

The Nature of the Divine

In some ways, Zarathushtra's notion of the nature of the Divine is affected by the perceptions of the culture and society in which he lived. But in material ways it is quite different, as is his idea of how the Divine should be worshipped.¹

The deities of Zarathushtra's culture.

In understanding Zarathushtra's ideas about the nature of the Divine, we first need to understand the deities of his society, and how they were worshipped.

These deities were perceived by their worshippers as having human forms but more powerful, with all the good and bad qualities of humans, magnified ~ a bit like the ancient 'gods' of other Indo-Iranian cultures. For example, Mithra was an Indo-Iranian deity, and the Yasht devoted to Mithra shows him as cruel, angry, vengeful, beating up and killing in cruel ways, those who tell lie to him and displease him.

Zarathushtra rejected this perception of the divine. In his thought, an entity who is cruel, angry, violent, who brings suffering and misery, is not worthy of worship. And he also rejected the ideas of his culture about how to 'worship'.

He came from a cultural tradition in which the 'gods' were said to demand expensive rituals and gifts which would have made their priests rich and powerful.² In return for such offerings, the priests suggested that the gods might, if pleased, grant the gift-givers their hearts' desires – victory over enemies, wealth, power, children, et cetera, as the Yashts make clear.³ And for those unfortunates who declined to so worship, or who offended these deities (read, their priests), the religious establishment guaranteed terrible retributions and punishments (from the deities), as the Yashts also make clear.⁴ Actually, those priests could not lose, because even if, after expensive sacrifices, wishes were not granted, they could blame some hidden sin of the person making the wish, which sin had doubtless displeased the deities.

Natural calamities (drought, famine, et cetera) were also useful to the religious establishment. In ancient times, the natural causes of such phenomena were not known or understood, so it was easy for the priests to portray natural calamities as punishments and retribution from powerful 'gods' who (according to their priests) controlled such phenomena.⁵

In short, man's perception of the 'gods' in Zarathushtra's society was that they were a bit like insurance policies (but chancy at best), capable of protecting their followers against great harm, or inflicting great harm if not given the extravagant gifts that they (through their priests) desired.⁶

So the currency of worship was bribery and appeasement with material gifts. A fear based paradigm. A control mechanism.

Zarathushtra rejected these paradigms of the nature of the Divine and this way to worship.

It is significant that in referring to the Divine, he does not use the Avestan word for 'god' ~ masc. *baga-*, fem. *bagā-*,⁷ except once in Y32:8, referring to the worship of an un-named goddess with disapproval. Nor does he use for his conception of the Divine, another Indo-Iranian word for 'god' GAv. *daēva-*, (Vedic *devá-*),⁸ which in the Gathas he uses only in a pejorative way for the gods of his society.⁹ Zarathushtra does not mention these deities by name. He refers to them generically (as *daēva-*) and portrays them and their priests as violent, cruel, tyrannical, deceitful, mercenary. Here are some of his descriptions of the gods and their priests in his society:

Referring to the gods of his society and their choices: "...Since they chose the worst thought, they then rushed into fury, with which they have afflicted the world and mankind." Y30:6, Insler 1975.

"...the rich Karpan [a type of priest] chose the rule of tyrants and deceit rather than truth." Y32:12, Insler 1975.

"When, Wise One, shall men desist from murdering? When shall they fear the folly of that intoxicating drink, through the effects of which the Karpans [priests] as well as the evil rulers of the lands torture our (good) intentions in an evil way?" Y48:10, Insler 1975.

The lament to the Divine, made by the allegorical cow, "...**(For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity...**" Y29:1, Insler 1975. The cow (in my view) is an allegory for the beneficial in mortal existence.¹⁰

From these and other parts of the Gathas,¹¹ we get the picture of a society in which the gods and their priests were tyrannical, violent, oppressive, cruel, greedy, untruthful, etc. ~ a state of affairs that deeply troubled Zarathushtra, especially since he was on the receiving end of their malice, probably because of his outspoken criticism of their practices,

"To what land to flee? Where shall I go to flee? They exclude (me) from my family and from my clan ..." Y46:1, 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..." Y49:1, Insler 1975.

Naturally, one cannot help but wonder: does the fact that Zarathushtra mentions the gods of his society (*daēva-* *bagā-*) generically mean that he believed in their existence, as entities? We have no way of knowing for certain. If he did so believe, it would have taken even more courage on his part to demote them from 'godhood'. But there are two verses which suggest to me that in his view, they were the products of the minds of their respective followers (who promoted and practiced a religion of cruelty, tyranny, bondage, falsehood et cetera). In Y32:3 he says:

'But you, o gods, all are the seed [*ciθrəm*] stemming from evil thinking...' Y32:3a., my translation, (other translations, footnoted for comparative purposes, are not materially different).¹² These words suggest that in Zarathushtra's view, the gods of his society were products generated from wrongful thinking.

In the same way, in Y49:4, referring to men of ill will, he says: "...Those who, with ill will, have increased fury and cruelty ... they have served the gods which is the conception [*daēnā-*] of a deceitful person." Y49:4, Insler 1975. These words suggest that he believed that these gods were the 'envisionment [*daēnā-*]', the products of the mind of, a follower of untruth.¹³

I think, in his view, these gods stood in opposition to Wisdom, as error stands in opposition to the true (correct) order of existence (*aṣa-*), as non-existence stands in opposition to life – as figments of the imaginations of those who worshipped them. But these gods were very real to the people of his society. He had to mention them (as portrayed by their priests), to distinguish their nature and teachings from that of his radically different idea of the Divine and Its path ~ both the personification of the true (correct) order of existence, a wholly beneficial order of existence.¹⁴

Re-thinking the Divine.

Using his mind to address this question of the nature of the Divine, Zarathushtra concluded that cruelty, bondage, fury, violence, deceit, tyranny, greed, destruction, etc. were 'wrong' (not in accord with the true (correct) order of existence), and that deities who personified such qualities were not worthy of worship. In re-thinking the nature of the divine he concluded that only a wholly beneficial way of being (*spənta-mainyu-*), a way of being that is wholly, completely, good (*vahišta-*), that comprehends and embodies completely, the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-* ~ an order of existence that is most good *aša-vahišta-*, beneficial *spənta-*),¹⁵ and who therefore is wisdom personified *mazdā-* is worthy of worship, divine. A significant step in man's quest for the Divine.

Zarathushtra not only rejected the deities of his culture, he demoted them from 'godhood',¹⁶ (imagine the courage that took!) which explains why he was so persecuted. And Zarathushtra (with his passion for truth) did not fudge. He announced, with subtle and exquisite craftsmanship, his new understanding of the Divine in the very first verse of Yasna 29, (believed to be the first Gatha).¹⁷

Whether there was an Iranian god named *mazdā-* before Zarathushtra's time, is complicated by the fact that opinions regarding Zarathushtra's date range from around 6,000 + BCE (according to ancient Greeks) to about 589 BCE (according to post-Arab invasion estimates).¹⁸ But there is no dispute that Zarathushtra's culture descended from a parent Indo-Iranian tribe, and Professor Thieme (Insler's teacher) tells us that there was no god named **medhás* in the Vedas, that in Vedic, we have only a fem. noun *medhā* meaning 'wisdom', which he equates with Avestan *mazdā-*.¹⁹ There is no direct evidence (as distinguished from hearsay and speculation), that before the advent of Zarathushtra any Indo-Iranian deity existed whose name was 'Wisdom', or its equivalent in any ancient Indo-Iranian language,²⁰ although the adjective 'wise', as one of a number of adjectives, may have been applied to some of these deities.

In short, Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine is not that of a being who has to be bribed into good humor or good behavior, nor is it a punitive being of wrath or vengeance.²¹ His notion of the Divine is one whose way of being is wholly in accord with the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), ~ wholly good, beneficial, generous, caring, supportive, compassionate etc., ~ but nevertheless will bring about, infallibly, the defeat of evil.²²

We see evidence of his re-thinking of the nature of the Divine in the Gatha song Yasna 43, where he states, "Yes, I have already realized Thee to be [*spənta-* 'beneficial'], Wise Lord," Y43:5, Insler 1975; and this same phrase is repeated five more times, with an additional thought, "Yes, I have already realized Thee to be [*spənta-* 'beneficial'], Wise Lord, when he attended [*pairi jasat*] me with good thinking..." Y43:7, 9, 11, 13, and 15; Insler 1975. In the GAv. text of this sentence there is no pronoun "he". In GAv. generally, pronouns are implicit in the form of the verb itself, which in this case could be 'he', 'she', 'it', or 'one'.²³ Insler thinks that the 3p sg. verb form *pairi jasat* stands for *spənta- mainyu-* (the 'beneficial-sacred way of being'), and *mainyu-* is a grammatically masc. noun, which may have been why he translates this 3p sg. verb *pairi jasat* as "he attended"). I agree with Insler that the 3p verb stands for the beneficial way of being *spənta- mainyu-* but in English, a beneficial way of being has no intrinsic (or grammatical) gender so a correct English translation would be "...when it attended [*pairi jasat*] me with good thinking...". What then does this statement (repeated 5 times) tell us? It tells us that in Zarathushtra's thought, a beneficial way of being [*spənta- mainyu-*] generates, enables ("attends with") good thinking ~ which is the comprehension of the true (correct) order of existence ~ a beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*) order of existence, the existence of the Divine. In other words, it is a beneficial way of being that generates the good thinking which enables Zarathushtra to

realize that the nature of the Divine, is wholly beneficial (*spənta-*) ~ which is the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*). An interesting and beautiful circle ~ simple and complex.

That this idea of the Divine ~ a being who is wholly good, wholly beneficial ~ is a core teaching of Zarathushtra may be seen from the fact that in the YAv. Yy1:1, the Lord (who is) Wisdom (Ahura Mazda) is described (using the superlative degree of 'good') as 'most good' (*vahišta-*), ~ which is also the nature of the true (correct) order of existence, commonly known in later YAv. texts as *aša- vahišta-*.

That this idea that the Divine is wholly beneficial is a core teaching of Zarathushtra may be seen from the fact that one of the later names for his religion was *din-i-behi* (which means 'the religion of goodness'). And it may also be seen from the fact that it was so fundamental a belief that it survived the destruction of texts and the killing of the learned that occurred during the invasion of Alexander (approx. 331 BCE and later the Arabs (approx. 647 CE),²⁴ because as late as the 9th century C.E. the idea appears in a Pahlavi text, the *Sikand Gumanik Vijar*, written by Mardan-farukh, a Zoroastrian intellect of that time. In pondering the origin of evil, he said:

"If the sacred being be perfect in goodness and wisdom, the folly and evil of any one are known not to arise from him. If it be possible for them to arise from him, then he is not perfect. If he be not perfect, it is not proper to glorify him for the sacredness of complete goodness ..." *Sikand Gumanik Vijar*, E. W. West translation.²⁵

This late text corroborates what we see in the Gathas (on this issue) ~ that Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine is that of a being who is wholly good ~ wholly in accord with the true (correct) order of existence *aša-* (a wholeness that is a Divine attribute *haurvatāt-*) ~ one who has no evil, harmful, destructive, qualities in it. Unfortunately, Mardan-farukh used this premise to justify a very different conclusion, that of cosmic dualism,²⁶ which is not consistent with the evidence of the Gathas. Zarathushtra has a more persuasive (and beautifully logical) solution.²⁷

What then was the result of Zarathushtra re-thinking the nature of the Divine? If in his thought the gods of his culture (as portrayed by their priests) were not worthy of worship because they were a mix of good and bad qualities, then the conclusion is compelling that, in his thought, it is not *who* a being is that makes it divine, worthy of worship. It is *what* the being is (the quality of the being) that makes it divine, worthy of worship. A revolutionary idea that is totally at odds with most dominant religions of all time, (including today) in which 'God' is frequently seen as an entity, separate from the rest of existence, who can do whatever He wants ~ punish fallible people, burn them eternally in hell, wreak vengeance upon them in other ways, ~ and still be considered 'God' (and good!).

Let us now look at the qualities which, in Zarathushtra's view, make a being worthy of worship ~ Divine.

Zarathushtra's names for the Divine.

Thieme has expressed the opinion that in a religion such as Zarathushtra's, which knows no images or idols, the name given to a deity is of decisive importance. It is the means of revealing the personality, the nature, of the deity.²⁸ A profound insight.

The names by which Zarathushtra calls the Divine (and which reveal his idea of the nature of the Divine) are as follows. I dislike making number counts. In addition, because of Old Av. syntax (how words are put together to form sentences) and translation differences,²⁹ the following numbers are approximate in any

event, but (based on the Insler 1975 translation) they give us a rough idea of how Zarathushtra perceives the Divine, through his names for the Divine, and the frequency with which he uses such names. In the Gathas:

mazdā- is used approximately 113 times. I think the most accurate English equivalent is 'Wisdom', and I have footnoted here some different opinions for those who may be interested.³⁰ Insler 1975 translates *mazdā-* as 'Wise One'. However, Thieme 1993 who was Insler's teacher, has argued persuasively that *mazdā-* is not an adjective ('wise'), but a noun ('wisdom'), and therefore means 'personified Wisdom'.³¹ (And I agree).

ahura- 'Lord' ~ alone ~ is used approximately 71. Some differences of opinion regarding what Zarathushtra has in mind in using *ahura-* are discussed later in this chapter.

mazdā- ahura- is used approximately 46 times, and *ahura- mazdā-* approximately 13 times. Even if we combine these last two (*mazdā- ahura-* and *ahura- mazdā-*) into one group (as being stylistic variations of one two-word name), their total would be approximately 59 ~ far less than the use of *mazdā-* alone, and also less than the use of *ahura-* alone. This compound name (*mazdā- ahura-* and *ahura- mazdā-*) has been translated into English as 'Wise Lord' (Insler 1975; Humbach/Faiss 2010), and as 'Wisdom the Lord' or 'Lord Wisdom' (Thieme 1993).³² I find Thieme's English choices to be linguistically more persuasive. And here we see the value of a more literal translation (over an interpretive one) in ascertaining Zarathushtra's thought. 'Wise Lord' places the identity of the Divine in Lordship (the noun), with 'wise' as subordinate (an adj.). On the other hand, 'the Lord, Wisdom' places the identity of the Divine in Wisdom (the noun) which identifies the nature of His lordship,³³ which accords with Zarathushtra's most-used name for the Divine ~ *mazdā-*.

It was only centuries later (in the YAv. texts) that the name of the Divine became standardized into one compound name ~ 'Ahura Mazda'. And later still during Achaemenian times, in Old Persian it became one name ~ Auramazdah. And yet later in Pahlavi times (in Middle Persian) it became Aurhamazd/Ohrmazd/Hormezd.³⁴

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra also occasionally calls his notion of the Divine by other names, as we will see. Let us first consider what Zarathushtra has in mind when he uses these two names ~ *mazdā-* and *ahura-*, with a view to understanding his base-line notion of the nature of the Divine. Based on the ways in which he uses these two names, *mazdā-* and *ahura-*, I think they are (in his thought) two ways of expressing the same ideas regarding the nature of the Divine.

mazdā-

According to Thieme, *mazdā-* is identical in meaning to the Vedic *medhā-* 'wisdom', and he concludes (after a linguistic explanation) that the correct translation of *mazdā-* is 'personified Wisdom' (a noun). Although some linguists and scholars may differ, I find Thieme's opinion to be well reasoned, knowledgeable and persuasive, and I think that *mazdā-*, 'personified Wisdom' is the product of Zarathushtra re-thinking the nature of the divine.

Which brings us to the question: What (in Zarathushtra's view) are the qualities of wisdom (*mazdā*) ~ the qualities which the Divine personifies? Well in his thought at a foundational level a being who is worthy of worship ~ and therefore Divine ~ is one whose existence is:

1. The true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*)~ the nature of which (in the Gathas) is intrinsic goodness in the superlative degree (*vohu-*, *vahišta-*), and includes factual truths, as well as the truths of mind/heart/spirit ~ which in the Gathas includes such qualities as honesty, generosity, goodness,

lovingkindness, solicitude (loving care, concern), friendship, compassion, protected against injury, not harming, nurturing, justice (as in 'being fair'), healing this world;³⁵

2. The comprehension of this order of existence ~ thinking that is intrinsic goodness in the superlative degree (*vohu-* / *vahišta-* *manah-*);³⁶

3. The beneficial-sacred embodiment of this order of existence in thought, word and action (*spənta-ārmaiti-*);³⁷

4. Its good rule (*vohu-* *xšaθra-* the rule of truth, its beneficial embodiment, its most-good comprehension Y51:4);³⁸ and

5. & 6. Is complete attainment (*haurvatāt-*) which results in an existence that is no longer bound by mortality (*amərətāt-*);³⁹

7. All of which comprise the wholly beneficial way of being (*spənta-/spəništa-* *mainyu-*), a way of being that is good, generous, beneficent, bountiful, reasoning, intelligent, loving, the essence of the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), the essence of what is sacred, Divine.⁴⁰ In the Gathas, *aša-* and *spənta-* are equated.⁴¹

These are the qualities which (in Zarathushtra's thought) comprise the nature of Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*), an idea that was remembered even in Younger Av. texts.⁴²

It is readily apparent from the above, that each of these divine qualities (later called amesha spenta) is some aspect of the true (correct) order of existence, *aša-*. This conclusion is corroborated by certain later texts in which the amesha spenta are collectively called *ašavan-* 'truthful ones'.⁴³

This conclusion is consistent with Y51:20, where Zarathushtra implies that they are of the same temperament "All ye (immortals) of the same temperament, let that salvation of yours be granted to us: truth allied with good thinking ...". Y51:20; Insler 1975. And although in Y51:20 the "ye" is not specifically identified as the beneficial non-dying ones (amesha spenta), Insler's view that they are what "ye" stands for, is corroborated in later Avestan texts in which the qualities of the divine, the amesha spenta, are repeatedly described as being of the same temperament ~ of one thought, of one speech, of one deed ~ a temperament which is truth-possessing (*ašavan-*), i.e. which accords with the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*).⁴⁴

And indeed in a beautiful section of the *Yasna Haptanghaiti* (a GAv. text, although not composed by Zarathushtra and not a part of the Gathas) which is the first time the words amesha spenta appear in surviving texts, these two words are used as adjectives to describe the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*),

'We celebrate / worship, then, the true order of existence (which is) most-good
ašəm at vahištəm yazamaidē

which (is) most beautiful,
hyaṭ sraēštəm

which (is) beneficial, non-dying
hyaṭ spəntəm aməšəm

which (is) light-filled
hyaṭ raocōṇhvaṭ

which (is) all good.
hyaṭ vīspā vohū•• YHapt.37:4, my translation.⁴⁵

That the nature of Wisdom (who is) Lord is the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), is corroborated in the Gathas where twice He is described as being of the same temperament with it.

'Thee, Most-Good-One [*vahištā*], the Lord who (is of) the same temperament with the most-good true order of existence [*aša- vahišta-*], do I lovingly entreat,...' Y28:2, my translation (the GAv. words and Insler's 1975 translation are footnoted for comparative purposes).⁴⁶

'The Lord Wisdom who (is of) the same temperament with the true (correct) order of existence...' Y29:7; my translation (the GAv. words and Insler's 1975 translation are footnoted for comparative purposes).⁴⁷

That the nature of Wisdom personifies the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), is corroborated in the later Old Av. *Yasna Haptanghaiti* where the Divine is described as,

... *ahurā mazdā ašā.srīrā* ..."

'... O Lord! Wisdom! beautiful through truth ...' YHapt.35:3, my translation.⁴⁸

That the nature of Wisdom personifies the true order of existence (*aša-*), is also corroborated in certain YAv. texts,⁴⁹ one of which (as Thieme so insightfully says) reveals the nature of the Divine through His names, among which are the following in the YAv. *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*. Here the author has the Lord, Wisdom, (purportedly) speaking.

'Then spoke the Lord (who is) Wisdom [*ahurō mazdā*] ... by name, I am ... fourth, (the) most-good true order of existence [*tūirya aša vahišta*], ...' § 7;

'... truthful by name am I [*ašava nqma ahmi*] ... most-truthful by name am I [*ašavastəma nqma ahmi*] ...' § 12;

'... the true (correct) order of existence by name am I [*aša nqma ahmi*] ...' § 15, my translation.⁵⁰

And in the Gathas, Wisdom is also called 'truthful' *ašavan-* "... the Truthful Lord [*ahurəm ašavanəm*]..." Y46:9, Y53:9 Insler 1975; and once, Wisdom is called 'o truth', "... I shall swear to be your praiser, Wise One, and I shall be it, as long as I shall have strength and be able o truth [*ašā*],⁵¹..." Y50:11, Insler 1975.⁵²

One might (reasonably) question: If the Divine is truth personified, why is his most used name Wisdom (*mazdā-*) instead of Truth. Perhaps it is because the true order of existence is a concept, whereas for living beings, it is the comprehension, the embodiment (personification), the possession of this concept (which is wisdom) that is relevant. In Zarathushtra's thought, the acquisition of wisdom is experience based.⁵³ In a related way, one of Zarathushtra's names for paradise is "The House of Good Thinking" ~ a state of being that houses the comprehension of truth, and is therefore wisdom personified (that 'house' is used as a metaphor for a state of being, as demonstrated in another chapter).⁵⁴

Some scholars have objected to the 'amesha spenta' being used to define Zarathushtra's notion of the nature of the Divine because (they contend) the Divine in the Gathas has many qualities – beneficence, compassion, justice, one who does not injure or harm, et cetera. But all of these 'good' qualities are included within the meaning of the true order of the existence (*aša-*), which includes the truths of mind/heart/spirit.⁵⁵ So one whose existence personifies the true order would (of necessity) have all good qualities.

Let us next consider what Zarathushtra intends when he uses *ahura-* as a name for the Divine.

ahura-

Most linguists who are Vedic scholars, and who have knowledge of other ancient Indo-European languages, translate *ahura-* as 'lord'.⁵⁶ Some Zoroastrian scholars prefer to translate *ahura-* as 'life' or 'existence'. According to Humbach/Faiss 2010, in Old Av. (and its YAv. "reinterpretations"), the conjectured noun stem *aṇhu-* (*ahu-* according to Insler 1975 and Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index),⁵⁷ has two meanings, (1) "life, existence, world," and (2) "patron" [i.e. 'lord']. Humbach/Faiss state that it is possible that the two are of the same origin, and that the noun *ahura-* 'lord' might derive from either.⁵⁸ Many years ago, I was informed (by a first class linguist) that the *-ra* in *ahura-* is an adjectival suffix, thus literally 'lordly'. In Avestan, adjectives often are used as nouns, so when used as a name alone, *ahura-* may literally mean 'Lordly-One' or in more fluent English 'Lord'. In the Gathas, when Zarathushtra calls the Divine 'Lord', he uses only *ahura-*, not *ahu-*.⁵⁹

In many languages, a given word may have two or more completely different meanings. For example, in English, 'light' means a brightness which makes things visible (*the light of the sun*). It means the opposite of 'heavy' (*this suitcase is light*). It also means 'not-serious' (*a light comedy*) ~ to name just a few of its many meanings. How someone would translate 'light' in an English text, would depend on its context.

Figuring out Zarathushtra's intent in using *ahura-* is important because (as Thieme reminds us) in a religion which has no images of the divine, the name given to a deity is of decisive importance in revealing its nature. So which of the two ~ 'lord' or 'life/existence' ~ did Zarathushtra's intend in using the name *ahura-* for the Divine? In some instances, he may have intended to include both meanings in a double entendre. However the translation of *ahura-* as 'lord' is consistent with all of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses this name in the Gathas, whereas the translation of *ahura-* as 'life' or 'existence' is consistent with only some of these ways. For example:

In Y31:8, Zarathushtra says "...I realized Thee to be (ever) young in mind, Wise One, when I grasped Thee in a vision to be the Father of good thinking ... (and) Lord [*ahurəm*] of existence [*aṇhəuš*] in Thy actions." Y31:8, Insler 1975. There is general agreement that *ahurəm* is acc. sg. of the *a-* stem noun *ahura-*, and *aṇhəuš* is genitive sg. of the *u-* stem noun *ahu-* / *aṇhu-* ~ the genitive would give us 'of the lord' or 'of existence'.⁶⁰ In this context, if *ahurəm* is 'existence', we would have to translate *ahurəm aṇhəuš* as 'existence of existence'. (Such epithets as 'king of kings' are not parallel because *aṇhəuš* 'of existence' is sg.). So here, the name *ahurəm* cannot be 'life' or 'existence'. It would have to mean 'Lord [*ahurəm*] of existence [*aṇhəuš*]'. And there are other such examples as well.⁶¹ With respect (and affection) for my friends who disagree, the contextual evidence is clear and compelling that in using *ahura-* as a name for the Divine, Zarathushtra intended 'lord' (there are no capital letters in Av. script, such as we would use for personal names in English).

Naturally, the question arises, if the name *ahura-* means 'Lord', what kind of 'lord' did Zarathushtra have in mind? 'Lord' in what way? 'Lord' of what? Does 'Lord' denote an authority figure? A master? A controller? Is man His slave? His servant?

In understanding *ahura-* 'lord' (and also its related concept 'rule' x *šaθra-*) most students of the Gathas interpret Zarathushtra's thought through the spectacles of human paradigms which in many major religions have been extrapolated on to the Divine. These dominant religious ideas have molded and conditioned our thinking. In my view, it is a mistake to view Zarathushtra's thought through such mental conditioning. The dominant religions of today did not exist in Zarathushtra's day. And if 'Lord' was used for Indo-Iranian deities, we have already seen that Zarathushtra rejected the deities of his culture. So we have to question:

What did Zarathushtra intend in naming his conception of the Divine 'Lord'. In answering this question we have to read the Gathas objectively, with an open mind and fresh eyes, based on the evidence of the Gathas themselves.

The Gathas show us *ahura*- 'lord' in a very different light from conventional thinking about the meaning of 'lord' (so also 'rule' as we have seen in another chapter). Let us look at the evidence.

In the Gathas (as distinguished from later texts) *ahura*- 'lord' is never used explicitly, as a title of the qualities of the Divine (amesha spenta in allegorical form) or any of the deities of Zarathushtra's culture. Nor is *ahura*- used for any human ruler. (It is an open question as to whether Zarathushtra uses it for *unperfected* man).

One of the loveliest teachings of the Gathas is the relationship between man and the Lord (who is) Wisdom. There is no mention of man as His slave or servant. Nor is the Lord called the 'father' of man. He is called the father of truth, the father of good thinking, and the father of embodied truth (*armaiti*-), but nowhere in the Gathas is he called the father of man.⁶² The relationship between man and the Divine is expressed in multi-dimensioned ways. But at a basic, foundational level the relationship is not authoritarian. It is described in the following ways:

As a friend to a friend (or a beloved to a beloved).⁶³

"...Tell me truly, Lord, Someone like Thee, Wise One, should declare to me, his friend,..." Y44:1 Insler 1975;

"Yes, Wise One, (grant) to me Thy proper support, which an able man, possessing such, should give to his friend..." Y43:14 Insler 1975;

"...I lament to Thee. Take notice of it, Lord, offering the support which a friend should grant to a friend..." Y46:2, Insler 1975.⁶⁴

As an ally (a partner) of Wisdom.

"...the one who is His ally [*urvaθa*-] in [*mainyu*- 'his) way of being'] and actions." Y31:21, Insler 1975;

"...the loving man ... such a person, [*spənta*- 'beneficial'] through truth, watching over the heritage for all, is a world-healer and Thy ally [*urvaθa*-] in [*mainyu*- 'in (his) way of being'], Wise One." Y44:2 Insler 1975.

Wisdom does not interfere with man's freedom to choose:

"...Him who left to our will (to chose between) the [*spəncā* 'beneficial'] and the [*aspəncā* 'non-beneficial']..." Y45:9, Insler 1975;⁶⁵

"...Reflect with a clear mind – man by man for himself – upon the two choices of decision..." Y30:2, Insler 1975.

Indeed, even when Zarathushtra prays to Wisdom for guidance, he recognizes that it is not through commands or decrees that He instructs, but through good thinking.

'... May (the) Giver of reason instruct through good thinking (the course of) my direction (so as) to be (the) charioteer of (my) tongue.' Y50:6, my translation. Insler's translation is footnoted here for comparative purposes.⁶⁶

In short, the relationship between man and the Divine at a basic level, (which sets the foundation for other levels), is egalitarian, not controlling, not authoritarian. It is that of a friend to a friend, a beloved to a beloved, a guide, an ally, a partner, in bringing about the desired end.

So we return to our question: If the Divine is not a controller or an authority figure, in what sense is He 'Lord'?

As with 'rule',⁶⁷ the evidence of the Gathas shows that Wisdom has 'lordship' or 'mastery', not over man or other life forms, but over the qualities or attributes that make a being divine (*amesha spenta*).

Wisdom has lordship over good thinking, "... for the very Wise Master [*ahura-*] of good thinking..." Y30:1; Insler 1975. The GAv. word which Insler translates as *Master* here, is *ahura-* 'lord'.

Wisdom has lordship over words and actions stemming from a good way of being (*mainyu-*), "...Lord [*ahura-*] of the word and deed stemming from good [*mainyu-*]..." Y45:8; Insler 1975. Such words and actions are part of the meaning of *ārmaiti-*,⁶⁸ so Wisdom has lordship over the quality of *ārmaiti-*.

And, (in a turn of the kaleidoscope) Wisdom derives Its Lordship from such words and actions, i.e. through Wisdom's *ārmaiti-*:

"... Thou art the Lord [*ahura-*] by reason of Thy tongue which is in harmony with truth and by reason of Thy words stemming from good thinking..." Y51:3; Insler 1975.

"...The Wise One in rule [*x šaθra-*] is Lord [*ahura-*] through [*ārmaiti-*]." Y47:1; Insler 1975.⁶⁹

And He has rule (which is another way of saying lordship) over completeness (*haurvatāt-*), non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), and the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), "...His abounding authority of rule [*x šaθra-*] over completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and immortality [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and over truth [*aša-*] ..." Y31:21; Insler 1975.⁷⁰

So in the Gathas, as a name which reveals the personality of the Divine, 'Lord' is not a lordship over people, or places, or lands, but over the qualities which make a being Divine (*amesha spenta*) ~ the true (correct) order of existence, its good comprehension, its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete attainment which is an existence no longer bound by mortality ~ the wholly beneficial way of being which is the essence of the sacred. 'Lordship' is the complete ownership, possession, of these divine qualities (and paradoxically being possessed completely by them) ~ indicating a quality of existence. Indeed, in those verses in which 'existence' fits the context in which *ahura-* is used, Zarathushtra may have intended a triple entendre for the word ~ an 'existence' which has acquired 'lordship' over the qualities of the Divine, (and which qualities have acquired 'lordship' over existence). Double and triple entendres and word plays appear throughout the Gathas (as many chapters in *Part Two* demonstrate).

The conclusion that *ahura-* is used for one who has acquired 'lordship' over the qualities of the Divine (and the evidence on which this conclusion is based) is entirely consistent with the way in which Zarathushtra uses 'rule' (*x šaθra-*) and its attendant notions of 'power', 'might', 'force', 'strength'.⁷¹ It is not without interest, therefore, that 'lord' (both *ahura-* and *ahu-*) is also used to refer to a (perfected?) human being ~ one who has acquired 'lordship' over the attributes of divinity (completely?).⁷² This conclusion is consistent with the fact that in the Gathas, mortals have qualities of the divine ~ the *amesha spenta* ~ within themselves (incompletely, unperfected) and are capable of attaining them completely. And this conclusion is also consistent with the idea of the Divine as the completely good (all-good) spiritual essence of all that exists (*haurvatāt-* at a collective level,⁷³) which ties into Zarathushtra's new envisionment of the identity of the Divine explored in the next chapter.⁷⁴

Now it is true that in the Gathas, Wisdom often is called Ruler. And again, one might jump to the conclusion that this establishes Him as an authority figure ~ a Ruler or 'Lord' over man ~ until we realize

that His rule is the rule of truth, its beneficial embodiment (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), and its comprehension (the most-good thinking),⁷⁵ a conclusion that is corroborated by the fact that Zarathushtra refers to Wisdom (who is) Lord and Its attributes (in allegorical form), truth, good thinking, and (in masked form) the beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) as "...Ruling Ones..." Y29:2, Insler 1975.⁷⁶

If Zarathushtra calls Wisdom "Ruler" we might reasonably ask ~ where is His Kingdom? to which one might reply: Well His kingdom is 'heaven' of course. Precisely! What is Zarathushtra's notion of 'heaven'? It is a state of being which personifies the qualities of the Divine ~ the amesha spenta ~ the true order of existence (*aša-*) and its components. It is a joyful⁷⁷ state of enlightenment ~ the House of Good Thinking, the House of Song ('House' being a metaphor for a state of being that 'houses' such qualities) ~ a state of enlightenment that is Wisdom personified.⁷⁸

Now it is true that Wisdom is called "... Lord of existence in Thy actions." Y31:8, Insler 1975. And once again, we might jump to the conclusion that to Zarathushtra, Lord must be an authority figure having lordship over everything that exists. But Zarathushtra describes 'existence' as the existences of matter and of mind.⁷⁹

In the 'existence of matter', if Wisdom, through His the beneficial way of being, birthed, crafted and fashioned the material (physical) order of the universe ~ as Y44:7 tells us ~ one might reasonably conclude that in Zarathushtra's view, He is Lord of the material existence ~ having generated it through His beneficial way of being.⁸⁰

But what of the 'existence of mind'? This existence is a way of thinking (*manah-*). It is the preferences in a way of being (*mainyu-*). So in the "existence of mind", one who is "... Lord of existence in Thy actions" is one who has lordship over his way of thinking, his way of being, which is reflected in the kinds of thoughts, words and actions that comprise such a way of being ~ a conclusion that is corroborated in Y45:8 and Y51:3. In Y45:8, He is "... Lord [*ahura-*] of the word and deed stemming from good [*mainyu-* a good way of being]..." Y45:8; Insler 1975. In Y51:3, He is "... Lord [*ahura-*] by reason of Thy tongue which is in harmony with truth [*aša-*] and by reason of Thy words stemming from good thinking [*vohu- manah-*]...." Y51:3; Insler 1975.

So once again, we see that the lordship of the Divine is Its lordship (Its rule) over, (Its complete possession of), the qualities with which Zarathushtra defines divinity ~ the true order of existence (Y31:21),⁸¹ its comprehension, good thinking (Y30:1),⁸² its embodiment in thought, word and action (Y45:8, Y51:3, Y47:1),⁸³ its complete and undying attainment (Y34:1, Y31:21),⁸⁴ ~ all of which comprise the wholly beneficial/sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*), all of which comprise Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*).

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra also calls Wisdom "Mighty One" (Y43:3, Y51:2), "most Mighty One" (Y46:9), "Mightiest Lord" (Y33:11), and "Greatest One of all" (Y45:6), Insler 1975. But once again, the power, might, of the Divine is based on Its possession of the attributes that comprise the divine (amesha spenta).⁸⁵

This is corroborated in Y28:9, where the "Mighty Ones" are the Lord Wisdom, truth, and most-good thinking, "... Thee and the truth and that thinking which is best [*vahišta-* 'most-good'] ... ye are the strongest (and) to mighty ones (like you) belong the powers and the mastery." Y28:9, Insler 1975.

Similarly 'power' is the gift of the allegorical *ārmaiti-* (truth embodied in thought, word and action) "...Give thou, o [*ārmaiti-*], power to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y28:7, Insler 1975.

Indeed, throughout the Gathas the concepts of 'power', 'might', 'strength', and 'force', are not coercive. They are not based on controlling people or events. They all are based on, or linked with, the qualities, the forces, that make a being divine ~ the amesha spenta, detailed in other chapters.⁸⁶

Other names for the Divine.

Zarathushtra's base-line idea of the nature of the Divine is reflected in other names for the Divine that appear in the Gathas, each of which is some aspect of the true order of existence (*aša-*) and/or its comprehension, good thinking. For example (Insler 1975 translation):

"... Thee, Best One [*θwā vahištā* 'Most-Good (One)'], the Lord who art of the same temperament with the [*aša- vahišta-* 'most-good truth']" Y28:8, Insler 1975;⁸⁷

"... the Knowing One..." Y29:6, Y45:3, Y31:17;⁸⁸ "... the One who knows..." Y51:8;

"... wise in His rule..." Y45:9, Y51:6;

"... wise in His soul..." Y45:10;

"... Lord of broad vision ..." Y33:13;

"... the All-viewing Lord..." Y45:4;

"... young in mind ..." Y31:8.

"... First One..." Y31:8, Y43:5, Y51:15.

Zarathushtra's thought, that personified Wisdom is wholly, completely good, is reflected in his calling Him *vahištā* (the first name itemized in the above list) which Insler 1975 translates as 'Best One'. The word *vahišta-* is the superlative form of *vohu-* 'good'. So 'Best One' is used, not in a competitive sense, but as the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness. When (as here) the adjective *vahišta-* is used as a noun, it literally means 'Most-Good-One'. And in this verse (Y28:2), the *Most-Good-One* is described as having the same temperament with the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), "Thee, Best One [*θwā vahištā*], the Lord who art of the same temperament with the best truth [*aša vahištā*]..." Y28:8, Insler 1975, or as I would translate it, 'Thee, Most Good One, the Lord who is of the same temperament as the most-good true (correct) order of existence...'. This phrase corroborates three conclusions,

- (1) that the true (correct) order is 'most-good' the superlative of 'good' (*aša- vahišta-*),
- (2) that the nature of the Lord is 'most-good' (*vahišta-*), and
- (3) that His most-good temperament is equated with the most-good true (correct) order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*).⁸⁹

Zarathushtra also calls Wisdom 'First One' in three verses (itemized above). In the Gathas, the word *paourvya-* 'first', has different shades of meaning (as it also does in English) which include first in time (primeval), and also first in quality.⁹⁰ An English example of 'first' in quality, would be *a diamond of the first water*, which means a diamond of the finest quality. And I think that Zarathushtra's name for the Divine ~ 'First One' ~ means first in quality ~ indicating that His nature is the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness (*vohu-*, *vahišta-*), wholly beneficial (*spənta- spəništa-*), beneficent, loving, generous (*hudāh-*), all that is true and 'right' ~ which is the true (correct) order of existence.⁹¹

The Nature of the Divine inferred through the objects of Zarathushtra's worship.

Zarathushtra's idea of the nature of the Divine may be inferred through the things that Zarathushtra worships and reverences.

Truth and good thinking: It is significant that in the Gathas, the true order of existence ('truth' for short), and its comprehension (good thinking, which ultimately is an enlightened state of being) are objects of worship, reverence, and praise, often in tandem with the Lord, Wisdom. For example,

"... As long as I shall be able, I shall respect that truth [*aša-*] is to have a gift of reverence." Y43:9, Insler 1975;⁹²

"Therefore, let us reverently give an offering [*myazdām*]⁹³ to Thee, Lord, and to truth [*aša-*]..." Y34:3, Insler 1975; the Avestan word *myazdām* 'offering' is a ritual offering, and thus an act of worship.

"...Thou, Wise One, along with truth [*aša-*] and good thinking [*voḥu- manah-*] ... I shall very happily approach all of you, as I worship and praise." Y34:6, Insler 1975;⁹⁴

"... Thou, Wise One, together with truth [*aša-*] and good thinking [*voḥu- manah-*] ... Let bright gifts⁹⁵ and reverence (for all of you) be manifest amid us." Y33:7, Insler 1975.

The beneficial/sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) is an object of reverence: "With hands outstretched in reverence of him, our support, the [*mainyu-* 'way of being'], [*spənta-* 'beneficial-sacred'] through truth ... " Y28:1, Insler 1975; *spənta-* 'beneficial-sacred' is a quality of the true (correct) order of existence, which is the existence of the Divine.⁹⁶

Completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) are the objects of praise.

The word 'praise' here is the praise of worship "...[*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*], those two enduring forces which are to be praised [*səmjhē*]⁹⁷ with good thinking ..." Y51:7, Insler 1975.

ārmaiti- 'embodied truth' is frequently called *spənta-* (beneficial-sacred) and is 'esteemed', "... [*spənta- ārmaiti-*] which is esteemed [*bərəx δqm*] by Thy knowing follower... " Y34:9; "... esteemed [*bərəx δqm ārmaitīm*] ..." Y44:7; Insler 1975. The GAv. word *bərəx δa-* has been translated as 'precious' by some linguists.⁹⁸

And good rule (the rule of truth, its comprehension, its embodiment Y51:4) is to be 'served' in a context which implies worship: "That good rule [*voḥu- x šaθra-*] must be chosen which best brings good fortune to the man serving it with milk [*īžā-*]..." Y51:1, Insler 1975. The word used for 'milk' here (*īžā-*), was a component of the ritual, and in the Gathas it is also used as a metaphor for the nourishment, nurture, provided by truth and its comprehension, good thinking.⁹⁹ So here (Y51:1), using the vocabulary of a ritual offering (milk), he tells us in this multi-dimensioned way, that good rule must be served/worshipped with truth and good thinking. When we consider that good rule is an activity of man, as well as of the Divine, we can appreciate the delightful double and triple entendres of how we 'serve/worship' good rule.¹⁰⁰

And the enigmatical Y51:22 suggests that it is Wisdom the Lord and all of His Divine qualities (*amesha spenta*) who are objects of worship, and are to be worshipped 'with their own names' and served with love.¹⁰¹

Usually, the object of worship is a Being or Entity. I cannot think of any school of thought in which the object of worship is truth (true order of existence) and its component parts. Why does Zarathushtra use the vocabulary of worship for truth ~ sometimes alone, sometimes in tandem with Wisdom, and sometimes in

truth's various aspects (its comprehension (good thinking), its embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete and undying attainment, the beneficial/sacred way of being)? I think he does so (in part, at least) to emphasize his re-thinking of the nature of the Divine ~ that it is the quality of a being ~ the personification of the true order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule, its complete attainment ~ that makes a being Divine, worthy of worship.

The nature of the Divine and mutual, loving, help.

In Zarathushtra's thought, loving help, care, solicitude, support, nurture, is part of the nature of the Divine. But it works in complementary ways ~ the notion is one of mutual, loving, help between man and the Divine, and man and man and other life forms (represented by the allegorical cow). This notion of mutual, loving help appears in various ways throughout the Gathas and is discussed in many of the chapters in *Parts One, Two, Three, and Six*. A few examples are collected and summarized here.

Through the true order of existence (a beneficial order of existence). One of the most frequently used adjectives describing Wisdom is 'beneficial' (*spənta-*) ~ the essence of the sacred ~ a quality that also exists (imperfectly) in man.¹⁰² And the very first verse of the Gathas states that the way of being (*mainyu-*) which is beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*) through the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), is supportive. 'Hand outstretched, with reverence of this (our) support ~ the way of being [*mainyu-*] beneficial-sacred [*spənta-*] through the true (correct) order of existence [*aša-*]...' Y28:1 my translation.¹⁰³

Humans help, support, protect, each other, other life forms, and indeed the Divine! by thinking, speaking and acting in a way that is beneficial, loving, that accords with the true order of existence, "... the loving man ... [*spənta-* 'beneficial'] through truth [*aša-*], watching over the heritage for all, is a world-healer, and Thy ally in [*mainyu-* 'his) way of being'], Wise One." Y44:2, Insler 1975;

In the same way, the Divine also is loving, caring, "... Him, the One who offers solicitude..." Y45:7, Insler 1975; "... the glories of Him who offers solicitude (to us)..." Y46:13, Insler 1975.¹⁰⁴

But how (in Zarathushtra's thought) does the Divine help, protect, support us? He doesn't do so by making 'bad' things go away. That would not be consistent with the paradigm that our positive and negative experiences are the tools that sculpt our souls, each a necessary part of the evolution of the soul ~ the perfecting process.¹⁰⁵ The Divine protects by helping us to handle our difficult experiences through truth and its comprehension, good thinking, "What help by truth [*aša-*] hast Thou for Zarathushtra who calls? What help by good thinking hast Thou for me...? ..." Y49:12; "... Therefore protect us in accord with truth [*aša-*]." Y34:7, Insler 1975.¹⁰⁶

In a related way, Wisdom's rule is supportive, friendly, "Yes, Wise One, (grant) to me Thy proper support, which an able man, ... should give to his friend, and which has been obtained through Thy rule that is in accord with truth [*aša-*]..." Y43:14, Insler 1975.¹⁰⁷

We see this idea of complementary, mutual, loving, help in Y33:11, 12 and 13.

The Divine helps mortals. "The Wise One who is the Mightiest Lord, and [*ārmaiti-*], and truth [*aša-*] which prospers the creatures, and good thinking [*vohu- manah-*], and (good) rule [*x šaθra-*] ~ listen to me, have mercy on me [*mərəzdātā mōi* 'give-compassion to me'],¹⁰⁸ ..." Y33:11, Insler 1975.

Mortals help the Divine (through the qualities that make a being divine, which they have imperfectly, incompletely). "Rise up to me, Lord. Along with Thy [*spəništa- mainyu-* 'most-beneficial way of being']

Wise One, receive force through (our) [*ārmaiti*-], strength through (every) good requital, powerful might through truth [*aša*-], protection through (our) good thinking [*vohu- manah*-]." Y33:12, Insler 1975.

The Divine supports a good thinking man by helping him to understand good rule. "Lord of broad vision, ... disclose to me for support the safeguards of your rule, [*x šaθra*-] those which are the reward for good thinking [*vohu- manah*-] ..." Y33:13, Insler 1975.

A mortal's paths to the Divine are the paths of the true order of existence,¹⁰⁹ the paths of good thinking,¹¹⁰ the paths of Wisdom's Divine attributes (the *amesha spenta*)¹¹¹ ~ a beneficial, generous, supportive, friendly, loving, compassionate path.

It could reasonably be concluded that Zarathushtra also calls perfected mortals *ahura*-.¹¹² Being *ahura*- and *mazdā*- includes not only having the power and wisdom of the attributes of the divine for one's self, it also includes helping others to attain them as well ~ a conclusion that is corroborated in the last part of one of the foundational manthra's in Zarathushtra's thought ~ the *Ahuna Vairya* (the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*).¹¹³ The conclusion that being *ahura*- and *mazdā*- means to be enlightened oneself, and also to help others make it is corroborated by the verses which say that we give completeness and non-deathness to the Divine, and the Divine gives completeness and non-deathness to us,¹¹⁴ and is consistent with Zarathushtra's idea that the Divine and man (and all the living) are part of the same (original) life force.¹¹⁵ In the final analysis, there are no 'others'. If you are trashed, I am trashed. If I can't make it, you can't make it. If every single unit of existence doesn't make it, no one makes it.

Being a pastor (a nurturer). We see Zarathushtra's idea of mutual, loving, help in his imagery of both the Divine and man being '*pastors*' ~ nurturers ~ of mortal existence. Indeed such nurture is an essential part of the solution for the sufferings of mortal existence in Yasna 29.¹¹⁶ Zarathushtra uses the word '*pastor*' to refer to the Divine and Its qualities truth, good thinking, the beneficial-sacred way of being, and embodied truth *ārmaiti*-, and also the man who has these beneficial, nurturing qualities (although incompletely).¹¹⁷ And in Y33.6, he refers to the duties of a good priest, as '*pastoral*'. He says, "The priest who is just (*ərəzuš* 'straight'), in harmony with truth [*aša*-] is the offspring from the [*mainyu- vahišta*- '(the) most-good way of being']. ... He is allied with that (good) thinking by reason of which he has respected to bring to realization his pastoral duties." Y33:6, Insler 1975. It is ironic (is it not?) that today, perhaps three millennia after Zarathushtra, priests in Christianity often are called *pastor*, yet Zoroastrian priests (with noble exceptions) no longer see their duties as '*pastoral*' ~ nurturing, caring for, the souls of all the living.

Through being a saoshyant, through salvation: The notion of mutual, loving help also appears in Zarathushtra's notion of a savior [*saošyant*-] as one who acts in accordance with the true (correct) order of existence, its good comprehension, its beneficial embodiment.

"Yes, those men shall be the saviors [*saošyant*-] of the lands, namely, those who shall follow their knowledge of Thy teaching with actions in harmony with good thinking and with truth, Wise One. These indeed have been fated to be the expellers of fury." Y48:12, Insler 1975.

Notice in this verse (Y48:12), it is '*fury*' (a destructive way of thinking and being) that is expelled, not a rival tribe, or race, or religion; and those who save are "...the saviors of the lands..." ~ not just receiving salvation (truth and good thinking) for themselves, but helping everyone to make it.

Indeed, in Zarathushtra's thought, 'salvation' (the qualities of the Divine) is something a person gives to all the living in mutual loving help.¹¹⁸ Salvation is attained, not through an agency beyond man's control, but through the beneficence of thinking, speaking and acting in accordance with the true order of existence, its

comprehension, its embodiment in thought, word and action, its rule "...let that salvation of yours be granted to us: truth allied with good thinking! ...words allied with [ārmaiti-] ..." Y51:20;¹¹⁹ "... let salvation be granted to the beneficent man..."Y34:3; "... salvation for the truthful [ašavan-],..." Y30:11.¹²⁰

Corroboration in later texts: This concept of mutual loving help is corroborated in later texts. Here are a few examples:

In the YAv. *Yasht Fragment 24* (called the *Vishtasp Yasht*),¹²¹ mutual, loving help comes from the Lord Wisdom,¹²² and we give it to our fellow creatures:

"... I, Ahura Mazda gently show him his way as he asks for it..." *Yasht Fragment 24:33*, Darmesteter translation.

"The Law of Mazda will not deliver thee unto pain [ft. 6. "literally 'no comfort'."]. Thou art entreated ... by the whole of the living world, and she is ever standing at thy door in the person of thy brethren ..." *Yasht Fragment 24:36*, Darmesteter translation.¹²³

The literal 'no comfort' is more accurate, than the interpretive translation 'pain'. In life there is pain. The interpretive translation 'the law of Mazda will not deliver thee unto pain' is not only linguistically inaccurate, it does not reflect the realities of our existence. But the more literal translation that 'the law of Mazda will not deliver thee to no-comfort,' is more accurate. In our pain, there will always be comfort ~ loving help. It may not be the help we want or expect. But it will be there. And it will help.

In the *Rashn Yasht*, a YAv. text,

"Then I, Ahura Mazda, shall come for help unto thee ..." Yt. 12:4, Darmesteter translation.¹²⁴ A similar but more detailed thought is expressed in the *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*.¹²⁵

In the *Srosh Yasht Hadhokht*, a YAv. text, we see the idea of good people being friends with all of existence.

"... Friends of the Amesha-Spentas;
Friends of ourselves, the Saoshyants, the two-footed part of ... creation;
Friends of all the beings of the holy [ašaonō 'truth-possessing'] world." Yt.11:17. Darmesteter translation.¹²⁶

The notion of mutual, loving help is echoed in a Pahlavi text, which appears in English translation as *Selections of Zadsparam*. It identifies the three things that will bring about the renovation of existence, the third being,

"...Thirdly, the existence of mutual assistance of the creatures, or along with and owing to mutual assistance, ... it is the triumph of warfare over the enemy which is one's own renovation." Ch. 1, § 19, E. W. West translation.¹²⁷

The 'enemy' here is untruth ~ all that is false, wrong,¹²⁸ echoing the Gathas, where the 'enemy' is untruth, (and 'hell' is a wrong-headed, deceived state of being in *mortal* existence, called "[the House of Deceit](#)", "[the House of Worst Thinking](#)," and "[the worst existence](#)").¹²⁹

The notion of mutual, loving help may also be echoed (indirectly) in the Pazand *Mainyo-i-khard*, where 'hell' is described as a darkness (i.e. a lack of understanding, an ignorance) so thick that the person cannot see his way clear and needs a helping hand to get out of it,

"[§ 21] ...the darkest hell ... [§ 31] ... their darkness is such-like as when it will be necessary to hold by the hand."¹³⁰

Conclusion.

Zarathushtra's two primary names for the Divine – *mazdā-* and *ahura-* – are, in my view, different ways of saying the same thing. Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*) comprises the qualities that make a being divine – the beneficial-sacred way of being which is the true order of existence (a wholly good existence), its comprehension good thinking, its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete attainment, a state of being that is not bound by mortality (later called the *amesha spenta*). And 'Lord' (*ahura-*) is a being who has attained complete possession, mastery of, and rule over (and is ruled by), these qualities. Both names reveal Zarathushtra's notion of the essence of the divine, – a being who is wholly good (*vahišta-*), wholly beneficial (*spənta-*), wholly 'truth-possessing' (*ašavan-*) – whose being personifies the true order of existence (*aša-*) – compassionate, generous, loving, caring, knowing, reasoning, intelligent, just (as in fair), a friend, a beloved.

It is a mark of Zarathushtra's genius that he sees 5 of these divine qualities (*amesha spenta*) also in man (and possibly all the living) although not completely (yet!). What does this tell us about Zarathushtra's idea of the nature of man, and the relationship between man and the Divine? What does this tell us about Zarathushtra's re-shaping of the Indo-Iranian mind-set in which each material thing has a spiritual essence – the divine – but one that is both good and bad?

A clue. Remove the spectacles of a few late texts and the dominant religions of today, and look at his perception of the Divine from the base upwards, not from the top down. Keep these questions (and clues) on the back-burner of your mind as you navigate the other chapters, especially the puzzles in *Part Two*.

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¹ See in *Part One: Worship & Prayer*, and *The Search for Truth*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*.

² Some scholars have expressed the opinion that such gifts to deities were given to elicit a corresponding good (or better) gift from the deity to the worshipper (which I think is correct). But in their opinion this model was based on the guest / host relationship, in which a gift from a guest required a reciprocal gift from his host (which, with respect, I think is totally incorrect). Not only is the guest / host relationship quite different from the worshipper / deity relationship, but the gift to a host is an expression of thanks for hospitality received. Very different is the worshipper / deity relationship.

In ancient times (even in non-Iranian societies) the ruler was an individual with more or less absolute power – the chief of a tribe, the ruler of a kingdom. The well being of individuals under his (or her) rule, depended on the ruler's good will, which individuals attempted to cultivate through giving gifts to the chief, or ruler, hoping thereby to secure benefits in return. And I think the same model (in those ancient times generally, and in Zarathushtra's society in particular) was extrapolated on to the divine – resulting in gifts to deities (through their priests) by the worshipper who thereby wished to cultivate the good will of the deity, and obtain some cherished wish (or boon) from the deity (as the YAv. Yashts make abundantly clear). Zarathushtra rejected this form of worship (discussed in *Part One: Worship & Prayer*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*). By contrast, in Zarathushtra's thought, the benefits Wisdom confers are gifts. They do not have to be earned, and what we give the Divine Zarathushtra also describes as a gift. See for example, *Part Two: The Solution Of Yasna 29*, and in Y33:14 where Zarathushtra, referring to himself in the 3d person says,

"For Zarathushtra does give the breath of even his own person as a gift in order that there be for [*mazdā*- 'for wisdom/Wisdom'] predominance of good thinking along with (predominance) of the action and the word allied with truth [which is the meaning of *armaiti*-], that there be [*sraoša*- 'listening'] and His (good) rule." Y33:14, Insler 1975.

³ Some of the deities worshipped in the YAv. texts are of Indo-Iranian origin, and therefore would have been the deities of Zarathushtra's culture which were brought into Zarathushtra's religion centuries later. These include (for example) the well known deities Mithra and Haoma, but also lesser known deities like Vayu who is featured prominently in the YAv. Ram Yasht, in which several legendary heroes (purportedly) offered sacrifices consisting of ritual offerings, to gain their hearts' desires (Yt. 15, SBE 23, pp. 250 ~ 263). Other YAv. deities were not of Indo-Iranian origin, such as Ardvi Sura Anahita, to whom (in a YAv. Yasht) hundreds of horses, oxen, lambs, were (purportedly) offered by legendary heroes to gain their hearts' desires.

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra calls the deities of his society daevas, and rejects them. However, he does not name any of these deities. So the deities of the YAv. texts that were not Indo-Iranian (like Ardvi Sura Anahita) may have been the deities of his society, or their worship may have arisen after Zarathushtra's time. Many of the YAv. Yashts mention Zarathushtra (and indeed Ahura Mazda!) worshipping such deities, but this was a common device in many YAv. texts, to give validity or authority to all such deities ~ including those of pre-Zarathushtrian origin.

To illustrate how different the way to worship such deities was from the Gathas, here are some examples of the extravagant sacrifices detailed in the Yasht of the deity Ardvi Sura Anahita (Aban Yasht). The titles of the Yashts are in Pahlavi (Middle Persian), but the Yashts themselves are in YAv. All these quotations are taken from the Darmesteter translation in SBE 23. All page numbers are to this volume.

"To her did Haoshyangha... offer up a sacrifice ... with a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand lambs. He begged of her a boon, saying: 'Grant me this, ... that I may become the sovereign lord of all countries...!'" §§ 21 - 22, p. 58;

"To her did Jamaspa offer up a sacrifice, with a hundred horses, a thousand oxen, then thousand lambs, when he saw the army of the wicked... coming from afar in battle array. He asked of her a boon, saying: 'Grant me this... that I may be as constantly victorious as any one of all the Aryans...!'" §§ 68 - 69, p. 70;

I rather like the following request for assistance, "To her did Yoista, one of the Fryanas, offer up a sacrifice with a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand lambs... He begged of her a boon, saying: 'Grant me this, ...that I may overcome the evil-doing Akhtya, ... that I may answer the ninety-nine hard riddles that he asks me maliciously...!'" §§ 82 - 82; pp. 72 - 73.

And this same formula of offering horses, cattle, oxen and lambs, in return for a boon, is repeated many times, using the names of legendary successful heroes, whose wishes the goddess (supposedly) granted ~ her priests thereby attributing to her, the successes of these legendary heroes. And this Yasht also recites the names of legendary evil-doers who offered such sacrifices but whose wishes the goddess did not grant ~ her priests thereby projecting her as being responsible for their failures. These same (almost identical) requests are contained in the Yashts to other deities as well whose priests doubtless wanted their own deities to be responsible for the successes of legendary heroes and the failures of legendary evil-doers.

⁴ Here are a few of examples of the punishments and retributions inflicted by angry Av. deities. There are many more (additional examples are given in a footnote in *Part One: Truth, Asha*).

The following examples are from the YAv. Mihir Yasht, (dedicated to the Indo-Iranian deity Mithra, Vedic *mitra*), as it appears in SBE 23, translated by Darmesteter:

§ 28: [referring to Mithra] "... who gives herds of oxen and male children to that house in which he has been satisfied; he breaks to pieces those in which he has been offended." p. 126.

§ 39: "Their falcon-feathered arrows, shot from the string of the well-bent bow, fly towards the mark, and hit it not, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them..." p. 129. The same fate (of being ineffectual in battle) meets their spears, swords, and clubs in this section also appears in the next one §40.

§ 43: "And then Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, throws them to the ground, killing their fifties and their hundreds, their hundreds and their thousands, their thousands and their tens of thousands, their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads; as Mithra, the lord of the wide pastures is angry and offended." p. 130.

§ 48: [referring to Mithra] "... then he binds the hands of those who have lied unto Mithra, he confounds their eyesight, he takes the hearing from their ears; they can no longer move their feet; they can no longer withstand those people, those foes, when Mithra ... bears them ill-will." p. 131.

It is significant, however, that while some of the punishments described in this Yasht are for failing to worship Mithra, many more are for lying to Mithra. So as horrible and cruel as the punishments described in this Yasht are, Mithra's nature had an ethical basis, although one might wonder at the limitation ~ the forbidden act is described as lying 'to Mithra' ~ not lying in general. But *miθra-* means 'contract' (Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index), and if the deity Mithra is 'Contract' personified, one can only admire the highly ethical principle expressed in this Yasht to Mithra, in which the composer has Ahura Mazda (purportedly) saying, at the start of this Yasht:

§1, "Said Ahura Mazdah to Zarathushtra the Spitamid: ...

§ 2 "... Never break a contract [*miθrām*], O Spitamid, whether you conclude it with an owner of Falsehood, or a Truth-owning follower of the good Religion; for the contract applies to both, the owner of Falsehood and him who owns Truth." Gershevitch translation 1967, *The Avestan Hymn To Mithra*, pp. 74, 75.

The following example of an offended deity threatening retribution is from Yy11, dedicated to Haoma (a pre-Zarathushtrian Indo-Iranian deity, Ved. *Soma*). Here, a person who refuses to give Haoma the proper offering [consisting of the tongue and left eye of the slaughtered animal] is threatened with the following calamities.

"[§ 3] H(a)oma speaks his drinker thus: ... Childless be thou, shorn of offspring, evil-famed and slander-followed, who holdest me from full outpouring, as a robber, skulls in-crushing... [§ 5] Who this offering would deny me, eats himself, or prays it from me ... [§ 6] In his house is born no fire-priest, warrior ne'er in chariot standing, never more the thrifty tiller. In his home be born Dahakas, Murakas of evil practice, doing deeds of double nature. [§ 7] Quick, cut off then H(a)oma's portion, gift of flesh for doughty H(a)oma! Heed lest H(a)oma bind thee fettered, as he bound the fell Turanian Frangrasyan (the murderous robber) fast in iron close-surrounded in the mid-third of this earth!" Yy11:3, 5, 6, 7, Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 245 - 246. Notice, there could have been no caste system in this time period, in that the children of one father could potentially have been priests, warriors, or farmers. See *Part Four: Castes and Heredity*.

⁵ We see an instance of such actions by the priestly composer of what Mills calls the Haoma Yasht (Yy9 celebrating Haoma, an Indo-Iranian deity) who makes it clear that a monarch who rejects the priest as counsellor, will lose his throne. This king, it seems, did not want the priests watching his every step, controlling the lands, and stifling progress (a king after my own heart!).

"Haoma lowered Keresani, dethroned him from his throne, for he grew so fond of power, that he treacherously said: No priest behind (and watching) shall walk the lands for me, as counsellor to prosper them, he would rob everything of progress, he would crush the growth of all." Yy9:24, SBE 31, p. 237 - 238.

We see the same idea in the YAv. *Bahram Yasht* (celebrating Verethraghna, a concept (quality) of Indo-Iranian origin, which in this Yasht is a deity who personifies the concept) whose priestly composer (putting his own ideas as speech by Ahura Mazda) assures us that if bad people take (for themselves) ritual offerings (presumably offered to the deity and to be enjoyed by its priests), then healing virtues are taken back and plagues and defeat result,

"Plagues will ever pour upon the Aryan nations; hostile hordes will ever fall upon the Aryan nations; the Aryans will be smitten by their fifties and their hundreds, by their hundreds and their thousands, by their thousands and their tens of thousands, by their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads." *Bahram Yasht* Yt. 14:53 Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 245.

Truly, these pre-Zarathushtrian religion(s) sought to control human behaviour through fear.

And we see this pattern of priestly domination and control through fear in later texts even after YAv. times such as in the *Vendidad* (SBE 4), the Pahlavi *Shayast La-Shyast* (SBE 5) and others. Even so admirable a priest as (Pahlavi) Zad-spāram was authoritative (although not seeking to control through fear). He had this to say about the "five dispositions" of a priest,

"The third is authoritativeness, because that priestly master is always wiser and speaks more correctly who is taught wisely and teaches with more correct words."

But the path of authoritativeness was not always smooth. We see Zad-spāram admonishing his students,

"... not to beat your own teacher with a snatched-up stick, and not to bring scandal upon his name, for the sake of annoying him, by uttering that which was not heard from your own teacher." *Selections of Zad-spāram*, Ch. 24, § 12, E. W. West translation SBE 47, p. 169.

But Zad-spāram (for whom I feel great affection, notwithstanding his imperfections), displays a truly lovely attitude towards teaching ~ that the knowledge we acquire we should share with others without worrying about our own renown (unfortunately he limits sharing knowledge with only the 'worthy', but interestingly, not limited to Zoroastrians),

"... whatever is taught liberally by your own teacher, you have to deliver back to the worthy, for the sake of not extorting a declaration of renown from the righteous." E. W. West, SBE 24, § 13, SBE 47, p. 169.

⁶ For example, in the YAv. *Mihir Yasht*, invoking and praising the pre-Zarathushtrian Indo-Iranian deity Mithra, it says, (speaking of Mithra)

"... who gives herds of oxen and male children to that house in which he has been satisfied; he breaks to pieces those in which he has been offended.

"Thou, O Mithra! art both bad and good to nations; thou, O Mithra! art both bad and good to men; ..." Yt. 10:28 - 29, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, pp. 126 - 127.

⁷ Insler identifies fem. *bagā*, masc. *bagō* as Avestan. words for 'goddess'/'god' in his commentary under Y32:8 in which the fem. form is used which Insler translates as "goddess", pp. 47, 204. Kent (1950) *Old Persian*, in his Lexicon, p. 199, shows Old Persian *baga-* 'god', among other variations of the word in various Indo-European languages. The YAv. texts more often use *yazata-*, which does not appear in the Gathas, but does appear in the YHapt.41:3, (which is composed in GAv., but probably some time after the Gathas). Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index shows *yazata-* as a GAv. adj. (in YHapt. 41:3) meaning 'worthy of worship', but in Avestan, adjs. can also be used as nouns ~ so 'one (who is) worthy of worship' ~ a deity.

⁸ Humbach (1991) Vol. 1, his paragraph numbers 1:2, p. 2, and 5:3, pp. 21 et seq.,

⁹ A commonly used word for 'god' or deity in Old Avestan was *daēva-*, which Zarathushtra used in the Gathas for the deities of his society whom he rejected. Moulton and Taraporewala both explain that the word *daēva-* in the Gathas refers to the gods of the pre-Zarathushtrian religion(s) of Zarathushtra's society. Moulton says that they got their bad character largely through the predatory behavior of their devotees (Moulton 1912 p. 350, ft. 1; Taraporewala 1951 p. 149) ~ a statement that is well documented in the Gathas. A few of the pre-Zarathushtrian deities (perhaps those whose teachings were particularly onerous, or whose priests no longer had political power during the syncretization)

became 'demons' in later Avestan texts. E. W. West enumerates these in SBE 5, p. 10, ft. 2, where he demonstrates the parallel between the names of these Avestan demons, and the Indo-Iranian deities they once were. In the Gathas, the Lord (who is) Wisdom is the only being considered worthy of worship ~ Divine ~ a wholly 'good' being, not a mix of 'good' and 'bad' qualities. But in later Avestan texts, other Indo-Iranian deities such as Mithra and Vayu (both of who were a mix of good and bad qualities) were not demonized, but made their way into the later Zoroastrian religion, and were worshipped along with Ahura Mazda in a syncretized blend which in many ways was far removed from Zarathushtra's teachings in the Gathas. It would be interesting to know the politics of their respective priesthoods which resulted in the demonizing of some (good/bad) pre-Zarathushtrian deities (in the YAv. texts), and in the re-introduction of others (also good/bad) as objects of worship. But we no longer have such information.

¹⁰ Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*.

¹¹ See also: [referring to the local gods and their followers]

"...ye have deceived mankind out of the good way of life...by such evil thinking and the *[aka- mainyu-]* '(the) evil way of being' [...]" Y32:5, Insler 1975;

"During their regimes, the Karpans [priests] and the Kavis [princes] yoked (us) with evil actions" Y46:11; Insler 1975;

"But ye gods – as well as the one who worships you – all of you are the offspring stemming from evil thinking, deceit and disrespect. Hateful too are your actions,..." Y32:3, Insler 1975.

¹² The GAv. words (transliterated) are as follows,

at̥ yuš daēvā vīspāñhō akāṭ manañhō stā ciθrām... Y32:3a.

Insler (1975) translates this phrase, "But ye gods ... all of you are the offspring stemming from evil thinking..." Y32:3a, and in his commentary uses the literal 'seed' *ciθrām* for 'offspring': "...Ye are the seed (offspring) stemming from evil thinking..." p. 198.

Humbach/Faiss (2010) translates this phrase, "But you Daevas/devils altogether are seeds from bad thought..." Y32:3a.

According to Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index the words *akāṭ manañhō* in this phrase are in the ablative case, and one of the uses of the ablative is to indicate 'from' in the sense of 'from a point of origin'. He illustrates this usage in his translation of Y32:3 which (in pertinent part) is as follows: "But you, O old gods, are all the *seed (issued) from an evil thought..." Y32:3. Skjaervo's *Introduction to Old Avestan*, Lesson 4, p. 44.

¹³ This conclusion, however, would not be accurate if Zarathushtra intended "conception [*daēnā-*]" here to refer to the mind-set of how these gods should be served, rather than the thought that conceived the idea of such gods.

¹⁴ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

¹⁵ See *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

¹⁶ The conclusion that Zarathushtra demoted the local deities of his culture from 'godhood', as being unworthy of worship is somewhat corroborated in the *Farvardin Yasht*, (Yt. 13) in which a similar (but not identical) idea is expressed in § 90. Here the composer, referring to Zarathushtra says:

"... who first in the material world proclaimed the word that destroys the Daevas, the law of Ahura; who first in the material world declared all the creation of the Daevas unworthy of sacrifice and prayer; ..." Yt. 13:90 Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, pp. 201 - 202.

yō paoiryō stōiš astvaiθyā vācīm framraoṭ vīdōyūm ahurō.ṭkaēšəm ∴

yō paoiryō stōiš astvaiθyā vīspqm daēvō.dātəm vavaca ayesnyqm avahmyqm ∴ Yt. 13:90 transliterated from Geldner 2P p. 187.

Some Zoroastrians (incorrectly called the 'orthodox') believe the Zoroastrian religion from its inception did not allow converts. Those who oppose this tradition have argued that Zarathushtra started a 'new' religion, and converted King Vishtaspa, his family, his court, and anyone who wished to join the religion. To which the 'orthodox' have replied that Zarathushtra did not start a 'new' religion, he simply 'reformed' the existing religion of his culture. With respect, this betrays a lack of knowledge ~ not only of the Gathas, but also of the later YAv. texts. The *daēva*- were the deities of Zarathushtra's culture (as the Gathas make abundantly clear). The word *vi.daēva*- which (according to Skjaervo's YAv. Index) means 'discarding (and rejecting) the daevas' appears throughout the YAv. texts. Indeed, so total was this rejection, that the meaning of the word *daēva*- (the deities of Zarathushtra's culture), came to mean 'demon' in the YAv. texts. That was an outright rejection ~ not simply a reformation.

¹⁷ The very first verse of the Gathas, Y28:1, is a subtle, multi-dimensioned verse ~ a mini puzzle. It is translated and discussed with comparative translations in *Part Six: Yasna 28:1*.

¹⁸ See *Part Four: Zarathushtra's Date & Place*.

¹⁹ Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium, 1993* (WZO, 1998), p. 201.

²⁰ Those who argue that a deity named Ahura Mazda existed before Zarathushtra point to the *Vendidad* in which the story of Yima (Jamsheed) is recounted, including conversations between "Ahura Mazda" and Yima. But that argument is flawed for at least 2 reasons:

1. We know that the *Vendidad* was written after YAv. times (demonstrated by its faulty Avestan grammar and other evidence, discussed in *Part Three: The Absence of Damnation & Hell In Other Avestan Texts*). The Av. Yima was actually a legendary figure of Indo-Iranian origin (Ved. Yama), and in the Vedas, no conversations are recorded between a deity named Ahura Mazda and Yama, nor in the Vedas is Yama said to have worshipped a deity called Ahura Mazda. So it is more than probable that the story of Yima in the *Vendidad* (and other late texts) was 'Zoroastrianized' ~ told through the perspective of Zoroastrianism, to illustrate aspects of Zarathushtra's teachings.

2. The foregoing conclusion ~ that the story of Yima was perceived and told through the spectacles of later Zoroastrianism ~ is corroborated by evidence of how the name of the Divine evolved in the history of Zoroastrianism. In the Gathas, the name used least is *ahura- mazdā*-, which became the name most used in the YAv. texts. See *Part Three: Evolution of the Name(s) Mazda, Ahura*. Therefore, a story in which the Divine is called by its YAv. name Ahura Mazda cannot have existed (in that form) before Zarathushtra's time period.

²¹ There are only two verses in the Gathas, Y28:9 and Y44:11 in which some translators ascribe the qualities of 'anger' and 'enmity' to the Lord, Wisdom. In both these verses, applicable words have not yet been decoded, translators are not in agreement, and neither 'anger' nor 'enmity' are supported by a contextual analysis. See *Part Three: Is Wisdom a 'God' of Wrath, Enmity?* See also *Part Two: The Paradox of Bad for the Bad*.

²² For Zarathushtra's understanding of truth, and that the reward for truth is truth itself, see in *Part One: Truth, Asha*; and *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*.

For Zarathushtra's understanding of divine power see in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power*; and in *Part Two: A Question Of Power*.

For his understanding of the ability of a wholly good Divine to bring about the certain, inevitable defeat of evil (because of the freedom to choose) see in *Part One: A Friendly Universe*; and in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*; and *A Question Of Power*.

Even during YAv. times, the difference between Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine, and that of his culture can be seen by comparing the temperament of Mithra, as shown in the *Mihir Yasht*, with that of Wisdom, as shown in the very first section of YAv. Yasna 1, (in which one can feel the love of the author for this perception of the Divine). I have segmented this section into separate lines so that you can see each thought expressed. The translation is Mills'. He translates *vahišta*- as 'best' instead of 'most good', among other differences:

"... Ahura Mazda ... the radiant and glorious [*raēvatō xʷarənaŋhatō*] and the greatest, and the best, the most beautiful [*mazištaheca vahištaheca sraēštaheca*, 'most-great, and most-good, and most-beautiful'] the most firm, the wisest [*x raθwištahecā* 'most reasoning/intelligent']... who attains His ends the most infallibly, because of His Righteous Order [*ašāt*],... who disposes our minds aright, who sends His joy-creating grace afar; ... who has nourished and protected us, who is the most bounteous Spirit [*mainyuš spəntōtāmō* 'the most beneficial way of being']." Yy1:1 Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 195; Av. word from Geldner 1P p. 7.

The superlatives are not used in a competitive way, but express a crescendo, an epiphany.

Although I do not agree with Mills' translation in all respects, in general the description of the Lord, Wisdom (quoted above), in Yy1:1 reflects many descriptions of Wisdom's nature in the Gathas. And it is interesting (is it not?) that in the texts composed in Old Av. (like the Gathas), 'light' words, as well as 'most good [*vahišta-*],' and (in YHapt.) also 'most beautiful [*sraēšta-*]' are also used for the true (correct) order of existence (which is the existence of the Divine).

²³ In these 5 verses, in which Zarathushtra says, "Yes, I have already realized Thee to be [*spənta-* 'beneficial'], Wise Lord, when he attended [*pairi jasat*] me with good thinking ..." Y43:7, 9, 11, 13, 15, Insler 1975, the verb form *pairi jasat* is 3p sg. but Avestan verbs are not gender specific and the 3p sg. translation could be 'he, she, it', or the impersonal 'one'. The word *mainyu-* (a 'way of being' or even a 'spirit'), has no intrinsic gender (nor even a grammatical gender in English). So if the 3p verb refers to *spənta- mainyu-*, an accurate English translation would be 'when it attended [*pairi jasat*] me', because in English only words with intrinsic gender are translated as 'he' or 'she'.

²⁴ This foundational idea ~ that to be Divine, the being must be all-good ~ is preserved in more than one Pahlavi text. Zadsparam was the name of one of the High Priests of the religion, and in his writings, *Selections of Zadsparam*, says the following to (words in italics indicate words that have been added to the text by West, as interpretive aids; words in round parentheses have been inserted by West, to show the applicable Pahlavi word); and words in square brackets are explanations by me).

"16. ... the renovation of the universe must occur through these three things.

17. That is, first, true religiousness in one-self and reliance upon a man's original hold on the truly glad tidings (nav-barhām) that Auharmazd [Av. Ahura Mazda] is all goodness without vileness, and his will is a will altogether excellent; ..." *Selections of Zadsparam*, Chap. I, §§ 16 - 19, translated by E. W. West, in SBE 5, p. 158.

This same idea is to be found in other Pahlavi texts, such as Mardan Farrokh's *Sikand Gumanig Vijar* (quoted in the main part of this chapter), and in *Dina-i Mainogi Khirad*, SBE 24, § 22, p. 34, to name a few. It is sad indeed that some scholars (including Zoroastrian scholars), struggling perhaps to explain the origin of evil, state that in Zarathushtra's thought, good and evil were both created by the Lord, Wisdom, *Ahura Mazda* ~ without a shred of supporting evidence in either the Gathas or the later texts, and indeed, contrary to what such sources do in fact say.

²⁵ *Sikand Gumanik Vijar*, Ch. VIII, §§ 108 - 109, SBE 24, page 160.

²⁶ Mardan-farukh started with Zarathushtra's premise, that to be worthy of worship ~ to be divine ~ the being must be all-good. But he used this premise to arrive at the conclusion of cosmic dualism ~ the idea that there are two uncreated beings, one all good (*Ahura Mazda*) and one all evil (*Aharman*) ~ because he approached the problem from a different perspective than did Zarathushtra. By the time Mardan-farukh wrote his treatise, Zoroastrians had lived under Islam for about 200 + years and their perception of the Divine had become conditioned by the dominant religion under which they lived, to the extent that the Divine was perceived as a separate Entity. Mardan-farukh therefore accepted as a given that God was a separate entity who was always all good, and therefore could not 'create' evil, which logically required the conclusion of cosmic dualism ~ the existence of an all evil entity ~ to explain the origin of evil in existence.

²⁷ Zarathushtra had different ideas regarding the origin of evil which is premised on the idea that the Divine is not an entity separate from its 'creation', detailed in *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation; A Question of Immanence*; and *Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

²⁸ Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium, 1993* (WZO, 1998), page 201. Thieme's statement that the religion of Zarathushtra knows no images or idols is corroborated (after a fashion) by Herodotus (484 - 425 B.C.E.) who mentions that the ancient Persians "have no images of the gods, no temples, nor altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly..." Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, as translated by George Rawlinson (Random House 1942), page 73. Moulton expressed a similar view, stating, "Genuine Parsism was, indeed, without images to the last." Moulton (1912), *EZ*, Lecture 2, p. 67. Unfortunately, the Sasanians did indeed make images of the Divine. See *Part Four: The Parthians & Sasanians*.

²⁹ The evidence underlying Zarathushtra's use of these names of the Divine is set forth in *Part Three: Evolution of the Name(s) Ahura, Mazda*.

³⁰ Not surprisingly the meaning of *mazdā-* has generated differences of opinion.

The older generation of Avestan scholars spells the (conjectured) stem *mazdāh-* a fem. noun meaning 'wisdom' (Jackson 1892 § 356, p. 102). Jackson (like Thieme) also sees the Ved. *mēdhas* 'wisdom' (a fem. noun) as cognate. Jackson explains that Av. *-āh* was originally (in Indo-Iranian) *-ās*, discussing this phenomenon with variations and many examples in his §§ 338 pp. 97 et seq. and §§ 107 pp. 41 et seq.

Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index (like many linguists today) spells the (conjectured) stem *mazdā-* and thinks it a masc. noun (even though in GAv. *ā-* stems generally are (grammatically) fem.). Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index translates *mazdā-* as 'he who puts all in his mind'.

To understand the meaning of *mazdā-*, (and Skjaervo's definition) one has to understand certain principles of Indo-Iranian philology. And I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for the following information. The Avestan word for *manah-* evolved from **manas-* in a prehistoric ancestral Indo-Iranian language (compare Ved. *manas-*). And the *-dh-* in the Vedic *medha-* indicates that the ancestral Indo-Iranian root must have been **dhā* 'put, establish' not **dā* 'give'. In addition, when **manas-* was used in a compound with the root **dhā* 'put, establish', the stress (accent) was on the element **dhā-* and **manas-* was reduced to **mns-*. Based on 2 well-known Indo-Iranian sound changes, the **-n-* between 2 consonants became a vowel *-a-*, and the *-s-* became *-z-* because it was in contact with **dh-*, and the 2d part of the word **dhā-* evolved to *dā-*. The result was Avestan *mazdā-*. The Ved. *medha-* shows a well established Indic change from *az* to *e*.

Applying these principles of historical Indo-Iranian philology to GAv. *mazdā-*, at first thought, we might conclude that the closest literal English translation of *mazdā-* as a name which reveals the nature of the being would be one who 'establishes mind (as his nature)'. Now 'mind/thought/thinking' can be either 'good' or 'bad'. But we know that in Vedic *medhā-* had come to mean 'wisdom' (which can only be 'good'), and I think a similar evolution in meaning occurred in Avestan. Thus *mazdā-* would mean one who 'establishes wisdom' (as his nature), or stated another way 'personified Wisdom' ~ which is Thieme's view of the meaning of *mazdā-* (although he does not give this particular explanation for it).

Another view has been offered by Gershevitch who also spells the (conjectured) stem *mazdā-*. He expresses the opinion that *mazdā-* means 'giver of thought' or 'creator of thought', Gershevitch *Dissent and Consensus in the Gathas*, pp. 23 - 24, appearing in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium, 1993* (WZO 1998); but *mazdā-* could not have evolved from *dā-* 'give, create' as the above explanation from Professor Tucker demonstrates.

Some Zoroastrians have expressed the opinion that *mazdā-* means 'great intelligence', or 'super intelligence'. True, there is an Av. stem *maz-* which means 'great'. So the first part of the name could possibly mean 'great' (but in my view, for a deity to be worth worshipping, It's nature would have to be more than just intelligence, however great). With

regard to the 2d part of the name, however (and with respect), there is no known (surviving) GAv. word which would generate the meaning 'intelligence' for Avestan *dā-* (which in *mazdā-* evolved from **dhā-* 'put, establish'). There are the GAv. words *vaēd-* and *zan-* both of which mean 'to know'. In Middle Persian (Pahlavi) there is a related set of words which E. W. West 1871 shows in his Glossary of Pazand/Pahlavi words, (appended to his book *The Book of the Mainyo-i-khard*) which are: *dānā*, *dānāi*, *dāneshn*, *dānestan* each meaning 'learned, knowing, intelligent, sagacious, wise, experienced' (pp. 57 - 58). Pazand and Pahlavi descended from Old Persian; and Old Persian shared a common (conjectured) parent language with GAv. but is approximately 500 years younger than GAv., (and not linguistically as close to GAv. as Vedic). Professor Tucker states that there is Old Persian *adānā(t)* 'he knew' and this is the ancestor of *dānestān*, etc. in Pahlavi and New Persian, but she notes that these are all West Iranian, whereas the corresponding verb in Avestan and East Iranian languages is *zan-* 'to know' (Y29.11 *paīfī.zānatā*).

³¹ Thieme gives a fine linguistic analysis on the basis of which he concludes (and I agree) that *mazdā-* (as used in the Gathas) cannot be an adjective, but is a noun, and therefore means personified Wisdom. He states "*mazdā ahurō* [he gives the name in its nom. sg. form] would then be not 'the wise lord', but 'Lord Wisdom' or 'Wisdom the Lord', that is, personified Wisdom." (underlining in the original). Thieme, *ibid.*, pp. 201 - 202.

³² Thieme (1993), *ibid.* p. 201.

³³ See Part Two: *The Lords & the Equations of Y31:4*.

³⁴ See Part Three: *Evolution of the Name(s) Mazda, Ahura*.

³⁵ See Part One: *Truth, Asha*.

³⁶ See Part One: *Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

³⁷ See Part One: *Beneficial-Sacred Embodied Truth, Spenta Aramaiti*.

³⁸ See Part One: *Good Rule Vohu Xshathra*.

³⁹ See Part One: *Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

⁴⁰ See Part One: *The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

⁴¹ In the Gathas, the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), and beneficial (*spənta-*), are equated. See Part One: *Truth, Asha*.

⁴² That the amesha spenta are attributes of the divine is corroborated in the YAv. *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*, where in § 3 they are identified as Ahura Mazda's name, i.e. His identity. The composer of this Yasht has Ahura Mazda purportedly saying

"Our name [*nqma*], O Spitama Zarathushtra! who are the Amesha-Spentas..." *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yt.* 1:3, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 24.

Notice, 'name' is sg. yet the amesha spenta are plural. This is because each attribute of the Divine (amesha spenta) is a component part of the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*) ~ its comprehension, good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- x šaθra-*), its complete attainment (*haurvatāt-*), resulting in a state of being that is not bound by mortality (*amərətāt-*). And the beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) is equated with the true order of existence (*aša-*).

We see the same alternation between **sg.** and **pl.** with Wisdom being equated with His attributes, (the amesha spenta) in § 24 of this Yasht (this part is sometimes called the *Bahman Yasht*), where the author has the Lord Wisdom (Ahura Mazda) purportedly saying,

"... wish no harm unto that man who would offer me [**sg.**] a sacrifice [*yasnam* 'worship'], be it ever so great, or ever so small, if it has reached unto us [**pl.**], the Amesha Spentas." *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*, Yt. 1:24, Darmesteter

translation, SBE 23, p. 31; Avestan word transliterated from Geldner 2P p. 66. In these words, the amesha spenta are a part of the Lord Wisdom (a part of Its nature).

⁴³ For example, in the *Zamyad Yasht*, Yt. 19:15, (and many later YAv. texts) the amesha spenta are called *ašavanō* 'truthful ones' (Hintze (1994) *Zamyad Yasht*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ The notion that the attributes of the divine (the amesha spenta) are of the same temperament is more explicitly stated in more than one later YAv. text. For example:

In the *Zamyad Yasht* (as translated into English by Hintze), the amesha spenta (in § 15) are described (in § 16) as: "The seven who think alike, the seven who speak alike, the seven who act alike, who have the same thought, the same word, the same deed,... the truthful ones [*ašavanō*]" Yt. 19:16, Hintze 1994, p. 16.

Almost identical words are used to describe the amesha spenta in the *Farvardin Yasht* 13:83: "[82]... the Amesha-Spentas, ... [83] Who are all seven of one thought, who are all seven of one speech, who are all seven of one deed; whose thought is the same, whose speech is the same, whose deed is the same ..." Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, page 199.

In the *Mihr Yasht* Yt.10:92, the amesha spenta are described as follows: "all the Amesha Spentas, in one accord with the sun..." Darmesteter, *ibid.*, page 132. So also in the *Khorshed Nyayish* 1.1, "... O Amesha-Spentas, who are all of you of one accord with the Sun." Darmesteter, *ibid.*, page 350. In the Gathas, 'sunlike' is used as a simile for truth, its comprehension (good thinking) and Wisdom who personifies truth and its comprehension is said to have the "appearance of the sun" ~ the most powerful form of light then known (see *Part Two: Light, Fire, Glory*). But in these Yashts the 'sun' was a symbol of Mithra, and this may have been an attempt to give him the reflected glory of the amesha spenta.

⁴⁵ This is my translation of YHapt.37:4 (a later GAv. text which is closer in time to the Gathas than are the YAv. texts). The Avestan words are transliterated from Geldner 1P p. 133.

⁴⁶ The GAv. text (transliterated) is as follows,

... *θwā vahištā yām ašā vahištā hazaošm*
ahurām ... Y28:2, Geldner 1P p. 100,

My translation, 'Thee, Most-Good-One, the Lord who (art of) the same temperament with the most-good, true order of existence, ...' Y28:2;

Insler 1975 for comparative purposes, "Thee, Best One, the Lord who art of the same temperament with the best truth ...' Y28:2.

⁴⁷ The GAv. text (transliterated) is as follows,

... *ahurō* ... *ašā hazaošō mazdā* ... Y29:7 Geldner 1P p. 100,

My translation, 'Wisdom the Lord, who (is of) the same temperament with the true order of existence...' Y29:7;

Insler 1975 for comparative purposes, "The Wise Lord, who is of the same temperament with truth..." Y29:7.

⁴⁸ For comparative purposes, the Humbach (1991) translation is "... O Wise Ahura beautiful through truth ..." Vol. 1, p. 143.

⁴⁹ See for example, the YAv. text *Visperad* 13.1, a part of which goes as follows:

ašəm ahurəm mazdqm yazamaide••
ašəm aməšō spəntā yazamaide••

ašəm aršuxδəm yazamaide••
ašəm vīspəm mąθrəm yazamaide••
zaraθuštrəm haδa.mąθrəm yazamaide••

sava ašavabyō yazamaide ušta aməšaēibyō spəntaēibyō yazamaide•• ... *Visperad* 13:1, transliterated from Geldner 2P p. 21.

I translate this lovely section of the *Visperad* as follows:

'We celebrate (the) Lord Wisdom (who is) the true order of existence [*ašəm*];
 We celebrate the undying beneficent (ones) [*aməšā spəntā*], (which are) the true order of existence;
 We celebrate the right-word (which is) the true order of existence;
 We celebrate all the manthra (the Word) (which are) the true order of existence;
 We celebrate Zarathushtra the possessor of the manthra (the Word);
 Salvation for the truthful we celebrate; the wish for the undying beneficent (ones) [*aməšā spəntā*] we celebrate; ...
Visperad 13:1.

It is interesting that (except in the sixth line) each mentioned thing is not called *ašavan*- 'truthful' or 'truth-possessing', but rather '*ašəm*', (the nom./acc. sg. of) *aša*- itself ~ indicating each mentioned thing was thought to be a part of the true (correct) order of existence. The 'manthra' ~ the Word of Wisdom is the path of truth, the path of the attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta), all of which are some aspect of truth or equated with truth. And 'salvation' is the attainment of the true (correct) order of existence, the personification of the attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta), see *Part One: A Question of Salvation*, and *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*. The Avestan notion of 'worship' as a celebration is detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*, and a ft. therein.

⁵⁰ Avestan words are from Geldner 2P p. 61 (§ 7), p. 62 (§ 12), and p. 63 (§ 15).

The *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*, is a YAv. text which appears to be a compilation of two or more separate texts because its various parts are not an organized whole, and it has two different sets of names which disclose the nature of Wisdom the Lord, both of which are composed as though He is the (purported) speaker. Here in more detail is § 7, quoted in the main chapter.

§ 7, *āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā ••* ... *nqmi ahmi* ... *tūiryō aša vahišta* ... Geldner 2P p. 61;

My translation. 'Then spoke Ahura Mazda ... by name I am ... fourth, the true order of existence (which is) most-good, ...';

Darmesteter's translation. "My fourth name is Perfect Holiness [*aša vahišta*]" SBE 23, p. 25. And Darmesteter explains "Perfect Holiness" in a footnote, giving the Pahlavi commentary as follows: "Asha-Vahista ... The commentary has: 'That is, my own being is all holiness.'" *ibid.* ft. 1.

Or as I would translate it, 'my own being is all truth', (i.e. 'I personify the true order of existence' ~ Ahura Mazda speaking).

⁵¹ The word *ašā* is the grammatical form for both the voc. case '*O truth*', and also the instr. case '*with/by/through truth*'. In this verse, Insler 1975 has opted for the voc. (which makes truth one of Wisdom's names); Humbach/Faiss 2010 for the instrumental "*through truth*" (which would make truth one of Wisdom's activities).

⁵² The conclusion that Wisdom personifies truth is corroborated by a description attributed to Porphyry, a Greek writer (who lived from about 234 to 305 C.E.) who, in his work *Life of Pythagoras* said (the 'he' refers to Pythagoras),

"These are the things he taught; but above all, to observe the truth; for this was the only thing in which humans could come close to God. For, as he learned from the Magi, God himself, whom they call Oromazes, resembles light with regard to his body and truth with regard to his soul." Vasunia (2007) *Zarathushtra and the Religion of Ancient Iran, The Greek and Latin Sources in Translation* (K. R. Cama Oriental Inst.), p. 144, translating from Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* 41.

Indeed, 'light' is sometimes a metaphor, and sometimes a symbol, for truth in the Gathas, and throughout the later texts. And even the (quite horrible) Pahlavi text *Arda Viraf Namah*, records the belief as late as Pahlavi times, that Ahura Mazda is light, with no body (Haug & West, *The Book of Arda Viraf*, Ch. 101, §10, p. 203). Yet this belief was not universally held in Sasanian times, during which a stone relief was made depicting Ahura Mazda sitting on a horse, and giving authority to rule to the first Sasanian king (details given in *Part Three: Evolution of the Name(s) Mazda, Ahura*; and *Part Four: The Parthians & Sasanians*).

⁵³ Detailed in 2 chapters in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*; and *A Question Of Power*.

⁵⁴ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

⁵⁵ Detailed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

⁵⁶ Humbach (and perhaps other linguists as well) think that Vedic *asura-* is a cognate for Avestan *ahura-*, Humbach 1991, Vol. 1, pp. 21 et seq. But Thieme does not agree (ibid. p. 202).

⁵⁷ Insler 1975 p. 153, commenting under Y29:6.

⁵⁸ Humbach/Faiss 2010, p. 165, commenting under Y27:13 (which is the Ahuna Vairya). An interesting piece of information when we consider that Zarathushtra uses 'lord' as one who has acquired lordship (ownership) of the attributes of the Divine, and thus is the epitome of existence (*ahu-*).

⁵⁹ But in the Ahuna Vairya, (in my view) he uses *ahu-* and *ahura-* with double entendre to refer to the Divine and what man (and perhaps all the living) are capable of becoming. See *Part One: The Manthra of Choices, Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo)*; and *Part Three: Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo), An Analysis*.

⁶⁰ *ahurəm* is the accusative sg. case form of the *a-* stem masc. noun *ahura-*; *anhəuš* is the genitive singular case of the *u-* stem masc. noun *ahu-* or *anhū-*, thus *anhəuš* means 'of existence'. Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index; Jackson (1892) §§ 236, 238; and §§ 262, 264.

⁶¹ Here are a few other examples of why it would be inconsistent to translate *ahura-* as 'life' or 'existence' when used in connection with the name of the Divine.

"... He is the decisive Lord [*ahurō*]..." Y29:4; *ahurō* here is the nominative sg. case form of *ahura-*. The alternative 'he is the decisive life (or existence)' does not fit.

"... The Wise One is Lord [*ahurō*] through such actions stemming from good spirit." Y45:5; Zarathushtra could not have intended '...The Wise One is Life, (or Existence) through such actions...'

"... Lord [*ahurəm*] of the word and deed stemming from good [*mainyu-*]..." Y45:8; *ahurəm* here is the accusative sg. case form of *ahura-*. Zarathushtra could not have intended '...Life (or existence) of the word and deed stemming from a good way of being...'

"... By your rule, Lord [*ahurā*], Thou shalt truly heal this world..." Y34:15; *ahurā* here is vocative sg. it seems improbable (to me) that Zarathushtra could have intended 'by your rule, O Life, (or Existence) Thou shalt truly heal this world...'

These are just a few examples. There are many verses in which the word *ahura-* as a name of the Divine is not consistent with the translation 'life' or 'existence'.

⁶² In no verse (where all translators agree) does Zarathushtra unequivocally refer to the Lord, Wisdom, as the father of man. He is described as the father of truth (Y44:3, Y47:2), as the father of good thinking (Y31:8, Y45:4) and as the father of embodied truth (*ārmaiti-* Y45:4), but no place is he described as the father of man (For his use of 'father' in these instances, see *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*). There is one verse which has been translated differently by various scholars which Insler has translated as follows "... such a person, by reason of his [*spənta- daēnā-* 'beneficial

envisionment'] is an ally, a brother, or a father (of Thee), Wise Lord, the Master of the house Who shall save (us)." Y45:11. In a footnote, Insler explains this phrase as follows: "That is, any man in this world who acts under the motivation of his own virtuous spirit [*spənta- mainyu-*] is himself of the very nature of god." Insler (1975) p. 79, ft. 16. To understand Zarathushtra's intent in this verse, try to imagine yourself as each of the following, separately, and then all together ~ as the 'ally' of the Divine; as the 'brother' of the Divine; as the 'father' of the Divine; and then as the ally, brother, father of the Divine ~ and see what understanding you come to. I think Insler's explanation hits the nail on the head. (Parenthetically, his use of 'god' with a small 'g' is not disrespectful. There are no capital letters in Avestan script).

According to the translations of Azergoshasb, Insler, Jafarey, Mills, Humbach (1991), Humbach/Faiss (2010), and Taraporewala, the term "father" in this verse (Y45:11) refers to the good man who opposes evil. According to the translations of Bode & Nanavutty, Haug, and T. R. Sethna ~ an earlier generation of scholars, when the process of decoding Avestan was in its infancy ~ the word "father" in this verse refers to Wisdom. But in a literal translation, based on today's knowledge, I think Insler's 1975 translation of this phrase is more accurate.

⁶³ In Y43:14, Insler, Bartholomae, Bode & Nanavutty, and T. R. Sethna translate the word *frya-* as 'friend', Taraporewala translates it as 'beloved'. In Y46:2, Taraporewala, and Bode & Nanavutty translate the words *fryō fryāi* as 'a lover to his beloved'; Insler, Bartholomae, Humbach, Mills, Moulton and Sethna as 'a friend to a friend'. Taraporewala comments that these words derive from the Sanskrit *priyā* which he states is used in the Bhagavad Gita to mean more than 'friend'. Tarap. 1951 pp. 449, 450, 575, 578.

⁶⁴ Indeed, the central role that friendship plays in Zarathushtra's thought, is shown in the *Doa Nam Setayeshne*, a Khordeh Avesta prayer composed many centuries after Zarathushtra. As translated by Sethna, it says, in part:

"Homage to the all knowing tolerator ['Tolerant-One'], who sent through Zarathushtra Spitman ... teachings of religion for the people of the world so that they may have friendship, inculcate faith and inner wisdom and knowledge gained from hearing. For the information and guidance of all men who are, who were, and who will be hereafter ..." Sethna, *Khordeh Avesta*, ((3d edition revised 1980, 1st ed. 1963), p. 63.

⁶⁵ These two GAv. words are discussed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*. It is not without interest that a later Pahlavi text, which speaks of 'Ahriman' ~ the embodiment of 'evil' and 'darkness' (as in the opposite of enlightenment) ~ describes one of Ahriman's characteristics as striving for absolute control i.e. the opposite of the freedom to choose. See *Selections of Zad-Sparam* Ch. 1 § 4, where it states that Ahriman saw a ray of light "and because of its antagonistic nature to him he strove that he might reach it, so that it might also be within his absolute power." SBE 5, p. 156, E. W. West translation.

⁶⁶ Here is the Avestan of this phrase,
dātā xratōuš hizvō raiθīm stōi
mahyā rāzāng vohū sāhīt managhā • Y50:6 Geldner, *Avesta*, 1P, p. 177.
 '... May the Giver of reason instruct through good thinking (the course of) my direction (so as) to be (the) charioteer of (my) tongue.' Y50:6, my translation.

In this verse, Insler 1975 translates *xratōuš* as "of ... will" (gen. sg. of *xratu-*). Here for comparative purposes is the Insler 1975 translation. "...May the Creator instruct through good thinking (the course) of my direction, in order to be the charioteer of my will and my tongue." Y50:6. But I find more persuasive the opinions of those linguists who take *xratu-* to mean (in GAv.) 'reason'; see *Part Three: Xratu*. And I think *dātā* belongs with *xratōuš* 'Giver of reason'.

⁶⁷ See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, and Power*.

⁶⁸ See *Part One: Beneficial-Sacred Embodied Truth, Spenta Aramaiti*.

⁶⁹ "... The Wise One in rule is Lord through [ārmaiti-]." Y47:1, Insler 1975. Here Zarathushtra is silent as to whose embodied truth (ārmaiti-) gives Wisdom His Lordship in Y47:1.

On the one hand, in Y45:8 Wisdom has lordship (rule, control) over His own words and actions stemming from a good way of being ("...Lord of the word and deed stemming from good [mainyu- '(a) good way of being']..." Y45:8, Insler 1975), which is another way of saying that His Lordship derives from embodying truth (ārmaiti-) in His own thoughts words and actions ~ "... The Wise One in rule is Lord through [ārmaiti-]." Y47:1, Insler 1975.

On the other hand, it could also (with double entendre) be man's embodied truth (ārmaiti-) that gives Wisdom His lordship because the first part of 47:1 deals with man's thoughts, words and actions of truth which give completeness and non-deathness to the Wise One ("Through a [spəntā mainyū 'beneficial way of being'] and the best thinking, through both the action and the word befitting truth, they shall grant completeness and [amərətātā 'non-deathness'] to Him. The Wise One [mazdā- 'Wisdom'] in rule is Lord through [ārmaiti- 'through embodied truth']". Y47:1, Insler 1975). The same is true in Y45:5, where it is man's good actions that give Wisdom His Lordship, "... Those of you who shall give obedience [səraošəm 'listening'] and regard to this (Lord) of mine, they shall reach completeness and immortality. The Wise One [mazdā- 'Wisdom'] is Lord through such actions stemming from good spirit." Y45:5, Insler 1975.

'Lordship' cannot exist in a vacuum. A 'Lord' has to have followers to support its rule with their thoughts, words and actions.

In short, it takes the thoughts words and actions of both the Lord Wisdom, and his followers, to create Its Lordship, Its rule. Therefore in Y47:1, in saying "... The Wise One [mazdā- 'Wisdom'] in rule is Lord through [ārmaiti-]." Y47:1 Insler 1975, I think Zarathushtra's intent is that Wisdom is Lord through the embodied truth (ārmaiti-) of both mortals and the Divine ~ which really (in Zarathushtra's thought) is the same thing ~ in that mortals and the Divine are part of one life force ~ just different in their respective stages of spiritual evolution ~ Wisdom at the apex, mortals at various stages along the way (see in *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*; and *A Question of Immanence*; and *The Puzzle Of The Singular & The Plural* and *Did Wisdom Choose Too?* and other related chapters in *Part Two*).

⁷⁰ See also "By whichever action, by whichever word, by whichever worship, Wise One, Thou didst receive for Thyself immortality, truth and mastery [x šaθra-] over completeness,... Y34:1, Insler 1975. Here Wisdom's 'mastery' (x šaθra- 'rule') is over completeness (haurvatāt-) ~ a state of being which is the complete attainment of truth, and therefore includes all the other amesha spenta ~ the wholly truthful (ašavan-), wholly good (vahišta-), wholly beneficial-sacred (spənta-) way of being (mainyu-).

There is a verse in which the Lord, truth and the most-good thinking are described as mighty ones to whom belong the mastery (or rule x šaθra-), "...Thee and the truth and that thinking which is best [vahišta- 'most-good'] ... ye are the strongest, (and) to mighty ones (like you) belong the powers and the mastery [x šaθramcā]." Y28:9, Insler 1975. Here, the qualities of the divine ~ truth and the most-good thinking ~ are allegorical entities. And rule, mastery (x šaθra-), belongs to the Lord and His divine qualities truth and the most-good thinking. This statement does not contradict the conclusion that Zarathushtra uses 'lord' in the sense of one who has lordship or rule over the qualities of the divine, because His rule is the rule of truth, good thinking and its embodiment in thought, word and action, (Y51.4), and His power is the qualities that make a being divine. See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra & Power*; and *Part Two: A Question Of Power*.

⁷¹ See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power*; and *Part Two: A Question Of Power*.

⁷² See *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31:4*; and *Part Three: The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo), An Analysis*.

⁷³ See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

⁷⁴ *Part One: The Identity Of The Divine*.

⁷⁵ The rule of truth, embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) and the most-good thinking Y51:4; the rule of truth and good thinking Y30:7, Y29:10, Y34:11, Y50:3; the rule of good thinking Y30:8, Y33:5, Y43:6; the rule of thoughts, words and actions which embody truth (which is *ārmaiti-*) Y31:4, Y47:1, and (implied) Y51:2. See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power*.

⁷⁶ In this Yasna 29, *spənta- mainyu-* appears in masked form as 'the fashioner of the cow' – in my view an allegory for the beneficial in mortal existence ~ thus the beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) fashions the beneficial in existence (the allegorical 'cow'). See *Part Two: The Solution of Y29*.

⁷⁷ Dastur Dhalla tells us that three of the many names of the Lord (who is) Wisdom in a YAv. text are: "All Happiness, Full of Happiness and Lord of Happiness," citing Yt. 1:14. which is part of the *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*. Geldner shows that the applicable Avestan words are,

vīspa.xʷāθra (literally 'all-happiness'),

pouru.xʷāθra (literally 'much-happiness' or 'full of happiness'), and

xʷāθravā (literally 'possessing happiness' ? nom. sg. of *xʷāθravant-*?) Geldner 2P p. 63.

Darmesteter has translated the *xʷāθra-* words in this Yasht as 'weal' (SBE 23, p. 28), but *xʷāθra-* (in its various grammatical forms) appears many times in the Gathas, where Insler translates it as 'happiness' (Y28:2c, Y31:7a, Y33:9b, Y43:2b, Y50:5d, Y53:6c). For the beautiful, multi-dimensioned meaning of *xʷāθra-*, and the kind of happiness it is, see *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire*, where this word is discussed in detail.

⁷⁸ See in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta, A Question of Reward and the Path*, and *The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

⁷⁹ "... the attainments of both existences ~ yes, of matter as well as of mind ~ ..." Y28:2; Insler 1975;

"... (to those) of this material existence and (to those) of the mind ~ ..." Y43:3, Insler 1975.

⁸⁰ For the way Zarathushtra speaks of the existences of matter and mind, see *Part One: Truth, Asha*. And for his ideas regarding 'creation' see *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

⁸¹ "... His abounding authority of rule over completeness and [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and over truth ..." Y31:21.

⁸² "... for the very Wise Master [*ahura-* 'lord'] of good thinking ..." Y30:1.

⁸³ "... Lord of the word and deed stemming from good spirit ..." Y45:8;

"... Thou art the Lord by reason of Thy tongue (which is) in harmony with truth, and by reason of Thy words stemming from good thinking ..." Y51:3;

"... The Wise One in rule [*x šaθra-*] is Lord [*ahura-*] through [*ārmaiti-* 'embodied (personified) truth']." Y47:1.

All from Insler 1975.

⁸⁴ "...Thou didst receive for Thyself, ... mastery [*x šaθrəmcā*] over completeness..." Y34:1; "...His abounding authority of rule [*x šaθrahyā*] over completeness and [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and over truth..." Y31:21 Insler 1975.

⁸⁵ See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, and Power*. There is some dispute amongst Zoroastrians as to whether Wisdom in Zarathushtra's thought, is all-powerful, and whether it matters. (It does in surprising ways). This question is discussed in *Part Two: A Question of Power*. But let us consider the matter.

Certain later texts do indeed describe Him as 'all-powerful'. See for example, the much later prayer 101 Names, the second of which is *harvəsp-tavān* 'all-powerful' Sethna, *Khordeh Avesta*, p. 208; 'omnipotent' Kanga *Khordeh Avesta* p. 405.

But some Zoroastrians today (who believe in cosmic dualism) argue that he cannot be all powerful while he has an uncreated opponent (the 'Devil') who is all evil, and free to wreak havoc on the world. This argument is disposed of because the premise on which it is founded ~ cosmic dualism ~ is not a part of Zarathushtra's thought (discussed in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being*. *Spenta Mainyu*; and *The Identity Of The Divine*).

Some Zoroastrians who are well versed in Zarathushtra's thought argue that Wisdom cannot be all powerful if he allows evil to exist, because given the freedom to choose, man can continue to wreak violence, cruelty, injustice, and all of the other harms that are regarded as 'evil' in the Gathas. This argument pre-supposes a definition of 'all-powerful' as a quality that is controlling, coercive. Zarathushtra does not use 'power' as a quality of the Divine in that way. In the Gathas, 'power' and related concepts are consistently associated with one or more of the attributes of the Divine (*amesha spenta*) see *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power*. This argument also overlooks the fact that the freedom to choose is an indispensable part of the learning process required for the defeat of evil. Zarathushtra has an interesting solution to the old quandry that if 'God' allows evil to exist, He is either not all good, or not all-powerful; discussed in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*; and in *Part Two: A Question Of Power*.

⁸⁶ See *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, and Power*; and *Part Two: A Question Of Power*.

⁸⁷ *vahišta-* is an adjective used here as a noun 'Most-Good (One)'.

See also: "... ye best ones [*vahišta-* 'you most-good (ones)'] ... Thou, Wise One, together with truth and good thinking..." Y33:7.

⁸⁸ In the *Hormezd (Ormazd) Yasht*, it states, "My eighth name is Knowledge." Yt. 1:7, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 25. And it is not without interest that in the *Shahnamah*, one of the names by which Zal (the son of Sam, and father of Rustam) calls the Divine is "the Knowledgeable One", Surti, *The Shah Namah of Firdaosi*, p. 96.

⁸⁹ See *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

⁹⁰ Insler 1975 identifies the stem word as *paourvya-* p. 184. Gershevitch translates the word as 'primordial'; Humbach as 'primal' (i.e. both being first in time); Taraporewala translates it variously as 'first' (in time and place), and also 'highest' (i.e. first in quality); Insler as 'fundamental' (as a basic quality), 'first' (in time) and also 'foremost' (i.e. first in quality).

⁹¹ Zarathushtra calls Wisdom (descriptively) the 'First One' in only three verses in the extant Gathas ~ in Y31:8, Y43:5 and Y51:15.

⁹² The full sentence is: "... To his question, 'Whom dost thou wish to serve?' I then replied 'Thy fire. As long as I shall be able, I shall respect that truth is to have a gift of reverence.'" Y34:3. In the Gathas (and later texts) fire is the material metaphor (or sometimes symbol) for the true order of existence (*aša-*), and therefore for the Divine (whose existence is the true order of existence). The references here (Y34:3) to 'fire' and what it stands for 'truth', are parallels. Other examples of serving truth,

"... the beneficent man ... He serves truth, during his rule, with good word and good action..." Y31:22.

"... in order to serve the straight paths..." In other verses these straight paths are the paths of truth "... the paths straight in accord with truth..." Y33:5. See *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*.

⁹³ The word *myazdām* is an Avestan word for a ritual offering of food as Taraporewala 1951 explains, although he prefers an alternative reading from ms. J6 which has *mīzdam* 'reward, prize', p. 360. Geldner's preference (from variations in mss. available to him) is *myazdām* which is also preferred by Insler 1975, Humbach 1991 and Humbach/Faiss 2010 and is a better fit contextually (in my view).

⁹⁴ See also "... Thee and the truth and that thinking which is best ~ we who are organized in the offering of praises [*stūtqm*] to you [*vā* pl.]..." Y28:9. The word *stūtqm* (gen. pl. of the fem. stem *stūt-* 'praise', Skjaero's Old Avestan Index) is the 'praise' of worship.

⁹⁵ What does Zarathushtra mean when he speaks of worshipping Wisdom, truth and good thinking with "bright gifts"? This is a lovely instance of Zarathushtra using words in a multi-dimensioned way, and is discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*) ~ well worth checking out.

⁹⁶ See in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu;* and *Truth, Asha.*

⁹⁷ Insler footnotes that his choice of this Avestan word is from the manuscript Pt4; and he comments that he follows Lommel in translating it as 'praised' giving a Vedic cognate and comparing this thought in our verse Y51:7 "...immortality [*amərətāt-*] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*], those two enduring forces to be praised with good thinking [*manəjhā vohū sənǰhē*]." Y51:7, with a similar thought in Y33:8 (where he uses a different 'praise' word) "...words praiseworthy with truth [*ašā staomyā vacā*]..." Y33:8 Insler (1975) p. 104, ft. 1, and p. 315. The word *staomyā* is a worship word, so 'praiseworthy' in the sense of 'worthy of worship'.

⁹⁸ See the discussion on *bərəx δqm-* in *Part Six: Yasna 32:9.*

⁹⁹ See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network.*

¹⁰⁰ And with a slight turn of the kaleidoscope, "...One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve..." Y51:18.

¹⁰¹ "I know in whose worship there exists for me the best [*vahišta-* 'most-good'] in accordance with truth. It is the Wise Lord as well as those who have existed and (still) exist. Them (all) shall I worship with their own names, and I shall serve them with love." Y51:22, Insler 1975. Insler interprets "those who have existed and (still) exist" as the undying attributes of the Divine (amesha spenta), an interpretation that is corroborated in the later Yy70:1. "I will worship those who (are) the Amesha Spentas and I will approach them with love." Yy70:1 as translated by Humbach 1991 Vol. 2, page 236. And in Y51:22, worshipping the divine attributes (amesha spenta) "with their own names" is interpreted by Insler 1975 as meaning worshipping truth with truth, good thinking with good thinking, et cetera, (p. 109, fts. 26 and 27). For an in-depth discussion of this wonderful Gatha verse (Y51:22), see *Part One: The Manthra of the Divine and the Human, Yenghe Haatam,* and *Part Six: Yasna 51:22.*

¹⁰² See *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being Spenta Mainyu.*

¹⁰³ See *Part Six: Yasna 28:1* for a detailed look at this verse, including the GAv. text and other translations for comparative purposes.

¹⁰⁴ See also "... And do Thou give, Wise Ruler, that promise through which we may hear of your solicitude (for us)." Y28:7. Here Wisdom's rule is one that is caring, loving.

¹⁰⁵ See in *Part One: A Friendly Universe;* and in *Part Two: Asha and The Checkmate Solution;* and *A Question Of Power.*

¹⁰⁶ So also, for "protection" by Wisdom.

In Y34:5 it is with the true (correct) order (*aša-*) and its comprehension, good thinking, that Wisdom protects ("...have ye the power, Wise One, ... to protect your needy dependent ... with truth and with good thinking ..." Y34:5, Insler 1975).

In Y50:1 Wisdom the Lord, truth and its comprehension (good thinking), are the protectors of Zarathushtra and his followers, "...Who has been found to be the protector of my cattle? Who of me? Who other than truth and Thee, Wise Lord, and the best thinking, ...?" Y50:1, Insler 1975. Here we know that "cattle" is an allegory for those who are committed to a beneficial-sacred existence (the allegorical cow), because of the way they are protected ~ with truth and the most-good thinking.

¹⁰⁷ Here are other examples of such "support":

In Y28:6 it is Wisdom, truth and good thinking who are asked for support "Come Thou together with good thinking. Along with truth, grant in accordance with Thy lofty words, Wise One, the long-lived gift of strong support to Zarathushtra and to us," Y28:6.

In Y29:1, it is Wisdom, truth, good thinking and His beneficial way of being (*spənta- mainyu-* called the fashioner of the allegorical cow, here) who are asked for "pasturage" i.e. nurture, care "..... 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.

¹⁰⁸ *mərəždātā* is a verb form, 2p pl. imperative, which linguists translate as 'have mercy'. My preference, following Bartholomae is 'give compassion' ~ discussed in *Part One: Truth, Asha, and Vohu Xshathra, Good Rule*, where I also explain why, in my view, the concept of 'mercy' as a reprieve from damnation is not relevant to Zarathushtra's thought, and indeed distorts it if used as a reprieve from 'damnation' (there is no concept of 'damnation' in the Gathas or later Avestan texts; detailed (for the Gathas) in *Part Two: The Houses Of Paradise & Hell*; and (for YAv. texts) in *Part Three: The Absence Of Damnation & Hell In Other Avestan Texts*.

¹⁰⁹ "...the paths, straight in accord with truth..." Y33:5; "...the path of truth..." Y51:13.

¹¹⁰ "...those paths of good thinking..." Y34:12; "...the paths of good thinking..." Y51:13.

¹¹¹ See in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*, and *The Puzzle of Worship*.

¹¹² See *Part One: The Identity Of The Divine*; and *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31:4*.

¹¹³ The Ahuna Vairya is known today as the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer. See *Part One: The Manthra of Choices, Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo)*.

¹¹⁴ See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat / Ameretat*.

¹¹⁵ See *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*, and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*; and *A Question of Immanence*; and *The Puzzle Of The Singular & The Plural*; and *Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

¹¹⁶ See *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*.

¹¹⁷ Zarathushtra's uses of 'pastor' are discussed in more detail in the following chapters in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*, and *The Solution of Yasna 29*. But here are a few examples of 'pastor' being used by Zarathushtra to refer to both the Divine and man.

The Divine as Pastor:

In Y29:1, a cry for help is made to them by the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence, (allegorically referred to as the cow), "... I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage." Y29:1, Insler 1975.

A human being as Pastor:

In Y29:2 and 6, 'pastor' is used for a human being, and Zarathushtra is chosen for the task of nurturing mortal existence.

In Y51:5, the 'pastor' is a human being who nurtures the allegorical cow.

In Y33:6, 'pastoral duties' are mentioned in connection with a priest who acts with qualities of the Divine (*amesha spenta*) "The priest who is just, in harmony with truth, is the offspring from the [*vahišta- mainyu-* 'most-good way of being'] ... he is allied with that (good) thinking ... he has respected to bring to realization his pastoral duties ..." Y33:6, Insler 1975.

Divine/human qualities as Pastor:

In Y48:11, the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*) and its embodiment in thought, word and action, (*armaiti-*) ~ qualities that exist in both the Divine and man, bring "pasturage" to mortal existence, "When, Wise One, shall

[*ārmaiti*-] come along with truth [*aša*-], bringing peace and pasturage throughout the dominion? ...".Y48:11, Insler 1975.

¹¹⁸ Detailed in *Part One: A Question of Salvation*; and see also the discussion of mutual, loving, help in *Part One: A Friendly Universe*.

¹¹⁹ In his 1975 translation of Y51:20, Insler includes additional words (not in the GAv. text) which separates embodied truth (*ārmaiti*-) from truth and good thinking in describing salvation ~ an interpretation with which I (respectfully) disagree. Here is Y51:20 in GAv.

a. *taṭ. vā.nā. hazaoṣāñhō. vīspāñhō. daidyāi. savō.*

b. *aṣəm. vohū. manañhā. ux δā. yāiš. ārmaitiš.*

c. *yazəmnāñhō. nəmanñhā. mazdā. rafədrəm. cagədō.*•• Y51:20, Geldner 1P p. 184.

Here is the Insler 1975 translation. The interpretive words he adds in lines b. and c. (which are not in the GAv. text) are shown in red font.

a. "All ye (immortals) of the same temperament, let that salvation of yours be granted to us:

b. "truth allied with good thinking! (We shall offer) words allied with [*ārmaitiš*]

c. "while worshipping with reverence of the Wise One who offers support (to us)." Y51:20; Insler 1975.

Insler's added words in line b. which separate the 2d half of the line from the description of 'salvation' in the 1st half, reflect his interpretation based perhaps on the fact that in 1975 he defined *ārmaiti* as "piety" which he may have thought belonged with line c. *yazəmnāñhō* 'worshipping' (present participle of the verb *yaz-* 'to worship' Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index).

I see it a bit differently (with respect). In line a. Zarathushtra requests salvation, which he describes in line b. as *aṣəm vohū manañhā ux δā yāiš ārmaitiš* literally 'truth with good thinking, words [*ux δā*] through which [*yāiš*] embodied truth [*ārmaitiš*] (exists)'.

ux δā is acc. pl. (Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index), matching acc. *aṣəm*, both accusatives are the objects of the request in line a. Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index shows *ārmaitiš* as nom. sg., (he shows the form for instr. sg. 'with ____' as *ārmaitī*). And nom. sg. *ārmaitiš* requires a verb. In Av. the verb *ah-* 'to be/to exist' is normally implied, not stated, and an implied '(exists)' fits the context, making the whole of line b. one unit in Zarathushtra's description of salvation, 'truth with good thinking, words through which embodied truth (exists)' [*aṣəm vohū manañhā ux δā yāiš ārmaitiš*].

You may wonder: What does Zarathushtra mean by using the instr. 'with good thinking' in connection with acc. sg. *aṣəm* 'truth', in line b. as part of his description of 'salvation' ~ requested in line a. Well, even in English 'with' (in times past) used to indicate inclusion. For example, the expression *she is with child* meant *she is pregnant*, or more literally *she has a child within herself*. And I think in GAv. we see the same use of the instr. 'with' to indicate inclusion. For example, in Y30:8b *...x šaθrəm vohū manañhā...* literally '(the) rule with good thinking'; the words *vohū manañhā* 'with good thinking' are instr. sg. forms of the stems *vohu-* and *manah-* respectively ~ indicating that rule [*x šaθrəm*] includes, or has within itself, good thinking, ~ in other words, Wisdom's rule includes a comprehension of the true order of existence. In the same way, I think in line b. of our verse, (Y51:20) Zarathushtra describes salvation as *aṣəm vohū manañhā* literally 'truth with good thinking' meaning the true order of existence, which includes its comprehension, good thinking. This verse Y51:20 is discussed, and its linguistics detailed, in *Part Six: Yasna 51:20*.

¹²⁰ Detailed in *Part One: A Question of Salvation*.

¹²¹ According to Darmesteter (in his introductory paragraphs to the Yashts and the *Sirozah*, SBE 23 p. 1) the *Vishtasp Yasht* is not a Yasht at all in the sense that it (along with other fragments) are not in praise of any particular "Ized" (i.e. adored one), but it is popularly called a Yasht. We know that the *Vishtasp Yasht* although composed in YAv. was a post Avestan composition because it (like the *Videvdāt/Vendidad*) was written in grammatically faulty Avestan, when our priests were no longer fluent in Avestan. But it contains ideas that are close to the Gathas, indicating that at least some priests remembered Zarathushtra's teachings even after Avestan times.

¹²² The *Vishtasp Yasht* also states that help will be given by the Lord Wisdom's divine attributes, the amesha spenta.

"...We, the Amesha-Spentas, will come and show thee, O Zarathushtra! the way to that world, to long glory in the spiritual world, to long happiness of the soul in Paradise [*vahišta- ahu-* 'the most good existence']; ... To bliss and Paradise, to the Garo-nmana [house of song] of Ahura Mazda, ..." *Vishtasp Yasht*, §§. 32 - 33, Darmsteter, SBE 23, p. 336.

The *Vishtasp Yasht* is not included in Geldner's *Avesta*, but is included in Westergaard's edition of Avestan texts, and I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for informing me that the YAv. word Darmsteter translates as "Paradise" is *vahišta- ahu-* 'most-good existence'. Now if you look past the imagery of the allegorical qualities of the Divine (amesha spenta) in this section, the sense of it accords with the Gathas in that it is the qualities of the Divine (amesha spenta) that help the soul to achieve the most good state of being (paradise) which is a joyful state of being in which the attributes of the Divine have been attained completely, as detailed in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*. But we have no way of knowing for sure whether, by the time of the *Vishtasp Yasht*, references to the attributes of the divine as entities were intended to be allegories (as in the Gathas) or whether the composers intended them to be actual living entities to be worshipped. Many later texts do indeed treat these divine attributes (amesha spenta) as living entities, to be worshipped.

¹²³ *Vishtasp Yasht* as translated by Darmsteter, in SBE 23, pp. 336 - 337.

¹²⁴ SBE 23, p. 170.

¹²⁵ In the *Hormežd (Ormazd) Yasht* (Yt. 1), the composer has Ahura Mazda (purportedly) saying,

"...I will come unto thee for help and joy, I Ahura Mazda;
the good, holy Sraosha will come unto thee for help and joy;
the waters, the plants, and the Fravashis of the holy ones will come unto thee for help and joy." Yt. 1:9,
Darmsteter translation, SBE 23, p. 26.

Sraosha is the (allegorized) concept of listening to and implementing Wisdom's Word (which is the path of His divine attributes, the amesha spenta), see *Part Three: Seraosha*.

The "waters, the plants" are metaphors for completeness and non-deathness, indicating those who have attained these qualities of the Divine, but these words are also sometimes used in the YAv. Yasnas for good (not perfected) people. The "fravashis" are thought to be the essence of the divine within each part of existence. See *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*, and in *Part Three: Fravashi*.

¹²⁶ Darmsteter translation, SBE 23, p. 165; Avestan word from Geldner 2P p. 161.

¹²⁷ SBE 5, p. 158.

¹²⁸ In another part of this Pahlavi text, the author states, that in opposition to 'Aharman' (literally 'inimical mind', a name for the Evil Spirit of the later texts),

"Auharmazd (Av. Ahura Mazda) prepared another rampart which is stronger, around the sky *which* is called 'righteous understanding' (ashôk âkâsîh)..." *Selections of Zadsparam*, Ch. 5, § 1, E. W. West translation, SBE 5, p. 167; words in round parentheses are E. W. West's.

So if we look past the imagery, we see here a reflection of the Gatha idea that the 'enemy' is an inimical mind, the best defense against which is 'righteous understanding' See also *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*

¹²⁹ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

¹³⁰ E. W. West, *The Book of the Mainyo-i-Khard*, English part, p. 141.