

## Birth of Zarathushtra

*Ali A Jafarey*

On March 25—day of Khordad, month of Farvardin—Zoroastrians celebrate the Birthday of Asho Zarathushtra, the Divine Founder of the Good Religion. I greet our companions on Z-Lists on this auspicious occasion and turn to the Avesta to see what it has to say for the day.

The oldest eulogy for a human being on record in the Indo-Iranian scriptures is in honor of Asho Zarathushtra. Prior to this, there were praises only for gods, goddesses, and deified personalities. It consists of seven stanzas, 88 to 94 of the Farvardin Yasht. The eulogy's wordings show that it was composed centuries after Zarathushtra when, instead of the geographical units of humanity in house, settlement, district, land, and earth divisions, we find society again divided on the professional basis of priests, warriors, and the settled producers. The composer is a priest who owes no alliance to the pre-Zarathushtrian cult and fully believes that Zarathushtra is the first and foremost in ushering in a completely new era.

The eulogy, although short, throws quite a good light on Zarathushtra. It shows that:

- Zarathushtra was born in spring when snow thawed, rains came, waters flowed, trees blossomed and plants grew.
- He was led to good words and good deeds through his good intuition.
- He realized the truth and recognized and comprehended the Wise God in an age when the world around him was completely engrossed in superstitions.
- He preached to others what he learned through his inspirations.
- He is FOREMOST in every phase of life. He revolutionizes the social structure and bases it on thoughtful thoughts, words and deeds. Leaders, both spiritual and physical, are to be elected and their election is to be based on their competency and sincerity. Modern democracy has yet to catch up with what Zarathushtra advises, advocates, recommends and presents in his ever-fresh teachings.
- Men and women enjoy freedom as equals. People can choose Asho Zarathushtra as their spiritual and physical leader only after understanding his divine message.
- At a time when every race considered itself to be the chosen people of gods/God, Zarathushtra did not discriminate between race, cast, and creed. The Good Religion is universal and for all the peoples of the world. It is the best religion among the existing ones. It advocates preaching and propagation on sound basis of education aimed at spreading all over the earth. It is the first universal missionary religion.
- He is constantly referred to as 'the foremost' because he is the first and foremost in giving an entirely fresh outlook to every walk of life—spiritual, mental, ethical, social, material, and physical. His 'Good Religion' is all-embracing.
- All the above points and many more are well documented in other parts of the Avesta as well as the Pahlavi writings. He is UNIQUE.

Here is a free abridged rendering of the eulogy in English:

88. We venerate the Reward and the Religious Choice of  
the Righteous Zarathushtra Spitama,

who is the foremost  
to think, speak, and do good;  
Who is the foremost  
priest, warrior, and settled industrious,  
who is the foremost  
to learn for himself and teach others,  
who is the foremost  
to understand for himself and for others,  
[the following facts]—  
the living world, the Universal Law of Asha,  
the Divine Message and the need to listen to it,  
the Divine Dominion, and all the good things  
created by the Wise One  
as of Righteousness.

89. Who is the foremost  
to reject false gods and ignoble persons,  
who is the foremost  
in the material existence  
to uphold Righteousness, denounce false gods,  
choose to worship the Wise God  
and be a Zoroastrian denying false gods  
and adhering to the Divine Doctrine.
90. Who is the foremost  
in the material existence  
to declare that none of the imaginary deities  
is worthy of worship and adoration.  
He stands as an ideal for a noble life,  
because he is the foremost bearer  
of the Divine Doctrine in all the lands.
91. His thought-provoking songs of Righteousness  
are heard everywhere.  
He is the lord and the leader of the world.  
He praised Righteousness  
as the best, sublimest and greatest.  
and he gave the doctrine of the Religion  
which is the best among all the religions that are.
92. The immortals progressives,  
who are all of one accord,  
chose him and accepted him,  
after a thorough consideration,  
as the lord and the leader of the world.
93. In whose birth and growth  
the waters and plants flourished,  
in whose birth and growth  
the waters and the plants increased,

and in whose birth and growth  
the entire progressing creation shouted:  
94. Hail to us, for a spiritual leader  
is born—Zarathushtra Spitama!  
Henceforth the Good Religion  
of Mazda-worship will spread  
all over the seven climes of the earth.

\*\*\*\*\*