

JEHANGIRJI CHINIWALLA ON "SUDREH" AND "KUSTI"

My friend Mr. Phiroz Shroff, the President of K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, has asked me to give you a talk on the philosophy of 'Sudreh' and 'Kusti' in the Zoroastrian religion. Besides being a very humble student of the extant scanty scriptures of Zarthosti Daen, I am particularly a student of the Zoroastrian philosophy of 𑬨𑬀𑬎𑬀 𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀 Ilm-e-Khshnoom, brought to the Parsi community by my revered Ustad Saheb the late Mr. Behramshah Shroff, from the Saheb-delan clan of highly advanced pious souls of Demavand Koh. I studied this philosophy to strengthen my own faith in the Zoroastrian religion, but my Ustad Saheb the late Mr. Behramshah, directed me in the eve of his life to propagate this philosophy. I have been therefore propagating this philosophy since 1925, in my own humble way.

You all know that the scriptures of the Zoroastrian religion are not available to us in their entirety. We have got certain chants in Avesta and Pazand, for purposes of prayers and ceremonials. It is very difficult to understand Avesta fully. A reputed European scholar has said that Avesta will be fully explained to us by the Soshyos who is to come. We have also some literature in Pahelvi in the shape of Commentaries and translations of Avesta. The decipherment of the Pahelvi writings is difficult and, if read, the connotations are cryptic.

At present, we do not have any independent literature of the philosophy of Zoroastrian religion handed down to us. The late Mr. K. R. Cama, who founded the school of the studies of our scriptures according to the science of Philology, at the ripe old age of 70, expressed an opinion that we have not made any researches in the esoteric philosophy of our religion, and therefore, we are not in a position to understand our religion fully and this fact requires to be published to the community. From this opinion it is clear that the present Avesta and Pahelvi lore cannot be understood simply from translations according to the science of philology.

Dr. West, a very learned Pahelvi scholar, has expressed an opinion that the Pahelvi versions and explanations of 21 Avesta nasks must have existed from the days of Prophet Zoroaster. This inference of this great scholar is correct, according to the description of Zoroastrian scriptures given to us by Mr. Behramshah Shroff. Asho Zarthusra was a living Yazat and His Soul belonged to the category of Yazatas.

The intelligence of Asne Vir (𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀 𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀), that he possessed was the intelligence of Yazatas and he could form direct contact of Yazatas and Ameshaspants. He himself wrote 21 nasks in Avesta. They were written in what is called Fasmus Manthra (𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀 𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀). These were chants to which no rules of grammar or philology could apply; but in the last nask, 33 chapters were written about a science known as Stot Yasna (𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀 𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀). The disciples of Asho Zarathushtra, who were also very highly advanced souls and who with the Blessings of Asho Zarathushtra could master the science of Stot Yasna, prepared 21 other nasks in Avesta, which are called Nasks of Manthra Spenta (𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀 𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀). To Nasks of Manthra Spenta, the rules of Stot Yasna as well as rules of grammar were applicable. Besides this, the advanced disciples of Asho Zarathushtra, under His direct supervision, had composed 1 nask of esoteric philosophy of Zarthoshti Daen in the Pahelvi language of the days of the Prophet. The advanced disciples had also prepared Farhangs (𑬀𑬎𑬀𑬎𑬀) for the use of Raenidars and Soshayants. The Mazdiyasni Zarathostri religion, given by Ahura Mazda to the Prophet Zarathushtra, is to survive throughout the cycle of Zarvane-darego-khadate of 81,000 years. Asho Zarathushtra gave His Religion about 8,000 to 9,000 years ago and, in the meantime, there have been some revivals of Zarthosti religion. Such revivals were carried out by Raenidars and Soshayants authorized to revive the religion and make necessary changes according to the

changing times. The last of such Raenidars was Adarbad Mahreshpand. The 21 nasks of Avesta and Pazand Manthras re-organised by him are known technically as Soshyanto-Manthras (सोष्यन्तो मन्थ्र) . Whatever we have today as Avesta Pazand Manthra, is a part of the Soshyanto Manthras, selected by Dastur Adarbad Mahreshpand, who flourished in the reign of Shapur II of the Sassanian Dynasty.

Whatever I shall submit today for your information as philosophy of Sudreh Kusti is according to the philosophy of Khshnoom, taught by our Ustad Saheb Behramshahji. This school of philosophy was founded in the year 1905 and in the course of the last 65 years, extensive literature of this philosophy has come into existence.

When Mr. Behramshah Shroff was first brought to Bombay the late Mr. K. R. Cama was actually requested by the late Mr. Kaikhushru Burjorji Choksi to examine the Khshnoom philosophy which Behramshahji propounded. The late Mr. Behramshah Shroff told me that on seeing the kyafa (क्याफ़ा) meaning the physiognomy of Mr. K. R. Cama, he could immediately find out that this great scholar was a man of high character and was a genuine seeker of truth.

After a large number of conferences with Mr. Behramshah, Mr. K. R. Cama expressed an opinion that what Behramshahji taught as Ilm-e-Khshnoom was Zoroastrian esoteric philosophy, though some of the technical terms were new, but that he was in a position to show that whatever technical terms that Mr. Behramshah Shroff gave belonged to the Iranian Philology.

The Late Mr. Jehangir J. Vimadalal, the noble learned uncle of our President, was a learned leader of the camp of orthodoxy of the Parsi community. He was also convinced that Ilm-e-Khshnoom was a Zoroastrian philosophy and he himself at the fag end of his life, founded Zarthosti Ilm-e-Khshnoom Felavnari Committee, of which he was the President and I was the Hon. Secretary. That committee is still in existence, and serves the community.

The philosophy of Sudreh and Kusti is interrelated with the philosophy of Navjot ceremony. Asho Zarathushtra did not only give the scriptures of religion but He has founded a living institution of Mazdayasni Zarthosti Daen (माजदयस्नी ज़रथोस्ती दानेन) . This institution has unseen parts as well as seen parts. Asho Zarathushtra had founded Gatumcha Ahurai (ग़ातुमचा अहुराई) or Gaas-e-Ahurmazda (गासे अहुरमज़द) which is unseen. From the talismans of this institution of Gas-e-Ahurmazd, fire temples were founded. In each fire temple there is a sacred place known as 'Pavmahel'. In this Pavmahel certain sacred ceremonies of the Zarthosti religion are performed, with the help of the talismans of the Pavmahel, brought down from Gaas-e Ahuramazda.

Children of Parsi Zarthostis are required to go through a ceremony called the Navjot ceremony between the ages of 7 and 14. After the performance of this Navjot ceremony, every Parsi child comes in close contact of the Pavmahel of the Zarthosti religion. This is a wide subject and I cannot explain this subject today. Sudreh and Kusti are worn by Parsi Zarthostis after going through the Navjot ceremony. It is incumbent upon every Zarthosti to put on Sudreh and Kusti, the holy shirt and holy girdle, day and night, after he has gone through the Navjot ceremony, and perform the ritual of Kusti Padiab (कुस्ती पादीआब). Failure to put on Sudreh and Kusti is declared a sin. In the list of sins of omissions and commissions in the Patet Pasemani of Adarbad Mahreshpand, failure to put on Sudreh and Kusti is described as a sin of Koshad-dwarashni (कोशाद द्वाराशनी). The Fravashi of Asho Zarathushtra remains present at the Navjot ceremony. Sudreh and Kusti are charged with power to prevent the entry of Satan into the small world of a Zarthosti.

The term Sudreh means Rahe-Sudmand i.e. beneficial Path. The Avesta term for it is Stehar (स्तेहर) . The term kusti is 'KARSTI' (कर्सती). It means a magnetic ring. The Avesta term for it is Ayvionghahan (अईविय ऑघहान).

According to the Khshroomic philosophy, Sudreh and Kusti are not merely the symbols of Zarthoshti Daen but they are Zaothra (ઝાઓથ્ર) or Alats (અલત્) or instruments for the performance of the small ritual or ceremony of Padiav Sazi (પાદીઆવ સાઝી). Thirty-three Alats are ordained in Zarthoshti Daen of which Sudreh Kusti, Atash-Behram and Varsiaji - the consecrated white bull - are most important.

Like the Avesta word "Pat", the Persian word "Pad" connotes protection, and "Aav" means water. By the performance of the ritual of Padiav Sazi, "Kuovate Zor" (કુવ્વતે ઝોર), meaning the protective spiritual power of "Zor", which is gifted by Ahuramazda to all human beings, flows more forcibly from the unseen bodies of Keherp, Ushtan and Tevishi, into the physical bodies comprising of Tanoo, Azda, Gaetha, and establishing spiritual order in the physical body. In the small world of a human being, there are nine coverings. Farohar, Ruvan and Baodhangh are Noorani i.e., constituted of luminous light and are immortal. Three other coverings in the small world of human beings are Keherp, Ushtan and Tevishi, (કેહર્પ, ઉશ્તાન, તેવીષી). They are made of very subtle and invisible atoms of matter, which has made great progress in its evolution and it has become indestructible. The spiritual power called Zor resides in these three coverings. The remaining three coverings of matter in human beings are Tanoo, Azda and Gaetha (તનુ, અઝદ, ગાએથા). They are made of atoms of matter and are subject to destruction. Tanoo is the hard frame of bones, Gaetha are soft organs of flesh and blood and Azda is unseen Roghani i.e., oily liquid body of subtle atoms of matter and it is also destructible.

It is said that before this Universe came into existence, a defect technically known in Avesta as Dravao (દ્રવાઓ) was observed in the Noor or the luminous light of Urvan or the soul. To cure this defect of Dravao, of the soul, and to raise the Dravao to the purity and status of the original light or Noor of the soul, the whole universe has come into existence, according

to the plan of Ahunavairiya (અહુનવૈરિય), the Edict of Ahoo Anamathavao (અહુ અનામાથ્રવા), the Impersonal God. A very small part of Ahoo Anamathavao, the Impersonal God, assumes the form of Dadvaao Dadar Ahurmazd (દદવાઓ દાદાર અહુરમઝદ), the Personal God, who emanates and creates this Universe. The Edict of Ahoo, the Impersonal God, was proclaimed through Ahurmazd, the Personal God. Minoi (મીનોઈ), Hasti (હસ્તી), Nisti (નીસ્તી) and Geti (ગેતી), are the names of four divisions of the whole Universe. The souls of Ameshaspands, Yazatas and such immortal beings have become free from the defect of Dravao in their evolution and they now help Ahuramazda in the evolution of mortal worlds. Those souls whose Dravao could not be cured in Hasti, the immortal world, have been sent down to this Geti, the mortal corporeal world, for the improvement of their Dravao. This is the fundamental teaching of Zarthoshti Daen.

This mortal world of Geti has passed through three evolutions, collectively known as Ushi-e-Atash (ઉષી-એ-આતશ), the evolution of Fire, Ushi-e-Bad (ઉષી-એ-બાદ), the evolution of Air, and Ushi-e-Ab (ઉષી-એ-આબ), the evolution of Water. This Geti, the material and mortal world, is now passing through the Ushi-e-Khak (ઉષી-એ-ખાક) i.e. evolution of Matter. Three-fourths of the Dravao attached to every human soul has been improved and the material atoms thereof - Anasar (અનાસર) - have been converted into very subtle indestructible matter. The atoms of this matter constitute the three coverings of Keherp (કેહર્પ), Ushtan (ઉશ્તાન), and Tevishi (તેવીષી). A spiritual power of Nature known as Kuvvati Zor (કુવ્વતે ઝોર), resides in these three coverings. These 3 coverings unite in a mysterious way and have formed the unseen body of man, that keeps alive his seen physical body consisting of the three coverings of Tanoo, Gaetha and Azda. One-fourth part of Dravao (દ્રવાઓ) of each human soul is being improved in the physical destructible body of man.

In the Zarthoshti scriptures the divine power of Ahuramazda has been called Niroo (નિરૂ), the divine power of ameshaspands and Yazatas i.e., the angels and archangels, has been called Aoaj (અઓજ), the divine power of Sarosh Yazat has been called "Tagi" (તગી), and the spiritual power that has been gifted to human beings is called Zor, in the Zarthushti Daen.

The main difficulty in propounding the philosophy of Khshnoom is that in order to explain one topic of Religion, some explanation of other co-related topics becomes necessary. Unless one has some idea of the Cosmogenesis of the Universe and the constitution of a human being according to Zarthoshti Daen, it is not possible to understand the utility and efficacy of the Farmans or the commandments of Asho Zarathushtra relating to Tarikate Ashoi (તરીકતે અષોઈ) and Padiav Sazi (પાદીઆવ સાઝી) with Sudreh and Kusti.

In the Universe, the Law of Asha (અષ) or divine order, reigns supreme. According to Asha, the souls of all human beings are divided into five main groups. For these 5 fundamental groups of souls, there are 5 fundamental great Religions, namely, Zarthoshti, Hindoo, Mahomedan, Jewish and Christian. All Religions are designed for the SPIRITUAL evolution of their followers, and are to be respected, but it cannot be said that they are all equal and similar. There is some subtle difference in the light of the souls of these 5 fundamental groups. There are also subtle differences in the physical constitutions, of the physical bodies of the followers of these 5 Religions. Hence, there are some differences in the 5 Religions. At the outset Ustad Saheb Behramshahji explained the Chapter of the knowledge of five "Jirams". This mortal world is getting its nutrition from the immortal worlds. In the immortal worlds, seven heavens revolve and rotate in a mysterious way and help the evolution of the mortal world. The 7 main planets, Sun, Moon, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Venus and Saturn preside over the 5 main fundamental groups

of human souls and guide their evolution, in a mysterious way. The 5 main groups of human souls are ruled by the planets Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Venus and Saturn and the two planets, Sun and Moon, co-operate with all the 5 groups in their progressive evolution, by raising their spiritual status step by step. For these 5 groups of human souls, 5 great fundamental Religions and their teachers are ordained, according to the Law of Asha i.e. Divine Order. This scheme of Divine Order of Asha should be properly understood, in order to understand the differences in the 5 fundamental Religions. Generally speaking, the teachings of Ethics and the moral codes in all the 5 great Religions are similar, but the teachings of purity of seen and unseen bodies and the teachings of rites, rituals and ceremonies for the living and the dead, differ considerably.

The followers of Zarthoshti Daen are ruled by Jupiter and the teachings of Asho Zarathushtra about the path of Ashoi (અષોઈ) and Yasna (યસ્ના) i.e. ceremonials, differ considerably from the teachings of the other four Religions.

Ashoi does not only mean truthfulness, and Druj (દ્રુજ) does not only mean falsehood. Ashoi connotes an unseen spiritual strength that physical body of Zarthoshtis develop, by subduing 21 kinds of Drujis or physical infections and disorders. The observance of the rules of Tarikat-e-Ashoi or the Path of Ashoi is the basic Farman of Zarthoshti Daen. To make the observance of the Rules of Ashoi, which are prescribed as rules of Druj-parheji i.e. the control of 21 kinds of infections and disorders of the physical body, become effective by performance of the small ritual of Padiav Sazi or Kusti ceremony. Therefore, wearing of Sudreh and Kusti and performance of the ritual of Padiav Sazi is absolutely essential for the evolution of the souls of Zarthoshtis.

Padiav Sazi is a Yasna i.e. a ritual which leads a Zarthoshti to immortality because it is stated in the Gathas that Yasna gives immortality. It is not merely a prayer or a Nemo.

Every human being has got around his

person an unseen limited atmosphere attached to it. It is called his Aipi (अधिपी). If we stretch both our hands and make them straight with the shoulders, the atmosphere upto the elbows of both hands is the extent of our Aipi. There are nine parts of this Aipi. In the outermost three parts of Aipi, our Farohar resides. In the central three parts, Kehrap, Ushtan and Tevishi reside. In the first part out of the three parts of Aipi nearest to our physical body, the physical body itself is situated. In the second part of our Aipi our Azda is protruded. In the third part our Khoreh - good or bad - is formed and resides there. The liquid unseen body of Azda is of the same shape and size as our physical body. The seat of our Khoreh - good as well as bad - is in the third part of Aipi. Our Azda keeps the physical body conjoined to the unseen bodies of Kehrap, Ushtan and Tevishi and when the Azda is torn, the human being dies.

The remaining one-fourth part of Dravao has been converted into what is called "Raethva" (रथेथ्व) in Avesta. It is very subtle Khak, earth, prepared by the Yazats out of the remaining one-fourth part of the Dravao of each soul. This earth is entrusted to the unseen bodies of Kehrap, Ushtan and Tevishi for improvement. Through the evolution of the physical body of human beings, this Khak will be first indestructible and ultimately be converted into Noor.

There are sixteen chakras or plexi in the unseen body, collectively called only Kehrap. These chakras guide the working of the human mind, instincts, senses and the working of the whole physical body generally. The Raethva (रथेथ्व) is mixed with the life-giving principle of "Gav" in a factory in the Azda called "Vasi" of fifty doors. Myriads of cells are born and die and in this process the Raethva is mysteriously purified. Effervescence of passions are produced during this process.

The human mind is the product of the vibrations emanating from the atoms of physical body and the unseen atoms of the Keherp

body, together with the influence of stars. If the vibrations of the atoms of Keherp can overpower the vibrations of the atoms of the physical body, on account of the observance of Ashoi, what is known as Vohu-man (वोधुमन) or Good Mind, is produced. The Divine Order of Ashoi should therefore be established in our physical body and the result of Tarikate-Ashoi is made effective by the ritual of Padiav Sazi and then Vohu-man, the Good Minu is produced. The Paharvi writers have therefore described Sudreh as Vohu-manik Vastra, costume that produces Good Mind.

Sudreh must be made from one whole piece of cotton cloth. The souls of the followers of Zarathushtra belong to the group of souls presided over by Jupiter. The small particles of souls in cotton plants also belong to the group of Jupiter. Therefore, according to the Law of Muvafecat (मुवाफेकत) or spiritual concordance, cotton cloth is most efficacious for the ritual of Padiav Sazi. The white colour of cotton has also its efficacy in so far as all colours are submerged in a balanced way in the white colour, which has got the essential quality of destroying all sorts of Darujis. The structure of Sudreh is such that during Padiav Sazi it reminds the wearer of the profitable path of Zarthoshi Religion, that all the followers of Zarathushtra have to tread. The "Girda" (गिरदा) on top is to remind that we have come with the burden of fulfillment of the commands of our Religion. "Mazdayasno Ahmi Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish Vi-daevo Ahur-takesho"; I am a Mazdiyazni Zarthoshti and I am bound to tread the path that will lead me to Ahurmazd and I shall remain away from the sinful path of Materialism.

The "Gareban" reminds us of the fact that we have to accumulate as much "Sawab" (सवाब) as possible to emancipate the soul. The result of pure religious life of good thoughts, words and deeds is productive of "Khoreh" or divine lustre in our physical body, which enhances the light of the soul. Different kinds of good Khoreh are mentioned in the

Zarhoshti scriptures, namely Farre Yazadi (ફરરે ઈઝદી), Kayan (કયાન), Arepat (એરેપત). Good Khoreh is the product of pure life, which can produce divine order in the sixteen chakras of the Keherp. In the tenth chakra of Keherp, the soul resides and the lustre of Khoreh emanates from that Chakra near the breast. Therefore, Gareban (ગરેબાન) is always kept near the breast.

In the Zarhoshti Daen there are certain tests prescribed for measuring the spiritual advancement of the soul. A Saroshavarez (સરોશવરેઝ) prescribes certain Nirang (નીરંગ) of Avesta Manthra to his disciple and after reciting such Manthra, the disciple goes to sweet sleep. One, two or three beads of pomegranate are formed in the Gareban of the Sudreh of the pupil when he awakes and from this, Saroshavarez could measure the spiritual advancement of the disciple.

In the Sudreh, there should be only 2 seams, i.e. only 9 lines formed while stitching. The rear portion of the Sudreh reminds us of the Immortal world, which we cannot see and to which we have to return. The outer portion reminds us of this world, to which we have incarnated with a set purpose of the emancipation of our soul. The triangular Tiri and its stitches on the Sudreh remind us of the path of good deeds, good words and good thoughts prescribed in our Religion. The parallel Tiri on Sudreh reminds us of the fact that our soul is only half of the one whole unit of soul, and that we have to be united with our soul's other part in the opposite sex.

The short sleeves from the shoulder to the elbows help in the preservation of our Khoreh and victory of Light over darkness. The "Daman" at the end of the Sudreh reminds us of the fact that this mortal world is intimately connected with the immortal world, and ultimately we have to return to our real home in the immortal world and for that purpose Ramno-Khastra (રામનો ખાસ્ત) preserves our own atoms.

Our kusti is made from the wool of lambs. Lambs also belong to the Jiram of Jupiter.

There are 5 kinds of lambs, Balota, Alpaka and others. Lambs by natural instinct eat only such greeneries that produce pure magnetism in them. The lamb may die but this magnetism remains preserved in its wool. The threads of wool are hollow and they have canals in them. According to the teachings of Zarhoshti Daen, there are 144 kinds of "Kesas" or "Karma" i.e., adjustments of laws of Paitioget i.e. good and bad retribution, and there are 72 steps of Ashoi that we have to climb. The structure of Kusti is such that it becomes a talismanic ring. It is woven in the shape of a hollow girdle, with 72 threads doubled into 144 and woven in a special manner. It is given a final form after a Zoroastrian priest cuts it with the recital of Avesta Manthra. This is known as "Vekri Kardan". Kusti is the Juft (જૂફત) i.e. helpmate of Sudreh.

Every atom of our physical body is made up of two elements, one is the life-giving element of "Gav" and the other is the destructive element of "Dravao". This mixed atom is called Vohun (વોહુન) in Avesta. But Vohun alone cannot make the physical body march towards real progress. Therefore, each atom of Vohun is again given the support of pure independent atom of Gav. Between Vohun and Gav atoms, there is a curtain of "Haeer" (હૈર). Out of this Haeer, Drujis emanate. The inherent characteristic property of Sudreh of cotton is such that rays of the Sun, when they enter the human body, could enter the body in a refracted condition. On account of such refraction, the friction between what comes out from Haeer as bad magnetism and becomes Druji, is very much controlled. Bad magnetism and unseen Drujis emanating from the physical body are held up for some time by Sudreh and Kusti and it could be thrown out by the performance of the ritual of Padiav Sazi. In the same way, Sudreh and Kusti help us in grabbing beneficial vibrations of the Stota of Avesta prayers, which provide food to the soul and make the Khoreh more shining. Sudreh and Kusti provide a sort of fortification to the seen physical body of

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Tanu and unseen subtle body of Keherp. This protection is called the formation of Napatem-Bavarhe, the centre of spiritual protection.

There are deeper explanations of the working of sixteen chakras of the Keherp body on the physical body and how Sudreh and Kusti help the spiritual advancement, in consequence of the observance of Tarikate-Ashoi and Padiav Sazi.

I have not touched the explanations of the efficacy of Sudreh and Kusti from the point of chakras. Khshnoom philosophy has interpreted the first chapter of Vendidad and explained the working of sixteen chakras of Keherp of human beings as well as the Kehrap of this Geti, i.e. mundane world.

There is ample testimony in the extant Avesta itself that Avesta is Gurza Senghha i.e. secret parlance and is not mere literature and that it cannot be fully explained and interpreted by the help of grammar and philology. Avesta is Manthra and is composed according to the rules of Stoat Yasna, wherein there are rules parental to the rules of Grammar and its interpretation needs the aid of the basic philosophy of Khshnoom. The basis of a pure religious life should be implicit faith in the teachings of our Prophet Zarathushtra and practice of the time-honoured Up-yan or religious practices, that have been given evolved from the teachings of the Prophet.

In or about 1921, the late Mr. Jehangir Vimadlal came for a message of Ustad Saheb Behramshahji Shroff to the Parsi community and in my presence Behramshahji gave the message of Saroshavarez Marzbanji Saheb to the Parsis that if you will observe the practice of Tarikat-e-Ashoi and Padiav Sazi by living a truthful life, you will be progressing in all the directions.

The explanations of this philosophy of Khshnoom about Sudreh Kusti are very extensive and in a series of about 12 talks on the subject, full justice can be done to it. I have today presented only a simple narrative, keeping aside deeper phases of the philosophy of Sudreh and Kusti.

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