



## **MORAL BASIS OF ZARATUSHTRA TEACHING**

«Maybe someone asks -Is it easy to go for those who bring Truth?

Of course, it is difficult to walk for everyone who brings, and his fiery path can never be facilitated».

(Agni Yoga, §167)

**Rasulova Tatyana Salikhovna**

Candidate of philosophical science,

Associated professor, chief of the "Social sciences" department Uzbekistan State Conservatory  
Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

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| <b>Published:</b> September 30 <sup>th</sup> 2020 | This article is devoted to the morality concept consideration in Zaratushtra teachings. It is known that the Prophet became a reformer of the religious doctrine that was confessed by his fellow tribesmen. It was Zaratushtra who introduced the good God Ahura Mazda, who should be worshiped, and his opponent, his twin brother Angra Mainyu, who should be avoided. Despite the fact that the Prophet lived thousands years ago, his teaching morality continues to amaze and delight with its humanity and striving for the man and mankind moral improvement. Therefore, the famous triad of the Prophet Zaratushtra about <i>a good thought, a good word and a good deed</i> remains not only in demand today, but also in many ways more relevant because of the difficult situation that all modern humanity is experiencing. |

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Zaratushtra's teachings moral foundations are not only a very interesting, but also his activity actual aspect, since moral and ethical norms are the basis of any human society, if it considers itself to be such. An indicator of relevance is that in the 21st century, military and civil confrontations, both between countries and within them, have not gone into the historical past. Terrorism and religious extremism have acquired an international character, and the misanthropic ideology is even becoming popular among a certain part of the youth certain modern states. Against this background, some artists' public statements who preach immorality as person's true freedom from any moral foundations and obligations are particular concern.

This statement absurdity is obvious to any sane person who understands that moral and ethical standards existed in any *proper human society*. They could change in different historical periods of human existence. This is due to the fact that people tend to interpret moral norms and philosophical and religious ideas based on their own, often selfish and momentary interests and goals. But these moral standards have always been, since they were brought to our planet by the Great Teachers of humanity for the development and advancement of human's immortal spirit by the steps of evolution and progress. For, a society, devoid moral foundation inevitably slides down to animal, or rather, bestial existence level. And, unfortunately, the human society development history has similar examples.

At the same time, the culture dehumanization, an open attack on the human society moral foundations, the traditional universal human values devaluation, which were allegedly invented by people themselves to enslave the human spirit, cause concern among progressive figures in science and art. That is why the upbringing of young people is becoming not only important, but the archive is an important task of every state. And turning to their historical roots, to their origins, which served as the fundamental basis for the formation of modern society and its culture, can help in solving this urgent problem.

Prophet Zaratushtra was one of those Great Individuals who came to Earth from time immemorial to rekindle the fire of Divine Love in people. For, the fire began to slowly fade in human hearts under the priests dogmatized religious ideas influence, which in their rituals performed the letter, and not the Divine Law Spirit.

It is not by chance that Living Ethics says in this connection: "*The same unchanging Truth is given to humanity in various garments. Likewise, it has been perverted by restless crowds for less than a century*". [1, §178] Therefore, again and again there is an urgent need for the arrival of one or another mankind Teacher in order to cleanse the Truth from age-old layers, and to establish morality in society as the most important stage for man and human society spiritual development.

We know little about Zaratushtra's life details, as well as about those specific events that shaped his ideas about the structure of the world and the Divine Law governing the Universe. One can only assume that the raids of the nomads on peaceful pastoralists, accompanied by cruelty, lawlessness, and often impunity, contributed to the fact that Zaratushtra began to look for answers to these burning questions. It was the cruelty of that barbaric era that "made" Zaratushtra think about the issues of good and evil, justice and injustice, moral or immoral actions of a person, committed by him during his life. In the mind of the Prophet, the questions of intravital or posthumous retribution for moral or immoral acts of an individual probably also arose.

In other words, Zaratushtra tried to understand where evil comes from on our planet, and why there is so much cruelty and immorality in the world created by God? What leads a person to inhuman treatment of his own kind and animals? What awaits him in the posthumous existence, and is there anything waiting for him there at all? What is the Divine Truth, what is it and how is it manifested on Earth?

These unasked, but certainly arising questions led Zaratushtra to the search for Truth, as well as the realization of the need for a radical reform of the religious concept. For, according to the Prophet the religion that was professed by his fellow tribesmen, was clearly outdated, no longer meeting the needs of the modern era.

It is no accident that Zaratushtra, in the Gathas he created, expressed the idea of seeking Truth as follows:

«Praise conceived a soul  
to give with a Good Thought,  
Deed rewards  
Ahura Mazda knows, –  
As long as I can

I'm looking for Truth». [2, p.40, Yasna 28.4]

Thus, the real life of ordinary people, with its kindness and cruelty, righteousness and unrighteousness, wisdom and stupidity, morality and depravity, contributed to the tireless, purposeful search for the Divine Truth. In the process of this search, Zaratushtra saw in his vision Ahura-Mazda himself and his eternal opponent and antagonist, Angra Mainyu, who coexisted with him. Thanks to this vision, Zarathushtra understood where so much evil in the world came from. For, the original existence of two spirits, like twin brothers - Ahura Mazda (the Wise God) and Angra Mainyu (an evil, ignorant spirit, who, due to his ignorance, left the Path of Truth and Righteousness), led humanity to the need for a moral choice between them. This moral choice of a person between Good and evil, a righteous life and an unrighteous one, between the observance of moral standards and immorality continues to this day.

The Prophet Zaratushtra himself says about this:

«Two spirits from the beginning -  
like twins in phenomenon  
Both in thought and in word  
and in deed - good and evil.

And only the blessed one is right  
of two, not a villain». [2, p.52, Yasna 30.3]

Moreover, the moral choice between good and evil, i.e. between the worship of Ahura Mazda and the worship of Angra Mainyu, the choice that a person must make every moment of his existence is not so easy or insignificant for him. This is due to the fact that a person, living in the manifested material world, as a rule, does not feel his original connection with all of Being, the entire Universe as a whole. That is why, in solving certain problems, people often proceed from selfish considerations of momentary profit, or self-interest, without understanding and without foreseeing the severe consequences of their wrong or immoral choice, which always leads to unrighteous actions. For, the unrighteous, immoral actions of a person not only harm the people around him, animals and nature, but also him, since they are always punished, if not by human, then by Divine judgment.

Moreover, immorality, vice, oblivion of the Cosmic Laws, the main of which is Love for All That Is, turns for a person into a spiritual degradation of personality. And spiritual degradation is accompanied by involutionary processes of his spirit, which is more terrible than the earthly, human judgment. It is no coincidence that an ancient Indian tale says that by doing evil to another, you are doing evil to yourself, and by doing good to another, you are doing good to yourself. This is due to the fact that everything in the world is interconnected, like a mycelium (mushroom spawn), which binds all the mushrooms in the clearing into a single, integral organism.

However, despite the fact that all the Great Teachers of humanity preached this obvious truth, humanity stubbornly continues not to understand and recognize it. Thus, mankind adds up grave consequences not only for itself personally, but for the whole world as a whole, precisely because everything on Earth and in the Universe is interconnected. Living Ethics says: «*The freedom that so attracts a person is an illusion. In Immensity there is freedom of choice, and in this is all beauty. Freedom of choice affirms a person. And a man assigns for himself the world of consequences to himself. This is how a life of addiction is created*». [3, §193]

In other words, by his actions, a person creates for himself his own world of consequences, when good deeds impel his spirit towards true freedom and beauty. While immoral and evil deeds enslave him completely, leading to complete dependence on his base desires and selfish aspirations. But in order to come to an understanding of the importance of moral principles, one needs to have a sufficiently developed spiritual organization that allows a person

to act in a highly moral manner, despite the obviousness. In other words, one often has to act to the detriment of oneself personally, one's material prosperity, or social position, but for the sake of the General Good, which, ultimately, turns out to be good for the individual himself.

Reforming the religion of his fellow tribesmen, Zaratushtra formulated concepts of the existence of the six Amesha-Spenta, i.e. Immortal Saints who play a huge role in the Teachings of the Prophet. For they contain spiritual and moral qualities that are the attributes of Ahura Mazda himself. Even the names of the six Immortal Saints indicate that morality and ethical standards were central to the religious teachings of the Prophet.

So, among the mentioned Immortal Saints, *Vohu-Manah* was in the first place, i.e. Good Thought, the closest companion of which is *Asha-Vakhishta* - the Best Righteousness. They were followed by *Spenta-Armaiti* - Holy Piety and *Hshatra-Varya* - Desired Authority [4]. And, finally, the last pair is *Haurvatat* - Integrity, and Ameretat, i.e. Immortality.

The religious and ethical teaching of Zaratushtra was revolutionary for his era. The Prophet spoke for the first time that the fact of a person's birth in a priestly environment, to which Zaratushtra himself belonged, as well as the formal performance of religious rituals and abundant sacrifices are not a panacea for a possible posthumous punishment for an unjustly lived life. Moreover, Zaratushtra did not deny the possibility of salvation not only to men from lower social strata, but also to women! He preached that every soul after its physical death will be judged for all its deeds, when all moral actions of a person will be placed on one side of the scales, and all his immoral deeds will be placed on the other.

It is quite natural that this Zaratushtra's idea was received extremely negatively by the priests. They believed that only a caste of priests could claim a Paradisiacal Abode, while all other people would vegetate and languish not at all in Elysian Fields, experiencing terrible torment and suffering. Meanwhile, the Prophet Zaratushtra argued that a gloomy, joyless existence in a place of torment and suffering, which is "supervised" by the spirit of evil - Angra Mainyu, awaits only the person who commits evil deeds, thereby violating the Divine Law of Ahura Mazda.

Moreover, Zaratushtra formulated a moral law that had to be strictly observed and fulfilled by all his supporters, adherents and followers - namely, *a good thought, a good word and a good deed*. This triune moral and ethical code, proclaimed by the Prophet Zaratushtra, was not so much an abstract religious and philosophical as a moral and practical one. For, he asserted both doing good deeds necessity and the rigor in the use of good words and, most importantly, good thoughts.

This postulate importance can hardly be overestimated. It is no accident that the Alexandrian philosophers, who understood the full significance and priority of thought, said: "Do not blame the World, for it was created by a great thought." Therefore, it is not God who is guilty that the world is as it is, but the thinking of people, which can turn the kindest creature into an evil animal, and vice versa!

The Living Ethics in this connection says: "Each spirit creates its own world, and from the quality of consciousness depends on the beauty or ugliness of the created world." [5, §719] One can only admire that the Great Prophet and Teacher Zaratushtra, who lived thousands of years ago, not only knew this Divine Truth, but throughout his arduous life he tirelessly promoted it among ordinary people - his contemporaries!

Even more amazing is the fact that for thousands of years after the departure of Zaratushtra, the ideas he voiced have not lost their relevance. They even became more understandable and in demand right now, when the world is shaken by cataclysms and a pandemic. Therefore, humanity will have to make its vital choice: to profess a good thought, a good word and a good deed, or to follow the lead of its most base, animal instincts.

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2. The Ghats of Zarathushtra. /Translation from Avestan, introductory articles, comments and applications by I.M. Steblin-Kamensky. - SPb.: Petersburg Oriental Studies, 2009.
3. Teaching of Living Ethics. Immensity /Part I. - M.: International Center of the Roerichs, Master-Bank, 2009. (Highlighted by us. - T.R.)
4. Under the Desired Authority, the translators of the Avesta often understand the royal (supreme) authority, i.e. the authority of Kavi Vishtaspa, who was one of the first to accept the Teachings of Zarathushtra. Therefore, some researchers believe that Zarathushtra, in gratitude to his patron and follower, singled out the Desired Authority as an attribute of Ahura Mazda, meaning the authority of the Kavi, i.e. king. However, it seems to me, that understanding of Authority by Zarathushtra, is of a deeper and more spiritual nature, like Authority over oneself, as the need to observe or establish complete control over one's thought, words and deeds. If we talk about the actual royal authority, then it is given to a person not to satisfy personal ambitions, profit motive and greed, but to help people, which is possible when the ruler himself becomes a moral standard for his nationals.
5. Teaching of Living Ethics. Immensity /Part II. - M.: International Center of the Roerichs, Master-Bank, 2010. (Highlighted by us. - T.R.)