

Heaven in Other Avestan Texts

We have already seen, that in YAv. texts, many pre- and post-Zarathushtrian deities ~ Haoma, Mithra, Anahita, etc. were worshipped with specified rituals, and expensive material gifts (hundreds and thousands of horses, oxen, sheep etc.).¹ And the 'good' rewards given (or promised) for so worshipping were also predominantly material things in mortal existence ~ success in battles, victory over enemies, mansions with soft beds, wealth, children to continue one's line etc.

But mixed in with all these material 'good' rewards, the YAv. texts also contain ~ and re-state in rather lovely ways ~ strands of Zarathushtra's thought. In this chapter, references to the 'good' reward are to these strands of thought ~ not to the many material 'good' rewards also found in YAv. texts.

Asymmetrical pairings.

First let us recall, that in the very structure of Avestan, 'mind' and 'spirituality' share a common genesis. The noun *manah-* means 'mind/thinking/thought'. And Beekes 1988 says that the adjective stem *manahiā-* means 'spiritual' (p. 132). So these two words (the meanings of which are antithetical in English) are equated in the Gathas.²

Next, you may wish to be aware that one of the words used in both the Gathas and in YAv. texts for the 'good' reward is *xʷāθra-* 'happiness' which is derived from *hu-āθra-* and has a beautiful multi-dimensioned meaning which it is impossible to translate into a one-word English equivalent. If you are interested, I have footnoted an explanation of its meaning here.³ If not, just stick with 'happiness'.

The Gathas speak of '**both existences**' which are described, not as 'this' life and an afterlife, but as the existences of matter and mind.

"...the attainments of both existences ~ yes, of matter as well as of mind ~ those attainments befitting truth [aṣa-] through which one might set Thy supporters in happiness [xʷāθrē]." Y28.2 Insler 1975;

"... the one who would instruct us to the straight paths of the Mighty One ~ (to those) of this material existence and (to those) of the mind..." Y43.3, Insler 1975. The **straight paths** are the paths of truth.⁴

We see this same understanding of '**both existences**' in YAv. texts as well. Here is one example. Additional examples appear in other quotations throughout this chapter.

Mihir Yasht Yt. 10.93

'... of the existence which (is) material [astvatō], and which is of mind/spirit [manahyō],⁵ ...' my translation;

'... *aṅhāuš yō astvatō yasca asti manahyō* ..., Geldner 2P p. 145

The word I translate as 'material' *astvatō* is gen. sg. of the stem *astvant-* which literally means 'possessing bones' ~ an idiomatic Avestan way of saying 'corporeal, material, physical'.

These two existences of matter and mind/spirit (in both the Gathas and in later Avestan texts) are not a symmetrical duality. The material existence is limited to mortal existence. But in Zarathushtra's thought, the abstract existence ~ 'mind, thinking, thought, spirit ~ exist in both mortal existence, and in an existence no longer bound by mortality ~ the house of good thinking (enlightenment), the paradise of a non-mortal existence (*amərətāt-*).

We see this same lack of symmetry in the notions of the 'good' and 'bad' rewards.

In the Gathas the 'bad' reward is a state of being that occurs in mortal existence only.⁶ In the Gathas (except for interpretations personal to a given translator) there is no notion of a place of punishment ~ a punitive 'hell' in an afterlife ~ an idea that also is absent from later Avestan texts, as we already have explored.⁷

In the Gathas, the 'good' reward is also a state of being, as detailed in many other chapters,⁸ but may be summarized (for our purposes here) as follows. Zarathushtra's path is the path of the (wholly good) true order of existence, its comprehension (good thinking), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete attainment (the qualities that make a being divine, *amesha spenta*). And his 'good' reward for taking that path is the attainment of these qualities.⁹ So of necessity, the attainment of this 'good' reward (a state of being) is an incremental one ~ starting in mortal existence (man having these qualities incompletely), and ending when attained completely in an existence no longer bound by mortality (*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'),¹⁰ which of necessity would be in non-mortal afterlife.

In many Avestan texts (other than the Gathas), we see these same ideas of Zarathushtra in the many descriptions of the 'good' reward ~ a state of being (an existence) that is good (*vohu-*), most-good (*vahišta-*), truth-possessing (*ašavan-*), light (*raocah-*), happiness/enlightenment (*xʷāθra-* derived from *hu-āθra-*) and ultimately completeness, non-deathness (*haurvatāt- amərətāt-*), and the 'house of song' (all derived from the Gathas). All but the last two (completeness and non-deathness) occur in both mortal existence and in an existence no longer bound by mortality (as in the Gathas), whereas the last two occur only in a non-mortal existence.

But in some YAv. texts, we also see the beginnings of a transition in thinking of the 'good reward' from a state of being (as in the Gathas), to a state of being existing in a pleasant place, to a pleasant place ~ the last appearing with some detailed descriptions in a YAv. Fragment text. Let us look at the evidence.

The 'good' reward in GAv. texts, other than the Gathas.

In the *Asha Vahishta* Y27.13 (Ashem Vohu), the reward for the path of the true order of existence (*aša-*), is the true order of existence (*aša-*), both described as the superlative of intrinsic goodness (*aša- vahišta-*),¹¹ ~ a state of being that is incrementally attained in this life, and therefore of necessity cannot be not limited to an afterlife.

In the *A Airyema Ishyo* Y54.1 the 'good reward' is described as the 'dear reward of the true order of existence [*ašahyā ... aštm ... išyqm*], in a context which is not limited to an afterlife.¹²

In the *Yasna Haptanghaiti*, the 'good' reward is associated with the true order of existence ('truth' for short) ~ sometimes in mortal existence, sometimes also in non-mortal existence, (indicating an incremental attainment). For example,

'O Wisdom, Lord, most beneficent One among living beings, may we attain Your good rule, for all (of our) lifetime; may a good ruler ~ man or woman ~ rule over us in both existences." YHapt. 41.2, my translation.

*vohū. xšaθrəm. tōi. mazdā. ahurā. apaēmā.*¹³ *vīspāi. yavē.*¹⁴ *hux šaθrastū.nā. nā.vā. nāirī.vā. xšaētā. ubōyō. aṅhvō. hātqm hudāstamā. ••* YHapt. 41.2, Geldner 1P p. 137.

'Good rule' is the rule of truth (*aša-*), its beneficial embodiment (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), and its most good comprehension (*vahišta- manah-*), (Y51.4). And here "both existences" are the existences ruled over by a

mortal good ruler ~ man or woman ~ so of necessity, the term applies to the existences of matter and mind in mortal existence only ~ not in an afterlife. Another example,

'O Wisdom, Lord, beautiful through truth [*aša.srīrā*], we would choose to think, speak, and perform actions which, among living beings, (are) most-good [*vahišta-*] for both existences.' YHapt. 35.3, my translation.

*taṭ. aṭ. *varəmaidī. ahurā. mazdā. aša.srīrā. hyaṭ. ī. *mainimaidicā. vaocōimācā. varəzimacā. yā. hātqm. šyaovananqm. vahištā. hyāṭ. ubōibyā. ahubyā. ••* YHapt. 35.3, Geldner 1P p. 129, the asterisks indicating the mss. preferences and emendations of Humbach/Faiss 2010.

Here the author speaks of what is 'most good' for the existences of matter and mind in mortal existence, and (in my view) perhaps also for a non-mortal existence, because a 'most good existence [*ahu- vahišta-*]' is a phrase used for paradise in both the Gathas and other Avestan texts.¹⁵

And then there is the beautiful YHapt. 35.8,

'To anyone among living beings (who has) the desire to win the most good (*vahišta-*), He has said, for both existences (it is) in the association of truth, then in the union of truth.' YHapt. 35.8, my translation.¹⁶

ašahyā. āaṭ. sairī. ašahyā. varəzənē. kahmāicīṭ. hātqm. jījišqm. vahištqm. ādā. ubōibyā. ahubyā. •• YHapt. 35.8, Geldner 1P p. 130.

Here we see a progression in winning the 'most good' ~ first 'in the association' of truth (the path), and then 'in the union' of truth (the end). And the two words 'truth' (*aša-*) and 'most-good' (*vahišta-*) are each a part of this progression (reflecting the Gathas in which *vahišta-* 'most good' is used for the Divine, its attributes, the path to the Divine, and the reward for taking that path).¹⁷ So here I think 'both existences' is used in a multi-dimensioned way ~ meaning the existences of matter and mind/spirit in mortal existence and also the existence of mind/spirit in a state of being that is no longer bound by mortality (non-deathness *amərətāt-*).

All these notions about the 'good' reward in other GAv. texts are completely in accord with what we see in the Gathas.

The 'good' reward as a state of being (an existence) in YAv. texts.

There are many instances in YAv. texts, in which the 'good' reward is described as a state of being (a quality of existence) in ways that reflect the Gathas. True, in some instances the 'deity' (spiritual essence) being beseeched for an existence that is 'most-good' or 'truth-possessing' or 'light' is not the Lord, Wisdom, (*ahura-mazdā-*) but some other deity ~ the spiritual essence of the haoma plant, or of the waters, or other deities. And sometimes the things that earn this 'good' reward are not in accord with Zarathushtra's thought. However, these differences were a function of the syncretization of pre-existing religions of Zarathushtra's culture which he rejected,¹⁸ with his religion, many centuries after his time.¹⁹ And this syncretization may also have included the worship of post-Zarathushtrian deities. But even in such YAv. passages, the descriptions of the state of being that is the 'good' reward often reflect what we see in the Gathas.

I think these ways of describing the 'good' reward in YAv. texts originally were created during, or very close to, Zarathushtra's time ~ before the syncretization ~ because they reflect Zarathushtra's thought. Then after the syncretization, these descriptions were just adopted and continued as part of the tradition in describing

the good reward ~ sometimes in a context which indicates that their authors understood Zarathushtra's thought well. And sometimes not.

Unfortunately, the two generally available English translations of YAv. texts are those of Mills and Darmesteter who at an early stage of decoding Avestan did amazing work, but who have interpretively translated YAv. words which describe an *existence* that is a 'most-good' or 'truth-possessing' or 'light-filled' reward, as a *place* ~ reading into Avestan words their own mind-set (influenced by their own religious beliefs, and perhaps also by certain Pahlavi texts, and perhaps even by Zarathushtra's metaphors 'bridge' and 'house of song' ~ taking these metaphors literally instead of metaphorically).

But the notion of 'heaven' as that term is generally used today (and as understood by Mills and Darmesteter), exists only in an afterlife. Whereas (like the GAv. texts) some YAv. texts mention the quality of existence that is the 'good' reward as occurring in this life and in the afterlife (which is closer to the Gathas than the interpretive 'heaven' of Mills and Darmesteter). I show the evidence which supports this conclusion throughout the discussion below (and few additional examples are footnoted here).²⁰

In the Gathas, various forms of 'light' are a metaphor for truth (the true order of existence *aša-*), its comprehension (*vohu- manah-* good thinking, (which are also Zarathushtra's notion of paradise), and the Divine who personifies this existence.²¹ So it is not surprising that in YAv. texts, we see 'light' words intertwined with many descriptions of the *most good existence (ahu vahišta-)*, and the *most good true order of existence (aša- vahišta-)*. ~ two of the terms which are used for the 'good reward' in the Gathas.

And in Yy19.6, these concepts appear as parallel descriptions of the 'good' reward in a non-mortal afterlife ~ paradise (when the soul has attained the true order of existence completely, and therefore is able to make the transition 'cross the bridge' to an existence not bound by mortality). The author has the Lord, Wisdom, (purportedly) speaking,

"... I will convey his soul across the bridge indeed, to the most good existence [*vahištəm ahūm*] ~ I who (am) the Lord, Wisdom ~
all the way up to the most good existence [*ā. vahištāṭ. aṇhaōṭ.*],
all the way up to the most good true order of existence [*ā. vahištāṭ. ašāṭ.*]
all the way up to the most good lights [*ā. vahištaēibyō. raocābyō.*]. Yy19.6, my translation; Avestan words are from Geldner 1P p. 75.

Notice the poetic alliteration and repetition which are so typical of Avestan chants, giving them a lyrical quality, which is missed if we translate too freely.

Now this section is not about three different 'heavens', so the conclusion is inescapable that the author of this YAv. text understood the ultimate (non-mortal) good reward to be a state of being ~ the *most good existence (vahištāṭ aṇhaōṭ)*, the *most good true order of existence (vahištāṭ ašāṭ)*, and *most good lights, (vahištaēibyō raocābyō)* ~ enlightenment ~ each of which the superlative of intrinsic goodness ~ *most good (vahišta-)* ~ a word which Zarathushtra uses almost as a word of art ~ for the Divine, for Its qualities, for the path of truth, and for the reward for taking that path, paradise.²²

We also see the *light* motif in describing the ultimate reward (in non-mortal existence) in one of the YAv. terms for paradise as 'endless light(s)',²³ (*anayra- raocah-*),²⁴ which interestingly is often described with the epithet *xʷadātā* 'self-made'.²⁵ And indeed, 'light' words appear as a part of many descriptions of the ultimate good reward as you will see in quotations throughout this chapter. So it is interesting (is it not?) that in the much later Pahlavi *Bundahishn*, the Divine is called 'endless light',²⁶ corroborating the conclusion (in the

Gathas) that Zarathushtra's paradise is an enlightened state of being that is Divine ~ an understanding that survived as late as at least one school of thought in Pahlavi times.

One of the most popular descriptions of the state of being that is the 'good' reward in YAv. texts, incorporates into one phrase, many of Zarathushtra's ideas regarding the qualities of this state of being ~ an *existence* (*ahūm*) (which some translators have interpretively translated as a *place* 'heaven').²⁷ This popular description appears in many of the YAv. Yasnas, in the *Visperad*, in the *Sirozahs* 1 and 2, in the main parts of the *Hormezd* and *Rashn Yashts*, in the conclusion to all Yashts, in one of the YAv. Fragment texts, and in the Khordeh Avesta prayers as the last line of the *Ahmai Raeshcha* prayer (which is a quotation of Yy68.11). And it may occur in other YAv. texts as well that I have not discovered. This very popular phrase is,

... *vahištəm ahūm ašaonqm raōcañhəm vīspō.xʷāθrəm* ...

the 'most-good existence of the truth~possessing, light,²⁸ all-happiness/enlightenment' (my translation).²⁹

I think this description originally was crafted by someone who knew and loved Zarathushtra's teachings well (if not by Zarathushtra himself, although it does not appear as such in the Gathas).

And as you can see, this description would apply to a state of being in mortal existence, and also to an existence no longer bound by mortality. But even when used for the ultimate 'good' reward in a non-mortal afterlife, this popular description clearly describes, not a place of reward, but an 'existence' (*ahūm*) that is 'truth~possessing' (*ašavan-*), that is the superlative degree of *intrinsic goodness* (*vahišta-*), that is *light* (*raocah-*), that is *joy/enlightenment* (*xʷāθra-* < *hu-āθra-*).

Other descriptions of the state of being (existence) that is the 'good' reward in YAv. texts are variations of parts of the foregoing. Here are a few examples.

Truth (aša-) and most-truth~possessing (ašavastəma-)

In the *Mihir Yasht*, Yt. 10.33, the author begs the Indo-Iranian deity Mithra for an assortment of 'good' rewards in this life ~ both material ones (reflecting traditional YAv. 'good' rewards), and also mental/spiritual ones (reflecting Zarathushtra's ideas) ~ one of which is the victory of a quality of existence ~ the true order of existence (*aša-*) and its adj. in the superlative degree *ašavastəma-*,³⁰ none of which are limited to an afterlife, reflecting the thought of the Gathas (on this one issue). Needless to say, Mithra as a deity is not mentioned in the Gathas.³¹ Here is Darmesteter's (somewhat free and interpretive) translation of this section (Yt.10.33). The Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner ~ sometimes with my more literal translation of such Av. words.

"Grant us these boons which we beg of thee, ... namely, riches, strength, and victory [*vərəθraynəmca*],³² good conscience and bliss [*ašavastəmca* 'a most truth possessing (existence)], good fame and a good soul; wisdom and the knowledge that gives happiness, the victorious strength given by Ahura, the crushing Ascendant of Asha Vahishta [*vanaiñtīmca uparatātəm yqm ašahe vahištahe* 'and the winning ascendance, that of the most-good, true order of existence'],³³ and conversation (with God) on the Holy Word [*paiti.parštīmca mqθrahe spəntahe* 'and study³⁴ of the beneficial precepts]." *Mihir Yasht*, Yt. 10.33, Darmesteter translation.³⁵

The words *mąθra- spənta-* 'beneficial precepts',³⁶ (used in the foregoing quotation) are routinely used in YAv. texts for Wisdom's teachings (as understood and transmitted by Zarathushtra). This section is repeated in § 58,³⁷ and this description of a 'good' reward as *ašavastəma-* 'a most truth possessing (existence)', appears also in § 5.³⁸

Most good existence (vahišta- ahu-).

A Gatha term for the 'good' reward is the '**most-good existence**' (*ahu- vahišta-*) ~ clearly not a place. The '**most-good existence**' (*ahu- vahišta-*) is a state of being that is the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness, and it often is used in YAv. texts as well for the 'good' reward.

In Yy71.16 the reward of the 'most-good existence' (*vahišta- ahu-*) is equated with possessing truth (*ašavan-* an adj. which can also be used as a noun 'truth possessing one', or in more fluent English 'truthful one'. And in Yy71.16 it is incremental ~ in the path (mortal existence) and in the ultimate end (an existence not bound by mortality).

'As you wish (to be) here O truth possessing one [*ašāum*], (so) you shall be.

Truth possessing [*ašava*] (you shall enable your) soul to reach the Bridge of Deciding (and) go over, (being) of most-good existence [*vahištahe aṅhəuš*].

Truth possessing [*ašava*] you shall go. You shall sing the Ushtavaiti Gatha...' Yy71.16, my translation; Avestan words are from Geldner 1P pp. 235 - 236.

In the *Zamyad Yasht* (Yt. 19) the 'most-good existence' is in mortal existence only. Sections 74 - 76 are about the qualities and good rule of the legendary Iranian king, Kavi Haosravah, and the resulting benefits accruing to his subjects, one of which is '...(and) for a future of an undisputed most good existence [*paiti aparayā vyarəθyayā vahištahe aṅhəuš*],' my translation.³⁹ Parenthetically, a part of §74 and all of §§ 75 - 76 of the *Zamyad Yasht* are identical to the *Farvardin* (Yt. 13) §§ 133, 134, and 135, so the foregoing 'most-good existence' as a benefit of King Haosravah's good rule appears in both these Yashts.⁴⁰ Here, a 'most-good existence' is one of a number of items which describe the King's good rule and its benefits. No matter how good a ruler King Haosravah might be, he would have no control over whether or not his subjects go to 'heaven' in an afterlife. Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion based on the context would be that because of his good rule, his commitment to truth (reflected in his kingly Divine Glory *xʷarənah-* mentioned here), the future of his subjects would be a 'most-good existence (*vahišta- ahu-*)' in *this life*, but not just in the sense of material goods, in that *vahišta-* is the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness, a quality of the true order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*). In the Gathas, 'good rule' is the rule of the true order of existence, its beneficial embodiment, its most good comprehension, (Y51.4). Good rule is an attribute of Wisdom (*mazdā-*) completely, and also of man (incompletely).⁴¹ Therefore a mortal king's good rule would reflect, and bring about, the true order of existence (a 'most-good existence') ~ even though imperfectly, not completely ~ in *this life* (mortal existence). Yet the 'most good existence' (*ahu- vahišta-*) is also a term used for paradise.

Completeness (haurvatāt-) and Non-Deathness (amərətāt-).

In some YAv. texts (as in the Gathas) completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) are the ultimate 'good' reward' (a non-mortal existence).

In Yy58.7, the request for completeness and non-deathness is made of (the spiritual essence of) the fire of Wisdom the Lord (a material metaphor for the true (wholly good) order of existence (*aša-*).

"...for the joy-producing grace ... grant us both Weal [*haurvatāt-* 'completeness'] and Deathlessness! [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness']." Yy58.7, Mills translation; Avestan words from Geldner.⁴²

In Yy65.15 its author quotes Gatha verse Y51.7 (the words of the quotation are in GAv. ~ not in YAv. equivalents) requesting completeness and non-deathness. Insler 1975 translates the quoted Gatha verse as follows, "...Wise One, ... grant Thou to me immortality [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*] those two enduring forces which are to be praised with good thinking." Y51.7.⁴³

And in the *Hormezd Yasht*, Yt. 1.25, six divine attributes (*amesha spenta*) are mentioned ~ all of Wisdom's generating ~ and the last two (completeness and non-deathness) are specifically described as the good reward in a non-mortal existence.

'Here is good thinking, [*iḍa asti vohu manō*]

(of) my giving, O Zarathushtra [*mana dąmi⁴⁴ zaraθuštra*].

Here (is) the true order of existence, which (is) most-good [*iḍa ašəm yač vahišṭəm*]

(of) my giving, O Zarathushtra [*mana dąmi zaraθuštra*].

Here (is) the rule to be chosen [*iḍa x šaθrəm vairīm*]

(of) my giving, O Zarathushtra [*mana dąmi zaraθuštra*].

Here (is) beneficial embodied truth [*iḍa spənta ārmaitiš*]

(of) my giving, O Zarathushtra [*mana dąmi zaraθuštra*].

Here (are) completeness and non-deathness [*iḍa haurvata amərətāta*]

which are the reward of the truthful ones when freed of their bodies [*yōi stō miždəm ašaonqm parō.asti⁴⁵ jasəntqm*].'

(of) my giving, O Zarathushtra [*mana dąmi zaraθuštra*].'

Yt. 1.25, my translation; Avestan words from Geldner 2P p. 66.

Darmesteter's translation is footnoted for comparative purposes.⁴⁶ In the Gathas, all six are the reward and the first four attributes of the divine (mentioned above) are also the path.⁴⁷ So did the author of this YAv. section understand Zarathushtra's thought? I think he did, but I leave it to you to decide.

An existence made healed (frašō.kərəiti-).

In the Gathas, the progression of existence is linear and certain ~ from an original state of being that is a mixture of divine qualities (albeit imperfectly attained) and their opposites,⁴⁸ towards a perfected state of being that is an all good existence (*ahu- vahišta-*) ~ the all good true order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*).⁴⁹ And we see this same paradigm of existence in the YAv. notion of *frašō.kərəiti* in some (but not all) YAv. texts.

Let us first consider the meaning of the YAv. word *frašō.kərəiti-*. The word in its various forms has been translated as 'renovation' (Darmesteter 1887), and 'restoration' (Mills 1894). Hintze (1994) translates

fraša- as 'excellent', and *frašō.caratar-* as 'renovator'.⁵⁰ Until the past 200 years or so, Avestan was for many centuries an unknown language. And sometimes, when one or two eminent translators have decided on the translation of a given word, it is then used repeatedly ~ as though cast in stone ~ by students of Zoroastrianism, with little re-thinking or re-examination. That is not a good thing if we want to understand as accurately as possible, the Avestan mind-set and its intent in using these very ancient words.

In English, the word 'renovation' and 'restoration' means repairing or remodeling something to restore it to an original (or improved) condition that was good.

But that is not at all the paradigm of the Gathas and many YAv. texts in which existence starts out (primordially) a mix of more good and bad qualities and progresses or evolves (through long experience) from this mixed state of being to one which is all good (*vahišta-*) ~ the true order of existence.⁵¹ Perhaps such translations as 'renovation' and 'restoration' were influenced by the purported ideal existence in pre-history that was said to exist under the rule of the legendary Indo-Iranian King Jamshid (Av. Yima; Ved. Yama). And indeed there are echoes of the descriptions of that ideal state, in some of the descriptions of *frašō.karaiti-* in YAv. texts (as examples from the *Zamyad Yasht* herein demonstrate). But there are even more strands of thought from the Gathas in the YAv. descriptions of *frašō.karaiti-* (as examples from the YAv. *Yasnas* and *Visperad* herein demonstrate). So let us re-examine the meaning of the word *frašō.karaiti-* ~ based on linguistics, and on the ways in which the word is used in the YAv. texts. This compound word has its genesis in the Gathas.

The stem *kar-* / *car-* means 'to make' (Beekes 1988, p. 168), or 'to do' (Skjaervo 2006). In the Gathas, it is used in both senses.

The Av. *aša-* 'the true (correct, good) order of existence' derives from the Av. root *ar-*, Ved. *ra-*, and Old Persian *arta-* ~ which means 'what fits', 'what is ordered in a system'.⁵²

The YAv. *fraša-* derives from GAv. *faraša-*. Insler 1975 thinks that *faraša-* is "derived as past participle from *fra ar*, i.e. **frarta-* > *faraša-*," and that its use in the Gathas is strongly reminiscent of Vedic cognates which are used in the sense of 'heal, repair'.

He therefore concludes that the idiom in the Gathas *ahūm fārašām kar* or *dā*, means "to heal, repair the world".⁵³ Translated more literally, 'to make [*kar* or *dā*] existence [*ahūm*] healed [*fārašām*]'.⁵⁴

In the macro context of the Gathas, *healed* fits exactly.

What does it mean to *heal* existence? Well, the Gatha verse Y30.9 which speaks of healing existence is immediately preceded by 2 verses which intimate how this is done ~ through the rule of truth and good thinking, through truth embodied in thought, word and action [*ārmaiti-*], and through the law of consequences, together with loving help from the Divine and all the living to see us through its difficulties (Y30.7 and 8).⁵⁴ Then the beautiful Y30.9 says *aṭcā tōi vaēm hyāmā yōi tm fārašām karənaon ahūm* 'and so may we be those who shall make existence healed' my translation (the Insler 1975 translation is footnoted for comparative purposes).⁵⁵

In the Gathas, *healing existence* means healing it from untruth, and all the suffering and ills it generates ~ lies, cruelty, violence, hatred, tyranny, bondage, theft, murder and the other qualities that (in the Gathas) are contrary to the true (correct, good) order of existence. The YAv. *frašō.karaiti-* means *healing existence* in the same sense ~ literally forwarding (*fra/frā*)⁵⁶ (existence) to the true order of existence (*aša-*), and making (*kar-*) it a reality.

Thus (originally) YAv. *frašō.kərəiti-* would have included the idea of both moving existence forward to truth, and making existence truth itself (the path and the end) ~ which is pure Zarathushtra.⁵⁷ And that captures well the way in which *frašō.kərəiti-* is used in some YAv. texts. Here is an example from a YAv. *Yasna*. It shows *frašō.kərəiti-* being used in the sense of forwarding the progress of creation to completion by lovers of truth, and 'making existence truth' ~ healed in that sense (as in the Gathas). This example mentions the word 'fravashi' ~ the all-good spiritual essence of a person (the Divine within).⁵⁸ Here is Mills' translation which is a bit free, but it gets the point across. Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner, some of which I have translated.

"... to the Fravashi of Zarathushtra Spitama ... and to that of the people who love Righteousness [*ašacinaṅhō* 'of truth-loving (nature)']⁵⁹ with all the holy Fravashis of the saints [*vīspābyō ašaonibyō fravašibyō* 'to all the fravashis of the truth-possessing'] who are dead and who are living, and to those of men who are as yet unborn, and to those of the prophets [*saošyāntəm* 'saviors/benefiters'] who will serve us, and will labor to complete the progress and renovation [*frašō.carəθrəm* '(the) making truth-healed'] of the world." Yy24.5.⁶⁰

An almost identical statement appears in *Visperad* 11.7. And another (rather lovely) example appears in a different YAv. *Yasna* ~ both footnoted.⁶¹

But in the *Zamyad Yasht*, although we see strands of some original ideas from the Gathas, (including the idea of a healed existence which is no longer bound by mortality ~ echoing *amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'; and also the phrase 'ruling at will' *vasō.x šaθra-* which is right out of the Gathas), we also see additional (non-Gatha) strands of belief including the physical resurrection of the dead, never growing old, never decaying, ever increasing, and other material aspects of existence ~ some of which call to mind descriptions of the (purported) ideal existence under the legendary king Yima (Jamshid) in which there was no disease, no decay, no growing old, no death, ~ a physically 'ideal' existence (in some minds!) ~ but also one which was said to be governed by truth (until Yima turned to falsehood). So we have mixed strands of thought in the *Zamyad Yasht*'s understanding of *frašō.kərəiti-*. Sections 9 - 10 speak of the Kingly Glory [*kavaēm x'arəno]* generated from Ahura Mazda and through which he made the many good creatures who will do the following, (Darmesteter translation, with YAv. words in square brackets from Geldner, which I have translated).

"So that they may restore the world [*kəranavqən frašəm ahūm* 'they may make existence truth-healed'], which will (thenceforth) never grow old, and never die [*amarəšəntəm* '(be) non-mortal'], never decaying and never rotting, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish [*vasō.x šaθram* 'ruling-at-will'], when the dead will arise, when life and non-deathness [*amərəx tiš*] will come, and the world will be restored at its wish [*frašəm vasna aṅhuš* 'existence (will be made) truth-healed according to wish]." Yt. 19.11, with additional examples footnoted.⁶²

In light of the foregoing linguistic and contextual evidence, we can see that *frašō.kərəiti-* has a double meaning 'forwarding (existence) to the true order of existence' (the path) and '(existence) made (into) the true order of existence' (the end). Neither phrase alone is adequate. Neither captures the double meaning of the path (the moving of existence forward to truth *fra-arta*, *fra-aša-*, *fraša-*), and the end (making existence truth itself (healed) ~ *frašō.kərəiti*). Of course, (as with all attempts at decoding Avestan) not everyone may agree. But even if we disagree on the linguistics, there can be no disagreement that this meaning accords with the contextual use of *frašō.kərəiti-* in YAv. texts in describing the ultimate good end (truth) and the way to get there (truth) ~ which is pure Zarathushtra.

Perception of the 'good' reward moves away from a state of being to a place.

In some YAv. texts, we see a transition in thinking of the 'good' reward, from a state of being ('existence'), to a good existence in a (good) place, and then to a good place ~ a conclusion that may have been influenced by the use of 'bridge' originally a metaphor for transition from mortal existence to an existence no longer bound by mortality, and the use of 'house of song' originally a metaphor for the state of being that is the bliss (like the 'high' we feel when we sing or hear beautiful music) of the ultimate 'good' reward ~ both originally metaphors, but which came to be taken literally as the time separating the Gathas from the YAv. texts extended to more and more centuries and knowledge became dim through the passage of time.

The sky.

I am inclined to think that this transition in thinking was also influenced by the word (in its various forms) *asman-/asan-/ašn-* ~ each form of the word meaning 'sky, heaven, stone' (Skjaervo 2006). Let us put ourselves in the shoes of the people in this later period of YAv. times. In the Avestan culture ~ from the time of the Gathas, to YAv. times (and even later) 'light' in all its then-existing forms (sun, moon, stars, fire) was used as a metaphor for truth ~ the true order of existence *aša-*. In the Gathas, the true order of existence when attained completely is paradise (and the existence of the Divine). With the passage of centuries (in some Zoroastrian schools of thought) the idea that 'light' was a metaphor faded from memory, and light (for paradise) came to be taken literally.

So when they looked up to the sky, what did they see? In daylight the sky was filled with sunlight. The night sky was filled with stars. So it is easy to see that in their minds, the sky became associated with the paradise that was the source of 'light'. Thus the sky and what was above it (from which light emanated) came to be thought of as a *place* of 'endless lights' ~ where the souls of the truthful and the Divine dwelt (having crossed the 'bridge' to the 'house of song'). Unknown whether 'stone' was just another unrelated meaning for *asman-/asan-/ašn-* or whether in YAv. times, they thought the sky was made of stone ~ (perhaps like turquoise during the day or lapis lazuli during the night) with holes in it through which the light shone (as stars) ~ as some scholars believe, (although that idea does not explain how a stone sky could be flooded with sunlight during the day).

We see this transition in thinking in the YAv. *Sirozah* II § 27 which section is dedicated to the sky.

Sirozah 2.27 *Asman.*

asmanəm. xʷanvantəm. yazamaide.

*vahištəm. ahūm. ašaonəm. yazamaide. raocanhəm. vīspō.xʷāθrəm. ••*⁶³

'The sunlit sky we celebrate;⁶⁴

The most-good *existence* of the truthful we celebrate ~ light, all happiness/enlightenment.' *Sirozah* 2.27, my translation.

Darmesteter (interpretively) translates *ahūm* as 'abode' in this section. But 'abode' in YAv. is *nmana-* whereas *ahūm* means 'existence, life'.⁶⁵

The last sentence uses the popular YAv. description of the 'good' reward which is a state of being ~ the 'most-good existence of the truthful, ... light, all happiness/enlightenment,' (*vahištəm ahūm ašaonəm ... raocanhəm. vīspō.xʷāθrəm*); however, the 'sunlit sky' in the first sentence is paired with this most-good existence in the 2d sentence, so we see that by the time *Sirozah* 2. 27 was composed, the most-good existence

was still a state of being, but perhaps was thought to exist in a place ~ the sunlit sky ~ paradise. And in its abbreviated form (*Sirozah* I § 27) we see even stronger evidence that this was the mind-set of the composer(s) of *Sirozah* II § 27

Sirozah 1.27, Asman

*ašnō. bərəzatō. sūrahe. vahištahe. aṅhəuš. ašaonəm raocəṅhō. vīspō.x'āθrō.:*⁶⁶

'The high sky [*ašnō. bərəzatō*]; (the place) of the mighty, most-good existence of the truthful, light, all-happy.' *Sirozah* II § 27, my translation. Darmesteter's is footnoted for comparative purposes.⁶⁷

Here in *Sirozah* I § 27, the gen. sg. declensions of the words *sūrahe. vahištahe. aṅhəuš.* 'of the mighty, most-good, existence' requires that they be preceded by an implied noun. Because of the immediately preceding 'high sky', I think the implied noun would be '(the place)' suggesting the conclusion that 'heaven' in *Sirozah* I § 27 had become a most good state of being that existed in a place, the 'high sky'.

The house of song, (GAv. *garō dāmāna-*; YAv. *garō nmāna-*).⁶⁸

Some YAv. texts describe the good reward as the 'house of song' as a metaphor for a state of being. Others use 'house of song' in contexts which give no indication ~ one way or the other ~ what the author's understanding of this term might have been ~ a place, or a metaphor for a state of being. In others, the author's understanding is ambiguous (on this point) ~ it could be a state of being (as in the Gathas) and a place (as in some YAv. texts).⁶⁹

Visperad 7.1 celebrates various concepts and activities which comprehend both the path and the end, including true-spoken words (*vaca aršux da*), hearing and implementing them (*sraoša*), the good reward (*ašt vaṅuhī*), the fravashis of the truth-possessing (*ašāunəm fravaši* i.e. the all-good spiritual essences of living beings, including those who have departed this life, used in the sense of the divine within), the bridge of discerning (*cinvatō pərətūm*) and finally,

'... the [house of song](#) of the Lord, Wisdom, we celebrate; the most-good existence of the truthful we celebrate; light, all-happiness.' *Visperad* 7.1, my translation.

... *garō nmānəm ahurahe mazdā yazamaide ∴ vahištəm ahūm ašaonəm yazamaide ∴ raocəṅhəm vīspō.x'āθrəm ∴* *Visperad* 7.1, Geldner 2P. pp. 1 - 12.

These phrases are not 2 different 'heavens'. They describe one heaven, the 2d of which is clearly a state of being. *Visperad* contains some beautiful strands of Zarathushtra's thought, I therefore think the author here was aware that [house of song](#) was being used metaphorically (as in the Gathas). Mills' translation is footnoted for comparative purposes.⁷⁰

The *Rashn Yasht*, Yt. 12, has three parallel descriptions of the ultimate good reward (in an afterlife) ~ one of which is the 'house of song', but in a context which suggests that the author may have understood it as a metaphor for a state of being. Darmesteter in his introduction to this Yasht states that Rashnu is the 'Genius of Truth'.⁷¹ Insler translates *rašnu-* as "justice".⁷² But as he tells us, *rašnu-* derives from the root *ar-* which also generated Ved. *rta-*, Old Persian *arta-*, Avestan *aša-*. And justice' carries with it a lot of baggage from our times (including punishment). Based on its derivation, I think *rašnu-* means 'right (correct) judgment' (as a mental process in accord with truth). In this Yasht, Rashnu is the spiritual essence of the concept,⁷³ (perhaps originally an allegory), and many sections of the Yasht call on, and bless *rašnu-* whenever he exists in various named material places (i.e. whenever 'right judgment' exists in each of these

places ~ including many named regions of the earth (kashvares), the mountains, the earth, the sea, the stars). And in the following 3 sections, the author also blesses and calls on the friendship of this spiritual essence of right judgment in 3 parallel descriptions of the ultimate good reward (in an afterlife) as follows. The translation is mine, YAv. words are from Geldner.⁷⁴ The full YAv. text with Darmesteter's translation for comparative purposes, is footnoted.⁷⁵ The refrain 'We call on his friendship ...' is in the nature of a chorus. One might almost hear the first part sung or chanted by a soloist, and the refrain "We call on his friendship ..." sung by a chorus of voices.

Yt. 12.35 ~ the 'endless lights'.

'Whenever, O truth-possessing Right Judgment [*rašnavō ašāum*], you are in [*upa*] the self-made [*xʷadāta*] endless lights [*anayra raocā*]. We call on his friendship ...'

Yt. 12.36, ~ the most-good existence of the truthful, light, all-happiness/enlightenment.

'Whenever, O truth-possessing Right Judgment, you are in the most-good existence of the truthful, light, all-happiness/enlightenment [*vahištəm ahūm ašaonqm raocanhəm vīspō.xʷāθrəm*]. We call on his friendship ...'

Yt. 12.37, ~ the house of song.

'Whenever, O truth-possessing Right Judgment, you are in [*upa*] (the existence) of the light-filled [*raox šnahe*] house of song [*garō.nmānahe*]. We call on his friendship ...'

In the last section (Yt. 12.37) you can see that after the word 'in [*upa*]', I have added the implied words '(the existence)'. I did so because both *garō.nmānahe* 'of (the) house of song' and its adj. *raox šnahe* 'of (the) light-filled' are gen. sg. and therefore need to be preceded by an implied noun. Now these 3 sections do not describe 3 separate 'heavens'. They are 3 ways of describing one 'heaven'. So because of the words 'truth-possessing Right Judgment' (in 12.37) as well as 'existence' (*ahūm*) in the immediately preceding section (12.36), I chose the implied noun '(the existence)' in the last section (12.37). So here I think the author probably understood that the 'house of song' was a metaphor for an existence ~ a state of being. On the other hand, he may have thought that the existences (in the two preceding sections) existed in a place ~ the house of song. I leave it to you to decide.

The *Ardibehesht Yasht*. Sections 3 and 4 in many ways are very close to the thought of the Gathas, but you may wonder why I have included them here because they have some translation uncertainties which make it difficult to say whether the author thought the *house of song* is a metaphor for a state of being (as in the Gathas), or a place. You may wonder why then I have included them here. Well, I like them so much that I cannot resist giving them to you, but I footnote the Avestan text and the translation uncertainties (together with Darmesteter's translation), so that you can see them for yourself.⁷⁶ Parenthetically, *Ardibehesht* is Pahlavi for Av. *aša- vahišta-*. Here are §§ 3 and 4 of the *Ardibehesht Yasht* in my translation (with my choices regarding the translation uncertainties).

§ 3 'Then I speak forth (about) the true order of existence (which is) most good. For if I speak forth (about) the true order (which is) most good, then (I speak forth) of the other the amesha spenta which (is) the good-way-of-living which Wisdom protects with good thoughts, which Wisdom protects with good words, which Wisdom protects with good deeds in the house of song ~ 'the good-way-of-living' [*hvāyaonəm*] of the Lord.' *Ardibehesht Yasht*, Yt. 3.3.

§ 4 'The house of song is for truth-possessing men; no one possessing untruth comes to the house of song, (which is) 'good-giving', alive with truth, light-filled; (no one possessing untruth comes to) the Lord Wisdom.' Yt. 3.4.

Aban Nyaish. By the time of the *Aban Nyaish*, § 8, the transition in thinking has been made and it no longer reflects the underlying ideas of the Gathas. The house of song is a place, and the way to get to it, is to recite ritual chants, including the Ahuna Vairya and the Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu). There is nothing here of the Gathas' path of truth which generates the reward of truth. This *Nyaish* is an invocation "unto the holy water-spring Ardivi Anahita [the spiritual essence of the waters]; unto all waters..." § 1. The word *ap-* 'water' is a grammatically fem. noun, (Skjaervo 2006) ~ hence (perhaps) the fem. gender of the spiritual essence of waters. Here is Darmesteter's translation.

§ 8 "He from whom she will hear the staota yesnya [the praises of the yasnās]; he from whom she will hear the Ahuna Vairya [Yatha Ahu Vairyo]; he from whom she will hear the Asha-Vahishta [Ashem Vohu]; he by whom the good waters will be made pure; with words of the holy hymns, he will enter first the *Garo-nmana* of Ahura Mazda: she will give him the boons asked for." *Aban Nyaish* § 8.⁷⁷

YAv. *Fragment 22* called by some today the *Hadokht Nask*,⁷⁸

YAv. *Fragments 23* also called *Afrin Paighambar Zartosht*,⁷⁹ and

YAv. *Fragment 24* also called the *Vishtasp Yasht*.⁸⁰

Geldner does not include any of these Fragments in his collection of Avestan texts so I cannot check Darmesteter's translation against the Avestan texts.

These Fragments contain many similarities and may indeed have restated ideas from a single more ancient source. Because they are in YAv., they would have been written many centuries after Zarathushtra, and Darmesteter notes that in *Fragment 24*, the YAv. language is written in a faulty, flawed way, commenting on its "incoherence",⁸¹ indicating at least such parts of it were written many centuries after Zarathushtra, when the religious establishment no longer was fluent in the YAv. language, and that it probably was a collection from different texts. The author(s) (purportedly) quote the advice and blessings given by Zarathushtra to his patron King Vishtaspa, many which echo Zarathushtra's teachings, and many which pertain to the King's earthly life.⁸²

In *Fragment 23.7 - 8* and *Fragment 24.5* Darmesteter's translation of the blessing for the ultimate 'good' reward describes it as an 'abode'. Although I do not have the Av. text, Darmesteter's translation of the applicable phrase in each of these Fragments is identical to his translation of the phrase in *Sirozah* of the words *vahištəm ahūm ašaonqm raocayhəm vīspō.xvāθrəm* in which there is no mention of an 'abode', and which I translate as 'the most good existence of the truth possessing, light, all happiness.' my translation (discussed above). Darmesteter's translation of these two passages is footnoted.⁸³ YAv. *Fragment 24* (*Vishtasp Yasht*) has a mix of other descriptions ~ some showing the 'good' reward as a place, others as a state of being. These are footnoted for your convenience.⁸⁴

Fragment 24 (*Vishtasp Yasht*), and *Fragment 22* also contain (in almost identical form) a story of what happens to the soul of a 'good' person after death which is a somewhat confusing mix of a state of being, and also a place ~ perhaps representing a belief that the 'good' reward was a place, while trying to fit into this framework, earlier traditions or teachings of the 'good' reward as a state of being, and how to get there. Judge for yourself. Here is a summary of the description from *Fragment 22*, based on Darmesteter's

translation,⁸⁵ which I have no way of checking in Avestan. Let us remember that this story is not Divine revelation. It is just the earliest of other similar stories that an ancient teacher of the religion created as a way of teaching ideas.⁸⁶ § 1 says that the following happens to the soul of "one of the faithful [*ašavan-* ?]".

In §§ 2 - 6, on each of the first three nights after death, the soul of the deceased sits near its head, singing the Ushtavaiti Gatha, and proclaiming happiness. And on each of these three nights, the soul experiences "... as much of pleasure as the whole of the living world can taste."

In §§ 7 - 14, "At the end of the third night, when the dawn appears, *it seems* to the soul of the faithful one as if it were brought amidst plants and scents; ... *it seems* as if a sweet scented wind were blowing from the region of the south, ... sweeter-scented than any other wind in the world ... And *it seems* ... as if he were inhaling that wind ..." and wondering where it came from. "And *it seems* to him as if his own conscience [*daēnā-* ? 'envisionment' ?], were advancing to him in that wind, in the shape of a maiden,... ", who is described as very beautiful, "in her fifteenth year, as fair as the fairest things in the world..." Whereupon the soul asks her who she is, and she replies "...I am thy own conscience [*daēnā-* ? 'envisionment' ?],..." and explains that her beauty reflects his own good deeds, detailing some of them. She then says "I was lovely and thou madest me still lovelier; I was fair and thou madest me still fairer; desirable; I was sitting in a forward place, and thou madest me sit in the foremost place, through this good thought, through this good speech, through this good deed of thine; ...".⁸⁷

If indeed the maiden is an image of the person's good envisionment (*daēnā-*) this last quotation reflects Zarathushtra's thought in that his envisionment is beautiful ~ comprising an envisionment of existence governed (*xšaθra-*) by the true order of existence *aša-* (which in the YHapt is called beautiful (*sṛtra-*), and most beautiful (*sraēšta-*), its comprehension, good thinking *vohu- manah*, and its beneficial embodiment in thought word and action *spānta- ārmaiti-*. But this envisionment is made more beautiful when translated into good thoughts, words, and actions (which is Zarathushtra's description of a *saošyant-* 'savior').⁸⁸ Immediately after this conversation between the soul and the image of his own goodness, the next section (§ 15) begins, without any mention of the soul crossing the Chinvat Bridge (the bridge is absent from this entire description).

§ 15 says

"The first step that the soul of the faithful man made, placed him in the Good-Thought Paradise.
The second step ... placed him in the Good-Word Paradise;
The third step ... placed him in the Good-Deed Paradise;
The fourth step ... placed him in the Endless Lights."⁸⁹

There is no Avestan word that corresponds with Darmesteter's word "Paradise".⁹⁰ This is his own interpretive addition (parenthetically a correct one). The text simply says that these three steps place a person in good-thought, in good-word and in good-deed, and the fourth places him in Endless Lights (recall that 'light' is metaphor for truth ~ the true order of existence, *aša-*). This echoes the Gatha teaching of the path and its end in that when we think, speak and act in a good way, we create in that instance, a touch of paradise.⁹¹ However, such good thoughts, words and actions are an incremental path which occur before death, whereas in this YAv. Fragment, all four steps occur after the third night following death, indicating perhaps some lack of understanding in transmitting earlier ideas.

In § 16 the soul of one "who had departed before him", asked the soul of the recently deceased, how he had departed from his (earthly) life "... How didst thou come ... from the abodes full of cattle and full of the wishes and enjoyments of love? From the material world into the world of the spirit? From the decaying

world into the undecaying one? How long did thy felicity last?" (a delightful indication of the (good) gossiping that is a part of human nature ~ then as now!).

Whereupon in §§ 17 - 18, Ahura Mazda intervenes and says "Ask him not what thou askest him, who has just gone the dreary way, full of fear and distress, where the body and the soul part from one another," He adds, let the soul eat "of the food brought to him, of the oil of Zaremaya: this is the food for the youth of good thoughts, of good words, of good deeds, of good religion, after he has departed this life; this is the food for the holy [*aṣavan-* ?] woman, rich in good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, well-principled and obedient to her husband after she has departed this life." Darmesteter routinely translates *aṣavan-* words as 'holy'.

Parenthetically, here we still have an echo of the gender equality in the Gathas, the YHapt. and many YAv. Yasnas which often men and women together, in tandem; but now in this *Fragment* we see a transition into the subordinate ('obedient') role for women that is so apparent in the Pahlavi texts ~ consistent with the conclusion that these *Fragment 24* (and possibly *Fragment 22* as well) were written long after YAv. times. Darmesteter appears to be a bit uncertain as to the nature of the refreshment, which he translates as the "oil of Zaremaya", surmising in a footnote that this is probably the butter made from milk in the middle of spring (the season) which in another YAv. text (*Visperad* and its Pahlavi Commentary) is said to be the best.⁹² In the Gathas, 'butter' and 'milk' are used as metaphors for good thinking, truth, and Wisdom's teaching ~ which is not only the path, but also the reward for taking that path.⁹³ And in ancient times spring was the season of beginnings ~ Noruz the celebration of rebirth and renewal. Was the author of this YAv. *Fragment* aware of the metaphoric use of butter and milk in the Gathas? Or was he just faithfully attempting to transmit an earlier teaching which he took literally?

The foregoing description of 'heaven' in *Fragment 22*, (mirrored in *Fragment 24*) is the most detailed in all surviving Av. texts. It clearly describes the 'good' reward ('heaven') as a place. But we see echoes of Gatha idea of 'heaven' is a state of being in the description of the steps of good thoughts, words and actions, leading to endless light. The qualities of the good existence after death ('heaven') in these YAv. *Fragments 22* and *24* also echo the Gatha idea of self-judgment but in a different way ~ the soul seeing his own goodness in the form of a beautiful maiden), sweet scents, plants, goodness (in thought, word and action), light, and butter (made from the finest milk) ~ all ideas and metaphors that are in the Gathas except that sweet fragrance is not mentioned in the Gathas, but in these YAv. texts the fragrance is related to 'plants' ~ a metaphor for non-deathness *amərətāt-* ~ (by this time seen as the opposite of the stink of decay, death, rather than a state of being not bound by mortality). So many of these descriptions had their genesis in the Gatha.

Did the authors of these YAv. *Fragments* understand the metaphoric nature of these images? Well, the maiden was clearly understood as an image (allegory) of the soul's own goodness. But the ways in which heaven as a place and as a state of being are mixed strands in these YAv. *Fragments* indicate (to me) that their authors were attempting to faithfully transmit much earlier ideas of 'heaven' as a state of being, and which included heaven-related metaphors used in the Gathas, but that by the time these *Fragments* were composed ~ many centuries after the Gathas (and probably some centuries after YAv. times) ~ the ideas of 'paradise' represented by such metaphors (and so faithfully recorded) may no longer have been understood by them. Their idea of 'heaven' had evolved into a place in which such images and states of being existed. These *Fragments* clearly speak of 'heaven' as a non-material place ("the world of the spirit" § 16), but include

within it material things ~ the sweet fragrance of plants, breezes, light, food, a gossipy (good) soul full of questions ~ a place where good souls live.

Vendidad

The *Vendidad* as it exists today, is (in my view) a collection of different texts. It is written in YAv., in grammar so flawed that it could only have been written long after the religious authorities were no longer fluent in the Avestan language.⁹⁴ As such, its mind-set is post Avestan. Nevertheless, in the interests of completeness, let us take a look at its views regarding the (non-material) 'good' reward.

There are a very few passages in the *Vendidad* regarding the (non-material) 'good' reward in the afterlife, and they are brief, with little detail. They lack the lyrical and beautiful expressions that mark such descriptions in other YAv. texts. The reward of 'most-good existence' (*vahišta- ahu-*) is promised mostly for obedience to religious mandates which have nothing to do with conduct that is intrinsically good. Good choices in thought, word and action are not relevant to earning the 'good' reward. Some examples of what earns the good reward according to the *Vendidad* are footnoted.⁹⁵

In some passages of the *Vendidad* the 'good' reward in the afterlife has become a place, even though it often uses the terminology of earlier Avestan texts, such as the 'most-good existence' (*ahu- vahišta-*) (which Darmesteter freely translates as the "blessed abode"). In other instances, it is more difficult to tell if the author of that part of the text thought of 'heaven' as a place or a state of being. Here are all such passages in the *Vendidad*. You may judge for yourself. The quotations are from Darmesteter's translation. Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner. Explanations and translations in square brackets are mine.

In Ch. 9, §§ 43 - 44, the reward of a person "who has cleansed from the Nasu [demoness of defilement of dead matter] anyone defiled by her" is the following "The welfare of the blessed abode [*vahištahe aṅhāuš* 'of the most-good existence'] thou canst promist to that man, for his reward in the other world."⁹⁶ Setting aside Darmesteter's interpretive translation, the 'good' reward here is a state of being ~ a quality of existence.

Ch. 7, §§ 49 - 52, has an interesting treatment of the afterlife. Here, the author describes dakhmas as places of pollution, and has Ahura Mazda (purportedly) speaking to Zarathushtra saying, "...Urge everyone in the material world, O Spitama Zarathushtra! to pull down Dakhmas." § 50, Darmesteter translation. And the reward for so doing is not only a remission of sins in this life (§ 51) ~ quite contrary to Zarathushtra's thought ~ but also the following in the afterlife.

"Not for his soul shall the two spirits [*mainyū*] wage war with one another; when he enters the blissful world [*vahištəm ... ahūm* 'the most-good existence...'] ... I Ahura Mazda shall rejoice in him, saying: "Hail O man! thou who hast just passed from the decaying world [*aṅhaoṭ* 'from the decaying existence'] into the undecaying one [*ahūm* 'existence']!" Ch. 7, §52.⁹⁷ A state of being?

By the time of the *Vendidad*, "*mainyu*" had become part of the proper name of two entities ~ the all good Spenta Mainyu and the all evil Angra Mainyu (the 'devil') which in the Gathas are two ways of being, not two entities.⁹⁸ But it is interesting (is it not?) that in even so late a text as the *Vendidad*, if we look past the imagery of the two entities battling for the soul in the foregoing section (Ch. 7 § 52), we see the earlier idea of two ways of being in a person's own soul battling for ascendancy.⁹⁹ And it is the good soul who makes the transition to the 'most-good existence' [*vahištəm ... ahūm*] ~ from a mortal (decaying) existence to a non-mortal (undecaying) existence ~ thoughts which echo the Gathas (although not precisely). But what makes the soul 'good', what earns this 'good' reward, is completely different from the Gathas.

Ch. 19, §§ 26 - 36 has the most detailed description in the *Vendidad* of both the 'good' and 'bad' rewards in the afterlife, but are somewhat confused in their sequence of ideas.¹⁰⁰ The 'bad' reward I have covered in another chapter,¹⁰¹ so here, I will give you what pertains only to the 'good' reward. And (following the pattern of other YAv. texts ~ earlier than the *Vendidad*, but many centuries after Zarathushtra), the author puts his own ideas (or the ideas of the religious establishment of that time) into the form of (purported) questions asked by Zarathushtra and (purported) answers given by the Lord Wisdom. The translation is Darmesteter's (quite free!) and he translates *ašavan*- words as 'holy' rather than 'truth possessing' (or 'truthful').¹⁰² The Av. words are from Geldner,¹⁰³ which I sometimes translate in square brackets. In this passage, 'heaven' is definitely a place in an afterlife in which the soul exists.

§ 26 "Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda ... Should I urge upon the godly man, should I urge upon the godly woman, should I urge upon the wicked ... that they have once to leave behind them the earth made by Ahura, ... the water that runs, the corn that grows, and all the rest of their wealth? Ahura Mazda answered: 'Thou shouldst, O holy [*ašāum* 'O truth possessing'] Zarathushtra.'" ¹⁰⁴

§ 27. "... Where are the rewards given? Where does the rewarding take place? Where is the rewarding fulfilled? Whereto do men come to take the reward that, in their life in the material world, they have won for their souls?"

§ 29 "... The soul enters the way made by Time, and open both to the wicked and to the righteous. At the head of the Chinvat bridge, the holy bridge made by Mazda, they ask for their spirits and souls the reward for the worldly goods which they gave away here below."

§ 30 "Then comes the well-shapen, strong and tall-formed maid, with dogs at her sides, one who can distinguish, who is graceful, who does what she wants, and is of high understanding. She makes the soul of the righteous one go up above the Hara-berezaiti; above the Chinvat bridge she places it in the presence of the heavenly gods [*mainyavanqm yazatanqm*] themselves."

Here (unlike *Fragments* 22 and 24), here dogs appear with the maiden, and the allegorical nature of the maiden ~ as the form of the deceased's good thoughts, words and actions ~ has been lost (yet interestingly, the maiden was understood as an allegory in a much later Pazand text,¹⁰⁵ ~ indicating that the religious views of the *Vendidad*, represented just one (benighted) school of thought in the history of Zoroastrianism).

§ 31 "Up rises Vohu-mano, from his golden seat; Vohu-mano exclaims: 'How hast thou come to us, thou holy one [*ašāum* 'O truth possessing one'] from that decaying world [*aṇhaoṭ* 'from ... existence'] into this undecaying one [*ahūm* 'existence']?"

Here, this question by Vohu-mano echoes (with less detail) the questions in *Fragments* 22 and 24, asked by the soul of a previously deceased person (not by Vohu-mano), and here there is no intervention by Ahura Mazda, as there is in the foregoing YAv. *Fragments*. The question is left hanging, unanswered, and the text goes immediately to § 32. And here there is no understanding of the allegorical nature of Vohu-mano (good thinking). Yet a much later Pahlavi text clearly understood and portrayed good thinking (Vohuman) as an allegory, in telling a different and quite lovely story.¹⁰⁶

§ 32. "Gladly pass the souls of the righteous [*ašaonqm* 'of the truth possessing'] to the golden seat of Ahura Mazda, to the golden seat of the Amsha-Spentas, to the Garō-nmānem, [*garō nmānəm* 'house of song'] the abode [*maēθanəm*] of Ahura Mazda, the abode of the Amsha-Spentas, the abode of all the other holy beings [*anyaēšqm ašaonqm* 'of other truth-possessing ones']."

Skjaervo 2003 shows *maēθana-* 'dwelling, habitation'. So here 'heaven' is a place only ~ described in material terms ~ 'golden seats'.

§ 33, Referring to the "godly man [*yaoždāθrayō ašava* 'the pure, truth~possessing one']",¹⁰⁷ this section speaks of "the perfume of his soul after death" (which is rather lovely) ~ identical to the phrase appearing in the YAv. *Fragment* 24, § 27, but there in a different context.

§ 34 "The souls of the righteous are gathered together there: ... "

And the section concludes with an admonition to Zarathushtra (purportedly still then in mortal existence), "Do thou thyself invoke, O Zarathushtra! this world [*dāma*] of Ahura Mazda."

Here 'heaven' is a place only ~ no longer an existence [*ahu-*]. But in the next two sections (§§ 35 and 36) the things Zarathushtra invokes include certain YAv. phrases which are used for heaven ~ some as a place, some as an existence.

§§ 35 - 36 [Zarathushtra purportedly speaking] "... I invoke the earth ... the water ... the ... trees ... the sea ... the shining sky [*asmanəm xʷanvanvañtəm* 'sunlit sky'] ...

the eternal and sovereign luminous space [*anayra raocā xʷadātā* 'endless lights self made'].

... the bright, all glorious blissful abode of the holy ones [*vahištəm ahūm ašaonqm raocayhəm vīspō.xʷāθrəm* 'the most-good existence of the truthful, light, all happiness/enlightenment'].

... the Garo-nmanem [YAv. *garō nmānəm* 'house of song'], the abode [*maēθanəm* 'habitation'] of Ahura Mazda, the abode of the Amesha Spentas the abode of all the other holy beings [*anyaēšqm ašaonqm* 'of other truth~possessing ones'].

The last phrase of § 36 (which follows the foregoing) is not a description of the ultimate 'good' reward ~ 'paradise'.¹⁰⁸

So here (in §§ 35 - 36) we have the transmission of different schools of thought ~ a few more ancient descriptions of the 'good' reward as a state of being, and also later descriptions of it as a place. The sections that follow continue with invocations to many of the important things in YAv. texts including 'to the beneficial, truth possessing Gathas [*gāθābyō spəntābyō ... ašaonibyō*]' all 5 of which are then correctly and individually identified (Ch. 19, § 38). So we see that even as late as the *Vendidad* the Gathas (although no longer understood) were held in reverence and esteem ~ not relegated to 'mere poetry', the opinion of a certain high priest in recent times.

In conclusion. The evidence of the 'good' reward in some YAv. texts reflect many strands of thought from the Gathas, some expressed in beautiful ways ~ that the 'good' reward is a state of being ~ the superlative of intrinsic goodness, the true order of existence, an existence of light (enlightened), joyful; that it is attained incrementally in mortal existence, and completely in an existence no longer bound by mortality (an afterlife); and that it is earned through goodness, by loving truth, by following the path of truth. And in the YAv. concept of *frašō.kərəiti* 'making existence truth-healed' and 'existence made truth-healed' we also see in some texts, the Gatha notion that by following the path of truth, we bring about the evolution of existence from one that is a mix of bad and more good, to one that is all good ~ the true (good) order of existence ~ and that this progression is certain, in that the texts do not speak of any alternative existence ~ only eventually 'existence made truth-healed' *frašō.kərəiti*.

However, (with the passage of centuries) we also see in other YAv. texts, a transition in thinking of the 'good' reward from a good state of being ('existence'), to (perhaps) a good existence in a good place, to just a good place. And finally, certain YAv. texts composed long after YAv. times, show a school of Zoroastrian thought

that still used remnants of Gatha phrases and imagery without understanding them, and with no understanding of 'heaven' as anything but a place ~ the reward for being obedient to the religious establishment, obedient to rules of behavior that were not about intrinsic 'right' or 'wrong' nor about intrinsic goodness. But we should remember that such texts expressed just one school of thought ~ a conclusion that is demonstrated by the fact that certain Pahlavi texts continued to display an understanding that the path to the good reward is the path of the amesha spenta (truth and its component parts), and that the reward is the splendour of the Divine (truth personified) ~ an existence that is most-good.¹⁰⁹

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¹ Detailed in *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*, with examples given in footnotes.

² Discussed in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*. In Y53.6 *manahya-* appears in its acc. sg. case form "...happiness has been lost to the deceitful who violate truth [aṣa-]. In alliance with them, ye are going to destroy the spiritual existence [*manahīm ahūm*]." Y53.6, Insler 1975.

³ The lovely multi-dimensional meaning of *x'āθra-* as an enlightened happiness (derived from *sū-āθra-*, *hu-āθra-*) has been explored in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*. But it is so important for an understanding of the quality of existence that is the 'good' reward, that I will explain the meaning of this word here as well. In Gatha verses, *x'āθra-* 'happiness/enlightenment' appears in contexts that include both mortal existence and an existence that is no longer bound by mortality.

Taraporewala 1951, commenting under the Gatha verse Y28.2 states that according to Bartholomae the word came from Aryan *sū-āθra* and *hu-āθra*, (p. 97 for *sū-āθra*, and p. 195 for *hu-āθra*).

The prefix *hu-* means 'good' (for example, *hucisti-* 'good understanding; *hujyāiti* 'good life'; *hušyaoθana-* 'good actions' etc.), with a secondary meaning 'well' (Jackson 1892, § 748, p. 209), as in 'well-being, happiness'. And *āθra* in YAv. is instr. sg. of the (conjectured) stem *ātar-/ āθr-* thus meaning 'through fire'. In the Gathas and YAv. texts, fire is a metaphor for the true order of existence ~ an enlightened existence. So if Bartholomae is correct about the derivation of *x'āθra-* (from *hu-āθra*), then the word would mean 'good/happiness [*hu-*] through fire/truth/enlightenment [*āθra*].

Many linguists (including Insler 1975) have translated *x'āθra-* as 'happiness'. And it is the best one-word equivalent that I can think of. But as you can see, 'happiness' is totally inadequate for the beautiful, multi-dimensional meaning of *x'āθra-*.

⁴ Detailed in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

⁵ Skjaervo 2006 shows the (conjectured) stem *manahya-* 'of thought'. Beekes (1988) shows the stem as *manahiā-* an adjective and translates it as 'spiritual' (p. 132); and indeed, in the Gathas, what in English we call 'mind' and 'spirit' are equated (detailed in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*). This would give us,

aṅhəuš yō astvatō yasca asti manahyō ..., Geldner 2P p. 145;

'... of the existence which (is) material [*astvatō*], and which is mental/spiritual [*manahyō*] ...' my translation.

⁶ Detailed in *Part Two: The Houses Of Paradise & Hell*.

⁷ In the Gathas: detailed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*;

In later Avestan texts: detailed in *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

⁸ See in *Part One: A Question of Salvation*, and *Zarathushtra's Paradise In This World & the Next*; And in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*, and *The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

⁹ Detailed in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & The Path*.

¹⁰ That man has within himself, incompletely, certain divine qualities (amesha spenta) and is capable of attaining them all completely, is detailed in chapters 1.3 through 1.8 of *Part One*.

¹¹ See *Part Two: The Manthra of Truth Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu)*, and *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu) An Analysis*.

¹² The A *Airyema Ishyo* consists of one verse which reads as follows,

'May the dear community come to the support of the men and women of Zarathushtra, to the support of good thinking, by which envisionment one will gain the chosen prize.

I ask for the dear reward of truth, which Wisdom the Lord awards.' Y54.1, my translation.

This verse is in GAv. Many scholars think it was not composed by Zarathushtra. Taraporewala thinks it was, and I am inclined to agree with him. The verse is discussed in detail, in *Part Six: Yasna 54.1, A Airyema Ishyo*.

¹³ Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate *apaēmā* as "may we attain" ("May we attain your good power/rule..." p. 111). In 1991, Humbach translated *apaēmā* as "may we reach".

¹⁴ The meaning of the words *vīspāi yavē* is discussed in detail in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

¹⁵ See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*.

¹⁶ See *Part Six: Yasna Haptanghaiti 35.8* for a detailed discussion of this section, with other translations given for comparative purposes.

¹⁷ See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*.

¹⁸ See in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*, and *The Identity of the Divine*.

¹⁹ See in *Part Four: Zarathushtra's Date & Place*, and *The Syncretization*.

²⁰ Here are some examples which show that in YAv. texts (as in the Gathas and also in the *Yasna Haptanghaiti*) the 'good' reward (the true (good) order of existence *aša-*) is incrementally attained ~ some examples in this life, some in the afterlife, and some in both. Words in round parentheses have been inserted by the translator. Where applicable, I show Avestan words from Geldner in square brackets, with translations by me.

In this life.

Yy70.4 "... that we may be as [*saošyantō*] ... the befriended of Ahura Mazda, and persons most useful to Him, holy men [*narō ašavanō* 'truthful men'] who think good thoughts, and speak good words, and do good deeds."

Yy70.5 "That he may approach us with the Good Mind and that (our souls) may advance in good [*vohū*], let it thus come; yea, 'how may my soul advance in good [*vohū*]?' Let it thus advance.'" Yy70.4 - 5, Mills translation SBE 31, p. 326; Avestan words from Geldner 1P p. 231.

Mills gives *vohū* a locative translation 'in the good'. But Skjaervo 2006 shows that *vohū* is acc. sg. thus, more literally 'how may we advance the good'. In either event, the advancement is intrinsic goodness. In the Gathas, intrinsic goodness is equated with the true (most good) order of existence ~ *aša- vahišta-* (see *Part One: Truth, Asha*).

Yy68.2 shows post-syncretic influence. Zarathushtra's idea of spiritual advancement, and the victory (of truth) is requested, but the request is made ~ not to Wisdom, but to the waters and their spiritual essence.

"And may'st thou approach me ... for progress, for growth ... and for that victory [*vərəθraṇne*] which makes the settlements advance." Yy68.2, Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 321; Avestan words from Geldner 1P p. 225; "victory [*vərəθraṇne*]" is the victory of truth over what is false (the meaning of *vərəθraṇne*, its derivation and the way it

is used in Av. texts, is discussed in a ft. in *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*, and in *Part Six: Y44.16* under *vərəθrəm.jā*).

In this life and the next.

Yy60.12 is a lovely YAv. examples of the incremental attainment of the 'good' state of being that is the 'good' reward in the Gathas, which I detail in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*. It states,

'Through the true order of existence, the most-good (*aša vahišta*)
through the true order of existence, the most-beautiful (*aša sraēšta*),
may we see Thee, may we serve Thee, may your following be the same with Thee.' Yy60.12 my translation.

Yy71.16 is another example of the good reward being in this life and the next. It is which is quoted in the main part of this chapter and detailed in another ft. herein.

In the next life.

In Yy55.2 the good reward is the true order of existence *aša-* in an afterlife. This section starts out by describing the Gathas (metaphorically) as offering refuge and protection, as being food and clothing to us (i.e. spiritual nourishment), and concludes (Mills' translation),

"... And (may) they be to us ... abundant givers of rewards, and just and righteous ones for the world [*tā.nō buyam humiždā. aš.miždā. ašō.miždā ... aṇuhe* 'may they become for us good-reward, great-reward, truth-reward of an existence'] beyond the present, after the parting of our consciousness and body." SBE 31, p. 294; Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner 1P pp. 192 - 193, which I have translated because Mills' translation of such words is not literal enough to convey the Avestan meaning.

Other examples of the incremental attainment of the true order of existence in YAv. texts ~ in mortal existence ~ are shown throughout this chapter and in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & The Path*; and *Asha & the Checkmate Solution*.

²¹ Detailed in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*.

²² Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*.

²³ To illustrate, in Yy71.9, many beautiful things are celebrated, one of which is the endless lights' ~ the waters as springs and rivers, plants, forest trees, all the lands, the sky, all the stars, the moon, the sun, and 'all the endless lights [... *vīspa anayra raocā yazamaide* ...]' my translation, Av. words from Geldner 1P p. 231.

Another example is *Sirozah* 2.30 which says, 'The endless lights, self-made, we celebrate [*anayra raocā xʷadāta yazamaide*] ...' my translation, Av. words from Geldner, 2P p. 267.

²⁴ While there is no dispute that *raocah-* means 'light', there are differences of opinion regarding the meaning of *anayra-*.

Skjaervo 2003 thinks that *ayra-* means 'tip, front', and that (with the negative prefix *an-*), *anayra-* means 'without beginning'. (YAv. Lesson 16, p. 171).

Darmesteter usually translates *anayra-* as 'endless', and sometimes as 'infinite' (which means 'without beginning or end').

In YAv. texts, *anayra- raocah-* is a term for paradise, the ultimate end which is non-mortal ~ a state of being that does not die or end. So as a term for paradise, I think Darmesteter's meaning ~ 'endless, infinite' is closer to the way in which *anayra-* is used in YAv. texts. And I find it persuasive.

²⁵ Skjaervo 2003 seems unsure of the meaning of *xʷadāta-* ~ placing a question mark after his definition "set in place by oneself (itself, themselves)?" I think *xʷadāta-* derives from,

xʷa- 'own' (Skjaervo 2006); it is a reflexive pronoun as in 'one's own self'; and

dāta- < *dā-* (*dā-* means 'to make, to give, to establish, etc.).

I therefore take *xʷadāta-* to mean 'self made'.

Darmesteter translates *xʷadāta-* as 'sovereign' in the *Rashn Yasht* and in the *Sirozah* (his translations are quoted in other footnotes herein). But, with respect, I disagree. The Av. words related to 'rule' or 'sovereignty' derive, not from *xʷa-*, but from *xšā-* 'to have command, middle voice 'to rule (over: gen.)' Skjaervo 2006; and *xšā-* has generated *xšāθra-* 'rule', and also 'ruler' (Y28.7 *dāstū mazdā xšayācā* "And do Thou give, Wise Ruler ..." Insler 1975). So I do not see *xʷadāta-* < *xʷa-* being 'sovereign', (which is from *xšā-*). This is not to denigrate Darmesteter whose translations were made at an earlier stage of decoding Avestan.

²⁶ By the time of the *Bundahishn*, a belief in Cosmic Dualism (two uncreated spirits) had become established ~ a belief we do not find in the Gathas. Speaking of these two spirits, the *Bundahishn* says:

"Both are limited and unlimited spirits, for the supreme is that which they call endless light ..." *Bundahishn*, Ch. 1, § 5, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, p. 4.

Now if you consider that the Divine is called 'endless light', with the frequently used the epithet *xʷadāitā* 'self-made', that is used with 'endless light' in YAv. texts, we would have to conclude that the quality of being which is paradise, 'divine' is 'self made' ~ an idea that exactly reflects what we see in the Gathas.

²⁷ Both Mills and Darmesteter translate this popular phrase (*vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām*) interpretively ~ as a *place*, rather than a *state of being*.

Darmesteter as an 'abode'; "... the bright, all-happy blissful abode of the holy ones." *Sirozah* 1.27 SBE Vol. 23, p. 11.; however, the word 'abode' or 'house' does not appear in the Av. text of this phrase.

Mills as 'Heaven' (a place) and 'world/life', ~ the latter being less interpretive.

"...even Heaven, the best world of the saints, the shining and all glorious!" *Visp.* 7.1, SBE 31, p. 345.

"... (heaven) the best life of the saints, the radiant, all-glorious.' *Yy9.19* SBE 31, p. 236.

²⁸ Skjaervo 2003 shows stem *raocah-* as a ntr. noun, and also as an adj. Thus the word *raocayhām* is a noun ('light'), or an adj. ('light-filled'). Jackson 1892 shows, as a general rule, that the *-ayhām* inflection is acc. sg. for ntr. *-ah* stem nouns (§ 339 p. 97). Thus *raocayhām* is acc. sg. of *raocah-*. Skjaervo 2006 shows a related adj. *raocōyhvañt-* 'full of light, with light' (or as I would translate it 'possessing light'). But the *-ayhām* inflection is not used for any declension shown by Jackson 1892 for *-vañt-* stems.

²⁹ The popular description of the 'good' reward as a state of being (the 'most-good existence of the truthful, light, all-happiness/enlightenment', my translation) appears as follows in these YAv. texts.

Yy9.19 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 1P. p. 44,

Yy11.10 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 1P. p. 57,

Yy16.7 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 1P p. 68,

Yy62.6 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ... Geldner 1P. p. 215,

Yy68.5 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ... Geldner 1P. p. 226;

Yy68.11 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 1P. p. 227,

Yy68.13 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 1P. p. 228,

Visp. 7.1 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide* ∴ *raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 2P. p. 12,

Visp. 23.1 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 2P p. 30,

Sirozah 1.27 and 2.27 ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* ∴ Geldner 2P p. 266.

Rashn Yasht, (Yt.12.36) ... *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xʷāθrām*... Geldner 2P p. 167;

Hormezd Yasht (Yt.1.33) is a quotation of *Yy68.11*,

Fragment 23.8 (*Afrin Paighambar Zartust*) and *Fragment 24.5*, (SBE 23 pp. 327, 329). Geldner does not include the Av. text of these Fragments.

This phrase "serves as a conclusion to all Yashts." (Darmesteter SBE Vol. 23, p. 34, and ft. 3).

And it appears in the Khordeh Avesta prayers as the last line of the *Ahmai Raeshcha* prayer (which is a quotation of Yy68.11).

Therefore this phrase *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide raocanhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* (with and without the *yazamaide*) is recited not only in the foregoing texts, but also each time the *Ahmai Raeshcha* prayer is required to be recited throughout the Avestan texts. This is why I call it one of the most popular descriptions of the existence (or state of being) that is the 'good' reward in YAv. texts. The following details the contexts in which the foregoing description of the 'good' reward appears.

In Yy9.19, and Yy11.10 it is the Indo-Iranian deity Haoma who is beseeched for the 'most-good existence of the truthful, light, all-happiness/enlightenment', in a context that does not specifically address whether the existence intended is mortal, non-mortal, or both.

In Yy16.7 this phrase simply describes a quality of existence that is worshipped/celebrated.

In Yy62.6 it is (the spiritual essence of) fire (originally a metaphor for truth) that is beseeched for teachers who will instruct the reciter so that he may obtain this most-good existence (*vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocanhām vīspō.xʷāθrām*) "now and for evermore" (quoting from Mills SBE 31, p. 315) ~ clearly an existence in both this (mortal) life and the (non-mortal) afterlife.

Yy68.5. Parenthetically, this entire Yasna is filled with beautiful strands of Zarathushtra's thought even though the entities addressed are an unspecified "Ahurian One" ~ probably Anahita ~ and the waters §§ 6 and 10 (a function of the syncretization).

Regarding Yy68.5, the immediately preceding § 4, is a separate sentence, starting after, and ending with, an Av. punctuation stop [••] and says (my translation) 'for the enlightenment of thoughts [*sūkāi manañhe*], for the enlightenment of words [*sūkāi vacañhe*], for the enlightenment of actions [*sūkāi šyaoθnahe*], for the preparation of the soul of the most-truthful [*ašavastanqm*].' Then in § 5 the petitioner requests the most good existence of the truthful, light, all happiness/enlightenment, *and* manly and legitimate offspring who may promote the petitioner's house, village, tribe and province (Mills, SBE 31, p. 321). So is his request for the most good existence in this life? in the afterlife? Difficult to say from the context.

In Yy68.11, (a section highly regarded by the ancients ~ quoted in the *Hormezd Yasht*, and inserted in the Khordeh Av. prayers as the *Ahmai Raeshcha*) this most-good existence (*vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocanhām vīspō.xʷāθrām*) is one of the blessings requested for the person being blessed. The blessings are material and spiritual ones, interwoven, and end with this most-good existence, in a way which (once again) suggests that this requested state of being commences in this life and eventually is attained completely a non-mortal existence.

In Yy68.12 - 13 the words describing the conduct that earns this most-good existence are quite lovely, and reflect the thought of the Gathas. Here is Mills' translation. He has inserted some of his interpretive aids in round parentheses but not others. Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner which I sometimes translate].

§ 12 " ... do ye grant ... to us colleagues, and disciples, ... men and women, as well as children, and maidens of the field

[§ 13] who think good only, for the overwhelming of oppression and of malice, in the raids of the invader and in face of foes who hate. Grant to us both the desire of, and the knowledge of that straightest path [*razištahe paθō*] the straightest because of righteousness [*yō asti razištō ā ašāt* ~ literally 'which is the straightest all the way to the true (correct) order of existence], and of (Heaven) the best life of the saints, shining, all glorious [*vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocanhām vīspō.xʷāθrām* 'the most-good existence of the truthful, light, all-happiness']." Mills SBE 31, p. 323; Geldner 1P, p. 228.

So here again (as in the Gathas) the 'good' reward is in the path of truth, and also is its ultimate attainment ~ the end (in an afterlife) ~ pure Zarathushtra.

In *Visp.* 7.1, 'house of song' (in YAv. *garō nmānəm*) is mentioned in parallel with 'the most-good existence of the truthful (which is) 'light, all-happiness/enlightened' ~ both are descriptions of the same quality of existence ~ the paradise that man is capable of attaining which is also the existence of the Divine (see *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*).

Visp. 7.1 "... *garō. nmānəm. ahurahe. mazdā. yazamaide.∴ vahištəm. ahūm. ašaonqm. yazamaide.∴ raocanhəm vīspō.x'āθrəm* •• Geldner 2P. p. 12;

'... the house of song of Wisdom the Lord, we worship; the most-good existence of the truthful we worship; light, all-happiness/enlightenment.' *Visp.* 7.1, my translation.

Did the author of this section, *Visp.* 7.1 understand that 'house' was a metaphor for a state of being, (as it is in the Gathas see *The Houses of Paradise & Hell*)? I think he did. The *Visperad* has some beautiful strands of Zarathushtra's thought, indicating that the author(s) of such strands understood his teachings.

Visperad 23.1 is very close to the ideas of the Gathas. It celebrates the superlative of intrinsic goodness and the (true) correct order of existence in a beautiful interplay in mortal and non-mortal existence.

Most-good [*vahišta-*] (is) Wisdom the Lord (whom) we worship/celebrate,
 Most-good [*vahišta-*] (are) the undying beneficial ones [*aməša- spənta-*] (which) we worship/celebrate,
 Most-good [*vahišta-*] (is) the truth possessing [*ašavan-*] man (whom we worship/celebrate,
 Most-good [*vahišta-*] (is) the true order of existence [*aša-*] (which) we worship/celebrate,
 Most-good [*vahišta-*] (are) the lights (which) we worship/celebrate ...
 Most-good [*vahišta-*] (is) the existence of the truth possessing (which) we worship/celebrate ~ light, all-happiness/enlightenment (*vahištəm ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide raocanhəm vīspō.x'āθrəm*),
 Most-good [*vahišta-*] (is) the way of the most-good existence, (which) we worship/celebrate (*vahištahe aṅhəuš vahištqm ayanqm yazamaide*). My translation.

In *Sirozah* 2 § 27, we see the same idea of celebrating/worshipping the most good existence (which is divine).

... *vahištəm ahūm ašaonqm yazamaide raocanhəm vīspō.x'āθrəm* Geldner 2P p. 266.

'... the most-good existence of the truthful we worship, light, all-happiness/enlightenment.' My translation.

Sirozah 1 § 27 is an abbreviation of the foregoing.

The *Rashn Yasht*, Yt.12.36, which contains this phrase is quoted in the main part of this chapter.

The *Hormezd Yasht* Yt.1.33 is a quotation of Yy68.11, (discussed above). Darmesteter's translation of it (Yt. 1.33) appears in SBE 23 p. 34; Geldner does not include the full translation ~ identifying it as the *Ahmai Raescha* prayer (which is a quotation of Y68.11, see above).

YAv. *Fragment* 23.7 - 8 (*Afrin Paighambar Zartust*) and *Fragment* 24.5 (*Vishtasp Yasht*): these YAv. texts are not included in Geldner, but Darmesteter's translation of the phrase in each of these *Fragments* is identical to his translation of the phrase in *Sirozah*.

Fragment 23.7 - 8, is a mix of material and spiritual blessings (Zarathushtra purportedly blessing King Vishtaspa), one of which is the popular phrase of the most good existence in this life, and is quoted in a ft. below.

In *Fragment* 24.5 this most good existence appears to be in the afterlife. It is quoted in a ft. below.

³⁰ Skjaervo 2003 says that *ašavastəma-* is the superlative degree of *ašavan-*. The literal meaning of *ašavan-* is 'possessing truth' (see *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*). So its superlative degree *ašavastəma-* means 'most-truth-possessing'.

³¹ The (conjectured) ntr. noun stem *miθra-* means 'contract' (Skjaervo 2006). Its abl. pl. declension appears in the Gatha verse Y46.5, "The man of good lineage, who is master of a house, should respectfully receive any person coming

(to him), be it in consequence of an order, or (other) pacts [*miθrōibyō* abl. pl.] ..." Y46.5, Insler 1975. Even allowing for translation differences, *miθrōibyō* cannot be a reference to the deity Mithra in this Gatha verse because its declension is plural.

³² *vərəθrayna-* 'victory' is frequently used in YAv. texts as the victory of 'good' over 'evil'.

³³ ... *vanaiñtīmca uparatātəm yəm ašahe vahištahe* ...

'... and the winning [*vanaiñtīmca*] ascendance [*uparatātəm*], that [*yəm*] of the most-good true order of existence ...' Mihir Yt. 10.33; my translation.

Skjaervo 2003 shows *vanaiñtī-* < *vanañt-* present participle of *van-*: victorious. Thus I translate *vanaiñtīmca* as 'and the winning'; Darmesteter translates it 'and the crushing'.

³⁴ Skjaervo 2003 surmises that *paiti.paršti-* means 'study'.

³⁵ SBE 23, pp. 127 - 128; Avestan words from Geldner 2P p. 132.

³⁶ For an understanding of *spənta-* and *mąθra-* see *Part One: The Beneficial Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*; and *Part One: Manthras, An Introduction*.

³⁷ The *Mihir Yasht*, Yt. 10.58, SBE 23, p. 133.

³⁸ The *Mihir Yasht*, Yt. 10.5, addressing Mithra, a pre-Zarathushtria deity,

"May he come to us for help! May he come to us for ease! may he come to us for joy! May he come to us for mercy! May he come to us for health! May he come to us for victory [*vərəθraynāi*]! May he come to us for bliss! [*ašavastāi* 'for a most-truth-possessing (existence)']!..." *Mihir Yasht* Yt. 10.5, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23 pp. 120 - 121; Av. words from Geldner 2P p. 126.

³⁹ *paiti* + gen. = 'for' (Hintze's 1994 glossary),

aparayā In Hintze's 1994 glossary *apara-* is an adj. "posterior, later";

In Skjaervo 2003 *apara-* means 'future, later, henceforth'

vyarəθyayā in Hintze's 1994, glossary *vyarəθya-* is an adj. "undisputed"; Skjaervo's 2003 and 2006 glossaries do not show this word.

⁴⁰ I am indebted to Hintze 1994 for pointing out that these parts of the *Zamyad Yasht* are identical with the *Farvardin Yasht*, Yt. 13, §§ 133, 134, and 135, (set forth in Geldner 2P p. 200).

⁴¹ Detailed in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*.

⁴² SBE 31, p. 308; Avestan words transliterated (but in stem form) from Geldner 1P p. 206. Mills translates *haurvatāt-* as 'Weal' (a happiness that is well-being). Insler 1975 translates it as 'completeness'. Other opinions and a discussion on the meaning of this key word, *haurvatāt-*, are given in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

⁴³ Avestan words transliterated (but in stem form) from Geldner 1P p. 222 (for Yy65.15) and p. 181 (for Y51.7).

⁴⁴ The meaning of *dąmi* here is both uncertain and also difficult to translate into (linguistically exact) English. Darmesteter translates it "creature" giving it a nom. sg. value for each amesha spenta, and a nom. du. value for *haurvatāt-* and *aməratāt-* (his translation of this section Yt. 1.25 is given verbatim below). But, with respect, I do not think that *dąmi* here is "creature", in that the attributes of the divine in Yt. 1.25 are not here living beings, but concepts (as demonstrated by the fact that the last two are called the reward).

I therefore think that the closest English equivalent in *meaning* (although not the exact linguistic translation) for *mana dąmi* is '(of) my giving' and to that end offer the following explanation.

dāmi derives from the verb *dā-* which means 'to give, produce, make, establish' etc. And Skjaervo 2006 shows a number of nouns that are derived from this verb *dā-*, e.g. *dātar-* 'giver, maker, establisher'; *dāh-* 'gift'; *dāta-* 'established rules' etc.

According to Beekes 1988, *dāmi-* is a fem. noun, and means "creation", p. 124.

According to Skjaervo 2006, the verb *dā-* also means 'to tie' from which he derives the following nouns ~ *dāman-* ntr. "net, web"; and *dāmi-* masc. "*web-holder" (showing the declensions *dāmiš* nom. sg.; *dāmitm* acc. sg.; and *dāmōiš* gen. sg. in GAv.).

In the Gathas, 'creation' is an act of birthing (*zqθa-*), generating, giving, from the primordial way of being (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*). Thus, (following Beekes 1988) I am inclined to think that the author of Yt. 1.25 used *mana dāmi* as an act of 'creation' that is a giving from oneself. But today, 'creation' is understood through the mindset of dominant religions which view 'creation' in an entirely different way ~ not as a giving from oneself. I therefore think that the closest English equivalent in *meaning* (although not the exact linguistic translation) for *mana dāmi* is '(of) my giving'.

⁴⁵ Skjaervo 2003 shows *parō.asna-* 'future'. In the compound word *parō.asti* (in Yt. 1.25) the second word *asti* has more than one meaning ~ one of which is literally 'bones' (pl.) (Skjaervo 2003 shows "*ast-*, pl. *asti* n.: bone"; also *asti* m.: guest; and *asti* 'is', from the verb *ah-* 'to be').

⁴⁶ Here is Darmesteter's translation,

"Here is Vohu-Mano, [*ida asti vohu manō*]
 my creature O Zarathushtra! [*mana dāmi zaraθuštra*]
 here is Asha-Vahishta, [*ida ašəm yač vahištəm*]
 my creature, O Zarathushtra! [*mana dāmi zaraθuštra*]
 here is Khshathra-Vairya, [*ida x šaθrəm vairīm*]
 my creature, O Zarathushtra! [*mana dāmi zaraθuštra*]
 here is Spenta-Armaiti, [*ida spənta ārmaitiš*]
 my creature, O Zarathushtra! [*mana dāmi zaraθuštra*]
 here are Haurvatat and Ameretat, [*ida haurvata amərətāta*]
 who are the reward of the holy ones [*yōi stō miždəm ašaonqm*]
 when freed from their bodies, [*parō.asti jasəntqm*]
 my creatures, O Zarathushtra!" [*mana dāmi zaraθuštra* ∴]
 Yt. 1.25, SBE 23, p. 31; the Avestan words transliterated from Geldner 2P p. 66.

⁴⁷ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

⁴⁸ The evidence from the Gathas that all of the attributes of the divine exist in man (incompletely) except for the last two (completeness and non-deathness) which he is capable of attaining is detailed in chapters 1.2 to 1.8 of *Part One*.

⁴⁹ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*; *Asha & the Checkmate Solution*; and *The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

⁵⁰ Hintze 1994, p. 48.

⁵¹ As detailed in *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*.

⁵² Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha, and in Kent 1950 p. 170 under arta-*.

⁵³ Inslar 1975, p. 172, commenting under Y30.9.

⁵⁴ Here are the entire verses Y30.7 and 8 (there are no capital letters in Av. script),

a. ['But to this \(mortal existence\) he comes, with \(good\) rule, with good thinking, and with the true \(correct\) order of existence,](#)

- b. and enduring embodied truth gives (them) form, breath.
 c. He shall be here for the protection of these (mortals), just as (he shall be) the first (to so protect) during the repayments through (molten) metal.' Y30.7, my translation; discussed in detail in *Part Six: Yasna 30.7*, with other translations given for comparative purposes.

"(to the Wise Lord). And thus, when the punishment [*kaēnā* 'repayment'] for these sinners [*aēnanhqm* 'of these wrongdoings'] shall come to pass, then for Thee, Wise One, shall the rule of good thinking be at hand, in order to be announced to those, Lord, who shall deliver deceit into the hands of truth." Y30.8, Insler 1975. See *Part Three: Adverse Consequences, Not Punishment*, for a discussion of the many different translation choices made here by linguists for *kaēnā* and *aēnanhqm*, with which I (respectfully) disagree.

This verse expresses the idea that the adverse consequences of wrongdoings (under the law of consequences) bring about the rule of truth and good thinking (by changing preferences, changing minds), enabling us to deliver untruth into the hands of truth.

⁵⁵ Here, for comparative purposes is the Insler 1975 translation of this phrase in Y30.9,

aṭcā tōi vaēm hyāmā yōi īm frašāēm kərənaon āhum
 "Therefore may we be those who shall heal this world!" Y30.9.

⁵⁶ The prefix *fra-* / *frā-* is frequently used in GAv. in the sense of 'forth'; Skjaervo (2006) shows the following,
fra.aēš- (under *aēš-* he shows 'to set in motion', and with *frā-* 'to send forth'
fra.dax š- (under *dax š-* he shows 'to *hit the mark(?)', and with *frā* 'to launch')
fra.mrao- (under *mrao-* 'to say, to speak', and with *frā-* 'to proclaim')
fra.par- (under *par-* 'to cross', and with *frā* 'to cross (over)')
fra.vat- (under *vat-* 'to inspire(?)', and with *frā* 'to make known').

⁵⁷ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

⁵⁸ See *Part Three: Fravashi*.

⁵⁹ *cinah-* means 'loving' (Skjaervo 2006). So when added to *aša-* as in *ašacinah-* we get 'truth-loving'.

⁶⁰ SBE 31, p. 275; (Mills ft. 2 "Pahlavi frashakard kardaran."); Geldner 1P p. 89.

⁶¹ *Visperad* 11.7 "... Anghuyu [name of a person] who hath loved righteousness [*ašacinahō* 'of truth-loving (nature)'] together with all the holy Fravashis of the saints [*vīspābyō ašaonibyō fravašibyō* 'to all the fravashis of the truthful'] of those now dead, and of those of the living, and of those of men unborn, of the prophets [*saošyantqm* 'saviors/benefitters'] that shall serve us, bringing on the renovation [*frašō.carəθrqm* '(the) making truth-healed'] of the completed world." Mills translation SBE 31, p. 351; Avestan words from Geldner 2P p. 17. Notice, *saošyant-* 'savior/benefitter' has the same meaning as in the Gathas Y48.12 ~ those who translate the teachings (of the path of truth) into words and actions of truth (see *Part One: A Question of Salvation*).

In Yy62.3, 'fire' ~ the material metaphor for truth ~ is seen as bringing about the healing of existence, just as it is in the Gathas, where fire is linked with the law of consequences which heals existence of evil ~ enabling its evolution to the true (good) order of existence.

a. *saoci.buye. ahmya. nmāne.*

b. *maṭ.saoci.buye. ahmya. nmāne.*

c. *raocahi.buye. ahmya. nmāne.*

d. *vax šaθi.buye. ahmya. nmāne. darəγəmcit aipi. zrvānəm.*

e. *upa. sūrqm. frašō.kərətīm.*

f. *hadā. sūrayā. vaṅhuyā. frašō.kərətōit. ♫ Yy62.3, Geldner 1P p. 214.*

a. "May you be aflame in this house;

- b. may you be aglow in this house';
 c. may you be light in this house
 d. may you be the Word in this house (for) a long time indeed hereafter
 e. in life-giving strength, making existence healed,
 f. all the way along to existence made healed, (which is) of good, of life-giving strength.' Yy62.3, my translation. Notice, the 'fire/light' is equated with the Word (which is the path of truth), and *frašō.karaiti-* appears twice ~ as the path and as the end. And this healed existence is the true (correct, good) order of existence, which is brought about by fire, the material metaphor for the true order of existence; *sūra-* as 'life-giving strength' is close to Skjaervo 2006 ('vitalizing strength'). Here I think the notion of 'life-giving' is a play of words on 'non-deathness' (*amərətāt-*). We see the same word play, (although with a different word) in Y30.4 which is discussed in detail in Part Six: *Yasna 30.3 and 4*.

Would you say the author of this YAv. passage understood the Gathas? I think he did.

Here is Mills' translation which is somewhat free, but gets the point across.

- a. "Be now aflame within this house;
 b. be ever without fail in flame;
 c. be all ashine within this house;
 d-f. be on thy growth within this house; for long time be thou thus to the furtherance of the heroic (renovation), to the completion of (all) progress, yea, even till the good heroic (millennial) time when that renovation shall have become complete." Yy 62.3, SBE 31, p. 314.

⁶² *Zamyad Yasht*, Yt. 19.11, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23 p. 290; Avestan words from Geldner 2P p. 244. The very next section (§ 12) continues the understanding of *frašō.karaiti-* in the immediately preceding § 11, but along lines that are less material. Darmesteter's translation is very interpretive ~ in fact a bit 'free'. Hintze's somewhat less so. I give you the YAv. text and these two translations for comparative purposes. I would translate *būn. gaēθā. amaršantīš. yā. ašahe. saṇvhaiṭīš. ništaṭ. paiti. drux š. nāšāite. yadāṭ. aiwiciṭ. jaṇmaṭ. ašavanəm. mahrkaθāi. aom. ciθrəmca. stīmca. āθatca. mare. nāšātaēca. mairyō. aθa. ratuš* as '~ so also the judgment (in accord with truth)' (see Part Three: *Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyō) An Analysis*).

Yt. 19.12 *bun. gaēθā. amaršantīš. yā. ašahe. saṇvhaiṭīš. ništaṭ. paiti. drux š. nāšāite. yadāṭ. aiwiciṭ. jaṇmaṭ. ašavanəm. mahrkaθāi. aom. ciθrəmca. stīmca. āθatca. mare. nāšātaēca. mairyō. aθa. ratuš*• Geldner 2P p. 244.

Hintze 1994

Av. words in square brackets indicate Hintze's emendations (*) or different mss. choices than Geldner's.

Yt. 19.12 "The world of Truth will be [*būn*] undecaying from generation to generation [**saṇvhaiṭīš*]. Falsehood will be returned to the place [**niš. taṭ. paiti. *nāšāite.*] where it had come from to destroy the truthful one, himself, his family and existence [*stīmca*]. The (female) villain [*maire*] will be terrified, and the lawless [**aratus*] (male) villain will disappear [**nāšātaēca*]." Hintz p. 15.

Darmesteter

Yt. 19.12 When the creation will grow deathless ~ the prosperous creation of the Good Spirit, ~ and the Druj shall perish, though she may rush on every side to kill the holy beings; she and her hundred-fold brood shall perish, as it is the will of the Lord." SBE 23, p. 290.

In addition to the descriptions of *frašō.karaiti-* in Yt. 19. 9 - 12 (discussed in the main chapter and above), we see almost identical descriptions in other parts of the *Zamyad Yasht*, specifically:

Almost identical to §§ 11 - 12, are §§ 19 - 20, but in the preceding §§ 14 - 18 it is the amesha spenta (attributes that make a being divine) that will make existence healed according to wish [*frašəm vasna ahūm*] as described in § 19.

⁶³ Geldner 2P p. 266.

⁶⁴ The word *yazamaide* is usually (and correctly) translated as 'we worship'. And it is true that the YAv. texts place a high emphasis on elaborate rituals as the way to worship. But the Avestan notion of worship includes the idea of celebration, especially in passages which are not about rituals. The Gathas contain no rituals (although ritual offerings such as milk, butter, and bread are used there as metaphors corresponding with offerings of truth and good thinking), and indeed, Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate *yaz-* words in the Gathas, sometimes as 'worship', sometimes as 'sacrifice', and sometimes as 'celebrate' ~ which correspond exactly with how *yaz-* words are used in YAv. texts. See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

⁶⁵ In YAv., 'abode' or 'house' is *nmana-* (Skjaervo 2003). This section (*Sirozah* 2.27) has neither *nmana-* nor any synonym for 'abode' or 'house'. But Darmesteter has 'abode' in his (somewhat) free translation.

"We sacrifice unto the shining Heavens; we sacrifice unto the bright, all happy, blissful abode of the holy ones."
Sirozah 2.27, Darmesteter translation. SBE 23, p. 19.

⁶⁶ Geldner 2P p. 262.

⁶⁷ Darmesteter's translation of *Sirozah* 1.27 is, "To the high, powerful heavens; to the bright, all-happy blissful abode of the holy ones." SBE 23, p. 11.

⁶⁸ GA. *garō dāmāna-* is YAv. *garō nmāna-* and almost all translators of whom I am aware have translated this term 'house of song'. Hintze 1994 alone translates *gar-* as 'welcome' and *garō nmāna-* as the 'house of welcome', in the glossary of her translation of the *Zamyad Yasht*, p. 45. She does not discuss (in her English translation) how she arrived at this conclusion. Her English translation is an abbreviated version of her German translation.

⁶⁹ *Sirozah* 2.30 is one such ambiguous passage ~ an ambiguity increased by uncertainties in translation.

I do not know the mss. on which Darmesteter depended for his translation. He shows the Pahlavi title of *Sirozah* 2.30 as "Aneran" which in YAv. is *anayra* ~ 'endless, infinite' (a state of being? a place?). Geldner does not show titles for any of the sections (indicating that the Av. mss. available to him, or which he preferred, did not have such titles).

Here are the first four sentences of *Sirozah* 2.30, in Avestan (transliterated) with my translation. I have numbered the lines for easy reference. Words in square brackets are my suggestions.

1. *anayra. raocā. xʷadātā. yazamaide.*
2. *raox šnəm. garō nmānəm. yazamaide.*
3. *misvānəm. gātūm. xʷadātəm. yazamaide.*
4. *cinvaṭpərətūm. mazdaḍātəm. ašaonīm. yazamaide. ... Sirozah 2.30 Geldner 2P p. 267.*

1. 'The endless lights, self-made, we celebrate; [paradise]
 2. The light-filled house of song, we celebrate; [paradise]
 3. The [*misvānəm* 'mixed'?] self made [*xʷadātəm*] place [*gātūm*] we celebrate; [the in-between place?]
 4. The bridge of deciding, Wisdom-made, truth~possessing, we celebrate; ...' [the transition to the above?]
- Sirozah* 2.30.

Lines 1 and 2: The terminology of lines 1. and 2. show that they are parallel descriptions of the same 'good' reward ~ paradise. The author well may have thought the 'endless lights' (line 1) were a state of being (a personification of truth). But we cannot tell whether he thought this state of being existed in a good place (line 2) ~ taking 'house' literally instead of as a metaphor (as in the Gathas). Even if he did, it is interesting that this place that is the paradise of 'endless lights' (personified truth, line 1) was thought to be *xʷadātā* 'self-made' ~ an echo perhaps of the earlier (Gatha) teaching that we make our existence into the state of being that is the true order of existence (paradise) by following the path of truth (with mutual, loving help) and evolving to its complete attainment (see *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*). The meaning of *xʷadāta-* is discussed in a ft. above.

Line 3. Skjaervo 2003 shows the stem *gātu-* means 'place' in YAv. (although he says it means 'road, way to go' in GAv. Skjaervo 2006), and Jackson 1892 shows that the *-ūm* inflection (*gātūm*) is acc. sg. for masc. and fem. *-u* stem nouns (§ 262 p. 77). Therefore *gātūm* is the object of the verb *yazamaide*.

The word form *xʷadātəm* 'self made' is also acc. sg.

I am uncertain about the meaning of *misvānəm*; Skjaervo 2006 and 2003 do not show this word (in stem form); neither do Beekes' nor Jackson's Avestan indices. Reichelt 1911 shows an adj. stem *misvan-* which he says means 'mixed', explaining that (as a noun) it means 'the place of the mixed' ~ the place to which those go, whose good and bad deeds are in balance (equal, 50% ~ 50%). Like the other words before the verb (*yazamaide*) in line 3., *misvānəm* is acc. sg., (for stems ending in a consonant) so I am inclined to think it is an adj., (along with *xʷadātəm* 'self made') describing *gātūm* 'place'. Darmesteter translates line 3 as another description of 'paradise' which, with respect, I do not think is correct.

Does this line 3 represent the beginnings of the idea found in much later Pahlavi texts of an in-between place 'Hamastagan' ~ between a very good existence in a good place ('heaven'); and a very bad existence in a bad place? Discussed in *Part Three: Heaven & Hell In Pazand & Pahlavi Texts*. It is possible, but I have not found this idea (of an in-between place Hamastagan) in any Avestan text (so far as I am aware ~ I may have missed it). On the other hand, the word *misvānəm* may have two entirely different meanings, and line 3 may be an Av. phrase that has not yet been decoded.

Line 4. I think this line probably shows that the author of this passage thought of the descriptions in lines 1 and 2 to be paradise (a good state of being in a (good) place); and perhaps line 3 to be a mixed state of being in a place that was something less than the 'house of song'; and this line 4 describes the transition ('bridge') to the above ~ thus celebrating the ultimate 'good' reward (the state of being that is paradise) and what leads to it. Except for one very late YAv. Fragment, the notion of the 'bad' reward as a bad place is absent from Av. texts (that were written during Avestan times) ~ detailed in *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

Here is Darmesteter's translation of these four lines. In his translation, the first 3 lines are each 'heaven' a place. He translates *raocā* in line 1 as 'luminous space' (influenced perhaps by his mind-set that 'heaven' is a place). Skjaervo 2006 translates the stem *raocah-* as 'light, and so does Reichelt 1911 (and all other linguists today, of whom I am aware).

"We sacrifice unto the eternal [*anayra*] and sovereign [*xʷadātā*] luminous space [*raocā*];
we sacrifice unto the bright Garo-nmana;
we sacrifice unto the sovereign [*xʷadātā*] place [*gātūm*] of eternal Weal [*misvānəm*];
we sacrifice unto the Chinvat-bridge, made by Mazda; ..." *Sirozah* 2.30, Darmesteter translation SBE 23, p. 20.

⁷⁰ Here for comparative purposes is Mills' translation of *Visp.* 7.1.

"And we sacrifice ... to the Garō Nmāna of Ahura even Heaven, the best world of the saints, the shining and all glorious!" *Visp.* 7.1, SBE 31, p. 345.

His translation is clearly influenced by his own mind-set of 'heaven' as a place.

⁷¹ SBE 23, p. 168.

⁷² The object of celebration in the *Rashn Yasht* is *Rashnu Razishta* ~ a name which indicates the qualities personified.

Darmesteter thinks that *rašnu razišta* means "the truest True", (SBE 23, p. 168 introduction to the *Rashn Yasht*). Other linguists today translate it in a related but different way.

rašnu-

Insler 1989, says that the root *raz-* has generated a set of related terms ~ *ərəzu-* "straight originally, then true, right, honest"; *ārəzva-* 'honesty, righteousness'; *arštāt-* 'honesty, righteousness, and *rašnu-* 'justice' ~ all deriving from the root *raz-*, *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, # 2, p. 12, ft. 1, # 3 p. 17).

I see *rašnu-* as 'right judgment'. (The English word 'justice' carries with it some cultural baggage which is not in accord with Zarathushtra's thought, in my view).

Skjaervo 2003 thinks *rašnu-* means 'divine judge who weighs the soul's thoughts, words and deeds on his scale' (based perhaps on its later (allegorical) use in the Pazand story of what happens to the soul after death (discussed in *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*).

razišta-

Skjaervo 2006 says *razišta-* means 'straightest', the superlative of *ərəzu-* 'straight'.

Insler 1975 translates *razišta-* in Y33.1 as 'most just';

Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate *razišta-* in Y33.1 as 'most straight/just'.

In either event, 'straightness' (as in honesty) and justice (as in 'right judgment') are both concepts that are implicit in the true (correct, good) order of existence, and indeed, Zarathushtra calls the path of truth the 'straight path' (see *Part One: Truth, Asha, and Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*).

The qualities *rašnu-* and *razišta-* are among the qualities that exemplify the true (correct) order of existence, and in fact, *rašnu- razišta-* is described in this YAv. *Yasht* with other words that (in the Gathas) are used to describe the true (correct) order of existence ~ *ašāum* 'truthful one', and *spəništa-* 'most beneficial' Yt. 12.7 (Av. words from Geldner 2P p. 164).

⁷³ For an explanation of the 'spiritual essences' of material things or concepts, see *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*, and *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

⁷⁴ Geldner 2P p. 167.

⁷⁵ Here for comparative purposes is Darmesteter's translation of *Rashn Yasht* Yt. 12.35 - 37 from SBE 23, p. 177; the Avestan text has been transliterated from Geldner 2P p. 167, who abbreviates each section after the word *zbayamahi*.

yaṭciṭ. ahi. rašnvō. ašāum. upa. anayra. raocā. xʷadātā. zbayamahi. ... Yt. 12.35

"Whether thou, O holy Rashnu! art in the sovereign Light, we invoke his friendship... Yt. 12.35;

yaṭciṭ. ahi. rašnvō. ašāum. upa. vahištəm. ahūm. ašaonqm. raocəḥəm. vīspō.xʷāθrəm. zbayamahi. ... Yt. 12.36

"Whether thou, O holy Rashnu! art in the bright, all-happy abode of the holy Ones, we invoke his friendship ..." Yt. 12.36.

yaṭciṭ. ahi. rašnvō. ašāum. upa. raox šnāhe. garō.nmāne. zbayamahi. ... Yt. 12.37

"Whether thou, O holy Rashnu art in the shining Garo-demana, we invoke his friendship..." Yt. 12.37,

⁷⁶ If you are not interested in linguistics of these 2 sections, you may prefer to skip this footnote.

Here is are §§ 3 and 4 of the *Ardibehesht Yasht* which speak of the [house of song](#). In my view, the author of these two sections was aware that the [house of song](#) is a metaphor for a state of being, because the thoughts expressed in these 2 sections are very much in tune with the Gathas. And indeed, in § 4, the [house of song](#) is equated in a parallel way with the Lord Wisdom. However, there are translation uncertainties which I show in red font, and discuss below.

§ 3 *ādīm. [āaṭ mss. K36, Jm4] framraomi. ašəm. vahištəm. yezī. framraomi. ašəm. vahištəm. āaṭ. anyaešqm. yaṭ. aməšanqm. spəntanqm. hvāyaonəm. yim. pāiti. mazdā. humatāiš. yim. pāiti. mazdā. hūx tāiš. yim. pāiti. mazdā. hvarštāiš. garō.nmānē. ahurahe. hvāyaonəm.* Yt. 3.3, Geldner 2P p. 73 - 74.

§ 4 *garō.nmānəm. nərəyō. asti. ašāvaoyō. naēciš. drvatqm. ayene. paitiš. garō nmānəm. ravohu. ašāyaonəm. ciθrəm. ahurəm. mazdqm.:* Yt. 3.4, Geldner 2P p. 74.

My translation.

§ 3 'Then I speak forth (about) the true order of existence (which is) most good. For if I speak forth (about) the true order (which is) most good, then (I speak forth) of the other the amesha spenta which (is) **the good-way-of-living** [*hvāyaonəm*] which Wisdom protects with good thoughts, which Wisdom protects with good words, which Wisdom protects with good deeds **in the house of song** ~ '**the good-way-of-living**' [*hvāyaonəm*] of the Lord.' Ardibehesht Yasht, Yt. 3.3.

§ 4 'The **house of song** is for truth-possessing men; no one possessing untruth comes to **the house of song**, (which is) '**good-giving**' [*ravohu* nom. sg. ntr.], **alive with truth** [*ašāyaonəm*], light-filled; (no one possessing untruth comes to) the Lord Wisdom.' Yt. 3.4.

Linguistic discussion.

§ 3 *hvāyaonəm* '**(the) good-way-of-living**'; a tentative translation. I was unable to find any stem for this word in the glossaries of either Skjaervo 2006/2003 or Reichelt 1911.

Reichelt in his glossary states (under *hvā-*) that the prefix *hu-* 'good' often becomes *hvā-* in certain Av. words, and his glossary has examples of such words.

The stem *yao-/āyu-* is related to various Av. words having to do with 'life, living'.

Skjaervo's 2006 GAv. glossary shows *āyu-/yao-* 'lifespan' (2006). His 2003 YAv. glossary shows *āyu-/yao-* 'age, lifetime' (2003) ~ each of these definitions is a flavor of 'life, living'.

In § 3 we have *hvāyaonəm* 2 times ~ once in connection with the truth and the other amesha spenta (which are components of truth), and once in connection with Ahura. I think *hvāyaonəm* combines the prefix *hvā* 'good' with *yao-* pertaining to 'living'. So I translate *hvāyaonəm* as '**(the) good-way-of-living**', which fits both of its uses in § 3.

§ 4 *ašāyaonəm*. Here the first component of the word *ašā* is instr. sg. I therefore translate the combined word more literally as '**the way of living (that is) with truth**'; or in more fluent English as '**alive with truth**', used as an adj. The word describes acc. sg. ntr. *nmānəm* (stem *nmāna-*).

§ 4 *ravohu* is a puzzle to me. I was unable to find a stem for it in the glossaries of Skjaervo and Reichelt. Let us consider 3 potential alternatives, ending with the one I think most likely.

One alternative: Darmesteter translates *ravohu* as '**wide**' (which suggests that the **house of song** is 'place' rather than a state of being).

A second alternative: Skjaervo 2003 shows a ntr. noun *ravah-* meaning 'wide open space'.

Reichelt 1911 shows additional flavors of meaning for *ravah-* 'clear space, open country, freedom, liberty'.

And Jackson 1892 shows the *-ahu* inflection to be loc. pl. for masc./fem./ntr. *-ah-* stems (§ 339 p. 98);

So we have to question: Would *ravohu* be loc. pl. of *ravah-* used adverbially? If it is, then (using Skjaervo's and Reichelt's definitions):

(1) *ravohu* could mean '**in wide open spaces**', in which event, the author thought of the **house of song** as a place; but in light of the fact that all the other descriptions in these two sections are qualities, I am not persuaded that '**in wide open spaces**' fits his mind-set; or

(2) *ravohu* could mean '**in freedom**', (used as an adverb) in which event, its meaning would not pertain to the **house of song** ('... no one possessing untruth **in freedom** comes to **the house of song**,...) ~ in the sense that the untruthful cannot freely come to the house of song.

Third alternative: In YAv. the form *vohu* is used for several declensions, one of which is nom. sg. ntr. The formation of compound words follows certain rules, one of which is that the first part can be a verbal noun/stem (Beekes 1988 p. 104). Among GAv verb stems, Beekes shows *rā-* 'give' (p. 211). If GAv. *rā-* evolved into YAv. *ra-* then *ravohu* originally may have been a compound word that became one word '**giving-good**' ~ in the sense of a good, beneficial generosity which, (like *hudāh* 'beneficence') is a quality of the true order of existence ~ the state of being that is

Zarathushtra's paradise, which he calls the [house of song](#)). If the author of this Yasht intended this meaning, 'giving-good', he understood that the house of song was a metaphor for a state of being. This is the alternative I think he intended because all the other descriptions of the house of song in §§ 3 and 4 are good qualities ~ states of being.

§ 4 *ahurəm* and *mazdqm* are acc. sg. so this name would have to be the direct object of the verb 'comes to'. This necessitates the implied repetition of the previously expressed verb phrase (which implied verb phrase I have inserted in round parentheses before the acc. sg. name *ahurəm mazdqm*).

Darmesteter's translation.

The dots at the beginning of § 3 are Darmesteter's and indicate his opinion that some words are missing from this section. The words in round parentheses at the beginning of § 4 have been added by Darmesteter.

§ 3 ". . . I proclaim Asha Vahishta [*framraomi aṣəm vahištəm*] then easy is the way to the [abode](#) of the other Amesha Spentas which Ahura Mazda keeps with Good Thoughts, which Ahura Mazda keeps with Good Words, which Ahura Mazda keeps with Good Deeds;" *Ardibehesht Yasht*, Yt.3.3, SBE 23, p. 43;

§ 4 "(Easy is the way to the Garo-nmana of Ahura Mazda): the Garo-nmana is for the holy souls and no one of the wicked can enter the Garo-nmana and its bright, wide, holy ways; (no one of them can go) to Ahura Mazda." Yt. 3.4, SBE 23, p. 43. Words in round parentheses are his interpretive additions.

As you can see, Darmesteter's translation is somewhat 'free', and leaves out a number of Av. words.

⁷⁷ SBE 23, pp. 356 - 357.

⁷⁸ Yasht Fragment 22 appears in SBE 23, pp. 314 - 323. Darmesteter notes that the Parsis call *Fragments 21* (a eulogy on the Ashem Vohu) and 22 the 'Hadokht Nask' but their contents are not the same as the 'Hadokht Nask' (now lost) identified in the Pahlavi *Dinkard*. Darmesteter's Introduction, SBE 23, p. 311.

⁷⁹ Yasht Fragment 23, also called *Afrin Paighambar Zartusht*. It appears in SBE 23, pp. 325 - 328.

⁸⁰ Yasht Fragment 24, also called the *Vishtasp Yasht*. It appears in SBE 23 pp. 328 - 345.

⁸¹ In his introduction to the Yasht Fragments 23 and 24, and speaking of Fragment 24, Darmesteter points to the "very corrupt state of the text" and the fact that "many passages in it are incomplete quotations from the *Vendidad* or allusions to statements therein" SBE 23, p. 325. And we know that the *Vendidad* itself is in grammatically flawed YAv. indicating that it was written when the religious establishment was no longer fluent in the YAv. language. See *Part Five: The Vendidad, An Overview*. But (unlike the *Vendidad*) *Fragment 24* has many benign ideas about the religion as a way of living ~ thinking, speaking, acting, blessing.

⁸² These blessings which pertain to the King's earthly life are interesting because they show the things that were valued in that society and culture, and the qualities that were valued in their legendary heroes. Here are a few examples which you may find interesting ~ Zarathushtra (purportedly) speaking to Vishtaspa.

Fragment 23 Afrin Paighambar Zartusht (Darmesteter translation, SBE 23 pp. 325 et seq.).

"... Mayest thou be most beneficent, like Mazda!

... fiend smiting like Thraetaona,

... strong like Jamaspa,

... well-armed like Takhma-Urupa (23.2)

... glorious, like Yima Khshaeta, the good shepherd,

... instructed with a thousand senses, like Azi Dahaka of the evil law [?!? a puzzle!]

... a wise chief of assemblies like Urvakhshaya

... beautiful of body and without fault like Syavarshana (23.3)

... rich in cattle, like an Athwyanide,
 ... rich in horses, like Pourush-aspa,
 ... holy [*ašavan-* ? 'truth-possessing?'] like Zarathushtra Spitama (23.4), ...

May ten sons be born of you ... [no mention of daughters] (23.5),

Mayest thou follow a law of truth, like Rashnu [Right Judgment]..." (23.7),

"Let us embrace and propagate the good thoughts, good words, and good deeds that have been done, and that will be done here and elsewhere, that we may be in the number of the good." (Yt. 23.8);

Fragment 24 '...the perfume of his soul...' § 27 (rather lovely) and other interesting phrases.

⁸³ *Fragment 23.7 - 8 (Afrin Paighambar Zartust)*: "7 Mayest thou follow a law of truth like Rashnu [the spiritual essence of Right Judgment] ... Mayest thou be freed from sickness and death like king Husravah. 8. Then the blessing goes for the bright, all-happy, blissful **abode** of the holy Ones!" Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 327. In the *Shah Namah* which recounts stories of the legendary kings and heroes of ancient Iran, King Husravah was said to have been taken bodily into paradise ~ without dying.

Fragment 24.5 (Vishtasp Yasht): "And when thou hast fulfilled a duration of a thousand years, (mayest thou obtain) the bright, all-happy, blissful **abode** of the holy Ones." Darmesteter translation, SBE Vol. 23, p. 329. Identical to his translation in other texts of the words *vahištām ahūm ašaonqm raocayhām vīspō.xvāθrām*.

⁸⁴ Here is Darmesteter's translation of some sections of *Fragment 24* which mention the 'house of song' or an Av. word which Darmesteter translates as "Paradise".

§ 28. "Reciting the whole collection of the Staota Yesnya prayers brings one up all the way to the blessed **Garonmana**, the palace beautifully made. That indeed is the way." SBE Vol. 23, p. 335.

§ 32. "... We, the Amesha-Spentas, will come and show thee, O Zarathushtra! the way to that world to long glory in the spiritual world, to long happiness of the soul in Paradise;" A good existence in a good place?

§ 33 "To bliss and Paradise, to the **Garonmana** of Ahura Mazda, beautifully made and fully adorned, when his soul goes out of his body through the will of fate, when I, Ahura Mazda, gently show him his way as he asks for it." SBE Vol. 23, pp. 336 - 337. A good existence in a good place?

Section 28 is far removed from the Gathas, in its statement that paradise is earned by reciting prayers.

In §§ 32 and 33, not having the Av. text of this *Fragment*, I do not know the YAv. words which Darmesteter translates as "world" (*ahūm-* 'existence?') or "Paradise".

But § 32 echoes Zarathushtra's thought that the path to the Divine is the path of the amesha spenta ~ true order of existence, its good comprehension its beneficial embodiment in thought word and action, its good rule, a beneficial-sacred way of being. However here in § 32, the attributes of the divine (amesha spenta) may have been thought of as living beings ~ with no recollection remaining in the author's mind that in the Gathas, they are concepts ~ the path to the Divine ~ and characteristics of the Divine which also exist in man (except for the last two ~ completeness and non-deathness ~ which he is capable of attaining), and that in the Gathas, only infrequently are some of them referred to as allegories, (chapters 1.3 through 1.8 of *Part One* discuss each amesha spenta in the Gathas).

⁸⁵ SBE 23, pp. 314 - 318.

⁸⁶ See for example the stories in *Part One: Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories*.

⁸⁷ *Fragments 22 and 24* are the earliest texts in which this story is told about the personification of his goodness appearing to him after death as a beautiful maiden. Although the 'good thoughts, words and deeds' so often found in Av. texts are mentioned in this story, the 'good' deeds of the soul described here are a mix of ideas from the Gathas

and from the later syncretized religion of YAv. texts. Words in round parentheses are Darmesteter's. Words in square brackets are mine.

"... O thou youth of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, of good religion, I am thy own conscience [or *daēnā*-envisionment?!] Everybody did love thee for that greatness, goodness, fairness, sweet-scentedness, victorious strength and freedom from sorrow, in which thou dost appear to me; ... When thou wouldst see a man making derision and deeds of idolatry, or rejecting (the poor) and shutting his door, then thou wouldst sit singing the Gathas and worshipping the good waters and Atar, ... and rejoicing the faithful that would come from near or from afar." §§ 11 - 13, SBE 23, p. 316. Here the path taken (which results in paradise) has moved away from the Gathas in which it is the path of the true order and its components that result in their attainment (paradise).

This story is repeated in later texts with some differences, and more detail, (see *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*) ~ indicating to me that both were transmitting a more ancient story which may have been composed close to Zarathushtra's time ~ with perhaps different ideas of what constitutes a good envisionment personified as the beautiful maiden.

⁸⁸ See *Part One: A Question of Salvation*.

⁸⁹ SBE 23, p. 317.

⁹⁰ The Av. text of *Fragment 22* does not contain the word "Paradise" in Darmesteter's phrases "Good-Thought Paradise... Good-Word Paradise ... Good-Deed Paradise...". My generous friend Farrokh Vajifdar was kind enough to check the Av. text in Westergaard's collection of Av. texts, for me.

⁹¹ Discussed in *Part One: Zarathushtra's Paradise In This World & The Next*.

⁹² SBE 32, p. 318, ft. 1.

⁹³ These metaphors are detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*.

⁹⁴ As explained in *Part Five: The Vendidad, An Overview*, and *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

⁹⁵ Here are some examples of the way in which 'most good existence (*vahišta- ahu-*)' is earned in the *Vendidad* ~ all in an afterlife. The translation is Darmesteter's who translates *vahišta- ahu-* freely as 'abode' and 'paradise' instead of *most-good existence*. In square brackets, I have added the YAv. words from Geldner (in their various declensions), with my explanations where necessary. All these ways of earning the 'good' reward are very far removed from (and irreconcilable with) Zarathushtra's thought.

In Ch. 9, §§ 43 - 44, a person "who has cleansed from the Nasu [demon of defilement by dead matter] anyone defiled by her..." has for his reward "... The welfare of the blessed abode [*vahištahe aṅhəuš* gen. sg.] thou canst promise to that man, for his reward in the other world." Ch. 9, § 43 - 44, SBE 4, p. 130; Geldner 3P p. 78.

In Ch. 8, § 29, the author (unabashedly) puts the following words into Ahura Mazda's mouth. "And whosoever shall give to my Parodarsh bird his fill of meat, I Ahura Mazda, need not interrogate him any longer; he shall go directly to paradise [*vahištəm ... ahūm*]." Ch. 8, § 29, SBE 4, pp. 195 - 196; Geldner 3P p. 116.

Ch. 8, §§ 49 - 52, has an interesting treatment of the afterlife. Here, the author describes dakhmas as places of pollution, and has Ahura Mazda (purportedly) telling Zarathushtra, "...Urge everyone in the material world, O Spitama Zarathushtra! to pull down Dakhmas." § 50. And the reward for so doing is not only a remission of sins in this life (contrary to Zarathushtra's teachings) but also the following in an afterlife.

"Not for his soul shall the two spirits [*mainiyū*] wage war with one another; when he enters the blissful world [*vahištəm ... ahūm* 'the most-good existence'] ... I Ahura Mazda shall rejoice in him, saying: "Hail O man! thou who hast just passed from the decaying world into the undecaying one!" § 52, SBE 4, p. 87 Geldner.

By the time of the *Vendidad*, "*mainyu*" had become part of the proper name of two uncreated entities ~ the all good Spenta Mainyu (the Divine), and the all evil Angra Mainyu (the Devil) which in the Gathas are two ways of being, not two entities (see in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being Spenta Mainyu, and Does the Devil Exist?*). It is interesting (is it not?) that in even so late a text as the *Vendidad*, if we look past the priestly rules and the imagery of the two entities battling for the soul, we see the earlier idea of two ways of being in a person's own soul battling for ascendancy.

⁹⁶ SBE 4, p. 130; Av. words from Geldner 3P p. 78.

⁹⁷ SBE 4, pp. 86 - 87; Av. words from Geldner 3P p. 54.

⁹⁸ See in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu, and Does the Devil Exist?*

⁹⁹ See *Part One: Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories*.

¹⁰⁰ As explained in *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

¹⁰¹ See *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

¹⁰² SBE 4, pp. 211 - 215.

¹⁰³ Geldner 3P pp. 127 - 129.

¹⁰⁴ Darmesteter footnotes that the translation is doubtful in its details, but states that in light of the preceding § 27, there is little doubt that the sentence refers to future life, and notes, "Aspendiarji translates 'Shall the godly man ... arise (from the dead)...?' which seems to be the meaning of the Pahlavi Commentary too." SBE 4, p. 212, ft. 1. Physical resurrection is not an idea we find in the Gathas (nor is it consistent with Zarathushtra's framework of thought).

¹⁰⁵ Detailed in *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*.

¹⁰⁶ Discussed in *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*.

¹⁰⁷ Regarding the word *yaoždāθrayō* in § 33, Skjaervo 2003 defines *yaoždāθrya-* as "(who is) to be purified. Here, however, we have *yaoždāθrayō ašava* (both nom. sg.) which perhaps means the 'pure, truth-possessing one'.

¹⁰⁸ All the phrases in § 36 of the *Vendidad* are descriptions of the ultimate 'good' reward (in an afterlife), except for the last phrase, which states (in Darmesteter's translation) "... I invoke the sovereign place of eternal weal [*misvānahe gātvahe xʾadātahe*] and the Chinvat bridge made by Mazda [*cinvat.pərətūm mazdadātqm*]." SBE 4, p 215. With respect, Darmesteter's translation of the first part [*misvānahe gātvahe xʾadātahe*] is not accurate. This phrase (at the end of § 36) is a quotation from *Sirozah* 2.30, where it is not used to describe the 'good' reward (discussed in a ft. above). So this may be an instance of the *Vendidad's* flawed use of Avestan ~ quoting a phrase from *Sirozah* 2.30 which the author of § 36 did not understand.

¹⁰⁹ As detailed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.