
Hoshbam: The Dawn (of Consciousness)

Recited at dawn, the **Hoshbam** prayer, like other prayers, is poetic and enlightening. It is the dawn not just of a new day, but of the consciousness, of the realization of our oneness with the Creator and Creation. It reminds us of our role in this earthly sojourn, and of our final goal of *Frashokereti*.

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By SILLOO MEHTA

Adapted in English from the Gujarati articles of K. N. Dastoor

Hosh means consciousness and *bam* the sky. At the physical level, *Hoshbam* or dawn is a ray of light in the sky breaking into a flood of sunlight. At the spiritual level, *Hoshbam* is the dawn (awakening) and expansion of divine consciousness in us. The recitation of this talismanic prayer, *Hoshbam*, at dawn, enables us to do this. How? Read on...

The time of dawn is considered by all religions to be holy and auspicious. It is a time when Light conquers Darkness, Good overcomes Evil, Mother Nature awakens from slumber to the waking call of the rooster who proclaims, "O man, awaken from sleep as another day has dawned. Get busy with your duties but before you do so, remember God with devotion and start the day with your offerings (prayers)."

In the religion of Zarathushtra, the time period starting 72 minutes before sunrise until sunrise is known as **Hoshbam** and a prayer of the same name is to be recited in that period. This period of Hoshbam is divided into two: the first 36 minute period is known as *Ushahen-ni-Hoshbam* and the following 36 minute period is known as *Havan-ni-Hoshbam*.

The prayer of Hoshbam is a short prayer packed with powerful vibrations which are compatible with the cool serene atmosphere of the dawn. Imagine the soft cool breeze gently swaying the colorful flowers which dance in ecstasy to His ever-present tune, emanating sweet scent around them; the chirping birds adding merry melodies to the crowing of the rooster which arouses man from his slumber; the soft colorful sky kissing the vale of mist on earth – ah! How fortunate are those who are awake to witness the colorful, musical grandeur of Dawn! How very fortunate are those who enhance the vibrations prevalent at this time with the recitation of the special prayer (Hoshbam) which is a step in the direction of His path! It is a time to meditate, communicate with the Divine; a time to join and dedicate self in aiding Mother Nature; a time to watch Light bless this earth with hope and joy; a time to

cleanse one's self within and without; a time to sacrifice negativity at the feet of benevolence; a time to attune with Lord Almighty!

We shall now enter into the prayer:

Atha iman vacho drenjajoish; yoi anghen varethraghnyotemcha baeshazyotemacha; pancha ahuna vairya frasaravayoish.

Thou shouldst recite these (under-mentioned Avesta verses) which are most victorious – efficacious and healing. Thou shouldst chant five Ahunavars.

The prayer begins with Ahura Mazda commanding us to recite these *manthra* in a loud voice with the noble thought that, “this prayer, formulated by Asho Zarathushtra, has such a powerful effect that it will speed up my spiritual evolution and take me eventually to Him. I will water the seeds of faith in me to blossom into flowers of benevolence.” Just hold such a thought while reciting this powerful prayer.

Yatha Ahu Vairyo 5.

The prayer of Yatha Ahu Vairyo is the command of the Lord. It is like a blueprint of the entire Creation. It denotes the purpose of Creation and its manifestation. The number five is connected with our 5 senses, the thoughts of repentance and to Sarosh Yazad.

Ahunem vairim tanum paiti, ahunem vairim tanum paiti, ahunem vairim tanum paiti. Yatha Ahu Vairyo 1.

Ahunavar protects the body.

Ahunavar, the original sound, known as “The Word” in the Bible and “Aum” in the Hindu scriptures, is the prayer which tills the soil of our spiritual field. The great spiritual Farmers and Shepherds (prophets) are sent down to earth to show us how to weed out the vices in us, plant the seeds of righteousness, water them with prayers and devotion, and harvest a good crop thus bringing about the alchemy of our soul. Thus, Ahunavairya protects and rescues the soul from *druj* - falsehood, ignorance, selfishness and all that is evil.

Kem na Mazda. Ashem Vohu 1.

The Kem Na Mazda prayer is a powerful *nirang* which cleanses all our negativity. The meaning and message of this prayer has been given in previous issues of this magazine.

Yatha Ahu Vairyo 21, Ashem Vohu 12.

In both cases, the individual digits of each number add up to 3 (1 + 2 and 2 + 1). The emphasis is on number three. The number three signifies:

(a) the three worlds in the entire Creation: the spiritual (*Hasti*), the ultra physical (*Nisti*), and the physical world (*Geti*)

(b) the three stage plan of Ahura Mazda for which these three worlds were created: (1) creation of the above three-worlds (2) passing souls into the mortal worlds for the transmutation of their evil into good; and (3) raising them back to the spiritual world after their renovation or perfection (*Frashokereti*).

Nemase-te hushbami; nemase-te hushbami; nemase-te hushbami. Aetatdim vispanam mazishtem dazdyai, ahumcha ratumcha yim ahurem mazdam,

Homage (be) unto thee, O Dawn! This (is) in order to dedicate to Him, the greatest of all (our) Ahu (Lord) and Ratu (Master) who (is) Ahura Mazda.

O powerful force of Hoshbam, accept our salutation, our praise, our prayers. Just as (at dawn) the night has burned into day, goodness has triumphed over evil, Sarosh Yazad's pet, the rooster, has crowed, may the rooster within me also crow and expand my consciousness. May the golden light of dawn penetrate into my being and change the dust in me to gold.

I dedicate to You all virtues arising out of my prayers and attunement. All the glory of benevolence that I may attain by my spiritual exercises and exertions, this too I dedicate unto You. May I aspire to do all good things and offer them to You O Ahura Mazda. May my good actions aid You in your multifarious functions. This is my way of repaying You for all the blessings You have bestowed upon me!

Snathai anghrahe mainyeush dravato, snathai aeshmahe khraivdraosh, snathai mazainyanam daevanam, snathai vispanam daevananam, varenyanamcha dravatam.

Raise weapon (against) the wicked Anghre Mainyu, (against the daeva) Aeshma, of terrible weapon, (against) the Mazanian daevas, and in order to raise weapon (against) all the daevas, (against) the Varenian wicked ones.

Snath means weapon. Here, the reciter wishes to use weapons to resist Anghre Mainyu and his evil hordes – the Aeshma, Mazanian and Varenian daevas.

The evil *Aeshma* daeva is opposed to Sarosh Yazata. This daeva thrives on anger, greed, disobedience and oppression. He carries the weapon of *khraivdraosha*, which is opposed by Sraosha Yazata who carries the weapon of *darshidraosha* (Sarosh Baj) which smites Aeshma's oppression, anger, etc. Water is a unique creation of Ahura Mazda with many properties such as thirst quenching, cleansing, life giving and nourishing, to name a few. These miraculous properties are due to the presence of the beneficial good currents (*frado*) in water. *Mazanian* daeva constantly strives to destroy these six frados - adhu, vanthvo, gaetho, shaeto, dangu and zantu - in water so that their functions are hampered, thus making humankind suffer physically and spiritually. *Varenian* daeva tries to arouse jealousy, lust, ego and materialism by polluting the spirit in the earth which perpetuates patience, tolerance and obedience.

May we develop the strength to oppose and smite these evil forces.

[To be continued...]

Hoshbam: The Dawn (of Consciousness) Part 2 of 3

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Read on...

Shekasteh ghanāmenyo bar ahreman leānat sad hazār bār.

May Ghanamino be defeated; may there be imprecations upon Ahriman a hundred thousand times.

This sentence has to be recited in a low tone, as it is written in Pazand language.

Here we observe that the Evil Spirit has been referred to by two different names in the same sentence. Is Ghanamino the same as Ahriman? Who are Satan and Angra Mainyu?

In order to understand the impact of this sentence, we need to know that these are different manifestations of the Evil Spirit.

Ahura Mazda, as a Creator, functions on different levels by different names (titles). In other words, His Light emanates different channels having different names, like the 101 names that we recite. One such channel is Spenta Mainyu or Spenamino, who functions on the 6th asman of Hasti, the Spiritual World. Spenta Mainyu emanates an opposite pole (spirit), Angra Mainyu, in the 5th asman, for a purpose. Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu work together to alchemize the evil within us into good. This evil, which is in us in different proportions, must be effervesced first. To accomplish this, Angra Mainyu ejects from himself a channel into the non-physical world (Nisti) and our earth (Geti) which is known as *Ghanamino*. It is Ghanamino's job to tempt us, thus bringing out the evil within us (*Av. dravao*). We commit sins, go through the punishment and eventually turn evil into good.

To summarize, Spenta Mainyu and Angare Maniyu are the twin spirits working in the spiritual world (Hasti), whereas Ghanamino is the channel of Angra Mainyu in the non-physical world (Nisti).

What, then, is Ahriman? The evil thoughts, words and deeds of mankind form a structure which is metaphorically referred to as a cloud. This cloud is called *Sheed* - from which the word *Shaitan* originates. It becomes an evil force. This Shaitan or Satan or Ahriman is the manifestation of the evil which is within all of us.

Fradathāi Ahurahe Mazdāo raevato, khvarenanghuhato, fradathāi Ameshanām Spentanām, fradathāi tishtryehe stāro raevato khvarenanghuhato, fradathāi narsh ashaono, fradathāi vispanām Spentahe Mainyeush dāmanām ashaonām. Yathā Ahu Vairyo (2)

(All these are) for the growth and glory of Ahura Mazda, possessed of treasures and glorious, for the increase of the Ameshaspands; for the increase of Star Tishtrya, possessed of treasures and glorious; for the increase of the holy man (and) for the increase of all the holy creatures of Spena Mino.

The word *fradathai* means spiritual love and growth or evolution. Any Avestan word which has *fra* in it denotes love, progress. Here the devotee prays that may Ahura Mazda, the Ameshaspands, Teshtar Tir star, holy men and all the creatures of Spena Mino, progress and succeed in their respective missions.

Vanghucha vanghuyāoscha afrināmi vispayāo ashaono stoish haithyāicha bavānithyāicha bushyānithyāicha, Ashim rāsentim daregho-vārethmanem mishāchim hvo aiwishāchim mishāchim afrasāonghāitim. Barentim vispāo baeshazāo, apāmcha gavāmcha urvaranāmcha. Taurvayeintim vispāo tbaeshāo daevanām mashyānāmcha. Areshyantām ahmāicha nmānāi ahmāicha nmānahe nmāno-patee.

I praise good men and women who are, who were, and will be, of the entire creation of Holy Hormuzd. I praise Ashishavangha who comes for help (and is) the protector for a long time, the friend (of good man) and herself the willing follower, (well-)instructing companion, and keeper of all healing virtues, for waters, cattle and plants and the destroyer of all evils of the daevas, wicked men (who are) the tormentors of this house and lord of this house.

Vanghucha and *Vanghuyaoscha* are the emancipated souls of men and women who are progressing towards the spiritual world (*Hasti*.) They possess divine consciousness. "I salute and attune myself with these *asho* souls who are constantly engaged in executing the divine functions of Nature on different stations, regions and places." A similar thought is reflected in the *Yenghe Hatam* prayer, in the Nirang-e-kushti (in the sentence, *haithaya varshtam hyat varsna frasostemem*) and also in the *Kerfeh Mozd* prayer. It is a good subject for meditation.

We also remember and attune ourselves with *Mino Ashishawangh* (female Yazad) during this auspicious time of Hoshbam. "She is supposed to be *ashim* - the bestower of divine blessings, *rasantim* - the guide/helper on the path to Ahura Mazda, *daregho varethem* - protector till the end of time, trouble shooter in times of difficulties (*afrasanghoitim*), a faithful helper and companion on the path of progress (*havo aivishachim*), who will convert my evil into good, one who will inspire me and eventually lead me to Him through her benevolent blessings."

Here waters (*aap*) and vegetation (*urvar*) which are a condensed form of the Light of Ahura Mazda, are also invoked, remembered and praised along with all the benevolent creation of the Lord. All these are beneficent for the progress of our body, mind and soul.

Then the prayer talks about the "home" which is this earth or the community. It is said that evil forces, magicians, bad vibrations are showering calamities upon the members of this "home" while Mino Ashishawangh steps in and shatters such evil influences, thus rescuing us, its members from misfortune.

Vanghuishcha adhāo vanghuhishcha ashayo hupaurvāo vahehish, aparāo rāsentish, daregho vārethmano, yatha no mazishtāoscha vahistāoscha sraeshtāoscha ashayo erenvante ameshanām spentanām yasnāicha vahmāicha kshnaothrāicha frasastayaecha. Fradathāi ahe nmānahe fradathāi vispayāo ashaono stoish hamistee vispayāo dravato stoish. Stavas ashā ye hudāo yoi henti.

I praise good charitable works and righteous deeds which are of a very exalted dignity and superior, and which subsequently in their results are attaining to our help and affording shelter for a long time, so that the greatest best and excellent righteousness may reach us.

As to how we may gain righteousness?

For the worship of the Ameshaspands and for their adoration, for their propitiation and for their glorification, and prosperity of this house, for the prosperity of the entire creation of righteous (Hormuzd) and for the entire antagonism of the entire creation of the wicked (that righteousness may attain to us). On account of truthfulness I sing the glory of Him who (Himself) is of good wisdom and of those who are His Ameshaspands - Holy Immortals.

This paragraph talks about what the devotee has to meditate upon during Hoshbam. The first four words is a formula of how a person should lead this life on earth. It explains that life is a bazaar where buying and selling, giving and taking are done. Happiness and sorrow will alternate, come and go according to one's karma, but one must always deal with righteousness, whatever the circumstances may be or consequences befall. We must act with love, not hatred, with hope and joy, not bitterness. Whatever has to be given, give away. Whatever is to be taken, take it as much as it is rightfully yours. Such words of knowledge, piety and devotion!

Those who do so will not have to come back to earth or re-incarnate (*tanaasakh*). They will progress further (*tanpasin*) towards higher realms. That they will reach the stage of 'Ashoi' is a promise. Here 'ashoi' is described as *mazistaoscha* - spiritually majestic (that which is able to grasp Divine Knowledge), *vahishtaoscha* - selflessness, sincerely truthful, and *straoshtaoscha* - that which is beautiful on account of truth and order.

Such are the gifts (of Ashoi) which will be bestowed upon those who practise the prescribed equation of life, which will take him to the doors of the abode of Dadar Ahura Mazda.

The line

**Ameshanām spentanām yasnāicha vahamāicha khshnaothrāicha
frasastayaecha.**

contains powerful manthras which enable us to join or attune ourselves with the Yazatas to whom we are praying, in this case, with the Ameshaspends. "May I, through the recitation of these manthras, offer my share and thus be connected with the works of the Ameshaspands. "

[To be continued...]

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**Vasascha tu Ahura Mazda ushtācha, khshaesha havanām damanām. Vaso āpo,
vasa urvarāo, vasa vispa vohu asha chithra;**

At Thy will and with happiness Thou, O Ahura Mazda! rulest over Thine-own creation.

Vasa means His wish, His loving command, His love towards every particle of creation. *Damanam* is the entire creation; *Ushtacha*=bliss, ecstasy; *khshaesha*=according to your power, authority. So the exposition of this sentence is - "O Ahura Mazda! The entire working of the Universe is according to your power. Command that the creation is attracted towards you and the power that does so, is Bliss, which is inspired by your Love. You are the very source of everything, you and your love; that is why it follows."

Vaso āpo, vasa urvarāo, vasa vispa vohu asha-chithra.

(Thou rulest) at (Thy) will over waters, over trees and over all good things, the seeds of righteousness.

Water and vegetation are the manifestation or blessings arising out of Your love; *asha chithra* (the good seeds) are the harvest of the divine agriculture of the spiritual world which rain down as blessings on our earth like the waters and vegetation. All these are the result of Your love for us.

khshayamnem ashavanem dāyata. Akhshayamnem dravantem. Vasokhshathro khyāt ashava; avaso-khshathro khyāt dravāo gato hamishto nizbereto hacha spentahe mainyeush dāmabyo, varato avaso-khshathro.

Thou appoint the holy (man) a ruler (but) not the infidel (i.e. the sinful man). May the righteous (man) be ruling-at-will (but) may the infidel, fallen into calamity, cast out of the creations of the Holy Spirit, having ailed (in his schemes) be not-ruling-at-will.

We are only humans of mixed elements. At times we shine with goodness, other times we become worse than devils. So in this prayer, I wish that the goodness in me gets the better of my lower nature; with your love you may transmute me from a *dravand* into an *ashavan*; may the evil in me be cast out and be caught in your love.

Hakhshaya azem-chit yo Zarathushtro fratemān nmānanāmcha visāmcha zantunāmcha dakhyunāmcha, anghāo

daenayāo anumatayaecha anukhtayaecha, anvarshtayaecha, yā āhuirish Zarathushtrish.

I who am Zarathushtra will guide the leaders of of the house, of the clans, towns and lands, to think, to speak and to act in conformity with this Religion which is of Ahura, revealed-by- Zartosht.

The pertinent words here are *namana*, *visa*, *zantu* and *dakhyu*. Ordinarily, they mean house, clans, towns and lands, respectively, but there is a deeper import. We all know that our dear Paegambar Saheb is known as *Vakhshur-e Vakhshuran* meaning "Prophet of Prophets." The fact is that Asho Zarathushtra did not merely establish the Mazdayasnie Zarthoshti Religion, but he also sowed the seeds of the infrastructure of all the other major religions which followed. This mighty plan of Ahura Mazda is hinted at in Gatha 31-11 and 31-19.

A new religion which has to be established has to have a center which is known and referred to here as *namana*. When that religion spreads among its devotees/members, its outward form is called *visa*. Its adherents come to earth, follow that religion and pass on to certain appointed planes beyond the physical world which are known as *jantu*. The Prophet, saints and sages of that religion, who lead and guide these souls draw upon an energy or force from a station which is meant by *dakhyu*. Thus, these four words are different stations for each religion whose main guide is Asho Zarathushtra.

The lesson we learn from this paragraph is that all religions, their spiritual disciplines, their do's and don'ts, stem from Ahura's conscience. We, as Zarathushtis and followers of the Mazdayasni Zarathushti Daena, should acknowledge and respect all religions and their practices. We should sympathize and help them in observing their own religion.

Yatha no aonghām shāto manāo vahishto urvāno khvāthravaitish tanvo hento vahishto anghush; ākāoschoit āhuire Mazda jasentām.

... so that our minds (be) full of joy (and) our souls (attain) the best, (our) bodies be full of heavenly glory (may be fit) for the best world (i.e. Heaven) O Ahura Mazda may (all these good wishes) reach (us) openly!

Shato manao = minds full of joy, is a state of mind which is difficult to cultivate. It is accepting all kinds of sorrow, misfortune with a smiling face and joyous heart - which only *ashavans* can possess. It is a spiritual exercise which we too can acquire over a long period of time. When that happens, the soul becomes 'best' (*vahishto urvano*), and the physical body which is matter, becomes subtle and shines with light (*khvathravaitish tanvo*) - full of heavenly glory. This is our ideal, our goal for which we must strive daily.

This is followed by a promise, that Ahura Mazda will help us fulfill that wish.

Asha vahishta, asha sraeshta, daresāma thwā, pairi thwā jamyāma, hamem thwā hakhma. Ashem Vohu 1 (to be repeated 3 times)

Through the best righteousness, excellent righteousness (O Ahura Mazda) may we catch sight of Thee and may we come near Thee (and) attain to Thy eternal friendship! (i.e. may we become worthy of Thy friendship!)

This last line of the Hoshbam prayer is a song of the soul's goal! To achieve *Asha* is not easy. The word *Asha* which commonly means *Ashoi*, or righteousness, has 7 facets - Law, Order, Beauty, Truth (ultimate reality), Righteousness, Purity and Freedom. Freedom is from the bonds of the flesh, from the temptations of life. When all that is achieved, can we aspire to see Him (with our spiritual eyes), bask in His glory, and seek His friendship. A day will come when we shall reach our goal.

[Concluded]