

The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo) in Ancient Commentaries.

This chapter supplements two other chapters on the Ahuna Vairya in this web book,¹ and is for those who would like to know what the ancients had to say about the Ahuna Vairya in Younger Avestan and Pahlavi texts. I will give you a sampling of such comments and commentaries. Parts of these commentaries have been referred to in other chapters. But for ease of reference, I think it is worthwhile to assemble the most important ones in one place, and examine them in (some) detail. So I ask your indulgence for any repetitions.

There are many passing references to the Ahuna Vairya in the Avestan texts where it is mentioned as a means of worship, an object of celebration, and is called 'the truthful word', 'wise', a 'weapon' for victory (over evil). A sampling of such comments (some quite lovely) have been footnoted to give you the flavors of the ways in which the ancients regarded the Ahuna Vairya.² Let us now look at the Commentaries.

The Younger Avestan Yasna 19.

The most ancient Commentary on the Ahuna Vairya is a very detailed one ~ the whole of Yasna 19, composed in Younger Avestan, several centuries after Zarathushtra's time.³

I doubt that this Commentary was the work of one author, or of one time period. It seems to be a collection of opinions (or recollections), in which different sections sometimes express the same concepts but stated a bit differently. Some sections are very close indeed to Zarathushtra's thought (and quite lovely). Others are not. And some are inconsistent with the content (the words) of the Ahuna Vairya itself (as you will see).

I therefore think that in its present form ~ the form which today we call Yasna 19 ~ this Commentary represents a much later (Sasanian) attempt to collect in one place various Avestan text fragments, and memorized opinions and comments in Avestan, on the Ahuna Vairya which, over the preceding centuries, had survived to Sasanian times, (with perhaps some Sasanian additions resulting in the anomalies in §§ 12 - 14, discussed later in this chapter).⁴

Yasna 19 §§ 1 through 11.

In §§ 1 and 2 of this Commentary, the author(s) have Zarathushtra asking the Lord Wisdom certain questions, and in sections 3 ~ 8, and 10 ~ 11 the Lord Wisdom (purportedly) gives answers (with the footnoted exceptions).⁵ This question and answer technique was typical and used in many YAv. texts, to give authenticity and authority to the ideas of the author of such texts. It is clear that Zarathushtra himself could not have conveyed the Lord Wisdom's purported answers as set forth in this Commentary because these sections are in a different form of the Avestan language (YAv.) than the Avestan of the Gathas (which is in GAv.). Moreover, many YAv. texts refer to Zarathushtra as an ancient, almost legendary figure, so he would have lived long, long before YAv. texts.⁶ But in a culture where knowledge was orally transmitted from generation to generation, the ideas in some sections in Yasna 19 may indeed have originated in Zarathushtra's time or shortly thereafter.

In the following sections of this Commentary its author(s) have the Lord Wisdom characterizing the Ahuna Vairya in the following ways, which I have summarized. But I have footnoted these sections in their entirety for those who prefer going to the source (as I do).⁷

§ 3, The Ahuna Vairya is the Word of the Lord Wisdom Himself, given to Zarathushta.

§§ 4 and 8, It existed before the corporeal existence, before the sun, or cattle or man (among other itemized things).

At one time, I thought this idea had to be a later addition by persons who did not understand the words of the Ahuna Vairya, and wanted to exaggerate its importance, because the Ahuna Vairya itself speaks of corporeal things ~ choices, judgments, actions, existence, rule, and being a pastor to the needy (the word *vāstāram*, literally means 'one who takes care of cattle') ~ all of which are parts of the corporeal existence. I therefore concluded that to say the Ahuna Vairya existed before the corporeal existence, was simply inaccurate. But now I think I was wrong. I think this statement needs to be understood in the context of what we see in the Pahlavi commentaries on the Ahuna Vairya in the *Bundahishn* and *Zad-sparam*. These commentaries (discussed below) speak of the Ahuna Vairya as the Lord Wisdom's original plan, His *idea*, for a way to defeat evil, ~ a plan which He thought of before the material existence was produced, and which involved producing the material existence to be the matrix for the perfecting process.⁸ So it would not be the actual words of the Ahuna Vairya which existed before the corporeal existence, but its idea, its plan to defeat evil, (evil being a part of the mixed primeval way of being, predated the corporeal (material) existence in Zarathushtra's thought).

§ 5 When perfectly recited, without additions or omissions, the Ahuna Vairya is worth a hundred other stanzas, even those that are prominent in the ritual, and even when imperfectly recited, it still is worth ten other stanzas that are prominent.

§ 6 A lovely section ~ very close to Zarathushtra's thought. (The Lord Wisdom purportedly speaking), "Whoever in this world of mine which is corporeal" recalls it, recites it and "shall worship thus" will be brought by the Lord Wisdom, across the Chinvat Bridge to the state of being that is Zarathushtra's paradise, which is described in 3 ways (shades of the Ashem Vohu!),⁹

~ *ahu- vahišta-* 'the most-good existence',

~ *aša- vahišta-* 'the most-good true order of existence, and

~ *vahišta- raocah-* 'the most-good lights', ~ light being the material symbol and metaphor for truth in the Gathas and other Avestan texts.

These 3 descriptions of the ultimate good reward is exactly in keeping with Zarathushtra's thought in the Gathas! And let us take it a step further.

What is it that brings the soul to this paradise of the most good, true order of existence, (a state of enlightenment)?

It is *ahura- mazdā-*. Now, as Thieme tells us, in a religion that has no images of the Divine, the name given to a deity is a way of revealing Its personality.¹⁰ In the Gathas, *mazdā-* is personified *wisdom*, which is a state of being that has acquired *lordship* over the qualities that make a being divine (*ahura-*).¹¹

So if we look past *ahura- mazdā-* as a name, to its meaning, what does this section tell us?

It tells us that when we have acquired *wisdom (mazdā-)*, which entails having *lordship* over the qualities that make a being divine (*ahura-*), our existence will be perfected ~ and these qualities (the *lordship* that is *wisdom*) will enable us to make the transition (cross the bridge) to an existence no longer bound by mortality non-mortal (*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'),¹² ~ a state of being that is paradise, the most good existence (*ahu- vahišta-*), the most good true order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), the most good lights (*vahišta- raocah-*). Exactly what the Gathas teach us! Ideas that are echoed in the Ahuna Vairya and the Asha Vahishta (except that Chinvat Bridge is not mentioned in those 2 manthras).¹³ And for an added treat, consider how, and for what, Zarathushtra uses *vahišta-* ~ almost as a code word in the Gathas (detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most Good, Vahishta*), and see what ideas come to you.

§ 7, Whoever while reciting it "takes ought therefrom, whether the half, or the third, or the fourth or the fifth" his soul will be drawn to the most good existence. A bit of a puzzle. I interpret this section to mean that implementing even a fraction of the teachings of the Ahuna Vairya in our lives, will increase the good in our existence, will take us towards the most good existence. The full section has been previously footnoted.

§ 10, It (the Ahuna Vairya) is the most important of all words which have ever been pronounced or spoken¹⁴ ~ past, present, or future ~ and that

"this utterance is a thing of such a nature, that if all the corporeal and living world should learn it, and learning should hold fast by it, they would be redeemed from their mortality!"

As you can see, §§ 6 and 10 state the same idea but just a bit differently (perhaps collated from different sources). But the value of studying them both is that being "redeemed from ... mortality" (§ 10) (i.e. achieving a state of being that is non-deathness, *amərətāt-*) was equated by the ancients with the state of being that is paradise (§ 6). An interesting insight into what ancient Zarathustrians in Avestan times thought was the nature of paradise and the way to get there (a linear paradigm).¹⁵ An insight that is exactly in accord with the Gathas, but which has largely been forgotten since then, under the influence of the paradigm of heaven and hell as places of delight and punitive torment (a dual paradigm).

And did you notice? The teaching of the Ahuna Vairya is for "all the corporeal and living world" ~ not limited to any one tribe.

§ 11 (The Lord Wisdom purportedly speaking). And "this our word I have proclaimed" is to be learned and recited "by everyone of the beings" under the influence of, and for the sake of *aša- vahišta* (the most-good true order of existence, which is the existence of the Divine, and therefore 'for wisdom/Wisdom [*mazdāi*]' and 'for the lord/Lord [*ahurāi.ā*]' as lines a., b. and c. of the Ahuna Vairya tell us). And the Word of the Ahuna Vairya is for "everyone of the beings" (for all existence ~ not for any particular tribe). So here again, the composer of this section had a good understanding of the Ahuna Vairya and Zarathushtra's thought.

Yasna 19, Sections 12 through 14.

Sections 12 - 14, are deeply flawed and contain many anomalies. They attempt to explain the words of the Ahuna Vairya, but they could not have been written by authors who were fluent in Younger Avestan (as you will see). These sections have been translated by both Humbach (1991)¹⁶ and by Mills (1887),¹⁷ which translations I give you here, for comparative purposes, so that you can decide for yourself, and do not have to take my word for the fact that these sections are deeply flawed.

Words in round parentheses have been inserted by the translator to indicate words that are not in the Avestan text, but which the translator thinks are implied. Words in square brackets are not in the text. They are interpretive comments or suggestions by the translator. I have added nothing in square brackets.

Mills tends to place in single quotation marks, the words (in the Commentary) that appear in the Ahuna Vairya itself.

The Avestan version has been transliterated from Geldner.¹⁸ Note the placement of small and larger bunches of grapes (the three triangular dots) indicating Avestan punctuation breaks (as determined by Geldner from selected manuscripts).

§ 12 *yaθa. frā.īda. āmraoṭ. yaṭ. dim. ahūmca. ratūmca. ādadaṭ. iθa. dim. para.cinasti. yim. ahurəm. mazdaqm. manas.paoiryaeibyō. dāmabyō.:*
yaθa. īm. vīspanq̄m. mazištəm. cinasti. aθa. ahmāi. dāmqn. cinasti. ••

Humbach 1991

" (Ahura Mazda) recited *yaθa* when they appointed Him as Lord and Judge. Thereby one commits Him, Ahura Mazda, to the creatures which are the prime ones of (good) thought. Just as one describes Him (as) the greatest of all (beings) [as in 45,6 *vīspanq̄m mazištəm*], so one commits the creatures to Him."

The words in square brackets have been inserted by Humbach as a suggestion that the Commentary may be referring to the Gatha verse Y45.6.¹⁹

Mills 1887.

"And 'as' (the worshipper has) here spoken it forth, when he has 'appointed' the 'Lord and regulator', so (by thus reciting these authoritative words), he acknowledges Ahura Mazda (as prior

to, and supreme) over, those creatures who have 'the mind' as their first. 'As' he acknowledges Him as the greatest of them all, 'so' he assigns the creatures to Him (as to their originator)."

§ 13 *yaθa. mazdā. hujiṭiš. vaṅhəuš. ida. θritīm. ŋkaēšəm. ādrəṅjayēiti. dazda. manəṅhō. para. tm. ida. manəṅhe. cinasti. yaθa. fradax štarəm. manəṅhe.:*
manəṅhō. aētavaitya. tm. kārayēiti. :
šyaoθənanəm. ida. ahūm. kārayēiti. ::

Humbach 1991.

"To (describe) the good gains of Mazda, one attaches the third statement to (the word) *vaṅhəuš*. (By reciting) *dazda manəṅhō*, one commits Him to thought as a teacher of thought. To such an extent (?) one refers to Him (as being one) of thought. (The word) *šyaoθənanəm* refers to existence.

Mills 1887.

"As he undertones the third sentence, he thereby announces that all the amenities of life appertain to the 'good' Mazda, (and come) from Him. As he recites *dazda manəṅhō*, 'the creator of mind', he acknowledges Him as superior to mind; and as he makes Him the one who indicates (the truth) to mind, (saying) '*manəṅhō* of mind,' which means that by this much he Makes Him (its director), and then makes Him 'the lord of actions'."

§ 14 *yaṭ. dim. dāmabyō. cinasti. mazda. ida. təm. yaṭ. ahmāi. dāmən.:*
x šaθrəm. ahurāi. cinasti.:
taṭ. mazda. tava. x šaθrəm.:
drigubyō. vāstārəm. cinasti.:
yaθa urvaθəm spitamāi.:
panca. ŋkaēša.:
vīspəm. vacō. fravākəm. haurum. vacō. ahurahe. mazdā. ::

Humbach 1991.

"When one commits Him to the creatures (by reciting) *mazda* [= 34,15 *mazdā aṭ mōi vahištā* ?], one therewith (commits) Him (to them) just as (one commits) the creatures to Him. One commits the power to the Ahura (by reciting) *taṭ mazdā tava x šaθrəm* [53,9]. One appoints a shepherd to the poor just as (one should) appoint an ally to Spitama. (These are) five statements [references]."²⁰

Humbach's translation ends with *panca ŋkaēša*. He does not include the last line of § 14 (as shown in Geldner) in his translation of this section. Mills' translation does include this last line. The numbers in square brackets are Humbach's idea that the Commentary refers to the Gatha verses Y34.15 and Y53.9.

Mills 1887.

"And when he acknowledges Him for the creatures thus, 'O Mazda!' he acknowledges Him (as their ruler) when he assigns the creatures to Him thus. He then assigns the Kingdom to Ahura, saying: 'Thine, O Mazda! is the Kingdom.' And assigns a nourisher and protector to the poor, saying: *yim drigubyō dadaṭ vāstārəm*; that is, as a friend to Spitama. This is the fifth sentence (and it concludes) the entire recital and word, (even) the whole of this word of Ahura Mazda."

No matter which translation you choose ~ that of Humbach (1991) or Mills (1887) ~ if you compare these sections to the linguistic information in *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya, An Analysis*, and even to the translations of both ancient and modern scholars, it is evident that the authors of §§ 12 - 14 of this YAv. Commentary did not have a clear understanding of the language and ideas of the Ahuna Vairya. Indeed, their lack of knowledge of the grammatical values and meanings of certain Gathic Avestan words (in the Ahuna Vairya) is so marked, that I cannot help but wonder if these sections of the Commentary represent either

- (a) faulty recollections in Sasanian times of earlier Avestan commentaries, or
- (b) attempted reconstructions (made in good faith, but nevertheless faulty) by the Sasanian redactors who were charged with collating Avestan materials on the Ahuna Vairya, and wanted to add some explanations of their own.

Here are a few of the reasons why I think so. You will doubtless see many others.

(1) There is no mention here of *vairyō* or the concept of choice, which is one of the key ideas of the Ahuna Vairya (as its very title indicates).

(2) There is no mention of *ašācēt hacā* 'in accord with truth indeed' which also is a key idea of the Ahuna Vairya. And many other words of the Ahuna Vairya are not accounted for in these explanations, which add many ideas that are not in the words of the Ahuna Vairya.

(3) The author(s) separate *vañhəuš* from *manəjhō*, which is not grammatically defensible because *vañhəuš* (gen./abl. sg. of *vohu-*) is an adjective which describes *manəjhō* (gen./abl. sg. of *manah-*) ~ a grammatical fact that is evident multiple times in the Gathas and was well known to the authors of other Younger Avestan texts as well, who were fluent in Younger Avestan.²¹ Even the Pahlavi translators understood that *vañhəuš* and *manəjhō* belong together. They translated *vañhəuš dazdā manəjhō*, as 'the gifts of Wahman' (Av. *vohu-* *manah-*), indicating that other schools of thought must have existed,²² and survived to Pahlavi times, but which were not represented in this YAv. Commentary, when this particular group of Sasanians collated various pieces of information on the Ahuna Vairya into one chapter of the Yasna, and perhaps tried to add an explanation.

(4) Trying to figure out what to do with *vañhəuš* the author(s) of this Commentary ascribe it to the good gains [*hujītiš*] of Mazda (Humbach's translation), and to the 'good' Mazda (Mills' translation) even though the Ahuna Vairya contains no word 'good gains of Mazda' (if you prefer Humbach's translation), and even though in the Ahuna Vairya the case form of *vañhəuš* is gen./abl. sg. ('of/from good'), and the case form of *mazdāi* is dat. sg. 'to/for the Wise One', so they could not belong together. In Avestan, an adjective has to be in the same case/number as the noun it describes. So *vañhəuš* could not be an adjective for *mazdāi*. And the authors of

this Commentary identify *vahhēuš* with the 3d teaching [*θritīm. tkaēšəm*]²³ of the mantra, without saying what this 3d teaching might be.

(5) § 14 concludes with the statement that the foregoing explanations represent 'five teachings' [*panca tkaēša*] without identifying what these five teachings might be. The explanations of the Commentary in §§ 12 - 14 themselves do not reveal 5 teachings. I am inclined to think that the authors were aware of a more ancient commentary which said that the Ahuna Vairya expressed 5 teachings (which in my view is accurate),²⁴ so they recorded that opinion, but they themselves had no idea as to what these 5 teachings might be, and do not identify them.

And there are many, many more problems with §§ 12 - 14, which you can discover for yourself by comparing it with the linguistic analyses and the various translations in *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya, An Analysis*.

Yasna 19, Section 15.

Section 15 is simple, beautiful, and profound. I think its first three lines were authored very close to Zarathushtra's time. Not only do they accurately reflect Zarathushtra's thought, but they also reflect an attempt to copy his poetic technique of expressing ideas in elegant puzzles (although in a more simplified way). It is not possible (in my view) that § 15 was authored by the same people who authored §§ 12 - 14. The first three lines of § 15 are quite lovely (as I understand them), and this section then goes on to state that the Lord Wisdom used the Ahuna Vairya to repel (or defeat) evil (which is also stated in other commentaries on the Ahuna Vairya) ~ and reflects the Gathas' ideas on how the evil within us (within existence) is overcome.

The words I show in blue (below) are a quotation from a part of the Gatha verse Y45.2, but written in the Younger Avestan form of the language (not in GAv.). The Avestan line breaks and paragraphs of § 15 shown here are the way they appear in Geldner.

§ 15 *vahištō. ahurō. mazdā.*
ahunəm. vairīm. frāmraoṭ.
vahištō. hāmō. kārayaṭ.:
hiθwaṭ. akō. abavaṭ.
antarəca. brvaṇtəm. āmrūta. aya. antarə.ux ti.:
nōiṭ. nā. manā. nōiṭ. saṇha. nōiṭ. x'ratavō.
naēda varəna. nōiṭ. ux da. naēda. šyaoθna.
nōiṭ. daēnā. nōiṭ. urvaṇō. hacinte. ::

Humbach (1991) has not translated this § 15. I give you the first three lines of § 15 in my translation, after which I give you Mills' translation of § 15 in its entirety.

Here is my translation of the first three lines.

vahištō. ahurō. mazdā.
Most-good (is the) Lord, Wisdom.

ahunəm. vairīm. frāmraoṭ.
*vahištō. hāmō.*²⁵ *kārayaṭ.:*

(He) spoke forth the Ahuna Vairya,
the most-good ~ one and the same ~ made real."

These first three lines of § 15 are cryptic. Here, the Divine is called 'most good' *vahišta-* (as in the Gathas), and the Ahuna Vairya is the most-good made real (*vahištō ... kārayaṭ*) ~ which 2d *vahišta-* is 'one and the same' (*hāmō*) as the 1st *vahišta-* which is the Divine. Beyond cool!

What was the author saying here?

Well, when we recall that in the Ahuna Vairya, it is man who makes real the attributes of the Divine by choosing and offering (gifting) them to and for the Divine, then we see in these 3 lines, an equating (*hāmō* 'one and the same') of the Divine (who is most good *vahišta-*) with the man who makes the Divine real (which is most-good *vahišta-*) ~ corroborating the interplay between the human and the Divine which we see in the Gathas, in the Ahuna Vairya itself, in the Commentary §§ 19 - 20 (discussed below), and also in the Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu). This mutual gifting is discussed in more detail, with evidence, in *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya, An Analysis*.

The remaining lines of § 15 tell us what happens when the first three lines are implemented, i.e. that evil is defeated when the most-good is made real. And §15 concludes with a recital of part of a verse from the Gathas which indicates the conflicting nature of the beneficial and harmful ways of being ~ a conflict which is eliminated by the Ahuna Vairya (through choosing and establishing the path that accords with truth indeed *ašācēt hacā*).

Here is the Mills 1887 translation of the entire § 15 including the first three lines. With respect, I think he rather misses the beautiful, and meaningful, point counter-point ideas which these first three lines express. And his translation of the remaining lines is a bit 'free' as well.

"He who is the best (of all) Ahura Mazda, pronounced the Ahuna-vairya, and as He pronounced it as the best, so He caused it to have effect, (He, ever) the same, (as He is).

The evil one at once arose (to oppose Him), but He (Ahura) repelled that wicked one with His interdict, and with this repelling renunciation:

Neither our minds are in harmony, nor our precepts, nor our comprehensions, nor our beliefs, nor our actions, nor our consciences, nor our souls."²⁶

Yasna 19, Sections 16 - 18.

Sections 16 through 18 reflect the germ of an original (more ancient) idea about the manthra, but these sections present and expand the original idea in ways that have little to do with the manthra itself. These perceptions probably occurred in very late Younger Avestan times, and (with respect) were done by authors who had little understanding of the original (more ancient) meanings of the manthra.

Mills subtitles §§ 16 through 21 a "Catechetical Zand". But these sections cannot have been composed by one author (in my view). §§ 16 - 18 are very different from §§ 19 - 21.

Sections 16 - 18 are summarized here as follows, but are footnoted in their entirety in the only translation available to me ~ that of Mills.²⁷

Section 16 comments that "this saying, uttered by Mazda, [i.e. the Ahuna Vairya] has three stages or measures" [accurately referring to its 3 metrical lines] and "has a conclusion ending with a gift". The idea of the 'gift' is accurate in my view and parallels the Gathas, whose the mutual gifting has been discussed in another chapter.²⁸ In § 16 of the Commentary, it is possible that the authors understood this 'gift' at the "conclusion" to be the nurture given to the ones in need at the end of line 3 of the Ahuna Vairya. However, the only word capable of being translated as 'gift(s)' and has been so translated (by the Pahlavi translators, and Taraporewala, among others), is *dazdā* which is in the first half of line 2 and not at the conclusion of the manthra. So I am inclined to think that what we have in this mention of a 'gift' in § 16, may have been an attempt to transmit ancient knowledge, but with no surviving understanding of how that knowledge fits any specific part of the manthra, other than the gift of nurture to the ones in need (at the end). But that is just my opinion.

§ 16 also contains a question and answer (Mills' translation).

"(Question.) How are its measures (constituted)?"

(Answer.) The good thought, the good word, and the good deed."

This (accurately) reflects certain ideas in line 2 of the Ahuna Vairya which mentions good thinking [*vanhāuš ... mananhō*] and actions [*šyaōθananqm*]. Although good word is not specifically mentioned in the Ahuna Vairya, such words (together with thought and action) would be included within the notion of an existence [*anhāuš*] (in accord with truth). Parenthetically, the 'good word' is identified in § 19 of the Commentary as the *mąθra- spānta-* and thus could mean the Word of the Ahuna Vairya itself, or perhaps the Gathas ~ Zarathushtra's teachings which are called *mąθra- spānta-* 'the beneficial Word' in certain Younger Avestan texts. Although this part of the Commentary is not a good linguistic fit with the actual language of the Ahuna Vairya, in substance it is not inconsistent nor an anomaly.

The rest of §§ 16 - 18 says that:

(1) The Ahuna Vairya "belongs" to four classes ~ the priest, the charioteer, the farmer and the artisan;

In Zarathushtra's society, the occupations in which people engaged consisted of herdsmen, artisans (based on its mention of 'molten, glowing metal'), warriors and priests.²⁹ Farming is not mentioned in the Gathas. But the above statement in the Commentary probably reflected the occupations that existed when the Commentary was made, and (accurately in my view) express the idea that the Ahuna Vairya "belongs" to everyone. To this extent, § 16 echoes ideas expressed in earlier sections in this Commentary, as we already have seen, and in my view reflected the idea that the Ahuna Vairya was composed as a primer of Zarathushtra's teachings to be recited by everyone.

(2) The Ahuna Vairya "belongs" to chiefs [*ratu*] which § 18 enumerates. They are introduced with a question "How are the chiefs (constituted)?" (Mills' translation). But there is no connecting sentence or explanation (in the Mills' translation) regarding what these chiefs have to do with the Ahuna Vairya. These chiefs are identified as follows,

~ Five chiefs [*panca.ratu*], namely the house-chief, the village-chief, the tribe-chief, the province chief, and "the Zarathushtra".

Many centuries after Zarathushtra, his name became the title of a religious and/or secular chief. Mills' footnote states that "the Zarathushtra" was the title of a governor,³⁰ but I am inclined to think that in this Commentary, it refers to a spiritual chief, because here "the Zarathushtra" is mentioned in addition to the province-chief (who would be the highest secular chief in the territories).³¹

~ And four chiefs [*caθru.ratuš*] in the Zarathushtrian territory of Ragha ~ the house-chief, the village-chief, the tribe-chief, and the Zarathushtra as the fourth ~ (the latter also probably a religious chief, since he is mentioned in addition to the tribe chief who would be the highest secular chief as overlord over Ragha).

Although the descriptions of chiefs in §18 of this Commentary certainly has historical value, there is nothing in the Gathas, nor in the language of the Ahuna Vairya about these enumerated 5 and 4 chiefs, or why the Ahuna Vairya would belong to chiefs, in addition to the priest, the charioteer, the farmer and the artisan (previously mentioned in § 18).

Yasna 19, Sections 19 - 21.

Sections 19 through 21 are entirely different in ideas from §§ 16 - 18.

Sections 19 - 20 are in the form of rhetorical questions and answers, very much like what we see in the Younger Avestan Commentary on the Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu).³² Indeed, § 20 of the Ahuna Vairya Commentary is identical to § 4 of the Ashem Vohu Commentary (Yy20.4). And these questions and answers reflect the same lovely interplay between the human and the Divine that is suggested in the language itself of these two manthras, as we have explored in other chapters.³³ I think §§ 19 - 20 are a verbatim transmission of more ancient teachings on the Ahuna Vairya, which were couched in the form of questions and answers ~ almost like a riddle and its answer.

Here are §§ 19 - 21 in their entirety. The Avestan from Geldner, including his Avestan punctuation.³⁴ The English translation is mine. Mills' translation is footnoted for comparative purposes.³⁵

19. *kaṭ. humatəm* ∴

What (is) good thought?

ašavanəm. manaspairayō ∴

Truthfulness³⁶ is the first/foremost thought.

kaṭ. hūx təm ∴

What (is) good word?

mąθrō. spəntō ∴

(It is) the beneficial-sacred teaching.

kaṭ. hvarštəm ∴

What (is) good deed?

staotāiš. aša.paoiryāišca. dāmābiš ∴

(It is) with interfaced (?) praises, and the foremost truth.

20. *mazdā. frāmraoṭ* ∴ *cīm. frāmraoṭ* ∴
Wisdom proclaimed. Whom (did He) proclaim?

ašavanəm. mainyaomca. gaēθīmca ∴
The truthful one ~ spiritual and corporeal.³⁷

cvqs. frāmraoṭ. fravākəm ∴
Of what (nature is) he who made (this) proclamation?

vahištō. x šāyāmnō ∴
(He is) the Most-Good-One, the Ruling One.

- [in the Gathas, these are names of the Divine ~ Most-Good-One (Y28.8), and Ruler (Y28.7, Y51.17)]

cvantəm ∴
Who (is) the one (proclaimed) ?

ašavanəm. vahištəmca. avasō.x šaθrəmca ∴
(He is) the truthful-one and the most-good-one, and (of) non-capricious rule.³⁸

- [each of these are these Divine qualities/names ~ *ašavanəm* 'truthful-one', *vahištəmca* 'and (the) most-good-one', and one who rules ~ are here paralleled in man ~ as in the Gathas (in which *aša-* and *vahišta-* are equated].³⁹

I do not think it is an accident that these questions and answers are identical with § 4 of the Commentary on the Ashem Vohu (Y20.4), showing the same interplay between the Divine and man.

In the Ashem Vohu manthra, the interplay between the human and the Divine is accomplished through *ašəm/ašāi* and *vahištəm/vahištāi*; *aša-* is an attribute of the Divine that man has in part and can attain completely, and *vahišta-* 'most-good' is what Zarathushtra calls the Divine, and is the paradise that man can attain.

In the Ahuna Vairya manthra, the interplay between the human and the Divine is accomplished (in part) through good thinking, actions from an existence in accord with truth and beneficial rule ~ all attributes of the Divine, which man has in part, and can attain completely ~ for its own sake (for the sake of the Divine *mazdāi ahurāi.ā*). It is true that the word *vahišta-* does not appear in the Ahuna Vairya, as it does in this section of the Commentary. But in the Gathas, *vahišta-* is used for the Divine, the path to the Divine (which is the path of Its attributes) and the thoughts, words and actions which implement this path⁴⁰ ~ each of which do appear in the Ahuna Vairya.

So in a very real sense, the Ashem Vohu and the Ahuna Vairya are about the Divine in quality and in being, and how the Divine is attained ~ the *path of truth* and its *reward (truth itself)* ~ as in the Gathas.⁴¹

Section 21 simply concludes the Commentary (in the same way as does the paragraph which concludes the Commentary on the Asha Vahishta). From it we learn that the Ahuna Vairya, (like the Asha Vahishta) was meant to be memorized, recited and chanted.

Here is § 21. The Avestan is from Geldner. The translation is mine.

§ 21. *bayqm. ahunahe vairyehe yazamaide* ∴

Of the divine (existences) of the Ahuna Vairya, we celebrate.

ahunahe. vairyehe. yazamaide. frasraoθramca. framaraθramca. fragāθramca. frāyaštīmca ∴

"We celebrate the heard-recital, and the memorizing, and the chanting, and the worshipful use, of the Ahuna Vairya.

yeñhē. hatqm. āaṭ. yesnē. paiī ∴∴∴

These last words are the beginning of the Yenghe Haatam manthra and their presence here simply indicates that this Commentary was concluded with a recital of the Yenghe Haatam.

It is interesting (is it not?) that the Commentaries on both the Ashem Vohu and the Ahuna Vairya conclude with a recital of the the Yenghe Haatam,⁴² a manthra which has a very lovely interplay between the human and the Divine,⁴³ as do (in different ways) the Ashem Vohu and the Ahuna Vairya manthras themselves. However, it is also true that the Yenghe Haatam is required to be recited at many other parts of the Avestan texts (when chanted as part of the rituals), which may have nothing to do with any interplay between the human and the Divine.

Younger Avestan Fragment 9.

A Younger Avestan Fragment which Mills calls Fragment 9, is a short fragment, the entirety of which is a Commentary on the Ahuna Vairya. It states what other ancient commentaries say about the Ahuna Vairya. This fragment is footnoted in its entirety.⁴⁴ Its contents may be summarized as follows.

- * The Ahuna Vairya is the word of the Wisdom (*mazdā-*);
- * It is the *mąθra- spənta-* (the 'beneficial teaching', or the 'beneficial word of reason');
- * It is healing and victorious, the opponent of malice;
- * It is helpful and victorious against the words of Aeshma ('Anger, Rage');
- * It is conducive to progress, "the multiplier and the furtherer of growth".

It is interesting that the enemy over which the Ahuna Vairya is 'victorious' in this Commentary is 'malice' and 'anger' ~ qualities that are not in accord with the true order of existence (*ašācīti hacā*). This perception of the 'enemy' is right out of the Gathas. And this Commentary tells us that the Ahuna Vairya is 'healing'. In the Gathas also, we see the idea of the Wisdom's teachings 'healing' existence⁴⁵ ~ healing it from wrongdoing and all the pain and grief it causes.

And this Commentary expresses an understanding that the Ahuna Vairya enables progress, the growth of the soul, a process whereby more and more souls achieve the end result ("the multiplier"). This process is, of course, the path of truth ~ choosing not only *who* we worship, and the quality of our existence, but also our judgments, the actions of (our) existence, and rule, all in accord with the true order of existence ~ a path that is its own reward.⁴⁶ And the multiplying result is achieved when we help each other make it ~ nurturing the ones in need.

Visperad Ch. 12, § 2.

The *Visperad*, a Younger Avestan text, briefly describes the Ahuna Vairya as follows in Ch. 12, § 2,

"... the wise offerings of the Ahuna-Vairya, ... possessing their many teachings of religious wisdom..." Mills' translation.⁴⁷

Visperad Ch. 14, § 3.

Here is my translation of this section. The Avestan, with explanations, is footnoted.⁴⁸

We celebrate (the) truth-filled Ahuna Vairya, (having) the judgment of truth;
We celebrate (its) possessing lordship [], (right) judgment (having) the truth-filled judgment of truth;
For He is lord and (right) judgment, who (is) the Lord, Wisdom.' *Visperad*, Ch. 14, § 3.

There can be no doubt that to the author of this section of the *Visperad*, both *ahu-* and the *ratu-* in the Ahuna Vairya refer to the Lord, Wisdom. Mills in his translation of this Avestan section, gives us the Pazand comment, in square brackets, which shows that the Pazand interpretation also thought that the *ahu-* and the *ratu-* referred to the Lord, Wisdom (a conclusion with which Mills footnotes his disagreement).⁴⁹

The Zamyad Yasht.

The *Zamyad Yasht*, Yt. 19.81, mentions the Ahuna Vairya briefly as the means through which Zarathushtra drove away the daevas (the pre-Zarathushtrian deities whom Zarathushtra rejected) and deprived them of worship and prayer.⁵⁰ If you look past the imagery of daevas (which by that time meant 'demons') we see an echo of the original idea (that the teaching of the Ahuna Vairya overcomes evil). But by the time of the *Zamyad Yasht*, I think the imagery may have become the reality.

The Vendidad.

This late text composed long after Avestan times (because it is in grammatically faulty Younger Avestan),⁵¹ describes the Ahuna Vairya as a way to defeat evil, although its language is not as eloquent in this respect, as that of the Pahlavi *Bundahishn* (discussed below). Pertinent provisions are footnoted here for your information.⁵²

The Pahlavi Dinkard's summaries of the Younger Avestan Sudkar Nask.

A Pahlavi text, the *Dinkard*, purports to summarize the contents of the Younger Avestan *Sudkar Nask* which in turn was said to be comments on the Ahuna Vairya. The Younger Avestan *Sudkar Nask* has not survived.

In *Dinkard* Book 8, there is a very brief (purported) summary of the *Sudkar's* comment on the Ahuna Vairya, which states,

"The *Sudkar* contains particulars about the power of the pure glorifying of the first utterance of Auharmazd, through thinking, speaking and acting;..."⁵³

Dinkard Book 9 (Ch. 2), starts with a much more detailed summary of the *Sudkar's* Commentary on the Ahuna Vairya.

If this Pahlavi text is an accurate summary of Avestan *Sudkar Nask* then by the time the *Sudkar Nask* was composed, the meaning of the Ahuna Vairya was not well understood,⁵⁴ as you will see. On the other hand, (like parts of Yasna 19) the lack of understanding may well have been that of the Sasanian redactors. Or a bit of both. But you can judge for yourself, whether or not you agree with my conclusion.

In many sections, we can see the Sasanian hand in the fact that the manthra is called by its first three words, 'Yatha Ahu Vairyo'. In only three sections is it called by the Pahlavi rendition (Ahunavair/Ahunavar) of its original Avestan title (Ahuna Vairya).

The quotations from *Dinkard* Book 9 which follow are in E. W. West's translation. The words he shows in italics indicate words that are not in the Pahlavi text, but which he has inserted as interpretive aids, or because he thinks they are implied. Letters which are in italics (within a word) may be his pronunciation aids. Pahlavi words in round parentheses are his way of showing the applicable Pahlavi words. I have used his system of transliteration.

Here are the parts which in my view accurately reflect more ancient knowledge.

This Pahlavi text states that the first chapter of the Avestan *Sudkar Nask* is about the Yatha Ahu Vairyo, just as that manthra was the beginning of the religion (which it was in the sense that it was the original plan or idea for the defeat of evil (untruth), as discussed in the commentaries in the *Bundahishn* and in *Zad-sparam*). In the following quotation, 'fargard' means 'chapter'.

"Of the Sûdkar there are twenty-two fargards, and the first fargard is the Yathâ-ahû-vairyô, just as the Yathâ-ahû-vairyô formula is as it were the beginning (bûnîh) of the religion..."⁵⁵

And it describes the Ahuna Vairya as encapsulating Zarathushtra's teachings (which indeed I think was the Zarathushtra's intent in composing it ~ in companionship with the Asha Vahishta).

"17. ... the words of the Ahunavair, the summary of everything for Zaratûst to utter."⁵⁶

Here are parts of the *Dinkard's* summary of the *Sudkar's* commentary on the Ahuna Vairya which contain the seed of an original understanding, but are transmitted in a way that demonstrates a lack of understanding. It states that the *Sudkar Nask* is:

"16. About *the place* where *one has* to utter the first Yathâ-ahû-vairyô for smiting the demons."

"18. And about *the fact that*, through chanting forth every single word of the Ahunavair with a virtuous intention, a demon is disabled, and *there is* protection of person *and* property from the adversary."

"20. About the increase of the creatures owing to the liberal thought, word, and deed of a righteous *person*; *owing to* the priests *having* become numerous, and *owing to* the perpetual meditation of righteousness and the existence of its recompense."

In these sections, we see the seed of the idea that the Ahuna Vairya lays out a blue print for the defeat of evil (untruth) by choosing who we worship, our existence, and our judgments, actions, and rule, in accord with the true order of existence.⁵⁷ The original 'demons' of Zoroastrianism were allegories of wrongful qualities (anger, malice, slander, violence, cruelty, and others), as we have explored in another chapter.⁵⁸ But in these sections summarizing the *Sudkar Nask*, the demons seem to have become entities, and their defeat is brought about, not by personal transformation, but by the recitation of the Ahuna Vairya as a spell which protects persons and property from such demons, which of course is far removed from Zarathushtra's thought in the Gathas, which the Ahuna Vairya encapsulates.

In these sections, we also see the seed of the original idea that existence is benefited by "meditation of righteousness", and by the liberal (generous) thoughts, words and actions of a righteous (truthful) person. But here, such benefits are also brought about by the priests becoming numerous, and the reverence of the person who makes the priests numerous (doubtless through the offerings of hundreds of horses, and thousands of oxen and lambs ~ all indicia of wealth in that culture ~ as detailed in the Yashts to various deities whose worship had been syncretized with Zarathushtra's worship of Wisdom).⁵⁹

Finally, here are the parts of the *Dinkard's* summary of the *Sudkar's* commentary on the Ahuna Vairya which demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of the meaning and purpose of the Ahuna Vairya, and indeed regard it solely as a talisman or spell, the recital of which ensures power and success in a given venture. Bear in mind that the Ahuna Vairya is a nugget of wisdom, a manthra. It is not addressed to the Divine. So it cannot be considered a prayer for assistance to bring about a successful result (although by the time of the *Sudkar* and also today, it is used as such).

Section 3 speaks of,

"... the power and success owing to uttering the Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo *formula* at the beginning of actions."⁶⁰

And it specifies in §§ 4 - 15, the numbers of times (from 1 - 13) that the "Yatha Ahu Vairyo" should be recited for various specified occasions and undertakings. These sections are footnoted here in their entirety for those who may be interested in these details.⁶¹

We see essentially the same ideas in a Pahlavi fragment-text which E. W. West has translated, and which he says is appended to the *Shayast La-Shayast* in manuscript M6, but is not a part of the *Shayast La-Shayast*.⁶² This appended Fragment Text also states the numbers of times the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer should be recited (from 1 - 13) for various undertakings.⁶³ It is essentially the same as the passage in the Pahlavi *Dinkard* 9, (purportedly summarizing the Younger Avestan *Sudkar Nask*), with minor variations, but the Fragment Text is better written and has more details, than the *Dinkard*'s summary of the *Sudkar Nask*.⁶⁴

I could not understand (in these Pahlavi texts) the correlation between the number of times the Ahuna Vairya should be recited, and the type of venture. For example, in the Pahlavi Fragment-Text, we have the following.⁶⁵

"§ 6. Six *by him* who goes to seek power, and to battle, so that he may be more successful.

§ 7. Seven *by him* who goes to perform the worship of God (yazdân), so *that* the archangels may come more forward at the worship. ...

§ 9. Nine *by him* who goes to sow corn; ...

§ 10. Ten *by him* who goes to seek a wife, ...

§ 14. Thirteen ... *by him* who shall pass over a bridge and a river, so that the spirit of that water may bless him; ..."

I certainly agree that seeking a wife should require more recitals of the Ahuna Vairya (10) than sowing corn (9). But it seems odd that crossing a bridge / river should require more recitals (13) than going into battle (6); or that securing the blessings of the spirit of that water to be crossed should require more recitals (13) than praying to "God" (7). Perhaps ~ being practical ~ it was thought to be more important that we not drown (secure the blessings of the spirit of the water to be crossed), than simply secure "God's" blessings in a general way.

The number of recitals in the *Dinkard* (summarizing the *Sudkar Nask*) present most of the same puzzles except for the last one ~ proceeding "by a ford *through* water" requires only one recital. No mention of the spirit of the water. But it specifies "Thirteen when *one* wishes to go to an inhabited district" (§ 15), but only six for power and going into battle (§ 8), and only "Seven when *it is* for the ceremonial of the archangels [probably the amesha spenta]... ("§ 9)". No mention of "God",⁶⁶ although in the later texts, *spānta- mainyu-* 'the beneficial way of being' was equated with 'God' (in the Gathas, the beneficial way of being is equated with the true order of existence ~ comprising the qualities that make a being divine).

But in the Pahlavi Fragment Text, setting aside the numbers of recitals, there are some rather lovely ones (even though ~ oddly ~ they require more recitals than praying to "God"),

"§ 12. Eleven *by him* who goes to the lofty mountains, so that the glory of mountains and hills may bless him *and* be friendly."⁶⁷ As someone who went to school in Darjeeling ~ in the foothills

of the Himalayan mountains ~ the idea of "the glory of mountains and hills" as a blessing, really speaks to me.

"§ 14. Thirteen *by him* who shall become pathless...".⁶⁸ As someone who has frequently lost my way ~ in the existences of both matter and mind ~ I am touched by this one.

It is clear from these Pahlavi texts ~ even the one purporting to summarize the Younger Avestan *Sudkar Nask* ~ that by the time these works were written, the Ahuna Vairya was largely thought of as a spell used to bring about desired events. The meanings of its words were no longer understood, nor was its purpose understood ~ providing a blue-print for living, for spiritual growth, for the perfecting process ~ although the *Dinkard's* purported summary of the Younger Avestan *Sudkar Nask* does contain some seeds of more ancient knowledge regarding the Ahuna Vairya, as we already have discussed.

The Pahlavi Bundahishn.

I have a soft spot for the *Bundahishn* (so also for *Zad-sparam*). The Pahlavi *Bundahishn* was probably written approximately two centuries after the Arab conquest of Iran (circa the 9th century CE), for the purpose of preserving ancient knowledge ~ an understandable concern, in light of the burning of texts and the killing of the learned which occurred after the Arab invasion of Iran (circa the 7th century C. E.).⁶⁹

Ch. I, §§ 21 and 22, translated by E. W. West, mention the Ahunavar (Av. Ahuna Vairya), and refer to the deity as "Auharmazd" (Av. Ahura Mazda). The round parentheses, and the words they contain in West's translation indicate that such words are not in the text but have been added by him as interpretive aids. Words in italics are in West's translation and indicate the insertion of words which he believes are implied in the language. Here are §§ 21 and 22 in full.

"21. Afterwards, Auharmazd recited the Ahunavar thus: Yatha ahu vairyo ('as a heavenly lord is to be chosen') &c. once, *and* uttered the twenty-one words; He also exhibited to the evil spirit His own triumph in the end, and the impotence of the evil spirit, the annihilation of the demons, and the resurrection *and* undisturbed future existence of the creatures for ever and everlasting.

22. And the evil spirit, who perceived his own impotence and the annihilation of the demons, became confounded, and fell back to the gloomy darkness; even so as is declared in revelation, that when one of its (the Ahunavar's) three *parts* was uttered, the evil spirit contracted *his* body through fear, and when two parts of it were uttered he fell upon *his* knees, and when all of it was uttered he became confounded and impotent as to the harm he caused the creatures of Auharmazd, *and* he remained three thousand years in confusion." E. W. West translation.⁷⁰

These sections of the *Bundahishn* occur at the end of a purported conversation between Auharmazd (Av. Ahura Mazda) and the "evil spirit" in which the evil spirit boasts that he will destroy all that is good, whereas the Lord Wisdom desires to find a way (or plan) to defeat evil.

Let us recall that Pahlavi *ahriman* (so also the YAv. Avestan *angra- mainyu-*) means an inimical, pain causing, hostile, harmful, mind. Thus its personification was seen to be the opposite of wisdom personified (*mazdā-*).

The *Bundahishn* implies that Ahunavar (Av. Ahuna Vairya) is this way or plan, and by it, evil will be defeated. If we recall that the 'demons' of the *Bundahishn* were originally allegories of such qualities as anger, malice, cruelty, and many other wrongful choices, it is easy to understand how the *Bundahishn* perceives the Ahuna Vairya as a plan to defeat evil. In that:

When we choose the object of our worship, our existence, our judgment, in accord with the true order of existence (line a. of the Ahuna Vairya), wrongdoing is dealt its first defeat,

Bundahishn "when one of its (the Ahunavar's) three parts was uttered, the evil spirit contracted his body through fear,".

When in addition we establish good thinking and actions stemming from an existence in accord with truth (line b. of the Ahuna Vairya), wrongdoing is dealt a further defeat.

Bundahishn "when two parts of it were uttered he fell upon his knees,".

And when we establish the foregoing attributes of the divine for wisdom/Wisdom, and the rule of the true order of existence for the lord/Lord (lines a., b., and c., of the Ahuna Vairya), wrongdoing is out for the count ~ unable to harm.

Bundahishn "when all of it was uttered he became confounded and impotent as to the harm he caused the creatures of Auharmazd".

I do not know where the *Bundahishn* got the idea of the evil way of being remaining "three thousand years in confusion." But that is a small deviation, in light of all the accurate stuff it has about the Ahuna Vairya.

True, the *Bundahishn* does not explain the meaning of the Ahuna Vairya. But in expressing the idea that the Ahuna Vairya is the blue-print for defeating evil (untruth), I think it was accurately transmitting a more ancient understanding.

The Pahlavi Selections of Zad-spāram.

We see even more clearly, in *Selections of Zad-spāram*, the idea that the Ahuna Vairya was the Lord Wisdom's plan (or formula) for defeating evil.

Here again, we are told that the Ahuna Vairya was produced by the Lord Wisdom after his discussion with the evil one who boasts that he will destroy the good. The Lord Wisdom concludes that he must find a way to defeat evil. And the Ahuna Vairya is the plan He comes up with to accomplish the renovation of the universe (by eliminating the evil in existence).

I think *Zad-spāram* was recording two (different) traditions, or schools of thought. because it describes the three 'benefits' of the 'Ahunavar' in Chapter 1, §§ 12 - 15, which, in many respects is far from accurate when compared with translations of this manthra. The second school of thought (or possibly an explanation of the first) appears in Chapter 1, §§ 17 - 19 where *Zad-spāram* describes the three things necessary for the renovation of the soul, which (more or less) accurately reflect

Zarathushtra's teachings, and are closer to the meaning of the Ahuna Vairya than the tradition or school of thought it first records (§§ 12 - 15).

Sections 12 - 15 are footnoted here in their entirety for those who may be interested.⁷¹

Sections 16 - 19 are summarized here, (and footnoted here in their entirety).⁷²

1. *Zad-sparam* says that the first thing necessary for renovation is that we must understand ("in one-self") and rely on the fact that Auharmazd (Av. Ahura Mazda) is all good, without any vileness, and his will is altogether good. And indeed, in the Gathas, the nature of the Divine, which is the true order of existence (*aša-*) is 'good' (*vohu-*) and its superlative 'most-good' (*vahišta-*).

This was one of Zarathushtra's foundational ideas. It was his re-thinking of the nature of the Divine ~ rejecting the deities of his culture, in large part because they were a mix of good and bad qualities.

And *Zadsparam* goes a step further (also in accord with the Gathas). He says that just as Wisdom the Lord is all good, so also is the true order which governs existence an all good order (although it often it may not seem so!),⁷³ which Darmesteter translates as His Will. While the Ahuna Vairya does not specifically state the foregoing, it does imply these ideas.

However, this "first thing" (although a prime teaching of Zarathushtra) does not capture a core idea in the Ahuna Vairya, which is that we must choose the Divine/existence (*ahū*), and (good) judgment (*ratus*) ~ in accordance with the true order of existence (*ašācētī hacā*).

2. *Zad-sparam* says that the second thing necessary for renovation is the hope of a good reward for good works, "serious fear" of punishment for crimes, and the need to persevere in good works and abstain from sin.

There is no mention in the Ahuna Vairya of reward or punishment ~ except perhaps for the implied result of living the path of the attributes of the Divine.⁷⁴ But once again, this second requirement in *Zadsparam* is one of the key innovations of Zarathushtra's thought ~ that the law of consequences is indeed necessary for, and will effectuate, the renovation of existence, but as an instrument of enlightenment, not punishment. With his slant on punishment, *Zadsparam* reflects later ideas that are absent from the Gathas in which the end result (through the law of consequences and mutual, loving help) will be the "good" and "satisfaction" for all ~ for those who choose correctly, and for those who choose wrongfully.⁷⁵ The idea that all of existence will achieve the good end is so important a part of Zarathushtra's thought, that we see it in the Gathas, in the YAv. idea of *frašō.kərəiti-* and in the Pahlavi *frashgard*.

3. *Zad-sparam* says that the third requirement is mutual assistance of the creatures which is the "triumph of warfare over the enemy which is one's own renovation." Mutual, loving help, is a key idea in the Gathas, and is also in the Ahuna Vairya, in which we have an interplay between the human and the Divine in providing (spiritual and material) help to those in need. And indeed in the Gathas, the concept of mutual, loving help, together with the law of consequences, is indispensable for the spiritual evolution of existence to completeness and non-deathness,⁷⁶ ~ vanquishing the enemy within.

It is true that the Commentary on the Ahuna Vairya in *Selections of Zad-spāram* is long, and thickly encrusted with the time-bound, culture-bound sermonizing of religious authority. But if we can look past such things, we find understandings that are quite profound in the above 3 requirements in §§ 17 through 19, which do indeed encapsulate Zarathushtra's solution to the problem of 'evil',⁷⁷ even though not exactly expressed in the way the Ahuna Vairya does. The focus of (even well-intentioned) religious authorities so frequently is on punishment and fear as a way to control behavior. But in the Ahuna Vairya there is no fear. There is free choice. Indeed, in Zarathushtra's thought, the freedom to choose is essential to bringing about the inevitable defeat of evil ~ something *Zad-spāram* seems to have missed (although I have much affection for him).

This concludes our analysis of ancient commentaries on the Ahuna Vairya, by people who, despite the loss of knowledge generated by wars of conquest, the burning of texts, and the killing of the learned, thought it valuable enough to devote time and effort to preserving it, and making it known and understood. That their labors may not have been perfect does not detract from the worth of their intentions. And I honor each and every one of them.

* * * * *

¹ *Part One: The Manthra of Choices, Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo); and Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya, An Analysis.*

² Here are a few examples of such passing references to the Ahuna Vairya in some YAv. texts. Only the first example is in my translation. Mills and Darmesteter translate *yazamaide* as 'we sacrifice to' and 'we worship'. But in Avestan the notion of worship (*yaz* words) includes the idea 'to celebrate' (discussed in a ft. in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*). So I have inserted 'celebrate' in square brackets where I think it more accurately expresses the author's intent.

Yy7.26: *ahunəm. vairīm. yazamaide•• aršux δəm. vacīm. yazamaide••* Geldner, 1P p. 36; 'We celebrate the Ahuna Vairya. The straightly-spoken word we celebrate. ...' my translation.

Yy8.1: "... and I offer ... the wood-billets and the perfume for the praise of Ahura Mazda, and of the Ahuna-vairya, the veracious word [*aršux δahe vāx š* 'of the straightly-spoken word']..." Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 228, Av. words from Geldner 1P p. 36.

Yy57.21 - 22: "We worship [celebrate] Sraosha ... the blessed, whose house stands with its thousand pillars, as victorious, ... self-lighted from within, star-studded from without, (22) to whom the Ahuna Vairya has come, the axe of victory ..." Mills' translation, SBE 31, pp. 302 - 302.

'Sraosha' originally was an allegory which stood for 'listening to and implementing' the Word of Wisdom ~ which is the path of truth. And in the Gathas, 'house' is frequently used as a metaphor for a state of being. Now if we factor those two ideas into the foregoing passage (Y57.21), we see the idea that a state of being that listens to and implements the path of truth is "self-lighted from within". Quite lovely.

Yy61.1 "Let us peal forth the Ahuna-vairya in our liturgy between the heaven and earth, and let us send forth the Asha Vahishta in our prayer the same, and the Yenghe Hatam..." Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 312. I think Mills uses the words "peal forth" here in the sense that bells peal forth a jubilation.

Visperad 23.2 "And we sacrifice to [celebrate] that reward, health, healing, furtherance, and increase, and to that victory which is within the two, the Ahuna-Vairya and the Airyema-ishyo, through the memorized

recital of the good thoughts, words, and deeds (which they enjoin)." Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 364; this section is not the same as Geldner's *Visperad* 23.2. I do not know what mss. Mills relied on to make this translation.

Ormazd Yasht § 22 "We worship [*yazamaide* celebrate] the Ahuna Vairya..." Darmesteter translation, SBE Vol. 23, p. 30; Geldner 2P p. 65.

The *Ashi Yasht*, has a very picturesque way of describing the Ahuna Vairya as a way to defeat evil. In this YAv. Yasht, Angra Mainyu (the harmful way of being personified) complains that Zarathushtra harms him with the Ahuna Vairya and the Asha Vahishta (the Ashem Vohu), saying,

"20. 'He smites me with the Ahuna Vairya, as strong a weapon as a stone big as a house; he burns me with Asha-Vahishta, as if it were melting brass. He makes it better for me that I should leave this earth ..." Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, pp. 274 - 275.

This is a metaphoric way of saying that the teaching of the Ahuna Vairya overcomes a harmful way of being, and that the teaching of the Asha Vahishta (which is about truth) is the refiner's fire ~ a metaphor for the enlightenment of truth.

By the time of the much later *Khordeh Avesta*, the Ahuna Vairya was indeed regarded as a protective spell. The *Hoshbam* prayer recites (3 times) *ahunəm vairīm tanūm pāiti*, which Kanga translates as "Ahunavar protects the body" and states that this phrase is part of a paragraph in the *Hoshbam* which "is taken from *Vendidad* 11, para.3." (Kanga, *Khordeh Avesta*, pp. 20 - 21, and the last ft. on p. 20). But the *Hoshbam* also includes a quotation of Yy60.12, which is one of my favorite YAv. quotations ~ very much in tune with the Gathas (detailed in *Part One: Seven Gems From The Later Texts*; and *Part Two: A Question of Reward & The Path*).

³ The YAv. texts themselves speak of Zarathushtra's teachings as being very ancient (detailed in *Part Four: Zarathushtra's Date & Place*).

⁴ See *Part Four: Collation of Texts In Sasanian Times*. I have not taken the time to research whether §§ 12 - 14 in Yy19 are in grammatically incorrect YAv. such as would indicate that they had been composed long after Avestan times, perhaps by Sasanian collators.

⁵ There are no specific words in §§ 9 and 10 which indicate that they are (purportedly) spoken by the Lord Wisdom.

§ 9: The way in which Mills has translated § 9 suggests that it was not intended by its author to reflect the Lord Wisdom speaking. Mills conjectures that Zarathushtra is the (purported) speaker of the words in § 9. That this one section has been inserted in between all the other sections through § 11, in which the Lord Wisdom is the purported speaker further confirms the patchwork nature of this Yasna and the idea that it represents the works of more than one author, put together by the Sasanian collators.

§ 10: The style and content of § 10 (in my view) indicate that the author of this section intended its words to be attributed to the lord Wisdom, in that it is declarative, expresses the same concepts as § 6, and is followed by § 11 in which the author clearly has the Lord Wisdom (purportedly) speaking.

⁶ Detailed in *Part Four: Zarathushtra's Date & Place*. And see also *Part Five: Chronology of the Avestan Texts*.

⁷ The only translation available to me of sections 1 ~ 11 of Yasna 19, (the YAv. Commentary on the Ahuna Vairya), is Mills' translation in SBE Vol. 31, pp. 260 - 263. Words in square brackets, and shown in **green**

font, have been inserted by me. The Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner 1P pp. 74 - 77, so that you can see how Mills translates such Avestan words into English. And where I simply cannot let Mills' translation pass without a challenge, I have placed in square brackets my translation or comments. This does not mean that I agree with every other aspect of the Mills' translation. In general, He translates *aša-* words as 'righteous' or 'holy' instead of 'truth/truthful'; He translates *aməša- spənta-* as 'Bounteous Immortals' instead of 'non-dying beneficial ones'. Mills puts some section numbers in round parentheses and some not (why the difference? I don't know). All words in round parentheses are in Mills' translation.

Here is Mills' translation of Yy19, §§ 1 through 11.

"1. Zarathushtra asked of Ahura Mazda: O Ahura Mazda, Thou most bounteous Spirit! [*mainyō špəništa* 'Most Beneficial Being'] maker of the corporeal worlds, the holy One! [*ašaum* 'Truthful One'], which was the word which Thou did'st declare to me,

"(2) which was before the sky, and before the water, before the earth, and before the cattle, before the plants, and before the fire, and before the holy man [*narəm ašavanəm* 'the truthful man'], and the Demon-gods (the Daevas), before the Khrafstra-men [*x rafstrāiš mašyāišca*] [which Mills' footnote says were probably wild beasts and/or insects], and before all the incarnate world]; even before all the good creatures made by Mazda, and which contain (and are) the seed of righteousness [*ašaciθra* 'the seed of truth-light']?

[I think "*x rafstrāiš mašyāišca*" means 'paralysed-reasoning mortals', or in fluent English 'mortals whose reasoning is paralyzed', which in this verse is the opposite of "*narəm ašavanəm* 'the truthful man' ~ 'reasoning' [*x ratu-*] being an integral part of the true order of existence and its comprehension (detailed in Part Three: *Xratu*).

For the meaning of *x rafstra-* see Part Six: *Yasna 28.5*].

"3. Thereupon Ahura Mazda said: It was this piece, the Ahuna-vairya, O Spitama Zarathushtra! which I pronounced as thine,

"(4) before the sky and before the waters, before the land, and before the cattle and the plants, and before the fire, Ahura Mazda's son, before the holy man [*narəm ašavanəm* 'the truthful man'], and before the Daevas, and the Khrafstra-men, and before the entire corporeal world, even before the good creatures made by Mazda, which contain (and are) the seed of righteousness [*ašaciθra* 'the seed of truth-light']. [For an explanation of the phrase "Ahura Mazda's son" see Part Three: *Light, Glory, Fire*].

"5. It was these part(s) of the Ahuna-vairya, O Spitama Zarathushtra! which especially belongs to me, and when each is intoned aloud without the (needless) repetition of verses and of words, and without their omission, it is worth a hundred of their other stanzas, even though they are prominent in the ritual, and likewise equally as well recited without additions or omissions; nay, further, when it is intoned imperfectly but added to, and with omissions, it is even then in effect equivalent (not to a hundred indeed, but) to ten other stanzas that are prominent.

"6. And whoever in this world of mine, which is corporeal, shall mentally recall, O Spitama Zarathushtra! a portion of the Ahuna-vairya, and having thus recalled it, shall undertone it, or beginning to recite it with the undertone, shall then utter it aloud, or chanting it with intoning voice, shall worship thus, then with even threefold (safety and with speed) I shall bring his soul over the Bridge of Chinvat, I who am Ahura Mazda (I will help him pass over it),

to Heaven (the best life) [*ā vahištāṅ aṅhaoṅ* 'all the way up to the most-good existence'], and

to Righteousness the Best [*ā vahištāṅ ašāṅ* 'all the way up to the most-good true (correct) order of existence'], and to the lights of heaven [*ā vahištāēibyō raocēbyō* 'all the way up to the most-good lights'].

[There are no 'and-s' in the Avestan text, between these three descriptions. Mills misses the idea that these are three descriptions of the same ultimate good reward, ~ one state of being, not a place which he calls 'heaven'].

"7. And whoever, O Spitama Zarathushtra! while undertoning the part(s) of the Ahuna-vairya (or this piece the Ahuna-vairya), takes ought therefrom, whether the half, or the third, or the fourth, or the fifth, I who am Ahura Mazda will draw his soul off from the better world [*vahištāṭ aṅhaoṭ* 'up to the most good existence']; yea, so far off will I withdraw it as the earth is large and wide [Pazand Commentary "and this earth is as long as it is broad"].

8. And I pronounced this saying which contains its Ahu [*yaṭ ahumaṭ*] and its Ratu [*yaṭ ratumaṭ*] before the creation of this heaven, before the making of the waters, and the plants, and the four-footed kine, before the birth of the holy biped man, before this sun with its body made for the acquisition of the creation of the Bountiful Immortals [*aməšanqm spəntanqm*].

9. And the more bountiful of the two Spirits (Ahura) declared to me (Zarathushtra) the entire creation of the pure, that which exists at present, that which is in the course of emerging into existence, and that which shall be, with reference to the performance and realization 'of the actions of a life devoted to Mazda [*šyaodənanqm aṅhəuš mazdāi*].'

10. And this word is the most emphatic of the words which have ever been pronounced, or which are now spoken, or which shall be spoken in future; for (the eminence of) this utterance is a thing of such a nature, that if all the corporeal and living world should learn it, and learning should hold fast by it, they would be redeemed from their mortality!

11. And this our word I have proclaimed as a symbol to be learned, and to be recited, as it were, to every one of the beings under the influence of and for the sake of Righteousness the Best [*ašāṭ haca yaṭ vahištāṭ* 'in accordance with the true order of existence which (is) the most-good']."

⁸ See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

⁹ See *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu), An Analysis*.

¹⁰ Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium*, 1993 (WZO, 1998), page 201.

¹¹ Detailed in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

¹² Detailed in *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*.

¹³ Detailed in *Part One: The Manthra of Choices, Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo)*; and *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya, An Analysis*.

¹⁴ However, this is a distinction the Ahuna Vairya shares with other prayers in Younger Avestan texts, for example, the *Ardibehisht Yasht* (Yt. 3.5) calls the *A Airyema Ishyo* 'the greatest of manthras [*mąθranqm mazištəm*], the most-good of manthras [*mąθranqm vahištəm*], the most beautiful of manthras [*mąθranqm sraēštəm*]' among other encomiums; Avestan words have been transliterated from Geldner 1P p. 74. For a discussion of this manthra, see *Part Six: A Airyema Ishyo, Yasna 54.1*.

¹⁵ This conclusion accords with the conclusions detailed in *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Deciding*.

¹⁶ Humbach (1991) Vol. 2, pp. 2 - 3.

¹⁷ SBE 31, pp. 263 - 264.

¹⁸ Geldner 1P pp. 77 - 78.

¹⁹ The part of the Gatha verse Y45.6 which contains *vīspanq̄m mazištəm* reads as follows, in translations by Humbach 1991 and Insler 1975.

Humbach 1991, Vol. 1, p. 165. "I shall (now) proclaim the Greatest One of all [*vīspanq̄m mazištəm*], praising with truth (Him) who (is) munificent (towards those) who exist..." Y45.6.

Insler (1975). "Now, I shall speak of the Greatest One of all [*vīspanq̄m mazištəm*], praising with truth Him who is beneficent through His [*sp̄ntā mainyū* 'through His beneficial-sacred way of being...'] to those who exist ..." Y45.6.

The description of the Lord Wisdom in this Commentary, as "the Greatest One of all [*vīspanq̄m mazištəm*]" is also used in other Younger Avestan texts.

²⁰ Once again, the words in square brackets have been inserted by Humbach. In the first such insertion, Humbach questions whether the reference to 'Mazda' in this context (of the Commentary) might not be a reference to the Gatha verse Y34.15, which starts with the words *mazdā at̄ mōi vahīštā* which Humbach (1991) translates as "O Wise One, tell me about the best (things)..." Y34.15. Vol. 1, p. 143. I am not sure that I see the connection between the use of "Mazda" in the Commentary and the Gatha verse Y34.15, as Humbach suggests, but I probably am missing something here.

In the second such insertion, "[53,9]" the words in the Commentary *taṭ mazdā tava x šaθrəm* do indeed appear in the Gatha verse Y53.9, the last line of which starts with the phrase *taṭ mazdā tavā x šaθrəm* (although the Commentary shows *tava* in the Younger Avestan form) and the last sentence in the Gatha verse Y53.9 does indeed reflect the sense of the last line of the Ahuna Vairya. Here is that last line of Y53.9 translated by Humbach 1991 and Insler 1975. The word *vahyō* is the comparative degree of *vohu-*, and and therefore means 'more good'.

Humbach 1991, Vol. 1, p. 194, "... That power (is) Thine, O Wise One [*taṭ mazdā tavā x šaθrəm*], through which Thou mayest grant the better (part) [*vahyō*] to the poor person who lives decently." Y53.9.

Insler 1975, "...Such is Thy rule, Wise One [*taṭ mazdā tavā x šaθrəm*], through which Thou shalt grant what is very good [*vahyō*] to Thy needy dependent who lives honestly." Y53.9.

²¹ The following examples from other Younger Avestan texts show that the authors of these texts were well aware that *vajhəuš* is gen. sg. of *vohu-* (in these examples) and describes *manajhō* when appearing with it, thus 'of good thinking'. There are no gen. sg. words in the Ahuna Vairya preceding *vajhəuš* for which it could be the adjective. It is not credible that the author(s) of this particular section (§ 13) of the Commentary on the Ahuna Vairya, (Yy19), would not have known the function and translation of *vajhəuš* in the phrase *vajhəuš dazdā manajhō* in the Ahuna Vairya, if they were fluent in Avestan. Here are a few examples ~ from various Younger Avestan texts, of the use of *vajhəuš manajhō* gen. sg.

In Yt. 2, the *Haft Ameshaspand Yasht* (*Haptan Yasht*) "... the destroyer of Vohu-Mano [*vajhəuš manajhō*]..." Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 39. Darmesteter shows this phrase in his §§ 14 - 15 of this Yasht. Geldner has it in § 13, Geldner 2P p. 72.

Yy70.2, "...And I would declare forth those of Ahura Mazda, those of the Good Mind [*vajhəuš manajhō*]..." Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 235; Geldner 1P p. 231.

The authors of Younger Avestan texts also knew that *vayhave manayhe* dat. sg. of *vohu-* *manah-* belong together.

In Yy1.2 "I announce and I (will) complete (my Yasna) to the Good Mind [*vayhave manayhe*] ..." Mills' translation SBE Vol. 31, p. 196.

In Yt. 2.1, the *Haft Ameshaspand Yasht* (*Haptan Yasht*),

"To Vohu-Mano [*vayhave manayhe*]..." Yt.2.1, Darmesteter SBE 23, p. 35; Geldner 2P p. 69.

In *Siroza* 1.2, "To Vohu-Mano [*vayhave manayhe*] ..." Darmesteter SBE 23, p. 4; Geldner 2P p. 260.

²² Indeed, the Pahlavi commentary of Zad-sparam is closer to the original mantra in meaning, than is this YAv. commentary (in some sections of which I see the heavy hand of a less knowledgeable school of Pahlavi thought).

²³ The evidence supporting the translation of *tkaēša-* as 'teaching' is detailed in a footnote in *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu), An Analysis*.

²⁴ See *Part One: The Manthra of Choices, Ahuna Vairya*.

²⁵ Skjaervo, *Old Avestan Glossary* identifies *hāmō* as nom. sg. of the stem *hāma-*, an adj. which means 'one and the same'.

²⁶ SBE 31, p. 264.

²⁷ Mills' translation, SBE 31, pp. 264 - 265. Words in round parentheses are not in the Avestan text, but have been inserted by Mills as his interpretive aids. I do not know why Mills has inserted square brackets around certain words in § 18, which in Geldner appear without any markings to set them apart from the rest of section 18 or footnotes to explain why they should be treated differently. Avestan words in square brackets have been transliterated by me from Geldner 1P p. 79.

16. And this saying, uttered by Mazda, has three stages or measures, and belongs to four classes (of men as its supporters), and to five chiefs [*pañca.ratu*] (in the political world, without whom the efficiency is marred) and it has a conclusion ending with a gift [*rāiti*].

(Question.) How are its measures (constituted)?

(Answer.) The good thought [*humatəm*], the good word [*hūx təm*], and the good deed [*hvarštəm*].

17. (Question.) With what classes of men?

(Answer.) The priest [*āθrava*], the charioteer (as the chief of warriors), the systematic tiller of the ground, and the artisan.

These classes therefore accompany the religious man [*nairē ašaone '... the truthful man'*] throughout his entire duty with the correct thought [*aršmanayhe*], the truthful word [*aršvacayhe*], and the righteous action [*arššaodna*]. These are the classes and states in life which give attention to the rulers, and fulfil the (laws) of religion; (yea, they are the guides and companions of that religious man) through whose actions the settlements are furthered in righteousness [*aša*].

18. (Question.) How are the chiefs [*ratavō*] (constituted)?

(Answer.) They are the house-chief, the village-chief, and the tribe-chief, the chief of the province, and the Zarathushtra as the fifth. That is, so far as those provinces are concerned which are different from, and outside of the Zarathushtrian regency, or domain. [(Mills) Rāgha which has four chiefs (only) is the Zarathushtrian (district)].

(Question.) How are the chiefs [*rataṽdō*] of this one constituted? They (are) the house-chief, the village-chief, the tribe-chief, and the Zarathushtra as the fourth."

²⁸ See *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo), An Analysis*.

²⁹ See *Part Four: No Castes*.

³⁰ SBE Vol. 31, p. 265, ftn. 5.

³¹ In the *Mihir Yasht*, Mithra is called "thou Zarathushtrotema!" Yt.10.115, SBE 23, p. 149, and Darmesteter was of the opinion that this was a religious chief. He footnotes a comment to the effect that the Zarathushtrotema was the "chief of the sacerdotal order" *ibid.* p. 149. I think that originally, 'Zarathushtra' was Zarathushtra's was a personal name, but because he was the founder of the religion which became so widespread and popular (touched on in *Part Four: The Syncretization*), by YAv. times his name came to be used as a title for an authority figure ~ religious and secular ~ even in areas in which *mazdayasna* was not the established religion (see Yy19.18 discussed herein).

³² The Younger Avestan Commentary on the *Ashem Vohu* is *Yasna 20*, and is discussed in *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu), Ancient Commentaries*.

³³ See in *Part One: The Manthra of Truth, Ashem Vohu*; and *The Manthra of Choice, Yatha Ahu Vairyo*.

³⁴ Geldner 1P pp. 79 - 80.

³⁵ Here is Mills' translation in SBE 31, pp. 265 - 266. Words in round parentheses are not in the Avestan text. Mills has inserted them as his own interpretive aids.

"19. (Question.) What is the thought well thought?"

(Answer.) (It is that which the holy man thinks), the holy thought to be before all other things.

(Question.) What is the word well spoken?

(Answer.) it is the Mathra Spenta, the bounteous word of reason.

(Question.) What is the deed well done?

(Answer.) It is that done with praises, and by the creatures who regard Righteousness as before all other things.

20. (Question.) Mazda made a proclamation, whom did He announce?"

(Answer.) Someone who was holy and yet both heavenly and mundane.

(Question.) What was His character, He who made this sacred enunciation?

(Answer.) He who is the best (of all), the ruling one.

(Question.) Of what character (did he proclaim him the coming one)?

(Answer.) As holy and the best, a ruler who exercises no wanton or despotic power.

21. We sacrifice to the (several) part(s) of the Ahuna-vairya. We sacrifice to the memorised recital of the Ahuna-vairya, and its regular chanting, and its use in the full Yasna."

³⁶ *ašavan-* 'truthful' is an adj. In Avestan an adj. can also be used as a noun that is a person ('truthful-one'), or a noun that is a concept ('truthfulness'), discussed in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*.

³⁷ This phrase is explained in the Commentary on the *Asha Vahishta*.

³⁸ Good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*) in the Gathas does not apply just to rulers. Each of us exercises 'rule' over ourselves, and others in 1,001 small (and big) ways. Good rule means using whatever power one has, for good ~ to help, to promote whatever is most-good in existence ~ the true order of existence. See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*.

³⁹ Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

⁴⁰ See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*.

⁴¹ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*.

⁴² The Yenghe Haatam is also required to be recited, sometimes with other prayers, at the end of some Yasnas, and in many different parts of the Avestan texts, which came to be recited as part of the ritual. But it seems interesting to me that the Yenghe Haatam alone was selected (without other prayers) to be recited at the end of the Commentaries on the Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu) and the Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo).

⁴³ See *Part Three: The Yenghe Haatam, An Analysis*.

⁴⁴ Here is Mills' translation of Avestan Miscellaneous Fragment 9. It consists of two sections. Geldner's *Avesta* does not include any Fragments, so I cannot show the Avestan words which correspond to Mills' translation. Mills has placed words in round parentheses to indicate that they are not in the Gathic text, but which he thinks are implied, or are interpretive aids. The string of dots in § 2 is in Mills' translation, and either represents words he is unable to translate, or words which have become illegible through damage to the manuscript(s) on which he relied. The word in green font is my translation. An explanation (by me) of these sections follows.

"1. The Ahuna-Vairya is a prayer to be (revered and) chosen as the choice one of Mazda. The Kshathra-vairya is likewise such, and the Ya Daena [Mills' footnote: "So I conjecture as the commencing words of some piece."]. They (it) will gain the reward. Yatha ahu Vairyo. It is the word of Mazda. They are the words in season. It is the Mathra-spenta word, the unsubdued, the undeceived, the victorious, the opponent of malice, the healing and victorious word of Mazda which, as it is pronounced, gives most the victory to him who utters it.

2. I have declared the hymn which is most helpful and victorious against the words of Aeshma [anger], which is health-giving and healing, and conducive to progress, the multiplier, and the furtherer of growth. Let the worshipper present it with a libertal offering . . . with its pleasing words. Let that be done through veritable grace which helps us on the most [Mills' footnote: "Y. L, 11."]. The kingdom (is) to Ahura, which to the poor may grant a nurturer [Mills' footnote: "Last line of the Ahuna."]." SBE Vol. 31, p. 393.

My explanations.

Section 1. The "Mathra-spenta" referred to in § 1 means 'the beneficial teaching' or 'the beneficial precepts (of Wisdom)'. In the Gathas, Wisdom's teachings, which he gives to Zarathushtra as the solution for the sufferings of mortal existence, is referred to as *mąθra-* (Y29.7). In YAv. texts, Zarathushtra's teachings (which he obtained from Wisdom) are sometimes called *mąθra- spənta-* 'the beneficial teaching'. Here the Ahuna Vairya is called *mąθra- spənta-* indicating perhaps that the author of this Fragment thought it summarizes Zarathushtra's teachings, which is corroborated by the Avestan Sudkar Nask, as paraphrased in the Pahlavi Dinkard, mentioned in the main part of this chapter.

Section 2. Mills is of the opinion that a sentence in § 2 refers to, or is a quotation from the Gatha verse Y50.11, which in Insler's 1975 translation reads as follows. "Yes, I shall swear to be your praiser, Wise One, and I shall be it, as long as I shall have strength and be able, o truth. Through good thinking the Creator of existence shall promote the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish."

I do not have access to the Avestan of this Fragment 9, § 2, and so cannot ascertain which part of this Gatha verse Y50.11 Mills thinks is quoted in Fragment 9, § 2. However, this Fragment describes the Ahuna Vairya as 'healing', and the Gatha verse Y50.11 speaks of the healing of existence through good thinking. And 'good thinking' is indeed prominent in the Ahuna Vairya.

⁴⁵ Here are some examples of how 'healing' is referred to in the Gathas.

"... Through good thinking the Creator of existence shall promote the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish." Y50.11, Insler 1975.

"Wise One, therefore tell me the best [*vahišta-*] words and actions, namely, those allied with good thinking and truth ... By your rule, Lord, Thou shalt truly heal this world in accord with our wish." Y34.15, Insler 1975.

"This knowing world-healer has listened, he who has respected the truth, Lord..." Y30.19, Insler 1975.

"Therefore may we be those who shall heal this world! ... be present to me with support and with truth, so that one shall become convinced even where his understanding shall be false." Y30.9, Insler 1975 (this verse is discussed in detail in *Part Two: The Lords & The Equations of Y31.4*).

"... the best existence [*ahu- vahišta-*]... the loving man [*kāθā*] who shall seek after these things ... such a person, [*spənta-*] through truth [*aša-*], watching over the heritage for all, is a world-healer and Thy ally in [*mainyu-*], Wise One." Y44.2, Insler 1975. Here, the loving person who seeks after the things that bring about the most-good existence [*ahu- vahišta-*] is one who is beneficial [*spənta-*], watching over the heritage for all, a world-healer and Wisdom's ally in (his) way of being [*mainyu-*].

⁴⁶ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*.

⁴⁷ SBE 31, p. 354.

⁴⁸ Here is *Visperad* Chapter 14, § 3 from Geldner 2P p. 23, with my translation and explanations.

ahunəm vairīm ašavanəm ašahe ratūm yazamaide:

We celebrate (the) truth-filled Ahuna Vairya, (having) the judgment of truth;

ahuməntəm ratuməntəm ašavanəm ašahe ratūm yazamaide:

We celebrate (its) possessing lordship, (right) judgment (having) the truth-filled judgment of truth;

hō.zī asti ahūmca ratūmca yō ahurō mazdā [number of required recitals omitted] ::

For He is lord and (right) judgment, who (is) the Lord, Wisdom.

1. The two ways to translate the phrase *ašavanəm ašahe ratūm* are discussed in *Part Three: Ratu*.

2. Regarding the words *ahuməntəm ratuməntəm* in the 2d line: the suffixes *-mant* and *-vant-* are used to indicate 'possessing' in both Vedic and Avestan (Macdonnell in *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, § 86, p. 63; Jackson 1892, § 289, p. 84).

3. In the 3d line: According to Skjaervo 2003, *Young Avestan*, and his Glossary, *hō* in YAv. is one of the forms for 'he' a 3p pronoun, nom. sg. masc. (Lesson 5, p. 36);

zī means 'for, because' (Glossary), and
yō 'who, which' is a relative pronoun, nom. sg. masc. (Lesson 6, p. 44).

⁴⁹ Here is Mills' translation. As you can see, he substitutes the Pazand commentary for the last line of the Avestan text.

"Also we worship the Ahuna-vairya, the holy lord of the ritual order,
the holy lord with its Ahu and its Ratu
(Pazand); for He is the one with the title Ahu and Ratu, who is Ahura Mazda [ft. 3 "Erroneous.]"⁴⁹

Mills (and so many other scholars) approach translating the texts with the mind-set that 'God' is the Judge who judges all souls, either after death, or at the end of times. But in the Avestan and Pahlavi texts there is no such final, end of life, or end of times judgment. Even in the *Bundahishn* which mentions an end of time judgment, it is the soul who judges itself.

The absence of such an event in the texts requires that we remove the spectacles of such preconceived ideas, and select translation options which are textually consistent. The total absence of an end of life or end of times judgment by 'God' is discussed in the following chapters. *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell* (in a ft.); and in *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Avestan Texts; Heaven & Hell in Pazand & Pahlavi Texts*; and *Apema, One of Many Ends*.

⁵⁰ The *Zamyad Yasht*, Yt. 19.81 states,

"And that one prayer, the Ahuna Vairya, which the holy [*ašavanəm* 'truthful'] Zarathushtra sang and repeated four times, with a song that waxed louder and louder, drove back all the Daevas beneath the earth, and took off from them sacrifice and prayer." Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 305, Avestan word from Geldner, 2P p. 255. The word "prayer" does not appear in the Avestan text.

⁵¹ See *Part Five: The Vendidad, An Overview*.

⁵² *Vendidad* Ch. 19, §§ 1 - 2, and 9 - 10, SBE Vol. 4, pp. 204, 206 - 207. Sections 2 and 10 state that confronted by the Evil One and his demons, who were bent on destroying him, Zarathushtra confounded them by chanting the Ahuna Vairya, among other things.

"9 (28). Thus in answer to him [Angra Mainyu] said Spitama Zarathushtra: '... [the Words taught by Mazda](#), these are my [weapons, my best weapons!](#)
[By this Word](#) will I strike,
[by this Word](#) will I repel,
[by this weapon](#) the good creatures (will strike and repel thee), O evil-doer, Angra Mainyu! ...'. *Vendidad* 19.9, Darmesteter translation, SBE 4, p. 206.

⁵³ *Dinkard* Book 8, Ch. II, § 2, SBE 37, pp. 10 - 11.

⁵⁴ This also is true of this Pahlavi text's summary of the *Sudkar Nask's* commentary on the Ashem Vohu and the Yenghe Haatam as discussed in *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu), An Analysis*; and *The Yenghe Haatam, An Analysis*.

⁵⁵ *Dinkard*, Book 9, Ch. II, § 2, as translated by E. W. West, in SBE 37, p. 173.

⁵⁶ *Dinkard*, Book 9, Ch. II, § 17, in SBE 37, p. 174. The full section reads

"17. About the good results (*dahisnân*) of a suitable recital of the words of the Ahunavair, the summary of everything for Zaratûst to utter." E. W. West translation.

⁵⁷ See *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo), An Analysis*.

⁵⁸ See *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*

⁵⁹ The YAv. Yasht to Anahita details these offerings repeatedly. See SBE 23, pp. 21 et seq. The translation is by Darmesteter.

⁶⁰ SBE 37, pp.173, translated by E. W. West.

⁶¹ Here are §§ 4 through 15 in their entirety, translated by E. W. West, as they appear in SBE 37, pp.173 - 174. I have divided the sections into paragraphs for easier reading. The words in round parentheses have been inserted by West. Words in italics indicate additions by West which he thinks are implied, but which are not in the Pahlavi text. Unless omitted by West, there is no mention of any occasion when this mantra should be recited three times. Why, I do not know.

"4. One *utterance* when *one* wishes to say anything to *any* one; one when he wishes to beg of *any* one; *and* one when he goes to work.

5. Two when he wishes to confer his blessing.

6. Four when *it is* for the homage of the chiefs of *creation* (*rado-franâmisnih*), or the ceremony of a season-festival.

7. Five when *it is* for carrying off the fiend.

8. Six when *it is* for power; *and* six when *it is* for the success of a battle.

9. Seven when *it is* for the ceremonial of the archangels, *or* when one wishes to perform the ceremonial of the archangels.

10. Eight when *it is* for the ceremonial of a guardian spirit of the righteous.

11. Nine when *one* wishes to cast seed into his land.

12. Ten when *one* wishes to allow procreation.

13. Eleven when *one* goes to ask for a wife.

14. Twelve when *one* expects to go up on a mountain.

15. Thirteen when *one* wishes to go to an inhabited district (*rûdastâk-1*); twelve when he goes out pathless; *and* one when he wishes to proceed by a ford *through* the water."

⁶² SBE 5, p. 372, ftn. 1.

⁶³ SBE 5, pp. 390 - 393.

⁶⁴ For example, the Pahlavi *Dinkard's* summary of the YAv. *Sudkar Nask* has the following puzzling provisions, which are clarified in the Pahlavi fragment-text.

Sudkard: "One *utterance* when *one* wishes to say anything to *any* one; one when he wishes to beg of *any* one; *and* one when he goes to work.

Fragment-Text: "One by him who goes forth to an assembly or before grandees *and* chieftains, or on any business; ..."

Sudkard: "Five when *it is* for carrying off the fiend.

Fragment-Text: Five by him who goes to atone for sin, in order to expel the fiend; ..."

'Fiends' or 'demons' in YAy. and Pahlavi texts are allegories of vices ~ anger, malice, etc. so here the expulsion of the 'fiend' is the enemy within. That devils are allegories for vices is detailed in *Part One: Does The Devil Exist?*

⁶⁵ SBE 5, pp. 391 - 393.

⁶⁶ SBE 37, pp. 173 - 174.

⁶⁷ SBE 5, p. 392.

⁶⁸ SBE 5, p. 392.

⁶⁹ See *Part Five: The Pahlavi Texts*.

⁷⁰ SBE 5, pp. 8 - 9.

⁷¹ Here are §§ 12 - 15 in Chapter 1, in SBE 5, pp. 156 - 157. They do not accurately reflect what is in the Ahuna Vairya. The "period" referred to in § 12 is the previously mentioned "period of struggle" (§ 9) during with good and evil are in conflict in existence, and for which the Ahuna Vairya is the Wise Lord's plan for ending this conflict through the elimination of evil.

"12. And after the period was appointed by him, he brought forward the Ahunavar *formula*; and in his Ahunavar these kinds of benefit were shown:-

13. The first is that, of all things, that is proper which is something declared *as* the will of Auharmazd; so that, whereas that is proper which is declared the will of Auharmazd, where anything exists which is not within the will of Auharmazd, it is created injurious from the beginning, a sin of a distinct nature.

14. The second is this, that whoever shall do that which is the will of Auharmazd, his reward *and* recompense are his own; and of him who shall not do that which is the will of Auharmazd, the punishment at the bridge [the Chinvat bridge] owing thereto is his own; which is shown from this *formula*; *and* the reward of doers of good works, the punishment of sinners, and the tales of heaven *and* hell are from it.

15. Thirdly, *it is* shown tha the sovereignty of Auharmazd increases that which is for the poor, *and* adversity is removed; by which *it is* shown that there are treasures for the needy *one and* treasures are to be *his* friends; as the intelligent creations *are* to the unintelligent, so also *are* the treasures of a wealthy *person* to a needy *one*, treasures liberally given which are his own." E. W. West translation.

⁷² Here are §§ 16 - 19 in Chapter 1, as translated by E. W. West, in SBE Vol. 5, p. 158.

"16. And the creatures of the trained hand of Auharmazd are contending *and* angry (*ârdik*), one with the other, as the renovation *of the universe* must occur through these three things.

17. That is, first true religiousness in one-self, *and* reliance upon man's original hold on the truly glad tidings (*nav-barhâm*), that Auharmazd is all goodness without vileness, and his will is a will altogether excellent; *and* Aharman is all vileness without goodness.

18. Secondly, hope of the reward *and* recompense of good works, serious fear of the bridge *and* punishment of crime, strenuous perseverance in good works, *and* abstaining from sin.

19. Thirdly, the existence of the mutual assistance of the creatures, or along with and owing to the mutual assistance *their* collective warfare; it is the triumph of warfare over the enemy which is one's own renovation."

In § 16, I do not know what is meant by the "trained hand of Auharmazd". With regard to the description of the creatures of Auharmazd as "contending *and* angry (*ârdik*), one with the other", perhaps this refers to unperfected beings who still have a mix of more-good and bad, or more-beneficial and inimical/harmful, (before they have attained renovation) which is why they get angry and engage in conflict, one with the other.

⁷³ Detailed in *Part One: A Friendly Universe*.

⁷⁴ As discussed in *Part One: The Manthra of Choice, Ahuna Vairya*, and in *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo), An Analysis*.

⁷⁵ Detailed in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*; and see *Part Three: Adverse Consequences, Not Punishment*.

⁷⁶ See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*, and *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.

⁷⁷ As discussed in more detail in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.