

## **Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 195 – A Daily Gatha Prayer of 16 verses based on Ahura Mazda's advice to Zarathushtra to drive away evil - Vendidad 11.1 - 2**

Hello all Tele Class friends:

### **A Daily Gatha Prayer – A Suggestion:**

In our WZSEs #192 – 194, we discussed the question by Zarathushtra answered by Ahura Mazda for the prayers to be recited to ward off evil from a dead body (Vendidad 11.1 – 2). There are 16 verses instructed by Ahura Mazda.

We suggest that these verses from Gathas can also be used as a Daily Gatha Prayer for all to recite.

In this WZSE #195, we present this prayer.

I apologize for the length of this WZSE. Hope you enjoy reading and listening and following up as a prayer.

And would like to hear your thoughts.

### **Background:**

Our Vakhshur-e-Vakhshuraan Zarathushtra Spitamaan, in his Gathas, asks many questions to Ahura Mazda, but Ahura Mazda never replies him; instead Zarathushtra figures out the answers by using his Vohu Mana, the Good Mind!

Later Avestan writers of Vendidad, Yashts, etc. thought this mode of questions and answers between Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda, can be a powerful way to expound their own interpretations of our religion but in their questions by Zarathushtra, Ahura Mazda answers them right away! This gave their interpretations a powerful support!

We see such questions and answers all over Vendidad, Yashts, etc..

Age of Vendidad has been debated in literature for a long time. It could be between 300 to 800 BC or earlier.

According to Dinkard, our religion had 21 Nasks (volumes) on various subjects.

They were destroyed by Alexander The Accursed after he defeated Hakhaaminian Empire in 324 BC.

During the ensuing Parthian Dynasty (226 BC – 222 AD), “Emperor Vologases I (51 – 78 AD) was influential in reverting the Hellenization by going back to Iranian customs and traditions of Hakhaaminian times.” According to Zoroastrian texts, Vologases I ordered the collection of the ancient Avestan texts that were destroyed by Alexander The Accursed. Eventually, all 21 Nasks were recompiled during the Sassanian times (224 – 651 AD), but once again completely destroyed by the Arabs after their conquest of the Sassanian Empire (651 AD).

The only Nask that remained in tact is #19, Vendidad. It consists of 22 Fargarads (chapters) dealing with diverse subjects like “hygiene (in particular care of the dead), cleansing, disease - its origin, and spells against it, mourning for the dead, the Towers of Silence, the

remuneration of deeds after death, the sanctity of and invocations to Aatash (fire), earth, waters; the dignity of wealth and charity, of marriage, statutes on unacceptable social behavior such as breach of contract and assault; on the worthiness of priests; praise and care of the bull, the dog, the otter, the *Sraosha* Parodarsh rooster, and the *Haoma* tree.”

Most of the contents is in a dialog between Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda as explained above. There are some nuggets of wisdom in these dialogs.

One of them is the instruction by Ahura Mazda to Zarathushtra about the prayers from Gathas to be recited to ward of evil.

As we presented in our last 3 WZSEs #192, #193, and #194, Zarathushtra enquires of Ahura Mazda, in Vendidad: “How shall I fight against the Druj (evil) that rushes from the dead and defiles the living?”

To this Ahura Mazda replies:

## **Avesta Words:**

“Aa-at mraot Ahuro Mazdaao,  
imeh vacha framrva, yoi henti **Gaathaahva**, beeshaamroota,  
imeh vacha framrva, yoi henti **Gaathaahva**, thrishaamroota,  
imeh vacha framrva, yoi henti **Gaathaahva**, chathrushaamroota,  
imeh vacha framrva, yoi henti **Gaathaahva**,  
beeshaamroota, thrishaamroota, chathrushaamroota.”

## **English Translation:**

“**Ahura Mazda then replied:**  
**Say aloud those words in the Gathas that are to be said twice,**  
**Say aloud those words in the Gathas that are to be said thrice,**  
**Say aloud those words in the Gathas that are to be said four times**  
**Say aloud those words in the Gathas that are to be said**  
**Twice, Thrice, Four Times”.** (Vendidad Fargarad 10.1-2)

It is very interesting to note that Ahura Mazda instructs Zarathushtra to recite the words **from Gathas**, even though, out of the total 16 verses to be recited per HIS advice above, 5 verses are from Yasna Haptanghaaiti (YH) and one from Yasna 54.1, Aa Airyemaa Ishyo! (Please note that all these 16 verses are covered in our WZSEs).

**Does that mean that during the time that Vendidad was written, YH and Aa Airyemaa Ishyo were recognized as Gathas?!?**

**That is a very interesting question!!**

**And if so, did Zarathushtra composed YH as well as Aa airyemaa Ishyo?**

The *YH* is generally considered to have been composed by the immediate disciples of Zarathushtra, either during the prophet's lifetime or shortly after his death.

However, some scholars claim that YH was composed by Zarathushtra himself.

**For Aa Airyemaa Ishyo, Dr. Irach Taraporewalla claims: “the language and its meter is exactly that of Yasna 53, the Vahishtoisht Gatha, that it was also composed by Zarathushtra as the last verse of Yasna 53 and its thought is in absolute agreement with that of the Fifth Gatha. This verse invokes the blessings of the Supreme upon the Zoroastrian Brotherhood and thus forms a fitting conclusion to the Five Gathas.”**

**This is a very important deduction coming from Vendidad that YH and Aa Airyemaa Ishyo are from Gathas!**

## **A Suggestion for our Daily Gatha Prayer from this Dialog:**

As mentioned in our previous WZSEs #56, 57, 58: Gathas in our Farajyaat (Daily Prayers), it is a real pity that we pray so many different prayers basically from our Khordeh Avesta, like Kushti Prayers, 101 Names, Sarosh Baaj, Gehs, Nyaayeshes, Yashts, Patets, but only pray our own Vakhshur-e-Vakhshuraan Zarathushtra Spitamaan Gathas once a year, even that. Late Dasturji Dastur Peshotan Dastur Hormazdyar and his eminent father believed in praying Gathas in everyday life and Dasturji commented on it in our WZSE #58.

Many of you have written to me that Gathas are too difficult to pray, we do not know the meaning, etc. etc. etc..

**So, today, we are suggesting a Daily Gatha Prayer consisting of the above 16 verses.**

**We have attached a PDF file with these verses (I have taken liberty to include 3 more Gatha verses, the well known Us-Moi Uzareshwaa Ahuraa!).**

**I have also attached another file with these verses and their translations side by side.**

**I have also created an Audio file of this prayer. It is almost 20+ MB (19 minutes) and so I cannot send it as an attachment with this email.**

**However, my perennial good friend, Joseph Peterson, at my request has placed it in his excellent website and this audio file can be accessed at:**

[http://avesta.org/mp3/WV195\\_A\\_Daily\\_Gatha\\_Prayer\\_from\\_Ahura\\_Mazda\\_Instructions.mp3](http://avesta.org/mp3/WV195_A_Daily_Gatha_Prayer_from_Ahura_Mazda_Instructions.mp3)

So, we are suggesting a Daily Gatha Prayer of the 16 (plus 3 additional) Gatha verses mentioned by Ahura Mazda to Zarathushtra.

We have covered all of them in our previous WZSEs as noted after each verse in the attached PDF files “[Daily Gatha Prayer.pdf](#)” and “[Daily Gatha Prayer with Translation.pdf](#)”.

## **SPD Explanation:**

1. Many Humdins ask: Why are we praying Ahunavaiti Gatha for our Geh Saarnaa (funeral) prayers?

I was told by some scholars that in old days we used to pray Ushtavaiti Gatha for the Geh Saarnaa prayer.

But later on some Dasturs thought that based on the above mentioned Vendidad question and answer, Ahura Mazda instructs Zarathushtra to pray those Gathas which have verses to be prayed 2, 3, and 4 times, to fight against the Druj (evil) that rushes from the dead and defiles the living.”

Ahunavaiti is the only Gatha which has verses to be recited 2, 3, and 4 times and so they switched to Ahunavaiti Gatha for the Geh Saarnaa prayer.

2. Even if you pray a few verses from this prayer each day, that would be wonderful.

**May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Respect for all burn ever eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and eternal enthusiasm!**

**Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)**

**(Aafrin Pegaamber Zartosht, from [Ervad Kangaji Gujarati Khordeh Avesta Baa Maaeni](#) – Page 424, adapted Aafrinaamahi - we wish instead of Aafrinaami – I wish, in the original)**

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli