

## Avestan Concept of the progress of Cyclico-Linear Time

The true nature of almighty Time, in Indo-Iranian eschatology, is as supra divine as the Creative power itself, the originator and lord of all things. This eternally spiritual and limitless quality of Time - **Prajāpati** of the Vedas and **Zravānē Akaranē** of the Avesta has been in existence forever, without limits or boundaries, without a beginning and without an end. We humans, almost the children of Time, are created to fulfill the very purpose of creation during a decreed limited period of earthly Time - **Zravānē Daraēghō Khadātē**.

To modern humans exposed heavily to an economic system, however, Time appears historical and irreversible and moves only in a linear direction, as a series of disconnected segments, starting from a beginning and progressing towards an end point in a linear uni-dimensional time order. The system has a non-repeatability of events and, therefore, forbids individuals to become old; even penalizes them for the economic loss. Engulfed in such a system the human sadly loses the sense of an individual life moving towards self-realization. Yet, this period of sharply delineated prevailing earthly time of long duration remains subject to its own decreed law of Time. Modern scientific observations seem to point towards a clear cyclical order permitting us humans to experience a cyclical renovation of all events in Nature occurring after each. Such regular completion and predictably repetitive events are re-enacted. As ordained by the **Law of Āshā** they occur, end and renew as an integral part of living - the precise cycles of human physiology, the soil, the tides, seasons, days, nights, months, years and the timely movements of the planets within our Solar system. And, we notice such physical events occurring in our Galaxy, in other Galaxies and in the Cosmos, too.

With the joyous experience of non-monotonous living and reliving each repeated event we, consciously, reenact the cycle of the seven creations by the ordained rhythmic pattern of our own efforts and rest, followed by a readiness to proceed further with regenerated zest. In a sense, through reliving the cycles of life, we seem to come to understand, as physical and physiological changes set in, what our lives are really all about. Within this Ahura Mazda decreed limited period of Earthly Time there is a cyclical forward progression with each beginning reaching an ending, which appears to merge into the next physical or physiological starting point. Even as we reach the end of earthly life, death, in our religious consciousness, is not the end. Another cyclical change occurs. **All change on earth, obviously, appears to remain subservient to this decreed order of the Law of Āshā.**

The Avestan recitation, '**JASA ME AVANGHĒ MAZDA**' (which forms part of our daily recitation) sings praise to the glory of such decreed Time (almost, in a way, hinting at the modern observations of Time/Space). The recitation appears to have been composed in a rather delicate and prosaic manner, in that the reverence starts from grass-roots levels and ascends higher and higher until it reaches the Finite and fuses imperceptibly into the Infinite. Imagine the immense strength and the all-conquering power of the Yazatas Vərəthraghna (Behram) and Uparōtāt. Imagine lush green pastures being softly wafted by these gentle giants by breezes that create comfort. Imagine Yazata Vāyu, too, creating the swaying winds and the mighty currents of air in the lower atmosphere. Imagine rising further up in the atmosphere (beyond the clouds) where there is the rarefied air of the Inner Space. Imagine the outer reaches of this rarefied atmosphere, Thwāsha, which reaches beyond 300 kms above the green pastures and which touches the nothingness of Adhwanō, the Outer Space. Imagine its boundless potential and share its destiny with Infinite Time from which Finite Time has been appointed by Ahura Mazda. Now, try and absorb this exquisite composition:

***Jasa Mē Avanghē, Mazda***  
[Come unto my aid, O Mazdā]

***Amahē Hutāshtahē Huradhahē Vərəθragnahē***  
[let praise be to the glory of the creation of the immense strength of Verethraghna (Yazata of Victory)]

***(Ahuradhātahē) Vanaintyaoshcha Uparōtātō***  
[(Who was created by Ahura) and of the all-conquering power of Uparōtat (Yazata of Conquest)]

***Rāmano Khāstrahē***  
[of Rāman (Yazata of Wholesome Pastures), whose comforting breezes bring joy to life]

***Vayaōsh Uparō-Kairēyēhē Tarōdhātō Anyāish Dāmān***  
[of Yazata Vāyu - the most efficient and far-extending Wind created to reach higher than any other in the creation]

***Ayētāt Tē Vayō Yat Tē Asti Spentō-Mainyaōm***  
[of higher currents of Air in the region that belongs to the realms of the Holy Spirit (far above the clouds)]

***Thwāshahē Kadātahē***  
[of the Atmosphere, the Inner Space - the Firmanent]

***Zravānahē Akaranahē***  
[of the Timelessness of Eternal Boundless Time]

***Zravānahē Daraēghō Kadātahē***  
[enclosing the Bounded self-sustained Earthly Time of long duration]

All through our Gathic, Avestan, Pahlavi and our Exilic periods there has remained a subtle reminder of the existence of a definite pattern of cyclico-linear division within this decreed framework of time. It was, clearly, during our latter Exilic period that this mental impression, retained through the ages, actually surfaced. For a while, Zravān became a Zarathushtrian divinity involving all humanity in a kind of cruel and destructive frame of mind, almost like a vice in an unreasonable and apprehensive state. The reasoning seems to run as follows:

- a) The ***Time before earthly Time***, in which the world, though already **spiritually luminous was not perceptibly existential**.
- b) The ***Transitional Time*** of a purely primordial perception, as if life on earth was **beginning to ‘become’**. The world is fashioned in a pure perceptible form on the basis of its already existing spiritual configuration.
- c) The ***finite Conflict Time*** of a polluted perception of ‘being’ on earth. Here is a purposeful period of persistent opposition between the pure, righteous and the impure, polluting elements. It is as if, during this chosen set period, a cyclical rhythm of struggle, with a preordained strong and unremitting antagonism, had been planned to keep the polluting adversaries constantly frustrated in their attempts. The cyclical repetition of confrontation and rest was, understandably, quite necessary.

- d) The ***climactic End of earthly Time*** when all polluting elements have, at last, been exhausted of their powers of darkness resulting in an **apocalyptic cessation of all change**. A blending with the original spiritual, glorious and static state of finite Timelessness (for all eternal duration '*yavoi vispai*') then occurs. This is Zarathushtra's vision of the ultimate final apocalyptic process of **"making afresh / making anew"** - Gathic: 'Frashā'-kar (Avestan: Frashō-kērēti / Pahlavi: Fras hēkart)

The end process is seen as a **cycle of re-purification or renovation**. It is a return to the original state of eternal light through a refreshed state of the spiritual gloriousness in which the pure elements, having served just obligations and a dutiful purpose, fuse imperceptibly in harmony with the supreme purity of the Infinite. The Earthly Time of the world (***Zravāne Daraēghō Khadāte***) is, once more dissolved into the frame of the endless Time of Eternity (***Zravāne Akaranē***). **This is taken to be the 'final cyclical change' on earth.**

In this, his amazing vision Zarathushtra not only becomes the first human to talk of the "end of time" but, clearly, to equate the measure of cyclical Time with human Destiny.

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