

The Solution of Yasna 29.

Yasna 29 is a lament and a promise. It is a mini-drama which Zarathushtra uses to convey an idea. The solution for the sufferings of mortal existence.

In Zarathushtra's time, songs and stories were a popular form of entertainment which also conveyed knowledge and ideas. This mini-drama was sung as a story. And the story is rich with allegories and pastoral metaphors which would have added interest and color for his listeners who lived in a society which raised cattle and horses as the dominant way of life.¹

Which brings us to one of the central characters in this mini-drama - *gəuš urvan-*. Its literal translation 'soul of (the) cow', is similar to the Pahlavi 'translation', and Neriosangh Dhaval's Sanskrit translation, both of which mention various forms of cattle. (I have footnoted quotations from both those texts you that you can judge for yourself).²

But the evidence of the Gathas is quite clear, that Zarathushtra uses this term as a metaphor. For example: In Yasna 28:1, he asks Wisdom for teachings that will satisfy the reasoning of good thinking and the soul of the cow. We don't know how the Divine communicates with other life forms. But Wisdom's teachings, expressed to Zarathushtra in Gathic Avestan, would not satisfy, the soul of a literal cow.

So the question is: What idea was Zarathushtra trying to express, by using this metaphor? This is explored in more detail in another chapter.³ Here I will simply summarize.

Martin Haug and Taraporewala thought the 'soul of (the) cow' is a metaphor for the 'soul of mother earth', which, in itself, is a lovely metaphor. Would Zarathushtra have used one metaphor to stand for another? I do not know. But I do know that while 'mother earth' fits some of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses 'cow' in the Gathas, it does not fit all of the ways. For example, in Y48:6, referring to the 'cow' in the preceding verse, Zarathushtra says,

"... she shall grant to us the enduring and esteemed strength of good thinking [*vohu- manah-*]..." Y48:6, Insler translation 1975.

A literal cow does not grant good thinking. Nor does the earth. But in the Gathas, this is precisely a gift of the beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*),⁴ which is the true, correct, wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*). (I have footnoted some evidence).⁵

Based on all the evidence in the Gathas, I think 'soul of (the) cow' is an allegory or metaphor for the living soul of all that is beneficial (*spənta-*), good (*vohu- / vahišta-*), truth-possessing (*ašavan-*) in mortal existence - even though imperfect.⁶

So why did Zarathushtra choose the metaphor 'cow' for this idea? We don't know for sure. But the people of his culture were intimately familiar with caring for, and increasing their cattle. And their survival depended on the nourishment they received from their cows. His pastoral metaphors would have been meaningful to them.

Today (some 3,000 + years later), our life style is largely urban. Even cattle-raising today is often a large scale, mechanized operation. So most of us do not interact with, and care for, cattle, in the 1,001 details of day to day life, the way people did in Zarathushtra's time. Therefore his pastoral allegories and metaphors are not as easy (or as meaningful) for us.

But let us not get turned off by pastoral metaphors that might sound awkward to us, especially when translated into English. Let us try to look past the awkwardness, to the ideas they stand for, which are valuable, beautiful, relevant.

The cast of characters in this mini-drama includes Wisdom, and (in allegorical form) three of His qualities ~ the true (correct, good) order of existence (*aṣa-* "truth" for short), its comprehension good thinking (*vohumanah-*), and the beneficial way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*) which in this poem appears in masked form as the '[fashioner of the cow](#)'. In other parts of the Gatha, the 'fashioner of the cow' is specifically identified as the beneficial way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*) and as Wisdom's way of being.⁷

The Gathas recognize that man also has these three divine qualities (although not completely).

Naturally, one wonders: If these three ~ truth, good thinking, a beneficial way of being ~ are qualities, why does Zarathushtra show them in this poem as allegorical entities? I think he does so to acknowledge and then reconcile (in dramatic form), the apparent conflicts that arise in the mind when confronted by suffering in mortal existence.

In Zarathushtra's thought, mortal suffering is not caused by the wrongful choices of the Divine. Nor is it caused by an incompetent Divine, or a hands-off Divine, or One who lacks the power to stop suffering. (As you will see).

Also included in the cast of characters in Yasna 29, is Zarathushtra himself as both the narrator of the drama and one of its characters.⁸

One other point. We know that centuries after the devastation wrought by Alexander, efforts were made during the Parthian and Sasanian eras, to gather together the scattered texts, and what knowledge remained in memory. Taraporewala and some other scholars think that the first 2 Songs of the Gathas were incorrectly collated ~ that Yasna 29 was the first Song, and Yasna 28 was the second Song.

Similarly, Insler,⁹ and some other scholars, think that the order of verses 4 and 5 in Yasna 29 are not in the order in which Zarathushtra composed this Yasna, because verses 4 and 5 do not flow in meaning,¹⁰ from the 3 verses that precede them and the 4 verses that follow. But they fit perfectly, before the last two verses. And I agree.¹¹ But you should judge for yourself.

Here, I will discuss the verses in what I think was their original order as follows, while keeping their traditional numbering:

Yasna 29:

Verses 1, 2, 3,

Verses 6, 7, 8, 9,

Verses [4](#), [5](#),

Verses 10, 11.

I footnote here for your convenience (and reference), all the verses in this song Yasna 29, in full (in the Insler 1975 translation), so that you can check out what I say here, and come to your own conclusions.¹²

The poem starts with a lament and cry for help by the allegorical '[soul of the cow](#)' (the collective soul (sg.!) of the beneficial in mortal existence). This lament and cry for help is made to Wisdom and His three divine qualities (in allegorical form).

"To all of you the soul of the cow lamented: *For whom did ye shape me? Who fashioned me? (For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity. I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage.*" Y29:1, Insler 1975.

The word "pastor" is someone who takes care of, nurtures, the allegorical cow; and "pasturage" ~ the grass that feeds the cow ~ is a metaphor for what nourishes the good in mortal existence. In another Gatha verse Zarathushtra speaks of,

"... the pasture of truth and good thinking." Y33:3, Insler 1975.

The beneficial aspect of Wisdom's nature (the "the fashioner of the cow") is moved and troubled by such suffering. It asks truth (another aspect of Wisdom's nature) if such suffering is consistent with good judgment ~ judgment that is true, correct; and states that if she (the allegorical cow) exists in mortal existence, there should always be someone to care for her. It asks Wisdom, truth, and good thinking, whom do they wish to appoint as her 'lord' [*ahura-*], one who would care for her and destroy the fury of the untruthful (which causes her suffering).

"Thereupon, the fashioner of the cow asked truth [*aša-*]: *Is thy judgment for the cow to be in this way? If ye ruling ones¹³ have placed her (on earth), there should always be cow-caring zeal by a pastor. Whom do ye wish to be her master [*ahura-*], one who might destroy the fury (caused) by the deceitful?"* Y29:2, Insler 1975.

Truth (*aša-*) is the one to whom the first question is directed because such suffering without a solution does not befit an order of existence that is true, correct (to say nothing of 'good', 'beneficial').¹⁴ This question (from Wisdom's beneficial aspect) is the very question that must have troubled Zarathushtra and his contemporaries, just as it troubles so many of us today when we see social injustice, predatory violence, cruelty, tyranny, and other wrongdoings that cause suffering.

The word that Insler 1975 has translated as "master" (in Y29:2 quoted above) is *ahura-*, 'lord'. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra uses 'lord' for one who possesses completely (has 'lordship' over) the qualities that make a being divine (*amesha spenta*). A perfected being.¹⁵ And did you notice? Here (in Y29:2), *ahura-* 'lord' and *pastor* are equated ~ yet another bit of evidence that Wisdom's rule is one that nurtures, is caring, solicitous.

In the next verse (Y29:3) a reply is given by Wisdom, good thinking and truth, through their spokesman, truth (*aša-*). And it is significant.

"To him¹⁶ they replied through truth [*asha-*]: *There is no help free of enmity for the cow. Of yonder beings, that strongest one is not to be found through whom the lofty are to activate the lowly [*ādrāṅg* '(the) weak'],¹⁷ to whom I, of ready ear, shall come at his calls.*" Y29:3, Insler 1975.

What does truth mean when it says, "*There is no help free of enmity for the cow*"? I think it means that the truth of the matter is: that since living beings are a mix of good and harmful qualities, inevitably, they will sometimes choose to think, speak and act in wrongful ways ~ the predatory evils complained of.

In fact, the freedom to choose, and the sufferings we experience, are essential for spiritual growth, the perfecting process.¹⁸ Therefore, the problem of mortal suffering cannot be solved by simply making evil, and suffering, disappear.

This does not mean (as some have contended) that in the Gathas, the Divine is not all-powerful because It cannot make evil disappear (an opinion that is not supported by any evidence in the Gathas or any ancient text of which I am aware). Such an opinion overlooks the fact that in the Gathas, Wisdom does indeed have a solution, for eliminating evil ~ a far wiser, more practical solution than simply making evil disappear (as you will see).¹⁹ Therefore (given the reality of the mix of good and bad within living things, and the

necessity of the freedom to choose), the Divine ~ whose existence is the true order of existence (*aša-*) ~ cannot destroy evil by a Divine act ~ make it go away, make it disappear. There has to be another solution.

Next, what does truth mean by "...that strongest one is not to be found ..."? Well, in the Gathas, strength is associated with the attributes of the divine (*amesha spenta*).²⁰ And "strongest one" here refers to the previous question which asked about a lord (*ahura-*) ~ a perfected being "who might destroy the fury (caused) by the deceitful." Y29:2. So when truth says "...that strongest one is not to be found ..." we see that the solution is not a lord - a perfected being ~ who will come to fix things for us ~ by simply destroying evil.

Finally, who are the "lofty" in this verse? Well, the Gathas speak of the (figurative) uplift of good thinking. For example,

"I who thoroughly bear in mind to uplift myself with good thinking [*vohu- manah-*],..." Y28:4, Insler 1975.

"... Thou knowest, Lord, (only) when there is uplifting of beings with [*vahišta- manah-* '(the) most good thinking'] ,..." Y32:6, Insler 1975.

So the "lofty" is another way of describing a perfected being. A being that houses good thinking completely. A being that personifies wisdom. And the weak are those of us who have not yet made it ~ mortals who need help.

So in this third verse (Y29:3) truth, says that not only is there no freedom from the enmity that creates suffering, but that "of yonder beings" ~ of all the beings on earth (the place of the cow's lament) ~ a perfected being ("...that strongest one...") who will destroy evil, is not the solution for the sufferings of mortal existence.

This brings us to verse 6. Faced with an apparent impasse (between the beneficial way of being's objection to suffering, and truth's reply ~ the Lord Wisdom sets the stage for the solution, which is why he is called the Knowing One.

"Thereupon [*ahura- mazdā-* '(the) Lord Wisdom'], the Knowing One, spoke these solemn words by reason of His attentiveness: 'A master [*ahū*] has not been found by a single one (of us), nor a judgment which indeed befits truth. However, the shaper did fashion thee for both a cattle-breeder and a pastor.'" Y29:6, Insler 1975.

This verse re-frames the dilemma.

First, the Lord Wisdom is attentive to the problem. He is honest about it, acknowledges it. But He then assures the good in mortal existence (the allegorical cow) that there is indeed a beneficial design at work, using the enigmatical words ~ "However, the shaper did fashion thee for both a cattle-breeder and a pastor." Y29:6.

Let us look past the imagery of these metaphors, to what they stand for:

- ~ The shaper is the beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ who is the fashioner of the
- ~ cow which stands for the good, the beneficial, in mortal existence;
- ~ cattle-breeder is one who increases the good in mortal existence, and
- ~ pastor is one who nurtures, cares for, the good in mortal existence.

In essence, Wisdom's assurance tells us that existence has been ordered (or shaped) in such a way, that the good in mortal existence (cow) has been fashioned for both nurture, (pastor), and increase (cattle-breeder).

This assurance reflects 2 central themes which appear in more detail throughout the Gathas.

The first theme, is one we have largely forgotten under the influence of the dominant religious paradigms that have conditioned our minds. But this teaching is undisputed in later Avestan, and Pahlavi, texts. It is the teaching that existence has been so ordered that the good, the truth-possessing, in existence will incrementally (and inevitably) increase, so that everyone will eventually make it to the ultimate Good End ~ which is personifying completely, an order of existence that is true (correct) wholly good (*aša- vahišta-*), its good comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spānta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*) ~ the beneficial way of being (*spānta- mainyu-*) ~ all qualities of the Divine.

How will that come about? In the Gathas, we are free to choose, but what we do comes back to us ~ not for punishment, but for enlightenment.²¹

Given the ability to reason and feel, when we reap what we sow, such experiences increase our understanding, our compassion, which in turn informs our preferences, changing our wrongful preferences freely, from within, because that is not the way we want things to be.

Our understanding and compassion are enlarged also through unearned experiences.

All the sufferings we experience ~ earned and unearned ~ sculpt our souls. They are necessary for spiritual growth, enabling transformation by enlarging our understanding. In Zarathushtra's thought, evil is defeated by changing minds, changing preferences, freely from within. In this way, over time, through all our experiences our wrongful preferences gradually are eliminated and our good, beneficial, preferences are increased,²² until we become wholly good (*vohu- /vahišta-*), wholly beneficial (*spānta-/spāništa-*), wholly truth-possessing (*ašavan-*), which is the ultimate Good End which everyone will reach.²³ As you can see, Zarathushtra's paradigm refutes the argument that the Divine is either not all powerful, or not all good; because if He were all good He would not allow evil to exist, but since evil does exist, He cannot be all powerful. This argument is based on premises that dominate other religious paradigms, but are not a part of Zarathushtra's thought.²⁴

This ultimate and certain good end is called:

- ~ the **foremost existence** in the Gathas;
- ~ *frašō.kərəiti*²⁵ in the YAv. texts; and
- ~ *frashgard* in the Pahlavi texts.

As Zaehner so eloquently has said, referring to the Pahlavi texts,

"... The last ~ the *Frashkart* or 'Making Excellent' ~ is the end to which the whole of creation looks forward; it is regarded as being the inevitable consummation of a rational process initiated by God, and it is never supposed for one moment that there is any doubt that it will come to pass. The phrase used for this process is *patvandishn i o Frashkart*, which can be translated as the 'continuous evolution towards the Rehabilitation'." Zaehner 1961.²⁶

With respect, I think the word "Rehabilitation" is not an accurate description of the incremental or ultimate good end in Zarathushtra's thought. "Rehabilitation" implies that we once were perfect, and have degenerated, and that the process of spiritual evolution rehabilitates us ~ makes us perfect again. That is contrary to the teaching of the Gathas which say that originally there were two ways of being ~ the bad and more good (Y30:3), the harmful and more-beneficial (Y45:2) ways of being, and that through our choices and experiences, we evolve to a state of being that is a wholly, completely, true (correct) wholly good order of existence (truth personified *aša- vahišta-*).

But we should remember, that in the Gathas, administering the law of consequences ~ that we reap what we sow ~ is reserved for the Divine alone. We are not wise enough to administer the law of consequences (to others, or to ourselves) in ways that are not destructive.

The second significant theme is that of mutual loving help (being a *pastor*) ~ also an indispensable requirement for the perfecting process. It is mutual loving help between all the living, and the Divine, that helps us through the difficult experiences that refine our souls.²⁷ There will always be nurture, care, for those who are suffering ~ whether we are going through small difficulties, or an overwhelming 'dark night of the soul', there will be help at hand. It may not take the form we expect, or want, but it will be there, to help us through the 'refiner's fire', in a way that helps to bring about the ultimate Good End.

It is not just the Divine who is a *pastor* as in verse 1 (and other Gatha verses), but all the living who in verse 6 (and other Gatha verses), are the *pastors* and *cattle-breeders* ~ those who *nurture* and *increase* the good in mortal existence. So here again, we see Zarathushtra's idea of a partnership between the Divine and mortals to defeat evil, and bring about the ultimate Good End (a wholly good, perfected, existence, in which the qualities of the Divine have been attained completely). In addition to calling both the Divine, and mortals, '*pastor*' there is additional evidence in the Gathas of Divine involvement in helping with the process of perfecting existence.²⁸

Wisdom's involvement in the solution for mortal suffering is not inconsistent with the teaching of Yasna 29 ~ that the solution to mortal suffering is not a lord ~ a perfected being ~ who will come to fix things for us by simply destroying evil. Wisdom helps us, not by destroying evil by a Divine act, but by helping us to help ourselves through truth and its comprehension ~ which enables us (freely from within) to change our wrongful preferences, (thereby eliminating the sufferings they cause), and also nurture, care for, each other during the difficulties of our perfecting process.²⁹

It has been argued that the Divine cannot be all powerful, because He needs the involvement of humans to bring about the defeat of evil. I have footnoted why this argument (with respect) is not well taken.³⁰

In the next verse Y29:7, the narrator (Zarathushtra) states that the Lord Wisdom, who is of the same temperament with the true order of existence, (an order that is beneficial),³¹ has fashioned a teaching, a formula (the *mąθra-* of *butter and milk*) to nurture, nourish, the soul of all that is good in mortal existence (the allegorical *cow*), and then affirms that the Lord Wisdom is beneficial (*spənta-*) to the needy with His teaching.

"The Wise Lord, who is of the same temperament with truth, fashioned that promise [*mąθra-* 'precept'],³² of butter and milk for the cow. He is [*spənta-* 'beneficial'] to the needy in accord with his commandment [*sāsnā-* 'instruction']..." Y29:7, Insler 1975.

Here, we see again that the *cow* is a metaphor, because adult cows do not eat butter or drink milk. And this verse also demonstrates (once again) the beneficial nature of the true order of existence (*aša-*), because if this order of existence is Wisdom's nature, and if Wisdom is beneficial to the needy, then it needs must follow (as the day the night) that the true order of existence is a beneficial order.³³

And here again, I think that in Insler's commentary, his alternative "*instructions*" rather than "*commandments*" for *sāsnā-* more accurately reflects Zarathushtra's thought.

So what is Wisdom's *mąθra-*, teaching, that is the promised solution, and beneficial to the needy? It is:

The *path(s) of truth* (Y51:13; Y33:5)

and its comprehension, the '*path(s) of good thinking*' (Y51:16, Y34:12 and 13).

The *mqθra-* of butter and milk stands for truth and its (incremental) comprehension, good thinking (which when complete is wisdom).

But why has Zarathushtra chosen to use this metaphor ~ calling Wisdom's teachings the *mqθra-* of butter and milk? This is one of Zarathushtra's lovely, multi-dimensional mini-puzzles. Here are 3 reasons (there well may be more).

First, The words "butter and milk" (food), are metaphors which express the nurturing, nourishing, function of Wisdom's teachings ~ the spiritual food that nourishes the good in mortal existence. We see this same link between nourishment and good thinking in another Gatha verse, which states (without the metaphors 'butter and milk')

"...all of us creatures under Thy rule whom one has nourished with good thinking..." Y34:3, Insler translation 1975.

A later Avestan text also uses 'food' as a metaphor for the thought provoking Gathas, which provide spiritual nourishment and protection (from untruth).³⁴

Second, Zarathushtra also uses butter and milk for what we give to the Divine. In another verse he says,

"But that man, [*mazda*- 'Wisdom'], is both milk and butter (for Thee), namely, the one who has allied his conception with good thinking..." Yasna 49:5, Insler 1975.

So Zarathushtra uses the metaphor butter and milk as a mutual gifting ~ for what the Divine gives to us, Wisdom's *mqθra-* of butter and milk, (as in our verse Yasna 29 verse 7), and also for what we give the Divine in the way we live our lives ~ the path of truth and its comprehension, good thinking (as you will see, in verses 10 and 11).

Third, it is true that the Gathas do not describe or refer to any rituals. But throughout the Gathas, Zarathushtra does indeed use words that were elements of Indo-Iranian rituals ~ butter (*āzūiti-*), milk (*īžā-*), and bread (*draonah-*) ~ ritual offerings that do not require killing animals (unlike the later Avestan texts in which meat is the ritual offering). And in the Gathas, Zarathushtra always uses the specific ritual words for 'butter' (*āzūiti-*), and 'milk' (*īžā-*) ~ with one exception. In our verse, (Y29:7) he uses the usual ritual word for butter (*āzūtōiš*), but *not* the usual ritual word for milk ~ instead he uses *x švīdmcā* (from the conjectured stem *x švīd-* which many scholars believe was just plain milk ~ secular milk).

We have to wonder: Why?

I speculate ~ this is just my opinion ~ that in so describing Wisdom's teachings (the *mqθra-* of butter and milk) with one ritual word and one non-ritual word ~ he may have wanted us to understand that Wisdom's solution for nourishing the good in mortal existence, and eliminating the suffering caused by wrongdoings, includes both our prayers and the way we live our lives ~ the path of truth.

So we see that in using the metaphor *mqθra-* of butter and milk Zarathushtra gives us many lovely interconnecting designs in the tapestry of his thought.

Which brings us to the last line of Y29:7 in which Wisdom asks the question, "...*(He said): Who has (been found) by thee, good thinking, who might give these things to the mortals below?*" Y29:7, Insler 1975.

Let us look past the image of good thinking as an allegorical entity, to the idea behind the allegory. What does Wisdom turn to, for the solution to mortal suffering? He turns to good thinking.

Here lies one of the key ideas of this song ~ that good thinking is the genesis of solutions for the sufferings that afflict existence.

It is good thinking that enables us to understand (incrementally) that the nature of the Divine is wholly good; that the true (correct) order of existence is a good, beneficial order ~ an understanding that is necessary to produce the beneficial thoughts, words and actions which embody this good order (*spənta-ārmaiti-*), and its good governance (*vohu- xšaθra-*), in ourselves, in our relations with others, and in our many social units, an understanding which is the first step towards eliminating the wrongdoings ~ the anger, cruelty, hatred, enmity, predatory conduct, lies, tyranny, et cetera, ~ that cause suffering.³⁵

And here, we need to recall that (unlike English), in Avestan, ~ based on the ways in which Zarathushtra uses 'good thinking' ~ its meaning is not limited to intellect. There is abundant evidence that good thinking includes good intellect, good reasoning, good judgment, and also good emotions, good creativity, good insight ~ the full spectrum of conscious capabilities committed to goodness.³⁶

Returning to Y29, in the next verse good thinking replies:

"This one, Zarathushtra Spitama, has been found by me here to be the only one who has given ear to our commandments [sāsnā 'instructions']. He wishes, [mazdā 'Wisdom'] to recite hymns of commemoration for us, and for truth, if he might receive for himself sweetness of speech [hudəmām ... vax əθrahyā]." Y29:8, Insler translation 1975.

Another key idea. The solution provider (Zarathushtra) is not a miraculous being. He is not the 'lord' of verses 2 and 6, or the "strongest one" of verse 3, ~ the perfected being who could not be found among mortals. The solution provider is a good thinking mortal ~ one who uses his mind to search for truth, one who has listened ("given ear") to Wisdom's teachings which are the path of truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule ~ the path of the beneficial way of being ~ a way of being comprising the qualities that make a being Divine,³⁷ which are the nurture ~ the "[mąθra-] of butter and milk" ~ that nourishes existence.

In short, if we look past the allegory of good thinking (as a person) to the idea this allegory represents, we see that it is good thinking that enables us mortals to generate the strategies and tactics, that help to eliminate the sufferings of existence ~ the promised nurture, care ~ and bring about Wisdom's good rule, which in the *Vohu Xshathra Gatha* (Yasna 51:4) is described as a rule that is compassionate, that protects against injury, the rule of truth (*aša-*), its beneficial embodiment (*spənta-ārmaiti-*), its most-good comprehension (*vahišta- manah-*),³⁸ ~ a rule through which the sufferings of existence, caused by wrongdoing, are reduced and eventually eliminated.³⁹

And in this verse, (the allegorical) good thinking informs Wisdom and Its other (allegorical) qualities, that Zarathushtra wishes to recite songs of "commemoration" (the Gathas) ~ commemoration in the sense of putting us in mind of Wisdom's teachings, helping us to keep them in mind, ~ if he might receive for himself sweetness of speech. An indirect request from Zarathushtra, for assistance in expressing these teachings in a way that is pleasing, that touches, inspires, (and intrigues) the hearts/minds of all the living.

Which brings us to verse 9.

Is Zarathushtra's appointment pleasing to the allegorical soul of the cow (the beneficial soul of mortal existence)? Does she rejoice at her good fortune in the appointment of a good-thinking man Zarathushtra? Not a bit! She weeps with frustration! A powerless human being for a champion? Singing songs of commemoration? What kind of a solution is that for "... the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might,..." Y29:1 that holds her in captivity?

"But thereupon the soul of the cow wept: 'I who have recognized that my caretaker [Zarathushtra] is powerless, (merely) the voice of a man without might, although I wish him to be one who possesses rule through power ~ when during my lifetime [yavā 'during (this) life']⁴⁰ shall that person appear who shall give help and hand to him?'" Y29:9, Insler 1975.

Being mortal, and therefore imperfect, the living soul of the good in mortal existence thinks of Zarathushtra as powerless. She wants a champion, who has **rule through power** in a worldly sense. So here Zarathushtra shows us the difference between mortal perceptions of power and rule, and Wisdom's perception which, in the *Vohu Xshathra Gatha*, is a rule that serves.

"... One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve..." Y51:18, Insler 1975.

Indeed, not only the allegorical cow, but Zarathushtra himself (well aware of his lack of worldly power),⁴¹ ~ is a little anxious. In the next verse, Y29:4, (perhaps reassuring each other) they express the conviction that Wisdom fulfils his words (referring to His previous assurance of assistance the "[*māθra-*] of butter and milk" and Wisdom's assurance to the cow that "*the shaper did fashion thee for both a cattle-breeder and a pastor.*" Y29:6.). And they express the further conviction that Wisdom is decisive and has the power to bring about what he wishes,

*"The Wise One is the first to heed his agreements [*sax'ārā* 'words'], ... He is the decisive Lord. As He shall wish it, so shall it be for us."* Y29:4, Insler 1975.

The last sentence is not an expression of fatalism. It simply expresses the belief that Wisdom has the power to accomplish what Wisdom wishes to accomplish ~ the nurture and increase of goodness, and the elimination of evil, in mortal existence.

As you can see from the string of 3 dots, I have omitted a substantial part of this verse because linguists are in disagreement about the omitted part. I have footnoted an explanation, and my opinion.⁴² Verse 5 follows.

Verse 5. "Thus, indeed, did we two continue to pray to the Lord [*ahura-*] with outstretched hands [*uštānāiš* ... *zastāiš* pl.] ~ namely my self [*mā urvā* 'my soul'] and that of the fertile cow ~ that we might dispose [*mazdqm* 'Wisdom'] to the questions: *Is there to be no future for the man [one] who lives honestly? No future for the man [one] who breeds cattle among the deceitful?*" Y29:5, Insler 1975. There is no word *man* in the GAv. text, (an explanation is footnoted).⁴³

The last 2 questions ~ a touching plea ~ recall to us the hardships and persecution that Zarathushtra himself endured for teaching Wisdom's path ~ the path of truth, the beneficial way of being. One which surely resonates with anyone who has ever tried to act with integrity against stiff opposition.

And here again, we see that 'cow' is used metaphorically. A cow doesn't have a hand. So she cannot pray to the Divine with an **outstretched hand**. Here, the 2 outstretched hands ~ one belonging to Zarathushtra and the other to the allegorical cow, indicate that they seek the help of the Divine as an ally, a partner, a friend.⁴⁴

The term 'one who breeds cattle [*fšuyant-*]' is a metaphor for one who increases the beneficial in mortal existence ~ the allegorical cow.⁴⁵ And the term **fertile cow** is another way of saying that the good in mortal existence will increase.

In verse 10, Zarathushtra continues his prayer (from verse 5).

"Lord, grant ye⁴⁶ to these (mortals) strength and the rule of truth and good thinking, by means of which one shall create peace and tranquility. I have indeed recognized the first possessor of this to be Thee, Wise One." Y29:10.

Here, truth and good thinking are no longer allegories. They are qualities of Wisdom's rule. Zarathushtra asks (without metaphors) for the gift of **strength** and the 'rule of truth and good thinking' which is a plea to increase these beneficial qualities (*amesha spenta*) in mortal existence (the allegorical 'cow').

The **rule of truth and good thinking**, (one aspect of which is social justice) brings peace and tranquility ~ an end to the suffering caused by wrongdoings.

We see here an inter-play between the preceding request by the allegorical **cow** for help from someone powerful as the world defines power, and Zarathushtra's understanding (in Y29:10), that ultimate power comes from the qualities that wisdom/Wisdom personifies ~ the rule (*x šaθra-*) of the true (correct, good) order of existence (*aša-*) and its comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), ~ which rule consists of (and cannot exist without) the beneficial thoughts, words and actions which embody the true order of existence, (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), ~ giving it substance, making it real.⁴⁷ That is why in the Gathas, *ārmaiti-* gives power ~ to the King, and to those of us who may not rule others but still must rule themselves ("... Give thou, o [*ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth'] **power to Vishtaspa and to me ...**" Y28:7, Insler 1975).

Zarathushtra then concludes his prayer and the song itself with the following words.

"Where are truth and good thinking, and where their rule? Yes, come ye now to me. Wise One, do ye acknowledge [paiī.zānatā]⁴⁸ those fit [frāx šnənā 'those (who are) discerning']⁴⁹ for the great task [mazōi magāi.ā],⁵⁰ Lord, (come) now to us down here in consequence of our gift for you." Y29:11, Insler 1975.

The plural '**ye**', represents (the allegorical) truth, good thinking, the beneficial way of being, which here are integrated into the name of the Divine, 'Wisdom "... [*mazdā* (voc. sg.) 'Wisdom'], **do ye acknowledge ...**" - indicating that these allegories are actually qualities of the Divine.⁵¹ I translate this verse somewhat differently (as preceding fts. show). But regardless of such differences, this last verse (Y29:11), says some important things upon which we can agree.

It starts with a call for, a search for,⁵² truth, good thinking, and their governance, and the necessity for us to become involved in the establishment of such good rule in mortal existence (with each beneficial thought, word and action) ~ thereby overcoming the wrongdoings that bring suffering.

And in this concluding verse, we see a mutual gifting.

Wisdom's gift to mortal existence of Its teachings, the path of the amesha spenta ~ truth, its good comprehension, its beneficial embodiment, its good rule, the beneficial way of being,

~ which is Wisdom's solution to end mortal suffering.

And we in turn gift back to the Divine our personification of these qualities in the way we live our lives,

~ which is Wisdom's solution to end mortal suffering.⁵³

This mutual gifting ~ from the Divine to mortals, and from mortals to the Divine: ~ increases the good in mortal existence, and ultimately brings about the inevitable Good End ~ *because* of the freedom to choose! A neat paradox.⁵⁴

It is this mutual gifting that makes existence healed, whole, complete.⁵⁵ How beautiful is that ?!

Conclusion:

Zarathushtra's perception of Wisdom's solution to the suffering in mortal existence is as applicable today, as it was in his time.

So often, our problems seem to be overwhelming. And it is human nature to long for a being with miraculous powers to come and make everything all right (the child within us all). In the later Avestan and Pahlavi texts, it was the Saoshyant ~ a magical person who would save us all ~ make everything turn out all right. Today it may be Superman, or Yoda, or some being from another star system with miraculous powers.

But that is not the answer.

It is not a perfected being ~ a savior ~ who will come and make the wrongdoings that cause suffering, disappear.

We mortals, in partnership with wisdom/Wisdom, have to increase the good in existence (be [cattle-breeders](#)); care for each other, and for existence as a whole (be [pastors](#)), which (incrementally) will make the wrongdoings that cause suffering disappear.

According to this Yasna, it is not suffering alone that is contrary to the true, (correct, good) order of existence. Our sufferings increase our understanding and enables us ~ freely, from within ~ to change, to eliminate, our wrongful preferences, as part of the process of spiritual evolution.

What does not befit an order of existence that is true, correct, good, is suffering without nurture, without help, to see us through the difficulties of the refiner's fire.

It is mutual, loving help ~ each of us helping each other ~ the caring, the concern, of a beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*), that generates good thinking, which brings about the beneficial in mortal existence. The solution to its suffering. Another of Zarathushtra's beautiful circles of thought.

In this way, we ourselves become fashioners of the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence.

It is the growth (incrementally) of this divine force ~ good thinking ~ that enables us to understand, embody, and govern mortal existence (in ourselves and in our social units) in accordance with what is true, correct (right), wholly good. It is the growth of good thinking that informs the thoughts, words and actions that heal existence of the maladies of cruelty, rage, predatory violence, bondage, and the other wrongful choices that cause suffering.

The solution to our problems lies in our own hands ~ with mutual, loving, help from each other, from the Divine, and from all the living. It is a good thinking mortal ~ not a miraculous being ~ who partners with the Divine, and is the key to saving existence from untruth and the destructive forces that cause suffering. Not that a good thinking individual always wins! But it is the start, the genesis. And it needs a community of good thinking individuals (another paradox!) to form the critical mass that excellerates change.

Was Zarathushtra an *ahura-* -- a perfected being? One who personified the amesha spenta completely? Well, the evidence of the Gathas shows that he was not.

We have only to recall the fashioner of the cow's request for a 'lord' ~ an *ahura-* to destroy the things that cause suffering ("*...Whom do ye wish to be her master [ahurəm], one who might destroy the fury (caused) by the deceitful?*" Y29:2, Insler 1975);

And truth's reply, "*...Of yonder beings, that strongest one is not to be found through whom the lofty are to activate the lowly...*" Y29:3, Insler 1975.

Zarathushtra himself does not claim to personify wisdom. He does not exempt himself from the need to search for truth on an on-going basis, "*... 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.

We tend to think that it is the job of great souls (or 'God') to give us fact-specific answers to solve our problems for us.

What should we do? What should we think? What is the 'truth'? Tell us! Tell us!

Well, the 'truth' Zarathushtra came to impart is that we must discover what is true, good, right for ourselves by searching for it on-going ~ scientific truth, social truth, emotional truth, spiritual truth ~ an incremental process which will (with many mis-steps) eventually give us the kind understanding that generates good governance ([lordship](#)) over ourselves and our social units, which will end the wrongdoings that cause suffering.

In the final analysis, the message of Y29 is a variation of a theme that is reflected again and again, in 1,001 kaleidoscopic ways, throughout the songs of the Gathas ~ that the means and the end are the same;⁵⁶ that existence is healed through the qualities that make a being divine ~ the true order of existence which is most good (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*) ~ the divine in existence, in living beings ~ an existence healed of wrongdoing.

It is good to reflect that after years of rejection, persecution, and wandering, Zarathushtra did indeed find a patron of worldly power, King Vishtaspa, who appreciated the validity of his teachings, and who (subject to human limitations) made the commitment to implement the beneficial rule of truth, good thinking and its embodiment in thought, word and action, in his small kingdom. That Zarathushtra's good vision, for a time at least, did indeed bring peace and happiness to that kingdom is reflected in his description of the environment that his teachings created. In Y46:16, he says to one of his followers, Frashaoshtra Haugva:

"Frashaoshtra Haugva, come thou hither ... Hither where [*ārmaiti-*] is in harmony with truth,⁵⁷ where sovereignty is in the power of good thinking, where the Wise Lord dwells in maturity." Y46:16, Insler 1975; or, as Professor K. D. Irani put it, "where Wisdom is at home."⁵⁸

In other verses, Zarathushtra re-states (without allegory) the divine solution provided in Yasna 29.

"...Through good thinking the Creator⁵⁹ of existence shall promote the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish." Y50:11, Insler 1975.

"... By your [pl.] rule, Lord, Thou [sg.]⁶⁰ shalt truly heal this world in accord with our wish." Y34:15.

"... Therefore, may we be those who shall heal this world [*ahūm* 'existence'] ..." Y30:9, Insler 1975;

"...the loving man ... [*spənta-* 'beneficial'] through truth [*aša-* 'through the true order of existence], watching over the heritage for all, is a world-healer [*ahūm.biš* '(an) existence~healer'] and Thy ally [*urvaθō*] ... [*mazdā* Wisdom]." Y44:2, Insler translation 1975.

It is worth remembering that the fashioner of all that comprises a good, generous, loving, nurturing, beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) in mortal existence, is in fact ... the essence of the sacred ~ in mortals and in the Divine.⁶¹

For some of us, religion is a preoccupation with the afterlife. Zarathushtra's focus is on this life.

For some of us religion helps us to cope with our fears ~ fear of the many adverse things in life over which we have no control, fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of punishment. Zarathushtra's teachings are not fear-based. They provide a joyful, friendly, inclusive framework for thinking and living without fear. A paradigm of existence in which eventually (and logically) good will overcome evil with certainty, in ourselves and in our world, even though it often really seems, that will never happen! ~ as Zarathushtra's own experiences made him well aware ("...Is there to be no future for the man who lives honestly? No future for the man who breeds cattle [who increases the beneficial in mortal existence] among the deceitful?" Y29:5, Insler 1975).

So often, and so repeatedly, truth, goodness, reason, seem to be overwhelmed by lies, greed, hatred, prejudice, destruction, the lust for power. And it sometimes seems so futile, so hopeless, to expect enough people to commit to goodness, to make a difference. But we need to stay with it. What's the alternative !? What happens if we quit !? We need to continue the fight with weapons of good thinking and the good words and actions it generates. Because when all is said and done, truth, for its own sake, is the only game in town ~ despite reverses, despite (splendid) failures, despite the fact that we may not prevail in the short run. Each time you think, speak or act in a good way ~ however insignificant, however hopeless ~ it has an impact of which you may not even be aware. Each of us is indispensable in bringing about the true (good) order of existence ... incrementally ... and then completely, thereby healing existence. As an ancient wisdom-worshipper (*mazdayasni*) said:

'... Through effort in taking a stand, we are (part) of the good'. *Yasna Haptanghaiti* 35:2 (my translation).⁶²

* * * * *

¹ The Gathas mention the care and increase of cattle, and also horse racing (with chariots). And (according to later texts) Zarathushtra's father's name was *Pourushaspa* (which means '(having) lots of mares'). So raising horse was also a way of life in Zarathushtra's culture. But raising horses would likely have been possible only for those who were (more or less) well off. The average person would not have been in a position to raise horses. But most families could have had even one, or a few, cows, which provided milk, from which they made butter. So in selecting 'cow' and 'cattle', Zarathushtra used metaphors that would have been well understood by the general population.

² The **Pahlavi 'translation'** of this verse (Y29:1) is as follows. It includes Pahlavi explanations, which Mills has placed in square brackets. Words in round parentheses, or in italics, are not in the Pahlavi text, they have been added by Mills. And Mills has added "(b)" and "(c)" to indicate the 2d and 3d lines of the verse. Here is the Pahlavi 'translation'.

"To you, O ye Ameshospends, **Goshaurvan** complained [some say that the **Lord-Bull (or his sovereignty)** addressed Auharmazd, thus]: To whom am I allotted [for feeding and keeping?] For whom am I shaped? [that is, for whom am I created]? (b) This one is upon me, Fury [who smites me with fury], the tyrannical [that is, he will harrass me], the wounder, [that is, my unmeasured slaughter makes my life in all things hateful], and a tearer again *he* is [that is, they will commit murder upon me], and a plunderer also, [that is, he will rob me], (c) I have no nourisher (or favourer) save You, [that is, I know none from whom my welfare so comes as from You], therefore prepare Ye for me that which is a good pasture." Mills, 1894, *A Study Of The Five Zarathushtrian Gathas*, pp. 20 - 21 (AMS reprint).

This commentary is not compatible with 'soul of mother earth'. Parenthetically, this Pahlavi 'translation' shows that the grammar and vocabulary of Avestan were no longer understood by this Pahlavi translator, in that a translation of *urvan* 'soul' does not appear here (although it does so appear in other Pahlavi texts), and this translator was not aware of the gender of *geush* (fem.) 'of (the) cow'. The Pahlavi translations of the Avestan texts are more in the nature of recording traditional knowledge of what a given verse said, with explanations, and commentaries, rather than actual translations. But I love the collegiality (and the honesty!) of acknowledging various opinions.

Neriosangh Dhaval's Sanskrit translation translates Avestan *geush urvan* as "the soul of the herds", Mills, *ibid.* p. 21. Here again, Neriosangh did not understand the Avestan language sufficiently to know that *geush* is (sg. and fem.) 'cow', not pl. 'herds' (which would be a mix of cows and bulls). But at least he understood that *urvan* means 'soul'.

The Pahlavi text, Selections of Zad-sparam, (Chapters. II and III, SBE 5, pp 161 ~ 163) has some echoes of Y29:1, but also other ideas that are not in the Gathas. In Chap. III Zad-sparam states,

"And Goshurvan, as she was herself the soul of the primeval ox, when the ox passed away, came out of the ox, even as the soul from the body of the dead, and kept up the clamour of a cry to Auharmazd in such fashion as that of an army, a thousand strong, when they cry out together..." § 1, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, p. 163.

Zad-sparam's identification of 'goshurvan' with the soul of the primeval ox may have been a mix of Zarathushtra's thought in Y29:1 and earlier creations stories, because:

(1) 'goshurvan' in this Chapter of Zad-sparam is referred to as 'she', (as is the Av. 'soul of the cow' *geush urvan-* in the Gathas), but here, it is the soul of the dead 'primeval ox' that cries out to the Divine, whereas in Yasna 29 she is very much alive ~ not dead at any time; and

(2) Zad-sparam in another chapter associates the primeval ox with one of the old (perhaps pre-Zarathushtrian) creation myths, in which, from the dead body and seed of the dead primeval ox (who was male), all plants and animals came into being. Chapter IX, E. W. West SBE 5, pp. 177 - 182.

Therefore, I conclude that Zad-sparam in speaking of 'goshurvan' (in Ch. III) expressed the imagery (roughly) as shown in Y29:1, but in trying to understand what this verse Y29:1 said, Zad-sparam interpreted it based on the creation myth of the primeval ox (which is not in the Gathas). For Zarathushtra's ideas on 'creation' see *Part Two: The Puzzle Of Creation*.

Zad-sparam wrote his texts a couple of centuries after the Arab invasion, in which the learned were slaughtered, so much knowledge was lost, (and in any event, even earlier, by Sasanian times, the grammar and vocabulary of Avestan ~ as a language ~ was not understood). So Zad-sparam no longer knew that Zarathushtra was using 'soul of the cow' as a metaphor, an allegory ~ just as he no longer knew that the fire within all things (so faithfully recorded by him) was also a metaphor (or what it stood for) ~ evidenced by his commentary attempting to explain it (detailed in a footnote in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*).

Zad-sparam was not only a high priest, he was a dear, good, luminous soul. True, his style is a bit preachy and his writings are culture bound (in ways that sometimes are a turn off). But he wanted very much to keep alive (what he believed to be) knowledge of the religion ~ as such, his writings include beautiful stories and ideas that are pure Zarathushtra (see for example, *Part One: Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories*), but also other ideas that are very far removed from Zarathushtra's thought. Nevertheless, without his writings, we would have lost a great deal of significant knowledge which must have come down from early Zoroastrians who understood the Gathas well.

³ The evidence regarding the ideas represented by the allegories and metaphors in this mini-drama has been explored in detail in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*.

⁴ In Yasna 43, in the opening lines of verses 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15, Zarathushtra says "And I have already realized Thee to be [*spənta-*], Wise Lord, when he attended me with good thinking..." Y43.7, 9, 11, 13, 15, Insler 1975. The 3d person pronoun **he** is not expressed in the Avestan text. A 3p pronoun is implied because the 3p is part of the verb form. Insler believes this **he** who attends with good thinking refers to *spənta- mainyu-* (because *mainyu-* is a grammatically masculine noun, hence Insler's choice of the masculine pronoun **he**). I agree that the implied 3p pronoun here refers to *spənta- mainyu-*. It cannot stand for the Lord Wisdom because in each of these near identical phrases, Zarathushtra addresses the Divine directly. So in effect, Zarathushtra repeatedly says (in these near identical lines) that a beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-* ~ which is the Lord Wisdom's way of being) attends with good thinking – an allegorical way of saying, a beneficial way of being [*spənta- mainyu-*] generates comprehension of the true (correct, wholly good) order of existence (a comprehension which is good thinking), which includes an understanding that the nature of the Divine Itself is beneficial [*spənta-*]. This chapter Y43 is discussed in more detail in *Part Six: Yasna 43*.

⁵ For example:

In Y31:9 the *fashioner of the cow* (the beneficial way of being, *spənta- mainyu-*) is described as *aš.x ratuš mainyuš*, which means a 'very-reasoning [*aš.x ratuš*] way of being [*mainyuš*]' (detailed in *Part Three: Xratu*).

In Y28:7, good thinking is the comprehension of truth,

"Give, o truth, this reward, namely the attainments of good thinking ..." Y28:7 Insler translation 1975.

And here, let us recall, that in the Gathas, *spənta-* 'beneficial', and

asha- '(the) true, correct, wholly good order of existence, and
 vohu- / vahishta- 'good / most good'
 are equated. Detailed:

In *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being*; and *Truth, Asha*; and

In *Part Two: The Puzzle Of The Most Good, Vahishta*.

⁶ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and Its Network*. And (as the selection 'cow' for this allegory suggests) the existence of the divine in mortals is not limited to human beings.

At first I was puzzled by a seeming inconsistency here. There is ample evidence in the Gathas that the 'cow' is an allegory for the beneficial in mortal existence (detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*). As such, she is clearly not an allegory for the 'bad' in existence. So in this song, Yasna 29, is Zarathushtra concerned only with providing a solution for the suffering of the 'good', and not also for the suffering of the 'bad'? If so, wouldn't this be a rather narrow, mean-spirited idea ~ not consistent with the thinking of a man to whom the generosity of 'beneficence' was the highest description of 'good' (Y30:3). Was Zarathushtra being inconsistent here? Was I missing something?

I think perhaps the answer is that (in our present reality) every unit of mortal existence, contains within it some 'good' and some 'bad' (Y30:3, Y45:2). This is clearly true of the units of existence we call human beings, as our day to day experiences prove. Parenthetically, scientific studies of animals, birds (and even plants and trees if recently published books are to be believed) are discovering that such non-human life forms not only think, but also make choices ~ some beneficent, some destructive (maleficent). And Zarathushtra lived in a time period in which man interacted in 1,001 repeated ways with the (non-human) life forms of his pastoral environment. Their behavior would have been constantly under his observing eye.

In short, the seeming inconsistency arises because of our compartmentalized thinking ~ segregating people and other life forms into the 'good' and the 'bad', when each one of them is a mix of the two. So by the sufferings of the allegorical cow, I think that Zarathushtra is speaking of the sufferings of what is good (the divine) in each unit of existence (each of which also has some 'bad' in it). Thus, the sufferings of the allegorical cow would indeed be the sufferings experienced by all the living ~ all of whom have some 'good' (divine qualities) in them.

Now it is true that Zarathushtra often speaks of 'deceitful persons' (or 'untruthful persons').

"... A man should not wish to satisfy the many deceitful people, ..." Y43:15, Insler 1975;

"But the deceitful persons, bad in rule, bad in actions and words, bad in conceptions and thoughts, ..." Y49:11, Insler 1975.

But this is a natural (and necessary) way to describe a person who is acting in a wrongful way. He could not realistically have said,

"... A man should not wish to satisfy the many deceitful people who also have some good in them, ..." Y43:15; or

"But the deceitful persons, bad in rule, bad in actions and words, bad in conceptions and thoughts, who also sometimes are good in actions, good in conceptions and good in thoughts..." Y49:11

It is not realistic to speak in that way. But identifying a person who does a lot of wrong as a bad person, is different from dividing people, existence, into two categories ~ the 'good' and the 'bad'. See *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*.

That is how I see it. Perhaps you may think of a more insightful explanation.

⁷ The identity of the *fashioner of the cow* is disclosed in other Gatha verses as follows (Insler 1975 translation),

As the (beneficial) way of being

"...this [*mainyu-* 'way of being'] who fashioned the joy-bringing cow for this world..." Y47:3. For the translation of *spanta-* *mainyu-* as a 'beneficial way of being', see *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*. The beneficial (*spanta-*) is the essence of the sacred in Zarathushtra's thought.

As Wisdom,

"...For whom hast Thou fashioned the joy-bringing, fertile cow?" Y44:6.

As Wisdom's most-beneficial-sacred way of being

"Thou, Wise One, who hast fashioned the cow ... by reason of Thy [*spāništa- mainyu-* 'most beneficial way of being']..." Y51.7.

Now we already know that the true order of existence, *aša*, is a beneficial order (see *Part One: Truth, Asha*). So if you look past the imagery of "the fashioner of the cow" for the idea behind the image, you will see that a beneficial way of being generates (fashions, shapes) an existence that is governed (*xšaθra-*) by the true order of existence (*aša*), its comprehension (good thinking *vohu- manah-*), and its beneficial embodiment in thoughts, words and actions (*spānta- ārmaiti-*). So in a nutshell, it is a beneficial way of being that fashions the beneficial in mortal existence ~ an existence which is the essence of the sacred (comprising qualities of the divine, the amesha spenta).

⁸ In ancient poetry (surviving even recently in eastern poetry) it is not unusual for a speaker to refer to himself in the third person, and we see this done in other places in the Gathas as well.

⁹ Insler 1975 p. 29. His asterisked footnote to the title Yasna 29 says, "The verses should properly follow the sequence 1 - 3, 6 - 9, 4 - 5, 10 - 11." In a well-reasoned analysis, Insler has proposed that in transmitting this Yasna, the order of the verses became changed, and he explains his opinion, pp. 136 - 141.

¹⁰ If we look at vss. 4 and 5, we see that they are out of sequence with the vss. which precede them (vss. 2 ~ 3) and with the vss. that follow them (vss. 6 - 9). As the following demonstrates (Insler 1975 translation throughout).

In vs. 2 the fashioner of the allegorical cow questions whether the cow's suffering is consistent with the true (correct) order of existence ("truth" for short) and asks who is the lord who will destroy the causes of her suffering;

In vs. 3 truth answers these questions ~ in effect saying, that there is no freedom from enmity for the cow, nor has that strongest one (a perfected being) been found among mortals to protect her.

In vs. 4 (according to the mss.) out of the blue comes the statement that Wisdom (*mazda*) "is the first to heed His agreements [or words]". Yet no 'agreements' (or 'words') of Wisdom have been mentioned up to now. And the concluding sentences "He is the decisive Lord. As He shall wish it, so shall it be for us" is also out of the blue, because there is no indication (before verse 4) as to what the Lord's wishes might be. In fact, the only thing that precedes these sentences is the lament and detailed sufferings of the cow. So if verse 4 originally followed verse 3, its words would seem to be an affirmation that the sufferings complained of are the way it is, rather than providing a solution for them.

And vs. 5 says "Thus indeed, did we two continue to pray to the Lord with outstretched hands ~ namely, my self and that of the fertile cow ~..." which is dislocated from the preceding verses in the following way:

There is no mention of Zarathushtra in any of the preceding verses of this song ~ he has not yet been chosen by good thinking ~ so the opening words "Thus indeed, did we two continue to pray to the Lord" are not related to anything mentioned before.

By contrast, the vss. numbered 6 through 9 in the mss. are natural sequences to vss. 2 and 3; and verses 5 and 4 are natural sequences to vs. 9 as shown in the main part of this talk.

¹¹ Some Zoroastrians are shocked at any suggestion that the Gathas have not been transmitted exactly as Zarathushtra composed them. No changes. But a moment's reflection makes it clear that this is neither logical, nor reasonable, nor indeed factual, as various differences in the surviving mss. themselves attest.

In the millennia that followed the composition of the Gathas, at least two devastating wars of conquest were experienced, during each of which the learned were killed, and precious knowledge lost (I hope to upload to my

website, chapters in *Part Four* which show the loss of knowledge after the fall of the Achaemenian Empire, and even more so after the Arab invasion of Iran).

After the devastation wrought by Alexander, the job of collecting the remnants of the scattered texts (and/or versions of them transmitted by memory) was started in the reign of the Parthian monarch, Valkash, and was completed two hundred years later by Tansar, a high priest of the Sasanian empire (by which time the Avestan language was no longer well understood). Tansar, (the texts tell us), kept as much of this collected knowledge as seemed good to him and discarded the rest (what precious knowledge was lost because Tansar did not think it worthwhile, we do not know).

Did any Zoroastrian texts survive the destruction of the Arab invasion of Iran (except as remembered)? We do not know for certain.

The Pahlavi texts that we have today were all written two or more centuries after the destruction of the Sasanian empire, and were subsequently copied and recopied down through the centuries in both Iran and India.

It is therefore understandable that the order of the verses in Yasna 29 may not have been transmitted as originally composed. Indeed, the wonder is not that anything was inadvertently changed. The miracle is that the Gathas and other Avestan texts survived in as good condition as we have them today.

¹² The translation of the following verses is that of Insler 1975 (except where otherwise stated). Words in *italics* here are Insler's way of indicating the words being spoken by someone. I have placed the verses in what Insler thinks was their original order, but the numbering shows the order in which they appear in the mss. Words in black font in square brackets are the way I would translate a given word or phrase (explained in other parts of this chapter) ~ representing my respectful disagreement regarding certain key aspects of Insler's translation.

Y29:1 "To all of you the soul of the cow lamented: *For whom did ye shape me? Who fashioned me? (For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity. I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage.*"

Y29:2 "Thereupon the fashioner of the cow asked truth: *Is thy judgment for the cow to be in this way? If ye ruling ones have placed her (on earth), there should always be cow-caring zeal by a pastor. Whom do ye wish to be her master [ahura-], one who might destroy the fury (caused) by the deceitful? "*

Y29:3 "To him they replied through truth: *There is no help free of enmity for the cow. Of yonder beings, that strongest one is not to be found through whom the lofty are to activate the lowly, to whom I of ready ear shall come at his calls.*"

Y29:6 "Thereupon the Wise Lord, the Knowing One, spoke these solemn words, by reason of His attentiveness: *A master [ahu-] has not been found by a single one (of us), nor a judgment which indeed befits truth. However, the shaper did fashion thee for both a cattle-breeder and a pastor.*"

Y29:7 "The Wise Lord, who is of the same temperament with truth, fashioned that promise [*mqr̥ra-*] of butter and milk for the cow. He is [*sp̥anta-* 'beneficial'] to the needy in accord with His commandment [*s̥āsna-* 'teaching']. (He said:) *Who has (been found) by thee, good thinking, who might give these things to the mortals below?"*

Y29:8 [good thinking's reply] "*This one, Zarathushtra Spitama has been found by me here to be the only one who has given ear to our commandments [s̥āsna- 'teachings']. He wishes, Wise One, to recite hymns of commemoration for us and for truth, if he might receive for himself sweetness of speech.*"

Y29:9 "But thereupon the soul of the cow wept: *I who have recognized that my caretaker is powerless, (merely) the voice of a man without might, although I wish him to be one who possesses rule through power ~ when, during my lifetime [yavā 'this] life', shall shall that person appear who shall give help and hand to him? "*

Y29:4 [Zarathushtra and the allegorical cow speaking] "*The Wise One is the first to heed His agreements with both gods and men, those which He indeed openly brought about and those which He shall bring about in secret. He is the decisive Lord. As He shall with it, so shall it be for us.*" [This verse has words which have not yet been fully decoded and which Insler himself finds 'enigmatic'].

Y29:5 "Thus indeed, did we two continue to pray to the Lord with outstretched hands ~ namely, myself and that of the fertile cow ~ that we might dispose the Wise One to the questions: *Is there to be no future for the man who lives honestly? No future for the man who breeds cattle among the deceitful?* "

Y29:10 "Lord, grant ye to these (mortals) strength and the rule of truth and of good thinking, by means of which one shall create peace and tranquility. *I have indeed recognized the first possessor of this to be Thee, Wise One.*"

Y29:11 "*Where are truth and good thinking and where their rule? Yes, come ye now to me. Wise One, do ye acknowledge those fit for the great task!* ['acknowledge for the great task (those who are) discerning'] *Lord, (come) now to us down here in consequence of our gift for you.*"

¹³ Zarathushtra's idea of Wisdom's rule ('[ye ruling ones](#)') comprises a governance that is in accord with the true order of existence, its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action, its most-good comprehension (Y51:4); detailed further in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, and Power*. Good rule cannot occur without the preceding three attributes of the divine which, together with good rule, comprise a beneficial way of being. In Yasna 29, only truth, good thinking and the beneficial way of being are allegorized. However, the beneficial way of being includes embodied truth (*ārmaiti*-) and good rule (*vohu- xšaθra*-) ~ it comprises all of the attributes of the Divine (see *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*). Truth and good thinking are singled out to be allegorized in this Yasna (Y29), in order to express the ideas which Zarathushtra wishes to convey here ~ that suffering without help is not consistent with the true order of existence; is not acceptable to the beneficial-sacred way of being; that evil and wrongdoing cannot be abolished by Divine edict; and that good thinking is the genesis of the solution for the sufferings of existence.

¹⁴ The evidence that the true (correct) order of existence is a good, beneficial order is detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

¹⁵ The meaning of *ahura*- as 'lord', and the ways in which Zarathushtra uses 'lord' in the Gathas, are detailed in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine* and also in *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31:4*.

¹⁶ *ahmāi* 'to him' refers to the beneficial way of being, *spənta- mainyu*-. The word *mainyu*- is a grammatically masc. noun, hence in Avestan the pronoun which stands for *mainyu*- is masc. as well (in dative sg. masc. form ~ *ahmai* 'to him'). But this is a generic masculine ~ because a 'way of being' has no intrinsic gender (such as 'son' or 'daughter' have).

¹⁷ Skjaervo 2006 shows *ādrāng* as a grammatical form of the stem *ādra*- 'weak, needy'. But linguists are in disagreement. The Avestan word for 'needy' in the Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo) is a synonym ~ *drigu*-.

¹⁸ Detailed in *Part One: A Friendly Universe*; and in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

¹⁹ Certain teachers of Zoroastrianism today have expressed the view that Wisdom is not 'all powerful' in Zarathushtra's thought (even though in the 101 Names prayer, '*harvesp-tavaan* 'omnipotence' is one of Wisdom's qualities, according to Kanga's translation).

This opinion (that Wisdom is not all powerful) is not supported by any evidence in any of the ancient texts. And it betrays a lack of understanding Zarathushtra's thought, in two respects:

(1) The idea of making evil disappear, is the solution of the child within us all (*make it go away*). It is not a thoughtful solution that meets the realities of our existence ~ neither the nature of mortal beings (which are a mix of 'good' and 'evil'), nor the fact that it is through our experiences (including suffering) that we grow, evolve, spiritually ~ that our understanding is (incrementally) increased, and our 'evil' preferences are (incrementally) eliminated. More important, to conclude that Wisdom is not all powerful because It cannot make evil 'disappear', totally misses the fact that (according to Zarathushtra) Wisdom does indeed have a most effective solution for eliminating evil ~ a solution in which evil is eliminated with certainty *because* of the freedom to choose (a neat paradox ~ see *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*).

(2) The idea that Wisdom is not all powerful has also been based on the notion of cosmic dualism ~ that there are 2 uncreated entities ~ one responsible for the 'creation' of all that is 'good' in existence, and the other responsible for the 'creation' of all that is 'bad' in existence. But the idea of cosmic dualism is absent from the Gathas. Angra Mainyu as the name of any entity is not in the Gathas. The word '*angra*' appears in the Gathas only as a concept, a quality (detailed in *Part One: Does The Devil Exist?*). In addition, cosmic dualism ~ the idea of 2 'creators' ~ one all good and one all bad ~ is contrary to specific evidence in the Gathas (detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way Of Being, Spenta Mainyu*), and it is far removed from Zarathushtra's ideas about 'creation'. See *Part One: The Identity Of The Divine*; and *Part Two: The Puzzle Of Creation*.

²⁰ See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra and Power*.

²¹ Translations of the Gathas by first class linguists, have read into the Gathas the notion of punishment, destruction, retribution, etc. for the 'wicked'. But no mortal is 100% 'wicked'. We all are a mix of bad and more good qualities (Y30:3), of harmful and more beneficial qualities (Y45:2). So punishing any mortal (who has done some good) with the tortures of 'hell' is not consistent with a Divine who is just, let alone wholly good, wholly beneficial, wholly loving.

Is this inconsistency (of a loving, wholly good, deity engaging in punitive tortures) Zarathushtra's? Or are the translations the problem?

If we examine all the verses in which translators have Wisdom destroying the 'wicked', or punishing them, or exacting retribution, we see (in abundance) that the inconsistencies are in the translations ~ not in Zarathushtra's thought. Detailed in *Part Three: Adverse Consequences, Not Punishment*; and *Is Wisdom A 'God' Of Anger, Enmity?*

The notion of 'hell' as a place where the 'wicked' are tortured, is not in the Gathas (in which 'heaven' and 'hell' are states of being that we become, not places to which we go); detailed in *Part Two: The Houses Of Paradise & Hell*.

The notion of 'hell' as a place where the 'wicked' are tortured, is not in any later Avestan text; detailed in *Part Three: The Absence Of Damnation & Hell in Other Avestan Texts*.

The notion of 'hell' as a place where the 'wicked' are tortured, is first found in Pahlavi texts; detailed in *Part Three: Heaven & Hell In Pazand & Pahlavi Texts*. (Pazand is simply the Pahlavi language written in Avestan script plus some ideograms).

²² Detailed in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*; and *Part One: A Friendly Universe*.

²³ Detailed in *Part One: A Friendly Universe*; and in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*; and *The Puzzle Of The Most-Good, Vahishta*.

²⁴ Detailed in:

In *Part One: A Friendly Universe*; and

In *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

²⁵ The meaning of the Avestan compound word *frašō.kərəiti-* is discussed in *Part Three: Heaven In Other Avestan Texts*.

²⁶ Zaehner 1961, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, (Phoenix Press reprint 2003), p. 308.

²⁷ See *Part Two: Molten Glowing Metal*.

²⁸ Detailed in a chapter in *Part One: The Angels Among Us*; and in a chapter in *Part Three: Chinwat, The Bridge Of Discerning*.

²⁹ The following quotations from the Gathas show that Wisdom helps with truth and good thinking ~ helping us to increase our understanding. In the first of these examples, Zarathushtra refers to himself in the 3d person. Speaking to Wisdom, he says,

"What help by truth [aša-] hast Thou for Zarathushtra who calls? What help by good thinking [vohu- manah-] hast Thou for me, ... " Y49:12, Insler 1975.

"Yes, throughout my lifetime I have been condemned as the greatest defiler, I who try to satisfy the poorly protected (creatures) with truth, Wise One [mazdā 'Wisdom] ... come to me ... give support to me. Through good thinking [vohu- manah-], find a means of destruction of this." Y49:1, Insler 1975.

"...Take notice of it, Lord, offering the support which a friend should grant to a friend. Let me see the power of good thinking [vohu- manah-] allied with truth [aša-] !" Y46:2, Insler 1975.

"Wise One, where are those sincere ones who, through their possession of good thinking [vohu- manah-], make even immoral decrees and painful legacies disappear? I know of none other than you [plural]. Therefore protect us in accord with truth [aša-]." Y34:7, Insler 1975. I think the plural here integrates within Wisdom, all the perfected fragments of existence.

³⁰ The argument that the Divine cannot be all powerful, because It needs the involvement of man to defeat evil, with respect, is not well taken for more than one reason.

First, it assumes a definition of 'power' that is coercive. In the Gathas, 'power' is associated with attaining the qualities of the Divine (detailed in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power*).

Second: based on the beliefs of certain dominant religions today, our minds have been conditioned into thinking that the Divine, humans, other life forms etc., are inherently separate ~ each from the other. But in Zarathushtra's thought, that is not so. If we connect the dots of what he specifically says, there is strong evidence that he sees existence as one unit, one whole, temporarily fragmented into mortal shells to enable the perfecting process (this basic premise enables a lot of bits and pieces in the Gathas, which otherwise might be puzzling, to fall into place, like the pieces of a jig saw puzzle). So it is the perfected and unperfected parts of this one being that work together to eliminate evil, increase the good in mortal existence, and thus bring about the ultimate Good End (for every fragment of this one being). The evidence for the foregoing conclusions is detailed in:

Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat (this chapter includes quotations from the Gathas in which Zarathushtra says that the Divine completes us, and we complete the Divine ! Insler translation 1975).

Part One: The Identity Of The Divine,

Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation; A Question Of Immanence; and Did Wisdom Choose Too?

³¹ Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*, which shows quotations from the Gathas in which *spānta-* 'beneficial' and *aša-* 'truth' are equated.

³² In his commentary on Y29:7, Insler states that *mąθra-* is almost always used for the word of Wisdom ~ His precepts ~ but Insler expresses the opinion that when *mąθra-* is associated with His solicitude, Insler prefers the translation 'promise', (an interpretive choice), and further states that *sāsnā-* can be translated as either 'instruction' or 'commandment' In my view (with respect) the more literal 'precept' for *mąθra-* is a better fit, as is 'instruction' (or 'teaching') for *sāsnā-* because the alternative 'commandment' is not consistent with a system of thought in which the freedom to choose is a necessary fundament.

³³ Additional evidence that the true order of existence is a beneficial order, is discussed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

³⁴ "...These Gathas offer refuge and protection for us. They are for us both food and clothing..." Insler 1975 in his commentary on Y29:7, p. 153, translating a part of Yy55:2 which is composed in YAv.

³⁵ In Y29, this solution applies to the sufferings caused by wrongful choices. But the solution applies equally to sufferings that are brought about by the natural order ~ illness, poverty, old age, loss of loved ones, et cetera (which are not the wrongful choices of the Divine !). Good thinking is the genesis of how we deal with such sufferings as

well. See *Part One: A Friendly Universe*, and *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution* which show that such painful experiences play in the process of personal growth and transformation.

³⁶ Detailed with evidence in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

³⁷ See in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*, and *The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

³⁸ In the *Vohu Xshathra Gatha*, Yasna 51:4, Zarathushtra summarizes his notion of Wisdom's rule as follows:

"Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall [*mərəždikā* 'compassion'] take place?

Where truth [*aša-*] which attains glory?

Where [*spənta- āramaiti-* 'beneficial embodied truth']?

Where [*vahišta- manah-* '(the) most good thinking']?

Where, [*mazdā* 'Wisdom'], through Thy rule? " Y51:4, Insler translation, 1975.

In this verse:

Why does Zarathushtra describes truth [*aša-*] as attaining glory? Because truth enlightens (enlightenment itself started out as a metaphor ~ a mind full of light, a mind that sees clearly, sees the truth).

Why does Zarathushtra describes embodied truth as 'beneficial' (*spənta- āramaiti-*)? Because in the Gathas, *asha-* is an order of existence that is good, beneficial (*spənta-*). So thoughts, words and actions that embody truth would also be beneficial (*spənta-*).

Why does Zarathushtra describe thinking (*manah-*) as most good (*vahišta-*)? Because the most good thinking is the comprehension of truth, which is most good (*aša- vahišta-*). In Avestan, the superlative often is used as a crescendo ~ rather than as a difference in kind. The *Hormezd Yasht* is full of instances in which Wisdom's names are given in both the positive and superlative forms ~ the superlative being a crescendo, rather than a difference in kind.

Thieme (Insler's teacher) made a profound observation. He said that in a religion such as Zarathushtra's that has no images of the Divine, the name(s) given to the Divine reveal Its nature, Its personality (detailed in *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*).

³⁹ If you look at the nature of Wisdom's teachings ~ which are the solution to the suffering of the allegorical cow ~ you will see how it fits with the metaphoric meaning of the allegorical cow. Specifically,

The solution for her suffering is:

~ the path of truth, which is most good (*asha- vahišta-*),

~ its good comprehension (*vohu- manah-*),

~ its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- aramaiti-*),

~ its good rule (*vohu- xshathra-*),

~ the beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~

Teachings that nourish and increase the good, the beneficial, the truthful, in mortal existence (the allegorical cow).

⁴⁰ "... when during my lifetime [*yavā*], shall that person appear who shall give help and hand to him?" Y29:9. Here again we have the word *yavā*, discussed in some detail in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*. There is no pronoun 'my' qualifying *yavā* 'during lifetime' in the GAv. text. Insler has added it as his interpretation. But as an allegory, the cow (the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence) is not limited to any one lifetime. It would exist as long as mortal existence exists. In saying 'when during lifetime' I think Zarathushtra's intent may have been duration of mortal existence, and also the time period in which the cow's champion (Zarathushtra) existed, because it was beset by the problems which caused the cow to ask when the help of someone powerful (as the world defines power) would come. I there translate *yavā* as 'during (this) lifetime'

⁴¹ See for example Y46:2 where he says: "I know that (reason) because of which I am powerless, Wise One: by my condition of having few cattle, as well as (that) I am a person with few men. I lament to Thee. Take notice of it, Lord, offering the support which a friend should grant to a friend. Let me see the power of good thinking allied with truth!" Y46:2, Insler 1975. In Zarathushtra's society, cattle and the number of men under one's authority were what gave a person wealth and power. Zarathushtra recognizes that he is not wealthy and powerful, but in the way he asks for Wisdom's help, he shows us that true power comes from truth and its comprehension, good thinking (which is wisdom) "...Let me see the power of good thinking allied with truth!" which is the promised solution of Y29 ~ a solution powerful enough for the destruction the social injustices which caused the lament of the (allegorical) cow.

⁴² The full verse, Y29:4, has words which Insler himself finds "enigmatic" and translators disagree as to their meanings (which is why I did not quote the full verse in the main part of this chapter). Here is the full verse in the Insler 1975 translation.

"The Wise One is the first to heed [*mairišō*] His agreements [*sax'ārā*] with both gods and men [*daēvāišcā mašyāišcā*], those which He indeed openly [*pairī.ciθīt*] brought about and those which He shall bring about in secret [*aiṗī.ciθīt*]. He is the decisive Lord. As He shall with it, so shall it be for us." Y29:4.

mairišō (the superlative of *mar-*) means 'who remembers best' (Skjaervo 2006).

sax'ārā. Insler 1975 comments that *sax'ārā* is ntr. pl. of a stem *sax'ar/n* 'word', which he says is also used in Y53:5 ("...I tell these words [*sax'ānī*] to..." where he emends *sax'ānī* to **sax'ān* **ī*,); and in arriving at the meaning of *sax'ar/n* he compares it with a Soghdian word for 'parole'. He concludes that in Y29:4, *sax'ārā* 'words' is used as the word of the Wise Lord and therefore is "clearly 'promise, agreement'." pp. 149 - 151.

Skjaervo 2006 translates *sax'ar/n* as "*verse" (indicating uncertainty).

Neither Insler nor Skjaervo 2006 identify the declension (case) of *sax'ārā* ~ indicating further uncertainty.

Humbach 1991 states that *sax'ar/n* is usually associated with 'word, speech', but translates it as 'outrages' (1991 Vol. 2, p. 35), and as 'acts of violence' in 2010 (p. 78).

I am persuaded by Insler's translation of *sax'ar/n* as 'word', and I agree that in the context in which it appears in Y29:4 it means the words of Wisdom (i.e. His teachings). But I do not find his interpretive "agreements" persuasive. The meaning of 'agreement' by definition requires the agreement of all parties to what is agreed to. There is no evidence in the Gathas that Wisdom made any 'agreements' with either men or the local gods of his culture (*daēva-*).

daēvāišcā mašyāišcā (both instr. pl., Skjaervo 2006) mean 'with gods and mortals'.

Here, I think Zarathushtra includes *daēvāišcā* (the local gods) with *mašyāišcā* (mortals) to make it clear that the words of Wisdom (His teachings) were not subordinate to anything. They apply to all of existence ~ even the local gods of his culture whose priests were then so powerful, and whose teachings were so different from those of Wisdom (see *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*). Zarathushtra was addressing the people of his culture and so had to do so in a way that reflected the facts on the ground.

aiṗī.ciθīt and *pairī.ciθīt*. Insler finds these words to be "enigmatic". He takes them as adverbs, relating *aiṗī.ciθīt* to Vedic *apīcyā* 'secret', and concludes that "*pairī.ciθīt* must therefore mean its opposite 'openly'." p. 150.

As you can see, the translation of certain aspects of this verse are uncertain. And the question arises: What words of His 'with gods and mortals' does Wisdom well remember, which He brings about (or brings to realization) ~ both openly and in a way that is not apparent (secretly)?

Well, the violence, cruelty, tyranny, etc. of the local deities and their followers are what resulted in the suffering complained of in Y29:1. And in the verse under discussion (Y29:4), I think Zarathushtra expresses the ideas that Wisdom most certainly remembers His words which would include the assurance in verse 6 that the good in mortal existence was fashioned for nurture and increase (pastor/cattle-breeder), as well as His teachings as a whole ~ including the law of consequences, from which wrongdoers ~ whether deities or mortals ~ are not exempt ~ they will reap what they sow (albeit as an educational process).

And if Insler 1975 is correct in his translation of *aipī.ciθīt* and *pairī.ciθīt*, as 'in secret' and 'openly', perhaps this reflects the fact that the operations of the law of consequences sometimes are apparent, clear to all, and that sometimes they function in ways that are not readily apparent. These conclusions are just guesses on my part. But in any event, these uncertain aspects of Y29:4 do not seem to affect the main message of this mini-drama. They reflect Zarathushtra's confidence that existence is ordered in a good, correct, way (*asha- vahishta*), and that Wisdom (who personifies this order of existence) has the power to bring about its realization ~ make it happen, make it real.

For the qualities that are inherent in the true (correct) order of existence, see *Part One: Truth, Asha*. And for the workings of the law of consequences as part of this order of existence, see *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.

Parenthetically, Zarathushtra's mention of the deities of his culture (in this and other verses) inevitably raises the question: Did he believe that these deities were real? Well, Zarathushtra was addressing the people of his culture. To do so effectively, he had to express himself in a way that reflected the facts on the ground ~ regardless of whether or not he himself believed in the existence of such deities. Indeed, there is a verse which suggests that Zarathushtra thought that the cruel deities of his culture were the creations of the minds of their followers.

"Those who, with ill will, have increased fury and cruelty with their own tongues among the cattle-breeders, these non-cattle breeders whose evil effects one has not yet defeated with good effects, they have served [*dqn* 'created'] the gods, which is the conception [*daena-* 'envisionment'] of a deceitful person." Y49:4, Insler translation 1975. The word *daena-* is 'conception' in the sense of an 'envisionment' ~ a mental perception (detailed in *Part Three: Daena*).

Skjaervo 2006 shows that the word *dqn* is a grammatical form of the verb *dā-* which all linguists (including Insler) agree means 'to give, make, create, establish'. I therefore think Insler's 'they have served' for *tōi ... dqn* is an interpretive translation (both in this verse and in Y32:4). Based on the generally agreed meaning of *dqn*, a linguistically accurate translation can only be: "... they have created (or 'made' or 'established') [*dqn*] the gods which is the envisionment [*daena-*] of an untruthful person." Y49:4.

⁴³ The last line, Y29:5c, reads as follows in GAv.

nōiṭ ərəžəjyōi frajyāitiš / nōiṭ fšuyentē drəgvasū pairī Keeping in mind, that in Avestan the verb 'to be' often is implied, these words (literally translated) mean
'(is there) not [*nōiṭ*] (to be a) future [*frajyāitiš*] for-(the)-honestly-living-one [*ərəžəjōi*]?'
not [*nōiṭ*] for-the-cattle-breeder [*fšuyentē*] among-the-deceitful [*drəgvasū*] all-around [*pairī*]?' Y29:5c.

As you can see, there is no word 'man' (GAv. *nar-*) in the GAv. text. But in Avestan (as in English) the masc. is used generically to include all sexes.

ərəžəjyōi. Skjaervo (2006) does not give the declension of *ərəžəjyōi* but identifies its stem as an adj., *ərəžjī-* 'living the straight life.' Jackson identifies the stem as *ərəž-jīš* 'right-living', showing *ərəžə-jyōi* as its dat. form 'for the right-living', Jackson 1892 § 261, p. 77. This word comes from the adj. *ərəžu* 'straight, honest' (which in turn comes from the root *ar-* which generates Ved. *rta-* and Av. *asha-*). In GAv. adjectives are often used as nouns, indicating a person or concept having the qualities of the adj. In this context the adj. is used as a noun ~ a person ~ thus *ərəžəjyōi* 'for-(the)-honest/right-living-one'.

fšuyentē is dat. sg. form of the stem *fšuyant-*. Insler 1975 and Humbach/Faiss 2010 think the word means 'cattle-breeder'. In this context, I think 'cattle-breeder' is the correct translation, because it is used in the context of increasing the beneficial in mortal existence (the allegorical cow). So *fšuyentē* (dat. sg.) means literally 'for-(the)-cattle-breeder'.

⁴⁴ Detailed in *Part Six: Yasna 28:1*, in which the gesture of worship ~ an outstretched hand ~ first appears in the verses of the Gathas.

⁴⁵ Regarding the phrase 'cattle-breeder [*fšuyant-*]', Insler 1975 reads this phrase as a metaphor. He footnotes the words "breeds cattle" as follows: "Metaphor for the truthful man who increases the flock of the faithful." p. 29, ft. 6.

But in the Gathas, Zarathushtra does not call a person who follows his teachings 'faithful'. There is no question of 'faith' involved, nor allegiance to Zarathushtra. He calls them *ašavan-* 'truth-possessing' ~ the allegiance is to truth.

⁴⁶ The plural *ye* here ("Lord, grant ye ...") includes the three allegorical entities which are a part of Wisdom's nature ~ truth, its comprehension good thinking, the beneficial way of being (which is the essence of the sacred). And the plural '*ye*' referring to the sg. "Lord" integrates these qualities with Wisdom ~ indicating they are part of His nature. But in the very same sentence, truth and good thinking are referred to as qualities of good rule, confirming the allegorical nature of their use as entities.

⁴⁷ See also "...Give thou, o [*ārmaiti-*], power to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y28:7, Insler 1975. If we look past the allegorical reference to *ārmaiti-* as an entity, these words say that embodying truth in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*) gives power, the way Zarathushtra defines power. See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power*.

⁴⁸ *paīfī.zānatā* "do ye acknowledge" Insler 1975. He does not comment on this word. Skjaervo 2006 shows *zan-* 'to know'; and he sees *paīfī.zānatā* as a 2p. pl. imperative verb form, related to an almost identical Old Indic (Vedic) word which means 'to recognize'. Humbach in 1991 translated *paīfī.zānatā* as 'recognize' (2p. pl. imperative) Vol. 2, p. 43. But in 2010, he and Faiss translated *paīfī.zānatā* as 'accept' which in their Notes they identify as a verb 2p. pl. imperative, but do not explain why they now prefer 'accept' for *paīfī.zānatā* instead of 'recognize' pp. 80, 170.

⁴⁹ *frāx šnānā*. Insler comments that this acc. pl. form of the word is supported in mss. J2 and Mf1, and is required by the context (giving a meticulous grammatical explanation). He identifies the stem as *frāx šnan-* (later *frax šnin-*), "whose meaning "discerning" has developed the sense 'fit, proper' (through one's discernment)." p. 157. And he gives a YAv. phrase "*frax šni avi manō* 'if his attitude is fitting, proper' (=nom. absolute)." p. 157. But (with respect) even in this YAv. example 'discerning' is a better fit ~ 'if his attitude is discerning'. Returning to Y29:11b, I think Insler's original English equivalent "discerning" is a better fit in a system of thought in which the search for and comprehension of truth (discernment) is a fundament. And "discerning" fits the sense of both Y29:11b and also the other examples in which the word is used in the Gathas as the following demonstrates,

Insler 1975 "...do ye acknowledge those fit [*frāx šnānā* ft. "J2, Mf1"] for the great task..." Y29:11

My translation '... do acknowledge for the great task (those who are) discerning [*frāx šnānā* per J2, Mf1],...' Y29:11b;

Insler 1975 "...Thou hast come to the truth in thy discernment [**frāx šnānē*] ..." Y43:12;

Insler 1975 "...Wise One, (grant) to me Thy proper [*frāx šnānām*] support..." Y43:14;

My translation '... Wisdom, (grant) to me Thy discerning [*frāx šnānām*] support...' Y43:14;

⁵⁰ *mazōi magāi.ā*. Insler 1975 stands with Bartholomae in disagreeing that *maga-* is the same as Vedic *mahgá-* 'liberality' whose grammatical gender is different as well. Meticulously analysing the context in which the word is used each time it appears in the Gathas, he concludes that *maga-* can only mean 'task' or 'enterprise', (and *magavan-* 'one sharing the task' ~ a follower of Zarathushtra) in the context of each such use. Thus he translates *mazōi magāi.ā* as 'for the great task'. pp. 157 - 158. I find his reasoning persuasive. The stem *maz-* means "great" as in 'great heart', 'great soul' ~ an expansive 'greatness' ~ not an arrogant, competitive 'great'.

⁵¹ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of The Singular & The Plural*.

⁵² In GAv. idiom, to 'call' for something is to search for it, as discussed in more detail in *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31:4*.

⁵³ See in *Part One: Worship & Prayer*. And in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path* (one of my favorite chapters); and *The Puzzle of Worship*.

⁵⁴ See *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

⁵⁵ This notion of collective completeness is discussed in *Part One: Completeness, Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

⁵⁶ See in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*; and *The Puzzle of Worship*.

⁵⁷ The phrase in Y46:16 which Insler 1975 translates as "... Hither where [*ārmaiti-*] is in harmony with truth, ..." is *yaθrā ašā hacaitē ārmaitiš*

Literally, "where [*yaθrā*] embodied truth [*ārmaitiš*] is in company [*hacaitē*] with truth (itself) [*ašā*]..." Y46:16.

A poetic way of saying, where truth (the ideal) and its personification are one and the same ~ where the ideal has become personified.

Skaervo 2006 says that the verb *hacaitē* is 3p sg. middle voice of the verb stem *hak-*, which in middle voice means "to follow, to be in the company of, be with".

⁵⁸ Professor Irani so translated the last part of this verse, Y46:16, in an unpublished lecture which I attended. It is a matter of deep regret (even though I sometimes disagreed with him) that so many of his wonderful lectures, laced with humor, were never reduced to writing and published.

⁵⁹ Zarathushtra's notion of 'creation' is not conventional. See *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

⁶⁰ See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural*.

⁶¹ Detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

⁶² The *Yasna Haptanghaiti* is in the Gathic Avestan language, so it would have been composed closer to Zarathushtra's time, than the later Avestan texts. The entire verse reads as follows.

'We are praisers in song, not deriders, of good thoughts, of good words, of good actions
~ here and elsewhere ~ of (those that) are being produced, and of (those that) have been produced.

Through effort in taking a stand, we are (part) of the good'. YHapt. 35:2 (my translation).

This verse and its translation are discussed in detail in *Part Six: YHapt. 35: 2 and 3*.