

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 177 – Why I should Pray in Avesta - Dasturji Dhalla's excellent alternative - Homage Unto Ahura Mazda!

Hello all Tele Class friends:

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 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 from this book and hope you enjoy it:

Why I should Pray in Avesta - Dasturji Dhalla's excellent alternative - Homage Unto Ahura Mazda!

Prayer is the heavenward soaring of the soul on wordy wings

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

Man has always prayed. He is a praying animal. Prayer was born with Gaya Maretan, the first man, it will live up to the time of Saoshyant, the last man to be born upon earth. It is instinctive and innate. It is the inborn urge in man like breathing and thinking and speaking. It is an inalienable accompaniment of human mind.

Prayer ever grows in depth, in fervour, in devotion, in selflessness, in spirituality. Prayer begins with the magic spells of the savage and ends with the sublime songs of the sage. Prayer outgrows man.

Prayer is the expression in words of the pious feelings of the heart, its devotional overflow. It is the breath of the soul. It is the fellowship and communion with Ahura Mazda. It is the noblest expression of thought in words, sublime speech of the spirit, an audible utterance of the heart, and a verbal expression of noble sentiments and feelings. Righteous thinking is prayer.

Through prayer does man convey his feelings of joy and sorrow, gratitude and love, hope and fear. In his hunger and thirst for the divine grace, man lays down through prayer his grievances before his creator, confesses his guilt, craves for help, and seeks mercy.

Prayer is the great discipline for man. It is a striving, a seeking for something beyond man's weak self, higher than himself, a will, a power, a strength, an ideal which man does not possess, but longs to attain.

Help me, Ahura Mazda, to cultivate the habit of prayer. Enable me to know thy will. I pray, that I may conform my impulses to its demands. I will pray with concentration of my mind and I will pray with all my soul. I will pray to thee in words of devotion with all my heart and I will pray to thee in silence, for thou dost hear my prayer even in thought. Thou dost read my thoughts and measure my feelings and know my aspirations. I will pray, Ahura Mazda, that prayer may lift me to thee, and make me thine.

[\(Dasturji Dr. Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda Part I\(a\) Prayer 34\)](#)

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 utilising 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..

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!

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

(Aafrin Pegaamber Zartosht, from [Ervad Kangaji Gujarati Khordeh Avesta Baa Maaeni](#) – Page 424, adapted Aafrinaamahi - we wish instead of Aafrinaami – I wish, in the original)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli