

The first four days after death: Responsibilities of the living towards the departed - PART 1

Dear Friends,

Recently someone on the List asked a question regarding the first four days' observances after death and the responsibilities of the living towards the dead.

I have written a comprehensive essay on this topic from the old writings of Ervad Phiroze Masani in Frashogard magazine over 70 years ago. I plan to make this into a small book to distribute at Doongerwadi and the Agiaries so that we may realise the importance of these 4 days and what our responsibilities are.

Our responsibilities towards our dear departed is one of the most solemn obligations placed on us in the Zoroastrian religion. Yet we hardly even know what we are supposed to do. This essay attempts to fulfil this gap in our understanding. Many of the points mentioned in the essay may seem impractical today, but we must know the complete details so that we may pass on this legacy to the next generation in toto.

Here is the first part of the essay. As usual I value your honest, detailed and cogent feedback.

Kind regards,
Ervad Marzban Hathiram

Death and Beyond

The responsibilities of the living towards the departed

Ervad Marzban Hathiram

Death is an inescapable part of life. For some, it is the end of a well lived life, for others it brings great fear. When death strikes a family, it often leaves behind a trail of confusion, sorrow and despair. In this state of disorder, the relatives of the departed *Urvan* (soul, also called *Ruvan*) often have to deal with some new persons who they may have never interacted with. Those who may have an elderly and knowledgeable person around them at that time may gain from their guidance and understanding. But as more and more Parsis live nuclear lives and get further removed from their religion and its essential practices, there arises a need to have some sort of handy guide which they could refer to in this moment of despair. This essay attempts to fulfil such a need by laying down in one place the entire range of ceremonies to be performed and practices to be observed during and after the death of a relative or friend. This essay is based mainly on a series of editorial articles written by *Ervad Phiroze Masani* in the *Frashogard* magazine starting from volume 23, issue 3-4 (Jan to June 1934) and extending upto volume 31, issue 3-4 (Jan to June 1942). Other sources include *Ustad Saheb's* book on the first four days' ceremonies with additional notes by *Dr. Framroze Chiniwalla*, other writings of Dr. Chiniwalla, my own personal observances while working at Doongerwadi and at the Agiary and interactions with senior and knowledgeable priests.

It must be understood that several points given in this essay may be different from the actual practice followed today. This is due to many reasons, primary being the shortage of priests, the large scale ignorance of what needs to be done, even among the few priests, and a general laxity in the strictness of certain practices which need to be followed. We will not enter into these differences in the essay, but merely note what **needs** to be done. Whether it is practical to be done or affordable is left to the discretion of the reader. However, it must be noted that the list of ceremonies prescribed is **optimal and necessary**. We have divided the essay into ten main sections as under:

- I. Pre Death analysis
- II. Death and upto Dokhmenashini
- III. Conduct of relatives at the Paidust
- IV. First four days (Chaharum) observances
- V. Conduct of relatives at the Pad-Ruz or Uthamna
- VI. Post Chaharum observances
- VII. Ceremonies for women dying in certain conditions
- VIII. Ceremonies for women dying during pregnancy or childbirth
- IX. Ceremonies for deceased children
- X. Ceremonies for abnormal deaths

I. Pre Death analysis

1. According to the Zoroastrian religion, every Parsi Zoroastrian should have an *Ustad* or spiritual master and a *Gavaah* or confidant. The Ustad guides the individual on his path towards God. But every individual makes mistakes. According to the religion, it is mandatory for every individual to immediately declare such a misconduct to his Gavaah or confidant. In this manner, the Gavaah not only keeps track of the individuals progress in overcoming his weaknesses, but can also speak up for the individual when he is incorrectly accused of some wrong doing. Considering the times we live in today, it is also necessary that every individual should, during his early life, appoint a *Spiritual Executor*. This can be the spouse or a close family member or a friend who the individual trusts implicitly. The spiritual executor must be made aware of his responsibilities in the case of a death occurring, and must be always prepared to handle such an event. It is prudent to sit down with the spiritual executor and prepare a list of observances to be followed after death occurs. Based on the observances selected and their current costs, a rough estimate of the total expenses can be made. Keeping this estimate in mind, the individual must keep aside a small part of his monthly income in a separate bank account which would be used to meet the expenses of the after death ceremonies and observances. This account must be held and operated jointly with the spiritual executor, and after death, by the executor alone. The money in this account must be invested in very safe yet high interest bearing instruments so as to keep ahead of inflation. It is mutually beneficial to be the spiritual executor of the person whom the individual has appointed as his own spiritual executor. In this manner, both individuals guide each other's savings and the risk of betrayal is lessened. When either individual passes away, the other must then appoint another

family member or friend as his new spiritual executor and take him through the observances desired and the money saved. In this manner, the individual need not worry about his fate when death occurs. Just as estates and wills are made and insurance covers purchased to take care of the legal and financial needs of family members on demise, in the same way, every person must take care of his own spiritual needs after death by the appointment of the spiritual executor and the creation of a sufficient fund to defray the expenses of after death occurrences.

2. In some cases, death is sudden and unexpected. However in many cases, it is apparent to the relatives that the person is about to die. In such a case, the under mentioned observances should be followed. As soon as it is apparent that death is inevitable (either on the Doctor's advice or otherwise), external medical equipment such as saline drips, syringes, respirators etc. should be removed (again only with the agreement of the medical staff) and the body of the dying relative should be sponged with clean water. A fresh set of clothes (not new but merely washed clothes which were in use by the person) including the Sudreh should be put on. The head should be properly covered. (For males, a white cotton cap as used by the priests is the best. If not available, a normal prayer cap may be used. For females a white cotton scarf or *matha banu* is optimal.) However, care should be taken to see that the ears are open at all times. The spiritual executor or a close relative of the person should then wash his own face, hands and exposed parts of the legs (known as performing *Padyab*) and then recite the *Kem na Mazda* prayer and untie his Kusti, and then reciting the *Hormazd Khodae* prayer tie the Kusti and finish off with the *Jasa me avangahe Mazda* prayer. He should then similarly recite the prayers and untie and retie the Kusti of the dying person. In case it is not convenient to tie the rear knots of the Kusti because the person is on the bed, then after tying the front knots, the Kusti should be gently slid till the rear end comes in front and the front knots slide to the back, and then the rear knots should be tied. Once this is done, the Kusti should be brought back to the correct location.

3. The *Panthaky* or head priest of the Agiary where the family's prayers are usually recited should be alerted of the imminent death. This will help him in making further arrangements with the priests at Doongerwadi.

4. If possible, a relative of the dying person should go to any Atash Behram (after taking a bath and changing his clothes; never in the same clothes as from the hospital) and procure some *Hom Water* or *Av* or *Nirang* from the priest in charge over there. Only three to four drops are needed. He should give this consecrated water or Nirang and to the dying relative. If this is not possible, a few drops of pomegranate juice should be given.

5. Meanwhile, the relative who tied the Kusti on the dying person should, if possible, light a fire in a small Fire vase (*Afarganyu*) using pure sandal wood chips (*Tacho*) and place some incense (*Loban*) on it. At the same time, a lamp (*Divo*) should be lit in a glass. Use either pure Ghee made from cow's milk (ex. *Britannia* or *Parsi Dairy Farm*) or use Coconut oil or Palm oil. The glass should be completely filled with oil or ghee. No water should be used. Place the *Afarganyu* and the *Divo* near the head of the dying person.

6. The same person should now recite the *Atash Nyaesh* in a soft voice, paying homage to the fire and Divo which has been lit. In case time is short, then the Diva no Namaskar (Homage to the Lamp) should be recited.

7. After reciting the *Atash Nyaesh* or *Diva no Namaskar*, the person should recite the *Patet Pashemani* (Prayer of Acceptance and Repentance of Wrong Doing) prayer on behalf of the dying relative. It is imperative that the *Patet* should be recited *before* death and not after the death has taken place. After finishing the *Patet* prayer, the *Ashem Vohu* should be recited in a low voice on a continuous basis till the relative passes away.

8. The last few hours of a dying person are a period of deep anguish, as the person sees his entire life before his mind's eye, and realises the enormity of what he has done in all these years. At this time of struggle, it is absolutely essential for the relatives to maintain a dignified calm and silence. Crying in front of the person, making loud calls on the mobile, arguing about what will be done after death, or discussing who will get what causes even greater pain and anguish to the departing *Urvan*. All such talk, if at all necessary, should be done in another room. The only sound in the room where the person is lying should be of the soft recitation of the *Patet* and the *Ashem Vohu* prayer along with the sweet smell of the burning incense, and the purifying rays of the *Divo*.

to be continued...

Dear friends,

Here is the second part of the article on the responsibilities of the living towards the departed.

**Regards,
Ervad Marzban Hathiram**

II. Death and up to Dokhmenashini

1. As soon as the person stops breathing completely and the doctor certifies that death has occurred, the same person who had recited the earlier prayers should now bend down and recite one *Ashem Vohu* softly in each ear of the deceased.

2. The following telephone calls should then be made:

- To the *Doongerwadi* informing them of the death and asking for the *hearse*
- To the *Panthaky* of the *Agiary* in which the deceased or his family have their normal prayers said informing him of the death and asking him to make the necessary arrangements at *Doongerwadi*.

3. In several hospitals, there is a practice of asking for organ donations after death, specially for eyes and kidneys. Many Parsis believe this to be a noble cause and leave behind instructions to donate these organs. However, organ donations cause irreparable spiritual damage to the Urvan or soul of the deceased and severely hamper its onward progress. They should not be done. Even if the individual has given instructions for the same, he has done so without realising the enormity of his mistakes and hence his family members should respectfully disregard these instructions and refuse the organ donations.

4. Similarly, many Parsis do not believe in their religion or the after death observances and leave behind instructions to be cremated or buried despite the presence of the Dokhma in their city. Many Parsis also leave instructions to their descendants not to perform ceremonies after their death, or to do so for only a limited period of time. In both these cases, according to the Zoroastrian religion, it is the solemn duty of the descendants to disregard these instructions and ensure proper Dokhmenashini and the performance of all religious observances for as long as they are able to do so financially and logistically.

5. Soon the hearse will arrive and the body is taken to any one of the many Bunglis at the Doongerwadi. It is essential to have all the four days ceremonies performed at Doongerwadi itself. The practice of having the Paidust at Doongerwadi and the rest of the prayers in the Agiary is extremely bad. The Urvan of the deceased person sits near the head of the body where the *Sachkar* (see below) is done. The act of locking the Bungli after the Paidust and having the ceremonies said at the Agiary leaves the Urvan in the Bungli without any protection or the benefit of prayers and causes immense grief to the soul. Hence this should be avoided at all costs and the first four days ceremonies should always and without fail be done at the same place where the Sachkar is done, i.e. in the Bungli at Doongerwadi.

6. While taking the body inside the Bungli, care should be taken to see that it is NOT taken in from the main door. It should be always taken in from the side door provided. This is very important.

7. Those non-Parsi friends of the deceased who wish to pay last respects to the departed should be brought in now. They should not however, touch the body. No flowers or floral offerings should be made or accepted at this time.

8. The body is now taken for the wash before the Sachkar ceremony is performed. It is absolutely essential that water is NOT used while bathing the body for the final time. Only *Taro* (Plain urine from the *Varasyaji*, or any other un-castrated bull) should be used. A plain mul-mul cloth should be made moist with the Taro and then this should be applied over the body just as we sponge with water, moving down from the head to the feet. The whole process should be repeated three times. The person washing the body should preferably wear thick gloves or cover his hands with a thick cloth while doing this process.

9. The body should now be dressed in the following: loin cloth, pyjama, white cap, a double folded cloth over the cap, (taking care that the ears of the deceased are always open and not covered by the cloth), and Sudreh.

10. The closest relative of the deceased should perform his own Kusti and then tie the Kusti on the deceased for the last time with the recitation of the prayers given earlier. Those relatives who wish to touch the body (although there is no need to do this at all) may do so now.

11. In case the deceased was a priest, then the Jama should be put on at this stage. The Nasseh-salaars (corpse bearers) arrive and after doing the Kusti and taking the Baj of Sarosh, place the body on the stone slabs and proceed to tie seven Bunds, or knots at different parts of the body and prepare it for the Sachkar ceremony.

12. Just before the Sachkar, the dog is brought in for the first time and is made to stand in such a manner that the eyes of the dog gaze on the face of the deceased. It is preferable to have a dog that has two spots over his eyes, indicating the presence of spiritual eyesight. This ceremony is known as *Sagdid*. (The gazing of the dog).

13. After this first *Sagdid*, the Nasseh-salaars perform the Sachkar ceremony, reciting the Sarosh Baj and drawing three *Karshas* (spiritual circuits) around the body with an iron nail. This is an extremely important ceremony and needs to be done in a grave manner. There should be complete silence and the Nasseh-salaars should not talk casually while performing this ceremony. The nail should be firmly held in the hand and the circuits drawn by dragging the nail across the ground, and not by merely throwing the nail from one Nasseh-salaar to the other. They should be properly instructed by the relatives that they wish to have the *Karshas* drawn in this fashion.

14. The performance of the Sachkar ceremony converts the Bungli from a normal building to a consecrated place. After this point, no non-Parsi can enter the building under any circumstances. No Parsi can enter this building without performing the Kusti ritual, just as is done before entering the Agiary.

15. Parsis married to non-Parsis (of either sex), and their offspring (whether Navjote has been performed or not is not relevant) should NOT sit in this Bungli but should take their place in the general Bungli outside. If they really love the deceased person, and wish for his spiritual progress then they should not make a fuss out of this issue nor demand any imaginary rights. Needless to say that the presence of such an inter-married person or their offspring gravely affects the efficacy of the prayers to be recited and places spiritual road blocks in the onward progress of the Urvan.

16. It is very essential that the Sachkar ceremony be done as soon as possible, and preferably in the same Gah in which the death has occurred. It is incorrect to wait for a relative to arrive from overseas or out of town and then do the Sachkar. There is no sense in touching a dead body and the delay is extremely harmful to the progress of the Urvan. Hence Sachkar should be done as soon as possible. The Geh Sarna can be delayed if really necessary.

17. After the Sachkar ceremony, the Sagdid should be done once again. Hence, the Sagdid should be done at the following occasions:

- Before the Sachkar
- After the Sachkar
- At the change of every Gah (Sunrise , noon , 3:40 pm , Sunset, Midnight)
- Before the Geh Sarna ritual
- In between the Geh Sarna ritual when the body is shifted
- After the Geh Sarna ritual
- At the stone slab just before the body is taken to the Dokhma

18. During these four days, care should be taken that the dog used in the Sagdid is fed with milk two or three times a day.

19. During all ceremonies beginning from the Sachkar onwards, it is advisable to shut off electric lights directly above where the body has been placed and also the place where prayers are recited. The presence of electricity has a detrimental effect on the efficacy of the prayers being recited for the Urvan and it is therefore preferable to have the lights in these areas off. Similarly the hum created by the exhaust fans also interferes with the vibration of the Avesta Manthras and they should be switched on only when really required. The lights and fans in the remaining part of the Bungli may be switched on if required. However, the atmosphere created with all the lights of and the presence of as many Divas as possible is unique and should be encouraged as far as possible.

20. From the time the Sachkar ceremony is completed and till the dawn of the fourth day after death, continuous prayers should be recited near the place where the Sachkar has been performed. These are known as the *Small Yashtegan* prayers. It is not at all necessary for a priest to do these prayers. They can be recited by relatives of the deceased. After purifying themselves and doing the Kusti, the relative should sit at a distance of at least 10 feet from where the body has been placed, and recite prayers from the Khordeh Avesta books placed there. Any prayer can be recited except the Patet. All other rules of prayer (such as what can be prayed in which Gah, which are generally given in the Khordeh Avesta book) should be followed.

21. At all times, a small fire should remain near the head of the deceased and this should be periodically fed with sandalwood, Kathi and incense. Similarly, a Divo made either of pure cow's milk ghee (you can get the ghee yourself and ask the Doongerwadi helpers to use it instead of the normal castor oil they use) or Coconut oil or Palm Oil should be lit at all times. At all times, a second Divo should be kept ready for lighting. When the old Divo is about to finish, the new Divo should be lit from the old Divo,

hence maintaining continuity. Apart from this main Divo, it is advisable to have several Divas placed at different parts of the Bungli rather than having the electric lights on at all times, as previously explained

22. The stage is now set for the Geh Sarna ritual, also known as the *Great Yashtegan*. The Nasseh-salaars arrive and take the Baj of Sarosh and sit silently next to the body. There should be no discussion between them and the relatives of the deceased should firmly instruct the Nasseh-salaars to maintain their Baj.

23. The Sagdid should be performed just before the Geh Sarna.

24. The two priests arrive in their full gear and commence the recitation of the Ahunavaiti Gatha, which forms the Geh Sarna ritual. The vibrations of the Ahunavaiti Gatha are extremely powerful and have a chopping action, which results in the connection between the Urvan and the body being cut off. It is for this reason that pregnant women should not attend the Geh Sarna ritual (they can attend the Uthamna however). The powerful vibrations of the recitation of the Ahunavaiti Gatha can result in the cutting of the umbilical cord and a possible miscarriage.

25. During the Geh Sarna, the relatives of the deceased should maintain absolute silence. (see section III below.) Their thoughts should be focussed on just one line: ‘may this recitation of the Ahunavaiti Gatha cut the connection between the Urvan of the deceased and its body.’ It is extremely harmful to the Urvan when relatives talk loudly while the prayers are in progress.

26. The body of the deceased should not be touched unnecessarily by the Nasseh-salaars. The practice of applying scented or cologne water is absolutely wrong and doctrinally invalid. This should not be done. When the Nasseh-salaars ask for the cologne water, it should be respectfully denied and explained to them that you do not wish to have this done. The only thing which can be applied after death is Taro, which is used before the Sachkar. After this, no scented waters or talcum powders should be used.

27. After the Geh Sarna, the Sagdid is done once again and then the relatives of the deceased perform the Sezdo and walk out to join the last procession to the Dokhma. The specific responsibilities at this time are covered in the next section.

28. There is no religious practice of surrendering the bangles of a widow before the body of her husband is carried to the Dokhma. The wearing of bangles is a custom borrowed from the Hindus and there is no doctrinal reason for doing so. Hence there is no ceremony by which the Bangles are to be disposed of. The widow may merely stop wearing them after the death of her husband. (Again this is merely a borrowing from the Hindus. Parsis are not supposed to wear Bangles.)

29. Similarly, there is no practice of throwing money in a handkerchief before the body is carried to the Dokhma. There should be nothing in front of the bier in which the body of the deceased is placed. The act of putting money notes on the bier violates its sanctity and causes harm to the progress of the Urvan. In any case, money for the Nasseh-salaars is included in the Bill for the services at Doongerwadi which will be paid after the Paidust. Hence the practice of putting money near the body should strictly not be allowed. These are recent innovations and are totally invalid. They must not be encouraged.

30. There is no bar on ladies joining the last procession. They are welcome to do so. In the earlier days when the Paidust used to be taken out of the homes of the deceased the women would stay behind to take care of the house and make necessary arrangements for the evening prayers. Hence the tradition of women not attending the last procession,. However since today the bodies are taken out from the Bungli, there is no need for the women to remain. In case they wish, they can attend the last procession taking care to follow the observances given in the section below.

31. After returning from the Paidust, it is necessary to perform the Kusti before entering the Bungli. The bathrooms attached to each Bungli should be used to have a complete head bath. Before the bath, the old clothes worn during the Paidust may be lightly rinsed and kept on one side to be taken away by a helper and given for a complete wash. They should then be safely stored and used for any other Paidust you may have to attend. After the bath, a fresh set of clothes should be put on and then homage should be paid to the Urvan of the deceased by putting some incense on the Afarganyu placed near the place where the head of the deceased was resting prior to the Paidust. It should be ensured that the Divo is well lit and the next refill glass is kept ready by its side.

32. After the Paidust, a metal water jar (Karasyo) filled with clean water is placed on a small tripod stand, and over that a small metal cup (Kansyo) is put. In this cup, fresh flowers (preferably only roses) are put and changed periodically. It is in this small water jar that the Urvan of the deceased will now stay for the rest of the days till the Chaharum (Dawn of the Fourth Day after death).

to be continued

How to attend the Paidust or Responsibilities after death: PART 3

Here is the third part of the ongoing series on the responsibilities of the living towards the departed. In this issue we consider the very important methods of observance when we attend the Paidust of any person.

Regards,
Ervad Marzban Hathiram

III. Conduct of the relatives during and after Paidust

Attending the Paidust of a deceased friend or relative is a grave spiritual responsibility. While doing so, the following precautions need to be taken.

1. It is preferable to have a different set of clothes to wear for the Paidust. These should be of cotton and white. For men they should be a long sleeved shirt (an old one which is not in normal use anymore) and a white cotton trouser. An old cotton *Dagli* would be even better. For ladies a plain white Sari with long blouse or a white *Salvar* and *Kurta* (both loose and not body hugging) would do. There is no reason to wear Black - that is a borrowing from the Christian funeral rules and should be avoided. Clothes should always be white. In terms of footwear, it is preferable to have a different set of leather shoes or sandals. Avoid rubber soled shoes. It is absolutely necessary to completely cover the head with a good *Topi* or a *Matha banu* for ladies. No hair should be visible from the front of the head. It is better to have a slightly large cap than a very small one covering only half the head. It is extremely upsetting to see several ladies today desperately trying to cover their head with the *Pallu* of the sari. This is not enough. The head MUST be covered with a scarf (cotton) folded over to give a double covering.

2. After coming to Doongerwadi, firstly the Kusti should be performed outside the Bungli after doing the Padyab using the water from the drums kept near each Bungli. This is very important. The benefits of doing the Kusti contribute directly to reducing the confusion of the Urvan sitting next to the body. It is each person's contribution towards lessening the attack of *Druj Nasu* or the Demoneess of Pollution on the Urvan. The importance of this ritual cannot be over-emphasised. It should be remembered that one is entering a consecrated place. Just as the Kusti should be done before entering the Agiary, it is necessary to do the same before entering the Bungli.

3. After entering the Bungli, homage should be paid first to the body in the Sachkar pavi by bowing down from a distance. This should be done discreetly.

4. After paying homage, the person should sit down and recite the Sarosh Baj upto the words '*Astavaitish ashahe*' of the Kem na Mazda prayer which forms part of the Sarosh Baj (This is known as 'Taking the Baj of Sarosh'). One should not sit and start chatting. It should be remembered that one is in the presence of an Urvan and its dead body. Prayers are in progress. While one may not be able to recite the same prayers, one can at least keep quiet or do some normal prayers. It is very disrespectful to sit and gossip. It is extremely beneficial to continuously recite the *Yatha* and *Ashem*, running the thought through the mind that: 'may these humble prayers aid in reducing the confusion of the Urvan and the attack of *Druj Nasu*.' If one speaks the Baj of Sarosh is 'broken'. Hence the need to keep quiet.

5. As the Mobeds recite the Geh Sarna prayer (reciting the Ahunavaiti Gatha) the constant thought should be run: "May the powerful prayers of the Ahunavaiti Gatha succeed in cutting the connection and attraction between the Urvan and its body."

6. After the Geh Sarna prayers are over, and if the Baj has been maintained, one should go up in front and perform the Sezdo, always standing at least 10 feet away from the body. (Technically known as three "*Kadam*".) If the Baj has been broken by speaking to someone, then the Kusti should be re-done and the Baj of Sarosh taken once again. Then the Sezdo should be performed and silence maintained to hold the Baj.

7. After doing the Sezdo, one should walk out of the Bungli and use a cotton handkerchief to make a *Paiwand* (connection) with another person. The handkerchief should be held by the two in such a way that it forms a U shape. Thereafter one should walk behind the body being carried after the priests and keeping an adequate distance. While walking the following thought should be focussed in the mind: "Because the body has been lifted from the pavi in which it was placed at the time of the Sachkar, the attack of Druj Nasu is now in play. With this handkerchief and the power of my Kusti and Sarosh Baj, I am reducing the attack on the Urvan. May the Earth (*Spenta Armaiti*) take the attack of the Nasu from the Urvan and onto herself through this handkerchief. " Those who know the '*Yatu zi Zarathushtra ...*' prayer forming part of the Haptan Yasht should pray the same while walking behind the priests. Otherwise, the simple Ashem prayer would suffice.

8. After the body has been placed on the platform for the final Sagdid, the last Sezdo should be done from a safe distance. One should not go very close to the stone platform (despite what the Nasseh-salaars may say). A reasonable distance to keep is 8 to 10 feet.

9. After the body has been carried into the Dokhma the attendees should walk to the place where the prayer books are handed out. At the given signal, the Baj of Sarosh which had been taken at the Bungli should be finished by reciting '*Nemascha ya Armaitish...*' and then the rest of the Sarosh Baj. Then the *Namaskar* of the Dokhma and the *Namaskar* of the Mountain given in the book should be recited.

10. After reciting the Namaskar, one should go up to the place where the person hands out the Taro, which should be applied this to all the open parts of one's body. Thereafter, without washing the hands or praying anything, the Kusti should be untied, the *Hormazd Khodae* should be recited and the Kusti should be retied while reciting 2 *Yatha*, 1 *Ashem*. No further prayers should be said. After that, all the exposed parts where Taro had been applied should be washed with water, the *Kem na Mazda* should be recited and the Kusti untied. Then *Hormazd Khodae* should be recited and the Kusti tied while reciting the 2 *Yatha* and 1 *Ashem* and then the *Jasa me avangahe...*prayer should be recited to finish off the Kusti ritual. In effect, the Kusti should be untied and tied twice after praying the Namaskar.

11. The unfortunate practice of entering the Dadgah or Sagdi immediately after this should be avoided and should not be done. In the earlier days, there were small washrooms next to the Dadgah. The Parsi helpers would take your one's fresh clothes on arrival at the Doongerwadi and keep this set in those bathrooms. After the Paidust, one would have a quick bath and then wear these clothes, and only then

enter the Sagdi. If this is not possible today, then one should not enter the Sagdi. One can always visit it when one comes for the Uthamna.

12. One should return by the same path as one came up. In the earlier days, there was a small ritual which used to be done by the Priests accompanying the Paidust. Since the body was taken over the earth, some Druj Nasu was sprinkled on the ground. This needed to be rectified. The priests should again recite the Sarosh Baj and then using a handkerchief, place their right knee and right hand on the ground and recite 1 Yatha. Then they should get up, walk some distance and repeat the ritual two more times (thrice in all) . This will purify the earth and remove the vestiges of the Druj Nasu. Unfortunately this is not done today. This can be done by any person attending the Paidust in a discreet manner on the way back and it is very beneficial.

13. It is necessary to have a bath and change into one's normal clothes before fulfilling one's office duties.

14. The process of attending the Paidust is a sacred responsibility. There are several things one is supposed to do which will help the Urvan in its onward journey. If they are done correctly, the person is blessed by the Urvan in deep gratitude. Such blessings are worth much more than any happiness money can buy.