

AVAN YAZAD

by Mrs. Pervin J. Mistry

Dear Friends,

Some of you may be interested to read this.

In the Avān Yasht, it is mentioned that those who worshipped Avān Ardivisur Yazad, did so with "100 horses, 1,000 oxen and 10,000 small animals". (Yasht-Ba-Maeni, Kangaji.) This is a standard dedicatory requirement for those who invoke Avān Yazad. Those who worshipped Avān Yazad did so with this standard "gift" of 100, 1,000 and 10,000 different animals.

The questions that arise from the above list of required animal offerings are, why only these specific numbers and not any other, less or more? Why did Avān Yazad accept these gifts from the righteous, such as Hoshang, Jamshed, Kersasp, Kai Kaus, Jamasp, and refused the same "offerings" from Zohak, Afrasiab and Arjasp?

Obviously, a Yazad does not require or need the gifts of animals since Yazads are Spiritual Beings and do not need to eat or, use animals to plough their earthly fields. Therefore, these "gifts" with which Avān Yazad is worshipped must necessarily indicate something mystical and spiritual. Could these specific 3 numbers of animals (100, 1,000, 10,000), mystically indicate qualities of the mind, soul and body? I came across the following explanation in "A Manual of Kshnoom" by Phiroze Nasarvanji Tavarā, assisted by Burjor Ratanji Panthaki. On page 230, it mentions that just as in modern times, qualifying university degrees are used after a person's name to indicate the degree of scholastic learning, these "gifts" of "animals" are expressions that indicate the spiritual degree of development of the devotee whether it be 100 times, 1,000 times, or 10,000 times more than that of other men who are spiritually lesser developed than the sages who could afford these numbers of varied "animals". The 10,000 gifts of "small animals" may be less in substance than 1,000 "oxen"; and, 100 "horses" may be more worthy and precious than the other gifts of larger numbers. Horses indicate the power of thought and therefore the 100 horses could indicate the spiritual attainment of the devotee as to how far and swiftly such thoughts would travel and what strength or force of materializing the "thoughts", giving them shape and form, the devotee had mastered.

Further, the author rightly points out that there is no such word as "heads" of 100, 1,000 or 10,000 animals mentioned as "offerings" in the Avān Yasht! The word "heads" is unnecessarily added by some Western philologists and then copied from them by some Parsi scholars. In the actual Avestan prayer, it is only mentioned that such and such personage worshipped Avān Yazad with 100 horses, 1,000 oxen and 10,000 small animals! No sacrifice and no "heads" of animals as sacrifice are mentioned! This is confirmed when we pray and recite these karda(s) (11.41, 12.45, 15.57, 17.68, 18.72, 27.116), and read the translation of the true students of the Sacred Avesta who do not alter our sacred scriptures by adding such words where none are mentioned in the original scriptures.

Certainly, Avān Yazad granted boons only to those who worshipped Her with piety, purity of body, mind and soul, and with proper Manthra as well as Yasna, to gain spiritual gifts and blessings! Avān Yazad did not grant Zohak, Afrasiab and Arjasp their wishes because although they were also advanced in their mental capabilities, they were using their powers for unrighteousness, for promoting vices, for harming and destroying the good creations of Ahura Mazda. These personages were progressing on the path of unrighteousness. They did not qualify spiritually and their gifts were not accepted by Avān Yazad.

Again, to compare with the above, I read in "In Search of Divine Light", by Behram D. Pithavals, Part 2, page 368, that "I, therefore, construe the offerings given to Pak Avan Yazad as detailed in the Yasht as typifying complete dedication to Her of whatever evolutionary progress the devotee has made till that date, spiritually (horse), psychically (i.e. in thoughts and emotions: oxen) and physically (small animals), in return for a very specific boon asked for."

The numeral 1 (one) stands for the Lord Almighty _ Ahura Mazda, who is the Supreme Ruler and Creator of the Universe. 0 (zero) indicates the height of perfection as representing infinity, without a beginning or end, and suggests going back to the source. The numbers from 0 to 10 have specific meanings and the number 10 indicates the highest attainable perfection. While the righteous Kings and Sages had perfected their spiritual powers for righteousness, Zohak and others whose boons were not granted had attained to the strength of thought or perfection for the wrong path, the path of evil. The very word, "Azidahak" (or Zohak), indicates that "azi" means snake; "dahak" means the numeral ten; consequently, Azidahak or Zohak had attained perfection in every evil thought, word and deed. Therefore, the numbers 100, 1,000 and 10, 000 are mystic and not to be taken as actual numbers of horses, oxen or animals.

It is also very suggestive that Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarathushtra did not worship Avan Yazad with these gifts for the boons which They asked. There was no reason for Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarathushtra to offer 100, 1,000 or 10,000 of anything that was required from Them by Avan Yazad! Ahura Mazda is the Supreme Creator of Everything, and of All Beings! Avan Yazad was created by Ahura Mazda Himself and hence, when it came to granting "gifts", no entity, not even Spiritual Beings can give to Ahura Mazda anything more or apart from what He Himself has given to Them! Symbolically, Ahura Mazda worships Avan Yazad, His Own "Daughter", with Baresman, Hom mixed with Jivam and with the Holy Manthra and Yasna and asks for the specific boon in return that Asho Zarathushtra will think, speak and act in conformity with His Religion that He Himself reveals to Asho Zarathushtra. Similarly, Asho Zarathushtra also worships Avan Yazad with the Holy Manthra, Yasna, Hom, Jivam, Baresman and, the boon that Asho Zarathushtra asks is to lead King Vistashp on the Path of His Revealed Mazdayasni Zarathushti Religion. Instead of "asking" for boon, this suggests more like members of a family coming together to help in performing an important task. Here, Avan Yazad, as one of the Spiritual Beings created by Ahura Mazda, is asked to aid Ahura Mazda's and Asho Zarathushtra's Divine Aim and Mission in bringing about Farshogard at the Divinely Appointed Hour by helping the righteous to advance faster and further with the help of the symbolic numeral 10 and the varied "animals".

This is what I read and wanted to share with you all. The other books I read, written by Dr. Faramroz Chiniwalla and others, also conform to these views and teachings.

Sincerely,

Pervin.

(Mrs. Pervin J. Mistry)