

ASHEM VOHU - YATHA-AHU-VAIRYO

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Ashem-Vohu

This small prayer of 12 words of three lines, contains untold spiritual richness, although it's the basic and most common of our Manthra (Prayers) in use, taught to all of us first when we are toddlers, whose recitation must be the initial prayer, which many of us must have done, and rightly so, as it is so potent and powerful that the divine light of "**Asha-Vahishta**" (one of our seven "Ameshaspands") flows into it and emanates from it when it is recited. That divine light is thus transmitted and the reciter of Ashem Vohu thus attunes himself or herself with the channel of Ashem vibrating in Nature.

The "Tawil" (inner esoteric meaning word analysis) of 'Ashem-Vohu' shows that it contains the relationship of men right from Dadaar Ahuramazda to the lower Animal, vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms, Behman and Ardibehesht Ameshaspands' Humta, Hukta, and Havarshata are connected with it. Three basic colours Red, Yellow and Blue, Nar-Ashvan, Tarikats, and explanation of cosmogenesis are included in a nutshell in Ashem Vohu.

Here, we shall see on what different occasions one Ashem should be prayed, and on what occasions if one Ashem is prayed, it is the equivalent of praying tens, hundreds, thousands; ten thousand and over Ashem. If one is aware of this, one can very easily utilize it in enriching one's life.

Pray ONE ASHEM

(a) **After Sneezing:** - We often hear that the Zoroastrian Religion is most scientific, and this one Ashem Vohu praying; provides one of the proofs - more so in the era of environment protection and pollution. After a sneeze, whatever pollution is left in the air, and in our 'Aipi' (atmosphere personal to the body) gets 'Cleansed by this one 'Ashem. Generally, people in the western world would usually say "Excuse me" to those around after a sneeze, and they in return "say "Bless you'. In old Khordeh Avesta, one comes across a Nirang termed 'Chikhwani Nirang' to pray after sneezing.

(b) **If you hear a Cock crow:** - In the Zoroastrian Religion, a cock is also known as "Tukhmay Sarosh". The sound 'vibrations of cock's crow cuts the 'Gashak' and reaches up, cutting across many layers of the atmosphere.

(c) **Gospands** like the Varasiiji, Bull, Cow, animals of Gava - when they are eating peacefully: - Here, "Manthra" is being joined with "Mithra" - It is said that when these animals are chewing the cud calmly, their 'Mithra' (thought force) are very pure. It is, therefore, desirable to attune with it, by one Ashem recitation.

(d) **When you hear the news of someone's death:** - On hearing of someone's death (whilst remembering the dead person), pray at once one Ashem as enjoined in the Zoroastrian Religion.

(e) **When bad thoughts persist:** Pray one Ashem - by doing so, you apply some sort of a

break on bad thoughts.

(f) **When you go to meet someone important**, you're superior in the office etc.: -
To become successful in your mission/work and/or to reduce difficulties, pray one Ashem.
Also,

(g) When you light a lamp/diva, or when light or lamp gets extinguished.

Note: A Zoroastrian is supposed to protect and preserve fire in any form anywhere. By blowing lighted candles on the cake, ignorant parents encourage their offspring's from a very young age to flout one of the most fundamental tenets of the Zoroastrian religion. It is not surprising in modern times to find the parents themselves cooking a snook at the teachings of our prophet. Why, we have seen in some Parsee households even westernized doddering dowagers indulge in such irreligious acts of their own birthdays! Your question, therefore, if this should be "tolerated" only provokes a couple of counter-questions: What is the remedy? Who has the authority to prevent them from committing such sacrilegious acts? All we can say is, to each his own. Everyone will see TRUTH in the face of the dawn of the fourth day after death.

The late Dr. Sir Jivanji Modi, in his "The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees", states that, "No religious rites of ceremonies are enjoined as necessary on the birthday of a Parsee child...After a bath and a new suit of clothes, the child is generally sent with some sandalwood to an adjoining Fire temple.

(h) When you remember your dear departed relatives / friends;

(i) When you come into contact with some Drui - evil or Nasa etc., pray one Ashem.

Pargard 1 of "Hadokhta Nask" narrates a Divine dialogue between Ahura Mazda and Zarthusht on "Ashem Vohu". The efficacy of devotionally recited only one Ashem Vohu is so great that its value increases in accordance with the various particular circumstances or events and time from 10 Ashem to Infinite Ashem.

Zarthusht Sahib asks Dadaar Ahura Mazda when will just one Ashem Vohu recital be equivalent in value to reciting 10 Ashem Vohu.

Answer: - When one sits to have his food and thinking of Humata, Hukhta, Havarashta i.e. all the divine work of the Yazatas going on in Nature, and shunning bad thoughts, words and deeds, if one prays one Ashem, it is equivalent to 10 Ashem Vohu.

(2) Similarly, when one prays one Ashem whilst drinking the duly crushed 'Haoma' water - then its value is like praying 100 Ashem.

(3) In sleep, while turning - changing one's side in bed - if one prays one Ashem, then its value is that of 1000 Ashem, recited at any other time.

(4) In the morning, as soon as your eyes open - on awakening - if one Ashem is prayed it is equivalent in worth as praying 10,000 Ashem.

Needless to say that on each of the above occasions, Ashem should be accompanied with the thought of ascribing; Humta, Hukhta, Havarashta and discarding Dushmata, Dujukhta and Dujavarashta - then only the value of Ashem increases in its divine stature (goodness and beauty).

At this juncture of the questioning, the quantitative formula- changes to the qualitative one.

Zarthusht Sahib asks Ahura Mazda: When is one Ashem, prayed in its splendor, goodness and beauty, worth as much as the entire region of "Khanirath Baami" Keshvar with its creation?

Answer: - When one human being recites one Ashem at the last moment of one's life, thinking of Humata, Hukhta and Hvarashta - i.e. all the divine work of the Yazata's going on in Nature.

Q). 2. Which is one Ashem when prayed worth as much as all that is in and between the earth and the sky (i.e. worlds, material - spiritual - divine)?

Answer: - When a human being recites one Ashem after renouncing forever the bad thoughts, words and deeds – when the human has converted all his evil into good and thus has attained the higher stage of Nar-Ashvan.

There is a vast difference between Ashem prayed by us, the worldly mortals, and that prayed by an Ashavan, the one who has renounced all evil and is climbing the ladder of Ashoi upward. His Ashem is more powerful and straightaway reaches higher. Ours naturally requires an effect as laid down in the formula of the Hadokht Nask.

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YATHA - AHU - VAIRYO

The above three lines of 21 words stands in Avesta prayers as one of the most mysterious prayer, an oldest, and powerful. We, Zarthoshtis, learn Yatha and Ashem as our basic recitation of prayers and utter the same throughout our life, knowing at maximum, if at all, that it is powerful. Our 21 Nasks bear each word of Yatha as heading, and some different number of Yathas are to be prayed for some different Avesta prayers. But far from it, by going deep into it or trying to understand its esoteric side, one will find that it could fill a volume, which is not possible here but still in a nutshell or as a very light rough outline. Let us try and understand. In recitation, prayer of Yatha is the best of the best, in each word of Yatha there is depth, which we cannot fathom nor understand completely.

The one and only, the Great one who has no name, no creator, is there but not there, is in everything, unknown, source of all sources - before creating the universe, took out an order, law - "**Vairya**", which is known as "**Ahunavairya**". Yazashni 19 Ha explains about this mystery. When this "**Vairya**" was taken out it was living, was Yazad of Yazads, absolute obedient, without limit, Completely Knowledgeable, as whose extension '**Fravashi**', came into being - after which the universe was created. Fravashi goes on praying "**Ahunavairya**" continuously, that is why it has knowledge of the whole universe.

The music of 'Ahunavairya' is in and connected with 'Fravashi' and Yazdi power, as well as around all that is in the universe, which is termed "**Ahunvar-noNaad**". This Naad reminds each and everything of the universe through consciousness continuously of the Great one. Hence, the "**Naad of Ashem**" is also present. Between these two 'Naads there is "**Naad of Yanghe-Hatam**" which is as joiner of Ashem and Yatha Naads, and when this will happen, the universe which is made out of Ahunavar, will get relieved of its sin, and will meet the Great one, by which each and everything will get transmitted in shining light - **Farshogard** (Renovation).

As mentioned above, this is the very thin and limited rough outline of the potency and power of Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo.

Many a scholar and savant has written number of times about the efficacy of 'Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo', and its miracles but it depends upon each individual and their intensity of prayers. We have gathered too much dust on our shining mirror which we will have to cleanse before getting the results and benefits of "Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo"

The number of Ahunavar to be recited on undertaking different works.

When a certain work is done, a "Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo" is recited a different number of times.

1 Yatha should be recited: - while leaving any one place for business;

- on returning home;
- at the time when one wants to speak to someone;
- on undertaking any new work;
- at the time when one wishes to go to the king or in the presence of great men;
- when crossing a river;
- before borrowing money, and also before demanding repayment of debt;
- when one goes out of the house;
- while putting out any lamp or light;
- before sitting on a chair just previously occupied by someone else.

N.B. - When a person is seated for some time, his personal aura gets attached to it, his body heat also gets transmitted, both of which may be impure and/or different than yours. Hence we are enjoined to recite one Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo before occupying such a seat.

2 Yathas should be recited:

- at the time when one wishes to go on a journey so that Behram Yazad may convey him in safety;
- upon hearing good news;
- before giving blessings to someone.

N.B. – when one invokes blessings on any one, one should (first) recite two Yathas, and then one should pronounce blessings.

3 Yathas should be recited:

- before visiting political or governmental personnel, aged persons, or elder relatives.

4 Yathas should be recited:

- going to a Gahambar (ceremonial) more blessedly;
- whilst remembering the Holy Yazatas during the Gahambar days

5 Yathas should be recited:

- for driving away “drujas” (evil thoughts, etc.);
- when one goes to atone for sins or misdeed;
- on lighting a lamp (or switching on a light)

6 Yatha should be recited

- when people go for the purpose of celebrating the nuptials of their children;
- when one asks for power;
- when we do any good work for our children;
- when one wishes for success in a battle;
- when attending a marriage reception (or any religious function like Navjote, Jasan, Marriage);
- before filling a suit in a court;
- on obtaining a favorable decree in a suit;
- when one becomes victorious in any conversation;

N.B. – In an Astrological Chart, 6th House, interalia denotes litigation.

7 Yathas should be recited:

- when one wishes to offer the Yasna service to the Ameshaspands;
- when a wicked person suddenly attacks or challenges;

(7 Ameshaspands – open enemies ruled by the 7th House)

8 Yathas should be recited:

- when one goes to offer the Yasna – service to the Arda Fravash;
- when one sows seeds in a field or garden;

9 Yathas should be recited:

- when one sows seeds in the ground – commencing any agricultural work;
- before sexual embrace with one's wife with a view to having a child born to her (not for mere lustful enjoyment)

N.B. – Corn as well as human seed fructifies after 9 months.

10 Yatha should be recited:

- when one wishes the males (of animals) to have access (to females).

11 Yatha should be recited:

- when one goes in search of a wife (or husband) for oneself;
- before proposing marriage to a girl or a boy;
- before giving away one's daughter in marriage;
- before bringing into existence a new relationship with someone.

12 Yatha should be recited:

- when one desires to ascend a mountain or high hill or when passing over a bridge;

- before entering a cellar;
- while proceeding from one city to another;
- on meeting with sudden calamity.

13 Yatha should be recited:

- when one loses his way;
- at the time when one enters a city or a town;
- when one wishes to go by the way of water;
- when one passes over the bridge of a river, so that the spirit of the water may bless. In the whole Avesta, the Yatha Ahu Vairyo is more successful (than any other formula) as to all rivers.

21 Yatha should be recited:

- when one proceeds on a journey so that Behram Yazad may convey him in safety;
- while going on the road you cross or pass any dead body.

When one is not able to recite other Avesta prayers:

(does not know how to read or write – cannot do so at certain time)

Khurshed Nyaish – Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 103

Sarosh Yasht (Ratni) Vadi - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 103

Sarosh Yasht Hadokht - Yatha Ahu Vairyo - 75

For each five Gehs: Havan, Rapithwan, Ujiran,
Aiwishruthrem, Ushahin - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 65

Meher Nyaish - Yatha Ahu Vairyo 65

Mah-Bokhtar Nyaish - Yatha Ahu Vairyo - 65

Ardvisur Nyaish - Yatha Ahu Vairyo - 65

Atash Nyaish - Yatha Ahu Vairyo - 65

Ardibehesht Yasht - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 65

When both Yatha and Ashem are to be prayed:

Hormazd Yasht - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 103, Ashem Vohu – 12

Patet - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 121, Ashem Vohu – 12

Afringan - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 121, Ashem Vohu – 12

Repenting for any sin and resolving not to repeat in future, i.e.

Patet-na-Mithra - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 21, Ashem Vohu – 12

Entering one's house and while purchasing domestic animal - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 10, Ashem Vohu – 3

After achieving success in any new undertaking – a Thank You - Yatha Ahu Vairyo – 5, Ashem Vohu – 3

AAZAD MANTHRA

Ashem Vohu, Yatha Ahu Vairyo (and Yenghe Hatam) are Aazad Manthra. They can be recited at any time, any place, any condition, if the circumstances so demand. Even with uncovered head, unhygienic personal condition etc. but only if the circumstances are genuine and emergent.

There is nothing more worthwhile like praying Ashem-Yatha at all times throughout one's life.

[References from the Rivayet of Bahman Punjya (and Shapur Bharuchi). The Mazdayasni Connection (of California)]

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