

The Rationale of PATET

By Hutokhsh

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Written by Dasturan Dastur Adarbad Marespand in the reign of the Sassanian King Shapur II, the 'Patet Pashemani' and Patet Ravan-ni have been two of the most misunderstood Pazend prayers in recent times.

During the rule of Shapur II, Christianity was spreading its tentacles to Europe and West Asia. Its main mission was to subvert Manicheism and the Mithra Cult, wherever they had spread. It took quite some time for the Crusaders to eradicate Mithra Worship, which incidentally, was a direct offshoot of the Mazdayasni religion. It was, therefore, logical that the Christians soon turned their ire on the Zoroastrians of Iran, conveniently forgetting the fact that when Christianity was in its infancy, no country in the world gave its adherents a shelter except the Iranians, who allowed them to settle in Armenia, Now, three centuries later, they were hell-bent on proselytizing the Iranians!

It was at this critical time that the 'Saoshyant-e-Zamaan,' Adarbad Merespand, whose Dasturi (Spiritual Jurisdiction and Patronage) exists to this day and will continue to exist until the advent of Shah Behram Varjavand, demonstrated to the hilt the spiritual supremacy of the Zoroastrian Religion those who dared challenge its precepts. He performed the miracle of remaining unscathed when molten brass was poured on his chest. It was this Rad Dastur, who resuscitated the dwindling faith, re-arranged the Avesta prayers composed various Pazend prayers like Doa Naam Setayeshne, 'Patet Pashemani' and numerous other 'Setayeshes.'

Alas! Today some of the culture-vultures of our community do not hesitate to pour scorn and ridicule on the Patet. They prattle inanities like, "How can God condone or pardon sins committed by morals, when there's the Law of cause and Effect functioning in Nature?" or, "It is silly for anyone to recite this prayer listing all those ghastly, deadly sins one would never dream of committing.....!"

Let us first emphasize that 'Patet' (Penitence) does not mean forgiveness at all. There is nothing like 'forgiveness', as we morals understand in Nature.

Practicing Meher-Patet, as it is technically called, means, Truthfulness (Meher) + a sincere Repentance-cum-Resolve (Patet) never to repeat that crime or sin again.

Man is the only one of the different species on Earth, who is endowed with a Conscience, a Consciousness and Articulation. When he is prone to temptation or when he indulges in practicing deceit or falsehood, he immediately experiences a prick of the Conscience, which prick is instantly flashed to the mind. Man then becomes conscious of his wrong doing.

If, at this point, the mind is the master of the man, as happens in most cases, then the Voice of Conscience takes a back seat and the individual becomes a slave of his mind. But, if the mind is assiduously trained to take cognizance of the Voice of Conscience, then the mind at once relays that message to the tongue, which blurts out the truth that a wrong has been committed. Therefore, Truth is that which is uttered exactly as the event or thing that is described or spoken about has occurred. We know from experience that many times when we utter a naked truth which may be unpalatable to us or to someone else, our minds undergo tremendous pressure and tension, which may take the form of acute embarrassment or mental anguish. This truth is Meher. (It may be noted in passing that Meher has many other meanings, depending upon the context in which the term is used.)

Patet, on the other hand, is a total admission, a complete confession to the Almighty that, "I have committed a wrong, which I promise never to repeat. So, please help me! I declare I am ready and willing to taste the bitter fruits of my wrong action and in fact I shall be grateful to you for the same."

Thus, a full and unconditional admission of one's guilt, a firm resolve that the mistake will never be repeated, an earnest appeal for the right kind of wisdom to be able to bear the retribution and an unshakable belief that there's solace only in suffering the punishment, in short, a genuine penitence coupled with bearing the penalty with equanimity and even cheerfulness ('Az anaai khvarsand hom') constitute Patet.

It will, therefore, be evident from the above, even to a moron, that in Patet there is not even a modicum of an idea of remission

FAITH & CREDULITY

"Faith is natural and spontaneous overflow of sincere powerful devotion; credulity is unnatural and imposed from outside simply out of the false consideration or respect for great men of learning and education Occultism and mysticism never lead to credulity. Belief in the existence of soul after the departure from the physical body, its state after death, all the unseen laws of nature at work, the functions of angels and other spiritual unseen intelligence, does not imply credulity. Very few souls who are fortunate enough to have sincere immaculated faith and devotion – souls who are not derailed from the lines of Spiritual Progress – can be naturally led to believe in mysticism and occult laws of nature. On the contrary the majority who are derailed from the lines of Unfoldment, who live only for the sake of the enjoyment of this world, who laugh out things beyond the power of physical vision, have, in the absence of faith, to lean upon credulity, and believe what the ostentatious persons have pronounced to be right."

– **Ervad Phiroze S. Masani**

in **"Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern"**

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of a sin. The practice of Meher-Patet constitutes the very backbone of Zoroastrian Tarikats (Religious Canons). Along with the recitation of the Avesta prayers, the practice of Druj Parhiz, the use of the bull's urine (Gaomez), etc. the constant practice of Meher-Patet in one's life, will sooner or later, put the practitioner on the right path, whether he is conscious of it or not. If you want to experience the result of Tarikat practice, then you must follow the path of Meher-Patet.

Ultimately, Patet is capable of granting salvation to the human soul. It has the propensity to release the Soul from the constant attraction of the Earth, after death. Later, when, we deal with Patet Ravan-ni to be recited for the departed souls, we shall tackle this aspect in details.

For the present, we need to remember two important factors : a) our last Raenidar (Saviour), Adarbad Marespand, has composed the Patet Pashemani embodying powerful thought forces befitting the needs of our times, i.e. according to the status and quality of the souls that are born in the Zoroastrian religion; and (b) the long list of sins and wrongs mentioned in that prayer pertain to those committed by the reciter not only in this birth, but in a number of births he has already been through.

The word 'Patet' is derived from the Avestic word, 'Paityoget' from 'paiti' - 'back' and root 'i' - 'to go'. Thus, 'Patet' in its original sense means repentance with an urgent desire to return. 'Patet' is a trial to stand against the evils that have befallen one coupled with a resolve not to commit them again. It is "an urgent desire with a penitent, sincere attitude to be invested with resignatory powers, enabling one to bear the chastisement of the sins committed, calmly, cheerfully and ungrudgingly, with a fervent hope for the future" This supplicating attitude is taken to mean asking for mercy, in which the devotee is ready and willing to suffer the punishment. "Punishment for the sins is taken as a mercy, as that will lead to 'umede – ristaakhiz', i.e. salvation."

Even at the risk of repetition we shall reiterate that no wrong or sin ever gets cancelled or obliterated in Nature. The immutable law of 'Jeejeshyeinti,' of 'like begetting like', operates inexorably and the effect of the reaction of the cause or action has to be reaped sooner or later.

It is extremely unfortunate that many Parsee Philologists thumb a nose at 'Patet Pashemani' just because it is a Pazend prayer composed in the Sassanian era. What they, and many others who try to cling to their bandwagon, forget, is that during the heyday of the Zoroastrian Religion, when all the 21 'Nasks' (encyclopaedic volumes first composed by the Prophet Himself) were in existence, the Zoroastrians not only recited the Avesta 'Manthrawani' but along with it raised corresponding exalted thoughts in the then existing 'Kyan' language to fortify the Avestic prayers. Thus, it was a case of 'Manthra', coupled with the appropriate, harmonious 'Mithra'.

However, during the Sassanian era, when the great Dastur Adarbad Marespand lived in the reign of Shapur II, coming events were casting their shadow, which only this supreme clairvoyant could see. He realized that the coming centuries would witness the decline of the loftiest religion of the world. The writing on the wall was too clear for him to see with his powerful psychic powers: That souls to be born in Parsi Zoroastrian families in the distant future will not be all that evolved to be capable of and qualified to synchronizing their thoughts with every word of Avesta they recite.

The alternative, therefore, was to couch these original thought-forces ('Mithra') in a language which had a lower vibrational frequency than the Avesta, which is the 'language' of the Divine Intelligences themselves! Thus we find the original 'Mithra' dubbed in the Pazend language in which we have today such splendid short prayers as the 'Doa Naam Setayeshne', the thirty five 'Setayeshes' and of course, the 'Patets.'

Today, when most of us are unable to practice many of the basic 'Tarikats' of 'Ashoi', because of the epoch in which we live, variously known as the 'Hashemi' (Martian) or 'Kaliyuga', the 'Patet Pashemani' is an absolutely indispensable prayer, which should be recited as often as possible by a Zoroastrian. When we deal with the prayer proper, we shall go into details and demonstrate how very effective and efficacious the 'Patet' is for modern Parsees.

Incidentally, those who speak disdainfully of the Pazend prayers forget that it is in some of these prayers that we still find preserved Avestic words and sentences from some of the original 21 'Nasks' which are not to be found in any of the extant Avesta prayers ! The most glaring example is that of the 5th big 'Setayesh', the famous 'Chithrem Buyat' Setayesh.

The 'Patet Pashemani' is the only prayer available with us today which offers an exhaustive anthology of the 'Tarikats' a Zoroastrian is enjoined to practice. No wonder that the 'Patet' has been calumnised by Parsee Brown Sahibs.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

"The physical world is only a part of the entire universe, and the laws of the physical world or knowledge of physical science cannot be excluded from the knowledge of the religion which implies the knowledge of all the laws of the universe. The part of physical science is implied in the whole of religion. The Zoroastrian religion has its esoteric side just as the invisible man has his counterpart: the soul, and just as this visible world has its unseen realms also. The Zoroastrian religion is the most esoteric in as much as it is very difficult to be understood by studying merely the exoteric meanings, and grammar etc. The esoteric element in Zoroastrian lore bears the same ratio to the exoteric as 7 to 1, because the physical visible world is roughly speaking only one-eighth part of the entire universe. Hence we find in Zoroastrian religion all the laws of nature expounded and explained, the major portion referring to the esoteric or the laws of the unseen states of existence re soul, heaven, angels, archangels etc., and the minor referring to the exoteric or the laws of the physical stage of existence. Purity of the body and laws of sanitation and hygiene, the laws of health and prevention of diseases against invisible microbes or druj, laws of physical magnetic purity and seclusion of menstruated women, all these laws of higher physical science are found taught even in the meagre extant Avesta scriptures.....We distinguish religion from science thus that science is knowledge invented from time to time by the effort of the intellect of man in its development, while religion is knowledge given by a highly developed soul through inspiration or influx of his heart. The former is ever changing on account of the limitation of man's intellect but latter is constant, for it is given once for all as it exists immutably in nature for all times. Religion therefore implies inspired knowledge of all the laws of nature both of the physical world and of the unseen world."

– **Ervad Phiroze Masani**

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The Christian concept of Confession in its *original* form (today, it has degenerated into a mere admission of guilt or sin every week or a month before a chaplain, while the same wrong act may be committed brazenly the very next day!) was virtually lifted from the Zoroastrian notion of *Patet*. In ancient Iran and particularly during the Sassanian times, a true *Yaozdathregar* (a priest in whom is developed the power of imparting purity to others), who strictly adhered to the path of *Tarikat*, used his will power in an extremely judicious way and did his best to keep his thought, word and deed on the 'golden mean'. However, because of a hoary bad Karma, if he inclined to slip up a little occasionally, and committed some offence, he would at once resolve never to repeat it and then would go to a very holy and saintly *Dastur* or an *Ustad* and perform sincere penance before him. If no such person was readily available, he had a pow-wow with his soul and vowed to be extremely alert next time.

Today, for us lesser morals, as our souls have not developed to that level of the competent *Yaozdathregars* of yore, the only remedy is to recite the *Patet Pashemani* as often as we can.

There is a certain principle, which should be followed while reciting the *Patet*. Since most of it is in Pazend with very few Avestic sentences strewn therein, it is to be recited in a whispering tone. However, if the reciter desires to recite it at the fag end of his prayers, that is after all the Avesta prayers are over, then he can do so in a loud voice. This is because of the difference in the vibratory frequencies between Avesta and Pazend. No other language is permitted to be interpolated when the Avesta *Manthra* is recited.

The very first sentence of the first *Karda* of the *Patet* is a slap in the face of all those who today glibly talk of *Humata*, *Hukhta* and *Hvarshata* as meaning simply, good thoughts, words and deeds. The first two paragraphs of this *Karda* are also a splendid example of the Pazend clinging faithfully to the original Avesta texts. In fact they contain the exact Pazend rendering of the Avestic *Patet* beginning with the words, "Ferestuye Humatoyibyascha, Hukhtoyibyascha, Hvarshatoyibyascha . .". The first sentence being thus: "*Fraaj Sataayem Harvespa Humata Hukhta Hvarashata, Pa Manashne, Gavashne' Kunashne. . .*" Note the retention of the Avesta *Humata*, *Hukhta* and *Hvarshata* although the so-called Pazend 'equivalents' (*Sic*) are placed right after these words ! This clearly indicates that the Avesta trio is not the same as the Pazend trio.

Humata, *Hukhta* and *Hvarshata* are the thoughts, words and deeds of *Yazatas*, i.e. they contain within themselves all the activities of Nature, current in the whole Universe which are meant to bring about the ultimate goal of *Frasho Kereti* (Final Renovation). *Humata*, literally does mean 'good thought', but here, "*Hu*" denotes the dictates of *Ahunavar* = the Edict of the great lord. Only the Immortals can grab the great *Vairyas* – Edict of *Ahu*. If man had the power to do so, he would not have been born in the corporeal sinful body! There is a gulf of difference between human thinking and *Humata* thinking, i.e. thinking according to the Edict, which is a feat only to be accomplished by the Immortals. "Man is full of doubts and ignorance and disbelief; hence his thinking is not *Humata*" In the same way, *Hukhta* means speaking according to the dictates of *Ahunavar*. Can a human being speak like that ? So also, *Hvarshata* means doing according to the dictates of *Ahu*.

Can man's deeds ever equal those of Nature's ? YES! Provided he goes on the path prescribed and reaches perfection. . then his deeds will be selfless and that will tantamount

to attaining a part of *Hvarshtha*. And so with *Hukhta* and *Humata*. *This is precisely why in the Patet, the devotee says, "Astooan Hom Huma a Pa Manashne.." – "I should be ever ready to obtain Humata powers i.e. the powers to see the immortal Universe working in its reality, with mind's eye"* Thus, the words *Humata*, *Hukhta*, *Hvarshtha* are highly technical and should be understood in their original sense.

Yet another peculiarity in the *Patet*, is its introduction, which begins with one *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*, after which the reciter immediately says *Yatha Ahu Vairyo Panj – 5 Yatha Ahu Vairyo!* What on earth is that? ask the confused philologists. As in many other instances, it was left to that ace disciple of the revered Ustad Saheb Behramshah Shroff, the late Dr. Framroze Chiniwalla, to come out with the correct esoteric meaning. The devotee here fervently wishes that by reciting five *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*, he may imbibe the energy of cultivating benevolence, like *Sarosh Yazad*, so that the currents and forces of *Sarosh* may multiply in his five *latent* senses, which in turn will turn his Consciousness always towards Lord Ahura Mazda.

One of the chief ideas of the *Patet* is then enunciated in the 3rd paragraph of the 1st *Karda*, beginning with the words "Stayem Ashahi..." There the reciter sees enjoyment in suffering the punishment meted out to him and does not grouch or crave for forgiveness. He is sure that in bearing the retribution stoically he will attain salvation.

Classification of Sins:

Dasturan Dastur Adarbad Marespand's Pazend 'Patet' lists various sins to which flesh is a prey. A number of sins has been mentioned by name, some of the important ones of which we shall see presently.

But what is very significant is the broad classification of the various sins as found in *Karda* 8. It should be mentioned that only after the advent of 'IIm-e-Khshnoom' in India, in the early part of this century has this classification or grouping of sins in the 'Patet' been fully understood.

Sins '(Gunaah)' are broadly *of* 4 types:

(1) 'Margarzaan'; (2) 'Maanidey'; (3) 'Farod Maande' and (4) 'Azey',

To appreciate the significance *of* these 4 groups *of* 'Gunaah', one must first have some idea about the **kinds of souls** as described in the Zoroastrian Religion. This division *of* the souls into three groups is made by Nature, according to the way in which the individuals have led their lives on Earth.

The first group *of* souls—and an extremely rare one, particularly these days—is that which consist *of* 'Daham Ravaans' or souls. The second group comprises the 'Jazaa Ravaans' and the third group consists *of* the 'Sazaa Ravaans'.

'Daham' souls are those fortunate ones, who, during their lifetime, have scrupulously and assiduously practiced all the Zoroastrian 'Tarikats' *of* 'Ashoi', resulting in their 'Kerdar' (a living prototype *of* one's terrestrial deeds which confronts one's soul after death) being very subtle and fine. Thus, these souls will have no problem smoothly sailing through the 3 stages *of* 'Chinvat (Gangdez, Kangdez and Varzamkard), gaining consciousness only after reaching 'Daadaare Gehan', which is the door to the 6 'Keshvars' and Heaven.

Needless to add, that these souls do not reincarnate on Earth but progress further.

The 'Jazaa' group of souls is in a relatively lower grade. These souls also follow the path of 'Tarikat' religiously but somehow there is some deficiency in the practice of these 'Tarikats'. Consequently the 'Kerdar' of such a soul is not all that subtle and the soul has to halt for some time on 'Varzamkard', the topmost, paradisiacal region of 'Chinvat', and then proceed to 'Daadaare Gehan'. The word 'Jazaa' means, 'reward'—Pahlavi Equivalent, 'Paad Dahishna'. These souls are also not reborn on Earth. Most of the souls who do not reincarnate belong to this group.

The last group of souls contains the majority of the Zoroastrian souls, who are incarcerated in the physical bodies on Earth today! These souls, during their sojourn on Earth, do not care to practice 'Druj Parhiz' and the Zoroastrian 'Tarikats'. These are the 'Baste Kustian Darvands' of the present day.

After this brief explanation of the class of souls, we go back to the groups of sins. One can roughly determine the class of soul, if one knows the nature of sin committed by the body housing the soul. For instance, if one commits a 'Margarzaan Gunaah', the soul is definitely that belonging to the 'Sazaa' group, and so forth.

(1) 'Margarzaan Gunaah' are sins for which there can be no repentance and for which the soul has to undergo mortal punishment, that is, it has to be reborn on this Earth. If a Zoroastrian commits a 'Margarzaan Gunaah', he has to reincarnate **at least** two to three times!

What sins will fall under the category of 'Margarzaan Gunaah' ('Margarzaan' = lit., 'death for the soul')? Some of these are mentioned in 'Kardas' 3, 4 and 5 of the 'Patet' e.g. being an atheist or an agnostic, expressing doubts about the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion, disobeying one's parents or 'Ustad', practicing trade or profession which gives rise to 'Druji', flouting and/or going against any of the Laws of Nature, not practicing the 'Tarikats' pertaining to 'Druji-e-Buji (menstruation and nocturnal discharge), throwing 'Nasa' in fire or water, practicing witchcraft or sorcery, participating in séances and coming into contact with spiritual mediums, indulging in adultery, sodomy, etc., cohabiting with a non-Zoroastrian man or woman ('Gunaah-e-Ravaani') masturbating ('Shoeythra Gunaah') debunking, deriding and making fun of a 'Zoroastrian' who tries to practice the 'Tarikats' (Avsosh Geraan Gunaah') etc. etc. Souls who are connected with any of these sins are 'Sazaa' souls. They have to be reborn again and again till they manage to wipe off their Karmic debts and obligations.

(2) 'Maanidey Gunaah' arises on account of the outstanding balance of the Karmic obligations of the past lives which still remain to be obliterated. 'Maanidey' means, 'what's left over.' Of course, the intensity or degree of these 'Gunaah' govern the number of times the soul has to keep coming to the Earth. If it is careful in using the **Right Will Power** all along, then it can reduce its frequency of incarnations. The peculiarity of this 'Gunaah' is that it comprises all or any of the 3 other groups of 'Gunaah-Margarzaan,' 'Farod Maande' and 'Azey'-**which might have been committed by the Soul in its previous births**. If the brought-forward 'Gunaah' belong to the 'Margarzaan' group, then the soul belongs to the 'Sazaa' class and it has to incarnate again and again. If the 'Gunaah' brought forward is a 'Farod Maande' one, then, depending on the intensity of that 'Gunaah' the soul could be either of the 'Sazaa' or 'Jazaa' class. But if the 'Gunaah' of the past is of the 'Azey' group, then the soul does not

have to incarnate, but after a halt on 'Varzamkard' progress further. It then belongs to the 'Jazaa' class. By and large, souls who are afflicted with 'Maanidey Gunaah' either suffer during life time or have their 'Sey-Shab' (the period during which the soul is attracted towards the Earth) after death, extended. The words 'Sey-Shab' literally mean, 'Three Nights'. So when one says that the 'Sey-Shab' is extended, it means that the soul which is on Earth for three nights and is supposed to takeoff for 'Chinvat' at dawn on the fourth day, remains attracted to the Earth for more than 3 nights and the progress is very slow.

(3) 'Farad Maande' means 'Gunaah' which are 'established' or 'proved' and which arise during one's lifetime. If one regularly and sincerely repents for this 'Gunah' and vows never to repeat it, then there is no rebirth for that soul. If, however, after committing such a sin, one does not sincerely repent or after repenting continues brazenly to commit it again, then such a soul has to come back to Earth. Thus, the soul afflicted by this 'Gunaah' can be either of 'Sazaa' or 'Jazaa' class. The maximum number of times such a soul has to incarnate is two.

(4) Finally, we come to that class of sins which is most fascinating, although none of us can claim to belong to that class of souls which are afflicted by it. 'Azey' sins are secondary sins resulting from primary ones **committed by others!** If 'Azey Gunaah' arise out of either 'Maanidey' or 'Farod Maande' 'Gunaahs' **committed by others**, then the afflicted soul belongs either to the 'Jazaa or Sazaa class.' If they arise out of 'Magarzaan Gunaah' of others, then the afflicted soul is that of the 'Sazaa' class! 'Azey Gunaah' are the only ones which are not committed by oneself!

Simply put, the mechanism of 'Azey Gunaah' works in this manner : a very pious, holy soul, once on Earth, has perforce to come into contact, directly or indirectly, owing to force of circumstances, with others, whose polluted auras and personal magnetism clash with their pure auras. It is, therefore, obvious, that (a) **no soul which incarnates can escape from a touch of this Gunaah, and (b) a soul which is afflicted with Azey Gunaah** is an exceptional one, a rare one and a very highly advanced one. And thereby hangs an interesting tale.

Not only **all** the Great Men and spiritually Illustrious Personages like Lord Jesus Christ, Moses, etc. were affected by 'Azey Gunaah', but even the Prophet of Prophets, Holy Spitaman Zarathushtra, whose 'body' was made of subtle Fire Energies and whose soul was of the category of a 'Yazad' could not escape from the influence of this 'Gunaah'. How? Whenever He would visit 'Geti' (physical Earth) to carry out His mission thereon, He had to transmute His 'body's' subtle, Fire Energies into material elements. At that time, all subtle putridity in the atmosphere would defile Him and as a result, He would be touched by the most rarefied and subtle form of 'Azey Gunaah'. Such 'Azey Gunaah' would at times afflict Him with such intensity that he had to exclaim, "Kaam Nemoi Zaaam? Kuthraa Nemoi Ayeni ?" (Yasna Ha 46-Gatha Ushtavaiti) when 'Bahman Ahmshaspan'd' would come to His succour and help Him lift the veil of matter and grossness!

In 'Karda' 8 of the 'Patet Pashemani,' all these four groups of 'Gunaah' are vividly enunciated and mentioned vis-a-vis all the creations of the 7 'Ahmshaspan'ds', and repentance is declared by the reciter of the 'Patet'.

The last paragraph of 'Karda' 8 is loaded with great mystical import.

Among other things, it is said there, “I repent if I have committed a sin against burning fire or a dog, a ‘Gospend’, the stars, the Sun, the Moon, the birds.....” The real meaning and significance of these sentences is not apparent. It is not the one that appears on the surface.

The whole paragraph suggests, according to the late Dr. Framroze S. Chiniwalla, that there is a world of difference between the knowledge and wisdom of the times when the Zoroastrian flag flew over most parts of the world and of today. If a Sassanian were to materialize in our midst, he would find our knowledge to be woefully poor and weak. Just as animals are guided only by feelings and passions and are oblivious of Nature, so would the Zoroastrian of Sassanian times find us today! **Modern Man is blissfully unaware of how offences and sins arise in Nature.**

Man’s actions must be such that they do not cause any damage or destruction in Nature. Man is supreme of all the creations of Nature on Earth. His deeds and their results, his actions and their reactions, affect the animals and birds, the rotation and revolution of the planets the Sun and the Moon. Humans have Consciousness, which animals don’t. They have the power of reasoning and Conscience that can decide between good and bad. Man is, therefore, the trustee of Nature’s Trust, of which the other creations are beneficiaries. Man’s actions should be a lubricant for the entire machinery of Nature.

Man is also a ‘half-Yazat’ on Earth! Yazad and other Divine Intelligences do not possess ‘Havas’ (passions) as humans do. So, in a way, humans who possess both Knowledge/Wisdom and Passions, have an edge over the ‘Yazads’, who do not possess passions. If therefore, man conquers his passions through the use of Right Will Power, then he can help Nature by lifting a great deal of its burden, resulting in reducing the passions and lust in animals.

If however, man himself succumbs to passions and false sentiments, he keeps throwing a spanner in the works of Nature, whereby he hinders the functioning of the Sun, Moon, Planets, etc., which are the various Agencies of Nature which operate her machinery.

So, the first thing a Zoroastrian is supposed to do is to inculcate humility in himself. Humility should be not only towards his fellow beings but towards the species of the lower kingdoms, too ! For this the path of ‘Tarikat’ has been shown. Those who live by practicing ‘Tarikats’ are the only ones who are saved from the sins committed against the creations of the Almighty, who are governed by the 7 ‘Ameshaspands’, as mentioned in ‘Karda’ 8

Today, what passes under the name of science is more often that not the result of a material culture and civilization, which work against Nature. Such a culture has, as its basis, nothing but crass ignorance about the Laws and Truths of Nature.

This then is the hidden meaning of this splendid last paragraph of ‘Karda’ 8 of ‘Patet’.

Retribution:

Just as souls and sins have been classified into groups in the “Patet”, so also has retribution or punishment for sins been divided into two parts: (a) “Paad fraah-e-Sey-Shab” and (b) “Tojashney Taawaan Deen.”

Both forms of punishment are mentioned in one of the most vital and significant sentences of the “Patet”. The last “Karda” 12 of the “Patet” contains this sentence which runs thus:

“Pull paadfraah bunddarosh, tojashney taawaan deen, paad-fraahey sey-Shab Panjaah-hafta saal, padash Khorsand hamdaadastaan hom” Freely translated, it would mean: “I believe in and am willing and ready to accept with pleasure the punishment to be meted out on the (Chinvat) Bridge; (I believe) in the “Bund – Darosh” – the shackles that bind the soul in the body while one is alive – but which should be raised to enable the soul to detach itself from its corporeal connections once death occurs; in the penance for sins and the resultant painful punishment; in the state of “sey shab” which may range from any thing between 3 days and 57 years.”

The meaning of “sey shab” has already been given in the 4th installment of this series viz., the attraction of the soul and the “Kherpa” (astral body) to the physical dead body and to the worldly possessions and relations. Ordinarily, “**sey shab**” (lit., 3 nights) is supposed to last for three days but can extend upto 57 years. This depends on the extent to which Karmic retribution in this world has been administered to the person and the quantum of outstanding balance of such retribution still to be meted out. The duration of 57 years is also for those Zoroastrian souls, who have not practiced “Druj Perhiz” during their lifetime.

The words, “Paad fraah” (Pahl. “Paad Fraas”) mean, that punishment which is borne with equanimity and even cheerfulness. But the other kind of retribution, “Tojashney Taawaan Deen” is a painful and agonising punishment. Even during one’s life on Earth, one undergoes both kinds of punishment. For example, soldiers who willingly and gladly die fighting for the sake of their country, undergo punishment of the “Paad fraah” type. But a murderer who is sent to the gallows, undergoes a painful, torturous punishment which is of the category of “Tajashney Taawaan Deen.”

21 Ahunavar & 12 Ashem: –

At the end of the ‘Patet,’ one comes across the unique combination of 21 “Yatha Ahu Vairyo” and 12 “Ashem Vohu.”

The 21 “Yatha” are for countering the 21 “Druji” – evil invisible magnetic effects, mentioned in the Zoroastrian Religion. Incidentally, it is significant that in Hindu Astrology, too one comes across, the “**Ekavib sati Mahadashas**” – “21 Great Evils” or discordant vibrations released by planetary bodies.

The 12 “Ashem Vohu” correspond to the 12 Zodiacal Signs and their 12 kinds of Karmic emanations.

The “Patet” prayer embodies certain hidden numbers, which can be gleaned according to the esoteric principles of Numerology mentioned in Zoroastrianism. For instance. Number 3 is evident almost throughout the “Patet”.

There are 12 “Karda,” i.e. $1+2=3$; the number given for “Sey Shab” is a days to 57 ($5 + 7 = 12 = 3$) years; there are 21 “Yatha” ($2 + 1 = 3$) and 12 “Ashem” (inversion of 21) = 3. Briefly, number 3 denotes the Creator, for it is Ahura Mazda who has created the Immortal World “Hasti”) (Aves. “Haithyengasti”), Who has sent the souls from the Spiritual to the Material World, and to whom the souls have to go back – from matter to

spirit.

The other talismatic number that emerges from the recitation of 21 “Yatha” and 12 “Ashem” is number 9, which denotes perfection.

According to esoteric Zoroastrianism, the “Aspandi” or Spiritual ‘Weight’ of the “Ahunavar” is 57. To arrive at the “Aspandi” of 21 “Yatha”, one should multiply 21×57 . The product is $1197 = 18 = 9$. So also the “Aspandi” of an “Ashem Vohu” is 36. The “Aspandi” of 12 “Ashem”, therefore, is $12 \times 36 = 432 = 9$.

What fantastic revelations lie buried in the seemingly simple Patet can be realized only when one looks at it through Ilm-e-Khshnoom.

Just as the **“Patet Pashemani”** recited by a Zoroastrian helps his soul fight the various temptations and overcome the hurdles strewn in his path at every step, **“Patet Ravanni”** (‘Patet’ of the soul that has crossed over) recited by the near and dear ones of the deceased, aids the departed soul in releasing it from its shackles, bringing it in harmony with Nature and thus assisting to attain ‘Anushehi’ (freeing the soul from the constant attraction towards the Earth) so that thereafter, the soul can easily carry on its task of liquidating its “Kerdar.”

“Patet Ravanni” is particularly very very useful and efficacious for the majority of the departed Zoroastrian souls; who during their lifetime, were unable to practice “Meher-Patet” for one reason or another.

When should one recite the “Patet Ravanni”? This question has elicited varied, basically conflicting answers from scholars of the community from time to time. For example, the late Sheriarji D. Bharucha opined that this “Patet” should be recited only during the first three days after death. Yet another opinion of an old Kadmi Dastur – a belief which is being followed by most priests to this day – was that this “Patet” can be recited immediately after death and continue to be recited thereafter without any exception. However, it was left to the “Ustad-e-Zamaan,” the late Beheramshaji Shroff, to point out the inaccuracy of both the above beliefs.

“Patet Ravanni” cannot be recited upto the “Chaharum” day. Why? Because the first three days after death when the soul is very much on earth waiting at the spot where the “Sachkar” ceremony was performed, before take-off on the dawn of the 4th day. During these three days among other things, the soul is keen to see that adequate arrangement is made for the proper disposal and disintegration of the physical body (in which it was ensconced during the lifetime of that individual), which is now lying in the “Dakhma”. Thus, during these three days, the soul is in a semi-conscious state (Nim-Hosh). In that period, it is also busy viewing its own actions and deeds performed during the life that has not been completed, as they whiz past in a cinematic form. Because the soul is in a semi-conscious state for three days, it is not able to see the panorama of its actions (this it can do for the first time, 36 minutes before sunrise on the “Chaharum” day) but can only view its deeds of the last life. That is why the “Patet” prayer which, contains the list of sins and of grievous breaches of the Laws of Nature, committed during the soul’s earlier incarnations when it passed through faiths other than the Zoroastrian, need not be recited during the first three days after death. The soul being in a semiconscious state cannot receive the particular thought-forces incorporated in the “Patet.”

Again there is internal evidence in the “Patet” itself, which suggests that this “Patet” cannot be recited on certain occasions. In Karda 12; there are two pertinent lines which read: “Hamey Farmaaem Ashem Vohu Beyvadirashni, Pateti Peesh Az Beyvativashni”; – “I direct that “Ashem Vohu” be recited at the time of my death, – I direct that just before death, “Patet” be recited.” Further, it says, “Pas Vadardeh Man Man Jaadehraa Az Gunah Pa Patet Bahod” – “After my death, it is incumbent on my children to recite the ‘Patet’ so that my path (of progress) may be clear.” The adverb “after” (‘Pas’) is the operative word here. It indicates the lapse of a certain period of time, viz. the first 3 days after death.

From the 4th day onwards, the heirs of the deceased must take it upon themselves to recite the “Patet Ravanni” every day, for many years.

This Pazend Patet can be recited loudly after all the Avesta prayers have been recited. However, if one wants to recite any other Avestic prayer, after reciting the ‘Patet’ then the entire patet should be recited in a whisper.

As in all other prayer formulas for departed souls, “Ahmai Raescha”, the “Raamno Khaastrahe” passage of “Jasa-mey-Avangahe, Mazda” and “Kerfeh Mazda” should not be recited at the end of the Patet Ravanni.

The importance of reciting the Patet Ravanni for the deceased can be reiterated by quoting a line from Karda 11 of the Patet itself. There it is stated that by not reciting this Patet, the tribulations (‘Dush-Khaari’) which the soul has to undergo, brings about a sin on the heads of those who should recite it.

It should be noted that in every ‘Karda’ of the Patet, the name of the deceased has to be recited. In some of the printed ‘Khordeh Avesta’ books, only the last ‘Karda’ mentions the place where the name of the deceased has to be recited. This should not be so.

The late Jehangirji Vimadalal used to say about this Patet: “what does it matter if we are unable to cut of the sins by reciting the Patet for the departed souls? They do get the thought-forces about the sins and endeavor in the spiritual world to be away from them.”

(Concluded)