

Faravahar: The Divine Self

The Faravahar is one of the most recognized symbols of ancient Persia. It is often associated with the teachings of Zarathustra and the spiritual heritage of ancient Iran. Beyond its historical and cultural significance, it can also serve as a powerful symbol for exploring our true nature and the journey of self-discovery.

What if the greatest obstacle to discovering who we really are is not that we have lost ourselves, but that we have become so identified with who we think we are that we no longer recognize our deeper essence?

The mask we learn to wear

From childhood, we gradually develop a sense of who we are. Our family, culture, education, relationships, and life experiences all contribute to shaping our personality. We learn how to behave, what is expected of us, what to hide, and what to show.

Over time, we build an identity around these experiences. We become the successful person, the responsible parent, the rejected child, the strong one, the one who must always please others, or the one who must never appear weak.

These identities become like masks. Some protect us, some help us belong, and others help us avoid pain. Eventually, however, we may forget that we are wearing them.

We begin to believe that our personality, our history, our achievements, and even our wounds define the whole of who we are.

The separate self

The personality is not something we need to reject. It is part of how we experience and participate in the world. We need an identity to function, communicate, build relationships, and fulfil our responsibilities.

The difficulty begins when we mistake this personality for our entire being.

We create a separate self through identification with our thoughts, emotions, memories, beliefs, and personal stories. We become so occupied with maintaining and protecting this identity that we lose contact with the deeper dimension of our existence.

We spend much of our lives trying to become someone, prove something, or protect the image we have created. Meanwhile, the deeper question remains unexplored: Who are we beyond all these identities?

Our Essence: A Radiance of Ahura Mazda

Beneath the personality we have developed throughout life, there is something deeper: our essential nature. It is not something we need to acquire, create, or earn. It is something we need to rediscover.

In this spiritual understanding of Zarathustra's teachings, our essence is connected to Ahura Mazda, the Source of Wisdom and the Supreme Consciousness. Like the sun, whose light reaches everything without losing its own radiance, this divine connection is not something we manufacture through effort. It is a deeper dimension of our being.

We can think of it as a spark of divine light within us, a radiant presence that exists beyond the changing nature of our personality. Our thoughts change, our emotions rise and fall, our bodies grow older, and our identities shift with life's experiences. Yet our deeper essence is not defined by these changes.

It is like looking at the sun through a small window and believing that the limited view is all there is. We see only a portion of the light and forget the vastness from which it comes.

The Eagle: Between Earth and the Infinite

The Faravahar can also inspire us to reflect on the image of an eagle. An eagle belongs to the earth, yet its wings allow it to rise above the landscape and move toward the open sky.

This offers a beautiful metaphor for the human condition.

We have a physical body, a personality, relationships, responsibilities, and a place in the world. We experience love, loss, pleasure, disappointment, and the ordinary struggles of being human. We have feet on the ground, and we must learn to live responsibly within the world.

But we also have the capacity to look beyond the immediate demands of earthly existence. We can question the meaning of our lives, explore the mystery of our existence, and reach toward something greater than our individual identity.

Like the eagle, we are not meant to remain confined to the ground, nor are we meant to abandon it. We have the possibility of experiencing both dimensions: being fully present in earthly life while remaining connected to the greater reality from which our essence emerges.

The eagle does not lose its connection to the earth when it flies. It simply experiences a wider horizon.

In the same way, spiritual growth does not require us to reject our humanity. It invites us to move beyond the limitations of identifying exclusively with our personality.

The Faravahar and the journey of the soul

The Faravahar offers a rich symbolic image for reflecting on this journey. The human figure can invite us to reflect on our conscious presence and our capacity to choose. The wings can remind us of the possibility of rising beyond our habitual ways of thinking and living. The circular form can evoke continuity and the enduring nature of our spiritual journey.

Rather than seeing the symbol simply as an image of something outside ourselves, we can use it as an invitation to look inward. We are of the earth, yet our essence reaches beyond it. We carry within us a radiance connected to the Source, and the journey is to rediscover that connection—not by becoming something else, but by remembering what we are.