The Creation Story

In the Beginning

According to the story of creation, Endless Light is the place and location of Ohrmazd who is omniscient, eternal, infinite and totally good (Gbd. 1.3-6). His adversary, Ahriman, was at the abysmal station of darkness, for he possessed "after-wit" (ignorance) and an inherently destructive desire. Between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, "...there is a void and they are not connected with each other." (Gbd. 1.3 - 6).

At this time the world was in a perfect spiritual (Ph. menôg) state for everything was in an "unthinking, unmoving and intangible state" which lasted for 3000 years (Gbd. 1.14). Ohrmazd knew through His omniscience that Ahriman at some point would attack His perfect creations (Gbd. 1.13). True to form, Ahriman arose from the abyss and came to the precinct of the luminous stars where he saw Ohrmazd, "the Light", and attempted to attack Him; for it is the inherent nature of Ahriman to be malicious and destructive. The evil spirit saw the valour and fortitude of Ohrmazd which was greater than his own; and so resigned, he returned to the station of darkness where he "fabricated" his legion of evil, in anticipation of the forthcoming battle (Gbd.1.15).

Ohrmazd through His omniscience knew "the end of the affair" and so proffered peace with a warning to Ahriman: "If thou wilt not heed the contest thou wilt not render thyself useless, and it will be profitable to us both." (Gbd. 1.21). Through "after-wit", Ahriman rejected the peace offer thinking that Ohrmazd had made it through weakness and helplessness. Ohrmazd cautioned Ahriman again: "Thou art not omnific, O Evil Spirit! — that is, thou canst not destroy Me." (Gbd. 1.24).

Ohrmazd Creates Finite Time

Ohrmazd through His omniscience knew that if He did not fix a period for this battle, there would be "everlasting dispute and confusion" and in that "mingled state" (Ph. Gumêzîshn), man would be continually seduced by Ahriman (Gbd. 1.25).

Ohrmazd, therefore, spoke to His adversary and fashioned a finite time of 9000 years for this "mingled state" to last (Gbd. 1.26). Ahriman agreed to this contest because of his inability to foresee the end. Ohrmazd through His omniscience knew that the first 3000 years would pass according to His own will and that the next 3000 years would be the period of heightened conflict, to be followed by the final 3000 years during which Ohrmazd would render Ahriman useless and ineffective. (See diagram)

At the beginning of the first 3000 years of the Gumêzîshn period, Ohrmazd chanted the all-important Ahunavar prayer which sent the evil spirit back into the station of darkness where it lay stupefied and unconscious for the remaining 3000 years. It is during this stupefaction period of 3000 years that Ohrmazd created the physical world in order to combat the forthcoming onslaught of evil.

The Purpose of Creation

Ohrmazd it is said, saw with a clear vision and purpose that His adversary the evil spirit would never yield to opposition. Ohrmazd realized that in order to render this opposition ineffective, He had to create His good creations to lure Ahriman into conflict, which in turn would result in his final defeat.

"Out of His own Self, out of the Essence of Light, Ohrmazd created forth the astral body of His own creatures, in the astral form of luminous and white Fire, whose circumference is conspicuous..." Ohrmazd endowed this astral form with "...Power and that which is Time." (Gbd.1.44), He then created forth the astral body of the good wind, which became the unseen power for His work. Simultaneously, Ahriman "fabricated his creatures out of his own essence of darkness " and forthwith arose "The Untruthful Utterance"
— the Lie. Ohrmazd, out of the Essence of Light, produced the “Truthful Utterance” from which arose the spirit of the Yathâ Aḥū Vairō, through whom the original creations were fashioned (GBd.1.50).

“He, first, produced the seven fundamental Beneficent Immortals, then the others; the seventh, Ohrmazd Himself; of the material creations, created in the spirit, the first are six; He Himself was the seventh; for, both, spirit first, and then matter, are of Ohrmazd;...” (GBd. 1.53).

“...He, first, created forth Vahman (Bahman), through whom arose the progress of the creatures of Ohrmazd; ...and then, (He created) Ardvahisht, then Shahrewar, then Spendârmad, then Hordâd and Amurdâd,...” (GBd.1.53).

The traditionally accepted order of the seven Beneficent Immortals is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avestan</th>
<th>Pahlavi</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spenta Mainyu</td>
<td>Ohrmazd</td>
<td>Bounteous Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vohu Manah</td>
<td>Vahman (Bahman)</td>
<td>Good Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asha Vahishta</td>
<td>Ardvahisht</td>
<td>Best Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khshathra Vairya</td>
<td>Shahrewar</td>
<td>Desirable Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spenta Ârmaiti</td>
<td>Spendârmad</td>
<td>Holy Devotion/Piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haurvatât</td>
<td>Hordâd</td>
<td>Perfection/Completeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amercitât</td>
<td>Amurdâd</td>
<td>Immortality/Undyingness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Lion Griffins (c. 5th century B.C.)_
Ohrmazd having fashioned the prototype of the material creations in a spiritual state, now proceeded to fashion these creations in a physical form.

With the aid of the luminous white Fire, He created the Sky which was to be the fortification and battleground from which evil would not be allowed to escape. Through the sky was fashioned the Water, which through its perfection would smite the demons. He produced the Earth which was made to float upon the waters. Fourthly, he produced the Tree which first took root in the middle of the earth and contained within it’s seed “...all kind of force of the trees.” (GBd. 1a.11). Next, He created the Beneficent Cow who stood on the shore of the good river Dāityā. Sixth, He created Gayō.marētān, the first mortal man—“...shining as the Sun;...his width was symmetrical as the height...” (GBd.1a.13). It is from Gayō.marētān that all of mankind was to be born. (Ohrmazd, it is said, produced the six creations in the six periods of the Gāhāmbārs). The seventh creation was Fire whose radiance was from Endless Light, the throne of Ohrmazd. Fire was the only creation which was allowed to permeate the other six creations which became dynamic when Fire, the breath of God, entered into them.

Ahriman Arises: Heightened Conflict

Upon the completion of the stupefaction period of 3000 years, Ahriman, the evil spirit, arose and in accord with his inherent desire set about to afflict the world of Ohrmazd. It is said that in the month of Fravardin and the day of Ohrmazd, (Nārōz), at noon Ahriman pierced the sky like a serpent for he wished to drag the sky below the earth to break it. He then sullied the waters underneath the earth which he next attacked and polluted. He then poisoned the tree which withered immediately. “He let loose Greed, Needfulness (Pestilence), Disease, Hunger, Illness, Vice and Lethargy on the body of the Cow and Gayō.marētān.....the Cow became feeble and ill, her milk dried up, and she passed away.” (GBd. 4.19-20). But the evil spirit could not find any means to kill Gayō.marētān who lived for another thirty years after the catastrophic advent of Ahriman into the world. Finally, “...he came to the Fire; he mingled smoke and darkness within it...(and)over all the elements of the material world, a transformation to duality, opposition, combat, and mingling of high and low became manifest.” (GBd. 4.27-28).

The Apocalyptic Tradition: The Battle Begins

Once Ahriman attacked the seven creations the conflict in the relative world was truly underway. According to tradition, for the next 3000 years (i.e. 6000 years into the Gumēžishn period), the world fell into a lamentable chaotic state as a result of the havoc wrought by Ahriman. Inspite of this chaos and confusion, the soul of the Cow (the good vision) pleaded with the divine beings of the celestial world to send a redeemer in order that he may restore peace and happiness within God’s creations.

The plea for restoration was accepted by the divine beings who chose Zarathustra as the saviour. Zarathustra’s task was to salvage the world from the affliction of evil by making man aware of an ethical structure, in order that the forces of falsehood may consequently be vanquished.

It is said that Zarathustra was born 6000 years into the Gumēžishn period (i.e. 9000 years from the beginning of creation). The scene was set for the forces of evil to be trodden through the moral weapon of good thoughts, words and deeds, the quintessence of Zarathustra’s revelation.

The Promise of Ahriman’s Defeat

In the Pahlavi texts, two ideas are expressed with regards to the annihilation of evil. First, that Ahriman will be expelled from the
universe of Light, and reduced to a never-ending unconsciousness; secondly, that Ahri-
man will be overwhelmed together with his miscreations. The defeat of Ahri-
man will terminate his faculties, and his active force will utterly cease to be.

The orthodox view of his cessation as expressed by a ninth century writer, Manushchíía,
was that the demons at some stage would not be in a position to incite or tempt the right-
eous ones, and that this would cause strife amongst the demons who would weaken and
eventually cease to exist.

(This may be comparable to the modern-day understanding of "black holes", which are
exploding stars that destroy themselves because of the contraction of their internal
mass, resulting in the prevention of light energy escaping. This occurrence is at the
expense of a disproportionate increase in their density and gravity, which causes their
own destruction).

We are told in the Creation myth, that Ahri-
man entered this world by piercing the sky
and that he will leave, weakened and
vanquished, through that same hole.

Special Help: The Saoshyants

Tradition has it, that special help will be
needed during the final 3000 years after Zar-
athushtra’s birth, in order to quicken the pro-
cess of Ahriman being rendered powerless.

According to the Bundahishn and other
Pahlavi texts, three saoshyants (those who
will bring benefit) will be born at 1000 year
intervals, after the prophet’s birth. These three
redeemers will be born posthumously from the
seed of Zarathushtra and Hvóí, which we
are told, is miraculously preserved in Lake
Kásooa (GBd. 35.60 p 303) where it is being
watched over by 99,999 fravashis. It is said
that at 1000 year intervals, a virgin will bathe
in this lake, and bear a child from the seed of
Zarathushtra. In other words, the saoshyants
will be men born of human parents.

In the Gáthás, Zarathushtra revealed, "...a
man shall come who is better than a good man
—the one who will teach us for the physical
existence and for that of the mind, the straight
paths of salvation to the true things with which
Ahura Mazdá dwells — (a man) who is faithful
and who) resembles you, O Mazdá, who
possesses the right knowledge and is wise.”
(Y.43.3).

The Tenth Millennium

In the tenth millennium, a precursor to the
Saoshyant, by the name of Peshotan, will
appear with a group of 150 righteous men who
will endeavour to restore order and faith back
into the world (GBd. 33.28). Thereupon, the
first saoshyant Ukshyat,ereta (“he who
makes righteousness grow”) will be born. We
are told that the creations will flourish for
three years, during which the wolf species will
disappear and for ten days, the sun will stand
still at noon — then disaster will strike, but
the struggle will continue. There will be bitter
winters and many men, women, children
and beasts will perish. The mythical king
Jamshíd will be driven back into the under-
world (Av. var).

The Eleventh Millennium

In the eleventh millennium, the war will reopen
and a new golden age will begin with the birth
of the second saoshyant, Ukshyat,nemah
(“he who makes reverence grow”). It is said
that there will be six years of abundance and
prosperity during which the evil creatures will
perish and the sun will stand still at noon for
twenty days. Men will become gentler and their
diet will change first to vegetables and then
only to water (GBd. 34.2-3). However, once
again evil will try and attack the good crea-
tions. Azhi Daháka, the primordial demon, will
break loose from his fetters and will go on a
rampage. He will devour men and beasts and
pollute the waters, earth, plants and fire
(ZVY.9.14-16). Keresáspa, the righteous hero,
will rise up to fight the demon who it is said
will return to his abode vanquished.
Fifty-seven Years Before the "Making Wonderful"

Towards the end of the eleventh millennium the third son of Zarathushtra will be born known as Astvat. ereta, ("he who embodies righteousness") — the final Saoshyant. This will happen fifty-seven years before the great moment of the "Making Wonderful" (Av. Fra-shō.kērēn). It is during this period that the Last Judgement will take place when the sun will stand still at noon for thirty days. According to tradition, all the seven creations as well as the souls of the dead in Heaven and Hell will pass through a river of molten metal. Then the Lord of health and friendship, Airyaman, will melt all the metal in the mountains and it will flow upon the earth. The souls of the righteous will experience it as warm milk whilst those of the wicked will feel the pain and anguish as if "...walking in the world in melted metal." (Gbd. 34.18-19).

After this, the all-important resurrection will occur when the Jra-vashis and the souls which are already in a spiritual state will unite with the resurrected future bodies (Ph. tan-i-pasēn). It is said that Gayō.marētan will be the first to
A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE CREATION STORY

- **0 Years**
  - Ahura Mazda's creations were in a spiritual state (i.e. unthinking, unmoving and intangible)
  - Ahura Mazda first perceived the existence of evil
  - Evil attacked unsuccessfully & returned to the abode of darkness, where it miscreated the dēvās
  - Ahura Mazda fashioned finite time & fixed the contest for 9000 years.

- **3000 Years** *Ahura Mazda chanted the Ahunavar prayer & evil was stupefied for the next 3000 years
  - All passed according to the will of Ahura Mazda (i.e. the world was unafflicted by evil)
  - Ahura Mazda fashioned the 7 creations in a Gērig (physical) state, in anticipation of the onslaught of evil.

- **6000 Years** *Ahriman attacked Ahura Mazda's 7 physical creations
  - the real conflict began
  - the soul of the cow pleaded for a redeemer

- **9000 Years** *Zarathushtra was born

- **10,000 Years** Ukhshvat.era, the first posthumous son of Zarathushtra

- **11,000 Years** Ukhshvat.nemah, the second posthumous son of Zarathushtra

- **(57 Years before the end of time)** -Astvat.era, the 3rd & last posthumous son of Zarathushtra -the Saoshyant.

- **12,000 Years** *Wizārishn — the Separation; time will cease to exist & the world will be restored to a perfect immortal state.
A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE APOCALYPTIC TRADITION

- **10,000 Years**
  - Peshotan - precursor to the Saoshyant
  - Ukkshyant, ereta - the 1st Saoshyant
  - creation will flourish for 3 years
  - wolf species will disappear
  - sun will stand still for 10 days at noon
  - disaster will strike, men will perish
  - King Jamshed will be driven back into the underworld.

- **11,000 Years**
  - Ukkshyant, nemah - the 2nd Saoshyant
  - the underworld will reopen
  - for 6 years there will be abundance and prosperity
  - evil creations will perish
  - sun will stand still for 20 days at noon
  - men will become gentle, will eat only vegetables, will have only water
  - evil will attack the good creations
  - Azhi Dahaka will break loose & will go on a rampage.
  - Kercaspa will fight and defeat Azhi Dahaka

- **(57 years before the end of time)**
  - Asvat, ereta - the 3rd Saoshyant
  - Last Judgement will take place
  - sun will stand still for 30 days at noon
  - all the creations will pass through molten metal
  - all metal will be melted by Aiyaman
  - the Resurrection will take place
  - the creations will be perfect
  - the final Yasna will be solemnized by Ohrmazd
  - the Last sacrifice of the bull Hadhayans will be performed
  - the Parahaoma libation will be taken
  - the resurrected bodies will become immortal.

- **12,000 Years** *The "Making Wonderful" will be completed and the Gumézishn period will come to an end.
  *Wizârishn - the Separation, when time will cease to exist.
be resurrected followed by the rest of mankind. The whole of creation will be perfect in both the spiritual and physical worlds. It is at this point that the 9000 year Gumezishn period will draw to a close, when the last spiritual Yasna (Guj. Ijashne) will be performed and solemnized by Ohrmazd and His divinities.

The Final Sacrifice

It is at this service at twelve noon, that the last sacrifice of the bull Hadhayans will duly be performed, and all the righteous will partake of it, together with the libation of the parahama prepared from the mythical white haoma plant. Upon the completion of this sacrifice, the resurrected bodies will become immortal like their already immortal souls. God’s creations will then experience for eternity, the joys of the senses as well as those of the mind and spirit. The “Making Wonderful” (Av. Frashu.kereti) will then be achieved with the coming to an end of the Gumezishn period.

Wizairishn: The Separation

Upon the ending of the Gumezishn period when time will cease to exist, the Wizairishn (Separation) period will begin, when “...the world will never grow old and never die, never decaying and never rotting, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish; ...” (Yt. 19.89).

In Zoroastrianism therefore, time is seen to move on a linear rather than a cyclic scale, having a beginning and a definite end. The role of man is to attain the salvation of both the body and spirit, in order to realize the total goodness and harmony of the seen and unseen worlds. The goal of mankind is to work towards this ultimate state of total goodness, when indeed “...creation....will grow deathless...” (Yt.19.90), and time will cease to exist!