

Atash Adaran – Consecration

(Published by North American Mobeds Council)

For this publication, the term “Atashkadeh” refers to the building of place of worship that houses the fire. The term “Atash Adaran” refers to the grade of fire that is housed in Atashkadeh.

In keeping with ancient customs and practices, the Zoroastrians in North America have established several Atashkadehs with “Atash Dadgah” fires and have now expressed their desire to establish places of worship with “Atash Adaran” to meet their spiritual needs.

Following careful study of Zoroastrian practices and procedures and after proper consultation with Zoroastrian scholars, advisors and spiritual leaders of this time, North American Mobeds Council (NAMC), in its capacity of an advisory body on Zoroastrian religious matters, has published this publication to guide and assist various North American Zoroastrian Associations (NAZA) in their endeavour to consecrate an Atash Adaran in North America.

The decision by NAZAs to establish an Atash Adaran should be preceded by a thorough examination, study and analysis of viability of consecrating and, more importantly, maintaining an Atashkadeh housing an Atash Adaran in their community.

Responsibility of constructing, consecrating and maintaining of an Atash Adaran:

Compared to Atash Dadgah, Atash Adaran has a complex and extended consecration procedure. It requires four types of fire; obtained, assembled, purified, consecrated, amalgamated and enthroned in a prescribed manner. It requires qualified and ritually purified Mobeds to perform consecration ceremonies over an extended period of time and requires commitment, support and participation by local community.

Since a special Atashkadeh is erected as a building solely and permanently to house the sacred Atash Adaran and for the use by Zoroastrians as their place of worship, it is fitting that it be a magnificent stand-alone edifice depicting Zoroastrian architecture and conveniently located for fellow Zoroastrians to attend on a regular basis.

In planning an Atash Adaran it must be realized that the consecration of Atash Adaran involves elaborate inner liturgical rituals. In order to perform these liturgies, an Atashkadeh to house Atash Adaran must include a Barashnumgah and a Yasnagah or Urvisgah with several paavis in it.

Requirements of the structure of an *Atashkadeh* that would house the Atash Adaran is outlined by NAMC in its publication entitled “*Atashkadeh in North America*”, published in May 2012.

This publication addresses the consecration of the fire of “*Atash Adaran*”.

Atash Adaran is a continuously burning fire. Qualified Mobeds are entrusted with the care, worship and responsibility of Atash Adaran by performing, amongst other ceremonies, Boi ceremony at least 5 times a day, each day of the year. Other inner liturgical ceremonies like Yasna, Visparad, Vendidad and Baj could be performed in the Urvisgah of this Atashkadeh. Sustained availability of qualified Mobeds and their proper compensation and remuneration should be of utmost consideration in any NAZA’s decision-making process.

Financial considerations should be well thought out for proper upkeep and maintenance of the Atashkadeh and for suitable housing for the Mobeds on the premises over an extended period of time. To this end, setting up a corpus fund for steady and sustained cash flow will be advisable.

Though NAMC commits to support any NAZA that undertakes this noble and ambitious undertaking, NAMC advises the NAZAs to weigh the responsibility they assume thoroughly.

Barashnum (ritual purification):

Mobeds holding Barashnum (ritual purity) are required to consecrate and thereafter maintain an Atash Adaran and to perform certain inner liturgical ceremonies.

A detailed procedure for obtaining and maintaining Barashnum in North American setting is published by NAMC under “Zoroastrian Purificatory Rites”.

Required number of Mobeds are to avail themselves of Barashnum in preparation for the consecration of Atash Adaran.

Preparation for the consecration of Atash Adaran:

An Urvisgah is a requirement in an Atashkadeh that houses Atash Adaran.

In the case where an Atash Adaran is to be established in an existing Atashkadeh with Atash Dadgah, where there exists a consecrated *Urvisgah*, the said Urvisgah can be used for the Atash Adaran consecration ceremony and for other inner liturgical ceremonies following enthronement of Atash Adaran.

In case where a new Atashkadeh is constructed to house an Atash Adaran, the Urvisgah needs to be consecrated before it can be used for Atash Adaran consecration and following that, other inner liturgical ceremonies.

Since an Atashgah is a section of the Atashkadeh that is permanently set aside for housing the holy fire of *Atash Adaran*, it is required to be consecrated before the sacred fire is enthroned in it.

Consecration of Urvisgah and Atashgah:

Urvisgah and Atashgah are to be thoroughly cleansed with fresh water before commencing consecration.

Participating Mobeds who have undergone Barashnum will first perform Khub ceremony of ‘Panche tae’ in the Urvisgah and Atashgah, followed by Aman Saman Mino Navar Yasna and Moti Khub, and thereafter daily Yasna and Vendidad with Kshnuman of Sarosh for three days.

On the fourth day, these Mobeds perform:

- a Yasna for Hama Anjuman with Kshnuman of Dadar Ahura Mazda
- an Afringan with the following kardas:

- Dadar Ahura Mazda
- Ardafravash
- Spendarmad
- Dahman
- Sarosh

- Five Baj, each with the same kshnuman as the kardas in Afringan above

Preface to consecration of Atash Adaran:

As prescribed in Zoroastrian liturgical tradition, spiritual practices and scriptural references, four sources of consecrated fire are required to constitute Atash Adaran:

Fires from the houses of:

Athornan (Zoroastrian Clergy and leadership)

- Respected Senior Mobed of the city or area
- and** any one or more of the following:
 - Leader of the City (Mayor or President of the local Association)
 - the donor (a person who donated for the Atash Adaran)

Rathestaran (Military)

Fire from any one or more of the following:

- Governor General of the Province or Governor of the State
- Military Officer or Police Officer
- Judge of a Court

Vaastrayoshan (Farmer or agriculturist)

Fire from any one or more of the following:

- Farmer
- Rancher
- Cultivator
- Gardner or horticulturist

Hutokshan (Tradesman, manufacturer or Professional)

Fire from any one or more of the following:

- Goldsmith
- Foundry
- Baker or distiller
- White-collar worker

Procedure of obtaining fires from the above sources:

The Organizing Committee of the local Association is to appoint a pair of Mobeds to procure fires from the above sources. Organizing Committee is advised to identify, develop and invite appropriate sources to participate in this process. These sources should be asked to light a fire in the hearth of their respective places of residence or business. The fire from the Hutokshan (tradesman or manufacturer)

group could be the fire that is used in their trade. The appointed Mobeds to arrive at the source place and collect the fire using appropriate utensils in a metal container with a perforated cover and arrange to transport them to the Atashkadeh. Care should be taken to arrange for a suitable and safe mode of transportation, and to feed the fire on route as required. At the Atashkadeh, the fires from the sub-categories can be combined, but the fires from the four major categories are to be kept separate and distinct from each other and placed on separate Afarganyas. Mobeds or Behdins be assigned to keep these fires constantly burning in anticipation of their purification process.

Process of Purification:

Two Mobeds holding Barashnum are assigned to purify each of the four fires separately, using the following process:

Preparation: Following items will be needed to purify the fire:

- Perforated ladle (Chamach)
- sufficient supply of combustible items consisting of
 - shaved sandalwood or any dry wood
 - powdered sandalwood or powdered dry wood
 - frankincense
 - Other clean flammable items as available
- Seven fire vases (Afarganyu) (4 for the original fires + 3 for purification process)
- Three metal strips about 15 inches long.

The first Mobed, following a padyab kusti, wearing a Padan, holds a perforated ladle (Chamach) with easily combustible substances (as described above)

- Recite Sarosh Baj up-to “Astavaiteh Ashahe” and recite “Dasturi” in lower tone (Baj).
 - Dasturi prayer: “Bedasturi-e-Dadar Ahura Mazda, Bedasturi-e-Ameshaspand, Bedasturi-e-Sarosh Asho, Bedasturi-e-Zarathost Spetaman, Bedasturi-e-Adarbad Marespand, Bedasturi-e-Mobedaan, baashad” ... Ashem Vohu 3”
- Then the Mobed holds the perforated ladle with combustible substances about 12 inches above the source fire while repetitively reciting “Yatha Ahu Vairyo” till the combustible substances in the perforated ladle ignites.
- The newly ignited fire in the perforated ladle is to be placed in a separate Afarganyu at least 10 inches away from the Afarganyu consisting the source fire.
- The Afarganyu with the source fire and the Afarganyu with the newly ignited fire is to be connected (Paivand) by the metal strip.
- The newly ignited fire is to be appropriately fed
- The source fire is to be allowed to extinguish itself.
- The Mobeds to complete the Sarosh Baj from “Nemascha ya Armaitish Ijacha”
- Using the newly ignited fire as the source fire, the second Mobed repeats the process.
- The first Mobed, once again, repeats the process, followed by the second Mobed who repeats the process the final time.

In total, the fire is to be purified four times.

Using the above procedure, each of the four sources of fire are to be separately purified, four times.

Consecration of the four fires:

The four separately purified fires are to be separately consecrated.

A pair of ritually purified Mobeds is assigned to consecrate each of the four fires simultaneously. If 8 Mobeds are not available for this process, the fires can be consecrated subsequent to each other using available pairs of ritually purified Mobeds.

The following ceremonies are to be performed on each fire by each pair of Mobeds:

Day 1: Mino Navar Yasna (Moti Khub) followed by Yasna (with Kshnuman of Sarosh) in the morning and Vendidad at midnight

Day 2: Yasna (with Kshnuman of Ahura Mazda) in the morning and Vendidad at midnight

All the four purified and consecrated fires are to be held in separate Pavi, pending their amalgamation.

Amalgamation of fires:

During this amalgamation process, the purified and consecrated *Athornan fire* is to receive the other three categories of fire.

The Rathestaran fire is to be brought to the Athornan fire and merged with the Athornan fire by the Mobeds who consecrated Rathestar fire, while reciting Atash no Namaskar thrice, followed by Ahmai Raesche.

The Vaastrayoshan fire is to be brought to the now amalgamated Athornan and Rathestaran fires and merged with it by the Mobeds who consecrated Vaastrayoshan fire, while reciting Atash no Namaskar, followed by Ahmai Raesche.

The Hutokshan fire is to be brought to the now amalgamated Athornan, Rathestaran and Vaastrayoshan fire and merged with it by the Mobeds who consecrated Hutokshan fire, while reciting Atash no Namaskar, followed by Ahmai Raesche.

After the amalgamation of the four fires, the ashes of the three now fireless Afarganyu are to be kept connected by a metal strip with the Afarganyu containing the amalgamated fire, till the ashes in the fireless Afarganyas is cooled off.

Consecration of Amalgamated fire:

On the amalgamated fire, a pair of Mobeds; usually the pair that consecrated the Athornan fire, is to perform a Yasna ceremony on the following morning, and a Vendidad at midnight with Kshnuman of Sarosh. The next morning, a Yasna ceremony with Kshnuman of Dadar Ahura Mazda is to be performed on the fire.

Enthronement of Atash Adaran:

Atash Adaran is to be enthroned in the presence of NAZA members and executives, Mobeds, dignitaries, distinguished guests and fellow Zoroastrians.

The Mobeds who participated in the process of purification and consecration of fires now unite and formally carry the Adaran fire to its chamber; “*Atashgah*”. Two of the Mobeds are to draw a Pavi using fine gravel on each side of the procession, and only the Adaran fire and the officiating Mobeds are allowed within the Pavi.

All the participants to form a procession and are to be encouraged to recite Yatha Ahu Vairyo, in unison, led by the participating Mobeds.

Participants of the congregation led by other Mobeds are to follow the newly consecrated Atash Adaran in a procession to the Atashgah where the participating Mobeds are to enthrone the Atash Adaran on its Afarganyu that stands on a stone platform. The senior Mobed of the participating Mobeds perform a Boi ceremony and lead the congregation in an Atash Niyayesh while feeding the newly enthroned Atash Adaran.

In the presence of the congregation, the participating Mobeds are to lead in celebration of the occasion by performing a Jashan with the following Kardas:

- Ardibehest Ameshaspand
- Ahura Mazda
- Spandarmad
- Arda Fravash
- Dahman
- Sarosh

Following the Jashan, six Baj ceremonies are to be performed, each with the same kshnuman as the kardas in the Jashan above.

Thereafter, the Mobeds are to perform a Tandorasti for the contributors to the establishment of Atash Adaran.

These ceremonies are to be followed by sharing the dedicated fruits and comradery amongst the participants.

This concludes the consecration and enthronement of Atash Adaran