

Atash or Atash-Parasti, the Worship of Fire

The Worship of the Sacred Fire is also one of the 7 Fundamental Pillars of our Religion. It is to honor our sacred covenant with Ahura Mazda and Asho Zarathushtra of preserving the worship of Atash that we left our homeland of Iran and brought the “alat” to India so we carry on our Atash-Parasti in continuity, with faith.

The Holy Avesta calls *Atash*/Fire as Ahura Mazda’s Son. **The “Son” or the “seed” is a reproduction of its parent; therefore, as Ahura Mazda’s Son, Atash is necessarily present in all our rituals.** It is through Fire, the Son, that we receive Ahura Mazda’s blessings. In the Atash Niyayesh that includes Gathic portions, fire is called the giver of health (spiritual as well as physical), and a healer who bestows spiritual blessings to the righteous. Fire is the physical manifestation of Ahura Mazda’s divine energy that permeates through time and space, opening the door of communion with the spiritual world.

The concept and worship of Fire as taught by Asho Zarathushtra is unique to our Religion. Fire is called Asha Vahishta, an Ameshaspand who is united with Ahura Mazda. Fire is spiritual as well as physical. Just as Vohu Mano is Ahura Mazda’s Divine Mind, Asha Vahishta (Fire) is the Divine Energy of Ahura Mazda that pervades every atom of the Universe. It is the Source of all Creation, of Life itself. It is Asha, the Divine Cosmic Fire of Ahura Mazda which sustains and motivates Nature from the moment of Creation till Farshogard is attained. The rotation of the celestial bodies, the waxing and the waning of the Moon, the seasons, the rise and fall of tides, birth and death, are all due to this Immutable Law of Asha (Cosmic Fire) which, through graded rotations, in time, revolves the Universe to Spiritual Perfection and Immortality. Asho Zarathushtra teaches that the Universe was created and exists due to Ahura Mazda’s Radiant Energy (Fire) and in time, will be absorbed into the same Divine Energy that manifested it billions and trillions of years ago. Science acknowledges that the Universe (Earth too) was born out of a ball of Cosmic Fire in its primordial stages of Creation and at the end of time it will be consumed back into the Cosmic Fire.

There is no sin greater than to extinguish a fire, especially when it is consecrated with elaborate rituals and enthroned in a “kebla”. Fire is the essential medium, besides Yasna (Rituals) and Manthra, through which we commune with Ahura Mazda. As indicated in the Ardibehesht Yasht, Asha Vahishta (Ardibehesht Ameshaspand) is synonymous with the Spiritual Fire or Divine Light as well as with Manthra or resonance. Both light and sound are the same energy from

different parts of the electromagnetic spectrum! As energy, light can also function as a spiritual barrier, together with sound, to contain and decontaminate “druj”. In order to heighten a spiritual outcome, the energy contained within sound and light can be combined through our mantra to create a type of constructive interference phenomenon. Asha Vahishta, representing both sound and light, **IS** the embodiment of such a “constructive interference” in Nature. In our rituals, both physical sound (mantra) and light (fire) are combined to create such a “constructive interference” that matches the spiritual energy of the divine and spiritual world.

Fire / Athra is mentioned in:

Ahunavaiti Gatha, 34.4: “*at toi atrem Mazda*” refers to Ahura Mazda’s Own Spiritual Fire. Here, **Asho Zarathushtra expressly seeks a vision and communion with Ahura Mazda through Fire, which is called “the Spirit Holiest”**.

Ushtavad Gatha, 43.9 states: “*at a thwahmai athre ratam nemangho ashahya ma yavat isai manyai*”, Asho Zarathushtra considers Ahura Mazda’s fire as the most precious and offers it homage with utmost reverence through prayers as long as he will have power and strength in him.

Fire as a Gathic belief is reflected in the following Avestan scriptures:

Vendidad, fargard 8 mentions the **16 fires** and their consecration.

Ardibehesht Yasht is dedicated completely to **Ahura Mazda’s Spiritual fire** called Asha Vahishta. Being light (radiance), Asha Vahishta is also the transmitter of sound! Combining the spiritual fire and mantra, Asha Vahishta transmutes unrighteousness to righteousness and through the combined energy of light and sound, destroys the evil seeds or druj created by Angre-Mainyu. **Sound** and **light** are waves of the same energy and transcending space-time continuum, as Asha Vahishta, they sustain and propel creation towards Frashogard!

Atash Niyayesh includes chapters of Yasna 33 and 62, and it is dedicated to the cosmic as well as the physical fire. It is important to note that fire, according to the Avesta, represents not just the physical fire that we see but it also refers to the unseen cosmic fire that is synonymous with Ahura Mazda’s Divine Energy or

Spiritual Consciousness. Fire, to a Zarthushti, symbolizes His Divine Spirit and Presence.

Haptan Yasht, karda 2 mentions that through the worship of fire, we reach Ahura Mazda!

The trinity of yasna, manthra and fire is inter-related because manthra or sound is the same energy as light or fire. Through the Yasna ritual, by the use of sound (manthra), light (fire), metal and water a magnetic “field” is generated whereby spiritual communion between the physical and divine is established through the priest who is himself (his human magnetism or ‘aipee’) purified through ritual “bareshnum” and who keeps “paiwand” with the earth.

That which the scientists call the “Big Bang” suggests that **sound**, inevitably accompanied by **light**, set the stage for the Universe to materialize. Asho Zarathushtra teaches the same, countless millennia ago, that it was Ahura Mazda’s Primordial Thought that produced the WORD that subsequently but inevitably resulted in the Creation of the Universe. The Creation was completed in three stages, first the *Hasti* or the spiritual realm, then the *Nisti* or the semi-spiritual realm and last, the *Geti* or the physical world. Science acknowledges that form is a function of the frequency of vibrations, a teaching that is revealed by Asho Zarathushtra in the Holy Avesta! A word when pronounced is synonymous to “frequency of sound”, “resonance”, and thought is associated with “light”. Zarathushtra has taught that everything originates from thought impulse. Man cannot create what is not first conceptualized in thought!

Further, in support of what is stated above with reference to Creation as mentioned in the Sacred Avesta (Gathas included), *ha 29.7* teaches that Ahura Mazda framed the Holy Manthra through Asha! “Manthra” is Divine Vocalization. “Asha” indicates Asha Vahishta, the Divinity in charge of the **Spiritual Fire** which is synonymous with Light or the Radiant Energy of Ahura Mazda! **Here, it becomes apparent that word/sound (manthra) is produced by light (Asha Vahishta). Both sound and light are energy.** On an oscilloscope, sound can be converted to a visual waveform. Astronomers “hear” stars before they are seen. Light and sound are both manifestations of energy at different levels. Asha Vahishta being the Spiritual Fire, or “Light” (energy) of Ahura Mazda, is also the **transmitter** of

sound, the sacred manthra. That Fire is related to sound or speech is also evident from the Atash Niyayesh .4, wherein it is stated that Atash grants wisdom (light of mind) and “fluent tongue”. Ardibeshest (Asha Vahishta) Yasht also teaches about mantra and spiritual purification through the utterance of sacred *manthra* or sound! Therefore, through the teachings of the Avesta, we are taught that both light and sound are interrelated as thought is to word. Irrefutably, Ahura Mazda’s First Thought and His First Word “Ahunavar” are interrelated. Behind the Holy Word, is the Primordial Thought pertaining to Creation and the Thinker of that Thought is Ahura Mazda, The Creator!

According to the Farvardin Yasht (karda 22), *Manthra Spenta* is the Soul of Ahura Mazda! Hence, it can be proven that Fire is the Spirit, the Essence, the Divine Energy of Ahura Mazda whereas the Divine Manthra is the Soul, the Spiritual Sound of Ahura Mazda! The Universe is His Body, His Physical Manifestation! The Divine Trinity of Thought, Word and Deed of Ahura Mazda is proven with the knowledge that the Deed is the Big Bang or the Creation of the Universe itself!

Indisputably, Asho Zarathushtra teaches that the Universe began with the Cosmic Energy unleashed from the Spirit (i.e. the Thought Force or Fire) as well as from the Soul (*Manthra Spenta/Ahunavar*) of Ahura Mazda! **In other words, the Universe is the result of both Sound and Light (Energy) emitting from Ahura Mazda.** Consequently, is it so inconceivable that when we will perfect our physical senses through spiritual evolution, and subsequently attain to the Spiritual Ideal State (Khordad) and Immortality (Amardad), like the Yazads, the Divine Beings, we will also, in the extremely distant future, be able to unite our consciousness with that of Ahura Mazda? Such a Holy Union will occur at the far off Divine Event of Frashogard that is preordained for all! **Asho Zarathushtra, the Yazad, has taught of this Divine Event, Frashogard, and the spiritual longed-for ecstasy to be experienced by Geush Urva when matter will transform itself to spirit or to the ethereal spiritual state, when there will be no Angre Mainyu left to torment the Soul of Geush Urva! How this Divine Event will be attained and how Angre Mainyu will be transformed to Spenta Mainyu is taught through the mystic teachings embedded in the Sacred Avesta, which includes the Holy Gathas.**

.....

Fire is expressly mentioned in the Holy Gathas.

Asho Zarathushtra seeks for a vision and communion with Ahura Mazda, through Fire, which is worshipped as the “**Spirit-Holiest**” (*ha* 34.4) which grants courage and clear guidance in life to the earnest believers, and brings destruction to the deceivers of truth. One of the ways in which a “sinner” (or matter) is purified is by passing through “molten metal”. As a purifier, Fire purifies everything in its Divine, Radiant Energy, transforming Angre-Mainyu (matter) to Spenta-Mainyu (energy), making the event of Farshogard a reality. Asho Zarathushtra refers to Fire as Ahura Mazda’s Son. The “Son” or the “seed” is a reproduction of its parent; therefore, as Ahura Mazda’s Son, Fire is necessarily present in all our rituals. It is through Fire, the Son, that we receive Ahura Mazda’s blessings. As His Son and Regent, Fire is present in all rituals. Sacred Fire is the Judge of actions performed during life and is the Dispenser of reward or punishment in after life.

Einstein theorized through elaborate scientific equations that **a) matter and energy are inter-related**. Asho Zarathushtra, thousands of years ago, teaches through the Sacred Gathas that the two *mainyus* (spirit and matter) are coeval and inter-related. The link between the two *mainyus* is maintained through Fire (energy) as it enables the spirit to descend and function on the physical plane and it also purifies matter into a spiritual state. **b) Space and time are connected**; the Holy Gathas also speak of the thought created spiritual world “*mainyava*” which is the cause of the creation of the physical world “*gaethya*” where time begins. The two worlds are connected through time and energy. The two *mainyus* are also connected till the end of time. Fire to us is not just the physical fire we see but it is heat, light, energy in different forms whose source is the Divine Unseen Cosmic Fire. Space is this Cosmic Fire filled with photons (light particles, energy) which are imbued with intelligence. **c) Matter can never be destroyed but changed into other forms of energy**; the Gathas also teach that matter (Angre-Mainyu) cannot be destroyed (*ha* 30.4) but through personal exertion and asserting the power of Right Choice between the two “*Mainyus*” or mentalities, matter can be transformed to radiant energy or Spenta-Mainyu. The very purpose and aim of Creation is to alchemize, change (convert) Angre-Mainyu (matter) to Spenta-Mainyu (spirit) by obeying Asha and Ashoi - by following The Path of Righteousness. The very goal of life is to transform our physical bodies into the ethereal robes of “*Tanpasin*” or light, through the purification of the different Fires within ourselves. This inner purification will eventually enable us to become spiritually perfected by uniting with all the nine parts of our soul in *Khaetwadath* and thereby attain Farshogard. **Through the mystic philosophy of the Gathas, we are taught to transform matter into energy through the agency of the Spiritual Fire that is within us and without us.**

Every morning when the Zarthushtis offer prayers to the Sun, the Sustainer of Life on Earth, we revere the different seen and unseen Fires (energies) that are Ahura Mazda's Co-Workers. Asho Zarathushtra has described sixteen energies functioning in Nature (Vendidad, *fargard* 18) through the Radiant Energy of the Sun. Today, scientists are rediscovering these as different forms of energy in the electromagnetic spectrum such as Radio Waves, Gamma rays, X-rays, Microwaves, Infra-Red, Ultra-Violet, etc. As worshippers of Fire, Zarthushtis show more science in our belief than any scientist who merely studies energies but does not believe he himself is the aggregate of all these Atash energies and therefore, without that knowledge, holds no special reverence for Fire which is Ahura Mazda's Own Physical Manifestation. The words "nothing exists without God" may be read as "nothing exists without God's Essence or Divine Energy which is Fire."

Pervin J. Mistry

April 30, 2001