

ĀTASH NEYĀYESH

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Introduction

The beauty about Ātash Neyāyesh is that this prayer can be recited at any time of the day. There are no restrictions on recitation of this Neyāyesh unlike some other prayers. As we all know it is a combination of three paragraphs of Yasna 33.12-14 (beginning), Yasna 62.1-10 (main portion) and Yasna 34.4 (end) in that order.

Variation: Content and Sequence – Kadmi Ātash Neyāyesh

1. The introductory para “Az Hamā Gunāh” is not there.
2. “Us moi uzāreswā ..., Rafedrāi vouruchashāne...., At rātām Zarathushtro....” (Paras from Yasna 33.12-14) are at the end and **are recited three times.**
3. The Fravarāne para (“Āthro Ahurahe Mazdāo Puthra....”) is short.
4. Recitation of Bāz (low tone) para at the end of main portion is different.
5. There is no “At Toi Ātrem” (Yasna 34.4) para, after Yasnemcha Vahmemcha
6. The sequence after Yasnemcha Vahmemcha is Ahmāi Raeshacha followed by “Us moi uzāreswā ..., Rafedrāi vouruchashāne...., At rātām Zarathushtro....” **recited three times.**
7. Followed by Hazanghrem, Jasa me Avanghe MazdaShort ending para in which roj māh and gāh is recited.
8. There is no Kerfe Mozd.....

9. There is no “Dādāre Gehān.....” Para
10. Ātash Behrām – Is recited as Ātash Behrām Neyāyesh
11. Ātash Ādarān – Is recited as Ātash Ādarān Neyāyesh
12. Ātash Dādgāh – Is recited as Ātash Dādgāh Neyāyesh

Preamble

I have looked at translations of Ātash Neyāyesh of a few individuals – T. R. Sethna, Kanga, Dastur Minocheherhomji and Oktor Skyaervo (FEZANA-Summer 2004, Pages 39 and 40).

Dastur Minocheherhomji’s elucidation is very philosophical and emphasizes divine attributes of an individual. Kanga’s explanation leans more toward corporeal (physical) elements. Sethna’s work is an amalgam of both versions where, at places, spiritual characteristics and at others physical traits are highlighted.

To a lay man the translation of Ervad Kanga would be most appealing as it is written in simple terms and is easy to comprehend. However, my narration is not based on translation of any one particular individual in its entirety.

Presentation

During the presentation I shall read out translations of selected paragraphs of the Neyāyesh of all three authors to highlight their respective approach and tenor. However, I have, in my notes, full translation of the Neyāyesh of all three authors as reference for our later discussion.

I have also done my own analysis based on these translations to arrive at a simple and less philosophical version of my own to understand what this prayer conveys.

Let me state at the outset that I have omitted from my assignment the initial and end passages from the Gāthās that form part of the Neyāyesh. I have

deliberated on the main portion of the Neyāyesh i.e. what forms portion of Yasna 62.1-10.

Translation - Ātash Puthra Ahurahe Mazdāo

Before I proceed with the main text of the Neyāyesh, let me address the phrase **Ātash Puthra Ahurahe Mazdāo**. As you are aware there is a controversy about its widespread translation as “Fire, son of Ahura Mazda”. According to Kanga the ordinary meaning of the word “Puthra” (Sanskrit ‘Putra’) –is “son” but he derives the meaning of this word from the Sanskrit root ‘pu’ meaning to purify, to render pure, “source of purifying, cleaning” and translates it as “purifier” throughout the Neyāyesh.

Kanga translates the phrase as “O Fire, the purifier (of all things) pertaining to Ahura Mazda”.

Sethna translates as “O purifying Fire of Ahura Mazda”.

Dastur Minocheherhomji translates it philosophically as “Light Divine”.

Composition

Ātash Neyāyesh is allegorically composed of five distinct sections.

Section One - Ethics and Philosophy - The beginning 3 paragraphs from Ahunavaiti Gāthā, Yasna 33.12-14 (Us moi uzāreshvā)

Section Two - Admiration (Paragraph 1), Adoration (Paragraph 2), and Veneration (Paragraph 3)

Section Three – Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 – Devotee asking for blessings

Section Four – Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 – What Fire expects from a devotee

Section Five – Paragraph 10 – Blessings that Fire gives to devotee

Legend

Kanga – Times New Roman 16

Sethna – Times New Roman 16 Italics

Minocheherhomji – **Times New Roman Bold**

Paragraph 1 – Fire is worthy of praise and homage - Admiration

In Paragraph 1 (**Yasnemcha vahmemcha huberetimcha**), the reciter praises the fire by saying “ The purifying fire of Ahura Mazda, you are worthy of praise (worship) and homage (invocation) in the abodes of mankind and may there be happiness (greatness) and good fortune unto that man who shall always worship thee with:

fuel (aesmo), Baresman (baresmo), milk (gao), and mortar (hāvano) in hand”.

With shining hands, with exalted hands, with praying hands, and with strong hands.

With illumination, with inner exaltation, soul sustenance, soul purification.

To me it implies that every household should have fire burning in his home which in olden days (before the advent of electric and gas fire) was the norm. And what is more if you recall in our childhood when we said our evening prayers we went into the kitchen to recite Ātash Neyāyesh in front of the hearth fire.

Paragraph 2 – Fire accorded exalted position - Adoration

In Paragraph 2 (**Dāityo aesme buyāo, Dāityo baoidhi buyāo**)

O Fire, the purifier of all things
May you have the right wood
May you have the right incense

May you have the right food
May you have the right fuel
May thou be provided nourishment for a long time

May you become bestower of light (Aesme)
May you become bestower of intellect (Baoidhi)
May you become bestower of nourishment (Pithvi)
May you become bestower of high praises (Upasayene)
May you become protector of life of abundance (Harethre)
May you become protector of pious life
O purifying fire of Ahura Mazda

Thou become worthier in: Illumination, self consciousness, soul sustenance, exalted position of dignity. Mayest thou be tended and tenderly cared for by devotees of maturity and wisdom.

In physical sense it means that for lack of fuel the fire should not get extinguished. Also it is like any living being, that needs proper nourishment to remain healthy, the fire should also be nourished well for it to continue to blaze. The reciter wishes that the fire gets its proper nourishment.

Paragraph 3 – Compliments to Fire - Veneration

Paragraph 3 (**Saoche buye ahmya nmāne, mat-saoche buye ahmya nmāne**), to me, is the most appealing part of the prayer. Very often I recite and translate this paragraph when I do a Jashan in someone's home. It says

O fire of Ahura Mazda!

May you burn (*be a blazing fire*) in this house–*tabernacle (human body)*

May you ever burn (*be a blazing fire*) in this house (*human body*)

For a very long time till the Renovation (*Restoration*)

May you bring brilliance (*be light*) in this house (*human body*)
May you bring prosperity (*on your growth*) in this house (*human body*)

May the mighty flame be in hearth and heart: ever growing, deep, ever constant and steady, ever bright and clear, ever unquenchable – ever waxing never waning till the renovation be achieved along the milestones of eternity and soul’s consummation.

One can interpret the meaning of this paragraph in two different ways. One - these are blessings for a home. Two – fire is revered as a visible symbol of the inner light, the inner spark that dwells in every human being, and the inner flame that burns within each of us. We need to keep that fire ignited and keep it blazing. In physical sense – it is to be active, industrious, and progressive.

Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 – Seeking gifts and wishes to be fulfilled

In next three paragraphs the person who recites the Neyāyesh asks for gifts to be bestowed through the fire and wishes he/she desires to be fulfilled.

Paragraph 4 (Dāyāo me Ātarsh puthra Ahurahe Mazdāo, āsu khvāthrem, āsu thrāitim)

O fire of Ahura Mazda! The purifier, grant me,
Joyous welfare (comfort - Khvāthrem) and sustenance (Thrāitim),
Long life (Jitim) and happiness (Khvāthrem), Greatness (Mastim),
Wisdom (Spāno) , *good memory*, fluent (*quick*) tongue, (Khshviwrem hizvām), Intelligence (Ushi) (*reason*) for (*holiness of*) my soul (Urune),
Intellect (Khratum) (*wisdom*) which may increase in proportion and May not diminish, and *manly vigor* [strength (Hāmvaletim) of manliness (Nairyām)]

Kanga and Sethna – almost the same.

**Grant unto me O Light Divine dignity (of humanity)
Wisdom, clear convincing speech to expound the Gospels
Consciousness of my soul to comprehend the deeper meaning
Intelligence – Reason all comprehending
Humanity all encompassing
Paragraph 5 (Eredhvo-zangām, akhvafnayām, thrishum asnāmcha
khshafnāmcha āsito-gātum)**

Strength for standing firm-footed, wakefulness (akhvafnayām) one third (thrishum) of the days (asnāmcha) and nights (khshafnāmcha), steadiness in one's duty (āsito-gātum)

**May I be ever active
Never drowsy and dull (resting only one third of the day)
Watchful even when seated and at rest**

May I be blessed with progeny (frazaintim)
Who is nourishing (tuthrushām),
Of innate wisdom (āsnām), - **intelligence**
Ruling over regions (karsho-rāzām), - **Self sustaining**
Sitting in the assembly (vyākhanām), - **Guiding the Anjuman**
Thoroughly developed (hām-raodhām), - **With all round development**
Possessed of good respect (hvāpām), - **Accomplishment**
Delivering from distress (ānzo-buzim), - **Self-redeeming**
As powerful as a hero (hvirām) – **Superior intelligence**

An offspring who may render my home (nmānemcha),
my family (visemcha), my town - province (zantumcha),
my country (dakhyumcha) and the religion of my country (danghu-
sastimcha) prosperous.

Kanga and Sethna – almost the same.

Such a progeny that would advance life at various levels and stages of self realization.

Paragraph 6 (Dāyāo me Ātarsh puthra Ahurahe Mazdāo yā me anghat afrasāonghāo)

O fire, the purifier pertaining to Ahura Mazda!
Do thou grant me such knowledge and point out such a course
So that I may perform virtuous deeds,
I may pay homage to Ahura Mazda
And lead my soul to goodness,
So that after my passing away I may obtain
For my good deeds the exalted place of Heaven in return.

Good rewards as a good return for prayers and a long time of happiness for my soul

May I deserve that result of my life dedicated to virtue, devotion and duty. Such is the blissful life of the soul ever-enduring.

Paragraph 7 – Yearning for Dedication

Paragraph 7 (Vispaeibyō sastim baraiti Ātarsh Mazdāo Ahurahe)

That Fire of Ahura Mazda carries admonition (sastim) unto all for whom that (Fire) cooks (hām pachāite) the evening and noon meals (khshafnimcha suirimcha) (i.e. gives them good understanding) (and) from all he solicits a good (huberetimcha), healthful (ushta-beretimcha) and friendly (vanta-beretimcha) offering – **dedication of virtue and light.**

Paragraph 8 and 9 are questions and answers

Paragraph 8 (Vispanām para-charentam Ātarsh zasta adidhayā)

The Fire looks at the hands of all comers and says:
What does the walking friend bring to the sitting friend?
We praise the Fire, the beneficent, powerful, shining warrior.
(Walking friend means the person going near the Fire and the sitting
Friend should be understood as Fire which itself cannot walk.)

Kersey Antia (FEZANA – Fall 2002, Page 63) translates it as:

The (inner) fire looks at those coming to it (as if to ask): Has the friend
who is able to move around (the human body) used his energy to
develop his inner friend (soul, who is locked inside and hence unable to
move around).

Isn't it a common practice that when we get invited by a friend or a
colleague for a meal, you carry a small gift as a token of your
appreciation and to convey your gratefulness?

Paragraph 9 (Āat yezi-she aem baraiti aesmem vā ashaya beretem)

But if any person brings unto that fire
Fuel with sincere heart or Baresman spread, or the fragrant plant
Hadhānaepata unto that offerer sanctimoniously
Then the Fire of Ahura Mazda being pleased,
Revered and satisfied gives a blessing

The blessings is in the next paragraph

Paragraph 10 – The blessings

Paragraph 10 (Upa-thwā hakhshoit geush vānthwa, upa viranām pourutās)

Unto thee (i.e. in thy family) may the flock of cattle increase - **have ample means,**

Unto thee may there be an increase of heroic men (*sons having heroic strength*) – **Blessed with many worthy sons**

May thou have an active mind (*may thou be clever and intellectual*) – **Endowed with active and alert mind**

May thy life be active (*may thou perform benevolent and virtuous deeds*) – **Spending the life for others**

Mayest thou live a joyous life – **Enjoying life of larger interests**

Those nights that thou livest.

This is the blessing of the Fire (for him) who brings to that fire dry fuel Examined in the light and purified with the blessings of righteousness

Such is the range of blessings for the person who offers his/her efforts for Inner Illumination that is free from pollution – Tested by wisdom and truth and purified by sublimity of righteousness

The significance of the sentence “fuel examined in the light and purified” is that the fuel is selected after examining in the light and after removing the bark wherein small insects and polluted objects may not be covered. The fuel and any other incense which may be put on fire should be absolutely dry and cleansed. Any kind of wet and dirty fuel should never be put on the fire.

Conclusion

I consider that Ātash Neyāyesh emphasizes important tenets of our faith, guides devotee to fulfill his/her commitment to life and carry out the message of our prophet:

Reverence to fire (Para 1), be alert and active (Para 3), self improvement (Para 4), be industrious (not lazy) (Para 5), no discrimination of genders (Para 5), not to be selfish (think of your clan, town, country and the religion of your country) (Para 5), to be environmental conscious (not to pollute atmosphere) (Para 10), concept of reciprocity-thank you (Para 10).

It is also a prayer where the reciter requests that certain blessings and character traits be bestowed on the narrator.

Let me end with a quote by Dr. Dr. Eruch JS Taraporewalla

“No scripture in the world can be understood merely by analyzing its words and its grammar: it has to be practiced. And when we live the life according to the rules laid down in a scripture we are following some Divine Messenger and we are trying to work for the Lord.”