



# USHTA-TE FOUNDATION

A H M E D A B A D I N D I A

## Gatha Awareness & Appreciation Project

### The Thought behind the Project

Most Zoroastrian Parsis are brought up with the simple heuristic (thumb-rule) of "Good thoughts, good words and good deeds" derived from our religion. Indeed this has stood us in good stead as we sail through the trials and tribulations of human existence on planet earth. The Zoroastrian theology presented in the Gathas (divine songs) which forms the basis of this ethical religion is even more beautiful and comprehensive. Gathas are the poetical compositions of Prophet Zarathustra. These beautiful verses are directly addressed by our prophet to our divine creator Ahura Mazda and represent His quest for truth. However, most Parsis are deterred from studying the Gathas because a) it was written in the Avesta, an alien language, long extinct and therefore subject to a variety of translations and interpretations and b) the abstract nature of the theology as depicted through the seven Amesha Spentas (aspects of God) and their interrelationships.

When Zoroastrian children ask 'difficult' questions about the religion and fail to get satisfactory answers from the elders, they feel disillusioned and start looking elsewhere for answers. How do we remedy this situation? One way is to form self-help groups for the study of Gathas. The Gatha Study Circle of Ahmedabad is one among several such groups in different parts of the globe, engaged in serious study and reflection on the Gathas.

Founded in 2004, under the aegis of Ushta Te Foundation, the study circle was initiated with inspiration of the eminent lawyer and jurist Mr. Rohinton Nariman, who himself has been active in the study of Gathas for

several years in the capital city of New Delhi. In Ahmedabad we formed a group of about 15 Zoroastrian Parsis who meet once a month to study and reflect on the Gathas and related literature, with a view to internalize its messages leading to inward growth and development. Dr. Ms Armaity Daver played a critical role in anchoring the study circle by drawing upon her large collection of literature and sharing it with the rest of the group. Many of the translations were read and reread verse by verse not only to understand, but to also imbibe these teachings.

In 2014, the Gatha Study Circle, launched into a unique project to arouse curiosity amongst the Parsis especially the youth in the timeless message of Prophet Zarthushtira as articulated in the holy Gathas. The idea was inspired by the fact that the study circle had a profound impact on each one of us. The once very unapproachable Gathas seemed to be very involving and inspiring. Enriched by the great experience, and noticing the change in our world-view and lives, we thought of ways and means to spread the word of the Gathas to every Zoroastrian home so that more and more Zoroastrians would shed their inhibitions for study of the Gathas.

### The Gatha Awareness Project

After much brain-storming, the group thought of powerful visuals as an appropriate means to achieve its objectives. It was felt that a few selected stanzas of these sacred texts could be depicted in a pictorial form and a calendar could be designed both in English and Gujarati, so that the messages contained in these sacred verses reach out to a large number of Zoroastrians.

The group got in touch with Mr. Rustom Daboo, another Zoroastrian from Ahmedabad now settled in Baroda, who has been silently involved in studying and propagating the Gathas. Mr. Rustom Daboo, (grandson of our great scholar, respected Ervad Khurshedji Daboo,) who himself has authored a book on the Zoroastrian religion is a self-taught painter in his spare time. He is known for his inspirational paintings. At the first suggestion, he picked up the challenge to make inspirational paintings illustrating the selected Has (stanzas) from the Gathas. After almost a year, Rustomji came up with a magnificent set of six paintings which are now available for wider circulation.

The Study Circle now plans to take these beautiful paintings to the homes of fellow Zoroastrians and others in two ways. The first consists of set of six reprints which will be packed in suitable boxes for gifting and will be on sale starting from the Udvada Utsav on 25th December 2015. The second idea was conceived to make these even more accessible to the common Parsi home. The group got 'apro' Cyrus Mobedji of Ashoi Designs, Ahmedabad, to design a beautiful calendar for the coming year (2016), using the paintings made by Rustomji. Cyrus, of Ashoi Designs and a product of the Fine Arts College, M.S. University, Vadodara, is a perfectionist. The calendar designed by him with much passion and enthusiasm, is a piece of art in its own right. It is being brought out in two sizes - regular and large. The calendar has been cleverly designed such that both the English and Gujarati translations of the selected stanzas are provided in an unobtrusive manner, and reading them does not interfere with the visuals. It was decided to use Eruch Taraporewalla's and Pилоo Nanavaty's translations of the Gathas, which the study circle found relatively easier to understand.

### Pre-booking of the products

Although the reprints and the calendar will be launched during the forthcoming Udvada Utsav on 25th December and will be available there at the Ushta Te Foundation's stall, it will also be possible to pre-book your copies on the net through Ushta Te Foundation's website (forthcoming) and/or through our representatives (see contact details at the end).

We trust that our humdins will like the products and give a hearty response to our efforts.

### Contact Details for Pre-booking the reprints and calendars

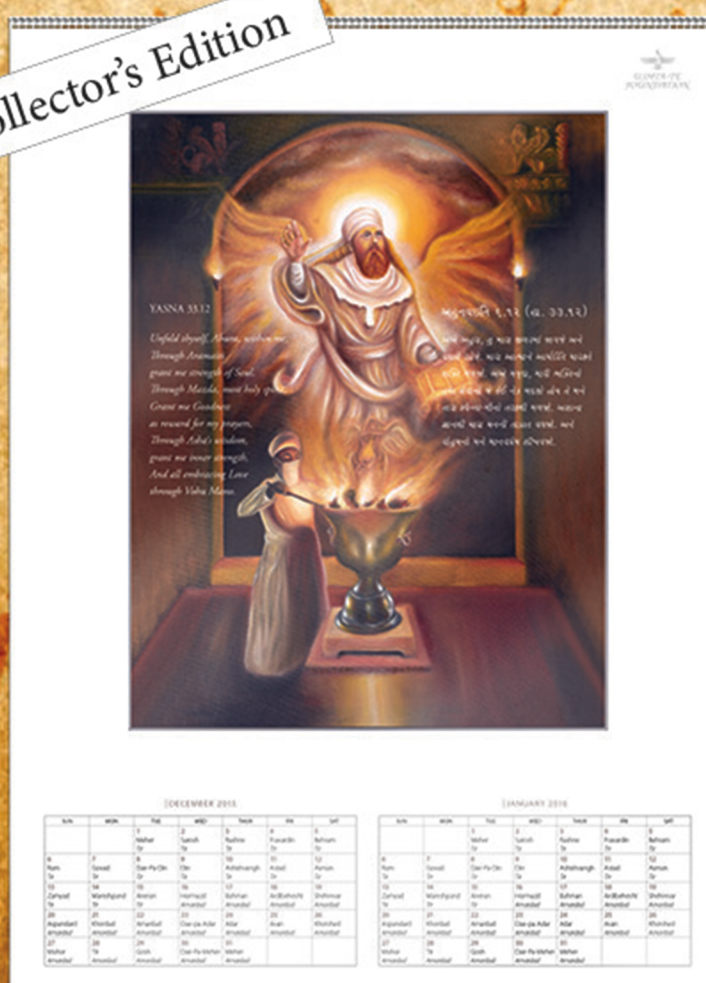
Mrs. Delnaz Jokhi & Ms. Ashish Majra : e-mail: [ushtatefoundation@gmail.com](mailto:ushtatefoundation@gmail.com)  
Ushta Te Office : +91-79-26858859, 26853114



Ahunavaiti 1.1 (Ha 28.1)  
ahyâ yâsâ nemangi  
ustânazastô ra  
manyêush mazdâ p  
ashâ vîspêñg s  
vanghêush xratûm



Reprints  
Size : 19 inches X 26 inches  
Set : Each set will have 6 different paintings



Calendar Large  
Size : 19 inches X 26 inches  
Pages : 6 pages (6 different paintings)



Calendar Small  
Size : 13 inches X 19 inches  
Pages : 12 pages - (6 different paintings)