

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 201 – The saviors of the lands with Spenta Aramaiti bringing harmony with good thinking and truth – Spentomad Gatha – Yasna 48 - Verses 11 – 12

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Let us start our WZSE #201st with Vakhshur-e-Vakhshuraan Zarathushtra's Gatha!

Our very good friend and a very well-known Gatha scholar, Dina McIntyre, was the editor of a wonderful series of presentations by eminent scholars on Zarathushtra's Gathas, in a simple and easy to understand language. This is available at:

<http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dgm/index.htm>

This series of wonderful articles on Zarathushtrā's Gathas is highly recommended for everyone and especially for the Religious teachers of adult groups.

Dina's contribution was on Aramaiti. Here is what she has to say about it:

(In order to give a short review of what Dina presented, I have taken liberty to remove some references from Gatha mentioned by her. You can read her whole presentation in the above mentioned website.)

Making it happen, Aramaiti, by Dina McIntyre

As one of Zarathushtra's "immortals" *aramaiti* is an important part of Zarathushtra's theological system. Yet it is surprising to see how differently leading Zoroastrian thinkers translate or interpret its meaning. To Dastur N.D. Minochehr-Homji and T.R. Sethna *aramaiti* is divine wisdom. To A.A. Jafarey it is serenity. Bode and Nanavutty translate it as devotion, K.D. Irani as benevolence, Farhang Mehr as divine love, and S. Insler as piety.

In my search for the meaning of *aramaiti*, I decided to comb through the Gathas and study each mention of *aramaiti* in them, to see if the context in which Zarathushtra used the word might give us some indication of the meaning he intended to ascribe to it. As with any analysis of Zarathushtra's thought processes, what I discovered was well worth the effort. I have obtained some insight into the meaning of *aramaiti*. And I have become aware that Zarathushtra's concept of "piety" and "worship" are quite unconventional. But such conclusions should not be accepted on the unsubstantiated word of any person,

however well-intentioned. They require verification from the source. All quotations from and references to the Gathas in this essay have been taken from Insler's translation, though I do not know if he would agree with some or all of the inferences which I have drawn from his translation.

To understand *aramaiti*, we must understand *xshathra*. And the converse is also true. But let us start with *xshathra*. *Vohu xshathra* is good rule. And good rule is what occurs when authority or power is exercised with reason and intelligence (good thinking, *vohu mano*) and is committed to what is true and right (*asha*). In short, as the Gathas repeatedly tell us, good rule is the rule of truth and good thinking. Let us set good rule (*vohu xshathra*) on the back burner for a moment and consider how Zarathushtra used the word *aramaiti*.

In *Ahunavaiti Gatha*, Zarathushtra states that a person expresses *aramaiti* by action stemming from good thinking.

By his action stemming from good thinking, the man of good determination has expressed his understanding and his virtuous [aramaiti],... Y34.10.

In *Ushtavaiti Gatha*, Zarathushtra once again links *aramaiti* to actions:

I know the Wise One who created it [truth] to be the Father of effective good thinking. And His daughter is [aramaiti] of good actions... Y45.4.

And in *Spenta Mainyu Gatha*, a person of *aramaiti* is described as:

...one who has allied his conception with good thinking... Y49.5.

It is clear from the above that Zarathushtra's concept of *aramaiti* is related to actions stemming from good thinking.

But the clincher comes in *Vohu Xshathra Gatha*, where Zarathushtra summarizes what it is that makes a man of *aramaiti* virtuous -- it is his understanding, his words, his actions, his vision.

Virtuous is a man of [aramaiti]. He is so by reason of his understanding, his words, his action, his conception [daena]... Y51.21.

It would be reasonable to infer from this evidence that, as Zarathushtra uses the word, *aramaiti* means bringing to life the rule of truth and good thinking by our understanding, our words, our actions, our vision -- the proverbial good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

Just as a skillful artist plays with colors, mixing, matching and complementing them to convey his thoughts and feelings, in the same way, Zarathushtra seems to enjoy playing with ideas -- mixing, matching and complementing them to convey his multidimensional vision. And the concept of *aramaiti* is no exception.

In my view, it is this concept -- this active and voluntary bringing to life of the rule of truth and good thinking, with our benevolent thoughts, words and deeds, as a friend and ally of God -- that is *spenta aramaiti*. In view of the fact that *aramaiti* functions at both the divine and the human levels, I have been unable to come up with one word that fits the concept exactly, (though "service" -- to the desired end by both man and God -- is close). But at the human level, the substance of the concept of *aramaiti* is identical to Zarathushtra's unconventional idea of how we must worship.

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In closing, let us consider how the above definition of *aramaiti* fits into the overall scheme of the *amesha spenta*. *Asha* is objective truth, knowledge, right, -- God's law which orders all aspects of the universe, both abstract and material. *Vohu mano* is good thinking, the means by which we ascertain knowledge, truth and right. And *aramaiti* is implementing or bringing to life good thinking, truth and right in our world (*zam*) with our good thoughts (understanding), our good words, and our good deeds, thereby bringing about good rule (*vohu xshathra*) here, and evolving towards completeness and immortality (*haurvatat/ameretat*).

The saviors of the lands with Spenta Aramaiti bringing harmony with good thinking and truth

In *Selections From Gathas*, Dina presents the following two verses from Yasna 48 about the saviors of the lands with Spenta Aramaiti bringing harmony with good thinking and truth.

Let us then present these two verses from Yasna 48:

The saviors of the lands with Spenta Aramaiti bringing harmony with good thinking and truth: Spentomad Gatha, Yasna 48 - Verses 11-12

(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation)

(11) Kadaa Mazdaa ashaa mat Aarmaitish jimat,
Khshathraa husheitish vaastravaiti;
Koi dregvodebish khruraaish raamaam daaonteh,
Keng aa Vangheush jimat Manangho chistish.

(12) At toi anghen Saoshyanto dakhvyunaam,
Yoi khshnum Vohu Mananghaa hachaaonteh,
Shyaothanaaish ashaa thwahyaa Mazdaa sengahayaa,
Toi-zi daataa hamaeshtaaro aeshem mahyaa.

The saviors of the lands with Spenta Aramaiti bringing harmony with good thinking and truth – Spentomad Gatha – Yasna 48 - Verses 11-12 Translation:

(11) When, Wise One, shall [aramaiti] come along with truth, bringing peace and pasturage throughout the dominion? Which men shall stop the cruelty (caused) by the violent deceitful persons? To which man shall come the understanding stemming from good thinking?

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

(Translation from Acta Iranica – *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* by Prof. Stanley Insler, 1975, Pages 291-293.)

SPD Comments

1. Once again, I highly recommend reading the whole Gatha presentation

edited by Dina McIntyre, especially the Religious teachers of the adult classes.

2. Taraporewalla translated the above two verses as:

(11) When O Mazda, armaiti together with Asha shall come through Khshathra, peaceful and bringing security? Who shall hold themselves unruffled even with the blood thirsty followers of Untruth? To whom shall come the Wisdom of Vohu Mano.

(12) Such, indeed shall be the saviours of the lands; who follow the call of duty guided by Vohu Mano; because of their deeds inspired by Asha, in accordance with Thy Command, O Mazda, they certainly have been marked out as Vanquishers of hatred.

3. Dr. Kolsawalla in his thesis:

The Prophets and Renovators of the world had to follow the call of duty by good thoughts. They were the smiters of wrath and passion. According to Rustomjee the future Benefactors of the human race will be those, who will shun hatred and discord and follow the pursuit of Wisdom through development of Divine Intelligence.

4. Poet Khabardar:

The holy persons always acted with righteousness, non-violence, lack of malice and in accordance with the Laws of Ahura Mazda. They were able to withstand against the Cupid and temptations of the flesh. In the Hindu scriptures it is also said that it is very difficult to overcome Kama or Cupid, who is the cause of wars, strife and acute suffering. It is to be mastered and kept in control and used only for procreation to carry on the world of Mazda.

May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Respect for all burn ever eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and eternal enthusiasm!

Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)

(Aafrin Pegaamber Zartosht, from Ervad Kangaji Gujarati Khordeh Avesta Baa Maaeni – Page 424, adapted Aafrinaamahi - we wish instead of Aafrinaami – I wish, in the original)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli