

## THE GATHIC WAY OF LIFE

The Gathic way of life is founded upon **Wisdom**. In the very first verse, Zarathushtra advises that, rather than seeking divine intervention, one should seek Wisdom and use it to live in harmony with Nature.

This I seek with reverence  
With uplifted hands  
The perfectness of the mind, Wisdom  
The first benevolence of Asha  
All should aspire to achieve  
Good Creation with intelligent thoughts  
Thus, creating harmony between existence  
And the inner self  
Zarathushtra – Gatha – Yasna 28.1 (FR)

According to Ha 31.11, religions were established by organisations that used their intelligence to promote their Thoughts through rituals and guidance, often for personal gain. Today, such well-structured systems make renewal difficult. A rigid, change-resistant mentality hampers progress.

Long before prophets appeared, the Gathas associated the sounds from the sky (Vivan Gusho) with those who seek to dominate others (Ha 32.8). The verse further states that as Wisdom increases, humanity will break free from the shackles, gradually dispel such beliefs, and continue to progress.

Thus, the Real World, the world in Existence, is the central focus of the Gathas. To master this Real World, a **six-step process** is recommended (Ha 28.3 & 28.10):

Truly, the *Asha* (2) derived through  
The *Good Mind* (1)  
Never before known  
Among the Wise and all Creation  
(With it) Bring about *Good Rules* (3) and never-waning  
Increasing *Righteousness* (4)  
Leading us towards *Perfection* (5)  
Zarathushtra – Gatha -Yasna Ha 28.3 (FR)

We have to use our 1-*Good Mind* to study 2-*Nature* and apply the knowledge so gained to establish 3-*Good Rules* thereby making society 4-*Righteous* and in harmony with nature. People in such a society will have the opportunity to attain 5-*Perfection* in their chosen profession and leave behind a legacy for which they will be 6-*Remembered* for generations.

And those who are righteous are known for  
Good creations and use of the wise mind  
In harmony with Wisdom in Existence  
Their aim achieved  
Their desire assuredly, Happiness

Their reward, knowledge and being known as righteous,  
Faithful and praiseworthy. (6)  
Zarathushtra - Gatha - Yasna HA 28.10 (FR)

The righteous use their wise minds to create products and innovations that are in harmony with the Wisdom in Existence. They aim to benefit humankind. They do not seek material reward; instead, they take satisfaction in the knowledge they gain and in being praised and remembered for their legacy. Through this, they attain *Immortality*, living on in the memories of future generations.

Later, a seventh step was added: *Self-Realisation (Khod-Ah)*, and the complete sequence became known as the **Seven Amesha Spentas**. A righteous person, through Self-Realisation, would recognise the divine within.

Over time, this seventh step was moved to the top and renamed **Ormazd**, turning the sequence into a pantheon of seven divine beings. The original Gathic philosophy was gradually lost. At the beginning of this millennium, images of these beings were beautifully illustrated by a Jewish artist and shared online. Zoroastrians purchased the copyright from Pyracantha Studios. Today, many people worship these images, lighting lamps and hanging garlands upon them. They also appear on the websites of many Zoroastrian associations — a living example of how customs and deities are formed and evolve.

The original Gathic six steps are immortalised in the six steps leading to the resting place of Kourosh (Cyrus the Great) and in the bas-relief of groups of six guests at Persepolis, each bringing NowRuz gifts from their respective kingdoms.

The latter seven-step system was symbolised on the NowRuz table by placing **Seven Trays (Sini)** (سینى) containing numerous offerings for guests. In the last century, Iranians who wished to preserve their banned ancient culture—yet avoid the wrath of the clergy—camouflaged the philosophical symbolism. They reduced the concept to the now-famous *seven simple items beginning with the letter S*, replacing philosophy with the properties of these items:

- “I am **SUMAC**; I give your kebabs a tangy taste. I symbolise Taste.”
- “I am **SEER**, Garlic; I lower blood pressure and bring calm. I symbolise Peace.”
- “I am **SENJED**, the fruit of the sorb tree; tasteless but giving shade. I symbolise Shelter and Security.”
- “I am **SERKEH**, Vinegar; I am sour yet an excellent preservative. I symbolise Preservation.” And so on.

The original six steps lead to a *paradigm shift* in human values. Wealth is no longer measured by dollars or gold, but by good deeds, knowledge, and a good name. People compete to do good. The aim of life becomes happiness and Immortality: being remembered for generations for the good one has done.

Such a paradigm shift eliminates exploitation of customers, underpaid labour, wars for resources, and religious conflict. The Gathas even encourage **competition in goodness**, even between husband and wife: “*Surpass one another in the pursuit of Truth.*” (Ha 53.5)

## THE SEVEN STEPS AS SYMBOLISED ON THE NOWRUZ TABLE

1. **Good Mind** *Vohu Mana* — Use your Good Mind to inquire and learn the
2. **Ultimate Truth** *Asha Vahista* — Understand the Laws of Nature, the Secrets within Nature, and use them to create
3. **Good Rules** *Khashatra Variya* — Good Guidance and Good Products, which lead to
4. **Lawful Desire** *Spanta Armaiti*— Righteousness, paving the way toward
5. **Perfection** *Hurvata* — Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Wholeness, leading to
6. **Immortality** *Ameretata* — (a) Being remembered for one's good work across generations  
(b) Losing the fear of death
7. **KHOD-AH (Self-Realisation)** — KHOD = self; AH = to come. Later replaced by **Ourmazd**.

Now that the people of Greater Iran are rediscovering the greatness of their ancient culture, it is time to **revive the original philosophy** behind the NowRuz table.

In the real world, we seek the correct answer. In the world of thoughts, many answers may seem convincing, but they are not necessarily correct. A clear example is the story of creation and the soul's journey after death: each religion has its own version, attributed to its only God.

We are reminded that the Universe processes the Truth, and that when we use our Wisdom to create what we imagine, it must be **progressive**. *Noit Mazda AVastriyo — Never should Wisdom be non-progressive.*

And they of these chose  
Progress for themselves bringing prosperity  
The Universe possesses the Truth  
Good creation is nourished in the mind  
Never should Wisdom be non-progressive  
Even the distorter of the truth of this good message partakes  
Zarathushtra – Gatha – Yasna 31.10 (FR)

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