

CHAPTER IX.

Consecration Ceremonies.

I.—COSECRATION OF THE SACRED FIRES AND THE FIRE-TEMPLES.

Consecration is "the act or ceremony of separating from a common to a sacred use, or of devoting and dedicating a person or thing to the service and worship of God" by certain rites or solemnities. Consecration does not make a person or thing sacred but declares him or it to be sacred, that is devoted to God or to divine service; as the consecration of priests among the Israelites; the consecration of the vessels used in the temple; the consecration of a bishop.¹ The Parsees have no consecration of persons, in the sense in which the word is used among the Christians, *e.g.*, the consecration of a bishop. If, by consecration is meant conferring of a certain qualification upon a person to enable him or to entitle him to do a certain religious function or rite, they have such a consecration. But the principal idea is, that the person seeks consecration by his own willing acts rather than any other person conferring the consecration. So, in the case of a person, the more proper word, from a Parsee point of view, is "initiation" than "consecration." I have already spoken of these initiation ceremonies under a separate head² Among things, there is the consecration of the following:—

- I. The Sacred Fires and the Fire-Temples.
- II. The Towers of Silence.
- III. The Âlât (implements, apparatus), *i.e.*, religious requisites

1. There are three grades of the Sacred Fire—The Sacred Fire of the Âtash Behrâm, (B) that of the Âtash Âdarân and (C) that of the Âtash Dâdgâh. These three have their different rituals of consecration and also different rituals for the daily

The three grades
of the Sacred Fire.

¹ Webster.

² *Vide*, above, Chapters VII and VIII.

prayers at the five times (*gâhs*) of the day, when they are fed with fresh fuel. We will, at first, speak of the process of consecrating these three grades of the sacred fire.

**(A) Consecration of the Sacred Fire of the First Grade,
the Âtash Behrâm.**

The ritual formulated for the consecration of the sacred fire seems to have been developed from certain passages of the eighth chapter of the Vendidad (VIII. 73-96), where, it is enjoined, that the fires used for different purposes and by different tradesmen may be carried from their places of use and business and enshrined in a Dâd-gâh (Av. Dâityô-gâtu), i.e., in a proper place. The list of fires there enumerated is as follows:—Fires used (1) in burning a corpse, (2) in burning filth, (3) in burning dirt, (4) The fire used by a potter, (5) a glass-blower, (6) a coppersmith, (7) a goldsmith, (8) a silversmith, (9) an ironsmith, (10) a steelsmith, (11) a baker, (12) a furnace-worker, (13) a tinsmith, (14) a shepherd, (15) a military man or soldier, (16) a neighbour.

The process of collecting the different fires and of purifying and consecrating them is so long and intricate, that, naturally, authorities differ in the matter of the details, though they agree on broad general principles. While writing on the subject of his process, the late Dastur Minocheherji Jamaspji Jamaspasana¹ said, that in the case of all the six Âtash-Behrâms founded and consecrated in Bombay and elsewhere, there has not been any similarity in the matter of the process. The process has differed in details. In the following account, I principally follow the description given by the late Dastur Erachji Sorabji Meherji Rana.² The Ithôter Revâyet also refers to this subject.³

The list of the Vendidad given above has suggested to later ritualists the thought of collecting 16 kinds of different fires to

1 I was indebted to the late Dastur Kaikhosru Jamaspji for kindly giving me a perusal of his late grandfather's manuscript notes on the subject.

2 *Vide* his account in the "Tamâm Avestâ ni Ketâb", published by Mr. Dadabhoy Cowasji, Vol. II, pp. 213-44.

3 Published in 1846.

produce, out of them, one fire for consecration. The different fires now collected in practice are the following :—(1) The fire used in burning a corpse, (2) the fire used by a dyer, (3) the fire from the house of a king or a ruling authority, (4) that from a potter, (5) a brick-maker, (6) a *fakir* or an ascetic, (7) a goldsmith, (8) a mint, (9) an ironsmith, (10) an armourer, (11) a baker, (12) a brewer or distiller or an idol-worshipper, (13) a soldier or a traveller, (14) a shepherd (15) fire produced by atmospheric lightning, (16) household fire or fire from the house of any Zoroastrian.

Each of the above fires is at first collected, purified, and consecrated in a certain manner. All these fires, thus collected, purified and consecrated, are united into one fire, which is then consecrated as one united fire. This consecrated fire is then enthroned in a Temple which itself is previously consecrated. I will describe these processes under the following heads:—

Different stages of the consecration of the Sacred Fire of the Atash Behrâm, the Fire-Temple of the First Degree.

1. Collection of the 16 fires.
2. Purification of the 16 fires.
3. Consecration of the 16 fires.
4. Union of the 16 consecrated fires.
5. Consecration of the united Sacred Fire.
6. Consecration of the Temple itself.
7. Enthroning the united fire.

The fires of the above-mentioned 16 tradesmen or functionaries are collected, purified and consecrated according to a fixed procedure. We will here describe in detail the process of collecting or fetching the first kind of fire, *viz.*, that from a burning corpse:—A Zoroastrian is to go to a burning ground and ask for a portion of the fire that burns a corpse.¹ If the party gives it of his own accord, at the time when the

¹ Dastur Minocheherji's above-mentioned notes say, that it is preferable to have, if possible, the fire from a Brâhman's corpse.

burning process takes place, well and good. If not, the Zoroastrian must wait there till the whole of the corpse has been burnt, and then, when the relations and friends of the deceased go away, he is to take a portion of the fire left. He must ask a non-Zoroastrian to take out for him a certain portion of the fire from the burning mass. If a non-Zoroastrian is not available, or if he refuses to do that work for him, then two Zoroastrian laymen may perform the *pâdyâb kustî*, hold the *paivand*, recite the Sraosh Bâj upto Ashahê,¹ and then hold over the fire, at the distance of about a foot, a perforated ladle containing a little powdered sandalwood and frankincense and such other substance as may easily ignite. They must not let the ladle touch the fire. The heat of the fire from the burning corpse easily ignites the fuel on the perforated ladle. The fire so ignited must be taken by the laymen to an open place. They must then finish the Bâj and have a bath of the *riman* purification. As the fire is that which has burnt an impure corpse, it is believed to have a part of the corpse's defilement; so, the carriers of it are required to purify themselves.

The fire thus brought from a burning ground is then fed with fuel and is placed on a piece of ground open to wind. By its side and in a windward direction, they place a heap of powdered sandalwood, frankincense and such other easily combustible substances. The heat and the blaze of the fire, carried by the wind towards the heap, ignites it. When thus ignited, this fresh fire is fed with fuel. Then, again by its side another heap of powdered sandalwood, frankincense and such other combustibles is placed in such a position, that the blaze and the heat of the fire produced as above may be carried by the wind towards it and that it may be easily ignited. This process is repeated 91 times. The distance between each burning fire, and the next heap to be ignited must be about half a *gaz* or about a foot. Each preceding fire is allowed to extinguish

1 The Ithôtar Revâyet (*i.e.*, the 78 Revâyets, p. 9) is over-scrupulous and enjoins that when one goes before the fire of the corpse all those precautions for pollution, as are required in the case of the corpse itself, should be observed.

itself. The fire ignited for the 91st time is then considered to be fit for use and it is kept burning by being regularly fed. This is the process of collecting the first fire in the above list of 16 fires, *viz.*, the fire of a burning corpse.¹

All the other 15 fires are similarly collected, but the process differs in the following points:—(a) The number of times, for which the above process is to be repeated, varies. For example, in the case of the second fire in the above list, *viz.*, the fire of a dyer, the number of times for which the process is repeated is 80. I give below,² a table which shows at one sight, the number of times through which the process of collection, the process of purification, and the process of consecration, passes. (b) In the case of the other fires, no defilement is supposed to be attached to them as that to the fire of the burning corpse; so, the laymen, who fetched them from their respective places, need not personally go through any kind of *riman* purification as that required in the case of the fire that burnt a corpse. (c) Again a portion of any one of the next 15 fires can be bodily lifted up from the mass and carried to the place of its use. It need not be produced by the ignition of powdered fuel on a perforated ladle, as in the case of the fire that burnt a corpse. The rest of the process is the same.

In the case of the sixteenth fire, the household fire, it must be that of the house of a Mazdayāñian or a Zoroastrian. But in this class are included several fires. A Zoroastrian may be a priest or a laymen. So, the fire must be made up of the fires from the houses of a priest and a layman. Among the priests, there are the Dasturs or the head-priests and Mobads or ordinary priests. So, the fire from the house of the priests must be made up from two fires, fetched from the houses, both

1 The Ithôter Revâyet enjoins a more tedious process. It says, that the fire brought, as said above, from a corpse may be purified by passing through the process over nine pits. Over it, one Yaçna of Sraosh, one Visparad and one Vendidad of Sraosh must be recited. In this way, the whole process is to be recited 91 times, *i.e.*, 91 fires may be brought at different times from a burning corpse and purified and then collected together.

2 *Vide* below, pp. 210-211.

of a Dastur and of a Mobad. Again, to this last class of fire, *viz.*, the household fire, must be added the fire produced by friction which was the earliest primitive way of producing fire for household purposes. There were two ways of producing fire by friction in early days, *viz.*, (a) the friction of two pieces of flint and the friction of two pieces of wood. So fires produced by both these two ways of friction must be added to the household fire fetched from the houses of priests and laymen.

At first, the household fire, made up from the fires of the houses of the priests and laymen, must be made to pass 40 times through the above process of ignition, wherein a fire is produced by some combustibles being placed in the windward direction of a burning fire. To the household fire, thus collected, may be added the fire produced by the above-said two methods of friction. The fire thus formed by ignition or combustion must again be passed 144 times through the above-described process.

The fire thus collected is considered fit to be handed over to priests for purification and consecration.

2. The process of purification. Two priests take charge of it. They perform the *pâdyâb-kusti*, hold the *paiwand* and recite the Sraosh Bâj upto the word Ashahê. While reciting the Sraosh Bâj, they recite in it the Dasturi also as in the case of the Bareshnûm purification.¹ They then proceed to purify the fire. In this process of purification, they follow the precepts of the Vendidad (VIII, 73-78) which refers to the practice of purifying a fire that is burning a corpse. It enjoins as follows:—(a) At first, the burning matter may be removed and its further burning may be stopped. (b) Then a Zoroastrian may take a perforated ladle, place some easily ignitable fuel upon it and then hold it above the burning fire so as not to touch it. The heat of the original fire, which was burning the corpse, passes up through the holes of the ladle and ignites the fuel on it. The fire so produced must be put by the side of the fire that was burning the corpse at a distance of a *vitashiti*, *i.e.*, about 10 inches from

¹ Vide above, Bareshnûm Purification, p. 122, Vide also p. 62.

it. The original fire may then be allowed to extinguish itself.
 (c) The fire thus prepared by the first stage of purification may then be fed with further fuel. Then a second fire may be prepared from it by the above process, *i. e.*, by holding over it at some distance, a perforated ladle containing some easily ignitable fuel. On the fuel being ignited, this second fire thus prepared may be placed by the side of the first fire at a distance of about 10 inches. The second fire must be fed with further fuel and the first fire allowed to extinguish itself in its turn. This is the second stage of purification. This process is repeated nine times. Just as a man, that has come into contact with a dead body, has to be purified at nine different *magas* or pits, each at the distance of a fixed measure, so the fire that was defiled by coming into contact with a dead body had to be purified nine times. After the ninth process, the fire produced thereby is considered to be pure.

Now the modern practice of purifying the fire, fetched or collected as above, follows the above process enjoined by the Vendidad but with an increased number of times. Two priests take charge of the fire collected for them, as said above, by two laymen. They hold over the fire, at the height of about half a *gaz* or about 12 to 15 inches, a perforated ladle containing powdered sandalwood, frankincense and such other easily combustible substances. When ignited, they place it on a clean place and feed it with fuel.

The later Revâyets say, that the priests are to prepare 91 *magas* or pits, each with a little powdered fuel of the above kind. Then they are to place the fire kindled as above into the first of these pits. Then they are to hold a perforated ladle over the fire kindled as above and get the powdered fuel over it ignited in the second pit which is full of powdered fuel. This fuel further kindles the fire. They are to hold the perforated ladle over it and thus repeat the process over the 91 pits for 91 times. The fire thus produced at the 91st time is said to be purified and fit for consecration. Each of the pits is to be connected with the preceding adjoining pit by a *pairwand* formed of

a piece of string or a piece of sandalwood. As the process goes on the preceding fire or the fire of the preceding pit is allowed to extinguish itself. Now, it being not practicable in towns to have a large open place, where 91 pits of the above kind can be provided, in present practice, the pits are replaced by fire-vases, and the process is repeated in vases. The number of censers need not be 91. A few as would allow the process to be repeated 91 times can do.

This is the process of the purification of fire named first in our above list, *viz.*, the fire of a burning corpse. Similar is the process for purifying the other 15 fires. But the number of times for which the process is repeated is different for the different kinds of fire. The number of times for the purification process is in each case the same as the number of times for the collection process. The table which I give below (pp. 210-211) will show this at one glance.

The fire, collected and purified as above, is placed in a censer and taken to the place where the religious ceremonies for the consecration are to be performed. Two priests, who have gone through the Bareshnûm, take a portion of that fire, in a separate censer, and recite over it an Yaçna and a Vendidad ceremony with the Khshnuman, or in honour of, Dâdâr Ahura Mazda. The fire, over which these recitals—one of the Yaçna and one of the Vendidad—with their ritual are made, is kept separate in a separate censer and constantly fed. In the meantime the fire collected and purified as above, and out of which only a portion was removed on the first day for consecration, is fed and kept burning. On the second day, another portion out of it is taken and the Yaçna and Vendidad ceremonies are performed over it in honour of Ahura Mazda. The fire (which is a portion of the same first kind of fire, *viz.*, the fire of a burning corpse) thus consecrated on the second day is mixed up with the fire consecrated on the first day and which, as said above, is kept burning in a separate censer. On the third day again, another portion of the above purified but unconsecrated fire of the first kind, is taken and consecrated as on the first two

3. The process of
consecrating the 16
fires.

days with a recital of the Yaçna and the Vendidâd in honour of Ahura Mazda. The fire (*i. e.*, the third portion of the first kind of fire) thus consecrated on the third day, is mixed up with the fire which was consecrated on the first two days and which was united or mixed up on the second day.

Then, similarly, a portion of the purified but unconsecrated fire of the first kind may be taken each day from *roz* Hormazd (*i. e.*, the first of the month) to *roz* Anerân (*i. e.*, the 30th day of the month), *i. e.*, for 30 days and consecrated each day by the recital of one Yaçna in the morning and one Vendidâd after midnight, both recited in honour of the Yazata or the angel presiding on the particular day on which the consecration takes place. For example, on *roz* (day) Hormazd, the recital of the Yaçna and the Vendidâd must be in honour of Ahura Mazda; on *roz* Bahman, in honour of Bahman, and so on. The fire consecrated each day is to be united with the united fire made up of the consecrated fires of all the preceding days including the first three days.

On the completion of the first round of the ceremonies for the 30 days of the month, commencing with Hormâzd (the first day) and ending with Anerân (the 30th day), a second round of 30 days, in the same way as above, must be gone through. Then a third round must be similarly gone through, but not for the whole of the month, *i. e.*, for 30 days, but only upto the Zamyâd *roz*, *i. e.*, the 28th day. Thus, as shown above, altogether 91 recitals of the Yaçna and 91 of the Vendidâd are to be repeated for consecrating the fire of the first kind. The following table explains this:—

	Recitals
On the first three days in honour of Ahura Mazda... ..	3
On 30 days from the 1st day (<i>roz</i> Hormazd) to the 30th day (<i>roz</i> Anerân) of the month	30
On 30 days as above for the second time	30
On 28 days from the 1st day to the 28th day (<i>roz</i> Jamyâd) during the third month	28
	—
	91
	—

Now, in the recital of Yaçna and the Vendidâd, two priests are required. So, if there be one pair of priests, they would take 91 days to complete the consecration of the first kind of fire, *viz.*, the fire of the burning corpse. One pair can perform and recite more than one Yaçna during the Hâvan gâh or the morning hours, but they can perform only one Vendidâd in the Hoshain gâh or after midnight. So, one pair would take at least 91 days to complete the consecration of the first kind of fire. But more than one pair can take part—and they generally do so—in the consecration of fires. In that case, the time would be shortened. Then the recital in honour of the Yazatas from Hormazd to Anerân need not be from day to day, *i.e.*, on the respective days on which they presided. What is considered as essentially wanted is 91 recitals of the Yaçna and 91 of the Vendidâd, of which the first three are in honour of Ahura Mazda, the next 30 in honour of the 30 Yazatas in their order, the second 30 also in honour of the 30 Yazatas, and the last 28 in honour of the 28 Yazatas from Hormazd to Jamyâd. The fire of the first kind, thus united and consecrated after 91 recitals of the Yaçna and the Vendidâd, (the number of the recitals being the same as that of the processes of collection and of those of purification), is to be kept apart in a censer marked with its name. A similar process is to be gone through over the other 15 fires.

In the case of the other 15 fires the details of the process of consecration are well nigh the same. The points of difference are two: Firstly, the number of recitals of the Yaçna and Vendidâd over the portions of fire, *i.e.*, the number of the processes of consecration varies in each. For example, in the case of the fires Nos. 2, 3, 4, etc. *viz.*, that of the dyer, the king, potter, brick-maker, etc., the number of recitals is 80, 70, 61, etc., which was also the number of its processes of collection and purification. Secondly, the order of the Yazatas with whose Khshnuman, *i.e.*, in whose honour, the recital is made, differs. For example, in the case of the second kind of fire, *viz.*, that of the dyer, the recitals of the Yaçnas and

Consecration of
the other 15 fires.

the Vendidâds for the first three days are in honour of the second Yazata Bahman. Then the remaining 77 recitals begin from Bahman, the second Yazata, and taking two rounds of 30 days end in the third round at Rashnu, the eleventh Yazata. In the case of the third kind of fire, the first three recitals must be in honour of the third Yazata Ardibehesht. Then the remaining 67 begin with the third Yazata and end with Adar in the third round. In the case of the fourth kind of fire, they are in honour of the fourth Yazata Sheherivar and so on, so that the recitals for the 16th kind of fire are in honour of the 16th Yazata Meher.

I append here a table, giving the particulars, above referred to, about the different kinds of fires that are united to form the Sacred Fire of the Atash Beherâm. (1) The first column gives a list of the names or the kinds of fires. (2) The second column gives the number of times the processes of (a) collection, (b) purification, and (c) consecration are repeated. The number for the repetition of each of all these three different kinds of processes is the same in the case of each of the fires.¹ (3) The third column gives the names of the Yazatas with whose *khshnuman*, or in whose honour, the consecration recitals of the Yaçnas and the Vendidâds for the first three days and nights are to be made. (4) The fourth column gives the names of the Yazatas in whose honour the rest of the consecration recitals of the Yaçna and the Vendidâd are made and the number of the recitals. The number of recitals given in this column and the three recitals in honour of each of the Yazatas mentioned in the third column, make up the number of the second column. The second column of the above list shows that there must be in all, 1,128 consecration recitals of the Yaçna during the morning hours of the day, and of the Vendidâd after the midnight hours. One pair of priests can recite only one Vendidâd. So, if only one pair of priests were to perform the ceremonies of consecrating the sixteen fires, they would take 1,128 days, *i.e.*, about 37 to 38 months. But generally more than one *jôr* or pair is

¹ *E. g.* in the case of the first fire, there are 91 repetitions for collection, 91 for purification, and 91 for consecration.

A Table giving the particulars about the different kinds
Âtash Behrâm and showing the number of the

The Kind of Fire.	No. of times for (a) the Collection, (b) Purification and (c) Consecration processes.	Names of the Yazatas in whose honour the three recitals of the Yaçna and Vendidad are said for the first three days.
1. Fire of a burning corpse ...	91	Ahura Mazda ...
2. " " Dyer ...	80	Bahman ...
3. " " King or ruling authority.	70	Ardibehesht ...
4. " " Potter. ...	61	Sheherivar ...
5. " " Brick-maker ...	75	Spendârmad ...
6. " " Ascetic ...	50	Khordâd ...
7. " " Goldsmith (or Al- chemist)	60	Amerdâd ...
8. " " Mint ...	55	Depâdar ...
9. " " Ironsmith ...	61	Âdar ...
10. " " Armourer ...	61	Âbân ...
11. " " Baker ...	61	Khorshed ...
12. " " Brewer, Distiller, or Idol-worship- per.	61	Mohor ...
13. " " Soldier or Travel- ler.	35	Tir ...
14. " " Shepherd ...	33	Gosh (Dravâsp) ...
15. " " Atmospheric Elec- tricity.	90	Depmeher ...
16. " " Zoroastrian, i. e., a Dastur (head-priest), a Mobad (priest), or a lay- man and of friction by flint and pieces of wood.	40 + 144 = 184	Meher ...
Total ...	1,128	

of Fires that are united to form the Sacred Fire of the processes of Collection, Purification and Consecration.

Names of the Yazatas in whose honour the rest of the recitals of the Yaçna and Vendidad are said and the number of the recitals.

By the word "first" is meant the first, beginning with the Yazata mentioned in third column.

3 recitals in honour of the first 28 Yazatas from Hormazd to Jamyâd and 2 in honour of Marespend and Anerân. Thus $(28 \times 3 =) 84 + (2 \times 2 =) 4 = 88$.

3 in honour of the first 17 Yazatas from Bahman to Rashna (*i.e.* 51) and 2 in honour of the next 13 (*i.e.* 26). In all $51 + 26 = 77$.

3 in honour of the first 7 Yazatas from Ardibehsht (*i.e.* 21) and 2 in honour of the remaining 23 (*i.e.* 46). So in all $21 + 46 = 67$.

2 in honour of the first 28 Yazatas from Sheherivar (*i.e.* 56) and 1 in honour of the remaining 2 (*i.e.* 2). So in all $56 + 2 = 58$.

3 in honour of the first 12 Yazatas from Spendârmad (*i.e.* 36) and 2 in honour of the remaining 13 (*i.e.* 36). So in all $36 + 36 = 72$.

2 in honour of the first 17 Yazatas from Khordâd (*i.e.* 34) and 1 in honour of the remaining 13 (*i.e.* 13). So in all $34 + 13 = 47$.

2 in honour of the first 27 Yazatas from Amerdâd (*i.e.* 54) and 1 in honour of the remaining 3. So in all $54 + 3 = 57$.

2 in honour of the first 22 Yazatas from Depâdar (*i.e.* 44) and 1 in honour of the remaining 8. So in all $44 + 8 = 52$.

The same order as in the case of the fourth kind of fire, but beginning

Do.	do.	do.	with Âdar. but beginning
Do.	do.	do.	with Âbân. but beginning
Do.	do.	do.	with Khorshed. but beginning with Mohor.

2 for the first 2 Yazatas from Tir (*i.e.* 4) and 1 for the remaining 28. In all $4 + 28 = 32$.

1 for all the 30 Yazatas beginning from Gosh. So 30 in all.

3 for the first 27 Yazatas, from Depmeher (*i.e.* 81) and 2 for the remaining 3 (*i.e.* 6). Thus in all $81 + 6 = 87$.

6 for each of the 30 Yazatas beginning from Meher (*i.e.* 180) and 1 more in honour of Ahura Mazda. Thus 181 in all.

employed in the consecration ceremonies. So, the whole ceremony is gone through in about a year or even less than a year. Again, several *Jashan* days, *i.e.*, religious feast days and the Gâhambâr feast days occur during the time that the whole process of consecration lasts. On such feast days, one *Yaçna* and one *Vendidâd* in honour of that particular *Jashan* must be recited. On the occasion of the Gâhambâr, *i.e.*, the season festivals, the *Visparad* in honour of the Gâhambâr festival must be recited. The number of these additional recitals cannot be fixed as that depends upon the time of the year.

What delays the process at times is the collection of the fire of atmospheric electricity, *i.e.*, the fire produced by the burning of a tree, grass or wood due to the fall of lightning. Months before the proposed time of the ceremony, messages are sent to different stations, requesting the Parsees there to be on a look-out to see if a falling lightning has produced a fire, and to take up a portion of the fire if so produced. The ceremony of consecrating the other fires need not be delayed for this fire. It may go on. But, if, by the time all the fires are consecrated, the fire produced by lightning does not come forth, the final union and consecration of all the fires cannot take place. It must be indefinitely postponed until this fire is produced and consecrated.

As said above, all the sixteen fires are, after the different consecrations of its portions for the number of times stated against their names in the second column of the above table, collected and fed in a separate censer. So, in all, there are 16 different censers containing the 16 different fires. The final union or collection must take place on the first Gâthâ Gâhambâr Festival day, *i.e.*, on the first of the five intercalary days at the end of the year. A large censer is prepared for this process. Two Yaozdâthragar priests, *i.e.*, priests with Bareshnûm and Khûb, form a *pairwand*, and, at first, remove, by means of a ladle, the consecrated fire prepared from the fire that burnt a corpse, from its censer to this large censer. Then, the other fires are

4. The final union of all the 16 fires.

carried there and united with the first in the consecutive order of their consecration.

The censer, containing the fire thus united and formed from the 16 consecrated fires, is then carried to the Yazashna-gâh for final consecration.

5. The final consecration of the United Fire.

At first, for three consecutive days, two priests recite, with their ritual, three Yaḡnas and three Vendidâds, each on one day, with the Khshnuman of Sraosha, *i.e.*, in honour of the Yazata Sraosha. Then, from Hormazd, the 1st day of the next month to Anerân, the 30th of the month, 30 Yaḡnas and 30 Vendidâds are recited, each on one day, in honour of the particular Yazata presiding on the particular day. Then, on the last day fixed for the final consecration and enthronement of the Sacred Fire, another Yaḡna in honour of Sraosha is recited with its ritual over it. This completes the ceremony of consecrating the Sacred Fire of Âtash Behrâm, the Fire of the first degree. What remains to be done is to place it, or, as the Parsee phraseology goes, to enthrone it, on its proper place (*dâityô-gâtu*).

The Sacred Fire being consecrated, the chamber in the Fire-Temple where it is to be enthroned must also be consecrated. That consecration ceremony lasts for three days. It must be performed before the final day of consecration and enthronement. It consists of the performance there, for three consecutive days, of the Yaḡna and Vendidâd ceremonies in honour of Sraosha.

6. The Consecration of the chamber of the Fire (the Sanctum Sanctorum).

On the day fixed, the final consecration-recital of the Yaḡna being said, the Sacred Fire is removed to the consecrated chamber with all dignity and solemnity. A procession is formed. The procession is headed by the head-priest and other priests who have officiated at the various ceremonies of the consecration. Some bear swords and some *Gurrs* or maces in their hands. The path, which leads from the Yazashna-gâh where the final

7. The Final Enthronement.

consecration of the Sacred Fire took place to the consecrated chamber where it is to be enthroned, is separated from the adjoining place by *pâvis* to keep it undefiled. Again, the path itself is divided into several *pâvis*, so that the two priests who carry the censer containing the Sacred Fire can remain, at each advance, in a separate *pâvi*. It must be remembered that, during the whole of the consecration processes also, the fire was kept within a separate *pâvi* where it was fed by the consecrating priests. The fire, after being carried thus to its chamber, is placed on a large censer standing on a large slab of stone surrounded by a *pâvi*. Then, it is fed with sandalwood and frankincense, and an Âtash Nyâish *i.e.*, a prayer in praise of fire, is recited. Then, in the front hall of the Temple, a *Jashan* ceremony is performed, wherein three Âfringans are generally recited. The first is with the Khshnuman of Sraosha, the second with that of Dahmân and the third again with that of Sraosha. Similarly, the Bâjs are recited. This finishes the ceremony of enthroning the Sacred Fire.

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

The spiritual rule
of the Sacred Fire.

The Parsees have some general toasts, which may be called their "national toasts," and which are now and then proposed at most of their dinners. The first is "*Yazdân ni Yâd*," i.e., "In honour and to the Glory of the Creator." Another, at times, is "*Ashô Farohar ni Yâd*," i.e., "In honour of the dear departed holy ones." One of the others is "*Atash Behrâm pâdshâh nâ pâe-takht ni salâmati*," i.e., "For the safety of the foot of the Throne of the kingly Sacred Fire of the Âtash Behrâm." In this toast, by the use of the word "throne," the idea of the spiritual rule of the Fire is intended to be held. At times, even up to a few years ago, some laymen addressed the priests as *pâdshâh*, i.e., the king, because they attended to, and fed, the kingly fire. The visible fire of the Church is a symbol of the Invisible Church of God.

In ancient Irân, the State and the Church were generally united. In bringing about the Irânian Renaissance, after the Dark Ages of the Parthian rule, brought about by the fall of the Achaemenian Empire at the hands of Alexander the Great, one of the ways adopted for the purpose by Ardeshir Babegân was that of the Unity of the Church and the State. His Vazir and Dastur (minister and head-priest) Taosar alludes to this, at some length, in his letter¹ to Jasnafshâh, the king of Tabaristan.² In Zoroastrianism, the Unity of the Church is represented, as it were, by the Unity of the Fire.

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, Tome III, March-April 1894.

² During the last century, this question was discussed in another way and had even gone to the Court of Law. The Shâhânshâhi sect of the Parsees at Surat opposed the erection of an Atash Behrâm by the Kadmi sect, on the ground that there cannot be two Atash Behrâms in one city. Both parties produced before the Court evidence from religious books, old and new, to support their case. The Court decided that there may be more than one Atash Behrâm in one city. The same question was discussed in Bombay at the end of the last century. There existed Atash Behrâm of the Shâhânshâhi sect. Its Dastur objected to the erection of another saying, that, as there cannot be two kings in one and the same city, there cannot be two Atash Behrâm padshâhs (kings) in one and the same city. Both sides published treatises. In the end, the second Atash Behrâm, known as the Anjuman Atash Behrâm, was founded.

Purity and Unity play the important part in the consecration of the great Sacred Fire. At present, though the Zoroastrian Church is separated from the State, it looks to the State—though now a non-Zoroastrian State—for its protection, for its sway. So, in their Afringân prayers, they pray, even now, as they did in ancient Irân, for the long life, prosperity and just and happy rule of the king. What Herodotus said of the ancient Irânians, that they, before praying for themselves, prayed for their sovereign and for their community, is true even now.¹ Not only in the Afringâns, but also in the *Tandaructi* prayer, recited at the end of all the formal prayers, a Parsee prays for his king. In their big dinners also, the “Health of the King” is one of their toasts.

Now, what does a Sacred Fire, purified and consecrated as above, signify to a Parsee? (a) A Parsee has to think for himself: “When this fire on this vase before me, though pure in itself, though the noblest of the creations of God, and though the best symbol of the Deity, had to undergo certain processes of purification, had to draw out, as it were its essence,—nay, its quintessence—of purity, to enable itself to be worthy of occupying the exalted position, how much more necessary, more essential, and more important is it for me—a poor mortal who is liable to commit sins and crimes and who is likely to come into contact with hundreds of evils, both physical and moral—to undergo the process of purity and piety, by making my *manashani*, *gavashni* and *kunashani* (thoughts, words and deeds) pass, as it were, through a sieve of piety and purity, virtue and morality, and to separate by that means my *humata*, *hukhta* and *hvarshata* (good thoughts, good words and good deeds) from my *dushmata*, *duzukhta*, and *duzvarshata* (bad thoughts, bad words and bad deeds), so that I may, in my turn, be enabled to acquire an exalted position in the next world.” (b) Again, the fires put together as above

1 “He that sacrifices is not permitted to pray for himself alone; but he is obliged to offer prayers for the prosperity of all the Persians and the king, for he is himself included in the Persians.” (Herodotus, Bk. I., 132.)

are collected from the houses and places of business of men of different grades of society. This reminds a Parsee, that, as all these fires from the houses of men of different grades have by the process of purification, equally acquired the exalted place in the vase, so, before God, all men—no matter to what grades of society they belong—are equal provided they pass through the process of purification, *i.e.*, provided they preserve purity of thoughts, purity of words and purity of deeds. (c) Again, when a Parsee goes before the Sacred Fire, which is kept all day and night burning in the Fire-temple, the officiating priest presents before him the ash of a part of the burning fire. The Parsee applies it to his forehead, just as a Christian applies the consecrated water in his Church, and thinks to himself: ‘Dust to dust. The Fire, all brilliant, shining and resplendent, has spread the fragrance of the sweet-smelling sandalwood and frankincense round about, but is at last reduced to dust. So, it is destined for me. After all, I am to be reduced to dust and have to depart from this transient life. Let me do my best to spread, like this fire, before my death, the fragrance of charity and good deeds and lead the light of righteousness and knowledge before others.’ In short, the Sacred Fire burning in a Fire-temple serves as a perpetual monitor to a Parsee standing before it, asking him to preserve piety, purity, humility and brotherhood.”¹

While speaking of the purificatory ceremonies, we have said

The ceremony of removing the ash of the Sacred Fire for the ritual of Purification.

that the sacred ash of the Sacred Fire of the Âtash Beherâm is required to be mixed with the consecrated urine. We will here describe the ceremony with which this ash

is removed from the vase of the fire:—Two priests with Bareshnûm, who have performed the Khub ceremony, go before the Sacred Fire in the Ushain gâh, *i.e.*, after midnight. They,

¹ *Vide* my “Religious System of the Parsis,” 2nd edition of 1903, pp. 27-28. *Vide* for this paper “The Report of the World’s Parliament of Religions,” Vol. II, p. 908. *Vide* the chapter on “Religion,” contributed by me, in Mr. Dosabhoj Framjee’s “History of the Parsees,” Vol. II, p. 214.

at first, make *pāv*¹ i.e., religiously pure, a metallic tray, two metallic ladles and a piece of linen. Holding a *paiwand* between them, they recite the Bâj with the Khshnuman of Ahura Mazda. Reciting it upto "vidhvâo mraotu," they utter the word "ashem" (i.e., purity) and repeat it in Bâj, i.e., in a suppressed tone. One of the priests then puts on gloves, and by means of the ladles, removes from the vase of the Sacred Fire as much of the ash as he requires, and places it in the metallic tray. Then, removing the gloves, both wash their hands and make them *pāv* with pure water. They let the hands dry and then pass the ash through the linen as through a sieve. The ash so collected is then put in a vessel previously made *pāv*. The vessel is then tied up with three turns of twisted yarn with two final knots and kept apart. Having done this, the priests go out of the chamber of the Sacred Fire and finish the Bâj. The ash is then supplied as required to the different Fire-temples of the lower grade under the jurisdiction of the great Temple for purificatory ceremonies.²

We will here describe the Bui ceremony, i.e., the ceremony of keeping the fire always burning, by feeding it with fragrant wood. The word "bui" is the Persian form of the Avesta word "baodha." It is "bui" in Pahlavi. Ordinarily, the word means "odour" or "smell." In the Parsee ceremonial phraseology, it means perfume, or good odour. Fire plays a prominent part in all Zoroastrian rituals. No ritual can be complete without the presence of fire. So, sandalwood, frankincense, and such other articles of fuel that emit good odour on burning are necessary requisites in all ceremonies. In the temples, where the Sacred Fire is kept perpetually burning, the feeding of the fire is an important ceremony. It is called "bui dâdan" in Persian, and "bui devi" (i.e. to give the perfume) in Gujarati.

1 The process of making a thing *pāv*, or religiously pure, consists in reciting Khshnaôthra Ahurahê Mazdêo and one Ashem Vohu and then washing it with pure water. This process is repeated three times.

2 Vide above, pp. 92 and 108.

The ceremony varies a little according to the different grades of the Fire temples. As said above, there

The ceremony
varying for the
three grades of the
sacred fire.

are three grades of Fire-temples:—(1) the Âtash Behrâm (in Pahlavi, Verehrâm or Vahrâm; Avestâ Vêrêthragna), *i.e.*, the fire of Victory (victory over evil influences or powers); (2) the Atash Âdarân *i.e.*, the fire of fires; (3) the Âtash Dâd-gâh, *i.e.*, the fire (ceremoniously established) in a proper place. Dâd-gâh is the Dâitya-gâtû of the Vendidad (Chapter VIII). In the first two grades of fire temples, it is the priest alone who can go before the fire and feed it. In the case of the third grade of temples, in the absence of a priest, even a layman can feed it. In the case of the Âtash Behrâm, the fire can be fed only by a priest who has become a Martab and who is observing all the ceremonies required to be observed by one with a Bareshnûm. In the case of the Âtash Âdarân, it can be fed by any priest, even when he is not observing the Bareshnûm. In the case of the Âtash Behrâm, the officiating priest must also have performed the ceremony of Khûb before going to the sacred fire to feed it. The Khûb ceremony consists of the performance of the Yaçna ceremony. Having once performed that ceremony, its qualifying influence lasts for four days. After the fourth day, it must be performed again. A bath during the interval, or a wet dream, which necessitates a bath among the Parsees, or the partaking of food without the regular recital of the Bâj, *i.e.*, the prayer for grace, or the coming into contact with a non-Zoroastrian, breaks the influence of the Khûb, which, in such cases, must be performed again.

The Bui ceremony is performed five times every day. It

The five periods
for the performance
of the ceremony.

is performed at the commencement of each of the five Gâhs or periods of the day which correspond, to a certain extent, with the canonical hours of the Christians.¹ These periods are the

¹ The five *gâhs* seem to correspond to *Matin*, *Prime*, *Sext*, *Nones* and *Compline*. In the Atash-Behram at Naosari certain priestly families had the right of the Bui ceremony for a certain number of days. This reminds us of a similar practice in the Assyrian and Babylonian temples.

following:—(1) Havân. It begins from early morning when the stars begin to cease to appear, and lasts upto 12 o'clock when the sun comes overhead. Literally, it means the time when the ceremony of pounding the Haoma is performed. (2) Rapi-thavin. It runs from 12 o'clock noon to 3 p. m. Literally, it means the pith (pithwa) or the middle part of the day (ayarê) (3) Uziran. It runs from 3 p. m. to the time when the stars begin to appear. Literally, it means the time of the advancement of the sun. (4) Aiwiçruthrem. It runs from nightfall to midnight. (5) Ushahin. It runs from midnight to dawn when the stars begin to cease to appear.

The ceremony of Bui in the case of these three grades of fire temples varies. (a) In the case of the second and third grades of Fire-temples, (the Âtash Âdarân and the Âtash Dâdgah), the fire can be fed with one piece of sandalwood, but in the case of the Âtash Behrâm, the fire must be fed with a Mâchi¹ of sandalwood. In this case, six pieces of sandalwood are placed on the Sacred Fire. The Âtash Behram is spoken of, as said above, as Âtash Behrâm Pâdshâh, i.e., the king.² Being the highest grade of Sacred Fire, it is compared to a king. So the sandalwood, with which the Sacred Fire is fed, is placed on it in the form of a Machi or throne. The six pieces are arranged on the fire in pairs of two pieces, placed one over the other. (b) The next point, in which the ceremony of the Bui varies in the case of these different grades of Fire temples, is this: In the case of the second and third the Âtash Nyâish (the prayer in honour of the angel presiding over fire) is recited only once, but in the case of the Atash Behrâm it is recited several times. In the first period of the day (the Hâvan), it is recited eleven times; in the second (the Rapi-thvin), nine times; in the third, seven; in the fourth, seven; in the fifth, six times. (c) Again, in the case of the

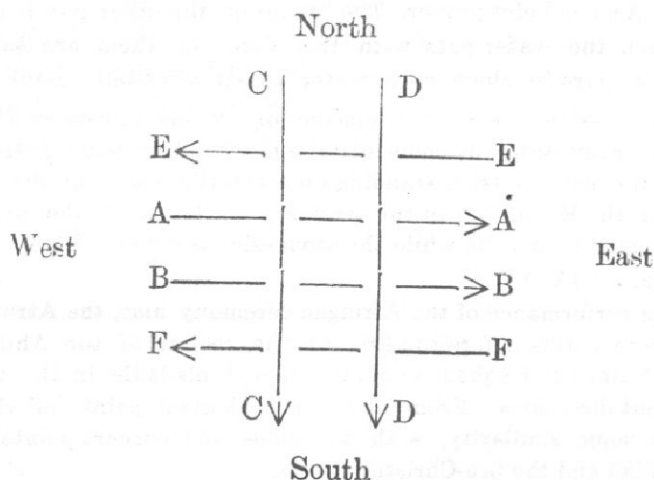
Difference in the way of feeding the fire, according to its grades.

1 Mâchi comes from Sanskrit *manch*, meaning a throne, a seat of honour.

2 *Vide* my contribution in the Zend Avesta of Darmesteter I. Introduction LXI-II.

second and third grades of the Sacred Fire, the Bui ceremony is very simple. The priest performs the *Kûsti-pâdyâb* (*i.e.*, performs ablutions and unties and puts on the *Kûsti* again with the recital of a prayer), and then goes into the sacred chamber, places one or more pieces of sandalwood over the fire and recites the *Âtash Nyâyish*, but in the case of *Âtash Behrâm*, the ritual is a little long in other respects. I will describe it here:—

A priest who has performed the *Khûb* ceremony, performs the *Kûsti-pâdyâb* at the commencement of each new *Gâh*, *i.e.*, the period of the day, as described above, and then recites his *Farziât*, *i.e.*, the necessary prayers, which are the *Srôsh-bâj*, the *Gâh* according to the time of the day, and the *Khurshid* and *Meher Nyâyishes* during the day periods, *i.e.*, the abovenamed first three *gâhs*. During the night-periods which form the last two *gâhs*, the *Khurshid* and *Meher Nyâyishes* are replaced by *Sraosh Yasht* (*Yagna* LVII) and *Sraosh Hâdokht*. He then goes into the sacred chamber, puts on white gloves, places some frankincense over the Sacred Fire, and then the *Mâchi*, *i.e.*, the six pieces of sandalwood as said above. If sandalwood is not obtainable, six pieces of any other kind of clean good wood will do. The six pieces are placed over the fire from three different positions, thus:—



At first, the priest, standing before the censer, faces the east and places two pieces (AA and BB in the above figure) of sandalwood over the fire at a short distance from each other. Then he turns to the south and places two more pieces (CC and DD) over the first two. Then he turns towards the west and places two more pieces EE and FF over the four.¹ He then washes with pure water² the stone-slab on which the censer of the Sacred Fire stands.³ This ceremony of washing the pedestal or the stone-slab (Khân) on which the Sacred Fire stands, is alluded to in the 9th chapter of the Yaçna.⁴ The priest then places on the fire a little sandalwood and frankincense three times, speaking the words Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta, *i.e.*, good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Then, he goes round the censer with a metallic ladle in his hand, and, standing in eight⁵ different positions (*viz.*, the four sides and the four corners), and then going back to his original position on the west of the censer and facing the east, recites, in these nine positions, different words of a short formula of prayer. This

1 In all the ceremonies of the Parsees, the north side is, as a rule, generally avoided. *Vide* above, p. 54.

2 For these purification ceremonies, the water itself is, as it were purified. Two water-pots, full to the brim with well water, are taken into the chamber. The water from the one is poured into the other, which itself is full to the brim until the water overflows, and while thus overflowing cleans and purifies also the sides of the vessel. This is done three times with the recital of the words Khshnaôthra Ahûrahê Mazdâo and of the Ashem-Vohû prayer. The water of the other pot is similarly purified. Then the water-pots with the water in them are said to be made *pâv i.e.*, pure or clean with water (pa-âv = Persian. ba-âb).

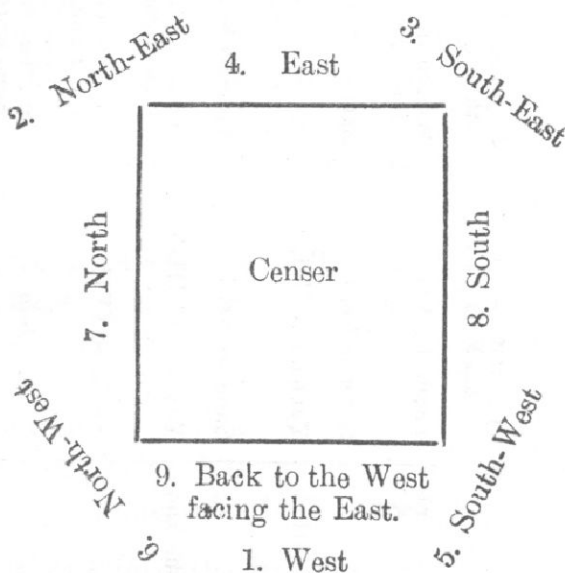
3 The stone-slab is ordinarily spoken of by the priests as Khuân or Khân. Prof. Darmesteter, by some mistake (*Le Zend Avesta* I. Introduction LXI.) calls the metallic tray, standing on a metallic stool on the left side of the censer, the Khân, but in the ordinary parlance of the priesthood, that tray is called Khâncê while the stone-slab is called Khân.

4 Yaçna, Hâ IX, 1.

5 In the performance of the Afringân ceremony also, the Atravakhshi, *i.e.*, the person sitting before the fire, at the recital of the Ahunvar or Yathâ Ahû Vairyô and Ashem Vohû, points with his ladle in the tray, the eight different directions. From an anthropological point of view, the custom has some similarity, with the sides and corners pointed by the Hindu Svastikâ and the pre-Christian Cross.

ceremonial of going round the censer is spoken of as '*chak farvun*,' i.e., going round the circle (Pers. *chak* i.e. "one side of four; an eighth part of a thing").

The following chart points out the different positions in which the priest stands whilst reciting the various parts of the prayer-formula. The numbers point out the consecutive order in which he stands at the different positions before the censer on the altar:—



I give here an illustration of the performance of the Bui-ritual in the sanctum sanctorum of the Fire-temple.¹

¹ The priests of the Shahanshahi sect put on white turbans, those of the Kadmi sect put on the *fentâ*, which is a hat of an Irani type. In this illustration it is a Kadmi priest who officiates.

The following table gives the different words of the text, recited in the different positions before the censer, the references to the Avesta text for the words, and their meanings:—

Table of the formula recited.

Directions.	Words of the Avesta Text recited.	References to the Texts.	Translation of the Words.
1. West	Âthwâ áthro gárayêmi ...	The first two words from Yaçna LI, 9.	I praise (Thee, O God) through my fire.
2. North-East	Vanghéush mananghó zaóthrá- byô yazamaidé.	Yaçna LXVIII, 3 ...	We praise through the offer- ings of good thoughts.
3. South-East	Athwâ áthro gárayêmi ...	Same as No. 1 ...	Same as No. 1.
4. East	Vanghéush ukhdhahé zaóthrá- byô yazamaidé.	Yaçna, LXVIII, 3 ...	We praise through the offer- ings of good words
5. South-West	Âthwa áthro gárayêmi ...	Same as No. 1 ...	Same as No. 1.
6. North-West	Vanghéush shkyaothnahé zaó- thrábyô yazamaidé.	Yaçna LXVIII, 3 ...	We praise through the offer- ings of good actions.
7. North	Sukái manangha ...	Yaçna, LXVIII, 4 ...	For the enlightenment of (our) thoughts.
8. South	Sukái vachangha ...	<i>Ibid</i>	For the enlightenment of (our) words.
9. Coming back to the original place on the West of the censer and facing the East.	Sukái shyaóthna ...	<i>Ibid</i>	For the enlightenment of (our) deeds.

The meaning of the above formula on the whole is as follows:—"O God! We praise Thee, through Thy fire. We praise Thee, by the offerings of good thoughts. We praise Thee through Thy fire. We praise Thee by the offerings of good words. We praise Thee through Thy fire. We praise Thee by the offerings of good deeds. (We do all this) for the enlightenment of our thoughts, for the enlightenment of our words, and for the enlightenment of our deeds." That is to say, the worshipper standing before the sacred fire, taking it as the symbol of God's refulgence and purity, and placing over the fire sandalwood and frankincense as visible offerings, offers the real, though invisible offerings of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and thereby hopes and prays for the further enlightenment of his thoughts, words and deeds.

Having recited the above short but pithy formula of prayer, the priest places again over the fire a little sandalwood and frankincense, and then recites, as said above, the Âtash Nyâyish¹ several times, according to the Gâh or period of the day. While reciting the first Nyâyish for the first time, the priest goes on placing bits of sandalwood and frankincense (aêsma bûi) at the intervals of a few words.

During the recital of the first Nyâyish, and during the recital of the first Pâzend portion of it, whilst uttering the words 'dushmata,' 'duzhukhta,' 'duzvarshta,' *i.e.*, evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds, he rings a bell thrice; some ring the bell thrice, whilst uttering each word, *i.e.*, in all give nine strokes of the bell. This is, as it were, to emphasise that portion of the prayer, wherein the worshipper expresses a desire to shun bad thoughts, bad words, and bad deeds. At the end of the first recital of the principal portion of the Âtash Nyâyish, the priest draws by means of two ladles two circles in the ash in the censer at its ridge, and at the similar end of the second recital he obliterates the circles again. While reciting the Nyâyish during the first and the fifth Gâh or period of the day (the

The ringing of the bell.

¹ S. B. E. XXIII., p. 357, Le zend Avesta, par Darmesteter, II., p. 705.

Hâvan and the Ushahin), the priest stands on the West of the censer with his face towards the East, and during the other periods *vice versa*.

(B) Consecration of the Sacred Fire of the second grade, the Âtash Âdarân.

The later Persian books say, that in a town or village where ten Zoroastrian families reside, the presence of a Fire-temple of the second grade, the Âtash Âdarân, is necessary. The process of collecting, purifying and consecrating the fires for this sacred fire of the second grade is not very long. (Four principal kinds of fire are required to constitute this fire. They are: Fire from the houses of (a) the Âthornâns, *i.e.*, the priestly class, (b) the Rathaêstârân, *i.e.*, the military class, (c) the Vâs-tryosân, *i.e.*, the agricultural class, (d) the Hutokhshân. *i.e.*, the artizans, tradesmen and manufacturers. We will speak of the consecration of the Sacred Fire of the second degree under the following heads: 1. Collection of the fires. 2. Purifying the fires. 3. Consecrating the fires. 4. The final consecration of the united fire. 5. The final enthronement.

(a) The first requisite fire is that from the houses of the Athornâns, *i.e.*, of the men of the priestly class. For this purpose, fires from the houses of the following persons are generally collected and united:—(1) The Dastur, or the head-priest of the town, (2) An ordinary priest. (3) The leading or the head layman of the town. (4) The donor. In case the Fire-temple is founded by a private individual with a charitable or religious motive, the fire of his house is generally taken, if convenient. If he lives in a town different from that where he founds the Fire-temple, the fire of his house need not necessarily be had. The fires from the houses of these different persons are collected together.

(b) For the preparation of the fire of the Rathaêstârs, *i.e.*, the military or the governing class, fires from the houses of the following grades of persons are collected:—1. Fire from the house of the Governor, or the ruling authority of the place. For

example, if a Fire-temple is sought to be founded in Bombay, the fire from the cook-room of the Governor's house may be had. If it is to be founded in a mofussil town, that from the house of the Collector or the Assistant Collector or the Deputy Collector or any other officer who is the head ruling authority of the place may be had. 2. Fire from the house of a military officer or person residing in the town or in the neighbourhood may be had. If there are no houses of military officers or soldiers near at hand, the fire from the house of a Police Officer may be had. 3. Fire from the house of the leading judicial authority. For example, if it is in Bombay that a Fire temple is being founded, the fire from the house of the Chief Justice or of any one of the judges of the High Court may be had. In the mofussil, it may be had from the house of any judge or magistrate or other judicial officer. All these fires are then mingled together to form a fire of the military or the ruling class.

(c) The fire from the house of an agriculturist may be had from the house of any tiller of the soil in the locality. If there is a Parsee cultivator at hand, the fire from his house may be had, and then from that of a Hindu cultivator. A fire from the house of an ordinary gardener may be had. Then all these fires are mingled together to form one fire of the agricultural class.

(d) The fire from the artizan class is prepared out of the fires of different tradesmen and workmen. They are generally fetched from the places of business of artizans and others, such as the goldsmiths, silversmiths, ironsmiths, tinsmiths, copper-smiths, dyers, distillers, bakers, potters, tillers, brick-makers, chunam-makers, shepherds, caravanbashis, sentinels, etc. The fires from their houses or places of business are all united to form one fire of the artizan class.

The process of purification is well nigh the same as that described above in the case of the different fires that were united to form the Sacred Fire of the first grade. A ladle with holes containing powdered fuel, etc., is held over the fire at some

2. Purification of the fires.

distance from the flame. The process differs in only one respect *viz.*, that in this case the process is repeated thrice only, while in the case of the Sacred Fire of the first degree the number of repetitions varied from 33 to 91 times.

Each of the above-said four united fires, after being purified as above, is consecrated separately.

3. Consecration of the four fires. Each of the four fires is placed in a separate vase and two priests take charge of each fire, *i.e.*, in all, eight priests are required to consecrate them. A lesser number can do, but in that case it would take a larger number of days. On the first day, each of the four pairs of priests performs over the fires, in the morning, the Yaçna ceremony and, after midnight, the Vendidad with the *khshnuman* of Sraosh. On the second day, the same ceremonies are performed again, but with the *Khshnuman* of Ahura Mazda. During these recitals the four fires are placed before the officiating priests.

Then, on the third day, the four fires are all united into one.

4. The final consecration of the Sacred Fire. The vase or censer containing the first, *i.e.*, the fire of the Athornân or priestly class, receives in itself the fire of the next three classes. All the priests, who officiate at the consecration, unite themselves by a *pairwand* and then, reciting the Yathâ Ahû Vairyô formula, combine the fires together in the first censer. Having done so, they recite the *nemashkâr*¹ of Âtash or homage to the Sacred Fire three times, finishing it with the Ahmâiraeshcha prayer, etc. It runs as follows: "Homage to thee, O Fire of wise Ahura Mazda, the benefit giving great Yazata."

Having thus combined the fires and having thus paid an homage to the united Fire, two priests—generally the two priests who had at first consecrated separately the fires of the priestly class—perform over it the Yaçna ceremony in the morning and the Vendidad at midnight with the *Khshnuman* of Sraosh. Then, on the morning of the fourth day, a Yaçna with the *Khshnuman* of Dâdâr Ahura Mazda is recited over

1 *Vide* Spiegel, translated by Bleeck, *Khordeh Avesta* pp. 3-14.

the united Fire. This finishes the preparation and the consecration of the Sacred Fire of Âtash Âdarân.

The Sacred Fire being thus prepared and consecrated, there

5. The enthronement of the Sacred Fire. now remains the final ceremony of enthroning it. It is well-nigh the same as that for the Sacred Fire of the first grade. The assembled priests and others form a procession and formally carry the Sacred Fire to the chamber which itself has been cleaned, purified and consecrated, as in the case of the Âtash-Behram. There, it is enthroned on a large metallic censer which stands upon a raised stone-platform or slab. A priest then feeds this Sacred Fire reciting the Âtash Nyâish. All others also recite this Nyâish. Then, they assemble in the outer hall of the Temple and perform the Jashan ceremony. In this, either the three Afringâns referred to in the case of the Jashan of the Âtash-Behrâm or the following Âfringâns are recited:—1. Ardibehest Ameshâspand. 2. Ahura Mazda. 3. Spendârmad. 4. Ardâ Fravash. 5. Dahmân. 6. Sraosh. Similarly, the Bâj ceremony is performed at the same time.

**(C) Consecration of the Sacred Fire of the third grade:
the Atash Dâdgâh.**

The ritual of the consecration of this fire is very simple. It is the ordinary fire of the household that is consecrated. So, there is no special process of collection for it. Again, there is no special purification. The principal function is the consecration of the Temple where it is to be deposited. The fire, that is used in the consecration of the Temple itself while performing the Yaçna and the Vendidâd ceremony, forms the Sacred Fire of the Âtash Dâdgâh. The following is the process of consecrating the Temple building:—The building intended or built for the temple is cleaned and washed. Some later writings say, that all Temple buildings may, at first, be washed and purified thrice with gaomez or cow's urine, but the practice is not generally resorted to now. It may then be purified by being washed thrice with water. After this purification and cleaning, commences the consecration ceremony. It lasts for

four days. During the first three days, in the morning, an Yaçna ceremony with the Khshnuman of Sraosh, and after midnight, a Vendidad with the same Khshnuman are recited. On the morning of the fourth day, a Yaçna with the khshnuman of Ardâ Farosh is recited. Then finally, the Jashan ceremony is performed. In this Jashan ceremony, five Âfringâns are recited with the Khshnuman of:—1. Ardibehesht. 2. Ahura Mazda. 3. Spendârmad (Spanta Armaiti) 4. Ardâfrôsh. 5. Dahmân. 6. Sraosh. Similarly, six Bâjs are recited.¹

1 At times, the numbers of Afringâns and Bâjs vary. For a list of the Fire-temples of all grades, vide Khân Bahâdur Bomanji Byramji Patel's contribution in the *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. IX, Part II. Vide Zoroastrian Calendar of 1276 Yazdazardi (1906-07), by Mr. Mancherji Jagosh.

CHAPTER X.

II.—CONSECRATION OF THE TOWERS OF SILENCE.

There are three ceremonies in connection with the consecration of a Tower. They are the following:—I. *Kodâri marvi* (*lit.*, to strike the first spade),¹ *i.e.*, the ceremony for digging the ground to lay the foundation. II. The *Tânâ* ceremony, or the ceremony of laying the foundation. III. The Consecration ceremony proper.

The first ceremony is that of digging the ground. It is performed a few days before the formal laying of the foundation. In the centre of the spot chosen for a Tower, a *Bareshnûm-wâlâ* priest encloses a certain place with a "*Pâvi*"² and thereon performs, at first, the *Khûb* ceremony with the five sprigs of the *Barsam* (*pâñch tâi ni khûb*). Then he recites the "*Bâj*" in honour (1) of *Sraosha*, the guardian angel guiding the souls of the deceased, (2) of *Ahura Mazda*, (3) of *Spenta Ârmaiti*, the Archangel presiding over ground, a portion of which is now being enclosed for the construction of the Tower, (4) of "*Ardâfrosh*," *i.e.*, all the departed souls, and (5) of "*Haft Ameshâspands*," *i.e.*, the seven Archangels. Having recited these prayers, the priest holds a spade in his hand and recites the *Srôsh Bâj* upto *Ashahê*. He then digs with his own hand a part of the ground required for the Tower. While digging, he recites the *Yathâ Ahû Vairyô* prayer 21 times.

A few days after, when the whole of the required plot of ground is excavated by the labourers, two priests perform in the morning the "*Tânâ*" ceremony for laying the foundation of the Tower. The ceremony is so called from the fact of "*tânâ*" or

1 The old Egyptian ritual for laying the foundation-stone of a temple, referred to below, also speaks of the use of the spade.

2 "*Pâvi*" (from "*pâv*," *i.e.*, sacred) is a kind of trench a few inches deep in the ground. It is intended to separate a portion of a place from the adjoining ground in order to perform a sacred ceremony, therein. No outsider is allowed to enter within this enclosed place while the ceremony is being performed. The *Yaçna*, *Bâj*, and *Vendidad* ceremonies are performed only within such enclosed spaces. In Fire-Temples, the sacred fire burns on a censer within such an enclosed space.

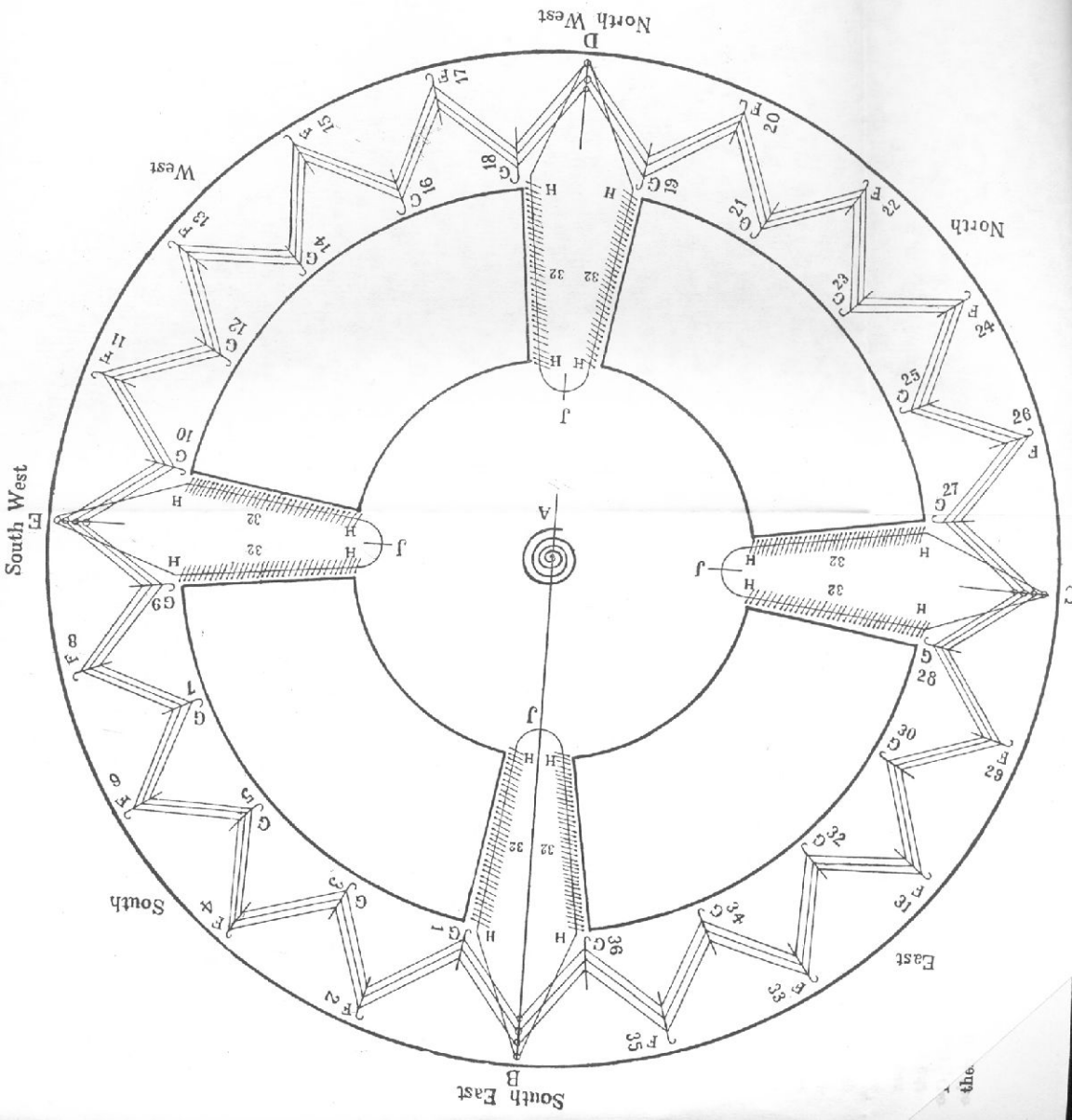
a very fine thread being used to mark out the circumference of the Tower and its different parts for the laying of the foundation. One hundred and one¹ fine threads are woven into one strong thread or string. The thread so prepared should be as long as would suffice to go round the circumference and the inner parts three times.² Some time before its use, this thread is made "*pâv*," i.e., washed, purified and dried. To hold this thread, the priests have to fix in the ground 301 nails of different sizes and weights. The following are the various numbers and weights:—(a) One central nail (shown in the plan by the letter A) of one maund without any holes. (b) Four sidenails³ (i.e., for South-East, South-West, North-West and North-East sides) (B, E, D and C,) each of half a maund. Each of these four nails is to have three holes, one being straight and the other two crosswise. (c) Thirty six nails (16 in the outer circle, each shown in the plan by the letter F, and twenty in the inner circle, each shown in the plan by the letter G,) weighing altogether about one maund. (d) Two hundred and fifty-six nails, altogether weighing one maund, 32 on each of the eight rows marked HH in the plan. (e) Four nails of the same size as the above 256 to be fixed at the places marked JJ. These five sets of nails give the total of 301.

On the day of the Tâñâ ceremony, in the morning, two Baresh-nûmwâlâ priests get down into the excavation that has been dug for the foundation. Having performed the *pâdyâb*, they perform the *khûb* ceremony with the five twigs of the Barsam. They then put on their full sacerdotal dress (*Jâmâ pichhori*) and hold the *paiwand* between them. They then recite the

1 One hundred and one is a sacred number, because, according to the Parsee books, the Almighty God has one hundred and one names which signify all his virtues. These one hundred and one names are recited in several ceremonies, e.g., in preparing the sacred "*Zaotra*" or consecrated water for the Haôma ceremony.

2 The number three is a sacred number, being symbolic of Humata, Hukhta and Hvarshta, i.e., good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, the three precepts on which the moral structure of the Zoroastrian religion rests.

3 These nails correspond to the pegs in the Egyptian ritual. For the four nails, cf. "the four supports of heaven" *vide* below, pp. 236-237).



Sraosh Bâj upto the word Ashahê, and begin to fix the nails in the ground. They recite one Ahunvar or Yathâ-ahû-vairÿô, while striking each nail. The central large nail A is struck first. The greater part of it is left above the ground. Then the nails on the South-East, South-West, North-West and North-East are struck. Then the above 36 nails are struck in the order marked in the plan beginning at G on the S.-E which is marked as G 1. The order is G 1, F 2, G 3, F 4, G 5, F 6, and so on in the first quarter. Then G 10, F 11, and so on in the next quarter. Thus the last or the 36th nail is at G 36 in the fourth quarter. Then the 256 nails are struck in eight different lines shown in the plan. The first 32 must be struck in the line between H and G 1. The next 32 on the similar row on the opposite side H-G 36. The third 32 on the third similar row H-G 10 and then the fourth 32 on the opposite row, and so on, till all the 256 are struck in the 8 rows at 32 per row. Then the last four are struck at the 4 points marked J. During the whole of the process of nailing, the priests recite Yathâ-ahû-vairÿôs.

After finishing the nailing, the priests commence passing the *tânâ* or the thread through the nails. They begin with the nail on the South-East quarter, B, one of the four large nails with three holes. The thread is passed through the lowest hole, and the end is fastened with it with a double knot which is put over it with the recital of two Ahunvars. The long thread is then carried from nail to nail in a metallic tray. One of the two priests carries the tray and the other passes the thread from nail to nail, always moving to the right, *i. e.*, from South-East to the South, then to the South-West, then to the West, and so on. Beginning with the nail at B, he takes the thread to G 1, then to F 2, then to G 3, then to F 4, and so on. Finishing the first quarter of the outer circle, *i. e.*, passing the thread round the first 9 nails of the outer circle, he passes the thread through the lowest hole of E, the second of the four large nails with three holes. It is then passed round the 9 nails of the second quarter of the circle, then through the lowest hole of D; then round the 9 nails of the third quarter of the circle; then through C; then round the 9 nails of last quarter of

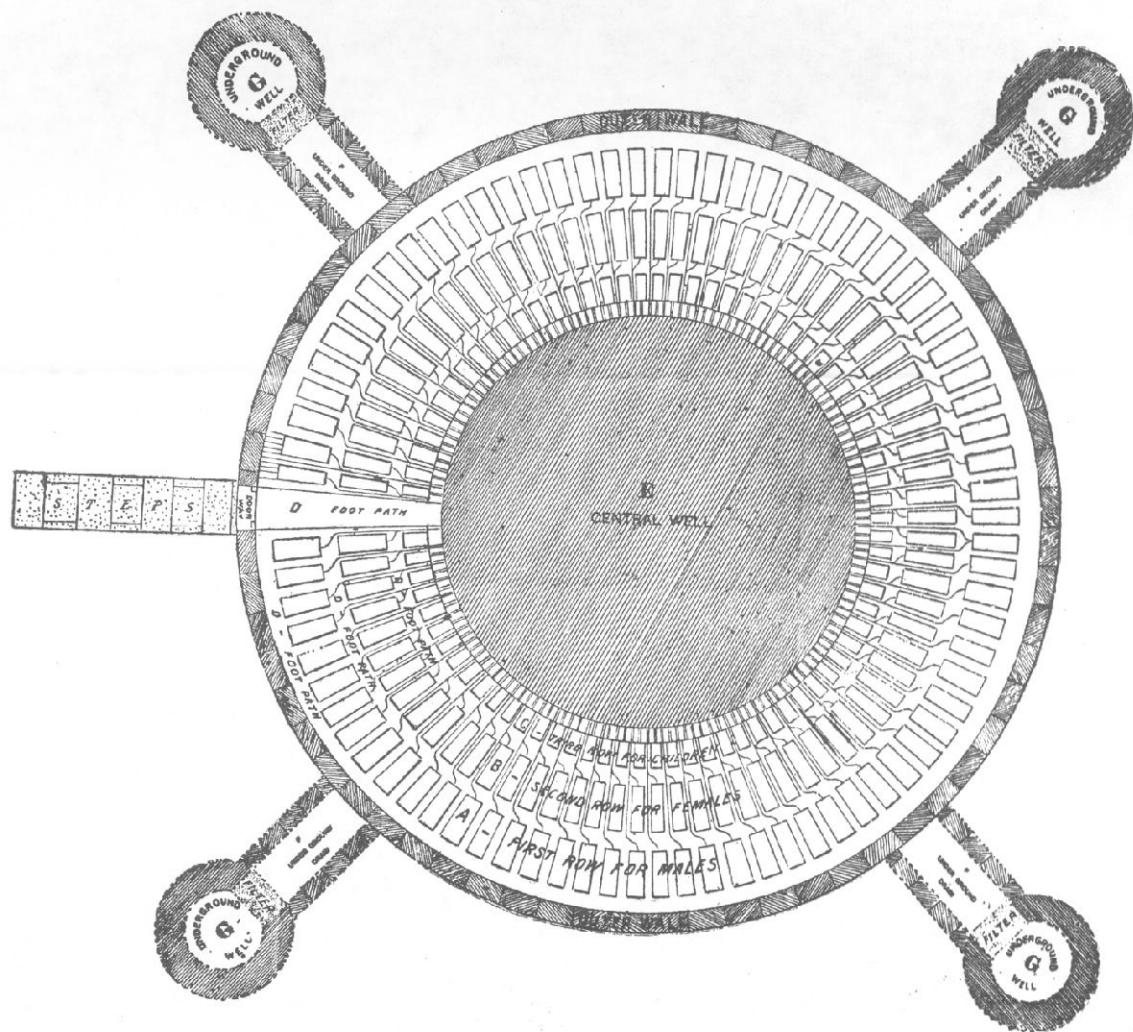
the circle. The nails in each quarter are fixed alternately, one at the side towards the inner well of the proposed Tower and the other at the furthest outer circle which is to form the foundation of the wall of the round tower.

The above process finishes one round. The thread must be taken round for the second time in the same manner as in the first round, but with this difference, that in the case of the large-holed nails B, E, D and C, it is to be now passed through the second or the middle hole. Then the thread is to be taken round for the third time. The process is the same, but differs in two points. Firstly, the thread is now to be pierced through the topmost hole of the four big-holed nails; and secondly, in the third round, the thread is also to be taken round each of the 32 nails which make each of the 8 rows. Going in one direction in the line of the 32 nails, in the first quarter of the circle, the thread is passed round one of the nails J. It is then passed round each of the 32 nails of the opposite row. Thus, in the process of the third round, all the double rows, each of 32 nails, are passed through in each of the four quarters of the circle. The thread is then passed round the biggest central nail which was struck in the centre of the plot and which pointed the position of the central well, known as the *bhandâr*. The whole of the remaining part of the thread is put round this central big nail. The two priests now finish the Sarosh Bâj, with the recital of the first part of which they had commenced the ceremony. This finishes the whole of the Tâñâ ceremony.

The place marked A in the plan forms the centre of the inner well of the circle where the bones gather after flesh is devoured. The outer circle next to, or out of, A marks the place of the first set of *pâvis*, on which, when the tower is finished, bodies of children are placed. The next outer circle marks the middle circle of the tower when completed, on the *pâvis* of which the bodies of females are placed. The third or the outermost circle marks the circle of the *pâvis* on which bodies of males are placed.

Thousands of Parsee visitors, men, women and children, gather to witness the ceremony. On the occasion of the Tâñâ ceremony of the

The Assembly.



Tower at Deolâli, about 100 miles from Bombay, which took place a few years ago, six special trains from Bombay took devout Parsees there. It is said that about more than 60,000 people collected there to witness the ceremony. The visitors were seated in a covered *mandap* round the excavations dug for the foundation of the Tower. Of course, all are not expected to witness the ceremony. Hardly a thousand can see it actually performed. But the other thousands go there with the devout object of participating in the work. On the close of the ceremony, the remainder, who have not been able to see the whole ceremony, go to the place and see the nails and the thread as spread there. All the visitors throw into the excavation, gold, silver and copper coins and even currency notes as they can afford. Some more devout even throw their rings. That is considered to be their contribution to the pious work of building a Tower. It is announced, that at the above-said Tower ceremony at Deolâli, they collected in this excavated ground a sum of a little more than Rs. 2,000. The head-priest of the district, in whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction the town lies, is believed to have the privilege of having the sum thus collected at these Towers of Silence ceremonies, but he generally gives it away to the subscription fund for the maintenance of the Tower, etc. It is believed, by many people, that it is meritorious to see the ceremonies of the consecration of at least seven Towers during one's life-time. Hence such large gatherings.

For two or three weeks after the ceremony, the excavations with the nails or pegs and threads are left as they are, so that people, who had no opportunity to go and see it on the day of the ceremony, may go and see it at their convenience. Hundreds generally go there and throw their humble mite in the excavated foundations. The place assumes a festive look for several days. Booths are put up by tradesmen for the sale of refreshments, etc. When the influx of people diminishes, the foundation work proceeds over the whole thing as it is. The nails and the thread remain underground and the foundation work proceeds over it.

Now what is the signification of this Tââ ceremony? The

The signification
of the Tââ cere-
mony.

Avesta and old Pahlavi books say nothing of it. The signification seems to be this:

As it is enjoined in the Vendidâd that the ground must not be polluted with the corpses of dead bodies but must be exposed, this Tââ ceremony seems to signify that the proposed Tower is expected to pollute the ground, only to the extent of its excavations. The thread all along limits, as it were, the extent of pollution. The pollution, if any, is within the four corners of the walls of the Tower. It does not extend even underneath. The position of the nails and the threads points out, as said above, the position of the different parts of the Tower when completed. We see from the description of the Tower, that it has four underground drains, through which the rain-water, etc., falling over the bodies in the Tower passes into the ground. The area of those underground drains which are likely to carry a little polluted water are also, as it were, limited by the four double rows, each of 32 nails, and their thread. Again, the whole process of nailing begins with the central big nail and the whole process of the spreading of the thread ends at that central big nail. This seems to point to the idea of unity in the Beginning and unity in the End. We all come from One, from the One. We all go to that One. The whole creation is, as it were, united in its birth. It is united in its end. There is One in All. There is All in One.

The Tââ ceremony of the Parsees reminds one of a somewhat similar foundation-ceremony of the

A somewhat
similar foundation-
ceremony of the
Egyptians.

ancient Egyptian temples. The well-known astronomer Norman Lockyer says:—"We

learn from the works of Chabas, Brugsch, Dümichen, and others, that the foundation of an Egyptian temple was associated with a series of ceremonies which are repeatedly described with a minuteness, which, as Nissen has pointed out, is painfully wanting in the case of Greece and Rome. Amongst these ceremonies, one especially refers to the fixing of the temple-axis; it is called, technically, 'the stretch-

ing of the cord.'.....Another part of the ceremony consisted in the king proceeding to the site where the temple was to be built, accompanied mythically by the goddess Sesheta, who is styled 'the mistress of the laying of the foundation-stone.' Each was armed with a stake. The two stakes were connected by a cord. Next the cord was aligned towards the sun or star as the case might be; when the alignment was perfect, the two stakes were driven into the ground by means of a wooden mallet.....One boundary wall.....was built along the line marked out by this stretched cord." ¹

The old Egyptian word for laying the foundation-stone was *Put-ser*, wherein *put* means 'to stretch,' and 'ser' means 'cord,' "so that part of the ceremonial which consisted in stretching a cord in the direction of a star was considered of so great an importance, that it gave its name to the whole ceremonial." ² Similarly in the Parsee ceremony, the *tānā* or the thread used in the ceremony has given its name to the whole ceremony. One Egyptian inscription says: "The Kherheb read the sacred text during the stretching of the measuring-cord and the laying of the foundation-stone on the piece of ground selected for the temple.....On account of the stretching of the measuring-cord, the Egyptian engineers were called by the Greeks, *υπεδουάτται* whose art Democritus boasts of having acquired." ³ Another inscription says: "The hammer in my hand was of gold, as I struck the peg with it.....Thy hand held the spade during the fixing of its (the temple's) four corners with accuracy by the four supports of heaven" In one picture, the king and the goddess are represented with clubs in their hands, to hammer the pegs.

On the Tower being completed, a particular day is fixed for its consecration. it is generally consecrated in the dry season, so that the ceremony, which is mostly to be performed in the open air with a temporary covering, may not be interrupted by the rains. It lasts for four days. The Tower is surrounded by a *pāvi*. In

3. The consecration proper of the Tower.

¹ "The Dawn of Astronomy" by Norman Lockyer, 1894, p. 173.

² *Ibid*, p. 175.

³ *Ibid*.

the central well of the Tower, called the "Bhandâr," two priests perform for three consecutive days the Yaçna ceremonies during the day in the "Hâvan Gâh," and Vendidâd ceremonies at night in the "Ushahin Gâh." These ceremonies are in honour of the angel Sraosha, who is protecting the souls of the dead for three days and nights after death. On the morning of the fourth day, the opening day of the Tower, a Yaçna ceremony is performed in honour of Ahura-Mazda. Then the Bâj and Afringân ceremonies are performed in honour of Ahura-Mazda, of Ardâfarosh, *i.e.*, the departed souls, of Spendârmad, *i.e.*, the Yazata presiding over mother-earth, a portion of which is now occupied for laying the dead upon, and of Sraosha. In the Afringân ceremony, known as the Jashan¹ ceremony, which is performed in the presence of a large number of the community assembled to witness it, the name of the donor, at whose expense the Tower is built, is mentioned and the blessings of God invoked upon him. If the Tower is constructed by the donor in honour, or to commemorate the memory, of a deceased relative, the name of that relative is publicly mentioned. When the ceremony is over, the Parsees assembled go into the Tower to see it and throw into the central well, gold, silver or copper coins as their mite in the expenses of the construction of the Tower. Some throw even their rings and ornaments. These go to make up the sum necessary for building the Tower, if it is built at the expense of the Anjuman or the whole community. If it is built at the expense of a generous donor, the amount thus collected goes to the head priest of the district in whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction the Tower lies. At times, he gives it for the use of some charitable funds of the town.² I give here a plan of the Tower itself.

1 'Jashan' is the contraction of 'Yazashna.'

2 For a list of the Parsee Towers of Silence, *vide Bombay Gazetteer* Vol. IX, Part II: Khan Bahadur Bomanji Byramji Patel's contribution. *Vide "Zoroastrian Calendar of the Yazdazardi Year 1276 (1906-7)"* by Mr. Muncherji Jagosh.

CHAPTER XI.

III.—CONSECRATION OF THE ÂLÂT OR RELIGIOUS REQUISITES.

A minor form of consecration is that for the Âlât or the requisites used in some religious services. One of such things is *gaomez* or cow's urine. Among the ancient Irânians, water, urine and sand or a particular kind of earth or clay were considered to be the best means of purification. Water was the best purifier, but before washing the body with it, the application of cow's urine was considered necessary. *Gaomaêza* is the Avesta word for it. It comes from *gao*, a cow and *miz*, Sanskrit *mih*, Latin *ming-ere*, to sprinkle. When the urine is consecrated by religious ceremonies, it is, in religious parlance, spoken of as Nirang or Nirang-din (*i. e.*, the nirang prepared by religious ceremonies). It is so called, because a *nirang*, *i. e.*, a religious incantation, is recited on its application.

Urine has been used by several nations from very old times as a purificative. Its original use as a purificative has led to the notion of its being considered as a charm against evil spirits. Prof. Eugen Wilhelm says on the subject of its use:—"That the practice of using cow's urine as a preservative against the influences of evil spirits is very old indeed, and likely to date from the most ancient times, we may conclude from the fact, that traces of this same custom existing with our Aryan brethren in the East in India and Irân may be found sometimes even to-day in the West, in the Bretagne, that province of France which holds its name from the Celtic Britons who sought refuge there."¹ Dr. Wilhelm gives references from Roman and Hindu books for its use and then shows that "the urine was employed in medicine from the most ancient times."² It was so used in Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Scandinavia. Pliny the Elder refers to its use as medicine in the 18th chapter of

1 "On the use of Beef's Urine according to the precepts of the Avesta and on similar customs with other Nations," by Dr. Eugen Wilhelm, p. 31.

2 *Ibid*, p. 29.

the 28th book of his Natural History.¹ Galenus, "the most prominent physician of antiquity"² next to Hippocrates, refers to this fact. It was an Indo-Germanic conception. Prof. Darmesteter, on the authority of Luzel (*Le Nirang des Parsis en Basse-Bretagne, Mélusine*, 493), says, that "the use of *gaomez* has been lately found to be known in Basse-Bretagne." (S. B. E., Vol. IV, 1st ed., *Intro.* p. 88, n. 3).

The urine used for ordinary purifications is the urine of a domesticated animal like the cow, the bull, or even the goat. But the urine used for higher purificatory services is that of an uncastrated bull and it is consecrated with certain ceremonies. The *Vendidâd* enjoins its use for purification in several passages; but the principal passage is the 21st section of the 19th chapter. Therein, there is a question to this effect: How can one purify a person who has become a *hamrit* (*i. e.*, one who has come into direct contact with a dead body) or a *patrit* (*i. e.*, one who has come into indirect contact with a dead body by coming into contact with a *hamrit*)? The reply is, that he can be purified by the urine of a bull that is (*a*) uncastrated (*bikhedrem*) and (*b*) that is properly prepared (*dâityô-keretem*, *i. e.*, properly consecrated). This passage requires, that the urine must be one properly selected and qualified.

In considering, what place *gaomez* or cow's urine or, what is ceremoniously known as "*nirang*" occupies in Zoroastrian ritual, we must look to the times in which its use was enjoined and also to the idea with which it was enjoined. Prof. Rapp says on this point:—"It would presume little acquaintance with the peculiarities of the ancient world, if we wished to bring to bear our present notions of decency and loathsomeness on the customs of old.....Can we judge now of the ideas and customs in this fashion from the point of view of European modern notions? And before we determine to bring in accord all the customs of the ancient world that were employed for purifications, to our modern rational notions, we might like to know

1 *Ibid*, p. 35.

2 *Ibid*, p. 38.

to be sure what advantage has that blood of an animal which Moses used, in respect of the purpose in view, over the urine of an ox! It will not be possible for us altogether to comprehend the conceptions of the ancient notions of what is pure and what is not pure and of their ceremonies in religious purifications, if we do not ascend up to the very origin of all these notions, namely, to the ancient doctrine of the double creation, that of the pure and of the impure world. That in the purifications so much value is set on the ox and all that issues out of it, the sacred legends of the Zend people make it quite comprehensible. We have seen that the entire ceremonial law of Zoroaster rests upon the conception of a pure and impure creation, and therefrom it follows that the corporeal impurity was just as punishable and just as abhorrent in the eyes of Ahuramazda, the pure, as the moral impurity of the soul, and that men should purify themselves from the first as from the last pollution by just the same means.

"Now, we believe ourselves to be able to prove that the entire ceremonial law of Moses reposes upon these very ideas and that no one can correctly comprehend nor understand the Mosaic law generally, if he does not start from these ideas when attempting his interpretations."¹

We will now describe the Nirangdin ceremony, *i.e.*, the ceremony for consecrating the urine. At first, two priests go through the Bareshnûm ceremony of ten days. There is one difference in the Bareshnûm gone through by the priests on this occasion and that gone through by the priests on other ordinary occasions. In the latter case, it is the nocturnal pollution during the first three nights that vitiates the Bareshnûm and necessitates a repetition. But, in the case of the priests who are to perform the Nirangdin ceremonies, they are to pass all the nine nights of the Bareshnûm in vigil, watch and prayer. If they have the nocturnal pollution during any of the ten nights, they are to repeat the Bareshnûm.

¹ K. R. Cama's Translation of the Article on the Vendidad from the German of Rapp, pp. 15-16, 19.

As described in the account of the Bareshnûm ceremony, the complete Bareshnûm takes ten days. On the eleventh day, one of the two priests takes an early bath and puts on a new set of clothes. Then, performing his *pâdyâb-kusti*, he says his morning prayers. Then he performs the Khûb¹ ceremony. On the second day, *i.e.*, on the twelfth day from the beginning, the second priest performs the Khûb ceremony. His colleague, who has performed the Khûb ceremony on the first day, gets him through that ceremony. Then, both the priests perform the Gewrâ¹ ceremony. During the six days of the *Gewrâ*, the priest whose turn it is to keep the *Gewrâ*, has to pass the night in vigil, as said above. Again, he is to take his meals after reciting the great *bâj* and not the ordinary *bâj*, or prayer of grace. On the completion of the sixth *Gewrâ*, both the priests perform the *bâj* ceremony and each partakes of the *Darun* consecrated by his colleague. This inter-communion, or partaking of the sacred bread consecrated by one another, is spoken of as “being *ham-kalâm*,” *i.e.*, “being one or united (*ham*) in their words (*kalâm*) of prayer.” Then they purify the utensils to collect the urine of the bulls for consecration. They make *pâv*, *i.e.*, ceremonially pure, two large water-pots—one larger than the other—two small water-pots, and a cup that would cover the large water-pot. All these pots are metallic.

By this time, a white bull known as the Varacyô is brought into the Temple where the ceremony is to be performed. We saw above that the Vendidad refers to an uncastrated bull for the use of the urine, but does not speak of its being a white one. Later books have enjoined that it must be a white one. A single black hair on the body disqualifies it for being used as a sacred bull. The word ‘varacyô’ comes from the Avesta word ‘vareça’ meaning ‘hair,’ because the hair of this white bull is used symbolically in the Yaçna ceremony. A metallic ring used in the ritual is known as “varaç in viti,” *i.e.*, ‘the ring with the hair.’ The hair of this sacred bull is put round the ring.

The Varacyô or the Sacred Bull.

¹ Vide above, P. 192. The Nâvar ceremony.

The two priests after being "*ham-kalâm*" as said above, and after making the utensils *pâv* or religiously pure, go with one of the small metallic pots before the sacred bull and collect his urine in the pot. Even a few drops of his urine are necessary to begin the collection. Having collected his urine, they collect the urine from a number of other ordinary uncastrated bulls. The work of collecting the urine must be finished some time before sunset. When it is so finished, one of the priests performs the *paragnâ* ceremony in the *Uziran-Gâh* i.e., in the afternoon-period of the day. Then the Vendidad ceremony is performed at midnight, commencing at a little after 12 o'clock. The vessel containing the urine of the sacred white bull and of other uncastrated bulls is placed between the Alât-gâh, i.e., the slab of stone on which the sacred utensils for the performance of the ceremony are placed, and the censer of fire. Another vessel containing pure well-water is placed by the side of this vessel. The priests then recite the Vendidad, the recital of which together with the accompanying ritual lasts for about 7 hours. This final ceremony consecrates the urine which is then known as *nirangdin*, i.e., the consecrated urine. The water consecrated with it is known as *âv*, i.e., the consecrated water.

In many eastern nations, the bull was held to be an emblem of Life, of Vital Energy. The Egyptians had their Apis. The Hindus have their Nandi. In Christian art, St. Luke is symbolized by an ox, and it is said that this symbolization has some connection with the reference to the ox in Ezekiel (I, 10) and Revelation (IV, 6). The white bull used by the Parsees under the name Varacyô (i.e., the possessor of Vareç, or hair which is used in the ritual) reminds us a little of the Apis of the Egyptians. Apis represented the moon. "He was supposed to have been born of a virgin cow rendered pregnant by a moon-beam or a flash of lightning." When he died he "received a splendid burial.....As universal joy pervaded on his discovery, so his death threw all Egypt into general mourning, and every one shaved off his beard."

Consecration of
the Sacred Bull and
his hair.

The Parsees have such white bulls in their principal towns. They are held useful for two purposes. One is, as described above, for their urine, which, together with that of other ordinary bulls, was consecrated. The second purpose is the use of their *varêça* i.e., hair which is used in the Yaçna liturgy to serve as a kind of hair-sieve. This use is referred to in the Visparad (Karda X, 2: *varaçâi Haomô angharezânâi*, i.e., the hair to pass, as through a sieve, the Haoma-juice). This bull is not used for any domestic purpose. On its death, all the liturgical services, wherein his *varêça* or hair is used, are stopped in the town or towns. Another white bull is immediately sought out and consecrated. Until it is consecrated, all the necessary Vendidad, Yaçna and Visparad ceremonies in which its hair is used cease to be performed in the town, and are directed to be performed in other towns which have their separate white bulls. This is something like the above-mentioned "general mourning" on the death of Apis in Egypt.

The consecration of the Sacred White Bull consists in having its hair carefully cut with religious ritual and then performing the Yaçna ceremony with it. All big Parsee centres generally keep such a bull in reserve. On the death of the one in use, the second spare one is brought to an adjoining Fire-temple and washed and cleaned. He is kept within a '*pâvi*.' Two Bareshnumwâlâ priests who have bathed previously and put on new suits of clothes, perform the *pâdyôb*, say their morning prayers, perform the *Khûb* ceremony of *pâñch tâi* (i.e., of the five twigs of the Barsam). They then take seven metallic cups, a golden or silver ring, a pair of scissors and a pair of long metallic tongs, and carefully wash and purify them with pure, clean water. The two priests then go before the bull. One of them holds his tail aloft with the help of the tongs and the other cleans and purifies it with pure water from a pot in his hand. He recites Khshnaôthra Ahurahê Mazdâo and one Ashem Vohu, while doing this. He repeats this process three times. Then, facing the south, he cuts off with the scissors referred to above, two hairs from the tail of the bull and ties them on the

The Ritual of the consecration of a White Bull.

metallic ring. He does this while reciting the Bâj ceremony with three Ashem Vohûs and Fravarânê up to Vidhvâo Mraotu, with the Khshnuman of Ahura Mazda. It is while uttering the word Ashem and two Ahunvars, that he ties the two hairs on the ring. Then he finishes the Bâj. The priests then go to the place where the Yaçna ceremony is performed, and with the recital of various short prayers and with some ritual, consecrate the above ring with the hair; holding it before the fire, rubbing it with the *bhasam* or the consecrated ash of the Sacred Fire of the Âtash Behrâm, and then washing it by dipping it, several times, in the above-referred to metallic cups which are full of pure, clean water. Then, with this newly obtained *vareça*, or hair, they perform the *Gewrâ*¹ ceremony for six days. On finishing the ceremony on the sixth day, the two priests go before the bull again and washing and purifying his tail as before, take a fresh and a larger quantity of hair. This is distributed among the different temples within the jurisdiction of their temple for being used with the rings in their Yaçna and Vendidâd ceremonies. This completes the ceremony of the consecration of the bull and of his hair. The liturgical ceremonies, the performance of which was suspended, are, now resumed with the symbolic use of the hair of the new bull.

1 *Vide* above, p. 192, the Návar ceremony.