

## THE COLOUR OF WHITE

The white colour - **Aurusha** indicates excellence of the highest order in our ancient Scriptures and, indeed by modern science itself. It represents a unit comprising subtle shades of all the colours found in the entire Universe and thus carries with it, composite attributes in the form of waves of ‘vibrations’ of all known colours.

The Staōta Yasht, the name of the 21 Nasks (Volumes) of the Great Avesta originally (before destruction) comprised the complete text and grammar of the Avesta language. ‘Staōta’ refers to songs of praise to the glory of the Creator recited in such an emotional and devotional manner as to create a type of deep vibratory impact in the minds of both those who recite as well as in the listeners. We have, at various times, certainly experienced this deeply moving emotional feeling in the sights, sounds, aroma and the total environment of an Atash Kadeh/Agiāry or Ātash Bēhrām.

The Laws of Vibration permeate through the whole of nature. Light and sound exist in waveform – the different wavelengths constituting the different parts of the spectrum of light and the quality of sound. Their measurement is gauged in terms of number of vibrations per second. When a ray of white light is made to pass through a prism it splits into its constituents, seven colours - (VIBGYOR-violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow & red) are produced. In Nature we see the phenomenon in the form of a rainbow when the white light of the rays of the sun are split in the form of an arc by the droplets of rain acting as tiny prisms.

In the laboratory this phenomenon has been artificially created by focusing a ray of white light on a glass prism and seeing it split by refraction into the seven colours. Conversely, if a round disc of 360 degrees is divided into seven equal parts of these seven colours and rotated at speed the seven colours merge and the disc appears pure white. The phenomenon will, however, not occur if a ray of coloured light (instead of the White light) is focused on a prism. Nor will the condensation of the seven colours into white occur if all seven colours are not equally represented on the disc to be rotated.

In the Avesta this was known, millennia of years before modern scientists conveyed the phenomenon. In fact, the Māghavans (Magi or Magians) of Zarathushtrian Mediā and Babylonīā were regarded with suspicion when they tried to demonstrate to prove (among other phenomenon) that, which is now common knowledge. They were labeled tricksters or magicians, at that time.

The speed of the ‘pure white light of the rays of the Sun’ are praised in the following Yashts: **Mēhr Yacht, verses 68 and 135** equate, in metaphoric terms, the swiftness, agility and speed of white stallions with that of the (white light) rays of the Sun (the horse being the Good Mind and the chariot being the good blessings in the Mazdayasni religion): -

<i>aurusha</i>	<i>raōkhshna</i>	<i>frādērēsra</i>	<i>sp̄anta</i>
pure white	shining	beautiful	holy
<b><i>Mēhr Yasht, verse 135.</i></b>			
<i>yahmāi</i>	<i>aurusha</i>	<i>auryanta</i>	<i>yukhta</i>
whose	white	swift	team

*Tir Yasht, verse 18* equates in praise Tir/Teshtar Tistriya the brightest white-lit star as seen from earth to the majesty and swiftness of a white stallion as: -

*aspahē kēhrpa aurushahē*

Further on in Tir Yasht, verse 58 note how white, the colour supreme has been given precedence over any colour and all known colours thus:

*aurushēm vā vōhū gaōnēm vā kāchit vā gaōnanām hamō-gaōnēm*

white in colour or one good colour, or any colour from all colours

*Mēhēr Yasht, verse 126* mentions in rather subtle metaphoric terms of the word ‘*spaēta*’ in the sense of the ‘**whiteness of being**’ - ‘**the Being of Purity**’, while mentioning about Chisti, the Divinity of Faith, as if to imply that there is nothing more innocent and ‘pure’ than plain and simple Faith. Zarathusht named his youngest daughter, **Pouruchista** meaning ‘one abounding in the being of purity as the divinity of Faith’.

*chistām barat-zaōthrānm ashāōnim spaēta vastrāō vanghaiti,*

Chisti brings sacred offerings, righteously bedecked in white,

*spaēta daēnayāō mazdāyasnōish upamanēm.*

the ‘whiteness of being’ of the Religion of all Mazdāyasnīs

It is, therefore, quite appropriate that we have considered white as the most sacred and purest of all colours in devotional and in all other aspects of our daily life. It is worthy of note that the Zarathushti priests in Iran and on the Subcontinent wear no non-white apparel in the Atash Kadeh/Fire temples or during rituals right from a white cap to white dress and white shoes. In daily life they do wear head dresses and shoes of black and other colours. To counter this, red caps and head dresses and shoes were introduced. Even the pyjamas during the Initiation Ceremony have, in the past up (down to the early 1900s), been red or yellow silken and the slippers often red velvet.

## Reference

1. Kavasji Edulji Kanga, A Complete Dictionary of the Avesta Language in Gujarati and English, reprinted by K R Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai, 2003.
2. Tehmurasp Rustomji Sethna, Yashts, Published by T R Sethna, 46, Parsi Colony, Karachi 1976.

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