

YASNA - KRIYAKAAM - IN GATHA 51-22 AND YENGHA-HEY HAATAAM PRAYER.

by Ervad Phiroze Masani

[Note: There are amongst us several, who believe with some pomp and ego, that our rituals - Kriyaa-kaam - are just an "external" thing and even non-Zarathushtrian. They should ponder on the following words of Ervad Saheb Phiroze Masani, the erudite scholar of Western studies of our Religion, and manifestly one of the eminent and authorised doynes of Ilm-e-Khshnoom.]

If one understands the fundamental principles on which the Zoroastrian rituals have been based, one will be easily convinced that Zoroaster has never taught a religion void of rituals.

The word "Yasna" is a very well-known word for "ritual" in the Avesta scriptures. The word literally signifies '**attunement or unison or univibrant state**,' being derived from "Yaz" to join or to be in tune with. It is this "Yasna" or procedure of attunement which keeps the ritual-performer in tune with the "Yazads" or the angel-like forces worthy of attunement.

Originally the word "Yasna" signified the generic meaning of ritual or ceremonial - a medium by means of which the devotee can be in unison or univibrant with the unseen spiritual forces for the development of his soul. **The word "Yasna" occurs in the "Yenghe Haataam" prayer** which is one of the ancient triad of "Yatha Ahu Vairyo", "Ashem Vohu" and "Yenghe Haataam", which are taught in the Varsht Mansar Nask. This Yenghe Hatam prayer which is regarded by all the Avesta students unanimously as the most ancient and taught by Zoroaster, teaches the institution of rituals by the word "Yasna" which has the categorical sense of ceremonial. We find even in the Gathas extant a paragraph **which is nearly the same as the Yanghe Hatam prayer, and which also contains the word "Yasna"**, and this proves for us the fact that Zoroaster himself has given the institution of "Yasna" or ritual and that too in the Gathas. This paragraph is section 22 of Vohukhshathra Gatha Ha 51, and runs as under –

"Yehya moi ashaa hachaa
vahisstem Yesne paiti,
Vaedaa Mazdao Ahura, yoi
dongharecha hentichaa
Tam Yazai Khaaish namenish
pairichaa jasaai vanta."

I attune myself by means of their own names with, and I reverently approach those who have already advanced and who are at present advancing, whom Ahura Mazda has recognised the best unto me on account of Ashoi or holiness in the performance of Yasna or the higher ritual."

The Yenghe Haataam prayer which is included in the Gathas and recognised as such by the Avesta students is, as seen below, almost exactly similar to the Gathic paragraph above quoted–

"Yeghe Haataam Aat Yesne paiti vangho,
Mazdao Ahuro vaetha ashaat hachaa,
Yaonghaamchaa taaschaa
taoschaa Yazamaide"

i.e., "We attune ourselves with those males and females of the advancing ones whom Ahura Mazda has known to be good in the performance of Yasna on account of Ashoi or holiness."

No one of the Avesta students who divide Avesta into period can deny the fact of the antiquity of these two paragraphs; nor can any one say that these two paragraphs were not given by Zoroaster himself. Again the word "Yasna" as we have seen implies the categorical meaning of ritual or ceremonial, and these two paragraphs which are only similar in form and sense with the exception of there being a singular nominative in

one and a plural nominative in the other, are sufficient to prove that Zoroaster has taught the institution of ceremonial.

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