

Yasna 51.21

This the 2d of three Gatha verses ~ Y51.20, 21, and 22 ~ a trio which contain many luminous and profound aspects of Zarathushtra's thought ~ encrypted in his typical multi-dimensional style.

Humbach/Faiss 2010, commenting on this verse, state that "... the stanza is not well-structured ...". With respect, it is not the Avestan verse that is "not well-structured". Their complaint would more accurately be directed to the translations of this verse.

To arrive at an accurate translation of this verse, it is not necessary to add a lot of words, and engage in syntactical gymnastics. Yet, (with respect), this is precisely what some translators have done, in order to make their translations work ~ based on a pre-conditioned mind-set.

If we allow the words and lines to play out naturally, letting them speak for themselves, this verse has many lovely things to tell us.

As usual, to keep my English from becoming mind-numbingly awkward, I sometimes use the short hand 'truth' for *aša-*, instead of the longer (but more accurate) 'true (good, correct) order of existence'. But when I do, if you would take a moment to think of the longer definition, you will see Zarathushtra's thought more clearly.

I reference here the translations and commentaries of the linguists in our group to avoid repeated citations.¹ I have followed Insler 1975 in placing the ceasura (the poetic break in each line, shown by a diagonal line).

- a. *āmatōiš. nā. spāntō. / hvō. cisfī. ux dāiš. šyaōdanā.*
 b. *daēnā. ašəm. spānvaṭ. / vohū. x šaθrəm. manaṅhā*
 c. *mazdā. dadāt. ahurō. / tēm. vaṅuhīm. yāsā. ašīm. •• Y51.21, Geldner 1P p. 184.*

My translation

- a. 'Beneficial (is a) man of embodied truth, he (is so) through illumined understanding, through words, through action,
 b. through envisionment. Beneficial (is) the true order of existence, (beneficial is) rule through good thinking.
 c. The Lord Wisdom, generates this. I ask for (this) good reward.' Y51.21.

Discussion.

This 2d verse of our trio, complements the first verse (Y51.20), in which 'salvation' is defined as a the comprehension and embodiment of the true order of existence (which is the existence of the Divine).

This 2d verse emphasizes the nature of these qualities (that define salvation and the Divine) ~ 'beneficial [*spānta-*]', which in Zarathushtra's thought is the essence of the sacred.²

The Avestan word *spānta-* has been translated variously as holy, virtuous, bountiful, bounteous, incremental, progressive, prosperous, beneficent, and beneficial. Thieme (Insler's teacher) believed that 'beneficial' is the closest English equivalent for *spānta-*. I agree that it is the closest. But in fact, there is no one-word English equivalent which comprehends the full meaning of *spānta-*.

In the Gathas (as Insler has pointed out), intrinsic 'good' (*vohu-*) is used interchangeably for *spānta-*, so at a basic level, *spānta-* is equated with what is intrinsically 'good'. For example,

"...the (correct) thinking stemming from [*vohu- mainyu-*]..." Y34.2, Insler 1975;

"...actions stemming from [*vohu- mainyu-*]..." Y48.8 Insler 1975;

"...The Wise One is Lord through such actions stemming from [*vohu- mainyu-*]..." Y45.5, Insler 1975.

But the meaning of *spānta-* is broader. Based on the ways in which *spānta-* is used in the Gathas, its meaning includes a loving, bountiful, generous, reasoning, intelligent, goodness which is the true (correct) order of existence, and is the essence of what is sacred.

Now you well may question: How can one word - *spānta-* - mean so many different things? Well, the evidence from the Gathas underlying these opinions and conclusions is clearly expressed, and has been detailed in another chapter, which you may wish to consider.³

So in discussing our verse (Y51.21), when you see the translation - 'beneficial', if you can keep in mind the full meaning of this divine quality, *spānta-*, you will better understand Zarathushtra's intent.

In short, in the Gathas, *spānta-* (an adjective) is used to describe an existence that is divine (the true order of existence) - the perfected Divine Itself, the qualities that make a being divine (*amesha spenta*), and an imperfect person who has such qualities (incompletely). There is some evidence that in mortal existence, possession of these divine qualities (*amesha spenta*) is not limited to humans.⁴ But our verse does not include that evidence, so I will not get into that idea here. I mention it just so that you are aware, and keep an open mind, on that aspect of the spiritual evolution of existence.

Our verse (Y51.21) starts with a declaration.

'Beneficial [*spānta-*] (is a) man of embodied truth [*ārmaiti-*], he (is so) through illumined understanding, through words, through action, through envisionment.'

At one level, this tells us that a person who embodies the true (correct, good) order of existence is beneficial (*spānta-*) through the ways in which he thinks, speaks, and acts. (Sound familiar?). Specifically we are told,

- He is beneficial 'through illumined understanding [*cisrī-*]'. The notion of 'illumined' is not a poetic fancy that I have added to the translation to make it sound beautiful. 'Illumined' is part of the meaning of *cisrī* (Skjaervo 2006; discussed below in the 'linguistics' section). Throughout the Gathas and later texts, light (illumination) is a metaphor for the true order and its comprehension; so essentially, a person who understands the true order of existence through good thinking (the comprehension of truth) - even though sporadically, imperfectly - is (incrementally) enlightened, and beneficial. The proverbial 'good thoughts'.

- He is beneficial 'through words'; the proverbial 'good words'. Although *ux δa-* words are sometimes used for Wisdom's Word - Its teachings, Its path - here I think *ux δāiš* simply means 'through (the) words' that a person speaks (to others or to himself) - which may include Wisdom's teachings, but are not limited to such teachings.

- He is beneficial 'through action'; the proverbial 'good action' (or the more old-fashioned 'good deed').

~ He is beneficial 'through envisionment [*daēnā*]' ~ through the ways in which he envisions existence. Why is this important? Because our envisionment ~ the framework through which we view existence ~ operates as a lens, or a filter, affecting how we think, speak and act. If our envisionment is self-centered, greed driven, fear driven, hate driven, rage driven, prejudice driven, it generates the many ills that ravage society and cause suffering ~ lies, greed, cruelty, predatory violence, tyranny, etc. ~ all the many 'wrongs' of Zarathushtra's society, (and of ours today!) that are contrary to the true order of existence ~ an order of existence that is wholly good, beneficial, truthful.

A Zoroastrian scholar once said (in a lecture which I attended) that the maxim 'good thoughts, good words, good actions' does not appear in the Gathas. That is true. They do not appear exactly in the form of that little maxim. But the idea itself does indeed appear in 1,001 lovely, multi-dimensional ways ~ just one of which is in our verse Y51.21.

Another Zoroastrian lecturer, some of whose lectures I also have attended, has repeatedly ridiculed this little nugget of wisdom ~ good thoughts, good words, good actions ~ dismissively stating that such a simplistic little maxim is 'just ethics' and cannot possibly define the religion. In so doing, he has brushed aside an idea that was deeply entrenched as a defining belief for more than the first 2,000 years of the religion's history.

But don't take my word for it. Let us think it through, based on the evidence.

Excluding sleeping, dreaming or being in a coma, can you think of any instance of man's existence that is not either a thought, or a word or an action? That little trio ~ thought, word, and action, encompasses man's entire (wakeful) existence.

Next, what were 3 major things about the religions of his culture that Zarathushtra rebelled against?

1. He rebelled against the notion that the natures of the deities of his culture were a mix of 'bad' and 'good'. In his view, only a being that is wholly good is worthy of worship. A being that has evil within it is not worthy of worship (according to Zarathushtra). So deeply entrenched in his teachings was this foundational, revolutionary (for his time) idea, that it survived the destruction of texts and the killing of the learned which occurred when the Achaemenian and Sasanian empires were destroyed. This idea is explicitly recognized in 2 surviving Pahlavi works ~ one written by a High Priest and the other written by a lay person Mardan Farrokh.

Zadspāram, an ancient Zoroastrian High Priest, wrote that 3 conditions were necessary to bring about the healing (or renovation) of existence (Av. *frašō.kərəiti*; Pahl. *frashkard*). Of these 3 things, the very *first* was the recognition that the Divine is all good, with no evil in It. And a lay Zoroastrian thinker, Mardan Farrokh, specifically recognized in his work *Sikand Gumanig Vijar* that a being with any evil in it is not worthy of worship.⁵ Zadspāram and Farrokh did not pull this idea out of the air. It is embedded throughout the Gathas, and became a well established bedrock of Zarathushtra's religion, (though now, largely forgotten).

2. Zarathushtra also rebelled against the notion of 'worship' in his culture, which essentially was to 'bribe' a deity (through its priests, naturally), with offerings of hundreds of horses, cattle, sheep (which were the currency of wealth in those days), and with expensive rituals which only priests could perform (because the rituals had to be done exactly 'correctly' (in order to be effective!) which mere laypersons, or priests not approved by the establishment, naturally had no hope of doing). By contrast, Zarathushtra introduced the notion of worshipping the Divine with the currency of truth

in the temple of life ~ with each good thought, word, and action. A notion that does not require priestly intervention for man to access the Divine. But worshipping with good thoughts, words and actions is not revenue generating. Over the centuries that followed, this idea of his was somewhat superseded when rituals as a way to worship, once again became of paramount importance as the religion became institutionalized, and needed a reliable source of revenue. Worshipping with good thoughts, good words and good actions is still mentioned in later Avestan texts, but it had become of secondary importance.⁶

3. Finally, Zarathushtra rebelled against the notion of 'reward' for worship. In the religions of his culture, the rewards were mostly material things ~ victory in battles, protection from natural calamities (such as drought), wealth, power, children to perpetuate one's line, etc. I apologize for repeated using the words 'unique', 'profound' and 'revolutionary' ~ but these words are the only ones I can think of, that accurately describe Zarathushtra's idea of 'reward' ~ which were indeed unique, profound, revolutionary for his time period (and even for our). In his thought, the reward for living and 'worshipping' the Divine with (good) thoughts, words and actions that embody the true (wholly good) order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), is the attainment of such an existence ~ which is the existence of the Divine.

So the (unknown) ancient Zoroastrian teacher who invented that little maxim ~ good thoughts, good words, good actions ~ captured in those six words, Zarathushtra's revolutionary [envisonment](#) regarding:

- ~ The nature of the Divine, a being who embodies the true (good) order of existence with Its good thoughts, words and actions ~ which is Wisdom personified;
- ~ The way to worship the Divine by embodying the true (good) order of existence with each good thought, word and action ~ which is the incremental attainment of wisdom; and
- ~ the reward for so worshipping, which is attaining completely, personifying, embodying, the true (good) order of existence with each good thought, word and action ~ the attainment of Wisdom.

Surely, the nature of the Divine, the way to worship, and the reward for so worshipping, are (by any definition) core elements of any religion, and therefore define the religion. And indeed they are echoed in the Avestan and Pahlavi names for the religion ~ Av. *mazdayasni* 'wisdom worship'; Pahlavi *din-i behi* 'the religion of goodness' (Pahlavi *din* derived from Av. *daēna-* 'envisonment').

That (wonderful) ancient teacher of Zarathushtra's thought who invented this little maxim ~ good thoughts, good words, good actions ~ was a teaching genius (and a marketing genius!). In this one little statement, he captured and distilled the essentials of Zarathushtra's teaching, in a way that was simple, and universally understood.

But (returning to our verse) this first declaration ('Beneficial (is a) man of embodied truth, he (is so) through illumined understanding, through words, through action), has more to tell us.

If a person who embodies the true order of existence is beneficial, it requires the conclusion that the true order of existence itself is beneficial, good (a conclusion that is expressed in 1,001 ways throughout the Gathas and later texts ~ *aša- vahišta-*).⁷

This declaration refers to a man who embodies truth. But the true order of existence and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*aša-*, *vohu- manah-*, *armaiti-*) are qualities of the Divine (amesha spenta).⁸ So this declaration also expresses that the nature of the Divine is beneficial, good,

(not a mix of good and bad qualities), and that man has within him (however sporadically, however imperfectly) these divine (good) qualities, generating the ability to envision existence as beneficial (good); and make existence itself (in thought, word and action) ~ beneficial (good).

This ties into the next 2 declarations in our verse (line b.), '[... beneficial \(is the\) true order of existence, \(beneficial is\) rule through good thinking.](#)'

The declaration '[... beneficial \(is the\) true order of existence,...](#)' expressly confirms what is implied in the preceding statement.

Then comes '[\(beneficial is\)⁹ rule through good thinking.](#)' Which brings us to the notion of [rule](#) in Zarathushtra's thought. In the Gathas, the adjective most frequently used with [rule](#) is 'good'.¹⁰ So to say '[\(beneficial is\) rule](#)' is another way of saying 'good rule' (*vohu- x šaθra-* which in the Gathas and more so in later texts is also called the 'rule to be chosen' *x šaθra- vairyā-*).

But how (in our verse) does Zarathushtra say this beneficial rule is brought about? It is brought about through the beneficial, illumined, thoughts, words and actions previously mentioned.

In short, searching for, and (incrementally) understanding, the true (good) order of existence, enables each of us to rule our own selves, and our social units (families, communities, nations, existence itself) in a beneficial (good) way (*vohu- x šaθra-*), ~ with each beneficial (good) thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*).

Don't you love the ways in which Zarathushtra's perception of the divine weaves in and out of the designs that make (mortal) life beautiful? Another Gatha paradox.

Which brings us to the next declaration, which is the first half of line c. '[The Lord Wisdom, generates this.](#)' I think '[this](#)' refers to the qualities in the preceding lines ~ truth, its comprehension, its embodiment in beneficial thoughts, words and action, resulting in a (beneficial) rule over our selves, and our social units.

So then what does Zarathushtra mean by '[The Lord Wisdom, generates \[\\[dadāt\\]\]\(#\) ...](#)' these qualities?

Well, these qualities are what make a being divine, so these qualities are generated by [Wisdom/wisdom](#), and by the being who has obtained lordship over these qualities (which is how Zarathushtra uses '[Lord](#)' in the Gathas).¹¹ In short, these qualities are generated by the being who personifies them ~ who is '[Lord](#)' and '[Wisdom](#)'. And yet these are qualities that we (imperfect fragments of existence who have wisdom within) have within us incompletely, are capable of (incrementally) attaining them completely.¹² What does this tell us about the nature and identity of the Divine, which generates these qualities.

Before moving on, I would like to explain why I have chosen [generates](#) as the meaning of [dadāt](#).

[dadāt](#) is a form of the verb stem *dā-* which means 'to make, to create, to give, to establish,' etc. In the Gathas, 'creation' is an act of (metaphoric) birthing [*zaθra-*] ~ a creation by emanation, a creation by giving (generating) what is within oneself.¹³ So when Zarathushtra uses [dadāt](#) (a *dā-* word), I think he intends all these flavors of meaning ~ 'making, creating (birthing), giving, establishing' the qualities that comprise the true order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule. I cannot think of any one English word which captures all these flavors of meaning for [dadāt](#). The word I have chosen ~ '[generates](#)' ~ is a poor, inadequate, choice but the only English equivalent I can think of that comes as close as possible to capturing all these flavors of meaning in this context.

Which brings us to the last declaration. *I ask for (this) good reward.'* Although this verse does not specifically say so, the implication is there, that it is the Lord Wisdom who is asked for this reward ~ reflecting a part of the mutual, loving help which is necessary for the perfecting of existence, and complementing the last words of the immediately preceding verse in which (referring to Wisdom) Zarathushtra says '(who) gifts support'.

The next question, naturally, is: What is this *good reward*? Of what does it consist? Well, the word *good* (the superlative of which is equated with the true order of existence *aša- vahišta-*), gives us a clue to the answer. In the Gathas, one of Zarathushtra's most unique, and profound ideas (for his time period) is that the reward for truth is truth itself. Or stated another way, the reward for taking the path of the true order of existence, is its attainment, which includes its components, ~ its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule ~ the beneficial (*spānta-*) way of being (*mainyu-*) ~ a way of being which is the true order of existence, (which in this verse is called *beneficial*, good).

How cool is that?

And this conclusion parallels the thought expressed in the last line of the (GAv.) *A Airyema Ishyo*, *'... I ask for the dear reward of truth, which Lord Wisdom, awards.'* Y54.1, my translation.¹⁴

Finally, in translating *yāsā* I have selected *'I ask for'* as the English equivalent which (in my view) is closest to Zarathushtra's intent, because in the Gathas the relationship between the Divine and man is not that of a slave or servant to a master, nor even that of a child to a parent. It is that of a friend to a friend ~ an egalitarian relationship (echoing the recognition that we all are a part of one existence ~ regardless of where along the path of spiritual evolution each fragment might be).¹⁵ In the Gathas, the only gesture of worship is an outstretched hand ~ an egalitarian gesture, demonstrating friendship, not servitude.¹⁶ Such translations as *'I entreat for'* reflect the mind-set of servitude, not the attitude of a friend to a friend.

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Let us now consider the linguistics of this verse. In Avestan, the punctuation mark indicating the end of a sentence appears only at the end of this verse. But our verse contains many separate thoughts. So in English translation, the words of this verse form more than one sentence.

Line a. *ārmatoiš. nā. spāntō. hvō. cistī. ux dāiš. šyaodanā.*

Line b. *daēnā ...*

Line a. *'Beneficial (is a) man of embodied truth, he (is so) through illumined understanding, through words, through action,*

Line b. *through envisionment. ...*

spāntō 'beneficial (is a)

The opinions of linguists and scholars regarding the meaning of *spānta-*, and why I think the closest English equivalent is 'beneficial' ~ a goodness which includes many flavors of meaning ~ as the essence of what is sacred, have been detailed and discussed in another chapter.¹⁷ So let us next consider the grammatical value of *spāntō*.

Skjaervo 2006 shows that *spāntō* has been used in many Gatha verses, but he does not give an opinion as to what its grammatical value might be. But Jackson 1892 shows, for *a-* stem words, that the *-ō* inflection is nom. sg. for masc. words (§ 236, p. 70). Here *spāntō* describes *nā* 'man', in a context which is consistent with it being nom. sg. masc.

I have added the words (*is a*). Forms of the verb 'to be' often are implied in GAv. and in Avestan, there are no articles ('the', 'a', 'an'), but to make an English translation fluent, an article has to be implied.

nā 'man'

nā is nom. masc. of the stem *nar-* 'man' (Skjaervo 2006).¹⁸

ārmatōiš 'of embodied truth'.

ārmatōiš is gen. sg. of the fem. noun stem *ārmaiti-* (Skjaervo 2006). There is no agreement amongst linguists regarding the meaning of *ārmaiti-*, which, based on the ways in which it is used in the Gathas, I translate as 'the true order of existence embodied in thought, word and action', or 'embodied truth' for short. These facts and opinions have been detailed in another chapter.¹⁹

Thus, *ārmatōiš nā spəntō* 'beneficial (*is a*) man of embodied truth'.

hvō 'he (*is so*)'

hvō is nom. sg. masc. of the demonstrative pronoun stem *ha-* (Skjaervo 2006) which can also be used as a 3p pronoun 'he'. And the context requires adding the implied words (*is so*), which is consistent with normal Avestan practice.

cistī 'through illumined understanding'

cistī is instr. sg. ('with/by/through ___') of the fem. stem *cisti-* which Skjaervo 2006 translates as " *illumination, understanding". The 'light' flavor of meaning has been variously explained.²⁰ Of particular interest is the *cisti-* word used in Y48.11, where Zarathushtra speaks of "... the understanding [*cištiš*] stemming from good thinking...". If good thinking is the comprehension of truth (as the evidence of the Gathas indicates),²¹ then the "understanding that comes from good thinking" (Y48.11) would be an understanding of truth ~ the material metaphor for which in the Gathas and later texts is 'light'. I agree with Skjaervo that 'illumination' is part of the meaning of *cisti-* words. But he seems to be the only linguist in our group who sees 'light' as part of the meaning of *cisti-* words. They have translated *cistī* in our verse as follows,

Insler 1975 "by reason of his understanding" (almost an abl. translation)

Humbach 1991 "(inspired) by (his) insight" (instr. sg.)

Humbach/Faiss 2010 "For (his) insight (a dat. sg. translation)

Taraporewala 1951 "through-(his)-wisdom" (instr. sg.)

I cannot tell how Moulton 1912 and Bartholomae translate *cistī* in our verse.

ux δāiš 'through (his) words',

ux δāiš is instr. pl. of the ntr. stem *ux δa-*, which means 'word' (Skjaervo 2006).

šyaoθanā 'through (his) actions'

šyaoθanā is instr. pl. of the ntr. stem *šyaoθana-* which means 'act, action' (Skjaervo 2006).

daēnā 'through (his) envisionment'.

daēnā is the form for both nom. and instr. sg. of the noun stem *daēnā-* (Skjaervo 2006), but the nom. does not fit in this context. The meaning of *daēnā-* has been explored in another chapter, in which I have given the opinions of linguists, and the contexts of each Gatha verse in which *daēnā-*

words appear.²² *daēnā-* cannot mean 'conscience' because in the Gathas there is 'good' *daēnā-* and 'bad' *daēnā-*, whereas 'conscience' by definition, can only be 'good'.

Thus, Line a. *ārmatoiš. nā. spəntō. hvō. cistī. ux dāiš. šyaodanā.*
 b. *daēnā ...*

Line a. 'Beneficial (is a) man of embodied truth, he (is so) through illumined understanding, through words, through action,

Line b. through envisionment. ...

* * *

Line b. ... *ašəm. spənvaṭ. / vohū. xšaθrəm. manajhā*

b. Beneficial (is) the true order of existence, (beneficial is) rule through good thinking.

ašəm '(the) true order of existence'

ašəm is the form for both nom. sg. and acc. sg. of the ntr. stem *aša-* (Skjaervo 2006). Here there is no verb of which *ašəm* could be the object (acc.), so in this context it has to be nom. sg.

spənvaṭ 'beneficial (is)'

Skjaervo 2006 shows *spənvaṭ* to be the form for both nom./acc. sg. ntr. of an adjective stem *spənvaṇt-* (deriving from the noun *spən-*). Again, there is no verb here of which *spənvaṭ* could be the object (acc.), so in this context it has to be nom. sg. The absence of a verb in this context requires that one be implied. Forms of the verb 'to be' are commonly implied in Avestan, and I think the most accurate implied verb here would be '(is)' which fits the nom. sg. declensions of both *ašəm* and *spənvaṭ*.

According to Humbach 1991, (commenting under a different verse, Y45.9) *spən-* is the noun form of *spənta-*.²³ Therefore the same differences of opinion that exist regarding the meaning of the adj. *spənta-* apply to its noun *spən-*. I take the adj. *spənta-* to mean 'beneficial' (as previously explained). So its noun form would be 'beneficialness' (which is not really a recognized word in English, but bear with me for a moment). Now, given all of the above, you well may wonder, where does the adj. *spənvaṇt-* come into the picture? Well, in both Vedic and Avestan, the suffix *vaṇt-* indicates possessing.²⁴ So adding *vaṇt-* to the noun stem *spən* would give us *spənvaṇt-* which would literally mean 'possessing beneficialness'. In other Gatha verses, in addition to being equated with the Divine and 'salvation', the true order of existence (*aša-*) is equated with good (*vohu-*), most-good (*vahišta-*), beneficial (*spənta-*), beneficence (*hudāh-*), compassion, and other 'good' qualities.²⁵ And in our verse the true order is equated with possessing beneficialness (which is just a variation on the same underlying theme. So here, *ašəm* is equated with *spənvaṭ*.

Thus (awkward but literal) *ašəm spənvaṭ* 'the true order of existence (is) possessing beneficialness'; Or in more fluent English 'beneficial (is the) true order of existence'.

xšaθrəm '(beneficial is) rule'

xšaθrəm is the form for both nom. sg. and acc. sg. of the ntr. stem *xšaθra-* (Skjaervo 2006). I follow Insler 1975 in translating *xšaθra-* words as 'rule'. The opinions of other linguists and the ways in which *xšaθra-* words are used in the Gathas (which shed light on its meaning) have been explored in another chapter.²⁶

vohū ... manañhā 'through good thinking'

vohū and *manañhā* are each instr. sg. of their respective ntr. stems *vohu-* and *manah-* (Skjaervo 2006). Their meanings have been discussed in detail in another chapter.²⁷ So here, I will not go into such details, nor cite the underlying evidence on which the following conclusions are based. First, *vohu-* means intrinsic goodness ~ not the many different ways in which 'good' is used in English that have nothing to do with intrinsic goodness.

Second, as Insler 1975 has pointed out, in the Gathas, *manah-* is used in 3 ways ~ for 'mind' (faculty), 'thinking' (process), and 'thought' (object). Here, the instr. implies a process ~ 'through good thinking'.

And third, based on the ways in which it is used in the Gathas, the meaning of the word *manah-* 'mind, thinking, thought' is not limited to the intellect, or reason, or logic. It's meaning includes the full spectrum of human consciousness ~ intellect, judgment, reason, logic, emotions, intuition, insight, creativity etc. I will give you just one example, to illustrate this point. Zarathushtra calls his 'paradise' a state of being that houses good thinking and song ~ the 'house of good thinking' and the 'house of song'. Now these are not two different paradises. They are 2 ways of describing one paradise, one state of being. So of necessity this state of being would have to include both intellectual functions, creative functions, and the bliss (an emotion) of making (or listening to) beautiful music.

Returning to line b. *x šaθrəm* is framed by the adj. *vohū* and its noun *manañhā*, indicating that these three words form one unit of thought, giving us *vohū x šaθrəm manañhā* 'rule through good thinking'. There is no verb or adjective which apply to this phrase, so they need to be implied. Here the implied '(beneficial)' has been previously expressed, and the verb '(is)' once again is implied:

Giving us

Line b. '... *ašəm. spēnvaṭ. / vohū. x šaθrəm. manañhā*

b. 'Beneficial (is) the true order of existence, (beneficial is) rule through good thinking.'

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Line c. *mazdā dadāṭ ahurō tēm. vaṇuhīm. yāsā. ašīm.*

b. 'The Lord Wisdom, generates this. I ask for (this) good reward.'

mazdā ... ahurō.

There is no dispute that the two names *mazdā* and *mazdā* are in the same case/number, and therefore belong together here; *mazdā* is the form for both gen. sg. ('of___') and nom. sg., but *ahurō* is only nom. sg. So both words are nom. sg. here, and these names are the subject of the verb *dadāṭ* 'gives, generates'.

dadāṭ 'generates'

The stem *dā-* is generally acknowledged to mean 'to give, to make, to put, to establish, to assign' etc.²⁸

According to Skjaervo 2006, *dadāṭ* is 3p sg. injunctive, of the verb stem *dā-*. I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for the following explanation of the injunctive. There is an issue which comes up in most of the Gathas about whether injunctive forms indicate past time (i.e. whether they are the equivalent of augmented forms in Old Persian and Vedic, which are the normal way of expressing past time) or whether they are 'tenseless'. English and most modern languages, do not have a tenseless category. This accounts for the differences of opinion amongst our group of linguists in translating *dadāṭ* in line c. as follows.

Insler 1975 "... The Wise Lord created [*dadā̄t*] this, ." (a 'past' flavor)
 Humbach 1991 "... The Wise Ahura grants [*dadā̄t*]..." (tenseless?)
 Humbach/Faiss 2010 "... The Wise Lord accords [*dadā̄t*] ..." (tenseless? but I am not sure, nor do they explain how they arrived at the meaning 'accords' for *dadā̄t*).
 Taraporewala 1951 "... Divine Strength doth Mazda Ahura bestow [*dadā̄t*] ...", (tenseless?)
 Moulton 1912 "... Mazdah Ahura will give the Dominion [*dadā̄t*] ..." (tenseless?)
 Bartholomae "... Mazdah Ahura will give the Dominion [*dadā̄t*] ..." (tenseless?).

In this context, I translate injunctive *dadā̄t* as 'tenseless'. One of the meanings of the stem *dā-* is 'to make, 'to create'. But in the Gathas, 'creation' is an act of (metaphoric) birthing [*zqθa-*] ~ a creation by emanation.²⁹ So when Zarathushtra speaks of Wisdom 'creating' truth, he says it in the sense that wisdom generates, or emanates, or births, truth. As you can see, Insler has translated *dadā̄t* (a *dā-* word) as 'created'. But 'creation' carries a lot of baggage, because of the way it is used in the dominant religions of today (which did not exist when Zarathushtra lived). The translation choice 'generates' combines the idea of 'to give/make' (which are included within the meaning of the Avestan verb *dā-* of which *dadā̄t* is 3p injunctive) while adding the Gatha notion that creating truth is an act of birthing it ~ generating it from oneself. So I have opted to translate *dadā̄t* as a tenseless 'generates'.

Thus, *mazdā̄ dadā̄t ahurō tām* 'The Lord Wisdom generates this. ...'

tām 'this'

There is no dispute that *tām* is a form of the demonstrative pronoun stem *ta-* which Skjaervo 2006 says means 'that', and Jackson 1892 says means 'this'.³⁰ Skjaervo 2006 says that *tām* is acc. sg. **masc.** Jackson 1892 says that *tām* is acc. sg. **masc/ntr.** In this context, it makes no difference to an English translation whether *tām* is **masc.** or **ntr.** The question here is: does *tām* 'this' belong with the first half of line c., or the 2d half. Well, the caesura places it in the 2d half of the line. Nevertheless, it cannot belong with the 2d half, because a **masc.** or a **ntr.** demonstrative pronoun (*tām* 'this') cannot belong with a **fem.** noun and its adjective ~ *vanuhīm ašīm* 'good reward' is (grammatically) **fem.** So we know that even though the caesura (the poetic break in the line) places *tām* in the 2d half of the line, it can only belong with the first half of the line.

And here, I think (with Skjaervo) that *tām* is acc. sg. **masc.** ~ a generic **masc.** because in Avestan, the **masc.** gender is used (generically) for a pl. pronoun which stands for nouns that have more than one grammatical gender. That is precisely the situation with *tām*, which stands for *ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth' a **fem.** noun; and *aša-*, *vohu-* *manah-*, and *xšaθra-* 'truth, good thinking and rule' which are **ntr.** nouns.

Thus *mazdā̄ dadā̄t ahurō tām* '(the) Lord, Wisdom generates this. ...'

yāsā 'I ask for'

yāsā is the form for 1p sg. present (indicative) tense of the verb *yā-* (Skjaervo 2006). The first person pronoun 'I' is part of the verb form. This verb form appears in a number of Gatha verses, in which it has variously been translated as 'to request' (Humbach/Faiss 2010); 'to entreat' (Insler 1975, Humbach 1991); 'to implore, beseech, ask for' (Skjaervo 2006); 'to beg, pray for' (Taraporewala 1951); 'to pray for', 'to long for' (Moulton 1912 and Bartholomae) ~ each (interpretively) reflecting the translator's mind-set of how one relates to the Divine. I have selected 'I ask for' for the reasons given in the *Discussion* section (above). In addition, the noun derived from this verb is *yāna-* which Skjaervo 2006 says means a 'request'. Thus, for the verb *yāsā*, 'I ask for'.

vaṇuhīm ... ašīm '(this) good reward'.

vaṇuhīm is acc. sg. fem. of the adj. stem *vohu-* 'good' (Skjaervo 2006 who shows the stem as *vahu-*); *ašīm* is acc. sg. of the fem. noun stem *aši-* 'reward' (Skjaervo 2006).

In Avestan, a word previous expressed, sometimes is subsequently implied. And here, I think that a demonstrative pronoun previously expressed, is implied here '(this)', indicating that the divine qualities which the Lord Wisdom generates are the good reward requested. Thus,

Line c. *mazdā. dadāt. ahurō. / tēm. vaṇuhīm. yāsā. ašīm.*

c.

* * * * *

Here is the Avestan text of this verse with my translation, and the translations of the linguists in our group, for comparative purposes.

- a. *āmatōiš. nā. spəntō. / hvō. cisfī. ux dāiš. šyaodanā.*
 b. *daēnā. ašəm. spənvač. / vohū. xšaθrəm. manaḥhā*
 c. *mazdā. dadāt. ahurō. / tēm. vaṇuhīm. yāsā. ašīm.* •• Y51.21 Geldner 1P p. 184.

My translation

- a. 'Beneficial (is) a man of embodied truth, he (is so) through illumined understanding, through words, through actions,
 b. through envisionment; beneficial (is) the true order of existence, (beneficial is) rule through good thinking;
 c. The Lord Wisdom, generates this. I ask for (this) good reward.' Y51.21.

Insler 1975

- a. "Virtuous is a man of piety. He is so by reason of his understanding, his words, his action,
 b. his conception. Virtuous is truth and the rule of good thinking.
 c. The Wise Lord created this, (and) I shall entreat Him for this good reward."

Humbach 1991

- a. "In accordance with right-mindedness, (and) through the action (connected) with the statements (inspired) by (his) insight, this prosperous man (Zarathushtra),
 b.c. makes truth prosper with (his) religious view. The Wise Ahura grants power through good thought. I entreat Him for a good reward."

Humbach/Faiss 2010

- a. "The beneficent man (depends) on right-mindedness. For (his) insight, statements, actions,
 b.c. (and) view/religion, that Wise Lord accords beneficial truth
 (and) power through good thought. From Him I request a good reward."

Taraporewala 1951

- a. "The Devotee of Armaiti (is) holy, [he~indeed] through~(his)-wisdom, (his) teachings, (his) action
 b. (and) through~(his)-Inner-Self promotes Truth; through~(Vohu)-Mano Divine Strength
 c. doth Mazda Ahura bestow, ~ for~this divine blessing do~I-pray."

Moulton 1912

"By Piety the beneficent man benefits the Right through his thinking, his words, his action, his Self. By Good Thought Mazda Ahura will give the Dominion. For this good Destiny I long."

Bartholomae

"By piety the man becomes Holy. Such person advances Right through his thinking, his words, his actions, his Self. By Good Thought Mazda Ahura will give the Dominion. For this good Destiny I long."

* * * * *

¹ References to 'Skjaervo 2006' are to his on-line *Old Avestan Glossary*.

Insler 1975 ~ his translation is at p. 109; his very brief comments are at p. 321.

Humbach 1991 ~ his translation is in Vol. 1, p. 191; his very sparse comments are in Vol. 2, p. 234.

Humbach/Faiss 2010 ~ their translation is at p. 158; their comment of three lines is at p. 192.

Taraporewala 1951 ~ his translation is at p. 819; his very brief comments are at p. 820;

Moulton 1912 ~ his translation and footnoted comments are at p. 387.

Bartholomae's English translation is shown in Tarap. 1951 at p. 820.

² Detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way Of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

³ Detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being*.

⁴ See *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*.

⁵ Zadsparam is referenced and quoted in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*; Mardan Farrokh is referenced and quoted in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

⁶ The evidence on which these conclusions are based are referenced in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*; and *Worship & Prayer*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

⁷ Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

⁸ Detailed in *Part One: Embodied Truth, Aramaiti*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Amesha Spenta*.

⁹ You may notice, I have added the implied words (**beneficial is**) before 'rule'. In Avestan syntax, a word previously stated (here '**beneficial**'), sometimes is subsequently implied. And the verb 'to be' in its various forms frequently is implied in Avestan ~ so frequently that linguists have given it a name ~ 'metonymy' ~ so that they can conveniently refer to it with just one word.

¹⁰ Mentioned in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*.

¹¹ Discussed and detailed in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: The Lords & The Equations of Y34.1*.

¹² Detailed in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

¹³ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

¹⁴ Detailed and discussed in *Part Six: Yasna 54.1, A Airyema Ishyo*.

¹⁵ Detailed in *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*.

¹⁶ The outstretched hand [sg.] as a gesture of worship is discussed in *Part One: Worship & Prayer*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

¹⁷ *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

¹⁸ Skjaervo 2006 does not show a declension for *hvō* in his *Old Avestan Glossary*. But in his *Old Avestan Lesson 3*, p. 26, he shows that *hvō* is a demonstrative pronoun nom. sg. masc.

¹⁹ *Part One: Embodied Truth, Aramaiti*.

²⁰ Skjaervo 2006 thinks that both the noun *cisti-* 'illumination, understanding' and the adj. *ciθra-* derive from the verb stem *kaēt-* which he says means 'to distinguish, mark out' (although according to Tarap. 1951 Bartholomae gives *kaēt-* a different meaning, discussed below). Skjaervo 2006 translates *ciθra-* as 'brilliant, distinctive'. (There is also a noun stem *ciθra-* which means 'seed', but that meaning is not relevant to the context of our verse, and here I have excluded all verses in which *ciθra-* means 'seed').

Other linguists in our group have translated *cisti-* words as follows:

Inslar 1975 translates *cisti-* words as "understanding" in our verse, and in Y30.9, Y48.11, Y51.16, Y51.18, Y47.2, Y48.5; and as 'insight' once, in Y44.10.

He translates the related *ciθra-* words as 'bright' (Y33.7,) 'clear' (Y31.22, Y45.1), and 'pure' (Y44.16).

Humbach 1991 and Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate *cisti-* words as "insight" in all verses in which *cisti-* words appear, without any linguistic commentary on the meaning of *cisti-*. (Y30.9, Y44.10, Y47.2, Y48.5, Y48.11, Y51.16, Y51.18, Y51.21).

Taraporewala 1951 translates *cisti-* words as "wisdom" in our verse (Y51.21) and in Y48.11, Y51.16 and Y51.18; and in all other verses in which *cisti-* words appear, he translates them as "reason" (Y30.9), "understanding" (Y44.10, Y48.5), and "idea" (Y47.2).

He comments under Y30.9 that *cisti-* is cognate with Skt. *citti* 'reason, understanding', stating that Bartholomae derives it from *kaēt-* (Skt. *cit-*) 'to think, to consider'. And in his comment under Y44.10, he notes that Bartholomae also sees *cisti-* in the sense of 'teaching' or 'religious lore' which he derives from *kaēθ-*.

I think that in the Gathas, *xratu-* means the 'reasoning' part of good thinking; and *cisti-* means a broader understanding generated by many factors ~ including one's envisionment, experiences, reasoning, intuition ~ an understanding which is good thinking ~ the comprehension of truth. The evidence on which this conclusion is based is explored in *Part Three: Xratu*, with quotations from the Gathas given in a ft. there.

²¹ Discussed and detailed in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

²² Detailed in *Part Three: Daena*.

²³ Humbach 1991, Vol. 2, p. 172.

²⁴ Macdonnel in *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, § 86, p. 63, says that adjective stems formed with the suffix

-mant- *-vant-* both mean *possessing*. Jackson expresses the same opinion for similar Avestan adjectives. Speaking of stems that end in consonants, Jackson says, "This subdivision of consonant stems includes: ... (ii) possessive adjective stems in *mant*, *vant*. ..." Jackson 1892, § 289, p. 84.

²⁵ These verses are detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*. But here are just a couple of examples in which the adj. *spənta-* 'beneficial' is equated with the true order of existence (*aša-*).

In Y44.2, a loving man is *spənta-* through *aša-*, "...the loving man, ... for such a person, [*spənta-* 'beneficial'] through truth [*aša-* '(the) true order of existence'] is a world-healer and Thy ally in [*mainyu-* '(his) way of being'], Wise One." Y44.2, Insler 1975.

"... the [*mainyu-*] [*spənta-*] through truth [*ašā*]..." Y28.1, Insler 1975.

²⁶ Detailed in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*.

²⁷ Detailed in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

²⁸ The meanings of the verb stem *dā-* are explored in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

²⁹ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

³⁰ Jackson 1892, § 409.