

PRAYERS

Silloo Mehta

Prayers have a two fold concept : **Manthra and Mithra.** "Manthra" is the Avesta compositions and "Mithra" is the thought force woven into it. The relationship between these two is like that of an employer and an employee. Through Mithra e.g. correct thought force, the powerful Avestic (staota) vibrations can be fulfilled. Mithra is like the sandalwood/loban offered to the fire of "Manthra" to make it more powerful and lustrous. In the soil of Truth, Manthra is the seed sown and Mithra is the water to nurture the growth. Thus you can see that both the words and thought force are equally important in prayers.

We know what "manthra" to pray; (Khordeh Avesta). But what about Mithra? since we do not know what we are praying, what thoughts should pass our mind while praying? Certainly not those of the worldly nature or selfish desires! What we need to do is to learn the essence of the thought force behind a particular prayer.

Man is known as a "thinking animal." When we think of good things (with the help of a clean body and mind), we are able to conjure up beautiful shapes and colours with which we can influence others; when we hold the correct thoughts during prayers, we are able to create forms with spirit, which serve us and help us fulfill our wishes.

PRAYER had the following main elements: Devotion for God, Obedience, Gratitude, Profound Faith, Truthfulness, Patience, Tolerance, Humility, Awe, Reverence.

In Farsi the word "Ibadat" (prayer) pertains to Devotion. "Bandagi" is akin to "Bandeh" which shows Obedience to Him and our Paegambar. Whatever path our Prophet has prescribed, if we tread that without doubt, question or arguments, those qualities of Faith make our prayers complete. Therefore, it is said that prayer is of : a) body, b) mind, c) soul. Whatever misery may befall us, if we accept our lot with Gratitude, Patience and Tolerance, not deviating from the path of Truthfulness—that is the prayer of the body and the mind. With Obedience and Humility, Awe and Reverence, to accept and observe the Laws of Nature and tenets of the Religion, would be prayer of the soul. When such a person prays, every atom in his body is capable of creating an attitude of Humility and a spirit of Peace and Contentment. Such a person acquires real wisdom; he never goes against his Religion but lives a good spiritual life. He has great strengths - his moral mentality and his physical body show responsibility to the soul. Such a person then becomes a 'Bhakt' (devotee). We call him 'Haomi' in Avesta. Such an exalted status he then has, that whatever he asks in his prayers he receives. But what does he ask? He asks, NOT FOR HIMSELF, BUT FOR OTHERS. Such souls are described in Avesta :-

"Haom yo gava baresamana, hizvo dangahangaha, manthracha, vachacha, shyothnacha, zaothrabyascha, arshookhadebyascha vaaghzi byo" and "Yengehe Hetam yazamalde"

These two paras we pray at the end of every niyaesh and yasht and are very

common. But what do they mean? Starting with the first one:

How can we describe a (bhakt) Zoroastrian Haomi? YO = that who is with "gav baresamana" = gav means that benevolent nature which is absolutely selfless and every inch for the sake of others 'baresamana' is a talismanic fortress in which 'yazates' come to help, from which, evil cannot escape but is transformed to good such a 'Haomi' how did he attain such an exalted status? The answer is "**Hizvodangahanga**" = by reciting Avesta correctly with manthra and mithra, by always uttering Truth and refraining from uttering falsehood he brought such results so that "**Arshukhadebyascha Vaaghzibyos**" = through the utterance of the manthra, and of Truths in Nature and by observing all the religious disciplines in his lifetime with the help of these, he obtains control over manthra, (vacha) speech and deeds, and thus himself becomes and 'alaat' (divinely charged) who can himself reach God and help others to reach Him.

The second para "**Yengehe ... Yazamaide**" such Haomis who have attained such spiritual heights, are always wanting to be attuned to those who have reached the Hasti (Spiritual Realm) and are known to Ahura Mazda and Bahman and have attained Universal Self Consciousness so that their inherent benevolence may grow into the Divine Light.

I have translated these truths from Dr. Chiniwalla's "Khordeh Avesta Ba Kshnoom Taawil" as best as I could. The substance is very heavy and difficult to understand, and although I am aware I cannot do full justice, it is so beautiful, I cannot resist the temptation to share it with my friends.

YENGEHE HATAAM

Those who have sailed in the boat of Ashem on the seas of Yatha have touched the six ports of 'gahamber' and have managed to sail through the three whirlpools; those who have observed the tenets and the spiritual disciplines of the Religion and have thus become 'Haomic' and have reached the spiritual realms (of Hasti) and are capable of fully attuning themselves to Him and are fully benevolent like Bahman (who is in Ahura's conscience) to those because of their status ... to have acquired such Asho, complete perfection and blissful peace, Mazda Ahura recognizes them and they are directly connected to Him.... to such souls, males and females we attune ourselves that is I with my body mind and soul in addition to my atoms that I may have in the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdoms, plus the connection I may have with my soul mate, together, (with the sound vibrations of my prayers, with my desires with my truthfulness) collectively, we attune to those souls, so that I may revitalize my atoms spread out thus and collectively become a whole and complete soul and thus in the boat of Ashem sailing in the waters of Yatha, overcome everything and finally reach the shore and meet my God.

Yengeha Hataam no **kalaam** is known as 'Hu Frayashatam,' Hu = benevolent kind and Fra = the progressive spirit which enables one to acquire, to attune oneself to. Thus this kalaam is said to be one which liberates one's soul and helps to establish a direct link with Dadar Ahura Mazda. It aspires to bring about freshness (by removing the deficiencies and fostering peace and eternal happiness) between the vibrations of Yatha and Ashem as like

between the earth and sky.

Therefore these three kalaams of Yatha, Ashem and Yengehe Hataam are the ones that spread Peace throughout the Creation. These are always there, and vibrating around every atom of the Creation; and because of that, nothing is or will be destroyed, but will one day (when these 'naads' are activated) turn into good and take the entire Creation toward and unto Him.

To sum up for these three **Azad Mathra** prayers: every atom has the naad of: a) Ahunavar, which vibrates to the thought: there is only one God, b) Ashem, which reminds us that Truth is the greatest and that all falsehood (evil) shall eventually transmute into good, c) Yengehe Hataam which constantly declares that **we will have to attune to the Divine in order to reach Him.** The Yatha and Ashem kalaams are known as those of Dadar Ahura Mazda; the one of Yengehe Hataam is known as Asho Zarathushtra's kalaam. Although all three are Dadar's kalaam, Yatha and Ashem kalaams are active in every atom and finally take it to its salvation. In between these two 'naads' of Yatha and Ashem is that of Yengehe Hataam but it is dormant. By following Ashoi, and spiritual disciplines of our Religion, as shown by Asho Zarathushtra, we activate that 'naad' and bring about the Will of Dadar. That is why this 'naad' is said to be that of Asho Zarathushtra. Thus this 'naad' of Yengehe Hataam is the one which helps us to attain salvation. This thought is supported even in Gatha Vohukathra Ha 51-22.

To sum up: Every atom in the Lord's Creation has a message to convey - namely: everything has to merge in Him. This Truth is proclaimed by the three mighty

forces created by the three talismanic 'naads' (vibrations) of Ashem Yatha and Yengehe Hataam. Yatha is the vast ocean of Ahura's Thoughts aided by nine Immortals. Ashem is the boat in which we sail and try to steer clear of the three whirlpools. The six ports (gahambar) are there for our food, sustenance, etc. The food thus is compared to Yengehe Hataam. Similarly, Yatha is also compared to a Sudreh with its 9 seams (9 Immortals). Ashem is the Kushti over it, which we tie around three times and then tie the six 'lairs' Yengehe Hataam. By tying these finally, we hope to fulfill our Mission.

Thus Yengehe Hataam is the 'ONE WAY TICKET to Him' on which there are these sure signatures of the Holy, Pious and Benevolent Souls. If Yatha is the sword to fight evil and Ashem is like the shield against it, Yengehe Hataam is like the ointment to heal our wounds and also like the spirit which gives us the strength to bear our wounds and finally help us to gain victory.

DO PRAY YATHA, ASHEM, AND YENGEHE HATAAM WHENEVER YOU CAN.

Face everything with a smiling cheerful countenance. Understand his mysterious ways. See God in everything, in every face - out of sight, but not out of mind.

An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory study and talk.

A religious husband and a wordly-minded wife cannot enjoy a happy home.

Call nothing - as your own

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Man's ultimate goal and destiny to be like 'Hom' Yazad - in complete obedience and worship of Ahu, to attain the status of a "Saoshyant" who is always helping others in their spiritual progress - for that there is no other way but Avesta manthra prayers.

When a person has control over or conquers his baser passions, then he is said to be healthy in body, mind and spirit: Tan-darosti; Mandarosti; Ravandarosti. That means he becomes "Haomi". Our prayers should be to ask for this quality, not to ask for fulfillment of our worldly desires.

Since we are ignorant of the cures of our physical mental and spiritual ailments how can we (in our spoken language) know what to ask for? If as patients, we do not go to a physician, how could we prescribe or know what medicine to take? A physician will prescribe in the medical language. Similarly our Avesta prayers are prescription for our ailments (not only physical) and even through we may not understand, we are enjoined to pray in Avesta. We cannot pray in any spoken language. A person who does not believe in the tenets of his Religion, one who gives up his 'farmans' and believes our sacred institutions, is like a sick patient whose disease is contagious. He is required to rest and stay in isolation and abstain from self indulgence for he is likely to spread his 'disease'.

Thus the talismanic Avesta prayers is the panacea for ills and the food for all the ethereal parts of our body and soul; it serves as an antiseptic to the spiritual contagion and enlightens the Ignorance and

darkness in ourselves. By constantly praying Avesta one is made aware of the purpose of one's existence and the fact that we do not live for ourselves but also for others. Our prayers also remind us of our duties others than worldly; how to alchemies the evil into good not only around us but also within us. If one is consciously aware of all this, one gets enlightened, becomes 'Haomi', and becomes one of the greatest helpers of nature partly for which he was created. Man is a trustee of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdom. He is like Nature himself; part of it; that is why he is endowed with freedom of Will - Action-Speech and like Ahura Mazda and the Yazads has a conscience, which when activated fully, can attune himself with Ahura Mazda and the Yazads and thus act like Nature's Right Hand! But the layers of ignorance formed over his consciousness, the 'druj' in his mind and passions woven in his inherent nature (which are of 99,999 types) have conquered him and will not let his conscience reach the stage of 'Daena', that is, he is unable to see or fathom Ahura Mazda's Creation as he should, and thus keeps blundering and learning by trial and error. Our prayers help us to cultivate the right conscience and see beyond the five senses.

We have no authority to evaluate the composers of Avesta prayers.

Avesta prayer is a priceless wealth and man will never be able to evaluate this treasure. How could he then judge these spiritual giants the Ashavans the master physicians of body mind and soul? - or for

that matter Asho Zarathushtra himself who composed and got composed these prayers? Because of his spiritual ignorance, he may doubt the authenticity of such mantric compositions or even become an atheist. It is very easy for man to thus fall than rise. It is very easy to forsake one's Religion, give up, for example, wearing Sudreh Kusti or reciting prayers etc., and appease the conscience with excuses based on worldly benefits and viewpoints. To have Faith and Devotion, to follow Religion, to pray daily etc. is an uphill task. It is strenuous to climb a hill; but to come down is very easy. Those who are thus at the bottom of the hill; are very unfortunate. Those who are on the top or ascending are truly lucky! By constantly pronouncing Avesta on our lips, we automatically cultivate Faith and Devotion which help us to surmount the innumerable obstacles that abound along Life's Path.

Let us now examine and look into the mine of treasure in our most powerful prayers of Yatha Ahu Vairyo.

YATHA AHU VAIRYO

(Yatha no 'kalaam' is very mysterious, and every word has very deep meanings. Not only is it extremely difficult to give 'kshnoomic' translation of the Gujarati version of each and every word and line of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo but it is very dangerous for a nobody like me to try and convey the exact meaning-least I slip or err even slightly. That is why I reproduce the translation in Gujarati, as it is in the book - Khordeh Avesta Ba Taawile - Kshnoom)

First of all, we shall distinguish between Ahunavairya and yatha Ahu Vairyo. They are not one and the same as we shall see. Ervad Kaikhoshru Dastur had given a beau-

tiful talk on the subject some years ago, the contents of which I shall use here, besides the Gujarati translation from the book.

Ahunavairya has two facets. The first is that it is like a plan - a blueprint for the entire Creation of God. The second is that it is the first step, the first foundation or implementation of that plan. It is the first sound, the first vibration which the Hindu call 'Om' and the Bible talks about as "the Word"; we Zoroastrians say it was the (vibrating sound) of Ahunavar.

In Yazashne Ha 19, Asho Zarathushtra asks Dadar Ahura Mazda: "What was the first thing which was created?" The answer was: Before water, earth, fire, goshpand (animals) were created, before Evil had crept into creation, before any creation, behind every creation, was the sound of Ahunavar. Mankind was created much later and was made responsible for taking everything back into Him. This Ahunavar naad (vibratory sound or - the Song Celestial) is very subtle and cannot be caught or heard by human ears and yet it vibrates in everything-every atom - from the speck of dust to a holy man. It delivers a three-fold message - three lofty thoughts condensed into it:-

- 1) He is- He is Great. That is like saying that there is a God, mighty and that there is 'Godhead' in each and everyone of us - even in an atheist. This 'naad' is vibrating even in an atheist or a murderer, but it may be dormant. It vibrates on different frequencies, but it is there - in animate or inanimate. Eventually every thing/being will change into good.
- 2) Truth is the greatest religion - That we should try never to utter untruth is a very essential part of our spiritual discipline. It is

very difficult to adapt this principle in our daily lives but one should keep trying continuously.

3) We all have to attain Beauty - Here 'beauty' means that final state of Beauty that one gets when one is perfected-Salvation- Farshogad. We have to know that everything, everybeing in the end has to be perfected and finally merge into Hlm. We have already observed that everything, animate or inanimate had the Ahunavar 'naad' in it. For example take the case of an ordinary dinner plate or any other plate for that matter. The 'naad' in it is there, but doormant. Whereas if you take the metal plate which is used in yazashne ceremony, the 'naad' in that is activated and vibrating with greater frequency. Not only does it give out good vibrations but spreads them around, influencing the environment. Hence, it becomes charged and is used as an 'alaat' in the ceremony. These three lofty thoughts form the basis of all other Religious teachings. Now than what is Yatha Ahu Vairyo? This 'naad' vibratory sound or "song celestial" which is vibrating in everything in the entire Creation, reminding one of the Lord's Will and Blueprint, cannot be heard by the human ears or uttered by human tongue. Our Asho Paegambar therefore, drew the staot of this powerful 'naad' and the lofty thoughts and formulated a prayer of 21 words which could be heard and uttered by human tongue and that is our prayer of Yatha Ahu Vairyo. It is the image or the manifestation of Ahunavairyia. It is the essence of the 21 nasks given by our Prophet. Each of these 21 words corresponds to a particular Nask.

When we recite a Yatha Ahu Vairyo properly holding and concentrating on these 3 thoughts, we create a force within

and without, because the 'naad' in us starts vibrating at a higher frequency.

"Listen innerly,

There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest But in his motion like an angel sings. Still quiring to the young eyed cherobins."

"All natural forms emit their sound and the whole is expressed in the sacred Word OM or AUM. Countrymen of old sometimes claimed that they could hear the corn growing. This should not however, be interpreted as physical hearing but as the Inner ear, in supersensible attunement Here one could lift the soul in prayer and invocation and know the reality of God."

Now we shall point out some of the connection between Ahunavar and Asho Zarathushtra. The Bible says: "In the beginning there was a Word, the Word was God, the Word was with God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. " Here they are talking about Jesus Christ when they say 'word was made flesh'. We too maintain that our Asho Zarathushtra was God's word made flesh - that is he was himself like a concentrated form of the Ahunavairyia 'naad'.

In Zarathushtra Nameh it is stated that Asho Zarathushtra took birth actually reciting "Yatha no Kalaam". Not the one that we pray, but "Yatha Ahu Vairyo Zaota frame mraute, atha ratush asaas achit hacha fra ashava videvao marotu." I'll explain. In an Afringan Ceremony during the performance of a Jashan, there is a head priest called Zaota (Jyoti the main one) and Rathwi is his helper. When Jyoti says: "Yatha Ahu Vairyo Zaota frame marute", the Rathwi replies, "Yo Zaota frame marute". Similarly Paegambar Saheb whilst taking birth on earth prom-

ises God saying, "I am your servant - Your Rathwi, Your helper. Now that I have taken birth I will spread your Will, your plan, your message in the entire creation. Thus saying he takes birth. In Fravardin Yasht it is stated that when our Paegamber uttered this sentence, the thought force spread all around and every atom vibrated in response and danced to the tune of the Celestial Song and Nature declared "Ushatano jato Athravayo Spitamozarathushtrō" Hail the Prophet has come, now the Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness shall prevail". There was USHTA (ecstasy) in the entire creation.

Another of Nature's fact and that which is historically recorded is : that no human being has ever smiled or laughed when he was born. Our Paegambar Asho Zarathushtra actually laughed at birth. "Plinius commemorates two remarkable features of the life of Zoroaster, one of which he refers to his birth, viz., he laughed on the day he was born, and his cerebellum palpitated so as to push back the hand laid upon it, a presage of future Knowledge."

Now if I were to write the detailed inner exposition (taavil) the article would be very lengthy. Therefore, we give just a summary of the three lines of Yatha Ahu Vairyo

The First Line : Yatha Ahu Vairyo Atha Ratush Ashat Chit Hacha

'Encompasses the beginning and the end of Creation - the knowledge of Pre-Cosmogonogenesis and Cosmogonogenesis How matter came out of spirit and how it has to be transformed back into Spirit-the story of infoldment and unfoldment....how out of AHU the shoreless motionless Ocean of Light, there was an emanation as a

cause for a Thought-a motion a vibration and how Creation was formed and how according to His will everything will merge back into Him. It is this Will, His command that with complete submission and obedience has to be executed with the help of His blessings. The emanation thus awakened, gains consciousness and out of it arise two groups of forces. Souls of the first group with the blessings, get ready to carry out His plan and constantly meditate on It, whereas those of the other one are lacking in obedience rebel as if to say: We are from the same source as you are. Why should we bow down to you? (this rebellion is the source of all Evil). They turn away from Light and are not blessed. It is these souls with 'dravao' (deficiency or darkness) that have to be perfected and brought back to Light. The Word 'Hacha' then signifies the fact that such lost souls (like us) have to go back to him.

The Second Line: Vangeush Dajda Manangho Kshyothenanam Angeush Mazdaal

To continue.... Now the souls in the first groups set forth to improve their less fortunate rebellious brethren (according to his Will) and they sacrificed and dedicated themselves to their mission - some of these were the 33 angels and archangels; (Yazads and Ameshaspands) and so the second line contains the knowledge of how the Yazads and the Ameshaspands helped in the different stages of Creation, how they strive to teach and transform souls; their functions and status in the Divine Hierarchy; how those who are thus transformed, in their turn, try to help the others. It also declares to the Universe that whatever is negative, will eventually change into positive. All darkness, disease, misfortunes, grief, disharmony will

one day turn into complete bliss and harmony, the eternal happiness.

*The third Line: Kshathremcha Ahural
Aa Yim Dregoobyoo Dadaat Vastarem*

The door to such happiness, such an authority will be attained by only those who not only walk on the path of Righteousness, but also work to uplift others at the sacrifice of one's self. "To serve others is to serve God". Such an authority is given to those, who in this world, have passed through the trials and tribulations of life and have learned their lessons - who have risen by falling and have always strived to stick to the right path and have come out victorious. That is why, O Man, do not complain for the misfortunes befalling you, but consider these as blessings in disguise. There is complete fairness In Divine Justice. So try to turn your stumbling blocks into stepping stones and be a Spiritual Farmer. Weed out the druj in your lives and from those of others; sow good deeds in the soil of faith, water them with Asha & the spiritual discipline (tarikats), shed the sunshine of warm loving thoughts and reap a rich harvest of a crop of peace, happiness and prosperity.

Ahunavalya - "Yatha no kalam" is such a powerful prayer for the Almighty! It is our protector and Saviour whose mystery is reflected in "Ahunem Vaireem Tanoom Paiti" means Ahunavar saves the body. Reciting a Yatha brings about beneficial results. It is sharp like a sword and is capable of taking a soul right into Chinvat Bridge and from there, into Garonaman Behesht (Heaven). It helps tremendously at the time of misfortune or catastrophe.

If Yatha no `kalaam` is like a sword, then Ashem is like a shield. Our Sudreh has the motion of Ahunavar, and its nine

stitches signify the nine stages of immortality. Our kushti is the motion of Ashem and the 72 strands of wool out of which it is made, represent the 72 steps of Ashoi. By wearing the Sudreh and Kushti on the body, we can activate the Yengehe Hataam `naad` which then becomes victorious in conquering `druj` and thus carrying out His Command when in the end, these two naads of yatha and Ashem (which are ever present) are activated fully. When the `naad` of Yengehe Hataam is able to join these two, then the entire creation will be liberated and everything will merge back into the Light.

In Nature this `Naad` of Ahunavar, this sublime strain, the divine melody is being sung everywhere, hence we are enjoined too recite Yatha as if we were singing it. The 21 words correspond to the 21 Nasks (volumes of Natural Universal Laws). These 21 Nasks are now lost to us but we do have their summary In Dinkard. These 21 nasks had two forms: a) Fashusho Manthra which had its inner exposition in b) Manthra Spenta Explanation of part of the Manthra Spenta Nasks is given in Dinkard.

To end on a beautiful note - Sudreh (Yatha) is like the ocean of Divine Order and Kushti (Ashem) is like the boat sailing in the ocean. In order to march towards Farshokereti (final Destination) it is incumbent that we sit in the boat (of Ashem) and sail in the waters (of Yatha) and pass the three big whirlpools by touching the three big ports - (gahambars) which are capable of steering clear of the dangers. Thus one ultimately sails to the shore, disembarks, praises the Lord and thanks him, and praying (the `Naad` of Yengehe Hataam) meets Him, greets Him, and merges into Him.

Atha Jamyad, Yatha Afrinamil