The Puzzle of Creation.

The whole notion of 'creation' is a puzzlement. Inevitably we wonder: Who created the creator? Then too if we assume (for the sake of argument) that there is such a thing as an 'uncreated' being, how did He create other things? Out of nothing? Out of Himself? What does 'creation' consist of? Why was 'creation' necessary? What purpose does it serve?

The words 'create' and 'creation' in our society, carry meanings influenced by the dominant religions of today, which did not exist in Zarathushtra's time, and therefore could not have influenced his thinking.   If we want to understand Zarathushtra's thoughts on creation, we need to remove from our minds the conventional notions of 'creation' and study his words with fresh eyes, without such pre-conceived views.

Zarathushtra does not mention any 'creation' stories such as the stories we find in certain later Pahlavi texts, the Bible, and the texts of some other religions. Based on the words he uses, we get some hints of what his ideas about 'creation' may have been (which are entirely consistent with the theory of evolution), but students of his teachings draw different conclusions about what he hints at. So it would not be right for anyone to say that Zarathushtra states specifically how 'creation' came about. He doesn't.

The Gathas are a small collection of his thoughts. And ambiguities in the language itself create uncertainties regarding what his intent may have been, because the same stem *dā-* (which has been translated as 'create', 'creation') also has different (but related) meanings. In addition, Zarathushtra uses many different words to express his view of how the existences of matter and mind came into being, but many translators, homogenize these differences, and translate such words as 'create', even though their Avestan meanings are different. When we consider a more literal translation, we begin to glimpse Zarathushtra's own thinking.

Notwithstanding these problems, there is enough evidence to draw some reasonable conclusions regarding his ideas on creation -- conclusions that are very different from conventional ideas as seen through the spectacles of three of today's dominant religions, which have colored the thinking of so many translators of the Gathas -- by Zoroastrians and by non-Zoroastrians. These conclusions are also quite different from most of the creation myths of later Zoroastrian texts which in any event are not uniform, and probably reflect different origins.

A word of caution.   Even if we arrive at some (tentative) conclusions regarding what Zarathushtra's ideas on 'creation' might have been, we should not forget his teaching that we are engaged in an on-going search for truth, so his 'creation' ideas are just that -- tentative ideas at that! -- not an article of belief that suspends on-going inquiry. Therefore, following his own teachings, his ideas may (or may not) not be persuasive in light of on-going discoveries about our universe(s) and ourselves. They may (or may not) need to be adjusted as our search for truth continues.

In light of the explosion of scientific discoveries and theories within the last 100 years regarding our universe (with which I cannot keep up!) I do not know if his ideas on 'creation' are in sync with such theories and discoveries. But his ideas provide a framework, a paradigm of existence, which is essentially benign, reasonable, and worth considering, if only as a stepping stone in light of on-going discoveries about our universe(s).

The evidence and conclusions in this chapter are a progression. As you read the earlier conclusions, objections or arguments will occur to you which may later be addressed. So keep an open (but questioning) mind, until the end.

In order to separate Zarathushtra's ideas from the pre-conceived mind-set of many translators, we need to start with some linguistic information, so please bear with me. Let us start with his vocabulary as it pertains to 'creation'.

Summary of words in Zarathushtra's vocabulary pertaining to 'creation'.

paourvya-   'first' can be used in the following ways in GAv. (as in English, both being within the Indo-European family of languages): 'first' can mean first in time (as in 'primordial', 'primeval', 'in-the-beginning'); or 'first' in place; or 'first' in quality, (as in 'a diamond of the first water', or 'foremost'); or 'first' in type (as in 'fundamental', basic); and possibly other meanings as well that do not presently occur to me. And linguists are not always in accord in how they translate the grammatical forms of *paourvya-* 'first', when used in a given verse. In addition, in GAv., an adjective (like 'first') can also be used as a noun ('first one'). And translators do not always agree on which of these two (adj. or noun) Zarathushtra may have intended in a given verse. In the Avestan script, there are no capital letters such as might guide us in determining his intent.[1]

ząϑa-   'birthing, engendering from oneself' (Skjaervo 2006). Although linguists generally agree about this meaning, *ząϑa-* words often are translated as 'create, creation'. An interpretive homogenization.

taš-   'to fashion',
ϑwarəš-   'to shape'.
       Linguists generally agree about the meanings of these two words, but sometimes translate them as 'to create'. An interpretive homogenization.

hvāpah-   'craftsman, artist'. There is general agreement about the meaning, but it is often translated as 'creator'. An interpretive homogenization.

dā-   'to give, grant, bestow' (verb); generating related nouns 'giver, grantor, bestower';
dā-   'to make, produce' (verb); generating related nouns 'maker, producer';
dā-   'to fix, establish, ordain' (verb); generating related nouns 'laws, orders, ordinances';
       The verb *dā-*, in middle voice, means 'to take, to receive', (Skjaervo 2006), but that is not relevant to how the verb is used with regard to 'creation', ... well ... at least I do not think it is ... or is it ... ? ...).
       There is general agreement amongst linguists, regarding these interconnected meanings for *dā-*. Humbach 1991 conjecture two possible Skt. cognates, while agreeing that in Avestan all three meanings are used for *dā-*.[2] In their 2010 work, Humbach and Faiss do not identify more than one Avestan root *dā-*. They state that the root *dā-* denotes the creator, and also the giver/bestower, "and much more".[3] Not surprisingly, scholars differ widely as to which meaning is applicable in a given verse. To illustrate, consider how the following eminent linguists translate the following words ~ all of which are grammatical forms of *dā-*, or word derived from it. These three tables represent just a few examples. There are many, many, more.

Table 1.   *då*   a grammatical form (conjugation) of the verb *dā-* (Skjaervo 2006).

	Y	Insler 1975	Humbach 1991 Humbach/Faiss 2010	Barth.[4]/Tarap. 1951
då	43.4	Thou shalt give	1991 Thou assignest 2010 you assign	B. thou wilt assign T. Thou bestowest
då	51.9	Thou shalt give	1991 Thou apportionist 2010 you fix	B. Thou wilt give T. Thou bestowest
då	47.3	Thou didst create	1991 establishing 2010 establishing	B. to give T. thou hast sent
då	43.2	Thou didst create	1991 thou grantest 2010 you grant	B. thou wilt give T. Thou didst ordain
då	31.3	Thou hast created	1991 thou apportionest 2010 you fix	B. thou givest T. thou bestowest

Table 2.   *dāṯ*   a grammatical form (conjugation) of the verb *dā-* (Skjaervo 2006).

	Y	Insler 1975	Humbach 1991 Humbach/Faiss 2010	Barth. / Tarap. 1951
dāṯ	29.10b	one shall create	1991 one may establish 2010 one can establish	B. he could produce T. lead/give
dāṯ	44.3c	did fix	1991: who assigned 2010: who fixed	B. determined T. laid-down (root 'to make')
dāṯ	44.5b, 44.5c	b: created c: created	1991 b and c created / assigned 2010 b and c created/produces	B. made T. fashioned (comment root 'create')
dāṯ	45.4b	created	1991 created 2010 created	B. created T. ordained
dāṯ	48.4	has set	1991 'expresses 2010 'produces' (p.188)	B. makes T. makes

Table 3. *dātā* (a grammatical form of the verb *dā-*, and also a grammatical form of derivative nouns *dāta-* 'established rules' and *dātar-* 'giver, maker' (Skjaervo 2006).

	Y	Insler	Humbach Humbach/Faiss 2010	Barth./Tarap.
dātā	50.6	creator	1991 giver 2010 giver	B. creator T. creator
dātā	50.11	creator	1991 giver 2010 creator/giver	B. creator T. laws
dātā	51.19	creator	1991 orders 2010 laws	B. ordinances T. laws
dātā	31.5	has been created	1991 have assigned 2010 you have assigned	B. have appointed T. hast ordained
dātā	29.10a	grant ye	1991 grant you 2010 grant	B. do ye ... grant T. do ye ... grant
dātā	34.2	have been granted	1991 (have been) established 2010 are created/established	B. do ye set T. laws, teachings
dātā	33.1	laws	1991 orders 2010 laws	B. laws T. laws
dātā	33.8	has been established	1991 is offered 2010 are offered	B. grant [pl.] T. grant-ye
dātā	34.14	has been established	1991 grant 2010 grant	B. will give T. shall be granted

As you can see in these tables, each of these linguists translates grammatical forms of *dā-* and words derived from it, as variously meaning 'to give/giver', 'to create, produce/creator' and 'to fix, establish, ordain / laws, ordinances. Not only do these scholars sometimes differ with each other, but as you can see, the same scholar has translated the same word differently in different verses, based on his perception of the context and his own (interpretive) mind-set.

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Let us now look at some verses in which Zarathushtra uses the various Avestan words that pertain to 'creation', and see if we can draw any tentative (but reasonable) conclusions about his views on 'creation'.   In so doing, let us ask ourselves in each instance:

Does the context require the conclusion of 'creation' as an act of 'birthing', 'giving', 'producing', 'shaping', 'establishing'?   An act which makes something that is separate from the creator? A part of the creator? Out of nothing? Out of something? Out of something previously existing?

These are questions we need to think about, if we want to understand Zarathushtra's thoughts on 'creation' (however tentative), and whether/how they differ from the creation ideas of dominant religions today which have affected the perceptions and interpretations of translators of the Gathas;

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and how they differ from the creation ideas of the later texts ~ some of which also reflect pre~ (or post~) Zarathushtrian creation myths.

Let us also remember, in going through these verses, that the Divine has no actual gender. Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine is not anthropomorphic. It is Wisdom personified.[5] But he had to use the language of his day to express his views, and in Gathic Avestan, not only do nouns have grammatical genders (as in French and Spanish), but in addition, the masculine gender is used generically (as it is in English) to include all genders ~ even in metaphors.[6]

In Y43.5, Zarathushtra speaks of the act of creation as the birthing or begetting of existence, *hyaṯ ϑwā aŋhāuš ząϑōi darəsəm paourvīm,* Y43.5.

A literal translation would be '...when I saw Thee first [*paourvīm* first in time] at the birthing [*ząϑōi*] of existence [*aŋhāuš*]...' Y43.5, my translation; a few others are footnoted for comparative purposes.[7]

The verb 'to see' (used in this quotation) is sometimes used in Gathic Avestan in the sense of 'to understand'.[8] I think the word 'first' is used here as first in time ~ primordially, in the beginning. But scholars differ as to whether Zarathushtra intended it as a point in time (in the beginning), or as a person, (First One),[9] ~ there are no capital letters in the Avestan script.

Linguists however, all agree about one thing, that in this verse, Y43.5, we have the act of 'creation' as 'at the birthing' (*ząϑōi-* loc. sg. of *ząϑa-*),[10] and this birthing is 'of existence (*aŋhāuš*), gen. sg. of *ahu-* 'life, existence' (Skjaervo 2006).

In Y44.3 he asks (rhetorically) "... Which man in the beginning was the father of truth [*aša-*] during the creation [*ząϑā* 'during the birthing']...?" Y44.3, Insler 1975.[11] The phrase "which man" is discussed later in this chapter. Does Zarathushtra here use the word *ząϑa-* 'birthing' metaphorically? He does. Fathers do not literally give birth. In these two verses, both 'father' and 'birthing' are metaphors, which are used to evoke an idea ~ the idea of generating from the originator,[12] 'life, existence' (Y43.5), and the true order of existence' (Y44.3). These metaphors evoke the idea of a 'creation' by emanation ~ which is consistent with one set of the meanings generated by the root *dā-* 'to give/produce' (verb); 'giver/producer' (noun).

So in these two verses, Y43.5 and Y44.3, there is no notion of 'creation' as an act that makes something separate out of nothing (or out of something previously made, such as clay or a rib).

Let us set aside for a moment, the nature of the one doing the birthing or generating of existence, and consider whether, so far, we are on the right track.

Is this conclusion (of creation by emanation) consistent with other ideas in the Gathas and any later texts? It is. It is consistent with the fact that in the Gathas, man (and possibly all the living) have within them (incompletely) all but the last two attributes of the divine, and is capable of attaining them all completely.[13] It is consistent with Zarathushtra notion of the good 'reward' which is the incremental, and eventually the complete, attainment of these divine attributes ~ his notion of paradise.[14] It is consistent with the notion of the immanence of the divine in all things, implied in the Gathas and with the fire in all things of the YAv. and Pahlavi texts, as well as the ways in which the Pahlavi texts describe how the fire is infused into all existence.[15] It is consistent with the 'innate wisdom',[16] of the later YAv. texts. And it is consistent with a beautifully crafted, multi~dimensioned metaphor frequently used in the Gathas ~ fashioner of the cow.[17]

Returning to Y43.5, (quoted above) where Zarathushtra speaks of the act of creation as the birthing or begetting of existence, let us recall that in the Gathas he speaks of 'existence' as the existences of matter and of mind.[18] Naturally, one wonders: Did Zarathushtra think that both matter and mind were created by birthing, by emanation from the primordial being? In Y44 Zarathushtra asks the Divine many rhetorical questions about the 'creation' of the material existence, and also of the abstract qualities that are qualities of the divine ~ the existence of mind. His vocabulary is instructive. Let us look the evidence.

In the existence of matter.

We have already seen that Zarathushtra starts (in Y44.3) with the birthing of the true order of existence, *aša-*, which in the Gathas applies to the existences of both matter and mind.[19] Insler 1975 translates *ząϑā* here as "during the creation" but it literally means 'during the birthing'.

"Which man [*kasnā*] in the beginning was the father of truth [*aša-*] during the creation [*ząϑā*]...?" Y44.3. Insler 1975,
Or as I would translate it 'Which man in the beginning was the father of the true order of existence [*aša-*], during the birthing [*ząϑā*] ... ? Y44.3.

Let us set aside, for a moment, Zarathushtra's use of 'which man' in referring to the generating entity. We will discuss that later. Here (in Y44.3) he mentions the father (generator) of the true order of existence (*aša-*) during the 'birthing' (*ząϑā*). And in the very next sentence (of the same verse), he asks about the true order (*aša-*) in the material existence, asking (rhetorically):

"... Which man [*kasnā*] did fix [*dāṯ*] the course of the sun and of the stars? Through whom does the moon wax (now), wane later?..." Y44.3. The word *dāṯ* is a grammatical form of the verb *dā-* 'to establish, to give, to make'. In this verse, most translators agree that it is used in the sense of 'to establish, to fix'.[20] So the 'creative' act is described first as the 'birthing' or 'generating' of 'existence', and then as 'establishing' the natural order of the material existence ~ the course of the sun and the stars, the waxing and waning of the moon, which continues in the next verse.

"... Which man has upheld the earth below and the heavens (above) from falling? Who the waters and the plants? Who yoked the pairs of swift (steeds) to the wind and the clouds?..." Y44.4, Insler 1975. Here again, (although *dā-* is not used) the creative act is upholding (or establishing) various examples of the natural order in the existence of matter (*aša-*), which in the immediately preceding verse was generated or birthed (Y44.3).

In the verse that follows, Y44.5, he asks (referring probably to the night sky with its luminous stars and moon):

"...Which craftsman [*hvāpah-*] created [*dāṯ*] the luminous bodies and the dark spaces? Which craftsman created [*dāṯ*] both sleep and activity? Through whom does the dawn exist, along with midday and evening...?" Y44.5, Insler 1975. Not all translators have not used the word 'created' for *dāṯ*.[21] What did meaning did Zarathushtra intend in using *dāṯ*?

It is interesting that here he describes the creating entity as a 'craftsman', *hvāpah-*. A craftsman does not create something out of nothing. He produces, makes, shapes or fashions the material at hand (here the material being the 'existence of matter' which was 'birthed' or emanated). 'To produce' and 'to establish' are both among the meanings of the verb *dā*. I think this is why so often

the later YAv. texts describe the Lord Wisdom as the 'Maker, or Giver, or Producer of the material world'.[22]

What conclusions can we come to regarding Zarathushtra's ideas on the 'creation' of the material existence based on these verses? Tentative ones.

In these rhetorical questions he asks who fathered, birthed, generated, the true order of existence (*aša-*) and then, in the existence of matter, established the natural order, and produced, fashioned, crafted the phenomena that are a part of it.   Did the original matter which was emanated, evolve over millennia (through the natural order that governs the universe) into the multiplicity of inorganic and organic material forms which we have today?   Zarathushtra does not say. But I find it interesting that what he does say is consistent with the theory of evolution (although perhaps not with one of the theories of natural selection),[23] and seems to be consistent with the theories of some physicists that we all are made of the same primordial matter. But these are just theories ~ steps in the on~going search for truth.

In the existence of mind.

In the existence of mind, the true order of existence is all that is intrinsically good, right, which in the Gathas includes what is beneficial, honest, loving, generous, compassionate, just (as in fair) et cetera.[24]

Let us now consider Zarathushtra's ideas about the 'creation' of the true order (*aša-*) in the existence of mind, using as a starting point, the original question in Y44.3:   "Which man [*kasnā*] in the beginning was the father of the true order of existence [*aša-*] during the birthing [*ząϑā*]...?" Y44.3, my translation.

In Y47.2 he says: "... The Wise One [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom'] is the Father of truth." Y47.2, Insler 1975.

And in Y31.8, he says of Wisdom "... when I grasped Thee ... to be ... the real Creator [*dąmīm*] of truth..."Y31.8, Insler 1975. The word *dąmīm* is acc. sg. of the noun *dāmi-*, derived from *dā-* (Skjaervo 2006).

So, reading these verses together (the 'father of truth during the birthing [*ząϑā*]' Y44.3; 'the father of truth' Y47.2; the real Creator [*dąmīm*] of truth..." Y31.8, Insler 1975), it would be reasonable to conclude that in calling Wisdom (*mazdā-*) '...[*dąmīm*] of the true order of existence...' in Y31.8, Zarathushtra uses the noun *dąmīm* (from the root *dā-*) as a giving from oneself, producing, making. I therefore think that '*dąmīm* of the true order' is used in the sense of 'the producer (emanator), giver, and (continuing) maker of the true order of existence,...' in Y31.8, which captures Zarathushtra's intent in describing the 'creating' entity in the context of these three verses.

Now we have already explored the evidence which shows that good thinking (*vohu- manah-*) is the (incremental, and ultimately the complete) comprehension of the true (correct, good) order of existence, *aša*;[25]   and *spənta- ārmaiti-* is the (incremental, and ultimately the complete) embodiment of the true order in beneficial thoughts, words and actions.[26] Does Zarathushtra address the 'creation' of these two aspects of the true order ~ comprehending and embodying the true order ~ in the existence of mind?   He does.

"...Which man [*kasnā*], Wise One, is the creator [*dąmiš*] of good thinking?" Y44.4 Insler 1975. The word *dąmiš* is nom. sg. of the noun *dāmi-*, derived from *dā-* (Skjaervo 2006). So in this rhetorical

question (which contains its own answer) Wisdom is the 'producer (emanator), giver, maker' of comprehending the true order of existence (good thinking).

"... Thou didst create [*då*] tranquility and [*ārmaiti-*] ..." Y47.3 Insler 1975.   The word *då* is a conjugation of the verb *dā-*. So here, Wisdom 'produces (emanates), gives, makes the embodiment of the true order in thought, word and action.

This understanding of the last 2 quotations above (from Y44.4 and Y47.3) is corroborated in Y45.4 where Zarathurhtra calls Wisdom (*mazdā-*) the father (a metaphor) ~ a producer ~ of both good thinking and embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*), "... I know the Wise One [*mazdā-*] ... to be the Father of effective good thinking. And His daughter is [*ārmaiti-*] of good actions ..." Y45.4, Insler 1975. So once again, (as with the true order of existence *aša-*) we see the idea that its comprehension good thinking, and its embodiment *ārmaiti-* are generated (fathered) from Wisdom (*mazdā-*) ~ an emanating or giving these two qualities ~ the comprehension and embodiment of truth ~ from wisdom/Wisdom.

In the case of embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*), in addition to the metaphor of being fathered by Wisdom (*mazdā-*) (Y45.4), Zarathushtra also asks "...Who fashioned [*tāšt*] [*ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth'] in addition to rule [*x̌ šaϑra-*]?..."Y44.7. Why 'fashioned'?   Well, each thought, word and action which embodies the true order of existence (which is *ārmaiti-*) and which results in good rule *vohu-x̌ šaϑra-*) has to be fashioned to meet the many and varied circumstances of life (existence) ~ by the wisdom within (mortals), as well as by Wisdom personified (the Divine).[27]

It is worth noting that Wisdom (*mazdā-*) is identified (in the extant Gathas) as the 'father' only of the true order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension, good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*).[28]   Wisdom (*mazdā-*) is not identified as the 'father' of good rule (*vohu- x̌ šaϑra-*), completeness (*haurvatāt-*) or non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), which also are divine attributes. Is this significant in the context of Zarathushtra's 'creation' ideas? I think it is.

The first three qualities of the Divine ~ the true order of existence (*aša-*), the ability to comprehend it, good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and the ability to embody it in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*), ~ are the generated qualities that cause, or bring about, the second three (good rule, completeness and non-deathness). So the primordial 'creative' act(s) in the existence of mind would be the birthing or generating of these first three qualities, which, through choices and experiences in the existence of matter, in an on-going spiritual evolution, cause and result in good rule (over our selves and our social units) and ultimately the complete (*haurvatāt-*) attainment of the qualities that comprise the true order of existence, at which time the reason for mortality ceases to exist, and a state of non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) occurs.[29]

Why questions?

Returning to the 'creation' poem Y44, it is significant that all these verses which deal with the true order in the existences of matter and mind are crafted in the form of questions. Why questions? I think Zarathushtra does this to emphasize his fundamental belief that life, (and 'religion'!), is an on-going search for truth ~ a search from which he does not exempt himself,

"... as long as I shall be able and be strong, so long shall I look in quest of truth. Truth, shall I see thee, as I continue to acquire ... good thinking..." Y28.4-5, Insler 1975.

Did he have some ideas about the answers to the questions (quoted above) about the birthing of the existences of matter and mind?   I think he did. After asking these questions, he concludes:

'... I, through these (questions) am helping to discern thee, Wisdom, (to be) the producer [*dātārəm*] of everything [*vīspanąm*] through (Your) beneficial way of being.' Y44.7, my translation. Other translations are footnoted for comparative purposes.[30]

The word *dātārəm* is a grammatical form of the stem *dātār-* 'giver, producer, maker, establisher', derived from *dā-* 'to give, produce, make, establish' (Skjaervo 2006).   Based on the verses discussed above (in which 'creation' is an act of birthing and establishing), it would be contextually consistent to understand *dātārəm* in this verse in the sense of a 'giver/producer/establisher', but there is no one-word English equivalent.

It has been argued that because in Y44.7 Wisdom (*mazdā-*) is identified as the giver/producer/establisher 'of-everything [*vīspanąm*]', this verse is evidence that in Zarathushtra's thought 'God' (a term which Zarathushtra never uses) was also the creator of evil. This argument ignores the qualifying phrase in Y44.7 that He is the giver/producer/establisher of everything 'through (Your) beneficial way of being [*spəntā mainyū*].' Y44.7.

To say that what is *spənta-* 'beneficial, good' can generate what is bad, harmful (*aka-/aŋgra-*) is a contradiction in terms. We know that in Zarathushtra's thought, the beneficial way of being and the 'evil' or 'harmful' way of being are opposites, that have nothing in common ~ witness the statement of the allegorical more~beneficial (*spanyah-*) way of being to the harmful (*angra-*) way of being: "...Neither our thoughts, nor teachings nor intentions, neither our preferences nor words, neither our actions nor conceptions [*daēnā-*] nor our souls [*urvąnō* 'selves'],[31] are in accord." Y45.2, Insler 1975.   And in the Gathas, *spənta-* 'beneficial' and the true order of existence (*aša-*) are equated, and what is 'bad' or harmful is the opposite of the true order of existence,[32] and therefore cannot be *spənta-* 'beneficial'.

Returning to Y44.7 we need to understand "everything" in the context in which it appears. For example, if I were going on a short trip and I said: *I have packed everything*, it would not mean that I have packed everything in the world, or even everything that I own. It would mean I have packed everything I intend to take on my trip ~ the context qualifying the scope of 'everything'. In Y44.7, the scope of "everything" is mentioned in the context of the questions in the preceding verses,

'... I, through these (questions) am helping to discern you, Wisdom, (to be) the producer [*dātārəm*] of everything [*vīspanąm*] through (Your) beneficial way of being.' Y44.7, (my translation) ~ a thought that is reflected (from a different perspective) in other verses.[33]

Not one of the preceding questions in this Yasna 44 asks who fathered, birthed, generated, established, produced, made, or fashioned 'evil'. In the existence of mind, the only rhetorical questions Zarathushtra asks in Y44 pertain to the true order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*), and its (good) rule (*x šaϑra*).   In the Gathas, it is a beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) that generates an understanding (*vohu- manah-*) of the true order ~ a beneficial order ~ and its embodiment in thought, word, and action (*ārmaiti-*).[34] Indeed, all these qualities (amesha spenta) are aspects of the beneficial~sacred way of being (which is the true order of existence), which is the essence of the sacred ~ an existence that is Divine.[35]

This brings us to the question: If Wisdom (*mazdā-*) did not create 'evil', where did it come from? How did it originate? To understand Zarathushtra's thinking, we have to look at this question from an opposite perspective ~ one that is different from the conventional thinking of our times.

Let us recall two foundational verses, Y30.3 and Y45.2, which tells us that there were two primeval, ways of being ~ the more-good and the bad (Y30.3), the more-beneficial and the harmful (Y45.2).[36] In Y30.3 these two primeval ways of being are called 'twins'.[37]   In the beginning, 'twins' exist in one womb, thus giving us the idea of these two ways of being existing in one 'container' or life entity. If the original act of 'creation' was one of 'birthing' or generating, then this primeval life force would have infused itself into every aspect of the material creation.   This primeval life force was a mix of divine qualities and their opposites. Perhaps this explains Zarathushtra's idea of the origin or advent of 'evil' in our existence.   It also explains Zarathushtra's idea that mortal man has within him (incompletely) qualities that are divine ~ the beneficial way of being, comprising truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its good rule ~ as well as their opposites.[38]

It is interesting that this idea (that the primeval (mixed) being infused itself into the material existence) is somewhat corroborated in a later Pahlavi text, *Selections of Zad-sparam*, which attributes the idea to the Gathas. It says,

> "As it is said in the Gathas, thus: So also both those spirits [Av. *mainyu-*] have approached together unto that which was the first creation ~ that is, both spirits have come into the body of Gayomard. ...". *Selections of Zad-Sparam*, Ch. 5, § 4,   E. W. West translation. West believes, this reference is to the Gatha verse Y30.4, (in which the two *mainyu-* "came together").[39]

If we recall that the Avestan *mainyu-* means 'a way of being',[40] then we have here, corroboration of the idea of the two opposite ways of being entering the material 'creation'. Why they did so is discussed below under the subtitle *The purpose of 'creation'*.

And this same text, using fire ~ the material metaphor for the Divine ~ speaks of it being diffused "originally" throughout the material existence.

> "...and Auharmazd [Av. *ahura- mazdā-*] produced the creatures bodily for the world; first, the sky; the second, water; the third, earth; the fourth, plants; the fifth, animals; the sixth, mankind. Fire was in all, diffused originally through the six substances..." *Selections of Zad-Sparam*, Ch. 1 §§ 20 - 21, E. W. West translation.[41]

Returning to the 'creation' poem (Y44), the only things that are identified as having been birthed, generated, produced, given, or fashioned by Wisdom through a beneficial way of being (*spənta-mainyu-*) are:

(1) the material creation and the true order that governs it (*aša-*), and

(2) in the existence of mind, the true order (*aša-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*), and its good rule (*vohu- xšaϑra-*) ~ all of which are aspects of the beneficial~sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ the way of being that is divine (hence represented in *Zadsparam* as 'fire' diffused into the material existence).

Thus, the material shells we inhabit are not intrinsically 'evil' ~ an important difference between Zarathushtra's thought and many dominant religions of today. It is only the life force that inhabits such shells that is a mix of beneficial~sacred and harmful preferences, and thus is capable of 'evil'. And

also capable of the divine. True, Zarathushtra does not say how the original life force with its two primeval ways of being came into existence.   Even in the notion of creation by emanation, we have the unanswered question: who emanated the emanator? I have not seen an answer to this question in the Gathas (although I may have missed it).   Indeed, I know of no thought system that has answered the question ~ who created the creator?   The problem has been defined out of existence (as philosophers and scientists so often do) by calling the original creator an 'uncreated' being.   Which really does not answer the question or solve the puzzle.

The identity of the creative entity.

One might (reasonably) object, that the being who in the beginning did all this birthing, establishing and fashioning is consistently addressed by Zarathushtra's two names for the Divine ~ Wisdom (*mazdā-*), and Lord (*ahura-*), and that it is a fundament of Zarathushtra's thought, that his notion of the Divine is a being who is wholly good, completely in accord with the true (correct) order of things.[42] How can these facts be squared with the notion that the creative act of infusing itself into the material existence was done by a primordial being who on the one hand was not all good, but who is consistently addressed by Zarathushtra as Wisdom (*mazdā-*) and Lord (*ahura-*)?

Well, if you were addressing the saintly Mother Theresa, (who at the beginning of her career when she entered the convent, was just an ordinary girl ~ not then called Mother Theresa, and whose way of being then may have contained more of a mix of not-so-saintly and saintly qualities), you might say, 'I saw you, Mother Theresa, when you entered the convent...'. In other words, you would address her by the name she had at the time you addressed her ~ the name which reflected her present saintly nature ~ not the name or nature she had when you saw her at the beginning, when she was not yet a saint.[43]

In the same way, it would be natural, for Zarathushtra to address the primordial 'emanator', 'giver' and 'fashioner' (who in the beginning had a mixed way of being and was motivated to do the birthing/generating, making, creative act by the beneficial-sacred part of its way of being) by the name that describes what He is at the time that Zarathushtra addresses Him ~ One whose way of being is wholly beneficial-sacred (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*), and Lord (*ahura-*).

Of course, this presupposes that in Zarathushtra's view, the being who is now Lord (*ahura-*) and Wisdom (*mazdā-*) was part of the perfecting process ~ the spiritual evolution from the primordial mixed way of being (that was only in part beneficial-sacred *spanyah-*), to a wholly, completely, beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*) way of being. There is evidence in the Gathas which suggests that this indeed is Zarathushtra's view. It is discussed in *Part Two: Did the Wisdom Choose Too*?

The Divine, in Zarathushtra's thought, is a being that has acquired rule (*x ṣ̌aϑra-*) or Lordship (*ahura-*) over the qualities that make a being divine,[44] and thus personifies the true (correct, wholly good) order of existence (*aṣ̌a- vahišta-*), its comprehension, (*vohu- manah-*), its embodiment (*ārmaiti-*),[45] ~ the wholly beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*).[46] I think this is why the beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) is Wisdom's way of being in the Gathas and the later YAv. texts.

Why 'which man' ?

In addressing Wisdom (*mazdā-*), Zarathushtra repeatedly alternates between "which man [*kasnā*]" and "who [*kə̄*]" when asking (rhetorically) about the identity of the entity doing the various creative acts (birthing, establishing, upholding, fashioning, etc.) mentioned in Yasna 44.

"...Which man[47] [*kasnā*] in the beginning was the father of truth [*aša-*] during the creation [*ząϑā* 'during the birthing]?..."Y44.3b, Insler 1975;

"...Which man [*kasnā*] did fix the course of the sun and of the stars?..." Y44.3c, Insler 1975;

"...Through whom [*kə̄*] does the moon wax now, wane later?..."Y44.3d, Insler 1975;

"...Which man [*kasnā*] has upheld the earth below and the heavens (above) from falling?..." Y44.4b-c, Insler 1975;

"...Who [*kə̄*] the waters and the plants?..." Y44.4c, Insler 1975;

"...Who [*kə̄*] yoked the pairs of swift (steeds) to the wind and to the clouds?..."Y44.4d, Insler 1975;

"...Which man [*kasnā*], Wise One, is the creator of good thinking?"Y44.4.e, Insler 1975.

kə̄ : The word *kə̄* is one of the nom. sg. masc. forms of the interrogative pronoun stem *ka-* ('who, which, what').[48] In the context of these verses, this pronoun *kə̄* 'who' could stand for Wisdom,[49] and the beneficial way of being (*mainyu-*)[50] identified as the producing entity in Y44.7, or it could stand for *kasnā* 'which man', the nearest noun which in these verses alternates with the pronoun *kə̄*.

kasnā ~ Insler meticulously (and courageously!) translates *kasnā* literally ~ "which man". According to Beekes, the word *kas* is a nom. sg. masc. form of the interrogative pronoun stem *ka-* ('who, which, what');[51] and *nā* is nom. sg. of *nar-* 'man' (Skjaervo 2006). Taraporewala informs us that although Bartholomae sees *nā* as originally nom. sg. of *nar-*,[52] he (Bartholomae) expresses the opinion that when combined with a preceding pronoun (or other word) it may be left untranslated,[53] ~ a cop out! (influenced perhaps by the pre-conceived idea that the Creator is a separate entity from man, making *kasnā* untranslatable to one of his mind~set). Similarly, none of the other translators have translated the creative entity *kasnā* literally, as 'which man',[54] ~ perhaps similarly influenced by their own pre-conceived mind~set of 'God the Creator' ~ a separate, always perfect, entity.

Assuming that Insler, Skjaervo and Bartholomae are correct in seeing *nā* as nom. sg. of *nar-* 'man', we have to wonder: Why does Zarathushtra choose 'which man' ~ not once or twice, but repeatedly ~ in asking his rhetorical questions about the identity of the creative entity? He could as easily have used *kə̄* 'who, which one', instead of *kasnā*. Why *kasnā* 'which man'? And why does he repeatedly refer to this creative entity as 'which man' when in Y44.7 he also identifies this creative entity as Wisdom (*mazdā-*) through (His) beneficial~sacred way of being? ("... By these (questions), Wise One, I am helping to discern Thee to be the creator of everything by reason of Thy [*spənta- mainyu-*]." Y44.7, Insler 1975).

I speculate that he does so to indicate a continuum of 'existence' ~ mixed at one end, evolving towards perfection, and ultimately perfected at the other end of the continuum ~ in that the same mix (of divine qualities and their opposites) existed in the unperfected primordial creative entity, which infused itself into all aspects of the material creation, and also exists in man (who is an unperfected part of that primordial being). And that the part(s) of this primordial (mixed) entity that have since then evolved into pure goodness, pure wisdom, is/are Wisdom (*mazdā-*) and His wholly beneficial~

sacred way of being (His *spənta- mainyu-*), now a perfected part of the primordial (originally mixed) life entity.[55]

This type of alternating technique between 'which man/who' and 'Wisdom' (in asking about the creative process) is also used by Zarathushtra, (although not pertaining to 'creation'), in his use of the singular and the plural in referring to Wisdom, which I think he did to indicate his understanding that there is an integration of identity between all the living and the Divine.[56]

We are so used to thinking of the Divine as a Being who is separate and apart from us, perfect to begin with ~ a creator who created all that exists out of nothing (or out of something that He had already created) ~ that it is difficult, when reading and translating the Gathas, to prevent ourselves from seeing Zarathushtra's ideas through the spectacles of that mental conditioning. But if we can manage to take off those spectacles (consistently), and view his ideas objectively, free of such pre-conceived ideas, so many puzzling bits and pieces of evidence (in the Gathas) fall into place, giving us conclusions that are so often corroborated elsewhere in the Gathas, and also in later texts.

It may (reasonably) be argued that given the limitations of human beings (to say nothing of other life forms), it is absurd to conclude that such beings could 'create' the natural order of existence. When I look at the awesome splendor of the universe, with its billions of galaxies at one end of the spectrum, and at another end the incredible miniature perfection of atoms, molecules and even smaller units of matter, all operating in an unbelievable order (of which even disorder is a part), I find it hard to believe that I (or any life form on earth) could have had any part in its 'creation', whether by emanation or otherwise. But then again, would that conclusion be absurd, if the limitations of humans and other life forms are a function of the physical shells they presently inhabit?

The purpose of 'creation'.

We have seen that in the Gathas the 'birthing, 'establishing' and 'fashioning' of the material existence was motivated and brought about by a beneficial way of being (Y44.3 - 7).

Naturally, one wonders: Why?

Why was this 'creative' exercise necessary in the first place? What was the (beneficial) reason for the 'creation' of a material existence, and the infusion (or diffusion) of the primeval being (a conflicted mix of more beneficial and harmful qualities) into all aspects of the material existence?   I have formed some (tentative) conclusions as to what Zarathushtra's answer may have been, based on evidence in the Gathas and somewhat corroborated in a later text.

Y44 makes it clear that (unlike many later texts) Zarathushtra's inquiring mind was not focused on just humans. He was interested in, and wanted to understand, the movements of the sun, moon, stars, other natural phenomena, and the laws that order our universe. Today, with earth-based and satellite-based telescopes, we are aware that our sun is just a small star in the Milky Way Galaxy, which is just a small galaxy in our (known) universe, and scientists speculate that our universe may be just one of many universes. Obviously, Zarathushtra had no access to such technology, and its resulting theories, and probably was not aware of other star-systems, galaxies, and possible universes. So his understanding of the purpose of 'creation' would be limited to existence as he knew it, and as we live it ~ on this earth.

I have not seen expressed or implied in the Gathas, the silly idea which at one time was generally held, that the whole (then-known) universe was created for the use and benefit of man. But I do see implied, some ideas as to why existence (as we know it here on earth) was 'birthed' or 'generated'.

We start with the dissatisfaction of the more-beneficial way of being with its opposite: "... Neither our thoughts, nor teachings nor intentions, neither our preferences nor words, neither our actions nor conceptions [*daēnā-* 'envisionments'] nor our souls [*urvąnō* 'selves'] are in accord." Y45.2, Insler 1975.

From this verse, it would be reasonable to conclude that the nature of the primeval being was conflicted; that it beneficial part did not like its destructive or harmful propensities, and wanted to find a way of eliminating them from its being, so that its being would be in harmony ~ wholly 'good', wholly 'beneficial'. But for such a change to truly occur, it could only be arrived at freely, from within, through an evolutionary or transformational process. *One* can lead a horse to water, *twenty* cannot make him drink.

In short, to change its harmful preferences the beneficial part of the primeval being would have had to devise a transformational process ~ a process in which the being would be made aware of how it would feel to be on the receiving end of harmful conduct or events. It would have to be free to make beneficial and harmful choices,[57] and experience beneficial and harmful experiences, both earned (through the law of consequences) and unearned.

Experiencing pain, grief, terror, et cetera ~ whether brought about by the way the material existence is ordered, or by natural phenomena, or the wrongful acts of others or ourselves ~ together with the abilities to think/feel/reason, and mutual loving help, would eventually bring about the desired change from within, because each time the mixed being was on the receiving end of all kinds of words, actions, or events which caused it pain or harm, it would realize that causing pain, grief, harm, (etc.) are not the way things should be, not the way the entire being (even its harmful side) wants things to be. And each beneficial experience would generate the realization that this is the way things should be, the way the entire being (even its harmful side) wants things to be. So over a long period of time, experience by experience, it's preferences would change. It would come to prefer what is beneficial, good, truthful, loving, generous, (the true order of existence) for its own sake, because that is the way it would want things to be.[58]

Essential to this process of transformation would be a matrix that enables the necessary experiences. In Zarathushtra's thought, the acquisition of wisdom is experience based.[59] The matrix which enables these experiences is the material existence. We see this idea in Y31.11 and 12, where Zarathushtra tells us that Wisdom (through its beneficial way of being Y44.7), in the beginning fashioned 'physical lives' [*gaēϑåscā*], and the ability to 'envision' and 'reason' [*daēnåscā ... xʷrātūcša*], that he clothed life in material shells, so that such life forms with free will, can express their preferences ~ whether true or false, whether ignorant or knowing.[60] And verse 12 ends with the beautiful thought: "...(But) in due course [*ārmaiti-*] shall come to terms with one's [*mainyu-* 'way of being'] where there has been opposition." Y31.12, Insler 1975; *ārmaiti-* is the concept of thoughts, words and actions that embody the true (wholly good) order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*) ~ an order that is friendly, loving, generous, compassionate, caring, just (as in 'fair'), an order of existence that is beneficial (*spənta-*).[61]

So, in addition to experiencing the consequences of our own choices, and other good and painful experiences, such good thoughts, words, and actions of embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) which comprise mutual loving help between man, the Divine, and all the living, will continually help to bring about the desired change from a way of being (*mainyu-*) that has opposing, conflicting preferences to one that embodies the true order of existence ~ a state of being that prefers what is true, good, right, for its own sake, as the Gathas and the Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu) manthra teach us.[62]

In Y31.11 we are told that the physical matrix through which preferences can be expressed are 'given' and 'fashioned', which is consistent with the notion that the primeval life entity infused (or diffused) itself into a material existence which evolved over the millennia into the various material forms of existence (as we know it today).

'Since for us in the beginning, O Wisdom, Through Thy thinking, Thou didst fashion [*tašō*] physical lives [*gaēϑåscā*], and envisioning-faculties [*daēnåscā*] and reasoning-faculties [*xratušcā*], since Thou didst give [*dadå*] embodied breath [*astvantəm … uštanəm*],[63] since (Thou didst give) actions and teachings, whereby one expresses preferences at will,' Y31.11, my translation. I think 'embodied breath' mean life within a material shell, ~ enabling actions and implementing teachings.' The Insler 1975 translation is footnoted for comparative purposes.[64]

The idea expressed in Y31.11 ~ that our material shells were 'fashioned' and 'given' as a medium or matrix to enable the activities and experiences required for spiritual growth, is somewhat corroborated in later Avestan and Pahlavi texts. Some of these texts recount some creation stories that are not found in the Gathas and may have reflected creation stories of (pre- or post-Zarathushtrian) Arya tribes, and possibly others. However, we also see golden strands of Gatha thought in these later texts. The Pahlavi *Bundahishn* implies that the soul of man is the "living soul of Auharmazd",[65] and then makes this interesting comment on the soul (bear in mind that 'creation' is by emanation):

> "...it [the soul] is given into the body that it may produce activity, and the body is created only for activity; And both of them changed from the shape of a plant into the shape of man, and the breath (nismo) went spiritually into them, which is the soul (ruban)..." *Bundahishn*, Ch. 15, §§ 4 - 5, E. W. West translation.[66]

In the *Sirozah* (a Younger Avestan text), fire is equated with *xᵛvarənah-* the divine glory in the three segments of society as it then existed ~ the priests, the warriors and the herdsmen[67] ~ the fire/glory within.[68] And the Pahlavi *Bundahishn* speaks of these three fires as follows:

> "All those three fires are the whole body of the fire Vahram,[69] together with the fire of the world, and those breathing souls are lodged in them; a counterpart of the body of man when it forms in the womb of the mother, and a soul from the spirit-world settles within it, which controls the body while living; when that body dies, the body mingles with the earth[70] and the soul goes back to the spirit." *Bundahishn* 17.9, E. W. West translation.[71]

Selections of Zad-sparam, (a Pahlavi text) speaks of the divine (symbolized by fire) infused into all existence, for the purpose of opposing 'Aharman' (which literally means 'harmful, hurtful, inimical, hate-filled way of being' but which in this text is shown as an all-evil entity, ~ although possibly an allegory).[72] Each of the preceding chapters in this text speak of this Evil entity coming to various

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parts of the good creation, ~ the waters, the earth, plants, cattle, man ~ and the ways in which each of them fight the Evil entity, and then states,

> "As he (Aharman) came seventhly to fire, which was all together *against* him, the fire *separated* into five kinds, ... And it produced the Propitious fire itself in heaven (garodman); its manifestation is in the fire which is burning on the earth, and its propitiousness is this, that all kinds are of its nature..." Ch. 11, §§ 1 - 2, E. W. West translation.[73] The words in *italics* are not in the text, but have been inserted by West as interpretive aids.

And §§ 1, and 3 - 6 describe these "all kinds" of fires as those which are in man and animals, in plants, in clouds, and in the "Behram fire ... whose propitious power *arises* from ... the praise of God, *and* the practice of good works." E. W. West translation.[74] The word 'Behram/Bahram' is the Pahlavi word derived from Av. Verethraghna which means 'victory of good over evil'.

So we see that these later texts tell us (in a dramatized way) that the purpose of infusing the divine fire into all aspects of the material existence, was to enable the defeat of evil. The *Bundahishn* expresses the same idea in telling a story of how the *fravashis* agreed to come to earth to fight evil.[75]

These are just different echoes (encased in the cultural expressions of Pahlavi times) of the idea implied in the Gathas that the material existence was produced, fashioned, to provide a matrix, to enable the experiences which would transform the primeval being from a conflicted mix of more~ good and bad (Y30.3), more~beneficial and 'harmful, hate-filled, pain~causing, inimical' (Y45.2) into a being that is wholly beneficial, wholly good, wholly in accord with the true order of existence, a wholeness of quality, as well as a wholeness of being (*haurvatāt-*) at which time, the reason for mortal existence would cease to exist, and a non~mortal state (non-deathness *amərətāt-*) would occur.

Does 'evil' exist in the material creation?

One might (reasonably) question: If the material creation was emanated from a primordial being which was a mix of beneficial and harmful capabilities, does 'evil' exist in the material creation? In answering this question, we need to recall some foundational ideas (in the Gathas):

First, it was through the beneficial way of being *spənta- mainyu-* that the material existence was produced and fashioned ~ the establishing of the true order in the existence of matter, the 'fixing' of the course of the sun and the stars, the waxing and waning of the moon, (Y44.3), the upholding of the earth and the sky, the waters and the plants, the 'yoking' of winds and clouds (Y44.4), the 'crafting' of the luminous bodies and the dark spaces, sleep and activity, dawn, midday and evening (Y44.5) ~ all were brought about through a beneficial way of being *spənta- mainyu-* (Y44.7). A beneficial way of being cannot, by definition, 'birth', produce, give, fix, establish or uphold what is not beneficial (i.e. what is harmful, 'evil'). Therefore in Zarathushtra's thought evil could not be a part of the material existence.

Second, throughout the Gathas, we see that Zarathushtra's notion of evil is the product of wrongful choices, and the preferences that generate them. Therefore, only something capable of choice can have 'evil' within itself. The physical forces of nature, cannot make choices. They function according to the fixed natural laws that govern them (*aša-*). The various physical shells which are inhabited by the (fragmented) life force, cannot make choices.[76] It is only the life force within these physical shells, and acting through them, that has the ability to make choices, and thus has within it the capacity for good and evil.[77] This line of reasoning is consistent with the fact that no place in the

Gathas is any part of the material creation, in and of itself, called 'evil' or 'bad', such as we see in the later texts, where frogs, wolves, drought, disease et cetera ~ everything that was harmful to man ~ were all considered intrinsically 'evil', the 'creations' of an all-evil uncreated 'god', cosmic dualism, which is not found in the Gathas.[78]

In one sense, we can understand how the Zoroastrians of the later texts fell into the error of classifying anything harmful to man as 'evil'.   In the Gathas, many descriptive references to 'evil' are indeed things that harm and injure. But in the Gathas, these 'harmful' and 'injurious' (evil) things are all the products of human choices ~ violence, cruelty, tyranny, fury, et cetera.[79]   The authors of certain later texts, with their human-centric world view, started with the idea that harming and injuring is 'evil' (which is in accord with the Gathas), and concluded that therefore, anything that is harmful or injurious to human beings, their possessions, their crops, etc. is 'evil' ~ drought, frogs, wolves, disease, death et cetera. This human-centric world view and conclusion is absent from the Gathas and is not in accord with its teachings,[80] and indeed is even inconsistent with the later texts which speak of the fire in all things ~ no exceptions being made for wolves, frogs, etc.

Naturally, one wonders: Can other life forms also make evil choices? Zarathushtra does not specifically answer this question. But man is not the only 'mortal' creature. And in light of the fact that the Gathas mention 'creatures' and 'mortals' in a context that sometimes includes more than humankind,[81] it is more than likely (in my view) that, in his thought, all mortals are involved in the process of spiritual evolution (a conclusion that seems to be hinted at in the YAv. Bahram Yasht).[82] True, he does not say what this evolutionary process consists of for other life forms, which is the only truthful way to address the question, because we have no way of knowing what goes on in the lives and minds of other life forms, except in a very superficial way ~ indeed, we have a hard time figuring out what goes on in the lives and minds of ourselves, and our fellow human beings with whom we share language and our lives.   But it is interesting that an increasing number of research scientists today see animals and birds make choices that are beneficial and harmful. And indeed, there is a NOVA documentary which suggests that even plants are involved in some sort of choice-making that harms or helps other plants, using the language of chemicals, and other material matrices that are not so used by humans.   There is a lot we do not know about other life forms. So it would be neither logical (nor consistent with good scientific principles) to make positive conclusions that other life forms cannot or do not make choices between what (to them) is right and wrong, good and bad, ~ based on an absence of knowledge.

Conclusion:

I conclude that to Zarathushtra, the process of 'creation' was generated by the beneficial side of the primeval being's nature, because of its dissatisfaction with the harmful side of its nature. The process of 'creation' generated a material matrix to enable the choices and experiences necessary to transform the primeval being's mixed, conflicted preferences into wholly good ones (which is Zarathushtra's definition of the divine, and his solution for the defeat of evil).

More specifically, 'creation' was an act of (metaphoric) birthing (*ząθa-*) ~ a creation by emanation, a giving (*dā-*) from the substance of the 'creator', an establishing and shaping of the material creation, and an infusion (or diffusion) of the primordial mixed, conflicted (more-good/bad) being into every aspect of the material creation, which would account for the presence of 'evil' in our existence.

To translate the *dā-* words as 'create / creator' brings into Zarathushtra's thought the baggage of other belief systems in which 'God' is a being separate and apart from the 'created', was always perfect to begin with, and not only 'created' all that exists out of nothing, but 'created' an imperfect existence, one that contains evil. A paradigm that is inherently illogical. To impose this paradigm of 'creation' on to the thought of the Gathas is not linguistically accurate, nor is it consistent with Zarathushtra's over-all thought. Whereas translating *ząϑa-* words as a (metaphoric) birthing, an emanating, and the *dā-* words as 'give/giver', 'produce/producer', and 'establish/establisher' is both linguistically accurate and consistent with the ways in which Zarathushtra uses these words.

In the existence of matter, whatever was emanated was shaped (*ϑwarəš-*) and fashioned (*taš-*) by the skillful craftsman (*hvāpah-*) ~ the primordial being's beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-* Y44.7) ~ into a natural order (*aša-*) that has enabled its evolution into the diversity of the material existence. In light of the fact that the true order of existence (*aša-*) is equated in the Gathas with goodness and beneficence,[83] we can only conclude that for all its griefs and pains, in Zarathushtra's view, there is no 'evil' in the material existence and its natural order.

Zarathushtra has a (beneficial) answer for how this conclusion is consistent with the unearned calamities that befall us ~ calamities which are caused by the ways in which the physical existence has been ordered ~ the food chain which requires killing to eat (generating terror in the things hunted and killed), hurricanes, earthquakes, illnesses, and all the physical calamities; calamities which nevertheless are not the wrongful choices of the Divine, because the material existence ~ with all its good and harmful phenomena ~ is the necessary matrix which enables the experiences required for spiritual evolution, from a mixed (more-beneficial/harmful) way of being to one that is wholly beneficial,[84] which is Zarathushtra's notion of the essence of the sacred ~ the Divine.[85]

In the non-material existence, this primeval 'creator' by emanation, infused its being into every aspect of the material existence. This primeval being contained within itself (like twins in one womb) two ways of being (*mainyu-*), two ways of thinking, speaking and acting, ~ the more good and the bad (Y30.3), the more beneficial and the harmful, inimical (Y45.2). So this 'creation' by emanation of the primeval life entity accounts for all the good, beneficial (divine) qualities in existence ~ the true order of existence (*aša-*), its (incremental) comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah*), the beneficial thoughts, words and actions which (incrementally) embody the true order (*spənta-ārmaiti-*), its (incrementally attained) good rule (*vohu- x šaϑra-*) ~ the capabilities of which were generated by the 'beneficial' (*spənta-*) side of the primordial being (which is Zarathushtra's notion of what is divine). And this idea of 'creation' by emanation also accounts for all our evil preferences in the ways we choose to think, speak and act ~ preferences and choices that harm, that injure, that are maleficent (reflecting the 'bad' side of the emanating being's nature).[86]

The purpose of 'creation' was to provide a temporary (mortal) matrix ~ the existence of matter ~ to enable the experiences necessary for the primeval being to evolve from a mixed, conflicted state of being, to one that is wholly good, wholly beneficial, wholly in harmony with the true order of existence ~ which is Zarathushtra's understanding of the Divine (whom he never calls 'God'), and which is also Zarathushtra's understanding of 'paradise' ~ the "House of Good Thinking", the "House of Song", the most-good existence *ahu- vahišta-* ~ a state of being that is blissful, joyful, wholly good, enlightened ~ wisdom personified (*mazdā-*).

And as the many fragments of the primeval (mixed) 'being' evolve into, and attain, this enlightened state of complete goodness, they reunite, so that eventually the original primeval 'being' is once again whole, complete (the collective aspect of *haurvatāt-*) but its nature is then no longer mixed, conflicted. It's nature is then wholly good, completely beneficial (the individual aspect of *haurvatāt-*).[87] That, in my view, is Zarathushtra's understanding of the Divine ~ a state of being that is wholly good, wholly beneficial, enlightened, wisdom personified (*mazdā-*), of which all the living are a part (collectively) although all its parts are not yet whole, complete (individually).

These conclusions are consistent with a large body of evidence in the Gathas.[88] But Zarathushtra does not express these conclusions explicitly. One wonders why.

Perhaps the reason is his passion for truth. The things he is certain of (such as the search for truth, the freedom to choose, the way we should live our lives, et cetera) he expresses explicitly. But no one can ever know for certain the answers to such questions as:

'How did this existence come about ('creation')? What is the purpose of existence? What is the source of 'evil'? What is the purpose of all the pain, grief and harm in existence? Is there an after-life? If there is, what does it consist of? Is there such a thing as 'divinity'? If so, what is its nature, its identity?

Zarathushtra was a thinking human being. These questions doubtless puzzled him ~ especially in light of the sufferings, injustice, and wrongdoings that were engulfing his society. And he applied his mind to searching for answers. The answers he arrived at, of necessity, could only be possibilities, since we cannot know the answers to such questions for certain. I think perhaps that is why he does not explicitly state them, but only raises questions, and implies (through inferences) what his understanding of the answers might be. His suggested conclusions form an ingenious (and remarkably consistent) hypothesis ~ not an article of faith.

Do his implied conclusions answer all questions? Well, I am not at all sure that I have discovered all of his implied conclusions. To the extent that I have, they do not answer all my questions. They do not answer the question, that even if 'creation' is by emanation, who emanated (or created) the 'emanator'?

But for me they answer more questions than any other belief system of which I am aware. And they provide a world-view, and a framework for living, that I love. I love their intellectual beauty, the way they fit (logically) with our awareness of existence. But more than that, I love the goodness ~ the beneficial, constructive, loving, caring, generous nature ~ of his conclusions, his paradigm of existence, of how we look at things ~ which inevitable affects the ways in we relate ~ to ourselves, to each other, to other life forms, to the environment, to the Divine ~ an entirely beneficial, loving, wholistic mind-set for living our lives ~ one that does not reject the material, but sees it as a beneficial part of existence, with a key part to play in bringing about the desired end.

Zarathushtra was a practical mystic. A paradox? True. But then again, aren't we all ~ to a greater or lesser degree ~ both practical and mystical? Only robots are entirely logical. Only ... non-mortals (perhaps?) ... might (in increasing numbers) be entirely mystical.

The beauty of Zarathushtra's thought is that he does not mandate these conclusions as articles of religious belief (Gallileo would have loved him!). To him, life, 'religion', is an on-going search for the true order in the existences of matter and mind ~ a search for the natural laws that order our

universe(s?); a search for what is 'true', 'good', 'right' as a way to live our lives; a search for the nature and identity of the divine; and all the abstract questions that puzzle us, each inextricably linked. The on-going discoveries of the natural laws of our universe inevitably affect our ideas (on an on-going basis) about the abstract questions that have puzzled the mind of man for millennia. And will likely continue to do so ~ at least until we comprehend completely (*haurvatāt-*), the true order in the existences of matter and mind (the house of good thinking, which is wisdom personified), at which time the reason for mortality, and the limitations of our mortal shells, will cease to exist and we will (perhaps) exist whole, complete, in a state of wisdom and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*). According to Zarathushtra (perhaps).

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[1] Discussion in more detail in *Part Three: Paourvya-*.

[2] Professor Elizabeth Tucker has informed me (in connection with understanding how Ved. *medhā-* could be cognate with Av. *mazdā-*) that there were two (conjectured) Indo-Iranian roots **dhā-* 'put, establish', and **dā-* 'give' (discussed in a ft. in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*). The asterisk before these stems simply shows that all stems are conjectured (based on their inflected forms).

Amongst our group of linguists, translations for the GAv. *dā-* include 'give' as well as 'create, produce, put, fix, establish' (and related words), as the following summary shows, so it is possible that the two separate Indo-Iranian roots evolved into one GAv. root *dā-* used for 'give, produce' as well as for 'fix, establish'.

Skjaervo 2006 shows the verb *dā-* means 'to give, make, establish, assign,' and in middle voice 'to take, receive'. He shows various nouns derived from *dā-* --
dāh- ntr. 'gift';
dātā- ntr. 'established rules';
dātār- masc. 'giver, establisher, maker;
dāϑra- ntr. < *dā-* 'act of giving'
dāϑa- adj. < *dāta-* 'according to established rules'.
He also shows another verb *dā-* meaning 'to tie, to tie down', which he thinks generated two related nouns *dāman-* ntr. 'web'; and *dāmi-* masc. '*web-holder'; but his views of these meanings do not seem to be generally shared by the other linguists in our group.

Insler 1975: *dā-* 'give, grant, establish, create'; he translates *dātā* in Y31.5 as "has been created"; but he comments on the meaning of *dātā* (under Y31.2) as follows: "... *dātā* 'was granted, established' 31.5, 33.8, 34.2, 14 ..." (p. 181). Insler, commenting under Y30.11 sees a stem *dātā-* as 'law' (p. 177). A 'law' is something that is 'established'.   Insler 1975 gives no commentary on the GAv. root(s) *dā-* or Skt. cognate(s).

Humbach 1991: *dā-* 'grant/establish/create'; he makes a comment under Y29.10 which is difficult to follow (for me). Referring to the Avestan phrase *aogō dātā aṣā x šaϑrəmcā* in that verse, he seems to be saying that *aogō dātā* means 'grant strength' and the same word *dātā* (not a repetition of it) with *x šaϑrəmcā* literally means 'grant' as in 'assign' from the root *dā-* 'to put, assign, establish' from a Skt. cognate *dhā-*.   He states: "*aogō dātā* 'grant strength', has *dātā* from the root *dā < *dā* 'to give, grant', ... Unlike this, *dātā* ... *x šaϑrəm(cā)* 'grant power' (lit. 'assign power') presupposes *dātā* from the root *dā < *dhā* 'to put, assign, establish'; ... Thus we see that in OAv. *dā < *dā* and *dā < *dhā* at least partly fell together lexically, and in phraseology." (1991 Vol. 2 p. 42).

Humbach/Faiss 2010: identify just one root, with meanings quoted in the main part of this chapter. (§23.4, p. 39).

Beekes 1988: identifies 3 *dā-* verbs as follows (p. 216);

1. *dā*   'give, put';
2. *dā*   'distribute' and
3. *dā*   'bind'.

Gershevitch 1967: in his discussion of the linguistics of the Ahuna Vairya sees two stems, (both of which he thinks originate from the Indo-Iranian stem *dhā*, specifically,

dazdar-   'doer', (about which there is much controversy amongst linguists) and
dātar- 'giver, creator'.   Gershevitch (1967), *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, p. 329.

Summary: Although, as Professor Tucker states, there were two (conjectured) Indo-Iranian roots **dhā-* 'put, establish', and **dā-* 'give', it would be reasonable to conclude from the above collections of opinions, and from the translations of the scholars shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3, that by GAv. times, the conjectured GAv. *dā-* was used (in the context of 'creation' words) for:

1. 'to give, grant, bestow', and related nouns;

2. 'to create, make, produce', and related nouns

3. 'to establish, ordain, lay down, and related nouns,

And, depending on the context of a given verse, it is possible that to Zarathushtra, each of these three shades of meaning were involved in his understanding of 'creation' ~ an act that involves giving, producing, establishing.

I am not sure of the genesis of Beekes' 'bind' or Skjaervo's 'tie', but this *dā-* word does not pertain to 'creation' words in any event.

The above is a small demonstration of the difficulties that linguists have encountered in decoding Avestan.

[3] Humbach & Faiss 2010, §23.4, p. 39.

[4] Bartholomae's translations are as they appear in Tarap. (1951).

[5] See in *Part One, The Nature of the Divine,* and *The Identity of the Divine.* The conclusion that Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine is not anthropomorphic (but that man projects It as such) is corroborated in a later Pahlavi Fragment in which the author (to make the point) has Zarathushtra (purportedly) asking Ahura Mazda the following question, and Ahura Mazda (purportedly) giving the following reply.

> "1. *It* is revealed by a passage of the Avesta that Zaratûsht, seated before Aûharmazd, always wanted information (*vâk*) from him; and he spoke to Aûharmazd thus: 'Thy head, hands, feet, hair, face, and tongue are in my eyes just like those even which are my own and you have the clothing men have; give me a hand, so that I may grasp thy hand.'

> 2. Aûharmazd said thus: 'I am an intangible spirit; *it* is not possible to grasp my hand.' ..." Pahlavi Fragment E. W. West translation, SBE 5, p. 372. West has appended this Fragment to *Shayast La-Shayast,* but states that it is not a part of *Shayast La-Shayast.*

[6] See   *Part Five: Avestan Genders, Grammatical and Actual.*

[7] *hyaṯ ϑwā aŋhə̄uš   ząϑōi darəsəm paourvīm,* Y43.5. So literally '...when [*hyaṯ*] I saw [*darəsəm*] Thee [*ϑwā*] in the beginning [*paourvīm*] at the birthing [*ząϑōi*] of existence [*aŋhə̄uš*]...' Y43.5; my translation. The

case form *zaθōi* is loc. sg. of the stem *zaθa-* thus 'in-the-beginning'. The case form *aŋhāuš* is gen. sg. of the stem *ahu-* thus 'of-existence'.

Skjaervo 2006 identifies *paourvīm* as an adverb, in which event here, it would describe the verb 'to see, to perceive'.   Thus "...when I saw [*darəsəm*] thee in the beginning [*paourvīm*]..." or   "...when I first [*paourvīm*] saw [*darəsəm*] thee...".

However, some translators see *paourvīm* as a noun, describing Wisdom, and various translators have added English words which they believe are implied, without always including them in round parenthes. That is why you may wish to be aware of the GAv. text. Here are various translations of this verse Y43.5.

Bartholomae:.
"...when I saw thee in the beginning [*paourvīm*] at the birth [*zaθōi*] of Life [*aŋhāuš*]..." Y43.5 (Tarap. 1951 p. 419).

Insler 1975: "...when I saw Thee to be the First One [*paourvīm*] at the creation [*zaθōi*] of the world [*aŋhāuš*],..."Y43.5. He translates *zaθōi* 'at the creation', but comments that both *zaθōi* (here) and *zaθā* (in Y44.3) attest to a stem *zaθā-* 'birth, creation' citing his agreement with Bartholomae (p. 233). Insler translates *aŋhāuš* in this verse as 'of the world', but he translates it as 'of existence' in many other verses. e.g.
31.8c "... Lord of existence [*aŋhāuš ahurəm*]..."
45.2a "... the two fundamental spirits of existence [*aŋhāuš*]..."
48.2d "...the good form of existence [*aŋhāuš*]."
50.11c "... the Creator of existence [*dātā   aŋhāuš*]..." (Interestingly, Humbach & Faiss (2010): "...the creator/giver" of the existence/world...")
51.6c "at the final turning point of existence [*aŋhāuš*]..."

Humbach/Faiss 2010: "...when I perceive you, the Primal One [*paourvīm*] (engaged) in the procreation [*zaθōi*] of existence/life [*aŋhāuš*]... Y43.5", (p. 115).

Taraporewala 1951 "...when I recognized Thee (as) the First [*paourvīm*] at-the-birth [*zaθōi*] of Life [*aŋhāuš*]..." Y43.5, (p. 416).

[8]   In GAv., 'to see' is often used in the sense of 'to understand'.   For example: "Truth, shall I see thee as I continue to acquire ... good thinking..." Y28.5. The word 'see' can also be used in the same way in English. For example when something is explained to a person, he may reply: 'I see!' meaning, 'I understand'.

[9] As the above translations show, this verse (Y43.5) Bartholomae translates *paourvīm* 'first' as a point in time 'in the beginning'. Insler, Humbach, Humbach/Faiss, and Tarap. all translate the word *paourvīm* 'first' here (in Y43.5) as a person 'first one' or 'primal one'. However, in other verses, Insler has also translated *paourvīm* as a point in time such as 'in the beginning' or 'first' (as an adverb).   For example:
31.11a "Since Thou ... at the beginning [*paourvīm*] didst fashion ..."
28.1b "... I first [*paourvīm*] entreat ..."
30.4a "... first [*paourvīm*] came together..."
43.8a "...I said to him first [*paourvīm*]: ..."
43.11c "... when I was first [*paourvīm*] instructed by your words..."
Y51.2a "...These things ... first [*paourvīm*] belonged to you ...".

[10] Skjaervo 2006;
Inler 1975 commenting under Y43.5 "*zaθa-* 'birth, creation' (correct, Bthlm. 1904, 1693", expressing agreement with Bartholomae, p. 233;
Humbach 1991 "... begetting..." Vol. 2, commenting under Y43.5.

[11] "... *kasnā ząϑā ptā ašahyā paouruyē*..." Y44.3b.
Literally (in my view), 'Which man [*kasnā*] in the beginning [*paouruyē*] (was) the father [*ptā*] of truth [*ašahyā*] during the birthing [*ząϑā*]?...' Y44.3, my translation.

Insler 1975: "...Which man in the beginning was the father of truth during the creation [*ząϑā*]? ..." Y44.3. He thinks *ząϑā* here (Y44.3) is an instrumental of duration, 'during the creation' p. 243 (translating it in a homogenized way ~ creation ~ although previously acknowledging that the stem *ząϑā-* means 'birth, creation' in his comment under Y43.5 p. 233).

Humbach 1991: "...Who (is) through (His) begetting [*ząϑā*] the primal father of Truth?..." Y44.3, (Vol. 1, p. 157); no comment on *ząϑā*.

Humbach and Faiss 2010: "...Who by procreation [*ząϑā*], (is) the primal father of truth" (p. 121);

Barth. "... Who is by generation [*ząϑā*] the Father of Right, at the first?..." (Tarap. 1951 p. 468).

Moulton 1912: follows Barth.   "... Who is by generation [*ząϑā*] the Father of Right, at the first?..." Y44.3, (p. 367);

Taraporewala 1951: "... What-Being (is) the Creator [*ząϑā*], the first Father of Asha?..." Y44.3 (p. 466); he acknowledges that Barth. construes *ząϑā* as instr. sg. 'by generation, through giving birth'; but prefers Andreas who construes *ząϑā* as nom. sg. of the (conjectured) stem *ząϑar* 'producer', noting that in the Rig Veda the two words 'producer' and 'father' are often used together in the same sentence as amplifying each other. Nevertheless, he translates (in a homogenized way) "... the Creator ..." (pp. 466, 467).

Mills: "... Who by generation [*ząϑā*; footnote: "As a generator'(?)"] was the first father of the Righteous Order (within the world)?..." Y44.3, (SBE 31, p. 113).

[12] Grammatical forms of *ząϑa-* 'birth, birthing' appear in 3 verses of the Gathas.

In Y43.5 and Y44.3, it is used (metaphorically) to describe the original creative act as discussed in the main part of this chapter.

In Y48.6 (although translators differ), it is used (metaphorically) to describe the birthing (advent) of a future existence, *ahurō aŋhāuš ząϑōi paouruyehya* "He (who is to be) Lord at the birth of the foremost existence." Insler 1975. Similarly, in English we might say (metaphorically) 'the birth of a new age'.

For Zarathushtra's thoughts on the nature of the 'future existence' see *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path.*

[13] Detailed in the applicable chapters in *Part One* on the beneficial~sacred way of being; truth; good thinking; embodied truth; good rule; and completeness/ non~deathness.
And in *Part Two:* the following chapters detail how various material aspects of existence are linked with attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta) ~ *Light, Glory, Fire;   Earth, Water, Plants;   Molten Metal;   The Puzzle of the Cow & Its Network;* and *A Question of Immanence.*

[14] Detailed in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat;* and
In *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path; The Puzzle of the Most Good, Vahishta;* and *The Houses of Paradise and Hell.*

[15] Detailed in *Part One: The Identity of the Divine;* and
In *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire;* and *A Question of Immanence.*

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[16] Detailed in *Part One: Meditation and Contemplation.*

[17] Discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow & Its Network.*

[18] In Y43.3 he speaks of "... (to those) of this material existence and (to those) of the mind [*aŋhə̄uš astvatō manaŋhascā*]...". In Y28.2 he also speaks of "... both existences ~ yes, of matter [*astvatascā*] as well as of mind [*manaŋhō*]...".

[19] See *Part One: Truth, Asha.*

[20] *Insler* 1975: "... which man did fix [*dāṯ*] the course of the sun and of the stars?..." Y44.3;
Humbach 1991: "...Who assigned [*dāṯ*] the course of sun and of the stars (its proper place)?..." Y44.3;
Humbach and Faiss 2010: "...Who fixed [*dāṯ*] the course of the and the stars?..." Y44.3.
Barth. "Who determined [*dāṯ*] the path of the sun and stars?..." Y44.3; (Tarap. 1951 p. 468).
Taraporewala 1951: "...What-Being laid-down [*dāṯ*] the path of the Sun and of the Stars ?..." Y44.3; (p. 466).

[21] Y44.5b and c: *dāṯ* As you can see in the following translations, *dāṯ* sometimes has been interpretively translated ~ reflecting a given translator's mind~set, rather than the GAv. meaning(s) of the word.
Insler 1975:   **b:** "...Which craftsman created [*dāṯ*] the luminous bodies [*raocå̄scā* pl.] and the dark spaces [*təmå̄scā* pl.] ?..."
  c: "...Which craftsman created [*dāṯ*] both sleep and activity?..."
Barth.   **b:** "...What artist made [*dāṯ*] light and darkness?...";
  c: "...What artist made [*dāṯ*] sleep and waking?..." (Tarap. 1951 p. 475);
Tarap. 1951   **b:** "...What Great-Architect fashioned [*dāṯ*] the Realms of Light and also the Realms of Darkness?..." (Tarap. p. 472);
  c: "...What Great-Architect fashioned [*dāṯ*] Sleep and also Activity?..." (p. 472); but commenting that the root is *dā-* means 'to create' (p. 473);
Humbach 1991:   **b:** "Which artist created [*dāṯ*] both light and darkness?..."
  c: "Which artist assigned [*dāṯ*] both sleep and waking (to their proper time)?..." (Vol. 1, p. 158);
Humbach/Faiss 2010:   **b:** "Which artist created/produces [*dāṯ*] both light and darkness?..."
  c: "Which artist created/produces [*dāṯ*] both sleep and waking?..." (p. 122).
I would translate *dāṯ* in this verse as follows,
b: 'Which craftsman produced/established [*dāṯ*] both the luminous (bodies) and the dark (spaces)?...'
c: '...Which craftsman produced/established both sleep and waking?...'.

On 'luminous (bodies)' or 'lights' [*raocå̄scā*] and 'dark (spaces)' or darknesses [*təmå̄scā*], a number of translators agree that both words are plural. However, Skjaervo (2006) in his *Avestan Glossary* does not commit himself as to whether *raocå̄scā* is plural, but shows *təmå̄scā* as plural.

[22] For example, in the *Tir Yasht*, Yt. 8,

... *ahura mazda mainyō spə̄ništa dātarə gaēϑanąm astvaitinąm ašāum* ... Yt. 8.10, Geldner 2P p. 108;

My translation, 'O Wisdom! Lord! Most Beneficial Being! Producer of the material existence, O Truthful One, ...' Yt. 8.10;

Darmesteter's translation, "...Ahura Mazda, most beneficent spirit, Maker of the material world, thou Holy One ..." SBE 23, p. 96;

And this way of describing the Lord Wisdom appears throughout the YAv. texts (not just in the Vendidad ~ written after YAv. times ~ where it is used very often in imitation of YAv. texts which were composed during YAv. times).

[23] The aspect of the theory of natural selection which sees destructive competition as a part of survival of the fittest, has now been questioned in that scientistific research now has discovered that co-operation, both within species and inter-species, seems to be more productive of well-being and survival.

[24] Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha.*

[25] See *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah.*

[26] See *Part One: Embodied Truth, Aramaiti.*

[27] Zarathushtra also uses *taš-* 'fashion' to refer to the famous 'fashioner of the cow' which appears throughout the Gathas. The 'cow' is an allegory for a beneficial-sacred in mortal existence ~ an existence governed (*x ša∂ra-*) by the true order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), and its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*) ~ albeit imperfectly. The beneficial-sacred in mortal existence ('cow') would have to be 'fashioned' to apply to the various and changing circumstances of our material lives. The evidence for the allegorical nature of the 'cow' is discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network.*

[28] It is worth noting that no place in the (extant) Gathas is Wisdom (*mazdā-*) called the 'father' of *spənta-mainyu-* the beneficial-sacred way of being. In Y47.3a, we have the phrase

   ahyā mainyə̄uš tvə̄m ahī tā spəntō

and almost all first class linguists have emended the word *tā* to **ptā* 'father', (e.g. "Thou art the virtuous Father of this spirit..." Y47.3 Insler 1975). With respect, I disagree. This change from *tā* to **ptā* 'father' is not supported by any mss. (shown in Geldner). My translation alternative is detailed in *Part Six: Yasna 47.3*, along with other translations given for comparative purposes.

[29] See in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*; and *Did the Wise Lord Choose Too?* And in *Part Six: Yasna 31.11 and 12.*

[30] Translations of this phrase in Y44.7 differ. Here it is in GAv. transliterated from Geldner 1P p. 149,

... azə̄m tāiš ∂wā *frax šnē avāmī mazdā
spəṇtā mainyū vīspanąm dātārəm•. Y44.7

My translation, "... I, through these (questions) am helping to discern you, O Wisdom, (to be) the giver/producer [*dātārəm*] of everything [*vīspanąm*] through (Your) beneficial way of being.' Y44.7.

On **frax šnē*, this is not Geldner's choice, but his ft. shows that ms. J3 has *frax šnē* which Insler 1975 prefers, commenting that an infinitive [*frax šnē* 'to discern'] dependent on *avāmī* [I am helping] goes well syntactically (giving clear Ved. parallels). p. 245. I find his argument persuasive.

The word *tāiš* is a demonstrative pronoun, instr. (by/through/with ___) pl. of the stem *ta-*, (Jackson 1892 § 409(a), p. 117) and therefor means 'through these'. But the noun for which it stands is not specified. It is implied (as so often happens in GAv.). Insler 1975 thinks the implied noun is '(questions)'. So too does Mills 1887 ("...With (questions such as) these..." SBE 31, p. 114 - 115). In light of the fact that almost all the

verses before this one contain questions which ask who birthed, produced, fathered, made, fashioned, various aspects of existence, I agree with Insler and Mills in thinking that the pronoun *tāiš* 'through these' stands for an implied noun '(questions)'.

There is general agreement that *spəṇtā mainyū* is instr. sg.

Insler 1975: "...By these (questions), Wise One, I am helping to discern Thee to be the creator [*dātārəm*] of everything [*vīspanąm*] by reason of Thy virtuous [*spəṇtā mainyū*]." Y44.7;

Barth. "... I strive to recognize by these things thee, O Mazdah, creator [*dātārəm*] of all things [*vīspanąm*] through the holy spirit [*spəṇtā mainyū*]." Y44.7 (in Tarap. 1951 p. 483);

Humbach/Faiss 2010: "...By these (offerings) I prudently refresh you, O Wise One, (you who) by beneficent spirit [*spəṇtā mainyū*] (are) the creator [*dātārəm*] of all (things) [*vīspanąm*]." Y44.7 (p. 123).

Taraporewala 1951: "... Thus I would-fain recognize Thee, O Mazda, through-(Thy) Holy Spirit [*spəṇtā mainyū*], (as) the Creator [*dātārəm*] of All [*vīspanąm*]." Y44.7; (p. 480).

[31] Insler 1975 commenting (in a different context) under Y28.4, says that in the Gathas, **urvan-** can mean either 'soul' or 'self', as with the Vedic *ātmán-*. p. 123.

[32] See also *Part One: Truth, Asha.*

[33] This thought, that the birthing, producing, fashioning, of the material existence, and the 'good' qualities in the existence of mind were motivated by the beneficial way of being is also reflected other verses. For example:

In Y51.7 "Thou, Wise One, who hast fashioned the cow as well as the waters and the plants by reason of Thy [*spāništa- mainyu-* 'most beneficial way of being] ..." Y51.7, Insler 1975. As in Y44.7, the word "Thy" is not in the GAv. text. These words are exquisitely crafted with double entendre.

The 'cow' is the material metaphor for the Wisdom's attributes in existence ~ an existence governed (*x šaϑra-*) by truth (*aša-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*) and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*) ~ albeit imperfectly.

The 'waters' is the material metaphor for 'completeness, wholeness' (*haurvatāt-*) ~ the way of being (a divine quality) that possesses truth (*ašavan-*) wholly, completely, the way of being that is wholly beneficial (*spənta-*).

And 'plants' are the material metaphor for non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), the state of being (a divine quality) that exists when the perfection process is complete, and therefore the reason for mortality ceases to exist.

So in effect these words in Y51.7 identify the most beneficial way of being (*spāništa- mainyu-*) as the means through which the material (cow, waters, plants), and the abstract attributes (amesha spenta) were fashioned. These attributes (amesha spenta) are of course component parts of the beneficial~sacred way of being (*spənta-mainyu-*), which fashioned them. See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*; and *The Puzzle of the Cow & Its Network.*

Y43.2, "...Thy [*spāništa- mainyu-* 'most beneficial way of being'] by reason of which Thou didst create [*då*] the wondrous powers of good thinking allied with truth."Y43.2. Here it is through His most beneficial way of being, that Wisdom gives, produces (*då*) two attributes of the divine (amesha spenta) ~ good thinking and truth. The verb *då* is a conjugation of *dā-* which means 'to give, produce, establish'.

[34] See in *Part Six: Yasna 43*, and also *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow & its Network.*

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[35] See in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu;* and *The Nature of the Divine.*

[36] See *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu.*

[37] See in *Part Six: Yasna 30.3 and 4.*

[38] See the first few chapters in *Part One,* which discuss these divine qualities in detail, based on the evidence of the Gathas.

[39] "As it is said in the Gathas, thus: So also both those spirits [Av. *mainyu-*] have approached together unto that which was the first creation ~ that is, both spirits have come into the body of Gayomard. ...". *Selections of Zad-sparam,* Ch. 5, § 4, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, pp. 167 - 168. West's ft. 5 identifies the reference to the Gathas as Y30.4. West's Pahlavi translation 'spirit' follows the Av. translation of *mainyu-* preferred by most linguists. But the only meaning that fits all uses of *mainyu-* in the Gathas is 'way of being' (see *Part One: A Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*). And 'way of being' fits this Pahlavi text, whereas 'spirit' does not.
But regardless of how we may choose to translate and interpret this word, it would at least be reasonable to conclude (based on the above quotation from *Zad-Sparam*), that this ancient Pahlavi Zoroastrian high priest (*Zad-Sparam*) believed that in Zarathushtra's thought, these two ways of being were infused into the original creation ~ but expressed (in hybrid fashion) through a creation myth (of Gayomard the first man) not found in the Gathas.

[40] See *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu* for a discussion on the meaning of *mainyu-*.

[41] SBE 5, p. 159.

[42] See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine.*

[43] In passing, it may be worth noting that Zarathushtra says "By these (questions), Wise One, I am helping to discern Thee to be the creator [*dātārəm* 'giver/producer/establisher'] of everything by reason of Thy [*spənta-mainyu-*]."Y44.7, Insler 1975. Why did he add these last words?
Well, if the original or primeval 'giver/producer/establisher' was wholly beneficial (*spənta-*), these last words would be redundant. On the other hand, they would have meaning if this primordial 'giver/producer/establisher' was a mix of beneficial (*spənta-*) and harmful qualities, and the creative act was motivated and accomplished by the beneficial side (*spənta- mainyu-*) of the primeval being. I agree that reasonable minds may differ. I also agree that this piece of evidence standing alone would not be persuasive. But it is consistent with, and reinforces, all the other bits and pieces of evidence that relate to the conclusions arrived at in this chapter.

[44] Detailed in *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31.4.*

[45] See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine.*

[46] See in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu;* and *Truth, Asha,* for the evidence that the beneficial-sacred way of being is the true (correct, good) order of existence.

[47] See also Y43.14, where Zarathushtra uses *nā* 'man' in connection with Wisdom: "Yes, Wise One, (grant) to me Thy proper support, which an able man [*nā*], possessing such, should give to his friend and which has been obtained through Thy rule [*x ša϶rā*] that is in accord with truth..." Y43.14, Insler 1975.

Taraporewala acknowledges that most linguists translate *nā* in this verse as nom. sg. of **nar-** 'man', although he interpretively translates it as 'great one' (because here it refers to the Wise Lord). Interestingly he comments that the Vedic cognate which means 'man' is sometimes used in the Vedas to refer to deities (in the sense of 'hero' or 'great person'), citing RV iii. 51.4. (Taraporewala (1951) p. 450).

Skjaervo 2006 expresses the opinion that in the word *kasnā*, the *nā* is either a particle, or the nom. sg. of 'man, hero' (Lesson 2, p. 18, commenting under *Uses of the Genetive,* in the last example given ~ that of Y44.3). He does not identify the particle which he thinks *nā* might be. Beekes 1988 does not identify any particle *nā* in his list of indeclinables (p. 145).

[48] Taraporewala 1951 p. 465. In his comment under *kə̄* in Y29.1a, (*kə̄ mā tašaṯ* "... Who fashioned me?...") states that in the Gathas this ending **-ə̄** is found instead of the usual **-ō** [*kō*] for the nom. sg. form of the stem **ka-** [an interrogative. pron. meaning 'who, which, what'] (p. 37). See also the following verses ~ all from Insler 1975.
50.1b *kə̄ mōi pasə̄uš kə̄ mə̄.nā ϶rātā vistō* "... Who [*kə̄*] has been found to be the protector of my cattle? Who [*kə̄*] of me?..."
51.11b *kə̄ vā aṣā āfraštā* "... Which one [*kə̄*] has taken counsel with truth? ..."
49.7c 2x *kə̄* **is** 'which' both times; *kə̄ airyamā kə̄ xᵛaētuš dātāiš aŋhaṯ* "... Which [*kə̄*] clan [*airyamā*], which [*kə̄*] family [*xᵛaētuš*] shall abide by Thy laws..."
And there are many, many other examples.

[49] The nom. sg. masc. *kə̄* could stand for Wisdom (*mazdā-*), if Skjaervo is correct in seeing *mazdā-* as a masc. noun.

[50] *mainyu-* is a masc. noun, therefore the gender of the pronoun replacing it is masc. *kə̄.*

[51] Beekes 1988 p. 141.

[52] Taraporewala 1951 p. 467.

[53] Taraporewala 1951 p. 467.

[54] *Taraporewala* 1951 'What Being [*kas-nā*]..." Y44.3, (p. 466);
Barth. "...Who [*kasnā*]..." Y44.3, (Tarap. (1951) p. 468);
Humbach 1991 "...Who [*kasnā*]..." Y44.3 (Vol. 1, p. 157), without comment on this word in Vol. 2.
Humbach/Faiss 2010 "...Who [*kasnā*]..." Y44.3 (p. 121) without comment on this word.

[55] See *Part Two: Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

[56] See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural; and A Question of Immanence.*

[57] "...Reflect with a clear mind ~ man by man for himself ~ upon the two choices of decision..."Y30.2; "...And between these two, the beneficent have correctly chosen, not the maleficent."Y30.3; "...Him who left to our will (to choose between) the virtuous [*spə̄ncā* 'beneficial'] and the unvirtuous [*aspə̄ncā* 'non-beneficial']..."Y45.9. All in the Insler 1975 translation.

[58] See *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution.*

[59] See in *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution,* and *A Question of Reward & the Path.*

[60] These verses are discussed in depth in *Part Six: Yasna 31.11 and 12.*

[61] See *Part One: Truth, Asha.*

[62] Y46.10 speaks of truth for truth's own sake, "Wise Lord, whoever ~ be it man or woman ~ would grant to me those things which Thou dost know to be the best [*vahišta-* 'most good'] for existence, namely, the truth for the truth and the rule of good thinking (with that person) as well as those whom I shall accompany in the glory of your kind ~ with all these I shall cross over the Bridge of the Judge." 46.10.   See also *Part One: The Manthra of Truth, Ashem Vohu.*

[63] *astvantəm … uštanəm* literally 'breath [*uštanəm*] possessing bone [*astvantəm*]'.   The ntr. noun *ast-* means 'bone' (Skjaervo 2006); the suffix *-vant-* means 'possessing' or 'owning'; thus *astvant-* literally means 'possessing bone'.   Many linguist agree that this was a GAv. idiom meaning 'corporeal', 'having a body'. Thus the phrase *astvantəm … uštanəm* actually means 'breath (life) possessing a body', as distinguished from pure breath [*uštāna-*] with no body ~ the intangible, non~corporeal life force of a being.

[64]   Insler 1975: "Since Thou, Wise One, at the beginning, didst fashion for us by Thy thinking, creatures [*gaēϑåscā*] and conceptions [*daēnåscā*] and intentions [*x ratušcā*], since Thou didst create body and breath, since (Thou didst create) both actions and words, (all these things) whereby a person with volition expresses his preferences." Y31.11.   Commenting under a different verse (Y31.1) Insler says that *gaēϑā-* simply means 'living creature' and corresponds to *gaya-* 'life', in the same way as *ahvā-* 'being' (Y51.9) corresponds to *ahu-* 'existence, world'. p. 181.
This verse is discussed in detail, with other translations given for comparative purposes, in *Part Six: Yasna 31.11 and 12.*

[65] The *Bundahishn* (transmitting what was probably a mix of one of Arya (and other) creation stories, and Zarathushtra's teachings) speaks of the seed of the slain primordial man Gayomard, which grew into a plant and then into human form, and then goes on to say,

> "2. And *in* forty years, with the shape of a one-stemmed Rivas-*plant, and* the fifteen years of *its* fifteen leaves, Matro and Matroyao grew up from the earth in such a manner that their arms rested on *their* shoulders (dosh), and one joined to the other they were connected together and both alike.
> 3. And the waists of both of them were brought close *and* so connected together that it was not clear which is the male and which the female and which is the one whose living soul (nismo) of Auharmazd is not away." *Bundahishn*, Ch. 15, §§ 2 - 3, as translated by E. W. West, SBE 5, p. 53.

The import of these words is not entirely clear, but the 'whose living soul of Auharmazd' appears to be the soul of the entity whose (male or female) gender is not clear to the author (or perhaps to itself).   However, West in his ft. 5 interprets the phrase differently, "That is, whether they had souls or not..." ~ but even so, this soul is described as "whose living soul (nismo) of Auharmazd...".

[66] SBE 5, p. 54. The Pahlavi text *Selections of Zad-Sparam*, says roughly the same thing, but uses 'glory' in place of 'breath (nismo)' or 'soul '(ruban)':

"... the glory is given a body so that it may produce activity, and its body is created only for activity. And, afterwards, they changed from the shape of a plant into the shape of man, and the glory went spiritually into them." Ch. 10, §§ 5 ~ 6, E. W. West's translation SBE 5, p. 184.

West comments in ft. 1, that he thinks the old word 'nismo' 'soul' was corrupted in *Selections of Zad-Sparam*, possibly by a scrivener's error (by the omission of the initial stroke), into 'gadman' 'glory'. SBE 5, p. 184.

But with respect (and I have a lot or respect for West), I do not agree that 'gadman' (glory) was a corruption. In YAv. and Pahlavi texts, the 'glory' and 'fire' are equated, and in man, each represents the divine within.

For example, in *Sirozah* the section which mentions the glory in people is the section on fire.   And 'fire' is equated with 'glory' in *Selections of Zad-Sparam* Chap. 12 § 10, where it speaks of "...that one great fire which was manifest, is divided into three, ... and it became itself three glories whose lodgments are in the Frobak fire, the Gushnasp fire, and the Burzin-Mitro." (SBE 5, p. 186) ~ the three fires/glories illuminating the (then 3) segments of society, priests, the warriors and the herdsmen/tillers.

Thus we see the notions of divine glory and fire, being used interchangeably in these later texts, as also shown in other quotations from later texts in the main part of this chapter.

[67] *Sirozah* 1 § 9, Darmesteter in SBE 23, p. 7, and fts. 1 and 2.

[68] In addition, the glory [*x^v varənah-*] was also possessed by a good king as his authority to rule, ~ a glory which he lost when he abandoned truth. Think about that for a moment.

[69] The fire Vahram/Bahram is the highest consecrated fire ~ later called the atash bahram, explained in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire.*

[70] These words are direct evidence that disposal of the dead by burial was an accepted part of the traditional Zoroastrian religion, in Pahlavi times, ~ as it also was in YAv. and Achaemenian time, detailed in *Part Four: Burial of the Dead.*

[71] SBE 5, p. 64.

[72] See *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*

[73] *Selections of Zadsparam*, Ch. 11, §§ 1 - 2, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, p. 184.

[74] *Selections of Zadsparam*, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, pp. 184 - 185.

[75] The Pahlavi *Bundahishn* was written around the 9th century C.E., a few centuries after the Arab invasion (circa 647 C.E.), and the surviving manuscripts of this text (according to E. W. West in his introduction in SBE 5) are in fragmentary, incomplete, and poor, condition. With the burning of texts following the Arab invasion, the author(s) who wrote the *Bundahishn*, some centuries after that invasion, were motivated by a desire to set down the recollected knowledge (the ideas, the stories) that had come down to them from ancient times.   Indeed, according to this text itself, its actual name "was Zand-âkâs 'knowing the tradition'." E. W. West Introduction, SBE 5, pp. xxii - xxiii.

In ancient times, stories were a way of passing on information and ideas. And one of the stories recorded by the *Bundahishn* is a conversation (purportedly) held between Auharmazd (Av. *ahura- mazdā-*) and the fravâhar (Av. *fravashi*), as follows. As you read this story, keep in mind, (1) that the *fravashi* (Pahl. fravâhar) is

the concept of the Divine (the *spǝnta-* way of being) within all things, and (2) that even though 'men' are mentioned, this purported conversation took place before the 'creation' of the material existence. So in essence, this was a conversation of the divine way of being with itself ~ compartmentalized to express or project an idea in story form.

The translation is by E. W. West, who places in *italics* words that are not in the text, but which he has added because he thinks they are implied. Words in round parentheses are West's way of showing applicable Pahlavi words. Words in square brackets have been added by me by way of explanation. I do not know what Pahlavi word West translates as 'world'. It may have been 'existence'. Av. *ahu-* 'existence' is also sometimes translated by many linguists as 'world'.

> "10. He [Auharmazd] deliberated with the consciousness (bôd) *and* guardian spirits (fravâhar) of men, and the omniscient wisdom, brought forward among men, spoke thus: 'Which seems to you the more advantageous, when I shall present you to the world? *that* you should contend in a bodily form with the fiend (drûg), and the fiend shall perish, and in the end I *shall* have you prepared again perfect and immortal, and in the end give you back to the world ['existence'?], *and* you *will* be wholly immortal, undecaying, and undisturbed; or *that* it be always necessary to provide you protection from the destroyer?'
>
> 11. Thereupon, the guardian spirits of men [Av. *fravashi*] became of the same opinion with the omniscient wisdom about going to the world, on account of the evil *that* comes upon them, in the world, from the fiend (drûg) Aharman and *their* becoming, at last, again unpersecuted by the adversary, perfect, and immortal, in the future existence, for ever and everlasting." *Bundahishn*, Ch. 2, §§ 10 - 11, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, p. 14.

Allegorical conversations were an ancient poetic technique ~ used to project or express ideas ~ in many cultures. And indeed we have specific evidence of such allegorical conversations in the Gathas ~ witness the allegorical conversations between Wisdom and his 3 divine attributes (amesha spenta) in Yasna 29, and the allegorical conversation between the more-beneficial and harmful ways of being in Y45.2.

In the same way, it seems to me that the ancient story (above, which the Bundahishn later attempted to transmit through the mind-set of its day ~ 9th century Iran) was originally an allegorical conversation. The question and answer between Auharmazd and the fravâhar (*fravashi*) was actually the *spǝnta-* (beneficial~ sacred) part of the primordial being discussing the matter with itself ~ wondering if it should just live with the evil side of its nature as a conflicted being, or if it should devise a way of changing it ~ removing evil from (its) existence, by producing and entering a matrix of material existence, in order to evolve to perfection through experiences in the material existence ~ at which time the reason for mortal existence would cease to exist, and it would be non-mortal. And the beneficial (*spǝnta-*) part of the primordial being decided on the latter course of action, and produced the material existence, into which the entire primordial way of being (which included both 'good' and 'bad' preferences) infused itself.

True, in this story, the original 'creating' entity, is described as Auharmazd who is all wise, perfect. But it is interesting, (is it not?) that the story seems to imply that the *fravashi* are imperfect, since the purpose of entering the material existence is to evolve into perfection, as the story states. Yet *fravashi* is the concept of the divine within. In understanding this apparent inconsistency, we have to remember that the story was transmitted through the cultural lens of Pahlavi times. Having lived for more than a century as a religious minority in a controlling religious environment in which 'God' was considered a being, separate from man, who was perfect to begin with, the authors of the Bundahishn started with that mind-set, and told the story through the spectacles of that conditioning, with imagery that expressed their mind-set. I think in the original story (which the *Bundahishn* was attempting to transmit), this conversation was an allegorical one between the beneficial (*spǝnta-*) way of being (a way of being that is Zarathushtra's notion of the divine) and itself ~ just as in Y29, we have an allegorical conversation between Wisdom and three of His divine qualities ~ hence the

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reference to both 'Auharmazd' and '*fravashi*' -- both representing the beneficial-sacred (divine) part of the mixed way of being.

Related to the foregoing, we have the *Bundahishn* story about the supposed contract reached (allegorically) between the "Auharmazd" (the *spənta-* way of being) and "Aharman" (the harmful way of being).   I think in the original story, these were not two separate beings. They were two (allegorical) aspects of the same being. And again, in this story, we are told that the material world (which is time-bound) was created by Auharmazd as a means of defeating evil (which, in the Gathas is done by generating the material existence in which minds and preferences are changed through experience). This story of the contract between Auharmazd and Aharman appears (in somewhat different, but recognizably similar versions) in two Pahlavi texts -- *Bundahishn*, Ch. 1, **§§** 8 - 28, and in *Selections of Zad-sparam*, Ch. 1 **§§** 1 - 27.

These interpretations of the foregoing stories are just my opinions, but they are consistent with so many ideas in the Gathas, and also in later texts (as detailed in this and other chapters).

[76] Our physical shells (genetic make-up) may pre-dispose us toward making certain choices, but in many instances, a person can choose to overcome such physical pre-dispositions. For example, a person with a quick temper may have a brain which pre-disposes her to lose her temper. But she is not a robot who has no option but to be ruled by the make-up of her brain. She can teach herself to overcome this pre-disposition, and control her temper. That is the choice of the life force within the material shell. True, there are a huge variety of other instances in which our physical shells do indeed affect or control our actions -- in small ways (such as how we perceive things) and large (such as injury, illness, addiction and mental illness). But whether or not we are able to change these physical phenomena (through awareness or medication), all experiences (even hopelessness) -- one way or another -- impact our existence, and as such, they sculpt our souls, they impact and affect the evolution of our beings -- and the results are always experiences through which something is learned which helps spiritual evolution.   At least that is what I see in Zarathushtra's thought. These are not ideas that occured to me before I studied the Gathas.

[77] See the discussion in *Part Six: Yasna 31.11 and 12.*

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

[79] See *Part One: Good & Evil.*

[80] See also *Part Two: A Question of Immanence.*

[81] Such as the evidence in *Part Two: A Question of Immanence.* Then too, Zarathushtra chooses the 'cow' as an allegory for the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow & Its Network*). See also the fact that the physical shells mentioned in Y31.11 (*gaēϑåscā* 'physical lives', and *astvantəm … uštanəm* 'embodied breath') are not limited to human beings (although in the next verse, Y31.12 they appear to be). These two verses are discussed in more detail in *Part Six: Yasna 31.11 and 12.*

Zarathushtra frequently refers to 'creatures' (or physical living things) instead of using the word 'mankind', in a context which sometimes is broader than mankind, and at other times may or may not be. For example (all in the Insler 1975 translation).
"... the creatures [*gaēϑå*] of truth,..." Y31.1;
"... and truth which prospers the creatures [*frādaṯ.gaēϑəm*], ..."Y33.11;
"... the creatures [*gaēϑå*] allied with truth do prosper..."Y43.6;
"... all of us creatures [*gaēϑå*] under Thy rule whom one has nourished with good thinking..."Y34.3;

"... Who among men did gratify Zarathushtra Spitama with solicitude?... the Wise Lord ... prospered his creatures [*gaēϑå*] with good thinking..."Y46.13;
"... to harm those who are my creatures [*gaēϑå*]..."Y46.8;
"... Friyana, the Turanian, the one who prospered his creatures [*gaēϑå*] with the zeal of [*ārmaiti-*], ..." Y46.12;
"... that vision ... which in companionship with truth, would prosper my creatures [*gaēϑå*] already allied with truth through words and acts stemming from [*ārmaiti-*]?..." Y44.10.

But, in other verses, the word 'creatures' is indeed used in a way that implies only humans.
"... explain these revelations among thy creatures [*gaēϑāhū*] and thine own?..."Y43.7;
"... that person who would strengthen with the power of such a reward his nearest fellow creature [*gaēϑąm*] ..." Y50.3.

Similarly, Zarathushtra frequently refers to 'mortals'. In our reality, all living things (not just man) are mortal ~ they die. Whether Zarathushtra intends to include more than 'man' when he uses 'mortal' would depend on the context.

[82] The Bahram Yasht implies that spiritual evolution is not limited to humankind, and is discussed in a ft. in *Part Two: A Question of Immanence.*

[83] See *Part One: Truth, Asha.*

[84] See *Part One: A Friendly Universe*, and *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution.*

[85] See in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*; and *The Identity of the Divine.*

[86] See in *Part One: Good and Evil*; and *Does the Devil Exist?*

[87] See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat.*

[88] See in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*; *The Houses of Paradise and Hell*; *The Puzzle of the Most Good Vahishta*; and *The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural.*
See also in *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*; and *The Identity of the Divine.*