

Zoroastrianism: A Universal Religion.

By

Dina G. McIntyre.

Mr. Justice Sri Krishna, respected dasturjis, ladies and gentlemen.

The topic on which you have asked me to speak is, as we all know, a controversial one. Opinions abound, pro and con. But really, opinions, including mine, aren't worth much. The question is: what does our religion teach on this issue. I would like to show you the evidence of what our religion teaches, so that you can make up your own mind. What is this evidence?

I would like to show you:

- The evidence of Zarathushtra's own words in the Gathas,
- The evidence of other ancient texts and prayers written over a period of time that spanned more than 1,000 years after Zarathushtra,
- The evidence of formal opinions given by ancient (and some modern) religious authorities, and
- The evidence of our ancient traditions and customs.

All of this evidence tells us that Zoroastrianism is a universal religion, open to anyone who may wish to become a Zoroastrian. Indeed, no proponent of exclusion has been able to come up with any evidence to the contrary in any ancient Zoroastrian text.

There are those who say that we must accept non-Zoroastrians into the religion, if we wish to survive. With due respect, I do not agree. Our Ashem Vohu prayer teaches us that we should do what is right because it is the right thing to do. In my view, we should practice acceptance -- not to "survive", but because it is the right thing to do. On the other hand, it pleases me that our ancient texts wholeheartedly support acceptance as the right thing to do.

Let us consider the evidence.¹ And for those who may be interested I have footnoted references to all the source materials. Let us start with:

Zarathushtra's Teachings in the Gathas.

There are many verses in the Gathas which show that Zarathushtra considered his religion to be a universal one, and hoped that all the living would come to believe in it. Here are a few examples. There are many more. In Y31.3 Zarathushtra says:

"... that commandment which is for Thy adherents -- speak, Wise One, in order for us to know (all) that by means of which I might convert all the living." Y31.3.²

Some Zoroastrians who advocate exclusion, argue that this translation, by Professor Insler of Yale University, is incorrect. But a review of many translations by major scholars, both "eastern" and "western", consistently shows that in this verse, Zarathushtra expressed the wish to convert all the living to the belief system which came to his mind from Mazda. For now, I

would like to discuss just 4 translations, but in the footnotes, I have quoted from 10 additional translations³, if you are interested.

The oldest translation of the Gathas that we have today, is the **Pahlavi translation**. Referring to Mazda's teachings, it translates this verse as follows:

"...declare it, that we teach all living the Faith." ⁴

The next oldest translation is **Neriosangh's Sanskrit translation**. Neriosangh was a Zoroastrian who lived in India many centuries ago. He translated a number of Avestan texts into Sanskrit. An English version of his Sanskrit translation of this verse, Y31.3, is as follows. Referring to Mazda's teachings, he says:

"... which wisdom is enlightening or awaking all the living." ⁵

So we see that the two oldest translations of the Gathas support the notion that the religion is for all the living.

In the late 1800s, one of the finest Avestan scholars was a fellow called **Bartholomae**. Taraporewala was one of his students. According to Bartholomae's translation, in this verse, Y31.3, Zarathushtra says:

"...that I may convert all living men." ⁶

More recently, we have the translation of the late **Mobed Firouz Azargoshasb** who was the President of the Council of Mobeds of Teheran -- the highest Zoroastrian priest in all of Iran. His translation reads as follows:

"...so that I may convert all the people into the right path." ⁷

There are those who argue that this verse, Y31.3, should be interpreted as pertaining to the choice between good and evil, and that there is nothing in the Gathas about choosing the religion. But the evidence of the Gathas is to the contrary. Zarathushtra describes Mazda's message as "... that word which is to be heard as the best for men..." Y45.5 -- not as the best for any particular tribe or clan, but as the best for mankind. And he himself made the choice. He says:

"... I choose (only) Thy teachings, Lord." Y46.3.

Zarathushtra makes no mention of restricting his teachings to those whose parents were Zoroastrian, for the simple reason that before Zarathushtra, no one's parents were "Zoroastrian" ⁸.

There are those who argue that Zarathushtra did not convert anyone. He merely reformed the existing religion. Well, no one knows today whether Zarathushtra's original homeland was in the north, south, east or west of the Iranian steppes and mountains, which in pre-Achaemenian times (and also today), consisted of a number of different countries. There is much speculation on this subject, but no direct evidence. We do know, from his own words, that he was persecuted and ostracized for speaking out against the tyranny of priests and

rulers, and had to flee from the region in which he was born. He says in the first verse of the Ushtavaiti Gatha:

"To what land to flee? Where shall I go to flee? They exclude me from my family and from my clan." Y46.1.

Zarathushtra fled to the kingdom of King Vishtaspa, and was successful in converting the royal family and the people of that land to his vision of religion.

Let us next consider:

Other Ancient Texts and Prayers:

Yasna 42 is a supplement to the Haptanghaiti. We know from its linguistics that it is not as old as the Gathas, but older than some of the other Yasnas, which are in the Younger Avestan language.⁹ By the time Yasna 42 was composed, the religion had become institutionalized, and had established priests and rituals. Verse 6 of this Yasna speaks of reverencing the athravans (fire-priests) who returned after spreading the religion in far off places. It says we reverence "... the Fire-priests, as they approach us from afar, and seek to gain the provinces, and spread the ritual lore...".¹⁰ This verse is clear evidence that even the rituals were not restricted, and were open to anyone who wished to join the religion.

The **Ahuna Vairya (Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer)** is in Gathic Avestan, and in the same meter as the Ahunavaiti Gatha. Many scholars believe that it was composed by Zarathushtra himself.¹¹ Several centuries after Zarathushtra, this prayer was commented on in Yasna 19.6, a later Avestan text, which has Ahura Mazda making the following promise to everyone in the entire world:

"And whoever in this world of mine which is corporeal shall mentally recall ... a portion of the Ahuna-vairya, and ... shall then utter it aloud, shall worship thus...I will bring his soul over the Bridge of Kinvat, I who am Ahura Mazda,..." Y19.6.¹²

So we see from this Avestan text, that ancient Zoroastrians believed that it was Ahura Mazda's wish that the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer be used by every person in the entire world.

There are many later texts and prayers which echo Gathic verses regarding the universality of the religion. For example, in the Gathas Zarathushtra expresses the wish to spread Mazda's teachings across the earth. He says: "**Lord, let wisdom come in the company of truth across the earth!...**" Y50.5. **The Farvardin Yasht**¹³ echoes this thought. It says in verse 94:

"...and there will the good Law of the worshippers of Mazda come and spread through all the seven Karshvares of the earth." Yasht 13.94.¹⁴

This wish that the religion will spread all over the world, is found in many of the **Khordeh Avesta prayers**, which were composed during Sasanian times, more than 1,000 years after Zarathushtra.

For example: the **Meher Niyaesh** says:

"May the knowledge, extent and fame of the commandments of the most excellent Mazda worshipping religion ever increase over the world, over all the seven regions, so may it be." ¹⁵

Almost identical words are also found in the

- **Khorshed Niyaesh,**
- **the Mah Bakhtar Niyaesh, the**
- **Ardvi Sur Niyaesh, the**
- **Atash Niyaesh,**
- **the Ardibehesht Yasht,**
- **the Sarosh Yasht Hadokht, and**
- **the Sraosh Yasht Wadi.** ¹⁶

The **Doa Nam Setayeshne** (another prayer composed in Sasanian times) says:

"Homage to the all knowing tolerator, who sent through Zarathushtra Spitman . . . teachings of religion for the people of the world so that they may have friendship, inculcate faith and inner wisdom and knowledge gained from hearing. For the information and guidance of all men who are, who were, and who will be hereafter..." ¹⁷

What a beautiful perception of our religion – as being one which promotes friendship, knowledge, and wisdom for all mankind.

The **Din-no-Kalmo (Pazand)** speaks of "...The good, righteous and complete religion which God has sent for the world..." ¹⁸

The **Doa Tandarosti (Pazand)** prays "... May the religion of Zarathushtra be a source of glory unto all mortals..." ¹⁹

We pride ourselves on the fact that Zoroastrians are famed for their honesty. One cannot help but wonder how anyone can truthfully and sincerely say these prayers daily, or weekly, or perhaps just on good occasions, and yet insist that the religion prohibits the admission of non-Zoroastrians.

It is important to remember that Zarathushtra does not teach aggressive proselytizing. On the contrary, he teaches that each person should make choices for himself, after reflecting with a clear mind. This teaching requires us to exercise tolerance, and respect other people's choices of religion. Different religions are just different paths to God. But this teaching also requires us to accept and respect a person who wishes to take Zarathushtra's path to God.

In the Gathas, Zarathushtra implies that the Divine is immanent (present) in all things. A later Avestan text, Yasna 17.11, expresses this beautiful thought by speaking of the fire in all things, the fire within ²⁰, as does the Bundahishn (a post-Sasanian, Pahlavi text).²¹

A later Persian poet, Jami, expressed this same thought of the divine within, in one of his poems. He said:

"The essences are each a separate glass

Through which the Sun of Being's light is passed.
Each tinted fragment sparkles in the sun,
A thousand colors, but the Light is One." ²²

The Farvardin Yasht also expresses this thought by reverencing the fravashi in all things. The fravashi is the divine within. As applied to different human races, verse 143 of this Yasht reverences the fravashis of good men and women in various enumerated countries -- Turanian, Sairimyan (which a footnote explains is Europe and Western Asia), Saini (which a footnote explains is China), and the verse concludes with reverence for the fravashis of good men and women "... in all countries....." ²³

If our religion teaches that the Divine is immanent (present) in all men and women, of what relevance is ethnicity to religion? Can we reject any person without rejecting the Divine which is immanent (present), within such a person?

Those who favor exclusion contend that this rule is not a question of rejecting anyone. Rather, it is a question of obeying God's will. They argue that it is God's will that each person should remain in the religion of one's birth, and that to change one's birth religion is an act of defiance against God's will.

Well, God caused us to be born naked. Is it His will that we not wear clothes? He caused us to be born ignorant. Is it an act of defiance against God to get an education? Some babies are born sick, or with birth defects. Is it His will that such babies not be given medical treatment to save their lives? What if one's parents are atheists? Is it an act of defiance against God to want to believe in Him? What if one's parents are religious fanatics? Is it God's will that the child of such parents must be a religious fanatic also, and must massacre and torture people as his parents do?

If Mazda is the God of the Universe, how can anyone shrink His relevance to only 100,000 born Zoroastrians on this planet of several billion people? How did we sink from the high nobility of Zarathushtra's thought to such a narrow view?

What I find most difficult to understand, is that those who advocate exclusion, have reduced Zarathushtra's magnificent concept of divinity to that of a tribal god of limited relevance.

Let us move on to:

Modern and Ancient Religious Opinions.

Most if not all high priests in India have expressed the opinion that conversion is forbidden by the religion. But the fact that they say so, does not make it so. They have to cite chapter and verse, and this, to date, they have not been able to do -- not a single ancient text, or prayer, or law, or tradition.

A corollary to the practice of non-acceptance is the treatment of Zoroastrian women who have married non-Zoroastrians. According to the high priests of India, they are no longer considered Zoroastrians, cannot enter a fire temple, and their children cannot be admitted to the religion. In support of this practice, some priests have cited Chapter 18, verse 62 of the Vendidad, which (according to them) "prohibits union between a Mazdayasni and non-

Mazdayasni."²⁴ However, this verse of the Vendidad which is in the Younger Avestan language, does not refer to interfaith marriages at all. Verses 61 and 62 state that Mazda is caused grief by a courtesan (Jahi), regardless of whether she sleeps with a Mazda worshipper or with one who is not a Mazda worshipper.²⁵ The Pahlavi translation of the Vendidad in its commentary on this verse, translates the word "Jahe" as an adulteress.²⁶ An adulteress is a married woman who sleeps with someone who is not her husband. So this verse has nothing to do with interfaith marriages. It speaks against prostitution (according to the Avestan text) and against adultery (according to the Pahlavi commentary). With one-sided justice, this verse makes no mention of the fellows who enjoy the woman's favors. But that is another story.

The Council of Mobeds of Teheran in Iran, have expressed a very different opinion from that of the high priests of India. In the early 1980s, an American, Joseph Peterson²⁷, after long study, first by himself and then under a Zoroastrian priest, concluded that he wanted to become a Zoroastrian, and wished to have his navjote done. An Iranian Mobed, Bahram Shahzadi of the United States, a luminous soul, wrote a letter to the Council of Mobeds of Tehran, requesting guidance. In an official written opinion (No. 466 issued in May of 1983), the Council responded. Referring to Mobed Shahzadi's letter, the Council's Opinion states: (in English translation):

"... The Council discussed the contents of your letter at an official meeting.

"You have, in your detailed letter, asked the opinion of the Council regarding the acceptance of people into Zoroastrianism. Let us glimpse through Zoroastrian scriptures and find an answer to it."

The Council's Opinion starts by quoting from the Gathas, and concludes:

"The above stanzas show that Asho Zarathushtra does not advocate force to spread the religion, but has kept it open for all . . . He has never reserved it for the Aryans, or for a particular caste of people. Yasna 46.12 shows that the religion had spread into the Turanian lands during Asho Zarathushtra's lifetime. Because he praises Friyana a Turanian Chief who supported Mazdayasna."

The Council's Opinion next gives references to later texts and concludes:

"The above citations show that the propagation and promotion of the religion is a meritorious deed... If we Zoroastrians believe that our religion is one of the great living religions of the world and that it is beneficial to all the peoples of the world, we ... must accept persons who want to embrace the Zoroastrian religion."

This 1983 Opinion of the Council of Mobeds of Tehran is a shining example of courage, learning, and civility, in a community badly in need of such virtues. In Zoroastrian communities today, so many of us are reluctant to take a stand against practices which we know to be wrong. We talk about it. We complain. We sympathize in private. But do we act? The Association for the Revival of Zoroastrianism, (ARZ) has now acted. And it has my sincere respect and admiration.

There is an ancient text called the Aerpatastan and Nirangastan, which is described (according to S. J. Bulsara's translation) as "being portions of the great Husparam Nask". The text covers

many aspects of the practice and administration of the religion in the society of that day. It takes for granted the right of a non-Zoroastrian to convert to Zoroastrianism, and focuses on prohibiting forced conversions. It states that a man who converts to the Zoroastrian religion should not force his wife to convert. He should not strike her, or stop supporting her, or "forsake her treacherously", nor does she "pass from the condition of being his wife", because she refuses to convert.²⁸ This ancient text was one of the authorities cited by the Council of Mobeds of Teheran, in its 1983 Opinion which concluded that the religion is universal and open to all who wish to join it, but should not be forced on anyone.

In the centuries that followed the migrations of some Zoroastrians to India, disputes arose among the priests in India about what the religion allowed and did not allow. On various occasions over the course of several centuries, Zoroastrian priests in India sent emissaries to the Zoroastrian Mobeds of Iran to get answers to their questions. These questions and answers are in written form, and have been preserved in texts called the Rivayats. I do not have copies of most of these Rivayats, and the following information and quotations from the Rivayats are taken from an excellent article by Professor K. D. Irani, and Farrokh J. Vajifdar.²⁹

One such Rivayat was given in response to questions taken to Iran by Nariman Hoshang in 1478 A.D. In one answer, the Iranian mobeds gave the opinion that slave boys and girls in Zoroastrian houses in India could be initiated into the religion with sudreh and kusti, and when they became intelligent, attentive and steadfast in the religion should be given barashnum (the cleansing ritual).

In 1599, the Kaus Mahyar Rivayat gave the opinion that even non-Zoroastrians who performed burials and cremations, should be allowed into the religion, provided that they were steadfast and occasioned no harm to the faith.

Finally, there is the Itthoter Rivayat of 1773. Here, 78 questions were prepared by the priests of Broach and Surat in India, and taken to Iran by Mobed Kaus Jalal. The replies to these questions were given in writing, signed by nine Iranian dasturs, and nine religiously versed behdins. One of the questions asks whether the religion allows the remains of deceased boys and girls who were servants, and who had been converted to Zoroastrianism, to be placed in the dakhma.

In their unanimous answer, the nine Iranian Dasturs and nine lay Zarathushtis, replied that it was indeed allowed. And their response included a clear denunciation of those who advocated exclusionary practices.

This Rivayat also answered the related question of whether it was appropriate to refuse to convert these young servant boys and girls as follows: "Here we have heard from the dasturzade Dastur Kaus, worthy successor of the deceased Dastur Rostam, that several dasturs, mobeds and behdins across most of the country [Hindustan] stand in the way ... and have agreed not to teach those youngsters the Avesta and not to convert them to the din-i beh-i mazdayasnan. This is unreasonable and alien to the tradition. May the Beloved ones prosper! In the second fargard of the Jud-div-dad³⁰ the Creator of the righteous material world has ordered the honourable Zaratusht Esfantaman anushe-ravan to lead all men to the Din-i Beh-i, to the Main Path, to edify His joy, His glory, and His honour... It is a very great merit and a righteous good deed ... those who hinder this and are against it are not even aware of the Origin and of the other world." In quoting from this Rivayat, Irani and Vajifdar say that they

have followed the Vitalone translation, with minor changes for ease of reading, and that the translation of Ervad Shehryarji Bharucha, is in accord.

One can only feel deep respect, admiration, and affection, for these nine dasturs and nine behdins of 18th century Iran, who lived with severe persecution, and yet signed their names to this document expressing opinions which could have earned them death, but which were nevertheless true to the teachings of Zarathushtra, and the traditions of the religion.

Finally, we come to the last body of evidence which I would like to offer for your consideration. And that is our:

Ancient Traditions, Laws, and Practices:

We all cherish the many things that give us a sense of community identity. But the things that generate this feeling of "community" are shared experiences and a state of mind.

Any student of history knows that Zoroastrians are a part of the Indo-European family of races (which anthropologists believe came over from Africa). One has only to look around a room full of Parsis to appreciate that we could not possibly have come from one racial stock. In skin color, height, hair, bone structure, and physiognomy, we are too diverse. The same racial diversity is apparent in the friezes at Persepolis and Susa, and hundreds of years after Zarathushtra, in the proselytizing traditions of the Aerpatastan and Nirangastan where, for example, it is written:

"When a slave professing any other creed comes over to the Good Religion he then becomes a direct subject of the King of Kings who shall give his price..."³¹

In those (post-Achaemenian) days, slaves were often people from other nations who were not Iranian.

While the Shahnameh may be more legend than history, some of our most famous ancestral heroes were the children of "mixed" marriages. The saintly warrior king KaiKhosrov's mother was an alien, as was Rudabeh, the mother of Rustom, the quintessential Persian champion.³² Those who favor exclusionary rules argue that such rules have always been a part of our tradition. If this were true, then King KaiKhosrov and Rustom (among others) would not have belonged to the community of our ancestors.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, whether we look to Zarathushtra's own words in the Gathas, or to other ancient texts and prayers written long after Zarathushtra, or to our ancient traditions, laws, customs, religious opinions, and legends, all the available evidence supports the conclusion that the religion of Zarathushtra is universal, and open to all who may wish to join it.

The proponents of exclusion have either ignored all this evidence, or they are not aware of it.

It is interesting, is it not, that we have used this man-made custom of non-acceptance as a survival mechanism, but, being contrary to Mazda's teachings, it is not helping us to survive – not as a community, and not as a religion. The late and much beloved Dastur N. D.

Minochehr Homji of Bombay, once said, in his Chicago lectures: A person who withholds the light from others will be the first to stumble in the dark.

Our religion is a vibrant, wonderful religion. A religion without fear; which teaches us a new way of looking at ourselves, and each other, and other life forms, and our environment, and 'God'. A religion which is exquisitely in tune with the wonders of our universe, and with the quest for truth which motivates scientific discoveries. It integrates the spiritual, the mental, and the material components of our existence in a way that satisfies our minds, our hearts and our souls. It teaches us to see our world and our existence in an interconnected and beautiful way. It gives meaning and joy to our lives.

We need to rediscover the teachings of our religion – not just on the issue of conversion, but in all its beauty, and glory, and fulfillment.

If we do, I can assure you, survival will not be a problem.

The choice is ours.

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¹ The evidence in this article is not exhaustive. There is much, much more. See the following excellent articles:

K.D.Irani and F.J. Vajifdar, Conversion in Zoroastrianism, *The Truth Behind the Trumpery*, as it appears in *Humata*, (Journal of the Center for Ancient Iranian Studies, Winter 1998 -- 1999 issue) p 8;

A. J. Davar, Zoroastrianism: A Universal Faith that Remained Regional? published in several parts in various issues of *Humata*, *ibid*.

C. P. Mehta, The Religion of Zarathushtra is for All Mankind. This work appears on www.efn.org/ropal/acceptz.html a website created and maintained by Stephen Williamson, a convert to Zoroastrianism, at which site he has collected many good articles on conversion.

Dr. Kersey Antia, the courageous and much admired high priest of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, has also written a thorough and knowledgeable article on conversion which I read some years ago. I regret that I do not have a copy of it.

² Where not otherwise specified, all quotations from the Gathas are from the translation by Professor Insler of Yale University as it appears in *The Gathas of Zarathushtra*, (E. J. Brill, 1975).

³ For example, (alphabetically arranged):

Bode & Nanavutty: "... so that I may lead all the living to believe in the true faith." *Songs of Zarathushtra*, *The Gathas*, (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1952), p 52.

Humbach: "... so that therewith I might receive all the living." *Gathas of Zarathushtra and the Other Old Avestan Texts*, (Heidelberg, 1991), Volume 1, p 127.

Irani: "...Give it in Thy own inspired word that I may thereby bring its realization to all." D. J. Irani, *The Gathas, The Hymns of Zarathushtra*, (Center for Ancient Iranian Studies, 1998), p 38.

Jafarey: "...It will help me guide all the living to choose aright." *The Gathas, Our Guide*, (Ushta Publications, 1989) p 35.

Kanga: "... so that I cause all men to put faith in the Religion." *Gatha-Ba-Maani*, ((Parsi Panchayat Funds and Properties, 1997) p 43.

Mills: "... (that ...) I may make all the living believers!" *Sacred Books of the East* ("SBE" hereinafter), Vol. 31, page 41. Taraporewala quotes Mills as stating: "... Observe that the religious system contemplated universal proselytism." I. J. S. Taraporewala, in his book, *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, (reprint,

Hukhta Foundation, Bombay, 1993), page 182. (This book by Taraporewala is hereinafter referred to as "Taraporewala").

Nanavutty: "... Thus I will convince all the living (regarding the true faith)." *The Gathas of Zarathushtra, Hymns in Praise of Wisdom*, (Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad (1999), p 83.

Sethna: "... that I may convince all the living to believe in the true path." *The Teachings of Zarathushtra*, (1978 reprint), p 29.

Sidhwa: "...To convert all mortals to become Thine alone." *The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra*, (1998), p 21.

Taraporewala: "... so-that I-may-ever-convert all the living (into the Right Path)." Taraporewala, page 178.

⁴ L. H. Mills, *A Study of the Five Zarathushtrian Gathas*, (Oxford 1892, AMS Press Reprint, 1997), p 57. This work includes an English translation of the Pahlavi translation edited with collation of manuscripts from all known codices, as well as an English translation from a collation of five ancient texts of Neryosangh's Sanskrit translation (hereinafter referred to as "Mills' compendium").

⁵ Mills' compendium, page 57.

⁶ Taraporewala, page 182.

⁷ Firouz Azargoshasb, *The Translation of Gathas, the Holy Songs of Zarathushtra*, (March 1988), page 13, published with the assistance of CIMNA (the Council of Iranian Mobeds of North America).

⁸ The Dinkard, Vol. V, written a few hundred years after the fall of the Sasanian Empire, is said to describe how prophets before Z had accepted the revelation. Based on historical evidence, I find it doubtful that the worship of Mazda was a part of any proto- Indo-Iranian religion. Professor Thieme is of the opinion that Mazda, as the name of God, was the invention of Zarathushtra. He points out that there is no equivalent deity called Wisdom in the Vedic pantheon. The Vedic language has only the feminine noun "medha" meaning wisdom. Thieme, *Reflections on the Vocabulary of Zarathushtra's Gathas*, in *Proceedings of the First Gatha Colloquium, 1993*, (WZO 1998), p 201. By contrast, other pre-Zarathushtrian Iranian deities of the Yashts and later Zoroastrian texts do indeed have their counterparts in the Vedic pantheon. But even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that some sort of worship of Mazda pre-dated Zarathushtra, it could not have been the religion as taught by Zarathushtra -- the "mazdayasno Zarathushtrish" of the "Jasa Me Avanghe Mazda" prayer which was composed in Sasanian times as a Zoroastrian credo.

⁹ Humbach, *The Gathas of Zarathushtra and Other Old Avestan Texts*, Vol. 1, page 7, footnote 9.

¹⁰ Mills translation as it appears in SBE Vol 31, page 291.

¹¹ For my explanation and discussion of the Ahuna Vairya, see Three Prayers and the Name of God, on www.vohuman.org. The article on the Ahuna Vairya (from that collection) also appears on www.zarathushtra.com. For a more in-depth discussion of the Ahuna Vairya, see The Talisman, which also appears on www.vohuman.org.

¹² Mills' translation as it appears in SBE", Vol. 31, page 261.

¹³ The Farvardin Yasht (Yasht 13) is written in the Younger Avestan language, not in Gathic, and was composed several centuries after Zarathushtra. By the time it was written the old pre-Zarathushtrian

Indo-Aryan deities had found their way into the religion of Zarathushtra, so the Farvardin Yasht differs from the teachings of the Gathas in some ways, but reflects them in other ways.

¹⁴ As translated by Darmesteter, in SBE, Vol. 23, page 202.

¹⁵ Meher Niyaaesh, in Sethna, *Khordeh Avesta* (1980 reprint), p 61.

¹⁶ Sethna's *Khordeh Avesta*, *ibid*, Khorshed Niyaaesh p 51; Mah Bakhtar Niyaaesh pp 71 -- 73; Ardvi Sur Niyaaesh p 83; Atash Niyaaesh p 93; Hormazd Yasht, p. 111; Ardibehesht Yasht p 123; Sarosh Yasht Hadokht p 141; Sraosh Yasht Wadi p 165;

¹⁷ Sethna, *Khordeh Avesta*, *ibid*, page 63.

¹⁸ Sethna, *Khordeh Avesta* *ibid*, page 169;

¹⁹ Sethna, *Khordeh Avesta*, *ibid* page 173.

²⁰ SBE Vol. 31, p 258, Mills translation.

²¹ As translated by E. W. West, in SBE Vol. 5, pp 61 -- 62.

²² As translated by Dr. S. H. Nasr, and provided to me by Dr. Jahanian. I do not have direct access to Dr. Nasr's translation.

²³ As translated by Darmesteter in SBE Vol. 23, pp 226 -- 227.

²⁴ Quoting from page 2 of a letter dated August 22, 1990 from Dastur Kotwal to The Chairman & Trustees Bombay Parsi Punchayet, which letter is initialed on each page by Kotwal, and signed at the end with his full name and titles.

²⁵ SBE, Vol. 4, page 200, and footnotes 1 and 2, all as translated by Darmesteter.

²⁶ Behramgore T. Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Vendidad (Zand-i Jvit-Dev-Dat)* published for the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1949, page 365 -- 366.

²⁷ Joseph Peterson's website may be viewed at www.avesta.org. This site is a compendious resource for Zoroastrian texts (in translations whose copyrights have expired) and other knowledge.

²⁸ *Aerpatastan and Nirangastan*, Book I, Chap. V, verses 4 and 5, page 40 of the S. J. Bulsara translation, published by the Trustees of the Parsee Punchayat Funds and Properties, Bombay, 1915. It is only fair to note that this text also recommends that as long as the wife refuses to convert, the husband should not sleep with her. Whether such advice was taken by the converted husband is not known.

²⁹ K.D.Irani and F.J. Vajifdar, *Conversion in Zoroastrianism, The Truth Behind the Trumpery*, as it appears in Humata, (Journal of the Center for Ancient Iranian Studies, Winter 1998 -- 1999 issue).

³⁰ Also called the Jvit-dev-dat (Pahlavi) or Vid-dev-dad, or Vendidad (Younger Avestan).

³¹ *Aerpatastan and Nirangastan*, Chap. IV, verse 29, S. J. Bulsara translation, *ibid.*, page 38

³² *The Shah Namah of Firdaosi*, as translated by Bahman Sohrab Surti (1986), Vol. II, pages 194 – 197, 252, 259; Vol. I, pages 11, 43, 61-62.