



HAMĀZŌR

HAMĀZŌR, a Zoroastrian-Persian adjective meaning “of the same strength” (< OP/Av. *hama-*, *AirWb*, col. 1773, and OP **zavar-*, *AirWb*, cols 1689-90; Hübschmann, *Persische Studien*, p. 273). The term occurs only in a formula of greeting: in Irani Zoroastrian usage *hamāzōr bēm* “Be we one in strength” (Dastūr Shehriyār, p. 305; Boyce, *Stronghold*, p. 44), and in Parsi usage *hamāzōr hamā ašō bēd* “Be ye one in strength, wholly righteous” (Modi, p. 382). By a custom that has died out, this greeting was generally exchanged at Nowruz, accompanied by the giving of hands: two persons, meeting, each took a hand of the other between his own two hands, placed palm to palm (see details in Modi, pp. 378-79). This salutation was also exchanged at home among family members.

Hamāzōr was also made when people gathered for public religious occasions. Thus at the end of *jašan* ceremonies, and at the last service for the departed (called *čahārom* in Persia and *uthamna* in India), after all had joined in reciting the *Ķoršēd Ātaš Niāyeš* and *Nām Setāyišn*, the leading person present in the congregation (usually a priest) made *hamāzōr* with the person next to him; then others would follow suit, thus everyone exchanged the greeting. After the *Āfrīnagān* (q.v.) ceremony, however, it was customary in India for the serving priest to make *hamāzōr* with the celebrant, and then with each member of the congregation. In Persia instead he carried fire in a metal vase, with incense, slowly passing through the congregation, calling out *hamāzōr bēm* as he went; and, as he passed, people stretched out their hands and drew the fragrant smoke towards themselves, while responding with the same



words (Dastūr Shehriyār, p. 305; Boyce, *Stronghold*, pp. 43-44).

When a priest completed his training, that is, became *marāteb* (Modi, p. 197), being thus qualified to solemnize the “inner” ceremonies, he went to the house of the high priest and took *hamāzōr* from him (Pavri, p. 205). The *hamāzōr* is still regularly exchanged by the two officiating priests at the end of the *Yasna*, *Visperad* and *Vendidād* services, after the celebrant has “left” the *bāj* (q.v.) of the divinity to whom the act of worship has been devoted. Likewise, and at the end of the *Nīrangdīn*, after they have covered the vessels containing the *nīrang* and consecrated water, the two priests exchange *hamāzōr* with each other and then with the high priest, if he is present.

On occasion (if one hand is occupied, see Boyce, *Stronghold*, pp. 54-55) an ordinary clasping of right hands replaces the special ritual gesture. It has been suggested (Boyce and Grenet, *Zoroastrianism* III, pp. 317-18) that the prominence given to such a hand-clasp in the monuments at Nimrud Dagħ was in part at least an allusion to its significance in Zoroastrian observance, as a gesture of shared fellowship and spiritual resolve.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Khudayar Dastur Shehriyār, “The Celebrations of the Gāhambār in Persia,” in *Sir Jansetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume*, ed. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, Bombay, 1914, pp. 302-5.

Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1937, repr. 1986.

H. M. Pavri, *Bāj dharṇāne lagtī pāwmahalnī kriyāō*, Bombay, 1938, repr. 1995.