

## Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra, & Power

Good rule (*vohu- x šaθra-*) is sometimes also called the desirable rule, or the rule to be chosen (*x šaθra-vairya-*).<sup>1</sup>

It is generally agreed that *vohu-* means 'good' and *x šaθra-* has to do with 'rule'. Professor Insler in an insightful commentary explains that (as with *manah-*), the word *x šaθra-* is used in three ways: as faculty ('rulership, mastery'), as process ('rule'), and as object ('realm, dominion').<sup>2</sup> This insight helps to reconcile translation differences, because although linguists generally agree that *x šaθra-* pertains to 'rule' – they may disagree as to whether it should be translated, as 'rulership, mastery' (faculty), or 'rule' (process), or 'realm, dominion, kingdom' (object). Add to this, the fact that Zarathushtra uses 'good rule' and its related concepts ~ power, strength, might, force ~ in unconventional ways, and we see some interesting ideas.

As with truth (*aša-*), good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*), discussed in previous chapters, Zarathushtra uses good rule, sometimes as a concept, sometimes as an activity/attribute of the Divine, sometimes as an activity/attribute of man, and in perhaps only one clear instance, as an entity.

*As an attribute / activity of the Lord, Wisdom.*

'Good rule' is an attribute or activity of the Lord, Wisdom. There are many verses in which the Divine is called a 'ruler' who offers solicitude (loving care, concern), and Divine 'rule' is described as wise and good.

"... the Lord, wise in His rule..." Y45:9, Y51:6, Insler 1975;

"... His rule..." Y45:10, Insler 1975;

"... Thy rule..." Y49:5, Insler 1975.

"... And do Thou give, Wise Ruler, that promise through which we may hear of your solicitude." Y28:7, Insler 1975.

Additional examples are footnoted,<sup>3</sup> and many more will be discussed below under the meaning of 'good rule'.

*As an attribute / activity of man.*

There are also many verses in which good rule is an activity or attribute of man

"... the beneficent man ... He serves truth, during his rule, with good word and good action..." Y31:22, Insler 1975;

"... One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve..." Y51.18,<sup>4</sup> Insler 1975.

Additional examples are footnoted,<sup>5</sup> and others will be discussed below under the meaning of 'good rule'.

*As a concept*

Zarathushtra most often uses 'good rule' as a concept. Here is just one example.

"That good rule must be chosen... In alliance with truth, it shall encompass the best [*vahišta-* most-good] (for us) through its actions, Wise One..." Y51:1, Insler 1975.

Additional examples are discussed below (in the meaning of good rule).

*As an entity.*

I have found only one clear<sup>6</sup> verse in which good rule is treated as an entity. In Y33:11 Wisdom and four characteristics of the Divine (four amesha spenta), are addressed as entities, and 'rule' is one of them,

"...Wise One [*mazdā*- 'Wisdom'] ... and [*ārmaiti*-], and truth ..., and good thinking, and (good) rule ~ listen to me, ..." Y33:11, Insler 1975.

But (as with truth, good thinking and embodied truth) in light of the fact that Zarathushtra most often uses rule as a concept, and as a characteristic/activity of the Divine and of man, this one clear reference to rule as an entity can only be allegorical. So the idea in certain later texts (written several centuries after Zarathushtra's time) that *vohu- x šaθra-* (or *x šaθra- vairya-*) is a living entity, an angel-like being to be worshipped / celebrated, who has metals under its protection, is not consistent with almost all of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses *vohu- x šaθra-* in the Gathas.

*The meaning of good rule.*

What does Zarathushtra intend when he uses the terms 'rule' and 'good rule'? Well, he lived in a society in which 'to rule' meant to control people, lands, cattle, horses. And where lands, cattle and horses were concerned, 'to rule' meant 'to possess, to own completely' what was ruled. But that is not precisely the way in which Zarathushtra uses 'good rule'.

In a series of rhetorical questions (which contain their own answers) he describes the components of Wisdom's rule, as one that does not harm, that protects from injury, that is compassionate, that is the rule of the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), and its most good comprehension *vahišta- manah-*, as the following rhetorical questions (which contain their own answers) demonstrate.

"Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall mercy [*mərəždikā* 'compassion'] take place? Where truth [*aša-*] which attains glory? Where [*spənta- ārmaiti-* 'beneficial-sacred embodied truth']? Where the very best thinking [*vahišta- manah-*]?<sup>7</sup> Where, Wise One [*mazdā*- 'Wisdom'], through Thy rule?" Y51:4, Insler 1975.

The word *mərəždikā* (which Insler translates as "mercy") is translated by others as 'compassion'.<sup>8</sup> So we see in this verse that Wisdom's rule is the rule of the true (correct) good order of existence (*aša-*), its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), and the most good thinking (*vahišta- manah-*), the pinnacle of comprehending truth, an enlightened state of being (which is Wisdom personified *mazdā-*).

Y51:19 shows the quality of man's good rule, "...that man assumes for himself this rule, namely the one who continues to seek for existence to be (in accord with what) the Wise Creator said is better [*vahyō* 'more-good'] for life through its actions [ft. 24]." Y51:19, Insler 1975. Insler's ft. 24 states "Namely, the enactment of truth and good thinking in this world." (p. 107). The enactment of truth and good thinking in existence is the concept of *ārmaiti-*, all three of which bring about good rule (Y51:4 quoted above).

In other verses as well, in his typical kaleidoscopic style, Zarathushtra describes good rule ~ in man and the Divine ~ as the rule of one or more of these three divine characteristics ~ the true order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension, good thinking (*vohu- manah-*) and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*).

As the rule of truth "...Thy rule that is in accord with truth..." Y43:14, Insler 1975;

As the rule of truth and good thinking "... the rule of truth and good thinking..." Y29:10, Y50:3, Insler 1975; additional verses are footnoted;<sup>9</sup>

As the rule of good thinking "...the long-lived rule of good thinking....." Y33:5, Insler 1975. Additional verses are footnoted;<sup>10</sup>

As the rule of embodied truth "... Grant thou, (*ārmaiti*-),<sup>11</sup> your rule of good thinking ..." Y51:2, Insler 1975.

As rule through embodied truth "...The Wise One in rule [*xšaθra*-] is Lord through [*ārmaiti*- 'embodied truth']." Y47:1, Insler 1975. It has been suggested that this phrase indicates that Wisdom's rule depends on the *ārmaiti*- of man which (conceptually) is true. But in Zarathushtra's own words here, this phrase is not so limited. *ārmaiti*- is an attribute of the Divine ~ Wisdom. And here we see Zarathushtra's idea that the rule of Wisdom is founded on the true (correct) order of existence embodied in thought, word and action ~ Wisdom's *ārmaiti*- and man's (and perhaps the *ārmaiti*- of all the living).

It is interesting that although Zarathushtra calls Wisdom the 'father' of truth, good thinking, and embodied truth (*ārmaiti*),<sup>12</sup> indicating that these three qualities are inherent in Him, and generated by Him, He is not called the father of the remaining three divine qualities (amesha spenta) ~ good rule, completeness (*haurvatāt*-) and non-deathness (*amərətāt*-), indicating perhaps that the last three occur when the first three are implemented.

The nature and importance of 'good rule' to Zarathushtra becomes clear when we see his descriptions of the suffering, grief, harm caused by the bad rule of priests and princes which was rampant in his society, in which the religious and secular powers combined to advance their own interests at the expense of the people under their rule. Here are a few examples (there are many more). In some of these verses the word 'rule' does not appear but the contexts describe the concept of rule.

Speaking of the gods of his society and the resulting harm that what was done in their names, "The gods did not at all choose correctly between these two, since the deceptive one approached them as they were deliberating. Since they chose the worst thought, they then rushed into fury, with which they have afflicted the world [*ahūm* 'existence'] and mankind." Y30:6, Insler 1975. The words "between these two" refers to the two ways of being (*mainyu*-) previously mentioned in this Yasna, and the "deceptive one" refers to the previously mentioned bad one of these two way of being ~ the *aka*- *mainyu*- of Y30:3.

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

"Wise one, where are those sincere ones who, through their possession of good thinking, make even immoral decrees and painful legacies disappear? I know none other than you. Therefore protect us in accord with truth." Y34:7, Insler 1975;

"Shameful are the many sins by which one attains fame, if at all by such things. (But) Thou knowest, Lord, (only) when there is uplifting of beings with the very best thinking, fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule." Y32:6, Insler 1975;

The cry of the allegorical 'cow' ~ an allegory for the beneficial-sacred in mortal existence "... 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, Insler 1975.

If you look at these verses, you will see that each one also contain the seeds of how bad rule is overcome ~ by (1) making the right choices which (2) implement the true, good order of existence ~ a beneficial, most good order ~ its comprehension, good thinking, and of course (3) loving help (*pasturage*).

(1) Making the right choices. We can have the best forms of government in the world, we can enact the best laws, we can have the best organizations or corporate charters, but they don't mean a thing unless they are implemented from day to day, by individuals making the right choices.

(2) Implementing truth and good thinking (with good thoughts, words and actions) is the concept of embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*), which of course creates good rule. "Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall mercy [*mərəždikā* 'compassion'] take place? Where truth [*aša-*] which attains glory? Where [*spənta- ārmaiti-*]? Where the very best thinking [*vahišta- manah-*]? Where, Wise One [*mazdā-*], through Thy rule?" Y51:4, Insler 1975.

(3) Being a *pastor*, and *pasturage*, are metaphors for the mutual loving help that is indispensable for bringing about Wisdom's good rule (since none of us can make it on our own, we all have to both give and receive help to make it). In Y29:1 (above), these words refer to the Divine (and its allegorical qualities truth, good thinking and in masked form the beneficial way of being), but in other Gatha verses, mortals also are have to be (and are) '*pastors*'.

Now, if good rule is the rule of the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension (good thinking *vohu- manah-*), and its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), as Y51:4 (quoted above) tells us, we can understand why such rule creates a social order that has the qualities of the true (correct) order (*aša-*) of existence.<sup>13</sup> For example:

This rule is healing (healing us from the disease of untruth in all its forms), "... By your rule, Lord, Thou shalt truly heal this world in accord with our wish" Y34:15, Insler 1975. Other qualities of the Divine are also described as healing (truth, good thinking, being beneficial, watching out for each other with thoughts words and actions of truth).<sup>14</sup>

This rule creates prosperity, peace, tranquility,  
"...the rule of good thinking, through the actions of which the creatures allied with truth do prosper..." Y43:6;

"... the rule of truth and good thinking, by means of which one shall create peace and tranquility..." Y29:10, Insler 1975. The true (correct) good order of existence (*aša-*) (implemented in thought, word, and action) also creates peace and prosperity.<sup>15</sup>

*How 'good rule' is used in Zarathushtra's thought.*

Good rule occurs at two levels ~ individually (generating the idea that the Kingdom of the Divine is within), and in social units. And at both levels, it occurs when a living being is in sync with the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*), when one comprehends it, good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), and embodies it in thought, word and action (*ārmaiti-*) ~ imperfectly by mortals, completely by the Divine (the Lord Wisdom not being exempt from this evolutionary process).<sup>16</sup>

But actually, these two levels are seamlessly integrated. A person's rule over the qualities of his own state of being, results in thoughts, words and actions that create good social units ~ ones that works for the benefit of all ~ because it is impossible to think, speak or act in a good way ~ a way that is in sync with the true (correct) order of existence ~ without benefiting not only ourselves, but also the people and circumstances

that are affected by such thoughts, words and actions ~ in social units of all sizes and types. Let us consider the evidence.

*Individual governance and transformation in man.*

There are no verses in which man presently has complete or perfect rule over the qualities that comprise divinity ~ the amesha spenta. But he is capable of doing so. Referring to rule and man's state of being, Zarathushtra says:

"Wise Lord, whoever ~ be it man or woman ~ would grant to me those things which Thou dost know to be the best [*vahišta-* 'most good'] for existence, namely, truth for the truth and the rule [*x šaθra-*] of good thinking (with that person) ... I shall cross over the Bridge of the Judge." Y46:10, Insler 1975. Here, truth for its own sake and the rule of good thinking are the qualities of a person's state of being that enable the transition ~ crossing the metaphoric bridge ~ from mortality to the state of non-deathness (*amərətāt-*).<sup>17</sup>

Additional examples are footnoted.<sup>18</sup>

So as we (incrementally) comprehend and embody the true (correct) order of existence ~ for its own sake ~ with our choices in thought, word and action, we attain mastery, rule, lordship, over the qualities that comprise divinity, (the amesha spenta), until we possess them completely. Thus through good rule over ourselves, our state of being evolves towards completeness (*haurvatāt-*) ~ the wholly truthful (*ašavan-*), wholly beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*) way of being. And paradoxically, this is also a state of being that is ruled by these qualities (amesha spenta). Perhaps two sides of the same coin.

*Individual governance and transformation (which results) in the Divine.*

There is some evidence in the Gathas that the Divine is part of the evolutionary process of having good rule over one's self (which is neither inconsistent nor surprising, when you consider Zarathushtra's views on the identity of the Divine and all the living). This evidence is detailed in other chapters.<sup>19</sup>

One of Zarathushtra's names for the Divine is *ahura-* 'Lord'. And he uses 'Lord' in a way that means 'one who has attained lordship over the qualities that make a being divine (amesha spenta)'. The evidence which underlies this conclusion is detailed in another chapter.<sup>20</sup> Zarathushtra uses 'rule' (*x šaθra-*) in the same way. Referring to the Lord Wisdom's rule over His own state of being, he says:

"... Thou didst receive for Thyself immortality [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'], truth [*aša-*] and mastery [*x šaθra-*] over completeness [*haurvatāt-*], ..." Y34:1, Insler 1975.<sup>21</sup> I understand rule (*x šaθra-*) here to be Wisdom's possession of, mastery over, completeness (*haurvatāt-*) which is the complete attainment of the true (correct) good order of existence (*aša-*) and its component qualities (amesha spenta) ~ a completeness which results in no longer being bound by mortality, non-deathness, (*amərətāt-*).<sup>22</sup>

"... His abounding authority of rule [*x šaθra-*] over completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and immortality [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and over truth [*aša-*], ..." Y31:21, Insler 1975. Now, completeness, non-deathness and truth are concepts. One cannot have "abounding authority of rule [*x šaθra-*]" over concepts. I therefore understand rule (*x šaθra-*) here to be Wisdom's complete possession of, or mastery over, these three divine qualities in His being.<sup>23</sup>

*Societal governance by man.*

In the Gathas, good rule means that a person who is in a position of leadership must exercise his power for the good, the benefit, of everyone and everything under his care. Good rule' (*vohu- x šaθra-*) is a quality of the Divine. But (as some of the above quotations indicate), it applies to man and the ways in which he governs his social units with his thoughts, words and actions of truth (*aša-*), i.e. with his *ārmaiti-*:

"...the blessed one who shall be eager to prosper the rule of the house or of the district or of the land with truth [*aša-*], ..." Y31:16, Insler 1975;

"... these things are clear to the beneficent man ... He serves truth [*aša-*], during his rule [*x šaθra-*], with good word and good action ..." Y31:22, Insler 1975. The phrase 'good word and good action' through which truth is served, is the concept of *ārmaiti-*.

"Let those of good rule, rule over us ~ not those of evil rule ~ with actions stemming from good understanding ...<sup>24</sup> with [*ārmaiti-*]..." Y48:5,<sup>25</sup> Insler 1975.

We see this understanding of 'good rule' echoed in a later Avestan text, in the (purported) words of the Lord Wisdom to Yima (Jamsheed), to whom He gave rulership,

"... make thou my worlds thrive, make my worlds increase: undertake thou to nourish, to rule, and to watch over my world." *Vendidad*, Ch. 2, § 4, Darmesteter translation.<sup>26</sup>

Other earlier YAv. texts also echo the Gathas' notion of good rule (a few examples are footnoted),<sup>27</sup> which is corroborated from a somewhat different perspective by the YAv. *Zamyad Yasht* (and other YAv. texts) which speak of a ruler losing the divine glory (*x"arənah-*) ~ which is his authority to rule ~ when he becomes untruthful, false, wicked.

Social justice is indeed an aspect of good rule. But (as the above quotations show), 'justice' alone is not enough. Good rule means going a step beyond 'justice'. It includes watching out for, benefiting, nurturing, the social units under the ruler's care. Those who have leadership responsibilities have an enormous impact ~ for good or harm ~ on the lives of others, based on the quality of their 'rule' ~ from small social units, (like a family, an association, a small business, a community organization), to larger social units (like big corporations, cities, states, the nation, the world).

In short, at the level of social units, large and small, good rule is what results when each individual thinks, speaks and acts in a way that embodies the true (correct) order of existence.<sup>28</sup> Good rule is created by embodying truth (*ārmaiti-*).

So to Zarathushtra, societal rulership, governance, is a trust. Its object is not self-aggrandizement or self-enrichment, or domination over others. Its object is to use the power of governance, to create a society which is beneficial to all by promoting the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*) with thoughts, words and actions which embody this order.<sup>29</sup> As Zarathushtra says, in a related way: "... fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule." Y32:6, Insler 1975.

But societal 'good rule' is not just for presidents, governors, rulers. Everyone has some power over others. If we think about it, even those whom we normally think of as being 'ruled' have power over their 'rulers'. Children have 'power' over their parents. Employees have 'power' over their employers. If your actions can either help or harm a person, you have 'power' over him. So the concept of good rule applies also to social governance and transformation by individuals who are not rulers.



### *Societal good rule of the Divine:*

One has to wonder: Man has the freedom to choose, and so can create a bad or better social order in accordance with such choices. But what of the Divine? Has the all-good Lord, Wisdom, created a good social order as a present reality? If so where is it? What is the social unit of this Divine good rule? Does Zarathushtra's thought accord with reality? What is the evidence on this issue?

In the Gathas, there are many bits and pieces of evidence that describe Zarathushtra's understanding of the nature of Wisdom's rule as one that affects us, as a present reality. We are told that:

Wisdom's rule is joyful and in accord with the true (correct) order of existence, "[Do Thou grant the most happy alliance of truth ... that alliance which exists under Thy good rule ...](#)" Y49:8,<sup>30</sup> Insler 1975.

Wisdom's rule is wise, "[... the Lord, Wise in His rule...](#)" Y45:9; and Y51:6, Insler 1975.

Wisdom's rule protects, it is caring and compassionate, "[Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall mercy \[\*mərəždikā\* 'compassion'\] take place? ... Where, Wise One, under Thy rule?](#)" Y51:4,<sup>31</sup> Insler 1975.

Wisdom's rule is not coercive ~ Wisdom gives us the freedom to choose, "[...Him who left to our will \(to choose between\) the \[\*spāncā\* 'beneficial'\] and the \[\*aspāncā\* 'non-beneficial'\] ...](#)" Y45:9, Insler 1975.

But Wisdom's rule is supportive, "[Lord of broad vision, disclose to me for support the safeguards of your rule, those which are the reward for good thinking...](#)" Y33:13,<sup>32</sup> Insler 1975.

Wisdom's rule is 'unharmable', "[...thee, o truth, and good thinking and the Wise Lord and \(those others\)<sup>33</sup> for whom \[\*ārmaiti-\*\] increases their unharmable<sup>34</sup> rule ...](#)" Y28:3, Insler 1975.

The social unit that is affected by Wisdom's good rule is existence itself "[But to this world<sup>35</sup> He came with the rule of good thinking and of truth...](#)" Y30:7, Insler 1975. And through His beneficial way of being (His *spānta- mainyu-*), His rule governs existence in a way that accords with the true (correct) order of things existence, *aša-* (which is a beneficial order), "[...Thy rule that is in accord with truth \[\*aša-\*\]...](#)" Y43:14,<sup>36</sup> Insler 1975.

Now this may seem odd indeed, when one considers all the suffering, grief, and pain in the world. But (in Zarathushtra's thought) it is nevertheless so. Existence has been ordered in a way that is good, in a way that is beneficial, in a way that ultimately will heal itself "[... By your rule, Lord, Thou shalt truly heal this world in accord with our wish](#)" Y34:15, Insler 1975 ~ an idea that is echoed in the *frašō.kərəiti-* of the later Avestan texts. This is so, despite (actually because of) the natural calamities which cause devastation and suffering. And this is so, even though (actually because) we have the freedom to choose, and our wrong choices inflict grief and harm on others. It is one of the profound paradoxes of Zarathushtra's thought, that the more free we are to choose, the more certain it is that good will ultimately prevail, and that evil will be defeated. The adversities and calamities we experience are a part of the soul-refining process. They are necessary experiences for an evolution from a mixed (good/bad) way of being, to one that is wholly good. The reasoning and evidence on which these conclusions are based form one of his most interesting puzzles which is discussed in 2 other chapters.<sup>37</sup>

This Divine rule, this governing of existence in a good way, is not a rule that micromanages existence. Every time we sneeze, that specific act is not something that has been ordained by the Divine. Rather, this rule, this ordering of existence, is a system that has been put into place. Just as the cogs and wheels of an old-

fashioned clock affect each other to accomplish the objective of telling time, so too each part of this system (that is Wisdom's societal good rule) affects other parts and, through all its multiple and varied happenings (which includes the 'bad' things that happen and also the unpredictable), accomplishes the desired end.

On the other hand, this rule is not a hands-off rule either. It distresses me when I hear people say that in Zarathushtra's thought we don't ask the Divine for help ~ as though the Divine were less generous than man. When help is asked for, it is always there. Zarathushtra, who suffered great persecution during his lifetime, nevertheless says "...For I know that words deriving from good purpose and from love are not to be left wanting by you." Y28:10, Insler 1975. And indeed, the Gathas are full of requests for help, "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. ...come to me ... give support to me..." Y49:1, Insler 1975.<sup>38</sup>

Mutual, loving help, between man and the Divine, and between man and man (and all the living),<sup>39</sup> is also a component of this rule ~ this governing of existence in accord with beneficial thoughts words and actions which embody the true (correct) order of existence (*spənta- ārmaiti*-). In this sense, all the living do indeed help to bring about the rule of the Divine.

You well may question: If Wisdom's good rule is the system through which He governs existence, how is it different from *aša*- which is the true (correct) good order of existence? Well (as I see it) the true (correct) order of existence is a concept, an envisionment. Good rule is the governance which implements of that concept, that envisionment (in our selves and in our social units). That is why good rule is described (in Y51:4 quoted above) as the rule of the true (correct) order of existence (*aša*-), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti*-), its most good comprehension (*vahišta- manah*-).

*The related concepts of strength, power, might, force,<sup>40</sup> in Zarathushtra's thought.*

In conventional thought, the words strength, power, might, force, are associated with physical force, domination, control over others, sometimes even with coercion, or at least with the ability to coerce. Zarathushtra uses these words in a very different way ~ a way that was as unconventional in his day as it is in ours. Just as good rule is the rule of the true good order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment in thought, word action, and is the process of acquiring complete possession, or mastery, of the attributes that comprise divinity (the amesha spenta) ~ and being ruled by them, so too is Zarathushtra's notion of strength, power, might, and force based on the amesha spenta. The evidence is abundant.

In Y28:7, 'power' is given or generated by thoughts, words, and actions which embody truth (*ārmaiti*-), "...Give thou o [*ārmaiti*-], power<sup>41</sup> to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y 28:7, Insler 1975.

Truth is described as giving power, might "... powerful might<sup>42</sup> through truth..." Y33:12, Insler 1975.

Truth and good thinking have power "... Let me see the power of good thinking allied with truth!" Y46:2; "... the wondrous powers of good thinking allied with truth." Y43:2, Insler 1975.<sup>43</sup>

In Y50:4 'power' is obtained through worshipping with truth, the best thinking, and their rule, "...I shall always worship ... you,<sup>44</sup> Wise Lord, with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule [x *šaθra*-] through which one shall stand on the path of (good) power<sup>45</sup> ..." Y50:4, Insler 1975.

In Y45:10, completeness (*haurvatāt*-) and non-deathness (*amərətāt*-) are described as powers "...completeness [*haurvatāt*-] and [*amərətāt*- 'non-deathness']... these two enduring powers<sup>46</sup> ..." Y45:10, Insler 1975.



In Y45:7, the soul of a truthful person (*aṣavan-*), is described as powerful, "...That the soul of a truthful person be powerful<sup>47</sup> in [*aməratāt-* 'non-deathness']..." Y45:7, Insler 1975. The state of being that is non-deathness (*aməratāt-*) is reached when the soul personifies the attributes of the Divine (the amesha spenta) completely (which is the concept of *haurvatāt-*), and therefore the reason for mortality (the arena for the perfecting process) ceases to exist.<sup>48</sup>

And in Y51:18 Zarathushtra explains the basis of Wisdom's power as serving, "Glorious Jamaspa Haugva (has displayed) this understanding of His power:<sup>49</sup> 'One chooses that rule [*x šaθra-*] of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve ...'." Y51:18, Insler 1975. A 'God' who serves? Indeed. In Zarathushtra's thought, Wisdom's rule is one that benefits (*serves*) the ruled. How would one so 'serve', if not with thoughts, words and actions which embody the true (correct) good order of existence – which is the concept of *ārmaiti-*? ~ which explains why power is the gift of *ārmaiti-* ("...Give thou, o [*ārmaiti-*], power to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y28:7). And notice, in Y51:18 (above) it is our choice of a rule that serves (all the living) which reflects the power of the Divine ~ a 'God' whose power is based on service ~ a power that benefits.

In Y43:4, Zarathushtra speaks of "... the force [*hazə*] of good thinking..." Y43:4, Insler 1975; "force" here is used in the sense of *Star Wars*, *May the force be with you*. So also in this next quotation.

In Y33:12, we are told that embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) gives force, truth gives powerful might, and good thinking gives protection: "...Wise One, receive force through [*ārmaiti-*], ... powerful might through truth, protection through ... good thinking." Y32:12, Insler 1975.<sup>50</sup> The protection given by good thinking is of course protection from the enemy, which is untruth ~ ignorance, wrong thinking, all that is false ~ the opposite of the comprehension of truth. The true (correct) order of existence being most good (*aṣa-vahišta-*), its comprehension would of necessity have to be thinking that is 'good' (*vohu-*), most good (*vahišta-*).

In Y28:9 Zarathushtra describes Wisdom, truth and good thinking as the strongest, and as mighty ones to whom power and rule belong: "... 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 šaθra-*]." Y28:9, Insler 1975.<sup>51</sup>

The rule of the Wisdom (among other things),<sup>52</sup> and *ārmaiti-*, is called "... their rule of strength..." Y31:4, Insler 1975.

### *Terrorizing the 'enemy':*

The Gathas show us that in Zarathushtra's society, people were **terrorized** by the cruelty, violence, destruction and death visited on them by those in power (as Y29:1 and other verses so graphically illustrate).

In Y34:11 Zarathushtra engages in a play on words (as he so often does) in the way he uses **terrorize**. He speaks of **terrorizing** the enemy. In the Gathas, the 'enemy' is untruth, all that is wrong, false ~ the cruelty, violence, destruction which were **terrorizing** people. And how is this 'enemy' **terrorized**? Simple (but profound). The 'enemy' **terrorized** by the rule (governance *x šaθra-*) of the true (correct) good order of existence (*aṣa-*), and its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), which rule consists of thoughts, words and actions which embody truth (*ārmaiti-*). These powers **terrorize** the 'enemy' by eliminating it, which occurs when the true (correct) order of existence and its components (amesha spenta) are attained completely (*haurvatāt-*).

"Yes, both completeness and immortality [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] are for Thy sustenance. Together with the rule of good thinking allied with truth, ... [*ārmaiti-*] has increased these two enduring powers ... Because of these things, Wise One, Thou dost terrorize<sup>53</sup> the enemy." Y34:11, Insler 1975.

To summarize: we see from these verses, that to Zarathushtra, power, might, strength, force, come ~ not from coercion, domination or control over others, nor from terrorizing people through cruelty, violence, death, destruction and fear. Power, might, strength, forcefulness, come from the characteristics of the divine ~ the true (correct) good order of existence and its components comprising the wholly beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*), which is Wisdom personified. In Zarathushtra's thought, in the long run, 'good' is indeed more powerful ~ a power that enables the inevitable defeat of evil (because of the freedom to choose).<sup>54</sup>

*In conclusion:*

To summarize the ways in which Zarathushtra uses good rule (*vohu- x šaθra-*), the desirable rule, the rule to be chosen (*x šaθra- vairya-*):

Good rule is the rule of the true (correct), good, order of existence (*aša-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*) (Y51:4).

It is a concept. And it is a personified quality / activity of both the Lord (who is) Wisdom (completely, perfectly), and mortals (imperfectly, incompletely).

It functions at both an individual and a societal level. Good rule means obtaining (incrementally, and ultimately completely) possession of, mastery over, the attributes of the divine (*amesha spenta*) in our selves, and in our many social units, (and paradoxically, being possessed, ruled, by these attributes). Existence is perfected, healed (from untruth) when it achieves completely the true (correct) good order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule ~ powers that make a being divine. That ultimate, perfected, future existence is a part of Zarathushtra's thought in the Gathas, but his primary focus is on this (mortal) life, and how we should live it.

In mortal existence, good rule, power, is a public trust to be used, not for self aggrandizement or domination, but to benefit, watch over, care for, the many units of existence ~ one's self, other individuals, the family, the community, the nation, other life forms,<sup>55</sup> existence as a whole ~ helping to bring each aspect of existence into accord with the true (correct) good order – a beneficial, generous, loving, good thinking order of existence. As Zarathushtra says:

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

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<sup>1</sup> In the Gathas: 'rule' can be either 'good' or 'bad', but for the purposes of this footnote let us set aside the kinds of rule that are 'bad', and consider only the kinds of rule that are not bad.

The term 'good rule' does not appear as a fixed term every time Zarathushtra speaks of a 'rule' that is good. The 'goodness' of the rule is often shown by the context. However, I use the term 'good rule' for the following reasons. In the Gathas, the only adjective (or prefix) used with rule is 'good', with one exception, in which 'rule' is called 'unharmable'. In addition, 'rule' is frequently called the rule of truth and good thinking (as detailed in this chapter), and we know that 'truth' (*aša-*) and its comprehension, good thinking are intrinsically good/most good, beneficial

(see in *Part One: Truth, Asha; and Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*). Here are all the instances of the adj. (or prefix *hu*) 'good' appearing with 'rule' (in the Gathas).

"Let those of good rule [*hux šaθrā*] rule over us ..." Y48:5, Insler 1975;

"What is the power of Thy good rule [*vanhāuš ... x šaθrahyā*], Wise One?..." Y48:8, Insler 1975; the words *vanhāuš ... x šaθrahyā* are each gen. sg. ntr. of the stems *vohu-* 'good' and *x šaθra-* 'rule';

"...under Thy good rule [*vanhāu ... x šaθrōi*]..." Y49:8, Insler 1975, the words *vanhāu ... x šaθrōi* are each loc. sg. ntr. of the stems *vohu-* 'good' and *x šaθra-* 'rule';

"That good rule must be chosen [*vohū x šaθrām vairīm*] ..." Y51:1, Insler 1975. I think the later practice of calling rule 'the rule to be chosen, the desirable rule' (*x šaθra- vairya-*) came from this first verse in the Vohu Xshathra Gatha, Y51:1; echoed in "...One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve ..." Y51:18, Insler 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Insler 1975, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> See also the following verses in which *x šaθra-* is an attribute / activity of Wisdom, Insler 1975 translation:

"... Thy rule..." Y32:6; Y34:3; Y34:10; Y51:4; Y53:9; "... Thy good rule..." Y48:8;

"...His (good) rule." Y33:14; Y45:7;

"... His rulership ..." Y32:2;

"Lord of broad vision, disclose to me for support, the safeguards of your rule..." Y33:13.

"... Him who rules at His wish [*vasasə.x šaθrahyā*]..." Y43:8; "May the Wise Lord, who rules at will [*vasə x šayqs*],..." Y43:1.

"... let the Ruler [*x šayqs*], the Wise Lord, grant power to him, in order for him to attain the stride of truth." Y51:17, Insler 1975; recalling the idea that 'power' is obtained through truth embodied in thought, word and action, *ārmaiti-* "...give thou, o [*ārmaiti-*] power to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y28:7, Insler 1975. The word *x šayqs* is nom. sg. masc. of a present participle from the verb 'to rule'. I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for this information. So, more literally, 'let the ruling Lord Wisdom...!'

<sup>4</sup> The full verse reads as follows, "Glorious Jamaspa Haugva (has displayed) this understanding of His power: *One chooses that rule of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve (Him). Wise Lord, grant to me Thy support.*" Y51:18, Insler 1975. As you can see, after the words "in order to serve" Insler has inserted the word "(Him)" indicating Insler's interpretation of Zarathushtra's intent. But Zarathushtra himself does not so limit whom we should *serve* by choosing the rule of good thinking and truth. Throughout the Gathas, we see the idea that the rule of truth and good thinking is needed to benefit all existence, see for example, *Part Two: The Solution of Yasna 29*. Therefore I think Zarathushtra intent in this verse (Y51:18) is that we should choose the rule of good thinking and truth to *serve* all of existence (including the Divine).

<sup>5</sup> See also the following verses in which *x šaθra-* is used as an activity of man, Insler 1975 translation:

"... the blessed one who shall be eager to prosper the rule [*x šaθrām*] of the house or of the district or of the land with truth ..." Y31:16;

"Let those of good rule [*hux šaθrā*], rule [*x səntqm*] over us..." Y48:5;

"That good rule must be chosen [*vohū x šaθrām vairīm*]..." Y51:1;

"... Through his rulership [*x šaθrā*] (following) along the paths of good thinking, Kavi Vishtaspa reached this understanding of our task ..." Y51:16;

<sup>6</sup> In another verse, Y51:1, good rule could be either a concept or possibly an (allegorical) entity "That good rule must be chosen which best brings good fortune to the man serving it with milk..." Y51:1, Insler 1975; 'milk' here (*īžā-*) was a ritual offering, and in the Gathas 'milk' is one of the material metaphors for truth and good thinking (see *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Cow and its Network*), which is consistent with the fact that in the Gathas, we worship the Divine with truth and good thinking (see *Part One: Worship and Prayer*, and *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*), and is also consistent with the fact that good rule is so often called the rule of truth and good thinking.

<sup>7</sup> Here in Y51:4, Zarathushtra uses *vahišta- manah-* ~ the superlative degree of good thinking ~ a state of enlightenment, as a component of Wisdom's rule. Yet it is interesting that he uses the same term ~ *vahišta- manah-* ~ in describing the ultimate (perfected) state of being of a truthful person, "... and how, at the end, ... the best thinking [*vahišta- manah-* '(the) most-good thinking'] for the truthful person." Y30:4, Insler 1975.

<sup>8</sup> In Y51:4, Insler translates *mərəždikā* as 'mercy'. But in that verse Humbach 1991, and Humbach/Faiss 2010 translate it as 'compassion' (yet in Y33:11, they translate *mərəždātā* as 'have mercy', although 'give compassion' is a better fit in that verse in my view). Taraporewala comments that although his mentor, Bartholomae, translates the word as 'pardon', Barth. also gives the rendering 'compassion', 'grace', or 'kindness', which Taraporewala thinks is contextually more appropriate than 'pardon'. (p. 775). I agree.

The word 'grace' as an English equivalent would mean a giving of goodness, kindness, compassion, that does not have to be earned ~ which is consistent with other aspects of Zarathushtra's thought where Wisdom's teachings (the path of truth, the path of the qualities of the Divine) are gifted ~ they do not have to be paid for in a tit for tat fashion.

But the notion of 'pardon' or 'mercy' as in a reprieve from damnation has no relevance to Zarathushtra's thought in which there is no concept of damnation (other than interpretations personal to a translator). True, there is the law of consequences ~ that we reap what we sow ~ but that is not for punishment. It is for enlightenment ~ necessary for the perfecting process. Therefore a person would be harmed by a reprieve (or pardon, or mercy) from the adverse consequences of his conduct. See *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*, and *Part One: A Friendly Universe*. But (whether given by the Divine or by humans) 'mercy' in the sense of not holding a grudge, not being vengeful, not hating, is indeed relevant to Zarathushtra's thought. The English equivalents 'compassion, grace, kindness' fit well in this verse (Y51:4) because the nature of 'good rule' is a rule that benefits; that in all the difficulties of existence ~ both earned and unearned ~ mutual, loving help is always at hand from the Divine, from man, from all the living ~ as part of the way we govern ourselves and our social units. See *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

<sup>9</sup> See also, in Insler 1975:

"..... the rule of good thinking and of truth....." Y30:7 and Y33:10;  
 "..... the rule of good thinking allied with truth....." Y34:11; and Y51:18  
 "...Where are truth and good thinking, and where their rule..." Y29:11;  
 "... with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule..." Y50:4

<sup>10</sup> See also Insler 1975: "... the rule of good thinking, ..." Y43:6; Y44:6; Y46:10; and Y51:21.

<sup>11</sup> "... Grant thou, (*ārmaiti-*) your rule of good thinking ..." Y51:2, Insler 1975. In this last sentence of Y51:2, the word *ārmaiti-* does not appear in the GAv. text. Insler has inserted *ārmaiti-* in parentheses, to indicate his understanding that the pronoun 'thou' refers to *ārmaiti-*. I agree because *ārmaiti-* is the last mentioned entity before the pronoun 'thou'.

<sup>12</sup> "...the Wise One [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom'] is the Father of truth [*aša-*]." Y47:2;  
 "...I know the Wise One [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom'] ... to be the Father of effective good thinking [*vohu- manah-*]. And His daughter is [*ārmaiti-*] of good actions..." Y45:4, Insler 1975.

<sup>13</sup> See *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

<sup>14</sup> All four divine qualities (amesha spenta) ~ truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule, are required to heal existence (from untruth).

"... By your rule, Lord, Thou shalt truly heal this world in accord with our wish" Y34:15, Insler 1975. Wisdom's rule is the rule of truth (*aša-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its most good comprehension (*vahišta- manah-*) (Y51:4).

"... Through good thinking the Creator of existence shall promote the true realization [*haiθyāvarəštqm*] of what is most healing according to our wish." Y50:11, Insler 1975 translation. Here good thinking, (the comprehension of truth) heals existence. And it is its true realization [*haiθyāvarəštqm* as in making it real] that heals existence. And how do we make the comprehension of truth real? We can only do so with words and actions of truth (*ārmaiti-*).

Parenthetically, the words of the last line of Y50:11 are incompletely quoted in (what we were taught to call) the Ahura Mazda Khodae prayer which quotes the last line of Y50:11: *haiθyāvarəštqm hyaṭ vasnā fəraṣō.təməm* "the true realization of what is most healing according to (our) wish." But this quotation misses the most important part of this phrase ~ two words which appear at the end of the line that is immediately before this last line ~ *vohū manajhā* "through good thinking".

line c. "... ... *vohū manajhā*

line d. *haiθyāvarəštqm hyaṭ vasnā fəraṣō.təməm.*"

It is through good thinking that we bring about the true realization of what is most healing according to our wish. In my view, this is one of many pieces of evidence that demonstrates that during Sasanian times (when the Khordēh Avesta prayers were composed) our priests no longer understood Avestan. Their understanding of Gatha verses was more in the nature of what had traditionally been passed down through the centuries ~ what was thought to be its meaning ~ traditional knowledge which frequently was an imperfect understanding (as the Pahlavi 'translations/commentaries' of Gatha verses so frequently demonstrate).

This loss of knowledge is not surprising when you consider that by the time the Sasanian Empire came into being (around 200 CE), the religion had suffered the burning of texts and the killing of the learned which followed Alexander's invasion of Iran in about 331 BCE (as is so eloquently recalled in certain Pahlavi texts), so by the time the Sasanian High Priest Tansar (not one of my favorite characters) finished the task of collecting all the scattered texts that could be found, as well as what had been retained in memory, the Gathas were almost 2,000 years in the past (based on Skjaervo's 1,700 estimated date for the Gathas).

What is surprising (and worthy of the highest praise) is that the priests were so devoted that they continued to include the full Gathas in the ritual chants of worship, down through 2000 + years, as well as inserting quotations from the Gathas (and other Av. texts) in many of the Khordae Avesta prayers (which, except for such quotations, are in Pazand). Indeed, their continued chanting of the full Gathas in the rituals of worship, is how Zarathushtra's own words survived through more than 1,000 years from the Arab invasion of Iran (in the mid 7th century CE) until today.

<sup>15</sup> See *Part One: Truth, Asha*.

<sup>16</sup> See *Part Two: Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

<sup>17</sup> See *Part Three: Chinvat, The Bridge of Discerning*.

<sup>18</sup> Here are some examples which suggest, in different ways, an individual governance and transformation through good rule. We can understand the nature of the resulting 'reward' more clearly, when we see that in Zarathushtra's

thought, the qualities of the divine (of which good rule is one) are both the path and the reward for taking that path, (see *Part Two: A Question of Reward & the Path*).

"... the beneficent man ... He serves truth, during his rule, with good word and good action. Such a person shall be Thy most welcome guest, Wise Lord." Y31:22, Insler 1975. In the Gathas, 'heaven' is a state of being in which the qualities of the divine have been attained completely (see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*).

"... I shall attain for us here the long-lived rule of good thinking and the paths, straight in accord with truth, wherein the Wise Lord dwells." Y33:5, Insler 1975.

"Yes, praising, I shall always worship ... you, Wise Lord, with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule through which one shall stand on the path of (good) power..." Y50:4, Insler 1975; 'power' is associated with the attributes that make a being divine (amesha spenta).

In Y32:15 - 16, Zarathushtra equates those who rule at will over life with the House of Good Thinking, which is one of Zarathushtra's terms for paradise (an enlightened state of being ~ which houses w/Wisdom).

"...[vs. 15] those who rule over life at will in the House of Good Thinking.

[vs. 16] This is equal to the best [vahišta- most-good] indeed ..." 32:15 - 16, Insler 1975. The most-good existence (ahu- vahišta-) is another name for paradise in the Gathas and later Avestan texts (see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell*; and *Part Three: Heaven in Other Avestan Texts*). And see *Part Two: The Puzzle Of The Most-Good Vahishta*, for the simple, yet multi-dimensional, ways in which Zarathushtra uses vahišta- words in the Gathas.

And then there is Y34:11 "Yes, both completeness and immortality are for Thy sustenance. Together with the rule of good thinking allied with truth, ... [ārmaiti-] has increased these two enduring powers (for Thee). ..." Y34:11, Insler 1975. Completeness is the complete attainment of the true (correct) good order of existence and its component parts (amesha spenta) (see *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*). In this verse (Y34.11) it is the rule of good thinking, truth and embodied truth which increase completeness, which (logically) could only occur when these qualities in mortals have been attained completely.

Insler has added in round parentheses the words "(for Thee)" which are not in the GAv. text, indicating his interpretation that completeness and non-deathness are increased for the Divine, which is entirely consistent with both the context of this verse and the larger context of the Gathas. However, consider the first sentence "Yes, both completeness and immortality are for Thy sustenance..." Whose completeness and non-deathness are food (sustenance) for the Divine? It can only be the completeness of man (and perhaps that of all the living), which is consistent with the rest of Zarathushtra's thought in which man is capable of attaining completeness and non-deathness, and in so doing gives completeness and non-deathness to the Divine (see *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*) an idea that makes no sense to a mind-set that sees the Divine as a separate being from the rest of existence ~ perfect from the beginning ~ but is entirely consistent with Zarathushtra's notion of the identity of the Divine in which the Divine is a union of each perfected fragment of existence as a whole. See *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*.

<sup>19</sup> See *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*, and *Part Two: Did Wisdom Choose Too?* There are many puzzles in *Part Two* that shed light on this point, including *A Question of Immanence*; *The Puzzle of Creation*; and culminating in the quintessential Zarathushtrian puzzle, *The Puzzle of the Amesha Spenta*.

<sup>20</sup> For the evidence on which this conclusion is based, see *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

<sup>21</sup> The entire verse reads as follows. "By whichever action, by whichever word, word, by whichever worship, Wise One, Thou didst receive for Thyself immortality [amərətāt- 'non-deathness'], truth [aša-] and mastery [xšaθra-] over completeness [haurvatāt-], let these very things be given by us to Thee, Lord, in the very greatest number." Y34:1, Insler 1975. This is a lovely, multi-dimensional verse.



As you can see, in this verse Wisdom receives for Himself, non-deathness [*amərətāt-*], the true (correct) good order of existence [*aša-*], and rule over completeness [*haurvatāt-*] through certain actions, words, and worship. What does Zarathushtra mean by this? Well, it is the beneficial words and actions which embody the true (correct) order of existence (*spənta- ārmaiti-*) that bring about such an existence, ("...Through its actions, [*ārmaiti-*] gives substance to the truth [*aša-*]..." Y44:6; "Yes, both completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-*] are for Thy sustenance ... [*ārmaiti-*] has increased these two enduring powers ..." Y34:11, Insler 1975). And Zarathushtra's notion of 'worship' is to worship the Divine with Its own divine qualities ~ the true (correct) order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule (see *Part One: Worship & Prayer*, and *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*).

So in essence, in the foregoing verse (Y34:1) Zarathushtra says that it is through thoughts, words and actions ~ worship which embodies the qualities of the divine (amesha spenta) ~ that Wisdom attained rule over non-deathness, the true (correct) order of existence, completeness ~ indicating that the Divine was/is part of the process of individual transformation. And Zarathushtra concludes the verse by saying that these are the very words, actions and worship that we should in offer the Divine. If the Divine and man (and perhaps all the living) are part of the same being, then our self realization completes the Divine (see *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat; A Question of Immanence*; and *Did Wisdom Choose Too?*).

<sup>22</sup> See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat Ameretat*; and *Part Two: Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

<sup>23</sup> See also "..... I shall try to glorify Him for us with prayers of [*ārmaiti-*], ..... Whatever one has promised to Him with truth and with good thinking is to be completeness and immortality for Him under His rule [*x šaθrōi* 'in His rule'], is to be these two enduring powers for Him in His house." Y45:10. The word "rule [*x šaθrōi*]" is in the locative case, which Insler has translated as 'under', but the loc. can also be translated as 'in His rule' ~ describing the Wise Lord's state of being, and would parallel the subsequent "in His house". House in the Gathas is often used as a metaphor for a state of being that 'houses' the qualities that make a being divine (see in *Part Two: The Houses of Heaven & Hell*; and *A Question Of Reward & The Path*). Here again, we have the idea of man's *ārmaiti-*, which is reflected in parallel with his truth and good thinking, giving completeness and non-deathness to Wisdom, which again throws light on Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine. See in *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*, and *Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat Ameretat*.

See also: "... (And) grow Thyself in breath and body through the rule of good thinking and of truth." Y33:10. How would Wisdom 'grow in breath and body' through the rule of truth and good thinking? The answer is touched on in *Part One: Completeness & Non-Deathness, Haurvatat Ameretat*, which discusses the two ways in which Zarathushtra uses completeness ~ at an individual level, and at a collective level.

<sup>24</sup> Regarding this quotation, "Let those of good rule, rule over us ~ not those of evil rule ~ with actions stemming from good understanding ... with [*ārmaiti-*]..." Y48:5,

Insler 1975 has 'and' before his translation of *ārmaiti-*. But there is no 'and' -*cā* in the GAv. text of Y48:5b which reads *vanhuyā cištōiš šyaoθanāiš ārmaitī*. So more literally 'with actions of good understanding ~ with embodied truth [*ārmaiti-*]'. The two phrases are parallels ~ they are two ways of saying the same thing.

*šyaoθanāiš* is instr. pl 'with actions';

*vanhuyā cištōiš* are both gen. sg. 'of good understanding';

*ārmaitī* ~ Geldner 1P p. 169 shows only a few mss. sources for this word; his choice is *ārmaitē* voc. sg. 'o *ārmaiti-*' supported by mss. "K5.4, J2.3, Mf1.2, and H1"; and he shows ms. Jp1 has *ārmaitī* instr. sg. 'with *ārmaiti-*'; In this context, I agree with Insler 1975 whose choice is the instr. sg., ('with [*ārmaiti-*]'), Insler's ft. 4 citing the mss sources "Jp1 (J2)", p. 90. Geldner notes that in J2 a scribe changed the -*ī* inflection to *ē*.

<sup>25</sup> See also: "When, Wise One, shall [*ārmaiti-*] come, along with truth, bringing peace and pasturage throughout the dominion [*x šaθra-*]?" Y48:11.

<sup>26</sup> *Vendidad*, Ch. 2, § 4, SBE 4, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Many later texts echo the Gathas' notion of good rule. For example, in two later YAv. Yasnas, a good ruler is described as one who is truth-possessing [*aṣṣavanəm*] and most-good [*vahištō*], and who does not exercise wanton or despotic power, or capricious tyranny. In the following quotations, the Avestan words in square brackets are from Geldner 1P pp. 79, 81. The following translations are by Mills, who translates *aṣṣa-* and *aṣṣavan-* words as 'holy'; but the noun *aṣṣa-* 'truth' generates the adj. *aṣṣavan-* 'truth-possessing, or truthful' (see *Part Three: Ashavan & Dregvant*),

"... As holy [*aṣṣavanəm* 'truth-possessing'] and the best [*vahištō* 'most-good'], a ruler who exercises no wanton or despotic power." Yy19:20, SBE 31, p. 266;

"...The holy [*aṣṣavanəm* 'truth-possessing'] and the best [*vahištəmcā* 'and-(the)-most-good'], the one who rules with no capricious tyranny." Yy20:4, SBE 31, p. 268.

The YAv. Yy22:4 also describes an *aṣṣavan-* ('truth-possessing') ruler as "...one who rules with no capricious tyranny." Mills translation, SBE 31, p. 268.

<sup>28</sup> There are many instances in which Zarathushtra (perhaps deliberately) uses 'rule' in a way that could mean rule over a state of being, or a society, or both ~ a playful ambiguity, because a moment's reflection makes it clear that neither one can exist without the other. Here are a few examples of such ambiguity:

"... the desirable condition which is said to exist under thy rule." Y43:13. Does 'rule' here apply to a state of being? society? both?

"... fame is to serve Thee and the truth, Wise One, under Thy rule." Y32:6. Does 'rule' here apply to a state of being? society? both?

" Lord of broad vision, disclose to me for support the safeguards of your rule, those which are the reward for good thinking...." Y33:13. Does 'rule' here apply to a state of being? society? both?

"... May the Lord, Wise in His rule, place us in effectiveness, in order to prosper our cattle and our men in consequence of the good relationship of good thinking with truth." Y45:9. Does 'rule' here apply to a state of being? society? both?

"... all of us creatures under Thy rule whom one has nourished with good thinking..." Y34:3. Does 'rule' here apply to a state of being? society? both?

<sup>29</sup> Which is another way of saying that good rule is the rule of truth, its comprehension (good thinking) and its embodiment (*ārmaiti*-).

<sup>30</sup> "...Such is Thy rule, Wise One, through which Thou shalt grant what is very good [*vahyah-*] to Thy needy dependent who lives honestly." Y53:9, Insler 1975; *vahyah-* literally 'more-good', is the comparative degree of *vohu-* 'good'.

<sup>31</sup> See also: "... And do Thou give, Wise Ruler, that promise through which we may hear of your solicitude (for us)." Y28:7, Insler 1975.

<sup>32</sup> See also: "Have ye the mastery, [*xšaθra-*] have ye the power, Wise One, ... to protect your needy dependent ~ as I indeed am ~ with truth and with good thinking?..." Y34:5; "Yes, Wise One, (grant) to me Thy proper support, which an able man, possessing such, should give to his friend and which has been obtained through Thy rule [*xšaθrā*] that is in accord with truth..." Y43:14, Insler 1975.

<sup>33</sup> See in *Part Two: The Other Lords and the Equations of Y31:4*, and *The Puzzle of the Sincere Ones*.

<sup>34</sup> See *Part One: Truth, Asha* for a discussion of this 'unharmable' quality.

<sup>35</sup> The word "world" does not appear in the GAv. text of this verse. But *ahūm marātānō* literally 'existence of mortal-being' (or in more fluent English 'mortal existence') is expressed in the last line of the immediately preceding verse Y30:6, and (in accordance with accepted GAv. usage) the pronoun "this" in the first line of Y30:7 implies and stands for the previously expressed 'mortal existence' as Insler 1975, Humbach 1991, and Humbach/Faiss 2010 agree. For a more detailed discussion of this verse with comparative translations, see *Part Six: Yasna 30:7*.

<sup>36</sup> See also: "... the most happy alliance of truth ... that alliance which exists under Thy good rule [*x šaθrōi*]...." Y49:8, Insler 1975.

The law of consequences is a part of the true (correct) wholly good order of existence (it is given not for punishment but for enlightenment). In light of the fact that good rule is the rule of the true (correct) wholly good order of existence (*aša-*), the law of consequences would have to be a part of (Divine) good rule ("...That the soul of the truthful person be powerful in [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'], that woes beset the deceitful men in an enduring fashion ~ these things, too, did the Wise Lord create by reason of His rule [*x šaθrā*]." Y45:7). There is no 'hell' in the Gathas other than the 'hell' of a bad-thinking, false thinking, ignorant state of being which is still bound by mortality ('the House of Worst Thinking', 'the House of Deceit'), see *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*. We should remember that administering the law of consequences (as part of the true good order of existence) is reserved for the Divine alone (see *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*).

<sup>37</sup> For the evidence on which these conclusions are based, see *Part One: A Friendly Universe*, and *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>38</sup> Other verses in which Zarathushtra asks Wisdom for help, and which describe how Wisdom helps, protects, supports, are detailed in *Part One: Worship & Prayer*.

<sup>39</sup> The evidence which supports the conclusion of mutual, loving help as part of Zarathushtra's thought is scattered throughout the chapters of this web book, but some of it is collected in *Part One: The Nature of the Divine*.

<sup>40</sup> Insler 1975 sometimes uses a few English equivalents interchangeably for GAv. words which denote power, force, strength, might. But even in English, two different words can be used to express the same underlying meaning. In the footnotes that follow, I show the Old Av. words which have been translated by Insler (sometimes interchangeably) as power, force, strength, might.

<sup>41</sup> "...Give thou o [*ārmaiti-*], power [*tšəm*] to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y 28:7, Insler 1975.

Insler 1975 comments that both *tš-* and *tšti-* allow the consistent translation 'power' throughout the Gathas and are characteristically employed beside the allied concept 'mastery, sovereignty', giving examples, and further says that similarly *aēša-* is 'powerful' and *anaēša-* is 'powerless'. pp. 127 - 128. He notes that sometimes the figure *vanhəuš išti- manəjhō* Y32:9, Y46:2 ~ [which means the 'power of good thinking'] exchanges with *hazah-* 'force' *vanhəuš hazō manəjhō* (Y43:4) pp. 127 - 128 ~ which in my view corroborates Insler's understanding of *tš-* and *tšti-* as 'power'. Parenthetically, Insler 1975 sometimes translates *hazah-* words as 'powerful', as in Y33:12 "... powerful might through truth [*aša hazō əmava]*..." Y33:12, Insler 1975. And again, here in the Gathas 'force' is not used in the sense of 'coersion', but rather in the sense of powerful energy (as in Star Wars, *May the Force be with you*).

But not all translators translate *tš-* words as 'power'. In Y28:7 Humbach 1991 translate *tšəm* as 'vigour', believing it to be etymologically the same as a Vedic word which he translates (giving Ved. examples) as 'vigour, invigorant, refreshment'. Vol. 2, p. 25.

But, with respect, I do not think either 'vigor' or 'refreshment' are a good contextual fit in the applicable Gatha verses. In the phrase "...Give thou o [*ārmaiti-*], power [*tšəm*] to Vishtaspa and to me..." Y 28:7, Insler 1975, *tšəm* is used in connection with Vishtaspa, a king who was Zarathushtra's protector and patron. Let us recall that the quality of true

(correct) order of existence is intrinsic 'goodness' in the superlative degree (*aša- vahišta-*), and the material metaphor for the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*) is light, glory, fire. In Y28:7 I think Zarathushtra is expressing the idea that it is thoughts words and actions which embody the true (correct) order of existence (*armaiti-*) which give the king his power [*īšəm*], his authority to rule ~ an idea that is echoed in YAv. texts in which the divine glory (*xʷarənah-*) gives the king his authority to rule so long as he is good, and rules for the benefit of his people (i.e. rules with thoughts words and actions which embody the true (correct) order of existence ~ *armaiti-*, an order of existence that is good. And the divine glory (*xʷarənah-*) deserts those kings who turn to deceit, tyranny, and other qualities that are not in accord with the true (correct good) order of existence. This idea of the basis of the king's authority to rule is expressed in the story of Yima (Jamsheed), and in the many examples in the *Zamyad Yasht*, of 'good' kings who had this divine glory, and bad kings who lost it, or could not seize it.

<sup>42</sup> "... powerful might [*hazō amavaŋt*] through truth..." Y33:12, Insler 1975.

<sup>43</sup> "... Let me see the power [*īšīm*] of good thinking allied with truth!" Y46:2; "... the wondrous powers [*māyā*] of good thinking allied with truth." Y43:2, Insler 1975.

The word *mayā* has not yet been decoded, and the opinions of linguists vary somewhat.

In Y43:2, Insler 1975 translates *aša vāhəuš mayā manəhō* as the "wondrous powers of good thinking allied with truth". Specifically:

*mayā* "wondrous powers" (acc. pl.).

*vāhəuš ... manəhō* 'of good thinking' (gen. sg. of the stems *vohu-* *manah-*);

*aša* '(allied) with truth' (instr. sg. of *aša-*).

He does not comment specifically on the meaning of *mayā*, but says this phrase in Y43:2 parallels *vāhəuš aša īšīm manəhō* "the power of good thinking allied with truth" Y50:9ab, p. 232.

Humbach 1991 translates *vāhəuš mayā manəhō* in Y43:2 as "the blessings [*mayā*] of good thought", and Humbach/Faiss 2010 as "of the miracles [*mayā*] of good thought".

Skjaervo's Old Av. Index translates the stem *māyā-* as 'the creative (magic) of change'.

These different flavors of meaning gives us some idea of what the power that is *māyā-* might have been in Zarathushtra's mind-set (for which we have no equivalent one-word in English).

<sup>44</sup> Here in Y50:5, Insler has translated the word *vā* as 'all of you'. But actually, it is simply 'you', a plural pronoun (acc. 2nd person), and here as in other instances, it applies to the Divine. See *Part Two: The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural*.

<sup>45</sup> "...I shall always worship ... you [pl.], Wise Lord, with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule [*x šaθra-*] through which one shall stand on the path of (good) power [*īšō*]..." Y50:4, Insler 1975. Similarly, in Y46:16, sovereignty (rule) is in the power of good thinking: "Frashaoshtra Haugva, come thou hither ... where [*armaiti-*] is in harmony with truth, where sovereignty [*x šaθra-*] is in the power [*īštā*] of good thinking, where the Wise Lord dwells in maturity." Y46:16, Insler 1975.

<sup>46</sup> "... completeness and immortality ..... these two enduring powers [*təvīšī*] ..." Y45:10, Insler 1975. He comments that *təvīšī-* is 'force, power' and says that it is sometimes used in place of *x šaθra-*, p. 123.

In Y51:7, Insler translates *təvīšī* as "forces": "... grant Thou to me immortality and completeness, those two enduring forces [*təvīšī*] which are to be praised with good thinking." Y51:7. Once again, this is not 'force' in the sense of coercion.

<sup>47</sup> "...That the soul of a truthful person be powerful [*aēšō*] in [*aməratāt-* non-deathness]..." Y45:7, Insler 1975.

<sup>48</sup> See *Part One: Completeness and Non-Deathness, Haurvatat, Ameretat*.

<sup>49</sup> "Glorious Jamaspa Haugva (has displayed) this understanding of His power [*īštōiš*]: 'One chooses that rule [*x šaθra-*] of good thinking allied with truth in order to serve ...'." Y51:18, Insler 1975.

<sup>50</sup> "...Wise One, receive force [*təvīšm*] through [*ārmaiti-*], ... powerful might [*hazō āmavaŋ*] through truth, protection through ... good thinking." Y32:12, Insler 1975.

<sup>51</sup> "... Thee and the truth and that thinking which is best [*vahišta-* most good]... ye are the strongest [*zəvīštyāñhō*], (and) to mighty ones [*savanhqm*] (like you) belong the powers [*īšō*] and the mastery [*x šaθrəmcā*]." Y28:9, Insler 1975.

<sup>52</sup> See *Part Two: The Lords & the Equations of Y34:1*, for a discussion of this most interesting verse.

<sup>53</sup> The Old Av. word which in this verse (Y34:11) Insler 1975 translates as "terrorize" is shown in the mss. as two words *θwōi ahī* (Geldner 1P p. 126, Y34:11 ft. 10). Insler 1975 comments that Lommel has demonstrated that *θwōi ahī* belongs with *upā.θwayeiti* 'terrorize' and therefore should be restored as *\*θwōyahī*, giving grammatical reasons and citing parallel examples, p. 226. Humbach 1991 also thinks that *θwōi ahī* is an incorrect form and restores it to *\*θwayehī* or *\*θwyehī*, which he translates as "tremble", Vol. 2, p. 112. Humbach/Faiss 2010 show the two words as they appear in the mss. without emending them, and without comment, and with no change to the Humbach 1991 translation.

<sup>54</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: A Question Of Power*, and the chapters cited in its footnotes.

<sup>55</sup> That Zarathushtra's notion of 'good rule' extends to more than the care of humans ~ that it extends to other life forms as well ~ is graphically illustrated in the metaphor which he chooses to stand for the divine in mortal existence ~ the allegorical 'cow', its lament against cruelty and violence in Y29:1, and his frequent use of the metaphor of being a 'pastor' (nurturing, caring) for the 'cow'. And Zarathushtra uses ~ 'pastor' for both mortals and the Divine, the Lord (who is) Wisdom.