



THE MAZDAYASNI CONNECTION

August 14, 2023

Hā 51

Hā 51^a

Vohu-khshathra* Gāthā

*Know that the Hā of Vohu-khshathra Gāthā is Yasna Hā 51^a, which must be recited on the Day of Vohu-khshathra Gāthā with the Khshnuman given below**

Khshnaoθra Ahurahe Mazdaō,
Ashem Vohū 1.

Pa nāme yazdān Ahuramazda khōdāe
awazūni, gorje khōreh awazāyād Geh

G Gathas Series Ushtavad Geh,
Spentōmad Geh, Vohu-khshathra Geh,
Vahishtōisht Geh, Geh Gāthābyō,

berasād. "Az hamā, gunāh patet
az harvastin dushmat duzbukht d
mem pa geti manid, oem goft, oem kard,
oem jast, oem bun bud ested. Az ān gunāh,
manashni gavashni kunashni, tani ravāni geti
minōāni, okhe avākhsh pashemān pa sē
gavashni pa patet hōm. khshnaoθra Ahurahe
Mazdāo, tarōidite angrahe mainyush;
haithyāvarshtām by
staomi ashem. Ash
Mazdayasnō Za
ikaeshō (Gāh according to the period of the
day) frasastayaēcha

Ahurahe Maz
Ameshanām Spentōmad
rātu-khshathrābyō

The name of this Gāthā is derived from the words: "Vohu khshathrem"

Hā 51 251

occurring in its beginning, i.e., in the first verse. It became 'Vohu Khshatar' in Pahlavi.

♠ For further details see note 2nd on page first.

♣ This Khshnuman also occurs in the Āfringān-i Gāthā.

Translation: May from amongst Gāthā Gāhānbār (i.e., out of five Gāthā Gāhānbār days viz.) Ahunavad Gāthā, Ushtavad Gāthā, Spentōmad Gāthā, Vohu-khshathra Gāthā and Vahishtōisht Gāthā and Holy Frayashis come up (unto this prayer)!

† For its translation, see the translation of Ahura Mazda Khōdāe.

The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra Vohu-khshathra Gatha

One chapter, Ha 51 of the Yasna

From the writings of Dastur Kaiqushroo Navroze Dastoor Meherjirana

CENTRAL THEME

Vohu-Khshathra means 'Good Power'. That is, the power or authority of Spenta Mainyu, which is conferred on those who have advanced on the path of spenti and asha.

It also means 'Good Kingdom'. Man becomes the 'king' of his own universe, when his soul fragments, scattered in the human, animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms merge into him. This progress, called *Khaetoadatha* (Y. 12.9), is the natural consequence of advancement on the path of *spenti* and *asha*.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The contents may be summarized as follows:

- Spiritual Power and Authority (*Khshathra*).
- Ahura Mazda's grace (*merezhdikā*) leads to humility (*armaiti*), selfless mentality (*Vohu Mano*), Righteousness (*asha*) and Authority (*Khshathra*). (51.4)
- Such persons spread blessings and prosperity in the world. (51.5)
- In the final end of human existence, Ahura Mazda, through his Power and Authority, grants better than good to one who worships Him and the worse than evil to one who does not devote himself to Him. (51.6)
- Evil fate awaits the liars and wicked persons, whereas the followers of truth and the beneficent ones shall receive happiness. (51.8, 9)
- Those who do not follow the right path during life, repent, after death, at the Chinvat Bridge (51.13).
- The righteous ones are aided by Asho Zarathushtra's authorized and empowered disciples: Vishtaspa (51.16), Frashaoshtra (51.17), Jamaspa (51.18), Maidyomah (51.19). Such authority also resides with Holy Maghavs (51.11, 15, 16).
- The bearers of authority (*khshathra*) have received their authority and power from their attunement with the Amesha Spentas and the Yazatas (51.20, 21).

EVOLUTIONARY SEQUENCE

Ahunavad Gatha prescribes the first step towards man's final aim of *Frashokereti* or *Frashogard*. That is, man must learn and implement the teachings of the Religion as revealed by Prophet Zarathushtra.

Ushtavad Gatha gives the promise and hope of the fulfillment of the final goal, if the teachings of the Religion are implemented, thus giving endless ecstasy, divine happiness (*ushta*).

Spentomad Gatha declares that such a person will experience minoi growth, development and evolution (*spenti*). Spenta Mainyu (the progress-giving Force) as well as the seven Ameshaspands help the person in his exertions.

The spiritually advancing person now receives Divine Power and Authority (*Khshathra*) which is the central theme of Vohu-Khshathra Gatha.

KEY STANZA

Khashthra (Divine Authority, Power, Kingdom) is the best wealth - worth desiring and accumulating.

It proliferates (spiritual) wealth, prosperity, bliss amongst the people of the world owing to righteousness (*asha*) and religious works (*shyothna*).

O Mazda! May we continue doing whatever is best for us, from right now, until the end. (51.1)

CONDITION OF SOULS AFTER DEATH

The Gatha is explicit that wrong-doers may enjoy success and happiness temporarily, but ultimately they will repent, because they will be unable to cross the Chinvat Bridge (the bridge of Separation) and will return to earth to face the results of their misdeeds - "as you sow, so shall you reap."

The wicked man succeeds for a short time in this world over the righteous man, but ultimately he is defeated.

On account of his wicked deeds and bad conduct he becomes extremely repentant after death on the Chinvat Bridge, because the path to Heaven is closed to his soul. (51.13)

The righteous souls will enjoy the reward that has been promised by Asho Zarathushtra to the *Maghavs* or *ashavans*, who choose to follow his teachings. They will cross the Chinvat Bridge and enter the paradisiacal regions of heaven (*garo namana*, "The Abode of Songs"), where Ahura Mazda, in all His Glory, resides.

(O Mazda worshipping Zoroastrians) the reward that Asho Zarathushtra has, from the very outset, fixed for the Maghavs, will be awarded to you with blessings on account on account of your good thought and righteousness (*asha*).

(That reward is) Heaven (*Garō Namana*, "Abode of Songs") where Ahura Mazda dwells! (51.15)

THE FINAL STANZA

Gatha Vohu-Khshathra ends with a prayer of love and devotion to all those who are far advanced on their path towards *Hasti* - the divine world of the Yazatas. The last stanza (51.22) is the Gathic manthra-paraphrase of the Yenghe Hātām composition and also appears in Yasna Ha 15.2.

Ahura Mazda knows those who are and have been the best in performing Yasna with righteousness. I attune with them by name and reach them with sincere love. (51.22)

The adoration of the Holy Ones by name has developed continuously in the Zarathusti religion. The Fravardin Yasht has a list of over three hundred names of holy men and women. In the prayers for the dead and in the *Afringan* (Jashan) ceremony, the priests invoke, by name, Zarathushti saints, sages, kings and *pahlavāns* from ancient Iran, followed by Parsi priests and luminaries since their arrival in India. After the death of a community luminary, his/her name is added to the list of “illustrious ones who have passed on”, for services rendered to the community. ■

The Chinvat Bridge

The Chinvat Bridge (Av. *Chinvat peretu*), “the bridge of judgement” or “the bridge of the Requirer” is the bridge that leads from this world to the next and must be crossed by the souls of the departed (Vd. 19.29, 19.30). It is metaphorically called a bridge since it connects the material world with the unseen one, and serves as a medium to cross the deep chasm that separates the two.

The bridge lies on the peak of the cosmic mountain *Hara Berez* (Alborz), called *Chagad Daiti*, with one end in the south leading up to paradise (*behesht*) and the other in the north, leading to earth.

At death, man’s mortal frame perishes but his imperishable part, his real personality, his immortal soul, survives his bodily death. The Gathas, Hadokht Nask and the Pahlavi works Arda Viraf Nameh and Menog-i Khrad give a vivid description of the after-death experiences of the righteous and wicked souls. Reward or retribution for the soul in the next world depends on the good or the evil it has done in this life (Y30.10; 31.14, 20; 45.7; 51.6, 8, 9). Every thought, word and deed of an individual is recorded in Nature. With time, this accumulation assumes a form, called *Kerdar* (Av. *Kereta*, lit. “what is done”).

On the dawn of the fourth day after death, the soul proceeds towards the Chinvat Bridge, which is guarded by two four-eyed dogs (Vd. 13.9, 19.30). There it is judged by the tribunal of Meher, Sarosh and Rashne.

Rashne Yazata weighs the good and the evil deeds of the soul with his spiritual balance. If the deceased is righteous, his *kerdar* appears to him as a beautiful maiden. The Chinvat bridge becomes wide and he safely crosses over to the other side “well-wishingly and free from sorrow” and enters *Garo Namana* - the abode of songs (Y51.15).

If the soul is wicked, it stands trembling at this judgment span (Y51.13). His *kerdar* appears as an ugly hag, the Chinvat bridge becomes narrow like a razor blade, and the soul fails to cross it. Writhing with the pangs of conscience and crying words of woe, it is now led by its own conscience into the *druj-demana* (the Abode of Lies) (Y31.20, 46.11, 51.13). ■