Ahura Mazda's Good Mind

The Divine Cosmic Computer

[This article is an addendum to my previous article 'Avestan Justice and the Just person']

A most interesting Pahlavi Text, the **Shikand Gumānig Vijār** asserts that only an all-good Creator is worthy of adoration (Chap. VIII, verses 108 – 110): -

"If the sacred being be perfect in goodness and wisdom, the folly and evil of any one are known not to arise from him. If it be possible for them to arise from him, then he is not perfect. If he be not perfect, it is not proper to glorify him for the sacredness of complete goodness......"

Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 24, page 160.

Ahurā Mazdā, God the Father ('Dāttā' in Gāthic /Avestan /Vedic Sanskrit texts), was once akin to the Vēdic Assurā, 'Mēdhā', during the period in history, when the Indo-Iranian peoples were one, prior to the schism. And I see this thought very clearly in the Gathas, where Zarathushtra rejected the local Indo-Aryan divinities, who are described as fierce, and cruel, concluding that only a Creator of pure goodness / pure wisdom is worthy of adoration. The Zarathushti concept of God as a Supreme Creator is that he is "the perfectest spiritual herald of joy" in everything that is good in life.

In the practice of the precepts and tenets of the Religion of Zarathushtra life, as 'conscious perception', is real; it is earnest'. We do not perceive any aspect of life as 'hallucination' or 'delusion', *in normal health*. Zarathushtra saw nothing in life as being 'illusory'. We, therefore, do not believe in ghosts and the like, likely to menace our existence at their supposed will. We do not ever become 'possessed' either. We do not need an exorcist to eliminate the alleged 'evil possession' from the 'possessed' body (or mind).

We do not call ourselves *God-fearing*. Since he is the most perfect Creator, being all-good and all-benevolent one cannot remain fearful of such an ultimate epitome of perfection in goodness. We, therefore, call ourselves God-loving. We do not ever appease (in prayers, rituals or otherwise) any form of non-goodness (call it evil, if you like). In fact, we verbally challenge all evil forces during our daily prayers. We therefore call ourselves God-loving.

In the tenets of our Faith we believe that Evil cannot be 'created'. It does not 'exist' as a concrete physical entity. It is merely an aberration of the thinking of the Good Mind, which we are born with. Ahurā Mazdā created humans in his own image with a 'Good thinking mind' as His co-workers on earth for the ultimate total destruction of all Evil. But he placed the onus on each 'Individuality by bestowing

free choice of either rational, good thinking or irrational, not-so-good thinking. Evil therefore begins as a thought process devised/planned by the calculating mind, which has become irrational in thought. This evil thinking, then, may further be actuated to harsh and abusive words and even lead to improper not-so-good actions. So as to make the average person realise what Evil really is, it was 'personalised'. The Avestan word for this entire process as personalised evil is 'Khshaētan', which becomes the Biblical 'Satan'.

In our tradition we hold in utter disdain and without fear everything that is devious and all manoeuvres, which are mind-bending. They are artificially created to instil fear and through fear, exert some sort of imposed reverence, awe and obedience. In fact, we openly challenge all evil forces during our daily Kushti prayers.

Every person is a thriving living entity with a responsibility to live a life of goodness irrespective of the favourable or otherwise train of life's events. Some on toward events, while focusing on the expected experiences of rational thought, amicable speech and meaningful action, do occur in life, which may mislead the person to lean towards the other of the two Ahurā Mazdā bestowed choices. As a unique individuality each person possessing an Inner Self (the unique Conscience) an intention and will, is squarely responsible for own behaviour or misbehaviour during life. The Gāthic/Avestan word for 'Religion' is Daēna (Conscience). It is an amazing concept in that it makes the perpetrator fully aware of own, thoughts, words and actions ('Conscience pricks', as the adage goes). We will come across this concept at the time of the Judgement after death.

In Yasna 48.4 "He who makes his thinking better, Mazdā, or worse, verily promotes his Inner Self through gainful experience, amicable speech, own leanings and likings to guide his own Intellect and lead himself to his destiny."

And then again

In Yasna 51.2 Zarathushtra, as a faithful worshipper, dedicates his deeds to Ahurā Mazdā and Ashā and asks a boon of Spəntā Armaiti.

"Thou, O Spirit of Right-mindedness, grant me the power of the Will".

In Avestan beliefs the parents are responsible for their child's thoughts, words and actions until the child reaches the age of seven.

The Avestan child, a minor of tender age from infancy to early childhood (Aves: apērē-nāyuka/ Skt and Guj: Nājuka) of either gender was deemed immature and, therefore, unfit to be made responsible for her thought, word or action. The onus was on the mother (Aves: Mātar) and father (Aves: Ptā; Skt: Pitā) or the guardian (Aves: Paiti-pāyu), who would have replaced one of the parents. As such the child is permitted to indulge in childhood liberties.

The child, at age 7 years, is considered grown up to a 'major' mental age although still not fully grown up, i.e. in physiological terms (Aves: apērē nayav). The child is then deemed to become responsible for own thought, word and action and is, therefore, fit to be made ready for the initiation into the Good Faith by the investiture of the Sudrēh and Kushti. The ideal age, documented in the Book of Rivāyats, is

"7 years and 3 months".

If the thoughts, words and actions are good or not-so-good, the points thus scored are indelibly registered and 'saved' in, what may best be described in Zarathushtrian beliefs as, 'The Divine Cosmic Computer', to be weighed in balance after life ceases and the soul is made accountable for the inevitable judgement. Clearly, the 'Delete' button, if at all there is one, is blocked and there are no 'copy and paste transfers' either.

Indeed, in Yasna 30.4, Zarathushtra emphasises on the moral and ethical purpose of untruth (Drujō-Dəmāna) and 'best existence' for the followers of truth (Garō-Dəmāna)."

What then does 'The Divine Cosmic Computer' do? As an All-seeing; All-knowing and All-pervading (Pāhlavi: Harvēspa-atuān; Harvāspa-āghā; Harvāspa-khudā) power it puts into memory the sum total of all the thoughts, words and actions of each individuality through one of its attributes - Vohu Manāh, the Good mind in a safe setting.

Ahurā Mazdā's clear insight [(K)hudānush] personifies this omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent force, which possesses all the attributes of perfect goodness.

It would, then, appear Angra Mainyu, with all his wicked wiles, is totally incapable of breaking into the secure files of 'The Divine Cosmic Computer'. Clearly, then, there is absolutely no compromise with the evil of Angra Mainyu. There cannot be any deletion of an evil thought, word or action once it is 'entered' in 'The Divine Computer'. There is no provision for 'copy and paste transfers', either. At the 'Divine Tribunal' the 'Defence Advocate' present is the Individuality's own Inner Self/Conscience - the Daēna. Being accosted by own 'Conscience' the soul being fully aware of the thoughts, words and deeds perpetrated during life, is totally unprepared to defend itself against the decision of the 'Divine Tribunal'.

In Yasna 45.2 Zarathushtra emphasises in a firm statement about the attitude exhibited, right from he beginning, by Spənishtā Mainyu towards
Anghrəm (Gāthic word for Angra Mainyu)
".....there will be no compromise at all, no yielding to evil in thinking, teaching, will, belief, speaking, experiencing, nor in the matter of the Inner Self or of the Inner Consciousness".

The dilemma of 'forgiveness', 'mercy' and 'repentence'.

Here I need to take a pause to explain how I stumbled upon this theological impasse. I have been attending selected lectures and forums in another University in Sydney since the inception of its Department of Study in Religions in 1977. Visiting **Professor Morny Joy**, born an Aussie but now at the University of Calgary, Canada recently delivered a very thoughtful lecture on this aspect of a spiritual quandary that had been bothering my mind for long. Through her '*Comparative Studies on Philosophy and Religions*' containing Papers by several authors she summarises her very bold and explicit first volume - '*After Appropriation*' thus:-

"While the division between the two disciplines of Religious Studies and Philosophy is commonplace in Western academia, this bifurcation does not necessarily apply in non-Western settings, where religion and philosophy tend to be integrated. As a result, when the disciplines are virtually mutually

exclusive, as in the West, a full appreciation of Western approaches to either religion or philosophy is not easily attained and distortions, such as appropriation, often occur. Within the last 10 years there has been a concerted effort on the part of a number of Western scholars to try to address these deficiencies and re-examine many ideas that have been misappropriated or otherwise excluded. These errors have resulted fro a traditional approach where the religions and philosophies of non-Western peoples have been interpreted by reducing or manipulating their ideas and values to fit with Western concepts and categories. This project is conducted with the full awareness of the post-colonial critique of such enterprises. One of the central questions addressed is how comparative philosophy and religion would change if the concepts and categories of non-Western philosophies and religions were taken of equal importance."

Let us examine in a comparative sense the inequities in the phrase 'forgiveness' of sins / misdeeds / trespasses / transgressions... as have been used and interpreted in the Judæo-Christian tradition and as adjoined originally in Gathic and Avestan texts long before the Bible was written.

The Judæo-Christian tradition

Holy Bible:

In the Holy Bible there seems to have been an extraordinary parallel drawn, on the one hand between human-to-human forgiveness for a perpetrated offence in practical earthly interludes, and on the other hand a presumed spiritual forgiveness. This appears to be promoted in the mind of the faithful to give hope that one's misgivings and transgressions on earth will be annulled, thus lessening the sentence on 'Judgement Day' during the Divine Tribunal in the 'After-life'. This sounds very much like the 'plea' the modern legal fraternity mutually enters into while being fully cognisant that the client has actually committed the offence. Also, the forgiveness of the sins committed at regular intervals by the promotion of confession is deemed to wash out (nullify / 'delete') from 'The Divine Cosmic Computer') the transgression / crime committed. There are at least 100 verses referencing to the forgiving of sins committed and emphasizing this aspect. It seems one can forgive sins committed if the sinner confesses, shows repentance or even otherwise, on compassionate grounds through mercy or when a priest shows atonement on the sinner's behalf and even when the person proselytizes (perhaps with a hope he has committed himself to a 'different system' of judgement (or none at all) after death. Yet, several other verses emphasise that God - the Heavenly Father and Yahweh alone can forgive sins. There is also a verse which points towards all sins being recorded in writing in a 'heavenly book'. It seems these written recording can even be 'erased' on request.

Exodus 32:32 "Yet now, if you will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out of your book which you have written."

[Maybe, the following worse by the Iranian poet, Omar Khayyam 1048 - 1131 will help to highlight Zarathushti theology as opposed to these references from the Holy Bible]

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

Matthew 9:6 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..."

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Mark 11:26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions."

In Luke 5:21 it seems God alone can forgive sins.

"The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying,

"Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

Ezekiel 16:63 while reminding the Hebrews that idol worshipping is sinful entreats "......that you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth anymore, because of your shame, when I have forgiven you all that you have done", says the Lord Yahweh.

Psalm 86:5 "For you, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive; abundant in loving kindness to all those who call on you."

Luke 17:3 and 17:4 "Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him."

And "If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Leviticus 4:35 "......and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, that he has sinned and he will be forgiven."

This belief seems to have been justified as one form (among the many that have been put forth) of a Sacrament of Confession and Reconciliation to restore the sinful soul in full through 'Divine Mercy'.

According to the diary of St. Faustina, 'our Lord holds sacramental confession to be one of the principal means of giving due honour to His Divine Mercy.' Accordingly, Jesus urged St. Faustina to:-

"Write, speak of My mercy. Tell souls where they are to look for solace, that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy. There, the greatest miracles take place (and) are incessantly repeated....It suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one's misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully manifested. Were a soul like a decaying corpse so that, from a human standpoint, there would be no (hope of) restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full.

When you go to Confession, know this, that I, myself am waiting for you in the confessional; I am only hidden in the priest, but I, myself act in the soul. Here the misery of soul meets the God of Mercy. Tell souls from this fount of mercy, soul draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity."

Who are the judges sitting on this tribunal. If the confessional is anything like a courtroom scene, then it is really the court of Heaven we are kneeling before, awaiting our sentence, and the only judges in that court are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Holy Trinity of Divine Mercy. They are the "tri" in this tribunal. That is why when the priest pronounces the absolution, he states: "God the Father of mercies ... through the resurrection of His Son

... sent the Holy Spirit." It is the Holy Trinity that is actually waiting for us in this sacrament, ready to apply the remedy of His merciful love to our sinful souls. The throne of God's justice, through Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us on the Cross, has become for us the throne of His grace.

The Book of Hebrews (Hebrews 4:15-16) puts it:

"For we have not a high priest [Jesus] who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

The workings of the Divine Tribunal of Justice in our Gathic & Avestan Texts:

Let us, then, examine the sources in our Holy texts.

We have already noted, previously, that Ahurā Mazdā's clear insight [(K)hudānush] personifies this omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent force

The late High Priest, Dastur Dr. Hormazdyar K. Mirza in his response (19 Feb 1995) to Khojeste Mistree's article "Breakdown of the Zoroastrian Tradition in India from a contemporary Perspective" published in IRANO-JUDAICA II, Jerusalem 1990. (pgs. 227-54) best reveals the important correlation of human responsibility of own thoughts, words and deeds in earthy life and the inevitable consequences the soul has to face. He wrote thus —

"God created this worldly life but it is imperfect. Since this life is imperfect, human understanding is also imperfect. Hence, creation and existence of evil in this life is also beyond human understanding. Man has to accept that since the beginning of this worldly life, two opposing spirits, two rival forces are working in this world. With faith in God man has to fight and destroy evil in this life. God has endowed man with physical, mental and spiritual powers; and it is man's duty to develop these powers; and to utilise the same in fighting against evil in the service of man and God. God has destined that it is man's duty to destroy evil in this life by his own effort according to his circumstances and ability, and with the grace of God."

Yasna 30.9: "And then may we be those who make this life renovated"

Yasna 32.1: "May we be Thy messengers withholding those who torment Thee"

Yasna 31.13: "Since Truth (is) worthy of invocation and Lords of Mazda are (so), through blessing and right-mindedness and best mind - For us, do I wish powerful support, by whose growth do we conquer Evil"

The Divine perfectly Good Mind of Ahura Mazda, as a Cosmic Computer, collects, saves and files all human activities and transgressions

The negative and positive points once entered cannot be deleted or altered. For this reason we have recitations of 'regrets' called 'Patēts' in our Khordēh Avesta, the 'Common Book of Prayers'. Regrets will only make the person better but does not absolve him from the registered 'evil points'. It is hoped that, if the regrets are

genuine, he will become a better person and begins to think, speak and act in an amicable manner and thus weigh the balance of points towards the good side.

Until the day of 'Renovation' - 'The Final Judgement' (Gathic: Frashā-kar, Avestan: Frasho-kərəti; Pāhlavi: Frashēgard) at the end of time occurs (the very purpose of human life in this world) the two opposing spirits, good and evil, the course of justice and injustice shall remain in our imperfect worldly life. Till this happens and good and justice triumphs with the destruction of all evil, humans have to bear and suffer in this life with faith in *Ahurā Mazdā the almighty, the all-knowing and the ever-present Creator and His divine Justice.*

Yasna 29.4: "Ahurā himself is the Decider. He bears in mind......alone, Ahurā judges what is best and so may it be unto us as He wills!"

Yasna 32.6: "O Ahurā, in thy mind supreme all is remembered and the motives judged......""

Yasna 31.13: ".....all this thou dost watch....... observing with thy radiant eye dost Thou observe all as laid down in thy Eternal Law!'

Among a few Western acclaimed as "original writers and thinkers" who have borrowed large sections of our Gāthic, Avestan and Vēdic wisdom were: -

- **1. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche 1844 1900**. Among his alleged 'original' works (English translations from German) philosophical writings (during his mentally disturbed state of Tertiary Neuro-Syphilis causing Dementia) 'Thus Spake Zarathustra' (notice the spelling of Zarathushtra), 'Beyond Good and Evil', 'On the Genealogy of Morals', 'Free Will and Fate' were not only heavily borrowed from the Gāthic/Avestan texts but also distorted to suit the workings of his infected Nervous System. His denigration of women's role in home, community and society is extraordinarily bizarre.
- **2. Dante Alighieri 1265 1321** labelled as a 'powerful thinker' and a 'supreme poet' (English translations from Italian). His poem *'Divine Comedy'* has been considered "the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature"

His alleged imaginative and allegorical vision of the after-life was even considered as a sort of medieval world view of the Christian Church. It describes Dante's travels through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven; but at a deeper distorted level it represents in allegorical terms the soul's journey towards God. **Dante 1265–1321 claimed "he drew the idea from the medieval Christian theology and philosophy writings of Thomas Equinas 1225 – 1274".**

Not so. The original source was 'The Book of Ardā Virāf'' written by the Pontiff, Ardā Virāf' during the reign of the Sassānian King, Khusru I as early as 531-579 CE (Khusru was titled Anoush ē Ravān ē Ādil – the Immortal and Just Soul) in Iran. The book would have been translated into Greek and Latin in the first University recorded in history. The establishment of this University of Shāhpurgard (at Gondēshahpur) with Aramaic as the medium of teaching by Khusru I had attracted intellectual and philosophical minds from Greece, Rome and Europe. It was a milestone in human progress.

Ardā Virāf's description of his visit to Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven was 'borrowed' by Dante 1265-1321 who claimed "he drew the idea from the medieval Christian theology and philosophy writings of Thomas Equinas 1225-1274 (700 years later)".

The original 'Book of Ardā Virāf' was again translated much later 1827-1876; by Edward William West in 1824-1905. The Book was in turn revised by the Zarathushti Priest, Hoshangji Jāmāsp Asā into English (from the Pahlavi literature MS) by Prof. Martin Haug, of the University of Munich.

In 'The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, Volume VII: Ancient Persia, edited by Charles F. Horne, Ph.D.,1917 Charles Horne, in his Introduction writes: ".......The entire vision is truly Dantesque; and while we do not know its age, we can say confidently that it is several centuries older than the work of Dante. So profound, even to this day, is the Parsis' faith in the reality of Viraf's vision, that when the work is read in their religious assemblies, the men weep and the women cry out in horror"

Khusru encouraged and financed Dēhgān Dānēshwar to write the History of Airān (Khudāi Nāmēh), which was later used by Dāikiki and then by Firdowzi, who composed the Shah Nāmēh in verse form.

Alternatively, he had the works of Plato, Aristotles and other Philosophers translated into Pāhlavi. This led to the origins of Sufism, which was to take deep root later, during the Islamic period.

He ordered the entire Avestan Scriptures be rewritten in Pahlavi with revisions and re-explanations in Pāzand.

If you wish to read 'The Book of Ardā Virāf' visit http://www.avesta.org/ and click on the first topic in the middle column: -

3. Pythagoras

It was during depressing times of the Dark ages in Greece about that Pythagoras was born 569 BCE in Samos, an island off the western coast in the Anatolian plateau of Turkey of a Greek Father and an Asiatic mother. An ordinary Ionian of mixed blood he had no opportunity to read or write. *There has been not a single record of Pythagoras having written anything.* It was the later, so-called Pythagoreans (his immediate followers and later new conscripts), who did all the documentation and writing and, with it, the claiming and the exaggerating of whatever he is believed to have transmitted in his 'School'. This resulted in all that they claimed to be

documented in history as the alleged Pythagoras' original ideas and knowledge. Let us inquire into this rather extraordinary historical anomaly.

Not all that Pythagoras is believed to have transmitted was readily accepted by the Pythagoreans. Indeed, when the Pythagorean Society at Croton was attacked by Cylon, a nobleman from Croton itself, about 480 BCE.

Pythagoras escaped to Metapontium. Almost all authors say he died there; some claiming that he committed suicide because of the attack on his Society. After his death in about 480 BCE the 'Pythagorean Society' expanded rapidly about 500 BCE and later.

Knowledge, traditionally being accepted synonymous with power (particularly, at the time) the Society members in their euphoria (rather than in their self-styled wisdom) decided to enter politics. As it often happens the political nature of the, once, amicable members split them into a number of political affiliations and factions. Such were the problems created by these alleged intellectuals that the Society had to be forcefully suppressed. Its meeting houses and halls were everywhere violently sacked and burned. In particular, in the "House of Milo" in Croton 50 to 60 Pythagoreans were trapped and slain. Those who managed to escape or survive the wounds took refuge at Thebes and other places in Egypt. That certainly was the end of their ambitions as they soon went into obscurity.

Pythagoras, while in Samos had somehow managed to remain tolerant of (though disillusioned by) the dictatorial block on the freedom of speech imposed by the, then, tyrant Polycrates, who had seized control of the city of Samos. Around 535 BCE Pythagoras, who had a natural bent towards intellectual inquiries and learning, which he found gravely lacking in Greece at the time, escaped to Egypt. According to Porphyry he visited many of the temples and witnessed discussions but, as an alien, he was refused admission to priesthood to all the Egyptian temples. It was because there were strong links between Samos and Egypt at this time that Polycrates dispatched a letter of recommendation that he be permitted to enter the 'inner circle' of Egyptian priesthood. This helped him gain admission into the Temple of Diospolis. After completing the rigid temple rites necessary or admission he was ultimately accepted into the priesthood.

In 525 BCE Cambyses, son of Cyrus the Great, invaded Egypt, won the Battle of Pelusium and captured Heliopolis and Memphis. Pythagoras was taken as a prisoner of war, and, therefore as a slave to Babylon. In Babylonia in the Zarathushti Māghavan Brotherhood Guild, which was originally founded by Dāi-āuku (Gk: Diocese) was Gaomātā, a rather ambitious Māghavan as the Principal. It was under the tutelage, authority and guidance of the, then, Zarathsuhti Pontiff Zārādes (also called Zārādus in history). He was the supreme Mobēdān Mobēd, equivalent to the present Roman Pope (the Zarathushtrotəmā of Avestan times), both under Cambyses and later, (Daraius I) that Pythagoras attained deep knowledge and understanding of the Gathic and Avestan Philosophy. It is worthy of note that it was the name of this Royal Papacy, which prompted some historians to incorrectly place the birth of Zarathushtra in Babylonia and the incorrect date to 550 BCE. Pythagoras was instructed in the sacred rites and learnt about mathematics, geometry,

philosophy of ideas, intellectual ideals and spiritual knowledge. He also reached the acme of perfection in Arithmetic, Geometry and Music and the other mathematical sciences taught by the Babylonians. It was here that Pythagoras's young mind was firmly impressed. Here, he first learnt the importance of numbers and the dependence on the interaction of contraries or pairs of opposites — good / evil; positive / negative; light / darkness; right / wrong; rationality / irrationality; outwardness / inwardness...etc.

The Avestan words: Gāv for Mother Earth used for Gāiā; Varuna for Uranus; Dyāus for Zeus; Dyāus Pitār (pronounced Jyāus) for Jupiter......etc, possibly obtained from ancient Mycenaean Greek, are all known.

Sam Kerr Sydney, Australia