

# ZOROASTRIAN RITUALS

By Late Ervad Phiroze Masani

All Zoroastrian rituals — which are systematically divided into two main divisions viz, (i) those rituals meant for the living — like the Navjote or ceremony for the initiation of a child into the Zoroastrian faith; the Navar or initiation into priesthood or qualification of understanding the rules concerning rituals and being able to perform them; the Jashan or sympathetic co-operative ceremony of a body of persons for wishing welfare to themselves and to others; the Bareshnoom or nine days ceremony for the purification of the aura or personal magnetism of oneself, etc., etc., as well as (ii) those ceremonies meant for the dead e.g., the three days' Srosh ceremony for giving the departed soul into the charge of the angel Srosh, on the dawn of the fourth day; the Pad-ruz or the ceremony performed during the last hour of the third night of a soul's sojourn here in this world after death, the hour when the soul has his full consciousness awakened as to the **Pad-daheshna** or reward for its goodness and **Pad-fras** or punishment for its vice, from which two words we have the 'Pad-dehashn—Pad—fras—roj' i.e. the Day of Judgement or Doomsday or Pad-roj; the Afringan or periodic blessing ceremony for helping the dead on to their progress in the unseen world; the Yzashne and the Vendidad, and the Nirangdin and the Hama-yasht, which are specially ceremonies far more efficient than others lasting for several days or months together for the help of the dear departed ones, etc. etc, — all these rituals and ceremonies, and liturgies are all but spirito — scientific processes producing grand, practical results in the unseen world,

and are based on an entirely scientific understanding of the subtle and unseen laws of nature. Some of such grand fundamental laws; of nature taught by Zoroaster in the Avesta are —

1. **Zravan**, — the laws of **Eternal First motion or Energy** pervading every force and object, visible or unseen, thus creating the Idea of Time thereby;
2. **Uru**, — the law of ever widening and ever proceeding, the never-ceasing evolution, or Unfoldment or Spiritual Progress towards the Goal of "One Far-off Divine Event to which the whole creation moves", — that inherent tendency to advance or go onward which is the essential characteristic of "Urvan" the soul;
3. **Staota**, — the law of vibrations or subtle colours produced by vibrations of motion and sound, which is at the root of all creation;
4. **Khastra**, — the law of the Thermo — Electro — Magnetic Forces and current working throughout the visible and unseen realms, in indefinitely various forms of electricity or magnetism;
5. **Kharenangh**, — the law of Halo or Emanation of Subtle Magnetic Aura pertaining to all the kingdoms — human, animal, vegetable and mineral;
6. **Barej** — the law of Thermal Energy of Fires of different rates of intensity;
7. **Manthra**, — the law of efficiency of the mystic words of charms composed

by the Prophet in unison or attunement with the original Universal Musical Note — the creative word — Ahuna Var — the law whereby the Urvan or soul can be enrapport with the music celestial;

8. **Mithra**, — the law of Thought — Energy or Thought Power, its transmission and its effect on persons and things by creating unseen forms in the subtlest states of ultra-physical matter;
9. **Paitioget**, — the law of Retributive Compensation and Universal Adjustment and Obligation with reference to every visible and invisible object and force in the Universe, thus implying the law of Divine Dispensation of Justice and Equality;
10. **Asha**, — the law of Order, Administration and Holiness Divine implying the Highest degree of Purity, — physical, mental, moral and spiritual.

On these ten fundamental and many more secondary laws besides of equal importance are based all the Zoroastrian rituals which require really a spiritually — rational mind having a genuine grasp of higher scientific facts, and such a mind alone can comprehend the unseen working and efficacy of Zoroastrian rituals. All the above mentioned names of the ten basic laws of Zoroastrian rituals are purely Avestan, and each of them of frequent occurrence even in the fragmentary extant Avesta scriptures, with which all Avesta students are familiar. If we entertain a belief, as taught in the Avesta by Zoroaster, in the existence of Ahura Mazda (the Creator,) Ameshaspands (or the Archangels), Yazads (the Angels), heaven-world, soul; immortality of the soul, unseen colours, vibrations, etc. — things which cannot be seen by means of the physi-

cal vision or which cannot be easily understood by the intellect alone, we cannot but believe in the efficacy of Zoroastrian rituals. All these things are unintelligible to us at present, because we have not developed our spiritual vision or subtle perception and because we are therefore spiritually blind, just in the same way as ordinary light and colours are invisible to the unfortunate physically blind, or just as the scientific inventions of telephones, telegraphs, aeroplanes etc., can never be understood by those who are backward in intellectual development. The actual working of Zoroastrian rituals which is based on all the ten laws above referred to cannot be seen nor thoroughly understood by us so long as we are spiritually blind, for these are the processes going on in the rarer and subtler stages of ether, which are ultraphysical, and which can be actually seen by spiritual vision acquired by holy persons and the prophet. The thought-effect and the word-effect are the two main keys to the understanding of the efficacy of Zoroastrian rituals. The laws of vibrations of thoughts and sounds, of forms and unseen colours both of thought and sound, play a very remarkable part in the efficacy of recital of holy Avesta scriptures both as prayers and in the rituals. Vibration is at the bottom of every visible and invisible object in the universe, and nothing can have its existence without motion and vibration. We can attest to this fact even by the help of the physical sciences of acoustics, optics, magnetism, electricity, thermal energy etc. The ultimate object of all Zoroastrian rituals is therefore to create an accumulation of very fine electric and magnetic forces and currents, and by means of a battery invisible thus created to accelerate the thought-and-word-vibrations towards the direction of the departed soul for which the rituals are per-

formed. There is entirely a systematic explanation of the working of all individual Zoroastrian rituals, and every individual ceremonial of a certain kind has its own particular effect produced for the helping on the progress of the soul in the unseen world. Just as all the several parts in a big machine have their individual proper functions to perform, in the same way all separate forms of Zoroastrian rituals serve only as factors combining ultimately to produce a harmonious whole effect.

We shall take only one instance of the Jashan ceremony and try to understand briefly how it benefits the living for whom it is performed. 'Khastra' or magnetic and electric forces and currents play an important part in all Zoroastrian rituals. Even modern science admits that invisible subtle magnetic forces emanate from every mineral, vegetable, and animal and human

creation, and it is on account of this reason that only certain kinds of things having best and pure magnetic currents are taken in the rituals. Only certain kinds of fruit and flowers (others being prohibited) and water of springs or wells, etc., taken in the Jashan ceremony are employed so as to receive best magneto-electric currents issuing from hydro-electrical magnetic forces (Adufrado, Vanthwo-frado, Gaetho-frado, Khshaeto-frado, Danghu-frado) so often remembered in the Aban Yasht, and all these Frado or hydro-electric forces have the best natural efficiency, if the water is natural, i.e. derived from running streams. This is why only pure water of wells or springs is strictly recommended for use in all Zoroastrian rituals, and the pure running water of wells or springs which is exposed to the visible and dark rays of the sun all

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and vibrations are made ineffective by the presence of high frequency vibratic electric currents.

From the above, it is obvious how injurious and damaging is the presence of electric light or any electric appliances where Avesta Manthra are recited. It is imperative to atleast switch off all Electric lights etc., during the time of one's "Bandagi" and when 'Kirya-Kam' and other Religious Ceremonies are performed, so that the Vibrations and its Colours created by the Avesta-Manthra reach their right destination and do not go waste.

[Reference "The Question of Electric light in Atash-Behram "Kabla" Hall-(Gujarati) By 'Cinzac'.]

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the day has its Frado naturally in a very high order of efficiency and activity. In the Jashan ceremony the officiating priest who is a practitioner of highest mental and physical purity accumulates all the thermo-electro-magnetic forces from all the things placed before him in the ceremonial apparatus by means of the staota or colour-vibrations of the Avestic Manthra, and through Barej or the thermal of the Fire placed before him he creates a very grand and powerful magnet as it were of the most beautiful spiritual unseen currents and forces. This accumulation of currents is forwarded through Fire to the realms of the unseen world which is a region of highly accelerated vibrations. As a result of this in accordance with the laws of attraction or

attunement the beneficent spiritual forces from Yazads or angels rain down here to meet the force going above from the Jashan-ceremony officiator. Thus an actual shower of higher spiritual forces and currents is brought down here and propagated over a large compass by means of all such ceremonies like the Jashan ceremony intended to benefit the living.

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on the shoulders of some interested people of both sides for dividing the community into two, for their personal vendetta, personal power, and personal gains.

Whatever it may be let us wait and watch what the winners are going to do in the coming months. Whatever Socio-Economic reforms they wish to carry out, albeit reforms should be always for the betterment of the Community at large and not for a few people or party gains, they should be supported and helped by all the Parsees irrespective of their being CUZ, CER or neutrals, and in the same breath, it can be said that if they try to bring about even an iota of reform in our pristine pure religious laws, ceremonies, or its institutions, directly or indirectly then every Parsee worth his name should rise up in arms or in whatever manner they can, and crush them.

Hope wise counsel will prevail, and the successful candidates will not get led away by some rebellious press or persons whose support they had and now find hard to disassociate with.

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✓ If we refer to the laws which form the basis of Zoroastrian rituals we can easily understand the actual function of Zoroastrian rituals. The rituals in themselves will neither lessen the number of sins nor increase the number of good actions of the soul. That account is closed with the cessation of the last breath in the physical world; but there is one point here which ought to be carefully borne in mind. The Avesta word 'Kereta' or the Pahlavi 'Kerdar' is very important in understanding the actual efficacy of Zoroastrian rituals. The Kereta or Kerdar implies literally "what is done," and therefore it signifies a graphical collection of the lasting vibrations of the thoughts, words and deeds, committed by the soul during its physical existence. The collection of vibrations remains, like a thought photo-sphere immersed into the aura of the man, and it is impressed also in the unseen world on the particular stage to which the soul is accelerated in its progress in accordance with the proportion of the good or bad nature of its life actions. We find in the Hadokht Nask a very elaborate description of the accompaniment of this thought photo-sphere or the Kerdar with the soul. Two separate Fargards of the Hadokht Nask are devoted to this subject viz, the 2nd and the 3rd, the second treating of the good Kerdar of a soul compared to a most beautiful maiden, and the third of the bad Kerdar of a soul which is

compared to a most ugly woman. This idea of Kerdar having been taught in a special Nask, deserves a good deal of importance in the treatment of Zoroastrian rituals and it is supported even by the Gathas. The Gatha Ha 31 Para 20 describes the punishment meted out to the soul of an unholy person having a bad Kerdar or collection of the vibrations of the unmeritorious thoughts, words and deeds. In the same way Gatha Ha 53 Para 6 refers to the precept against bad Kerdar. Again Gatha 49 Para 11 depicts the condition of souls having a bad Kerdar which is a collection of "Dush-Khshathreng" i. e. acts of abuse of power, Dush-Shyothneng" i. e. evil actions, "Duz-Vachangho" i. e. undesirable words, Duz-Daenengh" i. e. evil consciences, "Dush-manangho" i. e. evil thoughts, and the bad kerdar is collectively represented as "Akaish-kharethaish" i. e. all sorts of evil food or evil aura accompanying the soul. Of the many passages regarding the good Kerdar we may refer to Gatha 46 Para 10 and 19 both of which deal with the merit deserved by a soul of good Kerdar.

Having thus established the law of Kerdar as taught in Zoroastrian rituals we shall now try to understand the direct ultimate result produced by Zoroastrian rituals. The collective electro-magnetic force including the thought effect and the word-effect created by the officiator in the ceremony in accordance with those

ten fundamental laws has sufficient motor power to proceed to the exact stage of the soul under thought of the officiator and to touch the Kerdar or photo-sphere that is hovering round the soul. If it is a bad kerdar, it causes great deal of annoyance, disease, unease and punishment to the soul; if a good one, it becomes a source of happiness, ease and delight and reward to the soul. Hence the force sent through the medium of Zoroastrian rituals either increase the peace and ecstasy of the soul of good kerdar or mitigates the unrest felt by a soul of bad Kerdar. We may take a rough simile which must not be construed as a logical analogy in order to understand this important item in the study of Zoroastrian rituals. Just as a man in the physical world suffering from disease, calamity or poverty requires medical treatment, mental and verbal consolation and even pecuniary help, in the same way a departed soul of bad Kerdar, having been put into that sorry plight on account of the ignorance of the laws of nature, is in need of the kind of help under its own circumstances, and that best kind of help as taught by Zoroaster is the Holy Ritual. The performance of ritual in honour of the dear departed ones has been ordained as the incumbent duty of the living towards the dead. How can the living father, mother, or husband or wife or children, brother or sister, and friend best remember and express the deep sense of obligation and love towards those of whom any one of these has been deprived, except by means of the Zoroastrian rituals, which propound a systematic procedure based on the most fundamental laws of nature for establi-

shing a channel of communication between the living and the dear departed ones ?

Another rough simile may be given in order to understand the need of Zoroastrian rituals for a soul of bad Kerdar or of good Kerdar. If a member of a family is removed to a distant place, the postal system or telegraph system serves as a source of communication between those separated. The messages received mutually by both the parties enable each of the parties to know the condition of the other and the need for help required by either. In case if there is no need for help, mere messages of good wishes and love are also welcomed by each of the parties and thus we can very well understand the practical utility of the communicative system and the blessings showered by it. Of course the systems of communication in the physical world cannot work in the unseen world of ultra physical matter, and for understanding very clearly the nature of the world of ultra-physical existence and the different stations therein reached by the soul after death, Zoroaster has inculcated the best system of telegraphic, telepathic, telephonic and tele-electric communication between the living and the departed soul- viz, Zoroastrian Rituals, Thus we see that the rituals taught in Zoroastrian religion have their own proper function and utility in the grand economy of nature and that system of ceremonials never inteferes with the law of Dispensation of Justice in nature. There are many other points besides, which ought to be studied by those who are eager to understand the real inner working of the entire system of Zoroastrian rituals.