

The Web of Immanence.

I am beginning to feel that I have a Gatha-complex, because for just about every ill that plagues our world, I find real time answers in Zarathushtra's thought. Allow me to give you a bird's eye view, with a few examples.

Consider the great divide that currently exists between religion and science. In Zarathushtra's thought, the two are seamless, because to him, truth (*aṣa-*) finds expression in the existences of both matter and mind, and religion (in his thought) is a search for truth ~ the factual truths of our universe, as well as the truths of mind/heart/spirit.

For those who are concerned about a society in which blaming everything and everyone else for one's own actions, has become endemic, Zarathushtra offers an effective antidote – individual responsibility. We can have the best form of government in the world, we can enact the best laws, we can have the best organization or corporate charters, but they don't mean a thing unless they are implemented from day to day, by individuals making the right choices. We can confer. We can advise. But when all is said and done, it is individual responsibility that saves us from the collective cop-out.

For those who worry about the ego-centric rat-race we sometimes get caught up in, Zarathushtra implies that "completeness" (*haurvatāt-*) is achieved at both an individual and a collective level. Perfecting ourselves is a necessary first step, but completeness is ultimately attained when everyone makes it. So at each step along the way, in order to make it, we must both give and receive help ~ both essential to realizing the desired end.

It is sobering to think how many people in the world live under dictatorships, deprived of basic human rights (and how easily our own institutions can be subverted or attacked). According to Zarathushtra, even the object of our worship is to be chosen in accord with truth, *aṣa-*.¹ Logically then, people should also have the right to choose their temporal rulers in the same way. If this idea of Zarathushtra's were to be believed and held, worldwide, it would solve not only the problems of dictatorship, but also those of democracy.

In matters of governance, whether of nations, or corporations, or even community boards, we often are beset by abuses of power. The wealth of some nations gets siphoned off into the pockets of corrupt politicians and those who own them, leaving little or nothing to spend on needed human resources, and infra-structure, such as roads, water and sewage systems, electricity, telecommunications, schools, urban planning – the infrastructure needed to form the foundation of a thriving economy. Corporate management sometimes uses its power to manipulate markets, and engage in deceptive practices, resulting in near financial collapse (as occurred in 1930 and again in 2008), not only for such corporations, but for the economy itself.

Zarathushtra's solution is *vohu- xṣaθra-* ~ the idea that power and authority are a trust to be exercised in ways that promote the public good; the profound realization that, to be worthwhile, an essential ingredient of power is service (a lovely paradox);

"Glorious Jamaspa Haugva (has displayed) this understanding of His power: 'One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve...' Y51:8.

"... fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule." Y32:6.

Indeed, Xenophon, a Greek warrior, historian and philosopher traces this quality ~ a beneficial rule ~ to the laws of the Persians. He says,

"He [Cyrus] was, moreover, educated in the laws of the Persians. These laws do not seem to begin where they begin in most cities, but by [caring for the common good](#)." Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, Book I, chapter 2, § 2, Ambler translation 2001, p. 23; (a standard of governance which was not lived up to by some Sasanian rulers).

In a world where today so many live below the poverty level, where violence, prejudice, drugs, crime, and environmental pollution afflict our communities, Zarathushtra's "can-do", action oriented teaching provides a powerful remedy. He teaches that it is not enough to think good thoughts, and speak good words. We have to use our minds and hearts to search for solutions, and take action, so that each of us becomes a co-worker with Wisdom, a benefiter, a savior (saoshyant) of our world, solving one small problem at a time. He says:

["Yes, those men shall be the saviors \[saoshyantō\] 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.](#)

I love the teaching of a prophet who tells us that on the path of spiritual evolution, a good first step is justice, being fair, but an even higher step is generosity ("[...the beneficent have correctly chosen...](#)" [Y30:3](#)). If we could commit to generosity in our dealings with each other, what a happy difference it would make. And generosity often (though not always) begets a corresponding generosity from the recipient.

On the other hand, Zarathushtra does not teach us to be willing victims. He encourages us to fight wrongful actions, but with truth and good thinking, not with anger or hatred or prejudice, or violence. If we fight hatred with hatred, or anger with anger, prejudice with prejudice, violence with violence, we simply create more hatred, anger, prejudice and violence. When he asks the Divine for help in dealing with the persecution to which he was being subjected, he asks for help through truth (*aša-*) and its comprehension, good thinking.

["What help by truth hast Thou for Zarathushtra who calls? What help by good thinking hast Thou for me, ..." Y49:12.](#)

["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. If requital is good, come to me and give support to me. Through good thinking, find a means of destruction of this." Y49:1.](#)

In the final analysis, there is one (implied) teaching of Zarathushtra that links into all the others, and provides a solution for so many of the ills that plague us. It is the idea that the Divine is immanent (present) in being, in all things, and that therefore, we all are part of one existence ~ one whole (temporarily fragmented to enable the perfecting process).² If, when making our choices, we could remember that teaching, just imagine what the consequences would be. How would we speak or act in a given situation, if we remembered that 'God' is present in the object to which our words or actions are directed – whether it is a human being, or another life form, or our environment?

Can this teaching be carried to its logical conclusion? Probably not. Do I swat mosquitoes? Sure I do (with a mental apology). Would I eliminate a colony of ants that was lunching on my house? As humanely as possible (and to the extent necessary), yes I would. Would I wage war against tyranny or terrorism? Yes I would (to the extent necessary and without victimizing or indiscriminate killing). Should we kill to eat? We have to, if we want to survive. Even vegetarians kill (all or parts of) plants. Why our world is ordered in such a way that we have to kill to survive? I do not know for certain, (although since studying the Gathas, I have some ideas).³

I think an integral part of Zarathushtra's teachings is that we have to confront what causes pain and suffering in existence ~ even if it is part of a status quo (like the natural order) ~ and pull some good out of it, make things better. Yes, we have to kill to survive. But we can use our minds/hearts to ensure that we don't victimize.

If we believe this (implied) teaching – that the Divine is present in all things – we would understand that we all are inextricably linked in a web of existence – an interdependent ecosystem. We would understand that whether it is another human being, or another life form, or our environment, we cannot victimize it, we cannot trash it, without harming ourselves and the Divine. If we could turn this thought into actions, its Light would flood our lives and make our world a brighter, happier place. We heal existence with truth, its good comprehension, its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule, its complete attainment.

["...Therefore may we be those who shall heal this world..." Y30:9.](#)

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¹ See *Part One: The Manthra of Choice, Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo)*.

² See in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat / Ameretat*, and *The Identity of the Divine*.
See in *Part Two: A Question of Immanence; A Question of Reward and the Path; The Puzzle of the Most-Good, Vahishta; The Puzzle of Creation; and Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

³ See *Part One: A Friendly Universe*; and in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*;