayer, and then recite a part of the Srosh-bâj prayer. Then holding a *paiwand* between them they enter the room where the corpse is placed.

The *Paiwand.*

To hold a *paiwand* means to be in close contact or touch with each other. This is done when two persons hold a piece of cloth or cotton tape between them. This is intended to show, that they are associated or united in doing a thing and are ready to co-operate and sympathise with each other. When these two persons enter into the room, holding the 'paiwand' between them, the two relations who are sitting by the side of the deceased leave their places and entrust the body to them. They place the body on the ground on a clean white sheet of cloth and put on the shroud over it. The whole of the body except the face is covered with cloth. In some parts of Gujarât even the face is covered with a *padân* (Avesta, *paitidâna*).[2]

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1 *Vide* below, the Naojote.

2 The padân is a piece of white cotton cloth put over the face. It is also put on by the Parsee priests when the say their prayers before the sacred fire or other sacred things of offerings. This is intended to prevent particles of saliva falling over the body or over the sacred things and thus to save them from defilement.

Laying on the slab.

The corpse is then lifted from its place by the abovementioned two persons and put on slabs of stones in a corner of the front room. The hands are arranged upon the chest crosswise. In some of the towns of Gujarât, the old Avestic method of placing the dead body on a plot of ground previously dug in the house, instead of on slabs of stone is still in practice. The ground is dug out a few inches deep and a layer of sand is spread over it. The corpse is placed on the ground thus prepared (*Vendidâd*, V, 11; VIII, 8). The body is placed on the ground or on the slabs in a position which would avoid the head pointing towards the North.

The north side always avoided.

In all the ceremonies of the Parsees, the north side is, as a rule, generally avoided. The children while going through the Naojote ceremony for the purpose of putting on the sacred shirt and thread, the marrying couple going through the Âshirvâd or marriage ceremony, and the priests in all their religious rites and ceremonies never face the north. This is due to the fact, that the ancient Iranians, the ancestors of the Parsees, had a natural hatred for the north, from which side proceeded all kinds of dangers and evils whether climatic, physical or mental. The *Vendidâd* (VII, 2, 5) says that the Druj-i-Nasush, *i.e.*, spirit of Destruction runs from the northern direction in the form of a fly. Even the wind from the northern direction was believed to be stinking (*Yasht Fragment*, XXII, *Hadokht Nask*, III, 18).[1] The winds from the northern cold regions brought sickness and death in Persia. Again, the marauders from Mazenderân, Gilân and other adjoining regions in the north brought destruction and death in many Iranian families. These people of the north were depraved and wanting in many moral qualities. On the other hand, the south was considered a very auspicious side, The winds from the south were healthy and invigorating. Coming from the south, they brought rain and plenty. The wind blowing from the south purified the atmosphere all round (Vendidâd, III, 42). The wind blowing

1 Haug's Text and translation in the *Book of Ardâ Virâf*, p. 315.

towards the soul of a virtuous man, when it (the soul) passes on to Heaven on the dawn of the third night after death, was said to be sweet-scented and fragrant and to have come from the south (Yasht Fragment XXII, Hadokht Nask II, 19). Owing to the belief based on these facts and considerations, the north was always avoided.[1]

Drawing the Kasha or the boundary line.

After placing the corpse on slabs of stone, one of the two persons, draws round the body three *Kashas*[2] or circles with a metallic bar or a nail. This is intended to show, that the ground within the circle is temporarily set apart for the corpse, and that nobody is to go to that part of the ground lest he should catch infection.

Separate apartments for the dead bodies.

In ancient Persia, almost all houses were provided with separate apartments for placing the corpse before its removal to the Towers of Silence. In the case of the poor who could not afford to have such separate apartments there was a separate house for the purpose in every street. The poor carried their dead to such houses before removing them to the Towers. "Ahura Mazda said: 'In every house, in every street, they should make three *katas* (separate parts of ground) for the dead'". (Vend., V., p. 10),

It is said, that even now, such separate houses are provided in the Parsee streets in Persia where the parties take their dead and perform the funeral ceremonies before removing them to the Towers of Silence. Such houses are known as "margzâd." Upto to late, some of the mofussil towns of Gujarat had such separate houses for the dead in Parsee streets. They were known as Nasâkhânâs *i.e.*, the houses for the dead bodies. Every Parsee town has a Nasâ-Khana, but now it is generally used as a depôt for the biers, the slabs of stones above

1 *Cf.* the ancient Egyptians, while mummying the dead bodies, pointed the head towards the south (Maspero's Egypt and Assyria).

2 *Vide* my paper on "Iranian *kashas* and the Boundary lines of the Roman Lustrum" (*Journal* of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. VIII, pp. 520-30. My Anthropological Papers, Part I, pp. 331-39).

referred to, the shrouds and such other requisites for the removal of the dead. The Bahman Yasht (Chap. II, p. 38) speaks of it as Nasâi-kata [1] (corpse chamber).

Their sanitary isolation.

It is enjoined, that the place to be chosen for such apartments or houses for the dead should be free from dampness, should be the least frequented by men and animals, and should be far away from the place where religious ceremonies are performed. The Vendidâd (VIII, p. 5) says: "Ahuramazda said that (they must choose) in the house of a Mazdayaçna the cleanest and the driest place which is the least frequented by cattle and beasts of burden, by the fire of Ahuramazda, by the Barsam spread through piety and by the holy man". After having placed the body on one side of the ante-room, either on slabs or on a part of the ground dug and specially prepared, the two persons, who were upto now arranging all these things, now leave the house, still holding the *paiwand* between them. They then finish the Srosh Baj prayer, a part of which they had recited before commencing their work.

The *Sagdid*. Its object.

One of the ceremonies is that of the *Sagdid*. The word '*Sagdid*' is made up of *sag*, a dog, and *did* sight, and means "the sight of a dog." A dog, usually a four-eyed (*Chathru-chashma*) dog *i.e.*, a dog with two eye-like spots just above the eyes, is made to see the corpse. [2]

As regards the purpose why the *sagdid* is performed, various reasons are assigned: (*a*) Some say that the particular class of the spotted (*chathru-chashma*, or the four-eyed) dog had the characteristic of detecting whether life in the body of a man

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1 Dastur Kaikobad Âdarbâd's Text, p. 7. S. B. E., Vol. V, p. 205.

2 It appears from the customs of several ancient nations that the dog played a prominent part in the funeral ceremonies of these nations.

(*a*) Compare the *Chathru-chasma* of the Avesta with the "four-eyed dogs" of the Rig-Veda (10th Mandala) which guarded the way to Yama's abode;

"Fear not to pass the guards—
The four-eyed brindled dogs—that watch for the departed".
(Mon. Williams' *Indian Wisdom*, 1876, p. 22).

was extinct or not. It stared steadily at the body if life was extinct, and did not look at it at all if life was not altogether extinct. Thus the purpose for the *sagdid* among the ancient Iranians was to ascertain, before the disposal of the body, whether life was really extinct. (*b*) Others, as Dr. Haug says, attributed the *sagdid* to some supposed magnetic influence in the eyes of the dog. (*c*) There were others who connected the *sagdid* of the dog, which of all animals is the most faithful to his master, with the idea of loyalty and gratitude that must exist between the living and the dear departed ones. (*d*) M. Abel Hovelacque thinks, that the respect which the Mazdayaçnâns professed for the dog may be due either to a recollection of ancient belief of which the correct meaning may have been lost or to a special motive. That motive may be the expression of the recognition of the dog's valuable services in a society where the country life, agriculture and the breeding of the cattle played a rôle of great importance. [1] (*e*) Again, others considered the dog to be symbolical of the destruction of immoral passions. Death put an end to all passions; so, the presence of a dog near the dead body emphasized that idea. *Cf.* Dante's following lines :—

(*b*) Among the ancient Romans, Lares of the departed virtuous were represented in pictures with a dog tied to their legs. This was intended to show, that as the dogs watched faithfully at the door of their masters, so the Lares watched the interest of the family to which they belonged.

(*c*) The people of the West Indies have a notion among them of the dogs accompanying the departed dead. *Cf.* the following lines of Pope :—

> "Even the poor Indian whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind,
> Thinks admitted to yon equal sky
> His faithful dog shall bear him company."

1 Ce respect que le Mazdéens professaient pour le chien avait-il un motif spécial; était-il le souvenir d'anciens événements, d'anciennes croyances dont on pouvait bien avoir perdu déja le véritable sens, c'est ce que nous ne pouvons assurer. Faut-il simplement en voir la cause dans la reconnaissance à laquelle le chien devait avoir un si juste titre pour ses bons offices, dans une société où la vie de campagne, la culture de la terre, l'élevage du bétail jouaient un rôle si considérable? Peut-être les deux opinions ont-elles ici, comme bien souvent, une égale raison d'être." (L' Avesta, Zoroastre et le Mazdéisme, par Abel Hovelacque, (1880, p. 337).

"For that fell beast whose spite thou waile'st o'er,
Let no man onward pass along her way.

. . . . .

Many the creatures are that with her wed,
And will be more until the greyhound come,
Who with sharp agony shall smite her dead."

(Divine Comedy, Hell, Ch. I, ll. 94-102; Dr. Plumptre's Translation.)

In these lines, the greyhound is considered as the deliverer of Italy. He is the symbol of the destroyer of the passions of sensual enjoyment, pride and avarice which are represented by the leopard, the lion and the wolf.[1]

(*f*) Some connect the idea of the *sag-did* with the symbolic idea of the two dogs—the Canis major and the Canis minor in the Orion at the Chinvad bridge, which is the Milky Way. [2]

The *sagdid* is performed twice during the process of putting on the shroud and is repeated in every Gâh[3], as long as the corpse is in the house. It is repeated just when the new Gâh begins. It is enjoined that in case a dog is not procurable, the *sagdid* of flesh-devouring birds like the crows and vultures may be allowed; that is to say, it will do, if a flesh-eating bird happens to pass and see the corpse from above. [4]

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1 For the various beliefs about the dog, *vide* "The Dog in Myth and Customs" by E. T. Leith (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. III, pp. 302-306 and pp. 360-362). *Vide* my paper on "The Tibetan Mode of the Disposal of the Dead. Some side-light thrown by it on some of the details of the Iranian mode as described in the Vendidâd. A study" in the Sir J. J. Z. Madressa Jubilee Volume, edited by me. pp. 347-55.

2 Sir J. J. Z. Madressa Jubilee Volume, p. 317.

3 The Gâhs are the five different periods of the day. The first Gâh, *Hâvan*, begins with the dawn of the day and ends at twelve noon or midday. The second, *Rapithwin* runs from twelve noon to three o'clock in the afternoon. The third, *Uzairina* begins at three and continues until it is dark. The fourth *Aiwisruthrem*, commences from when it is dark, and lasts upto midnight. The fifth Gâh *Ushahin*, commences from midnight and lasts upto the dawn of the day.

4 "Or, the flesh-eating birds fly in the direction." (Vend. VII, 3).

Fire kept burning in the room.

After the first *sagdid*, fire is brought into the room in a vase and is kept burning with fragrant sandal-wood and frankincense. This is done with a view to destroy the invisible germs of disease that may be floating in the air in the room where the corpse is placed before its removal to the Tower of Silence. We read the following in the Vendidâd (VIII, 79,80) about this sanitary use of fire: "O holy Zarathushtra! If one carries with purity (for the fire) the aêsma (*i.e.*, the wood) of the plant Urvâsna, or Vohugaôna or Vohukêrêti, or Hadhânaêpata,[1] or any other fragrant tree, the fire of Ahura-Mazda goes to fight a thousand times against the invisible evil daevas[2] in all the directions in which the wind spreads the fragrance of the fire."

Prayers by a priest.

Then a priest sits before the fire and recites the Zend-Avesta till the time of the removal of the corpse to the Tower, and keeps the fire burning. It is not absolutely necessary that a priest should recite prayers at this time. Any person in the house can recite prayers and keep the fire burning. The priest and all other persons are enjoined to sit at a distance of at least three paces from the corpse, so that in case the deceased died of an infectious disease, there may be no danger or risk to the health and life of the living. We read the following about this enjoinment: "O Creator of the material world! At what distance from the holy man (should the place of the corpse be)?" Ahura Mazda replied, "Three paces." (Vendidâd, VIII, 6, 7.)

Time for the removal of the body to the Tower.

The corpse may be removed to the Tower at any time during the day. As it is enjoined that "the Mazdayaçnâns should expose the body to the Sun," (Vend. V, 13), the removal of the body at night is strictly forbidden. If death takes place early at night, the body is removed the next morning; but, if it takes place late

1 All these are species of fragrant plants, the burning of the wood of which destroyed germs of disease.

2 The word 'daêva' is used in the Avesta for all evil influences or things, whether physical, mental or moral.

at night or early in the morning, it is removed in the afternoon. In the case of an accidental death, a long interval is generally allowed. The Vendidâd (VII, 4-5) says, that in such a case, the decomposition does not commence as early as in the case of a body that was suffering from illness, but commences after one Gâh, or one period of the day; and so, it is not detrimental to the health of the living to keep the body some time longer.

The corpse-bearers.

About an hour before the time fixed for the removal of the body to the Tower, two—or, four if the body is heavier—Nassâsâlârs,[1] *i.e.*, corpse-bearers, clothed in perfect white, enter the house, after having said and performed the *Pâdyâb Kusti*. All the parts of the body except the face are covered up. They put on *dastâneh* (*i.e.*, covering for the hand) over their hands. The exposed parts of the body are covered up to ensure their safety against catching infection through any uncovered part, should the deceased have died of an infectious disease. They enter the house holding a *paiwand*[2] between them and carry an iron bier, called *gehân*,[3] to remove the body. Wood being porous and therefore likely to carry and spread germs of disease and infection, its use is strictly prohibited in the funeral ceremonies. So, the bier is always made of iron.

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1 The Nasu-Kashas of the Vendidâd. In large towns or centres of Parsee population, there are ganerally two classes of corpse-bearers, (*a*) The Nassâsâlârs, who go to the house and place the corpse on the bier, and who afterwards enter the Tower and expose the corpse there. (*b*) The Khândhiâs (*lit.*, those who carry the body on their Khândh, *i. e.*, shoulders) whose business is to carry the bier of the corpse from the house to the Tower. In small towns where the Parsee population is sparce, one and the same class of persons performs both the works. In smaller towns where the Parsee population is more sparce, there are no paid professional carriers of this type and the corpses are disposed of by the relations and friends of the deceased. In Bombay, it being the head-quarters of the Parsees, there is a paid staff of about 50 professional corpse-bearers of both the classes.

2 *Vide* above, p. 53.

3 Perhaps from Pers. *gâh*, bed, meaning the last bed.

The corpse-bearers must be at least two, even if the deceased were a mere infant that could be carried by a single person. "Nobody should carry the dead alone" (Vendidâd, III, 14). If the body is heavy, it must be carried by four, six, eight, ten or any such even number. A pair, or the number two, plays a prominent part in all the ceremonies for the disposal of the dead body and that pair always holds a *paiwand* between them. After death, the body must never be left alone or in the company of only one person. After washing it, there must be always two persons sitting by its side. Again the persons, who put on the shroud and place it on slabs of stone in a corner of the house before its removal to the Tower, must be two. We will see further on, that the priests who say the last funeral prayers at the house are also two.. The persons who attend the funeral procession to the Tower also go in pairs of two and two, holding a *paiwand* in the form of a handkerchief between them. A single individual should never attend the funeral. The injunction of having pairs in all these funeral ceremonies is intended to create a view of sympathy and mutual help.

The number two plays a prominent part in all funeral ceremonies.

The corpse-bearers, on entering the house, place the bier by the side of the corpse and then "take the *Bâj*."[1] They then recite a formula in a suppressed tone which says: "(We do this) according to the dictates of Ahura Mazda, according to the dictates of the Ameshâspentas, according to the dictates of the holy Sraosha, according to the dictates of Âdarbâd Mârespand,[2] and

The recital of the Bâj.

1 "To take the *Bâj*" is to recite the Sraosh-bâj prayer up to the word "Ashahē" in the Kem-nâ-Mazdâ prayer which forms a part of the Sraosh-Bâj (Darmesteter, Le Zend Avesta II, pp. 686–88). When the particular work of a person in connection with the disposal of the dead body is finished, the bâj is also then finished, *i.e.*, the remaining part of the Sraosh-bâj is recited. This *bâj* is also taken by all priests at the time of bathing and in the Bareshnum ceremony.

2 He was a well-known Dastur or Head priest of the Sassanian times, and took an active part in the renaissance of the Zoroastrian religion after the long period of ignorance in the times of the Parthians.

according to the dictates of the Dastur of the age."[1] By the recital of this formula, known as the Dasturi formula, they declare, that they undertake to perform all the ceremonies for the disposal of the dead as enjoined in the religious books and as directed by the Head-priest of the time. Then they sit silent by the side of the corpse. If they have at all any occasion to speak, they speak with a kind of suppressed tone, without opening the lips, which is said to be speaking in *bâj*.

The Gêh-sârnâ prayer.

Then follows the "Gêh-Sârnâ" ceremony, *i.e.*, the recital of the Gatha. Its recital was intended as a sermon and exhortation to give moral courage to the survivors to bear up with fortitude the loss of the deceased and as a protection against the spread of disease. We read the following on this point in the Vendidâd (X, 1, 2): "Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda: 'O Ahura Mazda! Most beneficent Spirit! Holy Creator of the material world! How are we to stand against the *druj* (evil influence) which runs from the dead to the living? How are we to stand against the *nasu* (evil influence) which carries infection from the dead to the living?' Then Ahura Mazda replied: 'Recite those words which are spoken twice in the Gâthâs.'" The words referred to in this quotation occur in a passage in the beginning of the Ahunavaiti Gâthâ.

In this Gêh-Sârnâ ceremony, two priests perform the *Pâdyâb Kusti*, and, after reciting the prayers for the particular Gâh, go to the chamber where the dead body is placed, and standing at the door or inside the door at some distance from the body, and holding a *paiwand*[2] between them, put on the *padân*[3] over their face, take the *bâj*[4] and recite the Ahunavaiti Gâthâ (Yaçna XXVIII-XXXIV) which treats of Ahura Mazda, his Ameshâspentas or immortal archangels, the future life, resurrec-

1 Here they recite the name of the Head-priest, if there be one, of the time at the town.

2 *Vide* above, p. 53.

3 *Vide* above, p. 53n.

4 *Vide* above, p. 61.

tion and such other subjects. After reciting nearly half of the Ahunavaiti Gâthâ (up to XXXI, 4), they stop for about a minute. The corpse-bearers now lift the corpse from the slabs of stone on which it is lying and place it over the iron bier. The two priests now turn towards the bier and recite the remaining half of the Ahunavaiti Gâthâ.[1]

Gêh-Sârnâ ceremony of pregnant women.

If the deceased person is a pregnant woman in the fifth month of her pregnancy when the child is supposed to have some life the *géh-sârnâ* ceremony is enjoined to be performed by two pairs of priests. The *sag-did*, above referred to, is also by two dogs, one for the woman and the other for the child. Again the body also is to be carried out of the house by two pairs of Nassâsâlârs (Shâyast lâ Shâyast, X, 10[2]; Sad-dar LXX, 5.[3]).

The last look.

When the recital of the Gâtha is finished, the final *sag-did*[4] is performed, and then the relations and friends of the deceased who have by this time assembled at the house, have a last look of the deceased. In such an assembly, the females assemble in the house, and the males outside the house or in the street. The males, one by one, pass before the corpse, have a last look, and out of respect make a bow, which process is called *sijda*.

Removal from the house.

When all have had their last look and paid their respects the corpse-bearers cover up with a piece of cloth the face of the deceased which was up to now open, and secure the body to the bier, with a few straps of cloth

1 It seems, that at one time, in Persia, and even in India, the Gêh-Sârnâ prayer at the house was finished at this part of the recital and the body was removed to the Tower, the rest of the prayer being recited on the way to the Tower. (*Vide* my paper on "The Geh-sârnâ Recital as enjoined and as recited about 150 years ago," in the Sir J. J. Z. Madressa Jubilee Volume, edited by me, pp. 415–20.)

2 S. B. E., Vol. V, p. 319. It is said that when the body of a pregnant woman has to be carried, in unavoidable circumstances, by two persons, these two persons must go through the Barshnum Purification (Shâyast la Shâyast II 6. S. B. E., Vol. V, p. 247).

3 S. B. E., Vol. XXIV, p. 335.

4 Vide above, p. 56.

so that it may not fall on being lifted up and carried. They then carry the bier out of the house and entrust it to the Khândhiâs who are, as said above,[1] another class of corpse-bearers whose only business is to carry the bier of the corpse on their shoulders from the house to the Tower. The number of these carriers varies according to the weight of the body to be carried. Before lifting up the body, these carriers also "take the bâj" and arrange themselves in pairs of two holding the *paiwand* between them.

Gaomez, or cow's urine as a purifier or disinfectant.

Immediately after the removal of the body from the house, Gaomez, *i. e.*, the urine of the cow, is besprinkled over the slabs of stone on which the body was placed and over the way by which the corpse-bearers carried the body out of the house. The slabs of stone are now generally removed from the house immediately after the removal of the body.[2]

The Gaomez or cow's urine is spoken of as *Nirang*, because its application or use is generally accompanied by the recital of a *nirang*, *i. e.*, a prayer formula. Cow's urine was believed by the ancient Zoroastrians to possess disinfecting properties. So, in order to destroy the germs of impurity and disease, if any, it was besprinkled on the place where the dead body was placed.[3] For the same reason, cow's urine played a prominent part in cleaning impurities attached to things that came into contact with the decomposing matters of men and animals. Such things are first asked to be purified or washed with cow's urine and then with water (Vend. VII, 74–75). Utensils or articles of furniture made of wood, clay, or porcelain that come into contact with a decomposing body are condemned altogether. Being porous, they are held to have possibly caught the germs

1 Vide above, p. 60n.

2 In some of the Mofussil towns, at least in the orthodox families of the towns, the slabs are kept in the house for 10 days or 30 days according to the season of the year being winter or summer. This injunction seems to have been based upon the Vendidâd (chap. V, 42).

3 Vendidâd XIX, 21.

of disease from the dead body and are therefore considered to be unsafe for further domestic purpose (Vend. VII, 75).[1]

The Funeral Procession.

When the bier leaves the house, out of respect for the deceased, all the male relations and friends of the family that have assembled at the house of the deceased, or at times only the elders, follow the bier for some distance from the house or upto the end of the street. There, they make a last bow to the deceased and stand aside, giving way to those relations and friends who wish to accompany the funeral procession to the Tower of Silence. These follow the bier at a distance of, at least, thirty paces. The rest of the assembly now disperse. Before entering into their houses or places of business, they wash their face and other exposed parts of their body and perform the *kusti*. All those who go with the funeral procession to the Tower are clothed in full white dress. They arrange themselves in pairs of two, hold a *paiwand* between them, take the bâj and silently march to the Tower. The procession is headed by two priests. On this point we read in the Vendidâd (VIII, 14, 19-21): "O Holy Creator of the material world! How does the road over which a dead man is carried become passable for cattle, etc.?". . . (Reply) "First, the Âthravan (*i. e.*, the priest) should pass by the road, reciting the victorious words (of Yathâ Ahû Vairyô and Kem nâ Mazdâ)."

The Disposal in the Tower.

When the bier reaches the Tower, at first it is put on the ground outside and the Nassâsâlârs uncover the face of the body. Those who have accompanied the funeral procession pay their respects and have a last look from a distance of at least three paces. Then a *sagdid* is once more performed and that for the last time. In the

1 According to Dr. Eugene Wilhelm, many other ancient nations besides the Persians used cow's urine as a disinfectant. *Vide* Dr. Wilhelm's paper "On the use of Beef's Urine, according to the precepts of the Avesta and on similar customs with other nations." According to Dr. Haug, the peasants of several parts of Europe, even now, use cow's urine for a similar purpose. (Haug's Essays on the Parsees, 2nd Edition, p. 286). "The use of *gômâz* has been lately found to be known in Basse-Bretagne (Luzel, Le Nirang des Parsis en Basse-Bretagne, Melusine, 493)" Darmesteter. S. B. E IV, 1st ed. Introd. p. LXXXVIII n. 3,

meantime, the gate of the Tower which is kept locked with a metallic lock is opened. The Nassâsâlars who had fetched the corpse out of the house and entrusted it to the carriers and who have accompanied the corpse, now resume charge of the body. They lift up the bier and carry it into the Tower. They remove the body from the bier and place it on one of the *'pâvis'*.[1] They then tear off the clothes from the body of the deceased and leave it (the body) on the floor of the Tower. We read on this point in the Vendidâd; (VIII, 10) "Two powerful persons may carry him and place him naked without any clothes on this earth, on clay, bricks, stone and mortar." The body must be exposed and left partly uncovered, so as to draw towards it the eye of the flesh-devouring birds and to fall an easy prey to them. The sooner it is devoured, the lesser the chance of further decomposition and the greater the sanitary good and safety. The clothes removed from the corpse are never used for any purpose whatever, but are thrown in a pit outside the Tower, where they are destroyed by the combined action of heat, air and rain. In Bombay they are further destroyed with sulphuric acid.

On the Nassâsâlârs completing their work in the Tower and on their locking the Tower, notice is given, by a clapping of hands by a servant, to all those who have accompanied the funeral procession and who have by this time taken their seat at some distance from the Tower, to say that the body is placed in the Tower. They all get up from their seats and finish the *bâj*, *i. e.*, recite the rest of the Sraôsh-bâj, of which, before joining the procession, they had recited only a part. They now leave off the *paiwand* and recite a short prayer which says: "We repent of all our sins. Our respects to you (the souls of the departed). We remember here the souls of the dead who have the spirits of the holy." They then apply cow's urine to the exposed portions of their body and then wash them with water. They untie and regirdle the *kusti* with its usual formula of prayer. Then some, especially the priests, say the Patet or

1 The platform of the Tower is divided into separate sections named *pâvis*. Each corpse is placed on a separate *pâvi*.

the Repentance prayer, mentioning the name of the deceased in the last portion of the prayer and thus ask the forgiveness of God upon the deceased. As said above, the Vendidâd enjoins that only two priests must attend the funeral procession with a view to direct and advise the adoption of the necessary rites and ceremonies. But generally, the family invites more than two priests to accompany the procession and to say the prayers at the Tower. All of them are paid for their services. This being done, all return home and generally take a bath before following their ordinary vocations.

The Tower.

A short description of the Tower of Silence[1] will not be out of place here. The Tower of Silence wherein the dead bodies are exposed to the sun and to the flesh-eating birds, is generally built on the top of a hill or an elevated ground. We read on this point in the Vendidâd: "O Holy Creator of the material world! where are we to carry the bodies of the dead? O Ahura Mazda! where are we to place them?" Ahura Mazda replied: "O Spitama Zarathushtra! on the most elevated place" (Vend. VI. 44–45). On such an elevated place, an isolated spot, away from human dwellings, is chosen for the Tower. Its construction all along is just in accord with the view held in the performance of the ceremonies for the disposal of the dead, *viz.*, the sanitary view, which enjoins, that, while disposing of the dead body with all respect due to the deceased, no injury or harm should be done to the living. The Tower is a round massive structure built throughout of solid stone. A few steps from the ground lead to an iron gate which opens on a circular platform of solid stone with a

1 The Parsee word for a Tower of Silence is 'dakhmâ,' which is used in the general sense of a receptacle for the dead. The English phrase "Tower of Silence" seems, as pointed out by Sir George Birdwood, to have been first used by the late Mr. Robert Zavier Murphy, who was for some time the Oriental Translator to the Government of Bombay. The round tower-like construction of the building seems to have suggested to him the use of the word 'Tower.' Then, in Persian and also in Hindustâni, the word 'Khâmush,' *i. e.*, silent or 'Khâmushi,' *i. e.*, silence, is often used in connection with the dead. The dead are alluded to as being 'Khâmush,' *i.e.*, silent. Hence, the Persian word 'Khâmush' seems to have suggested to Mr. Murphy, who was versed in oriental learning, the word 'silence' in connection with the word Tower.

circular well in the centre. The following is a short description of a Bombay tower as given by Mr. Nusserwanjee Byramjee, the late energetic Secretary of the public charity funds and properties of the Parsee community.

"The circular platform inside the Tower, about three hundred feet in circumference, is entirely paved with large stone slabs well-cemented, and divided into three rows of shallow open receptacles, corresponding with the three moral precepts of the Zoroastrian Religion—'good deeds,' 'good words,' 'good thoughts.' (The three rows are used as follows:)

"First row for corpses of males.

"Second row for corpses of females.

"Third row for corpses of children.

"The clothes wrapped round the corpses are removed and destroyed immediately after they are placed in the Tower—'Naked we come into this world and naked we ought to leave it.

"There are footpaths for corpse-bearers to move about. A deep central well (*bhandâr*) in the Tower, about 150 feet in circumference (the sides and bottom of which are also paved with stone slabs) is used for depositing the dry bones. The corpse is completely stripped of its flesh by vultures within an hour or two, and the bones of the denuded skeleton, when perfectly dried up by atmospheric influences and the powerful heat of the tropical sun, are thrown into this well, where they gradually crumble to dust, chiefly consisting of lime and phosphorus;—thus the rich and the poor meet together on one level of equality after death.

"There are holes in the inner sides of the well through which the rain water is carried into four under-ground drains at the base of the Tower. These drains are connected with four under-ground wells, the bottoms of which are covered with a thick layer of sand. Pieces of charcoal and sandstone are also placed at the end of each drain, which are renewed from time to time. These double sets of filters are provided for purifying the rain water passing over the bones before it enters the ground—

thus observing one of the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion that 'The Earth shall not be defiled.'

"The vultures (nature's scavengers) do their work much more expeditiously than millions of insects would do, if dead bodies were buried in the ground. By this rapid process, putrefaction with all its concomitant evils, is most effectually prevented. According to the Zoroastrian religion, Earth, Fire and Water are sacred and very useful to mankind, and in order to avoid their pollution by contact with putrefying flesh, the Zoroastrian religion strictly enjoins that the dead bodies should not be buried in the ground, or burnt, or thrown into seas, rivers, etc.

"In accordance with their religious injunctions the Parsees build their Towers of Silence on the tops of hills if available. No expense is spared in constructing them of the hardest and the best materials, with a view that they may last for centuries without the possibility of polluting the earth or contaminating any living beings dwelling thereon.

"However distant may be the home of a deceased person, whether rich or poor, high or low in rank, he has always a walking funeral—his body is carried to the Towers of Silence on an iron bier by official corpse-bearers and is followed in procession by the mourners, relatives and friends, dressed in white flowing full-dress robes, walking behind in pairs and each couple joined hand in hand by holding a white handkerchief between them in token of sympathetic grief."

In the compound of the Tower, at a short distance from it, there is a small building called *sagri*, where a sacred fire is kept burning day and night. In mofussil towns, where it is not convenient to keep fire burning, at least, a light is kept burning.

The Consecration of the Tower.

The construction of a Tower is accompanied by religious ceremonies[1] which are performed at different times during the progress of the structure and are therefore divided into three classes:—

(1) The ceremony of digging the ground. (2) The "Tânâ" ceremony, or the ceremony of laying the foundation. (3) The

1 *Vide* below, Consecration ceremonies.

consecration ceremony after which the Tower is laid open for public use.

The solicitude for the living at the bottom of all the ceremonies.

We have described at great length the funeral ceremonies upto the time of the disposal of the body in the Tower. It appears, that at the bottom of a good many of them lies a great solicitude, on the part of the lawgivers who framed the rules and dictated the ceremonies, to attend to the sanitary good of the survivors. At first sight, the details may appear irksome, but from the standpoint of sanitation and health, most of them, though enjoined about 3,000 years ago, appear essential. Every precaution is enjoined, so that, in disposing of the dead body, no contamination or injury may result to the living. After a certain time after death, no man except the official corpse-bearers, is allowed to touch the dead body or to come into any contact with it. If somebody accidentally or unavoidably does touch the body, he is enjoined to keep himself aloof from others and not touch them before he bathes and undergoes a prescribed ceremonial of different washings.

Segregation and Disinfection.

Not only should a man not come into contact with the dead body, but even utensils and other articles of furniture should be kept away from the corpse. If wearing clothes have been defiled by the sweat, vomit, etc., of the dead, they should be altogether rejected and destroyed (Vend. VII. 13). If not defiled, they may be purified by the "Gaomez" and water. If the clothes are made of leather they must be washed thrice with "Gaomez," rubbed with dry earth thrice, washed with water thrice, and exposed for three months in the air before being used again. If they are made of woven cloth, which is more porous than leather and therefore likely to carry more germs of disease and infection, the above process of cleaning and washing must be repeated six times, and they must be exposed to the air for a period of six months (Vend. VII, 14–15). Even the clothes thus purified cannot be used again for religious purposes or for ordinary domestic purposes, but they can be used for other petty purposes. (Vend. VII, 18–19).

Utensils for domestic purposes, if they have come into contact with a dead body, require to be washed several times according to the specific gravity of the metal of which they are made. If the utensil is made of gold, it requires one washing with "Gaomez" and water and a rubbing with dry earth. An utensil of silver, which is more porous than gold and therefore likely to carry more contagion, requires two similar cleanings and washings. An iron one requires three, a zinc one four, and a stone one six washings. An utensil of porcelain, wood or clay is to be condemned altogether (Vend. VII, 73–75). In the same way, if accidentally a dead body happens to come into contact with stores of grain (Vend. VII, 32–35) or of drinking water (Vend. VI, 26–41), it is enjoined to reject and condemn a certain quantity in the near vicinity of the body.

Thus, at the bottom of all religious injunctions and restrictions in connection with the funeral ceremonies and the disposal of the dead body, lies the sanitary principle of segregation, prevention of contamination and infection, and the idea of observing simplicity and equality.

We will now speak of some of the observances attended to in the house after the removal of the corpse. They also point to the same end.

A few observances attended to in the house. Fire kept burning.

After the removal of the body to the Tower, all the members of the family are required to bathe. Fire is generally kept burning for three days at the spot where the body was placed before removal. Fragrant sandal wood and incense are burnt over it. We have spoken above, about the good attributed to the fire in destroying the germs of disease lurking at the spot where the decomposing body was placed.

Spot set apart.

Again the spot, where the body was placed before removal, is generally set apart and not used for some time. Nobody is allowed to go on the spot for a period of ten days if the season at the time be winter, or for a period of thirty days, if the season be summer, when

the decomposition and contamination are generally more rapid. (Vendidâd V. 42).

Lamp and flowers.

Near the spot where the body was placed, a lamp is kept burning for a period of ten days or thirty days, according as it is winter or summer. In a small pot full of water fresh flowers are kept and changed every morning and evening. On the expiry of the above period, the chamber is washed throughout.

Abstinence from meat diet.

For three days after death, the family abstains from meat and takes food chiefly consisting of vegetable and fish, which is called "parhîzî," *i. e.* abstinence. Not only do the family, but even nearest and dearest friends abstain from meat diet. The abstinence is observed as a sign of mourning. Generally, no food is cooked in the house where death has taken place. The nearest relations of the family prepare the food for the bereaved family and send it over to their place.

On the custom of abstaining from meat diet during the first three days after the death of a member of the family, we find the following injunction in the Shâyast lâ Shâyast (Chap. XVII, 1–3). "In a house where a person shall die, until three nights are completed, nothing whatever of meat is to be placed on a sacred cake (drôn) therein and its vicinity; but these, such as milk, cheese, fruit, eggs and preserves, are to be placed; and nothing whatever of meat is to be eaten by his relations."[1] The Sad-dar says "In every habitation where any one departs .....the relations should not eat meat for three days." (Sad-dar LXXVIII, 1–2).[2]

II. Ceremonies that relate to the soul of the deceased.

We will now speak of the funeral ceremonies performed for the soul after the disposal of the body. A short epitome of some of these is given in the 17th chapter of the Shâyast lâ Shâyast. (S. B. E. Vol. V, pp. 382–84).

1 S. B. E. V. (1880), p. 382. 2 Ibid XXIV, pp. 341–42.

The soul sees a picture of its deeds.

According to Parsee Scriptures, the soul of a dead person remains within the precincts of this world for three days.[1] In this state, it sees before itself a picture of its past deeds. If it is the soul of a pious person, it sees a beautiful picture of its deeds in the past life in the form of a handsome, well-formed, strong damsel and feels happy and joyful. If it is the soul of a wicked person, it sees a horrible picture of its past deeds in the form of an ugly, ill-formed, weak woman, shudders and feels unhappy at the sight and is at a loss to know where it should go.[2] We read in the Hâdokht Nask: "Zarathushtra asked Ahura-Mazda, 'O Ahura-Mazda, Beneficent Spirit, Holy Creator of the material world! when a pious man dies, where dwells his soul for that night?.....Where for the second night?..... Where for the third night?'" (Yasht Fragment XXII; Hâdokht Nask, Chap. II, 1–18). Then Ahura-Mazda replied, "It remains at the place of his body, singing the Ushtavaiti Gâthâ (song of congratulation), asking for blessedness thus: 'Blessedness to him to whom Ahura-Mazda of his own will grants blessedness!'" (Yasht Fragment, XXII; Hâdokht Nask, Chap. II, 5. *Vide* Haug's Text and Translation in the Book of Arda Virâf, pp. 309-10).

If it is the soul of a wicked man it remains within the precincts of this world for three nights, remembering all the

1 *Cf.* The Christian idea of the Resurrection of Christ at the end of three days.

2 Dr. Cheyne calls this "a very noble allegory." He says, "Heaven and hell are not primarily the localities appointed for souls after death; the one is 'life,' 'the best mental state;' the other is 'life's absence,' 'the worst life,' a high doctrine which is embodied in a very noble allegory in the Vendidâd.....Conscience, in fact, according to the fine allegory, appears to the soul of the deceased man and conducts it to its place." (The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter by Rev. Dr. Cheyne, (1891), pp. 398–99. The Bampton Lectures of 1889). *Vide* Rev. Dr. Casartelli's paper entitled "Outre-Tombe—A Zoroastrian Idyll" in the K. R. Cama Memorial Volume, pp. 74–78. Dr. Haug thought, that this allegory suggested to Prophet Mahomed "the idea of the celestial Huris." Dr. Cheyne says, "At any rate this Zoroastrian allegory suggested the Talmudic story of the three bands of ministering angels who meet the soul of the pious man, and the three bands of wounding angels who meet the bad man when he dies." (The Origin of the Psalter, p. 437).

wickedness of its past life and feeling at a loss to know where it should go. It clamours; "Oh Ahura-Mazda! To what land shall I turn? Where shall I go?" (Yasht Fragment, XXII; Hâdokht Nask, Chap. III. *Vide* Haug's Book of Arda Virâf, p. 315)

Number three symbolically sacred.

The soul of a man thus remains within the precincts of this world for three days. The number three is a sacred number, because it reminds one of the three principal precepts of the Mazda-yaçnân religion upon which the moral philosophy of the Zoroastrian religion turns. Think of nothing but the truth, speak nothing but the truth, and do nothing but what is right, and you are saved. Your good thoughts, good words, and good deeds will be your saviours in the next world. Therefore it is, that, three days after death, the soul of a good man directs itself towards the paradise with three steps of Humata, Hûkhta, and Hvarshta, *i. e.*, good thoughts, good words and good deeds. On the other hand, the soul of a wicked man directs itself to hell with three steps of Dushmata, Duzûkhta, and Duzvarshta, *i. e.*, evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions. We read in the Hâdokht Nask: "The first step which the soul of the pious man advanced, he placed in Humata (good thoughts). The second step which the soul of the pious man advanced, he placed in Hûkhta (good words). The third step which the soul of the pious man advanced, he placed in Hvarshta (good deeds)." (Yasht Fragment, XXII, 15; Hâdokht Nask II, 34, *Ibid.* p. 314).

Sraosha as the protecting angel.

Now for the three days and nights that a soul is believed to remain within the precincts of this world, it is under the special protection of Sraosha. The Yazata or the angel Sraosha is a guardian angel guiding the souls of men. He is a guardian angel whom the Almighty has appointed to guide the souls of men while living and even when dead. The Yaçna says: "O beautiful, holy Sraosha! protect us here in these two lives, in these two worlds, in this world which is material, in that which is spiritual." (Yaçna LVII, 25).

As Sraosha is the protector of the soul in this world, all the prayers of a Zoroastrian begin with a Sraosh-bâj, which is a

prayer for the Khshnûman of (lit., for the pleasure of, *i. e.*, for thanking) Sraosha. It is for this reason, that Sraosh Yasht (Yaçna LVII) is generally recited by a Parsee at night before going to bed, to pray that his soul be under the protection of the angel when he is asleep.

The first three days' ceremonies at home.

As the soul is under the protection of Sraosha for three days after death, when it is still within the precincts of this world, the religious ceremonies for the soul of the dead during the first three days are performed in the name of, or with the Khshnûman of, Sraosha. This angel is specially implored by the relations of the deceased to protect his soul. The Shâyast lâ Shâyast says: "In all the three days, it is necessary to perform the ceremonial (Yazishn) of Sraôsh, for this reason, because Sraôsh will be able to save his soul from the hands of the demons for the three days; and when one constantly performs a ceremonial at every period (*gâh*) in the three days, it is as good as though they should perform the whole religious ritual at one time."[1] We will now describe these ceremonies performed for the first three days in honour of Sraosha.

At the commencement of every *gâh*, two or more priests and the relatives of the deceased say the Sraosh-bâj and the prayers of the particular Gâh, and the Patet or the repentance prayer, with the Khshnûman of Sraosha. At night, at the commencement of the Aiwisruthrem Gâh, two priests perform the Âfringân ceremony in honour of Sraosha. They sit on a carpet face to face with a vase of fire and a metallic tray between them. The senior priest, who has the tray before him, is called "Zaoti" (from *Zu*, to perform a ceremony), or performer of ceremonies. The other, who has a vase of fire before him, is called the Âtravakhshi, or the fire-priest. The metallic tray contains a pot of pure water and a few flowers, eight of which are arranged in a particular order. Two of them point to the fire and the remaining six are arranged in two rows of three each, pointing to one another and in a line at right angles to the line in which the first two are arranged.

1 Chap. XVII, 3, S. B. E. Vol. V. (1880) pp. 382-83.

The Zaoti begins the Âfringân with what is called a "Dibâchêh," *i. e.*, introduction, which is a prayer in the Pazend language, wherein he invokes the protection of the angel Sraosha upon the soul of the deceased, whom he names in the prayer. When the "Dibâchêh"[1] is finished, both the priests recite together the seventh Kardê (Av. Kêrêta) or section of the Sraosh Yasht, (LVII, 15–18), which sings the praise of the angel for the protection it affords.

The first three days' ceremonies at the fire temple.

Besides these prayers and ceremonies, which are performed for three days and nights at the house of the deceased, the Yaçna prayers, and sometimes the Vendidâd with the Khshnûman of Sraosha are recited at an adjoining Fire-temple for three successive mornings and nights. These Yaçna prayers and the Bâj ceremonies with the Khshnûman of Sraosha, can be performed only at the Fire-temples.

The Oothamnâ ceremony.

In the Uziran Gâh of the third day, a ceremony is performed which is called the "Oothamnâ." The friends and relatives of the deceased and a few priests meet together in an assembly. The particular prayers of the Gâh, the Sraôsh Hâdokht (Yasht XI,) and the Patet are recited. A Pazend prayer with the Khshnûman of Sraosha is recited, wherein the name of the deceased is announced and the protection of Sraosha is implored for him. This is an occasion for the announcement of charities. This ceremony and this assembly are very important, because, at the end of the ceremony, the relations and friends of the deceased generally announce donations to charity funds in the *naiyat* or memory of the deceased and to commemorate his name. The Parsee community of India has given many lacs of rupees in public charity. Of this sum, a large part was announced at these funeral gatherings of the third day after death.

The custom of commemorating the name.

The Parsees have another custom of commemorating the name of a deceased person if he be a great public benefactor. At the conclusion of the above "Oothamnâ" ceremony on the third

1 Spiegel-Khordeh Avesta (Bleeck's Translation). Vol. III, p. 172.

day, the head priest generally, or in his absence an "akâbar," *i. e.*, a leader of the community, proposes before the assembled Anjuman, *i. e*, the public assembly, that the name of the deceased public benefactor, whose benefaction or good deeds he enumerates, be commemorated by the community consenting to remember the name of the deceased in all the public religious ceremonies in the Dhup-nirang recital. This proposal is sometimes seconded by somebody, or very often it is just placed before the assembly without any formal seconding. When nobody opposes that proposal, silence is taken as consent, and thenceforth the name of the deceased is recited and his soul is remembered in all public religious ceremonies. If the deceased public benefactor has done benevolent acts for the good of the whole Parsee community, in whatever part of the world they be, his name is recited and remembered by the whole community. If the deceased has done good and benevolent acts for the good of the community of his own particular town or district, the Anjuman of that town or district alone begins to invoke his name in the religious ceremonies. For example, the name of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the first Parsee Baronet, who rose from very poor circumstances to be a merchant prince of India, and who gave large sums of money in charity, not only for his own co-religionists but for all sections of the mixed community of India, is remembered in the religious ceremonies by the whole Parsee community of India.

This custom[1] is a very old one. It had its origin in the old Avesta times. The Fravardin Yasht contains a long list of the departed worthies of old Iran who had, before the time when the Yasht was written, done some benevolent acts for the good of the Mazdayaçnân community. The Afrîn-i-Rapithwin, written,

1 I am told, that a somewhat similar custom prevails at the University of Oxford, where during the bidding prayer, they make "a long statement recalling the gifts of benefactors to the University in times past. It is really a thanks-giving to Almighty God for the gifts of the worthies of old who gave lands and money to endow the Colleges and University. The list of benefactors is read out in full on the high festivals in the University Church only." (Dr. L. Mills in a letter).

later on, in the Pazend language, contains a few names of such illustrious departed worthies.

The different formulæ for commemorating the names of the deceased.

The formulæ used for this purpose have varied at different times. The formula used in the Fravardin Yasht is: "We invoke the Fravashi....." For example, "We invoke the Fravashi of the holy Yima of Vivanghâna." The formula used in the Pâzend Afrîn-i-Rapithwin is, "May the holy spirit of.....be one with us." For example, "May the holy spirit of Emperor Kai-Vishtâsp be one with us in ceremony." The formula used now in the Pazend Dibâchêh of the Âfringân is, "May.....so and so.....of pious soul be remembered here." For example, "May Behedin[1] Jamshed Behedin Rustam[2] of pious soul be remembered here." The honour of thus remembering the name of a deceased person in public religious ceremonies was considered to be the greatest honour that a grateful community could bestow upon a person after his death for the good that he had conferred upon his fellow-brethren.

The adoption of a son.

If the deceased is of the age of fifteen and has left no son, it is necessary that a son should be given to him in adoption. The adopted son generally belongs to a nearly-related family. The name of the son thus adopted is declared publicly before the assembly. We

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1 "Behedin," *i. e.*, "of good religion," is a term applied to the name of a Zoroastrian layman. If the deceased belongs to the priestly class, and has gone through the initiating ceremony of Nâvar, he is spoken of as "Ervad," which is another form of Herbad, which itself is the later form of Avesta 'Aethra-paiti.' If the deceased belongs to the priestly class, but has not gone through the initiating ceremony of the Nâvar, he is spoken of as "Ostâ," which is the contracted form of Avesta "Hâvishta." If he is a head priest, he is spoken of as Dastur. If the deceased is a female of the priestly class, she is spoken of as "Osti."

2 The second name is the name of the father. If the deceased was adopted, his adoptive father's name is mentioned instead of his own father's. In the case of females, the name of her father is mentioned with hers, if she is unmarried, and that of the husband if she is married. In case of a second marriage, the name of the first husband is mentioned with hers. The Zoroastrians of Persia, and following them the Parsis of the Kadmi sect in India, mention the name of her father.

find no reference to the system of adoption in the Avesta books. It is the Pahlavi works that refer to it. But the desire to have a son adopted if there is no son of one's own, naturally follows from the desire to have a son of one's own, as alluded to in the Avesta. An Irânian was to aim at a married life and to have a son, and not only to have him but to educate him well. If he did his duty towards his children well, and if being well brought up morally, they performed good acts, he, as a consequence of, or as a recompense for, his carefulness to do his duty, was to participate in the righteousness which resulted from the good deeds of the children. The Shâyast lâ Shâyast says, "one is to preservere much in the begetting of offspring, since it is for the acquisition of many good works at once; because in the Spend and Nihâdûm Nasks, the high priests have taught that the duty and good works, a son performs, are as much the father's as though they had been done by his own hand." (Shâyast lâ Syâyast, Chap. XII, 15),[1] Thus a son was considered a blessing from several points of view. His good actions were expected to shed lustre upon the good name of the father. Again, he would look after the family interests. He would perform the necessary religious rites of his parents. For all these reasons, an Irânian looked upon a son as a great blessing. So, failing to have a son, he generally wished to adopt one.

The passage of the soul to the other world on the fourth day.

The dawn after the third night after death is considered a great and solemn occasion. As we said above, the soul of a man remains within the precincts of this world for three days. On the dawn after the third night, it goes to the other world. The soul passes over a bridge called Chinvat.[2] We read in the Vendidâd: "The soul goes to the holy Chinvat Bridge created by Mazda, which is an old path of immemorial times and

1 S. B. E. Vol. V, p. 345.

2 The Chinvat Bridge reminds one of the "Sirat" of the Arabs, the "Wogho" of the Chinese, the "Gioell" and "Bifröst" of the Scandinavians. Cf. the Belief of the Ancient Egyptians. *Vide* my paper, "The Belief about the Future of the Soul among the Ancient Egyptians and Iranians" (Journal, B. B. R. A S., XIX, pp. 365-374. *Vide* also my "Asiatic Papers," pp. 137-146).

which is for the wicked as well as for the holy. There, they ask the soul (to account) for its deeds done in this material world." (Vend. XIX, 29).

The Chinvat Bridge and Mithra the Judge.

The bridge is guarded by the angel Mithra. The Vendidâd says: "(When) the third night ends and the dawn shines, the well-armed Mithra appears at the sufficiently happy mountain" (Vend. XIX, 28). This angel who is known in the later books as Meher Dâvar, *i. e.*, Meher the Judge, is assisted by Rashnê, the Angel of Justice, and Ashtâd, the Angel of Truth. They judge a man's actions done in the past life.[1] If his good deeds overweigh even by a small particle his misdeeds, his soul is allowed to pass over the bridge to Paradise. If his good deeds are equal to his misdeeds the soul goes to a place called Hameshta-gehân.[2] (Vend. XIX, 36). If his misdeeds outweigh his good deeds, even by a particle, he is cast down into hell.

Ceromonies at the dawn of the fourth day.

Thus, the dawn after the third night after death is the occasion when the soul of the man is judged by Meher Dâvar, the Judge, assisted by Rashnê Râst, the Angel of Justice, and Âstâd, the Angel of Truth. Therefore it is considered a very important and solemn occasion for the performance of religious ceremonies for the soul of the deceased. The ceremonies performed in the Uziran gâh on the previous day are repeated, and the Âfringân and Bâj prayers and ceremonies are performed in addition. This being the time of the judgment of the man's deeds, his relations and friends pray for God's mercy on the soul of the deceased. Man is liable to err, and therefore they implore the

1 St. Michael is also represented as weighing a man's actions in a scale. *Vide* my paper on "St. Michael of the Christians and Mithra of the Zoroastrians. A Comparison." (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. VI, pp. 237-54. My "Anthropological Papers" Part I, 173-90). For a similar notion among the ancient Egyptians, *Vide* my paper on "The Belief about the Future of the Soul among the Ancient Egyptians and Iranians." (Journal, Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XIX, pp. 365-374. My "Asiatic Papers" Part I, pp. 137-146).

2 The Hameshta-gehân of the Parsees reminds one of the Purgatory of the Christians and the "Aerâf" of the Mahomedans.

blessing and mercy of the Almighty on this particular occasion, when his deeds are judged by the angel Meher assisted by Rashnê and Âstâd.

The Bâj ceremonies on this occasion are recited in honour of the angels who have an important share in connection with the occasion. The first Bâj is in honour of the angels Rashnê and Âstâd together, who help the Angel Meher. The second is in honour of Râm-Khvâstra, who is the angel presiding on the rarified atmosphere or ether. This is because when a man dies, the soul of a good pious man passes away to the higher regions through, or with the help of, rarified air. The third Bâj is in honour of Ardâfarosh, *i. e.*, in honour of the spirits of all the departed souls, whose rank the particular deceased, for whom the ceremony is performed, has joined. The fourth Bâj is in honour of Sraosh who has guided and guarded the soul of the deceased in its sojourn to the other world after death. When the Bâj of Ardâfarosh is recited, a suit of white clothes, together with the sacred bread and other sacrificial articles, is consecrated by the priest. This suit of clothes is called "Shiâv." It is the Vastra in the word Vastra-vata of the Fravardin Yasht: "Who will praise us ..... with clothes in hand?" (Frav. Yasht XIII, 50). This suit of clothes is generally given to the priest or to the poor.

Ceremonies on, and after, the fourth day.

The other principal occasions, on which the Afringân-Bâj ceremonies are enjoined to be performed in honour of the dead, are the Chehârum," "Dehum," "Siroz," and "Sâlroz", *i. e.*, the fourth day, the tenth day, the thirtieth day and a year after death. The following passage of the Shâyast lâ Shâyast speaks of the above-said ceremonies of the dawn after the third night and of subsequent ceremonies:

"And after the third night, at dawn, one is to consecrate three sacred cakes (*drôn*), one for Rashnu and Âstâd, the second for Vâê, the good, and the third for the righteous guardian spirit (*ardâî fravard*); and clothing is to be placed upon the sacred cake of the righteous guardian spirit ..... And the fourth day the ceremonial (Yazishn) of the righteous guar-

dian spirit is to be performed; and afterwards are the tenth day, the monthly, and, then, the annual ceremonies." (Shâyast lâ Shâyast, Chap. XVII, 4–5. S. B. E., Vol. V, 1880, p. 383).

According to the Zoroastrian belief, the relation between a pious deceased and his surviving relations does not altogether cease after death. His holy spirit continues to take some interest in his living dear ones. If the surviving relations cherish his memory, remember him with gratefulness, try to please him with pious thoughts, pious words and pious deeds, it is likely, that these invisible departed spirits will take an interest in their welfare, and assist them with an invisible helping hand. The most essential requisite, by which a surviving relative can please the holy spirits of his departed dear ones, is this, that he should be pious in thoughts, words and deeds, and that he should perform meritorious charitable deeds. We read in Yaçna (Hâ XVI, 7): "We praise the brilliant deeds of piety in which the souls of the deceased delight." For this reason, it is not unusual among the Parsees, that on the above-mentioned occasions of the third, fourth, tenth, and thirtieth day, and on the anniversaries after death, they give food and clothing to the poor of their community, and sometimes give various sums in charity. These occasions are further the occasions on which the surviving relatives remember the deceased with feelings of gratitude, respect and love, and pray to God that his soul may rest in peace and tranquillity.

It appears from all the above description, that the funeral ceremonies are intended to produce in the minds of the survivors a great solicitude for the health of the living, respect for the dead, feelings of gratitude and love towards the deceased, and ideas of morality and virtue, inculcated by the thought that death levels everybody, and that one should always be prepared for death which may overtake him at any moment.