

# **SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBER 5 IN THE ZARATHUSHTRIAN RELIGION**

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5 is one of the significant numbers in the Zarathushtrian religious thought. There are 5 Gahs or periods of a complete day, 5 Gathas of the Zarathushtrian scripture, 5 invisible principles in the human constitution, 5 metallic wires in the performance of Baj ceremony.

## **NUMBER 5 IN ASSOCIATION WITH ANGEL SRAOSHA**

But it is in relation to angel Sraosha that prime importance is accorded to number 5. In any prayer or ceremony in propitiation of Sraosha, always 5 Yatha Ahu Vairyo are recited, and it is significant to note that Sraosha stands for humanity; he is the leader of creations ("Salaar i daamaan"), and the protector of mankind in both the worlds (Larger Sraosha Yasht-25).

Now, number 5 stands midway between 1 and 10 signifying thereby two-fold aspect, one, that man has acquired control over the lower kingdoms, and two, he has to unfold his hidden powers in the course of his spiritual development in order to effect atonement with God. It is in the second aspect that Sraosha plays a significant role in that the aspirant draws an inspiration from the angel Sraosha, who is depicted, as 'daeno diso' or 'the teacher of religion', and in strict obedience to divine commandments, typified by Sraosha, he is well-set towards his attainment of the final objective.

Also, number 5 refers to the fifth principle in the human constitution viz. mind, and to the fifth great race viz. the Aryan race whose progenitor, according to the Avesta, was Gaya Maretan (Farvardin Yasht-87). In the fifth great existing race, there is a considerable development of mental powers as is evidenced by high advances in science and technology. But, it is not a complete development, only lopsided. It is when spiritual faculties are fully developed that mankind will reach the final goal of attunement with the Divine, to achieve which man has to purify himself internally and draw an inspiration from Sraosha who personifies strict obedience to divine commandments.

## **NUMBER 5 SIGNIFIES EVOLUTION**

As we saw above, number 5 standing midway between 1 and 10 signifies that man has yet to evolve spiritually.

Aryan religious systems mostly support the theory of evolution by gradually evolving stages. Thus, according to the Vedantic theory there are five important planes or 'koshas' intervening between matter and God. These are: (1) Annamaya Kosha or matter, (2) Pranamaya Kosha or life, (3) Manomaya kosha or mind, (4) Vijnanmaya Kosha or super mind, and (5) Anandmaya Kosha or soul. Evolution proceeds from matter to life, to mind, to super mind. And at the fourth stage, man, by dint of his supreme piety, may evolve his soul and be attuned to God.

According to the mystic sect of the Ismailis among the Muslims, there are five principles between God and man, viz. (i) universal reason, (ii) universal soul, (iii) matter, (iv) space, and (v) time (A Literary History of Persia - E.G. Browne).

According to the theory of emergent evolution propounded by the English philosopher Samuel Alexander, the five stages of evolution are (i) space and time, (ii) matter, (iii) life, (iv) mind, and (v) deity. He further says that inhabitants at each level may feel that they have free will, while at the level lower than their own, there is a lack of freedom. For example, human beings equipped with mind, may think themselves free, whereas plants and animals at the lower level are not free. Similarly, God at the highest level is perfectly free, but he

finds human beings without freedom (Some Problems of Philosophy - James Jeans).

## **ZARATHUSHTRIAN VIEWPOINT**

According to the Avesta (Farvardin Yasht-149), the five invisible principles in the human constitution are: (1) Ahu or life principle, which makes us aware of the world around, through consciousness, (2) Daena or the inner conscience, (3) Baoda or the discriminative faculty, (4) Urvan or soul and (5) Fravashi or the guardian spirit which serves as the divine guide of the soul. To be in tune with God man is enjoined to follow the dictates of his Fravashi, which acts as the divine monitor and also represents the ideal which the soul has to realize.

Zarathushtrian religion like all other great Religions declare the truth about the spiritual evolution of man, theory of evolution, according to which, man's final goal is to attain perfection and immortality (Haurvatat and Ameretat). And to achieve that objective man is to be attuned to nature, refraining from rampant exploitation of natural bounties, thereby disturbing ecological balance; to put into practice the Zarathushtrian ideal of Frashogard or Renovation; purging the material creations of the evil influences of Druj or Lie, the focal point of all evil and wickedness, in contra-distinction to Asha or Truth, the springboard of all virtues and goodness.

The soul of a holy man (Nara Ashavan) who has realized the highest ideal is merged with his Fravashi, so, in the Avesta, we frequently come across the expression "Iristanam Urvano Yazamaide Yao Ashaunam Fravashayo" that is, "We are attuned to the souls of the dead, who (are) the Fravashis of the holy".

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## **FROM THE TREASURY OF ILM-E-KHSHNOOM**

**Framroze Chiniwalla, in his Khordeh Avesta-ba-Khshnoom, offers the following thought to be passed in mind while reciting 5 Yatha Ahu Vairyo's in Sarosh Baj:**

**I have, within me, a communication line with Ahuramazda. Which I have gained through many a births and lives. It emanates from the unseen oceans of divine energies ("Zareh"s) and moves me towards Him. That motion is in charge of Sarosh, who infuses in my thoughts and in my consciousness a craving for 'Mukti', (Liberation, Salvation, Nirvan, Frashogard). May my communication line with Ahuramazda become more and more energetic, and lead me and my consciousness more and more towards the Divine and the Good, and ever keep me within the protective ring of Sarosh; and ever inspire me to live the life with an earnest longing for selflessness and the Divine.**

**(The communication line is called, "Panj-e-Zarvikashey Baaten". Our five senses, which put us in contact with the world around us is called "Panj-e-Zarvikashey Jhaaher". Jhaaher is external; Baaten is internal. Both are assigned the figure 5.)**

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