

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 293: Progress is the Zoroastrian watchword - Dasturji Dhalla: Homage Unto Ahura Mazda, Part I(b), Prayer 14

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Ring out the old, ring in the new – Lord Alfred Tennyson

The great English Poet Laureate, Lord Alfred Tennyson, wrote a beautiful poem –

In Memoriam – grieving about a close friend who died recently. Its much quoted verses are for “ringing out” the old year and “ringing in” the new one.

These words are appropriate to welcome our New Year 2019 and so I quote Lord Tennyson:

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

With the above wonderful words as background, Jo Ann and I want to wish you a belated Merry XMAS and Happy New Year with good Health and lots of Happiness with your loved ones and family and friends!

2018 was a difficult year for us but with your prayers and good wishes, we overcome this little bump in our lives and the future for all of us in Hafta Keshwar Zamin looks very promising!

Dasturji Dhalla on Progress:

With that in mind, it will be appropriate to quote Dasturji Dhalla's one of the prayers from his wonderful book: **Homage unto Ahura Mazda** about **Progress**.

Let me take this opportunity to repeat a previous WZSE introduction of Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda. Hope you do not mind to hear 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 Progress from this book and hope you enjoy it:

Progress is the Zoroastrian watchword – Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda – Part I(b) – Prayer 14

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 Progress as the Zoroastrian watchword. This is a wonderful short prayer on Progress by Dasturji. Without Progressive thoughts, and inspiration to dare and face and fight obstacles and hardships, our communities in India and Pakistan would not have achieved all the fame and respect from all over the world.

So today, we present this prayer by Dasturji on Progress:

Progress is the Zoroastrian watchword – Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda – Part I(b) – Prayer 14

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

Progress is the rule of life. Progressive movement is the law of the universe. Life presses on and onward in its incessant march. Life is progress.

Progress is the glorious unfolding of the design of Providence. The world works out its great purpose and moves towards a definite goal.

The history of the world is the history of its progress. Nothing under heaven is complete and perfect. Everything moves towards completion and perfection.

Progress is the prerogative of man alone. Angels, above him, need no progress, for Ahura Mazda has enthroned them on the highest heights of perfection. Animals, below him, know no progress, for the gift to word progress is not vouchsafed unto them.

Onward by day and onward by night moves the human caravan without rest or respite, ever on the move, strives to reach its destiny. In natural course, progress paces with slow and steady steps. At other times, convulsions and upheavals, physical and social, political and economic, precipitate its forward march. Progress may pause and halt awhile, when arrested and retarded, but ever unfailingly to resume its interrupted journey.

In progress hast thou ingrained, Ahura Mazda, our hope for the betterment of our future. We gather in the present the harvest prepared by the noble efforts of our ancestors in the past. Never can we let die the past. Let not, however, grow in us the habit of always turning back to the past, but guide us ever to look ahead. For when heavily weighs on us the dead hand of the past, it hampers our progress. Lead us to see that hollow is our boast that our forefathers were great and glorious, if in our turn, complacently we, live on past reputation and reap and flourish on past achievements. Inspire us to dare and do what our fathers did in their days. Embolden us to face and fight obstacles and hardships. Enthuse us for hard and strenuous effort to move with the times. Progress is the most salient trait of the Zoroastrian character. Help us to further the progress of our community even by a fraction of a footstep each day that we live upon earth and keep ourselves abreast of progress, Ahura Mazda.

[\(Dasturji Dr. Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda Part I\(b\) Prayer 14:](#)

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 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.. 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