

THE PRACTICALS OF THE PARSI LIFE WHY AND HOW SUDREH-KUSHTI?

The First Axiom of Religion (Dharma,

Daena) is : The intellect of an ordinary non-saintly human has a limit; it has an inherent incapacity to understand - even to be aware of - the Truth in Nature.

The Second Axiom is : Every principle, every doctrine, every tenet, every discipline, every practice, every institution of Religion is based on the events and existences, forces and energies lying beyond the intellectual barrier of a non-saintly human.

Modern science very strongly points its finger towards these axioms.

Sudreh-Kushti, one of our Religious practices, is not just an identity symbol of the Parsis. It is an apparatus, an equipment to keep a Parsi attuned to Asho Zarathushtra every moment of his life. It is a 'yoga', a process of communion with the Divine. It has, therefore, its own Rules for the making and compositions of Sudreh and Kushti and for using them as powerful channels of Prayer and Yoga. The Rules are formulated by the Saoshyants, the Authorised Deputies of Zarathushtra and have come down to us through tradition.

How would you do your Kushti Prayer?

Here are a few essential hints.

Wash your face with water while pronouncing; 'Khshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdaao', Ashem Vohu 1. Pass the wet palm of each of your hands on the arm below the elbow of the other hand. Pass the wet palm of your left hand over the two feet. Wipe the water on the arms and palms gently with a clean handkerchief.

Now face the direction of the Sun i.e. East, in the morning; West, after the noon till sunset. After sunset face a 'Divaa' or lamp, or failing that the moon, or failing that the South.

Start Kemnaa Mazdaa. *Do not untie the Kushti until the whole of Kemnaa Mazdaa is finished.* While reciting, pass these thoughts in your mind: *Oh Mazda! I am a human with all the faults of flesh; save me from the enemies within me; lift me up if I fall; infuse the divine Fire of Sarosh in my consciousness; keep me ever reminded of my divine Guide of this world and the next : Asho Zarathushtra; may all evil vanish from the earth; homage to Armaiti, the divine Goddess, the soil of the earth and humility in man; let my ego vanish*

After finishing Kemnaa Mazdaa, untie the Kushti; double fold it; hold it with the help of the thumb or the first finger of the left hand and catching it with the right hand at a little distance from the left hand, horizontally parallel to the body, start .

Ahuramazda Khodaae, Ahriman Avaandeyshaan ... Form three circles on the Kushti at Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni. Go on reciting further. At "Haithyaa Varashtaam Hyat Vasnaa" ... take the first circle around the body Bring the two ends in front. At the first "Yathaa Ahu Vairyo", tie the first knot by inserting the right hand end of the Kushti. At the second Yathaa let the second knot be from the left hand end. Let each hand take its end of the Kushti at the back and tie the two knots, first from the right hand end and the second from the left, while reciting one Asheym Vohu.

From Ahuramazda Khodaae to the last Asheym, let the following thoughts pass in your mind;

May all the evil forces be transmuted to the good; let me exert to keep my thought, word and deed pure and good (manashni ...). Let the blessings of all the divine Entities and Energies enter into me (haithyav arashtaam ...). While reciting first Yathaa, think: let me be in attunement with Ahura Mazda. At the second Yathaa, think: I attune myself with my Divine Guide Asho

Zarathushtra. At the last Asheym, think: *let the divine Energy of 'Asha' and 'Ushtaa' enter into me.* (See the article on Asheym Vohu for the meanings of 'Asha' and 'Ushtaa'.)

Now recite "Jasa mey Avangahey Mazda... . The thoughts are: *Ahura Mazda has, in His wisdom, placed me in the Daena of Zarathushtra; let me think, speak' and act as He has commanded; Mazdayasni Daena is most majestic, most divine and most beautiful. It is ordained to dissolve all evil from man, lead man to salvation, make man perfect, and lead the whole creation to Ahura Mazda; the Zarthushti Daena (like all other Daenna's) springs from Mazdayasni Daena; I am born in the Din of Zarathushtra; I will advance through Him, to Ahura!!*

When have we to do Kushti? (i) While getting out of bed; (ii) every time after a visit to w.e.; (iii) before starting your Manthra prayers; (iv) before entering any Atash Beheraam or Agiary; (v) after doing Sezda to a dead body. These are compulsory occasions. Voluntarily you can do Kushti before a meal and before going to bed.

If at your work-place or otherwise, it is not possible to do Kushti, recite: five 'Yathaa Ahu Vairyo' and three 'Ashem Vohu's as a substitute.

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