

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 255: Shun the Falsehood Teachers and live your life with Truth – Ahunavaiti Gatha – Yasna 31, Verses 18-19

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Our very good friend Behram Pastakia, ZAMWI, sent an email to some of us:

“The Gathas ~ Interfaith Prayer Service ~ Martin Luther King Jr. : 4 April 2018

The participation on 4 April 2018, to remember the 50th Death Anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr., with his emphasis on using ***non violence*** to address issues of social justice, raises the question, what do *Zarathushtis* have to say?

What does Zoroastrian theology teach us?

What does the last sentence of **Yasna 31.18** mean?”

Our very good friend and Gatha scholar – Dina McIntyre – gave a very interesting reply to Behram, saying that we all have been given “a divine quality of good thinking – the ability to think in a good way, to bring about a good end.”

She further stated:

Non-violence only works when the adversary is (more or less) committed to good values. For example, when our own beloved Mahatma Gandhi used non-violence, it worked because the British (for all their prejudices and wrongful conduct) were essentially decent. They allowed a free press. Roughly the same thing happened in the US during the civil rights movement with Martin Luther King. The unarmed, non-violent protesters were beaten and abused, but the press reported it all, and people throughout the country were unwilling to allow such actions to continue.

In answer to Behram’s question: What does the last sentence of Yasna 31.18 mean? – Dina attached a short chapter – A Question of Weapons - from her upcoming book – Zarathushtra’s Teachings, which she thought would answer Behram’s question. I have attached this chapter with Dina’s permission and highly recommend all to read it.

This peaked my interest in Yasna 31.18 and so I am presenting this and the next verse in this WZSE #255.

Shun the Falsehood Teachers and live your life with Truth – Ahunavaiti

Gatha – Yasna 31, Verses 18 - 19

In the first Verse 18, Zarathushtra advises all not to listen to the falsehood of the evil persons because they destroy the home, the village, the town, and the country. He implores them to resist these false people with good thinking (Vohu Mano) and truth/righteousness (Asha Vahishta).

In the Verse 19, Zarathushtra wishes that the people listen to a wise man whose teachings are beneficial and hope they act according to them in their lives. And he requests Ahura Mazda to assign the destinies of the good and evil people by his Asha (Fire/Truth).

With this introduction, let us present these two verses from Ahunavaiti Gatha, Yasna 31 Verses 18 - 19:

Shun the Falsehood Teachers and live your life with Truth – Ahunavaiti Gatha – Yasna 31, Verses 18 – 19

[\(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation\)](#)

(18) Maa-chish at veh dregvato maathraaschaa

Gushtaa saasnaaoschaa,

Aazi demaanem visem vaa shoithrem vaa

Dakhyum vaa aadaat,

Dushitaachaa marakaechaa athaa ish

Saazdum snaithishaa.

(19) Gushtaa yeh mantaa ashem ahumbish

Vidvaao Ahuraa,

Erezhukhdhaai vachanghaam khshayamno

Hizvo-vaso;

Thwaa aathraa sukhraa Mazdaa vanghaau

Vidaataa raanayaao.

Shun the Falsehood Teachers and live your life with Truth – Ahunavaiti Gatha – Yasna 31, Verses 18 - 19 Translation:

(18) Let no one give to the words of the false and wicked ones because such persons shall lead the home, the village, the town and the country to ruin and destruction.

It is therefore, our duty to resist such persons and repel them with spiritual weapons of purity and righteousness.

(19) May the people, O Lord of Life, give ear to a wise man whose teachings are soul healing and beneficial

**and act according to them in their lives.
May they listen to the person who is capable of spreading
the religion of truth and has eloquence of speech.
Through Thy radiant fire, O Lord of Wisdom,
do assign the destinies of both parties (the wise and the ignorant).**

(Translation of Gathas the Holy Songs of Zarathustra, from Persian into English by Mobed Firouz Azargoshasb, March 1988, San Diego, California.)

SPD Explanation:

1. The last sentence of Verse 18 above has generated much controversy from two words: “saazdum” and “snaithishaa”.

“saazdum” is translated by some scholars as cut down, overthrow, repel, resist, smite, correct, kill, drive them, triumph, etc., quite a variance.

“snaithishaa” by many is translated as a weapon, but some have translated as stroke, sabre, dart, blow, spiritual weapon, etc.

2. Dina McIntyre summarizes as:

“the weapon with which Wisdom the Lord protects Zarathushtra from persecution is 'the power of good thinking allied with truth.’”

3. Dr. Irach Traporewala translates it as:

“so resist these with spiritual weapons (of good thinking (Vohu Mano) and Truth (Asha). “

4. In our most recited Kem Naa Mazdaa Prayer’s first verse which is taken from Zarathushtra’s Ushtavaiti Gatha – Yasna 46 Verse 7, he prays:

“when the evil minded followers of falsehood threaten me with violence? Who other than your fire (Aatar, energy) and good thoughts (Vohu Mano) will protect me?”

Here again, spiritual weapons of good thinking and Truth are mentioned.

5. Once again, in Farvardin Yasht, Verses 77 – 78, where “Aatar and Vohu Mano are expressly mentioned as resisting the inroads of Angra-Mainyu to defend the Creatures of Asha.” Ervad Behramgore Anklesaria.

6. In our beautiful small prayer Hosh Baam, taken from Yasna 27 Verses 1 – 2, there are two words used: “snathaai” – to strike Angra-Mainyu and his Daevas and “fradathaai” – for the progress of Ahura Mazda, Ameshaaspands, the star Tishtrya, the holy men and of all the holy Creations of Spentaa Maînyu. “snathaai” is similar to “snaithishaa” in the above Verse 18.

7. Dina McIntyre was the editor of a very good collection of articles:

An Introduction of Gathas of Zarathushtra available at:

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

In it, in Chapter 7, my good friend, Dr. Lovji Cama, ZAGNY, presented a very good article on: Athra, Fire in the Gathas of Zarathushtra at:

<https://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dgm/vol7.htm#volume7>

In this article, Lovji gave 8 instances in Gathas where Athra is used by Zarathushtra, the above two verses and the first verse of Kem Naa Mazdaa are included. He summarizes this article as follows:

“First, Athra is an agency or faculty or aspect of Ahura Mazda, moreover it is an active agency, unlike the *Amesha Spentas* which are ideas or desirable qualities. The most obvious action of *Athra* is to bestow the just rewards to the deceitful and the truthful, at the time of the judgment of the soul. ... *Athra* derives power from *Asha* (right and truth) and works with *Vohu Mano* towards the fulfillment of *Asha* (order) and therefore the final victory of good over evil. Not only does *Athra* give guidance and help to the truthful, it also protects them from physical harm that is intended or caused by the deceitful. In Yasna 46.7 (Kem naa Mazdaa) Zarathushtra specifically says so.”

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 AAFRINAAMAH! (May it be so as we wish!)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli