

The Grand Procession of the Faithful – Arrival of Tavdi Adraan Saheb At Mumbai.

What should be Our Prayer Before the Padshah Saheb?

"You, who are all one with each other

through your righteous conduct ("Kerfeh")

and through the divine gifts of the Din, namely, Yazashney and Daroon and Afringaan, and you, who are filled with the divine award ("Mizdey"),

may you live long with your spouses and children and family

and may you be in unison with the divine field (paevand) of the "Saoshyos" the Saviour".

- The Blessings from Chithreym Buyaad (3)

"This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you that God is Light..... If we walk in the Light, we have fellowship with one another....."

John 1-1 :5-7

The midnight of 20th December 1999 and early morning of the 21st Roj Hormuzd, Mah Amardaad, Gaah Ushahin (Shahenshahi), y.z. 1369! 10 percent of the Parsi Community was walking on the road *from* Vatcha Gandhi Agiari to Godrej Baug at Nepean Sea Road, Mumbai, in solemn and devotional fellowship at a respectable distance *from* the Holi Aderaan Padshah, brought *from* Navsari, once a prominent town of the Parsis.

Every community has an unseen and non-local field, like a magnetic field surrounding a magnet. Every member of the community is joined through this field to every other, howsoever *far* away they may be *from* each other. The force behind the field is religious and cultural. It is the field of faith and devotion of the community towards its own Prophet, the Saoshyant, and the spiritual Institutions gifted by Him, and the religious disciplines taught by Him.

That principle of the divine science is set out in the above passage of the Pazend Prayer, Chithreym Buyaad. You Parsis are tuned with each other with the chords of (i) your righteous deeds - 'Kerfeh' which is the opposite of "Goonah" - sin, and (ii) the divine Institutions gifted to you by Paigamber Asho Zarathushtra. The composer of the Prayer, Dastoor Aderbaad Maaraaspend, has indicated these gifts by Yazashney, Daroon and Aafringaan. In these are inherently included all the gifts: Surdreh Kushti, Manthra, Atash Kadeh, Dokhma, Kriya-Kaam, Meher-Patet (the moral discipline of Truth and Repentance) and Boonak-Paasbaani - (the preservation of the racial and spiritual gene). The Prayer blesses every Parsi who is tuned to the field of faith, firstly, with long life, so that much of the Karmic responsibilities, liabilities and obligations may be discharged in this life; and secondly, with the paevand i.e. the field connection with the Saviours of the Din, past, present and future. These blessings are entwined in the Prayers: 'Ahmai Raeshcha' (Ahmai Dareygaam Darego Zitim), "Kerfeh Moozda" ("May I be away *from* Sin and remain in the divine fields of the advanced souls") and Yenghahey Haataam, ("we attune ourselves with all such souls marching nearer and nearer to Thee, oh Mazdaa Ahuraa!")

On that day the Parsis marched on an infinitesimally small path on the surface of the earth in the company of a divine King. As Mahalia Jackson used to sing with intense fervour : "I am walking with my King....."

Look at the above quoted words from John I. God is Light and if we walk in His Light, we have strengthened the field of our fellowship. That is what the Parsis did in the small hours of that great day. As to how was this done, our aging brother Jame Jamshed reported in a commemorative issue of 2-1-2000 (Vol. 59 : 39), although there was more emphasis *on* publicity than divinity. I need not repeat all that.

What is Atash in our Din? Why do we call a Holy Atash in Atash-Baheraam *or* Agiary, "Padshah Saheb?"

We must first know and understand a few Truths about Atash which are taught in our Din.

The first is : Atash does not just mean a burning physical fire. Atash is the divine energy operating *on* all the motions and movements of all the continents of Creation: physical, ultra-physical and divine. Each particle in nature is in motion and has therefore the energy of Atash inherently operating in it. The burning fire of our daily experience is the external manifestation of the divine energy within. It has an inherent natural co-efficient of divinity in it. This can be enhanced by certain 'Kriya' *or* 'Yasna' - a mystical procedure-whereby the fire is made to pass through certain kinetics. The coefficient of divinity in Atash-Daadgah is higher than an ordinary fire; that of Aaderaan still higher; that of Atash beharam still higher; and that of Paak Iranshah, the highest, in the world of our experience. The Kriya for raising the level of divinity differs accordingly in its expanse and range.

The rules of all such Kriya are very subtle, delicate, precise and exacting. Amongst several things, the spiritual purity of the performing priests is a vital factor.

As there are rules of consecrating the Holy Padshah of different levels, there are rules also for shifting Him. The fundamental rule is that Atash beharam and Adaraan Padshah's must never be shifted from the original place of enthronement. However if compelling circumstances arise and it becomes absolutely necessary to shift the Padshah, the tradition has prescribed another set of exacting rules.

I write this with profound sorrow that **the procedures adopted for bringing the Padshah Saheb from Navsari and enthroning Him in Mumbai were not in consonance with the religious and traditional prescriptions and did not take into account some principles regarding the spiritual purity of an Atash Padshah.** Some vital rules were infringed to avoid hardship. It was the duty of the Dastooris and Mobeds to evolve a procedure as near as possible to the religious and traditional prescriptions and principles. What was actually done was based more *on* convenience and show-business than the adherence to the Rules. Those who volunteered to serve and help are not at all to be blamed for this, so also those faithful Behdins who walked with the King *on* the last leg of His journey. **In fact their intense devotion was a mitigating factor for the agonised Padshah Saheb. And we, the Behdins and non-mobeds of the community can still do something to undo the damage.**

What can we do?

That takes us to another divine Truth about Atash and Atash Padshah. That is : **Any Atash Padshah burning in any Atash-Beheram, Aadraan *or* agiary is a conscious, living spiritual and divine entity.** Our very tradition of bowing down and falling *on* our knees before Atash-Padshah expresses our inherent belief and conviction that He is alive and conscious, and has the divine power to bless us.

Further there are enough references in the existing Avesta indicating that **Atash is the divine Energy of "Kayshaash," Karma, and the destiny of all humans and every thing in the Creation.** In other words, Atash is the Lord of Karma. The whole of Atash Niyash vibrates with this Truth. The "food" for the day and "food" for the night; the question asked by Atash : "What gift you, my walking friend, has brought for me, your sitting friend?" ; the passages: "Oos Moi Ujareyshva Ahura" and "At Toi Atareym Ahura" (taken from Gatha 33 : 12, 13 & 14, and 34:4) all these and many more in Atash Niyash declare this Truth. So also: Haptan Yashta, Kardeh 1 : 2 (=Yazashney Ha 36-1); Gatha : Ha 43 : 4, 9; 46 : 7 ; 47 : 6 ; 51 - 9.

Being a divine conscious entity, Atash is anxious to lead every human to the Path of Ahura, through his or her Karma, destiny, Kayshaash. Every Religion has this Truth entwined in it. Rig Veda has 200 Shloka's on Agni, the Holy Fire. We, the Parsis are gifted with 'Atash Padshah's who are in charge of the spiritual destiny of every devotee.

There is another Truth about Atash taught in the Din. That is: **It is the Padshah's function to fight with the physical, mental and spiritual pollutions going round in His area of operation.** This function causes a strain on the Padshah and His energy diminishes in discharging the function. This divine Energy is required to be replenished by imparting the "Boy" ceremony five times a day.

The marathon ceremonies for consecrating the Atash-Baheraam and Aadraan are based on these fundamental Truths. So also the ceremonial Rules for shifting a Padshah from one place to another. Any violation of any Rule of consecration or shifting results in an "Aajaab" on the Padshah. "Aajaab" means oppression tyranny, strain, burden or stress, which depletes the coefficient of divinity in the Padshah.

When in the present case, the Rules were violated, the Padshah has undergone the Aajaab. He now wishes His Energy to be replenished. Mobeds will do their job of "Boy" ceremonies. But the Padshah desires - actually craves-that we, His devotees and Behdins, also play our part in replenishing His Divinity. How do we do it? - By chanting before the Padshah one Atash Niyaiish whenever we can, with all the devotion of gushing out from our heart and the intensively earnest thought:

"May my gift of this Niyaiish, howsoever small, strengthen and energise you, oh Padshah Saheb, so that you will lead my destiny to be on the divine path and to march on it in the midst of my worldly life and all its ups and downs. Lead me, oh, the son of Ahura-Mazda-Aathro Ahurahey Mazdaao Poothra, nearer and nearer to Ahura; cleanse the dirt in me; alchemies the druj (evil) within me into his light (Oos Moi Ujareyshva Ahura.....) As the Saheb of my karma, my destiny, give this award to me and my community".

When you enter the Agiary, wash you face, do a proper Kushti, chant Sarosh Baaj, Gah and Khorshed and Meher Niyaiishes on the verandah or any convenient place outside the main prayer room; then enter the prayer room facing the Padshah in any direction except North, and recite the Atash Niyaiish with the above thoughts whirling in your mind and heart. You will undo the damage inflicted on the Padshah by the violation of the prescribed rules of shifting Him.

- K. Navroz Dastoor

What would you give me oh Atash? Oh! You, who are the expression of Ahura's Son, Athra! Give me the following, in this life itself and just as sufficient as i need and deserve:

Atashic Energy to convert my druj into Gava; spiritual nourishment; a life in your service; selfless loftiness; spiritual wisdom; strong truthful tongue; awakening of the soul; faithful intelligence, which may go on expanding; and inherent courage and power.

**- Atash Niyaiish - 13
(Dayao me... Asoo kharhreyim...)**

(Parsi Pukar September-October '99 Vol. 5; No. 3-4)