

Why Should I "Do My Kushti"?

There was a time when Zoroastrians performed the Kushti Padyaab ritual several times a day... upon arising, after bath, every time after going to the bathroom, at the change of the gahs, at bedtime, etc..... either mechanically or with faith just because they were supposed to or enjoined to. In our times, we find it extremely inconvenient, old fashioned and even unnecessary. What is the use, we argue with our conscience, to rattle off some words which make no sense to us? The saddest part of it all is, we do not even realize what protection and benefits it showers upon us, both, in this life and the next. Ah, we are strange people dying of thirst, sitting on the brink of a fresh, cool stream of water! If we were to make efforts to know the inner truths of even the gist of the meanings of our kushti prayers and the importance of this very small but powerful ritual, we could inculcate these in our children right from the time of their Navjote. **We could teach them from example, by performing it ourselves** whenever possible, not mechanically, but with real pleasure and joy!

My dear friends, if you have read so far, I beseech you to read on which is what I have learned and wish to share with my fellow Zoroastrians.

I shall have to lay a foundation of some facts, rather truths of Nature upon which we shall build our explanation. So pardon me if you feel I digress or dwell upon irrelevant topics.....these are all interconnected.

Kushti prayers we all may know, but what is **Padyaab**? It is the preparation that we do before untying the Kushti. We wash all parts of the body that are exposed, (like our arms, and face) with water, dry them and then start reciting Kemna Mazda. Only after we have recited Kemna Mazda, do we untie the Kushti, go through the Ahura Mazda Khodal, and keep the two fore-fingers lodged in the knots in front while reciting Jasame Avengha Mazda. If you can recite **Sarosh Baj** after this, it is better.

It takes only 10 minutes.

We all know and agree about the importance of Prayers, which is known as **Bandagi** in Persian. **Bandagi** has a built-in meaning. "Banda" means a servant. When we offer prayers to Him we become like his **Banda**. We offer ourselves wholly unto Him - servant of God. Prayer in English means "words uttered or aspirations felt and addressed to God, as an act of worship, or as a petition." In prayers, we talk to God, we communicate with full submission and devotion. We should. Why? All Prophets (Messengers of God) of the different Religions descended upon our Earth plane, with messages from Him. These messages are the **Fundamental Truths in Nature**. One of them to put it very simply is: our Great God is Infinite Divine Light. A ray of that Divine Light is in each one of us. Our ultimate aim or destiny is to merge in Him. But before we attain that goal, we have to work hard. Before we reap such a harvest, we have to do some spiritual farming, and one of the ways to do that is to **Pray**. Suppressing our ego as much as possible, with 2 main pre requisites of having a) very humble disposition and b) uttering Truth on the tongue.. Truth for the sake of Truth.. we pray, concentrating on such central thoughts as: God is great, I surrender myself to Him completely I have to reach Him but the road is long and weary. As I go along this journey, I recite His prescribed Mathra so that I activate my '**chakras**' (spiritual centers) and generate/liberate the spiritual energy and forces within me. I aspire to be a good Zoroastrian by implementing my Prophet's teachings into my life thereby not only going nearer to Him but also aiding the entire Creation to march toward "**Farshogard**".

[You are aware of the Kushti prayers and the effects of vibrations during recitation of prayers (manthra) and the thought forces one should hold on to (mithra).]

To probe deeper into a mysterious explanation of the advantages of perform-

ing kushti ritual, we need to know about the nine constituents of a human Being as mentioned in Yasna Ha 55. They represent three triads of 3 categories.

Triad I.

- (1) **Tanu** - Outer bodily form with skeleton.
- (2) **Gaetha** - Vital organs of the body like the liver, brain, etc.
- (3) **Azda** - Subtle oily counterpart of the physical form. The 'etheric double' or exact replica of our physical body in fine ethereal state. Azda is partly outside and slightly inside our body. It is physical but cannot be seen.

Gross, Visible Belong to the Physical Group Subject To Expansion And Contraction In Course Of Time.

Triad II.

- (1) **Kehrp** - Subtle Form or body. Comprises of 16 chakras a body of variegated invisible colors. It is 6 inches outside the body. Invisible and cannot perish.
Ushtan and Tevishi reside in Kehrp and so does the soul (urvan).
- (2) **Tevishi** - is the Desire Forces - is the center of higher and lower emotions and feelings i.e. good and evil desire forces of a soul.
- (3) **Ushtan** - Ultra physical current coming down from Spiritual Realms; subtle and vital life energy poured down from above and joined with each soul ... which contributes to the thinking, speaking, acting powers of the soul, and to the will-power, consciousness and divine wisdom.

Also Subject To Expansion And Contraction... These Belong To The Ultra Physical Worlds.

Triad III.

- (1) **Urvan** - Soul.
- (2) **Baoddangh** - Perfect Divine Knowl-

edge, brilliance of the light of spiritual knowledge.

- (3) **Fravashi** - The sublimest spark - divine light proportionate to the soul's goodness - Godhead.

These Are Immortal, Permanent Not Subject To Variations Or Expansion Or Contractions.

Out of these 9 parts, Soul (Ruvan) Baoddangh and Farohar are elevated to the divine status of pure light. Kehrp Tevishi and Ushtan are also faultless but have not yet risen to that stage. Tanu Gaetha and Azda need to be strengthened in our lifetime.

[At one stage, we humans existed in fiery form. At another stage in watery form. At still another in aerial. At present we all are 'khaki' earthly.]

Why Kushti Padyaab ?

AZDA - though not visible, is included in the Physical group. Why? when body disintegrates at death, so does Azda with Tanu and Gaetha. Azda is like Nature's laboratory. Every day our cells and atoms are renewed or manufactured in Azda. In Haptan Yasht this laboratory is called

પચાસ દૂવારની (દરવાજાની) વાસી

Laboratory with 50 doors. Azda makes other things like the Mind from which our thoughts emanate. Azda also has the power to sustain life. It keeps the body strong and healthy if given three kinds of food: (A) Tariquat. (B) Truth on tongue. (C) Prayers constant & daily.

Not only does Azda strengthen the body, it also strengthens the mind. What is mind? Can the scientists define the mind? They could the brain, but not the mind. Our Religion teaches us how the mind works and why. Our mind which is abstract, comprises of 2 subtle elements: (a) 'Gav' element which is good and sustaining (b) 'dravao' which is bad and destructive. Our minds are an interwoven combination of gav and dravao = "Vohun" in varying degrees. The gav element which has a

sustaining element, has an upper hand, therefore Life goes on. Out of this Gav element comes out a current which we know as conscience.

Mind is formed when the child is 6 months old in the mother's womb. At that stage it is not active but the ravan (soul) is. When birth takes place, the soul which is active, tells the mind "Now I shall go into a state of dormancy (sleep); you take over but be vigilant. Do heed the 'gav' element and act correctly." The mind promises to do so but gradually as the child gets older and smarter in the ways of the world, (age 3 or 4 or 5) the soul which knows all, goes to sleep and the mind which is now activated, forgets the advice and is often tempted to act otherwise. For example, we all know it is wrong to speak a lie. Whenever one is tempted to lie, for any reason the conscience (which is a current coming from the 'gav' element) warns the mind; but the mind may not listen and may find some excuses or justification to appease the conscience and thus the tongue utters the untruth. But in some cases, it may not be so. There is a constant struggle going on within Good and Evil. It is up to us, how we react. For that reason our beloved Prophet Asho Zarathushtra has revealed to us the secret of increasing the 'gav' element in us.

As Zoroastrians, we are enjoined to mould our lives in accordance with immutable laws of Nature - hence our canons of purity, our mathravani prayers, our great institutions like Dokhma, Atesh behrams, etc. With the help of all these gifts we have to do the alchemy of our soul.

In these scientific times, we all know and acknowledge the harmful results of bacteria, carbondioxide and other such elements, even if we cannot see them. If that is believable, because scientists tell us so, it should not be difficult to believe what 'the Master Scientist of All Times' our beloved Holy Zarathushtra has taught us - that 'druj' or bad emanations from certain

objects and atmosphere attack us, our physical and astral bodies, constantly. By reciting kushti prayers we not only liberate spiritual waves and currents to ward off these attacks, but also strengthen our Azda to prevent sickness or physical diseases. Just as the body is strengthened by eating good food, so these 'manthric prescriptions' help Azda enhance our physical and spiritual health. Thus Azda keeps the body strong and healthy. If (a) we try to abstain from 'druj' (b) we utter Truth on our tongue (c) offer constant prayers daily.

Now we shall see the drama that is unfolded at the time of death. How could kushti performance help one after Life ceases ?

Tanu and Gaetha (because they belong to the physical group). Ushtan gets snapped, the Azda which is full of holes, collapses. Kehr p comes out at once. Tevishi (desire) forces goes out of the body but hovers above it like a dense cloud - a condensed shell of the person's last desires. For this reason, to melt or make it less dense we should pray Ashem Vohu in the dead person's ear. The mind which is now shocked gets panicky and realizes that the urvan has to suffer the consequences of bad deeds performed on earth.

At such a time, especially when death is instantaneous or due to an accident, the plight of the soul which was dormant during lifetime but now slowly awakened, is pitiable.

Remember the 'gav tatva' (element) and the 'dravao' which make up the 'vohun' element in the mind ? At the time of death, the combination of 'vohun' breaks up; the gav is separated from the dravao; the good separated from the evil. Ahriman the evil, which resides in the body in the 13th chakra (corres. Part where the genitals are) wishes to attack the urvan. It wants to go from the 13th to the 10th chakra (where the soul resides) with a view to capture it. It does not know that the urvan

at the time of the death, has already gone to the head, 1st chakra. Between 10th and 13th comes 12th chakra which is near the navel. Protection is given by our Paegambar there too. The two knots of our kushti protect this chakra, that is if the person wears it. At this point, the Fire Energies working in us (Atashe Vohufriyan) which is not yet extinguished, gives resistance to Ahriman. The fight or resistance put up by the Fire energies depends upon its brilliance and power. If the person has performed his kushti ritual constantly during his lifetime, has abstained from Druj, His Atashe vohufriyan will be powerful and will not be affected by Ahriman. The soul (urvan) which has escaped to the head knocks on the Kehrp and wishes to enter it, but the Kehrp will not open the door lest Ahriman follows. So till Ahriman is made impotent in the 10th chakra by Atashe Vohufriyan, it does not allow the soul to enter. After that it does. Now we understand why Zoroastrians are in a hurry to do the schkar. Before Atashe Vohufriyan gets extinguished, Sachkar must be done. If we understand all this, we may realize how important this three minute ritual of kushti padyaab is. Such a lot depends upon its performances.

Coming to a most fascinating fact about the advantages of kushti-Padyaab - something which may not have occurred to us in the past, we shall start by making a very bold and inspiring statement : Performing Kushti Padyaab is like performing a Boye Ceremony before the Fire. Just as the mobed tends to the fire in the Atesh Kadeh, we tend to the fire (energies) in our bodies. Let us observe what happens when gah changes ? We all know that the earth rotates on its axis and revolves around the sun. When the 'gah' changes, it wobbles a little on its axis; with the result that the rays of the Sun which were direct until then, get deflected. At that time, the Dark forces of Ahriman (who is always waiting for such opportunities), plays his part making Atash Padshah's task (which is that of fighting the dark forces) difficult. At this time the load on our Atesh padshah's increases. At such times, our dasturji who performs the

'boye' ceremony, tries to recharge the fire energy and restore the original power in Fire.

Similarly we have fire energies within us (as already explained) known as Atashe Vohufriyan. This is a benevolent energy which takes one towards goodness, with love. When the 'gah' changes or when we visit the toilet or have been to a dirty place, etc. our Atashe Vohufriyan is also attacked. Not only that but our kushti which is made of woolimbibes and absorbs the bad vibrations we have picked up in such places and the putridity contaminates our personal atmosphere. We therefore are enjoined to perform our kushti thus 'offering' 'boye' to our own atesh.

To conclude, dear Zoroastrians, our times are not suitable and our circumstances at times make this difficult for us. It is easier to preach than to practise. My aim of writing to you this article is to elaborate upon the magnitude of the importance of the kushti performance, and of wearing proper sudreh and kushti, (next to the skin) at all times. Do not remove it ever, I entreat you, at any time (except of course when taking a bath) and try to 'do the Kushti' as many times as possible. Even if you cannot pray, do the kushti prayers at least.

"Tamari kasti jaroor saaboot rakhjo."
Every such kushti performance brings "farshogard" (salvation) nearer.

With utmost devotion and love for our Asho Paegambar, we meditate: "I am a Zoroastrian, I shall accept this gift (of sadro kushti) of our dear Prophet and try to tread the path He has chalked out for us. Whatever I am I know I am a Mazdeyasnie Zarathoshti. Whatever I may have (or not have) there is nothing which is more precious than my **Faith** in my Religion."

Teach and encourage your children and others to wear and be proud of the privilege of this great Zoroastrian practice. Do not for any reason forsake this spiritual armour and the golden thread that connects you to the great Mazdeyasnie Zarathoshti Religion.

Silloo Mehta

Vol. 17 No. 6