

THREE PHASES OF PRAYER - MEHER, MANTHRA AND DRUJ-PAHEREZ

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NON-SAINTLY HUMAN NEEDS ALCHEMISING OF DRUJ – UNTRUTH AND POLLUTION - WITHIN HIM

[Editorial Note: What is prayer? Is it just a petition to God to give us something worldly? Or is it just an expression of our praise for him? Or is it an essential spiritual exercise of discipline?

How should we pray? Is there any sense in reciting Khordeh Avesta prayers, without understanding their meanings?

Here are Dr. Saheb Framroze Chiniwalla's answers to these questions and several others. This is the translation of the of a portion from the 'introduction' to his "**Khordeh Avesta ba Khshnoom**". Some portions of the said introduction were published in the last two issues of the humble Parsi Pukar. – **Editor**]

Today several people go on saying: Offer your prayers, but understand what you are praying, ask for blessings or boon. They do not know what they are saying. A real prayer is that which is at once granted by the divine Yazatic Forces. But that is to be distinguished from mere worldly selfish desires. Every person has some such desire or the other and he wishes that it might be fulfilled. That thought is always in his mind. Every minute he wishes something or the other. To express such desires like, give me wealth of wife or children or power or great worldly achievement, is not real genuine prayer. These are just worldly cravings. If a man knows what he should pray and ask for and what he should not, he is a devotee in the right sense and his prayer at once succeeds; he gets what he wants. He is then not a needy person and does not require any advice as to what he should pray for. He knows. Therefore these, who say, do not pray without understanding the content have no idea what they are talking about.

Every person has a desire every minute and wishes its fulfillment. **So, to read out a lesson asking for such wishes is not a PRAYER. The most essential ingredient of Prayer is that it is not for oneself; it is for others.** One who prays does not ask anything for himself. He wishes to give away all that he has to others and to remain poor by himself. That is the meaning of prayer, **an ideal that one should strive to reach.** One who so prays is real Drigu, Dervish. **The saints' and Abeds' prayers are of this kind.** But can an ordinary worldly person pray like that? His desires are whirling in his mind all the time. What is the sense in paraphrasing them in the form of a 'prayer'? In fact and in nature, such worldly cravings are like obstructive rocks in the physical body, which have dried up the seeds of morality and righteousness garnered in the body. **To 'pray' for such ghosts of worldly desires is nothing but self-worship and therefore not a prayer.** It is just ignorance.

Then what is a prayer?

Accordingly to Zarathoshti Daena prayer has three elements:

1. **Prayer of body** - purity of the physical body and "Aipi" surrounding it.
2. **Prayer of the mind** - truth in the thoughts and on the tongue.

3. **Prayer of the Ruvan (soul)** - to chant Avesta Manthra with their 'Mithra' i.e. the thoughts associated with them

To express differently a parsi who wears Sudreh-Kusti -a: Baste Kushtian", has (1) to enwrap oneself in "Meher"; (2) to chant Manthra (3) to practice "Druj Paherej". These three things constitute the prayer (Baendegi) of the body, mind and ruvan, and makes one real devotee - "Bhakta", who is named as "Haomi" in Avesta. One will then live for others at one's own sacrifices. One will then be a 'Gospend', i.e. will have "Gospendi Tevishi (desires)". He or she will not have any selfish or worldly desire. **He will be like a cow - 'Gospend' - "more anxious" to give away then to snatch away.** That is an ideal state of a Haomi, which is to be attained through the said three kinds of prayers. When one becomes Haomi, his body and mind will have undergone a transformation. The inherent seeds of morality will have grown in his body; those seeds will have grown to a tree bearing the fruits of humanity, which he or she tastes and then gives them to others. (This is not a mere psychological thought in him. It is the result of certain actual transformations in his body and mind. **Some subtle processes have operated within him, which transmute him from a selfish person to a 'Haomi'.** The processes are set in motion by three kinds of prayers. Ordinary man is selfish to start with. To become selfless requires the exertion of the three prayers. Only on undergoing the exertions man's inherently selfish disposition is transmuted to the selfless state. In other words his "Kharfastru Tevishi" is converted to "Gospandi Tevishi" when all the "I, I" and "mine, mine" are dissolved, and the animal within is transformed to an angel.)

PABANDI OF MEHER

'Pabandi' means to be firm upon. To be a Paband of Meher is the prayer of the body and mind. What is "Meher"? **One who is destined to be born of Parsee parents has first to put on Sudreh Kusti and then to be thankful for whatever situation he or she may be put in by nature; to be truthful to oneself and others, to faithfully perform all his or her duties towards the parents, brothers, sisters, spouse, children and to all others he or she comes across in life.** That is to be the Paband of Meher.

Meher does not mean to act in whatever way one wishes or to do whatever comes in mind. **Had the mind been pure, nothing further would be needed.** The whole difficulty is that the mind is NOT pure. Its impurities are to be alchemised to purities. Its selfishness is to be converted to selflessness. This cannot be achieved by mere boasting and babbling of the tongue. It requires hard exertion. **Whatever one's selfish mind thinks is sure to have some inherent mistake or error. Therefore one has to follow the commands and admonitions of the Daena in doing everything in life. The guiding star is not the mind but the Daena.**

One may say, "My conscience is pure, I don't need Sudreh Kusti, I will never do anything untruthful - that is my determination". One so babbling has no idea what selfish wolf is operating within one's body. He is ignorant of the power of carnal desires and passions, which fizz and ferment the effervesce within his body. Poor fellow - he does not know that there is natural inherent untruth within him; that he is more a mire of lies than a fountain of truth. Had his conscience been really awake, had all his selfishness been dissolved, he would be an entirely different person. He would be a Haomi with a high spiritual stature. Had he in him the light of truth, or a mechanism not capable of untruth or a compass always pointing to truth or a watch declaring the timings of the truth, he would not have been needy for anything. Untruth would never emanate from him. Such Haomi will give all that he gets, to others, to mankind. But the boaster of "my pure conscience" is himself full of worldly desires, passions, ambitions, and jealousies. His mind revolves around his selfish cravings to be somebody in the world, do something big, be famous to have material things, motor cars, wealth, power to boss on others, to be attractive to the opposite sex, to be proud of his worldly achievements. That means he is

immersed in his own selfishness and that is not a state of so called “pure conscience” of “Goodness”. In the Daena, goodness and selflessness are synonymous. One cannot be without the other. The selfish mind is not a good mind. The bell of truth does not ring in it. The so-called ‘Voice of conscience’ is self-deception; an escapism to justify his selfish ends. Such a mind boasting to operate by itself is bound to be filled up with the gnawing insects of errors. That is why Daena commands, prescribes do’s and don’ts and warns the humans to walk by them.

That is the Prayer – Bandagi – of the body and mind.

“DRUJ – PAHEREZI”

Druj Paherezi is another kind of Prayer, which generates divine strength and virtues in the body and mind. It delivers the devotee from the pain and diseases of the body and mind. What is Druj – Paherezi? The human body is full of things like urine, stools, saliva, perspiration, and filth. So long as certain subtle heat operates in the body, it survives. Once the heat vanishes, the body dies. The whole process of the living body is based on that heat and by its very nature; the body is full of physical filth and mental infirmities, with heavy tendency to be animal-like and not angel like. You may eat best of food; ultimately the waste matter is bound to be generated in the bowels. The body has such natural deficiencies and imperfectness, which result in “Akhti” i.e. waste matters, pus, pain, miseries, and illnesses. The thoughts emanating from such a body is therefore bound to be polluted with faults and errors and passions and thirsts, and selfishness. This state of the body and mind is called “Akhti”, the state of ‘Druj’, “Kharfastrī Tevishi”. Therefore the Druj, the state of evil is bound to be generated from the body, mind and thought of every human. This is a natural phenomenon. **At the same time man has “Gava” – an element of “Good” – in him, which can create ‘Goodness’ – and humanity,** but in very little negligible proportion.

This Druj Arises from the inherent faults of the flesh and the body, and is required to be controlled and prevented from going out of bounds. This Druj is infectious; it spreads out and causes subtle harm to other things in the surroundings. It is ordained for us to minimize the infection of the Druj. That is called Druj Paherez.

Whatever daily activities a human does, results in some or the other kind of pollution. (Eating, drinking, speaking, reliving waste matters, copulating – each of these create Druj in some form or the other. In the present days of Hiv, E-Coli, BSE, Malaria and a host of viruses, this is not difficult to understand. Today’s genetic engineering is making war-weapons of viruses – K.N.) The Tarikat’s prescribed in the Daena are intended to reduce the damaging effects of the various kinds of Druj. And this is a part of the Zarathushtrian prayer.

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