

PRAYERS FOR THE GOOD HEART.

MEANING AND MESSAGE OF "KSHNAOTHRA AHURAHEY MAZDAAO."

A SILENT PRAYER OF LOVE, DEVOTION AND ACTION, AND NOT A YELL OF HATRED, EGO AND SHOW OFF.

The subject of Manthra Prayers has been often treated in this humble Parsi Pukar. September 1996 was a special issue on Manthra. The subject is too wide to be adequately covered even through half a dozen special issues. Yet it is this magazine's pet subject. Because, Khordeh Avesta Prayer is perhaps the only minoi institution of our Religion we have preserved better than any other. A lot of questions are being asked on the mode and mechanics of different Prayers.

One question that is repeatedly asked is: do our Avesta Prayers have any meaning in them? What are their contents? What is the message, if any, in them? What are the thoughts embedded in them? Can we have some idea about what thoughts we should have or pass through our mind while chanting them?

To answer these questions, we propose to present to our readers, from time to time, the meanings and message of some of our daily Khordeh Avesta Prayers or the passages therefrom, which occur repeatedly, up to a level. As is often pointed out here, Manthra have levels of meanings. The translations from the western studies are based on a manmade conjectural grammar of Avesta and the guess-work of a psuedo science called linguistics or etymology or 'science' of languages. There is no doubt that great exertions were put in by the western scholars in arriving at their translations. But unfortunately they were stuck up with the paradigms of the material science and culture of the 19th century, and therefore, their translations were devoid of any spiritual, mystical and devotional aspects, which are the sine-qua-non of any holy scripture. We Parsis were too much lured by these studies, and the result is that we are left ignorant of the profound divine content of our own scriptures.

DON'T DESPAIR! LIGHT IS HERE!

But there is a silver lining to this cloud of ignorance. The translations emanating from IIm-e-Khshnoom, the mystical science of the Zarthoshti Din, do rely to a certain extent on the western philological studies, but lay greater emphasis on the mystical levels hidden behind the dry looking meanings. We propose to place before you these Khshnomic translations and the mystical teachings and message woven into them. The main translator is the late Dr. Faramroze Chiniwalla, by vocation a reputed ophthalmic surgeon but later a saint with no other work except propagation of the genuine divine knowledge embedded in our Din. He has translated all the five Gatha, all Khordeh Avesta, all Niyash's and Yashta's, written volumes on Yazashney and Vendidad, and all this, in addition to the several large books on the minoi science, IIm-e-Khshnoom itself.

KNOWLEGE, DUTY, DEVOTION

Avesta Manthra are the treasure house of divine Knowledge and Wisdom, Love and Devotion. Every passage, every line, every word has three phases: science, duty, and devotion. Science here does not mean the modern physical sciences; it means the mystical truths. Duty means a Godly Message for living our lives; and devotion means intense love. The first phase reveals some unknown existence and event in Nature. The second raises a warning finger of do's and don'ts in life; and the third sprinkles our hearts with profound love towards Ahura, Asho Zarathushtra and Din.

This is the undercurrent in every Manthra Prayer, be it an Ashem Vohu of twelve words or Yazashney of 72 chapters. The articles in this series will reflect all the three phases; but the emphasis will be more on devotion.

WHAT IS DEVOTION?

The Ruvan within us is itself a ray of Ahura's Light. In this life it is imprisoned in a physical body. The aim is to alchemise all evil within us, and add it to the existing good in us, and then go back to our Fountain Source, Ahura. The separation from Him and the craving and the sure hope of going back to Him are the undercurrents beneath the devotion throbbing in our good hearts. Devotion is thus an expression of our deep love and craving for Him, His Prophet and His Din. Every Avesta line is a sprinkle of devotion, if you know something of its meaning. All our holy scriptures, though only about 1/20th of the original, are a grand melody of intense love and devotion. Alas! we are kept devoid of the divine music in them. But cheer up! Here you will receive in your ears some serene notes from the divine songs and your good heart shall rejoice.....

Let us therefore begin with just a two worded Avesta line of rejoicing:

"KSHNAOTHRA AHURAHEY MAZDAAO."

The surface meaning is:

May Ahura Mazda 'rejoice!' or

May Ahura Mazda be 'pleased!' or

Propitiation to Ahura Mazda! or

May this Prayer of mine 'please' Ahura Mazda!

Why 'please' and 'rejoice' in inverted comas? This rejoicing of Ahura is not like the material oriented rejoicing of the mortals like us. His pleasure, His joy consists in bringing the whole creation back to Him. His love for every particle of the creation is more intense than our love towards Him. He desires that we, the humans, strive ourselves to rush to Him and be with Him, so that the joy of union be to both - He and us. He has provided many a paths to walk towards Him - the Paths of Religions, which ultimately lead to one last track taking us to His grand mansion.

The line "Kshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdaao" is, then this prayer: **"Oh Ahura Mazda! Let me walk on the prescribed path of my Daena; let me carry out Thy commands as brought to me by my divine Guide, Asho Zarathushtra, so that Thee and I both come nearer and nearer to each other, and we both rejoice."**

In the word 'Kshnaothra', we hear two words: "Khsna" and "Thra" with "O" in between. 'Khashna' has echo of bliss, ecstasy, joy, happiness of divine intoxication. It is also woven into some other words like 'Kshnaohraicha', 'Kshnooto', 'Kshnooman', 'Kshnoom' (Gatha 48-12, 53-2) 'Kshnaoosh' (46-13), 'Kshnootem' (519). Each of these has the meaning related to divine joy - bliss.

"Thra" has the echo of 'through', which denotes agency, instrumentality, like, X works 'through' Y. Y is the agent, the delegate, the attorney, who works for or under the orders of X. **Every human is God's delegate, His constituted attorney, authorised, empowered and commanded to do certain things and (unlike the legal power of attorney) NOT to do certain things.** These 'do's and 'don'ts are the lamps on the path leading to Him. For us, they are prescribed in the prayer, Patet Pashemani. Follow them and the joy of union is not far away. Discharge your duties cast on you by God's Power of Attorney. Be His agent and servant; know that He desires to work through you; therein lies His joy and yours too. That is the message of "Kshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdaao." **"May I work for Him as ordained by Him so that He and I both rejoice"**, is the personal prayer embedded in the line.

Incidentally, 'Thra' is also woven into the word 'Poothra', which means the son. Son is the agent of the father; he is required to work for the father; he takes up much of the father's burden. Therefore Atash is the son of Ahuramazda ("Athro Ahurahey Mazdaao Poothra"); mark, 'thra' is not only in "Poothra" but also in "Aathra", which is the root-word of 'Atash', 'Atar'. The truth that Ahura works through His son, Atash, is entwined in two 'thra's. May be the same truth is the light behind the Christian Faith's axiom: "Lord Jesus is the Son of God."

"Kshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdaao, Ashem Vohoo 1", is the starting line of our Kushti Prayer, Sarosh Baaj and most of the 'Niyaish's and 'Yashta's. (In the five 'Gah's, it is Ashem Vohoo 3, instead of 1). Dr. Saheb Faramroze Chiniwalla, in his "Khordeh Avesta baa Kshnoom", has given the following meaning of the line;

"(May i be) the agent (Marefat) for the rejoining of Ahuramazda (i.e. may it happen that through me and through the action of the whole world Daadaar rejoices). May 'Asha' i.e. Minoi (divine Order be spread out". (page 69).

He then gives a footnote to elaborate the central theme of the line:

"Daadar's aim for creating the Universe can be fulfilled fast by treading the Path shown in the Din according to the command of Ahuramazda, that is, according to the Tarikat; that means Ahuramazda rejoices at the attainment of His aim. Therefore, may i continue to walk on the path of Tarikat, so that Daadar may rejoice and others may act and work in the same way through their good association with me; this i pray. I have no doubt that this will surely happen through the gift of this Mantra."

When Ahuramazda is to be emphasised as creator, the word is prefixed by "Daadaar." 'Daadaar' is the Pazend version of "Daatarey" occurring in the sentence "Daatarey Gaethanaam Astavaitinaam", which means, the creator of the temporal (physical) world.

'Tarikat' means the full code of conduct for living the life on earth and includes both: the moral code as well as the religious disciplines of the body and mind, like Sudreh Kushti, Manthra Prayers, adoration and worship of Atash Padshah, rituals and ceremonies etc. Faramroze Chiniwalla conveys that Ahura's path is the path of the Tarikat in this sense.

The beauty of Chiniwalla's translation is that he has expressed the central them of this line in different words at different places. For example in Haven Gah he has put it this way: (May i be) the agent for Ahuramazda's rejoicing (and promise to do such deeds as will bring the Frasho-Kayreti nearer).

Frasho Kayreti or Frashogard means the time when all evil will be alchemised to good. 'Fra' denotes freshness, greenness, peace, bliss. All the darkness will be changed to light. All ignorance will vanish. All untruth will be dissolved. All hatred will melt away. That is Ahura's aim; may i act as His agent and servant to bring it nearer.

In Repithavan Gah (page 129) Faramroze Chiniwalla introduces another facet: victory.

"May the instruments for the rejoicing of Daadaar Ahuramazda be sustained and His victory may march on."

His victory is in bringing Frashogard nearer, when every particle will sing. "Nearer to Thee my Lord."

Rejoicing, bliss, ecstasy of the Principal-Ahuramazda, and the servant- the human being, may multiply. Let the human get a drop from His infinite ocean of love. Poets have sung this idea; artists have painted it. Let the human be an instrument of God's music; His servant for bringing Frashogard.

"Khshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdaao" has a holy Manthric vibration. It is not to be wasted by shouting it at each other at all times, odd and even. It is spoken softly as a prayer while praying. Its message is love to God and His creation and the call of action. It is not to be used as a weapon of hatred towards others or for bloating one's ego or for a haughty show off.

- Cherag

(Parsi Pukar DECEMBER 1997 Vol. 3; No. 6)

ASHEM VOHU - PRAYER FOR THE GOOD HEART.

INFINITE OCEAN OF DIVINE WISDOM IN A MANTHRA COMPOSITION OF JUST TWELVE WORDS!

[Note: In our issue of December 1997, we announced the beginning of this series on our Khordeh Avesta Prayers. Our aim is to present to our truth-seeking readers the meanings of our Prayers, which are deeper than those conveyed by the translations we normally come across. Every Parsi, who has tried to follow these ordinary translations, has felt something missing in them. Look at the holy Scripture of any other Religions, be it Bhagvad Gita, or Bible or Koran or Dhammapad or Granth-Sahib. What an intense throb of devotion! What a profound spiritual message! What a guidance and inspiration for living the life on this earth, when we feel ourselves away from God! What a solace in our daily turmoils! What a satiation of our hunger and thirst for spiritual knowledge and action! In the heart of our hearts we do feel that our Avesta Prayers are not able to give the spiritual satisfaction our heart so longingly craves. When we read the ordinary translations, we wonder whether these can be our genuine prayers. Many a honest Parsis are therefore inclined to turn towards other Religions or mysticisms. Some of us do show our resentment to such Parsis going 'out' of their own Zarthoshti Din, intellectually if not by conversion. But we forget that it is the apparent lack of spiritual materials in the present day form of our Din that leads them away. And the fault lies, amongst several other things, with the dry, lifeless, spiritless translations of the Avesta, which flow, not from the mystical experience of the Saints and Seers, but from the material psyche of the Western scholasticism.

This series is intended to break that material wall in which our so called "studies" are imprisoned. We show here the infinite profundity of our Scriptures in Knowledge, Duty and Devotion, the three pillars of any religious system. Our base is Ilm-e-Khshnoom and the translations and devotional explanations and commentaries of its authorised master Dr. Saheb Framroze Chiniwalla.

Please do keep in mind that the Khshnoomic translations do draw on the grammar and the philological pseudo sciences formulated by the western studies; but at the same time they do draw out from these western clouds of haziness, the spiritual and devotional truths, which are way beyond the Western materialistic psyche.

Our India is a country of Saints and Prophets - the land of the "Yogi". The west is a world of material and sensory "pleasures" - the land of the "bhogi". Here in India dwells the spirit of God; there in the west whirl the forces of Satan. The quest for truth and journey on the Path of God are still explored in India. Not that the West was devoid of any Saints. I have here a book titled "Miracles" by D. Scott Rogo (Contemporary Books Inc 1983), describing the miracles of the great Religion of Lord Jesus Christ. The Index refers to 47 acclaimed Christian Saints and several other non-declared ones from about 12th century to the present day including Bernadette of the miraculous Lourdes Spring and Therese Neumann (1898 - 1962), a life packed with miracles. In spite of these Saints and miracles, the western culture takes pride in their "scientific progress", which is the other name of "Godlessness to homosexuality", as predicted by St. Paul.

I write this to convey that the Khshnoomic translations and explanations often point out and compare the eternal Truths of other Religions with the truths revealed in the Zarthoshti Scriptures. The ultimate source of Truth is the same. None of God's Prophet speaks untruth.

The apparent differences in Religions vanish when taken to their deepest origin. Khshnoomic translations will show you this wonderful unity in all apparent diversities. Read, absorb and digest with a sincere craving for truth. May Asho Zarathushtra help you! - **Editor.]**

In the issue of December 1997, we tried to understand the meaning of that beautiful Manthra-line : "Khshnaoathra Ahurahey Mazdaao". We will now enter into the vast territory of our commonest Prayer-"Ashem Vohu". A short Prayer of Just 12 words! And I call it a vast territory! That, mind, is an under statement. Better way is to call it an infinite ocean of Knowledge, Wisdom, Duty and Devotion. Rest assured, this is no exaggeration. After deciding to write on Ashem Vohu in this series, I started shuddering. The

materials on Ashem Vohu, in the Khshnoomic writings are enormously vast and wide. How do I gather them and present them to my lay-readers; who have little background of Khshnoom as also the western pseudo science of philology? I feel like a sparrow trying to empty an ocean by its beak. All I can do is to pray for the blessings from that divine fountain which prompted me, in the first place, to write on the 12 worded Prayer.

The best way to start the exploration of any matter, is to collect whatever observations are available and try to collate them to arrive at some underlying rule or some regular pattern or even some law . . . or truth. That is the method of science.

Now what observations can we make on this 12 worded prayer. If we concentrate a bit on the words, we find that out of 12 words as many as 3 occur twice. Let us number the words and observe :

Number	Word
1	Ashem
2	Vohu
3	Vahishtem
4	Asti
5	Ushta
6	Asti
7	Ushta
8	Ahmai
9	Hyet
10	Ashaai
11	Vahishtaai
12	Ashem

See? "Ashem" is the first (No.1) and the last (No. 12). "Asti" is No.4 and No.6. "Ushta" is No.5 and No.7. These are direct repetitions i.e. the same word occurs twice. There are two others Ashaai (No.10) and "Vahishtaai" (No. 11) which are not exact repetitions but slightly twisted ones. Ashaai (No. 10) seems to be a twisted version of "Ashem" (Nos. 1 and 12). Similarly, "Vahishtaai" (No. 11) seems a slightly twisted form of Vahishtem (No.3).

So in a small prayer of just 12 words, 3 words are directly repeated 2 times. Two others are twisted repetitions. In particular, "Ashem" is repeated exactly as well as twistedly (12 and 10). It is possible that some grammar is involved in the twisted versions; but the exact repetition of as many as 3 out of 12 words i.e. $3 \times 2 = 6$ i.e. 50% repetition does not speak good of it as a literary composition. Particularly the word "Asti", which means "is" and occurs twice as Nos. 4 and 6 i.e. only with "Usta" (No.5) in between, seems to be bad prose. It reads something like "a is, b is". Why repeat 'is' at such a short distance? Say "a and b are". But it seems the composer does not want to use "are" and insists on 'Asti' twice. Has he some numerological structure in his mind?

It is possible to arrive at some underlying mathematical pattern in the composition: 12 words, 3 lines, 4 words in each line, 3 exact repetitions, 2 fractional repetitions - 'Ashem' as Nos. 1 and 12, 'Asti' as Nos. 4 and 6, 'Ushta' as Nos. 5 and 7. ($7 - 5 = 2$, $6 - 4 = 2$ and $12 - 1 = 11$. In 11, $1 + 1 = 2$.) In the fractional repetitions, Ashem (Asha-em) is twisted to Asha-ai and Vahishtem is twisted to Vahishtaai - "em" to "aai". Ashaai is immediately followed by Vahishtaai. A Ramanujam is required to reveal a single mathematical pattern in these 12 words. But we do see some numbers and numerology running in them.

We also see that there is a rhythm in the whole prayer. Pronounce the three lines : (i) Ashem. . . Asti, (ii) Ushta . . . Ahmaai and (iii) Hyat . . . Ashem, stopping at the last word of each line. You will feel the rhythm.

All these (and several others we'll see later) are enough indications that this is not some literary prose or poetry. There is mathematics in it, rhythm in it, numerology in it. Numbers are God's signatures on the universe, His divine declaration of His Order and Beauty. The greatest intuitive mathematician Srinivas Ramanujam (1887 - 1920) said that a mathematical equation expresses a thought of God! Sir James Jeans (1877-1946) one of the pioneers the 20th century Physics and Philosophy of Science, said that the whole universe is a thought in the mind of a Mathematical Thinker. Phythagoras, the great mystic of 6th century Before Christ, propounded that the whole cosmos was an harmonic system of numbers. He revealed the

relation between mathematics, music and colour which is a reflection of the science of Staota Yasna contained in the mystical wisdom of Zarthoshti Din.

The physical sciences as also the mystical sciences have their own findings on the laws of vibrations. God's whole creation is a huge vibration which manifests itself as the divine, non-physical and physical worlds. In Physics, vibrations are known to exist without there being any medium or thing to vibrate on. All matter seems to be condensed vibrations. The laws of Staota Yasna are the first foundation of the Creation, so declares Yazashney Ha 55. The Prayers i.e. the Manthric compositions of Zarthoshti Scriptures - and of all other Religions - are the transformation of the vibrations of God's Creation into words, which human tongue can pronounce; and therefore when the manthras are chanted, the chanting human is attuned to that wave-length of the divine vibrations in Nature, which are entwined in the particular Manthra Composition he or she is chanting.

Ashem Vohu is one of such Manthric compositions; but its distinctive feature is that it is the essence of the several marathon Manthra compositions. It is a drop distilled from the ocean of huge vibrations, and the whole ocean is contained in the drop. Therefore the effect of its chanting vibrates intensely in the whole universe.

All this about Ashem Vohu Prayer is revealed in several other Avesta compositions. There is one full Ha 20 in Yazashney which declares the Staotic (i.e. vibratory) effect of each of the three lines of Ashem Vohu. (That Ha 20 is the "Framraot Ha" which is ordained to be chanted on the first five days of Mukta: Roj Astaad to Aneraan, Mah Sfindarmard.) There is a Manthric fragment called Hadokhta Nask which sets out certain numerical equations for the chanting of Ashem Vohu. One Ashem Vohu chanted in certain circumstances is equivalent to 10, 100, 1000 Ahsem Vohu's.

There is therefore enough internal and external evidence to prove without any doubt that Ashem Vohu is not just a literary piece of writing, but a profound and highly effective composition of Manthra. Our tradition and our way of life amply demonstrate this. Recite Ashem Vohu when your mind is invaded by evil thoughts. Recite it when you hear about somebody's death. Whenever you come across any disorder, physical or mental, in your own self or in somebody else, recite Ashem Vohu. It is a most effective Prayer of Ahura's Law, Order, Beauty and Truth and a human's efforts to tread on the Path of righteousness, purity and freedom.

My dear readers! We have to go a long way to understand and appreciate this small Prayer of twelve words. We will go into some further numerology of Ashem Vohu, its place in all other Avesta Prayers and then - may the Lord guide us - into the vast ocean of its meaning.

- Cherag.

(Parsi Pukar APRIL 1998 Vol. 3; No. 10)

“ASHEM VOHU”, A PRAYER OF NUMBER 3.

THE PLACE OF NUMBERS AND NUMEROLOGY IN RELIGIOUS AND MYSTICAL TEACHINGS

We have seen that the Ashem Vohu Prayer is connected with rhythm, vibrations and numbers. Number 3 seems to be predominant. 3 lines, 12 words ($1+2=3$), 3 words repeated twice. (Ashem, Ushta, Asti). Two words are repeated with a slight twist (Ashaai, Vahishtaai). These repetitions, exact as well as twisted, have an inherent numerology in them. (Please refer to word nos. in the last issue). 'Ashem' is the word no.1 and the word no.12. $12-1=11$. $1+1=2$. 'Ushta' occurs as the word nos. 5 and 7. $7-5=2$. 'Asti' is the word nos. 4 and 6. $6-4=2$. Ashaai and Ashem are $12-10=2$. The formula however changes with Vahishtaai (no.11) and Vahishtem (no.3), where $11-3=8$. Here, $8 = 2 \times 2 \times 2$ or 2^3 . The numbers 3 and 2 go on appearing. The total number of words is 12. $12=3 \times 4=3 \times 2 \times 2=3 \times 2^2$.

This is not just a mathematical pleasure exercise. Numbers and numerology have a great sense and significance in all mystical sciences and arts. Even in physical sciences, numbers often make baffling appearances. In the interior of an atom, there are supposed to be orbits around a central nucleus, on which certain numbers of electrons are supposed to be going round. The first orbit nearest to the nucleus can have not more than 2 electrons; the second orbit gets filled up by 8 electrons. The successive orbits seem to follow a pattern 2, 8, 18, 32... electrons. Nobody has ever seen these orbits or an electron. These numbers are arrived at by certain speculative mathematical exercises, which are related to the science of electricity. It seems a numerology runs in all physical matter.

Similarly, why the ratio of circumference to the diameter of any circle should be just a constant figure, 'pi' = 3.1415926..., nobody knows. You may be surprised to know that this constant pi has endless numbers after the decimal point. You can go on to millions of decimal places. Mathematicians have tried their best to find out a pattern in the digits but in vain. The greatest intuitive mathematician of the century, Ramanujam (1887-1920), had at his age of about 27 years, published a 23-page paper on "Modular Equations and Approximations to Pi" in Quarterly Journal of Mathematics (1914). Verily, God's Mathematics is beyond the mortal man.

Mystical sciences of all Religions have used numbers and numerology to express the secrets of Nature. Every whole number has a secret message when set out in any exposition of a secret law of Nature. A number is connected with a pattern; a pattern arises out of vibrations; a vibration is a motion of rhythms. The whole Nature is set to numerous vibrations emanating from the First Vibration of God, called 'Ahom' or 'Word' or 'Ahoonvar'. Number One manifests out to number Two and then to Three, which is then followed by infinite numbers; that is how the Creation comes into being. That is why St. Augustine said, "Numbers are the FORMS of divine wisdom".

We have seen that the number which directly manifests itself in Ashem Vohu is 3. The current of 3 runs within the Prayer (the simplest indication being 12 words, 3 lines, 4 words in each line). **It vibrates in a pattern of 3.** There is, however, external evidence spread over all our existing Avesta Prayers, to show that Ashem Vohu vibrates with the figure 3.

Take any Avesta Prayer from Sarosh Baj to the longest Yashta, you will find that almost all of them has a passage "Fravaraane Mazdaysno Zarthushtrish....." wherein you recite the Gah (the period of the day's time when you are praying). The words "Yasnaaicha, Vahammaicha, Khshnaothraaicha, Frasastaeycha" occur three times in that passage. It ends with "...Ashava Vidvaao Mraotu". You will find that **this passage 'Fravaraane' always follows Ashem Vohu 3. You Have to recite 3 'Ashem Vohu's before uttering 'Fravaraane.....'. Why?**

This question 'Why' is always a far cry. You may perhaps be surprised if I tell you that **modern science, with all its inventions, discoveries and theories, and explosions on God's land and excursions on the**

moon, has not been able to find an answer to a single 'Why'! All its answers are to 'How' and never to 'Why'. Earth goes round the sun, a much bombasted discovery. But why? No answer! Newton answered how; there is a force of gravitation; Einstein said, there is "the curvature of space time continuum". (Don't worry if you don't follow this.) But, why is there such a "force" or "curvature", no one knows! Why is mother's love so sublime? Why is peacock so artistic? No one knows. So, never expect an answer to 'Why', unless you are prepared to accept the answer, "God's wish", or "This question should be asked to God, if, as and when you meet Him". The so called rational people will twist their nose at this. That, they don't know, is a most irrational act.

In mystical sciences, we can have some indication about Nature's mechanism behind a phenomenon or observation, or its significance in our daily life. Mystical sciences rely very much on symbolism, since they deal with the events and existences beyond our senses, intelligence and experience.

So, why 3 'Ashems' before Fravaraane passage will have answers containing mystical truths and teachings. Remember, Religion is not just a science, it is the way of life as well. And **every way, every tenet, every prescription, every conduct ordained by Religion is founded on certain immutable laws, beyond our understanding. If you do not accept this Truth, which is itself immutable, it will be logical and reasonable for you to be an athiest** and to have one way of life: "Eat, drink, enjoy our physical senses, for tomorrow we die".

Coming back to our Prayer riddle, another observation awaits us. One Ashem Vohu comes at the beginning of most of the prayers, after the words 'Khshnaothra Ahurahey Mazdaao'; and the end of every prayer is Ashem Vohu 1. So, number 1 has also a place in it. We see another fact that Ashem is mostly 1 or 3 in our Prayers. 2,4,5,6,7,8,9 Ashems arenowhere found. 10 Ashems occur in Ahuramazda Yashta. But, 10 is 1 with one zero ($1+0=1$). That way, in Vendidad Pargarad 19, 100 'Ashem Vohus' are to be recited by the performing Mobed; but 100 is 1 with two zeros ($1+0+0=1$). There is one more number for Ashem. That is 12. **In 'Hoshbam' and in 'Patet Pasheymani' prayers, Ashem Vohu 12 is followed by "Yatha Ahoo Vairyo" 21.** Yatha 21 and Ashem 12 is an oft occurring pair in Kriyakaam. But, 12 is $1+2=3$. 3 does not leave Ashem alone. Here in its company, Yatha has also turned to 3 through 21 ($2+1=3$) !

You will see that this is unlike Yatha Ahu Vairyo which comes in various numbers: 1,2,4,5,7,8,10,12,21, even 200 (in Vendidad). Although we are not dealing with Yatha prayer in this article, please note one observation. In the last part of every Khordeh Avesta Prayer, a line comes: "Yasnemcha Vahmemcha Aojascha Zavereycha Afrinami". **This is always preceded by Yatha Ahu Vairyo 2**, in the same way as Ashem 3 precedes the passage, "Fravarane.....".

Before I deal with the Zarthosti numerology of number 3, let me take my truth seeking reader into the **mystical aspects of that number in other Religions and Mysticism**s. That will make the Zarthoshti treatment easier to understand.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), though not a mystic like Pythagoras or Plato, had said that, 3 is the first number to which you can apply the term "all". 1 is singular, 2 is dual, 3 and onwards are plurals. When two units are involved we say 'both', like, "both agreed"; but for 3, we cannot say 'both', we have to say 'all agreed'. The first number to transit from 'both' to 'all' is 3. In several mysticism, cosmogenesis is described by numbers. 1 is the one God, the ultimate Truth or Reality. His Command brings into being 2. 2 means duality, the opposing forces. From this 1 and 2, now emanates the whole Creation. 2 proceeds further to 3,4,5..... i.e. the Creation, the Universe, comes into existence. Lao-Tzu, **a great Chinese mystic (602-442 B.C.) says, "The Tao produces unity, unity produces duality, duality produces trinity, and the triad produces all things"**.

The numbers from 3 onwards indicate various stages of Creation. For instance, **7 indicates 7 'Ameshaspends' and 7 continents of the divine world. 33 indicates 33 'Yazatas'**; 4 indicates the materialisation of 4 elements, fire, air, water, dust. The numbers from 3 onwards not only reflect the science of cosmogenesis, but also **the evolution of a human soul**. All that begins with the number 3. As the duality of 2 enters 3, a vast territory is opened and this is indicated by various triads or trios, a bunch of **three** units. The number 3 now, through these divine triads, opens the universe and its Creator to the consciousness of the humans. Have a look at the following triads from various Religions:

Christian :Father, Son, Holy Ghost. (The Divine Trinity.)

The Way, the Truth, the Life. (The divine role of Lord Jesus.)

Faith, Hope, Charity. (St. Paul's prescriptive trio for the human conduct. (1.Cor.13.))

Hindu: Sat, Chit, Anandao (Truth, Wisdom, Ecstasy.)

Brahmaa, Vishnu, Mahesh (Creation, evolution, annihilation.)

Gyan (knowledge), Karma (duty), Bhakti (devotion).

Space, time, causation (the three aspects of Maya).

Muslim: Islam, Iman, Ihsan (Surrender, Faith, Service (obligation)).

I do not expect my reader to understand fully the message of these triads. Here, I am pointing out the existence of the triads as the foundations of many a truths revealed in different Religions. That is my first purpose. The second is that there are three phases hidden in such triads:

i) They reveal, to a limited extent, some great Truth about the genesis of God's Creation in its three parts: the divine, the non-physical and the physical (3 again !).

ii) They point out to the path towards God to be treaded by a human soul, a part of which is the rules of conduct on this earth.

iii) They set out the different stages of human consciousness, as the soul has its journey on the earth and thereafter.

So, there is a triple message in every trio. Verily the figure 3 is a wonderful banner of life. Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni, is a moral trio. The Hindu saints invoke peace by saying "Shanti, Shanti, Shanti", three times. Christians make the sign of cross three times. The wise men of the East, who went to the newly born Saoshyant, Lord Jesus, were three. Ashoka's chakra has 3 lions. **St. Ignatius of Loyola (formerly a soldier) used to shed tears wherever he saw something in groups of 3; it reminded him of the holy Trinity! "Nemo Ahurai Mazadai", we speak three times in Khorshed and Meher Niyashis.** So also, "Jasamey Avanghahe Mazda".

The 'three'-dominant Ashem Vohu also has a hidden Zarthoshti trio: Asha, Vohuman and Ushta. Now it is time to delve into that. That means nearer to the meaning of Ashem Vohu.

- *Cherag*

▪ ▪ ▪

(Parsi Pukar MAY 1998 Vol. 3; No. 11)

THE COLOURFUL SPECTRUM OF THE SEVEN MEANINGS OF "ASHA"

THE FIRST OUTLINE OF AHURAMAZDA'S MESSAGE IN ASHEM VOHU

In this life we are all surrounded by numbers. Every thing, every existence, every event appears to be connected with numbers. We have 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 hands..... and 1 heart. There seems to be 2 electrons in the first orbit of almost all the atoms. Ratio of circumference to diameter of a circle is always 'pi' i.e. 3.1415.... Light of our experience appears to have constant speed, 1,86,000 miles per second. A physical body is attracted towards earth by a measured i.e. numbered force of gravitation. In their strenuous attempts to understand nature, the scientists come across numbers and numbers. They try to find out an order, a pattern in all the phenomena of our experience. So much so that a great astronomer James Jeans was prompted to say that the universe is a thought in the mind of a mathematical thinker. Ramanujam, the miracle-mathematician, said that every equation expresses a thought of God.

ONE - Ahoo is only IT who exists and about whom we cannot think except that "IT IS". We masculinise IT to HE. There are some who think IT is a SHE. But why go into that? If IT is unthinkable, why bother about the gender? Mazdayasni Daen calls that 'IT' or HE (if you like) as "Anamathwaao" - One who cannot be thought of, the UNTHINKABLE; and "Afrazyant" UNFATHOMABLE, who cannot be fathomed; the Infinite, who cannot be plumbed or probed by the finite human mind.

It is only when that ONE goes into TWO that the Creation starts forming. And when the TWO expands, the THREE is the first to come in, and then followed by innumerable numbers. That is numerical way of expressing cosmogeneses; and when the cosmos forms and evolves and goes back to ONE (via infinity), there are numbers and numbers all the way.

Our 12 words prayer of Ashem Vohu has this message hidden in it. It is a divine declaration that the cosmos got all its varieties from the number 3 and its Law of functioning is based on 3. The Creator, the creation and its reaching back to the Creator are the three marathon stages of the cosmos and everything in it. When you chant 3 'Ashem Vohus's in your Khordeh Avesta Prayers, let this thought pass in your mind (i) I was once with Him, (ii) I am at present away from Him, and (iii) I will one day reach Him; (or He will one day reach me).

With this thought-triplet in mind let us now enter the vast and blissful garden of Ashem Vohu, full of Yazatic fragrance. (Yazatic means Godly; divine; emanating from Ahura as His Light, His Sound and His Fragrance.)

At the very entrance of this three oriented garden we meet a triplet: ASHA, VOHUMAN and USHTA. Each of these three has a vast ocean of meanings and infinite wisdom. Before we delve into them, may I first show a glimpse of the meaning and message of Ashem Vohu in a nut-shell?

"It is decreed and declared ("Asti") that in Ahura's Creation, there Vibrates and operates a triplet of Yazatic Energies viz. ASHA, VOHUMAN and USHTA. It is therefore incumbent upon every human being to mould his or her life in such a way that the spring of these Yazatic Energies open up in his or her heart and she or he treads the Path of Asha, the Path towards the final Freedom (Mukti), the path that takes her or him to Ahura".

I humbly request my readers to note that this is not a word-to-word translation of Ashem Vohu. It is the version faithfully transforming the word-to-word translation into the divine message woven into the prayer.

Kindly also note that the translation is based on the mystical teachings of Mazdayasni Daen, which is named Ilm-e-Khshnoom. The translator and expounder is Dr. Framroze Chiniwalla, vide his wonderful book "Khordeh Avesta Baa Khshnoom". "Khshnoom" and the Path of Asha, "Areyzoish Patho" are referred to and equated in Gatha Vahishtoish-53-2.

Now is the time to go into the wonderful spectra of the Truths and messages woven and revealed in the

three words: **Asha, Vohuman** and **Ushta**.

Here is the spectrum twinkling in the word 'Asha':

Asha means:

The Yazatic Law, Order, Beauty, Truth, in the Creation,

Also Purity, Righteousness in the humans and Freedom - Mukti, Frashogard of the humans and the Creation.

Let us take this one by one:

1. **The Yazatic LAW:** Asha is the Divine Law by which (i) the whole Creation comes into being, (ii) continues its existence and function, and (iii) ultimately goes back to Ahura. These are three basic stages in the operation of the whole of Ahura's Universe, be it divine, non physical or physical. Every thing, every existence, every event functions and works as ordained in the divine Law of Asha. The root of the Law is 'Ahunvairyā', the First Vibration which drew the plan of the creation. That First Vibration then multiplied and generated the Law of Asha which became the operating energy of every thing and every event.

2. **The Yazatic (divine) ORDER:** The function of every law is the maintenance of order, organization and coordination. Every thing from a speck of dust to the Light of Ahura must have a structured framework; and must work and evolve as ordered by the Law. The sun, the earth, the moon, the planets, the stars should follow the Law. The river flows, the ocean roars, the wind blows; the leaf flutters, the bird flies, the fish swims, the cheetah jumps, the lion roars, the cattle blesses, the tree grows, the dust flies, the water rains and runs, a human loves or hates; all this is born, lives and transforms; all and every motion, movement, action is ordered by the divine Law. Asha is the Ray of Ahura's Light that is embedded in everything. It is itself the Law and itself the Order.

3. **The Yazatic BEAUTY:** Wherever there is Law and Order, there is beauty. **Beauty is the hidden face of Ahura Mazda.** We may not be able to see Him, but His beauty connects us with Him. Many a mystics have experienced God in the flying of the birds, in the sun-rays falling on grooves, in the gorgeously standing mountains. A mathematician like Ramanujam saw God in every equation. Because an equation is the expression of God Himself, His own declaration of the Law and Order and Beauty, shown to a mortal ignorant human being. When the artist paints, he tries to express his own experience of God's Beauty. When a poet sings, he is transforming his feelings in words. So did Rabindranath Tagore.

"The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on.

My heart longs to join in thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice"

The Light of Thy Music!

The Breath of Thy Music!

The Stream of Thy Music!

Is not Nature's beauty God's divine notation? A transmission of His Music into the things seen?

Tagore says, God is immanent in Nature. The tempest and the ocean, the sun and the moon, the hills and the rivers are the **outbursts** of divine Reality. They are whispering His music in our ears; and they are "amara nayane tomara vishvachhabi" His own pictures captured in our eyes.

"Asha Vahishta, Asha Sraeshta" - Asha is the best, Asha is the most beautiful..

4. **TRUTH:** The spectrum of Asha now expands. Law, Order and Beauty are the manifestations of Ahura's Truth, the Truth that prevails in Nature, the Reality that is ultimate and devoid of any human doubts and despairs. In this meaning, Asha is compared to Vedic "Rta". Rta is defined by Panikkar as "Cosmic and sacred order, the divine Yagna as a universal law, also truth, the **ultimate dynamic and harmonic structure of reality**". Ahura and His 'Yazata's are engaged in performing the divine Yasna - Yazashney, which creates and rules the world and carries it to its ultimate aim of merging into Ahura. Asha is the inherent truth of everything - 'Hakikat'. In Islam, it is "Hakikah", which means, the ultimate essence of a thing due to which a

thing is what it is. The seer like Ramana Maharishi saw Ishwar as the reality within the outward appearance of all things. In the sufi Path Hakikah means the advanced state when the sufi receives a revelation of the truth behind everything. In Gatha 44, questions are asked, which look like elementary geography or science question paper. How did the sun and stars get their motion? How are the water and trees made? How do morning and noon come about? This is like primitive professor asking questions to Ahura. But as usual, there are much deeper waters here. The passages asking the questions are prefaced by the words "Tat Thwa Pereysa Areysh Moi Vaocha Ahura". This sentence means "Oh Ahura! Tell me the **truth** about the questions I ask". The word for truth is Aeyresh. It means, tell me the ultimate truth behind all these phenomena; not what appears to our senses, but the divine Order beyond, which manifests in the appearances. Here the inquiry is about the superior order working behind the external things and events. **"Aeyresh" means the ultimate sublime truth, the inner working of the Laws of Asha which are materialised in the day to day experiences during our life on earth.** (Incidentally, these are not questions asked by Asho Zarathushtra. He knows all the answers. He has seen the whole Truth and Reality behind all creation. What the Gatha does is to convey to the ordinary humans that they should search for the answers to these questions and the only way to get the answers is to expand one's consciousness by treading the path prescribed by Asho Zarathushtra.)

After having a glimpse of the four colours in the spectrum of 'Asha's meaning, we now transit to the remaining three: Purity, Righteousness and Freedom. Whist the first four provided the Truths in Nature, the last three relate to the human psyche and evolution. How has the human to tread the path of Asha? What has he or she to do in daily life to evolve spiritually i.e. to march towards Ahura? What are the rules of this march? **What are the orders of the divine Field Marshal to be obeyed, without question, while marching on the ground of life?**

- *Cherag*

(Parsi Pukar JUNE 1998 Vol. 3; No. 12)

PRAYER FOR THE GOOD HEART - ASHEM VOHU. (4)

**THE SPECTRUM OF "ASHA" –
LAW ORDER, BEAUTY, TRUTH, PURITY,
RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FREEDOM.**

**EVERY HUMAN'S DUTY TO STRIVE TO BE FREE
FROM IMPURITY OF THOUGHT WORD AND DEED.**

'ASHEM VOHU' IN A NUT-SHELL:

"It is declared and decreed (as the Truth in Nature - 'Asti').

That in Ahura's Creation,

There vibrates and operates a triplet of Yazatic Energies,

Namely: Asha Vahishta, Vohuman and Ushta.

It is therefore incumbent on every human being,

To mould his or her life on the divine Path of Ashoi i.e. Purity and Righteousness,

So that the spring of these Yazatic Energies open up in her or his heart,

And she or he treads the Path of Asha leading towards the final Freedom (Frashogard) and Ahura.

■ ■ ■

ASHA, VOHUMAN, USHTA is the divine triplet declared and revealed in the Ashem Vohu Prayer. We are at present on the seven meanings of Asha. We have seen the first four viz. **Law, Order, Beauty, Truth.**

LAW is the Yazatic Law of operation of Ahura's Creation.

ORDER is the Yazatic Organisation carrying out the Law.

BEAUTY is the physical expression of Ahura's Law.

TRUTH is the ultimate Reality from which the Creation emerges and goes back to Ahura.

Let us now take up the fifth meaning -

PURITY

We know from our experience that a human is a mix of evil and good - in other words, of ignorance and knowledge, darkness and light, untruth and truth, impurity and purity. A terse and elegant expression for this phenomenon is that a human has in him or her a wolf and a cow; the wolf wants to devour the cow, the cow wants to give her milk to the wolf and intensely desires to convert the wolf to a cow. A striking feature of this conflict is that the human mind is more inclined towards evil than good. It would like to flatter the wolf rather than love the cow; to be selfish rather than selfless. It is prone to fall a prey to the deceiving snares of Ahriman rather than resist the deceptions. Sarosh Yashta Hadokhta (Kardeh 1 (7)), therefore, calls upon man **to have a dog in him, which can resist the wolf and protect the cow**, and growl warningly if his mind tends to slip in the pitfall of Satan. (This dog is even given a name "Pasusha Haurvanghaho" - in Sarosh Yashta and also in Vendidad Par. 13-12).

The message in the word Asha (when it means purity) is that be pure in thought, word and deed; endeavor to desist from being impure in mind, speech and work. What is pure and what is impure is defined by Ahuramazda and His definitions are conveyed to us through His Prophets, Avatar's and Saints.

Impure is termed as "Goonah," pure as "Kerfeyh." In Patet Pasheymani, a Manthra Prayer par excellence, the devotee expresses his or her determination to exert to resist goonah and to do Kerfeyh. "Koo Goonah na koonam..... Ku Kerfeyh koonam"; because the Patet prayer itself says that Ahuramazda Khodae has defined in the Din what is Goonah, and His saviours and Saints have proclaimed His list of 'Goonah' i.e. such thought, word and deed which are sins and are to be shunned by the humans. So, exert to keep your mind, tongue and hands pure; try your best not to defile them by the impurities of Ahriman.

Of course, purity includes physical purity. Body is to be kept clean and pure. Dirt attracts evil thoughts, and evil thoughts lead to sin-goonah. How significant is the Baj to be recited while entering w. c.! Its first words are "Goonah Shekastey Sad Hazar Bar" – May the sin be, defeated ten thousand times. Because evil thoughts have the property of being gathered in a dirty place in the form of unseen clouds, and they can invade a human mind.

Purity itself is beauty and order, the two previous meanings of Asha. Impurity is disorder, ugliness, dirt. Let all the dirt in me be cleansed, is the master thought in the powerful Manthric line "Oos Moi Ujareyshva. Ahura." "Oh Ahura purify me, enlighten me, dissolve the evil (druj) in me." (Gatha 33-13; Atesh Niyayish).

RIGHTEOUSNESS

The sixth meaning of 'Asha' is Righteousness. It means the right conduct - "right" is defined and specified by Ahuramazda and His Messengers. It points out to what we normally call moral code. Moral code, again, is resisting the wolf and nourishing the cow, the same indication towards 'goonah' and 'kerfeh'. It is the code of do's and don't's prescribed by all religions universally. **In the Zarathoshti Daen, do's are prescribed through the mystical science of seven Ameshaspends.**

WHO ARE AMESHASPENDS?

Let us have a glimpse of this science. **The Ameshaspands are the Rays of Divine light emanating from the main source, Ahuramazda. They are conscious entities discharging certain functions in the divine, non-physical and physical worlds in complete obedience to Ahura.** That is their first phase. Their second phase is that they depict certain virtues, virtues which are the do's prescribed in Religion. And with each 'do', there is a corresponding 'don't', there is an opposite, a vice. Here is a horizontal table of the virtues associated with each Ameshaspend.

1. **Ahuramazda** : Virtue: humanity, love towards all humans and all creations of Ahura. Opposite: Hatred, anger, greed, jealousy, carnal indulgence, selfishness - in short delivering oneself to devil.

2 **Bahman, Avesta: Vohuman** : A temperament, a mind that takes pleasure in selfless service, unconditional love, a cow-like disposition, craving to give away, to extend a helping hand to wherever there is misery and suffering. Vohu means not only 'good' but also loving (root 'Vas').

Opposite: 'Akoman', a mind that is extremely selfish, oppressive, ruthless, merciless, hateful.

3. **Ardibeheshta, Avesta: Asha Vahishta**: Love for truth, beauty, purity. Opposite: Untruth, impurity, goonah-inclined disposition.

4. **Shaheyrevar, Avesta: Khshathra Vairya**: Power and strength to resist evil and goonah. Opposite: Succumbing to the faults of the flesh, falling into devil's deception, revolt towards all Godliness.

5. **Sfendarmard, Avesta: Spenta Armaiti**: Extreme humility, a sense of nothingness before God, love towards all, obedience towards Ahura.

Opposite: Ego, pride, haughtiness, self-centredness, selfishness, disobedience to Ahura's commands.

6. **Khordad, Avesta: Haurvatat** : To be constantly conscious that implementing God's command is sure to lead to perfection, all dissolution of the evil within and eligibility to stand in the Court of Ahuramazda.

Opposite: Reverse journey towards imperfection, inhumanity, Godlessness entanglement in the snares of Ahriman.

7. **Amerdad, Avesta: Amereytat** : Journey towards immortality, the higher spiritual dimensions. Amerdad is the twin of Khordad. Perfection and Immortality go together. Opposite : Same as in Khordad.

Here, then, is the narration of the righteous conduct, Righteousness, the 6th meaning of Asha.

[A side note: each of the seven Ameshaspends is associated with one of the vital creations we come across on this earth. Like to know?

Ahuramazda	The humans
Behman	Cow, cattle
Ardibeheshta :	Fire
Shaherevar	Metals and Matter
Sfendarmard	Earth, ground
Khordad	Water
Amerdad	Trees, plants, vegetations.

An exercise for my reader: Compare the creation associated with each Ameshaspend, with the virtue assigned to each, and ponder, meditate. Hint: Cow and selflessness, metal and divine power, earth and humility....]

The 5th meaning of Asha, purity, is related closely to the 6th, righteousness. Both mean: do Kerfeh, shun Goonah. If you want a subtle distinction, Righteousness is the process, purity is the product. To be pure, be righteous. To wash out all impurities, be righteous.

FREEDOM (AZADI)

The final 7th meaning of Asha is "Freedom." Now that you are familiar with the previous 6 meanings, you must have guessed what 'Freedom' can mean. It means free from all evil within; free from all the snares of satan. It is a stage where we i.e., our Ruvan is no longer required to imprison itself in a physical body on earth. Our body is material i.e., it has matter as its important ingredient. Each cell in the body is made up of atoms of matter. The advanced physics of the Zarthoshti Din points out that for the formation of an atom, certain subtle good and evil ultra-elements are required to combine. The dance of ultimate-particles of matter like electron, proton, neutron, neutrino, quark, lepton, which baffles the man-made physics, has a certain rhythmic patterns of the good and evil ultra-elements. If this tron-tron business is beyond you, don't bother. **Here, the truth to be noted is that when all the evil (druj) in man is dissolved and converted to 'good' (gava), Ruvan is free from all bodily incarnations and re-incarnations; that is, Ruavn attains Freedom.** It is now on its way to the higher Regions of divine light. This free-from-body stage is called "**Tan-pasin**". The body-bound stage requiring incarnations on the earth is called "**Tanasakh**." In the Nirang prayer to be chanted after Ahuramazda Yashta, we say "Tanpasin Beegoomanam," I have no doubt that I will reach Tanpasin, which means I will, one day, be free from all druj, I will attain "Freedom." The technical word for this freedom is "Frasho-kerayti" or 'Frashogard.'

- Cherag

• • •
(Parsi Pukar JULY 1998 Vol. 4; No. 1)

THE MEANING, MESSAGE AND MYSTIC CONTENT OF THE WORD "VOHUMAN"

BEWARE! OURS IS AKOMAN AND NOT VOHUMAN

The divine triplet, "Asha", "Vohuman" and "Ushta", is woven in the sublime prayer of Ashem Vohu.

We have seen the seven coloured spectrum of the meanings of Asha viz Law, Order, Beauty, Truth, Purity, Righteousness, Freedom. We now transit to the second member of the triplet: "Vohuman".

The ordinary surface-meaning given to Vohuman is 'good mind'; but these two words are not as simple as they seem to be. What is 'good'? Who defines it? With so much evil reported in the newspapers every morning, can the humans be said to be good?

Those who are in power in most of the countries on the globe i.e. the politicians are notorious for their lack of 'goodness', as a common man understands it to be. They lie, they fight, their psyche is power thirsty, selfish, dishonest. Their corrupt mentality then pours down into the those who are governed by them and the common people. The whole earth has thus become a boiling pot of evil.

As every holy scripture of the world has declared: the ordinary humans i.e. not those who are striving to tread the path of Sainthood, are inclined more towards evil than good as defined by God and declared through His Prophets, Avatars and Saints. **We are all predisposed more to evil thoughts, words and deeds than good. The Gatha sternly warns against the 'Akoman', the bad mind trying to overpower the good.** In our Kushti Prayer, we beseech Ahuramazda to give us power and understanding to see through and through the snares and conspiracies of Ahriman, the external lord of evil, who is the great inspirer of Akoman. ("Khshnaoitra Akhurahey Mazdaao, Taroidetey Angramainyash.") Akoman is our internal ally of Ahriman. Both of them push us to "Goonah", the sins, which mean evil thoughts, words and deeds and lead us away from "Kerfeh", the good ones. Lord Buddha declared that our mind is like an ill-thatched hut through which the water of passion and sins seeps constantly. The whole aim of Dharma, Din, Religion is firstly to define and declare what is good and what is bad and secondly to show the way how to resist and control the Akoman and convert and transmute it to Vohuman, the good mind.

This process of alchemising evil within us into good is not easy and smooth. It requires strength, energy and determination to follow the path of Daena.

The word "Vohuman", therefore, does not mean that our mind is already good and we shape our life according to what we think as good. That is the greatest misnomer, into which Parsis are being led by those, who are lured by Ahriman to run away from the strenuous path of life prescribed by Daena. This is NOT Religion; it is spiritual suicide. "Not me but my Prophet defines good and bad"; and if the bad is adopted, spiritual death and woe will be the plight, declares Gatha: 45-3 and 53-6, 7.

Vohuman is not, therefore, what we have; it is what we are required to achieve. We are in duty bound to tread the path of righteousness, Asha, so that we can alchemise our Akoman to Vohuman by painstakingly adhering to the prescriptions of life prescribed by our Prophet. The linguistic root of the word Religion is 'to be bound', and Dharma, 'duty'.

Vohuman is, therefore, a strenuous climb on a steep mountain. It is a journey through the rising levels of our consciousness. It is to be attained step by step. Every inch on the climb, we have to exert to transmute evil into good. It is a fight, a resistance, an alchemy all the way. The mind is a garment woven by the great Weaver with white threads of 'good' and black threads of 'evil'. At every step of life, we are to labour to transmute the black thread into white, until all the black threads are converted to white and the garment is changed from brown to a shining white.

An under current runs into the Gatha that Vohuman is the consciousness of Ahuramazda and Ameshaspends. **It is the highest wisdom and intelligence of God himself.** Man's ultimate aim is to achieve

it, through the prescribed commands of Religion. To understand this a little more, let us go a little in the etymology and linguistics of the word "Vohuman".

HOLY SCRIPTURES HAVE LEVELS OF MEANINGS

In trying to understand a holy scripture of any Religion, we must keep in mind that each word, each line, each passage has not one but several meanings and several messages. They are addressed to the humans having different levels of understanding and consciousness. The same passage may have different communication and different purport for an ordinary non-saintly human and a Saint or Sage or Ashavan. The great Sufi Mystic, Maulana Rumi said that the holy Koran has seven different meanings. He is not referring to the grammatical whirlpools; he means than for a man or woman passing through a particular spiritual stature, the meaning and message is different than another on a different stature or level of consciousness.

Again, on the same level, the message in a single line may refer to different phases and aspects of Religion and life. It may be revealing a mystical truth in Nature, a practical lesson for day-to-day life and a song of devotion, all in one. "Gnyan, Karma, Bhakti", as the great Hindu Religion says. All the three in one line may have different contours or colours or lessons for different levels of human consciousness.

Let us now examine what meaning is tried to be given to the word "Vohuman" by our linguistic scholars. Most of them - almost all of them assign the meaning "good mind". "Vohu" is derived from "Vah", they say, which means "good". As we have seen, that word 'good' has its own difficulties. Whose "good"? Man's or God's? Who defines good? Left to himself, man defines his own good which is entirely contrary to the dicta of the Prophets of God. What is good mind, so repeatedly declared in the Gatha? Putting aside such theological considerations for the time being, when we enter the arena of scholars, we find that very few of them have gone beyond the meaning 'good'. The late Dr. I.J.S. Taraporewala (22-7-1884 / - 15-1-1956) was one of those very few. Others knew that the root "Vah" had different meanings, but they preferred 'good' almost all throughout. Thus, Bartholomae, once the solid pillar of the Western studies, gave three root-meanings of 'Vah': (i) to dwell, (ii) to dress, (iii) to shine, but preferred "good" for "Vohu" in his Gathic translations. He propounded that 'h' corresponded to Sanskrit's ' and therefore the Sanskrit 'Vas' was Avesta 'Vah'. Dr. Taraporewala points out on page 553 of his "The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra" that **Sanskrit lexicons give five distinct roots for "Vas" : to shine, to dwell, to dress, to love, to aim** or attack.

Now look to the various connotations and implications of Vohuman as mentioned above in the light of these roots. You will see that each root is a pointer to them. Let us take them one by one.

The root **"dwell"** points out that Vohuman is required to enter and stay or reside within us. That is, **our mind has to become the dwelling house of Vohuman, the divine consciousness.**

"To dress" indicates that **our mind has to put on the garment of the higher consciousness. Without it the mind is naked.**

"To shine" denotes that **there is darkness in our mind, and it is required to be removed by the divine light of Vohuman.** Mind gets its light only when Vohuman shines in it.

"To love" is the sheet anchor of Vohuman. To achieve the light of Vohuman, the mind is required to love - to love all the creation of Ahuramazda. **Love is the opposite of hatred. Love is the foundation of selflessness, the opposite of selfishness. Love loves to give away. Selfishness is all for snatching away. Love is the greatest agent to alchemise Akoman towards Vohuman. Love, again, is the fountain of humility; love therefore is the eraser of ego and pride. Love is the most powerful torch to enlighten the mind.**

The 5th root is to **"aim at"**. Our aim is to achieve Vohuman; **to exert to make the divine dwell in our mind, to put on the garment of love and humility, to convert the black threads in our Akoman to white, to strive to remove its darkness of ignorance and make it shining with Ahura's Light.** Alchemisation of Akoman to Vohuman is the aim to achieve. Dharma - Daena - is the path to achieve this.

The great Truth that Vohuman is not what we already have, but an aim to be achieved, is repeatedly and

persistently declared by the Gatha. The very first Ha (28) of the first Gatha Ahoonvad, after declaring the main theme of all the Gathas in its first passage, declares in the second,

"Ye Vaa Mazda Ahura

Pairi-Jasaai Vohu Manangh-ha".

And Ha 43, the first Ha of Gatha Ushtavaiti repeats in its passage nos. 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, the line:

"Spentem Et Thva Mazda Mengha-hi Ahura

Hyat maa Vohu Pairi Jasat Manangh-ha".

Both these couplets refer to "pairi jasai" and "pairi jasat", which indicates the reaching, approaching, entering of Vohuman. Vohuman is required to enter within us, to reach us, to be invited by us. We must strive to call Vohuman, make him approach us, surround us. 'Pairi' has the meaning of "surrounding". He is outside us, we invite him to come to us. And both the couplets convey that **when Vohuman reaches us, Ahura reaches us.**

The above couplet repeated 5 times in Ha43 says "I recognised Thee, Oh Ahura, as the doer of Spenti (i.e. my growth, evolution, journey towards Him), when **you arrived within me with Vohuman**".

The couplet in 28-2 says **"May I, oh Mazda Ahura, reach you through Vohuman"**.

These are prayers striving to reach Vohuman, and through him, Ahura. **Not that we already have Vohuman "good mind", as boasted by the licentious; we have Akoman, the mind with an evil content** with some good woven in it. Let us invite Vohuman by our exertions, exertions to follow earnestly and devotedly the commands of the Daena, so that our consciousness may reach higher and higher towards HIM. **We are still far away from HIM. May we come nearer and nearer to Him through the alchemisation of all Akoman to Vohuman.**

- Cherag

(Parsi Pukar AUGUST 1998 Vol. 4; No. 2)

"USHTA", A CLAMOUR: "NEARER TO THEE MY LORD!"

Not the worldly Happiness But Ecstasy of Love and Devotion is USHTA

Inherent in the Prayer of Ashem Vohu is a triplet: Asha, Vohuman, Ushta.

'Asha' has a spectrum of seven meanings: Law, Order, Beauty, Truth, Righteousness, Purity, and Freedom. Ahuramazda's Law, Order, is the Truth, which expresses itself as Beauty in Nature, and as Righteousness, Purity and Freedom in the humans.

Vohuman is the divine consciousness of Ahura and a goal to be achieved by the humans. 'Vohu' has the root of 'Vah', Sanskrit Vas, which has the meanings: to shine, to dwell, to dress, to love, to aim. Each of these words points out to **the transmutation of the human Akoman to Vohuman. A mind in which all the 'druj' is alchemised to 'gava' attains the high sublime stage of Vohuman, the mind that is all LOVE and all GOOD, like Ahuramazda Himself.** For us, the ordinary humans, there is a long way to go to achieve this. The mechanism of this alchemy from Akoman to Vohuman is provided by the Daena or dharma. **The Energy that motivates the mechanism is called USHTA, the third member of Ashem Vohu's triplet.**

USHTA is a wonderful word. Asha and Vohuman are the divine entities in Ahura and His Yazata's; Ushta is a divine force whirling in the humans. The meaning assigned by the philological sciences to Ushta is happiness, prosperity, well-being, weal, (Sukh). But coming from the material West, this 'happiness' is equated to material and worldly happiness; the happiness derived from the enjoyment of worldly objects, riches, wealth, property, bodily convenience and equipments. One of the misnomers some people spread amongst the innocent of our community is that our Religion enjoins to enjoy 'good' things of life, and those "good" things are good food and drink, cars and planes, buildings and bungalows, shares and securities. Their religion begins here and ends here. Their "Ushta" has the meaning of this kind of material happiness.

Ushta is not that. The best word to introduce us to the meaning of Ushta is BLISS or ECSTASY. The happiness generated, not from the worldly objects but from the spiritual peace of the mind and heart is Ushta. The worldly enjoyment is temporary. It is bound to evaporate away. Excess of it leads to sin. Its very nature is to lead the humans to accelerating temptation until they fall. Ushta is exactly the opposite. It is permanent and ever increasing. It leads to Ahura. Its excess is a flight up towards Him. **"Nearer to Thee my Lord" is its banner. It is the bliss of a divine intoxication, ecstasy of LOVE and DEVOTION.**

Let us analyse the precept and the concept of Ushta and its infusion in our day-to-day life on this earth.

Do you remember the thought we have to generate in our mind while reciting 3 Ashem Vohu's wherever it occurs in our Khordeh Avesta Prayers? **At the first Ashem, think: I was once with Ahuramazda. At the second: I have been separated from Him, and at the third: I will once again be with him.** This is the past, present and future of our Ruvan. At present we are away from Him. We are separated from Him. Our Ruvan i.e. our own inner self burns in the pang of separation. **When shall I come back to Thee, my Ahura? How long have I to burn in this fire? How long, my God, how long?** This is the cry of our Ruvan within us every moment. But made up as we are, we are not conscious of the Ruvan's lament. The word 'Ushta' conveys that this inner cry of the Ruvan should seep out in our physical mind, in our conscious thought and pour out as tears of separation from our eyes, whatever be our Karmic plight, and whatever time, good or bad we may be passing through in our life, and whatever our individual Karma or destiny may be driving us to do. **This pang of separation is at the root of all our love, devotion and attraction - (Ishq, Bhakti) towards the divine.** It is inherent in every human, howsoever sinful he may be. It can develop and take up a huge stature in those saints who seek Him just through their devotion. The land of our country, Bharata, India, vibrates incessantly with the devotion of the lofty Saints like Tukaram and Narsinh and Gnyaneshwar and Mira and Ramkrishna... and so many others, whose songs and sayings and addresses to Him have gone into

every particle of our earth and every inch of our air. The laments and wailings of the great sufis like Farid, Bullah Shah, Shah Latif for their divine Beloved perpetually echo from all our hills and mountains. Our poets' songs of separation do shake up our mind and throb our heart with the burning separation and intense longing to be with Him.

We are, however, neither poets nor Saints and Sufis. We are entangled in our own Karma. We have our own personal duties to perform - duties towards our family, community, country, humanity. We find ourselves too hard pressed towards our worldly duties and responsibilities to get time for drawing our mind to God and our separation from Him. The great saint Ramkrishna Paramhans (the Guru of Swami Vivekanand and a number of other ascetics) used to give an excellent solution to this dilemma. By all means you do all your worldly duties, do them in all earnestness and sincerity; they are cast on you by God Himself; but make it a point to set aside and spare a little time to sit alone, and think of God, feel a burning desire for Him, talk to Him, ask Him: how long my Beloved? When wouldst Thou free me from all this turmoil? I know, all this is Thy own wish and Thy own wisdom. I will bear Thy separation as long as Thou desirest. Till then i come to Thee to receive Thy love in my thoughts, so that whatever i think, say and do, i dedicate to Thee.....

THIS IS OUR KUSHTI PRAYER

A few solitary and silent minutes for this dialogue with Him is not a difficult task. Specially for us the Parsis, it is easier. **Our Din has gifted us with several exercises to be alone with Ahuramazda and talk to Him, commune with Him, attune with Him.** For instance, we are ordained to do Kushti several times a day. The whole Kushti prayer, with its Kemna Mazda, Ahuramazda Khodae and Jasa mey Aveghahey Mazda, is nothing but a dialogue of Ushta with Him and Asho Zarathushtra. What a store house of devotion the Kushti Prayer is! **Oh Mazda! Be with me and in my heart and mind. Protect me from my infirmities and faults of the flesh. Light in me the fire of devotion to Thee. Send Thy Sarosh in my consciousness. Enlighten me with the divine knowledge. Awaken in me my supreme Teacher, Asho Zarathushtra. Let me strive and exert to follow the commands of the Mazdayasni Zarthoshti Din, the Din which is ordained for me to bring me nearer and nearer to Thee oh Ahura Mazda.....**

Just imagine! We can, in the midst of our worldly duties, send such sublime prayer to Him several times a day! Is this not a special gift to us from our Guide and Master, Asho Zarathushtra? Should we not take full advantage of it? Sudreh Kushti proclaims that the call of Ushta is ever emanating from a Parsi; that the burning thoughts of Love and Devotion are constantly wrapped around a Parsi; and that several times a day a Parsi is destined to address Ahura through the Kushti Prayer. What a grand destiny!

THE HOLY FIRE OF USHTA

Take another blessing of Asho Zarathushtra, the holy Atesh in Atesh Baheram or Adran or Dadgah. Look at it. It burns and at the same time emanates light. Its flame dances upwards as if calling Ahura and singing to Him. Let our heart burn for Him like this holy Atesh. As wood is the burning material for the Atesh, let my Ushta, my burning desire to go nearer to Him, be the wood for my heart. This holy Atesh is in charge of my journey towards Ahura. It will take me to Him in all kinds of ways. And see! The holy Atesh spreads light as it burns. Let me also burn with Ushta, so that the light of Ahura enwrap my heart and soul.

You may perhaps be surprised to know that all these prayerful thoughts and many many more are woven in the prayer, Atesh Niyaish! You wont get them in the dry grammatical translations current amongst us. Only "**Khordeh Avesta baa Khshnoom**" by Framroze Chiniwalla has power to electrify your heart with these thoughts.

Similarly all our other Manthra Prayers are the power houses to generate Ushta in our heart. It does not matter if you do not know the meaning of the Avesta prayer. **One thought while reciting the manthra prayer is enough, namely: Oh Ahura Mazda! By this prayer which is composed by Asho Zarathushtra and His divine Deputies, i am coming nearer to Thee. Ordain that my love and devotion for Thee may ever burn in my heart.....** The three Ashem Vohu's which are there in every prayer will remind you of this

thought.

The meaning and purport of the word Ushta does not end here. **This is just a beginning and an introduction.** There are nine pearls in the divine necklace of Ushta. That means that there are nine ways of looking to Ushta or that there are nine meanings attached to it. Each of them overlaps with the other. A common thread runs through them; yet we can concentrate on one of them at a time, so that in the end we get a full holistic picture of this wonderful word, Ushta. All the nine and the final whole are derived from whatever is said about Ushta in our holy scriptures. Of the five Gatha, one is fully devoted to Ushta. It is the second Gatha; its name is '**Ushtoovad**'. 'Vad' means spoken word. This Gatha is therefore the word of Ushta or the song of Ushta, or the Truth of Ushta. There are four 'Ha's in Gatha Ushtoovad (Yazashney Ha 43, 44, 45, 46). Each Ha is a divine narration of how Ushta operates in the whole of God's creation and how a human being can tread the path of Ushta; how Ushta leads to the path of Asha and ultimately to Ahura. Every word of this Gatha vibrates with devotion. The spectrum of nine meanings is drawn out mainly from the Gatha Ushtoovad.

The general introductory meaning and purport of Ushta, which we have discussed in this article, is: 'the burning pangs of separation'. This has two interwoven elements: **separation and agony.** (veyog ane vednae). We burn in the fire of separation. Burning is an agony. (One erudite Parsi savant Khodabux E Poonegar has given 'Oos', to burn as the root of Ushta.) Yet that burning, that agony of separation itself has an inherent current of bliss. The devotee enjoys the pangs of burning. He or she feels an ecstasy while suffering the separation. A great saint of Gujerat, Akho Bhagat, has described this in a wonderful line:

Ander padya mahasuk mane

Dakhan hara daze jo nae!

He says, a devotee - Bhakta - is like one who has fallen into a stream of boiling oil. He himself experiences a great bliss, but the on-lookers are having burns.... Look at the fun!

He burns in separation, but the very burning infuses in him the sure hope of the union with God, and that hope is like a cool spray, which makes him forget the burning.

These are therefore the first two colours in the nine-coloured spectrum of Ushta : (i) Separation (ii) Agony.

- *Cherag*

(Parsi Pukar SEPTEMBER '98 Vol. 4; No. 3)

ASHEM VOHU, THE PRAYER OF GOOD HEART (7)

NINE PEARLS IN THE DIVINE NECKLACE OF USHTA.

How Do We Plunge Into Ushta in the Turmoils of Our Life?

Asha, Vohuman and Ushta are the three pearls in the necklace of Ashem Vohu. The necklace, like the "gireybaan" of your Sudreh, touches your heart. It is meant that way; because Ashem Vohu is the Prayer of Good Heart. It throbs your heart through Ushta.

We are trying to understand the meaning and message of the word Ushta. The big pearl of Ushta is surrounded by nine small pearls. The first two of the small pearls, as we have seen, are separation and agony. Separated as we are from Ahura, our Ruvan cries "It was my ego which separated me from Thee, Oh Mazda! How long wilt Thou keep me away from Thee? I am Thy lover in agony. I burn in my love for Thee".

Separation and agony are the flowers on the branch of LOVE. They generate love, the intense attraction of love. Separation itself is the burning of love.

We therefore add two further links in the chain of Ushta : LOVE and ATTRACTION.

Our love attracts us to Him. But He seems to be far way. Is there any way by which I can express my love for Thee? Of course, Thou art fully aware of my burning, yet separated as I am from Thee, show me how I sent to Thee the message of my love.

Ahuramazda answers us through Gatha Ushtoovad. That Gatha is His word ('vad') of Ushta. He has woven into that Gatha a prayer for us and that is : "Generate in me, oh Almighty Ahuramazda, that love which Thou hast for the whole creation ("Vasey Khshyans Mazdao Dayat Ahuro, Utooti Tevishee Gat Toi Vaseymee" - Gatha Ha 43-1, lines 2 & 3).

Thou lovest every particle of Thy Creation. Thou art drawing it towards Thee through Thy love. It matters not if Thou still desirest me to burn in Thy separation; at least burst in my heart that spring of love Thou hast for every particle of Thy universe. Let me express my love for Thee by loving every human being, every animal, every tree, and every thing. Let me serve Thee by serving Thy Creation with the same love as Thou pourest on it.

This is the divine message of love and service in Ushtoovad Gatha. I can appease my burning for Thee by loving all and serving all. My Ushta, my bliss, my ecstasy is in my giving Ushta to others, by loving them, serving them and awakening in them intense love for Thee. "Ushta Ahmai ye Ahmai Ushta Kahmaichit". Ushta, the bliss of loving Thee multiplies by giving Ushta to others (Gatha Ha 43-1, line 1).

The 'happiness' in the word Ushta does not mean worldly happiness or wealth or material conveniences and objects. That is not happiness, because it dies down soon; it is exhausted by giving it away. Ushta is the wealth, which grows and increases infinite times by giving away; that is the wonderful quality of love. **Go on emptying the jar of love, and lo! it goes on overflowing.**

The Zarathushtrian Science teaches that everything we see and experience around us is the expression of God's love. The attraction of His love is the building block of whole creation. Just think! Everything attracts everything else. Attractions of infinite variety operate the universe. Every object attracts every other. They call it gravitation. In every tree, the water is attracted up. In every atom, there are nuclear attractions. In every human heart, there is attraction towards beauty, truth and God. It all is His love, which is the force of attraction.

Separation, agony, love, attraction are the first four facets of Ushta. When these four are whirled together, the fifth pearly appears: **Devotion - Bhakti.**

Now what do we say of Bhakti? This great country India - Hindustan, Bharata - is a tremendous power house of Bhakti. All over the country great Devotees of God were born. The miracles of their Devotion are household stories. A fifteen year old saint Gnyaneshwar writing an unrivaled commentary on the sacred Bhagvad Gita; Narsinh Bhagat compelling Lord Krishna to show His presence; Mira gulping down poison; Nanakshah, Kabir, Akho Bhagat, Namdev, Bulal Shah, Nizammudin Olia, Ramkrishna the list is unending.

They were no pundits and savants; they were just immersed in the infinite ocean of His love. They were just intoxicated by their devotion to Him. They saw Him everywhere and yet felt far away from Him. They sang poems, they tortured themselves, they burnt themselves in separation from Him.

In one of his 'Abhang', Sant Tukaram laments bitterly, **"I have become mad after Thee Oh Vithala! (God). I am vainly looking in the various directions for Thee...** The very foundations of my life are shaken and I pant without Thee as a fish without water (Abg. 2210) "Are you fallen asleep?.. Is the way far off, that you have to cross? Do you see my faults that You do not come?... My life is really oozing out of my eyes, says Tuka (Abg. 1019 - Transl. A. D. Ranade)

'Fish out of water' is a powerful metaphor, favourite of many 'Bhakta's. Nanak commands his own mind, **"Oh 'mana', love Hari as the fish loves water, who, as the water rises goes into ecstasy of the body and peace of mind.** She cant live a moment without water; the Lord alone knows her agony".

Kabir says, "Fish is the greatest lover, all other loves are meagrely. No sooner she is separated from water, she leaves the body".

Nazir lamented in Urdu "I did not know that you have to eat sorrow... to tremble, to sigh to bring on tears". Sarmad asked in Persian, "Tell me the reason for the heart break... Tell me who does not commit sin in the world... If I do bad and You badly rebuke me, tell me what is the difference between You and me..." Sarmad thinks that forgiveness is his right and God's duty!

With all their burnings, these sublime devotees were ever convinced that one day they will be one with their beloved. **That Faith for the union is the sixth pearl in the necklace of Ushta.** Right, we the ordinary non-saintly people cannot afford to be very intoxicated in His love. We have lot of duties to perform, a lot of Karma to discharge. **But even in the midst of our turmoils, it is possible for us to be a 'Bhakta', an earnest devotee of Ahura and Asho Zarathushtra.** We can cultivate in ourselves an ever wakeful awareness that our stay on this earth is a part of our journey towards Ahuramazda, and Asho Zarathushtra is our Guide, and that we have to follow His commands in every thing we think, speak and do. That is our Ushta, our confidence that every day takes us nearer to Him, whatever be the storms in our life.

That faith and confidence will inspire us to endeavour ceaselessly to carry out the dictates of our Daena. The very thought of Asho Zarathushtra will infuse immense zeal in us to obey Him in everything we do. **This zeal to exert is the 7th pearl of Ushta; and the exertion emanating from that zeal is the 8th one.** Here we arrive at the practical side of Ushta. How do we exert to attune ourselves with Asho Zarathushtra and through Him with Ahura?

To start with, we must understand a few practical truths taught in our Daena. The first and the foremost truth for the non-saintly persons like us is that **we are a mixture of good and evil.** As is often written here, there is a good cow in us and an evil wolf in us. The cow desires to give her milk to the wolf, so that his evil be converted to good. The wolf wants nothing of the kind; his desire is to eat away the cow.

The second truth is that **non-saintly humans like us are inclined to be knowingly dragged away in the current of the evil.** It is therefore necessary that we resist the evil which naturally ferments within us. We are required not to fall into the snare of the sins.

The third truth is that **good and evil are defined by God and not man.** God has declared, through the emphatic commandments of His Prophets, what is a sin and what is not; what are the do's and don'ts.

The fourth truth is that **we have to be ever vigilant to encourage the cow and discourage the wolf within us.** That is, let our mind remain alert to resist all temptations of evil and to be away from sins (Taroideetay..."); and let it strive always to be immersed in such thoughts, words and deeds which are defined as good by God's Prophets ("Kerfeh Muzda").

The question then is, how do we exert to be good and to avoid evil?

It is clear and obvious that the whole exercise is a frame of mind. We are to develop a thought force in our own consciousness which will vigilantly draw us towards good and train us to discard evil. The foundation of such thought force is Bhakti, devotion, Ushta.

If I love Ahuramazda and Asho Zarathushtra, how can I disobey them? A lover does not go against the

wish of the object of his or her love. **How can I be faithless to my lover?** I must therefore do what Ahura has ordered me to do and not do what he has forbidden me to do. Let this thought be ever alert in our mind.

Further, **if Ahuramazda is the creator of everybody, all humanity is my brotherhood.** I cannot hate my brothers and sisters. Since You love them all, I have no choice but to love the whole humanity. I crave for the same love as Thou hast for everybody (as Ha 43-1 says).

And how do I express my love towards all? By serving 'Gava', the disposition of the cow within us. That cow is the apostle of "giving away", unlike that wolf in us whose motto is to "snatch away".

To love others, to serve others, to be ever ready to help those who are in misery, are the virtues of Gava, the divine cow; and to do so helps us to generate the currents of Ushta in our heart. These actions of Gava are called "Hutokhshi". It means: "in the service of God and all His creation".

To be a Hutoksh - the servant of God - one qualification is very much needed. That is "Khaksari", "Naakasi", humility, i.e. the dissolution of pride and ego. This again is a part of Ushta.

So, what is Ushta? **Separation, Agony, Love, Attraction, Bhakti, Faith, Zeal to exert, and the Exertion itself, which consists of cow-like sacrifice, loving service Hutokhshi, Humility...**

- Cherag

(Parsi Pukar OCTOBER '98 Vol. 4; No. 4)

ASHEM VOHU, THE PRAYER OF GOOD HEART (8)

THE DIVINE DECLARATION OF ASHEM VOHU : THERE IS ASHA, VOHUMAN AND USHTA IN AHURA'S WORLD.

BRING USHTA IN YOUR HEART AND LIFE, AND MARCH TOWARDS AHURA.

A small prayer of just 12 words: "Ashem Vohu..... Vahishtaai Ashem"! A treasury of divine Truths; a torch of practical wisdom on the cloudy path of our life on earth; a roaring ocean of devotion, love and faith in our heart! A Mantric composition, for which the Creator Lord Ahura Mazda Himself tells Asho Zarathushtra, in Hodokhta Nask, about the wondrous effects of its recitation, and in Yazashney Ha 20, how it leads every individual to his or her perfection (Khaetvodath) and the whole creation to its salvation (Frashogard).

During our stroll in the beautiful garden of this Prayer, we had a look to the three beds of flowers, the triplet: Asha, Vohuman and Ushta. Let us remind ourselves swiftly of the fragrance of each of the three.

Asha, Asha Vahishta, Ardibeheshta :

Law : Ahura's Law on which the Creation operates.
Order : the huge organisation of Ahura, wherein even a speck of dust has an orderly place.
Beauty : the manifestation, the expression of Ahura's Order which throbs the heart of every human.
Truth : The ultimate truth about the Creation, its operation and the final aim.
Purity : The human's duty to strive to keep his or her thoughts, words and works pure and undefiled, a strenuous exercise indeed!
Righteousness : The human expression of the divine Purity.
Freedom : The ultimate freedom from Druj, the evil, the final alchemisation of all evil into good.

Vohuman, Vahishtem Mano, Bahman :

Divine Consciousness of Ahura Mazda Himself.

For the human mind: Alchemy of Akoman to Vohuman. Dissolution of ego, pride, hatred.

For the human heart: A call of earnest love and devotion: come to me, dwell in me, shine in me, pour your silvery current of love in me, oh Vohuman!

USHTA

Nine Pearls in the Necklace:

A cry of love and devotion: How long this separation, my Lord!

How long this agony, my Lord?

The undercurrent in the human heart: Love, attraction and intoxication to the Divine, burning Bhakti, unshakable Faith, zeal to exert to reach the Divine, the Exertion: cow-like sacrifice, loving service, Hutokhshi, Compassion, Humility.

Ah! What an ocean this Prayer of 12 words is!

We are now ready to enter into the meaning of Ashem Vohu.

"ASHEM VOHU VAHISHTAM ASTI, USHTA ASTI".

This is a declaration of the great Truth that in Ahura's Creation there is - there EXISTS - Asha Vahishta and Vohuman - in short, His Consciousness and His Law;

And that there is - there EXISTS - USHTA (with all its nine pearls) in Ahura, in all His Creation, and in the heart of all humans.

THAT is Ahuramazda's divine declaration, His affirmation, assertion, confirmation, message. The word that is the foundation of this declaration is "Asti", i.e., 'IS'.

Now what is "IS?"

It is a word which indicates something which 'is,' i.e., which exists. When it is said that a thing or an event - 'is', it means, in our ordinary thinking, that the thing or event exists in nature i.e. it is a truth in nature. But not all that we say 'is', is the truth. There are certain 'is's which may not be declaring the whole truth in nature. Our 'is' is based upon our own experience of the world. That experience, in turn, is based on our five senses. But our senses are not always right; what they convey to us may not be the whole truth; at times it may not be the truth at all. For instance, when we say, "Here is the sun rising in the east." and "Here is the sun setting in the west"; we rely on our own experience based on our sense of seeing. We see the sun every day rising in the east and setting in the west. But that is not the truth in nature. The sun does not rise or set; in truth, the movement of the earth creates that illusion. Astronauts on the moon saw the earth rising up in the sky. We earthlings know that our earth does not rise up or set off. So, our senses are not as reliable as we are habituated to think. That means our 'IS' may at times be "IS NOT." But when a line of a Manthra composition, which is the word of God transmuted in human speech, says "IS", it declares the whole, pure truth in Nature. It is not defiled by an untruth wholly or partly. It is the THE TRUTH in Nature, unquestionably and undoubtedly.

So, here in Ashem Vohu - Prayer the Word 'Asti' used twice, declares an undefiled truth that there is Asha and Vohuman in Nature and so also there is Ushta in Nature. The message of the first line therefore is, "Remember, there is ('asti') "Asha" the divine Law, Order, Beauty, Truth, Purity, Righteousness, Freedom, and there is Ushta with all its nine pearls.

Having declared the existence of Asha, Vohuman and Ushta in the first six words, the Prayer than says "USHTA AHMAAI". Ahmaai is translated as "to him". The two words, thus convey "Ushta is to him." It is not clear who this "him" is. But the last line and the whole context indicate that Ushta is for that human being who knows or is aware or is conscious of the two pure Truths that there is Asha and Vohuman, and there is USHTA. Once we know these Truths, we are in Ushta; the bliss, the ecstasy; the 'masti' i.e. intoxication of devotion enters into us; the tide of Bhakti devotion rises in us. We will burn in the agony of separation from our Lord Ahuramazda and Zarathushtra; and yet we will have bliss in that burning. Our attraction towards the Lord will increase; our Faith in our Din, our Lord's words and commands will become unshakable; we shall face all the worldly happiness and miseries with thankfulness to the Lord; we shall treat them as the gifts of the Lord; we shall take all troubles as the alchemy of "druj" in us into "gava", and as steps towards our march to the Lord; we shall exert strenuously to put into practice all the commands of our Lord Zarathushtra with great zeal without any doubt and with absolute certainty that they are meant to take us before the Lord.

Once the awareness of Vohuman and Asha enters in our hearts, the tide of Ushta strongly roars in every cell of our body and every point of our beings; and our attitude towards every human, every animal, every vegetation, every atom of matter will change; it will be all love and no hatred, all selflessness and no selfishness, all giving away and no snatching away, all service and sacrifice and no greed; all spread out from the center and no focusing on self-center; all humility, Armaiti and Hutokhshi and no ego and pride. The tide of Ushta will keep us ever reminded that the ultimate Ushta is to stand before God in person and that confidence will ever vibrate in all that we think, speak or do.

This being so, the third line "HYAT ASHAAI VAHISHTAAI ASHEM" now conveys a practical message. Its purport is that there being Vohuman, Asha and Ushta in Nature, it is required of every human being that she or he traverses the Path of Asha (in all its seven colours) in the present life, elevates his or her Ushta, and thereby ultimately attain FREEDOM - Freedom from all druj, freedom from the cycle of birth and death i.e., attain Frashogard. That freedom is the highest form of Ushta.

* * * * *

THE SCHOLAR'S MEANINGS

Let us divert a little on how the Western and west oriented scholars have translated this prayer. Dr. Taraporewala in his "The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra" (1953; Reprint 1993 Hukhta Foundation) has given the translations of Ashem Vohu by as many as 15 translators (arranged alphabetically). Most of them has translated Ashem (or Asha) as "righteousness", and Ushta as "happiness". That has infused in their translations more of a dry moral fervour than the devotional or spiritual or mystical. If I take the liberty of

paraphrasing this class of translations, it would read like this:

"Righteousness is good and best.
Happiness is to him who is righteous
for the sake of righteousness."

This "righteousness for righteousness's sake" is supposed to be a great idea like "art for art's sake" or "science for science's sake." An artist expresses his feelings in his art as they come to him without any thought for any reward or benefit. A scientist just goes after truth without caring for any prize (Nobel or ignoble). Ashem Vohu, according to this class of translators, advocates righteousness for its own sake and not for any bounty or prize. The idea may be good, but cannot be as great as worth finding a place in a Manthra composition. And although righteousness without any expectation of a reward is advocated, the Prayer itself seems to prescribe the award viz happiness - Ushta. And if Ushta is meant to be the happiness of having a large Bank account, as some "scholars" and "studies" say, then the meaning turns to this: "Be righteous for righteousness' sake and you'll get the reward of a large Bank account." - a contradiction in terms. Do it without expecting a prize, but and yet you'll get the prize of "happiness". It will be an almost impossible psychological exercise to forget about the prize while doing righteousness, since the prayer itself promises it. You will get a prize, but while doing righteousness, don't think of it! However, if you give Asha and Ushta those meanings of seven colours and nine pearls, you will have a huge take-off from the ground of these fumbling translations to the heavens of devotion and mystical experience.

Some translators have lifted the Prayer up to some loftiness, when they have translated Ushta as bliss or peace (F. K. Dadachanji), Eternal light (Khabardar), Illumination (Taraporewala); and Asha as "Law Immutable" (B. Anklesaria), 'Sat' (Eternal Truth) (Dadachanji), Holiness (Darmesteter), Purity (Ashoi) (Kangaji and Spiegel).

Those translators who have given the meaning of 'righteousness' to Asha, have quarreled as to what is meant by the English word. There is some spiritual content in the word, said Bartholomae and Moulton, rather hesitantly; and Haug, the scholar of fragmentation of Avesta, says pompously that the word does not "necessarily imply holiness," it only means "what is right and meritorious in a ritualistic sense". I do not quite understand what he means. We need not enter into an argument on these hazy and smoky pronouncements flowing from the material psyche of the then Godless West. But this illustrates how this westerly scholasticism has ravaged our Scriptures.

Today the expression 'Ushta Te' appears in commercial advertisements. Whenever you read it, remember, not the diamond necklace in your safe deposit locker, but remember the necklace of nine pearls of bliss, devotion, selflessness, "masti."

- Cherag

(Parsi Pukar DECEMBER '98 Vol. 4; No. 6)

THE MEANING, MESSAGE AND EFFICACY OF ASHEM VOHU ELABORATED IN HADOKHTA NUSK.

AHURA'S CREATION AND HUMAN HEART BOTH, GERMINATE FROM THE SAME SEEDS - "ASHA CHITHRA", "VAH CHITHRA".

What is, then, the meaning and substance of Ashem Vohu, a mini Prayer of gigantic Truths revealed in the Zarthoshti Din? It is this:

"THERE IS AND EXISTS (IN THIS
CREATION OF AHURA MAZDA),
ASHA, VOHUMAN AND USHTA.

USHTA, THE SPIRITUAL BLISS,
FLOWS INTO HIM OR HER WHO
FOLLOWS THE PATH OF ASHA.

THEREFORE, IT IS INCUMBENT
ON YOU, OH HUMAN BEING,
THAT YOU SHALL FOLLOW
THAT PATH OF ASHA IN LIFE
AND ATTAIN THE FINAL FREEDOM."

This is a divine declaration of Truth and spiritual admonition to man, wonderfully blended together.

The psyche, the frame of mind and the thoughts of every human being should be always immersed in Ushta i.e. in devotion to Ahura, and an intoxication of bliss and peace, come what may.

That devotion and intoxication spring in the heart of the human by following the Path of ASHA, the path of truth, purity and righteousness, and that will lead to the ultimate Freedom, Frashogard, Mukti, Salvation.

The Ashem Vohu Prayer declares; remember that the commands of Dharma, Din (all Religions) emanate from Asha, Ahura's fountain of Law, Order Beauty and Truth. It is your bounden duty, oh man, that every thought you think, every word you utter and every work you do at every moment of your tiny life on the earth, should be within the pattern of Asha, and its laws as prescribed in Dharma, Din and **should be treated as an humble dedication to Ahuramazda.**

"Everything I think, speak or do is my humble offering to Thee, oh Ahuramazda", should be the undercurrent in our mind; and that alone can alchemise all evil into me and my mind, into the Good and merge it with the Good, the Gava, already there. "Let the wolf in me surrender to the cow in me; let the evil currents in my mind throwaway all its mud; let my Akoman struggle to be converted to Vohuman" - that is the motto and aim of the human lives on this earth.

This is thus the tricoloured spectrum of Ashem Vohu: Asha, Vohuman, Ushta.

You are on your journey back to Ahura and He has ordained that at every step on the way, the cool and calm water from the fountain of Ushta will be sprinkled on you; **that is the promise of Ashem Vohu.** Howsoever rough the journey be, howsoever thorny the path be, howsoever stormy the sea of "Sansaar" - the worldly life be, never forget that HE is ever present in you as the sprinkling spring of USHTA. **In any weather, rough or smooth, HE is there to shower His USHTA, the bliss, the ecstasy on you.** Duties of worldly life are to be discharged, no doubt, and the worldly happiness and misery are bound to visit you in unpredictable cycles; but in all these whirlwinds, let the needle of your mental compass be ever attracted with burning devotion towards the Lord. HE is there, here and everywhere with the cooling hose fountain of Ushta. In your

heart He is; in your breath He is. Let every beat of your heart throb in Ushta. How curious, my Lord, that the burn of your Ushta does not burn, but cools in the very process of burning!

Whatever is to happen shall happen according to your wish. "Athaa ne Anghahat Yatha Havo Vasat." All that happens is in your huge plan. "Yatha Ahoo Vairiyo..." But in all that I will go on saying, "**Az Anaai Khorsand Hom**", - **whatever calamity comes, I shall take it smilingly and with delight. And at every moment my heart shall keep on silently singing the song of Ashem Vohu.**

* * * * *

NOW ABOUT THE EFFICACY OF ASHEM VOHU

Every Manthra - Prayer has two angles:

(i) its **meaning** and message and (ii) its Manthric **effect** within the person praying, and out in Nature. We have dwelt at some length on the first aspect of meaning; let us now enter into the second, of the effect.

Every Parsi who has faith in Avesta Prayers, accepts it as her or his inherent belief that whatever be the meaning of a Prayer, it has some vibratory effect. This is not just a matter of blind faith. Every Religion has declared the efficacy of Mantra. There are several scientific observations, which point a finger to the vibratory nature of the whole universe, and some, which have shown the vibratory effect of spoken words in general and the Manthric words of Religious Prayers, in particular. Apart from such observations, the holy Scriptures of all Religions declare the effect and efficacy of Mantra or Manthra Prayers. So also Avesta. In his extraordinary book, "**Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern,**" the late **Ervad Phiroze Masani has given 40 evidentiary references from Avesta on 'Staota' - Divine Vibrations - and 70 on the loftiness and efficacy of Manthra.** Of the 40 on 'Staota', 13 are from Gatha, 13 from 'Yashta's, 13 from Yazashney, 5 from Visperad, 1 from Ava Niyash and 1 from Hadokhta Nask. Of the 70 on Manthra, 12 are from Gatha, 15 from Yazashney, 10 from Visparad, 29 from 'Yashta's, 1 from Sarosh Baj, 2 from the 'Gah's and 1 from Hadokhta Nask. Those who are ignorantly carried away by the faithless fanatics proposition of escapism that the Gatha is the only genuine scripture (GAC - Gatha Alone Cult, as they are now internationally known), will be surprised that the 13 references on Staota and 12 on Manthra, from the Gatha are as eloquent on the efficacy of Manthra as the non-Gathic Avesta references. The escapist people deliberately avoid reading what goes against their pet, pre-conceived, prejudiced and non-objective notions, conjectures and guessworks; yet I give here the bare references to Manthra in the Gatha, as elaborated by the erudite Khshnoomist scholar Phiroze Masani: Ha 28-5, 7; 29-7; 31-6; 32-13; 43-14; 44-14, 17; 45-3; 50-5, 6; 51-8.

* * * * *

In addition to those general references on Staota and Manthra, there are special references on particular Avesta Prayers. The most outstanding of these are Yazashney Ha 19, 20 and 21, which elaborate the meaning, message and efficacy of three of our basic Prayers: "Yatha Ahoo Vairyo", "Ashem Vohu "Yenghahey Haataam." There is one more scripture, "Hadokhta Nusk", which speaks particularly about Ashem Vohu in a most extraordinary and unique fashion. In this, we now enter.

WHAT IS HADOKHTA NUSK?

First about the Hadokhta Nusk. This is the only Scripture we have, which has the word 'Nusk' in its title. It looks as if it is a fragment of a larger Scripture. Westergard, one of the pioneers of the Avesta studies in the West, had called it "Yashta Fragments." It however does not have the peculiar features the Yashta Prayers have. As its name suggests, it seems to be a part of one of the basic or derivative sets of 21 Nusks. We have today only about 1/20th part of one of the sets of 21 Nusks. As is well known, the 21 words of which the Prayer Yatha Ahoo Vairyo is composed, are the names of 21 Nusks. Hadokhta Nusk is stated to be corresponding to the 20th word of Yatha Ahoo... Prayer viz "Dadat." One large Pahalvi Book Dinkard says

that this Nusk contained three 'Fargard's (chapters). Dinkard has given a summary of the contents of this Nusk. It appears therefrom that this Nusk contained the practical rules of leading the life on this earth so as to march towards Ahura and evolve spiritually further and higher. This includes the recitation of Manthra Prayers and in particular Ashem Vohu. The benefits of reciting Ashem Vohu and its expansive effect in Nature are described in a way, simple and profound at the same time.

Ilm-e-Khshnoom has pointed out that the word "Hadokhta" has two components: "Hada" and "Ukhda". 'Hada' means 'with' and 'Ukhda' means "the divine sound ringing out of a specially structured word and its pronouncing." That is the word, the very pronouncing of which generates divine energy within the pronouncer and elevates him or her to a higher spiritual level and enables him or her to absorb the Yazatic energy pouring down from the Yazats, within her or his personality and emit and transmit it all around. The pronouncing of the divine word i.e. the Manthra makes the pronouncer an 'Aalaat' or 'Zaothra', a receiving and transmitting station for the Yazatic energy. "Zaothra" is an Avesta word frequently occurring in Manthra Prayers. (For instance, in the passage "Haoma Yo Gava Baresmana..." occurring in all Niyash's & Yashtas).

The Hadokhta Nusk prescribes the Rules of becoming a Zaothra; and declares that one of the Rules is the pronouncing of the holy Manthra and that one such 'Manthra' is Ashem Vohu. The Nusk is said to contain 3 chapters and four subject matters viz.

- (i) Ashem Vohu, the lofty and majestic effect of reciting it on different occasions;
- (ii) A narration of what happens after death to the Ruvan of (a) an Ashavan i.e. a highly evolved person, who had been pure in thought, word and work during his life on earth and (b) an ordinary person who could not during his life on earth avoid falling a prey to the forces of evil and committing sins i.e. doing that which was ordained by Din not to do, and not doing that which was ordained by Din to do;
- (iii) Sarosh Yasht Hadokhta, which is a Manthra Prayer for elevating one's consciousness towards Ahuramazda;
- (iv) Yazashney Ha 59, which gives a narration of the Vibrationary Laws which are the foundation of (a) all Creation ("Staota Yasna") and (b) the composition of Manthra. ("Fashusho Manthra"). Howsoever would I like to take my reader in these fascinating subjects, I would leave them for some other occasion and return to Ashem Vohu as depicted in the first Fargard of Hadokhta Nusk.

The Fargard begins with question posed by Asho Zarathushtra to Ahuramazda:

"Oh Ahuramazda... which is Thy one Word that showers the seeds of Asha and all-goodness and takes the Creation towards Thee?"

"Ahuramazda spoke back in reply, 'That, oh Zarathushtra, is the Prayer (Kalam) of Ashem Vohu.'"

Ahuramazda then further elaborates that whoever recites Ashem Vohu and tread on the Path of Asha with his or her heart full of earnest faith and devotion, worships not only me, but also water, earth, gava (the cow within), trees and all the things of my Creation emanating from "Asha Chithra" and "Vohu Chithra" i.e. from the seeds of Asha and Vohuman.

We shall now delve into this.

- Cherag

(Parsi Pukar February '99 Vol. 4; No. 8)

WHAT SHOULD BE YOUR PERSONAL CRY OF DEVOTION TO AHURAMAZDA?

AHURAMAZDA'S DIVINE DECLARATION ABOUT THE POWER OF ASHEM VOHU, IN HADOKHTA NUSK.

The meaning and substance of Ashem Vohu, consist of three revelations.

The first declares:

**"There is and exists (in this Creation
of Ahuramazda) Asha, Vohuman and Ushta"**

Asha, as we have seen is Ahura's Law, Order, Beauty, Truth; and for the humans, Truth, Righteousness and Freedom.

Vohuman is the Consciousness of Ahuramazda and His Yazata's; and for the humans, the divine consciousness to be attained by transmuting our mixed up good and bad mind - 'Akoman' - to Vohuman.

Ushta is the ever flowing current of love and devotion in the human heart, which leads to the ultimate goal of attaining perfect and permanent, bliss, peace, ecstasy.

Ashem Vohu declares in its very first line that these three exist, they are THERE in Nature ('Asti').

The second line then proclaims:

**Ushta, the spiritual bliss, flows into
him or her who follows the Path of
Asha.**

Path of Asha is the Path of Din, Dharma, Mazhab, Religion, revealed by the 'Paigambar's, 'Saoshyant's and Avatar's, Saints, Sages and Seers. That Path begins with the spark of Ushta, has the lamps of Ushta all the way and ends with the Yazatic Light of Ushta.

And the last line declares :

**Therefore it is incumbent on you,
oh human being, that you shall
follow that Path of Asha in life and
attain the final freedom.**

The first two lines declare the basic chapter of the divine science of Religion; and the third line calls upon the human to think, speak and do, and to act, behave and work as directed by that science.

This is a fascinating feature of all Manthra Prayers. Every passage and every line has three colours: Knowledge or Science (Gnyan), a call of duty (Karma) and a cry of devotion (Bhakti) - all in one tri-coloured spectrum. If you want to talk in terms of actual colours, you can imagine that golden yellow is the colour of divine Knowledge, soothing blue is the colour of worldly duty and burning red is the colour of devotion. "Zar" in "Zarathushtra" means golden yellow, since Asho Zarathushtra is the pinnacle of divine Knowledge. Blue is the colour of the sky and the sea; at times in life, the sky thunders and the sea goes into violet storms; but all the thunders and storms of life are followed by the soothing blue. The colour of love and devotion is red, the colour of burning. Bhakti, devotion, love and compassion do burn a human, but there is Ushta in all burnings. The cry of Ushta burns and soothes at the same time. It is agony and ecstasy at the same time.

Every Avesta passage has devotion in it, sometimes open and clear and sometimes hidden and potent. Look at the third line of Ashem Vohu. The message is that to attain Freedom, burn in Ushta and follow the Path of Asha burningly. You can well convert this into a personal cry of devotion to Ahuramazda :

Oh Ahura! Since You declare that i must follow Your Path of Asha and Ushta, i implore beseech, pray that give me strength to do it. Keep Your loving eyes on me, so that i may not be lured to deviate from Your Path.... Let me burn in my devotion to Thee every moment of my life.....

All our prayers end with Ashem Vohu. Let all your Prayers from today onwards end in this heart-throb.

In the February 1999 issue of this humble magazine, I had touched the subject of "Efficacy of Ashem Vohu." The meaning and message of any Manthra Prayer is one thing; and its efficacy is the other. Every Manthra has both. In truth, the efficacy is more dominant than the meaning. Every chanting of Manthra has a divine spiritual effect within us and 'out' in Nature. IIm-e-Khshnoom, the divine Science of our Din teaches us that when you recite Manthra Prayers (as ordained), the recitation creates certain fields of divine electro-magnetism, which are divided in ten channels. Of the ten, nine are taken by Nature as a gift from you and one channel is given back to you. Just imagine, this small 'you' gives a gift to Ahuramazda by chanting Manthra! It is as if Nature is obliged to you! Only the unfortunate would miss such an opportunity of giving daily gift to Nature and Ahuramazda through Manthra Prayers.

The efficacy and the effect of chanting just this small 12 worded Ashem Vohu is eloquently declared by none other than Ahuramazda Himself. In our extant Holy Scriptures there is one: Hadokhta Nusk, a part of which deals with the efficacy of the Ashem Vohu Prayer. In February 1999 issue, I had given some information about Hudokhta Nusk and the topics and matters it contains. The relevant Fargard which deals with Ashem Vohu, begins with a question asked by Asho Zarathushtra to Ahuramazda : "Which is Thy one Word which showers the seeds of Asha and all-goodness and drives the Creation towards Thee, Oh Ahuramazda....?"

Ahuramazda spoke back in reply:

"That Word, oh Zarathushtra, is the Kalaam of Ashem Vohu."

"Whoever recites Ashem Vohu and treads on the Path of Asha with his or her heart full of earnest devotion and faith, worships not only Me but also water, earth 'gava' (the cow) trees and all things of my creation emanating from Asha - Chithra and Vohu Chithra - the seeds of Asha and Vohuman."

The message is that the Kalaam - the 12 worded Prayer - of Ashem Vohu is so potent and powerful in its effect that its very chanting showers on the earth and man all the seeds of Asha and all-goodness.

Asha-chithra and Vah-chithra are the terms of divine science. Avesta is not literature; it is Manthra and expresses the mysteries of natural science in terse lines and coded words. This science reaches for beyond the fumbling sciences of man. Avesta words are not just a matter of etymology or linguistics or philology or grammar. They are terms and terminologies of mystical science of Religion.

Asha-chithra and Vah-chithra do not have the dry meanings: the seeds of purity and goodness, in some literary or figurative way. They go to the root sciences of Creation. In the world of Yazatic Light, which is called Hasti, the seeds of Creation are generated by Ahura and His Yazatas. They are not just imaginary constructs; they are the actual points of divine Yazatic Light having a positive existence. They then expand and spread out; and take up different forms of (i) divine Light, (ii) non-physical energies and (iii) ultimately the physical energies and matter of our earthly experience. Every piece of nature we come across in our earthly life, be it water or tree or mountain or fire or earth or wind or sky or sun or moon or stars or light - all are the physical manifestations of Asha Chithra and Vah-chithra - in other words, of the Yazatic Light. It is for this reason that we have in our Prayer Book, Khordeh Avesta, 'Namaskaar's of mountain, tree, water, lamp and all

things spread out in all the four directions - Char Dishaano Namaskaar. Just have a look at the translation of that Namaskaar. You will find a list of Ahuramazda's Creation on this earth to which we say, 'Nemo Aonghahaam' i.e. "homage to all these." In the limited area of our language, we can say that the Yazatic rays of divine Light diminishes its intensity or splendour successively and creating various forms all the way. It is like a very subtle shining Light becoming coarser and coarser.

There is a vast mystical science giving some faint idea about how the Yazatic Light changes into the physical forms of our day-to-day experience. One fascinating feature of this Science is that every object we experience is stated to be in charge of a particular Ameshaspend or Yazata. Thus, a tree is in charge of Amerdaad Ameshaspend; mountain, of Jamyad Yazata; earth, of Asfandarmard Ameshaspend; metal in charge of Shaheyrevar; fire, of Ardibeheshta and Aadar; water, of Avan, Khordad and Bereza; sun, of Khorshed Yazata; moon, of Mohor Yazata. When we pray Namaskaar to a thing, we pray to the Yazata in whose charge that thing is, or, in other words, we pray to that Yazata through the thing.

So, in Hadokhta Nusk, Ahuramazda says that one who chants Ashem Vohu worships not only Him but also water, earth, tree and all things emanating from Asha-Chithra and Vohu Chithra. Ashem Vohu is thus the Namaskaar of all Namaskaar's. We wonder how a small Prayer of just 12 words can be a Prayer to Ahuramazda, Yazatas and all Creation! But that is Ahuramazda's proclamation and is therefore a Divine Truth, a Law, a Mechanism that works. Just say "Ashem Vohu..... Ashem", and all energies of Ahura are invoked; homage is offered to all Yazatas and all Creation. That is Ahuramazda's declaration about the effect and efficacy of Ashem Vohu. That is the reason why every Prayer in Khordeh Avesta begins with Ashem Vohu and ends with Ashem Vohu.

Now have a look once again to the passage in Hadokhta Nusk. It says that when you chant Ashem Vohu, your heart must overflow with earnest devotion and faith. The Avesta words are:

"Froreyt Frakhshni Avi Mano Jarjdaatoit Angha-huyat Hacha". This is a powerful mantric line. (It occurs also at other places in Avesta in relation to Athra (Ahura's Holy Fire), Fravashi, Ameshaspend's and Asho Zarathushtra - Farvardin Yashta-47, 92). Each word in this line has a series of special meanings. Here we have taken a surface meaning: with a heart overflowing with faith and devotion. The message is that let your chanting of Ashem Vohu be not mechanical; let it be accompanied with the heart throb of intense devotion towards Ahuramazda, Asho Zarathushtra and His Daena. Let the tongue vibrate with the Manthric Words of Ashem Vohu and the heart throb with Bhakti... Let the two bring tears in your eyes.

Ahuramazda's proclamation about the Ashem Vohu Prayer then proceeds to say that the chanting of Ashem Vohu is a prayer not only to Ahuramazda but to all His Creation including water, earth, 'gava' and trees. This follows from the Truth that all His Creation flows from Asha Chithra and Vah-Chithra and the main theme of Ashem Vohu is Asha and Vohuman. Ahura's mechanism of Creation as operating in Nature is transmuted in the Manthric words of Ashem Vohu, and hence its efficacy.

(Parsi Pukar April '99 Vol. 4; No. 10)

Efficacy Of Ashem Vohu As Proclaimed By Daadaar Ahuramazda In Hadokhta Nusk

When is one Ashem Equal To 10, 100, 1000, 10000 ... and Infinity?

Sahebji, my readers! We are on the divine dialogue between Ahuramazda and Asho Zarathushtra as contained in Hadokhta Nusk. Ahuramazda proclaims the effect and efficacy of Ashem Vohu prayer. Whoever chants Ashem Vohu, worships, and attunes with not only Ahuramazda but also water, earth, tree and all things emanating from Asha-Chithra and Vohu Chithra i.e. from the Yazatic Light. He also decrees that whenever you chant Ashem Vohu, chant it with your heart overflowing with your love and devotion to Him. What should be your personal cry of devotion, has been given on page 2 of April 1999 issue.

The next passage of Hadokhta Nusk sets out the further proclamation of Ahuramazda about Ashem Vohu and also Ahoonvar i.e. Yatha Ahoo Vairyo. The passage contains certain words, which have levels of meanings much deeper than the dry philological and grammatical ones. The following is the paraphrased version, spun with a slightly deeper esoteric explanation, as revealed by IIm-e-Khshnoom.

"Oh Zarathushtra! Ashem Vohu
chanted by a truthful tongue and
Yatha Ahu Vairyo chanted through a
heart full of faith and devotion, and a
tongue full of truths, give rise, in the
heart and soul of the chanter, courage
to resist evil and victory against evil."

The message of this passage is that the human tongue is the first step in every person's spiritual journey towards Ahura. He has ordained that the tongue has to carry out two main functions: (i) to chant the Manthra Prayers and (ii) to speak the truth. That is the exercise a human is required to do throughout his or her life on this earth. We are passing through the earth with our Ruvaan encaged (imprisoned) in the physical body. The body is required to be tilled and ploughed. This means, we have to cultivate this 'land' (which is our body) so as to produce a crop of goodness. In other words, we are required to convert the evil within us to good, and add it to the little good already there. This agriculture starts with our tongue. The first and initial tilling of the ground consists in moving your tongue with truth and Manthra. Our tongue is a busy organ; it babbles every day of our life; it has to, to be able to live. Ahura decrees that: babble as much as you like but don't speak a lie and at least one time a day move the tongue with Manthra. Do this and your cultivation begins. Remember, it will not begin without this. That is why every Niyash and Yashta has a passage: Haoma Yo Gava Baresmana... Vaaghzibyoo. There, the tongue is referred to 4 times in a passage of 11 words. The message is that you will march further on the path of Ahura if you first move your tongue with truth and Manthra. The other things for our Ruvan's evolution will then be added unto you.

The passage of Hadokhta Nusk declares that this tongue-exercise will take you further and nearer to Ahuramazda. **At every step the strength and courage to resist evil will increase.** (This applies to all Manthra Prayers). At every step, more and more druj-evil within will be converted to 'gava' - good. As you evolve further, the strength of the tongue itself will increase. The Manthra Prayers recited by the stronger tongue will have greater efficacy. That is the gist and substance of the Hadokhta Nusk passage. It says, chant Ashem and Ahoonvar with the increasing spiritual strength of the tongue and resist the evil with increasing courage. That is the way to the victory against evil.

■ ■ ■

The above passage is followed by another (no. 5, in Kavasji Kanga's Gujarati "Yashta Baa Maaeyni") beginning with the words, "Ereyjaiti Ji Spitma paro asti Jasoithyao." It has high esoteric and technical

levels of meanings. I am not going into this. Kangaji himself is not satisfied with his own translation. He says so in the foot note. I leave this passage and go to the next passages which have some wonderful and fascinating formulae and equations. Asho Zarathushtra asks,

"Kaa Ashava Asho-stootish, Yaa Dasa
Anyeshaam Asho-Stootinaam, Masanacha
Vanghahnacha Sryanacha Areyjaiti"

Every word of this passage has deeper levels of meanings. It is a statement of certain evolutionary spiritual progress of a Ruvaan. But let us take the simple philological meaning rendered by Kangaji :

"Which is that ONE Ashem Vohu,
which in its lofty stature, in its good
quality and in its beauty has the
equivalent value of TEN Ashem
Vohu's?"

The three words Masanacha Vanghahanacha Sryanacha sound just literary characters: lofty, good and beautiful. If we put aside their deeper esoteric meanings, the question is simple. Which ONE Ashem Vohu is equal to TEN Ashem Vohu's in loftiness, goodness and beauty?

In the next passage, Ahuramazda answers: ONE Ashem Vohu equals TEN, when it is chanted by a person while eating the blessings of Haurvatant (i.e. Khordaad) and Ameretaat (i.e. Amardaad) and praising (or worshipping or absorbing) Humata, Hookhta, Havarashta and throwing out Dooshmata, Doojukhta Dujvarashta.

Humata, Hukhta, Havarashta is loosely translated as 'good' thoughts, words and deeds, and Dooshmata, Doojukhta, Dujvarashta as evil thoughts, words and deeds. Then the act of eating is referred to, and the menu for eating is stated to be the blessings of Haurvataat (Khordaad) and Ameretaat (Amardaad). These two are stated at other places to be the Ameshaspendes of water and vegetation. It is perhaps sought to be conveyed that any food we eat comes from or through water and vegetation, which are the blessings of Khordaad and Amardaad.

It therefore boils down to this: When a person sits down to eat food and recites ONE Ashem, thinking about all good thoughts, words and deeds, throwing out all evil thoughts, words and deeds, that one Ashem Vohu is equivalent to TEN Ashem Vohu's.

The practical lesson, apart from any esoteric or mystical science, is: recite one Ashem Vohu before eating; eat with all good thoughts, shun all evil thoughts; offer your gratitude to Ahuramazda and His Ameshaspendes, particularly Khordaad and Amerdaad. That ONE ASHEM will be equal to TEN 'Ashem's in its loftiness goodness and beauty. As already indicated, the loftiness, goodness and beauty are expressed on the words Masanacha, Vanghahanacha, Sryanacha. These words occur in Afrin-e-Gahambar, a prayer recited in the Afringaan ceremony done on the Gahambaar days. 'Gahamaar's are six and they are certain periods of time related to the seasons. But that is not the only significance of Gahambaar. The whole history of creation and of the journey of every Ruvaan, and their future aim, are set out in the mystical science of Gahambaar. That science is encoded in the Afringan and Afrin of Gahambaar. The code is partly deciphered by Ilm-e-Khshnoom, particularly by Framroz Chiniwalla in his Nikeez-e-Vehdin Vol. 1, page 193 et seq. On page 208 of this book the mystical meanings of the three words Masanacha, Vanghahanacha, Sryanacha are given. They indicate the successive stages of the evolution of a Ruvaan as it marches towards "Khaetvodath". This is a difficult and most misunderstood chapter of our Din. I do not propose to take you in this subject of Khaetvodath at this state. It requires elaborate treatment and may some day be taken up separately in this humble magazine.

• • •

Hadokhta Nusk then proceeds further in the dialogue between Daadaar Ahuramazda and Asho

Zarathushtra. The passages have certain Avesta common throughout. The purport of the questions is: which ONE Ashem Vohu is equivalent in its loftiness, goodness and beauty now, to 100 'Ashem's, 1000 Ashems, 10000 Ashem's. Daadaar Ahuramazda's answers, tersely stated are:

One Ashem is equal to 100 Ashems, when it is recited after drinking the holy Haoma water. (Paras 8 and 9).

One Ashem is equal to 1000 Ashems, when it is recited by a person waking up from his sleep and changing his side to go to sleep again. (Paras 10 to 11).

One Ashem is equal to 10,000 Ashem's when it is chanted by a person waking up from his sleep (and coming out of bed) (Paras 12 and 13).

In each of these formulae, Asho Zarathushtra refers to the loftiness, goodness and beauty of the ONE Ashem; and Daadaar Ahuramazda refers to the person as chanting ONE Ashem, thinking about all good thoughts, words and deeds and throwing out all bad thoughts, words and deeds.

In Paras 14 to 17, the formula changes. It is not now arithmetical or quantitative (like one equal to 10, 100, 1000, 10000 as formerly.) It now becomes qualitative.

Which ONE Ashem is equivalent to the whole Khaniratha Keshvar? That is the question. (Para 14). Khaniratha Keshvar means a certain continent in Nature, which has our earth within it. Loosely paraphrased, the question is which ONE Ashem has the effect as large as the whole of that continent? Or which ONE Ashem is that powerful as to go around the whole of the great continent: Khanirath Keshvar?

Daadaar Ahuramazda answers: That Ashem is the ONE which is recited by a person **at the last moment of his or her life (i.e. while dying!)** (Para 15).

And the last question is tremendous:

Which ONE Ashem is equivalent to all things lying or going round between the land below and the sky above;

Which is equivalent to all the Light spread out between the land and the sky, and

Which is equivalent to all the creation emanating from Asha-Chithra and Vohu-Chithra.

Daadar answers: That Ashem is the ONE which is chanted by a person, who has completely freed himself from all evil thoughts, words and deeds i.e. all the Druj in him or her is alchemised to Gava, which means he or she has reached the stature of a Nar-Asavan or Nairi Ashavan. (Para 18)

My dear reader! You must have understood that all this is coded language and it contains much more than the surface appearance. But one thing is certain: you are asked to recite one Ashem while eating food (1 = 10), while drinking Haoma water (from Yazashney or Vendidad Kriya) (1 = 100), while changing sides in sleep (1 = 1000), and while waking up for the day (1 = 10000). Genuine Haoma water is not available today; never mind, say one Ashem while drinking ordinary water.

I shall now try to decipher a little - very very little - the Truths contained in this curiously wonderful Hadokhta Nusk.

- Cherag

(Parsi Pukar May-June '99 Vol. 4; No. 11-12)

WE CONCLUDE OUR JOURNEY IN THE GOLDEN RIVER OF ASHEM VOHU.

HAVE USHTA, TREAD THE PATH OF ASHA AND REACH VOHUMAN

We have sailed long in the wonderful and beautiful river of the small prayer of ASHEM VOHU. We are seated in the small boat of our own mind. A cool breeze is blowing on our face and filling up the white sail of our heart mounted on the mast of Ilm-e-Khshnoom, the Divine Knowledge of our Din. The river seems to us as a small serene flow of sparkling water. We know, it is only a small branch of a mighty gush coming out of a huge Manthric mountain. We are looking around. Lush green woods and forests are passing us on both sides as we stream. A herd of grazing cows look at us from far away. Colourful birds are singing to mother nature some mysterious melodies and the trees seem to be listening with ecstasy, trying to join in the music with their own humming. Did we not see those three hugely lotus flowers radiating with divine beauty - the flowers of **Asha, Vohuman and Ushta?**

Ashem Vohu! The Prayer of thousand melodies woven in 12 words! Throb your heart in devotion! Don't you hear the hidden Voice of Ahuramazada singing to you from far away? "I am with you", His Melody Whispers, "I am your heart throb; I am the tide and ebb in the stormy ocean of your mind; I am the Beauty; swim fast towards me; I am waiting for you because I love you; my Atash of Ushta is glittering in you. I have placed an Athravan in you to keep the fire constantly burning in the chamber of your heart. That Athravan is Asho Zarathushtra. He has my Truth and my Manthra on His tongue. Look for Him; be acutely conscious of His presence in you, and leave the rest to Him. One small whispering call to Him and He will rise before you like a shining cloud of My Light. He is already there, waiting to hear your tiny heart throb. "Let 'Ashem Vohu' be your call to Him and Me...."

What is the Message of Ashem Vohu? There are three lotus-flowers blooming in the river of our life: Asha, Vohuman, Ushta. They occur in this order, in Ashem Vohu. To have a clearer idea, let us change the order: Ushta, Asha, Vohuman. Let Ushta awaken in us and keep ever awake, every moment of our life. That is the first basic line of this Raga. 'Devotion' is the simplest meaning of Ushta; but it does not convey the full lustre of the word. It does indicate love and attraction towards the divine i.e. Ahuramazda, Asho Zarathushtra and the Din. But that is just the flutter of a leaf on a huge tree. There was one Parsi Scholar very well versed in the West-Oriented Studies of our Religion, the late **Khodabux Poonegar, who propounded that the word 'Ushta' has the root "Us" "to burn", and it meant "bliss"**. Another Parsi Scholar Dr Irach Taraporewala gave the root: "to illumine" and the meaning: "Illumination"! Burn yourself and get illuminated! Burn for what?... Burn in separation Separation from Him....

We are all separated from Him. 'We' means our Ruvan. It is away from Him to alchemise the 'druj' ('dravaao', Raethva) attached to it and that element of darkness and ignorance is undergoing the active process of alchemisation : druj to Gava, darkness to Light. It is a long path; but at every step Ahuramazda is silently with us. His divine presence is in the Beauty around us and wherever His Truth is being proclaimed. He is present in our happiness and our misery. He Himself is Ushta all the way. His bliss is with us all the way.

That Ushta leads us to the Path of Asha, the purity of body, mind, thoughts, words, and actions. The Path of Asha is the Path of the Din - Erezooosh Patho - the Path of the Truth. Therefore the third line of Ashem Vohu declares that it is incumbent upon the humans to tread the Path of Asha. It is described in Gatha 53-2 as the way prescribed by His Messengers and 'Saoshyant's, leading to Khushnoom, the divine knowledge.

Go on with the journey of life with burning but blissful fire of Ushta and be illuminated. Let the mind be illuminated. Let the darkness of ignorance fade out with the Light of Ushta, Bhakti. When all darkness will vanish, the consciousness will turn towards the divine and the Akoman, the dark mind will be converted to Vohuman, the Illumined Mind - Soochaa Mananghahaa. Therefore the first line of Ashem Vohu proclaims the existence of Ushta, Asha and Vohuman, And the second line declares that Ushta is to him or her who treads

the path of Asha, the Path of Din. Unless the music of Ushta emanates from our life on earth, Asha and Vohuman will not be reached.

So, my dear friend, this is the divine message of the 12 words prayer. 12000 words are not adequate to express the message. Yet it is short, sweet, and vibrant with His music: Follow the Path with Ushta and all the rest will be added unto you.

In our journey through the beauties of Ashem Vohu, we saw Ahuramazda narrating some mysterious equations about one Ashem being equal to 10, 100, 1000 infinity. This mystery of numbers requires separate treatment. We will go into that some other time.

We have then **Yazashney Ha 20, which sets out the deeper truths woven into Ashem Vohu. This is the same Ha we call "Framrot-no-Ha"** ordained to be prayed on the first five of the eighteen Muktaad days. (Roj Aastaad to Aneraan preceding the Gatha). It is a small prayer of 5 paragraphs and 93 words. The first three paras expand the mystical meanings of the three lines of Ashem Vohu; the 4th para says that Ashem Vohu is Mazda's proclamation for both, the physical and divine worlds and leads ordinary humans to the high spiritual stature of an Ashavan. And in the last para the reciter declares his or her attunement with the Manthric Channel of Ashem Vohu flowing in Nature and also with the Staotic (i.e. vibrational) music of Ashem Vohu going round in Nature. Thus the first three paras refer to the meaning and the last *two* to the effect, of Ashem Vohu.

Para 1 declares that Ahuramazda Himself has lovingly spoken Ashem Vohu so as to evolve the humans on the Path of Asha and the first line "Ashem Vohu Vahishtem Asti" has the meaning of leading every human, through the divine consciousness and Yazatic Wisdom, to the final Freedom - Frashogard, and 'Khaetvodath', the Perfection. One, who recites Ashem Vohu and follows the path of Asha, in effect puts into practice the divine Laws of the Din. The Path of Ashoi is traced in the first line of Ashem Vohu and first para of Ha 20.

The second Para of the Ha reveals the mysticism of the second line: "Ushta Asti Ushta Ahmai". Ahuramazda proclaims that Ushta is the ever lasting sublime bliss i.e. the happiness of spiritual peace (and not the so called "abundance" of material things, which are destined to perish). Only that one shall attain Ushta, who is aware of the divine stature of an Ashavan; who is eager to be attuned with an Ashavan; and who is ever immersed in the thought that he or she shall, one day achieve that stature, howsoever far that goal be.

'Nar-Ashavan' or 'Naari Ashavan' is one who have either completely alchemised his or her internal Druja to Gava or who is in complete control of whatever druj is left to be alchemised. That means it is not only a **state of mind** in spite of the infirmities of the body, but also it is a divinely **physical** state where his or her body has actually evolved towards the stage of Ahura's Light. THAT is the evolution every being is headed towards, and not the Darwinian evolution where, as Bernard Shaw put it, a pond of amoeba (primitive life-cells) is supposed to have been converted to an academy of scientists, by sheer accident. The Ashavan is in the process of amalgamating the fragments of his or her Ruvan scattered in the lower kingdoms of animal, vegetable, and mineral. How far he or she has progressed in this amalgamation determines his or her successive stages. That is why Khordad Yashta classifies three stages of 'Ashavan's viz. those with three 'Karsh', six 'Karsh' nine 'Karsh'. Karsh means the expanding orbit of the spiritual stature and power. Between 0 and 3, 3 and 6 and 6 and 9 there are several stages. We the non-saintly humans have to remember that we are at present very near to zero. But Ashem Vohu declares that by the ardent Ushta burning in us, we are sure to reach the stage of Ashavan and, as the first para of Haa 20 declares, the Stage of Ultimate Perfection - **Khaevodath**.

The third para of Haa 20 then declares the message of the third line of Ashem Vohu. It says that Ahura Mazda has commanded the humans to tread the path of Asha, leading to the stature of Ashavan, by maintaining an ardent faith in the Din, its Manthra, and the power of those who are already 'Ashavan's. That is why: Asha IS, Vohuman IS and Ushta IS (Asti). Ushta is the bliss of devotion all the way until the supreme bliss of Ashavan is reached. That Ushta is to her or him who keeps oneself burning in the Ushta of separation, which itself is a phase of the final Ushta.

So, my dear reader, we conclude our journey in the golden river of the 12 worded prayer Ashem Vohu. What a spiritual treasure house it is. Ahuramazda Himself speaks about it and declares its message and efficacy in Hadokhta Nusk and Yazashney Haa 20. In the latter, the word used for Ahuramazda's Proclamation is 'Fraamraot'. "Fraamraot Ahurahey Mazdao" whereas it is "Mraota Ahurahey Mazdao" at other places (e.g. Hormazda Yashta : 1 ; Vendidad 1-1). 'Fra' is a prefix of love as well as progress. Ahuramazda declares with great love the mysteries of Ashem Vohu and its power to progress towards Him.

Let us now finally repeat the message of Ashem Vohu, which you can churn in your mind while reciting it:-

"Ashem Vohu Vahisitem Asti, Ushta Asti"

There is and EXISTS (in Ahura's creation) Asha, Vohuman, Ushta.

"Ushta Ahmai"

Ushta, the spiritual bliss, flows into her or him who follows the path of Asha.

"Hyat Ashaai Vahishtaai Ashem" Therefore it is incumbent on you, oh human being, that you shall follow that path of Asha in life and attain the final freedom.

(see page 1 of 'April 1999 issue).

Let us burn in our devotion to Thee every moment of our life.

Adieu my reader!

Cherag

To Him Through Asha!

"Asha Vahishta, Asha Sraishtha, Deyreysaam Tiwa Pairithwa Jamyaam Hameym Thwa Hakhma".

"Asha" is the best and the most beautiful for taking us to the world of Yazatic Light Hasti, so that,

We shall see Thee Oh Ahura mazda!

We shall reach the Yazatic Light that surrounds Thee, and

We shall reach Thy friendship so as to be one with Thee".

- Hoshbaam

(Parsi Pukar September-October '99 Vol. 5; No. 3-4)