



NORTH AMERICAN MOBED COUNCIL **NEWSLETTER** **ATHRAVAN**

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Presidents Message:

NAMC executive is starting a Quarterly Newsletter. This will be emailed to all Mobeds in North America whose Email address we have. If you know any Mobeds in India or any other countries please do forward their Full name and Email Address to Adil Minocherhomijee at adilminocherhomijee@gmail.com and he will add them for next mailing.

Please forward your remarks, any news like new navar, and any article you would like to contribute to Khushroo Bharda at kbbharda@hotmail.com and Kobad Zarolia at kzarolia@ca.inter.net. Hope you enjoy the first Newsletter.

Ervad Kobad Zarolia

WHAT ARE PRAYERS **Ervad Gustad M. Panthaki**

Prayer can be defined as a personal conversation with, or acknowledgment of, God; whose language of communication is determined by the devotee, while the act of prayer is considered sacred. Prayer and expectation are two different conceptual categories. Prayer for the purpose of fulfilling a wish is not true prayer. An Urdu poet expresses **ibaadat karte hai jo log jannat ki tamanna me, ibaadat to nahin hai; ek tarah ki vo tizarat hai**, "a prayer done in expectation of heaven, is not a prayer, it is a business transaction".

From Ahuna Variya, Yasna 36:5 and 43:16 we learn that a prayer has three distinct elements: mind (knowledge), action (work) and words (devotion). Hence a prayer can be any one of them or any combination of these three. These elements in Hinduism are defined as Bhakti (devotion), Karma (work) and Gnanan (knowledge).

Depending on the individual's mentality and capacity, one chooses their respective prayer-path. It is incorrect to view prayer as only a recitation of words. One can sit silently while admiring the beauty and complexity of nature, or help a person in need, or read a well-composed book for its parables and thoughts, and all the aforementioned would equally fall into the category of prayer. There is no rule forbidding any method or route for prayer, with the exception that no harm is incurred upon others.

Of the three methods of prayer, the simplest, most common, most fulfilling and perhaps easiest, is bhakti (devotion). Submission to Ahura Mazda brings freedom from inhibition, **hvo vichiro Ahuro, atha ne**

anghat yatha hvo vasat, “alone Ahura judges what is best, so happen unto us whatever He wills” (Yasna 29:4). Similar sentiments are pronounced in Yasna 44:16 and 49:12. The most difficult and most frustrating path is the path of gnanan (knowledge).

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY Ervad Jehan Bagli

The physical existence is a manifestation of the Divine Energy, the Ultimate ineffable Reality that is the basic foundation of all Faiths. This energy pervades through the universe in everything that exists. This Spiritual essence is therefore a part and parcel of all mankind. Human beings are therefore, **The Spiritual passing through a transitory Physical existence.**

Prayer is a mode of communion. Communion with what? Rather than without, the prayer is a communion with the Divine self within. It is an effort to understand and harmonize with the innate Divine in order to attain –Haurvatat - the Perfection, the Completeness. It is through familiarity and awareness of the innate Divinity that we can generate a meaningful relationship with our physical Self. This relationship in turn can chart our path to perfection, to make our quest for *Asha* more fruitful.

Religion is generally regarded as a personal matter, between ones God and one’s moral sense. We must however realize, that **Consciousness of God is indeed self consciousness. Knowledge of God is indeed the understanding of self**, for only through understanding of self that we can understand the divinity that pervades among each other. God is the manifested inward spirit, the expression of ones spirituality, the revelation of ones intimate thought. Speaking of thoughts, a communion is a way of thinking, thinking with the Good Mind – *Vohu Manah*. However, in the face of the chaotic stress of the corporeal world, it is an arduous task for one, to keep the mind in its pristine GOOD state all the time. The state of *Aramaiti* – piety, devotion, right-mindedness - is the sanctuary **to refresh and renovate the Mind**, to free it from being corrupted by the chaos, and return it to its pristine **Good** state. Only through constant renovation through devotion and will from within, that mankind can retain the mind, **Vohu** and be “among those who shall heal and refresh Life in this world” (Ys 30.9).

Aramaiti is a state of being that permits to harmonize **the human mentality with the holy mentality - Spenta Mainyu - the human will with the will of God- Asha**. A short period spent to attain the state of *Aramaiti* through devotion in communion, can reap immense returns. It can elevate *Vohu Manah* to **Vahishta Manangha -Best thinking-** which must light one’s Path to **Asha Vahishta -Best Truth-** and lead to the generation of rule of Truth and Good thinking- **Khshthvirya**. that can enlighten the path of perfection for one’s self. The main reason why we pray is to **rejuvenate the Mind** that can then effectively seek **harmony with the innate Divine** for the quest of Good Thought that can lead from **Haurvatat to Ameretat**.

WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY Ervad Brigadier Behram M. Panthaki

Most of us turn to God in prayer for selfish motives; we seek prosperity, happiness, safety and good health and ask Ahura Mazda to bless us with material prosperity. Some of us pray from habit, because we do not doubt the efficacy of prayer and hope our wish list will be fulfilled. Still others never pray because they believe in destiny. Most of us would have experienced that we take to prayer more seriously and with greater concentration when faced with difficulty.

In Zarthushti philosophy, prayers are not meant to ask Ahura Mazda for material gains but for the general good of mankind in the belief that the good of all would lead to the good of the individual. So what should we pray? Should we only pray the Gathas that were composed by Zarathushtra or should we pray the Yashts, Niyashes and Gahs composed by his followers? Some lay greater emphasis on the meaning of our prayers while there are those for whom the rituals are more important. It really does not matter which

prayer we decide to recite, or how, when or where we pray. What is of essence are the devotion, sincerity and concentration we bring to bear on our mind while engaging with our Maker.

It is worthy that we remember our Creator, Ahura Mazda, at least once in a day. Reciting just the Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Ashem Vohu with attentiveness and dedication will have more meaning than saying prayers for over half an hour while our minds wander in some distant field in pursuit of materialism.

Last two lines of Para 10 of Yasna 28 i.e. the first Gatha Ahunavaiti sums it all up: “***At va kshamaibya asuna vaidā Kharethya Vaintya Sravao***”.

Dr. Irach JS Taraporewalla translates, “No prayer said with devotion can ever remain unanswered from your side.”