

DINI AVAZ
101 QUESTION ANSWERS

**Dedicated
to
All past and present workers
who have
sweated and toiled
for Ilm-e-Khshnoom**

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Dini-Avaz was born in December 1975 and, with Dadaar's Grace, has completed 25 years in the service of the community. Amongst various topics and articles, we started the column of Question / Answers in 1978 under the flamboyant heading of "Have You Any Question? O. K. Shoot", which was run by Religious Scholar. Mr. Adi Doctor. Mr. Doctor, being M. A. in Avesta, had the knowledge of Philology and then gained an in-depth study of Ilm-e-Khshnoom. Thus, he could blend and present the answers in the most clear, lucid and satisfactory manner. The column gained momentum and became most popular with subscribers and is still liked by the readers.

In 1981, we changed the heading to "Your Question Page". Few years back, due to pressure of work and health, Mr. Doctor excused himself from this responsibility, but agreed to contribute a question or two, whenever possible. Hence, the heading was changed once more to "You Ask, We Answer" wherein yours truly had to chip in and answer questions also.

The first 69 questions upto page 106 of this book are penned by Mr. Doctor. The rest are contributed by me.

Out of so many questions over the years, it was a herculean task for the undersigned to choose 101 Questions only and hence it was endeavored to include as many different subjects as possible, connected with daily life. If Ahura Mazda wishes, in future we may publish further Questions.

Atha Jamyat Yatha Afrinami.

Curset M. Patel
Editor, Dini-Avaz Committee

FORWARD

The word *xsnum* occurs in two places in the Gathas Y.48.12 and Y. 53.2. In the former, the word means 'satisfaction' as also in Y. 46.1. C. Barthlomae translates it as 'fulfilling one's duty'. Kavasji Kanga states that the word has much the same significance as that of the later Sufi word *m'arafat* 'knowledge of the Self, Spiritual Insight'. *xsniiim* is 'esoteric knowledge' and this is certainly the meaning of the word in some of the later Zoroastrian mystical writings. It is the occult knowledge taught by Zoroastrianism.

The world revealed to us by our senses is only a very small part of the entire creation. A large part is beyond our comprehension, hidden from us, and cannot be discernable without following the prescribed directions of Religion.

We have heard about 'Para Psychology' and 'Psychic Research' and its subject matter is known as Extra Sensory Perception (ESP). We need not therefore be puzzled by the occult science, which is a way of life.

It gives me great pleasure to pen these few lines for this booklet containing 101 questions with their replies - 69 penned by Shri Adi Doctor and the rest by Shri Cursetji Patel. Even though one may not subscribe to all the views propounded by the authors, there is much to learn from the dialogue - an exchange of ideas and opinions.

K. M. JamaspAsa

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DINI-AVAZ - OUR OTHER ACTIVITIES ZARATHUSTI DIN SAHIYTA MANDAL.

We publish books also under the name of Zarthushti Din Sahitya Mandal and have already published up to now 13 books in our series of under/around 100 pages; at present all the books are under Rs. 20/- each. The books have already gone into 2nd & 3rd printing.

The Mandal appeals to all religious minded individuals to contribute their mite, in order to make printing, xeroxing feasible. Those who contribute in four figures will be sent one copy of the published book of series, for next two years absolutely free of charge.

For further details please write to Zarthushti Din Sahitya Mandal C/o. C. M. Patel, 31, Gautam Nivas, 3rd Floor, Seven Bungalows, Versova, Andheri (West), Mumbai 53.

RELIGIOUS LECTURES ON AUDIO- CASSETTES.

To begin with, over 100 Religious lectures, given by different speakers on different subjects, were made available on audio cassettes, the list of which was published in Dini-Avaz of Nov-Dec. 1997. A nominal amount of Rs. 10/- is charged to reproduce the chosen subject on the cassette given by you and Rs. 60/- is charged if the cassette (Sony or Foreign Cassette) is ours. Many upcountry persons as well as Mumbaikars have utilized this scheme, especially those who are very busy to attend the lectures, and those who used to attend now but are unable to do so due to age and conveyance problems. A separate working committee of Mr. Rusi Patel, Mr. Hoshang Surti and Mr. Curset Patel has been formed. Those interested may contact Mr. Curset M. Patel at the Dini-Avaz address or Mr. Rusi Patel at Banaji Building, 1st floor, GIP store lane, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013. Cheques may please be drawn in favour of any of the above named persons.

SANDALWOOD PROJECT FOR AGIARY- ATASHBEHRAM .

It is a known fact that sandalwood prices have sky-rocketed Rs. 800-Rs. 1300/- and its availability restricted. This has obviously led to the decrease in food for the Atash Padshahs. In some of the upcountry Agiaries, the mobed performing "Boi" ceremony, at the change of every Geh, is unable to offer even one thin stick of Sandalwood to the Atash Padshah. Machi should be offered to the Atash Behram Padshah during the "Boi" ceremony. Out of eight Atash Behrams two are experiencing some difficulty in the Aiwisruthrem and Ushehin Gehs. This is being looked into from the monthly donations given by many people.

Under the auspices of the Dini-Avaz Committee, a committee is formed having Mr. T.S. Pardiwalla, Mr. Rusi Patel and Mr. C. M. Patel. You may send your contributions to Mr. T.S. Pardiwalla 1A/12A Tata Mills Housing Society, Parel, Mumbai 400 012 or to Mr. C.M. Patel at the Dini-Avaz address. Cheques may please be drawn in favour of Mr. T.S. Pardiwalla or Mr. C.M. Patel. We have collected about Rs. Two Lacs upto November 1999.

HAVE YOU ANY QUESTIONS? OKAY, SHOOT!

Q.1 In this rank materialistic age, what should a true Zoroastrian do to lead a life according to the dictates of his Prophet?

A. He should try and practice 'Druj-parhiz' (abstinence from all kinds of Drujis) every minute of the day. This includes: (a) Keeping his 'Aipee' clean; (b) Performing the Kushti every time he gets an opportunity; (c) Safeguarding himself from two **drujis** in particular: **Druji-e-buji** (pertaining to menstruation and seminal discharge) and **Druji-e-heekhra** (pertaining to paring of nails and cutting of hair); (d) Reciting the Avesta-Pazend prayers daily; (e) Speaking the truth and keeping a word or a promise always; (f) Maintaining unshakable Faith in all the Teachings, Tenets and Institutions of our Great Religion.

Q.2 As a modern fashion-conscious young girl, I wear dresses, which are in vogue. At the same time, as a Zoroastrian, I wear the Sudreh next to the skin, but many times I have to fold it down to the waist and then tuck it neatly inside the under-garment. Is it permissible?

A. We are amused at your use of the words, "(I) have to fold it down to the waist.." Torn between two loyalties, eh? If you allow Dame Fashion to tuck at your Sudreh sleeves and make-believe that some semblance of an apparel, christened a "Sudreh", has been donned by you, and therefore, everything is hunky dory, you are only deluding yourself. Why? Consider these facts:

In the Avesta (**Khorshed-Meher Nyaishes**), there is a pertinent line, which runs, "**Zarenumantem Soorem Yazamaide**" ("We attune ourselves to the Golden Weapons"), i.e. to the spiritual weapons with which a Zoroastrian is supposed to fight the forces of evil and darkness. Every moment, **Druj** (subtle putridity) oozes out of every pore of the human body and this emanation is more from certain parts of the body than from others. To restrict and neutralize this **Druj**, Zoroastrians have been enjoined to don the spiritual armour of **Sudreh-Kushti**, to practice **Druj Parhiz** (abstinence from **Druj**), to follow the path of **Tariqat** and to recite the Avesta Manthra.

Not only are **Sudreh-Kushti** considered spiritual 'weapons', but along with the Atash Behram, and the all white bull (**Varasio**), they are Nature's extremely efficient Functionary Agents (**Alaats**) or Spiritual Apparatuses.

It is obvious that if the **Sudreh** is not just an ordinary upper garment but a **specialy designed apparatus** to ward off evil forces and to attract the benevolent, blissful cosmic currents of Nature, to help the Zoroastrian Soul in its progress and upliftment, the Sudreh has to be worn according to the Zoroastrian tenets and not according to the dictates of fickle fashion.

Zoroastrian doctrine clearly lays down the properties of a legitimate **Sudreh**: It should have the prescribed nine seams; it should be made out of white, cotton cloth only; its length should extend upto the knees, etc. Space does not permit us to go into the details of all the properties. However, we shall take up only two factors, which are germane to your question.

1. Among the prescribed nine seams, the Nape seam, which is a crescent-shaped patch **on the nape of the neck**, reminds the wearer of the **Sudreh** of his 'Cross' that he alone has to carry. It is the visible sign of the Karmic Debt that he alone has to settle. While wearing the **Sudreh** (head first in the opening at the top), a glance at this seam, called the **Girdo**, not only reminds the Zoroastrian that he is answerable for every thought, word and deed of his and that he has to abide strictly by the Law of fulfilment of obligations with every visible and invisible object and force in the Universe, but also imposes upon the wearer the duty towards his religion and reminds him of his vow, to follow the anti-demoniacal Law of Ahura Mazda, given by him at the time of his Navjote ceremony.
2. The other very important seam is the **Gereban**, tiny bag-like receptacle **over the chest**, which is a battery, a store-house for collecting the aura. The **Gereban** is a constant reminder that the personal magnetism of the wearer must be raised to its peak by practicing the Laws of the Source of Truth and its minute concomitant laws of total abstinence from any breach of promise. The **Gereban** is closely connected with the 10th **chakra** (plexus or psychic centre) of the astral body which is the **chakra** pertaining to the Conscience. (In Zoroastrianism, the human body is said to have 16 **chakras**).

The above two points, let alone the length of the **Sudreh** sleeves as well as the length of the **Sudreh** itself, which has a very significant connection with the 9th **chakra** of the neck and the 15th **chakra** of the knees are sufficient to show that any kind of tinkering or pottering with this holy armour tantamounts to not wearing it at all! A properly-made **Sudreh bears the**

seal of Prophet Zarathushtra Himself! Such a Sudreh is the mini-copy of the outline of the Universe! If you meddle with it, go on trimming its shape and size, wrap up all the vital seams and tuck them round the waist and treat the Sudreh with scant regard, you mock at Ahura Mazda and your Prophet in whose exalted religion you are born. Why unnecessarily impale your soul on the fence of fashion and earn Divine condemnation for it? Instead, would it not be better and easier to pose a challenge to your couturiere and ask him to cut your dress according to your Sudreh?

Har aan Kas ke Sudreh-Kushti baste shud, U Beheshtee shud U Beheshtee shud U Beheshtee Shud!

"Whosoever donned the Sudreh and Kushti, consider that person fit for Heaven!"

Q.3 Is it true that since the word 'Dakhma' comes from Avesta, 'Daz' - to burn, burning of corpses was the common method of disposal of the dead in ancient Iran?

Before we answer your question, let us state that those who dream of and preach such canards, see crematorium even in a plate of Dhanshakh! And ironically while these 'crematomanes' exhort fellow-Zoroastrians to be baked or barbecued, they themselves prefer the trusty old **Dakhma** after they kick the bucket!

While it is true that the etymology of the word 'Dakhma' is traced to the Avestic root **Daz** (Skt. **Dah**), to burn, we assert most emphatically that this 'burning' had nothing to do with cremation by wood or electricity. On the contrary, this word has its origin in another cognate Avesta compound! mentioned in the Vendidad, viz., **Hvare Daresya** (lit, "the Sun's gaze"), i.e. exposure to sunlight. The 'burning' was done by Sun's radiation! Today, with the talk of harnessing Solar energy for diverse purposes, it is not difficult to grasp the real purport of the Avestic root, **Daz**.

Before the advent of Holy Prophet Zarathushtra, the practice in Iran and even elsewhere was to expose the corpses to the rays of the Sun. The peculiarity about the Sun's rays is that they never converge but are always parallel. Therein lies the dual, seemingly paradoxical properties of creation and destruction in the solar rays. In chapter 7 of the Vendidad, it has been explained succinctly that even if a corpse lies for a whole year on the ground, fully exposed to the Sun's rays, the ground will not be defiled or polluted!

Next time when you come across someone tossing that old raspberry about ancient Iranians being cremated, ask the person to furnish any cogent evidence. On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that **Khurshed Nagirishni** was the order of the day even in the pre-Zarathushtrian times. What the Prophet of Prophets did was to improve upon this method by introducing the talismanic **Dakhmas**.

Some years ago, the Archaeological Department of the Government of Pakistan found in Baluchistan **Dakhmas**, which were 6000 years old! The antiquity of **Dakhmas** can also be gauged from the allusions to them in Kersasp Nameh, Faramarz Nameh, Bahman Nameh and, of course, the Shah Nameh.

Q.4 In one of his many lectures in Bombay, a young, London-trained Parsee philologist opined that a Zoroastrian can donate his eyes and/or kidneys after death. Will you please throw some light on this delicate issue?

We are aware that our young Parsee 'Billy Graham' has been talking most of the time through his cap, which he wore only on a couple of occasions during his lecture-series. His knowledge of Iranian History, of Zoroastrian festivals and rituals and of Zoroastrian eschatology is, to put it mildly, half-backed and meagre. Any wonder then, that he advocates donation of human organs after death.

To answer your question, a Zoroastrian needs to ponder three issues, two of which deal with one of the fundamental Laws of Nature, viz., the Law of Cause and Effect or of Action & Reaction, while the third issue pertains to an important injunction of Zoroastrianism.

Suppose a well-meaning gentleman wills that his eyes be donated immediately after his death. "if some poor crippled person gets new eyes, I will get the blessings" he murmurs to himself as he puts his signature on his Last Will and Testament. **What guarantee is there that the donee of the cornea will not misuse the new power of sight he has been bestowed with?** And does the donor and all those who think and act like him realize what kind of a 'crime' they commit in Nature's set-up? When a low humdrum mortal virtually defies Nature and causes disturbance and disorder in her scheme of things, severe retribution in the hereafter for that individual is absolutely inevitable.

If, however, we give the benefit of the doubt to the donee of the eye and assume that he will not misuse his new-found gift, we are confronted with the second point about the Law of Karma.

Blindness in a person could be congenital or caused by accident or disease later in life. In both these cases, there is no denying that its cause lies directly in that individual's fate, his **Qisas**. **In the past, at one time, he himself has generated a karmic cause and so now has to suffer a karmic penalty.** If any organism is misused in one life, it has to result in an appropriate retribution, arising from that organism in a succeeding life. The famous "Sleeping Prophet" of America, Edgar Cayce, once admonished a person who was deaf: "Then do not close your ears again to those who plead for aid". And so with eyes, kidneys, limbs etc. The field of operation may be different but the score remains unaffected.

Those who get ultra-emotional and without considering the various issues at stake deem as real charity to donate their organs after death, pitiably forget that their action is **not** going to wipe off the 'crime' committed by the donee in the eyes of Nature, where the Laws of Limit and Justice function inexorably every second. **What's more, the donor himself is guilty of disturbing the process of dispensation of justice by Nature.** One sure-fire test when one is confronted with a delicate or a difficult poser as to whether a particular deed should be performed or not, is to ask oneself the question, whether the action will assist the White Side of Nature (**Asar-e-Roshni**) or the Dark Side (**Asar-e-Tariki**), without being sentimental, and then go ahead with it.

And finally, a Zoroastrian particularly, has to abide by the enjoinder in his Religion which itself is an infallible anthology of all the Laws of Nature. Putting it very briefly, the four elements - fire, air, water and earth - which add up to our physical bodies, have got to be surrendered to their Custodian in Nature known as **Daham Yazad**, on or after the fourth day of death. This has to be done, because, when the time comes for the soul with the astral body, embodied in that physical body, to be re-born, the **same** ultra-physical elements and particles that made up the body in the previous incarnation, are combined and mixed to enable the soul to reincarnate on earth.

Thus, you will find that on the **Chaharum** day, ceremonies and rituals invoking the assistance of **Daham Yazad** are specially performed. It is obvious, therefore, that elements embodied in

every limb and organ of the body have to be lodged with **Daham Yazad**. In fact, Zoroastrian doctrine is so particular about every single part of the body being deposited in the **Dakhma** that even if a part of a limb is cut off in an accident or has to be amputated, the **Gah Sarna** ceremony has to be performed on that part, which is then to be placed in the **Dakhma**, even though the owner of that severed limb is very much alive and kicking!

Q.5 Is it okay for Zoroastrians to buy lottery tickets or angle for a Jackpot at the races?

A. Any particular reason why you single out Zoroastrians? This question can be applied to any human being.

Broadly speaking, the income of an individual can be divided into two categories from the standpoint of Nature. One is called **Lyanati** (literally, shamefully or wrongfully earned) Income and the other is known as the **Barkati** Income, i.e. income, which has a built-in element of prosperity and abundance. Once again **Qisas** or the Law of Cause and Effect takes over.

Income, like birth, marriage and death, falls under the category of Destiny, where man's efforts do count, but not to the extent that he can radically change or alter his fate. An interesting story from the Hindu legends will help illustrate the point.

Once Lord Shankar and Parvati, the celestial pair, were strolling in Kailash. Suddenly, Parvati had a strong desire to visit the corporeal world and find out how the humans were faring there. After some remonstrance, Lord Shankar agreed to accompany her. They, therefore, took human form and descended on earth. While they were strolling in a small forest near Mathura, Parvati saw a very poor old man living in a thatched, ramshackle hut and barely able to subsist himself. She coaxed and pleaded with her lord to do something about the man's poverty. Lord Shankar, however, reasoned with her and requested her not to disturb the order of Nature.

"But what kind of justice is this in your kingdom?" asked Parvati, who, after all, wouldn't give up easily. "Here is a good old devotee of yours, who lives a simple, honest life and yet doesn't even have a square meal per day!" Lord Shankar kept on persuading and requesting her not to press him to interfere. "You do not know the functioning of Nature and Her laws, my dear", he pleaded. "so let's keep out of it".

But Parvati was, after all, a woman. So, she kept on pestering him to help the poor man. At last, thoroughly exasperated, Lord

Shankar agreed and decided to teach his lady a lesson once and for all.

Now it so happened that just before Lord Shankar took his decision, the old man who had very feeble eyesight accidentally knocked himself against the branch of a tree and virtually blinded himself.

The next day, as the poor fellow tried to grope his way through the forest to reach his usual destination, near a stream where he chopped wood, Lord Shankar handed over a solid gold slab to Parvati to put it on the man's path so that he may find it and say goodbye to poverty. Parvati was overjoyed with the thought that at last she would be instrumental in bringing the poor woodcutter some relief! She gladly put the yellow 'metal a few yards in front of the old man. As soon as the man came upto the slab, his foot stubbed against it. Parvati was horrified to see this. Lord Shankar was having the last laugh!

"See, didn't I tell you that we should leave Nature well alone!" he gently chided her. "This man's Karma was such that even though Dame Fortune kissed his foot, he shoved her aside! So, neither mortals nor Higher Intelligences can ever interfere with the Laws of Nature!"

Q.6 What is the true concept of "Ashoi"? How can it be achieved?

A. It's like asking, "What is Truth?" You might as well have asked, "What is Zoroastrianism?" The answer can fill volumes. But for our purpose, only certain important points may be noted.

Zoroastrianism is nothing but "Ashoi", "Ashoi" and "Ashoi". Supreme emphasis is placed on "Ashoi" in our religion. The clarion call is, "Aevo Pantao Yo Ashahey, Vispey Anyashanm Apantanm" - "There is only one path, that of **"Ashoi"**. All others are no paths".

Very simply put, "Ashoi" is the spiritual, mental and physical purity that every Zoroastrian is enjoined to practice every minute of the day. What really matters is spiritual purity - purity of the heart and soul - followed by mental and physical purity. In fact, physical purity is almost taken for granted. It is bound to come of itself once one is careful about spiritual purity.

How does one attain this spiritual purity? By practicing at least some of the "Tariqats" - Canons and Practices of Daily Life like reciting the Avesta regularly, abstaining from various "Druji", practicing certain important 'Baaj' rites, etc. In short, one should

always be tilting the lance against the forces of Darkness of Nature. A Zoroastrian soul is a "**Ratheshtaar**" - a warrior - first and last, against Evil of every kind. He has to fight the Evil within him and the Evil without.

The Evil within mainly comprises the individual's murky thoughts and the subtle putrid vibrations that emanate from his body every moment and pollute his "Aipi" - aura or personal magnetism. The Evil from without which also attack his "Aipi" consist of a host of objects, from bad vibes prevailing in the atmosphere to adverse planetary effects that afflict every individual constantly.

All these putrid vibrations can be successfully warded off only by following the "Tariqats" of "Ashoi". No word in any language can convey the exact, perfect meaning of "Ashoi", which is the Avesta "Asha".

In Avesta, four "Khaao" = source or root, are mentioned: (a) "Asma Khaao" = the sources of the 'Asmaan' (Planetary Realms), (b) "Ashna Khaao" = the sources of the Planets, (c) "Ereyjoish Khaao" = the Sources of Truth and Righteousness and (d) "Ashahey Khaao" = the sources of "Ashoi". All religions have combination of the first three "Khaao" in varying degrees; Zoroastrian Religion has the first three plus the 4th "Khaao" in all its glory. And this is precisely why we have elaborate, complex and highly sensitive and efficacious rituals and ceremonies. Ceremonials constitute the very backbone of Zoroastrianism.

For a detailed account of the various Zoroastrian "Tariqats" of "Ashoi", we refer the reader to the late Mr. Bamanji B. Rivetna's book, "Zoroastrian-Life Procedure Code", available from the Parsi Vegetarian & Temperance Society, Noble Chambers, Ghogha Street, Fort, Bombay.

Q.7 My 14 year old son refuses to pray daily. He tells me, "You go on praying for me too, daddy!" I have tried to reason with him but to no avail. My wife asks me to be strict and even use the cane, but I don't like that. However, I have noticed that whenever and whatever little he prays, his pronunciations are better than mine. Could you suggest some solution?

A. Prayer by proxy? Well, anything goes in this materialistic age! However, there are two points mentioned in your question, which seem to be in your favour: (a) Your son has just entered his teens; and (b) he does pray occasionally.

You can try these two methods: (1) Reason and (2) Example.

1. Explain to him that the human body doesn't comprise just flesh, bones and skin, but has many other constituents, one of the most important of which is the soul. Just as the physical body needs food and water at least twice a day to nourish and sustain it, so does the soul need constant nourishment. This can only be provided by our highly efficient and powerful Avesta and Pazend prayers. Such prayers create tremendous vibratory force round their reciter, which, among other things, provide the right and the only kind of food for the soul. And just as each one has to feed his own body, so does one has to feed his soul. No one else can do that. If one does not pray, the soul starves. A starving soul is much worse than a starving body. The body exists for a very short period of the vast expanse of Time in Nature. But the soul is immortal. A well-nourished, strong soul alone can progress in Nature and come closer to God.
2. Nothing can impress a child more than an example. If a good example is set by the child's parents, sooner or later the child is bound to emulate it. If your son constantly sees you and your wife praying, he is bound to think for himself that there must be something to it.

You can also take him to one of the religious classes conducted in your city, provided the right type of training is imparted there. You may read out aloud from simple religious books. You can also arouse his curiosity and provoke him to question you on the why and wherefore of various religious principles and doctrines. Tell him stories from epics like the Shah Nameh, so that he can ponder over the fantastic feats of those advanced souls of our ancient Iranian Kings and Warriors.

But, under no circumstances, should you force anything upon him. For then, he will develop a prejudice against his religion, which will simmer throughout his life. And we need hardly add, please, spare the rod!

Q.8 From what date or month (approx.) according to the Gregorian calendar does the 2nd "Haavan" start? Is it necessary during this period to perform the "Kushti" again in order to maintain the "Geh-geh" 'Kushti'? Is it also necessary to recite the "Farajyaat" again in the 2nd "Haavan" before praying the "Yashts"?

A. Yours is a neat 3-in-1! Let's start with the first part. During the 1st seven months of the Zoroastrian year, that is, from "Roz

Hormazd" of "Mah Fravardin" to "Roz Aneran" of "Mah Meher", the "Rapithwan Gaah" is in force (Details are given below). And from "Roz Hormazd" of "Mah Aban" to the "Vahishtohisht Gatha", the 2nd "Haavan" is in vogue.

If you follow the Fasli calendar, then only will the dates of the Gregorian calendar coincide with the various Zoroastrian festivals and events including the 2nd "Haavan" and "Rapithwan" periods. In that case, the "Rapithwan Gaah" begins on the 21st March and ends on circa 16th October, whereafter the 2nd "Haavan" begins.

Since the "Shahenshahi" and "Kadimi" calendars do not provide for intercalation, the Parsee calendar and the Gregorian calendar are not in harmony.

During the period when the 2nd "Haavan" is in vogue, it is essential to perform the normal "Change-of-Gaah" 'Kushti'.

Finally, it is not necessary to recite the 'Farajyaat' again in the 2nd "Haavan". For explanation, one must understand the true role and function of 'Rapithwan'.

The Avesta word for "Rapithwan" is "Arem" or "Aryem Pithwa", which, if freely translated, means, the (Karmic) food, which is administered by Nature to humans at the appropriate time. "Rapithwan" is one of the most important noumena of Nature. The advent of "Rapithwan" is an event of deep significance in Nature. Such an event has two aspects. One is the **specific speed** of the Sun's visible and invisible rays, which fall on the earth during those special days of the occasion; and the other is the coming down in the vehicle of those rays, the paraphernalia needed for the progress of the Universe, i.e. Nature's blessings essential for the welfare of mankind.

There are two fundamental events in Nature. One begins, as mentioned earlier, from the first day of 'Mah Fravardin' (i.e. circa 21st March) and continues till the last day of "Mah Meher". During this period, among other things, the rays of the sun, which fall on our earth for 24 hours create 5 'Gaahs'. In these 7 months, a 'Yazatic' power or force by the name of 'Mino Rapithwan' functions which creates proper and good order in the Universe. At this time only, one kind of event takes place, which is the event of "Haameen". Two kinds of heat manifest themselves in this period: one generates health and well-being; the other brings about excess of humidity. "Rapithwan" then manifests itself and functions in the world's atmosphere.

However, in the remaining five months of the year, "Rapithwan" goes down under the Earth, in the Hades, and functions there.

Q.9 My 'Navjot' has been performed. However, my uncle tells me that I still do not recite my 'Kushti' prayers properly. Will you guide me as to how to tie the 'Kushti' correctly?

A. This 8 year old girl is not alone in her quandary. Many of us adults, sail in the same boat. We, therefore, give below simple steps for performing the 'Kushti' correctly:

1. The "Paadiyaav" which precedes the untying and tying of the "Kushti", is as important as the 'Kushti' ceremony itself. At first, one's arms have to be washed with water, from elbow down to the fingertips. The whole face is then to be washed. After drying them,
2. "Khshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao" - 1 "Ashem" is to be recited;
3. Now the whole of "Kem-na-Mazqa" prayer is to be recited;
4. After completing the "Kem-na-Mazda", the "Kushti" is to be untied silently;
5. The "Hormazd Khodaye" prayer is then to be recited in a whispering tone upto "Pa Patet Hom". While reciting the passages in this prayer, the following formalities have to be adhered to: (a) while uttering softly the words, 'Ahriman Avadashaan', crack the 'Kushti' (which is now held in the two hands in such a manner that the left index finger holds the loop and the right hand holds the 'Kushti' many inches above the tassels or 'lars'), in the direction of the North. (b) The 'Kushti' is to be further cracked lightly twice in the North, once while reciting the words, 'Dush Padshah Avaadashaan Baad' and secondly, while reciting 'Dushmat, Dujukht, Dujvarsht'. (c) While reciting "Az Aan Gunah, Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni", the "pair of scales" has to be made and the reciter should think about the spiritual regions in which the soul will go once it is earmarked for salvation. (d) After, "Pa Patet Hom", recite loudly, "Khshnaothra ahurahe Mazdao Taroideetey" and while uttering the words, "Haithya Varshtaanm" tie the first round of the Kushti around the waist.
6. Now come 2 "Yatha Ahoo Vairyo". While reciting the word 'Ahoo' (2nd word), put one end of the 'Kushti' inside the loop made, with your right hand and then while uttering the word, 'Shyaothnanaam", pull the two ends of the 'Kushti' towards the sides. The same method is to be adopted while reciting the

2nd 'Yatha' except that the 'Kushti' is to be inserted in the loop with the left hand.

While reciting the 1st 'Yatha', think of the Lord, who alone is one; and while reciting the 2nd 'Yatha', think of our Prophet who is supreme among the messengers of God.

7. Thereafter, one 'Ashem Vohu' is recited and the two knots at the back are tied. Naturally, the thought that should pass through one's mind while reciting this 'Ashem', should pertain to "Ashoi".
8. Finally, comes "Jasa Mey Avangahey Mazda", the "Declaration of Faith" prayer. While reciting this, one should insert the two index fingers in the two front knots and think of the supreme Prophet, who gave us the 'Zarhoshti Deen'.

Q.10 Why is it that modern Parsees give a pride of place to 'Behram Yazad' in their invocations? In fact, of the 32 other Divine Intelligences, the Ahmeshaspands, Minos, Dae, etc. come higher up in the Hierarchy. Yet, why this curious trait?

A. Jamanani Tasir Bava! However, we can't dismiss the question in just these three words. There are certain reasons why latterday Parsees have a penchant for 'Behram Yazad'. First of all, 'Behram' or 'Varharam' or 'Verethraghna', meaning 'victorious' indicates that 'Behram Yazad' grants victory to those who invoke Him: victory both in the material and in the spiritual senses. In the 'Behram Yasht', a refrain occurs in the first 10 chapters in the form of a question posed by the Prophet to Ahura Mazda 'Ko Astee Mainyavanaam Yazatanaam Zyotemo?' "Who among all your Minoi Yazatas is alert and ready to don the armour and fight for Victory?"

The answer given is: "Behram Yazad" created by Ahura is the one, O Spitama Zarathushtra!" The 10 chapters then delineate the various spiritual forms (Kehrp), in which Behram Yazad appears.

Every human being is susceptible to temptations of all kinds. Just as there are ten deficiencies (Azi Dahaka), so also there are ten kinds of temptations that dog humans. Temptation is only a means to destruction. therefore, man has to conquer his temptations.

Behram Yazad is the one who can save a man from temptations. It is He who helps destroy temptations and bring salvation to mankind. What more can a human ask for?

Depending upon which temptation or sin the individual has succumbed to, 'Behram Yazad' adopts anyone of the 10 forms suitable for that individual.

Further, as most of you are aware, we live in the 'Hashemi' (Martian) age today, according to the mathematical-cum-astronomical calculations of the cycles of time in the Zoroastrian religion. Now, the 'Asman' or the Planetary Plane of 'Hashem' - the 5th from below - is governed by 'Khshathra Vairya' (Sherevar Ahmeshaspand) and Behran Yazad. Any wonder then that the Parsees give considerable importance to and revere 'this Yazad', thereby unwittingly reducing the adverse affects of "Hashem"?

A cautionary note is, however, called for regarding a certain nefarious practice that has crept into our community in invoking Behran Yazad. It is the deplorable practice of reciting a concocted story pertaining to a woodcutter (Kathiarā) before a 'Divā' lit in the honour of 'Mushkil Asaan Behram Yazad', if Behram Roj happens to fall on a Friday. No words are sufficient to decry this unholy, non-Zoroastrian practice, which has strong Muslim overtones, with Friday (Joomma) being considered a sacred day.

Q.11 It is observed these days in Bombay that many Parsee families who have the "Sachkar" and "Gah Sarna" ceremonies of their departed ones performed at the Doongarwadi Upper "Banglis", do not complete all the other requisite rituals there, during the following three nights. Instead, they have these ceremonies performed at an "Agiary" or an "Atash Behram". Isn't it incumbent to perform the 4-day ceremonies only where the "Sachkar" has been performed? Will you also give the reasons?

A. You are right! We give below in as simple a manner as possible, the duties and responsibilities of those who unfortunately leave their departed relations in the lurch, just when these souls need the presence of the living ones and their prayers and ceremonies very much.

As soon as death occurs, certain radical physical and ultra-physical changes occur in and outside the body. We need not go into all these changes, as that will be outside the scope of this question. However, one should know what happens to the immortal soul when the body collapses. The soul, which was so far near the region of the heart in the living body (i.e.

in the 10th Psychic centre or plexus of the ultra physical body or 'Kehrp'), now comes out of the centre of the head (from the pineal gland) and tries to enter the 'Kehrp', which has already seated itself outside the head of the newly departed. The 'Kehrp' has gradually oozed out of the right or left toe, depending upon whether the individual is male or female, respectively. The 'Kehrp' will be the home or the 'Space Ship' of the soul for a long time.

Let's assume that the soul has managed to gain entrance to the 'Kehrp' without much difficulty. **The 'Kehrp' then, with the soul, sits near the head of the corpse. This it does right until the dawn of the 4th day after death ('Chaharum').** The question then arises, how can the soul be near the head of the corpse, **after** the corpse has been laid inside the 'Dakhma'? The answer is that the 'Kehrp' with the soul is connected with the corpse by a very thin blue streak or a luminous thread. Thus, the contact is maintained between the Kehrp-cum-soul and the corpse.

The important point for our purpose here is that **the soul stays put near the head of the corpse for 3 days and nights. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that all the ceremonies and rituals, like those pertaining to Sarosh and Daham Yazads, etc. should be performed very near the place or spot where the 'Sachkar' has been performed.**

Let's see what happens today when many Bombay Parsees have the "Sachkar" and 'Gah Sarna' ceremonies performed at one place, viz. in one of the upper 'Banglis' of Doongarwadi, but have the rest of the ceremonies till the dawn of "Chaharum", performed at an Atash Behram or an Agiary. Suppose one Dinshawji Dodhchatur passes away on the 10th of a month and his funeral service is to be held at the Bennett Bangli. From the time of the 'Sachkar' ceremony, Dinshawji's soul is sitting plumb near his head deeply engrossed in viewing the wide panorama of all the 'Kala-Dholas' that he had done during the life that has just passed. Sometime after the "Gah Sarna" is over and the corpse is laid in the dokhma, Dinshawji's soul, ensconced in the 'Kehrp', suddenly realizes that his nearest and dearest ones, some of whom had brought the very roof down when Dinshawji was ailing and bed-ridden and had left no stone unturned in summoning the best medical aid that could be got, depart with the rest of the crowd who had come to bid him the final farewell! That day's Gujarati newspapers had

already announced that while Dinshawji's "Pyedast" will be at the Bennett 'Bangli', the Uthamna (and, therefore, all other subsequent ceremonies) will be held at Andheri's Patel Agiary! Poor Dinshawji's Soul! It is in a veritable panic. What did his close relations think? That they were religiously following some Christian burial ceremony, where once the body is laid to rest in a grave after the funeral service, there's nothing left to be done at the spot? The limit of ignorance and callousness! Dinshawji's soul is much disturbed. It can hardly concentrate on the videotape of his present and past lives, that is being played before it. Ahriman's army is waiting round the corner, ready to pounce on the soul-carrying-'Kehrp', once the sun sets and darkness creeps in. If only some numbskull would realize how very vital and indispensable are the Sarosh ceremonies right near it at present! But the only presence there is that of a small oil lamp burning near it. Everyone else has gone, to enjoy the cosy comfort of a bed or an arm-chair at home! Dinshawji's soul shudders. There is silence all round. NO 'Stoat' vibrations whatsoever to protect, guide and nourish the soul ! Instead, 20 miles away, close relations and friends troop in at the Agiary with poker faces for the "Sarosh nun Patrun". They try to look as solemn as possible, but soon the ice is broken. Conversation ranges from what Mrs. G. is upto this time, to the fate of the 4th cricket test. No one bothers about the fate of the now shivering soul of the late Dinshawji at Doongarwadi! Why should they? After all, the pair of priests has already started reciting 'Naam Chesti Anushey Rawan Rawani Behdin Dinshawji Behdin Dorabji". So, everything is hunky dory!

But, is it? At the Doongarwadi, only the soul of late Dinshawji later knows how it spent the night, when it barely managed to escape the attacks of the hordes of Ahriman. In the absence of 'Sarosh' ceremonies and other Avesta prayers near it, it was hounded by those evil forces every minute. One might as well say that one was being kind and generous, by giving a very hungry man standing at Flora Fountain some grub in a plate placed at Ghatkopar! Dinshawji's soul barely escaped the clutches of the Dark Forces, only because, during his lifetime, Dinshawji prayed well and had collected, to his credit some powerful vibratory forces thereby. These plus the "Sachkar" and the "Geh Sarna" ceremonies had helped for that one night. But Dinshawji's real ordeal was yet to begin! The following morning, the 2nd day of the departed soul's sojourn on earth, there was a flurry outside the Bennett 'Bangli'

and to its mortification Dinshwaji's soul was shocked to find the pall-bearers bring in another 'Sachkared' corpse and place it exactly where his body lay a day ago. He soon recognized the soul inside the 'Kehrp' of the newcomer which sat meditating very close to him, as that of Dosibai Doomasia, an old woman living in the building opposite his when he still had his mortal shell. Dosibai's presence at the same spot surely spelt the 'doom' of Dinshwaji's soul. Luckily for Dosibai, because of her relatively better Karma, all the ceremonies upto the "Chaharum" were performed at the Doongarwadi. Thus, while Dinshwaji's soul received a constant barrage of bombardment from "GanaMin" and his gang, Dinbai's soul experienced peace and tranquility of a high order.

We, therefore, reiterate with all the emphasis at our command that :

1. The newly departed soul of a Zoroastrian stays for about 3 days and 3 nights on the earth, near the head of the corpse.
2. The soul is attacked all-the time by the Dark Forces of Nature. Therefore, the 'Sarosh', 'Daham' and other rituals have got to be performed near the spot where the corpse after "Sachkar" has been kept.
3. Those Parsees who leave their departed relations at Doongarwadi to stew in their own juice for the first three days after death and perform the 3-day ceremonies at the Agiary or Atash Behram, not only render a distinct disservice to the departed but unnecessarily bring on themselves and their family members spiritual retribution and opprobrium. A thousand pities that our 'Panthakies' and 'Mobeds', who should give proper advice maintain a woeful silence or tacitly encourage such practices!

Q.12 It is maintained in certain quarters that our Prophet gave only the five Gathas to the world. If so, then who composed all the other Avesta prayers? What is the exact meaning of the word "Gatha"?

A. You will be surprised if we told you that even the Gathas recited today are not the original compositions of the Prophet! And thereby hangs a long tale about the 21 "Nasks", which we shall try to cut short as best as we can. But before that, the meaning of the word "Gatha". Philologically, it means "Divine Songs", from the Avesta root "Gaa" to sing. However, as in all other Avestic words, there is more than meets the eye in this term,

too. According to the perfect science of 'Khshnoom', "Gathas" are the 'Yazatic' forces ('Shakti') who have been appointed by the Lord to preside over and govern and guide the souls of the five 'Varna' or groups or classes of souls for whom, on this earth, five religions have been ordained. These 'Gathas', therefore, which are five, have as their leader, the 'Zarathushtra Gatha' because the "Zarathushtra Gatha" is closely associated with Ahura Himself. The soul connected with this "Zarathushtra Gatha" descends on the earth as 'Paigambar Zarathushtra'.

The entire work, therefore, of all the 5 "Gathic, Yazatic forces", is entrusted by the "Zarathushtra Gatha" to Asho Zarathushtra. In other words, one of Prophet Zarathushtra's main tasks in this world is to guide the development of the five groups of souls and their five religions. Thus, to enable the 5 "Varna" to progress, Prophet Zarathushtra creates 5 major "Talesams" (concentrated Spiritual force from which power can be drawn by those qualified and capable), each of which has a direct contact with its 'Varna'. The 'Manthra' prayers pertaining to these 5 'Talesams', which Prophet Zarathushtra has raised and built in the "Upairi Dakhyu Gaas" (the University and Spiritual Power Station in the 4th Plane around the Earth), are the 5 Gatha prayers.

But the 5 Gathas that we recite today are not the original compositions of the Prophet. Strictly speaking, today there is nothing like the Avestic literature with us, except some Pahlavi writings, "which are a sealed book, as the decipherment of the words is difficult, and the language with the technical mystic connotations.....is hard to understand."

The extant religious texts comprising the Gathas and the rest of the Avesta "cannot be called literature in the strict sense of the word.....The "**Khordesh Avesta**", "**Vendidad**", "**Yasna**", etc. are religious prescriptions which are to be utilized for the redemption of the soul.. ..Just as doctors write prescriptions which are only intelligible to the medical men and are to be used by the laity with perfect faith and confidence, without any why and wherefor, the rationale of which can be known from Materia Medica and sciences affiliated to the Medica, in the same way the Avestic religious specialties are **talismanic prescriptions** to be used as such, the Materia Medica and other sciences which explain those prescriptions forming the Avestaic literature in its true sense being quite different and requiring special studies."

"The sciences, philosophies and theologies - the actual Zoroastrian literature as such have been called 'Farhangs', and the expositions have been called '**Nikiz**'. Of all these '**Farhangs**', 'Staot Yasna' is the most prominent" (The above extracts in quotation marks have been taken from the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla's "Essential Origins of Zoroastrianism").

In the Zoroastrian religion, there is a lengthy account of the "Staot Yasna." In Nature, there is an infallible science called, "Staot Yasna" which is the **speech of the Yazatas**. In praise of this "Ilm", we have in the Avesta "Manthra" a line, "Staot Yasna Yazamaidey Ya Daata Angheush paouruyeya" = "We attune ourselves to Staot Yazna, which is the first primeaval law".

Prophet Zarathushtra imitated this 'Staot Yasna', which was conducive to the speech faculty of a human being, so that the prayers or 'Manthra' based on it, when recited, can help the progressive work of 'Spenta Mainyu'. Thus, the base of the entire Avesta is "Staot Yasna."

Our Paighambar Asho Zarathushtra Himself had composed 21 'Nasks' (Encyclopaedic volumes) of '**Fshusho Manthra**'. Thereafter, He directed His disciples to compile 21 Nasks each of '**Manthra Spenta**,' 'Tavil' (Detailed Inner Expositions) and '**Saoshyanto Manthra**'.

It is Daadaar Ahura Mazda Himself, who appoints the various 'Raenidars', (Saviours) who follow Prophet Zoroaster in Different times. These 'Raenidars' become aware of the group Karma of the community during their respective times **and in keeping with such times and the constitutions and types of souls which will incarnate**, they reorganize the religion of Prophet Zarathushtra. They make use of the Encyclopaedic volumes of 'Saoshyanto Manthra' compiled by the disciples of the Prophet and compose the 'Manthra' suitable to their times.

Just as in the original 21 'Nasks' of the Prophet, there are three groups of volumes - the 'Gathic', the 'Datic' (pertaining to law) and 'Hada Manthric' (comprising miscellaneous prayers), in the 21 'Nasks' of 'Manthra Spenta' and 'Saoshyanto Manthra' also there are these three groups. The 'Saoshyanto Manthra' has interwoven in it, both 'Fshusho Manthra' and 'Manthra Spenta'.

The last 'Raenidar' to appear in this world was Dasturan Dastur Adarbad Marespand, who lived in the reign of the Sassanian King Shapur II. This great Dastur compiled the 21 'Nasks' of 'Saoshyanto Manthra' for our times. Along with that, being fully

aware of the bad times on which the Iranian Zoroastrians would fall, Dastur Adarbad also composed prayers in Pazend.

We repeat that what's given above is a very short account of how our modern Avesta prayers came into being. For details, one should refer to the plethora of works on the subject, by the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla and the late Mr. Jehangir S. Chiniwalla.

You will see, therefore, that even the 5 Gathas that we have today are not the original compositions of our Prophet although they, too, like many of our other Avesta prayers, contain certain passages from the original. Our 'Gathas' as well as the rest of the Avesta works have undergone changes according to the needs of the times - however, **changes wrought by the 'Raenidars' and 'Zarathushtrotemos' of Paighambar Saheb, who have the Divine Authority to affect the alterations, and not by any fuddy duddies, according to their whims and fads.**

Q.13 We have in our religion many feast days but not a single day for fasting. What's the reason? Further, what's the significance of the 4 'Unroza' days - "Bahman, Mohr, Gosh and Raam"?

A. Parsees have a saying, "Khaanaar Peenaar Ney Khoda Aapnaar". And they admirably live up to that adage! So, if you talk of 'fasts', you might be unnecessarily raising a hornet's nest round your head!

The answer to the first question revolves round one of the most delicate and difficult subjects of the Zoroastrian Religion FOOD! Surprised? Then get your teeth into this.

Would you believe if someone were to tell you that the ultimate aim of Nature of bringing "Frasho Gard" - Salvation of the entire Universe - depends on the food you ingest?

To understand the supreme importance of food for a human, one should have some idea about how the, semen is formed after the food is processed in the body for 49 days!

After taking any food, the four 'forces' that are there in our bodies start functioning. First is called, "Kuvat-e-Jaazebaa", which enables the food to be swallowed through the gullet - deglutition. The second force is "Kuvat-e-Maasekaa", which carries the food to the stomach and helps it retain there. The third force is "Kuvat-e-Haajema", the force, which helps digestion. And the fourth is "Kuvat-e-Daafeya", which helps foecal excretion.

Then, after the food is digested, are formed "Kemush" = Chyme or pulp to which the food is reduced and "Kelush" = Chyle or emulsified white fluid. From these essences are formed four other fluids: (1) Blood, (2) Phlegm, (3) Bile and (4) Black Bile. Each of these four functions are in the body wherever they are needed. These four humours are formed in about four hours.

A certain chemical process goes on in the blood for the first seven days after the food has been eaten. The blood gets divided into two grades - higher and lower. The lower grade blood goes to the region of the heart and on to every vein and artery of the body and gives strength to them. In the higher grade of the blood, there takes place a certain process for yet another seven days. The resultant is again divided into two grades, of which the lower one forms flesh. Such processes and chemical actions go on occurring, forming bones, fat, viscosity, marrow and finally, semen. In this manner, Nature takes 49 days to convert any comestible into blood, bones, fat, marrow, semen, etc. i.e. every part of our body is formed through food, which, in turn, means that "food and eating" also constitute in Nature, a kind of 'ceremony'. If proper and adequate food is not partaken of regularly, the right quantum of semen will not be formed. If that happens, the whole procreation process will be hampered. In which case, Nature's final aim of bringing about 'Frashogard' will be set back. All of which reminds one of that old rhyme: "For want of a nail, the shoe was lost. For want of a shoe, the horse was lost. For want of a horse, the rider was lost." One can say in the same vein that, "For want of food, 'Frashogard' was lost".

But, that's not all! There is a very important "Ilmyati" reason behind taking good food regularly. Most of you may be aware that, according to the principle of decimals, every individual's soul is divided into many parts. Once the whole soul is bifurcated into two dissimilar counterparts --'Sharif' and 'Khasis' - near "Zareh Vourukasha", these two parts are sub-divided genderwise as human parent - souls (main souls) and particle souls of animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms 9/10th of each male soul and 9/10th of each female soul remain permanently as human, and 1/10th of each goes to form and embody in the animal kingdom. Again, 1/10th of this animal soul - particle goes to form and embody in the vegetable kingdom. Finally, 1/10th of this forms and embodies in the mineral kingdom. Now, in order that the human soul cleanses itself of the 'Dravao' or the stain of ignorance and rebellion attached to it, it has

to, among other things, attract and gather its own soul – particles from the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. This can be done by a Zoroastrian by always following the path of "Asha", by practicing humility, tolerance, patience and by inculcating other virtues like truth, love, etc. After constantly practicing these virtues, the soul of the Zoroastrian is ready to assimilate in itself its particle-counterparts in the three lower kingdoms. **The means by which this assimilation can be attained is through the seemingly simple routine and process of eating - the right kind of food.** Thus, proper food plays a very vital role in the spiritual progress of a Zoroastrian.

The second part of this question can be easily answered. In the Zoroastrian pantheon of "Ahmshaspands" and "Yazads", each Ahmshaspand has his/her co-workers, who function in the three realms of "Hasti", "Nisti" and "Geti" (Earth). "Bahman Ahmshaspand", who in the "Geti", i.e. on this earth, presides over animal kingdom in general and, cowkind in particular, has as His Co-workers; 'Mohr', 'Gosh' and 'Raam'. This is why many Parsees abstain from taking meat on these days. However, most of them find it difficult to control their 8th 'Chakhra' of the tongue even for a day, and do not bat an eyelid tucking into a succulent chicken or tackling a juicy pomfret on the 'Unroza' day. What's more, they fully justify their action by arguing that these do not come under the category of "meat"! The last laugh is of course had by "Bahman Ahmshaspand and His Co-workers!"

Q.14 A great and good Zoroastrian passed away recently in tragic circumstances. However, what was even more tragic was the manner in which the post-mortem rituals like "Sachkar" and the "Geh Sarna" were rushed through. All of which bring to the fore the following questions:

- a) Many Parsees are keen on having the "Geh Sarna" performed as fast as possible, so that the departed soul can get the benefit of two or three 'Sarosh'. If in certain cases, only one 'Sarosh nu Patrun' is available for the soul before the 'Chaharum', does it in any way affect the progress of the soul?
- b) If there is very little time available for the 'Geh Sarna', can the 'Sachkar' be dispensed with?
- c) Nowadays, many Parsees die because of train or road accidents. If, say, their very near ones are out of Bombay and they desire to attend the funeral ceremony, it becomes

well night impossible to keep the body for a long time, as decomposition sets in fast. Wouldn't it be, therefore, advisable to make some arrangement like a morgue, at the Doongerwadi itself, so that the body could be retained for a few more hours?

d) Can non-Zoroastrians perform the "Sezda" before the "Sachkar" has been performed on the corpse?

A. You have talked of the 'tragic' and the 'more tragic' aspects. But, what about the most tragic side of the whole regrettable episode, when many so-called educated Parsees out of perverse curiosity, cluttered round the coffin in which the body was brought, immediately after it was taken out of hearse? Surely, they wasted 10-15 precious minutes as they refused to budge even after repeated requests! These minutes could have been most fruitfully utilized for a better performance of the 'Sachkar' and 'Geh Sarna' Ceremonies!

All this could have been avoided if modern Parsees were not ignorant of the fundamentals regarding the obsequies to be performed.

The four corner-stones which are indispensable for a Zoroastrian soul immediately after death are: 'Sachkar', 'Geh Sarna', 'Dokhmenashine', and the 'Sarosh' ceremonies.

Of these four, it is absolutely essential that the 'Sachkar' be performed in the very 'Gaah' in which the person has died, for the simple reason that, on account of (a) the 'Gaomez' ('Tara') - sponge bath, (b) the seven 'bunds' or tourniquets tied on different parts of the dead body, (c) the talismanic 'Ahunavar' prayer recited while drawing the three furrows ('Karsh') or circuits round the corpse with an iron nail, which is finally kept near the head of the corpse and (d) the 'Sagdid' (sighting by the dog), the forces of Evil (Druj), are severely restricted within the confines of the circuit. No outside 'Druj' can attack the soul, which is still waiting at the head of the corpse.

If the 'Sachkar' is, for some avoidable or unavoidable reason not performed in the same 'Gaah', the soul has to suffer an onslaught of 'Ahriman' and his brood, even if the deceased had led a good, pious life. Here, the basic idea is simply this: A Zoroastrian soul is a spiritual heavyweight, because of the high voltage of the Divine Light it possesses, which increases its spiritual avoirdupois. Moreover, if a person, having this kind of soul practices during his lifetime, the 'Tarikats' or spiritual

disciplines, like 'Druj-Parhez', tying the 'Kushti' whenever necessary, and is morally upright, etc., his soul, which is already a 'Ratheshtar', a warrior, gets a tremendous boost and it fights endlessly, and successfully wards off the constant attacks of the evil forces. It is, therefore, all the more faced with very severe attacks by the vindictive evil forces immediately after death. At that time, the soul puts up a valiant fight. However, it clamours for reinforcements in the form of rituals like 'Sachkar' and 'Geh Sarna', the 'Staot' or vibrations of which help it to muster sufficient strength to stave off all future attacks! If, at such a critical time, the soul doesn't receive adequate aid, its plight would drive even a thick skinned living person mad for the rest of his life! But the soul is immortal, and therefore, can never be destroyed even though it suffers a heavy battering from Ahriman.

There is, therefore, absolutely no need to make an unholy haste of performing the "Geh Sarna". If the "Sachkar" is performed in the same "Gaah" in which death has occurred, the "Geh Sarna" can be performed much later, provided 'rigor mortis' has not set in to a very high degree, resulting in rapid decomposition of the body.

Here, a delicate question arises: If decomposition plays havoc with the body, should the 'Sachkar' be given the go-by?

The answer is an emphatic NO. It is the 'Sachkar' and the 'Sachkar' alone, which protects the soul sitting near the head of the corpse, with its talismanic circuits, keeping the 'Druj' at bay. We firmly believe that if only 'Gaomez' ('Taro') is used and even a drop of water is in no circumstances used for the sponge-bath, the status quo can be maintained in the condition and state of the corpse. If necessary, oscillating fans and slabs of ice may be kept at a distance near the head and feet of the corpse. The 'Sachkar' ceremony is indispensable and forms the first corner-stone of the four-tiered wall of the Zoroastrian post-mortem rituals.

If the "Geh Sarna" is postponed to accommodate the 'Sachkar' ceremony, one shouldn't worry much if the deceased gets one 'Sarosh' less. In such exceptional cases, if the survivors are very keen on the departed soul getting one 'Sarosh' extra, they can perform the 'Sarosh nun Patrun' at an Agiary, even though, the corpse has not been placed in the 'Dakhma'. Once the 'Sachkar' has been performed, the corpse is laid on a stone

platform on the ground round which the talismanic circuits are drawn. No one except the 'Nasasalars' can now touch it. The suggestion, therefore, of constructing a morgue-like room at Doongarwadi for badly mutilated or decomposed bodies cannot be accepted. However, as mentioned earlier, slabs of ice and fans at a distance can be usefully employed.

Finally, it is most unfortunate that modern Parsees, always vying with one another in keeping with the Joneses and carried away by mushy sentimentality, are so ignorant about their traditions, that they do not realize the harm they do to the departed, by allowing non-Zoroastrians to pay their homage by looking at the face of the deceased before or after 'Sachkar'. Not only that, worse still, it is the woeful misguidance given in the past by some of the 'Dasturs', who should have known better, that non-Zoroastrians may be allowed to see the face of the deceased before 'Sachkar'.

Much has already been said and written in the past in journals and magazines of 'Ilm-e-Khshnoom' on this subject. Suffice therefore, here to recapitulate very briefly the main points pertaining to the condition of the body and soul immediately after death of a Zoroastrian. We are all aware of the 5 major religions ('Varna') of the world and the faith and beliefs ('Verena') of the followers of these religions, **which, in their constitution, status and stages of evolution are different in grades.** Between any two religions, there is bound to be differences in their philosophies, practices, tenets and canons. Because of these radical differences, in every individual, a certain circuit of thoughts is constantly rotating or orbiting round his body. In this circuit, which is exclusive and peculiar to the group of individuals of one religion, there is always a sub-circuit belonging to the faith he professes. (Here, it should be remembered that even if a person claims to be an atheist, heredity will not leave him, in that the thoughts and beliefs associated with the religion and faith followed by his parents, grandparents or great-grand parents will always be imprinted and impressed on his subconscious). The origin of this sub-circuit is to be found in the 'light', which exists in the soul of every individual. This 'light' then falls on the mind of the individual, which is connected to the atoms of the body. This sub-circuit of one's faith, therefore, naturally and automatically surrounds every person every second, even though he may be blissfully unaware of it! The main source, from which the currents and energy of this circuit emanate from the body, is the eyes.

These currents are the electro-magnetic radiations emerging from the eyes every micro-second.

Now, therefore if a practitioner of a faith or belief which is not Zoroastrian, is present at or after the time a Zoroastrian dies and he sees the face of the Zoroastrian corpse, however well-meaning he may be, he unwittingly transmits those 'alien' radiations from his eyes to the corpse, which is decomposing every minute, and he thereby helps accelerate the process of decomposition, because of the increase in the 'Nasa Druj' which is attacking the corpse.

We reiterate for the 11th time that in not allowing non-Zoroastrians to see the dead body of a Zoroastrian, no insult or slight is, even remotely intended to the non-Zoroastrians, nor is it a vainglorious boast of the Parsees. But, here it is only a narration of a principle, which is based on the minute truths of Nature. If Parsees were to explain this truth to non-Zoroastrians, they would be the first to desist from mucking up things at the last minute for their departed Parsee friend or colleague, and pay their respects from a distance.

Q.15 Can you give just one-sentence answers to the following questions?

- 1. What is Zoroastrianism?**
- 2. Who was Zoroaster?**
- 3. What was his mission?**
- 4. What is the basic philosophy of Zoroastrianism?**
- 5. What is the concept of God in Zoroastrianism?**
- 6. Was there any religion before Zoroaster?**
- 7. How old is the Zoroastrian religion?**
- 8. Were the heroes and warrior-kings mentioned in the 'Shah Nameh' legendary or real?**
- 9. Why is a Zoroastrian enjoined to wear the 'Sudreh' and the 'Kushti'?**
- 10. Is there rebirth on earth for Zoroastrians?**

A. (The answers given below are obviously neither complete nor exhaustive, but they do contain the quintessence of the teachings of the greatest Prophet on earth.)

1. Zoroastrianism is the world's oldest and the most exalted revealed religion, which embodies **all** the Laws of Nature.

2. Zoroaster was the Iranian Prophet **par excellence** who was a Yazat (Angel) in the garb of a man, a co-worker of the **Ameshaspands** (Arch Angels) and the one ordained by Ahura Mazda as the promoter, guardian and protector of the other four major religions of the world.
3. His main mission was to bind the **Daevas** – i.e. to exorcise the force of Darkness, to restrict the forces of Matter and to regulate the deficiency of spiritual ignorance in mankind.
4. Man should endeavor never to create any disorder or chaos in Nature, but strive every moment to fulfill and abide by the Law of **Asha** (Divine Law and Order).
5. There are two concepts: an Impersonal God, **Ahu**, about whom nought may be said, and a Personal God, **Ahura Mazda**.
6. There was one universal religion called the **Mazdayasni** Religion.
7. The religion, as propagated by Zoroaster, is about 9000 years old.
8. They were as real as you and me, except that their **physical and spiritual strengths** were far, far more superior than any human on earth, today.
9. **Sudreh and Kushti** are the 'golden weapons' - **Zarenumant Soor** - which help a Zoroastrian every moment to ward off and keep at bay all evil forces and bad vibrations.
10. No and Yes: for those Zoroastrians, who follow the **Path of Tariqat of Ashoi** throughout their lives, there is no reincarnation, for others, there is!

Q.16 After reading your answer to questions in Dini Avaz, July-August, 1979, I have been greatly disturbed. I refer to your passage, "The 'Kehrp' has gradually oozed out of the right or left toe, depending upon whether the individual is male or female, respectively". I have no right toes. Does that mean that my 'Kehrp' will remain trapped inside me eternally and my soul denied its 'space-ship'? I was wondering if you could advise me on what to do. Do you believe that I should have a sex-change operation and become a girl so that my 'Kehrp' can come out from my left toes, all of which are intact?

A. We enjoy an occasional leg-pull. And if this is one, we can reply in the same spirit. But then that would be perhaps dangerous, with someone who is already devoid of his right toes! However, in all sincerity we may say that readers like

Mr. Irani have not to worry one wee bit. What is meant when it is said that the 'Kehrp' starts flowing from the right or left big toe of a male or a female on the day of death, is that the 'Kehrp' which is the '**astral**' or the '**causal**' **body** and not the physical body, emanates from the **direction** and **area** of the right or left toe. Thus, whether one has toes or stubs, why, even if one's leg has been amputated, does not make a jot of a difference to the flow of 'Kehrp' just before death.

Reader Irani will make medical history and bamboozle scientists if he goes in for the so-called change of sex, simply because he has to no right **toes!** Atta boy, Irani!

Q.17 What is Staota?

A. Staota, rendered philologically means simply 'praise' or 'adoration'. But the word, like most other Avesta words is a technical word of very deep significance. It connotes the sense of "Colours produced by the vibrations of the Sound". The entire Avesta is formed in accordance with **Staota Yasna** ("the scientific laws of harmonic colours and vibrations working in the unseen planes or realms of the Universe"). This extremely important Law of Staota, which is the source and fundament of all vibrations in Nature, is most instrumental in the formation of the entire Avesta, i.e. the 21 Nasks. It is the **Fundamenta Universalis**. That is why in **Yasna Ha** 55.6, it has been said that, **Staota Yasna Yazamaidey, ya daata anghesh pouruyehya** = "We attune ourselves to the Staota Yasna which are the basic laws of primary existence".

Holy Prophet Zarathushtra, who was the only one on earth to thoroughly assimilate all these laws of **Staots**, formulated the First Word, **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**, as an exact replica of the Primeval Celestial Vibration of **Ahuna Var**, and from this **Yatha Ahu Vairyo**, the Prophet devised, with the help of the same **Staota** or Vibratory Colour-Laws, the **Gathas**, the **Yasna**, the **Vendidad** and all the Avesta, most of it unknown and lost to us, to form the **21 Nasks**.

Q.18 Why are the days, Ardibehesht, Adar, Sarosh and Behram invariably marked in red in our Parsee calendars?

A. Because **Ardibehesht Ameshaspand** and His 3 **Hamkaars** (co-workers), **Adar, Sarosh**, and **Behram** govern Fire. That is, their main function is to look after all the Fire Energies in Nature, with which our **Atash Behrams, Atash Adarans** and **Atash Daadgaahs** are directly connected. The red marking in our

calendars is a reminder that we should, at least on these days, visit the Fire Temples and perform our duties as true **Atash Parasts**.

Q.19 If a Kusti is very long, can one wear it after tying a knot in front?

A. No. The only knots that are to be tied are the reef knots in front, while reciting two **Yatha Ahu Vairyo** and the reef knots at the back, while reciting one **Ashem Vohu** during the **Kusti** prayers. There should be no other extra knot of any kind. The reason is not far to seek.

One of the main functions of the **Kusti**, which is made of white wool, is to **attract** the vibrationary colours (**staota**) created by the recitation of the efficacious Avesta prayers and to **retain** or **store** them, so that these Staota can then flow constantly in our **Aipi** (personal surrounding atmosphere). Thus, a veritable magnetic circuit is created in the **Kusti** itself, which does not allow any outside **Druji** to attack the body on which the Kusti is tied. If there is any disturbance in the free flow of this circuit, it snaps. No extra knot, therefore, should be tied on the Kusti.

Here, it won't be out of place to give a few practical hints to our readers. First of all, avoid using a **Kusti**, which is very loose. Use one of the right size. If against this your argument is that these days, **Kusti** tend to shrink after washing, our answer is that, **Kustis should not be washed often**. As explained again and again, they are the storage batteries of Staota created by your daily prayers. By washing them with water and soap regularly, the vibrationary currents stored therein get wiped off. Do you clean your magnetic cassette tape with a piece of cloth every other day?

It is most unfortunate, that many present day Mobeds are also seen wearing Kustis with extra knots in the front. This is invalid. The rites they are supposed to perform cannot have the potency and efficacy they are expected to have, if the very base or foundation of their prayers, the **Kusti** prayers are defective, if the **Kusti** tied round their waists have an extra, uncalled for knot.

Q.20 Parsees celebrate their birthdays in a strange manner, particularly the children: they light candles on a birthday cake and then blow them off to the chants of "Happy Birthday to You!" Should this be tolerated? What was the custom in ancient Iran?

A. A Zoroastrian is supposed to preserve and protect fire in any form anywhere. By blowing lighted candles on the cake, ignorant parents encourage their offspring's from a very young age to flout one of the most fundamental tenets of the Zoroastrian Religion. It is not surprising in modern times to find the parents themselves cocking a snook at the teachings of our Prophet. Why, we have seen in some Parsee households, even Westernised doddering dowagers indulge in such irreligious acts on their own birthdays! Your question, therefore, if this should be "tolerated" only provokes a couple of counter questions: What is the remedy? Who has the authority to prevent them from committing such sacrilegious acts? All we can say is, to each his own. Everyone of us will see TRUTH in the face at the dawn of the fourth day after death.

The late Dr. Sir Jivanji Modi, in his "The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees" states that, "No religious rites or ceremonies are enjoined as necessary on the birthday of a Parsee child After a bath and a new suit of clothes, the child is generally sent with some sandal-wood to an adjoining Fire-Temple.....Some of these who can afford, get a religious ceremony unknown as **Fareshta** performed.....According to Herodotus, 'of all the days in the year, the one which the ancient Persians observed most was their birthday'."

If any of our readers are able to throw light on the celebration of birthdays of children in ancient Iran, we shall be glad to use it in our future issues.

Q.21 I do not understand the unnecessary hue and cry about a very minor matter, viz., the **Sezda** of a departed Parsee by his non-Parsee friends. Why should the orthodox section of the community cling to its outdated and unfair practice of depriving any well-wisher of paying his homage to his departed friend or colleague? And now that we have seen a photograph of a Parsee corpse whose face was exposed for all and sundry to see, in, of all places, Navsari, let's hope that Parsees of Bombay will not lag behind in bringing about this much-needed change. Or do you have any hidden trump card up your sleeve to dispute this?

A. There is no trump card, which has so far been hidden by us. IIm-e-Khshnoom has already put all its cards on the table regarding this issue. But, we find that there are still a few souls in our community, who suffer from an incurable **Sezda**-mania, from time to time. But **Sezda**-mania is not their only complaint.

The malady goes much deeper: it is a Satanic trait to belittle, rundown and cavil at what the Avesta calls the **Dareganaam Upayanaam** = long-standing religious custom or practice.

One of such "long-standing religious practices" is that, no Zoroastrian woman in her menstrual period and any person belonging to another religion or professing another faith should look at a corpse of a Zoroastrian. If that happens, then the corpse is said to become "reeman", i.e., it becomes defiled by something. What that "something" is, we shall see presently. But, before that, at this point, it is possible that one question may have arisen in the minds of some of our readers, viz., once decomposition sets in a corpse, it is already said to contain **drujih**, then where is the question of the corpse becoming "**reeman**" simply because it is looked at by a certain class of persons? In answer, we shall say, here is the rub! The decomposition that sets in **and** the **druj** that arises **naturally** in a corpse are quite different from a corpse, which is declared "reeman", i.e. which is **defiled** and **desecrated** by something extraneous. For example, even a Zoroastrian collapsing and dying suddenly on the road where his dead body is looked at and touched by different people in the street, or a Zoroastrian woman dying during her menses or immediately after delivery, are considered "**reeman**" corpses. Thus, you will observe that "something extraneous" in case of a Zoroastrian dying on the road, is the **sight** and/or the **touch** of any and everybody, whereas, in the case of a woman in menses or confinement, the "something" extra is the **Druje-Boojee** which prevails in her at such times.

To understand adequately the delicate point of non-Zoroastrians not being allowed to see the face of the Zoroastrian corpse, one must first grasp thoroughly certain basic principles that the religion teaches. Firstly, it should be remembered that the souls of humans belonging to all the religions do not stand on the same footing and at the same stage in their spiritual evolution. In Nature, according to the Law of **Asha**, which means Divine Law and Order, human souls have been divided into 5 fundamental groups, and each group of souls gets the religion according to its status and grade, for which its own leader, called Prophet, is ordained and given. With the advent of time, the groups get divided into sub-groups of souls.

Secondly, in every human being, there is a constant **circuit** of his own thoughts - even sub-conscious - rotating without fail. In this main **circuit**, there is one major **sub-circuit** which

pertains to the faith he has in the religion in which he is born. (Even in an atheist, who, according to Nature, is born to parents professing a certain ancestral religion, this circuit is always there, however sub-consciously it may be rotating). This circuit of faith is automatically created or produced out of the "Raye" or Light of the Soul. This Light constantly falls on the mind of that individual, which mind is connected with every atom of his body. So, this religious faith of the individual is automatically radiated on account of the moving circuit of the individual's thoughts, in the form of very subtle electro-magnetic emanations through that person's eyes! These radiations are in Avesta called, **Fraado**.

These **Fraado** are mentioned in the **Avan Yasht** and **Nyaish**. There is a purpose behind this. One of the functions of **Avan Yazad** is to govern waters of all kinds in the Universe. Now, it is common knowledge that a human body is made up of nearly 75% water. The innermost, sub-conscious thoughts of an individual are indissolubly mixed with the water or liquid element that keeps flowing in the body. The result of this blend of water-circuits and circuits of the innermost thoughts in the body, is the **Fraado** from the eyes, specifically called **Wanthwo Fraado** in Avesta.

Take a simple example. Two unknown persons meet each other. At the very first meeting, something happens, something somewhere clicks or doesn't click and one likes the other or doesn't like him. So also, we have the classic instance of "Love at first sight". What does all this show? That the wavelength of the radiations emanating from the eyes of one person either harmonises with the wavelength of the radiations belonging to another person, i.e. it is "in phase" or it clashes with its opposite counterpart, i.e. is "out of phase". This is the crux of the whole matter under discussion.

The next question that arises is, how can one say that the wavelengths of the radiations emanating from the eyes of two Zoroastrians are almost alike, whereas those between a Zoroastrian and a non-Zoroastrian are always different? The answer is to be found in the fact discussed above, that every individual belonging to one group of souls or one religion has a constantly moving circuit of inner, sub-conscious thoughts which is directly connected with the faith he is born in! **This is the main cause of the wavelengths of radiations emanating from two individuals belonging to two different faiths, being at variance.**

If you are with, us till this point, you will appreciate that when a non-Zoroastrian looks at a Zoroastrian corpse, he unwittingly and for no fault of his own, aggravates and exacerbates the **Nasa-Druj** that is naturally produced in the dead body. The electro-magnetic radiations from his eyes create disharmony in the environment surrounding the Zoroastrian corpse and defiles the atmosphere created there by the **Sachkar** ceremony.

The custom and practice of requesting non-Zoroastrians to refrain from seeing the dead body of a Zoroastrian are centuries old. And they have been practiced without any non-Zoroastrian taking umbrage or feeling slighted, because they know, understand and appreciate that no offence whatsoever is meant. Why then are some 20th century Parsee wiseacres, screaming for reforms (and ultimate regression, of course!), hell bent on raising an unholy rumpus among different communities? Wouldn't it be more advisable for them to first find out the cause or reason for this scientific, centuries-old tradition and explain it to their non-Zoroastrian friends, who may express a desire to pay their last respects to a departed Zoroastrian whose dead body they may want to see?

Here one point needs to be emphasized. There seems to be a lamentable misunderstanding in the minds of even those who should know better, about the **Sezdo** being permitted to non-Zoroastrians before the Sachkar is performed. **NO!** Even before the **Sachkar Sezdo** by non-Zoroastrians is not permitted. Traditionally, the moment life ebbs away from the body of a Zoroastrian, he should not be touched or look at by a non-Zoroastrian or even by a menstruating Zoroastrian woman. Even today, in a hospital, when a Parsee dies, a curtain is raised round his body, so that no non-Zoroastrian doctors or nurses can see it. If they do, then such a corpse, too, is considered "reeman". The reason is that, the moment death occurs, the **drvaao** inside the atoms of the physical body produce **Druj-e-Nasu**. On the principle of "like attracts like", the latter's counterpart, which is outside the physical body, immediately rushes to the aid of its conferere, which is inside the body. If at such a time, a non-Zoroastrian were to look at the face of the dead Zoroastrian, the Druj-e-Nasu multiplies a number of times, thereby rendering the Sachkar ceremony which is performed later, virtually invalid.

What we always fail to understand is why do those who want to bring about senseless changes in our religious traditions, think we have any axe to grind in upholding our glorious

religious heritage? What selfish motive could there be if we cherish the precious legacy left to us by our wiser and far more spiritually advanced ancestors? **The only purpose for our reiterating that Sezdo of a dead Zoroastrian cannot be performed by anyone other than a Parsee Zoroastrian, is that it is the soul of the deceased that ultimately suffers and its progress towards the Chinvat is seriously affected if non-Zoroastrians are permitted to see the dead body, near whose head, the soul waits for three nights before take-off!** A word to the wise is enough, we hope!

Q.22 I intend marrying a Parsee girl, who has a quaint and an unwomanly hang-up: she does not want a child in any circumstances! Since Zoroastrianism has always advocated procreation and to my thinking, is against the use of any birth control artificial devices, what do I do?

A. "To have or not to have", that's the question. For a moment we thought we were running an agony column! But we are glad that our reader has sought religious clarification. There may be others who may be facing a similar problem.

In the Zoroastrian Religion, every one from the lowest to the laity to the highest Dastur, is enjoined to marry - except of course the special class of holy Zoroastrians, the Magavs, who have no need to marry. According to the Vendidad, Ahura Mazda prefers a married person to a single one and one with many children to one without any.

In the Pahlavi Dinkard, there is a passage which says that, "for the event of 'Tan-e-Pasin' (the Resurrection), the main duty is that one should marry at the appropriate time **and desire children** and continue one's lineage."

Why, in the **Asheervad** ceremony at the time of marriage, among the blessings recited is, "May you enjoy the union, **procreate children** and have a long, united life"

In our **Ahmai Raeshcha** and **Atash Nyaish** prayers, we ask for a child, which has natural intelligence and wisdom (**Asnaamchit Frazaintem**).

In His Infinite Wisdom, omniscient Ahura Mazda had a plan when He created the Universe. The aim in his plan was to send to the Earth all those souls who had some deficiency in them. They were sent down ensconced in humans, animals, plants, etc., to get rid of their deficiency. One of the main instruments or agencies through which His Aim and will for human beings

could be fulfilled is marriage. When a man and a woman unite according to religious tenet and custom, they can produce a **Farzand** and be a co-worker and a collaborator in fulfilling the Will of Ahura Mazda.

The very word **Farzand** means, "to make progress after being born." The word is made up of **fra** = forth, forward + Avesta **Zan** = to be born, i.e. to take forward after birth. What or who does the child 'take forward'? Where does it 'take forward'? It takes its parents forward, i.e. after their death, it helps them cross **Chinvat**. The saying, "Child is the father of Man;" has an echo in the word **Farzand**! So also, the Gujarati saying, **Baap Kartaan Beto Savayo**, has the same original connotation. **Thus, it is the duty of the Farzand to help bear the burden of his parents and help them cross the Bridge, by having all the necessary rituals performed after their death.**

Here, it is very interesting to note that in ancient Iran, during the Peshdadian period, the famous **Pahlavans**, who were the forerunners of Prophet Zarathushtra and whose souls were very exalted, when they married, they produced children who always had an edge over their parents. For example, the greatest of the epic heroes, Rostam, who had married Tehmina, had brought forth a son, Sohrab. When, in the famous battle between the father and the son, the latter lifted his invincible father off the ground, the **Yazatas** blessed **Rustom** saying, **Zehibaad e Pahlvaan-e-Zamin!** "How good were your deeds that you have now a son who has bettered his father! Surely your life has been worth living!"

Just before the advent of our Prophet, there were the **Maazaini daevas** (demons) who wished that not a single human should live on this earth. What they contrived to do was that with the help of their powerful **Agha-Manthra** (Black Magic incantations), they brought about certain changes in the Anasars (atoms) of humans and made the air so dense that no **homo sapien** would be able to breathe and life would be extinct. **Our reader's prospective spouse and others like her who think nothing of the indiscriminate use of various contraceptives or even perhaps an occasional abortion, are the modern version of the Maazaini demons, who want to thwart Ahura Mazda's aim of allowing deficient souls to incarnate, evolve and reach salvation.**

All he can do is to persuade her to get rid of her stupid whim and ponder these three points:

1. Unless souls incarnate on earth, **Frashogard** (final renovation) of the Universe is impossible. **Those Zoroastrians who prevent these souls from incarnating commit a heinous sin by acting against the laws of Nature.** They are only interested in satiating their carnal desires.
2. Every Zoroastrian male is enjoined to practice **bunak pasbani** (preservation of the nucleus and essence of his seed) and not fritter away or waste the tokham.
3. Both the man and the woman lawfully joined in wedlock have a Karmic debt and obligation to be fulfilled with the soul that is to incarnate in their home. Trying to avoid its advent will only help in their debt with the soul to be born, being carried forward with compound interest to the next birth!!

It is lamentable that while every woman yearns for motherhood and even the world's most confirmed libber doesn't object to it, some snooty Parsee girls entertain such wild, anti-Zoroastrian thoughts!

Q.23 We Parsees are not supposed to bury a dog. But when we have a dog as a pet, what are we supposed to do with its dead body? If we bury it in our compound and after 6 months we wish to construct a building in that area, how do we purify the earth? If we exhume the carcass after months, what do we do with the remains thereof?

A.

As they say in Gujarati, "**Sau Waatni Ek Waat:**" **A Zoroastrian is enjoined never to bury a dog.** Parsees having a penchant for keeping canine pets would do well to pay heed to this injunction given in the Vendidad.

Fargard (Chapter) 13 paragraphs 8 to 49 give details about the life of certain species of dogs, the responsibility of mankind towards them and how dogs are the co-workers of human beings (like roosters) in bringing about **Frasho Gard**. Thereafter, from paragraph 50 to the end of **Fargard** 13 is given the account of the death of a dog. This information is just by way of interest.

For our purpose, however, the vital **Fargard** is 3, wherein in paragraph 8, we are told that, when Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda, which is the second kind of earth which is displeased (this **Fargard** opens with 5 causes which please the earth and 5 causes which displease the earth), the Lord replied: "That earth in which corpses and carcasses of dogs lie buried through the year:" The important two words used are **Sairey nikantey** = "they lie and rot there". When this happens, among other

things, that portion of the earth becomes lifeless and loses its essence.

Here, it is interesting to note that the dead bodies of men and dogs are such that they should never be buried, while there are other animals like **Varasiaji** which can be buried. For explanation, one has to remember the role of **druj-e-nasu**, which is a **vibrant, living force** that goes on increasing at an extremely fast pace as decomposition sets in. In the case of human beings, particularly devout Zoroastrians who have practiced **druj-parhez** throughout their lives, the **druj-e-nasu** attacks with double vigour and force, after **death**. This druj multiplies very fast and remains for a long time inside the dead bodies. The same principle applies to dogs, who also throughout their lives keep **Druji** at bay. On the other hand, animals and, birds like **gospands** and parrots can be buried, because after death, as in life, the **druj** inside them is very feeble and the spirit (**Mino**) of the earth has the power of make it impotent.

It is therefore, incumbent on every Parsee who keeps a dog as a pet to think of a suitable, open place at a certain height, far away from human dwellings while the dog is alive, so that after death, the dog can be taken to that distant place to be exposed to the Sun's rays and the gaze of nature's scavengers like vultures, crows, etc. It is no use arguing that in today's cities it is not possible to do so. Even in a metropolis like Bombay, this can be done. One can, for example, earmark an open, secluded place on the outskirts of Bombay's suburbs for the dead dog to be laid to rest.

Again, in Fargard 7, paragraph 48 onwards we come across statements like, it takes nearly 50 years for a corpse which is simply buried straight in the earth, to be pulverised to dust. But, if it is placed in a coffin and buried and a tomb or a mausoleum is built on it, may take anything from 100 to 150 years for the body to be reduced to dust! Or, as stated in paragraphs 50 to 59 of the same **Fargard**, Prophet Zarathushtra enjoins his followers, as per the instructions of Ahura Mazda to dig open the graves and expose the corpses to the Sun's rays. **Graves and tombs have been called the dwelling-places of Devs.**

In Vendidad, **Fargard 6**, paragraph 1 onwards, we are told that if land is polluted by **nasa druj** emanating from a dead body of a man or a dog, that land becomes polluted and defiled and remains so for at least a year and it cannot be used for any

productive purpose for that period. Normally, a defiled land is purified in the following manner (paragraphs 6 to 9 of Fargard 6): it should be cleared of all **nasa** (nails, hair, blood, etc.) and exposed to the rays of the Sun for long periods. We may even suggest sprinkling **Ab-e-Zar (Taro)** on that part of the land for some time.

As for the last part of the question, the answer by now should be obvious. The remnants of the dead dog should be taken to a distant place, as mentioned above, and exposed to the Sun's rays on small mound or a hillock.

Q.24 How can a Zoroastrian meditate while he is praying and when he is not praying?

A. True meditation and control over thought processes are quite difficult to start with. We are sure many of our readers must have experienced a paradoxical phenomenon: bad and immoral thoughts assailing their minds when they pray! One need not worry about it at all! In this **Kaliyug** or **Hashemi** age, the dark side of Nature is invariably more powerful. But that should not deter one from continuing reciting the Avesta.

There are various ways in which one can improve one's power of concentration and meditation: you may try keeping an oil lamp a little away from you while you pray. If it is not difficult you can bring the image of any celestial object like the Sun, Moon or a Star before your mind's eye. Easier still, before you begin your prayers, you should think and concentrate hard on the various **Yazatas** in whose honour you are going to recite the **Nyaish** or **Yashts**. For example, if you are to recite the **Khorshed-Meher** Nyaishes, before starting the prayers, express a strong mental desire that **Khurshed** and **Meher Yazads** shall come to your succour. In Gujarati, we call this, '**Naiyat Baandhwi**'.

But, the best and the most efficacious way of controlling our thoughts in these bad times is to bring before our mind's eye the image of that **Martazi-e-Martazian, Kai Lohrasp Shah**. According to Ustad Behramshahji, in Demavand Koh, the Saheb Delans have the image of Kai Lohrasp before them to keep their thoughts on the golden path.

Incidentally, the picture of Kai Lohrasp, who was the first person in the world to monitor the thought-vibrations of every single particle in Nature, is the one you see in photo-frames with the picture of (what's supposed to be) the Prophet, although the image of Kai Lohrasp is very crudely drawn.

Our main point is that, if you keep Kai Lohrasp's picture before your mind and concentrate and think that, "just as Lohrasp Shah used to read the thought of even an atom, he would read my thoughts, too", you will be able to gradually avoid bad thoughts. You will require tremendous patience to carry out this experiment. But once you are able to conjure up the image of Kai Lohrasp in a split second, as soon as some bad thought assails your mind, without making any effort, you will start **feeling** the difference.

Again, when you pray, try to segregate a corner in your home and stick to that daily. So also, keep reciting your prayers at a specific spot, which you select, in an Agiary or an Atash Behram.

Q.25 During our life span on earth, we are supposed to collect our "Anasars" from the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. Could you give us the list of vegetables, animals and minerals having connection with the Burjishi Jirm, so that it becomes easy to realize what minerals, vegetables, etc. should be used by us, whose souls are linked to the Burjish Jirm?

A. Some of the important **minerals** connected with the **Jirm** of Jupiter: Gold, Silver, Copper and Iron.

From the **vegetable** kingdom:

Grains, Pulses, & Vegetables: Cauliflower, Cabbage, Wheat, Gram-dal.

Flowers: Rose, Mogra, Gulchhadi, Gulmohur, Marigold.

Fruits: pomegranate, Apple, Figs, Sugarcane, Sweet Lime, Orange, peach, Apricot.

Trees & Plants: Sandalwood, Babool.

From the Animal kingdom: All animals having a preponderance of **Gav (gospndi)** element: goat, lamb, cow, bull, parrot. (The above list is neither exhaustive nor complete)

Please note that when we talk of "using" animals, it's not meant in the sense of eating their flesh. In that sense, the meat of goat, lamb and chicken only is permitted.

Also, note that in the times we live in, which are rightly described as the "small Kyamat", one should not be **infatuated** or **obsessed** with these matters. For example, if the food placed before you does not consist of items connected with the Burjishi **Jirm**, you should **not** push away your plate but eat with

satisfaction, contentment and humility. So also, if you have to use some synthetic material like plastic vessels and utensils, because of their cheaper price, you should do so and not incur debts to buy copper utensils!

The golden rule: Try and make constant efforts to use and utilize what belongs to the Burjishi **Jirm**. If helpless, grin and bear it!

Q.26 In many 'Khordeh Avesta' books, in the "Khorshed" and "Meher Nyaishes", where there are passages, which are to be recited according to different 'Gaahs', it is stated that, a passage beginning with "Ima Raochao" is to be recited either in the "Rapithwan Gaah" or the 2nd "Haavan Gaah". Now, we know that during certain months of the year, in the absence of "Rapithwan" functioning on earth, we continue to recite the Haavan Gaah. Then, how can "Rapithwan" be equated with the 2nd "Haavan" as far as this passage in the "Khorshed-Meher Nyaishes" is concerned?

A. This mistake of confounding "Rapithwan" with the 2nd "Haavan" has crept in many "Khordeh Avesta" books. But, it has been rectified in almost all the "Khordeh Avesta" books published since the days of Ustad Behramshahji - from Ustad's own book, "Khordeh Avesta Ba Tariqat" to Dr. Chiniwalla's classic "Khordeh Avesta Ba Khshnoom Tawil" and the Vegetarian Society's 'Khordeh Avesta'.

In the 2nd "Haavan Gaah" you should continue reciting "Vohu Ukshya Manangha..." and not "Ima Raochao...", which is reserved only for the 'Rapithwan Gaah'.

Q.27 What does the Kusti remind us of? Why is it tied on the waist three times round?

A. The three rounds of our sacred thread girdle are reminiscent of the three stages of the mighty Plan of Ahu, called **Ahunavar**. These are, (a) creation of world and souls; (b) exile of souls to the mortal worlds for their Reformation; and (c) repatriation of these souls to the immortal worlds after **Frasho-Kereti**, their spiritual Renovation. This linking of the chain of the immortal and mortal worlds, suggests that we have to remain faithful to our noble Faith, and be as warriors in the army of Ahura Mazda, ever fighting against all kinds of vice and leading a truthful, pious life.

The object of tying the Kushti on the waist is that thereby the **Khoreh** is kept attracted to the middle of the body. Besides, the 12th **Chakra** (plexus), which is at the navel, is connected with the planet Jupiter (Burjis) under whose influence is the Zoroastrian Faith. The Kushti on the waist helps in drawing the holy currents of Jupiter to the plexus at the navel. These holy currents of Jupiter are helpful in bringing about the counterpoise between the good and evil desire-forces.

Another reason why Kushti is enjoined to be tied on the waist is to prevent the currents of the 13th plexus or psychic centres connected with the genitals, from rushing and overpowering the higher plexuses of Nos. 12, 10 (on heart), 4 (higher up on the forehead between the two eyebrows) and 1 (on the crown of the head), so that the interior currents from the lower plexuses may pass directly to the ground.

Thus, by keeping the Kushti on the waist like a belt, we are bound to serve as soldiers in the spiritual army of the blissful Creator, fighting against the Satanic forces. [The above answer has been taken from "A Manual of Khshnoom" by P. N. Tavaria].

Q.28

A. **"No religion is greater than truth:' Please comment.**

This statement is quite true and the Zoroastrian Religion considers truth to be one of the corner-stones of the evolution of the soul. The actual explanation for this could run into pages, but for the present, we shall consider only some of the important points.

Every human being has an inherent tendency to speak the truth, because of the voice of conscience in him. But, in most cases, this voice is stifled by yet another organ of the body, namely the tongue. It is rightly said that though the tongue does not have a single bone, it is instrumental in breaking many bones!

The fact is that, of the four elements of Nature - Fire, Air, Water and Earth - the tongue's 8th **Chakra** (plexus) is made of only the Earth elements. The result is that it becomes grossly material and materialism means the seat of Ahriman or his cohorts. It is this materialistic, earthy **Chakra** that prompts an individual to tell a lie. Thus, there is an eternal conflict between the tongue and the conscience going on in the individual every minute, and to save his or someone's skin, he lies.

Again, Zoroastrianism insists that truth should be told **for the sake of truth**. This can only be done if the 8th **Chakra** of the tongue is under control all the time. The earthy element in it

should be suppressed as much as possible. All this can be done by following as best as one can, the path of **Tariqat** (spiritual disciplines) and keeping the Sudreh and the Kusti in trim continually.

Also, it is incumbent on a Zoroastrian to know and learn the truths of Nature and then direct his living accordingly.

Always speaking the truth and trying to live a life parallel to the truths of Nature is a fundamental desideratum of the Zoroastrian Religion. Ancient Iranians were renowned for three things: truthfulness, archery and horse-riding, not without reason.

Q.29 A friend of mine is in a fix. After years of having the **Muktad** ceremonies performed for 18 days in a Bombay **Agiary**, he has now been informed by the trustees and the **Panthaki** of that **Agiary**, that the next **Shahenshahi Muktad** will be only for 10 days and not 18! Will you let me know in detail, if the **Muktad** days are 10 or 18, and if so, why?

A. We shall try and give a detailed answer as suggested. Incidentally, some years ago, a suit was filed against the trustees of a Bombay **Atash Behram** on this very issue. A thousand pities that some of the **Dasturs** wrongly testified that the **Fravardegan** days, as they should be called, because they are the special days for the **Asho Farohars**, are 10 and not 18. Why they were wrong and how, by reducing the **Fravardegan** days to 10, our trustees and priests bring about **Karmic** retribution for the entire community, is what we shall presently consider.

The main plank of all those who argue that **Muktad** days are only 10, is the three Avesta words, **Dasa Pairi Khshafano** occurring in **Karda 13** in the **Fravardin Vasht**, where it is stated that, during the **Hamaspahmaedem Gahambar**, which comes towards the end of the year, the **Fravashis** come to the **Veesa**, desiring help and they move about here for 10 nights. This is the literal translation of part of paragraph 49 of the **Fravardin Vasht**, done by some scholars.

For our purpose, the operative words are **dasa** and **Khshafan**. Now the latter has not been interpreted in the right context by our Parsee scholars. **Khshafan** or **Khshapan** means either "darkness" or "night". In the **Fravardin Yasht**, the word **Khshapano** can be taken as Genitive singular of **Khshapan**, meaning, "of, or belonging to darkness", i.e., "evil"; or if it is

taken as Accusative plural, it could mean "nights". Here, the "darkness" or "evil" alluded to, means the darkness that descends on earth, because of the sins committed by mankind.

The word **dasa** = 10. But, according to Numerology, it also indicates, "completion" or "perfection". The word '**pairi**' = surrounding, i.e. to surround. **At the end of every year, because of the unmitigated sins of mankind, the forces of Khshafan are formed, which surround the earth, virtually, strangling the life-breath of the earth! To counter these ultra-powerful Satanic forces of that time the Fravashis of diverse grades - from the yazatic to those of ordinary departed souls, come down (Veecharenti).**

Thus, in para 49, the words **dasa pairi khshafano** are to be taken in this technical sense. Elucidating these words beautifully, the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla says, "those are highly esoteric technical terms, which demonstrate the factual knowledge" about the Fravashis.

It is the misfortune of the Parsee community that some latterday Dasturs and Parsee scholars miserably fell for the pseudo-claptrap of superficial translations of this very pertinent paragraph and almost overnight, torpedoed the age-old tradition of celebrating the **Muktad** for 18 days!! We say this with conviction, because, our modern scholars fail to answer two pertinent questions that arise: (1) How does one explain the recitation of this very paragraph of the Fravardin Yasht in the **Baaj** ceremony of the departed soul on its death anniversary? And (2) How does one explain the millenia-old tradition of the Parsees of celebrating the **Fravardegan Hingaam** for 18 days?

We shall answer both these questions and vindicate the wisdom of our spiritually advanced forefathers. According to the religious doctrine, the year is divided into two groups of festive occasions (**hingaam**). Both these groups of Time are governed by **Khordad Ameshaspand**. One is called **Yaairya** and the other **Sared**, who are the co-workers of **Khordad**. The death anniversary of the departed is a part of the **Sared hingaam**. At this time, i.e. on the day of the **baaj**, **Fravashi** of the departed soul wants to take the soul towards the **last - 6th Gahambar**, the **Hamaspahmaedem Gahambar**. Therefore, she, that is the **Fravarshi**, wants to break and destroy the evil **Kerdar** (the feminine apparition), viz., **Khshafan**. Thus, the death anniversary day of the departed soul becomes a veritable mini **Hamaspahmaedem hingaam** for the departed when the

Khshafan has to be destroyed. For this reason, the same paragraph of the **Fravardin Yashti**, which refers to the **Fravardegan** days, is recited in the Baaj ceremony, on the death anniversary (the Baaj day). What does this show? That "dasa pairi khshafano" does not only mean moving round on 10 nights, but something much more!

This automatically brings us to the next question: that, if it does not only mean 10 nights, how did the tradition of 18 nights or days come about?

We reiterate that the souls of the departed Zarthostis come down to earth for only 10 days during the Fasli Fravardegan period. They come ensconced in the vehicles and custody of the highly exalted Ashaunam Fravashis. These 10 days are a part of the Fravardegan or Muktaad Hingaam. There are also reasons for the number of days being 10 for the coming down of the souls. But, we won't go into the details of that aspect, while answering our questioner. Our main question is, whether the Fravardegan Hingaam days are 10 or 18, and if so, why.

We have already seen that the Khshafan or darkness or evil envelopes the earth during the last days of each year. To reduce and destroy this Khshafan, the Ashaunam Fravashis (the combined Fravashis of the seven Ameshaspands and of the perfected souls of the numerous yazatic intelligences) come down. These Fravashis of the Yazatic forces remain here for the first 10 days plus 7 days of the New Year, which belong to the 7 Ameshaspands namely, from Roj Hormazd to Roj Amardad! The Ameshaspands replenish Khurshed Yazad whose material form is the Sun, with the benevolent yazatic currents. Therefore, these 7 days of the Ameshaspands in the month of Fravardin are as important as the first ten days of the Fravardegan days! And the invocation of the Ashaunam Fravashi during these 7 days is done with the words, Daham vispesha.... During these 7 days, if the barehs (behdaans) are still there, and if the Muktaad ceremonies continue, to be performed, the Fravashis of the souls of the departed are immensely pleased.

One point still remains to be clarified. The first 10 days plus the next 7 days make 17 days in all. The 18th day is the Ashishwangh Roj of the last month, Spendarmad, which is the day for meditating on the "Invitation to the Fravashis" and the souls who'd be coming the next day. In Gujarati, its called, "lien na Mithra Karvano Divas".

Thus, the 18 Fravardegan days, i.e. days, which destroy darkness and evil and spread plenty and prosperity all round consist of:

- a) Roj Ashishwagh of Mah Spendarmad - the Invitation Day.
- b) Panj-i-Keh or the 5 small days of the Fravardegan Hingaam.
- c) Panj-i-Meh or the 5 big days of the Fravardegan Hingaam.
- d) The 7 days of the Ameshaspands - from Roj Ohrmazd to Roj Amerdad of the month Fravardin.

Q.30 These days many Parsees feel happy that our youth visit Agiaries and Atash Behrams in large numbers. Is this a sign of the revival of religion?

A. It's a moot point. One thing is, however certain. Most of our youths, not to mention the elders, unfortunately do not know how to present themselves before the Atash Padshah. For their guidance, we give below a few relatively simple "do's" and "don'ts".

1. Before setting out for the place of worship, ensure that you have had a bath, at least.
2. Have a different set of clothes for the Fire Temples. Do NOT wear clothes you use for any other occasion.
3. If you can leg it to the nearest Agiary or Atash Behram, avoid using any mode of transport. If you have to use a bus, train, or taxi, see that you take care to jostle or brush against as few people as possible without making a show of it. For example, if on your way to the Fire Temple, you find a bus or a train that is overcrowded, avoid taking it. The next one could be less crowded. (Here, we are talking of practical steps and not of the purely/strictly Zoroastrian enjoiments, because we are living in highly polluted times. According to the strict Zoroastrian principles, one can't enter an Atash Behram without undergoing the purificatory ablution).
4. In many Parsee homes, one sees the shocking spectacle of clothes, to be worn to an Agiary or Atash Behram placed carelessly on beds, and at times, what's unpardonable, on beds indiscriminately used by women in their menses! This should be strictly avoided!
5. Avoid going near the Fire altar in your office clothes. This may sound bewildering to many of you, who do so. But, once you know how you carry the outside pollution and spiritual contamination and offer them along with your sandalwood stick

to the exalted "Padshah", and once you grasp the lofty significance of the purification, consecration and enthronement of the Atash Adaran or Behram, you will hesitate to enter the portals of a Fire Temple even with a new set of clothes!!

6. It's a shame that some youngsters brazenly enter the hall near the Sanctum Sanctorum without performing their Kushti padiaav. Ensure that lawful Kushti Padiaav (Washing of hands, from the elbow down to the tips of the fingers, the face and the feet if they are not covered with socks), followed by reciting the Kushti prayers and untying and tying the Kushti is carried out.
7. See that the head is adequately and properly covered before you enter the compound of the Fire Temple. Although a Zoroastrian is supposed to keep his head covered all the time, if you want to remove your headgear, do not do so until after you have left the precincts of the Agiary or Atash Behram.
8. Do not use perfumes, colognes, scents, etc. while visiting the Fire Temple.
9. Avoid carrying anything like a bag - plastic, leather etc. when you are face to face with the Padshah, particularly if these bags, packets, etc. have been used elsewhere.
10. Remember always that you are going to be in the presence of the Lord and King Spiritual. So go in utter simplicity and humility.

Q.31 What or Who is the "Dev" we come across in our Zoroastrian texts? How does one exorcise "Devs" from our lives?

- A.** Pardon us, sir! But surely one does not "come across" or bump into 'devs' in our sacred Avesta texts! In fact, these are the places, they (the 'devs') will avoid like the plague! You mean, the references to 'dev' in the pejorative/derogatory sense in our Avesta and Pahlavi/Pazend texts....

In the Zoroastrian scriptures and literature, it is stated that the biggest enemy of the entire universe is dravao/daeva. Dravao is the Nominative singular of dravant or dregvant. The root in these words is important. It is Avesta dru = run away, to attack, to be callous, etc. Thus, dravao has the meaning of "to run away from the command of the Lord", "to revolt against the Almighty", etc. How does this trait of rebelling, revolting come about? The answer lies in the term, daeva. This word has two sources or roots: "dub" = to deceive, and to be deceived, and "deev" = to shine.

Thus, the word daeva means to be deceived because of ignorance and in that ignorance lies that knowledge (paradoxically as it may seem) which leads its owner astray. A daeva is, therefore, deceived and, in turn, deceives another.

That's why it has been allegorically said that a daeva has knowledge of only 4 of the 6 Gahambars (the stages of evolution of the Universe beginning with (a) the seed of Creation; (b) the sprout of Creation that grows from the seed; (c) the growing of that sprout; (d) the 'fruits' that come up from the grown-up sprouts. These the daevas are aware of. Because of this knowledge of the 4 Gahambars, the daeva shines, i.e. he is illuminated by the knowledge.

But, he just does not know how to eat the 'fruits', i.e. how to tackle destiny, whom to give what in life, what to take from others (the Law of Cause & Effect or Karma). The Gahambar or the evolutionary stage of the Universe, which has this mystery buried in it, is the 5th Gahambar, that of Kharid-Frokht, lit, buying and selling, i.e. fulfilling one's Karmic obligations. The 'dev' has no knowledge of this Gahambar. all he knows and believes in is to steal the fruit. That's why in Avesta, he is described variously as Hazangha = dacoit, Tayu = thief and Un-Ashava = one away from law and order. He is also dubbed a Saasta = tormentor, i.e. an enemy of truth and justice. Because of these highly adverse traits in them, the daevas throw hurdles in the way of Nature, whose final goal is Frasho-Kareiti or the glorious Renovation. That is why the 6th Gahambar of Ereto Keretan cannot take place, or is postponed. To have the 6th Gahambar, one should cross the 5th Gahambar. These things the 'Devs' are ignorant of.

Even after considering the definition of daeva, one is not able to imagine what a daeva is like. To comprehend the daevas, one has to consider their four phases or aspects.

1. The first deals with the Dark Forces of the Dark or Black side of Nature. These forces govern and rule the Dark side of Nature. Vendidad Chapter 19, paragraphs 43, 44 and 45 mention these Blacks. They are called, **Daevanam Daevo** (devil of devils) and their names are also mentioned.
2. The 2nd phase of daeva comprises the sprites and the spirits called Arvahi - the evil fairies, the wicked jinn, etc.
3. This phase concerns all of us who have physical, corporeal bodies! Our bodies and minds are full of passions (greed, envy, anger, lust, etc.)

4. The sum of the above three phases combine to form the 4th phase, which in Yasna 29.2 (Gatha Ahunavaiti) is called Dregwodebish Aeshemem, which takes the form of, say, Turbra-tur, the gigantically monstrous cloud of the Dark Side.

Of the above 4 phases, the first two always go together. They were kept in check and control by our most exalted Prophet.

Today, we, who are mostly concerned with the 3rd phase and about which our questioner wants to know in the second part of this question, can keep the 'dev' or 'druj' at bay, by strictly following the practices and procedures given by holy Prophet Zarthosht. They are: Follow always the path of Righteousness (practice truth for the sake of truth); practice druj-parhez (abstinence from druj) every minute of the day, by not only wearing a valid Sudreh and Kushti but performing the Paadiav-Kushti as and when they should be performed; recite the Avesta and Pazend Manthra regularly, particularly the Farajyat prayers; and do all you can to preserve and protect the sacred institutions of the Zarthoshti Deen, like Atash Behrams, Agiaries and their alaats and the Dakhmas.

(The above reply, on the Daevas, except for the last paragraph, has been based entirely on the superb exposition given by the late Dr. F. S. Chiniwalla in Gujarati)

Q.32 Khshnoom followers are accused many times of claiming to possess the only right knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion. It is also asked, how is it that in the thousands of years of Zoroastrian history, only in the last 90-100 years has a group of Zoroastrians claimed that they are the only custodians of the true knowledge.

A. This fallacious thinking should be treated with the contempt it deserves. It stems from an ignorance about the history of the Zoroastrian religion. The very word Khshnoom is an Avesta word, occurring twice in the Gathas themselves. Like all Avestic technical words, which have 9 different interpretations in different contexts, Khshnoom (and not Khasnoom as many Parsees, lazy on their palates tend to pronounce), too, has nine meanings. However, the original meaning is, "the true inner rejoicing or *ecstasy* arising out of the knowledge of the esoteric side of the holy Mazdayasni Religion. Even in Sanskrit, there is a corresponding word, "Brahmanand Vidya".

Let alone the Zarthoshtis living in ancient Iran, even our ancestors led by Mubedan Mubed Nairyosangh Dhaval, an

Ashavan of a very high order and his other Ashavan colleagues had "Khshnoom" with them! These highly advanced, holy souls not only had the original grammar of Avesta, Pahlavi and Pazend (today, we have neither the grammar of Avesta nor of Pahlavi/Pazend. Sanskrit grammar is applied to translate Avesta texts and Persian/Arabic grammar is used for the translation of Pahlavi texts!), but also had the science and knowledge of Ilm-e-Stot from which Manthra could be composed, and of the tawil or the inner exposition of the Manthra.

Even today we have evidence to prove what has been said above. The Sanskrit Ashirwad ceremony is not a result of a mere translation of the Pazend Ashirwad ceremony, but is a Manthra composition created by the knowledge of Stot. We'll take only two words from it.

The famous Avesta word, Nidaa-Snaithishem, is normally translated by philologists as "eschewing weapons". But the Sanskrit of Neryosangh has the word, Bhavatchhedam, which would mean, "one who is released from this incarnation". When Ustad Saheb Behramshahji first interpreted the Avesta word nidaasnaithishem in this sense, the late Kharshedji R. Cama, the father of Iranian philology in India, immediately exclaimed, in a meeting of Scholars, that, "Now, at last, I am able to understand why the Sanskrit word bhavatchhedam is used for the Avesta word, nidaasnaithishem!".

Similarly, for the Avesta word Upayan (as in Dareghanaam Upayanaam..) the Sanskrit word used is Shikshaa A-drashya Rupini. Such an interpretation is impossible without the knowledge of Stot yasna, because in this technical Avesta word is embedded the meaning of "tradition" (of rituals, practices, etc.), which is clearly reflected in the Sanskrit interpretation. Unfortunately, the vagaries of time took their toll and the fantastic treasure of Khshnoom, which Neryosangh and his Abeds had nearly 1200 years ago, began to disappear.

When, in the early part of this century, with the first-ever alien "marriage" in the Parsee community and with the spiritual decline of many of its members enchanted by the superficial glamour of materialistic progress of the West the unflinching, firm faith of the Parsees in their religion began to be shaken, the Saheb-Delans of Demavand Koh decided that it was time the veil of grossness, that had fallen on Khshnoom through the centuries, be lifted just a little, so that the wayward Parsees would get an inkling of the glory and splendor of the pristine Zoroastrian Religion.

The only mistake that many Khshnoom enthusiasts make is to make it appear that Ilm-e-Khshnoom is a school of thought or philosophy of the Zoroastrian Religion. Hence they style themselves, "Khshnoomists". This is not so. Ilm-e-Khshnoom is that beatific knowledge and wisdom, which reveals the esoteric truths and secrets of Nature, which, in turn, is the Zoroastrian Religion itself. Anyone, therefore, who criticizes or belittles Khshnoom, ridicules the Zoroastrian Religion and insults Prophet Zarthosht himself!

Q.33 In the past issues of Jame Jamshed Weekly, there had been articles on out-of-body projections, where an individual can project his 'body' out of his physical body. I have heard that many saintly persons, including our own Dastur Azar Kaiwan, were able to be present at more than one place at the same time. Could you give the Zoroastrian explanation for this phenomenon?

A. At the outset, one should distinguish between different phenomena: (1) astral projection and (2) bilocation.

Astral Projection or Out-of-Body projection (OOB) is "the natural, spontaneous, accidental or deliberate exteriorization of the astral body." In all cases of astral projection, there is a tenuous rapport between the two bodies through the astral chord by which they are joined. In the case of an accident or a surgical operation, a person has the experience of autoscopy, "self-seeing", in which the conscious astral body sees the inert physical body.

Bilocation, on the other hand, is the phenomenon attributed to saints and other holy persons of being bodily in two or more places at the same time. Pythagoras, Empedocles and other Greek sages are credited with practices that allowed them to enter a state of dissociation at will.

In the Zoroastrian literature, there is an Ustadi jargon called, Khalle-Badan, which is used in two senses - broad and narrow. In its broader sense, it is used for deliberate or experimental astral projection, although a further difference is shown between projection of the soul and projection of the Kehrp. During sleep, while one is dreaming, the soul (Urvan) leaves the body and travels long distances within a twinkle, but the Kehrp does not leave the body. This can and does happen to all of us. But in the case of astral projection in the broad sense, that is experimental projection after occult development, both the soul and the Kehrp leave the physical body. The distance these two can travel (while

the silver astral chord keeps them connected to the physical body) is upto what is technically called the Arvahi Alam (the realm of sprites). If they are able to go further, and in case of very advanced souls, right upto the Planetary World (Hasti), their Kharenangha (literally, lustre) also accompanies them.

Again; there are different kinds of Kehrp that are projected. The common variety of Kehrp projection is the invisible Anasari (made of 'elements') Kehrp, which is projected, depending on the Varna or Jirm to which one belongs.

In the 2nd category come those holy, highly advanced souls who project the Kehrp of their Mithra (thought-forces). It is this type of Mithra Kehrp projection that is called bilocation or multiple location. This multiple location, which means being present simultaneously in more than two places can be most effectively practiced only by the Zarthoshti abeds, saleks or holy sages. The maximum number of places at which the Kehrp of the Mithra can be present is nine. The classic and the best example of an exalted personage who could effectively project his Mithra Kehrp was, of course, Kai Lohrasp Shah. How the other holy persons during his time could see his Mithra Kehrp in the sky, as it were, can still be visualized by us in Shah Lohrasp's pictures.

We reiterate that the extent and quality of projection of the Kehrp of Mithra depends on the Varna or Jirm of the individual. For example, while the Burjishi Jirm advanced soul can practice astral projection or multiple location for anything upto 6 months at a stretch, others can practice them for a maximum number of 40 days only.

Dastur Hazrat Azar Kaiwan bin Azar Gushasp bin Azar Zarathushtra, to give his full name, could project himself at 9 different places simultaneously. The spiritual strength and power necessary for such a high degree and level of projection is called Ilm-e-Hevla. This power can be used only when one is capable of exercising Khshathra Vairya (righteous will power).

Q.34 Sir, we got it from the horse's mouth the other day that in the film, "A Quest for Zarathushtra", Zoroaster is being depicted as a Prophet, because he got the revelation from Ahura Mazda while he was meditating near a river. The question is, before the river incident, did not Zoroaster reveal or manifest his prophethood in any other way? Isn't this a very naive way of projecting our Prophet, like Buddha having got his revelations under a tree?

A. Were it just "naive", we wouldn't have minded. But this is downright false. It all stems from blindly following what has been dished out by some Western writers. Even if we were to take everything written in the Pahlavi Zarthosht Namah literally, we couldn't have come to this quaint conclusion. The Dinkard, which contains the Zarthosht Namah, begins the delineation of the life of Zoroaster from the descent of the Glory (Khvarenah) on him. But, we shall mention briefly only those instances, which prove beyond doubt the earmarking of Zarathushtra in Nature as the Prophet of Prophets much before his going to the allegorical River.

1. The Glory that goes out from Ohrmazd to various stations in the spiritual realms and to different holy personages, until it reaches the wife of Frahim-rvana-Zoish, who was the maternal grandfather of the Prophet, who gives birth to Zarathushtra's mother, Dogdo. This reference to the Glory fleeing from one person to another, all the way from Ahura Mazda, points to Nature's process of purification through the Glory, of the womb of the Prophet's mother of "Druji-e-Buji", menstrual flow, to ensure immunition from material/carnal desires. The demons were thoroughly discomfited by this Glory.
2. Lord Ohrmazd passed on the Farohar of Zarathushtra to his parents through a Hom (Haoma) plant, "through miracle-producing tillage", by the Ameshaspands.

Incidentally, when at one stage in the evolution of the Universe, the Ameshaspands formed the material of Zarathushtra and seated his Farohar (spiritual essence) within, Zarathushtra appeared to the archangels as having a "body" like their own (Ham Kehrpah), which means that the Prophet's body was lustrous like that of the Ameshaspands. It was then that Ohrmazd discussed with the Ameshaspands about the achievement of perfect purity and spiritual wisdom and of good aura by the Prophet's mother. The Lord further stated that since Zarathushtra had a "body" similar to that of the Ameshaspands, he would be invisible on earth and hence it was necessary to invest him with Asna Vir powers (powers, which, among other things, enabled him to assume a material body at will). for this reason, steps were taken to make both Pourushaspa and Dogdo paragons of purity.

3. The manner in which the spiritual essences (Farohar, Baod, Ravan, i.e. soul, etc.) and the subtle body of Zarathushtra descended on the earth - through Khordad and Amardad, to

the holy clouds and thence to the earth as rain-water, which caused the plants to flourish- the mixing of the milk of those six miraculous "cows" with the Haoma juice and the drinking of it by Pourushaspa and Dogdo, which resulted in the glory, Farohar and the material essence of Zarathushtra coming in the two parents - all these clearly indicate the pre-natal elaborate planning and care taken by Nature for years and years to bring forth the most unique soul in aeons, that of Zarathushtra.

4. For 3 days before Zarathushtra was born, the village became all lit-up naturally.
5. Zarathushtra laughed at birth. As Prof. Jackson puts it, "The tradition is recorded by Pliny, who observes in his 'Natural History', Zoroaster was the only human being who ever laughed on the same day on which he was born. We hear, too, that his brain pulsated so strongly that it repelled the hand when laid upon it, as presage of his wisdom".

The fact remains that the holy Prophet's soul being free of sin, was not subject to the vicissitudes of life, for he took birth as the greatest Saviour, and hence he laughed at his birth.

6. Many other miracles take place thereafter, which we need not go into here. Just one instance of the conversation between Pourushaspa and the arch-demon, Durasrub, however, will be sufficient to highlight our point, that much before the Prophet "meditated" by the "River", he was ordained by Nature to be the exceptional one on earth - a Yazata in the garb of a man! Pourushaspa asked Durasrub, "When you were brought before my son, why were you looking from him to the deepest depth and to the sublime height?" Durasrub replied, "I was looking for a long time from him up on high to something sublime, then from him to the radiance and glory that he (Zarathushtra) possessed together extending up to the Sun, the radiance and glory that had no end:'

A thousand pities that when even the demons Durasrubo and Bratrugrish were cognisant of the very exalted position of Zarathushtra, our latter-day film-makers with a battery of "theological advisers" at their command, want to drag Him down and make a caricature of Him! They have yet to learn of Nature's way of doing things.

Q.35 In Agiaries and Atash Behrams, one sometimes find devotees performing their Kushti near the Kebla (altar) or near a well. Some also snap their fingers, particularly when

they come across the word "Ahriman" or "Angra Mainyu" in their prayers, all round them, irrespective of whether others are standing nearby. I resent this attitude. Could you tell us what is the proper way of doing all this?

- A. You are right in resenting this attitude. Kushti should not be performed near the fire altar or near any well, because while lightly cracking the Kushti, the devotee recites such Manthra as would exorcise Ahriman and his hordes. Thus, the bad magnetic currents from the body are passed through the tassles of the Kushti to the surrounding ground. Such evil radiations should not be allowed to be carried forth to the Atash Padshah or the well. The same principle is to be applied if there are people around you. You should not crack the Kushti or snap your fingers and pass on your putrid magnetism to others. Instead, you should just look at the floor below you in the Northern direction, so that the evil magnetic currents pass through the eyes, which are the most important outlets for the flow of our bodily emanations. '

Q.36(a) No one is allowed to perform the Kushti ceremony in the prayer hall before the Atash Padhsha. Why?

(b) I stay on the ground floor of our building. On the first floor, Parsee families reside. But on the second and third floors, some non-Parsees reside. Is it okay to have a Jashan ceremony performed in my flat on the ground floor? If yes, what precautions should I take?

- A. (a) We have combined the two questions. Well, the answer to the first question is that, not only are we not supposed to "do" the Kushti near the fire altar, but we cannot perform the Kushti even very close to a well. The reason is quite simple. While untying the re-tying the Kushti, we are supposed to crack it lightly and gently in the North, as we recite certain Pazend Words in the "Ohrmazd Khodai" prayer ("Ahriman awadashaan, door awaaz daashtar, lad sheekaste baad." "Ahriman dewaan". "Doosh Paadshah awaadashaan baad." "dushmata, doozukhta, doozavarshata"). Actually, only the lower half of the Kushti should be lightly cracked. One need not swing round, raise the hand in a huge arc above the head and come down with a bang that would make Diwali crackers sound like sweet music to one's ears! The Kushti is to be very lightly cracked in the air somewhat like a whip, so that the residual powerless vibrations

caught and collected in it, are cast off through the tasseled extremities (the Laris and the Kushti becomes fit for imbibing new ones).

It is then obvious that if such bad vibes are shaken off near a fire altar or an 'altar' of water (well, lake etc.), the pure and holy atmosphere gets polluted and the circuits around the fire altar are disturbed, resulting in the creation of a disorder, which is sinful for a Zoroastrian, who is supposed always to follow the Law of Asha (Divine Law and Order).

Incidentally, if there are many people around you while you perform your Kushti, do not start cracking it all round you and pass on your evil vibes to others, unless, perhaps, it's your main-law!

- (b) We live in difficult times. We cannot afford to be too finicky about practicing the exalted Zoroastrian religion in its ideal form, particularly in a megalopolis like Bombay. The best course would be to have the Jashan ceremony performed in an Agiary or an Atash Behram. However, if there are family members, who are unable to go to the fire temple and yet wish to be present at the Jashan ceremony, it may be performed in your ground floor residence, provided your flat is free of women having their menses, and it is otherwise always kept free of any major spiritual pollution.

If the ceremony is performed in the house, the place or spot where it is to be performed should be cleaned and purified, by the application of Taro after it dries up, by swabbing it with water. It should be ensured that no non-Parsee is around to witness the ceremony. But what is difficult and yet must be ensured too, is that the prayers recited by the Mobeds should not be heard by anyone except Parsee Zoroastrians.

Q.37 Is it compulsory for Zoroastrians to eat mutton with Dhansak on the Chaharum day? Is Kabab necessary?

- A.** Really, sir! That's the limit! Only a couple of months ago, one clever by the half writer accused us of being 'Kavab changs!' Parsee, thy name is gluttony! It is possible that Parsees, who deprived themselves of meat dishes till the Chaharum day, after the death of a relative, conjured up the idea of breaking such a self-imposed meatless fast by hogging mutton on the 4th day, to compensate for the deprivation for about 72 hours!

But jokes apart, we think that this custom goes back to the days when Parsees, because they could not comprehend the

great Pasu pach ceremony, deemed it fit to offer fat to the Atash Behram fire on the chaharum day (See Dini Avaz Vol.5 No.2, March-April 1980).

Q.38 In one Agiary in the Fort area, the other day, we saw a priest put a copper vessel filled with water on the ash of the Atash Dadgah! Is this permitted?

A. Why, we have heard that even eggs are being scrambled on that Dadgah! But lets begin from the beginning. Today, office goers in the Fort Area of Bombay, who come in the afternoons to perform their Kushti and pay their respect to the Adaran Padshah, think that the Dadgah is their personal property, which can be potted with the way they like! For example, both men and women take the chamach and start patting the ash in the censer round the fire of the Dadgah. While we admit that they do it with respect and that their intentions are good, in reality, they are unnecessarily creating a violent disorder by tampering with the Dadgah.

Before we explain why we say so, we appeal to all our readers, who in their work outfits touch the Dadgah Afarganian (censer) as if they were priests with a duty to tend the fire, not to go anywhere near touching - distance of the Dadgah fire.

We make these mistakes because we fail to understand the status of a Dadgah in an Agiary or an Atash Behram.

The very fact that specific names have been given to the various grades of Fire, viz., Atash-e-Behram, Atash-e-Adaran and Atash-e-Dadgah, means that these fires are different from ordinary fires. The 3-grade fires are living entities, persons, possessing power and authority given by Nature, after their consecration, and having the responsibility of protecting the corporeal world.

So, we, Zoroastrians, are first of all duty bound to show the utmost respect and regard for their Divine status. These 3-grade Fires are alaats (spiritual weapons) having authority. In and around this trio, there are ever present, the Yazatic currents and forces. There are magnetic circuits in the Aipi (surroundings) of the 3-grades of Fire, which in Avesta are called the Rathwya Chakhras.

The Atar-e-Dadgah itself is the conscience of the Atar-e-Adaran in an Agiary. The biggest and most exalted magnetic circuit in all these three grades of Fire is around the edge of the censer on the top where the ash is. Only a qualified priest, therefore,

can go near it and touch it. These Dadgaahs are consecrated ones, unlike the home or hearth fire.

As regards warming water or boiling eggs on such a consecrated fire, we shudder to think of the consequences for those stupid people who create such violent disorders in the magnetic circuits, and the fate that awaits their souls on the Chinwat!.

Q.39 Is it a sin to kill noxious creatures (khrafastras), like snakes, scorpions, cockroaches, lizards, etc.? Also do we have to kill such Khrafastras?

A. No, it is not a sin to kill a khrafastra. It may be pointed out that the Avesta word, khrafastra has a broader meaning than a mere noxious creature. It is the opposite of Gospand or Gava. These are the two fundamental elements intertwined in the Anasars (atoms) of all human beings. While the element of Gava belongs to the white side of Nature, the Khrafastris element belongs to the dark side. It is the duty of all men to transmute the khrafastris element into the gospandi element, during their lifetime.

In a khrafastra (noxious creature), this element considerably dominates the gospandi element, which is negligible.

Yes, we should eliminate and exterminate the khrafastras from the face of the earth, as they represent the dark side of Nature. The principle of Ahimsa here would be entirely misplaced.

Q.40 Why are Khurshed and Meher Nyaishehs considered to be farajyat (compulsory) prayers during daytime?

A. Khurshed and Meher Yazads are the inseparable cosmic twins. With a slight variation, we can say that Meher Yazad is the alter ego of Khurshed. Meher, Avesta Mithra, has many meanings - 9 to be exact. One of them is the 'rays', both visible and invisible, of the Sun (Khurshed). Putting it in an esoteric sense, Khurshed Yazad, who resides on the 4th Asman or the 4th plane of the planetary world performs various functions one of which is to bring down the Asar-i-Roshni (the benevolent currents of Ahura) through his rays. These rays with the Asar-i-Roshni are then sent down to the world of Nisti - evanescent world -, which is under the jurisdiction of Meher Yazad, who has his 7 Dakhyus or planes in the Nisti. Thus, Khurshed Yazad passes on the cosmic rays from the planetary world of Hasti to the invisible evanescent world of Nisti, which includes our earth. Khurshed and Meher

Yazads, therefore, are inseparable co-workers. When the devotee recites the Khurshed and Meher Nyaishes, he brings about the union of Khurshed and Meher Yazads in the vibratory circuit of benevolent forces around him.

Khurshed and Meher Nyaishes have always been considered fundamental compulsory prayers, because the Manthra, which they contain; have the inherent propensity to preserve and protect the world. The devotee desires that by reciting these two Nyaishes, he purifies the 16 plexuses (Chakhras) of his invisible/subtle body, the Kehrp, so that Ahura Mazda can dwell in them. He also desires that he develop contentment and peace of mind, so that he would always remain healthy, physically and mentally. So just as the world's "backbone" is strengthened by Khurshed and Meher, the devotee's "backbone" (physical body), too, would strengthen.

The devotee further desires that every human being should consider the rising of the Sun (visible Khurshed) as one of the biggest blessings of Ahura Mazda, and that the purpose of the blessings is fulfilled quickly. It is, therefore, compulsory to recite the Khurshed-Meher Nyaishes, so that the devotee himself may contribute his mite to the glorious function of Khurshed and Meher Yazads, of taking the Universe to its goal - salvation (Frasho Kereiti)! A devout Zoroastrian is not supposed to partake of even a drop of water in the morning, before reciting the Khurshed-Meher Nyaishes.

Q.41 **In the Jam-e-Jamshed of the 28th January 1984, Mr. M. R. Masani had appealed to 'Jame' readers to become members of his "Society for the Right to Die with Dignity", the main purpose of which is "to relieve needless human suffering, particularly in the case of those terminally ill". In short, it is "voluntary euthanasia". Mr. Masani gave two examples of Vinoba Shave, who refused medication at a certain stage of his illness, and Arthur Koestler, in support of his plea. The question is, is it okay for Parsees to go for such euthanasia?**

A. Why single out the Parsees? Even others should think twice before taking the plunge in the Great Beyond. At the time of birth of every human being, what is fixed or destined is the total number of breaths he will take during the present incarnation. How he spends or fritters away his breaths is his affair. If he leads a normal, sober life, he will not unnecessarily expend his life-breaths. In short, a person has to complete that

many destined life-breaths on earth. That is one aspect of the issue.

The other pertains to the Law of Karma or the Law of Cause and Effect, by which a person has to undergo pain and suffering, whether physical or mental. In all this, there is the Law of Limit and Justice operating always.

If now we combine these two aspects - the fixing of the number of breaths for every individual and the operation of the inexorable Law of Karma, the issue at stake does not appear fuddled any more. If voluntary euthanasia is permitted, the individual will free himself from physical agony and pain, no doubt. But what about the torment that awaits his soul? There is nothing on earth compared to the agony of the soul after death. "Voluntary euthanasia" is only a euphemism for suicide. It is against the Law of Asha or the Divine Law and Order. It is said that if a person commits suicide and cuts short his life, the balance of the breaths that he would have taken had he remained alive, multiplies ten times after death. In other words, suppose a person had 10,000 life-breaths left over when he voluntarily decided to kick the bucket. His etheric body then has to be in a state of suspended animation, till such time as he would have completed $10,000 \times 10$ times = 1,00,000 breaths! In the process, the soul suffers.

We appreciate and are well aware of the fact that in case of certain terminal diseases, the pain is so excruciating and the discomfort to both the patient and those around so intolerable, that there is a yearning for death. Yet, we leave it to our readers to decide the best course of action. All that we can do is to point out what would happen in Nature, in case "voluntary euthanasia" was practiced.

Q.42 Sometime ago, I heard that in a Jashan ceremony performed under the auspices of a Parsee family, not only were non-Parsees invited, but the Chashni was distributed to them. The host, when questioned, explained that he had invited both Parsees and non-Parsees, who belonged to the low income strata of society, as the very purpose of Chashni is to distribute it to the poor and needy, Is this correct?

A. Briefly put, a Jashan ceremony is not a Pav Mahal ritual, i.e. it need not be performed only in the Pavis of a fire-temple. However, a temporary, makeshift Pavi has to be created for the performance of a Jashan. Which means, purifying the floor with

water, placing of a double covering as Paivand on the washed floor and lighting an Atash Dadgah along with an oil lamp thereon. Once the ceremony begins, the area becomes a quasi Pavi and gets connected with the Pav Mahal of Nature, attracting the currents of Asar-e-Roshni (currents of Boundless Light), which move in concentric circles, creating an electromagnetic circuit. These concentric circles, called in Avesta, Rathwya Chakhra are always the main targets of attack by Ahriman. He will succeed in his nefarious task if per chance the Jashan is performed in such a way that it is subject to the magnetic vibrations and radiations emanating from the eyes of those whose frequency / wavelength clashes with the Rathwya Chakhra and circuits of the Jashan ceremony. In short, the Jashan ceremony, or for that matter, any Zoroastrian ritual, is vitiated by the magnetic radiations emanating from the eyes of non-Zoroastrians.

Chashni, which comes from the verb chashidan = to taste, Guj. chakhvun, is called Myazda or Mej. This comprises selected fruits, Drun, etc., and is placed near the Dadgah while the ceremony is conducted, whereby the Myazda is imbued with the benevolent Divine Currents and the blessings of Ahura Mazda. Every item in the Chashni is charged with subtle electromagnetic currents, as well as has absorbed the vibrations of the Avesta Manthra recited by the priests. Non-Zoroastrians, therefore, cannot partake of it. Why, even a Mazdayasni Zoroastrian cannot partake of it, if he doesn't eat it lawfully, i.e., after observing the rules of partaking of a Chashni, according to Yasna 10.15. It's a shame that some members of the white-turbaned gentry had advocated such un-Zoroastrian practice, of distributing the contents of a Chashni to hospitals or to the poor! Chashni must be eaten by those who have organized or paid for the ceremony in which the Chashni has been consecrated.

Q.43 In one of the past issues, you had stated that meditation in our religion is interwoven in our Avesta prayers. However, you will appreciate that we pray only for a limited time. What about the rest of the waking hours of our lives, when we would like to meditate? Isn't there any method by which we could do it?

A. Yes. But even that "method" involves a part of the prayers. The Avesta word Mithra has many meanings. One of them is attuning one's thoughts to the though-forces prevailing in

Nature. Every Avesta Manthra has a built-in Mithra. To the best of our knowledge, there is at least one short paragraph taken from the 7th Karda of the Yasna Haptanghaiti or Yasna 41.4, which contains one of the finest and most exalted thought for meditation.

This short Manthra-cum-Mithra is recited and meditated upon by the soul of a human being while being born. If, during lifetime, a Zoroastrian keeps meditating on the powerful thought-forces of this Manthra, he is bound to accelerate his spiritual progress.

The pertinent paragraph begins with the words, **Hanaemacha Zaemacha Mazda Ahura...** For the transliteration of these Avesta passages, you are requested to open Karda 7 of the Haptan Yasht from the Khordeh Avesta, and, sit back and enjoy the exquisitely beautiful translation and the tawil, as done by the one and only Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla. It is said that the late Dr. Chiniwalla used to meditate constantly on this pregnant passage.

The translation-cum-tawil is as follows: "O Mazda Ahura! We shall be competent and victorious". For what? "For obtaining long life". So that, just as You who are happy and enjoying ecstasy, so may we be blissful! It is our ardent desire that this wish of ours will be fulfilled".

"We shall always be Your devotees and shall never flinch from reposing our faith in you. Thou art truly omnipotent, O Wisest among all the exalted Existences! You will surely grant me bliss! Thou art the One Who will give us long life and the ecstasy that goes with it. Truly will I be qualified for that and attain victory. O omniscient Lord! When Thou art above me, why should I bother about the threats of that wicked one (Ahriman)?" "So, O Lord, We are Thy servants who lawfully intone Thy praise and recite the Manthra. We do not mind taking birth again and again, so that every time we shall recite more and more Manthra. The result will be goodness.

"So, O Lord! Thou who hast given the boon to religious people like me, that boon or reward You yourself will give us both for this world and the next. This will enable us to reach the zenith of Ashoi, which is with you".

Q.44 We were about to go to the press, when we received a query from our 10-year-old reader, Farzad Palia. He writes, "Will you please explain the significance of the Kusti Lars?"

A. Sure, Farzad! And many thanks for the interest you have shown in this subject.

If you look at your Kushti, you will find that at the two ends of an untied Kushti, there are three tassel-like extremities. Each tassel is called a Lari, and each knitted portion consisting of three Laris is called a Lar. Thus, there are in all two Lars. They remind a Zoroastrian of the two important laws of Nature: (1) Why man comes to this evil material world and (2) What is his final glorious destiny.

The 6 tassels or Laris of the two Lars represent the 6 Gahambars or the stages of evolution and progress of a soul. At present, all our souls are passing through the fifth Gahambar or stage of progress of the soul, wherein man has to fulfill his obligations and duties with other human beings, and even animals, plants, minerals and metals.

You will notice that the extremities of the Laris (tassels) are left un-knitted, so that when the lower half of the Kushti is lightly cracked in the air, the bad vibrations caught in the Kushti through various sources, are cast off through the extremities and the Kushti becomes fit for absorbing new, healthy vibrations.

Q.45 Why is it that Parsees, who constitute one of the smallest communities in the world, have perhaps the largest number of post-mortem rituals, compared to any other religion in the world? Do the non-Zoroastrian souls progress in the other world faster with a lesser number of ceremonies?

A. The quantum of rituals has nothing to do with the number of followers of a religion. At one time, during the heyday of the Sassanian rule, Zoroastrians are believed to have numbered 33 crores!

The question, therefore, boils down to, why does the Zoroastrian religion have such a high proportion of elaborate after - death ceremonies? The first point to be considered is what is the purpose of such a ceremony? The answer briefly is that before the dawn of the Chaharum, the main ceremonies like the Sachkar, the Geh Sarna, the Sarosh rituals and the special Chaharum dawn rituals reduce the force and power of druje-nasu that keeps attacking the soul and the corpse - the latter before it is taken to the dakhma. The small yashtegan (prayers recited from the Khordeh Avesta for 3 days where the soul is) helps the semi-conscious soul to attain peace and tranquility and to develop its consciousness. The Geh Sarna ceremony

helps break the "thought-shell" or "desire-shell" of the corpse, that is invariably formed after death. The Sarosh rituals help reduce the load or pressure of the forces of darkness on the soul and on the consciousness of the soul. Finally, the Chaharum dawn ceremonies help the atoms and particles of the body to disintegrate faster to enable them to be delivered to Daham Yazad, who is the custodian of such anasars.

The post Chaharum elaborate rituals for years for a Zoroastrian help release the Bund-e-Darosh, the shackles of the soul, and to put him on to his work of liquidating the Kerdar (the subtle form that encircles the soul, as a result of his thoughts, words and deeds - good or bad - during life time) sooner with the required energy and zeal. Nature will come to the Ravan's aid, but the ceremonies expedite the work and assist Nature a great deal.

In sum, our ceremonies go a great deal towards the amelioration of the soul on the invisible planes after death, relieving the soul from its concomitant Dravao (ignorance of the soul). It is our ceremonies, which help a soul recognize the Dravao, as the soul gradually reaches the stage of full consciousness (Anushehi) and begins to practise devotion to Ahu.

We have so far briefly seen why we have such elaborate and complex eschatological rites and rituals. Now, we come to the pertinent part of the question, why only our religion has a legion of such ceremonies.

For this, we have to consider first the fact that the 5 major religions of the World correspond to the 5 Varna or groups of souls, which are graded in Nature. Coming straight to the point, the soul of a Zoroastrian belongs to that group, which has attained maturity, compared to others, which are still either in infancy or in the adolescent stage. As such, while a spiritual guide comes to receive the souls of other religions, immediately after death, the matured Zoroastrian soul has to reach Chinvat entirely on its own steam! Such a soul is a Rathaeshtar, a warrior, which is capable of fighting any evil, hurdles and stumbling blocks on its way to Chinvat. The extensive Zoroastrian rituals assist the soul in clearing the traffic jams and tangles en route.

Moreover, according to a Natural Law, "the higher the status, the greater the responsibility", the Zoroastrian Soul, which during lifetime, is supposed to practice abstinence from druj (ultra-physical putridity) by following various spiritual disciplines,

is more viciously attacked by the druj-e-nasu, which is born and nurtures fast after death, than the souls of non-Zoroastrians who have not to practice the tariqats of Ashoi. Hence, the need for elaborate after-death rituals for Zoroastrians.

Q.46 Is there such a thing as a better time to die? If so, which is the right time for the soul to leave the body?

A. We wish we could regulate the time and decide at what hour one should kick the bucket! However, it is believed that one is lucky if one gives up the ghost around sunrise. Strangely enough, if you check the time of death of most Parsees in the Parsee press, you will find that very very few pass away at that time! Of course, there are obvious advantages: For instance, the soul gets three "Srosh" recited for it for three nights; secondly, the Haavan Gaah being the longest among the day Gaahs, if a Zoroastrian dies in the early part of it, the Sachkar ceremony can be conveniently performed in the same Gaah, which is as it should be, so that the druj-e-nasu doesn't get a chance to become more powerful. All this should not lead anyone to commit harakiri at sunrise!

Q.47 Should "Patet Pashemani" be recited at the time of the Navjote ceremony? Do our departed ones benefit by the recitation of "Patet Ravan-ni"?

A. Patet is an integral part of the Navjote ceremony. It's tragic that modern mobeds do not realize the importance of reciting it on this occasion! When a child born of bast-e-kustian parents undergoes this ceremony the ordained priest showers Nature's blessings on it by reciting the Manthra and by endowing it with the Sudreh and Kusti. The child becomes a new joti, that is, a co-worker of the Mazdayasni Zarthoshti religion. It then automatically becomes the co-worker of Spenta Mainyu or the White side of Nature.

At this time, the priest prays that the sins for which this child had to be re-born, may not recur in this incarnation. One should not fall for the facile thinking among many Parsees that a child of 7 or 9 can hardly be expected to commit heinous sins as listed in the Patet. What is essential is that although the child's age is so young, its soul's age is thousands of years old!

Our departed souls are busy "liquidating" the Kerdar (the animated phantom of thoughts, words and deeds during one's lifetime, that surrounds the soul) on the lower stages of Chinvat.

It is enjoined on their relations to recite the Patet Ravan-ni as often as possible (except during the 10 days of Muktd). It should be remembered that just because a person dies, the subtle connection between him and his near ones is not severed. The contact exists through genes (tokham), blood and ushtaan (life-breath). This relationship is the strongest between father/mother and children.

In the said Patet, the refrain that appears in most of the Kardas is, (so and so) ander gunehgaar buud ested, that is so and so (the deceased), if he has committed the following sin, mun az andarz farmaaney pedaambari jadangoyi hum dadestaani (so and so, child of so and so) jaadehra pa patet hom, i.e. according to the injunction of the Prophet I, attract the consciousness of the departed soul, through my contact of genes, blood, etc., towards me and recite this Patet prayer to clear the way of the soul on Chinvat.

Q.48 Could you please let us know, step-by-step, how the Sarosh-Khshnuman Kushti is to be recited?

A. First, the paadiav has to be performed. While reciting Khshnaothra Ahurahe Mazdao, Ashern Vohu (I), wash the hands (in downward movement from the elbow to the tips of the fingers), face and feet, in that order. Wipe them dry in the same order.

Then begin the Kushti prayer:

1. Khshnaothra ahurahe Mazdao. Ashern Vohu - 3.
2. Fravarane Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish Veedaevo ahura-tkaesho (recite the relevant Gaah). Sraoshahey Ashyehey, Takhmahey Tanu-maanthrahey, Darshi-draosh, Aahuiryehe, Khshnaothra Yasnaicha. Vahmaicha Khshnaothraicha Frasastyaecha, Yatha Ahoo Vairyo Zaota Fraa Mey Mrootey, Athaa Ratush Ashaat Chit Hacha, Fraa Ashava Veedwao Mraotoo. Sraoshem Asheem Huraodem Verethraajanem Fraadatgaethem Ashavanem Ashahey Ratoom Yazamaidey.
3. Ahunem Vaireem Tanum Paaiti (3 times) Yatha Ahoo Vairyo - 1.
4. Kem-na-Mazda.. (entire prayer to be recited). [While reciting, Nemaschaa Yaa Armaitish Ijhaachaa, the male must put his right index finger to the navel, face the ground and bow to Spendarmad Ahmshaspand; the female must use her left index finger.]
5. Now untie the Kushti silently.

6. Then recite Khshnaothra ahurahe Mazdao Ashern Vohu - 1 followed by Ahurmazd Khodaae..., followed by the usual two Yatha Ahoo Vairyo, one Ashem Vohu and Jasa Mey Avangahey Mazda. (While reciting the latter, hold the front reef knots of the Kushti with the two index fingers.)
7. After that remove the fingers from the knots and hold the Kushti from the sides with two hands and recite:
8. Yatha Ahoo Vairyo - 2.
9. Yasnemcha, Vahmemcha aojascha Zavaracha Aafreenami, Sraoshahey Ashyehey, Takhmahety, Tanu - Manthrahey, Darshi - draosh, Ahooiryehey, Ashern Vohu - 1.
10. Recite Ahmai Raeshcha (complete), followed by Hazangrem Baeshazanaam (complete), Jasa Mey Avangahey Mazda, Amahey Hutaashtahey Huraodahey (complete) and Kerfeh Mozda...(complete).

Q.49

Many Zoroastrians frequently inquire, how to recite the "Srosh Yasht Vadi" at night for the departed soul?

A.

After the Aiwisruthrem Gaah has begun (72 minutes after sunset), first recite the obligatory (Farajiyat) prayers of that Gaah namely, Kushti, Srosh Baaj, Aiwisruthrem Gaah, Srosh Yasht Vadi, Atash Nyaish and Doa Naam Setayesh. Then, preferably after performing the Kushti, recite the Srosh Yasht Vadi once again. Finally, the Nirang of the Yasht will undergo a change, and should be recited as under:

Khshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdao - Ashern 1. Gurzh (or Varzh) Khureh Avazaayaad, Sarosh Asho, Tagee, Firozgar Baad; Destageerey Rawaan. Destageerey Ruh here recite the name of the deceased with his/her father's name, prefixed by the word, Behdin, Osta, Osti or Ervad, as the case may be.

Repeat this (from Destageerey Ruh) 3 times.

Continue with, Hamaa Tun Paashaan, Ashaoaan Asho Negehdaar; Roz Mah Va Shabaan Harney Iraniaan Va PaoiryuDakeshaan, Gehaan Daamaan Behdinaan, Taajiaaney Bust-eKustiaan, Zarthushtiaaney Neekaan Va Paakaaney Hafta Keshvar Zameen Sarosh Yazad Panaah Baad.

(Now recite the name of the deceased with his father's name) Sarosh Yazad Panaah Baad! (3 times). Ashem Vohu - 1. (The whole Nirang should be recited 3 times)

We need hardly emphasize the supreme importance of reciting

this Sarosh and Patet Ravan - ni for the departed Zoroastrian soul daily, whether you perform other ceremonies or not.

Q.50 There is hardly anything in the translation of the Ahunavad Gatha that makes it incumbent to be recited at the Geh-Sarna ceremony of a departed Zoroastrian. Yet, traditionally, this Gatha (Yasna Ha 28-34) constitutes the Geh-Sarna ritual. What is there in it that makes it obligatory for two Zoroastrian priests to recite it at the time of the funeral?

A. There are many points to be considered in this answer. The first is that our Avesta prayers are not mere literary compositions. Avesta is not also a mere language or a dialect, but it's Manthra, loosely translated as "prayers". These Avesta Manthra are made up of different grades. What Holy Prophet Zarathushtra first composed as 21 Nasks was called Fshusho Manthra, the highest grade of Manthra. Today, we do not have a single entire prayer, which is composed in Fshusho Manthra-form. Most of our Avesta prayers belong to the Manthra Spenta grade. It is said that the Prophet's own 21 Nasks of Fshusha Manthra had in its last, 21st Nask, contained 33 chapters, in which were given details about how Manthra could be composed, their grammar, etc. Our Prophet taught this esoteric science to his selected disciples. Such Manthra could be understood and interpreted correctly only if one is well versed in Ilm-e-staot - science of Vibratory colours.

The second point to be remembered is that Manthra Spenta can only be composed by Saoshyants (saviours specially appointed by Nature). Thus, the Gathas we have at present are not the one's composed by our Prophet in Fshusho Manthra form, but by Dastur Aderbad Marespand, the last Saoshyant. The Saoshyants do not compose something, which is new, but base their Manthra on the Manthra Spenta composed by the disciples of the prophet according to the changing times. In this manner, before Dastur Adarbad, other Saoshyants had arranged their Manthra. But the basis is always the Manthra Spenta of the time of Prophet Zoroaster.

Thus, today, the Gatha Ahunavaiti recited in a special way near a Zoroastrian corpse belongs to the category of Manthra Spenta. The commandment to recite this Gatha with the Khshnuman of Sarosh is that of the Prophet, but its composition is that of Dastur Adarbad. Such Avesta are technically called "Azaintish", and in the Sarosh Yasht (Vadi) there is a mystic taawil of the Gatha. This is called Gatha "mut azaintish".

The literal meaning of azaintish is, explanation, commentary, etc. But the deeper meaning of this technical term is as follows: With the help of IIm-e-Staot, an effect is so created that the moment you recite that Manthric word with correct pronunciation and intonation, the relative thought force (Mithra) is automatically created.

It is believed that many Avesta words have nine thought-forces (Mithra) sealed in them, which create an impact on the 9 constituents (Tanu, Gaetha, Azda; Kehrp, Ushtan, Tevishi; Urvan, Baodangh and Fravashi) of a human being. When, therefore, the "ta'awil" of an Avesta word is revealed, nine types of "azaintish" or meanings could be given!

So, the important point to be remembered here is that drab and dry-as-dust philological translations of the Avesta can give you - at best - one correct meaning of an Avesta word. But when one Avesta Manthra is recited on nine different occasions with its special Khshnooman, nine different forms are created and nine different thought-forces automatically emanate from it!

To recite the Avesta as prayers or rituals is one thing. But when an Ashavan practises the same Manthra, it is a totally different thing! The Ashavan is aware of the science of Staota and, therefore, he intensifies the force and power of the nine types of Mithra, nine times!! In other words, he raises the power of the Mithra embodied in the Manthra to the high potency of 81 ! For example, our Kem na Mazda prayer has-the effect of binding certain kinds of druji (ultra-physical putridities). If an Ashavan recites this prayer (by raising the 9 kinds of Mithra nine times), he can completely cure an insane person!!

Coming to the Ahunavaiti Gatha, its Manthra which has nine kinds of Mithra sealed in it, contain such Mithra that when it is recited as Geh-Sarna, certain Mithra or thought-forces so emanate out of it that the formidable Mithra & Manthra combination create strong vibrations which blast the "shell" of the worldly desires and thoughts, formed round this Kehrp (subtle body) of the deceased. They also help destroy the Druje-Nasu formed in the atmosphere round the corpse.

The strophes of the Ahunavaiti Gatha are extremely efficacious in destroying the forces of materialism. That's why the entire Gatha is recited to smash the crust of the last worldly thoughts and materialistic desires of the dead Zoroastrian. This Gatha composed in the Manthra Spenta form is recited as a ritual, according to the doctrines of our religion.

Q.51 These days, we find that many Parsees, youths and grownups - aping the pseudo-culture of the West, particularly of the U.S.A., where children just don't bother about their aged parents, fail miserably in performing their duties even after the parent is dead. Could you, therefore, briefly tell us their duties and why they should perform them?

A. The Pazend word for a son or daughter is Farzand, the Avesta for which is Frazant. The words are derived from Fra - forth and Zan - to be born. Thus, one who takes birth and makes (the parents) progress or evolve. In a Pazend Afrin, there is a beautiful passage which says, "Kera Zan aavaayad, zan baad; kera farzand aavaayad, farzand baad," - "May one who is devoid of wife, have one; may one who is devoid of a child, have one. Thus, the Zoroastrian religion lays a very very heavy stress on the fundamental duty and responsibility of a "farzand", who is supposed to help the soul of the departed parent progress in the other realms! How can a son or daughter do this? Right from the dawn of the 4th day after death, when after the Dhoop Sarna ceremony, a small ceremony, called "Gaahe Bhanaavvi" starts, the duty of the son towards his departed parent/guardian, begins. In this ceremony, the son or nephew or even an adopted son, while offering incense to the fire, for the benefit of the departed soul, vows to perform all the necessary rituals in future for it. The departing soul, which is on the verge of take-off for Chinvat, is now at peace, that it has its "spiritual executor"! This responsibility is absolutely mandatory on the "farzand". If he either fails to assure the departing soul of performing his duties towards it, or after assuring he fails to carry them out, nature takes very severe retributory action against him.

It is very difficult to enumerate all that the farzand has to perform. But the absolute minimum ceremonies that he must perform as his duty, in present times, can be summed up as follows:

1. On the 10th, 30th, 180th and 365th day after death, he must have the Hushmordi and Pav Mahel rituals performed in an Agiary or Atash Behram. They include, Afringaan, Frokhshi, Stum and Baaj plus about six yazashnes and vendidad, during the first year.
2. Every year, for at least 12 years, these rituals should be repeated on the Saaligaan day (of death).

3. Muktaad ceremonies should be arranged to be performed as long as the farzand can afford them.
4. After 10-12 years, if his financial condition permits, a Nirangdin should be performed in honour of the dead.
5. Fravardin Roj, Gahambars, Parabars (same Roj same Mah), etc., at best in the first year should not be lost sight of and ceremonies should be performed on these days.
6. But, above all, the most important duty of the farzand is to recite prayers (particularly, the Stum Karda, Patet Ravan-ni and Sarosh Yasht (Main - in the night) himself for the departed parent/guardian!
If he fails to perform these basic duties, he is taken care of, both in this life, and in the hereafter, by Nature!

Q.52 You must have observed the recent spate of Navjotes and Weddings of Zoroastrians performed in Atash Behrams and Agiaries of Bombay. This is all to the good, particularly as they are performed in the morning. But, along with it, a nasty practice has crept in. This is of having the ceremony video-taped, so that the event can be preserved for posterity. We have seen such ceremonies being performed under glaring arc-lamps inside the Dadyseth and Banaji Atash Behrams, as well as inside Agiaries. What's more, all the three Dasturs living in Bombay - Dr. Mirza, Dr. Jamaspasa and Dr. Kotwal - have participated in them, without raising any objection! Even common sense dictates that the effects of such rituals must be impaired with all those electric gadgets and contraptions. We are filled with revulsion. Would you please give a detailed reply regarding this deplorable fashion?

A. You are absolutely right. Before we give the reasons for putting a ban on such electric gadgets from our fire-temples, let us emphasize and pin-point the persons primarily responsible for this sacrilege. First, the trustees of these Atash Behrams and Agiaries, for turning a blind eye to what's going on in their trust premises. Most of the fire-temples have forms to be filled in by the party who wants a Navjote or a wedding to be performed inside them. This form has to be okayed by the manager and invariably by a trustee. It is here itself that this harmful, nefarious practice can be nipped in the bud by the trustees. The form should make it very clear that no photography of any kind will be permitted inside the hall of the fire-temple. The trustees can

also put up a board to the same effect at the entrance of the fire temple, as has been done in Iranshah.

Dasturs and mobeds who perform such ceremonies are equally guilty. So are the boiwallas of the fire-temples who do not bat an eyelid at such functions. Persons belonging to both these categories will have to answer for their sins of omission on their Chaharum Day, to Meher Davar.

Last but not the least, are the behedins, the parents, relatives and friends of the Navjotee or the couple who weds, responsible. The latter, being adults are also guilty of allowing such harmful practices, merely for the sake of preserving the pix/film for posterity.

Two things happen when such film-shootings and flash cameras are used. The effect of the sacred Navjote or wedding ritual as well as the Nahaan undergone by the child or the couple are neutralized and nullified, and the sanctity and Divine power at the Padshah ruling in that consecrated institution are severely jeopardised. There are too many technical and delicate points that have to be considered to understand how all this happens. But we shall try and make the whole exercise as easy to understand as possible.

The child or the couple have passed through the Nahaan ceremony, by which they have been purified both physically and ultra-physically. They are now entities whose Atash-e-Vohufryaan (the Fire Energy prevalent in every human being and which has to be activated by different spiritual processes by souls belonging to different religions) is operating on a higher frequency than that in any other Zoroastrian. The personal atmosphere (Aipee) of such a person is purer than that of those around him. This person is radiating energy or currents which is/are very rarified and subtle, as compared to the physical radiations emanating from any worldly source, including the currents and emanations flowing from electric lights, arc lamps, spot lights, etc. Thus, the moment a flash camera, focused on the child or couple having undergone the spiritual ablution, clicks or the video arc lamps are switched on, the opposing subtle currents flowing from the Nahaan - undergone entity, and the dense ones from the camera or electric lamps come into severe friction, resulting in drastically reducing the good aura of the person concerned.

After knocking the bottom out of the beneficent effects of the Nahaan, let's see what happens when the cameras and bright

lights are focused on the child or couple during the actual ceremony. We shall take only one example, that of a Mazdayasni child whose Navjote ceremony is being performed. What exactly happens during the Navjote ceremony can be illustrated by a crude worldly analogy.

Among his various missions, one of the most important for Holy Prophet, Zarathushtra was to build a cosmic institution called Gaas or GatumGhaa Ahuraai of the Gathas. From this Gaas, flow the currents of the Pav Mahel, etc. on earth, particularly in our Agiaries and Atash Behrams. Let's call this Gaas, Zoroaster's Power House in space. Before the Navjote, being born of Mazdayasni Zoroastrian parents, there was a loose connection between the child and the Power House, that is, although the wires were connected, no current was flowing through them.

Now, Lord Ahura Mazda has appointed two administrators of this Power House - Din and Astaad Yazats. As soon as the Navjote ritual starts, the Navjotee is made to recite the prayer, "Rajeestyao, Cheestyao, etc." When this is recited the administrators Din and Ashtaad Yazats become aware that a Mazdayasni child is to be initiated in the Gaas where Yazatic currents constantly flow. So they switch on the current from the Power House for the child. But yet the receiving centre's (the Navjotee's) switch is not on. For that purpose that is for the Navjotee to receive the current the mobed invests him with the Sudreh and while reciting the Ahuramazda Khodai Nirang ties the Kusti round his waist. The moment this investiture ceremony is over, the Navjotee's switch is turned on and the current from the Zoroastrian Religion's Power House starts flowing freely. The child who now becomes a true Zarthoshti is duty bound to keep the Sudreh/Kusti on as long as he lives, for only then will the current from Zarathushtra's Power House keep flowing in him constantly.

Imagine then what would happen if when Such a delicate and vital spiritual ritual is taking place, you throw highly materialistic radiations on the child and the priest! You have already destroyed the personal atmosphere and magnetism of the child and vitiated his Nahan. Now you go a step further and destroy the subtle vibrations of the Avesta/Pazend Manthra being recited there as well as short-circuit the divine currents that would flow from the Spiritual Power House of Zarathushtra. All this for the sake of showing the film or pix to friends and relatives

later!! Have you realized what violent damage and disorder you are causing and creating on the one and only solemn occasion in the child's life?

Not only that. Your constant camera-flashes and video lamps destroy to a very great extent the Khoreh (halo), Khshathra (Divine Power), Karsh (circuits) of the Atash Padshah that operate and radiate in and around the entire building, which is consecrated, housing the Padshah! Imagine the colossal damage thus wreaked by those who perpetrate such acts! As said earlier, the trustees of the fire-temples, the mobeds performing the Navjote or wedding ceremonies as well as those tending the holy fires where such ceremonies are performed, and the laity who bring in friends or professional video cameramen inside the Fire Temple, are equally guilty in Nature of creating violent disorders, for which retribution is certain!

Q.53 We are young Zoroastrian ladies, residing in different parts of the U.S.A. Some of us are in our teens and some in our early twenties. So far when we have had our 'Chum' we haven't taken any segregatory measures, but acted as in normal times. However, the elders in some of our families advise us that we should take extra care during our monthly periods. Some even warn us of dire consequences if we don't keep aloof. At least, one of us is married and the other will be shortly married. It is said that sexual contact should be strictly avoided when a woman has her 'chum'. Modern scientists, doctors and gynaecologists scoff at this old wives beliefs. Yet, we are interested in knowing what our religion, and if possible, other religions have to say about this 'natural phenomenon' in every woman. Also, how would you reconcile the extremes of the taboos prescribed in the religions and the pooh-poohing of such superstitions by modern science. Please try and give a detailed reply.

A. We heartily welcome the young ladies from the land of Uncle Sam! More welcome is their query which in this age of an overdose of crude, one sided propaganda contained in advertisements and commercials about sanitary napkins and tampons, as well as misleading and mischievous, permissive statements made by sex-experts, sexologists and even some popular gynaecs., acquires a new dimension. How should a Zoroastrian woman live in such times, during those "difficult" days?

It is ironic though, that what a young woman, say fifty years ago, used to consider her enemy who visited her every month, today's lass calls it her "chum". In reality, it is neither. It is a natura "phenomenon": the production of sex hormones, oestrogens, and their interplay in females after puberty, which give rise to the menstrual cycle. Thus, menstruation, from Latin menses - month, is the monthly discharge of blood from the uterus. It is closely connected with ovulation, the time when the ovum escapes from the ovary into the womb.

Incidentally, what is endearingly called "chum", has been variously known through the ages as catamenia, monthlies, menses, periods, courses, 'the curse', flowers, seed-time, unclean time, visitation, etc.

We shall divide our answer into three parts: the first will deal with what some of our extant scriptures as well as those of some of the other religions have to say about menstruation; the second will deal with some research being conducted by scientists round the world, and thirdly, what profound light Ilme-Khshnoom throws on this phenomenon.

1. Chapter 16 of the Vendidad is replete with exhaustive details about a woman in menses, the precautions she has to take, the responsibility she has towards society during that period, the exact happenings at the onset of and during menstruation, what is a normal menses and what is an abnormal one and the steps to be taken to remedy the latter, the duty of a woman after the "period" is over, the disastrous consequences of sexual intercourse during menses, etc. All the 18 paragraphs of this chapter deal with the subject under consideration. We request our readers to go through any reasonably faithful translation of this chapter of the Vendidad.

Both the Patet Pshemani and the Dwaazdeh Hamaayasht (Vide Rististaan, Pg. 314, by the late Ervad Sheriarji D. Bharucha) mention the cardinal sin pertaining to non-observance of Zoroastrian laws and spiritual disciplines by a menstruating woman.

And last but not least is the passage in Kisse-I-Sanjan (Couplets 173 to 176).

In the literature of the Hindus, there are many references to what in Sanskrit is called Rej or Rejasva = Menses, in Vedavyas smriti, Aapstamba smriti, Manusmriti, Nirnayasindhu, etc. Most of you are aware of that story in the Bible about a woman

in menses touching Lord Jesus' cloak when he was with a gathering of people and Jesus crying out to the effect: "Who hast touched me? I see my virtue or halo (Khoreh) flying away".

So also Leviticus, Chaps. 15 and 22 deal specifically with it. Similarly, the Quran and Jewish scriptures have injunctions regarding the duties and responsibilities of a menstruating woman.

In short, scriptures of all the major religions of the world categorically state two common points about menstruation: (a) That a woman having per period, is, during these days, unclean or impure and (b) That if such a woman comes into contact with another person, or object, she pollutes or defiles that person or object.

According to Hippocrates, who lived in the 4th century B.C. catamenia was essentially a cleansing process or catharsis, but during the process the body becomes charged with an extremely noxious element that brought peril and blight. Pliny, who died in 79 AC., said that the touch of a menstruous woman turned wine into vinegar, caused fruit to rot, etc.

Our quieriests from the States talk about "old wives beliefs". Are these really grandma's beliefs? Let's see what genuine researchers and scientists of today have to say about menstruation.

By and large, doctors recognize that many women during menstruation are ill at ease, emotionally disturbed, depressed anxious and troubled for no apparent reason.

Modern physiology confirms that menstruation consists of the disintegrated ovum, 'infertile blood', mucus and dead tissues, and involves the elimination of menotoxins, poisonous substances that accumulate in the body of a woman, and appear in her menses, her sweat and other bodily fluids.

B.B.C. Panel Interview

The BBC World Service had presented a program called "A Period of Unrest" on the 28th August 1974 in which three eminent scientists - a Consultant Psychiatrist, a Consultant Gynaecologist and a Researcher from the Department of Psychology, Queen's University, Belfast, were interviewed on the subject for half an hour. The Gynaecologist was the famous Dr. Katherine Dalton, about whose book, "The Pre-menstrual Syndrome" (1967), some of you must have at least heard of. The interviewer began by saying that menstruation even today

is an "underaccounted subject". According to Dr. Dalton, it's a "previously undiagnosed problem". Male research workers were slow to investigate the side-effects of periods themselves.

According to the Consultant Psychiatrist, the problems connected with the period were invariably certain disabilities and mental disturbances. Dr. Dalton said that in the U.S.A., it was found that because of menstruating women 120 million working days, and 64 billion dollars per year, were lost!!

Then Dr. Dalton made another startling revelation: talking about "aggressive outbursts" in menstruating women, she stated that there were psychosomatic disorders in children because of menstruating mothers. A survey of 100 such children showed that in the "para-menstrual phase" - four days before the monthly cycle and four days after it - 50% of the children had to be admitted to the hospital! This was "highly significant".

The Consultant Psychiatrist (the only male on the BBC panel) said that during menses, 10% of women suffered from severe psychological depression, whereas 30-40% of the women had milder depression. In other words, at least 50% of the women on whom tests were undertaken showed definite signs of psychiatric depression or endogenous depression!

But, the most clinching and revealing facts came from the young Belfast researcher, Jackie Bains. According to her, laboratory workers in the U.S.A. who conducted intriguing tests on 20 girls in the first batch and 12 in the second, concluded that the menstrual cycle was linked to hearing, taste and abilities.

Many girls and grown-up women were more "alert" coincident to ovulation. Singers responded differently to the phenomenon of "absolute pitch" (the ability to sing any tone at will). There were wide variations in sharps and flats. In some cases, during the early part of menstruation, their performances were dampened, whereas there was rise in efficiency a week after the period or during ovulation.

Ms Bains went on to state that just as menstruation can affect moods, converse possibilities were also very much there! Moods can affect thoughts and changes brought about in the menstrual cycle. Here she mentioned that experiments undertaken by U.S.A.'s Harvard University on girls living together in dormitories or those sharing rooms, showed a remarkable "synchronising" of cycles!! Gradually the cycles were found to "inter-step with each other"!!! Thus, as the

interviewer aptly put it, "women getting cycles in step with each other, tend to suggest that there are intangible, low-grade psychological connections, about which we know nothing".

Again, periods were found to have "scholastic effect" on the girls. Further, girls having regular boyfriends had a "cycle length which was less and the cycle itself shorter" than those who did not have boyfriends.

The panel also talked about chemical interaction which led to two extremes: depression and mania (over-alertness), and concluded that there was "no specific treatment" for this!

Talking about school-girls who had entered the puberty stage, Dr. Dalton said that the menstruation factor was a very important one in passing or failing exams. Epidemiological studies revealed that 5% of the schoolgirls had a 10% low during pre-menstrual week and a rise of 10% in post-menstrual week. Even a female examiner, if in her menses, is affected while marking her papers!

Dr. Dalton admitted that menstruation did affect women in authority - magistrates, teachers, heads of states, members of parliament, etc. - in decision-making! She emphatically stated that there was a "tremendous difference" in their moods and attitudes!

A totally new scientific dimension to the subject of menstruation has been given by Michel Gauquelin, the famous French researcher in cosmic and biological phenomena. In his "The Cosmic Clocks", he poses the question: Is there a cause and effect relationship involved between the average length of a woman's menstrual cycle and the period between two new moons? He concludes: "It is not at all unreasonable to assume that there are some privileged portions in the lunar cycle, when, because of electromagnetic or other similar changes, the onset of menstruation would be facilitated.

Talking about "life fields", Dr. Lyall Weston in his "Supernature", cites the experiments conducted by Harold Burr of Yale, to demonstrate that every living creature produces its own electric field, Burr's test with student volunteers showed that, "all the female students produced one huge increase in voltage, lasting about 24 hours, once each month. These changes seemed to take place near the middle of the menstrual cycle.

Now, from what you have read about menstruation particularly in part two of this reply, certain basic points have emerged as

almost established facts, namely that, (a) during the 'monthly period' there are metabolic, biological and psychological changes in a woman; (b) this period of four to five days every month is different or abnormal from the remaining days; and (c) such periods can, at times, seem to be "infectious" in that young women living together can betray "synchronizing of cycles" .

While psychologists, gynecologists and physiologists still grope with the subtle intangibles and imponderables about menstruation, the Zoroastrian religion, as always, plumbed the depths of this unique feminine phenomenon thousands of years ago and came out with startling and staggering facts about it! What's more, since its foundation is "Ashoi" or piety, our religion is the only one to have prescribed strict do's and don'ts which have to be observed during menstruation. Why? Ah, not so fast! Let's go step by step and find out the answer in this third and final part of the article, particularly in the dazzling light of Ilme-Khshnoom, or the Divine Science that brings ecstasy.

Among the various fundamental laws operating in Nature, the two pertinent ones for our purpose are: (1) the Law of Quality and (2) the Law of Polarity. Because of the functioning of these laws, the two natural forces or currents are called in Pahlavi Asar-e-Roshni and Asar-e- Tariki. The first belongs to the side of Spenta Mainyu or the White Side of Nature, and the second belongs to the side of Gana Mino or the Dark Side of Nature.

All the 21 kinds of Druji (spiritual putridity) that exist in Nature come under Asar-e- Tariki. The word Druj is Avesta, which has been loosely translated as "lie".

In the existing Avesta/Pazend scriptures, names of many of the 21 Druji have been preserved. For example, in Patet Pashemani is mentioned Druji-e-Hayira or Hikhra, meaning subtle putridity emanating from dead matter such as paired nails, hair, blood, pus, urine etc. In the Khordad and the Zamyad Yashts are mentioned various Druji like Hashi, Gashi, Saen, Buji, ("u" as in "pull"), Paeseesh, etc. Then there is Druji-e-Nasu referred to in the Vendidad, which emanates from a corpse.

We are concerned with Druji-e-Buji, which pertains to menstruation, immediate post-natal putrid emanations, etc. In Avesta, there is a word, Dakhshata, a pointer, sign etc. When a girl enters the stage of puberty, among the metabolic changes that take place, one is this Dakhshata, which later became Dashtaan. In this state, the woman generates a high degree

of "heat" from her pores, which in technical parlance is called Haraarat-e-Garebia = "abnormal heat". This "heat" is of varying grades and manifests itself in different degrees at the time of various ailments.

According to the Zoroastrian esoteric science, if the intensity of this heat is between one to three Aspandi (Aspandi is a unit of measure), while it indicates some bodily affliction for the person concerned, it is not infectious. But when the Haraarate-Garebia reaches 3 to 6 Aspandi, it becomes infectious. To give a rough analogy, we have the "Richter Scale" to measure seismic activities connected with earthquakes, tremors, etc. Any seismic activity that touches about 6' or more on the Richter Scale means the intensity of the quake is severe; similarly, if the Haraarat-e-Garebia touches 3 to 6 Aspandi, the red signal is switched on. It means the emanations from a woman radiating such "heat" are a source of infection of extremely subtle, but highly intense putridity. The personal magnetism of a woman in this state is able to knock out the Khoreh (aura, halo) of even a very saintly person who may be as far as 10 to 11 feet from her! An ordinary person coming into direct or indirect contact with a menstruating woman runs a grave risk of his five senses being gradually and subtly affected! Also, his thoughts veer more and more towards materialism and grossness.

How does this happen? While in the menstrual state, the aura in the woman's personal atmosphere becomes putrid and the aura is polluted by Druji-e-buji. The Nasa or putrid matter inside the body is thereby nourished and aggravated. Since the personal atmosphere or magnetism (Aipi) of such a woman is in contact with the atmosphere outside, the air is also polluted. According to the Zoroastrian Scriptures, air comprises Vayuveh (lit. the benevolent wind) and Vayu-saritar (the malevolent wind).

Normally Vayu-veh, because of the sun's rays and Nature's other benevolent currents that come down constantly, and because of the force of Vayu- Yazat, keeps Vayu-seritar in check. The latter is helped by all the dark forces of Nature. All types of druji exist in Vayu-seritar, which are ready to create all kinds of afflictions and diseases.

So, when druji-e-buji emanates from a menstruating woman, it strengthens Vayu-seritar, which then tries to wriggle out of the grip of Vayu-veh and spread all kinds of diseases in the

world. What's more, this "infection" spreads and afflicts the aura of man, through the sun's rays, human contacts - direct and indirect. This is how man's thoughts become more materialistic and gross! Man becomes more sinful as the animal instincts in him are aroused!

In ancient Zoroastrian Iran, as vividly described in Vendidad, Chapter 16, very strict and minute codes of conduct were prescribed for a menstruating Zoroastrian woman. Some of them are cited here to show to the modern eve to what extent she has "fallen" in cocking a snook at almost all the injunctions and admonitions of the Vendidad! The basic principle underlying all of them is that of "Segregation and Seclusion". In the very first paragraph of this chapter, a question is posed. When a Zoroastrian woman enters her "period", what sort of arrangements should her family members make? The answers are given in paragraphs 2 to 7. Her temporary residence has to be at a distance from the dwelling places of other people. Not a tiny ray of light should be seen in her abode. The floor on which she walks should be of dry earth. The floor should not be wet even in the slightest degree, nor should there be any grass, plants or weeds, etc. on the ground. She should keep a distance of at least 52 to 55 feet from any ceremony that is being performed.

The person who carries her food should stand about 10% feet away from her, so that her breath doesn't pollute that of the carrier. Such food should be served in a copper or iron vessel. The type of food that should be given to her is also mentioned in the Vendidad.

What should a Zoroastrian woman do when she becomes aware of the beginning of menses? Here, the important point to remember is that there are various times when she is not conscious of the onset of her 'period'. So, the countdown to the nourishment of Druj-e-Buji starts once the woman becomes aware of her condition. It takes between 9-10 minutes for this Druji to mature. During that period, the woman should change her clothes, her Kusti, etc. without making a show of it.

Besides the above Vendidad injunctions, a menstruating Zoroastrian woman should not mix with or touch another menstruating woman or her clothes, utensils, etc. (Remember the "Synchronizing effect" in the BBC panel interview?) Such a woman is also not supposed to have her bath during these days. Difficult to swallow? Well, we know of quite a few young

and not-so-young Parsee women who even today follow this admonition religiously. But, if you think you are wiser than Prophet Zarathushtra, as many ignorant Zoroastrians do today, go ahead and do what you like. But remember! You take your pick, and you pay the price!

No Avesta/Pazend prayers should be recited during menstruation. All she can do, say, after visiting the toilet, or waking up in the morning or before going to bed, is to untie the Kusti silently, tie the first round and then recite two Yatha Ahu Vairyo as is normally done while tying the two front knots at the back. She is free to recite any number of Yatha, Ashem and Yenghe Hataam prayers during the day.

A woman in this condition should not glance at a corpse, let alone touch it. A married woman in this state should desist from having sex. (This should be very obvious, because, in the first place, she cannot touch anyone, even her husband.) A child upto the age of about three years can be coddled, or even nursed, by her.

Ancient Zoroastrian Iran solved all these "problems" of a menstruating woman by having Dashtaan-gaahs (rest houses for such women) where the woman could rest and recuperate in quarantine. What a pity that in the so-called "progressive" and "advanced" civilization, modern Zoroastrian women are deprived of such soul - ennobling amenities and facilities. Until the beginning of this century, Parsee women in India had separate rooms on the ground floor for themselves during menstruation. But today? Times have changed radically. What a menstruating Zoroastrian woman should do has been stated above. What she can is entirely up to her. One fact, however has to be stated emphatically: Nature does not let go anyone, who creates a disorder or throws a spanner in her works, unpunished!

Q.54 What are the absolutely essential ceremonies for a departed Zoroastrian in present times and for how long should they be performed?

A. It is very difficult to give a specific answer, because there are various extraneous factors like, the place one resides in the availability of an Atash Behram or an Adaran for performing the Pav Mahal rituals, like Yazashne, Vendidad, etc., the availability of Mobeds, etc. However, we shall mention both: ceremonies necessary where ideal conditions prevail, and

secondly, where there is hardly any priest readily available to perform them.

Starting with the Chaharum day, after the ceremonies performed at dawn, (a) in the Havan Geh, Yazashne of Ardafravarsh; Baj of Ardafravarsh and Sarosh; Afringaon of Ardafravarsh; (b) in the Rapithwan Geh; Stum; (c) in the Ujiren Geh, Sturn; (d) in the Aiwisruthrem Geh, Sarosh and Patet; in the Ushahin Geh, Vendidad and Farokshi with Baaj.

These are the essential rituals in all the five gehs on the 4th day after death, when conditions are ideal. However, today, even where Pav Mahal is present, it is difficult to have the Vendidad performed. At the best of times, during the first four days after death, three Yazashne and three Vendidad are enjoined to be performed. However, at present, one should be satisfied even if one Yazashne and one Vendidad are performed during this time.

Thereafter, till the Dasma (10th day after death), every day, one Baaj, Afringaan, Farokhsi, and three Sturn should be performed. If there is no Agiary or Atash Behram where these rituals can be performed, the Afringaan, Farokshi and Stum should be performed at home by relatives of the deceased. It is regrettable that in most Agiaries and Atash Behrams today, the "bapornu Sturn" is finished off at some places, even at 8.30 in the morning!

Then, every month, for one year, on the roj coinciding with that of the deceased, i.e., the rojgaan, on roj Fravardin, on the roj and name of the coinciding month (e.g. Khordad - Khordad, Sheherevar - Sheherevar, etc. also known as parab and on any one day of the five Gahambar days) (there are six such Gahambars), the Baaj, Afringaan, Sturn and Farokshi ceremonies are to be performed.

Masiso or Mahgaan or "Month's Mind" consisting of two days, is a very important occasion and besides the above set of ceremonies, Yazashne and Vendidad ceremonies should also be performed.

On the 180th day (the Chhamsi) after death, the same set of rituals is to be performed. Traditionally, two days are devoted to the Chhamsi also. However, we have heard it from our buzorgs that on the 180th day, Machhi should be offered to an Adaran or an Atash Behram Padshah. It is also essential to have the Yazashne and Vendidad ceremonial performed on this occasion.

Finally, the Varsi or the Saaligan, for which again two days are devoted: the exact roj and month on which the soul had departed and the day earlier. On this day, every year, the Baaj that is performed should be with the Siav and Kusti. Both the Hushmordi (Afringaan, Farokshi, Saturn) and the Pav Mahal ceremonies (Baaj, Yazashne and Vendidad) should be performed on these days.

During the first year and thereafter, every year, the Muktdad or the Fravardegan rituals should be performed without fail.

The minimum period for which at least the annual baaj rituals and the Muktdad ceremonies to be performed is about 12 years. There is no maximum time limit. The golden rule is that one should continue with these ceremonies as long as one can manage and/or afford them.

Within the first year after death, if possible, six Yazashnes and six Vendidad may preferably be performed. If one can afford the Nirangdin, and if one is reasonably satisfied that the priests performing the same have done their best in the given circumstances to maintain and preserve their Bareshnum, this exalted Pav Mahal ceremony may be performed 10-12 years after death. In this regard, one need not be carried away by any priest bragging about his scoring a century or more, where performance of such a difficult ceremony is concerned. It is better these days to err on the safe side!

We have not given here the purpose of having each of the above Hushmordi and Pav Mahal rituals performed. But, in sum, we shall just say that certain days after death are very important for the departed soul. In our Pazend texts, they have been mentioned as, Chaharum, Daham (Dasmu), Siroj (Masiso) and Saal-roj (Varsi) during the first year, and thereafter, every Rozgaan or the specific roj of each month on which the person has died and the Saaligaan (the annual day).

What happens on these days, in particular, is that the consciousness of the soul is activated to its full stature. At other times, the soul is more or less in a semi-consciousness state trying to wipe off its bad Kerdar, the phantom arising out of his thoughts, words and deeds during worldly life. But, on these special occasions, the soul attains full consciousness and is desirous of Zoroastrian rituals performed for its evolution.

It should be emphasized here that the soul does not immediately get the benefit of the ceremonies performed in its honour. The

fruits of these ceremonies are initially credited to the "General Reserve" of Dadaar Ahura Mazda called Ganj-e-Daadaar. From there, at the due and appropriate time, the benefits and benedictions trickle or flow to the soul, depending on its qualification and competence to receive them.

Q.55 We are aware that a human's Kehrp (subtle body) has 16 psychic centres, as mentioned in Chapter 1 of the Vendidad. We are also aware (a) that a great deal has been written on "the subject in Gujarati, particularly by the late Ervad Phiroze Masani and by the erudite Chiniwalla brothers; and (b) that to explain the intricacies of the movements, role and importance of each chakhra is a highly laborious, complicated matter, as it involves many permutations and combinations. Could you, therefore, just tell us briefly and in simple terms the inter-relation and the inter-action of the various Chakhras and how a Zoroastrian could improve his living by such inter-action?

A. Fortunately, and as always, the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla comes to our assistance through his "Nikiz", the translation of the Vohu Khshathra Gatha, etc.

Every human's thought, word and deed, every milli-second, depends on the 16 Chakhras, while, at the same time, such thought, word and deed influence the circuiting of these chakhras. In each chakhra, basically, four kinds of currents keep flowing. Thus, in the 16 chakhras, there could be 64 kinds of circuits.

What is important is that these four types of circuits could be of the valid and right kind (Rathawya patha) or the invalid and wrong kind (A-rathawya patha). If in each of the chakhras, the four kinds of orbits are of the Rathawya type, they are capable of bringing about beneficial results, and vice versa you can imagine to what extent, damage can be caused, by all or most of the chakhras operating in the wrong manner, which they actually do, in almost all of us! This gives rise to all sorts of irregularities and disorders in our subtle and physical bodies! The four types of circuits or orbits in each chakhra are the fiery, airy, watery and earthy currents. Now, for instance, if the fiery and airy circuits in one chakhra are moving in the right manner, they can gradually come in harmony, which, in turn, will activate the watery and earthy currents and make them move in the appropriate manner. But, if the fiery and the airy circuits are

on the a-rathwya patha, they cannot function in harmony and bring the other two circuits (watery and earthy) in harmony. The result could be disastrous, namely, if the fiery current comes into contact with the watery current, the former gets dowsed and knocked out! Then, there is a possibility of the airy and the earthy currents clashing with one another, knocking each other out, and raising typhoons of lust and passions!

So, the fiery and the airy currents must circulate in harmony. In case the fiery and the earthy currents or the watery and the earthy currents come into contact with one another, minor benefits could still be derived. For example, one would then be inclined to follow the path of truth and righteousness. And if the airy and watery currents come together, one may tend to do either a good or a bad deed. But, in no circumstances should the fiery and the watery circuits of any chakhra meet.

Of the 16 chakhras, the first four, which are in the Kehrp around the head, are the cause of our consciousness. In ordinary mortals like us, these four plexuses of the brain are dormant, while in saintly persons, they are active. In these chakhras lie the highly potent energy of a human's five latent senses. It's that invaluable spiritual wealth which he has earned through the various incarnations.

Then there is the second group of plexuses comprising Nos. 5 to 8, which govern our five senses - taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight. The ninth chakhra, sort of distils the essence of the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth chakhras through our speech, whether we speak truth or untruth. Thus, these five chakhras demonstrate the shenanigans of the physical world, and are active in ordinary human beings. The 10th chakhra has the "voice of conscience". It contains the spiritual elements of soul and baod (Divine Wisdom). It is the Capital of the 16 chakhras. The 11th chakhra is the battlefield where constant battles of the positive and negative forces take place.

The permutations and combinations of the 11th plus the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th chakhras (which are those that are responsible for arousing passions, emotions, etc.) result in our experiencing all kinds of ups and downs in life.

These ups and downs, the trials and tribulations of life are reflected in the first four chakhras, which are like a mirror to all our actions. Anyone who can "see" inside these four

plexuses, can get a complete idea of the machinations of the 11th and the last four chakhras, as well as the plexuses numbering five to eight. The 12th chakhra, incidentally, is another very important mystic chakhra near the navel. In combination with the 4th chakhra, it wants to send the currents and forces of Ahura, Bahman and Asha to the 10th chakhra of the conscience. This can happen if chakhras five to nine do not have any disorder and the 11th "battlefield" chakhra possesses Spenamin vanquishing Ganamin. Thus, the basic principle is to bring about frequency-harmony of the four currents or circuits in each chakhra, and then to bring all the 16 chakhras on the same path (Humpatha).

How to go about it? If a Zoroastrian practices the fundamental disciplines (tariqats) chief of which is always speaking the TRUTH, irrespective of the consequences, does his Meher-Patet, i.e. in case he commits a sin, big or small, confesses it truly and sincerely to his conscience or to the Almighty, promises never to repeat that sin and prepares himself to suffer the retribution for the sin committed, with equanimity and cheerfulness, then the earthy currents operating in plexuses 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 reach to those rarefied heights, which result in a natural control over the senses (i.e. these five plexuses metamorphose from grossness to subtlety), the tongue gets the natural strength to be sincerely penitent and contrite for any wrong done, and the violent disorders in the 14th, 15th and 16th plexuses die down and order is established, so that in the 13th chakhra, Satan loses his strength. This, in turn, results in Spenamin vanquishing Ganamin in the 11th "battlefield" chakhra, which makes the 12th and the 4th chakhras active. Now with the free flow of the currents of Bahman and Asha in the 10th chakhra, the jurisdiction of Ahura is at last established therein.

Q.56 We would like to ask two questions:

- 1. As Bombayites, for the last three to four decades, we have been noticing an all-round, general decline in the standards of values, morality, principles and religious perceptions and practices, not only in Parsee youths, but also in the older generation. Many are the prophylactics and palliatives suggested at various Zoroastrian for a and conferences, but these, at best, tackle only the symptoms superficially, and let alone trying to find some specific remedies, they are not able even to cite one main reason for our present**

deplorable state of affairs. In the meanwhile, whatever is left of the Parsee press, just goes to town scribbling abject nonsense about community or religious matters. Thus, when everyone starts becoming the proverbial "Bharuchi Nawab", pontifically making analyses and observations and giving advices right and left, the reader or the listener is thoroughly bewildered and bored. The net result is that the community keeps sinking - in every sense of the term.

So, please don't ask us to read this or that or listen to x or y or z. We are sick of all this, because we are convinced that books and lectures do not, cannot, solve our problems. What exactly, therefore, do we do at PRESENT, so that at least the rot can be stemmed?

2. It's all right for Khshnoom-lovers to praise their philosophy and view-point. But, have any of our present-day foreign scholars at least acknowledged Ilm-e-Khshnoom as the pristine way of interpreting Zoroastrianism?

- A. 1. Your first question has virtually taken our breath away. For, you have effectively and boldly put your finger on the raw spot. Our community is sinking but in the morass of its own making! The conditions and state of affairs that you see prevailing today, had their seeds sown in the first three to four decades of the 20th century. There's no point in repeating what those hybrid, synthetically treated seeds were, because most of us are aware of them. However, at none of the fora or conferences rightly referred to by you, nor in the fragments of the Parsee-owned press, does anyone pinpoint the real reasons for our decline and fall, because most of us are fond of words, words, words and statistics!

Parsees, the world over, including the metros of India, have been so bamboozled by the synthetic gadgets and golliwogs of Ganamin in this century, that they have spelt their own doom! What Alexander and the Arabs did to the respective Zoroastrian Empires millenia ago, the Zoroastrians themselves are doing today to their religion in the name of progress and development. I don't think there is any enemy bigger and worse than that a Western science and materialism for our religion and our community.

It is a sinking ship we are clinging to. The majority, even then, are least bothered. Those like you, who are, should in this last

critical, crucial decade of the century, concentrate fully on just a couple of things :-

1. Recite the mandatory prayers ("Manthra") every day, without fail. These prayers should never be rushed through. For those with the excuse, "Where's the time?", there's a counter-question; can't you find just one hour in the twenty-four given to you by Nature? In fact, this writer would go further and suggest that, pray as many times as you can in a day. There is no substitute in this world for our Avesta/Pazend prayers. Particularly in these times, those who are clinging to the sinking ship of the community will find their lifebuoys only in Manthravani, and not in lectures or books.
2. As the inseparable twin of Manthravani, there is the basic religious discipline, technically known as Tariqat, which has got to be adhered to. This includes: (a) the perennial wearing of the Sudreh (of the right shape and form) and Kusti and the frequent performance of the Kusti ritual; (b) covering the head at least while partaking of meals and answering Nature's calls; and (c) speaking the truth for the sake of it.

For Zoroastrians in India, there is just one more duty to perform: protection, preservation and proper maintenance of Agiaries, Atash Behrams and Dakhmas.

These are the only basic remedies at present for those Zoroastrians who want to survive the turbulent decade ahead and herald the advent of the golden era.

Is it okay if one imbibes say a peg of fresh obtained "Taro", whenever possible?

Q.57

A.

Say, what do you think you are swigging, Chivas Regal or Remy Martin? Neither Taro (Ab-i-Zar) nor Nirang (consecrated Taro) is supposed to be "imbibed". Only at the time of taking the Nahan (spiritual ablution) should one sip a little of the Nirang. So, please DON'T indulge in such silly exercises, unless you want your health to be ruined beyond repair! And Taro is always to be applied on the body.

Q.58 What is the difference between "Qisas" and "Karma"? How can one cancel and/or reduce one's bad "Karmas"?

A.

To put it briefly, "Qisas" is a very broad term, which includes "Karma" and much more. For instance, according to Ustad Saheb Beheramshahji "Qisas" in Nature consists of 144 chapters of which "Karma" forms a part of only one chapter of the Laws

of Retribution and Rewards operating in Nature. Thus, for our day-to-day purpose, the word Karma is more apt.

When you talk of "reducing" one's bad "Karma", it is meant that new Karmic debts and obligations can be avoided. But when the word "cancel" is used, it would mean that past Karmas could be erased. These two are totally different propositions. New bad Karmas can be avoided by a Zoroastrian if the following precautions are taken:

- (a) Inculcate as much humility as possible in yourself.
- (b) Speak the truth, always.
- (c) Practice as many tariqats (spiritual disciplines) as possible.
- (d) Recite the mandatory Manthra (prayers) without fail every day.
- (e) Do your utmost to preserve and protect the consecrated religious institutions, the Atash Behrams, Adarans and Dakhmas.
- (f) Perform your duty without fail towards your elders, both during life and after their death.

As regards "canceling" your past "Karma", it just can't be done, because of the basic law of Nature that, "Every Action has its Reaction". So, one has to, at best, grin and bear it! However, the net effect or impact of the result one tends to get can be cushioned. That is, you can create a shield around your "personal atmosphere" and deflect some part of the effect that your past "Karma" might have created. It is said that a Zoroastrian can reduce a third of his destiny. The remaining two-thirds have to be met with. Yet, even these two-thirds can be encountered and undergone with a smile if the same six practices are followed as a routine.

Q.59 If extensive repairs are to be carried out to a building, housing a Fire Temple, the Holy Fire has to be shifted. What should be done? Shouldn't the "Padshah" be moved?

A. When there is an absolute necessity, when it is absolutely unavoidable, an Atash Padshah has to be shifted. For shifting, at least three days and eight priests who have undergone the Bareshnoom are required. 3 Yasnas and 3 Vendidads are to be performed. The Padshah has to be moved only on a moonless night with great care and precaution. Electric wires overhead and crossing over gutters etc. are taboo.

Q.50 A highly respectable Zoroastrian of Pune bitterly complains about some of his co-religionists going near the fire altar

of the Agiary without performing the Padiab-Kushti. In one case, even the proper head-gear was missing! The question he asks is, "Please let me and our community know how to deal with a case like this".

A. Such a situation arises only because of ignorance. So, some enlightenment is necessary. First, let's take the question of the head-gear, what constitutes a proper, legitimate head-gear for a Zoroastrian when he enters the fire temple? The head dress should be of cotton, preferably white. No knitted woollen skullcaps, please. How about a felt hat or a sola topee? No. That should have gone with the British!

A proper head-gear is the sine qua non of a good Zoroastrian for twenty-four hours - except when he has his bath. In ancient Zoroastrian Iran, only those who were taken slaves were made to doff their headgear and shave off their beards. Thus, if a present-day naam-ke-wastey - Zarthoshti were to find himself, say, in the Achaemenian times, he would have been treated with utter disdain and contempt!

Very briefly put, the reason for making the head cover indispensable is that near the pineal gland very near the skull, there is the first and foremost plexus (chakhra) of the astral body (Kehrp). This has to be protected every micro-second from the friction that takes place around it - friction caused by the cosmic currents that bombard our bodies and the emanations from our bodies that takes place at this focal point. If no covering protects this first chakhra and the friction is allowed to be perpetrated unchecked, the vibrations therefrom flow into the individual's personal atmosphere (Aves. Aipi) or his "psyche-field" and cause untold harm, both physical and spiritual.

To give a crude analogy, just as a hen incubates her egg at a given temperature for a specific period only, to enable the chick to emerge, so should the pineal gland chakhra be protected from the constant clash that occurs around it because of the above-mentioned forces. In modern times, if covering the head in public or at place of work is found to be "embarrassing" to some, try doing it at least when you are having your meal, while attending to nature's call and of course, while praying the manthra in a fire temple.

And, oh yes! if the head gear is made of cotton, it (a) doesn't allow the sun's direct rays to enter the body, instead they get

refracted and are much milder; (b) has the property of converting the Asar-e-Tariki (dark side) current into Asar-e-Roshni (white sides benevolent) currents.

As regards the padiab Kushti, it is a ritual of immense importance. It consists of washing one's hands and face with water. If the ankles are uncovered, they too should be washed. While washing, the movement should be downwards.

What exactly happens during the ritual of Padiav-saazi? The protective spiritual power (Kuvvate Zor) gifted by Ahura Mazda to all human beings, flows more forcibly from the subtle, ultra-physical bodies of Kehrp, Ushtan, and Tevishi, to the physical bodies of Tanu, Gaetha, and Azda, thereby establishing spiritual order therein. So, when a Zoroastrian washes the exposed parts of his body and then performs the Kushti ceremony, he demolishes malevolent thoughts and passions from his body and purifies it by instilling the Mithara (thought-force) of humility, patience and tolerance. The physical body now starts receiving uninterruptedly the spiritual power from the ultra physical bodies.

Before entering the prayer-hall in front of the fire altar, it is absolutely incumbent to perform this Padiav-Saazi and purify his Aipi, which contains all the physical, ultra-physical and spiritual bodies. Otherwise, he carries with him the putridities of the outside world to the holy fire and pollutes it. It is the duty and responsibility of every Zoroastrian to ensure that he/she first performs the Padiav Saazi and then sees to it that no other co-religionist goes before the fire altar without performing it. Let's not just blame the priests for not doing the needful. In nature, each one of us is equally guilty of dereliction of duty if we turn a Nelson's eye to the misdeeds of fellow Zoroastrians!

Q.61 We are aware that all men are not equal. What we would like to know is in what way do they differ from one another?

That is, how does a Zoroastrian differ from a non-Zoroastrian?

A. There are five groups of souls (varna) in which the souls are divided. The distribution of souls in groups is according to the raethwa or the impurities/deficiency in the souls. The 1/4th raethwa prevalent in every soul is not the same in each group, but differs in proportion. It is from this raethwa that the physical bodies are made. Hence, even no two physical bodies are the same.

The first of the three physical constituents of one's personal atmosphere (Aipi) to be formed is Azda, the fluid body. It contains in itself life (Jaan), Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Mind.

These six entities of the Azda are of five different kinds in the five groups of souls. The Azda of that group of souls to which the Zoroastrians belong is by and large made of subtle pure watery element. From there it proceeds to become that of the fiery element. While in the case of Azda of other groups, it ranges from it being made of a lower degree of watery element or earthy element, which then evolves gradually into higher subtle elements.

Similarly, all the 6 entities of the Azda mentioned above, differ in the five Varnas. So also, the Atash-e-Vohufryan prevailing in all human beings differ in the five groups. Again, the Vanthwo Frado emanating from the eyes of all individuals over which the person has no control, differs from one group of souls to another. That is why, in consecrated Zoroastrian religious institutions, which have magnetic circuits inside and outside them, non-Zoroastrians are not permitted to enter. So also, after the Sachkar is performed, only a Zoroastrian is permitted to view the corpse, because the Vanthwo Frado emanating from the eyes of a non-Zoroastrian, are not in harmony with the electro-magnetic currents resulting from the recitation of Zoroastrian prayers and the performance of Zoroastrian ceremonies at the site. This would create a disorder, which would knock out the magnetic circuit around the dead body. In a similar way, there is a difference between the electromagnetic currents emanating from the breath of a Zoroastrian and a non-Zoroastrian.

Earlier, we referred to the difference in the fire - energy (Atashe-Vohufryan) of individuals. This vital Energy, which takes the entire load of the physical body and does its best to raise the matter therein to subtle states, is a mixture of four other basic fire-energies: Mino Karko, Vazisht, Urvazisht and Spenisht. For the five groups of souls or the five major religions of the world, there are thus five grades of Atash-e-Vohufryan. For instance, the soul belonging to the Zoroastrian religion (the Jupiterian Varna), has the Mino Karko energy which is active, while the remaining energies are dormant and are subservient to Mino Karko. Everything mentioned above - breath, Frado, etc. - is governed by the dominance of Mino Karko in a Zoroastrian. And that makes all the difference!

Q.62 What is Vohu Mana? How can it be attained? Can we consider ourselves of the Good Mind?

A. Vohu Mana, literally means "the good mind". However, in many of the contexts in which the words appear in the Avesta texts, they mean, "Bahman Amshaspand". Thus, this "good mind" is nothing but that of Bahman Amshaspand. It is virtually impossible for anyone of us, ordinary mortals, to achieve that extremely high and exalted level of the Mind of a Divine Being. However, one can strive to achieve a modicum, a drop of the vast ocean of Bahman Amshaspand. One of the ways of getting it, is to befriend Spenta Armaiti (Spendarmed Amshaspand) by inculcating in oneself the virtues of humility, patience and tolerance.

Q.63 Things are so bad here that people don't know right from wrong. They now "know" that conversion is right, that restructuring the calendar is right, that there is freedom of choice in the Gathas and with our education, understanding and logical mind, we can now decide how "wrong" these ancient practices have been. "Vendidad" should be abolished and the "Yashts" discontinued! Will "Dini Avaz" please touch on these matters and tell the American Zoroastrians, what the truth is?

A. We not only understand the plight of our correspondent, but fully sympathize with him. At the same time, we cannot resist the temptation of asking, "What did you expect, friend?" All these questions boil down to the one primary question: "Can Zoroastrian settled abroad, survive?" The question is rhetorical in that it's an established fact that Zoroastrians just cannot practice their religion in the total absence of their Fire Temples, which draw their spiritual sustenance from the talismanic powers of the Pav Mahal of the Iranshah, and of Dokhmas, which also have their magnetic circuits running in tandem with those of the Atash Behrams. Thus, outside India, and particularly outside the west coast of India, it is just not possible for any good and true Zoroastrian to exist and follow his faith as it should be followed, say, for more than three generations. Having mentioned this basic fact, let's briefly examine the queries raised. The question of restructuring the calendar has been tackled at some length elsewhere. So also, the "freedom of choice" mania. This is a concept, which, besides just not being there in the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Yasna 30.2 as is presumed by many, simply mitigates against one's common sense. How can

a Messenger of God - and in the case of Prophet Zarthustra, who was a yazata in the form of a man - tell his followers to believe as they want to, when he tells them about the truths and mysteries of nature?

As regards our modern education and the so-called "logical mind", the least said the better. In fact, it is this very education, which is our biggest bane, as it has generated nothing but conceit and arrogance in us, and has driven us relentlessly towards materialism. So, in reality, its nothing but regression from the ultimate goal of every human being - salvation!

Finally, the pitiable allergy towards the "Vendidad" is now nearly a hundred years old. The reason? It prescribes and proscribes what a Zoroastrian should do and what he should not. Yes, the only extant Nask composed by Asho Zarthosht is being scoffed at by our educated idiots!

The remedy? Come back to India, before it is too late!

Preferably on the west coast.

K. N. Dastoor adds:

The content of the Vendidad is full of mystical truths. Dr. Chiniwalla has written a large 700-pages book on it. But, the content apart, what is the "logical" explanation, from the modern "educated" mind, of the fact that the recitation of Vendidad on the Nirang (Bull's urine) during the Nirangdin Ceremony, purifies the Nirang in such a mystical way that it does not decay for years, whilst the ordinary non-ceremonial Nirang decays within three days?

All this "knowledge" is just ignorance. These educated ignorant are blissfully unaware that in this last decade of the 20th century, logic is declared to be not reading the truth, and the most modern science is declared to be not in contact with reality, and the intellect has arrived at a barrier of ignorance, penetrable only by religious and spiritual disciplines.

These non-conformists, as some of them love to call themselves, have arrived at certain pre-conceived notions, arising out of their own prejudices and vested interests. They do not desire to disturb their own comfortable mental equilibrium by throwing an impartial and truth-searching glance at several things around them. They know not what they are doing. They are passing through a bad Karmic phase; but their time to retreat shall also come. You and I can only pray for them. May they come back soon on the Right Path - Erezooosh Patho - of the Saoshyant's, as ordained in Gatha 53.2.

As to the right and wrong, a non-saintly human mind is naturally inclined towards wrong. It has to exert in order to resist the wrong and arrive at the right. All prophets including Zarathushtra have declared this (Gatha 53.6) and modern thinking has now arrived at it.

Ask your "knowledgeable" friends to ponder on the new materials of modern science and the old materials of the Religious and mystical wisdom. Many physical scientists are doing that.

Q.64 Why is it that most philologists are not able to appreciate the beauty and importance of Khshnoom in the interpretation of our Scriptures?

A. There seems to be at least two reasons:

(i) Philology touches only the language. The religion and its philosophy take a back seat. This study of the language too, is faulty for all the translations are done with the help of Sanskrit grammar, as the Avesta grammar is completely lost to us. So, also, instead of the Pahlavi grammar, which is missing, Arabic grammar is employed to translate Pahlavi. The result is that every avowed philologist unwittingly enters a strait jacket, and then, to cap it all, wears blinkers sitting therein. This is the main reason why if 'A' has first translated a piece, 'B' will tacitly endorse it or produce, at best, a variation. Thus, if Avesta Gav or Gao is 'cow' to one, it will be 'ox' to another and 'beef' to a third. No philologist worth his self would ever dare to believe that the same Avesta word in one context has a totally different meaning in another. Yes, Kangaji (hats off to him!) in his monumental Avesta-English dictionary, has done his best to show that, at times, the same word has a different interpretation in a different context.

On the other hand, according to Ilm-e-Khshnoom, Avesta words are technical terms and have nine meanings depending on the context.....This is not palatable to the philologist because it goes beyond his blinkers and straight-jacket!

(ii) The other bizarre habit with philologists is that, for them, in the entire extent Avesta and Pahlavi Texts, contain material that is confined to the planet earth: once again the result of that wretched straitjacket and ! Thus, Hafta Keshvar means the seven continents of the earth - as if these continents remain constant throughout time! So also, Vouru Kasha is the Caspian Sea. The names of various "mountains" and "rivers" are sought

in the geographical atlas of this world. They never pause and ponder that the foremost Prophet of the world doesn't come down to teach the names of mountains and rivers or of cities and continents on this planet of ours! Is it any wonder then that they are just unable to appreciate the explanations of Khshnoom?

Q65 What prayers can a menstruating woman recite?

A. A woman in that state can recite the Yatha, Ashem and Yenghe Hataam prayers only. She cannot perform the Kushti.

Q.66 Many Zoroastrians, young and old, these days complain of not getting adequate sleep or getting disturbed sleep. Is there any way, from the religious angle, by which this can be remedied?

A. Outside of medical and psychiatric help, there is a wonderful care for the problem mentioned by you.

First of all, you must ensure that the bed or couch is kept clean and neat. One's head should always be either towards the south or the east. Try and keep a small metallic container (preferably copper or in the last resort, german silver) with fresh Gao-mez (Taro) behind the head of the person suffering from disturbed sleep.

During sleep, the Ushtan or life force does not flow freely. Only about half of it is received by the body. Therefore, the attack on the force of darkness (Gashik) on the Khoreh is tremendous. In the unseen worlds, there are 3 yazads who direct the Ushtan - Meher, Sarosh & Rashnu. Therefore, a specific Nirang, which induces sleep, invokes these three Divine Entities. If one recites this Nirang (given below), the Gashik is kept within limits.

Again, during sleep, the astral body (Kehrp) is in a slightly detached state vis-a-vis the physical body, because of which, the lower sprites can create disturbances and disorders. The recitation of this Nirang is a sure-fire remedy to keep these spirits at bay and avoid bad dreams and nightmares.

Of course, preceding this Nirang, to be recited just before falling asleep, every Zoroastrian is supposed to recite the Sarosh Yasht (Vadi), which among other things regulates one's Mithra (thought-force) in that subconscious state. Therefore, one should perform the Kushti near the bed, and then recite the Nirang.

In this Pazend Nirang, there are two Avesta words, Ahurem Mazdanm, which is a name (Esm), whose special effect of the jupiterian Atar-e-Froba, helps one in sleep, through Sarosh Yazad. (No Baj is to be taken or left for this Nirang).

"Naam-I-Yazad, Naam-I-Ahuramazd Khuda Avazuni Yaz-I-Yaar, Yaz-I-Gushdaar Kasney Paityaar Meher Srosh Yaar Srosh Gushdaar Kasney Paityaar AHUREM MAZDANM Ahuramazd va Ameshaspandaan Va Meher Srosh Rashne, Naam-i- Yazad Naam-i-ahuramazd Khuda Avazuni, Ashem Vohu (1).

Q.67 These days different Nirangs are recited by many Parsees. They are preferred because they are shorter than the Avesta Nyaishes and Yashts. Many also recite the Nirangs, which appear after the Yashts without reciting the relative Yashts. Is that correct and permissible? Which Nirangs can one recite even if one is not able to observe the strict laws of Tariqat in these times?

A. Nirangs that appear after the Yashts are to be recited only after completing the Yashts. We are aware many Zoroastrians reciting, say, the Nirang of the Ardibehesht Yasht minus the Yasht. This is unlawful and the overall effect of the prayer is lost. Avesta prayers have a set form and formula devised by the Raenidars. Thus, every word has got to be recited as it is, to get the right vibratory effects. However, if one desires to recite these seven Nirangs (of Hormazd, Ardibehesht, Sarosh Hadokht, Sarosh Vadi, Hom, Vanant and Meher Yashts) without the corresponding Yashts, then one has to take the Baj of the corresponding Amshaspend or Yazad and then after the Nirang leave the Baj.

But here again, one is required to adhere strictly to the laws of the Deen and, above all, to always speak the Truth!

Nirangs which can be recited freely are (a) Nirang-I-Kusti Bastan (Tying the Kusti-Ohrmazd Khudai); (b) Nirangs to be recited after completing the Nyaish and the Yasht prayers; (c) Nirang before taking Ab-I-Zar (Shekastey shekastey Shaitan...) (d) Nirangs to be recited at the time of paring nails and cutting hair; (e) Nirang when one sneezes; (f) Nirang before falling asleep (mentioned above); (g) Nirang after awakening, etc.

Q.68 Two questions please, regarding Gehs:

(a) How can one abide by the rule that Sachkar should be performed in the same Geh in which a Zoroastrian dies, if he passes away just a few minutes before the Geh ends?

(b) If one is not able to finish one's prayers during the particular Geh in which they were begun, what does one do?

A. The basic principle underlying both these questions is the same, namely, a little extra time given by Nature to help us tide over our practical difficulties. This is governed by the law pertaining to the Sun's rays. The rays take about 9 minutes to reach the earth. After reaching the earth, the rays take some time to establish themselves and have their effect. This is calculated at about 23 minutes after the rays have touched the earth. Putting it in a different way, one can say that a Geh is born, grows to maturity and then gradually tapers off. Thus, for a new Geh to mature, it takes about 32-33 minutes. Or, it takes about 32 minutes for the old Geh to change into the new one.

Coming to Sachkar, if a Zoroastrian dies in the last minutes of one Geh, those around can get a little over half an hour to perform the Sachkar in the beginning of the new Geh. This is perfectly valid and amounts to performing the Sachkar in the Geh in which one has passed away.

However, this facility is available today only where the funeral ceremony and Sachkar take place at one's home. In a city like Bombay, the departed soul fails to get the benefit of the extra 32 minutes, because the Sachkar is performed in a bungli at the Doongerwadi and the hearse itself takes two hours to arrive after death! So, the Nasa Druj gets much stronger! Surely a heavy price to pay for being a part of the modern civilization.

As regards our daily prayers, this principle of the extra 32 minutes should be taken into consideration only as an exception. One should avoid beginning one's prayers towards the end of a Geh. However, if rarely one finds that a longish yasht continues in the new Geh, one can do so and finish the prayers within the extra 32 minutes.

There is still a rarer possibility. Once in a while, one is not able to complete the prayers even after the additional period is over. Then, in very exceptional circumstances, one should recite the new Geh and then finish the pending prayers.

P.S. If a person dies in the last minutes of the ushahin Hoshbam, one is deemed to have performed the Sachkar in the ushahin Geh, even if the Havan Hoshbam plus ten minutes have passed!

Q.69 I am a practicing Athornan with a beard. My father had asked me to grow one. My mother has never liked my wearing one. But now the big problem is that my girl-friend, who will shortly be my fiancée, simply refuses to allow any hirsute growth on my chin! In spite of my explaining to her how the ancient Iranians sported beards and that it is a sign of manliness, she will have none of it! "Its either me or the beard", she says. What should I do?

A. After a long time has a reader thought of us as an Agony Aunt. Anyway, we'll try to solve your dilemma. Have you tried telling your girl-friend that only slaves in ancient Zoroastrian Iran were made to shave off their beards and remove their headgears? If still she persists in her resolve and if you can't marry anyone else, you may reluctantly knock off your beard, though then you will have to take the following minimum precautions:

- (a) It is believed that you perform only the Hushmor5ii ceremonies, for you shouldn't even dream of performing the Pav Mahal rituals, if you shave.
- (b) Avoid shaving daily. On the days you shave, if you can't take a second bath (as shown below) do not perform any rituals, for you can't go to any Fire Temple and/or offer sandalwood, incense etc. to the fire, if you have only one bath. The second bath should be taken immediately after performing the Kushti ceremony after the first bath. (This rule applies to Behdins too!)
- (c) After shaving, and before your first bath, recite the Nirang necessary while cutting hair and paring nails (This Nirang will be found in all prayer books published by those connected with Ilm-e-Khshnoom). For practicing mobeds, this Nirang is a must. Remember, as a regular practicing mobed, you must have a second bath when you shave, and then only you can go to any Fire Temple.

Here's wishing you good luck! If you find the above process cumbersome and time-consuming, an easier solution would be to find another girl-friend, who appreciates a macho man!

Q.70 What is the significance of taking "Paivend" (holding handkerchief) whilst going to "Paidest"?

A. Before we understand why we take 'Paivend' whilst walking behind a corpse for 'Paidest', we should know something about the procedural rituals followed when death occurs. We are

aware, that the moment a living thing dies it starts to decay and "Druj-e-Nasu" becomes stronger and stronger. As time passes by it contaminates and spreads in the surroundings. In order to bind and reduce this 'Druj-e-Nasu' 'Sachkar' is to be done, as fast as possible in the same "Gaah" in which the person has died. In 'Sachkar', seven 'bunds' (like tourniquets) are tied on different parts of the dead body. This is after giving the corpse a bath, which should be with 'Gaomez' - 'Tara', and not with water as it is commonly done. The corpse is then placed on stone slabs and whilst reciting 'Ahunavar' prayer (Yatha) three "Karsh" or circuits are drawn round the corpse with an iron nail by the 'Nasesalar". After this, Avesta Manthravani is recited near the Ravan till "Geh Sarna". In between, "Sagdid" (Sighting by the special dog) is performed. By all this the forces of Druj (Evil) are restricted within the boundaries of the circuit drawn and no outside Druj can attack the Ravan. About half-way through the "Geh Sarna" the corpse is lifted from the circuit and placed by Nasesalars in the 'Gehan'. After this pause, further recitations of Geh Sarna is done. When it gets over, the persons who are present do "Sezdo". Then the corpse is lifted by the Nasesalar in the 'Gehan' and the last journey to the Dokhma begins. Note that up-to-now the body was shifted only once after "Sachkar" ceremony circuits. Now, when the Nasesalars (Pall-bearers) lift the body in the Gehan on their shoulders, due to the movement of lifting-walking-shaking of Gehan, the 'Druj-e-Nasu' becomes activated and spreads out. In order to resist this force, we walk silently joined by cloth (usually handkerchief) with another person, spaces away from the corpse carried by the bearers. According to the canons of the Zarthusti Din each individual possesses a fire-energy within him called Atashe-Vohufryan and this is to be protected from the force of. 'Druj' - evil-dark side of Nature's contamination, which is attacked, whilst walking behind a corpse. Hence Paivend with another person, so that two Atashe-Vohufriyan, together will be able to resist the onslaught of Druj-e-Nasu more effectively. Before going to 'Paidest' we have to do our Kusti, and take Baj by praying certain portion of the Manthra after doing the final 'Sezda'. When the Nasesalars come out of the 'Dokhma', after placing the body inside, we have to recite the remaining portion of the Baj and then only we can disconnect the "Paivend".

Q.71 Please explain what is Havan-ni-Hoshbam and Ushahin-niHoshbam?

A. Hoshbam is the period before sunrise, and it is the most benevolent period of the day, when Nature bestows the choicest Blessings on the world. 72 minutes before sunrise is the period of Hoshbam. For example, if the sunrise of a given place is 6.12 A.M., then Hoshbam period will start from 5 O'clock. First 36 minutes from 5 O'clock is **Ushahin-ni-Hoshbam**, i.e. upto 5.36 A.M. and from 5.37 A.M. to sunrise 6.12 (36 minutes) is **Havan-ni-Hoshbam**.

Q.72 One should take a bath after attending "Paidast". Is this optional or compulsory? Can we touch things in the house, or are we not allowed to do so, without taking bath?

A. Formerly, all Parsee houses used to have "**Khadki**", a separate room kept on the ground floor where, in the event of death, the body was kept, ceremony and 'Gehsarna' performed and then from there it used to be taken to the 'Tower of Silence', with menfolk walking behind the corpse in two, with 'Paevand' - termed as going to 'Paidast'. On returning home they again used to do Kusti before entering the home, and then directly take a bath. Now-a-days the body is kept in a Bungli at Doongerwadi/Tower of Silence. During the time of 'Gehsarna' womenfolk usually sit in the room where the body is kept, and menfolk outside. After the ceremony of 'Gehsarna', Sezda is done, and some menfolk walk short distance behind the body, do again the final 'Sezda', then a small prayer, take 'Tara' and wash their hands and face and perform the Kusti. All those who have gone to 'Paidast' i.e., walked behind the body, must **take a bath**, and it is compulsory. Those who do not go to 'Paidast' - mayor may not take the bath. When any **movement of the corpse** takes place (even after Sachkar), the **Druje-Nasu** becomes strong, and emits putridity in the surroundings. Women who sit in the same room are also exposed and subjected to movement of the corpse, when during 'Gehsarna' the corpse is lifted and placed in the 'Gehan', by the pallbearers. Hence, they should also take a bath. All said and done, it is fitting to take a bath when one attends the funeral, as it is hygienic, healthy, scientific and religiously required. As regards touching things in one's house, it should be avoided as far as possible before a bath.

Q.73 These days every second person - even a male - who visits an Agiary wears all sorts of perfumes, with the result that

instead of the fragrance of sandalwood and bawal, one has to inhale mixed odours of Brut and Old Spice, Jovan and Black Rose! Are these things permitted inside a place of worship?

- A. Yes, the overpowering smell of a weird combination of perfumes does tend to asphyxiate a worshipper before the Fire Altar. What's worse, such an attack on our olfactory senses does distract our attention and concentration.

"But that apart, these perfumes in which chemicals and even animal fats are used do not at all jell with the sanctified atmosphere of a fire Temple. The different scents emanating from these perfumes do clash with the highly rarified and subtle vibrations emanating both from the consecrated Fire and the Staota or vibratory colours resulting from the constant recitation of the Avesta prayers. The environment is thus completely vitiated. In fact, adverse currents are attracted. Then, how does one solve the practical problem of those office-goers, who visit a Fire Temple before attending office? After all, a city like Bombay has a humid climate and body odours do stink to high heavens! A solution may be found in the following way: Keep two hankies in the purse or pocket. Daub only one lightly with your favourite perfume. That handkerchief should not be used at all in the Fire Temple. And in no circumstances should you spray colognes or perfumes on your person while visiting Agiaries and Atash Behrams.

Women should also avoid wearing any cosmetics, like lip stick and nail polish inside a Fire Temple.

While on the subject, we may as well draw the attention of our readers to a couple of allied subjects. All kinds of fancy caps are worn by both young and old these days in Fire Temples. Briefly, Zoroastrians should wear only that head-gear which is made of cotton and is preferably white. **Woollen knitted caps are absolutely taboo**, because they violate the rules of Chakhras (Plexii) and create friction between the rays of the sun entering the body and various emanations from the body.

And finally, time has come for all Agiaries and Atash Behrams to put up new sign-boards prohibiting the carrying of any cellular phone or pager inside the hallowed premises. Recently, this writer had to request a gentleman with a pager fixed to his waist, like Ray Ban specs case, to leave the set outside. Of course, the question was, 'why'? The answer is obvious to anyone who knows the elements of the working

of a pager or a mobile phone. All these contraptions are connected to a myriad of "base stations" on the house-tops of various buildings. Besides, there are different persons, particularly young girls, who give you the connection to various people. In short, you are bringing the whole wide and radio waves thoroughly polluted world and its diverse atmospheric waves, inside the consecrated building of a Fire Temple! No one has any right to bring any outside contamination inside either the Yajashna-gah or the prayer hall outside the Sanctum Sanctorum. That would defeat the very purpose of segregating the Holy fire from the outside world.

Q.74 Is it necessary to take a bath before going to an Agiary/Atashbehrum and before reciting Avesta prayers at home?

A. Yes, it is. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Purity of body and mind are essential requirements for reciting the talismatic Avesta Manthravani gifted to us by the Prophet. Avesta was never a spoken language at any point of time. They are Manthra-creating very efficacious colour vibrations - which penetrate the body, mind and soul.

Keeping in mind the time and age in which we live and the practicality of our existence, it may not be possible to adhere strictly to the ritual of having a bath every time, before reciting our prayers. On such an occasion, we should thoroughly wash all exposed parts of our body twice. This should be followed by the Kusti ritual. Whilst going to an Atash Behram, after performing the "Vaju" i.e., washing thoroughly of all exposed parts of the body, the Kusti should be done twice. It is regrettable that many a time one observes some people who only wet their finger-tips and fancifully apply droplets of water on the face while visiting an Agiary/Atash Behram leave alone the washing of ones hands (and feet). Some people do not even perform the Kusti and walk straight towards the Atash Padshah in the Kebla room, thus burdening the Atash Padshah with impurities.

When in doubt about the state of one's cleanliness, one should avoid standing directly before the Atash Padshah but pray from outside, bowing to the glow of the fire falling directly or indirectly on the walls, doors or windows or by bringing the fire into one's mind's eye and bowing before it. One should be very vigilant in these matters, more so when one goes to an Atash Behram. Not only should the head be properly covered but also the hands and feet. It seems that Navsari Atash-Behram has the facilities

(especially for visiting travelers) for taking a bath before entering the Fire Temple. Other Atash Behrams should also apply their minds in the matter.

In passing, note that Pharaohs and Priests of ancient Egypt bathed before prayers and sacrifices. Hindus still bathe in the sacred Ganges before 'Puja-paath'. In ancient days pilgrims bathed in the Nile, Jordan, Euphrates, Po rivers. Mosiac law decreed bathing after sexual intercourse, menstruation or contact with menstruating woman; a bride after her wedding night had to bathe. Moslem law requires bathing on numerous occasions, including the pre-nuptial bath common to many cultures.

Q.75 In my house, there are four members in the family, two daughters, my wife and myself. The three of them have their periods regularly. But the younger daughter unfortunately, suffers from asthma. While the women, during their menses, take, as much precaution as possible, the younger one, has to be assisted, at times, when she feels breathless. Thus, my wife and I have to come into contact with her, during those days. As one who prays for a couple of hours daily, and practices whatever little, Tariqat is possible, I feel awful. What should I do?

A. We are sorry to hear about your daughter's trouble and your plight. But this is what you should do.

Whenever she is ill and needs you help, please give it to her without the slightest hesitation. Don't grumble that I have already had my bath and am about to sit for my prayers, so, how can I touch you etc.? **Never even think like that!** Go to her succour right away; satisfy her needs. All this without complaining.

Because therein lies real **Hutokhshi** (selfless service). And such **Hutokhshi** takes pride of place over anything in Nature. But what is equally important, is that after you have tended to her wants, follow at least the minimum **tariqat**, like, taking the **Taro** and having a quick bath, before beginning your prayers. Never mind if you' have a lesser time for your prayer that day. So, service, at least towards one's own, always come before self.

Q.76 Why do we apply "Rakhia"- ashes of fire-wood, on the forehead when we go to Atash Behram, Agiary? What is the significance?

A. All Agiaries, Atash Behrams, - "Atash Padshah" are consecrated and are kept in the Sanctum Sanctorum or the "Kebla" room. The Afargania tray, on which are the ashes, is to be found the prime, first circuit, "Kash". This is one of the six 'Kashes' to be found in an Agiary (9 in an Atash Behram).

The "Rakhia", "Bhasam", Ashes of the firewood/sandalwood is the nearest to the holy fire containing the 'Ushtan' of the holy fire (to some extent) which we apply between the brows (say on the third eye), connecting ourselves with the vibrating fire energies of the Atash Padshah.

'Rakhia' has the power and ability to draw subtle and pure currents and vibrations, hence we apply on our person whilst we are in Agiary or Atash Behram, but it should be rubbed off as soon as you are out of the Agiary, Atash Behram as the Rakhia can draw outside bad vibrations, pollution, etc. also. The disposal of the 'holy ashes' should not be by using it to clean utensils, nor should it be thrown into the sea, but it should be buried in shallow pits, dug up in the open fields.

Q.77 'Navjote' should be performed during "Hoshbam" period of morning only. Should marriage be performed in the morning or evening?

A. In Iran, as per the Zoroastrian custom, marriages were performed in 'Ushin Geh' around 4 O'clock or so (and not in "Gasak" time between 12.40 a.m. to 2.40 a.m. as some think) which in vernacular, we termed as 'Panchali Ratna Lagan'. Navjote was always performed during the 'Hoshbam' period of Havan (36 minutes before sunrise).

The Marriages performed at present after sunset, is as per the word we had given to the Hindu king Jadhiv Rana, when we landed in Sanjan, that we will perform all our marriages in the evening, like Hindus, as per one of his few terms and conditions.

Q.78 Vanant Yasht prayer is supposed to drive out evil (Daruj or Drawao). Does this prayer work upon the evil in the atmosphere or does it work to drive out evil habits within us e.g. greed, anger etc.) or for both?

A. All prayers in their final analysis drive out 'Druj' and 'Dravao', from within and without. Certain prayers are marked out specifically, from which one is 'Vanant' Yasht, which works on both i.e. evil in the atmosphere, as well as evil within us, but more so on atmosphere. 'Vanant' Yasht drives out pollution, which arises, and evil spirits (Arvahi).

In 'Vanant' Yasht', together with 'Manthra' (Avesta recitation) 'Yasna' is also joined in a small way. The graded clapping, one clap, two claps and three claps in the 3 paras, and then in another 3 paras, 3 times 3 claps, whilst praying the same in whisper, this is the part of 'Yasna' one does with 'Manthra' as in other ceremonies.

Faridun Atharwyan name is mentioned thrice in the 'Vanant' Yasht. Faridun is the first physician of the world hence for sickness, ailments, which are due to 'Druj' and 'Drawao' Vanant Yasht is prayed, together with its Nirang. The line in the Nirang, "Akhi darde Shekam haft andam," is especially important.

Q.79 Is it inferiority complex, which makes sizeable Parsee males and even some females to sprinkle their talks with swear words or is it just show off? Does "Galam Gali" harm individual spirituality?

A. One of the Hindu friends used to joke and say laughingly "Whenever there is a 'Parsee Bawa' there is "Galam Gali", of course, many a times without meaning it". Well jokingly or not it is nothing to be proud of. Generally, we do have the 'sprinkling' of "Badam-Darakh" (as we say) in our speech. One cause of it is certainly some inferiority complex as you put it, but many a time it is only the 'show offness' - which leads to the habit of sprinkling 'Galam Gali' Bad words, as the name suggest, cannot be good for one and yes, it does harm to us spiritually in our progress. Good thoughts, Good words, Good deeds is the theme of our and other Religions. The eighth 'Chakhra' (plexus), which is on the tongue is made up of 'khak' element, a materialistic one. Hence, it should be controlled first. We do Avesta Khani by the same tongue, which God has given us and the tongue's most important and main functions are to pray and to speak the truth.

"Agah Manthra" is the opposite of Manthra Spenta, and bad words/swear words/Galam Gali is the lower form of 'Agah Manthra'. Hence, one should not indulge in uttering bad words, less harm befalls him. One can convey anything, without speaking bad words.

Q.80 I visit 8 Atashbehrams in a day, completing first four Atashbehrams of Bombay and then Udwada, Navsari and Surat (two) Atashbehrams. I go straight from the railway station to the Atashbehram. My friend objected to this stating I must have a bath before I visit Atashbehrams at

Udwada, Navsari and Surat. Well, this is not feasible due to time element, as I will not be able to visit all eight Atashbehras in a day. I am still continuing to go to those Atashbehras before taking bath. Is this O.K.? Please comment.

A. First of all, what is the idea of doing eight Atashbehras in a day? Is this necessary? Nowhere, is it instructed that we should visit all the Atashbehras in a day. Instead of eight, if there were eighteen Atashbehras...? Although this is in vogue, it is not correct. Some sort of craze has developed to perform this exercise. Only a hundred years ago it would not have been possible to break journey at Udwada, Navsari and accomplish this kind of visit. Hence, this exercise is not even traditional.

It is absolutely necessary to have a bath before visiting an Atashbehras after such a long journey. Going to the 'Padshah' in the condition in which you are going is to carry the pollution right up to the "Kebla" room of the 'Padshah', thereby giving more work to him. Going to the 'Padshah' in order to earn some 'Punya', we, due to our undesirable acts, add to our 'Paap'. Iranshah's position is unique and in reality one has to take a 'Nahan' before visiting Iranshah. Hence, a bath is a must, followed by 'Kushti-Padyav'. It would be worthwhile to do 'Kushti', twice, before entering any Atashbehras, in order to cleanse our 'Aipi' (the immediate surrounding near our body - if we stretch out our arms sideways, then the circumference from elbow to elbow is our 'Aipi').

It would not be amiss here to narrate the story we have heard that when Banaji Atashbehras was opened at Charni Road, Mumbai, nobody was allowed to go in unless they had taken a bath at the Atashbehras itself (facilities were provided). One day one well-to-do and respectable gentleman, came in his own horse-cart, driven by a Parsi, after having a bath at home. Even then he was refused admission since he was not ready to take a bath...

In view of the above, it is undesirable to visit Atashbehras without taking a bath. (Navsari and Surat, both Atashbehras have the facility for taking a bath)

Q.81 I was told by my old uncle that the Avesta Prayers which at present we recite are not of Zarathushtra Sahib, but composed by someone else, I forget the name. If they are not of Zarathushtra Sahib, then whose are they?

- A. Well, young friend why don't you ask your uncle about it? What he has said is right, but do not get perturbed or anxious. It seems you have not grasped properly what he must have said. The source is from Prophet Zarathushtra - given **'Manthra'** only, to which **"Raienidar"** and **"Soshyant"** (very highly evolved souls) from time to time add/deduct, dilute, change, based on the laws of **"Stota-Yasna"**, according to the calibre of the souls descending on the earth during that particular period of time, in the cycle of Zervane-Darego Khadate (period of 81,000 years).

Fashusho Manthra, Manthra-Spenta, Soshyanto-Manthra

Prophet Zarathushtra Sahib first made "Fashusho Manthra" whose potency was sublime and very high, for highly evolved soul of **'Nabanazdist'** and **'Poiryotakesh'** status (nearer to Centre of God). They are out of bounds for the likes of us. Secondly, Zarathushtra Sahib in his presence asked his disciples to prepare the Manthra which are known as **"Manthra-Spenta"** and from this Manthra-Spenta, at different times Soshyants make and present the **"Soshyanto-Manthra"**. At present, Manthra, which you are praying is "Soshyanto-Manthra" given to us by the last Raienidar Aderbad Marespand Sahib whose Raienidari started during the reign of Shapur, the II of Sassanian Dynasty (450 A.D.). Raienidars give Manthra based on the calibre of the souls who will descend during their reign. When Raienidar Behram Varzavand will come in the near future, he will make necessary changes in the Avesta.

In Karda 12 of the Patet of Aderbad Marespand, reference is made of the connection of Aderbad Marespand Sahib right from Zarathushtra Sahib... to Gustad to Aderbad Marespand Sahib, showing his lineage. He poured on himself tons of molten copper, to prove that he was the chosen one.

How a Soshyant or a Raienidar should present "Soshyanto-Manthra", the Key is found in 'Manthra-Spenta' Vastaram Nask the last few chapter of 'Stota-Yasna'.

Thus the prescription of the present Avesta, which we pray fits the patient which we all are at the particular given time in the evolution of one cycle of 81,000 years - Zarvane Darego Khadate.

Q.82 Can we recite prayers i.e. recite Manthrawani, if we are wearing Rubber Shoes or Champals?

- A. We should avoid praying, whilst wearing rubber shoes or champals (gum boots) as there would not be proper earthing,

(so to say) as whilst reciting Manthrawani and earthing is always required to make a proper circuit. (Rubber is a bad conductor of electricity). Similarly, one should not pray with his/her feet hanging in the air (whilst sitting), or lift up the feet and place them on a (wooden) chair. Care should be taken to see that at least one foot is touching the ground. Bare feet should not touch the ground. Cloth, carpet, socks should be in between the ground and your feet. (Formally Atashbehras and even Agiaries used to have wall to wall or huge carpets in the "Kebla" room and other places. This was not on account of show or pomp but to safeguard the above principles). Wooden flooring is not proper for prayers.

Q.83 After going to the toilet, my mother reprimands me, if I don't do Kushti. I have never seen any of my friends doing the same, nor some adults also. Please inform me as to why I should do the Kushti after answering Nature's Call.

A. One should do the Kusti, after visiting the toilet, without fail, in order to cleanse his "Aipi" (If one stretches his arm sideways, the circumference from elbow to elbow is one's 'Aipi'). You wash your hands with water, after going to toilet, this is to fulfill the basic rules of hygiene of cleansing the impurities existing on the hands. The "Tarikat" (Religious/Spiritual disciplines) of Zarathusti Din teaches us that not only hands but all those parts of the body which are not covered should be made clean by first applying the 'Taro' and then washing them off with water. The (unseen) microbes which are not visible to the naked eye, nor measured by any instrument, are present in the atmosphere of the toilet, which are harmful to an individual, physically as well as spiritually. When one defecates or passes water, the vibes pass through one's "Aipi" and hence, by doing Kusti, giving the force of the Manthra, one's "Aipi" is cleansed and purified. As per our religion a Zarthosti is supposed to take a Baj "**Hajete Javani Baaj**", in which one has to recite a line in prayer, away from the toilet at least 10.5 feet then go to the toilet, observe silence, and when done with recite the remaining short prayer (Baj Mukvi), wash as we have said above, after taking "Taro", and then do the Kushti.

Q.84 "Haptan Yasht" is for the seven Ameshaspands. Hence, it must be powerful. Can it be prayed daily? Can you tell us something about it?

A. Yes, Haptan Yasht is an account of the functions of the seven Ameshaspands and yes, it is powerful. Hence, it requires a full

fledged article to explain all its contents, which is not possible here. Still, we will take up a small outline of the same.

Every morning, Dadaar Ahuramazda perform "Yasna" (ceremony) with His seven Ameshaspands. Ameshaspands lead the field in the 33 Yazati Mandai followed by Dae, Mino, Farrokh and Yazad. These seven Ameshaspands plus two laws of Dat (Mazdadat / Ahuradat) made the Universe.

The Staota of "Haptan Yasht" are highly beneficial, they are cold and light blue in colour and all of us may not be able to digest its effects if we pray it daily. If '**Saturn**' is troubling an individual it would be beneficial if it is prayed after reciting Ava Niyash. Similarly, it will be beneficial if it's prayed with Khordad Yasht also. Near the dead and after for three days, where the corpse was laid for **Geh Sarna** (Bhoi-nu-Bhenter) it is beneficial to pray 'Haptan Yasht' (together with Hom, Vanant and Khordad).

In our Khordeh-Avesta, there are two kinds of 'Haptan yasht', big and small (Moti and Nani) but it is desirable to pray the big/Moti 'Haptan Yasht' only. In its first Karda the reference is to Dadaar **Hormuzd**. In the second Karda, it is '**Behman**', in the third Karda **Ardibehest**, fourth **Sheraver**, fifth **Spendarmad**, sixth **Khordad** and seventh **Amardad**. For first seven days of the Parsi calendar month, Haptan Yasht is a **must** in prayers.

The paragraph/Karda of "Yatuzee Zarathushtra..." is said to be most powerful, it should be prayed seven times (and hope you are able to digest its effect). It is said that the Nirang contained in eighth Karda was taught to Mohamed Saheb by Dastoor Diniar, from whom it came to Ali and others. But most unfortunately the same was utilized by the disciples against us Iranians in the last battle the Sassanians fought.

Q.85 Muktdad has come and gone - but how were the ceremonies performed - the less we say the better. One is aware of the deteriorating situation, still I have mixed feelings regards stopping and not performing any ceremonies. Hence alternatively, what should a "Behedin" do to get his satisfaction and lighten Mobeds' burden?

A. Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever. Yes, the show must go on, we cannot brush off the performance of ceremonies completely due to slackness, omission, etc. in ceremonies by Mobeds. Summarily, we cannot dismiss the performance of "Kriyas" - (ceremonies).

Muktad ceremonies formerly used to be performed at each individual's house, on the ground floor. Such facilities were provided for in houses, bungalows. But when the purity of the place became difficult to maintain, Muktad tables were shifted to Panthaki/Athornan houses. Here also with the passing of time problems arose and finally, as at present, Muktad ceremonies for 18 days came to the Agiary/Atashbehram. Now-a-days from 18 days it has become 10 days; (We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow, but wiser sons no doubt will think us so). Baj, Afringan, Farokhshi, and Saturn are the main ceremonies to be performed during Muktad days. Out of this, except the first i.e. Baj ceremony (which can be performed only in Urvisgah of Agiary or Atashbehram) the rest can be performed by "Behdins".

Satum is the easiest to perform, not requiring much time. Farokhshi also can be prayed from the book which contains the Farvardin Yasht, only Afringan requires little basic know-how, and some practice.

One who performs the Kriya of the departed ones should have some acquaintance with the deceased whose Kriya he is performing in order to bring his image in his mind's eye during the performance of ceremonies, which make the ceremonies more efficacious and effective.

On days other than Muktad "Sarosh-Patet on behalf of the deceased must be prayed.

At present as things stand it will be more advantageous, effective and economical if the Kriyas of the deceased are performed by his own family members. [It is learnt, that incase the Afringan prayer cannot be performed, in the last resort, one may pray 121 Yatha and 12 Ashern. During the time of praying Yatha and Ashern it is necessary to have the image of the deceased in front of you.]

Q.86 Day by day prices of Sandalwood are skyrocketing; it is going to be difficult for the community, especially the poor and the middle-class, what is the alternative?

A. One recalls Ustad Sahib Behramshah who usually used to say "**Mata Nathi**" meaning loosely that time and circumstances are not there and it will become more difficult to follow the Zarathushti Din.

Sandalwood prices are today touching Rs.1400/- to 1500/- per kg. Undreamt of prices, due to sandalwood export and auctions.

It's becoming unaffordable and may become a rare commodity. Alternative to sandalwood at present is 'Baaval Wood', affordable and practicable, which has kept our sacred flames alive for centuries in Agiaries and Atashbehrams. Chunks of big sized wood, which we call 'Kathi'. Still, those who can afford must go on offering "Khushbo" e.g. Sandalwood.

'Kathi' has different prices at different places in Gujarat and Maharashtra - Baaval prices approximately are between Rs.8/- and Rs.12/- per kg. But it also runs into short supply. The regrettable fact is that our community elders and fathers had no foresight even four/five decades ago to go in for Baaval forests and sandalwood trees. Nothing can be done at this juncture for sandalwood as it is controlled by the government but there are still avenues open for Baaval plots.

Q.87 We have five days of Gathas in a year, when we pray five Gatha prayers. Now suppose if one prays, say Gatha No.4 Vohukshtra, on Gatha No.3 Spentomad day, or any other Gatha on different Gatha day, will it be O.K. or wrong?

A. First of all let's make it clear that it is not necessary to pray any of the Gathas on Gatha days only. Gathas can be prayed for all 365 days, and mainly on Gatha days.

We have three Calendars in our community - 'Kadmi', 'Shenshai' and 'Fasli'. We will not go into the merits or demerits of these Calendars, but why shouldn't we laymen/Behdin take advantage of this 3-calendar Gatha days and pray the Gathas on these three occasions, instead of only five days as you mention in your question.

There is no objection, and it's O.K. even if you pray different Gathas on different Gatha days, but it would be worthwhile if you pray first the Gatha according to its day, and then pray any other Gatha as desired by you.

Fifth Gatha '**Vahishtoisht'** is the Burjisi Gatha meaning Brehaspati connected with Jupiter - which should be prayed by us often, even daily. Only 'Ahunavad' Gatha (first Gatha) should not be prayed daily. Some break should be given.

Q.88 It is instructed that one should pray "Framraot-no-Ha" for first five days of the Muktd but at what place should it be prayed, meaning after doing Niyash or Yasht or Gathas, and before or after Setayesh and Pazand prayers? Can this be prayed after sunset, and on other 360 days of the year? In a nutshell, what is this prayer all about?

A. The questions coming on the heels of Muktd, goes to show that you have prayed "Framraot-no-Ha", which is very good, because practicing what you learn or know, is the real essence. In the final analysis, it doesn't matter whether you have heard hundred religious lectures, or read thousand books, but of this, what you put into practice (Amal-Karvo) is of great importance *for* the salvation of the Soul.

"Framraot-no-Ha" is Ha 20 of the Yasna, and there is no harm in praying it on any other day of the year, if so desired. Of course, after doing your daily Farajiat. On these days it will be like an ornamental prayer, but on Muktd days it is a compulsory prayer. It can be prayed in all 'Gehs', i.e. even after sunset. Framraot-no-Ha should be prayed after doing Nyaishes and Yashts but before Gathas - Sateyesh and Pazand prayers.

The "Framraot-no-Ha" basically gives the spirit and substance of Ashem Vohu (Ashoi) and its phases. It is a paraphrase of the 'Ashem' prayer.

Q.89 India's Nuclear explosion, or any nuclear explosions. How far is it wrong or right, from the religious point of view.

A. Any pollution arising out of anything in any way to the elements - Fire, Water, Air and Earth is abhorred by Nature. Nuclear explosion done as a test or utilized in warfare, harms the ecological balance in Nature which is in opposition to the laws of Religion. To protect, preserve and revere the elements of Nature is the basic tenets of our Religion.

Any nuclear explosion whether it is done in sea or on land, in air or underground, due to its inherent quality of destruction, destroys in its path, men and material alike. It's after effects of radiation is more deadly which kills, maims and spreads diseases.

Mother Earth will continue to produce fruits and flowers and vegetables, but man will be in two minds, whether or not he/she should consume it or not, less it is contaminated with radio activity.

In a nutshell, if such is the scenario of the nuclear explosion then how can it, in any way be right *from* the point of view of any religion, as no religion advocates destruction of men *or* beast, flora -or fauna.

Knowledge of nuclear armament is no knowledge. It's the knowledge that kills. As per Hindu philosophy its 'A-Vidya' not

'Vidya'. According to Zarathushti Din it belongs to the 'Keresani' cult, and not 'Hom' civilization.

Q.90 We have Setayashes of every Roj in Khordeh Avesta. Is it necessary to pray it daily according to the Roj. Can one pray these Setayashes after doing Kushti only?

A. We have 30 Setayashes and Chithrem Buyat, Naam-I-Khaver, Namaaz-e-Daadaar Ahura Mazda, Ba Naam-I Yazad, Sepaasl-Akenaareh given to us by our last Rainidar Adarbad Maraspand Sahib in pazend Manthra Prayers. They are independent prayers not forming part of the Avesta prayers. We usually pray Doa Naam Setayashne after completing our prayers of Niyaeshs, Yashtas, Gatha etc., and it is termed as a part of our compulsory prayer- (Farajiat Bundagi). While the other five are optional, according to the present time, Chithrem. Buyat and Naam-IKhavar are of great importance, having in it the blessings of the advent of Rainidar Behram Varzavand.

The 30 Setayashes or any of them can be recited after finishing all your prayers. Usually one prays Setayashes of the day-Roj and Mah according to Shenshai or Kadim calender. It is also highly beneficial to pray the Setayashes (atleast) according to the Fasli Calender Roj-Mah {For in Nature, Fasli calender is more correct.}

One cannot recommend recital of any prayers before doing Padyaab-Kushti and Farajiat (of Gah, Khorshed, Meher between Sunrise to Sunset) and Night Farajiat (after Sundown of Aivishthrum Geh, Sarosh-Yasht-Ratni-Vadi and Atash Niyaesh). Still if you have done Farajiat in say Havan Geh, and if you desire to pray Setayashes in Rapithwan or Ujiran Geh, then you may pray the Setayashes after doing Paadyaab Kushti-Sarosh Baj (and atleast Gah)- but how many minutes does it take to do Khorshed/Meher Niyaesh.

Whilst praying the Setayesh your 'Mithra' - thought - should also be on the meaning and gist of the Setayesh.

"Pazand Bhenfer Series No.2" by late Ervad Phiroze Masani and '6 Setayeshes of Rainidar Adarbad Maraspand by Hutoksh are recommended for the understanding of the meaning of these Pazand Setayeshes.

Q.91 Why is clapping to be done whilst reciting Vanant Yasht?

A. Interesting question indeed. Among all the Yashts contained in the present 'Khordeh Avesta' which we recite, this Yasht is an

exception; because we have to do something more than mere recitation - a 'Kirya' of clapping.

Mithra, Manthra and Yasna. Mithra = thought, Manthra = words (which should go together with thoughts), and Yasna = ceremony (which goes with Manthra words and Mithra - thoughts). In Vanant Yasht we are doing Yasna by clapping, together with Manthra.

Faridoon who is also known as 'Nirangna Saheb' - is invoked to make this prayer 'Firozgarbad.'

In the 6th, 7th and 8th paras of the Vanant Yasht, Faridoon Athvayan the noble Poryotakesh Padshah Ravaan, is invoked and his help sought. The clapping indicates drawing of his attention towards the reciter, just as snapping our fingers indicates driving away of evil from ourselves.

Q.92 Did Zarathushtis believe in Yatoo-black magic in old times?

A. We have completed 14,500 years in the present Zarvane Darego Khadate of 81,000 years. Black magic is attributed to Evil, and evil forces existed even before the advent of Prophet Zarthusht Sahib, against whom the Mazdiyasnan 'Poiryotakesh' and 'Nabanazdesht' Padshahs and Pahalvans use to battle, and keep them at bay. What we term as 'arvahi' path was open. The sprites descended to the Earth, from their abode in 'Pari Dakhyu'. This path was closed by the Prophet.

Black magic does exist in the world, and is practiced in different forms in different parts of the world.

Q.93 Many of our Dastoorjis and Mobeds whilst coming to perform 'Kriya-kam' - Ceremonies, take out their footwear some distance away from the "Jhajam" (place of prayer), and walk barefooted upto the Jhajam. Is this in order?

A. No, this should be avoided, all priests should endeavor to take care that their bare feet do not touch the ground. It is said, that as soon as your bare feet touch the ground "Kusti-Tute" – i.e., your Kusti power becomes null and void, requiring one to perform fresh 'Kusti'.

Zarathushti Din enjoins that as one should keep his head covered, so it should be with the feet, more so whilst reciting Avesta. Cotton socks should be worn by clergy whilst performing ceremonies, which is forgotten nowadays. Even we should cover our feet whilst praying. Few decades ago, Agiary and Atashbehram prayer halls were almost covered from wall to wall

with carpets. This was not for pomp or show but to help and protect such finer points of our Religious Tarikats. Remember that even in Atash-Padsha Kebla room the priest do not enter, without wearing foot-wear (which is separately kept).

The point is that there should be "Paivand" between our feet and Earth. Socks (not synthetic, cotton only) Carpet, Setranjee, foot-wear of leather (not rubber) fulfill this requirement.

Chakhra '16' is situated at the sole of the feet. This Chakra has all the four elements, fire, water, air and earth dormant in it, and thus its direct contact with the earth increases its dormancy which should be avoided, but let us not enter into this. Suffice to say that a Zarathusti's naked feet should not touch the ground.

Q.94 In the recent Mukhtad days, I noticed trays and trays of Divas kept near the Kebla Room of Agiaries where the light from these Divas fell on the Atash Padshah. This is not the case in Atashbehrams. Which one is correct? When, where and of which oil should Diva be lit? Please explain.

A. Answer to this calls for an essay on Divas or at least a full-length article as explanation, but let us do it as concisely as possible. Firstly, under no circumstances should light of any sort fall on the Atash Padshah of an Agiary or an Atashbehram. This includes the light from a Diva.

Diva should be lit from any oil extracted from the vegetable kingdom or from Animal Kingdom like ghee derived from the milk of goshpands but no product from the mineral kingdom (e.g. kerosene) should be used. It should not be from the fat of animals. Ghee from cows milk is the best followed by ghee from sheep's milk. However, in today's world this would be very uneconomical. Hence, the most economical and permissible fuel for a Diva would be Castor Oil (Aerandia). Refined oils should be avoided.

It is the duty of a person lighting a Diva to pray one Ashem Vohu and ensure that it does not get extinguished. Nature is displeased if one lights any fire, which one is unable to keep burning continuously. If it gets extinguished then three Ashem should be prayed. If one is lighting a Diva in an Agiary or an Atashbehram it should not be placed in or near the Atash Kebla. Divas can be lit near wells. They should be lit near dead bodies, during the performance of any religious ceremony and should be found in every Zoroastrian household.

Divas should preferably be done in earthen containers. Glass vessels are used nowadays, which should only be a second choice. Plastic containers should not be used.

The light from a Diva lit from the specified fuels will soothe the eyes, and the Stoata produced by Avesta Mathravani will remain intact.

With the disappearance of Atash Dadgahs from today's Zoroastrian households, it is imperative that there should be at least one Diva continuously burning in any secure corner of every Zoroastrian household.

Q.95 We do not change our day at 12 O'clock mid-night, but in the morning. Please inform at what hour our day changes. Is it 5 O'clock when our Dastoorjis start praying the fourth day prayers of the deceased?

A. No, it's not 5 O'clock in the morning as wrongly practiced by our clergy. A Zarathushti day changes according to the Sunrise of a given place. 36 minutes before the Sunrise time of a given place. For example, if Sunrise is at 6-42, then minus 36 minutes from it, and your day will start at 6-06 a.m.

Q.96 Recently, I lost my mother whose memory keeps haunting me, am I disturbing her up there (in her work of reducing "Kerdar")? Please suggest, some prayers, preferably small, which I can recite.

A. Naturally 'Yaad' - remembrance of our beloved, recently departed one is bound to come, making our eyes wet at times. Here a little control as taught to us is necessary - so as not to cry and shed tears, although it is easily said, then done. As soon as one remembers any departed soul then one has to pray one '**Ashem Vohu**' at once. If you remember specifically someone daily who has departed, (say after your prayers) then you should pray ten "Ashem-Vohu". One should remember in the following way the departed soul:

Anushe Ravan Ravane-ee Behedin/Osta/Ostee - **Name of the deceased** Behdin/Osta/Ostee **Father's Name** Aidar-eyaad Baad. The most appropriate and important prayer one can recite for the departed one is "Sarosh-Ratni-Vadi" and "Patet (Ravan-ninayetay-Padhvani) daily. One can also do 'Farejyat' - or any other Niyas, Yasht for the departed one, especially '**Atash Niyas**' and '**Haptan Yasht**'. A small para as given below is to be added after Roj-nek-nam :

Behzaday Asho Ruvaney (- Bin -) Rasad, Khoda bayh Amorjad, Amurzadeh Baad, Ruvaney. (- Bin -) bey Nikano Niko Kerdaran beresad. Ashem-Vohu 1.

Daily 'Saturn' can be easily prayed. It's a small Kirya - little Diva, lota of water, little milk, wheat/rice made things or any other food made at home or dates / Banana / fruits/dry fruits anything which is available - Pray **Satum-no-kardo** from book (ii) **Farokhshi** can be prayed (by praying Satum-no-kardo and adding to it Fravardin Yasht) (iii) Laakh-nu-Bhantar (pray for 10 days 570 Yatha, 210 Yangeh-Hathem and 120 Ashem daily) etc.

Q.97 Every alternate family seems to have Juddin "Vahumai" or "Jamai", now-a-days what should we do, to try and make our children marry within our community?

A. Man proposes, but God disposes, still we have to strive for better days, for the community, in this Kyamat period. Although intermarriages have increased, we will survive, we will fall- but not get extinct. The saviour Varzavand Sahib will come when he may-but he will come, and the lost knowledge and power of the Zarthushti Din will rise again. One cannot blame the present generation. Their parents are equally responsible, for they have not moulded their children in the Zoroastrian way of life, but on the western materialistic concepts, which *are* not conducive to the tenets of the Zarthushti Din. Furthermore, the parents have not taught their children by example, for they themselves lack in "**Parsi-Panu**". They have not made them feel proud to be a Parsee, of their religion, tradition, culture, history, etc. In the absence of all this, the younger generation hasn't got the idea that it is wasting its round of birth and wiping itself out spiritually.

Q.98 I have bought a plot of land and am going to construct a bungalow on it but before I do so what religious ritual ceremony should I perform on this piece of land?

A. First of all it should be made, clean. Preferably taro may be sprinkled on it, if not for three days at least once after which it should be cleaned with well water. A pavi may be made whilst reciting 'yatha', round the border. A Jashan ceremony may be performed on the ground.

Q.99 Looking at the present living conditions in cities, my residence is far away from fire-temples. Hence, for conveyance use of vehicles is unavoidable with so many

"impurities". Isn't it better to pray at home rather than going to Agiary/Atashbehram?

A. You have a point but these are the drawbacks of urban life. Formerly in small towns and villages, one used to walk safely to a nearby Agiary. Still, in a city like Mumbai, residents of two Parsee Baugs one of Cusrow Baug, Colaba and other of Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari are lucky to have the facilities of going to the Agiary, without the above problem.

You wish to pray at home, rather than go to the Agiary/Atashbehram; but how far is there purity in your own home? Separation of women while in menses, is it observed? Servants moving about, wooden house flooring - above/below residence etc., Now, in Agiary/Atashbehram you are in "Kash", Padshah is sitting nearby on his throne, vibrations of prayers are present, fields of staota from ceremonies are formed. This protection we do not get in a residence.

In the house where Atash Behram Saheb is enthroned, the 'Nad' of Sarosh Yazad is usually present, as between Atash Varharan and Sarosh Yazad there is a very close relation and contact. Because the music of Sarosh is continuously present, the Bandagi done in Atashbehram becomes more powerful and effective.

Also on Festival days, Hamkaras, important Aoj, one would like to go to Atashbehram/Agiary, whenever one has to, but keep some norms like washing all open parts of the body properly and then doing proper "Kushti". Before entering the Atashbehram "Kushti" should be performed twice (i.e., after performing Kushti first time, wash again the open parts of your body, and perform the Kushti)

The important point to be observed is not to go directly in front of 'Padshah', but keep a distance. If previously you have seen your Padshah properly, then you can bring the image in your imagination in front of you - utilize your third eye. If you do all this, to a certain extent, your problem will be solved.

Q.100 Pregnant women should not be present at "Gehsarna" because there first Ahunavad Gatha is prayed, which will be harmful to the baby in the stomach, but during pregnancy can she pray the Ahunavad Gatha herself especially on Gatha days?

A. Absolutely right, a pregnant woman should not be present nearby during "Gehsarnau ceremony. But why? That only Ustaad

Saheb Beheramshah explained stating that "Staota" vibrations of the Ahunavad Gatha are such that they disintegrate the atoms of the bodies, whereas during pregnancy the baby's atoms gets manifested and hence Ahunavad Gatha 'Staota' will be harmful to the baby. So avoid praying it too during the Gatha days but instead during pregnancy do pray (Birjishi-Jupiter) fifth Vahishtoisht Gatha.

Q.101 In our ceremonies and prayers, prefix is attached to the names of departed ones like Behedin, Ervad, Osta, Osti, but no such prefix is recited with the names of Padshahs, Pahelwans of bygones. Why?

A. Padshahs like Gayomard, Hoshang, Tehmurasp, Jamshed, Faredoon, Minocher, Kaikhushru, and many others, and Pahelwans Zal, Rustom, Sam, Nariman etc. are the pure Barjisi (Jupiterian) souls who descend on this earth, in the beginning few thousands years, of a Zarvane Daregho Khadate (time cycle of 81,000 years) for the betterment of humanity and progress towards Farshogard. They are known as Nabanazdisht and Poryotakesh Ravans, who are nearer to center (Nucleus) of Ahura Mazda. They have attained Salvation - Mukti, still they return to Earth, and build spiritual benevolent places and institutions (just like materialistic benevolent institution from which we get help). They all are revered and remembered in our ceremonies and prayers, who need no prefix, to be indicated, in Nature.

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Publications by Zarathushti Din Sahitya Mandal

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1.	The 6 Setayesh of Raenidar Adarbad Marespand Author: Hutoksh	10-00 + 3-00
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From 1947 to 1974, Parsi Avaz, owned and edited by Mr. Jehangir S. Chiniwalla ruled the roost in the esoteric realms of the Zoroastrian Religion. After it wound up, on the death of Mr. Chiniwalla the bi-monthly **Dini-Avaz** was launched in December 1975, vindicating the dictum that Nature abhors a vacuum.

Run by the Dini-Avaz Committee in a magazine format, it was initially priced at Rs. 12/- for six issues. In its inaugural issue, it stated its object, which was to provide the answers to various doubts and questions about our Scriptures, spiritual institutions, religious practices, rituals etc.

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- Adi F. Doctor

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Hearty Congratulations to Dini-Avaz and its Editor Cursetji Patel who despite indifferent health, continues to light the lamp of divinity in Zarathushti hearts both in India and abroad. May Ahura Mazda in His Infinite Wisdom grant both Dini-Avaz and Cursetji a long, healthy and vibrant life. Aameen! Aameen! Aameen!

- Noshir H. Dadrawala