



NORTH AMERICAN MOBED COUNCIL **NEWSLETTER** **ATHRAVAN**

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Presidents Message:

NAMC had their AGM in Toronto on 6th April 2012. We had 22 Mobeds in attendance. The topics discussed were Mobedyar program, Smart Phone App Zoroastrian Quotations , Zoroastrian Calendar unification, and many other subjects. A full report will be published soon. I would like to thank ZSO for hosting the AGM and all Mobeds who traveled to Toronto to participate at this meeting.

EPILOGUE FOR NAVJOTE

Adapted from the write-up of Ervads B. Panthaki, N. Kotwal and S. Dastur

Every religion has an initiation ritual to accept an individual into the religious community. The corresponding Zoroastrian ceremony is known as Navjote. The word is derived from the Avestan words Nav meaning new and Jote meaning worshipper. The initiation ritual in ancient Iran was known as Nozad – meaning new birth – signifying the rebirth of a child in the faith.

Today, we are gathered here, to honour the choice of (name of the initiate), to the virtuous path, the path of Ashoi or Righteousness, the path of HUMATA, HUKHATA AND HUVARASTA or GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS AND GOOD DEEDS.

The ceremony consists of the investiture of the child with a sacred garment called Sudreh, a white vest specific in design and a waist girdle called Kusti, the holy thread. Ceremony involves the following sequence:

Nahan. This is a symbolic purification of mind and body through a consecrated bath to attain the order of ritual purity needed for the ceremony. The nahn ritual involves recital of some Holy mantras by both the priest and the child. It is usually conducted in presence of immediate family.

Affirmation of Faith. The initiate is now brought before the assembly to make an Affirmation of Faith. The initiate is made to stand in front of the priest to be invested with 'Sudreh'. The word Sudreh means 'beneficent path' that the initiate commits to through the ceremony.

The Sudreh is a garment made of white muslin or cambric, symbolic of purity. It is made of two pieces of cloth sown together on the sides. The front and the back of the garment symbolically represents the past and the future. The V- neck in the front has a pocket sown at the bottom of the V known as Girehban. It is the symbolic storehouse for the Good deeds of the past. There is another pocket at the back known as Girdo which is believed to retains the potential for the good deeds that will be done in future. The investiture of Sudreh through the two hands and over the head is carried out each, during the recital of Yatha Ahu Vairyo, at the words Shyãothananãm meaning action.

The Kusti is made of lamb's wool that symbolizes innocence and is hand woven from 72 strands which represent 72 chapters of the Holy text of Yasna. It is tied thrice around the waist with two knots in front and two at the back. The three rounds remind the initiate to practice the basic tenets of the religion: good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The knots remind one, that

- (i) Ahura Mazda is the creator,
- (ii) His is the Mazdayasni religion,
- (iii) Zarathushtra is our prophet and
- (iv) To abide by the Mazdayasnian Law of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Benediction: The priest invokes the blessings of Ahura Mazda on the new initiate, through recital of Tandrosti. During this recital the child is showered with a mixture of rice and flower petals. At the end all the priests join in to recite of the above benediction a second time.

With the investiture of this SUDRAH and KUSTI, May Ahura Mazda Bless (name of initiate) on this most important day of his/her life, with THY guidance, love, a healthy body, a pure mind, and a wide and noble outlook in life making him a Truthful and benevolent Zarathushti.

*For more Information or submission of any articles in NAMC Newsletter,
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