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Zarathustra: Zaota the Invoker
Zoroastrianism
Ancient Faith of Persia
 (and home of the three kings or “wisemen” who followed the
 star to Bethlehem.)

1. Name: and Date.

Zoroastrianism: roughly 1700 BCE – 1000 BC.

2. Family name of the prophet:

Maidyoi-Maungha Spitama,

3. Holy name:

Zarathustra – Zaota the “Invoker”.

4. Name for God:

Ahura Mazda “The Wise Lord”.

5. Name for “The Promised One”.

Khshathra (Dominion), Desirable,
 a kingdom yet to come.

6. Birth legends & life:

His mother glowed with the divine Glory usually reserved for kings; the soul of the prophet was placed by God in the sacred Haoma plant and the prophet was conceived through the essence of Haoma in milk. The child laughed at his birth instead of crying, and he glowed so brightly that the villagers around him were frightened and tried to destroy him. All attempts to destroy young Zarathushtra failed; fire would not burn him nor would animals crush him in stampedes; he was cared for by a mother wolf .

Zarathustra was exiled for opposing the polytheistic priests and was forced to wander. Eventually he won over King Vishtaspa and became the Court Priest. He was possibly killed at the age of 77 while praying. Other traditions say he died peacefully.

7. Manner of Revelation:

Zoroaster received his prophetic Calling at the age of thirty when an angel brought to him a vision of God through Vohu Manah or “Good Mind”. He was instructed in Heaven receiving perfect Knowledge of the past, present and future. (Yasna 35 the Gathas).

13: *“As the holy one I recognized thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me to learn the state of my desire. Grant it me, that which none may compel you to allow, (the wish) for long continuance of blessed existence that they say is in thy Dominion. “*

8. Revealed Book:

The **Zend-Avesta and Gathas** containing Poetry and Hymns dealing with philosophical and theological knowledge.

Zarathushtra is used as a character in dialogue with Ahura Mazda; he is featured in ritual texts and in law- texts. Much ritual and doctrine are attributed to him In much later Zoroastrian traditions, some of which were not recorded until centuries after the Arab conquest.

9. Basic Teachings:

Ahura Mazda and the Beneficent Immortals.

Zoroaster's teachings center on a single God, Ahura Mazda, who is alone worthy of worship. He is, according to the Gathas, the creator of heaven and earth. He is the source of the alternation of light and darkness, the sovereign lawgiver, and the very center of nature, as well as the originator of the moral order and judge of the entire world.

God is surrounded by six or seven beings, or entities, which the Avesta calls amesha spentas, "beneficent immortals." The names of the amesha spentas frequently recur throughout the Gathas and may be said to characterize Zoroaster's thought and his concept of God. In the words of the Gathas, Ahura Mazda is the father of Spenta Mainyu (Holy Spirit), of Asha Vahishta (Justice, Truth), of Vohu Manah (Righteous Thinking), and of Armaiti (Spenta Armaiti, Devotion).

The other three beings (entities) of this group are said to personify qualities attributed to Ahura Mazda: they are Khshathra Vairya (Desirable Dominion), Haurvatat (Wholeness), and Ameretat (Immortality).

(An apparent form of the Trinity common to other Faiths. See “Trinity”.)

A very significant teaching of Zoroastrianism is the concept of Khshathra (Dominion), which is repeatedly accompanied by the adjective Desirable; it is a kingdom yet to come.

The Invoker taught that in the beginning there was a meeting of the two spirits, who were free to choose—in the words of the Gathas—"life or not life." This original choice gave birth to a good and an evil principle, or "dualism.

At the beginning of time, the world was divided into the dominion of the good and of the evil. Between these, each man is bound to decide. He is free and must choose either the Wise Lord and his rule or Ahriman, the Lie. The same is true of the spiritual beings, who are good or bad according to their choices.

From man's freedom of decision it follows that he is finally responsible for his fate. Through his good deeds, the righteous person (ashavan) earns an everlasting reward, namely integrity and immortality. He who opts for the lie is condemned by his own conscience as well as by the judgment of the Wise Lord and must expect to continue in the most miserable form of existence, one more or less corresponding to the Christian concept of hell.

On the side of the Wise Lord are the settled herdsmen or farmers, caring for their cattle and living in a definite social order. (Yasna 33 Gathas) The follower of the Lie (Druj) is a thieving nomad, an enemy of orderly agriculture and animal husbandry.

Each act, speech, and thought is related to an existence after death. The earthly state is connected with a state beyond, in which the Wise Lord will reward the good act, speech, and thought and punish the bad.

After judgment is passed by Ahura Mazda, the good enter the kingdom of everlasting joy and light, and the bad are consigned to the regions of horror and darkness. Zoroaster, however, goes beyond this, announcing an end phase for the visible world, "the last turn of creation." In this last phase, Ahriman will be destroyed, and the world will be wonderfully renewed and be inhabited by the good, who will live in paradisiacal joy.

Edited from Encyclopedia Britannica

notes of interest:

- a. In Verse 7 of Yasna 33 in the Gathas Zoroaster offers his own body to God.
- b. In Yasna 45 Verse 5 Zoroaster proclaims his authority under God.
- c. In Yasna 51 verse 14 it says: "*The Karapans will not obey the statutes and ordinances concerning husbandry. For the pain they inflict upon the cattle, fulfill upon them through their actions and judgments that judgment which at the last shall bring them to the House of the Lie.*"

From these and other passages it seems clear the Zoroastrian social mission was to bring farming and animal husbandry to an otherwise nomadic lifestyle. "Good and evil" were used as teaching tools. Settled farmers were following "good" practices while nomads were "disobedient".)

Here are a few excerpts from the Gathas. Followers believe these to be the oldest texts and, perhaps, the most accurate portrayal of the Prophet Zoroaster's Revelation.

The YAZNAS should be read with the same approach as followers in respective Faiths meditate on the Holy Bible or Holy Quran. It helps me to simply substitute "God" for the word "Mazda". Then these texts read much like old Biblical hymns.

AVESTA: YASNA - Ushtavaiti Gatha

Translation by Bartholomae, from I.J.S. Taraporewala, The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra. Notes in square brackets were added by JHP.

"Now I will proclaim to those who will hear the things that the understanding man should remember, for hymns unto Ahura and prayers to Good Thought; also the felicity that is with the heavenly lights, which through Right shall be beheld by him who wisely thinks.

2: Hear with your ears the best things; look upon them with clear-seeing thought, for decision between the two Beliefs, each man for himself before the Great consummation, bethinking you that it be accomplished to our pleasure.

3: Now the two primal Spirits, who reveal themselves in vision as Twins, are the Better and the Bad, in thought and word and action. And between these two the wise ones chose aright, the foolish not so. 4: And when these twain Spirits came together in the beginning, they created Life and Not-Life, and that at the last Worst Existence shall be to the followers of the Lie, but the Best Existence to him that follows Right.

8: So when there cometh their punishment for their sins, then, O Mazda, at Thy command shall Good Thought establish the Dominion in the Consummation, for those who deliver the Lie, O Ahura, into the hands of Right.

9: So may we be those that make this world advance, O Mazda and ye other Ahuras, come hither, vouchsafing (to us) admission into your company and Asha, in order that (our) thought may gather together while reason is still shaky.

10: Then truly on the (world of) Lie shall come the destruction of delight; but they who get themselves good name shall be partakers in the promised reward in the fair abode of Good Thought, of Mazda, and of Right.

11: If, O ye mortals, ye mark those commandments which Mazda hath ordained -- of happiness and pain, the long punishment for the follower of the Druj, and blessings for the followers of the Right -- then hereafter shall it be well.

YASNA 31. is a hymn in which Zarathustra praises God, the creation of individuality and spirit.

5: Tell me therefore what ye, O thou Right, have appointed me as the better portion, for me to determine, to know and to keep in mind, O thou Good Thought -- which portion they envy me. Tell me of all these things. O Mazda Ahura, that shall not or shall be.

6: To him shall the best befall, who, as one that knows, speaks to me Right's truthful word of Welfare and of Immortality; even the Dominion of Mazda which Good Thought shall increase for him.

7: About which he in the beginning thus thought, "let the blessed realms be filled with Light", he it is that by his wisdom created Right. (Those realms) that the Best Thought shall possess those dost Thou exalt, O Mazda, through the Spirit, which, O Ahura, is ever the same.

8: I recognize Thee, O Mazda, in my thought, that Thou the First art (also) the Last -- that Thou art Father of Vohu Manah; -- when I apprehend Thee with mine eye, that Thou art the true Creator of Right [Asha], and art the Lord to judge the actions of life.

11: When Thou, O Mazda, in the beginning didst create the Individual and the Individuality, through Thy Spirit, and powers of understanding - when Thou didst make life clothed with the body, when (Thou madest) actions and teachings, whereby one may exercise one's convictions at one's free-will;

12: Then lifts up his voice the false speaker or the true speaker, he that knows or he that knows not, (each) according to his own heart and mind. Passing from one to another Armaiti confers with the spirit in whom there is wavering.

13: Whatever open or whatever secret (acts) may be visited with punishment, or whether a person for a little sin demands the highest punishment, -- of all this through Asha Thou art aware, observing it with Thy flashing eye.

YASNA 32: Zarathustra illustrates the principle of "dualism" which is at the heart of, not only Zoroastrianism, but Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths as well.

9: The teacher of evil destroys the lore, he by his teaching destroys the design of life, he prevents the possession of Good Thought from being prized. These words of my spirit I wail unto you, O Mazda, and to the Right.

10: He it is that destroys, who declares that the Ox and the Sun are the worst things to behold with the eyes, and hath made the pious into liars, and desolates the pastures and lifts his weapon against the righteous man.

11: It is they, the liars, who destroy life, who are mightily determined to deprive matron and master of the enjoyment of their heritage, in that they would prevent the righteous, O Mazda, from the Best Thought.

12: Since they by their lore would pervert men from the best doing, Mazda uttered evil against them, who destroy the life of the Ox with shouts of joy, by whom Grehma and his tribe are preferred to the Right and the Karapan and the lordship of them that seek after the Lie.

13: who hast power, O Mazda Ahura, on him who threatens to be my undoing, that I may fetter the men of the Lie in their violence against my friends.

The following Yazna addresses Divene Judgement and the paths of good and evil.. This is also where Zarathushtra offers the life of his own body, the choiceness of good thought, action, and speech, unto Mazda, unto the Right, Obedience, and Dominion.

YASNA 33.

1: According as it is with the laws that belong to the present life, so shall the Judge act with most just deed towards the man of the Lie and the man of the Right, and him whose false things and good things balance (in equal measure).

2: Whoso worketh ill for the liar by word or thought or hands, or converts his dependent to the good -- such men meet the will of Ahura Mazda to his satisfaction.

3: Whose is most good to the righteous man, be he noble or member of the community or the brotherhood, Ahura -- or with diligence cares for the cattle, he shall be hereafter in the pasture of Right and Good Thought [Asha and Vohu Manah].

4: I who by worship would keep far from Thee, O Mazda, disobedience and Bad Thought, heresy from the nobles, and from the community the Lie, that is most near, and from the brotherhood the slanderers, and the worst herdsmen from the pastures of the cattle; --

5: I who would invoke thy Obedience as the greatest of all at the Consummation, attaining long life, and the Dominion of Good Thought, and the straight ways into Right, wherein Mazda Ahura dwells

6: I, as a priest, who would learn the straight (paths) by the Right, would learn by the Best Spirit how to practice husbandry by that thought in which it is thought of; these Twain of Thine, O Ahura Mazda, I strive to see and take counsel with them.

12: Rise up for me, O Ahura, through Armaiti give strength, through the holiest Spirit give might, O Mazda, through the good Recompense [âdâ, offering], through the Right give powerful prowess, through Good Thought give the reward.

13: To support me, O Thou that seest far onward, do ye assure me the incomparable things in your Dominion, O Ahura, as the Destiny of Good Thought. O Holy Armaiti, teach the Daenas about the Right.

14: As an offering Zarathushtra brings the life of his own body, the choiceness of good thought, action, and speech, unto Mazda, unto the Right, Obedience, and Dominion.

Referencing Verse 14 above: If one thinks of bodily sacrifice along with the “eating of My body” and the food of the spirit allegorically symbolizing the ‘bread of Life’, the connection between Zarathustra and Jesus is compelling.

YAZNA 35: Is a beautiful “Song of Recognition”.

“7: As the holy one I recognized thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me and asked me: "Who art thou? to whom dost thou belong? By what signs wilt thou appoint the days for questioning about thy possessions and thyself?"

8: Then I said to him: "To the first (question), Zarathushtra am I, a true foe to the Liar, to the utmost of my power, but a powerful support would I be to the Righteous, that I may attain the future things of the infinite Dominion, according as I praise and sing thee, O Mazda.

9: As the holy one I recognize thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me. To his question, "For which wilt thou decide" (I made reply). "At the gift of adoration to thy Fire, I will bethink me of Right so long as I have power.

10: Then show me Right, upon whom I call.

(Mazda:) "Associating him with Piety, I have come hither. Ask us now what things are here for thee to ask. For thy asking is as that of a mighty one, since he that is able should make thee as a mighty one possessed of thy desire."

11: As the holy one I recognized thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me, when first by your words I was instructed. Shall it bring me sorrow among men, my devotion, in doing that which ye tell me is the best.

12: And when thou saidest to me, 'To Right shalt thou go for teaching', then thou didst not command what I did not obey: 'Speed thee, ere my Obedience come, followed by treasure-laden Destiny, who shall render to men severally the destiny of the two-fold award.'

13: As the holy one I recognized thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me to learn the state of my desire. Grant it me, that which none may compel you to allow, (the wish) for long continuance of blessed existence that they say is in thy Dominion.

YASNA 45. Zarathustra reveals his Message.

1: I will speak forth: hear now and hearken now, ye from near and ye from far that desire (instruction). Now observe this in your mind, all of you, for he is revealed. Never shall the false Teacher destroy the Second Life, the Liar, in perversion by his tongue into evil belief.

2: I will speak of the Spirits twain at the first beginning of the world, of whom the holier spoke thus to the enemy: "Neither thought, nor teachings, nor wills, nor beliefs, nor words, nor deeds, nor selfs, nor souls of us twain agree".

3: I will speak of that which Mazda Ahura, the all-knowing, revealed to me first in this (earthly) life. Those of you that put not in practice this word as I think and utter it, to them shall be woe at the end of life.

4: I will speak of what is best for the life. Through Asha I have come to know, O Mazda, who created it (the life), the father of active Good Thought: but his daughter is the good-working Armaiti. The all-observant Ahura is not to be deceived.

5: I will speak of that which (he), the Holiest declared to me as the word that is best for mortals to obey; while he said: "they who for my sake render him obedience, shall all attain unto Welfare and Immortality by the actions of the Good Spirit [Spenta Mainyu -JHP]" - (he) Mazda Ahura.

6: I will speak of him who is the greatest of all, praising him, O Right, who is bounteous to all that live. By the holy spirit let Mazda Ahura hearken, in whose Adoration I have been instructed by Good Thought. By his wisdom let him teach me what is best,

All of the Messengers of Divine Thought have been rejected of men and persecuted. Zarathustra makes his own case clear.

YASNA 46.

1: To what land shall I go to flee, whither to flee? From nobles and from my peers they sever me, nor are the people pleased with me nor the Liar rulers of the land. How am I to please thee, Mazda Ahura?

2: I know wherefore, O Mazda, I have been unable (to achieve) anything. Only a few herds are mine (and therefore it is so) and because I have got but few people. I cry unto thee, see thou to it, O Ahura, granting me support a friend gives to friend. Teach me through the Right what the acquisition of Good Thought is.

3: When, Mazda, shall the sunrisings come forth for the worlds winning of Right, through the powerful teachings of the wisdom of the future Deliverers? Who are they to whose help Good Thought shall come? I have faith that thou wilt thyself fulfill this for me, O Ahura.

4: Whom, O Mazda, can one appoint as protector for one like me, when the Liar sets himself to injure me, other than Thy Fire and Thy Thought, through actions of which twain the Right will come to maturity, O Ahura? In this lore do thou instruct my very self.

Social teachings are an important part of any authentic guidance. This ultimately results in a dynamic advancement for the people of the time. A path leading towards revolutionary change is evident in verse 14 where statutes encouraging farming and husbandry are laid out but are not being followed by all. As one looks deeper it is seen that the dualism of good and evil is used as a metaphorical “training tool”. People who follow agriculture are on the right path while nomads who plunder the producers are in the wrong.

YAZNA 51

3:” Let your ears attend to those who in their deeds and utterances hold to your words, Ahura and Right, to those of Good Thought, for whom thou, Mazda, art the first teacher.

4: Where is the recompense for wrong to be found, where pardon for the same? Where shall they attain the Right? Where is the holy Piety, where Best Thought? Thy Dominions, where are they, O Mazda?

5: All this (I) ask, whether the husbandman shall find cattle in accordance with Right, he that is perfect in action, a man of understanding, when he prays to him, who hath promised unto the Wise the true Judge, in that he is Lord of the two destinies...

6: Even he, Ahura Mazda, who through his Dominion appoints what is better than good to him that is attached to his will, but what is worse than evil to him that obeys him not, at the last end of life.

7: Give me, O thou that didst create the Ox and Waters and Plants, Welfare and Immortality, by the Highest Spirit, O Mazda, strength and continuance through Good Thought at the (Judge's) sentence.

8: Of these two things will I speak, O Mazda, - for one may speak to the wise, - the ill that is threatened to the Liar, and the happiness of him who clings to the Right. For he, the Prophet, is glad of every one who says this to the wise.

9: What recompense thou wilt give to the two parties by thy red Fire, by the molten metal, give us a sign of it in our souls - even the bringing of ruin to the Liar, of blessing to the Righteous.

10:Whoso, other than this one, seeks to kill me, Mazda, he is a son of the Lie's creation, ill-willed thus towards all that live. I call the Right to come to me with good destiny.

11: What man is friend to Spitama Zarathushtra, O Mazda? Who will let himself be counseled by Right? With whom is holy Piety? Or who as an upright man is intent on the brotherhood of Good Thought?

12: The Kavi's wanton did not please Zarathushtra Spitama at the Winter Gate, in that he stayed him from taking refuge with him, and when there came to him also (Zarathushtra's) two steeds shivering with cold.

13: Thus the Self of the Liar destroys for himself the assurance of the right Way; whose soul shall tremble at the Revelation on the Bridge of the Separator, having turned aside with deeds and tongue from the Path of Right.

14: The Karapans will not obey the statutes and ordinances concerning husbandry. For the pain they inflict upon the cattle, fulfill upon them through their actions and judgments that judgment which at the last shall bring them to the House of the Lie.

15: When Zarathushtra hath promised to the men of his brotherhood, (which) in the House of Song Ahura Mazda hath first attained, for all this I have looked through your blessings, Good Thought, and those of Right.

16: Kavi Vishtaspa hath the creed which the holy Mazda Ahura with Right hath devised, together with the dominion of the Brotherhood, and the path of Good Thought. So be it accomplished after our desire.

17: The fair form of one that is dear hath Frashaoshtra Hvogva promised unto me: may sovereign Mazda Ahura grant that she attain possession of the Right for her good Self.

18: This creed Jamaspa Hvogva chooses through Right, lordly in substance. This Dominion they (choose) who have part in Good Thought. This grant me, Ahura, that they may find in thee, Mazda, their protection.

19: The man himself, O Maidyoi-Maungha Spitama, hath set this before him after conceiving it in his own self. He that would see life indeed, to him will he make known what in actions by Mazda's ordinance is better during (this) existence.

20: Your blessings shall ye give us, all that are one in will, with whom Right, Good Thought, Piety, and Mazda (are one) according to promise, giving your aid when worshipped with reverence

21: By Piety the man becomes Holy. Such person advances Right through his thinking, his words, his action, his Self. By Good Thought Mazda Ahura will give the Dominion. For this good Destiny I long.

So ends another foray into the core Writings; this time of a Faith few know much about. When ancient scriptures are read with an open mind it becomes difficult to simply dismiss them only because they are not included within a certain doctrinal framework or are judged “false” by authority figures of other Faiths. Ahura Mazda is extolled with great reverence as the one and only God (not Satan). Mazda is just as valid as the God of

Abraham, Isaac and Israel- or Allah! Zarathustra taught dualism just as is found in the Bible Quran or Bhagavad-Gita. Figure it out.

Many condemn because of the practice of Astrology. Ancient Astrology was simply the use of the celestial calendar so that the all-important seasonal signs could be read and utilized for agriculture (see Gen 1:14). It is only later, as time passes, that Astrology deteriorates into a pseudos-cience of reading horoscopes to forecast the future, of using signs of the zodiac as a guide to marriage compatibility etc. Indeed, we owe the Ancients a debt, not condemnation!

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