

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 318: To Accumulate Knowledge - Dasturji Dhalla - Homage Unto Ahura Mazda - Part II(b) - Prayer 23

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Dasturji Dhalla on To Accumulate Knowledge:

Dasturji Dhalla, in his famous book: Homage Unto Ahura Mazda discusses the importance of accumulating knowledge, a Ahura Mazda's Given prerogative to mankind alone. Our Parsi Community in India has always been at the forefront of acquiring knowledge and it will be appropriate to quote Dasturji Dhalla's one of the prayers from his wonderful book: **Homage unto Ahura Mazda** about **Accumulating Knowledge**.

Let me take this opportunity to repeat a previous WZSE introduction of Dasturji Dhalla – *Homage Unto Ahura Mazda*. Hope you do not mind hearing 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-ul-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 Teachers, 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 and at the beginning of each Religion Class.

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

To Accumulate Knowledge – Dasturji Dhalla – *Homage Unto Ahura Mazda* – Part II(b) – Prayer 23

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 **To Accumulate Knowledge**. This is a wonderful short prayer on acquiring knowledge by Dasturji. According to him, we as human beings have a prerogative of accumulating knowledge which we should make all efforts to acquire it.

So today, we present this prayer by Dasturji on To Accumulate Knowledge:

To Accumulate Knowledge – Dasturji Dhalla – *Homage Unto Ahura Mazda* – Part II(b) – Prayer 23

[\(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation\)](#)

It is given to man alone to accumulate knowledge

Ahura Mazda has kindled the divine flame of illuminating light in man's mind. Reason is the prerogative of man. It raises him above the beasts. Animals live by instinct. With reason as the eye of his soul and as his guide to steer the bark of his life, man creates culture and civilization and progresses towards perfection.

Ahura Mazda has ordained that mind shall not lie fallow. Man has to cultivate it and seed it that knowledge may grow upon its soil. Knowledge ploughs its

bright way through the darkness of Ignorance. It gives all-seeing eyes to man's soul to see the light veiled in the clouds.

Knowledge is as ancient as time. It knows no death. It is inviolate and invincible. It rules the world. It is man's highest acquisition. It is priceless. It is the only treasure that is stolen not and burns not and rusts not and decays not and dies not. Man of knowledge is richer than the richest of men and more powerful than the most powerful potentate. Knowledge gives man wings to fly to the four corners of the earth and soar to the highest heavens to unravel the secrets of life. It is man's unfailing and life-long friend, his surest and safest guide in life.

Ahura Mazda lighted the torch of knowledge when man first set his foot upon earth. Numberless persons have from generation to generation lighted their lamps at its flame, but the eternal torch goes on burning the same as ever.

Man hides his wealth and jewels. Knowledge is not meant for concealment, nor for hoarding, It is to be sought for from anywhere and to be freely distributed everywhere. It may be imparted to a million people from sunrise to sunset and it will know no decrease. Inexhaustible is the store of knowledge.

Endow me with a brain, my kindly Creator, in which the light burns bright. Give me an orderly mind, an active mind and a comprehensive mind, animated by curiosity and inquisitiveness to know and learn. Enlighten my understanding. Let reason rule my conduct. Let me live in the realm of intellect.

If I know anything, I know how little I know of the immeasurable that lies before me to know. Let me own my ignorance with humility that I may move onward on the path of knowledge. Let me not be arrogant of my knowledge. Let me never think that I know enough. Let me ever crave for more knowledge than I have. Let me consecrate my soul to knowledge. Let me be poor in purse, but rich in knowledge. Let me bear aloft the torch of knowledge, O thou All knowing One.

(Dasturji Dr. Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda Part II(b) Prayer 23:

<http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dhalla/ch2b/ib23.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 WZSEs, 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 Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli