

ARE YOU WEARING THE CORRECT SUDREH?

What do you mean? Is there a wrong Sudreh also, someone may ask. Yes, there is. Mini-Sudreh, sleeveless Sudreh, low-cut Sudreh, Girda (Nape piece) - less Sudreh, without Tiri Sudreh etc. The heading is for those who are orthodox, or think and call themselves orthodox or religious-minded individuals, wearing Sudreh and not for those Parsees who do not believe in Sudreh, or are not wearing the same. They will have much to pay for and a long way to go, in the end. Let's put them aside (as we say in Gujrati "Abhrai per Muki-devo"). What we are concerned with is, for those who believe in it, but consciously or unconsciously, knowingly or unknowingly, wear a Sudreh which sometimes seems to be too ridiculous for words.

First of all, 60 to 70 percent of persons who stitch the Sudreh are to be blamed. Some of them themselves do not know that Sudreh should be of nine seams, and as far as possible should be stitched by hand and not by machine. Its Gireban, tiny bag-like receptacle over the chest, should be at a certain place according to individual measurement. Sudreh 'Tiri' - small vertical seam, two right angled triangular seams-, should be at the right or left side according to the gender of the person. 'Girdo' should be there on all Sudreh compulsorily etc. not mentioning the length of the sleeves of the Sudreh itself.

Mini-mini Sudreh mainly worn by the ladies should be seen to be believed. Just a thin strip of mulmul running from the shoulder downwards, having low Gireban, and the cloth going over the bosom and ending just underneath the breast in order to fit in the 'Choli' (blouse). Naturally this will not have any Girda or sleeves at all. Can one call this a Sudreh? Yet, the wearer of it proudly says - Oh yes! I always wear the Sudreh, I am orthodox.

One would think that passion for fashion, is associated with ladies only but that is not so. The last half of the 20th century has brought in their counterpart male with a bang. Sleeveless Sudreh, small sleeve Sudreh, just below waist Sudreh, Sudreh which narrow down (as not to make bulge with the shirt in the pant) etc. Really the sleeve of the Sudreh should be broad with its end touching the elbow, which was cut in half initially, then it became sleeveless but now they have not stopped there, they feel hot, hence, Sudreh which runs down the shoulder with a big arc, upto the front ribcage whereby half the front portion and rear portion of the Sudreh are not there at all. The length of the Sudreh really in its sublimity, should be touching the knees. Let us be frank, one would see very few persons wearing such a Sudreh every time. Some few wear it on important days and occasions, or when they pray. The rest wear it of a reasonable length which go half way upto the thighs. But some fashionable ones are only upto hips which do not even cover the groin portion. Can one call this a Sudreh ?

Over 60 to 65 percent of Parsis do not know about the 'Tiri' the two side seams, or understand about it or their position on the right side or left, according to gender. Some do not have Girdo at all, which is of importance in the Sudreh denoting that we have come with the weight of obligation of past life to be fulfilled in this life, which we have to do by observance of Zoroastrian disciplines. This load we have to bear - Girdo reminds us of that. Why, for what reason this stupid omission in the Sudreh is not understood. Where, oh where is the real Sudreh which the prophet Zarthusht gave to us of nine seams, long upto the knees, with full blown sleeves upto elbow, of Girband over that place of the body where individual's own 'ravan' is now sleeping (10th plexus of the Kehrp) with 'Girdo', Tiri' etc.

Sudreh should be made from one whole piece of white cotton cloth having nine seams namely 1) Nape piece-Girdo 2) tiny bag like piece over the chest Gireban (3 & 4) Front and Conrear main parts (5 & 6) Two sleeves upto elbow (7) Parallel seam (8 & 9) Two triangular seams. Sudreh length should extend from the neck to the knees, and completely circular at bottom.

Sudreh should not be treated like other garments that may be altered according to the whims and fancy of a fashion-designer.

Prophet Zarathushtra has prescribed the Sudreh of a specific material, design, colour and shape, in doing which he has, as it were, reduce the very macrocosm (shape of universe) into the microcosm of the Sudreh.

- **Curset Patel**

(Dini Avaz Vol. 23 No. 1)