

My God - AHURA MAZDA
PRIMER AND ACTIVITY BOOK



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My First Steps to Zarthoshti Religion- Book 1.

June 2010

This book belongs to:

Name: _____

I _____ was _____ born _____ on:
 Date _____ Month _____ Year _____

I was born on: Roj _____ Mah _____
 Yazdezardi _____

My Navjot: Date _____
 _____ Month _____ Year _____

My Navjot: Roj _____ Mah _____ Yazdezardi

Introduction

Children's book on systematic religious education have been a long felt need in the community. I had a keen desire to bring out books with basic knowledge on essential subjects, complete with activities and illustrations.

I planned a series of books entitled - My first steps to Zarthoshti religion. This first book in this proposed series, took unduly long to publish, as I was not able to get an appropriate illustrator. My search for a good illustrator ended with Ms. Anaheet Gazder, who so readily offered to make illustrations for this book as labour of her love. I am indeed beholden to her for patiently preparing illustrations as per the requirements. Needless to say, *all illustrations are copyright of Ms. Anaheet Gazder and may not be reproduced without her written consent.*

This book is published by Ahunavar Academy, an institution started by me some years back, to exclusively cater to religious and spiritual education at different levels all over the world.

This book is intended to kindle interest of children in learning about their religion. It is not necessary to read it from cover to cover. Parents and teachers may first go through the book and then read it with the children as per their inclination and capacity.

I plan to bring out more books in this series with the help and blessings of Ahura Mazda.

Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia
June 2010.
Mumbai, India.

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My God - AHURA MAZDA

1. What is God ?

God is the HIGHEST DIVINE POWER who created the Universe, who is present everywhere and who looks after all creations.

Every religion understands this Supreme Power - God - in its own way, and gives it different names. Zoroastrians call their God by the name

AHURA MAZDA

Ahura means "Lord" and Mazda means "Wisdom." Hence Ahura Mazda means "*Lord Wisdom*" or in other words "The Lord who knows everything." *Gayomard*, the first king of the Peshdadian dynasty was the first to teach man to believe in one God, whom he called *Mazda*. The people who accepted Gayomard's belief came to be known as *Mazdayasni*.

Different religions call their God by various names. Though the power behind all these names is the same, the understanding of God differs from religion to religion. Hindus call Him *ISHWAR* or *BHAGWAN*, Muslims call Him *ALLAH*, Jews call Him *YAHVEH*, Sikhs call him *WĀHE GURU*, Christians call Him *GOD*.

2. Knowing Ahura Mazda

Ahura Mazda, Hormazd or Ohrmazd is the name by which we refer to our dear God. We also refer to Him by other names like Dādārji, Yazdān, Khudā, Khudāiji and Parvardegār.

Ahura Mazda is the Highest being in the whole world. He has neither an equal nor an opponent. He is omniscient, that is, all-knowing, omnipresent, that is present everywhere and omnipotent, that is all-powerful.

Ahura Mazda cannot be seen by our eyes and hence He is invisible. He cannot be seen because He has no form, shape or colour. He is without a beginning or an end. He was, He is and He will be forever.

Ahura Mazda is infinite, and, so it is not possible to understand him, because our mind can only understand things which are finite, which have a beginning and an end.

Ahura Mazda Himself is made of light and He live in Endless Light. All bright and radiant things remind us of Ahura Mazda. Whenever I want to think of Ahura Mazda, or see Him before my eyes, I have to think of a very, very bright and powerful white light.

Ahura Mazda is best represented by radiant and luminescent creations like the sun, moon and stars.



The most luminescent creation that we know of on the earth is the **SUN**, which is looked after by Khorshed Yazad.



Among the seven creations on the earth, the most radiant creation and the one that has the most qualities like Ahura Mazda, is the FIRE, referred to as Adar Yazad.

Both SUN and FIRE bring Ahura Mazda's Divine Energy (*Khoreh*) to mankind.

Ahura Mazda is always referred to as *bakhshāyandeh*, *bakhshāyazgar* and *meherbān*, because he is "the giver of all good things, forgiver of mistakes and compassionate." Though He is All powerful, He is always good, kind, helpful, merciful and forgiving.

We can 'know' and 'see' Ahura Mazda through His creations and the orderliness with which they go about their work - like the rising and setting of the sun, the growing of a seed into a plant, the ebb and tide in the ocean and the growing of a baby.

An important way of knowing Ahura Mazda is through His qualities. He is known by His attributes, which we learn from prayers like the *101 names of God. Hormazd Yasht* has about seventy names of Ahura Mazda and the *Doa Nām Setāyashne* praises God and enumerates the boons and blessings He has bestowed on the world.

Some of the names of Ahura Mazda are *Harvespa-tawān* "All Powerful", *Harvespa-āgāh* "All-knowing", *Abadah* "Without a beginning", *Abi-anjām* "Without an end", *Chamaga* "The cause of all causes", *Dāvar* "Judge", *Dādār* "Creator", *Bokhtār* "Redeemer", Self-existent, *Iyānah* "Protector", *Vāsnā* "Omnipresent (present everywhere)", *Khāvar* "Merciful", and *A-satoh* "Unconquerable".

3. Ahura Mazda's gifts to us

Ahura Mazda is the creator of every good thing that we see around us. No evil ever comes from Him. He has created the whole world with wonderful creations so that man can live a happy life with the help of these creations.



Ahura Mazda created man superior to other creations, gave him intelligence and sovereignty over time. At the same time, He also gave man the responsibility to look after other creations like air, water, earth, minerals, plants and animals which are for his use. Man should utilise them with wisdom and temperance, and never misuse or overuse them.

To each one of us Ahura Mazda has given a beautiful life.



We are surrounded by loving and caring people, like our parents, our family, our friends and our teachers. Ahura Mazda has given us a healthy body and an active mind, which, if properly used, can help us achieve anything in life.

Ahura Mazda has created this world so that with our help, His good power SPENTA MAINYU can fight and defeat the evil power ANGRA MAINYU and drive him away from this world.

ACTIVITY

Find the given words in the grid:

H	O	A	K	I	Y	A	H	V	E	H
K	H	H	H	S	H	I	I	A	O	Z
K	R	U	U	H	W	A	N	H	R	P
L	O	R	D	W	I	S	D	O	M	E
B	H	A	A	A	A	H	U	E	A	S
A	Z	M	E	R	J	E	H	H	Z	H

B	H	A	G	W	A	N	R	H	D	A
M	A	Z	D	A	Y	A	S	N	I	A
Y	S	D	G	A	Y	O	M	A	R	D
A	Y	A	Z	A	D	M	A	Z	D	A

Lord Wisdom	Ahura Mazda
Jehovah	Ishwar
Mazdayasni	Bhagwan
Yazad	Khuda
Gayomard	Peshdad
Hindu	

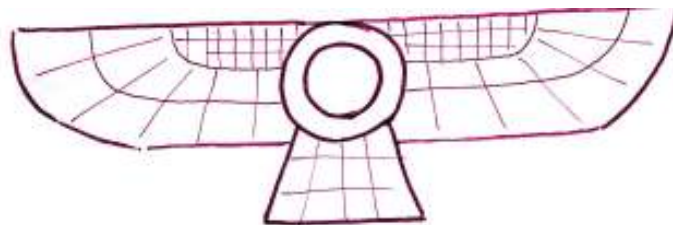
4. Ahura Mazda's helpers

When Ahura Mazda created the spiritual world, He created divine beings in it who are known as AMESHASPANDS, YAZADS and FRAVASHIS, who later became His helpers and co-workers. Ahura Mazda created the material world to make Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit ineffective.

The purpose of mankind in this world is to fight against Angra Mainyu, who lures and attracts innocent children and people with lures and attractions. We should not give in to his temptations. We have to use our wisdom and decide what is good and what is bad.

Wisdom is the sum total of knowledge we have received the advise and guidance of parents and elders, which we used when taking the decision. If we take our decision which is against the teachings of the religion and advise of our elders. It is almost always not a wise decision.

By making the correct choices we not only make ourselves stronger, buy we also give power to Ahura Mazda and make Angra Mainyu weak. The Ameshaspands, Yazads and Fravashis help us in this task.



Ahura Mazda gave a Fravashi to each and every creation, including the Ameshaspands and Yazads. These Fravashis are visualized as the picture above - the circle in the centre symbolize the perfection of God, since the Fravashis are the pure light of God. The wings signify that they are always ready to help us and come as soon as we remember them. The Fravashis of human beings also have an upper body and a face above the wings. The Fravashis nurture all creations and help them to progress and prosper. All spiritual and material creations have a Fravashi, including the Amesha Spentas. Even Ahura Mazda has a Fravashi.

THE SEVEN AMESHASPANDS

According to the Zoroastrian religion, there are 7 Ameshaspand who look after the 7 creations. Though Ahura Mazda is the father and creator of the Ameshaspands, He is also one of the Ameshaspands. The 7 Ameshaspands always work in harmony with one thought and one intention - to help progress and prosper the creations.

The main helpers of Ahura Mazda are the other six Ameshaspands. They are given the task of protecting and nurturing the creations. The Ameshaspands also represent aspects and qualities of Ahura Mazda, which we have to imbibe in our lives.

In the illustrations the Ameshaspands are depicted as Fravashis of various colours, depending on their functions and creations.

Dādār HORMAZD (as an Ameshaspand):



Dādār HORMAZD (Ahura Mazda in Avesta language) Himself is regarded as the first Ameshaspand.

He is also the father and creator of the other six Ameshaspands.

He looks after the welfare of human beings.

He reminds us to have Wisdom and act with Wisdom.

He is unhappy when people hurt, harm and kill other people.

His Ham-kars (co-workers) are Dae-pa-Adar, De-pa-Meher and Dae-pa-Din.

BAHMAN Ameshapand:



BAHMAN (Vohu Manah in Avesta language) Ameshaspand looks after cattle and beneficent animals like cows, goat and sheep.

He teaches us to keep our mind good, pure, calm and clean.

He give thoughts of peace and harmony to those having a pure mind.

He gives divine wisdom to those who regularly do their prayers for some time every day.

He does not like people who misuse their mind to have evil, crooked and harmful thoughts.

His Ham-kars are Mohor Yazad, Gosh Yazad and Mino Ram Yazad.

ARDIBAHEST Ameshapand:



ARDIBAHEST (Asha Vahishta in Avesta language) Ameshaspand looks after the fires.

He also looks after energies, as they are created from fire and heat.

Ardibahest Ameshaspand had established order at the beginning of the Universe.

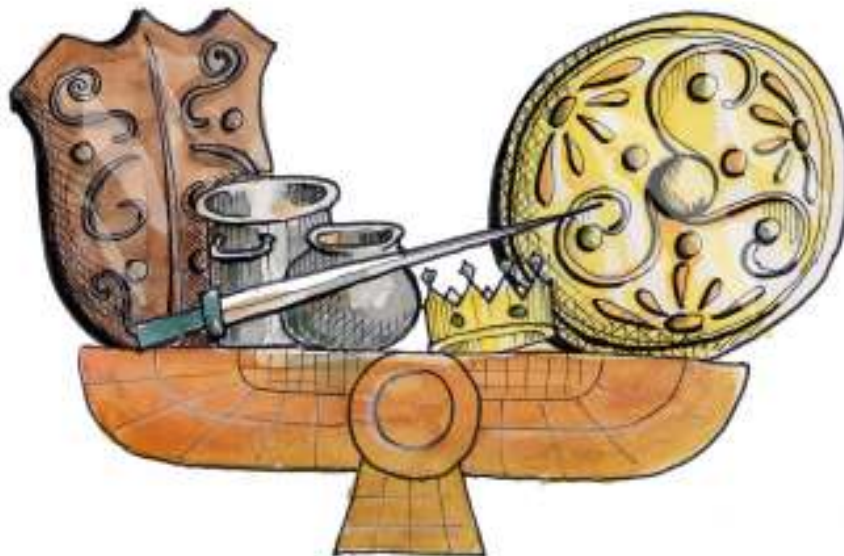
He teaches us to be truthful and righteous, so that we can find the purpose of our life.

He does not like people who lie and deceive others

He is referred to as the Gatekeeper of Heaven.

His Ham-kars are Adar Yazad, Sarosh Yazad and Beham Yazad.

SHAHREVAR Ameshapand:



SHAHREVAR (Khshathra Vairya in Avesta language) Ameshaspand looks after metals and minerals.

He also looks after the sky.

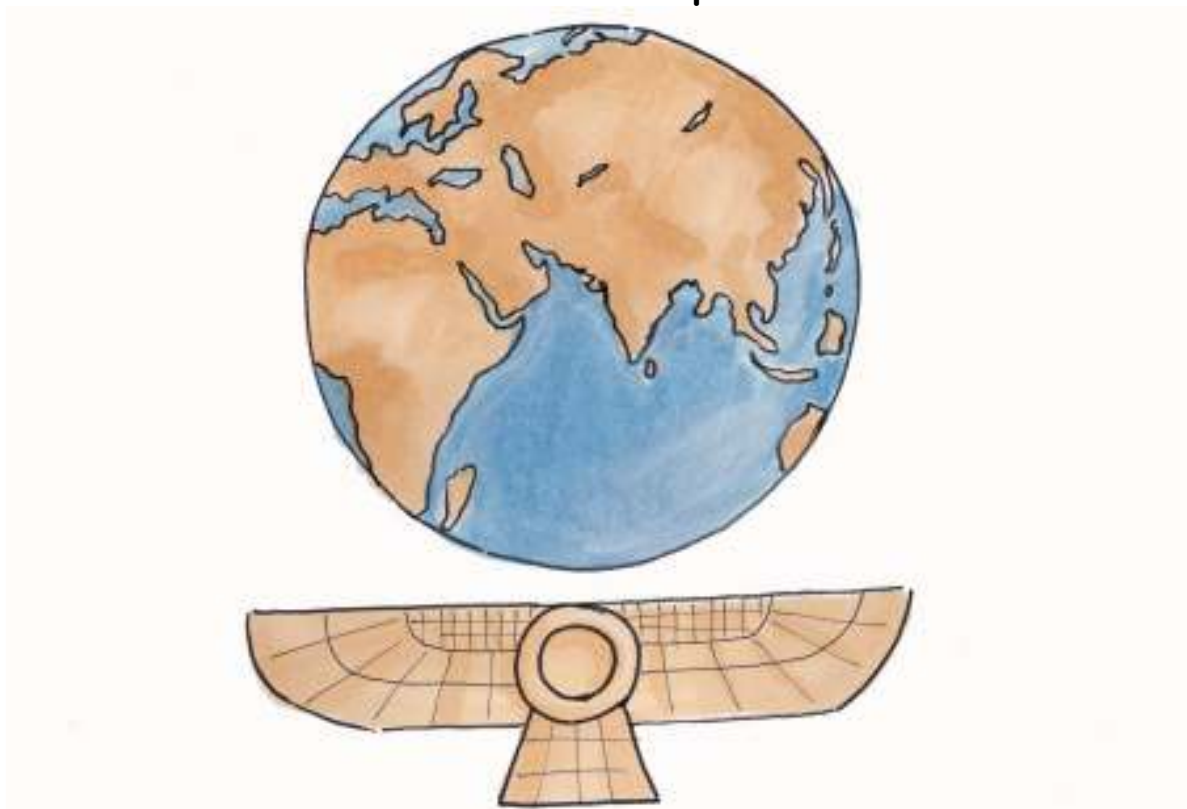
He gives the power to be firm for right and good causes.

He helps kings and rulers to be good leaders,

He likes people who are industrious and who work hard.

He does not like lazy and lethargic people.

His Ham-kars are Khorshed Yazad, Meher Yazad, Mino Asman Yazad and Mino Aneran Yazad.

SPANDARMAD / ASPANDAD Ameshapand:

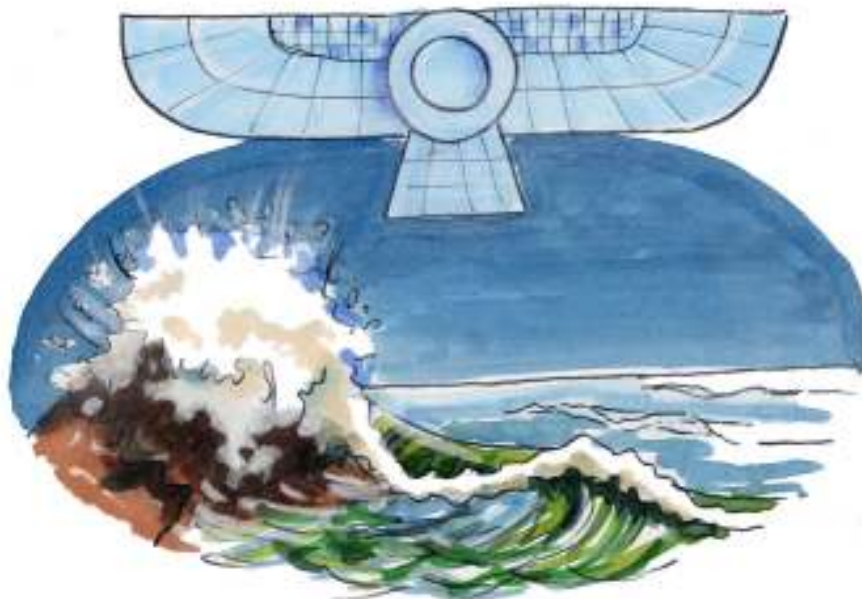
SPANDARMAD / ASPANDAD (Spenta Armaiti in Avesta language)
Ameshaspand looks after the earth.

She teaches us to be loving, tolerant, understanding and humble.

She also teaches us to be devoted and tolerant.

She does not like people who are arrogant and proud.

Her Ham-kars are Avan Yazad, Din Yazad and Mino Ashishwangh Yazad.

KHORDAD Ameshapand:

KHORDAD (Haurvatat in Avesta language) Ameshaspand looks after water, especially of the sea and the oceans.

He looks after time and its divisions in years, months, days and gehs. He also looks after seasons.

He teaches us to strive and be perfect in whatever we do.

He sees to it that good people are never troubled by thirst.

His Ham-kars are Tir Yazad, the Fravashis (Fravardin) and Govad Yazad.

AMARDAD Ameshapand:



AMARDAD (Ameretat in the Avesta language) Ameshaspand looks after trees, plants and vegetation, which also includes fruits, vegetables, flowers and grains.

He teaches us that our soul is immortal, that is, it will not die when our body dies.

He sees to it that good people are never troubled by hunger.

He likes people who take care of their soul along with their bodies.

His Ham-kars are Rashne Yazad, Ashtad Yazad and Zamyad Yazad.



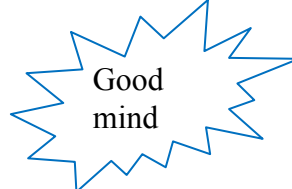
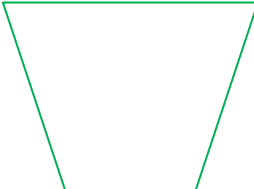
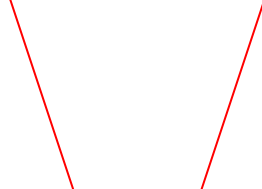
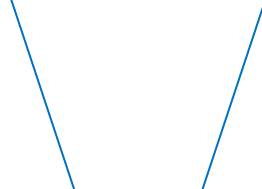



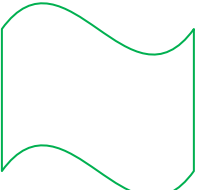
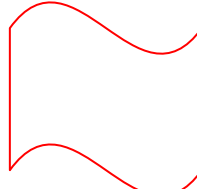
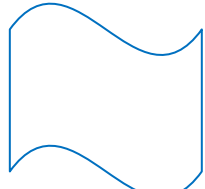
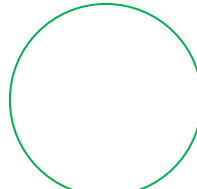
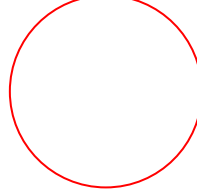
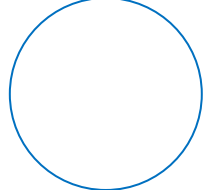

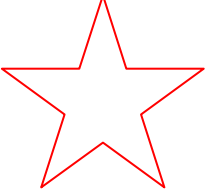
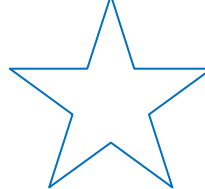
The Seven Ameshaspands along with the Yazads and Fravashis work together with harmony and unity to bring progress and prosperity to the world.

ACTIVITY

1. Find out the names of the Ameshaspands, their creations and their teachings from the jumbled lot below, and place the ones belonging to the same Ameshaspand in similar shapes:

Shahrevar - animals - Ardibahesht - Khordad - truthfulness - Good Mind - metals - vegetation - earth - Bahman - devotion - water- Spandarmad - perfection - leadership - Amardad - fire - immortality.

Example:

 <p>Bahman</p>	 <p>animals</p>	 <p>Good mind</p>
		
		
		
		
		

2. Circle the odd man out, who does not belong to the group. All words except one are related to one particular group of Amesaspands :

Plants	hunger	truth	immortality	Amardad
Human beings	Hormazd	metals	Dae-pa-Adar	wisdom
Animals	Ardibahešt	Mind	goats	Mohor
Metals	laziness	Shahrevar	fire	kings
Avan	earth	Bahman	arrogance	love
Water	time	season	Khordad	metals
Goat	Sarosh	Fire	Ardibahešt	lies

5. Understanding Ahura Mazda

Whether we are happy or sad, we should always remember Ahura Mazda. In times of happiness we should think of Ahura Mazda and thank Him for all His blessings. In times of troubles and difficulties we should remember Him and ask for His help and strength to overcome our difficulties. We should always remember that with the help of Ahura Mazda and with our own efforts, we will be able to overcome all troubles and difficulties.

We should have total FAITH in the Justice of Ahura Mazda. He works in His own way, which are mysterious. Sometimes we may not immediately understand why something has happened to us.

We should strive our best to achieve happiness and greatness in our lives. If despite our best efforts we are not able to achieve our desired goal, we should learn to remain happy under all circumstances and totally submit ourselves to His will. We have to understand that the desired thing may not be good for us at that time, and so God in His wisdom is not fulfilling our desires. In the Avesta it is said *athā ne aghat yathā hvo vasat* "May it be so as He wills." Some other put this same idea in other words when they say "Thy *Will* be done."

athā ne aghat
yathā hro vasat
"MAY IT BE SO AS HE WILLS"



We should always be strong and courageous in our lives, since our friend and our God Ahura Mazda is always with us. To remove fear of unknown things, we should always keep in mind the words:

***IF AHURA MAZDA IS WITH ME,
NO ONE CAN HARM ME.***

Sometimes we feel that Ahura Mazda has not been just to us. That inspite our efforts and hard work, we have not been crowned with the success that we had expected. However, Ahura Mazda is the greatest and best judge and he can never be wrong. Of course, in this imperfect world, it may take a little longer for justice to reach us. Whenever we have thoughts of doubt about the justice of God. Or feel that justice has not been done or that we are wrongfully punished, we have to remember that Ahura Mazda's justice may take a longer time, but it will definitely be done. It is necessary for us to be patient and remember the words:

***The Mills of God grind slow,
but they grind exceedingly well.***

Unhappiness, misery, pain and difficulties are temporary. Many a times, if we are receptive enough, they teach us important lessons and help us in developing our character and mould our personality. Whenever we are unhappy, dejected or disheartened, we allow Angra Mainyu to triumph. Whenever we remain cheerful and positive, it is a victory of God and goodness. We have to be patient, and work towards overcoming the diifculties with our faith in God.

Bad times do pass away as do the good times. We have to always keep in mind this advise of a wise man:

This too shall pass

6. In the name of Ahura Mazda

We should always begin our work by remembering Ahura Mazda and taking His name. Some of our prayers begin with the words *Ba nāme yazad* "in the name of Yazad (a name of Ahura Mazda)." It is very helpful if we constantly keep Ahura Mazda in our mind, and the easiest way to do that is to constantly chant His name.

We Zarthushtis used to greet each other with the words:

YAZDAAN PANAAH BAAD !!!

"May God protect you."

The receiver of this greeting would reply:

DER ZI O SHAAD BAAD !!!

"May you have a long and happy life."



This is a delightful greeting. Each time we use it, we remember God and wish for the happiness of others.

7. Ahura Mazda is a friend

Ahura Mazda is everybody's FRIEND and so He is also my friend. To be His friend I have to first ask for His friendship. This can be done by being good and following the teachings of my religion. If I take this first step, Ahura Mazda will take several steps to come to me and be my friend for life.



Then, we should have COMPLETE FAITH that Ahura Mazda is our friend and He will do the best that is for us. In our prayers we have been taught:

Atha ne anghat atha hvo vast
"May it be so, as He Wills."

Ahura Mazda definitely comes to our help whenever we call Him. If we learn to make Ahura Mazda our friend, we will always joyful, happy, prosperous, strong and confident.

For making and keeping Ahura Mazda as a friend, I should not knowingly hurt anybody in the world, and I should take extra care not to hurt my parents and friends. I have to take the utmost care to see that I do not do anything that hurts my greatest friend - My God Ahura Mazda.

Ahura Mazda has promised that He will help and support all those who remember Him with true heart.

***THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS WORLD THAT
ME AND MY AHURA MAZDA TOGETHER
CANNOT ACCOMPLISH.***

Ahura Mazda remains our friend and helps us, irrespective of our behaviour. However, by our wrong choices and bad actions we close ourselves to His help. He never punishes us. Whenever we are unhappy, it is not because of His punishing us. It is the result of our mistakes - knowingly or unknowingly committed, as also for our evil thoughts and wicked ways. Our happiness and sadness is in our own hands. It depends on the law of Asha, which states "Evil unto evil, good blessings unto the good."

8. Talking with Ahura Mazda

Apart from being our best friend, Ahura Mazda is also our father, brother and guide. Sometimes we may feel a need to talk with somebody, but do not know where to go. At such times we can turn to Ahura Mazda and talk out our problems and difficulties with Him.



The best way to communicate with Ahura Mazda is through our *Mānthravāni* prayers, that is prayers in our sacred Avesta and Pazand languages from the Khordeh Avesta. Whenever we do the Kasti our mind can communicate with Ahura Mazda. Our innermost thoughts can reach Ahura Mazda. We can think about Ahura Mazda by looking at a fire or natural light or simply by closing our eyes and thinking about them.

The first thing to do when talking to Ahura Mazda is to THANK Him. We need to thank Him for several things. At the outset, we must thank Him for giving us a wonderful life, parents, relatives and friends. For giving us circumstances where we can lead a happy and prosperous life. We should also thank Him for giving us birth in the beautiful Mazdayasni Zarthoshti religion and sending Prophet

Zarathushtra to teach us religion. We should thank him for all the beautiful creations in the world which help us and sustain our lives. One of the best ways to thank Ahura Mazda, apart from maintaining a good conduct, is by praying to Him.



Next, we should seek **FORGIVENES** from Ahura Mazda for any mistakes done by us knowingly or unknowingly. If we promise Ahura Mazda not to repeat the mistakes, He helps us in overcoming our mistakes and giving us strength to bear the result of our mistakes.

Lastly, we may ask for **HELP** from Ahura Mazda for whatever we need. The things that we ask for should not be troublesome or harmful to others. After seeking our heart's desire, we should leave it to Ahura Mazda's wisdom, to grant us our wishes. We can also

share our problems and difficulties with Ahura Mazda, seek guidance from Him and ask to be shown the right way.

We can communicate with Ahura Mazda even when we are not praying. Thoughts of Thanks, Sorry and Help can be communicated any time to Ahura Mazda by thinking of Him.

9. Making Ahura Mazda happy

Most of our prayers begin with the words *Khshnaothra ahurahe mazdāo* "for the pleasure of Ahura Mazda." It is our duty to see that our thoughts, words and actions should be such that they please Ahura Mazda. We can please Ahura Mazda with our good thoughts, good words, good deeds and our sincere prayers.



Since Ahura Mazda has created all creations, He will be unhappy if I harm any of his creations. I should not hurt or harm any of God's good creations.



We human beings are Ahura Mazda's dearest and best creation. We should take extra care not to hurt or harm any person. We should also try and help as many deserving persons as possible - by way of giving them food, clothes, money or knowledge.

If a man becomes turns evil and starts hurting others, we have to stop such a person from harassing others and try to bring him back on the path of goodness.

10. Our duty towards Ahura Mazda

Our first duty towards Ahura Mazda is to be doubtless about His existence, His love and His innumerable blessings. We should have total BELIEF and FAITH in Him Mazda. We should never doubt His existence just because we cannot see Him.

Another important duty towards our dear Ahura Mazda, our creator and maker, our friend and guide, is to always follow the right and

true path and be His friend and supporter. This is the way to be a co-worker of SPENTA MAINYU, which is the creative spirit of Ahura Mazda.



We should always strive and make the best possible efforts to reject and fight against everything all that is bad, evil and wrong, as such things belong to ANGRA MAINYU and they disturb and destroy God's good creations.

We we should always keep Ahura Mazda's presence in our mind and act accordingly. Whenever we think any thought, speak any word or do any action we have to be aware of His presence and ask ourselves whether they would please Ahura Mazda. We should never think, speak or do anything which may displease Ahura Mazda.

ACTIVITIES

1. I talk with God for : Tick or

Saying Thank You	
------------------	--

Saying Sorry	
Fighting with Him	
Complaining	
Asking for things.	
Sharing jokes	
Asking for help	
Sharing problems.	

2. By what words will you describe God: Tick \checkmark or \times

Good		Kind	
Punishing		Cruel	
Happy		Law-abiding	
Merciful		Wise	
Revengeful		Forgiving	
Angry		Joyful	