The Paradox of the Individual and the Community.

One of the unique things about Zarathushtra's theology is that he does not give us fact specific answers. Instead, he gives us a system, a method, a way of solving our problems and living life. I would like to show you how this system plays out in one of the many paradoxes of the Gathas. The paradox of the individual and the community.

 We know that a core teaching of Zarathushtra is individual responsibility.   Have you ever wondered how this affects community well being? Is there a conflict here?   Let us consider the matter, starting with the Individual aspect of this paradox.

Zarathushtra's notion of individual responsibility includes certain components.

First, we must think. This is unusual. Many religious authorities consider obedience to be a higher priority. Not Zarathushtra. His priority is that we think. In fact, he considers good thinking (*vohu-manah-*) to be a divine quality that man also has (although incompletely).

Second, he tells us we must think individually – each person for himself. This also is unusual. Many religious institutions require obedience to some central human authority. Not Zarathushtra.   He says, "...Reflect with a clear mind – man by man for himself ~ ..." Y30:2.

Does this mean that Zarathushtra is indifferent to community well-being?   Of course not. His notion of how to nurture and create community is just different from blind obedience to authority for the so-called 'common good' (as authorities ~ who of course define the 'common good' ~ are fond of alleging).

One of the challenges surely, is to find a way of implementing his teaching of independent thought, within the institutional frameworks of society ~ religious and secular.   In so doing, we need to be aware that obeying some central human authority does not necessarily create community. It simply substitutes another human being's thinking for one's own.

The concept of *sǝraoša-*,[1] which literally means 'listening' (hearing and implementing Wisdom's teachings)', does indeed exist in Zarathushtra's thought. But this is not a blind obedience. It is a freely chosen way of life. Zarathushtra specifically speaks of listening through good thinking. He says, '...Teach life healing judgment, then to it, let listening [*sǝraošō*] come through good thinking...' Y44:16 my translation.[2]

Even the Divine Itself, instructs through good thinking.

'... May the Giver of reason [*dātā   x ratǝuš*] instruct through good thinking (the course of) my direction (so as) to be (the) charioteer of (my) tongue.' Y50:6, my translation; (the Av. text and the Insler 1975 translation are footnoted).[3]

"...Through good thinking the Creator[4] of existence shall promote the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish." Y50:11.

The third component of Zarathushtra's notion of individual responsibility is the freedom to choose. He describes Wisdom as, "...Him who left to our will (to choose between) the [*spǝ̄ncā*] and the [*aspǝ̄ncā*]..." Y45:9 ~ a choice between the beneficial and the non-beneficial.

Each thought, word and action involves making a choice. Even the failure to choose is a choice.[5]

Updated 2025

The fourth component involves how we make our choices.   Zarathushtra's commitment is to choose truth for its own sake, as the Gathas and the *Asha Vahishta* (*Ashem Vohu*) manthra tell us;[6] not out of fear of punishment; not for a reward; but to bring about the true order of existence for its own, most-good sake. When we do so, we bring ourselves, and our communities -- our world -- into harmony with this order of existence (which is most-good *aṧa- vahišta-*).

Look at any human endeavor – medicine, technology, science, literature, law, whatever – and you see the validity of this teaching. It is the creative diversity and intelligence of individuals, free to think for themselves, that generate beneficial solutions to the many problems that form a part of our reality.   It is the many good choices, made by many individuals, that generate community well being. This is exemplified in the intellectual and creative freedom that has historically (although imperfectly) generated discoveries, and fueled economic successes, in democracies.   Compare that with the failures of authoritarian governments whose policies have tried to control almost every aspect of human enterprise -- from government run collective farms to government run factories, to government mandated human behavior.

How often do we hear the seductive voice of false argument which seeks to persuade us to give up our freedom to think for ourselves and make our own choices, for the so called 'good' of the community.

In the the last part of the 20th century and the early part of this 21st century, Enron was one of the world's largest companies, with revenues of nearly $101 billion, but which was riddled with institutionalized and systemic fraud.[7] Imagine yourself as an auditor for Enron, in the last few years of Enron's existence, being told by your supervisor: *you cannot expose the financial wrongdoings of management – it would destroy the company, throw thousands of people out of work, destroy the savings of hundreds of thousands of shareholders, to say nothing of losing us our biggest client.*   Did covering up for Enron's management save jobs, or save its shareholders, or keep the auditing company from losing its biggest client?   It did not. But if the auditors had refused to give their seal of approval, right at the beginning, the problem would not have grown to such huge proportions, and it might indeed have saved the employees, the shareholders, the company itself, and its auditors. In fact, as a result of a huge cover-up to 'save' the company, Enron and its auditors both went out of business, became extinct, and certain Enron executives were sent to jail.

In the same way, in religious communities, sometimes community leaders issue edicts that we believe to be wrong. And there are those in the community who tell us that we have an obligation to not question these edicts and obey them, 'for the good of the community'. But can it ever benefit a community to perpetuate what is wrong?

I don't ask you to take my word for it. I ask only that you think about it. Do you believe in Zarathushtra's system? Does it make sense to you? Is it validated by experience?

Finally, *the fifth* component of individual responsibility is the law of consequences, that we experience the consequences of our choices, that what we do comes back to us – the good choices and the bad choices – all come back to us (in the long run), not for punishment, but as a learning mechanism, to increase our understanding.   If we make choices that turn out to be mistakes, it is not the end of the world. Mistakes are a normal part of the learning process. The lessons are sometimes painful, and sometimes beautiful. But they *all* (eventually) bring about the good. They

Updated 2025

all (eventually) increase understanding (*vohu‑ manah‑*).

Let us now consider the other side of this paradox, the community. How does Zarathushtra see "community". In the Gathas, he speaks of conventional community units, from the smallest to the largest -- the family, the community, the clan (or tribe), the world, existence.

But there is a dimension to his teaching on community that is very beautiful, and which I would like to touch upon.

Many (but not all) students of Zarathushtra's thought, see in his teachings (and even more in many later texts), the idea of the immanence of the Divine in all things.   In other words, that the Life Force of the Divine exists in, and is a part of, all things.

In the early years of my studies, I contemptuously (and judgmentally) dismissed the reverence for nature displayed in some of the later texts as some sort of primitive, pre‑Zarathushtrian, nature worship -- totally inconsistent with Zarathushtra's thought in the Gathas. Now, (after many years of studying the Gathas) I realize I was wrong. I now think that this reverencing of nature in the later texts may indeed have originated from the Gathas (even though later forgotten as the source) as a recognition of the Divine (in being) within all that exists.

The question of immanence is discussed in more detail in other chapters in *Part Two*, but I would like to show you a few highlights. And here, I will start with the later texts, and show you how they tie into the Gathas. The first highlight is the concept of:

The fravashi in all things.

The word *fravashi* does not appear in the Gathas, but it appears frequently in YAv. texts which do not define the meaning of *fravashi* -- presumably because the authors were well aware of its meaning and did not see the need to define it.   Over the centuries, the meanings of words tend to evolve, and unfortunately (but not surprisingly), the word *fravashi* has been used with different shades of meaning in the long, long history of Zoroastrianism. But based on many of the references to *fravashis* in YAv. texts, it is generally accepted by practicing Zoroastrians, (and also by some non‑Zoroastrian scholars), that the *fravashi* is the Divine within.[8]   The *Farvardin Yasht*, a Younger Avestan text, is dedicated to the veneration of the *fravashis*, (the Divine), within all things.

As applied to human beings, and different races, the *Farvardin Yasht* reverences the *fravashis* of good men and women in various enumerated countries -- Turanian, Sairimyan (which Darmesteter's ft. explains is Europe and Western Asia), Saini (which his ft. explains is China), and these sections conclude with reverence for the *fravashis* of good men and women "... in all countries ...".[9] But in the *Farvardin Yasht*, the fravashis of other life forms are also worshipped/celebrated (Avestan *yaz‑* words include the idea of worship that is a celebration).[10] The *Farvardin Yasht* mentions:

> "... tame animals, ... wild animals, ... animals that live in the water, animals that live under the ground, ... the flying ones, ... the running ones, ... the grazing ones. We worship their Fravashis." *Farvardin Yasht*, Yt.13:74, Darmesteter translation.[11]

And the *Farvardin Yasht* speaks of worshipping/celebrating the *fravashis* of plants and inanimate things as well:

"We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis: ... that of the ... fire ... that of the sky ... that of the waters ... that of the earth ... that of the plants ... " *Farvardin Yasht,* Yt.13:85 - 86, Darmesteter translation.[12]

So we see in all of these sections, the idea that we worship/celebrate the Divine in all that exists ~ a beautiful idea which (if we kept it in mind) would completely change our perception of 'community', and the ways in which we relate ~ to ourselves, to each other, to other life forms, to our environment.

Is this idea also found in the Gathas and other later texts? I think it is. Sometimes specifically, sometimes impliedly.   In certain later texts, each attribute of the Divine, ~ later called the amesha spenta ~ is specifically linked with some aspect of the material existence as a "counterpart".[13] According to the dictionary, a 'counterpart' can be two corresponding copies, or duplicates, or it can be something that completes ~ a complement. A 'complement' is defined as one of two mutually completing parts.[14]   In later Pahlavi texts, these "counterparts" ~ the Divine and the material ~ are as follows:

The Divine		The Material "Counterpart"
ahura- mazdā (the Lord Wisdom)	with	the righteous man[15]
aša- (truth)	with	fire
vohu- manah- (good thinking)	with	cattle
ārmaiti- (embodied truth)	with	earth and the virtuous woman
vohu-x šaϑra- (good rule)	with	metals
haurvatāt- (completeness)	with	water
amərətāt- (non-deathness)	with	plants

Zarathushtra does not speak of "counterparts". But Professor Insler has insightfully pointed out,[16] that Zarathushtra links various aspects of the material existence, with Wisdom and Its divine characteristics (amesha spenta) in (what Insler thinks is) roughly the same way as in the later texts. I agree with Professor Insler, but I see the following differences.

First, in the Gathas, some of these links are indeed specific, some are implied strongly, and some are just hinted at;

Second, in the Gathas, Wisdom is linked with mortals ~ with no distinction between genders. None of the material links are gender specific in the Gathas, (as they are in the later texts). In the Gathas, there is gender equality,[17] and

Third, the links between the Divine and the material in the Gathas, are not one-to-one links. They are not as rigid and one-dimensional as they are in the later texts. In the Gathas, the linking is done in beautiful, kaleidoscopic multi-dimensioned ways, with the material metaphors and the Divine quality for which they stand, flowing into and out of each other. These links in the Gathas are shown in Table form in another chapter (the Table is a long one).[18]

Updated 2025

So we have to ask ourselves: Why would Zarathushtra create such a lovely, multi-dimensioned, kaleidoscopic web of correspondences between the Divine and the material?   What was his intent? We cannot say for certain that Zarathushtra's intent was to demonstrate the immanence of the Divine in all of existence. However, if you look at the evidence, that conclusion is strongly implied and is consistent with the *Farvardin Yasht*, and with other evidence in the later texts which imply more strongly and in other ways, the immanence of the Divine in all existence ~ one of which is the fire in all things. There are those who contend that this fire in all things is energy. But (with respect) that conclusion is not supported by evidence in the Gathas and later texts, and misses a very lovely aspect of these teachings ~ the fire in all things.

Fire in all things.

In the Gathas, fire is specifically used as a metaphor for truth (*aša-*, the true (correct) good order of existence) ~ a wholly good, beneficial, generous, loving order of existence which is Wisdom's existence.   So it is not surprising that in later Zoroastrian rituals, fire became a symbol of the Divine. But not just in the rituals.

The unknown author(s) of Yy17:11 (a YAv. text) and many centuries later, the unknown author(s) of the *Bundahishn* (a Pahlavi text), recorded the belief that fire exists in all things – in man, animals, trees, plants, the clouds, in the world itself.[19] It is interesting that the fire in all these things is called by names that represent various spiritual concepts, each of which is a quality of the true, good order of existence (*aša-*), such as: *vohu.fryāna-* '(the) goodness of friendship', *urvazišta-* 'most happy, most joyful', *vazišta-* 'most welcoming', *spāništa-* 'most beneficial'.[20] Now the fire described in each of these various parts of material existence are not different in nature.   Fire is fire. They all are one physical phenomenon ~ fire. We see this quite clearly in another Pahlavi text, which says,

> "...and Auharmazd [Av. *Ahura Mazda*] produced the creatures bodily for the world; first, the sky; the second, water; the third, earth; the fourth, plants; the fifth, animals; the sixth, mankind. Fire was in all, diffused originally through the six substances...", *Selections of Zad-Sparam*, 1:20 - 21, E. W. West translation.[21]

And referring to fire, this text says

> "...And it [fire] produced the Propitious fire itself in heaven (garodman); its manifestation is in the fire which is burning on the earth, and its propitiousness is this, that all the kinds are of its nature." *Selections of Zad-Sparam*, 11:2, E. W. West translation.[22]

In those ancient times, fire was the only form of light that mortals could make (think about that for a moment ... or two ...).   The fire in all things, as detailed in Yy17:11, the Pahlavi *Bundahishn,* and *Selections of Zad-Sparam,* is a very lovely way of saying that the Divine (an en*light*ened being, symbolized by fire*light*) exists, or is immanent, in all things, and it corroborates the linking of the Divine with various aspects of the material existence that we see in the Gathas and in some the later texts.

And this gives us a glimpse into Zarathushtra's understanding of 'community'.   In ever expanding circles, it includes our families, our neighborhoods, our states, our nations, the family of man and all living things, and our environment ~ the community of existence as a whole. And the Divine

Updated 2025

exists, is present, is immanent, in each unit of this beautiful 'community' ‑ each of its qualities (amesha spenta) linked in multi-dimensioned ways to various aspects of the material existence.

Now, how could we, as individuals, benefit this community? Think about it. Could we ever benefit this community, or any part of it, by doing something wrong, however well intentioned?   We could only benefit this community with thoughts, words and actions that help to bring this community into sync with the true good order of existence, *aša-*.

I would like to show you one more way in which Zarathushtra looks at community.

Wholeness, Completeness Haurvatat.

In the Gathas, *haurvatāt-* completeness, wholeness, is attained at both an individual and a collective level.   The evidence is detailed in another chapter.[23] Here I will simply summarize:

At the individual level, *haurvatāt-* is an existence that is 'whole, complete' in the sense that it is no longer a conflicted mix of qualities that are more-good and bad (Y30:3), more-beneficial and harmful (Y45:2); *haurvatāt-* is a whole, complete, personification of the true, good order of existence (*aša-*).

In the Gathas, this completeness (*haurvatāt-*) is an attribute of Wisdom Itself. Zarathushtra speaks of: "...His completeness [*haurvatāt-*]... " Y31:6.

Yet, we can earn it: "...Those of you who shall give obedience [*səraošəm* 'listening'] and regard to this (Lord) of mine, they shall reach completeness [*haurvatāt-*]..." Y45:5.

Wisdom gives completeness to us: "...grant Thou to me ... completeness [*haurvatāt-*] ..." Y51:7.

And, most interesting of all, we give completeness to Wisdom.

"Through a [*spənta- mainyu-* '(the) beneficial way of being']
and [*vahišta- manah-* 'the most-good thinking']
through both action and the word befitting [*aša-* 'the true, good order of existence']
they shall grant completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] to Him.
The Wise One [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom'] in rule is Lord through [*ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth']. Y47:1[24]

You well may ask: how could we possibly give completeness to the Divine? How do we complete what is already complete? Isn't the Divine above needing anything that we can give It? Apparently not.   If the Divine is immanent (present) in all that exists then, although as a part of existence It is complete, perfect, It cannot attain ultimate completeness until everything of which It is a part   ‑ every fragment of existence ‑ has attained that same state of completeness, perfection.   The same is true of man (and presumably of every other fragment of existence ‑ each of which is a 'counterpart' of the Divine).

So we see that 'completeness' (*haurvatāt-*) is attained both at an individual, and eventually, at a collective level. The ultimate paradox; giving an added dimension to the meaning of community, in that an individual is not truly complete, until the community of all the living arrive at that same state of completeness, *haurvatāt-*.

Once we understand this thought, it becomes apparent that although a given individual may perfect himself or herself, we cannot reach ultimate completeness until everyone does. It is not enough for an individual to perfect himself. We have to help each other make it. Thus, from a slightly different perspective, we see again a beautiful part of Zarathushtra's thought – a mutual benefiting, mutual,

Updated 2025

loving help, which results in a mutual completing, of man and the Divine and all the living ~ existence as a whole ~ community in an ultimate sense.[25]

So once again, we need to ask: How would each of us, in making our individual choices, benefit this 'community'?   Can any rule or tradition that is intrinsically 'wrong', intrinsically out of sync with truth ever benefit any unit of this community ~ a family, a business, a nation, our world ~ existence itself?

In conclusion, Zarathushtra's system of individual responsibility and community well being involves thinking for ourselves, using our minds/hearts/spirits to figure out what is true (factual truths and the truths of mind/heart/spirit) and thinking, speaking and doing it ~ making choices which bring truth to life with each thought, word and action, and experiencing the consequences of our choices (and unearned experiences, as well as mutual, loving help), as an on-going process of learning through experience, which makes us grow as individuals, and as communities, because when we think a thought, speak a word, or do an action, we benefit not only ourselves, but also the people and circumstances that are affected by our thoughts, words and actions – our communities, our world.

If we keep this understanding in mind, if we make our choices in ways that accord with the true good order of existence (*ašāṯcīṯ. hacā*), it will enable us to meet the challenge of being true to the teaching of individual responsibility, in a way that builds well-being in ourselves, and in the many communities of which we are a part.

<div align="center">

* * * * * * *

</div>

---

[1] See *Part Three: Seraosha.*

[2] This verse Y44:16 is quoted as the 2d paragraph of the *Kemna Mazda* prayer, so we can see that the ancients thought it was important. This beautiful verse is discussed in detail in *Part Six: Yasna 44:16*, with other translations given for comparative purposes.

[3] The Avestan words of this part of Y50:6 are as follows:

Lines c. and d. *dātā x ratə̄uš hizvō raiϑīm stōi mahyā rāzə̄ṇg vohū sāhīṯ manaŋhā.:.*

My translation: "May the Giver of reason [*dātā x ratə̄uš*] instruct through good thinking (the course) of my direction (so as) to be (the) charioteer of (my) tongue.' Y50:6.

Insler 1975: "May the Creator [*dātā*] instruct through good thinking (the course) of my direction, in order to be the charioteer of my will [*x ratə̄uš*] and my tongue." Y50:6.

[4] Zarathushtra's (unconventional) ideas on 'creation' are discussed in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation.*

[5] As James K. Lovelace, a Zoroastrian in the Washington DC area, pointed out in his essay: *Reality and Response*, even the failure to make a choice is a choice. His essay appears in *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, Issue No. 10, which may be viewed on Shahriar Shahriari's website www.zarathushtra.com.

[6] Discussed in *Part One: The Manthra of Truth, Asha Vahishta (Ashem Vohu).*

[7] Enron Corporation was at one time one of the world's largest companies engaged in producing energy, pulp, paper, commodities and communications, headquartered in the United States, with revenues of nearly 101 billion before its collapse. At the end of 2001, it was discovered that its allegedly healthy financial condition had in fact been misreported and was sustained substantially by institutionalized and systemic fraud, which

Updated 2025

its auditors, Arthur Anderson failed to report.   Arthur Anderson was one of the largest auditing and accounting companies in the United States at that time.   As a result, Enron itself went bankrupt at the end of 2001, some of its top executives were convicted of fraud and went to prison, and its accounting company Arthur Anderson went out of business.   (Source: Wikipedia which contains more details).   At that time, I watched and read about the whole Enron debacle in the news.   But that was a long time ago, so I used Wikipedia to ensure that the details I remembered were correct.

[8] The meanings of '*fravashi*' are discussed in Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism,* (1985 reprint, published by the K.R. Cama Oriental Press, Bombay) pp. 232 - 243, and 375 - 378.   Dhalla was for many years the High Priest of the Zoroastrians in Karachi.   And before that, when he was a young man, his community collected the money needed to send him to study the Avestan language and texts, (as well as Pahlavi Zoroastrianism) with A. V. W. Jackson at Columbia University, who was one of the top Avestan scholars of that era.

[9] *Farvardin Yasht*, Yt.13:143, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, pp. 226 ~ 227.

So also the YAv. Yy23:3 "And I desire in my worship to approach toward every holy Fravashi [*ašavane fravaše* i.e. 'truth-possessing *fravashi*'] whosesoever it may be, and wheresoever dead upon this earth (its possessor may have lain),..." Y23:3, Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 273; Avestan words from Geldner 1P p. 87.   Mills (who belonged to an earlier generation of translators, when the decoding of Avestan was still in its infancy) translates *ašavan-* words as 'holy' instead of its literal meaning 'truth-possessing', or more fluently 'truthful'. It is worth noting that at the time this YAv. Yasna was composed, a dead body on or in the earth was not considered a defilement ~ as it came to be in later texts, long after Avestan times (see *Part Five: The Vendidad & Its Lessons for Today*).

[10] Detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of Worship.*

[11] SBE 23, pp. 197-198.

[12] SBE 23, p. 200.

[13] This idea that each amesha spenta (and the Lord Wisdom), and various aspects of the material existence are "counterparts" ~ as shown in the Table in the main part of this chapter ~ appears in a Pahlavi Fragment which has been translated in SBE 5, pp. 374 - 378.   The translator, E. W. West, appended this Fragment text to his translation of *Shayast la Shayast*, but states that this Fragment is not a part of *Shayast la Shayast* (ft. 1, p. 372).   Dhalla 1963 discusses additional ways in which each amesha spenta was linked with its material counterpart throughout the long history of the religion, pp. 39 - 61, 162 - 172, 357 - 367.

[14] Webster's *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.*

[15] The 'righteous man' probably was not generic here, so as to include all sexes.   In this Pahlavi Fragment text, in the list of "creations" in §§ 4 - 5 (SBE 5, p. 373) the righteous man is the creation of Auharmazd (Av. *ahura- mazdā-*), and the virtuous woman is the 'creation' of Spendarmad (Av. *spəṇta- ārmaiti-*), by then regarded as a female divine entity.   But in the sections that follow, which list the "counterparts", the virtuous woman is not mentioned at all (§§ 8 - 29), although in the "counterpart" group of sections Zarathushtra is instructed to propitiate the earth and virtuous women if he wishes to propitiate Spendarmad (§ 20).

It should be remembered that when literacy was not universal, verbal transmissions of knowledge prevailed. And this Pahlavi fragment was an attempt to record ancient knowledge that had been passed down for more than 1,000 years, from generation to generation.   However, the Pahlavi writers recorded ancient knowledge through the mind-set of their times, which was very different (in more ways than one) from the Avestan mind-set.   The gender equality that appears so conspicuously in the Avestan texts does not appear in the Pahlavi texts (all of which were composed after the Arab invasion of Iran).   By the time Even the earliest Pahlavi texts were written, after 200 + years of textual silence following the Arab invasion of Iran.   And so dominant and

pervasive were the Islamic views and rules regarding women as not being the equals of men, that the Zoroastrian community was bound to abide by these views and rules which controlled every aspect of their environment, and therefore, over the passage of time, influenced and became a part of their thinking. Thus, perhaps the Zoroastrians of that time period could not bring themselves to include women with men, as the creation and counterpart of Ahura Mazda, and felt more comfortable seeing women as the creation of a lesser divinity ~ Spendarmad ~ so very different from the gender equality in the Gathas and later Avestan texts.

In addition, by the time of the Pahlavi texts (written over a period of several centuries after the Arab invasion) Avestan as a language was no longer understood. They doubtless did not know that the gender of *ārmaiti-* was purely grammatical, and that in Avestan, the masc. gender is sometimes used generically (to include masc. and fem.) ~ that the masc. form of a given word is also used when a plural noun or pronoun includes more than one gender (see *Part Five: Avestan Genders, Grammatical and Actual*). In addition, with the passage of time the amesha spenta were thought of as divinities, rather than as attributes of the Divine in some (but not all) texts. Thus to their way of thinking, it must have seemed eminently logical that Ahura Mazda (a man, naturally), created and was the counterpart of a man, whereas Spendarmad (then thought of as a female divinity) created and was the counterpart of a woman ~ a way of thinking that may have been understandable under their circumstances, but was far, far, removed from the thought of the Gathas (in which one of Zarathushtra's innovations was that, unlike the deities of his culture, the Divine was not human like in form ~ an innovation so well known that it was recorded even by Greek writers (detailed in *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*).

[16] Professor Insler expressed this idea in an insightful but unpublished lecture *Abstract Levels of Ritual in the Gathas of Zarathushtra*, which he gave at a meeting of the American Academy of Religions, in Chicago, Nov. 20, 1988, a written copy of which he was kind enough to give me.

[17] Detailed in *Part One: Gender Equality.*

[18] These links between the material and the Divine are summarized in Table 2, in *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*. And for supporting evidence from the Gathas, see for example the following chapters in *Part Two*: *The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*; *Earth, Waters, and Plants*; *Molten, Glowing Metal*; *Light, Glory, Fire*; and *Other Metaphors*.

[19] The Younger Avestan text Yy17:11 (SBE 31, pp. 258 - 259), gives the names of the fires, but does not explain where these fires reside. The Pahlavi *Bundahishn* 17:1 (SBE 5, pp. 61 ~ 64), uses these Avestan names (although not in exactly the same form), and then explains (in Pahlavi) where these fires reside.

So these two texts have to be read together (as Mills' fts. explain) to understand the references to these named fires (from Y17:11) and where they reside (from the *Bundahishn*). Without the explanations in the Pahlavi *Bundahishn* we would not have been aware of this concept of the fire within all things. So we are indebted indeed to the dear priests and scholars who participated in writing the *Bundahishn* (around the 9th century CE) and also to those who later copied and re-copied it through the centuries, for preserving knowledge of this ancient belief. Unfortunately, what remains of this text today is in a very fragmented and poor condition, as West's Introduction to the *Bundahishn* explains. And the text also contains much that is very, very different from the Gathas.

[20] The linguistics and meanings of these descriptions of the fires in each aspect of the material existence are explained in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire.*

[21] SBE 5, p. 159.

[22] SBE 5, p. 184. The later Avestan and Pahlavi texts often call fire the 'son of Ahura Mazda'. This is just another way of describing the Divine glory/fire which is (metaphorically) 'birthed' or emanated into all things

~ 'creation' in Zarathushtra's thought, being an act of (metaphoric) 'birthing' (*ząϑa-* in the Gathas) ~ a creation by emanation.   This conclusion is corroborated in the Gathas, where fire is the material metaphor for *aša-* ~ the true, good order of existence, and Wisdom is called the 'father of truth (*aša-*)'. But fathers do not give birth. So we know that Zarathushtra used 'father' here as a metaphor for the idea that Wisdom generates truth.   These ideas are discussed in more detail in *Part Two: Light, Glory, Fire;* and *The Puzzle of Creation.* Parenthetically, here we have another paradox. It is the comprehension of truth that enables the existence of w/Wisdom, and it is w/Wisdom Who in turn generates truth (because w/Wisdom is truth personified).

[23] Detailed in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat.*

[24] The words in blue font, in this translation of Y47:1 are from Insler's 1975 translation.   Not all translators agree.   But there are other verses in the Gathas which also indicate that we give Wisdom completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*). Here are two such verses.

"Yes, both completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-* non-deathness] are for Thy sustenance. Together with the rule of good thinking allied with truth, (our) [*ārmaiti-*] has increased these two enduring powers (for Thee)..." Y34:11, Insler 1975. He has placed the words "(our)" and "(for Thee)" in parentheses, as you can see, indicating that they are not in the GAv. text, but are interpretive aids added by him.   In my view, Zarathushtra did not intend to so limit the idea he expresses.   Here, (as in Y30:7), I think *ārmaiti-* is the embodied truth of both Wisdom Itself, as well as of all the living, which increases completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) for Wisdom and all the living "... Your enduring worshipful offering [*draonah-*] has been established to be [*amərətāt-* non-deathness] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*]." Y33:8, (see also *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path;* and *Part Six: Yasna 30:7*).

Have you ever wondered what I mean when I speak of Zarathushtra's wonderful, multi-dimensioned, technique? Or his use of double entendre (using one word to convey two or more meanings)?   Well, this simple sentence in Y33:8 is one such example; *draonah-* is the GAv. word (in stem form) for the bread or cake that was a ritual offering.

At one level, Zarathushtra is saying (in Y33:8), that we worship the Divine, by offering Him our own self-realization (completeness and non-deathness) as a worship offering.

At another level, the bread (*draonah-*) is made up of water and grain. Water is the material metaphor (or counterpart) for completeness (*haurvatāt-*). Grain comes from plants, which are the material metaphor (or counterpart) for non-deathness (*amərətāt-*). (I am indebted to Professor for this insight).

So here Zarathushtra, uses *draonah-* with double entendre, to indicate a worship offering to the Divine, and also to indicate what this offering consists of ~ completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) ~ our own self realization is the food offering that nourishes the Divine (of whom we are a part).

[25] See in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine;* and *The Identity of the Divine;*
And in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path.*