

CHAPTER VII.

INITIATION CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS.

I. The NAOJOTE. The Initiation of a Zoroastrian Child into The Fold.

By initiation, we mean an introduction into a certain religious

Two kinds of organization, by the performance of certain initiation. rites and ceremonies. Of this kind of initiation,

the Parsees have two: (i) The *Naôjote*, which is the initiation of a Parsee child into the fold of the Zoroastrian religion. (ii) The *Nâvar* and the *Martab*, the two grades of initiation into Priesthood. We will at first speak of the *Naôjote* or the initiation of a child into the religion through investiture with a sacred shirt and thread.

The ceremony of investing a child with sacred shirt and thread is called *Naôjote*.¹ A Zoroastrian may put on any dress he likes. He may dress as an European, Hindu, Mahomedan or as a person of any nationality, but he must put on the *sudreh* and *kusti*, i. e., the sacred shirt and thread as visible symbols of Zoroastrianism. The word *Naôjote* is made up of two words, Pahlavi *naô* (Avesta *nava*, «»» Sans. नव, P. نو, Lat. *novus*, Germ. *neu*, Fr. *neuf*) 'new' and *zôt* (𐬀𐬵𐬰 Av. 𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬰 nom. 𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬰 sans होत) i. e. one who offers prayers, from *zu* (𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬰 Sans. हु) to offer prayers. The initiation is so named, because, it is after its performance, that a Zoroastrian child is said to be responsible for the duty of offering prayers and observing religious customs and rules as a Zoroastrian.² The ceremony of *Naôjote* among

1 *The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. I., Part I. (for September 1915), pages 53-54.

Op. cit., Vol. I., Part I., page 53.

The modern Zoroastrians of Persia call this ceremony *Shiv-Kusti*.

2 Some take the word *Naôjote* to be another form of *Naôzâd*, i. e. a new birth, meaning thereby, a spiritual birth. After going through the ceremony, the child undertakes some moral or spiritual responsibility. Hence the word (West S. B. E. XXIV, chap. V, n. 1, p. 262). The *Shâyast lâ Shâyast* speaks of it as *navid zâdih* 𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬰 𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬰, Dr. M. B. Davar's ed., p. 72, l. 1, Chap. XIII, 2) i. e. new birth.

the Parsees corresponds to that of Confirmation¹ among the Christians.

Seven is the age at which it is enjoined to initiate a child.

The age for this investiture. According to Herodotus (I, 136) and Strabo (Bk. XV, chap. III, 18), the ancient Iranians commenced the education of their children at the age of five. It seems, that a part of that education was religious education which prepared them for this ceremony of investiture. Plato (First Alcibiades 37) gives the age of education as seven. This then must be the age of the regular commencement of secular education after the religious investiture with the sacred shirt and thread. The Vendidad (XV, 45) and the Dinkard (Vol. IV, chap. 170)² support Plato's statement. In case a child is not sufficiently intelligent to understand the ceremony and to know its responsibilities, it is permitted that the ceremony can be postponed to any age upto fifteen, at which age the investiture must take place. If the ceremony is not performed and if the child is not invested with the the sacred shirt and thread at or before the age of 15, the child is said to be claimed by the Drujas³ her own. The Vendidad (XVIII, 31, 54) represents the evil Drujas claiming four kinds of men as her own. Among these, the fourth kind is that of persons, who, having past the age of 15, go about without the sacred shirt and thread. The Druj says: "He assuredly is the fourth of my those (*i. e.* above class of) men, he, an ill-behaved man, who, after (the age of) fifteen years, moves about without the sacred thread and shirt."⁴ The Sad-dar (Chap. X, 1) says, that "it is incumbent on all Behedins,⁵ (whether) males or females, who attain the age of 15 years, to bear the sacred

1 "The word 'confirm' is found frequently in both the Old and the New Testaments in various shades of meaning, but with the general sense of *strengthening* and establishing" (Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible). It is worth noting in connection with this meaning, that one meaning of

دز, the Avesta root of the word *zaotar* is "to be strong" (Sans. ज, P. डोर),

2 Dastur Dr. Peshotan's edition.

3 Av. *درو* *درو* one who does harm, deceives, speaks lies. This is personified as a female evil power.

4 Vend. XVIII, 54.

5 *i. e.* Zoroastrians. *Lit.* members of the good religion.

means "an advantageous path." Dr. West¹ takes the word to be Persian "*sud-reh*" meaning an advantageous path. Some derive the word from Avesta "*vastra*," meaning 'clothing' and say that the word "*sadreh*" is formed by dropping the first letter "v."² Mr. K. E. Kanga thinks that the word is Arabic ستره *sutrah*, i. e. anything which covers or protects (the body).³ The Dâdistân-i Dini speaks of it as *pirâhan* (پیراهن) Pers. می‌راهن shirt) The Pahlavi Vendidad⁵ speaks of it as *shapik* (شاپیک). It also speaks of it as *tashkuk* (تاشکوک)⁶ A Persian gloss of the word is given as *sudreh*.⁷

The sacred shirt and thread are symbolic in their structure. The symbolism is explained not in the Avesta, but in later Pahlavi and Persian books. Some of the symbolism is explained in the Dâdistân-i Dini (Ques. 39, Chap. XL). The Persian Sarnâmeh-i-râz i Yazdâni also refers to it. The shirt is made up of white cambric, the white colour being symbolic of innocence, and, as such, the symbol of the Mâzdayaçnân religion.⁸ The Dadistân i Dini enjoins that the shirt should be pure white⁹ and of only one fold¹⁰, not double. The reason for the shirt to be of only one fold is said to be that Vohuman (Bahman) is "one creation" which is the first (ayôk dâm i fartûm).¹¹ The

1 S. B. E. Vol. V, p. 286.

2 The Zend Avesta par Darmesteter II, p. 243 n. 13. As an instance of a similar dropping of "v" "we have the case of وید Sans. (वेद Lat. *vir*, which has given us the Pers. *yal* يل i. e., hero."

3 He wrote of this in a letter to me.

4 Question XXXIX, 1. Ervad Tehmuras's Text, p. 125, 1. 2.

5 Chap. XVIII, 7. Dastur Hoshang's Text, p. 566. Dastur Dr. Hoshang says, that it is the same as Pers. شبی a night shirt (*ibid.* Vol. II Glossarial Index, p. 209). Anquetil Du Perron (Tome II, p. 529) takes the Pahlavi word to be Chev. In that case, it is the same as Pers. شوب below i. e., the garment below the *kusti*.

6 Pahl. Vend. XVII, 1. Dastur Dr. Hoshang's Text, p. 561, 1. 12.

7 *Ibid.*, note 17.

8 "Spaëta Daênayâo Mâzdayaçnoish upamanem" (Meher Yasht, Yt. X. 126).

9 "Darûst sapit" (Ervad Tehmuras's Text, p. 125, 11. 5-6). Ques. 39 S. B. E. XVIII, Chap. XL, p. 133.

10 Ayôtâk, ayôkardeh. *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

word *Vohû-mana* being variously used, the signification is not clear, but what is meant seems to be this, that the whiteness of the shirt is supposed to influence for good one's mind. Again, the shirt must not be made up of one continuous piece of cloth but of two pieces sewn together on the sides, so that one piece may be on the right hand side, and the other on the left hand side, thus dividing the shirt into two parts, the front and the back part. These two parts—the front and the back—are said to be symbolic of the past and the future, both being related with each other through the present. It has an opening for the head and it reaches down to the knees.

The most important part of the shirt is the *gireh-bân* (*lit.* that which preserves the knot), which signifies loyalty to, or faith in, the religion. The *Gireh-bân* is known as the “*kisseh-i kerfeh*,” *i.e.*, “the purse or the bag of righteousness.” It is made in the form of a bag or purse, which rests a little below the throat. It indicates symbolically that a man has to be industrious, and has not only to fill his purse or bag with money, but also with *kerfeh* (righteousness). The *Shâyast la Shâyast* enjoins,¹ that the sacred shirt should be put next to skin, *i.e.*, there should be no other garment under it.² Thus, the *sudreh* is a symbol that reminds one of purity of life and righteousness.

The Avesta word for the sacred thread is “*aiwyâonghana*,” *lit.* to gird round the body. *Kûsti* is its Pahlavi rendering. The word *Kûsti* is variously derived. (a) It may be derived from Pahlavi *kust* 𐭥𐭣𐭥𐭥 P. 𐭥𐭣𐭥𐭥 meaning “direction or side.” Thus, the word *kûsti* may mean “that which points out the proper direction or path.” *Sudreh* (the sacred shirt) indicates the advantageous path, and *kûsti* (the sacred thread) indicates the proper direction to proceed

1 Chap. IV. 7, 8. *Amat shâpîk dô patmukht ikvîmûnet va kustik madam zak-i avpar yidruniyen adinash...vanâç*, (Dr. Davar's ed., p. 30).

2 Cf. Jeremiah XIII, 11, where the waist-cloth or the girdle of linen is enjoined always to “cleave to the loins”, *i.e.*, to be “worn next the skin,” which process of wearing signified “righteousness and faithfulness.” (Isaiah XI, 5). The *sudreh*, to a certain extent, corresponds to “the linen ephod” of the priest (I, Samuel II, 18).

on that path. Taking the same derivation, *kūsti* may mean, "a badge distinguishing those who are on the side (*kust*) of (i.e., who believe in) Zoroastrianism." (b) Some derive the word from *kosht* (کشت) waist, and say that it is so called because it is put on the waist.¹ (c) Again *kosht* also means "limit or boundary," so, *kūsti* may mean "that which keeps us, or reminds us to keep ourselves, within proper limits or bounds." The *Sudreh* being, as said above, "the advantageous path of righteousness, the *kūsti*, which is put over it, is "that which confines us or keeps us within the limits of that path of righteousness." The Avesta word for *kūsti*, viz., *aiwyaōnghana*, which literally means "to sit round or to limit," renders this derivation probable. (d) Again, some take this word *kūsti* to be *kishti*, i.e., a ship, and say, that it signifies, that, like a ship, it carries us to the safe haven of righteousness. Whatever derivation we take, the *kūsti* symbolizes and indicates a direction in the path of righteousness.

The *kūsti* is made up of lamb's wool. The wool is at first combed and then spun into fine thread on a hand-spindle called *chātri*. Two such long threads are prepared on two spindles or *chātris*, and are then twisted into one. This thread is then woven into the *kūsti* on a hand-loom called *jantar* (جنتر sans. यंत्र), the ends of which are moveable, so that it can be adjusted to the length required. The twisted thread is passed round the loom 72 times; so, the *kūsti* consists of 72 threads, divided into six strands, each of twelve threads. A continuous thread is made to pass, in the process of weaving, through each of the six strands. When the weaving is almost finished, and the length of about a foot of the threads remains to be woven, the whole thread is removed from the loom and handed to a priest to be cut and consecrated. It is the privilege of the women of the priestly class to weave and prepare a sacred thread, and it is the privilege of a priest to cut and consecrate it.

To consecrate the thread, the priest first performs the *pādyōb kūsti*. He then recites the *Sraōsh bāj*² as far as the

1 Haug and West, Glossary and Index of the Virāf-nāmeḥ, pp. 202-3.

2 Vide Darmesteter. Le Zend Avesta II, pp. 636-88.

word Ashahê. He next recites the *nirang* (the liturgical formula) for cutting and consecrating the thread, followed by the Ashem¹ Vohû and Yathâ ahû vairyo.² While reciting the latter, he cuts the *kûsti* into two parts as he utters the word *shyaothnanâm*. On finishing the *Yathâ ahû vairyo*, he utters in bâj (i.e. in a suppressed tone) the brief Pazend formula of *sraosh ashô tagi tan farmân*,³ and then finishes the bâj. The women who prepare the *kûsti*, generally get it cut and consecrated by the male priest members of their own families. When they have no such members and have therefore to get it consecrated by other priests, they have to pay a small fee for it. After this consecration, the *kûsti* is returned by the priest to the owner, who now completes its weaving. First, by means of a needle, she turns the *kûsti*, which is hollow, inside out, and then knits by hand the remaining part of the thread. Three tassels (*lari*),⁴ each of 14 threads, are formed at each end of the woven thread. The *kûsti* is then finally washed before being used.

The *kûsti*, being prepared from the wool of a lamb, which is considered to be an emblem of innocence and purity, is held to remind a Zoroastrian of the purity of life which he has always to observe. The 72 threads composing the *kûsti*, symbolize the 72 *hds* or chapters of the Yaçna. The 24 threads, which make up each of the three tassels at each end of the *kûsti*, symbolize the 24 Kardabs or sections of the Visparad, a part of the liturgical prayer; the six strands, each of twelve threads, into which the 72 threads of the *kûsti* are divided at the time of weaving, are said to symbolize the six religious duties⁵ of a

1 Yaçna XXVII, 14.

2 *Ibid.* 13.

3 Srosh yasht, Yt. XI, (Darmesteter. Le Zend Avesta II, p. 482. "Vienne Srôsh ... Ormazd").

4 Pers. *lar* لار thin.

5 The enumeration of these duties differ in different Pahlavi and Pazend books. The Shâyasht la Shâyasht (Chap. XII 31, Dr. Davar's ed. p. 71, S. B. E. V, p. 351) gives the following list:—(1) the celebration of the Gâsânbârs (Gâhambârs) or the season festivals; (2) the celebration of the Rapitavin or the setting in of summer; (3) Sadôsh (Sraosh) or the performance of the funeral ceremonies for the first three days after the death of one's dear departed ones; (4) Farvardagân, i.e., the religious

confirmed this previous custom of putting on the *kûsti*, and also directed that it may be put on over a sacred shirt (*vahumanich vastarg*) and with a recital of religious formulæ (*dînîk niranghâ*).¹ He held it to be a symbol of the necessity of (a) obedience to God, (b) closing up the door against sin and (c) breaking up the power of destruction.

It is enjoined, that, excepting the time of bathing, a Zoroastrian must always bear the sacred shirt and thread. The thread is to be untied and retied during the day on the following occasions:—(1) immediately after leaving bed in the morning;² (2) every time after answering a call of nature; (3) before saying prayers; (4) at the time of bathing; (5) before meals. A modern Parsee sometimes neglects to do so on the first and fifth occasions, but he generally does so on the second, third, and fourth occasions. The Dâdistân-i Dînî says,³ that, from times immemorial, men turn towards light at the time of performing the *kûsti* ceremony as it is connected with a form of prayer.

The first thing that one has to do on these occasions (except the first) is to perform what is called *pâdyâb*⁴ or ablution. It consists of washing the face and other uncovered parts of the body like hands and feet with pure water and after reciting a short prayer-formula.⁵ Then he has to face the sun. If he is within the house and if the sun is not visible, he has to stand facing the east in the morning up to 12 o'clock noon, and facing the west from 12 o'clock to night-fall. At night, he has to face a lamp or the moon. If there is no moon or lamp, he may face the stars. We will, later on, while speaking of the investiture by the priest, describe in detail the process of putting on the *kûsti*.

As to its symbolism the *kûsti* is a kind of belt. "*Kamar-bastan*" i.e., "to tie the waist" or "to put on the belt" is a phrase which has come to mean "to be ready to serve, to be

1 Dâdistân-i-Dînî Chap. XXXIX, 19 Tehmuras's Text, p. 120, Ques XXXVIII, 22.

2 Sad-dar, Chap. LXXXII.

3 Chap. XXXIX.

4 *Vide* Purificatory Ceremonies. Journal, Vol. XI, No. II pp. 169-179.

5 Khshnaôthra Ahurahê Mazdâo Ashem Vohu, i.e., May God be pleased. Piety is the best good and happiness. Happiness to him who is pious for the best piety.

prepared for a work." So the Dâdistân says, that the putting on of the *kûsti* on the waist,¹ symbolizes one's readiness to serve God.

While putting on the *kûsti*, one has to fasten it with two knots, one in the front and another on the back. Knots, which signify firmness and resolution, symbolize here resolutions about certain religious and moral thoughts. While forming the first half of the first knot in the front on the second round of the thread, a Zoroastrian has to think that Ahura Mazda exists, that He is one, is holy and is matchless. While forming the second half of this first knot, he has to remember that the Mazdayaçnian religion is the word of God and that he must have full faith in it. In the third round of the thread, while forming the first half of the second knot at the back, one has to remember that Zoroaster is the Prophet of God, and that he is our guide to show us the proper path of worship. While forming the second half of the second knot, he is to bear in mind that he has always to attend to "good thoughts, good words and good deeds."²

The Dâdistân-i-Dînî (Chap. XXXIX, Pursishna XXXVIII) dwells at some length on the symbolic signification of the *kûsti*. The purport of what it says is this:—Firstly, God wishes that man should serve Him and should follow His path. Now, there are certain conventional ways in which a man shows his service or obedience to God. For example, he falls on his knees in his prayers; he lowers his head and bows; he raises his hands towards Heaven. All these ways or rites, which symbolize service or obedience or homage to God, are done occasionally. But the *kûsti* is a standing symbol to signify permanently a man's readiness to serve God. As a kind of *kamar-band* or belt, put on in a solemn way

¹ The *kûsti* of the Zoroastrian scriptures reminds one of the "girdle" of the Christian scriptures which varied from that of sack cloth (Isaiah III, 24) to that of gold (Revelation I, 13). The Avesta also speaks of the *kûsti* or belt being golden (*zaranyô-aiwyâonghanem*, Yt. XV, 57). Among the Israelites and the early Christians also, the operation of girding signified energetic action.

² Sad-dar, Chap. X.

with religious meditation and prayer, it reminds a person of his perpetual obligation to stand in the service of God. Whenever a Zoroastrian sees this *kūsti*, the *band* (بند) or belt on his waist, he has to consider it as a badge of service and to say to himself "I am the servant (bandâh . بندہ) of God." Secondly, a person puts on a badge or belt of service and stands before his superior to receive his orders. Thus, the sacred belt or *kūsti* reminds a man of humiliation before God; and of his readiness to receive His orders. Thirdly, the *kūsti* is a kind of a *band*, i.e., a kind of a shutter. A shutter shuts up a thing, so that neither outside influence may affect that thing nor that thing's influence affect an outside thing. So, by putting the *band* of a *kūsti*, a Zoroastrian, while reciting the words *manashni*, *gavashni*, and *kunashni*, i.e., thoughts, words and deeds, and putting on the knots on the thread, resolves to let no outside evil influence enter into his mind and affect the purity of his thoughts, words and deeds, and not to let that purity of thoughts, words and deeds leave his mind. Fourthly, we learn from the *Dâdistân-i-Dîni*, that the *kūsti* reminds one to have a high ideal of character before his mind. The waist over which the *kūsti* is fastened, divides our physical body into three parts, the higher, the middle and the lower. The upper or the higher part of our body is the seat of heart and brain which typify higher characteristics. The lower part, which contains organs like the stomach which always require something to feed it, typifies lower characteristics of appetite, thirst, lust, etc. So, the *kūsti* being tied on the middle portion of the body, viz., the waist, and acting as a *band* or stopper, must remind us, not to let the lower passions rise above and suppress our higher characteristics.¹

Having described the preparation and the consecration of the shirt and thread, and having explained the symbolism, we will now describe the Naôjote ceremony itself, wherein a priest puts over the child the sacred shirt and thread.

The ceremony of
Naôjote.

¹ This statement of the *Dâdistân* reminds us of what Dr. Drummond, in his "Stones Rolled Away," speaks as the three stories of our body, the upper, the middle and the lower.

As a qualification of fitness to go through this ceremony, the child is expected to know a few short prayers. Of these, the knowledge by heart of the Nirang-i-kusti (*i.e.*, the prayer for the sacred thread) is indispensably necessary, because it is required to be recited whenever the sacred thread is to be untied and fastened again, on certain occasions during the day, of which we have spoken above. This Nirang-i-kusti is made up of the following three prayers:—(1) Kem-nâ-Mazdâ;¹ (2) Nirang-i-kusti or Ahura Mazda Khodâe;² (3) Jasa me avanghê Mazda, Mazda-yaçnô ahmi.³ Besides this prayer of Nirang-i-kusti, the prayers known as Nirang-i-âb-i Zar or Nirang-i Gaômez, Srosh-bâj, and Patet, were, at one time, expected from a Zoroastrian child, to be known by heart for the Naôjote ceremony. But now-a-days, they are not deemed absolutely necessary.

On the day fixed for the investiture, a little before the time of the ceremony, the child is made to go through a sacred bath or a kind of purification known as *nâhn*.⁴ Upto a few years ago, it was customary, that the child should abstain from any kind of food in the morning until after the investiture. This was considered as a little sacrifice on the part of the child to testify

1 This short prayer is a part of what is known as Khordeh Avesta, *i.e.*, the smaller Avesta:—It is made up of the following passages of the larger Avesta. (a) Yaçna Chap. XLVI, 7; (b) Yaçna Chap. XLIV, 16; (c) Vendidad VIII, 21; (d) Yaçna Chap. XLIX, 10. The prayer consists of an invocation to God for help and an expression of desire to throw off physical and moral evils.

2 This is a prayer in the Pazend language. For the text of this prayer in the Avesta character, *vide* "Khurdeh Avesta in Zend Characters" by Ervad Tehmuras Dinshaw Anklesaria (1887), pp. 23-26, and "Khurdeh Avesta" by Mr. Framjee Minocherji Dastur (1881) pp. 5-7. For its translation, *vide* S. B. E., Vol. XVIII, p. 384; Le Zend Avesta, par Darmesteter. Tome II, p. 685; and Spiegel, Bleeck's Translation, Vol. of Khordeh Avesta, p. 4.

3 This short prayer, which forms, as it were, a short statement of the Zoroastrian Articles of Faith or Confession of Faith, is taken from Yaçna XII, 9. The first four words meaning "Oh God, come to my help" are added as an invocation, from Ormazd Yasht, Yt. I, 27.

4 *Vide* above, pp. 90-96, "Purification Ceremonies."

its faith in the importance and value of the ceremony. Upto a few years ago, the ceremony was always performed in the morning, but now it is performed in the evening also according to the convenience of the parties. The very fact, that it was enjoined, that during the course of the ceremony the officiating priest must recite the dawn (Aush-bâm¹) prayer,² shows, that it was thought necessary that the ceremony should be performed in the morning.

After the sacred bath, the child is taken to a room where the parents and their relations and friends, and the officiating priest with one or more other priests have assembled. The upper part of its body, which is to be covered with the sacred shirt at the hands of the officiating priest, is covered over with a sheet of white cloth that can be easily removed. The child is made to sit on a low wooden stool covered over with a sheet of white cloth, in front of the officiating priest, who sits on a carpet on the floor. The child is made to sit facing the East. The following requisite things are placed on the carpet:—(1) a tray containing a new set of clothes for the child, including a new sacred shirt and thread; (2) a tray of rice known as akhiâna which, at the end of the ceremony, is presented to the family priest; it is a remnant of the old system, when there was a payment in kind as well; (3) a tray of flowers which are presented at the end to the assembled priests, friends and relations; (4) a lamp, generally a lamp fed with clarified butter: there may be additional candle-sticks burning; (5) fire, burning on a censer with fragrant sandalwood and frankincense; (6) a tray containing a mixture of rice, pomegranate grains, raisins, almonds, and a few slices of cocoanut, to be sprinkled, later on, by the priest over the child as a symbol of prosperity. The first tray, containing the suit of clothes, also contains some

1 Pahl. 𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌 Av. 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀 Sans. उषस Lat. aurora, and Av. 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀 P. 𐬨𐬀 brilliant.

2 For the prayer *vide* Spiegel (Bleeck's Translation), Khordeh Avesta, p. 5; Darmesteter, Le Zend Avesta, Vol. II. p. 638.

betel leaves and areca nuts,¹ a few pieces of sugarcandy, a few grains of rice, a cocoanut, a garland of flowers, a metallic cup containing *kûnkân* (a kind of red powder) and a few rupees. All these things have nothing to do with the religious part of the ceremony, but they are considered in India as emblems of good luck. All these are presented by the priest, later on, to the child. The money is, at the end of the ceremony, taken by the family priest as a part of his fee, and is spoken of as the fee for the *giryân* or *girehbân*.²

When all the priests have taken their respective seats, the head officiating priest, who is seated face to face with the child, gives in the hand of the child a new sacred shirt. They all then recite the Patet, or the atonement prayer. The child also recites the prayer or its special sections, if it knows these by heart; but generally, it recites the Yathâ Ahû Vairyô prayers in its stead. In some families, recently, instead of the Patet, the Hormazd Yasht is recited. Having finished this, the officiating priest gets up from his seat and the child stands before him. Then follows the investiture proper which is made up of the following four parts:—(1) the recital of the Confession of Faith by the child, followed immediately by the putting on of the sacred shirt by the priest; (2) the recital of the Nirangi-i-kusti with a preliminary introduction from the introductory part of the Hormazd Yasht (Yasht 1) upto the words *vidhvâo mraotâ*, accompanied with the girdling of the *kûsti* or sacred thread by the priest over the sacred shirt; (3) the final recital of the Mazdayaçnô Ahmî (Yaçna XII, 8-9) formula of the Articles of Faith; (4) the recital of the *Tandaruçtâ* or the final benediction.

1 The betel-vine gives leaves all the year round. The vine gives no fruit or flower but simply leaves which are eaten with betel-nuts. So the leaves are held as symbols of simplicity and prosperity. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, Vol. XI. No. III, pp. 317-18.

2 *Vide* above, p. 173, for the word.

“The areca-nut is symbolic of festivity and is, therefore, always used as an offering for the gods (in India). It is also an essential requisite for the ceremony of betrothal. (*Ibid*, p. 329.)

The first part of the investiture consists in presenting to the child the sacred shirt after making it recite the Confession of Faith. This prayer of the Confession of Faith is made up of two parts: (a) The Avesta *khshnuman* of the Yazata Din, who presides over Religion (Din Yasht. Yasht XVI).¹ (b) A Pazend formula of the Confession of Faith.² The confession made up of these two parts runs as follows:—"Praised be the most righteous, the wisest, the most holy and the best Mazdayačnian Law, which is the gift of Mazda. The good, true and perfect religion, which God has sent to this world, is that which Zoroaster has brought. That religion is the religion of Zoroaster, the religion of Ahura Mazda communicated to holy Zoroaster." It ends with the recital of an Ashem Vohû prayer.

On the child making this public declaration of its faith in the Zoroastrian Mazdayačnian religion, the priest clothes it with the sacred shirt. While putting it on, he recites the sacred formula of Yathâ Ahû Vairyô, and the other priests join him in the recital.

Then the officiating priest stands at the back of the child and both face the east if it is morning, and the west if it is evening. He at first recites the introductory part of the Ormazd Yasht (Yasht I)³ and then the Nirang-i-kusti.⁴ The substance of this prayer of Nirang-in-kusti runs thus: "The Omniscient God is the greatest Lord. Âhriman is the evil spirit, that keeps back the advancement of the world. May that Evil Spirit with all his accomplices remain fallen and dejected. O Omniscient Lord. I repent of all my sins; I repent of all the evil thoughts that I may have entertained in my mind, all the

1 S. B. E., Vol. XXIII, 1883. "To the most right Chista, etc.," p. 264. Spiegel, translated by Bleek. Khordeh Avesta, p. 147. Darmesteter, Le Zend Avesta, Vol. II, p. 302.

2 Spiegel, translated by Bleek. Khordeh Avesta, p. 191.

3 Spiegel, translated by Bleek. Khordeh Avesta, p. 21. From "In the name of God.....satisfaction, etc."

4 *Ibid*, p. 4

evil words that I may have spoken, of all the evil deeds that I may have done. May Ahura Mazda be praised. May the Evil Spirit Âhriman be condemned. The will of the Righteous is the most praiseworthy."

The process of putting on the *kûsti* over the body is as follows:—The priest holds the *kûsti* from its middle or central part in his left hand. Then he holds in his right hand a part of the two strings of the thread so formed. A part of the double strings is thus held horizontally between the two hands and the remainder hangs down vertically. This posture continues upto the recital of the words "*manashni, gavashni, kunashni*" in the Nirang-i-kusti. With the recital of these words a part of the string is then formed into circular curves in both the hands. Then, on reciting the words Khshnaôthra Ahurahê Mazdaô, the curves are let loose, and with the recital of Ashem Vohû, the thread is passed round the child's waist. With the recital of the first Yathâ Ahû Vairyô, the second round is completed, the first knot in the front being tied with the recital of the word *shyaothananâm*. With the recital of the same word in the second recital of the Yathâ Ahû Vairyô, the second knot in the front is tied, and then, with the recital of another Ashem Vohû, the thread is passed round the waist for the third time and the final two knots at the back are tied. This completes the investiture of the sacred thread. During this investiture, the child recites with the officiating priest the *Nirang-i-kûsti*.

The child, after being thus invested with the sacred shirt and thread, announces the last and the most important of the Articles of Faith, given in the 12th chapter of the Yaçna. It runs thus: "O Almighty! Come to my help. I am a worshipper of God. I am a Zoroastrian worshipper of God. I agree to praise the Zoroastrian religion, and to believe in that religion. I praise good thoughts, good words and good deeds. I praise the good Mazdayačnian religion which curtails discussions and quarrels, which brings about kinship of brotherhood, which is holy, and which, of all the religions that have yet flourished and are likely

3, The Recital of the fourmula of the Articles of Faith.

to flourish in the future, is the greatest, the best and the most excellent, and which is the religion given by God to Zoroaster. I believe, that all good things proceed from God. May the Mazdayacnian religion be thus praised."

The most important part of these short prayers is that, wherein the child is made to believe in the efficacy of one's own good thoughts, words and actions. A Parsee has to believe that, for the salvation of his soul, he has to look to himself. For his salvation, he has to look to the purity of his thoughts, the purity of his words, and the purity of his deeds. The pivot on which the whole of the moral structure of Zoroastrianism turns, rests upon this triad of thought, word and deed. Think of nothing but the truth, speak nothing but the truth, do nothing but what is proper, and you are saved.

The putting on of the sacred shirt and thread and the declaration of the Articles of Faith complete the ceremony proper. The officiating priest now makes a red *kunkun* mark on the child's forehead—a long vertical mark if the child is male, a round mark if female—and then gives in its hands, the cocoanut, flowers, betel leaves, areca nuts, etc., referred to above. There only remains now the recital of the Tandaructi or benedictions by the officiating priest, invoking the blessings of God upon the new initiate. He says: "May you enjoy health, long life and splendour of piety. May the good Angels and the Immortal spirits (Ameshâspands) come to your help. May the religion of Zoroaster flourish. O Almighty God! May you bestow long life, joy and health upon the ruler of our land, upon the whole community and upon this ¹..... May the child live long to help the virtuous. May this day be auspicious, this month be auspicious, this year be auspicious. May you live for a good number of years to lead a holy, charitable and religious life. May you perform righteous deeds. May health,

¹ Here the name of the child is mentioned.

virtue, and goodness be your lot. May all your good wishes be fulfilled like those of the immortal angels. Amen! Amen!"

While reciting this, the priest showers over the head of the child, the mixture of rice, pomegranate seed, almonds, raisins, etc., referred to above. In the end, all the assembled priests again recite together, the above *tandaructi* (benedictions). The priests are then paid their fees. They and the assembled friends and relations are presented with flowers. The priests then depart, and the child and the parents are presented with sums of money by friends and relations. The assembled guests generally disperse after a dinner, where "*Jarthoshti sikkâni salâmati*," i.e. the prosperity of the Zoroastrian fold (*lit.*, the safety or prosperity of Zoroastrian coinage) is the toast of the occasion.

CHAPTER VIII.

II.—THE NÁVAR AND THE MARTAB.

The Initiation into Zoroastrian Priesthood.

It is the son of a priest only who can become a priest. This seems to be a very old custom of ancient Irân. We find it alluded to in the institutions of Ardeschîr Bâbakân, the founder of the Sâssânian dynasty, with whose reign commenced the Irânian Renaissance of the period. One of the innovations, said to have been introduced by him, or rather one of the old customs,—more honoured in their breach than in their observance at his time,—re-introduced by him with the aid of his Dastur Taôsar or Tansar, was, that the members of different professions and trades, and their descendants, should adhere to their old professions and trades and not change them for others, except with the special permission of the king or the Government authorities. The division of the people into different professions and trades, and the regulations to restrict them to their respective lines of business, were thought to be necessary for the good of society.

“Cette répartition,” says Tansar, “des hommes en quatre classes est pour le monde une garantie durable de bon ordre. Le passage d’une caste à l’autre est indterdit, sauf le cas où l’un de nous montre un talent particulier. Alors on porte le cas devant le roi. Après une épreuve et une enquête prolongée faite par les Mobeds et les Herbeds, s’ils reconnaissent le mérite du candidat ils se transfèrent dans une autre caste.....
.....Le Shâhanshâh, par sa pure intelligence et la vertu de son génie, a reconstitué ces membres disjoints. Il a remis chacun à sa place distincte, l’a fait redescendre à son rang et a arrangé que personne n’exercerait un autre métier que celui pour lequel Dieu l’avait créé. Par ses mains la Providence divine a ouvert aux habitants de ce monde une porte inconnue même aux âges antiques.”¹

¹ Lettre de Tansar au Roi de Tabaristân (Journal Asiatique, Tome III, Neuvième Serie, pp. 518–520) par Darmesteter.

The division of the people into different professions and trades, referred to by Tansar, as having been made by Ardeshr, was not quite unknown to the ancient Persians before his time. According to the *Shâh-nâmeh*, it was made by King Jamshîd of the Peshdâdian dynasty. "Il (Djemshid) assigna à chacun la place qui lui convenait, et leur indiqua leur voie, pour que tous comprissent leur position et reconnussent ce qui était au-dessus et au-dessous d'eux."¹ Tabari says the same thing: "Djemshid partagea toutes les créatures du monde en quatre classes.....et il dit: Que chacun fasse son travail et ne s'occupe pas d'autre chose.....
.....Si quelqu'un s'écartait des réglemens qu'il avait établis, il le faisait mettre à mort."² We thus find that the rules introduced by Ardeshr were rather old, and that he re-established them, and declared that people must restrict themselves to their own hereditary professions. The priesthood was especially such a profession. But, we find further from Tansar's letter that Ardeshr had intended to make certain exceptions. For example, a man, by special qualifications or examinations, can qualify himself for a profession, other than that of his forefathers. We find such an exception, in the case of priesthood, made in Persia, even so late as the 17th century. One Dastur Rûstam Gushtâsp Ardeshr "is said to have sprung from the laity and not from a priestly family."³ It is said, that in the time of this Rûstam Gushtâsp, the then ruling Mahomedan King of Persia ordered a general massacre of the Persian Zoroastrians, unless they proved that they were monotheists and not idol-worshippers. It was this layman Rûstam Gushtâsp who proved this to the satisfaction of the king, and he was made a Dastur. He was a good scholar. The copy of the *Dinkard* in the Mulla Firoze Library, a copy of the *Mino-Kherad* in Mr. Tehmuras Dinshaw's possession and a Persian *Revâyet* in Mr. Manekji Unwâlâ's possession are by his pen. In India, no exception seems to have been made, and it is only

1 Le Livre des Rois, M. Mohl, Vol. I, pp. 49-50. Small ed., p. 35.

2 Tabari, par Zotenberg, Tome I, p. 103.

3 S. B. E., Vol. V, Introduction, p. XXXIII, West.

the sons of priests or of the members of the priestly families who can become priests. The right can be revived by any male member of the priestly family, though his immediate ancestors may not actually have been priests. For example, A may be a priest. His son B, grand-son C, great-grand-son D may not have entered into priesthood, but still E, the son of D, can, if he chooses, become a priest. The right can thus be revived by a descendant upto the fifth generation. It then dies and can no longer be exercised.

In order to be a thoroughly qualified priest, one has to go through two grades of initiations and their ceremonies. They are: (1) the Nâvar and (2) the Martab.

1. THE NÂVAR.¹

The first initiatory ceremony for priesthood is that of Nâvar. The word is written and read in different ways. It is also written and read as Nâbar, Nâibar, or Nâgbar.² Darmesteter says of this word: "L'origine et le sens exact du mot *nâbar* نابر Pahlvi *nâpar* et *nâivar*, sont obscurs."³ I think the word means "a new carrier of offerings or rites." It can be derived from Avesta نڀ new (Pahl. نو Sans. नव, P. نو Lat. novus, Fr. neuf, Germ. neu, Eng. new, same as in Naôjôte), and بار to carry (Pahl. بردن P. بردن Sans. भर, Lat. Ferre, Eng. bear). In the Avesta words, hû-bérétî ushta--bérétî, vanta-bérétî (Y. LXII, 7), the word bérétî (like the Sanskrit भृति *bhṛiti*, nourishment, food, service, capital) which is derived from the above न/ bar, to carry, is used for presents, offerings. So Nâvar, which is originally naô-bar (*i. e.*, a new carrier of presents and offerings), means "one who is newly initiated in the work of offering prayers, rites and sacred things to the Deity." The fact, that it can be explained in the same way

1 For "Nâvar in Irân," *vide* Prof. Khodayar's article in the Sir J. J. Z. Madressa Jubilee Volume, pp. 435 *et seq.*

2 S. B. E., Vol. XVIII, Pahl. Texts II, Chap. LXXIX, 4 n. 1—West. It is written نابر in an old manuscript of the Dâdistân belonging to Mr. Tehmuras Dinshaw.

3 Le Zend Avesta, Vol. I, Introduction, p. LIV, n. 2.

as the word Naôjôte, the first important initiatory Zoroastrian ceremony, is a proof in support of this interpretation.

To initiate a person into priesthood, several stages of ceremonies have to be gone through. They are the following :—(a) the Bareshnûm; (b) the Gewrâ; (c) the initiation proper. I give here an illustration which shows the initiate taking his Bareshnûm.

(a) The candidate for initiation into priesthood has first to go through two Bareshnûm purifications.¹ The first Bareshnûm is said to be for his own *tan-pâk*, i. e. for the purification of his own body, the second is for the *nîyat*² of the person in whose memory he becomes a Nâvar. Between the first Bareshnûm and the second there may be an interval of a few days if it is so desired, or, otherwise the candidate may begin the second Bareshnûm on the same day

1 *Vide* above, pp. 97-145, Purification Ceremonies. In Persia, at present, they go through 10 Bareshnûms, four of which are said to be "for his soul" ("Nâvar in Irân," by Prof. Khodayar Dastur Sheheryâr, in the Sir J. J. Zarthoshti Madressa Jubilee Volume, edited by me, p. 435).

2 *Nîyat* literally means purpose, intention. Among the Parsees, many charitable deeds are said to be performed by a person in the *nîyat* of a deceased relative or friend. A may build a Fire-Temple or a Tower of Silence or such other religious edifice in the *nîyat* of B, his father or relative or friend. It is something like what we call "in memory of" in ordinary language, in case of ordinary charitable institutions, such as schools, dispensaries, asylums or hospitals. In the case of religious buildings, when they are consecrated, or even in the case of charitable buildings like schools or hospitals when they are opened with the religious ceremony of a *Jashan*, the name of the particular person, in whose *nîyat*, honour or memory the building or institution is founded, is mentioned in the prayers. (For the form in which the name is mentioned see above, p. 78, chapter on "Death") These religious or charitable buildings may be in the *nîyat* of living persons as well. In that case, the names of the living persons are recited in the prayers with a slight alteration. Instead of the words *Anûsheh Ravân*, i. e., 'of the dead (*lit.* immortal) soul', the words *Zindeh Ravân*, i. e., 'of the living soul,' are affixed to the name of the person in whose honour the buildings or institutions are founded. The name of the donor also is recited as *فرمایشنه* "farmâyashna," i. e., one at whose direction the building or institution is founded. As in the case of the *jashans* for religious buildings or charitable institutions, so in the case of religious ceremonies, the name of the person in whose *nîyat*, i. e., purpose, honour or memory, they are performed, is mentioned in the recital of the prayer.

when he finishes the first. In that case, both the Bareshnûms take 19 days in all. During these Bareshnûm days, the candidate is to say his prayers five times during the day. He is expected to pass his time in a religious or pious mood. If, during any of the days of the Bareshnûms, he has a *pollutis nocturna*, that vitiates his Bareshnûm. In that case, he must begin the Bareshnûm again. If the case happens in the second Bareshnûm, he has to repeat only the second Bareshnûm and not the first. To avoid this risk, nowadays, the candidate for priesthood goes through the initiation at a very early age, before 15 or 16, when he is likely to be free from such risk. The second Bareshnûm is, as said above, for the *nîyat* of somebody. If that somebody is a lady, he must take care that he goes through the second Bareshnûm and the subsequent ceremonies of *gewrâ* and initiation at a time, when there is no chance of that lady's passing through her monthly course. If during these ceremonies, the lady, in whose *nîyat* he goes through the ceremony, has her monthly course, that vitiates the ceremony which must be begun again when the lady has passed through her course and purified herself. If the person, male or female, in whose *nîyat* the ceremony is gone through, dies during the period of these ceremonies, that event also vitiates the whole thing.¹

(b) On the candidate completing the Bareshnûm, two qualified priests (*i.e.*, two priests who "hold the Bareshnûm"), who have to initiate the candidate, perform, what is known as, the *gewrâ* ceremony, which lasts for six days. This *gewrâ* ceremony, which qualified them to initiate the candidate, consists of reciting the Yaçna with its ritual for six consecutive days. The word "*gewrâ*" comes from the Avesta root *garew*, Sanskrit *grah*, German *engreifer*, Pers, *giraftan* to acquire, to take hold of. Both the priests perform the Yaçna ceremony, *i.e.*, recite the whole of the Yaçna with the necessary ritual. One of the two priests who recites the whole Yaçna is called Joti (Zaota), *i.e.*, lit. the performer of ceremonies or the offerer of offerings. The other priest who assists him in going through the ceremony

¹ *Vide* above, pp. 137-138.

is called Râthwi.¹ The priest, who performs the ceremony as the Joti, is technically said to have "*taken the Gewrâ*," i.e., to have acquired the qualification of continuing the ceremony. The priest who takes the *gewrâ* on the first day, is said to have *taken* the first *gewrâ*. He is to pass a night of vigil and watchfulness. If he has nocturnal pollution, he is said to have lost the efficacy or the qualification of his *gewrâ*. In that case, the *gewrâ* must be repeated the next day. If the efficacy continues, on the next day, in the morning, he "gives the second *gewrâ*" to his colleague. In this case, the other priest recites the Yaçna as Joti and the priest who gives the *gewrâ* acts as a *Rathwi*. He, now, in his turn has to pass the night in vigil. Thus each of the two priests has to "take the *gewrâ*" on an alternate day. These *gewrâ* ceremonies are to be performed for six days. To avoid the chance of the *gewrâs* being vitiated by the failure of the vigil of the priest holding the *gewrâ* for the particular day or by some other cause, at times, three priests are made to take part in the *gewrâ* ceremonies. Instead of one priest taking the *gewrâ*, two perform the ceremony, so that, in case one fails to observe the required vigil and is disqualified for some cause, the other may serve, and the candidate may not be disappointed and the initiation not delayed. The candidate has, during these six days, to pass his time in prayers during the five Gâhs and to observe all the observances of saying the grace at meals, etc. He is not to come in contact with any non-Zoroastrian.

(c) On the sixth day of the *gewrâ* ceremony, the priest who has taken the sixth *gewrâ*, i.e. has recited the Yaçna with its ritual as the Joti on the sixth day, initiates the candidate. The candidate takes his bath in the morning with all its formalities and puts on a new set of white clothes. He puts on a white turban which is a symbol or insignia of priesthood. The parents of the candidate invite a few friends, both male and female, to witness the ceremony. In mofussil towns like Nao-sari, a general invitation to males is passed round, through a

¹ Râthwi or Râspi. Av. 𐬵𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎 lit., one who arranges the religious requisites at their (*rathweya*) places (Gâh Uziran, 5).

crier, in the whole town. So, any Zoroastrian who chooses may attend.

At the appointed hour, at about nine o'clock in the morning, a procession is formed to take the candidate to the temple for initiation. At Naosari, the headquarters of the priesthood, the assembly gathers at the house of the candidate. Gentlemen gather outside the house and the ladies inside, and they all then go to the temple in a procession. The candidate walks in the front with the head-priest of the town, or, in his absence, with his deputy, on his right. Other elders of the community follow. The ladies follow last. In Persia, the ladies throw dry fruits and silver coins over the candidate. In Bombay, the Parsees not having quite separate quarters, and the city being too thickly populated to arrange for the ceremonial procession, the candidate stays in the fire-temple itself, for the six days of the *gewrâ*. So, the gathering assembles at the temple itself and the procession also is formed there. It formally moves from one part of the temple to another. The candidate is dressed in his full dress consisting of *Jâmâ* (Pers. جامه), which is a loose gown-like dress of white linen, and *pichhori*, a kind of linen-belt, put round the waist. All the male members of the gathering are similarly dressed in their full dress. The candidate carries a shawl in his left hand, it being an insignia of an office or function which a person holds for the time being.

The candidate carries in his right hand a *gurz* or a mace.

The *gurz* or the mace. *Gurz* is the Avesta *vazra*, Sans. वज्र, a mace or club. It symbolizes that the candidate is now going to be a member of the church militant and undertakes to fight against all evils, physical or moral. In the Khorshed Nyâish, Meher Yazad or the Angel Mithra, the God of Light, Justice and Truthfulness is represented as carrying a *vazra* or mace to strike it over the heads of the Daêvas or the evil powers (*Yazâi vazrem hunivikhtem kamêrêdhé paiti daêvanâm*).¹ The Fire-temple where the candidate is going to be initiated is called Dar-i-Meher,

¹ Khorshed Nyâish, 15.

i. e., the Port or the Gate of Meher (Mithra). So, he carries the *gurz* with him as the insignia of his coming office, in which he has to fight against the enemies of Light, Justice and Truthfulness and has to make his way for the church triumphant in Heaven.¹

On the procession arriving at the Fire-temple, the candidate goes to the *Yazashna-gâh* where he is to perform the *Yaçna* ceremony. The assembled priests are generally seated on carpets spread on the floor. The candidate removes his upper garments which form his full dress, performs the *pâdyâb-kusti*, and puts on the *padân* (mouth-veil).² Thus prepared, he is brought before the assembly by one of the two priests, who asks for permissoin to initiate him. He asks: "Gentlemen of this gathering (Anjuman, Avesta Hanjamana), doth it please you that this candidate may be initiated?" The Head-priest present, after the interval of a few seconds, takes the silence of the assembly for its assent and nods his head, or puts forward both his hands, to signify the acquiescence of the gathering.

The candidate must be free from leprosy³ or any wound from which blood oozes, otherwise he would be rejected and the necessary permission refused. It is to give the assembly an opportunity to see or examine him well, that he is presented before it after the removal of the upper garments.⁴ The candidate then returns to the *Yazashna-gâh* to go through the ceremonies of his

1 For further particulars about the *gurz*, vide my paper, "The *Gurz* as a Symbol among the Zoroastrians" (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. VIII, No. 7, pp. 478-96). My Anthropological Papers, Part I, pp. 313 *et. seq.*

2 In Persia, the *Padân* hangs from a crown or a turban, decorated with gold and silver coins. The Sir J. J. Z. Madresa Jubilee Volume (pp. 435-38, Mr. Khodâyâr's article) gives an interesting account of, what is called, the "Vers" and "Verd" ceremonies in the Nâvar initiation there.

3 On the Irânian horror of leprosy, cf. Vendidad II. 29, 37; Abân Yasht, Yt. V, 92. Herodotus, I, 138, "Whoever of the citizens has the leprosy or scrofula is not permitted to stay within a town, nor to have communication with other Persians." According to Ctesius, Megabyzus escaped from the hands of his captors, on pretending that he had leprosy.

4 It is said, that, in Persia, the candidate is taken to an adjoining room and there made stark naked and examined (vide Mr. Khodâyâr's article in the Sir J. J. Z. Madressa Jubilee Volume, p. 437).

initiation and to recite the Yaçna with its ritual. The visitors disperse after flowers and rose-water have been presented to them. If the father or the guardian of the candidate is well off, he distributes money among the assembled priesthood. Relations and friends are, at times, feasted at noon and even at night, if parents can afford to do so.

On retiring to the *Yazashna-gâh*, the candidate recites the *Minô-Nâvar Yaçna* (Yaçna without the *Visparad*)¹ with its ritual, he acting as the *jôti* and the priest who initiates him acting as the *râspi*. In the afternoon, he performs the *bâj*² ceremony and takes his meals, after which he performs the *âfringân* ceremony. I give here an illustration which shows the Nâvar initiate performing the Yaçna ceremony.

On the second and the third day, the candidate is permitted to have only one meal. The above three ceremonies are repeated in honour of Sraosh on the second day, and the *bâj* is performed in the morning instead of in the afternoon as on the first day. On the third day, the above three ceremonies are again repeated in honour of Sirouza (the *Yazatas* presiding over the thirty (*si*) days (*rouz*) of the month). On the fourth day, the Yaçna is recited with the *Visparad*, the *bâj* and *âfringân* in honour of *Atura Mazda*. Thus qualified, the priest now called *hêbad* (Avesta, *âthrapaiti*, teacher) can perform the *âfringân*, *Naôjote*, marriage and such other ceremonies, but not the Yaçna, the *Vendidâd* or the *bâj* ceremonies.

It appears, that the *nâvar*, has been from the first, a ceremony of trial, of self-abnegation, self-denial, and self-renunciation. The following facts point to that inference:—

1. The candidate is expected to pass his days during the continuation of the whole ceremony which lasts about a month, in a kind of retreat, in order to be free from worldly thoughts and to be engaged in pious thoughts; he must sleep on the floor and not on a cot, and take his meals at stated hours after prayers. According to the present custom, if the candidate

¹ *Vide* Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, Vol. I, p. LXVII.

² *Ibid*, Vol. II, pp. 152-53.

has a *pollutis nocturna* during the two *Bareshnāms*, he is disqualified and has to go through the *Bareshnām* again, because the untoward occurrence is held to show, that he was not passing his time in pure divine meditation, which he was expected to do, as a would-be priest, but that he thought of worldly matters.¹ 2. During the last four days, when he is regularly being initiated and performs the Yaçna ceremony himself as *jōti*, he has to take only one meal on the second and third days, to prove that he has control over hunger and thirst and hence over other passions.

A good deal of the original lofty ideal seems to be losing its ground now. In order to avoid the risk of failure in the test of pious meditation, self-abnegation, or control of passions, candidates are made to go through the initiatory ceremony in their early boyhood before the age of fifteen or sixteen, when according to the course of nature, they are expected to be free from *pollutis nocturna*. Again now-a-days, it is not only those boys, who are really intended to be priests in the future, that go through the initiation, but many others who are intended by their parents for other walks of life. The latter are made to go through it with the idea, that it is a religious ceremony worthy to be gone through. There are many medical men, lawyers and merchants of the priestly class, who have been made to go through it by their parents in their boyhood. That being the case, the whole of the Yaçna is not learnt and not recited but only a part. One would not object, and must not object, to this procedure, if even in these cases, the original lofty ideal were kept in mind. The salutary effect would not be lost, if a boy were to be made to go through the discipline of the initiation in an intelligible manner. A doctor, a lawyer, or a merchant, if trained in early boyhood to a little discipline, pious meditation, self-control, and self-abnegation, would be a better man in his profession by that kind of discipline, trial and training. What is wanted is, that the original high ideal must always be kept in view.

1 If this occurs during the last four days, the candidate is called *nābūd* (نابود non-existent') and is absolutely rejected as unfit for the priesthood.

2. THE MARTAB.

The second degree for priesthood is known as *Martab*.¹ The degree of *nâvar* does not entitle a priest to perform, what may be called, the ceremonies of the inner circle of the Fire-temple. He cannot perform the Yaçna, the Vendidad and the Bâj ceremonies. He cannot officiate at the purification ceremonies of *nâhn* and *bareshnâm*. In order to qualify himself to do so, he must go through the Martab ceremony. Besides the Yaçna and the Visparad, which he had to read for his Nâvarhood he has now to read the Vendidad.

For this ceremony, the candidate has to go through one *bareshnâm* of 10 days. On the 11th day, he, in company with a qualified priest, performs the *khûb* ceremony² and recites for it the Mino Nâvar Yaçna with its ritual. On the second day in the morning, he has to recite another Yaçna in honour of Sraosh, and at midnight he recites the Vendidad. This completes the *martab* ceremony and he is now entitled to perform and recite any of the Zoroastrian rituals and prayers.

The Zoroastrian Nâvarhood, in some of its features, reminds us of the Christian knighthood of olden times, when knighthood was a kind of religious order. The following passage presents many points of similarity between an Irânian Nâvar and an ancient Christian knight: "The young man, the squire, aspiring to knighthood, was first of all stripped of his garment and put into a bath, the symbol of purification. On his coming out of the bath, they clad him in a white tunic, the symbol of purity, a red robe, emblematic of the blood he was to shed in the cause of the faith, and a black doublet, in token of the

1 The word is Arabic *murattab* مرتب *lit.* prepared, classified. It seems to be connected with the word *martaba* مرتبه a step, dignity. It may thus mean, one who has risen to a higher step or grade or dignity. Some speak of this initiation as Marâtib. In that case, it is Arabic مراتب *marâtib*, *i.e.*, grades and gradations of rank. The sense then would be "one who has passed through more than one grade or rank."

2 The *khûb* is of two grades; for the major, the recital of the whole of the Yaçna with the full ritual is requisite; for the minor, the recital of a few *hâs* or sections (III to VII) are requisite.

dissolution which awaited him as well as all mankind. Thus purified and clothed, the novice kept a rigorous fast for twenty-four hours. When evening came, he entered the church and passed the night in prayer, sometimes alone, sometimes with a priest and with sponsors who prayed in company with him. When the sermon was over, the novice advanced towards the altar with the sword of knighthood, suspended from his neck; the priest took it off, blessed it and attached it to his neck again. The novice then went and knelt before the lord, who was to knight him. 'To what end,' the lord then asked him, 'Do you desire to enter into this order? If it is that you may be rich, repose yourself, and be honoured without doing honour to knighthood, then you are unworthy of it.'"

The points of similarity are the following :—(1) Both, the Iranian Nâvar and the Christian knight, had to go through purificatory baths. (2) Both had a white dress as a symbol of purity. (3) The knighthood had its fasts. The Nâvarhood had no fasts but a kind of abstention or temperance. (4) Both had some weapons to serve as symbols. The Knights had swords; the Nâvars had *gurzs* or maces. (5) Both the orders signified poverty and a desire to serve and work against evil.
