



## Performing the Sedreh Pushi Ceremony

Dasturji Mehraban Firouzgary, Tehran, Iran

The youth initiate must at least know the "Avestaye Koshti" and "Soroosh Vaj" prayers by heart. Also they should know the purpose and reason for the "Sedreh" and "Koshti" and how to tie the "Koshti" around the waist while reciting the "Yatha Ahu" and "Ashem Vohu" prayers.

In addition, the youth should know the following prayers and their meanings from Khordeh Avesta book such that at least he/she can recite them from the book and pass the Mobed's standards set for testing the candidate, well in time, before the Ceremony :

- 1) Peymane Din (Din no Kalmo)
- 2) Beressad
- 3) Tan Dorosti
- 4) 101 Attributes (names) of God. (Sado Yak Name Khoda)
- 5) Vispe Setayesh (A short Prayer meant to dedicate all the (Vispa) currently prayed to Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, Yazatas etc. A short Berasad, in itself )
- 6) Setayeshe Yekta Khoda (Doaa Naam Setayeshne)

(After the ceremony, one may request in writing for a certificate from the Kankashe Mobedan of Tehran or Yazd which can then be proudly displayed. )

Before the ceremony, one must take a bath and wear brand new white clothes including a new Sedreh. (Any haircuts must be given before) No visits to hair/ beauty salon is allowed after the bath and the youth must be of sound mind and body and be fully prepared and willing to accept the religion and to embrace it full-heartedly. Of course it is expected that the parents, teachers and Mobed would assist the initiate in a diligent manner in this respect.

At the ceremony, at least the following items will be placed on the white tablecloth which could be spread over on a clean floor or a table:

- 1) Plate containing some Thyme (Avishan) mixed with rice (uncooked), over which item 2 is placed.
- 2) Koshti (brand new, never opened)
- 3) Lit oil lamp or glass candelabra (laleh)
- 4) Tray of dried fruits and nuts (Lork) mixed or spread over with white sweets (Noghl)
- 5) Potted flower (Flower bouque, surrounded by item 6, in flower pot with water)
- 6) Branches of Cypress (Sarv)
- 7) Portrait of Zarathushtra and a Prayer book
- 8) A mirror and rose water sprinkler used to welcome guests after ceremony

The Mobed and the initiate both wash their hands and face while reciting the Ashem Vohu prayer together. Then the Mobed and initiate sit around the table, or on the ground facing each other with the Mobed facing the sun. Now the Mobed recites (quietly almost humming??) the Oormazd Yasht or Atash Niyayesh prayer for the well being of the initiate. At the same time the youth begins to hum all the prayers which have been learned.

(The decision of which prayer the Mobed recites sometimes has to do with the day and the month. For example, the Mobed must recite Atash Niyayesh in the months of Ordibehesht and Azar and days of Azar, Soroosh and Verahram while he/she recites Oormazd Yasht on days of Oormazd, Dey Be Azar, Dey Beh Mehr, and Dey Beh Din. On the other days the Mobed decides himself but he typically prefers Oormazd Yasht since Atash Niyayesh requires that fire be present which is not always



feasible.)

Prior to reciting the Beresad prayer (bestowed in honor of the initiate's good health), the Mobed will take the Koshti, handed to him by the child and while aligning the two ends, drapes the folded koshti over his/her shoulders such that the middle of the Koshti is situated to the left side.

Following the Beresad prayer, the Mobed stands and motions the child to stand directly in front of him with his back towards him and both facing the sun. At this time the child needs to pull up his/her shirt such that the Koshti can be tied on the waist directly on top of the Sedreh. Now the child establishes a connection or bond with the Mobed by holding on to the Mobed's gown cuffs as the Koshti prayers begin. At this time the Mobed slides his left hand's middle finger between the fold in the middle of the Koshti and his right hand's middle finger between the two ends of the Koshti, which were previously aligned, and begins to recite the "Avestaye Koshti" (Koshti prayers) and proceeds to tie the Koshti as if he would for himself.

(The process of tying the Koshti, involves bringing both hands jointly to the left and shaking the Koshti deliberately as if to rub off or clean while reciting the section which reads: "Shekasteh ahriman bad .... Hich kareshan be kamah nabut". Then hands are pushed forward and the ends of the Koshti folded to the middle such that the Koshti does not touch the ground while being tied around the waist. In the middle of the sentence, "Maso waho pirouzgar bad" bring the middle of the koshti up towards the lips and eyes of the initiate and while saying the words, "Khashnaothra Ahurahe Mazda" hands are raised upwards followed by a quick shake to the left at "Taruedaety angrahe mayniosh...".

Immediately after this with "Haytia varshtam..." the Koshti is tied around the waist.)

The rules for tying the Koshti: For each knot, you feed the end of the koshti through the loop from the bottom and for both the front knots and the back knots, you begin the first knot with the right hand holding the end of the koshti and the second knot the left hand. (If knots are properly tied, they will form the easiest and tightest knot known as a Reef Knot (or a Square Knot) but if not done correctly, you will end up with a stuck knot which is not easy to untie.) The front knots are tied when reciting "Shyaotenanam angheosh Mazdae" which means "I will perform the good deeds of life for (I brace up myself to do good deeds out of / using) Widsom (Mazda)" and the back knots are tied while reciting the "Ashem Vohu" prayer which means "Truth is the key to the greatest happiness if one follows the path of Righteousness for its own sake".

After all four knots are tied, the Mobed lifts the child's hands coupled together as in praise and rests his own hands on the child's shoulders and finishes reciting the "Avestaye Koshti" picking up from "Mazdayasnu ahmi...", Our oath of allegiance to the Good Religion. When saying "Hamazurbim" and "Pirouzbad", both raise the hands and swipe their faces as in kissing their foreheads and eyes, which indicates a person's dedications and true faith in what he/she has just agreed / dedicated to. Then the child faces the Mobed and places his folded hands into the Mobed's hands and repeats, word by word, the "Peyman Din" and "Dadare yek..." which the Mobed recites. At last the child sits back in his seat and listens to the Mobed as he recites the "Tan Dorosti" prayer and showers him with the mixture of Avishan and rice.