

## Completeness & Non-Deathness Haurvatat, Ameretat

Linguists and other scholars agree that *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are qualities of the Divine. But these two words have been translated in different ways. These words are a part of Zarathushtra's core teachings. If we just pick the translation that appeals to us how will we know what Zarathushtra had in mind? We need to see how he uses these two words, and how their meanings fit into his good envisionment. I will give you my conclusions and show you the evidence on which they are based, so you can decide for yourself what Zarathushtra had in mind.

*haurvatāt-*. Linguists generally agree that *haurva-* literally means 'whole, complete', and *-tāt* is a suffix that means a condition ('-ness'). So literally *haurvatāt-* means 'completeness, wholeness'. But it has also been translated as 'health',<sup>1</sup> 'welfare',<sup>2</sup> 'integrity',<sup>3</sup> 'perfection',<sup>4</sup> 'self-realization',<sup>5</sup> 'saving grace and salvation'.<sup>6</sup> Some of these translations are simply flavors of the same underlying meaning. Others are not.

Based on the ways in which Zarathushtra uses *haurvatāt-* it means completeness, in the sense of the complete attainment of the qualities that make a being divine, which is (spiritual) perfection (sometimes called 'self-realization' except that 'self' is no longer relevant (in Zarathushtra's view); I sometimes use 'self-realization' here for want of a better English word, but when you see that word here, I ask that you remember that 'self' is no longer applicable).

And in the Gathas 'salvation' (for *haurvatāt-*) is used in the same way ~ being saved from untruth, attaining completely the qualities that make a being divine (all of which are a way of saying 'self-realization').

But physical 'health' and physical 'welfare or well being' do not fit the ways in which Zarathushtra uses *haurvatāt-* in the Gathas.

*amərətāt-* has been translated by most scholars as 'immortality', and has been interpreted by some scholars to mean 'continuing life'. These translations (with respect) do not fit the ways in which Zarathushtra uses *amərətāt-* in the Gathas.

Looking (briefly) at the linguistics of *amərətāt-*, the negative prefix *a-* means 'not' or 'non'; *mərə(ta-)* is from the Avestan root 'to die', and the suffix *-tāt* means a condition ('-ness'). I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for the more detailed linguistic information footnoted here.<sup>7</sup> And in the Gathas, *amərətāt-* is almost always partnered with *haurvatāt-* 'completeness'. So the meaning of this divine quality *amərətāt-* would have to be something that is associated with 'completeness'.

In my view, the closest English equivalent for *amərətāt-* that fits all of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses this word, and also has a linguistic basis that is reasonably sound, is 'non-deathness' in the sense of a state of being that is not bound by mortality (which is the arena for the perfecting process).

Let us now look at the evidence of how Zarathushtra uses these two words, which tells us the key part they play in his overall good envisionment (*vaṇuhī- daēnā-*). As usual, all quotations from the Gathas here are to the Insler 1975 translation, unless otherwise stated, but I sometimes place English words in square brackets, in black font, within such quotations, to show my translation of a given Avestan word which differs from Insler's translation.

*haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are mentioned fewer times in the extant Gathas than other divine qualities (which for convenience I will collectively call 'amesha spenta') ~ possibly because *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* represent

a spiritually perfected end result which has not yet been attained by mortals, whereas the focus of Zarathushtra's thought is mostly on the realities of the present and how we should live our lives.

*Divine qualities that man can attain.*

Like the other amesha spenta, *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are attributes of Wisdom, "...Thou didst receive for Thyself [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'], truth [*aša-*] and mastery over completeness [*haurvatāt-*], ..." Y34:1).

But unlike other divine qualities, *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are not described as qualities that mortals currently possess. They are divine qualities that mortals are capable of attaining by following Wisdom's teaching, (which is the path of the truth, the path of Wisdom's divine attributes).<sup>8</sup> For example, Zarathushtra speaks of,

"... a prize which is to inspire completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-*] in me, just as Thou hast received these two for Thyself." Y44:18;

"...Those of you who shall give obedience [*səraoša-*] and regard to this (Lord)<sup>9</sup> of mine they shall reach completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-*] ..." Y45:5); *səraoša-* does not mean obedience. It means 'listening to and implementing' the teachings of w/Wisdom, based on reason and free choice.<sup>10</sup>

*As concepts.*

Like the other qualities of the Divine (amesha spenta), *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are treated as concepts, which many of the quotations in this chapter will show. Here is one example: "...Your enduring worshipful offering has been established to be [*amərətāt-*] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*]." Y33:8 (i.e. man's offering of completeness and non-deathness are his own self-realization, a state of being that we, in our present reality, have not yet attained).

*As entities.*

In the Gathas, *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are not specifically treated as entities ~ allegorical or otherwise, although there is a verse that impliedly does so.<sup>11</sup> I do not think this is significant in any meaningful way (although I could be wrong). However, in later texts these two are routinely listed as living beings along with truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule (amesha spenta).

*How they are brought about.*

Let us now look at how *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are increased and brought about, which gives us clues regarding their meanings (in Zarathushtra's mind). For example,

Y47:1 tells us that completeness and non-deathness are brought about by a beneficial way of being (*spənta-mainyu-*), by most good thinking (*vahišta- manah-*) which is the comprehension of truth, and by actions and words befitting truth (*aša-*), which actions and words are the concept of *ārmaiti-*, "Through a [*spənta-mainyu-* 'a beneficial way of being'] and the best thinking [*vahišta- manah-*], through both action and the word befitting truth [*aša-*], they shall grant completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] to Him. The Wise One [*mazdā* 'Wisdom'] in rule [*xšaθra-*] is Lord through [*ārmaiti-*]." Y47:1. This is the only Gatha verse in which all 7 divine qualities appear together.

In Y34:11 four divine attributes (amesha spenta) increase *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-*. "Yes, both completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] are for Thy sustenance. Together with the rule [*xšaθra-*] of good thinking [*vohu- manah-*] allied with truth [*aša-*] ... [*ārmaiti-*] has increased these two

enduring powers ..." Y34:11. (The word 'sustenance' here means that which sustains, nourishes; nourishment helps to sustain a being, makes it grow. So here Zarathushtra also says that [completeness and non-deathness](#) sustain Wisdom, nourish It, make Wisdom grow. Hold that thought).

An additional example that truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule bring about completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) is footnoted here.<sup>12</sup>

So these verses, taken together, tell us that the qualities that make a being divine, increase and bring about completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*). Which of course raises the question: completeness and non-deathness in what sense?

It may well be that in other Indo-European languages (including Vedic and possibly ancient Latin as well) their equivalent of *haurvatāt-* was used sometimes to indicate completeness in the sense of good health and well being ~ disease being then regarded as a defect, as not being physically whole. For example even today in English we use 'wholesome' for something that is healthful, not rotten ('wholesome food', 'wholesome milk').

In times past, 'wholesome' in English was even used as 'healthy' in a non-material (ethical) sense ('wholesome literature', 'wholesome behavior') ~ a use that is now a bit obsolete.

Some linguists therefore prefer the interpretive 'health' or 'well-being' for *haurvatāt-*, and 'continuing life' for *amərətāt-*, based on historical interpretations in other Indo-European cultures. Generally speaking, such interpretations are valuable, and indeed played an indispensable role in decoding the Avestan language. But the meanings of words evolve in different ways, in different times and places, and here, such interpretations do not fit the ways in which Zarathushtra uses these two words, as the following reasons show (there doubtless are more). Nor indeed are such interpretations quite supported by later Avestan texts).<sup>13</sup>

*First:* A moment's reflection makes it clear that when we (incrementally) bring about truth, good thinking, embodied truth, and good rule, these qualities cannot bring about freedom from physical disease (if *haurvatāt-* is translated as 'health, well being'). Nor can these qualities (while we are still imperfect) ensure that we will continue to live, and never die (if *amərətāt-* is translated as 'continuing life'). It could not have escaped Zarathushtra's attention that sickness, disease and death come to all mortals ~ even the most saintly. The Gathas contain no evidence that leading a beneficial, truthful life (following the path of truth) will bring about freedom from illness, disease and death.<sup>14</sup> Nor is there any evidence in the Gathas of the tragic idea promoted by some religious authorities (who profess to speak for 'God', naturally), that physical illness, disease or death are punishments for wrongdoing or (more to the point) for disobeying the religious establishment.

*Second:* Good health / well being, and physical life are things that exist in our present reality as attributes that most mortals currently have, even though we may not have them perfectly, or may lose them, whereas in the Gathas, completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) are spoken of only as something that mortals are capable of attaining in the future<sup>15</sup> ~ not as qualities that we presently possess.

*Third:* *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are present attributes of the Divine. However, good health or physical well-being, and a reprieve from physical death pertain to our physical shells. They have no relevance to the Divine,<sup>16</sup> ~ a being without physical form (one of the ways in which Zarathushtra's envisionment of the Divine differed from that of his culture); a being no longer bound by mortality.<sup>17</sup>

*Fourth:* In the Gathas, we give completeness and non-deathness to Wisdom (as detailed in this chapter). It is clear that man cannot give physical health or a reprieve from physical death to the Divine. Arguments to the contrary (with respect) are not well taken. They are discussed in this footnote.<sup>18</sup>

*Fifth:* Just as Zarathushtra says that we give completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) to Wisdom, so also he asks Wisdom to give completeness and non-deathness to us ("... Grant Thou to me, completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] ..." Y51:7). There is no evidence in the Gathas that Wisdom, on request, grants any mortal exemptions from physical death or illness. True, when we are ill, if we pray to the Divine for help, ~ prayers that will be answered in ways that will benefit us. But that does not necessarily mean that the Divine will take away our illnesses, or keep us from dying. Illness and death are a part of the natural order (*aša-*) ~ an order which helps to bring about the process of spiritual growth.<sup>19</sup>

*Sixth:* The English word 'immortality' means a life force that is not extinguished at death. Man dies. But he is regarded as immortal, because he is thought to have a soul that survives death, regardless of the kind of life he has led. The most evil person in the world is still thought to be immortal, because his soul survives death. So 'immortality' is inherent. It is neither earned, nor given, nor increased. Yet in the Gathas, *amərətāt-* (so also *haurvatāt-*) is earned, it is given, it is increased. So Zarathushtra could not have intended *amərətāt-* to mean 'immortality'.

In short, 'health' or 'well-being' as a translation for *haurvatāt-*, and 'continuing life' or 'immortality' as a translation for *amərətāt-*, are interpretive translations. They are not in accord with the literal, linguistic meanings of these words, nor with the ways in which Zarathushtra uses them in the Gathas.

So we return to the question: What ideas is Zarathushtra trying to convey when he uses these words 'completeness, wholeness' (*haurvatāt-*) and 'non-deathness' (*amərətāt-*)?

*In a nutshell:*

If a beneficial way of being, (which is) the true wholly good order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment (personification), its rule, increase and bring about completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), it would be reasonable to conclude:

~ that completeness *haurvatāt* is the end result of a process of spiritual evolution ~ from a primeval mixed (more-good/bad Y30:3, more-beneficial / harmful Y45:2) state of being to one that is completely, wholly good, completely, wholly beneficial (*spənta-*), completely, wholly in accord with the true (correct) good order of existence ~ a state of being in which one has attained (mastered) completely, wholly, the qualities of the Divine (the amesha spenta); in the Gathas, 'lord' (as a name for the Divine) is used in the same way ~ as one who has lordship (complete possession, mastery) over the qualities of the Divine and (paradoxically) is possessed completely by them;<sup>20</sup> and

~ that non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) is the state of being that occurs when the other qualities of the Divine have been attained completely (*haurvatāt-*), because then, the evolution of the soul (from a conflicted mix, to an all-good wholeness) is complete, the reason for mortality ceases to exist, and a non-mortal state of being is attained; which explains why these two words are almost always used together.

The foregoing conclusions are corroborated by the fact that in the Gathas completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) are states of being that occur at both an individual and a collective level.

*Haurvatat and Ameretat at an individual level:*

We start with the premise that the life force which existed primordially, contained within itself (like twins in one womb) two ways of being (*mainyu-*) ~ the more good (*vahyō*) and the bad (Y30:3); the more beneficial (*spanyā*) and the harmful, or inimical (Y45:2). The stems *vahyah-* and *spanyah-* are the comparative degrees of *vohu-* 'good' and *spənta-* 'beneficial'<sup>21</sup> respectively, indicating that these two ways of being (*mainyu-*) are not fixed unchanging polarities. The comparative degrees suggest an evolutionary process.

In the Gathas, truth, its comprehension, embodiment, and rule are also called beneficial-sacred *spənta*<sup>22</sup> (which is corroborated in the later texts by the inclusion of these attributes under the later collective term *amesha spenta*). So if the primeval life force was a mix of two ways of being, one of which is more beneficial (*spanyah-*) we see that this life force had within it from the beginning, primordially, qualities that (imperfectly) are divine (the first five divine qualities), as well as those that are harmful, inimical, 'bad'. This mixed primeval state of being was conflicted, not in harmony, not whole, spiritually diseased by the inclusion of 'bad' qualities.

Now let us recall what it is that brings about and increases, *haurvatāt-* 'wholeness', 'completeness', and *amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'. According to the evidence (above), they are increased and brought about by a beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*) (which is) the true (correct), wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*).

As these qualities increase in a person, his/her way of being (*mainyu-*) becomes increasingly more truth-possessing (*ašavan-*), more beneficial (*spanyah-*) until these qualities are attained completely, wholly.<sup>23</sup> So at an individual level, *haurvatāt-* means 'wholeness', 'completeness', 'integrity', 'perfection', 'self-realization' in the sense of personifying completely, wholly, the true/right (correct), good order of existence ~ being wholly, completely beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*), being wholly, completely the epitome of goodness (*vahišta-*),<sup>24</sup> ~ no longer mixed, no longer conflicted, no longer spiritually defective (or diseased) with 'bad' qualities. That is why in Zarathushtra says in Y33:8 - 9:

" ... .. [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*]." (Y33:8), "...let a person support with good thinking the very [*mainyūm* 'way of being'] of these two companions who increase truth, through that happiness consisting of change ... under whom (all) souls are in harmony." Y33:9, i.e. no longer a conflicted mix of more-good and bad (Y30:3), more-beneficial and harmful (Y45:2). Parenthetically, in this verse, Zarathushtra provides us with a paradox for our entertainment. I have footnoted it here for those who are interested in such things.<sup>25</sup>

This wholly truthful (*ašavan-*), wholly beneficial (*spənta-*), wholly most-good (*vahišta-*) way of being has become Wisdom's way of being (the Divine being a part of this evolutionary process).<sup>26</sup> And this 'completeness' is a way of being that man can attain as well by following the path of the true (correct) order of existence and its component parts (the other *amesha spenta*), but which (in our present reality) man has not yet attained completely. In this sense, *haurvatāt-* 'completeness' occurs at an individual level.<sup>27</sup>

The arena in which this evolutionary process occurs is the material world and the experiences it affords.<sup>28</sup> So when (for each individual) this evolutionary process is complete, the reason for mortality ceases, and a state of non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) for that fragment, that unit, of existence occurs. In this sense, *amərətāt-* occurs at an individual level.

This is one reason why these two words are almost always used together in the Gathas.

*Haurvatat and ameretat at a collective level.*

Zarathushtra also uses *haurvatāt*- 'completeness' and *amərətāt*- 'non-deathness' with double entendre ~ at a collective level. He tells us:

- ~ that we earn completeness and non-deathness through our own endeavors,
- ~ that Wisdom gives completeness and non-deathness to us, and
- ~ that we give completeness and non-deathness to Wisdom.

Here is the evidence:

We earn completeness and non-deathness through our own endeavors, "...Those of you who shall give obedience [*səraoša*- 'listening'] and regard to this (Lord)<sup>29</sup> of mine they shall reach completeness [*haurvatāt*-] and [*amərətāt*-] ..." Y45:5. In other words, those who listen to (hear and implement) Wisdom's Word ~ the path of truth ~ will earn completeness and non-deathness by so doing.

Wisdom gives completeness and non-deathness to us, "... grant Thou to me [*amərətāt*- 'non-deathness'] and completeness [*haurvatāt*-], ..." Y51:7.

And we give completeness and non-deathness to Wisdom, "Through a [*spəntā mainyū* 'beneficial way of being'] and the best thinking [*vahišta*- *manah*- 'most-good thinking'], through both action and the word befitting truth, they shall grant completeness [*haurvatāt*-] and [*amərətāt*- 'non-deathness'] to Him [*ahmāi*]. The Wise One [*mazdā*- 'Wisdom'] in rule is Lord through [*ərmaiti*- 'embodied truth']." Y47:1.<sup>30</sup> The notion that we give completeness to Wisdom does not rest on the evidence of Y47:1 alone. We see it in other verses as well, some of which I have footnoted here.<sup>31</sup>

This evidence requires the conclusion that by following the path of the qualities that make a being divine, (amesha spenta), man not only earns completeness for himself, at an individual level, but in so doing, both receives completeness from, and gives completeness to, the Divine ~ Wisdom the Lord.

What could Zarathushtra mean by this? How could the Divine and mortals complete each other?

Well, if various units complete each other, then of necessity, they would have to be component parts of one whole. No other conclusion is logically possible. In short, if mortals and the Lord (who is) Wisdom complete each other, then mortals are not complete without 'God', nor 'God' without mortals.<sup>32</sup> And if that is so, then it needs must follow (as the day the night), that no one mortal is complete without all other mortals. In this sense, completeness, wholeness, (*haurvatāt*-), and the resulting non-deathness (*amərətāt*-) occur at a collective level that includes man and the Divine (the Divine comprising an incremental, and eventually complete, union of all the perfected units or fragments of existence). Does this collective 'wholeness' include life forms other than mankind? There is some evidence that it does, but that is discussed in another chapter.<sup>33</sup>

So the wholeness, the completeness, that is *haurvatāt*-, is twofold

- it is an individual wholeness, completeness, of the *quality* of being (wholly beneficial (*spənta*-), wholly in accord with the true (correct) good order of existence (*aša*-), wholly good (*vahišta*-), and
- ~ it is a collective wholeness, completeness, of the *identity* of being<sup>34</sup> ~ an incremental union of the perfected fragments of existence (temporarily fragmented to enable the perfecting process)<sup>35</sup> when the perfecting process of each fragment is complete, no longer conflicted, no longer a mix of more-good and bad (Y30:3), of more-beneficial and harmful (Y45:2); which eventually will include every fragment of existence as a certainty (because of the freedom to choose!),<sup>36</sup> so that the being in which all such



fragments are united becomes whole or complete again. At which time, the reason for mortality ceases to exist (because mortal existence ~ the arena for the perfecting process ~ no longer is necessary) and a state of non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) occurs.

Is there any other evidence that corroborates this understanding of Zarathushtra's use of *haurvatāt-* completeness at an individual and collective level ~ as the perfected union (which is truth personified) that includes man and the Lord (who is) Wisdom (and perhaps all the living)? There is implied evidence. I find it persuasive. But decide for yourself.

It is corroborated by the material metaphor for *haurvatāt-* which is water. Water may exist in many separate bodies ~ drops of water, springs, lakes, rivers, the ocean. But when these separate bodies of water are joined, the separateness no longer exists. They become one body of water.

It is corroborated by the material metaphor for the true (correct) good order of existence (which the Divine personifies and which culminates in completeness and non-deathness for everyone) ~ fire. When many separate fires are brought together, their separateness no longer exists. They become one fire.

It also is corroborated by a later text ~ a Pahlavi Fragment (as translated by E. W. West) in which the Divine and each of its attributes (*amesha spenta*) are said to be "counterparts" of various aspects of the material existence.<sup>37</sup> According to the dictionary, a "counterpart" can be one of two corresponding copies, or duplicates, or it can be a complement. And a complement is defined as one of two mutually completing parts.<sup>38</sup> Thus, to say that aspects of the Divine are "counterparts" of aspects of the material existence, would be a symbolic (or metaphoric) way of describing the immanence of the Divine in all things.<sup>39</sup>

To understand the relevance of this Pahlavi Fragment to our discussion here we need to recall that in the Gathas and many later texts, 'heaven' is a state of being, not a place. And one of the terms for 'heaven' is *ahu- vahišta-* '(the) most-good existence' ~ a state of being that is intrinsic goodness in the superlative degree. This term (*ahu- vahišta-*) was shortened to *vahesht* (or *wahišt-*) in Pazand/Pahlavi texts,<sup>40</sup> which centuries later evolved into *behesht* (in Persian) ~ all synonyms for 'heaven' although sadly, by then a place, not a state of being that is the superlative degree of intrinsic goodness (*vahišta-*).

Returning to the Pahlavi Fragment, of particular interest (on the issue of *haurvatāt-* meaning 'completeness' at a collective level) is the phrase which concludes the discussion of each quality of the divine (*amesha spenta*) as a counterpart of a material aspect of existence, stating in effect, that if a person "propitiates" (here defined as "promotes the things of") each such *amesha spenta*, and its material counterparts, then he will attain the following: (the translation is by E. W. West who places the word "in" in italics to show that it is not in the Pahlavi text but has been added by him as an interpretive aid; I have placed the word in red font here).<sup>41</sup> Referring to such a person, this Fragment text states,

"... the splendour of Auharmazd (Av. *ahura- mazdā-*) and the pleasure and joy become his own *in* heaven (*vahisht*)."; (once, referring to the good man who is a 'counterpart' of Ahura Mazda);

"... the splendour of Auharmazd becomes his own *in* the best existence [Av. *ahu- vahišta-*]."; (once in the section on 'Vohuman' ~ Av. *vohu- manah-*);

"... the splendour of Auharmazd becomes his own *in* heaven [*vahisht*]."; (once each in the sections on Ardibehesht and Shatvairo ~ Av. *aša- vahištā* and *xšaθra- vairyā-*);

"... the splendour of Auharmazd becomes one's own *in* heaven [*vahisht*]."; (once in the section on Spendarmad ~ Av. *spənta- ārmaiti-*);

"... the splendour of Auharmazd may become their own *in* heaven." (Once in the section on *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* combined, and once referring to all the amesha spenta combined).

With the insertion of "*in*" by E. W. West, 'heaven' becomes a place (based on West's mind-set which was informed by his own (or other dominant) religious paradigms). But if we read these phrases without inserting "*in*" (which is not in the Pahlavi text), while recalling that *vahesht* evolved from Av. *ahu- vahišta-* 'most-good existence' (a term for the ultimate good End in the Gathas and later Avestan texts) heaven becomes a state of being ~ the splendor of the Divine becomes the person's own most-good (existence) ~ the collective 'completeness, wholeness' which is *haurvatāt-*. Read the above quotations again, without the "*in*" (and without the article 'the') and you will see it for yourself.

Zaehner 1961 makes the interesting observation,

"Zoroastrianism differs from most other religions in that it sees reality as a spiritual disharmony... resulting from the conflict between good and evil. But he asserts that the final rehabilitation (Pahl. *frashkart*) is regarded as being the inevitable consummation of a rational process initiated by God, and it is never supposed for one moment that there is any doubt that it will come to pass."<sup>42</sup>

This thought is reflected (from another perspective) in the rather lovely Gatha verses Y33:8 and 9 (which I already have quoted in part, so forgive me for quoting them again, in this context). And here I will quote them in full (deleting only what is not in the Avestan text), because Y33:8 also expresses some of the ideas we have been discussing, but in the context of 'worship'. In the Gathas, we worship the Divine with Its own Divine qualities ~ two of which are completeness and non-deathness. In other words, our completeness (our self realization) is the worship that Wisdom has '*established*' ~ the kind of worship the Divine wants.

"Take ye heed of these goals of mine, which I shall enact with good thinking: worship of ... you [pl.], [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom'], and words praiseworthy with truth. Your enduring worshipful offering has been established to be [*amərətāt-* 'non-deathness'] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*]." Y33:8, Insler 1975.

" Yes, for Thee [sg.], [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom] let a person support with [*vahišta- manah-* '(the) most-good thinking'] the very [*mainyūm* 'way of being'] of these two companions [*sarəidyayā*] who increase truth through that happiness consisting of change. The association of these two has already arisen under whom ... souls are in harmony." Y33:9, Insler 1975.

Y33:8 mentions completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), which are the way of being [*mainyūm*] "...of these two companions [*sarəidyayā*] who increase truth ...".<sup>43</sup> In the next verse (Y33:9) in my view, the "souls" who said to be "are in harmony" are those perfected souls that have reached completeness ~ an (incremental) plurality that forms a Divine union. Notice, the plural for the Divine in Y33:8, and the sg. for the Divine in Y33:9, indicating a union (that is a plurality) ~ one of Zarathushtra's neat puzzles.<sup>44</sup>

So *haurvatāt-* 'completeness' is the complete attainment of the beneficial way of being, the true (correct) wholly good order of existence in which the "spiritual disharmony" of falsehood, wrongdoing, no longer exists.

And *amərətāt-* is the resulting state of being that is no longer bound by mortality ~ the arena for the perfecting process ~ because when *haurvatāt-* is attained, that (material, mortal) arena is no longer necessary.<sup>45</sup>

*Some additional thoughts on the meaning of ameretat.*



As *salvation*. In the Gathas, *amərətāt-* is almost always linked with *haurvatāt-* 'completeness'. But where *amərətāt-* is used alone, it is linked with 'salvation' (which Zarathushtra defines as the attainment of the qualities of the divine), or with the defeat of the opposite of truth ~ being saved from untruth, ~ all of which, in Zarathushtra's thought, is another way of describing a state of being that is the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*) personified, w/Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*) ~ the wholly beneficial (*spənta-/spəništa-*) wholly good (*vohu-/vahišta-*) way of being, which is *haurvatāt-*.<sup>46</sup>

As 'undying'. Darmesteter translates *amərətāt-* as 'undying',<sup>47</sup> which fits, in one sense, because Zarathushtra's notion of divine qualities (*amesha spenta*), cannot cease to exist. They all are various aspects of the true (correct) good order of existence *aša-* ~ which is enduring, eternal, undying ~ hence the first part of their later collective name 'amesha'.

This is corroborated in certain later texts in which one of the terms used for 'heaven', is the 'endless light(s)'.<sup>48</sup> In the Gathas and later texts, light in various forms, is used ~ sometimes as a metaphor or symbol, and sometimes as a description ~ for Wisdom and Its divine attributes the *amesha spenta*.<sup>49</sup> And these divine attributes, ~ the true (correct) order of existence and its component parts (its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule ~ the beneficial way of being) ~ are the reward, which is Zarathushtra's idea of 'heaven' (a state of being).<sup>50</sup> So attaining the 'endless Light(s)' would be a metaphoric way of describing a state of being in which these attributes of the Divine have been attained.

Now, in ancient times, all sources of physical light (on earth) were thought to 'die'. The light of the sun 'died' when it was swallowed up by the darkness of night. Fire died out when its fuel was spent. By contrast, the term 'endless light(s)' for a state of being which is the apex of spiritual evolution ('heaven') was a metaphoric way of saying that beings who have attained enlightenment, have (metaphorically) become pure light (the metaphor for the *amesha spenta*), and their light is 'endless' ~ no longer mortal, it does not die, it is undying *amərətāt-*.

#### Conclusion and Summary:

*haurvatāt-* is 'completeness' in the sense of the complete attainment of the qualities that make a being divine ~ the true, wholly good order of existence, its good comprehension, its beneficial-sacred embodiment in thought, word and action, its good rule ~ the beneficial-sacred way of being.

*amərətāt-* is 'non-deathness' ~ an existence no longer bound by mortality, because the perfecting process is complete.

And Zarathushtra uses *haurvatāt-* 'completeness', and *amərətāt-* 'non-deathness' in two ways:

(1) individually as the attainment of the wholly, or completely beneficial-sacred (*spənta*), most-good (*vahišta-*) way of being, ~ personifying completely the true (correct) most good order of existence (*aša-vahišta-*), and

(2) collectively, as the incremental reuniting or rejoining of the primeval life force (temporarily fragmented to enable the perfecting process) into one (incrementally increasing) whole that comprises the Divine ~ a union of perfected mortals, (including perhaps all the living) ~ as each fragment of the primeval way of being (mixed, conflicted), attains a state of being that is the wholly, completely beneficial (*spənta*), most-good (*vahišta-*) way of being ~ personifying completely the true most good order of existence (*aša-vahišta-*).

And when that completeness (at both levels) occurs, existence is no longer bound by mortality, and a state of 'non-deathness' (*amərətāt-*) occurs.<sup>51</sup>

In my view, the closest English words for these two Avestan words, are 'completeness or wholeness' for *haurvatāt-* and 'non-deathness' for *amərətāt-*. These English words are consistent with all of the ways in which Zarathushtra uses these words in the Gathas, and they have a (reasonably) sound linguistic basis.

They are consistent with the evidence that completeness *haurvatāt-* and non-deathness *amərətāt-* are attributes of the Divine, which man (and perhaps all the living) do not presently have, but are capable of attaining.

They are consistent with the evidence that the other qualities of the divine (which man presently has, although less than completely) increase and bring about these two ultimate divine qualities ~ completeness *haurvatāt-* and non-deathness *amərətāt-*.

They are consistent with the evidence that non-deathness *amərətāt-* is equated with the attainment of salvation which Zarathushtra defines as the attainment of the qualities of the Divine ~ the personification of the true (correct) wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*).

They are consistent with the evidence that we earn completeness *haurvatāt-* and non-deathness *amərətāt-*, that Wisdom) gives them to us, and that we give them to Wisdom ~ we complete the Divine, and the Divine completes us, at which time we are no longer bound by mortality.

And they are consistent with the two metaphors: water for the completeness (*haurvatāt-*); and fire for the personification of the true wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*).

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<sup>1</sup> Insler in 1975 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'completeness'. But later he expressed a preference for 'health'. See Insler, *Zarathushtra's Genetic System*, which may be viewed at <http://www.zoroastrian.org.uk/vohuman/> (click on 'Authors' and scroll down to Insler's name).

<sup>2</sup> Bartholomae gave 3 possible meanings for *haurvatāt-*: 'wholeness, completeness, welfare'; I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for this information (Bartholomae's dictionary is in German, a language which (I regret to admit) I do not know.

Mills in Y31:6 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'welfare' in Y31:6; SBE 31, p. 43.

Jafarey 1989 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'wholeness' (p. 118);

<sup>3</sup> Humbach 1991, and Humbach/Faiss 2010 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'integrity';

<sup>4</sup> Azargoshasb 1980 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'perfection'. (p. 14).

Taraporewala 1951 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'wholeness, spiritual completeness, perfection'. He comments (under Y31:6) that the Ved. cognate of *haurvatāt-* is *sārvatāti* which means 'wholeness', 'perfection' in the Rig Veda where it is usually associated with *svasti* (*su-astī*) well-being, blessing. p. 191.

<sup>5</sup> Sethna 1975 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'self-realization', (Sethna, *Gathas*, from his translation of Y31:6 (on p. 31).

<sup>6</sup> Moulton 1912 translated *haurvatāt-* as 'Welfare, or Salvation', (EZ p. 344); 'salvation' being (according to Moulton) "its etymological cognate" p. 295, ft. 2.

<sup>7</sup> I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Tucker for the following information [words in square brackets are my additions]. In Avestan we have some nouns built with the suffix *-tāt*, for example, *haurvatāt-* 'wholeness' is based on *haurva-* 'whole'; *paurovatāt-* 'foremostness, pre-eminence' is based on the adj. *paurova-* 'before, in front'; YAv. *drvatāt-* 'firmness' is based on *drva-* 'firm, solid'. So what is the word on which *amərətāt-* is based? We have the Avestan word *mərəθyu-* 'death', but there is no Avestan word *mərə-*. However we do have *mərəta-* 'dead, liable to

die' ~ a participle from the verb 'to die'. And linguists surmise that *aməratāt-* must represent a contraction of \**amərata-tāt-* to *aməratāt-*. The uncontracted nom. sg. *aməratātās* is attested to in Yy57:24 [where it appears in a list with other amesha spenta, Geldner 1P p. 201, SBE 31, p. 303].

Professor Elizabeth Tucker has also pointed out to me that the prehistoric Indo-Iranian participle from the root 'to die' preceded by the negative prefix *a-* was \**amrta-* and this developed into Avestan *aməša-* 'immortal', or more literally 'not-mortal'.

Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index shows the adj. *aməša-* 'immortal, undying'; he shows the (grammatically) fem. noun *aməratāt-* 'undyingness, immortality'. And he shows *marəta-* 'mortal', and *marətan-* 'mortal man'. But in my view a more literal meaning of *marətan-* is 'mortal one' or 'mortal being' (not limited to humans) as distinguished from a being that is no longer mortal).

<sup>8</sup> See *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*.

<sup>9</sup> The word 'Lord' does not appear in the Gathic text of this verse Y45:5. Insler has inserted "(Lord)", in parentheses, as an interpretive aid, to indicate that in his opinion "to this [*ahmāi*]" stands for the Lord. The full verse reads as follows (in Insler's 1975 translation) "Now I shall speak of what the most virtuous one [*spəntō.təmō* 'most-beneficial-(one)'] told me, that word, which is to be heard as the best [*vahišta-* 'most good'] for men: Those of you who shall give obedience and regard to this [*ahmāi*] (Lord) of mine, they shall reach completeness and immortality. The Wise One is Lord through such actions stemming from good spirit [*vohu- mainyu-* a good way of being]." Y45:5. The word *spəntō.təmō* is one of the superlative forms of *spənta-*, which here is used as a noun, thus 'most-beneficial (one)'. In my view, the pronoun 'to this [*ahmāi*]' refers to the preceding 'word which ... is most-good', so what Zarathushtra is saying, is that those who listen to, and implement, his teaching ('to this [*ahmāi*] of mine') which is the Word of Wisdom, the Most Beneficial One, they shall reach completeness and non-deathness. (Humbach 1991 and Humbach/Faiss 2010 also take *ahmāi* as referring to the previously mentioned "word ... which is best ['most good']").

But (with double entendre) Zarathushtra could well have meant 'Lord' as well, because the teaching of Zarathushtra is the path of the true order of existence, which is the existence of the Lord (who is) Wisdom (see *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*). So in that sense, 'Lord' is also consistent with the Zarathushtra's teaching. As the *Farvardin Yasht* says, speaking of the Lord, Wisdom (Ahura Mazda referred to in the immediately preceding section), "Whose soul is the Mathra Spenta..." Yt. 13:81, Darmesteter translation SBE 23 p. 199. The 'mathra spenta' is the beneficial Word of Wisdom ~ Its 'words of reason'. So here (and in other Avestan texts), the Lord, Wisdom, is equated with Its 'Word' ~ the path of truth which w/Wisdom personifies.

Parenthetically, the words "actions stemming from [*vohu- mainyu-* '(a) good way of being']" Y45:5, parallels the concept of *ārmaiti-* as actions which embody the true (correct) order of existence, (an existence which is most good ~ *aša- vahišta-*); embodying goodness (*ārmaiti-*) describes a good way of being (*vohu- mainyu-* Y45:5).

<sup>10</sup> See in *Part One: The Search for Truth*, and *The Freedom to Choose*; and *Part Three: Seraosha*.

<sup>11</sup> The is only one implied reference to *haurvatāt-* and *aməratāt-* as entities, "two companions" in Y33:9, translations of which are not agreed to by professional linguists,<sup>11</sup> (although in the later texts, along with all other divine qualities, *haurvatāt-* and *aməratāt-* are mentioned as entities to be worshiped, along with other amesha spenta). The context of this Gatha verse requires that I also give you the last sentence of the immediately preceding verse,

"... .. Your enduring worshipful offering has been established to be [*aməratāt-* 'non-deathness'] and completeness [*haurvatāt-*]." Y33:8 Here they are not entities.

"Yes, for Thee [*mazdā-* 'Wisdom'], let a person support with [*vahišta-* ... *manah-* '(the) most good thinking'] these two companions ... .." Y33:9. Here (in Y33:9) the two companions (entities? concepts?) refer to *aməratāt-* and *haurvatāt-* in Y33:8.

<sup>12</sup> In the following verse, divine qualities (amesha spenta) bring about completeness and non-deathness, "I shall try to glorify Him for us with prayers of [*ārmaiti*-], Him, the Lord who is famed to be Wise [*mazdā*] in His soul. Whatever one has promised to Him with truth and with good thinking is to be completeness and [*amərətāt*- 'non-deathness'] for Him under His rule, is to be these two enduring powers for Him in His house" Y45:10; 'house' is used in the Gathas as a metaphor for a state of being that 'houses' certain qualities (See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*). In this verse, Y45:10, truth and good thinking are directly shown to bring about *haurvatāt*- and *amərətāt*-. And it would be reasonable to conclude that *ārmaiti*- is indirectly shown to increase these two powers, because prayers of *ārmaiti*- are thoughts, words and actions which embody the true (correct) order of existence. See *Part One: Worship & Prayer*.

<sup>13</sup> Darmesteter explains that while the amesha spenta originally were "mere" personifications of virtues and moral powers, over time, each was thought to have taken a part of existence under its protection and care, thus "the empire of waters and trees was vested in Haurvatat and Ameretat, health and immortality, through the influence of old Indo-Iranian formulae, in which waters and trees were invoked as the springs of health and life." SBE 4, p. lxxi, § 33. And in his introduction to the *Khordad* (Av. *Haurvatat*) *Yasht* he speaks of "Haurvatat, the Genius of Health and Waters".

However, Darmesteter's idea of linking of *haurvatāt*- with 'health' is not supported by a number of later YAv. Avestan texts. In the YAv. *Hormezd* (*Ormazd*) *Yasht*, Yt. 1:25, *haurvatāt*- and *amərətāt*- are associated with 'reward' (which is close to the way in which these two words are used in the Gathas).

"Here is Vohu-Mano,  
... here is Asha-Vahishta  
... here is Khshathra-Vairya,  
... here is Spenta-Armaiti,  
... here are Haurvatat and Ameretat,  
who are the reward of the holy ones [*ašaonəm* i.e. 'of the truth-possessing ones'] when freed from their bodies, ..." *Hormezd* (*Ormazd*) *Yasht*, Yt. 1.25, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 31. Darmesteter translates *ašavan*- words as 'holy' instead of 'truthful' or the more literal 'truth possessing'. The Avestan word is from Geldner 2P p. 66.

In other YAv. texts, *haurvatāt*- is associated with the mastery (or judgments, in the sense of a mental faculty) of truth, and prosperity, (parenthetically, in the Gathas, prosperity (in the long run) is one of the dividends of the true (correct) order of existence, see *Part One: Truth, Asha*). For example,

In *Sirozah* I:6, the section on *Khordad* (Av. *haurvatāt*-) associates *haurvatāt*- with prosperity and the mastery of the true (correct) order of existence (*aša*-), (which Darmesteter whose translation was done at an earlier stage of decoding Avestan, routinely translates as 'holiness' instead of 'truth').

"To Haurvatat, the master [*haurvatātō raθwō*]; to the prosperity of the seasons and to the years, the masters of holiness [*ašahe ratubyō* 'the judgments of truth']..." *Sirozah* I:6, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 5; Avestan words are from Geldner 2P p. 260; translations in square brackets are mine. The same description and words are found in *Sirozah* II:6, SBE 23, p. 15.

Identical words are found in the *Haft Ameshaspend* (*Haptan*) *Yasht*, (Yt. 2:3)

"To Haurvatat, the master [*haurvatātō raθwō*]; to the prosperity of the seasons and to the years, the masters of holiness [*ašahe ratubyō* 'the judgments of truth']..." Yt. 2:3, Darmesteter translation, SBE 23, p. 36; Geldner 2P p. 69.

Almost identical words are found in the *Khordad* (Av. *Haurvatat*) *Yasht* (Yt. 4:1, and 4:12).

[Ahura Mazda purportedly speaking]

§ 1 "... I created for the faithful, the help, the enjoyments, the comforts, and the pleasures of Haurvatat..." Darmesteter translation SBE 23, p. 49.

§ 12 "... I bless the sacrifice and prayer, the strength and vigour of Haurvatat, the master [*haurvatātō raθwō*]; of the prosperity of the seasons and of the years, the masters of holiness [*ašahe ratubyō* 'the judgments of truth']. ..." Darmesteter translation SBE 23, p. 52; Avestan words from Geldner 2P p. 81 - 82 (in Geldner these words are shown in § 11);

The Avestan words *haurvatātō raθwō* and *ašahe ratubyō* also appear in the (un-numbered) introductory words of this Yasht. Darmesteter's translation of these introductory words is very close to his translation of § 12, but does not quite fit the Avestan words shown by Geldner (possibly because Geldner's compilation of mss. was not available to Darmesteter when he worked on translating the Yashts). The linguistics of the Avestan words *haurvatātō raθwō* and *ašahe ratubyō* are discussed in a footnote below.

In these YAv. texts, Darmesteter has translated *raθwō* and *ratubyō* (which are various YAv. case forms of the stem *ratu-*) as 'master, judge, judgment', which in the Gathas is used frequently as 'judgment' (so Insler 1975, and Humbach/Faiss 2010, see *Part Three: Ratu*; and *The Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo), An Analysis*), but *ratu-* may perhaps have evolved in later Av. texts to mean 'judge', or 'master'.

The Zoroastrian wedding ceremony, (composed in an Pazand, perhaps more than 1,000 after Zarathushtra's time), is another text which does not associate *haurvatāt-* with health. In a part of the wedding ceremony, the priest gives the couple(s) getting married advice on how to live their lives in accordance with the teachings of the religion. Here, it is *amərətāt-* (not *haurvatāt-*) that is associated with 'health'. He says,

"The law and custom of Holy Khordod [Av. *haurvatāt-*] is fertility and prosperity. Keep your heart happy and keep your body pure, for purity of the body is the righteousness of the mind. Do not be ungrateful and do not be sad. Look upon the world with a positive eye and be grateful for the gifts and laws of Bountiful Ahura Mazda. Out of barrenness create fertility and produce happiness. Since water is the source of fertility and prosperity, keep water clean. Do not contaminate the water with impurity. Do not wash your body nor clothes in flowing water. Dig canals and turn dry land into productive land.

The law and custom of Holy Amordad [Av. *amərətāt-*] is physical health and long life... Plant trees and plants. ... Give herbs and medicines to the needy. Look after those who are ailing or in pain."

As translated in an unpublished translation by Shahin Bekhradnia, who generously has given me permission to use this translation.

As you can see, the one word that runs through all these later YAv. texts, which is associated with *haurvatāt-* is 'prosperity'. I have often wondered, 'why prosperity'? what evolution of thought was it that took the meaning of *haurvatāt-* from the complete attainment of the true (correct) good order of existence (in the Gathas) to prosperity? I can only speculate as follows: In the Gathas, Zarathushtra does indeed say that the true (correct) order of existence (in the long run) brings prosperity (as discussed in *Part One: Truth, Asha*). And since *haurvatāt-* is the complete attainment of the true (correct) order of existence, this may have supplied the connection between the thought of the Gathas and the later YAv. association of 'prosperity' with *haurvatāt-*. Or there may have been some other reasons not clear to me. But one thing is clear. 'Prosperity' does not fit the ways in which *haurvatāt-* is used in the Gathas (although in the Gathas, in the long run, one cannot prosper (in the long run) if one is out of sync with the true (good) order of existence).

<sup>14</sup> It is true that in later texts the Avestan term Angra Mainyu (Pahl. Ahriman) is depicted as a living entity ~ the Devil, the Evil One ~ who spawns his own evil creation, and that diseases were thought to be the creation of the Devil. But no such ideas are to be seen in the Gathas which do not mention the Devil as an entity (except for interpretations personal to a given translator).

See the following chapters in *Part One: The Beneficial Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu; Good and Evil; and Does the Devil Exist?* And in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Creation*.

<sup>15</sup> In the Gathas, Wisdom is said to have fathered truth, its comprehension, and its embodiment in thought, word and action (*aša-*, *vohu manah-*, and *ārmaiti-* Y44:3, Y47:2, Y45:4, Y31:8).

And the Lord Wisdom is said to have created or generated (metaphorically birthed) truth and good thinking (*aša-* and *vohu manah-* Y31:8, Y34:10, Y44:4, Y45:2), and created (Y47:3) and fashioned (Y44:7) embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*).

He also is said to have fashioned (but not fathered) 'rule' *x šaθra-* (Y44:7).

If in Zarathushtra's thought, creation is by emanation (as his use of *zqθa-* 'birthing' metaphorically indicates), then this metaphoric fathering / birthing of truth, good thinking and *ārmaiti-* are consistent with the idea that the primeval way of being contained within it these first three divine qualities ~ as man's way of being presently does. In the Gathas, 'rule' is not fathered by the Divine, but the 'fashioning' of rule indicates what is done with the three qualities truth, its comprehension, its embodiment) during the evolutionary process. No place in the Gathas is the Wise One said to have fathered or fashioned *haurvatāt-* or *amərətāt-*, which is consistent with the conclusion that these two attributes represent a state of being at the end of the evolutionary process ~ divine qualities which mortals (including perhaps all the living) are capable of attaining.

<sup>16</sup> Detailed in *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*.

<sup>17</sup> Such mortal facts as good physical health, disease, and death have no relevance to the Divine, whose existence is not bound by mortality ~ except to the extent that the Divine is immanent in all things (see *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*).

<sup>18</sup> It has been argued that the idea that man gives *haurvatāt-* (as well being) and *amərətāt-* (as continuing life) to the Lord, Wisdom, parallels an ancient Vedic idea that the worship of a deity's followers gives that particular deity strength and continuing life. A subtle and interesting thought. It is true that a deity would become unknown (i.e. would cease to exist under that name) if it had no followers. So the worship of a deity would indeed give it continuing life (if *amərətāt-* is 'continuing life') in that sense, and might give it well-being (if *haurvatāt-* is 'well being') in the sense that the importance of the deity would be increased by a large following. But (with respect) such interpretations and arguments are not consistent with Zarathushtra's conception of the Divine<sup>18</sup> or his ideas about the way to worship.<sup>18</sup> His conception of the Divine, and how to worship it, are very different from the deities, and the ways to worship them, which were prevalent in his ancient Indo-European culture (shown so clearly in the Vedas, the much later YAv. Yashts, and also in ancient Roman and Greek ideas on these subjects). There are many instances in which Zarathushtra's thought is a rejection of the norms of his Indo-European culture, and these are two such instances of rejection ~ his conception of the Divine, and the way to worship. The evidence has been detailed in *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*. Here I will simply summarize.

Unlike ancient Indo-European deities, Zarathushtra's notion of the Divine is not that of a human being magnified, or made great (having both good and bad human qualities). His notion of the Divine is one that has no physical form (human-like or otherwise), and is a being who is wholly good (*vahišta-*), one who comprehends (*vohu-manah-*), the true (correct) order of existence completely ~ a wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*) ~ one whose thoughts, words and actions embody this order of existence (*ārmaiti-*), one who rules Itself and existence in a good way (*vohu- x šaθra-*), one who is personified Wisdom (*mazdā-*).

Similarly, the method of worshipping pre-Zarathushtrian Indo-European deities was ritual based, involving substantial material gifts which made their ritual-oriented priests powerful.<sup>18</sup> That type of worship would indeed increase the well-being and power of such deities, because such extravagant material gifts would increase the wealth and therefore the well-being and power of the priests who promoted the worship of such deities, without which such deities would soon be forgotten.



Zarathushtra's notion of worship is quite different. In the Gathas he says in more than one verse, that we worship the Divine ~ Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*) ~ with the qualities that make a being Divine ~ a beneficial-sacred way of being (*spənta- mainyu-*), (which is) the true (correct) wholly good order of existence (*aša- vahišta-*), its good comprehension (*vohu- manah-*), its beneficial embodiment in thought, word and action (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), its good rule (*vohu- xšaθra-*), and yes, even with our own completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) when we attain these qualities (detailed in *Part One: Worship & Prayer*, and in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of Worship*).

Worshipping the Divine with these qualities is essentially the way an individual lives his life. Such worship does not require the establishment of a powerful priestly hierarchy as an intermediary between man and 'God'. Such worship does not require extravagant physical gifts and animals for sacrifice (read bribes) to the deity (represented by its priests). And worshipping with these divine qualities cannot bring about well-being in the sense of wealth or importance, either for a deity or for its priests. But (as the evidence of the Gathas shows) worshipping with the qualities that make a being divine does bring about completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*).

In Zarathushtra's view, the power, the strength, the might, of the Divine is founded, not on material offerings, but on spiritual qualities ~ the attributes that make a being divine (*amesha spenta*) ~ the true (correct) order of existence, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule, the beneficial-sacred way of being (detailed in *Part One: Good Rule, Vohu Xshathra*; and in *Part Two: A Question Of Power*).

Nor could Zarathushtra have thought that the old Indo-European ways of worship would give 'continuing life' (for *amərətāt-*) to the Lord (who is) Wisdom. The rituals of worship are time-bound and culture-bound. We have only to consider certain aspects of the rituals described in the Yashts to appreciate how obsolete they are and why they are not followed today. But worshipping with the currency of truth is not limited to any one culture or time period. Undoubtedly, our perceptions of truth may be flawed and subjective, and may change from generation to generation, and culture to culture. But Zarathushtra does not tell us what 'truth' is (except for its general nature ~ good, beneficial, etc.). He tells us to search for truth with good thinking. Its comprehension is incremental. The true (correct) good order of existence (*aša-*) is an eternal ideal, non-dying (*amesha*).

We see this conclusion that the true (correct) order of existence (*aša-*) is eternal, undying, corroborated in later Av. texts, in which the most-good truth Asha Vahishta is an *amesha spenta* ~ an undying, beneficial one. For example,

"... *ašəm vahištəm sraēštəm aməšəm spəntəm yazamaide* •• ... " Yt. 1:22, Geldner 2Pt. p. 65.

My translation: 'We worship /celebrate the true (correct) order of existence, (which is) most-good, most-beautiful, undying [*aməšəm*], beneficial-sacred [*spəntəm*] ...'; Yt. 1:22. This is a quotation from the Old Avestan *Yasna Haptanghaiti* (YHapt.37:4) ~ not a part of the Gathas, or composed by Zarathushtra, but composed in Old Avestan.

Darmesteter translation: "... We worship Asha-Vahishta, most fair, undying and beneficent. ..." Yt. 1:22, SBE 23, p. 30.

Worshipping, or failing to worship, with truth, its comprehension, and its embodiment in thought, word and action, its rule, cannot give well-being, or good health, or life or death to a Being who in Zarathushtra's view personifies these eternal divine qualities, which the later texts called '*amesha spenta*' ~ a term which literally means qualities that are non-dying (*aməša-*), beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*). So the idea that man's worship gives a deity well-being and continuing life as exemplified in ancient Indo-European rituals and practices, is at odds with Zarathushtra's thought, which rejects such forms of worship. There isn't a single ritual described, or prescribed, in the Gathas, although Zarathushtra does indeed use certain ritual offerings (milk, butter, bread) as metaphors for the offerings of truth and good thinking. And completeness, non-deathness (our own self-realization, enlightenment) ~ are included in his idea of how we should worship the Divine. (See in *Part Two: The Puzzle of Worship*, and *The Puzzle of the Cow and Its Network*.)

<sup>19</sup> See *Part One: A Friendly Universe*, and *Part Two: Asha & the Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>20</sup> As discussed with evidence in *Part One: The Nature Of The Divine*; and

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In *Part Two: The Lords and the Equations of Y31:4*.

<sup>21</sup> The linguistic evidence for these conclusions is detailed in *Part One: The Beneficial- Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu, and Good Thinking, Vohu Manah*.

<sup>22</sup> See *Part One: The Beneficial-Sacred Way of Being, Spenta Mainyu*.

<sup>23</sup> The idea that *haurvatāt-* is the wholly or completely beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*) way of being is also suggested by the following verses.

In Y34:1 the action, word and worship which give Wisdom the Lord non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), truth, and mastery over completeness (*haurvatāt-*), are described in the next verse, Y34:2 as the thinking stemming from a good way of being [*mainyu-*] and the action of the *spənta-* man whose soul is in alliance with truth (as well as songs of praise). Here are these two verses:

"By whichever action, by whichever word, by whichever worship, Wise One, Thou didst receive for Thyself immortality [*amərətāt-*], truth [*aša-*] and mastery over completeness [*haurvatāt-*], let these very things be given by us to Thee, Lord, in the very greatest number." Y34:1;

"Moreover, all these things have been granted to Thee by the (correct) thinking stemming from good spirit [*mainyu-* '(a) good way of being], by the action of the virtuous [*spəntahyācā* 'of (the) beneficial'] man whose soul is in alliance with truth, (and) by songs of praise (sung) in universal glory of your kind, Wise One." Y34:2.

These two verses suggest that Wisdom is part of the evolutionary process, a process to which man contributes (which is logical if Wisdom and man are part of the same life force, being). For additional evidence see *Part Two: Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

<sup>24</sup> See *Part Two: The Puzzle Of The Most Good, Vahishta*.

<sup>25</sup> In the Gathas, a beneficial way of being, truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule bring about completeness and non-deathness. And in a paradoxical (but entirely logical) way, completeness and non-deathness increase the true wholly good order of existence because before existence is perfected (at both an individual and collective level), existence is only partly truthful. But when all of existence (individually and collectively) is perfected, existence is entirely truthful. The paradoxes of the Gathas are the seeds of such interesting, multi-dimensioned ideas. But if solving these kinds of puzzles are not your cup of tea, that is not a problem. Zarathushtra's teachings at a straight forward level are also very beautiful and satisfying.

<sup>26</sup> See in *Part One: The Identity Of The Divine*; and in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of Creation*; and *A Question Of Immanence*; and *Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

<sup>27</sup> It is not without interest, that in the *Shahnamah* of Firdaosi, we are told that Sam brought the young king Navzar, the son of Minochehr, back to the path of goodness by persuading him of the error of his ways, and one of the things Sam is reputed to have said is that the soul progresses towards "God realization".

"Saam pointed out to Navzar that he was the sole inheritor to Fareedoon's noble traditions, so he must rule in such a just manner that everyone should speak well of him. A wise person does not lose his character for the sake of acquiring wealth and all the material comforts of the world which, after all, is temporary, and which prevent his Soul from progressing towards God realization..." Surti, *The Shah Namah of Firdaosi*, Vol. 1, p. 71.

I regret that I do not know Persian (Farsi) so I do not know what word in the *Shahnamah* Surti has translated as "God realization".

<sup>28</sup> See *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>29</sup> The word '[Lord](#)' does not appear in the Gathic text of Y45:5, as discussed in a preceding ft.

<sup>30</sup> Y47:1 has generated differences in translation. It is discussed (with comparative translations) in *Part Six: Yasna 47:1*.

<sup>31</sup> Zarathushtra expresses the thought that we give completeness to Wisdom in many verses in kaleidoscopic ways. For example:

In Y34:11, he says that embodied truth (*ārmaiti-*) and the rule of truth and good thinking, have increased completeness and non-deathness (*haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-*) which are sustenance (food, nourishment) for Wisdom, "Yes, both completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and immortality [*amərətāt-*] 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. Parenthetically, here Insler interprets that it is the *ārmaiti-* of man that increases *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* for the Divine, but I think that the absence of a restricting pronoun for *ārmaiti-* means that it is the *ārmaiti-* of all the living (including the Divine) that brings about *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-*.

The idea in Y34:11 (above) that *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are sustenance (food, nourishment) for the Divine is an echo of the thought expressed in Y33:8 where (with a slight turn of the kaleidoscope) he tells us that the best worship offering (*draonah-*) we can give the Divine is our own attainment of completeness (*haurvatāt-*) and non-deathness (*amərətāt-*), "...Your enduring worshipful offering [*draonō*] has been established to be immortality and completeness." Y33:8; *draonah-* is a ritual offering (a type of bread or cake) made from water (a metaphor for *haurvatāt-*) and grain (plants a metaphor for *amərətāt-*), and thus is symbolically food or nourishment for the Divine (see *Part Two: Earth, Waters, Plants*). Let us remember that Zarathushtra worships Wisdom the Lord with Its own divine qualities "... I will always worship all of you, Wise Lord, with truth and the very best thinking and with their rule ....." Y50:4; "I shall try to glorify Him with prayers of [*ārmaiti-*]...." Y45:10. And we have already seen that these divine attributes bring about *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* (Y34:11, Y47:1, both quoted in the main part of this chapter).

In Y45:10 (with another turn of the kaleidoscope) Zarathushtra suggests the same thought expressed in Y33:8, but without the metaphor of nourishment or sustenance. He says: ("...Whatever one has promised to Him with truth and with good thinking is to be completeness [*haurvatāt-*] and immortality [*amərətāt-*] for Him under His rule, is to be these two enduring powers for Him in His House." Y45:10. ('house' is often used in the Gathas as a metaphor for a state of being that 'houses' a given quality). So this verse also suggests that we give completeness and non-deathness to the Divine.

In Y34 verses 1 and 2, (still turning the kaleidoscope), he expresses the thought that we give completeness *haurvatāt-* and non-deathness *amərətāt-* to Wisdom through a good way of being (*mainyu-*) ~ a way of being that comprises the attributes of the Divine and is therefore beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*).

"By whichever action, by whichever word, by whichever worship, Wise One, Thou didst receive for Thyself immortality [*amərətāt-*], truth and mastery over completeness [*haurvatāt-*], let these very things be given by us to Thee, Lord, in the very greatest number." 34:1; the Divine with His own qualities ~ with truth, its comprehension, its embodiment, its rule ~ which give Him non-deathness, the true (correct) order of existence and rule over completeness.

"Moreover, all these things have been granted to Thee by the (correct) thinking stemming from good spirit [*vohu-mainyu-*], by the action of the [*spənta-*] man whose soul is in alliance with truth, (and) by songs of praise (sung) in universal glory of your kind, Wise One" Y34:2. The words "all these things have been granted to Thee" refer to things enumerated in the preceding verse "immortality [*amərətāt-*], truth and mastery over completeness [*haurvatāt-*]..." which man gives to the Divine in both these verses.

And then of course, we have Y47:1 in which Zarathushtra states that we give completeness and non-deathness to Wisdom by being beneficial, by following the path of the divine attributes (*amesha spenta*).

"Through a [*spəntā mainyū*] and the best thinking, through both action and the word befitting truth, they shall grant completeness and immortality to Him. The Wise One in rule is Lord through [*ārmaiti-*]." Y47:1.

<sup>32</sup> That mortals are not complete without 'God', nor 'God' without mortals, is corroborated by Zarathushtra's ideas regarding the identity of the Divine, detailed in *Part One: The Identity Of The Divine*.

<sup>33</sup> See *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*.

<sup>34</sup> See *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*.

<sup>35</sup> See in *Part Two: Asha and the Checkmate Solution* and *The Puzzle of Creation*, and in *Part Six: Yasna 31:11 and 12*.

<sup>36</sup> Detailed in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*.

<sup>37</sup> This idea that each amesha spenta (and the Lord Wisdom Himself), and various aspects of the material existence are "counterparts" appears in a Pahlavi Fragment in SBE 5, pp. 374 - 378. E. W. West who is the translator of this Fragment, has appended it to his translation of Shayast la Shayast, but states that this Fragment is not a part of the Shayast la Shayast, see his ft. 1, p. 372. Also, its subject matter and the character of its author are very different ~ miles apart ~ (in my view) from Shayast la Shayast.

See also the discussion of the amesha spenta in Dhalla 1963 *History*, pp. 39 - 61, 162 - 172, 357 - 367, for additional ways ~ some consistent with the Gathas and some inconsistent ~ in which each amesha spenta was linked with its material counterpart throughout the long history of the religion (e.g. as caretakers, protectors, etc.).

<sup>38</sup> Webster's *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.

<sup>39</sup> See *Part Two: A Question of Immanence*.

<sup>40</sup> For example, E. W. West 1871, *The Book of the Mainyo-ikhard*, Ch. VII, § 8, Pazand part, p. 15. In his Glossary and Index he links Pazand "vahasht" to Avestan "vahišta" p. 204; discussed in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

Professor Elizabeth Tucker advises that *wahišt-* is 'paradise, heaven' in Pahlavi and represents the same Iranian superlative adjective as Avestan *vahišta-*. She states that Pazand is simply a writing system, Middle Persian written in the Avestan alphabet.

<sup>41</sup> SBE 5, pp. 374 - 379.

<sup>42</sup> Zaehner 1961, p. 308. This idea of Zarathushtra's ~ the certainty that good will ultimately prevail (*because* of the freedom to choose), is detailed in the following two chapters in *Part Two: Asha & The Checkmate Solution*, and *A Question Of Power*. See also *Part One: A Friendly Universe*.

<sup>43</sup> Insler 1975 translates the gen. du. *sarəidyayā* as 'of these two companions'. More recently Humbach/Faiss 2010 have translated the word as 'of the two braves'. Although they do not comment on how they arrived at the meaning 'braves', they do say that it undoubtedly refers to *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* mentioned in the immediately preceding verse (p. 176). In my view, 'companions' is a good contextual fit for *sarədyā-*, in light of the fact that *haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-* are almost always partnered in the Gathas.

<sup>44</sup> The plurality that forms a Divine union is reflected in the ways in which Zarathushtra alternates between the sg. and the pl. in his references to the Divine; detailed in *Part Two: The Puzzle Of The Singular & The Plural*.

<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere, we discuss the evidence which supports Zarathushtra's notion that this material world is the arena which enables the experiences necessary for a spiritual evolution from a mixed state of being, to a state of being that is completely beneficial-sacred (*spənta-*), completely good (*vahišta-*), in short, a state of being that completely personifies the true wholly good order of existence (*aša vahišta-*) ~ a state of being which is completeness (*haurvatāt-*). If this is so, then it stands to reason that when *haurvatāt-* is achieved, the experiences of the material world are no longer necessary. In short, when the perfecting process is complete (*haurvatāt-*), mortal existence ~

the arena for the perfecting process ~ is no longer required, and a state of being occurs that is no longer bound by mortality, 'non-deathness' (*amərətāt-*).

Is there any corroboration for this conclusion? There is implied (but not explicit) corroboration in both the Gathas and in the later texts.

The evidence of the Gathas is subtle, beautiful, and worth the effort (in my view), and is detailed in *Part One: The Identity of the Divine*; and in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path*; *Asha and the Checkmate Solution*; *The Puzzle of the Singular and the Plural*; *The Puzzle of Creation*; *A Question of Immanence*; and *Did Wisdom Choose Too?*

In the later texts, we also see an implied corroboration for this understanding of *amərətāt-* (non-deathness) as a state of being that is no longer bound by mortality. For example: Yasna 19, a YAv. text, is the earliest (surviving) commentary (made many centuries after Zarathushtra) on one of the foundational manthras of Zoroastrianism, the Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo).<sup>45</sup> It tells us (among other things) to choose the object of our worship, and also our judgment (i.e. our choices in thought), actions, and rule, in accord with the true (correct) order of existence.<sup>45</sup> And the commentary on this prayer in Yasna 19 tells us that doing so will redeem us from mortality,

"... this utterance [i.e. the Ahuna Vairya] is a thing of such a nature, that if all the corporeal and living world should learn it, and learning should hold fast by it, they would be redeemed from their mortality!" Yy19:10, Mills translation.

All of which is another way of saying that when we bring to life completely the rule (*x šaθra-*) of the true wholly good order (*aša- vahišta-*) and its comprehension good thinking (*vohu- manah-*), with our beneficial thoughts, words and actions of truth (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), in our selves and in our world, we will no longer be bound by mortality (because the perfecting process will then be complete, so the reason for mortality will no longer exist).

<sup>46</sup> In one verse, *amərətāt-* is linked with salvation and the attainment of truth, "Because those who are alive, and those who have been, and those who shall be, shall seek after the salvation that comes from Him, the One who offers solicitude. That the soul of the truthful person [*ašavan-*] be powerful in [*amərətāt-*]..." Y45:7. Zarathushtra defines 'salvation' as the attainment of the qualities of the divine, each of which is some aspect of the true (correct) order of existence, see *Part One: A Question of Salvation*. Although completeness (*haurvatāt-*) is not specifically mentioned in this verse (Y45:7), linking non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) with 'salvation' and the attainment of truth is the same as linking it with completeness (*haurvatāt-*) because *haurvatāt-* is the complete attainment of the true order of existence, which is Zarathushtra's notion of 'salvation'.

In one verse, *amərətāt-* is linked with salvation and the defeat of deceit by truth, which again is the same as impliedly linking it with *haurvatāt-*, as explained above, "If, during the times after this (present) one which is under the workings of evil, one shall defeat deceit by truth, ... for the sake of immortality [*amərətāt-*], then one shall increase Thy glory, Lord, during those times of salvation." Y48:1.

And in one verse we see that deceitful thoughts and actions do not bring about a good way of life and *amərətāt-*. Speaking of the local gods and their followers who have promoted evil thoughts and actions, Zarathushtra says, "In this way ye have deceived mankind out of the good way of life and immortality [*amərətāt-*]..." Y32:5. A "good way of life" in Zarathushtra's thought is a life that accords with the true (correct) order of existence (of which *haurvatāt-* is the complete attainment, resulting in non-deathness).

<sup>47</sup> Darmesteter translates *aməša-* as 'undying', for example, in Yt. 1:22, SBE 23, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> See *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

<sup>49</sup> See *Part Two: Light, Fire, Glory*. This metaphor we also see reflected in Porphyry's description of Lord Wisdom (Ahura Mazda) as follows: "For as he learned from the Magians, the god, whom they call Horomasdes, in his bodily form resembles light, in his soul, truth." Fox and Pemberton, *Passages in Greek and Latin Literature Relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism*, (K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Publication No. 4, 1928) pages 85 - 86. (A copy of these pages

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from this out of print work was generously made available to me by my friend Farrokh Vajifdar). It is easy to understand why light should be chosen to describe the (metaphoric) 'body' of Wisdom personified (*mazdā-*). Wisdom personifies is a state of enlightenment.

I now have Vasunia's more recent translation of Porphyry, which is as follows: the 'he' refers to Pythagoras,

"These are the things he taught; but above all, to observe the truth; for this was the only thing in which humans could come close to God. For, as he learned from the Magi, God himself, whom they call Oromazes, resembles light with regard to his body and truth with regard to his soul." Vasunia 2007 p. 144, translating from Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* 41.

<sup>50</sup> See in *Part Two: A Question of Reward and the Path, The Puzzle of the Most-Good Vahishta, and The Houses of Paradise and Hell*.

<sup>51</sup> That non-deathness (*amərətāt-*) is increased (Y34:11, discussed in this chapter) corroborates the idea that *haurvatāt-* occurs at a collective level. If we all are fragments of one life force, then as more of these parts become complete (*haurvatāt-* at an individual level), and re-unite with the other parts that have done so as well (*haurvatāt-* at the collective level), this union of wholly *ašavan-* parts increases, as does their condition of non-deathness.