

WHAT IS "STAOTA" ?

Its Definition, Meaning and Rules . . .

By The Late Ervad Phiroze Masani.

["Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern" by the late genius Ervad Phiroze Masani, can well be described as the first English Text Book containing the basic principles of the Mystic Science of our Religion. Every lover of that science should read the book. Every critic of that science should not criticise it without reading that Book. What is the extent of the Zarathushtrian Scriptures? What is the rationale of, and the science behind our so called rituals and ceremonies? How should Zarathushtrianism be studied? What are our Prayers? How are they constituted? What is their effect? What is a 'Magi'? Who was Zarathushtra? Why is Proselytism (conversion) not advocated in Zarathushtrian Religion? These and numerous other questions are answered in Phiroze's Book in a style which is scholarly and yet simple.

Here is an extract from the Book on the subject of "Staota" and "Staota Yasna." Before elaborating the meaning of these basic technical words, Phiroze gives numerous references from the scriptures wherein these terms and their variations occur. There are 13 references from the Gatha's, 13 from the Yashta's, 7 from the Yazashney, 5 from the Visparad, 1 from Hadokhta Nask and 1 from Aban Nyaesh (Pages 213 to 223). Phiroze then explains the principles which emerge from these references (P 223 et seq) I.

These are only some of the references to the word "Staota" occurring in the Avesta. But from these also one can easily make out that the word "Staota" does not imply mere "praise" or "adoration" or "propitiation" but something more than that. The word "Staota" as seen from the above-quoted references signifies the fundamental law of unseen colours produced by the vibrations of the Sound; and the entire universe has been manifested in accordance with the Laws of these Vibration-colours (Staota Yasna) from the one Primitive Sound of Prime Motion - Ahuna Var - in the Highest Heaven. We can easily see from these quotations also that the unfoldment of the Soul and communion with Ahura Mazda are only possible by means of the attunement with the Highest Staota, and that the Soul requires for its progress the various intensities of these Staota according to its stage of progress in the scale of unfoldment. In order therefore to attain this Summum Bonum the soul has to attune itself with the Staota of all the Yazads and other spiritual intelligences, the greatest of whom on the Earth is Sraosha according to the Gatha XXXIII; 5: -

"Yas-te vispe mazishtem Sraoshem

Zbaya avanghane",

"I invoke Sraosha for help who is the greatest of all Thy Yazads."

The angel Sraosha is the receiver of all the collective Staota raining down from all the Yazads, and it is also the transmitter of the same to any living soul who is ready to respond to Sraosha. For making the soul fit for response to Sraosha or angel presiding over collective Staota, the prophet Zoroaster has enjoined all the canons of Ashoi-or physical, magnetic, mental, moral and spiritual purity-for without purity the soul cannot rise to the level of vibratory response required for the higher potential of the Staota of Sraosha. Thus when a soul attunes itself with Sraosha by means of Asha according to the canons taught by the profit for smiting

the Druja or all Unseen evil magnetic influence, it is fit for responding to the vibration of all Yazads collectively through Sraosha, and hence to the vibrations of all Yazads individually in accordance with the laws of attunement by means of Staota. When the soul has thus made itself worthy of these higher vibrations, it realises the efficacy of the chanting of Avesta Manthra which, when recited with the observance of Ashoi, produce Staota corresponding to the Universal Staota, and thus there is perfect harmony or attunement of the Soul with the ruling Yazads. Hence we learn a fundamental rule of Zoroastrianism that Ashoi is the first requisite for the enjoyment of the efficacy of Avesta Manthra recital, and it is only on account of the present day life of the majority of Zoroastrians without the observance of Ashoi-principles that the efficacy of Avesta prayers is not consciously perceived by them. But the Avesta Manthra, which have been entirely based on Yatha Ahu Vairyo for the 21 Nasks as we have seen before have been made from the One Word Yatha Ahu Vairyo -which in its turn is only a Bagha or corresponding branch of the Universal Ahuna Var-the vibration creative of the entire manifested universe, has its own efficacy on the planes of vibration and unseen colour, and we shall presently see some references from the extant Avesta proving that the Avesta Manthra is meant for producing higher vibratory and Staotic effects unseen.

Thus we gather the following rules regarding Staota -

1. "Staota implies colour produced by vibrations of sound in the higher planes of vibration.
2. "Staota Yasna" signifies the entire procedure and science of attunement through the medium of the higher unseen colours produced by vibrations of sound.
3. "Urvatam Urunem" means the Unfoldment of the soul by means of the acceleration of the vibration of the soul to the rate of its original potential in accordance of the laws of Staota Yasna.
4. "Sraosha" is the angel presiding over the entire collective Staota raining down, from all the Yazads, and is also the transmitter of the same to any soul that has made itself fit for response to Sraosha.
5. "Asha" implies all the collective laws of holiness by means of which the physical, magnetic, moral mental and spiritual subtlety and higher rate of vibration may be attained in order to qualify the soul for attunement with Sraosha.
6. Urvan x Asha x Sraosha x Manthra - is the chain like order necessary for proving the efficacy of the Avesta Word-Manthra for oneself, and the Laws of Staota work in each of these four main links.
7. "Yazamaide" - a word of frequent occurrence in all Avesta prayers connotes the meaning of the attunement of the soul of the holy chanter-one who has been qualified as the follower of or recipient of Sraosha with every Yazadic Staota that he repeats in every sentence.

From all this it is quite clear that the Zoroastrian Manthra prayers are based on subtle laws-laws which go beyond the scope of mere philological renderings of the Avesta texts. It is no doubt that the Staota Yasna comprises within itself the science of vibration and Undulatory Motion, Acoustics, Optics, Chromatics, Electricity, Magnetism, Numbers, etc. because all these are closely connected with one another in their mutual functions on the higher planes. It is on account of this that the Manthra which inculcate all the laws of Staota Yasna exhaustively are known in Pahlavi by the holy priests who understood these laws very well by the name of "Farhangan Farhang Manthra Spenta"- the knowledge of all knowledges, the Science of all Sciences - the Master-Science is Manthra Spenta, for Vibration is the Fundament of the Universe, and the Knowledge relating to the original first creative Vibration of Ahuna Var,

which is expounded by the prophet Zoroaster, in the Sum Total of Yatha Ahu Vairyo which is an exact prototype of the celestial note Ahuna Var, or in the 21 Nasks of Avesta Manthra-is the root of all knowledge, the main-key to all the sciences of the universe.

Hence every student of the Avesta must be informed of the Staota Laws in accordance with which the Entire Avesta Manthra has been composed. The ignorance of this most important fact and the utter forgetfulness thereof has given rise to a very considerable amount of false-knowledge among the students of Avesta. The subject of Staota Yasna which is the main foundation of all Avesta Manthra is so very extensive that it requires volumes to elucidate it to give a good deal of satisfaction to a reader possessing scientific knowledge of the laws of vibration. One whole Nask called, "Stud Yasht" in Pahlavi or "Vastarem" in the Avesta is devoted to the special treatment of the Laws of Staota Yasna which contains in all 33 main Chapters. Out of this very important Nask, we have mere fragments of Gathas, Yasna Haftanghaiti, Yasna, Visparad, but we are unfortunate in not having the original keynotes for the proper elucidation of these fragments by the laws and rules of Staota Yasna.

One important fact which should be noticed in connection with the subject of Staota is this that "the Urvan or soul requires for its unfoldment certain units of vibration and Staota in proportion to its own stage of present progress. In fact the Staota produced by means of the recital of Avesta Manthra is the kind and the rate necessary for a Soul born in the Zoroastrian fold and following the Laws of Ashoi propounded in the Law of Unfoldment taught by the prophet Zarathushtra. The necessity of the Staota produced by Avesta Manthra serves as food as it were for the Soul.

Hence the Gathas which have the supreme degree in point of Staota are said to be the actual food of the Soul in Yasna Ha 55 2, 3, 4 -

"The Gathas which are for us full of protection and full of defence and serve as spiritual food; the Gathas which serve for our soul as food and clothing. These Gathas are as protection and defence for us and as food spiritual; and these Gathas serve as food and clothing for our soul. May these Gathas be the givers of good-reward, and reward of-holiness in the next existence after separation of the physical tenement from the consciousness. These Gathas are as courage, triumph, abundance, health prosperity and defence for us. They are movers towards good existence, they are helpers all round, they take us towards good wisdom, they guide us towards holy-being, they are for progress and knowledge. May their efficacy reach us by means of the Staota Yasna which has been created by Mazda the most beneficent victorious, progressor-of-the universe for the protection of the constituents of holiness, for the preservation of holy constituents and for the protection of all the beneficent benefactors of the entire existence of the holy!"

This one quotation is quite sufficient for furnishing proof of the fact that the Manthra has been formulated in accordance with the Laws of Staota Yasna or Laws of attunement by means of higher vibro-chromatic undulations. In the passage we notice that the soul is benefited by the Manthric vibrations only through the medium of Staota Yasna which is their foundation. We also learn from the same passage that the soul does exist in the next world after the separation of the physical tenement from the life; that the soul is helped on in the unseen world in its progress by the efficacy of the Avesta Manthra and the Staota of these Manthra; that the Manthra have a very exalted root-cause and the beneficial efficacy of the Staota Yasna laws has been merged into the Manthra; and moreover that the Manthra which contain the Staotic impressions in their very formation protect the soul from the evil influences of Drujih like the clothing which protects the body, and that the Manthra help the soul on in the work of "Uru" or spiritual unfoldment by providing the Soul with its own natural food the higher vibratory colours requisite for the certain stage that the soul has reached in the scale of its unfoldment. Finally we are informed

from the same grand passage that the vibratory impressions received by the soul during its life on earth in accordance with holiness, accompany the soul in the unseen world after its departure from the physical world and are very useful in giving the requisite vibraticromatic motion to the soul in the unseen world, and that a prayer is evoked for the reaching of these beneficial efficacies through the medium of Staota Yasna which has been created by the Creator at the very First Motion given for the Infoldment of the Soul or manifestation of the universe and for the ultimate Unfoldment of the Soul or manifestation of the spirit.

Even from the extant Avesta we have learnt then from the references to Staota quoted above that –

(i) the yearning for the knowledge and practice of Staota Yasna leads to the Summum Bonum i.e. the greatest good or heavenly bliss meant for the Soul.

(ii) the love of Mazda, attunement with Ahura Mazda friendship of Ahura Mazda, adoration, glorification and propitiation of Ahura Mazda are possible only by means of the Staota Yasna.

(iii) one must always have the one yearning for becoming a skilled practitioner of Staota.

(iv) the practice of Staota if well directed results in the Fresh awakening of the Spiritual (Ahu) within man.

(v) one who is not well-versed in Staota Yasna cannot be allowed to participate in the libations offered unto Yazads and other apparatus meant for producing forces of attunement with Yazads.

(vi) the prophet Zoroaster the Holy one was the first practitioner perfect of Staota since he was the first to comprehend the manifestation of the entire universe in accordance with the Celestial Tune of Ahuna Var by means of the Staota Yasna Laws, and to formulate the Word Yatha Ahu Vairyo in rhythmic parallelism with that Ahuna Var, and thence to expand the Yatha Ahu Vairyo into the 21 Nasks of Avesta Manthra having their special rates of acceleration and intensity, for to Zoroaster the progress of the Soul implied genuine absorption of higher Manthric vibrations and colours by the Soul through the medium of Ashoi-Principles which help to promote the subtleness of the Physical and the ultra-physical tenements of the Soul-the physical comprising Tanu or body proper, Gaetha or vital organs, Azda or etheric and nervous body and the ultra-physical including Kehrpa or invisible counter part of the physical body. Ushtana or life or vital heat, Tevishi or desire-shell, the root cause of thought-activity, all of which are mentioned in the very first line of Yasna Ha 54 1.

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WHAT IS "MANTHRA" ?

Extracts from "Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern

by The Late Ervad Phiroze S. Masani

(Extracts from the Late Ervad Phiroze's book is continued below. After giving 40 references from the Holy Scriptures on 'Staota' and 'Staota Yasna', Phiroze sets out 16 principles emerging from them. Of these, six appeared in the last issue. The remaining ten are reproduced below. Phiroze then proceeds to give references from the Scriptures on "Manthra", and then elaborates them in his masterly style).

(vii) The Staota produced by the Manthra and Ashoi principles of the Law of Zarathushtra are very powerful and capable of disintegrating *the graphs of vibrations and forms unseen created by Daevas* or people of evil thoughts and mal-practices.

(viii) The *Staota* or vibration-colours belonging to and *generated for Ahura Mazda* are the most supreme of all vibrations and colours.

(ix) *Only offerings of Staota or higher vibrations and colours can reach Ahura Mazda and Asha Vahishta.*

(x) *The followers of Zoroastrian Law must be the practitioners of the Staota* produced by the Avesta Manthra, and must stick to this practice at any cost.

(xi) *Staota Yasna is the protector, defender and promoter of the entire existence* of the holy, guiding the whole creation, to that "One Divine Event" or '*Frasho-Kereiti*' i.e. Renovation.

(xii) *The Staota Yasna are the Fundamental Laws* in accordance with which the Original Thought Vibration, or Primum Mobile, the Very First Motion is given by the Causer of all Causes, for the Infoldment and Unfoldment of Spirit into and from matter.

(xiii) *The Sun is the centre or store-house of Staota* or all the higher vibrato-chromatic effects. Hence the Sun is also desired in attunement by means of the Staota Yasna, and the close relation between the Sun, which is the Light of all visible Lights and the Staota Yasna is indicated very easily.

(xiv) The inter-relation, of Ahuna Var, Asha Vahishta, Staota Yasna, Gathas, Aggregate Words, Soul, Fravashi, Havonim, Baresman, Haoma, Thought, Word and Deed of Mazaayacnyan Law-establishes a very strong proof of the effect of Staota present everywhere lying at the bottom of everything. The Gathas and all the collective Words of the Avesta Manthra are based on the Laws of Staota and have correspondence to the Original Staota of the Song Celestial and of the archangel Asha Vahishta presiding over Divine Moral Order of the Universe. The Soul (Urvan) can have the glimpse of the Fravashi through attunement with Baodangha (higher spiritual Consciousness) only by means of Staota. The ceremonial efficacy produced by the aggregate forces of the Havonim or metal tumbler, Baresman or sacred twigs and Haoma or sacred plant is

entirely based on the grand Laws of Staota which establish telepathic and Staotic connection between the visible and the unseen planes of the universe. And lastly the underlying element of the Mazdayasnian Law being also the Staota of Ahuna Var, it is quite evident that the Thought, Word and Deed expounded in that Law should be closely connected with the Staota Yasna.

(xv) Staota Yasna stand as the Most Excellent Seeds or bases of the entire Universe, and the universal unfoldment is possible only through the attunement of all by means of these basic Laws of Staota Yasna. *The Higher Staota must be the chief desideratum of every Zoroastrian soul.*

(xvi) The Universal Attunement or Brotherhood is possible only through the media of Staota, and the one Staota of Ashem practiced holily and in accordance with the Law is equal in its potential or power to the Vibration of Ahura Mazda, to the Vibration of waters, plants, land and the living creation, for the *Staota of Ashem is itself the Fundamentum of the Law of Asha Vahishta. Hence only Staota will achieve the Universal Frasho-Kereti or Renovation of the Entire Universe.*

Besides these, the epithets of Staota or Staota Yasna viz., worth chanting, worth singing, worth attuning, worth remembering, worth practicing, worth learning, worth teaching, and capable of withstanding, canceling and crushing the vibration and colour of Evil Thought, Evil Word and Evil Deed such as are hindrances to Spiritual Unfoldment, and again having a special rhythmic, harmonic arrangement -only stamp on the mind of a sincere student of the Avesta that there is nothing so very desirable during life on earth but the one thing namely the knowledge and practice of Staota Yasna for achieving the Progress or Unfoldment of the Soul, and that more things are wrought by the Avesta Manthric prayers than the philologists dream of.

(Editor's note : Phiroze now gives, on pages 232 to 252 of his Book, as many as 70 references on 'Manthra' : 12 from Gathas, 15 from Yasna (other than Gathas), 10 from Visparad, 29 from 'Yashts' and 4 from other Avesta. Each is translated on the double foundation of the modern science of philology and the ancient Science of Khshnoom – the Zarathushtrian Mysticism. We have not reproduced the passages and their translations here for obvious reasons. What follows is Phiroze's masterly analysis of the Truths emanating from the passages.)

These are some of the references from the extant meagre Avesta that has been spared to us, for the proof of the fact that "*Manthra*" is no ordinary language of everyday use in practical life for social, economic and other means of communication between one person and another. We see from these quotations at least this fact that "*Manthra*" or the entire Avesta, which has its root-cause the 'Yatha Ahu Vairyo' is formulated entirely on the laws of subtle vibrations, which pervade throughout the entire cosmos. There is not one thing in the entire universe from the greatest to the smallest, visible or unseen, which is not subject to this Fundamental Law of Vibration or motion, of sound produced by vibration or local energy, and of the colour generated by both vibration and sound combined together. All the Avesta passages quoted above will clearly show to a patient reader that there is produced very powerful efficacy of the mere sound of Avesta Manthra, and the strength of that efficacy depends on the holiness, -requisite with the Avesta Manthra recital-of the reciter's physical, mental, moral-and spiritual constituents – the efficacy of the Manthra recital varying directly with the power of Ashoi possessed by the practitioner of Manthra. This efficacy is the greatest in the case of the holy prophet Zoroaster who as we have seen is able to clear this earth of the 'daevas' or worst possible vibrations, formulated by the most abominable demoniac men who practiced the worst form possible of Black Magic, merely by means of the one Word of Ahuna Var. The efficacy of Manthra recital varies with different individuals in proportion to the Ashoi observed by them, for Manthra or

sound based on the law of meditation always co-operates with the Mithra or thought energy of the reciter, and the Vohu Manangha or healthy thought energy is to be found only in one who observes all the canons of Ashoi. The Ashoi principles aggravate the intensity of subtle Right Thought Power allied with which the Avesta Manthra produces its own desired effect. Thought and word always co-operate in Zoroastrian prayers, and although Thought vibrations have their own function, and Word vibrations have theirs, yet when both are combined together and when the thought-force is as supreme and elevated as the Manthric (mergy, it produces the precise effect which ought to be produced. Unless these fundamental laws of thought-waves and word-colours are understood by a student of Avesta it is quite impossible for him to account for so many Avesta references to Staots and Manthra and the efficacy of Ahuna Var and the Names of Ahura. Mazda. A student of Avesta must know that **Vibration is at the bottom of the Universe, and that life or thought-force or energy or Divine Fire by whatever name we call it, is all-pervading, and the Eternal Song Celestial which is ever chiming is the Original Creative Force of Ahuna Var parallel to which Celestial note runs the powerful Word of Yatha Ahu Vairyo the key-note to all the Avesta Manthra in its final efficacy of leading the Soul on to Unfoldment whereby to attain 'Garon-mana' the 'Abode of Song.'**

We shall (now) put down all the rules deducible from the quotations given above. These rules may be grouped into some such divisions as (i) *the origin of the Avesta Manthra* (ii) *the vibration as the basis of the Avesta* (iii) *the efficacy of the Manthra in general*; (iv) *the efficacy of the Ahuna Var in special*; (v) *the Manthra serving as a powerful weapon against subtle visible or unseen evil influences*; and (vi) *the relation of Avesta Manthra with other fundamental things*.

(i) **The origin of the Avesta Manthra. -**

- (1) The Manthra has been formed by Ahura for the sake of the soul's unfoldment.
- (2) The Manthra has been revealed to Zoroaster by Mazda when he attains the Power Spiritual for grasping the basic Law of Ahuna Var and Staota.
- (3) Zoroaster who is Drujih-proof i.e. protected completely by Ashoi against Druj becomes the apostle of Mazda's Manthra, and this Gathic fact is again verified by the words "Mazdofrasansta, Zarathushtro-fraokhta" i.e. "communicated by Mazda and declared or preached by Zarathuahtra" occurring frequently in the Yasna.
- (4) Manthra is the origin itself of the Mazdayasnian Law for the entire universe was formulated after and in accordance with the Song Celestial Ahuna Var.
- (5) The Manthra belongs originally to the three archangels Haurvatat, Ameretat and Asha who preside over Spiritual Wholesomeness or Perfection of Soul, Immortal bliss or final destination of Soul, and Divine Moral Order, the Summum Bonum or the final desideratum for the entire manifested universe.

(ii) **The vibration as the basis of the Avesta Manthra.-**

- (1) The law of universal attunement so frequent in the Avesta can only be understood by the help of the Law of Vibration, which is the Fundament of the Universe. The attunement with one's own Soul and Fravashi, the blessed attunement with Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra, waters, plants, Amesha Spentas, with Manthra Spenta, with the living creation, with the entire existence, can be achieved only by means of higher Vibrations and colours produced by these vibrationa, -the law fundamental of the structure of the entire Avesta Manthra.

(2) The reiteration of the idea of absorption, grabbing and catching the Manthra Spenta, the Ashem Vohu, the Yasna Haftanghaiti and other efficacious Manthras proves that the Avesta Manthra is entirely based on the laws of subtle vibrations produced by thought and sound.

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