

The words in “Shí Naashá” express the joy of the Diné to be returning to their homeland. While many other Navajo songs cannot be interpreted, almost every syllable in “Shí Naashá” is translatable.

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|--------|---|
| Shí | I |
| naashá | walk |
| biké | path I follow |
| hózhó | beauty way |
| lá | (emphasizing what was said before) |
| Ahala | freedom (the sense of walking toward freedom) |
| gó | in the way of |
| naashá | walk |

Note: In the Navajo language, the language itself is connected to the sounds the people hear around them. The words could represent the sounds they hear in nature connected with the song, or actions of things they are doing, such as grinding corn. In this song, as they are walking, the words “ahala” can represent the sounds of walking, or the items they are carrying shifting around and going up and down in their bag as they walk. This is just one way the language represents what is heard.

Remember that some of the syllables, “hey ya hey ney ya” are called vocables and don’t have a specific meaning. Here is a rough translation of the song:

Shí naashá, shí naashá, shí naashá biké hózhó lá
I am going, I am going, I am following the path; the way of beauty is around me.

hey ya hey ney ya
vocables showing the end of the section

Ahala ahalágó naashá, ahala ahalágó naashá
Freedom, I am going in freedom. Freedom, I am going in freedom.

Shí naashá, shí naashá, shí naashá biké hózhó lá
I am going, I am going, I am following the path; the way of beauty is around me.

hey ya hey ney ya
vocables showing the end of the section

This song, as well as many other Navajo songs, refers to “walking in beauty” or “Hózhó,” which is a Diné core belief and way of life. The beauty associated with the word “hózhó” in Navajo does not refer to physical appearance. Instead, it roughly translates as the concept of balance, peace, harmony and beauty. It is the end goal for each Diné person. To walk in beauty also means to develop spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental strength to get beyond fears and be able to have joy, happiness, confidence, and peace.