

# Zoroastrianism

## The Gathas

(excerpts)

Translated by L.H. Mills (1887)



Faravahar, a primary symbol of Zoroastrianism, is believed to be a depiction of a guardian spirit.

Zoroastrianism is an ancient monotheistic religion that originated with the prophet Zoroaster in ancient Persia. The life of Zoroaster (Zarathustra below) is dated to roughly 1000 BC, and the religion was both contemporaneous with and thought to have influenced both Vedic Hinduism and early Judaism. Modern day adherents live in parts of Iran and India. Zoroaster proclaimed his devotion to the one, benevolent God, Ahura Mazda. The sacred texts attributed to Zoroaster himself are known as the Gathas, and the Gathas are included in the sacred Zoroastrian collection known as the Yasna. The central concepts of Zoroastrianism include a strong focus on human free will and the belief that good thoughts, good words, and good deeds are necessary for happiness. In addition, fire and the sun are prevalent symbols of God's energy. For more, see: [www.sacred-texts.com/zor/sbe31/index.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/zor/sbe31/index.htm).

### Yasna 28

1. (A strengthening blessing is the thought, a blessing is the word, a blessing is the deed of the righteous Zarathustra. May the Bountiful Immortals accept and help on the chants. Homage to you, O sacred Gâthas!)
2. With venerating (desire) for this (gift) of gracious help, O Mazda, and stretching forth my hands (to Thee) I pray for the first (blessing) of (Thy) bountiful Spirit; (that is, I beseech of Thee that my) actions (toward) all (may be performed) in (the Divine) Righteousness; and with this I implore from Thee the understanding of Thy Benevolent Mind, in order that I may propitiate the Soul of the Kine (our herds and folk, which cries so bitterly to Thee).
3. And therefore, O Great Creator, the Living Lord! (inspired) by Thy Benevolent Mind, I approach You, (and beseech of Thee) to grant me (as a bountiful gift) for both the worlds, the corporeal and (for that) of mind, those attainments which are to be derived from the (Divine) Righteousness, and by means of which (that personified Righteousness within us) may introduce those who are its recipients into beatitude and glory!
- ...
11. And therefore do Thou, O Lord, the Great Creator! fill up and satisfy (my) desire with these attainments (of the grace) of Thy Good Mind, which Thou dost know to be derived from Righteousness, (and) which (are verily) sublime, for I have known Thine instructions to be never void of their effect (in the struggles) for our (daily) food, and therefore worthy objects of desire.
12. (Yea, I approach Thee with my prayers, I) who by these (great gifts of grace) will protect ((Thy) Divine Righteousness, and (Thy) Good Mind within us) for ever. And do Thou therefore, O Ahura Mazda! teach me from Thyself, yea, from Thine own mouth of spirit, that I may declare it forth to (these Thy waiting people) by what (powers and according to what laws) the primeval world arose!

### **Yasna 30**

2. Hear ye then with your ears; see ye the bright flames with the (eyes of the) Better Mind. It is for a decision as to religions, man and man, each individually for himself. Before the great effort of the cause, awake ye (all) to our teaching!

3. Thus are the primeval spirits who as a pair (combining their opposite strivings), and (yet each) independent in his action, have been famed (of old). (They are) a better thing, they two, and a worse, as to thought, as to word, and as to deed. And between these two let the wisely acting choose aright. (Choose ye) not (as) the evil-doers!

4. (Yea) when the two spirits came together at the first to make life, and life's absence, and to determine how the world at the last shall be (ordered), for the wicked (Hell) the worst life, for the holy (Heaven) the Best Mental State,

### **Yasna 31**

3. And that keenness, that deciding satisfaction, which Thou hast given by (Thy) Spirit, and (Thy) Fire, and by Thy Righteousness (itself) to the two battling (sides), do Thou declare unto us, O Ahura! that vow which is for the seeing (as those endowed with mental light). Yea, do Thou declare this that we may know it, O Mazda! With the tongue of Thy mouth do Thou speak it (that as I preach its mighty truths) I may make all the living believers!

4. And when the Divine Righteousness shall be inclined to my appeal, and with him all those (remaining ones who are as) Mazda's (own) Ahuras then with the blessedness (of the reward), with (my) Piety and with Thy Best Mind (active within me), I will pray for that mighty Kingdom by whose force we may smite the Lie-demon.

...

8. Therefore, as the first did I conceive of Thee, O Ahura Mazda! as the one to be adored with the mind in the creation, as the Father of the Good Mind within us, when I beheld Thee with my (enlightened) eyes as the veritable maker of our Righteousness, as the Lord of the actions of life!

9. Thine, O Ahura! was Piety; yea, Thine, O Creator of the Kine! was understanding and the Spirit, when Thou didst order a path for her (guiding). From the earth's tiller (aided) she goeth (in that allotted way), or from him who was never tiller. (Thy path hath given her choice.)

### **Yasna 43**

1. Salvation to this man, salvation to him whosoever (he may be)! Let the absolutely ruling Great Creator grant (us, He) the living Lord, the two eternal powers. Yea, verily, I ask it of Thee (O Ahura) for the maintaining Righteousness. And may'st Thou also give it to me, (O inspiring) Piety! splendour (as it is), holy blessings, the Good Mind's life.

2. Yea, to this one may the man endowed with glory give that best of all things, the (spiritual) glory. And do Thou likewise (Thyself) reveal Thine own (gifts) through Thy most bountiful spirit, O Mazda! (And do Thou teach us) Thy wonderful thoughts of wisdom, those of Thy Good Mind, which Thou hast revealed (to us) by Thy Righteousness (within us) with the happy increase of (our joy), and on a long life's every day.

...

14. Yea, as the man enlightened (in Thy law), and who has possessions, gives to his friend, (so give Ye) me, O Great Creator! Thy rejoicing and abounding grace, when through Thy sovereign Power, and from (the motives of Thy cause of) Righteous Order, I stand forth to go out to, or to arouse, the chiefs of Thy (pure) proclamation, with all those (others) who recite Thy well-remembered Māthra word.

15. Yea, I conceived of Thee as bounteous, O Ahura Mazda! when with the Good Mind's grace Thy Sraosha (Obedience) approached me, (and said): Let the quiet and long-enduring better mind with understanding teach (thee); let not a foremost man conciliate the wicked (as sycophant desiring aid), for with that (quiet mind of faith), Thy saints have brought full many a sinner unto Thee (as convert, and in penitence).

16. Thus, O Ahura Mazda! this Zarathustra loves the Spirit, and every man most bounteous prays (beside him): Be Righteousness life-strong, and clothed with body. In that (holy) Realm which shines (with splendour) as the sun, let Piety be present; and may she through the indwelling of Thy Good Mind give us blessings in reward for deeds!