

### The Puzzle of the 'Cow' and its Network.

When (in a middle aged search for my roots) I first started to read the Gathas, in the very first verse I came across '[soul of the cow](#)'. My non-agrarian mind was turned off. 'This', I thought, 'is not for me,' and I tossed the book aside. Luckily, my curiosity got the better of me. But it was not until I was well into studying the Gathas that I (incrementally) came to understand that Zarathushtra uses [cow](#) as part of a system of pastoral metaphors, in beautiful multi-dimensioned ways, to express his profoundly moving vision.<sup>1</sup>

He lived in a rural, cattle-raising society in which pastoral metaphors would have been meaningful to his listeners. So if we want to understand his mind-set, we should not get self-conscious or turned off by the pastoral imagery he uses. As you navigate your way through this network of metaphors you may at first feel skeptical, but keep an open mind, and you will have some wonderful 'Eureka!' moments ~ more perhaps than I have had, and which you can then share with me.

#### Metaphors.

What is a metaphor? A metaphor is the use of a word in a way that is not intended to be literal, in order to evoke an idea or an impression. In his poem *Ars Poetica* the poet Archibald MacLeish describes the way metaphors work as follows.

"For all the history of grief,  
An empty doorway and a maple leaf."

Poetry is full of metaphor. For example, Wordsworth describes a field of daffodils as:

"A host of golden daffodils,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

Daffodils don't really 'dance'. The word "dancing" is a metaphor which evokes the poet's impression. Similarly, Carl Sandburg, in his poem *Chicago*, describes the city (as it then existed) as:

"Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders."

A city does not have literal shoulders, but we immediately understand that the poet is using 'Big Shoulders' to evoke an impression. Metaphor is not limited to poetry. We use it all the time in everyday speech. For example: we might say 'that man is an icicle', to describe a man who has (or shows) no feelings; 'that dance is so cool' ~ to describe a dance that is delightful. In these examples, 'icicle' and 'cool' are both metaphors ~ although so different in meaning. So you see, we talk like poets all the time, and don't even know it.

When a metaphor is descriptive, such as the examples given above, we immediately understand the poet's (or person's) intention. But even in every day speech, there are metaphors which require some knowledge of contemporary usage to understand them because they are used in an idiomatic way. For example, to express the idea that someone's conclusion is exactly accurate, we might say ~ *you have hit the nail on the head* ~ the meaning of which would not be apparent to someone say 3,000 years into the future. And when a network of metaphors and allegories from 3,000 + years ago (in another culture and society) is used, almost as a code, to express a network of ideas, they present a mystery which is not so easy to unravel.

*Allegories.*

What is an allegory? It is using the form of a person or other living thing, to represent an idea. For example, the famous piece of sculpture 'Justice', which depicts a blind-folded woman holding a set of evenly balanced scales in one hand, and a sword in the other, is an allegory. The sculptor used the form of such a woman to express the idea of justice -- striking the balance true (the evenly balanced scales) without fear, favor or prejudice (the blind-fold), in a powerful, decisive way with might serving right (the sword). One cannot help but wonder why the sculptor chose a woman to express the concept of justice. Surely, he could not have thought that women are more just than men, could he? ... No, no. He undoubtedly had some other thought in mind (though what it might have been, I cannot imagine).

Ancient poetry in many cultures around the world, is full of metaphors and allegories. Modern poetry a bit less so, and although we use metaphors in every-day speech, we normally do not use allegories, which may be why some people today are skeptical of the existence of allegories in the Gathas. An allegory is an extended metaphor. So sometimes I may use the word 'metaphor' to include an allegory.

*Compartmentalized thinking.*

In understanding Zarathushtra's system of metaphors and allegories, you will need to abandon compartmentalized thinking and allow yourself to see how his ideas flow into and out of each other in beautiful multi-dimensioned ways.

What do I mean by 'compartmentalized thinking'?

Well, when children color in their coloring books, they usually color within the lines -- I (tried to) do so myself, when coloring with my grandchildren -- so that usually, each unit of the picture is colored in just one color, and indeed, that is very good -- worthy of praise -- nothing to denigrate. But think of a master artist like Leonardo da Vinci. In his portraits, the face alone has many different colors and shades of colors, subtly blended in multiple ways to bring out the physical features and the personality he wants to express.

Painting is an art form. So too are songs and poetry. The Gathas are songs and poetry. And Zarathushtra uses metaphors the way Leonardo uses colors -- many strands of thought and images skillfully blending into and out of each other to reveal his ideas. Zarathushtra's poetry sometimes has a mathematical precision, and sometimes an abstract, impressionist loveliness. So be open to the thought that a given allegory or metaphor may be used, not just for one idea, but for different perspectives of underlying ideas -- the opposite of compartmentalized thinking.

Let us start with the controversial 'cow' (GAv. *gao-*), and first consider what an accurate translation of *gao-* (in all its various declensions),<sup>2</sup> might be. Is it 'cow' (as most linguists contend) or is it 'earth' (as many practicing Zoroastrians contend). If it is 'cow', we need to ask, does Zarathushtra use the word literally or metaphorically, and if metaphorically, what idea(s) does he intend to convey with this allegory 'cow' and its related network of metaphors -- milk and butter, pasture, bulls, cattle/oxen, pastor, cattle-breeder?

*'Cow' or 'earth'.*

In a given language, it is not uncommon for one word to have two or more entirely different meanings. For example, the English word 'light' means a radiance which (if not too blinding) allows us to see things clearly (*the light of the sun*). But 'light' also means something of little weight (*this suitcase is light*). And, from a

slightly different perspective, something that is not too serious (*some light music*), or possibly even funny (*a light play*), or something a scholar might look down his nose at (*a light book*). How someone would translate 'light' in an English sentence would depend on the context in which it is used. Martin Haug, an early giant in the field of Avestan studies, writing before 1878, says:

"*Gaus* has in Sanskrit the two meanings 'cow' and 'earth'."<sup>3</sup>

If we assume, for the sake of argument, that in GAv., *gao-* can mean 'cow' and also 'earth', we see that in the context of a few Gatha verses, 'earth' would indeed fit.<sup>4</sup> But (with affection and respect for those who are emotionally invested in 'earth'), there are many Gatha verses in which 'earth' does not fit the context (if the translation is not 'free'). For example, in Y32.14, Zarathushtra (disapprovingly) comments that evil princes<sup>5</sup> say, "...The cow [*gāuš*] is to be killed ..." Y32.14. If you substitute 'earth' for 'cow', the evil princes would be saying '...The earth [*gāuš*] is to be killed ...' which does not fit the context. And there are many other examples in the Gathas, where 'earth' does not fit the context in which *gao-* is used. They are footnoted here for your convenience.<sup>6</sup>

It is not without interest that long before the 'earth' vs. 'cow' controversy of today, at least one Pahlavi text (possibly more) also translated the Avestan *geush urvan* as 'soul of the [female] ox' (i.e. cow), in a context that has some echoes of the Gatha verse Y29.1, and the context of which does not fit the translation 'earth'.<sup>7</sup>

Some Zoroastrian translators of the Gathas who contend that *gao-* should be translated as 'earth', point to both Haug and Taraporewala, to justify their position. Actually however, both Haug and Taraporewala thought that in the Gathas, 'cow' is used as an allegory for the earth. Haug comments on *gāuš urvā* (appearing in Yasna 29) as follows:

"*Geush urva* means the universal soul of earth, the cause of all life and growth. The literal meaning of the word, 'soul of the cow' implies a simile;<sup>8</sup> for the earth is compared to a cow."

Similarly, Taraporewala 1951 justifies his interpretation of *gāuš urvā* (in Y29.1) as 'soul of Mother Earth' by pointing to the *Srimad Bhagavata*, in the Indic *Puranas* where (Taraporewala says) the oppressed earth, "wearing the form of Cow" (p. 34) begs assistance from the Divine.

It is clear from these comments, that both Haug and Taraporewala believed that while 'cow' might be a literal translation of the GAv. word, the form of a cow is used as an allegory or metaphor for the 'earth'. The idea of Haug and Taraporewala is a beautiful one. But (with respect and affection for both of them) if you look at all the verses in which *gao-* is used (as shown in this chapter and its footnotes), you will see that 'cow' as a metaphor or allegory for the 'earth', fits the context of only a very few verses (unless the translation is 'free').

If the context of most Gatha verses does not allow *gao-* to be translated as 'earth' (whether literally or metaphorically) we are left with only one alternative, and that is 'cow'. This brings us to the next question: Did Zarathushtra intend to use 'cow' literally, or as an allegory?

In my view, he uses 'cow' as an allegory, as part of a meaningful network of metaphors. Let us look at the evidence.

*The cow: an allegory or an animal?*

Many (non-Zoroastrian) scholars ~ both in the last century and also today ~ have expressed the opinion that 'cow' should be taken literally, and that in using his pastoral imagery, Zarathushtra was promoting an

agrarian way of life. Some such scholars are skeptical of the idea that there are metaphors and allegories in the Gathas. Some have expressed the opinion that the ancient time period of these poems was too 'primitive' for the use of such sophisticated techniques (although ancient poetry, sagas, and bardic traditions in many 'primitive' Indo-European cultures are full of metaphors and allegories, and there is no dispute that Avestan is within the Indo-European family of languages). It is interesting that these scholars do not contend that when Christ (who also lived in a 'primitive' pastoral society) said 'feed my sheep',<sup>9</sup> he was promoting sheep-husbandry. Do we perhaps have a double standard here?

At the outset, in determining whether the 'cow' is an allegory or a literal animal, surely we should look at the words of the Gathas themselves where (to give just one example) we see the words, "Thus, indeed, did we two continue to pray to the Lord with outstretched hands ~ namely, my self and that of the fertile cow..." Y29.5, Insler 1975. Not knowing what goes on in the mind of a cow, we cannot presume to say that a cow cannot 'pray', but we can state with confidence that it cannot pray with 'outstretched hands'. A literal cow does not have 'hands' that can be 'outstretched'. Compelling evidence that Zarathushtra uses *cow* as an allegory ~ not literally. And there are many other examples, which we will get to later in this chapter. Let us first look at the opinions of some linguists who have expressed the opinion that the 'cow' is an allegory.

Cameron was an early scholar who argued that the terms 'cow' and 'herdsman' (cattle-breeder, pastor) are employed metaphorically by Zarathushtra. He concluded that the 'cow' is a symbol for 'God's flock' and the herdsman is an energetic member of his flock who follows the will of God in thought, word and action.<sup>10</sup>

Are Cameron's conclusions supported by the evidence? Well ... yes and no.

Insler 1975 agrees with Cameron that Zarathushtra uses these pastoral words as metaphors, but disagrees that the cow can be a symbol for humanity. Insler uses the following line of reasoning in arriving at his conclusion that the 'cow' is an allegory for the *vaṇuhī daēnā*,<sup>11</sup> – the good envisionment – which he defines as the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking. He perceptively observes:

"...Zarathushtra makes it quite clear in his poetry that the cow is a benevolent force which must be sought after by the truthful man (50.2), and which shall be given to the honestly living person as a reward in order to save his fellowman from the forces of deceit (50.3). In this way the figure of the cow approaches in essence the Lord-created values of truth and good thinking, whose quest for and realization on earth is the task of the righteous man (29.10, 31.4, 47.2, 51.1 etc.), and which shall bring on the defeat of deceit (31.4, 48.1 etc.).

"Similarly, when 51.5-6 juxtapose in antithetical fashion the notions of a person who shall serve the cow in accordance with truth and of a person who shall not serve the Wise Lord, the reverence to be allotted to the cow comes very near to that of Ahura Mazda himself in importance. Thus the cow in origin seems to belong to a higher world than that of man, and her appearance on earth and her required attention are for the purposes of bringing nourishment and peace to the faithful (48.5-6), much as the attainment of good thinking and truth in the mortal world are to accomplish these very aims (29.10, 33.5, 34.12-14, etc.). ..."

And he concludes:

"This line of reasoning leads me to believe that the cow is an allegorical figure for the *vaṇuhī daēnā* 'the good vision' (51.17, 53.1, 3), the conception of the foremost existence belonging to the immortal forces (45.11, 49.6), and one which the Wise Lord granted to the savior Zarathushtra (53.2). It is the conception which is best for those who exist (44.10), ...

"... When the Gathas constantly stress the message, as we remarked above, that only the good vision, that is, the view of the world governed by truth and good thinking, shall prosper the creatures, is the best for those who exist, shall bring good fortune to the peoples, etc., then can we not conclude that the cow and the good vision are equivalent entities? The parallelism of both sets of terms cow: butter and milk, and good vision: peace, tranquility prosperity etc. speaks for just this identification... in reaching a proper understanding of the message of Y29."<sup>12</sup>

So in the view of Insler 1975, the cow is an allegory for the *vañuhī daēnā* 'the good vision' ~ a vision of the world governed by truth (*aša-*) and good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), which governance is the concept of good rule *vohu- xšaθra-*. Insler 1975 does not mention *ārmaiti-* as a part of this envisionment.<sup>13</sup> Zarathushtra does.<sup>14</sup>

When I started writing this chapter, I was convinced by Insler's reasoning that the cow is an allegory for the good vision. But as I worked on the supporting evidence, I realized that this conclusion is not consistent with *all* of the evidence. My view now, is very close to Insler's. It is also close to Cameron's. I also incline (somewhat) to Haug and Taraporewala. And I see some links with the material blessings of a pastoral life ~ the views of the literalists. Am I steering a wishy washy politician's course between the opposing rocks of scholastic opinion? Heaven forbid!

In my (sincere) view, Zarathushtra uses the allegories 'cow', 'soul of the cow', and 'cattle', (with related pastoral metaphors), for different perspectives of the same underlying form of existence ~ mortal existence (comprising all the living) that contains within it, (however imperfectly) the qualities of the Divine ~ the true order of existence which is most good (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*) which comprises the beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ a way of being which is the true (correct, good) order of existence.

Or, stated another way, these pastoral images are allegories for the beneficial-sacred (the foregoing qualities of the Divine) in mortal existence ~ not just the envisionment of such an existence (which is a concept), but in mortal existence itself ~ in all the living, (not just in man ~ witness the selection of 'cow'); suggesting an underlying unity of identity between the Divine, and all mortal existence. It is worth remembering that in Indo-Iranian (pre-Zarathushtrian) creation stories, the primeval cow/ox was the progenitor from which all plants and animals were generated,<sup>15</sup> ~ a creation story that would have been familiar to the people of his culture, and would have made it easy for them to understand that the metaphor 'cow' included all mortal existence ~ not just humans.

My understanding is not necessarily at odds with Professor Insler's view (that the cow is an allegory for the good vision ~ a concept). My understanding simply goes one step further ~ it includes both the envisionment and its reality in mortal existence. In the GAv. language itself, the same word can be used for a concept, and also for a person who has the qualities of the concept. For example, Zarathushtra takes the concept *vahišta-* 'most good', and uses it as a name for the Divine "[Thee, Most Good One \[θwā vahištā\] ... do I lovingly entreat ...](#)" Y28.8. It therefore would not have been alien to the mind-set of Zarathushtra's listeners, to hear one metaphor for both a concept (the good vision) and for an existence which has the qualities of the concept. The former is included in the latter.

Before we go on, let us recall certain aspects of Zarathushtra's thought. In his view, the true order of existence (*aša-*) is a beneficial (*spənta-*), wholly good (*vohu-/vahišta-*) order of existence ~ the essence of the

sacred, the existence of the Divine. So a beneficial existence is one that is governed in accordance with the true (correct, good) order of existence (*aša-*), which governance (good rule *vohu- xšaθra-*) includes understanding this order (good thinking *vohu- manah-*) and implementing it with beneficial thoughts, words and actions (*spənta- ārmaiti-*).<sup>16</sup>

Let us also recall that in Zarathushtra's thought, all of these five attributes of the Divine (*amesha spenta*) are also activities and characteristics that man presently has (although not perfected), and that man can attain these divine attributes completely. These 5 divine qualities are what I mean when I speak of the 'beneficial in mortal existence', which is part of a 'beneficial existence' (which includes the existence of the Divine and its 7 qualities). These terms are another way of saying the 'beneficial way of being' which is *spənta- mainyu-*.

So we return to the question: What evidence is there of how Zarathushtra uses 'cow'? As an allegory? As a literal animal? In a few verses, he does indeed use 'cow' literally.<sup>17</sup> In a few verses, he uses 'cow' with double entendre ~ as a literal cow, and also as an allegory. For example, he frequently speaks of the "joy-bringing cow" (Y44.6, Y47.3, Y50.2), Insler 1975. In Zarathushtra's society, cows were wealth ~ they brought a happy (material) life, to their owners. And Zarathushtra also says that the good environment and its implementation (the path of truth) is a joyful path.<sup>18</sup>

But in most of the verses the 'cow' can only be an allegory, because the literal cow does not fit. Here are a few examples.

*First example:* In the very first verse of the very first Gatha, Zarathushtra asks Wisdom for that (i.e. His teachings) through which Wisdom may satisfy the reasoning of Zarathushtra's own good thinking, and the soul of the cow.

"With hands outstretched ... I first entreat all (of you), Wise One, through this act, for (that) through which Thou mayest satisfy the determination [*x ratu-* 'reasoning'] of (my) good thinking and the soul of the cow." Y28.1,<sup>19</sup> Insler 1975. I translate *x ratu-* as 'reasoning' (following H. P. Schmidt and others), thus here '(the) reasoning of (my) good thinking'.<sup>20</sup>

Now, Wisdom's teachings may indeed satisfy Zarathushtra's reasoning mind. But how would these teachings (especially as spoken to, and discussed by, human beings ~ in Gathic Avestan) satisfy the soul of a literal cow? If I had been paying attention when I first read this verse (instead of getting turned off) I would have realized that a literal cow is satisfied by grass, water, good care, and other things. But the teachings of Wisdom, as discussed by human beings in GAv. songs (the Gathas) would be neither here nor there to the soul of a literal cow (let alone a satisfaction). So this very first verse signals that the cow has a meaning other than one literal cow (we will get to 'soul' later).

*A second example:* The 'she' in this next verse (Y48.6) stands for the 'cow' mentioned in the immediately preceding verse (Y48.5). "For she shall bring peace to us, she shall grant to us the enduring and esteemed strength of good thinking [*vohu- manah-*]. And the Wise One [*mazdā-*] shall increase the plants for her through truth [*aša-*], He (who is to be) Lord at the birth of the foremost existence [*ahu- paourvya-*]." Y48.6, Insler 1975. It is clear that a literal cow does not fit. A literal cow does not bring peace,<sup>21</sup> (nor does the earth!). A literal cow does not grant the enduring and esteemed strength of good thinking (nor does the earth). But these are precisely the gifts of the qualities of the Divine (*amesha spenta*) in mortal existence ~ one that is governed (*xšaθra-*) (even though imperfectly) by the wholly good, true order of existence (*aša-vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and its beneficial embodiment in thought,

word and action (*spānta- ārmaiti-*).<sup>22</sup> The process is incremental. The more these attributes are implemented in existence, the more beneficial existence becomes ~ hence bringing **peace** and the **enduring and esteemed strength of good thinking** ~ comprehension of the true order of existence (enlightenment).

And if the later texts do indeed provide us with a code for understanding the metaphors of the Gathas, the "plants" referred to in the above verse (Y48.6) are the material metaphor for *amərətāt-* non-deathness. If that is so, then this verse conveys the underlying ideas that through the qualities of the Divine in existence (cow), Wisdom will increase the number of persons who attain non-deathness *amərətāt-* (plants) through truth (*aša-* the true order of existence ~ which includes all the qualities of the Divine). Such persons in turn (in loving help), nourish the qualities of the divine (the beneficial) in mortal existence<sup>23</sup> (just as plants nourish the cow), so that, in an incremental way, an existence governed (*xšaθra-*) by truth (*aša-*), its comprehension (good thinking *vohu- manah-*) and its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spānta- ārmaiti-*) eventually becomes the 'foremost existence [*ahu- paourvya-*]' of the last sentence (in Y48.6); *ahu- paourvya-* literally means 'first existence'. The word *paourvya-* 'first' is used here in the sense of 'first in quality' which is why Insler has translated it as the 'foremost existence'.

The **foremost existence** is an existence in which the amesha spenta have been attained completely, possessed completely ~ when 'lordship' has been attained over these qualities,<sup>24</sup> and when these qualities govern (rule) existence.

The **foremost existence** is the most good existence (*ahu- vahišta-* ~ one of the terms for the state of being that is Zarathushtra's 'paradise'),<sup>25</sup> the healed existence (*ahūm.biš*) of the Gathas ~ healed of untruth; the 'renovation' (*frašō.kərəiti-*) of the YAv. texts.

*A third example:* Here again, the 'she' in this verse (Y50.3) refers to the 'cow' mentioned in the immediately preceding verse (Y50.2). "For she indeed, whom one has promised with good thinking to him during the rule of truth and good thinking, she shall belong to that person who would strengthen, with the power of such a reward, his nearest fellow creature, whom the deceitful one [*drəgvā* 'deceitfulness'] shall (otherwise) appropriate." Y50.3, Insler 1975. Here the 'cow' ("she"), is both the means of strengthening our fellow creatures, and also the reward for doing so. Once again, the literal 'cow' does not fit the context (nor does the earth) ~ especially in light of the alternative "whom the deceitful one"<sup>26</sup> [or 'whom untruthfulness'] shall (otherwise) appropriate." But we know that in the Gathas, the qualities of the divine in mortal existence are both the path and the reward for taking that path,<sup>27</sup> (a reward that commences in mortal existence) ~ which fits the double role played in this verse by the cow as an allegory for qualities of the divine in mortal existence.

The above examples (and many others),<sup>28</sup> demonstrate that based on the ways in which Zarathushtra uses 'cow', his intended use is allegorical (with the few exceptions previously footnoted, in which the cow is used literally).

And the allegorical meaning of 'cow' ~ the beneficial in mortal existence (an existence governed by the qualities of the Divine that mortals have (imperfectly) within them), ~ fits the context of each verse in which 'cow' is used as an allegory. We discuss below (under 'soul of the cow') the evidence which requires the conclusion that the meaning of this allegory 'cow' includes not just a concept ~ a good envisionment ~ but stands for an existence in accord with the first five divine qualities (amesha spenta), the most good existence (*ahu- vahišta-*), the beneficial way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*), which is the true (wholly good) order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*).

One cannot help but wonder why Zarathushtra chose 'cow' as the material metaphor (or allegory) for the attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta) in mortal existence (i.e. on earth). He may have had a number of reasons.

He may have done so because in the myths of his culture, all living things sprang from the original 'cow', so his hearers would have understood and appreciated his using the cow as standing for all mortal existence.

He also may have done so, because in his society, cows were the source of milk and all that can be made from it (cheese, yoghurt, etc.), and so was beneficial to their survival. Also, possessing cows or cattle was wealth. They gave a man and his family material prosperity, material well-being. So one reason why he may have chosen 'cow' and its related pastoral imagery, was to use this allegory to stand for the parallel nourishment, happiness, blessings, well-being ~ material and spiritual ~ generated by an existence that is governed in accordance with the attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta).

But I think he had an additional reason beyond these two reasons, which becomes apparent when we see how he uses the related imagery of 'cattle', 'oxen', and 'bull(s)', as discussed below.

*Soul of the cow.*

Insler comments (in a different context) that in the Gathas, *urvan-* can mean either 'soul' or 'self', as with the Vedic *ātman-*.<sup>29</sup> However, 'self of the cow' is no different from 'cow', so Zarathushtra could not have intended *urvan-* to mean 'self' in this context ~ especially if 'cow' is used metaphorically. So what was his intent in using 'soul of the cow'? Let us first look at the ways in which he uses 'soul'.

In the Gathas, man has 'soul'.<sup>30</sup> The cow (representing the beneficial in mortal existence) has 'soul',<sup>31</sup> and the Wisdom has 'soul'.<sup>32</sup> This is consistent with the notion of a creation by emanation<sup>33</sup> and is also consistent with the idea of the immanence of the Divine (in being) in existence.<sup>34</sup>

In the Gathas, 'soul' is not limited to mortal existence, ("[...That the soul of the truthful person be powerful in \[aməratāt-\], ...](#)" Y45.7 Insler 1975. We have seen the evidence that *aməratāt-* is an attribute of the Divine, an amesha spenta, which man can attain, and that its literal meaning is 'non-deathness', ~ a state of being that is no longer bound by mortality.<sup>35</sup>

Zarathushtra uses 'soul of the cow' in only two Yasnas ~ in Yasna 28.1 (once) and in Yasna 29 (more than once). Here again is Y28.1. Zarathushtra asks Wisdom for that (i.e. Wisdom's teachings) through which He may satisfy the reasoning of (mortal) good thinking, and the soul of the cow.

["With hands outstretched ... I first entreat all \(of you\), Wise One, through this act, for \(that\) through which Thou mayest satisfy the \[x ratu- 'reasoning'\] of \(my\) good thinking and the soul of the cow."](#) Y28.1, Insler 1975.

We have already discussed that 'cow' here must be an allegory, because Wisdom's teachings as spoken to, and discussed by, human beings in GAv. would have no relevance to one literal cow.

Is the 'cow' and its 'soul' a metaphor for only the good vision ~ a concept? Not under all the evidence.

The 'good vision' is a way of looking at the world. It is not a living thing. It cannot have a 'soul' (or a 'self' for that matter). It cannot experience suffering (Y29.1). It cannot make choices (the 'good vision' being itself a concept that is only 'good' by definition). But the 'cow' is said to have, and do, all these things ~ it has 'soul', it suffers, and it is capable of making choices (Y31.9 ~ 10). In addition, Zarathushtra uses 'soul



of the cow' and 'cow' interchangeably with 'mortals' (living beings). In light of all these factors, he could not have intended 'cow' to be a metaphor for just a concept ~ the good envisionment. Here is the evidence.

*Suffering.* In Yasna 29, 'soul of the cow' is something which experiences suffering, and asks Wisdom and His divine attributes for help, for nurture, "To all of you<sup>36</sup> the soul of the cow lamented: 'For whom did ye shape me? Who fashioned me? (For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity. I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage.'" Y29.1,<sup>37</sup> Insler 1975. A concept (in addition to not having a soul), cannot experience the suffering and torment described in Y29.1.

*Making choices.* In Y31.9 - 10, referring to the 'cow', Zarathushtra says, "... Thou didst grant the way to her to go either (to him who) shall act as pastor or (to him) who shall not be pastor (for her). And, of these two, she chose for herself the cattle-breeding pastor to be her truthful master [*ahurəm ašavanəm* 'truthful lord'] and the cultivator of good thinking..." Y31.9 - 10, Insler 1975.<sup>38</sup> It is clear that here the allegorical 'cow' has the freedom to choose. The 'good vision', however, is by definition only a 'good' way of looking at things. It is the result of good choice. It is not capable of making choices between the more-good and the bad (Y30.3), between the more-beneficial and the harmful (Y45.2). Only living beings (who have divine qualities imperfectly within them) are capable of making such choices.<sup>39</sup>

*Interchangeability.* Zarathushtra uses 'soul of the cow' and 'cow' interchangeably ~ with each other, and with the 'needy' and 'mortals'. The last two words include more than 'cows' alone, or even 'man' alone. All living things (on earth) are mortal. And all (to a greater or lesser extent) are needy.

It may be argued that although man presently has five divine qualities (*amesha spenta*) within him, Zarathushtra does not specifically say that all of existence has within it these first five qualities. That is true. He does not specifically say so. But he does imply it by metaphorically linking each *amesha spenta* to specific aspects of the material existence in multi-dimensioned ways,<sup>40</sup> and the implication is even stronger in the later texts. But let us return to how Zarathushtra uses these terms ~ 'soul of the cow', 'cow', the 'needy', and 'mortals' interchangeably.

In Y29.1, it is the 'soul of the cow' who begs for assistance.<sup>41</sup>

In Y29.7, this assistance is promised to the 'cow' and is given to 'the needy' and to 'mortals' interchangeably. "The Wise Lord ... fashioned that promise [*mąθrəm*]<sup>42</sup> of butter and milk<sup>43</sup> for the cow. He is [*spənta* 'beneficial'] to the needy in accord with His [*sāsnayā* 'instruction'].<sup>44</sup> (He said:) 'Who has been found by thee, good thinking, who might give these things to the mortals below?'" Y29.7, Insler 1975.<sup>45</sup>

And the recipient of this promised aid (which in Y29.7 is the *needy* and *mortals*), is the 'soul of the cow' (in Y29.9), who weeps with frustration because the person chosen to care for her ~ Zarathushtra ~ is "powerless".<sup>46</sup>

Thus we see that Zarathushtra uses 'soul of the cow' (in Y29.1 and 9), and the 'cow', the 'needy' and 'mortals' (in Y29.7) interchangeably. (No coloring within the lines here).

This interchangeability is also implied in the ways in which Zarathushtra uses the term 'fashioner of the cow', who is one of the allegorical characters (an attribute of the Divine) in Yasna 29,<sup>47</sup> as the following demonstrates.

In Y29.1, the 'soul of the cow', after detailing the cruelty, violence etc. that cause her suffering, asks "...Who fashioned me?..." Y29.1.

In Y29.2 the 'fashioner of the cow' who is troubled by the suffering of the 'soul of the cow', advocates for the 'cow' as follows, "Thereupon the fashioner of the cow asked truth 'Is thy judgment for the cow to be in this way? If ye ruling ones have placed her (on earth), there should always be cow-caring zeal by a pastor..." Y29.2, Insler 1975. (So here also we see here that 'soul of the cow' (in Y29.1), and 'cow' (in Y29.2), are used interchangeably, as discussed above).

Now the 'fashioner of the cow' is identified in the Gathas as the beneficial way of being, *spənta- mainyu-* (Y47.3), and as Wisdom's most beneficial way of being (Y51.7), and as Wisdom Himself (Y44.6).<sup>48</sup> And this fits, because it would have to be a beneficial (*spənta-*) way of being (in man incompletely, and in the Divine completely) that fashions the beneficial in mortal existence ('cow'). In other words, a beneficial way of being (the essence of the sacred) is what generates (incrementally) an understanding, (*voḥu- manah-*),<sup>49</sup> of the true (correct) order of existence, *aṣa-* (which is a beneficial order), and its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), which results in good governance (*voḥu- xšaθra-*) in ourselves and in our social units ~ all of which comprise a beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*) way of being in mortal existence (the allegorical 'cow').

And, (in a double-dimensioned way), it was also a beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ the 'fashioner of the cow' ~ that fashioned a material creature (cow) which is so beneficial to man in a pastoral society.

And indeed (in a multi-dimensioned way) it is also the beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) that produced the entire material existence,<sup>50</sup> ~ a material existence (and its experiences) through which the perfecting process is enabled, and the attributes of the divine (amesha spenta) are attained completely.<sup>51</sup>

How cool is that ?!

So we see that in using the term 'fashioner of the cow' for a beneficial way of being ~ the essence of the sacred (*spənta- mainyu-*), the one word 'cow' (what is fashioned) stands for multi-dimensioned ideas which include the attributes of the divine (amesha spenta) in mortal existence, the physical beneficial 'cow', and the entire 'material existence' which is the medium for the perfecting process through which existence attains the attributes of the divine ~ the amesha spenta ~ comprising a completely, wholly beneficial-sacred way of being (no compartmentalized thinking here!).

What happens when we add 'soul' to this multi-dimensioned allegory of 'cow' and the fact that it experiences suffering and makes choices? I get the idea that Zarathushtra intends the term 'soul of the cow' as a metaphor (or allegory) for the collective soul of existence,<sup>52</sup> (notice, 'soul' is sg.)<sup>53</sup> when he wants to stress (by such usage) existence that is not limited to mortal existence.

So here we have ideas blending into and out of each other, like the colors in a painting.

A beneficial existence is both the beginning and the end. The difference between the beginning and the end is not a difference in kind, but a difference in completeness ~ at the (mortal) beginning not completely beneficial, at the end completely, wholly, beneficial (in an existence not bound by mortality).

And (additional dimensions) it is good thinking and its search for truth that enables an understanding and personification of these divine attributes (the amesha spenta),<sup>54</sup> which comprehension ~ incomplete at the beginning ~ is wisdom personified (*mazdā-*) at the end, which is a wholly beneficial way of being, the essence of the sacred. The difference between these beginnings and ends is not one of kind. They are simply different stages of existence in an evolution to completeness.<sup>55</sup>

The conclusions we have arrived at (above) regarding the metaphoric meanings of 'cow' and 'soul of the cow' are corroborated by the ways in which Zarathushtra uses a network of related pastoral images.

*Milk and butter.*

In Y49.5 Zarathushtra says: "But that man, Wise One, is both milk and butter (for Thee), namely, the one who has allied his conception with good thinking..." Y49.5, Insler 1975. Now, it is obvious that a good thinking man is not, literally, "milk and butter". Therefore it is easy to see that the term "milk and butter" is used metaphorically here, and is related to good thinking, because it is not every man who is "milk and butter" for Wisdom, but only "the one who has allied his conception with good thinking". Good thinking is the comprehension of truth, and generates its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spānta- ārmaiti-*) and its good rule (*voḥu- xšaθra-*).<sup>56</sup> So milk and butter are these qualities which nourish Wisdom/wisdom. A conclusion that is corroborated by the fact that the GAv. terms for these two food items are the milk and butter of the ritual ~ which is offered to a deity as symbolic nourishment, food.

Similarly, in Yasna 29.7 Zarathushtra says: "The Wise Lord, who is of the same temperament with truth, fashioned that promise [*mąθrəm* 'precept, teaching'] of butter and milk for the cow. He is [*spānta-*] to the needy in accord with His commandment [*sāsnayā* 'instruction']. (He said): 'Who has (been found) by thee, good thinking, who might give these things to the mortals below?' " Y29.7, Insler 1975. Obviously, physical cows do not require a teaching (*mąθra-*) of (ritual) butter and (here non-ritual) milk, (detailed in another chapter).<sup>57</sup> So this verse is a clear signal that both 'butter and milk' and 'cow' are being used metaphorically.<sup>58</sup> The "promise [*mąθrəm*] of butter and milk" is Wisdom's teachings, His precepts (*mąθra-*) -- also called the path of truth, the path of good thinking, the path of the amesha spenta.<sup>59</sup> And good thinking is the means by which we search for the true (correct) order and comprehended it ~ a comprehension that is necessary to implement it in thought, word, and action (*ārmaiti-*), and so govern our selves and our world (*voḥu- xšaθra-*). So good thinking enables the solution (as shown in the last sentence of this verse Y29.7) for the sufferings of the soul of existence (the soul of the cow described in Y29.1).<sup>60</sup> And, (in an elegant circle) good thinking is also the end ~ Wisdom personified, the House of Good Thinking (paradise). So here again, we see that the difference between the beginning (incomplete) and the end (complete) is not a difference of kind. In English speaking cultures, to think in circles is considered derogatory ~ inept, illogical thinking. But the circle (and its variation, the figure 8) is the symbol for infinity, eternity, and other lovely things ~ including Zarathushtra's elegant circles of thought.

Reading these two milk and butter verses together, it would be reasonable to arrive at the following conclusions:

Milk and butter come from the allegorical cow (the beneficial-sacred in existence), just as good thinking and other divine qualities are generated by an existence (a way of being) that is beneficial.<sup>61</sup> Or, stated another way, the opposite of a beneficial existence ~ rage, violence, cruelty, greed, oppression, tyranny, lies, et cetera ~ do not generate a comprehension of the true (correct) order of existence (which is good thinking), and its embodiment in thought, word and action, and therefore cause suffering.

Milk and butter are the teachings (*mąθra-*) of Wisdom ~ the "...[*mąθrəm*] of butter and milk..." Y29.7. These teachings are the search for truth (which is done with good thinking) and its implementation (the 'path of truth' the 'path of good thinking', the path of the amesha spenta) which will relieve the suffering of the collective soul of existence and the (still imperfect) divine qualities (amesha spenta) within it (the soul of the cow).

And [milk and butter](#) refers to a person who, with his good thinking, implements this path of truth, and thereby nourishes Wisdom (Y49.5), and also nourishes and nurtures the needy and mortals (Y29.7) ~ both mortals and the Divine being part of an existence which contains within it the first five qualities that make a being divine (*amesha spenta*) ~ incompletely in mortals (the allegorical 'cow'), completely in the Divine.

And (with possibly one exception ~ the word used for 'milk' in Y29.7) the GAv. words for [milk and butter](#) in these verses are the milk and butter used for ritual offerings, just as the attributes of the divine (the *amesha spenta*) are the way to worship the Divine in Zarathushtra's thought.<sup>62</sup>

A small glimpse of Zarathushtra's exquisite, multi-dimensional techniques, using simple metaphors and allegories to encapsulate a wealth of inter-related ideas (in song!) for the enlightenment (and entertainment) of his listeners.

This metaphoric understanding of 'milk' fits well with other instances of ancient (pre-Islamic) Persian usage. In the Shah Nameh, it is the 'milk' (good thinking?) from a very special cow (the divine qualities in existence?) which nourishes Fareidun while he grows into manhood. Fareidun was the mythical hero who defeated Zohak, who was evil incarnate. And (in what is only a faint echo of the Gathas) in some later texts, cattle (a collective noun which includes cows which give milk) are called the "counterpart" of good thinking.<sup>63</sup>

In the Gathas, the metaphoric meanings of 'cow' and 'milk and butter' are carried further (and corroborated) by Zarathushtra's related imagery of 'pasture'.

#### *Pasture.*

In Y33.3, Zarathushtra says: "[...The person who is very good to a truthful man ... such a person shall be on the pasture of truth and good thinking.](#)" Y33.3, Insler 1975. Now, a literal, physical pasture is made up of plants (which contain water), not truth and its comprehension good thinking. So it is obvious that Zarathushtra is using "[pasture of truth and good thinking](#)" in a metaphoric sense. ~ again in a multi-dimensional way.

In one sense, plants are the material metaphor for non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) and waters are the material metaphor for completeness (*haurvatāt-*). So in that sense, this phrase says that someone who encourages truth in others, will attain completeness and non-deathness (plants, which have water in them).

In another sense, this phrase says truth and its comprehension both nourish and reward the good man. (Is Zarathushtra equating the good man ~ a beneficial being ~ with the cow here, in that a 'pasture' normally nourishes a cow, not a human being?). And in Y34.3, without the metaphor of "[pasture](#)" Zarathushtra expresses a parallel thought "[... all of us creatures under Thy rule whom one has nourished with good thinking...](#)" Y34.3.

Zarathushtra's use of the term "[the pasture of truth and good thinking](#)" in Y33.3 (quoted above) is significant when you see that in the very next verse (Y33.4), he uses the parallel imagery of "[pasture of the cow](#)".

"[Wise One, \(it is\) I who, through worship,](#)<sup>64</sup> [shall turn away disobedience and bad thinking from Thee, ... and the worst counselor from the pasture of the cow.](#)" Y33.4, Insler 1975.<sup>65</sup>

It is clear that the "[worst counselor](#)" (presumably someone lacking in good thinking), has nothing to do with literal plants ([pasture](#)) and literal cows. Therefore it is obvious that "[pasture of the cow](#)" is being used metaphorically. If we read together the parallel phrases of "[the pasture of truth and good thinking](#)" (in

Y33.3), and "pasture of the cow" (in Y33.4), we see what the metaphoric (or allegorical) nature of the cow is, because of what nourishes it ~ truth and its comprehension good thinking, nourish (give life to) its embodiment, its good rule ~ qualities of the divine (amesha spenta) in mortal existence (the allegorical cow).

He also uses the metaphor "pasturage" in Y44.20. Speaking of evil priests and princes who have "delivered the cow into fury", he says "...They have not been eager to prosper her and her pasturage with truth." Y44.20, Insler 1975. Here it is easy to see that both the "cow" and her "pasturage" are used metaphorically, because they are prospered by truth, which has nothing to do with the prospering of physical cows and their pasturage.

The above examples illustrate some of the techniques which Zarathushtra uses to alert us to the fact that 'pasture' is a metaphor, and is not intended to be taken literally. This network of pastoral metaphors, ~ cow, soul of the cow, butter / milk, and pasture ~ also includes the related metaphors 'bull(s) of the heavens', 'cattle', 'oxen', 'pastor', and 'cattle-breeder'.

*Bull(s).*

There are two verses in which Zarathushtra speaks of the "bull(s) of the heavens [asnqm]" Insler 1975 ~ 'bull' being singular in one verse, and plural in the other. Other linguists translate *asnqm* as "of the days/rosy dawn".<sup>66</sup> Regardless of which translation we use, since literal, physical bulls have nothing to do with the heavens or daylight, we can see that Zarathushtra is using 'bull(s)' here metaphorically. So what does the metaphor stand for. Let us look at these two verses.

Y50.10

In Y50.10, Zarathushtra speaks of "...the lights [raocā] of the sun [x̄v̄āng], the bright [aēurus̄] bull [ux šā] of the heavens [asnqm] ~ these are for your glory, Wise Lord allied with truth." Y50.10,<sup>67</sup> Insler 1975. Let us recall that Zarathushtra crafted his metaphors for a pastoral society. In my view, 'the bright bull of the heavens' (notice the adjective, bright, describing bull) refers to the immediately preceding 'lights of the sun', as a parallel description ~ the way one might say *the lights of the sun, the bright chariot of the heavens*. If this is so, then how Zarathushtra uses 'lights of the sun' as a metaphor may give us some idea of his intention in using 'the bright bull of the heavens'. In the Gathas and in the later texts, 'light', 'glory', 'radiance', (all of which are 'bright') are metaphors for Wisdom and Its divine attributes, the amesha spenta,<sup>68</sup> ~ an enlightened state of being. And in the Gathas, the brightest form of light ~ the 'sun' ~ is specifically used to describe Wisdom, and two of His divine attributes ~ the true order of existence and its comprehension good thinking; ("...sunlike truth..." Y32.2; "...the sunlike gain of good thinking..." Y53.4; and referring to Wisdom "...Him who has the appearance of the sun..." Y43.16, Insler 1975).

So at one level, it would be reasonable to conclude that since 'bright bull of the heavens' is a parallel description to 'lights of the sun' which in other verses refers to Wisdom, truth and good thinking (and the other qualities of the Divine which all are components of the true order of existence), then 'bright bull of the heavens' here is a metaphor for Wisdom and His divine attributes ~ corroborated by the fact that 'light' and 'glory' are metaphors for all of the divine attributes (the amesha spenta) impliedly in the Gathas and more often and explicitly in later texts, and these qualities are what make a being glorious, divine ("...these are for your glory,..." Y50.10 quoted above).

We see a second dimension when we consider 'lights [raocā]' in Y50.10 (quoted above) and recall that in YAv. texts, a term for 'heaven' is 'endless lights' (*anayra- raocah-*),<sup>69</sup> and that in the Gathas, Zarathushtra's

notion of 'heaven' is an enlightened state of being in which one has attained completely the attributes of the divine ('endless lights').<sup>70</sup> In light of these facts, we could reasonably infer that the "...the lights of the sun, the bright bull of the heavens..." is a metaphor for the qualities that make a being Divine (amesha spenta), and those who have attained these qualities completely ~ an enlightened state of being ~ 'endless lights', the House of Good Thinking, which is Wisdom personified *mazdā*-.

Y46.3.

"Wise One, when shall the bulls of the heavens [*ux šānō asnqm*] rise forth for the maintenance of the world of truth [*ayhāuš ... ašahyā*]? The intentions of those who shall save are in accord with Thy mature teachings! To which person shall one come with good thinking to (give) help? To me? I choose (only) Thy teachings, Lord." Y46.3, Insler 1975. Although Insler translates *ayhāuš* as "of the world" here, he translates it as "of existence" in many other verses.<sup>71</sup> So more literally 'for the maintenance of an existence of truth'.

Here again, literal, physical bulls are not "of the heavens"; and physical bulls have nothing to do with rising forth 'for the maintenance of an existence of truth'. So once again, we know that these bulls of the heavens are being used metaphorically. They are allegories. Which raises the question: what do these allegories represent. In Y50.10 (above) bull is sg. Here in Y46.3 it is plural. Why?

Well in this verse, the bulls of the heavens are partnered with "those who shall save", whose "intentions ... are in accord with Thy mature teachings". Did Zarathushtra intend these to be two separate terms, or do they both describe the same thing, (as did 'the lights of the sun' and 'the bright bull of the heavens' in Y50.10)? Well, let us look at the second of these two partnered terms.

"...The intentions of those who shall save are in accord with Thy mature teachings...Y46.3, Insler 1975. Who are "those who shall save"? In the Gathas, Wisdom is called a savior (*saošyant-*), and also are human beings who translate Wisdom's teachings into actions that accord with truth.<sup>72</sup> 'Salvation' is defined by Zarathushtra as the attainment of the qualities that make a being divine (amesha spenta).<sup>73</sup> And Wisdom's "teachings" are the path of truth, the path of the amesha spenta, so to be 'in accord with Thy mature teachings' would be one who is in accord with the true order of existence and its component parts completely (mature) ~ which is the nature of the Divine. It would be reasonable to conclude therefore that in Y46.3, the phrase "those who shall save" includes both Wisdom and those beings who have attained the qualities of the Divine completely.

And following this line of reasoning, it would be reasonable to conclude that Zarathushtra uses the 2d of these two partnered terms ("...those who shall save are in accord with Thy mature teachings...") to indicate the allegorical nature of the first partnered term ("...the bulls of the heavens...") ~ both terms comprising Wisdom, Its divine attributes (amesha spenta), and those who personify these attributes completely ~ the true order of existence, its comprehension, its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete attainment and the resultant state of being that is not bound by mortality ~ hence "of the heavens..." ~ not earth bound ~ comprising a wholly beneficial way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*) which is the essence of the sacred. This conclusion is consistent with the activities (and the plurality) of 'the bulls of the heavens' in this verse (Y46.3) in that in Zarathushtra's thought the human and the Divine do indeed "rise forth" with help "for the maintenance of an existence of truth", and they do indeed give help by good thinking, (although it is not only perfected humans, but all the living, who give (and receive) such help in Zarathushtra's thought).

In short, in Y50.10 (quoted above) 'lights' (pl.) reflects the seven attributes of the Divine which comprise the true (wholly good) existence of the Divine (sg. 'bright bull of the heavens'). Y46.3 takes us a step further because the nature of the Divine (sg.) is not only the plurality of these attributes, but also those who have attained them completely, generating in Y46.3, the plural "bulls of the heavens" ~ which is Zarathushtra playing with words (to good purpose) as he so often does.

So in the context of these two verses Y46.3 and Y50.10, I think "bull(s) of the heavens" is an allegory for the Divine ~ Wisdom, Its attributes (amesha spenta) and those who have attained them completely ~ the plurality of the perfected parts of existence which comprise the unity of the Divine (sg.).<sup>74</sup>

It is interesting (is it not?) that in the Shahnameh, it is a bull-headed mace<sup>75</sup> (the complete attainment of the amesha spenta in existence?) with which Fareidun defeats Zohak (the embodiment of evil in existence) ~ an echo of the "bull(s) of the heavens" in the Gathas ~ indicating that the personified qualities of the Divine are the weapons of choice in defeating evil.<sup>76</sup>

And in certain old pictures, Zarathushtra is shown carrying a staff topped by the head of either a cow or a bull (both allegories of the Divine (from different perspectives) in the Gathas).<sup>77</sup> If the top of Zarathushtra's staff is a bull's head, it corroborates the imagery of how Fareidun defeated evil incarnate, Zohak (as well as these two 'bull(s) of the heavens' verses in the Gathas). If it is a cow-headed staff, it corroborates the message of Yasna 29, that Zarathushtra's power or authority derives from good thinking ~ from comprehending (however incrementally) the nature of the divine (amesha spenta) in existence and implementing it ~ which accords well with the ways in which Zarathushtra uses 'power' in the Gathas, where 'power' is linked to the amesha spenta.<sup>78</sup> It is sad that more recent pictures of Zarathushtra (perhaps uncomfortable with the 'cow' or 'bull' imagery) show just a staff without the head at its top. But centuries before this self-consciousness arose, some (but not all) columns at Persepolis were topped with capitals in the shape of a seated cow or bull. Did this represent the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence (which in the Gathas is the source of true power)? Did this reflect the early Achaemenian kings' repeated declaration that they derived their power, their kingship, from *auramazdāh-* (Av. *ahura- mazdā-*)?

Which brings us to a final question. Why does Zarathushtra in these verses choose the metaphor of 'bull(s)' to describe the Divine, (including the attributes of the Divine, and those who have attained them)? He already has a beautiful set of metaphors for the Divine in light, sun, glory, fire. Why does he in addition, choose to describe the Divine as the 'bull(s) of the heavens'? Insler points out that 'bulls' are used in the Rig Veda as a metaphor for 'gods'.<sup>79</sup> The explanation ~ that Zarathushtra uses for the Divine, a metaphor that already existed in Indo-Iranian belief systems ~ may indeed have reflected his intent. It would certainly have alerted those ancients who heard the Gathas sung, to the divine meaning underlying the allegorical 'bull(s)'. But I think Zarathushtra also had an additional reason, which becomes apparent when you consider that the metaphor 'bull(s)' is a part of the network of his other pastoral metaphors ~ cow, soul of the cow, and cattle/oxen. Cattle and oxen by definition include both cows and bulls. Would you care to draw any (reasonable) inferences? Well, put that question on the back burner of your mind, until we look at how he uses 'cattle / oxen'.

*Cattle / Oxen.*

There are some verses in which 'cattle' could be used in a literal sense, as a material asset, the possession of which would give a person wealth, and therefore power, in a cattle-raising society.<sup>80</sup>

But there are other verses in which the evidence is indeed conclusive that Zarathushtra uses the word 'cattle' and 'draft-oxen' metaphorically. Here are a few examples:

*First example:* In Y50.1 Zarathushtra says, "Does my person have control over anyone who can offer help? Who has been found to be the protector of my cattle? Who of me? Who other than truth and Thee, Wise Lord, and best thinking [*vahišta- manah-*], ...?" Y50.1, Insler 1975. In this verse 'cattle' could not mean literal cattle because real cattle are not protected by truth and its comprehension (good thinking). However, truth and good thinking are frequently described as the means by which Wisdom protects us from the enemy (which is *druj-*, untruth ~ all that is the opposite of truth).<sup>81</sup> In this verse, it is Wisdom, truth, and its most-good comprehension (*vahišta- manah-*) that protects Zarathushtra and 'my cattle'. So we can reasonably infer that the term 'cattle' here is a metaphor for human beings who are committed to Zarathushtra's teachings ~ to an existence governed by the qualities of the divine.

*Second example:* In Yasna 46.4, Zarathushtra speaks of the 'draft oxen of truth.' "Yes, the deceitful one [*drəgvā* 'untruthfulness']<sup>82</sup> has guarded the draft oxen of truth [*ašahyā važdrəng ... gā*],<sup>83</sup> ~ either those of the district or those of the land ~ from arising, being, ... difficult to challenge and contentious by reason of his [*xvāiš* 'through its own'] actions. Whoever shall expel him [*yastəm* 'who-that shall expel'], Wise One, from rule or from life, that person shall free the oxen for the flight of good understanding." Y46.4, Insler 1975. Here, the very term "draft oxen of truth" is not relevant to literal oxen. Nor would a 'deceitful one' (or 'untruthfulness') have a negative impact on literal oxen because the untruthful could be every bit as good at caring for oxen (a valuable asset) as the truthful. Nor can freeing such oxen "for the flight of good understanding" have relevance to literal oxen. So it is easy to see that in this verse Zarathushtra uses 'oxen' as a metaphor for (at least) human beings. And the very nature of the term, and its context, indicate that 'draft-oxen of truth' means those who labor to bring about the true order in existence, the way draft-oxen labor to plough a field to bring about the growth of plants (the material metaphor for non-deathness *amərətāt-*).

In addition, 'draft-oxen of truth' in Y46.4, parallels 'bulls of the heavens' in the immediately preceding verse, Y46.3 (quoted above), each having complementary objectives ~ 'arising for the maintenance of the true (correct) order of existence' (for the 'bulls of the heavens' Y46.3), but being freed for "the flight of good understanding" (for the 'draft-oxen of truth' Y46.4), indicating that they have not yet attained this 'good understanding'.

In the above examples, the words 'cattle' and 'oxen' are metaphors for those who are committed to the path of truth, the path of the amesha spenta in existence. They clearly refer to human beings in Y50.1 (quoted above), and to humans and possibly other forms of existence in Y46.4 (quoted above). But do they also refer to those who have attained the amesha spenta completely? Does Zarathushtra use 'cattle' specifically for the Divine? Not specifically (so far as I am aware). But we see this added dimension when we consider that the meaning of the words 'cattle' and 'oxen' include both 'cows' and 'bulls'. In Zarathushtra's thought, it is both man and the Divine who work towards increasing the qualities that make a being divine (amesha spenta) in existence.

In the context of the verses in which these terms are used:

'cow' is a metaphor for the divine (the beneficial-sacred) in mortal existence;

'oxen' is a metaphor for mortals who labor to bring about the true order of existence (and therefore have not yet made it).



'bull(s)' is a metaphor for the Divine ~ a perfected existence, an existence in which the attributes of the divine (amesha spenta) have been attained completely.

But 'cows', 'oxen', and 'bull(s)' are all 'cattle', suggesting an underlying unity of the being for which these metaphors stand ~ the Divine, man, and other life forms (since Zarathushtra's chosen allegories are not human beings). This conclusion is consistent with many other aspects of his teachings.<sup>84</sup>

*Pastor.*

In some verses it is Wisdom and Its divine qualities, who are the 'pastor', who nurture the allegorical cow (the beneficial (divine) in mortal existence). For example, in Y29.1, the allegorical 'soul of the cow' identifies as *pastor*, Wisdom, truth, good thinking and the 'fashioner of the cow' (Wisdom's beneficial way of being *spānta- mainyu-*), "To all of you, the soul of the cow lamented: For whom did ye shape me? Who fashioned me? (For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity. I have no pastor other than you. Therefore, appear to me with good pasturage." Y29.1, Insler 1975.

In many more verses it is man who is the *pastor* who so nurtures the allegorical cow with Wisdom's teachings (the path of truth, the path of the qualities that make a being divine). For example: A few verses later (in Y29.6 - 8, and Y29.5), it is Zarathushtra who is chosen to bring nurture to the lamenting cow/mortals.<sup>85</sup> And there are other verses as well in which man is identified as *pastor*.<sup>86</sup>

The nurture which the Divine and man bring, as pastors, is of course the solution to suffering ~ Wisdom's teachings, the path of truth and its components ("...the [*maq̄ra-*] of butter and milk..."Y29.7, "the pasture of truth and good thinking" Y33.3 ~ every quality of the divine being a component of the true order of existence and its comprehension good thinking) ~ once again indicating that the beneficial-sacred in existence (*cow*), and what nurtures it (*butter and milk, pasture*), and its care-taker(s), *pastor(s)*, are all used in an inter-related system of metaphors which must have been so meaningful (and so obvious) to the pastoral community in which Zarathushtra lived.

These verses in which the Divine and man are 'pastor(s)', reflect the concept of mutual, loving help, and also the well accepted view that in Zarathushtra's thought, the Divine and man are partners in nurturing and increasing an existence that is governed by the qualities of the Divine (the allegorical *cow*).

*Cattle-breeder:*

In Y29.5, Zarathushtra and the (allegorical) cow ask Wisdom these questions "...Is there to be no future for the man who lives honestly? No future for the man who breeds cattle among the deceitful?" Y29.5, Insler 1975. Here a 'cattle-breeder' is linked to the man who 'lives honestly', (i.e. in accord with the true order of existence). However, honesty is not a prerequisite for successfully breeding literal cattle. Untruthful persons could be excellent breeders of literal cattle. So we know that 'cattle-breeder' is used metaphorically. But what would this (metaphoric) 'cattle-breeder' be increasing? To understand that, we have to recall what Zarathushtra uses 'cattle' (which includes *cows* and *bulls*) as a metaphor for.

In Y49.4 Zarathushtra speaks of "Those who, with ill will [*duš.x raθwā* 'with bad reasoning'],<sup>87</sup> have increased fury and cruelty with their own tongues among the cattle-breeders, these non-cattle-breeders whose evil effects one has not yet defeated with good effects, they have served the gods, which is the conception of a deceitful person [*yā drəgvatō daēnā*]."<sup>88</sup> Y49.4, Insler 1975. Here 'non-cattle-breeders' are those who increase fury and cruelty 'with their tongues', who live 'among the cattle-breeders' and whose 'evil effects' have not yet been defeated with 'good effects'. Therefore the term 'non-cattle breeders' could not refer to

the nomads who might have raided the settlements for cattle. Raiding nomads would not use their 'tongues' to increase cruelty and fury. Nor would such raiders live 'among the cattle-breeders'. The impression I get from this verse is that a **non-cattle-breeder** here is a rabble-rouser who with his bad reasoning incites himself and others to cruelty and fury ~ the opposite of a beneficial way of being *spənta- mainyu-* (which is the divine way of being). In the context of this verse (Y49.4) these metaphors stand for increasing the divine in mortal existence ('cattle-breeders') and retarding the divine in mortal existence (**non-cattle-breeders**).

This conclusion is further demonstrated by Zarathushtra's statement that one has not yet defeated the 'evil effects' of the 'non-cattle-breeders', with 'good effects'. If the **non-cattle-breeders** are those who **increase fury and cruelty**, then it would be reasonable to assume that **cattle-breeders** are those who defeat such **evil effects** with **good effects** ~ thus increasing (**breeding**) the beneficial in mortal existence (**cow/cattle**) ~ a conclusion that is consistent with the other instances of **cattle-breeder** used in the Gathas which are footnoted.<sup>89</sup>

*In conclusion:*

The evidence demonstrates that Zarathushtra uses these pastoral metaphors in multi-dimensional ways which may be summarized as follows:

He uses 'cow', 'bull(s) of the heavens' and 'cattle' (which, by definition includes both cows and bulls) as metaphors for different perspectives of the beneficial-sacred in existence ~ an existence governed (*x šaθra-*) in accordance with the true, wholly good, order (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*armaiti-*). The meanings of these metaphors ~ 'cow', 'bull(s) of the heavens' and 'cattle' ~ include not just the concept of good envisionment, but its *existence* ~ in the living ~ all of whom contain within themselves these qualities of the divine (amesha spenta) ~ some incompletely in mortal existence (**cow**), some completely in an existence no longer bound by mortality (**bulls of the heavens**) ~ the term **cattle** including both **cows** and **bulls** ~ all working to move existence forward to the true order (YAv. *frašō.kərəiti-*) ~ a beneficial existence, one that is most good (*ahu- vahišta-* ~ one of the names for paradise which starts in mortal existence in the Gathas and later Av. texts).

He uses 'soul of the cow' when his intention is to emphasize the non-material aspect of the (not yet perfected) beneficial-sacred in mortal existence ~ the collective soul of all the living on earth ~ all of whom have within them (imperfectly) five of the seven qualities of the divine; all of whom suffer because of violence, cruelty, fury, bondage and other wrongful choices that are not in accord with the true (correct, good) order of existence; all of whom need nurture, loving care; many of whom so often pray to the Divine for assistance in their suffering.

The promised assistance is the '[*mąθra-* 'teachings'] of butter and milk". The term **butter and milk** is a metaphor which includes truth and the way we search for truth ~ good thinking ~ understanding how to implement truth in thought, word and action, and governing ourselves and our social units in accordance with it (which is the teachings, the *mąθra-*, of Wisdom, the path of truth, the path of good thinking, the path of the amesha spenta). 'Butter and milk' nourish, just as the comprehension of truth nourishes existence ~ enables its enlightenment. The words used for 'milk and butter' are most often the words for ritual offerings of milk and butter ~ symbolic food for the Divine ~ just as the attributes of the divine (the amesha spenta) are Zarathushtra's way to worship and nourish the Divine.<sup>90</sup> This path nourishes existence ~ the way a **pasture** nourishes **cattle** ~ both **cows** (the incomplete divine in mortal existence) **and bull(s)** (the complete Divine in existence). And **pastures** are made up of plants (which contain water) ~ the material

metaphors for two divine attributes completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), which in the Gathas, are also the way to worship, and are linked with the ritual offering of bread (*draonah-*), which is made from grain (plants) and water.<sup>91</sup>

'Pastors' are those (both the Divine and mortal) who nurture (**are pastors for**) the beneficial in all of us ~ in existence (the amesha spenta in mortal existence, the allegorical 'cow'). **Cattle-breeders** are those who work to increase the qualities of the divine in existence (**cattle**). And, when we consider that 'cattle' includes 'cows' and 'bulls', and that Zarathushtra's notion of 'heaven' is a state of being that is divine, the **foremost existence**, the **'most good existence (*ahu vahišta-*)**<sup>92</sup> we begin to see the added dimension that a 'cattle-breeder' is one who works to bring existence to the complete attainment of the true order and its component parts, the amesha spenta ~ Zarathushtra's notion of 'heaven'; the healed existence of the later Av. texts *frašō.kərəiti-*, which, if we think about it, is just another (but perfected) perspective of the original metaphor (cow) as an existence (incompletely) governed (*x šaθra-*) in accordance with the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*), the beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*).

So when we nurture each other by making existence beneficial, in accord with the amesha spenta (**cattle ~ cows / bulls**), ~ we increase (as 'cattle-breeder') these divine values in mortal existence and create the Zarathushtrian 'heaven' ~ on earth,<sup>93</sup> in ourselves, and in the collective soul of all the living, so that wrongful choices (which cause suffering) cease to exist.

No compartmentalized thinking here.

These conclusions are consistent with all of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses these pastoral terms in the Gathas where the context does not require that the words be understood literally. These conclusions are consistent with the way he uses 'fashioner of the cow', ~ a beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*), in both man and the Divine,<sup>94</sup> which in a thousand and one ways with each beneficial thought, word and action, 'fashions' a beneficial-sacred existence ~ an existence governed by qualities that make a being divine. These conclusions are also consistent with (and are corroborated by) the conclusions in the other puzzles discussed in this work.

Zarathushtra uses this network of pastoral metaphors in multi-dimensioned ways. At one level they may indeed have been chosen because of an appreciation of the blessings of a pastoral way of life. At other levels these pastoral terms which were so meaningful to his society ~ 'cow', 'milk and butter', 'pasture', 'bull(s)', 'cattle, oxen', 'pastor', 'cattle-breeder' ~ are used metaphorically, with the metaphors and their underlying meanings flowing into and out of each other, suggesting a unity of identity in existence, conveying the ideas that a beneficial-sacred mortal existence, and indeed the collective soul of all the living, are nurtured by, and nurture with, the qualities that comprise divinity, ~ the true (wholly good) order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good governance (*vohu- x šaθra-*) ~ qualities that comprise the beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*), which creates ('fashions') a beneficial existence ~ all that is good in the existences of matter and mind.

When I was a little girl, my mother had a small, very old, very beautiful, work of art which consisted of a simple carved ivory<sup>95</sup> pedestal, supporting a very intricately carved ivory ball, which had within it (loose) another carved ivory ball, which had within it (loose) another carved ivory ball, and so on ~ a ball within a ball within a ball (I never did know how many balls were encapsulated within it). Each was

carved in intricate, inter-related designs (with no apparent seams) ~ all of them, (although separate, loose, units), were (supposedly) carved out of a single block of ivory. How this was done I do not know. It was an art form which represented a certain very ancient tradition (so I was told).

Zarathushtra's ideas remind me a little of those carved ivory balls within balls (or circles within circles), with inter-related designs, and all originating from the same block of thought. Were Zarathushtra's ideas the original inspiration for this art form? Perhaps. Perhaps not. I have often wondered.

In closing, let me leave you with a question: If Zarathushtra uses 'cattle' imagery for the divine in existence ~ in all the living, both incomplete and complete ~ why does he use 'cow' and 'soul of the cow' in the singular in speaking of the sufferings of mortal existence which (in mortal shells) comprises a plurality of beings?

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Zarathushtra's use of metaphor was first brought to my attention by Professor Insler's 1975 book on the Gathas, and I gratefully acknowledge my debt to his scholarship and insight, without which I would never have understood Zarathushtra's beautiful systems of metaphors. But Professor Insler should not be blamed for my opinions where I diverge from his.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Skjaervo 2006 shows the stem *gao-* as masc. fem. 'cow, bull'. For those of you who like to read the Gathas in Avestan, I thought you might like to see the various declensions of the stem word. Beekes 1988 thinks the GAv. stem is *gav* and he spells its various forms (declensions) in ways in which he thinks (based on linguistic principles) that they sounded in GAv. times (and earlier). Whether he is correct or not, I do not know. These words are written differently in the mss. (which were copied and recopied centuries later). The following Table shows Beekes' ideas of the various forms of the stem (pp. 114 - 115), as well as the ways in which they appear in the mss., (based on the selections of Geldner/Insler 1975/Skjaervo 2006). Beekes' notation 'YH' indicates that the particular form is found only in the *Yasna Haptanghaiti*, and not in the Gathas.

Case and number	Beekes' spelling	In the mss. as shown in Insler 1975 & Geldner
Nom. sg.	<i>gāuš</i>	<i>gāuš</i>
Acc. sg.	<i>gām</i>	<i>gqm</i>
Gen. sg. 'of the cow' Abl. sg. 'from the cow'	<i>gauš</i>	<i>gəuš</i>
Dat. sg. 'to/for the cow'	<i>gavai</i>	<i>gavōi</i>
Acc. pl.	<i>gāh</i> YH	<i>gā</i> (in the Gathas Y46.4 'oxen')
Nom. du.	<i>gāvā</i>	<i>gāvā</i>

<sup>3</sup> Haug, *Essays on the Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, p.148, ft. 1, (Philo Press, Amsterdam, reprint, 1971 of E. W. West's edited edition 1878).

<sup>4</sup> In the Gathas, Insler in his 1975 translation sometimes does indeed think that *gao-* 'cow' is used for the 'earth'. All the following examples are from Insler 1975:

In Y32.8, the Indo-Iranian legendary Yima (Ved. Yama; the Jam/Jamsheed of the Shahnameh) is quoted as having said: "*The cow [gāuš] is goddess*" and Insler footnotes the following explanation. "The cow here is not the good vision but the earth, which was worshipped as a goddess by the Aryans." Insler 1975 p. 47, ft. 7.

In Y32.10, Zarathushtra uses an expression "*...the one who has professed the worst in order to see the cow [gqm] and the sun with his eyes;...*" Y32.10, Insler 1975. He explains this expression in a ft. as follows: "The expression means

'to remain alive'," And in his commentary he states that in this verse, *gqm* 'the cow' is a metaphor for the earth, as frequently in the Rig Veda, and that the expression 'to see the earth and the sun' means 'to continue to live'. (p. 47, ft. 9, and p. 205).

Other verses are ambiguous regarding whether a literal cow is intended.

In Y51.7, Zarathushtra says: "Thou, Wise One, who hast fashioned the cow [*gqm*] as well as the waters and the plants by reason of Thy [*spanta- mainyu-*], grant Thou to me [*aməratāt-*] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*]..." Y51.7, Insler 1975. Now it might be argued that Zarathushtra is saying that Wisdom fashioned the (literal) cow, as well as the waters and the plants that it relies on for food. But when you consider that this first part is linked to a request for completeness and non-deathness, it signals that Zarathushtra is using 'cow' and 'waters and the plants' metaphorically, because there is no literal connection between a literal cow and its food (waters and plants) on the one hand, and the two ultimate divine qualities completeness and non-deathness on the other hand. In later texts, the waters and plants are "counterparts" of completeness and non-deathness. Therefore it would be reasonable to ask: is 'cow' also a metaphor for one or more amesha spenta? I think it is. In later texts, cattle were linked with good thinking. But I think in the Gathas 'cow' stands for a beneficial-sacred way of being (*spanta- mainyu-*) in mortal existence ~ an existence which comprises the qualities that make a being divine (amesha spenta).

<sup>5</sup> You may wonder why, in Y32.14, evil princes (instead of priests) should say "The cow is to be killed...", Insler 1975. Well, the pre-existing religious practices of Zarathushtra's culture are reflected in the YAv. Yashts, (reflecting the syncretization of pre-existing religions with that of Zarathushtra). And several Yashts speak of the practice (and necessity) of princes and other legendary heroes giving large quantities of cattle etc. to local deities in hopes of getting their wishes granted. This practice of princes giving cattle for sacrifice may have been what Zarathushtra was referring to in Y32.14.

<sup>6</sup> Here are additional examples in which 'earth' does not fit the context in which *gao-* is used:

In Y34.14, Zarathushtra speaks of those who translate good thinking into actions, as existing in the 'community of the fertile cow', "For that prize, ... Wise One, has been established (for those) who, through their action stemming from good thinking, indeed exist in the community of the fertile cow [*gəuš*], as they further the good understanding of your will [*x ratəuš* 'reasoning'] with truth, Lord, throughout the (whole) community." Y34.14, Insler 1975. If you substitute 'earth' (either literally or metaphorically) in place of cow, you will see that it does not fit the context, because at no time was the community of the entire earth committed to Zarathushtra's path of truth and its comprehension.

In Y50.2, Zarathushtra asks: "How, Wise One, should a person seek after the joy-bringing cow [*gqm*] ..." Y50.2, Insler 1975. Zarathushtra's teachings do not advocate seeking after the earth.

In Y51.14, speaking of corrupt priests, Zarathushtra says: "...Theirs is a pleasure from (bringing) injury to the cow [*gavōi*] by their actions and words, a doctrine which shall place them in the House of Deceit in the end." Y51.14, Insler 1975. The physical, literal 'earth' would be a poor fit in this context. Throughout the Gathas, the actions of the priests and princes of which Zarathushtra complains, are actions of cruelty, violence, tyranny, theft, murder, fury, et cetera. These are actions which are directed against other human beings, and result in an existence of suffering ~ far more than just the physical, literal, earth. In this verse, Y51.14, Zarathushtra says that such actions will end up bringing such priests to the House of Deceit (one of his terms for what is commonly call 'hell', but which means a wrong-headed state of being in mortal existence see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*). In the very next verse (Y51.15), he states that the true order (*aša-*) and its comprehension, good thinking, will result in 'salvation' and the House of Song (one of his terms for 'heaven'), a blissful state of being ~ in mortal and non-mortal existence. I therefore do not think that Zarathushtra could have intended *gavōi* in Y51.14 to mean the earth. For the same reason, he could not have intended *gavōi* to be a literal, physical, cow because cows were valuable assets in that society, and greedy priests would not have taken pleasure in injuring them, although they were indeed killed for sacrifices.

And there are other such examples in which 'earth' does not fit the context in which *gao-* is used.

<sup>7</sup> The Pahlavi text, *Selections of Zad-sparam*, Chs. II and III, SBE 5, pp 161 ~ 163, has some echoes of Y29.1 but other ideas as well that are not in the Gathas. In Chap. III of this Pahlavi text, it states (E. W. West translation) "And Goshurvan [Av. *gāuš urvan-*], as she was herself the soul of the primeval ox, when the ox passed away, came out of the ox, even as the soul from the body of the dead, and kept up the clamour of a cry to Auharmazd in such fashion as that of an army, a thousand strong, when they cry out together..." § 1, SBE 5, p. 163.

It is clear that 'goshurvan' (Av. *gāuš urvan-*) in this Pahlavi text could not accurately be translated as the 'soul of the earth'. However, Zad-sparam's identification of 'goshurvan' with the soul of the primeval ox was a mix of Zarathushtra's thought in Y29.1 and earlier creation stories, because 'goshurvan' in this Chapter of Zad-sparam is referred to as 'she', and so is female (as is the Av. 'soul of the cow' *gāuš urvan-* in the Gathas), whereas in one of the old pre-Zarathushtrian creation myths, the primeval ox, from whose seed all plants and animals came into being, is male. West SBE 5, p. 161, ft 4. I conclude, therefore, that Zad-sparam in speaking of 'goshurvan' expressed the imagery (roughly) as shown in Y29.1, but in trying to understand this verse Y29.1, he interpreted it based on the (pre-Zarathushtrian) creation myth of the primeval ox.

<sup>8</sup> Actually, Haug, (whose mother tongue was not English) probably meant 'metaphor' or 'allegory' here, not simile. A simile would have required the translation "like the soul of a cow".

<sup>9</sup> In the New Testament, (the translation of the King James Version), the book of John, Ch. 21, §§ 15 - 17, states:

"15. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, ... Feed my lambs."

"16. He saith to him again, the second time, ... Feed my sheep."

"17. He saith unto him the third time ... Feed my sheep."

<sup>10</sup> Insler 1975 p. 141, discussing Cameron's views. And in his References (p. 335), he identifies "Cameron, G. G., 1968, Zoroaster the Herdsman. IJ. 10, pp. 261 - 281."

<sup>11</sup> Some translators translate *daēnā* as 'conscience', but (with respect) that cannot be accurate. One's conscience, by definition, is always 'good'. Whereas in the Gathas, *daēnā* can be 'good' or 'bad'; *daēnā* is a (good or bad) way of looking at, or conceptualizing, existence ~ a (good or bad) "conception" Insler 1975, a (good or bad) "envisionment" (Schwartz 1993 and others), discussed in detail in *Part Three: Daena*.

<sup>12</sup> Insler 1975 pp. 141-143; these quotations are brief selections from Insler's commentary on Y29.

<sup>13</sup> The fact that Insler 1975 does not mention *ārmaiti-* as part of 'good envisionment' may have been because Insler 1975 translates *ārmaiti-* as 'piety', and more recently as 'respect'. But as Insler's teacher, Thieme has pointed out, such words as 'piety' or 'respect' cannot be qualities of the Divine, and there is no dispute that *ārmaiti-* is indeed an amesha spenta ~ an attribute of the Divine ~ in Avestan texts. Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, which appears in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium*, 1993, (WZO 1998), p. 207. The meaning of *ārmaiti-* as the true (correct, good) order of existence embodied in thought, word and action, can be determined with reasonable certainty, based on the ways in which Zarathushtra uses the word. See *Part One: Embodied Truth, Aramaiti*.

<sup>14</sup> In Y44.10, referring to good envisionment [*daēnā-*] in existence (without the metaphor of 'cow') Zarathushtra says: "This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. Have they truly seen that vision [*daēnā-*] which is the best [*vahišta-* 'most good'] for those who exist, and which in companionship with truth, would prosper my creatures already allied with truth, through words and acts stemming from [*ārmaiti-*]?" Y44.10, Insler 1975;

The word *āmatōiš* is the form for both gen. sg. ('through words and acts of [*ārmaiti*-...]'), and also abl. sg. ('through words and acts stemming from [*ārmaiti*-...]'). In this context, I think the gen. sg. is a better fit 'through words and actions of embodied truth...'

<sup>15</sup> The *Bundahishn* is a Pahlavi text (written more than 1,000 years after the Gathas). It contains myths that pre-dated Zarathushtra but were brought into the religion during the syncretization evidenced in the YAv. texts. The *Bundahishn*, Chapter 10.1 - 4, records one of the creation stories as follows:

"On the conflict waged with the primeval ox.

As it passed away, owing to the vegetable principle (*kiharak*) *proceeding* from every limb of the ox, fifty and five species of grain *and* twelve species of medicinal plants grew forth from the earth, and their splendour and strength were the seminal energy (*tokhmih*) of the ox. Delivered to the moon station, that seed was thoroughly purified by the light of the moon, fully prepared in every way, and produced life in a body. Thence arose two oxen, one male *and* one female; and afterwards, two hundred and eighty-two species of each kind became manifest upon the earth. The dwelling (*manist*) of the birds is in the air, and the fish are in the midst of the water." *Bundahishn*, Ch. 10 §§ 1 - 4, as translated by E. W. West in SBE 5, pp. 31 - 32. Italicized words and words in round parentheses are in West's translation.

It is worth noting that the creation stories recorded in the *Bundahishn* are not consistent. For example, the simplest of the creation stories does not involve the ox at all. It states:

"Of Auharmazd's creatures of the world, the first *was* the sky; the second, water; the third, earth; the fourth, plants; the fifth, animals; the sixth, mankind." Ch. 1, § 28, SBE 5 p. 10.

And there are other creation myths in the *Bundahishn* as well - each inconsistent with the others.

<sup>16</sup> The evidence from the Gathas which establishes these conclusions has been detailed in the first few chapters in *Part One*, which discuss each attribute of the Divine, as well as the nature and identity of the Divine. And see also *Part One: A Friendly Universe*.

<sup>17</sup> Here are some examples of 'cow' being used literally in the Gathas,

"Each such man has (also) ruined Thy teachings: the one who has professed the worst in order to see the cow and the sun with his eyes; ..." Y32.10, Insler 1975. He footnotes the following explanation "This expression means 'to remain alive'." p. 47, ft. 9.

"Even Yama, the son of Vivahvant, ... he who wanted to satisfy our men (by) swearing: 'The cow is goddess'. ..." Y32.8, Insler 1975. Translations of this verse vary, but in any event, the 'cow' is used literally here.

<sup>18</sup> "Yes, to those (of you) seeking, I shall speak of those things which are to be borne in mind ... which things are to be looked upon in joy throughout your days." Y30.1, Insler 1975. For other examples, see *Part One: Joy, Happiness, Prosperity*.

<sup>19</sup> Y28.1 is a wonderful, multi-dimensional verse which is discussed in *Part Seven: Yasna 28.1*, together with my translation and others (for comparative purposes). Here, I just quote those parts of it which pertain to the discussion at hand, using the Insler 1975 translation, so that you can have confidence that the translation is not molded to meet my conclusions.

<sup>20</sup> Insler 1975 translates *x ratu-* as 'will', 'determination', 'intention', but he acknowledges that other scholars translate *x ratu-* as 'reason' or 'intellect', pp. 327 et seq. For a detailed discussion of the meaning of *x ratu-*, as used both in the Gathas and some later Avestan texts, see *Part Three: Xratu*.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed, in that culture, the possession of cows ~ one of the main wealth-assets of that society ~ would have attracted the raiding nomads, and thus could be said to bring war and violence, rather than peace.

<sup>22</sup> See *Part One: Truth, Asha*, for the evidence which supports the conclusion that in Zarathushtra's view, the true order of existence, *aša-*, brings peace.

<sup>23</sup> This is the concept of mutual, loving help so often seen in the Gathas. See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*; and *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*; and *The Manthra of Choice, Yatha Ahu Vairyo*. And this concept of mutual, loving help is discussed throughout many other chapters as well.

<sup>24</sup> For the evidence of Zarathushtra's intent when he uses 'lord', see *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*; and *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31.4*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most Good, Vahishta*.

<sup>26</sup> In this verse, Y50.3, the GAv. word which Insler translates as 'the deceitful one' is *drəgvā*, which he interprets to be the Evil Spirit (Insler 1975 ft. 5, p. 99). However *drəgvā* is nom. sg. of the adj. *drəgvant-* 'deceitful'. I think 'deceitful' is too narrow a definition for *drəgvant-* (explained in a ft. below) but let us stay with 'deceitful' for now. In GAv. and adj. can also be used as a noun (a concept or person) that has the qualities of the adj. There are no articles ('the' or 'a') in Avestan. So in this verse (Y50.3), it would be as accurate to translate *drəgvā* as a concept '(what is) deceitful' or in more fluent English 'deceitfulness', ~ which is corroborated by the fact that the concept *drəgvant-* 'deceitful' in this verse is stated in opposition to concepts 'the rule of truth and good thinking'. Thus if in this verse we substitute the concept 'untruthfulness' for 'the deceitful one' (the Evil Spirit), we get (using Insler 1975 in all other respects), "For she indeed, whom one has promised with good thinking to him during the rule of truth and good thinking, she shall belong to that person who would strengthen, with the power of such a reward, his nearest fellow creature, whom untruthfulness [*drəgvā*] shall (otherwise) appropriate." Y50.3, Insler 1975.

Zarathushtra's uses of *druj-* and its adj. *drəgvant-* as well as interpretive translations which (with respect) are not consistent with his thought (or with reality) are discussed in more detail in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell* (for *druj-*) and in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*.

<sup>27</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

<sup>28</sup> That 'cow' is used as a metaphor for the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence ~ an existence governed by the amesha spenta ~ is also supported by the following verses:

Y50.2, "... How, Wise One, should that person seek after the joy-bringing cow, namely, the one who would wish her to bring pasturage to him, as he lives honestly in harmony with truth among the many who secretly betray (us)??.." Y50.2, Insler 1975. A literal cow does not bring pasturage to man, as this verse states ~ it is man who brings pasturage to the literal, cow. So, with this note of dissonance, Zarathushtra signals that 'cow' is not being used literally here. But cow as a metaphor for the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence fits the context, because a person should seek after an existence governed by the attributes of the divine (the allegorical cow) ~ an existence which is joy-bringing, and which nourishes (brings pasturage). And when we remember that Zarathushtra speaks of the 'pasture of truth and good thinking' and the 'pasture of the cow' we see that this pasturage is what nourishes the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence (cow).

In Y34.14 Zarathushtra says, "... (...those) who through their action stemming from good thinking, indeed exist in the community [*vərəzānē*] of the fertile cow, as they further the good understanding of your will [*x ratu-* 'reasoning'] with



truth, Lord, throughout the (whole) community [vərəzəñā]." Y34.14, Insler 1975. Now cows exist in herds, not in communities. We can also tell that "community of the fertile cow" in this verse is not used for a herd of literal cows because such herds do not "further ... good understanding ... with truth". But that is precisely what an existence governed by the attributes of the divine does. So we see that "community of the fertile cow" is used metaphorically here. It is another way of saying the community of those who are committed to, and implement, the beneficial-sacred in existence. This conclusion is corroborated in Y49.7 where the same thought is expressed without the metaphor of 'cow', "And let a person listen to that with good thinking, Wise One. Let him listen with truth. Do Thou, Lord, (also) give ear (to this). Which clan, which family shall abide by Thy laws [dātāiš], thus being one which shall give good fame to the (whole) community [vərəzəñāi]?" Y49.7, Insler 1975. The clan, the family, which abides by Wisdom's laws in Y49.7 is the 'community of the fertile cow' in Y34.14. Wisdom's 'laws' are His teachings, the path of truth and its component parts, the amesha spenta. The word that has been translated as 'by (Thy) laws [dātāiš]' literally means 'that which has been established, given, made' (deriving from *dā-* 'to make, give, establish').

Y46.19 has the metaphor *gāvā azī*. These words are both dual.

*Skaervo 2006* states that *azī* is an adj. which describes a cow that has had a calf (a milch cow).

*Humbach (1991)* translates the phrase in this verse *mīždām parāhūm ... gāvā azī* as "a prize providing higher existence, namely two fertile cows" and compares it with a Rig Vedic phrase which speaks of "procreating higher existence". (*Humbach 1991 Vol. 2, p. 189*). But two cows cannot procreate together. And in any event, why the dual ~ 'two cows'?

*Insler 1975* says that these dual words literally mean 'two fertile cows' (commenting on p. 275). However he thinks this is what he calls an 'elliptical dual' (*gāvā azī* 'two fertile cows') as 'a cow and a steer', and interprets *gāvā* as a metaphor for the good vision and Zarathushtra as its keeper. But (according to the dictionary) a steer is a castrated bull, so I am doubtful that it could be a metaphor for either procreation or Zarathushtra as the cow's keeper. Even a regular bull does not function as the keeper of a cow. And there is no parallel Gatha verse in which 'bull' is used as a metaphor for Zarathushtra. So we need to look for another answer to this puzzle.

I think there are some open questions in the linguistics (vocabulary and syntax) of this verse. But setting those aside the phrase in which *gāvā azī* appears is as follows, "The person who ... shall bring to realization ... what is most healing according to (our) wish, for such a person ... winning the prize of a future existence, shall there be [*gāvā azī* 'two fertile cows'] ..." Y46.19, Insler 1975.

The only answer that occurs to me is that perhaps the dual, *gāvā azī* (two fertile cows) may have been chosen by Zarathushtra because it applies to the 'prize' which is the amesha spenta in existence (cow) ~ which starts (1) incompletely in mortal existence, and ends (2) completely in a future perfected existence. And *azī* 'fertile' is used to represent the idea of the increase of the beneficial in both types of existence ~ unperfected and perfected. This (tentative) opinion is supported by the evidence in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*. But the dual *gāvā azī* remains a puzzle.

In Y48.5, is 'cow' used literally? as a metaphor? I think both. "...let the best vitalization for the cow be brought to realization on earth, in order to breed her for our food." Y48.5, Insler 1975. Here, I think Zarathushtra is engaging in double entendre, as he so often does. On the one hand he says that we should nourish the literal cow so that she will nourish us (as literal food). On the other hand, using the 'cow' and 'food' as metaphors, could equally mean that we nourish the Divine in mortal existence (cow) by following the path of truth ~ its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule ("the best vitalization for the cow"); and 'breeding' (or increasing) these divine qualities in mortal existence (cow) provides food for our souls.

<sup>29</sup> Insler 1975 p. 123, commenting under Y28.4.

<sup>30</sup> Here are the verses which mention man's soul (*urvan-*), all in the Insler 1975 translation:

"If the better course for the soul [*urvanē*] has not been seen through these words,..." Y31.2;

"...the action of the [*spanta-*] man whose soul [*urvā*] is in alliance with truth..." Y34.2;

"...to what goods [*vohū* 'goodness'] shall my soul [*urvā*] proceed in the future?" Y44.8; Skjaervo 2006 shows *vohū* as the form for both sg. and pl. in nom./acc. ntr. And here, the adj. *vohū* is used as a noun that is a concept (in my view).

"...that the soul [*urvā*] of a truthful person be powerful in [*amərətāt-*]..." Y45.7, Insler 1975;

" Wise One, Thou dost guard in Thy house this good thinking, and the souls [*urunascā*] of the truthful ones,..." Y49.10, Insler 1975. Parenthetically, 'house' is used in the Gathas as a metaphor for a state of being (see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*) - so if "Thy house" is Wisdom's state of being, what intriguing thought does this verse give you?

"During their regimes, the Karpans and the Kavis yoked (us) with evil actions in order to destroy the world and mankind. But their own soul [*urvā*] and their own conception [*daēnā-*] did vex them when they reached the Bridge of the Judge [*cinvatō pərətuš*] '(the) bridge of discerning',..." Y46.11; see *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*.

" But the deceitful persons, bad in rule, bad in actions and words, bad in conceptions and thoughts, them shall their souls [*urvqnō*] continue to encounter with foul food when they shall be true guests in the House of Deceit." Y49.11; (see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*, for an explanation of the metaphors 'foul food' and 'House of Deceit').

"By reason of this, the conception of the deceitful person misses the true (conception) of the honest man. His soul [*urvā*] shall vex him at the Bridge of the Judge surely, in that he has disappeared from the path of truth by reason of his own actions and (the words) of his tongue." Y51.13;

"...The association of these two has already arisen, under whom (all) souls [*urvqnō*] are in harmony." Y33.9; the reference to 'souls' here could mean more than just human souls. In Avestan texts other life forms have 'souls' also (see *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*).

<sup>31</sup> Here are the verses which mention the soul (*urvan-*) of the cow:

Y28.1, and Y29.1, both quoted in the main part of this chapter.

And Y29.9: "But thereupon the soul of the cow wept..." Y29.9, Insler 1975, discussed in *Part Two: The Solution of Y29*.

<sup>32</sup> Here is the one verse which mentions the Lord Wisdom's 'soul' although the GAv. word is not *urvan-*, "...Him, the Lord who is famed to be Wise in His soul [*qnmānī*]..." Y45.10, Insler 1975. Insler translates *qnmānī* as loc. sg. 'in-soul'. According to Skjaervo, its stem is *qnmān-* which in Y30.7 Insler 1975 translates as 'breath' *kəhrpəm ... qnmā* 'body and breath'. Humbach 1991 and Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate *qnmānī* in this verse (Y45.10) as 'wind' but in his 1991 comments, Humbach states that it can mean "perhaps also 'soul, self,'" pointing to Y30.7 (Humbach (1991) Vol. 2, p. 173).

Now, why do you suppose Zarathushtra chooses (in this verse Y45.10) to use for the Lord Wisdom's 'soul', the (more material) *qnmān-* 'breath/soul' instead of the (less material) *urvan-* 'soul/self'? We cannot be sure. But whatever his intent may have been, the use of 'breath' for the Divine, expresses a unity of identity between the Divine and all the living (see *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*).

There is another verse, Y45.2, in which *mainyu-* 'a way of being', is said to have *urvan-*, "...Neither our thoughts, nor teachings nor intentions, neither our preferences nor words, neither our actions nor conceptions nor our souls [*urvqnō*] are in accord." Y45.2 Insler 1975. However, here I think *urvqnō* means 'selves' - as in two opposite ways of being (*mainyu-*). Commenting under a different verse (Y28.4), Insler 1975 says, citing a Ved. cognate, that *urvan-* can be used as 'soul' or 'self' (p. 123).

<sup>33</sup> See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

<sup>34</sup> See *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*.

<sup>35</sup> See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat / Ameretat*.

<sup>36</sup> In Y29.1, the GAv. word which Insler translates as 'to all of you' is *x šmaibyā* 'to you [pl.]' 2p dat. pl. of the personal pronoun stem *x šma-* (Skjaervo 2006; Jackson 1892 § 393, p. 112). Insler has added the words **all of** to indicate that 'you' is pl. So literally 'to you' ~ the pl. referring to Wisdom, and three of his divine attributes ~ truth, good thinking, and His beneficial way of being (the latter appearing in this Yasna in masked form as the 'fashioner of the cow' as discussed in *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*).

<sup>37</sup> The 'soul of the cow' which Zarathushtra says will be satisfied by Wisdom's teachings in Y28.1, is the very same 'soul of the cow' who begs for nurture in Y29.1, which nurture (in Y29) is Wisdom's teachings (the "[*mąθra-*] of butter and milk" which are provided to mortals through Zarathushtra, to heal what torments the beneficial-sacred in existence (Y29.7, 8, 10) ~ cruelty, violence, fury, bondage (Y29.1).

<sup>38</sup> This choice is paralleled in the first line of the Ahuna Vairya Y27.13, *yaθā ahū vairyō aθā ratuš ašātcēt hacā* Y27.13a, which Insler has translated as "Just as the Lord [*ahu-*] must be chosen, so also the judgment [*ratuš*] in accord with truth [*ašātcēt hacā-*]." Y27.1a Insler translation in his essay *The Ahuna Vairya Prayer*, as it appears in *Hommages et Opera Minora Monumentum H.S.Nyberg, Acta Iranica*, (Brill, 1975) pp. 409 et seq.).

The choice in the Ahuna Vairya is to be made by living beings. The choice in Y31.9 - 10 is made by the 'cow'. What is to be chosen in the Ahuna Vairya, is a lord [*ahū*] and (good) judgment [*ratuš*] in accord with the true (correct) order of existence [*ašātcēt hacā-*] which is a beneficial order. In Y31.9 - 10, the pastor (clearly a beneficial being) is equated with a truthful lord [*ahurəm ašavanəm*], i.e. someone who possesses (or has lordship over) the qualities of the true (correct) order [*ašavan-*], which is a beneficial order.

For a more detailed discussion of this beautiful manthra, the Ahuna Vairya, see

*Part Two: The Manthra of Choices Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo)*, and

in *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo) an Analysis*, and *The Ahuna Vairya in Ancient Commentaries*.

<sup>39</sup> The choice granted to the cow in Y31.9 ("...Thou didst grant the way to her to go either (to him who) shall act as pastor or (to him) who shall not be pastor (for her)." Y31.9, Insler 1975) is paralleled in Y45.9 where it applies to man without allegory ("...Him who left to our will (to choose between) the [*spāncā*] and the [*aspāncā*]..." Y45.9, Insler 1975). In both these verses, the choice is between what is beneficial and what is non-beneficial ~ the 'pastor' (one who nurtures, cares for) in Y31.9, and what is *spānta-* 'beneficial' and its opposite (with a negative prefix *a-*) 'non-beneficial'.

<sup>40</sup> Zarathushtra links ~ sometimes expressly, more often impliedly ~ the qualities of the divine with light, fire, earth, metals, water, and plants. See in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire; and Earth, Metal, Waters and Plants; and A Question of Immanence*.

<sup>41</sup> "...I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage." Y29.1, Insler 1975.

<sup>42</sup> The word *mąθrəm* is acc. sg. for *mąθra-*, which literally means 'word of reason' and is used for Wisdom's precepts, teachings. See *Part One: Manthras, An Introduction*. Although Insler translates *mąθrəm* here (in Y29.7) as 'promise',

he explains in his commentary that *mąθra-* in the Gathas almost always refers to the word of the Wise Lord, His precepts, and is often associated with *sāsnā-* 'instruction', and *sāngha-* 'teaching'. Insler 1975 p. 153 - 154.

<sup>43</sup> In this verse, Y29.7, butter is *āzūtōiš* (the ritual butter), and milk is *x švīdāmcā* (Skjaervo 2006 conjectures the stem as *x švīd-* 'milk'). Linguists are uncertain regarding whether this word is also the milk offering of the ritual (which is *īžā-*). Taraporewala 1951 thinks this word *x švīdāmcā* means 'sweetness', citing a Skt. cognate.

<sup>44</sup> In this verse (Y29.7), the stem word identified by Insler as *sāsnā-* he translates as 'commandment' but in his commentary on this verse, he translates *sāsnā-* as 'instruction'. Insler 1975 p. 153. With respect, I do not think 'commandment' is a translation choice that is consistent with the freedom to make choices, which is a fundament of Wisdom's teachings as understood by Zarathushtra (see *Part One: The Freedom to Choose*; and see *Part Three: Commands?*).

<sup>45</sup> The full verse reads as follows: "The Wise Lord, who is of the same temperament with truth [*aša-*], fashioned that promise [*mąθra-*] of butter and milk for the cow. He is [*spānta-* 'beneficial'] to the needy in accord with His [*sāsnayā* 'instruction']. (He said:) 'Who has (been found) by thee, good thinking, who might give these things to the mortals below?'" Y29.7, Insler 1975.

Notice here, the Lord Wisdom's 'temperament' is the same as the true order of existence (*aša-*), and he 'fashions' a teaching [*mąθra-*] 'of butter and milk'. In the Gathas, Wisdom's teaching is called the 'path of truth, *aša-*', (see *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*). So here, the metaphors 'butter and milk' represent the path of the true order of existence *aša-* (which by definition would include its component parts ~ its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule) ~ the nature of the Divine.

In the same way, the beneficial-sacred way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*) fashions the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence (the 'fashioner of the cow' discussed herein), which is an existence that accords with the true order, a beneficial order, which is the existence that is Divine. And (in Y29.7 above) "...He is [*spānta-* 'beneficial'] to the needy in accord with His [*sāsnayā* 'instruction']...". Wisdom's 'instruction' is the path of the amesha spenta (each of which is an aspect of the true order of existence ~ a beneficial order). The qualities which are the amesha spenta comprise a beneficial way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*). See in *Part One: Truth, Asha*; and *The Nature of the Divine*.

Beautiful multi-dimensional circles of thoughts blending into and out of each other.

<sup>46</sup> In Y29.9, it is the 'soul of the cow' who weeps because she thinks her appointed caretaker, Zarathushtra, is a man without power "But thereupon the soul of the cow wept: 'I who have recognized that my caretaker is powerless, (merely) the voice of a man without might, although I wish him to be one who possesses rule through power...' Y29.9, Insler 1975.

One has to wonder: Why did the soul of the cow weep? Now if the 'soul of the cow' is an allegory for the 'good vision' alone, it would not have been disappointed in the appointment of a man who did not possess power (as the world defines power). The good envisionment would have recognized that a good thinking person is the genesis for the solution for the problems of existence, because it is a good thinking person who envisions existence to be in accord with the true (correct) order of existence (the good vision). But imperfect mortals, whose possession of truth, good thinking, etc. is not complete, would not be so perceptive. To imperfect mortals, 'power' is might, the ability to control, to crush opponents, whereas in the Gathas, 'power' is associated with the true order of existence and its components (amesha spenta), (detailed in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra and Power*. The fact that the 'soul of the cow' does not understand this (and therefore weeps) indicates (to me) that the 'soul of the cow' is an allegory for the collective soul of all mortals ~ who have within them the first five qualities of the divine (amesha spenta), but imperfectly, and therefore do not yet understand Wisdom's notion of 'power ~ that 'power' is equated with the

attributes of the divine. Hence the frustration felt by the 'soul of the cow' ~ the (imperfect) beneficial sacred in mortal existence ~ when offered a 'powerless' man ~ but one who thinks ~ as its pastor.

<sup>47</sup> See *Part Two: The Solution of Y29*.

<sup>48</sup> In Yasna 29, the "fashioner of the cow" is not identified. But its identity is disclosed in the following three Gatha verses:

In Y47.3, the "fashioner of the cow" is identified as the beneficial-sacred way of being, *spanta- mainyu-* ("...the [mainyu-] who fashioned the joy-bringing cow, for this world..." Y47.3, Insler 1975); it is worth noting that this beneficial-sacred way of being (*spanta- mainyu-*) is a divine attribute which also exists in man (although incompletely), see *Part One: The Beneficial Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*. In no (extant) verse is man's beneficial way of being specifically identified as the 'fashioner of the cow', but such a conclusion can reasonably be implied (because the beneficial way of being in man and the Divine is not different in kind, only in quality ~ incomplete in man, complete in the Divine; and man, with his good choices "fashions" in 1,001 ways, a beneficial existence ~ one that is governed by the true (correct) order of existence, its good comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spanta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- x šaθra-*) ~ attributes of divinity.

In Y44.6, the "fashioner of the cow" is identified as the Lord Himself in a rhetorical question ("...for whom has Thou fashioned the joy-bringing fertile cow?" Y44.6, Insler 1975);

In Y51.7, the "fashioner of the cow" is identified as Wisdom, through His most-beneficial way of being ~ His *spāništa-mainyu-* ("Thou, Wise One, who hast fashioned the cow ... by reason of Thy [*spāništa- mainyu-*] ..." Y51.7, Insler 1975).

Now it could be argued that Zarathushtra intended to say, in the last two verses (Y44.6 and Y51.7), that Wisdom the Lord created literal cows (although the word he chooses to use is not 'create' or 'make' but 'fashion'). But this literalist argument is not consistent with the (metaphoric) ways in which Zarathushtra uses 'cow' as we have discussed in this chapter. Nor does it explain why ~ of the entire material creation including man ~ only the cow is repeatedly identified as having been fashioned by the beneficial way of being (*spanta- mainyu-*), by Wisdom Himself, and by His beneficial way of being. Yet if we understand 'cow' here as an allegory for the the divine (the amesha spenta) in mortal existence, each such fashioning fits ~ the beneficial way of being (in both man and the Divine) would indeed fashion an existence that is in accord with the true (correct) order, a beneficial order.

<sup>49</sup> This is repeatedly stated in the verses of Yasna 43 "And I have already realized Thee to be [*spanta-*], Wise Lord, when he attended me with good thinking ...", Insler 1975. In his commentary Insler expresses the opinion that the unidentified "he" who "attends with good thinking" is *spanta- mainyu-* and I agree, (see *Part Six: Yasna 43*); *mainyu-* is a grammatically masc. noun, hence Insler's masculine pronoun 'he', (which in English would normally be translated as 'it' because *mainyu-* (whether translated as 'spirit' or 'way of being') has no actual gender).

<sup>50</sup> Y44.7, discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

<sup>51</sup> See *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>52</sup> I was delighted to discover that Moulton seems to have arrived at a somewhat similar conclusion. He footnotes "Ox-soul" in his translation of Y28.1 as follows. "The souls of his people ~ collective." (Moulton 1912 pp. 344 - 345). But (with respect) I disagree that the the term "soul of the cow" in the Gathas is limited to Zarathushtra's people. I think it means the collective soul of existence, for the reasons detailed in this chapter.

<sup>53</sup> Note the singular 'soul', and think of it in the context of the ideas discussed in the following chapters:

In *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat / Ameretat; The Nature of the Divine*, and *The Identity of the Divine*,

In *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path; The Houses of Paradise and Hell; The Lords and the Equations of Y31.4; The Puzzle of Creation; and A Question of Immanence*.

<sup>54</sup> See *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*.

<sup>55</sup> See in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation; A Question of Immanence*, and *Did Mazda Choose Too?*

<sup>56</sup> The idea that Zarathushtra uses **milk** as a metaphor for good thinking, (which is the comprehension of the true (correct) order of existence) is further suggested by his technique of interchanging the metaphor (milk) with good thinking and other attributes of the divine (amesha spenta). For example:

In Y51.1, he speaks of serving good rule (the components of which rule are Wisdom's divine attributes, truth, its comprehension (most-good thinking), and its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action *spənta- ārmaiti-*), Y51.4, with milk: "**That good rule is to be chosen which best brings good fortune to the man serving it with milk...**" Y51.1, Insler 1975. In other Gatha verses he speaks of serving Wisdom with its own divine attributes (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*). In Y28.2 (without using the metaphor 'milk') he serves the Lord, Wisdom, and His divine attributes, (using the plural 'you') with good thinking, "**I who shall serve all of you [vā pl.], Wise Lord, with good thinking...**" Y28.2, Insler 1975.

In Y50.8, he uses **footprints of milk** in describing such service, "**...Wise One, I shall serve ... you with the renowned footprints of milk. You, moreover, with truth and with the reverence (worthy) of a sincere person. You moreover, with the skillfulness of good thinking.**" Y50.8, Insler 1975. The words 'footprints of milk' suggests actions that come from an understanding of truth (which is good thinking) which actions are the concept of *ārmaiti*.

In Y49.10 he uses *ārmaiti-* and milk (good thinking) in parallel, associated with reverence, "**... and reverence with which are allied [ārmaiti-] and milk...**" Y49.10, Insler 1975. Re-echoed without metaphor in Y45.10, where he speaks of prayers of *ārmaiti-* "**I shall try to glorify Him for us with prayers of [ārmaiti-]...**" Y45.10, Insler 1975.

<sup>57</sup> See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

<sup>58</sup> The conclusion that '**butter and milk**' is used metaphorically in Y29.7 is also required when we consider that Wisdom's response of a "**[mqθra-] of butter and milk**" is made in response to the lament of the soul of the cow in verse 1, that she is held captive by "**the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might**", and her request for "**good pasturage**". Literal "**butter and milk**" from Wisdom would clearly not solve the suffering caused by cruelty, violence, bondage et cetera. In addition, in the first sentence of verse 7, Wisdom's promise of "**butter and milk**" refers to the last sentence of verse 6, where He assures the metaphoric cow (the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence) that there will be those who will promote her increase and care ("**Thereupon, the Wise Lord, the Knowing One, spoke these solemn words ... '...the shaper did fashion thee for both a cattle-breeder and a pastor'...**" Y29.6, Insler 1975).

<sup>59</sup> See *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*.

<sup>60</sup> See *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*.

<sup>61</sup> See *Part Six: Yasna 43*.

<sup>62</sup> See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

<sup>63</sup> E. W. West's translation of an insightful Pahlavi Fragment SBE 5, p. 372 et seq., appended to (but not a part of) *Shayast la-Shayast* (the latter text being authored by a visionless soul). The word "counterpart" appears more than once in §§ 9 - 11 of this Fragment, p. 374. The linking in later texts of each amesha spenta with a counterpart in the material existence is discussed in *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*.

<sup>64</sup> Zarathushtra's idea of 'worship' is to worship the Divine with its own qualities, the amesha spenta. See *Part One: Worship & Prayer*, and *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

<sup>65</sup> The full verse reads as follows: "Wise One, (it is) I who, through worship, shall turn away disobedience and bad thinking from Thee, and opposition from the family, and the nearest deceit of the community, and scorners from the clan, and the worst counselor from the pasture of the cow." Y33.4, Insler 1975.

<sup>66</sup> Insler comments on *asnqm* under Y46.3, that it is gen. pl. of *asan-* 'heaven' rather than of *azar/n* 'day' Insler (1975) p. 264.

Humbach (1991) translates *asnqm* as "of the days" (gen pl.) in both Y46.3 and Y50.10 (Vol. 2, pp. 177, 220) without a linguistic explanation.

Humbach/Faiss (2010) translate *asnqm* as "of the days/rosy dawn" in Y46.3 and as "of the days" in Y50.10 (pp. 133, 152), again without linguistic comment.

Whichever meaning is accurate, it is clear that 'bulls' here is used metaphorically, because neither "of the heavens", nor "of the days/rosy dawn" have any relevance to literal bulls.

Zarathushtra may indeed have used *asnqm* with both meanings in mind, intending a double entendre ~ as 'of (the) heavens' and as daytime and dawn which are both 'light' ~ a metaphor for the enlightened state that is his 'heaven'. His contemporaries would have been well aware of, and would have appreciated, the double entendre which fits so well in the context of his songs.

<sup>67</sup> Here is the full verse. I have divided the lines of this English translation to facilitate discussion:

"Yes, those things which Thou hast brought to realization,  
as well as those things which Thou hast reached by Thy action,  
and those things which one shall esteem, through good thinking, in his vision  
~ the lights [*raocā*] of the sun [*x'āng*], the bright [*aēuruš*] bull [*ux šā*] of the heavens [*asnqm*] ~  
these are for your glory, Wise Lord allied with truth." Y50.10, Insler 1975.

Supplementing the discussion in the main part of this chapter, this verse is a mini-puzzle ~ using metaphors to express a simple, basic idea in multi-dimensions.

Here, the "lights of the sun" appear to refer to the three things that precede that term, specifically:

1. "those things which Thou hast brought to realization"
2. "those things which Thou hast reached by Thy action", and
3. "those things which one shall esteem, through good thinking, in his vision".

What does Zarathushtra mean by the first ~ "those things which Thou hast brought to realization..."? In the Gathas, Wisdom is called the Father of truth *aša-* (Y47.2), good thinking *vohu- manah-*, and embodied truth *ārmaiti-*, (Y45.4), the creator (or giver) of truth (Y34.10) and good thinking (Y44.4, 7), and the fashioner of embodied truth and rule *x šaθra-* (Y44.7). So it would be reasonable to conclude that #1 above refers to the amesha spenta, the divine qualities which Wisdom has brought to realization (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*).

What does Zarathushtra mean by the third "those things which one shall esteem, through good thinking in his vision..."? In the Gathas, the qualities of the divine (amesha spenta) are objects of reverence, praise and esteem ~ sometimes together with the Lord, Wisdom, and sometimes by themselves. This is done with good thinking in Y28.2,

and Y51.7. So it would be reasonable to conclude that # 3 refers to one's perception (**one's envisionment**) through good thinking, of these divine qualities (amesha spenta), (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*).

#2 is more difficult to puzzle out – "**those things which Thou hast reached by Thy action**". What idea is Zarathushtra attempting to convey? The concept of completeness (*haurvatat*) is the complete attainment of all the qualities of the divine (amesha spenta), and is one of Wisdom's qualities. Therefore it may be that "**those things which Thou hast reached by Thy action**" (#2 above) also refers to the amesha spenta ~ qualities that he has reached completely, through His endeavors, His action (see *Part Two: Did Wisdom Choose Too?*).

Each of these three things are equated with the "**lights of the sun**". Various forms of light are used as metaphors and similes in the Gathas (and later texts) for the true order of existence *aša-* (which is the existence of the Divine) of which the qualities of the divine (amesha spenta) are component parts. So I conclude that each of these three terms (reflecting the amesha spenta), are parallel ways of describing the "**the lights of the sun**" ~ corroborated by the fact that in the Gathas, Wisdom is described as one who "**has the appearance of the sun...**" Y43.16. The "**bright bull of the heavens**" in my view, refers to the immediately preceding **sun**. (See *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*).

<sup>68</sup> See *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*.

<sup>69</sup> See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

<sup>70</sup> See in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good Vahishta; A Question of Reward and the Path; The Houses of Paradise and Hell; and The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural*.

<sup>71</sup> One of the meanings of the stem word *ahu-/aṇhu-* means 'life, existence'. So a literal translation of *aṇhəuš ... ašahyā* would be 'of an existence [*aṇhəuš*] of truth [*ašahyā*]'. Although in this verse (Y46.3) Insler translates *aṇhəuš ... ašahyā* as "of the world of truth", he frequently translates *aṇhəuš* as "of/from existence" (gen./abl. sg.). Here are a few examples from his 1975 translation:

*aṇhəuš ahurəm* "Lord of existence" Y31.8;

*aša aṇhəuš* "from an existence in harmony with truth" Y44.8;

*dātā aṇhəuš paouruəhyā* "laws of the foremost existence" Y33.1;

*aṇhəuš ahyā paourvīm* "the foremost (doctrine) of this existence" Y45.3;

*aṇhəuš vahištahyā paourvīm* "beginning of the best [most good] existence" Y44.2;

*aṇhəuš ahyā vahištəm* "the best [most good] thing of this existence" Y45.4.

<sup>72</sup> See *Part One: A Question of Salvation*.

<sup>73</sup> See *Part One: A Question of Salvation*.

<sup>74</sup> See in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat / Ameretat; and The Identity of the Divine; And in Part Two: The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural*.

<sup>75</sup> "... Faridun advanced upon him [Zohak, evil incarnate] with the speed of a storm-wind and dealt him a blow from his bull-headed mace ..." Levy, *The Epic of the Kings, Shah Nama by Ferdowsi*, p. 24.

<sup>76</sup> See *Part One: A Question of Weapons; and Part Two: The Paradox of Being Bad for the Bad*. The following examples also demonstrate that in the Gathas, evil is defeated by good ~ the premier quality of the Divine, the true order of existence (which includes its component, the other attributes that make a being divine, the amesha spenta):



"If, during the times after this (present) one which is under the workings of evil, one shall defeat deceit by truth [aša-], ... for the sake of [amərətāt- 'non-deathness'], then one shall increase Thy glory, Lord, during those times of salvation." Y48.1, Insler 1975;

"... How might I deliver deceit into the hands of truth [aša-], in order to destroy it in accord with the precepts of Thy teaching?..." Y44.14, Insler 1975; the precepts of Wisdom's teachings are the path of truth, the path of the amesha spenta.

"... those, Lord, who shall deliver deceit into the hands of truth [aša-]." Y30.8, Insler 1975.

<sup>77</sup> I do not know the source (textual? oral tradition?) for this cow-headed or bull-headed staff of authority shown in old pictures of Zarathushtra. In Persepolis we also see carvings of kings carrying a staff of authority, or scepter, but these are not topped with the head of a cow or bull ~ perhaps because the king's authority was secular, whereas Zarathushtra's is spiritual (the cow/bull being a metaphor for the divine in existence). However, in Persepolis, the columns in and around the palaces are indeed topped with the heads of cows or bulls. In modern pictures of Zarathushtra, the artists have done away with the cow's head (or bull's head) on his staff ~ perhaps because it makes them feel uncomfortable ~ bothered by its relevance (as I once felt) ~ not understanding its significance in his beautiful network of metaphors.

<sup>78</sup> See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra and Power*.

<sup>79</sup> Insler (1975) p. 264, commenting under Y46.3.

<sup>80</sup> There are some verses in which 'cattle' could be used in a literal sense, as a material asset, the possession of which would give a person wealth, and therefore power, in an agrarian society. Some other verses (with double entendre) may perhaps have been used 'cattle' both literally, and also to mean those who are committed to a beneficial existence ~ an existence that is governed by the qualities that make a being divine (amesha spenta). Here for example are some verses in which 'cattle' may have been intended literally, or used with double entendre:

Yasna 46 starts out with "To what land to flee? Where shall I go to flee? They exclude (me) from my family and from my clan..." Y46.1. Clearly, at the time this Yasna was composed, Zarathushtra was being persecuted, his mission was not yet successful. And in the very next verse he says: "I know that (reason) because of which I am powerless, Wise One: by my condition of having few cattle, as well as (that) I am a person with few men..." Y46.2. At one level, being powerless because he has "few cattle" and "few men" could be taken literally to mean he was not a wealthy man, with large herds and many retainers or warriors. At another level, having "few cattle" could also mean (with double entendre) that he had few people committed to his teachings, because according to tradition, for a long time his only follower was his cousin Maidhyomangha.

In the same way, in Y31.15 he speaks of "...that one who finds no means of living apart from harming the cattle and the men of the undeceiving pastor." Y31.15. Here again, 'cattle' and 'men' of the undeceiving pastor could have been intended literally, or with double entendre following the above reasoning.

In the same way, in Y45.9 he says, "... May the Lord, Wise in His rule, place us in effectiveness, in order to prosper our cattle and our men [pasūš vīrāng] in consequence of the good relationship of good thinking with truth. Y45.9. The same reasoning applies, as discussed above, although here the last phrase ~ in consequence of the good relationship of good thinking with truth ~ makes the double entendre stronger.

<sup>81</sup> See *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*

<sup>82</sup> The term *drəgvā* which Insler (1975) has translated as "the deceitful one" in this verse is an interpretive choice. To translate *drəgvā* as a concept 'untruthfulness' is equally valid, linguistically (detailed in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*).

Beekes 1988 p. 118, shows *drəgvant-* is an adj. (although he spells it *drugvant-* ~ to show what he believes was its original GAv. form).

In the Gathas, *druj-* is used as the opposite of *aša-* therefore I think 'untruth' ~ a broader term than 'deceit' more accurately states the meaning of *druj-* (detailed in a ft. in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*).

*drəgvant-* is the adj. of *druj-*. The suffix *-vant* indicates possession, thus the adj. *drəgvant-* means 'possessing untruth' or in more fluent English 'untruthful'. (Explained with references in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*).

In Gathic Avestan, adjectives are often used as nouns (persons, concepts, and other things) that have the qualities of the adj.

So in Y46.4 an accurate translation of *drəgvā* (an adjective used as a noun), could with equally linguistic accuracy be a noun that is a concept 'untruthfulness', or a noun that is a person 'untruthful person'. Therefore, if we choose a concept we get 'untruthfulness has guarded the draft oxen of truth ... from arising...' Y46.4. I think Zarathushtra's intent here was to say that, since we are not yet perfected, untruthfulness is an obstacle even to those who are committed to truth. And let us recall that in the Gathas, *arising* or uplift, is associated with good thinking (Y28.4, Y32.6).

It is true that later in this verse (Y46.4) Insler (1975) uses 'he' and 'him' and 'his' when referring to *drəgvā*. But these are interpretive choices. Specifically (referring to *drəgvā*), with my translation options in black font,

*dužazōbā hqs x'āiš šyaodanāiš ahāmustō* [Insler emends to \**ā hām.ustō* ft. 4, p. 80]  
*yastām x šadrāt mazdā mōiθat jyātəuš vā*  
*hvō tāng frō.gā padmāng hucistōiš carat* Y46.4

"...being, as he is [*hqs* 'being'], difficult to challenge [*dužazōbā*] and contentious [\**ā hām.ustō*] by reason of his [*x'āiš* 'through (its) own'] actions. Whoever shall expel him [*yastām* = 'who(ever)-that', ~ *yas* 'whoever', *mōiθat* shall expel, *tām* 'that' ~ referring to *drəgvā* 'untruthfulness'] from rule [*x šadrāt*] and from life [*jyātəuš*], that person [*hvō*] shall free those oxen [*frō.gā ... carat*] for the flight [*padmāng*] of good understanding [*hucistōiš*]." Y46.4.

*hqs* 'being'; *hqs* is present participle of the verb *ah-* 'to be' (Skjaervo 2006), and therefore means 'being'. There are no words "as he is" in the GAv. text.

*x'āiš* 'through (its) own'; *x'āiš* is instr. pl. masc./ntr. of the pronoun stem *x'a-* 'own' (Skjaervo); here it describes the instr. pl. ntr. *šyaodanāiš*; thus *x'āiš šyaodanāiš* 'through (its) own actions'.

*yastām* 'who(ever) that'; *yastām* combines *yas* and *tām*. Skjaervo's 2006 *Glossary* shows the word *yastām*, under the relative pronoun stem *ya-* but he does not define or explain the word. However, his *Young Avestan* Lesson 6, p. 44 shows that *yas*° is nom. sg. masc. of the relative pronoun *ya-* 'who', 'which'; and his *Old Avestan* Lesson 2 shows that *tām* is acc. sg. masc. of the demonstrative pronoun *ha-/ta-* 'that' (which can also be used for a 3p pronoun 'he'). Av. genders are grammatical, unless they refer to a noun that has intrinsic gender 'man', 'son', woman, 'girl' etc.). The word *drəgvā* 'untruthfulness' has no intrinsic gender. In English translation, masc. and fem. grammatical genders are translated as 'it'. Only pronouns that have intrinsic gender are translated as 'he/him', 'she/her'.

So if we translate this verse Y46.4 into English, with *drəgvā* as a concept, and the foregoing translation choices which are linguistically accurate, it would read as follows, (using Insler 1975 in all other respects) 'Yes, untruthfulness [*drəgvā*] has guarded the draft oxen of truth ~ either those of the district or those of the land ~ from arising, being [*hqs*] difficult to challenge and contentious by reason of (its) actions [*x'āiš šyaodanāiš*]. Whoever-that [*yastām* referring to 'untruthfulness'] shall expell, Wise One, from rule or from life, that person [*hvō*] shall free the oxen for the flight of good understanding." Y46.4. Expelling untruthfulness 'from life' is consistent with Zarathushtra's teachings. Expelling untruthful people 'from life' ~ killing them ~ is not consistent with Zarathushtra's teachings.

Zarathushtra does not advocate murder ~ however awful a person might be. And his paradigm for defeating evil is not to kill 'bad' people, but to change minds, change preferences, through the true order of existence (which includes the law of consequences ~ that we reap what we sow ~ as well as mutual, loving help), detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

And in Zarathushtra's thought, there is no 'Devil' (except for interpretations personal to the translator). Therefore translating *drəgvā* as the devil 'the deceitful one' is not consistent with his thought, detailed in *Part One: Does The Devil Exist?*

<sup>83</sup> Insler 1975 translates *ašahyā važdrēng ... gā* as the 'draft oxen of truth' commenting that this is a metaphor for those who do the work of truth in this world. He gives no linguistic comment. (p. 265).

<sup>84</sup> For consistent conclusions, and the evidence on which they are based, see:

In *Part One: Completeness & Non-deathness, Haurvatat / Ameretat*; and *The Identity of the Divine*;

In *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural*; *Earth, Metals, Waters and Plants*; *A Question of Immanence*; and *The Puzzle of Creation*.

<sup>85</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*.

<sup>86</sup> Other examples of 'pastor' being used metaphorically for a human being are as follows:

In Y51.5 Zarathushtra tells us what his idea of a (human) pastor is. "Through all this, I am asking how the pastor, lofty by reason of his actions shall (best) serve the cow in accord with truth..." Y51.5, Insler 1975. We know that Zarathushtra is using pastor metaphorically here because literal cows are not taken care of with truth.

We see the same ideas in Y47.3 where, referring to 'the joy-bringing (allegorical) cow', Zarathushtra states that Wisdom created tranquility and embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) for her pastor when he took counsel with good thinking, "...the joy-bringing cow... Moreover, Thou didst create tranquility and [*ārmaiti-*] for her pastor when he took counsel with good thinking." Y47.3, Insler 1975. Now, embodying truth (*ārmaiti-*) and 'taking counsel with good thinking' are not qualities that are necessary for a literal pastor of a literal cow, ~ evil minded persons could take excellent care of cows as well. So we see that both the joy-bringing cow, and her pastor are being used metaphorically, the latter referring to a human being. Parenthetically, we see here (again!) that the beneficial-sacred (truth, good thinking, etc.) in mortal existence bring happiness ("the joy-bringing cow").

In Y33.6, priestly duties are described as 'pastoral', and a good priest is described as is one who lives in accord with the true order, its comprehension, and from a most good way of being [*vahišta-mainyu-*] "The priest [*zaotar-*] who is just [*ərəzuš*], in harmony with truth, is the offspring from the [*vahišta- mainyu-* the most-good way of being]. In consequence of this, he is allied with that (good) thinking by reason of which he has respected to bring to realization his pastoral duties. By reason of this very thinking, Wise Lord, I am eager for Thy sight and Thy counsel." Y33.6, Insler 1975. The word which Insler has translated as "just" [*ərəzuš*], is translated as "straight (not crooked)" by Skjaervo 2006. Thus I translate *ye zaotā ašā ərəzuš* '(the) priest who through truth (is) straight'. This verse is discussed in *Part One: The Good Priest*.

It is not without interest that in Y53.4 Zarathushtra describes his daughter Pourucista as "...one who shall serve father, husband, pastors and family..." Y53.4. Conspicuous by its absence is any mention of 'priests' here ~ not even *zaotar-*. Why? Well, he did not think well of the priests of his culture (the karpans and the usigs), whom he speaks of with disapproval for their crooked ways. So perhaps in this verse, Zarathushtra uses 'pastor' to include a good priest, because in his view, the primary duty of a priest is to be a nurturer of the beneficial, the good, in existence (as described in Y33.6 above), one who is straight through truth, who is allied with good thinking, through which he brings to realization his "pastoral duties" (Y33.6). Zarathushtra predated Christianity by several centuries (perhaps

by more than 1,000 years). It is ironic (is it not?) that today, Christian priests (who are Protestants) are routinely called 'Pastor' and 'Minister' (reflecting the idea of a priest who ministers to the needs of his congregation), whereas we have forgotten Zarathushtra's idea that a good priest is a 'pastor'.

In Y31.9 - 10, referring to the previously mentioned 'cow' Zarathushtra says "...Thou didst grant the way to her to go either (to him who) shall act as pastor or (to him) who shall not be pastor (for her)." Y31.9. If here the cow is an allegory for the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence, then this verse makes perfect sense, because mortals do indeed have the freedom to make choices between those who will nurture them with the attributes of the Divine, and those who will not do so (i.e. those who act with untruth, cruelty, violence, tyranny, deceit, et cetera). And the choice given to the 'cow' in Y31.9, is made by the 'cow' in the very next verse, Y31.10, "And, of these two, she chose for herself the cattle-breeding pastor to be her truthful master [*ahurəm ašavanəm*] (and) the cultivator of good thinking. Wise One never did the non-pastor share the friendship of her who requires good attention." Y31.10. In the extant Gathas, Zarathushtra has not used *ahura-* for unperfected man. So is the 'pastor' who is the 'truthful lord [*ahurəm ašavanəm*]' unperfected man? the Divine? A bit of a puzzle. A more detailed discussion of this aspect of Y31.10 appears in *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31.4*.

In Y31.15, the identity of the *pastor* is ambiguous ~ it could, with double entendre be both a truthful man, and the Divine. Here Zarathushtra speaks of an untruthful person of evil actions who "finds no means of living apart from harming the cattle and men of the undeceiving pastor." Y31.15. The term "undeceiving pastor" is another way of saying the 'truthful pastor' ~ a pastor who lives in accord with the true order of existence. There are no capital letters in Avestan script. So is the reference here to man? to the Divine? to both?

<sup>87</sup> The GAv. word which Insler (1975) translates as 'ill will' is *dūš.x raθwā* which Humbach says is instr. sg. of *dūš.x ratu-* a stem word which he translates as 'having bad intellect' (Humbach 1991 Vol. 2 p. 208). Insler consistently translates *x ratu-* as 'determination, will, intention' but acknowledges that Hans Peter Schmidt and others translate *x ratu-* as 'reason, intellect'. In the Gathas, *x ratu-* can be both good or bad. Based on its contextual use in both the Gathas and later texts, I think that *x ratu-* in the Gathas means 'reasoning' ~ which can be good reasoning, or bad reasoning (*dūš.x ratu-*) ~ although in later texts, its meaning evolved to mean only good reasoning (see *Part Three: Xratu*). Taking *dūš.x raθwā* as 'through bad-reasoning', Y49.4 would read as follows (staying with the Insler 1975 translation in all other respects): 'Those who through bad-reasoning [*dūš.x raθwā*] have increased cruelty and fury with their tongues among the cattle-breeders, these non-cattle-breeders whose evil effects one has not yet defeated with good effects, they have served the gods which is the conception [*daēnā-* 'envisionment'] of a deceitful person." Y49.4.

<sup>88</sup> *yā drəgvatō daēnā*, I would translate this phrase 'which (is) the envisionment of (what is) untruthful' Y49.4, or in more fluent English, 'which (is) the envisionment of untruthfulness'. I think that the word *drəgvant-*, an adj. is used here as a noun that is the concept of the quality ~ '(what is) untruthful' (or 'untruthfulness'). The meaning and linguistics of *druj-* as the opposit of *aša-*, and its adj. *drəgvant-* 'untruthful' are explored in more detail in a ft. in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell* (for *druj-*), and in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*.

<sup>89</sup> Here are the other verses in which 'cattle-breeder' and 'cattle-breeding', respectively, are used as metaphors in the Gathas.

In Y29.6, the Lord, Wisdom, reassures the lamenting soul of the cow that her fashioner/shaper (His beneficial way of being, *spənta- mainyu-*) fashioned her for a cattle-breeder and pastor "Thereupon the Wise Lord, the Knowing One, spoke these solemn words ... However the shaper did fashion thee for both a cattle-breeder and a pastor." Y49.6. If here the 'cow' is an allegory for the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence, then the *pastor* who nurtures such an existence and the *cattle-breeder* who increases it must also be allegorical (i.e. not a literal pastor and cattle-breeder of literal cows).

In Y31.9 - 10 which have been discussed in a ft. above, Zarathushtra, speaks of the [cattle-breeding pastor](#).

There is only one verse of which I am aware in which the idea of breeding cattle could be used with double entendre ~ both literally and allegorically. In the last sentence of Y48.5, Zarathushtra speaks of breeding the cow (in the Insler 1975 translation). However, although translators are in general agreement about the first sentence of this verse, translations of the last sentence vary greatly. Here is the Insler 1975 translation. "[Let those of good rule rule over us ~ not those of evil rule ~ with actions stemming from good understanding... with \[ārmaiti-\]. Men \[mašyā 'mortals'\], let the best vitalization for the cow be brought to realization on earth, in order to breed her for our food.](#)" Y48.5. Here, breeding the cow could be taken both literally (as breeding cattle for food) and also metaphorically, as increasing the amesha spenta in mortal existence for spiritual nourishment. The word *mašyā* ('mortals') appears in different forms in the manuscripts (e.g. as *mašyāi mašyāi mašyā mašyā mašyā*), and is translated differently by various translators. Insler (1975) translates it as *mašyā* "men" voc. pl. of *mašya-* which means 'mortal'. Humbach 1991 preferred *mašyāi* which he translated as 'for mankind' (Vol. 1, p. 177) commenting that *mašyāi* can be dat. sg. of both *mašya-* 'man' and \**mašyā* 'woman' (Vol. 2, p. 199). Humbach/Faiss 2010 emend to *mašiyāi* 'to womankind'. Taraporewala 1951 (without comment) and Bartholomae both translate the word *mašyāi* 'for man' (pp. 668, 671) ~ i.e. a generic usage, as in 'mankind'.

A small illustration of the fact that the GAv. language has not been 100% decoded, and that some uncertainties still remain in its translation. Fortunately, Zarathushtra says the same things many times in many different ways, so his underlying ideas come through, regardless of translation differences.

<sup>90</sup> See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship and the Path*.

<sup>91</sup> See *Part Two: Earth, Metal, Waters and Plants*.

<sup>92</sup> See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat;* and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta; A Question of Reward;* and *The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

<sup>93</sup> On earth, is indicated by the use of material metaphors ~ cattle-breeder, cow, bulls, et cetera.

<sup>94</sup> See the complementation of the beneficial way of being, *spənta- mainyu-*, in man and the Divine in the alternating verses of Yasna 47 (as described in a footnote to *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*).

<sup>95</sup> This ancient piece of art was made before elephants were an endangered species, slaughtered for their ivory, as they are today. In ancient times it is true that elephants were used by man for his purposes (instead of being allowed to live free). But they were considered valuable assets. When they died, their tusks were used for ivory ornaments. They were not slaughtered for their ivory tusks.