

BENEFITS AND LOGIC OF ORAL TRADITION

Dr. Kersey Antia, Mar 20, 2020

What Madon's *Denkart* (4.59.8f) responds to a question by a Christian named Boxt-mal's as to why Zoroastrians "memorize" Avesta by oral tradition, may well explain the reason for it:

By the sending of the Zand into the midst of the world, to be known orally, a full means of salvation is exhibited in both. These manthras of the faith and all the oral matter he ordered to write in a basic text. Now indeed for the most part it is preserved in actual books as is known among those acquainted with the facts. But to memorize is a great profit. Its profitableness is in the giving of knowledge of the worship and praise to the people, the one thing so that it has known whence things arise. In such a way it was possible to transmit profound words and true customs unperverted, such as are the basic utterances of decisions and blessings far beyond the written form. And for many other reasons also it is reasonable to consider the living, spoken word more important than the written.¹

Apparently the Zoroastrians perceived the importance of oral tradition for proper training of pronunciations and transmission of customs associated with it and so on.

¹ Harold Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943, p. 163.