

NIYAESH & YASHT

If you recite the Avesta prayers regularly you must be familiar with the two terms : NIYAESH and YASHT. Generally speaking, one does not know the difference between the two, except that the Yashts are usually longer than the Niyashts. In this article, attempt is made to show the meanings of the two terms and the significance of the difference between the two... from Dr. Framroze Chiniwalla's "Khordeh Avesta - Ba Kshnoom Tavil".

What is Niyasht - or Niyashtn? The word implies not only the idea of praise or veneration, but also of saluting " सलाम करनी " It also has an element of hope - hope to acquire the blessings of the Yazad to whom the prayer is addressed and to ask for permission to be of service to him. Such a deep-rooted meaning is contained in the word 'Niyasht' besides that of asking for the fulfillment of a wish.

The entire universe comprises of :
Hasti, the immortal world (spiritual) Planes of Light
Nisti, the ultra-physical and (Material) Planes of Matter
Geti, the physical world of our planet earth.

There is unity, oneness in Hasti, with completeness, perfection, Immortality; whereas in Nisti the law of Duality operates; while there is Asar-e-Roshni, there is Asar-e-Tariki too. There is incompleteness, lack of wholeness, therefore there is want, there is separation, there is misery. (दुःख) In order to change this दुःख to सुख to bring about perfection, wholeness, to transmute the pangs of separation into throbs of love, 'Ushta' (उश्ता) immortal bliss... the yazads function in unity - all according to Ahunavairya - अहुवैर्य - Ahu's Great Plan, with great obedience. The Yazads thus working together in Nisti are known as Payu Thworeshtar (पयु थोरेश्तार) and their quality of obedience is known as 'Sroshem'. Therefore we can say that the fuel which keeps burning the fire of Nisti, are the 33 Ameshaspands and Yazads,

who are unchanging (अचल) but bent upon progress. We could also say that they are agencies appointed by Nature, like the Khurshid, Meher, Mah Bokhtar, Avan, Adar Yazads and Man is also one, because he contributes his share and plays his role. The angels always function according to and in obedience to His plan, but the manner in which Man acts, will determine how Nisti-Geti will progress or retard. Hence man by abstaining from **Druj**, observing Nature's Laws, spending his life in service to others, by praising, saluting, worshipping these agencies, will help the Yazads in their Divine functions. Man's hoping, wishing to be thus, is **Niyashtn**. So in a Niyasht, we salute such Nature's agencies (whether Avan Ardivisur or Mah Bokhtar) for their philanthropic missions, praising them and wishing that we too may be lucky to give our share of help to nature. Such a noble 'salaam' (सलाम) accompanied by an ardent wish is called "**Niyasht**". Whilst praying a Niyasht, our thoughts should be something like: "O Atesh Padshah or Avan or Mah or Khurshid or Meher! You all are absorbed continuously and incessantly in the grand herculean functions of the Divine Plan, His Will... without sleep, hunger, fault or fatigue. May you get complete success and may our wish (दुःख) our सलाम, our homage, our नमस्कार reach you. We ask that we may be made complete (सर्वम्), that our thoughts, words and deeds be such that we may become whole (सर्वम्). Thus in a Niyashtn, we salute, ask for such a noble boon, pay homage to Nature's agencies and hope to be connected to the Divine, so we may be lucky to join those who serve Him.

At this juncture, something very interesting. It is customary for Parsees to greet each other with a 'Sahebji'. There is deep significance in this word which is also reflected in a Niyasht. When we wish "Sahebji!", to someone we (should) mean "O Saheb. May you live long and be (सर्वम्) - whole - complete." Why whole? Because right now, we are all incomplete, in a fragmentary state. Our

Ruvaan (रुवान्) was divided into male and female, so we are only half. Not only that, our soul particles are scattered in animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms. When we absorb these back into ourselves and be one with our Soul mate (this union takes place not on earth but in the super-ethereal region and is known as 'Khaetwodath' (ખાએત્વોદથ) we become complete, a whole and only then can we proceed on our journey towards Him.

Let us now see how these prayers help us. This will also explain: (a) why we must recite the prayer and not merely pass the main thought of the prayer in our minds, and (b) why we cannot recite it in any other language but only as prescribed - in Avesta.

When we recite these **mantras**, (spiritual compositions of certain sounds causing particular vibrations and colours - **Staot**) a talismanic form/force arises out of the power working around in the atmosphere of the reciter, which comes to life due to the **Talesam** (talismanic field) that Asho Zarathushtra built in Nature. Such powers of **Talesams** could be unlocked only with proper observance of the rules of prayers. As soon as such a form/force arises, it is absorbed by Nature and offered to the Yazad to whom the prayer is addressed.

Even the worst sinner can benefit from prayers if he recites them in the proper manner. He too can perform this miracle of creating a spiritual form, which can attract and be attuned with the Forces of Light - **Asar-e-Roshni**; - but because he is very sinful, he cannot absorb the benevolent currents into his own **Aipi** (personal magnetism) which is polluted, and hence, his soul starves... 'Manthravani' is the soul's food and nourishment. His sins come in the way of this form/force going to his Ruvaan but the innumerable spiritual forces working in Nature, immediately take up this form and offer it, on his behalf, to the particular Yazad whose Niyaaeshn he was praying, which is then used by that angel in His service. Therefore, praying is a big '**Sawab**', the height of charity, which provides the oil to keep Nature's fires burning.

Dear readers, what beautiful thoughts and noble aspirations are mysteriously hidden behind our Avesta prayers! How unfortunate are those who say "Why should one pray so much? It is enough to have good thoughts, words and deeds." They do not know what they are missing!

WHAT IS YASHT?

The word Yasht implies, to be attuned with, or to be one with, or to mingle with :

(a) the Yazads themselves i.e., with their quality of obedience (**Saroshem**).

(b) their **Ushtaan** i.e. their emanations which are brilliant Forces of Light.

(c) their **Mithras** i.e. thought forces which have the motion of Ahura and so have the consciousness of Creation... a definite form known as **Mithre Barin**. મિથ્ર બરીન

(d) their angelic (actual) forms which at times enter our world.

So in a Yasht we attune ourselves with the Yazads themselves, whereas in a Niyaaesh we attune ourselves with the forms arising out of their functions, like the Sun, Moon, Water and Fire. We pay homage to their invisible inner power.

When the 33 Yazads are in Hasti, their motion is that of Ahura, they are in Ahura's orb, Ahura's Aipi so to say, and are hence known as **મિથ્ર અહુર બેરેજન અર્ધદાયે જંપહ**. They are part of the immortal, Ahura's energy/motion. They are Ahura Mazda's ray of light in Hasti. When they go down to Nisti, by separating from Ahura Mazda, they sustain and strengthen the lamp of Nisti and are known as **Payu Thoworeshtar** (પયુ થ્યોરેશ્તાર) as mentioned earlier. Thus the Yazads attune themselves to Nisti. Such a kriya of attuning to, sustaining and being one with, is known as **Yasht**.

When a man goes through life in such a way that he helps Nature in her functions, acquires magnanimous Yazad-like qualities and aids the Yazads in their work, he is said to have performed a Yasht with that Yazad. By reciting Yashts, we not only attune ourselves with the Yazad but also pour oil into the machinery of the Yazadic functions.

Before we go on to the next point, let us understand the terms **Aipi** and **Khoreh** and how

they differ from one another. **Aipi** is the electro-magnetic atmosphere around our bodies, the circumferential area upto our elbows. When our Aipi becomes pure, it can attract and retain pure Light, Nature's Blessings; then it becomes Khoreh. We do not possess Khoreh, saints and sages do. Therefore we are enjoined to observe the Laws of Purity, whereas they observe the Laws of Khoreh. Even those who have Khoreh are of two classes; Varj Khoreh having 2-6 aspandis (measure of Purity Power) and Gadman having 0-2 aspandis.

When a person having Varj (advanced) Khoreh recites a Yasht, he is said to be able to help the Nature of Nisti through **the strength of his Khoreh**; the one having Gadman Khoreh (one who can control his passions and has a strong mind) helps through **the strength of his thought forces**. Ordinary people like us who have no control over reflex actions, help Nature **through the Force which arises out of the vibrations of prayers (staots)**.

The AMAL - The practice of reciting a particular Niyasht or Yasht for 40 consecutive days with great care and discipline is known to us. This is to ask for some boon or fulfillment of an ardent wish. At the end of this period of 40 days, a person possessing Khoreh is able to earn his reward. That particular Yazad comes down to earth in some form while he is awake and grants him the boon. For people like us, it is a different story. We could, depending upon what we ask, also benefit, by their appearance and guidance in our dreams or sub-consciousness mind or in a state of sleep.

There are altogether 5 Niyashts and 22 Yashts.

Those of us who pray these Niyashts and Yashts regularly, even without understanding the contents or the meanings, do not realize what treasures we unlock for ourselves, for others and for the great Machinery of Nature. By reciting powerful **manthravani**, (માંથ્રવાણી) we strengthen our physical body, enjoy good mental health, obey our Religion, constantly strive to tread the right path and march towards our goal. We do not get intoxicated by success or prosperity, we do not lose hope in case of failure or misery. We take everything in our stride, take life as it comes with "Thine, not mine will be done!" on our lips. We are

ever ready to serve our Religion, our community, our society; ever willing to till the soil in Ahura Mazda's Fields. When Ahriman comes to loot and destroy the crops, we as guards, fight the evil (as Ratheshtars - spiritual warriors). Therefore in conclusion :

1) The recitation of a Niyasht enables us to :

- improve our tan-darosti and man-darosti,
- be willing to accept cheerfully, sorrow and happiness, thus maintaining balance,
- to improve ourselves and be able to guide others correctly.

2) The recitation of a Yasht enables us to:

- gradually eradicate spiritual Ignorance, base passions and evil thoughts,
- desire and acquire the authority to do the above for others - service to others.

So then, one who wishes to be thus, true to himself, true to his family, community, one who wishes to serve Ahura Mazda and others, to climb higher the ladder of Ashoi, the best and surest way is through prayers. To justify or find excuses not to pray is a mere deception of the mind. For it is the mind which plays tricks upon us, deceives us. The soul knew it all but upon entering the earth, it went to sleep gradually and asked the mind to take over, warning it of the perils. But the mind which is now in a state of comatose, is a mixture of good and evil and to it, "forbidden fruits are always sweeter"; hence the misery. All our misfortunes and grief originate in the mind and it is incumbent that we strive constantly repeatedly and consistently to drive away evil thoughts... that is our Religion and that is our prayers.

Translation :-

“ આ જંદગીનું (અથવા દુન્યાનું) સૌથી પહેલે (જાણવાનું) કે જે, સર્વજ્ઞ અદુરમજદે મને કહ્યું છે તે વિષે હું (તમુને ખુલાસો કરું છું, (તે એ કે) આ માંથ્રવાણીને, જેમ હું ગણું છું તથા જાહેર કરું છું તેમ તમારામાંનાં જેઓ, (તે ઉપર) અમલ કરશે નહીં તો તેઓની જંદગીનો અંત, નુકસાન (અથવા હાલાકી)માં આવશે. ”

(ઉશ્તવદ ગાથા, હા ૪૫.૩)