

C H A P T E R - I V

RITUAL DRINKS IN THE IRANIAN RITUAL CEREMONIES

THE YAZISHNA CEREMONY - HAOMA CEREMONY -

The Miscellaneous chapter provides a comprehensive treatment of the concept of Haoma in the Avestaic context - the four Haoma-s, its medicinal qualities, its significance from the religious stand-point. So, under this head, it would be worth tracing the ritualistic preparation of the haoma-juice which is known as the Yazishna Ceremony or the Haoma ceremony.

According to Yasna (IX.3.10) the Haoma cult forms the most important part of the Zoroastrian ceremonies, or rather.... it is impossible to perform any great religious ceremony without the Haoma sacrifice.¹

From this it can be gathered that the whole of the grander Mazdayasnian ritual revolves round the Mazdean Theology of Haoma representing everlasting life.²

Moreover an analogous if not an identical ceremony of the Haoma was known even before the age of Zarathushtra, despite there being no direct reference to it in the Gathic

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1. Neryosangh's Sanskrit version of the Hōm-Yasht-Yasna IX-XI; tr. by Unwala J.M., Vienna, 1924, p.42.
 2. Modi J.J., The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees, Bombay, 1937 (1922), p.303.

scriptures. A passage of the Haoma Yasht (Yasna Ha IX-X) may be provided wherein Vivanghat (Skt. Vivasvat) father of Yima (Jamshed) was the first to perform this ceremony.³

It is noteworthy that the inner liturgical services comprising of the Yasha or Yazishna, the Visparad, Vendidad and Bāj - generally spoken of as pāv-mahal (see Appendix I, technical terms) are undertaken in a separate place in the fire-temple especially allotted for them; known as "Dar-i-Meher". The section of the Dar-i-Meher where these pāv-mahal ceremonies are performed constitute the Yazashna-gāh or Urvis-gāh or Hindhorā.

The priests who perform such ceremonies are spoken of as the Yaozdathragar Mobads or priests who are purifiers and who have also observed the Barashnum or the highest religious purification. (See Appendix I Technical terms).

The Yasna of which Yazishna is a later form is derived from Av. /yaz = to worship, invoke or praise. It is the same as the Skt. yajña from /yaj = to worship, to sacrifice.

The Yasna is a long prayer accompanied by certain rituals and things presented as symbols. It includes the

3. Hodivala S.K., Indo-Iranian Religion, Bombay, 1926, p.5.

praise of God, invoking His blessings and succour along with His Archangels and all other natural creations. This Yasna prayer of seventy-two chapters known as Hā-s is recited along with certain rituals by the two priests - the Zaotar and the Raspi or Ātravakhshi, who are to observe meticulous cleanliness.

Yasna is celebrated in two parts, viz., the Paragna and the Yasna proper. The word Paragna comes from para - (Av. before or fore) and Skt. yajña (Av. yasna) meaning the recital or ritual that comes before or precedes the Yasna proper.⁴

The Paragna ceremony is generally performed by the Ātravakhshi - the assistant priest, who lays down the table with certain principal or essential ceremonial implements and requisites, for the Zaotar - the main officiating priest to carry on with the Yasna ceremony proper. The first of the two preparations of haoma juice prepared in this ceremony is partaken of by the Zaotar at the end of Yasna Ch.XI.

4. Modi J. J., op.cit., p.252.

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The liturgical apparatus⁵ or requisites for the Yasna ceremony are the following :

- (A). The Khwān or stone-slab (3 in number).
- (B). Metallic requisites known as Astāmā or Ālāt i.e. metallic utensils or instruments of brass or at times silver like -
 - (a) Hāvanim (mortar).
 - (b) Lālā (pestle) i.e. mortar and pestle.
 - (c) Tashta i.e. chalice or plates and cups.
 - (d) Two Māhrui i.e. crescent-shaped stands.
 - (e) Barsam - vegetable twigs or metallic wires.
 - (f) Varac-ni-viti i.e. a ring entwined with the hair of the sacred bull.
 - (g) Kāplo - a knife.
 - (h) Kuṇḍī and other vessels for water.
- (C) Organic requisites -
 - (a) Aiwyāonghana - the date palm leaf.
 - (b) Urvaram-twig of a pomegranate tree.
 - (c) Jivam - fresh milk of a goat.
 - (d) Darūn - the sacred bread.
 - (e) Goshūdā - clarified butter.
 - (f) Haoma - twigs of the Haoma plant.

5. Ibid, p.253.

(D) Zaothra or Zor-consecrated water.

(E) Fire and its requisites - (a) fire, (b) Afarganium - a vase to hold the fire, with its accompaniments the ladle and the tongs. (c) Aēsma-bui i.e. the fragrant fuel.

The Preliminary Preparation -

At this stage, one of the two priests participating in the Yasna ceremony, the one with the khūb (i.e. ritual for qualification) either small or great duly observed, prepares and lays out certain principal and essential requisites, described below:

Barsam - It is derived from Av. barsam, Skt. br̥h or br̥mh = to grow, and is a symbol of God's vegetable creation.

Its association with the haoma and jivam ceremonies (Haōmayo gava baresmana) is very ancient and existed even in the times of Zarathushtra. An essential requisite of the inner liturgical religious rites, wherein various numbers of metallic barsam - brass or silver wires are required for the different ceremonies which have replaced the earlier use of twigs of a particular tree as barsam. It is generally identified with the barhi-s known as the kuśa-grass used in the various brahmanical ceremonies.

The performing priest with khūb (i.e. ritual for qualification) having made these metallic wires pāv (i.e. ceremonially pure), along with the metallic utensils, proceeds to tie the barsam, with a strip of leaf of the date-palm, known as aiwyāonghana. It is derived from the Av. aiwi and yāonghana 'to put on' denoting a putting round about the barsam to tie it, as in the Yasna liturgy. The date-tree being essential in the liturgical services, it is found in the compound of every fire-temple.

Having thrice washed the desired leaf of the date-palm to the recital of the khshnaothra formula, the officiating priest, cuts off the leaf and carries it in a water-pot to the Yazishna-gāh, where it is divided into six thin strips and then into two groups of three each, twisted into a string, knotted at both ends. Placed in a clean, pāv metallic cup, it is used for tying the barsam.

The separate twigs or barsam wires represent the various parts of creation. The Pahlavi commentary of the Yasna (Ch.IX.26) refers to the main object of the aiwyāonghana being of ayokardgih, that is unification with nature.⁶ So the strips of the leaf of the date-palm put around the

6. Ibid, p.275.

separate twigs or barsam wires, unite them into one bundle, signifying the unity of creation of nature.

Next, the priest undertakes the preparation of the urvaram or pomegranate twigs used along with the haoma twigs, for the ceremony. Urvaram is derived from the Av. urvara tree, specially applied to the pomegranate twig in the liturgical services.... The Dātistan-i-Dini (Ch.XLVII.16) specializes the pomegranate as the urvaram or as 'the tree' wherein it is called hadhanapag (Av. hadhānaepata) i.e. evergreen from the Skt. 'sada' - 'hada', i.e. 'ever' and from 'nip' or 'nap' to be green. The pomegranate fruit had a religious significance in connection with several oriental cults.⁷

This evergreen plant is considered to be an emblem of immortality of the soul and a symbol of plenty and prosperity as it contains a number of grains within itself. Hence the pomegranate symbolizes vegetable creation especially the fruit-growing trees also the immortality of the soul and the fecundity of Nature.

The priest having washed and purified the particular pomegranate twig, with the pāv water cuts it off with the

7. Ibid, p.267-277; also refer Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.XIX, p.442.

three recitals of the Khshnaothra prayers and places it in a metallic cup in the Yazishna-gāh...where it is used with the haoma and jivam in preparing the haoma-juice.⁸

Probably, the use of the stem-pieces of the pomegranate in the preparation of the haoma extract adds to it, the clinical properties of stem-bark.⁹

Jivam or the goat's milk is the next necessary ingredient which deems preparation. It is an abbreviation of gam jivyām (literally the 'living product of the cow', i.e. fresh cow's milk, the word gāo or gao (Skt. go) suggesting a product of the cattle.

The priest draws the milk thrice into the pāv metallic cup to the invocatory formula in honour of the angel Gosh or Drvāsp who presides over the bovine creation.

No Zoroastrian ritual or religious ceremony is complete, without the presence of fire, burning over the metallic censer

8. Ibid, p.278.

9. Shehriar K.C., "Scientific Assessment of Haoma Extract of Yasna Ceremony"; Spl. issue of the Golden Jubilee of the Memorial at Sanjan and Birth Centenary of Late J.J. Vimadalal, Bombay, 1971, p.111.

or vase called afarganium accompanied by the chamach (a ladle) and a chipio (tongs) for feeding the fire with fuel known as aēsma-bui consisting of sandalwood-pieces and frankincense. So the priest kindles the fire and places aēsma-bui near it.

He also washes all the necessary ālāt (sacred utensils), puts them in a kunḍi, placed on the khwān or stone-slab.

Varc-ni-Viti - The ring around which the hair (varc) of a white bull are entwined is a necessary requisite. Hair kept for such purpose may only be used as long as the bull is alive. At each performance of the Haoma ceremony, the ring with the hair is purified before use. It is placed in a small metallic cup, before the officiating priest who purifies it (prior to preparing the Zor water) with a ten-times repetition of the recital of the hundred and one names of God in bāj (suppressed tone). It serves for straining the haoma juice... Thus varc or hair is spoken of in the Avesta (Visparad X.2) as Varesa Haoma angharezān i.e. the varc or hair for straining the haoma.¹⁰

Having placed the varc over the strainer (surākhdār tashta) or 'perforated plate', with a triple repetition of the triad words humata hukhta, hvarshta, the haoma juice is poured through the strainer. On each, recital of the word

10. Modi J.J., op.cit., p.271.

hukhta the haoma juice is poured into the cup of Zaothra water, whereas with each recital of the word hvarshta the haoma-water is allowed to pour into the mortar.¹¹

All the juice in the mortar, which is a mixture of the Zaothra water and haoma juice along with the urvaram twigs, is poured through the strainer, from whence it passes into a cup.

Next, the priest lets a few drops of the prepared and collected haoma juice fall over the milk plate (jivām-no-tashtō).

It is at this stage, that the other priest, who is to join in the recital of the Yasna and to act as the Zaota, enters the Yazishna-gah, reciting the Ashem Vohū and a certain number of Yathā ahu Vairyo-s. He goes before the khwān of fire and purifies or consecrates the fire (Yasna IX.1).

Unwala J.M. mentions that when the Rathwi has pressed out the haoma juice the Zaota must clean with water the stone-pedestal of the fire-altar on all sides while reciting three Ashem Vohū-s.¹²

11. Ibid, p.292.

12. Neryosangh's Sanskrit version of the Hom Yasht (IX-XI)
tr. by Unwala J.M., Vienna, 1924, p.2.

Then the priest who had performed the ceremony of straining the haoma rises from his seat, places the cup containing the prepared and strained haoma-juice in a niche of the adjoining wall.

It is interesting to note, that the residual remnants in the perforated saucer after filtering the haoma-juice, becomes the symbol of the rejection of the evil ones - altogether not mentioned in the ritualistic injunction.¹³

Then the Darūn (sacred bread) a flat unleavened round bread made of wheat flour and ghee - a necessary requisite for the celebration of various ceremonies is brought out. It is the later form of the Av. Draonangha (literally that which makes strong from dhru = to be strong, to sustain. It is prepared by members of the priestly class muttering the words, humata, hukhta and hvarshta (good thoughts, good words, good deeds).

In the liturgical service of the Yasna, while jivam is the fresh milk Goshuda or ghee, is a product of the cow's milk which accompanies the Darūn. It is derived from the Av. guesh hudhao which literally means the product of the well-created cow. A small quantity of it is placed over the Darūn and eaten as chāshni.¹⁴

13. Ibid, p.70.

14. Modi J.J., op.cit., p.281.

In the earlier part of the discussion, the reference to straining of the haoma-juice came in by way of explaining the use of the varc (hair) and the surākhdār-tashta used for straining the haoma juice.

It is noteworthy that in ancient Iran, the haoma twigs were plucked in the same way as the urvaram, reciting the propitiating formula in honour of the angel Haoma. Now-a-days dry branches of Haoma are brought from Persia, where they grow on mountain-slopes. As they are very rare in India, they are thriftly used for ritualistic purposes.¹⁵

For the ceremonies Haoma stems are obtained from young plants growing in the hilly regions of Quetta and Persia.¹⁶

It is noteworthy that such haoma-twigs procured from Persia are not used directly for ritual ceremonies. They are washed and purified and laid aside for thirteen months. A qualified priest takes a quantity, washing and purifying the twigs with water, to the recitation of the khshnaothra Ahurah Mazdao, Ashem Vohu - prayers. Then they are kept in a metallic box, similarly washed and purified, for thirteen

15. Neryosangh's Sanskrit version of the Hom Yasht : Yasna (IX-XI), Unwala, J.M., Vienna, 1924, p.43.

16. Professor Shehriar K.C., "Scientific Assessment of Homa Extract of Yasna Ceremony" in the Spl. Issue of the Golden Jubilee of the Memorial at Sanjan and Birth Centenary of late J.J.Vimadalal, Bombay, 1971, p.10

months and thirteen-days before being used. Thus they can be used, several years later.

The Vendidad (VI.42-43) enjoins the purification of these haoma-twigs which come in contact with filth and impurities. Again the Vendidad requires the twigs to be laid aside for one year.¹⁷

With the collecting of the required implements mentioned above and placing them as required, the Paragna prayers are commenced upon. Having made the water-pots 'pāv', the vessels are placed on the khwān (stone-slab), made pāv earlier. The barsam, aiwyaonghana, haoma-twigs, varac-ni-viti are made pāv and kept ready as described earlier.

Straining of the Haoma Juice -

On the recital of a certain section of prayers the priest brings the Hāvanim (metallic mortar) near him and places the haoma and urvaram twigs together with the Zaothra water. It may be noted that the goat's milk (jivam) is included at the second straining of the juice. He pounds them with the pestle (lālā) reciting certain prayers. The juice thus prepared, is then strained through the nine-holed chalice (surākhdār tashta

17. Modi J.J., op.cit., p.287.

and varc-ni-viti and then partaken of by the officiating-priest, Zaotar later on in the Yasna proper. Having placed the jivam and Darun in their respective chalices on the khwān (stone-slab) and keeping at hand a fresh set of haoma and urvaram twigs in a chalice, the priest who has prepared the Paragna ceremony joins the Zaotar as the other priest - Ātravakhshi in the ceremony.

The two preparations and poundings are spoken of in the Avēsta(Yasna X.2) as fratarem havanem and uparem havanem i.e. the first and the second squeezing of the haoma.¹⁸

Yasna Proper -

This is the second part of the Yasna ritual, conducted by the main officiating priest (Zaotar). It consists of the recital of the chapter seventy-two along with some rituals which are essentially performed during the Paragna ceremony.

Chapters (3-8) constitute the Darun Yasht. At its commencement, the Zaotar checks all the implements and requisites placed by the Ātravakhshi and at the end makes the Darūn Chāshni - the partaking of a bit of the sacred bread 'Darūn' which is then kept for being partaken by the congregation thereby symbolizing a link in the spiritual participation of the ceremony.

18. Ibid, p.295.

Chapters (9-11) constitute the Haoma Yasht, a litany to the different characteristics of the Haoma, recited only by the Zaota. During its recitation, the Zaota keeps looking at the already prepared and consecrated haoma juice (in the Paragna ceremony) placed before him. In the middle of Chapter 11, the Zaota stops and hands over the cup (fuliyun) to the Ātarvakhshi, who makes pure his own left hand, takes the cup, goes to the fire, and offers the aēsma-bui to the fire with his right hand. This symbolizes that the said haoma juice is first dedicated to the fire. Then he turns to the left side of the Zaotar, places the cup on the barsam and recites "Yō nō aevō at te uyē, thayoidyai-ture mandaidyai zsvidem haptaidyai navadaseme yoi ve yaethma." that is (the Ātravakhshi telling the Zaotar)". Whatever is one for us, may it be twice, thrice, four times, five times....upto ten times, and may it be of help to you.

Then he hands over this cup to the Zaotar who keeps it in his right hand, and looking into it recites pairi te haoma asaum asavazo dadhami imam tenum ya me vainaiti huraodha, thwakhshai haomai madhai, avanghai, ashavastai pairi vahistem ahum asaunam roadanghem vispo khvathrem'.

(The Zaotar recites) O! righteous Haoma, the giver of righteous strength! In order (to obtain) wisdom, prosperity for the family and righteousness, this body which seems

beautiful to me, do I dedicate unto thee who art diligent. O! Righteous Haoma, destroyer of death dost thou give unto me the best existence which is shining and which is for the righteous ones.

Then he further recites three Ashem Vohū-s together with the Ātarvakhshi. The Ātarvakhshi then proceeds to recite three more Ashem Vohu-s offering 'aēsma-bui' to the fire, and during these three Ashem Vohu-s the Zotar drinks the haoma juice from the cup in three sips.

Chapter 12 is the declaration of the faith while Chapters 13-18 contain invocatory and dedicatory prayers to the sacred things standing on the Ālāt-gāh.

With the recital of Chapter 21 begins the second preparation of haoma juice. The celebrant refers to the haoma, jivam, urvaram, Zaothra, the Hāvanim... and says that he desires to have them with the recital of their praise. After referring to them again in Chapter 24, the recitation of Chapters 25-27 is accompanied by the preparation i.e. haoma is pounded squeezed and strained. The juice thus prepared is not drunk by the priest but set apart for the requirement of the congregation.¹⁹

19. Ibid, p.307.

By way of custom, it is the drops from the juice of the second preparation that are administered to a new-born infant and a dying man.

Without going into the details of every chapter^s, recited in the course of the Yasna liturgy only a few chapters are pointed to, which are of particular relevance.

Chapters 28-34 comprise of the Gāthā Ahunavaiti, Chapters 43-46, the Gāthā Ushtavaiti, Chapters 47-50 the Gāthā Spentomad, Chapters 51 of the Gāthā Vohukshatra and Chapter 53, the Gāthā Vahistoisht. These are believed to be the oldest compositions of the Prophet written in Av.

The Yasna ceremony is completed with the chapters 70-72, invoking the Ameshaspentas and praising the good creations of Ahura Mazda, whereupon the Zaota gets down from his seat and exchanges a Hamazor - a form of Zoroastrian salutation of peace, with the Ātravakhshi finishing the bāj and performing the ²⁰kusti.

Thereupon both the priests approach the well whence water was first drawn. Having performed the Zor-melavvi, i.e. the Zaothra water, held by the Zaotar in the Hāvanim with the well-water - the water from the Hāvanim is poured into the well.

20. Ibid, p.308.

Turning for the explanation of the symbolic meaning of the Yasna ritual to Dasturji Daboo for whom the components used in the preparation of the haoma extract represent the three phases of evolution - (i) water represents virgin primordial matter to 'create the forms of the universe', (ii) milk added later indicates the 'entry of life' into the matter and (iii) Haoma and pomegranate stems represent wisdom and immortality respectively.²¹

According to the Dātistan-i-Dinik (XL VII.30-35) the four poundings of the haoma twigs during the recitals of four Ahunavar-s symbolize the coming of Zarathushtra and his three future apostles - Hushedar, Hushedar-mah and Soshans. The striking of the metallic Hāvanim while pounding and straining the haoma reminds one of the triad of thought, word and deed, on which the ethics of Zoroastrianism rest.²²

So, for the Dātistan the striking of the metallic mortar during the squeezing of the haoma and the sound evoked with

21. Professor Shehriar K.C., "Scientific Assessment of Haoma Extract of Yasna Ceremony" in Spl. Issue of the Golden Jubilee of the Memorial at Sanjan and Birth Centenary of Late J.J.Vimadalal, Bombay, 1971, p.111.

22. Modi J.J., op.cit., p.294.

the Avesta words, become a reminder of the thoughts, words and deeds of those true apostles in the world. Moreover, the three ceremonial processes of pouring the Zaothra water into the haoma mortar for the preparation of the juice, are symbolic of the three processes of the formation of rain in Nature - 1) Evaporation, 2) Formation of clouds and 3) Condensation of rain.²³

In the Haoma-ritual, the aiwyāonghana and the haoma-twigs represent vegetation, the tying of the metallic barsam twigs relates to metals, while the jivam or milk represents bovine creation and the preparation of the Zaothra or Zor represents water while the varc refers to the holy spirit of Zarathushtra.

In conclusion, it may be said that the Haoma ceremony may be traced back to the pre-Zoroastrian times. In preparing the haoma-beverage, the haoma-twigs, themselves the embodiments of various qualities are pounded with pomegranate twigs further enriching their clinical and medicinal properties. Jivam or milk is further added, bestowing health-giving virtues transforming it into an ideal, nourishing, vitalizing and invigorating beverage with the addition also of the Zaothra

23. Ibid, p.295.

water, along with the incantation of the relevant formulae it becomes truly an elixir par excellence - a ritual drink.

In the words of Hodivala S.K..... it was believed that by drinking the sacred beverage, men obtained health, wealth, wisdom, in spirit and even immortality, especially if taken from the hands of a priest.²⁴

Haug - On the Preparation of Haoma juice among the Parsees and the Soma juice among the Brahmins -

On comparison of Iranian Haoma and Brahmanic Soma ceremonies, Haug's views: "The most important part of the offerings in both Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifices and the Ijashne ceremony is the juice of the Soma plant. In both the twigs of the plant itself (the brāhmaṇa-s use stalks of the Pūtika, which is the substitute for the original Soma and the Parsees use the branches of a particular shrub which grows in Persia) in their natural state are brought to the sacred spot, where the ceremony is to take place, and the juice is there extracted during the recital of prayers. The contrivances used for obtaining the juice, as well as the vessels employed, are somewhat different, but on closer inquiry, an original identity may be recognised. The brahmins beat the stalks of the plant,

24. Hodivala S.K., Indo-Iranian Religion, Bombay, 1926, p.5.

which are placed on a large flat stone, with another smaller stone, till they form a single mass; this is then put into a vessel and water is poured over it. After some time this water which has extracted the greenish juice, is poured through a cloth, which serves as a strainer, into another vessel. The Parsee priests, use instead of stones, a metal mortar with a pestle, whereby the twigs of the Haoma plant, together with one of the twigs of the pomegranate tree are bruised, and they then pour water over them to obtain the juice, which is strained through a metal saucer with nine holes. This juice (para-haoma) has a yellow colour and only very little of it is drunk by one of the two priests (the zaota) who must be present, whereas all the Brahmanical priests (sixteen in number), whose services are required at the Jyotiṣṭoma, must drink the Soma juice, and some of the chief priests (such as the Adhvaryu and Hota) must even take a very large quantity. The Parsee priests never throw any of the juice into the fire, but the Brahmins must first offer a certain quantity of the intoxicating juice to different deities, by throwing it from the variously shaped wooden vessels into the fire, before they are allowed to taste the sweet liquor! The Parsee priests only show it to the fire and then drink it. Afterwards the juice is prepared a second time by the chief priest Zaota and then thrown into a well. ²⁵

25. Ibid, p.282; also for further details refer to Haug's Essays on the Parsees, 2nd ed., pp.281-283.

NIRANG OR NIRANGDIN -

The nirang is one of the most important ālāt that is, the sanctified requisite of the Zoroastrian religion. The nirang is the preparation of the bull's urine (gaomez) duly consecrated through a highly sophisticated ceremony, known as the Nirangdin ceremony. It not only has a very powerful antiseptic property, but also has great spiritual value. This prepared nirang is the basic requisite in almost all the Initiation and Purificatory ceremonies.

It occupies a unique place as a drink in Zoroastrianism. The nirang is to be consumed as an internal purificative for the soul as well as to be applied externally for physical purification.

Nirangdin - The Ceremony for Consecrating Gaomez -

As to the place gaomez or bull's urine or, what is ceremoniously known as "nirang" occupies in the Zoroastrian ritual, is related to the times in which its use was enjoined and also to the idea with which it was enjoined.²⁶

26. Modi J.J., op.cit., p.241.

Modi J.J. quotes the translation of Cama K.R. of Rapp's German Article on Vendidad : It would presume little acquaintance with the peculiaritiesⁱ of the ancient world if we wished to bring to bear our present notions of decency and loathsomeness on the customs of old. ...Can we judge now of the ideas and customs in this fashion from the point of view of European modern notions? And before we determine to bring in accord all the customs of the ancient world that were employed for purifications, to our modern rational notions, we might like to be sure what advantage has that blood of an animal which Moses used, in respect of the purpose in view, over the urine of an ox ! It will not be possible for us altogether to comprehend the conceptions of the ancient notions of what is pure and what is not pure and of their ceremonies in religious purifications, if we do not ascend to the very origin of all these notions, namely, to the ancient doctrine of the double creation, that of the pure and the impure world. That in the purifications so much value is set on the ox and all that issues out of it, the sacred legends of the Zend people make it quite comprehensible.... We have seen that the entire ceremonial law of Zoroaster rests upon the conception of a pure and impure creation, and therefrom it follows that the corporeal impurity was just as punishable and just as abhorrent in the eyes of Ahura Mazda, the pure, as

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the moral impurity of the soul, and that men should purify themselves from the first as from the last pollution by just the same means.²⁷

Urine has been used by several nations from very olden times as the best means of purification. Its use as a purifier has been enjoined in several passages of the Vendidad, but the principal passage is the twenty-first section of chapter 19.

Therein is an answer to a question, to this effect; that a person who has come into direct or indirect contact with a dead body can be purified by the urine of the bull that is: a) uncastrated (bikhedrem) and b) that is properly prepared (i.e. daityo keretem i.e. properly consecrated). So the urine must be one properly selected and qualified.²⁸

Its original use as a purificative has led to the notion of its being considered as a charm against evil spirits.

Modi J.J. quotes Eugene Wilhelm on the subject of its use thus - That the practice of using bull's urine as a preservative against the influence of evil spirits is very

27. Ibid, p.241.

28. Ibid, p.240.

old indeed, and likely to date from the most ancient times. We may conclude from the fact that the traces of this same custom existing with our Aryan brethren in the East in India and Iran may be found sometimes even today in the west, in the Bretagne, that province of France which holds its name from the Celtic Britons who sought refuge there." 29

Nirangdin is the name of the ceremony whereby the gaomez or the bull's urine is consecrated for ceremonial purposes. It consists of a Barashnum ceremony by two priests, then the khūb ceremony followed by the six Gawrā-s and the final Vendidad.

Gaomeza - the Av. word for it is derived from gao, a cow and miz., Skt. $\sqrt{\text{mih}}$ = to sprinkle. 30

When the urine is consecrated by religious ceremonies, it is in religious parlance spoken as nirang prepared by religious ceremonies. It is so called because a Nirang that is, a religious incantation is recited on its application. 31

29. Ibid, p.241, For further details refer Eugene Wilhelm On the use of Bull's Urine according to the precepts of the Avesta and on similar customs with other Nations, p.31.

30. Ibid, op.cit., p.239.

31. Ibid, p.240.

Nirangdin Ceremony for Consecrating Urine -

The urine used for ordinary purification is the urine of domesticated animals, like the cow, the bull or even the goat. But the urine used for higher purificatory services is that of an uncastrated bull and it is consecrated with certain ceremonies.³²

The two priests who are to perform the Nirangdin have to undergo through the Barashnum ceremony of nine days and nine nights (vide Barashnum).

The complete Barashnum takes ten days. On the eleventh day after an early bath one of the two priests puts on a new set of clothes, performs his pādyāb-kusti, saying his morning prayers and then performs the khūb ceremony, on the first day.

On the next day, that is, the twelfth day from the beginning, the second priest having performed the khūb ceremony is got through it by his colleague, who had performed the khūb ceremony on the first day.

Then during the six days both the priests perform the Gewrā. The priest whose turn it is to keep the Gewrā not only spends the night in vigil but has to take his meals

32. Ibid, p.240.

after reciting the great bāj and not the ordinary bāj or prayers of grace. On the completion of the sixth Gewrā, both the priests perform the bāj ceremony, each partaking of the Darūn (sacred bread) consecrated by his colleague.³³

This intercommunion, or partaking of the sacred bread consecrated by each other, is spoken of as being ham-kalām, that is, being one or united (ham) in their words (kalām) of prayers.

Then they purify the utensils to collect the urine of the bulls for consecration. They make pāv (ceremonially pure), two large water-pots - one larger than the other, two small water-pots, and a cup that would cover the large water-pot. All these pots are metallic.³⁴

After being ham-kalām and having made the utensils pāv (ceremonially pure), the two priests go before the sacred bull (that is, Varasyo) so as to collect his urine in one of the small metallic-pots. Even a few drops of his urine are necessary to start the collection.

After having collected his urine, the priests collect the urine from a number of other ordinary uncastrated bulls, which must be completed sometime before sunset.

33. Ibid, p.242.

34. Ibid, p.242.

On its completion, one of the priests is to perform the Paragna ceremony or the Preparatory ceremony in the Uziran-Gah that is, in the afternoon period of the day and the Vendidad ceremony at mid-night, commencing a little after twelve o'clock.

The vessel containing the urine of the sacred white bull and of the other uncastrated bulls is placed between the Ālāt-gāh, that is, the stone-slab on which the sacred utensils for the performance of the ceremony are placed, and the censer of fire.

Another vessel containing pure well-water is placed by the side of this vessel. Thereupon the priests recite the Vendidad together with the accompanying ritual which lasts for about seven hours. It is with this final ceremony that the urine is consecrated and known as the nirang or nirangdin, that is, the consecrated urine. The water consecrated with it is known as āw, that is, the consecrated water.

This nirang is then used for internal and external purposes in all kinds of purificatory ceremonies to ward off pollution.

In conclusion, we turn to Wilhelm once again, who gives reference from Roman and Hindu books for the use of urine and then shows that urine has been employed in medicine since the most ancient times. It is so used in Egypt, Greece, Rome and

Scandinavia... It was an Indo-Germanic conception. Darmestator, on the authority of Luzel says that the use of gaomez has been lately found to be known in Basse-Bretagne.³⁵

According to Bana, H.R.... urea given by modern doctors to patients suffering from abdominal troubles has its origin in the Bull's urine consecrated by Nirangdin ceremony and used by the Zoroastrian priests, and laymen as internal and external antiseptic for purification of a woman recovering from delivery, of a corpse-bearer of a Naojoti and Nāvarya.³⁶

The spiritual significance and relevance of these ceremonial food and drinks is very interesting to learn about. The nirang, the haoma juice, the draona (sacred bread) and so on, are not only ordinary foods and drinks but are known as ālāt-s, which act as apparatus to transmit the spiritual power and element into the said visible above items. These ālāt-s therefore assume within themselves the invisible power and strength which ultimately sustain the mortal men on earth to their advantage. For instance, the words recited while drinking the nirang during the Initiation ceremonies.

35. Ibid, p.240.

36. Bana H.R., "Diseases in the Ardibehesht Yasht" in Professor Poure Davoud Memorial Volume No.II; Papers on Zoroastrian and Iranian subjects contributed by various scholars.

Among these ordinary worldly objects like water, milk, vegetation not much changes are visible to the naked eye, but with the consecration of the higher liturgical ceremonies, there is so much transubstantiation in these objects that they imbibe the spiritual power into them. In the Avesta this process is mentioned as Ashaya Uzdātam that is made exalted through purification.

Moreover, it is enjoined that the performing priest, also helps in transmitting the power in these ālāt-s through his khvarreh, that is aura and in order to exalt his aura to a higher level, the priests undergo different purificatory ceremonies. (Refer "Barashnum" - Appendix I).

Resorting to such spiritual ceremonies as the base, the priests acquire certain spiritual power (amal) by undergoing certain ceremonies, and with the help of this amal, they transmit this power into the said ālāt-s.

Thus just as the radio-waves are not physically visible but are received and projected, similarly, such spiritual powers are not visible but the effects are to be seen and experienced in their manifestation.

GAHAMBĀR-S - THE IRANIAN FESTIVAL OF FOOD AND DRINK ..

Milk, water, wine and sherbet along with fruits and food items especially the Darūn (sacred bread) form the chief offerings at the seasonal thanks-giving ceremony known as the Gahambār-s. Such offerings are known as myazd. Drinks such as milk, water, wine and sherbet are filled in small vessels or glasses placed in a tray over which the officiating priest recites the relevant prayers, thus transforming them to ritual drinks. It may be noted here, that sherbet refers to a preparation of water to which sugar and lemon-juice is added or the available concentrated extracts of rose, mango, orange and so on are added, thus forming a sweet refreshing drink. The festival focusses on man's gratitude to god for the creation of the seasonal phenomena as well as the bestowal of bounteous gifts, whereupon man offers his thanks by participating and partaking of the myazd-ritual offerings of food and drink.

One of the constituents of the Zoroastrian groups of liturgical ceremonies are the Gahambār-s. These are the seasonal festivals deriving their importance either from the agricultural, seasonal or cosmogonical points of view. The celebration of the Gahambār-s was mainly to offer thanks-giving to God for the institution of the different seasons, on the regularity of which depended the prosperity of the world. It is only later on that the object of offering thanks for the creation of the six best and grand objects of Nature was added.

These being - Heavens, Water, Earth, Vegetable Creation, Animal-creation and Man.

The Gahambār-s are celebrated by -

- A) The performance of the liturgical services including- 1. Āfringān, 2. Bāj, 3. Visparād, 4. Pāvī and
- B) The solemn feasts accompanying the services.³⁷

During these rituals, the officiating priest has before him, a tray, placed on a sheet of white cloth and containing myazd - that is, fruits and flowers of the season. Besides these, there are milk, wine, water and sherbet (syrup) in small vessels or glasses in the tray. The Darūn or sacred bread, fruits, flowers, wine, milk and so on, which are offered and over which prayers are recited are all jointly known as myazd.³⁸

Neryosang translates the word myazd by phala-fruit. So, now-a-days, the Parsees generally understand by the word 'mej' fruit used in the religious ceremonies.³⁹

37. Modi J.J., The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees, Bombay, 1937 (1922), p.422.

38. Ibid, p.367.

39. Ibid, p.369.

Originally, the Darūn (sacred bread) was included in the word 'myazd'. The Hā or Chapter 3 of the Yasna instead of calling it Draona refers to it as 'kharathem myazdem' - that is, the offered eatable food. At present the word Darūn is mentioned separately.

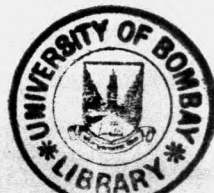
In the ceremony of the Pāvī, no fruits or flowers are required - the only requisite being milk. A small metallic glass is placed before each priest in which, a little milk is poured at each recital of the Dibāchē. Thus all the recitals are made over milk. After the recital of the three Dibāchē-s by all the priests, the particular priest who has performed the ceremony of the Bāj of Gahambār, recites alone the Dibāchē again. At the end of each sentence of the Dibāchē the other priests say in chorus 'aidunbād' - that is 'Amen'.⁴⁰

The Gahambār-s were generally accompanied with solemn feasts wherein members of the family or residents of a street or a town participated.

The Gahambār-ni-Chāshni is the ceremonial and communal eating of the things offered in the Gahambār ceremonies, which forms an important part in the Gahambār celebration. Universal brotherhood is aimed at in the public Gahambār-s.⁴¹

40. Ibid, p.423.

41. Ibid, p.424.



So, the worshippers partake of all the things offered as myazd which are eatables (kharethem myazdem Hā 3 of the Yasna) in a ceremonious way. This partaking of the eatables presented as myazd is spoken of as chāshni (literally, tasting). The Chāshni or ceremonial tasting of the Darun or sacrificial bread - with the first two chapters of the Yasna, the priest invokes the God and the Divine Intelligence and with the next six chapters known as Sarosh Darun (or Sacred Bread in honour of Sarosh), he consecrates them. With the recital of the eighth chapter the priest ceremoniously partakes of it.

It is only those who are deserving who have deserved it by their righteousness (asha) and good conduct (frērti) that are asked to participate in the chāshni. (Yasna; Hā-VIII.2).

The Bahman Yasht prophesizes that the non-celebration of the Gahambār-s, will be an evil day for the world. It means it will be an evil day when man ceases to offer thanks to God for the creation of the phenomena of seasons and different gifts. King Jamshed was the first Monarch of Persia who celebrated the Gahambār-s.⁴²

42. Ibid, p.422.

The ultimate object of these offerings is, that they may suggest to the worshippers, that the best offering is that of righteous actions. Prayer, praise and righteousness are the best offerings acceptable to God.⁴³

43. Ibid, p.370.