

WZSE – Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 26.

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Today, we will present an interesting explanation for our two basic pillars of our Zoroastrian Religion – Ashem Vohu and Yathaa Ahu Vairyo.

Ashem Vohu Prayer:

Ashem Vohu Vahishtem asti,

Ushtaa asti;

Ushtaa ahmaai,

Hyat ashaai Vahishtaai ashem.

English Translation:

Righteousness is the best good

and it is happiness.

Happiness is to him/her who is righteous

for the sake of the best righteousness.

Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala's Explanation for Ashem Vohu Prayer:

Our prominent Parsi scholar of both Sanskrit and Avesta, Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala, and the second Principal of our beloved MF Cama Athornan Institute, in his major opus: The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra has given a quite thought provoking discussion on Ashem and Yathaa prayers.

From the English translation of Ashem Vohu, as presented above, we usually think of it as representing the main theme of Asha, Righteousness. Dr. Taraporewala proposes that its main theme is actually the Ushtaa = Happiness as mentioned in it – Ushtaa Asti – it is Happiness! In fact, many scholars attribute our second Ushtavaiti Gatha songs to Ushtaa, Happiness based on Ashem. Actually, it starts with: “Ushtaa Ahmaai, yehmaai Ushtaa kahmaichit” – Happiness to him who gives happiness to others.

An interesting interpretation of Ashem Vohu prayer and something to remember when we recite Ashem Vohu.

(Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala – Divine

Songs of Zarathushtra, Pages 23 - 25)

Yathaa Ahu Vairyo Prayer:

Yathaa Ahu Vairyo

Athaa ratush ashaat chit hachaa;

Vangheush dazdaa manangho,

Shyaothananaam, Angheush Mazdaai;

Khshathremchaa Ahuraai aa,

Yim dregubyo dadat vaastaarem.

English Translation:

Just as an Elected Leader acts according to his will,

So also the religious leader due to his righteousness and other virtues associated with it.

The gift of Vohu-Manah (Good mind) is for those working

for Ahura Mazda in this world;

He who acts as the protector and nourisher of the poor,

accepts the sovereign rule of Ahura Mazda for the entire world.

Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala's Explanation for Yathaa Ahu Vairyo Prayer:

Dr. Taraporewala also explains the Yathaa Ahu Vairyo in quite a detailed essay. He separates it in three lines and proposes that the first line from "Yathaa to Ashaat Chit" really explains the important role of a learned Righteous Dastur (Mobed) who is equal in stature to a King in old days or to an elected leader, a CEO, etc. of present day. This is because of his **knowledge** and practice of Righteousness. And the basic theme of this first line is "Knowledge".

The second line according to him: "Vangheush Dazdaa to Mazdaai" really gives us inner meaning of Vohu Manah – Good mind, but Vohu is derived from an ancient root Vah – to love. So, the second line really expresses the importance of **LOVE** to all mankind.

The last line from “Khshathremachai to Vaastaarem” according to him is basically for the **Service** to mankind, to help poor and needy.

So, these three lines according to him tells us about the three paths to Ahura Mazda – the path of **Knowledge**, the path of **Love** and the path of **Service**. And he then associates these three paths by a very simple three words doctrine – **The HEAD** representing the path of **Knowledge** , **the Heart** representing the path of **Love** and **the HAND** representing the path of **Service!**

A very interesting way to remember our basic pillar of Religion – Yathaa Ahu Vairyo prayer associated with **Head, Heart, and Hand!**
Quite thought provoking! Hope all of us remember these three simple words related to Yathaa Ahu Prayer!

(Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala – Divine Songs of Zarathushtra, Pages 17 - 22)

SPD Comments:

I have never heard such illuminating explanations for Ashem Vohu and especially for Yathaa Ahu Vairyo prayers. These explanations have given me a unique perspective on these two prayers and I will always remember the watch words - **Happiness and Head, Heart and Hand!**

I gave a similar talk to our ZATAMBAY Gathering in the home of Anahita and Hoshedar Tamboli on 11/3/2013. My dear wife Jo Ann videoed the whole talk and it is now available on YouTube at:

[Ashem and Yathaa - Happiness and Head, Heart and Hand!](#)

Hope you have a chance to see this video!

May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Tolerance 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!)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli