
WHAT IS MEANT BY “TARIKAT” AS A WAY OF LIFE?

MEHER PATET, THE NECESSARY INGREDIENT OF “TARIKAT”

(Note - The word tarikat is popular amongst Kshnoom lovers. However many immature kshnoomists out of zealousness to put into practice their new found knowledge, acquired either by reading or from their kshnoomist friends, and without having a correct perspective of the word, unknowingly do acts which do them more harm than good, besides making them a subject of ridicule amongst their family members, friends and others who either do not believe in the teachings of kshnoom or are not initiated into it. This article is based on a treatise of the subject by **Dr. F.S.Chiniwalla** in his magnum opus “ Khordeh Avesta ba Kshnoom Taavil” pgs. 677 to 718. Translated version is by Minoo Irani.)

Definition – Grades – Usefulness – Applicability in modern times

The word tarikat is sacrosanct and sacred because it is one of many Nature’s ways of working in the universe, decreed by Ahuramazda. Avesta word for it is Patha meaning path or road. It also embodies the meaning of Varana or genera of souls.

Imagine what would happen if the railways of the world were to come to a standstill. Trade and commerce would collapse, businesses would be ruined and in general, material progress the world over would badly suffer. Similarly, if tarikat path which forms a framework of Zoroastrian religion is abolished, the religion will lose its spiritual strength and its followers will be left groping in the dark. Such a thing had happened 1300 years ago in Iran. In the last days of the Sassanian empire during the reign of Kobad (father of Noshirwan) a man named Mazdak brought about disorder in the ongoing practice of Zoroastrian tarikats resulting in a large part of the population turning infidels and becoming traitors to their religion, king and the country, causing irreparable damage to Zoroastrian culture and way of life. Our forefathers had come to India with the sole purpose of preserving the religion and its tarikats.

The revered teacher of kshnoom the late Ustadsaheb Behramsha N. Sharaf - may his soul progress towards higher realms - was anxious to see the Parsis observing at least the lowest grade of tarikats suited to the times. He used to say ” My holy masters have given a message for the Parsis of India that if they do not observe tarikats, they will be led astray, will lose their faith and Parsipsnu will disappear”. Alas, how true these words have come today.

Tarikat is a very necessary and useful tool for spiritual progress. Spiritual guides and great men of a religion appear from time to time and put before its followers tarikats to be followed suited to the people of their time. Rainidar or the spiritual leader of our religion has selected from the original 21 Nasks and given to us the prayers in the form of Zend Avesta which are suitable for our spiritual evolution. So also such tarikats are given which can be observed during our time and the rest remain unrevealed lest they are denigrated by people who are unfit to understand and appreciate their purpose and usefulness.

Tarikat Patha gives maximum spiritual and physical benefits to those who tread upon it because it is the best, most practical, most economical whereby Ahuramazda’s wish called Mithra Baren - Frashogard or the

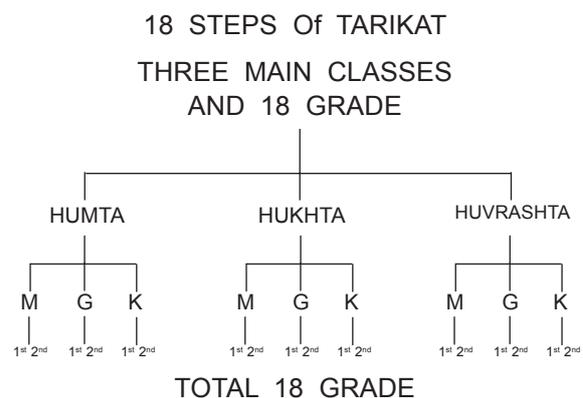
salvation of the universe is fulfilled. This is the real meaning of the sentence Kshnothra Ahurahe Mazdao - Pazand Kaam Anjam Bed Chun Ahuramazda Khuda = May Ahuramazda be pleased and His wish fulfilled. Throughout the cosmos, events are taking place along the predetermined path of Asha called 'Pant' also called tarikat. That is why time cycles of 81000 years come and go with precision, different genera of souls descend on earth at their appointed time and Nature's task of bringing about Frashogard of the Universe goes on incessantly.

'Asha' here means a procedure which is in perfect order and in which there is no place for wastage but there is true economy. Economy does not mean miserliness but management of resources according to the Law of Limit and Justice. Ghanamino tries to bring about 'a-pant' or disorder in 'Asha' putting obstacles in Nature's work and in general retarding progress of the Universe.

Tarikat is a path along which a traveller undertakes the journey of his life by observing certain set of rules called canons of Ashoi. These rules are always prescribed according to Marefat meaning an agent through which a job is carried out, meaning the quality of the ruling class, the laity and the priestly class of the time who observe the tarikats and according to Hakikat meaning reality meaning the 'Spirit of the Age' during which particular class of souls descend on earth. If tarikats are prescribed without taking into consideration the Marefat and the Hakikat, then Ghanamin creates a-pant because such tarikats violate the Law of Asha and instead of benefiting its followers harms them and gives rise to Sperejvant meaning hypocrisy, pretence and false show. For example if somebody tries to observe the high level of tarikats meant for Barjasi Age - the Golden Age when people are god fearing and lead their life according to truthfulness and righteousness, during the present Hashimi Age - the Dark Age of materialism, falsehood and selfishness then

such tarikats are contrary to the Hakikat giving rise to Sperejvant and instead of benefiting him causes harm. Thus there is a great responsibility on the shoulders of those prescribing tarikats to others.

There are three main Classes of tarikats of Humta, Hukhta, Huvrashta divided into three sub classes of Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni with each sub class having two grades as shown in diagram



In present times it is best to observe the tarikats of the last grade i.e., 2nd grade of Kunashni of Huvrasht Class, because they are suited to the practitioners of the Zoroastrian religion of any Age & Time, even the type through which we are undergoing at present. The list is given at the end of the article.

According to the Law of Duality there is both Gav and Druj or good and evil present within us. The Gav in us directs our mind on the path of righteousness and is responsible for the various virtues we exhibit from time to time, our inclination towards the religion, our love for truth and honesty, our charitable and altruistic nature etc. These may be present to a greater or lesser degree depending upon how far our soul has evolved. Similarly there is also a darker side of our nature which manifests as various iniquities such as acts of passion, telling lies, khud parasti or self appraisal, self grandiose, considering one's own reason competent enough to believe or disbelieve religious concepts, forgetting that there is God. These and other frailties of flesh are a result of Druj present in our constitution

to a degree depending upon the denseness attached to our soul. Thus left to our own resources we cannot find out a way out of the quagmire in which we find ourselves in life. We cannot make any spiritual progress and starve our souls of its food. It is for this reason that our revered Prophet has shown patha of tarikat which are methods devised to gain control over our lower self and carnal desires. It helps to develop our heart powers by which we can recognize the purpose of life on earth. When one becomes an adept (we cannot in this life) his Keherp and its Chakras are developed, his third eye gets open, the Higher powers concentrate in the talismanic ring formed in his heart and he is able to hear, see and perceive the working of Nature i.e., he is in tune with the eternal universal consciousness. Such a man is a master of Ashoi and is called an Ashavan.

The true inner meaning of the word tarikat is not understood today. References are found in Gatha Ha 53-2 and Ha30-2.

In Ha-53.2 it is said that Hoi= he who follows daen - Mazdao Vahamai = for praising Mazda, treading the path according to the Will of Mazda according to Kshnoom the religion established and handed down -Manangaha = by thoughts of devotion, Kurdish = by prescribed words ie Mathras and faithfully following religious tenets such as keeping Sudreh-kusti on the body always, Kshiothnaischa = doing good deeds ie observing tarikats according to the teachings of Kshnoom, Afraoret yasnascha = performing prescribed rituals and ceremonies with full faith, Kavascha Vistaspo Zarthushtish Spitamo Frashastrascha Daonghaho = Kae Gustasp authorized by Zarthushtira and Frashaoster who knew the events of the past and the future, Schantu = will teach Erejush Patho = the path of righteousness (above mentioned canons according to Kshnoom

- thoughts - actions - sudreh kusti etc.) = the path of tarikats canons of Ashoi (which Kae Gustasp and Frashaoster had followed in their time) Yam = that , Daenam Ahuro = is the Din of Ahuramazda (is known as), Saoshyanto dadaat = Ahura prepared for the future regenerators of the religion.

Thus we see that the religion enjoins on its votaries to follow the path prescribed and not that one chooses.

In Gatha 30.2 Ahunavad Gatha it is clearly mentioned that only by observing tarikats, shall Geushaish Vahishta ie not two ears but many divine ears ie the 16 Chakras or the psychic centres will be highly developed, meaning heart powers will be developed enabling to see Nature's working with the developed third eye.

Tarikats are not the same for all. They are separate for every man suiting to his own bodily weakness and iniquities.

More reference of tarikat is given in Hadokht Nask. In the 1st chapter Dadaar Ahuramazda tells Zarthushtira and gives him an heritage to be handed to mankind proclaiming that through tarikats man can reach the highest level of Ashoi . The condition is that first he should free himself from the shackles of passions by consciously trying to control them and this can be achieved only by observing the canons of holiness. In the 2nd chapter of Hadokht Nask is given the condition of the soul after death of he who has followed the tarikat path and he who has neglected to do so. This is a very lengthy treatise but here it will suffice to say that the former gets Tanpasin and rewarded with Garothman behest whereas the latter has to go to the dark recesses of hell meaning Tanasak = rebirth on earth in the darkness of mother's womb.

(To be continued)

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A LIST OF MINIMUM TARIKATS GIVEN BY
DR. F. S. CHINIWALLA IN HIS KHORDEH AVESTA BAA KHSHNOOM.
TRANSLATED VERSION BY MINOO IRANI.

(Contd. from Parsi Avaz Vol I-1)

Tarikat is a railroad providing easy access to conquer druj and attain real recognition of self disabilities and faults. It is unique in as much it shortens the length of the journey. Tarikat path is arranged on the principles of Ashoi is quite singular and the only one of its kind. All other paths are no paths having no rail of Asha and are not efficient of speedy service. To give a simile, suppose a person is reluctant to travel but if his hands and feet are tied up and put in a train, he is bound to reach the station where the train ends. Tarikat path is so well laid out that it shortens a long journey and will carry you to your destination in the shortest possible time. Just as a person who is put against his wish on a train reaches his destination, so also a person no matter however much trapped in his vices, begins to observe tarikats, sticks to the rules of Druj-parhez, listens to his voice of conscience, declares truthfully whatever transpires, contemplates and repents for his sins and does not try to hide them, always makes efforts to overcome his weaknesses; no matter he fails in his attempts, but becomes penitent and recites Patet, then with the help of all these spiritual exercises is bound to feel improvement within himself and by the time reaches the end of his sojourn on earth, will become a changed man having taken a step further in his soul's journey.

Some tarikats that can be observed but with a condition of first practicing Meher-Patet which will help to improve self and uphold Parsipanu :

1. Ritual to be followed first thing on getting out of bed in the morning. It consists of
 - a) Reciting one Ashem on touching the ground
 - b) applying bull's urine or lime juice to exposed body parts and reciting 'Shekaste Shaitan nirang,
 - c) Untying and

tying kusti. This is very simple and can be observed anywhere.

2. Reciting Baaj-e-Hajat after coming out of the privy in such a way that others' attention is not drawn towards you. If in one's home it does not matter, however no show should be made whilst reciting the nirang elsewhere because its effect gets nullified. It is necessary to learn the nirang by heart if you want to observe it.
3. Reciting Baaj-e hamam for taking bath. It is very easy to follow.
4. It is good to recite Baaj-e khurashna whilst having food. If it is not possible when in company then desist. In any case the food we eat does not help to gather the particles of our soul scattered in the lower kingdoms but it only sustains the vital heat of our body. As far as possible no conversation should be carried out at the dining table. If at all it becomes necessary, it should be minimum. It will suffice to maintain silence. However as we cannot abide by this rule it is not for people like us to observe this tarikat. The priests should observe it because they have to retain their spiritual strength.
5. Use of bull's urine is a basic requirement for observing tarikats.
6. The consecrated bull's urine or Nirang is meant for internal use only whilst taking a purification bath and on occasions like Navjote and weddings. Such baths are taken on rare occasions only.
7. A Parsi worth his salt should perform Kusti ritual as many times during the day such as five times at every change of Geh, and after attending nature's call. This tarikat can be observed even during

the most adverse times. What is required is true devotion and faith.

8. Ittelam-ni-baaj is to be recited by males after seminal discharge. A simple procedure given here will suffice in present times. Clean the affected parts and apply bull's urine - if not available lime juice - on the whole body within 10 minutes of the incident and then take a bath with water. During winter or if health does not permit, just apply a little water by rubbing a wet palm all over the body.
9. Paring nails and cropping hair should be done keeping sufficient time in hand. Only then can the tarikat regarding the same could be observed. Follow the given procedure. After paring nails or cutting hair all clothes should be removed and taro or lime juice should be applied to the whole body. Then place the palm of the left hand on the head, recite the nirang and take bath. This can be easily done. If one has attended hair cutting saloon, remove all clothes and apply taro or lime to the body. Then recite the nirang. This is also easy to follow.
10. Reciting Patet is very beneficial.
11. There is no act more charitable and blessed than saying "Patet ruwan ni" (i.e. for our departed dear ones).
12. It is good to take the blessings of the dead. Therefore recite Sarosh Yasht Vadi in their memory.
13. Recite Chirag - no -namesaker after sunset whilst lighting a lamp.
14. It is our duty to recite Khorshed & Meher Nyaeshes every day during the day and Sarosh Yasht Vadi at night
15. It is also our duty to get the ceremonies performed for the dead on Fravardegan days.

It will not be too much to repeat that the fundamental requirement to achieve any result from observing tarikats is to practice Meher-Patet i.e. try and speak the whole truth and repent for an act of sin committed vowing not to repeat in future. This is easier said

than done, but sincere continuous efforts in that direction will surely reap benefits.

Please remember not to exceed your capacity and limit in observing tarikats; otherwise it will turn into a farce and you will become a laughing stock of others. This will also give a bad name to these profound and glorious Laws of Purity.

The tarikats are like our physical body, Meher-Patet is like our life force; keeping staunch faith in them is akin to the soul, and freedom of spirit experienced can be compared to Baod and finally climbing the steps of Ashoi can be equaled to the Divine essence within us the Farohar.

Our prophet has prescribed tarikats to transmute evil into good. Their observance will benefit us both physically and spiritually. It will gradually strengthen our capabilities of Joran-e jaan namely the power of right thought, right speech, right action, virility of good intentions, consciousness of virtues and wisdom. This in turn will enable us to withstand all woes and calamities boldly, ungrudgingly praising the Creator for the same - real alacrity to do the right thing in the nick of time - consciousness for reaching the great Harmonies. All these may seem beyond our reach at present but taking a small step further now will surely put us on the path. Therefore begin now keeping in mind the lessons taught above.

[Remember! We have within us the evil forces of Dushmata, Dujukhta, Dujvarashta. We have to alchemise them into Manashni Gavashni Kunashni. That is the long term aim to be reached through Maher Patet and Tarikat, Today you are not "all good". There is a long way to go. Tarikat helps us to fight the evil within us.

One of the evils is our ego. If the tarikat itself makes you egoistic, it is hypocrisy. Tarikat without Armaiti and Hutokshi is just a sinful show of pride.] ● ● ●

(Concluded)