

Zarathushtra's Paradise, In This World and the Next.

In conventional thinking, 'heaven' or 'paradise' is a place to which good people go after this life, as a reward. Zarathushtra's thinking is quite different. In the Gathas, 'heaven' is a state of being that we (incrementally) become.¹ And here I would like to focus on a rather unique aspect of this idea.

It is not limited to an afterlife.

We have already seen in preceding chapters, that Zarathushtra's path is the path of truth ~ the true order of existence which is wholly good, and its component parts ~ its comprehension good thinking, its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete attainment ~ all of which comprise the beneficial-sacred way of being. And his notion of the 'reward' for taking this path is ~ the true order of existence and its component parts which comprise the beneficial-sacred way of being.

So it is readily apparent that to him, both the (incremental) path, and its (complete) reward, are the qualities with which he defines the Divine ~ Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*), an enlightened state of being. In Zarathushtra's thought, 'paradise' and the Divine are equated.

Now, in the first few chapters in *Part One*, we see evidence from the Gathas (and sometimes the later texts) which shows what Zarathushtra has in mind, when he speaks of these component qualities of the Divine (whose existence is the true, wholly good order of existence), which for convenience I will call the amesha spenta ~ qualities that do not die (*aməša-*), that are beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*). So I will not detail all that evidence here. But I need to summarize some of it to place ideas in context.

And in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most Good, Vahishta*, we see that this order of existence, and the qualities that comprise it, are intrinsic goodness in the superlative degree.²

So both the path, and its reward, are intrinsic goodness.

Now it is true, that these divine qualities are spiritual. But we acquire them incrementally ~ bringing them to life, giving them substance, with our (material) thoughts, words and actions. And conversely, it is these divine characteristics (Zarathushtra's idea of paradise) that in turn give beauty and meaning to our material thoughts, words and actions, bringing paradise to this (material) existence.

Each time we think, speak or act in a way that is good ~ a way that accords with the qualities of the Divine ~ we create a little bit of paradise (the divine) ~ in ourselves, and in our world, thus, incrementally, perfecting our world, and our selves. Zarathushtra calls this "[the path\(s\) of truth \[aša-\]](#)" ~ each attribute of the Divine being some aspect of (or equated with) truth ~ the true order of existence. Let us consider briefly, how these attributes of the Divine, which man presently has within him, bring paradise to this world.

Truth (Asha)

In the physical existence bringing to life the true order of existence requires us to acquire knowledge, and respect our environment and other life forms. It requires that we not trash the earth, the waters and the air. These things, and we ourselves, are what scientists call an inter-related eco-system. The search for truth, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, are necessary steps in understanding existence ~ in all its varied complexity ~ and not harming it. I believe this is why in ancient times Zoroastrians valued knowledge so highly. It is a necessary part of acquiring wisdom.

In the existence of mind (as Zarathushtra uses 'mind'), the path of truth includes the truths of mind/heart/spirit ~ all that is right, which in the Gathas includes such notions as honesty, integrity, goodness, generosity, lovingkindness, friendship, compassion, being fair, being beneficial, et cetera ~ all of which are a part of the true (correct) order ~ the way things should be. By contrast, untruthfulness, harming, hatred, cruelty, fury, oppression, corruption, greed, tyranny, bondage, ignorance, abuse of power, are some examples of what Zarathushtra complains of as 'wrong' ~ not in accord with the true order of existence.

So the path of truth means making choices that are true and 'right' in our day to day existence. These choices are not 'just ethics'.

When we choose knowledge over ignorance, kindness over cruelty, friendship over hatred and prejudice, honesty over deceit, right judgment being fair over injustice, generosity over greed, lovingkindness over hostility or indifference, in that instance we bring to life a quality of the Divine ~ the true order of existence which is the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness, *aṣa- vahišta*.

In the long run, such choices make our world a happier place to be in, for ourselves, for other people, other life forms, our environment. With such choices, as we increase this divine quality ~ truth ~ we create (however temporarily) a little bit of paradise (the divine) ~ in our world and in ourselves.

Good Mind, Good thinking (Vohu Manah).

The next divine quality is a good mind, good thinking, good thought ~ all three are encapsulated in the Avestan words *vohu- manah-*. The ways in which Zarathushtra uses these words includes not only intellectual functions, but all aspects of our (awake) consciousness ~ intellect, reason, emotions, creativity, insight, intuition, et cetera.³ Good thinking is the incremental (and ultimately the complete) comprehension of the true (good) order of existence ~ which comprehension is wisdom/Wisdom (there are no capital letters in Avestan script) ~ the name Zarathushtra most often uses for the Divine who personifies wisdom (*mazdā-*).⁴

It is through this divine faculty, good thinking, that we find solutions to the problems that beset us ~ both material and spiritual ~ whether it is a cure for cancer, or a cure for hatred and prejudice (the cancers of the soul), or the problems of street gangs, violent crimes, corporate misgovernance, political corruption ~ whatever. It is through good thinking that we can, in Zarathushtra's words, "[deliver deceit,⁵ into the hands of truth](#)". Y44:14, Insler 1975. It is the growth of this divine force ~ good thinking ~ which enables us to understand how to heal existence. As Zarathushtra says, "[...Through good thinking the Creator of existence shall promote the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish](#)." Y30:9, Insler 1975. Healing existence means to heal it from all the many wrongs that injure and harm. It is a necessary first step in bringing existence into accord with all that is true, good, right ~ the true (right) order of existence.

Beneficial-sacred Embodied Truth, Spenta Aramaiti.

spənta- ārmaiti- means beneficially embodying the true order of existence (a beneficial order) with each material thought, word, and action. (Sound familiar?). Whether we are teaching children, or trying a lawsuit, or building a house, or doing medical research, or billing a client, or creating a work of art, when we bring to life, give substance to, the true, good order of existence, we bring a touch of the divine, a touch of paradise, into our world with each such beneficial thought, word and action.

The concept of beneficially embodying the true order of existence includes what in times past was called "charity" ~ a generous lovingkindness ~ lending a helping hand to a fellow human being and other life forms

(without being condescending about it). Not all of us have the financial means to found hospitals or orphanages. But we can be generous and loving to each other, to other life forms, to our environment, in 1,001 small ways ~ embodying the true (good) order of existence with our thoughts, words and actions ~ in each small instance, personifying the Divine (however imperfectly) thereby bringing a touch of the divine, a touch of paradise, to our world. (And if we have to kill to survive ~ as all of us do ~ at least let us do so as quickly and humanely as we can, minimizing suffering).

Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra.

Good rule is what occurs when authority, power, is committed to what is true, good (*aša-*), and is exercised with good thinking (*vohu- manah*), with thoughts, words and actions that embody truth (*armaiti-*). In the Gathas, good rule is called the rule of truth, its beneficial embodiment, and the most-good thinking (Y51:4).⁶

Good rule applies to how each of us governs oneself.

And it applies to how we govern our many social units ~ the family, the workplace, our many social organizations, our centers of learning, as well as governmental functions ~ the community, the state, the nation, our world. It includes the idea that a position of authority is a trust to be used to advance what is true and right, for the good of all concerned ~ not for personal aggrandizement, greed, power. Referring to fame, Zarathushtra says:

["Shameful are the many sins by which one attains fame, if at all by such things ... fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule." Y32:6, Insler 1975.](#)

Many years ago, there was a school of thought in business management which promoted a "survival of the fittest" theory of business management. The idea was, that two or three potential leaders at the same level of management would be encouraged to compete with each other in a dog-eat-dog, no holds barred, fashion, for advancement, that the fittest would survive and that the company would benefit by having such a superior survivor as an employee. What actually happened was that these 'superior survivors' were obsessed only with their own interests, rather than the best interests of the company (or their superiors!). And their dog-eat-dog, dirty-tricks tactics created so much havoc in these companies, that they became terrible places in which to work. Productivity nose-dived. Profits fell.

Well, experience is a good teacher. It has generated another theory of business management. It operates on the premise of co-operation and fair treatment. If employees are treated fairly and humanely, and are allowed to use their creativity and good thinking to do a better job (subject to human limitations), they will be happier, they will work better, and productivity and profits will increase ~ a win-win situation. This is an instance of the 'good rule' that is *vohu- xšaθra-*. And it is exemplified in the teachings of the late great American, Professor W. E. Deming who is credited with using it to rebuild the Japanese economy after World War II (even though he may never have heard of Zarathushtra or *vohu- xšaθra-*). It is also exemplified in the philosophy of business management that governed a Zoroastrian industrialist and entrepreneur, J. N. Tata, and his family in India, the success of whose enterprises has been legendary.⁷

These are just two of the many success stories that validate the concept of good rule, good governance, *vohu- xšaθra-*, in the business world. And it works in all aspects of human endeavor, in all social units. It reflects Zarathushtra's rather unusual thought that in the long run, we can prosper, we can be happy, only when we are in sync with the true order of existence ~ an order that is intrinsically good, beneficial, honest, and all

other good qualities. The concept of good rule is equally applicable today as it was in times past ~ in the way Cyrus the Great governed an empire of 22 nations/tribes,⁸ (even in the legend of Yima).⁹

But Zarathushtra's concept of good rule, has practical applications in our world that extend far beyond the idea of good governance in our many social units. It does not apply just to Presidents, Governors, Senators, the captains of industry, business executives, or other people in authority. It applies to all of us as individuals. Everyone has some power. Even the 'powerless' have the power to harm or help. The concept of good rule requires us to use whatever power we have for good, to advance what is true and right.

In the *Vohu Xshathra* Gatha, there is a lovely verse in which Zarathushtra, teaching through questions, sets out the components of good rule. I have quoted it before. But allow me to quote it here again.

"Where shall there be protection instead of injury?
Where shall mercy [*mərəždikā* 'compassion']¹⁰ take place?
Where truth which attains glory?
Where [*spənta- ārmaiti*- 'beneficial-sacred embodied truth']?
Where the very best [*vahišta*- 'most-good'] thinking?
Where, Wise One, through Thy rule?" Y51:4 Insler 1975 translation.

In effect, we bring to life this divine quality good rule (creating a touch of paradise), in our day to day lives, by offering protection instead of injury, by being compassionate, by searching for "truth which attains glory", by beneficial thoughts, words and actions that embody the true order of existence, (a beneficial, most-good, order), and by the use of reason, understanding and all the other good qualities included within the meaning of 'the most-good thinking' *vahišta- manah*-. The environment we would create by so using our power would indeed be a heavenly one.

The Beneficial Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu.

We have already seen that the qualities that make a being divine comprise a way of being that is good, generous, bountiful, reasoning, intelligent, loving, that is the essence of the true (right) order of existence (*aša*-), the essence of what is sacred ~ divine qualities that also exists (incompletely) in man.

But Zarathushtra implies that the Divine exists in all of us ~ not just in Its qualities, but in being.¹¹

Now if the Divine is a part of you, and if the Divine is a part of me, it follows (as the day the night) that there is a unity of identity between us. When I first came across this teaching in the Gathas, many years ago, it stunned me. I couldn't get it out of my mind. When I walked from my office downtown, I looked at the different people on the street, and I thought to myself: If Zarathushtra is right, then the Divine lives in that crazy looking kid with long hair and funny beads. The Divine lives in that person in a business suit with a briefcase. The Divine lives in that shabby man polishing the brass sign outside the Bank. The Divine lives in that elegant person walking into the Bank. The Divine lives in that homeless person sitting on the sidewalk. And the Divine lives in me.

And for the first time, a concept I had often heard about, but never really appreciated ~ the idea of the family of mankind ~ became real to me.

And I began to understand (not just as an abstract principle, but as a reality), how superficial were the standards by which I automatically categorized people ~ wealth, social standing, how they looked, how they dressed, what schools they went to, what jobs they held. I realized that if the Divine is a part of each of

them, and if the Divine is a part of me, there is a unity of identity between us, for all our superficial differences. But Zarathushtra takes us a step further.

In searching for the Divine, Zarathushtra discovered It in the family of mortals ~ humans, other life forms, existence as a whole ~ what today scientists call our eco-system ~ reflected in his idea that we should be not just human-healers, but existence healers (*ahūm.biš*).¹²

A favorite quotation from the Persian poet, Jami, expresses it in this way:

"The essences are each a separate glass
Through which the Sun of Being's Light is passed,
Each tinted fragment sparkles in the sun,
A thousand colors, but the Light is One." ¹³

When, in our day to day lives, we implement the qualities of the divine way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ a way of being that is beneficial, generous, bountiful, reasoning, intelligent, loving, strong, the essence of the true order of existence (*aša-*), the essence of what is sacred, Divine,¹⁴ ~ we bring a touch of paradise here ~ to the world we inhabit.

To summarize Zarathushtra's idea of how we bring paradise to our material world, he teaches that paradise is the complete attainment of the 7 qualities of the Divine. And when we bring these divine qualities to life in our world, with each thought, word, and action (however imperfectly), we create something of the divine, a touch of paradise, here on earth, however briefly. It is interesting that an Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, expressed the same thought in one of his Balaka poems. He said:

"... Mingling darkness with light
You have created your earth;
To that earth, you send me
Empty-handed ...
You command me to transform it
Into heaven ..." ¹⁵

At this point, you well may object: "It's all very well to say that you create a little bit of heaven when you bring to life the characteristics of the Divine, but what about people to whom bad things happen? What about people who experience the unhappiness of the death of loved ones, illness, poverty, the abuse of power, economic stonewalling, corruption, earthquakes, tsunamis? What about people who are fair and decent in their dealings with others, yet experience predatory behavior and injustice at the hands of others? Is this fair? Where is their little bit of heaven?"

I don't have all the answers. I can tell you that we know from the evidence of the Gathas that Zarathushtra himself suffered great unhappiness and great injustice. He was hounded and persecuted by a corrupt priesthood and by cruel princes. They accused him of defilement, of being impure. They drove him out of the land of his birth. They expelled him from his family and his tribe ~ in an age when the (extended) family and tribe were a person's only protection and safety net.

Driven from his home, he wandered and travelled, friendless, for years. He was so ruthlessly ostracized, that in some places, he even was denied the basic hospitality of shelter in bitter cold weather (although hospitality was more than a tradition, it was an obligation, in that ancient culture!). Referring to himself in the 3d

person, he complains of being denied shelter "... although his two draft animals were trembling from wandering and from cold." Y51:12, Insler 1975.

Why should Zarathushtra, a good man, have suffered such persecution? Well, as Zarathushtra teaches, man has the freedom to choose. And that being the case, there are those who will choose the ways of wrongdoing ~ the ways of injustice, cruelty, prejudice, predatory violence, ignorance, deceit, tyranny, corruption, brutality et cetera. And since the freedom to choose is a necessary part of spiritual evolution,¹⁶ the Divine does not prevent us from experiencing the consequences of the wrongful choices of others (and our own wrongful choices as well). But, with mutual, loving help, the (perfected and unperfected) divine gives us the tools to cope ~ strength, understanding, solutions. With these weapons, we can not only cope, but often (although not always) incrementally change what's wrong into what is right ~ "deliver deceit into the hands of truth". Y44:14, Y30:8, Insler 1975.

The Gathas infer that living in the material existence is a learning experience, a progression towards spiritual wholeness, w/Wisdom. The 'good' and 'bad' things that happen to us are not the arbitrary happenings of an uncaring universe. Nor are they the 'punishments' of a vengeful deity. Nor are they the 'wrongful choices' of the Divine. They are necessary for spiritual growth. They sculpt the soul. They are opportunities to overcome what is wrong, to bring about something 'good', to transform us from our own internal 'devils',¹⁷ and the calamities that befall us ~ for ourselves, for others, for existence as a whole. The key is to address such 'bad' things with truth, with good thinking, with good words and actions, finding solutions that embody the beneficial, true order of existence.¹⁸

Is this teaching of Zarathushtra valid? I am not wise enough to give you an answer. I can only tell you that from my own experience, (and from what I have observed in the lives of others) each time some serious crisis or calamity has befallen me, although at the time I could not see how any good could possibly come out of such a 'bad' situation, in the long run ~ sometimes the very long run ~ invariably I learned from the situation, and good did indeed come from each such situation. So yes, I think this teaching is valid. But that is just my opinion.

So far we have considered Zarathushtra's idea of paradise, expressed in the material existence. But there is the other part ~ the spiritual part ~ to this equation. When we have learned all the lessons life has to offer, when we have succeeded in attaining completely, the qualities of the divine, we attain the prize ~ paradise.

Zarathushtra's paradise of the spirit is not a place of reward to which we go after we die. It is the state of being that we attain when we (incrementally, and eventually completely) personify, the true, wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*), and eventually its complete attainment (*haurvatāt*), at which time we are no longer bound by mortality, and attain a non-mortal existence, non-deathness (*amərətāt-*). Zarathushtra's paradise of the spirit is attained when we become the wholly beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) ~ a way of being that is enlightened (wisdom), a way of being that is Divine.

Not everyone agrees that to Zarathushtra, paradise is a state of being.¹⁹ Some still cling to the conventional wisdom of a few Pahlavi and Pazand texts which describe 'heaven' and 'hell' as places of reward and punishment ~ both expressed in 'material' ways! But in my view, the evidence of the Gathas (and even some later texts) is compelling, as detailed in other chapters,²⁰ but I will summarize it here.

We see Zarathushtra's idea of 'reward' in many verses (in kaleidoscopic ways) in which the reward for bringing to life the qualities of the Divine are ... the qualities of the Divine,²¹ ~ clearly a state of being, not a physical location.

Among the names Zarathushtra uses for (what we call) 'heaven' are the '[most-good thinking](#)', '[the most-good existence](#)' (so also in later texts);²² and for (what we call) 'hell', the '[worst existence](#)' (Y30:4) ~ all clearly states of being and not physical locations.²³

This idea is corroborated in a YAv. Fragment, composed some centuries after the Gathas, which states that a good person attains paradise in four steps:

"The first step ... placed him in the Good-Thought Paradise;
The second step ... placed him in the Good-Word Paradise;
The third step ... placed him in the Good-Deed Paradise;
The fourth step ... placed him in the Endless Lights." Darmesteter translation.²⁴

The Avestan words which Darmesteter translates as 'Paradise' is *ahu- vahišta-* 'the most good existence'.

And the same thought is to be found even in a later Pazand text, the *Mainyo-i-Khard*:

"Heaven [vahasht]²⁵ is first, Humat (good thoughts), and second Hukht (good words), and third Hvaresht (good deeds)."²⁶

The Pahlavi/Pazand 'vahasht', which became the Persian 'behesht' is the word for 'heaven' in those languages (although by the time Pahlavi (Middle Persian) had evolved into Persian, 'behesht' was thought of a place, not a state of being). The paradise of good thoughts, words and actions, cannot be a physical paradise. These good ways of thinking, speaking and acting reflect a state of being ~ a conclusion that corroborates the names for paradise as the '[most-good thinking](#)' (*vahišta- manah-*), the '[most-good existence](#)', (*ahu- vahišta-*), and is a state of enlightenment ~ 'the endless light(s)' of YAv. texts.

In the foregoing YAv. Fragment text, and the Pazand *Mainyo-i-Khard*, by dividing 'heaven' into strata or levels (the good thought paradise, the good word paradise, the good deed paradise and the endless lights), I think the authors were attempting to demonstrate that good thoughts are a good first step, but they alone are not enough. They have to be translated into good words and good actions. Thus, the first level of achievement is good thoughts. A higher level is attained when good thoughts are translated into good words. And an even higher level is attained when good thoughts and words are translated into good actions. Each stage is a progressively higher, (or more-good) state of being (the stairway to heaven?).

One well may ask: if this is so, then why does Zarathushtra describe 'heaven' as the '[most-good thinking](#)'? Why not as the 'most-good action'? Perhaps the answer is that we achieve the first three stages of 'heaven' (described in these two later texts) in the matrix of the material world ~ with our (material) thoughts, words and actions. Whereas when we eventually personify the truths of mind/heart/spirit completely, the reason for mortality ceases to exist, and only the existence of mind remains. Thus we start, incrementally, with good thinking in the material world, and end with the enlightenment that is the complete attainment of good thinking when we have made the transition (crossed the bridge) to spiritual completeness, wholeness. That non-mortal state of completeness doubtless has its own words and actions that embody the true order of existence (*ārmaiti-*), its own good governance (*vohu- xšaθra-*),²⁷ but they would not be the words and actions of our material shells, nor the governance of our material, mortal existence ~ which is the focus of Zarathushtra's teachings. Of course, this conclusion is just my opinion.

Finally, in addition to calling the 'reward' (which we think of as 'paradise, heaven') the 'most-good thinking', and the most-good existence', Zarathushtra also calls it the 'House of Song' and the 'House of Good Thinking'. He uses the words 'house' 'dwelling' and the related word 'dwells' as metaphors for a state of being that houses such qualities. For example, in Y33:5, Zarathushtra speaks of "...the paths, straight in accord with truth, wherein the Wise Lord dwells." Y33:4, Insler 1975. Clearly, 'dwells' here does not refer to a physical location where the Lord, Wisdom, lives. He could 'dwell' in the paths of truth, only in a metaphoric sense, indicating His condition or state of being. And there are other examples as well.²⁸

So what is Zarathushtra trying to convey when he these uses these terms for paradise ~ the House of Good Thinking and the House of Song? Well, good thinking is the comprehension of the true order of existence (*aša-*). So the House of Good Thinking would be a state of being that 'houses' the comprehension of truth ~ an enlightened state of being. And the House of Song, is perhaps a state of being that 'houses' bliss, like the high we feel when we sing or hear beautiful music. So Zarathushtra's paradise in the existence of mind is a state of being that is a joyful, enlightenment ~ Wisdom personified.²⁹ It is the bliss of rejoining the source. A collective completeness (*haurvatāt-*),³⁰ a plurality that is a Divine union.³¹

But his paradise begins in mortal existence ~ each time we bring the Divine to life by creating and singing the melody of truth in our day to day lives. Rabindranath Tagore, with his poet's insight, expressed the same truth in this way. He said:

"Oh brother,
Do you know where heaven is?
It has no beginning, it has no end,
Nor is it any country ...
In my heart Heaven finds her home,
And in my songs her melodies."³²

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¹ The evidence supporting idea that to Zarathushtra what we call 'heaven' is a state of being is detailed in many of the chapters in *Part Two* ~ see particularly, *The Houses of Paradise & Hell*, and *A Question Of Reward & The Path*.

² See in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Most Good, Vahishta*, and *The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

³ See *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

⁴ Detailed in *Part One: Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*, and in *Part Three: Evolution Of The Names, Mazda, Ahura*.

⁵ In Y44:14 (and in Y30:8), in the phrase "... deliver deceit into the hands of truth ..." the Avestan word that Insler 1975 translates as 'deceit' is *druj-* which means more than just 'deceit'. It means all that is ignorant, false, wrong, (which includes 'deceit') ~ just as 'truth' includes both factual truths and the truths of mind/heart/spirit ~ all that is good. So conceptually *druj-* words would be translated more accurately perhaps as 'untruth' ((although not linguistically exact).

⁶ As detailed in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*.

⁷ One of the challenges involving 'social justice' in the United States in this second decade of the 21st century, is the fact that while productivity has increased substantially, corporate decision makers have allocated the resulting profits almost exclusively to themselves ~ representing the top 2 or 3 % of our population. In other words, a large majority of the employees who have contributed to increased productivity and wealth have not benefitted from it.

A family of Zoroastrians ~ the Tata family ~ in India successfully addressed this very problem (which in the India of that time was much worse), while building a network of many highly successful businesses. Good business management is a form of Zarathushtra's concept of 'good rule'. And the Tatas have proved that good rule works. It brings (material) success. Let us consider 'good rule' in the history of one of these companies (because that is the one I am most familiar with) ~ formerly called the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), now called Tata Steel.

TISCO was founded in 1907, in India. Its successes were obtained in part by its employees, who have shared in the wealth created. Here are some aspects of its 'good rule'.

Before 1937 (and long before such benefits were available to workers in the United States and Europe), the company provided its workers with an 8 hour work day, free medical and hospital care, free schools, profit sharing bonuses, a retirement fund, and other benefits ~ in addition to good wages. This was not considered 'charity' by management. It was considered to be a fair and equitable way to compensate, improve and motivate the work force which was considered a valuable asset of the company.

In 1956, labor and management entered into a joint consultation agreement which established on-going meetings in all departments, between labor and management to solve problems and encourage workers to suggest ideas to cut costs and increase production and profits (by which, through profit sharing bonuses, both workers and management stood to gain ~ the bonuses not being limited to management).

Did this 'good rule' result in lower profits or detriment to the company? It did not. The operations of TISCO and later Tata Steel, saw large periodic expansions ~ even as competition increased. In 2007, Tata Steel was recognized as one of the top 10 steel producers in the world, with operations in India and Europe. A practical dividend of 'good rule'. Needless to say, other management decisions contributed to the success of Tata Steel ~ it was not just the company's good relationship with its workers that generated its profits. But its good rule vis a vis its workers was a valuable component, a valuable investment, in creating long term profitability, not a detriment.

⁸ Detailed in *Part Four: Cyrus The Great & Zarathushtra*.

⁹ The (Zoroastrianized) story of Yima, and its demonstration of 'good rule' is touched upon and quoted in part, in a footnote in *Part One: The Freedom to Choose*. We know that the story of Yima was 'Zoroastrianized' because Yima was a legendary Indo-Iranian figure ~ Av. Yima is Ved. Yama (see *Part Four: Ancient Origins & Homelands*). However, the Vedas do not recount the same stories about Yama that the Avestan texts recount of Yima, nor do the Vedas say that Yama worshipped Ahura Mazda. In fact, (as Thieme has pointed out), there was no Indo-Iranian deity called Wisdom before Zarathushtra (see *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*). So we see that by the time of the YAv. (and post-Avestan) texts, the story of the legendary Indo-Iranian Yima/Yama had evolved into a Zoroastrianized legend which illustrated Wisdom's teaching of 'good rule' (as Zarathushtra understood Its teaching).

¹⁰ The GAv. word *mərəzdikā* is translated by Taraporewala 1951 as 'compassion'. He comments that his teacher, Bartholomae, favored 'pardon' but also gives the meanings 'compassion', 'grace', or 'kindness'. So literally, in this verse, [Y51:4, '... where shall compassion take place?...](#)' Compassion is a part of Wisdom's good rule, whereas 'mercy' in the sense of a reprieve from punishment, damnation is not a part of, nor consistent with, Zarathushtra's thought, in which there is no notion of punishment, damnation (detailed in a ft. in *Part One: Truth, Asha*).

¹¹ See in *Part One: The Significant Seven*, as well as the more detailed chapters on each of the 7 qualities of the Divine; and also *The Nature of the Divine*, and *The Identity of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow & Its Network*, and *A Question of Immanence*, as well as other puzzles in *Part Two*.

¹² See *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*.

¹³ As beautifully translated by Dr. S. H. Nasr, and generously provided to me by Dr. Daryoush Jahanian.

¹⁴ The flavors of meaning included within the term *spənta mainyu-* as used in the Gathas, is detailed, with evidence, in *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way Of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

¹⁵ Rabindranath Tagore 1955, *A Flight of Swans, Poems from Balaka*, No. 28, translated from the Bengali by Aurobindo Bose (John Murray), p. 50. One of my many favorite books of poetry.

¹⁶ Detailed in *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*.

¹⁷ The demons of Zoroastrianism are the vices that harm our souls, as detailed in *Part One: Does the Devil Exist?*

¹⁸ Discussed in *Part One: A Friendly Universe*, and *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.

¹⁹ I am heartened that Moulton 1912, and Dastur N. D. Minochehr-Homji 1994 (in his Chicago Lectures, unpublished but recorded on cassettes), and Dr. Farhang Mehr 1991 (in his book *The Zoroastrian Tradition*), among others, also have arrived at the conclusion that the heaven of the Gathas is a state of mind, or a state of being, although each of them has done so on the basis of different translations.

²⁰ See in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*, and *The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta*, and *The Houses of Paradise and Hell*; and in *Part Three: Heaven In Other Avestan Texts*.

²¹ See *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*.

²² *Part Three: Heaven in Other Avestan Texts*, explores the Avestan names for (what we call) paradise ~ the most popular of which is the 'most good existence' *ahu- vahišta-*, a term which is found in the Gathas. Dastur Dhalla 1963 (in his *History of Zoroastrianism*) has also collected references to the later texts which speak of heaven as the most good existence *ahu- vahišta-*.

²³ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*.

²⁴ SBE 23, p. 317.

²⁵ The Pazand (Middle Persian) word which West translates as "heaven" is "vahesht", which became the later Persian 'behesht' which now means the conventional 'heaven' (a place). Both "vahesht" and 'behesht' are later forms of the Avestan word *vahišta-* 'most good', although that is not the meaning of 'behesht' today.

²⁶ Translation by E. W. West 1850, *The Book of the Mainyo-ikhard*, (1979 reprint) Ch. VII, § 12, p. 140; But this text also (inconsistently) describes 'heaven' in other ways, which are discussed in *Part Three: Heaven & Hell In Pahlavi Texts*. Pazand is mostly Pahlavi written in Avestan script (with some ideograms etc.).

²⁷ Witness the references to the Lord Wisdom's words and actions, see *Part One: Beneficial-Sacred Embodied Truth, Spenta Aramaiti*.

²⁸ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

²⁹ See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

³⁰ See *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

³¹ Detailed in *Part One: The Identity Of The Divine*.

³² Rabindranath Tagore 1955, *A Flight of Swans, Poems from Balaka*, No. 24, translated from the Bengali by Aurobindo Bose (John Murray), p. 45