

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 314: Our Community - Dasturji Dhalla - Homage Unto Ahura Mazda - Part I(b) - Prayer 22

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Dasturji Dhalla on Our Community:

Our Parsi Community in India has suffered many hardships, and troubles and with hard work, has achieved an important place in the hearts of all Indian majority. 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 **Our Community**.

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

Our Community – Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda – Part I(b) – Prayer 22

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 **Our Community**. This is a wonderful short prayer on Our Community by Dasturji. Without lofty 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 Our Community:

Our Community – Dasturji Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda – Part I(b) – Prayer 22

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

Thirteen long centuries ago, when the Kian Glory fled past our ancestors forever, when the crown and scepter of the great Sassanian empire fell, when the fame and fortune of the greatest kingdom of the day left them, when friendless and forlorn they stood and knew not where to turn, thou our eternal friend, stood by them in the darkest day of their need, O Ahura Mazda. Thou didst uphold them and take them beneath thy protecting wings and stay with them in the woeful time of their misfortune. Thou didst lead them under thy guiding star to this our land of adoption

and become their refuge and their rock of stay.

Fugitives forlorn they came from distant shores and thou didst sustain them in their plight and cheer them and help them to begin life anew amid strange surroundings. Thou didst inspire them to strenuous, hard work and, never faltering, never failing, never despairing, with unbending will, unbounded zeal, and undying hope they strove and struggled, toiled and labored under the scorching sun and malarial swamps, and thou didst crown their active and diligent life with success.

Our fathers have built the noble heritage from age to age by their patient labor, incessant efforts, hazardous adventures. They have worked near and they have worked afar, they have lived lonely lives in far-flung countries, they have sailed distant seas and have enriched our community by wealth they brought by land and sea. They have sown and we reap; they have gathered, and we use.

Our fathers struggled with poverty and with honest, hard work amassed riches. Faithfully following the noble precepts of holy Zarathushtra, they gave to the poor and the needy, they gave for the healing of the mind. They gave, and they gave freely to all, counting not caste or creed, and they made the appellation 'Parsi' to mean charity. They have raised us to our present estate and made us what we are today.

Our fathers have done their duty; help us, O Heavenly Father, to do ours. Give us agile bodies, active minds, and quickened hearts to play our part even as they have played theirs. Keep us ever watchful to guard our morals and the glorious edifice of our communal character that we may never besmirch the fair name of our community. With the humility of the mind and devotion of the heart and prayer of the spirit at our command, we commend our community, smallest of small among nations, to thy unflinching care and protection and guidance, Ahura Mazda, now and forever.

(Dasturji Dr. Dhalla – Homage Unto Ahura Mazda Part I(b) Prayer 22:

<http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dhalla/ch1b/ib22.htm>)

SPD Comments

1. Prayers in this Dasturji Dhalla's book covers 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 WZSEs, 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