

The advent of the word, ‘GOD’

The word ‘GOD’ⁱ in the English language first appeared as late as the fourth century CE (Common Era). The word is a relatively new European innovation, which has not been used in any of the ancient Judaeo-Christian scripture manuscripts that were written in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek or Latin. Before this date the word for ‘God’, used by the early Christians, was ‘Father’.

In English, the *earliest Christian use of the word, ‘God’* occurred in Germanic writing after the word ‘Guda’ was used for God. It first appeared in the *Gothic Bible* (also known as the ‘Wulfila Bible’) *as translated from the New Testament* by (Bishop) Wulfia (circa 311-380 CE) into the Gothic language spoken by the Eastern Germanic Gothic tribes (one of 3 Germanic tribes – the ‘Geats’, the ‘Goths and the ‘Gutar’). During the fourth century, the Goths were converted to Christianity, largely through the efforts of (Bishop) Wulfilas, (living in Nicopolis ad Istrum, today's region of Northern Bulgaria). It is generally agreed that the word is derived from the Proto-Indo-European neuter *passive perfect participle*, *g^hu-tó-m, from the Proto-Indo-European - the Proto-Germanic meaning of *gudán.

The words ‘Gods’ and ‘Goddesses’

The words, ‘Gods’ and ‘Goddesses’ progressed over centuries to a distorted imposition by colonial powers among their subjects in their occupied populations globally. On the Subcontinent, the Vedic peoples in their own languages used the word ‘Dēvā’ & Dēvīⁱⁱ, derived from the Sanskrit root ‘Div’ (meaning to shine or become bright). The Gathic /Avestan equivalent words are ‘Daēva’ and ‘Daēvi’ⁱⁱⁱ. The colonialists and their missionaries, having once acquired the words ‘divinity’ and ‘divine’ for themselves, promoted the use of the words ‘Gods’ and ‘Goddesses’ instead, while in a push to promote their own mother tongue, totally foreign to the occupied populace. This, soon promoted widespread use of these acquired words in their occupied territories and, even, globally. The ‘Dēvās’ (female-‘Dēvis’) were (and, still remain devotedly) the meaningful ‘divinities’ (their ‘Shining Ones’- the ancient ‘Dēvās’ and ‘Dēvis’) among the Vedic devotees on the Subcontinent in their own language of their ancestors. Unfortunately, the distorted words, ‘Gods’ and ‘Goddesses’ have remained (almost irreversibly) in common parlance in the imposed language of the former colonial power. Among the noteworthy pantheon of the so-called ‘first born Gods and Goddesses’ of the pre-Christian Greeks were some ‘divinities’ borrowed from the Proto-Indo-Iranians and the later Indo-Iranians. These were the Olympian Godhead, Greek **Zeus** (*Greek father/ruler responsible for thunder, lightning, storm, rain*) from Vedic ‘Dyāus’ (*pronounced Jyāus. In Ṛgveda 1.89.4: Dyauṣ is first mentioned and given the title of Father. Also in Ṛgveda 4.17.4: ‘..... He who begat the strong bolt’s Lord who roareth, immovable like earth from her foundation’^{iv}*); Greek **Jupiter** from Vedic ‘Dyāus-pitā’ (*Ṛgveda 1.89.4: Dyāus Pitā, meaning Sky Father; it also appears in other verses*); Greek **Ouranos/Uranus** from *Vishnu Shasranāmah* (454th name of Vishnu) and from ‘101 names of Ahura Mazda’, his 44th name ‘Varuna’); Greek **Diana** (originally **Dāinā**) from ‘Daēna’ (meaning ‘conscience’, which was also ‘Din’, the ‘Faith’ in the One Creator); Greek **Gāiā** from Vedic and Avestan ‘Gāv’- Mother Earth.....etc.

The Proto-Indo-European language

Proto-Indo-European is the linguistic reconstruction of a common ancestor of the Indo-European languages^v - the Vedic Sanskrit and the pre-Gathic languages spoken by the united Proto-Indo-Europeans in their subarctic Primal Homeland much before the onset of the Early Bronze Age (circa 4000-1800 BCE) in Central Asia and adjacent subarctic regions. This was before the era of the Indic Sage, Rāmāchandra and the Iranic Prophet, Zarathushtra). Their one common God-head was ***Bhāgā*** (the word is still used as in Bhagavan, Bhāghwad Geetā ...etc). But, after the schism (between the once united Vedic Indic and the Iranic peoples, which occurred around 3500 BCE - Before Common Era) each went their separate ways. The Indic peoples, then, called their Godhead, ***Brahmā***, the chief among all their pantheon of lesser divinities (the ***dēvas*** and the ***assuras***) and, called the pre-Gathic Iranic Godhead the ***assura***, ***Mēdhā*** among all their many assuras. Later, Zarathushtra, the Iranic reformist named the Supreme Creator, ***Ahura Mazda***, ***‘the One Perfectly Good Divine Creator’ among all the lesser Yazatas*** (Archangels and Angels). ***In an extraordinary vision he incorporated all humans, in an earthly scheme of things, as his co-workers to achieve a clearly meaningful final purpose allocated to humans in life up to the ‘end of time’*** (later, the Judaeo-Christian Apocalypse). The Proto-Indo-European language was the first proposed proto-language to be widely accepted by linguists. Scholars estimate that the proto-Indo-European language may have been spoken as a single language before the schism, between the once united Vedic Indic and the Iranic peoples.

The Proto-Indo-European itself was thought to derive from a root *ǵʰeǵ- ***‘to pour ghee / clarified butter as libation, (‘to libate’ - Vedic Sanskrit ‘hūta’ / Gathic ‘huda’)*** and a root *ǵʰaǵ- (*ǵʰeǵh₂-) ***‘to call, to invoke’ Vedic Sanskrit ‘hūta’ / Gathic ‘huda’***. Also ***‘having been sacrificed’***, from the verb root *hu* meaning ***‘sacrifice’***. A subtle shift in translation gives the meaning ***‘the one to whom sacrifices are made’ or ‘the one to whom it is invoked’***, that is, ***the Creator***).

Shri Vishnu Sahasra Nāmah (1000 names of Vishnu), from Sloka 95^{vi}:

886/887th name - *‘The one who is endless / who consumes the libation of the sacrifice through Fire’*

Depending on which possibility is preferred, the pre-Christian meaning of the Germanic term may either have been (for *‘invoking’*) ***‘invocation, prayer’*** and (for *‘pouring’*) ***‘libation’*** and ***‘the One or that which is libated upon’*** (possibly the ‘unconscious origin’ of the meaning of the words, ***‘idol’*** and later, ***‘idol worship’*** generally and, the absence of rituals during solemn prayer recitation in Islam).

Zarathushtra’s word, ‘Huda’ in the Gathas

There are some cultures of the world, which have difficulties with the pronunciation of ‘K’ as differentiated from that of ‘Kh’ (as in ‘Kazakhstan’). The Iranic peoples of the subarctic Primal Homeland and their descendants may have pronounced ‘kh’ in a different way - the palatalization of the sound ‘k^{vii}’. Not being a linguist it is difficult for me to express the problems clearly, except provide examples below.

The Indo-European, ancient Hittite words, (K)Hātti and its Capital, (K)Hatusāsh, and Gathic /Avestan words, Hara(k)hvaiti, (K)Haurvatāt (Pāhlavi: Khordād)...etc. The Parsis (in their exilic state) often pronounce (K)Hudā as Khodā / Khodāyē / and, even, in conformity with Indian tradition, Khodāyēji)

Hudā - Zarathushtra's 'The One, Perfectly Good Creator'^{viii} .

Hudā: 31.22 as in *Hu-dā: Good Dāttā*

Translated variously as 'The One of Supremely Perfect Divine Goodness', 'Lord of Wisdom', 'Seer of Truth', 'The One having Clear Insight' & epithets for 'The One Supreme Wise Lord'.

Hudā(y) / Hudānu: *Hudāō*: 45.6; 48.3, *Hudāōnghē* 31.22, *Hudāōnghō* 30.3; 34.3, *Hudāōbyo* 34.13.

Hudānuš/ Hudānaoš: 31.16

Hu-dāma / Hu-dāməm: 29.8 '*Sweetness; Supremely Perfect Divine Goodness*'.

i Germanic etymology, [http://www.ask.com/wiki/GOD_\(word\)](http://www.ask.com/wiki/GOD_(word)).

ii Monier-Williams, Sir Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, New Edition, 1988, p. 478 (*Div*), p. 492 (*Dēva*).

iii Avesta-English Dictionary of Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga, '*Avasthā bhāshā ni sampurna farhang*' (*A Dictionary in Avesta, Gujarati and English languages*), Education Society's Steam Press, Bombay, 1900. *Reprint - A Complete Dictionary of the Avesta Language in Guzerati and English* by Kavasji Edalji Kanga, The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai, 2003, p. 241 (*Daēva*), p. 242 (*Daēvi*).

iv Griffiths, Ralph T. H., *The Hymns of the Ṛg Veda*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1973.

v Lehmann, Winfred. P., *Proto-Indo-European Phonology*. The Indo-Iranian Voiceless Aspirates. <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/iep11.htm>

vi *Shri Vishnu Sahasra Nāmah (1000 names of Vishnu), from Sloka 95*. <http://kirtimukha.com/chinnamma/sahasra/sloka95.htm>

vii Lehmann, Winfred. P., *Proto-Indo-European Phonology*. The Indo-Iranian Voiceless Aspirates. <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/iep11.html>

viii Taraporewala, Irach J. S., *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, Hukhta Foundation, Bombay, 1993.

Sam Kerr
Sydney, Australia
01 May 2015