

## The Avestan 'given word'

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### Pronunciation symbols

I have adopted the following transcription (after Kanga & Taraporewala) as permitted by my software, while avoiding the encoding of the **ITRANS convention** hoping to make the reading for non-academic purposes generally easier: -

**a** as in **fun**; **ā** as in **far**; **ã** (nasal sound **ān**) as in '**āvān**'; **ə** as in **fed**, **ē** as in **fade**; **i** as in **fill**; **ī** as in **feel**; **o** as in **for**; **ō** as in **fore**; **u** as in **full**; **ū** as in **fool**. The nasal sounds are **ān** as in **āvān**; **ən** as in the French '**trés biən**', **īn** as in **Ahīnsā** (also pronounced '**īm**' as in Sanskrit **Ahīmsā** and as also in Avestan and Gathic languages) and **ūn** as in Humayūn. The pronunciation of some consonants (as permitted by my software) are '**ś**' for '**sh**', '**š**' for '**ss**', '**ṛ**' for '**ri**', **ñ** for '**ni**', '**ž**' for '**zh**'.

The pronunciation of the vowel sounds '**ə**' as in **fed** and '**ən**' as in the French '**trés biən**' is unique to the Gathic/Avestan languages. **These vowel sounds 'ə' and 'ən' are not found in the alphabets of Sanskrit and (Shuddha) Gujarāti** (and possibly also in other Indic group of Prakrit languages) where **all 'e' vowel sounds are pronounced as ē as in fade**. Also, it is interesting that 'Vedic Sanskrit' texts appear to be conspicuous by the absence of a double negative although double negatives do occur later in 'Classical Sanskrit'.

Thus, in the Gujarāti version of the book by Taraporewala, Irach J. S., '**Ashō Zarathushtra nā Gāthā**' all the '**e**'s are shown with the typical Gujarāti alphabetic '**pā(n)khru(n)**' (pronounced as '**ē**' as in **fade**). In the original Gujarāti version of his Khordeh Avesta Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga, however, uses a crescent above the '**e**'s to create the sound **ə** as in **fed**, and **ən** as in the French '**trés biən**' and the typical Gujarāti alphabetic '**pā(n)khru(n)**' to create the sound **ē** as in **fade**. In the English version of his book Taraporewala, Irach J. S. uses the accepted symbols for **ə** as in **fed**, **ē** as in **fade** and **ən** as in the French '**trés biən**'.

### The 'given word'

Regarding 'a given word' to another Zarathushti here is what Zarathushtra has been quoted in **Mēhr Yasht, verse 2** as conveying to his followers through his Revelation, the wisdom he gained in his dialogue with Ahura Mazda: -

***Do not retract your 'given word', O Spitamān, neither from the one whom the evil had asked for, nor the one to the righteous co-religionists, because a given word, both to the evil as well as to the righteous is binding***

He then goes on to say:-

***The guilty one who is false to his 'given word' is as deceitful to the entire country, O Spitamān, as if a hundred evil ones were tormenting one righteous man***

It has been noted that after the common Assuric/Ahuric days of the united Āryās a schism occurred in their ranks into the Avestan Airyānic people and the Vēdic Āryānic people. The main point of contention for the break-up was whether to revere, worship and appease the forces of evil, as the Vedic people (Dēvā-yasnian) were inclined to do or not to so, and even, bravely challenge evil as the Gathic/Avestan people did according to the teachings of the

Prophet Zarathushtra. Note also the emphasis on the terms **'keeping / honouring'** of the **'word'** when **'given' even to the evil**. Note also the term **'the entire country'**, i.e. each and every self-respecting Mazdā-yasnian. The 'breaker of the promise' (Mithrō-drujəm / Mithrō-drujānm) is here considered literally a traitor to the Suzerain Ruler (King of Kings) of the entire Airyānic expanse, the Lord of all Airyānā and of Un-Airyānic (occupied) territories.

Mēhr Yasht had been composed before the Achaemenian era (and transmitted by the time-honoured Indo-Iranian oral tradition). According to the Yasht the Gathic/Avestan word for 'a given word' is Mithrā himself (he is himself the **'tanu-mānthrō – the word incarnate'**) - he whom none can deceive, he who is the protector of men and smiter of men who break 'the given word', he whom the Lord of the Country himself invokes for help with outstretched hands in earnest request. Mithrā is he, whom Ahura Mazda gave 1,000 skills and 10,000 eyes in order to watch those who will violate contracts and those who are false to their 'given word', in whose presence many men false to their promise go secretly into hiding, humiliated.

**In the Gathic and Avestan languages (and also in the Ṛg Vēda) there is no word for 'writing'**. Every contract and event was based on oral dialogue. The 'given word' carried with it a moral, ethical and even legal connotation. The Gathic/Avestan word 'Vacha' means word or utterance (Prakrit / Vachan; Pāhlavi: Vaj / Gujarati: Bāj). 'Vachan in present day parlance, in fact, means 'an oath'. The piety and sacredness of a 'given word' was known to the common Āryās even during prehistoric times. **Through the solemn oath attributed to Varunā ('Var' means to bind/tie) a person was 'bound' to act or not to act in accordance with whatever he uttered to another person (in the form of an oral contract). Even now, a 'given word' by a Zarathushti to another Zarathushti is morally and ethically binding**, although if his intention is not so good he may deny it in legal proceedings.

Here, through this solemn oath attributed to Mithrā two persons or groups of persons agree together over a particular contract mutually, thus entering into a moral obligation through this mutual arrangement/consent. The modern equivalent to this, during ordinary speech would be the exclamation 'by God; 'by Jove'; 'by Odin' (a Teutonic divinity). It is interesting to note that until recently (at least in the British Commonwealth countries) legal practitioners have used the term 'by Odin' at the end of their letter to their clients. I still possess letters from my solicitor in Sydney with the term at the end of his letters of the 1960s. **The spoken word was indeed a power in those days (a very noble attribute of humans), which had to be personified and recognized as a divinity**. The power invested in the divinity would then support and further the cause of the upright man who honoured his pledge and smite down with vengeance the untruthful who betrayed it. It was after the advent of writing and use of signatures and seals that the power of the 'given word' slowly became diminished and even became obsolete. It is now not uncommon to give lavish promises of deeds before political Elections. Even in modern times Nikita Khrushchev of Russia, known for his explicit speeches, once observed in the UN Assembly, "Politicians will give promises - sometimes, even to build a bridge where there is no valley or river to cross." It is not clear at what stage in history the meaning of the 'given word' / the 'swear word' became grossly distorted to mean 'abusive word, curse, foul language, even blasphemy.'

With the advent of writing the reliance on the intention with which the spoken word was uttered, became more and more a subject of doubt. On occasions torture has been made justifiable to elicit the 'alleged truth'. Often the truth elicited through torture was clearly falsehood negated under extreme duress. Slowly, the written contract, ending in one or more signature(s), thumb impressions and seal impressions became fashionable and later became legal requirements. Nowadays, it is all in writing with date and signature attested. Perhaps the following amusing conversation might help in understanding medieval thinking:

Romeo: Lady, by yonder moon I swear.

Juliet: O, swear not by the moon; the inconsistent moon.....that monthly changes in her circular orb, lest thy love prove likewise variable.

Romeo: What shall I swear by?

Juliet: Do not swear at all. Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self which is the God of my idolatry, and I will believe thee.

Varunā {the 44<sup>th</sup> name of Ahura Mazda in the 101 names of Ahura Mazda, the 544<sup>th</sup> name in the 1001 names of Ahura Mazda and the 554<sup>th</sup> name of Lord Vishnu in the Vishnu Sahasra Nāma} was the son of 'waters' – Apam Napāt living on a high dwelling in the huge Sea, Vouruksha. (The Vēdās call him the 'child of waters' – Apam Shishur. He was invested with vast Cosmic powers, for 'it is he who established Heaven and Earth and the Kingdom (Vēdic Kshatra/Gathic Khshathra) is his'. Vēdic Mitra/Gathic Mithrā, the Lord of Fire and also the Lord of the Covenant was believed to accompany the all-seeing Sun in its daily course. The Vēdic Mitra (Mitra in Sanskrit and the later Prakrit group of languages means 'friend') was the natural guardian of Ṛta in the sense of 'Truth'. It was therefore in the most ancient common Āryanic/Airyanic times, even before the era of Zarathushtra that these most revered of divinities became the Lords of Loyalty – Varunā/Varuna the Lord of Truth and Mithrā/ Mitra the Lord of Covenant. The Creator the Lord of All Wisdom remained Ahurā Mazdā/Brāhma.

These, then, were the 3 Lords of the Airyānic - Iranic Pantheon and Āryānic - Vedic Guardians who upheld the cause of the great common Āshā/Ṛtā complex (the Eternal Law/the Truth Eternal) laid down for the benefit of the entire Universe, our Solar System and, therefore, for the benefit of all humankind. This Eternal Law insured 'Order in the Natural World' such that the Sun continued to remain in position and to maintain its orderly clockwise rotation giving enough heat to the Earth rotating around it on its elliptical path, so that the seasons changed depending on its distance from the Sun. The existence on Earth continued in a natural regulated manner and the tides changed depending on the waxing and the waning of the satellite Moon during the period of the allotted Earthly time (Zravānē Daraēgho Khadātē).

Offerings of worship and of sacrifice (Vēdic Yajna/Gathic Yasna) to the Lords of Oath and Covenant and to the Āshā / Ṛtā complex for upholding the Eternal Law became obligatory. All humans on Earth had to fulfill these obligations in order to help maintain these natural processes, which in turn helped to maintain the Natural Law. The personification of the Law in Āshā/Ṛtā, naturally had other ethical implications. A female divinity, Āshā governed conduct, which had to be of the highest of all ethical Vēdic/Avestan values. This included truth, honesty, loyalty, courage and virtue. Any violation of the 'given word' by a person to another (or even to his own conscience) had to be smitten in retribution, because it was a sacred pledge given to the Divinity of Oath – unto one of the three Lords: Varunā, Mithrā and Ahura Mazda.

This retribution, in real life, was made obvious to everyone through the 'Ordeal of Water' or the 'Ordeal of Fire' - an ordeal to be undergone by those accused of a wrong doing and who had sworn their innocence.

The Vēdās talk of oath taking whereby a person had to swear oath by Mitra in the presence of water and holding water in his hands. The oath of marriage by the Vedic people was taken in the presence of fire during the ceremony. Among the Avestan people an oath was both by water and by fire.

## ***The Ordeal of Water***

Society was cruel, then, as it is now to those who will not retaliate or speak out in defence or defiance although they have done nothing wrong. The ordeals imposed, even on such innocent persons (often, victims of malicious innuendo and calculated intrigue) were indeed both physically and psychologically harsh. In the Indo-Iranian tradition during the ***Ordeal of Water*** the accused was required to submerge himself in water. Just as the head dipped under the surface of the water an archer shot an arrow, which had to be retrieved by a speedy courier. On the return of the arrow the head of the accused was lifted from under the surface of the water. If he was still alive he was deemed to be innocent. According to the Vedas the accused was expected to renounce upon oath (abhishapya kām) before submerging his head under water saying, "Through truth protect me, O Varunā" (satyēna mabhi rakshāsva, Varunā) while holding water with both hands.

***The Ordeal by Fire*** in Iran took several different forms: -

a) Described in the Shāhnāmēh is the imposed plight of Shyāvarshan (Syāvakhsh) the great warrior Prince who was accused of a shocking impropriety of moral behavior and had to go through the fiery test to prove his innocence. Two huge fires of piled wood placed close together were lit 'to blaze high and fierce such that the earth appeared more illuminated than the sky'. Shyāvakhsh was forced to ride through the fire along a very narrow corridor between the two fiercely blazing flames. Both he and his horse emerged on the other side unscathed 'because the breath of fire to him was even as the cool wind, being really innocent.'

b) Ordeal by molten metal. The accused had to lie prone and molten metal was poured on his bare chest. If the unfortunate victim survived the deep burns he was deemed innocent. It is interesting to note the parallels when Zarathushtra, in his ***extraordinary vision of Frashā-kar (Avestan: Frashō-kērēti/ Pāhlavi Frashēkart*** - the later expurgated 'Apocalypse/Domesday' in the Bible and in other Faiths) talks of a huge tidal; wave of molten metal sweeping through the Resurrected masses in order to distinguish the sinful from the ones without blemish. His visionary thinking has been assimilated in the teachings of other subsequent world Faiths. Even during the retribution of this Final Judgement - Zarathushtra's vision of the final Ordeal by Fire - it is as if among the guilty ones will be those who have amassed a huge debt of dishonoured 'given words' and thus incurred a surfeit of minus points in the balance. This Ordeal by Fire was undergone by Ādarbād ē Māhraspand, Mobēdān Mobēd during the reign of Sassānian Emperor, Shāhpur II (309-379 CE). He had to prove the truth of 'his statement of orthodoxy' and his claims of 'heretics in the court', which were both vigorously opposed as heresy through court intrigue.

c) In this Ordeal the accused was obliged to drink boiling hot molten sulphur (brimstone) and survive if he was really innocent. Hence the idiom 'through Fire and Brimstone' used when one has to experience extreme difficulties to succeed. Even now, the Iranian expression 'sōgand khordan' means 'to swear an oath.'

Our scriptures are full of praise for those who keep their 'given word', come what may and disgrace for those who dishonour a 'given word'.

Mēhr Yasht talks of *the long arm of Yazata Mēhr, which will reach those who break their promise. Hence, the English idiom 'the long arm of the law', whether they be hiding in the East towards Sind (ushēshitairē Hindvō) or in the West towards Ninavēh (daōshitairē Nighanē) or in the southern basin of Rangha (sanakē Ranghayāō) or escaped to the ends of the earth (vimadhim ainghāō zēma).*' Further, *'Mithrā's informants and co-workers sit watching for*

*breakers of the 'given word' from all lofty heights and all watch towers.' 'Appalling is the abode and miserable are the children in that house where habitual breakers of the 'given word' live.'* On the other hand, *'to all those who keep their 'given word' (fulfill their oath) is bestowed 'swiftness to their horses (asu-aspim), 'a most righteous way of life' (razishtëm panthānm), 'clever progeny with natural innate wisdom with the help of righteous, benevolent, powerful Fravashis' (vanghuish, surāō, spētāō Fravashyō asnām frazaintim).'*

Whereas breakers of the 'given word' are *reprimanded (apaschit Mithrō-drujānm), their horses, although running hastily are not able to reach the destination, the person though riding do not move forwards in earnest and their horses although pulling the carriage cannot move efficiently. 'Their lances when hurled do not reach their target' and 'if they manage to reach the target they have no intended effect.'*

The breakers of the 'given word' are given *'neither strength nor vigour', neither glory nor reward'. Instead, the strength from their arms and the vigour from their feet are drained, their eyes lose luster, their ears lose hearing. Yazata Mithrā ensures their hands are restrained behind them, their eyes are covered over, their ears are muffled, their legs lose support so that they become powerless.'*

The Romans, in addition to the above observations, having perceived Yazata Mithrā as being *'10,000 more perceiving, brave, all-knowing, undecieving, and invincible in battle'* were most impressed. Their 'macho' vision of a great all-subduing hero returning after conquest, in all his glory, back to Rome to an immense applause from the people and the Senate, was just too overwhelming. Their yearnings just happened to fit precisely into such an image. But their version took a shockingly bizarre and distorted form. They carried this distorted Cult Mithrā image of a meaningful reverence to our Avestan Yazata Mithrā/Vēdic Guardian Mitra to their conquered lands in Europe. To them a ready-made Lord Mithrā/ Mitra, friend, protector and Master of Contracts / Covenants naturally became the right choice as 'a protector of their treaties' and 'a bond of friendship' with rival nations in their campaigns.' Western Societies, then, as it does now, most times look for answers to their ills into the wisdom of the East.

Back in Asia the two warring nations of the Hittites in (K)hātti and Mittāni had similar experiences. Clay tablets describing treaties have been found in the archives of the Boghas Kouï diggings (near (K)Hatushāsh - Capital of (K)hātti (modern Turkey) during the 14th Century BCE}. These tablets, incidentally, have been the first ever recorded mention of the Yazata Mithrā in the west. The Hittites and the Mittāni people revered the same Vēdic/Avestan divinities. This indicates that the earliest Indo-European migrants to the west did carry their deeply rooted religious practices with them in wanderings/conquests. Besides Mitra/Varunā, among the other Assurās/Ahurās of the prehistoric Neolithic Indo-Iranian pantheon mentioned in the clay tablets were Bhāgā/Bhāgā, Aryamān/Airyamān, Vāyu/Yayu, Indra.....etc. The Roman cult fever reached such epidemic proportions that outside the sphere of the Airyānic/Aryānic peoples mysterious rites of initiation and allegiance (rather than of reverence) developed to a level when cult heroes among their warriors had to be made to emerge.

### **The Roman Cult:**

The Roman cult Mithrā became an integral part of their warrior legions guaranteeing support to all who had pledged their lives to the Roman Eagle. Mithrāic Temples (Mithraeums) were built at the fulfillment of every military expedition in all occupied territories in Europe, Africa and Asia Minor. The vault of the crypt of each Mithraeum was symbolic of our Avestan Celestial vault. The most recent Mithraeum unearthed in London, England was as late as 1954 in Walbrook. The cult with secret initiation rites has, quite incorrectly, in modern literature been blatantly

attributed to our Māghavans who the writers claim had propagated it. The Māghavans (the Biblical Magi) were, in fact, propagating the teachings of Zarathushtra and had nothing whatsoever to do with such strange beliefs and rites of the bizarre Roman cult Mithrā initiations. They would have indeed found the cult practices deeply offensive and would have pointed out the denigrating way in which the image of Yazata Mithrā was portrayed in such a demeaning manner by the cult imposing some confusing Mithrāic brotherhood. Rudyard Kipling wrote of the alleged 'loyalty' of the Roman legionaries as being akin to the present day Freemasonry, with its 3 degrees of initiation. The Mithrā cult had 12 initiation rites (representing the 12 Houses of the Zodiac through which the early morning Sun rose each day) demanding stringent oaths of secrecy.

The cult Mithrā was made to be born allegedly of a 'virgin stone' and was held as 'a true son of God' and therefore worthy of worship. Three figures represented as shepherds holding a sheep each were shown as 'witnesses' during his birth in all stone plaques and reliefs in caves and in Mithraeums throughout the Roman Empire. He was the imagined begetter of light (**genitor luminis**), born from the rock (**dues genitor rupe natus**), which gives birth (**petra genetrix**). He was made to appear so strong he could ride a bull bare-back and even slay the bull single handed. Being a representative of the Sun he was held in utmost honour on the day of the winter solstice on 25 December so that he might continue to 'shine bright' and 'offer heat and solace' to his followers during the ensuing cold wintry months. There had to be a great exhibition of comradeship among the believers since the cult Mithrā was their helper and friend (Avestan Mithrā//Vēdic Mitra means 'friend'). Exchanging gifts and inviting close relatives and friends for the 'birthday feast' was obligatory. Several unearthed Mithraeums have shown carved reliefs of the sacred Mithrāic Meal that was ceremoniously indulged in, representative of the present Eucharist. Children were specially favoured during the festival period. The Spring Solstice of 21 March was the official New Year day (the so-called Julian calendar was derived from a Calendar known to the Akkadian/ Aryānic people millennia before Romulus and Remus). The deranged Roman emperor Nero was among the early rulers to embrace the cult beliefs. In fact, he became so carried away that he had a 'Domus Aurea' ['House of the Sun' built and then appointed himself 'Sol Invictus'; (the invincible Sun) to be worshipped as 'Helios Sol']. There were several Roman emperors who harboured such delusive ideas. They had their likeness on their coins decorated by a halo of radiating rays around their head, previously reserved only for the rock carvings, reliefs and statues of the cult Mithrā himself.

This hysterical worship of a distorted cult Mithrā figure continued for over 2000 years until the middle of the 5th century BCE. Even the Emperor Constantine I 307-337 CE, who was induced by the Christian clergy to sign an edict (325 BCE) declaring Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, continued the worship of the cult figure and took active part in the Festival of Mithrā. He continued to have Mithraeums built and had '**Soli Deu Invicto Mithrae**' inscribed on his many monuments and '**Soli invicto comiti**' on his coins. The cult worship was to continue by the masses unabated for another 200 years.

The unrequited continuance of the worship of the cult Mithrā, thus, remained a baffling dilemma to the Christian clergy, in spite of their threats and persecutions for over two centuries after the official State recognition of the religion. Finding it difficult to erase the Festival of Mithrā the clergy and their devout followers decided to 'join' the cult Mithrā worshippers during the annual 'Festival of Mithrā'. Thus, as the years passed by the Christian clergy managed to slowly replace portions of the Roman Mithrā cult beliefs calling them Christian beliefs. Preparations for the Festival of Mithrā commenced on the day of the **Avestan Yāldā** (replaced by the new Christian beginning of Yuletide). The singing of the **Hymns in praise of Mithrā** was converted into the Christian carol singing, **the 12 days** of the Mithrā Festival were retained. The

dates **24 December**, the eve of the Mithrā's birthday and 25 December the birthday of Mithrā were both assimilated into the Christian beliefs. The concept of the Mithraic **Shepherd**, the highly emotion-charged **ritual feast** with invitation of near relatives and guests, the **favouring of children**, the **exchange of gifts**, the **pious sacredness of the days**, the cult **motifs**, the **resolutions** were all slowly, year by year, incorporated into the Christian festivities until **the celebration of the Mithrā festival and its memory were totally erased**.

This well planned strategy over a very long period of time ultimately worked, as history has shown. After Constantine I's sudden death in 337 CE he was succeeded by his three sons - Constantine II (from his second wife Faustus) and Constantius II and Constans (from his first wife Minervina). They managed to secure an uncertain hold on the empire with the murder of a number of relatives and supporters of Constantine for their Mithraic beliefs. Ultimately, after considerable infighting, Constantius II (337-361 CE) emerged as the successor with Constans, for some time an uneasy co-emperor. The last member of his dynasty was his nephew and son-in-law, **Julian (360-363 CE), who attempted to abolish Christianity and restore Mithraism**. The last time I was in Mumbai during the Christmas festivity our Maharashtrian home help (a recent convert to Christianity) told me she would not be coming to work the next day as she had to visit 'Mon Molly temple in Vandre' (Mount Mary Church in Bandra) to worship 'Ishwar'.

The devotion with which we, followers of Zarathushtra' adhere to our 'given word' (even when obviously being deceived) is well borne out in this story. Some years ago a visiting Zarathushti lady born in Navsāri related how the descendants in the family lost their stately family home and adjacent land because of a trustful 'given word' to an alleged kindly neighbour (Gujarāti: '**vachan**'). Apparently, her elderly mother had developed 'friendship' with this neighbour who used to do some daily chores for her fetching grocery and frequent 'presents' and her favourite home made 'pickles'. The rest of the family stayed in Mumbai and occasionally visited granny. During a presumable lapse in conversation she had once given a promise to the neighbour that her house on her demise would be sold only to him and that too at a nominal price. When she fell seriously ill she kept her 'given word' by signing a document to that effect. After her demise the family was served a warrant. The house had to be sold for the declared sum of money. The neighbor however did not keep his word, which was not to build an annexé in front as his business premises for grocery and also not to divide the adjoining vacant plot of land for sale. He was even unpleasant to the family for their complacency. Such was the power of the 'given word' in this Zarathushti ladies mind that she (without being intentionally cruel to the rest of the family) refused to budge when 'the crucial test appeared to give it in writing'; nor did she think of going against her own trust worthy belief in persons who 'give their word' to ensure the neighbour's part of the bargain in the legal document had been incorporated.

A pledge is probably best given when least is said. Regrettably, everything now has to be in writing to be made acceptable and believable (except perhaps the sadistic thrill seeking false gossip carried by word of mouth). Now let us look at the responsibilities and merits that go with a promise as mentioned in **Mēhr Yasht, verse 116**. The verbal promise / the oral contract is: **-20 fold when given among friends; 30 fold between co-workers; 40 fold between co-proprietors of land and estate; 50 fold between co-religionists; 60 fold between fellow students; 70 fold between students and their superiors; 80 fold between son-in-law and father-in-law; 90 fold between brothers, 100 fold between father and son; 1,000 between countries when a pact is entered into, 10,000 fold between followers of the Mazdāyasni Faith**.

This would imply that a promise given by one Zarathushtrian to another and then dishonoured carries a surfeit of the number of points. In other words the breaker of the promise is, then,

faced with having to involve himself in amicable thoughts, appropriate words, and meaningful and beneficial activities of a highly meritorious value to negate the imbalance. Our scriptures also imply that any reason given for an inability to honour the 'given word' however 'emotion ridden' or 'outwardly justifiable' will remain entirely irrelevant on Judgement Day. Yazata Mithrā is not only the Lord of Covenants but also presides as a Judge on that day. He is benevolent to and protector of the **Ashavan** – his loyal friend, (**Rtāvan of the Vedās**). Note the Hindi phrase '**Ashavan kē phul**' – Vedic offering of 'flowers of loyalty' during prayers and rituals.

Yazata Mithrā, Lord of Contracts/Covenants and Yazata Varunā, overseer of Oath-taking are revered in Ṛg Vēdā 5.83.6: - ".....you two bring forth rain from up yonder sky through the lure of Assurā; you two protect your (Vrata) Ordinances through the lure of Assurā; through (Rtā) Truth Eternal you rule the Universe."

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Day of Qadimi Nou Rouz – Mah Fravardin, Ruz Hormazd, Yazdegardi Era 1379 (20 July 2009)