

BALANCING BODY-MIND-SPIRIT THE ZOROASTRIAN WAY

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Zoroastrianism does not believe in the dichotomy between body and mind but emphasizes the intricate relationship between body, mind, and spirit and the important role *Ushtaana* (breath) plays in this respect. In Yasna 33.14 Asho Zarathushtra dedicates his own *Ushtaana* (breath, vitality even of his own body), a concept which is also repeated in other prayers. Since in both these utterances, *Ushtaana* is placed in a spiritual context along with good thoughts, words, deeds, etc., *Ushtaana* represents something spiritual besides mere breath, namely, a link between body-mind-spirit.

By bringing our body-mind-spirit together through certain breathing techniques, we can overcome many stresses and ailments such as high blood pressure, headaches, ulcers, anxiety about various things, anxiety attacks, etc. I'll briefly point out how this could be done.

First, stretch yourself and let go and sit quietly. Then just follow the breath going into your nose and getting out of your nose. Do no worry when it goes out of the nose either way. Try to slow down your breathing as much as possible.

Now, say *Vohu* as you breathe in and *Mana* as you breathe out. *Vohu* means "good" and *Mana* means "mind". When we breathe heavy, as when we run, breathing makes a sound like *Hoo*. But even when we slow down our breathing, it makes a certain sound, which is like *Vohu Mana*. Match the sound of *Vohu* with the breath you inhale and match the sound of *Mana* with the breath you exhale, so that both sounds becomes one and the same.

Now, try to slow down your breathing even further and pause after each breath and say only *VO* as you inhale and *HU* as you pause after inhaling, and say only *MA* as you exhale and *NA* as you pause after exhaling. This comes about only after a great deal of practice and so keep it as your long-term goal only.

Breathe in good thoughts and good intentions and breathe out all bad ones you ever had and get rid of them forever. Stop being a prisoner of them. They only hurt you and your spiritual progress. Follow Asho Zarathustra in dedicating your *Ushtaana* to God and Godly things and breathe no evil.

Then visualize that you are being surrounded on all sides by a radiant divine light, *Anaghra Raschao*, and imagine that it enters your

body through the pores in your skin and permeates your body, mind and spirit with the divine essence of Ahura Mazda, that is, His Inner Fire. Realize therefore that we are all made of Ahura Mazda's own essence through His Holy Spirit, Spenta Mainyu, and our hearts vibrate with His Divine Fire – a small essence of it resides in us all and keeps us alive. If we do not breathe, we do not live. Breath keeps us going and keeps us warm. Try to feel the warmth, the inner fire, in your body and feel that your palms and feet are getting warmer and warmer every minute.

Feel the throbbing of your heart and realize that your heart is throbbing with Ahura Mazda's divine energy and His Spirit resides in you and you are dedicating your Ushtaana, your breath to Him, as Zarathushtra himself does. Let the divine energy pervade through your entire being from your forehead to your feet.

Breath is not all physical, but it is also mental. So we cannot always follow the breath just as we cannot always control our mind or our thoughts. So just let it be. It all depends on practice and on where we are on our spiritual sojourn at a given time. Practice it every day, even as often as you can in a day. If you need audio tapes to expand and reinforce this technique, they are available from the speaker for a small donation to a worthy cause. Good luck! Ushta Te!