

## Zarathushtra's Birthday

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*Yehe zânthae-cha vakhshae-cha  
urvâsen âpô urvarâos-cha;  
Yehe zânthae-cha vakhshae-cha  
ukhshîn âpô urvarâos-cha;  
Yehe zânthae-cha vakhshae-cha  
ushtatâtem nimravanta  
vîspâo spentô dâtâo dâmân:  
“Ushtâ-nô zâtô-nô ratush  
yô Spitâmô Zarathushtrô!  
idha apâm vîjasâiti  
Vanghvi Daenâ Mâzdayasnish  
vîspâish avi karshvân yâish hapta.”*

In whose birth and growth,  
the waters and plants flourished;  
in whose birth and growth,  
the waters and plants increased;  
and in whose birth and growth,  
the entire progressing creation shouted:  
“Hail to us, for us is born  
a righteous leader—Zarathushtra Spitâma!  
The Good Religion of Mazda-worship  
will, henceforth, spread all over  
the seven regions of the earth.”  
(Fravardin Yasht.93-94)

3,767 years ago, on a fine spring morning, A boy was born to Dughdav and Pourushaspa Spitâma, their third son. They named him **Zarathushtra** to rhyme with the names of his two elder brothers—Rataushtra and Rangushtra. The Spitâmas were a prosperous cattle-raising family and lived near the bank of a river, later called *Dâiti*, the Lawful, in Airyana Vaeja, once northeastern Iran and now in Central Asia. Dughdav was an exceptionally open-minded, bright lady. She took care of Zarathushtra's education and provoked in him the desire to search and discover. She set him on the road to discover truth, *the truth*.

Provoked to discover truth, Zarathushtra discovered Mazda Ahura, literally *The Super-Intellect Being*, a god so different from the gods humans had visualized and conceptualized before, a god transcendental and yet so close as to be beloved, a god both impersonal in mind but personal in thought, a god that is wholly good. A Super-Intellect that wisely creates, sustains, maintains, and promotes Its creation. A Super-Intellect that is *spenishta mainyu*, the Most Progressive Mind, the most increasing mentality and not a static godhead. A Super-Intellect that communes with Its creations and inspires them through *seraosha*, the inner-voice within them. A Super-Intellect that has granted freedom of thought, will, word, action, and choice to Its creations and endowed them with good mind, truth, power, and peace to prosper and progress to

wholeness and immortality.

Zarathushtra's one discovery: the best, Mazda, provided him with all the principles of the good life, both on this earth and beyond. Provoked by his mother when he was a child, he became a *Mânthran*, the thought-provoker par excellence for humanity. He laid the foundation of his universal religion, *Daenâ Vanguhi*, the religion of Good Conscience, the religion that means constant progress, continuous modernization toward eternal bliss.

Very few of the founders of religions and doctrines have lived long enough to see their mission completed as they desired. Moreover, very few of them have passed away satisfied with the progress of the task which they began. Asho Zarathushtra is indeed one of those few. He proclaimed his divine mission at the age of thirty; successfully withstood all the difficulties created by his enemies—the priests and princes of the old cult—for a good ten years. Following that, he took two full years to convince King Vishtâspa and his sagacious court of the truth of his mission, and he passed another thirty-seven happy years seeing the full realization of his mission. Tradition says he died a happy and satisfied person at the age of seventy-seven years and forty days.

The extant Avesta has two eulogies in honor of Zarathushtra, both of which are in the Farvardin Yasht, the reverential record of the men and women who served with and followed after Zarathushtra in promulgating the Good Religion. The first, the longer of the two poems although later than the second, rejoices at his birth in early spring—6th Farvardin 30 years BZRE (before Zarathushtrian Religious Era), 26th March 1767 BCE. The other, shorter but older, has been sung to praise his accomplishments. It is the only one in which he is addressed in superlatives. Yet he is not deified. He is clearly said to be the lord and leader of human beings even in this bodily life. Yet the Avesta recognizes only one God as the Lord and Leader of the Spiritual and Material Existences. And Zarathushtra has remained a human being all through the 4,000-year history of the Zarathushtrian religion, an unusual phenomenon in the history of religions.

The other epithet used in the above eulogy is *paoiryō-tkaesha*, literally 'of the primal doctrine', herein translated as "foremost in the divine doctrine". This term stands for all those men and women, including Zarathushtra, who were first and foremost to choose the Good Religion in their lineage and serve its cause. Their children and grandchildren, who were also promoters of their mission, are called *nabanazdishta-*, the 'nearest offspring'. These two categories of the faithful hold the highest position in Zarathushtrian lore.

No doubt, Asho Zarathushtra is the first and foremost of the *paoiryō-tkaesha*. He is our lord, leader, and rehabilitator, our guiding light. We hail his birthday, the Hope for the rebirth of the living world. Let us praise him in the words of the Farvardin Yasht as given in another, shorter eulogy:

We revere Zarathushtra as the lord and leader of the material existence. He is the foremost in the Divine Doctrine. Amongst all human beings, he is the best of the well-established and the best of the good-ruling. Amongst all human beings, he is the most splendid and the most glorious. Amongst all human beings, he is the most worthy of

eneration and the most worthy of admiration. Amongst all human beings, he is the most worthy of our pleasure and the most worthy of our praises. Because the best righteousness should be the criterion, he is, for us, the cherished, and worthy of veneration and glorification.

(Fravardin Yasht.152)

Zarathushtra was born, tradition says, on 6th of Farvardin. It means: 3783 years ago (26th March 1767 BCE) in early spring.

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