

Ardibehesht Yasht

Through Fire do we approach Thee, O Ahura Mazda! (Yasna 36.1)

Introduction:

Ardibehesht is the Pahlavi name for the Avestan Asha Vahishta. Ardibehesht Ameshaspand presides over the Creation of Fire. Fire is the most perfect and unadulterated reflection, in the Spiritual World as on Earth, of the One Eternal Flame. It is the origin and the end of every material thing. It is the Divine Substance; it is heat, light, motion and intellect! Yasna 17.11 mentions Fire not only in its visible forms, but also in its invisible forms. The Invisible or Spiritual Fire is the Cosmic Energy, the Divine Light of Ahura Mazda pervading every atom of the Universe, transmuting matter to spirit, ultimately realizing the Goal of Frashogard.

Yasna 31.7 states that Creation began with Ahura Mazda's First Thought. He first thought of creating the Heavenly Realms filled with Light! Additionally, Yasna 29.7 reveals that Ahura Mazda framed the Holy Manthra through Asha! Holy Manthra is the Divine Word, "Ahunavar", whose consequential resonances manifested as "staot", the science of colors, sound, light, numbers and shapes. "Asha" indicates the Immutable Laws of Nature which are the result of the First Thought/Light, in charge of Asha Vahishta (Yasna 54). As established, the Word/Sound (Manthra) is produced by the Primordial Thought/Light of Ahura Mazda. The Ardibehesht Yasht emphasizes the interrelationship of light and sound as forms of energy. Thunder and lightening are a simple example of how light and sound are unified.

That Fire is related to sound or speech is also evident from the Atash Niyayesh, karda 4, wherein it is stated that Atash grants wisdom and "fluent tongue". Therefore, both light and sound are interrelated as thought is to word. Asha Vahishta, as the Spiritual Fire, or "Light" of Ahura Mazda, is also the transmitter of Sound, the Holy Manthra. Behind the Holy Word, is the Primordial Thought, the Blue Print of Creation, and the Thinker of that Thought is the Creator, Ahura Mazda! According to Farvardin Yasht, karda 22, Manthra Spenta is the Soul of Ahura Mazda! Hence, it can be established that Fire is the Primordial Thought of Ahura Mazda! Manthra Spenta is His Soul and the manifested Universe is His Physical Body, His Deed!

While the Atash Niyayesh contains portions of the Ahunavad Gatha embedded in the Staot Yasht Nask, the Ardibehesht Yasht forms a portion of the Bagan Nask which is also one of the 21 Nasks, revealed by Ahura Mazda to Asho Zarathushtra. The 21 Nasks are based on the 21 "staot" (Cosmic Resonances) of the sacred Ahunavar Manthra. The Ardibehesht Yasht is a part of the Bagan Nask which contains 16 extant Yashts preserved in the Avesta. **Although the language of the Gathas may differ from the language of the Yashts, it is important to note that the Gathas, Yashts, the entire 72 chapters of the Yasna, as well as the Visperad and Vendidad form segments of the original 21 Nasks which together comprise the Sacred Avesta! The source of the Gathas, Yashts, Yasna, Vendidad and Visperad is the same!**

Ardibehesht Yasht: We always start our prayers by offering homage to Ahura Mazda who is the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient Lord of Creation! We begin by reciting, "*Khshnaoثرa Ahurahe Mazdao. Ashem Vohu I*". Meaning, may I be worthy of pleasing Ahura Mazda with my

propitiation! Some may call into question that if Ahura Mazda is the Supreme Creator and we are mere mortals, how will the Creator Ahura Mazda be pleased by us? The answer is that Ahura Mazda will be pleased when the Divine Event of Frashogard is achieved! This will happen when we 1) achieve mastery over our physical senses; 2) attain to spiritual wisdom through conscious exertion of converting evil (Angre-Mainyu) to good (Spenta-Mainyu) by **obeying the Laws of the Religion**, and 3) subsequently celebrate the Pre-Ordained Divine Event of Frashogard!

When we pray 1 Ashem Vohu we consciously try and put into practice the rules of “ashoi” which include practicing the prescribed rules of purity of thoughts, words and deeds pertaining to the body, mind and soul. The manthra of Ashem Vohu contain two very important words, “ashoi” and “ushta”. “Ushta”, commonly translated as “happiness” or “good health”, does not, in any way, refer to material prosperity or physical health alone. True, everlasting “ushta” is attained only when Vohu Mano (Divine Consciousness or Ashoi) enters the mind and through Asha Vahishta the spiritual state is regained after matter or the physical body is transformed to spirit or the energy body of light called “tan-pasin”. In a mystic sense, it is the separation from Ahura Mazda that prevents real “ushta”; conversely, merging with Him gives immortal bliss or spiritual ecstasy. Therefore, the true, everlasting “ushta” is attained when the physical body becomes one with the spiritual Fravashi and individually we attain to Frashogard. Similarly, when the physical world, “gaethya” merges with its original source, the “mainyava” or the spiritual world, universal Frashogard will be realized and the Divine Aim of Creation will be fulfilled. The end is Joy, everlasting “Ushta”! This is the message of Ashem Vohu recited after offering veneration to Ahura Mazda. By offering our small share of hastening the Divine Event of Frashogard we please the Creator and increase “asha” and “ushta” in this world!

We continue to recite, “*Pa name yazdan Ahura Mazda Khodae awazuni gorge khoreh awazayad*”; We begin by remembering and paying homage to the Creator Ahura Mazda and desire that through righteous actions, may we be worthy of attaining to and increasing the Khoreh (Splendor and Glory) of the Creator Ahura Mazda.

Then the Ameshaspand Asha Vahishta (Ardibehesht) is propitiated and supplicated to come to our help. When we recite the words, “*az hama gunah payet pashemanum; az harvastin dushmata, duzhukhta, duzvarshata; mem pa geti manid, oem goft, oem kard, oem bun bud ested. Az an gunah, manashni, gavashni, kunashni tani ravani geti minoani*”, we ask forgiveness for the past sins committed and pledge to abstain from all unrighteous thoughts, words and deeds pertaining to the body, mind and soul, sins affecting this world and the world beyond. We continue by reciting the “fravarane mazdayasno” portion. The devotee praises righteousness and professes to be a worshipper of Hormazd by following the rules of the Religion revealed by His Prophet Asho Zarathushtra. The devotee promises to act according to the Laws of Ahura Mazda which are the Immutable Laws of Asha in charge of Asha Vahishta (Ardibehesht)! We recite the Gah in which we worship Ardibehesht Ameshaspand together with Airyaman and Saok Yazads and ask for the boon that a wise “teacher” may reveal to us the true meaning of Yatha Ahu Vairyo, i.e. Ahura Mazda’s Divine Aim, Will, Law, Order, and Justice.

Ahura Mazda reveals to Asho Zarathushtra that for the invocation and worship of us, the Ameshaspands, Ardibehesht Ameshaspand should be regarded as the invoker, extoller, glorifier and revealer of all the good shining lights (Fire) and brilliant works (i.e. Creation of the

Universe)! Asha Vahishta is the nourisher of the Universe because all that exists is due to heat, light, motion, resonance, all combined as the Divine Spirit of Ahura Mazda, which is Fire in all its manifold forms! Indeed, Asha Vahishta (Ardibehesht), as Ahura Mazda's Divine Energy, permeates and sustains every atom and particle in the Universe, guiding the entire creation to the Pre-Ordained Divine Event of Frashogard!

It is further revealed that those who tread the Path of Righteousness and worship Ardibehesht, worship all the Ameshaspands who are united with Ahura Mazda's Thoughts, Words and Deeds. Such devotees attain to the Highest Heaven which is Garothman! None of the unrighteous go to Garothman or can stand in the Presence of Ahura Mazda's Divine Light! It is believed that after leaving this Earth, the soul of the righteous goes to the place of Best Existence (Garothman) and the soul of the unrighteous goes to the place of darkness. (We find similar statements in the Hadokht Nask, fargard 2 and 3, and in the Vendidad, fargard 19.) The words "*yim paiti Mazdao humtaish, yim paiti Mazdao hukhtaish, yim paiti Mazdao Hvarshtaish*" indicate unity with the Thoughts, Words and Deeds of Ahura Mazda. These words may also refer to the three steps or stations, *star-paya, mah-paya* and *khorsheed-paya* through which the soul of the righteous passes to Garothman, after *chahrum*.

Asho Zarathushtra further inquires of Ahura Mazda as to which is the best Prayer with which to worship and invoke Ardibehesht Ameshaspand. The answer is that the prayer of "Airyaman Ishyo" (Yasna 54) is the Greatest and the Holiest of the Holy Spells with which to propitiate Ardibehesht Ameshaspand. It is emphasized that the manthra recited in praise of Airyaman Yazad "is the best for healing and is the most healing of the Holy Manthras". Airyaman Yazad drives away deceit and ignorance from the mind which is inevitably bound by the two opposing principles, Angre-mainyu and Spenta-mainyu, which are created essentially by the interaction of spirit and matter in this physical world. "Saoka" Yazad is also worshipped together with Airyaman Yazad. "Soak" denotes activity of the mind, that is, the brilliance of wisdom. Both Airyaman and Saoka Yazads are co-workers of Ardibehesht (Asha Vahishta) and represent Spiritual Illumination, quality possessed by Atash, as also specified in Atash Niyayesh. Atash is intimately connected with "fluent tongue" ("*khshviwrem hizvam urune ushi*", Atash Niyayesh .4), indicating Atash to be synonymous with Spiritual Enlightenment (good thoughts) as well as speech (good words) - the inevitable result of good thoughts and words leads to good deeds!

Further, it is revealed that the potent manthra contained in the Airyaman Prayer defeats Angre Mainyu! It is deemed meritorious to pray the Ardibehesht Yasht after reciting Yasna 54, the Airyanam Ishyo Prayer. Ardibehesht Yasht adds that "the daeva of deceit, Angre Mainyu, full of death, ran away from Asha Vahishta shrieking that the sacred verse of ASHEM VOHU has the Divine Power to smite and vanquish me, Angre Mainyu"! Ashem Vohu and Asha Vahishta are like the two sides of a coin; **Ashem Vohu is total purity, and Asha Vahishta/Atash is the purifier of all things.** Yasna 20 is the Avesta commentary on the small Ashem Vohu prayer; it specifies that Ashem Vohu is called "bagha Ashahe Vahishtahe" and the manthra contained in this prayer adds to the power of Asha Vahishta.

The Ardibehesht Yasht lays great emphasis on Fire being interrelated to manthra or sound. That light and sound are the functions of waves of energy manifesting at different

frequencies is a scientific fact revealed by our Paigambar Saheb and known to our ancestors, thousands of years ago! Our ancestors knew the correspondence between Divine Light manifesting in the physical world as Atash, and the Primordial Sound manifesting as Manthra. Sound is also spiritual/occult; it relates to frequencies, numbers and spectrum. Manthra is composed of sound, not mundane words; it embodies celestial harmony, or cosmic resonances. It is said that "Sound" is the key to the most potent and effectual power in Nature because it transcends space-time continuum and opens the door of communion between mortals and the Divine World. The two: light and sound, are inseparable, is proven by scientists who "hear" stars, that is, they transform the light coming from a particular luminary object into sound. Conversely, Ultra-Sound and MRI X-rays show images through the medium of sound. The Holy Avesta emphasizes this interrelationship of light and sound by stating that both light and sound are at the root of all manifestation. The Holy Avesta teaches that the Universe became manifest through the resonance of "Ahunavar" which was conceived in Ahura Mazda's Wisest Mind as a result of His First Thought (Light)! Word or sound is but the vocalization of thought. This proves that Asha Vahishta/Atash, as Divine Energy/Light, is irrefutably connected to Manthra or Spiritual Sound – both being energies, as accentuated in this Yasht!

As energies, both Light and Sound heal, is a fact. Radiation, laser are used for healing ailments as well as sound therapy is used to destroy kidney stones, and cure certain mental illnesses. Therefore, the utterance of Holy Manthra is also a spiritual cure for diseases. **The Ardibehesht Yasht mentions five kinds of healers or doctors.** "*Asho-baeshazo*", healing can be done through purificatory rites wherein the inner pollution is driven away through nirang and holy ablution, i.e. bareshnoom and naahn. "*Dato-baeshazo*", healing is also done through justice by upholding the laws of the religion as well as civic and moral laws. "*Kareto-baeshazo*", surgeons also heal through surgery. That plants also heal "*urvaro baeshazo*" is also mentioned. These are the physicians who know the healing properties of plants (ayurveda). Finally, the most efficacious healing of body, mind and soul is attributed to piety, spirituality and the utterance of manthra, "*manthro-baeshazo*". That healing must begin from within is an old Avestic teaching. One who heals by means of reciting the holy manthra, "*manthro-baeshazo*" is considered as the best healer because he heals completely, the inner and the outer, the physical and the spiritual parts of the body. He heals the body, mind and the soul, all combined to create the perfect and lasting cure through the Sacred Manthra.

Since we are an integral part of the Universe, Divine Consciousness (Vohu Mano) and Divine Light (Asha Vahishta) are innately within us, functioning through the 3 spiritual, immortal principles (fravashi, baodh, and urvan). These spiritual principles are linked to the physical through "mind" which, through choice, becomes the vehicle of either Angre-mainyu or Spenta-mainyu. Subsequently, the words we utter are the product of our thought, and it is the thought or "mind" wherein the "seeds" of good or evil come to fruition. **The Ardibehesht Yasht draws our attention to the 3 most destructive "seeds" which hinder spirituality.** They are: "*azi-chithra*", "*vehrko-chithra*", and "*bizangro-chithra*". "*Azi-chithra*", means "seeds of snakes"; "*vehrko-chithra*" means "seeds of wolves"; and, as food for thought, "*bizangro-chithra*" means "seeds or tendencies of evil/wicked biped"! The fact that "man" (biped) is placed beside snakes and wolves indicates that the disposition of mankind can be as destructive when he chooses to be vile. Snakes and wolves are synonymous to being vicious, selfish and cunning, as is man when he so chooses. The only distinction between man and animals is that man alone is endowed with

speech. When a man utters an evil word, the effect created in Nature by the ensuing sound, is irreversible. Man alone has the ability to vocalize manthra. Man alone is responsible for his thoughts, words and actions, and when man chooses to be wicked, he is the most dangerous of all animals! Ardibehesht Yasht, therefore, emphasizes that the utterance of efficacious manthra promote spirituality because during such passage of time while manthra are recited, the door of the soul opens to commune with the Divine. This helps the mind to drive away dormant or active "seeds" of destruction germinating in the dual principles of human mentality! In addition, manthra promote spirituality by fructifying and nurturing the spiritually beneficent "seeds" in the warmth of spiritual light generated by potent "staot" through sublime thoughts of devotion. Through prayers, Spenta-mainyu is strengthened.

The three evil "seeds" and the consequential outcome on the disposition of humans who harbor and nurture these are dealt with in detail in the Ardibehesht Yasht. This awareness regarding the gravity of promoting these "seeds" to culminate is mentioned in this Yasht because as a purifier, it is Atash/Asha Vahishta who alchemizes every "seed" originating from "Angre-mainyu" to ultimately become purified to embody Spenta-mainyu. Empirical science acknowledges that certain sound/vibes are soothing; relaxing music productively affects plant growth and also affects the brain waves in humans. Our ancestors were not so "unscientific" when they maintained that sound produced by holy, sacred manthra has the ability to destroy the incorporeal "druj" in its innumerable forms! By uttering the manthra of this Yasht, by knowing why and what we are praying, we become aware of the existing "druj" in various forms and thereafter become successful in consciously driving away false notions from our mind. The cure for ailment (mental, moral and physical) is also given; and the first step to permanently cure ailments is through the recitation of manthra whose spiritual sound enables the soul to dispense holistic cure from within.

Ardibehesht Yasht emphatically states that one who heals by means of reciting the manthra is best among all healers because the cure is effected from within, from the soul itself. It proves the adage, "mind over matter". The "seeds" of righteousness also come to fruition within us if we listen to our inner voice of consciousness, the voice of Sarosh Yazad. He dwells in the silent chamber of our heart (soul) and is called "*takhmahe tanu manthrahe*" (manthra incarnate). This indicates that spiritual manthra are inherently present within us; embedded within the silent chamber of our soul; we merely have to connect our spiritual soul to the Soul of Ahura Mazda (Manthra Spenta), through the prescribed disciplines and utterances of manthric prayers. The Path of Righteousness, the Path to Asha is an inward Path, attained through the inner voice of Sarosh Yazad (soul-consciousness). The most potent weapon against Angre-mainyu is Divine Sound/Manthra. The profound message of this Yasht is that just as a doctor fills out prescriptions for patients, prayers/manthra are our spiritual medication which will heal us from within, i.e. heal our inner self so we may become spiritually perfected.

Together with the words, "seeds of wolves, snakes and wicked men", the other words which keep repeating are, "apa-dvarata", "jainti", "janat", "tbaeshayat" and "nasyat" meaning perish, smite, vanquish, destroy and cease to exist. The devotee prays that all "druj" in the form of untimely death, sickness, heretics, oppressors, anger, bad thoughts words, deeds, proud people, slanderers, tyrants, jealous people, liars, sorcerers, demons, deceitful people, cold winds from the North ("apakhtar") may vanish together with the broods of snakes, wolves and wicked men.

Asha Vahishta smites all these manifold “druj” and the devotee entreats Asha Vahishta to accept the offering of prayer and destroy the evil army of Angre-mainyu, a thousand times, thousand and ten thousand times, ten thousand of these broods of wicked men, women and demons! “Angre-mainyu”, the Demon of Deceit, full of death, ran away from Asha Vahishta howling that the Prayer of Asha Vahishta will smite and kill the sickliest of the sicknesses of mine, the deadliest of the deadly, the foremost daevas amongst the daevas, the most unholy apostates and the most oppressive of the oppressors of men!

At the end of the Yasht we recite the usual kardas, beginning with, “Haomayo.... vaghziyo”, meaning, we salute “the haomi”, who performs ritual of ijeshne with the offerings of baresman, milk, truthfulness, devotion, piety, purity and chants the Holy Manthra with the “skill of tongue” (memorized manthra). This is followed by the recital of “Yenghe Hatam” wherein we revere and remember all the holy men and women for their righteous deeds. Then we recite in murmur the Pazand karda, “Hormazd Khodae, awazunie, mardum..... neki rasanad aedun bad.” (Yatha Ahu Vairyo 2.) We pay homage to the Bountiful Creator and plead to become steadfast on the Religious Path by gaining complete (esoteric) knowledge of the Religion. We conclude by praying that may I be worthy of and achieve the knowledge and goodness of the Religion! May it be so!

This is followed by “Yasnemcha vahmemcha.... Mazdadhatayao ashaonyao. Ashem Vohu 1.” The devotee praises Ahura Mazda’s creation of the Most Excellent Asha Vahishta who is the Guardian in charge of Ashoi, aided by Airyaman Yazad who safeguards the most efficacious Holy Spells and Saok Yazad, who watches over Spiritual Illumination.

Then we recite the set of Ahmai Raescha, Hazangrem, Jasame Avanghe Mazda and Kerfeh Mozd prayers. After the karda of Roz nek naam, we recite the standard dedicatory formula, “Gorje khoreh avazayad..... man ano avayad shudan, Ashaone Ashem Vohu 1”, wishing for the glory and power of Ardibehesht Ameshaspand to increase and entreating Ardibehesht to come to our help in order to defeat the druj created by Angre-mainyu. **For an explanation of “kaft keshvar” please read the attached file.**

We end the Yasht by facing the south, praying, “Dadare gehan dine...”, venerating the Mazdayasni Zarathushti Religion and the Laws of the Religion proclaimed by Asho Zarathushtra as revealed to him by Ahura Mazda, the Creator of the Universe! We offer homage to the chaste, undefiled Ardvisur Anahita and to the holy life-giving Tree created by Ahura Mazda! We praise Asha Vahishta, full of Radiance, and express the yearning to unite with the Laws of Ashoi. We again entreat Asha Vahishta (Ardibehesht Ameshaspand) to come to our aid.

The Nirang of Ardibehesht Ameshaspand is in Pazand and is to be recited 3 times. We worship the Creator and the Keeper of the World who is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent and also the Nourisher; He is the Producer and Doer of Meritorious Deeds – the Overseer of all! We declare that Ahriman is nothing whatsoever; is ignorant and cannot succeed in doing any harm to the good creation. Hormazd is the Creator, Ahriman the destroyer. The Creator is Holy and Ahriman is wicked. May Ahriman be overpowered, may he be driven far away, defeated, vanquished and overcome forever! The foremost Religion is the Pak Mazdayasni Zarathushti

Religion; Hormazd is Exalted, Powerful, Creator and the Increaser! Thus ends the Ardibehesht Yasht.

Conclusion: Genuine prayer is the calling or invoking into oneself of a portion of Divine Consciousness because in prayer (piety), through manthra, one opens the inner door (soul) to the reception of the Divine Guest one communes with. Yasna 30.1 specifies that efficacious manthra is best for spirituality, which is attained by “*yasna*”, through “*staotacha ahurai*” (Ahura Mazda’s Own Spiritual Language of “*staot*”). On the other hand, if an individual prays five times a day but fails to live by the prescribed tenets, such prayers are not “heard” or accepted by the Divine since “*mithra*” (thought) and “*manthra*” in such instances become divergent. Consequently, such weak “*staot*” are ineffectual to create productive reciprocal resonances in the Spiritual World. The Avesta, especially the Avan Yasht, mentions several instances wherein such prayers have not been answered. The Avesta is our most sacred, priceless legacy; please, let us not abandon it, desecrate it, or alter it, because we do not understand it. Let us preserve it with faith and dedication.

“Bi bandegi, zindegi sharmindgist”, without prayers, life is insignificant!

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