

# Zarathushtrōtəma - (almost like Zarathushtra)

## Pontiffs of great Empires

### Pronunciation

a as in fun; ā as in far; ā̃ (nasal sound ān) as in 'āvān';ə as in fed, ēas 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 ā̃n as in āvān; ən as in the French 'trés bièn', ñ as in Ahĩnsā (also pronounced 'ĩm' as in Sanskrit Ahĩmsā and as also in Avestan and Gathic languages) and ũn as in Humayũn. The pronunciation of some consonants are 'ś' for 'sh', 'š' for 'ss', 'r̥' for 'ri', ñ for 'ni'.

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The untimely and cruel demise of Zarathushtra created a much needed void among his ardent followers and the sacerdotal order of Ātharvans to help maintain the continuity in the structured society of Zarathushtra's diocese and to help safeguard his teachings from the ugly ravages of those that had opposed his rational views during his lifetime.

Gatha **Ahunavaiti: Yasna 30.4**, he emphasises on the moral and ethical purpose of the creation of Life on earth - *"a 'worst existence' for the followers of untruth and 'best existence' for the followers of truth"*.

Gatha Ushtavaiti: **Yasna 45.8 and Gatha Vohu Khshathra 51.14**  
Zarathushtra talks of the reward of 'a glorious and eternal existence'  
in the '**Abode of the Highest/Best Existence**' - Heaven  
(Garō-dēmāna)

(in harmony with Ahura Mazda, who is Lord Supreme)

The other alternative is a relegation to the '**Abode of Untruth/Worst Existence**' - Hell  
(Drujō-dēmāna).

Gatha Ushtavaiti: Yasna 46.11: **Zarathushtra warns of the wickedness of the Karapans & Kavis, whose Inner Self will remember their evil actions, before they are judged to be relegated to remain in Drujō-dēmāna (the Abode of Untruth).**

Gatha Spəntā Mainyu (Ys. 48.5): **"Let those who know how to rule well (Hu-Khshathra), and not the evil rulers, rule us! Let them rule us with wisdom and skill, O Ārmaiti!"**

Clearly, Zarathushtra's absence warranted an earthly representative to take his place while Yazata Mithra would continue to remain Ahura Mazda's spiritual representation as a mediator in the affairs of humans on Earth. This need was, indeed, fulfilled by the appointment of a Spiritual head from among the many devout Ātharvan co-workers who had devotedly assisted Zarathushtra during his own lifetime, both in the missionary work and in the propagation of his sermons. His holiness, no doubt would need to be such that he would be widely regarded as the one who would have the characteristics nearest to those of the Holy

Prophet and one who had strictly remained adherent to the doctrines of the Prophet so that he was worthy of being designated with the title of ‘Zarathustrōtāma’ - one who is almost like Zarathushtra.

With the oral tradition still prevailing there are no clear pointers as to how the selection or election of such an exalted follower from among his most dedicated co-workers was achieved at the time nor is there any indication in the later Pāhlavi/Pāzand commentaries. However, if the documented election of the Holy Ardā Virāf, the first Pontiff of the Sassānian Empire (224-641 CE) during the reign of Ārdēshir I (224-240 CE) were to be taken as a guideline, this is could well be the way it may have been conducted and attained.

**Mēhr Yasht 10.115** very aptly compares the Pontiff - such a worthy follower of Zarathushtra and who is almost like Zarathushtra to Mithrā, Ahura Mazda’s terrestrial representative to oversee human affairs on Earth:-

**‘Thou, O Mithrā, overseer of human affairs on Earth, thou art the master of the House, of the Village, of the Town, of the Country, thou O Zarathustrōtāma.’**

It is, here, worthy of note that there is a ‘master’ designated to each of the 5 Gāhs (periods of time in a day). **Zarathushtrōtāma** is rightly the Master during the 4<sup>th</sup> **Aiwi-sru-thrēma Gāh**.

- 1. Hāvan Gāh** (Period of time to earn from the work done) - **Hāvanē.....Sāvanghē visyāicha** (The Lord of each village settlement ‘visya’ is akin to a Patel)
- 2. Rapithwan Gāh** - (Period of time to give rest and food to beasts of burden) **Rapithwināi .....Frādata-šsavē zantumāicha** (The Lord of the town ‘zantu’ is, akin to a Mayor)
- 3. Uzirin Gāh** ((Period of time to take rest from work) - **Uzyeirinai.....Frādata-virāi dakhyumaicha** (The Lord Sovereign of the Country **dakhyu**’ is the ruling Monarch),
- 4. Aiwi-sru-thrēma Gāh** (Period of time for extending prosperity to all living creatures when the power invested in the Pontiff rests in the worship of the Yazatas and propitiation of the Fravashis of the righteous - **Aiwi-sru-thrēmāi aibigayāi.....Frādata-vispām hujyātē Zarathushtrōtāmāicha** (‘Aiwi’ is surrounding protection, ‘sru’ is guidance to listen to in life: meaning from the Spiritual Lord Supreme ‘the Guardian over life, who bestows prosperity to all living creatures’) and, finally
- 5. Ushā-hin Gāh** - **Ushā-hināi.....berejyāi nmānyāicha** (Period of time during and from early dawn when it is propitious to ask for the fulfilment of one’s wishes and when the authority, the master of the House (**nmāna**) prays to the Creator with assistance from Yazatas Śraōsa, Raśna, Āstād.....It is appropriately also the period of time when the soul of the beloved departed reaches the Chinvat Bridge in readiness for the Judgement)

## **Election of the Pontiff**

The attainment of a Zarathushtrian Empire was achieved after the defeat of last two warring rulers of the Hellenised Parthian Dynasty. In the Battle of Ctesiphon in CE 224 Artabanus IV Ardeshir defeated and killed Artabanus. He then occupied the Capital, Ctesiphon. During the same year CE 224 Ardeshir defeated and captured the elder brother, Vologases VI ruling in

the Parthian Capital, Ekbatana, in the Battle of Hormus. Vologases VI died in captivity in Ctesiphon two years later in CE 226.

The Grecian polytheism and hellenised idolatry encouraged by the Parthian Governors was overthrown. The Fire altars, which had fallen into disuse, were restored and step by step the ancestral Faith of Zarathushtra of the Primeval Homeland with its ritual ceremonies re-established.

Ardeshir raised the Priesthood to a position of honour and dignity. To ensure uniformity, an Assembly of the Māghupats was convoked. It has been recorded that 40,000 of the most highly respected and learned Māghupats from all parts of the Empire were assembled. They reduced their own numbers to 4000, then to 400 and finally to 40, from whom 7, known most for their piety and learning were selected. The 7, in turn, chose Ardā Virāf as the Pontiff of the Empire. The Māghupats (The Avestan word ‘Māghupat’ had by now gone through an evolutionary change over the millennia - Māghupat>Māghubad> Maubad> Mobad>Mobēd) were then united into a **Great Council of the Nation**. The precepts of the Faith were collected in a sacred volume to set a standard, which required all to conform to. A necessity to explain the Zand Text with a translation and interpretation was found. Thus, a nation well supported by priesthood with a **Pontiff as the revered Head (the Mobēdān ē Mobēd, the Ātharvan of all Ātharvans)** and with a strongly centralised religion was re-established after an absence of nearly 500 years. The Pontiff chosen thus was among the most respected Mobed of the time - **Ardā Virāf**.

### **Dante Alighieri’s plagiarism and expurgation of the Pontiff’s vision.**

The Ardā Virāf Nāmag, a book written by the Pontiff during the Sassanian rule of Ārdēshir I 224-240 CE relating the vision of his journey to Heaven, Hell and Purgatory was recreated by **Dante** between 1308 & 1321 (**actual Italian name Durante degli Alighieri ca. 1265-1321**). This was more than a thousand years later from translations by Greek and Latin scholars who had attended the World’s first University established under the rule of Khusru I (the Great 531-579 CE).

The establishment of this University of Shahpurgard (at Gondeshahpur) in Sassanian Iran with Aramaic as the medium of teaching in 550 CE had encouraged scholars from far and wide to attend. Khusru I had financed Dēhgan Dānēshwar to write the ‘History of Airān’ (Khudāi Nāmēh), which was later used by Dāikiki and Firdawzi to compose the Shah Nāmēh. Collaboration between scholars from Greece, Rome and Iran saw the works of Plato, Aristotles and other Philosophers translated into Pāhlavi. The Avestan Scriptures were rewritten with revisions and re-explanations and commentary in Pāzand.

But the general trend to this day is still sometimes in denial, even among some intransigent academics. Dante’s expurgation of Arda Viraf’s original vision, a clear plagiarism was first originally simply titled ‘*Comedia*’, **meaning Comedy** and was later christened ‘*Divina*’, **meaning Divine** by Giovanni Boccaccio in 1555. It has remained the ‘*Divine Comedy*’ ever since and by default ***Dante has since been elevated to the stature of a visionary prophet for his alleged vision - “Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso” taken from Ardā Virāf’s original***

*Book, the 'Ardā Virāf Nāmēh' describing the Pontiff's vision of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven.*

Here are a few more references from the Holy Avesta: -

**Zarathushtrōtēmācha:**

**Aiwisruthrēm Gāh 4.6 - 'Reverence be to the Pontiff, the Holy Lord of Righteousness.'**

**Yasna 4.6 -**

**'With this highest offering for the holy period of Aiwisruthrēm I offer reverence to the Holy Pontiff, who remains adherent to the doctrines of Zarathushtra...'**

**Zarathushtrōtēmāicha:**

**Aiwisruthrēm Gāh 4.1: 'During the period of time for extending prosperity to all living creatures when the power invested in the Pontiff rests in the worship of the Yazatas and propitiation of the Fravashis of the righteous.....'**

**Yasna 1.6 & Yasna 3.8:**

**'I learn about Aiwisruthrēm, the righteous period of righteousness and about the Holy Pontiff, who helps to felicitate all the necessities of life.....'**

**Zarathushtrōtēmāhē:**

**Aiwisruthrēm Gāh 4.9:**

**'.....through steadfast understanding of the faith, oblivious of sins and through whose actions prosperity and righteousness .....praise be to the Holy Pontiff.....'**

**Visparad 1.9:**

**'I learn about and work devoted to Aura with the Master of the Country, devoted to Ahura and adherent to the doctrine of Zarathushtra.....'**

**Visparad 9.1:**

**'The true follower lifts the offering to gain strength to fight against evil, to gain health.....to follow the precepts of Zarathushtra and of the Pontiff, who remains strictly adherent to the doctrine of Zarathushtra'**

**Zarathushtrōtēmāō:**

**Fravardin Yasht 13.21, Yasna 17.18 & Yasna 26.1:**

**'Reverence be to the Fravashis of those in this house (nmāna), this village settlement (visya), this province (zantu), this country (dakhyu) and of the Holy Pontiff (Zarathushtrōtēma).....'**

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25 September 2012