

### Heaven, Hell, The Bridge, & What's On The Other Side.<sup>1</sup>

Be prepared for some surprises ! Let's start with some facts.

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra does not mention of any the following ideas:

- ~ no final judgment, ~ whether end of life or end of times ~ in which a soul is judged to determine its fate in an afterlife;
- ~ no place of reward to which a 'good' person is sent after death; and
- ~ no place of punitive tortures, to which a 'bad' person is sent after death.

These ideas are also absent from all other Avestan texts of which I am aware (that were composed during Avestan times). And (as you will see) there is no place for these ideas in Zarathushtra's framework of thought. They simply do not fit.

Yet many translators ~ Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians ~ have interpretively read these ideas into the Gathas; and have announced (with pride!) that Zarathushtra invented the idea of 'heaven' and 'hell' as places of reward and punishment.

How did this happen? Let me show you.

The idea of a punitive hell of tortures, first appears in Pahlavi texts, which (based on the internal evidence of these texts) were written after the Arab invasion of Iran. One of these texts complains that people were in doubt, and no longer believed in the elaborate rituals and purifications mandated by the priestly establishment (none of which are found in the Gathas).

So an assembly of priests was convened, which decided that a young priest ~ Viraf ~ would take a drug induced journey to the spirit world and bring back information that would dispel such doubts.

This text says,

" ... it is necessary ... [that] one of us may go, and bring intelligence from the spirits, that the people ... shall know whether these Yazishn and Drun and Afringan *ceremonies* and Nirang *prayers*, and ablution and purifications ... attain unto God, ... and come to the relief of our souls, or not." *Arda Viraf Namah*, Ch. 1 §§ 17 - 27, Haug & West translation (words in *italics* have been added by the translators as implied).

"And then those dasturs of the religion filled three golden cups with wine and the narcotic of Vishtasp, ... and he [Viraf] swallowed the wine ... and slept upon the carpet." *Arda Viraf Namah* Ch. 2 §§ 29 - 31, Haug & West translation p. 151.

When Viraf woke up, he dictated to a scribe, that 2 angels had given him a guided tour of a place in which the souls of the 'wicked' were punished by tortures, and also a place of mostly material delights in which the souls of the 'good' were rewarded. The fact that 8 chapters describe the good rewards, and 82 chapters (full of incredibly cruel details, laid down like a code of law) describe the punishments, shows us their intent ~ control through fear, and a little bribery.

Let us now look at Zarathushtra's ideas regarding the 'good' end(s) (which for convenience I will call 'heaven' or 'paradise'), and the 'bad' end(s) (which for convenience I will call 'hell').

We need to be aware of 3 important things (as you will see) that we have long forgotten.

*First*, Zarathushtra's notion of the 'good' and 'bad' ends are not places of reward and punishment. They are states of being.

*Second*, these states of being do not begin after death. They start in mortal existence. In the Gathas, the division is not between 'this life' and an 'afterlife'. The division is between an existence that is bound by mortality ~ the arena for the perfecting process ~ and one that is no longer bound by mortality ~ 'non-deathness' (*ameretat-*) ~ when the perfecting process is complete.

*Third*, in Avestan, there are no capital letters, and no articles 'the' or 'a/an'. But to make an English translation fluent, we have to add such words.

If we add 'the' good End, it implies one final good End. If we add 'a' good end, it implies one of many good ends. So which did Zarathushtra intend? Judge for yourself. But when, for convenience, I use 'the', please remember, it equally could be 'a'.

'Heaven'

Let's start with 'heaven'. He uses many terms for the good ends/End. Here, I will discuss just 3 of these terms. They are,

House of good thinking (*vangheush demana- mananho*),

House of song (*garo demana-*), and

Most good existence (*ahu- vahishta-*).

These are not 3 separate 'heavens'. They are 3 different ways of describing one state of being. Now you may object that 'house' is a place, not a state of being. But in the Gathas, 'house' and its related words, like 'dwelling place', 'dwells' etc., often are used as metaphors for a state of being. Here is one example (there are many more).<sup>2</sup>

Zarathushtra says,

"...and there shall be yoked from the good dwelling place of good thinking the swiftest steeds,<sup>3</sup> which shall race ahead unto the good fame of [*mazda-* 'Wisdom'] and of truth." Gathas, Yasna 30, verse 10, Insler translation 1975.

Now, good thinking is a quality, an activity. So the only dwelling place in which good thinking could exist, is in a living being that houses this quality or activity.

And does this heavenly state of being begin in an afterlife? In this verse (as in others), clearly not. It says, that those from the "good dwelling place of good thinking", 'shall race ahead unto the good fame of Wisdom and of truth' ~ a race that is run in mortal existence.

These conclusions are consistent with other Gatha verses that we have seen in past sessions that show that we mortals have this Divine quality, good thinking, imperfectly, and that for mortals good thinking is the incremental (and eventually the complete) comprehension of truth. Here are just 2 examples. Zarathushtra says,

"Truth, shall I see thee, as I continue to acquire ... good thinking ..." Gathas, Y28:5, Insler 1975.

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

So **housing good thinking** in our beings, begins in mortal existence, where it continues to increase incrementally ~ many good ends of imperfect enlightenment ~ evolving into a state of being that eventually **houses** a complete, perfected (*haurvatat-*) understanding of truth ~ the ultimate good End, a completely enlightened state of being.

Similarly, I think Zarathushtra uses **house of song** as a metaphor for a state of being that **houses** the harmony,<sup>4</sup> the bliss, the 'high' we feel when we sing (or listen to) beautiful music, ~ a state of happiness which we experience (imperfectly), in mortal existence. Which brings us to the 3d term for 'heaven'.

A **'most good existence (*ahu- vahishta-*)'** ~ clearly is a state of being, not a place.

What does Zarathushtra mean by a **'most good existence'**? Let's see what ancient Zoroastrians thought. In Avestan, the word *vahishta-* 'most good' is the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness. In later Avestan texts a **'most good existence (*ahu- vahishta-*)'** is the most frequently used term for a/the good end/End, and is described as follows,

... *vahishtem ahum ashaonam yazamaide raochanghem, vispo.xvathrem,*<sup>5</sup> ...

'the most-good existence of the truth-possessing, we celebrate,<sup>6</sup> light, all-happiness/enlightenment,' my translation.

Here, (as in the Gathas), the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness, **'most good' (*vahishta*)** includes those who are **truth-possessing**, and the bliss, the harmony, the enlightenment this brings. But in the Gathas, Zarathushtra takes us further. He uses **'most good' (*vahishta*)** almost as a word of art, in rich, kaleidoscopic, multi-dimensioned ways.<sup>7</sup> Here I will just summarize.

In the Gathas,

- ~ **'most good' (*vahishta*)** is a name for the Divine (who is **truth personified**),
- ~ **'most good' (*vahishta*)** describes the qualities of the Divine ~ a beneficial way of being, which is the true (correct) wholly good order of existence ('truth'), its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule, (**truth personified**),
- ~ **'most good' (*vahishta*)** describes Wisdom's teachings (the **path of truth**), as well as the thoughts, words and actions that implement them (an imperfect **personification of truth** in mortal existence),
- ~ **'most good' (*vahishta*)** describes the reward for taking this path (many good 'ends' **personifying truth** incrementally in mortal existence), and
- ~ **'most good' (*vahishta*)** is the ultimate good End, which is **truth personified completely**; an **enlightened, blissful** state of being,
- ~ these are **'a'** or **'the'** **'most good existence' (*ahu- vahishta-*)** ~ Zarathushtra's paradise.

Looking at this summary we begin to understand that to Zarathushtra, truth ~ the true (correct) order of existence ~ **is** the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness, which in later texts became the standardized epithet for truth (*asha- vahishta-*) ~ and is reflected in a later name for the religion ~ 'religion of goodness' (*din-i-behi*). And we see that the **'most good existence' (*ahu- vahishta-*)** ~ which is Zarathushtra's paradise ~ is a state of being that starts in mortal existence ~ the **path of truth**. We create paradise ~ multiple good 'ends' ~ each time we (even imperfectly) make existence **'most good'** with truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its

rule ~ incrementally evolving to the ultimate good End ~ **personifying truth completely, (asha- vahishta-)** ~ which is the ultimate state of being ~ paradise, the '**most good existence**' (*ahu- vahishta-*).

Zarathushtra expresses the foregoing conclusions about the incremental, and ultimate, good ends/(End) in many verses in which various divine qualities are what earn the reward, and are the reward itself.<sup>8</sup>

In the Gathas, salvation is not being saved from damnation and a hell of tortures. Salvation is being saved from untruth ~ from all that is false, wrong, in the existences of matter and mind.<sup>9</sup>

He says,

"... salvation for the truthful ..." Gathas, Y30:11, Insler 1975.

"... let that salvation of yours be granted to us ~ truth allied with good thinking ..." Gathas, Y51:20,<sup>10</sup> Insler 1975.

In the first quotation, being truthful is what earns salvation. In the 2d quotation, truth and its comprehension are salvation itself.

So '**salvation**' ~ being truthful, comprehending truth ~ consists of many good ends which start in mortal existence.

And '**salvation**' is also the ultimate good End ~ a completely enlightened state of being ~ enabling transition to a state of being no longer bound by mortality.

A second example. He says,

"... those whom Thou dost know, ... to be just and deserving in conformity with truth and good thinking, for them do Thou fulfill their longing with these attainments. ..." Gathas, Y28:10, Insler 1975. Here, truth and good thinking, are what earn the reward, and they are the reward itself.

And we see corroborating evidence in a later text. It is not a part of the Gathas, but it is in Old Avestan (indicating it was closer in time to Zarathushtra than other Younger Avestan texts).

' To anyone among living beings  
(who has) the desire to win the most good [*vahishta-*],  
He has said, for both existences,  
(it is) in the association of truth [*asha-*], [the path]  
then in the union of truth [*asha-*].' [the end].  
*Yasna Haptanghaiti*, chapter 35, section 8, my translation.

Here, the good ends/End to be won, are the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness ~ the **most good** [*vahishta-*] ~ a state of being, which is equated with **truth** ~ both the path, and the ultimate good End. And here, **winning the most-good (vahishta-)**, applies to **both existences** which in the Gathas are the existences of matter and mind in mortal existence (Y28:2, Y43:3).<sup>11</sup> So good ends/End ~ **truth personified** ~ start, and are eventually completed, in mortal existence ~ a completeness (*haurvatat-*) which enables the transition (crossing the bridge) to an existence no longer bound by mortality (*ameretat-*). In the Gathas, completeness (*haurvatat-*) and non-deathness (*ameretat-*), are qualities of the Divine which mortals do not presently have, but are capable of attaining.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, here are 2 bits of corroborating evidence from the later texts which are among my favorites. First, a word of explanation. In the Gathas, **truth**, its comprehension **good thinking**, and **Wisdom**, are linked with various forms of **light ~ sunlight, fire, glory**.<sup>13</sup>

Why sunlight? Well, truth and its comprehension, enlightens. Wisdom is a completely enlightened state of being. And sunlight was the strongest form of light known to mortals in that time period.

But why fire? Well, in those days, fire was the only form of light that mortals could make. But more than that, fire was a central part of their lives ~ necessary for survival. Fire was needed to cook their food, to keep them from freezing. And it was the only form of light available in darkness when the moon and stars were not visible.

With that, let us look at the corroborating evidence from later texts, which I think is so beautiful. You may already have seen it in other contexts, but the repetition is needed in this context, (so please indulge me).

An Avestan Fragment describes our attainment of paradise, in metaphoric incremental steps, each of which is a state of being (in mortal existence!). The Avestan term which Darmesteter translates as 'Paradise' is *ahu-vahishta* 'most-good existence'. This Avestan Fragment says,

"The first step ... placed him in the Good-Thought Paradise [*ahu-vahishta*].  
The second step ... placed him in the Good-Word Paradise [*ahu-vahishta*];  
The third step ... placed him in the Good-Deed Paradise [*ahu-vahishta*];  
The fourth step ... placed him in the Endless Lights."  
*Avestan Fragment 22, § 15, Darmesteter translation.*

Other Avestan texts describe the Endless Light(s) as 'self-made' *xvadhata*, I have footnoted examples.<sup>14</sup> So we make, we create paradise ~ a 'most-good existence' of good thoughts, words and deeds with our choices in mortal existence.

In the Pahlavi *Bundahishn* the Divine is named 'Endless Light'.<sup>15</sup>

And in the Gathas, the Divine completes us, and we complete the Divine.<sup>16</sup>

You well may question: Why does Zarathushtra cloak these ideas so enigmatically? I think for many reasons. But perhaps the most important has to do with human ego. To think that we can become divine, could be quite intoxicating to our (imperfect) human egos, leading to arrogance, dictatorial entitled behavior ~ the cause of so many problems, so much suffering, as well as retarding one of Zarathushtra's fundamental teachings (essential for the evolution of the soul) ~ the freedom to choose and the enlightenment that eventually comes (from within) through experiencing the consequences of our choices (and mutual, loving help).

Perhaps Zarathushtra had in mind the example of Yima (Jamsheed),<sup>17</sup> whose pride and arrogance were a sure sign that he had not yet attained the state of pure goodness that is completeness, truth personified. For in pure goodness, in completeness, there is no place for pride and arrogance. Yima's pride and arrogance were foolish. Pure goodness, truth personified, is wisdom/Wisdom (*mazda*-).

*Hell*

Let us take a quick look at Zarathushtra's ideas about what we call 'hell'. True, his ideas include the darker, more painful, realities of our material existence. But they also include the seeds of salvation (from untruth). As such, they fit Zarathushtra's idea of an order of existence (in the existence of matter !) that is wholly good, beneficial.

He has many terms for 'bad' ends and their qualities ~ all of which are states of being.

They are,

'most-bad existence (*ahu- achishta-*)' ~ a state of being;

'house of worst thinking (*achishtaya demana- manangho*)' ~ a state of being that houses worst thinking;

'house of deceit/untruth' (*drujo demana-*) ~ a state of being that houses what is false, wrong, mistaken, ignorant.

'Unhappiness' ~ a quality of being.

And 2 metaphors,

'foul food' ~ for the vices that poison our souls; and

'darkness' ~ for a state of being that cannot see, is in the dark, unenlightened. (Parenthetically, no place does Zarathushtra equate the color black with evil. In fact, in one Gatha, referring to the stars in the night sky, he says "**Which craftsman created [*dā̄t* 'produced'] the luminous bodies and the dark spaces? ...**" Gathas, Y44:5, Insler 1975). In fact, since the universe has more dark phenomena than 'white' ones, it could be argued that black is a more favored color. But I don't think either prejudice holds water ~ neither with science nor with Zarathushtra's thought. Colors (including white and black) are a function of how our eyes perceive material phenomena ~ which has nothing to do with 'good' or 'evil'. And in Zarathushtra's thought, 'good' and 'evil' are the products of human choices, and the entire material existence ~ at least on earth ~ with all its colors and their absences, was produced, generated, by a beneficial way of being to accomplish a good end ~ the elimination of evil preferences through experiences.<sup>18</sup> So whether we look to the facts of science, or the teachings of Zarathushtra, nothing in the material existence is intrinsically 'evil'. Nor is anything in the material existence intrinsically 'good'. It is the way the material existence has been ordered (at least on earth) that is intrinsically wholly good, its purpose being to bring about wholly good end(s)/End (according to Zarathushtra).

Is this paradigm true? I don't know. I can only say that I have (repeatedly, in the long run) found it to be true in my own (incremental) life experiences.

Returning to the terms Zarathushtra uses for the 'bad' end(s), as you can see, all these states of being exist in mortal existence. But Zarathushtra takes us a step further. In the Gathas, these states of being exist *only* in mortal existence. These terms describe an unperfected state of being ~ wrong-headed, false, ignorant, mistaken. And in the Gathas, mortal (material) existence is the arena for the perfecting process.

These 'hells' in mortal existence include, in part, the law of consequences ~ that we reap what we sow, that what we do ~ good and bad ~ comes back to us. To that extent, we create our own hells ~ here, in the material existence. But these 'hells' also include the many unearned calamities ~ including the wrongful choices of others, elements of nature, etc. ~ that cause us grief, suffering (these are not the wrongful choices of the Divine!). All these 'hells' ~ earned and unearned ~ are not for punishment. They are for enlightenment. They are our teachers. They enlarge our understanding. They sculpt our souls. These hells ~ earned and unearned ~ together with our good experiences, and mutual, loving help between the Divine, man, and all the living, are necessary parts of the perfecting process, which occurs in mortal, existence.

So an unperfected being remains bound by mortality, until the perfecting process is complete, at which time it is pure goodness, pure light, truth personified, and makes the transition to a state of being that no longer is bound by mortality non-deathness (*ameretat-*). This explains why, in the Gathas and other Avestan texts (that were composed during Avestan times) there is a complete absence of 'hell' as a place of punishment in

the afterlife. There simply is no place for it in Zarathushtra's framework of thought. Which brings us to Chinvat Bridge.

*Chinvat Bridge.*

Chinvat Bridge has been translated *interpretively* as the 'Bridge of the Judge', the 'Account Keeper's Bridge', the Bridge of the Separator, etc. ~ injecting into this Gatha term other religious paradigms in which a separate, all perfect, Being, 'God'

~ judges a person after death,

~ separates the 'good' from the 'bad' (as though any human being at death, is all good, or all bad),

~ sends the (so called) 'good' to 'heaven' and

~ throws the (so called) 'bad' into hell.

But if we give Chinvat Bridge its literal meaning, the illogic (and injustice !) of this paradigm disappears.

There is no dispute that *peretu* means 'bridge'.

As for *chinvato*, Insler 1975 (citing Bartholomae) says that it derives from *ci-* 'to discern, decide'.

So, *what* is discerned, decided, after a soul dies and arrives at this bridge? By whom? For what purpose? And is this a physical bridge?

Well, a (non-material) soul would not need a physical 'bridge' to make a crossing of any kind. So 'bridge' has to be a metaphor. I think it represents transition to an existence no longer bound by mortality ~ when the soul has become perfected. And I think what is '*discerned, decided*' at this metaphoric bridge, is a story-telling way of expressing exactly that ~ whether the soul has become perfected, and can make the transition (cross the bridge) to a non-mortal existence. And in the Gathas, and certain later texts, the soul itself is involved in this process of *discerning, deciding* ~ a notion of self-judgment, (perhaps by the Divine within).<sup>19</sup>

Which brings us to what is on the other side of this transition (bridge).

*Frasho.kereiti*

This is a term we find in later Avestan texts for an idea that is expressly stated in the Gathas.

In Zarathushtra's thought, there are no rejects. Everyone will eventually make it to the ultimate good End ~ truth personified. This is not a feel-good palliative, to tame our fears of an unknown afterlife. Zarathushtra's paradigm of the assured, certain, good End, combines the beauty of pure logic, and the spirituality of a divine order of existence that is wholly good (we will discuss this paradigm in the next Session). Here I will simply say that the certain, assured, good End was so foundational that it is expressed even in later Avestan and Pahlavi texts ~ *frasho.kereiti* in later Avestan; *frashgard/frashkart* in Pahlavi ~ although today, even teachers of the religion have largely forgotten what these words mean. Zaehner describes the meaning of this term in Pahlavi texts as follows.

"... 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.<sup>20</sup>

Insler demonstrates,<sup>21</sup> that the Avestan *frasho.kereiti* comes from a phrase in the Gathas. In essence, *frasho* means healing existence (from all that is false, wrong) by forwarding (*fra*) truth (*asho*) ~ or more fluently 'forwarding (existence to) truth'; and *kereiti* means making it happen.<sup>22</sup>

I would like to leave you with a question. Place it on the back burner of your mind, and let your mind play over it.

Given the freedom to choose ~ a core teaching of Zarathushtra ~ how is it possible, for the good End to be inevitable? We will consider this paradox in the next session.

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<sup>1</sup> The ideas mentioned in this chapter are detailed and referenced in the following chapters:

[Home Page:](#)

[Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories;](#)

[In Part One:](#)

[Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat;](#)  
[Zarathushtra's Paradise In This World & The Next; and](#)

[In Part Two:](#)

[The Houses Of Paradise & Hell;](#)  
[A Question of Reward & The Path; and](#)  
[The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta;](#)

[In Part Three:](#)

[The Absence Of Damnation & Hell In Other Avestan Texts;](#)  
[Heaven In Other Avestan Texts;](#) (this includes a discussion of *frasho.kereiti* and its meaning and derivation)  
[Heaven & Hell In Pazand & Pahlavi Texts;](#) and  
[Chinvat, The Bridge Of Discerning](#) (with a very beautiful mini-puzzle towards the end of this chapter).

<sup>2</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: The Houses Of Paradise & Hell*.

<sup>3</sup> The word '[steeds](#)' does not appear in the Gathic Avestan text of this verse. Insler has inserted it because he thinks it is implied (probably because of the chariot racing metaphor in this verse which uses '[yoked](#)' and '[race ahead](#)').

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Dolat Bolandi for suggesting to me that in addition to bliss, happiness, the [house of song](#) is a metaphor also for the 'harmony' that is a part of beautiful music. I think her insight is accurate, because the [house of song](#) is a state of being that has attained completely, the qualities of the Divine, and therefore is wholly good. It no longer has within it two conflicted ways of being "[the more good](#)" and the "[bad](#)" [Gathas Y30:3](#) (my translation); the "[more-beneficial](#)" and the "[harmful](#)" [Gathas Y45:2](#), (my translation; both these verses are detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way Of Being*). And Dolat's idea is confirmed by two Gatha verses in which completeness (*haurvatat*) and non-deathness (*ameretat*) ~ Zarathushtra's paradise ~ are referred to as bringing about harmony.

"Take ye heed of these goals of mine, which I shall enact with good thinking: worship of all of you, Wise One, and words praiseworthy with truth. Your enduring worshipful offering has been established to be [immortality](#) [[ameretat](#)-[non-deathness](#)] and [completeness](#) [[haurvatat](#)]." [Y33:8](#), Insler 1975. (Here, our own self-realization is a way to worship the Divine).



"Yes, for Thee, Wise One, let a person support with good thinking the very spirit [*mainyu-* 'way of being'] of these two companions who increase truth through that happiness consisting of change. The association of these two has already arisen, under whom (all) souls are in harmony." Y33:9, Insler 1975.

A beautiful and accurate insight. Thank you, Dolat!

<sup>5</sup> The Avestan word *vispo.xvathrem* 'all-happiness/enlightenment' has lovely, multi-dimensioned meanings which it is impossible to translate into an English equivalent of one or even a few words. If you are interested, its meaning is explained in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*.

<sup>6</sup> This popular description of the good end(s)/End ~ 'most-good existence of the truthful ... light, all-happiness/enlightenment', usually has *yazamaide* after the word *ashaonam* 'of (the) truthful'. In Avestan texts, *yaz-* words are used for worship that is a celebration (detailed with many examples in a footnote in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*). Thus, *vahishtem ahum ashaonam yazamaide raochanghem vispo.xvathrem* 'we celebrate the most-good existence of the truthful, light, all happiness/enlightenment.' (my translation).

The contexts in which this term 'most-good existence' appears are sometimes in mortal existence, sometimes in an afterlife, and sometimes it is difficult to say which. But the foregoing phrase is the most popular description of the 'most-good existence' in YAv. texts, appearing in the following texts. I give you these numbers, just to demonstrate its popularity (I may have missed a few) which conclusively establishes that in YAv. times, it was well understood that the good ends/End is a state of being, not a place.

7 times in the Younger Avestan *Yasnas*;

2 times in the *Visperad*;

2 times in the *Sirozah*,

1 time in the main part of the *Rashn Yasht*,

1 time in the main part of the *Hormezd Yasht*,

1 time in the YAv. Fragment 23, § 8 (*Afrin Paighambar Zartusht*),

1 time in the YAv. Fragment 24, § 5;

21 times ~ as a conclusion in all 21 Yashts (according to Darmesteter), and

1 time in the last line of the *Ahmai Raeshcha* prayer (which is a quotation of Yy68.11). As such it is also recited each time the *Ahmai Raeshcha* prayer is required to be recited during (or at the ends of) other various Avestan chants.

<sup>7</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of The Most-Good, Vahishta*.

<sup>8</sup> Detailed with many examples in *Part Two: A Question Of Reward & The Path*.

<sup>9</sup> Detailed in *Part One: A Question Of Salvation*.

<sup>10</sup> I agree with the Insler translation of these words in Y51:20 ~ that salvation is truth and good thinking. But in the 2d line of this verse, I respectfully disagree with his separating *aramaiti-* ('embodied truth') from truth and good thinking as the definition of 'salvation', by adding a period (full stop) punctuation mark after "truth allied with good thinking", and then adding words (which are not in the GAv. text) before *aramaiti-* (which immediately follows) in order to make it part of a separate sentence ~ probably because in 1975 he translated *aramaiti-* as 'piety'. But as Thieme (Insler's teacher has pointed out) *aramaiti* is a quality of the Divine, and the notion of 'piety' is irrelevant to the Divine (which clearly cannot be pious towards Itself). And in fact, Insler himself many years later, changed his mind about his 1975 translation of *aramaiti*. This verse is detailed in *Part Six: Yasna 51:20*, and the meaning of *aramaiti-* is detailed in *Part One: Embodied Truth, Aramaiti*.

<sup>11</sup> In the Gathas, 'both existences' are described as the existences of matter and mind. Applicable quotations from the Gathas are given in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

<sup>12</sup> Detailed in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness*.

<sup>13</sup> Detailed in *Part One: The Fire In All Things*; and in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*.

<sup>14</sup> For example,

"The endless lights, self-made, we celebrate [*anayra raocā x<sup>v</sup>adātā yazamaide*] ...' *Sirozah* 2:30 my translation, Av. words from Geldner, 2P p. 267.

'Whenever, O truth-possessing Right Judgment [*rašnvō ašāum*], you are in the self-made [*x<sup>v</sup>adāta*] endless lights [*anayra raocā*]. ...' *Rashn Yasht*, Yt. 12.35, my translation, Av. words from Geldner, Part 2, p. 167. 'Right Judgment' is an allegory representing a mental quality (as in *having good judgment, having true judgment*), therefore it would of course exist in (be a quality of) enlightenment (endless lights).

Skjaervo 2003 seems unsure of the meaning of *x<sup>v</sup>adāta-* - placing a question mark after his definition "set in place by oneself (itself, themselves)?" I think *x<sup>v</sup>adāta-* derives from,

*x<sup>v</sup>a-* 'own' (Skjaervo 2006). In Younger Avestan it is a reflexive pronoun as in 'one's own self'; and *δāta-* derives from *dā-* one of the meanings of which is 'to make, to produce, to give, to establish'.

I therefore take *x<sup>v</sup>adāta-* to mean 'self made', 'self produced', 'self given', 'self established'. Thus we not only make our own enlightenment, but we also help each other to become enlightened (without being bossy or dictatorial) thereby helping to establish enlightenment. This idea of mortals both earning salvation (truth, its comprehension, its embodiment) for ourselves, and also helping others make it is detailed with evidence from the Gathas in *Part One: A Question Of Salvation*.

Darmesteter (who translated when the decoding of Avestan was at an earlier stage) translates *x<sup>v</sup>adāta-* as 'sovereign' in the *Rashn Yasht* and in the *Sirozah*. But, with respect, I disagree. The Av. words related to 'rule' or 'sovereignty' do not derive from *x<sup>v</sup>a-*, but from *x šā-* 'to have command, middle voice 'to rule (over: gen.)' Skjaervo 2006; and *x šā-* has generated *x šāθra-* 'rule', and also 'ruler' (*dāstū mazdā x šayācā* "And do Thou give, Wise Ruler ..." *Gathas*, Y28:7 Insler 1975).

<sup>15</sup> *Bundahishn* Ch. 1, § 5; E. W. West translation.

<sup>16</sup> Detailed in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness*; and see also *Part Two: The Identity Of The Divine*.

<sup>17</sup> We know that the legendary figure Yima (Jamshid) existed before Zarathushtra's time because Zarathushtra mentions Yima in a Gatha verse (Y32:8), and also because Avestan "Yima son of Vivanghvat", was Vedic "Yama son of Vivasvat" in Indic texts. So Yima/Yama was an Indo-Iranian legendary figure, when the Iranian and Indic people were one tribe - before they split into 2 tribes, the Indic and the Iranian (detailed in *Part Four: Ancient Origins & Homelands*).

Now, the Avestan legend of Yima mentions Ahura Mazda, which has caused some people to think that the worship of Ahura Mazda predated Zarathushtra. But this is not so. In the Gathas Zarathushtra rejected the deities of his culture. He said nothing about 'reforming' them. And we know that the Avestan story of Yima was 'Zoroastrianized' (to include Ahura Mazda) because there is no mention of Ahura Mazda in the Vedic accounts of Yama. In fact, as Thieme (Insler's teacher) has pointed out, there was no Vedic deity called Mazda. In the Vedas, there is only the Vedic fem. noun *medhas* 'wisdom' (discussed in *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*). Certain scholars who have concluded that a deity named 'Wisdom' pre-dated Zarathushtra also give Zarathushtra a very late date (based on texts written after the Arab invasion of Iran). But this conclusion about Zarathushtra's date is not in accord with historical

evidence (detailed in *Part Three: Evolution Of The Name(s) Ahura, Mazda*). All of the foregoing evidence requires the conclusion that to say there was a deity named 'Wisdom' before Zarathushtra's time period is pure speculation ~ unsupported by (and at odds with) historical facts.

<sup>18</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of Creation*.

<sup>19</sup> Detailed in *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*; And in *Home Page: Buried Treasure In Ancient Stories*.

<sup>20</sup> Zaehner 1961, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, (Phoenix Press reprint 2003), p. 308.

<sup>21</sup> The opinions of various linguists on the meaning of *frasho.kereiti*, are discussed in *Part Three: Heaven In Other Avestan Texts*.

<sup>22</sup> In Avestan, the prefix *fra-* / *frā-* is frequently used in the sense of 'forth', or 'forwarding'; Skjaervo (2006) shows the following,

*fra.aēš-* under *aēš-* he shows 'to set in motion', and with *frā-* 'to send forth';

*fra.dax š-* under *dax š-* he shows 'to \*hit the mark(?)', and with *frā* 'to launch';

*fra.mrao-* under *mrao-* 'to say, to speak', and with *frā-* 'to proclaim' [i.e. 'speak forth'];

*fra.par-* under *par-* 'to cross', and with *frā* 'to cross (over)';

*fra.vat-* under *vat-* 'to inspire(?)', and with *frā* 'to make known'.

Insler thinks that YAv. *frasho.kereiti* derived from certain Avestan terms used in the Gathas. His explanation is detailed in *Part Three: Heaven In Other Avestan Texts*.