

DUALISM AS PRESENTED BY ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE GATHA

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Zarathushtra has been erroneously portrayed as the preacher of Dualism. On one hand he is credited for being the first person to introduce monotheism to the world. On the other hand, it is claimed that he has said that Ahura Mazda is the Creator of only the good things in creation and therefore the bad things fall to the realm of Ahrimana.

Zarathushtra is the most misunderstood, misinterpreted, misquoted, misbelieved and misapprehended teacher the world has seen. His teachings' - The Gathas - has over 50 translations and not two translations are the same. At least Neitzsche the author of "Thus spoke Zarathushtra" can be commended for not quoting the Gathas while putting his own thoughts down as those of Zarathushtra.

The reason why Zarathushtra is misapprehended is that he has spoken of the Ultimate Truth. He had understood the nature of things; he had understood the Universe; he had understood the Wisdom in Creation. He has clearly expounded these facts in the Gathas. These facts are not in harmony with the general belief the world is used to having. The world of science and knowledge is looked upon incredulously by religion. It is a well-known story in all major religions, that Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise for having eaten from the tree of knowledge.ⁱ

In history we see that, when in the Persian Empire the real teachings of Zarathushtra were practiced, not only did his adherents prosper, but also every nation and culture that was in contact with them reaped the benefit.ⁱⁱ During that period the civilized world leaped forward into a new age. Paganism took second seat; philosophy and science were openly discussed, although philosophers like Socrates were put to death for their thoughts.

Unfortunately whenever unquestionable beliefs and faith replaces wisdom, understanding the teachings of Zarathushtra becomes difficult. Those that emotionally love him, without perceiving his

enunciation, try to make his teachings compatible with general beliefs. It is here that they take advantage of the antiquity and lack of common knowledge of the Avesta Language and its unknown grammar. They rearrange the words to form sentences to suite their beliefs. Thus we have the so-called translations, each of which has its' own story.

The verses of the Gathas that are commonly quoted when trying to argue for or against dualism are from Yasna Ha 30.

Let us look at the very first line of Yasna Ha. 30.1 in Avesta language

At TA vakh shay ishen to

This is translated as: -

Now to those eager shall I speak of the TWO (Dr. Taraporewalla)

This is in spite of the Avesta word for TWO not being found in the Avesta rendering of Yasna Ha 30.1.

Also let us look at Yasna Ha. 30.2, line three

Avar anao vi chi tha hya

This is translated as: -

Before deciding between the TWO paths (Dr. Taraporewalla)

Here again the Avesta word for TWO cannot be found in the Avesta rendering of Yasna Ha 30.2. A tabulation of the words translated to mean TWO in Yasna Ha.30 by some of the translators would help.

Out of 19 translations ⁱⁱⁱ that were used in the tabulation below, some have said Two, others did not. Some have called Mainyu, the Spirit; others have called it Thoughts. The tabulation shows the number of scholars who did not use the word Two for the specified words.

<u>Ha</u>	<u>Avesta word</u>	<u>English meaning</u>	<u>of 19 translation</u> <u>TWO was NOT</u> <u>USED in</u>
[30.1- (2)]	Ta	of the TWO	9
[30.2-(7)	Avar anao	TWO paths	13
[30.3-(15)	Hi	these TWO	10
[30.3-(18)	Aos	of these TWO	7
[30.4-(6)	Mainyu	TWO spirits	2
[30.5-(2)	Maini vao	TWO spirits	1
[30.6-(1)	Ayao	of the TWO	3

So why have some translators added Two everywhere? Why has Mainyu become a Spirit and even the Holy Spirit? There are at least two obvious reasons. The most important one being, the influence of latter Pahlavi texts that speaks of dualism, the dualism between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman.

Bundahisht^{iv} Chapter 1.3. Explains as under.

"Revelation is the explanation of both spirits together; one is he who is independent of unlimited time, because Ohrmazd and the region, religion, and time of Ohrmazd were and are and ever will be; while Ahriman in darkness, with backward understanding and desire for destruction, was in the abyss, and it is he who will not be; and the place of that destruction, and also of that darkness, is what they call the 'endlessly dark.' 4. And between them was empty space, that is, what they call 'air,' in which is now their meeting. "

The reason for such conclusion and confusion was the influence of other religions in the days when the Zarathushti Nation was weak and vulnerable. In other religions God went to men; men could not go to God. He appeared only before those individuals that he chose to appear that too in the privacy of the mountains away from the crowd. In contrast the God of Zarathushtra was approachable by each and every human that desired it, no bars no distinctions. It just involved following the natural

laws in nature, the Eternal Law, which has come down to us as the Amesha Sepantas.

The students of Zarathushtra tabulated this approach, the Eternal Law; in its natural step by step ascend towards Ahura Mazda. Starting with Vohu Mana, - the use of the Good Mind - and evolving towards Perfection and finally understanding and realizing Ahura Mazda. Thus Ahura Mazda being the goal, the final destination, appeared last on their list.

An explanation of the original concept of the Amesha Sepantas will put things into perspective.

The progress of the Earth and all that dwell on it is according to this principle. It is also the natural process of progress in the expanding universe. Although unrecognized it is being followed by us humans' wherever there is progress. Let us go through the Seven AMESHA - SEPANTA, in summary form, and understand them as the ancient Zarathushties understood it.^v

1- The mind, the intelligence, should be used in a Good way and each one to their maximum capacity. **VOHU MANA**

2- Using the mind in a **Good** way and to its maximum, results in the understanding of the natural laws and we end up with good knowledge, good discoveries, good inventions. **ASHA VAHISTA**

3- The information, the truth, the discoveries, what do we do with them? We have to use them to make life better, by making Good Rules, Good Laws and giving Good Guidance. **KHASH ATRA VAIRYA**. That would also lead to Good Products and Good Services.

4- The result of Khash atra vairya is Righteousness, a Righteous Society, a Righteous Nation, a Paradise where people live in harmony with each other and with nature. Where there is No war, No pollution, No sickness, No lies, No thefts, and No fear. Where all DESIRES are LAWFUL. **SPENTA ARMAITI**

5- In such a Righteous Society people have a chance to advance Mentally, Physically and Spiritually. The result is PERFECTION. Perfect doctors, perfect engineers, perfect musicians, perfect farmers, perfect

poets, perfect athletes, perfect priests, perfection in all fields.
HAURVATATA

6- Perfection creates a mental stage in human life where one is Free from the Fear of Death, free from the fear of the unknown. Thereby one does not belong to the material world but to a timeless, spaceless state of mind where death has no meaning. **AMERETAT**

7- Having attained Perfection and lost the sense of fear, the final and seventh stage is attained. One understands and becomes one with, The Wisdom in Creation, **MAZDA AHURA**, the Power, the living Wisdom, the active, creative, expanding Force that keeps the universe in action and chain reaction, and the Creator of this Wisdom **AHURA MAZDA**.

Now when the original meaning and concept of Amesha Sepantas were lost and were instead personified as the Izads, the Bountiful Immortals, the attributes of God, the whole story changed. Ormazd (Ahura Mazda) had to be in front of the line of the Izads (gods) to lead them. It was considered disrespectful to start with the Izads and utter the name of God at the end. So Ahura Mazda was moved to the front. Here He was confronted with Ahri Mana - the evil mind - that was otherwise holding on to its rightful place in opposition to Vohu Mana the good mind. At once Ahri Mana is also personified as the all-powerful horned being, sporting a tail and holding a spear working against God. Dualism is born. God with all his powers is not able to subdue this creation of his and so enters into an agreement of partnership with it, in ruling the world.

According to Bundahish Chapter 1.13.

Then Ohrmazd, with a knowledge of which way the end of the matter would be, went to meet Ahriman, and proposed peace to him, and spoke thus: 'Evil spirit! bring assistance unto my creatures, and offer praise! So that, in reward for it, ye (you and your creatures) may become immortal and undecaying, hungerless and thirstless.'

More recently Amesha Sepantas have been described as the attributes of Ahura Mazda. It is like giving God a shape. Zarathushtra has never described God; he has never draw a picture of God. Knowing the attributes of God is like having a mental picture. The Babylonian gods had attributes; every time the Babylonians defeated an enemy they enhanced the attribute of their god by adding the attribute of their

enemy's god. Mardukh the Babylonian god is said to have enhanced 51 attributes.^{vi}

The second reason for using TWO is claimed to be grammatical. Since the concerned words are in the plural, which naturally means more than one, it has seemed legitimate to categorize them as dual words and then be specific and say TWO. For example instead of saying, "between the Paths" that means any number of paths, some have chosen to limit it by translating it as "between the TWO paths".

If we do not add our own thoughts and let the Gathas speak for itself the word by word translation of Ha 30.1 and 30.2 will be: -

And of these shall I speak to those eager
Those qualities of wisdom that all the wise wish
And call creative qualities
And good creation of the mind
That all powerful truth
Truly and that more & better ways are discovered
Towards Perfection.
Zarathushtra - Gatha Yasna 30.1 (FR)

Listen with your ears to the supreme facts
Consider with open mind
Between the paths before deciding
Person by person for his own self
Before greatness of the message
Is truly spread, understand each one.
Zarathushtra - Gatha Yasna 30.2 (FR)

There is nothing of a dualistic nature that Zarathushtra has said in these verses. If there is anything of dualistic nature that he speaks about, it is **the dualistic nature of the human MIND, the MANA - the Thoughts.**

And these thoughts in the beginning
That opposing thoughts revealed
In the mind and in the words also
In the deeds and these were good and bad
And of these the wise
Rightly choose not so truly the unwise
Zarathushtra - Gatha Yasna 30.3 (FR)

It is the human mind that is capable of being good and bad instantaneously. VOHU MANA and AHRI MANA. Zarathushtra wants us to understand this and avoid the bad use of the mind. He wants us to look for the all-powerful truth and discover ways to achieve PERFECTION.

Truly the knowledge derived
By the good mind
Never before known
Among the Wise and in the Universe
From it bring good rule, never waning
Increasing creativity
Leading us towards perfection
Zarathushtra - Gatha Yasna Ha 28.3 (FR)

Ahri Mana is not a spirit and is not in opposition to Ahura Mazda the Creator, but it is the negative side of the human Mind (Mana). Use your mind in a good way, (Vohu Mana) and attain Perfection, bring happiness unto yourself and your neighbours. Unfortunately society has developed on the wrong footing, instead of using Vohu Mana to live a perfect and peaceful life on this planet we use our Ahri Mana to make Bread Out Of Stone^{vii} and create more material wealth for ourselves by causing harm to other people and the environment.

Of importance is our understanding of the aim of life on this planet. Zarathushtra sees it as attaining Perfection, understanding the Wisdom in Creation and being one with the Creator of this Wisdom, Ahura Mazda.

Certainly I shall acquire
The Wisdom in Existence
Through good use of the mind
I shall master them all
Physical and that of the mind
Gaining through knowledge
Whereby desiring and getting perfection
Zarathushtra - Gatha Yasna Ha 28.2 (FR)

Zarathushtra has given a blue print for the creation of Paradise on Earth; unfortunately society is preoccupied with misinterpreting him as a preacher of dualism.

ⁱ Bible - Genesis 2.9 and 3.5

ⁱⁱ For detail see "The Benevolent Empire" - in Iran Zamin Vol. 1 No.1

ⁱⁱⁱ Gathas translated by: M.B.Anklesaria, Mobed Firouz Azargoshasb, Datur F.A Bode, Mary Boyce, J.M. Chaterjee, F.S. Chinawalla, S. Insler, A.V.W. Jackson, Ali A. Jafarey, Ervad KE.Kanga, Kavi A.F. Khabardar, L.H.Mills, K.E.Punegar, F. Rustomji, T.R. Sethna, Spiegel, I.J.S.Taraporewala N.Daval, Bartholomae

^{iv} The Bundahishn ("Creation"), or Knowledge from the Zand -Translated by E. W. West, from **Sacred Books of the East**, volume 5, Oxford University Press, 1897.

^v For detail check the web site - www.ancientiran.com "Teachings of Zarathushtra."

^{vi} Babylonian and Assyrian Religions. BY S.H. Hookie - Oxford - Basil Blackwell 1953.

^{vii} Bible Mathew 4:1-4