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Արամազդ

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Aramazd

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Aramazd was the chief and creator god in pre-Christian Armenian mythology, cognate with Ahura Mazda.^[1]^[2]^[3] Aramazd was regarded as a generous god of fertility, rain, and abundance, as well as the father of the other gods, including Anahit, Mihr, and Nane.^[3]^[1] Like Ahura Mazda, Aramazd was seen as the father of the other gods, rarely with a wife, though sometimes husband to Anahit or Spandaramet.^[3]

Identification with other deities

Aramazd was readily identified with Zeus through *interpretatio graeca*, the two often sharing specific titles regarding greatness, bravery, or strength. There was some disagreement in scholarship as to the relationship between Aramazd, Amanor, and Vanatur, but the evidence most strongly indicates that Vanatur ("Lord of the Van") was a title for the chief deity (be it Իլի or Ahura Mazda/Aramazd, though recorded uses are only as a title for Aramazd), and that Amanor was both a common noun referring the new year and a title for the deity whose celebration was held on the new year (Vanatur, whether Իլի or Aramazd).^[3]

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- "Armenia (Vannic)" by A.H. Sayce, p.793-4; "Armenia (Zoroastrian)", by M(ardiros). H. Ananikian, p.794-802; in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, vol. 1 (<https://archive.org/details/encyclopaediaofr01hastuoft>), 1908

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Categories: Fertility gods | Creator gods | Armenian gods | European mythology stubs

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Ahura Mazda

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ahura Mazda (/əˈhʊrəˌmæzdə/^[1]), (also known as **Ohrmazd**, **Ahuramazda**, **Hourmazd**, **Hormazd**, and **Hurmuz**, *Lord* or simply as *spirit*) is the Avestan name for a higher divine spirit of the old Iranian religion (predating Islam) who was proclaimed as the uncreated spirit by Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism. Ahura Mazda is described as the highest spirit of worship in Zoroastrianism, along with being the first and most frequently invoked spirit in the *Yasna*. The literal meaning of the word *Ahura* is *light* and *Mazda* is *wisdom*. Zoroastrianism revolves around three basic tenets - Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

Ahura Mazda first appeared in the Achaemenid period (c. 550 – 330 BCE) under Darius I's Behistun Inscription. Until Artaxerxes II (405–04 to 359–58 BCE), Ahura Mazda was worshiped and invoked alone. With Artaxerxes II, Ahura Mazda was invoked in a triad, with Mithra and Apam Napat. In the Achaemenid period, there are no representations of Ahura Mazda other than the custom for every emperor to have an empty chariot drawn by white horses, to invite Ahura Mazda to accompany the Persian army on battles. Images of Ahura Mazda began in the Parthian period, but were stopped and replaced with stone carved figures in the Sassanid period.

Contents

- 1 Nomenclature
- 2 Characteristics
- 3 Zoroaster's revelation
- 4 History
 - 4.1 Achaemenid Empire
 - 4.2 Parthian Empire
 - 4.3 Sassanid Empire
 - 4.4 Present-day Zoroastrianism
- 5 In other religions
- 6 101 Names
- 7 In popular culture
- 8 See also
- 9 Notes
- 10 References
- 11 Bibliography
- 12 Further reading

Nomenclature

"Mazda", or rather the Avestan stem-form *Mazdā-*, nominative *Mazdā*, reflects Proto-Iranian **Mazdāh* (*female*).

It is generally taken to be the proper name of the spirit, and like its Sanskrit cognate *medhā*, means "intelligence" or "wisdom". Both the Avestan and Sanskrit words reflect Proto-Indo-Iranian **mazdhā-*, from Proto-Indo-European **m̥sdʰeh₁*, literally meaning "placing (**dʰeh₁*) one's mind (**m̥s-*)", hence "wise".^[2]

The name was rendered as *Ahuramazda* (Old Persian) during the Achaemenid era, *Hormazd* during the Parthian era, and *Ohrmazd* was used during the Sassanian era.^[3]

The name may be attested on cuneiform tablets of Assyrian Assurbanipal, in the form *Assara Mazaš*, though this interpretation is very controversial.^[4]

Characteristics

Even though Ahura Mazda was a spirit in the Old Iranian religion, he had not yet been given the title of "uncreated spirit". This title was given by Zoroaster, who proclaimed Ahura Mazda as the uncreated spirit, wholly wise, benevolent and good, as well as the creator and upholder of Asha ("truth"). As Ahura Mazda is described as the creator and upholder of Asha, he is a supporter and guardian of justice, and the friend of the just man.

Zoroaster's revelation

At the age of 30, Zoroaster received a revelation. While Zoroaster was fetching water from dawn for a sacred ritual, he saw the shining figure of the yazata, Vohu Manah, who led Zoroaster to the presence of Ahura Mazda, where he was taught the cardinal principles of the Good Religion. As a result of this vision, Zoroaster felt that he was chosen to spread and preach the religion.^[5] He stated that this source of all goodness was the only Ahura worthy of the highest worship. He further stated that Ahura Mazda created spirits known as *yazatas* to aid him, who also merited devotion. Zoroaster proclaimed that all of the Iranian *daevas* were bad spirits and deserved no worship. These "bad" spirits were created by Angra Mainyu, the hostile and evil spirit. The existence of Angra Mainyu was the source of all sin and misery in the universe. Zoroaster claimed that Ahura Mazda was not an omnipotent God, but used the aid of humans in the cosmic struggle against Angra Mainyu. Nonetheless, Ahura Mazda is Angra Mainyu's superior, not his equal. Angra Mainyu and his *daevas* (spirits) which attempt to afflict humans away from the path of righteousness (*asha*) would eventually be destroyed.^[6]

History

Achaemenid Empire

Whether the Achaemenids were Zoroastrians is a matter of much debate. However, it is known that the Achaemenids were worshipers of Ahura Mazda.^[7] The representation and invocation of Ahura Mazda can be seen on royal inscriptions written by Achaemenid kings. The most notable of all the inscriptions is the Behistun Inscription written by Darius I which contain many references to Ahura Mazda. Beginning from Darius' reign until Artaxerxes II, Ahura Mazda is invoked alone. Under the reign of Artaxerxes II, royal inscriptions stopped the sole invocation of Ahura Mazda and began invoking a triad of spirits, Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and Anahita. An inscription written in Greek was found in a late Achaemenid temple at Persepolis which invoked Ahura Mazda and two other spirits, most likely Mithra and Anahita. On the Elamite Persepolis Fortification Tablet 377, Ahura Mazda is invoked along with Mithra and Voruna (Apam Napat, probably vedic Varuna, "water-god"). Artaxerxes III makes this invocation to the three spirits again in his reign.

The early Achaemind period contained no representation of Ahura Mazda. The winged symbol with a male figure who was formerly regarded by European scholars as Ahura Mazda has been shown to represent the royal *xvarənah*, the personification of royal power and glory. However, it was customary for every emperor from Cyrus until Darius III to have an empty chariot drawn by white horses as a place for Ahura Mazda to accompany the Persian army on battles. The use of images of Ahura Mazda began in the western satraps of the Achaemenid Empire in the late 5th century BCE. Under Artaxerxes II, the first literary reference as well as a statue of Ahura Mazda was built by a Persian governor of Lydia in 365 BCE.^[8]



The Behistun Inscription contains many references to Ahura Mazda.

Parthian Empire

It is known that the reverence for Ahura Mazda, as well as Anahita and Mithra continued with the same traditions during this period. The worship of Ahura Mazda with images is noticed, but it stopped with the beginning of the Sassanid period. Zoroastrian iconoclasm, which can be traced to the end of the Parthian period and the beginning of the Sassanid, eventually put an end to the use of all images of Ahura Mazda in worship. However, Ahura Mazda remained a dignified male figure, standing or on horseback which is found in Sassanian investiture.^[8]

Sassanid Empire

During the Sassanid Empire, a heretical^{[9][10][11]} form of Zoroastrianism, termed Zurvanism, emerged. It gained adherents throughout the Sassanid Empire, most notably the royal lineage of Sassanian emperors. Under the reign of Shapur I, Zurvanism spread and became a widespread cult. Zurvanism revokes Zoroaster's original message of Ahura Mazda as the uncreated spirit, and the "uncreated creator" of all, and reduces him to a created spirit, one of two twin sons of Zurvan, their father and the primary spirit. Zurvanism also makes Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu of equal strength and only contrasting spirits.

Other than Zurvanism, the Sassanian kings demonstrated their devotion to Ahura Mazda in other fashions. Five kings took the name Hormisd and Bahram II created the title of "Ohrmazd-mowbad" which was continued after the fall of the Sassanid Empire and through the Islamic times. All devotional acts in Zoroastrianism originating from the Sassanian period begin with homage to Ahura Mazda. The five *Gāhs* begin with the declaration in Middle Persian, that "Ohrmazd is Lord" and incorporate the Gathic verse "Whom, Mazda hast thou appointed my protector". Zoroastrian prayers are to be said in the presence of light, either in the form of fire or the sun. In the Iranian dialects of Yidgā and Munjī, the sun is still called "*ormozd*".^[8]

Present-day Zoroastrianism

In 1884, Martin Haug proposed a new interpretation of *Yasna* 30.3 that subsequently influenced Zoroastrian doctrine to a significant extent. According to Haug's interpretation, the "twin spirits" of 30.3 were Angra



Ahura Mazda (right, with high crown) presents Ardashir I (left) with the ring of kingship. (Naqsh-e Rostam, 3rd century CE)

Mainyu and Spenta Mainyu, the former being literally the "Destructive Spirit"^[n 1] and the latter being the 'Bounteous Spirit' (of Mazda). Further, in Haug's scheme Angra Mainyu was now not Ahura Mazda's binary opposite, but—like Spenta Mainyu—an emanation of Him. Haug also interpreted the concept of a free will of *Yasna* 45.9 as an accommodation to explain where Angra Mainyu came from since Ahura Mazda created only good. The free will made it possible for Angra Mainyu to *choose* to be evil. Although these latter conclusions were not substantiated by Zoroastrian tradition,^[2] at the time Haug's interpretation was gratefully accepted by the Parsis of Bombay since it provided a defense against Christian missionary rhetoric,^[n 2] particularly the attacks on the Zoroastrian idea of an uncreated Evil that was as uncreated as God was. Following Haug, the Bombay Parsis began to defend themselves in the English language press; the argument being that Angra Mainyu was not Mazda's binary opposite, but his subordinate, who—as in Zurvanism also—*chose* to be evil. Consequently, Haug's theories were disseminated as a Parsi interpretation, also in the West, where they appeared to be corroborating Haug. Reinforcing themselves, Haug's ideas came to be iterated so often that they are today almost universally accepted as doctrine.^{[8][12][n 3]}

In other religions

In Manichaeism, the name *Ohrmazd Bay* ("god Ahura Mazda") was used for the primal figure Nāšā Qadmāyā, the "original man" and emanation of the Father of Greatness (in Manicheism called Zurvan) through whom after he sacrificed himself to defend the world of light was consumed by the forces of darkness. Although Ormuzd is freed from the world of darkness his "sons", often called his garments or weapons, remain. His sons, later known as the World Soul after a series of events will for the most part escape from matter and return again to the world of light where they came from. Manicheans often identified many of Mani's cosmological figures with Zoroastrian ones. This may be in part because Mani was born in the greatly Zoroastrian Parthian Empire.

In Sogdian Buddhism, *Xwrmzšt'* (Sogdian was written without a consistent representation of vowels) was the name used in place of Ahura Mazda.^{[13][14]} Via contacts with Turkic peoples like the Uyghurs, this Sogdian name came to the Mongols, who still name this deity *Qormusta Tengri* (Also Qormusta or Qormusda) is now a popular enough deity to appear in many contexts that are not explicitly Buddhist.^[15]

The pre-Christian Armenians had Aramazd as an important deity in their pantheon of gods. He is thought to be a syncretic deity, a combination of the autochthonous Urartian figure Ara and the Iranian Ahura Mazda. In modern-day Armenia, Aramazd is a male first name.



Investiture of Sassanid emperor Shapur II (center) with Mithra (left) and Ahura Mazda (right) at Taq-e Bostan, Iran.



Investiture scene: Anahita on the left as the patron *yazata* of the Sassanian dynasty behind Emperor Khosrau Parviz with Ahura Mazda presenting the diadem of sovereignty on the right. Taq-e Bostan, Iran.

Some scholars (Kuiper. IJ I, 1957; Zimmer. Münchner Studien 1984:187–215) believe that Ahura Mazda originates from *vouruna-mitra, or Vedic demigod Varuna.^[16]

101 Names

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|---|---|--|--|
| 1. yazat ("Worthy of worship.") | 15. ham-ayâfah ("Comprehensible of all.") | 30. harvastum ("All in all.") | 43. raxôh ("Independent, carefree.") |
| 2. harvasp-tavân ("Omnipotent.") | 16. âdharô ("Most straight, most just.") | 31. husipâs ("Worthy of thanks.") | 44. varûn ("Protector from evil.") |
| 3. harvasp-âgâh ("Omniscient.") | 17. gîrâ ("Holding fast all.") | 32. har-hemît ("All good-natured.") | 45. a-frîpah ("Undeceivable.") |
| 4. harvasp-h'udhâ ("The Lord of all.") | 18. acim ("Without reason.") | 33. harnekfareh ("All good auspicious-glory.") | 46. awe-frîftah ("Undeceived.") |
| 5. abadah ("Without beginning.") | 19. cimnâ ("Reason of reasons.") | 34. beshtarnâ ("Remover of affliction.") | 47. adhvaî ("Unparalleled.") |
| 6. awî-añjâm ("Without end.") | 20. safinâ ("Increaser.") | 35. tarônîs ("The triumphant.") | 48. kâme-rat ("Lord of wishes.") |
| 7. bûnastah ("The origin of the formation of the world.") | 21. âwzâ ("Causer of increase. The Lord of purity") | 36. anaoshak ("Immortal.") | 49. framân-kâm ("Only wish is His command.") |
| 8. frâxtaîntah ("Broad end of all.") | 22. nâshâ ("Reaching all equally.") | 37. farashak ("Fulfiller of wishes.") | 50. âyextan ("Without body.") |
| 9. jamakh ("Greatest cause.") | 23. parvarâ ("Nourisher.") | 38. pazohadhad ("Creator of good nature.") | 51. â-framôsh ("Unforgetful.") |
| 10. parjahtarah ("More exalted.") | 24. âyânah ("Protector of the world.") | 39. xavâpar ("Beneficent.") | 52. hamârnâ ("Taker of accounts.") |
| 11. tum-afayah ("Most innocent.") | 25. âyaîn-âyânah ("Not of various kinds.") | 40. awaxshâyâ ("Bestower of Love.") | 53. snâyâ ("Recognizable, worth recognition.") |
| 12. abravaînt ("Apart from everyone.") | 26. an-âyanah ("Without form.") | 41. awarzâ ("Excessive bringer.") | 54. a-tars ("Fearless.") |
| 13. parvaîdah ("Relation with all.") | 27. xraoshît-tum ("Firmest.") | 42. â-sitôh ("Undefeated, undistressed.") | 55. a-bîsh ("Without affliction or torment.") |
| 14. an-ayâfah ("Incomprehensible by anyone.") | 28. mînôtum ("Most invisible.") | | 56. a-frâzdum ("Most exalted.") |
| | 29. vâsnâ ("Omnipresent.") | | |

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|---|--|--|---|
| 57. hamcûn ("Always uniform.") | 67. âdhar-kîbarît-tum ("Transformer of fire into jewels.") | 79. a-gûmân ("Without doubt.") | 90. vaspân ("Attainer to all the creations.") |
| 58. mînô-stîgar ("Creator of the Universe spiritually.") | 68. bâtgârjâi ("Doer of bad everywhere.") | 80. a-jamân ("Without time.") | 91. vaspâr ("Bringer of and attainer to all.") |
| 59. a-mînôgar ("Creator of much spirituality.") | 69. âwtum ("Creator of most excessive water.") | 81. a-h'uân ("Without sleep.") | 92. h'âwar ("Merciful.") |
| 60. mînô-nahab ("Hidden in Spirits.") | 70. gel-âdhargar ("Transformer of the earth into fire.") | 82. âmushtushyâr ("Intelligent.") | 93. ahû ("Lord of the world.") |
| 61. âdhar-bâtgâr ("Air of fire, i.e. transformer into air.") | 71. gel-vâdhgar ("Transformer of the earth into air.") | 83. frashûtanâ ("Eternal protector-increaser.") | 94. âwaxsîdâr ("Forgiver.") |
| 62. âdhar-namgar ("Water of fire, i.e. transformer into water.") | 72. gel-namgar ("Transformer of the earth into water.") | 84. padhamânî ("Maintainer of padman, i.e. the golden mean.") | 95. dâdhâr ("The just creator.") |
| 63. bêt-âdhargar ("Transformer of air into fire.") | 73. gargar ("Artisan of artisans.") | 85. pîrôzgar ("Victorious.") | 96. rayomañd ("Full of rae-lustre-splendour.") |
| 64. bêt-namgar ("Transformer of air into water.") | 74. garôgar ("Bestower of wishes.") | 86. h'udhâvañd ("Lord-Master of the Universe.") | 97. h'arehmand ("Full of khoreh, i.e. glory.") |
| 65. bêt-gelgar ("Transformer of air into earth.") | 75. garâgar ("Creator of man") | 87. ahuramazda ("Lord Omniscient.") | 98. dâwar ("The just judge.") |
| 66. bêt-girdtum ("Transformer of air into girad, i.e. gathered.") | 76. garâgargar ("Creator of the entire creation") | 88. abarînkuhantavân ("Of the most exalted rank in the power of maintaining the origin of the creations.") | 99. kerfagar ("Lord of meritorious deeds.") |
| | 77. a-garâgar ("Creator of four elements") | 89. abarîn-nô-tavã ("Of the most exalted rank in the power of rendering the creations anew.") | 100. buxtâr ("Redeemer, saviour.") |
| | 78. a-garâgargar ("Creator of clusters of the stars") | | 101. frashôgar ("Restorer through increase of the soul.") |

In popular culture

- Ormazd and Ahriman feature in the 2008 video game, *Prince of Persia*.
- Ormazd and Ahriman feature heavily in the Philip K. Dick novel *The Cosmic Puppets*.
- In the 2001 video game *Severance: Blade of Darkness*, Ahura Mazda was the god who created the entire world in which the game takes place.
- One of the inspirations for the name of the Mazda Motor Corporation is Ahura Mazda, with homophone similarity to founder Jujiro Matsuda.
- A statue of Ahura Mazda is built to contain the Djinn in the film *Wishmaster*.
- In the 2013 Amish Tripathi novel *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, Ahura Mazda is shown as the God of Pariha.
- Ahura Mazda is referred in the Immortal Technique song "Sign of the Times" from the *Martyr* disc.
- In the novel *Battle Royale*, a student named Mizuho Inada believes she is a warrior for the god Ahura Mazda.
- Ahura Mazda appears as a character in the *Lucifer's Halo* miniseries of Joseph Michael Linsner's comic *Dawn*.
- Ahura Mazda was the name of a late 1960s, early 1970s psychedelic and fusion prog-rock band from the Netherlands.
- Ahura Mazda is featured in the book *Kushiel's Avatar*, the third novel in Jacqueline Carey's *Kushiel's Legacy* series.
- Ahura Mazda is mentioned in song 'Sign of the Times' in 'Immortal Technique's' album *The_Martyr_* (2011)

See also

- Varuna^[16]
- Vritra (VritraAsura, also known as Ahi or snake. Enemy of devata Indra, and defeated by him)

Notes

1. For an explanation of the approximation of *mainyu* as "spirit", see Angra Mainyu.
2. Most prominent of these voices was that of the Scottish Presbyterian minister Dr. John Wilson, whose church was next door to the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, the premier school for Zoroastrian priests. That the opinions of the Zoroastrian priesthood is barely represented in the debates that ensued was to some extent due to the fact that the priesthood spoke Gujarati and not English, but also because they were (at the time) poorly equipped to debate with a classically trained theologian on his footing. Wilson had even taught himself Avestan.
3. For a scholastic review of the theological developments in Indian Zoroastrianism, particularly with respect to the devaluation of Angra Mainyu to a position where the (epitome of) pure evil became viewed as a creation of Mazda (and so compromised their figure of pure good), see Maneck 1997

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5. Nigosian 1993, p. 12.
6. Andrea 2000, p. 86.
7. Bromiley 1995, p. 126.
8. Boyce 1983, p. 686.
9. Corduan 1998, p. 123.
10. King 2005, p. 314.
11. Whitrow 2003, p. 8.
12. Maneck 1997, pp. 182ff.
13. Unknown 1999, p. 429.
14. Frye 1996, p. 247.
15. Sims-Williams 1992, p. 44.
16. Varuna#In Zoroastrianism

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Persian words and phrases

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