

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 284: Give me bodily health, I Pray - Dasturji Dhalla - Homage Unto Ahura Mazda - Part I(b) - Prayer 21

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Let me take this opportunity to repeat a previous WZSE introduction of Dasturji Dhalla – *Homage Unto Ahura Mazda*. Hope you do not mind to hear his wonderful explanation about why he wrote this book – *Homage unto Ahura Mazda*!

Many of you have asked me: Why I should pray in Avesta/Pazand language I do not understand?

Such questions have been asked all the times by our well meaning Humdins.

In the past, some attempts were made by writing Gujarati Monajats which we used to sing every day in our beloved Cama Institute.

But the best answer to this question was given by none other than one of our greatest Avesta/Pahlavi Scholar and prolific writer, Shams-UI-Ulama Dr. Dasturji Maneckji Dhalla, Vada Dastur of Karachi. One of his very wonderful books is: *Saga of a Soul -- An Autobiography*, which was written by him in Gujarati and was translated later on in English and is available at: <http://www.avesta.org/dhalla/saga.htm>

which I highly recommend to all of you to read. It gives details of his life in a very lucid and detailed manner.

In its Chapter LXI : MY FAITH IN DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS ([please see the attached file and please read it](#)), he gives a detailed background about attempts by our scholars to compose and sing prayers in Gujarati with accompaniment of a Harmonium; however, the orthodox Parsis really criticized these efforts and eventually it died down.

His dear wife always kept after him to write a book of Zoroastrian prayers in English and finally after 45 years from the time he wanted to write such a book, he wrote the book of Daily Zoroastrian Prayers in English: *Homage Unto Ahura Mazda*, which is available at:

<http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dhalla/>

and it is a wonderful book of daily Zoroastrian Prayers in English which our youths would really like it.

Those who participated in our 17 Tele Classes will remember that at the end of each Tele Class, we always had a cyber Hum Bandagi with an English Zoroastrian Prayer from Dasturji Dhalla's above book.

To all parents and guardians: please look up this book and make sure the young ones also look it over.

It would be great if all of us have a family prayer from this book each day.

So today, we will present one of these prayers on Health from this book and hope you enjoy it:

Give me bodily health, I pray – Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda – Part I(b) – Prayer 21

(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation)

Dasturji Dhalla grew up as a very orthodox Zarathushtri. During his stay in NY and USA for his Ph. D. studies, he experienced the free US society and came in contact with many people with varied backgrounds. During this period, he started to open his mind and slowly drifted to become an enlightened person with lofty ideals. On his return to Karachi, he was appointed the Vada (Chief) Dastur of Karachi and Sindh province. Many of our NA friends from Karachi speak very highly of him and he used to teach religious classes to them. He was invited to give lectures to many groups. During his first visit to Mumbai for a lecture series, orthodox Parsis threw rotten eggs on the stage and gave a very hard time to him for his enlightened thoughts on religion.

In one of his prayers in his above book, he talks about Health. This is a wonderful short prayer on Health by Dasturji. In our lives, Health is the most important requirement for leading a Happy Life.

Lately, Jo Ann and I have been going through some tough times about health. As you all know, Jo Ann had two back operations lately and she is back home after her second major back operation. She is slowly getting back to normal.

Your prayers and good wishes have sustained us through these tough times and we thank you for the same and hope you continue them for her complete recovery.

So today, we present this prayer by Dasturji on Health:

Give me bodily health, I pray – Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda – Part I(b) – Prayer 21

Health is happiness. It is the greatest blessing of life. With health, life has everything, without it, it has nothing. Health is the richest possession of man upon earth. Blank and empty is life when it is bereft of health. Dead is the joy in life, where health is lacking. Nor birth, nor wealth, nor rank, nor power, aught avails, if thy Airyaman withholds health from man, Ahura Mazda. Everything is naught, where health is not.

Man appreciates not things that providence showers upon him unsought and in plenty. He values it at its proper worth, when he loses it awhile. When health fails man, and the body fails to do his bidding, life becomes tasteless and tedious to him and depression of spirit hangs over him. Then on his bed of sickness, he curses his existence and yearns for health.

Keep me healthy and sound and strong in body to the day of my death, Ahura Mazda. When old age creeps on me and health begins to fail, I

will hourly pray unto thee to give me the soundness and strength of the body that once were mine, even as Rustom, the rider of matchless Rakhsh, prayed unto thee in the hour of his need to give him back the strength, from the surfeit of which he had suffered in his youth and from which thou hadst relieved him at his prayerful request.

Health gives liveliness and cheerfulness, superabundant energy and exuberant optimism. Give me soundness and vigor and agility of body to work strenuously for the furtherance of good and to carry on a vigorous warfare against evil. Give me, I beseech thee, O Giver of health, a healthy body to nurture a healthy mind to enable me to lead an active and industrious Zoroastrian life in the discharge of my life's duties.

(Dasturji Dr. Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda Part I(b) Prayer 21:

<http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dhalla/ch1b/ib21.htm>)

SPD Comments

1. Prayers in this Dasturji Dhalla's book cover all types of subjects of our daily life. It is a great compendium of short daily Zoroastrian prayers in English.
2. It removes the usual complain that I do not understand what I am praying.
3. Dasturji says in the attached background chapter of his Autobiography:

On receiving and utilizing these, many coreligionists wrote to me stating that, despite all their honest efforts, when they had simply failed to have any desire to pray in Avesta, which they could not understand, they had turned in despair to Christian prayers. But now that they had found Zoroastrian prayers in a comprehensible language they had started using them every day.

What a wonderful tribute to Dasturji's book.

4. As I mentioned in my previous WZSE, our prayers are a private communication between us and Dadar Ahura Mazda! They can be a simple Yatha and Ashem, they can be a Kusti prayer, they can be our Daily Farajyaat, they can be singing Gathas, they can be our thoughts in our language and words, etc.. And praying to Dadar Ahura Mazda with Faith is the best way to live our lives through good and bad times.

Dasturji Dhalla's book is one more beautiful aid to all who wants to pray in English.

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!

In HIS service 24/7!

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

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli