

CONSECRATION OF ATASH BEHRAMS AND ADARANS

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Courtesy : **Burjor Daboo**

THE CEREMONY OF CONSECRATION OF ATASH-BEHRAMS AND ADARANS

The Sacred Fire is metaphorically spoken of as a King, having a spiritual jurisdiction over the district round about. The stone slab or stand, on which its censer stands, is considered and spoken of as its throne (takht). Its chamber is in the form of a dome, giving an idea of the dome of the heavens. It is just under the center of the dome that the censer stands on the slab. From that center hangs, high above over the fire, a metallic tray which is spoken of as the crown (tap of the Sacred Fire, which is looked at as the symbolic representation or emblem of a spiritual ruler- One or two swords and one or two maces are hanging on the inner walls of its chamber. They serve as symbols of the Church militant, and signify that the faithful should fight against moral evils and vices, just as they would fight against their enemies, and thus make it, in the end, triumphant.

— *The Religious Ceremonies & Customs of the Parsees by Sir Jivanji J. Modi (1922) p. 226.*

THE 16 KINDS OF FIRE NECESSARY FOR PREPARING, CONSECRATING AND ENTHRONING THE HOLY FIRE OF ATASH-BEHRAMS.

For consecrating the fire of an ATASH-BEHRAM (Av. ATASH + VERETHRAGHNA; Peh. ATASH-E-VARHARAM) it is first necessary to obtain the under-mentioned 16 different kinds of fire.

<u>SERIAL</u> <u>No.</u>	<u>KINDS OF FIRE</u> <u>OBTAINED FROM</u>	<u>No. OF TIMES OF</u> <u>PURIFICATION</u>
1)	A Burning Corpse (Specially Of A Brahmin)	91
2)	The Abode Of A Dyer	80
3)	The Abode Of A King Or A Head Of State	70
4)	The Furnace Of A Potter	61
5)	The Kiln Of A Brickmaker	75
6)	The Abode Of A Fakir Or Sanyasin	50
7)	The Furnace Of A Goldsmith	60
8)	From A Mint	55
9)	The Furnace Of An Ironsmith	61
10)	An Armoury	61
11)	A Bakery	61
12)	The Abode Of An Idolator Or A Distillery	61
13)	The Abode Of A Soldier Or A Guesthouse	35
14)	The Abode Of A Shepherd	33
15)	Lightening	90
16)	The Abode Of A Zarathushti (Preiest+Behdin)	40
	+ Fire obtained by friction	+144
	TOTAL	= 1128

For defraying past Karma there are 15 main and many other occupations. For this important reason alone, fires from the 15 places set out in the above Table, and that from lightning, are first obtained, severally purified through ceremonies, and finally merged with each other in order to prepare the holy fire of an Atash Behram. As stated by the late Dr. Framroz S. Chiniwala, fire was at the very beginning, through Fire all Creation came forth, good or bad results of Keshash are from fire, the very life is due to fire, it is through fire that death as well as liberation comes, the functions of God are through Fire. For this reason in Zarathushtrian Daena, the status of Fire is in the open; in other religions it is concealed. Hence all regulations relating to Atash-Behrams, Adarans, Sudreh and Kashti, etc. are called "UPAYANA" (UPA = from above, YANA = have come), what have been placed before humanity for the first time by our Paigamber Saheb who received them from Ahura Mazda. Further, the religious institutions like Atash Behrams first absorb the divine blessings and other outpourings coming from Ahura Mazda and spread them everywhere. Hence they all come within the definition of "Upayana". These activities have been going on from the very dawn of Creation and hence they are called "ancient" (Dareghayao). (See Khordeh Avesta Ba-Kshnoom Tawil).

THE MODE OF OBTAINING AND PURIFYING THE 16 KINDS OF FIRE.

In the first place, a Zarathushtrian Behdin should go to a Hindu Smashaan and request that he be given some fire from a corpse that may then be burning, preferably that of a Brahmin. If such fire is not readily given, fire may be obtained from a non-Zarathushtrian present at the burning place when the relatives of the dead person have left the place after the burning of the corpse. If a non-Zarathushtrian even is not found there or refuses to give some fire from the burnt corpse, then two “Behdins” do Padyab-Kashti there and remaining in contact or Paevand with each other take the Baj of Sarosh. Thereafter they hold about a foot above the fire there a flat ladle with holes in it on which cotton, sandalwood and some incense like “Iooban” etc. are kept- They take the fire thus kindled on the ladle to an open place at some distance and complete the Baj of Sarosh Yazad. (They both then take a “Nahaan” and become pure). Thereafter the said fire is taken to a predetermined place and laid on the ground in such a way that a breeze of the wind can pass over it. About a foot away from there, in the direction of wind, some mixture of sandalwood and incense powder _is placed on the ground. When as a result of the blowing of the wind the mixture becomes ignited, they keep such fire separate.

In this way new fire is created for 91 times and the fires previously obtained for 90 times are allowed to go out in the natural way. But the fire lastly obtained (hereinafter for brevity’s sake referred to as “the 91st fire”) is kept burning in an Afringaniya (fire-receptacle). Two mobeds who have passed through the Baresnoom ritual take some fire from the Afringaniya, keep it in another Afringaniya and perform, taking the Kshnooman of Ahura Mazda, one Yazashne in Havan Geh and one Vendidad at night in Ushahin Geh.

On the next day, those two mobeds take another part of fire from the 91st fire and perform thereon Yazashne and Vendidad as stated above. Then they merge this fire with the fire consecrated on the previous day. The procedure is repeated on the 3rd day. Thereafter starting from Roz Dadar Ahura-Mazda upto Roz Mino Aneran, i.e. for 30 days, the two mobeds each day take some portion out of the 91st fire, consecrate it with the ceremonies mentioned above, but take the Kshnooman of the Ameshaspand /Yazata presiding over each day in succession and keep on adding the daily consecrated fire to the amalgam of the fires previously consecrated. They then continue the above rituals for the next 30 days thereafter. They keep on performing the above rituals upto Roz Jamiyad Yazad of the 3rd month also, merging the new fire with the mixture of the previously obtained fires. Thus in all 91 days: In this way the fire obtained from Smashan (i-e. burning ghaat) is considered to have become completely pure after the 91 days’ ceremonies. It is then put in an Afringaniya and kept burning continuously.

First 3 days,
Next 30 days,
Next 30 days,
Next 28 days.
Total 91 days.

Each of the remaining 15 fires is duly purified by the same process as described above. However, the number of days for which the above-mentioned Yazashne and Vendidad ceremonies are to be performed differs with each kind of fire; No “Nahaan” is necessary; and it is not necessary to use a flat ladle with holes. As regards the 16th kind of fire obtained from the residence of Zarathushtrians, it is made to pass through the same process as above for 40 days and purified. Thereafter it is mixed with the fire obtained by the process of friction with flint. This mixture is then purified by the ceremonies described above for the next 144 days.

In ancient times, the Dastoors used to ignite pieces of sandalwood placed on an altar by the heavenly fire brought down by recital of powerful Maantras, e.g. “OOS MOI OZARESHVA, AHURA...” This was also actually done by Dastoor Saheb Nairyosang Dhaval of immortal memory when Iranshah Fire was established at Sanjan. Unfortunately, due to the absence of such Maantra Master Athravans it is the custom nowadays to use the fire ignited as a result of lightning falling on a tree, wood, etc. in the rainy season. In this way the 16 kinds of fire, including that obtained from lightning, are purified and placed in different Afringaniyas and kept continuously burning by offering them sandalwood etc. until the day of enthronement.

THE PROFOUND CEREMONY OF ENTHRONING THE HOLY FIRE OF ATASH BEHRAMS

On the Ahunavad Gatha day, the 16 fires separately purified and segregated as previously mentioned are merged together as under. At first two mobed sahebs fortified by “Bareshnoom” and “Khoob” remain in “Paevand” and ignite a new fire from the already purified Smashan fire by means of a flat ladle with holes as described above and put it in a big Afringaniya. Thereafter the remaining fires are taken there, in the serial order of their purification, and mixed with the fire in the big Afringaniya. Then this big Afringaniya containing the amalgam of the 16 fires is carried to the place where Yazashnes are performed (Yazashne-gah) and two mobeds, taking the Khshnooman of Pak Sarosh Yazata, perform on it for three days and nights the ceremonies of Yazashne and Vendidad. Thereafter for 30 days beginning with Roz Ahura-Mazda, the mobeds continue to perform the Yazashne and Vendidad ceremonies, with the exception that the Khshnooman taken is that of the Ameshaspand/Yazata presiding over each day.

On the day of enthronement, those mobeds perform Yazashne with the Khshnooman of Pak Sarosh Yazata. Then the consecrated holy fire is taken in procession from the Yazashne-Gah to the previously consecrated chamber with a dome. The procession is formed according to the following order of precedence : The two mobeds carrying the Holy Fire, then the High Priest and the other mobeds who may have taken an active part in the purification rituals described above, all carrying in their hands swords, maces, etc., and then the Behdins. In That Order. The whole route is divided into separate “Pavis” and the whole procession slowly moves with due solemnity and devotion in such a way that when the two mobeds carrying the Holy Fire are passing over one “Pavi”, the other members of the procession are in other different “Pavis”. In the Holy of Holiest, the Fire is enthroned in a previously purified “Patra” and sandalwood and incense are offered to it with the recitation of Atash Niyayesh.

Simultaneously, in the outer hall, three Afriganiyas are placed and the Jashan ceremony of three Kardas is performed, taking the Khshnoomans respectively of Sarosh Yazata, Dahman Yazata and Sarosh Yazata.

CONSECRATION OF AN ADARAN GRADE FIRE

For the purpose of consecration of an Adaran, only the following four kinds of fire are required:

(1) FIRE OF THE ATHRAVAN CLASS - (ATHRAVAN): From the abodes of the High Priest, a priest, the head of the city and the person who is establishing the Adaran.

(2) FIRE OF THE WARRIOR CLASS - (RATHESHTAR): King or Governor, Army Chief, and Chief Justice.

(3) FIRE OF THE AGRICULTURAL CLASS - (VASTRIOKSH): A Zarathushtrian farmer, a Hindu fanner and a gardener.

(4) FIRE OF THE ARTISAN CLASS – (HUTOKSH): Fires from the abodes of a Goldsmith, and an ironmonger, etc.

The mode of purification of these four kinds of fire from the four classes of society is the same as in the case of an Atash Behram described above, but only for three days.

For further details reference may be made to the Religion Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees by Sir J. J. Modi, pp. 210-43 and to the Book on "Atash" based on Ustad Saheb Behramshah N. Shroff's Lectures, now under preparation by my respected and dear friend, Mrs. Meher Master-Moos, Founder of Mazdayasnie Monasterie.

FROM 'IN SEARCH OF DIVINE LIGHT' –BEHRAMSHA PITHAWALA PGS 58 to 62