

Apema, One of Many Ends.

In this chapter you will doubtless think I am repeating what I have often said before (*Oh no! not again!*). But there are many different groups of verses that have been interpretively translated to reflect the same set of ideas. And unless I address each such group of verses you would be justified in questioning the validity of my conclusions.

This chapter addresses one such group of verses in which the Avestan word *apāma-* has been interpreted to reflect the ideas of a final judgment by 'God' before being sent to a place of reward ('heaven') or a place of punishment ('hell'). This is the paradigm of at least 2 major religions that did not exist in Zarathushtra's time period, but which have been dominant on our planet for more than a 1,000 years, and therefore have so conditioned our mind-sets (mine included) that we tend to read these ideas into Gatha verses which do not express them. If we wish to figure out Zarathushtra's thoughts, we need to remove the spectacles of such mental conditioning when reading the evidence that follows.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that such interpretations are not justified ~ not in the context of a given verse (the micro context), nor in the context of Zarathushtra's thought in the Gathas (the macro context) ~ and that there are (linguistically) accurate alternative translation options which are consistent with the micro/macro contexts.

I have divided this chapter into sections that are based on ideas (rather than linguistics), because I thought you might find that more interesting and meaningful. But Zarathushtra expressed his intent in Avestan, so to understand his intent, we need to look at the linguistics of Avestan words. But I will keep the linguistics simple and on point.

Let us recall that in Avestan, there are no articles, 'the', 'a', 'an'. But a translator often has to pick one for a fluent English translation. And his choice can make a material difference in the meaning of a sentence or verse.

The stem *apāma-* means 'last'. It is an adjective, which in Avestan can be used as a noun '(an) end', '(the) end', '(each) end', or adverbially ('lastly', 'eventually', 'finally', 'in the end', 'at the end' etc.).¹

Now the notion of '(an) end', or even '(the) end', can be used in many ways that have nothing to do with an 'end of life' or 'end of times' judgment, or the 'end' that is a place of reward or punishment in an afterlife ('heaven' or 'hell'). For example,

The **end** of an event or episode (*the end of a movie; the end of a party*);

One of many intermediate **ends** (*the end of each lap in a race course*);

An **end** that is a consequence for a type of behavior (*a trickster will come to a sticky end*).

A consequence that is an emotional **end** (*a sad end; a happy end*);

The examples are legion.

So the choices a translator makes from available options is an interpretation. All translations involve some interpretation. But to be valid, an interpretation, or an implied meaning, needs to be consistent with the context of the verse and the rest of the Gathas.

True, Zarathushtra was a human being, and humans, by nature, are inconsistent. But over the years, each time I have thought Zarathushtra was being inconsistent, on further study I realized that I was mistaken. He is remarkably consistent throughout the Gathas. So I think it is a mistake to

jump to the conclusion that he was being inconsistent in a given verse. The better course is to see if a verse can be translated in a linguistically defensible way that also is consistent with the micro/macro contexts.

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Macro context.

The following teachings in the Gathas are relevant to the meaning and interpretation of *apāma*-words and the verses in which they appear. Therefore *apāma*-verses need to be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the following teachings. The evidence that these are indeed Zarathushtra's teachings in the Gathas has been detailed in other chapters (footnoted as we go along). I will summarize these teachings here.

1. The distinctions below may seem annoying ~ especially the distinctions between 'mortal' and 'material'. But they represent an important aspect of Zarathushtra's thought. So we need to fix these distinctions in our minds to keep from slipping into the mind-set of dominant religious paradigms that are not found in the Gathas.

(a) Zarathushtra describes 'existence' as the existences of matter (the material existence) and mind (as Zarathushtra uses 'mind').²

(b) The material existence is the matrix for the perfecting process,³ therefore it is a temporary existence that is mortal which (as I understand Zarathushtra's thought) includes as many (material, mortal) 'lifetimes' as are necessary for completion of the perfecting process.⁴

(c) Mortal existence includes the existences of mind and matter (the material).⁵

(d) But non-mortal existence includes only the existence of mind, because when the perfecting process is complete and the soul is no longer a mix of good and bad qualities, the matrix for the perfecting process ~ the material existence (which is mortal) ~ is no longer necessary, and existence is then the existence of mind ~ joyful (the [house of song](#)), enlightened (the [house of good thinking](#)), non-mortal (non-deathness, [amərətāt](#)).⁶

2. In the Gathas there are no specific mentions or descriptions of an 'end of life' or 'end of times' judgment by a deity, nor a *place* of reward ('heaven') or punishment ('hell').⁷ Nor is (i) such a judgment or (ii) place of punishment in an afterlife ('hell'), mentioned or described in any Avestan text that was composed during Avestan times.⁸ In fact, such a 'judgment' is not mentioned even in any of the well known Pahlavi texts (so far as I am aware), although certain Pahlavi texts do indeed mention a temporary place of punishment in an afterlife ('hell') ~ a paradigm that is at odds with the Gathas and other Avestan texts.⁹ The notion of self judgment which we see in certain Avestan and Pahlavi/Pazand texts,¹⁰ is not the same as a judgment by a deity to determine whether we should be rewarded or punished. These Pahlavi/Pazand ideas are discussed below in a little more detail.

3. In the Gathas, the consequences of 'bad' choices (in thought, word and action) are a state of being that 'houses' wrong thinking, ignorance, unhappiness (the [house of untruth/deceit](#), the [house of worst thinking](#)) in mortal existence, the matrix for the perfecting process.¹¹ But a wrong-headed, deceived, deluded, ignorant state of being evolves through experiences ~ earned through the law of consequences (that we reap what we sow), as well as unearned experiences, and mutual loving help

~ until the soul becomes perfected, and is no longer a mix of 'good' and 'bad' qualities and preferences,¹² at which time it moves on (crosses the bridge) from a mortal to a non-mortal existence (although it continues to be involved in giving loving help for the perfecting of existence).¹³

Therefore the final end of mortal, material, existence for all the living ~ everyone! ~ is a state of being that is "good" and brings "satisfaction". In Zarathushtra's thought, the eventual 'good end' is a certainty. Indeed, so well established was this teaching that we find it centuries later in YAv. texts (*frašō.kərəiti-*), and more than 1,000 years after Zarathushtra in Pahlavi texts as well (*frashgard/frashkard*).

Let us now look at the Gatha verses which have been interpreted as I have complained of (above).

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Adding 'final' when not in the Avestan text.

There is a verse in which no *apāma-* or similar word is in the Avestan text but in which 'final' has been added by translators as an interpretive aid.

Insler 1975. "As in harmony with those things which are the laws of the foremost existence, the (final) judgment [*ratuš*] thus shall bring to realization the most just actions for the deceitful as well as for the truthful man, and for the person for whom falsity and honesty are held to be indifferent." Y33.1.

There are no words "the" or "(final)" in the GAv. text of this verse.

So the question arises: What kind of judgment [*ratuš*] does Zarathushtra intend in this verse? Well, *ratu-* and *aša-* are (linguistically) related. According to Professor Insler, both words derive from the same root *ar* that has generated a number of Avestan words which mean 'honesty', 'righteousness', 'straight', 'true', 'right', etc. (as detailed in another chapter).¹⁴ So *ratu-* is the notion of 'judgment' as a mental ability that leads to mental conclusions that are intrinsically good, correct, true (as in *she has good judgment*). This understanding is corroborated by the fact that there are no instances in the Gathas, of *ratu-* being used for 'bad' judgment (unlike, for example, *daēnā-* which is used for 'good' envisionment, and 'bad' envisionment).

Adding "the (final)" before 'judgment' expresses the idea of a final 'end of life', or 'end of times', event that presumably is made by a deity. But there is no evidence to corroborate this interpretation. Neither the Gathas, nor the later texts describe or mention an 'end of life' or 'end of times' judgment made by the Lord Wisdom. Even the Pahlavi *Arda Viraf Namah* does not describe an 'end of life' or 'end of times' judgment made by the Lord Wisdom,¹⁵ (although it specializes in the torments of a temporary 'hell' in an afterlife ~ an idea not found in any Avestan text). And according to the Pahlavi *Bundahishn*, at the end of times, it is the soul itself that sees its past conduct, and understands (with true, right judgment ~ a mental quality) the 'bad' things and the 'good' things that it has done (a self-evaluation).¹⁶ We also see this same idea of self judgment (but at the 'end of life', not the 'end of times') in a story in an Avestan Fragment,¹⁷ which is also told in the Pazand *Mainyo-ikhard*.¹⁸

Our verse (Y33.1) starts with "As in harmony with those things which are the laws of the foremost existence..." Insler 1975. I think this refers to *aša- vahišta-*, the wholly good, true (correct) laws that order existence, of which the law of consequences is a part.¹⁹ The manuscripts which contain

this verse (Y33.1) differ in writing the word as *ratuš* nom. sg., and *ratūš* acc. pl.²⁰ Now it is true that the law of consequences involves multiple judgments on the part of the Divine, regarding what consequences would be true, right, good, for a given action during an existence that is *mortal* and material, in order to benefit each person by enlarging his understanding through experiencing such consequences. But I think in our verse (Y33.1) the nom. sg. is a better contextual fit because (in addition to the syntax) **(good) judgment [*ratuš* nom. sg.]** is used here (and in other Gathas verses and other Avestan texts), not as a one-shot event, but as a mental quality, which is a part of good thinking.²¹ And in the Gathas, the law of consequences is administered with "good thinking" (Y43,16), and therefore with **"(good) judgment"**.

And indeed in our verse (Y33.1), with double entendre, *ratuš* **"(good) judgment"** could also mean each person's own evolving (good) judgment. If we plug these understandings into this verse, while choosing linguistically accurate options, we get,

'As in harmony with those things which are the laws of the foremost existence [*aša- vahišta-*], **(good) judgment [*ratuš*]** will bring about the most straight/true actions [*razištā šyaοθanā* pl.] for (an) untruthful-one [*drəgvataēcā* dat. sg.] as well as for a truthful-one [*ašaonē* dat. sg.], and for the one for whom falseness and honesty are held to be the same [i.e. an amoral person]."Y33.1, my translation.

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Let us now look at all the Gatha verses that use *apāma-* words (in their various declensions), in all of which most excellent translators have interpreted *apāma-* as an 'end of life' or 'end of times' event, ~ sometimes a judgment, sometimes a place of punishment ('hell').

I see these *apāma-* words as other kinds of 'last' (an adj.), or other kinds of an 'end' (a noun), and I will show you how such verses can be differently translated in linguistically defensible ways.

Then you can decide for yourself which translation fits the micro context of each verse and the macro context of the Gathas.

An 'end' as a consequence that is a quality of being.

Normally, an English translation 'in the end' or 'at the end' would (in Avestan) require the locative sg. form *apāmē*. And there are verses which do indeed use the loc. sg. *apāmē* (which we will explore below). However, there are some verses in which the nom./acc. ntr. sg. form *apāməm* '(an) end' or '(the) end' or '(each) end' appears, which many translators have opted to treat as an adverb 'in the end' or 'at the end' (even though they may disagree about how *apāməm* is translated in a given verse).

In footnote 1 of this chapter, I have shown that according to excellent linguists, there are no clearly established general rules in Avestan which govern the formation of adverbs from other words, and that one of the ways in which an adverb can be so formed, is to use an adjective that is acc. ntr. sg./pl. "with adverbial force" as Jackson 1892 states. However, where the verb is a form of 'to be' (*ah-*), both the subject and object of the verb are in the nom. case, so in those instances, I surmise that a nom. ntr. adjective could also function as an adverb, as linguists have done with *apāməm* words (*apāməm* is the form for both nom. and acc. ntr. sg.).

In short, in the context of these verses, the adjective *apāməm* could be used either as a noun ('(an) end', '(the) end', '(each) end') or as an adverb ('in (the) end', 'at (the) end', 'lastly', 'finally', 'eventually' etc.). Naturally each of these options can materially affect the meaning of a verse. So we need to

pick an option that is both linguistically defensible, and a good contextual fit. And if the option we pick is also consistent with later Avestan texts, that makes the correctness of the choice even stronger. Let us now look at applicable verses, starting with the famous Y30.4.

Y30.4.

Insler 1975. "Furthermore, when these two spirits [*mainyu-* 'ways of being'],²² first came together, they created life and death, and how, at the end [*apāməm* nom./sg.], the worst existence [*aṇhuš acištō*] shall be for the deceitful [*drəgvatəm* dat. pl.] but the best thinking [*vahištəm manō*] for the truthful person [*ašāunē* dat. sg.]." Y30.4,

So strong is the conditioning to which our minds have been exposed, that here nom. sg. ntr. *apāməm* has been translated as an adverb ("at") which, with the addition of "the", gives it an 'end of life' or 'end of times' flavor ~ the end that is 'bad' being interpreted as a place of punishment ~ hell ~ even though it is called a quality [*acištō*] of existence [*aṇhuš*], not a place, and even though its opposite best thinking is an end that clearly is a good quality of being best thinking [*vahištəm manō*] ~ not a good place.

But if we give *apāməm* (an adj. used here as a noun) its normal grammatical value ~ nom. sg. ~ we see that it is simply (an) end that is a consequence ~ a good fit with the micro and macro contexts. Here are my translation options for this verse (which is discussed in detail in another chapter).²³

'And furthermore when these two ways of being [*mainyu-*] first came together, they produced life and non-life. And just as (a) most bad existence [*aṇhuš acištō*] shall be (an) end [*apāməm* nom. sg. ntr.] for possessing untruths [*drəgvatəm* dat. pl.], so also most good thinking for possessing truth [*ašāunē* dat. sg.].' Y30.4, my translation.

drəgvatəm (dat. pl.) literally means 'for possessing untruths' and *ašāunē* (dat. sg.) literally means for possessing truth.²⁴ Here, the ends are simply two qualities of being ~ 'a most bad existence [*aṇhuš acištō*]' and 'most good thinking' ~ the consequences for possessing untruths and truth.

In the Gathas, a 'most bad existence' (Y30.4) is also called in other verses the house of worst thinking and the house of untruth ~ a state of being in mortal existence that houses these bad qualities, which through experience, evolves incrementally through a 'more good' state of being to a wholly good state of being, which is Zarathushtra's paradise ~ completeness (*haurvatāt-*) ~ the complete attainment of the true, good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), and its comprehension, a state of enlightenment (most good thinking Y30.4 above) which is a most good existence (*ahu- vahišta-*) ~ all names for paradise (a state of being) in Zarathushtra's thought.²⁵

It is true that this verse (Y30.4) does not state that a 'most bad existence' (the consequence for possessing untruths) occurs in material, mortal, existence. But that is not only a reasonable conclusion, it is the only available conclusion that is consistent with the macro context of Zarathushtra's thought.

Y51.14.

Insler 1975. "Neither are the Karpans [a type of priest] our allies ... Theirs is a pleasure from (bringing) injury to the cow by their actions and their words, a doctrine [*sənghō*] which shall place [*ādāt*] them in the House of Deceit [*drūjō dāmānē*] in the end [*apāməm*]." Y51.14.

The 'cow' is an allegory for the beneficial in mortal existence.²⁶ And in this verse (Y51.14), and elsewhere, the result of injuring the beneficial in existence is a state of being that houses what is wrong, untruth (*druj-*) ~ the 'house of untruth / deceit' in *material, mortal* existence,²⁷ ~ a state of being that is not in accord with the true order of existence.²⁸

Translators, influenced by the mind-set of 'hell' as a place of punishment at the end of a 'bad' life, have chosen to add 'the' while taking *apēmam* as an adverb ('in the end').

But the verb *ādāt* gives us a key to understanding Zarathushtra's intent. Skjaervo 2006 says that *ā* is an adverb which means "here (and now), currently, at present". It is used both pre- and post-position. And he shows that *ā* with the verb *dā-* means 'to place' with *ādāt* as its aorist subjunctive 3p sg. form (in our verse, the 3p sg. (it) refers to the preceding *sānghō* 'teaching' of the Karpans). Now if we translate *ādāt* with the flavor of meaning of its adverb *ā*, we get the meaning '(it) shall here (and now) place' the Karpans in a wrongheaded state of being ~ one that houses untruth. And (since fluent English requires an article 'the' or 'a/an') if we choose '(an) end' instead of '(the) end' we get the following translation of the last line of Y51.14.

Line c. *yā. īš.²⁹ sānghō. apēmam. drūjō. dāmānē. ādāt.* Y51.14,

More literally: 'which [*yā*] teaching [*sānghō*] (as an) end [*apēmam*] will here (and now) place [*ādāt*] them [*īš*] in (the) house [*dāmānē* loc. sg.] of untruth [*drūjō* gen. sg.]' Y51.14;

Or in more fluent English: 'which teaching will end up placing them in the house of untruth here (and now).' Y51.14.

The more literal translation is linguistically defensible. And it is consistent with the micro context of the verse, and the macro context of the Gathas.

Y48.4

Here, Insler has given *apēmam* its normal grammatical value (nom. sg. ntr.). He has not opted to translate *apēmam* adverbially.

Insler 1975. "Who has set his mind on the good, Wise One, and (who) on the bad, (each) such person follows his conception in action and in word; also his pleasures, his desires, and his preferences. (But) when Thy will [*x ratā*] shall be done, the end [*apēmam*] shall be different (for each)." Y48.4.

Linguists have translated the last line differently, because of loc. sg. *x ratā*. Insler translates *x ratu-* words as 'will, determination, intention'. Many excellent linguists translate *x ratu-* words as 'reason', 'intellect', 'wisdom', etc., as Insler himself acknowledges (p. 327). Following H. P. Schmidt, I translate *x ratu-* words as 'reason', 'reasoning', etc., (detailed in another chapter).³⁰ And I translate this verse as follows (detailed in yet another chapter).³¹

- a. (he) who has set (his) thinking (on what is) more-good [*vahyō*], O Wisdom, and (on what is) more bad [*ašyascā*],
- b. that envisionment, with action and word,
- c. his pleasures, desires, choices, he follows.
- d. (But) under Your reasoning [*x ratā*], (each) end [*apēmam* nom. sg.] shall be different (for each choice).' Y48.4, my translation.

This verse simply states the law of consequences ~ that the huge variety of (incrementally) more good and more harmful choices in thought, word and action, each generate their own consequences, which are delivered through Wisdom's reasoning. This conclusion is corroborated in Y43.16, in which the same idea is expressed using Wisdom's good thinking instead of His reasoning [*x ratā*]. In the Gathas, reasoning, is a part of good thinking.³²

"...May He dispense through His good thinking (each) reward corresponding to one's actions." Y43.16, Insler 1975.

In the Gathas, adverse consequences for wrongful choices are not dispensed as an act of divine punishment, wrath, a 'justice' that is vengeance,³³ They are dispensed with good thinking (Y43.16), with a beneficial way of being (Y47.6), to bring about a good end, and satisfaction for all (Y47.6, Y31.3, Y51.9),³⁴ ~ an incremental process of spiritual evolution to completeness.

There is also another verse in which nom. sg. fem. *apāmā* 'end' is used as a consequence that is impliedly a quality of being. I have footnoted it for your convenience.³⁵

An end as a consequence that is an emotion ~ sorrow.

Y53.7

In the first part of this verse, Y53.7, there are many Av. words that have not yet been decoded with any degree of certainty, and about which linguists are in spirited (and sometimes amazingly illogical),³⁶ disagreement. So I will stay with the Insler 1975 translation for the first part, which I find more persuasive than the translations of other linguists. But I offer (respectful) disagreement regarding Insler's translation (1975) of the last part of this verse, in which Insler treats *apāmam* as an adverb.

Insler 1975. "However, there shall be for you a (good) prize for the following task [*magahyā*].³⁷ Namely, that there be the most faithful fervor (by you), while your legs are on the ground [Insler's ft. "That is, *while ye are still alive.*"], in that place where the spirit of the deceitful one [*mainyuš drəgvatō*] [Insler's ft. "The evil spirit"], sinking lower and lower, shall finally disappear. If ye abandon this task, then the word woe [*vayōi*] shall (also) be for you at the end [*apāmam*]." Y53.7.

In trying to understand the micro context, the first question that arises is: What is this 'task' for which Zarathushtra asks our fervent commitment? It is accomplishing the purpose of existence (called the great task, in Y29.11), which is to promote all that is true, good, right, and eliminate all that is untrue, wrong, hurtful, in existence (starting with the wrongs within each of us). In the Gathas, the (good) prize is truth and its component qualities (amesha spenta).³⁸

Next: There is no 'Devil' or 'Evil Spirit' in the Gathas, other than interpretations personal to a given translator (this too is a legacy of a mind-set preconditioned by dominant religions, and some later texts with noble exceptions).³⁹ Insler's "finally" is not an *apāma-* word.

Here Insler translates nom. sg. *apāmam* adverbially "at the end", which, (together with the article *the*) gives *apāmam* an 'end of life' or 'end of times' interpretation. But (with respect) I think a more literal translation of the last part of this verse conveys more accurately, Zarathushtra's intent.

The word *vayōi* is an interjection (Skjaervo 2006). The way we might say *O sorrow!* Just as in the *Tir Yasht*, "*Happiness!* [YAv. *ušta*]" is an interjection.⁴⁰ (Avestan script has no exclamation mark such as the English "!", is used with interjections in English).

Here I think *apāməm* is used in its normal grammatical value ~ as a nom. sg. ntr. adjective 'last', which describes the nom. sg. ntr. noun *vacō* 'word'. And I translate *mainyuš drəgvatō* as '*...(a) way of being [mainyuš] possessing untruth [drəgvatō]...*'⁴¹ I therefore translate the last part of Y53.7 as follows. The diagonal lines do not represent the caesura breaks of the poetic meter. I have inserted them to show you how the order of the Avestan words in the last sentence, relates to the English translation. I give you the Avestan words only for the last line.

My translation.

c. '*... where the way of being possessing untruth [mainyuš drəgvatō], sinking away and below, shall disappear.*'⁴²

d. *If you abandon this task / then for you, "O sorrow!" shall be / (the) last word.' Y53.7.*

d. *ivīzayaθā magām tām / at vā vayōi aṅhaitī / apāməm vacō. Y53.7.*

Naturally, one wonders: what did Zarathushtra have in mind when he speaks of the untruthful way of being "*sinking ... below*"? Well, in the Gathas, the notion of '*uplift*' is a metaphor associated with good thinking ("I who shall thoroughly bear in mind to *uplift* myself with good thinking..." Y28.4, Insler 1975; "... Thou knowest (only) when there is *uplifting* of beings with the very best thinking..." Y32.6, Insler 1975).⁴³ This is consistent with our verse (Y53.7), in which the idea of '*sinking ... below*' is associated with an untruthful way of being (*mainyuš drəgvatō*), which by definition is the opposite of the '*uplift*' of comprehending truth (which is 'good thinking').

So in essence, this verse Y53.7 says that those who do not devote their energies to the task of promoting what is true, good, right, and eliminating what is wrong in existence (starting with our own wrongs) will end up in an unhappy state of being. In short, a consequence of *possessing untruth* is an unhappy state of being, in *mortal* existence.

Y45.3.

Insler 1975. "Now, I shall speak of the foremost (doctrine) of this existence, that which the Wise Lord, the Knowing One, told me: 'Those of you who shall not bring to realization (each) precept [*mąθrəm* '(My) Word'] now exactly (*iθā* 'in this way')⁴⁴ as I shall conceive and speak of it, for them shall there be woe [*avōi*] at the end [*apāməm*] of existence.'" Y45.3.

Here again, translating *aṅhāuš ... apāməm* as "*at the end of existence*" gives *apāməm* an adverbial value which, (with *the*, and if coupled with *aṅhāuš* 'of existence') expresses an 'end of times' or 'end of life' event, which is unhappy.

But if we give *apāməm* its normal grammatical value (nom. sg.), and stay closer to the Avestan syntax (word order) we get the following translation. It is more literal, which makes the translation a bit awkward ~ not fluent ~ but shows that this translation option is not only consistent with both the micro/macro contexts, but reflects the same idea which we saw in Y53.7 (above) and which in fact is repeatedly expressed in the Gathas. Here is the last line.

... *aēibyō aṇhāuš avōi aṇhaṭ apāmam* Y45.3

'for them [*aēibyō*], unhappiness of existence [*aṇhāuš avōi*] shall be [*aṇhaṭ*] (an) end [*apāmam* nom. sg.],' Y45.3, my literal translation.

In this verse (Y45.3) Wisdom's *Word* [*mąθrəm*] is the path of the true order of existence (*aša-*) ~ searching for it, giving it substance, making it real, with our thoughts, words and actions. And here, *apāmam* is an 'end', a consequence that is an unhappy state of being (existence).

In short, this verse (Y45.3) tells us that those who do not *bring to realization* the true order of existence (by searching for, comprehending and embodying it) will be unhappy ~ an *end* that is a consequence of such conduct. This translation option is corroborated in the Gathas which express the profound idea that (in the long run) we cannot be happy, we cannot prosper, if we are not in sync with the true order of existence ~ in the way we live our lives, in our thoughts, words and actions,

"...happiness has been lost to the deceitful [*drəgvō.dəbyō* dat. pl. 'to (those) possessing untruth'] who violate truth [*aša-*]..." Y53.6, Insler 1975.

This idea is discussed in more detail in a chapter on happiness in *Part One*.⁴⁵

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The end of mortal existence.

Let us now look at the 2 verses in which Zarathushtra does indeed use the loc. sg. *apāmē*. In both these verses, *apāmē* is used as part of a chariot racing metaphor ~ the *end turning point* (lap) in a race. And in both these instances, translators have selected translation options that imply an 'end of life' or 'end of times' event. But a racer can engage in more than one race ~ each with its last turning point. And even a given race can have more than one lap ~ each with its end turning point.

Let us consider the racing metaphor, as well as the ways in which the loc. sg. is translated into English. Both are relevant to our enquiry.

The racing metaphor. Racing imagery has been used extensively in the literature of many cultures and languages, (including English), ~ sometimes as a metaphor, sometimes as an analogy. For example, we speak *having run a good race* (using a race as a metaphor for one's life), or *my race is run* (referring to the close of a lifetime).

In the Gathas, chariot racing metaphors appear in many verses. In one verse (with no *apāma-* word) a race course is used as a metaphor for Zarathushtra's mortal lifespan, and in another (with an *apāma-* word) for mortal life in general (discussed below).

The locative. The Avestan stem *urvaēsa-* 'turn, turning point', is a (grammatically) masc. noun. And in Avestan, an adjective must be in the same case and gender as the noun it describes.

In Avestan, nouns and adjectives are given a locative value by changing their inflection (ending). The form of the inflection depends on the stem word. The masc. noun stem *urvaēsa-* becomes the loc. sg. *urvaēsē*. And the adjective stem *apāma-* becomes the loc. sg. masc. *apāmē*.

Now, the loc. can be translated into English in many ways. Skjaervo 2003, explaining the locative in Avestan says,

"The main use of the locative is to express place where and time when."⁴⁶

So an Avestan locative can be expressed in English by such words as 'in', 'on', 'under', 'at', 'over', 'upon', 'up until' and other such words that indicate "place where and time when".

Finally, when an Avestan adjective and its noun are loc., the English words representing the locative case are used only once, so they include both the loc. adj. and the loc. noun. for example, 'at the final [apāmē] turning point [urvaēsē]'. In English translation, the loc. **at** is not used with both final [apāmē] and turning point [urvaēsē]'.

With all that in mind, let us take a look at the 2 verses in which loc. sg. masc. *apāmē* is used.

Y43.5.

Insler 1975. "But I have already realized Thee to be [spānta- 'beneficial'], Wise Lord, when I saw Thee to be the First One at the creation [zqθōi 'birth'],⁴⁷ of the world [ajhāuš 'of life'], and when I saw that Thou didst determine actions as well as words to have their prizes, namely, bad for the bad [akām akāi 'bad for (what is) bad'],⁴⁸ a good reward for the good [vajuhīm ašīm vajhaovē '(a) good reward for (what is) good'], (each to be given) through Thy skill **at the final [apāmē] turning point [urvaēsē]** of creation [dāmōiš]." Y43.5. A few other translations of this verse (Y43.5) are footnoted for comparative purposes.⁴⁹

In the phrase *dāmōiš urvaēsē apāmē* the translation of the locative words *urvaēsē apāmē* as "**at**" expresses the idea of an 'end of times' event in which 'good' and 'bad' rewards are meted out. But this does not fit the micro context. This verse speaks of the law of consequences being instituted at the beginning ~ at the birth [zqθōi] of life as we know it (mortal, material existence). Therefore the operation of the law of consequences would not be postponed until an end of times event. Its operation would be continuous, from the beginning 'up until' the end. So as a first step in understanding Zarathushtra's intent, translating the loc. *urvaēsē apāmē* as 'up until the final turning point' is a good fit, whereas "**at**" does not fit the context of this verse.

But what does Zarathushtra mean when he says (in effect) that the law of consequences will be given through Wisdom's skill from the beginning of creation 'up until the final turning point of creation [dāmōiš urvaēsē apāmē]" ?

To understand this verse (Y43.5), we need to be aware of Zarathushtra's unconventional ideas regarding 'creation', and its purpose (as the matrix for defeating all that is untrue, wrong, within existence), (detailed in other chapters).⁵⁰ The making, producing, of the material existence in Avestan is *dāmi-* (*dāmōiš* being its gen. sg. form). And this understanding of *dāmōiš* 'of (material) creation' is key to an understanding our verse (Y43.5 above). The word *dāmi-* derives from *dā-* 'to give, produce, make, establish'.

In a nutshell, Zarathushtra saw the original or primeval intangible entity as one that consists of two ways of being ~ the more good and the bad (Y30.3), the more beneficial and the harmful (Y45.2). And he describes 'creation' as an act of birthing, that involved making or producing a *material* existence (as the matrix for the perfecting process), into which the intangible primeval entity (consisting of two ways of being) infused itself, so that it could experience in the material existence, all the earned and unearned experiences which increase understanding, and result in the elimination of harmful qualities and preferences.

And in our verse (Y43.5) the way in which the loc. words *urvaēsē apāmē* are translated into English makes a material difference. If the consequences described in this verse are given 'at the end turning poing of creation [*dāmōiš* 'the material existence']' we have the 'good' and 'bad' rewards given at an 'end of times' event ('heaven' and 'hell').

But if such consequences are given 'up until the last (or final) turning point of (material) creation [*dāmōiš*]' Y43.5, we simply have a description of the law of consequences ~ that we reap what we sow, ~ from the beginning of mortal life (the material creation) until the last lap ~ the final turning point of (material) creation.

And what is the final turning point of (material) creation'? The Gathas imply that it is when the purpose of the material existence (the perfecting process) has been completed ~ when all the living have attained a state of being that is the true (correct) wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*) ~ which is the most good existence ~ *ahu- vahišta-*),⁵¹ which is Zarathushtra's paradise ~ a state of being that is no longer material, mortal.⁵² The later Av. texts also express the idea of perfecting existence (*frašō.kərəiti-* 'forwarding existence to truth, (and) making it so'),⁵³ ~ a state of being to which all the living will eventually evolve, through the workings of earned and unearned experiences, and one's ability to think/feel, and mutual loving help.⁵⁴

This interpretation that *dāmōiš* 'of creation' in our verse (Y43.5) means the material existence of our mortal lives, is corroborated in the verse that immediately follows (Y43.6) in which Zarathushtra uses 'turning point' to refer to a turning point in his own (mortal, material) life span,

"(But) at this very turning point [*urvaēsē*] in which I exist, Thou, the Wise One, hast come into the world with Thy [*spəntā mainyū* 'beneficial way of being'], (and) with the rule of good thinking, through the actions of which the creatures [*gaēθā*] allied with truth [*ašā*] do prosper. To them does [*ārmaitiš* 'embodied truth'] announce the judgments [*ratūš* acc. pl.] of Thy will [*θwahiā x ratāuš* 'of Thy reasoning']. Thou, whom no one is able to deceive." Y43.6, Insler 1975.

Parenthetically, the interpretation of Wisdom's judgments [*ratūš* pl.] here as multiple instances of the reasoning of His mental conclusions ~ His good thinking ~ is corroborated here in three ways, (a) in Wisdom's rule of good thinking mentioned earlier in this verse; (b) in the fact that embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) 'announces' these judgments ~ a metaphoric way of saying that these judgments embody truth, and (c) the conclusion that Wisdom's judgments are so intrinsically true, right, that they cannot be deceived, or misled.

And the interpretation that *dāmōiš* 'of creation' in our verse (Y43.5) means the material existence of our mortal lives, is consistent with another Gatha verse Y48.2 in which a racing metaphor is used (although not an *apāma-* word).

"Tell me what things Thou dost know, Lord, before the far end of the course shall come to me..." Y48.2. Or stated without the metaphor, *before I die*.⁵⁵

So here, the far end of the race course is a metaphor for the end of Zarathushtra's material, lifetime, which is consistent with interpreting *dāmōiš* as '(material) creation', the difference being the end of one material lifetime in Y48.2, whereas in our verse Y43.5, the final turning point is the end of the all material existence.

Now we come to the last (no pun intended) verse in which loc. sg. masc. *apāmē* is used. Here again, it is used in connection with the racing metaphor 'turning point'.

Y51.6.

Regarding the *apāma-* word in this verse, manuscripts differ.⁵⁶ Except for Skjaervo 2006, all the linguists in our group and Geldner have chosen loc. sg. masc. *apāmē* which is supported by many mss. A few mss. have nom. sg. masc. *apāmā* which Skjaervo 2006 thought was the correct form of the word in Y51.6. I think the *apāma-* word in this verse belongs with loc. *urvaēsē* and therefore has to be loc. sg. masc. *apāmē*.

Insler 1975. "The one who accepts what is better [*vahyō*] than good and who shall bring success to His wish, (him) the Lord, Wise in His rule, (shall accept). But what is worse than bad [*akāṭ ašyō*] shall be at the final [*apāmē*] turning point [*urvaēsē*] of existence [*aṇhāuš*], for that man who shall not serve Him." Y51.6. The linguists in our group disagree about some other words in this verse, and I have footnoted their translations for comparative purposes.⁵⁷

The translation choices that Insler 1975 (and others) have made, have the effect of turning the last part of this verse into announcing a very bad, one-shot 'end of times' event ~ at the final turning point of (all) existence (suggesting 'hell'). But if we translate the loc. sg. adjective *apāmē aṇhāuš urvaēsē* as 'up until (the) last turning point of (mortal, material) life' Y51.6, i.e. up until the perfecting process has been completed ~ we get a result that is consistent with the micro context of this verse, as well as the other loc. *apāmē* verse (Y43.5 above), and the macro context of Zarathushtra's overall thought.

I translate Y51.6 as follows:

'(The one) who accepts [*? dazdē*] (what is) more good than good, and who is ready to do His wish, (him) the Lord, wise in rule (shall accept); but (what is) worse than bad (shall be) for the one who shall not do so [i.e. who shall not accept what is more good than good], up until the last turning point of (mortal, material) existence [*apāmē aṇhāuš urvaēsē*].' Y51.6, my translation.

This is an interesting verse which Zarathushtra has crafted as an easy, playful, mini-puzzle. Let us take a moment to look at the entire verse.

The phrase, '(what is) more good [*vahyō*]⁵⁸ than good', can only be the superlative most-good true order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*) ~ which in the Gathas is used for the existence of the Divine, the path to the Divine (the path of truth) and the reward for taking that path,⁵⁹ which reward is the most-good existence (*ahu- vahišta-*), a term Zarathushtra uses for his notion of paradise,⁶⁰ a state of being that is Divine.⁶¹ Take a moment to read this verse again, while keeping in mind the multiple ways in which Zarathushtra uses *vahišta-*, 'most good' (for 'more good than good') and see what you think.

Next, he uses 'worse [*ašyō*],' the comparative degree of 'bad' (as in *bad, worse, worst*), in the phrase '(what is) worse than bad [*akāṭ ašyō*]," which can only mean the superlative 'most bad' ~ bringing to mind a 'most-bad existence [*ahu- acišta-*]' ~ a mortal state of being, which in Zarathushtra's thought is a consequence of wrongful choices (but which routinely has been translated interpretively as 'hell' ~ a place of punishment in the afterlife).⁶²

So in these two phrases, by using the 2 comparative degrees of 'more good' and 'worse' Zarathushtra is playing with words ~ perhaps with double entendre to indicate an incremental process ~ reflecting (once again) that the consequences of our actions are (incremental) states of being, and that such consequences continue up until the end of mortal existence ~ when the perfecting process has been completed, and we make the transition (cross the bridge) to a state of being that is no longer mortal (non-deathness *amərətāt-*).⁶³

In conclusion, the ideas of an 'end of times' or 'end of life' judgment followed by the reward of 'heaven' and 'hell' as places of enjoyment or punishment, have been transplanted into the Gathas through interpretive translations (influenced by the mind-set of much later, but presently dominant religious paradigms and (on the subject of 'hell') by a few later Pahlavi/Pazand texts). You have seen the evidence. I leave it to you to decide whether in these Gatha verses such interpretations are consistent with the micro context of a given verse, the macro context of the Gathas, and the total absence of such paradigms in the Gathas and later Avestan texts (that were written during Avestan times).

* * * * *

¹ Skjaervo 2006 shows that the stem *apāma-* is an adjective, which he says means 'last'. Linguists more often translate it as a noun 'end'. And in Skjaervo's view, the nom./acc. sg. form is sometimes used as an adverb 'in the end'.

Skjaervo 2006 shows the following declensions in the following verses under *apāma-* adj. 'last'.

apāmē loc. sg. masc. Y43.5

apāmā nom. sg. masc. Y51.6;

However, in Y51.6 Geldner shows that most mss. have the loc. sg. *apāmē* (Geldner 1P p. 181).

And that is how Insler 1975 reads it (as loc. sg. *apāmē*).

apāmā nom. sg. fem. Y44.19

apāmām nom./acc. sg. ntr. "(adv.?)" question mark is Skjaervo's in Y53.7

apāmām adverb. Y30.4, Y45.3, Y48.4, Y51.14. However:

Although in Avestan there are words which are adverbs (in Skjaervo 2006), the use of other words as adverbs is an area that is not clearly defined in Avestan grammar. According to Skjaervo 2006, *Old Avestan*, Lesson 7, some adverbs are derived from adjectives (p. 75). In his 2006 Glossary he says *apāma-* is an adjective, and in the last two lines above (in purple font) he thinks its nom./acc. sg. ntr. form (*apāmām*) is used as an adverb in the verses he cites.

But translators disagree on whether *apāmām* is used as an adverb in each such verse cited by Skjaervo.

Beekes 1988 states (without specifically referring to *apāmām*) "There is no regular way in which adverbs were derived from adjectives". (In other words, there is no generally applicable rule for it), but he goes on to say that the acc. ntr. (sg. and pl.) forms were "not infrequently" used as an adverb (p. 147).

Jackson 1892 is bit more detailed. He says that many adverbs are formed by means of suffixes (none of which apply to our word *apāmām*); and that "Many adverbs in Av., as in Skt. are really only stereotyped cases of nouns, adjectives, or pronouns used with adverbial force." Although he gives examples of nouns and adjectives used as adverbs, *apāmām* is not one of his examples (§§ 726 ~ 733, pp. 201 - 203)..

As you can see, the foregoing uncertainties add to the challenge of translating this very ancient language. And these uncertainties make clear how important the context is, when attempting to ascertain the meaning of such words.

² For the existences of matter and mind, see *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

And Zarathushtra uses 'mind' to include not just the intellect, but the full spectrum of consciousness ~ intellectual, emotional, creative, insightful, etc., detailed in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

³ That the existence of matter is the matrix for the perfecting process, is detailed in *Part One: The Paradox of the Material & The Spiritual*; and in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

⁴ Detailed in *Part One: Reincarnation*.

⁵ The existences of matter and mind are discussed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*. Here are his descriptions of the existences of matter and mind.

"... to the straight paths of the Mighty One ~ (to those) of this material [*astvatō*] existence [*aṅhāuš*] and (to those) of the mind [*manaḥascā*]..." Y43.3. Insler 1975. Here, the existences of matter and mind are in the "straight paths" and thus are limited to mortal existence. The "straight paths" are the paths of searching for, and giving substance to truth (*aṣa-* see *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*).

"... the attainments of both existences ~ yes, of matter [*astvataścā*] as well as of mind [*manaḥhō*] ~ those attainments befitting truth [*aṣa-*] through which one might set Thy supporters in happiness [*x'āθrē*]." Y28.2, Insler 1975. Here the existences of matter and mind are in mortal existence (in which the attainments of truth are incremental). In addition, the complete attainment of the true order of existence truth (*aṣa-*) is also Zarathushtra's notion of paradise ~ the ultimate existence which is not bound by mortality ~ an existence which is the happiness of enlightenment (the house of good thinking; the house of song). So in this verse, the existence of mind is also an existence no longer bound by mortality.

⁶ Zarathushtra's thought regarding 'mortal' and 'non-mortal' existence, is discussed in:

Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat;

Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path; and *The Houses of Paradise & Hell*; and

Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning.

⁷ Detailed in *Part One: Zarathushtra's Paradise In This World & The Next*; and

In *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

⁸ Detailed in *The Absence of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*; *Heaven in Other Avestan Texts*.

⁹ See *Part Three: Heaven & Hell In Pazand & Pahlavi Texts*.

¹⁰ Discussed in *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*.

¹¹ Detailed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

¹² Detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

¹³ Discussed in *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*.

¹⁴ Detailed in *Part Three: Ratu*.

¹⁵ The Pazand *Mainyo-ikhard*, has a story in which the soul is judged by Rashnu. But Rashnu is an allegory for (right, good) judgment (as a mental quality, a mental capability), detailed in *Part One: Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories*.

¹⁶ Detailed in *Part Three: Heaven & Hell In Pazand & Pahlavi Texts*.

¹⁷ Mentioned in *Part Three: Heaven In Other Avestan Texts*.

¹⁸ Detailed in *Part One: Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories*.

¹⁹ Detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

²⁰ In our verse (Y33.1) there are mss. differences in writing the *ratu-* word. Geldner has chosen *ratūš* (acc. pl.) based on mss. K5, Pt4, S1, Mf1, Jp1, Pd; but he shows *ratuš* (nom. sg.) in mss. J2, 6, 7, H1, K11, L13, 1, 2, and B2 (which is Insler's choice); Geldner 1P pp. 119 - 120, ft. 4). Naturally, the translation would be different depending on whether the declension is nom. or acc., sg. or pl. Other translations of this verse, Y33.1, are footnoted in *Part Three: Ratu*.

²¹ Detailed in *Part Three: Ratu*; and the chapters on the Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo) in *Parts One and Three*.

²² For the translation of *mainyu-* as a way of being, see *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

²³ Both the meaning and linguistics of this most interesting verse are detailed in *Part Six: Yasna 30.3 and 4*.

²⁴ *drəgvatqm* is dat. pl. of the stem *drəgvant-* an adj. which literally means 'possessing untruth', or 'untruthful' This adj. can be used as a noun that is a person ('untruthful-one'), or a concept ('untruthfulness'). Here (Y30.4), most translators take it as a noun that is people 'for (the) untruthful' (dat. pl.). I take it more literally 'for possessing untruths' (dat. pl.). And the same reasoning applies to my translation of *ašāunē* 'for possessing truth' dat. sg. Why is this important? Well, when referring to a person, we might say he (or she) is evil ~ because of the way s/he acts. But actually, no person is all good, or all evil. In mortal existence we all are still a mix of good and bad qualities. In Zarathushtra's thought, it is choices, conduct, that generates consequences (not people). And in this verse (Y30.4) Zarathushtra is announcing a principle of his teaching. I therefore think it is inaccurate to pick a translation choice (even though linguistically valid) which interprets *drəgvatqm* and *ašāunē* as 'bad' and 'good' people; but translating these words more literally 'for possessing untruth' and 'for possessing truth' more accurately reflects Zarathushtra's thought. This issue is discussed in detail, with many verses, in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*.

²⁵ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*; and *The Puzzle of the Most Good, Vahishta*.

²⁶ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and Its Network*.

²⁷ Detailed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

²⁸ Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

²⁹ Insler prefers *yā iš* which is also the preference of Humbach 1991, and Humbach/Faiss 2010, Taraporewala 1951 and Bartholomae. Geldner 1P p. 183, has *yāiš* based on 4 mss., showing no ms. variations, (which I think is a scribal error).

As to its meaning, *yā* 'which' is a relative pronoun, nom. sg. masc./ntr. and it stands for the masc. noun *sāngha-* 'teaching'. On the meaning of *iš*, Reichelt 1919 says *iš* is acc. pl. masc. "see under ay-." And he shows that (in one of its meanings) *ay-* is a "subst. pron. dem., only enclit. acc. m. ... *īm*, *īt*, *iš*, *ī*, ..." So here I take *iš* (acc. pl. masc.) to be a demonstrative pronoun 'them', referring to the masc. pl. *karapanō*.

³⁰ Detailed in *Part Three: Xratu*.

³¹ Detailed in *Part Six: Yasna 48.4*.

³² Detailed in *Part Three: Xratu*.

³³ Detailed in *Part Three: Is Wisdom A 'God' of Wrath, Enmity?*

³⁴ Detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

³⁵ In Y44.19 *apāmā* nom. sg. fem. is used. The fem. form is used because *apāmā* refers to *maēiniš* which is a fem. noun. The word *maēiniš* has been variously translated as 'payment, requital, and punishment'. The first two mean a consequence (which can be good or bad, and therefore do not carry the added meaning of 'punishment'). Insler himself has translated *maēiniš* as 'payments' in Y31.15, but as 'punishment' in Y44.19. So you can see the biblical mind-set flavoring his choice and the choice of other translators as well (discussed in *Part Three: Adverse Consequences, Not Punishment*). Here is Y44.19.

Insler 1975. "This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. The person who shall not give that prize to the one winning it, namely, to the man who should receive it in accord with (our) promise ~ [line d.] what shall be the first punishment [*maēiniš* 'requital'] for such a person? [line e.] I know the final one [*apāmā*] which shall befall him." Y44.19.

I think here also, *apāmā* is an end result (consequence) of wrongful actions ~ not an 'end of life' or 'end of time judgment' ~ just as one might say *You are going to come to a bad end* meaning the consequence of wrongful actions. Let us take a closer look at the pertinent lines.

line d. *kā tām ahyā maēiniš aḡhaṭ paouruyē*

line e. *vīdvā avqm yā.tm aḡhaṭ apāmā* •: Y44.19, (from Insler 1975 who has a few Av. words in different form from Geldner)

d. 'what shall be the first requital [*maēiniš*] for such a person?

e. (The) end-one [*apāmā*] which shall befall him, I know." Y44.19, my translation.

To understand what Zarathushtra had in mind in using nom. sg. *apāmā* 'the end-one', we need to read these two lines in our verse (Y44.19) together with the 2 verses which immediately precede it.

In Y44.17 Zarathushtra asks Wisdom (in essence): How can he impassion people so that they will follow Wisdom's teachings ~ the search for truth, the path of truth.

In the next verse Y44.18, he asks Wisdom: How can he win over King Vishtaspa, his Queen and the royal circle (referred to in metaphors which play on their names, discussed in *Part Three: Other Metaphors*).

And in our verse Y44.19 (quoted above) he asks what the first consequence will be for the one who prevents him from getting the prize (winning over the royal circle), stating that he knows how these persons will end (the end consequence). In the later texts we are told that the priests of Vishtaspa's court did their utmost, through fraud, false accusations, planting false evidence, et cetera, to discredit Zarathushtra in Vishtaspa's eyes. I think this may have been what Zarathushtra was referring to in Y44.19, when he asks what the consequences will be for the person who through such wrongdoings tries to thwart Zarathushtra from winning that prize (converting the king and the royal circle to Wisdom's path, the path of truth). In the context of this verse, I think the first requital (payback) is that these priests will reap what they sow, and will themselves be discredited (which did indeed occur according to the later texts), and Zarathushtra says (in effect) that he knows how these priests will end up ~ in a wrong-headed state of being, a most bad existence, a state of being that houses untruth (the house of untruth), ~ a temporary state of being (in mortal existence) which is the consequence of wrongful behavior in the Gathas (detailed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell; and Asha & The Checkmate Solution*. So once again the 'end' here is simply a temporary consequence.

³⁶ The Humbach 1991 translation of Y53.7 line b. describes quite graphically an act of sexual intercourse, and then concludes with the words "where, slipping back and down the spirit of the deceitful one has gone away." Vol. 1, p. 194. The Humbach/Faiss 2010 translation is not much different in this regard. Which

makes one question: What, (in the name of common sense let alone logic) does this sexual description have to do with the deceitful way of being going down and away?! In both these translations (1991 and 2010) there is a complete disconnect between the first and last part of this verse. Avestan words (like English words) often have more than one meaning. It does not make sense to select meanings for Av. words which result in a total disconnect with the rest of a given verse.

This demonstrates so clearly how important the micro context of a verse is, in making translation choices ~ especially for Avestan words that are not frequently used, have not yet been decoded with 100% certainty, and which (as the Insler 1975 translation shows) can have more than one unrelated meaning. Parenthetically, no place in the Gathas is sex itself, or the act of sexual intercourse, deemed 'evil'. Nor do the Gathas, or any other Avestan text (of which I am aware) mention sexual intercourse as a way to defeat the deceitful way of being (or the deceitful spirit).

But Zarathushtra does not teach asceticism. He does not tell us that we must renounce the joys of the material existence to achieve spirituality. Quite the contrary, the material existence is the matrix through which we make choices that enable spiritual growth (one of life's paradoxes!). So in his thought, the material existence is not intrinsically 'bad'. It is how we use it that is more good or bad.

If we worship the material existence ~ elevate it as the ultimate objective ~ or use it in ways that harm, or injure ourselves or others, or to accomplish a 'bad' end, it is our *choices* in so doing, that retard spirituality (i.e. are 'bad') ~ not the matrix through which we express our good and bad choices (the material existence).

I love that Zarathushtra's perception of the Divine includes the generosity of giving us material tools to achieve spiritual growth, and crafting these material tools in such a way that the process of achieving spirituality includes moments of pleasure and joy. See in *Part One: Truth, Asha; Good & Evil; The Paradox of the Material & the Spiritual*; and *A Sky Full of Stars*; and in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

³⁷ *magahyā* in our verse, Y53.7, is gen. sg. ('of ___') of the stem *maga-*. In Av., the gen. is sometimes used in a dat. flavor ('for ___') according to Skjaervo 2003 *Young Avestan*, Lessons 12 and 13, which is the way Insler has translated the gen. *magahyā* in Y53.7 "...for the ... task [*magahyā*]."

In his comment on Y29.11, which is the first Gatha verse in which a *maga-* word is used, Insler 1975 does a meticulous analysis of each Gatha verse in which *maga-* appears, (including our verse Y53.7), and considers Vedic parallels, in support of his translation choice 'task', which fits each use of a *maga-* word in the Gathas (pp. 157 - 158).

³⁸ Detailed in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & The Path*.

³⁹ Detailed in *Part One: Does The Devil Exist?*

⁴⁰ Explained in *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu) An Analysis*.

⁴¹ I translate *mainyuš drəgvatō* as '(a) way of being possessing untruth'. Both words are nom. sg. of their respective stems *mainyu-* and *drəgvant-*. The meaning of *mainyu-* as a 'way of being' is discussed in detail in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being*;

And *drəgvant-* is an adj. which literally means 'possessing untruth', or 'untruthful', (although it often is used as a noun (person or concept), as discussed in a ft. above, and further detailed in *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*).

For fluent English, we need to add an article ('the' or 'a'). In the context of our verse, Y53.7, I think Zarathushtra is speaking of a deceitful way of being as a general principle. Thus, *mainyuš drəgvatō* '(a) way of being possessing untruth'.

⁴² In line c. I follow Insler's take on the difficult *ānqsaṭ* in this line, and in translating the words that precede it, *paracā mraocqs aorācā* as 'sinking away and below', I follow his more literal translation in his commentary on this verse Y53.7 "sinking away and below", (p. 326).

⁴³ Detailed with other examples in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

⁴⁴ Skjaervo 2006 says that *iθā* is an adverb. which means 'in this way'; Reichelt 1919, says *iθā* is an adv. which means 'thus, so'.

⁴⁵ Detailed in *Part One: Joy, Happiness, Prosperity*.

⁴⁶ Skjaervo 2003 *Young Avestan* Lesson 17, pp. 192 - 194.

⁴⁷ Insler himself explains in his commentary, that he agrees with Bartholomae that the literal meaning of the stem *zqθa-* is 'birth' (p. 233).

⁴⁸ My translation alternatives "bad for (what is) bad" and "(a) good reward for (what is) good" in this verse Y43.5 express the idea that it is 'good' and 'bad' conduct ~ not people ~ that is intended here, for 3 reasons:

1. It is 'good' and 'bad' conduct that is mentioned in the immediately preceding words;
2. The Avestan words are in the sg. If people had been intended, they would have to be pl. and
3. No one is all bad or all good, and under the law of consequences, it is good and bad conduct that accrues consequences. This verse is discussed in a ft. in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Bad for the Bad*.

⁴⁹ Here is Y43.5 in Gathic Avestan with a few translations for comparative purposes.

spəntəm aṭ θwā mazdā mājihī ahurā
hyaṭ θwā aṅhəuš zqθōi darəsəm paourvīm
hyaṭ dā šyaodanā mīzdavan yācā ux dā
akəm akāi vaṅuhīm ašīm vaṅhaovē
θwā hunarā dāmōiš urvəēsē apəmə Y43.5.

Insler 1975. "But I have already realized Thee to be virtuous [*spənta-*], Wise Lord, when I saw Thee to be the First One at the creation [*zqθōi*] of the world [*aṅhəuš*], and when I saw that Thou didst determine actions as well as words to have their prizes, namely, bad for the bad, a good reward for the good, (each to be given), through Thy skill at the final [*apəmə*] turning point [*urvəēsē*] of creation [*dāmōiš*]." Y43.5. p. 61.

Humbach (1991). "I realize that Thou art prosperous, O Wise Ahura, when I see Thee, the Primal One, (engaged) in the begetting [*zqθōi*] of existence [*aṅhəuš*], while Thou assignest to actions their prize as well as to statements, (assigning) evil to the evil one, (but) a good reward to the good one, by Thy skill, at the final [*apəmə*] turning point [*urvəēsē*] of creation [*dāmōiš*]." Y43.5, Vol. 1, p. 152.

Humbach/Faiss (2010). "I realize that you are beneficent, O Wise Lord, when I perceive you, the Primal One, (engaged) in the procreation [*zqθōi*] of the existence/life [*aṅhəuš*], (and) when you make the actions have their prize as well as the statements, (assigning) evil to the evil one (but) a good requital/reward to the good one by your skill, at the final [*apəmə*] turn (of the course) [*urvəēsē*] of the world [*dāmōiš*]." Y43.5, pp. 115 - 116.

Taraporewala (1951). "(As) Divine, indeed, O Mazda, have-I-realized Thee, O Ahura, when I-recognized Thee (as) the First at-the-birth [*zqθōi*] of Life [*aṅhəuš*]; for Thou-hast-ordained (that all) acts and all words shall-bear-fruit ~ evil to the Evil, (and) good blessings to the Good ~ through Thy Wisdom, (thus shall it be) up to the ultimate [*apəmə*] goal [*urvəēsē*] of Creation [*dāmōiš*]." Y43.5, p. 416. In this verse Taraporewala's conclusion is close to my own, although he arrives at it differently.

Bartholomae's translation (shown in Tarap. 1951 p. 419) is the same as Moulton's (shown next).

Moulton (1912). "As the holy one I recognised thee, Mazda Ahura, when I saw thee in the beginning at the birth [zqθōi] of Life [aḡhāuš], when thou madest actions and words to have their meed ~ evil for the evil, a good Destiny for the good ~ through thy wisdom when creation shall reach its goal." Y43.5, p. 365. A free translation that does not indicate how the locative is translated.

⁵⁰ Zarathushtra's unconventional ideas regarding 'creation' are discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*. His notion of how the evil in existence is defeated is detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

⁵¹ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

⁵² Detailed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*; and *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*.

⁵³ The meaning of *frašō.karāiti-* is explored in *Part Three: Heaven In Other Avestan Texts*.

⁵⁴ Detailed in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.

⁵⁵ The phrase "before the far end of the course shall come to me" is a racing metaphor, meaning before the end of Zarathushtra's life. In the phrase *yā māng pərəθā* (which Insler 1975 has translated as "far end of the course"), the mss. available to Geldner 1P p. 168 show *yā māng* with no mss. variations footnoted by Geldner. Insler 1975 emends *yā māng* to **yāmāng*, gen. sg. of *yāman-* 'course' (showing an almost identical Ved. cognate), explaining how the change from an oral **yāmāng* to a written *yā māng* would have come about, and showing Vedic parallels for *pərəθā* as meaning "far end", thus translating **yāmāng pərəθā* as "far end of the course" p. 286. In the context of Y48.2, I find Insler's decoding of the words **yāmāng pərəθā* "far end of the course" to be persuasive.

But not all translators agree. Humbach 1991 translates *yā māng pərəθā* as "the compensations [pərəθā] that [yā] (I have) in mind [māng]"; but acknowledges that *yā māng* could be read as one word, gen. sg. of *yāman-* 'course'. He sees *pərəθā* as "compensation/forfeit" based on a YAv. *tanu.pərəθa-* "of forfeited body". Vol. 2, p. 197. But (with respect) the notion of 'compensation' in the nature of a forfeit does not apply to, or fit, the context of this verse Y48.2.

As you can see, the process of decoding the GAv. language is still a work in progress.

⁵⁶ Geldner 1P p. 181.

⁵⁷ Here is the full verse Y51.6 in Gathic Avestan with my translation, and for comparative purposes, the translations of the linguists in our group, with a few notes on particular words.

yā vahyō vanhāuš dazdē yascā hōi vārāi rādaṭ
ahurō xšaθrā mazdā aṭ ahmāi akāṭ ašyō
yā hōi nōiṭ vīdāiṭ apāmē aḡhāuš urvaēsē Y51.6.

My translation:

'(The one) who accepts [? *dazdē*] (what is) more good than good [i.e. the most good *vahišta-*], and who is ready (to do) [*rādaṭ*] His [*hōi*] wish, (him) the Lord, wise in rule (shall accept); but (what is) worse than bad [i.e. most bad *acišto*] (shall be) for the one who shall not do so [*yā hōi nōiṭ vīdāiṭ* i.e. who shall not accept what is most good], up until the last turning point of (mortal, material) existence.' Y51.6.

Let us first look at some of the difficult words.

dazdē is used in more than one Gatha verse. And no one meaning (or conjugation) ascribed to it by the linguists in our group fits each Gatha verse in which this word is used. This word has been discussed

in more detail in *Part Six: Yasna 30.4*, which looks at the opinions of each linguist in our group, and each verse in which *dazdē* appears. In our verse (Y51.6) Insler translates it as "accepts" (3p sg.). In Y30.4 he translates it as "they produced" (3p pl. and a different meaning).

My take? *dazdē* well may be the form for more than one conjugation. I have followed Insler 1975 in our verse Y51.6 because the syntax requires that the verb (which is first expressed) be implied later in the sentence (a normal feature of Avestan syntax according to Insler, see *Part One: The Manthra of Choices, Ahuna Vairya*), and Insler's choice here **accepts** is the only meaning that applies to both the expressed and implied use of *dazdē*. And it fits the context of the verse. But it is a tentative translation at best.

rādaŋ Skjaervo 2006 thinks it is Inj. 3p sg. of *rād-*; and Reichelt 1919 says one of the meanings of *rād-* is 'to be ready to do a person's will'. However, I prefer Insler's choice "wish" because Wisdom in the Gathas is not a deity who demands obedience to His Will. Wisdom recognizes that the freedom to choose (and learn from our experiences) is essential to the process of acquiring enlightenment (the house of good thinking) which is wisdom, which is Wisdom's wish for all the living (of which He is a part).

hōi is a 3p sg. personal pronoun; it is the form for genitive and dative masc./fem./ ntr. The context requires that the first *hōi* is gen. masc. 'his'; the second *hōi* is dat. 'for the one'. The masc. is generic.

vīdāiŋ linguists disagree widely; I follow Reichelt 1919, who says one of the meanings of *dā-* with (the prefix) *vī* means 'to do, perform', so in context I have "for the one who shall not do so [*yā hōi nōiŋ vīdāiŋ*], which (of all available translation options) best fits the context.

Insler 1975 (does he interpret **existence** to be all existence? an individual's existence?)

"The one who **accepts** [*dazdē*] what is better than good and who shall bring success to [*rādaŋ*] His wish (him) the Lord, Wise in His rule, (shall accept). But what is worse than bad shall be, at the final turning point of existence for that man who shall not serve [*nōiŋ vīdāiŋ*] Him." Y51.6, p. 105.

Humbach 1991 (he interprets **existence** to be an individual's existence).

"He who **decides in favor of** [*dazdē*] (what is) better than good, and who will heed His will [*rādaŋ*], the Ahura (will) remember (him) with (His) power. But (what is) worse than evil (will befall) that one who will not care [*nōiŋ vīdāiŋ*] for Him, at the final turning point of (his) existence." Y51.6, Vol. 1, p. 187.

Humbach/Faiss 2010 (they interpret **existence** to be all existence).

"(Of him) who **accepts** [*dazdē*] what is better than good and who **submits to** His will, the Lord, through His power (is) mindful. But what is worse than evil (is in store) for that one who **did not fulfill** [*nōiŋ vīdāiŋ*] (his duties) toward Him, at the final turn of the existence/world." Y51.6, p. 154.

Taraporewala 1951 (Individual life? All life?)

"Whoso **renders-himself** [*dazdē*] better than-good, and whoso **fulfills** [*rādaŋ*], Her destiny, (he shall be) Master [Ahura] through-the-Xshathra of Mazda; but (it shall be) worse than-bad for him, who **fosters** Her not [*nōiŋ vīdāiŋ*], at-the-final [*apāmē*] end [*urvaēsē*] of Life [*ayhāuš*]." Y51.6, p. 779. The 3p pronoun *hōi* (gen./dat. sg.) is not gender specific. Taraporewala translates it as fem. because he thinks it refers to the (allegorical) 'cow' in the preceding verse. In my view, the 'cow' is an allegory for the beneficial in mortal existence (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow & Its Network*). Here Taraporewala takes cow to be an allegory for "Life" or "the World of Life" (p. 777); but in Y29.1 he takes the cow to be "Mother-Earth" (p. 33).

Bartholomae (Individual life? All life?)

"Even he, Ahura Mazdah, who through his Dominion **appoints** [*dazdē*] what is better than good to him that is attached to his will [*rādaŋ*], but what is worse than evil to him that **obeys** [*vīdāiŋ*] him not at the last end of life." Y51.6 (Tarap. 1951, p. 781).

Moulton 1912 (Individual life? All life?)

"even he, Ahura Mazda, who through his Dominion appoints [*dazdē*] what is better than good to him that is attentive to his will [*rādaŋ*], but what is worse than evil to him that obeys [*vīdāiī*] him not at the last end of life." Y51.6, p. 385.

Here we also see the influence of Bartholomae's and Moulton's biblical mind-set in the translation of *vīdāiī* as "obeys", whereas an integral and necessary part of Zarathushtra's paradigm for the evolution of existence is the freedom to choose.

⁵⁸ *vahyō* means 'more good' ~ the comparative degree of *vohu-* 'good'.

⁵⁹ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*.

⁶⁰ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*; and see *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu) An Analysis*, for instances in which Zarathushtra uses *vahišta-* to describe both the path and the end.

⁶¹ See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

⁶² See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*, for the idea that 'hell' is a state of being ('a most-bad existence') in mortal existence.

⁶³ Detailed in *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*.