

MANASHNI-GAVASHNI-KUNASHNI

Is It So Simple To Practice?

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(This article is written for the benefit of those who tout their belief that Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni (M.G.K.) is all in all of Zoroastrian religion and that nothing more is required to be done in life to follow the Din. The following is based on the treatise appearing on pages 677 to 718 of "Khordeh Avesta Ba Kshnoom" in Gujarati by Dr. F.S.Chiniwalla and "Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern" by Phiroze Masani).

Unfortunately, today M,G,K is the most misunderstood and blatantly distorted of all Zoroastrian teachings. Whenever a Parsi is asked to quote the teachings of his religion, he will boastfully say that "Our prophet has taught us to practice Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni - Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds", as if to say the prophets of other religions have taught to the contrary. We commonly hear all and sundry saying that the original teachings of Zoroaster Himself were very simple but the latter day priests have made it complicated by introducing various rites and rituals to make their importance felt and to earn their livelihood through them. Hearing such things from the mouths of the people of lower strata of the community who are generally uneducated and ignorant of the scriptures can be condoned; but when the literate, educated and scholarly gents say the same thing it sounds not only irrational but their honesty of purpose comes under doubt. Their minds are so highly influenced by the Western Ideology and hollow superficial study of the scriptures by the western scholars that they have become credulous and refuse to even glimpse at and make an effort to know anything about the esoteric side of the religion taught by the school of Ilm - e -Kshnoom. Perhaps this attitude is due to the demon of our times who by his diabolical manoeuvres has captured the minds of not only the Parsis but that of all humanity. The fallout of this type of wind blowing is that even some of the Kshnoomists have been led astray.

The protagonists of *Simple Religion* claim that our prophet was a very practical man and hence has given the simple principles of *good thoughts, good words, and good deeds* to be practiced by his followers in every day life which will suffice their spiritual needs. Besides being fallacious and absurd such a claim is also blasphemous. Let us see why it is so.

It is commonly experienced by all of us that we are not scrupulously honest in our day to day life. For example we do not hesitate to speak half truth or even tell a lie when it suits us or are confronted with a face saving situation. Now a days we even read of corruption having penetrated the temple of justice. Many a times a judge in spite of knowing a defendant to be guilty gives a benefit of doubt citing some lacuna in presentation of evidence and pronounces him *not guilty* on ground of some technicality of law. Thus the principles of M,G,K are blatantly violated on one hand and on the other it is claimed that these are the only teachings of our prophet! One may ask is it not a fraud being played on one's conscience? Does not saying so tantamount to misguiding the community members and shaking the faith of those who are sincerely trying to follow the tenets of the religion?

Our prophet is called *Vakshure Vakshuran* the *Prophet of Prophets*. He was not an ordinary human being as is believed but was a *Yazat* in human form.

He was the first messenger of Lord Ahuramazda and was sent on a special mission to earth of curbing the wide spread evil in the

world of His time and teaching humanity the lessons of righteousness and how to lead a life to further spiritual progress and evolution of the soul. His was a unique and exalted position in the whole of Universe as He possessed *Asne Vir* or heroic consciousness and innate knowledge which enabled Him to know and see the events of the Past of the Past when the Universe was manifested till the Future of Future when the Universe will once again merge with HIM after all evil is transmuted into good. It is therefore blasphemous to say that such an exalted soul had taken birth in this physical world just to teach man how to keep good thoughts, say good words and do good deeds. Of course these are a part of His teachings but not in the sense as is taken and tom - tommed today by a section of our community.

To understand why it is next to impossible for ordinary people like us to practice true *MGK* it is necessary to go a little into the physical makeup and constitution of man and the reason for his existence on earth. Man has a physical body which is subject to death, an ultra physical body and divine components one of which is his soul. The latter two are immortal and indestructible because they are emancipated. Every atom of our physical body is made of both *Gav and Druj* or good and evil. It is for converting the evil into good that we take birth on this earth as a physical entity embodying the soul. When all the evil attached to the soul is transmuted into good, it will be freed from the shackles of the cycles of birth and rebirths and will achieve salvation.

Except for the divine world of *LIGHTS* which is the abode of Ahuramazda and other Divine Beings, the *Law Of Duality* operates in the entire evanescent universe in which our earth is located. It is because of this immutable law that good and evil exists side by side. It is precisely for this reason that we exhibit both good and evil propensities during our life. Sometimes we do righteous deeds and at other times we commit sins. It is because of the Divine essence called *GAV* present in us that

we act in a righteous manner on one hand and on the other it is the Demon of ignorance and deceit or *DRUJ* within us which drags us into sins.

Take for example our tongue. We tell truths and speak lies with the same tongue. Our mouths water at the sight of food and we are tempted to eat it even though it may not be conducive to our health. Another instance is our sex instinct by which we are attracted towards the opposite sex. We either abuse it by committing perverse and unnatural acts of lust and passion or use it for procreation which is its primary function. Many similar instances can be cited. However the problem is that with the wind of liberalisation blowing throughout the world today and the mind set of the people to accept and indulge in such vices under the pretext of these being *natural physiological needs of the body*, more and more evil is spreading in the world and the Devil is having an unopposed field to operate and trap mankind in his diabolical plans.

Many of us desire not to fall into sin and avoid circumstances which lead us into sin, but there is a powerful compelling force within us which drags us into committing the act much against our wish. Mankind has been facing this problem since thousands of years when *Kalyug* had set in, and has been struggling ever since to maintain a balance of these two forces of good and evil within himself but to no avail. It is therefore clear that there is something in our constitution which prevents us from practicing the true principles of *MGK*. It is our experience that we have to struggle and work hard to achieve anything in life whether it be power, position, wealth, health etc. Same is the case with maintaining high moral values, controlling body passions, doing righteous acts, speaking truths and developing other virtues which make a better human being out of us. Each and every one of us has seeds of righteousness planted within us from birth; only we have to nurture and allow them to grow. What prevents their growth are the thorny plants of passion and wild weeds of iniquities. Our job in life is to clear

this undesirable crop and make the soil suitable for the seeds to take firm roots. Of course we have to toil hard, break sweat and even get hurt in the process but continue we must. To help us in this arduous task, mother Nature has endowed us with two very powerful weapons. One is the essence called *Baod* which has universal divine consciousness and which unknown to us supplies us with divine energy which not only sustains our life but continuously showers munificent beneficial currents which manifest as qualities of Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni, Vir, Hosh and Kherad ie. The power of right thought, right speech, right action, virility of good intentions, consciousness of virtues and wisdom. These lie latent but we have to develop them. The second and more practical one is the voice of conscience to enable us to guard against the machinations of the devil (a divine gift commonly known as *the voice of conscience*). This weapon has to be kept sharp by using it constantly. Whenever we are about to commit a wrong act, this voice calls out loud and clear to desist from doing the act. However if we repeatedly ignore its promptings, this voice becomes silent, the weapon dulls and we are left defenseless against the attack of the devil. We then easily succumb to the weaknesses of flesh. He who has the courage and will power to stand up and fight the battle of life will be a true hero, but he who has kept down his defenses and meekly surrenders to the attacks of the horde of enemies within him will alas have to suffer and pray to his *Khoda* for the change of his destiny in future.

Hopefully the gentlemen who say that Zoroastrian religion is simple and based only on the principles of Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni will realise their folly. If they are reciting their *Kusti* prayers daily they should take a note of the following lines:

Az hama gunah patet pashemanum, az harvestin dushmata, dujukhta, dujvarashta, mem pa geti manid oaem goft, oaem kard, oaem jast, oaem bood ,bood aested az aan gunah, manasni, gavashni, kunashni tani, ruvani, geti

minoani, okhe avaksh pasheman pase gavashni pa patet hom.

I am ashamed of the sins committed by me, want to keep distance from them and sincerely feel penitent for having committed them, (meaning I hatefully foresake them and am prepared to bear the punishment which will befall me, learn a lesson from it and am anxious to be endowed with wiser sense so as not to repeat them in future.) I want to remain alert, recognize and feel sincerely repentant for all the evil thoughts, bad words and bad deeds (all those likely and those amongst them present within my physical and ultra physical self) which are contrary to the wish of Ahuramazda - those in which I have engrossed my thoughts and have afflicted me in my life and whom I have been unable to conquer or restrict, those which are deep rooted and latent and there is a fear of their surfacing anytime - all such sins committed by me pertaining to the physical body (preventing it from becoming refined), pertaining to the soul (obstructing its path of progress), pertaining to the earth (delaying its ultimate salvation), pertaining to the the Divine world (interfering in the task of divinities of unfoldment and merger of the universe with the Creator) - all these sins prevent me from getting the benefits accrued out of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

Dear sirs, it is therefore very clear from the above lines of prayer which you as a true Zarthoshti are supposed to recite frequently and daily according to the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion; that first of all we have to overcome the evil of bad thoughts, bad words and bad deeds, quietly and willingly bear the retribution befalling us without complaining but thanking Ahuramazda that He has granted an opportunity of washing our sins and opening the way for a brighter future and progress of the soul. Then and only then can we expect to climb the ladder of evolution when we can have perfect coordination between the head and the heart and truly practice the principles of *Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni* and expect to get the benefit ie freedom from cycles of birth and

rebirths and ultimate salvation of the soul. Till such time, the so called good thoughts, good words and good deeds will only remain as what we *feel and interpret* them to be so by our limited faculties and intelligence. Please therefore do not deceive yourselves and the community because things are not so simple as you make them out to be. It will be for your own good if you look towards the holy scriptures and try to understand and practice the true tenets of the religion as are presently available with us. Please keep faith that various rituals and ceremonies which are traditionally performed and the prayers which we are enjoined to recite are all given by the Prophet Himself and have come down to us since generations. At least respect the wisdom of your forefathers who diligently followed them. It was purely because of their religious fervour and their faith in Prophet's teachings that they stood out and shone amongst the multitude of their fellow brethren in a foreign land. They upheld the true Parsi traditions which made the community unique. Instead of bearing the torch left by our ancestors, today many amongst us belonging to both the laity and the priestly class

are twisting and turning the Zoroastrian principles to suit their favourite physical arrangements of ease and comfort. Due to gross materialistic mentality one may refuse to accept, but it is a fact that the downfall of the community and the various ills and woes facing it such as lack of moral character, lack of courage, poverty, reducing numbers, high mortality and low birth rate are all due to lackadaisical and care a damn attitude towards the religion. There are numerous instances found in history that great civilizations and empires have been wiped out when they began to ignore their religion and moral turpitude and corruption set in as a result amongst their people. Nature does not spare those who defy her. Therefore let us stop the destructive activity of ignorant religious controversy, shake off the devil of lethargy and stop finding superficial solutions to our problems such as advocating proselytisation, artificial insemination, stop defiling and destroying religious institutions and revert to the golden path followed by our ancestors. That will sustain us till the redeemer comes and lifts the community back from the abyss in which it finds itself today.