

CEREMONIES

Sr no.	Brith	Initiation
1.	<p>The birth of a child is a very auspicious event in a Parsee house. It was so also in ancient Persia. According to the Vendidad,1 Ahura Mazda says:- "I prefer a person with children (puthrânê) to one without children (aputhrâi)." Even the very ground, where lives a man with his children, is described as feeling happy.2 Cultivation and a good supply of food to people are recommended, because they make mankind healthy and able to produce a healthy progeny.3 To be the father of good children was a blessing from the Yazatas, like Tishtrya,4 Mithra,5 Haoma,6 and Atar,7 and from the Fravashis.8 To be childless, was a curse from the Yazatas.9 Domestic [2] animals, when ill-fed and ill-treated, cursed their masters, that they may be childless.10 Childlessness was something like a punishment from heaven.11 Kingly splendour (khwarrah)12 was associated with those who were blessed with children.13 According to the Shayest Na-Shayest, one of the advantages of having children was "that the duty and good works which a son performs are as much the father's as though they had been done by his own hand.</p> <p>A Zoroastrian woman often prayed for a good, healthy child.15 A Zoroastrian man and woman prayed before their sacred fire for a good, virtuous child.16 A woman without a child felt as sorry as a fertile piece of land that ia not cultivated.17 She prayed for a husband who could make her a mother of children.18</p> <p>Among the Achaemenians, a wife who gave birth to many children was a favourite with</p>	<p>The Navjote is also known as Sedreh-Pushi. This is the initiation ceremony where a child, between the ages of seven and twelve, receives his or her sudreh and kusti and performs the 'Kusti Ritual' for the first time.</p> <p>The child will have already learned the daily prayers and will engage in ritual washing as part of the ceremony. The ceremony is performed by a mobed (Zoroastrian priest) and is obligatory for all Zoroastrian families.</p> <p>The Recital of the Patet.</p> <p>The officiating priest places in the hand of the child seated before him, the sacred shirt with which he is shortly to invest the child. He then recites the Patet or the repentance prayer. The child also recites the prayer or its special sections. If it does not know these by heart it recites several times the Ahunwar, which is a short sacred formula, corresponding, to some extent, to the Pater-noster of the Christians. At the conclusion of the Patet, the officiating priest gets up from his seat and makes the child stand before him. Now follows the investiture proper.</p> <p>The Investiture proper.</p> <p>The investiture proper is made up of four parts.</p> <p>The recital of the Declaration of Faith by the child at the instruction of the priest.</p> <p>The recital of the Nirang-i kusti, or the Ahura Mazda Khodai prayer.</p> <p>The final recital of the Articles of Faith by the child with the priest.</p> <p>The recital of the Tan-dorosti prayer.</p>

her husband, who did not like to displease her in any way.¹⁹ Children being the choicest gift of God, their lives were, as it were, pledged by parents for the solemn performance of an act.²⁰ We read in Herodotus:²¹ "Next to prowess in arms, it is regarded as the greatest proof of manly excellence to be the father of many sons. Every year, the king sends rich gifts to the man, who can show the largest number: for they hold that number is strength." Strabo also says a similar thing.²² We learn from the writings of the Christian Martyrs of Persia, that the ancient Persians, did not, for the above reasons, like the prohibition against marriage among the Christians in the case of holy young Christian girls.

1. The Declaration of Faith and the Investiture with the shirt.
The child is asked by the priest to make a Declaration of Faith

"Praised be the most righteous, the wisest, the most holy and the best Mazdayasnian Law, which is the gift of Mazda. The good, true, and perfect religion, which God has sent to this world, is that which Prophet Zoroaster has brought in here. That religion is the religion of Zoroaster, the religion of Ahura Mazda communicated to holy Zoroaster."

This declaration ends with the short prayer formula of Ashem Vohu, which says that "Righteousness is the best gift and happiness. Happiness to him who is righteous for the (sake of) the best righteousness."

When the child finishes the declaration, the officiating priest, with the recital of an Ahunwar prayer, puts on the child the sacred shirt.

Pregnancy

In the Avesta itself, we find no references to any ceremony or rite during the state of pregnancy. The only allusion we find is this:- Women on finding themselves enceinte prayed before Ardwisura for an easy delivery,²³ and then for a copious supply of milk at their breast for their children.²⁴ The allusion to these prayers suggests, that there may be some formal ceremonies accompanying those prayers, but we do not know what they were.

Coming to later Pahlavi and Persian books, we find, that the Shayest ne-Shayest directs, that, when it is known that a lady of the family has become pregnant, a fire may be maintained most carefully in the house.²⁵ The Saddar also gives this direction.²⁶ We have the remnant of this injunction in the present custom of some of the modern Parsees, who on the occasion of the completion of the fifth

2. The Investiture with the Sacred Thread and the Recital of its Prayer.

The officiating priest now stands behind the child, both facing the east, if it is morning, and the west if it is evening. He now recites a prayer, in the recital of a part of which the child joins him. The substance of the prayer which is recited by the priest and the child together runs thus:

"The Omniscient God is the greatest Lord. Ahriman is the evil spirit, that keeps back the advancement of the world. May that Evil Spirit with all his accomplices remain fallen and dejected. O Omniscient Lord! I repent of all my sins. I repent of all the evil thoughts that I may have entertained in my mind, of all the evil words that I may have spoken, of all the evil actions that I may have performed. May Ahura Mazda be praised. May Ahriman, the evil spirit, be condemned. The will of the righteous is the most praiseworthy." During the recital of this prayer, the priest invests the child with the sacred thread.

2.

and seventh months of pregnancy, light a lamp of clarified butter in their houses. The reason, assigned for this in the Pahlavi and Persian books, is that the fire, so kindled in the house, keeps out daevas, i.e., evil influences from the house. Again, a fire or a lamp is even now taken to be symbolic of the continuation of a line of offspring. For example, it is not rare to hear, even now, words like these "Tamâro cherâg Roshan rahê" i.e., "May your lamp be always burning." This benediction is meant to say: "May your son live long, and may your line of descent continue." The ancient Iranians believed that there were many chances for the children to be born males if the males were stronger than the females at the time of conception.

According to the Avesta, in the state of pregnancy, a woman is to be looked after very carefully. It is wrong for the husband to have sexual intercourse with her in her advanced state of [4] pregnancy, which, according to the Rivayats, commences with the fifth month.²⁸ She is to abstain from coming into contact with any dead or decomposing matter, even with a thing like one's toothpick which may contain germs of one's disease.

3.

The fifth and the seventh months of pregnancy are observed as days of rejoicing.

During pregnancy, the modern Parsees have no religious ceremonies or rites. On the completion of the fifth month of pregnancy, one day is celebrated and known as "Panch mâsiûn," i.e., the day of the fifth month. Similarly, a day is observed on the completion of the seventh month and is known as Agharni. These days are observed as auspicious days of rejoicing only in the case of the first pregnancy. They are observed not in accordance with any religious injunction or

3. The Recital of the Articles of Faith by the Child.

The child, being thus invested with the sacred shirt and thread, now announces, with the priest, the articles of the Zoroastrian faith, which run thus:

"O Almighty! Come to my help. I am a worshiper of God. I am a Zoroastrian worshiper of God. I agree to praise the Zoroastrian religion, and to believe in that religion. I praise good thoughts, good words, and good actions. I praise the good Mazdayasnian religion which curtails discussions and quarrels, which brings about kinship or brotherhood, which is holy, and which, of all the religions that have yet flourished and are likely to flourish in the future, is the greatest, the

with religious ceremonies or rites. The expectancy of a child being a joyful event as said above, these days — especially some day after the completion of the seventh month — are observed as joyous occasions, when the lady who is enceinte is presented with suits of clothes by her parents, relatives, and friends and especially by the family of her husband. The husband, is in turn, presented with a suit of clothes by the wife's family. Sweets are sent out as presents by the husband's family to the bride's house and to near relations and friends. In these sweets, one prepared in the form of a cocoanut,³⁰ has a prominent place. A cocoanut typifies a man's head³¹ and so it is a symbol of fecundity. Some of the customs observed on these occasions are more Indian in their origin and signification than originally Persian or Zoroastrian.

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

The most important part of these Articles of Faith is that wherein the child is made to believe in the efficacy of one's own good thoughts, good words, and good acts. A Parsi has to believe, that for the salvation of his soul he has to look to nobody else, but to himself. Nobody -- no priest, or no prophet -- will intercede for him. For his salvation he has only to look to the purity of his own thoughts, words, and actions. The pivot, on which the whole of the moral structure of Zoroastrianism turns, rests upon this triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. Think of nothing but the truth, speak nothing but the truth, and do nothing but what is proper, and you are saved.

4.

Place of delivery, and its temporary consecration.

In the case of the first delivery, it generally takes place in the house of the wife's parents. A room or a part of a room, generally on the down-floor, is prepared and set apart for the purpose. As the Vendidad³² says, the place for delivery must be very clean, dry, and least frequented by others. It appears, that in former times, such places were specially provided in Parsee houses on the down-floors. Parsee houses in those times had generally spacious down-floors that were used for all purposes. The upper floors were low and were rather like lofts. So, the down-floors provided proper places for delivery, as enjoined in the Vendidad. But, as, with changed circumstances, Parsee houses of today are not what they were before, and as, at present, in storied houses in big towns, the down-floors are generally the worst part of the houses, places of delivery at the down-floor are nowadays properly condemned as unhealthy. In the case of a house or a place where no delivery has taken place before,

4 The Recital of the Tan-dorosti or Benediction.

The investiture of the sacred shirt and thread, and the declaration of the Articles of Faith by the child, finish the ceremony proper. There only remains now the recital of the Tan-dorosti (lit. health of the body) or the Benediction by the officiating priest, invoking the blessings of God upon the new initiate. The purport of what he says in this recital is this : "May you enjoy health, long life, and splendor of piety. May the Yazatas and the Amesha Spentas come to your help. May the religion of Zoroaster flourish. O Almighty God! May you bestow long life joy and health upon the ruler of our land, upon the whole community and upon this [here he names the child]. May he (or she) live long to help the virtuous. May his days be auspicious, his months be auspicious, his years be auspicious. May he live for a good number of years to lead a holy charitable and religious life. May he perform righteous deeds. May health, virtue, and goodness be his lot. May all his good wishes be fulfilled like those of the immortal angels. Amen!"

This finishes the whole ceremony. The officiating priest and the other priests are then paid their fees and the assembled guests have flowers presented to them.

	<p>religious-minded persons generally take care that a religious ceremony may be performed there before the delivery. In other words, they get the place consecrated. A priest or two say and perform the Afrinagan prayer and ceremony over the place. At times, even the Baj prayer is recited. It seems that one of the lost nasks (books), the Husparam, had special chapters on the subject of parturition.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>A lamp lighted on the birth of a child.</p> <p>On the birth of a child, a lamp is lighted and kept burning, for at least three days, in the room where the lady is confined. The Saddar says: "When the child becomes separate from [6] the mother it is necessary to burn a lamp for three nights and days — if they burn a fire it would be better — so that the demons and fiends may not be able to do any damage and harm; because when a child is born, it is exceedingly delicate for those three days."³⁴ Some people keep the lamp burning for ten days and some for forty days, the latter number being generally observed as the period of confinement.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Period of confinement on delivery, 40 days.</p> <p>On delivery, the mother is enjoined to remain apart from others. She is not to come into contact with fire, water, and other furniture of the house.³⁵ In the case of those that give birth to still-born children, it is enjoined in the Vendidad,³⁶ that they must thus remain apart for 12 days. This period has been latterly extended, as described in the later Pahlavi and Persian books, to forty days in all cases of delivery. Now-a-days, a Parsee lady has generally forty days of confinement after delivery. The Saddar says: "During forty days it is not proper that they should leave the child alone; and it is also not proper that the mother of the infant should put her foot over a threshold in the dwelling (i.e., leave the house) or cast her eyes upon a hill, or it is bad</p>	

	for her menstruation.	
7.	<p>During the above forty days, the lady is in a state of isolation.</p> <p>She is not to come into contact with anybody and with any part of the ordinary furniture of the house, especially wooden furniture and linen articles. Her food is to be served to her on [7] her plate by others. Those who have to come into contact with her have to bathe before they mix with others. Even the medical attendants had to do so, but, now-a-days, this sanitary rule is more honoured in the breach than in its observance. The original injunction may, among some other reasons, have been intended to observe "purity" in order to prevent the spread of the diseases to which women in this state are subject.</p> <p>At the end of forty days, which is the period of confinement, the lady has to purify herself by a bath before ordinarily mixing with others. At first she takes an ordinary bath and then goes through what is called "nân," a contraction of the Sanskrit word "snân" which is a sacred bath.⁴⁰ A priest, generally the family priest, administers that bath with consecrated water.</p> <p>All the bedding and clothes of the woman, used during the forty days of her confinement after delivery, are rejected from ordinary use. They are enjoined to be destroyed, lest they carry germs of disease among others. But, now-a-days, that injunction is not strictly followed. They are given away to sweepers.</p>	
8.	<p>The first drink after birth.</p> <p>Formerly, a mother in child-birth first drank a few drops of the sacred Haoma-juice, which was squeezed and consecrated in a fire-temple. The Persian Farziât-nameh of Dastur Darab Pâhlan says, that a new-born child should be made to drink a few drops of</p>	

this juice. If the consecrated Haoma-juice (para-Haoma) may not be had, one may pound at home a few Haoma twigs and a few leaves of the pomegranate tree (urvarâm) in water with the recital of an Ahunwar and give the juice for the first drink. In the Hom Yasht,⁴¹ Haoma is said to give fine healthy children to women. Haoma was emblematical of immortality. Anquetil Du Perron⁴² refers to this religious custom as prevalent in his time. But now-a-days this custom is rarely observed, and in place of the Haoma-juice, a sweet drink made of molasses or sugar is given to the child as a first auspicious drink. The Farziât-nâmeh asks the mother to feed the child with her own milk for 18 months if the child be male, and for 15 if it be a female.

9.

Naming the child.

Herodotus⁴³ refers to the custom of naming the child among the ancient Persians. We infer from what he says, that the parents waited for some time after birth, and then, watching the physical and mental characteristics of the child, gave them such names as indicated their characteristics. In the case of modern Parsees, many name the child after an immediate deceased ancestor. A Parsee name is made up of three names. The first is his own personal name. The second is his father's name and the third is his surname or family name. Now, it is the first of these three, that is the proper name of the child; and in the case of that name, many prefer to call a child by an immediate ancestor's name. Suppose [9] a person named Jivanji had his father named Jamshedji, and his mother named Âwân bâi. Then, on the birth of a child, if it is a male child and if his own father (Jamshedji) was dead, he would prefer to name it Jamshedji. If it were a female child, he would like to name it Âwân bâi after his deceased mother. Some resort to a so-called astrologer and name the child as advised by him.

This process of naming the child has one particular religious significance, and it is this: In all religious ceremonies, during life or after death, a person's name is recited as he or she is named at the time of his or her birth: This name is called Janam-nâm or birth-name. In his or her Naojote [navjote], i.e., sacred shirt and thread ceremony, marriage ceremony, or any other ceremony enjoined by him or her during lifetime (Zindeh-ravân), the birth-name is recited together with the father's name. In all the ceremonies after death (Anôsheh-ravân), the name is similarly recited. In the case of a female, her personal name is recited together with that of her father as long as she is not betrothed. But after betrothal, her name is recited together with that of her husband.⁴⁴ As a lady's name is recited with her husband's in all ceremonies after betrothal, the ceremony of betrothal is known as "Nâmzad shudan" in Persian, meaning "to be named," or nâm pâdvun in Gujarati meaning "to give a name."

Herodotus says of the old Achaemenian times, that "their names, which are expressive of some bodily or mental excellence, all end with the same letter."⁴⁵ Looking to the names as given in the Avesta, we find that they mostly end in 'a'. The same or similar names when given by Greek writers end in 's'. This can be easily seen from a list of Iranian names given by Rawlinson⁴⁶ with their corresponding forms in Greek writings.

10.

Birth-day.

The birthday of a Parsee child — and especially the first birthday — is an important day. No religious rites are enjoined as necessary. But the parents generally like to celebrate the day in what one may call, a religious way. After a bath and a new suit of clothes, the child is generally sent with some sandalwood to an adjoining Fire-temple. There, the ash of the sacred fire is attached to

	<p>its forehead. Some of those, who can afford, get a religious ceremony, known as Fireshte (Fareshtâ),⁴⁹ performed. That is generally done on the first birthday. This ceremony consists of the recital of prayers in honour of the 33 different Yazatas or angels, and indicates, that God's blessings are invoked upon the child, and that it is wished that it may be blessed with all the physical characteristics and mental virtues over which God has directed these Yazatas to preside. According to Herodotus,⁵⁰ "of all the days in the year, the one which the ancient Persians observed most was their birthday.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Childhood.</p> <p>From a strictly religious point of view, there is nothing special to be remarked in the case of the childhood of a Parsee child. It is held to be innocent and not liable or subject to the performance of any religious duties or rites. If God forbid, the child dies before the Naojote [navjote] or the investiture of the sacred shirt and thread, its funeral ceremonies are on a lower scale. In the recital of the funeral prayers, the child is spoken of as 'Khûrd,' i.e., small or young. This appellation signifies that the deceased person was too young and that it had no responsibility for duties or rites as a Zoroastrian.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>According to the <i>Farziât-nâmeh</i>, when the child first begins to speak, the first word to be taught to it is the name of God and the next that of Zoroaster. At the age of seven, it may be entrusted to a Mobad or priest for religious instruction. At first, the Srosh Baj prayer, then the Niyayeshes, and then the Yashts may be taught to it.</p> <p>The Pahlavi Aerpatastan⁵² has a chapter on the subject of the childhood of a Zoroastrian child of old and of the responsibilities of its Mobed preceptors. The latter were to take no</p>	

children under their charge without the permission of their parents or guardians.⁵³ There seemed to be a custom whereby some children lived with their preceptors, whose fee for the whole period of tuition is mentioned in one place as 500 drachms, or about 600 rupees. The preceptors had, as it were, a kind of lien on the children if the stipulated fee was not paid. If, at the end of the stipulated time, they found that the guardians were not the proper persons to whom the children could be safely restored, they withheld the restoration.⁵⁴ The Pahlavi Andarz-i kutakân speaks of a few duties of children from a religious point of view.

Sr no.	Marriage	Funeral
1.	<p>Marriage, is a good institution, according to Parsee's books.</p> <p>According to the Parsee books, marriage is an institution that is favored by the Almighty God. According to the Vendidad (IV. 47), Ahura Mazda says: "O Spitama Zarathushtra! Indeed, I thus recommend hereunto thee, a man with a wife above a Magava (i.e., an unmarried man) who grows up (unmarried), a man with a family above one without any family, a man with children above one who is without children." The very ground where a married man lives is represented as feeling happy. Zarathushtra asks: "O Creator of the physical world! Which is the second place on the earth that feels happy?" Ahura Mazda replies: "That (the place is happy), over which a holy man builds a house with fire, cattle, wife, children, and good followers.</p> <p>The reason why marriage is recommended in Parsee's books is that there is a greater</p>	<p>The main principle at the bottom of the customs and ceremonies for the disposal of the body.</p> <p>The main principle, at the bottom of the Parsee custom of disposing of the dead and at the bottom of all the strictly religious ceremonies enjoined therewith, is this that the body, when the immortal soul has left it, should, preserving all possible respect for the dead, be disposed of in a way the least harmful and the least injurious to the living. For properly understanding the Parsee ceremonies that relate to the disposal of the body, one must look to the ancient Zoroastrian ideas of sanitation, segregation, purification, and cleanliness as expressed in the Vendidad, one of their Avesta Scriptures.</p> <p>The object of observances summed up in two words.</p> <p>As Prof. Darmesteter (Zend Avesta II) says, all the ceremonies of this order can be summed up in two words, which are the same as those which sum up</p>

	<p>likelihood for a married person than for an unmarried one to be able to withstand physical and mental afflictions and to lead a religious and virtuous life (Vd. 4:48, 49). We read in the Gathas (Y. 53:5): "I say (these) words to you, marrying brides and bridegrooms! Impress them in your mind. May you two enjoy the life of a good mind by following the laws of religion. Let each one of you clothe the other with righteousness. Then assuredly there will be a happy life for you.</p>	<p>today all the prophylactic measures in the case of an epidemic, viz., (1) to break the contact of the living with the real or supposed centre of infection; (2) to destroy this centre itself. Though all do not die of an infectious disease, it is dangerous and difficult to leave it into the hands of all, to distinguish which case is infectious and which not. So, for the sake of precaution and safety, it seems to have been enjoined, that all cases of death should be supposed as infectious, and that people should come into as little contact as possible with dead bodies.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>To help marriage is a meritorious act.</p> <p>Marriage being thus considered a good institution and well-nigh a religious duty, recommended by religious scriptures, a Parsee considers it a meritorious act to help his co-religionist to marry. The Vendidad (4:44) says: "If a co-religionist — be he brother or friend — comes to thee with a desire for a wife, get him married to a wife."2 To bring about the marriage of a maiden, who has reached her puberty, with a good righteous man, is considered to be very meritorious and an act of atonement for sin.</p>	<p>Washing the shroud, and the part of the house where the body is placed.</p> <p>When a person's case is given up, the relations begin to make preparations for the disposal of the body. At first, a part of the house on the down-floor, where the body is to be placed before its removal to the Towers, is washed clean with water. The shroud or the dress with which the body is to be covered is also washed beforehand in the house. The shroud or the dress with which the body is covered is white and made of cotton. It need not be new. Old clothes may be used for the purpose after being washed. Unnecessary wastage of clothes over the dead bodies is forbidden. (Vendidad, V. 60).</p> <p>Akhiânah.</p> <p>When a case is given up as hopeless, the relations send for two or more priests, who assemble round the sick bed of the dying person and say, for his benefit, the Patet, which is a prayer for the repentance of one's sins. The priests are paid in money and corn for their services. This is called the Akhiânah1 ceremony because during this ceremony, priests are presented with grain. This part of the funeral ceremonies is not generally performed. The origin of this custom seems to lie in the fact that a person must always say his repentance prayer [patet], and repent of his sins. If he is conscious and able, he must do so at the approaching moment of death. His near relations and friends may join in the last prayers. If the recital of the whole patet is not possible, the recital a short time before death, of the</p>

		<p>Ashem-Vohu formula by the dying person himself, if he is able, or by some relation, if he is unable, is considered meritorious. The Hadokht Nask (I, 31-32) says that the recital of the Ashem-Vohu formula² at the very end of life, praising good thoughts, good words, and good actions, and condemning evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions is, in point of greatness, goodness and excellence equal in value to the whole or the region of Khwaniras with its cattle and leading men. The purport of all this is to say that if a man at his dying moment could honestly say that he led a pious life and repented of all his sins, that life is worth more than the country of Khwaniras with all its riches.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>The authority of Herodotus.</p> <p>We learn also from Herodotus (Bk. I., 136), that in ancient Persia, the State encouraged married life. He says: "Next to prowess in arms, it is regarded as the greatest proof of manly excellence to be the father of many sons. Every year the king sends such gifts to the man who can show the largest number, for they hold that number is strength."³ Thus, from very ancient times, marriage is considered among the Parsees to be the most important event in one's life.</p>	<p>Communion with a few drops of the sacred Haoma juice.</p> <p>Upto a few years ago, a short time before death, a few drops of the consecrated haoma juice were poured into the mouth of the dying person. The haoma⁴ plant being an emblem of immortality, its juice is poured to impress an idea that, after all, the soul of a man is immortal. The haoma plant reminds one of "The Tree of Life" of the Christian scriptures (Genesis, II, 9) in the garden of Eden and of the Sidra or Lotus of the Mahomedan scriptures (The Qurân, LIII, 14-20: S.B.E., IX, p. 252). As the Tree of Life is guarded by the Cherubim and the Sidra by 70,000 angels, so the haoma-i saphid, or the White Haoma, is guarded by 99,999 Fravashis or the guardian spirits. Sometimes, instead of the juice of the haoma plant, if it was not available at hand, the juice of a few grains of pomegranate, the leaves of which are considered essential in some of the Parsee ceremonies, is dropped into the mouth of the dying person.</p> <p>The final bath.</p> <p>A short time after death, the corpse is washed throughout, first with a little application of <i>gaomez</i> and then with water, generally with well-water. A clean suit of clothes, washed at home, is then put over the body. It is afterwards destroyed and never</p>

		<p>used for any other purpose. The <i>kusti</i> or the sacred thread is then put round the body by some near or dear one, with the recital of the Nirang-i-kusti, or the <i>Ahura Mazda Khudae</i> prayer. The corpse is then placed on a cot. Then two persons keeping themselves in touch with the body sit close by, and somebody recites the Ashem Vohu prayer very close to the ear of the deceased. The relations then meet or embrace the deceased for the last time. In Persia, the person washing the corpse puts on woolen gloves.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>The religious part of the marriage ceremonies is originally Persian.</p> <p>After the several vicissitudes of fortune that the community has passed through, it is difficult to determine how many and which of the present several marriage customs of the Parsees are originally Zoroastrian or Persian. But this much can be said with well-nigh a certainty, that the strictly solemn or the religious part of the ceremony, wherein the priests take part, is more or less originally Persian. M. Harlez seems to be correct when he says on this point: "Nous ne trouvons pas non plus, dans ce qui nous reste des livres avestiques, de cérémonies particulières pour le mariage; il est probable cependant que l'origine de celles qu'observent encore les Parses modernes remonte aux temps les plus reculés.</p> <p>In the very commencement of the Ashirwad [asirvad] or the marriage Blessing-prayer, known as the Paêvand-nâmeh, and recited at the wedding ceremony, the officiating head priest says that the ceremony is "according to the rules and customs of the Mazdayasnian religion (avar dâd va âin-i-Din-i-Mazdayasni)." We gather from stray references in Herodotus (Bk. IX. 108) that the Achaemenians observed some ceremonies for marriage. Ferdowsi also refers to the existence of some marriage customs.</p>	<p>Contact stopped to prevent infection.</p> <p>After this time, the dead body is supposed to fall under the influence of Druj-i-Nasush, i.e., the evil influence of Decomposition or Destruction. It is considered that to touch the body then is dangerous for the living, lest they should catch contagion and spread disease. Only the corpse-bearers are allowed to come into contact with the body. If somebody else touches the body, he has to go through a process of purification or a sacred bath taken under the directions of a priest.</p> <p>Putting on of the shroud.</p> <p>The body is now given in charge of two persons who are generally trained to their work. They are first required to take a bath and put on a clean suit of clothes. They perform the Kusti,⁶ i.e., ungird the sacred thread and put it on again with a prayer, and then recite a part of the Srosh-baj prayer. Then holding a paywand between them they enter the room where the corpse is placed.</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>The marriageable age.</p> <p>According to the Avesta, a person came to manhood in ancient Iran at the age of fifteen (Yt. 8:13-14, Tir; Yt. 14:17, Warharan; Y. 9:5). The Pahlavi Bundahishn also gives the same age (Chap. 3:19, S. B. E. Vol. V., 16). So, fifteen was the marriageable age for males. For the females also it was 15 (Vendidad 14:15). The very fact, that in the Avesta we find brides praying for suitable husbands, shows that there were no early marriages (Yt. 5:87, Aban; Yt. 15:40, Ram; Y. 9:23). The Paywand-nameh, recited at present at the marriage ceremony, also shows that early marriages were never contemplated. The bride and [17] bridegroom are asked to express their consent after "truthful consideration" (Tâ andâzandi paêmân pa râst manashni pasand kardehid). The book of Herodotus also points to a grown-up age for marriage. The marriageable age at present is generally after 21 for males and after 16 for females. The Parsee Marriage Act enjoins 21 for males and 18 for females. When they are not of that age, the marriage certificate must be signed by the parents.</p>	<p>The Paywand.</p> <p>To hold a paywand means to be in close contact or touch with each other. This is done when two persons hold a piece of cloth or cotton tape between them. This is intended to show that they are associated or united in doing a thing and are ready to co-operate and sympathise with each other. When these two persons enter into the room, holding the 'paywand' between them, the two relations who are sitting by the side of the deceased leave their places and entrust the body to them. They place the body on the ground on a clean white sheet of cloth and put on the shroud over it. The whole of the body except the face is covered with cloth.</p> <p>Laying on the slab.</p> <p>The corpse is then lifted from its place by the above-mentioned two persons and put on slabs of stones in a corner of the front room. The hands are arranged upon the chest crosswise. In some of the towns of Gujarat, the old Avestic method of placing the dead body on a plot of ground previously dug in the house, instead of on slabs of stone is still in practice. The ground is dug out a few inches deep and a layer of sand is spread over it. The corpse is placed on the ground thus prepared. The body is placed on the ground or on the slabs in a position which would avoid the head pointing towards the North.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>The betrothal</p> <p>The nuptial ceremonies of the marriage day are preceded by several other ceremonies. When the match is arranged, an auspicious day is fixed for the betrothal. The new moon day, or the first day (Ohrmazd) of the Parsee month, or the twentieth day, over which Behram [Warharan], the angel of Victory, is believed to preside, are generally considered to be auspicious days. Nowadays, the parties generally fix such auspicious days or the days</p>	<p>The north side always avoided.</p> <p>In all the ceremonies of the Parsees, the north side is as a rule generally avoided. The children while going through the naojote [navjote] ceremony for the purpose of putting on the sacred shirt [sudre] and thread [kusti], the marrying couple going through the Ashirwad or marriage ceremony, and the priests in all their religious rites and ceremonies never face the North. This is due to the fact that the ancient Iranians, the ancestors of the Parsees, had a natural hatred for the North, from which side proceeded all</p>

most convenient to them. But still, it is not rare, especially in the Mofussil towns, for the parties to resort to Hindu astrologers to name one or more auspicious days for the betrothal or marriage or such other auspicious events.

Matches are generally arranged by the parents with the consent of the children, though, nowadays, there are many cases of marriages where the marrying parties make their own choice. In the latter case, they generally consult the parents. Mutual friends of the two families generally carry messages and bring about the arrangement. The Pahlavi Pand-nâmeh of Adarbad Mahraspandan recommends this process (§ 42). The marriages of the three sons of Faridoon and the marriages of Rustam with Tehemina and of Kaus with Soudabeh were, as we learn from Ferdowsi, thus arranged. Upto late, and even now to a certain extent, professional match-makers were not unknown.

On betrothal day, at first, the ladies of the bridegroom's family go to the house of the bride and make her money present in silver coins. Then the ladies of the bride's family go to the house of the bridegroom and make him a similar [18] present. These reciprocal presents of silver coins form the only important part of the ceremony.

The ladies return to their houses, after a little refreshment, mostly consisting of fish, sweets, curd, plantains, and sugar. The modern Parsee term for this ceremony is Adrâvvûn, but the older⁵ term is Nâm pâdvûn, which is derived from the Persian term 'Nâmzad kardan,' i.e., to name. It is so called from the fact that after the betrothal, the brides took the names of the bridegrooms.⁶ According to the Parsee custom, a girl's name is always connected with her husband's in religious ceremonies after the betrothal, even if, by some chance or accident, marriage does not take place. This shows that betrothal⁷ was considered to be a solemn ceremony for a marriage contract. Nuptial

kinds of dangers and evils whether climatic, physical or mental. Even the wind from the northern direction was believed to be stinking. The winds from the northern cold regions brought sickness and death in Persia. Again, the marauders from Mazenderan, Gilan, and other adjoining regions in the North brought destruction and death in many Iranian families. These people of the North were depraved and wanting in many moral qualities. On the other hand, the South was considered a very auspicious side. The winds from the South were healthy and invigorating. Coming from the South, they brought rain and plenty. The wind blowing from the south purified the atmosphere all round. The wind blowing towards the soul of a virtuous man, when it (the soul) passes on to Heaven on the dawn of the third night after death, was said to be sweet-scented and fragrant and to have come from the south. Owing to the belief based on these facts and considerations, the North was always avoided.

Drawing the Kasha, or the boundary line.

After placing the corpse on slabs of stones, one of the two persons, draws round the body three Kashas⁹ or circles with a metallic bar or a nail. This is intended to show that the ground within the circle is temporarily set apart for the corpse, and that nobody is to go to that part of the ground lest he should catch infection.

Separate apartments for the dead bodies.

In ancient Persia, almost all houses were provided with separate apartments for placing the corpse before its removal to the Towers of Silence [dahkma]. In the case of the poor who could not afford to have such separate apartments there was a separate house for the purpose in every street. The poor carried their dead to such houses before removing them to the Towers. "Ahura Mazda [58] said: 'In every house, in every street, they should make three katas (separate parts of ground) for the dead'

It is said that even now, such separate houses are

	<p>songs are generally sung on this occasion.</p>	<p>provided in the Parsee streets in Persia where the parties take their dead and perform the funeral ceremonies before removing them to the Towers of Silence. Such houses are known as "margzâd" [mortuary]. Up to late, some of the mofussil towns of Gujarat had such separate houses for the dead in Parsee streets. They were known as Nasâkhânâs, i.e., the houses for the dead bodies. Every Parsee town has a Nassâ-Khânâ, but now it is generally used as a depot for the biers, the slabs of stones above referred to, the shrouds and such other requisites for the removal of the dead. The Vohuman Yasht (2:36) speaks of it as Nasâi-kata</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>The Divô, or the kindling of a lamp.</p> <p>The next ceremonial occasion is that of Divô, i.e., a light. It is so called because early in the morning of a day fixed for the occasion, an oil lamp is lit in the house of each party.⁹ The ladies of each of the two families go in turn to the house of the other, and place a silver coin in the lamp there. This occasion is considered more important than that of the betrothal, because, on it, formal presents of clothes and rings are made. When the matches are arranged, the betrothal is hastily determined upon, to give a formal stamp, as it were, to the arrangement, The parties then have no time to prepare mutual presents and gifts; so, this second occasion, the day for which is fixed leisurely, is more important than the betrothal, for the formal presents of gifts, The first wedding rings are generally presented by both the parties on that day.</p>	<p>Their sanitary isolation.</p> <p>It is enjoined that the place to be chosen for such apartments or houses for the dead should be free from dampness, should be the least frequented by men and animals, and should be far away from the place where religious ceremonies are performed. The Vendidad (8:5) says: "Ahura Mazda said that (they must choose) in the house of a Mazdayasnian the cleanest and the driest place which is the least frequented by cattle and beasts of burden, by the fire of Ahura Mazda, by the barsom spread through piety and by the holy man". After having placed the body on one side of the ante-room, either on slabs or on a part of the ground dug and specially prepared, the two persons, who were up to now arranging all these things, now leave the house, still holding the paywand between them. They then finish the Srosh Baj prayer, a part of which they had recited before commencing their work.</p> <p>The Sagdid. Its object.</p> <p>One of the ceremonies is that of the Sagdid. The word 'Sagdid' is made up of sag, a dog, and did, sight, and means "the sight of a dog." A [59] dog, usually a four-eyed (Chathru-chashma) dog, i.e., a dog with two eye-like spots just above the eyes, is made to see the corpse.</p> <p>Fire kept burning in the room.</p>

		<p>After the first sagdid, fire is brought into the room in a vase and is kept burning with fragrant sandalwood and frankincense. This is done with a view to destroy the invisible germs of disease that may be floating in the air in the room where the corpse is placed before its removal to the Tower of Silence [dakhma]. We read the following in the Vendidad (VIII, 79, 80) about this sanitary use of fire: "O holy Zarathushtra! If one carries with purity (for the fire) the aêsma (i.e., the wood) of the plant Urvâsna, or Vohugaôna, or Vohukêrêti, or Hadhânaêpata¹⁶, or any other fragrant tree, the fire of Ahura Mazda goes to fight a thousand times against the invisible evil daevas¹⁷ in all the directions in which the wind spreads the fragrance of the fire.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>The Âdarni.</p> <p>The next important occasion is that of Âdarni, It is the occasion, on which, the dowry given by the bride's father, is presented to the bride-groom's family. On several other occasions of holidays between the betrothal day and the marriage day, several presents are sent to each other's family, mostly from the family of the bride to that of the bridegroom. The marriage occasion is one, when the mothers of the bride and the bridegroom, expect presents of clothes from their own parents. If the parents are dead, it is considered to be the duty of the brother or brothers to present a suit or suits of clothes to the sister. A nuptial song is generally sung on such an occasion.</p>	<p>Prayers by a priest.</p> <p>Then a priest sits before the fire and recites the Zend-Avesta till the time of the removal of the corpse to the Tower [dakhma], and keeps the fire burning. It is not absolutely necessary that a priest should recite prayers at this time. Any person in the house can recite prayers and keep the fire burning. The priest and all other persons are enjoined to sit at a distance of at least three paces from the corpse, so that in case the deceased died of an infectious disease, there may be no danger or risk to the health and life of the living. We read the following about this enjoinder: "O Creator of the material world! At what distance from the holy man (should the place of the corpse be)?" Ahura Mazda replied, "three paces."</p> <p>Time for the removal of the body to the Tower.</p> <p>The corpse may be removed to the Tower [dakhma] at any time during the day. As it is enjoined that "the Mazdayasnians should expose the body to the Sun," (Vd. 5:13), the removal of the body at night is strictly forbidden. If death takes place early at night, the body is removed the next morning; but, if it takes place late at night or early in the morning, it is removed in the afternoon. In the case of an accidental death, a long interval is generally allowed. The Vendidad (8:4-5) says, that in a such a case, the decomposition does not commence as early as in the</p>

		<p>case of a body that was suffering from illness, but commences after one Gah, or one period of the day; and so, it is not detrimental to the health of the living to keep the body some time longer.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>The fixing of an auspicious day.</p> <p>An auspicious day is fixed for the marriage. In some families, even now, it is the astrologer who determines which day is auspicious for the marriage.¹⁰ The new moon day and the full moon day are auspicious.¹¹ Tuesdays are inauspicious.¹¹ The marriage festivities generally last for four days. The first of these is called <i>mândav-saro</i>, when a twig of a tree, generally a mango tree, is planted near the door, symbolic of a wish for fertility.¹² The second and the third days are known as <i>Varadh-patra</i> days when religious ceremonies in honour of the dead are performed.</p>	<p>The corpse-bearers.</p> <p>About an hour before the time fixed for the removal of the body to the Tower [dakhma], two — or four if the body is heavier — <i>Nassâsâlars</i>,¹⁹ i.e., corpse-bearers, clothed in perfect white, enter the house, after having said and performed the <i>Padyab-Kusti</i>. All the parts of the body except the face are covered up. They put on <i>dastânek</i> (i.e., covering for the hand) over their hands. The exposed parts of the body are covered up to ensure their safety against catching infection through any uncovered part, should the deceased have died of an infectious disease. They enter the house holding a <i>paywand</i>²⁰ between them and carry an iron bier, called <i>gekân</i>,²¹ to remove the body. Wood being porous and therefore likely to carry and spread germs of disease and infection, its use is strictly prohibited in the funeral ceremonies. So, the bier is always made of iron.</p> <p>The number two plays a prominent part in all funeral ceremonies.</p> <p>The corpse-bearers must be at least two, even if the deceased were a mere infant that could be carried by a single person. "Nobody should carry the dead alone". If the body is heavy, it must be carried by four, six, eight, ten, or any such even number. A pair, or the number two, plays a prominent part in all the ceremonies for the disposal of the dead body and that pair always holds a <i>paywand</i> between them. After death, the body must never be left alone or in the company of only one person. After washing it, there must be always two persons sitting by its side. Again the persons, who put on the shroud and place it on slabs of stone in a corner of the house before its removal to the Tower [dakhma], must be two. We will see further on, that the priests who say the last funeral prayers at the house are also two. The</p>

		<p>persons who attend the funeral procession to the Tower also go in pairs [64] of two and two, holding a paywand in the form of a handkerchief between them. A single individual should never attend the funeral. The injunction of having pairs in all these funeral ceremonies is intended to create a view of sympathy and mutual help.</p> <p>The recital of the Bâj.</p> <p>The corpse-bearers, on entering the house, place the bier by The recital of the the side of the corpse and then "take the Baj."²² They then recite a formula in a suppressed tone which says:</p> <p>"(We do this) according to the dictates of Ahura Mazda, according to the dictates of the Amesha Spentas, according to the dictates of the holy Sraosha, according to the dictates of Adarbad Marespand [Mahraspandan],²³ and according to the dictates of the Dastur of the age.</p> <p>By the recital of this formula, known as the Dasturi formula, they declare that they undertake to perform all the ceremonies for the disposal of the dead as enjoined in the religious books and as directed by the Head-priest of the time. Then they sit silent by the side of the corpse. If they have at an any occasion to speak, they speak with a kind of suppressed tone, without opening the lips, which is said to be speaking in baj.</p>
10.	<p>The sacred bath.</p> <p>Coming to the ceremonies of the day of marriage itself, the bride and the bridegroom take in the morning or in the afternoon, a sacred bath with consecrated water.¹³ This sacred bath is known as nân.</p>	<p>The Geh-Sarna [geh-sarnu] prayer.</p> <p>Then follows the "Gêh-Sârânâ" ceremony, i.e., the recital of the Gatha. Its recital was intended as a sermon and exhortation to give moral courage to the survivors to bear up with fortitude the loss of the deceased and as a protection against the spread of disease. [65] We read the following on this point in the "Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda: 'O Ahura Mazda! Most beneficent Spirit! Holy Creator of the material world! How are we to stand against the druj (evil influence) which runs from the dead to the living? How are we to stand against the nasu (evil influence) which carries infection from the dead to the living?' Then Ahura Mazda replied: 'Recite those</p>

		<p>words which are spoken twice in the Gathas.' " The words referred to in this quotation occur in a passage in the beginning of the Ahunavaiti Gatha.</p> <p>In this Geh-Sarna ceremony, two priests perform the Padyab-Kusti, and, after reciting the prayers for the particular Gah, go to the chamber where the dead body is placed, and standing at the door or inside the door at some distance from the body, and holding a paywand²⁵ between them, put on the padan²⁶ over their face, take the baj²⁷ and recite the Ahunavaiti Gatha (Yasna 28-34) which treats of Ahura Mazda, his Amesha Spentas or immortal archangels, the future life, resurrection, and such other subjects. After reciting nearly half of the Ahunavaiti Gatha (up to 31:4), they stop for about a minute. The corpse-bearers now lift the corpse from the slabs of stone on which it is lying and place it over the iron bier. The two priests now turn towards the bier and recite the remaining half of the Ahunavaiti Gatha.</p> <p>Geh-sarnu ceremony of pregnant women.</p> <p>If the deceased person is a pregnant woman in the fifth month of her pregnancy when the child is supposed to have some life, the geh-sarna ceremony is enjoined to be performed by two pairs of priests. The sagdid, above referred to, is also by two dogs, one for [66] the woman and the other for the child. Again the body also is to be carried out of the house by two pairs of Nassasalars.</p> <p>The last look</p> <p>When the recital of the Gatha is finished, the final Sagdid³¹ is performed, and then the relations and friends of the deceased who have by this time assembled at the house, have a last look of the deceased. In such an assembly, the females assemble in the house, and the males outside the house or in the street. The males, one by one, pass before the corpse, have a last look, and out of respect make a bow, which process is called sijda.</p>
11.	The time of the performance of the religious	Removal from the house.

ceremony.

The Parsee marriages are generally performed in the evening, just a little after sunset.¹⁵ The bridegroom generally sits in the compound of the house or bungalow in a promiscuous place in the midst of the company of several male friends and relations. The bride and the lady guests are accommodated with seats within the building.

When all have had their last look and paid their respects, the corpse-bearers cover up with a piece of cloth the face of the deceased which was up to now open, and secure the body to the bier, with a few straps of cloth so that it may not fall on being lifted up and carried. They then carry the bier out of the house and entrust it to the Khândhiâs who are, as said above,³² another class of corpse-bearers whose only business is to carry the bier of the corpse on their shoulders from the house to the Tower [dakhma]. The number of these carriers varies according to the weight of the body to be carried. Before lifting up the body, these carriers also "take the baj" and arrange themselves in pairs of two holding the paywand between them.

Gomez, or cow's urine as a purifier or disinfectant.

Immediately after the removal of the body from the house, Gomez, i.e., the urine of the cow, is be-sprinkled over the slabs of stone on which the body was placed and over the way by which the corpse-bearers carried the body out of the house. The slabs of stone are now generally removed from the house immediately after the removal of the body.

The Gomez or cow's urine is spoken of as Nirang, because its application or use is generally accompanied by the recital of a nirang, i.e., a prayer formula. Cow's urine was believed by the ancient Zoroastrians to possess disinfecting properties. So, in order to destroy the germs of impurity and disease, if any, it was besprinkled on the place where the dead body was placed. For the same reason, cow's urine played a prominent part in cleaning impurities attached to things that came into contact with the decomposing matters of men and animals. Such things are first asked to be purified or washed with cow's urine and then with water. Utensils or articles of furniture made of wood, clay, or porcelain that come into contact with a decomposing body are condemned altogether. Being porous, they are held to have possibly caught the germs of disease from the dead body and are therefore considered to be unsafe

		for further domestic purpose
12.	<p>Marriage performed with éclat in ancient Iran.</p> <p>Marriage is considered to be an event that must be celebrated, not quietly, but with some éclat. It must be celebrated in the presence of an assembly¹⁶ (anjoman) who can bear witness to the event.</p>	<p>The Funeral Procession.</p> <p>When the bier leaves the house, out of respect for the deceased, all the male relations and friends of the family that have assembled at the house of the deceased, or at times only the elders, follow the bier for some [68] distance from the house or upto the end of the street. There, they make a last bow to the deceased and stand aside, giving way to those relations and friends who wish to accompany the funeral procession to the Tower of Silence [dakhma]. These follow the bier at a distance of, at least, thirty paces. The rest of the assembly now disperse. Before entering into their houses or places of business, they wash their face and other exposed parts of their body and perform the kusti. All those who go with the funeral procession to the Tower are clothed in full white dress. They arrange themselves in pairs of two, hold a paywand between them, take the baj and silently march to the Tower. The procession is headed by two priests. On this point we read in the Vendidad (VIII, 14, 19-21): "O Holy Creator of the material world! How does the road over which a dead man is carried become passable for cattle, etc.?" ... (Reply) "First, the Athravan (i.e., the priest) should pass by the road, reciting the victorious words (of Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Kem-na Mazda).</p> <p>The Disposal in the Tower.</p> <p>When the bier reaches the Tower, at first it is put on the ground outside and the Nassasalars uncover the face of the body. Those who have accompanied the funeral procession pay their respects and have a last look from a distance of at least three paces. Then sagdid is once more performed and that for the last time. In the meantime, the gate of the Tower which is kept locked with a metallic lock is opened. The Nassasalars who had fetched the corpse out of the house and entrusted it to the carriers and who have accompanied the corpse, now resume charge of the body. They lift up the bier and carry it into the Tower. They remove the body from the bier and place it on one of the 'pâvis'.³⁶ They then tear off the</p>

clothes from the body of the diseased and leave it (the body) on the floor of the Tower. We read on this point in the Vendidad (VIII, 10) "Two powerful persons may carry [69] him and place him naked without any clothes on this earth, on clay, bricks, stone and mortar." The body must be exposed and left partly uncovered, so as to draw towards it the eye of the flesh-devouring birds and to fall an easy prey to them. The sooner it is devoured, the lesser the chance of further decomposition and the greater the sanitary good and safety. The clothes removed from the corpse are never used for, any purpose whatever, but are thrown in a pit outside the Tower, where they are destroyed by the combined action of heat, air, and rain. In Bombay they are further destroyed with sulphuric acid.

On the Nassasalars completing their work in the Tower and on their locking the Tower, notice is given, by a clapping of hands by a servant, to all those who have accompanied the funeral procession and who have by this time taken their seats at some distance from the Tower, to say that the body is placed in the Tower. They all get up from their seats and finish the baj, i.e., recite the rest of the Srosh-baj, of which, before joining the procession, they had recited only a part. They now leave off the paywand and recite a short prayer which says: "We repent of all our sins. Our respects to you (the souls of the departed). We remember here the souls of the dead who have the spirits of the holy." They then apply cow's urine [gomez] to the exposed portions of their body and then wash them with water. They untie and regirdle the kusti with its usual formula, of prayer. Then some, especially the priests, say the Patet or the Repentance prayer, mentioning the name of the deceased in the last portion of the prayer and thus ask the forgiveness of God upon the deceased. As said above, the Vendidad enjoins that only two priests must attend the funeral procession with a view to direct and advise the adoption of the necessary rites and ceremonies. But generally, the family invites more than two priests to accompany the procession and to say the prayers at the Towers. All of them are paid for their services. This being done, all return home and generally take a bath

		before following their ordinary vocations.
13.	<p>The dress of the bridegroom. The bridegroom puts on the usual ceremonial dress — Jâmâ-pichhori — of the Parsees, which is a loose flowing dress, full of folds and curls.¹⁷ This flowing dress is always white in colour.¹⁸ The bridegroom holds a shawl in his hand, a shawl is considered in India a symbol of respect and greatness.¹⁹ He has the mark of a Kunkun²⁰ (red pigment) on his forehead.</p>	<p>The Tower [dakhma].</p> <p>A short description of the Tower of Silence³⁷ will not be out of place here. The Tower of Silence wherein the dead bodies are exposed to the sun and to the flesh-eating birds, is generally built on the top of a hill or on an elevated ground. We read on this point in the Vendidad: "O Holy Creator of the material world! where are we to carry the bodies of the dead? O Ahura Mazda! where are we to place them?" Ahura Mazda replied: "O Spitama Zarathushtra! on the most elevated place" (Vend. VI. 44-45). On such an elevated place, an isolated spot, away from human dwellings, is chosen for the Tower. Its construction all along is just in accord with the view held in the performance of the ceremonies for the disposal of the dead, viz., the sanitary view, which enjoins that, while disposing of the dead body with all respect due to the deceased, no injury or harm should be done to the living. The Tower is a round massive structure built throughout of solid stone. A few steps from the ground lead to an iron gate which opens on a circular platform of solid stone with a circular well in the centre.</p> <p>The Consecration of the Tower.</p> <p>The construction of a Tower is accompanied by religious ceremonies³⁸ which are performed at different times during the progress of the structure and are therefore divided into three classes:- (1) The ceremony of digging the ground. (2) The "Tana" ceremony, or the ceremony of laying the foundation. (3) The consecration ceremony after which the Tower is laid open for public use.</p>
14.	<p>The signification of the mark of kunkun on the forehead and of flowers.</p> <p>The red pigment mark on the forehead of a bride is always round and that on the forehead of a bridegroom is always long and vertical. The reason is this: the long vertical mark of the male symbolizes a ray of the sun, and the</p>	<p>The solicitude for the living at the bottom of all the ceremonies.</p> <p>We have described at great length the funeral ceremonies upto the time of the disposal of the body in the Tower. It appears, that at the bottom of a good many of them lies a great solicitude, on the part of the lawgivers who framed the rules and dictated the</p>

round mark of the female symbolizes the moon. A handsome man is compared by Oriental writers to the sun, but the beauty of a woman is always compared with that of the moon. The sun is always represented in ancient pictures, as a round disc with shooting rays. Again, the sun, through his rays, is a fructifying agent, but the moon is represented as a conceiving agent. She absorbs the rays of the sun. Just as the sun is a fructifying agent, and the moon a conceiving agent, so is man in his relation to woman. Hence it is that the mark on a man's forehead is long and vertical like the rays of the sun and that on a woman's forehead round like the moon.

The bridegroom has a garland of flowers round his neck as a symbol of sweetness and geniality. The bridegroom is called var-râjâ, i.e., husband-king. For this particular occasion of marriage, his position is taken to be elevated.

ceremonies, to attend to the sanitary good of the survivors. At first sight, the details may appear irksome, but from the standpoint of sanitation and health, most of them, though enjoined about 3,000 years ago, appear essential. Every precaution is enjoined, so that, in disposing of the dead body, no contamination or injury may result to the living. After a certain time after death, no man except the official corpse-bearers, is allowed to touch the dead body or to come into any contact with it. If somebody accidentally or unavoidably touch the body, he is enjoined to keep himself aloof from and not touch them before he bathes and undergoes a prescribed ceremonial of different washings.

Segregation and Disinfection.

Not only should a man not come into contact with the dead body, but even utensils and other articles of furniture should be kept away from the corpse. If wearing clothes have been defiled by the sweat, vomit, etc., of the dead, they should be altogether rejected and destroyed. If not defiled, they may be purified by the "Gomez" and water. If the clothes are made of leather they must be washed thrice with "Gomez," rubbed with dry earth thrice, washed with water thrice, and exposed for three months in the air before being used again. If they are made of woven cloth, which is more porous than leather and therefore likely to carry more germs of disease and infection, the above process of cleaning and washing must be repeated six times, and they must be exposed to the air for a period of six months. Even the clothes thus purified cannot be used again for religious purposes or for ordinary domestic purposes, but they can be used for other petty purposes.

Utensils for domestic purposes, if they have come into contact with a dead body, require to be washed several times according to the specific gravity of the metal of which they are made. If the utensil is made of gold, it requires one washing with "Gomez" and water and a rubbing with dry earth. An utensil of silver, which is more porous than gold and therefore likely to carry more contagion, requires two similar cleanings and washings. An iron one requires three,

		<p>a zinc one four, and a stone one six washings. An utensil of porcelain, wood or clay is to be condemned altogether (Vd. 7:73-75). In the same way, if accidentally a dead body happens to come into contact with stores of grain (Vd. 7:32-35) or of drinking water (Vd. 6:26-41), it is enjoined to reject and condemn a certain quantity in the near vicinity of the body.</p> <p>Thus, at the bottom of all religious injunctions and restrictions in connection with the funeral ceremonies and the disposal of the dead body, lies the sanitary principle of segregation, prevention of contamination and infection, and the idea of observing simplicity and equality.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Presents to the bride and bridegroom and to their parents.</p> <p>Some of the assembled friends and relations then make their presents to the bridegroom and his father. The presents mostly consist of shawls or rings or money in cash. The bride and her parents receive similar presents from their friends. Up to a few years ago, these presents, especially those in cash, were very common. Small presents of cash up to Rs. 5 were not necessarily paid into the hands of the parties but were given into the hands of a friend or relation, who acted as a receiver or collector for the occasion. He put down in a book the names of the donors and the amount of their money gifts. Such money presents used to pay off a part of the marriage expenses.²³ The memo kept by the receiver proved to be of use to the parties when, on similar occasions of marriages in the family of their friends, they had to make similar presents in return.</p>	<p>A few observations attended to in the house. Fire kept burning.</p> <p>After the removal of the body to the Tower [dakhma], all the members of the family are required to bathe. Fire is generally kept burning for three days at the spot where the body was placed before removal. Fragrant sandal [sandalwood] and incense are burnt over it. We have spoken above, about the good attributed to the fire in destroying the germs of disease lurking at the spot where the decomposing body was placed.</p> <p>Spot set apart.</p> <p>Again the spot, where the body was placed before removal, is generally set apart and not used for some time. Nobody is allowed to go on the spot for a period of ten days if the season at the time be winter, or for a period of thirty days, if the season be summer, when the decomposition and contamination are generally more rapid.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Marriage gift and dowry.</p> <p>It appears from the Avesta, that in old Iran, it was more customary for the bridegroom to give marriage gifts to the bride than for him to take from her. The duty of the father of the bride, and in his absence or death, that of the</p>	<p>Lamp and flowers.</p> <p>Near the spot where the body was placed, a lamp is kept burning for a period of ten days or thirty days, according as it is winter or summer. In a small pot full of water fresh flowers are kept and changed every morning and evening. On the expiry of the</p>

brother, was confined to that of presenting an earring (gaoshâvarê) to the bride. The sum of 2,000 silver dinars and two gold dirhems, referred to in the Pahlavi Paêwand-nâme, recited at the marriage, seems to be the average standard that an ordinary bridegroom of moderate means was expected to provide for his bride.

above period, the chamber is washed throughout.

Abstinence from meat diet.

For three days after death, the family abstains from meat and takes food chiefly consisting of vegetable and fish which is called "parhîzi" i.e., abstinence. Not only do the family, but even nearest and dearest friends abstain from meat diet. The abstinence is observed as a sign of mourning. Generally, no food is cooked in the house where death has taken place. The nearest relations of the family prepare the food for the bereaved family and send it over to their place.

On the custom of abstaining from meat diet during the first three days after the death of a member of the family, we find the following injunction in the Shayest Ne-Shayest (Chap. 17:1-3). "In a house where a person shall die, until three nights are completed, nothing whatever of meat is to be placed on a sacred cake (dron) therein and its vicinity; but these, such as milk, cheese, fruit, eggs, and preserves, are to be placed; and nothing whatever of meat is to be eaten by, his relations."³⁹ The Saddar says "In every habitation where anyone departs ... the relations should not eat meat for three days.

17.

Marriage processions.

An hour or two before the celebration of the marriage, the ladies of the bride's family and the bride's friends, form themselves in a procession, and carry the bridegroom, to his place, presents of clothes and some other valuables. The houses of the bridegroom and the bride have a kind of wedding powder called chauk spread over their thresholds on such merry occasions.²⁴ A nuptial song is again sung on such an occasion. They return to their place after this presentation. The assembly, then, forms itself into a procession, headed by the officiating priests and the bridegroom and followed by the ladies who carry with them what is called varni, i.e., a present from the var, (i.e., the bridegroom) to the bride. The

Ceremonies that relate to the soul of the deceased.

The soul sees a picture of its deeds.

According to Parsee Scriptures, the soul of a dead person remains within the precincts of this world for three days.⁴¹ In this state it sees before itself a picture of its past deeds. If it is the soul of a pious person, it sees a beautiful picture of its deeds in the past life in the form of a handsome, well-formed, strong damsel and feels happy and joyful. If it is the soul of a wicked person, it sees a horrible picture of its past deeds in the form of an ugly, ill-formed, weak woman, shudders and feels unhappy at the sight and is at a loss where to go.⁴² We read in the Hadokht Nask: "Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda, 'O Ahura Mazda, Beneficent, Spirit, Holy Creator of the material world! when a pious man dies, where

procession is sometimes preceded by a band of music. According to the Pahlavi Denkard, one of the objects of playing music on the occasion of a marriage is to inform the whole town, especially the neighborhood, that a marriage has been celebrated.

The procession goes to the house of the bride, where the marriage generally takes place. A nuptial song is generally sung on this occasion.

The procession goes to the place of the bride, and its members are accommodated with seats, the males in the compound and the females within the house. The door of the house of the bride is decorated with a hanging string of flowers, called toran (i.e., arch), and the sideposts which support the doors are marked with Haradh (turmeric) mixture.²⁷ This kind of decoration is observed on the door of the bridegroom's house also. A nuptial song is sung on this occasion.

dwells his soul for that night? ... Where for the second night? ... Where for the third night?' " (Yasht Fragment 22; Hadokht Nask, Chap. 2:1-18). Then Ahura Mazda replied, "It remains at the place of his body, singing the Ushtavaiti Gatha (song of congratulation), asking for blessedness thus: 'Blessedness to him to whom Ahura Mazda of his own will grants "blessedness!)

Number three symbolically sacred.

The soul of a man thus remains within the precincts of this world for three days. The number three is a sacred number, because it reminds one of the three principal precepts of the Mazdayasnian religion upon which the moral philosophy of the Zoroastrian religion turns. Think of nothing but the truth, speak nothing but the truth, and do nothing but what is right, and you are saved. Your good thoughts, good words, and good deeds will be your saviours in the next world. Therefore it is that, three days after death, the soul of a good man directs itself towards the paradise with three steps of Humata, Hukhta, and Hvarshta, i.e., good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. On the other hand, the soul of a wicked man directs itself to hell with three steps of Dushmata, Duzukhta, and Duzvarshta, i.e., evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions. We read in the Hadokht Nask: "The first step which the soul of the pious man advanced, he placed in Humata (good thoughts). The second step which the soul of the pious man advanced, he placed in Hukhta (good words). The third step which the soul of the pious man advanced, he placed in Hvarshta (good deeds)." (Yasht Fragment, 22:15; Hadokht Nask 2:34, Ibid, p. 314).

18.

Welcoming ceremonies before crossing the threshold.

After the assembly is seated, the bridegroom enters the bride's house. He is welcomed at the door by the mother of the bride. He is made to stand at the threshold where several ceremonies are performed to welcome him and to wish him good luck. A fresh Kunkun mark is made upon his forehead, and a little rice is

Sraosha as the protecting angel.

Now for the three days and nights that a soul is believed to remain within the precincts of this world, it is under the special protection of Sraosha [Srosh]. The Yazata or the angel Sraosha is a guardian angel guiding the souls of men. He is a guardian angel whom the Almighty has appointed to guide the souls of men while living and even when dead. The Yasna says: "O beautiful, holy Sraosha! protect us here in

stuck upon the moist Kunkun mark and thrown over his head. Rice is considered to be the symbol of plenty and prosperity. Hence the sprinkling of rice plays a prominent part on many occasions of joy for wishing good luck. The officiating priests also, in performing the religious ceremony, and in invoking the blessings of God upon the couple, sprinkle rice over them. Before the recital of the marriage blessings, the bride and the bridegroom also throw upon one another a handful of rice. Some fond mothers make the bride and the bridegroom eat a few grains of rice thus besprinkled over them in the marriage ceremony. An egg is then passed round his head three times, and then thrown upon the ground and broken. This seems to be the remnant of the old custom of animal sacrifice.²⁹ It signifies that if there be any evil destined for the person it may pass off to the egg and be destroyed with it. A cocoanut is then similarly passed round the head three times and then broken.³⁰ A little water is then poured in a tray, which is passed round the head three times, and then the water is thrown at the feet of the bridegroom. Once in the evening, the ladies of the bride's family present before the bridegroom a water-pot (called var-behendoo, i.e., a pot presented to the husband, (var), as a part of the dowry), and make him dip his hand in it. While doing so, he drops a silver coin into it as a return gift, and as a mark of his appreciation of their gift.³¹ At one time it was customary that the feet of the couple were washed with water just after the performance of the marriage ceremony. When Parsees began to put on English-fashioned boots, it being a little troublesome to remove the boots, the custom was to wash the tip of the boots with a little water. After the welcoming ceremonies on the threshold, the bridegroom is made to cross the threshold without placing his foot upon it. The bride also, when she goes to her husband's, is made to cross the threshold. The threshold is crossed with the right foot, which is always

these two lives, in these two worlds, in this world which is material, in that which is spiritual."

As Sraosha is the protector of the soul in this world, all the prayers of a Zoroastrian begin with a Srosh-baj, which is a prayer for the Khshnuman of (lit., for the pleasure of, i.e., for thanking) Sraosha. It is for this reason, that Srosh Yasht (Yasna 57) is generally recited by a Parsee at night before going to bed, to pray that his soul be under the protection of the angel when he is asleep.

The first three days' ceremonies at home.

As the soul is under the protection of Sraosha for three days after death, when it is still within the precincts of this world, the religious ceremonies for the soul of the dead during the first three days are performed in the name of, or with the Khshnuman of Sraosha. This angel is specially implored by the relations of the deceased to protect his soul. The Shayest Ne-Shayest says: "In all the three days, it is necessary to perform the ceremonial (Yazishn) of Srosh, for this reason, because Srosh will be able to save his soul from the hands of the demons for the three days; and when one constantly performs a ceremonial at every period (gah) in the three days, it is as good as though they should celebrate the whole religious ritual at one time".⁴³ We will now describe these ceremonies performed for the first three days in honour of Sraosha.

At the commencement of every gah, two or more priests and the relatives of the deceased say the Srosh-baj and the prayers of the particular Gah, and the Patet or the repentance prayer with the Khshnuman of Sraosha. At night, at the commencement of the Aiwisruthrem Gah, two priests perform the Afrinagan [79] ceremony in honour of Sraosha. They sit on a carpet face to face with a vase of fire and a metallic tray between them. The senior priest, who has the tray before him, is called "Zaoti" (from Zu, to perform a ceremony), or performer of ceremonies. The other, who has a vase of fire before him, is called the Atravakhshi, or the fire-priest. The metallic tray contains a pot of pure

	<p>considered auspicious.</p>	<p>water and a few flowers, eight of which are arranged in a particular order. Two of them point to the fire and the remaining six are arranged in two rows of three each, pointing to one another and in a line at right angles to the line in which the first two are arranged.</p> <p>The Zaoti begins the Afrinagan with what is called a Dibache, i.e., introduction, which is a prayer in the Pazand language, wherein he invokes the protection of the angel Sraosha upon the soul of the deceased, whom he names in the prayer. When the Dibache is finished, both the priests recite together the seventh Kardah (Av. Kereta) or section of the Srosh Yasht, which sings the praise of the angel for the protection it affords.</p> <p>The first three days' ceremonies at the Fire-temple.</p> <p>Besides these prayers and ceremonies, which are performed for three days and nights at the house of the deceased, the Yasna prayers, and sometimes the Vendidad with the Khshnuman of Sraosha are recited at an adjoining Fire-temple for three successive mornings and nights. These Yasna prayers and the Baj ceremonies with the Khshnuman of Sraosha, can be performed only at the Fire-temples.</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>The waiting for the bride.</p> <p>When the bridegroom enters the house to be married he is further welcomed with a song. Having entered the house, the bridegroom takes his seat first and waits for the bride, who comes in after a short time, to take her seat. The bridegroom sits on the right hand of the bride. The right-hand side is a place of honor, and so it is occupied by the husband who is considered to be the leader of the bride. The bridegroom and the bride take their seats facing the East. There are two stools on one side of each of the chairs. On these are placed two metallic trays full of rice, which is to be thrown by the officiating priests over the</p>	<p>The Uthamnu ceremony</p> <p>In the Uzerin Gah of the third day, a ceremony is performed which is called the "Oothamnâ" [Uthamnu] The friends and relatives of the deceased and a few priests meet together in an assembly. The particular prayers of the Gah, the Srosh Hadokht (Yt. 11) [80] and the Patet are recited. A Pazand prayer with the Khshnuman of Sraosha is recited, wherein the name of the deceased is announced and the protection of Sraosha is implored for him. This is an occasion for the announcement of charities. This ceremony and this assembly are very important, because, at the end of the ceremony, the relations and friends of the deceased generally announce donations to charity funds in the naiyat or memory of</p>

couple while reciting their marriage benedictions. On the stool by the side of the chair on which the bride is to take her seat, stands a small metallic pot containing ghee (clarified butter) and molasses.

the deceased and to commemorate his name. The Parsee community of India has given many lacs of rupees in public charity. Of this sum, a large part was announced at these funeral gatherings of the third day after death.

The custom of commemorating the name.

The Parsees have another custom of commemorating the name of a deceased person if he be a great public benefactor. At the conclusion of the above "Oothamna" ceremony on the third day, the head priest generally, or in his absence an "akâbar," i.e., a leader of the community, proposes before the assembled Anjoman, i.e., the public assembly, that the name of the deceased public benefactor, whose benefaction or good deeds he enumerates, be commemorated by the community consenting to remember the name of the deceased in all the public religious ceremonies in the Dhup-nirang recital. This proposal is sometimes seconded by somebody, or very often it is just placed before the assembly without any formal seconding. When nobody opposes that proposal, silence is taken as consent, and thenceforth the name of the deceased is recited and his soul is remembered in all public religious ceremonies. If the deceased public benefactor has done benevolent acts for the good of the whole Parsee community, in whatever part of the world they be, his name is recited and remembered by the whole community. If the deceased has done good and benevolent acts for the good of the community of his own particular town or district, the Anjoman of that town or district alone begins to invoke his name in the religious ceremonies. For example, the name of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the first Parsee Baronet, who [81] rose from very poor circumstances to be a merchant prince of India, and who gave large sums of money in charity, not only for his own co-religionists but for all sections of the mixed community of India, is remembered in the religious ceremonies by the whole Parsee community of India.

This custom⁴⁵ is a very old one. It had its origin in the old Avesta times. The Frawardin Yasht contains a

		<p>long list of the departed worthies of old Iran who had, before the time when the Yasht was written, done some benevolent acts for the good of the Mazdayasnian community. The Afrin-i Rapithwin, written, later on, in the Pazand language, contains a few names of such illustrious departed worthies.</p>
<p>20.</p>	<p>Fire.</p> <p>A servant stands there holding a censer with burning fire in one hand, and a little frankincense in the other. On the two stands, there are two burning candles, one, by the side of the bridegroom, and the other, by the side of the bride.</p> <p>Marriage witnesses.</p> <p>Then two persons are made to stand before them, one by the side of the bridegroom and the other by that of the bride. These are the marriage witnesses. The nearest relations generally stand as witnesses. It is usually married persons, not bachelors, who stand as marriage witnesses.</p> <p>The ceremony proper.</p> <p>As to the ceremony itself, we find, both from the ancient writings and the modern customs, that the following are requisite for a proper marriage.:-</p> <p>1) The marriage should be celebrated before a specially-called assembly (anjoman jasta-isted) which need not be very large. As the later tradition says, five persons may for the purpose form an anjoman or assembly. The assembled guests served, as it were, as further witnesses to the marriage.</p> <p>(2) The officiating priest questioned the marrying couple whether they consented to be united in marriage.</p> <p>(3) He united them by joining their hands, a</p>	<p>The different formulae for commemorating the names of the deceased.</p> <p>The formulae used for this purpose have varied at different times. The formula used in the Frawardin Yasht is: "We invoke the Fravashi...." For example, "We invoke the Fravashi of the holy Yima of Vivanghana." The formula used in the Pazand Afrin-i Rapithwin is, "May the holy spirit of ... be one with us." For example, "May the holy spirit of Emperor Kai-Vishtasp be one with us in ceremony." The formula used now in the Pazand Dibache of the Afrinagan is, "May ... so and so ... of pious soul be remembered here." For example, "May Behedin⁴⁶ Jamshed Behedin Rustam⁴⁷ [82] of pious soul be remembered here. The honour of thus remembering the name of a deceased person in public religious ceremonies was considered to be the greatest honour that a grateful community could bestow upon a person after his death for the good that he had conferred upon his fellow-brethren.</p> <p>The adoption of a son.</p> <p>If the deceased is of the age of fifteen and has left no son, it is necessary that a son should be given to him in adoption. The adopted son generally belongs to a nearly-related family. The name of the son thus adopted is declared publicly before the assembly. We find no reference to the system of adoption in the Avesta books. It is the Pahlavi works that refer to it. But the desire to have a son adopted if there is no son of one's own, naturally follows from the desire to have a son of one's own, as alluded to in the Avesta. An Iranian was to aim at a married life and to have a son, and not only to have him but to educate him well. If he did his duty towards his children well, and if being well brought up morally, they performed good acts, he, as a consequence of, or as a</p>

process known as Hâthêvârô, i.e., hand-fastening. A symbolic knot also played a prominent part in the ceremony.

(4) The process of uniting them was followed by a benediction which was accompanied by a sprinkling of rice or other things.

Preliminary ceremonies. Tying the marriage knot.

Before being seated by each other's side, the bride and the bridegroom are first seated opposite each other, separated by a piece of cloth held between them as a curtain. Now begins what we may call the religious ceremonies. Two priests present themselves for the performance of these ceremonies. The senior officiating priest gives the right hand of one into the right hand of the other. Then a piece of cloth is passed around the chairs of both so as to enclose them in a circle. The ends of the cloth are tied together. This is, as it were, strictly speaking, the tying of the marriage knot. This is done with the recital of the sacred formula of "Yatha Ahu Vairyo.

Hathêvârô, i.e. hand-fastening.

After tying the knot of the ends of the cloth, which, as it were, encloses them into a circle of unity, the priest fastens with raw twist their right hands which are grasped by each other. This rite is called Hathêvârô, i.e., hand-fastening.⁴⁵ The above-sacred formula is recited during this rite also. It is the family priests who are entitled to the fee of hand-fastening, even if the ceremony is performed by other priests.⁴⁶

In the ceremony of hand-fastening, the raw twist is put round the hands seven times.⁴⁷ After fastening the hands, the raw twist is passed around the pair seven times, and then, finally, it is passed seven times around the knot of the cloth which passes around their chairs.

recompense for, his carefulness to do his duty, was to participate in the righteousness which resulted from the good deeds of the children. The Shayest Ne-Shayest says, "one is to persevere much in the begetting of offspring, since it is for the acquisition of many good works at once; because in the Spend and Nihadum Nasks, the high priests have taught that the duty and good works, a son performs, are as much the father's as though they had been done by his own hand." (Shayest Ne-Shayest, Chap. XII, 15).⁴⁸ Thus a son was considered a blessing from several points of view. His good [83] actions were expected to shed lustre upon the good name of the father. Again, he would look after the family interests. He would perform the necessary religious rites of his parents. For all these reasons, an Iranian looked at a son as a great blessing. So, failing a son, he generally wished to adopt one.

The passage of the soul to the other world on the fourth day.

The dawn after the third night after death is considered a great and solemn occasion. As we said above, the soul of a man remains within the precincts of this world for three days. On the dawn after the third night, it goes to the other world. The soul passes over a bridge called Chinwad.⁴⁹ We read in the Vendidad: "The soul goes to the holy Chinwad Bridge created by Mazda, which is an old path of immemorial times and which is for the wicked as well as for the holy. There, they ask the soul (to account) for its deeds done in this material world."

The Chinwad Bridge and Mithra the Judge.

The bridge is guarded by the angel Mithra. The Vendidad says: "(When) the third night ends and the dawn shines, the well-armed Mithra appears at the sufficiently happy mountain." (Vd. 19:28). This angel who is known in the later books as Mihr Dawar, i.e., Mihr the Judge, is assisted by Rashnu, the Angel of Justice, and Ashtad, the Angel of Truth. They judge a man's actions done in the past life.⁵⁰ If his good deeds [84] outweigh even by a small particle his misdeeds, his soul is allowed to pass over the bridge to Paradise. If his good deeds are equal to

	<p>During this process, the sacred prayer of Yatha Ahu Vairyo is recited.</p>	<p>his misdeeds the soul goes to a place called Hameshta-gehân.⁵¹ (Vend. XIX, 36). If his misdeeds outweigh his good deeds, even by a particle, he is cast down into hell.</p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>The union.</p> <p>At the end of this ceremony, at a signal given by the senior priest, the servant who holds the fire-vase places frankincense on the fire. At this signal, the curtain of cloth, which is held between the couple, is dropped, and the couple throws on each other a few grains of rice which they hold in their left hands. This throwing of rice is accompanied by a clapping of hands by the friends and relations who have assembled there.</p> <p>The above ceremony of holding the cloth curtain between the bride and the bridegroom, and then dropping it after the fastening of the hands, signifies that the separation that hitherto existed between them no longer exists now, and that they are now united into the bond of matrimony.⁴⁸ As long as the curtain was held, they sat opposite each other, but on its removal, they are made to sit side by side. This also signifies that they, who were up to now separate, are now united together.</p> <p>The putting on of raw twist around the couple seven times also indicates union. The raw twist itself can be easily broken, but when several threads are twined into one, they cannot easily be broken. So it signifies that the tie of union into which the couple is now bound may not easily be broken.</p> <p>The throwing of rice.</p> <p>The throwing of the rice by the marrying couple upon each other is watched with great interest by their friends, especially by the ladies, who urge their respective friends, the bridegroom or the bride, to look sharp and throw the rice first when the signal is given. The one that throws rice first over the other is</p>	<p>Ceremonies at the dawn of the fourth day.</p> <p>Thus, the dawn after the third night after death is the occasion when the soul of the man is judged by Mihr Dawar, the Judge, assisted by Rashnu Rast, the Angel of Justice, and Astad, the Angel of Truth. Therefore it is considered a very important and solemn occasion for the performance of religious ceremonies for the soul of the deceased. The ceremonies performed in the Uzerin gah on the previous day are repeated, and the Afrinagan and Baj prayers and ceremonies are performed in addition. This being the time of the judgment of the man's deeds, his relations and friends pray for God's mercy on the soul of the deceased. Man is liable to err, and therefore they implore the blessing and mercy of the Almighty on this particular occasion, when his deeds are judged by the angel Mihr assisted by Rashnu and Astad.</p> <p>The Baj ceremonies on this occasion are recited in honour of the angels who have an important share in connection with the occasion. The first Baj is in honour of the angels Rashnu and Astad together, who help the angel Mihr. The second is in honour of Ram-Khvastra, who is the angel presiding on the rarified atmosphere or ether. This is because when a man dies, the soul of a good pious man passes away to the higher regions through, or with the help of, rarified air. The third Baj is in honour of Ardafarosh, <i>i.e.</i>, in honour of the spirits of all the departed souls, whose rank the particular deceased, for whom the ceremony is performed, has joined. The fourth Baj is in honour of Srosh who has guided and guarded the soul of the deceased in its sojourn to the other world after death. When the Baj of Ardafarosh is recited, a suit of white clothes, together with the sacred bread and other sacrificial articles, is consecrated by the priest. This suit of clothes is called "Shiâv." It is the <i>Vastra</i> in the</p>

said to win. This is, as it were, a race of love. "Who won, the bridegroom or the bride? is a question often heard in the assembly. This is to signify that one who throws rice first, thereby indicates that he or she will be the foremost in loving and respecting the other. The clapping of hands expresses the approval and goodwill of the assembly for the union. The priests also, during the recital of the benedictions, throw rice over the marrying couple. To throw rice or some other thing over the marrying couple as a symbol of good luck and prosperity seems to be an old custom. Ferdowsi refers to it in the case of Zal's marriage (akik va zabarjad bar afshândand).

The marriage ritual repeated at midnight.

The marriage ritual is repeated at midnight. Anquetil du Perron says that it is a remnant of the old custom of Persia where, in the town of Kerman, the marriage ceremony was performed at midnight. In many families, the practice of repeating the ceremony at midnight and of the address in Sanskrit is not resorted to now. The performance of the above ceremonies and the recital of the address, complete, what we should call, the solemn part of the celebration of marriage. But there are certain other customs and observances, which, though very rare in Bombay, are observed to a certain extent in the Mofussil towns. It is the ladies who observe them. Moreover, they are now rather looked on more with an idea of merriment than with that of any solemnity.

"Washing the feet."

The next rite is that of "washing the feet" of the couple with water. That was more practicable about forty years ago when almost all Parsees put on native shoes without stockings. But now, owing to the inconvenience of taking off English shoes and stockings, only the front tip of the shoes is washed with a little water. The significance of the custom may be that of washing away all past mistakes and driving

word *Vastra-vata* of the Frawardin Yasht: "Who will praise us ... with clothes in hand?" (Frav. Yasht XIII, 50). This suit of clothes is generally given to the priest or to, the poor.

Ceremonies on, and after, the fourth day.

The other principal occasions, on which the Afrinagan-Baj ceremonies are enjoined to be performed in honour of the dead, are the "Chehârum," "Dehum," "Siroz," and "Salroz", i.e., the fourth day, the tenth day, the thirtieth day and a year after death. The following passage of the Shayest Ne-Shayest speaks of the above-said ceremonies of the dawn after the third night and of subsequent ceremonies:

"And after the third night, at dawn, one is to consecrate three sacred cakes (dron), one for Rashnu and Astad, the second for Vae, the good, and the third for the righteous guardian spirit (ardâi fravard); and clothing is to be placed upon the sacred cake of the righteous guardian spirit.... And the fourth day the ceremonial (Yazishn) of the righteous guardian spirit is to be performed; and afterwards are the tenth day, the monthly, and, then, the annual ceremonies.

<p>away all evils and misfortunes. More probably, it signifies a kind of welcome. In India, visitors who come from some distance, are first given some water to wash their feet soiled by a long walk. At times, a lady hid the shoe thus removed it, and did not return it unless paid a rupee.</p>	
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