

## Ashavan &amp; Dregvant.

The Avestan language itself has ambiguities which require a translator to make choices which, as a result, are necessarily interpretive.

The words *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* (in their various declensions),<sup>1</sup> involve two of these ambiguities, which in certain (sometimes key) verses make a material difference in our perceptions of Zarathushtra's thought. And in fact, in many verses, fine linguists have made translation choices for these words that are seriously inconsistent with the Zarathushtra's thought. So if we want to understand his intent (as accurately as we can) we need to see if they can be translated in a way that is linguistically sound, and consistent with his overall thought. That is the objective of this chapter.

*ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* are adjectives for *aša-* and *druj-* respectively,<sup>2</sup> so let us refresh our recollection of the meanings of these last two words. Their meanings have been explored in more detail in another chapter.<sup>3</sup> I will summarize them here.

*aša-* means the 'true (correct) order in the existences of matter and mind'. In the existence of matter, *aša-* means what is factually 'correct' ~ including the laws that order our universe ~ the laws of science. In the existence of mind, *aša-* also means what is 'correct' ~ all that is intrinsically 'right', 'good', ~ the values that order the existence of mind ~ which in the Gathas includes such qualities as goodness, truth, honesty, lovingkindness, generosity, compassion, caring, friendship, being beneficial, being just (as in being fair) et cetera. As you can see, there is no one-word English equivalent for *aša-*, so where one word is needed, I use (the less than adequate) 'truth' for short ~ encompassing the truths of matter and mind.

*druj-* in the Gathas, is used as the opposite of *aša-*,<sup>4</sup> so its meaning includes all that is not in accord with the true (correct, right, good) order of existence. In the Gathas, some of these qualities are ~ falsehood, harming, rage, injuring, cruelty, predatory violence, tyranny, bondage, injustice, greed, et cetera ~ all that is intrinsically 'wrong' and false. Once again, we have no one word equivalent in English, so I use 'untruth' for short. Insler 1975 uses 'deceit'.

*aša-* is a noun; *ašavan-* is its adjective and therefore includes the qualities of truth, goodness, all that is right.

*druj-* is a noun; *drəgvant-* is its adjective and therefore includes the qualities of what is false, wrong, ~ not in accord with the true order of existence.

So whatever short hand English equivalents we may use for them, we need to we keep in mind the full meaning of *aša-* and *druj-* in order to understand the full meaning of their respective adjectives *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-*.

In both Vedic and Avestan, adjectives which end in *-vant* indicate possession.<sup>5</sup> Thus the adj. *drəgvant-* would literally mean 'possessing untruth'. And in a similar way, the adj. *ašavan-* means 'possessing truth'.<sup>6</sup> Some translators (for example, Gershevitch),<sup>7</sup> have translated *ašavan-*, as 'owner of truth', (which at first thought is rather lovely). But the 'possession' which is part of the meaning of these adjectives is not ownership ~ which suggests both exclusivity and control over what is owned. In Zarathushtra's thought, the search for truth is incremental and on-going ~ a search from which he does not exempt himself.<sup>8</sup> So even he does not claim to have all the answers (or 'own truth'). I

think therefore a more literal translation for these two adjs., (consistent with fluent English), is more accurate as follows:

For the adj. *drəgvant-*, 'possessing untruth' (which in fluent English sometimes requires the translation 'untruthful'); and

For the adj. *ašavan-*, 'possessing truth' (which in fluent English sometimes requires the translation 'truthful').

In the Gathas, *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* have indeed been so translated as adjectives. For example,

"...The truthful Lord [*ahurəm ašavanəm*] ..." Y46.19, Insler 1975;

"...Where is the truthful Lord [*ahurəm ašavanəm*] ..." Y53.9, Insler 1975;

"...those who are the deceitful rulers [*sāstārō drəgvantō*] of the land ..." Y46.1, Insler 1975.

*When these adjectives are used as nouns.*

In Avestan, an adjective can also be used as a noun ~ a person, concept, activity, or other thing, which has the qualities of the adjective. To illustrate,

*vahišta-* is an adjective ~ the superlative degree of intrinsic 'goodness'. But *vahišta-* is also used as a noun for a most-good-one (person), or a most-good-thing (concept/conduct). For example,

*As an adjective.* "... best thinking [*vahištəm manō*]..." Y30.4, Insler 1975.

*As a noun that is a person.* "Thee, Best One [*θwā vahištā*]..." Y28.8, Insler 1975. Or literally 'Thee, Most-Good-One...!'

*As a noun that is a concept* ~ here the path of truth, "Listen with your ears to the best things [*vahištā*]..." Y30.2, Insler 1975.<sup>9</sup>

And there are many, many other examples in Avestan of adjectives being used as nouns that can be persons, or concepts, or activities or other things.

So under this rule of Avestan grammar, the adj. *ašavan-* and *drəgvant* can also be used in these various ways.

*As a noun that is a person.*

For *ašavan-* 'a truthful (one)', or more literally '(a person) possessing truth'.

For *drəgvant* 'an untruthful (one)', or more literally '(a person) possessing untruth'.

*As a noun that is a concept/quality/conduct.*

For *ašavan-* 'a truthful (thing)' or '(what is) truthful, or 'truthfulness',

For *drəgvant* 'an untruthful (thing)' or '(what is) untruthful, or 'untruthfulness'.

Because this ambiguity is inherent in the language itself, we have to figure out which choice Zarathushtra intends in a given verse, based on the context of the verse (micro context). And if the context is not decisive, we need to choose an alternative that is consistent with the song and Zarathushtra's overall system of thought (and common sense) ~ the macro context.

In the Gathas, the adjs. *ašavan-* 'possessing truth', and *drəgvant-* 'possessing untruth', are in fact often used as nouns for people who act in a truthful or untruthful way. And many such examples are a good contextual fit. Zarathushtra was persecuted by the powerful religious and secular establishment of his society because he spoke out against their corruption, greed, tyranny and oppression,<sup>10</sup> ~ qualities that are *not* in accord with the true (correct) order of existence (i.e. qualities that do not 'possess truth') ~ so it makes sense that he would call these priests, princes, and their

followers 'untruthful one(s)' ~ *drəgvant-* ~ used as a noun for people. A few such examples have been footnoted.<sup>11</sup>

But when he discusses the principles of his teachings, it is a different matter, and in some verses, translating these two adjectives ~ *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* ~ as persons, results in serious inconsistencies with, and distortions of, the rest of his teachings. Yet linguists have automatically translated *ašavan-* exclusively as 'truthful person(s)', and *drəgvant-* exclusively as 'untruthful person(s)'. This tendency has perhaps been influenced by the perception of Zoroastrianism as a conflict between two warring kinds of people ~ the 'good' and the 'bad', rather than two warring states of being within each person ('the more good and the bad' Y30.3, 'the more beneficial and the harmful' Y45.2, my translation).<sup>12</sup>

So how do we figure out Zarathushtra's intent when, in a given verse, the adjs. *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* are used as nouns? Is he referring to people, or to concepts/qualities?

Well, let us step back for a moment, and see if the ways in which he uses truth (*aša-*) and untruth (*druj-*) are helpful, because these are the nouns which have generated the adjectives *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-*. Here are a few verses that are helpful. And I will give them to you in the Insler 1975 translation, so that you can feel assured that I have not molded the evidence to suit my argument.

In Y44.14 he asks '...How might I deliver deceit [*druj-* 'untruth'] into the hands of truth [*aša-*] in order to destroy it in accord with the precepts of Thy teaching...?' Y44.13, Insler 1975. The 'precepts' of Wisdom's 'teaching' is the path of truth, the path of divine qualities (amesha spenta).<sup>13</sup> So this verse tells us that in his thought, it is untruth ~ a quality ~ that is destroyed. He similarly speaks of delivering "deceit [*druj-* 'untruth'] into the hands of truth [*aša-*]..." in Y30.8 Insler 1975.

"... If, ... one shall defeat deceit [*druj-* 'untruth'] by truth [*aša-*]..." Y48.1, Insler 1975. Here again, it is truth that defeats untruth ~ both qualities, not persons.

"... those who, by reason of the commandments of deceit [*druj-* 'untruth'], continue to destroy [*vīmarəncaitē* 'destroy as in kill']<sup>14</sup> the creatures of truth [*aša-*]..." Y31.1, Insler 1975. Here, "the creatures of truth" are those who are committed to following the path of truth (a quality). And those who kill, do so because they follow untruth (a quality).

"... the rich Karpan [a type of priest] chose the rule of tyrants and deceit [*druj-* 'untruth' a quality] rather than truth [*aša-* a quality]." Y32.12, Insler 1975.

And a key principle of Zarathushtra's thought: "...truth [*aša-* a quality] is to be saved for its (good) preference, that deceit [*druj-* 'untruth' a quality] is to be destroyed for its (false) profession..." Y49.3, Insler 1975.<sup>15</sup>

These verses show that in the macro context of Zarathushtra's thought the conflict is between two qualities ~ *aša-* and *druj-*, truth and untruth. Hold that thought.

Let us now look at the verses in which he uses the adjs. *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* as nouns. All of the linguists in our group have translated *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* (when used as nouns) as persons, so to keep things simple, I will use the Insler 1975 translation as generally representative of his fellow linguists (in this regard) without offering other translations. In addition, references to Skjaervo 2006 and Jackson 1892 for the various declensions of *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* have been given in an earlier footnote in this chapter, and so I will not repeat them here.

## Y48.2.

A phrase in Y48.2 has been translated as follows (the full verse is footnoted).<sup>16</sup> "... Shall the truthful [*aṣavā*] finally conquer the deceitful [*drəgvantəm*], Wise One? For that is known to be the good form of existence." Y48.2, Insler 1975.

Here forms of *aṣavan-* and *drəgvant-* have been translated as nouns that are people. The translation gives the words *aṣavā* and *drəgvantəm* a pl. flavor, but according to Skjaervo 2006 (and general rules) *aṣavā* is nom. *sg.*, and *drəgvantəm* is acc. *sg.* With respect, these adjs. *aṣavā* and *drəgvantəm* should not be translated as nouns that are people for several reasons.

If people had been intended here, surely the pl. would have been used ~ the truthful and the untruthful. In addition, these words do not refer to any particular group of people in Zarathushtra's society who were behaving in a truthful or untruthful way. These words are used in a (rhetorical) question, about a foundational principle of Zarathushtra's thought ~ that truthfulness will finally prevail over untruthfulness ~ so clearly stated in Y49.3 using *aṣa-* and *druj-* (quoted above). Now, we all are a mix (in varying degrees) of these conflicting qualities. No person is all truthful or all untruthful. Therefore, there cannot be such a thing as a 'truthful person' conquering an 'untruthful person' (as a principle of his teaching). For all these reasons, Zarathushtra cannot have intended using *aṣavā* and *drəgvantəm* as nouns which are people in this verse (Y48.2). But these problems disappear if we translate these two words as qualities ~ *truthfulness* and *untruthfulness*, or even better, the more literal 'possessing truth' and 'possessing untruth', because in Zarathushtra's thought the conflict is between these two qualities ~ truthfulness and untruthfulness ~ within each of us, in our ways of being (Y30.3, Y45.2).

'...shall possessing truth [*aṣavā* nom. *sg.*], O Wisdom, overcome possessing untruth [*drəgvantəm* acc. *sg.*]?' (For) that indeed is known to be (the) good form of existence.' Y48.2 my translation.

The translation option of *aṣavā* and *drəgvantəm* as qualities are a better fit in all respects. It accords with the reality of our existence (that no one is all good or all bad). It fits with the *sg.* declension of both words. And it is consistent with two foundational principles of Zarathushtra's thought:

(1) that the conflict is between qualities, and

(2) that the good within us ~ the true order of existence (*aṣa-* a quality of being) ~ will ultimately overcome our evil preferences and qualities, ("...truth [*aṣa-*] is to be saved for its (good) preference, that deceit [*druj-*] is to be destroyed for its (false) profession..." Y49.3, Insler 1975), a principle so foundational,<sup>17</sup> that the idea survived in YAv. texts (*fraṣō.kərəiti-*) and Pahlavi texts *frashgard*).

## Y51.9.

In Y51.9 *drəgvant-* and *aṣavan-* have (again) been translated as deceitful and truthful person(s) ~ and indeed the immediately preceding verse has been so translated as well.<sup>18</sup> Let us look at Y51.9.

"The satisfaction which Thou shalt give to both factions [*rānōibyā* 'both types (of conduct)'] through Thy pure fire and the molten iron, Wise One, is to be given as a sign among living beings in order to destroy [*rāṣayeījhē*], the deceitful [*drəgvantəm* acc. *sg.*] and to save the truthful [*aṣavanəm* acc. *sg.*]." Y51.9, Insler 1975.

First, the word *rānōibyā* (dat. du.) is an Avestan word that has not yet been decoded. All translations are simply best guesses as linguists themselves admit, and include such a (wild!) diversity of guesses

as 'thigh', 'leg', and when used in the dual, '2 legs of the scale', 'balance', 'salvation/damnation', '2 parties' and '2 factions'. This word has been discussed in another chapter,<sup>19</sup> and for the reasons detailed there, I think the stem means 'type', and I translate this dat. du. word as '[for both types \(of conduct\)](#)' ~ not as '[to both factions \(of people\)](#)'. Why have I implied 'conduct'? Well, this verse is about the law of consequences, and in Zarathushtra's thought, it is conduct that generates consequences.

All the linguists in our group translate these two adjectives *drəgvantəm* and *ašavanəm* as nouns that are people (an interpretive choice), and here also they give these words a **pl.** flavor (to make their interpretations work) although both these words are **sg.** But (with respect) this interpretive choice is neither logical, nor does it fit the micro context, and it materially distorts Zarathushtra's thought for several reasons.

1. **Fire** in the Gathas is the material symbol (or metaphor) for truth,<sup>20</sup> ("[... Thy truth-strong fire...](#)" Y43.4.),<sup>21</sup> which is a beneficial (*spənta-*), wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*).<sup>22</sup> Fire is never used as an instrument of punishing or destroying people in the Gathas, nor in later Avestan texts, nor even in Pahlavi texts which specialize in the torments of 'hell'.<sup>23</sup> The 'hell' of other religious paradigms in which 'bad' people are punished by being burned continually in the fires of hell in an afterlife, does not exist in Zoroastrian thought. In the Gathas, fire (a metaphor for the true order of existence, *aša*) is indeed associated with the law of consequences, which is a part of the (good, beneficial) laws that order existence, (*aša-*). As such, it is the refiner's fire. The adverse consequences of our wrongful choices are not punishments, nor are they vengeance. Their purpose is to enable spiritual growth, increase understanding, bring about enlightenment.<sup>24</sup> And in the Gathas, **molten metal** (made molten through fire) is a metaphor for the soul refining process as well,<sup>25</sup> ~ the earned (and unearned) adversities which sculpt our souls, increase our understanding, as part of a process of spiritual growth. Logically, the fires of 'hell', and 'molten metal' cannot '**destroy**' the souls of those who follow untruth, which brings us to the next point.

2. In the interpretive translation of this verse (above), it is Wisdom Himself who destroys untruthful people. This is not only contrary to Zarathushtra's thought that truth will prevail in all of us, and that our evil preferences eventually will be destroyed (detailed above), but is an impossibility. Even physically killing an untruthful person, one cannot '**destroy**' his soul. True, the verb *rāšayeñhē* has been translated by other linguists as '**to harm**', instead of '**to destroy**', but even so, translating these two adjectives, each as a person is not consistent with Zarathushtra's thought in which '**to harm**' ~ especially through fire ~ is not in accord with *aša-* the true (correct) order of existence (for which fire is the material symbol or metaphor),<sup>26</sup> and Wisdom is *aša-* personified. His nature is the true (correct, wholly good) order of existence.<sup>27</sup>

So it is neither linguistically accurate, nor logical, nor consistent with Zarathushtra's thought to translate these 2 **sg.** words *drəgvantəm* and *ašavanəm* as **pl.** people here (in Y51.9).

The only (linguistically sound) translation choice that is both logical, and consistent with specifically expressed thoughts in the Gathas, is to take these two adjectives as nouns that are two qualities which generate thoughts, words and actions ~ giving each quality substance, reality. I translate Y51.9 as follows,

['The satisfaction which you give, O Wisdom, for both types \(of conduct\), through your bright fire, through molten metal, \(is\) to be given for clarification among living beings, \(is\) to be given for](#)

untruthfulness [*drəgvantəm*] to be destroyed'. (Thus) You save truthfulness.' Y51.9, my translation.<sup>28</sup> And how do we destroy (or harm) untruthfulness? By being truthful (echoed in Y44.13 and Y49.3 quoted above) ~ by changing our own destructive preferences to beneficial ones, which occurs through our experiences in the material existence ~ through earned and unearned consequences (a part of the true order of existence *aša-*),<sup>29</sup> through our ability to think, feel, and through mutual, loving, help (also a part of the true order *aša-*), which includes protecting others from harm and injury (Y51.4),<sup>30</sup> with truth and good thinking,<sup>31</sup> ~ not killing them.

#### Y30.4.

Y30.4 is a verse in which Zarathushtra expresses key principles of his teachings. And (once again) linguists have translated declensions of *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* as people, instead of qualities.

"... and how at the end, the worst existence shall be for the deceitful [*drəgvatqm pl.*] but the best thinking for the truthful person [*ašāunē sg.*]." Y30.4, Insler 1975.

This verse has been discussed in detail in another chapter.<sup>32</sup> Here I will simply say that to translate these words as rewarding and punishing people is not consistent with Zarathushtra's thought. Here Zarathushtra is not describing the priestly establishment or their followers that have been persecuting him ~ 'untruthful (people)'. He is describing key principles of his system of thought. I translate this verse as follows.

'... and just as a most-bad existence shall be an end for possessing untruths [*drəgvatqm gen.*<sup>33</sup> *pl.*], so also most-good thinking for possessing truth [*ašāunē* a form of dat. *sg.*].' Y30.4, my translation.

This verse (Y30.4) reflects the law of consequences. A most bad existence (in mortal existence) is the result or consequence of 'possessing untruths [*drəgvatqm pl.*]', whereas 'possessing truth [*ašāunē sg.*]' results in most-good thinking (one of Zarathushtra's terms for paradise) ~ incrementally in mortal existence and eventually complete enlightenment (the 'house of good thinking' ~ one of Zarathushtra's terms for the ultimate paradise) when we make the transition (cross the bridge) to an existence which no longer is bound by mortality. The pairings here are asymmetrical.<sup>34</sup> We see many instances of asymmetrical pairings in the Gathas.

#### Y43.8

Another example appears in Y43.8. In the immediately preceding verse (Y43.7) Zarathushtra says that he was asked the following questions,

"...Who art thou? To which side dost thou belong [more literally 'whose art thou']?<sup>35</sup> How this day wouldst thou begin to explain these revelations among thy creatures and thine own?" Y43.7 Insler 1975.

And in the next verse, Y43.8 he answers, "Then I said to him first: (I am) Zarathushtra. If I were able, I would be a true enemy to the deceitful one [*drəgvāitē* ft. 7 "The evil spirit."] but a strong support to the Truthful One [*ašaonē* ft. 8 "Ahura Mazda"]. That while I continue to praise and eulogize Thee, Wise One, I would begin (to explain) the endeavors of Him who rules at His wish." Y43.8, Insler 1975.

The key words in this verse (Y43.8) are of course "to the deceitful one [*drəgvāitē* dat. *sg.* of *drəgvant-*]," and "to the Truthful One" [*ašaonē* a form of dat. *sg.* of *ašavan-*] each of which adjs.



Insler 1975 and many other fine translators have translated as a noun/person, and which Insler interprets to be the Devil and God.

But there is no Devil in the Gathas (other than interpretations that are personal to the translator).<sup>36</sup> In Avestan script there are no capital letters, and in the Avestan language there are no articles 'the' or 'a/an', but the insertions of such articles into an English translation are necessary to make it fluent.

Selecting 'the' instead of 'a' and capitalizing **Truthful One** allows the interpretation of two entities ~ the evil spirit and Ahura Mazda ~ a duo that is found in later texts (and other religious paradigms), but which is alien to the thought of the Gathas.

The only translation option that is consistent with the thought of the Gathas, is to take the adjectives *drəgvāitē* and *ašaonē* as nouns that are qualities. This gives us (using Insler's remaining translation opinions) '... If I were able, I would be a true enemy [*haiθyō dvaēšā* 'a true opponent']<sup>37</sup> to untruthfulness [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.] but a strong support to truthfulness [*ašaonē* a form of dat. sg.]...' Y43.8.

This is consistent with Zarathushtra's thought, in which we have to 'oppose' untruth, and support, advance, truth.

#### Y31.20.

In Y31.20 Insler 1975 translates *ašavanəm* (acc. sg.) as a noun that is a person, "Heavenliness shall be the future possession of him who shall come to a truthful person [*ašavanəm* acc. sg.] (now)..." Y31.20, admitting in his commentary that this would require us to supply additional words such as "for instruction" (p. 191).

But in Zarathushtra's thought, there are no gurus. The search for truth has to be undertaken by each person ~ "man by man for himself" Y30.2. The state of being that is paradise is earned ~ it is not given to a person because he is a disciple of anyone. He never says, *If you will follow me, I will make sure you get to 'heaven'*. But if we translate *ašavanəm* as a noun that is a quality (using Insler's opinions in all else), the phrase does not need additional words, and is completely consistent with Zarathushtra's teaching ~ that the state of being that is 'heaven' is the possession of a person who comes to truthfulness ~ a quality of being. "Heavenliness (shall be) the future possession of him who shall come to truthfulness [*ašavanəm* acc. sg.] ..." Y31.20, my translation.

#### Y53.4.

Similarly, in Y53.4, dat. pl. *ašavābyo* has been interpreted as people, "... If she is truthful to the truthful [*ašavābyo* dat. pl.], the Wise Lord shall grant (to her) the sunlike gain of good thinking ... for her whole lifetime, ..." Y53.4, Insler 1975. This implies that we need be truthful only to those who are truthful ~ not to anyone else ~ in order to achieve good thinking (the comprehension of truth). But in Zarathushtra's thought we need to be truthful for truth's own sake ~ independent of any other consideration (such as the quality or identity of people to whom we are being truthful). How can one achieve the comprehension of truth (good thinking) if one is truthful only to those who (one thinks) are truthful? And who amongst all the living has no 'untruthfulness' in him? These problems disappear if we translate the dat. pl. adj. *ašavābyo* as a noun that comprises all that is truthful (a quality). The literal 'truthfulnesses' [pl.] is awkward. For fluent English we need to add

'(all that is)' to show that 'truthful [*ašavābyo*]' is pl. Thus, '... (if she is) truthful to (all that is) truthful [pl.], the Lord Wisdom, shall give (her) the sunlike gain of good thinking...', my translation.<sup>38</sup>

But (in a manner consistent with Zarathushtra's thought), the adj. 'truthful' in a slightly different context is used for a person.<sup>39</sup>

There are other verses as well, in which translating the adjectives *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* as nouns that are people is not consistent with Zarathushtra's teachings, whereas translating them as nouns that are qualities, is so consistent. I have footnoted a few (not all) of them for your consideration.<sup>40</sup>

And there are some other verses in which *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* appear, but the translations of these verses as a whole are so different (amongst first class linguists) that it is not feasible to explore them in this chapter. Each such verse would need a separate chapter to analyse its translation. I therefore have not included them here.

*In conclusion:* In normal Avestan usage, adjectives can be used for nouns that are persons, concepts, activities, or other things that have the qualities of the adjective. In the verses in which the adjs. *drəgvant-* 'possessing untruth' and *ašavan-* 'possessing truth' are used as nouns, it is not consistent with Zarathushtra's system of thought, (and inconsistent with logic and reality), to *always* translate these two adjectives as persons, in instances in which the context shows that the conflicts, choices, are between two qualities, two ways of being ~ 'possessing untruth' or 'untruthfulness'. and 'possessing truth' or 'truthfulness' ~ especially in verses in which Zarathushtra discusses the principles of his teachings.

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<sup>1</sup> Skjaervo 2006 shows the following declensions for *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* (the masc. forms of these two adjs.) and the Gatha verses in which they appear;

*ašavā* nom. sg. Y31.17; Y44.12; Y46.5, 6 (2x), 14; Y48.2; Y53.09;

*ašavavanəm* acc. sg. Y31.10, 20; Y46.9; Y51.9;

*ašaonē* dat. sg. Y33.1, 3;

*ašāunē* Y30.4; Y32.10; Y43.8; Y47.4, 5; Skjaervo is silent on this declension in these verses (indicating uncertainty); Jackson 1892 shows this as a form of dat. sg. § 313, p. 91.

*ašāunaēcā* Y43.4; Skjaervo is also silent on this declension in these verses, but Jackson's opinion that *ašāunē* is a form of dat. sg. would apply here, with the suffix *-cā* 'and'

*ašaonō* gen. sg. Y32.11; Y47.4;

*ašāuno* acc. pl. Y43.15;

*ašāuno* Y31.14; Y45.7; Skjaervo is silent on this declension in these verses (uncertainty as to whether it could be acc. pl. in these verses);

*ašavavabyō* dat./abl. pl. Y30.11; Y53.04;

*ašāunqm* gen. pl. Y49.10.

*drəgvā* nom. sg. Y30.5; y31.17; Y44.12 (2x); Y45.1; Y46.4, 6, 7; Y47.5; Y49.2; Y50.3;

*drəgvantəm* acc. sg. Y32.5, 14; Y46.5; Y48.2; Y51.9;

*drəgvātā* instr. sg. Y49.9;

*drəgvāitē* dat. sg. Y31.15; Y33.2; Y43.4, 8; Y46.6; Y47.4; Y51.8;

*drəgvataēcā* Y33.1;

*drəgvatō* gen. sg. Y31.18; Y49.4; Y51.13; Y53.7;

*drəgvatō* acc. pl. Y32.10, 11, 16; Y43.15; Y45.7; Y49.3, 11;

*drəgvantō* nom./voc. pl. Y31.20; Y46.1; Y47.4;



*drəgvō.dəbīš* instr. pl. Y29.2; Y48.11;  
*drəgvō.dəbyo* abl./dat. pl. Y30.11; Y31.14; Y53.6;  
*drəgvatəm* gen. pl. Y30.4;  
*drəgvasū* loc. pl. Y29.5; Y44.14.

<sup>2</sup> Beekes 1988 shows *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* as adjectives, (although he spells them *drugvant-* and *artavan-* believing those to have been their original (or perhaps earlier) forms, pp. 118, 120.

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of *aša-* as the 'true (correct, good) order in the existences of matter and mind', is detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*, in which other opinions are also discussed. And the qualities that are not in accord with the true order of existence are also detailed in that chapter (based on the evidence of the Gathas).

<sup>4</sup> The idea that *aša-* and *druj-* are opposites is discussed in more detail in a ft. in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

<sup>5</sup> Macdonnel in *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, § 86, p. 63, says that adjective stems formed with the suffix *-mant-* *-vant-* both mean *possessing*. Jackson expresses the same opinion for similar Avestan adjectives. Speaking of stems that end in consonants, Jackson says, "This subdivision of consonant stems includes: ... (ii) possessive adjective stems in *mant*, *vant*. ..." Jackson 1892, § 289, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> Macdonnel in *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, §182, discussing secondary suffixes, states that one of the uses of the suffix *-van* is to form an adj. in the sense of possessing p. 264.

<sup>7</sup> Gershevitch, 1967, in *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, he translates the Yasht to Mithra (Mehr Yasht), in which he translates *ašavan-* words as 'owner of truth'.

<sup>8</sup> See *Part One: The Search for Truth*.

<sup>9</sup> This verse has been discussed in detail in *Part Six: Yasna 30.2*.

<sup>10</sup> See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

<sup>11</sup> Here are a few examples of *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-* (in their various declensions) being used for people (sg. and pl.) who act in truthful or untruthful ways, or who are committed to being truthful or untruthful (even though not always nor completely).

"... the one who has set the deceitful [*drəgvatō*] against the just [*dāθəng*]; ... the one who has raised a weapon to the truthful man [*ašāunē* sg.]." Y32.10, Insler 1975. Parenthetically, here the 'just [*dāθəng*]' is also an adj. used as a noun (people).

"... Who is truthful [*ašavā* adj.], or who is deceitful [*drəgvā* adj.]? The deceitful person [*drəgvā* noun] ... is it that such a person ... is considered evil [*angrō* adj.]?" Y44.12, Insler 1975; other linguists translate *angrō* as 'inimical' and 'harmful', so here the *deceitful person* [*drəgvā*] (the person who does not act in accord with the true (correct) order of existence) is one who is 'harmful', 'inimical'.

"... That the soul of the truthful person [*ašaonō* gen. sg.] be powerful in immortality [*amərətāitī*], that woes beset the deceitful men [*drəgvatō* acc. pl.] in an enduring fashion..." Y45.7, Insler 1975. This verse speaks of the consequences of person(s) acting truthfully (in accord with the true order of existence), and untruthfully. Notice, the asymmetrical treatment of the consequences. The consequences of acting truthfully is (ultimately) non-deathness ~ a non-mortal existence, and thus necessarily in an afterlife; whereas the consequences of acting untruthfully is adversities ~ an afterlife is not mentioned which is consistent with the conclusion that in Zarathushtra's thought, 'hell' is what we create in, and is limited to, mortal existence. It does not exist as a

place of punishment in a non-mortal the afterlife, (see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*; and *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*).

"... the souls of the truthful ones [*aṣṭāunqm*] ..." Y49.10, Insler 1975.

"... Which men shall stop the cruelty (caused) by the violent deceitful persons [*drəgvō.dəbīs*]?... "Y48.11, Insler 1975.

And there are many more verses in which the context requires that the adjs. 'truthful' and 'untruthful' be translated as nouns that are people, in ways that are consistent with Zarathushtra's thought.

<sup>12</sup> Discussed in *Part One: The Beneficial Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

<sup>13</sup> See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

<sup>14</sup> Reichelt 1919, in his Glossary shows *mərənca-* as a verb deriving from *marək-* 'to kill, slay, destroy', and when used with the suffix *vī* 'to destroy'. So the 'destruction' here is in the nature of a physical killing.

<sup>15</sup> Although the first part of Y49.3 deals with qualities ~ "truth [*aṣa-*]" and "deceit [*druj-* 'untruth']", in the last line of Y49.3, many linguists have translated *drəgvātō* acc. pl. of *drəgvant-* as a noun that is people. Here is the full verse.

"However, it has been fated for this world, Wise One, that the truth [*aṣa-* a quality] is to be saved for its (good) preference, that deceit [*druj-* a quality] is to be destroyed for its (false) profession. By reason of this, I am eager for the alliance of good thinking, in order to ban all the deceitful persons [*vīspāng drəgvātō* acc. pl.] from our company." Y49.3, Insler 1975. Banning untruthful people from any association with Zarathushtra's followers makes no sense, since everyone is a mix of truthful and untruthful ways of being. But translating *drəgvātō* as a noun that is a quality fits well, both the context of the verse ~ the beginning of which speaks of truth and untruth as qualities, as well as Zarathushtra's overall thought. Thus, '...in order to ban all untruthfulness [*vīspāng drəgvātō* qualities] from our company." Y49.3, my translation.

<sup>16</sup> Here is the full verse. "Tell me what things Thou dost know, Lord, before the far end of the course shall come to me. Shall the truthful [*aṣavā* nom. sg. person] finally conquer the deceitful [*drəgvantəm* acc. sg. person], Wise One? For that is known to be the good form of existence." Y48.2, Insler 1975. Parenthetically, there is no word "finally" in the Avestan text (...*kaṭ. aṣavā. mazdā. vānghaṭ. drəgvantəm. ...*), and if we translate *aṣavā* and *drəgvantəm* as qualities then the eventual overcoming of untruth is not only consistent with Zarathushtra's thought, it is a foundational hallmark of his thought ~ reflected (with varying degrees of accuracy) in all later Zoroastrian texts ~ Avestan (*fraṣō.kərəiti-*) and Pahlavi (*frashgard*).

Thus '...Shall possessing truth [*aṣavā* nom. sg. quality] finally conquer the possessing untruth [*drəgvantəm* acc. sg. quality], O Wisdom? For that indeed is known to be (the) good form of existence." Y48.2, my translation.

<sup>17</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>18</sup> The immediately preceding Y51.8 has been translated as follows,

"For then I shall say to Thee, Wise One, ... that I would do evil to the deceitful one [*drəgvāitē*], (as) in accordance with the wish of Him who has upheld the truth ..." Y51.8, Insler 1975. The word *drəgvāitē* is dat. sg. of the adjective *drəgvant-* which here is used as a noun. Insler (and other translators) think the noun is an entity who is untruthful. Insler has footnoted "the deceitful one [*drəgvāitē*]", as follows "The evil spirit" (p. 105, ft. 12). In Avestan, there are no articles 'the', 'a/an', (and no capital letters), so if a translator adds *the* to *deceitful one [*drəgvāitē*]* it suggests the Devil, whereas if he adds *a* it becomes is a human being ~ both interpretive. But in the Gathas, there is no mention of an Evil Spirit (as an entity), other than interpretations personal to the translator (see in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu* and *Does the Devil*

Exist?). Nor does Zarathushtra teach that we should act wrongfully towards those who do wrong ~ untruthful people (see *Part Two: The Paradox of Bad for the Bad*). But if we translate the adj. *drəgvāitē* 'untruthful' as a noun that is a quality, we get an excellent contextual fit ~ micro and macro.

'I would do evil for (what is) untruthful [*drəgvāitē*], in accord with the wish of Him who has upheld the truth ...' Y51.8, my translation. First *drəgvāitē* is dat. sg. (Skjaervo 2006), which in English is translated with either 'to\_\_\_' or 'for\_\_\_'. Here Zarathushtra engages in word play. How do we 'evil' for what is untruthful? By advancing truth. Truth would be an 'evil' for untruth (because truth destroys untruth). A conclusion that is consistent with the last words in this phrase ~ "in accordance with the wish of Him who has upheld the truth ...". Y51.8. This kind of word play is discussed in more detail in *Part Two: The Paradox of Bad for the Bad*.

<sup>19</sup> Discussed in detail in *Part Six: Yasna 43.12*.

<sup>20</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*.

<sup>21</sup> "... those rewards Thou shalt give, through the heat of Thy truth-strong fire, to the deceitful [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.] and to the truthful [*ašāunaēcā* a form of dat. sg.],..." Y43.4. Insler 1975. *drəgvāitē* is dat. sg. of the adj. *drəgvant-*, and *ašāunaēcā* is one form of dat. sg. (as detailed in a ft. above, which shows the declensions of these two adjectives). And the dat. declension in Avestan can be translated either as 'to\_\_\_' or 'for\_\_\_'.

Here, in Y43.4, if we translate the adjectives *drəgvāitē* and *ašāunaēcā* as nouns that are concepts/qualities, and select the dat. 'for', we get '... those rewards Thou shalt give, through the heat of Thy truth-strong fire, for possessing untruth [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.] and for possessing truth [*ašāunaēcā* a form of dat. sg.],..." Y43.4. In Zarathushtra's thought, it is the quality of our conduct ~ not 2 types of people ~ that generate consequence (adverse or good). The law of consequences is part of the true (correct, good) order of existence (*aša-*), a material metaphor for which is light/fire. So 'through the heat of Thy truth-strong fire', describes the process of enlightenment ~ which can be painful (when achieved through adverse consequences), but which eventually eliminates our wrongful preferences, bringing the 'good' and 'satisfaction' to all (detailed in *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*).

<sup>22</sup> Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

<sup>23</sup> In the Gathas, the consequences of making bad choices is called 'the house of untruth' and 'the house of worst thinking' ~ in mortal existence ~ and adverse consequences are never described as a fiery torment or punishment, see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

In later Av. texts, punishment by torturing a soul in 'hell' in an afterlife, is conspicuous by its absence. See *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

In some Pahlavi/Pazand texts, the 'wicked' are indeed 'punished' in a place of torment, hell. But even in such texts, is fire is never used as an instrument of torment or torture. See *Part Three: Heaven & Hell in Pazand & Pahlavi Texts*.

<sup>24</sup> See *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Part Two: Molten Glowing Metal*.

<sup>26</sup> See *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

<sup>27</sup> Detailed in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

<sup>28</sup> See *Part Six: Yasna 51.9* for a detailed discussion of this verse, its translation, and comparative translations.

We have something similar in Y30.11, which accurately reflects Zarathushtra's thought if the two pl. adjectives there are translated as nouns that are qualities in thought, word and action, because here he is speaking of

principles (the law of consequences). Let us first look this verse (Y30.11) translating these two adjectives is as people (as most translators have done),

"... (there is) both a way of easy access and one with no access, as well as long destruction [*darəgə̄m ... rašō*] for the deceitful [*drəgvō.dəbyō* a form of dat. pl.] but salvation for the truthful [*ašavabyō* dat. pl.,..." Y30.11, Insler 1975.

And here is this verse translating these two adjectives as nouns that are qualities ~ simply an expression of the law of consequences which is well attested in the Gathas,

'When mortals [*mašyāhō*] learn these principles which Wisdom has given [*dadā*] ~ a way of good access and one of no access; as well as long destruction [*darəgə̄m ... rašō*] for (all that is) deceitful [*drəgvō.dəbyō* pl.], but salvation for (all that is) truthful [*ašavabyō* pl.], then each one shall exist with these (principles). Wish it so!' Y30.11, my translation. I have added the implied words (all that is) to express the pl. This verse is also discussed in *Part Three: Chinwat, The Bridge of Discerning*; and *Adverse Consequences, Not Punishment*.

<sup>29</sup> See *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>30</sup> See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*.

<sup>31</sup> In *Part One: Worship & Prayer* I detail the evidence from the Gathas in which Wisdom protects, helps, through truth and good thinking.

<sup>32</sup> See *Part Six: Yasna 30.3 and 4*.

<sup>33</sup> Although *drəgvatəm* is gen. pl., Skjaervo 2003 shows that in Avestan syntax, the genitive sometimes is used with the flavor of a dative (in English translation), Skjaervo 2003, *Young Avestan Lessons* 12 p. 116, and Lesson 13, p. 133. And I agree that in the context of this verse (Y30.4) *drəgvatəm* has a dat. flavor (in English translation), as do Insler and many other translators (except that they translate *drəgvatəm* and *ašāunē* as nouns that are people, instead of concepts, with which I disagree).

<sup>34</sup> Detailed in *Part Six: Yasna 30.3 and 4*.

<sup>35</sup> The applicable phrase *kahyā ahī* has been differently translated by linguists. Bear in mind, there is no question mark in Avestan punctuation.

*ahī*. There is no dispute that *ahī* means '(thou) art' ~ the pronoun 'thou' is implicit in the verb form (which is 2p sg. present tense (indicative) of the verb *ah-* 'to be', Skjaervo 2003 *Young Avestan*, Lesson 3). But when *ahī* is used with an interrogative pronoun (*kahyā*) the verb *ahī* would be translated as a question 'art (thou)'.

*kahyā*. The interrogative pronoun stem *ka-* means 'who, which, what', and *kahyā* is one of its declensions. The question is: which declension?

Humbach 1991 in his commentary says that *kahyā ahī* literally means 'whose art thou', Vol. 2, p. 138 ~ giving *kahyā* a gen. sg. value. I think this translation is the most literal and is exactly accurate.

Taraporewala 1951 takes *kahyā* as gen. sg. and comments that this gen. with *ahī* (from *ah-* 'to be'), is used in the sense of 'belonging to' (which accords with Humbach 1991). He translates the phrase *kahyā ahī* as "To-whom dost-thou-belong?"

Insler 1975 translates *kahyā* as *which*, standing for two sides ~ that of Ahura Mazda and that of the Evil Spirit (as he makes clear with his footnotes in the next verse). He translates *kahyā ahī* "To which side dost thou belong?..." Insler 1975.

I suppose it could be argued that Zarathushtra was being asked to declare, to which deity he belonged ~ to Wisdom the Lord, or to the Evil Spirit. But (with respect) I do not think that argument is tenable for two reasons:

(1) The Evil Spirit as an entity, a living being, is absent from the Gathas. If Zarathushtra's belief system included so important a part of any spiritual philosophy ~ the Devil as an Entity ~ he surely would have mentioned it. At least once?

(2) Even more important, throughout the Gathas, the only allegiance which Wisdom requires of us (and of Zarathushtra) is the allegiance to truth. The conflict in the Gathas, is between two opposing ideas ~ truth and untruth; two opposing ways of being ~ 'possessing truth' and 'possessing untruth'.

Therefore, I think the gen. sg. *kahyā* with *ahī* 'whose art thou' asks Zarathushtra about which of the two ways of being ~ truth or untruth ~ does he belong to, a conclusion which is supported by Zarathushtra's answer which clearly states to which he belongs ~ if we translate the two adjs. *drəgvāitē* (dat. sg.), and *ašāonē* (a form of dat. sg.) as nouns which are qualities. Thus,

Y43.7, *ciš. ahī. kahyā. ahī.* 'who are you? whose are you? ...'

Y43.8 'Then I said to him: 'First (I am) Zarathushtra. If I were able, I would be a true enemy to (what is) untruthful [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.], but a strong support to (what is) truthful [*ašāonē*] ...', my translation.

This interpretation (that 'whose are you?' intends to ask Zarathushtra if he belongs to truth) is corroborated by another verse which echoes the sense of the same question and answer.

"... To his question, *Whom dost thou wish to serve?* I then replied: *Thy fire. As long as I shall be able, I shall respect that truth is to have a gift of reverence.*" Y43.9, Insler 1975. Fire is used in the Gathas and later texts as a material metaphor for truth ~ the true order of existence ~ an enlightend existence.

<sup>36</sup> See Part One: *Does the Devil Exist?*

<sup>37</sup> In Part Three: *Is Wisdom A 'God' of Wrath, Enmity?* I detail the evidence that *dvaēšah-* words mean 'opponent / opposition / to oppose'.

<sup>38</sup> The masc. form of the adjective 'truthful' is *ašavan-*; its fem. form is *ašāonī-* (Skjaervo 2006), which is sometimes written *ašāunī-* in the mss. In Y53.4, the GAv. the phrase that Insler 1975 translates as "... If she is truthful to the truthful,...", is *ašāunī ašavābyo*. There are no words 'if she is' in the GAv. text, but I agree that it is reasonable to imply them here because the fem. *ašāunī* (nom. sg.) refers to Zarathushtra's daughter Pouruchisti. The word *ašavābyo* is dat. pl. masc. ('to/for \_\_\_') of the masc. stem *ašavan-* (Skjaervo 2006). The masc. is generic here (regardless of whether we translate the adj. as a noun that is people or qualities). If we choose to translate *ašavābyo* [pl.] as a noun that is a quality ~ truthful ~ we would need to add an implied '(all that is)' to show that the noun is pl., giving us

'... (if she is) truthful [*ašāunī*] to (all that is) truthful [*ašavābyo*]...', my translation.

Here is the context of the sentence as a whole, so that you can see how translating *ašavābyo* as a concept instead of people fits well both the context of this verse, as well as Zarathushtra's overall thought, in that choosing truth for its own sake generates an understanding of the true (correct good) order of existence, which is the 'sunlike gain of good thinking'.

c. *ašāunī ašavābyo manahhō vaṅhāuš xʷənvaṭ haṅhuš mām bəəduš*

d. *mazdā dadāt āhūro daēnayāi vāṅhuyāi yavoī vīspāi.ā.* Y53.4;

'... (if she is) truthful to (all that is) truthful, the Lord, Wisdom, shall give (her) the sunlike gain of good thinking ... for good envisionment, for her whole lifetime here.' Y53.4, my translation. The string of dots indicates the exclusion of *mām bəəduš*.

Taraporewala 1951 citing Bartholomae, thinks that the words *mām bāaduš* were added during later times and so does not translate them (p. 837). Neither does Insler 1975 (which omission he indicates with a string of the three dots after 'good thinking'). Nor have I. In any event, the meaning of *mām bāaduš* is obscure to me; so also to Skjaervo 2006 who gives three question marks (one for the stem and two for the meaning) for both *mām* and *bāaduš*.

<sup>39</sup> In Y33.3, Zarathushtra says "The person who is very good to a truthful man [*yā ašāunē vahištō*], be he allied by family, or a member of his community, or allied by clan, Lord, or be he someone who continues to serve the cow with zeal, such a person shall be on the pasture of truth and good thinking." Y33.3. Although the word "man" is not in the GAv. text, here, the context of the verse clearly establishes that the adj. *ašāunē* (dat. sg. masc.) is used as a person who is committed to truth ~ the masc. being used generically. But unlike Y53.4 ("... If she is truthful to (all that is) truthful, ..." Y53.4), Y33.3 requires that we be most good [*vahištō*] to a truthful person, ~ the intended meaning being that we should prosper, encourage, help (be most good in that sense) to those who are committed to truth, which is consistent with Zarathushtra's thought.

<sup>40</sup> Here are a few more examples of Gatha verses in which the adjectives *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* have been translated by most linguists as truthful and untruthful person(s), in contexts which are inconsistent with Zarathushtra's thought, whereas translating them as truthful and untruthful qualities is consistent with the micro and macro contexts. (In a preceding ft., I gave some examples of Gatha verses in which *drəgvant-* and *ašavan-* have been translated as truthful and untruthful person(s), in ways that are consistent with Zarathushtra's thought.)

#### Y47.4 As a noun/person:

"... Be a man indeed of little worth (or) indeed the master of much, he shall be loving to the truthful person [*ašāunē* a form of dat. sg.], and bad to the deceitful one [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.]." Y47.4, Insler 1975. In his ft. 5 Insler states that *ašāunē* and *drəgvāitē* should be understood at two levels ~ as applying to a truthful and a deceitful person, as well as to Ahura Mazda as the 'Truthful One', and the evil spirit as 'the deceitful one'. I disagree (respectfully).

*ašāunē* and *drəgvāitē* are both dative. The dative form of a word requires it to be translated either as 'to \_\_\_' or 'for \_\_\_'. By selecting 'to \_\_\_', and adding an article 'the' (absent in the Av. text) the meaning of this phrase is changed in a material way that is not consistent with Zarathushtra's thought.

#### Y47.4 as a noun/quality:

If we translate *drəgvāitē* as a noun that is a quality with the dat. alternative 'for \_\_', and omit the added article ('the' ~ which is not in Av.), this phrase becomes completely consistent with Zarathushtra's thought. Thus, '...he shall be loving to (a) truthful person [*ašāunē*], and bad for (what is) untruthful [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.].' my translation. Here again, we have an the asymmetrical pairing (a person for *ašāunē*, and a concept for *drəgvāitē*). Unlike the later texts, the Gathas are full of asymmetrical pairings. And this alternative translation '...he shall be loving to (a) truthful person [*ašāunē*], and bad for (what is) deceitful [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.].' exactly fits Zarathushtra's foundational teaching that the enemy is untruth ~ not other people, or other tribes. See also *Part Two: The Paradox of Bad for the Bad*.

#### Y49.9 as a noun/person:

"... The truly speaking man has never expounded alliance with the deceitful one [*drəgvātā* instr. sg.], ..." Y49.9 Insler 1975. Most translation choices have been made which suggest a devil entity for *drəgvātā*.

#### Y49.9 as a noun/quality:

If we do not add *the*, and translate the adj. *drəgvātā* as a noun/quality, we get a linguistically sound alternative which is an exact fit with Zarathushtra's system of thought.

Thus, *nōiṭ ərəš.vacā sarəm didqs drəgvātā* '... The truly-speaking [*ərəš.vacā*] have never expounded union [*sarəm*] with (what is) untruthful [*drəgvātā* instr. sg.], ..." Y49.9, my translation.



Parenthetically both the foregoing translations result in an asymmetrical pairing!

Y33.2 as a noun/person:

"... Therefore, who shall bring about what is bad [*yā akəm*] for the deceitful one [*drəgvāitē* dat. sg.] either by word or by thought, or with his hands, or who shall enlighten his guest in the good [*vanhāu*] ~ all these shall bring success to His desire and be in the approval of the Wise Lord." Y33.2 Insler 1975. Here again, by choosing the article **the** most translations express the idea of bringing about what is bad for **the** deceitful one ~ the Evil Spirit or Devil ~ which is alien to the thought of the Gathas.

Y33.2 as a noun/quality:

Notice, the other two adjectives ~ 'bad [*akəm*]', and 'in the good [*vanhāu*]' ~ are nouns that are qualities, and I think *drəgvāitē* is used here as a noun that is a quality as well.

I translate these lines as follows,

Literally (and a bit awkwardly):

*aṭ yā akəm drəgvāitē* 'therefore, who (is) bad for possessing untruth,  
*vacaṇhā vā aṭ vā manaṇhā* 'whether by word, or by thought'  
*zastōibyā vā varəšaīt* 'or by hand, (which) one may bring about;  
*vanhāu ā cōiṭaitē asīm* 'or (who) shall enlighten (a) guest in (what is) good ...'  
*tōi vārāi rādəṇī* 'shall bring success to His desire;'  
*ahurahyā zaišē mazdā* '(shall be) in the approval of the Lord Wisdom.' Y33.2.

Here again we have both the same word play ('bad for the bad') as well as an asymmetrical pairing ~ who is bad for untruthfulness (a concept) and good for a guest (a person). And how do we bring about what is bad for untruthfulness? By being truthful (see *Part Two: The Paradox of Bad for the Bad*).

Y32.14 as a noun/person:

"Even the Kavis have continually fixed their intentions on capturing and plundering the riches of this world, since they have begun to aid the deceitful one [*drəgvantəm* acc. sg.] ..." Y32.14, Insler 1975. In this translation, the adj. *drəgvantəm* is used as a noun/person, which together with inserting **the** (not in the Avestan language) expresses the idea of aiding **the** deceitful one ~ the Evil Spirit or Devil. But there is no Devil or Evil Spirit as an entity in the Gathas (see *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*).

Y32.14 as a noun/quality:

If we translate *drəgvantəm* as a noun/quality, it gives us

'since they have begun to aid (what is) deceitful [*drəgvantəm* acc. sg.]...', which is consistent with Zarathushtra's thought.

Y31.18 as a noun/people:

This verse has been translated by many translators in a way that shows their predisposition to think of the conflict as between two factions of people ~ the 'good' and the 'bad' as you can see from Insler's insertion in round parentheses of the word (faction) ~ rather than a conflict between two ways of being within a person (Y30.3). "No one at all who belongs to the deceitful [*drəgvatō*] (faction) has listened to your precepts and instructions. For such a person has (already) placed house and settlement and district and land in strife and destruction. Therefore cut [*sāzdūm*] these down with your weapon [*snaiṭišā*]." Y31.18, Insler 1975. As Y31.18 as an adj:

More consistent with Zarathushtra's thought would be to translate *drəgvatō* as an adj., 'No one who possesses untruth [*drəgvatō*] has listened at all to your precepts and instructions...!'

Y50.3, as a noun/person:

In this verse, 'she' refers to the allegorical 'cow' ~ the beneficial sacred in mortal existence, a way of being that is both the path and the reward. And once again, with the added article 'the', the adj. *drəgvā* is translated as a noun/person, ~ interpreted as the devil ~ rather than as a concept.

"...she shall belong to that person who would strengthen with the power of such a reward his nearest fellow creature, whom the deceitful one [*drəgvā*] shall (otherwise) appropriate." Y50.3, Insler 1975.

## Y50.3, as a noun/quality:

If we translate *drəgvā* as a noun/quality and not add 'the', it fits Zarathushtra's thought perfectly ~ a conflict between two qualities, two ways of being that influence human behavior. Thus (using Insler's translation opinions in all other respects), '...she [the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence] shall belong to that person who would strengthen with the power of such a reward his nearest fellow creature, whom untruthfulness [*drəgvā*] shall (otherwise) appropriate." Y50.3.

The next example (Y53.7) has been so variously translated (some beyond belief!), that to give you the entire verse would require a chapter in *Part Six* rather than a ft. here. But there is a part of this verse which I think is important to consider in this chapter (on translation alternatives for *ašavan-* and *drəgvant-*). Therefore, for our purposes, I will use the Insler 1975 translation (except for his opinion on *mainyuš drəgvatō*). Figuring out Zarathushtra's intent here takes a bit of time and effort, but I hope you will not begrudge it, because the resulting understanding is quite lovely.

Y53.7, "... that there be the most faithful fervor (by you) while your legs are on the ground, in that place where the spirit of the deceitful one [*mainyuš drəgvatō*] sinking lower and lower, shall finally disappear..." Y53.7, Insler 1975.

The phrase *while your legs are on the ground* is a GAv. idiom which Insler says simply means *while you are still alive* (ft. 7, p. 113).

*mainyuš* (nom. sg. of *mainyu-*). The translation of *mainyu-* as a 'way of being' (and the fact that 'spirit' does not accord with all of the ways in which *mainyu-* is used in the Gathas) has already been detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*).

*drəgvatō* is gen. sg. of *drəgvant-*. And here (once again) translating the adj. *drəgvant-* as a noun/person, and adding the article 'the' suggests the Devil, which is alien to the thought of the Gathas.

I would translate *mainyuš drəgvatō* as,

Literally, 'the way of being of untruthfulness',

Or in more fluent English 'the untruthful way of being'. Which brings us to the meaning of the phrase in which these two words occur.

What does Zarathushtra mean when he says 'the untruthful way of being, sinking lower and lower, shall finally disappear...'?

In the Gathas, 'uplift' is more than once associated with 'good thinking' (the incremental, and ultimately the complete, comprehension of the true (correct, good) order of existence) as shown in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*. Here is one example, "...I who shall thoroughly bear in mind to uplift myself with good thinking ..." Y28.4, Insler 1975.

If 'uplift' is used (metaphorically) to describe 'good thinking' ~ an enlightened state of being ~ it would be reasonable to conclude that 'sinking lower and lower', is used (metaphorically) to describe its opposite ~ 'bad thinking' ~ an unenlightened state of being, which is the 'untruthful way of being'. So this verse tells us in effect (in pertinent part), that the more we embrace and follow Wisdom's teachings (the path of truth, the path of the qualities that make a being divine ~ amesha spenta) while we are on this earth (mortal existence), the more the untruthful way of being will gradually disappear on this earth ~ which is exactly the end result of Zarathushtra's solution for the defeat of evil by changing minds, changing preferences, changing our way of being (see *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*).