

WHAT IS "STAOTA" ? Part 1 of 2

Its Definition, Meaning and Rules . . .

By The Late Ervad Phiroze Masani.

["Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern" by the late genius Ervad Phiroze Masani, can well be described as the first English Text Book containing the basic principles of the Mystic Science of our Religion. Every lover of that science should read the book. Every critic of that science should not criticise it without reading that Book. What is the extent of the Zarathushtrian Scriptures? What is the rationale of, and the science behind our so called rituals and ceremonies? How should Zarathushtrianism be studied? What are our Prayers? How are they constituted? What is their effect? What is a 'Magi'? Who was Zarathushtra? Why is Proselytism (conversion) not advocated in Zarathushtrian Religion?

These and numerous other questions are answered in Phiroze's Book in a style which is scholarly and yet simple.

Here is an extract from the Book on the subject of "Staota" and "Staota Yasna." Before elaborating the meaning of these basic technical words, Phiroze gives numerous references from the scriptures wherein these terms and their variations occur. There are 13 references from the Gatha's, 13 from the Yashta's, 7 from the Yazashney, 5 from the Visparad, 1 from Hadokhta Nask and 1 from Aban Nyaesh (Pages 213 to 223). Phiroze then explains the principles which emerge from these references (P 223 et seq) I. These are only some of the references to the word "Staota" occurring in the Avesta. But from these also one can easily make out that the word "Staota" does not imply mere "praise" or "adoration" or "propitiation" but something more than that. The word "Staota" as seen from the above-quoted references signifies the fundamental law of unseen colours produced by the vibrations of the Sound; and the entire universe has been manifested in accordance with the Laws of these Vibration-colours (Staota Yasna) from the one Primitive Sound of Prime Motion - Ahuna Var - in the Highest Heaven. We can easily see from these quotations also that the unfoldment of the Soul and communion with Ahura Mazda are only possible by means of the attunement with the Highest Staota, and that the Soul requires for its progress the various intensities of these Staota according to its stage of progress in the scale of unfoldment. In order therefore to attain this Summum Bonum the soul has to attune itself with the Staota of all the Yazads and other spiritual intelligences, the greatest of whom on the Earth is Sraosha according to the Gatha XXXIII; 5: -

"Yas-te vispe mazištem Sraošem

Zbaya avanghane",

"I invoke Sraosha for help who is the greatest of all Thy Yazads."

The angel Sraosha is the receiver of all the collective Staota raining down from all the Yazads, and it is also the transmitter of the same to any living soul who is ready to respond to Sraosha. For making the soul fit for response to Sraosha or angel presiding over collective Staota, the prophet Zoroaster has enjoined all the canons of Ashoi-or physical, magnetic, mental, moral and spiritual purity-for without purity the soul cannot rise to the level of vibratory

response required for the higher potential of the Staota of Sraosha. Thus when a soul attunes itself with Sraosha by means of Asha according to the canons taught by the prophet for smiting the Druja or all Unseen evil magnetic influence, it is fit for responding to the vibration of all Yazads collectively through Sraosha, and hence to the vibrations of all Yazads individually in accordance with the laws of attunement by means of Staota. When the soul has thus made itself worthy of these higher vibrations, it realises the efficacy of the chanting of Avesta Manthra

which, when recited with the observance of Ashoi, produce Staota corresponding to the Universal Staota, and thus there is perfect harmony or attunement of the Soul with the ruling Yazads. Hence we learn a fundamental rule of Zoroastrianism that Ashoi is the first requisite for the enjoyment of the efficacy of Avesta Manthra recital, and it is only on account of the present day life of the majority of Zoroastrians without the observance of Ashoi-principles that the efficacy of Avesta prayers is not consciously perceived by them. But the Avesta Manthra, which have been entirely based on Yatha Ahu Vairyo for the 21 Nasks as we have seen before have been made from the One Word Yatha Ahu Vairyo -which in its turn is only a Bagha or corresponding branch of the Universal Ahuna Var-the vibration creative of the entire manifested universe, has its own efficacy on the planes of vibration and unseen colour, and we shall presently see some references from the extant Avesta proving that the Avesta Manthra is meant for producing higher vibratory and Staotic effects unseen.

Thus we gather the following rules regarding Staota –

1. "Staota implies colour produced by vibrations of sound in the higher planes of vibration.
2. "Staota Yasna" signifies the entire procedure and science of attunement through the medium of the higher unseen colours produced by vibrations of sound.
3. "Urvatam Urunem" means the Unfoldment of the soul by means of the acceleration of the vibration of the soul to the rate of its original potential in accordance of the laws of Staota Yasna.
4. "Sraosha" is the angel presiding over the entire collective Staota raining down, from all the Yazads, and is also the transmitter of the same to any soul that has made itself fit for response to Sraosha.
5. "Asha" implies all the collective laws of holiness by means of which the physical, magnetic, moral mental and spiritual subtlety and higher rate of vibration may be attained in order to qualify the soul for attunement with Sraosha.

6. Urvan x Asha x Sraosha x Manthra - is the chain like order necessary for proving the efficacy of the Avesta Word-Manthra for oneself, and the Laws of Staota work in each of these four main links.

7. "Yazamaide" - a word of frequent occurrence in all Avesta prayers connotes the meaning of the attunement of the soul of the holy chanter-one who has been qualified as the follower of or recipient of Sraosha with every Yazadic Staota that he repeats in every sentence.

From all this it is quite clear that the Zoroastrian Manthra prayers are based on subtle laws-laws which go beyond the scope of mere philological renderings of the Avesta texts. It is no doubt that the Staota Yasna comprises within itself the science of vibration and Undulatory Motion, Acoustics, Optics, Chromatics, Electricity, Magnetism, Numbers, etc. because all these are closely connected with one another in their mutual functions on the higher planes. It is on account of this that the Manthra which inculcate all the laws of Staota Yasna exhaustively are known in Pahlavi by the holy priests who understood these laws very well by the name of "Farhangan Farhang Manthra Spenta"- the knowledge of all knowledges, the Science of all Sciences - the Master-Science is Manthra Spenta, for Vibration is the Fundament of the Universe, and the Knowledge relating to the original first creative Vibration of Ahuna Var, which is expounded by the prophet Zoroaster, in the Sum Total of Yatha Ahu Vairyo which is an exact prototype of the celestial note Ahuna Var, or in the 21 Nasks of Avesta Manthra-is the root of all knowledge, the main-key to all the sciences of the universe.

Hence every student of the Avesta must be informed of the Staota Laws in accordance with which the Entire Avesta Manthra has been composed. The ignorance of this most important fact and the utter forgetfulness thereof has given rise to a very considerable amount of false knowledge among the students of Avesta. The subject of Staota Yasna which is the main foundation of all Avesta Manthra is so very extensive that it requires volumes to elucidate it to give a good deal of satisfaction to a reader possessing scientific knowledge of the laws of vibration. One whole Nask called, "Stud Yasht" in Pahlavi or "Vastarem" in the Avesta is devoted to the special treatment of the Laws of Staota Yasna which contains in all 33 main Chapters. Out of this very important Nask, we have mere fragments of Gathas, Yasna

Haftanghaiti, Yasna, Visparad, but we are unfortunate in not having the original keynotes for the proper elucidation of these fragments by the laws and rules of Staota Yasna.

One important fact which should be noticed in connection with the subject of Staota is this that "the Urvan or soul requires for its unfoldment certain units of vibration and Staota in proportion to its own stage of present progress. In fact the Staota produced by means of the recital of Avesta Manthra is the kind and the rate necessary for a Soul born in the Zoroastrian fold and following the Laws of Ashoi propounded in the Law of Unfoldment taught by the prophet Zarathushtra. The necessity of the Staota produced by Avesta Manthra serves as food as it were for the Soul.

Hence the Gathas which have the supreme degree in point of Staota are said to be the actual food of the Soul in Yasna Ha 55 2, 3, 4 -"The Gathas which are for us full of protection

and full of defence and serve as spiritual food; the Gathas which serve for our soul as food and clothing. These Gathas are as protection and defence for us and as food spiritual; and these Gathas serve as food and clothing for our soul.

May these Gathas be the givers of good-reward, and reward of-holiness in the next existence after separation of the physical tenement from the consciousness. These Gathas are as courage, triumph, abundance, health prosperity and defence for us. They are movers towards good existence, they are helpers all round, they take us towards good wisdom, they guide us towards holy-being, they are for progress and knowledge. May their efficacy reach us by means of the Staota Yasna which has been created by Mazda the most beneficent victorious, progressor-of the universe for the protection of the constituents of holiness, for the preservation of holy constituents and for the protection of all the beneficent benefactors of the entire existence of the holy!"

This one quotation is quite sufficient for furnishing proof of the fact that the Manthra has been formulated in accordance with the Laws of Staota Yasna or Laws of attunement by means of higher vibro-chromatic undulations. In the passage we notice that the soul is benefited by the Manthric vibrations only through the medium of Staota Yasna which is their foundation. We also learn from the same passage that the soul does exist in the next world after the separation of the physical tenement from the life; that the soul is helped on in the unseen world in its progress by the efficacy of the Avesta Manthra and the Staota of these Manthra; that the Manthra have a very exalted root-cause and the beneficial efficacy of the Staota Yasna laws has been merged into the Manthra; and moreover that the Manthra which contain the Staotic impressions in their very formation protect the soul from the evil influences of Drujih like the clothing which protects the body, and that the Manthra help the soul on in the work of "Uru" or spiritual unfoldment by providing the Soul with its own natural food the higher vibratory colours requisite for the certain stage that the soul has reached in the scale of its unfoldment. Finally we are informed from the same grand passage that the vibratory impressions received by the soul during its life on earth in accordance with holiness, accompany the soul in the unseen world after its departure from the physical world and are very useful in giving the requisite vibratichromatic motion to the soul in the unseen world, and that a prayer is evoked for the reaching of these beneficial efficacies through the medium of Staota Yasna which has been created by the Creator at the very First Motion given for the Infoldment of the Soul or manifestation of the universe and for the ultimate Unfoldment of the Soul or manifestation of the spirit.

Even from the extant Avesta we have learnt then from the references to Staota quoted above that –(i) the yearning for the knowledge and practice of Staota Yasna leads to the Summum Bonum i.e. the greatest good or heavenly bliss meant for the Soul.

(ii) the love of Mazda, attunement with Ahura Mazda friendship of Ahura Mazda, adoration, glorification and propitiation of Ahura Mazda are possible only by means of the Staota Yasna.

(iii) one must always have the one yearning for becoming a skilled practitioner of Staota.

(iv) the practice of Staota if well directed results in the Fresh awakening of the Spiritual (Ahu) within man.

(v) one who is not well-versed in Staota Yasna cannot be allowed to participate in the libations offered unto Yazads and other apparatus meant for producing forces of attunement with Yazads.

(vi) the prophet Zoroaster the Holy one was the first practitioner perfect of Staota since he was the first to comprehend the manifestation of the entire universe in accordance with the Celestial Tune of Ahuna Var by means of the Staota Yasna Laws, and to formulate the Word Yatha Ahu Vairyo in rhythmic parallelism with that Ahuna Var, and thence to

expand the Yatha Ahu Vairyo into the 21 Nasks of Avesta Manthra having their special rates of acceleration and intensity, for to Zoroaster the progress of the Soul implied genuine absorption of higher Manthric vibrations and colours by the Soul through the medium of Ashoi-Principles which help to promote the subtleness of the Physical and the ultra-physical tenements of the Soul-the physical comprising Tanu or body proper, Gaetha or vital organs, Azda or etheric and nervous body and the ultra-physical including Kehrpa or invisible counter part of the physical body. Ushtana or life or vital heat, Tevishi or desire-shell, the root cause of thought-activity, all of which are mentioned in the very first line of Yasna Ha 54 1.

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..... To be continued WHAT IS "MANTHRA" ?- Part 2

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