

Significance and Philosophy of the Vendidad

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[Continued from Vol. 1 Issue 1]

Recurring state of affairs in each subsequent Zravane Daregho Khadata

Thus Zarathushtra the Yazata first descended on this Earth at the beginning of the fourth Hazara of the fourth Zravaane Akarne – the Present of the Present Tense. As mentioned earlier, each Hazara is composed of innumerable Zravane Daregho Khadata, which is a cycle of 81,000 years. Thus in the first Zravane Daregho Khadata of the fourth Hazara, Urvan of Groups B, C, D and E started descending on the Earth and allowed Angra Mainyu to enter the Earth. As soon as he entered, he started systematically corrupting men and the earth. This state of affairs continued for the first four thousand years of the first Zravane Daregho Khadata. At this point, the Soul of the Earth complained to the Creator and asked for a saviour, in response to which Zarathushtra the Yazata took on a superhuman form and descended on the Earth with the Vi-Daeva-Data. He then systematically cleaned the various corruptions which had seeped into the Earth as well as in man and established the Zoroastrian faith. He ejected Angra Mainyu from the Earth and placed special check points, so that he could not enter again. After accomplishing the other facets of his mission, he rejoined the Augmented Nature.

After his departure, the Earth remained in a state of goodness for some time. But soon thereafter, the evil tendencies began to creep in once again. Various authorised disciples of Zarathushtra descended at various points in the Zravane Daregho Khadata. However, as the years passed, the intensity of evil began to increase, till it finally appeared that the Earth would be destroyed. At this point, the future ‘son’ of Zarathushtra called *Astvat-Ereta*¹ – One who makes the bodily creatures rise up, The Final Redeemer or *Saoshyant*² –the Interpreter of the Religion descended on the Earth. He collected the good creations of Ahura Mazda, and took them to a secluded part of the Earth, higher than any other point. Now, the Earth witnessed a deluge, wherein every creation of the Earth was destroyed – the Universal Flood. This state of

submersion remained for a period of approximately 25,000 years – a period in which the Earth is washed and cleaned of all her accumulated sins.

Finally, when the Earth became fit once again, the descendants of the saved creatures descended on the Earth, and life started afresh, in a new Zravane Daregho Khadata. Soon thereafter, as the souls of the Jhirum of the B, C, D and E classes descended, Angra Mainyu once again lured them into letting him enter the Earth. Soon his ravages started once again, reaching a crescendo at around 4,000 years of the Zravane Daregho Khadata. Soon Mother Earth called out to Ahura Mazda for a saviour, and once again the superhuman form of Zarathushtra the Yazata descended the Earth with the Vi-Daeva-Data. The whole cycle was repeated till the next deluge, then a further period of submersion and life started afresh in the third Zravane Daregho Khadata.

Such are the endless cycles of each Zravane Daregho Khadata within the fourth Hazara of the fourth Zravaane Akarne of the Present of the Present Tense. Each subsequent Zravane Daregho Khadata takes man one step closer in cleaning the Primeval Ego attached to his Urvan. In our current Zravane Daregho Khadata which started approximately 14,600 years ago, Zarathushtra descended on the Earth approximately 9500 years ago in around 7500 BC with the Vi-Daeva-Data and established the Zoroastrian faith.

Zravane Daregho Khadata and the Hindu Yugas³

It is interesting to note that the Hindu Yugas – *Satya*, *Treta*, *Dvaapar* and *Kali* are actually collective forms of numerous Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles. The ratio of each Yuga to the Zravane Daregho Khadata is 3:16 as shown in the table below.

Table 1: The Hindu Yugas and their relation to the Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles

Name	Years	Ratio multiplication x 3	Ratio division ÷ 16	No. of ZDKs
Kali yuga	432,000	1,296,000	81,000	16
Dvaapar yuga	864,000	2,592,000	81,000	32

Treta yuga	1,296,000	3,888,000	81,000	48
Satya yuga	1,728,000	5,184,000	81,000	64

Hence it can be easily seen that the calculation of the Hindu Yugas is but a combination of a number of Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles. The total number of Zravane Daregho Khadata in each Yuga also signifies the main events of each Yuga. Hence in the Kali-yuga, there are 16 Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles. The number 16 reduces to 7 which signifies the predominance of upheavals and revolutions, an age in which sin is eminent. The Dvaapar Yuga contains 32 Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles, which reduces to the number 5, signifying an age where man is more concerned about evolving his 5 spiritual senses rather than the 5 physical senses. The Treta Yuga contains 48 Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles, which reduces to the number 3. 3 denotes the three-step plan of the Ahuna Vairya – First the stage of eternal merge, then the evolution of the Cosmos, and finally the eventual return of the Cosmos back to Ahu in the Remotest Future tense of the seventh Zravaane Akarne. Finally, the Satya Yuga contains 64 Zravane Daregho Khadata cycles, reducing to the number 1, which signifies perfection. Satya Yuga denotes the time when all men will belong to one universal Great White Brotherhood. Such are the mysteries of the inter-relation of the Hindu and Zoroastrian time cycle calculations.

The 5 distinct sections of the Vendidad

Having considered the detailed description of Cosmogogenesis and the different facets of time, we can now better understand the contents of the Vendidad. The Vendidad is a long scripture, divided into 22 chapters, called Frakarts⁴, or Pargarads. Though seemingly unrelated when viewed in isolation, and without a background of its origin, the Vendidad has in fact a common theme running throughout its 22 chapters which can be succinctly summarized and understood when viewed with the correct backdrop. The contents of the Vendidad can thus be easily divided into the following sections.

The first section, comprising of the first Frakart sets the backdrop for the scripture, detailing the state of the Earth before the entry of Angra Mainyu and the havoc he wreaked post his entry.

The second section, comprising the second Frakart deals with events happening at the end of each Zravane Daregho Khadata, and the two great spiritual entities entrusted with the task of saving and recreating the Earth.

The third and main section, stretching from Frakarts III to XVIII, contains the detailed laws given by the Prophet Zarathushtra to help man fight the attack of Angra Mainyu.

The fourth section, comprising of Frakart XIX contains the details of the combat between Zarathushtra and Angra Mainyu, and the defeat of Angra Mainyu.

The last section, comprising of Frakarts XX to XXII show us the onward march of the Earth to its final salvation post the defeat of Angra Mainyu.

The table below summarizes the contents.

Table 2: Summary of the contents of the Vendidad

Section	Comprising	Details
Section 1	Frakart I	A description of the Earth before the entry of Angra Mainyu and the destruction he wreaks after his entry
Section 2	Frakart II	A description of the preparations for the Universal Deluge at the end of the 81,000 year cycle
Section 3	Frakarts III to XVIII	The rules given by Zarathushtra to man to help him fight Angra Mainyu
Section 4	Frakart XIX	The encounter between Zarathushtra and Angra Mainyu
Section 5	Frakarts XX to XXII	The defeat of evil and the march to salvation

Contents of the Vendidad

Section 1: The two states of the Earth

Frakart I

The Vendidad begins with a description of 16 cities that existed on the Earth. It then describes the entry of Angra Mainyu into each of these 16 cities and the kind of havoc he inflicts on the cities and their inhabitants. Efforts have been made in the past to identify these cities with real world cities through geological and geographical means. Some correlations have been formed, though they are nebulous. However, after understanding the reality behind the need for the Vendidad, we can better explain this first Frakart. The grand saga of the Vendidad begins with a reminder as to why the Vendidad is needed in the first place. The Earth existed in a pristine and paradisiacal state. However, when Angra Mainyu succeeded in luring man to allow him to enter the Earth, he then started wreaking havoc. The progression of how Angra Mainyu systematically began corrupting the Earth and its holy residents is therefore recounted in the first Frakart of the Vendidad with a view to laying the backdrop for the grand narrative to unfold, and also to serve as a reminder to mortal man that his failure to resist the temptation of Angra Mainyu was solely responsible for this.

How exactly was this achieved by Angra Mainyu? We have observed that when the Earth was going through the stages of Ushi, 16 Spiritual Energy receiving, processing and transmitting Centres, called Chakhras were created at different parts of the globe. These Centres were used to attract and receive the blessings that the Augmented Nature would constantly shower on the Earth and its denizens. When Angra Mainyu succeeded in entering the Earth by luring man, he systematically began infiltrating each of these Energy Centres. He wrecked them and set up parallel centres within these Chakhras where he would create Dysfunctional and Destructive Energy which he would use to further corrupt the Earth and man. In the same way, this Destructive Energy also seeped into the 16 energy centres within man's body and made him turn against the Mazdayasni faith. When Zarathushtra the Yazata descended on the Earth in his superhuman form, he destroyed these parallel destructive centres on the Earth and restored the working of the original Good Energy Chakhras. This is clearly mentioned in the Avesta when describing the Prophet Zarathushtra as He 'who first

turned (eradicated) the Chakhras of the Daevas and (the wicked) men resembling (influenced by) the Daevas.’⁵

The progression of how Angra Mainyu corrupted each of the 16 Chakhras, what kind of corruption he placed in them and, through them, in the entire mankind, is detailed in the first Frakart of the Vendidad. That the names of some of these ‘cities’ corresponds to the name of some real cities only indicates the general area in which those Chakhras were situated. The Vendidad describes each of these cities in two technical stages: *pourvim* – the first, undefiled, pure state; and *bitim* – the second corrupted, impure state.

The central theme of the Vendidad is therefore made clear in the very first chapter: the Vendidad is the message of Zarathushtra to mankind containing within itself the rules, which if properly implemented, can convert these Chakhras, and therefore the Earth, from the *bitim* – impure and defiled state to the pristine, pure, undefiled state – *pourvim* which existed before the entry of Angra Mainyu onto the Earth.

Section 2: Yima & the Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle

Frakart II

After having set the underlying theme of the Vendidad, the scripture now proceeds to describe what will ultimately happen at the end of the Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle of 81,000 years. As the levels of evil keep on increasing through the cycle, man keeps on tumbling further down. Finally when it seems that the Earth will be completely destroyed by the designs of Angra Mainyu, the final saviour Saoshyant or Astvat-Ereta appears. He then selects a pair each of the good creations and takes them into a specially designed and secluded place, called a *Vara*⁶ – an enclosure. Then the waters start rising and the entire Earth is submerged by the Global Deluge, getting a wash to rinse of the accumulated sins of the past Zravane Daregho Khadata. Then after a 25,000 year hiatus, the waters shall recede and the descendants of the chosen ones collected by Astvat-Ereta will descend on the earth and start life afresh, beginning the new Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle.

At the centre stage of these apparently never ending cycles stand two Divine Entities, two great Spiritual Powers who are charged with recreating the Earth after each Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle and stemming the rise of evil in each cycle. These two great powers are:

- *Yima*⁷, and
- *Zarathushtra*

Yima is the Divine Entity that is charged with furthering the work of the Ahuna Vairya plan on the physical Earth. As such, Yima is an energy force which works with the Augmented Nature in various ways on this Earth. This Divine Force is also bestowed upon certain men during their lifetime. The greatest of such possessors of the Yima authority was the Peshdadian King *Jamshyd*, known in the Avesta as *Yima Vivangha*⁸. As one of the most important forerunners of the Prophet Zarathushtra, it was Yima Vivangha's divine mission to construct the *Vara*, the sacred enclosure which would be used by the future son of Zarathushtra, Astvat-Ereta, at the end of the current Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle.

The Peshdadian King Jamshyd was therefore instrumental in constructing the special Vara, using the Divine Force of Yima, from whom his Avesta name is derived. In this mission, Yima Vivangha adopted diverse tactics, using different forces from within the Augmented Nature to further his mission. This is revealed in the Avesta through the usage of three separate terminal appellations to his name. Accordingly Yima is named at different place as either:

- *Yima Vivangh* – *ana*⁹
- *Yima Vivangh* – *vat*¹⁰
- *Yima Vivangh* – *usha*¹¹

When the Yima power works with Spenta Mainyu as well as Angra Mainyu in a limited way, that situation is described using the terminal appellation *ana*.

When the Yima power works solely with Spenta Mainyu, the situation is described using the terminal appellation *vat*.

When the Yima power works solely with Angra Mainyu in a limited way, the situation is described using the terminal appellation *usha*.

Although different humans were bestowed with differing levels of the Yima power, King Jamshyd was the only human to have all three levels of the Yima power, which manifested themselves at different points in his life. Hence his apparent fall from grace, in popular tradition.

The second Frakart of the Vendidad thus describes in detail the work of the Yima power vested in King Jamshyd which resulted in the creation of the sacred Vara for the future use of the last saviour at the end of the Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle. In essence, King Jamshyd was working towards the plan of the Ahuna Vairya – to convert the corrupted, defiled *bitim* world into the pristine pure *pourvim* world. To this end, he created within the *bitim* world, a small undefiled *pourvim* world – which is known as the Vara of King Jamshyd. However, the onslaught of Angra Mainyu was too severe for even this great forerunner of Zarathushtra to contend with. That power could only be put into proper control by the establishment of the Zoroastrian faith by Prophet Zarathushtra. This is described allegorically in the second Frakart as Jamshyd refusing the Prophet position offered to him by Ahura Mazda.

Thus the first two chapters of the Vendidad lay the background to understanding the next sections to follow, by describing the process of the entry of Angra Mainyu onto the earth and his defiling the same; and then by describing the great power of Yima manifested in King Jamshyd which resulted in the creation of the sacred Vara of Jamshyd which will be used nearly 77,000 years later by Saoshyant at the end of the Zravane Daregho Khadata cycle. This backdrop adequately prepares us for the next and main section of the Vendidad.

Section 3: The tools of the Vi-Daeva-Data

Frakarts III to XVIII: General Introduction

The third and main section of the Vendidad deals with the actual tools that Prophet Zarathushtra gave to man to withstand the onslaught of Angra Mainyu on the Earth, and to cleanse the Primeval Evil that resides in his Urvan. It has been generally thought that the contents of these Frakarts are of a collection of unrelated issues of a hygienic and sanitary nature. However, when viewed against the backdrop given above, a singular chain of consistency weaves right through the Frakarts, presenting

us with a remarkable understanding of the working of the Augmented Nature and also the important status of man in attaining the final goal of Universal Salvation, known in the Avesta as *Frashokereti*. Each Frakart of this section deals with the various constituents of the Earth, their main adversaries and the methodology to be implemented for removing the Primeval Ego in that constituent. We may summarize the contents as under:

Table 3: Vi-Daeva-Data tools for the different components of the Earth

Frakart	Constituent	Issues dealt with
III	The Environment	Cleansing the Chakhras
IV	Man	His ethical responsibilities
V	Man	Introduction to pollutants
VI	Man	The primary pollutant – Nasu
VII	Man	The secondary pollutants
VIII	Man	Cleansing the pollutants – normal process
IX	Man	Cleansing the pollutants – Special process
X	Man	Maanthric solutions for the pollutants
XI	Man	Divine blessings to fight pollutants
XII	Man	Help of the deceased man to the living
XIII	Animals	Role of the Svan dog
XIV	Animals	Role of the Udra dog
XV	Man & Animals	Their symbiotic relationship
XVI	Man	Airborne pollutant threats
XVII	Man	Hikhra pollutants & their remedies
XVIII	Man	Druj pollutants & their remedies

Frakart III: Cleansing the land and the environment

The main section of the Vendidad, dealing with the tools to convert the Earth from the bitim state to the pourvim state, starts with Frakart 3 detailing the tools given by Prophet Zarathushtra to spiritually cleanse the Earth and its environment. Before man can commence cleansing himself, it is necessary to cleanse his environment. Thus Frakart 3 deals with these issues.

The Frakart starts with the listing of 5 instances when the Earth is made happy¹². These are enumerated in the table below.

Instances when the Earth is made happy

No.	Instance
1	A consecrated place where prayers are recited
2	House of the Advanced Holy man with his extended family
3	Good agriculture is practiced
4	Good Cattle rearing is followed
5	Good cattle enrich the ground with natural fertilizer

It is easy to take a simplistic view of the contents presented above and link them to the ‘pastoral age’ of the time of Zarathushtra. However, after viewing the evolution of Angra Mainyu and the entire creation, we can appreciate these truths in a better light. In response to Zarathushtra’s question regarding what makes the Earth happy, Ahura Mazda replies that the earth is happiest when the faithful step forward, with the ritual implements in their hand, chanting the prayers. The land referred to here is the consecrated land where the inner liturgical ceremonies are performed. The lands where the Fire-temples of the faith are established are, in fact, *pourvim* areas within the otherwise polluted *bitim* areas of the Earth. It is for the same reason that entry to these places is strictly regulated even for Zoroastrians themselves, and restricted for non-Zoroastrians. On such consecrated lands, the priests perform the kinetics of the faith, and maintain the *pourvim* nature of the area, thereby accumulated the blessings of the Augmented Nature, which are then distributed to the faithful who come to worship there. Hence such a land is the happiest, that is, the closest man can get to experiencing the *pourvim* nature in an otherwise *bitim* world.

The second instance in which the Earth is made happy is when the Advanced Soul – a holy man of the *Nar Asha* class makes his dwelling. These souls practice wholesome family life, living in peace and symbiotic harmony with the nature around them. Their extended family includes cattle – the foremost living emblem of self-sacrifice for the happiness of others. They cause an increase of goodness and happiness which is radiated to other members of the community.

The third instance causing happiness to the Earth is when wholesome agriculture is followed. Again this is not to be taken in a simplistic and literal manner. The agriculture referred to here is not only of the physical kind. It also refers to the spiritual agriculture that each farmer (human) must follow, ploughing the barren soil (of his physical body), removing from it the hard stones (passions and ego), planting in it the good seed (the dictates of the *Daena/Dharma/religion*), watering the seed (with the fertilizer of faith, devotion and worship) and finally reaping the rich harvest (of the removal of the Primeval Ego from his soul, leading to his individual salvation). At the physical level, this injunction reminds us of the need for conserving the physical assets of the Earth, living in a natural and organic way, without exploiting or degrading any of nature’s resources.

The fourth instance is when good cattle rearing is followed. Again going beyond the physical meaning, this injunction reminds the faithful for the need of increasing within their minds and their soul, the *Gava* element. This is the element of self-sacrifice, of giving for others that is part of the human soul. The *Gava* element is always in danger of being overshadowed by the *Dravao* element of selfishness and stealing from others. When man shall practice the teachings of the *Vi-Daeva-Data*, his *Gava* element shall increase, suppressing the *Dravao* element, causing man to walk the path of righteousness, and hence lead him to *Frashokereti*.

Finally, the last instance of the Earth's happiness is when the cattle enrich the ground with their organic waste. Beyond physical similarity, this injunction leads us to understand that the increase of goodness in man shall bring about an enriching by-product in that the whole Earth will stand to gain by his better behaviour. The progress of man and the Earth are closely inter-linked since each has been created for the other. Hence when man advances, the Earth advances too.

After detailing the happiness causing instances the *Vendidad* moves on to describe the five instances when the Earth is made unhappy, which are enumerated below.

Instances when the Earth is made unhappy

No.	Instance
1	When man consorts with the Daevas
2	Where burial take place
3	Closed tombs are created
4	Evil houses stand
5	Wife and children of the faithful are led astray

The second part of the third *Frakart* deals with instances where the Earth is made unhappy¹³. The first instance is when man consorts with *Angra Mainyu* and his associates, allowing the evil ones access to the good areas of the Earth. Since *Zarathushtra* has put barricades against his entry, *Angra Mainyu* influences the minds of men and tries to enter the Earth through the following of his evil tendencies.

The second instance is when corpses of men and dogs are buried in the ground, giving rise to very high levels of pollution. The situation is also worsened when tombs are made above the ground, in such a way that the purifying rays of the Sun cannot enter

the earth on which the tomb is created, giving rise to the third instance of unhappiness. The fourth instance is when burrows of the evil Angra Mainyu are dug. This is not to be understood literally, but contains a grave injunction. The burrows of Angra Mainyu refer to the malevolent effects of institutions that teach man the craft of Angra Mainyu. Hence any activity on this Earth, which would obstruct the objective of the Ahuna Vairya plan to cleanse the primeval evil, gives rise to unhappiness in the Earth. Finally the last instance in which the Earth is rendered unhappy is when the wife and children of a holy man are led astray. This may appear to be a strange instance, but a closer scrutiny reveals a different meaning. We have seen above that the process of fragmentation of the original soul with the Primeval Ego resulted in man's soul having a similar female counterpart and lower fragments in the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdom. The wife and children referred to here are the lost fragments of an individual's soul. When man follows the teachings of the Vendidad, the fragments of his soul in the other kingdoms come closer to him, ultimately merging in him. But when man goes against the Vendidad, he causes his fragments to drift even further away from him. Hence his progress is delayed. This delay causes anguish to the Earth.

The next part of the third Frakart¹⁴ deals with the methodology to convert the unhappy, polluted Earth to the happy, pure state; as well as warnings to those who stand in the way of such conversion. The final part of the third Frakart deals with issues relating to pollution caused by burial and lists the exceptional circumstances when the body *has* to be buried and what safeguards one must take.

Thus the third Frakart of the Vendidad show us the tools given by Prophet Zarathushtra to start the process of the Ultimate Salvation by first cleansing the Earth and the environment in which man lives.

Punishment in the Vendidad

Before we go to the next Frakart, it is necessary to explain at this point one of the most misunderstood injunctions of the Vendidad, which relates to the methods of punishments stipulated in it. According to the Vendidad, there are two main types of sins: those for which repentance is possible through the exercise of redemptory punishment; and those sins which are so severe that it is not possible for man to earn

his redemption from them within this life. For those sins where repentance is possible through the exercise of redemptory punishment, the Vendidad stipulates three types of punishment. This is explained in the table provided below.

Classification of sins and their redemptory punishment

Sins		
Sins for which repentance can be earned within this life <i>Avesta: aaperetha, aapereti</i> ①		Sins for which repentance cannot be earned within this life <i>Avesta: an-aaperetha</i>
Redemptory process for ① through		
<i>Xwastak</i> Monetary compensation	<i>Aspahe-ashtraya</i> The Horse whip & <i>Sraosho-caranaya</i> The Obedience Whip	<i>Yaozdaathri</i> Purifying processes

Thus the Vendidad mentions three types of redemptory punishment:

1. Through monetary contribution towards public works.

This is not to be understood as ‘buying’ redemption. This was an important spiritual exercise wherein a certain portion of the wealth accumulated by the sinner was confiscated, and a parole like sentence awarded during which time the accused had to perform social tasks. The money collected was used for public works like building dams, bridges, irrigation projects or roads etc.

2. Through the Horse-whip and the Obedience Whip: *Aspahe-ashtraya* and *Sraosho-caranaya*.

These have been misunderstood to mean a corporal type of punishment where the accused was whipped with a horse-whip like instrument for a number of times depending on the severity of his crime. However, it is not so. Even the grammatical composition of these Avesta words and their Pahlavi translations reveal that there is more to this than corporal punishment. Moreover, there are no historical references to such punishments ever having being practised in Iran.

The bodily composition of man is such that he is naturally inclined towards evil. To counteract this, the Augmented Nature has put in him *Daena*, the voice of conscience. When man follows the path of righteousness, his *Daena*

becomes more and more insistent whenever he thinks of doing something wrong. However, when man follows his five basic senses and commits sin (in defiance of the five spiritual sense which remind him not to do so), he sets up a burden for himself, which he will need to bear sooner or later, based on the laws of action and reaction.

Different men commit different levels of sin. Similarly, there are different degrees of potentialities in which each man can commit sin. These differing degrees of potentialities are quantified in multiples of 500 and 1000 in the Vendidad. When a man commits a sin, the latent potentiality within him of committing further sin gets increased in multiples of 500 and 1000. In other words, we may say that man's latent potentiality to obey the laws of the Augmented Nature reduce by multiples of 500 and 1000. The supreme embodiment of obedience to the Augmented Nature on this Earth is personified in the form of the Yazata Sraosha¹⁵. Hence when man commits sin, he reduces the level of Sraosha potentiality within him. This situation cannot be allowed, and hence various kinetics are prescribed, which if followed, will re-increase the level of Sraosha potentiality within the man and decrease his Dravao potentialities. The performance of such kinetics is allegorically explained in the Vendidad as the use of the Sraosho-caranaya whip.

The progress of man can be quantified in several ways. In the Avesta, as in other scriptures, animals are often used in metaphoric sense to denote different levels of spiritual advancement. The Horse (Avesta *aspa*) is one such unit used in the Avesta to denote the speed and the quantum of spiritual advancement of an individual, coupled with numerous prepositions¹⁶. As an individual follows the precepts of the religion, he adds speed to his progress and hastens his Ultimate Frashokereti. In the same way, when man commits sin, he loses the accumulated speed and decelerates his progress to salvation. This cannot be allowed and hence various kinetics are prescribed in the Avesta to help man recover his 'lost speed'. These kinetics are metaphorically referred to as using the Aspahe-ashtaya – the horse whip.

Hence we see that the simplistic terms used in the Vendidad actually refer to spiritual kinetics of the highest nature, which are the real tools given by Zarathushtra to man to help him remove the Primeval evil from his soul and hasten his journey back to Ahura Mazda.

3. *Through Purifying Processes: Yaozdaathri*

The last type of redemptory punishment is the practice of the various purifying ceremonies in the Vendidad¹⁷. Once again, these have to be viewed in the correct spiritual context and not as fumigation or purification systems. We shall speak more of them at a later stage.

Frakart IV: The Ethical Responsibilities of man

After having given the rules for cleansing the Earth of its pollution, so as to convert the *bitim* existence into the *pourvim* state in Frakart III, the next Frakart starts with dealing with the most important constituent on earth – man. The progress of man is linked to his dealings with other men. Honesty and fairness in these dealings is the cornerstone of his life. This is so because after the process of fragmentation that happened in the upper realms, the method of cleansing the Primeval Ego in the Urvan on the Earth is through the process of give and take with other humans and the lower kingdoms. Hence the rules which govern such dealings need to be understood properly by man so that he may follow them scrupulously and thereby attain his salvation.

The third Frakart, therefore, deals with these matters. The Frakart opens with the statement that one who is not ethical in his dealings with other men, one who does not give respect to one who deserves it is akin to a robber¹⁸. Just as a young person gives respect to an elder, a disciple to his master, nobles to the king, the king to his subjects – in the same way it is incumbent on man to give respect to his seniors – the Augmented Nature around him; listen to the dictates of his religion and follow the teachings of the Prophet. Just as we are obliged to repay a loan we may have taken from another, it is obligatory for us to repay the great loan given by the Creator to us in the form of this life, and work quickly towards our Frashokereti. If we do not do this, we break the laws of nature and are classified as thieves. This is the pivotal

teaching which governs all the dealings of man: Respect, ethical behaviour, and the pursuit of the ultimate goal of Frashokereti.

With a view to enlarging this fundamental idea, the Frakart now goes on to describe the different types of unwritten contracts¹⁹. In his dealings with others, man often gives his word to do or to abstain from doing something. The giving of his word is known in the Avesta as *mithra* – the contract. Mithra also means truth. Hence the implication is clear – truth should be the cornerstone of all contracts. The six different types of unwritten contracts are given below.

The six types of unwritten contracts

No.	Type	Avesta term
1	The Word	Vacahi
2	The Handshake	Zasta
3	The worth of a lamb	Pasu-mazo
4	The worth of cattle	Staoro-mazo
5	The worth of a brave man	Viro-mazo
6	The worth of a city	Dainghu-mazo

After this background, the Frakart now describes how the dealings of man should be based on ethical fundamentals²⁰. It lays out the limits of each contract, and describes the grievous spiritual damage that accrues to an individual should he break his ethical promises. This is allegorically described through the rigorous punishments of the Aspahe-ashtraya and the Sraosho-caranaya described earlier.

The next section of the fourth Frakart deals with issues relating to conflicts arising out of the breaking of the unwritten contracts²¹. When man breaks his promise given to another, a conflict arises. This conflict can take various forms, including the wronged person taking up illegal means to extract his dues. This is not to be related merely on a physical or commercial angle. As we have seen above, it is through the mutual give and take between men and the lower kingdoms that the last remaining part of the Primeval Ego can be converted to good. When one man refuses to give to another what is his rightful due, not only is it a violation of mercantile law, it also creates an anomaly in nature. A spiritual setback is caused to both the parties; their rightful exchange is delayed, and their spiritual advancement is halted, even backtracked.

Thus this section of the Frakart deals with the spiritual issues arising out of such violations, and lays down the punishments for the same.

The next paragraph of the Frakart contains the eternal ring of optimism, for it states that through these punishments, man will ultimately learn the importance of ethical dealing. A time, however distant, will come when man will resolve his issues with other men and live as one of the universal brotherhood²². When such a time comes, the Augmented Nature will provide for the basic needs of such matured and evolved persons²³.

The next three paragraphs of the Frakart deal with the different rules of atonement and the superior spiritual growth of men who offer such atonement²⁴; and the other rules of conduct which man must observe in his daily life. The importance of family life is extolled here, because it is only by passing through the oven of marital life that the baser instincts of man become converted to goodness²⁵. The significance of keeping faith in God, even in adverse conditions is mentioned here²⁶.

The last section of the fourth Frakart deals with issues relating to the punishments and atonements of those who do not follow the above tenets, and hence cause grievous spiritual harm to themselves²⁷.

It can be seen from the above that just as the third Frakart dealt with returning the earth from its present bitim state to the pristine state, the fourth Frakart deals with the ways in which man can create a living paradise on this earth through his ethical and moral dealings with other men and the lower kingdoms.

¹ Yasht 13.110, 117, 128, 129; Yasht 19.92, 95

² Yasht 13.145; Vendidad XIX.5; Yasht 19.89; Yasht 24.30; Yasna 59.28; Yasna 26.10

³ This entire section is taken from 'Essential Origins of Zoroastrianism', by Dr. F. S. Chiniwalla, page 180.

⁴ From Avesta *frakereiti* 'chapters, section'.

⁵ Yasht 13.89

⁶ Vendidad II.25, 30,31,33,38

⁷ Often compared with the Vedic Yama

⁸ Often compared with Vedic Vivasvat

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- ⁹ Vendidād II.3, 6, 9, 13, 17, 22; Yasht 13.130
- ¹⁰ Yasna 9.4, 5;
- ¹¹ Yasht 19.35; Yasna 32.8
- ¹² Frakart III. 1-6
- ¹³ Frakart III. 7-11
- ¹⁴ Frakart III.12-35
- ¹⁵ From Avesta root *sru* ‘to hear’ (the word of God)
- ¹⁶ Some examples: Jāmaspa, Drvāspa, Tūmaspa, Keresāspa, Haecat-aspa, Pourushaspa, Aurvataspa, Hitāspa, Renjat-aspa, etc.
- ¹⁷ Called *Nahn*, ‘bath’ in traditional terms
- ¹⁸ Frakart IV.1
- ¹⁹ Frakart IV.2
- ²⁰ Frakart IV. 3-16
- ²¹ Frakart IV. 17-42
- ²² Frakart IV. 43
- ²³ Frakart IV. 44
- ²⁴ Frakart IV. 45-46
- ²⁵ Frakart IV. 47
- ²⁶ Frakart IV. 49
- ²⁷ Frakart IV. 50-55