

SUDREH AND KUSHTI

[A lot has been written on the subject in Gujarati. We give some basic information on this important subject in English for the benefit of our English readers and more particularly for the youth. The information is as given in old Gujarati writings on the subject and is mainly culled out of the book : "A Manual of Khshnoom" by Phiroze N. Tavadia.]

SUDREH

The Sudreh is a specially prepared vestment which is worn on the chest and reaches up to mid thighs or even up to knees. In fact, according to the Zarathushtrian doctrine, a sudreh must be made in conformity with the following points:

- Must be made of cotton (muslin) cloth;
- It must be of white colour only;
- It must be made from one piece only;
- It must contain the prescribed nine seams;
- The length must be at least up to mid thighs or up to knees;
- It must be completely circular at the bottom and
- The bottom must be completely rim-sewn.

Of these, the condition about the nine seams is perhaps the most important. These nine seams are as under:

1. Nape piece;
2. Gerebaan;
3. Vertical seams (@ left for men and on the right for women);
4. Triangular seams (on the right side for men and left side for women);
5. right sleeve;
6. left sleeve;
7. front main part for the shirt;
8. rear main part of the shirt;
9. parallel seams.

Each seam has profound significance and act as a store house of spiritual growth for the native who wears it. However, this can be summarized in short as under:

Sr. No Of Seam	Name of the Seam	Thought associated with the Seam.
1	Nape Seam	Retributive compensation by the observance of the tarikats (canons) of the religion.
2	Gerebaan	Preservation of Khoreh (aura)
3 - 4	Two triangular seams	i. Observance of religious canons which constitute Hvarashta; ii. Observance of Truth which constitutes Hukhata; and iii. Development of Humata through Hvarashta and Hukhata.
5 - 6	Left sleeve and right sleeve	Overpowering the effects of 'Darkness' through effects of 'Light' (Asha)
7 - 8	Front and back sides	From mortal state to rise to immortal
9	Parallel seam of a sanctified soul.	Blending of masculine and feminine counter parts

The entire technique of Sudreh is built in such a way that the wearer continuously gets the vibratory effect in Nature to penetrate through his astral body, activate the sixteen Chakras, and according to the grand laws of the Zarathushtrian Faith, (i) bring in Ashoi i.e. purity (ii) purify the Khoreh (aura) and (iii) bring about the Keshash (retribution). In this matter, the nine seams of the Sudreh plays an important role by bringing about "Zabariyaat" i.e. multiplications etc. through the process of Chakras.

The importance of the Sudreh is so profound that it is enjoined in the religion that a Zarathushtrian corpse must also be invested with his own used Sudreh, which holds the collective effect of the tenets of the religion observed during life and for this purpose the Sudreh must be the one used by the deceased during life.

KUSTI

The term "Kusti", the Zarathushtrian sacred thread girdle is derived from Karsha, (magnetic) circuit. It is also referred to in the Avesta as to mean that which is worn around the waist. The performance of the Sudreh - Kusti rite is the basis of all daily prayers and all religious ceremonies.

Just as the nine seams of the Sudreh represent the nine holy, ever living, ever blissful lustrous potentialities emanating from the Ahunavar, the Will Divine of Ahura Mazda, which comprise of the seven Ameshaspandas and the two Data, the deified laws of Infoldment and Unfoldment that function in nature for the Reformation of Souls in the mortal worlds and their repatriation in the immortal worlds, similarly, the three round of the Kusti are reminiscent of the three stages of the Ahunavar Plan, i.e: (i) Creation of the worlds and Souls; (ii) exile of the Souls to mortal worlds for their

reformation and (iii) repatriation to the immortal worlds after Frasho - kereti i.e. their spiritual renovation.

The kusti is to be made of wool of the lamb, especially of the lambs called 'Balota', which is one of the five species of lambs mentioned in Bundehehshneh. The wool possesses the properties of absorbing the sound vibrations. Thus, when the prayers (Manthras) are recited, their vibrations are absorbed, stored and then distributed as may be required to the wearer/performer of the Kusti. This has the effect of spreading the vibrations throughout the aura and reach the Soul.

The yarn is spun on two separate spindles by the priestly class ladies. The two threads thus spun are then formed into a ball. Next, the two threads are twisted together and wound on another spindle bigger than the above one. In this way, we get what we call a 72 duplicated threads i.e. 144 threads of Kusti girdle. This unification of the two threads into one reminds of the law of Duality, which operates in the immortal worlds as 'Limit' and 'Justice'.

The three rounds of Kusti on the waist remind us of the three stages of the Ahunavar Plan. The object of tying the kusti on the waist is that thereby, the Khoreh i.e. the personal aura, is kept attracted to the middle of the body. The 12th. Chakra of the body is at the naval and is connected to the effects of Jupiter, under whose influence the Zarathushtrian Faith is covered. Thus the kusti on the waist helps in drawing the holy currents of this planet from this Chakra to the 10th. Chakra at the heart and hence elevates the consciousness of the native. Further, the knotting of the kusti on the front and the back sides with the reef knot also have their significance.