

## God in the Gathas

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In the Gathas, it is Zarathushtra who gives us his search, research, observation, experience, meditation, intuition, inspiration, and the final realization of Truth—God, the creation, the Primal Principles of Life, and the high responsible position of us humans in the world we live. Here is a summary of how he conceived and comprehended God and communed with him.

In Song 10.10 (Y 45.10), he sings:

"I shall seek to exalt Him for us with veneration of serenity,  
Who, by a new name, is known as Mazda Ahura, the Wise God.  
He grants, through righteousness and good mind,  
wholeness and immortality in His dominion.  
May He grant us steady strength and endurance."

It may be worth noting that the two words chosen by Zarathushtra to describe best God belong to opposite genders. Ahura, meaning 'The Being' with a secondary meaning 'lord' is masculine, and mazda 'supreme wisdom, super-intellect' with a secondary meaning of 'The Wise' is feminine. A beautiful combination, indeed! However, Zarathushtra has followed the grammatical rules of his age that when a masculine and feminine nouns combine, pronouns follow the masculine rule, yet he frequently uses the neuter gender, particularly the emphatic HVA, in his Sublime Songs. We too, bound by the present Judeo-Christian usage of God taken as a masculine in English, use the masculine pronoun without assigning any particular gender to God, for God is above such an imagination. Maybe a day will come when we have a better conception of God and use the simple pronoun of IT.

Here is a gist of how Zarathushtra describes his Mazda (164 times) and Ahura (131 times) of which Mazda Ahura is mentioned for 50 times and Ahura Mazda for only eight times together or with one word in between! And yet, prompted by the later Avesta, we have become accustomed to say Ahura Mazda.

Before we proceed further, let it be pointed out here with emphasis that the term ahura (Sanskrit asura) for god is a pre-Zarathushtrian Indo-Iranian term. But mazdâ was added first by Zarathushtra alone to describe God as "Super-Intellect". And this makes a great difference. Gods and goddesses were known for their power. Zarathushtra laid stress on God's wisdom. Strength follows super-intellect.

God is wise. He is the wisest. He is knowing, the most knowing. He knows best. He knows best the past, present, and future. He remembers all that exists. He knows the secrets of life. He is wide-viewing and all-watching. He watches every move, open or hidden. He is, above all, MAZDA, super-intellect, supreme-wisdom.

God is supreme. He is the first and the latest - literally the foremost and the youngest. In other simple words: God is above age and time.

God “dwells in progress”. He is progressive, the most progressive. He is the continuous creator, maintainer, and promoter of the universe and all that is in it—the sky, stars, sun, moon, earth, everything. It means that He is not a static god who has finished with his creation and is only maintaining or guiding it to a given destiny. He regulates the universe through *asha*, the law of precision. His *spenta mainyu*, progressive mentality, continues to create and promote his creation. He possesses *vohu manah*, good mind, the wisdom that maintains it. He establishes *khshathra*, the divine dominion, in which all is well, everything is good, and every creature enjoys *âramaiti*, serenity. He grants *haurvatât*, wholeness, and *amaretât*, immortality, to the creation. He is in continuous contact with those who want to listen to His voice, *seraasha*, the inner voice. For us, God has created the joy-bringing world. He has created the living world and bestowed it with free will. He has created body, conscience, and intelligence, and he has infused life into the physical frame. He has then granted it freedom of thought, speech, and action so that one is free to choose one's convictions. The freedom is for all, the righteous and the wrongful, wise or unwise.

God is of oneaccord with *asha*. He does not violate the very laws he has so wisely ordained. His laws entertain no exceptions. It means no unexplained freaks, no never-understood miracles.

God is the judge. He upholds the prime laws. He is the lord of life. It is God who has ordained that good deeds produce good rewards, and evil deeds have bad consequences. The Laws are not to be broken, not even by mercy.

God is kind. He is friendly, a good friend, an ally. He is loving. He is loved.

God is the guide. He is the teacher. To him all ultimately return.

God is mighty. He is the mightiest. He is the greatest. He is powerful, most powerful. He is ruling-at-will.

In short, God is Mazda Ahura, the supreme Wise Being. It is, to repeat a point, the name given by Zarathushtra to explain God in two meaningful words. God is super-wisdom personified, and God is The Being. Every other conceivable attribute is but a part of these two wondrous words.

The Gathas do not present God as wrathful, awful, dreadful, vengeful, resentful, jealous, or, on the contrary, merciful, because these aspects would render God personal and are also in violation of the very pristine laws he has ordained. The “awful” theory makes one dread God, and the “merciful” theme encourages one to commit evil acts and feel sure of “amnesty”. God is just loving and a loved friend; that is enough.

Mankind on this earth has a high position. He is a companion of God in mind and action. A progressive person is associated with God. One who promotes and develops a house, settlement, district or land with righteousness becomes godlike. In fact, as a progressive teacher, he is godlike.

## **Personally Impersonal**

God in the Gathas is the impersonal Supreme Being. Nevertheless, one comes across poetic expressions such as “for my enlightenment, teach me to speak the thoughts of Your mind and the words of Your mouth”, He “watches with sharp eyes through *asha*”, and “You help with Your own hands”. Zarathushtra conceives God by beholding him with his eyes of thoughts, words, and deeds. He befriends him and falls in love with him. He is in communion with God as any other person can rise to be. It is the inner voice, *seraosha*, that leads to God, the ultimate goal.

Although these few references to mouth, eyes and hands are clearly allegorical, they bring closer to the human mind an abstract God and make him a personal being, giving one the warm feelings of a relationship, the close, cordial relationship between the created and the Creator. A God so impersonal and yet so personal! Perhaps this a very beautiful side of “God in the Gathas”.

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