Daena

daēnā-[1] is a key word in the Gathas. Yet (like so many key words), it has been variously translated. My purpose here is to see if we can determine what meaning Zarathushtra has in mind for this word, by considering some different translations, what they are based on, and then by looking at the ways in which Zarathushtra uses this word.

Quotations from the Gathas are from the Insler 1975 translation (unless otherwise stated), and therefore reflect his translation choices, which show *daēnā-* as 'conception' and 'vision'.

It is true that there are some words (in any language) that have two or more completely different meanings. But I do not think that *daēnā-* is one of them (based on the ways in which it is used in the Gathas).

In my view, in the Gathas, *daēnā-* means 'envisionment, worldview,' in the sense of a mental framework for viewing, or envisioning how existence should be. This meaning has a sound linguistic foundation, and also fit all of the ways in which *daēnā-* is used in the Gathas.

The meaning of *daēnā-* has evolved over time.

In the Gathas, there is both 'good' *daēnā-*, and 'bad' *daēnā-* (detailed below). Later, in some YAv. texts, *daēnā-* was used only for Zarathushtra's good envisionment/religion ~ an envisionment/religion that worships Wisdom (or wisdom!), *daēnā māzdayasni*.[2] Later still, *daēnā-* evolved into the Pazand/Pahlavi word *din* 'religion' and *din-i-behi* 'religion of goodness' ~ again referring only to the Zoroastrian religion.

So the meaning of *daēnā-* started out as being an enviroment that could be either 'good' or 'bad' (in the Gathas). But with repeated usage for Zarathushtra's 'good' enviroment, the meaning evolved to one that was only 'good' (in the perceptions of those who used this word) ~ the religion itself.

We see this same kind of evolution in meaning in other languages with other words. For example, the English word 'luck', originally was used for both 'good luck' and 'bad luck'.   But with repeated usage for 'good luck' the word 'luck' came to be used only for 'good luck' (*she's so lucky! with a little bit of luck ...*).

Let us now look at some translations of *daēnā-* by linguists.

Those translators who have discussed the linguistic origins of *daēnā-* seem to agree that it derives from the root *dī* 'perceive, view, think'.   But they differ on how they develop the meaning of *daēnā-* from *dī*.

Insler 1975 consistently translates *daēnā-* as 'conception(s)' (in the sense of something that is mentally conceived, perceived, envisioned), except for two verses in which he translates *daēnā-* as 'vision'.[3] He comments (under Y44.9) that *daēnā-* means 'vision, conception'.[4] Commenting under Y31.20) he says that *daēnā-* (*dayanā) comes from the underlying "stative root" *dī* 'view, consider' and that in the Gathas its usage is often close to that of Ved. *dhī-* 'vision, thought'.   He states that later *daēnā-* developed into 'religion' but in the Gathas, this view or vision is that of a world governed by the rule of truth and good thinking, a related term being the 'foremost existence' *aŋhuš paouruyō* of Y28.11,[5] ('foremost, here being used in the sense of first in quality).[6]

Hintze 2015 translates *daēnā-* as "worldview".[7]

Skjaervo 2006, shows the verb *daē-/dī-* which he says means 'to see (with inner vision)'. Although he does not specifically state (in his 2006 glossary) that *daēnā-* derives from *daē-*, it is easy to make the connection. And of course, what a person 'sees' with his mind's eye is an envisionment ~ which could be 'good' or 'bad'. But for the meaning of *daēnā-* Skjaervo 2006 goes a step further. He defines *daēnā-* as "man's 'visionary' faculty; personified as the sum total of man's thoughts, words and deeds." So he sees *daēnā-* as the ability (faculty) to envision, and the personification of this envisionment in thought, word and action ~ which is another way of saying the quality of a person's 'self', 'individuality'.

Schwartz 1993 translates *daēnā-* as "envisionment".[8]

Humbach 1991 translates *daēnā-* (sg. and pl.) "religious view(s)", commenting that in Y45.2, the plural "views" would be more accurate.[9]

Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate *daēnā-* (sg. and pl.) variously as "view(s)", and as "view-soul", "view(s)/view-soul (s)", "view/religion", and "religious view".[10] They do not comment on how they arrived at "view-soul", but perhaps Taraporewala's comments give us some insight.

Taraporewala 1951 translates *daēnā-* variously as "Soul(s)", "Self (sg. and pl.)," "Inner-Self" (sg. and pl.), "Higher-Selves", "Teaching", "Revelation", "Ego", "Faith", and "Religion".[11] In his comment under Y31.11, he gives us the views of several other scholars, and his own, as follows (with his citations here omitted).[12] He states that:

Jackson saw *daēnā-* as 'conscience'.

Andreas' opinion was that *daēnā-* derives from *dī-* 'to perceive, to think' (Skt. *dhī*) and that *daēnā-* means 'the thinking part of our being'. To 'perceive' is close to 'envisionment'; but (with respect) I question, how *daēnā-* as the thinking part of our being, is different from *manah-* 'mind'.

Bartholomae saw *daēnā-* as having a two-fold meaning ~

(1) as 'religion', and

(2) as 'individuality', or 'spiritual ego' or 'inner self', "almost in the sense of the Skt. *ātman* (*jīvâtman*)," explaining that *daēnā-* is a theological and philosophical concept signifying the sum total of the spiritual and religious attributes of an individual, i.e. his spiritual and religious individuality. Taraporewala notes that Bartholomae gives no etymology for the word *daēnā-*, acknowledges that the word is difficult to translate in a given passage, and that Bartholomae is influenced by later texts regarding the beautiful maiden (*daēnā-*) who meets the soul after death and is a personification of his own good thoughts, words and actions. Taraporewala does not think the later texts should influence our understanding of *daēnā-* in the Gathas.

Taraporewala agrees with Andreas, that *daēnā-* derives from *dī-* 'to perceive, to think'.   In Taraporewala's opinion the nearest Skt. equivalent to *daēnā* is *dhyāna* whose primary meaning (he says) is 'that part of our being that perceives and thinks', which is probably why he translates *daēnā-* as 'soul(s), inner-self/self', et cetera.

Moulton 1912 translates *daēnā-* as "Self, Selves" and "Religion".[13] He footnotes *daēnā*, in Y33.11 (citing Bartholomae) as follows, 'the sum of a man's spiritual and religious characteristics', but gives no linguistic or other reasons for this definition.

Mills 1894 seemed to have difficulty finding one English word which would fit all instances in which *daēnā* is used in the Gathas. He translates the word as 'conscience' in some Gatha verses and other GAv. texts. He leaves it untranslated in one Gatha verse, and in all other Av. texts (in SBE), he translates the word as "religion" or "Faith".[14]

Darmesteter 1887 did not translate the Gathas into English (so far as I am aware); but in translating Younger Avestan texts in SBE he translates *daēnā-* variously as 'conscience' and 'law'.[15]

With respect, neither 'conscience', nor 'religion', (nor 'law'), nor 'soul', nor 'self' (nor related terms) fit the contexts of all of the verses in which *daēnā-* is used in the Gathas.

Daena in the Gathas is not 'conscience'.

The English word 'conscience' means 'an inner voice that helps us to distinguish right from wrong, guiding us to do what is right'. A person's conscience might be silent. Or even mistaken.   But a 'conscience', by definition, can only be 'good'. A conscience cannot be actively bad, untruthful, deceitful.   Whereas, in the Gathas there is both good *daēnā-* and bad *daēnā-*.   "Who has set his mind on the good, Wise One, and (who) on the bad, (each) such person follows his conception [*daēnąm*] in action and in word; also his pleasures, his desires, and his preferences. (But) when Thy will shall be done, the end shall be different (for each)." Y48.4.   Parenthetically, the "end" here is not a 'hell' of tortures' but the law of consequences ~ that we reap what we sow.[16]

In this verse (Y48.4), *daēnā-* is related to 'setting one's mind' on good or bad, which is another way of describing the way one (mentally) views, or envisions, or conceives, existence ~ good enviornments and bad ones.   And *daēnā-* here is also related to making choices, as it is in Y31.11 (quoted below). One's conscience cannot influence us to make choices that are bad or good. So 'conscience' does not fit the context in which *daēnā-* is used in this verse. An additional verse is footnoted.[17]

One's conscience cannot, by definition be 'bad. Here are a couple of examples of bad *daēnā-* in the Gathas (an additional verse is footnoted).[18]

"Those who, with ill will, have increased fury and cruelty with their own tongues ... whose evil effects one has not yet defeated with good effects, they have served the gods, which is the conception [*daēnā*] of a deceitful person." Y49.4. 'Conscience' does not fit this context.

"... the conception [*daēnā*] of the deceitful person misses the true (conception) of the honest man..." Y51.13. 'Conscience' does not fit.

So, with respect, *daēnā-* cannot mean 'conscience'.

Daena in the Gathas is not 'religion'

Religion also does not fit the context of all Gatha verses. Here is an example. "Lord of broad vision [*vourucašānē*],[19] disclose to me for support the safeguards of your rule, those which are the reward for good thinking. Reveal to me, by reason of my [*spənta- ārmaiti-*], those conceptions [*daēnå*] in harmony with truth." Y33.13. Here, *daēnå* is plural. Zarathushtra could hardly have been asking the Lord to reveal to him multiple religions (or 'consciences' or 'selves').   These words do not fit the context.

Daena in the Gathas is not 'soul / self '

With respect, those who see *daēnā-* as 'soul', 'self', 'individuality', or a personification of a person's thoughts, words and actions, et cetera, have not given any linguistic explanations for such choices. In arriving at such meanings for *daēnā-* I think they have been influenced by a later (YAv. and then Pahlavi) story about the beautiful maiden at the Chinvat Bridge (the Bridge of Discerning), who is a personification of a 'good' deceased persons' thoughts, words and actions;   and an ugly hag who is a personification of a 'bad' deceased person's thoughts, words and actions.[20]

But in the Gathas, *daēnā-* cannot mean 'soul/self' for the following reasons.

Insler 1975 (commenting in a different context) says that in Avestan, *urvan-* is used as both 'soul' and 'self', a usage that he says is parallel to that of Vedic *ātmán-*.[21]

And in some Gatha verses (and also in the GAv. *Yasna Haptanghaiti*), 'soul/self' (*urvan-*) and *daēnā-* are mentioned in the same verse as two separate things ~ in a way that makes it clear that *daēnā-* and *urvan-* are not being used as synonymous.   So in the mind-set of those who lived when GAv. was spoken fluently, *daēnā-* could not have meant 'soul/self'.

In Y45.2 'soul/self' (*urvan-*) is used in tandem with *daēnā-*. In this verse Zarathushtra describes an allegorical confrontation in which the more-beneficial [*spanyå*] way of being [*mainyu-*] makes the following statement to the harmful [*angrəm*][22] way of being [*mainyu-*], "...Neither our thoughts nor teachings nor intentions, neither our preferences nor words, neither our actions nor conceptions [*daēnå*] nor our souls [*urvąno*] are in accord." Y45.2. Here *daēnå* and *urvąno* are two separate items in a list of items. If *urvąno* is 'souls/selves' as Insler states and linguists generally agree, then *daēnå* cannot have the same meaning.

In Y46.11 Zarathushtra also uses 'soul' and *daēnā-* in tandem, as two separate things "...But their own soul [*x^və̄ urvā*] and their own conception [*x^vaēcā … daēnā*] did vex them when they reached the Bridge of the Judge, ..." Y46.11.

An example from the *Yasna Haptanghaiti* (not a part of the Gathas, but composed in GAv.) which demonstrates that *daēnā* cannot mean 'soul', 'self', is footnoted.[23]

Daena in the Gathas is the 'ability to envision' and 'envisionment'.

There is substantial agreement amongst linguists that *daēnå* is derived from *dī* 'perceive, view.'
In another context (not mentioning *daēnå*), Insler has perceptively demonstrated with many examples, that certain GAv. words can be used in three ways ~ for a faculty, for its process, and for its object (i.e. what the faculty and process produce). And he gives the following example among others (although *daēnā-* is not one of his examples),
manah- means 'mind' (faculty)
manah- also means 'thinking' (process) and
manah- also means 'thought' (object).[24]

And I think *daēnā-* is one of these words.

As faculty, it means 'the ability or faculty to perceive, to envision' ~ as Skjaervo calls it, a 'visionary faculty'. This (in my view) is the meaning of *daēnå* in Y31.11 ('envisioning-faculties' quoted below).

As object daēnā- means 'envisionment', 'conception', 'perception', 'worldview' ~ the way(s) in which one perceives or looks at how existence should be. This I think is the meaning of *daēnā-* in all the other verses in which the word appears.

These meanings for *daēnā-* have a sound linguistic basis, and also fit all of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses *daēnā-* in the Gathas, which we will next examine.

daēnā- (as faculty) is one of the tools with which we make choices.

'Since for us in the beginning, O Wisdom, through Thy thinking, Thou didst fashion physical lives [*gaēϑåscā*], and envisioning~faculties [*daēnåscā*], and reasoning~faculties [*x̌ ratušcā*], since Thou didst give embodied breath, since (Thou didst give) and actions and teachings, whereby one expresses preferences at will,' Y31.11, my translation.[25]

In the Gathas, 'good' *daēnā-* is Zarathushtra's envisionment of the path of goodness, the path of the truth order of existence and its components (amesha spenta).[26]

With this key conclusion ~ that the *daēnā-* he advocates is envisioning an existence that is in accord with the true order of existence ~ all the other ways in which Zarathushtra uses *daēnā-* fall into place like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

This envisionment (*daēnā-*) is described as one that is intrinsically 'good' (*vohu-*),[27] 'beneficial' (*spǝnta-*),[28] ~ adjectives that Zarathushtra also uses to describe the true order of existence.[29] He states that this envisionment (*daēnā-*) is one that "prospers the creatures" as does the true order of existence and its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spǝnta- ārmaiti-*).[30] And he sees this envisionment of the true order of existence as involving its comprehension (good thinking *vohu- manah-*) and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*) in kaleidoscopic ways. Here is the evidence.

An envisionment that accords with truth (aša-).

"... those conceptions [*daēnå*] in harmony with truth [*ašā*]." Y33.13.

"...those who are yoked with truth [*ašā*] have yoked their conceptions [*daēnå*] on the best prize [*vahištē mīždē*] ..." Y49.9. Here the true order of existence (*aša-*) and the nature of (good) envisionment (*daēnā-*) are equated, and both are equated with the most~good prize (reaffirming that the reward for truth is truth itself).[31] And you may recall that Zarathushtra uses *ahu- vahišta-* 'the most~good existence' as one of his names for the ultimate prize ~ paradise, a state of being that is the true (wholly good) order of existence.[32]

An envisionment that belongs to Wisdom.

If Zarathushtra's envisionment [*daēnā-*] is an existence in harmony with the true (correct, good) order of existence, then one can understand why this envisionment belongs to the Divine, because the Divine personifies the true order of existence. The existence of the Divine *is* the true (correct, wholly good) order of existence.

"... Thy conception [*ϑwōi ... daēnā*]..." Y44.11, Insler 1975;

"... from His good conception [*hōi ... daēnayå vaŋhuyå*]." Y53.1, Insler 1975;

"... in order to serve the straight paths and that conception [*daēnąm*] which the Lord granted..." Y53.2, Insler 1975. The "straight paths" are the paths of truth.[33]

'... that conception [*daēnąm*] which (is) of-possessing-you-ness [*x šmāvatō*], Lord." Y49.6, my literal translation.[34] Here, *daēnąm* here is an envisionment that is of the same nature as the Divine (whose existence is the true order of existence).

An envisionment of truth, its comprehension (vohu- manah-), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (spənta- ārmaiti-).

If Zarathushtra's envisionment [*daēnā-*] is an existence which belongs to, and is of, the Divine ~ one which is in harmony with the true order of existence ~ it is easy to understand why his envisionment is one which comprehends truth (good thinking *vohu- manah-*) and embodies it in beneficial thoughts, words and actions (*spənta- ārmaiti-*). Here are some examples. Additional ones are footnoted.[35]

"This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. How might [*ārmaiti-*] separately come to those to whom Thy conception [*ϑwōi ... daēnā*] is taught, Wise One? ..." Y44.11, Insler 1975. A rhetorical question which contains its own answer ~ that an envionment (of truth) results in thoughts words and actions which embody truth (*ārmaiti-*).[36]

"But that man, Wise One, is both milk and butter (for Thee), namely, the one who has allied his conception [*daēnąm*] with good thinking [*vohu- manah-*]. Any such person of [*ārmaiti-*] is of the (same) good lineage with truth and all those (other forces) existing under Thy rule, Lord." Y49.5, Insler 1975. Here a person whose envisionment [*daēnąm*] accords with the comprehension of truth (good thinking), is called a person of embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) whose "good lineage [*huzāntuš*]" is with truth (Insler 1975), or who is "well-acquainted with truth" (Humbach 1991).[37]

The envisionments of those who save, or benefit (saošyant)

"To that, Lord, which Thou hast told me to be the road of good thinking, to the conceptions [*daēnå*] of those who shall save [*saošyantąm*],..." Y34.13.[38]

In this verse (Y34.13), the "road of good thinking" and the "conceptions of those who shall save" are equated. In the Gathas, 'salvation' is being 'saved' ~ not from damnation in hell, but from what is false, wrong. Salvation is truth and its comprehension good thinking, and other attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta). And man is both a receiver and giver of salvation.[39]

Conclusion. The envisionment (*daēnā-*) which Zarathushtra advocates, is an envisionment that is in accord with the true (wholly good) order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*) and its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta-ārmaiti-*). It is an envionment that prospers the living, and is the most-good prize (*vahišta-mīžda-*). An envionment of true order of existence generates the reward of true order of existence.

How beautiful is that?!

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¹ According to Skjaervo 2006, the stem *daēnā-* is a fem. noun, which has the following declensions (case/number forms),

Singular

daēnā   nom. sg.
daēnąm   acc. sg.
daēnā and *daēnayā*   instr. sg.
daēnayāi   dat. sg.
daēnayå   gen. sg.

Plural

daēnå   nom./acc. pl.
daēnābīš   instr. pl.
daēnābyō   dat. pl.

daēnā- in its various declensions, appears in the following Gatha verses, Y31.11, 20; Y33.13; Y34.13; Y44.9, 10, 11; Y45.2, 11; Y46.6, 7, 11; Y48.4; Y49.4, 5, 6, 9; Y51.13, 17, 19, 21; Y53.1, 2, 4, 5. The ways in which Zarathushtra uses *daēnā-* in each of these verses will be quoted in this chapter.

daēnā- also appears in the following GAv. texts, YHapt. 37.5; YHapt. 39.2; YHapt. 40.1; YHapt. 41.5, and the *A Airyema Ishyo* which is Yasna 54.1, (some of which will be quoted in this chapter).

² For example, in the YAv. *Visperad,* "... the diligent husbandman of the Mazdayasnian faith [*daēnayå māzdayasnōiš*]." *Visperad,* Ch. 3, § 5, Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 343; Avestan words from Geldner 2P p. 10. Ancient Zoroastrians were much given to personifying concepts. We see this in the Gathas, where truth (*aša-*), good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) ~ most often shown as concepts or qualities ~ are sometimes personfiied (as allegories). And in YAv. times, other concepts of Zarathushtra (such as *cisti-* 'understanding', and *aši vaŋuhi* 'good reward') were also personified, but then came to be thought of as real living beings to be worshipped.

³ Here are the two verses in which Insler 1975 translates *daēnå-* as 'vision'.

"This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. How shall I bring to life that vision [*daēnąm*] of mine,..." Y44.9;

"This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. Have they truly seen that vision [*daēnąm*] which is the best [*vahišta-* 'most good'] for those who exist, and which in companionship with truth, would prosper my creatures already allied with truth through words and acts stemming from [*ārmaiti-*]? In consequence of my insight they have wished for Thy powers, Wise One." Y44.10. Think about that last sentence for a moment.

⁴ Insler 1975, p. 245.

⁵ Insler 1975 p. 192.

⁶ See *Part Three: Paourvya.*

⁷ Hintze, 2015, *Zarathushtra's Time & Homeland: Linguistic Perspectives,* appearing in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* 2015 p. 38.

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[8] Schwartz, *The Ties that Bind: on the Form and Content of Zarathushtra's Mysticism,* appearing in the *London Gatha Colloquium 1993,* p. 140.

[9] In Y45.2 the more-beneficial way of being (metaphorically) tells the harmful way of being that neither their thoughts, nor teachings, nor reasonings, nor preferences, nor words, nor actions, nor *daēnå-* (plural) nor souls are in accord.   In this verse, Humbach translates *daēnå-* as "views" (plural). Humbach (1991) Vol. 2, p. 166.

[10] Humbach/Faiss (2010) translate *daēnå-* as follows in the following GAv. texts;

In the Gathas,

As "views" in Y31.11; Y45.2,11; Y49.9;   (pp. 87, 128, 132, 148);
As "view-soul" in Y46.11 (p. 136);
As "view/view-soul" in Y31.20; Y33.13; Y34.13; Y44.9; Y46.7; Y49.5; Y51.13, 19; Y53.5; (pp. 89, 99, 103, 146, 156, 157, 160);
As "view/religion" in Y44.10, 11; Y46.6;   Y49.4, 6; Y51.17, 21; Y53.1, 2, 4; (p. 124, 134, 146, 147, 157, 158, 159, 160);
As "religious view" in Y48.4 (p. 142).

In the GAv. Yasna Haptanghaiti

As "views" in Y39.2 (p. 110);
As "views/view-souls" in Y40.1; Y41.5 (pp. 111, 112);
As "view/religion" in Y37.5; (p. 108).

In the GAv. A Airyema Ishyo, Yasna 54.1.

As "view/religion" (p. 162).

The translation of Y46.11, by Humbach/Faiss (2010) is interesting in the way in which they distinguish between *urvan-* "breath-soul" and *daēnā-* "view-soul" (but I am not persuaded that this was Zarathushtra's intent, based on all the ways in which he uses *daēnā-*).   Here is their translation of Y46.11. Words in round parentheses are their interpretive aids.

"By (their means of) power the Karapans/lie-priests and the Kavis/princes yoke the mortal one to bad actions in order to ruin (his) existence. Their own breath-soul [*urvā*] and their own view-soul [*daēnā*] will make them shudder/tremble, when they arrive at the accountant's bridge, guests to the house of deceit for all time." Y46.11, Humbach/Faiss (2010) translatio. For the meanings of house of deceit and for all time (or forever) see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell ~* in which I show how inconsistently linguists translate the Av. words which here have been translated as for all time (or forever). Even in Pahlavi texts which invented the idea of a 'hell' of torments in an afterlife, 'hell' is of limited duration. Neither in the Gathas, no in the later texts is there an eternal hell.

[11] Taraporewala translates *daēnå-* as follows in the following GAv. texts;

In the Gathas,

As "Souls" in Y31.11; (p. 210).
As "Self" in Y31.20; (p. 241).
As "Selves" in Y45.2 ~ here *daēnå* pl. is in tandem with *urvānō* 'souls'; (p. 537).
As "Inner-Selves" in Y33.13; Y46.6, Y53.5; (pp. 345, 591, 840).
As "Inner-Self" in Y46.7; Y46.11; 48.4; Y49.5; Y51.13; Y51.19; Y51.21; (pp. 594, 609, 665, 708, 799, 814, 819).

As "Higher-Selves" in Y49.8; (p. 720).
As "Teaching" in Y34.13; (p. 391).
Untranslated in Y44.9; (p. 488).
As "Revelation" in Y44.10; Y44.11; Y45.11; (pp. 492, 496, 567).
As "Ego" in Y49.5 ~ here *daēnā-* is used in a 'bad' sense; (p. 705).
As "Faith" in Y49.6; Y51.17; Y53.2; Y53.4; (pp. 711, 808, 830, 837).
As "Religion" in Y53.1; (pp. 827).

Taraporewala's translation does not include the *Yasna Haptanghaiti*.

In the A Airyema Ishyo, Yasna 54.1.

As "Inner-Self" (p. 858).

[12] Taraporewala (1951) pp. 211 - 212.

[13] Moulton (1912) *EZ*, translates *daēnå-* as follows in the following GAv. texts (Moulton's translation does not include the *Yasna Haptanghaiti*).

In the Gathas,

As "Selves" Y31.11; Y45.2, 6; Y49.9; Y53.5; (pp. 353, 370, 373, 382, 389).
As "Self" Y31.20; Y33.13; Y44.9; Y45.11; Y46.7, 11; Y48.4; Y49.4, 5; Y51.13, 17, 19, 21; Y53.4;   (pp. 354, 360, 368, 372, 374, 378, 381, 386, 387, 388).
As "Religion" Y44.10, 11; Y49.6; Y53.1, 2; (pp. 368, 381, 388).

In the A Airyema Ishyo, Yasna 54.1.
As "Self."

[14] Mills; translations of *daēnā-* is not consistent. None of his choices fits each use of *daēnā-* in all GAv. texts. And none of his choices fits each use of *daēnā-* in all YAv. texts.

In the Gathas, the GAv. Yasna Haptanghaiti, and the GAv. A Airyema Ishyo (Y54.1)

Mills translates *daēnā-* as 'conscience' in
the Gatha verses Y45.2, Y46.11, Y51.13, Y53.4,
the GAv. YHapt.39.2, and
the GAv. Y54.1;
SBE 31, pp. 126, 140, 183, 192, 288, 293.

He translates *daēnā-* as "(perverted) conscience" in Y31.20, SBE 31, p. 52 ~ the word in parentheses indicating his attempt to reconcile 'bad' *daēnā-* in this verse. But a 'conscience' by definition cannot be 'bad'.

He leaves the word untranslated in the Gatha verse Y49.6 SBE 31, p. 165; and

He ignores the word in Y49.9, and in the GAv. YHapt.41.5; SBE 31, pp. 166, 290.

In all other Gatha verses in which *daēnā-* appears ~ representing a majority ~ he translates the word variously as "Faith", "moral laws", and "Religion".

In certain YAv. Yasnas also, Mills translates *daēnā-* as "conscience". Here are two examples.

In Yy26.4,

9

"And (...) hither, we worship the spirit and conscience [*daēnąmca*], the intelligence and soul and Fravashi of those holy men and women [*ašaonąm ašaoninąmca*] who early heard the lore and commands [*paoiryanąm ţkaēšanąm*] (of God) [footnote 2 "or the early religion"] ..." Yy26.4, SBE 31 p. 278;

paoiryanąm ţkaēšanąm paoiryanąm sāsnō.gūšąm iδa ašaonąm ašaoninąmca ahūmca daēnąmca baoδasca urvānəmca fravašīmca yazamaide ... Geldner 1P, p. 94.

Although in the Gathas Mills most frequently translates *daēnā-* as "religion" or "Faith", that would not fit the context of this verse (Yy26.4), in which he translates *ţkaēša-* as "religion" or "lore". The words *paoiryanąm ţkaēšanąm* actually means 'of the first (or original) teachings'. The meaning of *ţkaēša-* as 'teaching' is discussed in detail in a footnote in *Part Three: The Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu) An Analysis*.

In Yy26.6,

"And (...) hither, we worship the life, conscience [*daēnąmca*], intelligence, soul and Fravashi of the next of kin [*nabānazdištanąm*], of the saints male and female [*ašaonąm ašaoninąm* literally 'of the male-truth-possessing-ones, of the female-truth-possessing-ones']..." Yy26.6, SBE 31 p. 279;
nabānazdištanąm iδa ašaonąm ašaoninąm ahūmca daēnąmca baoδasca urvānəmca fravašīmca yazamaide... Geldner 1Pt. p. 94.

[15] In the YAv. *Farvardin Yasht* Darmesteter translates *daēnā-* as 'conscience'. But in the YAv. *Drvasp Yasht (Gosh Yasht)* he translates *daēnā-* as 'law'. However, 'law' is generally the English equivalent for Av. *dāta-* 'established rules' (Skjaervo, *Old Avestan Glossary*), i.e. 'that which is laid down', or 'that which is established' ~ a noun deriving from *dā-*, one of the meanings of which is 'to establish' (the meanings of *dā-* are discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation* for the meanings of *dā-*).

Farvardin Yasht, Yt. 13

"We worship the perception; we worship the intellect; we worship the conscience [*daēnå*]; we worship those of the Saoshyants;..." *Farvardin Yasht*, Yt. 13.74, Darmesteter translation SBE 23, pp. 197;
āsnå yazamaide manå yazamaide ∵ daēnå yazamaide ∵ saosyaṇtąm yazamaide ∵ ... § 74, *Farvardin Yasht*, Geldner 2P, p. 184.

"... we worship the spirit, conscience [*daēnąmca*], perception, soul, and Fravashi ..." *Farvardin Yasht*, Yt. 13.149, Darmesteter translation SBE 23, p. 228;
... ahūmca daēnąmca baoδasca urvānəmca fravašīmca yazamaide ... *Farvardin Yasht*, Yt. 13.149, Geldner 2P, pp. 203 - 204 .

Drvasp (Gosh) Yasht, Yt. 9

"O good, most beneficent Drvaspa! grant me this boon, that I may bring the good and noble Hutaosa to think according to the law [*daēnayāi*], to speak according to the law [*daēnayāi*], to do according to the law [*daēnayāi*], that she may spread my Mazdean law [*yā.mē daēnąm māzdayasnīm*] and make it known, and that she may bestow beautiful praises upon my deeds." *Drvasp (Gosh) Yasht*, Yt. 9.26, Darmesteter translaiton, SBE Vol. 23, p. 116; Avestan words transliterated from Geldner *Avesta* 2P, p. 123.

In each of the above quotations, if you substitute 'envisionment of existence' or 'worldview' for the *daēnā-* words you can see that it fits the context well.

According to the internal evidence of some YAv. texts themselves, these YAv. texts were composed many centuries after Zarathushtra. But in this last example, the author of the Yasht makes Zarathushtra the (supposed) speaker, who offers up a sacrifice to Drvaspa ~ one of the many deities in the YAv. texts (something he never does in the Gathas). Frequently, the authors of various Yashts simply attempted to gain credibility or acceptance for the syncretized deities of such Yashts, by having Zarathushtra worshipping them. In some of these Yashts, the authors have even Ahura Mazda offering up a sacrifice to a given deity. Zarathushtra's

teachings must have attained a wide and far reaching degree of popularity for the priests to claim credit for their respective deities by having Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda worshipping such deities in such Yashts.

[16] See *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*; and *Part Three: Apema, One of Many Ends*.

[17] "But that man, Wise One, is both milk and butter (for Thee), namely, the one who has allied his conception [*daēnąm*] with good thinking. Any such person of [*ārmaiti-*] is of the (same) good lineage with truth and all those (other forces) existing under Thy rule, Lord." Y49.5, Insler 1975. Here 'conscience' does not fit, because a man does not have the option to ally his conscience with good or evil. His conscience can only be good. But 'envionment' fits.

[18] Here is an additional example of *daēnā-* used in a 'bad' context.

"But the deceitful persons, bad in rule [*dušəx šaϑrəng*], bad in actions [*duš.šyaoϑanəng*] and words [*dužvacaŋhō*], bad in conceptions [*duždaēnəng*] and thoughts [*dužmanaŋhō*],..." Y49.11; the pre-fix *duš-/duž-* means 'evil', 'bad'.

[19] In the phrase "Lord of broad vision," in Y33.13, "broad vision" translates the GAv. word *vourucašānē*. The first part *vouru-* means 'wide, far', and *caš-* means 'to see' (Skjaervo 2006).

[20] A YAv. Fragment, and a Pazand/Pahlavi text attempt to show through a story the underlying idea that a person who is a personification of 'good' in his thoughts, words and actions is able to make the transition (cross the bridge) from mortality to a non-mortal existence, whereas a person's evil thoughts, words and actions prevent him from doing so.

In this story a person who has departed this life, comes to the Chinvat Bridge (a metaphor for transition -- the ability to cross over to a non-mortal existence) at which he is met by a personification of his thoughts, words and actions, in the form of a beautiful maiden (if good) which enables his transition (crossing the bridge), or an ugly hag (if bad) which prevents his transition.

Do I approve of such stereotypical thinking -- young and beautiful = 'good'; old and ugly = 'bad'? I do not. It saddens me. But we have to look at the ancient texts accurately and objectively (and see whatever good we can in them) not allowing our own biases to affect our perceptions -- to the extent possible. The story itself was a rather lovely, creative way of expressing the underlying ideas.

This story is discussed in *Part One: Buried Treasure in Ancient Stories*; and in *Part Three: Heaven in Other Avestan Texts*. The YAv. text does not mention the ugly hag who is a personification of the person's bad thoughts, words and actions, but she does appear in the Pahlavi version of the story which mentions both.

So what started out as an envisionment, a worldview in the Gathas, became a personification of that envionment in thought, word and action in the later story of the maiden and the hag.

Although this story does not appear in the Gathas as such, I think the Gatha verse Y46.11 may have been its genesis -- or at least the verse expresses the idea that later generated the story. In Y46.11, Zarathushtra, speaks of evil priests and princes who "... yoked (us) with evil actions in order to destroy the world and mankind. But their own soul [*xᵛə̄ urvā*] and their own conception [*xᵛaēcā ... daēnā*] did vex them when they reached the Bridge of the Judge, ..." Y46.11.

Now, why would a person's own flawed soul, and his own bad worldview, or envionment [*daēnā-*] upset him when he reaches the 'bridge'?   Perhaps because he wants to make the transition (cross the bridge) to a non-mortal existence, but is prevented from doing so by the way he lived his life -- by his own flawed soul, and his

bad worldview, which generated harmful, destructive, wrongful, thoughts words and actions. So in effect, he is upset with himself ~ with his own deficiencies.

[21] Insler 1975 p. 123, commenting under Y28.4.

[22] The meaning of *angra-* is discussed in *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*

[23] *The GAv. Yasna Haptanghaiti* 39.2 says,

'And we celebrate the souls [*urunō*] of wild animals which (are) harmless,   we celebrate the souls [*urunō*] of truth~possessing [*ašāunąm*] men [*narąmcā*] and women [*nairinąmcā*], wherever born indeed, whose more~good envisionments [*vahehīš daēnå̊*] either do prevail, or will prevail, or have prevailed.' YHapt. 39.2, my translation.

daitikanąmcā. aidyūnąm. hyaṯ. urunō. yazamaide.•: ašāunąm. āaṯ. urunō. yazamaide. kudō.zātanąmcīṯ. narąmcā. nairinąmcā. yaēšąm. vahehīš. daēnå̊. vanaintī. vā. və̇ŋghən. vā. vaonarə̄. vā.•:   Geldner 1P, p. 135.

Here *daēnå̊* is what each of these 'souls [*urunō*]' generate, and therefore cannot mean the same as 'soul'. *vahehīš* is nom./acc. pl. fem. of the adj. *vahyah-* (Skjaervo 2006) which means 'more~good' ~ the comparative degree of *vohu-*, thus here, envisionments that are more~good.

[24] Insler 1975 p. 118.

[25] See *Part Six: Yasna 31.11 and 12,* for a detailed discussion of this verse, its translation, and the opinions of other translators.

[26] Detailed in *Part Two: A Question of Reward & The Path.*

[27] Here are some examples of *daēnā-* being called 'good' in Gathic Avestan texts.

In the Gathas

Y53.1 "(to the adherents). The best wish of Zarathushtra Spitama has been heard if the Wise Lord shall grant to him those attainments in accord with truth and a good existence for all his lifetime. Likewise, to those who have accepted and taught the words and actions stemming from His good conception [*daēnayå̊ vaŋhuyå̊*]." Y53.1, Insler 1975.

Y53.4 [Referring to his daughter Pouruchisti] '... (if she is) truthful to (all that is) truthful [pl.], Wisdom, the Lord, will give (her) the sun~like gain of good thinking ... for good envisionment [*daēnayāi vāŋhuyāi*] for her whole lifetime here.' Y53.4, my translation.

Y51.17 "Frashaoshtra Haugva has continuously displayed to me the esteemed form (of [*ārmaiti-*]) for the sake of the good conception [*daēnayāi vaŋhuyāi*], ..." Y51.7, Insler 1975.

The GAv. *Yasna Haptanghaiti* also describes *daēnā-* as 'good',

YHapt. 37.5,

"And we celebrate good thinking, and good rule, and good envisionment [*vaŋuhīmcā daēnąm*] and good awareness, and good embodied truth." my translation.

vohucā. manō. yazamaide.   vohucā. xšaϑrəm. vaŋuhīmcā. daēnąm. vaŋuhīmcā. fsəratūm. vaŋuhīmcā. ārmaitīm.•: Geldner 1P, p. 133;

(Skjaervo 2006, translates the stem *fsəratū* as "*power of awareness(?)" indicating some uncertainty. Humbach/Faiss (2010) translate its acc. sg. form here *fsəratūm* as "reflection" p. 108).

In the GAv. *A Airyema Ishyo* Y54.1, the envionment that is *daēnā-* is good thinking, the comprehension of truth.

'May the dear community come to the support of the men and women of Zarathushtra, to the support of good thinking, by which envisionment one shall gain the chosen prize, I ask for the dear reward of truth, which the Lord, Wisdom, awards.' Y54.1, my translation (see *Part Six: Yasna 54.1, The A Airyema Ishyo* for a more detailed discussion of this verse and other translations).

[28] Here are two Gatha verses in which *daēnā-* is described as 'beneficial~sacred' (*spənta-*).

"... such a person, by reason of his [*spənta- daēnā-* 'beneficial~sacred worldview'] is an ally, a brother, or a father (of Thee), Wise Lord, the Master of the house Who shall save (us)." Y45.11, Insler 1975.

"[*spənta-* 'beneficial~sacred'] is a man of [*ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth']. He is so by reason of his understanding, his words, his actions, his conception [*daēnā*] ..." Y51.21, Insler 1975. If a man of embodied truth is beneficial~sacred (*spənta-*) through his envisionment (*daēnā*), then (it needs must follow as the day the night) the nature of his envisionment would have to be beneficial as well.

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

[30] Zarathushtra's envisionment (*daēnā-*) is one that "prospers the creatures" as does the true (correct, good) order of existence and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*).

"This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. Have they truly seen that vision [*daēnąm*] which is the best [*vahišta-* 'most good'] for those who exist, and which in companionship with truth, would prosper my creatures already allied with truth through words and acts stemming from [*ārmaiti-*]? In consequence of my insight they have wished for Thy powers, Wise One." Y44.10, Insler 1975.

[31] See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path.*

[32] See in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*; and *The Houses of Paradise and Hell.*

[33] The "straight paths" in Y53.2 are the paths of truth "...the paths, straight [*ərəzūš paϑō*] in accord with truth, wherein the Wise Lord dwells." Y33.5, Insler 1975.

[34] *tąm daēnąm yā x šmāvatō* [gen. pl.] *ahurā*
My literal translation: '... that [*tąm*] envisionment [*daēnąm*] which [*yā*] (is) of-possessing~you~ness [*x šmāvatō*], Lord [*ahurā*].' Y49.6, my literal translation. Or in more fluent English, '... that envisionment which (is) of your nature Lord."
Insler 1975 translation: "...that conception [*daēnąm*] which belongs to one of your kind [*x šmāvatō*], Lord." Y49.6. In my view, Insler's "one of your kind" for *x šmāvatō*, is not a reference to other gods worshipped alongside Wisdom (such gods never mentioned in the Gathas) or even other beings. The suffix *-vant* indicates possession, and *x šma-* means 'you' (pl.). So the stem *x šmāvant-* literally means an envisionment that possesses the nature of the Divine ~ 'you' [pl.] indicating the plurality of His qualities (amesha spenta) ... and perhaps those who have attained them and thus are in union with the Divine.

[35] Here are two additional verses in which truth, its comprehension good thinking, and its embodiment (*ārmaiti-*) are linked with the envisionment or worldview which Zarathushtra advocates.

"This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. Have they truly seen that vision [*daēnąm*] which is the best [*vahištā*] for those who exist, and which in companionship with truth [*ašā*], would prosper my creatures already allied with truth through words and acts stemming from [*ārmatōiš* 'of embodied truth']? In consequence of my insight they have wished for Thy powers, Wise One." Y44.10, Insler 1975. Here, envisionment is linked with what is most-good (*vahišta-*), truth (*aša-*) and 'words and acts of embodied truth [*ārmatōiš*]. The word *ārmatōiš* is the form for both gen. ('of ___) and abl. ('stemming from ___'). I think the genitive fits better in this context.

"This I ask Thee. Tell me truly, Lord. How shall I bring to life that vision [*daēnąm*] of mine, which the master of a blessed dominion ~ someone of great power like Thee [*ϑwāvąs*], Wise Lord ~ would decree by reason of his lofty rule, as he continues to dwell in his seat in alliance with truth and good thinking?" Y44.9. Insler 1975. There in no word *ahurā* 'Lord' in the GAv. text.
I translate parts of this verse somewhat differently (detailed in *Part Three: The Puzzle of the Sincere Ones & Others*). But regardless of translation differences, there is no ambiguity about Zarathushtra asking (in effect through a rhetorical question) that his envionment [*daēnąm*] be given currency by a ruler who is "in alliance with truth and good thinking".
For those who would like linguistic details I offer the following for line b.
Y44.9b. *yąm hūdānaoš paitišə sahyāṯ x šaϑrahyā ərəšvā xʸsāϑrā ϑwāvąs asīštiš* [**aš.īštiš*], *mazdā*
Y44.9 my translation showing Av. words '... which [*yąm*] a master [*paitišə*] of beneficent rule [*hūdānaoš* ... *x šaϑrahyā*], would declare [*sahyāṯ*] through (his) lofty rulership [*ərəšvā xʸsāϑrā*], someone of great power [**aš.īštiš*] like Thee Wisdom, ...'.
*aš.īštiš Insler explains in meticulous detail, the linguistic reasons, (which are beyond my linguistic knowledge) why *asīštiš* is a scribal error which he emends to **aš.īštiš* 'one of great power'. In the Gathas, 'power' derives from the qualities of the divine (amesha spenta). So Insler's emendation fits very well in the context of this verse. I therefore find it persuasive.
ϑwāvąs is nom. sg. of the adj. stem *ϑwāvaṇt-* (Skjaervo 2006) ~ a very interesting word ~ which literally means 'possessing-thee-ness', but in more fluent (but less than adequate) English 'someone like Thee'.
Insler translates *hudāh-* words as 'beneficent' in other verses.
This verse is discussed in more detail in *Part Three: The Puzzle of the Sincere Ones & Others.*

[36] In Y44.11 truth embodied in thought, word, and action (*ārmaiti-*) is the result of good envisionment.
"...How might [*ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth'] separately come to those to whom Thy conception [*ϑwōi ... daēnā*] is taught, Wise One? ..." Y44.11. A rhetorical question which contains its own answer ~ that an envionment (of truth) results in thoughts words and actions which embody truth (*ārmaiti-*). Which makes sense.
In Y33.13 we see the flip side (which also makes sense). Here it is truth embodied in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*) which generates an envionment in harmony with truth and results in the comprehension of truth (good thinking).
"Lord of broad vision, disclose to me for support the safeguards of your rule, those which are the reward for good thinking. Reveal to me, by reason of my virtuous [aramaiti], those conceptions [*daēnå*] in harmony with truth." Y33.13, Insler 1975.
In other words, striving to embody the true order of existence with each thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*), generates a more accurate envionment of what the true order of existence is.
These two verses (Y44.11 and Y33.14), read together, show that the acquiring the true order of existence is an incremental, experience based process, with help from the Divine ("disclose to me ... reveal to me...") ~ which He does through good thinking ("...instruct through good thinking ..." Y50.6).

[37] "... Any such person of [*ārmaiti-*] is of the (same) good lineage [*huzəntuš*] with truth..." Y49.5. The word *huzəntuš* is susceptible of more than one meaning. The prefix *hu-* means 'good'. Humbach (1991) explains that there are two possible translations of *huzəntuš* ~ one derives *huzəntuš* from the root *zan* 'to beget, give

birth to' (he gives as an example *huzə̄ntu-* 'of noble birth', but does not reference where this word is so translated). The other possibility derives *huzə̄ntuš* from the root *zan/x šnā* 'to know' . He prefers the second alternative and translates *ašā huzə̄ntuš* as "well-acquainted with truth". Vol. 2 p. 209.   Either one works in the context of this verse.

[38] Here is the full verse in the Insler 1975 translation,

"To that, Lord, which Thou hast told me to be the road of good thinking, to the conceptions [*daēnå̄*] of those who shall save [*saošyantạm*], along which Thy extoller shall proceed in alliance with truth indeed to the prize which has been promised to the beneficent, and of which Thou are the (only) source of giving, Wise One." Y34.13, Insler 1975.

Here, the "road of good thinking" is equated with the 'envisionments of those who shall save [*daēnå̄ saošyantạm*]'.
'Salvation' is truth, its comprehension good thinking and other attributes of the Divine, amesha spenta (see *Part One: A Question of Salvation*; and *Part Six: Yasna 51.20*);
And the "prize" (or reward) is also truth, its comprehension and other attributes of the Divine (see *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*), so it is easy to understand the last phrase " of which Thou are the (only) source of giving, Wise One." Y34.13.

[39] See *Part One: A Question of Salvation*.