

A COMMUNITY THAT PRAYS. . . .

Today on our Earth, man has forgotten himself, woman has forgotten herself, humanity has forgotten itself, and..... Parsis have forgotten themselves.

Because all of them have forgotten Dharma, Daena, Religion.

To forget Daena means to forget communication with God. The Only way to communicate with Him is Prayer. We have lost our capacity to pray.

For a Parsi, Prayer is the attunement with Ahuramazda and Yazats, the Channels of His Divine Light, through Manthra.

Since two centuries, the majority of humans on the globe have discarded God. They are drifted away by their own ego. They exerted hard to find out, through their disoriented intellect, the "natural" (i.e. Godless) laws" governing the atom, monkey, and man's mind, and have failed miserably in finding all the three. Truth and Reality are more elusive to-day than they were at the start of these exertions. But alas! In the process, all that man did was to display himself as the cruelest killer, destroyer and slaughterer, and a cancerous virus on the body of the Mother-Earth. His was an insane rush towards money, sex and power. To own the gadgets of sensual and material pleasures and the brutal weapons of destruction and *torture*, was the only aim of life. Knowing fully well that his behaviour brings his own doomsday nearer and nearer, he persists in it obstinately and steadfastly.

That is the key to his forgetting God and Prayer. **"The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray"**, said Leonard Ravenhill about Americans. It is true for the humans.... and the Parsis.

The affluent Parsis do not pray. The middle class Parsis want to pray, yet they pray a little; they say, 'we don't find time'. The poor Parsis pray more in the midst of their poverty. But there is another class, "the self righteous" as pointed out by Ravenhill. They present their alleged righteousness as an excuse for not praying. They say they have "Vohuman", i.e. good mind and therefore they don't need prayers and for that matter any religious discipline. All Dharma's including Zarthoshti Daena declare in most emphatic terms that human mind is not Vohuman; it is Akoman, (let us say "Woe-human") full of the faults and infirmities of the flesh. All it can 'pray', if at all, would be just selfish demands or self-affected babbles. These vohuman boasters, like all humans, do display their Akoman behaviour in sufficient quantity.

It is high time every member of the Parsi Community prays, and prays through Khordeh Avesta Manthra. This humble Parsi Pukar has in most of its previous issues furnished adequate materials on the different phases and aspects of Manthra prayers; their vibratory composition, their efficacy within us and outside us, the

levels of meanings concealed in them and the message of knowledge, works and Devotion (Gnyan, Karma and Bhakti) contained in them.

We are not on this earth only to eat, drink and be merry. Our stay here is temporary. We are in a Musafirkhana, travellers' inn, for a short time. We are away from our home for a purpose and with an aim, so tersely and beautifully expressed in four words, "Nearer to Thee my Lord!" Our only communication with our home and our God is Prayer. And the best way for a Parsi to pray is through Avesta Manthra. It is vitally needed not only as a spiritual exercise for an individual Parsi, but also as an effective instrument of survival of the whole community. They say, a family that prays together stays together. We may add, a community that prays, stays.

Manthra Prayer is a Divine Alchemy; it washes away our sins and faults; it alchemises the rust of our devilish selfishness to the gold of Godly selflessness. It converts the snatching wolf within us into a giving cow. It strengthens our inner self to bear the Karmic calamities and sprinkles the water of His grace on the parched soil of our psyche. It transforms the worm of doubt into a butterfly of devotion.

Kushti is our shortest prayer. There are other Prayers to be compulsorily chanted everyday - "Farajyat" like sarosh Baj, Gah and Khorshed- Meher Niyaishes.

There are several other additional Prayers. Be a prayer addict in the midst of your worldly duties. Pray with fervour. Great miracles are in store for you.

An humble suggestion! After finishing your Manthra Prayer, howsoever short or long, emanate the following thoughts from your mind: -

"Oh Ahuramazda! Oh Asho Zarathushtra! Our heart felt gratitude to You that You have kept the flickering flame of our Faith burning in our hearts, even in the midst of the stormy winds of materialism.

Give us energy to infuse in our lives the Commands of your Daena. When we fail and fall, give us strength to do Patet (repent) and to bear with a smiling face the Karmic reactions of our sins.

Our plight is becoming unbearable, day by day Oh Lord! Send Your Saoshyant and Saviours, soon."

- Editor

THE MESSAGE AND MUSIC OF MANTHRA - PRAYERS.

From the "Introduction" to Khordeh Avesta baa Khshnoom"

by Faramroze Chiniwalla

English Rendering by K. Navroz.

[Note: Dr. Saheb Faramroze S. Chiniwalla has, in his masterly Introduction to his priceless Book "Khordeh Avesta baa Khshnoom", explained why a Parsi's Prayer must of necessity be the Avesta Manthra. We have published the translation of some of the important parts from that Introduction. Here is the concluding part. The points covered so far can be summarised as under:

1. Prayer is for the mind and soul, as the food is for the body.
2. The elements of Prayer are: Faith, devotion, obedience, thanksgiving, towards Ahura, Asho Zarthushtra and the Daena; truth, Meher, Patience, humility, tolerance, love, service, resistance to evil, Patet. And the Foundation of all these elements is the Manthra Prayer.
3. Man is a mixture of good and evil. The cow of serene selflessness and the wolf of hard-core selfishness both reside in Man. The wolf is to be resisted, conquered and converted. Prayer is the weapon.
4. Manthra Prayers are structured and composed on the basis of Staota Yasna, the art and science of Vibrations – from Ahura's divinest Light to the coarsest of inert matter.
5. Manthra Prayer is the alchemy of the evil within into good, a powerful weapon to generate spiritual energy for resisting the ten enemies within and the satanic forces without.
6. The faulty mind prays for selfish ends. The polluted thoughts by themselves have no ability to pray.

7. Manthra is a Doctor's prescription to cure the illness of the flesh. Drink deep the medicine and dissolve the disease.

8. Manthra Prayers must be recited strictly according to the set Rules.

9. Have some glimpses of the inner meanings of the Manthra Prayers and gyrate them in your mind while reciting.

In the concluding part that follows, Dr. Saheb Faramroze defines three elements of devotion and three modes of chanting the Manthra; and expounds inter-alia on the music of Sudreh-Kushti, the functions of Niyash and Yashta and the meanings of Hutokhsha, the servant; Vastrayosh, the farmer; and Ratheystar, the warrior.

- Editor]

The Druj within man acts in various ways. For instance, some people have an inherent tendency and temperament to utter lies; they just can't help it. That is due to the dwelling of druj in their tongue. Such person blurts out a lie, but no sooner he does that, his conscience should prick him. If he tries to arrest any further lie coming out, or immediately declares that what he spoke was a lie and it was because of his bad disposition that he had uttered it, and resolves to be vigilant hereafter not to fall a victim to that bad tendency, then he is said to have generated a mental obstruction or resistance against the Druj. This is called "**Mahe-Patet**". Whatever Tarikat's that are given in the Daena are the equipments gifted by the Paigamber Saheb. Through them we can resist and mitigate the effects of the Druj which radiates out in the surroundings, when we eat, drink, think or involve ourselves into any activity, and which pollutes and infects others.

[The word 'Tarikat' is not confined only to Sudreh-Kushti, Nirang. Manthra Prayers, Atash - Parasti etc., but also includes the moral doctrines ordained by the Daena - K]

This, thus, is the meaning of the Prayers of the body and mind. When a human engages in such mind-body prayer, he is required to recite Khordeh-Avesta Manthra as an integral part of the prayer. The recitation of the Manthra (some of which like Kushti, Sarosh Baj, Gah and Khorshed Meher Niyash are compulsory) constitutes the Prayer of the Ruvan added to the mind-body prayer. To recite Patet - Sarosh for our near and dear departed souls also constitutes a limb of our Ruvan's prayer.

The Need for Manthra

To train the body and mind, to build up character and to observe Tarikat are in the hands of each individual. Along with that, to bear with patience and thankfulness whatever pleasures and pains or delights and miseries befall on us, is the **first element of devotion**. To have intense faith on Daena; to be ever conscious that the mind is imperfect and inclined towards sin and therefore to drive away its fads, fancies and mania and remove all pride, egocentricity, self-contredness, and self-worship; to learn to know and beware of one's faults, infirmities and weaknesses; to strive to find them out; to be aware of the fact that the Druj is emanating from every particle of one's personality and harms oneself and others too, for a long period of time; to learn to resist and control all these motions and movements of the Druj; to observe and be ever vigilant to observe the truth and the Druj Paherez Tarikat; and thus to serve one-self as well as others- all this is the **second element of Devotion**. These two elements are to be accompanied by the Manthra Prayers which provide 'food' for the Soul. Manthra is the Prayer of Ruvan, and is the **third element of Devotion**.

When Devotion in all its three elements reaches perfection and fulfillment, one becomes a "HAOMI".

The Main Foundation of Avesta Prayers - Sudreh-Kushti.

Kushti-Paadiaav is the most essential ingredient of the Parsi Daena. It means to do Kushti at every Gah and after each call of nature. Sudreh-Kushti is called "Ukhda". **They carry the divine seal and signature of Asho Zarathushtra and Ahuramazda**, like the currency notes bearing the authoritative seal of the Government. Sudreh-Khushti is a precious and high valued equipment. They attune the wearer with Zarathushtra and Ahuramazda. The Music of Ahuramazda's promise runs through them. It sings that one who will fulfill the object of Sudreh Kushti will be the recipient of Ahuramazda's and Zarathushtra' s blessings. What is the object of Sudreh Kushti? Their meaningful design from cotton and wool, can besiege in their orbit all the 'Akhti', Druj and ill effects, which emanate every minute from the thought, word, deed and activity of the body and mind, and can mitigate and prevent them from spreading their infection in the surrounding atmosphere. The magnetism of the earth, then, draws the reduced Druji deep within, and uses it as fertiliser of the earth, thus converting the burdensome and infectious Druj into useful and economic blessings. **The sound of Ahuramazda's own Music of the Cosmos hums through Sudreh-Kushti.** (As you put on Sudreh-Kushti, and recite the Manthra, you are radiating the silent music of your prayer to Ahuramazda). When we go to toilet to relieve ourselves of the Drujic by-products of our system, the Music of Sudreh Kushti and their orbits are disturbed, because of the release of the Akhti, the poisonous heat. The orbits are then required to be repaired and reoriented, by performing the Kushti (i.e. untying and tying the Kushti while reciting the prescribed prayers), so that the orbits are re-energised to hold on the Akhti, and the Earth magnetism can draw it in. It is therefore the first duty to maintain the "Amal" (i.e. the practice) of Kushti. That is called Hutokshi - the duty to keep our own mind-body and the atmosphere of the Earth clean. The main point is to maintain the balance of our mind through the

prayers of the body, mind and soul; and to complete our Hutokshi - the duty of service - by reciting the prayers as ordained in different 'Gah's. The Gah prayers give sustenance to the Nature's work going on in different Gahs. When they are recited, the miniature Nature within the devotee works parallel and on the same wave-length as the Nature outside and he thereby helps Nature in its exertions.

Three Modes of Reciting Manthra: -

There are three basic rules of reciting the Avesta Manthra. They are called "Dreynjya", "Mara" and "Sraavi Gathavya Vacha". In the Dreynjya mode, the reciter just goes on chanting Avesta keeping only one strong thought that may the 'Staota' (Vibrations) of this Prayer do whatever is ordained for them; I am serving Ahuramazda by reciting this Manthra. While so praying, we must remain at one place and not move about, so that the structure of vibrations generated by the Prayer is duly ripened and benefits the devotee.

In "Mara" mode, the devotee sits in a suitable posture and in addition to the above thought also thinks of spiritual progress and evolution. He or she also has in mind a particular motive or calculation for the Prayer.

In mode the mode of "Sraavi Gathavya Vacha", the devotee deeply concentrates his or her mind and recites without allowing his thoughts to go astray. He or she actually builds up thought-forces and while reciting gyrates the inner meanings and message of the Avesta in his or her mind.

You can chant the Manthra in any of the three modes suitable to you, and thereby vibrate the "Good Sound" of Ahuramazda in your 'Aipi' (i.e. the atmosphere immediately surrounding you), breathe the air of Prayer and stop the Druj from pervading out. You can do this atleast by doing Kushti in every Gah. Then only you can be called "Bast-e-Kushtian" .

Benefits of Reciting Niyash's and Yashta's.

Through the Niyash prayers, a devotee makes his or her body and mind healthy, strengthens his or her blood and mind, exerts himself determinedly and sincerely to follow and obey the Daena, and does not vacillate or waver if any calamity falls on him or her.

He goes on striving to become a Haomi, to be worthy of serving the community and society and becoming a farmer who cultivates the field of Ahuramazda's creation. He can then be called the "Vastriyosh" (spiritual farmer) and "Hutokshsh" (the servant of Ahura and His creation).

The Yashta Prayers infuses spiritual strength in him or her to 'cultivate' his own Ruvan, and to guard against and resist effectively the evil forces of Ahriman which rush to him to steal or ruin the fruits of his cultivation. He reaches the stature of

Ratheystar (the Warrior of Ahura) and can even shatter and eradicate the evil forces and their evil fruits.

Thus through the Niyash Prayers the devotee will amend and ameliorate the health and condition of his body and mind, will keep his balance in all pleasures and pains and will cultivate and serve his own self and others. This is called "Shakhsyat" . Through the Yashta Prayers, he will resist 'Daeva' - the evil forces of darkness and ignorance and control the carnal and material passions, inherent within himself.

There is no way other than the Manthra Prayers for one who desires to be truthful towards one's parents, spouse, children, community, society and humanity; and who desires to be the Hutokhsh of Ahura and serve Him; and to reach the "Nav-Ghena" - the nine beauties of Ahura's Ashoi (Purity, holiness). Otherwise, **to act according to the whims and fancies of one's own mind is a deception, because had the mind been faultless and true, no human would have been needy, miserable, fumbling here and there to find a way, restless, disgruntled, dissatisfied, selfish, floundering, blundering, vacillating in carnal pleasures and passions, agonizing oneself at the happiness of others and ever attracted towards wealth, sex and power. The ill fate of a human is hoarded in his mind and thought; therein lies his bad luck. To erase it is His duty, his Religion, his prayer. And that Prayer cannot be other than the Manthra Prayer.**

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