

Yatha Ahu Vairyo Prayer

by

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Before we discuss the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer, I would like to give a brief explanation of Mazda and His attributes, the amesha spenta, because their meanings are relevant to the Yatha Ahu Vairyo.

In referring to the object of his worship, Zarathushtra does not use the generic word for "god" in the language of his day. According to the late Professor Thieme, Zarathushtra's notion of 'God' is Wisdom personified.¹ Specifically, he calls 'God' most often 'Mazda' which means 'Wisdom', and also 'Ahura' which means 'Lord'. And he sometimes combines these two nouns as Mazda Ahura, which, centuries later, became the compound name Ahura Mazda. In the Gathas, Mazda has certain attributes which were later called the amesha spenta. These attributes of Mazda also appear in man, although not perfected as they are in Mazda.

Asha

The first is asha, which literally means "what fits". It has been translated as "truth", "order", and "righteousness". You well may wonder: How can one word mean so many different things? Well, Zarathushtra sees reality in terms of what he calls the existences of matter and mind (Y28.2).

In the existence of matter, "what fits" is what is correct, accurate, hence factual truth. It includes the true order of things in our physical universe, the laws that underlie the way our physical universe functions -- the laws of chemistry, biology, physics, astronomy, et cetera.

In the existence of mind, "what fits" is also what is correct, what's right -- not a puritanical, judgmental rectitude, but one which, in the Gathas, includes such qualities as goodness, love, generosity, solicitude, friendship, compassion, justice et cetera. So in essence, "asha" means the truth of things, or the true order of things, in the existences of both matter and mind. So when you hear the word "truth" for "asha" please remember that it means not only factual truth, but also the truths of mind and spirit -- all that is good and true and right.

Vohu Manah

The next amesha spenta is vohu manah which Professor Insler tells us, means a good mind (the instrument), good thinking (the process), and good thought (the product)². Needing to select one, for translation, he translates vohu manah as "good thinking" because in the Gathas, it is most often the process that is relevant. Vohu manah is the means by which we search for, and comprehend, the truth -- factual truth, and the truths of mind and spirit (asha).

Aramaiti

The next amesha spenta is: aramaiti. Scholars who are linguists are in substantial disagreement as to the meaning of aramaiti, which they variously translate as

rightmindedness;³ divine wisdom;⁴ piety or respect;⁵ faith and devotion;⁶ satisfying intention;⁷ fittingness, submission and humility;⁸ and serenity, stability, tranquility.¹⁴

Many of these translations forget that aramaiti is an amesha spenta -- an attribute of Mazda. It is clear that linguistics alone has not provided an answer for the meaning of aramaiti, although each linguist passionately believes in his translation.

In trying to figure out the meaning of aramaiti, it is helpful to look at the ways in which Zarathushtra uses the word in the Gathas. This suggests that aramaiti means embodying truth (asha), giving it life, substance, with our thoughts, words and actions of truth -- the proverbial good thoughts, good words and good actions which are a fundament of Zarathushtra's thought. For example, he says: "But to this world He came with the rule of good thinking and of truth, and (our) enduring [aramaiti] gave body and breath (to it)....." Y30.7.⁹ How do we give "body and breath" to the rule of truth and good thinking? We cannot do so with rightmindedness, or piety, or respect, or devotion or serenity alone. We can only give the rule of truth and good thinking "body and breath" -- give it life -- with our thoughts, words and actions. Similarly, in Y44.6 Zarathushtra says: "...Through its actions, [aramaiti] gives substance to the truth...", indicating that actions are included within the concept of aramaiti. And he describes a person of aramaiti as follows: "[Spenta] is a man of [aramaiti]. He is so by reason of his understanding, his words, his actions, his conception [daena]....." Y51.21, indicating that the concept of aramaiti includes all these things -- understanding, words, action, vision. In short, aramaiti means 'embodied truth'. There is no one English word that adequately translates aramaiti, so I leave it untranslated.

Vohu Xshathra

The fourth amesha spenta is vohu xshathra, which means good rule. In the Gathas it is called the rule of truth, aramaiti, and good thinking¹⁰. In other words, good rule is the rule of the true order of things (all that is true, good, right), its comprehension, and its embodiment in thought, word and action. Good rule involves the use of power, not for self-aggrandizement or control, but to advance the truth, in ourselves, and in our societies. In the context of society, the use of power is a public trust.

Haurvatat / Ameretat

The fifth and sixth amesha spenta -- often found together in the Gathas -- are haurvatat which means completeness, wholeness, perfection, and ameretat which literally means "non-deathness", although it is universally translated as "immortality". I do not think "immortality" is consistent with the ways in which Zarathushtra uses ameretat in the Gathas, but I will not get into that here.

Spenta Mainyu

The seventh concept, spenta mainyu is a benevolent spirit or way of being -- a way of being that is in accord with truth (asha) -- that chooses the truth¹¹, and that derives its "spenta" quality from truth¹². Insler, translates "spenta" as virtuous, more recently as benevolent, and he translates "mainyu" as spirit. Jafarey translates "mainyu" as mentality, and many Zoroastrians have come to prefer "mentality" as the correct translation for "mainyu". But with

due respect, this does not accord with the way in which Zarathushtra uses the word in the Gathas. For example: In Y30.3 Zarathushtra says: "Yes, there are two fundamental [mainyu], twins which are renowned to be in conflict. In thought and in word, in action, they are two..." Y30.3. If the two mainyu manifest themselves in thought, word and action, then all three activities would have to be included within the concept of mainyu, not just mentality. Similarly, in Y45.2, Zarathushtra describes a hypothetical conversation in which the spenta mainyu says to its opposite: "..... Neither our thoughts nor teachings nor intentions, neither our preferences nor words, neither our actions nor conceptions [daena] nor our souls are in accord....." Y45.2, indicating that the concept of mainyu includes all those things -- i.e. the full spectrum of a way of being, of which mentality or thought is only a part. I therefore take mainyu to mean "spirit" as in a "way-of-being", like the spirit of liberty, the spirit of independence, the spirit of friendship, et cetera.

There is some dispute as to whether spenta mainyu is, historically, an amesha spenta, but that debate is not relevant for our purposes, and for convenience, I include spenta mainyu within my use of the term amesha spenta.

Let us turn to the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer. It reads as follows:

yatha ahu vairyo atha ratush ashat chit hacha
vangheush dazda manangho shyaothananam angheush mazdai
xshathremcha ahurai.a yim dregubyo dadat vastarem

The Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer appears in Yasna 27 verse 13. This prayer is called the Ahuna Vairya in ancient Avestan texts (Ahunavar in Pahlavi texts). It's language is pure Gathic, and it is in the same poetic metre as the Ahunavaiti Gatha. Many scholars believe that it was composed by Zarathushtra himself. Indeed, it encapsulates Zarathushtra's way of life in a nutshell.

Unfortunately, translations of this prayer vary widely. The translation I use is that of Professor Insler of Yale University.¹³ The words in square brackets have been inserted by me, by way of explanation, or to show you the applicable Gathic word (but without its grammatical inflections and variations). Here is the translation.

Just as the Lord [ahu] must be chosen
So also the judgment [ratush] in accord with truth [asha]
In consequence of (this) good thinking
[vohu manah, the comprehension and choosing of asha]
establish the rule [xshathra]
of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking
for the Wise One [mazda],

and for the lord [ahura] whom they
established as pastor for the needy-dependents.

The Ahuna Vairya prayer is not addressed to Mazda, as prayer normally is. Nor is it a hymn of praise. It is a manthra, a nugget of wisdom, the purpose of which is to remind us of certain truths, as we recite it and meditate over it. So what does this manthra, this nugget of wisdom, teach us. It teaches us some very powerful and beautiful things. Let us consider them.

In the long history of Zoroastrianism, this prayer, the Ahuna Vairya, has been regarded as something of a talisman, a very potent charm, capable of producing extraordinary effects. In an early commentary on the Ahuna Vairya which appears in Yasna 19 verse 10 (not a part of the Gathas), it is written that Ahura Mazda said of this Ahuna Vairya, that:

"..... this utterance is a thing of such a nature, that if all the corporeal and living world should learn it, and learning hold fast to it, they would be redeemed from their mortality!"¹⁴

And a later Pahlavi text, the Bundahishn, (written some centuries after the Arab invasion) describes it as a formula for defeating evil. It states:

"..... even so as is declared in revelation, that when one of its [the Ahunavar's] three parts was uttered, the evil spirit contracted his body through fear, and when two parts of it were uttered, he fell upon his knees, and when all of it was uttered he became confounded and impotent as to the harm he caused the creatures of Ahuramazd "¹⁵

It is significant, that even after the devastation wrought by Alexander and by the later Arab invasion, the idea survived in what remained of the Zoroastrian community, that the Ahuna Vairya is so powerful, that it not only enables us to transcend our mortality, as stated in Yasna 19, but also enables the defeat of evil, as the Bundahishn states. A potent talisman indeed.

Naturally, one wonders: How? How does the Ahuna Vairya defeat evil? How does it help us to transcend our mortality?

To answer the first question (how does it defeat evil) we have to remember Zarathushtra's idea of evil. In the Gathas, every descriptive reference to evil, is the product of wrongful choices. Zarathushtra describes evil as a primordial way of being [mainyu]. He does not specify its origins. But he suggests that in our existence, we bring it to life, we give it substance, we make it real, when we choose it with our thoughts, words and actions. Therefore a key to the destruction of evil and the suffering it causes, is making the right choices, which brings us back to the Ahuna Vairya prayer -- the prayer of choices.

This prayer specifies three things that are to be chosen: the lord [ahu], the judgment [ratush], and the rule [xshathra].

A word of explanation. The verb "vairyo" which means "must be chosen" and which appears in the first segment, also applies to the second segment. Similarly, the phrase "ashat chit hacha" which means "in accord with truth" which appears in the second segment, also applies to the first. This kind of ellipsis is typical of Zarathushtra's poetic style, and appears

frequently in the Gathas. I have footnoted a reference which gives many such instances, so that you can check it out, if you wish.¹⁶

<p><u>First choice:</u></p>	<p>yatha ahu vairyo</p> <p>Just as the lord [ahu] must be chosen [vairyo]</p> <p>[in accord with truth, asha]</p>
<p><u>Second choice:</u></p>	<p>atha ratush ashat chit hacha</p> <p>so also the judgment [ratush] in accord with truth [asha]</p> <p>[must be chosen]</p>
<p><u>Third choice:</u></p>	<p>vangheush dazda manangho shyaothananam angheush mazdai xshathremcha ahurai.a yim dregubyo dadat vastarem.</p> <p>As a result of this good thinking</p> <p>establish the rule [xshathra] of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking,</p> <p>for (the sake of) the Wise One, and for the lord whom they established as pastor for the needy-dependents.</p>

The First Choice:

What does Zarathushtra mean by choosing the Lord in accord with truth? To understand the significance of this choice, we have to think back to Zarathushtra's time period.

Today, we are used to thinking in terms of a benevolent monotheism. But the situation was very different for Zarathushtra. We know from the Gathas that the society in which he lived was violent, corrupt and cruel. He complains of greedy princes, a thieving aristocracy, and pleasure loving priests who, seduced by power and wealth,

"... chose the rule of tyrants and deceit rather than truth [asha]." Y32.12.

These tyrants used fear to promote the worship of their gods, some of whom Zarathushtra describes as "fierce"¹⁷ and their actions as "hateful"¹⁸. And Zarathushtra made a choice. He

concluded that deities who were cruel and tyrannical were not worthy of worship. He not only spoke out against them, he demoted them from godhood. Imagine the guts that took!

Having rejected the "godhood", of these violent and cruel local gods, Zarathushtra found himself re-thinking the whole notion of divinity. If the divine could not be evil, neither could it, logically, be a mixture of good and evil. It could only be all good, the spenta way of being (spenta mainyu), a way of being that is in accord with truth (asha).

He concluded that only pure goodness, pure wisdom, could lay claim to divinity, could be worthy of worship. He described the attributes of divinity (later called the amesha spenta) as:

Truth ([asha](#))

Its comprehension through good thinking ([voḥu manah](#))

Its embodiment in thought, word and action ([aramaiti](#))

Its good rule ([voḥu xshathra](#)),
the rule of truth, aramaiti, and good thinking

Its complete and undying personification ([haurvatat, ameretat](#))

All of which comprise the benevolent way of being ([spenta mainyu](#))

And all of which comprise Wisdom personified ([Mazda](#)).

In other words, the first choice of the Ahuna Vairyā requires that we choose the object of our worship (the lord -- ahū), in accordance with truth, asha.

Zarathushtra's conception of the Divine moved away from one that was fear-based, (requiring the worshipper to accept whatever cruelty or violence was dished out by a deity who had to be appeased with bribes and sacrifices) to one that is pure goodness, Wisdom personified, and therefore worthy of worship.

A significant step in man's quest for the Divine.

Although the pantheon of local gods with whom Zarathushtra had to contend, are not around today, the first choice of the Ahuna Vairyā is still relevant to us. Like our ancient ancestors, we too tend to worship many gods, just different ones -- wealth, power, prestige, appearances, position. By Zarathushtra's standards, such gods are not worthy of worship. We need to choose what we worship "[in accordance with truth \[asha\]](#)."

It is sobering to think how many people in the world live under dictatorships -- without choice, without basic human rights. According to the Ahuna Vairyā prayer, even the object of our worship is to be chosen in accord with asha. Logically then, people should also choose their temporal rulers in accordance with asha. If this idea of Zarathushtra were to be believed and held, worldwide, it would solve not only the problems of dictatorship, but also those of democracy.

The Second Choice:

The Second Choice of the Ahuna Vairya prayer, is "[the judgment in accord with truth](#)". What is "[the judgment in accord with truth](#)"? It is vohu manah -- good thinking, understanding asha, and making our choices in accordance with that understanding.

Good thinking is the key to accessing the factual truths of our universe -- the laws of science. It is also the key to understanding the truths of mind and spirit. It is the key to accessing asha -- the key to accessing the divine.¹⁹ And good thinking, according to Zarathushtra, requires that we think for ourselves -- not blindly accept what others may tell us.

["Listen with your ears to the best things. Reflect with a clear mind -- man by man for himself " Y30.2;](#)

["... as long as I shall be able and be strong, so long shall I look in quest of truth. Truth, shall I see thee as I continue to acquire both good thinking and the way to the Lord?....." Y28.4 -- 5.](#)

Indeed, even when asking for Mazda's guidance, Zarathushtra asks that it be given through good thinking, not by fact-specific rules that must be blindly obeyed. He says:

["..... instruct through good thinking \(the course\) of my direction, in order to be the charioteer of my will and my tongue." Y50.6.](#)

The Third Choice:

The Third Choice of the Ahuna Vairya prayer is choosing to establish, or bring to life, "[the rule \[xshathra\] of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking](#)" which, in my view, is the concept of aramaiti, although not mentioned by name.

The importance of this third choice -- the rule of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking -- is reflected in Zarathushtra's view of what it takes to be a saoshyant -- a savior.

In the later texts, the concept of a saoshyant became greatly embroidered and exaggerated to the point of elevating saoshyant to the status of a miraculous messiah of great power who will be victorious over evil, and make everything all right. We are not much different today. Whether it is Superman, or Yoda, or other omniscient aliens with miraculous powers from another star system, we too hunger for a leader with magical powers who will make everything turn out all right.

This view of the saoshyant you will not find in the Gathas. There is no one savior (or two or three) with magical powers who will come to fix things for us. We have to fix things for ourselves, with Mazda's help, and with the help of each other. According to Zarathushtra, each individual is a potential saoshyant -- a potential savior. And what we need saving from are the wrongful choices that bring grief and pain to our existence. In the Gathas he asks:

["... which men shall stop the cruelty \(caused\) by the violent deceitful persons? To which man shall come the understanding stemming from good thinking? Y48.11](#)

And he concludes:

"Yes, those men shall be the saviors [saoshyanto] of the lands, namely, those who shall follow their knowledge of Thy teaching with actions in harmony with good thinking and with truth [asha], Wise One. These indeed have been fated to be the expellers of fury." Y48.12.

The "actions in harmony with good thinking and with truth [asha]," of this Gathic verse, Y48.12, is the same thought as the "actions stemming from an existence of good thinking" of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer -- actions which bring the divine to life with each thought, word and action -- not only in our spirits, but also in our world -- and so establish good rule (vohu xshathra) in both. To Zarathushtra, the material and the spiritual are inextricably linked -- each necessary to bring about the desired end. Thoughts, words and actions of asha (the material embodying the spiritual) are the means by which we achieve the desired end -- the best asha, the best thinking -- a spiritual state of being, as well as a good society, a better world.

Thus the purpose of life -- to realize, or make real, the divine -- is achieved in both existences, in the existence of mind and spirit, as well as in the existence of matter, our material world. If we follow this formula, this world would indeed be heaven on earth, and the suffering caused by wrongful choices would cease to exist.

We can summarize the talismanic virtues of the Ahuna Vairya as a formula for defeating evil and the suffering it causes, quite simply: When we create light, the darkness ceases to exist. We create light by bringing the divine to life with our choices -- our choices of who and what we worship, our choices in thought, word and action stemming from an understanding of asha. When we stop choosing evil, we deprive it of substance. It becomes impotent, unable to cause harm and suffering, as the Bundahishn tells us.

But what of the promise of Yasna 19, that if we learn the Ahuna Vairya, and learning, hold fast to it, we will transcend our mortality.

In Zoroastrian lore, which is highly metaphoric, we are told that the Chinvat Bridge (the Bridge of the Separator, or the Bridge of the Judge), stretches from the material to the good spiritual existence. I take the imagery of the bridge to represent (metaphorically) a transition from an existence of mortality, to an existence of pure mind. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra tells Ahura Mazda that he will cross over this bridge, in the company of the divine attributes ("... in the glory of your kind ...") with each man and woman who gives him "... truth for the truth, and the rule of good thinking ..." Y46.10.

This Gathic verse echoes the Ahuna Vairya formula that we must choose the divine in our understanding, in our words and actions. When we do so, it becomes a part of us (or we become a part of it), and we make the transition (we cross over the bridge) from mortality to the good spiritual state where the reason for mortality no longer exists (non-deathness ameretat), or as the author of the later Yasna 19 puts it, we are redeemed from our mortality.

This brings us to the last part of the Ahuna Vairya, which says that we establish the rule of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking, "... for the Wise One [mazda] and for the lord [ahura] whom they established as pastor for the needy-dependents."

In the last verse of the last Gatha, Mazda is described as the one who grants what is very good to his needy dependent who lives honestly. In the second Gatha, Yasna 29 verse 2, "ahura"

refers to a person, a human being,²⁰ who would nurture Mazda's good vision (the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking) and Zarathushtra is chosen by Mazda and his divine aspects, to bring Mazda's teachings to mortals, and be a pastor or nurturer to them and Mazda's good vision.

The last line of the Ahuna Vairya seems to combine these two thoughts when it says "... for (the sake of) the Wise One [mazda] and for the lord [ahura] whom they [the divine aspects] established as pastor for the needy-dependents". At one level, mazda may refer to God, and ahura to Zarathushtra, the enlightened man who has attained, or acquired lordship over, the attributes of divinity, truth, good thinking, et cetera. At another level, mazda and ahura may refer to two parts of the same Whole.

So the last line of the Ahuna Vairya says that we establish the rule of the divine (i.e. actions stemming from an existence of good thinking) for the sake of the divine (mazda and ahura) who in turn nurture (are the pastor for) those who have not yet made it -- the needy-dependents. That is how we defeat evil. That is how we (individually and collectively) transcend our mortality.

One last thought. The last part of the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer exquisitely complements the last part of the Ashem Vohu prayer.

In the Ashem Vohu, we desire the divine (asha) for the sake of the divine as concept -- the best asha (vahashtai ashem).

In the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer, by our choices, we realize or make real, the divine (through actions stemming from a comprehension of asha), for the sake of the divine as being -- mazda and ahura.

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¹ Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, in the *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium*, (WZO 1993, published in 1998), p. 201.

² See Insler, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, (Brill 1975) page 118. For a more detailed discussion of the definition of vohu manah see *Harmony in Paradox: The Paradox of the Material and the Spiritual*, on www.vohuman.org.

³ Humbach translates aramaiti as "rightmindedness", See Humbach, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts*, (Heidelberg, 1991), Vol. 1, page 13.

⁴ Sethna translates aramaiti as divine wisdom, Sethna, *The Teachings of Zarathushtra*, (1978), page 17 et seq.

⁵ **Insler** translated aramaiti as "piety", in *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, (Brill 1975), but more recently, he has expressed a preference for "respect". See Insler, *Zarathushtra's Genetic System*, which may be viewed on www.vohuman.org.

Hanns-Peter Schmidt states: "For armaiti and taremaiti I have substituted 'respect' and 'disrespect' for the awkward 'proper thought' and 'perverse thought' I used previously (1974). 'Respect' is less specialized than 'devotion' and 'humility' and lacks the overtones of the present day usage of 'piety' (Insler) and the negative connotations of 'conformity'" Hanns-Peter Schmidt, *The Form and Meaning of Yasna 33*, (American Oriental Society, 1986), page 4.

Moulton translates aramaiti as "Piety" or "Devotion", Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism, Lectures delivered at Oxford, 1912*, (AMS Press reprint), page 344.

⁶ Taraporewala translates aramaiti as "Faith and Devotion". Taraporewala, *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, (Hukhta Foundation, reprint, 1993), page 100.

⁷ Thieme, rejecting such translations as 'fittingness', 'submission' and 'humility', suggests that aramaiti means an attitude "characterized by satisfying intention" and that as an attribute of Mazda, it is characterized by care/solicitude, and as an attribute of man, by loyalty/devotion. Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium*, ((WZO 1993, published in 1998), pages 206 -- 208.

⁸ See Thieme's discussion, *ibid.*

⁹ All quotations from the Gathas in this paper are from the translation of Professor Insler in *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, (Brill 1975), unless otherwise indicated, although Professor Insler may or may not agree with the inferences I draw from his translation. Round brackets () appearing in a quotation are in the original and indicate an insertion by Professor Insler, usually to aid understanding. Square brackets in a quotation [] indicate an insertion by me. Such insertions by me are provided to show you applicable Gathic words (although usually in root form, not with their grammatical variations) or by way of explanation. A string of dots in a quotation indicates a deletion from the original. Often a verse contains many strands of thought. Deleting from a quotation those strands of thought that are not relevant to the discussion at hand enables us to focus on the strand of thought under discussion.

¹⁰ "... the rule of truth [asha-] and of good thinking [vohu- manah-]..." Y29.10 and Y50.3; "..... the rule of good thinking and of truth....." Y30.7 and Y33.10, "...Grant thou [aramaiti-] your rule of good thinking ..." Y51.2; "Where shall there be protection instead of injury? Where shall mercy take place? Where Where truth which attains glory? Where [spenta- aramaiti-]? Where the very best thinking? Where, Wise One, through Thy rule?" Y51.4.

¹¹ "...the very virtuous spirit [mainyu- spenishta-] ... chose the truth...Y30.5.

¹² "... the spirit [mainyu-] virtuous [spenta-] through truth..." Y28.1, see also: "...For such a person, virtuous [spenta-] through truth...is ... Thy ally in spirit [mainyu-] Wise One."Y44.2.

¹³ See Insler, *The Ahuna Vairya Prayer*, as it appears in *Hommages et Opera Minora Monumentum H.S.Nyberg, Acta Iranica*, (Brill, 1975), page 409 et seq., 419 -- 420.

¹⁴ Y19.10, as translated by Mills, in *Sacred Books of the East*, (Motilal Banarsidas reprint) ("SBE" hereinafter), Volume 31, pages 262 -- 263.

¹⁵ *The Bundahishn*, as translated by E. W. West, in *SBE* Volume 5, Chapter 1, verse 22, pages 8 -- 9.

¹⁶ See the examples collected in Humbach, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts*, (Heidelberg, 1991), pages 105 -- 106.

¹⁷ "..... fierce gods" Y34.5.

¹⁸ "But ye gods are of the offspring stemming from evil thinking, deceit and disrespect. Hateful too are your actions....." 32.3.

¹⁹ Which is the message of Y29, and also of a story from a later text, *Selections from Zadsparam*, see *Buried Treasure*, which appears on www.vohuman.org.

²⁰ The word "cow" in Yasna 29 and elsewhere in the Gathas, has been interpreted by some as an allegory or metaphor for the "world". Professor Insler (and later, others) have interpreted it as an allegory or metaphor for Mazda's good vision. I think that Zarathushtra, with double entendre, uses "cow" as a metaphor for the good vision **on earth** -- the vision of a world governed by truth and good thinking. In Yasna 29, a complaint is made to Mazda and his attributes (who also are treated as allegories in this Yasna) -- truth, good thinking and his benevolent spirit (identified as the "fashioner of the cow"). This complaint is made to them by the allegorical cow (the good vision on earth) as follows:

"... For whom did ye fashion me? Who fashioned me? (For) the cruelty of fury and violence, of bondage and might, holds me in captivity. I have no pastor other than you. Therefore appear to me with good pasturage." Y29.1.

The benevolent spirit of the Wise Lord -- spenta mainyu (which appears in masked form in this Yasna as the fashioner of the cow) -- is troubled by this state of affairs, and referring to the allegorical good vision on earth (the cow) asks the Wise Lord and His other attributes:

"..... Whom do ye wish to be her **master [ahura-]**, one who might destroy the fury (caused) by the deceitful?" Y29.2.

Mazda turns to good thinking for the solution, and good thinking replies that it has found Zarathushtra (a man of understanding) who has given ear to Mazda's teachings, who will give Mazda's teachings to mortals, and who will be a pastor, i.e. nurture them, and Mazda's good vision on earth. Y29.7 and 8. Thus we see that "ahura" in Y29.2 refers to an enlightened human being -- Zarathushtra.

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