

20 POINTS TO BE OBSERVED WHILE VISITING A FIRE TEMPLE

Necessary decorum and discipline:

1. One should bathe (preferably a head bath) before going to the Atashbehram or Agiary, and try his best, as far as possible, after a bath, not to come into contact with other things; this is more so whilst going to the Atashbehram. After traveling from one city to another it is imperative that a bath should be taken. You **can't** go to "IRANSHAH" at Udwada **without** a bath, just prior to visiting him.
2. Dress with decorum, no tight jeans or mini-skirts or tight choli. Dress in white rather than any other colour, especially dark ones (Black, Green, Red, Violet). White is an original prime colour, which transmutes the sum total of evil "**Asaeray Tariki**" into "**Asaeray Roshni**" – sum total of Ashoi. Cotton dress is preferable to any other material. Clean and washed clothes should be worn. "CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS".
3. Head should be covered **before** coming into the vicinity of Atashbehram/Agiaries. To do so, after entering Atashbehram/Agiary compound is undesirable. (Really a Zarthoshti's head should be covered for 24 hours). Cotton topi with two layers, or double layer "Mathabana", or big scarves but no wollen knitted topi which has holes, handkerchief or scanty scarves. Hair should be completely covered.
4. Before entering the main building of Atashbehram/Agiaries in order to go near the threshold of holy fire, Padiyab-Kushti should be performed – meaning all the open parts of the body should be cleaned with water, dried and then "Kushti" should be performed. This is to purify and rearrange our own aura which becomes impure by the activities of the outside world and environment. While going to an Atashbehram it is worthwhile to do "Kushti" twice i.e. wash all open parts of the body with downward strokes, then do "Kushti", then again wash and do Kushti. Whilst going to IRANSHAH this is a **must**. (Really, "**Nahn**", A Spiritual Bath which cleans the pollution which accumulates from time to time in our personal magnetic atmosphere, "the **Aipee**" – should be taken). Sudreh should not be inserted back into the trousers but should be kept out whilst praying.
5. Do not strike the Kushti nor snap your fingers towards a fellow devotee standing nearby. Kushti should not be done in the "**Kebila** room" facing or near the Atash Padshah, or near a well. Crack your Kushti in the northern direction.
6. Remember to loosen your shoe laces before doing your Padiyab-Kushti. Do not touch "Sukhad" (sandalwood) with wet hands after Padiyab-Kushti.
7. One should not face North whilst doing Kushti or whilst praying, except while doing "*Char Dishano Namaskar*".
8. Care should be taken that bare feet do not touch the ground at any time. (Formerly Agiaries/Atashbehram used to have wall-to-wall carpets, the idea behind was this and not pompousness). Feet should be covered by socks. Whilst praying, feet (or at least one foot) should touch the ground and not keep hanging or on the chair. Connection with the Earth has to be there (as earthing) but covered or with something in between (like Carpet, Socks, Setranji). Rubber shoes, Gumboots should not be worn while praying as rubber/plastic are non-conductors (of Electricity). It hinders the bad magnetism from flowing out freely from our feet.

9. In the Fire-Temple (as well as at home) that we usually visit, a special place or corner should be selected and fixed by us, and as far as possible we should pray there. Strange as it may seem, this builds up an atmosphere which is conducive to the type of work you are doing, it creates an atmosphere, which over a period of time becomes strong and a field is created.

10. All able persons should preferably pray standing. If this is not possible for some reason, sit in “**Do-Zanoo**” position (i.e. folding the legs at knees, keeping feet backwards, on **Right side if Male and Left side if Female**) at some place, which will not cause inconvenience to other devotees.

11. Prayers should be done softly but distinctly, not in whispers, thought or in mind. One should not rock or sway from side to side like a pendulum whilst praying, as vibrations of prayers get distorted. Do not show your back to the Atash Padshah, **Face Him!** Take care that no one passes between you and the altar, nor should you do the same. While praying do not cross the legs nor talk.

12. As our nails and fingertips send out impure vibrations, our hands should be covered by a piece of cloth or by a handkerchief preferably white, when we say our prayers and while facing the Holy fire in an Atash **Kadeh**. According to our tradition, placing of white handkerchief over the palm of our hand is a gesture of reverence and submission to Ahura Mazda and our fervent desire to establish a Paevand with all spiritual beings.

13. “Rakhia” – Ash should not be misused. It should be taken by the first finger near the thumb (Burjisi finger) and applied in between the eye brows; (the third eye) and **nowhere else**. By this, “point of contact” is established with the Holy fire on the altar. Please refrain from placing coins and currency notes in the receptacle of “Rakhia”. It can do you no good, it only reduces the spiritual benefit of “Rakhia”. Rakhia should be wiped off when you leave the Agiary/Atashbehram, because as it has the power to absorb good vibrations from the atmospheric field of the Atashbehram/Agiary, it can also absorb the polluted vibrations of the outside world.

14. Sandalwood piece brought by you for Atash Padshah, should be kept in your hand, in front of you or in your shirt pocket, Not in pants or anywhere below the navel. When you do your prayers, especially while doing Atash-Nyaish, hold it in your hand as it has the ability to absorb “Avesta Staota” – vibrations. Also when the sandalwood is shown the glow of the Atash-Padshah whatever pollution it has gathered of the outside world gets wiped off to an extent. After prayers place the sandalwood in its appointed place. In an Atashbehram, it is undesirable to insist on personally handing sandalwood to the officiating priest who is in “**Bareshnoom**” for attending to the holy fire.

15. Whilst bells are rung during “**Boi**” Kriya on change of “**Gehs**”, different people do different things. The correct and the simplest thing is to stop doing whatever you are doing, even praying and stand or sit still silently and think that the attack of the black side of Nature on the Padshah gets repelled and Dushmat, Duzujhth, Duzvarashta gets destroyed and Humata, Hukhta and Havarashta expand and become more and more.

16. Electric lights or fans in our Atash Kadehs are objectionable but we are faced with a *fait accompli* here. Electricity waves and vibrations are base and materialistic and are not at all compatible with the vibrations of Manthra recitation, and tend to destroy them or nullify them. We cannot switch off the light, as many people do not understand this point and they may get offended. Hence, for a believer the only alternative is to go and pray where there is sufficient light, or pray near the divas (For Light).

17. On “**Hamkaras**” and festival days during rush hours, devotees should maintain patience and calm whilst offering obeisance on the “**Umbur**” without any hustle or undue hurry. While kneeling to pay obeisance; ladies should not put their hand bags or purses (with their comb and cosmetics) on the threshold. In fact, they should not be carried into the “Kebala” (Inner room) at all. Kissing the threshold of the inner room or the photo frame of Paegamber Sahib is taboo.

18. “Diva” should be done only of oil, water should not be mixed with it. Burning of agarbattis or incense sticks near Atash Kadeh should be avoided.

19. Khurshed, Meher, Mah Bokhtar and Ava Niyashes, and Ava Yasht should not be recited in front of the Atash Padshah. At night recite the Sarosh Baj, Aivisruthrem Geh and Mah Bokhtar Niyash the same way; **Not** in front of the Padshah.

20. Concentrate properly on the prayer that is being recited by you rather than prick up your ears on what others are talking, and focus your eyes on what others have worn. Decorum should be maintained, remember Atashbehram/Agiaries are not clubs or chitchat places, if you have to talk do it softly and in a dignified manner.

**“REMEMBER, YOU HAVE COME TO PRAY
AND
THE SPIRITUAL KING
IS SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU
ON HIS THRONE.”**

CURSETJI M. PATEL

ZARATHUSHTI DIN SAHITYA MANDAL
C/o. Dini-Avaz Committee,
P.O. Box No. 2093, Kalbadevi Post Office,
Mumbai 400 002.