

'Chalisa' or the 40 day ritual

<<There are different ways of praying, or asking for help from divine agencies. The first way is to completely devote our minds to one divine being, say, Behram Yazata and pray the specified prayer - the Behram Yasht in this case, at a particular time every single day for a period of forty days, maintaining strict levels of physical and spiritual purity during that period. At the end of this period, the Yazata should appear to the devotee in any of the ten forms we have examined in the first ten Kartas of this Yasht. Hence a connection has been established between the devotee and the divine being. Now to maintain this connection for a prolonged period, the devotee keeps on repeating or chanting a particular name or phrase of the Avesta at all times of his daily life. By doing so, the devotee remains in constant contact with the divine being, and receives immense spiritual benefit. The devotee is able to listen to the Divine Song of Behram Yazata as the Yazata goes about his divine tasks. The devotee's questions are answered easily and he advances very rapidly. This is the highest method of invocation and is known in the Avesta as *nama-azbaitish*.

When a devotee understands the mystic working of a particular Yazata through the application of taavil and the esoteric knowledge of Khshnoom, and keeps his thoughts on those functions all the time, at the same time also reciting the necessary prayers, then that method is called *upastuitish*. Here the devotee receives help from the Yazata but is unable to hear his Divine Song. Yet the devotee is confident that with his future progress, he will definitely be able to achieve that goal.

Finally, when a devotee is unable to run his thoughts on the divine work of the Yazata, but merely prays the Behram Yazata consistently, and also has the sacred baj ceremony performed in honour of Behram Yazata, then this method is called *nistuitish*. Here of course the devotee is unable to maintain constant contact with the Yazata but nonetheless is able to receive help from the Yazata when he is eligible for it. These are the different ways in which the invocation of Behram Yazata can be done. The *nama-azbaitish* method is the most difficult and can be done only by very highly evolved souls who are very close to their individual salvation. The other two methods can be attempted by ordinary souls. Even at this low level, there is no doubt that the Yazata directly does help the devotee>> [1]

Reference:

[1] "Tavil of Behram Yasht" by Ervad Marzban J Hathiram.

Ervad Marzban J Hathiram has referred to Dr.Saheb Faramroze S Chiniwalla's "Tavil Of Behram Yasht"(gujarati) which has appeared in "Parsi Avaz" Vol. 27 No. 40 to 49(1974).

<http://tenets.zoroastrianism.com/TAAVILOFBAHERAAMYASHT.pdf>

Note: The practice of invoking the blessings of any particular Yazata is known as 'Chalisa', or the 40 day ritual. During these days, the person seeking the help of the Yazata practices the strictest spiritual disciplines, observes all laws of spiritual and physical purity, does the full Farajyat for every Gah for the full 40 day period AND recites the particular prayer for attuning with the Yazata, in this case Behram Yasht at the same time every day for the full 40 days.

The Chalisa ritual must be recited at one place only and at one time only for the full period. That is, if you start the chalisa at say 8 a.m in the morning at so-and-so Agiary, in a particular chair or bench, then that will have to be followed for the full duration. Hence it is very important to select the time and place very carefully.

If one is successful in completing this arduous practice without ANY shortfalls of any nature, whether caused by him or not, then the particular Yazata appears to him in any form (maybe even in the guise of a human) and answers the query that the devotee is looking for answers to.

Please note that a woman can definitely do the chalisa. However her bodily functions would sometimes intervene. In this case she can continue after the seclusion as Nature does compensate for this. Using medical pills to delay or prepone normal bodily functions would immediately nullify the Amal. Even in original medicinal sciences like Ayurveda and Hakimi, there were certain herbs which could be taken for these purposes, and the practitioners were well aware of them. However, they were never used as a means of doing the Amal. She should merely stop during those days and continue thereafter, with full effects.

Generally, it has been observed that as the 40 day period gets closer to the end, all kinds of obstacles come in the way of the devotee which would make him break his practice. If he perseveres (and it is very difficult) then he will definitely get some answer for his query.

This will sound very fairy tale like to some people and they are entitled to have that opinion. Those who may have experienced something like this will no doubt understand what is being said. Well, to each his own.

By the way, the period of 40 days is common to many religions other than ours as the period of testing one's ability to perform certain practices.

If you intent to do the Behram Yasht in the day time then following would be the IDEAL requirements:

Kusti
Sarosh Baj
Gah
Khorshed & Meher Nyaesh
Vispa Humata (only in Havan or second Havan, never in Rapithwan or Uzirin)
Mah Bokhtar Nyaesh
Ava Nyaesh
Atash Nyaesh
Hormazd Yasht
Ardibehesht Yasht
Sarosh Yasht Hadokht
Khordad Yasht
Haptan Yasht (recite the Yatu Zi Zarathushtra para 7 times)
Behram Yasht
Doa Nam Setayashne
Char Disa No Namaskar
Patet Pashemani
Chithrem Buyat
Doa Tandarosti
101 Names

You would require at least 2 hours to go through this list. IT IS HIGHLY IDEALISTIC.

If you do not have that much time, a revised list is given below:

Kusti
Sarosh Baj
Gah
Khorshed & Meher Nyaesh
Vispa Humata (only in Havan or second Havan, never in Rapithwan or Uzirin)
Hormazd Yasht
Ardibehesht Yasht
Sarosh Yasht Hadokht
Behram Yasht
Doa Nam Setayashne
Char Disa No Namaskar
Doa Tandarosti
101 Names

This would take much less time (though still about an hour for a fluent prayer).

The ideal list is long because it follows Ustad Saheb's advice of doing 5 Nyaesh and 5 Yasht before trying to do any Amal prayer. The Khordad and Haptan Yashts are necessary to bind our thoughts during those 40 days.

Cautionary note: A certain nefarious practice has crept into our community in invoking Behram Yazad. It is the deplorable practice of reciting a concocted story pertaining to a woodcutter (Kathiara) before a 'Diva' lit in the honour of 'Mushkil Asaan Behram Yazad', if Behram Roj happens to fall on a Friday. No words are sufficient to decry this unholy, non-Zoroastrian practice, which has strong Muslim overtones, with Friday (Joomma) being considered a sacred day.

In this day and age when Avesta prayers are being increasingly relegated and so called translations and alterations are made by false ratus, it is entirely and totally necessary that we stick to the original Behram Yasht and not give importance to the fabrication.

If we do give this story importance, after a period of time, because of the ease of reciting it as compared to the Yasht, the Yasht will be totally forgotten.