

# History of Zoroastrianism

BY

MANECKJI NUSSERVANJI DHALLA, PH. D., LITT.D.

High Priest of the Parsis, Karachi, India

AUTHOR OF

*Nyaishes or Zoroastrian Litanies, Zoroastrian Theology, Zoroastrian  
Civilization, Our Perfecting World – Zarathushtra's Way of Life*

idha apām vijasāiti  
vanghuhi daena māzdayasnaish  
vispāish avi karshvān yāish hapta.

“Henceforth from now may spread  
The Good Mazdayasnian Religion  
Over all the zones that are seven.”

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TO  
KHAN BAHADUR  
KAVASJI HORMASJI KATRAK, O.B.E.

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*at hvo vangheush vahyo nā aibijamyāt  
ye nāo erezush savangho patho sīshoit  
ahyā angheush astvato mananghaschā  
haithyeng āstīsh yeng ā shaetī ahuro  
aredro thwāvāns huzentushe spento mazdā.*

“May that man attain to better than the good  
Who helps teaching us the upright paths of blessedness  
Of this material world and that of the spirit  
– The veritable universe wherein pervades Ahura –  
That faithful, wise, and holy man is like unto thee, O  
Mazda.”

- ZARATHUSHTRA

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## Foreword

Dastur Dhalla was high priest of the Parsis as well as a trained scholar. In this popular book he assembles quotations found throughout Zoroastrian literature. Presented chronologically according to the source literature, they present the story of a religion in evolution. This approach has its disadvantages and its critics. One disadvantage in my opinion is that it tends to present an exaggerated view of the differences which appear in the literature. It is quite possible to provide a much more homogeneous view of these elements. Another disadvantage of Dhalla's approach is that it necessitates a fair amount of interpolation to present a continuous view, which is subject to more speculation. Even so, Dastur Dhalla was uniquely qualified for the task, and I am pleased to make this valuable book available in this electronic edition.

**Note:** I have added terms in square brackets [] to facilitate searches consistent with other texts on the [avesta.org](http://avesta.org) web site. I have also expanded some of the citations, again in square brackets []. Obvious typos have been silently corrected. I have also normalized the spelling in the texts in this series in order to be consistent, and to facilitate searches. Wherever possible I have used the spellings of F.M. Kotwal and J. Boyd, *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion*, Scholars Press, 1982. See the table at the end for specifics.

-JHP, May 2003.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Aerpt.	Aerpatastan
AF.	Arische Forschungen
Air. Wb.	Altiranisches Wörterbuch (Bartholomae)
AnAtM.	Andarz-i Atarpat-i Maraspand
AnKhK.	Andarz-i Khusru-i Kavatan
Aog.	Aogemadaecha
Artax. Pers.	inscriptions of Artaxerxes at Persepolis
AthV.	Atharva Veda
Av.	Avesta
AV.	Arda Viraf
AZ.	Afrin-i Zartusht
Bd.	Bundahishn
BH.	Behistan
bk.	book
BYt.	Pahlavi Bahman Yasht
cf.	( <i>confer</i> ), compare
Dar. Alv.	inscriptions of Darius on Mt. Alvand (Elvend), near Hamadan
Dar. Pers.	inscriptions of Darius at Persepolis
Db.	Dabestan
Dd.	Dadestan-i Denik
Dk.	Denkard
ed.	edition of, edited by
Eng.	English
EpM.	Epistles of Manushchihir
ERE.	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Hastings)
FHG.	Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum (Müller)
G.	Gah
GlrPh.	Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie
Gs.	Ganj-i Shayikan
Guj.	Gujarati
Hj.	Hajiabad
Hn.	Hadokht Nask
Is.	Isaiah
Jsp.	Jamaspi

JAOS.	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JRAS.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
KZ.	Kuhn's Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung
Mkh.	Menog-i Khrad
NR.	inscriptions of Darius at Naksh-i Rostam
Nr.	Nirangistan
Ny.	Niyayesh
Pers.	Persian
Pt.	Patet
Phl.	Pahlavi
Rv.	Rivayat
RV.	Rig Veda
SBE.	Sacred Books of the East
Sd.	Sad Dar
SdBd.	Sad Dar Bundahishn
Sg.	Shkand Gumanig Vizar
Skt.	Sanskrit
SnS	Shayest-ne-Shayest
Sr.	Sirozah
TdFr.	Tahmuras Fragment
tr.	translated by, translation of
Vd.	Vendidad
vers.	version
vol.	volume
Vsp.	Visperad
WFr.	Westergaard Fragment
Xerx. Pers.	inscriptions of Xerxes at Persepolis
Y.	Yasna
Yt.	Yasht
ZDMG.	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
Zsp.	Zadspram



## CHAPTER I. THE SOURCES

**The data of information.** The materials that we gather for the preparation of the history of the religion that Zarathushtra preached in Ancient Iran come from varied sources. The earliest native records are embodied in the sacred texts in which the prophet and his immediate disciples propounded the new religion. These are furnished by the Avestan literature, which is followed by the Pahlavi and Pazand works and finally by the writings in Modern Persian down to the end of the eighteenth century.

Peoples of diverse faiths and nationalities have likewise, written about Zoroaster and his teachings from the earliest to the modern times. Greeks and Romans and Christians in the Occident and Indians, Hebrews, Arabs, Syrians, Armenians, and Chinese in the Orient have contributed to the fund of information on the subject. Zarathushtra has founded a new religion and we shall begin with the consideration of the materials used in the foundation, which are to be gleaned from the Avesta, the earliest literature produced by Iran.

**The Avestan Nasks.** Tradition credits Zarathushtra with having written profusely. Pliny states that the great philosopher Hermippus, who flourished in the early part of third century before the Christian era, had studied some 2,000,000 verses composed by Zoroaster.<sup>1</sup> The Arabic historians Tabari and Masudi state that the Zoroastrian texts were copied on 12,000 cowhides.<sup>2</sup> Parsi tradition speaks of twenty-one Nasks or volumes written by Zarathushtra. These, we are informed, dealt with religion, philosophy, ethics, medicine, and various sciences. King Vishtaspa ordered two archetype copies of these sacred texts and deposited them in the libraries of Dizh-i Nipisht and Ganj-i Shapigan.<sup>3</sup> One of these copies perished in the flames when Alexander burned the royal palace at Persepolis.<sup>4</sup> The other copy, tradition maintains, was taken by the conquering hordes to their own country, where it was rendered into Greek.<sup>5</sup>

The collection of the scattered texts was begun under the last of the Arsacids and completed in the early Sasanian period. The twenty-one original Avestan Nasks were artificially made to correspond to the twenty-one words of the Ahuna Vairya (Ahunwar) formula. The holy Manthra is made up of three lines and the twenty-one Nasks were, likewise, divided into three equal parts of seven each to correspond with

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1 HN. 30. 2. 1.

2 *Annales*, 1. 675; *Masudi*, ed. Barbiei de Meynard. 2.123.

3 Dk., vol 9, p. 577.

4 Diodorus, 17.72; Curtius, 5.7; Dk., vol. 9, p. 569.

5 Dk., vol. 9, p. 569.

them. These three divisions are classified under the headings: Gasanik, that is, pertaining to the Gathas or devotional hymns, the Hadha Mansarik, which as *Denkard*<sup>6</sup> says, is intermediary between the Gathik and the last division, namely the Datik, which is that pertaining to law.<sup>7</sup> It is estimated that the twenty-one volumes contained about 345,700 words of written text.<sup>8</sup>

This canonical compilation has suffered heavily during the last thirteen centuries since the downfall of the last Zoroastrian empire in the seventh century. The entire collection of the Avestan texts that has reached us consists of about 83,000 words,<sup>9</sup> that is, about one-fourth of the original twenty-one Nasks. The Vendidad is the one Nask that has survived the ravages of time in its complete form. Some of the lost Nasks are preserved in part in the Yasna, Yashts, and Nirangistan. We shall draw upon this Avestan material in our discussion of the Gathic and Avestan periods.

**The Pahlavi, Pazand, and Persian sources.** During the chaos that prevailed in Iran after the downfall of the Achaemenian empire, the Avestan language began to decay. When it grew unintelligible to the people, the learned priests undertook translations and explanations of the Avestan texts into Pahlavi, the new language which originated during the period. These commentaries on the original Avestan texts are called *āzainti* in Avesta, and *zand* in Pahlavi. The explanatory texts now came to be known as Avastak-u Zand or the Avesta and the commentaries. Pahlavi was the court language of the Sasanians and it survived the downfall of their empire by at least three centuries. Extensive Pahlavi literature that came into existence under the Sasanians has mostly perished. The works that have reached us were written after the downfall of the Sasanian empire, mostly during the Abbasid period. The compilation of the most important work of the period, the *Denkard*, for example, was commenced by the learned high-priest Atarfarnbag Farokhzad in the beginning of the ninth century and completed by one of his successors, Adarbad Hemed, towards the end of the ninth century. The *Denkard*, *Vijirkard-i Dinik*, and the *Persian Rivayats* give us summaries of the lost Nasks. We gather from the contents of the lost Nasks given in the *Denkard* that, with the exception of the eleventh Nask, altogether twenty Avestan Nasks, nineteen along with their Pahlavi commentaries and one without it, still existed in the ninth century. The greater part of these works has perished during the unsettled times when Persia fell under the barbarous rule of the Tartars.

6 DK8, 1, 7.

7 See Geldner, *Avesta Literature*, tr. by Mackichan in *Avesta, Pahlavi, and Ancient Persian Studies in honour of Dastur Peshotanji B Sanjana*, p. 31.

8 See West in SBE., vol. 37, Introd. p. 45.

9 See Geldner, *ib.*, p. 30.

Pahlavi works on religious subjects that are extant consist of about 446,000 words.<sup>10</sup>

With the invention of the modern Persian alphabet, Pahlavi fell into the background. An admixture of Aryan and Semitic make-up the Pahlavi language as written. It was later simplified by the elimination of all Semitic words and replacing them with their Iranian equivalents. The original Avestan texts were explained and interpreted by the Pahlavi commentary which, as we saw, was called Zand. A further need was felt to make explanatory versions of the Pahlavi texts themselves. This further explanation and added commentary is called *Pazand* from the Avestan word *paiti zainti*. Short benedictory prayers are composed in Pazand as supplementary prayers to the original Avestan prayers, The Pazand texts were written in Avestan script. With the introduction of the Arabic script in Persia, the Pahlavi script fell into disuse.

Zoroastrian works came to be written in the modern Persian alphabet. A considerable literature, both in prose and poetry, has sprung up during the last seven centuries in Persian on Zoroastrian subjects.<sup>11</sup> The Pahlavi and Pazand works originated in Persia, whereas both Persia and India contributed in the production of the Persian works.

**Parsi-Sanskrit and Gujarati sources.** An Indian school of Parsi Sanskritists of the thirteenth century, headed by Neryosang Dhaval, has translated some parts of the Avestan texts into Sanskrit from their Pahlavi version. Besides these, they have left for us the Sanskrit translation of a few Pahlavi works.

A considerable literature, in prose and verse, has appeared in Gujarati on Zoroastrian subjects in India. A Gujarati version of the Yasna and Vendidad and two renderings of the Khorda Avesta were published in the beginning of the nineteenth century, that is, before the influence of Western scholarship penetrated into India. Works written in Gujarati continue to be published to the present day.

**Oriental sources.** The Indo-Iranians shared a common religious heritage, and the Rig Veda furnishes us with the earliest sacred texts that are helpful in the better understanding of the religious beliefs of the pre-Gathic, Gathic, and the Younger Avestan periods of the history of Zoroastrianism. There are, likewise, scattered passages in the Vedas, Brahmanas, Smriti, and Puranas that refer to the Iranians and their religion. Judaism under the Exile was influenced by Zoroastrian teachings and furnishes us with points of resemblance between the angelology, demonology, and eschatology of the Iranians and the Hebrews. The Armenian historians Moses of Khoren and Elisaeus, the

10 See West. GIrPh.2. 90, 91.

11 See West. GIrPh. 2. 122-129.

theologians Eznik and the Syrian Theodore bar Khoni, the Acts and Passions of Persian Saints and Martyrs, works written by Zoroastrian converts to Christianity, the Syriac, Armenian, Judaic, and Christian polemic literature against Zoroastrianism, and the writings of the Mandaeans are full of views held by those who opposed the state religion of Persia during the Sasanian period. A host of Arabic and Mohammedan Persian writers from the days of Ibn Khurdadhbah (A.D. 816) and al-Baladhuri (A.D. 851), al-Biruni (A.D. 973-1048), al-Shahrastani (A.D. 1086-1153), to Yakut (A.D. 1250), Kazwini (A.D. 1263), Mirkhond (A.D. 1432-1498) and Mohsan Fani (A.D. 1600-1670) give valuable information on our subject. There are stray passages in Chinese literature with reference to the religious beliefs and practices of the Zoroastrians.

**Occidental sources.** The contact of Persia with Greece began in the fifth century B.C. under the Achaemenians. It continued with Rome up to the middle of the seventh century A.D., to the last days of the Sasanians. Ktesias was the court physician of king Artaxerxes II. Xanthus and Herodotus began to acquaint their readers with the manners and customs and religious beliefs of the Persians. Hermippus (B.C. 250) is said to have studied the writings of Zarathushtra. Theopompus and Hermippus are the two writers upon whose writings on Persian religion the later writers have drawn considerably. Plutarch was familiar with the lost work of Theopompus and gives useful information on his authority, Diogenes Laertius says that Aristotle was familiar with the theory of Persian dualism. Plutarch, Strabo, and a few others write from their personal observation. Cicero, Pliny, Ammianus Marcellinus, and other Roman writers continued to write about Persia up to the Middle Ages. The writings of the earlier classical authors throw special light upon the religious beliefs and practices of the Achaemenians.

**Inscriptions, coins, and tablets as the last source of information.** The Old Persian Inscriptions with their Babylonian and New Elamitic renderings found at Behistan, Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam, Elvand, Susa, Kerman, and Suez; the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek inscriptions, together with the works of the ancient classical writers, furnish us with information about the religious beliefs and practices of the Achaemenians. The Pahlavi inscriptions, likewise, add to our knowledge of the religious life of the Sasanian period. The names of about ten Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas and Yazatas that appear on the coins of Indo-Scythic rulers of Northwestern India in Greek characters and the epigraphic texts in Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek contribute to the information that we get about Zoroastrianism from varied sources.

## CHAPTER II. AIRYANEM VAEJAH

**The Stem-land of the Aryans.** The problem of the cradle of the Aryan race will probably never be solved with certainty. Airyanem Vaejah [Eranvej], 'the stem-land of the Aryans,' is spoken of as the first of the good lands created by Ahura Mazda.<sup>1</sup> It had a mild and genial climate, with long, pleasant summers and short winters. Unlike Indian Yama, who chose the realm of the dead and established his suzerainty in the heavenly world, Yima was the illustrious king who ruled over men and beasts and converted his kingdom into a veritable paradise upon earth. Animals and mankind prospered and grew in such large numbers in his memorable reign, which tradition has subsequently regarded as the Golden Age of Iran, that the country could no longer hold them. Ahura Mazda, thereupon, bade him to lead his overflowing population to migrate southwards, on the way of the sun. Yima carried out the divine behest and yet the difficulty was not solved, for the numbers kept on increasing steadily. The king organized a second migration again towards the south and still a third in the same direction.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the happy home of the Aryans was destined to be further disturbed, Ahura Mazda knew this through his omniscience and he called a conference of the angels and summoned Yima to attend it with the best of his men.<sup>3</sup> He then warned the king that Angra Mainyu, the enemy of God and men, contemplated invasion of Airyanem Vaejah. He would cause evil winter to fall that would bring fierce, deadly frost. Such dense desolation would follow the icy deluge that every vestige of human habitation would disappear and it would be a wonder if even a footprint of a sheep could be seen.<sup>4</sup> Angra Mainyu did invade the happy home of the Aryans and plagued it with a deluge of snow and ice. Forewarned by Ahura Mazda, the mighty king took timely measures, and before Angra Mainyu cause destruction and death, through deadly deluge, or, in the language of geology, before the glacial cataclysm rendered the primeval Aryan home unfit for habitation, he led a further successful migration towards the hospitable south.

**The Indo-Europeans.** This virile race, white in colour and fair of complexion, called itself Aryan or noble. It was the parent of the Indo-European peoples of history, These members of the Aryan family lived long as a homogeneous people speaking the same language with dialectic differences and shared many beliefs and practices in common.

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1 Vd1.3.

2 Vd2.9-19.

3 Vd2.21.

4 Vd2.22-24.

Pressure of growing population, thirst for adventure, sharp divisions caused by the fermentation going on in the minds of thinking persons over religious beliefs and practices continued to disintegrate them. During the early part of the second millennium B.C., nomad tribes left their home and turned westwards and reached the Aegean lands or turned southwards in successive waves from the steppes of the Caspian Sea. Scattered tribes passed by the chain of Caucasus, entered Armenia and spread southwards. Some of the more virile tribes succeeded in founding small Aryan kingdoms. They have left traces of their Aryan beliefs and practices. The Kassites, who rose to power in the Zagros in 1700 B.C., designated godhead by the Indo-European term *bugash*, Av. *baga*, Skt. *bhaga*, Slav. *bogu*, Phrygian, *bagaios*, and worshipped Suryash, Skt. *surya*, the sun, as their chief god. The Mitannis, who founded an Aryan empire between the Euphrates and the Tigris, have left behind them the record of their own names, such as Dushratta, Artatama, and the names of the Aryan divinities Mitra, Indra, Varuna, and Nasatya in an inscription dating 14th century B.C. at Boghaz-Keui. The trend of migration continued until we see the Aryan Medes at a later date facing the Semitic Assyrians as their immediate neighbours.

**The Indo-Iranians.** The other migratory wave extended earlier towards the Alburz range and to the southern belt of the Caspian Sea and took the eastward course. The *Vendidad* opens the enumeration of the sixteen good places created by Ahura Mazda, ranging between Airyanem Vaejah in the north and Hapta Hindu or Sapta Sindhu, the land of seven (later five) rivers, the Panjaub.<sup>5</sup> The names of these lands may not be taken as marking the successive stages of the Aryan migration showing the people leaving their original habitat, descending downwards through the Caucasus, crossing the Alburz range, entering eastern Iran or modern Afghanistan, passing the Hindukush and terminating their peregrinations in Sapta Sindhu. But the text may be taken as recording historico-geographical reminiscence on the part of the writers of the south-eastward migration of the Aryan race.

Of the various sections of the Aryan family, the ancestors of those that later became known in history as the Indians and the Iranians lived longest and closest together in eastern Iran. They sacrificed to the same gods and entertained the same view of life upon earth. They separated at a later period and a group turned towards the south, crossed the Hindukush and entered the Panjaub by about 2000 B.C.

The great Aryan family thus dispersed during several generations and the members sought out for themselves new settlements in Asia and Europe. Of the various groups that separated from the main stock at different times, the Iranian group preserved most faithfully the original name of the primeval home of the Aryans. The place of

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5 Vd1.1-20.

residence had changed, the surroundings had altered beyond recognition, and the communities that lived and shared life with them had gone. But the deeply cherished name Airyanem Vaejah had been indelibly imprinted on their minds. The veneration for the stem-land lived, the memory of its paradisaic condition still lingered, the auspicious name Airyanem Vaejah continued still to be passionately loved, and the Iranians resolved that their latest settlement should be known for ever by no other name than Airyanem Vaejah of happy memory.

# **THE GATHIC PERIOD – ABOUT 1000 B.C.**



### CHAPTER III. Zarathushtra

**Zarathushtra doubts to know.** Prophets are gods in the flesh, and Zarathushtra, the prophet of Iran, was such a man-god. His date of birth, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, is placed anywhere between 600 B.C. and 6000 B.C. It is an uncontested fact that there is a marked closeness between the grammar, metre, and style of the **Rig Veda** and the Gathas. The Gathic inflexions are more primitive than the Vedic. The period of the position of the Gathas, therefore, cannot be separated from the Vedas by any considerable distance of time. Zarathushtra's place of birth is of equal uncertainty. His earliest appearance in the Gathas is at the period of his life when he has left his pupillage behind. He has evidently learnt all he could from what the teachers of his days could give him. He has conversed with the wise men of his country. He has often visited the central places where trade routes from distant lands converged and has gathered information and experience from the worldly-wise travellers, merchants, and pilgrims. But the more he has learnt, the more eager his desire to learn further has grown. His teachers had instructed him in knowledge based on tradition. But tradition is stagnant, and knowledge is ever on the onward move. Besides, tradition is wedded to the time that is dead, and knowledge looks to the time to be born without end. Moreover, tradition demands its instruction to be taken on trust, and knowledge is based on inquiry and discussion. Reason is shadowed by doubt and doubt is the parent of knowledge. Zarathushtra, a paragon of reason, doubts the wisdom of his teachers.

Zarathushtra resolves to be his own teacher, and to learn by observation and thinking. He thinks and thinks deeply and comprehensively on the conditions prevailing around him. He considers that life is not woven of the tissues of joy and happiness alone, but of considerable sorrow and misery also. Injustice and inequity, strife and oppression, poverty and destitution, greed and avarice, wrath and rapine, falsehood and deceit, envy and malice, hatred and jealousy, crime and vice, sorrow and suffering, filth and disease confront him everywhere. He is keenly responsive to human sufferings and the groans and sighs of the agonized hearts. The misery of the multitude touches his heart. His flesh creeps, his heart is heavily oppressed, and his spirit is depressed at the sight of this dark side of human life. He suffers at the sight of suffering and, with eyes suffused with tears, he lives from day unto day thinking and brooding over the woes of the world. Zarathushtra doubts the goodness of gods.

He is religious at heart, but his daily experience of the religion practised and lived around him tends to estrange him from the faith of his forefathers. He sees with horror temples reeking with the blood of

sacrificial animals. He finds that barren formalism, sanctimonious scrupulosity, meticulous ablutions, superstitious fear, and display of external holiness pass for religion. Zarathushtra doubts the religion of his birth.

**Zarathushtra seeks silent, solitary seclusion.** Solitude is nature's sublime temple where spirit can commune with spirit in the surrounding silence and unruffled calm. Mountains lift their heads majestically on the Iranian plateau, and Zarathushtra retreated into the mountain fastness. Here, far removed from the stress and strife of life, and with no human sound to distract his thoughts, he made his home. He breathed the refreshing air. The twittering and chirping and whistling and singing of birds filled the air. Here the earth and waters, birds and beasts, sun and moon, stars and planets worked as his teachers. He read some lesson, some message written by the hand of the maker of all on every pebble and every leaf, every dewdrop and every sunbeam, in every star and every planet. Here he plunged into a reverie or gazed into vacancy. The calm atmosphere is conducive to communion, and here, in the monastic void; he communed with nature which inspired solemn thoughts in him. He communed with his mind and he communed with his inner self. He thought and he reasoned, he cogitated and he contemplated, he mused and he dreamed. He meditated upon the essence of divinity, the anomalies of life, and the human destiny after death. Here in this great and glorious temple of nature, built by divine hands, his eyes of spirit saw what the eyes of flesh could not see. Here in the sublime sanctuary spoke the solemn voice of the divine vicar and he heard it. Zarathushtra's creative mind evolved the highest conception of godhead, whom he named Ahura Mazda or the Wise Lord.

**Zarathushtra yearns to see Ahura Mazda.** Zarathushtra has prepared himself through the wise discipline of mind and heart and through the life of piety to receive his message from Mazda. He longs for the moment when, being enlightened in mind, he shall visualize Vohu Manah or Good Mind, Asha or Righteousness, Sraosha, the embodiment of Obedience to divine commandments, and the sublime seat of beneficent Ahura.<sup>1</sup> Mind alone can understand and realize the supreme mind and Zarathushtra longs to approach Mazda through Vohu Manah.<sup>2</sup> Mind is the repository both of knowledge upon which rests the enlightenment of life, and pure thoughts which form the basis of good conduct. He developed this dual aspect of mind to a prominent degree and prayed that Vohu Manah might bless him with his presence.<sup>3</sup> He had not long to wait, for Vohu Manah, he who

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1 Y28.5.

2 Y28.2.

3 Y44.1.

impersonates the divine mind, one day came to him and inquired who he was and to whom he belonged and what he wished for.<sup>4</sup> Seeing Vohu Manah, Zarathushtra got a glimpse of Ahura Mazda, whom he now conceived as holy, and for the first time felt himself acquainted with the words of wisdom.<sup>5</sup> When his ardent desire to meet Vohu Manah is fulfilled he now aspires through him to greet Ahura Mazda himself.<sup>6</sup> His one consuming passion now is to see Mazda face to face and hold communion with him,<sup>7</sup> so that he may have the most comprehensive understanding of the divinity. He desires and yearns and prays that Mazda may vouchsafe unto him his heart's longing. Devotion for Mazda wells up in his heart, and he is filled with the divine spirit. He feels himself lifted above the earth, and in his supreme moments of transcendent ecstasy he has the beatific vision of Mazda.<sup>8</sup> He has now found Mazda and he pours out his devout heart at his feet. He longs to be alone with him, belong wholly to him, and live in his love and attachment.<sup>9</sup> He praises him, worships him, makes songs of devotion to him, he yearns to weave his personality with Mazda like the warp and woof, and he longs to lose himself in the divine bosom.<sup>10</sup> His whole life is bound up in one idea: Ahura Mazda.

#### **Zarathushtra longs to commune with Ahura Mazda.**

Zarathushtra has thought out many problems of life but he is still unsatisfied with his discoveries. He has doubts on many points,<sup>11</sup> and who but Mazda can solve them satisfactorily? He asks Mazda for whom has he created the weal-dispensing cattle,<sup>12</sup> who has marked out the path of the sun and the stars, by whom does the moon wax and wane,<sup>13</sup> who has yoked swiftness to winds and clouds, who withholds the earth and the sky from falling down, who made the waters and the trees,<sup>14</sup> what artificer made light and darkness and wakefulness and sleep, who made the dawn and the day and the night that remind man of the

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4 Y43.7, 9, 11, 13, 15.

5 Y43.11.

6 Y28.6.

7 Y33.6.

8 Y43.5; 45.8.

9 Y44.17.

10 Y28.3; 43.8.

11 Y48.9.

12 Y44.6.

13 Y44.3.

14 Y44.4.

intelligence of his duty,<sup>15</sup> who is the creator of Good Mind,<sup>16</sup> who formed the blessed devotion in the divine kingdom and who with wisdom made the son dutiful to his father,<sup>17</sup> how should devotion embrace those to whom his religion is proclaimed,<sup>18</sup> whether devotion furthered righteousness through deeds,<sup>19</sup> how was the prayer to be addressed to him,<sup>20</sup> who was righteous and who was wicked, with whom did the enemy of all side and who was like unto him, was not the person that repudiated Mazda's beneficence himself the enemy,<sup>21</sup> how was the wickedness of those who ran counter to the rules of righteousness and good thought to be put down,<sup>22</sup> how was wickedness to be brought into the hands of righteousness,<sup>23</sup> who would gain victory when the powers of righteousness and wickedness came to grips,<sup>24</sup> who would smite victoriously the enemy with the mighty words of Mazda,<sup>25</sup> how would recompense to the righteous and retribution to the wicked be accorded at the reckoning,<sup>26</sup> how the best existence was to be won,<sup>27</sup> would the divine kingdom be made known to God's faithful through Good Mind,<sup>28</sup> what were the ordinances of Mazda,<sup>29</sup> how should he, Zarathushtra, approach Mazda with love,<sup>30</sup> with what goodness would his soul win felicity,<sup>31</sup> and many such questions pertaining to the way of life. He felt Mazda's inspiring presence within him, he heard his whispers. Mazda spoke through his mind and he was enlightened. He sought instruction from Mazda and had now acquired it.<sup>32</sup>

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15 Y44.5.

16 Y44.4.

17 Y44.7.

18 Y44.11.

19 Y44.6.

20 Y44.1.

21 Y44.12.

22 Y44.13.

23 Y44.14.

24 Y44.15.

25 Y44.16.

26 Y31.14.

27 Y44.2.

28 Y44.6.

29 Y34.12.

30 Y44.17.

31 Y44.8.

32 Y45.6.

**Zarathushtra is filled with an intense fervour of enthusiasm for prophetic work.** The work of prophetic preparation was now completed. Zarathushtra was girt with wisdom and righteousness. He had heard, comprehended, and made his own the message of Mazda and was now ready to convey it to mankind. One phase of his life had now ended. He was now ready to leave the life of seclusion and turn towards the clamour and clatter of town traffic and live in the midst of the sight and sound of throbbing human life. He had a new mission, a new hope, a new way of life to regenerate the world. Mankind was steeped in the slough of despair and despondency, helplessness and hopelessness. He was to be the bearer of the message of hope to mankind and salvage it. He was to wean the hearts of men and women from wickedness, to lead them on the path of righteousness, to assuage the sufferings of humanity, to establish a new social order, and to found a new moral world. He was burning with zeal to embark upon his great mission. He was the chosen of Mazda, who now speaks with sublime satisfaction that Zarathushtra alone among mankind had heard his divine commands and having heard them was now going to make them heard among all mankind, therefore he was bestowing on him elegance of speech.<sup>33</sup> The great work that he had now to undertake of propagating his new religion and winning people for it would be beset with untold obstacles and hardships and Zarathushtra realizes it.<sup>34</sup> But the messenger of Mazda is determined to face them and overcome them and emerge triumphant in the end. He tells Mazda that he will lead mankind on the path of righteousness and sing untiringly his praise all around as long as his life is blessed with power and strength.<sup>35</sup> He speaks of his faith in terms of a universal religion. He is convinced that the religion that Ahura Mazda has commissioned him to preach is the best for all mankind.<sup>36</sup> He looks forward to winning all living men for the faith of Ahura Mazda.<sup>37</sup>

But the ardent desire of the prophet was not to be fulfilled at the moment, nor to be accomplished in full measure in after ages. Though possessed of all the best elements that fitted it to be a world creed, Zoroastrianism has never shown any signs of becoming a universal religion. In the midst of the vicissitudes of fortune, it has been a national religion at best. Little short of a miracle has saved it from total extinction, and various causes have combined to reduce it to the narrowest limits today as the communal religion of a hundred and twenty-five thousand souls. This fact will be brought out more

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33 Y29.8.

34 Y43.11.

35 Y28.4; 50.11.

36 Y44.10.

37 Y31.3.

prominently in the treatment of the religious development during the subsequent periods.

**People marvel at the new prophet.** Zarathushtra turned his steps to his place of birth and childhood. His kinsfolk and friends recognized him and yet they were bewildered to witness a marvellous change in him. He was of course grown in years and stature. But there was something indescribable that those who saw him could not realize. His face had grown sweet and serene. It breathed ineffable kindness and bore shining reflection of his pure inner life. It wore the expression of gentleness and cheerfulness, hope and confidence. A resplendent halo of righteousness encircled his magnetic face. He moved among people with a friendly look and a kindly word to all. His moral grandeur struck awe unto those who came near him. The sublimity of his serene behaviour, the childlike simplicity of his speech, the unassuming attitude of his movements, the imperturbable calm and passive countenance aroused feelings of reverence in those who met him. They greeted him with salutations and adoration. His advent soon became the event of surrounding villages. All eagerly pointed to him and talked about him. In dumb veneration people gazed at him, admired him, adored him, and marvelled at him. He was Zarathushtra of the Spitamas, they said, yet he was altogether a novel personality. He was of them and yet above them, he was akin to them and yet unlike them. He spoke unheard of words, he talked of unknown things. He was what they were not. They were but men, he was greater than man, he was an angel, he was a godling.

**Zarathushtra definitely breaks with the religion of his forefathers.** Zarathushtra has seen by this time that there were some people who were anxious to hear what he had to say. He now began to give lengthy talks on subjects of great importance to his eager listeners. He saw that he could sway and draw the hearts of his hearers to himself. He gave forth publicly that he came from his maker Ahura Mazda, whom he declared to be incomparably greater than the gods they had so far known. This great God had sent him as his chosen prophet to preach a nobler religion than the one they followed. Their priests had laid great emphasis on outward observances and carried rules for rituals to meticulous casuistry. Their gods were fond of sacrificial offerings of animals and birds. Religion, preached Zarathushtra, did not consist in a scrupulous observance of outward forms, but was based mainly upon the heart. A broken heart and a contrite spirit were the choicest sacrifices that the faithful could offer to their creator. Burning tears of a penitent heart were better than a cupful of oblations. The aim and object and end of the religion that Mazda had commissioned him to teach was righteous conduct. His worship was founded on righteousness. Genuine piety is of the heart and its outward expressions

are good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The beliefs and practices of his hearers were irreconcilably alien from what he taught. His outspoken utterances created diverse effects upon those who flocked to hear him daily. Some felt themselves moved and influenced by them.

There were others among his hearers who had approached him specially with the intention of finding out his views without rousing his attention to their ill-will. They took alarming reports to their associates. They saw danger ahead of them. They waited and watched, suspected and spied. They were adroitly prepared themselves to face the ominous situation; and they had not to be long in waiting. Signs of disapprobation, whispers of disapproval, murmurs of indignation now appeared in various threatened to break out in open revolt.

**The hostile Daevayasnian priests.** The priests of the ancient faith were now alarmed. They attempted to dissuade the prophet from disturbing the peace of the people. They met often to argue with him on the questions he was raising, but were foiled in the controversies.<sup>38</sup> They felt themselves humiliated before the people and gave up meeting the prophet. They began to work against him and tried in all possible manners to frustrate the effect he was daily producing upon his hearers. They were accustomed to fatten upon the profits of the elaborate ceremonials and rich sacrifices that people offered under their guidance. They were renowned as exorcists who cast out demons, who read dreams, prognosticated the future, warded off the effect of the evil eye and, with ingenious charlatanism, had prospered among the credulous and superstitious. Zarathushtra reproved their greed and avarice. He exhorted the people to give up these superstitious practices and warned them that they were causing great harm by following such false teachers.<sup>39</sup> His denunciation of their practices made them furious and now they sought his ruin. They accused him of preaching doctrines that were subversive of the religion of their forefathers and the established form of worship, and of blaspheming their gods. They incited the people to oppose him and made frantic appeals to the rulers of the land to drive him out from their midst.

Zarathushtra's heart was burning with indignation against these hypocrisies. With his holy spirit aglow with righteous wrath, he called these Pharisees and Scribes of Iran, Kavis and Karapans or seemingly blind and hearingly deaf. These terms belong to the Indo-Iranian period and were evidently used in a good sense, before the Aryan groups separated. They share the fate of the cardinal word *daeva* and are assigned derogatory meaning in the Gathas. The Vedic hymns use the

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38 Y30.6.

39 Y45.1.

word *kavi* in the sense of a sage. It is freely applied to the seers and to Soma priests. It is further used as an epithet of gods. Agni, in particular, bears this honoured title.<sup>40</sup> In the Gathas the word is curiously used with a double meaning. It is given a bad connotation whenever it is applied to the priests of the Daeva-worshippers. But the second Iranian dynasty is known as the Kavi or Kayanian. Its renowned kings who lived before the coming of Zarathushtra were Kavi Kavata, Kavi Usa, and Kavi Haosravah. Even Vishtaspa, who later became the royal patron of the new religion, retains this title and Zarathushtra speaks of him as Kavi Vishtaspa.<sup>41</sup> It is significant, however, that Vishtaspa is the last king who shares this epithet with his royal predecessors. The kings who succeed him and with whom the dynasty dies out do not share the title. To the class of the Kavi belong the Karapan, corresponding to Skt. *kalpa*, 'ritual,' and the Usij, Skt. *ushijah*.

These heretical priests give the cattle to violence,<sup>42</sup> they mislead mankind by their evil teachings and bring destruction to them and their cattle, but the prophet knows that they will face ruin,<sup>43</sup> and in the end their own corrupt consciences will condemn them to eternal damnation.<sup>44</sup> Through the drunken orgies they and the wicked lords of the land who follow them cause misery to all around them, and Zarathushtra implores Ahura Mazda to put down their evil.<sup>45</sup> The bitterest foe of Zarathushtra who opposes him and thwarts his work is Bendva, who does not himself embrace righteousness and incites others to follow his lead. Zarathushtra invokes Mazda to overthrow this chieftain from power.<sup>46</sup> Grehma is another powerful Kavi who always intrigues for Zarathushtra's undoing.<sup>47</sup> Mazda denounces him and his evil associates, for their teachings lead to the destruction of the life of cattle and they lead others to wickedness.<sup>48</sup> This wicked leader will bewail his evil fate and repent that he did not accept Zarathushtra's message, when at the end of his wicked life his soul will be consigned to the worst abode of woe.<sup>49</sup> Usij is yet another class of the false priests who work violence to cattle and husbandry.<sup>50</sup>

40 RV. 2. 23. 1; 3.14.1.

41 Y46.14; 51.16; 53.2.

42 Y44.20.

43 Y32.15.

44 Y31.20; 46.11; 51.14.

45 Y48.10.

46 Y49.1, 2.

47 Y32.14.

48 Y32.12.

49 Y32.13.

50 Y44.20.



These evil teachers, complains Zarathushtra, misinterpret the doctrines that he preaches and deceive people.<sup>51</sup> They are devoid of goodness of mind and heart and are the beloved of the Daevas.<sup>52</sup> They defraud mankind of the happiness of both the worlds.<sup>53</sup> Like the Daevas whom they follow, they are known throughout the seven regions of the earth as the offspring of Evil Thought, Lie, and Arrogance.<sup>54</sup> They persecute the righteous and desolate their pastures.<sup>55</sup> Those who strengthen the hands of such false leaders given over to wickedness incur Ahura's displeasure.<sup>56</sup> Zarathushtra exhorts all not to listen to the words and commands of the liars who bring misery and destruction to the house and clan, district and country, but to resist them with all their might.<sup>57</sup> These persons who do not embrace Righteousness and Good Thought are Zarathushtra's enemies. They are powerful and they strive to frighten Zarathushtra who is weak.<sup>58</sup> He looks to Ahura Mazda for protection against them and prays that instead of causing him harm, their hostile actions may recoil upon themselves.<sup>59</sup> The enmity and hatred towards the prophet, however, increase day by day and he is now aware that the opponents are bent upon doing him the utmost harm that they can, that is, they conspire to kill him.<sup>60</sup>

The Kavis and Karapans carried on vehement counter propaganda against Zarathushtra. They persuaded, denounced, cajoled, flattered, and threatened in one breath those that showed signs of being influenced by the new doctrines. They terrorized them with excommunication from society, and with persecution in this life and tortures awaiting them in the next life. People dreaded their power and were not yet swayed so completely by the new teachings as to face persecution. The history of religions teaches us that a new religion does not spread through well-balanced and reasoned arguments and convictions. It is borne on the wings of the unbounded enthusiasm and overflowing emotion that a prophet can create. If a prophet succeeds in preaching the new ideas that fill his being, with passionate and frantic zeal, if he succeeds in kindling the flame of emotional, nervous enthusiasm among his hearers by his fervent preaching, if he succeeds

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51 Y32.9.

52 Y32.4.

53 Y32.5.

54 Y32.3.

55 Y32.10, 11.

56 Y31.15.

57 Y31.18.

58 Y34.8.

59 Y46.7, 8.

60 Y51.10.

by means of his whirlwind campaign to light the spark that can set the whole country on fire, his religion becomes a living faith. Zarathushtra's teachings had not so effectively stirred them. Consequently, those that followed him hanging with enthusiasm on the unheard of words that he uttered, gave up going after him when they saw the vehement opposition of the custodians of the old faith. Those that had seriously heard him but were yet undecided and hesitating in the choice between the charms of the new and the dictates of the old religion, deserted him. The ignorant and unthinking people, who had, with child-like curiosity, turned wherever his footsteps trod, imitated the elders of society and left him. Those who were proud to claim him as their friend forsook him when the hour came for them to stand by him. Those that were his kith and kin disowned him, because he had disavowed their ancestral faith. Thus did the wavering, timid, half-hearted followers fail him in his hour of need and leave him. Ahura Mazda alone did not leave him and, with him on his side, Zarathushtra felt that he was not alone in his loneliness. His prestige, however, is shattered and all restraint is broken. Respect for him is gone. He is now greeted everywhere with hostile feelings and coarse jokes. The mob that was hilarious in his commendation becomes furious in his condemnation. It mocks and maligns, jeers and insults him.

God fashions religion as an ideal aiming at cohesiveness, brotherhood, and unity among mankind. Man makes it disturbing, disruptive, and divisive. The great ideal recedes from the very inception of religion, until it grows dim and distant. It does not die, because ideals are immortal. Hope, ingrained in human heart, holds out the eternal assurance of its eventual realization.

**Friendless and forlorn, Zarathushtra flees to Ahura Mazda.** He implores him, he cries unto him to help him as a friend would help his friend. He has no following, no means of sustenance, and no place of refuge. If he wants to live so that he can yet hope to work as the prophet of Mazda and found his excellent religion, he should leave his homeland. He asks Mazda to point him the land to which he should flee.<sup>61</sup> When all hopes seem to be blighted, he bids farewell with heavy heart to the place of his birth. He does not know to what land he should turn and he turns to wherever Mazda may take him. He walks and walking thinks, dreams, falls into a reverie, stops, wakes up, hastens his steps. He comes across villages, but rumours have preceded him that a man, a pretender, a blasphemer, a disturber of peace is on the way. No headman of the villages comes forward to offer him an asylum in his village, even though the traditional usage of hospitality demands that his doors be flung open to the weary traveller. He must go onward, he sees, and travels to places removed from his native town, so that the

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61 Y46.1, 2.

people may not know him. There, among new surroundings and new people, he must begin his work anew. In his own town they knew him from childhood. They could not realize that they had among them one who had risen through the incomparable virtues of his head and heart to perfection, and upon whom Ahura Mazda's grace had descended. They could not reconcile themselves to the idea that they should bend their heads and bow their knees to one who grew of age among them and whose father and father's A father lived and shared their common lives. But in the distant parts of the country where he would go as a stranger, he hoped his mission would bear fruit. So he went along from one village to another and, with feet swollen with fatigue, he covered several miles every day. Since he left his home he had not slept in a bed. If he reached a caravanserai at night, he slept in a corner where horses and mules, donkeys and camels jostled together. He rested his weary head upon the divine bosom and found a perfect haven in the heart of Ahura Mazda. At noon he slept on the bare floor or on a mattress or on straw under the shade of trees. If he found a throng of people at a halting stage passing their time in idle talk, he ventured to address them on the subject near to his heart. His words fell upon deaf ears and they curtly dismissed him from their lively company. Thus passed days after days, and season after season. Summer and autumn had passed and he was now in the midst of severe winter. He had dined so far on extremely frugal meals and spent money where he could not do without spending it, yet his pocket was getting thinner day by day. He would have to work to earn his honest living or beg, which he would not do. He clothed himself in coarse cloth which exposed him to the bleak blasts of snow and frost that cut his face and pierced his body limb from limb. When the great nobles of his native town and the rich members of the Kavi fraternity fared sumptuously on savoury dishes and luscious wines, and slept on warm beds with velvety cushions to rest their heads and with printed chintz curtains, the one greater than they went hungry and cold and had nowhere to lay his weary limbs.

**Zarathushtra's teachings win the ear of the royal court.**

Thus passed a long period of trials and hardships. Zarathushtra traversed the length and breadth of Iran. He spoke, he discoursed, he conversed, he preached wherever he happened to be. His prophetic career was now bearing some good result. He was winning converts for his new religion. He triumphed in gaining over the sympathy even of some intelligent youths of his own family.<sup>62</sup> His cousin Maidyoimaongha (Maidok-mah) sympathized with his cause and soon became his ardent disciple.<sup>63</sup> Two very brilliant brothers of the powerful Hvogva clan came over to his faith. They were Frashaoshtra

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62 Y46.15.

63 Y51.19.

(Frashostar) and Jamaspa.<sup>64</sup> Zarathushtra beseeches Ahura Mazda to grant the gift of Good Thought to Frashaoshtra and his other followers.<sup>65</sup> He implores him further bestow the most gladsome chieftainship in righteousness upon Frashaoshtra,<sup>66</sup> whose daughter he later takes to wife.<sup>67</sup> Jamaspa, called the wise, owing to his great talents, occupied the most influential position at the royal court. Zarathushtra gave him his daughter Pouruchisti in marriage.<sup>68</sup> The prophet of Iran had made his spiritual conquest even among the Turanians, the traditional foes of Iran, and brought over the influential chieftain Fryana and his family to his faith.<sup>69</sup>

Zarathushtra had begun his prophetic propaganda in the west of Iran. He had now crossed the entire breadth of the country and was now in the extreme east. Bactria was the seat of the Kavi kings. For a long time he had been preaching in the great city, which was the meeting place of travellers and merchants from distant lands. He stirred up religious enthusiasm among his hearers. He spoke with flaming enthusiasm and animation and his discourses warmed their imaginations and enthused their hearts. They thought that the new teacher taught as man had never taught. They bowed their knees to him, strewn his path with flowers and worshipped the very ground he walked on. Success now attended upon him and day after day he found himself surrounded by new converts. His victory was complete when ultimately he triumphed in winning as a convert Kavi Vishtaspa, the ruler of the land, together with his royal consort Hutaosa. This was the crowning event in the establishment of Zoroastrianism. Conversions to the new religion followed rapidly as a natural sequel, when it became known that the ruling house of Iran had embraced Zarathushtra's faith. Zarathushtra now declares with supreme satisfaction to his divine teacher Ahura Mazda that the king had befriended his religion and was eager to cooperate with him in his great mission of proclaiming his faith to all.<sup>70</sup> He now beseeches Ahura Mazda to give him and the royal patron of his religion the blessings and gifts of good thought, righteousness, and devotion of Vohu Manah, Asha, and Armaiti, so that they may make his profitable words heard everywhere.<sup>71</sup> The king, says Zarathushtra, has attained the knowledge of the sacred lore which

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64 Y46.16, 17; 49.9; 51.18; 53.2.

65 Y28.8.

66 Y49.8.

67 Y51.17.

68 Y53.2, 3.

69 Y46.12.

70 Y46.14.

71 Y28.7.

Ahura Mazda had conceived with Asha.<sup>72</sup> Vishtaspa, Frashaoshtra, and others who have now turned Zoroastrian, invoke and adore Ahura Mazda and tread the straight paths of the Saviour ordained by him.<sup>73</sup> The Turanian chieftain Fryana came over to the new faith and Zarathushtra immortalizes his clan in his holy hymns.<sup>74</sup>

**Zarathushtra's Mission.** Prophets are revolutionists and Zarathushtra was the earliest one. He saw that the world was imperfect and its infirmities and inequities were formidable. He was the messenger of Ahura Mazda, the refuge of the weak, the solace of the suffering, the hope of humanity, and the regenerator of the world. He brought to the unhappy world the happy tidings of the coming of the Kingdom of Righteousness. He introduced into the world a new spiritual order. He brought a new hope, a new life. Brimful of life and hope, he brought cheer and hope to mankind.

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72 Y51.16.

73 Y53.2.

74 Y46.12.

## CHAPTER IV. TOWARDS MONOTHEISM

**Gods in evolution.** Religion has formed a deeply integral part of mankind at all times. We glean from the records of early peoples the earliest gropings of the human mind in its endeavour to understand and interpret natural phenomena. At various stages of its evolution, religion rises from animism to a belief in cosmic and abstract gods. Each tribe had its local god or gods who gained or lost in power as the seats of their location rose or fell in political power. The fate of the gods fluctuated with the vicissitudes of their followers. The god who rose to power either absorbed other gods in his person or subordinated them as lesser gods or ministering angels in his own service. Some of these gods were embraced in the family of the great god as his son or consort, in case of a goddess, and formed a divine triad of father, mother, and son. When religious ideas approached abstract thinking, they were represented as the manifestations of the newly enthroned god or they were reduced to abstractions as the great god's attributes. When Babylon rose to power, its god Marduk absorbed all other gods, both of the north and the south, even his father Ea, and became the chief god of the whole of Babylonia. The legends of the earlier gods clung to his name and hymns formerly composed in their honour were now dedicated to him. Ashur, the local god of Assyria, eclipsed gods of other localities and rose to preeminence as his native city came to paramount power. When Shamash outshone his many confederate solar gods, he became the supreme god, and the other gods who were formerly on a footing of equality with him were accommodated as his satellites. Sometimes when the fighting tribes were united by peace the rival gods of each tribe formed their divine union. For example, the sun god Ra who came to Egypt from Asia formed an alliance with the popular god Amen and the dual divinities, thereafter, came to be known as Amen Ra.

The priests associated the highest attributes with the gods whom they exalted. The poet who sang the glory of his favourite god was always so deeply moved by his devotion to him that he spoke and sang of him as the most powerful and the most beautiful god. Consequently, a monotheistic vein began to appear in the utterances of sectarians, each of whom acclaimed his respective god as the one and the only god, without his like. This indiscriminate exaltation of several gods as the all-highest and all-wisest evoked protest from some quarters. Human experience had taught them that a country had only one sovereign autocrat as its ruler and two or more kings of absolutely equal grade in power were unthinkable. With such ideas we notice Amenhotep IV, an adventurous king, attempting to introduce a great religious reform among his people in the fourteenth century B.C. He scoffed at the Egyptian pantheon and declared that there was only one god whose outward form was the sun. This god was Aten, the visible disk of the

sun. In his zeal for reform, he changed his own name to Akhenaten or 'pleasing to the Sun-disk.' He suppressed the worship of other gods, destroyed their statues, demolished the temples that housed them, sequestered their property and obliterated their names wherever they appeared. He consecrated temples to Aten and made the cult of the Sun-disk his state religion and commanded his subjects to offer their devotions to this one God only. Being himself a poetic genius, he composed fine hymns to the new God and addressed him as the inscrutable creator, one God, absolute in power. The revolutionary reform, however, did not survive the death of the poet-king. The old gods returned from exile and were soon reinstated.

The gods were in most cases subject to human infirmities. Ra grew old with age and became weak. Gods had their wives, who like women in human society were subordinated to their lords. But as history records instances of some women of exceptional talents and virtue who broke the social barriers raised by men against their sex and rose to pre-eminence, so some goddesses of abnormal energy rose to power. The great goddess Ishtar, for instance, absorbed all other goddesses of the Babylonian-Assyrian pantheon and became the supreme female divinity. It was at her temple that sacred prostitution became a feature. Osiris had Horus for his son by his wife Isis. His brother Set overpowered and killed him by cunning and intrigue. Some gods were ceremoniously bathed and clothed, adorned and perfumed with incense by priests every morning. The divine toilet over, they were treated with sumptuous food and drink of slaughtered animals and wine. The gods of the Greeks lived on the summit of Mount Olympus. They were, like the members of their divine fraternity elsewhere, invested with magnified human forms and traits. They loved and hated, intrigued and deceived and shared human frailties. It was for the demoralizing influence of such beliefs that Plato later forbade the tales of the frail gods in his ideal Republic, and Xenophanes poured out scorn over the anthropomorphic gods of Homer and Hesiod.

The gods were generally the personifications of nature. The solar gods, from their high position in the heavens, naturally became the overseers of men's actions upon earth and consequently they came to be regarded as the celestial judges. The solar gods Anu, Ninib, Nergal, and Shamash, at various periods of their ascendancy to power, became the judges who punished wrong-doers. With the advancement of thought, the moral tone improved. The heart is the voice of God and welfare in life is gained by following its guidance, says Amenhotep. The emphasis that he lays on the adherence to truth in his inscriptions anticipates Darius the Great by several centuries. But the one god who rose to the greatest moral grandeur before the incomparably more sublime god that Zarathushtra discovered, was Varuna. A god of the sky in his origin,

he rose to great ethical heights and became the upholder and guardian of the moral order upon earth. He is called omniscient and infallible. He detected man's truth and falsehood. If two men sat together and schemed some wrong, Varuna was there as the third. The winkings of man's eyes were numbered by him. The sinner laid bare his heart before him, confessed his sins, and prayed for his forgiveness, pathetically saying that he did not commit sin willingly but that he was led astray by wrath, dice, and liquor. The hymns composed in his honour are most ethical.



## CHAPTER V. AHURA MAZDA

**Ahura Mazda is the name Zarathushtra gives to God.** The Iranians, as we shall see later, had brought to their new homeland several gods of the Indo-Iranian pantheon. Zarathushtra does not mention them by name in his hymns. This omission is not accidental; it is deliberate. His is altogether a new religion. No wonder he tells his hearers that he speaks to them words that are unheard of before.<sup>1</sup> All thinking and doing, whether human or divine, is done through the mind. It is knowledge or wisdom which creates, moulds, and guides anything and everything. He, therefore, clothes the idea of godhead with wisdom and names him 'Ahura Mazda.' This collocation means literally, 'The Lord Wisdom' or 'The Wise Lord.' The first element of this compound, Ahura, 'Lord,' is one of the Indo-Iranian generic forms of godhead and Zarathushtra confers upon it the Iranian epithet Mazda, 'Wise.' The Aryan and Semitic gods that preceded Ahura Mazda were nature gods. Some of them later rose to a higher spiritual level and acquired spiritual epithets. Ahura Mazda was never a nature-god. He was what he ever is, the highly spiritual being. Apart from its use in the Gathas, the term Mazda is found in its derivative form Mazdaka, used as a Median proper name in 715 B.C. in the Assyrian inscriptions of Sargon. Moreover, the compound Ahura Mazda itself is found in its Assyrian equivalent Assara Mazas in an inscription of Assurbanipal. Though the inscription bears the date of the reign of king Assurbanipal, it records the use of this Assyrian form of Ahura Mazda in the latter part of the second millennium.

Zarathushtra uses the divine name variously as the metrical composition of the hymns requires. He employs the combinations Ahura Mazda and Mazda Ahura or the forms Ahura or Mazda respectively, designating God in all cases. In many instances the terms Ahura and Mazda are used separately in a single strophe, the one at the opening and the other at the close with different exhortations and prayers to each, yet in both cases as applied to the Supreme Being. Ahura Mazda.

**Ahura Mazda is the Being par excellence.** Ahura Mazda sits at the apex among the celestial beings of Garonmana [Garothman, *i.e.* Heaven]. He is not begotten, nor is there one like unto him. Beyond him, apart from him, and without him nothing exists. He is the supreme being through whom everything exists. He is brighter than the brightest of creation, higher than the highest heavens, older than the oldest in the universe. He is the best one.<sup>2</sup> He knows no elder, he has no equal. There is none to dispute his supremacy and contest his place. Nor is there one

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1 Y31.1.

2 Y28.8.

to struggle successfully with him for the mastery of the heavens. He is the first and foremost. He is the most perfect being. He is almighty.<sup>3</sup> He is the absolute sovereign.<sup>4</sup> He is beneficent.<sup>5</sup> He is changeless.<sup>6</sup> He is the same now and for ever.<sup>7</sup> He was, he is, and he will be the same transcendent being, moving all, yet moved by none. In the midst of the manifold changes wrought by him in the universe, the Lord God remains changeless and unaffected, for he is mighty.<sup>8</sup> He will decide victory between the rival hosts of good and evil.<sup>9</sup> He is the most worthy of invocation,<sup>10</sup> and the first possessor of felicity and joy.<sup>11</sup> There is none before him.<sup>12</sup> He is the greatest of all.<sup>13</sup> He is the only God proper, than whom there is none higher. Everything comes from him and through him. He is the lord of all. Many are his attributes. They are not accidents of his being, as will be shown below, but are his very essence.

**The nature of Ahura Mazda.** Ahura Mazda is spirit in his being. The cardinal attribute Spirit or Beneficent Spirit or Most Beneficent Spirit is his very essence. Zarathushtra acquaints mankind for the first time in the history of religions with the concept of the godhead that is most incomparable in sublimity and unprecedented in the grandeur of nobility. He is higher than the highest being worshipped by mankind before his day. He is devoid of all anthropomorphic traits which characterized the Aryan and Semitic gods. Man, however, can comprehend abstract ideas and spiritual conceptions when they are put before him in words and expressions clothed in the garb of earthly imagery and compassed in human language. Zarathushtra, therefore, speaks of Ahura Mazda in human analogy. He conceives of Ahura Mazda in thought and apprehends him with his eye.<sup>14</sup> He asks him to teach by the word of his mouth<sup>15</sup> and to tell him with the very tongue of his mouth.<sup>16</sup> He is also spoken of as distributing good and evil to men by

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3 Y28.5; 33.11.

4 Y28.7; 43.1.

5 Y48.3.

6 Y45.10.

7 Y31.7.

8 Y43.4.

9 Y44.15.

10 Y46.9.

11 Y29.10.

12 Y28.3.

13 Y45.6.

14 Y31.8; 45.8.

15 Y28.11.

16 Y31.3.

his own hands,<sup>17</sup> and as observing with his eyes all things hidden and open.<sup>18</sup> He lives in the empyrean enthroned in his majesty.<sup>19</sup> He is ever present in the straight paths that lead mankind to righteousness.<sup>20</sup> In his resplendence he lives in the heavenly realms and wears the firmament as his garment.<sup>21</sup> Yahweh, likewise, covers himself with light as with a garment. Expressions like these are symbolical and they are not to be taken literally, since Ahura Mazda, as the whole tone of the Gathas proves, is to be seen or conceived only through the mind's eye. The finite can describe the infinite through finite analogies and similes alone.

**The transcendental immanence of Ahura Mazda.** Ahura Mazda has his celestial mansions in the highest heavens, upon the vast expanse of the earth and in the hearts of the righteous persons. He is transcendent in as much as he is infinitely more sublime and greater than his creatures. Yet he is not so remote and ineffable as not to be approached and addressed and greeted by his ardent worshippers. He is immanent in the sense that man can enter into close and loving relations with him, and own him as his father and brother and friend.<sup>22</sup> He befriends those who seek his friendship and loves those who long for his love.<sup>23</sup> Zarathushtra addresses Ahura Mazda as his friend.<sup>24</sup> He is life's safest anchorage and Zarathushtra, in his misfortunes, pours out his heart in his divine friend's bosom and cries unto him for help and protection as a friend helps a friend.<sup>25</sup> He lovingly helps those who flee unto him in their distress and betake themselves to his protection. There is none other than he who shields men against harm and they invoke his protection through Asha.<sup>26</sup> We sleep secure because he guards us lovingly and we live in safety because he stands by our side when we awake out of sleep. His goodness towards us knows no bounds. Immortality, holiness, power, and perfection are his gifts to those who deserve them through their deeds and words and prayers.<sup>27</sup> Man can become his friend and companion through his words and deeds of

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17 Y43.4.

18 Y31.13.

19 Y28.5; 46.16.

20 Y33.5; 43.3.

21 Y30.5.

22 Y45.11.

23 Y44.17.

24 Y44.1.

25 Y46.2, 7.

26 Y34.7.

27 Y34.1.

righteousness.<sup>28</sup> He is invoked to bestow upon the pious the good things of life for his love of them.<sup>29</sup> With his good understanding, man can imitate him and be like unto him by promoting the welfare of all around him through righteousness.<sup>30</sup>

The prophet prays for his vision and communion with him.<sup>31</sup> He strives to approach him through Good Mind,<sup>32</sup> and through his devoted supplications.<sup>33</sup> With outstretched hands he aspires to reach him with songs of praise on his lips.<sup>34</sup> Thus will he continue his praise, he says, as long as he has strength and vigour,<sup>35</sup> and adds that the stars and the sun and the dawn all unite in singing praise unto him.<sup>36</sup> Consumed with the fervour of religious emotion, he implores Ahura Mazda to rise up for him,<sup>37</sup> and to come to him and manifest himself to him in his own person.<sup>38</sup> Sraosha comes with Vohu Manah unto him whom Ahura Mazda desires.<sup>39</sup>

**Ahura Mazda is the creator.** Creation is a free act of the divine goodness of Ahura Mazda.<sup>40</sup> In the beginning when he lived in his supreme self-sufficiency, he conceived the thought to clothe the heavenly realm with light.<sup>41</sup> He created light, and darkness was there, for darkness shadows light.<sup>42</sup> He is the father and creator of Vohu Manah,<sup>43</sup> of Asha,<sup>44</sup> of Khshathra,<sup>45</sup> of Armaiti,<sup>46</sup> of Haurvatat and

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28 Y31.21, 22.

29 Y33.10.

30 Y31.16.

31 Y33.6.

32 Y28.2.

33 Y50.9.

34 Y50.8.

35 Y50.11.

36 Y50.10.

37 Y33.12.

38 Y33.7; 49.1.

39 Y44.16.

40 Y44.7.

41 Y31.7.

42 Y44.5.

43 Y31.8; 44.4; 45.4.

44 Y31.7, 8; 44.3; 47.2.

45 Y44.7.

46 Y31.9; 44.7; 45.4.

Ameretat,<sup>47</sup> and of Geush Tashan.<sup>48</sup> The joy-giving cattle and this universe are his creations.<sup>49</sup> He upholds the earth and firmament from falling.<sup>50</sup> He made the moon wax and wane, and determined the path of the sun and stars.<sup>51</sup> He yoked swiftness to wind and clouds.<sup>52</sup> He clothed the heavenly realms with light.<sup>53</sup> He it was who made morning and noon and night.<sup>54</sup> He created kine, waters and plants.<sup>55</sup> He created human beings and their spirits, breathed life in their bodies and endowed them with the freedom of will.<sup>56</sup> He inspired love between the son and father.<sup>57</sup> He made sleep and wakefulness.<sup>58</sup> He is the beneficent dispenser of blessings to mankind.<sup>59</sup> Weal and woe are ordained by him.<sup>60</sup>

**Ahura Mazda is the lord of wisdom.** The very name of the godhead embodies in itself great wisdom. Ahura Mazda is the wise lord.<sup>61</sup> He has created the universe through his wisdom and rules it through wisdom. He is the most knowing one.<sup>62</sup> He is the far-seeing one,<sup>63</sup> and so is he the all-seeing one.<sup>64</sup> He knows all that is done in the past and all that will be done in the future, and judges through his omniscience.<sup>65</sup> Zarathushtra seeks knowledge from him of what will be and what will not be.<sup>66</sup> Through his Best Mind he knows man's desert at the reckoning.<sup>67</sup> Human beings have their masks drawn on their faces

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47 Y51.7.

48 Y31.9; 47.3.

49 Y44.6; 50.11.

50 Y44.4.

51 Y44.3.

52 Y44.4.

53 Y31.7.

54 Y44.5.

55 Y44.4; 48.6; 51.7.

56 Y31.11; 46.6.

57 Y44.7.

58 Y44.5.

59 Y28.5; 33.11; 48.3.

60 Y45.9.

61 Y29.6; 45.3; 48.2, 3.

62 Y46.19.

63 Y33.13.

64 Y45.4.

65 Y29.4.

66 Y31.5.

67 Y32.6, 7.

and none can see what is hidden within. But Ahura Mazda has an eye over them all and with penetrating eyes he sees their open and secret faults.<sup>68</sup> None can deceive his wisdom,<sup>69</sup> for he is undeceivable.<sup>70</sup> He is the consummate teacher of those who believingly hear him and become of one mind with him and who, inspired by Asha and Vohu Manah, exalt him by their words and deeds.<sup>71</sup>

**Ahura Mazda is the law-giver and judge.** With the creation of man Ahura Mazda has ordained laws for the rightful conduct of his life.<sup>72</sup> The great mission of the prophet is to acquaint mankind with these and to lead all to see for themselves with their intelligence that their welfare depends on the faithful adherence to them. He exhorts his hearers to give a careful hearing to his words, understand with clear discernment what he tells them, and, with the discreet exercise of the freedom of the will, with which Ahura Mazda has endowed them, make their own choice of conduct.<sup>73</sup> The divine law-giver has established the moral order in the beginning of the world.<sup>74</sup> He has ordained the commandments of reward and retribution to the righteous and the wicked, and Zarathushtra asks his followers to keep them in mind and live lawful lives so that they may thereby win felicity for themselves.<sup>75</sup> Every man and every woman that lives this earthly life will have to stand at the reckoning one day to receive his or her own desert, and Zarathushtra teaches them all the laws of the requitals of human conduct in which Ahura Mazda himself has instructed him.<sup>76</sup> Ahura Mazda is the lord who knows and watches and judges the deeds of mortals.<sup>77</sup> He holds the destinies of mankind in his hands and apportions reward and retribution unto the righteous and the wicked.<sup>78</sup> The righteous souls will live in the abode of Ahura Mazda.<sup>79</sup> He punishes the wrong-doers just as he rewards the righteous, but he

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68 Y31.13.

69 Y43.6.

70 Y45.4.

71 Y51.3.

72 Y46.15; 51.19.

73 Y30.2.

74 Y46.6.

75 Y30.11; 45.7; 51.6.

76 Y31.14.

77 Y29.4; 31.8.

78 Y43.4, 5.

79 Y30.10; 48.7; 49.10.

shows compassion also and forgives when the penitent sinner casts himself on his mercy.<sup>80</sup>

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80 Y30.2.

## CHAPTER VI. SPENTA MAINYU

**Spenta Mainyu is the self-revealing activity of Ahura Mazda.** The supreme godhead, we have seen, is immutable, perfect, spiritual unity. Zarathushtra solves the problem of reconciling the unchangeable nature of Ahura Mazda with the world of change by postulating a principle that intervenes between the unmoved mover and the moved. This working medium of Ahura Mazda spans the chasm between the supersensuous and the sensuous. He brings the transcendence and immanence of Ahura Mazda into a synthesis. Ahura Mazda is neither completely separated nor completely merged in the world. He is the primordial, self-existing being. In his infinite goodness he wills the creation of the universe. Both heavenly and earthly existence lived with him and in him as idealized contents of his being. The projection or manifestation of his creative will and thought is his active working principle Spenta Mainyu, Holy Spirit. Spenta Mainyu is as old as Ahura Mazda, for he ever was in Ahura Mazda and with Ahura Mazda. Though he is thus part of Ahura Mazda, in his manifestation as the working self of Ahura Mazda he is different from Ahura Mazda. He is not an entity or personality. Ahura Mazda is the greatest spiritual personality. Spenta Mainyu is his image, his replica. He represents the creative attribute of Ahura Mazda in his relation to the created world.

Spenta Mainyu symbolizes the ideal or perfect existence as conceived in thought by Ahura Mazda. The materialization of the divine thought in creation spells imperfection and Spenta Mainyu is shadowed by his inseparable opposite. These two primeval spirits, who are spoken of as twins, emerged from the divine bosom and by their innate choice appeared as the better and the bad in thought, word, and deed.<sup>1</sup> He, the Most Holy Spirit, chose righteousness and he who is called the Evil Spirit wooed the worst as his sphere of action.<sup>2</sup> The better one of the two spirits told the evil one that they were by nature opposed to each other in their thoughts and teachings, understandings and beliefs, words, and deeds, selves and souls – in nothing could they twain ever meet.<sup>3</sup> When the two first came together in the world, they created life and non-life and established the law of reward and retribution for mankind, that the righteous will reap at the end of existence the weal of Best Thought and the wicked the woe of the Worst Existence.<sup>4</sup>

The Gathas variously speak of Spenta Mainyu either as the attribute of Ahura Mazda or as his vicegerent, or as his co-worker, or as identified

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1 Y30.3.

2 Y30.5.

3 Y45.2.

4 Y30.4.



with him or as distinct from him. It is Spenta Mainyu that Ahura Mazda creates cattle and water and plants and all that exist.<sup>5</sup> Ahura Mazda is asked to give ear to man's invocation through Spenta Mainyu,<sup>6</sup> and to strength through him.<sup>7</sup> Through him does Ahura Mazda give Perfection and Immortality unto the pious who live a righteous and devoted life of best thoughts, words, and deeds.<sup>8</sup> Ahura Mazda is implored to teach by his own mouth, on behalf of his Spirit, how the world first came into being.<sup>9</sup> It is through his Spirit that Ahura Mazda furthers his blessed realms<sup>10</sup> He gives the best unto the righteous through Spenta Mainyu.<sup>11</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda what award will he make unto the believers and the non-believers through his Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Mazda will come at the final dispensation with Spenta Mainyu.<sup>13</sup> Through him does one win the felicity of paradise.<sup>14</sup> The devout seek to be acquainted with the works of Spenta Mainyu.<sup>15</sup> The Spirit knows the attitude of the false speaker and the true speaker, the wise and the unwise as they are led by the promptings of their hearts and minds.<sup>16</sup> Spenta Mainyu is the friend of all and he protects them through Righteousness in both the worlds from transgression.<sup>17</sup> It is the wicked that are hurt by him.<sup>18</sup> Spenta Mainyu or the Holy Spirit is sometimes spoken of as the Good Spirit,<sup>19</sup> or the Best Spirit,<sup>20</sup> or the Most Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> This superlative title, the Most Holy Spirit, is sometimes applied to Ahura Mazda himself.<sup>22</sup> It is also used for Spenta Mainyu as apart from Ahura Mazda. For example, Zarathushtra tells Ahura Mazda that he chooses his Most Holy Spirit for

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5 Y44.7; 47.3; 51.7.

6 Y45.6.

7 Y33.12.

8 Y47.1.

9 Y28.11.

10 Y31.7.

11 Y47.5.

12 Y31.3; 47.6.

13 Y43.6.

14 Y43.2.

15 Y28.1.

16 Y31.12.

17 Y44.2.

18 Y47.4.

19 Y45.5.

20 Y33.6.

21 Y47.2.

22 Y33.12; 43.2; 45.5; 51.7.

himself.<sup>23</sup> The Most Holy Spirit, the one who stands in opposition to his evil twin brother, dons the massive heavens for his garment.<sup>24</sup>

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23 Y43.16.

24 Y30.5; for Spenta Mainyu see Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 29, 30, 32, 33, 40, 69, 71; Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p. 101-106; Kanga, *A New Interpretation of the Spenta Mainyu of the Gathas*, Bombay, 1933.

## CHAPTER VII. MAZDA'S MINISTERING ANGELS

**Amesha Spentas in the making.** Zarathushtra holds before mankind six cardinal virtues of Ahura Mazda for emulation. Primarily, they are pure abstractions, etherealized moral concepts, symbolic ideals, abstract figures. They have no individuality, no characteristics, no mythology as the Indo-Iranian divinities have. Zarathushtra aims at replacing the divine beings that owe their origin to some natural phenomena and later rise to moral stature, by spiritual ideals. The heavenly beings that he finds honoured among his people are such ancient beings that have evolved from the various aspects of nature. Such are Mithra and his associates that hold spiritual sway over the hearts of the Iranian peoples. The prophet substitutes for these august concrete beings his worshipful attributes of Ahura Mazda. In the heavenly hierarchy they represent altogether a novel feature. They are entirely unlike the gods whom mankind had been accustomed to worship under various names before his advent. He names these divine qualifications Vohu Manah, 'Good Mind,' Asha, 'Righteousness,' Khshathra, 'Divine Kingdom,' Armaiti, 'Devotion,' Haurvatat, 'Perfection,' and Ameretat, 'Immortality.' They form Ahura Mazda's being. That is, Vohu Manah is Ahura Mazda's Good Mind or Good Thought, Asha is his Righteousness and so are others his different virtues. This idealistic phase that Zarathushtra puts before man does not long retain its character. The abstract virtues soon get detached from Ahura Mazda and assume thin personification. In two instances we meet with the appellative terms *Mazdāo* (*schā*) *Ahuronghō*, 'Ahura Mazda and his associates,'<sup>1</sup> like the Vedic plural expressions Varunas and Rudras.<sup>2</sup> Here we witness the Amesha Spentas or the Holy Immortals of the post-Gathic period in the making.

These six divine attributes which we have said tend towards forming the heavenly host of Ahura Mazda, it is suggested, have originated under the influence of the Vedic Adityas.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the seven Gathic divine appellations, the Adityas, however, are variously spoken of as six or seven or eight or even twelve in number. They include great Vedic divinities like Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Indra, and others and even sun and moon and fire. Zarathushtra has set his face against them. His spiritual impersonations of the godhead are, it seems to us, a class by themselves and are particular to him.

Vohu Manah, Asha, and Khshathra are neuter nouns taken in the later Avestan as male members of the divine hierarchy and Armaiti,

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1 Y30.9; 31.4.

2 See Tiele, *The Religion of the Persian Peoples*, tr. Nariman, p. 116.

3 Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 98 f., 117, 240; Geiger, *Die Amesha Spentas*, p. 164-245; Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p. 17.

Haurvatat, and Ameretat are feminine names. They occur in the different Gathic stanzas individually or two or three or four or more together indefinitely. The hexad, or taken along with Ahura Mazda, the heptad, is not fixed in the Gathas as we find it in the later Avesta, where it is expressly said that the Holy Immortals are seven. Yet we have instances where Ahura Mazda and his six epithets are mentioned together.<sup>4</sup> Asha stands first in the number of times he is mentioned and Vohu Manah, though first of the heavenly host, comes second. They are followed by Khshathra and Armaiti respectively. Haurvatat and Ameretat, who invariably occur together, make up the rear. With the exception of Vohu Manah, whose name is always a fixed compound with Vohu, 'Good,' qualifying Manah, 'Mind,' all the others have not the stereotyped epithets that the four of them are given at the later period. At times Vohu Manah's epithet designating his goodness is transferred to Khshathra.<sup>5</sup> As the process towards the personification of Ahura Mazda's attributes has already begun, it is often extremely difficult to decide whether the qualitative divine expressions stand for personified beings or as abstract nouns designating certain virtues in application to Ahura Mazda himself or to man.

The prominent feature of these six abstract attributes when they have fully grown into Ahura Mazda's ministering angels is the twofold character of work they are assigned to perform. In addition to a specific virtue that each represents on the spiritual side, a material object is put under his or her direct guardianship on the physical side. This physical aspect of their functions is most marked in the later period. Its origin, however, can be traced in the Gathas where we find a beginning already made of associating some one material creation with every one of them. We shall now deal with them individually.

## VOHU MANAH

**The first in Ahura Mazda's creation.** When Ahura Mazda was with none beside him, in his supreme isolation, he evolved in his mind the thought of creating the universe. He named his first creation after his mind and called him Vohu Manah, Good Mind.<sup>6</sup> Zarathushtra fondly speaks of him as Ahura Mazda's son.<sup>7</sup> He is often addressed in the Gathas in the superlative as Vahishta Manah, Best Mind.<sup>8</sup> Occasionally, Vohu Manah is converted into Vohu Mainyu, Good Spirit<sup>9</sup> or Vahishta

4 Y34.11; 45.10; 47.1.

5 Y31.22; 51.1.

6 Y44.4.

7 Y31.8; 45.4.

8 Y28.9; 31.4, 7; 32.6, 11; 33.9; 41.1; 50.1, 4; 51.4.

9 Y45.5; 48.8.

Mainyu, Best Spirit.<sup>10</sup> It has to be noted that Vohu Mainyu or Vahishta Mainyu has nothing in common with Spenta Mainyu or the Holy Spirit, the first of the two Primeval Spirits of Ahura Mazda.

**Vohu Manah is Ahura Mazda's Good Thought.** The ethical system of Zarathushtra has the triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds as its basis. Good words and good deeds proceed from good thoughts and good thoughts are inspired in man by Vohu Manah. In all his waking hours man thinks and thinks incessantly. He thinks useful thoughts and wise thoughts and great thoughts and wholesome thoughts and kindly thoughts and virtuous thoughts and good thoughts. But he thinks also idle thoughts and foolish thoughts and mean thoughts and malicious thoughts and cruel thoughts and vicious thoughts and evil thoughts. The mind soars high and wings its way in the realm of righteousness or it sinks low and grovels in the mire of wickedness. Man thinks thoughts, but thoughts make man. Thoughts make him a human being, a saint, and an angel; and thoughts make him an animal, a sinner, and a demon. Man is thought materialized in word and deed. Vohu Manah is the ideal that man as a thinking being has to realize.

**Vohu Manah symbolizes Ahura Mazda's wisdom.** Man thinks but he reasons besides, and his reasoning raises him above the level of the animal world. The Gathas employ *khratu* and *chisti* to designate wisdom. They do not, however, classify wisdom as the later Avesta distinguishes the innate wisdom from the acquired wisdom. The loftiest ideal for man upon earth is to be like unto Ahura Mazda and it is through the wisdom of Vohu Manah that man can realize it.<sup>11</sup> Zarathushtra invokes Ahura Mazda to grant him the wisdom of Vohu Manah,<sup>12</sup> and longs to be acquainted with the decrees of Vohu Manah.<sup>13</sup> He desires to know to whom among his followers will the wisdom of Vohu Manah descend.<sup>14</sup> The wise man of good understanding performs deeds that are pleasing to Vohu Manah.<sup>15</sup> The enlightenment that Vohu Manah gives enables the devout to practise the doctrines of weal and woe.<sup>16</sup> They pray for thoughts to turn where wisdom abides.<sup>17</sup> Mazda is

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10 Y33.6.

11 Y48.3.

12 Y28.1.

13 Y48.9.

14 Y48.11.

15 Y34.10.

16 Y34.7.

17 Y30.9.

implored to fulfil the desires of the wise who are devoted to Vohu Manah.<sup>18</sup>

**Vohu Manah's grace.** Zarathushtra adores Vohu Manah with songs of praise,<sup>19</sup> and teaches his followers to offer him praise.<sup>20</sup> He asks Ahura Mazda to teach him how best he could inspire men to the deeds of Vohu Manah.<sup>21</sup> He tells his heavenly father that he will always work for the furtherance of the domain of Vohu Manah,<sup>22</sup> and adds that as long as he has strength left in him he will, in union with Vohu Manah, lead mankind on the path of righteousness.<sup>23</sup> He implores Ahura Mazda to come down to him through Vohu Manah.<sup>24</sup> Through Vohu Manah does the prophet long to reach Ahura Mazda,<sup>25</sup> and through the performance of the deeds pleasing unto Vohu Manah does he long to glorify and reach his maker.<sup>26</sup> Pouruchisti is advised to seek Vohu Manah's fellowship.<sup>27</sup> The devout seek to propitiate Vohu Manah to win his kinship.<sup>28</sup> Ahura Mazda is besought by them to be the revealer of Vohu Manah unto them.<sup>29</sup> When enlightenment descends upon Zarathushtra, he longs to see Vohu Manah,<sup>30</sup> and prays that he may come to help him.<sup>31</sup> His yearning to have a glimpse of the divine mind is satisfied. Vohu Manah comes to him and illumines his mind.<sup>32</sup> The prophet seeks to know from him the rules of life that lead to happiness.<sup>33</sup> Vohu Manah teaches him the working of Ahura Mazda.<sup>34</sup> He asks Mazda to teach him through Vohu Manah his secret doctrines.<sup>35</sup>

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18 Y28.10.

19 Y28.3.

20 Y30.1.

21 Y48.8.

22 Y28.11.

23 Y28.4.

24 Y28.6.

25 Y28.2.

26 Y50.9, 10.

27 Y53.3.

28 Y45.9.

29 Y31.17.

30 Y28.5.

31 Y28.3.

32 Y43.7, 9, 11, 13, 15.

33 Y44.8.

34 Y45.6.

35 Y50.6.

Life led according to the promptings of Vohu Manah is life lived well and Zarathushtra prays for the life, of Good Mind.<sup>36</sup> The blessings of Vohu Manah form the precious reward for man and are gained through the performance of good deeds inspired by righteousness.<sup>37</sup> Zarathushtra longs to know through Vohu Manah the straight paths of life.<sup>38</sup> There are the paths of Vohu Manah and Mazda is invoked to reveal them,<sup>39</sup> Ahura Mazda grants the prayer and speaks about the paths of Vohu Manah to Zarathushtra.<sup>40</sup> Wicked persons mislead men who strive to live an upright life and follow the paths of Vohu Manah.<sup>41</sup> The prophet warns his followers against the evil teachers who keep them back from appreciating the worth of acquisition of Vohu Manah.<sup>42</sup> The evil-minded Bendva defies the counsel of Vohu Manah.<sup>43</sup> The faithful are eager to learn how they could keep far from those that do not seek Vohu Manah's counsel.<sup>44</sup> The evil doers are separated from Vohu Manah.<sup>45</sup> Vohu Manah leaves those who do not practise righteousness,<sup>46</sup> and righteousness flees from those who follow not Vohu Manah, in the same manner as noxious creatures fly from men,<sup>47</sup> The pious therefore declare that they will not annoy Vohu Manah.<sup>48</sup> Vohu Manah is dispenser of the riches of the well disciplined mind and Zarathushtra longs to win it through righteousness.<sup>49</sup> The pious invoke Mazda to reward their efforts to lead righteous lives by bestowing upon them the riches of Vohu Manah.<sup>50</sup> It is the teachers of evil that prevent men from valuing these riches.<sup>51</sup> The prophet prays for the gifts of Vohu Manah for himself and his associates.<sup>52</sup> Vohu Manah's reward is an

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36 Y43.1.

37 Y28.7; Y43.16.

38 Y33.6.

39 Y34.12.

40 Y34.13.

41 Y32.11.

42 Y32.9.

43 Y49.2.

44 Y44.13.

45 Y32.4.

46 Y34.8.

47 Y34.9.

48 Y28.9.

49 Y46.2.

50 Y43.2.

51 Y32.9.

52 Y28.8.

incomparable blessing.<sup>53</sup> Ahura Mazda is asked to grant the wishes of those who are worthy of Vohu Manah's reward owing to their righteousness.<sup>54</sup> Those that are good unto men who endeavour to lead righteous lives will share the blessings of Vohu Manah.<sup>55</sup> They are religious in truth who embrace the good thoughts of Vohu Manah and base their actions of life upon them; such persons win prosperity and happiness.<sup>56</sup> The prophet prays for chieftainship through Vohu Manah.<sup>57</sup> Man obtains power through goodness of his mind and he invokes Ahura Mazda to grant him that power through Vohu Manah.<sup>58</sup> Zarathushtra asks Vohu Manah to bestow power upon his disciples.<sup>59</sup> Girt with such power, man can wage a successful war against wickedness, therefore do the votaries beseech Vohu Manah to endow them with it.<sup>60</sup> Mazda gives power unto the righteous as reward through Vohu Manah.<sup>61</sup> He is invoked to give endurance and durability through Vohu Manah.<sup>62</sup> These he gives and in addition he bequeaths upon the good, perfection and immortality.<sup>63</sup> Those who in obedience to the teachings of the prophet do the deeds of Vohu Manah are given good abodes and joy in life,<sup>64</sup> and perfection and immortality.<sup>65</sup> Whoso befriends Mazda through thoughts and deeds will be given steadfastness of Vohu Manah.<sup>66</sup> Vohu Manah protects the poor.<sup>67</sup> Through him does Ahura Mazda know the deserts of mankind.<sup>68</sup> Zarathushtra asks Mazda to let him know the award he will give him through Vohu Manah.<sup>69</sup> Those in whose life righteousness and devotion are blended, further the dominion of Vohu Manah.<sup>70</sup> The righteous bring prosperity to the World through the deeds of Vohu

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53 Y33.13.

54 Y28.10.

55 Y33.3.

56 Y49.5.

57 Y49.3.

58 Y33.5, 12; Y44.6; Y51.21.

59 Y29.10.

60 Y31.4.

61 Y46.10.

62 Y51.7.

63 Y45.10.

64 Y29.10.

65 Y45.5.

66 Y31.21.

67 Y34.5.

68 Y32.6.

69 Y31.5.

70 Y34.11.



Manah<sup>71</sup> Mazda awards his bounty to those who through deeds of Vohu Manah work for the world.<sup>72</sup> He promotes the best wishes of the truthful workers through Vohu Manah.<sup>73</sup> The prophet promises to give through Vohu Manah the best that is in his power to those who rejoice him by their goodness.<sup>74</sup> One acquires the best of the Holy Spirit through the words of Vohu Manah and the devotion of Armaiti.<sup>75</sup> Vohu Manah furthers the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.<sup>76</sup> He prospers the possessions of those that rejoice Zarathushtra.<sup>77</sup> He welcomes the Turanian Fryans to the joy of Mazda.<sup>78</sup> Vohu Manah will announce the advent of the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.<sup>79</sup> He will establish it at the end of time for those who have helped righteousness to rout wickedness.<sup>80</sup> He will come to the help of the Saoshyants at the Renovation.<sup>81</sup>

**Vohu Manah's relation to paradise.** This becomes most marked in the later period. The beginning towards this phase is already to be noted in the Gathas. Vahishta Manah or Best Thought is spoken of as the paradise itself where the righteous will go after death.<sup>82</sup> Vohu Manah dwells in the heavenly home along with Mazda and Asha.<sup>83</sup> Paradise is said to be the heritage of Vohu Manah.<sup>84</sup> Zarathushtra knows the rewards of deeds done for Ahura Mazda and desires to lead his soul to paradise through Vohu Manah.<sup>85</sup> Those who oppose the evil deeds of the wicked who are wilfully blind and deaf to the teachings of the prophet, will go to the heavenly abode of Vohu Manah.<sup>86</sup> The mighty power of Vohu Manah will be manifested when Mazda will deal out justice to the righteous, and the wicked through his fire.<sup>87</sup> Through the

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71 Y43.6.

72 Y34.14.

73 Y50.11.

74 Y46.18.

75 Y47.2.

76 Y31.6.

77 Y46.13.

78 Y46.12.

79 Y44.6.

80 Y30.8.

81 Y46.3.

82 Y30.4.

83 Y30.10; Y44.9.

84 Y53.4.

85 Y28.4.

86 Y32.15.

87 Y43.4.

words of Vohu Manah the prophet honours those who have worked for the divine purpose and whom Mazda will therefore gather in his abode.<sup>88</sup> The pious pray for long life of felicity in the paradisiac domain of Vohu Manah.<sup>89</sup>

**Vohu Manah in association with cattle.** Vohu Manah's connection with animal life is hinted in the Gathas. This trait becomes much emphasized in the later period when he becomes the genius of cattle and takes the animal world under his protection, as a secondary part of his function as the premier angel of Ahura Mazda. When Geush Urvan, as the genius of the sentient beings, living upon earth, complains of the wrath and rapine to which the animal kingdom is subjected, Vohu Manah consoles her with the gladsome news that the creator of the world was sending Zarathushtra, his messenger, to teach mankind to protect the cattle and kine.<sup>90</sup> In consultation with Vohu Manah, it is said, Ahura Mazda created cattle and pastures to feed them.<sup>91</sup> Vohu Manah is the protector of cattle.<sup>92</sup> They are a precious asset of Vohu Manah and give durability and endurance to mankind.<sup>93</sup> It is through the good understanding of Vohu Manah, that men are inspired to work for cattle.<sup>94</sup>

## ASHA

**The Indo-Iranians recognize a universal order prevailing in the world.** Life upon the earth reveals to man that a smooth and graceful and ordered movement goes on all around him in nature. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, with their ceaseless seasonal succession of changes, take their unvarying course. The tides rise and fan punctually. The dawn and morn and noon and evening and night go their uninterrupted daily round. The dying day gives birth to the night. The night hangs its myriad of silvery lamps to lighten the darkness. The dawn breaks to resurrect the day and the day goes the perennial round of its birth. The heavens and their glittering hosts, the sun and the moon and the stars and the planets march at a regulated space. Despite the casual freaks and caprices, the laws governing the movements of nature seem to be immutable. This unfailing regularity of nature led the Indo-Iranians to discern the fact that a stable order prevailed in the universe which ensured its existence. They called it *ṛta*. They emulated

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88 Y46.14.

89 Y33.5.

90 Y29.7, 8.

91 Y47.3.

92 Y50.1.

93 Y48.6.

94 Y45.9.

this universal order and introduced it in all their human activities. They offered prayers to gods, they sacrificed to them seasonal offerings. All this was to be done at fixed times, reciting specific formulas, chanted in a prescribed manner and with regulated movements of sacred implements. The ceremonials were thus to be performed in accordance with the established rules and under a fixed order. This order was *ṛta* in rituals or rite, a word derived from the same stem. Thus step by step they advanced higher and saw that human life can best be lived when man's relations with his neighbours, his duty towards his fellowmen and towards the heavenly beings were regulated according to fixed laws. Thus they came to recognition of a basic moral order regulating human affairs and understood by *ṛta* employed in ethical matters as right or righteousness, word, of the same significance. Varuna, Mitra, and the Adityas, as also Agni and Soma, came to be regarded as the upholders of the moral order.

**Zarathushtra adopts Asha, the variant of *ṛta*.** A cardinal figure most prominently in the Gathas is *Asha*. Its familiar and widely known Iranian variant is *arta*, *areta*, equivalent to the Vedic *ṛta*. Words derived from this stem must have been freely used in Western Asia and surrounding countries about four thousand years ago. We gather from the clay bearing cuneiform inscriptions discovered at Tell-el-Amarna in Middle Egypt and the great find of tablets at Boghaz-Keui in Asia Minor that Dushratta, a Mitanni king, was ruling in Syria about 1600 B.C. In his letter to his brother-in-law Amenhotep III of Egypt he mentions his brothers who bear the names Artashumara and Artatama. His grandfather also was named Artatama. Zarathushtra thus finds the stem *arta* or *areta* in vogue, but we do not find him using it in the Gathas. He uses its variant *asha* instead and makes it the basic foundation for the structure of his moral philosophy. The Later Avestan works follow him in their general use of the word. It is in the Old Persian inscriptions, however, that we find the use of *arta* as an element of proper names. The Pahlavi writers make a more frequent use of the *arta* form than of *asha*.

**Asha stands for Ahura Mazda's righteousness.** Ahura Mazda is the father of Asha, says Zarathushtra.<sup>95</sup> He created Asha through his wisdom.<sup>96</sup> Asha is of one will with Ahura Mazda.<sup>97</sup> He is the counsellor of Ahura Mazda,<sup>98</sup> and lives in one abode with Ahura Mazda and Vohu

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95 Y44.3; Y47.2.

96 Y31.7, 8.

97 Y28.8, 29.7.

98 Y46.17.

Manah.<sup>99</sup> He is given the attribute *Vahishta*, 'best'.<sup>100</sup> It is not employed in the Gathas as his fixed title, as it becomes in the later Avesta where Asha Vahishta is used as a compound word.

The Vedic poet asks why does the sun fall not from the sky, why do waters of the rivers flowing into the ocean not fill it, where do the stars go during the day and similar questions pertaining to the working of the cosmic order in nature. Zarathushtra, in like manner, asks Ahura Mazda to tell him who is the father of Asha, the embodiment of the order ruling the world, who has determined the path of the sun and the stars, and by whom does the moon wax and wane,<sup>101</sup> who upholds the earth and the firmament from falling, who has made waters and plants and who has given swiftness to winds and clouds,<sup>102</sup> who has made light and darkness, and morning and noon and night.<sup>103</sup> In one place we find him telling Ahura Mazda that the sun and the dawn take their course for his glorification through Asha.<sup>104</sup> Asha's one epithet is the shining one.<sup>105</sup>

A few passages lead us to trace some connection between Asha and the ritualistic order. Zarathushtra speaks of himself as a *zaotar*, Vedic *hotar*, sacrificing priest, and says that he learns the straight or orderly way through Asha.<sup>106</sup> Ceremonial offerings are made unto Ahura Mazda and Asha.<sup>107</sup> Ahura Mazda knows those who are best in the celebration of the Yasna sacrifice according to Asha.<sup>108</sup> The devout make ceremonial offerings to Asha along with Ahura Mazda.<sup>109</sup>

**Zarathushtra best exemplifies Asha's righteousness in his life.** Zarathushtra is pure in body, mind, and spirit. He is the embodiment of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. He thinks, speaks, and acts righteousness. He lives in the atmosphere of righteousness and radiates it all around him. He is the very righteousness itself living in flesh for the good of mankind. Righteousness sustains him in his hardships and trials. When his great prophetic work is beset with untold difficulties; when the prophet of Ahura faces opposition on all sides; when friends desert his company

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99 Y44.9.

100 Y28.8.

101 Y44.3.

102 Y44.4.

103 Y44.5.

104 Y50.10.

105 Y32.2.

106 Y33.6.

107 Y34.3.

108 Y51.22.

109 Y34.3.

and kinsmen abandon his cause; when the rulers of the land look upon him with suspicion and the wicked seek to compass his ruin; when, friendless and forsaken, hissed and hooted, ridiculed and persecuted, he roams about the villages and towns of Iran, he turns his eager eyes to Mazda and Asha in search of inward peace, and obtains it.<sup>110</sup> Reduced to the verge of the direst poverty, Zarathushtra does not seek earthly riches, but the imperishable wealth of the spirit, that is, righteousness.

**Righteousness is the pivot around which the ethics of Zarathushtra revolves.** Asha is the highest word in the Zoroastrian terminology, and its derivative *ashavan* forms the epithet of the man who is most saintly and possesses the noblest character. The term is applied to Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra, and to all who are religious. Righteousness is the will of Ahura Mazda; it is the rule of man's duty, and to be righteous is synonymous with being religious. The law of righteousness is the norm to which the faithful has to conform his life in this world. Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds form the ethical foundation upon which righteousness rests and the basis upon which the entire structure of the system of the Mazdayasnian philosophy is reared. This noble truth, at once so pithy and simple, is accessible to all. It does not appeal to the intellectual few and leave aside the ignorant many; nor does it remain the prerogative of a few thinkers and philosophers; but it can reach all and become the cherished possession of the prince and peasant alike. Every Zoroastrian child imbibes the triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds at its mother's breast.

**Zarathushtra longs to see Asha.** Zarathushtra yearns to make Asha his own along with Ahura Mazda and Vohu Manah.<sup>111</sup> He longs to see Asha and his heavenly associates.<sup>112</sup> He is eager to behold him coming with the devotion of Armaiti.<sup>113</sup> Through the deeds prompted by the good thoughts of Vohu Manah he aspires to reach Asha.<sup>114</sup> He implores Asha to come unto him along with Ahura Mazda and Vohu Manah.<sup>115</sup> He advises his daughter Pouruchisti to seek fellowship with Asha.<sup>116</sup> He prays that Hvogva may make Asha her own.<sup>117</sup> He longs for the day when Asha will come among the Fryan nobility through

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110 Y28.6.

111 Y28.3.

112 Y28.5.

113 Y43.10.

114 Y50.9.

115 Y33.7.

116 Y53.3.

117 Y51.17.

Armaiti.<sup>118</sup> He counsels marrying couples that as husbands and wives they should strive to excel one another in their pursuit of Asha.<sup>119</sup> Asha is approached through the practice of noble deeds according to the primeval laws ordained by Ahura Mazda.<sup>120</sup> Zarathushtra looks for devotion to come with Asha among his followers.<sup>121</sup> Those who live in communion with Asha reap the best reward.<sup>122</sup> Zarathushtra prays for the blessings of Asha.<sup>123</sup> Asha is asked to grant that blessing which forms the reward of Vohu Manah.<sup>124</sup> Zarathushtra, says Ahura Mazda, is the one man who has heard the divine commandments and undertaken to live and work for the furtherance of Asha's righteousness.<sup>125</sup> The prophet of Ahura Mazda declares that as long as he shall have vigour and strength he will urge all to yearn for Asha,<sup>126</sup> and work for the spread of Asha's precepts.<sup>127</sup> He adds further that he shall protect Asha's righteousness all his life.<sup>128</sup> The pious everywhere welcome Asha's manifestation,<sup>129</sup> and the wise uphold him through their words and deeds.<sup>130</sup> Whoso spreads Asha's righteousness in the house and district is like unto Ahura Mazda.<sup>131</sup> Those that are best unto the righteous ones shall be in the pastures of Asha and Vohu Manah.<sup>132</sup>

**Asha's work.** Zarathushtra knows Ahura Mazda through Asha.<sup>133</sup> He prays for the good deeds of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of Vohu Manah.<sup>134</sup> He asks Ahura Mazda to give help through Asha,<sup>135</sup> and beseeches him to grant the desires of those who are devoted to Asha.<sup>136</sup>

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118 Y46.12.

119 Y53.5.

120 Y46.15.

121 Y48.11.

122 Y48.11.

123 Y51.10.

124 Y28.7.

125 Y29.8.

126 Y28.4.

127 Y32.6.

128 Y28.11.

129 Y48.8.

130 Y31.22.

131 Y31.16.

132 Y33.3.

133 Y45.8.

134 Y28.1.

135 Y28.6.

136 Y28.10.

Ahura Mazda gives riches of Vohu Manah through Asha,<sup>137</sup> and Zarathushtra seeks to learn how the riches can be obtained.<sup>138</sup> Those who put down violence and strife gain Vohu Manah's reward through Asha.<sup>139</sup> He is implored to come through Asha and Vohu Manah,<sup>140</sup> and asked to give mighty power through Asha.<sup>141</sup> Those who practise righteousness win power as reward from Ahura Mazda through Vohu Manah.<sup>142</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda what reward will be given him through Asha and Vohu Manah.<sup>143</sup> These rewards are the blessings of both worlds given by Ahura Mazda through Asha.<sup>144</sup> Zarathushtra asks Asha together with Vohu Manah about the rules of life that lead to happiness.<sup>145</sup> Ahura Mazda sees open and secret faults of men through Asha.<sup>146</sup> Kinship with Vohu Manah is sought through Asha.<sup>147</sup> Ahura Mazda wields power between the rival factions of righteousness and wickedness through Asha.<sup>148</sup> Through Asha and Vohu Manah Ahura Mazda apportions vigour and durability, weal and immortality unto those who practise righteousness and good thinking.<sup>149</sup> Through Asha's righteousness does the world prosper by deeds prompted by Vohu Manah's good thoughts.<sup>150</sup> Through Asha again is Ahura Mazda's help sought that Vohu Manah may come.<sup>151</sup> Ahura Mazda is implored to reveal knowledge of the path of Vohu Manah through Asha.<sup>152</sup> The creator of the world confers with Asha to know about a lord who can alleviate the sufferings of the kine.<sup>153</sup> Zarathushtra seeks to know through Vohu Manah what Asha said to the creator.<sup>154</sup> Ahura Mazda is

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137 Y43.2.

138 Y46.2.

139 Y48.7.

140 Y33.7.

141 Y33.12.

142 Y46.10.

143 Y31.5.

144 Y28.2.

145 Y44.8.

146 Y31.13.

147 Y45.9.

148 Y44.15.

149 Y45.10.

150 Y43.6.

151 Y44.1.

152 Y34.12.

153 Y29.2, 3, 6.

154 Y46.9.

asked to give long life which is Asha's gift.<sup>155</sup> The pious declare that they will never provoke the wrath of Asha.<sup>156</sup>

Ahura Mazda asks Zarathushtra to seek information from Asha.<sup>157</sup> Asha gives counsel to those who listen to him.<sup>158</sup> Wisdom exalts communities through Asha's righteousness.<sup>159</sup> Ahura Mazda knows what is best for man in this life through Asha.<sup>160</sup> He teaches his best doctrines through Asha.<sup>161</sup> Armaiti is asked to enlighten the conscience of men through Asha.<sup>162</sup> Men of good understanding know Armaiti's devotion as the source of Asha's righteousness.<sup>163</sup> Asha and Armaiti are united in the heavenly realms.<sup>164</sup> Ahura Mazda has devised his creed with Asha that Vishtaspa embraces.<sup>165</sup> Asha gives power to his zealous adherents.<sup>166</sup> He furthers men's possessions.<sup>167</sup> Men make the pastures prosper through the practice of Asha's righteousness.<sup>168</sup> The wicked strive to hinder the good work of those who further Asha's righteousness by prospering the cattle by their diligence.<sup>169</sup> Ahura Mazda created plants for the cattle.<sup>170</sup> Diligent persons gain cattle through Asha.<sup>171</sup> The prophet is awarded precious animals and weal and immortality by Ahura Mazda through Asha.<sup>172</sup>

**The path of righteousness.** The Rig Veda refers to the path of *rta*.<sup>173</sup> The Gathas similarly speak of the path of Asha, righteousness, and the idea, as we shall see later, is developed in the Later Avesta. The path of righteousness leads to paradise and the wicked souls, we are

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155 Y28.6.

156 Y28.9.

157 Y43.12.

158 Y51.11.

159 Y34.14.

160 Y45.4.

161 Y48.3.

162 Y33.13.

163 Y34.10.

164 Y46.16.

165 Y51.16.

166 Y51.1.

167 Y33.11.

168 Y44.20.

169 Y46.4.

170 Y48.6.

171 Y51.5.

172 Y44.18.

173 RV. 8.31.13.



told, tremble at the Bridge of Judgment because they have deviated from the path of Asha through their words and deeds.<sup>174</sup> Ahura Mazda dwells in the straight paths and Zarathushtra seeks their knowledge through Asha.<sup>175</sup> Deviation from the path of righteousness spells man's destruction. Zarathushtra exhorts his hearers that every man and woman is free to choose for himself or herself the path of righteousness or the path of wickedness. The decision between the two ways of life rests with the individual. Man is the arbiter of his destiny. He has the power and freedom to choose between truth and falsehood, righteousness and wickedness, good and evil. He is responsible for the moral choice he makes and is consequently responsible for his actions. If he makes the right choice and embraces righteousness, he will reap its reward, but if, as a free agent, he chooses wickedness, the accountability will be his and his own daena or self will lead him to retribution.

**The discipline of the individual in righteousness.** The prophet inculcates righteousness in his teachings, and strictly enjoins his followers to combat wickedness. By his birthright man belongs to the world of righteousness and is sent into this world for its furtherance and for the destruction of the world of wickedness. He is a friend of the righteous and their righteousness, but a foe of the wicked and their wickedness. It is expressly said that he alone is righteous who is a friend to the righteous; but he who, through maudlin sentimentality, is good unto the wicked and palliates his wickedness is to be considered wicked, for by failing to do his duty he puts a premium on wickedness.<sup>176</sup> To condone evil in a wicked person is a capitulation to evil. Before the individual sets out to fight wickedness in the outer world, he has first to establish order in his inner world. Concord and not discord, order and not disorder, righteousness, and not wickedness, should be his constant inward experience. With strict discipline he has to work for the spiritual development of his self. He is taught to subjugate his passions, eradicate evil thoughts from his mind, and conquer the animal in him by an incessant warfare with the forces of wickedness. The path of righteousness leads to the abode of Ahura Mazda.<sup>177</sup> But the path is not without its difficulties and trials. Firm resolution, strong will, and sustained effort are required before one can successfully tread it and reach the final goal. It needs no effort to be wicked and be a passive victim of the flesh, but it does take a hero to be righteous and live for the spirit. There are tempting pitfalls and alluring snares that beguile the devotee and lead him astray to the path of wickedness. The quest is

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174 Y51.13.

175 Y33.5, 6.

176 Y46.6.

177 Y33.5.

fraught with great difficulties. But then the prize it brings is also matchless. The goal is not easy to reach. Many more are the chances of misses than of hits, and the aspirant has to try again and again before he can successfully strike the mark. Our attempt may prove fruitless for the time being, but there is merit in having aimed at realizing the ideal. If we win, it is good. If we lose, it is also good.

Man has to keep himself pure and clean bodily, mentally, and spiritually. Purity of body and mind is the best thing for man in life.<sup>178</sup> It strengthens righteousness and sanctity. The blending of the virtues of Vohu Manah and Armaiti in the life of man makes him righteous. The fusion of the noble qualities both of the head and heart make the individual righteous. Vohu Manah purifies the mind, Armaiti sanctifies the heart. Vohu Manah's knowledge enlightens the world, Armaiti's devotion ennobles it. Without knowledge man is poor indeed, but without devotion he courts death in spirit. Knowledge teaches the spirit the philosophy of life, devotion lends to the spirit the zest to act it, and the true religion begins with this acting. The philosopher may think of Ahura Mazda, the metaphysician may speculate about his origin, but the devout actually imitates him in action. Knowledge gives a right view of life, teaches man about his relations to his Heavenly Father and the universe, and creates ideals for him; but devotion strives to realize these. Knowledge is good, wisdom is better; but wisdom tinged with devotion is best. The wise knows Mazda, the devout owns Mazda; and the blending of the virtues of both makes man the consummate one, the saint, the *ashavan* or righteous one.

**Righteousness will win over wickedness.** The creed of Asha leads to felicity, whereas the opposite way of wickedness brings destruction.<sup>179</sup> Those who follow the ways of wickedness destroy the world of Asha's righteousness.<sup>180</sup> Zarathushtra seeks from Asha and his heavenly associates power with which he and his followers may smite wickedness.<sup>181</sup> Asha's righteousness leaves evil doers who embrace not devotion and good thinking, just as wild beasts flee from men.<sup>182</sup> Vohu Manah leaves those who think not of Asha.<sup>183</sup> Ahura Mazda is invoked to teach how the faithful can drive away the Druj and those persons who, in defiance of the divine precepts, follow not Asha.<sup>184</sup> The prophet asks Ahura Mazda how best he can put wickedness in the hands of

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178 Y48.5.

179 Y49.3.

180 Y49.3.

181 Y31.4.

182 Y34.9.

183 Y34.8.

184 Y44.13.

righteousness and bring punishment unto those who embrace wickedness.<sup>185</sup> Vohu Manah will establish the divine kingdom of Ahura Mazda for those who vanquish wickedness and deliver it into the hands of Asha.<sup>186</sup> The world will ultimately embrace righteousness through the efficacious teachings of the Saviours of the world and Ahura Mazda is asked to declare when that happy day will dawn over the world.<sup>187</sup> Zarathushtra tells Ahura Mazda that his divine purpose will be accomplished and his name will be glorified when as ordained by him both men and demons will see at the end of the world that Asha triumphs and his righteousness smites wickedness and the world will be blessed with the happy tidings.<sup>188</sup> He fervently hopes for the period when every individual in his or her own capacity will embrace and act righteousness and will thus make the entire world of humanity gravitate towards Asha. In this consists the final victory of good over evil, and the Divine Kingdom of Ahura Mazda will come when righteousness wholly pervades the universe. All, therefore, have to contribute to this mighty work. The righteous ones living in different ages and at different places form the members of one righteous group, inasmuch as they are all actuated by one and the same motive and work for the common cause. Though differentiated by time and place, as also by their respective tenements of clay, they are one in spirit, and work for the inauguration of the Kingdom of Righteousness.

**Fire is the visible symbol of righteousness.** Zarathushtra says that the best offerings that the pious can make to the fire of Ahura Mazda are the righteous deeds inspired by Asha and proclaims that as long as he has vitality left in him he will think of Asha whenever he will carry his gift of adoration unto fire.<sup>189</sup> Through the fire and the thought of Ahura Mazda, he says, he will find protection against the Evil Spirit and his evil machinations and it is through them that Asha's righteousness will thrive.<sup>190</sup>

Physical impurity is removed by fire and Zarathushtra employs this emblem of purification in the eschatological sense to burn and destroy spiritual uncleanness or sin. Thus will the fire be the great purifier of souls steeped in wickedness. Through Asha and fire will Ahura Mazda give his final award unto the good and the evil.<sup>191</sup> Asha and Armaiti will help Ahura Mazda when he will separate the righteous from the wicked

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185 Y44.14.

186 Y30.8.

187 Y46.3.

188 Y48.1, 2.

189 Y43.9.

190 Y46.7.

191 Y31.3, 19.

through his fire.<sup>192</sup> The fire of Ahura Mazda is mighty through Asha and will bring manifest joy unto the righteous but a visible harm unto the wicked.<sup>193</sup> Ahura Mazda's might and holiness, says Zarathushtra, will be manifest when he will deal out the destinies unto the righteous and the wicked through the glow of fire strengthened by Asha.<sup>194</sup>

### KHSHATHRA

**The sovereign power of Ahura Mazda.** One of the first attributes that man learns to discern in the heavenly beings is their might or power. It is manifest in their activities as creatures, sustainers, and rulers. The ancestors of the Indo-Iranians called it *kshatra*, and applied it to Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and the Adityas. Zarathushtra, we find, adopts it in its Iranian form *khshathra* and uses it in its ordinary meaning, power, or applies it specifically to divine power, symbolized in the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda. He gives it the epithet *vohu* and calls it *vohu khshathra*, 'the Good Kingdom,'<sup>195</sup> or speaks of it as *khshathra ishtoish*, 'the Kingdom of Desire,'<sup>196</sup> or names it *Khshathra vairyā*, 'the Wished for Kingdom.'<sup>197</sup> Ahura Mazda has created Khshathra.<sup>198</sup> In the post-Gathic period the compound Khshathra Vairyā gains ground and is always used as the name of the archangel representing Ahura Mazda's divine majesty.

**Zarathushtra exhorts mankind to work for the establishment of the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.** The creator, ruler, and sovereign lord of both the worlds is Ahura Mazda. The pious invoke him to lead them to work in his kingdom upon earth for the prosperity of men and their cattle.<sup>199</sup> They pray that they may get happy homes, rich in pastures, attended by Khshathra.<sup>200</sup> All creatures prosper in Mazda's Kingdom through Vohu Manah,<sup>201</sup> and through him again Ahura Mazda gives Khshathra's power to the good.<sup>202</sup> Nobler than the sphere of earthly riches is Khshathra's domain of spiritual riches. Ahura Mazda rules over his earthly kingdom and prepares mankind for his

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192 Y47.6.

193 Y34.4.

194 Y43.4.

195 Y31.22; 48.8.

196 Y51.2.

197 Y43.13; 51.1.

198 Y44.7.

199 Y45.9.

200 Y48.11.

201 Y34.3.

202 Y51.21.

celestial kingdom of perfection and goodness that is yet to be. Despite its much good, this world harbours in its midst much that is evil. Man's work in this life is to fight and rout the forces of evil. Zarathushtra had laid the foundation of the Divine Kingdom and has assigned to man the stupendous task of building and establishing the ideal kingdom in which good alone will exist. Evil lurks in man and through man bestrides the world. It is his duty to cleanse his inner nature of all impurity and eradicate evil from the world without. Zarathushtra is hopeful and confident that one day evil will not be. It is left to man to bring that day near or keep it at a distance. It is in his hands to accomplish it now or keep it long in the coming. The prophet of Ahura Mazda is in earnest and eager to hasten its advent. He asserts, with repeated emphasis, that the Kingdom is near at hand, if only mankind sets about zealously and strenuously to inaugurate it. He passionately exhorts his hearers not to waver, not to be staggered by the formidable nature of the task, but to aspire and work and struggle and fight for it with body and mind, heart and soul. With deep religious fervour he sings that he is ready to lay down the life of his body to lead mankind to work for the advancement of the Kingdom in obedience to the commandments of Ahura Mazda.<sup>203</sup> With Ahura Mazda on his side, he makes the good thoughts of Vohu Manah and righteousness of Asha his own and, with the burning devotion of Armaiti, he works for the advent of the imperishable Kingdom.<sup>204</sup> Triumph of righteousness over wickedness will usher in the Kingdom and he prays for strength for himself and his followers so that they may wage a successful war against wickedness.<sup>205</sup>

The pious pray that they may participate in the inauguration of the Kingdom of Mazda.<sup>206</sup> Vohu Manah, the guardian of good thoughts, furthers the Kingdom.<sup>207</sup> As right thinking is the source of good conduct and endeavour to work for the advent of the Divine Kingdom, it is sometimes spoken of as belonging to Vohu Manah. The Kingdom, it is said, is in the possession of Vohu Manah and Ahura Mazda and Asha and Armaiti live in it.<sup>208</sup> The Kingdom of Vohu Manah is furthered by Asha's righteousness.<sup>209</sup> To be worthy of entering the Divine Kingdom and living in it is man's highest aspiration. Asha assures the life in the Kingdom to those who work zealously for the furtherance of

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203 Y33.14.

204 Y28.3.

205 Y31.4.

206 Y51.2.

207 Y30.8; 31.6.

208 Y46.16.

209 Y34.11.

righteousness.<sup>210</sup> Through righteousness is the divine help gained in Mazda's Kingdom.<sup>211</sup> Zarathushtra is eager to enter the blessed Kingdom,<sup>212</sup> and a long life of felicitous existence in it,<sup>213</sup> and to share its splendours.<sup>214</sup> Wise Jamaspa courts the life of righteousness and longs for the Kingdom as the gift of Vohu Manah.<sup>215</sup> Zarathushtra prays that Frashaoshtra may win the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda for all time;<sup>216</sup> He asks Ahura Mazda to manifest unto him the incomparable things that mankind will witness in the Divine Kingdom as the reward of Vohu Manah.<sup>217</sup> Ahura Mazda is asked to give the Kingdom through Vohu Manah as reward to those whom he knows to be doing what is best in life.<sup>218</sup>

**The Divine Kingdom in the world of perfection.** Vohu Manah will proclaim the advent of the Kingdom.<sup>219</sup> Ahura Mazda has ordained through Vohu Manah and Asha to give unto the good perfection and immortality in his Kingdom.<sup>220</sup> Through Khshathra he apportions the destinies unto the good and the evil according to their deserts.<sup>221</sup> The pious yearn for the presence of Ahura Mazda with Vohu Manah, Asha, and Khshathra when they enter the paradisiacal Abode of Song.<sup>222</sup> Ahura Mazda will come at the final goal accompanied by his Holy Spirit, Vohu Manah, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti.<sup>223</sup> With evil eradicated and imperfection at an end, the world that will emerge on the occasion of the establishment of the Divine Kingdom will be altogether a new world, a perfect world.<sup>224</sup>

**Khshathra's sphere over metals.** Ahura Mazda has created the earth rich in soil and has filled its bowels with untold mineral wealth and has desired that mankind should thrive and prosper through the

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210 Y51.1.

211 Y43.14.

212 Y48.8.

213 Y43.13.

214 Y43.8.

215 Y51.18.

216 Y49.8.

217 Y33.13.

218 Y46.10.

219 Y44.6.

220 Y45.10.

221 Y45.7.

222 Y50.4.

223 Y43.6.

224 Y34.15.

riches obtained by their diligence and labour. Wealth is the natural concomitant of all earthly kingdoms. All earthly and spiritual riches therefore are embodied in Khshathra. The later Avestan texts assign the guardianship of metals, the visible token of wealth, to Khshathra. The Gathas are silent over the connection of Khshathra with metals. The ordeal of molten metal does however play a prominent part in cleansing the world of all moral impurities to make way for the coming of Khshathra's Kingdom. Ahura Mazda knows best the retributions that will take place through the molten metal.<sup>225</sup> The righteous will reap their final reward and the wicked will meet with their retribution when Ahura Mazda will judge them through the molten metal.<sup>226</sup>

### ARMAITI

#### **The feminine abstraction of Ahura Mazda's devotion.**

Armaiti is cognate with Vedic Aramati, who is a shadowy personification of piety or devotion, She retains the same meaning in the Gathas and is emblematic of Ahura Mazda's love or devotion. Ahura Mazda created her,<sup>227</sup> and she is lovingly called his daughter,<sup>228</sup> or again, his own.<sup>229</sup> Holy or spenta, which is her standing epithet in the later period, is applied to her sometimes in the Gathas.

**Zarathushtra's soul is wedded to Ahura Mazda through Armaiti's devotion.** Through fervent meditation on his own inner nature and patient study of Ahura Mazda's marvellous work in creation, Zarathushtra understands the ways of Ahura Mazda. He knows the wise lord through the enlightenment of his mind. His heart yearns to own Ahura Mazda. From the depth of his heart, he prays unto him, invokes him in silence and with the pronounced words of his mouth. He burns incense of devotion unto his maker upon the fire burning on the altar in the holy temple of his heart. The fire first flares and flickers, then blazes and burns, and illumines the sublime path that leads to Ahura Mazda. He dedicates his will and his desire and his heart and his life and himself unto him. He loses himself in devoted love for him. He sees with Ahura Mazda's eyes and hears with Ahura Mazda's ears. He communes with him and he becomes one with him. He is eager that his hearers should share the incomparable gift of Armaiti with him. With earnest longing he asks Ahura Mazda when Armaiti's devotion will ennoble the lives of those to whom he proclaims his faith.<sup>230</sup> The members of

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225 Y30.7; 32.7.

226 Y51.9.

227 Y44.7.

228 Y45.4.

229 Y31.9.

230 Y44.11.

different ranks of Iranian society that have embraced his religion fervently pray that the good and holy Armaiti may be theirs.<sup>231</sup> Those who have devoutly accepted the commandments of Ahura Mazda are eager to devote their hearts unto him.<sup>232</sup>

**Armaiti's work.** Armaiti teaches the ordinances of Ahura Mazda.<sup>233</sup> She furthers the imperishable Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.<sup>234</sup> Those who make Armaiti's devotion their own, becomes holy.<sup>235</sup> Armaiti blesses them with plenty and prosperity.<sup>236</sup> Ahura Mazda is asked to give vigour through her.<sup>237</sup> Zarathushtra asks the faithful to exalt Ahura Mazda with devotional prayers.<sup>238</sup> His religion inspires truthful deeds through the words of Armaiti.<sup>239</sup> In the Vedas we find Aramati linked with *rta*, that is, devotion in connection with the moral order.<sup>240</sup> So we are told in the Gathas that Asha's righteousness is furthered by Armaiti.<sup>241</sup> As righteousness is the outcome of the life of Armaiti's devotion, the wise one bases his conduct upon her inspiration.<sup>242</sup> The prophet asks Frashaoshtra to lead the faithful to the life of communion with Asha's righteousness and

**Armaiti's devotion.**<sup>243</sup> For the union of both furthers the Kingdom of Vohu Manah<sup>244</sup> The coming of Asha and Armaiti to inspire their lives is eagerly sought by the pious.<sup>245</sup> Armaiti inquires after the misdeeds and shortcomings of the true speaker and the false speaker, the wise and the ignorant.<sup>246</sup> The wicked Bendva, the inveterate foe of the prophet, does not follow Armaiti.<sup>247</sup> Righteousness deserts those who know Armaiti as the beloved of Ahura Mazda, and yet estrange

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231 Y32.2.

232 Y31.1.

233 Y43.6.

234 Y28.3.

235 Y51.21.

236 Y49.5.

237 Y33.12.

238 Y45.10.

239 Y44.10.

240 RV. 5.43.6.

241 Y44.6.

242 Y34.10.

243 Y46.16.

244 Y34.11.

245 Y43.10; 48.11.

246 Y31.12.

247 Y49.2.



themselves from her devotion.<sup>248</sup> Zarathushtra asks her to give him and Vishtaspa their heart's desire.<sup>249</sup> He implores her to teach men's consciences through righteousness.<sup>250</sup> She is besought to grant as a gift the riches of the life of Vohu Manah's good thoughts.<sup>251</sup> One serves the Most Holy Spirit the best by the performance of the deeds inspired by Armaiti's devotion.<sup>252</sup> Armaiti is invoked to send righteous sovereigns and not wicked ones to rule over the world.<sup>253</sup> Armaiti will co-operate with Ahura Mazda at the final dispensation.<sup>254</sup>

**Armaiti's relation to the earth.** Sayana glosses Aramati by *bhūmi*, 'earth'. Armaiti plays a prominent part as the genius of earth in the later Avestan period. Though the Gathas do not clearly emphasize this aspect of her work, we can trace in them the belief in Armaiti's connection with the earth. Zarathushtra preaches the usefulness of settled agricultural life as opposed to the nomadic life prevailing in his days. He says that Ahura Mazda has laid out the beneficent path of agriculture and asks men to choose it. Armaiti is here conjointly mentioned with Geush Tashan.<sup>255</sup> The noble descendants of the Turanian Fryana, prompted by righteousness, further the settlements of Armaiti through their diligence.<sup>256</sup> The Maker has, in consultation with Vohu Manah, the genius of cattle, created Armaiti or earth and replenished it with pastures.<sup>257</sup>

#### HAURVATAT AND AMERETAT

**The inseparable pair of perfection and immortality.** Haurvatat and Ameretat form an indissoluble spiritual pair and are always celebrated together in the Gathas. No single hymn is addressed to Haurvatat or to Ameretat alone. Haurvata means or perfection, and Ameretat is emblematic of immortality. The dual earthly gift of endurance and vigour of body is paralleled with the heavenly blessings of perfection and immortality.<sup>258</sup> Ahura Mazda bestows through Vohu Manah and Asha endurance and vigour of body in this world and

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248 Y34.9.

249 Y28.7.

250 Y33.13.

251 Y43.1.

252 Y47.2.

253 Y48.5.

254 Y47.6.

255 Y31.9.

256 Y46.12.

257 Y47.3.

258 Y33.8; 34.11; 45.10; 51.7.

Haurvatat's perfection and Ameretat's immortality in the next, upon those who offer him the sacrifice of devotion.<sup>259</sup> The earthly boons are the gifts of Haurvatat and Ameretat.<sup>260</sup> Whoso piously pronounces the sacred formulas dedicated to Haurvatat and Ameretat receives the best reward.<sup>261</sup> Through the recital of these holy words and basing their lives upon righteousness, do the faithful win for themselves the blessings of Haurvatat and Ameretat.<sup>262</sup> Zarathushtra fervently prays for the participation in these blessings.<sup>263</sup> Those who offer willing obedience unto the teachings of the prophet will attain unto Haurvatat and Ameretat.<sup>264</sup> He who befriends Ahura Mazda with his thoughts and words and deeds wins them for himself.<sup>265</sup> Man comes by them in Ahura Mazda's Kingdom through his good thoughts, words, and deeds, and his life of righteousness and devotion.<sup>266</sup> It is the wicked who defraud mankind of happy life and immortality by means of evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds.<sup>267</sup>

**Water and plants form the province of Haurvatat and Ameretat.** The Gathas hint at the connection of Haurvatat and Ameretat with water and plants, over whom they preside in the Later Avesta. Ahura Mazda who has created water and plants is invoked to give Haurvatat's perfection and Ameretat's immortality.<sup>268</sup> On the eschatological side Haurvatat figuratively represents ambrosia and Ameretat stands for nectar that the pious souls receive in heaven.<sup>269</sup>

## SRAOSHA

**Sraosha is obedience to the religious lore.** In the later period, Sraosha rises to great prominence as the divine teacher of Mazda's religion. Zarathushtra longs to see Sraosha,<sup>270</sup> and prays that he may come unto every man whom Mazda Wills.<sup>271</sup> The prophet teaches the new faith to the world of humanity. He exhorts mankind to pay heed to

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259 Y45.10.

260 Y33.8.

261 Y31.6.

262 Y44.17.

263 Y44.18.

264 Y45.5.

265 Y31.21.

266 Y47.1.

267 Y32.5.

268 Y51.7.

269 Y34.11.

270 Y28.5.

271 Y44.16.

the words that are best for the mortals to hear and tells them that Ahura Mazda will give them perfection and immortality if they will bring Sraosha's obedience unto him.<sup>272</sup> By teaching mankind to obey the ordinances of Ahura Mazda, and inspiring them to work according to them, through good thoughts, words, and deeds for the furtherance of righteousness in the world, Zarathushtra helps in the inauguration of the Divine Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.<sup>273</sup> In the later period Sraosha acts as a co-assessor with Mithra and Rashnu, who all combine to make up a heavenly tribunal for the judgment of the dead. Mithra and Rashnu, the two brother judges, seated with Sraosha, do not appear in the Gathas, but a passage speaks of Sraosha's coming as a judge with the reward unto the good and evil contending parties.<sup>274</sup> Zarathushtra invokes Sraosha as the greatest of the heavenly beings to appear at the final consummation of the world.<sup>275</sup>

The word *sraosha* occurs also in several Gathic passages in its ordinary meaning of obedience, and not as the personified spirit of this abstract virtue.

## ATAR

**The fire cult.** Atar or fire corresponds to the Vedic Agni Atar's functions are elaborately delineated in the Later Avesta. We shall therefore leave the discussion of the resemblance between them for subsequent pages. The early Aryan settlers of Iran had brought the cult to their new home as their cherished heritage bequeathed to them by their Indo-Iranian ancestors. Tradition speaks of several great sacred Iranian fires consecrated by the pre-Zoroastrian kings. The Pahlavi Bundahishn says that Yima and Kavi Haosrava established the fires Froba [Adar Farnbag] and Goshasp [Adar Gushnasp]; and that Vishtaspa, the royal patron of Zarathushtra, consecrated the fire Burzin Mihr.<sup>276</sup> The Mohammedan writers of the tenth century speak of some ten such places dedicated to fire before Zoroaster's time.<sup>277</sup> The prophet of Iran thus found the cult of fire already established in Iran when he entered upon his divine mission on earth. He purified its archaic form and incorporated it into his new system. Of all the elements, he raised fire, or light, to a place of the highest distinction in his faith.

Ahura Mazda is eternal light, his very nature is light. He lives in the everlasting lights of the highest heaven. Light in its various

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<sup>272</sup> Y45.5.

<sup>273</sup> Y33.14.

<sup>274</sup> Y43.12.

<sup>275</sup> Y33.5.

<sup>276</sup> Bd.17.5-8.

<sup>277</sup> Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 98-100.

manifestations, whether as the fire of the hearth on earth, or the fiery substance in the bowels of the earth, or as the genial glow of the sun in the azure vault of heaven, or the silvery sheen of the crescent moon in the sky, or the flickering brilliancy of the stars in the firmament, or even in the form of the life-giving energy distributed in the entire creation, is emblematic of Mazda. No wonder, then, if the prophet of Ancient Iran made fire the consecrated symbol of his religion, a symbol which in point of sublimity, grandeur, and purity, or in its being the nearest earthly image of the heavenly lord, is unequalled by any of its kind in the world.

When Vohu Manah approaches Zarathushtra, and enquires of him what is his most ardent desire, the prophet replies that his inmost yearning is to think of righteousness through the devotional gifts of his homage to Atar's fire.<sup>278</sup> When the chosen of the Lord is thwarted at times in his great mission by the Druj or Lie, he turns to Atar as one of the protectors that will best help him in the furtherance of the mighty cause of righteousness.<sup>279</sup> The fire of Mazda plays an important part in the work of the last judgment at the final Renovation of the world. Mazda has promised through Asha that he will give award unto the contesting parties of good and evil through fire.<sup>280</sup> The Heavenly Father will deliver his final judgment upon the righteous and the wicked through fire together with the Holy Spirit.<sup>281</sup> It is through fire that the creator will bestow profit upon the righteous and bring harm unto the wicked.<sup>282</sup> Mazda will apportion reward and retribution to both the good and the evil through the glow of fire, which is emblematic of righteousness.<sup>283</sup> The believers therefore pray that fire, which is mighty through righteousness, may be a manifest help unto the faithful, but a veritable harm unto the foe.<sup>284</sup> The noble truth of the prophetic words of Zarathushtra will, in this manner, be vindicated when, at the final Dispensation, divine judgment shall be meted out to man through the red fire of Mazda.<sup>285</sup>

## ASHI

**The feminine abstraction of sanctity.** Ashi represents sanctity and destiny, or reward. In one passage she is given the epithet

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<sup>278</sup> Y43.9.

<sup>279</sup> Y46.7. [i.e. the famous phrase "Kem-na Mazda" etc. -JHP]

<sup>280</sup> Y31.3.

<sup>281</sup> Y47.6.

<sup>282</sup> Y51.9.

<sup>283</sup> Y43.4.

<sup>284</sup> Y34.4.

<sup>285</sup> Y31.19.

*vanghuhi*, 'good',<sup>286</sup> which in the Later Avesta is inseparably associated with her name. She represents the life of piety and its concomitant result. Zarathushtra invokes Asha to come with Ashi.<sup>287</sup> She apportions Mazda's ordinances, about which the prophet desires to learn.<sup>288</sup> He invokes her in his crusade against Druj, or the Lie.<sup>289</sup> Whoso, through the power that Ashi confers upon him, deprives the wicked of his possessions, reaps the rewards that Mazda has promised.<sup>290</sup>

In an eschatological sense, she forms the reward assured in heaven to those who have led a life of sanctity upon earth. It is with the accompaniment of Ashi's recompense that Sraosha approaches the seat of judgment to reward the righteous and wicked souls.<sup>291</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to manifest unto him the incomparable things of his Divine Kingdom which are rewards of Vohu Manah,<sup>292</sup> and seeks to know the reward that will be his in the Good Kingdom.<sup>293</sup>

Ashi's sphere of activity grows in the later development of her cult and, in addition to representing the reward of the pious in heaven, she stands also for the earthly prize of those who are diligent. She becomes the genius of fortune, and the eager eyes of her numerous votaries are always turned to her for her favour. This new phase of her activity will receive attention in the place assigned to her in our treatment of the Later Avestan period.

## GEUSH TASHAN AND GEUSH URVAN

**The Fashioner of animal life.** The Gathas speak of three beings, Geush Tashan, 'the Creator of the Bull or Cow,' Geush Urvan, 'the Soul of the Bull or Cow,' and Gav Azi, 'the Bull or Cow Azi.' Av. *gav*, and Skt. *go*, both mean bull or cow. The Vedic divinities Dyaus, 'the Heaven,' and Prithivi, 'the Earth,' have the epithets bull and cow applied to them from their physical characteristics.<sup>294</sup> After the analogy of the Skt. *go*, 'bull or cow,' which also means earth, some are led to think that the above expressions are used with reference to the earth.<sup>295</sup> The Pahlavi,

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286 Y51.10.

287 Y51.10.

288 Y34.12.

289 Y31.4.

290 Y50.3.

291 Y43.12.

292 Y33.13.

293 Y48.8.

294 RV. 1. 160.3.

295 Haug, [Martin] *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, [London, 1907,] p. 148; Kanga, Gujarati tr. of the Gathas; Punegar, Eng. tr. of the Gathas in the *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute*, No. 12.

Sanskrit, Persian, and early Gujarati versionists, it may be noted, adhere to the original meaning and explain the words with reference to the bull or cow.

Some creation-myths of the world relate that the earthly creatures have sprung from the bodies of the primeval man or of the cosmic cow killed by the gods or, as in the case of the later Zoroastrianism, by the Evil Spirit. In Babylonian mythology it is Marduk who killed Tiamat and the creatures came into existence from his body. According to the Vedic texts the gods sacrificed Purusha and brought the earthly and aerial creatures into being from his body. Ahriman, say the Pahlavi works, killed Gaya Maretan [Av. 'Gayo-maretan,' Phl. 'Gayomard'], the Primeval Man and Gavyokdat, the Primeval Bull, and men and animals and plants came into being from the various parts of their slaughtered bodies.

Cattle were the source of all wealth and the ox who drew the plough and enabled man to cultivate his field was held in religious veneration among the pastoral and agricultural Aryans and Semites from early times. Mithra was the most powerful Indo-Iranian divinity when Zarathushtra preached his new religion. The Iranians worshipped Mithra as 'the lord of wide pastures,' which is his standing epithet in the Younger Avesta. According to the ancient myth Mithra killed the Primeval Bull and thereby became the creator and fashioner of the earthly beings. The Mithraic sculptures represent him sitting on the bull's back, seizing it by the nostrils with one hand and plunging his hunting knife deep into its back. Zarathushtra did not include him in the heavenly hierarchy, but adapted the legend of the immolation of the Primeval Bull by Mithra to ethical ends.<sup>296</sup>

Geush Tashan stands in the Gathas for the creative activity of Ahura Mazda. He is said to be Ahura Mazda's own,<sup>297</sup> and Mazda is spoken of as his lord.<sup>298</sup> Geush Urvan is the spirit of the animal kingdom, and the obscure Gav Azi, who is spoken of in the Gathas as the giver of joy and prosperity, represents the animal creation. Tradition explains Gav Azi as 'the three years old cow.' It is evidently *gav aevodāta*, 'the sole created bull or cow,' of the Later Avesta,<sup>299</sup> and *Gavyokdāt*, 'the Sole Created Bull' of the Pahlavi and subsequent Sanskrit, Persian, and Gujarati versionists.

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296 See Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 132-137; Tiele, *The Religion of the Iranian Peoples*, tr. Nariman, p. 112-114; Moulton, *Early Religious Poetry of Persia*, p. 43, 88, 91, 92; Jones, *Mithraism in ERE*. 8. 752; Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p. 79-82, 146, 147.

297 Y31.9.

298 Y47.3.

299 Yt7.0; S1.12; S2.12.

**Zarathushtra declared the only mortal who could assuage the sufferings of the kine.** Geush Urvan complains in a bewailing tone before Ahura Mazda that anger, rapine, plunder, and wickedness are harassing its very existence and therefore its soul sighs for a deliverer.<sup>300</sup> Ahura Mazda holds a celestial conference to redress the grievances of the Soul of the Kine. After patient deliberations, in which Vohu Manah, the genius of cattle, Asha, the guardian of peaceful, settled life, and Geush Tashan take part, Vohu Manah, as the premier councillor, declares that Zarathushtra is the only mortal who has heard the divine commands, and he is the one person suited to be sent to the world as the spiritual and temporal lord who could remove the grievances of Geush Urvan.<sup>301</sup> The Soul of the Kine is disconsolate and cries in despair that its sufferings are so great that it would be beyond the power of the prophet to assuage them.<sup>302</sup> Further pleadings soften its despair and Zarathushtra is chosen for the mighty work.

We can see in this account an attempt to convince the waverers, disbelievers, and heretics of the true mission of the prophet. The later texts resort to miracles of various sorts to fulfil the same purpose. Those who have not yet come, in Gathic times, to any definite conclusion as to the choice of their faith, and are still hesitating before embracing the new creed, are shown how preparations were made in heaven for Zarathushtra's mission, and how it is with the divine approval that the new prophet comes to them for their good.

Zarathushtra preaches the advantages of a settled life, and persuades his hearers to emerge from the pastoral life and embrace agricultural habits. He exhorts them to work diligently for the kine's welfare, grow fodder for their nurture, and lead an active and an industrious life. This is a stage of transition, and all could not easily give up the unsettled habits of life in which they were brought up. Naturally, therefore, there is much disorder in the land and Zarathushtra enters upon his mission to establish ordered social life.

**Agriculture and cattle-tending bring prosperity.** Geush Tashan is mentioned along with Armaiti's earth and Ahura Mazda shows the advantageous path of the industrious agriculturist who tills the earth by his diligence and prospers Vohu Manah's cattle, whereas the indolent persons who do not practise husbandry fail to reap the fruits of life.<sup>303</sup> Ahura Mazda has created cattle that give the good things of life to men.<sup>304</sup> Moreover, he has created Armaiti's earth for the

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300 Y29.1.

301 Y29.2-8.

302 Y29.9.

303 Y31.9, 10.

304 Y44.6.

pasture of Geush Tashan.<sup>305</sup> Whoso wishes pasture of cattle reaps the reward for his labour.<sup>306</sup> Ahura Mazda fulfils the desire of the bodily life of those who, inspired by Vohu Manah, work for the welfare of the cattle.<sup>307</sup> Unto those who lead righteous lives and work the will of Zarathushtra, will be given in the next world happiness such as the possession of cattle gives.<sup>308</sup>

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305 Y47.3.

306 Y50.2.

307 Y34.14.

308 Y46.19.



## CHAPTER VIII. PRAYERS AND RITUALS

**Prayer is the heavenward soaring of the soul on wordy wings.** Man has always prayed. Primitive man who did not understand natural phenomena worshipped power in the invisible beings whom he feared. He humbled and humiliated himself before them, and strove to placate and mollify them. His more enlightened descendants began worshipping goodness or knowledge or righteousness in gods. Prayer in its origin is instinctive and it gradually grows rational and moral. Man has always wearied God with his extravagant demands. He has prayed that fortune may drop from the skies. He has fancied gods would do miracles for him. And he has always expected that gods should answer all his prayers. His mental and moral progress has purified prayer. Naturally, he prays for his health and vigour of body, for food and riches, for offspring and long life. In his nobler mood, he prays for purity of mind and heart. He prays that God may strengthen him to fight temptation, vice, and sin. When he falters and falls, he feels contrition for his misdeeds, strips his heart bare before God. and implores him to wipe out his transgressions.

When his troubles are sleeping and the world smiles upon him, man sometimes forgets that he owes the happy turn in his life to God and prays not, or, if he prays he prays with his lips what he disowns with his heart. Some sorrow, some disaster throws him again on his knees. When darkness and gloom hang heavily upon him, when he is plunged into deep dejection, when he is cast down by the sense of his utter helplessness, when he thinks the world is giving way beneath his feet then to God he turns for succour. With uplifted hands and on bended knees, he unburdens himself of his afflictions, seeks strength in prayer and prays with his heart on his tongue. In his infinite mercy, God beckons him near, softens his bitterness, chases away his anxiety, strengthens him to triumph over his hardships, and fortifies him against the assaults of vice and sin. The soothing gleam of joy dawns on his sorrowful life and, with God as his rock, he finds himself on safe soil.

Homage, invocation, sacrifice, and the outpouring of prayer are the various expressions of the inward longings of man to commune with the divine, to enter into mutual intercourse with him. Those are outlets through which man pours forth his heart to the fountain of all bounty. The individual who surrenders himself to unseen powers, who kneels down in humility at the altar, who with uplifted hands pays homage to the hidden forces behind the rising sun or the waxing moon or the roaring ocean, and who carries an offering to the fire or a libation to the waters is psychologically greatly affected. Such attitudes of spirit have great subjective value, for they deeply influence man's character. Prayer is the highest type of expression through which man conveys to his

Heavenly Father his feelings of joy and sorrow, gratitude and love, hope and fear, or in his hunger and thirst for the divine grace lays down his grievances before him, confesses his guilt, craves for help, seeks mercy. Devotion is the first requisite. Mere mutterings of a few formulas with the lips, while the heart does not pulsate with devotional fervour, are no prayer. Where there is no such prayer, there is no devotion; and where there is no devotion, there is no religion.

**A host of gods claimed man's homage.** Gods were bountiful and benevolent. Men prayed to them. Prayers were mostly petitions for gifts of health, long life, offspring, cattle, chariots, riches, and victory over enemies. In Egypt prayers were offered to Amen and Amen-Ra at Thebes, Re-Horus at Heliopolis, Ptah at Memphis, who rose to great eminence and drew a large concourse of worshippers to their shrines. In Babylonia and Assyria hymns were composed in honour of Marduk and Ashur, Shamash and Anu, Nergal and Ninib, and other gods and goddesses like Ishtar. Men and women humiliated themselves, exalted the divinities, addressed them with honorific epithets as wise, creators, powerful and merciful, sang paeans to them and prayed to them. Gods were bountiful and men prayed to them for long life, numerous offspring, and wealth. The Vedic Aryans invoked gods for specific gifts which were in their power to bestow. Agni and Prajapati were asked to grant them fulfilment of their desires and to shower wealth upon them. Agni and the Maruts were asked to give heroic offspring and prosperity. Men besought Agni to be near them for their welfare and to be of easy access as a father is to his son. The Adityas were invoked to lead them to the path of pleasantness. Ushas was implored to give them good luck and glory and riches. Indra was besought to render them help in their conflict with the black-skinned Dasyus and to enable them to ward off their enemies. Indra and Varuna were asked to confer upon them happiness and objects of their desires. Yama was invoked to grant them long life upon earth and happy life in the company of gods in heaven. Men dreaded Rudra's wrath and prayed humbly to avert his ill-will. Men prayed to gods and sought protection against hostile demons who worked for harm.

**Zarathushtra purifies prayer.** Ahura Mazda hears prayers even in thought. Righteous thinking is prayer. Such prayer lifts man to Ahura Mazda. Potent is the power of prayer unto Ahura Mazda, says Zarathushtra.<sup>1</sup> Like unto Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra addresses his prayers to Vohu Manah, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti, either as Ahura Mazda's attributes or as the eternal beings representing holy virtues. He pours out his soul in passionate supplication to Ahura Mazda and longs to win his love.<sup>2</sup> With hands lifted in fervent homage and with

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1 Y28.10.

2 Y44.17.

devotional hymns, he yearns to come to Ahura Mazda.<sup>3</sup> He praises and beseeches Ahura Mazda to be his own.<sup>4</sup> Steeped in devotion, he comes to him with worship and praise.<sup>5</sup> He seeks to approach Mazda with songs of praise and invocation.<sup>6</sup> Through righteousness of Asha and good deeds of Vohu Manah, he says, he will come to Ahura Mazda worshipping with words of praise.<sup>7</sup> He is anxious to behold his maker and to hold converse with him.<sup>8</sup> He implores Ahura Mazda to come to him through Vohu Manah.<sup>9</sup> In another place he beseeches Ahura Mazda to come in his person through Asha and Vohu Manah.<sup>10</sup> He is eager to win Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah and Asha for himself.<sup>11</sup> He desires to know when being enlightened he will see Ahura Mazda, Asha, Vohu Manah, Sraosha, and the throne of Ahura Mazda.<sup>12</sup> He appeals to Ahura Mazda, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti to come to him;<sup>13</sup> to hearken unto him and have mercy upon him.<sup>14</sup> The faithful long to dedicate their songs of praise to Mazda, Asha, and Vahishta Manah and say that they will never incur their provocation.<sup>15</sup> The songs of praise and homage, the prayers and good deeds of the righteous are stored in Garo Demana [Garothman], the Abode of Song.<sup>16</sup>

Bountiful Ahura Mazda is munificent in showering his gifts upon mankind and he knows what is best to give. Zarathushtra implores him to give what pleases him.<sup>17</sup> He prays for long life;<sup>18</sup> that he may be enabled to perform the good deeds of the Holy Spirit through righteousness.<sup>19</sup> He asks him to apportion all good things of life and further the life of the body through Vohu Manah and Khshathra

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3 Y50.8.

4 Y43.8.

5 Y34.6.

6 Y34.2.

7 Y50.9.

8 Y33.6.

9 Y28.6.

10 Y33.7.

11 Y28.3.

12 Y28.5.

13 Y28.3.

14 Y33.11.

15 Y28.9.

16 Y34.2; Y45.8; Y49.10.

17 Y51.18.

18 Y43.13.

19 Y28.1.

according to his will.<sup>20</sup> Vigour and endurance are the essential qualities that enable man to fight wickedness and cling to righteousness and Zarathushtra prays for them.<sup>21</sup> These blessings are the earthly counterparts of weal and immortality, the heavenly boons represented by Haurvatat and Ameretat,<sup>22</sup> and Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to bestow them upon him through Vohu Manah according to his commandments.<sup>23</sup> He prays for the possession of spiritual riches of Ahura Mazda,<sup>24</sup> the riches that form part of the life of Vohu Manah.<sup>25</sup> He beseeches Ahura Mazda to come unto him for help in his need with Vohu Manah, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti.<sup>26</sup> He asks Ahura Mazda to shower his blessings upon the man who approaches him with invocation.<sup>27</sup> He prays for that divine blessing, the power of Ahura Mazda which he gives through Vohu Manah unto the holy man who furthers righteousness through words and deeds tinged with religious wisdom.<sup>28</sup> He invokes upon all the blessings of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, Asha, and Armaiti, who are all of one will.<sup>29</sup> His best prayer is heard and his ardent wish is fulfilled that those who once opposed his teachings have now come over to the faith to embrace the words and deeds of his religion and Ahura Mazda has extended to him the life of felicity now and for ever.<sup>30</sup>

Zarathushtra faces bitter opposition from those who have played upon the credulity of the ignorant and the superstitious and have prospered thereby. He invokes Ahura Mazda for the frustration of their mischievous machinations. Even prophets are moved with indignation and righteous wrath against evil-minded persons who lead mankind to destruction. Jesus, the embodiment of gentleness, denounces the Scribes and Pharisees with prophetic rage as fools and hypocrites, serpents and vipers; he overthrows the tables of money-changers, and casts them out of the temple with a whip of small cords. Zarathushtra exhorts those who seek Vohu Manah's blessings to put down violence and cruelty.<sup>31</sup> He implores Armaiti not to let evil rulers govern the

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20 Y33.10.

21 Y43.1.

22 Y45.10; Y51.7.

23 Y51.7.

24 Y51.2.

25 Y43.1.

26 Y28.3.

27 Y51.2.

28 Y51.21.

29 Y51.20.

30 Y53.1.

land.<sup>32</sup> Bendva is the powerful foe who thwarts Zarathushtra's work of winning over men and women to righteousness, and he prays unto Ahura Mazda for his downfall.<sup>33</sup> He calls such persons liars, deceivers, and wicked.<sup>34</sup>

**The Manthras.** The prophetic word of great moral significance is called Manthra, corresponding to the Vedic Mantra. Both in Iran and India they turn into spells of magical charms. Ahura Mazda has, in one will with Asha, made them.<sup>35</sup> Zarathushtra prays that he and Vishtaspa may successfully proclaim them.<sup>36</sup> Whoso explains these sacred formulas unto the wise reaps joy.<sup>37</sup> Zarathushtra is the friend of one who chants them with homage;<sup>38</sup> and invokes Ahura Mazda to help him through Asha.<sup>39</sup> He rouses all those that recite them to religious life.<sup>40</sup> He gains the best reward who proclaims the true words of righteousness, weal, and immortality.<sup>41</sup> He who follows righteousness under the inspiration of the Manthras gains weal and immortality.<sup>42</sup> Those who do not base their conduct upon these salutary words as the prophet himself thinks and does, will be in the woe in the end.<sup>43</sup> Grehma the opponent of the faith and his wicked followers who harass the messenger of Ahura Mazda's holy words will go to the abode of the Worst Thought.<sup>44</sup> Zarathushtra seeks to know how will he rout wickedness by the holy words of Mazda's ordinance.<sup>45</sup> With these sacred formulas on their tongues, he says, he and his disciples will convert the wicked to their Lord.<sup>46</sup> The words of the wicked are also called Manthras, and the prophet exhorts his hearers not to listen to them,

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31 Y48.7.

32 Y48.5.

33 Y49.1.

34 Y49.2; 53.8.

35 Y29.7.

36 Y28.7.

37 Y51.8.

38 Y50.6.

39 Y50.5.

40 Y43.14.

41 Y31.6.

42 Y44.17.

43 Y45.3.

44 Y32.13.

45 Y44.14.

46 Y28.5.

because they bring destruction and death to the settlements of the faithful.<sup>47</sup>

**Rituals and sacrifices.** Gods required to be propitiated that they might extend their favour to men. When men began to lead settled agricultural life, they began to offer the first fruits of the harvest and produce of the cattle as thanksgiving offerings to them. With growing prosperity they prepared rich repasts of sumptuous food and wine and invoked them to alight on the hallowed place where ceremonial rites were performed, or kindled fire to despatch the sacrifices to heaven on its flaming tongues. Thus were the gods as well as the ancestral dead treated at sacrificial repasts everywhere. The Indo-Iranians were not behind other peoples and their sacrificial offerings consisted of milk and melted butter, grain and vegetables, flesh of goats and sheep, bulls and horses, and the exhilarating Soma-Haoma beverage. Elaborate rituals and sacrifices offered to obtain coveted boons, to gain the remission of sins, and to stave off the terrors of hell. The consecrated food was partaken of by the sacrificers to reap the merit. The altars were reeking with the blood of animals that were sacrificed to innumerable gods. Zarathushtra does away with such sacrifices and purifies rituals.

Ritual is not religion; but it is a powerful aid to religious life. It feeds the emotional nature of man which plays the most prominent part in religious life. It inspires devotional fervour and purity of thoughts. Zarathushtra presumably utilized this formal side of religion to stimulate religious emotion and inspire righteous conduct. Tradition ascribes the division of society into priests, warriors, husbandmen, and artisans to the initiative of King Yima [=Jamshed] of the Golden Age of Iran. Zarathushtra does not recognize this fourfold professional order of society in the Gathas. He does not mention *āthravan*, 'the protector of fire' or priest. The Later Avesta speaks of the sacerdotal class by the title of *āthravan*. The Pahlavi texts continue to employ this priestly designation, and in addition speak of it as *magopat*, or *magpat*, corresponding to the Greek form Magi or Magus. Zarathushtra uses the forms derived from *maga*, 'great,' but it cannot be said that he uses them in reference to the priestly class. A threefold division of society appears in the Gathas, and Zarathushtra gives each one altogether different names. They are called *xvaetu*, *airyaman*, and *verezena*, probably indicating his immediate disciples, the nobility, and the working classes respectively.<sup>48</sup>

The Later Avestan texts speak of distinct functionaries who officiated at the sacrificial ceremonies. The head of this group is *zaotar*, corresponding to Skt. *hotar*, 'the sacrificer.' Zarathushtra speaks of

47 Y31.18.

48 Y32.1; 33.3, 4; 46.1; cf. [James Hope] Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, [London: 1913,] p. 355 n. 2.

himself as a *zaotar* in one passage though with an ethical implication only. As a *zaotar*, he seeks the vision of Ahura Mazda and longs to hold communion with him.<sup>49</sup> The food offered as a ceremonial offering is known in the Avestan texts as *myazda*, and Zarathushtra says that the faithful will offer *myazda* with homage unto Ahura Mazda and Asha.<sup>50</sup> He alludes once to *draonah* [=dron], 'the sacred cake,' which forms an indispensable article of offering in the later period. He speaks of it probably in the sense of the ambrosia and asks Haurvatat and Ameretat to confer it upon him for ever.<sup>51</sup>

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49 Y33.6.

50 Y34.3.

51 Y33.8.

## CHAPTER IX. LIFE IS A BLESSING

**The joy of living.** Zarathushtra gives a joyful orientation to bodily life. He preaches a robust faith in living. The world may not come up to the individual's expectations, yet he has to live in such a wise as to get maximum good out of life. Man finds that sometimes life glides peacefully like the moon that sails across the heavens; on other occasions it runs a rough and ruffled course. Zarathushtra teaches man to adjust himself to the diverse ways of life. Man has to accept life on its own terms, take it as he finds it, make as much of it as he can, rejoice in it, and glory in it. He has to be a radiating centre of cheer and happiness to all with whom he comes in contact. It is the duty of every one to be the bearer of joy and light in gloomy and dark homes.

Man has an unquenchable thirst for joy, pleasure, and happiness. He longs for them in this world as he prays that he should get them in the next. In this world of joy and sorrow, Providence has provided joy in abundance for men and women in all stages of their lives to make their lives livable.

The rich and poor, high and low alike can feast their eyes on the wealth of natural beauty and the marvels of natural phenomena. It is superstition that converts lovable nature into a haunt of dreadful demons and ghosts, goblins and witches. Everything in nature wears a cheerful outlook and a bright hue. New life is blossoming all around and nature throbs with joy. The dawn has her charms reserved for those who rise early. The poor are astir at dawn and begin their day by enjoying the marvellous beauties of nature. They witness the rays of the rising sun driving away the morning mists. They have no diamonds to decorate their bodies, but there are no diamonds to compare with the sparkling beads of dew that they see on the leaves of the trees around them, when the virgin rays of the rising sun throw their lustre upon these. The poorest can inhale in deep draughts the fresh breeze coming from fields which are being mown, from rich foliage and thick woods, or the sweet perfume of roses and jasmine wafted by the wind, or taste the sweet smell of the earth when it has been drenched by seasonal rain. It is a great joy to sit or lie under the shade of trees with their leafy branches gently swaying to and fro to refresh us with cool breeze fanning our faces, or to sit in a rose bower redolent of sweet perfume, or to sprawl or roll about or walk barefooted on the grass, or to romp in the gardens, or to run wild in the fields and woods, or to rest our eyes on the tender green of the grassy lawns stretched before us. Often do we long for calm and it gives us soothing calm to sit in the fields with nothing but the rustle of dry leaves to break the stillness. It thrills us with joy to hear the birds lilting and carolling their sweet music. The nightingale's melodious song, the cooing of the dove restlessly moving



its beautiful neck, the chirping and warbling of birds, the buzzing of insects, and the sound of the wind singing through the woods have a pleasing effect on our minds. It is as pleasant to watch the waters of a pond ruffled by the wind, or the eddies of a lake, or the slender jets of the water of the fountain, or the sunbeams dancing on the water, as to watch the roaring waves rolling up with weakening ripples and softly breaking at our feet. It is pleasing to hear the noise of the heavy rain spattering against the window panes and the puddles in the street, or to see the snow falling in fleecy flakes. It cheers us to see the crimson glow at the sunset, the starlit firmament, powerful wind driving the fleecy clouds before it, the gambolling of soft, white cloudlets and their chasing one another like kittens, the bashful endeavour of the moon to peep from between the clouds, or the moon bravely fighting her way out from the heavy dark clouds interrupting her course and shrouding her in darkness, or the gorgeous pageant of the moon sailing the sky on a clear night in her majestic glory attended by her myriad sparkling handmaids, or the moon flooding the earth with her light and bathing the trees in silver shine, or the glittering rays of the moon drawing silvery lines on the waters. Nature delights us in her multifarious phases. It gives us untold joy and pleasure to be with her for our company. Our hearts beat in unison with the mighty heart of nature.

There is infinite joy in watching the play and amusements of children. There is pleasure in watching games and sports played by others. There is yet greater pleasure in our own singing, dancing, walking, running, riding, driving, playing, roaming in a forest buzzing with life or in the fields of waving grass, skating, swimming, having a plunge in cool surging waves of the ocean on a summer day or rowing amid the rhythmic plash of the oars and a variety of entertainments.

The enlightened find joy in rational pastimes. They saunter in literary bypaths and find incalculable joy in literature, art, music, and other occupations of the mind. For them there is no delight to compare with the intellectual delights. There is no joy greater than that which one who is consumed with the desire to add something to human knowledge or to further human health and happiness experiences when, deeply engrossed in inventing and discovering, after concentrated observation and protracted experimenting he hits upon a right solution of the problem of his search. The products of such creative minds in the fields of arts and sciences have made life more livable. When we get wearied of our workaday world, it is enlivening to court the company of books. Our cares and sorrows are forgotten for a time, and we get a soothing message to embolden us to face life's problems. We greet thinkers and sages, poets and writers, historians and travellers, the great and the noble, the mighty and the heroic that have lived in ages past. The fatigue of our minds leaves us, the anguish of our hearts

disappears, and we are refreshed. Joy and hope prepare us for our duties of life.

It is a boon to live, says Zarathushtra. He teaches everyone to enliven his mind with sunny cheerfulness, to be gay of heart and buoyant of spirit. He exhorts him to say Yea to life with overflowing enthusiasm and overplus joy.

**Happiness unto him who gives happiness unto others.** Thus says Zarathushtra at the gray dawn of history.<sup>1</sup> The sublime precept is again and again imparted to mankind in their days by Confucius, Hillel, and Jesus and is contained in the Pentateuch and the Book of Tobit. The noblest of mankind live to make others happy. Kindly feelings for others make them insensible to their own privations. They impose privation upon themselves to save something for the needy. They place service before self and expose their lives and limbs to imminent peril to rescue others in danger. They think little of themselves and much of others, and wear out their lives in the service of others. In all ages and places there have been noble men and women who would willingly sacrifice their lives a hundred times over for some ideal, some noble cause. Men of generous disposition have always laboured to bring sunshine in the lives of their fellow-men. Such persons have been eager to share their own happiness with their neighbours. Life lived for others is life at its best. When everybody will wish everybody well and when everybody will endeavour to live for all and all will labour to live for everybody, men and women will be angels in flesh inhabiting the world. Service to fellowmen is the best service to Mazda.

**Vitality and endurance are priceless boons.** The body is the most marvellous apparatus prerequisite for mental and spiritual activity. Zarathushtra is the first to teach that the purity of the body leads to the purity of the mind and the pure in mind become pure in spirit. Life is struggle and a healthy, sound and strong body is indispensable for combating physical, social, and moral evil. Everyone has to gird up his loins for the fray and with a sound and rigorous body be quick in his gait for the arduous duty not to do less than his best in life. It is robust health that creates bodily vigour and vitality. Zarathushtra lays constant emphasis on a sound and agile body, for it is indispensable for all activities of mind and spirit. The spirit may be daring and eager to fight the battles of life, but it cannot fulfil the mission of its life if it is enshrouded in a weak body. Zarathushtra prays for his followers to be brimful of vitality and energy which may give them success in all their physical, mental, and spiritual efforts to uplift humanity. Vitality and endurance, or *utayūitī* and *tevishī*, are the most incomparable earthly boons given by Haurvatat and Ameretat. These superb qualities of the body make for physical exuberance which results

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1 Y43.1.

in the strenuous, untiring, zealous activity on the part of man. Man of overflowing vitality, unflinching endurance, abnormal energy, undaunted courage, restless activity, whose life is bubbling over with youthful exuberance, who is intoxicated by the exhilarating enthusiasm, laughs in the face of obstacles and hardships, and looks death defiantly in the face, lives a whole life in the short span of time and changes history. Physical exuberance is a stimulant to mental and spiritual exuberance. The harmonious adjustment creates zest for life, and unbounded enthusiasm for ameliorative work. The ordinary man in his undertakings and the patriot who changes the destiny of his country and the prophet who revolutionizes man's social and moral life, all work with diverse enthusiasms created by the bodily, mental, and spiritual exuberance.

**Prayer for earthly blessings.** Zarathushtra asks Mazda to give him and his followers long-enduring joy that he may be able to withstand opposition.<sup>2</sup> Zarathushtra prays that the faithful be given the reward of joyful and happy life.<sup>3</sup> Ahura Mazda has ordained that the good shall have happy homes in which joy abounds.<sup>4</sup> He is invoked to give, according to his will, such good abodes with all pleasures of life that were and are and will be.<sup>5</sup> The faithful long for such good abodes rich in pastures.<sup>6</sup> Armaiti, as the genius of the earth, gives happy dwellings unto the righteous.<sup>7</sup> Those that are devoted to Vohu Manah are blessed plenty and prosperity.<sup>8</sup> The Daevas defraud mankind of happy life upon earth.<sup>9</sup>

Ahura Mazda and his heavenly associates advance the desires of the good for the blessings of life.<sup>10</sup> Zarathushtra invokes for the realization of the desires that he and Vishtaspa entertain.<sup>11</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to fulfil the desires of those who are worthy in his eyes for their righteousness and for good thoughts.<sup>12</sup>

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2 Y28.6.

3 Y28.2.

4 Y29.10.

5 Y33.10.

6 Y48.11.

7 Y48.6.

8 Y49.5.

9 Y32.5.

10 Y28.9.

11 Y28.7.

12 Y28.10.

Mazda is implored to grant vitality and endurance which are the earthly gifts of Haurvatat and Ameretat.<sup>13</sup> Armaiti confers these boons upon the inmates of happy homes.<sup>14</sup> Zarathushtra prays for long life.<sup>15</sup> Mazda is besought to bestow happiness and joy for all the days of a long life upon those who pray for them.<sup>16</sup> The happiness and blessings of life come unto those that are righteous.<sup>17</sup> The devout pray for the riches of Good Mind through Righteousness that may bring unto them joy of long life.<sup>18</sup> Vohu Manah is invoked to give reward to men according to their deeds.<sup>19</sup> Ahura Mazda is implored to grant vitality through Armaiti and through the Holiest Spirit, mighty power through Asha, and supremacy through Vohu Manah.<sup>20</sup>

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13 Y43.1; 45.10; 51.7.

14 Y48.6.

15 Y33.5.

16 Y43.2; 50.5.

17 Y51.8, 9, 20.

18 Y28.7, 8; Y43.12.

19 Y43.16.

20 Y33.12.

## CHAPTER X. EVIL

**The problem of evil.** The origin of evil has been the deepest problem of life.<sup>1</sup> It confronts every human being in one form or other. If there is one question which has eluded all investigations of the keenest intellects of all lands and all times; if there is one problem which has called forth volumes of writings from the profoundest of thinkers; if there is one riddle that has baffled all attempts of the sages at solving it; if there is one problem on which the last word yet remains to be said, despite the world's voluminous literature of some ten and twenty centuries – it is the problem of the existence of evil. It makes a world of difference whether one looks on life with a healthy mind and a cheerful spirit, or with a morbid mind and a sick spirit, or with an arrogant mind and a defiant spirit. The philosophies of life vary greatly from optimism or pessimism to cynicism or scepticism, according to the various casts of the temperaments of their founders. Life has been a blessing to some, but a curse to others. Some have sought satisfaction by giving up the world of activity with its joys and sorrows, others have tried to escape the temptations and vices of the world by leading a life of self-renunciation. To others still, freedom from existence has seemed the only salvation.

**The existence of evil is a stubborn fact of life.** The creation has not only a bright but also a dark side, and the latter is to be accounted for. All is not well with the universe. There is something that savours of bad. The optimist who says that all is right with the world is as much at fault as the pessimist who says that all is wrong. It is not good to dilate upon wrongs, real and imaginary, and pine away under melancholy and gloom; it is wrong to groan and worry over the darkness of the night, oblivious of the light of the day; but it is equally wrong to dismiss this great question in a rough-and-ready way by denying outright the existence of evil. We cannot dismiss this eternal problem with a shrug of the shoulder. Evil is far too potent a factor in human life to permit us to turn a blind eye to it. It is too real to be ignored and sophistically explained away.

Man finds that he lives in a hostile world. The elements and animals and his fellowmen combine to make war upon him. Great is the wrath of the elements. Nature is beautiful and kindly, benevolent and bountiful, wise and frugal, cheering and comforting, ennobling and inspiring. But Providence governs the universe by the law of contraries. In her malevolent mood, nature is a callous and capricious and frightful monster, raging and thundering, wasting and withering, scorching and burning, drowning and burying, devastating and destroying, devouring

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1 Some material in this chapter is inserted here from my *Our Perfecting World*, New York, 1930.

and killing. Her catastrophes and cataclysms work havoc upon earth. Her magic wand spells destruction and death all around. With appalling suddenness, in one terrific moment, she razes to the ground marvels of man, raised by his toil and industry of years. Her burning mountains, in their frightful freaks, rain brimstone and fire upon fertile fields, convert prosperous towns in one raging sea of flame, emit molten metals, and, let loose hell on earth. Her terrific quakes bring havoc upon villages and towns, overwhelm sleeping humanity reposing in its implicit confidence in the gentle mother earth, rudely wake men, women, and children, and mercilessly drive them headlong, demented and delirious, in futile search of shelter and safety and bury their unwary victims deep under the debris. Her furious hurricanes blow about the weeping weaklings of the human and animal world like autumn leaves and bury them alive in the sandy solitudes of the desert. The unbridled gushing waters of her inundations carry all life and property before them. Her famines and droughts kill vegetation and decimate animals and human beings. Her giant trees strangle and deal out death to small trees growing about them in the forests. Wild creepers entwine themselves like serpents round trees and choke their lives out. Countless millions of insects and ants gnaw trees down to dust and death, ravage the crops, and kill live stock. A reign of struggle to the death is witnessed in the animal world. The strong live and thrive by devouring the weak in the forests. Millions of animals and birds and fishes are born to be so many morsels to the stronger of their species. She breeds plagues and pestilences and looses death to hold its carnival. Leprosy distorts the countenances of hundreds of thousands of men and women, renders loathsome their touch, and encrusts their bodies with plague spots of disease more horrible than death.

The greater enemy of men than elements and animals, however, is man himself. The human scourges of God, like Attila or Jenghis Khan or Nadirshah or Tamerlane, sweep over populated areas like blighting winds and leave an appalling wake of desolation and death. Peoples give distressing exhibition of human bestiality when they go to war with one another. Man's baseness augments a thousandfold the beastliness of nature. His inhumanity to man, nurtured upon his falsehood and inequity, arrogance and avarice, wrath and jealousy, envy and hatred, cunning and intrigue, vindictiveness and cruelty, malice and back-biting, selfishness and meanness, and vice and wickedness create human misery worse than the worst done by the lifeless and living creation whose lord he claims to be. When the brute in him rears his head and acts through him, he becomes worse than the wildest beast of the jungle.

**Zarathushtra stigmatizes evil as evil.** The existence of so much evil in the world lies heavy on the heart of man. Evil is a challenge, and

Zarathushtra accepts it. He does not palliate evil. It is not, he teaches, the passive negation of good. It is the active enemy of good. It is not complementary to good, nor is it good in the making. It is not evil only in name. Evil is just evil, nothing more nor less. It is the fundamental fact of life, and haunts us like our shadows which we cannot evade. Illusion does not cause evil; it exists in the realm of reality. It is the most disagreeable fact in Ahura Mazda's universe, and the prophet of Iran looks it in the face. It is futile to speak of things as better than they actually are. Bad things of life do not lose their badness by giving them good names. It is wrong to make-believe that evil does not exist, though it does exist as truly as man exists. The world is not all good; it is not all bad either. Neither is all right with the world, nor is all bad with it.

**Life is co-operation with good and conflict with evil.** Good and evil are co-existing polarities. Man can think of things only in terms of their opposites. Light is light because of darkness. Health is a coveted boon, as its loss heralds sickness. Life is valued as Ahura Mazda's most incomparable gift, as lurking death threatens its extinction. Happiness is pleasant, for misery is unbearable. Riches rise in worth owing to the dread of poverty. Joy is gratifying, for sorrow aims at killing it. Virtue is the health of the spirit, for vice is its disease. Righteousness is the life of the spirit, for wickedness spells its death.

There can be no compromise between good and evil. Incessant warfare is raging between good and evil. Man's duty is to commend good and co-operate with it; to condemn evil and enter into conflict with it.

**“Resist Evil” is the clarion call of Zarathushtra to humanity.** Evil is equally the enemy of Ahura Mazda and man, and man is created a comrade in arms to resist it in all its manifestations. It is his birthright to fight evil. He shares Ahura Mazda's work of mending evil. The world is a battlefield and man is a soldier in the eternal struggle. The soldier's duty is to stand firm at his post and fight even to the death. If he holds overtures with the enemy, or succumbs to his wiles, he is a rebel; if he evades fight, or ignores it, or turns his back upon the enemy, he is a coward, dishonouring his manhood.

Belief in the existence of evil gives force to man's feelings of repugnance to evil. He can squarely meet the enemy of Ahura Mazda and man on the field, and give him battle, if his reality is fully understood. Evil is fought the harder, not by loving good the more, but by hating evil. Love of good and working for good breed only passive dislike for evil. Hatred of evil alone sets the soul on fire to fight it with zest and zeal. Evil cannot be hated with an all-consuming hatred, if it is masked in the garments of good. To be hated from the depth of the heart, and with the fullest force of one's being, evil should be exposed in

its innate ugliness, its diabolic nature. Evil is aggressive. Man must resist and conquer it, or submit and court defeat.

Zoroastrianism is essentially militant. It stirs human hearts to repugnance towards evil; it spurs man to fight it with all his being, body, mind, and spirit. Not to resist evil with offensive and defensive warfare against it is either to be callous or cowardly, or both in one's person; it is to fail in one's duty to mankind and be false to the redemptive task assigned by Ahura Mazda to man. Evil is the common enemy of Ahura Mazda and man, and man is engaged in fighting as an ally of the godhead. In his fight against evil, he is a co-worker and a fellow-combatant with Ahura Mazda. Men of all times and all places have to fight individually and collectively for the mighty cause. Man has to fight the forces of evil to his last breath. His life is one of a continued crusade against the powers of wickedness. He has to adjust social wrongs, regenerate society, and redeem the world of humanity.

**Man's duty to resist evil in his own nature.** Man was animal but yesterday. Today he is man, though not devoid of animal traits. His destiny is to be angel, and tomorrow he shall be that also. Everyone has in his or her power to be a saint. But the way to attain sainthood and divinity is distant and beset with countless difficulties. Every step in advance is a struggle. The animal in man is obdurate and persistent, cunning and resourceful. To escape from his grip, to destroy his power, to eliminate him, man has to fight a hundred battles. Man's inner life is a perpetual warfare between animal and human within his breast. A violent struggle is going on in every human heart between the higher impulses to renounce animal appetites, and the lower instincts to satisfy them. Man is a divided self, divided mind, divided will, and feels within him the conflict of two opposing natures. The one half of man's being is always at war with his other half. When the Good Spirit first met the Evil Spirit, he said that he was opposed to him in his thoughts and words and deeds and faith and conscience and soul and every thing.<sup>2</sup> The same complete polarity obtains between the higher self and the lower self in man. The one stands for truth, virtue, and righteousness, the other represents falsehood, vice, and wickedness. Though inhabitants of the same tenement, they are poles apart in their thoughts, words, deeds, feelings, and aspirations. What is light to one is darkness to the other, and what is nourishment to the one is poison to the other. When the animal in man gets the better of the human, it makes for his imperfection, it is his curse, his enemy, his evil. Evil thoughts and dark passions are its emissaries. They are to be combated and conquered, if man desires to fulfil his destiny. The storm of evil that arises within man is no less violent than any which he encounters in the outer world. Resistance to evil in the one is as instinctive as it is in the

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2 Y45.2.



other. This resistance is conducive to higher life. It breeds in man the qualities of strenuous effort, toil, courage, strength, and sacrifice. Courageous fight to vanquish evil builds character. Facing aggressive evil with fortitude, fighting temptations, and overcoming evil is progressive ascent towards individual perfection.

**Man's duty to resist evil in society.** As it is with the individual so it is with society. Social life opens with animal instincts and evolves toward human traits. Every man is an ally of every other man against the common enemy, evil. When they play human they co-operate with their comrades in the task ordained for them by Ahura Mazda. In their forgetful moments, when they throw down their human vesture and lapse into their animal state, they miss their mark. Instead of fighting the enemy of man, they fight men, and tear them with mad fury. Every man's hand, then, is against every man individually, as every nation's hand is against every nation collectively. Rather than follow the demands of the moral world, to wage war with evil, they continue the practice of the physical world, the war of the strong against the weak. At all times they fight beyond their homeland, sometimes they fight in their homes. Dogs living in the same yard are friends all day, but turn into foes at any hour. So are men, friendly and fondling in their human nature, but snarling at each other, like dogs, when the animal in them emerges on the surface. Society has always had its parasites, who live on theft and plunder, rapine and bloodshed. So will it be until that time, in distant ages to come, when society, by human effort for betterment, eventually reaches perfection. The animal in man will grow weak with time, and will be subdued. As society progresses in evolution, this baser element in man will be disabled by degrees. In perfect society it will be eliminated.

But society is yet imperfect in all phases of its life. It has its stray dogs and pouncing wolves and cunning serpents. They are menaces to its well-being, and vigorous resistance to their vicious propensities and evil doings is indispensable for the very life of society. In primitive society the work of redressing wrongs remains in the hands of aggrieved individuals, and as individuals are actuated by vengeance, hatred is met by hatred, blood is avenged by blood, and evil is repaid by evil. In organized society the right of redressing wrongs is taken from the individual. Society interferes, and in its authoritative position as State, undertakes to dispense justice to warring factions. Justice ceases to be vengeance, but cannot dispense with the punishing rod. Society cannot exist without laws, and all legislation implies enforcement of laws by punishing their infringement. To punish, however, is to use force for the resistance of evil. An imperfect society in an imperfect world cannot exist without its courts and constabularies, its prisons and scaffolds. The State as police cannot do its duty without resort to physical force. If

the guardians of society were to don ash-coloured robes, and retreat before the forces of evil, or make themselves known as non-resistants to evil, unprotected society would soon welter in crime and bloodshed. Militant evil, with no deterrent combatants in the field, would throttle passive good to death.

Persuasion and force are two chief factors indispensable in human affairs. Individuals, as well as society, can endure wrong patiently and try to reclaim the wrong-doer by good counsel and admonition. But when persuasion fails in its purpose, and wicked people become more desperate in inflicting injury, endurance on the part of the recipient of injury ceases to be virtue. It encourages evil, exposes society to danger, and does harm even to the perpetrator of crime by allowing him without restraint to sink deeper in guilt. The human in man is amenable to persuasion, but his animal nature must be subdued by force. Society requires the coercion of the State, because it is imperfect. To those members of the State who are walking on the path of perfection or who are striving to come nearer to perfection, coercive laws of the State do not apply. As society evolves towards perfection, persuasive power will prove an increasingly effective urge to good behaviour, and force will gradually recede into the background. In the perfect society to come, force will have no place.

**To be good and eschew evil are passive virtues; to further good and to fight evil are active virtues.** Personal salvation is the basic principle, the motive power that inspires all religious life. Zarathushtra insists that every man's duty is to seek salvation of all mankind. To secure individual salvation and leave others to their fate, without working and struggling for their salvation, is to fail in one's duty towards his fellow-men. To be good, but not to make others good; not to be evil, yet not to resist evil caused by others, are merely negative virtues. Just as the individual's duty ends not in practising passive virtues which tend to make him good, but in making others good, so also he must not rest when he has eradicated his evil thoughts, bridled his passions, and overcome the evil that lurks in his inward nature, but he has further to reclaim others who have embraced evil. It is not only passive resistance that he has to offer to evil, but, adopting an aggressive attitude towards evil of all kinds, he has to combat and rout it. It is not enough that he should himself eschew evil; he must combat evil in others. He cannot remain a passive spectator while his neighbour is suffering. He is not to be a passive onlooker of, or to connive at some wrong on the ground that he is not the originator of it. The fact that something evil and imperfect exists around him, no matter by whom caused, is a sufficient reason why he should rush into the fray and do his share to mitigate and remove it. Nay, he has even to hunt out the

hydra of wrong and strike at its many heads, so that the world of goodness may not suffer.

The prophet of Iran warns man that happiness is not the criterion of the value of human life, pleasure is not the standard; but duty in its two-fold aspect, that is, of working for righteousness and fighting against wickedness, is the guiding principle of life. Incessant work for the Kingdom of Righteousness deepens man's life; uncompromising war against the Kingdom of Wickedness strengthens it. This two-fold activity makes life complete. To further righteousness is only half the duty; to combat wickedness is the other half. Both are indispensable to realize the Zoroastrian ideal of righteousness.

Everyone can contribute his or her mite, in the manifold walks of life, to the grand end of bringing about the final victory of good and the utter defeat of evil. The poorest man, who cheerfully fulfils his obligations of father and husband, brother and son, who struggles with poverty, yet loves independence and honour, who extends not his hand for alms, but lives on the slender earnings of his honest toil, who rears his children into good men and women does his duty by goodness, and does it well. The man who has energy and time, and employs both of these in social service of any kind, who organizes philanthropic work, preparing ameliorative schemes and who spends his bodily vigour and leisure hours for the betterment of humanity, succours goodness. The rich man, who gives away his wealth in the name of Ahura Mazda to alleviate the sufferings of the needy, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, heals the sick, builds homes for the homeless; promotes goodness. The man of learning and wisdom, who enlightens and inspires, ennobles and uplifts mankind, furthers goodness. The man of adventurous spirit who reclaims arid wastes, fertilizes barren lands, clears the forests of wild beasts; or the man of talents, who discovers an antidote to some disease, a preventive to epidemics and plagues, extirpates germs and bacteria, combats heroically physical evil. One who struggles hard for the elimination of the darkness of the mind, who crusades against superstition and bigotry, is combating mental evil. The man who struggles with the forces of corruption and injustice, who fights for the redress of wrongs, who blunts the edge of the tyrant's sword, is routing the forces of social evil. A righteous person who wages a relentless war against immorality, who pares the wings of vice and cripples crime, is a hero of the war against moral evil.

### ANGRA MAINYU

**The Evil Spirit and his characteristics.** Just as man, in his religious evolution, comes to the belief in the existence of kindly invisible beings who protect and nourish and help him, so he discovers that there are hostile powers who wish him evil. Such demons are

presided over by powerful chiefs who rule over the world of darkness and evil. They have weak personalities as incarnating evil, but each one is Satan in the making. Set was in conflict with Horus in Egypt, as Tiamat was with Marduk in Babylonia, and Vritra with Indra among the Indo-Iranians.

The Evil Spirit who disputes the sovereignty over human hearts in Iran with the Holy Spirit, is not given a proper name in the Gathas. Of the two primeval Spirits, the one who chose evil as his sphere of activity is given the epithet *angra*, meaning enemy or evil. Angra Mainyu thus means the Enemy or the Evil Spirit. This attribute is applied once directly to the Evil Spirit.<sup>3</sup> In another place it is said why is a bad (*angra*) man not like unto Angra, 'The Evil One,' referring evidently to Angra Mainyu, or the Evil Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The term *angra* is thus used more than once in the ordinary meaning 'evil' as a designation of wicked men.<sup>5</sup> He is given the epithet *aka*, 'bad.'<sup>6</sup> In one place he is given the name Aka Mainyu, 'the Bad Spirit.'<sup>7</sup> Yet in another instance he is termed *dregvant*, or the Wicked One.<sup>8</sup>

In his thoughts, words, deeds, faith, conscience, soul, and everything else, he stands at the opposite pole to the Good Spirit.<sup>9</sup> He is himself evil in thought, word and deed,<sup>10</sup> and chose to do worst things.<sup>11</sup> When he first manifested himself he created non-life in opposition to the action of the Good Spirit who created life.<sup>12</sup> He denounces the providence of Ahura Mazda.<sup>13</sup>

The Evil Spirit lures men by his mischievous machinations to the path of wickedness, and lulls their spiritual senses to repose. He is the inveterate foe of humanity. Man, we may infer from the tone of the Gathas, should avoid him as he would a pestilence. Fortunate is he who successfully bridles the tumult of the Evil Spirit and breaks the heavy chains that fetter his spirit. But woe to him who revolts from the Good Spirit, pays homage to the author of evil, and lives in bondage to him. Such a man is a moral pervert, a rebel, and suffers death in the spirit.

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3 Y45.2.

4 Y44.12.

5 Y43.15; 44.12; 48.10.

6 Y30.3.

7 Y32.5.

8 Y30.5. [*dregvant* literally means "possessing *druj*". -JHP]

9 Y45.2.

10 Y30.3.

11 Y30.5.

12 Y30.4.

13 Y44.12.

The normal state of man is to be always on the side of the good, and by any act of going over to the realm of evil he creates for himself an unnatural situation. His sacred duty is to espouse the cause of the Good Spirit.

### DAEVAS

**The infernal crew.** The diabolic spirits who have entered into a compact with Angra Mainyu to mar the good creation of Ahura Mazda are the Daevas, or demons. They are the offspring of the Evil Mind and spread their mischief over all seven zones.<sup>14</sup> The Evil Spirit has taught them to mislead men through evil thought, evil word, and evil deed.<sup>15</sup> The Daevas instigate the enemies of settled life to give the cattle to violence.<sup>16</sup> Mazda best remembers the misdeeds of these recreants and he judges accordingly.<sup>17</sup> When the two primal spirits of good and evil came together at the beginning of creation the demons chose evil and rushed with one accord to bring destruction to mankind.<sup>18</sup> The wicked are the beloved of the demons, for they are the ones that renounce the Good Mind and revolt from the wisdom of Ahura Mazda and Righteousness.<sup>19</sup> The demons should therefore be abjured,<sup>20</sup> and the Saviour Saoshyant will be the friend, brother, and father of those who hate them.<sup>21</sup> The Daevas will receive their due at the final Dispensation when Righteousness will smite Wickedness.<sup>22</sup>

As Ahura Mazda holds his council of celestial beings, so Angra Mainyu maintains in his infernal court a retinue of male and female demons. In opposition to every archangel and angel, the younger literature sets up a corresponding fiend. These form exact counterparts of the powers of goodness, and always act in direct opposition to them. We do not find the symmetry of diametric opposites between these rival forces carried out to completion in the extant Gathic literature. The names of not all the corresponding demons, who are the opponents of Mazda's ministering angels, are found. The rivals of Vohu Manah, Asha, and Sraosha are mentioned by names, as Aka Manah, Druj, and Aeshma, but with the exception of Druj, the adversary of Asha, the rest are seen working only sporadically and not in systematic antagonism to

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14 Y32.3.

15 Y32.5.

16 Y44.20.

17 Y29.4.

18 Y30.6.

19 Y32.4.

20 Y34.5.

21 Y45.11.

22 Y48.1.

their corresponding rival good spirits. Taromaiti, or heresy, the opponent of Armaiti, is named but once,<sup>23</sup> though the term does not occur in this particular passage as a personified demon. Aka Manah, Druj, and Aeshma are the only Daevas expressly mentioned in the Gathas. We shall deal with these separately.

### AKA MANAH

**The Evil Mind.** Aka Manah is mentioned only three times in the Gathas.<sup>24</sup> Even in his name he is the antithesis of his heavenly rival Vohu Manah, or Good Mind. Like his celestial adversary, who is sometimes called Vahishta Manah, 'Best Mind,' this fiend is also styled Achishta Manah or 'Worst Mind.' The Daevas, it is said, chose to embrace the Worst Mind.<sup>25</sup> They are the progeny of Aka Manah.<sup>26</sup> Zarathushtra undertakes by his prayer to drive out the demon of Evil Mind from before him, that is, from the world of Righteousness.<sup>27</sup> When man's mind is not filled with the good thoughts of Vohu Manah, it becomes an easy prey to the onslaughts of the evil thoughts of Aka Manah. Whosoever is a victim to Aka Manah finds his thoughts enslaved by him. As heaven is associated with Vohu Manah, hell is mentioned as the region of Aka Manah. The tyrant Grehma and his wicked followers who destroy life, we are told, will go to the Abode of the Worst Mind.<sup>28</sup>

### DRUJ

**Her Kingdom of Wickedness.** The Rig Veda speaks of a minor demon Druh who with others of her class stands for malice or hatred. The corresponding Gathic term is Druj, 'falsehood or wickedness.' The Daevas are generally malevolent male beings. Druj, on the other hand, is a female fiend. The Gathas give her greater prominence than to any other evil being. As the rival of Asha, or Righteousness, Druj personifies wickedness in every form and aspect. All evil in the world is focused in her. Ever since the Evil Spirit introduced evil in the world, the world of humanity has been and will be, until the final Renovation of the universe, divided into two distinct parties. Those on the side of Ahura Mazda follow the law of Righteousness, but those who have chosen to live in error have embraced the law of Druj, or Wickedness. The righteous form together the world of righteousness, whereas the wicked ones are classed as the members of the world of wickedness. The sacred

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23 Y33.4.

24 Y32.3; Y33.4; Y47.5.

25 Y30.6.

26 Y32.3.

27 Y33.4; Y47.5.

28 Y32.13.

mission of Zarathushtra lies in the work of converting these misguided men to righteousness and in winning them over to the side of Ahura Mazda.

**The adherents of Druj.** The man who yields to the temptations of Druj is a dregvant, 'wicked one,' as opposed to the *ashavan*, 'righteous one,' who follows Asha.<sup>29</sup> Angra Mainyu himself is called dregvant.<sup>30</sup> The wicked who are themselves of evil faith seek to mislead others.<sup>31</sup> They defy the good admonitions of the Deity and are not willing to hear the good counsel, the divine word of the Good Mind. Zarathushtra seeks means, therefore, to drive out their wickedness.<sup>32</sup> He exhorts his audience to listen attentively to his inspired teachings, so that the teacher of evil may not thereafter injure them.<sup>33</sup> The prophet comes as the lord between the parties of the righteous and the wicked and those whose good and evil deeds balance.<sup>34</sup> He preaches to those who, being led astray by the evil advice of Druj, smite the world of righteousness.<sup>35</sup> The wicked are far from the good-will of Ahura Mazda; their sinful deeds make them companions of Evil Mind.<sup>36</sup> They strive to estrange the righteous from the Best Mind,<sup>37</sup> and from the best deeds.<sup>38</sup> They strive to reduce all others to their own class. They bring distress and death to the house, village, town, and country, through their wicked spells.<sup>39</sup> He who harasses the prophet is the child of Druj.<sup>40</sup>

**Druj's followers are to be requited with evil in this world.** In his crusade against the Kingdom of Wickedness, Zoroaster is unsparing and even unforgiving. We do not see, in the words handed down from his lips, the gentler side of virtue of returning good for evil. Here we have the ethics of retaliation. Once the antithesis between the Kingdom of Righteousness and Wickedness is sharply defined, the latter is to be relentlessly opposed. The two parties are on the war-path, and strict discipline demands that the righteous man will on no account wink at or palliate wickedness, and let the evildoer go free without

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29 Y29.2, 5; 30.11; 46.1, 4.

30 .Y30.5.

31 Y45.1.

32 Y44.13.

33 Y45.1.

34 Y31.2; 33.1.

35 Y31.1.

36 Y47.5.

37 Y32.11.

38 Y32.12.

39 Y31.18.

40 Y51.10.

retribution. Wrong is to be handled as wrong, and the man who does wrong is to be met with his own weapons. Evil is to be requited by evil and not by goodness. Indifference and leniency threaten only to further the domain of Wickedness. Consequently evil is to be relentlessly put down.

Zarathushtra is the friend of the righteous, but a veritable foe to the wicked.<sup>41</sup> The wicked lords of the land vehemently oppose his work;<sup>42</sup> it is they who hinder the righteous in the pursuit of goodness. He who hurls these miscreants down from power clears the way for the good teachings.<sup>43</sup> Succouring the wicked is tantamount to practising wickedness. It is expressly said that the one who is good to the wicked is himself wicked.<sup>44</sup> Those who with their thoughts, words, and deeds bring punishment to the wicked fulfil the desire of Mazda.<sup>45</sup> No one, therefore, should be the cause of rejoicing to the wicked.<sup>46</sup> Every one, on the contrary should always practise goodness towards the righteous, but deal out ill to the wicked.<sup>47</sup> The man of truthful words should not give chieftainship to the wicked.<sup>48</sup>

**Druj's disciples fare no better in the next world.** Ahura Mazda reckons the followers of Druj as wicked, and therefore retribution and misery await their souls.<sup>49</sup> Ahura Mazda gives happiness and joy hereafter to the righteous, but on the wicked he inflicts punishment and pain.<sup>50</sup> The wicked, according to the teachings of the Gathas, are led by their conscience through their own deeds to the Abode of Darkness.<sup>51</sup> One of the names of the inferno, as we shall see, is *drujo demāna*, 'Abode of Druj.' There rush the wilfully blind and deaf<sup>52</sup> thither go to perdition the crew of the wicked.<sup>53</sup>

**Final defeat of Druj.** The logical sequence to the war between the powers of righteousness and wickedness in these sharply defined poles

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41 Y43.8.

42 Y46.1.

43 Y46.4.

44 Y46.6.

45 Y33.2.

46 Y43.15.

47 Y47.4.

48 Y49.9.

49 Y43.4; Y45.7

50 Y31.14, 15; Y51.8, 9.

51 Y31.20.

52 Y46.11; Y51.14.

53 Y49.11.



of existence is the demanded ultimate victory of righteousness over wickedness. This is the goal towards which the world of humanity moves. When punishment will come to the wicked and the divine kingdom descend upon earth, Druj will fall forever into the hands of Asha.<sup>54</sup> Hence Zarathushtra abjures Druj,<sup>55</sup> and prays for power that he and his followers may be able to smite Druj.<sup>56</sup> He asks Ahura Mazda how it will be possible to deliver over Druj into the hands of Asha,<sup>57</sup> and it will eventually come to pass that the righteous will rout the wicked.<sup>58</sup> The tone of his divine inquiry implies the answer that when humanity unanimously adheres to Righteousness, Wickedness will ultimately perish.<sup>59</sup>

### AESHMA

**The demon of wrath.** The foe of Sraosha, who is above all the genius of obedience and revelation, is Aeshma, or 'Wrath.' When Geush Urvan, or the Spirit of animal life, complains of the disturbance and disorder, chaos and anarchy prevailing on the earth, it speaks of Aeshma as the prime originator of these calamities.<sup>60</sup> The Fashioner of the Cattle, thereupon, consults Asha to find out a chieftain who would ultimately banish Aeshma from the creation.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore in this connection, when the twain spirits of good and evil first met together at the beginning of the creation, the demons embraced evil and rushed to the standard of Aeshma in order to bring destruction to the life of man.<sup>62</sup> Those who with firmness control and repress this arch-fiend are the saviours.<sup>63</sup> Zarathushtra says that the faithful follower of the good, who is striving to hold and make his own the Good Mind through righteousness, should in the first place put down Aeshma, the fiend of fury.<sup>64</sup>

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54 Y30.8.

55 Y49.3.

56 Y31.4.

57 Y44.14.

58 Y48.2.

59 Y30.10.

60 Y29.1.

61 Y29.2.

62 Y30.6.

63 Y48.12.

64 Y48.7.

## CHAPTER XI. LIFE AFTER DEATH

**Death lives by feeding on life.** Death is ever at man's heels. It is closer to him than his shadow. Man has always desired to gain immunity from death. It is only when man is downcast and depressed that he looks to death as deliverer and says that he would be better dead than live and suffer. When life becomes dreary and dark, death, assumes a bright hue and promises the unfortunate ones to drown their miseries in the darkness of the grave, and to give them rest which life has not given them. When life takes its normal course, man blames God that he should have permitted death to stalk the earth. Out of compassion for mankind, it is said, the Babylonian god Ea once endeavoured to secure immortality for it but failed in his attempt. Both gods and men considered the indefinite prolongation of life as the supremest blessing. But the gods zealously guarded this much coveted boon and kept it as their exclusive possession. They grew jealous and frustrated men's attempt to win immortality, for men would be gods if they got the priceless prize. The hero Gilgamesh passionately longed for immortal life and went in search of an escape from death. He was informed by the shade of his heroic compatriot whom death had taken away from him that death was the final fate of man and he was indulging in futile hopes. Immortal life was for gods only. Death was the lot of mankind and even a hero like Gilgamesh with all his marvellous achievements could not escape it. It was, therefore, advisable for him to give up yearning for what was unattainable and rather wholeheartedly enjoy life as long as it lasted and death was yet far off. He is advised by others to don fine raiment, to anoint himself with oil, to fill his belly with fine food and wine, to love the woman of his bosom and be merry by day and by night, for death would put an end to his life at any moment.

Death comes with stealthy steps. When the hour sounds and death issues its summons and knocks at the door, nothing in the world, can keep it out. Death is a grim harvester. It is absolutely heedless of the seasons of life. It swings its sickle and takes away some in the heyday of their summer. It strikes others when they are in the full vigour of life before their life-work is finished and they have enjoyed the greatness they have built. To others who lie lingering in bed suffering excruciating agonies of pain it comes with cruel slowness leisurely moving with feet of lead and leaves them long writhing in the convulsions of fading life. Its kiss is killing and its embrace is extinction. It is difficult to look it in the face without quailing. Its helpless victim lies tossing in bed fighting in vain to keep off its icy hands circling round his neck to smother and squeeze out life. Death's ghastly pallor comes over his livid face the breath begins to rattle laboriously in the throat his voice is stilled, he stares with sightless eyes, his dear ones around him watch with bated

breath his every breath fearing it to be his last, the convulsions of the body, at grip with the soul struggling to leave it, grow keener, life gradually ebbs out of him, it dries up in his veins, the heart ceases its beating, and he gives up his ghost. Death prostrates him in the dust. He sleeps in solitude in the cold grave to be eaten up bit by bit in its decay by worms or is consumed by the roaring tongues of red hot fire or is torn limb from limb by vultures who make a meal of him.

**Death is man's last sleep from which he wakes up in the other world.** Death sets man brooding over the whereabouts of the dead who has just ceased breathing and fails to respond to the call of the living. It is the greatest mystery, with the solution of which man is always confronted. Man has ever longed to lift the veil that hides it and look behind it. It was an enigma to the first man upon earth and an enigma still it is to us. From the gray dawn of civilization man has vaguely believed that the dead do not die altogether. The Egyptians are among the earliest of the civilized peoples who have left records of their beliefs they held some seven thousand years ago. They could not account for the disappearance of the individual at his death and conjectured that unseen and unheard though the dead one had become, he existed somewhere and somehow. Though he had dropped his vesture of clay he had adopted some invisible replica of it and had thrown a veil over himself and his doings that cannot be penetrated. The grave where his last remains were deposited, they thought, was his natural abode where he lived the life that he hitherto led, but only invisibly. Naturally enough he hungered and thirsted, worked and rested, loved and hated, as he did while alive. So also did the Babylonians believe that the dead departed to the subterranean regions and lived their invisible lives.

The Indo-Iranians came to believe at an early age that at death man leaves behind all that is mortal. His mortal tenement perishes but the imperishable part of man, his real personality, his soul survives his bodily death. Yama was the first to discover the path of the dead and won for himself the empire of the dead. Yama welcomed the soul of the dead to his abode where it was met by its kith and kin that had preceded it.

Zarathushtra systematically speaks of two different worlds, this one and the next. The present, or the earthly world, is called *astvant*, 'corporeal,' and the other or the heavenly world is called *manahya*, 'spiritual,' literally, 'of thought.'<sup>1</sup> Body and soul are the two main constituents in the formation of man. These two have their respective organs and other spiritual and material essentials. So long as these work in unison man lives, and lives for the best in this world. The Evil Spirit

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1 Y28.2; 43.3.

has introduced death in the world,<sup>2</sup> which brings the dissolution of these diverse elements. The soul exists for the short span of its life on earth in the tenement of the body. When the material frame crumbles into dust it flees heavenward. The bodily death does not mean the death of the soul, for that is immortal.<sup>3</sup> Death is not the end of man's life, for he lives in heaven in spirit and he lives upon earth in posterity. The present life is a prelude to the future life. It is a pilgrimage to a higher life. Man should therefore bethink himself to prepare for the journey to the next world when he departs from this life. He will get in heaven what he craves for in vain upon earth. He will have for actual experience in heaven the best and perfect condition which he visualizes but imperfectly in thought on earth.

**The belief that he will one day meet the dear departed lightens man's burden of bereavement.** Death casts the greatest gloom around us. Time, in its fulness, softens the sorrow of the bereaved, wipes away his tears, and heals the wound inflicted by death. But there are always persons of deep emotional nature and gentle feelings who are disconsolate. Their dear ones are torn from them whom they cannot forget. Death lacerates the heart of fond parents by snatching away from their bosom their only child that was the apple of their eyes. The devoted wife in the neighbourhood is deprived of her doting husband, who was the idol of her heart and was all that she most loved on earth. Life seems to be empty and hollow to yet another father who has lost his youthful son, who was the joy of his heart and pride of his life. The bereaved grieve and weep, sigh and sob, cry and pray that God may give them back their dear ones, who had shared their joys and sorrows at the fire hearth, but God does not give them back. The dead have gone to the world from where there is no return. With the passing away of their beloved ones, flowers seem to have lost their fragrance, life is shorn of its sweetness, the world has lost its light, and everything around seems to be dead to them. The dead do not pass out of their lives. The music of their voices lingers in their minds, their images float before their vision, their faces haunt them during the day, and they dream of them at night. If they walk in the garden they think they see the airy figures of their dear ones under the shade of the pine trees; if they turn aside they feel they are followed by the ghosts of their dead; if they close the door of their abodes they think they hear the dead knocking at their doors; if they open the doors they fancy they hear the retreating steps of the dead.

Unto countless millions of such aggrieved persons driven to hopeless despair, comes the welcome tidings that their dead ones are living in the yonder world and they will one day be able to meet them. Death has

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2 Y30.4.

3 Y45.7.

parted them now, but they will be united with them some day. They will themselves go the same way that their dear ones have gone; only they have preceded them and are now awaiting their arrival. When they will go to the world of the dead, they will meet them face to face, they will know one another; greet one another with open arms, and live thereafter together in peace and felicity. If God has taken away their beloved before their time, it must be because in his infinite wisdom he must have thought this world not good enough for them. For those whom God loves most, he calls to himself sooner than others.

**The anomalies of earthly life and their final adjustment in heaven.** The unequal distribution of earthly possessions among mankind, the unequal opportunities held out to men, the undeserved sufferings of the righteous, the unmerited success of the wicked, and various other anomalies of life have led man by long ages of thinking to postulate a place where wrongs shall be ultimately adjusted, outraged righteousness expiated, and undetected wickedness punished. Death is the entrance into eternal light or eternal darkness. The order of this world is far from perfection; the innocent often suffer, while the guilty escape with impunity; the virtuous poor man pines under grinding poverty, while the rich man prospers. The doctrine of a future life of rectification where justice will be administered with exactitude in accordance with the divine ordinance, where grievances of this world will be redressed, and where every injustice, borne patiently, will be rectified, gives mental tranquillity and spiritual calm to the afflicted. A vista of hope thus opens before those who are roughly handled by this world. This hope brings peace that the world had not hitherto given them. It enables them manfully to endure pain and privation, suffering and sorrow, in the pious hope that a higher life awaits them in which they will receive their due. This hope assures man the continuation of what little happiness he has had in this world and the cessation of what great misery he suffered on earth. It gives meaning to the life of the individual, and inculcates a robust faith in the goodness of God. Man thus learns that he is not the sport of some evil-designing spirit who has carelessly thrown him on this world, resourceless and helpless. When in spite of his own honest work and hard labour he finds himself hopelessly lost in the feverish struggle for existence, he does not complain that some unjust and partial Maker has made him of clay inferior to that of his intensely selfish competitors, and given to him lesser opportunities for success than to his rivals in the race of life. The cheerful idea dawns upon him that the gloomy and dark night of anguish of his broken heart and troubled spirit will be followed by an eternal morn which will dispel all darkness and shed light on his path. He consoles himself with the belief that his life of misery upon the earth is a precursor of happy life in heaven. When life upon earth brings no solace, the hope of heavenly recompense comforts and sustains him.

Vast numbers of men and women have always believed in heaven and hell as certainties. The fear of punishment in the next world has had a great deterrent effect upon many wicked persons. They have dreaded death opening the door to their damnation.

**Reward for the good and retribution for the evil.** Looking to the history of the origin of this belief among the cultured peoples prior to the advent of Zarathushtra, we find that the growth of ethical concepts led the early Egyptians to believe in the judgment of the soul in the next world. The heavenly tribunal was presided over by Osiris and his associates. Before each of these subordinate judges the soul had to declare that it had not committed the various sins which were enumerated before it name by name. Its heart was weighed in a balance. The soul that came out successful from the trial was escorted by Horus to Osiris who now awarded it bliss. Woe unto the one who could not stand the test at the seat of judgment, for a hippopotamus sitting on the watch pounced upon it and made a morsel of its diet.

The Babylonians did not entertain the belief in the reward and retributions to the righteous and the wicked on an ethical basis. The heavens never formed the abode of the dead. It was in the subterranean regions full of darkness and gloom where all the dead departed. Tired by the gloom and monotony of their imprisonment, the dead longed for an escape to the world where they had experienced joy during life. But the guardians of the lower world kept a careful watch and did not let the unfortunate incumbents escape to the upper world.

In the abode of Yama, according to the Vedas, was found sensuous enjoyment, sweet music was heard and milk and honey and wine flowed amid abundance of food. There was no sickness or old age or suffering. In the early period all souls went to the abode of Yama, but the later belief was that only the righteous abode in the heavens and the wicked went their way to the world of nothingness. Immortality was not inherent in man; he won it as a reward for his righteous life upon earth.

The doctrine of reward and retribution in the other world forms the chief part of the ethical teachings of Zarathushtra's Gathas.<sup>4</sup> All precepts in the sacred stanzas are generally accompanied by a repeated mention of reward or retribution in this or the next world, Men of elevated minds may hold that it is not a high moral standard in which an individual practises virtue in the hope of reward and eschews vice for fear of retribution. But to be entirely disinterested in the acting of righteousness, or to follow virtue for virtue's sake, is a saintly prerogative. And the world is not made up of saints. The saint is the acme in the moral sphere, as is the intellectual genius in the realm of reason. Both form the climaxes in the two distinct spheres of human

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4 Y30.10; 31.14, 20; 45.7; 51.6, 8, 9.

activity. The world begets tens of millions of average men, in contrast to the few isolated types of master-spirits who inspire the world with their boundless devotion or enlighten it by their profound intellect. These give a new life and impetus to the moral and intellectual activities of mankind. The saintly type of virtue is the goal which humanity feebly attempts to reach. Humanity, as a whole, is evolving towards this ideal type of virtue, but meanwhile — and let this be emphasized till the striven for goal is reached — it needs some sort of incentive to good conduct in the lives of its masses. Hence the prime motive of their embracing righteousness is the hope of future reward, and that of shunning wickedness is the fear of retribution. In human affairs we have to be content with getting something less than ideal.

It is no wonder, then, if we find an elaborately worked out system of rewards and retributions in the ethical code of the sacred hymns. The faithful generally pray, among other boons, for endurance, durability, riches and happiness in this world, and for rewards, weal, and immortality in the world to come. Zarathushtra implores Ahura Mazda to grant him long life in his Divine Kingdom,<sup>5</sup> and inquires what will bring happiness to his soul.<sup>6</sup> In the same manner, the devout lift up their praises of the Lord to the throne of the Almighty.<sup>7</sup> Ahura Mazda is the giver of rewards to the righteous as well of punishment to the wicked.<sup>8</sup> He is entreated to grant the riches of both the worlds.<sup>9</sup>

**The soul reaps as it has sown.** The soul is the master of the body and is responsible for the good or the evil deeds it has done in this life. Man carves his destiny for the next world by his thoughts, words, and deeds in this life, and good or evil destiny awaits the soul in the next, or the spiritual world, which is essentially the place of reward and retribution. The life in this world is incomplete without its prolongation in the heavenly world, for it is only a life of probation, and the harvest of good or evil deeds sown here is to be reaped hereafter by the soul in the world of the spirit. Whether the soul, on embarking to the next world, will be greeted by the righteous or seized by the wicked, depends entirely on the sort of life it has led in this world. If it wins beatitude, it is on its own merits; if it loses this, it is equally through its own fault. If it ascends to heaven, it is owing to its righteous life in this world; if it sinks into hell, it is due to its wicked life here.

The soul is created pure and innocent. The lost soul that traverses the regions of inferno after death was at the first moment of its original

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5 Y43.13.

6 Y44.8.

7 Y45.8.

8 Y43.4.

9 Y28.2.

entrance into the bodily world as pure and perfect as the soul of its neighbour now entering paradise. In the spiritual world, class distinctions are unknown. There are no white or black, red or yellow, high or low, touchable or untouchable souls, as man has most selfishly branded his brethren from the difference of the colours of their skin or their low rank in society. The noblest of souls may dwell in the tenement covered with the darkest skin; the vilest of souls may take the body with the whitest skin for its vestment; the loveliest of spirits may be found in the body with the ugliest complexion and the foulest of souls may lurk in the fairest body.

**The Bridge of Judgment.** When man began to people the heavens with the celestial beings and came to the belief that the dead go heavenward, he naturally began to think of the means to scale the heights. Nature often showed the beautiful rainbow spanning the space between the earth and the sky in glorious colours, and the shining Milky Way paving its circular path with silvery stars. With the development of the eschatological ideas, the Egyptians believed that the souls of the dead lived in the starry regions which were generally reached by means of a huge ladder.<sup>10</sup>

We are given in figurative language by Zarathushtra the image of a bridge, called Chinwad, literally 'of the dividing one', that connects this world with the unseen world, and serves as a medium to cross the deep chasm that separates the two. The reckoning of the good or evil deeds of the souls takes place after death,<sup>11</sup> and judgment is passed upon them before they can cross the bridge. The souls fare here as is their due. The righteous souls come to this place in pious expectation of the reward that awaits them. Zarathushtra helps those righteous souls to cross the Bridge who have devoutly practised his religion.<sup>12</sup> But the wicked souls, who have estranged themselves from the Path of Righteousness by their own evil thoughts, words, and deeds, stand trembling at this judgment span.<sup>13</sup> Writhing with the pangs of their conscience and crying words of woe, they are now led by their own conscience to perdition.<sup>14</sup>

## HEAVEN

**Abode of the righteous after death.** The sharp antithesis that existed between the righteous and the wicked in the material world finds its counterpart in the spiritual world. The righteous in this world formed *ashahyā gaethā*, 'World of Righteousness,' as against the

10 For parallels to the Bridge see Soderblom, *Les Fravashis*, [Paris, 1899,] p. 70 f.

11 Y31.14.

12 Y46.10.

13 Y51.13.

14 Y31.20; 46.11.



*dregvants* who belonged to the world of wickedness. The place reserved for the pious souls that approach heaven is called *garo demana* [Garothman], 'Abode of song.' Ahura Mazda first entered this home of the blessed ones and Zarathushtra has promised that the faithful of all times will win admission to it through thinking good thoughts and practising righteousness.<sup>15</sup> The prophet says that he will sing praise unto Ahura Mazda in such a manner that it will be heard all along the path leading to Garo Demana.<sup>16</sup> He will carry the dutiful homage of his own and of his followers unto Ahura Mazda to his resplendent House of Song.<sup>17</sup> Here the pious souls are surrounded by choirs of celestial beings. Those who win fair report of their lives in this world, live in the happy lodgings of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, and Asha.<sup>18</sup> We have already seen that paradise itself comes to be known by the name of Good Thought or Best Thought. In one instance this region of felicity and bliss is called *vangheush demana manangho*, 'Abode of Good mind.'<sup>19</sup> Ahura Mazda with his heavenly host, and the souls of the righteous ones, live here. He will welcome King Vishtaspa and other friends of the faith who have helped Zarathushtra in his mission, to live with him in the same abode.<sup>20</sup>

**The nature of reward in heaven.** The blessed ones now enter into felicity. To the pious souls Ahura Mazda gives the good reward which their goodness has earned.<sup>21</sup> The fruition of paradise belongs to them. Those who have helped the prophet in his great work are rewarded in the spiritual world.<sup>22</sup> There the righteous enjoy felicity in immortality.<sup>23</sup> Zarathushtra prays for long life of blessed existence in the Kingdom of Mazda,<sup>24</sup> and seeks to know his soul will reap the good that will rejoice it.<sup>25</sup> The good leave a good name and fame behind them on earth, and attain reward in the abode of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, and Asha.<sup>26</sup> The weal of the blessed ones in heaven knows not any woe; it is the lasting happiness which is never followed by misery, and the

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15 Y51.15.

16 Y50.4.

17 Y45.8.

18 Y30.10.

19 Y32.15.

20 Y46.14.

21 Y30.11; Y43.5.

22 Y46.19.

23 Y45.7; Y51.8, 9.

24 Y43.13.

25 Y44.8.

26 Y30.10.

bliss is without alloy, for the riches of Vohu Manah are everlasting.<sup>27</sup> Earthly happiness is fleeting, it may be supplanted by misery at the very moment that man thinks himself most secure in its enjoyment. The joy of life may at any moment be eclipsed by a passing cloud of sorrow; but the heavenly bliss is abiding, knowing no end, and having no pain in its train. It is the highest blessing of life, says Zarathushtra, which Mazda will give for ever and aye to all those who are the faithful followers of his excellent religion.<sup>28</sup>

### INTERMEDIARY PLACE OF REWARDS

**Between heaven and hell.** We learn from Pahlavi works that an intermediary place, situated between earth and the star-region, is reserved for the souls in whose case the records of what may be called the Book of Life show that their good deeds are on a par with their evil deeds. The strict logic of the doctrine of Zoroastrian eschatology and the, symmetry of the entire system demand a place where the souls whose good and evil deeds exactly balance and who cannot ascend to heaven because of the heaviness of their sins, and yet are not so weighed down by sin as to descend into hell, and find their resting-place till the final judgment. The Avestan and Pahlavi texts record in full detail this eschatological doctrine, while the Gathas appear to recognize either in spirit or in the abstract, so that we may be justified in concluding that the concept of the intermediate place was embodied in the teachings of Zarathushtra from the beginning.<sup>29</sup> Whoso wavers between good and evil through his unsteady thoughts, words, and deeds will in the end find his place in intermediate region.<sup>30</sup>

### HELL

**The wicked are consigned to perdition.** In contradistinction to the Best Existence, the abode of sinners after death is *achishta ahu*, 'Worst Existence.'<sup>31</sup> The region of hell is called *drujo demāna*, 'Abode of Wickedness,'<sup>32</sup> or *achishtahyā demāna manangho*, 'Abode of the Worst Mind.'<sup>33</sup> Darkness is the characteristic trait of the inferno.<sup>34</sup>

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27 Y28.8.

28 Y53.1.

29 Cf. Y33.1; 48.4, Bartholomae in ZDMG. 35. 157, 158; Roth, *ib.* 37. 223-229; Geldner, *Aus dem Avesta* in KZ. 30. 530.

30 Y48.4.

31 Y30.4.

32 Y46.11; 49.11; 51.14.

33 Y32.13.

34 Y31.20.

**The nature of retribution in hell.** The Gathic texts casually mention that torment and woe, punishment and sorrow, fall to the lot of the wicked in hell,<sup>35</sup> and that the demons greet the lost souls with foul food.<sup>36</sup> This figurative expression and other poetic metaphors of like nature are taken literally in the later periods, when hell is materialized and the concept of physical torture is systematically worked out. The soul writhes in agony owing to the consciousness of its alienation from Ahura Mazda. Its vicious life proves in the end its own perdition. From day unto day it has made its own hell, and now its own conscience condemns it to the damnation of hell.<sup>37</sup>

**Duration of punishment in hell.** The Gathas speak of the punishment as lasting for a long period.<sup>38</sup> The idea of eternal damnation, that is confinement in hell, until the day of Renovation, which is markedly manifest in the later works, exists in embryo in the Gathas. A passage expressly speaks of the misery of the wicked souls as lasting for all time.<sup>39</sup>

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35 Y30.8, 11; 31.14, 15, 20; 43.5; 44.19; 45.3, 7; 49.4; 51.8, 9; 53.7.

36 Y31.20; 49.11; 53.6.

37 Y31.20.

38 Y30.11; 31.20.

39 Y46.11.

## CHAPTER XII. THE FINAL DISPENSATION

**The end of the world.** The Gathas speak of a period when the progress of creation will stop, the evolution of the universe will reach its destined goal, as the cycle of the world will then be completed and creation and life will end.<sup>1</sup> Ahura Mazda will come at this time with his Holy Spirit, and with Khshathra and Vohu Manah, to accomplish this great work.<sup>2</sup> The world-process will then come to its final consummation as ordained by him at the beginning of creation.

**The saviour Prophets.** The later scriptures speak of different saviours that will appear in the world at various epochs to reform it, the last and the greatest of such saviours being Soshyos [Soshyant], or, to use the Gathic word, Saoshyant. The term *saoshyant*, in both the singular and plural form, occurs in the Gathas. Here, however, the word is used, not as the name of any particular individual, but as a generic term, designating Zarathushtra and his fellow workers. It is in the Younger Avestan period that we first become acquainted with a person bearing this name. Those who by their good deeds work for the commandment of Ahura Mazda through Good Mind and Righteousness are called the saviour prophets.<sup>3</sup> Ahura Mazda is asked regarding the period when the wisdom of the saviours will dawn upon the world through their efficacious precepts.<sup>4</sup> Zarathushtra is the *deng-paiti*, 'Lord of the House.' He says that as the Saviour he will be friend, brother, and father unto him who hates the demons and those mortals who belittle him.<sup>5</sup> A thousand years after him Jesus as Saviour uses the identical word and says that whosoever shall do the will of God, is like a brother and sister and mother unto him who is the *oikodespotes* 'Lord of the House' and Saviour.<sup>6</sup> To be as worthy as these saviours who bring about the furtherance of the world and to be the perfectors of the world, themselves, is the devout prayer of the faithful.<sup>7</sup>

**Universal Judgment.** All human souls will be subjected to a collective judgment before the ultimate renovation of the world. The souls will have to undergo the great ordeal by fire and molten metal, to which reference has already been made.<sup>8</sup> At the time of the final

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1 Y43.5; 51.6.

2 Y43.6.

3 Y48.12.

4 Y46.3.

5 Y45.11.

6 Matt. 13.27; 20.1; Mark 3.35; see Moulton. *Early Religious Poetry of Persia*, p. 106; 107.

7 Y30.9.

8 Y51.9.

Dispensation Ahura Mazda will judge the souls of the righteous and the wicked by the test of his blazing fire.<sup>9</sup> The powerful fire will be a manifest help unto the holy, but harmful unto the wicked.<sup>10</sup> Asha and Armaiti will help Ahura Mazda at the final judgment.<sup>11</sup> Mazda knows best how to mark out the lost sinners at the final ordeal of the molten metal.<sup>12</sup> This tribulation will reclaim the sinners.<sup>13</sup>

**Righteousness triumphs over wickedness.** The world of humanity will at last arrive at the stage when Druj, or Wickedness, will come into the hands of Asha, or Righteousness. This ideal aim and end has been the final goal laid out in the Gathas. Zarathushtra prays over and over again for the period when Righteousness will smite Wickedness. Every gain to the Kingdom of Righteousness is the loss to the Kingdom of Wickedness, and when there is no Wickedness left Righteousness will reign supreme. When the law of Wickedness is thus annihilated, the divine law of Righteousness will pervade the entire world. Even the wicked souls who had revolted from Mazda in the corporeal world and gone over to the Evil Spirit will after the retribution come over to Mazda and acknowledge his sovereignty. As the great shepherd, Ahura Mazda will bring back into the fold of righteousness all those persons who, led astray by the arch-tempter, had left his flock.

The later texts give us a systematic account of the final struggle between the good and the evil powers, and relate in detail how every one of the heavenly beings will smite his own particular opponent evil spirit. As we have already seen, the Gathas speak of the victory of Asha, or Righteousness, and the defeat of Druj, Wickedness. The fate of Angra Mainyu, the father of evil, is not mentioned; but we can infer that once the law of Wickedness perishes, its originator must be impotent; in other words, the final defeat of Druj signifies also the defeat of the arch-Druj Angra Mainyu.

**The Kingdom of Righteousness; man's share in its inauguration.** In the higher sphere of life man is taught to go out from within himself and do active work for others. The truly righteous person does not live for himself alone, but holds out his own life for the ransom of others. Man may not rest with working for the salvation of his individual soul; he has equally to strive for the, saving of the collective soul, the soul of all humanity. Every year that he lives in this world he has to render some distinct social service and further the sum total of human joy and happiness: every day that he enjoys the infinite blessings

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9 Y31.3, 19; 43.4; 47.6.

10 Y34.4.

11 Y47.6.

12 Y32.7.

13 Y47.6.

of Ahura Mazda he has to give his mite in the furtherance of the cause of goodness. Human society is a great family, and no single member can live for himself. No act of the individual can be so personal that it does not affect the other members of the group or influence them in some way or another. Every one has to work for all. The individual is an important incident in society, a dutiful member of the world of humanity if he works for it; but an undesirable burden and a superfluous impediment to society if he selfishly lives for himself.

When one works for the good of others and lays his services at the door of society, one becomes richer in spirit. The spirit gains when she goes out from within and is prepared to lose herself for the common good, but loses when she is confined to the narrow limits of herself. There is nothing nobler for her than the virtue of self-sacrifice. The righteous sages have attained to greatness because they were meek enough in spirit and humble enough in heart to be humanity's willing servants. These spread goodness around them and become the means of happiness to others. And real happiness in turn comes to those who thus make others happy.<sup>14</sup>

Various, as we know, are the motives which serve men as incentive in their work. Some work for the applause of their fellow-beings, some for the posthumous name and fame, while still others do some good work in the hope of some reward in this or the next world. If a man abstains from evil it may be owing to the dread of public censure or to the fear of incurring the divine vengeance and future retribution; but the truly righteous one practises righteousness for its own sake. As the patriot who is guided by the noblest of human sentiments lives and dies for his country, so the *ashavan* acts in promoting the divine Kingdom of Righteousness.

Each age has its ideals, religious and social; and they vary in accordance with the high or low grades of civilization, of its peoples. The establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness is the one universal ideal, which knows no change. Ahura Mazda will bring about the renovation of the world in accordance with his divine will.<sup>15</sup> The whole universe moves towards the realization of this state of perfection, and humanity evolves towards this ideal. The righteous at all times help to bring this great event nearer by their deeds, even though the onward march may be beset with obstacles, and progress at times may be retarded, yet it can never be wholly arrested. Occasionally it may seem to swing back, but on the whole its move is onward along the path. If progress and evolution seem to be slow, the faithful need not despair. In the course of eternity Ahura Mazda has ample time to finish the work

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14 Y43.1.

15 Y34.15.

with the cooperation of the children of men. Human beings that form a society at a given period in the endless chain of Boundless Time have to give their respective share in the furthering of this great work. If society suffers for the faults of its units, it is because the individuals are human; out even these faults and these sufferings turn out to be incentives for the sure and steady work of advancement. Zarathushtra is the first to give meaning to human history. There is the great design, the stupendous purpose, the onward march towards making a new world, a perfect world. Progress is the Zoroastrian watchword. Man's birth is an ascent to the state of final perfection. Each individual has to join hands with the rest of his fellows in this great and noble undertaking; he must work to the extent of his powers and lend his aid, no matter how insignificant, to the attainment of the ideal end. Man need not feel appalled by the narrowness of the sphere in which he can labour nor must he be staggered at the vastness of the work to be done. The individual life should add something to the sum total of the life of humanity. Everyone has to consecrate his life to the good of humanity. It is a stage in which everyone feels sympathy for his neighbour and helps everyone else. This is the common aim that knits together all men that have visited this earth since creation began, and must equally unite for all time those that will inhabit it up to the end of existence. The eternal conflict aims at the universal. Individuals in all ages have to work to accomplish this great end. Each generation profits by the work done in the past, makes some infinitesimal advance and adds its own share to the inherited legacy; thus handing it down to posterity in a better and a higher condition than that in which it received this inheritance. At last, by the constant efforts of the ages and the accumulated work of humanity, the desired object will be secured. Every effort made in this direction is a step upward gained on the ladder leading to the ultimate goal.

The great world drama will then be over, the final curtain will fall on the tragic element in creation; the ultimate triumph of good over evil will be secured, the divine Kingdom of Righteousness will be established, and all this will come to pass through the work of man, the chief actor and hero of the human play, who co-operates and participates in this great work with his Heavenly Father. Man will then enter into the everlasting joy of Ahura Mazda. Such is the great message of Hope that the prophet of Iran brings to the world of humanity from Ahura Mazda.

**THE AVESTAN PERIOD – FROM  
ABOUT 800 B. C. TO ABOUT A.  
D. 200 AT THE LATEST**



## CHAPTER XIII. INDIA LEAVES INDO-IRANIAN RELIGION BEHIND

**Brahmanism.** The millennium that followed the advent of Zarathushtra witnessed the great creative period of religious and philosophical thought in the world. Beginning with Zoroastrianism, it gave rise to Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Jainism in India, which form the religion of one half of mankind at the present day. In addition, it developed Judaism in Palestine, and Taoism and Confucianism in China. When the Indo-Iranians separated, members of one group settled in the Panjaub and produced the hymns of the Rig Veda. Their descendants, who had by this time moved towards the plains of the Ganges, created the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. Apart from Buddhism and Jainism, which arose in the middle of this period of religious and philosophical efflorescence, we may distinguish at least four stages of religious evolution, namely those of the Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. These periods do not exclude but overlap one another. The Vedic period continued for a considerable time into that of the ritualistic Brahmanism, and the Brahmanic into that of the philosophic Upanishads and the Upanishad period projects into that of the religion of the Bhagavad Gita.

The Brahmins officiated at the sacrifices and conducted religious services for the laity. They propitiated and placated gods with libations and sacrifices and penances to win magical power. When the Vedic language and literature became antiquated, the Brahmins interpreted and amplified the ancient texts. Thus arose the Brahmanas dealing with sacrificial texts based on the authority of the Vedas. The Vedic poets had weaved religious thought in the garb of beautiful lyrical poetry. Their descendants were now preoccupied in formulating elaborate ceremonials and sacrificial rites. Symbolical significance was attached to their punctilious performance. Rites and ceremonies came to be invested with mysterious power to secure for the donor his heart's desires. Words specifically arranged and recited in a specific manner were believed to have magical potency and were supposed to heal disease, to win the favour of gods, to rout the demons, to frustrate the evil scheming of enemies and to cause them harm. The power of sacrifices was equally great. The gods, it is said, were originally mortals and dreaded death, but later won immortality by sacrifices. Sacrifice, it is added, enables the Brahmins to compel the gods to do their will. Ritualism thus rose to a pre-eminent position. Burnt offerings and sacrifices were believed to procure earthly gifts and heavenly bliss and to raise the estate of the soul in the next world. Exhortations for moral life continued to be made, yet elaborate ritual and animal sacrifices became the central feature of religion.

Such elaborate ceremonies performed and sacrifices offered by a specialized priestly class satisfied the religious needs of the masses of people. The chanting of the sacred formulas, the sound of bells and conches, the odour of the burning incense and of burnt offerings, descended soothingly upon the spirits of the vast numbers of people and appeased their innate human hunger for religion.

But there were some persons of a deep devotional disposition whom dreary ritualism and magical incantations which superseded a religion of morality, did not satisfy and they yearned for higher personal religious experience. They longed for passionately plunging into the life of the spirit. Such persons aspired to live religion in their own persons, to approximate the object of their devotion, to see their God face to face, to commune with him, and to lay bare their souls before him. They aimed at leading the life of the spirit, but the spirit was encased in a fleshy frame, and the flesh seemed to them to be antagonizing the spirit. Beneath their calm exterior, they often experienced the tempest raging within and their inner world torn by the conflict. Evil thoughts and vicious passions forced themselves into the mind and tortured it. Their one paramount function, they concluded, was to quell the tumult of their physical nature, before they could embark upon spiritual progress. They betook themselves to ascetic practices to drill and discipline, control and subdue their unruly bodies. They left their homes and retired to the forests. They practised various kinds of austerities, flagellated themselves, emaciated, tortured, and mortified their bodies by rigorous devices. They laboured to induce ecstatic state by fasting, vigil, and use of narcotics, as aspirants to magical power have been known to do from primitive times. The austerities and devotional exercises of some advanced ascetic monks, known by the name of Shramanas, excited great admiration and reverence of the people. Even gods, it is alleged, gained their supernatural power by practising austerities. They were mortals originally, say the Atharva Veda and the Brahmanas, and austerities enabled them to defy death. Sages and saints attained miraculous power by the same means. Manu speaks of the practice of austerities as the best means of purifying one's life. By the close of the Vedic period, life was divided into four stages, being those of discipleship, householdership, hermitage, and renunciation. The great legislator lays down that when a householder finds his skin wrinkled and his hair grown gray and witnesses sons born to his sons, he should give up his possessions, wear a tattered garment, resort to the forest, and fare on what grows in the forest or beg his food in adjoining villages. There he should practise austerities and concentrate his mind on Brahma. The ascetic ideal rose in great esteem. People whose lives were saddened with sorrow and suffering, those of highly emotional nature who were extremely sensitive to the jars and buffets of life, those who were temperamentally subject to intense alternating elation and

depression, or those in the autumn of their lives who were anxious for their spiritual edification, severed all ties with their families and the busy world and returned to the forest solitudes. The cloister attracted recluses from all grades of society. King Janaka renounced his throne in old age and became a hermit.

**The philosophical religion.** Among the forest dwellers there arose a class of persons to whom the ascetic life, with its concomitant mortification of body, failed to bring mental satisfaction. There were already germs of theosophy in the Vedic hymns, and such persons, prone to reflection, began to think deeply on the great problems of life and death.

Philosophy has generally led its distinctive existence as a parallel attempt of man to think out for himself the eternal verities of life, which religion has claimed to impart through divine revelation. Religion has acknowledged it as an aid in its need or as a handmaid to amplify and elucidate its preachings. Philosophers have stood as a class by themselves. Their systems of thought have been recognized as the results of concentrated thinking on the problems of existence, or as the findings of human reason. Philosophy has from its earliest days been regarded in Greece as a secular attempt of the human mind to solve the riddles of life. India, on the other hand, has classed all such thinkers as one group of seers, sages, or prophets and held the utterance of every thinker as inspired. The unknown Vedic seer who sings of the water as the germ of life in the hymn of creation is giving expression to revealed truth, whereas Thales of Miletus, who declares water as the first principle, speaks in terms of cosmogonic philosophy. Kapila's great Sankhya system of numbers is enshrined for all time as divinely vouchsafed. When his Greek contemporary, Pythagoras, preaches that number is the first principle of the world, he passes as a lay thinker grafting his metaphysics on numbers.

With the advent of the great thinkers who weave their metaphysical speculations into creative systems of philosophy, higher religion in India tends to be philosophical religion, and metaphysical speculation becomes religious philosophy. The philosophical religion thus propounded by the great thinkers is embodied in the Upanishads. These Upanishads are appendices to Brahmanas and represent the essence of higher Brahmanism. They set aside the Vedic gods. The supreme God of the Brahmanic period was Prajapati or Brahma, a personal god like the various gods of the Vedic pantheon. The Upanishads replace this father-god by the impersonal world-soul. They teach the principle of divine immanence. Personality implies the existence of another, as an 'I' to a 'thee.' It is limitation. According to the thinkers, nothing exists outside of Brahma; all is Brahma. They teach idealistic monism. Brahma is the only reality, all else is illusion. The individual self is a mere reflex of the

Self or Brahma. It is identical with the universal Self. It is due to ignorance and illusion that this fundamental truth is not recognized. It is knowledge that leads the individual to discover for himself that the outward Brahma and his inner self are one and the same. Man had always extolled God and humiliated himself. God was infinite when man was finite. God was all powerful, man was a weakling. God was king and man was his subject. Man looked to God with awe and reverence. He bowed before him, and prayed with folded arms and on bended knees. The Indian mystic philosopher is daring in his intercourse with the divine. He claims intimacy and identity with God, nay, he hails himself God, and assures every human being of potential divinity. When knowledge dawns upon man he can acclaim with sublime ecstasy, 'I am Brahma.' Man thus becomes God and the supreme function of philosophy is to raise man to his proper estate by means of knowledge. Divinity sleeps in man, it has to be awakened. Man is God in the making and knowledge makes him God. In its keen insight into the mystery of existence, its scientific value of philosophical thinking, its boldness of conception, this all-absorbing monism has no equal in the history of philosophy. Brahma, as the apex of existence, is the acme of metaphysical speculation. But being nameless, colourless, and lifeless, it denies definition and defies description. It demands that man shall speak of it in negation only, but better still not speak at all. It is an impersonal neuter abstraction, a phantom god in the world of shadowy reality, a god who is no god.

But the human heart hungers for a God who is a thinking and willing being, a personal God who can hear man's prayers, who can bestow gifts, who can fulfil hopes, who can guide man on the highway of life, who can protect him from harm, who can award merit, who can punish wrong, who can forgive man's trespasses, who can replenish life when it seems hollow and empty, who can brighten it with gleams of sunshine when it seems dark and dreary, who can sustain man when he is downcast, in whom he can find strength in his weakness, before whom he can lay his troubles, upon whom he can lean in his loneliness, in whom he can find refuge when the world seems to fail him, who can console the heavy-hearted, who can heal the bruised and bleeding heart, who can wipe away the tears of those that weep their lives out, and who can respond to the human call whenever and from wherever it comes and whatever it may be.

The philosophers thus dispensed with gods, but they persisted nonetheless. Like the rise and fall of kings and dynasties, old gods were forgotten, forsaken, but new ones simultaneously succeeded them. The sacred texts habitually explain and accommodate new gods by depicting one as incarnating himself in the person of another or by declaring a new god as being identical with the old one. Rudra, for example is seen

resenting the treatment accorded him. The supreme Adorable One pacifies him by saying that homage paid to one was equivalent to that given to another, for they were both one and the same. When Bhagavat or Vasudeva rises to be the supreme God in the fourth century B.C., Brahma and Shiva are declared to be his creations and are relegated to subordinate positions to carry out the will of the new god. Similarly when Brahmanism later absorbed the cult of Bhagavat, Vishnu, the sun god who was popular at the period, became the supreme God. Thus did the generality of mankind find that they could not live without personal gods and kindly gods did not desert them to their fate.

**The religion of devotion.** Krishna Vasudeva, a member of the warrior caste, founded Bhagavatism, the religion of *bhakti*, devotion or love, about the 4th century B.C. Bhagavatism arose under the influence of Sankhya and Yoga. Sankhya being an atheistic system, Bhagavatism allied itself with Yoga. Concentration of thought, which is Yoga's fundamental concern, was converted into devotion to a personal God. This personal God, whom he termed the Adorable One, was the objective of man's devotion and love. This doctrine is later propounded in the Bhagavad Gita, or the Song Celestial, originally composed in the 2nd century B.C. and surviving in its later redacted form. In transcendent beauty and elegance of form, this philosophical poem is among the sublimest that have been vouchsafed to man. It teaches an eclectic philosophy weaving ideas from Sankhya and Yoga around the central doctrine of devotion or love to God.

Whole-hearted love of God and duty selflessly performed in the name of God, dedicating one's actions to the glory of God, win deliverance for man — such is the message of the Gita. Rituals, concentration of thought, and disciplinary ascetic practices are aids to the life of devotion or love for God. Love for God leads man to know him better and teaches him to do his deeds, leaving their outcome to God. Those who know Krishna are freed from the binding nature of actions. Those who piously seek and find refuge in him are absolved of their sins. Faith, love, and resignation in him sustain man in this life and open for him, after his death, a life of felicity in loving fellowship with God.

New gods thus replaced the old Indo-Iranian gods. The evolution of religious thought in India made such a comprehensive and revolutionary advancement upon Indo-Iranian religion, that it gave an altogether different form to the religions that originated during the millennium.

**The Indian outlook on life changes.** A thousand years of life upon the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges had softened and sabbred the character of the robust and joyful Aryan settlers of India. In common with their Iranian cousins whom they had left behind the

Hindukush, the Vedic singers had sung of this world in laudatory terms and fervently prayed for long life in it with its riches and joys. The hymns of these priestly sages throb with the cheerful, optimistic view of life. Their descendants of the later Brahmanic period who speculated on the problem of life showed a marked turn from this cheerful and optimistic attitude towards life upon earth to a gloomy and pessimistic one. The Kshatriyas or men of the ruling and fighting class produced the pessimistic philosophy of the Upanishads from about 800 B.C. onwards. They seem to have grown intensely sensitive to the stress of living. Climatic influences, political upheavals, racial contacts, and above all, metaphysical speculations of their great thinkers are the causes that have contributed to their altered attitude towards life upon earth. This new philosophical religion preaches that happiness or enjoyment of life while living or of the merited good after death reacts upon the person and condemns him to several lives in the woeful world. This world is illusory and soaked in sorrow and suffering. Yet upon such a purgatorial world man's desire for happiness brings him again and again to go the dreary rounds of births and deaths, to live out the karma of his past lives until, divested of actions and their consequences, he may, at a dim and distant date, win liberation from the labyrinth of life and escape heavenward to rest his world-weary head on the breathless bosom of Brahma.

Such is the philosophy of life propounded by the leading thinkers of India by the sixth century B.C. It becomes the standard philosophy for all time and generally leaves its indelible impression upon the subsequent religious and philosophical thought in India. With the exception of some materialistic systems of philosophy of the type of the Charvaka which taught pure Hedonism, the various schools of thought generally agreed in their estimate of life upon earth as a life of woe. Buddha and Mahavira, who founded their great religions at short intervals during the sixth century B.C., had their minds saturated with the pessimistic view of man's life upon earth; The one great thinker whose teachings exerted lasting influence upon Buddha was Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya philosophy. It was the dictum of the Sankhya system, that existence was suffering. What men considered pleasure was pain in disguise. Life was pain.

Buddha lays down with greater emphasis than ever before that life is suffering. There is no cure for the world-ache. The world is irremediable and not to be born in it is the only escape from suffering. Life, says Buddha, is steeped in sorrow and suffering. Pleasure is gilded pain. Joy is veiled sorrow. Birth is sorrow. Age is sorrow. Wealth is sorrow. Sickness is sorrow. Death is sorrow. Union with the unpleasant is sorrow. Separation from the pleasant is sorrow. Desire for life is sorrow. Ungratified desire is sorrow. The tears, he adds, that the weary

wayfarers have shed upon their pilgrimages upon earth make a vaster expanse of water than the waters of all the oceans upon the earth. Just as the ocean has only one taste of salt so, it is said, Buddha's teachings have but one taste, deliverance from suffering. The comprehension of the origin and nature of this suffering and the knowledge of the path that leads to its cessation bring freedom from birth and death. Life is suffering and Buddha's mission is to preach the gospel of deliverance from it.

**The philosophy of escape from life.** There are occasions in the lives of all human beings when they think they cannot adapt themselves to the world around them. Hard facts of life seem to press very heavily upon them and they seek diverse means to lighten the burden. Some like to forget their environments and seek seclusion in out of the way places far from society, where they can feel happy to be alone in the company of nature. They crave the joy of solitude where they can lose themselves in the soliloquy of their own thoughts. Men with literary leanings read so that they may forget themselves for a time and transplant themselves into other environments. Society's baseness revolts some who long to strip themselves bare of the trappings of civilization and escape to the freedom of primitive simplicity. Morbidity drives some to seek isolation from society. Despair and distress drive others to seek refuge in a world of dreams, where they can forget the hard realities of life, and live awhile with their fancies and dreams in the atmosphere created by their own imagination. They like to retreat within themselves, seeking the protection of the inner life against the torments of outer life. Here they fondly delude themselves to ascribe reality to their visions and dreams. They people the world with their own thoughts, make it after their likes and dislikes. It gives them some comfort to live awhile in the world of illusion. Many find occasional reverie soothing. The soothing thoughts of the dream-land of their creation help them to forget the trying reality and lull to sleep the burning fever of the tortured brain. Men of philosophic bent of mind seek to escape the sordid realities of life by retiring into a world of mysticism to live in the atmosphere of otherworldliness.

Among the Aryan settlers of India, we have seen, renunciation of the world of desires became an ideal of life. Desire came to be looked upon as the chief cause of evil. To live is to desire and consequently suffer in many rebirths. Escape from the life of desires to seek their extinction hastened deliverance. The Bhagavad Gita seeks to find compromise by advising the wise to desire without any attachment and to act without any expectation of reaping fruits.

Prince Arjuna is grieved at the painful duty his position in life entails upon him to fight his kinsmen. When he witnesses the contending armies drawn up on the battlefield, he is struck with sudden

compunction and appalled at the prospect of the impending slaughter of his kinsfolk. He hesitates to plunge into the battle array. God Krishna manifests himself in human form in the person of his charioteer to relieve him from his embarrassment. On no account can the prince shirk his inevitable duty, urges Krishna, even if its performance forces him to wade his way to the throne through the blood of his relations. Man cannot escape his duty in life. He cannot compass his retreat before the actions that fall to his lot.

Life without actions is unthinkable. One has only to do his work in such a manner that he may maintain complete detachment from the consequence of his actions. Dispassionate and disinterested performance of actions does not fetter the doer. Thus, says Krishna, he acts himself, for the world would perish if he ceased to work. The multifarious actions that he performs do not entail upon him the necessity of going the round of existences because his actions are selfless and directed to the good of mankind. Action, he says, is better than inaction and he adds that immunity from action can be had by action alone. Action should be for the sake of accomplishing it and not for its resulting rewards. Man has to perform his duty zealously in whatever station of life he may happen to be. He has to be utterly indifferent and unmindful of the fruits of his actions. Or better still, says Krishna, he should do his deeds in the name of his God and for him, and dedicate all his activity to the glory of God.

Ignorance is the penalty that the soul pays when it enters the body. The senses introduce it to the fleeting show of the world. The mind broods over the objects and is drawn in attachment to them. Attachment gives rise to desire which is insatiable like fire. As long as man is swayed by desire, he drifts like a ship that is tossed upon the waves by stormy winds. Desire, wrath, and greed are the threefold entrance to hell. By regulating and controlling the senses, man secures the tranquillity of thought and knowledge. His tranquillity of mind should be such as to remain undisturbed like a flame that is sheltered from the wind and flickers not. He should be temperate in food and sleep, work, and rest. As the tortoise draws its head and feet within its shell, so should he be withdrawn from the outer world of senses and, retiring to a secluded spot, think and meditate deeply upon God. When he has attained this state of devotional exaltation, a clod of earth and a lump of gold become of equal worth unto him. Joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success and failure, censure and praise, good and evil, friend and foe are all alike unto him and he is unaffected by the pairs of opposites. Happiness is quiescence and life's goal is its attainment.

The inherent evil nature of matter, however, remains characteristic of all Indian thinking. The human body continues to be regarded as the



root of evil. The moralists teach the strengthening of the spirit by breaking the body and the ascetic ideal of life is highly esteemed.

When the Buddhist monk migrated to distant lands they spread the ascetic view of life in places where they lived. The Greek philosophers became acquainted with it at an early date. The Essenes, an ascetic Jewish sect, adopted it from the Neo-Pythagoreans.

## CHAPTER XIV. IRAN GOES BACK TO INDO-IRANIAN RELIGION

**The Indo-Iranian cult passes under the mantle of Zarathushtra.** King Vishtaspa was succeeded by weak kings and Eastern Iran soon lost political importance. Zarathushtra, likewise, was not blessed with successors of commanding personalities to carry on their missionary work. His religion could not penetrate into Western Iran, where the cult of the Indo-Iranian divinities had a strong hold over the minds and hearts of the people. Mithra occupied the pre-eminent position among them, with the non-Iranian Anahita as the close second in importance. Ahura Mazda outshone Mithra with his transcendent spiritual sublimity and ethical greatness. Besides, he had come with profound prestige as his cult was proclaimed by the new prophet himself. He was easily acclaimed as the most incomparable divinity that man had ever known. Mithra, Anahita, and other bagas, as we have seen from the inscriptions of the successors of Darius, accepted to work under the new supreme God.

The stronghold of Zarathushtra's religion was Eastern Iran. His religion was a reform of the primitive faith of the Iranians. But the reform did not last long, owing to the counter-reformation that followed his death. The excellence of his highly ethical religion was indelibly imprinted on the minds of the cultured classes, but it had not reached the masses. They could not comprehend the abstract ideas of the new prophet, whereas they found it easy to invoke Mithra and his heavenly associates with elaborate rituals and sacrifices. Their veneration for these older divinities, now in exile, had not ceased. They viewed the movement of the revival of the Indo-Iranian faith with great favour. The leaders of the Zoroastrian Church, on the other hand, were alarmed at this growing tendency to go back to the pre-Zartoshtrian faith. They sought a compromise. A great religious syncretism then took place, with the result that the successors of the prophet were obliged to accommodate the Indo-Iranian divinities in the divine household of Ahura Mazda. Mithra was the most popular divinity at the period in Western Iran from where his cult, as we shall see later, passed on to Europe. It is expressly said that Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas were pleased with his religion and accepted it, and Ahura Mazda conferred upon him the chieftainship of the world,<sup>1</sup> Mithra and his co-workers were made to give their allegiance to Ahura Mazda and to agree to work as the satraps in his divine kingdom. The Yashts or hymns dedicated to the several Yazatas open with the declaration that they are created by Ahura Mazda. Mithra is created by Ahura Mazda. The Yasht composed in honour of the angel Verethraghna, begins with the

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1 Yt10.92.

acknowledgment that Verethraghna is *Ahura-dhāta*, 'created by Ahura (Mazda).' In return, Mithra and his old compatriots secured the privilege of sharing the homage and adoration of mankind with their heavenly sovereign Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda and his six spiritual attributes were now openly recognized as seven impersonations of the cardinal virtues of Ahura Mazda, and were given a class designation, Amesha Spentas or the Holy Immortals. These Amesha Spentas were given the first rank in the divine hierarchy and the Indo-Iranian divinities and those of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian origin were classed under the epithet Yazata or Adorable One, and assigned a second place in the divine hierarchy. The Amesha Spentas are thus the archangels and Yazatas the angels in the newly formed Zoroastrian pantheon.

With the return of the pre-Zoroastrian divinities also came the ancient rituals and sacrifices, offerings and libations. The beliefs and practices of the old faith were engrafted on the religion. The writers ascribe them to the authorship of Zarathushtra. He is himself depicted as glorifying and worshipping the great Indo-Iranian divinities whom he did not recognize in his Gathas. He is shown begging them for various boons. The Indo-Iranian religion that Zarathushtra came to replace by his religion of reform thus lives as an indissoluble part of his religion. Zoroastrianism became a blend of the two, that is, the Indo-Iranian religion and Zarathushtra's religion of reform. And so it remains up to the present day, as we shall see in subsequent pages.

**The Gathic view of life persists.** When the ascetic ideal of life became so widespread in and outside India, it is natural that people of despairing disposition may be drawn to it. There were, it seems, some small sects or brotherhoods in Iran that embraced this view of life. It is evidently of some such sect that the Vendidad<sup>2</sup> speaks with disapproval. Apart from such sporadic instances, the ascetic ideal of life is foreign to the Later Avesta. The exhortations of the prophet about the prime importance of a physically strong and sound body to enable man to combat evil, to fight the imperfections of the world, and to work strenuously for the regeneration of mankind, are faithfully embodied in the Younger Avesta. Self-control and discipline of the body rather than austerity and self-mortification remain the ideal. Strong and hardy men and women of rugged virtues bred of bodily cleanliness, bodily purity, bodily health, and bodily soundness are praised with unabated zeal. The view of life remains as optimistic and cheerful as propounded by Zarathushtra. The inborn craving of all human beings to obtain pleasurable states of feeling or happiness for themselves is fully recognized. The devout yearn for happiness that they can find in a temperate enjoyment of the good things of life. The gloomy view of life

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2 Vd4.47.

which the Indian cousins have now embraced is unknown to the Iranians. Life is still joy.

Ahura Mazda has created joy-giving lands for mankind.<sup>3</sup> Three of the many names of Ahura Mazda are: All Happiness, Full Happiness, and Lord of Happiness.<sup>4</sup> He has created happiness for mankind.<sup>5</sup> He is himself abundant joy.<sup>6</sup> Ahura Mazda has created joy, happiness, and pleasure of Haurvatat, the archangel presiding over weal.<sup>7</sup> Adoration of Ahura Mazda by day and by night, bring him and Sraosha and waters and trees and the Fravashis unto the faithful for their joy.<sup>8</sup> The householders pray that joy and happiness may never leave their houses.<sup>9</sup> They prayerfully ask that their minds be full of joy.<sup>10</sup> Ahura Mazda is invoked to give joy and happiness.<sup>11</sup> Zarathushtra invokes his blessings upon King Vishtaspa that he may be as full of happiness as Raman, the genius of joy.<sup>12</sup> Abundant happiness comes to him to whom the Kingly Glory cleaves.<sup>13</sup> Mithra gives full happiness to his votaries,<sup>14</sup> and the faithful invoke him to come for their joy.<sup>15</sup> The angels presiding over fire and waters are invoked to give great happiness and life of joy.<sup>16</sup> Atar is invoked to bestow joy upon the faithful.<sup>17</sup> The Fravashis of the righteous give happiness.<sup>18</sup> Airyaman is implored to come for the joy of men and women who faithfully follow Zarathushtra.<sup>19</sup> The entire creation that imparts weal unto mankind is invoked.<sup>20</sup> Ardvi Sura gives good abodes and joyful abodes and enduring abodes unto all Mazda-

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3 Vd1.1.

4 Yt1.14.

5 Y21.4.

6 Y1.1.

7 Yt4.1.

8 Yt1.9.

9 Y60.1, 7.

10 Y60.11.

11 Y35.4.

12 Yt23.7; 24.6.

13 Yt19.54.

14 Yt10.33, 65, 108.

15 .Yt10.5; Ny2.14.

16 Y62.1, 4, 10; 68.2, 11; Yt5.26; Ny5.10.

17 Y58.7.

18 Yt13.32.

19 Y54.1; Vd20.11.

20 Vd19.37.

worshipping families.<sup>21</sup> Tishtrya prospers joyful and good abodes.<sup>22</sup> Mithra blesses the Aryan peoples with them.<sup>23</sup> The devout invoke Mithra that they may dwell long in happy abodes under him.<sup>24</sup> He is besought to give happiness.<sup>25</sup> Ardvi Sura gives riches and prosperity and flocks of cattle.<sup>26</sup> Riches, flocks of cattle, and garments are his to whom Glory cleaves.<sup>27</sup> The householder prays for an increase of his flocks.<sup>28</sup> Atar is invoked to grant sustenance, life in abundance, and children of innate wisdom.<sup>29</sup> He is further implored to grant flocks of cattle and multitude of men.<sup>30</sup> That happiness, glory, riches, children of innate wisdom, and fortune may never leave his house is the fervent prayer of the worshipper.<sup>31</sup> Ahura Mazda is invoked to give long, joyful life.<sup>32</sup> Mithra gives courage, victory, fame, knowledge, bodily health riches, and virtuous offspring.<sup>33</sup> Soundness and health of body, riches, children of innate wisdom, life longer than long are sought from the good waters of Ahura Mazda.<sup>34</sup> Vitality is asked from Haoma.<sup>35</sup> The Fravashis are asked to give long life.<sup>36</sup> Thus are all boons that make life comfortable, happy, enjoyable, and livable, constantly prayed for.

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21 Y68.14.

22 Yt8.2.

23 Yt10.4; Ny2.13.

24 Yt10.77.

25 Yt10.33.

26 Yt5.26, 98.

27 Yt19.54.

28 Y60.3.

29 Y62.4, 5; Ny5.10, 11.

30 Y62.10, Ny3.10; 5.16.

31 Y60.7.

32 Y41.4.

33 Yt10.33, 108.

34 Y68.11.

35 Y9.19.

36 Y13.135.

## CHAPTER XV. PROMULGATION OF THE FAITH OF ZARATHUSHTRA

**The Avestan people.** The races that formed the Zoroastrian fold were the Bactrians, the Medes, and the Persians, who successively rose to political independence in Ancient Iran. The Bactrians of the Northeast, the Medians of the Northwest, and the Persians of the Southwest, were politically welded into one Persian nation, under the Achaemenian empire. This process of blending these different peoples into one homogeneous nation under the creed of Zoroaster was completed by the time of the of Persia by Alexander the Great.

**Zoroastrianism takes its root in Eastern Iran.** The Later Avestan texts speak of King Vishtaspa as the very arm and pillar of Zoroastrianism, the defender of the Faith, who gave an impetus to the religion, which until then had experienced only an extremely chequered career, and who made the faith known and renowned throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> With all the zeal and fire characteristic of converts Zarathushtra's followers worked actively for the promulgation of the faith. The authors of the Younger Avestan period depict Zarathushtra as saying that he will exhort the people of house and clan, town and country to embrace the Mazdayasnian religion and teach them to practise it faithfully in their thoughts, their words, and their deeds.<sup>2</sup> The zealous priests invoke Chisti, the heavenly associate of Daena, or religion, to grant them a good memory and strength for their body.<sup>3</sup>

**Athravans, the Zoroastrian priests of Eastern Iran.** The generic name for priest in the Avestan texts is *āthravan*, derived from *ātar*, 'fire.' It corresponds to the Skt. *atharvan*, the fire-priest of the Indo-Iranian period. The atharvan, it is said, twirled Agni or fire and, like Prometheus, brought it from the sky to the earth.<sup>4</sup> Nature hails Zarathushtra at his birth as an athravan.<sup>5</sup> He is the very first and foremost of the athravans.<sup>6</sup> Even Ahura Mazda himself takes this term to define one of his own innumerable names.<sup>7</sup> Like their Vedic brethren, the Avestan people divided their society into different professional groups; and the athravans formed the first of them. Fire was their

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1 Yt13.99, 100.

2 Y8.7.

3 Yt16.17.

4 RV.6.16.13.

5 Yt13.94.

6 Yt13.88, 89.

7 Yt1.12.

special charge, and it was their special duty to tend the sacred flame in the shrines, and also to go abroad preaching the religion of Mazda.<sup>8</sup>

**The Medes and Persians of Western Iran.** We have already seen that the Aryan race had established their settlements in Northwestern Iran from about 2000 B.C. and that the Kassites and Mitannis had ruled over considerable tracts between 1700 B.C. and 1400 B.C., The other two peoples of the same race that successively rose to great power during the first millennium before the Christian era were the Medes and the Persians. So close was their racial affinity that the Biblical and classical writers generally use their names as alternative terms. The Medes or Mada are first mentioned by their names in the Assyrian inscriptions in the ninth century B.C. They overthrew the Assyrian empire in about 708 B.C., thus replacing the Semitic domination in Western Iran by the Aryan.

The earliest mention of the Persians is made in the Assyrian inscriptions where it is said that the Assyrian King Shalmaneser II led a campaign against the people of Parsua in the Zagros in the ninth century B.C. These people were probably identical with the Persians who rose to power later in the further east. They lived in Pars, known in its Greek form as Persis, and were a tributary subject people under the Medes. Their ruling house was known after the name of Hakhamanish, the head of the royal house, known in history in its Greek form, Achaemenes. Cyrus wrested the royal sceptre from the Medes and founded the Persian empire in about 558 B.C.

Not long after the death of Vishtaspa, the royal patron of Zarathushtra, the Kingly Glory left the eastern line of the Iranian kings and thus flew to the west. With the shifting of the political sphere of influence, the centre of religious authority gravitated towards the west. Ragha, hereafter, became the pontifical seat of the descendants of the prophet. The temporal and spiritual power here was vested in the chief pontiff of the Zoroastrian world.<sup>9</sup> Religious influence radiated from this ecclesiastical centre, and the Magian neighbours, who formed the priestly caste among the Medo-Persians, were probably the first to imbibe the new ideas and gradually to spread them among the peoples Western Iran.

The Achaemenian empire was made up of various nationalities of diverse faiths, and the rulers were always tolerant towards the religions of these subject races. Guided by political expediency, they often built or restored the temples of alien peoples, and occasionally even honoured the Jewish, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Greek divinities.<sup>10</sup> Cyrus ordered

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8 Y42.6.

9 Y19.18.

10 Cf. Gray, "Achaemenians", in *ERE*. 1, 69-73.

the restoration of temple at Jerusalem,<sup>11</sup> and Darius, the devout worshipper of Auramazda, favoured its rebuilding as decreed by Cyrus.<sup>12</sup> According to the Babylonian inscriptions, Cyrus restored the gods of Sumer and Akkad to their former temples, from which they had been brought out by Nabuna'id, the last native ruler of Babylon. He returned the captive gods of Kutu to their home and rebuilt their temples.<sup>13</sup> Cyrus was the shepherd and the anointed of Yahweh in Judea,<sup>14</sup> he was the chosen of Marduk in Babylon. Darius is called the son of the goddess Neit of Sais in an Egyptian inscription at Tell el-Maskhutih.<sup>15</sup> Cambyses, according to an Egyptian inscription on a naophoric statue preserved in the Vatican, ordered the purification of the desecrated temple of Neit at Sais, and paid homage to the goddess.<sup>16</sup> In a Greek inscription Darius reproved his satrap Gadatas for the reverential attitude toward Apollo.<sup>17</sup>

**The religion of the Achaemenians.** Zarathushtra's new religion took time to penetrate into Western Iran, and, in absence of any data, we are not in a position to say how far Cyrus and his people were influenced by it. It is safe to surmise that they practised some form of Indo-Iranian religion, with Mithra, who was steadily rising in influence, as perhaps the regnant divine power. Darius and his successors were ardent Mazda-worshippers. These Achaemenian kings most devoutly ascribe all their greatness and success to Auramazda, Av. Ahura Mazda. The Old Persian Inscriptions speak of him as the greatest of the divinities.<sup>18</sup> Darius says with fervent piety that Auramazda made him king and enabled him to hold his vast kingdom firm. Everything that the king did or every glory that he achieved was by the will of Auramazda. Every battle that he won and every army of the enemy that he routed was by the grace of Auramazda.<sup>19</sup> Xerxes zealously imitates his illustrious father and attributes everything of his to Auramazda, and invokes his protection for himself and his empire.<sup>20</sup> It is again

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11 Ezra 1.1-11; 3.7; 4.3; Is. 44.28; 2. Chron. 36.22, 23.

12 Ezra 6.1-15.

13 *Cylinder Inscription*, 32-35.

14 Is.44.28; 45.1.

15 Golenischeff, *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie*, 13. 106, 107.

16 Petrie, *A History of Egypt from the Nineteenth to the Thirtieth Dynasties*. 3. 361, 362. London, 1905.

17 Cousin and Deschamps, *Lettre de Darius, fils d'Hystaspes* in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenistique*, vol. 13. p. 529-542.

18 Dar. Pers. d.1; Xerx. Elv, 1; Xerx. Van. 1.

19 Bh. 1.5-9, 13, 14, 18, 19; 2.20, 25-31, 33, 35; 3.36, 38, 41, 42, 45, 46; 4.50, 52, 54, 56-59, 62, 63; 5.72, 75; Pers. d. 1-3; e. 2; Nr. a. 1, 3-5; b.1; Elv. 1, Sz. c, 1.

20 Pers. a. 1.3, 4; b. 1.3; c. 1.3; d. 1.3; Elv. 1; Van. l.3.



Auramazda who brought the kingdom to Artaxerxes III.<sup>21</sup> Though Auramazda is thus the supreme God of the Achaemenians, it seems there were lesser divinities who received their homage. Without using their names, Darius and Xerxes are seen expressing their wish that other gods besides Auramazda may protect their country.<sup>22</sup> It is Artaxerxes who speaks of Mithra and Anahita.<sup>23</sup> Herodotus tells us that the Persians did not set up images to gods.<sup>24</sup> During the later period, however, Artaxerxes Mnemon first introduced images of gods. He set up the statue of Anahita in Babylon, Susa, Ecbatana, Damascus, and Sardis.<sup>25</sup> *Arshta*, Av. *Arshat* [Phl. *Ashtad*], which personifies Rectitude is yet another heavenly being discovered by Foy in the inscriptions and confirmed by Jackson by close examination on the rock.<sup>26</sup> Darius says here that he walks according to *arshtām* or rectitude. With the emphasis that Zarathushtra lays in the Gathas upon Druj, Lie, Wickedness, Darius speaks of *drauga*, Lie, as the embodiment of all evil. It is the Lie that incites his enemies to revolt from him.<sup>27</sup> He advises his successor to protect himself from Lie and punish those that lie.<sup>28</sup> It was because he did not lie that Auramazda and other gods bore him aid.<sup>29</sup> Herodotus informs us that the Persians considered lying as most disgraceful.<sup>30</sup> The Gathas and the Later Avesta speak of the Path of Righteousness as the only true path,<sup>31</sup> or the truest path,<sup>32</sup> and Darius exhorts in the same vein not to leave *pathim tyām rāstām*, 'The Path of Truth,' not to slight the commandments of Auramazda and not to sin.<sup>33</sup> Closely parallel to Y37.1, which enumerates Ahura Mazda's earthly creation, and which formula is recited by devout Zoroastrians as grace before meals, the Old Persian Inscriptions state that Auramazda has created this earth, yonder heaven, man, and peace for man.<sup>34</sup>

21 Pers. a. 1.

22 Bh. 4.12, 13; Dar. Pers. d. 3; Xerx. Pers; b. 3; c. 3; d. 3.

23 Art. Pers. a. 4; Art. Sus. a; Art. Ham. 1.

24 Herod. 1.131.

25 Berosus. cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Proreptica*, V .65, 3; cf. Cumont, *Anahita*, in ERE. 1. 414, 415.

26 Bh. 4.64; see Jackson, JAOS XXIV. 90-92.

27 Bh. 4. 4.

28 Bh. 4. 5.

29 Bh. 4. 13.

30 Herod. 1. 138.

31 Y51.13; 72.11; Vd4.43.

32 Yt10.3.

33 Nr. a. 6.

34 Dar. Pers. g. 1; Nr. a. 1; Elv. 1; Sz. c. 1; Xerx. Pers. a. 1; b. 1; c. 1; d. 1; Elv. 1; Van. 1; Art. Och; Pers. 1.

The Persians, says Herodotus, sacrificed unto the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and winds.<sup>35</sup> The Magus, we are told, adorned his head-dress with a garland of myrtle and took the sacrificial animal to the highest peak of the mountain. He cut the animal, seethed its flesh, spread it out on a carpet of the tenderest herbage, and consecrated it by chanting sacred texts.<sup>36</sup> The Yasht dedicated to Ardivi Sura Anahita depicts Iranian kings and heroes sacrificing her a hundred stallions, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand sheep. Herodotus attests to the fact that when Xerxes arrived at Hellespont in his expedition against Greece, he sacrificed a thousand oxen to Athene of Ilium, by which he evidently means Anahita.<sup>37</sup> The sculpture on the Tomb of Darius depicts the king reverentially facing fire on the stone altar, and the sun above.

Darius asks the reader of his inscriptions to make them known and not to conceal them. Upon him that carries out his wishes, he invokes his blessings that Auramazda may be his friend, may there be a large family unto him, may he live long, and may all his actions be crowned with success. Whoso, however, acts against the royal wish and keeps back the achievements of the king from the knowledge of the people, unto him, says Darius, Auramazda may not be a friend, he may not be blessed with a large family and long life and fulfilment of his wishes.<sup>38</sup> The Later Avesta names the demon of drought Duzhyairya.<sup>39</sup> and Darius invokes Auramazda and his associates to protect his country from Dushiyar.<sup>40</sup> The inscriptions do not mention Angra Mainyu. We have, however, seen that Darius uses Drauga, Lie, with the emphasis that the Later Avesta puts on Angra Mainyu, and in thus seeing all evil in Drauga instead of in Angra Mainyu, Darius is more faithful to the spirit of the Gathas than the Later Avesta is. It is true that the inscriptions never mention Zarathushtra by name, but they undoubtedly breathe the spirit of his teachings. The royal house of the Achaemenians is a devout Mazda-worshipper at its rise, it imbibes the Zoroastrian cult gradually and is fully Mazdayasnian Zartoshtrian by the time of its downfall.

### **Magi, the Zoroastrian priesthood of Western Iran.**

Herodotus tells us that the Magi formed one of the six tribes into which the Medes were divided and constituted their sacerdotal class.<sup>41</sup> They

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35 Herod. 1. 131.

36 Herod. 1. 132.

37 Herod. 7. 43, 53, 54.

38 Bh. 4. 10, 11, 16, 17.

39 Yt8.50-55.

40 Pers. d. 3.

41 Herod. 1. 101; see Carnoy, *Le Nom des Mages* in *Le Muséon*, 9, 121-158; Moulton, *The Magi in Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 182-253; Moore, *The Persian Origin of the Magi* in *Hoshang Memorial Volume*, p. 306-310.

wore the white robe and covered the head with the woolen tiara with long flaps on each side to, cover the mouth.<sup>42</sup> The Median empire was short-lived. Cyrus overthrew Astyages, the last Median king, in 550 B.C. and laid the foundation of the great Achaemenian empire. The Persians thus conquered the earthly possessions of the Medes and the Magi, their priests; but they were in turn conquered by the latter in spirit. The Magian victory in the spiritual domain more than made amends for the loss of their temporal power. The racial jealousy and antagonism between the conquerors and the subdued races, however, continued for a considerable time owing to the Median attempts to regain their ascendancy. When Cambyses heard of the Magian priest Gaumata's revolt to overthrow the Persian empire, he exhorted the people never to let their kingdom fall into the hands of the Medes and the Magi.<sup>43</sup> Gaumata had destroyed the structures called *āyadanā*, which the Babylonian version explains as the houses of gods. Darius restored these temples.<sup>44</sup> The anniversary of the day of the Magian usurper's fall, known as *Magophonía*, was observed by the Persians as a great festival, and Herodotus informs us that the Magi kept within their houses on that day.<sup>45</sup> With the lapse of time, however, the Medes and the Persians became more reconciled to each other. The Magi were the priests of the Medes; they now became the priests of the Persians. This strengthened their position. The classical writers held their names in ancient times as synonymous with the wisdom of the East. Magic and magician are the words reminiscent of their fame; No sacrifices were offered without them.<sup>46</sup> They accompanied the armies with the sacred fire, kept it burning on the battlefield, and invoked divine help for the victory of the king. Herodotus tells us that the holy chariot drawn by eight white horses followed the armies of Xerxes. The Magi made sacrificial offerings at various stages on the march and prayed for the triumph of the Persian arms, in which the king and the Persian soldiers in the army participated.<sup>47</sup> They were held in great esteem, and their exalted position at the court of the kings ensured them a considerable influence over the people. They were looked upon as the wise mediators between man and God. They officiated at the ceremonies, chanted the hymns, sacrificed at the altar, explained omens, practised divination, expounded dreams, and ministered to the various religious wants of the people.<sup>48</sup>

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42 Strabo, 15. 3. 15.

43 Herod. 3. 65.

44 Bh. 1.64.

45 Herod. 3. 79; cf. Ctesias, *Pers.*, § 15.

46 Herod. 1.132.

47 Herod. 7.43, 53, 113, 114, 180, 191.

48 Herod. 1.107, 108; 7.19, 37.

It seems that the Magi took a long time to supplant the religious practices of the Persians by their own. The two races differed very widely on some of the main religious observances. For example, the Magi held the elements of nature sacred. The earth was to be kept pure from defilement. Hence they exposed the corpses of the dead to be devoured by birds; though the Persians, on the contrary, enclosed the corpses in wax, and interred them in the earth.<sup>49</sup> We gather from Arrian that Alexander sent the body of Darius to be interred in the royal mausoleum by the side of the remains of the departed ones of the royal family of Persia.<sup>50</sup> The Persians continued this practice for a considerable time, until finally with the complete fusion of the two races they seem to have exchanged burial for the exposure of the corpses.

The earliest Greek writer to acquaint the Western world with the history of the nations of Ancient Iran is Herodotus, who wrote about a century and a quarter before the fall of the Achaemenian empire. Writing at a period when the Persians were in the zenith of their power in Western Iran, and when the Magi were the recognized class, he, with the other writers that followed him, acquainted the West with the Magi. The athravans, the real custodians of the *Avesta* and the guardians of the Zoroastrian symbol of fire, are unknown to these writers. This may be due to the fact that Eastern Iran, which was the home of the athravans, had politically declined, and the writers are mainly concerned with the Persians of the west, and their immediate predecessors, the Medes.

The Avestan texts do not recognize the Magi. The forms derived from the term *maga*, 'great' occurring in the Gathas and the Later Avesta do not represent this priestly class. We find a solitary passage, presumably a late interpolation, which pronounces a curse upon those who ill-treat the Magi.<sup>51</sup> We may add a passage in which Ahura Mazda tells Zarathushtra that he prefers a man who has a wife to one who lives as a magus, that is, lives in continence.<sup>52</sup> The class designation of the priests in the Avestan text is persistently athraivan. The disposal of the dead by the exposure to the light of the sun, the reverence for the elements, fire, water, and earth, the stringent laws for bodily cleanliness, the active crusade against noxious creatures, are some of the salient features of the religious practices and beliefs of the Magi that we glean from the writings of the Greek authors. These form the cardinal tenets of the Vendidad and are all associated with the athravans, who make up the official priesthood of the Avestan people. It

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49 Herod. 1. 140.

50 *Anabasis*, 3, 22. 1; and cf. ShN. 6.56.

51 Y65.7.

52 Vd4.47.

is not a Magus who cleanses the defiled by ablution ceremonials, heals the sick by the recital of the holy spells, and moves about with a *penom* over his mouth, and a *khrafstraghna* in his hand; but it is an athravan who exercises all these powers and more. The sacerdotal class is known by the title of athravan throughout the texts. It is the only privileged priestly class that the Avesta recognizes.

**Spread of Zoroastrianism in remote lands.** The Zoroastrian missionaries travelled to distant lands for the purpose of promulgating the religion, and their homeward return from their sacred missions is celebrated by the faithful.<sup>53</sup> The promulgating zeal on the part of the Zoroastrian priests seems to have provoked opposition from non-believers. Keresani, a powerful ruler of a foreign land, we are informed, prevented the fire-priests of Iran from visiting his country to preach the Zoroastrian doctrines.<sup>54</sup> In spite of all such obstacles thrown in their way, the Zoroastrian missionaries gradually succeeded in planting the banner of their national faith both near and afar. They wished eagerly to spread abroad between heaven and earth the Ahuna Vairya, or the most sacred formula of the Iranian faith, together with the other holy prayers.<sup>55</sup> Attention has already been called to the fact that the Gathas celebrated the conversion of Fryana the Turanian and his descendants. The Avestan texts include some more Turanian names in the canonical list of sainted persons.<sup>56</sup> The most illustrious of these Turanian Zoroastrians was Yoisht-i Fryana [Yavisht i Friyan], who sacrificed unto Ardvi Sura and begged of her a boon that he might be able to answer the riddles that the malicious wizard Akhtya put to him.<sup>57</sup> The boon was granted him,<sup>58</sup> and the later Pahlavi treatise which bears the name of the Turanian saint adds that Yoisht-i Fryana solved the enigmas put forth by the wizard who was killing all those who were unable to answer his questions. The saint, in his turn, proposed to Akhtya three riddles, which the wizard was unable to answer. The saint, thereupon, put the sorcerer to death.<sup>59</sup> The Frawardin Yasht<sup>60</sup> commemorates the Fravashi of Saena, an illustrious convert to Zoroastrianism. We learn from the Pahlavi works that this apostle of the faith left behind him one hundred disciples who preached the Mazdayasnian faith in the land of Seistan.<sup>61</sup> Armenia came under the Zoroastrian influence at a very early date, and

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53 Y42.6.

54 Y9.24.

55 Y61.1.

56 Yt13.113, 120, 123.

57 Yt5.81, 82.

58 *Ib.*, 83.

59 Cf. West and Haug, *Yosht-i Fryan in Arda Viraf*, p. 247-266, London, 1872.

60 Yt13.97.

a corrupt form of Zoroastrianism prevailed in the country for several centuries.<sup>62</sup> Cappadocia, Lydia, and Lycia were the scene of an active Zoroastrian propaganda. The Aramaic inscriptions recently discovered in Cappadocia mention Daena, the female genius of the Mazdayasnian religion, conjointly with the native God Bel.<sup>63</sup> India and China witnessed the spread of the gospel of Iran.<sup>64</sup>

The proselytizing work on the part of the Zoroastrian ministers of the faith was thus carried on with a considerable amount of success, though we are not in a position to form any idea regarding the numbers of the followers of the religion of Mazda at this period.

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61 Modi, *The Wonders of Sagastān* in *Aiyadgar-i Zarīran*, p. 126, 127, Bombay, 1899; for further references see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 137, n. 6.

62 Cf. Ananikian, *Armenia (Zoroastrian)*, in *ERE*. 1, 794-802.

63 Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik*, vol. 1, p. 67 f., Giessen, 1902.

64 *ShN*. 1. 76, 77; For references regarding the Zoroastrian propaganda in China see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 278-280.

## CHAPTER XVI. ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE YOUNGER AVESTA

**Zarathushtra is the chief of mankind as Tishtrya is of the stars.** On the banks of the river Darej lived Pourushasp of the family of the Spitamas in a small house.<sup>1</sup> A boy babe was born unto him. In consultation with the elders of the clan, the child was named Zarathushtra. Nature donned a festive garb, the sun shone with a brighter glory, trees strewed flowers, on the ground roses bloomed in luxuriant profusion, flowers and leaves and grass scented the air with sweet fragrance, creepers climbed the hedges in riotous luxuriance, the birds carolled in the air, myriads of tiny drops of the morning dew shone like pearls upon the leaves and branches of the trees, the clouds floated merrily in heaven, the winds made music in the lofty trees, joy filled the air, and the trees with their leafy tongues and the blades of grass and the grains of sand and birds and beasts and men and everything everywhere joyously sang: "Hail, for to us is born the Athravan, Spitama Zarathushtra."<sup>2</sup> He is said to have been renowned in Airyanem Vaejah.<sup>3</sup> Here did he commune with Ahura Mazda and other heavenly beings.<sup>4</sup> Ahura Mazda made him the lord and overseer over mankind as he has established Tishtrya the leader of the stars.<sup>5</sup> He was the embodiment of goodness and righteousness on earth. He was the first and best of the divine law.<sup>6</sup> He tells Ahura Mazda that he will lead mankind according to the thoughts, words, and deeds of the religion which is of Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra.<sup>7</sup> Ardvi Sura speaks of him as the wise, clever Athravan, who has mastered the revealed law and who is himself the word incarnate.<sup>8</sup> He is the holiest, the most ruling, the most bright, the most glorious, and the most victorious among men.<sup>9</sup> Haoma speaks of him as the most strong, the most firm, the most clever, the most swift, and the most victorious.<sup>10</sup> He is the chief of the material world, the head of the two-footed race.<sup>11</sup> He is the first bearer

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1 Vd19.4.

2 Yt13.93, 94; Y17.18.

3 Y9.14.

4 Vd19.11.

5 Yt8.44.

6 Yt13.148.

7 Y8.7.

8 Yt5.91.

9 Yt19.79.

10 Y9.15.

11 Yt5.89; 13.41, 91, 92.

of the law among peoples.<sup>12</sup> He is the foremost in thinking good thoughts, speaking good words, and doing good deeds. He exemplifies best in himself the virtues of the priest, the warrior, the husbandman and furthers righteousness as never done before.<sup>13</sup> The Amesha Spentas longed for his advent as the lord and the master of the world.<sup>14</sup> He is himself invoked as the wisest, the best-ruling, the brightest, the most glorious, the most worthy of sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification.<sup>15</sup> Homage is paid unto him.<sup>16</sup> The Kingly Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations is also his.<sup>17</sup>

**Zarathushtra invokes the Yazatas for various boons.** Ahura Mazda asks Zarathushtra to sacrifice unto Ardvi Sura.<sup>18</sup> Zarathushtra thereupon offered a sacrifice unto her and begged of her a boon that he might win over king Vishtaspa to his faith and lead him to think and speak and do according to the law.<sup>19</sup> Ardvi Sura granted him the boon.<sup>20</sup> When assailed by the demon Buiti, he offered sacrifices unto the waters of the river Daitya.<sup>21</sup> Unto Drvaspa he offered sacrifice for the boon that he might succeed in bringing over Hutaosa to think, speak, and do according to his religion and to make his religion known to others.<sup>22</sup> And the boon was granted unto him by Drvaspa.<sup>23</sup> He asks for the same boon from Ashi Vanghuhi and it is given him.<sup>24</sup> He invokes the Fravashis of the faithful to his help whenever he finds himself in danger.<sup>25</sup> From Verethraghna does he ask victorious thinking, speaking, and doing, questioning and answering, which the angel of victory vouchsafes unto him.<sup>26</sup> Unto Chisti, the genius of wisdom, he offers a sacrifice praying for righteousness of thought, word, and deed, agility, soundness of body, keen hearing, and eyesight.<sup>27</sup> He invokes Ashi

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12 Yt13.90.

13 Yt13.88, 89, 91.

14 Yt13.92.

15 Yt13.152.

16 Yt17.5.

17 Yt19.56 f.

18 Yt5.1.

19 Yt5.104, 105.

20 Yt5.106.

21 Vd19.2.

22 Yt9.25, 26.

23 Yt9.27.

24 Yt17.45-47.

25 Yt19.41.

26 Yt14.28-33.

27 Yt16.6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13.



Vanghuhi with the voice that the female genius declares to be the sweetest of all that invoked her.<sup>28</sup>

**Temptation of Zarathushtra.** Temptations of the prophets of God by the Evil One are recorded in the lives of the great prophets. Buddha, the enlightened one, is thus tempted by Mara and promised universal dominion if he desisted from imparting his illumination to mankind.<sup>29</sup> Satan shows Jesus the kingdom of the world and their glory and offers them all to him if he gave up God and came over to him. Several centuries before both Buddha and Jesus, the prophet of Iran is tempted by Angra Mainyu. At the command of the arch-fiend, the demon Buiti came rushing to cause Zarathushtra's death. Zarathushtra saw through insight that the wicked, evil-doing demons were taking counsel together for his death. He chanted the Ahuna Vairya [Ahunwar] and frustrated the foul attempt of the Druj on his life. Foiled in his mission, Buiti rushed away dismayed and spoke unto Angra Mainyu that so great was the glory of holy Zarathushtra that he could see no way of killing him.<sup>30</sup> Angra Mainyu tells Zarathushtra that he was a mere man, born of human parents, and could not therefore withstand his onslaughts. Moreover, if he renounced the Mazdayasnian religion, he would award him untold riches. Unto him the prophet of Mazda retorted that neither for the love of his body or life, nor if his breath were torn away would he desist from the good Mazda-worshipping religion. With the sacred formulas as his weapons, he adds, he would strike and repel the evil brood of Angra Mainyu.<sup>31</sup> Up to the end of time, up to the time that the victorious Saviour came, Zarathushtra tells Angra Mainyu that he would smite his evil.<sup>32</sup> Thus was he first in the material world to proclaim the word for the destruction of the demons.<sup>33</sup> The demons fled headlong, weeping and wailing, at his sight and their malice was extinguished.<sup>34</sup> He chanted the Ahuna Vairya and drove back the demons beneath the earth.<sup>35</sup> Haoma says that Zarathushtra drove back beneath the earth the daevas that were stalking the earth in the shape of human beings.<sup>36</sup> He was the first among mortals who brought the demons to nought, who first proclaimed the word that

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28 Yt17.17.

29 See Nariman, *Some Buddhistic Parallels*, in *The Religion of the Iranian Peoples* by Tiele, p. 148-162.

30 Vd19.1-3.

31 Vd19.4-9.

32 Vd19.5.

33 Yt13.90.

34 Yt19.80.

35 Yt19.81.

36 Y9.15.

worked their destruction, and who first denounced their creation as unworthy of sacrifice and prayer.<sup>37</sup> Angra Mainyu, the wicked and deadly, howled in impotent rage that Zarathushtra alone succeeded in routing and smiting him where all the Yazatas failed to encompass his defeat.<sup>38</sup> He bewails that Zarathushtra smote him with the Ahuna Vairya, the deadly weapon, which was as a stone as high as a house,<sup>39</sup> that he burnt him with righteousness as if it were molten metal, and that he, the prophet of Mazda, was the only one who made it better for him to leave the earth.<sup>40</sup>

**King Vishtaspa helps Zarathushtra in establishing his religion.** Bactria sheltered Zarathushtra when his own native place had cast him out. King Vishtaspa embraced his faith and he thought and spoke and did according to the law. He became the arm and support of the new religion. He gave movement to the religion, say the sacred texts, which stood motionless for a long time. He helped its promulgation all around and made it prosper.<sup>41</sup> Ragha, we are told, became the seat of the prophet's ministry and here he was both the spiritual and temporal chief.<sup>42</sup> The royal example evidently influenced many people to give ear to his teachings. People now warmly welcomed him and heard him with bated breath. His countenance radiated light among them and they felt that their souls had awakened to new life. The faithful undertake to tread in his footsteps, conform themselves to his likeness, live his life, and walk in his light.<sup>43</sup> Zarathushtra thus triumphed in lighting a beacon to illumine the path for mankind to tread.

**Allusions to Zarathushtra in classical literature.** In absence of any authentic Iranian data regarding the age and place of Zarathushtra's birth, we eagerly turn to the testimony of the classical writers who have written up to the time of the close of the Avestan period.<sup>44</sup> The information, however, that we derive from them is fragmentary and mostly legendary. The cycle of legends has formed around him and he is undiscernibly remote from the writers. His name

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37 Yt13.89, 90.

38 Yt17.19, 20.

39 Vd19.4.

40 Yt17.20.

41 Yt13.99, 100; 19.84-86.

42 Y19.18.

43 Y12.7.

44 See Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 150-154, 169, 170, 182, 186-191; Fox and Pemberton, *Passages in Greek and Latin Literature relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism*, translated into English, p. 1-82.

is given variously as Zaras, Zaratas, Zaratus and Zoroaster.<sup>45</sup> Diogenes Laertius says that Xanthus of Lydia (fifth century B.C.) mentioned Zoroaster by name.<sup>46</sup> The earliest authentic allusion to him, however, is found in the Platonic *Alcibiades*.<sup>47</sup> Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23-79) says that Zoroaster was the only human being that laughed when he was born and adds that his brain pulsated so forcibly that it repelled the hand put over it. Tradition has it, he says, that Zoroaster lived in a desert upon cheese for twenty years.<sup>48</sup> Diogenes of Laerte (second century A.D.) quotes Dino (about 340 B.C.) as saying that Zoroaster meant one who sacrificed to the stars and adds that Hermodorus, a disciple of Plato, agreed with this.<sup>49</sup> He is spoken of as Chaldaean by Hippolytus (A.D. 236),<sup>50</sup> or as an Assyrian<sup>51</sup> or generally as a Magian or Bactrian. He is called the king of Bactria who fought with Ninus and Semiramis and was defeated.<sup>52</sup> The Avestan texts are silent over the question of the age in which he was born. The classical writers speak upon the subject, but their testimony is not reliable. Pliny says on the authority of Eudoxus (368 B.C.), Aristotle (350 B.C.), and Hermippus (250 B.C.) that Zoroaster lived 6000 years before the death of Plato or 5000 years before the Trojan war, and Diogenes of Laerte quotes Hermodorus and Xanthus to the same effect.<sup>53</sup> Pliny quotes Hermippus as saying that Zoroaster composed two million lines of verse.<sup>54</sup> Polyhistor (about first century B.C.), Plutarch (A.D. 46-120), Apuleius of Madaura (A.D. 124-170), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-211) and Hippolytus say on the authority of Diodorus of Eretria (60 B.C.), and Aristoxenus, a disciple of Aristotle, that Pythagoras was a pupil of Zoroaster.<sup>55</sup> He is generally designated the discoverer of magic.<sup>56</sup> Dio Chrysostom (A.D. 40-120) says that according to the account given by the Persians, Zoroaster withdrew from the society of men to live in a mountain. A great fire fell from heaven and kept the mountain burning, but that Zoroaster came out of it unscathed.<sup>57</sup> Clement of Alexandria speaks of Zoroaster as the

45 Fox and Pemberton, *Ib.*, p. 28, 44, 46, 54, 73, 82.

46 *Proem*, 2.

47 Fox and Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

48 *Ib.*, p. 44.

49 *Ib.*, p. 80, 81; for other references see Jackson, *ib.*, p. 147-149.

50 Fox and Pemberton, *ib.*, p. 82.

51 *Ib.*, p. 28.

52 See Jackson, *ib.*, p 154-157.

53 Jackson, *ib.*, 152-154; Fox and Pemberton, *ib.*, p. 45, 80.

54 Fox and Pemberton, *ib.*, p. 45, 46.

55 *Ib.*, p. 28, 54, 65, 73, 82.

56 *Ib.*, p. 22, 52, 60, 65, 69, 82.

57 *Ib.*, p. 48.

son of Armenius and adds that he was killed in war. He quotes Plato as saying that after lying on the pyre for twelve days he came back to life.<sup>58</sup> Pliny states that it is not certain whether there was only one Zoroaster or others also bearing his name.<sup>59</sup>

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58 *Ib.*, p. 73.

59 *Ib.*, p. 45.

## CHAPTER XVII. THE YOUNGER AVESTAN RELIGION

**From the Gathas to the Later Avesta, a retrograde step.** We now enter upon a new field of investigation, and move in an entirely changed atmosphere as we proceed. The buoyant spirit of the Gathic hymns is preserved to a great extent in the composition of the Haptanghaiti, or the section to 'Seven Chapters' in the Avestan Yasna, written in the Gathic dialect during the transition period that intervened between the close of the Gathic age and the opening of the Avestan period. The lofty tone of the earlier compositions gradually declines, and the greater part of the Yasna, Yashts, and Vendidad becomes heavy and monotonous. On only rare occasions do the texts exhibit sudden flashes of transcendent beauty and devout fervour. The growing tendency is for complexity and concreteness. The Gathas generally dealt with the abstract concepts. Every one of the Amesha Spentas, as we have already seen, impersonated some cardinal virtue. Though Asha, the genius of righteousness, and Haurvatat, that of perfection, have each a Yasht consecrated to them in the Younger Avesta, the abstract virtues of these archangels do not receive any recognition in these hymns. The secondary and concrete qualities with new associations loom larger in the thoughts of their composers than do the primary qualifications. Rather than dealing with the righteousness of Asha Vahishta and the perfection of Haurvatat, the later texts expatiate upon their healing powers by means of the recital of the various formulas of magical efficacy and the spells to drive away the demons of diseases and death. This general tendency of drifting towards the concrete and material in religion is the characteristic feature of the times and endures throughout the Younger Avestan as well as the subsequent Pahlavi period, in which it reaches its climax.

Daena, Chisti, Mithra, Raman, Rata, Manthra, Airyaman, Asha, Hvare, Maunghah, Asman, Ushah, Atar, and Zam furnish us with instances in which terms that were used in the Gathas to connote the ordinary meanings are now personified as angels.

**The angels that outshine the archangels.** Some of the Yazatas, both those of pure Iranian extraction and those of Indo-Iranian origin, have risen to such a great popularity during this period that they are honoured more than the Amesha Spentas. The angels Anahita and Tishtrya, Mithra, and Verethraghna figure more prominently than the archangels Vohu Manah and Asha Vahishta, Armaiti, and Ameretat. Some of the longest Yashts, or sacrificial hymns, are composed in their honour. The Yasht dedicated to Mithra, for example, is eight times larger than the one composed in honour of Ahura Mazda himself. The archangels, who are higher in the spiritual hierarchy, who occupied a

unique position in the Gathas, and whose glory the prophet ever sang with his clarion voice to the people of Iran, have now either to content themselves with short laudatory compositions or go entirely without any special dedication. Some of the attributes that are the prerogative of Ahura Mazda alone are lavishly applied to the leading angels; but the authors are sparing even to parsimony when they confer honorific epithets on the Amesha Spentas.

**Their imprecations upon their careless votaries.** A few of the Yazatas, or Adorable Ones, are conjointly honoured with Ahura Mazda in the same strain. They are eager to help man and stand by his side in the hour of his need, if they are invoked. They help man, if man remembers them. Moreover, they are themselves strengthened in their work by man's offerings. Tishtrya despondently complains to Ahura Mazda that he is worsted by his adversary Apaosha because mankind do not propitiate him with sacrifices as they ought to. If they did so, Tishtrya would be emboldened and enabled to conduct his warfare with the demon of drought more vigorously. Tishtrya complains that people do not sacrifice unto him to the extent that they do unto the other angels, who are more popular among them. Mithra, likewise, complains of man's occasional neglect of his invocation, which evokes his displeasure. And Mithra is terrible when angered. Unless man appeases his wrath by abundant sacrifices, he punishes his wretched victim mercilessly. Similarly, the Fravashis, or Guardian Spirits, are the most helpful genii, but on condition that man propitiates them with sacrifices. When satisfied, they are of indescribable help, but once offended they are hard to deal with. They are to be approached with religious awe. They are to be feared, rather than loved. This fear of the celestial beings may engender obedience in man, but not devotion. And devotion is the higher of the two virtues.

**Ahura Mazda invokes his heavenly ministers for help.** In the Gathas we saw Ahura Mazda co-operating and holding conferences and working in consort with his heavenly subordinates. The Younger Avesta gives a picture of a step in advance in this direction. Here Ahura Mazda is often depicted as sacrificing unto the minor divinities, and asking for boons from them. For instance, he prays to Ardvi Sura, Mithra, and Vayu for favours, and they grant him these boons.<sup>1</sup> Vayu even goes further and says he does good to Ahura Mazda.<sup>2</sup> The Fravashis helped Ahura Mazda, and the Lord himself says that had he not received their help, great would have been the difficulty.<sup>3</sup> But even here it is expressly said that all these beings whom Ahura Mazda invokes for help are his creations. It is he himself who has made

1 Yt5.17-19; 10.123; 15.2-4.

2 Yt15.44.

3 Yt13.12, 19.

Tishtrya and Mithra as worthy of honour, sacrifice, and prayer as himself.<sup>4</sup> Rather than commanding his envoys and viceroys as the sovereign ruler to put his orders into execution, he solicits their co-operation in his work. Besides, Ahura Mazda's offering sacrifices unto other beings turns out a source of help to them. Tishtrya in his distress looks to Ahura Mazda for help. Mazda, thereupon, sacrifices unto him, which gives Tishtrya renewed vigour and strength to fight his adversary Apaosha.<sup>5</sup>

**Ceremonial implements, textual passages, and objects and expressions that share invocation.** In common with the Vedas, the Avestan texts deify the ritual implements, textual passages of the scriptures, and other like objects. The expressions of invocation and sacrifice applied to them are the same as those used in honour of Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, and the Yazatas. The following are the objects that come in for a share of invocation in the ritual: Haoma, Aesma or the wood for the fire altar,<sup>6</sup> Baresman or the sacred twigs, Zaotira or libations, one's own soul and Fravashi,<sup>7</sup> the Gathas, the chapters of the Yasna Haptanghaiti,<sup>8</sup> metres, lines, words of the chapters of the Haptanghaiti,<sup>9</sup> intellect, conscience,<sup>10</sup> knowledge,<sup>11</sup> and even sleep.<sup>12</sup> Thus the creator and his creature, angel and man, ceremonial implements and scriptural texts are all alike made the objects of adoration and praise.

**Zarathushtra's monologues in the Gathas as against his dialogues in the Avesta.** In the Gathas the prophet addressed several questions to Ahura Mazda, but the replies were left to be inferred from the context. An advance is made upon this method, and now we have Zoroaster depicted as putting questions, and Ahura Mazda himself as answering them categorically. To invest their compositions with divine sanction and prophetic authority, the later sages wrote in the form of a dialogue between Ahura Mazda and his prophet. The greater part of the Vendidad and some of the Yashts are composed in this style. Escorted by the celestial Yazatas, Ahura Mazda comes down to Airyanem Vaejah

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4 Yt8.52; 10.1.

5 Yt8.25-29.

6 Y6.18; 7.26.

7 Y59.28; 71.18.

8 Y71.12, 18.

9 Vr16.3.

10 Yt13.74.

11 Y22.25; 25.6; Yt2.1; Sr1.2, 29; 2.2, 29.

12 Vr7.3.

to attend a meeting of mortals convened by Yima, and warns him of the coming destructive winter and frost.<sup>13</sup>

**The Avesta looks with unrelenting abhorrence upon idols and images of divinities.** Idolatry in any form is sin. The *Shah Namah* abounds in passages depicting the Persian kings and heroes as conducting a crusade against idols and idol-worship. The conquering armies of Persia always destroyed the idols and razed their temples to the ground. Herodotus writes that the Persians did not erect idols.<sup>14</sup> Sotion adds that they hated idols.<sup>15</sup> The statues of different divinities were, however, not unknown among the Achaemenians. The winged figure floating over the head of Darius on the rock sculptures at Behistan is probably a representation of Auramazda. We have it on the authority of Berosus that the Achaemenian king Artaxerxes Mnemon (B.C. 404-358) had statues erected to Anahita in Babylon, Ecbatana, Susa, Persepolis, Bactria, Damascus, and Sardis.<sup>16</sup> Strabo describes the image of Omanus, that is, Vohu Manah, as being carried at a later period in procession in Cappadocia.<sup>17</sup>

We find no traces of such open disregard of the genuine teachings of the faith, when the priesthood firmly established its influence. Orthodox Zoroastrianism never sanctioned any form of idol-worship in Iran.

The Yazatas, or angels, Tishtrya, Verethraghna, Dahma Afriti, and Damoish Upamana introduce a novel feature in the theology of this period. They are pictured as assuming various forms or man, horse, and other objects in the performance of their allotted work.

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13 Vd2.21, 22.

14 1.131.

15 Diogenes Laertius, *Prooem.* 6.

16 Cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protreptica*, 5, 65, 3.

17 P. 733.



## CHAPTER XVIII. THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE MILLENNIUM

**Yahweh, the only God of the Hebrews.** We have already seen the eclipse of the old gods and the rise of the new ones in India during the millennium that opened with Zarathushtra and ended with the advent of Jesus. The monotheistic idea greatly developed during this period among the Jews who were a subject race under the Persians and whose religion was influenced by Zoroastrianism. As Judaism later gave much to Christianity and Mohammedanism, the knowledge of the belief in the godhead among this people is of great interest, and we shall discuss it in brief.

A race of sturdy nomads of Semitic stock tending their flocks from times immemorial in the Arabian desert, of handsome features with prominent aquiline nose, is seen settling down in Palestine about thirteen centuries before the Christian era. Many of their kinsmen had laboured and suffered as slaves in Egypt, until Moses brought them deliverance. The Hebrews, as the people are known to history, found their new settlement already populated by the civilized Canaanites. The new-comers intermarried with them and adopted their civilization. They succeeded later in founding a kingdom, and under the heroic ruler David, Jerusalem became the centre of Jewish religious life and the sanctuary of their national God Yahweh. During the period of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel prophetic literature of great value arose and enriched human thought. The kingdom of Israel ended in 721 B.C., and Judah met with her destruction in 586 B.C. The Persians brought the Jews deliverance and allowed them to restore the temple of Jerusalem that was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. They flourished under the tolerant Persian rule, codified their religious laws, collected and copied the sermons and teachings and songs and ancient writings that they still possessed. Thus in a few centuries more there came into being the scriptures known as the Old Testament, the most precious legacy of the Hebrews to mankind.

When they had lived in small groups, each tribe had its God, whom the people worshipped. Gradually a more powerful God from among these won the universal respect of the race. He was Yahweh, worshipped in the earlier stages in the form of a brazen serpent, until the idol worship gave place to a purer form of godhead. His dominion over men was contested by Baal of Tyre who received devotion from the people side by side with him both in Israel and Judah. Yahweh ultimately came out successful and remained the only God of the Hebrews. The prophet Amos (760 B.C.) raised him to monotheistic grandeur and spoke as the mouth-piece of Yahweh. Hosea and Isaiah preach against idolatry and the prophets are incessantly enjoining upon

the people not to make idols or graven images and they exhort them not to worship any other God but Yahweh. It is said that Yahweh is a jealous God and brooks no homage but to him. The children of Israel had suffered in Egypt where they were in bondage. God heard their groaning and had compassion on them. He appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, burning in a bush, and said that he had come down to deliver the suffering children of Israel from bondage to a place flowing with milk and honey. He gave him ten commandments for the guidance of the people. Therein he demands that man shall fear him, walk in his ways, cleave unto him, obey him, love him, and serve him with all his heart and all his soul. He has chosen Israel unto himself above all people as a beacon of light and righteousness to mankind. Consequently, he demands that they shall serve him faithfully, and transgress not his commandments. If people walk in the Lord's statutes and keep his commandments, he gives them seasonal rains, full crops, protection against the attacks of animals and men, victory and offspring. He goes with the armies of Israel to the battlefield and fights for them against the enemies. But when they transgress his commandments, worship idols or other gods or turn apostates, he breaks the pride of their power, lets loose their enemies over them, and chastises them by visiting their country with plagues and pestilences, famines and droughts, desolation and death. It was for the inequities of his wayward children that Yahweh sent Tiglath-Pileser as his scourge to punish them and put them under the Assyrian yoke. The prophet Isaiah tells the people that Yahweh uses Assyria as his rod to punish them. Those who seek Yahweh, find him. He does not fail or forsake them. But when they forsake him, and provoke him to anger, he casts them away forever. But even then if people repent, humble themselves before him, fall down on their faces, rend their clothes, and weep, he relents, forgives them, comes back to them, takes them under his protecting wings, helps them, and prospers them. The Psalms and Prophets are replete with higher ethical sentiment and aim at reforming the motives of conduct rather than regulating it by ceremonial observances. They are full of fervent expressions of religious emotion. God is depicted here as the compassionate Father who looks to all as his children. Judaism prepares the way for a nobler type of godhead that was to be preached by Jesus.

**Taoism and Confucianism.** Animism and ancestral worship ministered to the spiritual needs of the people in China from the earliest times. As in the other parts of the world, the higher conceptions of gods or of some one supreme principle like Heaven as God were gradually evolving among the sages. Tradition places the Golden Age of China in about 3000 B.C. But the authentic historical records do not go beyond a millennium before the Christian era. It is in this period that great religious and social ideals were preached that have shaped the Chinese

life for all time. The country was harassed by feudal warfare, and famine and pestilence worked havoc, adding to the misery of the people. Perplexed at the visitation of misfortunes and calamities, wail goes up to Heaven from a poet in the eighth century B. C. complaining that Heaven is unjust and merciless in its dealings with mankind. Such complaints are however drowned in the chorus that Heaven does not will evil. It is man's own fault, in consequence of which he suffers. Man is born good, it is said, but when he goes astray from the path of goodness, he brings calamity on his head. When there were strife and chaos stalking the earth, the sages felt that peace and harmony reigned above in heaven. Perfect was the Way or Heaven or the Tao or the one universal principle, the ultimate reality. Happiness would fall to the lot of mankind, if it followed faithfully the Way. The imitation of the Way or Heaven was therefore the ideal of earthly conduct. It was virtue and virtue brought happiness. Man's duty was to cultivate the Way and the sages undertook to teach it to mankind. The Way was one which to all thinkers looked alike, but the methods of reaching it as taught by them were different.

Lao-tze, a great mystic born in 601 B.C., is the founder of Taoism. He teaches quietism. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) is the man of the world and teaches a moral code of personal conduct. His religion is a discipline of life and his system is a reaction against Taoism.

## CHAPTER XIX. AHURA MAZDA

Ahura, Mazda, and Ahura Mazda. The name of God still retains its two elements separate. These have not yet coalesced into one word. In the metrical sections of the Younger Avesta the two elements are sometimes used apart from each other, or either one of the terms may be used to designate the Supreme Being, but in the prose compositions the collocation Ahura Mazda generally occurs as a compound phrase. In the formation of compounds, however, either Ahura or Mazda alone is used for the sake of convenience. The Ahura compounds such as *Ahura-dhāta*, 'created by Ahura,' *Ahura-tkaesha*, 'of the faith of Ahura,' or the adjectival form *āhuiiri*, 'of Ahura,' invariably represent the divine lord Ahura Mazda. Similarly, the Mazda element in the compounds *Mazda-dhāta*, 'created by Mazda,' *Mazda-yasna*, 'worshipper of Mazda,' *Mazdo-frasasta*, 'taught by Mazda,' *Mazdo-fraokhta*, or *Mazdaokhta*, 'spoken by Mazda,' invariably stands for Ahura Mazda himself.

**Ahura Mazda is the highest object of worship.** Ahura Mazda still holds sovereign sway over both the worlds; his authority in the world of righteousness is undisputed, and his imperial right is unchallenged. He is the greatest and the very best of the angels.<sup>1</sup> The Old Persian Inscriptions speak of him as the greatest of the divinities.<sup>2</sup> The archangels and angels dutifully carry out Mazda's orders. Reverence for him has never abated, and adoration of him does not languish with the advent again of the old Indo-Iranian divinities. Like the dual divinities Varuna-Mitra who received joint invocation during the Indo-Iranian period, Ahura-Mithra or Mithra-Ahura are invoked together. Ahura generally takes precedence and Mithra stands second in the compound,<sup>3</sup> but in the Nyaishes composed in honour of Hvare Khshaeta or the sun and Mithra, as also in the Yasht dedicated to Mithra,<sup>4</sup> the order is reversed and we have then Mithra-Ahura. He is yet the sublimest goal of human aspiration. The best of all sacrifices and invocations are those of Mazda.<sup>5</sup>

The faithful acknowledge their indebtedness to Ahura Mazda and devoutly offer to him their homage and sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> They worship him with the very life of the body,<sup>7</sup> and they long to reach him through the medium of fire, through the Good Mind, through Righteousness, and

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1 Y16.1; Yt17.16.

2 Dar. Pers. d. 1; Xerx. Elv. 1; Xerx. Van. 1.

3 Y1.11; 2.11; 3.13; 4.16; 6.10; 7.13; 17.10; 22.13.

4 Ny1.7; 2.7, 12; Yt10.113, 145.

5 TdFr.28.

6 Y13.5.

7 Y37.3.

through the deeds and words of wisdom, as well as through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.<sup>8</sup> Ahura Mazda, in fact, is implored to be their very life and limb in both the worlds.<sup>9</sup> It is through the Best Righteousness that the true in heart aspire to behold the Lord to approach him, and to associate with him.<sup>10</sup> The attainment of the companionship and the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda is the pious wish of the supplicant.<sup>11</sup>

**Mazda's titles.** The Yasna sacrifice opens with the praise of Ahura Mazda and enumerates the following divine titles: maker, radiant, glorious, the greatest, the best, the most beautiful, the most firm, the most wise, of the most perfect form, the highest in righteousness, possessed of great joy, creator, fashioner, nourisher, and the Most Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> He is all-pervading. There is no conceivable place where he is not. Closer than the nose is to the ears, or the ears are to the mouth, is he to all that which the corporeal world thinks, speaks, and does.<sup>13</sup> He is the greatest temporal and spiritual lord.<sup>14</sup> He is the absolute ruler.<sup>15</sup> He is the most mighty and righteous.<sup>16</sup> He is benevolent.<sup>17</sup> He is the maker, the most holy, the most wise, and the best one to answer when questioned.<sup>18</sup> His is the omniscient wisdom.<sup>19</sup> He is undeceivable.<sup>20</sup> He is omniscient and never sleeping.<sup>21</sup> Radiant and glorious are the most frequent epithets with which the texts open the invocation to the divinity. Above all Ahura Mazda is the spirit of spirits.<sup>22</sup> This essential trait stands intact through all changes in the concept of God. He is not invested with any anthropomorphic character, and his multifarious epithets are truly the figurative expressions of human language used by man in his feeble attempt to give vent to an outburst of the feelings of devotion and reverence for his Heavenly Father. Ahura Mazda is

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8 Y36.1, 4, 5.

9 Y41.3.

10 Y60.12.

11 Y40.2; 41.2, 5, 6.

12 Y1.1.

13 TdFr. 58, 59.

14 Y27.1; Vr11.21.

15 Y21.3.

16 Y56.1.

17 Y38.4.

18 Vd18.7, 13, 66.

19 Vr19.1.

20 Yt12.1.

21 Yt12.1; Vd19.20, 26.

22 Y4.7.

synonymous with light, even as his opponent is identical with darkness, and the sun is spoken of as his most beautiful form.<sup>23</sup> Just as the *Rig Veda* speaks of the sun as the eye of Mithra and Varuna,<sup>24</sup> so do the Avestan texts call the sun the eye of Ahura Mazda.<sup>25</sup> Speaking about the nature of Ahura Mazda, Plutarch well remarks that among objects of sense the Zoroastrian godhead most of all resembles the light.<sup>26</sup> The star-spangled heaven is his garment;<sup>27</sup> the holy spell is his soul.<sup>28</sup> Many are the names by which mankind have learnt to know him. The first Yasht, which is dedicated to him, enumerates seventy-four of these attributes. They are all descriptive of his wisdom, far-sightedness, power, righteousness justice, and mercy.<sup>29</sup>

**Only the world of righteousness is created by Ahura Mazda.** As the antithesis between the Deity and the Evil Spirit is now most strongly marked in the Later Avesta, the godhead is expressly described as the creator of everything that is good,<sup>30</sup> evil being the counter-creation of Angara Mainyu. Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu in the younger texts are described as creating good and evil in turn. The archangels are Mazda's creations;<sup>31</sup> so also are the angels and men, the animals, sky, water, trees, light, wind, and earth.<sup>32</sup> In the various enquiries which Zarathushtra addresses to Ahura Mazda in the *Vendidad*, the divinity is portrayed as the creator of corporeal world. Ahura expressly says to Zarathushtra that he has created everything in the world, and yet nothing in his creation comes up to the level of man, who is the greatest and the best of all creations.<sup>33</sup> Through the wisdom of Ahura Mazda the world has come into being, and through his divine wisdom it will come also to an end.<sup>34</sup>

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23 Y36.6; 28.8.

24 RV. 1.115.1; 6.51.1; 7.61.1; 63.1; 10.37.

25 Y1.11; 3.13; 4.16; 7.13; 22.13.

26 *Is. et Os.* 46.

27 Yt13.3.

28 Yt13.81.

29 Yt1.7, 8, 12-15.

30 Y71.10; Vr11.5; Vd11.1.

31 Yt1.25.

32 Y1.1, 2, 12; 2.12; 12.7; 17.12; 37.1; 38.3; Vr7.4; Vd19.13, 16, 35; 21.4, 8, 12; Aog. 30.

33 Aog. 30.

34 Yt1.26.

## CHAPTER XX. SPENTA MAINYU

**Belief in an intermediary spirit between God and the world.** From the days of Thales (about 600 B.C.), the head of the school of Miletus, the Greek thinkers were in touch with the Orient. The Ionians were in close contact with the Persians. Pythagoras, we have seen, was believed by the classical writers to have been the pupil of Zoroaster, though several centuries intervened between them. Numenius of Apamea says that Pythagoras and Plato reproduce the ancient wisdom of the Magi and Brahmans, Egyptians and Jews. Alexandria became later a cosmopolitan seat of learning, and the intellectual East and West met there. It was here that Judaism and afterwards Christianity were Hellenized. The wisdom of the East was held in high esteem at Alexandria. Persian influence, it seems, had been felt in Greece in the early formative period of its philosophy. Zarathushtra, we have noticed, postulated a quasi-independent spirit intermediary between the godhead and the universe, Anaxagoras calls it *nous*, acting between God, and the world as the regulating principle of existence. Plato says in his *Timaeus* that the universe becomes an organism through the universal World-Soul that is created by the Demiurge, the Supreme Deity.

The Old Testament refers to the Spirit of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> Philo Judaeus unites the Greek and Jewish ideas about Logos and says that Logos is the first-born Son of God and acts as a viceregent of God between God and the world. He is the prototypal Man after whose image all men are created. Logos is something more than Plato's Idea of the Good, because, like Spenta Mainyu, he is creatively active. In common with Spenta Mainyu, Logos is not a personal being, and like Spenta Mainyu again, he appears sometimes as identified with God and at other times seems to be an attribute of God. The Avestan texts refer to Spenta Mainyu and his adversary Angra Mainyu as *thworeshtar* or the fashioners or cutters and, speaking about the work of Logos, Philo speaks of him as Tomeus, 'the cutter,' employing the word of the same meaning. Again as Spenta Mainyu or the spirit of light is shadowed by the opposite spirit of darkness, so Logos, says Philo, is the Shekinah or Glory or Light of God, but he is also the darkness or shadow of God. This is so because, he adds, the creature reveals only half the creator and hides the other half. In the *Book of Wisdom* of Solomon, Wisdom, identical with the Greek Logos, is the divine essence, living a quasi-independent existence in God and side by side with God. She works as the active agent of god in the creation of the world. In Mithraism, Mithra held the position of the Mediator between God who was unknowable and unapproachable and mankind. He fashioned the world

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1 Genesis 1.2.

as Demiurge. The intermediary Spirit of God occurs throughout the New Testament. Numenius of Apamea, writing in the second century, says that God has bestowed divine qualities upon a second god who acts in the world as the power for good. The Supreme God or the First principle, he adds, works in the spiritual world, whereas the activity of the second god extends to the spiritual as well as material world. Origen, writing shortly after him, says that God created Logos or the Son. His relation to the Father is the same as that which exists between Ahura Mazda and Spenta Mainyu. The Son or Logos, says Origen, is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, but the Son is lesser than the Father. Clement of Alexandria says that Logos, represents the will, power, and energy of God. He is the creator on behalf of God. He has introduced harmony in the universe and conducts its affairs as the pilot.

**The relation between Ahura Mazda and his Holy Spirit.** It remains as subtle in the Younger Avestan texts as it was in the Gathas. We have already seen in the treatment of this highly abstract concept, as it is portrayed in the Gathic texts, that the term Spenta Mainyu either designated Ahura Mazda as his divine attribute, or occurred as a being separate from the godhead. The Later Avestan texts, it seems to us, lead us to the idea that Spenta Mainyu has no independent existence apart from Ahura Mazda, in other words, as shown above, he is not a personal being. The Later Avesta, moreover, as we shall see in the subsequent pages, teaches that all earthly and heavenly beings, belonging to the Kingdom of Goodness, including Ahura Mazda himself, have their Fravashis, or Guardian Spirits. Spenta Mainyu alone in the realm of the good is without his Guardian Spirit. Furthermore, Spenta Mainyu does not receive homage and invocation from man, as do Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, and the Yazatas. In one passage the faithful dedicate their thoughts, words, deeds, and all to him.<sup>2</sup> Spenta Mainyu, therefore, may be taken as an attribute of Ahura Mazda which is either conjointly used with the godhead as his distinguishing epithet, or occurs alone by itself to designate the Supreme Being. In this latter use, it may be said, Spenta Mainyu represents Ahura Mazda, in the same manner as the royal title 'His Majesty' is frequently used as a substitute for the name of a king.

In contradistinction to the evil creation of Angra Mainyu, or the Evil Spirit, the Avestan texts speak of the good creation as belonging to Spenta Mainyu, the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> He maintains the sky, the waters, the earth, the plants, and the children to be born.<sup>4</sup> The stars also are spoken

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2 Y58.6.

3 Y1.16; 8.6, 11.13; 17.2; 57.17; Vr12.4; Yt6.2; 8.48; 11.11; 13.76; 15.3, 43, 44; Vd3.20; 5.33; 13.1, 2, 5, 6, 16.

4 Yt13.28, 29.



of as the creatures of the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> He created Mithra's chariot, inlaid with stars and made of heavenly substance.<sup>6</sup> He is spoken of as the holier of the two spirits.<sup>7</sup> He struggles with Angra Mainyu to seize the Kingly Glory [khwarrah].<sup>8</sup> Characteristic of the highly developed type of dualism of the Younger Avestan period, we find that the two rival spirits divide their sphere of influence in regard to the wind, or Vayu. The moderate wind that is conducive of good is called the wind of Spenta Mainyu,<sup>9</sup> and only to this good part of Vayu are the faithful to offer sacrifice.<sup>10</sup> Snavidhka, a tyrant foe of the Iranian hero Keresaspa, haughtily exclaims that if he ever grew to manhood he would make the heavens his chariot, convert the earth into a wheel, bring down Spenta Mainyu, or the Holy Spirit, from the shining paradise, and make Angra Mainyu, or the Evil Spirit, rush up from the dreary hell, and compel them to draw his chariot.<sup>11</sup> In a couple of instances Ahura Mazda is depicted as speaking of the Holy Spirit as a part of himself. Speaking about the great work of the Fravashis, or the Guardian Spirits, Ahura Mazda says that had not the Fravashis helped him, the wicked Druj would have smitten the good creation, and it would never have been possible for Spenta Mainyu to deal a blow to Angra Mainyu.<sup>12</sup> Ahura Mazda sacrifices unto Vayu and asks from this angel of wind a boon, that he may smite the creation of Angra Mainyu but that none may smite the creation of Spenta Mainyu.<sup>13</sup>

The superlative forms, Spentotema Mainyu,<sup>14</sup> or Spenishta Mainyu, meaning the Most Holy Spirit; are spoken of as Ahura Mazda's attributes.<sup>15</sup>

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5 Y1.11; 3.13; 4.16; 7.13; 22.13; Yt12.32.

6 Yt10.143.

7 Y19.9.

8 Yt19.46.

9 Y22.24; 25.5.

10 Yt15.5, 42, 57, 58; S1.21; 2.11.

11 Yt19.43, 44.

12 Yt13.12, 13.

13 Yt15.2, 3.

14 Y1.1; 37.3.

15 Y19.1; Yt1.1; 14.1, 34, 42; Vd2.1; 7.1; 9.1; 10.1; 14.1; 18.14; A4.4.

## CHAPTER XXI. AMESHA SPENTAS

**The archangels.** The higher celestial beings that had not expressly acquired a distinguishing name of their own in the Gathas are now designated as the Amesha Spentas, or 'Holy Immortal Ones.' They are thus addressed for the first time in the Haptanghaiti, or the Yasna of Seven Chapters, the earliest prose composition of the Avestan period, though still made in the Gathic dialect.<sup>1</sup> They are all created by Ahura Mazda.<sup>2</sup> Plutarch and Strabo refer to them in their works.<sup>3</sup> With the godhead at the pinnacle they form a heptad and are henceforth mentioned as the seven Holy Immortal Ones.<sup>4</sup> Severally they are both male and female.<sup>5</sup> Vohu Manah, Asha Vahishta, and Khshathra Vairya are conceived of as masculine beings, though neuter in grammatical gender; Spenta Armaiti is pictured as a feminine concept; and Haurvatat and Ameretat are treated as masculine beings, though their grammatical gender is feminine. In a paramount degree they are all of one thought, one word, and one deed; their father and lord is the creator Ahura Mazda.<sup>6</sup> They look into one another's soul;<sup>7</sup> and they each have their special Fravashi.<sup>8</sup> Garonmana [garothman], the highest heaven, is their dwelling-place, and there they occupy the golden seats that belong to spirits in the realm supernal.<sup>9</sup> Their sacred names are the most mighty, most glorious, and the most victorious of the spells.<sup>10</sup> To utter their name is synonymous with efficacy and power. Yasht 2 is devoted to their praise.

**Their attributes.** The Amesha Spentas are the ever-living and the ever-helping ones;<sup>11</sup> they are the wise ones, and good rulers.<sup>12</sup> It is they that are the shining ones; of efficacious eyes, exalted, mighty, valiant, imperishable, and righteous.<sup>13</sup> They are the makers, rulers, fashioners,

1 Y39.3; 42.6.

2 Yt1.25.

3 Is. et Os. 47; Strabo, p. 732; Thomas, *Strabo and the Ameshaspands* in *J. J. Madressa Jubilee Volume*, p. 173-176.

4 Yt2.13; 13.83; 19.16; For seven Babylonian Igigis and seven Elamite deities, see Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p. 17.

5 Y4.4; 24.9; 39.3; Vr9.4.

6 Yt13.83; 19.16.

7 Yt13.84; 19.17.

8 Y23.2.

9 Vd19.32, 36.

10 Yt1.3.

11 Y4.4; 39.3; Vr9.4; 11.12.

12 Y2.2; 4.4; 6.1; 24.9; 25.4; 35.1; 58.5; 70.1; Vr8.1; 11.12; Vd19.9.

13 Y26.3; Yt13.82.

guardians, protectors, and preservers of the creation of Mazda,<sup>14</sup> and Mazda has given them beautiful forms.<sup>15</sup>

**Their work.** The archangels hold their celestial councils on the heights of the heavens.<sup>16</sup> From there they come down to the seven zones into which the world was divided according to the Avesta,<sup>17</sup> and rule over the realms of earth.<sup>18</sup> They are naturally invited to the sacrifice,<sup>19</sup> and offerings are placed by the devout for them to accept.<sup>20</sup> The faithful pray that the Amesha Spentas may visit and enjoy sacrifices in their houses,<sup>21</sup> for shining is the path by which they descend to earth to receive the libations offered in their honour.<sup>22</sup> Even Mithra as a God-like embodiment sacrificed unto them,<sup>23</sup> and for him they have made a dwelling.<sup>24</sup> They are of one accord with the sun;<sup>25</sup> and they gather together the light of the moon and pour it down upon the earth.<sup>26</sup> They are the divine ones who help in bringing about the final restoration of the world.<sup>27</sup> Each of them will smite his opponent at the time of the resurrection.<sup>28</sup>

**Zarathushtra the first among mortals to sacrifice unto the Amesha Spentas.** Mazda asks his prophet to invoke the Amesha Spentas, even though he could not behold them with his eyes.<sup>29</sup> Zarathushtra follows Mazda's behests; and he is the first man to invoke them.<sup>30</sup> a spiritual predecessor having been Sraosha. For that reason the faithful sacrifice unto the Amesha Spentas with love and joy,<sup>31</sup> and pray

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14 Y58.5; Yt19.18; Vd19.9.

15 Yt13.81.

16 G2.8.

17 Y57.23; Yt11.14.

18 Vd19.13.

19 Y1.2.

20 Y4.2.

21 Y60.6.

22 Yt13.84; 19.17.

23 Yt10.89.

24 Yt10.51.

25 Yt10.51; 13.92.

26 Yt7.3.

27 Yt19.19.

28 Yt19.96.

29 Vd19.13.

30 Yt17.18.

31 Y15.1; Vr6.1.

to them for help and protection.<sup>32</sup> Their praise and sacrifice form one of the cardinal articles of faith.<sup>33</sup> Hence it is that we find in the oft-repeated formulas of the Later Avestan texts that sacrifice, invocation, propitiation, and glorification are offered to them for the furtherance of prosperity in the world of righteousness.<sup>34</sup> Nor must it be forgotten that in his benedictions upon King Vishtaspa the prophet invokes upon his royal patron the blessings of brightness, glory, riches, swift horses, and good sons that come as a benign gift from the archangels.<sup>35</sup> The ceremonials performed in honour of the Amesha Spentas by unholy priests delight them not;<sup>36</sup> on the other hand, distress and harm flee from that worshipper whose homage has reached them.<sup>37</sup> When their loving votary performs his devotions and finds his spirit inflamed by their love, he forthwith dedicates to them the very life of his body and all his earthly possessions.<sup>38</sup>

### VOHU MANAH

**His place in the Later Avesta.** As the first in the creation of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah retains his pre-eminent position in the Later Avestan period. He occupies his seat next to Ahura Mazda in the celestial council. The other archangels live in him.<sup>39</sup> In some cases Vohu Manah does not stand as the name of the archangel, but simply connotes its ordinary meaning good mind or thought. In fact, as in the Gathas, there is a subtlety of meaning that makes it difficult to decide in translation whether the concept or the archangel is intended. In Vd19.20, 23-25 the term designates a good man or even clean clothes.

**Vohu Manah guards wisdom.** Vohu Manah's *khrtu*, or wisdom, which occurs in the Gathas, is now classified in the later texts into two distinct types, *āsna khrtu*, 'innate wisdom,' and *gaoshosruta khrtu*, 'acquired wisdom.' These two types of knowledge are spoken of as objects worthy of sacrifice and propitiation.<sup>40</sup> Ahura Mazda accordingly asks Zarathushtra to seek knowledge all the night long,<sup>41</sup> because the true priest and his disciples work by day and by night for the increase of

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32 Y58.5.

33 Y12.1.

34 Y52.4.

35 Yt24.46.

36 Yt10.139; 24.12.

37 Yt1.24.

38 Y11.18; 14.1, 2; Vr5.2.

39 Y4.4; Vr11.12.

40 Y22.25; 25.6; Yt2.1; S1.2, 29; 2.2, 29.

41 Yt24.41.

knowledge.<sup>42</sup> Vohu Manah rejoices in man's endeavour to wrest from nature her secrets.

**His Work.** When the Evil Spirit first attacked creation Vohu Manah came to its succour.<sup>43</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to teach him the laws of both the worlds, so that men following his precepts may act in such a way that Vohu Manah may come to them.<sup>44</sup> It is through his medium that the devout can aspire to reach Ahura Mazda;<sup>45</sup> and on that account he is implored to further bodily life.<sup>46</sup> It is said, moreover, that he is more a possession of the hard-working man of the world, who has married and toils for his family, than of the celibate or the ascetic.<sup>47</sup> Vohu Manah's function of guarding the animal kingdom is not emphasized in the Avestan texts.

Vohu Manah welcomes the righteous souls to paradise. When the blessed ones cross the great bridge and come up to the gates of heaven, this premier angel rises from his golden throne and in gracious words receives the new-comers.<sup>48</sup>

In the final conflict between the hosts of the rival powers, he will smite his adversary Aka Manah.<sup>49</sup>

## ASHA VAHISHTA

**The formation of the name.** The Younger Avesta, in conformity with the Gathas, calls this archangel Asha and adds the epithet *vahishta* or 'best' to the name. The variant stem *arta* is, however, found as an element of *Astvat-ereta*, the name of the renovator [Saoshyant].<sup>50</sup> It is also met with in the proper names during the Achaemenian period. We have, for example, *Artakhshathra*, *Artadata*, *Artapata*, and *Artafarnah*. Its forms *areta*, 'proper,' and *anareta* or *anaretha*, 'improper,' are likewise found.<sup>51</sup> A righteous person is called *ashavan* which is equivalent to the Vedic *rtāvan*. In the use of Avestan *ashahe khā* and Vedic *khā rtasya*, 'source of righteousness,' we have an interesting instance of the common words employed by both.<sup>52</sup>

42 Vd4.45; 18.6.

43 Yt13.77, 78.

44 Yt1.20.

45 Yt36.4.

46 Y68.23.

47 Vd4.48.

48 Vd19.31.

49 Yt19.96.

50 Yt13.110, 117, 128, 129; 19.92, 95.

51 Y12.4; 65.9; Vr1.2; 2.2.

52 Y10.4; RV2.28.5.

**His righteousness remains the basic doctrine of Zoroastrianism during the Later Avestan period.** Ahura Mazda is the righteous lord of righteousness.<sup>53</sup> Among the many names by which Ahura Mazda is invoked in the hymn dedicated to him, the fourth is Asha Vahishta or Best Righteousness.<sup>54</sup> Ahura Mazda has created Asha Vahishta, or Best Righteousness,<sup>55</sup> who is the greatest, best, fairest, the radiant, the all-good archangel.<sup>56</sup> In one instance he is called by the Indo-Iranian epithet *bagha*, 'divinity.' He it is who smites disease, death, fiends, sorcerers, noxious creatures, and his adversary Druj, Deceit or Wickedness.<sup>57</sup> Zarathushtra for that reason proclaims the glory of Asha Vahishta, through whom the way to the abode of the archangels, paradise, becomes easy.<sup>58</sup> The souls of the dead, who are the Fravashis of the righteous, dwell in the shining realm of Asha Vahishta.<sup>59</sup> This celestial personification gives joy to the souls of the righteous dead.<sup>60</sup> It is through him that the devotee aspires to behold and reach Ahura Mazda.<sup>61</sup> He offers homage and adoration to him along with Ahura Mazda.<sup>62</sup> Emphasizing Zarathushtra's dictum in the Gathas, the Younger Avesta affirms that there is one path alone that leads to the eternal life, and that is the Path of Righteousness.<sup>63</sup> The Vedas likewise allude to the Path of Rta.<sup>64</sup> The Achaemenian kings refer to the Right Path in their rock inscriptions.<sup>65</sup> Buddha embodies his teachings in his noble Eightfold Path.<sup>66</sup> During the same period Lao-tze interprets his philosophy in the Tao or the Way in China. Shinto or the Way of the gods appears in the national cult of Japan. The prophets and seers reveal the Path or Way of life to mankind and Jesus calls himself the Way, a thousand years after Zarathushtra. The faithful invoke the holy waters of Ahura Mazda for the attainment of this path which is the most

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53 G5.5.

54 Yt1.7.

55 Yt1.25.

56 Y13.8; 37.4; 59.32; 60.13; Yt1.22; 2.7; 13.91, 92; S1.3; 2.3.

57 Yt3.14-17.

58 Yt3.3.

59 Y16.7.

60 TdFr. 72-74.

61 Y60.12.

62 Y41.1.

63 Y72.11.

64 RV1.136.

65 Naksh-i Rostam a. 6.

66 *Mahāvagga*, 1.6.18.

upright and which leads to the paradise of the righteous.<sup>67</sup> Atar, the genius of fire, leads to this straightest path all those who lie not unto Mithra.<sup>68</sup> Referring to the guilty persons who have undergone punishments for the crime of assaulting other persons, the *Vendidad*<sup>69</sup> admonishes sinners to walk in the path of righteousness in future. Darius likewise exhorts men not to leave the path which is right.<sup>70</sup>

Zarathushtra was the first among mortals to praise this embodiment of holiness;<sup>71</sup> and King Vishtaspa, by adopting the new faith, helped to open the way for righteousness in this world.<sup>72</sup> The faithful beseech Ahura Mazda to bless them with intelligent men who embrace righteousness;<sup>73</sup> Good, thoughts of the mind, good words of the tongue, and good deeds of the hand make man *ashavan*, or righteous.<sup>74</sup> He obtains purity when he cleanses his own self with them.<sup>75</sup> The friendship of Asha in this world and the next is the most coveted boon for all time.<sup>76</sup> It is easy to understand why Asha is invoked to enter the house of the faithful to smite the wicked Druj.<sup>77</sup> The excellence of religious thoughts, words, and deeds, which is ordained by Ahura Mazda, and nourished by Vohu Manah, is furnished by the righteousness of Asha Vahishta.<sup>78</sup>

**Righteousness is the highest riches.** Man, we are told, pines for the riches of the earth and often strives to obtain the boon of wealth even by unlawful means. On the contrary, he should rather aspire to a store of righteousness, which is the real and permanent wealth. When a man starts on a journey, he takes provisions and stores with him.<sup>79</sup> He takes care to provide himself with more goods than are his actual requirements.<sup>80</sup> How sad it is, then, that he should not furnish himself now, while it is time, with the spiritual stores of righteousness for the

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67 Y68.13.

68 Yt10.3.

69 Vd4.43.

70 NR. a. 6.

71 Yt13.88.

72 Yt13.99; 19.93.

73 Y40.3.

74 TdFr. 57-59; see Nariman, "Buddhist parallels to Humata, Hukhta, Hvarashta" in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, p. 311-316.

75 Vd10.19.

76 Y40.2; 41.6.

77 Y60.5.

78 Vr12.3, 4.

79 Aog. 41.

80 Aog. 42-44.

great journey which he will have one day to undertake and from which he will never return.<sup>81</sup> In the end cattle are dust; gold and silver are dross; even the body of man mingles with clay. Righteousness alone does not mingle with the dust, but survives the bodily death of man.<sup>82</sup> There comes a day or there comes a night, when the master leaves his cattle, when the cattle leave their master, and the soul leaves the body.<sup>83</sup> But righteousness, which is the greatest and the best of all riches, accompanies the soul after death.<sup>84</sup> Riches and fortune one cannot have for oneself, nor can one maintain form and beauty of body forever at will; but everyone can embrace righteousness and make it his own in this world.<sup>85</sup> The best man is the righteous man. He is not heroic who is not heroic in righteousness, he is not valiant who is not valiant in righteousness.<sup>86</sup> Life in departing leaves the richest empty in the midst of his abundance, if he lacks righteousness.

**The world of righteousness, as against the world of wickedness.** The universe is divided into two hostile camps. The righteous form a distinct world by themselves, and they are the favourite ones of Ahura Mazda. The men who have chosen to naturalize themselves as citizens of the Kingdom of Wickedness form a separate world of their own. The texts in the Later Avesta speak of the *ashaono sti*, 'the world of the righteous man,' as opposed to the *drvato sti*, 'the world of the wicked fiend,' The sorcerers and the wicked destroy the world of righteousness.<sup>87</sup> It is the faithful that work for the furtherance of the one, and for the destruction of the other.<sup>88</sup> The man that is holy rejoices in the prosperity of the former, just as he exults in the adversity of the latter.<sup>89</sup> He who does not gladden a righteous person who comes within his gates has no lasting or true joy. To be charitable to such a one is to attain paradise.<sup>90</sup> But again, he rejoices not who helps a wicked person that clamours for help. To help such an evil one is equivalent to hindering righteousness, inasmuch as he is wicked who is a source of goodness to the wicked.<sup>91</sup> A gift bestowed upon a righteous man is the

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81 Aog. 46-47.

82 Aog. 84.

83 Aog. 51.

84 Aog. 52.

85 TdFr. 95-98.

86 TdFr. 103, 104.

87 Y8.3.

88 Y52.4.

89 Y8.8.

90 TdFr. 107-109.

91 Y71.13; TdFr. 110-112.



best of all libations,<sup>92</sup> but not so when it is made to a wicked one. Refusing food to a demon-worshipper or a wicked one does not make one guilty.<sup>93</sup> The faithful pray that a righteous king may rule over them, but that a wicked one may be baffled and defeated.<sup>94</sup>

**Bodily purity contributes to righteousness.** Next to life the second best good for man is purity.<sup>94</sup> This is the dictum of the Gathas, and it is most consistently developed throughout the entire subsequent literature. It is the favourite theme on which, the Zoroastrian theologians are never tired of expatiating. Purity of body is the most salient feature in the life of a Zoroastrian. It is rated higher than anything else. The problem of cleanness and uncleanness, purity and impurity, has evoked an extensive literature. The tenets of the faith in this respect have been worked out into a science of health. Bodily purity is indispensable to purity of mind. Cleanliness of body is an essential requisite for saintliness. The clean in body find it easy to be pure in mind, and the pure in heart have just a step to take to be holy in spirit.

**Asha Vahishta comes to be regarded as the healing spirit of bodily diseases.** As the many kinds of healers restore bodily health by herbs and drugs, and remove the tumours and cancers by knife and implements, so there are healers that heal through righteousness or by the holy spell. We shall speak later on, in its proper place, of the art of healing by means of the holy spell. The Yasht which receives its name after Asha Vahishta is in fact mostly consecrated to Asha Vahishta's associate Airyaman, the guardian genius of human health. Of all the healers, the Avestan texts announce, the spiritual healer is the best one; it is he that heals the faithful through his own righteousness by means of the utterance of the holy spell.<sup>95</sup>

**Asha Vahishta's relation to fire.** We have seen in the Gathas Asha's dual association with the universal order prevailing everywhere and fire. We find these early Zoroastrian conceptions reflected in the writings of the Greek philosophers of the period. Heraclitus, who flourished at Ephesus, near the end of the sixth century B.C., postulates fire as the first principle from which everything that exists has come. It is working as reason or Logos and reveals the stable, divine law in the eternal flow of things in the universe. Heraclitus left a deep impression on Greek philosophy and his conceptions appear in later thinkers.<sup>96</sup>

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92 N84.

93 N18.

94 Y8.6.

95 Yt3.6; Vd7.44.

96 See also Carnoy, *Zoroastrianism* in ERE 12. 866.

In the Avestan liturgy Asha Vahishta is invoked together with Atar; the genius of fire.<sup>97</sup> Angra Mainyu, as the devil, exclaims that Zarathushtra burns him with Asha Vahishta as with molten metal.<sup>98</sup> This allegory of burning and annihilating the Evil Spirit through righteousness is taken literally in the later period of Zoroastrianism, where Asha Vahishta is identified at times with the household fire on the hearth. Such identification in the realms of matter and of spirit serves only to bring more into prominence the main tenets of Zoroaster's teachings in regard to Asha.

### **KHSHATHRA VAIRYA**

**The change that the concept undergoes.** The Gathic Khshathra now takes Vairya, 'desirable,' as its standing epithet, and hence both the terms combine to form the name of this archangel. This archangel of Ahura Mazda<sup>99</sup> gradually loses the abstract side of his nature in the Avestan texts. In the Gathic prose text of the Yasna Haptanghaiti the abstract idea of the Divine Kingdom occurs but once. In this solitary passage the devout long for the everlasting Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.<sup>100</sup> Throughout the Younger Avestan texts this abstract idea of the spiritual kingdom recedes into the background, or rather is entirely lost sight of. True, Khshathra Vairya is still occasionally invoked by name along with the other celestial beings, but his higher function as the genius of the sovereign power in the abstract entirely falls out.

**Khshathra Vairya as the genius of earthly wealth.** Materially Khshathra Vairya is the genius of metal, and his activity is now limited to guarding this concrete creation of God. He is not spoken of as the genius of the celestial riches of the Divine Kingdom of Ahura Mazda. Khshathra Vairya and the molten metal are invoked side by side.<sup>101</sup> In fact he very soon loses even this trait of his work; he is identified with metal and just becomes metal itself.<sup>102</sup> Thritha, the first reputed healer of the bodies of mortals, received from him a surgical instrument for healing.<sup>103</sup>

As the genius of metal, Khshathra Vairya is the lord of earthly riches. He generously bestows his possessions on the poor. He is sometimes invoked in company of *marezhdika*, 'mercy,'<sup>104</sup> who is styled the

97 Y1.4; 2.4; 3.6; 4.9; 6.3; 7.6, 17.3; 22.6; 59.3; Yt4.9; Sr1.7; 2.7; Afr. 4.2; G.2, 9, 12.

98 Yt17.20.

99 Yt1.25.

100 Y41.2.

101 Vr20.1; Yt2.7; Sr1.4; 2.4.

102 Yt10.125; Vd9.10; 16.6; 17.6, 8.

103 Vd20.3.

104 Yt2.7; Sr1.4; 2.4.

protector of the poor. We can trace this relation of Khshathra Vairya as the merciful helper of the poor to the Ahuna Vairya [Ahunwar] formula.

### SPENTA ARMAITI

**Her position in the Avesta.** As devotion personified on the abstract side, and as the genius of the earth on the concrete side, Spenta Armaiti, 'Holy Devotion,' retains her dual nature in the Younger Avesta. Through the medium of Devotion the faithful aspire to approach Ahura Mazda,<sup>105</sup> and in the Confession of Faith the pious follower of Zarathushtra chooses Devotion, and yearns to make her his own.<sup>106</sup> Upon lifting up his devotional prayer the house-lord prays that she may enter his house and thus rout heresy.<sup>107</sup> The malice and harm of the wicked could be averted through her help.<sup>108</sup> She is the daughter of Ahura Mazda and as the genius of devotion is the mother of Ashi Vanghulti or the genius of Good Piety,<sup>109</sup> while Rata, the guardian spirit of generosity, is invoked with her.<sup>110</sup>

**Armaiti as earth.** From her position as the female genius of the earth,<sup>111</sup> Armaiti very soon becomes the earth herself. She is now more frequently spoken of as the earth than as the genius of the earth.<sup>112</sup> She wears the star-studded sky as her garment.<sup>113</sup>

### HAURVATAT AND AMERETAT

**The dual archangels.** These two Amesha Spentas are closely united to each other and generally occur together side by side.<sup>114</sup> Haurvatat has a Yasht consecrated to him, being invoked as the lord of seasons and years.<sup>115</sup> Ahura Mazda created Haurvatat for the help, joy, comfort, and pleasure of the righteous ones.<sup>116</sup> The man who invokes the name of Haurvatat as one of the archangels is able to smite the legion of demons.<sup>117</sup> The two, Haurvatat and Ameretat, together form the reward

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105 Y13.6; 39, 5.

106 Y12.2.

107 Y60.5.

108 Yt1.28.

109 Yt17.16; Vd19.13, 16.

110 Sr1.5; 2.5.

111 Vd3.35.

112 Y16.10; Yt24.50; Vd2.10, 14, 18; 18.51, 64.

113 Yt13.3.

114 Y1.2; 3.1; 4.1; 6.17; 7.26; 8.1; 58.7; 70.2; 11.12; Vr9.5; Yt1.15; 10.92.

115 Yt4.0; S1.6; 2.6.

116 Yt4.1.

117 Yt4.2.

of the righteous after death,<sup>118</sup> while fire is invoked to grant the blessings of Haurvatat and Ameretat to its supplicants for help and joy.<sup>119</sup> The two archangels together will smite the demons of hunger and thirst during the final conflict between the forces of good and evil.<sup>120</sup>

Instances where the two archangels materially personify water and plants are not found in the Later Avestan texts. Examples, however, are not wanting, as is well known, in which they occur as meaning specifically water and plants in their healing effect on mankind.<sup>121</sup>

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118 Yt1.25.

119 Y58.7.

120 Yt19.96.

121 Y3.1; 4.1, 3; 7.1, 20; 8.1.

## CHAPTER XXII. YAZATAS

**The Zoroastrian angels.** Next in rank to the Amesha Spentas come the Yazatas, literally meaning the 'adorable ones.' We find the corresponding Skt. word Yajata in the Rig Veda, but it does not play any conspicuous part there. If the Amesha Spentas are the archangels in Zoroastrian theology, the Yazatas are the angels. They are numbered by hundreds and by thousands,<sup>1</sup> by tens of thousands and by hundreds of thousands, nay even more.<sup>2</sup> About forty only, however, are mentioned in the extant Avestan text. Plutarch refers to twenty-four.<sup>3</sup> The prominent Yazatas mentioned by name in Y16.4-6; Sr1.8-30; 2.8-30, closely correspond to the number mentioned by the Greek writer. Several of the Yazatas have individually consecrated to them a Yasht, or hymn of praise, which narrates the doings and functions of its respective genius. Besides the Yashts that form a special biographical literature of these minor divinities, the whole Iranian literature is filled with the record of their achievements. Ahura Mazda himself is a Yazata,<sup>4</sup> even as he is an Amesha Spenta. He is the greatest and the best Yazata.<sup>5</sup> Zarathushtra himself is spoken of as a Yazata.<sup>6</sup>

**History of the Yazatas.** Some of these Yazatas are, as we have already seen, pre-Zoroastrian and go back to the Indo-Iranian period; but with the exception of Sraosha, Atar, and Ashi, they do not appear in the Gathas, though frequent enough in the Later Avesta. In fact, they permeate all the later texts, and form an indissoluble part of the Zoroastrian pantheon. We shall group them under two headings and distinguish those that are common to the Indians and the Iranians from those that are purely Iranian.

*Indo-Iranian:* Mithra, Airyaman, Haoma, Verethraghna, Parendi, Rata, Nairyosangha, Apam Napat, Ushah, and Vayu.

*Iranian:* Atar, Ardvi Sura Anahita, Hvarekhshaeta, Maonghah, Tishtrya Drvaspa, Sraosha, Rashnu, Raman, Daena, Chisti, Erethe, Rasanstat, Ashi Vanghuhi, Arshtat, Asman, Zam, Manthra Spenta, Damoish Upamana, and Anaghra Raochah.

**Characteristics of the Yazatas.** Like their celestial elders, the Amesha Spentas, the Yazatas impersonate abstract ideas and virtues, or concrete objects of nature. Many of them preside over both spiritual and

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1 Yt6.1.

2 Vr8.1; for a list of minor divinities see Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p, 221-224.

3 Is et Os., 47.

4 Y41.3.

5 Y16.1; Yt17.16.

6 Y3.21; 7.21.

material phenomena. The nature Yazatas Hvarekhsaeta, Mithra, Maonghah, Ardivi Sura, Atar, and others personify the sun, light, moon, water, and fire. At times their names designate merely the objects of nature that they personify. This simultaneous treatment of the dual aspect of these angels is frequently found in one and the same paragraph and makes it difficult to distinguish the actual impersonations from the personified objects. Very often praise and sacrifice are offered more to the sun, light, moon, water, and fire as such than to the Yazatas presiding over them. We learn from Herodotus that the Persians sacrificed unto the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and winds.<sup>7</sup>

Instances are not wanting in which a Yazata begins his career as the personification of some one particular virtue or an object of nature, but with the lapse of time either substitutes for it some other or widens his sphere of activity and takes some new virtue in the abstract or some new object of nature under his guardianship in addition to his original duty. Some of the Yazatas are lacking in real individuality.

**The functions of the Yazatas.** Various are the boons that the Yazatas give unto man.<sup>8</sup> By hundreds and by thousands they gather together the light of the sun and pour it upon the earth.<sup>9</sup> Men invoke them with sacrifices<sup>10</sup> and in return they help men, They have a share of invocation and sacrifice offered unto Ahura Mazda, who is not jealous of the oblations thus dedicated to his subordinates. They are the holy, mighty, beneficent ones,<sup>11</sup> full of glory and healing.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the general work which the Yazatas perform as a class of spiritual beings, they are severally allotted different functions, which we shall notice under their respective headings.

**Offerings and sacrifices to the Yazatas.** Libations of milk and Haoma, of the Draonah [dron], or wafer-bread, and of meat are the objects generally dedicated to the angels, who always demand that man shall not forget their invocation and praise. They are ever eager to protect and help man in peace or war, provided that man propitiates them with offerings and sacrifices. To Anahita as celestial guardian of the waters, to Drvaspa, who protects cattle, and to Vayu, the wind, a hundred horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand sheep are consecrated in sacrifice by some of the early kings and heroes. We shall turn to this subject later.

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7 Herod. 1.131.

8 Y65.12, 14.

9 Yt6.1; Ny1.11.

10 Yt8.11.

11 Y25.8; 65.12, 14; G2.6.

12 Ny3.11.

**Division of the Yazatas according to their grammatical gender.** The Yazatas are both males and females, or rather the personifications of virtues and ideas that are in gender masculine and feminine. There is no distinction between these male and female divinities. Both of them are on the same level, occupy the same place of honour, and receive the same amount of homage. The gentle work becoming to the fair sex is allotted to female angels, and they are as powerful and awe-inspiring in their own sphere of activity as their fellow-workers of the opposite sex are in theirs. The female angels are: Ushah, Zam, Ardvi Sura Anahita, Drvaspa, Daena, Chisti, Arshtat, Erethe, Rasanstat Ashi Vanghuhi, Parendi, and Rata. All others are the male sex.

**Group Yazatas.** The usual manner of sacrificing unto the angels is to invoke each one separately by his name, or in company of his comrades and co-workers, or in joint pairs. On this last point we shall speak anon under a separate heading. Sometimes all the angels are invoked in a group under the comprehensive title of *vispe Yazata*, "all Yazatas,"<sup>13</sup> closely corresponding to the Vedic *vishve Devāh*, 'all Divinities.' In fact an entire book of the ritual is dedicated to the various spiritual lords under the title *Visperad*, literally meaning 'all lords.'

**Dual Yazatas.** A particular feature common to the Avestan and Vedic religions is the arrangement of certain divinities in pairs, who are revered together. As some of the Yazatas guard more than one abstract virtue or impersonate more than one natural phenomenon, it is not uncommon to find one Yazata entering into partnership with various Yazatas according to the nature of his work. For instance, Mithra, as the sovereign lord of wide pastures, forms a pair with Ahura; as the lord of light, he works in consort with Hvarekhshaeta, the genius of light; as the lord of truth, he works in company with Rashnu; and as the lord of plenty and prosperity, he enters into a comradeship with Raman. The more prominent of the dual divinities are Ahura-Mithra,<sup>14</sup> Hvarekhshaeta-Mithra,<sup>15</sup> Mithra-Rashnu,<sup>16</sup> Mithra-Raman,<sup>17</sup> Rashnu-Arshtat,<sup>18</sup> Raman-Vayu,<sup>19</sup> Daena-Chisti,<sup>20</sup> Ashi Vanghuhi-Parendi,<sup>21</sup> and

13 Y1.19; 2.18; Yt11.17; 17.19; WFr. 5.1.

14 Y1.11; 2.11; Ny1.7; 2.12; Yt10.113, 145.

15 Yt6; Ny1.2.

16 Vr7.2; Yt13.47, 48; 14.47; 24.52; Vd4.54.

17 Y2.3; 25.4; Vr2.9; Vd3.1; G1.2, 7, 8; S1.16, 2.16.

18 Y1.7; 2.7; Yt10.139; 12.40, S1.18; 2.18.

19 Y16.5; S1.21; 2.21.

20 Ny1.8; 2.8; S1.24; 2.24.

21 Y13.1; Yt8.38; 10.66; 24.8; S1.25; 2.25.

Asman-Zamyat.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes a special attribute of one Yazata is extended to his associate, and they share the characteristic qualities and functions of each other.

**Classification of the Yazatas.** The Avestan texts generally speak of two distinct orders of the Yazatas. They are *mainyava*, 'spiritual or celestial,' and *gaethya*, 'material or terrestrial.'<sup>23</sup> We are not, however, informed what particular Yazatas are grouped under each of the two classes. A very recent gloss in the Pahlavi version of the Avestan Litany Khwarshed Niyayesh explains that the terrestrial angels are such as Fire, Ardvi Sura's Waters, the Wind, the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth. These are so called, adds the commentator, because they can be seen by man with his eyes, whereas the celestial ones cannot thus be seen.<sup>24</sup>

In the following tabulation we shall class the Yazatas under two main divisions. Those Yazatas who commonly work for one and the same virtue, or preside over some one particular phenomenon, will be classed under the sub-titles of such a virtue or a phenomenon common to them. Thus, for example, all the Yazatas that guard rectitude will be treated in one group, and those that preside over light will be dealt with together. In cases where a Yazata presides over more than one virtue, we shall class this particular angel under the most prominent and characteristic of his virtues.

### CELESTIAL YAZATAS

- Divine wisdom: Daena, Chisti, and Sraosha.
- Rectitude: Mithra, Rashnu, Arshtat, Erethe, and Rasanstat.
- Victory: Verethraghna.
- Felicity: Raman.
- Charity: Rata.
- Peace: Akhshti.
- Spell: Manthra Spenta, Dahma Afriti, Damoish Upamana.
- Health: Airyaman, Haoma.
- Riches: Ashi Vanghuhi, Parendi.
- Cattle: Drvaspa, Geush Urvan.

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22 Yt1.16; 16.6; 42.3.

23 Y1.19; 3.4; 7.4; 16.9; 22.27; 25.8; 71.5; Yt6.3, 4; 10.13; 19.22; S1.30; 2.30; Ny1.9; G2.6; Vd2.21; 19.30; WFr. 1.2.

24 Cf. Dhalla, *Nyaishes*, p. 35, New York, 1908.



## TERRESTRIAL YAZATAS

- Light: Hvarekhsaeta, Maonghah, Anaghra Raochah, Asman, Ushah; (star-Yazatas) Tishtrya, Vanant, Satavaesa, and Haptoiringa [Haptoring].
- Wind: Vayu.
- Fire: Atar, Nairyosangha.
- Water: Ardvi Sura Anahita, Apam Napat, and Ahurani
- Earth: Zam.

## DAENA

**Religion deified.** One of the least personified Yazatas is Daena, even though she is a female divinity of religion. Very little is known of her personality more than the fact that she is the genius of the Holy Law of Mazda. She has a Yasht assigned to her which is called after her name; and yet even this is entirely consecrated to Chisti, who is her usual associate. The offerings are made to her companion, and various boons are asked from her. Daena has no share in this. She is simply mentioned by name in invocation along with Chisti. Even here she is assigned a secondary place, for Chisti takes precedence over her. Throughout the Avestan texts in which the two are mentioned together, Daena stands second in the order of invocation.<sup>25</sup> Ashi Vanghuhi, or Good Piety, is her sister and Sraosha, Rashnu, and Mithra are her brothers.<sup>26</sup> The twenty-fourth day of every month is dedicated to her.<sup>27</sup>

**The names of the religion.** It is called the *daena vanghu Mazdayasnya*, 'the good Mazda-worshipping religion,'<sup>28</sup> or *daena Mazdayasna*, 'the Mazda-worshipping religion.'<sup>29</sup> It is named conjointly with Ahura and Zarathushtra and called *Āhuirya Zartoshtri*, 'the Ahurian Zartoshtrian.'<sup>30</sup> It is further named *dāta Zartoshtri*, 'the Law of Zarathushtra.'<sup>31</sup> It is also spoken of without associating it with Ahura Mazda or Zarathushtra as *hu-daena*, 'good religion.'<sup>32</sup> The religion in standing opposition to the Mazda-worshipping religion is always called

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25 Y22.24; 25.5; S1.24; 2.24; Ny1.8; 2.8.

26 Yt17.15, 17.

27 Y16.6; S1.24; 2.24.

28 Y1.13; 2.13; 9.26; 11.16; 16.6; 22.24, 25; 25.5, 6; 70.3; Vr6.1; Yt2.13; 16.20; S1.24; 2.24; Ny1.8; 2.8; Vd19.6, 7, 13, 16.

29 Y8.1, 3; 22.25; 25.6; 71.4; Vr12.3; Yt8.23, 29; 10.68, 126, 127; 11.3; 16.17; 18.8; 19.2; 24.52; G2.7; Vd2.42; 3.30, 31, 41, 42; 5.21; 9.2, 47, 52; 10.18.

30 Y12.9; 60.3; Yt13.99; Vd2.1, 2.

31 Y1.13; 2.13; 22.25; 25.6; Yt11.3; Vd5.25; 19.16.

32 Vr3.3; Yt4.10; 19.95; 22.18; G4.8.

*daevayasnya*, 'the daeva-worshipping religion.' The preliminary short prayers, the Gahs, the Niyayeshes, the Yashts generally begin with a short confessional formula in which the reciter says he is the worshipper of Mazda, a Zartoshtrian, he is against the daevas, and he is of Ahurian faith, *Ahura-tkaesho*. One of the Nasks, the *Vendidad* in its original form, *vi-daeva-dāta*, means 'the Law against the daevas or demons'.<sup>33</sup> This religion of the demons is called *aka-daena*, 'evil religion';<sup>34</sup> or *duzh-daena*, 'evil religion'.<sup>35</sup> The man who follows the same religion is *hāmo-daena*, 'the co-religionist'.<sup>36</sup> The man of other religion is of *anya-tkaesha* or *anya-varena*.<sup>37</sup>

**The excellence of the Mazda-worshipping religion.** The angel Sraosha is the teacher of the religion.<sup>38</sup> Arshtat, the genius presiding over rectitude, is once identified with Daena.<sup>39</sup> Ahura Mazda brought for Haoma the heavenly made star-bespangled girdle and the good Mazda-worshipping religion.<sup>40</sup> He asked Yima to be the bearer of his religion to mankind, but the illustrious king pleaded his inability to undertake such a mighty task.<sup>41</sup> Zarathushtra then became the prophet of Ahura Mazda, and brought his religion to the world. The Kingly Glory gave unto king Vishtaspa and he thought and spoke and acted according to the religion.<sup>42</sup> He became the arm and support of the Ahurian Zoroastrian religion.<sup>43</sup> He found her fettered in chains and made her widely known.<sup>44</sup>

The Ahurian Zoroastrian religion, We are told, is the greatest, best, and fairest of all religions that are and that will be.<sup>45</sup> She is as much higher in greatness, goodness, and fairness than others as the Vourukasha is above all waters, or a great river, flowing swifter than a rivulet, or as a great tree overshadowing small plants, or as the heaven

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33 Y1.13; 2.13; 22.25; 25.6; 71.5; Yt11.17; Vd5.22; 19.16.

34 Vd18.9.

35 Y65.6; Yt5.109; 9.31; 19.47, 87; 22.36.

36 Vd4.44.

37 Y16.2; Vd12.21; 15.2.

38 Y57.24; Yt11.24.

39 Vr7.2.

40 Y9.26.

41 Vd2.3, 4.

42 Yt19.84.

43 Yt13.99.

44 Yt13.100.

45 Y12.9.

compassing the earth.<sup>46</sup> She is beautiful and spread far and wide.<sup>47</sup> As dissensions-dispelling, she causes weapons to be laid down.<sup>48</sup> She rejoices, protects, and guards the righteous man.<sup>49</sup> She takes away the sins of those who confess their wrongs and removes their evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds, as the powerfully blowing wind cleanses the plain.<sup>50</sup> The Mazdayasnian religion gives all good things of life.<sup>51</sup> She gives purification to him who cleanses his self with good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.<sup>52</sup> The place where the faithful pray and sacrifice according to religion is happy.<sup>53</sup> Hard work and industry are prime Zoroastrian virtues. Agriculture is the staple industry of the people and the texts say that sowing corn again and again feeds the Mazda-worshipping religion, it makes her walk with a hundred men's feet and suckles her with a thousand women's breasts.<sup>54</sup> The householder prays for the long-enduring excellence of the religion in his house.<sup>55</sup> Priests going afar for the propagation of religion, pray for a good memory and the soundness of the body.<sup>56</sup> He is not an athravan who has not girded his loins for religion.<sup>57</sup> The white colour, it is said is symbolic of the Mazda-worshipping religion.<sup>58</sup>

## CHISTI

**Divinity of religious wisdom.** Unlike her partner, just mentioned, Chisti, divinity of religious wisdom, has a personality that is sharply defined. Her standing epithets are 'good' and 'most upright.' She is the most upright, holy, bearing libations, wearing a white garment as her emblem.<sup>59</sup> Zarathushtra longs to own her and devoutly implores her to grant him, among other things, the clearest vision.<sup>60</sup> The prophet's noble consort Hvovi, as well as the itinerant priests and the

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46 Vd5.22-25.

47 Yt10.64.

48 Y12.9.

49 Yt24.14.

50 Vd3.41, 42.

51 Yt11.3.

52 Vd5.21; 10.18.

53 Vd3.1.

54 Vd3.30, 31.

55 Y60.3.

56 Yt16.16.

57 Vd18.1-4.

58 Yt10.126.

59 Yt10.126.

60 Yt16.2-13.

lords of the country, are among her supplicants, asking various boons, which she grants to those who are pure in heart.<sup>61</sup> The faithful long to approach Ahura Mazda through the deeds of Chisti.<sup>62</sup>

The word *chisti* is often used to denote spiritual wisdom. The eighth name of Ahura Mazda is *chisti* or wisdom, and the ninth is 'possessed of wisdom.'<sup>63</sup> The world first came into being through Ahura Mazda's understanding and wisdom.<sup>64</sup> Haoma makes the mind of the poor exalted with wisdom.<sup>65</sup>

## SRAOSHA

**His personality.** Sraosha is one of the few angels whose prominence increases with the lapse of time. Two Yashts are dedicated to him. The latter of which occurs also in the Yasna. He is the angel whose name has reached afar and whose very body is the holy spell.<sup>66</sup> Sraosha occupied a conspicuous place in the Gathas, and was associated with Ahura Mazda and his six abstract figures that have now become a corporate body of the seven Amesha Spentas. His close connection with them is remembered by the composers of the Later Avestan texts. We are told that he was the first in the entire creation to worship Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas. and the two protectors.<sup>67</sup> He chanted the five holy Gathas of Zarathushtra in order to propitiate the archangels.<sup>68</sup> From his battles against the demons, he returns victorious to the celestial assembly of the archangels.<sup>69</sup> His dwelling is supported by a thousand pillars, is self-lighted from within, and star-spangled from without.<sup>70</sup> He drives forth in a heavenly chariot drawn by four white shining horses that are fleeter than the winds, fleeter than the rain, fleeter than the winged birds, and fleeter than the well-darted arrow.<sup>71</sup> They overtake all, but none can overtake them, when Sraosha drives towards Hapta Hindu or the land of seven rivers in India.<sup>72</sup> The sacred formula Ahuna Vairya [Ahunwar] and the other consecrated spells are

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61 Yt16.15, 17, 19.

62 Y36.4.

63 Yt1.8, 9.

64 Yt1.26.

65 Y10.13.

66 Y3.20; 4.23; Yt13.85; Vd18.14.

67 Y57.2, 6.

68 57.8..

69 Y57.12.

70 Y57.21.

71 Y57.27, 28.

72 Y57.29.

his weapons.<sup>73</sup> His sisters are Ashi and Daena, and his brothers are Rashnu and Mithra,<sup>74</sup> and unto him Haoma offered sacrifice.<sup>75</sup> Owing to his victorious courage and wisdom the archangels come down to the seven zones.<sup>76</sup>

**Sraosha's attributes.** His standing epithets are: holy, well-shapen, victorious, ad world-increasing. He is the strongest, the sturdiest, the most active, the swiftest, and the most awe-inspiring of youths.<sup>77</sup> He is the word incarnate, the valiant wielder of the club, which is levelled against all demoniacal powers, especially against the fiendish Druj.<sup>78</sup> He is courageous, mighty, swift, powerful, terrible, and heroic.<sup>79</sup> He is a formidable foe to the wicked. He is not afraid of anyone, but the demons tremble at his sight and flee to the region of darkness.<sup>80</sup> His mace does havoc on them. He is the warrior of the strong arms, who breaks the skulls of the demons.<sup>81</sup> Himself unconquerable, he is the conqueror of all.

**The work of Sraosha.** Mazda has revealed his religion to Sraosha, who now teaches it to the world of humanity.<sup>82</sup> This was the prime function, as we have seen above, that the Gathas allotted him. The Younger Avestan texts speak more of his all-absorbing work of combating the demons. In the Gathas he preached devout submission to Mazda's mandates; in the Later Avesta he does the fighting with the rebels that revolt against divine authority. He, the exalted one, comes down to the creation of Mazda, with loins girt up to fight the demons.<sup>83</sup> Sleep has forsaken his eyelids since the two spirits Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu created the world.<sup>84</sup> Ahura Mazda has created him to withstand the demon Aeshma.<sup>85</sup> With an uplifted club he guards the world after sunset from the onslaughts of Aeshma, his constant rival, and against all the forces of wickedness.<sup>86</sup> Three times during the day

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73 Y57.22.

74 .Yt17.16.

75 Y57.19.

76 Y57.23.

77 Y51.13.

78 Y3.20; 4.23; 57.1, 33; Yt11.0, 23; Sr1.17; Vd18.14.

79 Y57.3, 11, 12, 13, 23.

80 Y57.18; Yt11.13.

81 Y57.34; Yt11.9.

82 Y57.24; Yt11.14.

83 Y57.30.

84 Y57.17; Yt11.11, 12.

85 Yt11.15.

86 Y57.10, 16; Yt11.10, 11.

and three times during the night the holy Sraosha descends on earth to smite the evil spirit Angra Mainyu, Aeshma, the demons of Mazendaran, and all other demons.<sup>87</sup> Just as the shepherd dog guards and protects cattle against harm, so does Sraosha protect men; and the faithful, therefore, yearn with good thoughts, good words, and good deeds to live under his constant guardianship.<sup>88</sup> The fire of the hearth calls Sraosha for help in the third part of the night, for the demon Azi threatens to extinguish his life.<sup>89</sup> Sraosha, thereupon, wakes up the cock Parodarsh, his ally, who lifts up his voice to rouse the world of humanity, and warns it against the mischief of Bushyansta, who lulls it to sleep.<sup>90</sup> With his terrible mace levelled at the head of Druj, he enters into controversy with her, extorts from the demoness her secret devices,<sup>91</sup> and smites her.<sup>92</sup> As the teacher of religion unto men he moves about spreading religious lore at his will over the whole material world.<sup>93</sup>

The master of rituals takes his name from Sraosha and is called *Sraoshāvarez*.<sup>94</sup> Parodarsh is called the *Sraoshāvarez* of Sraosha.<sup>95</sup> The implement of administering stripes to the criminals is called *Sraoshocharana*.<sup>96</sup>

**Sraosha's gifts.** He is implored to give strength to the spans of the warriors' steeds in battle, soundness of body, and power to meet the adversary.<sup>97</sup> He is like a firmly built house unto the poor, who look to him for support.<sup>98</sup> The faithful entreat him to guard them in both the worlds.<sup>99</sup> The householder invokes him to smite disobedience in his family.<sup>100</sup> He smites Kunda.<sup>101</sup> The Mazdayasnians are asked to sacrifice

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87 Y57.31, 32.

88 Yt11.7.

89 Vd18.22.

90 Vd18.23, 24.

91 Vd18.30-59.

92 Y57.15; Yt11.3, 10.

93 Y57.24.

94 Vr3.1; Yt24.15; Vd5.25, 57, 58; 7.17, 18, 71; G3.5.

95 Vd18.14, 15.

96 Vd3.36, 37; etc.

97 Y57.26.

98 Y51.10; Yt11.3.

99 Y57.25.

100 Y60.5.

101 Vd19.41.

unto him.<sup>102</sup> Evils of all kinds vanish from the house, clan, town, and country, wherein the righteous man thinking good thoughts, speaking good words, and doing good deeds, welcomes and sacrifices unto Sraosha.<sup>103</sup> The faithful pray for all the houses protected by Sraosha, wherein he is friendly, beloved, and honoured.<sup>104</sup> They beseech him to come to their help.<sup>105</sup>

### MITHRA

**His place in the Avestan pantheon.** Of all the Indo-Iranian divinities that have found their place in the Zartoshtrian theology, Mithra is the most prominent figure. As an associate of Varuna, Mithra's individuality was eclipsed during the Indo-Iranian period. After the separation of these two groups of the Aryan people, Mithra rose to great eminence, and was the premier divinity in Western Iran, when Zarathushtra preached his religion. During the period of syncretism after the passing away of the prophet, Mithra became the most conspicuous angel of the Younger Avestan period. The longest Yasht, which is eight times longer than the Yasht composed in honour of Ahura Mazda, celebrates his greatness. He is the most masculine, exacting, implacable, and relentless of all the Yazatas. Ahura Mazda has created him the most glorious of the spiritual Yazatas,<sup>106</sup> as worthy of sacrifice and prayer as himself.<sup>107</sup> The description of him in the Yasht that is dedicated in his honour gives a vivid picture of the character of the pre-Zartoshtrian divinities that came to be worshipped in Iran. Mithra was the most eminent of the primitive Ahuras, as he was conjointly worshipped with Ahura Mazda.<sup>108</sup> The writer who consecrated Yasht 10 in his honour was conversant with the past greatness of this divinity, whose cult had struck so deep a root in the popular mind. He certainly was unsparing in eulogizing the work of this genius in the universe. The texts sometimes speak of Mithra in terms that are usually applied to Ahura Mazda, and the latter himself is represented in this particular Yasht as having sacrificed unto Mithra.<sup>109</sup> The heptad of the Amesha Spentas having been already complete, Mithra is not raised to the rank of these higher beings, but is assigned a place among the Yazatas. The Old Persian Inscriptions of the

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102 Y57.13.

103 Y57.14.

104 Y57.35; Yt11.20.

105 Y57.3.

106 Vd19.35; Ny1.7.

107 Yt10.1.

108 Y1.11; 2.11; Yt10.113, 145; Ny1.7; 2.12.

109 Yt10.123.

Achaemenian kings mention a very limited number of the celestial beings. Mithra occupies a prominent place among these divinities. Artaxerxes Mnemon and Artaxerxes Ochus invoke Mithra for help and protection.<sup>110</sup>

**Mithra's attributes.** Of all the Yazatas that rule over this earth, Mithra is the strongest, the most sturdy, the most active, the most swift, and the most victorious.<sup>111</sup> Ahura Mazda has created him the most glorious of all the spiritual Yazatas.<sup>112</sup> The composer of the Yasht who sings to his favourite divinity applies to him the same honorific epithets as are applied to the godhead. Mithra is called omniscient, which is strictly speaking the epithet of Mazda alone.<sup>113</sup> He is the greatest of the Yazatas, with body shining like the moon, and face (ainika), as brilliant as Tishtrya.<sup>114</sup> It is interesting to note that the *Rig Veda* uses the corresponding Skt. form (anika), and says that Varuna's face is as shining as that of Agni.<sup>115</sup> He is the strongest of the strong the sturdiest of the sturdy, the most intelligent among the divinities, victorious, glorious, heroic, and the undecivable one, deep, courageous, weal-giving, propitiated when invoked, exalted, skilful, with a body made of spells, and a warrior of powerful arms, the leader of hosts, of a thousand devices, lordly, ruling, the all-knowing one, the one of good renown, of good form and glory, granting boons and pastures at his will, the giver of good, of ten thousand spies, heroic, and the all-knowing.<sup>116</sup> He is ever afoot, watchful, valiant, a dominating figure in the assembly, causing the waters to flow, listening to appeals, causing the trees to grow, ruling over the district full of devices, a creature of wisdom.<sup>117</sup> He is the swiftest among the swift, generous among the generous, valiant among the valiant, chief among the chiefs of assembly, increase-giving, fatness-giving, flock-giving, son-giving, life-giving, felicity-giving, joy-giving, glory-giving, kingdom-giving, and piety-giving.<sup>118</sup> Mithra is highly merciful, foremost, and peerless.<sup>119</sup> He is the protector and guardian of an creatures.<sup>120</sup> He is the most fiend-smiting among all the

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110 SUS. a; Ham. b; Pers.4.

111 Yt10.98, 135.

112 Yt19.35.

113 Yt10.24, 35.

114 Yt10.142, 143.

115 RV. 7.88, 2.

116 Yt10.24, 25, 27, 31, 35, 46, 56, 60, 63, 69, 82, 141, 143.

117 Yt10.61.

118 Yt10.16, 65.

119 Yt10.140.

120 Yt10.54.



Yazatas.<sup>121</sup> He is both good and bad for men and nations, Peace and War between nations are from him.<sup>122</sup> With his wide knowledge, he furthers the creation of Spenta Mainyu.<sup>123</sup> The sixteenth day of a month and the seventh month of a year are sacred to Mithra.

**Mithra's associates.** Among those who work in unison with Mithra, Ahura Mazda stands first; Mithra-Ahura are invoked together as a couple. Their union is pre-Zartoshtrian and corresponds to the Vedic Mitra-Varuna. A detailed account of their joint activity is not found in the Avesta, but they are called the two exalted, imperishable, and holy ones,<sup>124</sup> and are invoked for special help.<sup>125</sup> Mithra is again jointly invoked with Hvarekshaeta, the angel presiding over the sun. This is natural, because one of the chief functions of Mithra is to work as the guardian of light. Of the five Zoroastrian niyayeshes, or litanies, two are consecrated to the sun and Mithra, and these two are always recited together.<sup>126</sup> On the moral side Mithra protects truth. Consequently at an early date he is associated with Rashnu, who is the chief genius of truth.<sup>127</sup> They are united as two friends.<sup>128</sup> One of the principal attributes of Mithra is that he is the lord of wide pastures. In this capacity he joins in partnership with Raman Khvastra, who is essentially the angel that gives good pastures and happy dwellings, together with full joy of life.<sup>129</sup>

**Mithra, the genius of light.** On the material side Mithra presides over light, especially over the light that radiates from the sun with the radiance of which he is identical on the physical plane. As the harbinger of light and herald of the dawn, Mithra precedes the rising sun on the summits of mountains, and from there watches all Aryan settlements, nay more, even all the seven Zones of the world.<sup>130</sup> The great vault of heaven is therefore Mithra's garment.<sup>131</sup> Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas, being in one accord with the sun, have built up for Mithra a dwelling as wide as the earth in this material world, on the great mountain Hara Berezaiti (Alburz) where neither night nor darkness,

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121 Yt10.98, 135.

122 Yt10.29.

123 Yt10.142.

124 Y1.11; 2.11; Ny1.7; 2.2; Yt10.113, 145.

125 Yt10.113.

126 Ny1.2; Yt6.

127 Vr7.2; Yt13.47, 48; 14.47; 24.52; Vd4.54.

128 Yt10.79, 81.

129 Y2.3; 25.4; Vr2.9; Vd3.1; G1.2, 7, 8; S1.16; 2.16.

130 Yt10.13, 15; Vd19.28.

131 Yt13.3.

nor cold wind, nor hot wind, nor sickness, impurity; death and clouds can ever reach.<sup>132</sup> From this elysian abode Mithra surveys the whole universe at a glance.<sup>133</sup> Sleepless and ever wakeful, he watches and spies the doings of men, like Vedic Mitra-Varuna, as an infallible sentinel of heaven. He has posted eight of his comrades as scouts on the celestial watch-towers to spy upon men's doings.<sup>134</sup> After the sun has set, Mithra traverses the world all around, and surveys all that is between earth, and the heavens.<sup>135</sup> Ahura Mazda consequently has ordained that Mithra should watch from on high over the entire moving world.<sup>136</sup> The heat of Mithra it is, accordingly, that gives warmth and life to the plant world and bestows fertility upon this earth. Mithra, as a guardian genius in the celestial realm, superintends the vast expanse of the universe. Varuna has a thousand eyes,<sup>137</sup> and Mithra is constantly spoken of as having a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes. The brilliant sun is the lord of yonder heavens, who with his infinite rays of light pervades the whole world, Mithra furthermore receives in the Avesta the standing epithets *dainghu-paiti*, 'the lord of countries,' and *vourugaoyaoiti* 'of wide pastures.' His light is the dispeller of darkness and of all the sin and evil concomitant with it. Nothing is secret from Mithra's penetrating gaze. Mitra-Varuna have a thousand-eyed spies (*spasah*), who descend from heaven and traverse the world, watching the doings of mankind. Mithra, as we have seen, has ten thousand spies (*spaso*), who work as his messengers.

**Mithra, the inveterate foe of falsehood.** Yet after all, the greater and more important work of Mithra lies in the abstract sphere. At a very early date Mithra was styled the warder of truth. Light is synonymous with truth, as darkness is with falsehood. Mithra being primarily the lord of light, it was but a step from the physical to the moral sphere that he should be depicted impersonating truth. From the divine activity of Mithra, as portrayed in the Avestan texts, we gather more information of his aggressively active crusade against falsehood than of his work in upholding truth. In his warring capacity of lord of hosts, Mithra works more than all else to deal a destructive blow to the demon of falsehood, thereby strengthening the realm of truth.

To speak untruth was a heinous sin. Truth Was a paramount among the ancient Iranians. It was regarded as everything, it was religion. On this very account we see human evil reflectively focussed in the Avesta

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132 Yt10.44, 50, 51.

133 Yt10.64.

134 Yt10.45.

135 Yt10.95.

136 Yt10.103.

137 RV. 7.34.10.

as the *druj*, 'Lie,' which corresponds to *drauga* in the Old Persian Inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings, a conception almost like that of the devil. Herodotus writes that one of the first things that every Persian child was taught was to speak the truth.<sup>138</sup> Lying unto Mithra brings the offender the sin of being a deceiver of Mithra. The faithful is exhorted never to lie, for Mithra is unforgiving toward liars. Sad is the abode wherein live those that lie unto Mithra, for they are childless, and even their cattle stray along the road shedding tears over their chins.<sup>139</sup> Neither the lord of the house, nor the lord of the clan, nor the lord of the town, nor the lord of the country should ever lie unto this celestial being.<sup>140</sup> He is the protector and guardian of these lords, only so long as they lie not unto him.<sup>141</sup> If, however, they commit such a sin, Mithra is offended and angered, and destroys house, clan, town, and the country, along with their masters and nobles.<sup>142</sup> Nor can these culprit lords escape him, for he overtakes them, no matter how swiftly they may run.<sup>143</sup> The man of little faith who thinks that he can evade Mithra and indulges in falsehood is mistaken;<sup>144</sup> but Mithra thinks in his mind that were the evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds of the earthly man a hundred times worse, they would not rise as high as the good thoughts, good words, and good deeds of the heavenly Mithra.<sup>145</sup> Or again if the innate wisdom of the earthly man were a hundred times greater, it would not rise as high as the heavenly wisdom of the Mithra; or if the ears of the earthly man could hear a hundred times better, he would not hear so well as the heavenly Mithra who with a thousand devices of his, hears well and sees every man that tells a lie.<sup>146</sup> To such a one Mithra gives neither strength nor vigour, glory nor reward,<sup>147</sup> but on the contrary, he inflicts dire punishment. Into the hearts of all such he strikes terror, taking away the strength of their arms, fleetness from their feet, the sight from their eyes, and the hearing from their ears.<sup>148</sup> It is he that hurls down their heads as he deals death.<sup>149</sup> Mithra keeps back

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138 Herod. 1. 136.

139 Yt10.38.

140 Yt10.17.

141 Yt10.80.

142 Yt10.18.

143 Yt10.20.

144 Yt10.105.

145 Yt10.106.

146 Yt10.107.

147 Yt10.62.

148 Yt10.23, 48, 63.

149 Yt10.37.

harm and death from him who lies not unto him.<sup>150</sup> Neither the wound of the well-sharpened spear nor that of the well-darted arrow harm him whom Mithra comes to help.<sup>151</sup>

**Mithra the guardian of contracts.** Ahura Mazda enjoins upon Zarathushtra not to break the contract that is entered into with the righteous or with the wicked, for Mithra stands for both the righteous and the wicked.<sup>152</sup> In his role of genius of light he guards the sanctity of oaths, and the word *mithra* in the Avesta is frequently used as a common noun, meaning 'contract.'<sup>153</sup> For that reason, he who violates the oath, whether it be with a believer or a non-believer, feels the visitations of the stern angel's wrath. The crime of the one who thus violates a contract is called *Mithra-druj*, 'deceiving Mithra.' Such a criminal is heavily punished, and his guilt falls upon the shoulders of his kinsmen for years in the next world, making them answerable for it by punishment.<sup>154</sup> The ethics of thus holding a man's family and kinsmen responsible for his guilt seems to be a relic of the primitive type of group morality.

**Mithra as a war divinity.** Incidental allusion has been made above to Mithra as the lord of hosts. For that reason it is easy to comprehend the fact that warring nations invoke Mithra for help before going into battle; and the lord of hosts sides with that army which excels in offering sacrifice.<sup>155</sup> When Mithra marches out amid the hostile armies on the battlefield, he throws confusion into the camp of the enemy that has offended him, binds the hands of his offenders, covers their eyesight, takes away their power of hearing, deprives their feet of movement,<sup>156</sup> and breaks asunder their lines of battle, striking terror in their entire array.<sup>157</sup> Though the enemy use arrows and spears, swords and maces, they nevertheless miss the mark in every case,<sup>158</sup> and, all the while, Mithra rushes destructively from a thousand directions against the foes.<sup>159</sup> The adversaries who have lied unto him he kills by fifties and hundreds, by hundreds and thousands, by thousands and tens of

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150 Yt10.22.

151 Yt10.63.

152 Yt10.2.

153 Yt10.116, 117; Vd4.2-16.

154 Vd4.5-10.

155 Yt10.9.

156 Yt10.48, 63.

157 Yt10.36, 41.

158 Yt10.39, 40.

159 Yt10.69.

thousands, by tens of thousands and myriads.<sup>160</sup> Confusing their minds, he shatters their limbs and breaks their bones asunder,<sup>161</sup> at the same time as he throws down their heads<sup>162</sup> he enters the battlefield in person, and levels his club at both the horse and the rider.<sup>163</sup>

**Mithra's chariot.** Mithra goes forth on his daily round through the heavens and upon the earth driving in a celestial car that rolls upon one golden wheel, evidently the sun, with a shining axle.<sup>164</sup> Ahura Mazda made his chariot of heavenly substance and inlaid it with stars.<sup>165</sup> Like Sraosha's vehicle it is drawn by four white stallions that eat celestial food and are undying, shining, and spiritual.<sup>166</sup> When Mithra drives on aloft over the seven zones he is escorted on the left and the right, in front and from behind, by Sraosha, Nairyosangha, Ashi Vanguhi, Parendi, Nairyā Ham-Vareti, Kingly Glory, the Sovereign Sky, Damoish Upamana, Rashnu, Chisti, Atar, Verethraghna, and the Fravashis.<sup>167</sup> With bows and arrows, spears and clubs, and with swords and maces placed by thousands in his chariot, this divine war lord plunges, mace in hand, into the field of battle, smiting and killing the wicked that have been false to him.<sup>168</sup> Even Angra Mainyu and the fiendish demons flee away in terror before Mithra.<sup>169</sup> After smiting the demons and the men who have lied unto him, he drives forward through the seven Zones.<sup>170</sup>

**Mithra's wrath.** Mithra bemoans with uplifted hands before Ahura Mazda the disregard and negligence of men who do not invoke him by his name, even though he protects and guards them.<sup>171</sup> If he were invoked by men, he says, as other angels are, he would come at the appointed time for help to the righteous.<sup>172</sup> He looks, therefore, for votaries who will sacrifice unto him, so that in his might he may shower gifts upon them. Happy indeed is the man who thus gains the good-will of Mithra, for this divine angel henceforth bestows upon him radiance and glory, soundness of body, riches and weal, offspring and

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160 Yt10.43.

161 Yt10.71, 72.

162 Yt10.37.

163 Yt10.101.

164 Yt10.67,136.

165 Yt10.143.

166 Yt10. 68, 125.

167 Yt10.52, 66, 68, 100, 126, 127.

168 Yt10.96, 102, 112, 127-132.

169 Yt10.97, 99, 134.

170 Yt10. 133.

171 Yt10.53, 54.

172 Yt10.55, 73, 74.

sovereignty.<sup>173</sup> But woe is to him that is sparing in Mithra's invocation. For such a Wight calamity is in store, as Mithra is terrible to deal with when his righteous wrath is kindled. Mithra, when angered or disregarded in worship, inflicts poverty and wretchedness, sickness and death upon the offender, depriving him also of his offspring and power.<sup>174</sup> The house, clan, town, and country in which an insult is offered to Mithra are levelled to the ground.<sup>175</sup> He deprives the evil countries of their greatness and glory and victory, and renders them helpless.<sup>176</sup> The wise therefore pray that they may never come across Mithra's wrath,<sup>177</sup> and invocation is the best means of appeasing the vengeful angel.<sup>178</sup>

**Sacrifices to Mithra.** Varuna sits on the strewn grass at the sacrifice.<sup>179</sup> Similarly, the faithful devoutly invoke Mithra by his name with libations, and implore him to come and sit at the sacrifice, to listen to the invocation, to be pleased with it, to accept it, and to place it with love to their credit in paradise.<sup>180</sup> Ahura Mazda himself offered a sacrifice unto him in the shining Garo-nmana [garothman].<sup>181</sup> Zarathushtra is asked to offer sacrifices unto Mithra and so are the Mazdayasnians asked to sacrifice unto him with cattle and birds, along with Haoma and libations.<sup>182</sup> The faithful who desires to drink the holy libations consecrated in honour of Mithra is required to undergo certain penances. He has to wash his body for three days and three nights and undergo thirty stripes, or he might wash his body for two days and two nights and undergo twenty stripes, as the occasion requires. Anyone who has no knowledge of the ritual is prohibited from partaking of the sacred libation.<sup>183</sup> In these observances we can recognize the beginnings of the later Mithraic rites and mysteries for which the cult of Mithra, centuries afterwards, became famous. Mithra demands that his sacrifice shall be performed with out-and-out devotion. Ahura Mazda says unto Zarathushtra that if a sacrifice is offered unto Mithra by a holy and righteous priest, Mithra will be satisfied, and will straightway come to the dwelling of the supplicant, but if it is performed by an unholy priest,

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173 Yt10.108, 109.

174 Yt10.110, 111.

175 Yt10.28, 87.

176 Yt10.27.

177 Yt10.69, 98, 135.

178 Yt10.120.

179 RV. 1.2.64; 5.72.2.

180 Yt10.31, 32, 57.

181 Yt10.123.

182 Yt10.119.

183 Yt10.120-122.

it is rejected, no matter how long has been the sacrifice, nor how many bundles of the sacred twigs are consecrated.<sup>184</sup> Mithra promptly comes to help when he is satisfied.<sup>185</sup> He brings sovereignty for him who has piously offered him libations,<sup>186</sup> and gives him a good abode with desirable possessions.<sup>187</sup> He is to be offered sacrifices around and within countries, in and above countries, under and before and behind countries.<sup>188</sup>

Mithra's boons. He is constantly spoken of as giving happy and joyful abode, to the Aryan peoples. Many indeed are the boons asked for from Mithra by his votaries, who always approach him with love, homage and sacrifice. He is generally invoked to come to the faithful for help, freedom, joy, mercy, healing, victory, well-being, and sanctification. The masters of the house, clan, town, and country invoke him for help, so do the poor, when wronged, look to him for the redress of their grievances.<sup>189</sup> The husbandman solicits that rich pasture may never fail him. Horsemen sacrifice unto him even from on horseback and beg swiftness for their teams, vigour for their bodies, and might for overthrowing their adversaries.<sup>190</sup> Neither the spear of the foe nor his arrow hits the man whom Mithra helps,<sup>191</sup> for he guards and protects man from behind and in front.<sup>192</sup> furthers the possessions of man, he gives flocks of cattle, male offspring, chariots, spacious mansions, and prosperity<sup>193</sup> he is therefore entreated to grant riches, courage, victory, good name and fame, felicity, wisdom, and strength to smite the adversaries.<sup>194</sup> The worshipper prays that just as the sun, rising beyond the Alburz, reaches the height, so may he, with his ascending prayer, rise above the will of Angra Mainyu and approach Mithra.<sup>195</sup> Mithra's help, it may be added, is invoked for both the worlds.<sup>196</sup>

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184 Yt10.137-139.

185 Yt10.87.

186 Yt10.16.

187 Yt10.77.

188 Yt10.144; Ny2.11.

189 Yt10.83, 84.

190 Yt10.1, 94, 114.

191 Yt10.24.

192 Yt10.46.

193 Yt10.28, 30.

194 Yt10.33, 34, 58, 59.

195 Yt10.118.

196 Yt10.93.

## RASHNU

**Personification of truth.** This angel is preeminently genius of truth. His standing epithet is *razishta*, 'most upright'. To adopt the phraseology of the Younger Avestan texts, Rashnu is the most holy, the most well-shaped, exalted, courageous, most knowing, the most discerning, the most fore-knowing, most far-seeing, the most helping, the greatest smiter of thieves and bandits.<sup>197</sup> He is as bright as the fire.<sup>198</sup> Zarathushtra blesses king Vishtaspa that he may be of right faith like Rashnu.<sup>199</sup>

The eighteenth day of the month is consecrated to him.<sup>200</sup>

**Rashnu presides at the ordeal court.** The twelfth Yasht consecrated to Rashnu deals mainly with the preparation of the ordeal; and his presence at such trials is deemed indispensable.<sup>201</sup> In fact he is the chief celestial judge who presides at the ordeal. No specific habitat is assigned to Rashnu. The officiating priest has to invoke him to come to the ordeal from whatever part of the world he happens to be in at that time, whether in one of the seven zones of the habitable world, or on the great waters or on some part of the wide earth, or on the high mountains, on the stars and the moon and the sun, or in the endless light, even in paradise.<sup>202</sup> The man who lies at the ordeal offends both Rashnu and Mithra, and is consequently punished.<sup>203</sup>

We have already seen how Rashnu is often invoked in company with Mithra, and likewise with Sraosha; in a similar manner, as noted in the next paragraph, we generally find *Arshtat* the female personification of rectitude, invoked alongside of Rashnu.<sup>204</sup>

## ARSHTAT

**Divinity of rectitude.** *Arshtat* or *Arshti* is the female genius of truth. She does not play any prominent part in the Younger Avestan period. She co-operates with Mithra, Sraosha, and Rashnu in the judgment of the dead. Although the 18th Yasht is dedicated to *Arshtat* and bears her name, there is not in it a single mention of her by name; the entire hymn treats only of the Aryan Glory. In two *Siroza* passages

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197 Yt10.126; 12.5-8.

198 Vsp. 16.1.

199 AZ.7.

200 Y16.5; Sr. 1.18; 2.18.

201 See Dhalla, 'The Use of Ordeals among the Ancient Iranians,' in *Le Museon*, vol. II, p. 121-133, Louvain, 1910.

202 Yt12.9-38.

203 Vd4.54, 55.

204 Y1.7; 2.7; Yt10.139; 12.40; Sr.1.18; 2.1.8.



(1.26, 2.26) Mount Ushidarena literally meaning ‘the keeper of intelligence,’ is invoked in company with Arshat; and tradition points to this mountain at the place where Zarathushtra retired to meditate on the eternal problems of life and commune with the divine. As noted above, Arshat is generally invoked with Rashnu;<sup>205</sup> and she is called the world-increasing and the world-profiting.<sup>206</sup> In one instance she is identified with the Mazdayasnian religion.<sup>207</sup> The faithful invoke her excellence.<sup>208</sup>

As conjectured by Foy,<sup>209</sup> and established by Jackson,<sup>210</sup> after a careful examination of the Old Persian Inscription on the Behistan rock,<sup>211</sup> the name of this angel occurs in the very short list of Zoroastrian divinities known to the Achaemenian kings. The twenty-sixth day of the month is sacred to her.<sup>212</sup>

### ERETHE AND RASANSTAT

**Minor divinities of truth.** By the names of Erethe and Rasantat are designated two minor female angels presiding over truth. Nothing is known about them excepting that they are invoked by name along with Chisti and Ashi Vanghuhi.<sup>213</sup> They are given the epithet ‘good.’ Erethe is once called courageous.<sup>214</sup>

### VERETHRAGHNA

**The angel of victory.** Verethraghna belongs to the Indo-Iranian divinities. He is one of the most popular divinities of the Iranian cult. Indra’s most distinctive epithet in the Rig Veda is Vrtrahan, ‘the slayer of Vrtra.’ Its Avestan corresponding word is Verethraghna which, however, is not used as an epithet of some angel, but is the name of a powerful angel. Verethraghna impersonates victory and he has preserved this trait throughout the various epochs of Iranian religious thought. The Yasht bearing his name celebrates his exploits. As the genius of victory, and created by Ahura Mazda, Verethraghna is the best armed of the spiritual angels.<sup>215</sup> He is the most courageous in courage, the most victorious in victory, the most glorious in glory, the most

205 Y1.7; 2.7; Yt10.139; 12.40; Sr. 1.18; 2.18.

206 Y1.7; 2.7; Vsp. 7.2; Yt10.139; 11.16; 13.18; Sr. 1.26; 2.26.

207 Vsp. 7.2.

208 Y57.34.

209 KZ. 35.45; ZDMG. 54.364, n. 1.

210 *Persia Past and Present*, p. 203-205, New York, 1906.

211 Bh. 4.64.

212 Y16.6; Sr. 1.26; 2.26.

213 Y1.14; 3.16; 4.19; Vsp. 9.4; Sr. 1.25.

214 Vsp. 9.4.

abounding in favours, the best giver of welfare, and the most healing in health-giving.<sup>216</sup> He is the giver of manliness, inflicting death, maker of a new world, resolute, and self-willed.<sup>217</sup>

King Vishtaspa is blessed by Zarathushtra that he may be a conqueror of his enemies like Verethraghna.<sup>218</sup> The twentieth day of the month is dedicated to him.<sup>219</sup> His constant associates are Ama, 'Courage,' and Vanainti Uparatat, 'Dominating Excellence.'

**The patron angel of the Iranian countries.** Verethraghna is one of the national divinities of the Aryans. If the nation sacrificed unto Verethraghna with libations, and the sacred twigs, and consecrated cooked repast of cattle, either white or of some other colour, no hostile hordes, no plague, nor evil of any kind would enter the Aryan lands.<sup>220</sup> The sacrifice is to be offered through righteousness, and none but the righteous should partake of the holy food dedicated to Verethraghna. Untold calamity would befall the Aryan countries if the wicked should have a share in the sacred feast. In such an event plagues and foes would devastate the country and the Aryans would be smitten by their fifties and their hundreds, by their hundreds and their thousands, by their thousands and their tens of thousands, by their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads.<sup>221</sup>

**Verethraghna's work.** The armies that meet on the battlefield invoke Verethraghna for victory. He favours that army which first seeks his help. The army that secures his aid is sure to conquer and not to be conquered, it smites and is not smitten.<sup>222</sup> He breaks asunder the columns of the enemy, wounds them, shakes them, and cuts them to pieces.<sup>223</sup> He brings illness and death into the army that has lied unto Mithra, binds their hands and feet, and deprives them of their eyesight and hearing.<sup>224</sup> He destroys the malice of the malicious demons and men, sorcerers and fairies, the willfully blind, and the willfully deaf.<sup>225</sup> Zarathushtra sacrificed unto Verethraghna, imploring from him victory in thought, victory in word, victory in deed, victory in addressing, and

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215 Yt14.1,6, etc.

216 Yt14.3, 7, etc.

217 Yt14.28, 30, 32.

218 AZ. 7.

219 Y16.5; Sr. 1.20; 2.20.

220 Yt14. 48-50.

221 Yt14.51-53.

222 Yt14.43, 44.

223 Yt14.62.

224 Yt14.47, 63.

225 Yt14.4.

victory in replying.<sup>226</sup> Verethraghna imparts to the prophet the excellence of uprightness, the strength of the arms, the health of the body, the strength of the body, and the powerful vision of the eyes.<sup>227</sup>

**His metamorphoses.** Verethraghna, along with Dahma Afriti and Damoish Upamana, imports a peculiar aspect into the Iranian pantheon, that of assuming various shapes and manifesting his individuality in many forms. As the lord of victory he is ever ready to help those who invoke him, and comes down to his votary under different guises. Ten of such forms of Verethraghna are mentioned, when he appeared to Zarathushtra. The divinity successively assumes the form of the wind, a bull, a horse, a camel, a boar, a youth, a raven, a ram, a he-goat, and finally of a man.<sup>228</sup> He escorts Mithra in the shape of a boar to smite those that have lied unto the guardian of truth.<sup>229</sup>

## RAMAN

**He causes the joy of life.** Another instance of a hymn consecrated in name to one Yazata, but wholly devoted to the praise and glorification of another, is furnished by Ram Yasht (15). Raman is merely invoked by name along with Vayu at the beginning and the end of the Yasht. Vayu, the genius of wind, is the co-labourer of Raman, and the Yasht treats of his achievements. Raman Khvastra is the genius of the joy of life. The joy that he imparts is not the joy of the spirit, and does not convey any spiritual significance. It is the joy or pleasure pertaining to this life. Raman's joy makes man full of zest for life. Good abodes and good pastures that bring comfort and happiness in the present life are Raman's gifts. Savouriness of food is from him. Rich harvest, fertile fields, wide pasture, abundant fodder, and thick foliage, are the boons of Raman and his associate divinities, like Mithra and Vayu.<sup>230</sup> In fact it is Mithra and Tishtrya who impart this joy to the abodes of the Aryan nations.<sup>231</sup> The waters of Arvī Sura Anahita are likewise invoked to grant joyful dwellings for the worshippers of Mazda.<sup>232</sup> Zarathushtra wishes King Vishtaspa the joy of Raman.<sup>233</sup> We have already seen that Zarathushtra's joyful outlook on life pervades the Younger Avesta. Gaiety of spirit and cheerfulness of nature characterize the people of the period.

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226 Yt14.28, 30, 32.

227 Yt14.29, 31, 33.

228 Yt14.2, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27.

229 Yt10.70.

230 Y1.3; 2.3; 22.23; 25.4; Vsp. 1.7; 2.9; Yt10.146. Yt15; Sr. 1.21; 2.21; Vd3.1; G. 1.7.

231 Yt8.2; 10.4.

232 Y68.14.

233 Yt23.7; 24.6.

## RATA

**Physical and mental inequality leads to economic inequality.** Providence does not distribute the physical and mental gifts to man on the basis of equality. Some are born with agile, robust, and healthy bodies, whereas others are burdened with sluggish, weak, and sickly bodies. Mankind has contributed considerably by its vice of ages to the deformity of body and derangement of mind. Men and women are born with unequal physical and mental strength. The strong and strenuous, cunning and resourceful, vigorous and adventurous mercilessly overthrow the weak and slow, simple and dull, timid and indolent in the fierce scramble for the good things of life. The unequal distribution by nature of the gifts of body and brain, aided by selfishness and greed on the part of man bring about economic inequality. The disparity of poverty and wealth has appeared on the face of the earth ever since society took to settled life and, with the division of labour, embarked upon earning means of livelihood by different kinds of work. The strong have exploited the labour of the weak and forced them to slave like beasts of burden with their eyes raining tears of sorrow. The fear of starvation has hovered over millions of huts like vultures. The poor have generally lived in squalor and sickness and died like flies. Countless persons have not experienced a full and satisfied stomach from birth to death. Kindly mothers have eaten only half the bread that their children may have the other half. Multitudes of children have lived with wasted cheeks, sunken eyes, and emaciated bodies among the dregs of life. Men and women have sweated and starved and grown gray before their time. Physical sufferings have rendered many the shadows of themselves, made them live two years in one and age fast. Many have found it hard to equate the income and expenses, and earned a precarious living. The people whose tragedy it has been to be poor have always outnumbered the rich in the world.

When life has thus denied many the barest necessities of life, it has loaded others with abundance. Men of industry and enterprise have amassed riches, others have inherited wealth, still others have filled their coffers by foul means. Some have been parasites fattening upon the sweated toil of the tillers of the soil and have wrung from them the fruits of their labour. They have revelled in superfluous riches. They have lived in spacious halls with frescoed walls, and velvet hangings looped with golden tassels. They had a retinue of servants at their beck and call and lounged away their time upon luxurious divans. They had sumptuous tables laden with a dozen courses and sparkling wines and fed themselves to early death. Others gave themselves up to gaiety and licentiousness. Many have indulged in ostentatious and extravagant luxury when the vast numbers of the poor have clothed themselves in rags and their children have suffered from malnutrition. The insolence

and hauteur, the cold behaviour and thinly concealed slights have stung the helpless poor to the quick.

The poor took the counsels of contentment given by the wise to heart and resigned themselves to the inscrutable will of God. Moreover, there have always been noble souls everywhere who have come forward to father society's orphans and destitutes. They have acted on the principle that wealth was not given them for their selfish use, and that the rich were the stewards of their wealth given them by God for the amelioration of the condition of the poor. When some have not given anything from their abundance, many have always given something, and the few have given up their all.

**Charity personified.** The female genius of charity, grace, or almsgiving is Rata, the companion of Spenta Armaiti, with whom she is conjointly invoked in the hymns of praise.<sup>234</sup> Through her Ahura Mazda gives reward,<sup>235</sup> for he has spoken of her with express sanction to Zarathushtra, and in obedience the prophet has introduced her to humanity.<sup>236</sup> The faithful pray that they may win Ahura Mazda's favours through Rata.<sup>237</sup> She nourishes the poor.<sup>238</sup> Sraosha is the best protector of the poor.<sup>239</sup> He shelters poor men and women in his mansion.<sup>240</sup> Haoma exalts the mind of the poor.<sup>241</sup> With uplifted hands do the ill-treated poor call Mithra for help.<sup>242</sup> The faithful fervently pray that the spirit of charity of the religious devotee<sup>243</sup> may drive away the demon of stinginess from the house. If one of the faith approaches another seeking goods, or a wife, or knowledge, the man of means should help him with goods, he should arrange for the marriage of this poor coreligionist, he should pay for his instruction in religious matters.<sup>244</sup> It is in every man's power to practise charity, either in thoughts, or in words, or in deeds.

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234 Sr. 1.5; 2.5.

235 Y40.1.

236 Y65.9.

237 Y40.4.

238 Vyt36.

239 Yt11.3.

240 Y57.10.

241 Y10.13.

242 Yt10.84.

243 Y60.5.

244 Vd4.44.

## AKHSHTI

**The angel of peace.** This female divinity is peace personified, but even though perfectly clearly recognizable as such, she is very obscurely outlined as to traits. She is invoked in company with Vohu Manah, or Good Mind,<sup>245</sup> for nothing can break the inner peace in which the spirit of a man of good thoughts reposes. Akhshti is usually called victorious.<sup>246</sup>

The term *Akhshti* occurs also as a common noun. This peace as well as war lies in the power of Mithra to bring upon the country.<sup>247</sup> The rulers invoke Chisti to procure peace for their countries,<sup>248</sup> and the faithful pray that peace and concord may drive out discord and strife from their abodes.<sup>249</sup>

## MANTHRA SPENTA

The spirit of the spells. The Gathas spoke of the *mānθra*, the sacred formula, or inspired utterance of great spiritual potency, but did not personify it. The Avestan texts do so, however, under the name Manthra Spenta, or Holy Formula. The manthras generally indicate the spells of magical charms in the Younger Avesta. Manthra Spenta, the embodiment of the holy spell, is invoked along with Daena, the genius of religion, and Vohu Manah's wisdom.<sup>250</sup> As an angel presiding over the formulas of the faith he wards off evil, exorcises those possessed of the demons, and heals the sick; he is consequently invoked to heal the ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine diseases created by Angra Mainyu.<sup>251</sup> He is efficacious and the most glorious one,<sup>252</sup> and like every other angel, Manthra Spenta has his Fravashi.<sup>253</sup> The twenty-ninth day of the month is sacred to him.<sup>254</sup>

**The potency of the spells.** The collocation *manthra spenta* occurs more frequently in its ordinary meaning than as the name of the angel presiding over the holy spells. The term *mānθra* without its appellative *spenta* is also freely used to designate the sacred texts. It is also used for the magical spells of various degrees of efficacy. These spells are

245 Yt2.1; Sr. 1.2; 2.2.

246 Vsp. 7.1; Yt2.1, 6; 11,15; 15.1; Sr. 1.2; 2.2.

247 Yt10.29.

248 Yt16.19.

249 Y60.5.

250 Sr. 1.29; 2.29.

251 Vd22.2, 6.

252 Y1.13; 2.13; 25.6; Vsp. 21.2; Vd22.2, 6.

253 Yt13. 86.

254 Y16.6.

interspersed in the Avestan texts, especially in the Yashts and the Vendidad. Their conjuring efficacy is very great. They are supposed to have inherent mysterious power of their own, and the mere recital of these magical charms produces marvellous effects. The mystical compositions, as such, are credited with some kind of spiritual efficacy, some superhuman power; and through the recitation of them man can avert the baneful influence of the demons. Such spells are awful, efficacious, victorious, healing.<sup>255</sup> The recital of the holy spell gives easy delivery at birth, and helps in the growth of the child.<sup>256</sup> He who heals by the recital of the holy spells is the best healer, for he best drives away sickness from the body.<sup>257</sup> These magical incantations are mostly used to drive away the demons of defilement, disease, and death. The holy spell is the very soul of Ahura Mazda.<sup>258</sup> Whoso pronounces the names of Ahura Mazda by day and by night, on leaving his bed, or while retiring for sleep, or upon leaving his home or his town, is able to withstand the attacks of the demons, and will receive as much succour and help as a thousand men could jointly give to one man.<sup>259</sup>

**The chief spells.** Some of the most excellent, the most mighty, the most efficacious, the most smiting, the most victorious, the most healing, the greatest, and the best of the spells are the Ahuna Vairya formula, the Airyaman Ishya prayer, the names of Ahura Mazda and of the Amesha Spentas.<sup>260</sup> The Airyaman Ishya is the greatest, best, fairest, most fearful, most firm most victorious, and the most healing of all spells.<sup>261</sup> Saoshyant and his companions will recite the Airyaman Ishya prayer at the time of the renovation of the world. Through its intonation Angra Mainyu and his evil crew shall be hidden in the earth, the dead shall rise up, and Ahura Mazda shall rule according to his divine will.<sup>262</sup> There are other sacred formulas of great importance, such as the Ashem Vohu and Yenghe Hatam. These are composed in the Gathic dialect and are of rare merit. They are next in importance only to the most sacred formula of all, the Ahuna Vairya, which is spoken of in the following paragraph.

**Ahuna Vairya.** The greatest of all the spells, the Word par excellence of the Zartoshtrian theology, which is constantly on the

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255 Yt14.46.

256 Vd21.6, 10, 14.

257 Yt3.6. Vd7.44.

258 Yt13.81; Vd19.14.

259 Yt1.16-19.

260 Yt1.1-3; 3.5,6; 11.3; WFr. 4.1.

261 Yt3.5.

262 WFr. 4. See Haas, *An Avestan Fragment on the Resurrection*, with translation and notes in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 181-187, Bombay. 1908.

tongue of the faithful, is the Ahuna Vairya. It is made up of twenty-one words, every one of which corresponds to one of the twenty-one Nasks which make up the complete Holy Writ of the Zoroastrians. It is the quintessence of the entire scriptures. In reply to the prophet's inquiry about the origin of this sacred formula, Ahura Mazda says that before the heavens, before the waters, before the earth, before the animals, before the trees, before the fire, before men, before the archangels, before the demons. and before the entire material existence, Ahuna Vairya was.<sup>263</sup> Ahura Mazda pronounced it when the world was not.<sup>264</sup> One correct recitation of it without any omission is worth the chanting of a hundred Gathas,<sup>265</sup> and will enable the devout to reach paradise.<sup>266</sup> Of all the sacred formulas that have ever been pronounced or are now recited, or which will be recited hereafter, this word that the Lord God has announced to the holy prophet is the best.<sup>267</sup> It gives courage and victory to the soul and conscience of man.<sup>268</sup> Humanity would redeem itself from the death by embracing it in the fullness of faith.<sup>269</sup>

Zarathushtra chants aloud this Word when the demon Buiti seeks his death, and he puts the fiend to flight by the mere recital of it.<sup>270</sup> With the same word does the prophet repel the Evil Spirit himself, when he comes to tempt him.<sup>271</sup>

The value of the recitation and the intonation of the formula is greatly impaired when it is inattentively chanted with errors and omissions.<sup>272</sup> Ahura Mazda prevents the careless soul that makes such mistakes from entering paradise.<sup>273</sup>

**The number of times that the spells are recited.** The tenth Fargard or chapter, of the Vendidad gives a list of the Gathic stanzas which are to be repeated twice, three times, and four times at the beginning of the spells to repel evil. The Airyaman Ishya prayer is generally repeated four times. The most frequently occurring formulas that are repeated in various numbers, as the occasion demands, are the Ashem Vohu and the Ahuna Vairya. They are generally used at the

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263 Y19.1-4.

264 Y19.8.

265 Y19.5.

266 Y19.6.

267 Y19.10.

268 Yt21.4.

269 Y19.10.

270 Vd19.2.

271 Vd19.9.

272 Y19.5.

273 Y19.7.



opening or at the close of all prayers. The number of times which they are recited varies from one to a hundred thousand, or to be precise, the following specific numbers are found among the references to the different prayers: one, two, three, four, five, seven, eight, ten, twelve, twenty-one, one hundred, two hundred, twelve hundred, and a hundred thousand.

**Those privileged to recite the spells.** Manthrans, or chanters are those who are privileged to recite the spells.<sup>274</sup> Whoso seeks wisdom with pious intent is to be taught the holy spells.<sup>275</sup> The knowledge of the secret formulas is to be zealously guarded, it is to be imparted only to the veriest few in the closest circle.<sup>276</sup> The potency of such spells greatly lies in their careful and accurate recitation, without omitting any part of the prescribed formulas, or without violating the rigid rules of the manner of chanting. This requires that the reciter should be well versed in the art of exorcising, of healing, or in any other function he undertakes to perform with the help of the sacred spells. Teaching a manthra to an infidel is equivalent to giving a tongue to the wolf.<sup>277</sup>

### DAHMA AFRITI

**She personifies the power of benediction.** Each time that a righteous person offers sacrifices unto this personification of a divine blessing, she comes to him in the shape of a camel.<sup>278</sup> She is beautiful and friendly, she fills the empty to over-filling and restores the sick to health.<sup>279</sup> When the collocation is used as a common noun it means the blessings of the pious. A healer takes his fees from persons whom he heals. But when he cleanses or heals a priest he has to do so for just the 'blessing of the pious' that the priest can give.<sup>280</sup>

### DAMOISH UPAMANA

**He personifies the power of anathema.** This embodiment of the power to utter an awful malediction upon an offender against righteousness is generally mentioned alongside of Mithra.<sup>281</sup> When Mithra goes forth on his crusade against the demons and their followers throughout the seven zones, this angel, with the dread power of uttering

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274 Y7.24; 41.5.

275 Vd4.44.

276 Yt4.10; 14.46.

277 TdFr. 3; Nr. 17.

278 TdFr. 64; 65.

279 Vd22.5, 12, 18.

280 Vd7.41; 9.37.

281 Yt10.9, 66, 68, 127.

fatal imprecations, Accompanies him in the shape of a ferocious boar.<sup>282</sup> This sharp-toothed and sharp-jawed frightful animal symbolizes the terrible power of the curse for injury to the wrong-doer. Furthermore, when Ahura Mazda, the supreme heavenly judge, comes down to attend the ordeal court, Damoish Upamana is one of those to join among the number of his co-adjutors.<sup>283</sup> The contending parties were here put to self-imprecatory oaths. Divine wrath fell upon him who swore falsely and the dreadful boar that typified the awful potency of Dami Upamana's curse fell upon him and killed him at a stroke. He is also seen moving in the company of the Fravashis when they go out to the battlefield to help their favoured army.<sup>284</sup> The sacrificing priest invites him to attend the Yasna-sacrifice.<sup>285</sup>

### AIRYAMAN

**The genius of health.** This Indo-Iranian divinity originally conveys the idea of comradeship and occurs in the Vedas as a groomsman at the wedding rites and casually in the Avesta in connection with the wedding rites. The Fifty-fourth chapter of the Yasna is consecrated to Airyaman. He is invoked to come down to the wedding for the joy of the faithful.<sup>286</sup> In regard to attributes given to Airyaman we may add in this connection that his standing epithet is 'the beloved one.'

But Airyaman plays a more prominent part in the Iranian literature as the genius of health. He is an acolyte to Asha Vahishta, and is invoked together with him.<sup>287</sup> The third Yasht, which bears the name of Asha Vahishta, is, in fact, mostly devoted to Airyaman. Ahura Mazda created this earth immune from any sickness and disease, but the Evil Spirit introduced therein ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine diseases.<sup>288</sup> Ahura Mazda accordingly sends his messenger Nairyosangha to Airyaman with the request to go to the world with his healing remedies. Airyaman quickly obeys the divine command and begins his work.<sup>289</sup> He smites and drives away all kinds of sickness and death, magic and sorcery.<sup>290</sup> Airyaman does not heal by means of herbs and drugs, medicine and surgery, but by the holy spells. In fact one of the greatest of such sacred formulas, the Airyaman Ishya, as we have

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282 Yt10.127.

283 Yt12.4.

284 Yt13.47.

285 Y1.15; 2.15.

286 Y54.1.

287 Sr. 1.3; 2.3.

288 Vd22.2, 9, 15.

289 Vd22.7-20.

290 Vd.22.21-24.

already seen, bears his name and is used to smite all manner of disease and death.<sup>291</sup> At the recital of the magic formula flee sickness and death, demons and infidels, the two-legged brood of wolfish and serpentine nature, pride and scorn, slander and strife, falsehood and evil eye, courtesan and sorcery.<sup>292</sup> It is employed to rout sorcerers, fairies, and the progeny of evil.<sup>293</sup>

## HAOMA

**The divinity of joint Indo-Iranian fame.** One of the most distinctive features common to the Indo-Iranian peoples before their separation is the Haoma-Soma cult. The Avestan Haoma is identical with Vedic Soma, and both refer to the sacred drink prepared from a special plant and partaken of as a part of the ritual service. Haoma has secured a prominent place in the later Avestan theology and forms an essential part of the Zoroastrian liturgy. Haoma primarily is a plant of this world, from which the drink was quaffed as a religious act, but the idea soon evolves into an angel of the same name presiding over this plant. The two concepts are so closely interwoven that it often becomes difficult to ascertain whether the Haoma occurring in a certain passage is the genius of the plant of that name, or the plant itself. The same difficulty is witnessed with reference to Soma in the Vedas. The anthropomorphic character of both Haoma Soma is little pronounced. Three chapters of the Yasna and a Yasht mostly composed of excerpts from the Yasna are dedicated to Haoma. More than 120 hymns are devoted to Soma in Rig Veda.

Ahura Mazda brought for Haoma the star-bespangled spiritual girdle, that is, the Mazdayasnian religion. Girt with this he dwells on the top of the mountains,<sup>294</sup> and from these heights he sacrifices unto Drvaspa, Sraosha, Mithra, and Ashi Vanghuhi.<sup>295</sup>

**Haoma pleads the greatness of his cult.** He is anxious that his cult, which has been in vogue for centuries, be given a due place in the new faith and receive the sanction of the prophet. The poet depicts him as approaching Zarathushtra for this particular purpose. One morning, we are informed, Haoma came to the prophet as he was chanting the sacred Gathas before the fire-altar and asked him to seek his favour by consecrating the Haoma juice for libations and to praise him as the other sages had praised him.<sup>296</sup> Vivasvant, Yama, and Trita Aptya were

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291 Vd20.11, 12.

292 Yt3.7-13.

293 Vd20.9-12; 21.18-21.

294 Y9.26.

295 Y57.19; Yt9.17, 18; 10.88; 17.37, 38.

296 Y9.1.

the first to sacrifice unto Soma. The Avestan texts speak of the same persons who first offered sacrifices unto Haoma. In reply to Zarathushtra's inquiry Haoma proceeds to give instances of some of the greatest of his celebrants. The first among the mortals to sacrifice unto the angel Haoma by pounding the Haoma plant for libation was Vivanhvant, and the great benefit he derived there from was that the glorious Yima was born unto him.<sup>297</sup> Athwya, Thritha, and Pourushasp, the father of the prophet himself, were among the other prominent men who sacrificed unto Haoma. Their reward was that illustrious sons were born unto them. Thus Zarathushtra himself was born unto Pourushasp because the latter praised Haoma.<sup>298</sup> Zarathushtra, the poet says, thereupon paid homage to the angel, and proclaimed his cult as the most praiseworthy.<sup>299</sup>

**Haoma's titles.** The standing epithet of Haoma is 'far from death.' He is the powerful one, and rules according to his will.<sup>300</sup> He is the lord of knowledge and possesses good wisdom.<sup>301</sup> He is the healing one, beautiful, lordly, and of golden eyes.<sup>302</sup>

**His gifts.** Zarathushtra invokes Haoma and asks from him intelligence, courage, victory, health, increase, prosperity, vigour of body, and power to rule at will, and to smite the wicked that he may vanquish the evil done by the wicked men and demons.<sup>303</sup> The prophet further prays to him for health of the body, long duration of life, the all-shining abode of the righteous, the realization of his wishes on earth, a complete triumph over the wicked and a foreknowledge of the evil intents of the wicked:<sup>304</sup> Haoma bestows these boons upon him, Haoma in like manner gives knowledge to the aspiring students, husbands to the ripening maidens, beautiful offspring and righteous progeny to women, and paradise to the righteous.<sup>305</sup> The devout worshipper, in return, dedicates his very body to him.<sup>306</sup> Piety accompanied by joy enters the house in which Haoma dwells.<sup>307</sup>

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297 Y9.3, 4.

298 Y9. 6-13.

299 Y9.16.

300 Y9.25.

301 Y9.27; 10.2.

302 Yt9.17; 10.88.17.37.

303 Y9.17, 18.

304 Y9.19-21.

305 Y9.22, 23; 11.10.

306 Y10.14; 11.10.

307 Y10.1.

**Haoma implored to rout the wicked.** This angel is invoked to guard the faithful from the harm of the wicked, to take away the power of their hands and feet and to confuse their minds, so that they cannot behold the universe with both their eyes.<sup>308</sup> He is besought to hurl his weapons at the skulls of the wicked for the protection of the righteous,<sup>309</sup> and to crush the thought of the maligner.<sup>310</sup>

**Haoma's due.** Haoma is to be propitiated with sacrifice. Among other objects animals were sacrificed in the Zoroastrian ritual unto the angels, and the different parts of the consecrated flesh were allotted to the various Yazatas. The Pahlavi books elaborately treat the question of reserving particular parts of the animal for the various Yazatas. We are told that Ahura Mazda has set apart for Haoma as his share in the sacrifice the jaw-bone, the tongue, and the left eye of the immolated animal.<sup>311</sup> In general this is also in accordance with the statement of Herodotus<sup>312</sup> regarding the Persian acts of sacrifice in worship.

**Haoma's curse.** Haoma does not give good children of priestly virtues to the woman who wrongfully partakes of the sacred cake consecrated to him.<sup>313</sup> Whosoever deprives Haoma of his portion in the sacrifice, displeases him, and the penalty he pays for this slight to Haoma is that a priest, a warrior, or a husbandman is not thereafter born in his house.<sup>314</sup> The faithful is exhorted to propitiate him with his due portion, lest the offended angel should bind him with heavy iron chains as he bound Franrasyan.<sup>315</sup> Haoma pronounces his curse of being childless and of evil name and fame against those who, like thieves, rob him of his legitimate portion in the sacrifice.<sup>316</sup> He hurled down the arrogant Keresani from his throne.<sup>317</sup>

**Haoma, king of plants.** Haoma is the sovereign lord of all plants among both the Indians and the Iranians. Physically it is the plant that grows on the highest summits of Mount Hara Berezaiti, the modern Alburz.<sup>318</sup> According to the Vedic texts, it grows on the mount Mujavat.

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308 Y9.28, 29.

309 Y9.30-32.

310 Y10.12.

311 Y11.4.

312 Herod. 1.132.

313 Y10.15.

314 Y11.5, 6.

315 Y11.7.

316 Y11.3.

317 Y9.24.

318 Y10.10.

The birds carried it from there in all directions.<sup>319</sup> An eagle brought it down, says the Veda.<sup>320</sup> The nourishing earth is its mother where it grows in vales and dales, spreading sweet perfume all around.<sup>321</sup> It is of golden hue, say both, and the celestial drink prepared from its branches is most invigorating and profitable for the soul of man.<sup>322</sup> Indulgence in intoxicating beverages causes wrath and strife, quarrel and confusion, but the drink of Haoma is accompanied by righteousness and piety.<sup>323</sup> It confers immortality. It is the source of righteousness.<sup>324</sup> Haoma grows in abundance when it is praised by man. The pounding of the Haoma juice for sacrifice is tantamount to the destruction of the demons by thousands.<sup>325</sup> Misery vanishes and happiness and health enter the house in which Haoma is prepared.<sup>326</sup> The exhilarating drink gives inspiration and enlightenment to his supplicant and makes the beggar's mind as exalted as that of the rich.<sup>327</sup> The faithful pray that the healing remedies of Haoma may reach them for the strength of their bodies.<sup>328</sup> There is a close affinity between the Haoma-Soma cults and the rituals performed to celebrate them have great resemblance to each other. We shall notice it in our chapter on rituals.

### ASHI VANGHUHI

**Physically she stands for plenty, morally for piety.** On the physical side Ashi Vanghuhi, or Good Sanctity, is the guardian of earthly riches. She fills the barns of men with grain and with cattle, their coffers with gold, the fields with foliage, the chests of virtuous women with ornaments and their boxes with fine garments.<sup>329</sup> She brings happiness, cattle, fodder, and protection to him to whom the Glory cleaves.<sup>330</sup> On the ethical side she personifies sanctity and thus represents spiritual riches. She is also the giver of the mental riches unto men, that is, the bright understanding and the innate wisdom.<sup>331</sup> Ahura Mazda is her father and Spenta Armaiti, the embodiment of holy

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319 Y10.11.

320 RV. 3.43.7; 4.26.6, etc.

321 Y10.4, 17.

322 Y9.16.

323 Y10.8; Yt17.5.

324 Y10.4.

325 Y10.4.

326 Y10.7.

327 Y10.13.

328 Y10.14.

329 Yt17.7-14.

330 Yt19.54.

331 Yt17.2.

devotion, is her mother. The archangels, as well as Sraosha, Rashnu, and Mithra, are her brothers, and Daena, the genius of the holy faith of Zarathushtra, is her sister.<sup>332</sup> As the genius of plenty she joins Mithra, who increases pastures and fodder.<sup>333</sup> The seventeenth Yasht is dedicated to her. Parendi, Chisti, Erethe, and Rasanstat are invoked in her company.<sup>334</sup>

**Ashi's attributes.** She is bright, exalted, well-formed, well worthy of sacrifice, possessed of the bright chariot, courageous, giver of weal and health.<sup>335</sup> She is beautiful, shining with joy, and far-reaching through radiance.<sup>336</sup> She, the exalted one, is well-made and of noble origin; she rules at her will and is possessed of glory in her body.<sup>337</sup> She, the courageous one, carries all desirable things in her hands.<sup>338</sup> She is the protector, guardian, helper, healer, smiter of the malice of the demons and of the wicked men, the giver of good gifts, blessings, and success, and the bestower of the greatest, best, and the fairest reward unto men.<sup>339</sup> She comes in the shape of a well-built, beautiful, tall, high-girded maiden of noble birth.<sup>340</sup>

**Her supplicants.** Haoshyangha, Yima, Thraetaona, Haoma, Haosravah, before Zoroaster, as well as the prophet himself and King Vishtaspa, his royal patron and helper in the propagation of the new faith, are among the most illustrious of her supplicants. These worshippers severally offered her sacrifices and asked for various boons from her, which she granted in answer to their prayers.<sup>341</sup> The most favoured among her votaries is Zarathushtra himself; for him her loving regard is great.<sup>342</sup> This is because the prophet himself is the visible embodiment of sanctity on earth and the promoter of righteousness among men.

**Her work.** She is ever ready to help the faithful. She leads to rectitude.<sup>343</sup> She goes to those who invoke her from near or afar with

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332 Yt17.2,16.

333 Yt10.66.

334 Yt17.62; Sr. 1.25.

335 Y2.14; 57.3; Yt17.1; Sr. 2.25.

336 Yt17.6.

337 Yt17.15.

338 Yt17.7-14.

339 Y52.1-3.

340 Yt13.107.

341 Yt17.24-26, 28-31, 33-35, 37-39, 41-43, 45-47, 49-52, 61.

342 Yt17.17-22.

343 Y56.3.

pious libations.<sup>344</sup> The house which Ashi graces with her presence becomes full of perfume.<sup>345</sup> Happy indeed is the man whom Ashi attends, for riches, abundance, and prosperity spring in his house. The kings whom she favours have kingdoms rich in snorting horses, sounding chariots, flashing swords, large tributes, and an abundance of rich food.<sup>346</sup> Happy indeed are they whom Ashi attends, for they come by well-furnished houses wherein live righteous persons, rich in cattle, who have well-adorned beds, with rich cushions, and with feet inlaid with gold.<sup>347</sup> Their wives and daughters have square bored earrings and necklaces of gold.<sup>348</sup> And the men on whom Ashi, the genius of fortune, smiles have hoards of silver and gold and rich garments and swift and loud neighing horses and chariots, and large-humped, fiery camels, and weapons of war.<sup>349</sup> Glory is his whom she, in her goodness, attends.<sup>350</sup> The devout pray and implore her not to turn her face from them and withhold her kindness from them.<sup>351</sup> That Ashi may not quit their houses, is the fervent prayer of the faithful,<sup>352</sup> and the Fravashis are invoked by the righteous to bring the blessed Ashi into their abodes.<sup>353</sup> The householder prays that she may come and stay in his house.<sup>354</sup> She follows the generous man who causes joy unto the righteous poor by his liberal gifts, and the moment she puts her one foot in the house, it is filled with a thousand fold flocks and horses and virtuous offspring.<sup>355</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ashi to bestow her gifts upon King Vishtaspa.<sup>356</sup> The twenty-sixth day of the month is sacred to her.<sup>357</sup>

**What offends Ashi most.** She is grieved at the sight of maidens who remain unmarried for a long time.<sup>358</sup> She does not accept the libations offered by sterile persons and wicked courtesans.<sup>359</sup> As the

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344 Yt17.2.

345 Yt17.6.

346 Yt17.7.

347 Yt17.8, 9.

348 Yt17.10, 11.

349 Yt17.12-14.

350 Yt17.2.

351 Yt17.15.

352 Y60.7.

353 Yt13.157.

354 Y10.1.

355 Yt18.3-5.

356 Yt24.8.

357 Y16.6.

358 Yt17.59.

359 Yt17.54.



zealous guardian of the sanctity of matrimony, she abhors the wife who is untrue to the nuptial tie, the woman who violates the law of chastity, and the adulteress who sells her body for profit or pleasure.<sup>360</sup> Three times does she raise her wailing at such a shameful display of unchastity and longs either to flee to the heavens or sink into the earth, whereupon Ahura Mazda consoles her and leads her to his celestial abode.<sup>361</sup>

### PARENDI

**Ashi's associate.** Parendi, as the female genius of riches, plenty, and activity, is identical with the Vedic Puramdhi, the goddess of plenty. She is the constant companion of Ashi Vanghuhi, and is invoked with her.<sup>362</sup> She is active in thought, active in word, and active in deed, and gives activity to man's body.<sup>363</sup> She moves about in a light chariot.<sup>364</sup> As the impersonation of earthly riches Parendi accompanies the celestial car of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, or again she attends Tishtrya, the genius of rain, in furthering the prosperity of the earth.<sup>365</sup> Zarathushtra invokes her to enrich King Vishtaspa.<sup>366</sup>

### DRVASPA

**The female genius of cattle.** She is a female genius of the animal world. As the guardian of herds, she is invoked in company with Geush Tashan and Geush Urvan.<sup>367</sup> A Yasht (9) is consecrated to her and bears her name, or more familiarly that of Gosh or Geush Urvan. Drvaspa moves about in her own chariot of sounding wheels. Mazda has made her heroic and righteous. She is the bestower of health upon the cattle and kine. She watches well from afar, gives welfare and long continuing friendship. She is nourishing, courageous, well formed, possessed of weal, giver of health, and powerful helper of the righteous.<sup>368</sup>

**Her sacrificers.** The Yasht gives a list of her supplicants who have asked her to grant them various boons. They are the same persons that invoke Ashi Vanghuhi and pray for the same boons that they ask from her. The only difference between the forms of invoking Drvaspa and Ashi is that no offering is made to Ashi by any of her supplicants, whereas in the case of Drvaspa we see that with the exception of Haoma

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360 Yt17; 57, 58.

361 Yt17.57-60.

362 Y13.1; 38.2; Yt8.38; 10.66; Sr. 1.25; 2.25.

363 Vsp. 7.2.

364 Yt8.38; 24.9; Sr. 1.25; 2.25.

365 Yt8.38; 10.66.

366 Yt24.9.

367 Sr. 1.14; 2.14.

368 Yt9.1, 2, 7, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28.

and Zarathushtra the other heroes, Haoshyangha, Yima. Thraetaona, Haosravah, and Vishtaspa, bring to her offerings of a hundred horses, a thousand oxen, ten thousand small cattle, and the libations.<sup>369</sup>

### GEUSH TASHAN AND GEUSH URVAN

**Drvaspa's associates.** We have seen above in the Gathas among the impersonations of the animal world two distinct beings Geush Tashan, Geush Urvan. Gav Azi represented the joy-giving cattle. In the later Avestan texts Geush Tashan appears about six times.<sup>370</sup> We do not hear anything more definite regarding him than the fact that he is invoked by name along with other tutelary divinities. It may indeed be emphasized that he is entirely unknown from the time of the Pahlavi period onward. Geush Urvan is invoked in company with Geush Tashan and Drvaspa.<sup>371</sup> Gav Azi occurs but once. The master of a house is enjoined to give a *gav azi*, or a three-year-old cow, to the cleanser who imparted him bodily purification.<sup>372</sup> Verethraghna, the angel of victory, complains before Zarathushtra that the mischief of the demons and their worshippers increases upon earth because men do not offer sacrifices to Geush Urvan.<sup>373</sup>

### HVAREKSHAETA

**The sun deified.** Hvarekshaeta is the shining sun as well as the genius presiding over him. The sixth Yasht and the first Niyayesh are consecrated to him; but in fact the first two Niyayeshes celebrate Hvarekshaeta and Mithra conjointly. These two litanies, moreover, are always recited together during the day time. The treatment of the sun-Yazata, like that of Surya, the sun in the Rig Veda, and the physical sun as a phenomenon of nature is so complicated that it is difficult in many instances to distinguish the one from the other. It is not so much Hvarekshaeta in the capacity of an angel that figures here, as does Hvarekshaeta, the sun itself. The writer of the hymn in honour of Hvarekshaeta is more interested in depicting the movements of the sun itself as the orb of day than in giving account of the Yazata, or presiding genius of the sun. We have a vivid picture of the sun's movements, its rising and setting, its power to rout the fiends of uncleanness and impurity, but we have hardly anything which treats of the spiritual personality behind this great luminary of nature. The worship of the brilliant sun must have preceded the period of its deification, and the poet cannot quite rid himself of the fascination of

369 Yt9.3-5, 8-11, 13.15, 17-19, 21-23, 25-27, 29-32.

370 Y1.2; 39.1; 70.2; Vsp. 9.5; Sr. 1.14; WFr. 6.1.

371 Y1.2; 39.1; 70.2; Vsp. 9.5; Sr. 1.14; 2.14.

372 Vd9.37.

373 Yt14.54.

the primitive form of nature-worship. The physical phenomenon of the sun is always present before the mind of the writer; and there is very little attempt to address the presiding genius through his visible image, the concrete representative being the direct object of praise and glorification. The sun rises up above the mountain Hara Berezaiti and enters upon his daily career.<sup>374</sup>

Hvarekhshaeta is invoked by his name, and his standing epithets are 'the imperishable, radiant, and the swift-horsed.' Ovid attests that a horse was consecrated to the sun for the reason that the sun itself was swift moving like the horse.<sup>375</sup> Several classical writers write about the homage and sacrifice offered by the Persians to the sun. A white horse of the best Nisaeon breed was selected for the sacrifice to the sun.<sup>376</sup> A white chariot, covered with garlands was sacred to the sun.<sup>377</sup> A temple consecrated to the sun, with a priestess of the royal family at its head, is mentioned.<sup>378</sup>

The Amesha Spentas are all of one accord with the sun.<sup>379</sup> When the sun warms with its light, a hundred and a thousand spiritual Yazatas gather its glory and distribute it upon the earth for the furtherance of the world of righteousness.<sup>380</sup> When the sun rises up, purification comes unto the earth and unto the standing and flowing waters and unto the waters of the wells and seas, and unto the righteous creation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>381</sup> If indeed the sun were not to rise high up, the demons would destroy all things that are in the seven regions. Not even the spiritual angels would find means to withstand and repel them.<sup>382</sup> The offering of sacrifice unto the Sun in order to withstand darkness and demons, thieves and robbers, sorcerers and enchantresses, is equivalent to sacrificing unto Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas, the Yazatas, earthly and heavenly, and one's own soul.<sup>383</sup> The demons who, in the darkness of night, come out by the million from the bowels of the earth, glide away as soon as the sun mounts the sky and the world is ablaze with its light. Though they feast in the night time, as darkness is congenial to their nature, they fast during the day, for light is destructive to their

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374 Yt10.118; Vd21.5.

375 *Fasti*, 1.385, 386.

376 Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 86; Fox and Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 41, 67, 69, 84.

377 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 8.3.12; Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes*, 36, 39.

378 Flavius Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, 5.5.

379 Ny1.1.

380 Yt6.1; Ny1.11.

381 Yt6.2; Ny1.12.

382 Yt6.3; Ny1.13.

383 Yt6.4; Ny1.14.

being. When the light of Hvarekhshaeta breaks through the darkness of night, it drives away, not only darkness, but defilement, disease, and death. Like the moon and the stars, it grieves the sun to shine upon a defiled person.<sup>384</sup> Ahura Mazda has the sun for his eye.<sup>385</sup> In the Vedic literature, the sun is similarly spoken of as the eye of Mitra Varuna.<sup>386</sup> In the Litany to the sun, homage is paid to the two eyes of Ahura Mazda,<sup>387</sup> which are evidently the sun and the moon. The heavens bathed in the light of the sun form his garments.<sup>388</sup> The eleventh day of the month is sacred to him.<sup>389</sup>

Leprosy is especially regarded as a consequence of sinning against the sun, and Herodotus tells us that persons affected with the disease were not permitted to enter a town.<sup>390</sup>

### MAONGHAH

**The moon personified.** Herodotus writes that the moon is the tutelary divinity of Persia.<sup>391</sup> The case of this nature divinity is analogous to that of the sun. Maonghah is at one and the same time the moon and the personification of the moon. The seventh Yasht and the third Niyayesh are dedicated to this divine personage. Here also we find throughout the description of the waxing and the waning of the moon, the periods of the new and the full moons, and the benefit that the light of the moon imparts to the world. We hear much of the concrete moon, but very little of the abstract person of the angel. The sole-created Bull, the progenitor of the animal world, is invoked along with the moon.<sup>392</sup> The moon waxes and wanes through Ahura Mazda.<sup>393</sup> The Amesha Spentas gather the glory of the moon and distribute it upon the earth.<sup>394</sup> When the moon warms up with its light, the golden coloured plants grow up from the earth during the spring.<sup>395</sup>

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384 Vd9.41.

385 Y1.11; 3.13; 4.16; 7.13; 22.13; 68.22.

386 RV. 1.115.1; 6.51.1; 7.61.1, 63.1; 10.37.1.

387 Ny1.5.

388 Yt13.3.

389 Y16.4.

390 Herod. 1.138.

391 Herod. 7.37.

392 Sr. 1.12; 2.12.

393 Yt7.2; Ny3.4.

394 Yt7.3; Ny3.5.

395 Yt7.4; Ny3.6.

The moon is constantly spoken of as the possessor of the seed of the Bull.<sup>396</sup> The moon is furthermore described as the bestower, radiant, glorious, possessed of water, possessed of warmth, possessed of knowledge, wealth, riches, discernment, weal, verdure, good, and the healing one.<sup>397</sup> The twelfth day of the month is dedicated to the moon.<sup>398</sup>

### ANAGHRA RAOCHAH

**Deification of the endless light.** Anaghra Raochah means the Endless Light. It is the celestial light as opposed to the earthly light.<sup>399</sup> In the order of naming the various kinds of heavenly lights, Anaghra Raochah comes after the stars, moon and the sun.<sup>400</sup> Like the stars, the moon, and the sun, this supreme light stood without motion until the Fravashis or the Guardian Spirits showed it its path of movement.<sup>401</sup>

Anaghra Raochah is personified as a Yazata, being invoked at the sacrifice,<sup>402</sup> and the thirtieth day of the Zoroastrian calendar bears his name. In a couple of instances we find Paradise and the Bridge of Judgment, likewise Apam Napat, Haoma, Dahma Afriti, and Damoish Upamana, invoked along with Anaghra Raochah.<sup>403</sup> It is the name of the highest paradise.<sup>404</sup>

### ASMAN

**Firmament deified.** In its original meaning Asman means the sky; it is later personified as the genius of the sky, and invoked as a Yazata.<sup>405</sup> He is shining, exalted, and powerful. Asman and Vahishta Ahu, or Paradise, are invoked together,<sup>406</sup> and the twenty-seventh day of the Zoroastrian month is called after the name of Asman.

### USHAH

**The female divinity of dawn.** Ushah is identical with the Vedic Ushas, and is the female divinity of the dawn in both religions, thus coming down from the common Indo-Iranian period. It is she who

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396 See Gray, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 160-168.

397 Yt7.5; Ny3.7.

398 Y16.4.

399 Vd.2.40.

400 Y71. 9; Yt12.35; 13.57; G. 3.6.

401 Yt13.57.

402 Y1.16; 16.6; 71.9; Sr. 1.30; 2.30; Vd19.35.

403 Sr. 1.30; 2.30.

404 Yt22.15.

405 Y1.16; 16.6; Sr. 1.27; 2.27.

406 Sr. 1.27; 2.27.

announces as the first glimpse of light, to creation, the approach of dawn. Ushah's personality is very faintly pronounced both in the Rig Veda and in the Younger Avestan texts. The Vedic poets have, however, produced most exquisite lyric poetry in praise of the dawn in about twenty hymns. There is only a short Avestan hymn in prose composed to celebrate the dawn and even this has but six lines devoted to the subject of the composition. Here she is described as beautiful, resplendent, possessed of bright steeds, blessed, and heroic; and her light illumines all the seven zones.<sup>407</sup> Auxiliaries to Ushah are Ushahina and Berejya and Nmanya. In fact Ushahina, who is also a male personification of dawn, is the name of the fifth period of the day, and the prayer consecrated to Ushah bears his name. The priest at the sacrifice undertakes to propitiate Ushahina by sacrifice, if he has in thought, word, deed, or will offended him.<sup>408</sup>

### TISHTRYA

**The star genius directs the rain.** Next in importance to the sun and moon, among the heavenly luminaries, are the countless stars. Among the stars that are personified as objects of praise and reverence, the most prominent is the radiant and glorious star Tishtrya. He is the star Sirius in the constellation of Canis Major. The Yazata who impersonates this brilliant star bears naturally also the same name. The Tishtrya Yasht (8) sings the glory of the twofold work of Tishtrya, both as star and as the Yazata that presides over it. Tishtrya is, therefore, the rain-star, and the Yasht gives a lively picture of his movements in producing clouds and rain and sleet, and distributing them over all the world. Tishtrya's constant companions are the star Yazatas, named Vanant, Satavaesa, and Haptoiringa, as guardian spirits of different regions of the heavens.<sup>409</sup> The thirteenth day of the month<sup>410</sup> and the fourth month of the year are sacred to him.

**Tishtrya's attributes.** His standing epithets are 'the radiant' and 'the glorious.' He is the giver of fertility to the fields,<sup>411</sup> the giver of happy and good abode unto men, the white, shining, seen from afar, the healing, and the exalted one.<sup>412</sup> He is possessed of the seed of the waters, the valiant, the courageous, far reaching, the efficient,<sup>413</sup> and of sound

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407 Yt5.62; Vd18.15, 23; G. 5.5.

408 Y1.20,21.

409 Sr. 1.13; 2.13; cf. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p.23.

410 Y16.4.

411 Yt8.1.

412 Yt8.2.

413 Yt8.4.

eyes.<sup>414</sup> Ahura Mazda has appointed Tishtrya as the lord of all other stars, even as he has ordained Zarathushtra as the spiritual lord of all mankind.<sup>415</sup> The creator has made him as worthy of sacrifice, as worthy of invocation, as worthy of propitiation, and as worthy of glorification as himself.<sup>416</sup> According to Plutarch he is established as a scout over all other stars.<sup>417</sup>

**The sacrificial offerings enable Tishtrya to work with added vigour and strength.** Tishtrya smites the wicked fairies.<sup>418</sup> Like Verethraghna, he takes upon himself successive forms when he goes out for active work. He moves forward in the heavens for the first ten nights of the month in the form of a young man, for the next ten nights in the form of a bull, and then for the last ten nights in the shape of a white beautiful horse.<sup>419</sup> In accordance with the will of Ahura Mazda and the archangels, he traverses the most distant parts of the earth,<sup>420</sup> and the Iranian countries long for his advent, for it is through him that the country will witness a year of plenty or of drought.<sup>421</sup> Men and beasts, the waters and all, look eagerly to the rising of the star Tishtrya, as he will send a flood of rain to fertilize their waste lands with water and bestow riches upon the earth, if the righteous faithfully offer him praise and worship.<sup>422</sup> The farmer yearns for a few drops of Tishtrya's rain to moisten his parched fields, the gardener longs for a shower to brighten the foliage. The land smiles with rich harvests as a result of his fertilizing waters.

Tishtrya complains before Ahura Mazda about the indifference of men who do not sacrifice unto him. When invoked with sacrifice, as are the other angels, he is willing to hasten to the help of the righteous, whether for a single night, or two or fifty nights, or even a hundred nights.<sup>423</sup> Tishtrya affirms that owing to his power to further righteousness, he is worthy of sacrifice and invocation, and if people will offer him libations and Haoma in sacrifice, he will grant them heroic children, and purity unto their souls, the riches of oxen and

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414 Yt8.12; Ny1.8.

415 Yt8.44.

416 Yt8.50, 52.

417 *Is. et Os.* 47.

418 Yt8.8, 39, 40, 51-55.

419 Yt8.13, 16, 18; Vd19.37.

420 Yt8.35.

421 Yt8.36.

422 Yt8.36, 41, 42, 48.

423 Yt8.11.

horses.<sup>424</sup> He pours down water in abundance upon the earth, brings prosperity unto the whole creation, when he receives the offering of a sacrifice and is propitiated, rejoiced, and satisfied.<sup>425</sup> Never, in that event, would the hostile horde invade the countries, nor would any calamity or evil of any kind befall them.<sup>426</sup> Yet in spite of all this, the bounteous kindness of Tishtrya grants boons to his votary whether he prays for them or not.<sup>427</sup>

**His fight with the demon of drought.** Tishtrya is opposed in his work of producing rain by his adversary Apaosha, the demon of drought, who keeps back the rain. The Tishtrya Yasht gives a picturesque account of the struggle between them. In the combat with the fiend that holds the world in clutch through famine and drought, Apaosha, who appears in the form of a terrifying black horse, assaults his opponent and in their opening combat succeeds in forcing Tishtrya to retreat. Worsted by the fiend, Tishtrya mourns his defeat and complains that men do not sufficiently sacrifice unto him as they do unto other celestial powers, for had they not been sparing in their invocation, he would have been able to bring a further strength of ten horses, of ten camels, of ten oxen, of ten mountains, and of ten rivers to his side. Ahura Mazda himself, thereupon, offers a sacrifice unto Tishtrya and thus imparts new strength to him. Thus emboldened, he now, with renewed vigour, attacks his rival for the second time, and after a fierce struggle overcomes him. His triumph is hailed as the triumph of the waters, plants, and the religion of Mazda, for Tishtrya is now in a position to bring prosperity to the country.<sup>428</sup> Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, as well as Mithra, Ashi Vanghuhi, and Parendi, are among those that help Tishtrya in this war of the elements for the benefit of mankind.<sup>429</sup>

## VANANT

**A star-Yazata.** The other important star-Yazata besides Tishtrya who is classed among the spiritual beings is Vanant. The twentieth Yasht is composed in his honour. Tradition assigns to him the special work of guarding the gates of the great Alburz round which the sun, moon and the stars revolve, and accounts him as the leader of a constellation in the western heavens in the war against the planets. In the Avestan Yasht bearing this star-Yazata's name, Vanant is specially

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424 Yt8.15, 17, 19.

425 Yt8.43, 47.

426 Yt8.56.

427 Yt8.49.

428 Yt8.20-29.

429 Yt8.7, 38.



invoked to give help to smite the noxious creatures of Angra Mainyu.<sup>430</sup> Some spells to this effect, composed in the Pazand language, are later appended to this particular Yasht. It is elsewhere stated in the Avesta that Ahura Mazda has created him,<sup>431</sup> and that the faithful ask him for strength and victory to enable them to remove distress and tyranny.<sup>432</sup>

### SATAVAESA

**An acolyte of Tishtrya.** The star Satavaesa is also personified, but his individuality is very faintly pronounced. He has no Yasht or hymn composed to glorify him. As an acolyte of Tishtrya, he causes the waters of the sea Vourukasha to flow down to the seven zones for the nourishment of plants and animals, and for the fertility and prosperity of the Aryan nations.<sup>433</sup>

### HAPTOIRINGA

**Another acolyte of Tishtrya.** This constellation, Ursa Major, is also raised to the position of a lesser divinity. Ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine Fravashis watch over this stellar cluster.<sup>434</sup> The genius of this star is invoked to enable mankind to oppose the evil caused by the sorcerers and fairies.<sup>435</sup>

### VAYU

**The deification of the wind.** Vayu, or Vata, is the Indo-Iranian impersonation of wind. The terms Vayu and Vata are variously used to represent either the wind or the genius of wind in both the Rig Veda and in the Avestan texts. Yet Vayu is chiefly the personification of the wind. As we have already seen, the whole of the Ram Yasht treats of the exploits of Raman's comrade Vayu. Vayu's wind is divided into two parts, the good and the evil. The wind is productive of good, but it also causes harm. That part of Vayu which is supposed to be the source of harm is branded as evil, and classed among Angra Mainyu's creations. Hence the faithful take care to sacrifice unto that part alone of Vayu which is the creation of Spenta Mainyu.<sup>436</sup> The twenty-second day of the month is named after Vayu.<sup>437</sup>

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430 Yt20.1.

431 Yt8.12; Ny1.8.

432 Yt8.12.

433 Yt8.9; 13.43; Sr. 1.13; 2.13.

434 Yt13.60.

435 Yt8.12; Sr. 2.13.

436 Y22.24; 25.5; Yt15.5, 42, 57; Sr. 1.21; 2.21.

437 Y16.5.

**Vayu's attributes.** The genius of wind is most frequently called 'working on high.' He strikes terror among all, and fearlessly enters the deepest and the darkest places to smite the demons.<sup>438</sup> He is high-girt, of strong stature, of high foot, of wide breast, of broad thighs, and of powerful eyes.<sup>439</sup> He wears a golden helm and a golden crown, a golden necklace, and golden garment; he has golden shoes and a golden girdle; and armed with golden weapons he rides in a golden chariot rolling on golden wheels.<sup>440</sup> A fine image this, to immortalize Vayu in a golden statue! The poet gives a long list of the names of Vayu, and is very prolific in ascribing high attributes to him. In this the ancient composer follows the Yasht dedicated to Ahura Mazda. In fact Vayu is the only angel who is known, like Ahura Mazda, by many names. The text enumerates about forty-seven of such titles. Almost all of these attributes of Vayu are derived from the function of Vayu as wind, rather than from his activity as the genius of wind. They pertain to the atmospheric phenomenon more than to the abstract ideas about the angel. Some of the more important of the names of Vayu are as follows: the overtaker, the all-vanquishing, the good-doer, the one going forwards and backwards, the destroyer, smiter, usurper, the most valiant, the strongest, the firmest, the stoutest, the vanquisher at one stroke, the destroyer of malice, the liberator, the pervading one, and the glorious.<sup>441</sup>

**Those who offer sacrifices unto Vayu.** The recital of his names has a great efficacy, and Vayu asks Zarathushtra to invoke these names in the thick of the battle, or when the tyrant and heretic threaten him with their havocking hordes. The man in heavy fetters finds himself freed upon the recital of these names.<sup>442</sup> Vayu is the greatest of the great and the strongest of the strong. The text briefly describes how some of the most illustrious personages invoked Vayu and begged of him various boons, and in this connection we may recall that Herodotus<sup>443438</sup> mentions the fact that the Persians sacrificed to the winds among other divine forces in nature. The list of Vayu's supplicants in Yasht 15 is headed by Ahura Mazda himself, who desired the boon that he may smite the creatures of Angra Mainyu, but that none may smite the creation of Spenta Mainyu.<sup>444</sup> Among the kings, renowned heroes, and other personages who sacrificed unto Vayu, and to whom the angel

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438 Yt15.53.

439 Yt15.54.

440 Yt15.57.

441 Yt15.43-48.

442 Yt15.49-52.

443Herod. 1.131.

444 Yt15.2-4.

granted their boons, are Haoshyangha, Takhma Urupi, Yima, Thraetaona, Keresaspa, Aurvasara, Hutaosa, and such maidens as are not yet given in marriage.<sup>445</sup> Even the wicked Azhi Dahaka begged also of him a boon, but Vayu rejected his sacrifice.<sup>446</sup> Men sacrifice unto Vayu with libations and prayers and ask for strength to vanquish their adversaries.<sup>447</sup> Vayu asks Zarathushtra to invoke him, in order that neither Angra Mainyu, nor the sorcerers, nor the demons may be able to injure him.<sup>448</sup>

## ATAR

**The fire cult in Iran.** The cult of the sacrificial fire goes back to the Indo-European period. The Skt. word *agni*, 'fire,' has for its equivalent Latin *ignis* and Slavonic *ogni*. The most prominent divinity after Indra in the Vedas is Agni and more than 200 hymns and several stray passages are devoted to his glorification. The Iranian word for fire as well as for the Yazata presiding over fire is Atar. Among both the Indians and the Iranians fire occupies the central position in all rituals. The priest who tended the fire is known by a common name among both the peoples. Among the Indians he is *atharvan* and among the Iranians *āthravan*, literally meaning, 'one who tends fire.' A litany is composed in honour of Atar and he is celebrated many other passages. The ninth month of the year and the ninth day of the month are named after Atar.<sup>449</sup>

Atar, or Fire, is most frequently called the son of Ahura Mazda in the Younger Avestan texts. The devout hunger in heart to reach Mazda through him as a mediary.<sup>450</sup> Asha Vahishta's association with the fire continues and they are often together. As the most holy symbol of his faith, the house-lord prays that the sacred element may ever burn in his house.<sup>451</sup> We have already seen that the Avesta speaks of some fires consecrated by the pre-Zoroastrian kings in Iran. The Avestan works refer to the *dāitya gātu*, 'proper place,' for the fire and the Old Persian Inscriptions speak of the *āyadanā* as the places of worship.<sup>452</sup> The bas-relief sculpture at Naksh-i-Rustam over the royal tomb shows an altar with fire on it. Herodotus, the earliest of the Greek writers on Persia, however, informs us that the Persians did not erect temples in his days,

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445 Yt15.7-17, 23-41.

446 Yt15.19-21.

447 Yt15.1.

448 Yt15.56.

449 Y16.4.

450 Y36.1.

451 Y62.3; Ny5.9.

452 Bh. 1,14.

but sacrificed unto the elements sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and wind on the summits of mountains.<sup>453</sup> Dino, the contemporary of Alexander, does not mention the fire-temples and says that the Persians worshipped in the open air.<sup>454</sup> It may be that the early writers did not come across temples in Iran, in the Greek sense of the term. But there must certainly have been some kind of structures to protect the sacred fire from being extinguished. Strabo<sup>455</sup> for the first time mentions in Cappadocia places dedicated to fire, and speaks of enclosures with fire altars in the centre. No sacrifices, we are told, were offered to any divinity without the accompaniment of the invocation of fire. These altars, we are further informed by Strabo, were filled with ashes over which the sacred fire burned day and night. The Magi, he adds, tended the holy flames, and with Baresman twigs in their hands daily performed their devotions for about an hour.<sup>456</sup> Pausanias (A.D. 173) corroborates this statement from his personal observation in Lydia.<sup>457</sup> Xenophon and Curtius Rufus acquaint us with the practice of carrying fire on portable altars in religious processions.<sup>458</sup>

**Atar is both the genius of fire and the element fire itself.** As the fire dwells in every house, he is constantly spoken of in the Rig Veda as the lord of the house. The Yasna in the manner calls him the lord of all houses.<sup>459</sup> He is the great Yazata.<sup>460</sup> He is the most bountiful,<sup>461</sup> renowned name<sup>462</sup> the beneficent warrior, and full of glory and healing.<sup>463</sup> Besides being the angel that presides over fire, Atar is also fire as such. The two concepts are often so mixed up together that it becomes difficult to distinguish between the blazing fire burning upon the altar and the angel that personifies it. The difficulty is still more increased when we see the fire on the hearth conceived of as speaking and blessing as a person. The householders pray that the fire may ever burn and blaze in their houses.<sup>464</sup> In the Vedas, Agni is a friend of the

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453 Herod. 1.131.

454 Cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protreptica*, 5. 65.1.

455 60 B.C.

456 Strabo, p. 733.

457 Pausanias, 5.27.5, 6.

458 *Cyropaedia*, 8. 3. 11-13; *History of Alexander* 3. 3. 9; see Edwards, "Altar (Persian)" in *ERE*. 1. 346-348.

459 Y17.11.

460 Ny5.4.

461 Y1.2.

462 Vsp. 9.5.

463 Ny5.6; Sr. 1.9; 2.9.

464 Ny5.8, 9.

man who entertains him as a guest and feeds him with fuel.<sup>465</sup> The fire of Mazda, likewise, solicits devotional offerings from those persons for whom he cooks the evening and the morning meal, he looks at the hands of all passers-by, to see if they bring some present for him or not, even as a friend for a friend. When the faithful bring to him fuel, dry and exposed to the light, he is propitiated, and in the fulfillment of his wish blesses the votary with a flock of cattle and a multitude of men, an active mind and an active spirit, and a joyous life.<sup>466</sup> During the three watches of the night Atar wakes up the master of the house, the husbandman, and calls Srosh for help.<sup>467</sup> Here also it is not so much the angel Atar that acts, as it is the fire itself, for the master of the house and the husbandman are asked to wash their hands and bring fuel to it, lest the demon Azi should extinguish it.<sup>468</sup> The man who responds with alacrity, and is the first to wake up and tend the fire with dry wood, receives Atar's blessings.<sup>469</sup> The man who sacrifices unto fire with fuel in his hand, with the Baresman in his hand, with milk in his hand, with the mortar for crushing the branches of the sacred Haoma in his hand, is given happiness.<sup>470</sup> Phoenix of Colophon (280 B.C.), cited in Athenaeus, speaks of the fire ritual of the Magi and mentions the Baresman.<sup>471</sup> In the litany to the fire, the faithful are enjoined to feed the fire with fuel that is dry and well exposed to the light,<sup>472</sup> and Strabo tells us that the fire-priests fed the sacred fire with dry wood, fat, and oil; and he further adds that some portions of the caul of the sacrificed animal were also placed on it.<sup>473</sup>

**Atar's boons.** Atar is invoked to grant well-being and sustenance in abundance, knowledge, holiness, a ready tongue, comprehensive, great, and imperishable wisdom, manly valour, watchfulness, an innate offspring worthy to sit in the assembly and work for the renown of his house and village, town and country, and for the glory of his country, name and fame in this world, as well as the shining, all-happy paradise of the righteous.<sup>474</sup> Whoso does not treat the fire well displeases Ahura

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465 R.V. 4.2.6; 4.10.

466 Y62.7-10; Ny5.13-16.

467 Vd18. 18-22.

468 Vd18.19-21.

469 Vd18.26, 27.

470 Y62.1; Ny5.7.

471 Athenaeus, 12. p. 530.

472 Y62.10; Ny5.16.

473 Strabo, p. 732.

474 Y68.4-6; Ny5.10-12.

Mazda.<sup>475</sup> Zarathushtra blesses King Vishtaspa that he may be as resplendent as the fire.<sup>476</sup>

**His work.** When Mithra goes on his usual round in his golden chariot, Atar drives behind him along with the other divine personifications.<sup>477</sup> Like Agni who knows the paths leading to the gods,<sup>478</sup> Atar shows the most upright path to those who lie not unto Mithra.<sup>479</sup> When Angra Mainyu breaks into the creation of righteousness, Atar in company with Vohu Manah opposes the malice of the Evil Spirit.<sup>480</sup> When Yima, reft of his senses through the Kingly Glory, revolts from Ahura Mazda, the Glory departs from him and he falls to destruction.<sup>481</sup> It can well be imagined that the monster Azhi Dahaka should strive to capture the departed Glory, but Atar intervenes and vanquishes him.<sup>482</sup>

What causes grief to Atar. Angra Mainyu has created the inexpiable crime of burning or cooking dead matter,<sup>483</sup> and the Vendidad enjoins capital punishment for those who commit it.<sup>484</sup> We are informed that the Persians considered it a mortal sin to defile fire by blowing it with the mouth, or by burning dead matter over it.<sup>485</sup> The Achaemenian monarch Cambyses roused the indignation of his countrymen when he burnt the corpse of King Amasis at Sais.<sup>486</sup> It is, therefore, a crime to bring back fire into a house in which a man has died, within nine nights in winter and a month in summer.<sup>487</sup> Highly meritorious is the deed of bringing to the fire altar the embers of a fire desecrated by dead matter, and great shall be the doer's reward in the next world, when his soul has parted from his body.<sup>488</sup> Elaborate rules are accordingly laid down for the purification of the fire defiled by the dead.<sup>489</sup> There is no purification

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475 TdFr. 22, 23.

476 Yt2.4.

477 Yt10.127.

478 RV. 10.98.11.

479 Yt10.3.

480 Yt13.77,78.

481 Yt19.34-36, 38.

482 Yt19.46-50.

483 Vd1.16.

484 Vd8.73, 74.

485 Strabo, p. 732; Ctesias, *Persica*, 57; Nicolas Damascenus, Frag. 68; FHG. 3.409.

486 Herodotus, 3.16.

487 Vd5.43, 44.

488 Vd8.81, 82.

489 Vd8.73-80.

for the man who carries a corpse to the fire.<sup>490</sup> In the case of every pollution of the pure element. Atar is inexorable.

### NAIRYOSANGHA

**Mazda's celestial herald.** Nairyosangha corresponds to the Vedic Narashamsa, generally applied to Agni as his epithet. He is expressly spoken of as a Yazata,<sup>491</sup> and is well-shaped.<sup>492</sup> Like Agni who is often called the messenger of gods between heaven and earth, Nairyosangha is the messenger of Ahura Mazda.<sup>493</sup> When the Evil Spirit introduces disease and death in the world, Ahura Mazda dispatches him as his envoy to Airyaman to come with his healing remedies.<sup>494</sup> He is invoked along with Atar, for he is Atar's associate. He is termed the offspring of sovereignty<sup>495</sup> and as such he is entitled to go in Mithra's chariot with Sraosha.<sup>496</sup> He has his Fravashi.<sup>497</sup>

### ARDVI SURA ANAHITA

**The angel of waters.** Ardvi Sura, who bears the standing epithet *anāhita*, 'undefiled,' is the name of a mythical river as well as that of the female divinity of the waters. She resides in the starry regions.<sup>498</sup> This deity of the heavenly stream gets recognition of the Achaemenian kings, and is included in the extremely short list of the Iranian divinities expressly mentioned in their inscriptions.<sup>499</sup> Classical writers speak of her sanctuaries founded at Pasargadae, Ecbatana, Kangavar and other places.<sup>500</sup> At a very early date her cult migrates to distant countries and is there assimilated to Artemis, Aphrodite, Athene-Minerva, Hera, Magna Mater, Ishtar, and Nanaia.<sup>501</sup> She overleaps the barriers of Mount Alburz and gains her votaries in the far-off lands of East and West, where occasionally her cult degenerates into obscene rites. Herodotus who confuses her with Mithra says that her cult came to Iran from the Semites of Assyria and Arabia.<sup>502</sup>

490 Vd7.25-27.

491 Y17.11.

492 Y57.3.

493 Vd19.34.

494 Vd22.7, 13.

495 Y17.11; Ny5.6.

496 Yt10. 52.

497 Yt13, 85.

498 Yt5.85, 88, 132.

499 Art. Sus. a; Ham.

500 See Gray, *op cit.*, p. 57, 58; Fox and Pemberton, *op. cit.*, 34-39, 58, 66, 68, 79.

501 Gray, *ib.*, p. 57.

502 Herod. 1.131.

She is celebrated in one of the longest Yashts and in 65th chapter of the Yasna. She is described as the most courageous, strong, of noble origin,<sup>503</sup> good, and most beneficent.<sup>504</sup> Ahura Mazda has assigned to her the work of guarding the creation, like a shepherd guarding his flock.<sup>505</sup> The eighth of the year and the tenth day of the month are named after waters of Ardvi Sura.<sup>506</sup>

**Her image in words found in the texts, corresponds with her statue in stone.** The text gives a fine descriptive image of the female deity. She is a maiden of fair body, well-shaped, pure, courageous, tall, bright, beautiful, and glorious. Upon her head she wears a golden crown studded with a hundred stars and beautifully adorned, square golden earrings adorn her ears, a golden necklace decorates her neck, she wears a golden mantle, she has tightly girded her waist so that her beautiful breasts come out prominently, her white arms graced by elegant bracelets are stouter than a horse, she wears golden shoes, a rich garment of gold or of the skin of the beavers.<sup>507</sup> Pliny says that a statue made of solid gold was set up in the temple of Anaitis.<sup>508</sup> We have already seen on the authority of Berosus that Artaxerxes Mnemon (B.C. 404-358) introduced the worship of the images of Anahita among the Persians.<sup>509</sup>

**Ahura Mazda heads the list of the sacrificers who entreat her for various boons.** The Yasht dedicated to Ardvi Sura Anahita furnishes us with the names of those who have sacrificed unto her and begged of her various boons. The number of her supplicants exceeds that of any other angel. Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra invoke her, with Haoma and Baresman, with spells and libations, whereas the majority of her other votaries severally offer her a hundred stallions, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand sheep. Haoshyangha, Yima, Thraetaona, Keresaspa, Kavi Usa, Haosravah, Tusa, Vafra Navaza, Jamaspa, Ashavazdah, the son of Pourudakhshiti, and Ashavazdah and Thrita, the sons of Sayuzhdri, Vistauru, Yoishta, the members of the Hvova and Naotara families, Vishtaspa, and Zairi-vairi are all granted their diverse boons. These ask for sovereignty over all countries, victory on the battlefield, power to smite the adversaries in battle, to rout the sorcerers and fairies, the fiends and the demons; they pray likewise for bodily

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503 Yt5.15.

504 Yt5.130, 131.

505 Yt5.6, 89.

506 Y16.4.

507 Yt5.7, 15, 64, 78, 123, 126-129.

508 *Historia Naturalis*, 33, 4 (24) 82f.

509 Cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protreptica*, 5, 65, 3; Jackson, *Images and Idols (Persian)* in ERE. 7. 151-155; cf. Cumont, *Anāhita*, in ERE. 1. 414, 415.



health, wisdom to answer the riddles of heretics, and for riches and swift horses.<sup>510</sup> The boon that Ahura Mazda seeks is that he may win over Zarathushtra to think after his religion, to speak after his religion, and to act after his religion; the prophet in turn begs of her that he may gain to his side the mighty King Vishtaspa as a patron to embrace his religion.<sup>511</sup> The rulers and chiefs invoke her that they may defeat their enemies and smite the demons, sorcerers, and fairies, the warriors beg of her swift horses and bodily health and glory, the priests and their disciples pray for knowledge, the maids beseech her to grant them strong husbands.<sup>512</sup> Ardvi Sura Anahita bestows fruitfulness to women; she purifies the seeds of all males and the wombs of all females for bearing. Shes, as a divine bestower, gives easy childbirth to all females, and gives them right and timely milk.<sup>513</sup> Ardvi Sura likewise grants boons unto all, because it lies in her power to do so. The sacrificing priest implores her to come down from the stars to the sacrificial altar, and to grant riches, horses, chariots, swords, food, and plenty to men.<sup>514</sup> She gives health and increases flocks, possessions, and wealth.<sup>515</sup>

**She refuses to concede the wicked persons their wishes.**

Azhi Dahaka wickedly besought her to grant him a boon that he may make all the seven zones empty of men, and the Turanian Franrasyan sought her favour to secure the Glory, and the sons of Vaesaka implored her to grant that they may smite the Aryan nation by tens of thousands and myriads; Arejat-aspa and Vandaremainish craved for the defeat of King Vishtaspa, Zairivairi, and the Aryan nation; but Ardvi Sura Anahita refused to grant the evil wishes to these national foes of Iran.<sup>516</sup>

**The offerings of libations.** Ardvi Sura Anahita desires that men invoke her with libations and Haoma;<sup>517</sup> these libations are to be drunk by the priest who is well versed in religious lore, and not by any wicked and deformed person.<sup>518</sup> The faithful are to bring libations unto her at any time between the rising and the setting of the sun. Those brought to her after sunset do not reach her; on the contrary, they go to the demons, who revel in these misdirected offerings.<sup>519</sup> We are informed

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510 Yt5.21-27, 33-39, 45-55, 61-83, 98, 108-114.

511 Yt5.17-19, 104-106.

512 Yt5.85-87.

513 Y65.2; Yt5.2, 87; Ny4.3; Vd7.16.

514 Yt5. 130-132.

515 Y65.1; Yt5.1.

516 Yt5.29-31, 41-43, 57-59, 116-118.

517 Yt5.8, 11, 123, 124.

518 Yt5.92, 93.

519 Yt5.94, 95; Nr. 68.

that the man who dedicates these libations before sunrise or after sunset does no better deed than if he should pour them down into the jaws of a venomous snake.<sup>520</sup> Besides invoking Ardvi Sura Anahita as the Yazata of water, the waters themselves are collectively invoked to grant boons. Zarathushtra is asked to offer a libation to the waters and to ask from them riches, power, and worthy offspring,<sup>521</sup> a happy and a joyful abode in this world and the next, accompanied by riches and glory.<sup>522</sup> The faithful pray that these waters may not be for those of evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds, and evil religion, neither for the tormentors of their friends, neighbours, relatives, and priests.<sup>523</sup> Nor may they be for their evil-wishers,<sup>524</sup> nor for thieves and robbers, murderers and sorcerers, buriers of the dead, jealous and niggard, and heretics and wicked persons.<sup>525</sup>

**Animal sacrifices to Anahita.** Strabo relates the mode of sacrificing to the waters. The sacrificial animal, we are told, is taken to the bank of a river or a lake; a ditch is formed into which the animal is killed. The pieces of meat are then placed on myrtle or laurel, and holding tamarisk twigs in his hands, the priest pours oil mixed with honey and milk on the ground and chants the sacred formulas. Great care is taken that no drop of blood falls into the water while the animal is being immolated; nor must the mixture of oil, honey, and milk be poured into water.<sup>526</sup> This precaution is taken lest the waters be defiled.

**Any defilement of the waters evokes Ardvi Sura's displeasure.** It is sinful to contaminate the waters. Such an act incurs great displeasure on the part of the genius of waters. Those who wilfully bring dead matter to the waters become unclean for ever and ever.<sup>527</sup> If a man while walking or running, riding or driving, happens to see a corpse floating in a river, he must enter the river and go down into the water ankle-deep, knee-deep, waist-deep, nay even a man's full depth if need be, and take out the decaying body and place it upon the dry ground exposed to the light of the sun.<sup>528</sup> Herodotus informs us that the Persians do not make water, wash or bathe in a river.<sup>529</sup>

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520 Nr. 48.

521 Y65.11.

522 Y68.13, 14, 21.

523 Y65.6.

524 Y65.7.

525 Y65.8.

526 Strabo, p.732.

527 Vd7.25-27.

528 Vd6.26-29.

529 Herod. 1.138.

**Ardvi Sura's chariot.** Like some of the Yazatas, Ardvi Sura Anahita has a chariot of her own, in which she drives forth in majesty. She holds the reins in her own hands, and controls four great chargers who are all of white color, of the same stock, and who smite the malice of all tyrants, demons, wicked men, sorcerers, fairies, oppressors, as well as those who are wilfully blind and wilfully deaf.<sup>530</sup> The text enables us to understand the allegorical statement regarding the steeds that are yoked to her chariot, for we are told that the four chargers of Ardvi Sura are the wind, the rain, the cloud, and the sleet; and it was Ahura Mazda who made them for her.<sup>531</sup>

### APAM NAPAT

**His nature and work.** This Indo-Iranian divinity of waters seems very early to have been eclipsed by Anahita, who remains the chief genius presiding over waters in the cult. Apam Napat's Vedic counterpart has an aqueous as well as an igneous nature. In the association of the Avestan Apam Napat with the fire angel Nairyosangha, Spiegel sees traces of this secondary nature.<sup>532</sup> Apam Napat literally means 'the offspring of waters,' and, like the Vedic genius, lives beneath the waters.<sup>533</sup> He is the exalted lord and sovereign, the shining one, and the swift-horsed.<sup>534</sup> The waters are addressed as females. Apam Napat in the Vedas is nourished by females.<sup>535</sup> The Avestan texts speak of him as the lord of females.<sup>536</sup> He is the most prompt to respond when invoked,<sup>537</sup> and co-operates with Vayu and distributes the waters on earth.<sup>538</sup> He furthers the riches of the countries and allays misfortunes;<sup>539</sup> and when the Kingly Glory escapes from the contest of Atar and Azhi Dahaka to the sea Vourukasha it is Apam Napat who takes and protects it.<sup>540</sup> This Yazata is also credited with having made and shaped men.<sup>541</sup>

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530 Yt5.11, 13.

531 Yt5.120.

532 *Arische Periode*, 192, 193, Leipzig, 1887; see Gray, Apam Napat, in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vol. 3, p. 18-51; and in *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p. 133-136.

533 Yt19.52; RV. 8.43.9.

534 Y1.5; 2.5; 65.12; 70.6; Yt5.72; 19.51.

535 RV. 2.35. 3, 5.

536 Yt5.72; 19.52.

537 Yt19.52.

538 Yt8.34.

539 Yt13.95.

540 Yt19.51.

541 Yt19.52.

## AHURANI

**Another water genius.** A female Yazata, though of no great importance, is Ahurani, corresponding to the Vedic Varunani. She impersonates the Ahurian waters.<sup>542</sup> She is invoked in company with the sea Vourukasha and other waters.<sup>543</sup> The faithful devotee prays that if he has offended her in any way, he is ready to expiate his sin by an offering of the libations.<sup>544</sup> She is implored to descend in person and grace the sacrifice with her presence and be propitiated by it.<sup>545</sup> She is likewise invited to come with her gifts of health, prosperity, renown, the enlightenment of thoughts, words, and deeds, and for the well-being of the soul.<sup>546</sup> She is asked to give offspring that will further the prosperity of the house, village, town, and country and add to the renown of the country.<sup>547</sup> Riches and glory, endurance and vigour of body, a long life and the shining, all-happy abode of the righteous are the boons that the devout ask from her.<sup>548</sup> The libations offered her are the most excellent and the fairest, and are filtered by pious men.<sup>549</sup> Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds also serve as her libations.<sup>550</sup> The libations offered to Ahurani cause joy to Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas.<sup>551</sup>

## ZAM

**The earth deified.** The Avestan term for earth is *zam*, from which the angel Zam, or Zamyad, derives her name. Her personality is very insipid as compared with Armaiti, who, as we have seen, has the earth under her care and is, in fact, a more active guardian genius of the earth than Zamyad. The twenty eighth day of every month is sacred to Zamyad.<sup>552</sup> The poet who composed the Yasht in honour of Zamyad does not sing the glory of his heroine, but occupies himself rather with a description of the mountains of the world,<sup>553</sup> and with the celebration of the Divine Glory that descends upon the Aryan race, symbolizing the

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542 Y38.3.

543 Y68.6.

544 Y68.1.

545 Y68.9.

546 Y68.3, 4.

547 Y68.5.

548 Y68.11.

549 Ny1.18.

550 Y68.3.

551 Y66.1.

552 Y16.6.

553 Yt19.1-7.

greatness of the kings and the consecrated piety of the sainted souls.<sup>554</sup>  
Cyrus, says Xenophon, sacrificed animals to the earth as the Magians directed.<sup>555</sup>

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554 Yt19.9-93.

555 *Cyropaedia*, 8.24.

## CHAPTER XXIII. FRAVASHIS

**The divine double in man.** The belief in a double of the living and dead, animate or inanimate things, which influences the objects or persons has prevailed among different peoples from primitive times.

The Egyptians believed in man's higher double whom they named *Ka*. The *Ka*, in the early period of history, was supposed to belong only to the kings, but later all human beings were believed to possess it. At the individual's death he went to his *Ka* who interceded for him with God, provided him with food and looked after his welfare and protection.

In the Vedas the disembodied spirits are called the *pitrs* or the Fathers. Two hymns are dedicated to them. They live in the third heaven. Their abode, which is situated in the south, is called *pitrloka*. They have extended to heaven and earth with Soma,<sup>1</sup> and inhabit earth, air, and heaven. They feast with the gods,<sup>2</sup> and ride on the celestial car with Indra and other gods.<sup>3</sup> They adorn the sky with stars and give light and darkness.<sup>4</sup> They are divided into lower, higher, and middle grades and are classed as earlier or later. They are invoked collectively,<sup>5</sup> or individually.<sup>6</sup> They are invited to come with Yama, Vivasvat, and Agni to partake of the offerings. They come in thousands to the sacrificial repast.<sup>7</sup> They are fond of Soma.<sup>8</sup> They are asked to give riches, offering, and long life to their sons.<sup>9</sup> They are implored to help, intercede, and protect their worshippers and not to harm their descendants.<sup>10</sup>

Plato taught that the sensual objects that constitute the world were but the imperfect copies or reproductions of the quasi-personified Ideas that constituted true reality. These transcendental Ideas the contents of the creative mind of God. This supreme Deity creates the World-Soul, whom we have equated with Spenta Mainyu in previous pages. The Avestan text says the Fravashis stood ready for help, when Spenta Mainyu created the world with Angra Mainyu.<sup>11</sup> It is expressly said in a

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1 RV. 8.48.13.

2 RV. 7.76.4.

3 RV.10.15.10.

4 RV. 10.68.11.

5 RV. 7.33.1; 10.15.8.

6 RV. 1.36.18.

7 RV. 10.15.10, 11.

8 RV. 10.15.1, 5, 6.

9 RV. 10.15.7-11; AthV. 18.3.14; 4.62.

10 RV. 10.15.2, 5, 6.

11 Yt13.28, 29, 76.

passage that the souls of the dead that have become the Fravashis of the righteous owe their origin to Spenta Mainyu and to Best Mind.<sup>12</sup> Plato likewise says that the World-Soul who bears the images of the Ideas, fashioned the World-Body or the creatures after the pattern of the Ideas.

Aristotle postulated a second independent principle in addition to the soul which moved the body and carried on rational activity. This is the spirit which constitutes the real essence of the individual. Man is thus divided into body, soul, and spirit.

Philo distinguishes between the soul and the pneuma. This pneuma which the Platonists, Aristotelians, and Stoics of his time call Nous, is the image of the deity and constitutes the true nature of man. The transcendent God reveals himself through the divine Ideas which are his thoughts and will, in the form of creative forces. As the Fravashis are not classed among the Yazatas, so these divine Ideas, says Philo, are not angels, but are personified abstract ideas. They manifest the energy of God. The Fravashis, as we shall see anon, help Ahura Mazda in the maintenance of the world, so these Ideas administer the work of God. They impart reality to the creation. Order in the creation is preserved through them. The Fravashis are not all of equal grade,<sup>13</sup> so these Ideas also are not of equal rank. The Fravashi represents Ahura Mazda in man, so does the rational part of the soul stand for the type of the Logos. Plutarch speaks of two principles in man, the spirit and the soul. The spirit, he says, is immortal, whereas the soul is not. In the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom, an emanation of God, selects from the divine Ideas those that are fit for actualization and creates them.

The dead, according to the early Roman belief, were gathered to a group of spirits called Di Manes. The idea of the Genius or the divine double accompanying every individual during his lifetime arose in the period of the Republic. The Genius lived with the individual as long as he lived. At death he lost his individuality and was gathered to the Di Manes. Under Greek influence the idea of individuality developed. The idea arose that the Genius lived after death. Di Manes became individualized protecting spirits instead of an individualized group. During the lifetime of man his Genius was divine, after his death the Genius continued to live as one of the Manes. During lifetime the Genius received divine honours, after death his Manes received offerings as a God. The Manes came down to earth and influenced the living members of the families among whom they had lived. They required propitiation.

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12 Yt22.39, 40; see also Kanga, *A New Interpretation of the Spenta Mainyu of the Gathas .... the Progenitor of Fravashis in the Avesta ....* Bombay, 1933.

13 Yt13.17.

Numenius of Apamea, writing in the second century, speaks of two souls in man. The one is rational and the other is irrational. The great Alexandrian theologian Origen (A.D. 185-254) speaks of the twofold psychic division of man. He says with others that man is endowed with a soul and a spirit. He then explains the relation between the soul and the spirit, which exactly resembles that between a man's soul and his Fravashi in the Avestan texts. The Fravashi of a man serves as an ideal, which the soul has to endeavour to realize. The soul has to strive after, imitate and emulate its Fravashi and ultimately become one with it after death. The texts speak of the souls of the dead that are the Fravashis of the righteous.<sup>14</sup> Origen's teachings help us to understand the final identity of the soul and the Fravashi. The spirit, he says, is like unto a master or director of the soul during lifetime. It applauds or accuses the soul for its good or bad deed, and reminds it of its duty. If the soul behaves according to the dictates of the spirit, it ultimately becomes the spirit, but if it revolts from the spirit, it remains divided from the spirit, when the bodily life of the individual ends. The soul, he says, is the spirit in the process of redemption. It has therefore to put off its nature as soul and become spiritual.

**What are the Fravashis.** A class of higher intelligences playing a most prominent part in the Mazdayasnian pantheon, and receiving sacrifices and adoration from the world of humanity, is that of the Fravashis, or guardian spirits and prototypes of mankind in its purest creation. The Gathas do not mention these beings, but the word fravashi, or fravarti, has a corresponding form in the Persian name of the Median King Phraortes (647 B.C.), and also of the Median rebel mentioned in the Behistan inscription of Darius.<sup>15</sup> The Yasna Haptanghaiti mentions them for the first time.<sup>16</sup> One of the longest of the Yashts is dedicated to the Fravashis. The last ten days of the year, including the five intercalary days, are specially set apart for their cult. Besides, the nineteenth day of every month is consecrated to their memory,<sup>17</sup> and the first month of the Iranian calendar receives its name after them.

The Fravashis, we have seen, resemble the Vedic Pitrs, the Roman Manes, or the Platonic Ideas. True though it is that they share some common traits with these and have striking resemblances to them, yet, after all, they are not wholly the same as these. The manifold nature of their cult offers a complicated and stubborn problem to students of Iranian theology.

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14 Y16.7; 26.7, 11; 71.23; Yt22.39.

15 Bh. 2.24, 31, 32, 35; 4.52.

16 Y37.3.

17 Y16.5.



Primarily, the Fravashis constitute a world of homonyms of the earthly creations, and they have lived as conscious beings in the empyrean with Ahura Mazda from all eternity. The multifarious objects of this world are so many terrestrial duplicates of these celestial originals. The Fravashis constitute the internal essence of things, as opposed to the contingent and accidental. Earthly creations are so many imperfect copies of these types. They are the manifestations of the energy of Ahura Mazda. When nothing existed and Ahura Mazda lived in his sublime singleness, he had the ideas, concepts of the material and spiritual creation which he contemplated creating in time. We have recognized the projection and manifestation of his will and thought and the emanation of his creative mind as Spenta Mainyu. Origen, the Alexandrian philosopher, is right when he says that the Logos represents the sum total of the world-thoughts of God. Spenta Mainyu is the embodiment of Ahura Mazda's prototypal ideas which are called Fravashis in the Avestan texts. Creation is the materialization of these idealized contents of his mind and through him of Ahura Mazda's mind. These idealized contents of the divine mind are the Fravashis and the creatures are their feeble replicas. The Fravashis are not mere abstractions of thought, but have objective existence and work as spiritual entities in heaven, like the angels and the archangels, until they come down to this earth voluntarily, as we may infer through later statements in the Pahlavi texts. They migrate to this world, and are immanent in the particular bodies that come into being after their divine images.

**Everything that bears the hall-mark of belonging to the good creation has its Fravashi.** Every object which has a name, common or proper, is endowed with a Fravashi. Ahura Mazda, the father of all existence, has his Fravashi, and so have the Amesha Spentas and the Yazatas.<sup>18</sup> Ahura Mazda's Fravashi is the greatest, the best, the most beautiful, the most courageous, the most wise, the most efficacious, the most righteous.<sup>19</sup> Even the sky, waters, earth, plants, animals, and all objects of the kingdom of goodness, are not without their special Fravashis.<sup>20</sup> Thus beginning from the supreme godhead down to the tiniest shrub growing in the wilderness, every object has this divine element implanted in it. It is only Angra Mainyu and the demons, who are evil by nature, that are without it.

As Spenta Mainyu is not a personal being, he has no Fravashi. On the other hand he seems to us to be the Fravashi of Ahura Mazda.<sup>21</sup> The

18 Y23.2; Yt13.80, 82, 85.

19 Y26.2.

20 Yt13.74, 86.

21 See my article "Ahura Mazda's Fravashi" in *The Indo-Iranian Studies in honor of Darab Sanjana*, p. 115, 116.

ideal of Fravashi implies imperfection in the person to whom it belongs. Man becomes perfect when his soul realizes and reaches its Fravashi. It is the same with the heavenly beings. Vohu Manah realizes his Fravashi, when he smites Aka Manah that stands for his imperfection. Vahishta will reach perfection when he will ultimately rout Druj. Ahura Mazda has contemplated, devised a perfect world of which the symbol is Spenta Mainyu. The world is yet evolving towards the perfect state which Ahura Mazda has thought out. Ahura Mazda, therefore, will realize his Fravashi or Spenta Mainyu, when Angra Mainyu, the father of imperfection, will perish and the world will be a new world, a better world, a perfect world, an ideal world.

**During the lifetime of the individual, his Fravashi accompanies him to this earth.** When a child is born its Fravashi that has existed from all eternity now comes down to this earth as the higher double of the child's soul. The soul is the ego proper, the real I-ness. Every individual soul is accompanied by its Fravashi.<sup>22</sup>

This Fravashi acts as a guardian spirit, a true friend, and an unerring guide of the soul. Here is the divine voice of an infallible monitor who now advises and now admonishes the soul, now applauds its action, and now raises a voice of warning at a threatening spiritual danger. This divine agent in man, we may infer, sits enthroned by the side of the soul as an ideal ever attracting the soul towards herself. This ideal goal is the one towards which the soul should strive. Though living in the tabernacle of clay on earth with the soul, and in the midst of the storms of passion and vice, the Fravashi remains unaffected and untouched, ever pure and ever sinless. From the time the soul embarks on its unknown voyage to this world, as we can judge from Zoroastrian teachings, its Fravashi leads it, day and night, to the path of safety, and warns it of the rocks and shoals, storms and cyclones. If it is off the track, the Fravashi hoists the danger signal. The bark moves smoothly so long as the soul follows the wise counsels of its guide. But as soon as it revolts from the heavenly pilot, it exposes the bark to danger at every turn. The vessel now drifts along on the unmapped ocean without any one at the helm to direct it to the right course, is tossed on the roaring waves, is left to the mercy of the changing wind, and is in danger of being wrecked.

The soul alone is responsible for the good or evil deeds done in this world, and it receives reward or retribution in the next world according to its desert. At the death of the individual when the soul thus advances to meet its fate, its guardian Fravashi returns to the celestial realm, but lives now an individualized life as the Fravashi of a certain person who has lived his short span of life on earth.

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22 Y26.4; 55.1.

**Qualities of the Fravashis.** The Fravashis are usually designated as the good, valiant, and holy. They are the liberal, the most valiant, the most holy, the most powerful, the most mighty, the most effective.<sup>23</sup> They are the swiftly moving when invoked, the bestowers of victory, health, and glory.<sup>24</sup> Their friendship is good and lasting, and they are beautiful, health-giving, of high renown, and vanquishing in battle.<sup>25</sup> They are efficacious, the most beneficent, and the smiters of the arms of the tyrant foes.<sup>26</sup> They are girt with the blessings of piety as wide as the earth, as long as a river, and as high as the sun.<sup>27</sup> They are the strongest in moving onwards, the least failing wielders of weapons, the invulnerable, the shield-bearing, clad with iron helmets and weapons.<sup>28</sup> Their power and efficiency are simply inconceivable and beyond description.<sup>29</sup>

**Their work.** Like the higher celestial beings, the Fravashis are allotted their respective tasks in the creation of Ahura Mazda. They are the ones who stood ready for help to the godhead when the two spirits first met to create the universe.<sup>30</sup> It is through them that Ahura Mazda maintains the sky and the earth.<sup>31</sup> Ahura Mazda expressly is stated as saying that, had they not rendered him help, animals and men could not have continued to exist, because the wicked Druj would have smitten them to death, except for the guardianship of the Fravashis.<sup>32</sup> The waters flow, and the plants spring forth, and the winds blow through their glory.<sup>33</sup> Through their radiance and glory females conceive offspring, and have easy childbirth.<sup>34</sup> Through them it is that Ahura Mazda forms and develops the organs of child in the womb of its mother, and protects it from death;<sup>35</sup> moreover, patriotic sons destined to win distinction are born unto women on their account.<sup>36</sup> They first

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23 Yt13.75.

24 Yt13.23, 24.

25 Yt13.30.

26 Yt13.31.

27 Yt13.32.

28 Yt13.26, 45.

29 Yt13.64.

30 Yt13.76.

31 Yt13.1, 2, 9, 22, 28, 29.

32 Yt13.12, 13.

33 Yt13.14.

34 Yt13.15.

35 Yt13.11, 22.

36 Yt13.16.

gave movement to the waters that stood for a long time without flowing.<sup>37</sup> The trees that stood without growing began to grow, and the stars and the moon and the sun that had stood motionless, owing to the opposition of demons, received their movement through them,<sup>38</sup> and have ever since gone along their paths of progress owing to the influence of the Fravashis.<sup>39</sup> They protect the river Ardvi Sura Anahita<sup>40</sup> and watch over the sea Vourukasha and the stars Haptoiringa.<sup>41</sup> They uphold the sky and the waters, and the earth and the cattle, and preserve the lives of the children.<sup>42</sup>

**Fravashis help the living.** These spiritual forces wield great power in both the worlds, rendering great help to those who invoke them, and keeping watch and ward about the abodes in which they once had lived. In the field of battle, moreover, they help the fighting armies to victory. Awful and vanquishing in battle, they smite and rout the foes, and bring triumph unto those who invoke them.<sup>43</sup> The heroes invoke them to succour them in the battle.<sup>44</sup> When the ruling chief who finds himself in danger on the battlefield invokes them with offerings, they come flying unto him like winged birds and fight gallantly in his behalf against his foes. They become to him a weapon and a shield; they guard him on every side, protecting him with the strength that a thousand men would use in guarding one man, so that neither sword, nor club, nor arrow, nor spear, nor any stone may injure him.<sup>45</sup> They rush down in great numbers in the thick of the battle to crush the foes.<sup>46</sup> They cause havoc in the battlefield, and smite the malice of the demons and wicked men.<sup>47</sup> The nations against whom the Fravashis march are smitten by their fifties, and hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands, and myriads.<sup>48</sup> Both the vanquisher who pursues his foe and the vanquished who flees from the field invoke them to grant them swiftness in running.<sup>49</sup> The Fravashis turn to help that side which has first invoked

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37 Yt13.53, 54.

38 Yt13.55-58.

39 Yt13.16.

40 Yt13.4.

41 Yt13.59, 60.

42 Y23.1.

43 Yt13.40.

44 Yt13.23, 27.

45 Yt13.63, 69-72.

46 Yt13.40.

47 Yt13.33.

48 Yt13.48.

49 Yt13.35.

them with uplifted hands and heart-felt devotion.<sup>50</sup> They hasten for help to the righteous, but for harm to the wicked.<sup>51</sup> They are ever anxious to aid their kindred and countrymen, and they give course to the waters so that they may flow to the land they inhabited during their lifetime.<sup>52</sup> The householders pray that the august Fravashis may come to their houses with blessings of righteousness as wide as the earth, as long as the rivers, and as high as the sun.<sup>53</sup>

Ahura Mazda advises Zarathushtra to invoke them for help whenever he finds himself in danger.<sup>54</sup> When the supplicant needs help of some specific nature, he invokes the Fravashi of one whom he knows to be specially endowed with the corresponding virtue during his lifetime. For instance, Yima's Fravashi is invoked to enable one to withstand drought and death,<sup>55</sup> because that illustrious king is reported to have driven away these calamities from his kingdom. The Fravashi of king Thraetaona who is generally confounded by the later writers with Thritha, the reputed inventor of medicine, is invoked for help against itches, fevers, and other diseases.<sup>56</sup> Similarly the Fravashis of other great men are invoked for help in the respective sphere in which they are believed to have been conspicuous during their lives.<sup>57</sup>

**Fravashis of the dead long for sacrifices.** These are eager to communicate with the living among whom they have lived on this earth. They desire that their descendants and kindred shall not forget them. They seek their praise and prayer, sacrifice and invocation.<sup>58</sup> They come down flying from their heavenly abode to the earth on the last ten days of the Zoroastrian calendar, which are especially consecrated to them, and interest themselves in the welfare of the living.

**Fravashis bless if satisfied, but curse when offended.** The Fravashis are entreated by the living to be propitious to them. They are besought to come down from the heavenly regions to the sacrifices held in their honour. If they are propitiated with offerings, they bless their supplicants with riches and flocks, horses and chariots, and with offspring who will serve God and their country.<sup>59</sup> Those who piously

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50 Yt13.47.

51 Yt13.39.

52 Yt13.65-68.

53 Y60.4.

54 Yt13.19, 20.

55 Yt13.130.

56 Yt13.31; WFr.2. 2.

57 Yt13.104, 105, 132-138.

58 Yt13.49, 50.

59 Yt13.51, 52.

solicit their benediction receive these in abundance, for the Fravashis bring down unto them from the spiritual world the very best of blessings. But those who neglect or offend them are cursed; and their curse is terrible indeed. It brings untold harm to the family. Loving as the Fravashis are when propitiated, they become dreadful when offended.<sup>60</sup> Yet they never harm until they are vexed.<sup>61</sup> The wise, therefore, propitiate them to gain their goodwill, and placate them to allay their wrath. The householder prays that they may walk satisfied in his house, that they may not depart offended from his abode, but may leave the house in joy, carrying the sacrifice and prayer to Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas.<sup>62</sup> They are implored to accept the offerings and be propitiated thereby.<sup>63</sup> They are asked to come with riches as widespread as the earth, as vast as the rivers, as high as the sun, in order to help the righteous and harm the wicked.<sup>64</sup> Those who honour them attain to power and greatness.<sup>65</sup>

**Fravashis of the righteous ones of one's family, clan, town, or country invoked individually.** The survivors of the dead commemorate the pious memory of their departed ancestors. The members of a family sacrifice unto their elders, the citizens laud their patriots and heroes, and the devout revere the sacred memory of their sainted dead. The latter part of the Yasht that is consecrated to the Fravashis treats of the great personalities of Iran that have illumined the pages of her history in various ways. The Fravashis of the righteous men as well as women of all times and places who have worked for the furtherance of righteousness, and who have contributed to the welfare of mankind are constantly commemorated.

**Fravashis of the righteous ones of all ages and all places invoked collectively.** These celestial beings are invoked in a body by the faithful. The supplicant generally winds up his prayers by announcing that he sacrifices unto the Fravashis of the righteous from the time of the first man, Gaya Maretan, up to the time of the advent of Saoshyant at the end of the world.<sup>66</sup> Not only are the Fravashis of the departed ones commemorated, but those of living persons, as well as those of persons that are-still to be born in future ages, are also equally honoured with praise and invocation.<sup>67</sup>

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60 Yt13.31.

61 Yt13.30.

62 Yt13.156, 157.

63 Yt13.145, 147.

64 Y60.4.

65 Yt13.18.

66 Yt13.145.

67 Y24.5; 26.6; Vsp. 11.7; Yt13.21.

In addition to this, the righteous ones of all the Aryan countries, nay what is still more, even those who are righteous among the Turanians, the national foes of the Iranians, receive their share in this homage to the saintly ones.<sup>68</sup> The commemoration list ends with explicitly mentioning the righteous ones of all countries of the world.<sup>69</sup> The individual is thus taught to recognize the fellowship with the human beings of all ages and all places. Herodotus attests that a Persian does not pray for himself, but for the whole nation and his king.<sup>70</sup>

The faithful may infer from the spirit that runs through the Zoroastrian scriptures that there are no breaks in the life story of humanity. Each individual is a unit in the long line of countless generations between the first and the last man. He realizes his individuality in his own age and place. Each generation is the product of the past and parent of the future. It finds itself placed in the midst of religious, social, economical, and political institutions of the past and inherits the accumulated heritage of the wisdom and civilization of the collective humanity that has lived before it. The past has made the present in body, mind, and spirit; and the present has to make the future physically, mentally, and spiritually. No generation can live exclusively by itself and for itself. To the past it owes a deep debt of gratitude, to the future it is bound by parental duty. A wise parent instinctively works for the good of his children, and no age can be regardless of the material and spiritual welfare of those that are to follow it in time. Each age has its righteous persons by the million, who further the human progress. The Fravashis of such only are commemorated. Those that have willfully chosen to tread the path of wickedness and hamper the onward march of humanity towards perfection do not share this honour, the highest that collective humanity confers upon its dutiful children of all ages and places. The Pneuma, likewise, in the New Testament is not associated with unrighteous persons.

**Dual nature of the Zoroastrian ancestor-worship.** The commemoration of the Fravashis of the dead represents but one phase of ancestor-worship. As we have already seen, the spiritual prototype of man is something apart from and above his soul. It is the soul that constitutes the individuality of his person, and it is natural for the survivors to feel that they should look to the soul of the dead for the continuity of communication with them. The sacrifices and prayers offered to the Fravashis are primarily for soliciting their help and favour. Those offered to the soul of the dead on the anniversaries soon take a vicarious form and rest on the central idea that the performance

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68 Yt13.143.

69 Yt13.144.

70 Herod. 1. 132.

of rites by the descendants enables the soul of the dead to progress from a lower to a higher place in the next world. Thus man's Fravashi and soul both are thought to claim respectively their commemoration from the relatives of the departed one. These two distinct forms of ancestor-worship-the one of invoking the Fravashis of the dead for the good of the living, and the other of sacrificing unto the souls with the desire of contributing to their betterment in the next world-often overlap each other. The intermingling of the two becomes so complete that the souls and not the Fravashis are supposed to come down to the rituals even on the days originally consecrated to the Fravashis.



## CHAPTER XXIV. PERSONIFIED ABSTRACTIONS

**The infinity of time and the immensity of space personified.** Time and Space seem to have been the alternative answers to the early gropings of the primitive Iranian thinkers to find some solution for the problem of the origin of things in the universe; and these two elements, Time and Space, are incorporated in the Zoroastrian theology of Later Avesta after being shorn of the power assigned to them in the pre-Zoroastrian period. In the extant Avestan texts they hardly have any individuality. They are barren concepts sharing invocation along with the celestial beings and sanctified objects. The later works, however, speak of sects flourishing as late as the Sasanian period and even much later, who held these concepts as the highest categories in religious thought and drew the names of their sects from them.

**Zrvan Akarana.** This genius of Boundless Time, like several abstract ideas which are in course of time personified and yet are not classified among the Yazatas, is not listed as an angel. He is often invoked by name in company with Space and Vayu, the genius of wind.<sup>1</sup> He has made the path which the righteous or the wicked soul has to traverse,<sup>2</sup> and the plants grow in the manner he has ordained according to the will of Ahura Mazda and the archangels.<sup>3</sup>

The Avesta distinguishes sharply between the two different kinds of time, infinite and finite. The term *zrvan akarana*, 'boundless time,' is also used in its ordinary meaning of the unlimited time or eternity. It is said that Ahura Mazda created the sacred spell *Ahuna Vairya* in the Boundless Time.<sup>4</sup>

**Zrvan Daregho-khvadhata.** 'Time of Long Duration,' on the other hand, is a limited period portioned out from the Boundless Time. This finite time is also personified and is invoked by name along with Boundless Time.<sup>5</sup> The Younger Avestan texts do not furnish us with any data to enable us to form any idea of this concept, but we learn from the later scriptures that it refers to the world's cycle of twelve thousand years.

**Thwasha.** Space, or the infinite expanse, is faintly personified under the name *Thwasha Khvadhata*, or Sovereign Space. It is generally

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1 Y72.10; Vd19.13; Ny1.8.

2 Vd19.29.

3 Y13.56.

4 Vd19.9.

5 Y72.10; Ny1.8.

invoked along with the genius of time.<sup>6</sup> In one place it is depicted as going alongside of Mithra.<sup>7</sup> It is referred to by Eudemus, as quoted by Damascius, under its Greek pronunciation Topos, who says that the Magi name the cosmos by this name and from it are disjoined light and darkness. Like Time, it is not ranked among the angels.

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6 Y72.10; Vd19.13; Ny1.8.

7 Yt10.66.

## CHAPTER XXV. BAGHAS

**The divinities.** One of the names for divinity in general is Bagha, literally meaning 'dispenser.' We have seen that its history goes far back to the Indo-European period. In the Rig Veda, Bhaga is one of the Adityas, and one hymn is dedicated to him. Unlike the term Yazata, which retains its place as a divine appellation throughout the history of Zoroastrianism, Bagha soon loses its significance in the Avestan texts. The inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings do not speak of the heavenly beings as Yazatas, but they speak of them under the designation Bagha, as noted below. The Avestan texts, on the contrary, use the term bagha hardly six times throughout the extant literature, and by the time that we reach the Pahlavi period Bagha is used to represent the idea of divinity in general,<sup>1</sup> and also as a title of the Sasanian monarchs who zealously uphold the divine right of kings.<sup>2</sup>

Ahura Mazda himself is a Bagha.<sup>3</sup> Baga, the cognate of the Avestan Bagha, is most freely applied to Auramazda in the Old Persian Inscriptions. He is the greatest of all Bagas.<sup>4</sup> Besides the supreme godhead, Mithra is expressly mentioned as a Baga.<sup>5</sup> This does not exhaust the list of the Baghas, for, though not mentioned by name, the texts refer to others besides these two.<sup>6</sup> In the Later Avesta, compound forms of Bagha are also found, which also signify 'allotted by God.'<sup>7</sup> Bagabigna and Bagabukhsha, the names of persons; and Bagayadi, the name of a month, are the instances of the Baga compounds that are found in the Inscriptions.<sup>8</sup>

Bagha plays an insignificant part as Fate personified in the Younger Avesta, although this personification becomes more pronounced as the personification of Fate in the later Pahlavi period. There is, however, a solitary passage in the Vendidad, and it may be late, which tells us that a man who is drowned in water or burnt by fire is not killed by water or fire, but by Fate.<sup>9</sup> Cambyses said that it was not in the power of man to counteract Fate.<sup>10</sup>

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1 Sg. 4.8, 29; 10.69; Dk. SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8.15.1, p. 34.

2 Sg. 10.70; cf. Mordtmann, *Zur Pehlevi-Münzkunde* in ZDMG. 34.1-162.

3 Yt10.10; 70.1.

4 Dar. Pers. d.1; Xer. Elv. 1; Xer. Van. 1.

5 Yt10.141; Artaxerxes Ochus, Pers. a (b). 4.

6 Yt10.141; Bh. 4.61, 62; Dar. Pers. d.3; Xer. Pers. b.3; Xer. Van. 3.

7 Vsp. 7.3; Yt8.35; Vd19.23; 21.5, 9, 13.

8 Bh. 4.18; 1.13.

9 Vd5.8, 9.

10 Herodotus, 3.65.

The term Bagha, moreover, is also frequently used in its ordinary meaning, 'portion,' 'allotment.'

## CHAPTER XXVI. PRAYERS AND RITUALS

**The nature of the Younger Avestan prayers.** The Younger Avestan propounds a ritualistic religion.<sup>1</sup> The texts do not contain short or long continuous compositions that may be classed as prayers which can help man to give expression to the various feelings, moods, desires, and aspirations that agitate the deepest depth of his heart and the innermost recesses of his mind, beget emotional exaltation and devotional fervour in him, and inspire him to strive after an ideal life. Only some scattered sentences and short passages, occurring at rare intervals, can be collected from the mass of the liturgical texts to serve such a purpose. Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas, Yazatas, Fravashis, souls of the righteous men and women of all times, celestial and terrestrial beings, sun, moon, stars, sky, fire, wind, earth, water, rain, time, space, trees, mountains, rivers, places, fields, the season festivals, years, months, days, periods of the day, religion, customs, spells, texts, chapters, verses, metres, virtues, qualities, thoughts, words, deeds, intellect, self, priests, warriors, agriculturists, artisans, laymen, teachers, pupils, ritual implements and various other objects are enumerated by name with or without their attributes and functions, and receive praise and homage. They are all alike commemorated with the common word *yazamaide*, 'we worship,' in innumerable passages that pass as insipid, laudatory prayers.

Yasna Haptanghaiti or the Yasna of Seven Chapters, the earliest of prose compositions, made in the Gathic dialect, in the Younger Avestan period, contains more passages that can be termed proper prayers than any other text in the Avestan literature. It is significant to note that the supplicants who pray for several boons ask them from Haoma, Ardvi Sura and her waters, Fire, Mithra, and Sraosha rather than from Ahura Mazda himself.

We have collected references to such passages as can be termed prayers and classified them under the headings: Supplicatory, Confessional, Devotional, Benedictory, Imprecatory, and Exorcising prayers. We shall now turn to these.

**Supplicatory prayers.** The faithful pray unto the Amesha Spentas and ask them to extend their protection, as they say they do not see others than the archangels who can take them under their protection.<sup>2</sup> The Yazatas are asked to grant something greater and better and nobler than what their supplicant asks.<sup>3</sup> Haoma is asked to keep his votaries far

1 For rituals see Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*; Pavri, 'Ancient Ceremonies' in *Iranian Studies*, p. 194-229, Bombay, 1927; Haug, *Essays on the Parsis*, (3rd. ed.) p. 393-409.

2 Y58.5.

3 Y62.14.

from harm,<sup>4</sup> and give them foreknowledge of thieves and murderers and wolves for their safety.<sup>5</sup> It is prayed that Sraosha and Ashi may dwell in the house in which Haoma is the honoured guest and that Ashi may give joy there.<sup>6</sup> Haoma is implored to bestow upon his praisers the healing remedies and victory over their enemies.<sup>7</sup> He is further asked to give bodily health and long life,<sup>8</sup> courage and victory<sup>9</sup> that the righteous may be the courageous smiters of falsehood and malice.<sup>10</sup> In the end, the divinity of the sacrificial plant is asked to give the shining, all happy abode of the righteous.<sup>11</sup> Mithra is besought to give swiftness to the teams of his worshippers, strength to their own bodies so that they may watch successfully their enemies and smite them,<sup>12</sup> and also the demons and sorcerers and fairies and those that are seemingly blind and hearingly deaf.<sup>13</sup> Those that have not lied unto the angel of truth ask him to free them from distress and to give them riches and strength, victory and happiness, name and fame<sup>14</sup> and joy.<sup>15</sup> Sraosha is asked by his invokers to grant strength to their horses and soundness of body and strength to themselves, so that they may be able to defeat the jealous and inimical.<sup>16</sup> He is asked to protect them in both the worlds from the onslaughts of the demons of wrath and death.<sup>17</sup> The fire is asked to give abundant well-being, abundant sustenance, and abundant life, together with knowledge, holiness, a ready tongue, spiritual understanding, and comprehensive, great, and imperishable wisdom.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, he is asked to give manly valour, which is ever afoot, sleeplessness, watchfulness, offspring that gives support, ruling over the region, belonging to the assembly, thoroughly developed, of good intellect, that may further his house, village, town, and country, and the renown of the

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4 Y9.28.

5 Y9.21.

6 Y10.1.

7 Y10.9.

8 Y9.19.

9 Y9.27.

10 Y9.20.

11 Y9.19; 11.10.

12 Yt10.94, 114.

13 Yt10.34, 59.

14 Yt10.23, 33, 58.

15 Yt10.34, 59.

16 Y57.26.

17 Y57.25.

18 Y62.4; Ny5.10.

country.<sup>19</sup> Weal and immortality are the other boons that are asked from the fire.<sup>20</sup> Good reward and good renown and fulfilment of one's wishes now and forever and the shining, all-happy abode of the righteous are asked from the fire of Ahura Mazda.<sup>21</sup> Ardvi Sura is invoked to grant heroic sons of innate wisdom that may further one's house, village, town, country, and the religion of the country.<sup>22</sup> The waters of Ardvi Sura are asked to give riches and virtuous offspring that may not wish ill of anyone;<sup>23</sup> and they are asked to give radiance and glory, soundness and vigour of body, wise offspring, happiness, and life longer than long.<sup>24</sup> The Zaoatar or the sacrificer asks the waters on behalf of those that have participated in the sacrifice to imbue friends and pupils, teachers and learned men and women, youths and maidens and workmen and all Mazdayasnians with the wisdom to follow the path of truth.<sup>25</sup> The shining, all happy abode of the righteous is the last coveted boon that the waters are asked to grant.<sup>26</sup>

**Confessional prayers.** In the Confession of Faith the believer proclaims himself a Mazdayasnian Zoroastrian, an invoker of the Amesha Spentas; he ascribes everything good in this world to Ahura Mazda and he confesses that he is against the daevas.<sup>27</sup> He declares that the religion to which he belongs is the greatest and the best and fairest among all the existing religions.<sup>28</sup> He puts his faith in Ahura Mazda.<sup>29</sup> As a true Mazdayasnian, he bases his conduct of life upon good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and renounces evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds.<sup>30</sup> He further emphasizes that he belongs to good thoughts and not to evil thoughts, to good words and not to evil words, to good deeds and not to evil deeds, to religious obedience and not to heresy, to righteousness and not to wickedness, and so shall he be as long as the struggle between the rival spirits of good and evil lasts.<sup>31</sup> He

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19 Y62.5; Ny5.11.

20 Y58.7.

21 Y62.6; Ny5.12.

22 Y68.4, 5.

23 Y62.11.

24 Y68.11.

25 Y68.12, 13.

26 Y68.11-13.

27 Y12.1, 9.

28 Y12.9.

29 Vr5.3.

30 Y11.17; 12.8.

31 Y10.16.

praises righteousness.<sup>32</sup> The ideal of his life will be that he will endeavour to be like Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra and Frashaoshtra and Jamaspa and all those that have proved themselves to be the righteous and true benefactors of mankind and even like the good waters and trees and cattle.<sup>33</sup> He undertakes to protect the Mazdayasnian settlements from harm and drought,<sup>34</sup> and neither for the love of his body nor his life will he ever be a source of harm to them.<sup>35</sup> By his thoughts, words, and deeds, does he abjure and hate the chieftainship of the daevas, sorcerers, and those addicted to sorcery.<sup>36</sup> Thus will he denounce the guidance of the daevas even as Zarathushtra did at the command of Ahura Mazda when they communed together.<sup>37</sup>

**Devotional prayers.** The devout pray that through good mind and through rectitude and through the deeds and words of wisdom they may go near Ahura Mazda.<sup>38</sup> They pay homage and acknowledge themselves his debtors.<sup>39</sup> As Ahura Mazda has thought and spoken and decreed and done what is good, so do they give unto him, praise him, and worship him.<sup>40</sup> They long to approach him through righteousness and devotion,<sup>41</sup> or through fire.<sup>42</sup> Through the best and fairest righteousness they yearn to see him and attain to his perfect friendship.<sup>43</sup> They worship with their bodies and their lives.<sup>44</sup> They dedicate themselves unto him and beseech him to be even their lives and bodies.<sup>45</sup> They love him and lean upon him for strength, and ask him to make them cheerful and happy and give them life-long joy in him.<sup>46</sup> Ahura Mazda is the king of both the worlds and the faithful aspire to attain unto his Kingdom for ever;<sup>47</sup> and for all time do they seek fellowship with him and Asha, in this world and

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32 Y11.18.

33 Y12.7.

34 Y12.2.

35 Y12.3.

36 Y12.4.

37 Y12.5, 6.

38 Y36.4, 5; 39.4.

39 Y13.5; 36.4, 5; 39.4.

40 Y13.5.

41 Y13.6; 39.5.

42 Y36.1, 3.

43 Y60.12.

44 Y37.3.

45 Y41.3.

46 Y41.4.

47 Y41.2.



the next.<sup>48</sup> With the sacrifice and invocation and propitiation and glorification they long to approach the Amesha Spentas,<sup>49</sup> and they proffer unto them sacrifice and prayer with thoughts and words and deeds and with all good things of life and with their beings and with the lives of their bodies.<sup>50</sup> The worshipper strives to make Armaiti's devotion his own.<sup>51</sup> The votaries of Haoma lay before him the Gathas and the songs of praise and the savoury viands and are eager to dedicate their bodies to him in order to obtain from him wisdom and happiness and purity.<sup>52</sup> Mithra is implored by those who sacrifice unto him to come to them for help and freedom, joy and mercy, healing and victory, well-being and sanctification.<sup>53</sup> The pious dedicate their thoughts, words, and deeds, and their property, cattle, and men unto Spenta Mainyu;<sup>54</sup> and unto Staota Yasna their property and bodies for protection.<sup>55</sup>

**Benedictory prayers.** The priest who helps the Zaoatar or the officiating priest at the sacrifice, invokes blessings upon him that, what is of onefold help to himself, may be of twofold and threefold and tenfold unto his senior,<sup>56</sup> and that better than the good may come unto him.<sup>57</sup> The Zaoatar reciprocates that the better than the good may come to his junior partner and worse than the bad may not overtake him.<sup>58</sup> The sacrificer blesses every Mazdayasnian family with a good home and a joyful home and a happy home.<sup>59</sup> It is prayed that greatness may come unto him who feeds the fire with ceremonial offerings.<sup>60</sup> The fire blesses the householder that a flock of cattle and a multitude of men attend upon him and he may have an active mind and an active spirit be his and that he may live with a joyous life the nights that he may live.<sup>61</sup> The family priest invokes joy and blessings of the righteous, good nature, truth, prosperity, power, and glory for the house in which he offers

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48 Y40.1.

49 Y14.1; Vr5.1.

50 Y11.18; 13.4; 14.2; Vr5.2.

51 Y12.2.

52 Y10.18; 11.10.

53 Yt10.5; Ny2.14.

54 Y58.6.

55 Y58.2, 3.

56 Y11.9.

57 Y59.30.

58 Y59.31.

59 Y68.14.

60 Y62.1.

61 Y62.9, 10; Ny5.15, 16.

prayers.<sup>62</sup> He prays that the religion of Zarathushtra be firmly established in the house,<sup>63</sup> and the august Fravashis of the righteous may come to the house with blessings of righteousness as wide as the earth, as long as the river, and as high as the sun for the fulfilment of the wishes of the good and for the withstanding of the wicked.<sup>64</sup> His further blessings for the family are that obedience may smite disobedience in his house, peace may dispel strife, charity may rout niggardliness, devotion may smite heresy, and the truth may rout falsehood,<sup>65</sup> and he concludes by praying that happiness may come to the house and that the offspring and the friendship of Ashi, the genius of fortune, may never leave it.<sup>66</sup> The Fravashis of the righteous shower their blessings upon the inmates of a house in which they are propitiated that a flock of animals and a solid chariot may be in their houses.<sup>67</sup>

**Imprecatory prayers.** The pious pray that the wicked person may be deprived of his power and driven out from the creation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>68</sup> Haoma is asked to take away from the malicious that may be in the house, village, town and country, the strength of their hands and feet, and their eyesight, to cover up their intelligence, and confound their minds.<sup>69</sup> He is further asked to smite the robbers, tyrants, heretics, courtezans, and slanderers.<sup>70</sup> It is prayed that the waters of Ardivi Sura may not be for men of evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds, and evil religion, and for the tormentors of friends, neighbours, kinsmen, and priests, and for those who rob the good of their property and bring harm to them.<sup>71</sup> Calamities and destruction are invoked upon the thieves and robbers, murderers and oppressors of the righteous, sorcerers and corpse-buriers, vicious and misers, heretics and tyrants.<sup>72</sup>

**Exorcising prayers.** Spells are recited to deliver men and women and children from the supposed influence of the malignant spirits. The formula recites the names of diseases of the demons and condemns them to flee to the north or perish. In the name of Airyaman, the priest

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62 Y60.2.

63 Y60.3.

64 Y60.4.

65 Y60.5.

66 Y60.7.

67 Yt13.52.

68 Y60.9.

69 Y9.28, 29.

70 Y9.30-32; 10.12.

71 Y62.6, 7.

72 Y62.8.

says avaunt to sickness and death, demons and foes, heretics and oppressors,<sup>73</sup> the two-legged brood of snakes and wolves, arrogant and proud, slanderous and inimical, and evil-eyed,<sup>74</sup> worst liars and witches, courtezans and the wind from the north.<sup>75</sup> The priest recites the spell to purify the way over which a dead body is carried or to give cleanliness to a man who has touched a corpse or to one who seeks purification by ceremonial ablutions, and commands the demoness of defilement and her evil brood to flee and perish in the region of the north and never more appear to defile the creation of righteousness.<sup>76</sup>

**Priestly functionaries who conducted the sacrificial ceremonies.** The priestly hierarchy that was firmly established during this period was headed by the high priest, who was called Zartoshtrotema. He is invoked by this name.<sup>77</sup> The Rig Veda speaks of about sixteen priests that performed ceremonies and we have in the Avestan texts eight different functionaries who were employed in the performance of the Yasna ceremony. These are *zaotar*, 'sacrificer,' *hāvanān*, 'the pounder of Haoma,' *ātravakhsh*, 'tender of the fire,' *fraberetar*, 'carrier of things,' *āberetar*, 'bringer of things,' *āsnātar*, 'cleanser,' *raethwishkara*, 'auxiliary priest,' and *sraoshāvarez*, 'master of rituals.'<sup>78</sup>

**Revival of the Indo-Iranian rituals.** With the return of the Indo-Iranian divinities come also the ceremonies that their early votaries had celebrated before their separation. The Yasna Haptanghaiti already refers to the Haoma ceremony,<sup>79</sup> the invocation of the souls of the dead, and their Fravashis.<sup>80</sup> The chief ceremony is the Yasna corresponding to the Vedic Yajnya, the more important part among both being the preparation of the Haoma-Soma juice. The Haoma ceremony is shorn of its early gross element, yet the resemblance between it and the Soma cult is so great that they are spoken of in identical words. We shall quote a few of the more important passages to show the close parallelism between the Haoma-Soma cult. The celestial plant, it is said, was brought upon earth by birds. It is *girishta* or *giri jāta* and *parvatā vrddhah*, say the Vedic texts, and the Avesta says it is *bareshnush paiti gairinām* and *paurvatāhva vīraodha*, that is,

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73 Yt3.7.

74 Yt3.8.

75 Yt3.9.

76 Vd8.21, 72; 9.27; cf. Vd10.13, 14; 11.9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19; 20.7, 9; 21.18, 19; 22.21.

77 Y2.6; 3.8; 4.11; 6.5; 7.8.

78 Vr3.1; Yt24.15; Vd5.57, 58; 7.17, 18; G3.5.

79 Y42.5.

80 Y37.3.

growing on mountains. It is Av. *zairi*, and Skt. *hari*, meaning green or golden. It is passed through a sieve of the hairs of the tail of the sacred bull among the Iranians and from that made of sheep wool among the Indians. The extracting process is called Av. *havana* and Skt. *savana*. It is Av. *haomahe madho*, and Skt. *somyam madhu*, 'sweet juice of Haoma-Soma.' is Av. *baeshaza*, and Skt. *bheshaja*, 'healing.' The plant is deified among both and then it is called Av. *hvaresh*, and Skt. *svarshā* 'celestial,' it is Av. *hukhratu*, and Skt. *sukratu*, 'possessed of good intelligence.' It is Av. *verethrajā*, and Skt. *vrtrahā* 'victorious'.<sup>81</sup> Herodotus says that the Magi placed the consecrated flesh upon the tenderest grass,<sup>82</sup> and Strabo refers to the bundle of rods held by the Magi when he stood praying before the fire.<sup>83</sup> These are the *baresman* twigs employed in varying numbers in different ceremonies by the Zoroastrian priests. They correspond to the Vedic *barhis*, the carpet of straw upon which the heavenly lords sat when they attended the sacrifices.<sup>84</sup> Some of the minor ceremonies among both peoples resemble one another and same corresponding terms are employed for many ceremonial utensils, implements, and articles of offerings.<sup>85</sup>

**Animal sacrifices.** Meat was a principal article of diet among the Iranians and it was, likewise, used in sacred feasts and festivals, or in funeral repasts. We learn from the *Denkard* that the Pazag Nask dealt with the way in which an animal was to be slaughtered according to the religious rites.<sup>86</sup> The *Nirangistan*, has several pages devoted to the kind, quality, and size of the animal that was fit for a sacrificial offering about the way in which it was to be slaughtered, the sacred formulas to be recited while immolating the victim, about the manner in which different parts of the slaughtered animal were to be consecrated and dedicated to the various heavenly beings, and the way in which the consecrated viands were to be eaten at the close of the sacrifice. Like the flesh of an animal, fish was also used for sacrificial repasts.<sup>87</sup> The animals generally used in sacrifice were horses, camels, oxen, asses, stags, sheep, and birds.<sup>88</sup> We have already seen that kings and heroes sacrificed male horses, oxen, and small cattle to Ardivi Sura and Drvaspa. Small and large cattle, and winged birds are sacrificed unto

81 See Hodivala, *Indo-Iranian Religion* in The Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 4. 7-10, Bombay, 1924.

82 I. 132.

83 P. 733.

84 See article on *Barsom* by Mills and Gray in ERE. 2. 424, 425.

85 See Hodivala, *ib.*, 12-20.

86 Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8.6. 1, 2, p. 12, 13.

87 Nr., bk. 2.13.44; 20.15.16.

88 Athenaeus, 4, p. 145.

Mithra.<sup>89</sup> Verethraghna, we have noticed, received cooked repasts of cattle and Haoma received his share of the sacrificed animal. Xerxes sacrificed a thousand oxen at Hellespont to the Athene of Ilium, while the Magi offered libations to the sun, and to the Manes of the heroes.<sup>90</sup> When the great king came to the river Strymon, the Magi offered a sacrifice of white horses.<sup>91</sup> We have already seen that other classical writers speak of the horses sacrificed to the sun by the Persian kings. The most important form of the sacrifice among the Vedic Indians was, likewise, the *ashvamedha* in which horses were sacrificed. Cyrus, says Xenophon, sacrificed bulls to God, horses to the sun, and other animals to the earth.<sup>92</sup> Strabo tells us that the animal was garlanded and sacrificed at a clean place after reciting the dedicatory prayer. The victim was then divided limb from limb by the presiding priest and portions were distributed among the sacrificers. The divinity, it was believed, required the spirit of the victim. A little piece of caul was, however, put upon the fire.<sup>93</sup>

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89 Yt10.119.

90 Herod. 7.43, 53, 54.

91 *Ib.*, 7.113; cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 1. 385.

92 *Cyropaedia*, 8. 24.

93 P. 732; cf. Herod. 1. 132; see Edwards, *Sacrifice (Iranian)* in ERE. 11.18-21.

## CHAPTER XXVII. EVIL

**Dualism in evolution.** The original Gathic conception of the reality of evil is more emphasized by the theologians of the Later Avestan period, and the personality of the Prince of Evil becomes at the same time more pronounced. The hardest crux that confronts the Zoroastrian divines, as it does every theologian, is how Ahura Mazda, the father of goodness, can be made responsible for the existence of evil in this world. The prophet has already taught the existence of an independent power as the originator of evil. The idea inherent in this teaching is now elaborately worked out until every object that is branded by man as evil is ascribed to the agency of the Evil Spirit. A ban is put upon everything in the universe that is opposed to Asha's realm of righteousness, even to the detail of noxious creatures and poisonous plants. They belong to the evil creation. Herodotus and Plutarch inform us that the Magi held it a virtue to kill noxious creatures.<sup>1</sup> From the standpoint of evil, therefore, it is easy to understand that such a usurper king as Azhi Dahaka, who took a fiendish delight in feasting his eyes upon the most atrocious crimes perpetrated under his rule, was sent to this world by the arch-fiend as the apostle of destruction and death.<sup>2</sup> Hail and hurricane, cyclone and thunderstorm, plague and pestilence, famine and drought, in fact everything that harms man and decimates population, belong to the realm of evil. Angra Mainyu has cast an evil eye upon the good creation of Ahura Mazda, and by his glance of malice introduced corruption and disease into the universe.<sup>3</sup> The opposition between the Good and Evil Spirits is so pronounced that distinctive linguistic expressions are now used for both. There are separate words used for the organs, movements, and speech of the Good Spirit and his creation, and for those of the Evil Spirit and his world; and this rule applies to wicked men in general as well as to the noxious creatures. The man of the kingdom of goodness 'speaks,' but the wicked one 'howls' or 'roars'; the former 'eats,' but the latter 'devours'; the good one 'walks,' but the wicked 'rushes'; the one has a 'head,' but the other has a 'skull'; the one dwells in a 'house,' the other in a 'burrow.'<sup>4</sup> Thus the antithesis between good and evil becomes even more and more prominent. It is indelible. Evil remains as real a factor as good, as independent, and as active. There is a pronounced antithesis and an active warfare between the two rival spirits, and reconciliation or peace between them is impossible. Every prayer in the Younger Avesta begins

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1 Herod. 1. 140; Plutarch, *Is. et Os.* 46.

2 Y9.8; Yt17.34.

3 Vd22.2, 9, 15.

4 See Frachtenberg, *Etymological Studies in Ormazdian and Ahrimanic words in the Avesta* in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 269-289; Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 218, 219.

with the exhortation to propitiate the Good Spirit and abjure the Evil One. Man is warned to guard himself from the wiles of Angra Mainyu.

**The earliest non-Zoroastrian writers speak of Zoroastrianism as the religion of dualism.** Early Greek writers, who, we can safely assert, were contemporary at least with the Later Avestan period, speak of the religion of Iran as based on the belief in two rival spirits. Hippolytus relates, on the authority of Aristoxenus (about 320 B.C.), that the Persians believed in two primeval causes of existence, the first being Light, or the father, and the second, Darkness, the mother.<sup>5</sup> On the authority of Diogenes Laertius we have the assurance that Eudoxus and Aristotle wrote of these two powers as Zeus, or Oromazdes, and Hades, or Areimanios.<sup>6</sup> Plutarch (A.D. 46-120) narrates, in the same tone, that Oromazdes came from light, and Areimanios from darkness. The Good Spirit created six archangels and other divine beings, and the Evil One created as a counterpoise to them six arch-fiends, and other infernal creatures, and the devil's activity of counter-creation extended also to the physical world, for in opposition to the creation of good animals and plants by Oromazdes, he brought forth noxious creatures and poisonous plants. His opposition permeates the entire creation and will last up to the end of time, when he will be defeated and be made to disappear.<sup>7</sup> Plutarch himself further mentions, on the authority of Theopompus (400 B.C.), the loss of whose excursus dealing with Zoroastrianism in antiquity is still to be deplored, that the good God ruled for three thousand years, and the Evil One for another three thousand years. At the expiration of six thousand years, they entered into a conflict which goes on, and which will end in the final annihilation of the fiend.<sup>8</sup> Diogenes confirms this statement.<sup>9</sup> All this has its historic bearing upon the whole realm of Zoroastrianism in its relation to the great religions of the world, for each and all of them have had to deal with the problem of evil in its application to the life of man.

### ANGRA MAINYU

**The titles of the Evil Spirit.** The Gathic epithet *angra* is turned into a proper name. Angra Mainyu is the Demon of Demons,<sup>10</sup> who has crept into the creation of the Good Spirit.<sup>11</sup> His standing epithet is 'full

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5 *Refutatio Haeresium*, 1.2.

6 *Prooem* 8.

7 *Is. et Os.* 46, 47.

8 *Is. et Os.* 47.

9 *Prooem.* 9.

10 *Vd19.1*, 43.

11 *Yt13.77*.

of death.<sup>12</sup> He is all death.<sup>13</sup> He is deadly.<sup>14</sup> He is of evil glory.<sup>15</sup> He is the worst liar.<sup>16</sup> He is a tyrant,<sup>17</sup> of evil creation,<sup>18</sup> of evil religion,<sup>19</sup> and of evil knowledge,<sup>20</sup> and of malignity,<sup>21</sup> as well as inveterately wicked.<sup>22</sup> He is the doer of evil deeds.<sup>23</sup> The north is the seat of Angra Mainyu,<sup>24</sup> where he lives with his evil brood in the bowels of the earth to make onslaughts on the world of righteousness.<sup>25</sup>

**The counter-creations of Angra Mainyu.** The Avestan texts persistently speak of the creations of the two spirits, Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu;<sup>26</sup> moreover the first chapter of the Vendidad contains a list of the good places created by Ahura Mazda, over against which the Evil One counter-created various physical and moral evils to thwart the peace and happiness of the good creation. It is the Evil Spirit who has infected the bodies of mortals with disease and decay;<sup>27</sup> it is from him that come deformities of body;<sup>28</sup> and he is ever perpetrating wrong against the world of goodness. Angra Mainyu corrupts the moral nature of man. He it was who called into existence the tyrant Azhi Dahaka for the destruction of the creatures of righteousness.<sup>29</sup> The rival spirits have divided their sphere of possession and activity of the wind of Vayu, a part of which belongs to the Good Spirit, whereas the other part is included in the kingdom of the Evil Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

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12 Y61.2; Yt3.13; 10.97; 13.71; 15.56; 17.19; 18.2; 24.43; Vd1.3; 19.1, 43, 44; 22.2; Aog. 4.28.

13 Yt13.71.

14 Yt22.2.

15 Yt24.43.

16 Yt3.13.

17 Vd19.3.

18 Y61.2; Vd19.6.

19 WFr. 4.2.

20 Aog. 4.

21 Yt17.19; Vd11.10; 19.1, 5, 9, 12, 44.

22 Y27.1; Yt10.118; 13.71, 78.

23 Yt19.97.

24 Vd19.1.

25 Yt19.44.

26 Y57.17; Yt11.12; 13.76; 15.3, 43, 44; Vd3.20; 13, 1, 2, 5, 6, 16.

27 Vd20.3; 22.2.

28 Vd2.29, 37.

29 Y9.8.

30 Y22.24; 25.5; Yt15.5, 42, 57; Sr1.21; 2.21.



**Angra Mainyu grovels before Zarathushtra.** In his malicious thoughts and teachings, his intellect and faith, his words and deeds, and in conscience and soul, the Evil Spirit is exactly and diametrically the opposite of Ahura Mazda.<sup>31</sup> Angra Mainyu practises deceitful wiles, and incites man to rebel against the divine authority. As the arch-betrayer he allures man to abjure the Good Spirit. On the advent of Zarathushtra, as the true prophet, this soul of righteousness stupefies him, because he sees in the earthly embodiment of Ahura Mazda's will his eternal foe, who will by holy teaching and preaching threaten the overthrow of his infernal empire of wickedness.<sup>32</sup> The Prince of Darkness, in tempting Zarathushtra, promises him the sovereignty of the world, if he will only reject the faith of Mazda; but the prophet replies that he will not renounce the excellent religion, either for body or life.<sup>33</sup> Angra Mainyu determines to overthrow such faith on the part of the prophet to whom he is so opposed, and resolves to wreak vengeance upon him. He clamours for the death of the sage, and lets loose legions of demons to assail him, but the chosen of Ahura Mazda is found to be an impregnable rock, not to be moved. The blessed one scatters his assailants in flight. They rush howling and weeping to the regions of darkness, or hell.<sup>34</sup> Defeated and dismayed, the Evil Spirit bewails that Zarathushtra alone has accomplished what all the Yazatas together were unable to do; in other words, he is the only one who has baffled the devil and his infernal crew.<sup>35</sup> At the beginning of creation the recital of Ahuna Vairya [ahunwar] by Mazda put Angra Mainyu to flight,<sup>36</sup> and as a consequence the Spirit of Evil crouches in abject servility to Mazda's prophet, who has hurled him backward into the darkest abyss.

The demon-binder Takhma Urupi turned Angra Mainyu into a horse and rode him all around the earth during his reign of thirty years.<sup>37</sup> The Fravashis force him to give way to the blows of Spenta Mainyu.<sup>38</sup> He bewails that Asha Vahishta frustrates his efforts to spread sickness.<sup>39</sup>

**Angra Mainyu's final defeat.** Since the time when the Evil Spirit broke into the world of Righteousness,<sup>40</sup> a constant war is being waged

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31 Y19.15.

32 Yt17.19.

33 Vd19.6, 7.

34 Vd19.46, 47.

35 Yt17.19, 20.

36 Y19.15.

37 Yt15.12; 19.29.

38 Yt13.12, 13, 71.

39 Yt3.14-17.

40 Yt13.77.

against the hosts of Wickedness by the powers of Righteousness, as shall be to the last when Righteousness shall triumph over Wickedness. The faithful, accordingly, pray that Wickedness may be routed and Righteousness may rule for all in all. Every child of man has had his share in this universal strife and struggle. Those that through ignorance have not been steadfast in the path of goodness, and have been led to revolt from their creator, are those that have been victims to the clutch of Angra Mainyu. As the world progresses towards the true knowledge of the excellent Faith, mankind will embrace Righteousness and thus weaken the power of Wickedness. The perfection of mankind will thus come to pass; and finally the Father of Evil and all imperfection, having been deserted by his misguided followers, will be impotent. This will be the final crisis at which the Sovereign of Evil, bereft of power, will bow to his final fate and flee,<sup>41</sup> and will hide himself forever in the bowels of the earth.

## DAEVAS

**The Demons.** The *daevas*, or demons, are of both sexes, as are their heavenly counterparts. Over against the *vispe Yazata*, or 'all angels,' stand in sharp contradistinction the *vispe Daeva*, 'all demons.'<sup>42</sup> The greatest of all the demons is Angra Mainyu,<sup>43</sup> who has created these fiends in opposition to the Yazatas. The archangelic host of the Amesha Spentas, and some of the angel band of Yazatas have each a Daeva as a special adversary engaged in thwarting the divine will. Plutarch states that when Oromazdes created the six archangels, Areimanios counter-created an equal number of fiends.<sup>44</sup> The arrangement, however, is perfunctory, if we examine the Younger Avestan text. The personality of the majority of these demons is not sharply defined, and the account of their activities, as found in the Later Avestan texts, is very vague and meagre. Some are mentioned simply by name, without any account of their function being added; it is only through the help of the Pahlavi literature that we can get a more definite idea of their place in the infernal group. Not only are the wicked spirits spoken of as the Daevas, but also the nomadic hordes of Gilan and Mazendaran, realms designated as Mazainya in the Avesta, that constantly burst with their infidel hordes of invaders into the settlements of the faithful, menacing their properties, devastating their fields, and carrying away their flocks, are branded as Daevas.<sup>45</sup> The wicked sodomite is equally a daeva, and a worshipper of daevas, as well as a paramour of daevas; he is a daeva

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41 Yt19.96.

42 Y27.1; 57.18; Yt9.4; 19.81; Vd10.16.

43 Vd19.1, 43.

44 Is. et Os. 47.

45 Y27.1; 57.17; Yt5.22; 9.4; 10.97; 13.137; Vd10.14, 16; 17.9, 10.

during life, and remains a daeva after death.<sup>46</sup> All moral wrongs and physical obstacles are personified and catalogued in this scheme of demonology. To every disease is assigned its own demon as having been the cause of the malady. The germs of disease and death, of plague and pestilence, are spoken of metaphorically as Daevas. The Fire of Ahura Mazda serves to kill such Daevas by thousands wherever the scent of the holy flame may spread.<sup>47</sup> It is said that if the sun were not to rise, and the light of day should not curb their power to do harm under the cover of darkness, the Daevas would kill all living beings.<sup>48</sup> In connection with such ideas of the power of evil, it may be understood that the Avestan texts teach that the ground wherein are interred the corpses of the dead is infested with myriads of the demons, who feed and revel on the spot as a consequence, for such a place is their favourite haunt.<sup>49</sup> Even the dropping of nails and hair on the ground is an act of uncleanness that is equivalent to offering a sacrifice to the demons, as spirits of pollution. Such a careless act of uncleanness results in the production of demoniacal foes to health and purity such as lice and moths, which are equally called the daevas.<sup>50</sup> The northern regions are peopled with the demons.<sup>51</sup> They are evil, bereft of good, ill-behaved, evil-doing, worst liars, most loathsome, and most wicked.<sup>52</sup>

The number of the demons is said to be legion, even though the Avestan texts mention only about forty-five more explicitly by name. As in other cases of the fiendish crew of hell, many of these evil powers have no story in particular to tell, but we shall deal with the more important ones in the sections that immediately follow.

**The work of the demons.** The demons have all been allotted their special provinces of work in both the worlds. Active work and strenuous exertion on the part of man deal them blows; for example, when the farmer tills his fields and sows his corn, the demons are dismayed. When the corn grows the demons start in dismay and faint, they grumble and rush to their hovels.<sup>53</sup> They spread uncleanness on the earth,<sup>54</sup> that the creatures may thereby suffer, and attack and overpower

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46 Vd8.31, 32.

47 Vd8.80.

48 Yt6.3; Ny1.13.

49 Vd7.55-58.

50 Vd17.2, 3.

51 Vd7.2; 19.1.

52 Y12.4.

53 Vd3.32.

54 Yt10.50.

him who moves about without the sacred girdle.<sup>55</sup> They sought for the death of Zarathushtra.<sup>56</sup> They prevented the stars, the moon, and the sun from moving, until the Fravashis showed them their path.<sup>57</sup>

**Means to confound them.** The faithful recite the holy spells to dispel the demons. Zarathushtra himself, at the outset, baffled them by uttering the holy word.<sup>58</sup> As stated elsewhere, these evil spirits are put to flight at the recital of the Ahuna Vairya, Ashem Vohu, Gathic stanzas, and the other spells,<sup>59</sup> and the drinking of the consecrated Haoma, moreover, brings destruction to them.<sup>60</sup>

**Those who strike terror into the hearts of the demons.** Ahura Mazda is invoked to smite the demons,<sup>61</sup> and Haurvatat, Ardvi Sura, Drvaspa, and the Fravashis are invoked by the kings and heroes to the same end.<sup>62</sup> Asha Vahishta smites the worst of the demons by thousands,<sup>63</sup> while they tremble before Sraosha, who wields a club in his hands to strike upon their skulls.<sup>64</sup> Three times each day and each night Sraosha comes down upon this earth with his terrible mace to fight against the demons.<sup>65</sup> Mithra likewise levels his club at their skulls and smites them down.<sup>66</sup> The kings Haoshyangha, Takhma Urupi, and Vishtaspa triumphed and ruled over the demons.<sup>67</sup> Of course the demons are terrified at the birth of Zarathushtra.<sup>68</sup> They conspired to kill him,<sup>69</sup> but he routed them at the outset.<sup>70</sup> Not one of them, nor all together, could compass the hallowed sage's death;<sup>71</sup> they vanished overcome at his sight.<sup>72</sup> In fact all those demons that roamed about on

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55 Vd18.54, 55.

56 Vd19.3.

57 Yt13.57.

58 Yt13.90.

59 Yt3.7, 10; 4.2; 11.6; Vd10.13-16; 18.16.

60 Y10.6.

61 Y27.1.

62 Yt4.2; 5.22, 26, 68, 77; 9.4; 13.45, 137.

63 Yt2.11, 12; 3.10, 14.

64 Vd19.15.

65 Y57.31, 32.

66 Yt6.5; 10.26, 97, 128-133.

67 Yt19.26, 28, 29, 84.

68 Vd19.46.

69 Vd19.3.

70 Yt13.89.

71 Yt8.44.

72 Yt19.80.

the earth in human form sank beneath the earth at the appearance of the prophet.<sup>73</sup> For all these reasons it may be understood that in the realm of the hereafter the demons quail at the sight of a righteous soul advancing towards heaven, in the same manner as a sheep trembles in the presence of a wolf.<sup>74</sup>

**The Daeva-worshippers.** In opposition to the faithful who are called Mazdayasnians, or the worshippers of Mazda, all unbelievers and wicked persons are styled the Daevayasnians, that is, as being worshippers of the demons. The two worlds of the righteous and the wicked are rent asunder. The barrier between them cannot be broken. Mazda extends his helping hand to the righteous, but leaves the wicked to themselves. Nay he hates them.

As the *dregvant*, or the wicked one, stands in antithesis to the *ashavan*, the righteous one, in the sphere of morals, so the Daevayasnian, or worshipper of demons, stands in contradistinction to the faithful Mazdayasnian in the matter of belief. Both words, *dregvant* and *daevayasna*, are Zoroastrian synonyms also of heretic. The life of a Daevayasnian is not of equal value with that of a Mazdayasnian; this is shown in the Avesta by the fact that the new surgeon who intends practising among the Mazda-worshippers must first prove his skill on three of the Daeva-worshippers; and if his operations are successful he may then be given permission to practise among the faithful, but if his tests prove fatal he is to be disqualified forever.<sup>75</sup> In regard to acts of worship, moreover, those misguided sacrificers who bring libations unto Ardvi Sura after sunset are classed among the worshippers of the Daevas, for the libations brought after the sun has set reach the demons.<sup>76</sup>

**Zoroastrianism is anti-daeva, or against the demons.** In the hymn of the Confession of Faith that the faithful recites from the time when he as a child is invested with the sacred cord [*kusti*], and which he thereafter repeats throughout his life at the opening of each daily prayer, he proclaims himself a worshipper of Mazda and a foe to the demons.<sup>77</sup> In this antagonistic attitude to all that is evil, he abjures everything relating to the demons and all that may accrue from them, exactly as the prophet Zarathushtra did.<sup>78</sup> One of the Nasks, or books of the Avesta, moreover, derives its name from this very expression and is

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73 Y9.15; FrW. 4.3.

74 Vd19.33; Aog. 19.

75 Vd7.36-40.

76 Yt5.94, 95; Nr.68.

77 Y12.1.

78 Y12.4-6.

called, accordingly, the *Vendidad*, more correctly ‘*Vidaeva-dāta*,’ or ‘law against the demons.’

### AKA MANAH

**The demon of Evil Mind.** Angra Mainyu has created Aka Manah, or Evil Mind, as a counterpoise to the Good Mind of Vohu Manah. The fiend occupies, after his father, Angra Mainyu, the second place among the whole host of demons. In spite of this, he figures very rarely in the Younger Avesta and we do not hear so much of his activity as in the Pahlavi works. Aka Manah, in the scene of the temptation of the prophet, joins in the stratagem of the demon Buiti to assail Zarathushtra, and as an impersonation of the baser side of the human mind he practises his wiles by guileful words of seduction for the sainted leader to abandon the course of righteousness, but the holy prophet baffles the fiend in his attempt.<sup>79</sup> This evil being, moreover, takes part unsuccessfully in the contest between the powers of the Good Spirit and the Evil Spirit to seize the Divine Glory.<sup>80</sup> The ethics of Zoroastrianism naturally demands that Aka Manah’s power shall be ultimately destroyed, and accordingly he will be vanquished by Vohu Manah at the end of the present cycle.<sup>81</sup>

### DRUJ

**The embodiment of wickedness.** In his inscriptions, Darius concentrates all evil in Drauga or Lie, as the Gathas did in Druj. Druj is feminine in gender and, like other demons, is a spirit.<sup>82</sup> This evil genius of Wickedness of the Gathic period preserves her original traits in the Yasna and Yasht literature, but it seems, if we judge rightly, that she gradually undergoes a transformation in the *Vendidad*. The Gathic prayer of the faithful to enable the true believer to smite Druj, and thereby to weaken the Kingdom of Wickedness, is still echoed in the first part of the Avestan period.<sup>83</sup> The house-lord, for example, invokes Asha to drive away Druj from his house, and the faithful asks for strength to enable him to smite Druj, while he likewise implores the good Vayu to remove the fiendish Druj.<sup>84</sup> King Vishtaspa, as a champion warring against all that is evil, drove away Druj from the world of Righteousness;<sup>85</sup> and even Ahura Mazda himself acknowledges that had not the Fravashis helped him, Druj would have overpowered the entire

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79 Vd19.4.

80 Yt19.46.

81 Yt19.96.

82 Yt1.19; 11.3; 13.71.

83 Y61.5; Yt1.28.

84 Y60.5; Yt24.25; Vd20.8.

85 Yt19.93.

world.<sup>86</sup> In the same manner we can conceive why Mithra should be invoked by cattle that have been led astray to the den of Druj by the wicked.<sup>87</sup> Druj is designated as of evil descent and darkness,<sup>88</sup> and devilish by nature.<sup>89</sup> Her abode is in the north.<sup>90</sup>

In her burrows gathered the demons.<sup>91</sup> It is through the help of the religion of Mazda that the Druj can be driven away from the world; this is expressly the saying of Ahura Mazda to his prophet.<sup>92</sup> At the final renovation Saoshyant, the saviour, will overcome the Druj among mankind;<sup>93</sup> she will then perish utterly and forever with her hundred-fold brood.<sup>94</sup>

**Other Drujes.** The Gathas knew but one Druj, the one that works in opposition to Asha. In the Later Avestan texts Druj becomes a class designation of minor female demons. These fiends are styled the Drujes, and Yt2.11 speaks of *vispe druj*, 'all drujes,' in the same strain as *vispe Yazata*, 'all Yazatas,' and *vispe daeva*, 'all demons.' From the sacred texts we learn that there are drujes who come openly, and there are those that come in secret, and again there are those that defile by mere contact.<sup>95</sup> The term druj itself is loosely applied likewise to other demons and wicked persons. Angra Mainyu himself is called a druj.<sup>96</sup> The demon Buiti, for instance, is designated as a druj,<sup>97</sup> and the demoniacal Azhi Dahaka, who was sent to this world by the arch-fiend as a scourge to the world of Righteousness, is called a druj. The daevas, moreover, when baffled in their foul attempt to kill Zarathushtra, howl out that he is a veritable druj to every druj.<sup>98</sup> The conviction of the pious that Druj will perish at the hands of Asha Vahishta is for all time firm, because Sraosha appears on the field as the best smiter of Druj.<sup>99</sup> Manthra Spenta routs the Druj.<sup>100</sup> In a lengthy disputation, moreover, Sraosha extorts from the fiendish impersonation, Druj, the secret of

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86 Yt13.12, 13.

87 Yt10.86.

88 Yt19.95.

89 Y9.8; 57.15; Yt5.34; Vd8.21; 18.31 f.

90 Yt3.17; Vd8.21.

91 Vd3.7.

92 Vd19.12, 13.

93 Yt13.129.

94 Yt19.12, 95.

95 Yt4.6.

96 Vd19.12.

97 Vd19.1-3.

98 Vd19.46.

99 Y57.15; Yt3.17; 11.3.

how mankind by their various misdeeds impregnate her and her brood of fiends; that is, in simpler language, he learns from her by what particular works man increases the Druj's domain of wickedness.<sup>101</sup>

**Druj as the personification of bodily impurity under the name Nasu.** Purity of body, mind, and spirit go together to constitute a righteous man. The Gathas pre-eminently speak of the ethical virtues and purity of soul. Asha presides over Righteousness, and Druj acts as the evil genius of Wickedness. The greater portion of the Vendidad, however, contains priestly legislation for purity of body, as well as of the soul, and gives elaborate rules for the cleansing of those defiled by dead matter. The uncleanness embodied in the very term druj is now personified as Druj Nasu; her abode is in the burrow at the neck of the mountain Arezura in the northern region, but at the same time her presence is everywhere manifest on this earth.<sup>102</sup> Her chief function is to spread defilement and decay in the world. Immediately after the death of an individual, when the soul leaves the body and decomposition sets in, the Druj Nasu comes flying from the north in the shape of a despicable fly, and takes possession of the corpse.<sup>103</sup> She is expelled, however, when a dog or the corpse-eating birds have gazed at the dead body,<sup>104</sup> and when certain pious formulas have been recited. In reply to the inquiry how one may best drive away the Druj Nasu that rushes from the dead and defiles the living, Ahura Mazda bids the faithful to recite the holy spells.<sup>105</sup> When the purifactory rites have been performed and the sacred formulas uttered upon the one defiled by the dead, the Druj Nasu becomes weaker and weaker and flees from one part of the body to the other, until finally she vanishes towards the northern regions.<sup>106</sup> Whoso offers for consecration water that has in any way been defiled by the dead, or proffers libations after the sun has set, even though with good intent, feeds the Druj and thereby hinders the work of righteousness.<sup>107</sup> The religion of Mazda, as a faith paramount, dispels best this Druj of defilement.<sup>108</sup>

**The barrier between the ashavans and dregvants is still impassable.** Though the concept Druj as the genius of wickedness has

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100 Yt11.3.

101 Vd18.30-59.

102 Vd3.7.

103 Vd7.1, 2.

104 Vd7.3.

105 Yt4.5; Vd10.1.

106 Vd9.12-26.

107 Vd7.78, 79.

108 Vd19.12, 13.



undergone a change in the Later Avesta, the adjectival form, *dregvant*, meaning wicked, as opposed to *ashavan*, righteous, remains unaltered. This designation is applied equally to bad men and to demons, in the same manner as it used to be in the Gathas. Angra Mainyu himself is *dregvant*.<sup>109</sup> The term is applied to Dahaka,<sup>110</sup> Arejataspa,<sup>111</sup> to all Daevayasnians, and to all of evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds. The world of righteousness is opposed by the world of wickedness.<sup>112</sup> The faithful pray that the righteous may have the power to act according to their will, but that the wicked may be bereft of it and be driven out from the world of the Holy Spirit.<sup>113</sup> Every true believer confesses that he belongs to the righteous and not to the wicked.<sup>114</sup> That the righteous may rout the wicked is the fervent prayer of the faithful.<sup>115</sup> Along with the employment of this term, the application of the derogatory title *ashemaogha*, literally meaning 'one who destroys Asha, Righteousness,' has come into vogue and is equally applied to the wicked. Perhaps there is this difference in usage; that *dregvant* is an ethical appellation of unrighteous men, whereas *ashemaogha* seems to be a theological and ritual designation of one who deviates from the prescribed teachings of the established church and who preaches heresy both as regards the doctrines of the faith and the rules of ceremonial. The *ashemaogha* is generally to be understood as equivalent to the unrighteous. Anyone who undertakes to cleanse a person defiled by the dead, without being well-versed in the Zoroastrian rules of cleanness, is also an *ashemaogha*. Such a man retards the progress of the world by his false deed.<sup>116</sup> If a priest of this character were to give a benediction, his words of blessing would go no further than his lips.<sup>117</sup> Whoso gives the consecrated food to a sinner of that type brings calamity to his own country.<sup>118</sup> He himself is a heretic, for he does not acknowledge any temporal or spiritual master.<sup>119</sup> Ahura Mazda accordingly advises Zarathushtra to recite the divine names when he wishes to rout the

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109 Y27.1; 61.5.Y27.1; 61.5.

110 Y9.8.

111 Yt5.109.

112 Y8.8; Vd18.76.

113 Y8.5, 6.

114 Y10.16.

115 Yt1.28.

116 Vd9.51, 52.

117 Vd18.11.

118 Vd18.12.

119 Yt13.105.

malice of any such apostate;<sup>120</sup> Vayu likewise enjoins upon him to utter his sacred names when in danger of being so harassed.<sup>121</sup>

## INDRA

**A god in the Vedas, a demon in the Avesta.** This demon furnishes us with an instance of degrading one of the great Indian divinities to the rank of a demon in the Iranian theology. He is mentioned in the Boghaz-keui tablets, recently discovered in Asia Minor, that are supposed to date from about 1400 B.C. His name occurs but twice in the extant Avestan text: he is mentioned as one of the ribald crew routed by Zarathushtra;<sup>122</sup> and in another passage a spell mentioning him by name is recited to drive away the demons.<sup>123</sup> These two Avestan passages, however, do not give us an inkling of the function of this fiend. In the Pahlavi period he assumes the part of Asha Vahishta's adversary.

## SAURVA

**Foe to the archangel Khshathra Vairya.** The Indian counterpart of the demon Sauvra is Sharva. The Avestan texts, which make two mentions of the name of this demon, do not give us his life-story.<sup>1896</sup> In the diabolical host he is the adversary of the archangel Khshathra Vairya, through whom shall be established the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.

## TAROMAITI

**She thwarts devotion.** This feminine demoniacal impersonation of heresy and counterpart of Spenta Armaiti is to be smitten by the recital of the sacred formulas; she will flee away as soon as the Airyaman Ishya prayer is uttered.<sup>124</sup> The faithful, in consequence, pray that the genius of devotion may dispel this demoness from their houses.<sup>125</sup>

## NAONGHAITHYA

**A demon of incipient personality.** Naonghaithya corresponds to the Vedic Nasatya, the epithet of the heavenly Ashvins, and is likewise mentioned in the Boghas-keui tablets, but is classed in the Zoroastrian works among the evil powers. The demon is twice

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120 Yt1.10, 11.

121 Yt15.51.

122 Vd19.43.

123 Vd10.9.

124 Yt3.8, 11, 15.

125 Y60.5.

mentioned in the Avestan texts,<sup>126</sup> but the passages in question shed no real light on the sphere of his activity. During the Pahlavi period, however (and the same may reasonably be presumed for the Avesta), Naonghaithya, or Naunghas, as he is then called, is seen working in antagonism to Spenta Armaiti.

### TAURVI AND ZAIRICHA

**The adversaries of Haurvatat and Ameretat.** The names of the dual demons Taurvi and Zairicha personify, in later texts at least, fever and thirst. They occur together and are mentioned in two places in the Younger Avesta,<sup>127</sup> yet without any special description of their work. They are in the Pahlavi texts depicted as the adversaries of the dual divinities Haurvatat and Ameretat, whose active mission in the world has been described above.

### ASTOVIDHOTU

**The fiend of death.** As indicated etymologically by the root of the Avestan words *maretan* and *mashya*, man is mortal. This mortality applies to his material frame only. At death he dies in the flesh, but he lives forever in the spirit. Astovidhotu, literally 'the bone-divider,' who impersonates death, awaits all. When a man is burnt by fire or drowned in water, it is Astovidhotu who binds his breath and hastens him to an unnatural death.<sup>128</sup> Man trembles at Astovidhotu's sight.<sup>129</sup> The demon prowls with padded feet and silently creeps to capture his victim, pouncing upon him so suddenly that the unfortunate one remains unaware of his doom. He cannot be won over by favour or by bribe. He respects not rank or position, but he mercilessly captures all.<sup>130</sup> Every one eagerly wishes to put off the moment of this catastrophe. No one prays for death before its time, and no one likes to hasten to the jaws of this all-devouring demon. The philosopher may speak of death with sublime resignation, the theologian may console himself by depicting death as the birth into a higher life, the mystic may long for the dissolution of the body as a heaven-sent liberation of the spirit, but the majority of humanity thirst for life and thirst for a long life. The death-toll which Astovidhotu exacts from the world is appalling. On that account Mithra and Sraosha are invoked by the faithful to protect them from the assaults of Astovidhotu,<sup>131</sup> and Ahura Mazda's divine aid protects the child in its mother's womb from the onslaughts of this

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126 Vd10.9; 19.43.

127 Vd10.9; 19.43.

128 Vd5.8, 9.

129 Aog. 57.

130 Aog. 70-73.

131 Y57.25; Yt10.93.

demon.<sup>132</sup> The man who marries and rears a family, is hard-working, and nourishes his body with meat, is able the better to withstand Astovidhotu than a celibate.<sup>133</sup>

### VIZARESHA

**This demon's work.** The demon Vizaresha, 'the dragger away,' lies in wait for the wicked souls at the gate of hell, when justice is administered to the souls on the third night after the bodily deaths of men. No sooner do the heavenly judges pass their verdict of being guilty on a soul than Vizaresha pounces upon his victim and mercilessly drags the wretched soul into the bottomless hell.<sup>134</sup>

### KUNDA

**A demon at the gate of hell.** Sraosha is invoked to smite this demon. The fire of Ahura Mazda routs him.<sup>135</sup> He is drunken without drinking, and hurls the souls of the wicked into hell.<sup>136</sup> There are spells to rout the fiend and his evil progeny. The name occurs in its feminine form as Kundi.<sup>137</sup>

### BUSHYANSTA

**Sloth personified.** Idleness and inactivity tend to strengthen the Kingdom of Evil. The demoness Bushyansta, or sloth personified, literally 'procrastination,' is commissioned by Angra Mainyu to inculcate the habit of sleep and procrastination among mankind. She, the long-handed, as she is called,<sup>138</sup> lulls the whole living world to inordinate slumber. Timely sleep as such is of Ahura Mazda's making and it receives even adoration;<sup>139</sup> but Bushyansta, the inordinate, tempts the idle to be unduly long in bed,<sup>140</sup> and thus prevents the practice of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.<sup>141</sup> At dawn the cock Parodarsh, whose name literally means 'one who sees ahead,' flapping his wings and crowing aloud, warns slumbering humanity of the stratagem of Bushyansta, and informs the faithful that it is time to wake

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132 Yt13.11, 28.

133 Vd4.47-49.

134 Vd19.29.

135 Yt24.26.

136 Vd19.41.

137 Vd11.9, 12.

138 Vd11.9; 18.16, 24.

139 VSp. 7.3.

140 Yt22.42.

141 Vd18.17, 25.

up and proceed to work.<sup>142</sup> When Mithra comes in his chariot, he puts the fiend to flight;<sup>143</sup> the Aryan Glory and the holy spells join hands as well to render powerless this demoness of laziness.<sup>144</sup>

### AESHMA

**The demon of wrath.** This evil genius of wrath and fury, who comes down from the Gathic period, works in opposition to Sraosha. He is full of sin,<sup>145</sup> and is the wielder of a bloody mace.<sup>146</sup> Ahura Mazda created Sraosha to counteract his fiendish mischief.<sup>147</sup> The faithful invoke Sraosha to protect them from his assaults.<sup>148</sup> Sraosha hurls his mace at this demon's skull, and the fiend takes to flight before Mithra.<sup>149</sup> Intoxicating drinks incite men to embrace Aeshma, but the recital of the holy spells helps to dispel him.<sup>150</sup>

### BUITI

**The tempter of Zarathushtra.** The nineteenth chapter of the Vendidad contains an account of the temptation of Zarathushtra by the Evil Spirit. Angra Mainyu decreed in his infernal council amid the bickerings of the demons with one another that Buiti, who is death unseen, should go to the world and lure Zarathushtra from his constancy. The righteous one chants the sacred Ahuna Vairya [Ahunwar] formula and dispels the demon, who rushes away to report his inability to overpower the holy prophet.<sup>151</sup> Buidhi is the name of a demon found in Vd11.9, 12, which may be a variant reading of Buiti.

### APAOSHA

**The demon of drought.** The Yasht dedicated to Tishtrya gives a picturesque account of the battle waged between the angel of rain and the demon of drought. Tishtrya assumes three different forms for ten nights each. For the first ten nights he takes the form of a youth of fifteen years of age, for the second ten nights he moves along in the

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142 Vd18.16, 24. For general information about the cock among ancient Iranians, see Jackson, *Proceedings*, JAOS. 13. lix-lxi; cf. also Peters, *The Cock*, in JAOS. 33. 377-380.

143 Yt10.97, 13.4.

144 Yt18.2; Vd11.9, 12.

145 Yt10.97.

146 Y10.8; Yt11.15.

147 Yt11.15.

148 Y57.25.

149 Y57.10; Yt10.97.

150 Y10.8; Yt17.5; Vd11.9.

151 Vd19.1-3.

shape of a golden-horned bull, and the last ten nights in the shape of a beautiful white horse, with golden ears and a golden caparison, seeking libations and offerings, so that he may bestow upon his supplicants oxen, children, and horses.<sup>152</sup> When he proceeds to his work of pouring down water on the earth, he is confronted by demon Apaosha, who has assumed the form of a dark horse.<sup>153</sup> A severe struggle ensues, lasting for three days and three nights. Apaosha comes off first as the victor in the combat and puts the genius of rain to flight.<sup>154</sup> Tishtrya bemoans his lot and complains before Ahura Mazda that mankind had neglected to sacrifice unto him. If only he were strengthened by their offerings, he would carry with himself on the battlefield the vigour of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains, and ten rivers.<sup>155</sup> Ahura Mazda, thereupon, offers a sacrifice to the unfortunate angel and gives him the desired strength.<sup>156</sup> Girt with this added power, Tishtrya now boldly marches against his rival, and engages in combat with him, until, to the joy of the waters, and plants, and lands, and fields, Tishtrya comes out triumphant and Apaosha is defeated.<sup>157</sup>

### SPENJAGHRI

**Apaosha's associate.** The name of this demon occurs but once in the Avesta, in Vd19.40, where Vazishta, the fire of lightning, is spoken of as smiting Spenjaghri. We learn from the Pahlavi works that this fiend works in concert with Apaosha to hinder Tishtrya from pouring the rain upon the earth.

### AZI

**Demon of avarice.** On the physical side this demon strives to extinguish the household fire, but he is repelled by Sraosha three times during the night.<sup>158</sup> On the moral side he is the evil genius of avarice.<sup>159</sup> Sacrifices are offered to the waters and trees to enable the faithful to withstand him.<sup>160</sup>

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152 Yt8.13-19.

153 Yt8.21.

154 Yt8.22.

155 Yt8.23, 24.

156 Yt8.25.

157 Yt8.26-29.

158 Vd18.19, 21, 22.

159 Yt18.1.

160 Y16.8.

## VAYU

**A collaborator of Astovidhotu.** We have already seen the good part of Vayu personified as a Yazata. The other part belongs to the realm of wickedness and is impersonated by a demon of the same name. He accompanies the demon Astovidhotu in his work of bringing death unto creation. He is most pitiless and his path is most dreadful. A man may be able to traverse a path that is barred by a flowing river, or by a huge serpent, or by a terrible bear, or by an army, but no man can ever cross the path of Vayu and come out safe.<sup>161</sup> It is Vayu who hastens his victim to speedy death by smothering him when he is drowned or thrown in a burning fire.<sup>162</sup> As the good Vayu and the good wind, Vata, are identical, so are also the evil Vayu and the devil Vata personifying the storm-wind.<sup>163</sup>

## MINOR DEMONS

Some of the other demons who are merely mentioned by name, and about whose characteristics we do not know anything, are Vyambura, Hashi, Ghashi, Saeni, Buji, Driwi, Daiwi, Kasvi, Akatasha, Aghashi, Paitisha, Zaurva, Ithyejah, Spazga, and other shadowy evil intelligences.<sup>164</sup>

## PAIRIKAS

**The fairies.** A class of bewitching fairies has been created by Angra Mainyu to seduce men from the right path and injure the living world. Nimble as birds they go along flying in the shape of shooting stars between the earth and the heavens.<sup>165</sup> They come upon fire, trees, and other creations from which they are to be driven away by the recital of spells.<sup>166</sup> They try to kill Zarathushtra, but in vain.<sup>167</sup>

Three of the more prominent fairies are mentioned by name. They are Khnanthaiti that clave unto King Keresaspa, who was bewitched by her looks;<sup>168</sup> Duzhyairya,<sup>169</sup> corresponding to Dushiyar, or the fairy of drought according to the Old Persian Inscriptions,<sup>170</sup> and to Dushyari of

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161 Aog. 77-81.

162 Vd5.8, 9.

163 Vd10.14.

164 See Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 224-226.

165 Yt8.8.

166 Vd11.9, 12.

167 Yt8.44.

168 Vd1.10.

169 Yt8.51, 53, 54.

170 Darius, Pers. d. 3.

the Turfan manuscript of Mani;<sup>171</sup> and Mush.<sup>172</sup> Zarathushtra tells Angra Mainyu he will smite Khnanthaiti.<sup>173</sup> Ahura created Tishtrya to rout Duzhyairya.<sup>174</sup> He keeps her in bonds as a thousand men would keep one man, and if Tishtrya were not to keep her in check she would extinguish the life of the entire material world.<sup>175</sup> Mithra withstands the Pairikas.<sup>176</sup>

The recital of the Ahuna Vairya and Airyaman Ishya prayers routs the fairies.<sup>177</sup> Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to declare that divine name of his by the utterance of which he may smite the demons and fairies.<sup>178</sup> Ahura Mazda thereupon declares that the recital of his holy names is most efficacious for routing the evil ones.<sup>179</sup> Haurvatat, Haoma, Ardvi Sura, Tishtrya, Mithra, Vayu, the Fravashis, sun, waters, and trees are invoked to give power to withstand the seductive attacks of the Pairikas<sup>180</sup> Haoshyangha and Takhma Urupi overpowered and ruled over them.<sup>181</sup>

**The Yatus, or sorcerers, usually associate with this class of evil beings.**<sup>182</sup> The faithful declare in the Confession of the Faith that they abjure the sorcerers and those addicted to the sorcerers.<sup>183</sup> Ahura Mazda's names, and the most efficacious prayers Ahuna Vairya, Ashem Vohu, Yenghe Hatam, and Airyaman Ishya rout the sorcerers.<sup>184</sup> The recital of the hymn to Sraosha frightens and forces them to flee.<sup>185</sup> The

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171 Friedrich W. K. Müller, "Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan", Teil II, p. 15, in *Abhandlungen der Königlich-Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (APAW)*, Anhang, Berlin, 1904.

172 Y16.8.

173 Vd19.5.

174 Yt8.36, 51, 53-55.

175 Yt8.54, 55.

176 Yt10.26.

177 Yt3.5; 11.6; Vd20.12.

178 Yt1.6.

179 Yt1.10, 11.

180 Y9.18; 16.8; 68.8; Yt4.4; 5.26; 6.4; 10.34; 13.104, 135; 15.12; Sr. 2.13.

181 Yt19.26, 28, 29.

182 See Leo Joachim Frachtenberg, "Allusions to Witchcraft and other primitive beliefs" in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, p. 398-453; M. Franklin, "Allusions to the Persian Magic [\*Magi] in Classical Latin Writers", *ib.*, p. 520-534.

183 Y12.4.

184 Y61.3; Yt1.6; 3.5, 9, 12, 16.

185 Yt11.6.



prayers and sacrifices unto the fire,<sup>186</sup> the sun,<sup>187</sup> Vayu,<sup>188</sup> Tishtrya,<sup>189</sup> Haoma,<sup>190</sup> enable the faithful to disable the sorcerers. The Fravashi of King Haosravah is invoked to rout them.<sup>191</sup> King Takhma Urupi subdued them.<sup>192</sup> They failed in their attempts to compass the death of Zarathushtra.<sup>193</sup> The West has derived the term magic from Magi, the priestly class of the ancient Persians. The Zoroastrian works of all periods, however, detest sorcery as an evil creation of Angra Mainyu.<sup>194</sup> The verdict of the Greek writers regarding this is unanimous. Dino states in his *Persica* that the Magi abhorred divination by magic, and Sotion on the authority of Aristotle and Dino says that sorcery was unknown among the Magi.<sup>195</sup>

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186 Vd8.80.

187 Yt6.4.

188 Yt15.56.

189 Sr. 2.13.

190 Y9.18.

191 Yt13.135.

192 Yt19.29.

193 Yt8.44.

194 Vd1.14, 15.

195 Frag. 5. FHG. 2. 90; Diogenes Laertius, *Prooem.* 8; cf. also Windischmann in Sanjana's *Zarathushtra in the Gathas and in the Greek and Roman Classics*, p. 88, 105.

## CHAPTER XXVIII. DEATH AND BEYOND

**The theory of rebirth and the binding nature of Karma become axiomatic truths in India.** According to the Indo-Iranians and their Aryan descendants of the early Vedic period man came but once to this world. This one life of man received its completion after death in the next world. The earthly life was one of probation. The harvest of the seeds of the good or evil deeds that man sowed in this world was to be reaped in the other world. This view of the future life of man was already undergoing a change in India during the later part of the Vedic period. The belief grew that the ideal of life cannot realized within the limits of a single life upon earth. A long series of lives were required before the soul can purify itself of its impurities and win emancipation. By the sixth century B.C. the theory of the cycle of rebirths had become the universally acknowledged theory in India. Man may reap reward and retribution according to his desert for a temporary period in the next world, but he had to return to this world to enjoy or expiate the consequences of his good or evil deeds that he committed in his past life. Life is living out actions or Karma in a round of rebirth. To the philosophers of this period, this world is no longer what it used to be for the early Vedic seers, the abode of joy and hope. Not only is this world, in their view, transitory, its happiness illusive, its hopes hollow, but it is positively woeful. In such a world of sorrow and suffering man is condemned to sojourn. Periodical life in heaven for a pious man between his death and rebirth is no recompense owing to his impending life upon earth. Higher than heaven and greater than virtue's reward is beyond heaven. The goal of life is the final deliverance from the round of rebirth, the liberation of the soul from the bondage of the ever recurring life so that it may rest in the transcendent peace in Brahma. The one task of religion and philosophy, therefore, is to teach the way of emancipation to the weary wayfarer from the inexorable necessity of treading the rough and rugged path of the world of woe tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of times.

**Life is bondage.** The bonds that bind the soul to the world and prolong and postpone the period of its liberation are actions. The actions are fetters that bind the soul to the wheel of rebirths. The individual who goes to heaven or hell after death experiences reward or retribution according to his desert. But after a life of many a summer in the world beyond the grave, when merit or demerit of his good or bad actions is exhausted, he will have to descend upon the earth to work out his destiny according to the residue of the actions of his past earthly life. Thus will he be compelled to descend upon the earth time and time again until, freed from all attachments of actions, he wins emancipation.

As the source of man's actions is desire, it is desire that keeps the soul rooted to this world. Deliverance of the soul depends then upon the cessation of desire. But desire is inseparable from life. It is the very seed of all existence. It is said that when there was no existence and no death and Brahma alone breathed calmly, desire arose in him and the creation came into being as its consequence.

Yajnavalkya says that man is altogether desire. Karma results from desire and determines the time of the deliverance of the soul. Desire, moreover, generates desire. Like fire, says Manu, that grows stronger when fed with clarified butter, does the enjoyment of what man desires, creates in him cravings for still more. Man desires health and offspring, riches and glory, and a hundred good things of this life and in addition prays for heavenly bliss when he goes to his final reckoning. Between the dawn and dusk man performs many actions, good or bad. But even when they are all good, they are prompted by desire for profit and power, name and fame, health and happiness or for the acquisition of some earthly good. This attachment, craving, hope, and love for the prize of actions forge fetters round the human ego and indefinitely postpone the period of its liberation.

According to the Upanishads, the individual ego takes up one body and drops it at death and thus the ego that goes the round of births is identical. With Buddha it is not the same ego for the ego as such does not exist. There is no eternal soul or spirit of the individual. Karma alone survives the death of man. Rebirth is the corollary of Karma. Man is the child of Karma, for Karma transmigrates and makes man in its own image. From life to life Karma returns to the earth in the midst of the environment it has merited, now reaping the harvest and now sowing new crops, now treading its steps upward the spiral ascent and now sliding backward, now unburdening itself to its accumulated consequences and now encumbering itself with fresh attachments. Karma, thus, makes and moulds itself ever anew in every life from day to day and year to year, until the time that it has no harvest to reap and becomes devoid of desire and deeds, so that it wins liberation in Nirvana of peaceful repose. Life is a little link in the long chain of limitless lives. Salvation lies not in the escape from hell but from the whirlings of the wheel of life. What is feared is the new birth, for it brings its accompanying sorrows and sufferings. Life is a wayside inn where the wayfarer halts for some time while upon his protracted pilgrimage to Nirvana or the end of his earthly existence.

Jainism likewise teaches that Karma or actions elongate the chain of rebirths. The ideal of life, therefore, is to divest oneself of Karma. Actions should be performed without passion or attachment. Karma, thus born, lives but a momentary life and dies. The sooner is the Karma extinguished, the quicker follows the liberation from the trammels of

existence. It is the life of renunciation accompanied by bodily mortification that enables man to free himself speedily from Karma. The soul that wins liberation lives its individual life of peace and rest in heaven for ever.

In common with the various schools of philosophy current at the time, the Gita propounds the theories of rebirth and Karma. Krishna undertakes to teach how one has to perform actions and yet to save oneself from falling into their imprisoning fetters.

Thus India creates altogether a new eschatological philosophy. Zoroastrianism, as we shall see, continues to believe in only one life upon earth and Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism hold the same view.

According to Judaism, Yahweh searches the hearts of men and women and reads their thoughts.. He weighs their actions, rewards the good and punishes the evil. Reward and retribution are, however, meted out in this world. It is at the later period that the exiles in Babylonia brought with them under the Persian influence the belief in the compensatory justice in the life after death.

**The mightiest of men cower before death.** Every creature that is born in this earth dies when the demon of death comes to it.<sup>1</sup> The soul is immortal, and survives the death of the body which is perishable.<sup>2</sup> The ignorant man, intoxicated with the pride of youth, encircled in the heat of passion, and enchained by the bonds of fleeting desires, forgets the transitoriness and death of the body.<sup>3</sup> One who lives for the body alone comes to sorrow, at the end of life, and finds his soul thrown into the terrible den of Angra Mainyu.<sup>4</sup> Man should act in such a way that his soul may attain to heaven after death.<sup>5</sup> The individual who blindly seeks the passing good of the body, thus sacrificing the lasting good of the soul, is merciless to himself and if he has no mercy on himself, he cannot expect it from others.<sup>6</sup> This ignorance brings his spiritual ruin.<sup>7</sup> He should not live in forgetfulness of the everlasting life, and lose it by yielding to his passions. Man sees his fellow-being snatched away from this earth, but he grows so indifferent that he forgets that his own turn may come to sever his connection with this world.<sup>8</sup> The man may be

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1 Aog. 40.

2 Aog. 5-7, 25-28.

3 *Ib.*, 31-37.

4 *Ib.*, 28, 38.

5 *Ib.*, 20.

6 *Ib.*, 49.

7 *Ib.*, 56.

8 *Ib.*, 39.

faring sumptuously in the forenoon, but his fall may come in the afternoon.<sup>9</sup> The demon of death overpowers everyone. Ever since the world began, and man graced this earth with his presence, no mortal has ever escaped his clutches, nor shall one ever escape until the resurrection.<sup>10</sup> The priests and the princes, the righteous and the wicked, have all to tread the dreary path of death.<sup>11</sup> Neither the first man, Gaya Maretan, who kept the world free from disease and death, nor Haoshyangha, who killed two-thirds of the demons, nor Takhma Urupi, who bridled and rode on the Evil Spirit, nor Yima, who dispelled old age and death from his kingdom, nor Dahaka, who was a scourge to humanity, nor Thraetaona, who bound Dahaka, Kavi Usa, who flew in the sky, nor Franrasyan, who hid himself under the earth, could struggle successfully against death. All these great and mighty men delivered up their bodies, when Astovidhotu grasped them by their hands.<sup>12</sup>

**The recital of the sacred formulas on the deathbed of man helps his soul when it leaves the tenement of the body.** Life ends in death and dust. It sleeps on earth to wake in heaven. Bodily death liberates the soul for a higher life. This period of the separation of the body and soul is momentous; it is full of fear and distress.<sup>13</sup> In its utter bewilderment the soul seeks help. The recital of a single Ashem Vohu, pronounced by a man at the last moments of his life, we are told, is worth the entire zone inhabited by man,<sup>14</sup> and does him incalculable good.

**From this world to that which is beyond.** The twofold Gathic division of the universe into the *astvant*, 'corporeal,' and *manahya*, 'spiritual,' is maintained throughout all the Younger Avestan texts. One frequently meets with the expressions, 'both the worlds,' 'this and the next world,' 'this world which is corporeal, and the next which is spiritual,' 'the perishable and imperishable,' and the like. Man stands on the borderland between the material and spiritual worlds. In the world of the living he lives a short span of life. Here he either works for the realization of the great ideals that Ahura Mazda has set up for him, and triumphs; or he falls away from them, and fails. In the world of the dead, Ahura Mazda rewards men for having kept his commands, but visits with retribution all those that have disregarded his bidding.

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9 *Ib.*, 53-55.

10 *Ib.*, 57, 58, 69.

11 *Ib.*, 59.

12 *Ib.*, 60-68, 85-102.

13 Yt22.17.

14 Yt21.14, 15.

Heaven and hell are in the Younger Avesta no longer conditions of man's being, as they were in the Gathas, but are actual places located in space. The process reaches its consummation in the Pahlavi works, but the beginning is already made.

**All souls dwell three nights on earth after death.** At the dissolution of the body, the soul is freed from its bodily prison. The journey towards the next world does not, however, begin immediately after death, for the separation of the soul from the body takes place by slow degrees. It requires full three days and nights before the last vestige of the earthly bondage perishes. The Jews likewise believed that the soul fluttered in the neighbourhood of the body for three days.<sup>15</sup> The past flashes upon the soul and it recounts the acts done during its life. It takes its seat near the spot where the head of the deceased rested before the corpse was removed to the Tower of Silence. If the soul has walked in the Path of Righteousness during life, it spends its time in chanting the sacred hymns, and experiences as much joy as the whole of the living world can experience collectively.<sup>16</sup> It is anxiously longing for the rewards which are to take place at the end of the third night after death.<sup>17</sup>

Precisely the reverse is the case if the dead happens to be wicked. The soul of such a one sits near the skull and clamours in bewilderment and confusion about the terrible lot that awaits it, and experiences as much suffering as the whole of the living world can experience collectively.<sup>18</sup>

**Daena accompanies the soul to the next world.** Of the various spiritual faculties of man, the daena is the only one besides the soul of which we hear at great length after the dissolution of the body. It is in the power of everyone to keep his daena pure by good thoughts, good words, and good deeds and every one is enjoined to do so.<sup>19</sup> If one does not live according to this salutary advice and indulges in evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds, his own daena delivers him to the world of darkness.<sup>20</sup> On the dawn of the fourth day after death, the romantic journey of the soul begins and its voyage into the hereafter is described in allegorical and picturesque words. The soul of the righteous one makes its triumphal ascent to heaven, wending its way among fragrant perfumes, and amid a wind that blows from the regions of the south, a sweet-scented wind, sweeter-scented by far than any which the soul

15 See Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, p.457, n.2, London, 1893.

16 Yt22.1-6; 24.54.

17 Vd19.27-29.

18 Yt22.19-24.

19 Vd10.19.

20 Vd5.62.

ever inhaled on earth.<sup>21</sup> There appears then to the soul its own daena, or religious conscience, in the shape of a damsel of unsurpassed beauty, the fairest of the fair in the world.<sup>22</sup> Dazzled by her matchless beauty and grandeur, the soul halts and inquires who this image may be, the like of which it had neither seen nor heard tell of in the material world. The apparition replies that she is the impersonation of the soul's own good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in life. She is nothing more than the true reflex of its own character. For, when his friends and neighbours in the corporeal world indulged in wickedness, the spirit abiding in the true believer always embraced good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. It was this righteousness of the soul that had made the daena so lovely and so fair.<sup>23</sup>

This is a piece of an allegorical soliloquy on the part of the soul, in which the consciousness of its having led a virtuous life on earth brings it inner joy in the future, and that sweet voice of conscience comforts. In its flight to heaven which proves to be an eternal comfort, such a soul, redeemed by its piety on earth, is helped by Sraosha, Rashnu, the good Vayu, Arshtat, Mithra, and the Fravashis of the righteous in its advance to the realms of final beatitude.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, the soul of the wicked person is harassed by the thought of its wicked life, and marches at the end of the third night on the dreary and dreadful path that lies amid the most foul-scented wind blowing from the northern regions.<sup>25</sup> The full Avestan text is missing here, but we gather from the similar account of the wicked soul's journey preserved in the Pahlavi scriptures that the soul of the sinner is confronted by the personification of its own conscience in the shape of an ugly old woman who mercilessly taunts it for the wicked life it has led.

**All souls have to make their way across the Chinwad bridge into heaven or hell.** The righteous as well as the wicked souls must needs go to this Bridge of Judgment, made by Mazda, before they can be admitted to the realm of the hereafter.<sup>26</sup> Dogs are stationed at the bridge to guard its transit.<sup>27</sup> These hounds of the spiritual realm help the pious souls to cross the bridge, but the wicked ones long in vain for

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21 Yt22.7, 8; 24.55.

22 Yt22.9; 24.56.

23 Yt22.10-14; 24.57-60.

24 Aog. 8.

25 Yt22.25.

26 Vd19.29, 36; Sr. 1.30; 2.30.

27 Vd13.9; cf. Meherjibhai Noshervanji Kuka, "The Dog in the Vendidad" in *Zartoshti*, vol. 1, p. 271-280, Bombay, 1903; Bloomfield, *Cerberus, the Dog of Hades*, p. 27-30, Chicago, 1905.

their aid. The dogs accompany the daena of a good soul.<sup>28</sup> Whoso in the fulness of faith recites the sacred Ahuna Vairya [Ahunwar] is enabled by Ahura Mazda to cross the Chinwad Bridge and to reach paradise in a threefold manner, namely, unto the best existence, the best righteousness, and the best lights.<sup>29</sup> Ahura Mazda proclaims to Zarathushtra certain rules of righteousness by the practice of which he could pass over the bridge to paradise.<sup>30</sup> Speaking about the qualifications of a priest, the Heavenly Father informs the prophet that he shall be called a priest who by his wise precepts teaches a man to be of easy conscience at the bridge.<sup>31</sup> In this same connection it may be added that the man who has ill-treated the Vanghapara class of dogs in this world finds not his way across this crucial bridge.<sup>32</sup> Besides the bare announcement that the righteous souls can cross the bridge successfully and that the wicked ones fail so to do,<sup>33</sup> we are not furnished with a detailed description of the judgment at the bridge, although we have this information explicitly recorded in the Pahlavi accounts of the fate of the soul after death.

## HEAVEN

**Four heavens.** In contrast to the single heaven referred to in the Gathas, we meet with a fourfold division of heaven in the Avestan period. Garo-nmana [Garothman], or the Abode of Praise, remains the highest heaven, the realm of bliss that is reached by traversing the three lower heavens, called Humata, or Good Thought, Hukhta, or Good Word, and Hvarshta, or Good Deed, as beatific abodes for the soul. Garo-nmana [Garothman], the fourth and the highest heaven, is frequently designated in the Younger Avesta as the place of *anaghra raochah*, or endless light.<sup>34</sup> The generic name, however, for all the four heavens is *Vahishta ahū*, or Best Existence. This heavenly region is the shining and all-happy abode of the righteous,<sup>35</sup> and in Garo-nmana dwell Ahura Mazda and his heavenly retinue, together with those human souls that have reached perfection through righteousness.<sup>36</sup> Ahura Mazda offered sacrifice unto Mithra from Garon-mana.<sup>37</sup> The

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28 Vd19.30.

29 Y19.6.

30 Y71.16.

31 Vd18.6.

32 Vd13.3.

33 Vd13.3; 19.30.

34 Yt22.15; 24.61.

35 Y9.19; 11.10; 62.6; 68.5, 11, 13; Vsp. 7.1; 23.1; Yt12.36; 24.5; S1.27; 2.27; Vd19.36.

36 Vd19.32, 36.

37 Yt10.123.



faithful beseech Mithra to lay their sacrifices in Garo-nmana.<sup>38</sup> It is beautiful and all-adorned.<sup>39</sup>

**A cordial welcome awaits the pious souls in paradise.** Vohu Manah, the premier archangel of Mazda, hails the pious souls on their arrival in paradise in congratulatory terms,<sup>40</sup> and a leader of the heavenly host, introduces them to Ahura Mazda and the other heavenly beings.<sup>41</sup> In a different passage Ahura Mazda himself is depicted as welcoming the righteous souls with the same words that Vohu Manah uses.<sup>42</sup> The souls of the righteous persons that have departed from this world in earlier times join furthermore in welcoming the newcomers in their midst.<sup>43</sup>

**The pious enjoy eternally what but few mortals enjoy, and then only for a short period in this world.** The bountiful host of paradise commands his heavenly caterer to bring to the souls of the righteous the ambrosia;<sup>44</sup> a later work adds that this celestial food is served to the righteous souls by the Fravashis, while robes embroidered with gold and golden thrones are supplied to them by Vohu Manah.<sup>45</sup> The blessed souls enjoy eternal felicity and incomparable happiness in this abode of endless light.<sup>46</sup> Theirs is the lot to receive the everlasting rest which Mazda has prepared for them, and it is theirs to experience as much joy as one at the zenith of his greatness enjoys in this world.<sup>47</sup>

### MISVANA GATU

**The intermediary place between heaven and hell.** We have already referred to the probability of the idea of the intermediary place between heaven and hell as embodied in the Gathas. The Younger Avestan texts four times mention a place called *misvāna gātu*, 'the place of mixing.'<sup>48</sup> It is invoked by name along with Garo-nmana [Garothman], the highest paradise, and the Chinwad Bridge. The text in question, however, do not give us any account of this place. The Later Pahlavi texts render *misvāna gātu* by *hameshak sut gāās*, or 'the place

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38 Yt10.32.

39 Yt24.28, 33.

40 Vd19.31.

41 Aog. 10-13.

42 Vd7.52.

43 Yt22.16.

44 Yt22.18.

45 Aog. 15-17.

46 TdFr. 82, 83.

47 Aog. 14.

48 Yt1.1; S1.30; 2.30; Vd19.36.

of eternal weal,' which is generally taken to be identical with the well-known *hamistakān* of the Pahlavi period.

## HELL

**Four hells.** Simultaneously with the increase in the number of heavens, there is a corresponding increase in the list of hells. The Gathas knew but one hell. The later Avestan texts speak of four abodes of the damned. They are those of Dushmata, or Evil Thought, Dushukhta, or Evil Word, and Dushvarshta, or Evil Deed, together with the fourth and lowest hell, which has no specific name of its own in the Avesta, but stands in opposition to the highest Garo-nmana, and receives the epithet *anaghra temah*, or Endless Darkness.<sup>49</sup> The wicked soul reaches this darkest abode with the fourth stride. The realm known as *duzh ahū*, or Evil Existence,<sup>50</sup> or again as *achishta anghu*, or Worst Existence are designations of hell in general.<sup>51</sup> The regions of hell, if we look to incidental allusions in the Avesta, are stinking,<sup>52</sup> dreadful, and dark.<sup>53</sup>

**The wicked souls reap in incessant tears the crop they have sown in the finite world.** The gulf of gloom now yawns for them. The demon Vizaresha carries off in bonds the wicked souls to their doom.<sup>54</sup> Angra Mainyu orders them to be fed with the foulest and the most poisonous food in hell.<sup>55</sup> It is their own evil doings that bring them to woe.<sup>56</sup> They enter hell terror-stricken, like unto the sheep that trembles before a wolf.<sup>57</sup> A life of sorrow and suffering now awaits them.<sup>58</sup> The Evil Spirit exposes the wretched souls to the mockery of the infernal rabble.

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49 Yt22.33.

50 Vd19.47; Vd19.47.

51 Y71.15; Vd3.35; 5.62; 7.22; WFr. 3.2.

52 Vd19.47; TdFr. 93.

53 Aog. 28.

54 Vd19.29.

55 Yt22.35, 36.

56 Vd5.62; 7.22.

57 Vd13.8.

58 TdFr. 84.

## CHAPTER XXIX. THE RENOVATION

**The greatest of the renovators.** Zoroaster in his religion postulated a renovation of the universe, a new dispensation in which the world will become perfect at the last day. We learn from Diogenes, on the authority of Theopompus and Eudemus, that the classical authors were familiar with the Magian doctrine of the millennium and the final restoration of the world as early as in the fourth century B.C.<sup>1</sup> Plutarch draws his materials on this millennial doctrine from Theopompus.<sup>2</sup> In the Later Avestan texts we sometimes miss a clear definition of the collective judgment of the souls and final regeneration. But they furnish us with some stray passages which cursorily deal with the work of the Renovation at the millennium and of the saviour renovators who will bring this to pass.

**The world progresses towards perfection.** Inequity and wrong are to be ultimately supplanted by equity and right. The world is to be restored to a veritable heaven on earth. The goodness of Ahura Mazda makes it imperative that the entire creation shall finally be saved. The faithful are confident of this final event, and they know that this accomplishment will be the end of the world, when right shall triumph supreme. In his daily prayers the true believer prays that the fire that burns in his house may remain shining till the day of the good Renovation.<sup>3</sup> Spenta Armaiti, the genius of earth, is likewise implored to receive and to rear the seed that men emit in their dreams, and ultimately to deliver this back as holy men at the time of Renovation.<sup>4</sup>

According to the teachings of Zarathushtra, every man or woman is his or her own saviour. Salvation depends entirely upon the righteous life of the individual. Besides the individual salvation there is to be the universal salvation in which the renovators will finish the work of bringing salvation to all human beings. The texts speak of certain great souls, three in number, including the saviour paramount, that will usher in this period. These are called Saoshyants in the Zoroastrian terminology. The Frawardin Yasht<sup>5</sup> mentions Ukhshyatereta, Ukhshyat-nemah, and Astvatereta as the chief renovators. Zarathushtra's own kith and kin, a superman of miraculous powers, born in supernatural manner, will finally descend upon earth to renovate the world. Astvatereta, or the Saoshyant proper, will be immaculately conceived through

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1 Prooem. 9.

2 Is. et Os.47.

3 Y62, 3; Ny5.9.

4 Vd18.51.

5 Yt13.128.

a virgin called Vispataurvi, or ‘the all-triumphant.’<sup>6</sup> He is called Saoshyant because he will salvage the bodily world, and Astvat-ereta because he will save the bodily creatures from destruction at the hands of the two-footed wicked ones.<sup>7</sup> Astvat-ereta is reflected in the Gathic expression *astvat ashem*, *ashem* being cognate with *areta*.<sup>8</sup> This Saoshyant par excellence is the most eminent restorer, he is called the friend of Ahura Mazda, the meritorious one, who will bring the mighty work to completion.<sup>9</sup> This particular Yasht,<sup>10</sup> as just stated, incidentally mentions Zarathushtra’s seed as watched over by ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine Fravashis. Passages such as these in the Avesta contain in embryo the doctrine of the immaculate birth which is later elaborated by the Pahlavists.

This final Saoshyant will be helped in his great undertaking by pious comrades or attendants, who will be, as the description says, fiend-smiting, of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and who are such as have never known falsehood.<sup>11</sup> The Kingly Glory will cleave unto them,<sup>11</sup> and the great Saoshyant will profit the whole bodily world and withstand the Druj.<sup>12</sup>

**The final reconciliation of the entire creation to its creator.**

The world will henceforth neither grow old nor die, decay nor rot, but will be ever fresh and ever living; death will be no more, life and immortality will come to pass forever and the dead will rise up again.<sup>13</sup> Plutarch records that it is the Magian belief that at the time of the Renovation mankind will speak one language and have one commonwealth; men will live without food and they will not cast shadows.<sup>14</sup> Vohu Manah at the time of this final dispensation will smite Aka Manah; truth will rout falsehood; Haurvatat and Ameretat will smite once and for all the fiends of hunger and thirst, at which moment the deadly Aeshma will bow and flee helpless forever.<sup>15</sup> The demons are believed to have existed as long as physical and moral imperfections lasted; with the cessation of all such evils, the fiends will be no more.

6 Yt13. 142; 19.92; Vd19. 5.

7 Yt13. 129.

8 See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.*, p. 215.

9 See Casartelli, “Salvation (Iranian)”, in *ERE*. 11. 137, 138; Pertold, “The Origin of the Idea of a Universal Saviour” in *Modi Memorial Volume*, p. 464-474. 10. Yt13.62.

10 Yt19.95.

11 Yt19.89.

12 Yt13.129.

13 Yt19, 11, 19,20,23,24,89; WFr. 4.3.

14 Is. et Os. 47.

15 Yt19.95, 96.

The Saoshyants will join in reciting the Airyaman Ishya prayer, and the divine Kingdom of Ahura Mazda will come to pass, as the sovereignty of Angra Mainyu will then end. Impotent, the Prince of Evil will acknowledge his defeat in the warfare that has gone on for ages between the powers of Right and Wrong. Bowing before Ahura Mazda, Angra Mainyu will hide himself with the demons in the earth.<sup>16</sup> The wicked Druj and her hundredfold brood will forthwith vanish,<sup>17</sup> and with it will disappear all evil propensities in man. With the disappearance of evil from the universe, good will prevail everywhere and for all time; and the accursed name of Angra Mainyu will be forgotten. Ahura Mazda will be forever, even as he has been from all eternity.

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16 Yt19.96; WFr. 4.2, 3.

17 Yt19.12, 90.

**THE PAHLAVI PERIOD – FROM  
THE THIRD TO THE NINTH  
CENTURY**

## CHAPTER XXX. ZOROASTRIANISM UNDER THE FOREIGN YOKE

**Alexander consigns the Zoroastrian scriptures to the flames.** Cyrus had made Persia the queen of Asia, and it was in Persia that East and West first met. The history of the Achaemenians was a long struggle of wars with nations, and a considerable part of this warfare was a conflict with the West. Alexander crushed the Iranian armies at Arbela, and wrested the sceptre from the hands of Darius III, in 330 B.C., and the structure of the Iranian empire was shattered to pieces. Great as was this national catastrophe, still greater was the spiritual loss involved in the destruction of the holy scriptures of Zoroastrianism, which perished in the conflagration of Persepolis when the great conqueror, in a fit of drunkenness, delivered the palaces of the Achaemenians to the flames.<sup>1</sup> Fire, the most sacred emblem of Iran, was wantonly utilized in consuming the Word of Ormazd. The ill-fated Darius had ordered the two archetype copies to be preserved in the Dizm-i-Nipisht and Ganj-i Shapigan.<sup>2</sup> The first, deposited in the archives of Persepolis, perished in the conflagration. The second copy of the sacred writings, in the Ganj-i Shapigan, we are informed, was done into Greek,<sup>3</sup> though more probably it met with a similar fate. Ahriman had sent Zohak and Afrasiyab [Franrasyan] as the scourges to Iran, but their ravages paled before the irrevocable harm done by this fact of Alexander's wanton vandalism. Literary Iran has known him as her arch-enemy, and the Pahlavi writers have branded him 'accursed,' 'evil-destined,' and an envoy of Ahriman. After a long period of darkness, following his ill-destined invasion of Persia, Iran once more recovered her political autonomy, but she never regained, in their pristine fulness, the holy works of her great prophet.

**Zoroastrianism thrives better under the Parthians than under the Seleucids.** The premature death of the great conqueror brought the end of his ambition of hellenizing Persia. The philhellenic princes that ruled over the destinies of Persia for the long period of five and a half centuries that intervened between the overthrow of the Achaemenians and the rise of the Sasanians failed to accomplish anything in that imperialistic direction. Disintegration followed almost immediately after Alexander's death, under the Seleucid satrapies, and less than a century had elapsed before Arsaces succeeded in founding a strong empire in Parthia about 250 B.C. We have no means to ascertain the undercurrents of the religious thought among the Zoroastrians during this period. From what little information we get we find that in

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1 Diodorus, 17, 72; Curtius, 5, 7; Dk., Vol. 9, p. 569.

2 Dk., vol. 9, p. 577.

3 Dk., vol. 9, p. 569.

the Parthians Zoroastrianism found better masters than in the Seleucids. Mithradates, Tiridates, Rhodaspes, and Artabanus are some of the names of the Parthian kings that savour of a partiality for Zoroastrianism. The Magi exercised a considerable influence at the Parthian court. They had their place in the council of the state.<sup>4</sup> Pliny informs us that Tiridates, the brother of Vologeses I, was initiated in the mysteries of the Magi.<sup>5</sup> We have on the authority of Tacitus that he was a priest.<sup>6</sup>

**Zoroastrian practices embraced by the Parthians.** In the early days of their empire, at least, the Parthians were strongly influenced by Zoroastrianism in their religious beliefs.<sup>7</sup> They venerated the sacred elements, especially the fire, worshipped the sun under the name of Mithra, and in accordance with the tenets of Zoroastrianism, exposed bodies to the light of the sun and the birds of prey.<sup>8</sup> The fire altar, emblematic of Iranian influence, is a common feature on the reverse side of the coins of the Parthian rulers. Tiridates betrays an exaggerated notion of the Zoroastrian injunctions for the purity of the elements, when, invited by Nero to receive the crown of Armenia, he avoided the sea route and went to Rome by land. Prompted by the same scruples against defiling water, his royal brother declined to go to Rome, and invited his Roman contemporary to Persia.<sup>9</sup> One of the five kings of this royal house that bore the name Vologeses, ordered a collection to be made of the scattered fragments of the manuscript material that might have survived the period that for nearly five centuries threatened the utter destruction of the sacred scriptures of Zoroaster's faith and menaced even that which was preserved in oral tradition.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Denkard informs us that all that could be recovered of the lost Zoroastrian canon at this time was only as much as could be retained by any one Dastur in his memory.<sup>11</sup>

**Classical references to Zoroastrianism during this period.** Our knowledge about the state of Zoroastrianism during this period is very scanty, and the occasional references made by the classical writers of this time to the religious practices of the Zoroastrians help us in gaining some more information of the religious history of the faith. We

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4 Strabo. p. 515.

5 *Nat. Hist.* 30. 6.

6 *Annales*, 15. 24.

7 See Unvala, *Observations on the religion of the Parthians*, Bombay, 1925; Pettazoni, *La Riligione di Zarathustra*, p. 171.

8 Cf. Rawlinson, *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 399, 400, London, 1873.

9 Dio. Cassius, 63. 1-7.

10 Dk. SBE., vol. 37, bk. 4. 24, p. 413.

11 SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8. 1:21, p. 9, 10.



have often referred in earlier pages to the works of Strabo and Diogenes Laertius, who draw their material from the early Greek writers as well as base their statements on their personal investigation. We gather some more particulars on the subject from the incidental references of other writers. Porphyry (A.D. 233-306) mentions on the authority of Eubulus that the Magi are divided into three classes, the first and the most learned of which neither kill nor eat anything living.<sup>12</sup> Diogenes Laertius states that vegetables, cheese, and bread form their food, and they content themselves with the plain ground for their bed.<sup>13</sup> Clement of Alexandria (A.D. third century) mentions a sect of the Magi that observed the life of celibacy.<sup>14</sup> Speaking about the designation by which the Zoroastrian priests were known in Cappadocia in his days, Strabo relates that in addition to their usual name of the Magi, the priests were called *puraitthoi*, the equivalent of the Avestan designation *athravan*, or fire-priest.<sup>15</sup>

**Zoroastrianism spreads its influence abroad.** The Magi had established themselves during the Parthian period in large numbers in eastern Asia Minor, Galatia, Phrygia, Lydia, and even in Egypt. These colonies of the Zoroastrian priests became an active source of the diffusion of the Zoroastrian beliefs.<sup>16</sup> The rulers of the dynasties established in Pontus, Cappadocia, Armenia, and Commagene took pride in tracing their dynasties to the kings of the fallen empire. They encouraged Iranian tradition and religion in opposition to the Greek kings of Pergamon and Antioch. They paid homage to Oromazes, Omanos, Artagnes. (Verethraghna), Anaitis, and Mithra. Mazdaism flourished in Armenia in a very corrupt form. It was assimilated to local beliefs and Semitic ideas that had penetrated there from Syria. Aramazd (Ahura Mazda) was recognized as the chief divinity. Spandaramet (Spenta Armaiti), Haurotmaurot (Haurvatat, Ameretat), Anahit, Tir, Mithra, Vahram (Verethraghna) among the good heavenly beings, and Arhmn (Ahriman), Azmad (Aeshma daeva), Druzh (Druj) among the evil are included in the theology.<sup>17</sup> Strabo informs us that the Zoroastrian divinities were worshipped in Armenia, Cappadocia, and throughout North eastern Asia Minor.<sup>18</sup> He mentions having seen in Cappadocia the image of Omanos, that is Vohu Manah carried in a

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12 *De Abstinencia*, 4. 16.

13 Prooem. 7.

14 Stromata. 3, p. 191.

15 Strabo, p. 733.

16 Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, p. 139, Chicago, 1911.

17 Ananikian, *Armenia (Zoroastrian)*, in ERE. 1. 794-802.

18 P. 512, 732, 733.

procession.<sup>19</sup> The people of Pontus remained partially attached to Zoroastrianism up to the first century, when they exchanged the faith of Zoroaster with that of Jesus. Pausanias (second century A.D.), refers to the Magian rites practised in Lydia in the second century.<sup>20</sup>

The appearance of the Zoroastrian angels Atar, Maongha, Tishtrya, Mithra, Verethraghna, Vata, and others on the coins of the Indo-Scythian kings from the time of Kanishka, in the second century, proves the strong Zoroastrian influence outside Iran.<sup>21</sup>

**Zoroastrianism at the close of the Parthian empire.** The fact that some of the Parthian kings were favourably inclined to Zoroastrianism did not succeed in saving the Zoroastrian Church from falling into decay. Heresies and scepticism were rampant, it seems, and the priesthood was steeped in ignorance.<sup>22</sup> The language of the Avesta had long ceased to be a living tongue, and the knowledge of the holy books written in that language was on its decline. The new language born at this period is Pahlavi, cognate with Parthava or Parthian, meaning heroic. It is an admixture of Aryan and Semitic. The Aryan element belongs to the Avesta, whereas the Semitic element is Aramaic, closely resembling Syriac. The Magi and the Athravans, the priests of Western and Eastern Iran, who were now united undertook the translations of the Avestan works and their explanations in Pahlavi. The explanations or commentaries are called *āzainti* in Avesta, and *Zand* in the later tongue.

Mithraism and Judaism were flourishing in Western Iran and Buddhism in Eastern Iran. A new religion of great potentiality entered Iran at this period. It was Christianity, whose propaganda spread in Iran during the Parthian period. We shall deal in brief in separate chapters with the spread of Mithraism outside Iran, and with Christianity, which was destined to grow into a great spiritual force that confronted Zoroastrianism from the middle of the second century to the middle of the seventh century, or the downfall of the last Zoroastrian empire. Five centuries of literary chaos thus elapsed before the dawn of the real Zoroastrian reformation dispelled the darkness and once more illumined the Mazdayasnian world with new light.

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19 P. 732.

20 5.27.5.

21 Cf. Stein, "Zoroastrian Deities on Indo-Scythian Coins" in *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 17, p. 89-98.

22 AV. 1. 13-15.

## CHAPTER XXXI. THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

**The teachings of Jesus.** Great trading routes had converged upon Jerusalem and the Jews had long carried on an extensive commerce with distant countries. Wealth poured from all quarters and the rich accumulated vast fortunes. Side by side with all this opulence, there was growing in large towns a propertyless, proletarian, discontented class. The Romans were drawing vast numbers under their yoke of slavery. Discontent with life upon earth was increasing among the helpless population. God had destined man to reap happiness upon earth, but through the life of inequity and sin, man had lost his fellowship with God the Father. Out of compassion for his erring children, God became man in Jesus. He alone among all, it was given out, could secure forgiveness of man's sins from God as the mediator and restore him to divine fellowship. Jesus lived and suffered, and by his supreme sacrifice of dying as ransom for humanity, he undertook to save and redeem mankind.

The world was in great peril and there was no hope that man could save it. Superhuman help alone could revive its dying hope. God loved the world and therefore sent Jesus so that it might be saved through him. The Saviour of the world speaks authoritatively not only as a messenger or a prophet of God, but in the person of God so that despairing humanity may find supremest consolation. Jesus knows God, and is from him. Furthermore he asserts that he and his Father are one, the Father being in him and he in the Father. It is the Father who dwells in him that does the works that Jesus seems to be doing. He owns those as his kith and kin who do the will of his Father. They alone will enter the Kingdom of Heaven after death. Jesus promises eternal life to those who sacrifice their all to follow in his steps. God is a spirit. He does not relish burnt offerings and sacrifices. He demands that man shall worship him in spirit. He is merciful, forgiving, and just. He makes the sun rise on the good and the evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. The inhumanity of man has extinguished all hope in the heart of man that erring humanity can ever be redeemed. Jesus consoles man that all hope is not lost. God can help man in his woe, if only man has faith in God. For, says he, faith can accomplish what verges on the border of impossibility. It can move the mountain and cast it into the sea. Let man love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, and let him love his neighbour as himself and all will be well with the world. Love for God and love for God's children are the two fundamental commandments, says Jesus. Love is the fulfilment of the law. Humanity's salvation lies in its faithful practice of universal love. The Kingdom of Heaven, says Jesus, is at hand and he exhorts his disciples to preach this gospel of hope throughout the earth.

Men and women, says Jesus, are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in them. The world would be a paradise if they remained true to their noble inheritance and lived godly lives. But given freedom of action, they have gone astray from the path of equity and made life upon earth full of suffering and sorrow. Avarice and envy, jealousy and hatred have split the world of human beings who began life upon earth on terms of equality as children of the common Father, into two antagonizing factions of the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor. The strong and rich own and rule the world, the weak and poor toil and suffer, and the number of the weak and poor is legion. Jesus comes as the friend and saviour of the weak and poor. He consecrates weakness and poverty in his own person and lives his life as the weakest and the poorest of mankind. He extols the virtues wedded to weakness and poverty and preaches a philosophy of life for the rescue and uplift of the weak and poor, the sorrowing and suffering.

The philosophy of life that Jesus teaches us has love for its basic principle. To love one's neighbour as one loves one's self, is the chief commandment. Love is the binding force, the bond of unification between man and God, and man and man. This sphere of love knows no limits. It is neither tribal, nor communal, nor national. It is universal. Wherever man meets man, there love should be. If a man loves God, but hates his fellow-men, his love for God is false. The world would change its sombre hue if men were kindly affectioned with brotherly love. As a sentient being, man wishes well to himself. Let him only recognize that his neighbour, his fellowman has equal right to his own well-being. The golden rule of life for man, therefore, is, as Zarathushtra and Confucius had said, to do unto others what he would men should do unto him.

The world groans under misery, because men wish evil unto their fellowmen. Evil recompensed by evil furthers evil. It is incumbent, therefore, upon all to overcome evil done to them by good. If a wicked person smites another on one cheek, the injured person should on no account retaliate but meekly turn to the aggressor his other cheek. Hate from the enemy is to be returned with love, his curse with a blessing, and persecution by him with prayer for him. If the enemy hungers, he has to be fed and if he thirsts he is to be given water. In his infinite mercy, God forgives trespasses of the sinners, even so has man to forgive him who wrongs him. Forbearance is a virtue and the strong should bear with the weak. If one lends something to his neighbour, let him do it with indifference whether the borrower returns it or not, because God, in his goodness, will recompense him. If some one takes away his goods, let him not pursue the usurper with the object of regaining them.

Man cannot serve both God and Mammon. The root of all human ills is the love of money. The riches of the earth can be corrupted by moth

and rust and stolen by thieves. Let man give up his pursuit after them and let him by his virtue store up for himself his treasure in heaven, where it shall be imperishable. Jesus lived and died a poor man. Let man take his example, and use his wealth, if he has any, for helping the poor and the needy. And this act of relieving poverty and distress with his money is to be done so unostentatiously and with no ulterior motive but only with the object of discharging his duty towards his fellow-beings, that his left hand may not know what his right hand does. Treasure acts as a snare; it is a source of temptation. Hence it is that a rich man finds his entrance into the portals of heaven more difficult than a poor man. Faith and hope elevate life, but charity is the greatest virtue. It is the bond of perfection. A man of great possessions approached Jesus, saying he had faithfully observed all the commandments and was anxious to be assured of eternal life. The prophet of God answered that though he had practised all virtues, he had left out one and that was charity. He should therefore return home and sell whatsoever he had and give to the poor, so that God would reward him with treasure in heaven. It is practising true religion to visit the orphans and widows and alleviate their sufferings. Man does not bring anything into this world with him when he is born, neither can he take anything from his amassed fortune when the call of death comes to him. Contentment with what little he has, even if it is not beyond his daily food and raiment, is godly virtue leading to happiness.

Jesus gives a sublime manifestation of humility throughout his life. He glories in speaking of himself as a servant of humanity whose pious mission in life is to minister to the poor and the weak. He who ostentatiously exalts himself, says he, before his fellowmen shall be abased by the hand of God, but whoso humbles himself before all shall win exaltation. Let him, therefore, who is hailed as the great among men, minister to the needs of the many that are far from greatness; and let him who is saluted as the chief among his compatriots act as a willing servant of the populace. Jesus gave his life a ransom for mankind and he exhorts his hearers to practise such supreme sacrifice. Man instinctively loves life, but he gains more life and nobler life by losing it as a sacrifice for the good of others, than by saving it for the love of self. The best expression of love for others is the laying down of one's life as a loving sacrifice for the good of others. So did the Son of Man offer the very life of his body for the sake of mankind. Let the children of men hold their lives ready for sacrifice for one another in their mutual need Love is the active rule of life; sacrifice is the passive, concludes Jesus.

The religion of Jesus, as we shall see in subsequent pages, was destined soon to enter Iran as a rival to Zoroastrianism.

## CHAPTER XXXII. MITHRAISM

**Mithraism is Zoroastrianism contaminated with Semitic accretions.** Of all the Indo-Iranian divinities, Mithra attained to the greatest prominence during this period. The Avestan texts constantly speak of Mithra as the lord of wide pastures, and Mithra gathered the largest number of flocks under his protection in the field of spirit. Iranian in its basic principles, Mithra's cult was soon surcharged with Semitic accretions and spread far and wide under this new syncretic form. The Achaemenian kings lived during winter in Babylonia. Here the Chaldaean astrolatry or the Semitic star worship was assimilated with the cult. Planets and constellations whose course was believed to determine all events of life received homage. Chaldaean theology assimilated Mithra to Shamash, the god of the Sun. Thus Mithra, though distinct from the Sun in Zoroastrian theology, was united with the Sun and called *Sol Invictus* or the Invincible Sun, in the Roman mysteries.<sup>1</sup> In Asia Minor, Mithra was identified with local gods, and with the Greek gods at a later period. A blend of heterogeneous elements from Babylonia, Asia Minor, and Hellenic ideas ultimately gave him such a new form that his original traits were considerably concealed from sight.

Plutarch says that the Cilician pirates taken captive in 67 B.C. brought the cult of Mithra to Rome.<sup>2</sup> We have already seen from the activities of Mithra as described in the Avestan works that besides being the divinity of light and truth, he was also the tutelary divinity of the fighting armies. This warlike trait of Mithra appealed strongly to the martial instincts of the Roman legions that poured forth into the Parthian regions. The Romans recruited their auxiliary soldiers from Pontus, Cappadocia, Commagene, and Lesser Armenia, where the cult was popular, and these soldiers widely diffused it in Rome. The slaves in the Roman families were also instrumental in spreading Mithra worship. Mithra rapidly conquered vast dominions for his cult in Europe, and brought a large multitude of votaries from distant lands to his feet. His fame reached the borders of the Aegean Sea. He came to be worshipped between India and Pontus Euxinus. He was the only Iranian divinity who won popularity for himself in Greece. In the Near East his cult spread in the different parts of Asia Minor and reached India in the third century A.D. where it had its root in the North-Western provinces and Gujarat.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, p. 217.

2 Pomp. 24.

3 Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, S'aivism, and Minor Religious systems in Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie*, 3. 6, p. 153-157, Strassburg, 1913.

**Mithraism patronized by die State.** Mithraism prospered everywhere under the patronage of the emperors. Antiochus I, king of Commagene on the Euphrates, in his epitaph (about 35 B.C.) pays homage to Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and Verethraghna and orders that the priests shall put on Persian dress at the festivals, shall clothe the images in Persian costume and shall cover them with golden diadems.<sup>4</sup> Antiochus is shown in relief clasping the right hand of Mithra, who appears in Persian costume with radiate nimbus. Mithra appears on horseback in Persian costume on coins. Nero<sup>5</sup> desired the Magi who accompanied Tiridates, King of Armenia, to initiate him in the mysteries of Mithra. Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius dedicated a temple to Mithra, and Diocletian officially recognized Mithra as the protector of his empire in 307 A.D. During the middle of the third century, Mithraism was at the height of its triumph, and it seemed as if all Europe would turn Mithraic.

Mithraism was thus honoured by the emperors because it encouraged and supported their autocratic pretensions. The emperor was theoretically the first magistrate of Rome and derived his authority from the people. Mithraism brought the idea of *hvarena* [khwarrah] or Kingly Glory with it from Iran. This Kingly Majesty was a shining halo that descended upon the king. It encircled his head and made his person sacred. It was believed to be inherent in the person of the king, who proclaimed himself the descendant of divinity or divinity in the flesh.<sup>6</sup> It came to be known by the name of Destiny and every country and every city in the Orient worshipped its Destiny. The Semites called it *gadā*. It was rendered among the Greeks as Tyche. Alexander's successors adopted it to strengthen their royal position that they had usurped, and established the worship of the Glory or Tyche of the king. People swore by the Tyche of King Seleukos. The kings of Cappadocia, Pontus, and Bactriana honoured the Glory. The Seleucids proclaimed themselves the favourites of the Glory or Fortune and thus ordained to rule by the grace of God. The Yasht dedicated to Mithra speaks of him as the giver of Glory.<sup>7</sup> It was this function of Mithra of dispensing the Kingly Glory that made him the favourite of the Roman emperors who likewise declared themselves possessed of this divine Glory. They ruled with absolute power in the name of God, and ordered this goddess of their own person to be worshipped. A number of theophorous or god-bearing names compounded with the name of Mithra were used enthusiastically.

4 Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, vol. 1. p. 598, Leipzig, 1903-1905.

5 54-68 A.D.

6 Hj. Inscr. 1-4.

7 Yt10.16, 128, 141.

**The creed.** The supreme godhead is Kronos, Time, known in the Avestan texts as Zrvan Akarana or Boundless Time. He is devoid of name, sex, and passions. He is the First Cause. The Sun is his physical manifestation. In sculptures he represented as a lion-headed human monster. A serpent encircles his body. He holds the sceptre and the bolts of sovereignty and holds in each hand a key to the gates of heaven. He is the creator and destroyer. He created Heaven and Earth. The Earth begot the Ocean. The Heaven is Ormazd, or Jupiter; the Earth is Spenta Armaiti or Juno, the Ocean is Apam Napat or Neptune. Atar or Vulcan is the angel of fire. Shahrewar or Mars is the genius of metals. Haoma or Bacchus personifies plants. Drvaspa or Silvanus is the genius of agriculture. Anaitis or Venus and Cybele is the goddess of water. Vanainti or Nike is the angel of victory. Asha or Arete presides over virtue. These Iranian Yazatas that have accompanied Mithra were worshipped under Greek and Latin names. With other divinities they dwell on the sunlit summits of Mt. Olympus. Fire, wind, water, and earth are the four steeds that drive the chariot of the Supreme God. The Sun goes his daily round in his chariot. The moon drives in a cart drawn by white bulls. Verethraghna is likened to a bellicose and destructive boar, one of the forms in which he manifests himself in the Avestan texts. The exploits and achievements of other Yazatas are ascribed to Mithra. As God is unknowable and unapproachable, Mithra acts as the Mediator between God and mankind. Plutarch says that Oromazes dwells in eternal light as far above the sun as the sun is above the earth and Ahriman lives down below in darkness. Mithra, he says, occupies an intermediary place between them.<sup>8</sup> Ahriman or Pluto, according to Mithraism, is born like Ormazd of Boundless Time, and lives deep down in hell. He assaulted the heavens with his infernal crew, but was repulsed and driven back to hell.

The creation of the material world begins when Mithra combats the primeval Bull. His painful struggle with the Bull symbolizes the sufferings of mankind upon earth. He triumphs over the Bull and puts him in a cave where at the command of the Sun he ultimately kills him reluctantly, that he may thereby create and save mankind. The moon gathers and purifies the seed and the different kinds of animals are born. The soul of the Bull is taken under the protection of the dog, the faithful companion of Mithra, to heaven, where he becomes the guarding genius of cattle. The first human couple is now created and Mithra is set to guard it. Ahriman strives to kill it, as he had previously struggled to kill the Bull. He causes pestilential scourges and protracted drought but is baffled in his aim. He then causes a universal deluge, from which one man, forewarned by God, makes a boat for himself and his cattle and is saved. Then follows a huge conflagration which brings

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8 Is. et Os. 46, 47.



great destruction. The creation of Ormazd thenceforth lives and thrives. Mithra's work of creation being finished, he retires to heaven and guards the world from above.

**Mithraic ethics.** In Rome, Mithraism is the religion of the emperors and soldiers and Mithra exalts active, rigorous, military virtues. He is himself ever wakeful and demands wakefulness, agility in his votaries. He is the divinity of truth and justice and he guards them, fights against falsehood and injustice and requires that his worshippers will practise these cardinal virtues. Man's chief function in life is to combat evil actively on behalf of God. The fighting armies look to him for help and he never fails them. He helps the good in this life in their struggle for existence and assures them of salvation in the next. There is the esoteric side of Mithraism in which the aspirants to the Mithraic mysteries had to practise strict self-control. The neophytes had to undergo repeated lustrations and ablutions to cleanse their souls of sin. They had to live austere lives and perform elaborate occult ceremonies most scrupulously. There were seven degrees of initiation in which the mystic successively assumed the names of Raven, Occult, Soldier, Lion, Persian, Runner of the Sun, and Father and put on sacred marks appropriate to the names. He was made to undergo these seven degrees of initiation to enable him to acquire wisdom and holiness. Only those that passed through all the seven degrees became participants in the mysteries.

The Mithraic sanctuaries were in caves and grottoes. Fire burnt perpetually on the altar in the deep recesses of the subterranean crypts. The heavens were believed to be a solid vault and became symbolic of Mithra born from the rock. Greek art was enlisted in the service of Mithraism. Mithraic monuments represent in stone Mithra in the act of immolating the Bull, Mithraic legends, cosmogony, and mysteries.

**Mithraic eschatology.** The soul is immortal. It receives the reward or retribution according to the life it led upon earth. Mithra presides over the tribunal that judges the souls. As the heavenly Mediator, he helps the good to ascend to heaven and welcomes them as children returning from a distant journey. Woe unto the souls of the wicked, for they are dragged to hell by Ahriman and submitted to untold tortures.

There are seven heavens one above the other. These spheres are conjoined to the seven planets. A ladder takes the pious souls from one story to another. When the souls have traversed the seven zones, they enter the last paradisaic abode of eternal light and beatitude. At the end of time, Ahriman will destroy the world. Mithra will then come down upon the earth and will bring about the resurrection of the dead. The dead that have come to life again will recognize one another. Mithra will separate the righteous from the wicked. A bull, akin to the primeval

Bull, will appear on earth. Mithra will immolate it and give its fat with wine to the righteous that will make them immortal. Ormazd will let his fire fall upon the wicked and end their lives. Ahriman and the demons will perish in the conflagration. The will be renovated and the good will enjoy happiness time without bound.

**Christianity triumphs over Mithraism.** The Jews had settled in large numbers in the Roman cities. Paul, a disciple of Jesus, travelled far and wide to preach his master's faith. The religions of the East had for long time exercised great influence in Rome. Besides the Mithraic mysteries, the worship of Isis and Osiris from Egypt and the mysteries of various other systems were popular among the masses. Cultured men had ceased to believe in the ancient gods of Rome. They drew their inspiration from Greek philosophy, reproduced in the works of Cicero and Seneca. This Hellenistic-Roman philosophy was gradually losing its hold on those who thought man could not, unaided, gain divine knowledge and happiness. Man's salvation, they thought, could not be found in the world of sense. The religions from the East had long inspired all to turn their gaze from the earthly to the heavenly world, a supersensuous world, presiding over by a divinity who prescribed principles of moral conduct with divine authority and promised to give to the multitude peace and happiness in heaven, which they strove in vain to find upon earth. Pagan philosophers were vague over the belief in the future life. Christianity made it its fundamental doctrine, and entered Rome with words of comfort to all who laboured and were heavy laden in their lives of suffering upon earth. It gave them assurance of future recompense. The teachings of the new religion were eagerly listened to by the common people. New converts refused to pay divine homage to the emperor as was the prevailing custom in Rome. They were persecuted, yet the number of followers steadily grew. Periodical persecutions of the new sect drove many to martyrdom and after bitter struggle it gained a firm footing. The Roman empire was now on the decline. Christianity rose in influence after the death of Marcus Aurelius. It won a legal recognition during the early part of the fourth century. A century after Constantine, the Church became all-powerful. The disciples of Jesus won the Roman world with the gospel of love. By taking over the Hellenistic-Roman philosophy, they worked out a rational dogmatic theology that could satisfy both the spirit and the intellect.

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity was a turning point in the destinies of Mithraism. The cult ceased to be recognized and was tolerated to exist. Hostility against it began under his successors and persecution followed. A reaction followed under Julian the Apostate (A.D. 361-363), who was initiated in the mysteries of Mithra in his youth and who considered himself under the protection of Mithra. He

openly passed elaborate purificatory ablutions to wipe out the stains he had contracted when he had received the baptism and the communion of Christianity. As soon as he ascended the throne, he introduced Mithraic worship at Constantinople and celebrated the first taurobolia at Athens. He was the last pagan to occupy the throne of the Caesars, the last who was an ardent worshipper of Mithra. His premature death put an end to the reactionary movement. The victory of Theodosius in 394 A.D. extinguished all hopes of its revival by the aristocracy that was still faithful to the cult. Mithraism, which had originated among the enemies of Rome, remained her religion for two hundred years. It fell when it lost the protection of the State. Christianity now triumphed over its great rival. Mithraism lingered in the Alps and Vosges and in the out of the way places for considerable time. It perished, but not without leaving its mark behind, and many of its beliefs and ritualistic practices and its art influenced Christianity. The votaries of Mithra used to celebrate the birth of the Sun on December 25, because at the winter solstice light triumphed over darkness and the lengthening of the day began. The Christians chose this day as the feast of the Nativity of Christ, which is celebrated to this day.

## CHAPTER XXXIII. ZARATUSHT IN THE PAHLAVI WORKS

**Miracles as credentials of a prophet's mission as God's messenger.** Credulity creates miracles. They are due to man's hunger for the marvellous, his disposition to believe in the impossible, and his readiness to give credence to the incredible. They flourish where childlike innocence, ignorance is ready to be duped and deluded. The faith of the masses rests on the foundation of signs and prodigies, portents and miracles. Preternatural interference with the course of nature has been a commonplace everywhere. The omnipotent God, it has always been agreed, could change anything and everything at his own free will, and so he could set aside the physical laws that govern the universe. Miracles transcend natural laws. The prophets are believed to have been endowed with the power of producing supernatural events. The multitude always look upon them to work wonders that would establish their supernatural mission. The miracles strengthen the faith of the masses in the messengers of God. The movements of the prophets are devoutly magnified into miracles and credulous persons are always found to attest, as witnesses, the working of miracles. Buddha condemned miracles in most emphatic words, yet tradition has invested him with many more miracles than have been ascribed to any other prophet. Mohammed is asked to work miracles to prove the divinity of his mission as Noah and Abraham, Moses and Jesus had done. He is asked to cause the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dead to rise, and to change the course of nature. Mohammed replies that the Koran itself is the greatest miracle and he cannot work other miracles. Yet pious credulity, during the second generation, credits him with several miracles.

**Legend grows about the prophet of Iran that obscures his personality.** The Pahlavi works that give us the account of the happenings in the life of Zartosht have been written in about the ninth century, or about two thousand years after the passing away of the prophet. The holy figure has grown very distant and dim. The real events of his life have been obscured by the long centuries, particularly the five centuries of chaos that followed Alexander's conquest of Persia. The piety of the adherents of his faith has grown so much incense in his sacred memory that his face has got almost beyond recognition. We know everything of the life of Mohammed; we know something of the lives of Buddha and Jesus; we know practically nothing of the life of Zoroaster. The materials that we have in the Pahlavi works relating to him are not historical and authentic; they are legendary and mythical. Portents herald his birth and archangels attend his nativity. Legendary accounts of the miraculous conception and birth and childhood of Zartosht supersede the matter-of-fact information that the Gathas give.

The Pahlavi writers have before them the examples of the legendary stories of the miraculous incidents connected with the lives of Moses, Buddha, and Jesus, circulated in Iran by the followers of these prophets. It is probable that their writings have been influenced by these foreign sources.

**The Pahlavi works.** The Spend Nask, which is lost, is said to have contained the account of the birth and childhood of Zartosht. The materials that have been preserved in the *Denkard*, the *Selections of Zadspram*, and some scattered passages in other Pahlavi works make up the literature on the life of the prophet that came into existence during the Pahlavi period.

**The classical writers of the period on Zoroaster.** From the time of Porphyry, who visited Persia and wrote in the latter part of the third century, to the time of the late Latin writers, all who speak about Zoroaster reproduce in the main all that is written by the early Greek and Roman writers. Some of them have been influenced by what they heard from the Zoroastrian sectarians during their days. Porphyry, for example, quotes Eubulus and says that Zoroaster dedicated a cave to the worship of Mithra and adds that it is from the practice introduced by him that peoples conduct their holy rites in caves and grottoes.<sup>1</sup> Photius, who wrote in the latter part of the ninth century, ascribes the Zarvanite doctrines to Zoroaster and says that he represented Zaruan as the author of Hormisdas and Satan.<sup>2</sup> The fiction that magic originated with Zoroaster persists and is repeated from the classical and patristic works by very late writers. In the Faust-legend, Zoroaster figures as the prince of magicians whose book Faust studies so diligently that he is called a second Zoroastris. This book passes into the hands of Faust's pupil Wagner, who also studies it with as much diligence as his master did.<sup>3</sup>

**The date and place of Zartosht.** The Avestan works, we have seen, are silent over the question of the period when Zarathushtra flourished. Of the two main sources of information on this problem, namely the classical and the traditional, the latter is based on a few passages occurring in *Bundahishn*, *Arda Viraf*, and *Zadspram*.<sup>4</sup> The barest information we gather from these solitary passages is that Zartosht opened his prophetic ministry in the thirtieth year of the fabulous reign of one hundred and twenty of King Vishtaspa. The religion remained in undisturbed condition for three hundred years and in the three hundredth year of its foundation, Alexander invaded Persia.

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1 Fox and Pemberton, p. 86.

2 *Ib.*, p. 125.

3 Remy, *The Influence of India and Persia on the Poetry of Germany*, p. 13, New York, 1901.

4 Bd34. 1-9; AVN1. 2-5; Zsp.23.12.

The Arabic and Persian writers reproduce this statement in their works. The repetition of this legend by a host of the later writers seems to have given it a semblance of historic data. Tradition which is oblivious of the existence of the most renowned Persian kings Cyrus and Darius and Xerxes, which confounds the later Achaemenian kings with the Kayanian, which complacently accords a reign of one hundred and twenty years to Vishtaspa, which disposes of the rule of four hundred years of the Parthians in forty pages, which does not provide us with fifty pages of materials on the religious and social life of Zoroastrians during the five hundred years that intervened between Alexander and Ardashir, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty — is not a safe guide to follow. Both the classical date 6000 B.C. and the traditional date 600 B.C. are not acceptable; for its extravagance, the other for its unreliability. The date, as also the place of the birth and death of Zoroaster, will, probably never be established with any certainty, for no data exist to enable us to determine them with any accuracy. These questions will, probably, ever remain questions. The safest course for a writer upon these problems is to imitate the Pahlavist and endorse the frequently repeated phrase he employs whenever confronted with any insoluble question; *am lā roshan*, 'I do not know.'

**The birth of Zartosht.** Long before the advent of Zartosht, King Yima forewarns the demons that he will come to fight them.<sup>5</sup> A marvellous ox, in the reign of Kaus, likewise, foretells the coming of revelation through Zartosht.<sup>6</sup> Preparations are made in heaven for bringing about the birth of the prophet. The Kingly Glory descends upon earth and enters the house in which lives the woman who is destined to give birth to the prophet-child. It mingles with her when she is born. Owing to the Glory that has descended upon her, she is surrounded by a luminous light. The demons mislead her father into the belief that she is bewitched. The father thereupon sends her away to the clan of the Spitamas. When she came of age she married Pourushasp.<sup>7</sup> The demons struggle at every step to bring harm upon them, but are baffled in their vile attempts by the intervention of the heavenly beings. Vohuman, Ardwahisht, Hordad, and Amurdad miraculously bring about the mingling of the Glory, spirit, and body of the child in the womb of the mother.<sup>8</sup> For three nights did a hundred and fifty demons rush to the house where Dughdov lived and they struggled to destroy the child in her womb. but owing to the fire burning in her abode they

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5 Dk. SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.2. 59-61, p. 31.

6 Zsp. 12.12, 15, 16; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.2. 62, 64, 67, p. 31-33.

7 Zsp. 13.4; Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8.14. 1, p. 31; vol. 47, bk. 7.2. 2-10, p. 17-19; Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 24.

8 Dk. SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 2. 22-55, p. 23-30; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 24, 25.

failed in their foul purpose.<sup>9</sup> For three nights before the birth of the child, the village of Pourushasp became all luminous and people marvelled at it.<sup>10</sup> The struggle between the powers of light and darkness continues, marvels and wonders take place one after another, a divine light flashes forth from the house and in the midst of universal joy, the child is born, laughing outright at birth.<sup>11</sup>

**Zartosht's childhood.** Pourushasp is afraid and consults the wizard Durasrob about the extraordinary child. Durasrob conspires with his wicked companion Bratrakresh to kill the child. He stretches out his hand to strangle the child but finds to his dismay that his hand is miraculously withered.<sup>12</sup> Durasrob works upon the superstitious fear of Pourushasp and frightens him with evil consequences to himself and his family if the child should grow to age. The credulous father becomes of one mind with him. A great fire is kindled and the child is thrown into it. A great wonder is manifested to the people for the fire does not burn the child.<sup>13</sup> Durasrob devises other means of destruction and throws the child one day at the feet of oxen another day at the feet of horses, but when he is baffled in his evil intent and the oxen and horses do not kill the child, he approaches the lair of a wolf and when the mother has gone out he kills the cubs and puts the child near them. The wizard is confident that when the wolf will find on her return her cubs killed, she will mangle the child in revenge. Srosh and Vohuman guard the child and the wolf stands amazed at a distance with her mouth closed and fails to hurt the child.<sup>14</sup> Durasrob persists in his evil work of causing injury to the child, by practising witchcraft upon it.<sup>15</sup> At his tender age, Zartosht enters into controversy with Durasrob and condemns him and his associates for their evil practices.<sup>16</sup> Durasrob is ultimately baffled, acknowledges his defeat and retreats, and when he has gone a little distance, he falls from his horse and expires.<sup>17</sup>

**Zartosht's youth.** The Avestan and Pahlavi works declare the age of fifteen as the proper time of puberty for both boys and girls.<sup>18</sup> When

9 SnS10.4.

10 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.2. 56-58, p. 30, 31.

11 Zsp. 14. 12. 16; Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8. 14. 2; 9. 24. 1-10, p. 31, 226-229; vol. 47, bk. 5. 2. 2, 5. p. 122, 123; bk. 7. 3. 2, 3. 25. p. 35, 41; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 27.

12 Zsp. 16. 2. 3; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 4-6. p. 35, 36; Jackson *ib.*, p. 28.

13 Zsp. 16. 7; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 8-10, p. 36, 37; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 29.

14 Zsp. 16.5. 6, 8-11; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 11-19, p. 37-40; bk. 5. 2. 4, p. 122, 123; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 29.

15 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.3. 33, p. 43; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 31.

16 Zsp. 17. 1-6; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 34-43, p. 43-45; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 31.

17 Zsp. 19. 7. 8; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 44, 45, p. 45, 46; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 32.

18 Y9.5; Yt14.17; Vd14.15; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8.19.95, p. 79.

Zartosht was fifteen years of age he passed through the ceremony of the investiture with the sacred girdle.<sup>19</sup> In all ages when everybody lives for himself there is somebody who lives for all. That somebody in the settlements of Pourushasp was Zartosht, who chose to live for all. From childhood, kindness, sympathy, mercy, and generosity had written their marks on his face. He radiated benevolence around him. He shed joy and happiness on all who came near him, and communicated his goodness to them. He had boundless sympathy and love for all the poor and could not bear to see them suffer. He had keen ears for the suppressed sighs and silent sorrows of suffering humanity. He practised liberality and generosity, he nourished the poor, and gave fodder to cattle, he saved the lives of those in peril of losing it.<sup>20</sup> According to the custom of the times, his father Pourushasp selected a bride for him, but he requested that he should himself see her face to face and converse with her.<sup>21</sup> He leaves the house of his parents in search of knowledge and righteousness.<sup>22</sup> The Pahlavi texts do not give us any details of the years that he spent in acquiring wisdom and practising righteousness. He thought and inquired and studied and began to live the heavenly life upon earth and piously strove to become the ideal expression of Ormazd in bodily life.

**Zartosht meets Vohuman.** In the thirtieth year of his life Zartosht was one day going to attend the celebration of the season festival. Weary of walking he rested awhile on a solitary plain, when he saw in a vision a concourse of people headed by his cousin Medyomah come victoriously to greet him.<sup>23</sup> One morning he happened to cross four channels of the river Daiti in order to fetch water for the performance of the Hom ceremony. As he came out from the water and was putting on his clothes, his sight fell upon a handsome man in resplendent raiment bearing in his hands a spiritual staff, emblematic of religion. He was Vohuman, the heavenly premier of Ormazd. He accosted Zartosht and asked him who he was and what was his desire. Zartosht thereupon gave him his acquaintance and said that he was in search of righteousness and added that he was not only in quest of righteousness but also of the very source from which righteousness originates. Vohuman readily acquiesced and said that he would take him to the most beneficent lord who was the heavenly father of both of them. Then they marched onward, Vohuman walked first and Zartosht followed. As they walked together, Zartosht saw that Vohuman was as tall as three men's spears and that he had to take ninety steps to cover

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19 Zsp. 20.1.2.

20 Zsp. 20.4,6, 10,11, 14-16; Jackson, Cf., p. 32, 33.

21 Zsp. 20. 12, 13.

22 Zsp. 20.7.

23 Zsp. 21. 1-3; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 40.



the space that Vohuman did in nine steps. As they came within twenty-four feet of the Amshaspands, Zartosht could not see his own shadow on the ground, for so great was their brilliance.<sup>24</sup>

**Zartosht confers with Ormazd.** When Zartosht approached the august assembly, he paid homage to Ormazd and the Amshaspands and took his seat among the inquirers. In the conversation that follows, Zartosht puts questions and Ormazd gives his replies. Ormazd explains to him the excellence of the triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds and the mode of best conduct. Ormazd further acquaints him with the existence and nature of the two primeval spirits. Zartosht gets the beatific vision of the omniscient wisdom of Ormazd three times during the day and the remaining six Amshaspands exhibit to him the three ordeals by fire, molten metal, and knife. He is made to walk three steps on fire reciting the words, 'good thoughts, good words, and good deeds,' and he is not burnt. Hot metal is, likewise, poured on his chest and he is not hurt. In the third ordeal, the vital parts of his body are cut with a knife so as to let the blood flow from the wound, which is healed by passing hands over it. These ordeals, Zartosht is told, are to be undergone by the leaders of religion to prove the steadfastness of their faith when occasions demand it of them.<sup>25</sup>

**Zartosht's seven conferences with the Amshaspands.** When Zartosht returns from his conference with the Amshaspands, he opens his ministry and begins to unfold his divine message to mankind. The Kiks and Karaps opposed him and he rebuked and repudiated them in strong terms. The disbelievers clamour for his death, but the Turanian Aurvaitadang saves him.<sup>26</sup> Ahriman and the demons assail Zartosht and contemplate his death. Zartosht routs them and buries them in the earth by the recital of the Ahunwar.<sup>27</sup>

During the first decade of his ministry, Zartosht had altogether seven conferences individually with each of the Amshaspands at different places. In these conferences, each Amshaspand exhorts Zartosht to teach mankind to preserve and protect the particular material creation that is under his protection. Vohuman thus pleads for the proper maintenance of animals, Ardwahisht for fire, Shahrewar for metals, Spandarmad for earth, Hordad for water, and Amurdad for plants.<sup>28</sup>

**Zartosht at the court of king Vishtasp.** Zartosht at the court of king Vishtasp. At the tenth year of his ministry and at the close of his

24 Zsp. 21. 4-13; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 51-61; 4. 29; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 36, 40, 41.

25 Zsp. 21. 14-27; 22. 2; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 42.

26 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 1-20; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 42, 43.

27 Dk., SBE., vol. 47. bk. 7. 4. 36-45.

28 Zsp. 22. 1, 3-12; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 1, p. 50; vol. 37, bk. 8. 14. 3, p. 31, 32; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 46-49.

conferences with the Amshaspands, Zartosht wins his first convert.<sup>29</sup> Greater triumph, however, is now in store for the prophet of Ormazd. He is led by Ormazd himself to the court of king Vishtasp, where he succeeds in winning over the king and his courtiers by means of his persuasive preaching, the presentation of the testimony of the Amshaspands for the truth of his doctrines and by the working of many miracles.<sup>30</sup> The Kiks and Karaps at the court of Vishtasp were alarmed at the prophet's success. They challenged him to prove the truth of his utterances and propounded thirty-three questions to him. Zartosht answered them to the satisfaction of all present and to the utter embarrassment of the disputants. The unscrupulous priests of the old faith thereupon tried to ruin Zartosht's influence at the royal court by intrigues. They arraigned him before the king and succeeded in getting him imprisoned. Zartosht worked a wonder upon the favourite horse of Vishtasp and obtained his release.<sup>31</sup>

Ormazd then sent Vohuman, Ardwhisht and the Fire Burzin Mitra [Adar Burzin Mihr] to the court of Vishtasp to plead on behalf of the prophet and his religion. Confusion and terror overtook the king and courtiers and they began to tremble at the sight of the august personages. But the Fire of Ormazd assured them that they were not the emissaries of Iran's enemy, Arjasp and the Khyons, come to demand tribute from them, nor had they come to rob the king of his possessions, but they were deputed by Ormazd himself. The heavenly envoys advised the king to extend his royal patronage to the new religion. They promised him a long reign and a long life of one hundred and fifty years and an immortal son. They warned him at the same time of the evil that would fall upon him if he did not embrace the faith. In pious obedience to the divine behest, Vishtasp adopts the religion of Zartosht. Ormazd thereupon commands Neryosang to hasten to the court of Vishtasp with the elixir of life and asks Ardwhisht to hand it to the king. The archangel puts the elixir in a beautiful saucer and asks the king to quaff it. On drinking the life-giving potion, the king falls in a trance and sees marvellous things of the celestial world. He now asks his royal consort to accept the faith, which she readily does. The triumph of the new religion is achieved.<sup>32</sup> Faithful to his undertaking, Vishtasp lives and works and fights for the religion. His brother and sons go to India and other distant places to propagate the new faith.<sup>33</sup>

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29 Zsp. 23. 1,2,8.

30 Sg. 10. 64-66; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 64-66, 71, p. 64-66; bk. 5. 2. 8, p. 75. 76; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 57-59, 62.

31 Zsp. 23. 5; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 67, 69, 71, 73, p. 65-67; 5. 6, p. 75.

32 Bd17.8; Zsp. 23. 7; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 74-86, p. 67-71 p. 77; 6. 13, p. 81; vol. 37, bk. 8. 11.2, 3, p. 24; Jackson, *ib.* p. 65-67.

33 Sg. 10.67, 68.

**The passing away of the prophet.** Zartosht lives for forty-seven years after he receives the revelation. He spreads righteousness, puts down witchcraft, and fights wickedness.<sup>34</sup> The texts say he possessed the knowledge of medicine, law, and all kinds of earthly and heavenly wisdom.<sup>35</sup> He visualizes the future of his religion in a trance.<sup>36</sup> He had children by holy wedlock. Of these three will be miraculously born in the future as millennial prophets.<sup>37</sup> Bratraresh, the Turanian foe of Zartosht and his religion, killed him when he was seventy-seven years of age.<sup>38</sup>

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34 Dk., SBE, vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 72, p. 66.

35 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 5. 8, 9, p. 75. 76.

36 BYt. 2. 6-9.

37 Jackson, *ib.*, p. 20, 21. 40. Zsp. 23. 9; Dd72.8; Sd. 9. 5; BYt. 2. 3-5; Dk., SBE., vol. 5. 3. 2; 7. 5.1; 7. 6. 1, p. 73, 74, 77, 126. 165; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 127-129.

38 Zsp. 23. 9; Dd72.8; Sd. 9. 5; BYt. 2. 3-5; Dk., SBE., vol. 5. 3. 2; 7. 5.1; 7. 6. 1, p. 73, 74, 77, 126. 165; Jackson, *ib.*, p. 127-129.

## CHAPTER XXXIV. ZOROASTRIANISM AS TAUGHT BY THE PAHLAVI WORKS

**Ardashir, a Magus, rejuvenates Zoroastrianism.** With the fall of the Achaemenian empire were extinguished the last sparks of the fire of racial jealousy between the Medes and Persians. Common hardships and common sorrows had obliterated all traces of bitter feeling for one another. The Seleucid period and the five centuries of Parthian rule, as another great empire in Iran, served all the more to make them now one compact homogeneous people, thinking with one mind, feeling with one heart, and acting with one aim. As already pointed out, the Magi did not receive recognition in the Avesta. It is not so in the Pahlavi period. The Avestan term *athravan* remains during this era as a class designation alone, but *magopat*, which later becomes *mobad*, is used throughout the Pahlavi literature, equally as a class designation for priesthood and as a personal title of a priest to distinguish him from a layman. Significant in this light becomes the fact that although the Persians of old had defeated the Medes and their sacerdotal caste, the Magi, it was now a Magus again that was destined to revive the national glory of Iran, and restore their ancient faith. The Kingly Glory of Iran clave to a hero of the house of Sasan in the province of Fars,<sup>1</sup> who was alike priest and king.<sup>2</sup> Ardashir was his name, and the Iranian world rang with the praises of this son of Babak, whose fame is writ large in the history of Zoroastrianism.

This founder of the Sasanian dynasty won his spurs in the battle against Ardavan, the last of the Parthian kings, in A.D. 224. People turned their eager eyes to him for the national emancipation from the heavy yoke of the foreigners. His was the task of rebuilding the shattered fragments of the ancient Persian empire upon the ruins of the Parthian empire. When he succeeded in consolidating the various states of Iran into one mighty commonwealth under his sceptre, he proceeded vigorously thereupon to establish a polity in conformity with the teachings of Zoroaster which would unite his empire as Church and State. It was through Ardashir that Zoroastrianism became once more enthroned as the creed paramount, after a lapse of fully five centuries, and remained so for four centuries under the House of Sasan. The king himself, being of sacerdotal caste, strongly upheld the doctrine of the unity of the Church and the State. The two, he said, are like brother and sister; neither can flourish without the other.<sup>3</sup> They both are interwoven together like two pieces of brocade.<sup>4</sup> The *Denkard*, which is the greatest

1 *Karname-i-Artakhshir-i-Papakan*, 3. 10-18.

2 *Agathias*, 2.26.

3 *Masudi*, tr. Barbier de Meynard, 2. 162.

4 *ShN*. 6.286.

of the Pahlavi works of this period, upholds the divine right of kings and states if the temporal power of the glorious king Jamshed had been blended with the spiritual power of the supreme priest Zoroaster, the Evil Spirit would have lain low long ere this, and the Kingdom of Righteousness would have been established on earth once and forever.<sup>5</sup> Both of these powers will be concentrated in the final saviour, who is to enable man to gain the final victory over the Kingdom of Wickedness.<sup>6</sup>

Ardashir, as a pontiff-king himself, commissioned his high-priest Tansar to collect the scattered Avestan works and thus to prepare an authorized compilation of the sacred texts.<sup>7</sup> The enthusiasm evoked among the faithful at the restoration of their lost scriptures presents a situation seldom paralleled in history, and certainly never surpassed in the religious development of Zoroastrianism.

**The revival of Zoroastrianism continues with unabating zeal.** The great work inaugurated by the first of the royal House of Sasan was zealously continued by descendants and notably by Shapur II,<sup>8</sup> who brought the work to completion with the help of his illustrious Dastur and premier Adarbad Mahraspand.<sup>9</sup> Mani's heresy was at its height during this period, and Adarbad strove hard to restore the faith of his people that was undermined by the misguided leader's heretical teachings. In order to prove the marvels of the faith, Adarbad is reported to have submitted himself to the ordeal of the molten metal and to have come out unscathed.<sup>10</sup> King Shapur thereupon declared the work, as thus redacted, to be authoritative, and he commanded that anything outside this canonical collection should not be countenanced. Another source states that still further steps were taken to put the truth of the religion to the test. Several pious mobads were convoked to attend at the temple of the fire Froba [Adar Farnbag], and there to consider the momentous question of deputing one of their number to visit, in a vision, the spiritual world and thus to bring back from the angels themselves a first-hand knowledge of matters spiritual for the complete restoration of the religion. Seven holy men were first elected from the assembly. Out of this number Arda Viraf was selected as the most righteous and saintly. After preliminary ceremonies this holy man entered into a trance for seven days and nights, during which he was transported in spirit to the other world. His soul ascended into the realm of heaven, traversed the spiritual regions, and after beholding

5 Dk., vol. 3, p. 175, 176.

6 *Ib.*, p. 176.

7 *Ib.*, vol. 9, p. 578.

8 A.D. 309-379.

9 Dk., vol. 9, p. 579.

10 SnS15. 16; Sg. 10. 70; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 5. 5, p. 74, 75; AV. 1. 16.

paradise visited likewise the inferno. Viraf described the experience of his visions and thus contributed to rehabilitating the faith of the people in their historic religion.

**The Pahlavi works are written by many hands in successive periods.** Though the canon was declared closed by the edict of Shapur II, the work of rendering the Avestan texts into Pahlavi with exegetic commentaries, and the composition of original works in the court language, continued throughout the Sasanian period, and even long after the downfall of the empire. Few if any of the exegetical works of Zoroastrianism written during the Sasanian period have survived the devastating hands of the conquering hordes of the Arabs, and almost all the important Pahlavi works that we possess today were written under the Abbasid Caliphs. The Persians in whose veins flowed the kingly blue blood had helped the Abbasids in overthrowing the Umayyads, thus avenging themselves upon their national foes, the Arabs. This greatly elevated the position of the Zoroastrians at the royal court of Baghdad. During this period it was that the composition of the Pahlavi treatises was undertaken with renewed vigour. To the ninth century we owe much of the Pahlavi literature that has come down to us. Thus the Pahlavi literature covers a period of about seven centuries, beginning from the first Sasanian ruler, Ardashir, or still earlier, and stretching downwards to the times of the illustrious Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, al-Ma'mun, or even later. The invention of the modern Persian alphabet restricted the use of Pahlavi to the learned clerics, who continued to make some slight additions to the Pahlavi literature up to the end of the eleventh century.<sup>11</sup>

**The Pahlavi literature has its roots in the Avestan soil.** The Pahlavi works allege that the Avestan Nasks had perished, but the tradition transmitted orally from father to son and the fragments of the sacred texts did not suffer the Avestan lore to die out entirely. The extant Pahlavi works contain quotations from Avestan works that have not come down to us, and this may help to show that the later writers either quoted from memory or that they had access to Avestan works, since lost, when they wrote their Pahlavi treatises; or possibly it may serve to prove both facts. Nay, some of the Pahlavi works seem to be wholly or in part reproductions of some of the Avesta Nasks, and most scholars agree with West that the Pahlavi Bundahishn is an epitome of the Avestan Damdad Nask, that has since disappeared.<sup>12</sup> This leads to the probable conclusion that besides the two archetype copies deposited in the royal treasuries at Persepolis and Samarkand, there may have existed other copies of these Nasks, in full or in part, in private possession or in the more notable fire-temples. The internal evidence of

11 West, *Pahlavi Literature*, in *GIrPh.* 2. 80.

12 SBE., vol. 5. int. xxiv.

some of the most important Pahlavi works show us that they preserve much of the material derived from Avestan sources, which still existed in their days, but has been subsequently lost, and thus make up for the loss of the original Avestan books to a considerable extent.

**The Pahlavi literature is the completion of the Avestan works.** The Pahlavi works explain, elaborate, and describe in detail much of what is stated in brief in the original Avestan texts. This is the inestimable value of the Pahlavi literature. A few examples may serve to illustrate this statement.

The Avestan texts frequently mention 'the Time of Long Duration,' a period carved out from eternity as the age for the duration of the present world, but give no idea, as far as the texts have been preserved, as to the length of this mighty aeon. It is to the Pahlavi books that we have to turn to ascertain the specific duration of this period, for the millennial doctrine is recognized but not described in the Avestan writings that we possess today. It is worked out in full detail in the Pahlavi works. This fact might even suggest that the idea originated with the Pahlavists but such is not the case, for we know from Plutarch that Theopompus, who flourished in the fourth century B.C., or a little before the close of the Avestan period, was well acquainted with this doctrine of the Zoroastrians, and wrote about it in his works.<sup>13</sup>

The Later Avestan texts speak of the future judgment, the rising of the dead, the renovation, but it is the Pahlavi works that acquaint us with the method of the administration of justice in the heavenly tribunal and the final restoration of the universe.

The texts of the Younger Avesta, as noted above, speak of different heavens and hells, but the Pahlavi works locate them, and give a detailed description of the area they cover, the boundaries that divide them from one another, and the conditions that prevail in them.

**The trend of the religious thought of the Pahlavi period.** We have described the change from the Gathic to the Avestan texts as a retrograde step; the Pahlavi texts are still farther removed from the Gathas. The Gathic ideal lingers and continues to be admired, but it has ceased to influence. It evokes praise from the Pahlavi writers, but fails to inspire them with its abstract tone.

Zoroaster is a historical personage in the Gathas. In the Later Avesta he becomes super-human; but in the Pahlavi works his personality is enshrouded by miracles, and he is transformed into a myth. The fascination for marvels in religion is an unmistakable sign of the times. Christian bishops, who, as we shall see in the further stage of our inquiry, carried on inveterate disputes with the Zoroastrian clergy in

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13 Is. et Os. 47.

Persia, based the claim of the greatness of their own religion on miracles. Perhaps in consequence the life-story of Zoroaster, as told by the writers of the Pahlavi period, is similarly stamped with the mark of the miraculous. The Gathas and the Younger Avesta speak of the prophet's conferences with the Amshaspands, or archangels, and his communing with them. The Pahlavi texts, as we have seen, state that they came to the court of King Gushtasp as the envoys of Ormazd, to give proof of the divine calling of the prophet. Moreover, when Zoroaster met Vohuman, he actually saw the body and the face of the archangel, his size, and his garments, and in these celestial conferences with the archangels the prophet was requested by each in turn to command mankind to take due care of the concrete thing under the special charge of each as an Amshaspand and not the abstract virtue that each impersonates. Vohuman, for instance, as the genius of good mind, did not emphasize the faithful adherence to good thoughts, but contented himself with reminding the prophet to teach mankind to take care of the cattle. Ardwahisht, the genius of righteousness, gave no command to Zartosht to exhort men to follow the path of righteousness, but taught him that the best way of propitiating the heavenly spirit was to propitiate his fire. Similarly the other archangels in these celestial interviews did not hold up as the ideals the virtues over which they presided, but they inculcated due preservation of their respective earthly objects. A Pazand penitential prayer, whose authorship is attributed to Dastur Adarbad Mahraspand, the high-priest and premier of King Shapur (309-379 A.D.), mentions the Amshaspands by name, and exhorts the penitent to atone severally for the sins committed against them. In every case he addresses each archangel in turn and craves forgiveness for any offence that may have been committed by ill-treating the earthly object over which the genius presides. Offences against the abstract virtues which the archangels impersonate are not mentioned in this treatise,<sup>14</sup> and this fact tends decidedly to show that phase of Zoroastrianism in which abstract ideas were gradually losing in importance, and the concrete side of the religion was coming out with greater prominence.

This process of materializing the original abstract concepts reaches its climax in the eschatological notions of this period. The several heavens and hells, as also the bridge of judgment that leads to them, are now completely materialized. All the splendours of a royal court with its golden thrones, rich carpets, fine cushions are transferred to paradise. On the other hand, all sorts of physical tortures that man's ingenuity can devise prevail in hell.

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14 Pt. 8.



Fifteen hundred years separated Zoroaster from the Sasanian period, and a thick veil began to hide the pristine truth of his great religion from his followers.

**The Sasanian Church became an arbiter of the faith of Zoroaster.** It was through the Church that the religious teachings filtered into the populace. During the period of her great influence, when the State was practically under her tutelage, the Church rendered a lasting service by her attempts to reinvigorate the Mazdayasnian faith. She triumphed when she stood for the spirit of the religion of Mazda; but she failed when she descended to rigid formalism, stifled independent inquiry, stigmatized honest doubt as Ahrimanic, and sought to overrule original thinking by dogmatic assertions. Religion defeats its own ends when it degenerates into dogmatic theology. And it was not otherwise in Persia.

## CHAPTER XXXV. THE ACTIVE PROPAGANDA OF THE FAITH

**The Pahlavi works on proselytism.** Zartosht first preached his new religion to the people of Iran where he was born; but Ormazd has commanded that the excellent religion should be spread among all races of mankind throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> In their commentary on the oft-recurring Avestan formula *fravarāne*, the Pahlavi versionists add an explanatory gloss that every believer undertakes to proclaim the Zoroastrian religion of Ormazd to the entire world. It is said that the act of the highest merit that a non-believer can perform in his life is to his religion and embrace the Mazdayasnian faith.<sup>2</sup> The great Sasanian monarch, Shapur II, zealously worked for the restoration and promulgation of the faith among the unbelievers with the aid of his illustrious Dastur Adarbad.<sup>3</sup> The Denkard sanctions even the use of force for the conversion of the aliens.<sup>4</sup> A Pahlavi treatise devoted mostly to the Zoroastrian rituals attests the practice of admitting outsiders into the Zoroastrian fold.<sup>5</sup> Another Pahlavi tractate treating of the social and legal practices of the Sasanians lays down that if a Christian slave embraces the faith of his Zoroastrian master, he should be given freedom.<sup>6</sup>

**An Armenian account of the Zoroastrian propaganda.** Elisaeus, bishop of the Amadunians in the fifth century A.D., in his historical work states that King Yazdegird II and his royal court resorted to both persuasion and force in their attempt to win over the Christians of Armenia to Zoroastrianism.<sup>7</sup> The Christian subjects of the Persian king in Armenia, we are informed, were promised high positions, court distinctions, royal favours, and the remission of the taxes, if they accepted the national faith of Iran. Mihr Narsih, the premier of Yazdegird II (A.D. 438-457), in the proclamation to the Christian population in Armenia that he issued at the royal command, exhorts them to adopt the religion that their sovereign holds, and adds that those that do not acknowledge the Mazdayasnian faith are deaf and blind, and are misled by Ahriman.<sup>8</sup> Elisaeus informs us that this

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1 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 5. 14, p. 12; see Gray, "Missions (Zoroastrian)" in , ERE. 8. 749-751.

2 SBE., vol. 18, *Appendix*, p. 415.

3 Dk., vol. 9, p. 579.

4 SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8. 26. p. 88, 89. [I.e. the Duwasrud Nask (Warrior's Code) of the ancient Avesta, as summarized in Dk8.26.21. -JHP]

5 Aerpat. bk. 1. 4. 28, 29; 1. 5. 4.

6 *Mādigān-i Hazār Dādistān*, ed. Modi, p. 1, Poona. 1901.

7 *The History of Vartan*, p. 8, 9, 11, 31, 32, 35, London, 1830.

8 *The History of Vartan*, p. 11, 12.

proselytizing movement on the part of the Magi of Sasanian times was not confined to Armenia alone, but it extended further to Georgia, Albania, and various other countries.<sup>9</sup>

**Judaism and Christianity penetrate into Persia as the formidable rivals of the national faith.** When the Zoroastrian Church was thus engaged in promulgating the faith of Zoroaster outside Persia, her religious supremacy was challenged at home by Judaism, and more aggressively by Christianity.<sup>10</sup> Ardashir had established Zoroastrianism as the state religion of Persia, but there were in the empire colonies of people following other religions. Iran had long ceased to be a religious unit, and the vast number of Jews, Christians, and others of divergent faiths and creeds contributed towards disunion. Referring to the presence of the people professing different religions in his kingdom, King Hormizd IV once remarked that his throne rested on four feet;<sup>11</sup> and troublesome these outside elements certainly proved to the sovereign occupying the throne. A fairly tolerable latitude was conceded to these adherents of the alien faiths, though occasional persecutions of them were not unknown. These non-Zoroastrians frequently occasioned heated polemics in which virulent criticism and derisive terms were exchanged between the the Zoroastrian priests on the one side and the prelates of the rival faiths on the other. Iranian society was often convulsed with the storm of controversy. The alien faiths were branded as the promptings of the Evil Spirit, and were declared to be teaching a vile law, opposed to the pure law of Mazda.<sup>12</sup> The religions that most struggled in this manner with the national faith during the Sasanian period were Judaism and Christianity, whose position in Persia we shall now discuss.

**Judaism in Persia.** Judea had come under the Persian rule at the very early period. The Babylonian exile brought the Jews into close touch with the Persians in the sixth century B.C. We have already referred to the fact that the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem was executed at the royal command of the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius. The Jews had settled in Persia in large numbers from very early times, and had planted their colonies all over the country. They thrived peacefully and were given privileges to manage their own civic affairs without molestation from the state. Some of the members of the royal house had even married Jewish princesses. King Yazdegird I, for

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9 *Ib.*, p. 26.

10 See Gray, "Jews in Zoroastrianism" in *ERE.*, 7 562, 563; "Jesus Christ in Zoroastrianism", 7. 552, 553; Pettazoni, *La Religione di Zarathustra*, p. 193-199; 201-204.

11 Tabari, tr. Nöldeke, p. 268; Wigram, *History of the Assyrian Church*, p. 214. London, 1910.

12 SnS6. 7.

example, had a Jewish consort.<sup>13</sup> But in general those who contracted matrimonial alliances with Jewish women were disliked, and the Denkard inveighs in strong terms against the practice of contracting such unions.<sup>14</sup> In the course of time, the Persians and the Israelites seem to have been sharply divided in religious matters. Disputations on questions of belief must have been frequent. All of the Pahlavi works denounce Judaism in unsparing terms. The writer of the Denkard, for instance, avers that Judaism is not a divine religion,<sup>15</sup> and points to Zohak, the most detested of men, as the originator of the Jewish scriptures,<sup>16</sup> branding elsewhere the Jewish books as utterances of the demons.<sup>17</sup> Seno, a Zoroastrian sage, is reported to have said, in his admonitions to the kings of Persia, that the sovereign of the people ought to keep aloof from the religion of the Jews, as bringing devastation to the world.<sup>18</sup> The progress of the Jewish belief be arrested, lest it spread its evil among the faithful.<sup>19</sup> The knowledge of this religion produces baneful influences upon the Mazdayasnians,<sup>20</sup> it implants vice,<sup>21</sup> and aggravates immorality.<sup>22</sup> Men become of evil disposition through it.<sup>23</sup> Those who belong to this faith cannot be said to be related to the Prime Source.<sup>24</sup> Such violent attacks on the beliefs of a race which had settled in Persia from the very early period of her history show us the bitterness of feeling that must have prevailed between Zoroastrians and Jews. A later writer, confounding Kay Loharasp with Nebuchadnezzar, states that one of the meritorious deeds done by Loharasp was that he destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews.<sup>25</sup>

**Christian propaganda in Iran.** Christianity had entered Persia during the Parthian period, and the Sasanians found the creed of Christ more or less current when they established their empire. Of all the alien faiths in Persia, Christianity was the most aggressive. The pertinacious attempt of the Christians to win over converts to their faith from the

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13 Shatroihā-i Airān, 47, 53.

14 Dk., vol. 2, p. 97-102.

15 Dk., vol. 4, p. 211.

16 Dk., vol. 6, p. 372, 373; vol. 7, p. 439.

17 Dk., vol. 9, p. 604.

18 Dk., vol. 5, p. 310.

19 Dk., vol. 1, p. 24.

20 Dk., vol. 6, p. 373.

21 Dk., vol. 7, p. 456.

22 Dk., vol. 6, p. 357, 358.

23 Dk., vol. 4, p. 257.

24 Dk., vol. 4, p. 267.

25 Mkh. 27. 64, 67; see also Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 209.

ruling nation, often caused shedding of human blood. There was a state of perennial war between Sasanian Persia and Byzantine Rome, which had embraced Christianity. The sympathy of the Christian population naturally went to their Roman co-religionists and caused disturbances in Persia. Moreover, the fanatic zeal of the priests on both sides fomented communal strife, which often resulted in the destruction of the Zoroastrian fire-temples and Christian churches, and the consequent persecution of the Christians. Great as are the resemblances between the fundamental teachings of the two religions, their ethical systems show a glaring distinction. Christianity exalted monastic virtues, and glorified celibacy. The Zoroastrian priests vehemently denounced the foreign priests who preached a mode of life which clashed with their ethics.<sup>26</sup> Reckless utterances of the Christian priests often aggravated the ill-feeling between the two peoples, and violent scenes ensued. An enthusiastic bishop once regaled his congregation by saying that the soul of the king would, in his future life, be born in hell-fire with Satan, whereas the Christians would be translated to heaven,<sup>27</sup> while another patriarch urged the Roman bishops to free them from the accursed rule of the Persians.<sup>28</sup> The priests on both the sides became zealots, and occasionally fell into the slough of fanaticism. Great was the fury of religious rancour that prevailed on such occasions. The seceders from Zoroastrianism were persecuted; apostasy was made a capital crime by the Zoroastrian Church, and the renegades were put to death. Notwithstanding such harsh measures adopted by the Iranian clergy, numerous converts were made throughout the whole time of the Sasanian rule from Zoroastrianism to Christianity. Some of the greatest saints were won from the Zoroastrian community. A noted Zoroastrian preceptor embraced Christianity, and later became the Patriarch under the name Mar Aba the Great. The Zoroastrian priesthood clamoured for his death, and the law of the country supported them. It was the great admiration that King Noshirvan held for the Patriarch that saved his life.<sup>29</sup> Yazdegird I and Hormizd IV ascended the throne with proclivities for Christianity, and Noshirvan and Khusru Parviz had wedded Christian princesses. Nushzad, one of the sons of the great Sasanian king Noshirvan, was brought up a Christian.<sup>30</sup> Another ruler of the House of Sasan, Parviz, built a monastery to please his favourite Christian wife.<sup>31</sup> Such royal examples encouraged the Christian propaganda in Iran. Yazdegird I, who favoured the Christian cause, was

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26 Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 64; Eliseus. *op. cit.* p. 13.

27 Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

28 *Ib.*, p. 151, 152.

29 Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 184, 22-209.

30 Tabari, tr. Nöldeke, p. 467-474.

31 Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

hailed by the Christians as the blessed king, but was branded by his own co-religionists as the wicked sinner.<sup>32</sup>

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32 Shatroiḥā-i-Airān, 26; cf. Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 86.

## CHAPTER XXXVI. SECTS

**Zoroastrianism split up into a number of sects.** As indicated above, the Zoroastrian church had lost all control over its adherents. Sect after sect arose, each claiming to interpret the religion of Zoroaster in its own light.<sup>1</sup> The fact that numerous sects flourished in Iran at this period is proved by the frequent allusions to them by Greek, Arabian, Syriac, and Armenian writers. Shahrastani, as we shall see later, speaks of three sects, namely the Zarvanites, the Gayomarthians, and the Zardushtians. Mohsan Fani refers to fourteen sects as he witnessed in his days in the seventeenth century. Several of these, he adds, flourished from early times. Unfortunately the accounts of those sects, which we find in the extant Zoroastrian literature, is very meagre. Several of them, about which we get some information from the non-Zoroastrian sources, are not even mentioned by name in the Iranian works. The Armenian writers, Eznik and Elisaeus, writing in the fifth century about the Zoroastrians of their own time, state they were split into two rival sects called Mog and Zendik. Damascius (529 A.D.), on the authority of Eudemus states that sects flourished in Iran which held space as the primordial being that created the rival spirits of goodness and evil.<sup>2</sup> The most formidable of the sects, which counted eminent persons among its adherents during the Sasanian period and which had a considerable following long after the disappearance of this last Zoroastrian empire, was that of the Zarvanites. Zarvan, or Time, accompanied Mithra in his migration to the far West and as Kronos was placed at the pinnacle of the divine hierarchy in the Mithraic cult.<sup>3</sup> Antiochus I of Commagene speaks of Boundless Time.

### ZARVANITES

**Zarvan according to the Pahlavi writers.** This image of the eternal duration of Time is as cold and lifeless in the Pahlavi works as it was in the Avestan texts. Ormazd created it, and with its creation the entire existence came into motion.<sup>4</sup> or according to another passage, Boundless Time is eternally in Ormazd, and the very first work of his in creation appertained to Time.<sup>5</sup> He brought into being the earthly and heavenly creatures through his own splendour and through the blessing of Time.<sup>6</sup> Zarvan, or Time, is called hungerless and thirstless, painless

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1 Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 174-177, Edwards, *Sects (Zoroastrian)* in ERE. 11. 345-347.

2 *De Primis Princ.*, tr. by Chaignet, *Les Premiers Principes*, vol. 2, p. 129, Paris, 1898.

3 Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, Eng. tr. McConnack, p. 107, Chicago, 1903.

4 Zsp. 1.24.

5 Dk., vol. 6, p. 415, 416.

6 Mkh. 8.8.

and deathless, ever-living and ever-predominating over the fleeting things of the universe.<sup>7</sup> Thus the authoritative Zoroastrian works speak of Boundless Time in its relation to Ormazd; just as any system of philosophy or theology may speak of the eternity of God. The demon Arashk is alleged to have said that Ormazd and Ahriman have been two brothers in one womb.<sup>8</sup> Mani calls Zarvan in his heresy, Time Eternal, the Father God of Light.<sup>9</sup>

**Zarvan according to the non-Zoroastrian writers.** The account that we get of this being from the writings of the classical and Armenian authors is different from what we find in Iranian sources.<sup>10</sup> The Armenian and Syrian writers attack Zoroastrianism on this point.<sup>11</sup> Zarvan, or Time, they aver, is held by the Persians to be the generative principle of the universe. Moses of Chorene<sup>12</sup> writes that the Zoroastrians regarded Time as the source and father of existence.<sup>13</sup> According to Photius this being was looked upon as the ruler of the universe; he offered sacrifice in order to beget Hormizdas, but gave birth Hormizdas and Satan.<sup>14</sup> Damascius quotes Eudemus (about 306 B.C.) as stating that Time is the father of Oromasdes or Light and Arimanius or Darkness.<sup>15</sup>

The Armenian writer Eznik, in the fifth century A.D., attests the existence of a sect that held Zrovan or Time as the sovereign lord and was named after it. The sect, he says, holds Zrovan as the generative principle of everything, and it was from this primordial principle that both Ormizd and Arhmn have sprung. They are its twin children.<sup>16</sup> The Armenian historians credit Mihr Narsih, the premier of Yazdegird II, with speaking of Zarvan as the prime originator of Ohrmazd and Ahriman.<sup>17</sup> According to the teachings of this sect, as portrayed by these

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7 Mkh. 8.9.

8 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 30.4, p. 241, 242.

9 Jackson, *Researches in Manichaeism*, p. 8.

10 See Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 274-278; Gray, *Zrvam*, in *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, p. 124-129; Junker (tr. Tavadia), *The idea of Zruvan in the Iranian Literature and its influence elsewhere* in *Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute*, 5. 1-10; Pettazoni, *La Riligione di Zarathustra*, p. 189, 190.

11 Nöldeke, *Fesgtruss on Roth*, p. 34-38, Stuttgart, 1893; Blue, *The Zarvanite System in Indo-Iranian Studies in honour of Dastur D. P. Sanjana*, 68, London, 1925.

12 Blue, *ib.*, p. 68, 69.

13 Cf. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 275.

14 Theodore of Mopsuestia, *apud* Photius, *Bibl.* 81.

15 See Fox and Pemberton, *Passages in Creek and Latin Literature relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism*, p. 107.

16 Blue, *ib.*, p. 70, 71.

17 Elisiaeus, *The History of Vartan*, p. 11, 12.



writers Zarvan existed when the earth was not, and the heaven was not, and brooded over the thought of begetting a son who would create the universe. A doubt crossed his mind, the account claims, at the end of a thousand years, lest his sacrifice should turn out fruitless and he would not be blessed with a child. The sacrifice, however, turned out fruitful, but not without mishap. Zarvan conceived two offspring, one as the result of his sacrifice, the other as the outcome of the doubt that had desecrated his mind. He resolved to give sovereignty to him who was born first. Ohrmazd, who seems to have been possessed of foreknowledge even before he was thus born, read the thought of his father Zarvan, and gave it out to his comrade in the embryo. Ahriman thereupon perforated the womb and came into existence before Ohrmazd. He demanded sovereignty from his begetter, Zarvan, who disowned this ugly, dark creature, and gave the sceptre into the hands of Ohrmazd, who was resplendent with light. Ahriman now charged his father with breaking his vow. In order to free himself from this accusation, Zarvan entered into a covenant with Ahriman, and decreed that the empire of the universe should be conjointly ceded to both Ohrmazd and Ahriman for nine thousand years, though the right of priority was ever to be with the Good Spirit. After the expiration of this period, Ohrmazd, it was destined, should be at liberty to deal with his wicked brother as he liked.<sup>18</sup>

This fantastic legend has left no traces whatever in the extant Pahlavi works. They do not even mention any sect which had. its designation after Time itself, and we fail to glean any connected account of the doctrines of the Zarvanites from the extant Pahlavi works. Be this as it may, it is certain that a sect of the Zarvanites, who evidently aimed at resolving the Zoroastrian dualism into monotheism by the apotheosis of Time, did. flourish for a long time in Iran. Shahristani, who wrote in the early part of the twelfth century, attests, as we shall see later,, that he met the followers of this sect in his day.

## FATALISTS

**Superstitious belief in Fate that weaves the web of events in man's life.** God has willed man to be the architect of his destiny and endowed him with the freedom of will, says Zartosht.<sup>19</sup> Man's ignorance and superstition have led him to the belief that he is not a free agent who can control and shape the actions of his life. Human happenings, it is believed, are regulated by the position and movements of the stars and planets and constellations. Ingenious brains have laboured to divine the future from the careful observation of the movements of the

18 Cf. Eznik, translated in Wilson's *The Parsi Religion*, p. 542, 543, Bombay, 1843; Elisiaeus, *The History of Vartan*, p. 11, 12.

19 See Jackson. *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of the Freedom of the Will in Zoroastrian Studies*, 219-244.

heavenly bodies. They have practised augury by watching the flight of birds and have drawn omens from the stars and other sources. They have endeavoured to read the course of the stars and to study with utmost scrupulous care and anxiety, worthy of more rational and useful pursuits, the phenomena, in the vain hope that they would thereby be able to foretell coming events and forestall coming misfortunes. Fate, they have taught, dogs man's footsteps and overtakes him unawares. It hunts him like wild animals to and fro. Nothing could be done against it. In vain would a man struggle to save himself from being drowned in the floods of fate. The mightiest among men has to yield submission to the decrees of unrelenting fate. This credulous belief in the inevitability of the decrees of Fate has led men and women to accept with fatalistic resignation what befell their lot. It has led them to submit and succumb to the buffetings of life where they should have braved them and fought them and overpowered them. The belief in Fate and Kismet and Karma have all been equally paralysing. In one case it is the movements of the stars, in other the arbitrary will of Providence and in the third, actions of past life, that grip the individual at every step he takes in his life. Anything and everything that happens is predestined either by the stars and planets or by the inscrutable decree of Kismet or by the inexorable law of Karma. The fatalistic belief has crippled the activities, cramped the progress, stifled the spirit, and blighted the ardour of countless millions of people in the East.

Mithraism is loaded with fatalistic ideas which it received from Babylonia before going to Europe. Orthodox Zoroastrianism did not entirely escape the Babylonian influence. The Babylonian and Magian diviners played important part in the lives of the people. Shah Namah abounds in instances of superstitious regard for omens and portents and astrological auguries. The court astrologers read the stars to indicate the future events. The kings did not embark upon war without consulting the diviners. According to the Pahlavi Aiyadgar-i Zariran, King Vishtasp asks his wise diviner, Jamasp, to foretell the consequences of the war.<sup>20</sup> When Xerxes was marching against the Greeks, an eclipse of the sun took place. The king was taken with alarm and consulted the magicians about the meaning of the portent.<sup>21</sup> Men and women regulated the chief events of their daily lives according to the dictates of the planetary movements. Fate generally became the ruling force of life.

**Fate is the decree of Time.** Time and Fate are indissolubly linked together. They are often spoken of as identical with each other.<sup>22</sup> The movements of the heavens regulate Fate, and the planets and

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<sup>20</sup> 35-39.

<sup>21</sup> Herod. 7. 37.

<sup>22</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *apud* Photius, *Bibl.* 81.

constellations are the arbiters of man's fortune.<sup>23</sup> The good and evil stars determine man's lot, which is linked with the course of the stars. Every good and evil event that falls to the lot of man comes to pass through the doings of the twelve constellations that are ranged on the side of Ohrmazd, or through the baneful influence of the seven planets, as their special antagonists, arrayed on Ahriman's side. Both of these agents combine to administer the affairs of the world.<sup>24</sup>

Ohrmazd allots happiness to man. If man does not receive it, it is owing to the extortion of these planets.<sup>25</sup> Like brigands and highwaymen they rob the righteous of their good lot and bestow it upon the wicked.<sup>26</sup> Ahriman has specially created them for the purpose of depriving man of the happiness which the good stars would bestow upon man.<sup>27</sup> Like witches they rush upon the creation to spread evil,<sup>28</sup> and pervert every creature that comes across their path.<sup>29</sup> Fate, as the guardian of the celestial sphere, is therefore implored to help mankind at all times and in every deed.<sup>30</sup> That which is ordained to come to pass will unfailingly happen; man should not worry over things over which he has no control. He should learn to receive with tranquillity and calm whatever falls to his lot.<sup>31</sup> Though nothing in the world can rescind the inexorable decree of Fate,<sup>32</sup> divine Providence, moved by the prayers and supplications of mortals, can still, in special cases, intervene in mortal behalf. Owing to the counter-movements of the evil planets, Providence rarely interferes.<sup>33</sup>

**The inscrutable power of Fate.** Among the masses humility is apt to degenerate into servility in human affairs, or into fatalism in their relations with the superhuman powers. In Persia, the dissolution of the great empire, and the centuries of struggle and servitude that followed the national catastrophe, drove the Iranians to believe in Fate, the inevitable necessity before which they had to bow. The fatalist doctrine pervades the writings of the Pahlavi period. As early as the fifth century the Armenian controversialist Eznik attacks this fatalistic doctrine of

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23 See Gray, *Fate (Iranian)* in ERE. 5. 792, 793.

24 Mkh. 8.17-19, 21.

25 Mkh. 38. 4, 5.

26 Sg. 4.24-27.

27 Mkh. 12. 7-9.

28 Sg. 4.9.

29 Mkh. 8. 20.

30 SnS22.31.

31 SnS20.13; Mkh. 27. 11.

32 SnS20.17; Dk. vol. 12, bk. 6. A. 6, p. 36, 37.

33 Mkh. 24.3-8.

the Persians.<sup>34</sup> Fate, we are told, is written on man's forehead; he is fettered to it from his very birth.<sup>35</sup> Man is ignorant of the course mapped out for him by Fate, which guides the affairs of the world.<sup>36</sup> Fate holds sovereign sway over every one and everything.<sup>37</sup> Vazurgmitra states that the world shows that fools prosper and the wise suffer, for which reason he upholds the view that the ordering of results of man's actions is not in man's hands, but rests with Fate.<sup>38</sup>

Under the influence of Fate the wise man fails of his wisdom, and the fool shows intelligence, the hero becomes a coward, and the coward plays the part of a hero, the industrious turn out to be indolent, and the indolent become industrious.<sup>39</sup> When Fate befriends an indolent, ignorant, arid wicked man, his sloth becomes like unto diligence, his ignorance unto knowledge, and his wickedness unto righteousness. On the other hand, when Fate frowns upon a wise man and a good man, his wisdom is transformed to foolishness and ignorance, and his knowledge, skill, and worthiness do not help him in the least.<sup>40</sup> Life, wife, and child, power or fortune alike, come all through Fate.<sup>41</sup>

**How far Fate affects man's exertions.** Replying to the query whether man gets various things through Fate or through his own exertion, Vazurgmitra, the talented premier of Noshirvan, states that both of these are as closely linked together as are man's body and life. As the body falls a ruined tabernacle of clay when life has quitted it, and as life without the body is an intangible wind, so are Fate and exertion indissolubly united with each other.<sup>42</sup> Fate is the efficient cause, and exertion is the means through which man attains everything.<sup>43</sup> It is true that exertion is of no avail when Fate has ordained otherwise. Man may toil, and yet may not reap the fruit of his labour. But then, man's exertion in good works, even if not rewarded with fruitful results in this world, will reap a benefit in the next world through the angels. Man, therefore, has to depend upon the doings of Fate for the good of this

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34 Eznik, *Against the Sects*, German tr. Schmid, 2. 15, Vienna, 1900.

35 Mkh. 24.6.

36 Mkh. 27.10.

37 Mkh. 47.7.

38 Ibn Isfandiyyar, *History of Tabaristan*, tr. Browne, p. 85, 86, London, 1905.

39 Mkh. 23.5-7.

40 Mkh. 51.5-7.

41 Dd71.3; Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. D. 1, p. 75; Jamaspi, p. 122.

42 Gs. 56.

43 Gs. 57.

world, but upon his own actions for the spiritual goods to be enjoyed in the world hereafter.<sup>44</sup>

Through Fate man performs meritorious deeds.<sup>45</sup> Man, it is true, is dependent upon the decree of Fate as regards his earthly possessions, but it is left only to his individual exertion whether he shall reap the reward of righteousness or the retribution of wickedness.<sup>46</sup> Tansar, in his letter to Jasnaf, the king of Tabaristan, writes that it is wrong to deny the sovereign sway of Fate over man's life, but it is equally wrong to give up personal effort under the exaggerated: idea of the influence of Fate. The wise, he continues, should take the middle course, for Fate and man's free will are like two loads on the back of an animal. If either is heavier than the other, both fall down.<sup>47</sup>

Despite such prominence given to the workings of Fate by the Pahlavi writers, fatalism never came to be employed among the Zoroastrians as an excuse for cloaking man's indolence. It is idle persons, we are told, that blame Fate.<sup>48</sup> The feeble and faltering always throw the burden of their faults on Fate. The ever active spirit of Zoroastrianism militated against fatalism, and saved the people from much of its baneful influences.

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44 Phl. Vd5.8; Mkh. 22.4-6.

45 Dk., vol. 9, p. 585.

46 Dd71.3.

47 Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, 1. p. 553.

48 AnAtM. I 19.

## CHAPTER XXXVII. HERESIES

### **Heretics detested more than the demon-worshippers.**

Heresy was one of the greatest crimes of which a Zoroastrian could be guilty according to the ancient texts. It was a criminal! offense punishable by law. The severity of the law, however, was considerably modified during the Sasanian period, even though the works written during this period do not show any considerable advance in real religious toleration. In his letter to the king of Tabaristan, Tansar states that, in the statutes which Ardashir had framed, he had greatly modified the rigour of the law; for, whereas formerly a heretic was instantly killed, Tansar's royal master had ordered that such a sinner should be imprisoned for one year, and that the religion of Ohrmazd should be preached to him daily during that period in order to reclaim him from heresy. If he still persisted obstinately in his heretical belief, capital punishment was to be inflicted upon him as a last resort.<sup>1</sup> King Noshirvan extirpated heresies when he came to the throne.<sup>2</sup> Any one also who did not give assent to the dogmatic teachings of the Zoroastrian creed, or expounded views that were at variance with those sanctioned by her authority, incurred the odium of heresy, and came under the ban of ecclesiastical excommunication. The Church forbade with proscription any criticism of its authoritative canon; the ecclesiastical doctrine was fixed, and to think otherwise was heresy. Giving the definition of a heretic, the Denkard states that whosoever teaches, speaks, or acts respecting the beliefs and practices of the national faith differently from that which the ancients have done is a heretic.<sup>3</sup> Heretics are of three kinds: the deceiver, deceived, and the opinionated.<sup>4</sup> All of these misrepresent the teachings of the elders, and pervert the sacred writings,<sup>5</sup> as they declaim against the established teachings.<sup>6</sup> They promote, in opposition to Ohrmazd, the wicked religion of Ahriman.<sup>7</sup> The heretic is possessed by the Evil Spirit.<sup>8</sup> He is the disciple of the demon of heresy.<sup>9</sup> The demons lodge in his body;<sup>10</sup> he

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1 Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, p. 524.

2 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 4. 28, p. 415.

3 Vol. 12, bk. 6. C. 26, p. 58.

4 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. C. 83, p. 74.

5 Dk., vol. 1, p. 3.

6 Dk., vol. 1, p. 5.

7 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 53. 2, p. 328.

8 Dk., vol. 7, p. 474.

9 Phl. Y. 44.14.

10 Phl. Y. 47.4.

is, in fact, a demon in human form.<sup>11</sup> Even during his lifetime, his body resembles a corpse and the faithful should refrain from coming in contact with him, lest they themselves become defiled.<sup>12</sup> Bad as is his lot in this world, it is worse in the world to come. His soul is doomed to everlasting torture. It becomes a darting snake, and there is no resurrection for it.<sup>13</sup> For these reasons, men are warned to guard themselves from anything that savours of heresy.<sup>14</sup> The Pahlavi writers, in every treatise, are unsparing in their denunciation of heretics, arraigning them for deception, lying, and perversion. The heretic Gurgi is called a disreputable impostor, full of avarice, and worthy of every opprobrium.<sup>15</sup> In a similar manner, the Pahlavi works swarm with invectives against Mani, an arch-heretic in the third century A.D., to whose account we now turn.

### MANI

**The arch-heretic of the Sasanian period.** This remarkable man was born in the reign of Ardavan, the last of the Parthian kings.<sup>16</sup> He received his first revelation at the age of thirteen, and ultimately claimed to be a prophet, the very seal or the last messenger of God.<sup>17</sup> He began his propaganda under Ardashir, but worked with greater vigour under Shapur I, who embraced his faith.<sup>18</sup> Manichaeism flourished with varied success side by side with the state religion until the time when Bahram I ascended the throne. The teachings of Mani acquired a strong hold over the minds of many, and threatened to be a powerful rival of the ancient faith. The national spirit rebelled against the encroachment of the new cult, and the king strove to extinguish the heresy by the exercise of a firm hand. He confronted Mani with his Dastur, who threw him a challenge that, both of them should pour molten lead on their bellies, and whosoever came out unhurt should be declared to be in the right. This Mani did not accept. Consequently in A.D. 276-277 he was flayed to death and his body was stuffed with straw.<sup>19</sup> With the removal

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11 Dk., vol. 1, p. 15.

12 Dk., vol. 1, p. 31.

13 SnS17.7.

14 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 128, p. 35.

15 Dk., vol. 5. p. 320.

16 See Jackson's excellent work *Researches in Manichaeism*, New York, 1932; Sevan, *Manichaeism* in ERE. 8. 394-402.

17 Al-Biruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. Sachau, p. 189, 190. London, 1879; Mirkhond, *Rauzat-us Safa*, tr. Rehatsek, part 1, vol. 2. p. 336, London, 1892.

18 Mirkhond, p. 333, 336; al-Ya'qubi, quoted by Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 1. 156, New York, 1902.

19 Al-Biruni, p. 191; al-Ya'qubi, cited by Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 1. 157; Mirkhond, p. 337; Tabari, translated by Noldeke, *Geschichte der terser und Araber*,

of Mani from the field of activity, the Manichaeian propaganda entered upon its dissolution in Iran, but the seed of the new faith he had sown did not remain unfruitful. Despite the heavy slaughter of the Manichaeians, the new cult spread from the home of its origin to the Far East, reaching even as far as China, and penetrated far into the West in the fourth century, where for some time it contested supremacy with Christianity, somewhat as Persian Mithraism had done before it. St. Augustine was a follower of Manichaeism before he was converted to Christianity. He was not able to free himself from the influence of his teachings even after he had joined the Christian Church. He imparted its dualistic philosophy to Christian doctrine.<sup>20</sup>

The Pahlavi writers vehemently attack Mani and his followers. He is dubbed a *druj*<sup>21</sup> of evil origin,<sup>22</sup> and his followers are branded as deceivers, empty-skulled persons that practised witchcraft and deceitfulness, and taught folly in the way of secret societies;<sup>23</sup> they are denounced as deluding the uninformed and unintelligent, and as capturing the men of little knowledge in their esoteric circle.<sup>24</sup>

**Mani's eclectic system.** Mani aimed at forming a world religion and based his new religion on materials drawn from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Syrian Gnosticism. In his synthetic religion he accepts the dualistic theory as the basic doctrine to explain the existence of evil. Light which is synonymous with God existed above and darkness below. Satan arose out of darkness. Twice did he invade the kingdom of light. Light and darkness are mingled in the confusion of creation. Light is to be liberated from Darkness and made secure from the assaults of Darkness. That is the function of man during life. In the final dispensation Light will dispel Darkness for ever. His new religion differed in its cardinal principles from Zoroastrianism. The author of *Shkand Gumanig Vizar* devotes a chapter (16th) to the teachings of Mani and refutes them. The subject, however, remains incomplete as the latter part of the work is lost. Some of the more prominent features of Manichaeism, which are fundamentally foreign to the spirit of Zoroastrianism, are the ascetic principles of self-mortification, celibacy, fasting, and the vow of poverty. Each of these in turn we shall examine from the point of view of Zoroastrianism, and seek at the same time to determine the basic difference between the two theories of life.

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p. 47, Leiden, 1879.

20 Windelband (Eng. tr. Tufts), *A History of Philosophy*, p. 286, New York. 1905.

21 Dk., vol. 5, p. 315-317.

22 Dk., vol. 4, p. 211.

23 Sg. 10.59, 60.

24 Sg. 10, 75-77.



**Mani holds matter to be the root of evil, hence self-mortification of the body is a virtue in his system.** The body as composed of matter, according to this thinker, is inherently evil. On this very ground he denies the final resurrection.<sup>25</sup> Manichaeism brands all bodily desires as evil and legislates for their stifling and killing. Since all evil has its root in the body, salvation is possible only through the extirpation of bodily desires. Mani's system of religion becomes quietistic, ascetic, and inculcates only passive virtues. He taught his followers to abhor all natural pleasures and abandon them. He strove to extinguish the fire of the bodily desires. The devout was to begin by abstaining from every comfort and from every amusement. In spite of this, temptations assail him on all sides, so long as he lives in the midst of earthly attachments. To adopt a practical image, the centipede does not lose much if one of its legs is broken, so man is not safe when he succeeds in eradicating one desire, for another takes its place and haunts him in the quiet moments, even when the ardent longing of communing with the divine consumes him. He is still overcome by passion, by the desire of wife and child, of hearth and home. He feels that he cannot liberate himself from the unbearable yoke of these strong passions, unless he flees from the world to some solitary place where joys and sorrows cannot reach him. Life, such a one thinks, is a fleeting illusion. It cannot give him enduring calm. Accordingly, he breaks his family ties, shuns society, becomes a hermit, and lives a life of complete quiescence. He courts negation.

**Zoroastrianism stands for controlling and regulating bodily desires, but not for suppressing and killing them.** The antithesis of body and soul, flesh and spirit, is not unknown to the Pahlavi writers. But the body in itself is not evil. According to Zoroastrianism, matter is not inherently evil, and life in the flesh is not necessarily death in the spirit. Zartosht legislates for the material as well as the spiritual side of our nature. A healthy body alone can nurture a healthy mind, and it is through the agency of these two prime factors that the spirit can work out her destiny. Man can act righteousness and assail wickedness only with a sound body. The faithful craves for a long life in the body in this world, before he is allotted an eternal life of spirit in heaven. Bodily life in this world is sacred, it is a pledge. Ohrmazd has confided this most precious of his gifts to man that he may join with his Heavenly Father in securing the ultimate triumph of good over evil and thus usher the divine Kingdom of Righteousness into the world. The soul rules over the body as a householder rules over a family or a rider rides his horse.<sup>26</sup> It is the stubborn slave of the soul, and with the exercise of self-control it is to be converted into an obedient servant

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25 Sg. 16.50.

26 Dk., vol. 6, p. 353, 380, 381.

always ready to carry out the mandates of its master.<sup>27</sup> The body is an indispensable vehicle of the soul and the saintly soul drives in it on the path of righteousness. It is only in the case of the wicked, in whom the flesh gains victory over the spirit, that it becomes a heavy burden, its wheels refuse to move, sticking in the quagmire of sin. But then the fault lies with the driver. It is only when the individual lives solely for the body, feasts his lustful eyes on the vices of the flesh, and is a willing slave to the bodily passions, that the body turns out to be the grave of the soul.<sup>28</sup> Whoso lives in this world for the body alone and is immersed in bodily pleasures, loses in spirit in the next world, but whoso works for the soul, makes the spiritual existence more his own.<sup>29</sup> Just as a person going without shoes on a road infested with serpents and scorpions is constantly on guard lest the noxious creatures bite him, so a man should always beware of his bodily passions.<sup>30</sup> The great Sasanian pontiff Adarbad said that whenever any harm befell his body, he took consolation that it did not affect his soul, which was of greater significance.<sup>31</sup> Whosoever lives in this world with a view to the betterment of his soul, reaps the future reward, but whoso lives exclusively for the body, sees his body ultimately crumbling into dust with no hopes for the welfare of the spiritual existence.<sup>32</sup> The wicked conducts his soul after the bodily desires, but the righteous man should regulate his body in conformity with the higher desires of the soul.<sup>33</sup> The body is the halter to the soul, and the faithful one is reminded that he should so act in the world that neither the soul nor the body suffers for the other, but if that is not possible, he should prefer the soul to the body and be prepared to sacrifice it for the good of the soul.<sup>34</sup> The soul profits when the inordinate bodily pleasures are foregone.<sup>35</sup> The man who is prepared to dedicate his body for the sake of his soul or religion practises true generosity.<sup>36</sup> Though the body is the bane of the spirit, it is not branded as inherently evil. Man may work with the body, yet he may live for the soul. Discipline rather than austerity is the Zoroastrian watchword. Self-mortification does not form part of the Zoroastrian theology. With due self-control the devout has to conquer the flesh in

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27 Dk., vol. 1, p. 56.

28 Dk., vol. 5, p. 469.

29 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. A. 2, p. 33.

30 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. B. 47, p. 49, 50.

31 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. A. 5, p. 35, 36.

32 SnS20.10.

33 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 285, p. 5.

34 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6. 25, p. 8.

35 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 89, p. 2.

36 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 91, p. 5.

order to be victor in spirit; he has to subdue his bodily nature, but not to suppress it. The body is not to be reduced to a skeleton. Zoroastrianism demands a sound and a strong body to enable man to effectively combat the hydra of evil in this world. Uncleanliness of body is one of the ascetic virtues. It is repugnant to the spirit of Zoroastrianism, which stands for the bodily purity. Purity of body contributes to purity of spirit. Bodily uncleanliness means spiritual pollution, and wantonly weakening the body is a sin. Monastic life is unknown to the Zoroastrians of all periods. Christianity had entered Iran under the Parthian rule, and monasteries of both the sexes flourished in the Assyrian Church during the Sasanian period. Far from, exerting any influence upon the Zoroastrians, they were looked upon with great aversion by them.

**Celibacy, a virtue with Mani, a vice with Zoroaster.**

Manichaeism extols celibacy as the greatest virtue. For those initiated in the higher orders Mani advocated celibacy. When the ardent longing for the love of God swallows up all other desires and becomes the controlling factor of the devout, he is enjoined to take a vow of continence. He should not enter into matrimonial alliance if he desires to serve God whole-heartedly. Marriage is declared incompatible with sanctity; it is accounted impure and defiling. Mani forbids sexual intercourse as the worst type of uncleanliness.<sup>37</sup> Virginity is the highest form of life. Body being the formation of Ahriman, the propagation of lineage and breeding of families are evil.<sup>38</sup> Marriage prolongs the life of mankind, and so retards the union of the human species with God.

All this is in direct antagonism to the teachings of Zoroaster. In no period of the history of his religion was celibacy ever held a virtue. Those practising it were not considered more holy and held in higher reverence, as among the Manichaeans, but their action was strongly reprehended. Even the priests were not to be celibates, for it is a cardinal point of the faith of every true Zoroastrian that he shall marry and rear a family.<sup>39</sup> Ohrmazd prefers the man who lives a life of marital happiness to the one who lives in continence.<sup>40</sup> Whoso does not marry and propagate lineage hinders the work of Renovation, and is wicked.<sup>41</sup> Marriage is doubly an obligation, being a religious duty to the Church, a civic duty to the State. Hence both the Church and the State encouraged married life in Iran. It is considered a highly meritorious form of charity

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37 Al-Biruni, p. 190.

38 Sg. 16. 40, 41.

39 Dk., vol. 9, p. 609, 634, 637, 639; Gs. 123, 155.

40 Vd4.47.

41 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 92, p. 6, 7.

to help a poor man to marry.<sup>42</sup> Herodotus remarks that the Persian kings gave prizes to those who were blessed with many children.<sup>43</sup> The Zoroastrian works of all periods exhort the faithful to enter into matrimony. Mar Shiman, the chief bishop of the Christian settlers in Iran, was accused by the Mobads before Shapur II to the effect that he and his clergy were teaching men to refrain from marriage and the procreation of children.<sup>44</sup> King Yazdegird II saw great danger to the State in the spread of such doctrines among the masses. If they caught the contagion, says his royal edict, the world would soon come to an end.<sup>45</sup> Such were the strong feelings against any form of celibacy that prevailed at all times in Persia; and even in Mani's system the stringency was generally relaxed in case of the masses. Marriage was tolerated as a source of relief to their unrestrained sexual appetites. It was a necessary evil in their case. But in the case of the clergy and of other righteous persons who aimed at higher life, it was obligatory that they should be celibates. Zoroastrianism legislates for the clergy and the laity alike. In Mani's system marriage was a vice for the priest, a reluctant concession to the layman. According to the religion of Zoroaster, it is neither the one nor the other; it is a positive virtue for both. Sacerdotal piety does not tend to celibacy in Iran. It is disapproved for all and under all circumstances. In no stage of the individual's moral and spiritual development is marriage ever considered as incompatible with saintliness.

**Fasting recommended by Manichaeism, condemned by Zoroastrianism.** Mani advocated the abstinence from food as a means of expiation for sin.<sup>46</sup> Nearly a quarter of the year was set apart by him as the period of fast. If there is one thing more than another which Zoroaster teaches, it is that man shall never serve Ohrmazd by fasting and austerities, but only by prayers and work. Far from recommending these ascetic practices as virtues, he prohibits them as sins. Fasting formed no part of the religion of ancient Iran at any period of her history. It is strongly reprobated in the works of all periods. Fasting is a sin, and the only fast that the faithful are exhorted to keep is the fast from sin.<sup>47</sup> The wilful abstinence from food is a deliberate disregard of the bounty of Ohrmazd. In his exaggerated idea of the need of fasting, the ascetic weakens his body, and practically starves himself to death by a rigorous system of fasts. Zoroastrianism enjoins that man

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42 Vd4.44.

43 1. 136.

44 Wigram, *History of the Assyrian Church*, p. 64, London, 1910.

45 Eliseaus, *History of Vartan*, p. 13.

46 Al-Biruni, p. 190.

47 Sd. 83.1-6.

should take sufficient food to keep his body strong and active, and not make it languid by withholding the due share of food from it. With a feeble body man could not work strenuously for the furtherance of the world of righteousness, and carry on a vigorous warfare against the world of wickedness; and this, according to the Zoroastrian belief, is the chief object of man's life on earth.

**Mani's doctrine of poverty in the light of Zoroastrianism.**

The saint in Mani's system holds earthly things as so many distractions. The things of sense are impure. He tries to avoid them, and gradually gives them up one by one. He makes a vow of poverty. Wealth is looked upon as a source of temptation. Material commodities are regarded as satisfying the lower nature of man. The accumulation of property beyond that which would enable him to purchase food for one day or clothing for one year is forbidden.<sup>48</sup> The true hermit renounces all personal effort, does not think of providing for the morrow, and with passive resignation looks to God for what he may send to him. All ascetic orders where the vow of poverty is overemphasized give rise to mendicants and beggars living upon the alms of others. Among other evils mendicancy brings a drain on the resources of a society. For that reason it is not consecrated in Zoroastrianism. In fact it was not recognized at any period in the religious history of Iran. It is not a sin to acquire riches and accumulate property. The sin originates with the improper use of one's possessions, and the faithful are expressly warned not to lust for and indulge exclusively in the accumulation of the material wealth at the expense of the spiritual.<sup>49</sup> This reprimand serves as a corrective to the unbridled desire to covet earthly riches.<sup>50</sup> Wealth of the spirit is undoubtedly superior to that of the body. As regards the use of the wealth of this world man should work as if he were going to live a life of a thousand years, and as if what he failed to do today he could easily perform the next day. But when it comes to the question of the spiritual riches, he should act with the fear that he might perhaps live only a day more in this world, and that if he postponed today's good work till tomorrow, death might overtake him and prevent him from accomplishing it.<sup>51</sup> One should choose rather to be poor for the spirit than to be rich without it. Losing the spirit for the sake of earthly riches is wrong. But accumulating earthly riches with upright means and expending them for the welfare of the spirit is meritorious. Srosh helps the man who has riches and plenty, and who, far from yielding to temptations, makes good use of his fortune.<sup>52</sup> Wealth helps a righteous

48 Al-Biruni, p. 190.

49 Dk., vol. 3, p. 129; vol. 5, p. 314, 315; vol. 11, bk. 6. 149, 150, p. 49.

50 Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6. E. 16, p. 4, 5.

51 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 151, p. 49.

52 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 90, p. 4, 5.

man to perform meritorious deeds,<sup>53</sup> whereas grinding poverty at times occasions wickedness.<sup>54</sup> If a man craves for a vast fortune with a firm resolve to spend it for charitable purposes, his desire is laudable.<sup>55</sup> It is praiseworthy that man should, spend his earthly riches for his spiritual welfare.<sup>56</sup> Wealth is given to man not to squander on himself, but to help the poor and the needy, and assuage the wrongs of suffering humanity.<sup>57</sup> When misused, wealth becomes a halter to the body, and the wise one should sacrifice it, for the good of his soul.<sup>58</sup> Man should not be intoxicated with pride when he is in the plenitude of his riches and at the height of fortune, and must not hate the poor, for his fortune might leave him at any moment and place him in the class of the paupers.<sup>59</sup> He is reminded that howsoever rich he grows, his wealth could never exceed that of Jamshed. And yet that great king found his wealth deserting him when his end approached.<sup>60</sup> The kingdoms of the kings with all their fabulous fortunes are not everlasting.<sup>61</sup> One should not be proud of his fortune. It is but vanity; it is as fleeting and transient as a dream.<sup>62</sup> It changes its masters like a bird that flies from one tree to another, only to leave that in turn for still another.<sup>63</sup> At death wealth and property do not accompany company the owner, but go into others' possessions.<sup>64</sup> None should be proud of his possessions and count upon them as exclusively his own, for at the time of death even the palaces and treasures are of no avail, and the owner does not take them with him on his journey heavenward.<sup>65</sup> A wealthy man rolling in riches is healthy in the morning, becomes ill at noon, and quietly passes from this world before night; his fortune does not help him to avert this calamity.<sup>66</sup> Wealth and rank are the accidents of life, they do not

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53 Dk., vol. 4, p. 192.

54 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 283, p. 8.

55 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 310, p. 25, 26.

56 Dk., vol. 6, p. 418.

57 Dk., vol. 3, p. 142; AnAtM. 47.

58 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6. 26, p. 8, 9.

59 AnAtM. 57.

60 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 152, p. 49, 50.

61 Gs. 1.

62 Gs. 58.

63 AnAtM. 88.

64 AnAtM. 145.

65 Gs. 169.

66 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 200, p. 71, 72.

constitute the real greatness of man. Righteousness alone is the true riches and man cannot get it in the next world on loan.<sup>67</sup>

## MAZDAK

**The economic basis of his religious reform.** The second great heretic of this period who had a considerable following was a pious Mobed named Mazdak, son of Bamdat.<sup>68</sup> A Pahlavi treatise named *Mazdak Namah, Book of Mazdak*, is said to have been rendered into Arabic by Ibnul Muqaffa. The work has been lost, but its contents have been preserved in other Arabic works.<sup>69</sup> The author of *Dabestan* says that he met some Mazdakites who practised their religion secretly among the Mohammedans. These showed him a book called *Desnad*, written in Old Persian.<sup>70</sup> There are references to Mazdak and his teachings in Greek and Syriac, Arabic and Persian. He is called the accursed heterodox who observes fasts,<sup>71</sup> who appeared to cause disturbance among the faithful.<sup>72</sup> He was contemporary with Kobad.<sup>73</sup> Mazdak agreed with the fundamental doctrine of Zoroastrianism in respect to the indelible antithesis between the two principles, Light and Darkness, or Ohrmazd and Ahriman.<sup>74</sup> Masudi calls him a Zendik.<sup>75</sup> Tabari, Mirkhond, and others accuse him of teaching the doctrine of the community of wives.<sup>76</sup> The *Dabestan* repeats the statement.<sup>77</sup> Mazdak's revolutionary reform, however, was not so much religious as it was social and economic, for he preached communism, pure and simple.

The account of Mazdak's system is very meagre; but it is known that he accounted Jealousy, Wrath, and Greed as the three main causes of all evil in the world. Everyone, according to Mazdak's teachings, should be given equal opportunity and equal share of the enjoyment of the earthly possessions of God. So it was originally ordained by God, but that

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67 AnKhK. 5.

68 Modi, *Mazdak the Iranian Socialist* in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, p. 116-131; Christensen, *Two Versions of the History of Mazdak* in *Modi Memorial Volume*, p. 321-330; Nicholson, *Mazdak* in *ERE*. 8.,. 508-510; Pettazoni, *La Religione di Zarathustra*, p. 199, 200.

69 Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, I. 169, New York, 1902.

70 *Dabistan*, tr. Shea and Troyer, I. 378.

71 BYt. 2. 21; Phl. Vd. 4. 49.

72 BYt. 1.6.

73 488-531 A.D.

74 Al-Biruni, tr. Sachau, p. 192; *Dabistan*, tr. Shea and Troyer, I. 373.

75 Tr. Barbier de Meynard, vol. 2. p. 195.

76 Zotenberg. 2 148-152; Sacy, *Memoires sur diverses Antiquites de la Perse*, p. 354-356.

77 Shea and Troyer, I. 377, 378.

natural order has been upset by the aggressive strong for their own self-aggrandizement.<sup>78</sup> Society should therefore return to that original ideal state. These revolutionary teachings thrilled for a time Iran, and exercised a powerful fascination on the masses. The crisis was brought to a head when, far from taking any initiative to stamp out the heresy, the king encouraged it, and finally embraced it. His son, Prince Noshirvan, summoned the Dasturs and Mobeds to consider the situation. It was certain that the cult would spread and the young prince adopted severe measures to suppress it, lest it should menace the public peace. The clergy who viewed the new heresy with great alarm, advised rigorous measures to extirpate the threatening creed. Mazdak did not live long to preach his doctrine, for the prince arranged a banquet for him and his followers and put them all to the sword in A.D. 528.

This communistic socialistic sect received therewith a fatal blow from which it never wholly recovered, but it maintained a feeble spark of life for a considerable time. The Rawandis, Babak, called al-Khurrami, and al-Muqanna, the Veiled Prophet of Khurasan, later embodied the salient teachings of Mazdak in their system.<sup>79</sup>

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78 Tabari, tr. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Tenser und Araber zur zeit der Sasaniden*, p. 141, 154, Leiden, 1879.

79 Browne, *op. cit.*, 1.316-318; 328.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII. OHRMAZD

**The supreme godhead.** Ohrmazd is the Pahlavi equivalent of the Avestan Ahura Mazda in the Pahlavi writings of the Sasanian period and later. The concept of the Highest Being retains its former abstract and spiritual character in the works of the Pahlavi writers. Ohrmazd is what the entire creation is not, and he is not what anything in the universe is. The author of the Denkard describes him by negatives, and states that Ohrmazd is the sovereign, and not slave; father, and not child; first, and, not last; master, and not servant; lord, and not serf; protector, and not protected; changeless, and not changeable; knowledge itself, and not acquiring knowledge; giver and not receiver.<sup>1</sup> Radiant and glorious are his standing epithets in the Pazand prayers. We shall presently discuss some of the most prominent of the divine attributes which the Pahlavi works ascribe to Ohrmazd.

**Ohrmazd is eternal.** Ohrmazd had no beginning and has no end. He alone is the one who is neither born nor dies.<sup>2</sup> His adversary is inferior to him in this respect, that there will be a time when he will not exist. Ohrmazd ever was, is, and will ever be.<sup>3</sup> He is the causer of causes, himself being causeless.<sup>4</sup> He is the prime source of existence.<sup>5</sup>

**Ohrmazd is invisible.** The concept of the spirituality of Ohrmazd remains unchanged. He is the Spirit of Spirits.<sup>6</sup> Invisibility is the chief characteristic of spirituality, and Ohrmazd is said to be invisible.<sup>7</sup> He is so even to the other spiritual beings.<sup>8</sup> Though present in everything, he is unseen anywhere.<sup>9</sup> When Viraf is escorted by Srosh and Atar to the celestial court, and presented by Vohuman to Ohrmazd he hears the voice of Ohrmazd, sees a light, but does not see him face to face.<sup>10</sup> The souls of the righteous ones behold the place of Ohrmazd in heaven, and console themselves as having seen Ohrmazd himself.<sup>11</sup>

**He is intangible.** The Gathic and Later Avestan texts spoke figuratively of the hands, mouth, eyes, and body of Ohrmazd. In the

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1 Vol. 3, p. 176, 177.

2 *Ba Nām-i Yazad in Pazend Texts*, p. 210.

3 Bd1.3; Dk. vol. 2, p. 103; Gs. 128; *Duā-i Nam Sitāyishn in Pazend Texts*, p. 159.

4 Dk., vol. 9, p. 572.

5 Dk., vol. 3, p. 157.

6 Dd31.6; Sg. 1. 2; Dk., vol. 2, p. 103; *Dua-i Nam Sitāyishn in Pazend Texts*, p. 159.

7 Dk., vol. 6, p. 390.

8 Dd31.6.

9 Dk., vol. 3, p. 174.

10 AV. 11, 1-6; 101. 10-12.

11 Dd19.4.

Pahlavi texts Zartosht is portrayed as sitting by the side of the Lord and saying to him that the head, hands, feet, hair, mouth, tongue, and even clothes of Ohrmazd resembled his own and therefore he wished to grasp the Heavenly Father with his hands. Ohrmazd thereupon tells him that this is impossible, for, as the godhead, he is intangible.<sup>12</sup> A later text, on the contrary, speaks of Ohrmazd as taking hold of the prophet's hand and giving him wisdom in the shape of water to swallow.<sup>13</sup>

**He is omniscient.** In his knowledge of the past, present, and future Ohrmazd is without an equal.<sup>14</sup> It is he alone who is called the all-knowing one.<sup>15</sup> He knows all that is to come, and is aware of the final overthrow and end of his adversary.<sup>16</sup> Through his wisdom it is that man can guide himself to the path of righteousness.<sup>17</sup> Owing to his power of comprehending everything, he is the best judge of man.<sup>18</sup> He knows the inmost recesses of man's heart, for no secrets are hid from him.

**He is omnipotent.** Despite his rival who always thwarts his work, Ohrmazd is called omnipotent and all-ruling.<sup>19</sup> Everything in the world has some superior, Ohrmazd alone has none.<sup>20</sup> He is not wanting in anything.<sup>21</sup> The strongest of men feels himself impotent before the Lord. There are moments in each man's life during which his strength fails him, and he longs for the invisible power to lean upon. Ohrmazd is the power to turn to, for he is all-protecting.<sup>22</sup> He is the sustainer and helper of the helpless, guardian of the rich and the poor, liberator of those in distress and averter of all harm.<sup>23</sup>

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12 SnS15.2, 3.

13 BYt. 2, 4, 5.

14 Bd1.2; Dk. vol. 1, p. 34.

15 Bd1.2; Sg. 1. 1; 8. 49; Dk. vol. 1. p. 34; vol. 2, p. 103; vol. 3, p. 140; vol. 5, p. 331; vol. 6, p. 390, 412, 416; vol. 7, p. 440, 452; Vol. 8, p. 429, 461, 485; vol. 9, p. 594; Jsp., p. 110; *Dua-i Nām Sitāyishn*; *Namāz-i Dādār Ahuramazd*; *Nām-i Khāvar*; *Sitāyishn-i Ahuramazd* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 159, 206, 212, 243.

16 Bd 1. 13, 17, 20; Zsp 1. 2; Dk., vol. 4, p. 258.

17 Dk., vol. 3. p. 174.

18 Dk., vol. 7, p. 473.

19 Sg. 1. 1; Dk., vol. 1, p. 34; vol. 2, p. 103; vol. 3, p. 140, 157; vol. 6, p. 390, 412; vol. 7, p. 440; *Duā-i Nām Sitāyishn*; *Ba Nām-i Yazad*; *Namāz-i Dādār Ahuramazd*; *Sitāyishn-i Ahuramazd* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 159, 206-208, 243.

20 Dk., vol. 3, p. 177.

21 Dk., vol. 3, p. 174; vol. 6, p. 412.

22 Dk., vol. 7, p. 440; *Duā-i Nam Sitāyishn* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 159.

23 *Namāz-i Dādār Ahuramazd*; *Ba Nām-i Yazad*, *Sipās-i Akenāreh*, *Nām-i Khāvar*; *Sitāyishn-i Ahuramazd* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 206, 209, 211, 212, 243.

**Ohrmazd is the creator and conservator of creation.** He has created the entire creation.<sup>24</sup> He has created the Amshaspands and Izads, the paradise and Garothman, the shining sun and the brilliant moon, stars and the wind, water and fire, earth and trees, cattle and metals and men. He has given movements to the heavens and upholds them without pillars. He has given eyes to see and ears to hear and tongue to speak and hands to hold and feet to walk.<sup>25</sup> Through his wisdom he has brought the world into being and exercises his providential care to maintain it.<sup>26</sup> He is the father of man,<sup>27</sup> whom he has created as the greatest in all creation and has endowed with the power of thinking.<sup>28</sup> It is man's sacred duty to obey his heavenly creator.<sup>29</sup> He is the father and lord of creation.<sup>30</sup> He has created the good creatures, that they may participate in removing the blemish-giver from the world.<sup>31</sup> Like the weaver he has woven multifarious objects on the loom of nature.<sup>32</sup> Progress of his creatures is his constant wish.<sup>33</sup> He is the eternal source of all blessings and benefactions.

**He is all-good.** The creator is supreme in goodness,<sup>34</sup> he is all-goodness without any evil.<sup>35</sup> Whatever is good in the world proceeds from him.<sup>36</sup> He is the fountain of goodness as he is the source of glory and light and happiness.<sup>37</sup> He is benevolent and beneficent.<sup>38</sup> He is foremost in goodness;<sup>39</sup> always wishing good, and never contemplating

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24 Dk., vol. 3, p 163, 179.

25 *Duā-i Nām Sītāyishn; Namāz-i Dādār Ahuramazd, Ba Nām-i Yazad; Sipās-i Akenāreh; Nām-i Khāvar; Sītāyishn-i Ahuramazd in Pazend Texts*, p. 159, 206-209, 211, 212, 243.

26 Dk., vol. 5, p: 324; vol. 12, bk. 6. 311, p. 26.

27 Gs. 122.

28 *Duā-i Nām Sītāyishn in Pazend Texts*, p. 159.

29 Dk., vol. 4, p. 268.

30 Dk., vol. 5, p. 323.

31 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 135, p. 39; *Duā-i Nām Sītāyishn in Pazend Texts*, p. 159.

32 Dk., vol. 7, p. 425.

33 Dd3.1, 2.

34 Bd1.2.

35 Zsp. 1. 17.

36 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 1. 2, p. 38.

37 *Sītāyish-i Depmīhr in Pazend Texts*, p. 257.

38 *Duā-i Nām Sītāyishn; Namāz-i Dādār Ahuramazd; Ba Nām-i Yazad; Sipās-i Akenāreh; Nām-i Khāvar, Sītāyishn-i Ahuramazd in Pazend Texts*, p. 159, 206-209, 211, 212, 243.

39 Dd37.127; Dk., vol. 4, p. 194.

evil of any kind.<sup>40</sup> His goodness extends to the good and evil alike,<sup>41</sup> for his desire is all-beneficent.<sup>42</sup> This is manifest from the infinite care which he takes of his creatures,<sup>43</sup> as he is the preserver and protector of man through his perfect goodness.<sup>44</sup> Man should discipline his soul to trust in the goodness of Ohrmazd. Young and old, it is said, should think a hundred thousand times daily about the numerous blessings showered upon them by Ohrmazd, for ungratefulness on their part would lead their souls to the abode of woe.<sup>45</sup>

**He is all-merciful.** The Heavenly Father is the source of mercy and is all-merciful.<sup>46</sup> He is the lord of beneficence.<sup>47</sup> He is merciful to those who turn to him in joy and sorrow. When man look to Ahriman and not to Ohrmazd for guidance, he incurs the divine displeasure. Yet even if man in this way may be out of Ohrmazd's approbation, he is still not out of his mercy. The deity knows the infirmities of human nature and the weaknesses of the human heart, and forgives man's iniquity and transgression, if, penitent, the sinner approaches his Heavenly Father with heartfelt contrition,<sup>48</sup> firmly resolving to redeem his sinful past by good deeds present and future.

At the end of time, Ohrmazd will gather back all his creatures to himself.<sup>49</sup> Even the sinners will not be lost forever. Yet all this while the merciful Lord desires that man may not even now leave his blessed company, for it grieves him that man should suffer even temporarily through his own perverse conduct, and thus postpone the ultimate renovation.

**Ohrmazd is light physically, morally he is truth.** When Viraf, as hallowed visitant of true faith to the realms supernal, is escorted by Srosh and Atar as angel guides to the presence of Ohrmazd, he finds to his utter bewilderment that, although the almighty Lord is graciously pleased to greet him with audible divine words, he himself can see nothing in the ineffable presence but the sovereign light.<sup>50</sup> This endless

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40 Mkh. 8. 22.

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42 Sg. 8.53.

43 Sg. 8.57, 58.

44 Dk., vol. 3, p. 140.

45 *Ba Nām-i Yazad* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 209, 210.

46 Dk., vol. 6, p. 385.

47 Mkh. 1.1.

48 Dk., vol. 1, p. 9; *Duā-i Nām Sitāyishn*; *Namāz-i Dādār Ahuramazd*; *Ba Nām-i Yazad* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 159, 206-208.

49 Dk., vol. 6, p. 416.

50 AV 101. 4-12.

light is emblematic of Ohrmazd, who dwells therein.<sup>51</sup> All light proceeds from Ohrmazd.<sup>52</sup> In the moral sphere Ohrmazd is eternal truth. Porphyry of Tyre<sup>53</sup> says that he learnt from the Magi that they upheld the view that the body of Ohrmazd resembled light, and his soul was a likeness of truth.<sup>54</sup>

**He is all-just.** Great is the goodness of Ohrmazd, but his justice demands that he shall not make awards regardless of the merits or demerits of man. He is the divine law-giver, and as such he is the sovereign judge. The guilty man who affronts him, the sinner who lives and moves without contrition in his heart, the rebel who discards divine authority, all need a corrective. As the lord of mercy he forgives, but as the lord of justice he punishes as well. He is the giver of the reward of merit,<sup>55</sup> and does not let pass a single good deed of man unrewarded.<sup>56</sup>

**Man should devote himself body and soul to Ohrmazd.** Man has an inborn impulse that prompts him to strive after the divine. He looks to God for the satisfaction of the yearnings of his heart, even though the Evil Spirit ever struggles to steal away his heart from Ohrmazd. In the age-long conflict between good and evil, man's soul forms the prize of the two combatants. Whether he shall be a willing prize in the hands of Ohrmazd, or a rebel prey in the clutches of Ahriman, rests with him. Man, therefore, should learn to know himself. Religion best teaches him to do this. This knowledge of the self it is that will put him into right relation with his Heavenly Father, and thus save him from falling a victim to Druj.<sup>57</sup> Man toils to teach the parrot and the pet nightingale, but neglects to tame himself in the service of the Lord. The animal in his makeup asserts itself under such circumstances and prevents his spirit from singing glory to his creator. Man's evil thoughts and sensual appetites, hampering his spiritual growth, prove to be only so many turns and win dings that lead him astray from the path of Ohrmazd to that of Ahriman. Well can we see why man has constantly to beware of these; the tempestuous storm may overtake him at any moment, if he has not made any provision in the hour of calm. There is no hope for the individual who demeans and debases himself, and is loath to leave the path of wickedness. It is through the help of Ohrmazd

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51 Bd1.2; Zsp. 1.2.

52 Gs. 132.

53 About 230-305 A. D.

54 *Vita Pyth.*, 41.

55 Dk., vol. 6. p. 361.

56 Dk., vol. 6, p. 385, 386.

57 Dk., vol. 6, p. 356.

that man can liberate himself from the evil designs of Ahriman, and make himself worthy for eternal bliss.<sup>58</sup>

Man should further know Ohrmazd, for to know him is to follow him. This is the desire of the godhead.<sup>59</sup> He loves man with the love of a father for his child.<sup>60</sup> It behooves man to live in accordance with the divine will, and to offer to him worship and glorification.<sup>61</sup> He is worthy of man's praise because of his wise dispensation unto man.<sup>62</sup> Purity of thought, word, and deed is the most acceptable sacrifice to be given to Ohrmazd. The righteous person who furthers his creation by his holy deeds pleases him most.<sup>63</sup>

Devotion to Ohrmazd should dominate man's entire being, and man stands firm as a rock in the midst of trials and sufferings as long as he lives for Ohrmazd. Woe unto him who ceases to be good, for Ohrmazd departs from his sinful person and the wicked man becomes a partner of Ahriman.<sup>64</sup> The strongest of the strong has to turn to God for succour in the moment of overwhelming trouble, and Ohrmazd's help is the best preservative of man from all calamities. In the moment of the bitterest anguish, when man's heart sinks under sorrow, when cramping and sordid poverty brings depression, when the cup of misery is filled to the brim, and the spirit is wrung with grief, man finds the final refuge in him.<sup>65</sup> When man is devoutly resigned to Ohrmazd, he is saved from all troubles.<sup>66</sup>

In his divinity, moreover, Ohrmazd desires that man shall not come to him simply when reduced to dire extremities, but shall be constant in his devotion, whether amid happiness or in misery. Man shall not serve him because he fears him, but because he loves him. The devout shall not remember him in need, and forget him in plenty; nor shall he pay homage to Ohrmazd in the temple, and bend his knees to Ahriman outside.

**The Holy Spirit.** Spena Menu is the Pahlavi equivalent of the Avestan Spenta Mainyu, or the Holy Spirit, and occurs especially in the great Pahlavi work *Denkard* as the divine attribute of Ohrmazd. Instances may, however, be cited in which the Holy Spirit, here as in the

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58 Dk., vol. 7, p. 441.

59 Mkh. 40. 24, 25; Dk., vol. 7, p. 444; vol. 10, bk. 6. 31, p. 10.

60 Dk., vol. 7, p. 441.

61 Dk., vol. 9, p. 641.

62 Dk., vol. 6, p. 390.

63 Dk., vol. 8, p. 489.

64 Dk., vol. 3, p. 179.

65 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 126, p. 33.

66 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6. 28, p. 9.

Gathas, seems to have been regarded as being separate from Ohrmazd.<sup>67</sup> Like the Younger Avestan texts, the Denkart speaks of the creation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>68</sup> He is the source of all virtue, as his rival Gana Menu or Ahriman is the originator of vice.<sup>69</sup> The good qualities of man that make him righteous are derived from him.<sup>70</sup> To know Spena Menu, is to reach him,<sup>71</sup> and the devout person who is in spiritual communion with the Holy Spirit prospers in this world.<sup>72</sup> When a man is possessed of the power of Spena Menu, he is able to rout the Evil Spirit,<sup>73</sup> but when he sinfully puts out the Holy Spirit from his person, he exposes himself to the danger of being overpowered by the arch-fiend.<sup>74</sup> Spena Menu warns man of the temptations of the Evil Spirit, and inspires him with pious thoughts.<sup>75</sup>

Vohuman, the genius of wisdom, and also the innate wisdom, are the products of Spena Menu,<sup>76</sup> and it is the Holy Spirit that bestows the gift of divine wisdom upon man.<sup>77</sup> In fact the Mazdayasnian religion itself is the innate intelligence of Spena Menu.<sup>78</sup>

Spena Menu will ultimately triumph over the wicked Gana Menu,<sup>79</sup> and banish evil from the world.<sup>80</sup>

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67 Dk., vol. 2, p. 120; vol. 4, p. 194; vol. 5, p. 297, 328.

68 Vol. 5, p. 325; vol. 8, p. 442.

69 Dk., vol. 5, p. 348.

70 Dk., vol. 5, p. 341.

71 Dk., vol. 8, p. 442.

72 Dk., vol. 5, p. 328, 340; vol. 8, p. 441, 442.

73 Dk., vol. 4, p. 208, 209.

74 Dk., vol. 2, p. 108.

75 Dk., vol. 4, p. 250-252.

76 Dk., vol. 3, p. 158.

77 Dk., vol. 8, p. 477.

78 Dk., vol. 8, p. 474.

79 Dk., vol. 4, p. 252, 253; vol. 7, p. 462; vol. 8, p. 441.

80 Dk., vol. 5, p. 326.

## CHAPTER XXXIX. AMSHASPANDS

**The archangels.** The Avestan designation Amesha Spenta, representing the highest celestial beings, now assumes the form Amshaspand or Amahraspand. With Ohrmazd as the president of the celestial council the Amshaspands are seven in number,<sup>1</sup> though occasionally Goshorun and Neryosangh are also classed among the archangels.<sup>2</sup> A late Pazand prayer called Shikasta-i Shaitan, or the Annihilation of Satan, augments the list of the Amshaspands and speaks of them as being thirty-three in number. Ohrmazd has created his colleagues.<sup>3</sup> They are both males and females.<sup>4</sup> The first seven days of each month bear their names.<sup>5</sup> Every one of the group has a special flower dedicated to him or her.<sup>6</sup> Their abode is in the all-glorious, all-delightful Best Existence.<sup>7</sup> A later Pahlavi-Pazand work states that the seven Amshaspands have emanated one from the other, that is, the second from the first, the third from the second, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

**Their attributes.** The Amshaspands are immortal, invisible,<sup>9</sup> intangible,<sup>10</sup> of great wisdom, friendly to the good creation, the forgiving ones,<sup>11</sup> holy, wise, far-seeing, beneficent and intelligent.<sup>12</sup> Inasmuch as they owe their existence to Ohrmazd they are finite,<sup>13</sup> yet so great is their brilliance that Zartosht does not see his own shadow on the ground when he approaches them in heavenly conference.<sup>14</sup>

**Their work.** Various are the boons that the archangels give unto men.<sup>15</sup> Just as in the Later Avestan descriptions, they come down to the sacrifice,<sup>16</sup> and accept the prayers and offerings of pious men, if

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1 Zsp. 21. 12; 22. 1; Dd43.8, 9.

2 SnS22. 14; Dk., SBE. vol. 47, bk. 7. 2. 21, p. 23.

3 Bd1.23, 26.

4 BYt. 2.64.

5 Bd27.24; SnS22. 1-7; 23.1.

6 Bd27.24.

7 Dd74.2; 94.12.

8 Jsp. 110.

9 Dd74.2; Dk., vol. 1, p. 47.

10 SnS15.3.

11 Dd74.3.

12 Jsp. p. 110.

13 Dk. vol. 2, p. 114.

14 Zsp. 21.13.

15 SnS22, 1-7.

16 .SnS19.7.



performed with accuracy; but they do not grace the ceremony with their august presence when it is performed by impious persons, and with faulty recitals.<sup>17</sup> They dwell in the man over whom wisdom has full sway,<sup>18</sup> and those men alone who are blessed with superior wisdom are under their protection.<sup>19</sup> Three times every day they form an assembly in the fire-temples and shed good works and righteousness around for the advantage of the devout votaries that frequent the sacred places.<sup>20</sup> It is the will and pleasure of Ohrmazd that mankind shall propitiate them, and Zartosht is commissioned to exhort mankind so to do.<sup>21</sup> Ohrmazd further tells the prophet that the recital of their names is good, the sight of them is better, but to carry out their commands is best.<sup>22</sup> Man should be quick to speak the truth, ever thinking that the invisible archangels are standing by his side to watch him.<sup>23</sup> Ohrmazd confers with them in regard to creating Zartosht on earth, and they help the godhead in this great work.<sup>24</sup> They rout the demons,<sup>25</sup> and join naturally in lending assistance to Tishtar in his struggle with Aposh.<sup>26</sup> They successfully conduct Zartosht through the three ordeals in heaven—the first by fire, the second by molten metal, and the third by the knife. All the symbolic bearing of these tests they explain to him as the veritable trials to prove the steadfastness of the faithful when called upon, in troublous times, to vindicate the truth of the religion.<sup>27</sup>

The thirty days of the month are presided over by seven Amshaspands and twenty-three Izads. Each Amshaspand takes three or four Izads as his *hamkârs*, co-workers, to accomplish certain functions. Ohrmazd, for example, takes Day-pa-Adar, Day-pa-Mihr, and Day-pa-Den, to rout the accursed Ahriman. Vohuman has May (Mohor), Goshorun (Gosh), and Ram for his comrades to smite the cruel Eshm. Ardwhasht is joined by Atar, Srosh, and Warharan in the work of combating the demon of cold and the torments of Aposh and Spenjagra. Khwarshed, Mihr, Asman, and Anagran join Shahrewar to smite Bushasp, the demon of sloth. Spandarmad has Aban, Den, Ard/Ashishwangh, and Mahraspand as her comrades in her struggle

17 SnS9. 10.

18 Dk., vol. 3, p. 159.

19 Dk., vol. 8, p. 462, 463.

20 SnS20. 1; Dk., vol 12, bk. 6. 301. p. 15.

21 SnS15.30.

22 Zsp. 21.18.

23 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 91, p. 5, 6.

24 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 2. 19-35, p. 22-26.

25 Bd30.29.

26 Dd93.13, 14.

27 Zsp. 21.24-27.

with Astovidhot, the bone-breaker or the demon of death. Hordad is helped by Tishtar, Wad (Gowad), and Frawardin in his fight with the demons of avarice, Tarich and Zarich. Amurdad is joined by Rashn, Ashtad, and Zam (Zamyat) to co-operate with him in withstanding the demons of thirst and hunger.<sup>28</sup>

The great change wrought in the concept of the function of the Amshaspands, in contradistinction to Gathic and Later Avestan times, is that their work of guarding the concrete objects of the world receives greater attention than their prime work of enforcing the abstract virtues which they personify. In the Pahlavi period they have severally been assigned the work of guarding seven worldly creations, man, animals, fire, metal, earth, water, and plants.<sup>29</sup> The text just cited goes further and asserts that each Amshaspand has produced his own creation.<sup>30</sup> These objects are the counterparts of the Amshaspands, and their propitiation is equivalent to propitiating their spiritual masters.<sup>31</sup>

## VOHUMAN

**His materialization.** Ohrmazd is the father of Vohuman, or Good Mind, who is the first, after the godhead, in the entire creation,<sup>32</sup> and therefore standing next only to Ohrmazd himself.<sup>33</sup> He is possessed of good thoughts, peace-giving and evil-smiting, courageous and noble.<sup>34</sup> Vohuman is intangible,<sup>35</sup> but is depicted as assuming the form of a man when he is commissioned by Ohrmazd to hold a conference with Zartosht about the new faith. The prophet sees Vohuman coming from the southern regions.<sup>36</sup> The archangel seems to be of as great height as three men's spears and he holds a twig, the spiritual symbol of religion, in his hand.<sup>37</sup> Another text speaks of him as coming in the form of a handsome, brilliant, and elegant man, of nine times the height of Zartosht, clad in rich, shining clothes.<sup>38</sup> When Vohuman escorted Zartosht to the council of the Amshaspands, the prophet saw that Vohuman took only nine steps to cover as much space in walking as he

28 *Afrin-i haft Amshāspand in Pazend Texts*, p. 86-88.

29 SnS13.14; 15.5.

30 SnS15.4.

31 SnS15.6.

32 Bd1.23; Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 38, 6, p. 274; Dk., vol. 1, p. 34.

33 Dk., vol. 9, p. 572-574.

34 *Afrin-i Rapithwin; Sitāyish-i Vohuman in Pazend Texts*, p. 98, 224.

35 SLS 15. 3.

36 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 51, p. 47, 48.

37 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 52, p. 48.

38 Zsp. 21.8.

himself did in ninety steps.<sup>39</sup> The pure, white garment, the sacred shirt of the faithful, is designated as Vohuman's raiment.<sup>40</sup>

**He protects Zartosht from the time of the prophet's birth, and helps him in his prophetic work.** Ohrmazd consults Vohuman together with Ardwhasht about the appropriate time of sending Zartosht to the world, and Vohuman accordingly works miraculously to facilitate the birth of Zartosht.<sup>41</sup> He enters into the reason of the infant,<sup>42</sup> and makes the child laugh immediately at birth.<sup>43</sup> When Ahriman lets loose the fiends to destroy the babe, Ohrmazd sends Vohuman to save it.<sup>44</sup> The archangel hastens to the home of Zartosht and dispels Akoman, whom he finds there.<sup>45</sup> When the child prophet, according to the legend, was put in the den of wolves by the wizards, Vohuman, with the help of Srosh, took a sheep full of milk at night and suckled the child.<sup>46</sup> The Gathas refer to Vohuman's coming to Zartosht in order to impart to him enlightenment. We have in the Pahlavi texts the details of their meeting and their conversation. On being questioned by Vohuman as to his most ardent desire, Zartosht declared it to be righteousness,<sup>47</sup> and Vohuman even conducted him into the celestial council.<sup>48</sup> Ohrmazd, as the Pahlavi writings record, sent Vohuman along with the other Amshaspands to the court of Vishtasp in order that they might testify to the truth of the sacred mission of the prophet.<sup>49</sup> The archangel is the friend of Zartosht.<sup>50</sup>

**Vohuman's functions.** He was one of the bearers of religion from the Deity to Siyamak, the son of the first human pair.<sup>51</sup> He co-operates with Tishtar in pouring down rain on the earth.<sup>52</sup> He, as a divine aid, helps man to perform meritorious deeds.<sup>53</sup> It is the duty of Vohuman to

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39 Zsp. 21. 12.

40 Dd39.19; 40.2.

41 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 2, 17, 19, 24-26, 29, 33, p. 22-26.

42 Zsp. 20.3.

43 Zsp. 14. 12; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 5. 2. 5, p. 123.

44 Zsp. 14.9.

45 Zsp. 14.10, 11.

46 Zsp. 16.9; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 3. 17, p. 39.

47 Zsp. 21. 9, 10; Dk., SBE., vol 47, bk. 7. 3. 54-59, p. 48, 49.

48 Zsp. 21. 11; Dk.; SBE., vol. 47, bk; 7. 3. 60-62, p. 49, 50.

49 Dk., vol. 9, p. 615, 616; SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 74-82; p. 67-70.

50 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 38. 12; p. 276.

51 Dk., vol. 7, p. 457.

52 Bd7.3; Zsp. 6.3.

53 Dk., vol. 8, p. 446.

record the doings of men three times every day, and to keep account of their thoughts, words, and deeds.<sup>54</sup> As the recorder of the actions of mankind in the material world, he naturally appears in connection with the celestial assize which takes account of the doings of the souls when they proceed to the next world after death.<sup>55</sup> When the pious soul approaches heaven he welcomes it, and assigns its place and reward in paradise.<sup>56</sup> Vohuman gives reward to him who practises virtue, and teaches mankind to refrain from sin.<sup>57</sup> It is Vohuman who pictures the final good at the Renovation to children if they turn out to be righteous, and it is for this reason that children who are innocent are always cheerful.<sup>2421</sup> At the time of the renovation of the universe man will profit through the friendship of Vohuman,<sup>2422</sup> and it is Vohuman who ushers in the Messianic benefactors, and brings Ushedar, Ushedarmah, and Soshyos into conference with Ohrmazd.<sup>58</sup> Vohuman will smite forever his adversary Akoman, the demon of evil thought, at the final restoration of the world.<sup>59</sup>

**Goodness and wisdom abound in man when he welcomes Vohuman as his guest.** Ohrmazd tells Zartosht that the one who welcomes Vohuman learns the distinction between the ways of good and of evil.<sup>60</sup> Reverence for Vohuman brings submission to virtue, and man thereby detects his inner tendency to evil and sin.<sup>61</sup> Through the possession of Vohuman he comes to a better understanding of good and evil,<sup>62</sup> and the possession of Vohuman serves to explain to him Vohuman's true nature.<sup>63</sup> The man who loves Vohuman and his wisdom learns the discrimination between good and evil and thus gratifies Ohrmazd.<sup>64</sup> The creator has put Vohuman in man's body to withstand Akoman.<sup>65</sup> He resides in the human conscience and imparts wisdom,<sup>66</sup> and when he is lodged and treasured in the heart of the faithful, he

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54 Dd14.2.

55 Dd31.11.

56 Dd31.5; Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8.44.78, p. 164.

57 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 47.15, p. 306.

58 Phl. Y28.9.

59 Bd30.29.

60 Dd7.7.

61 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.53.33, p. 335, 336.

62 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.31.14, p. 248.

63 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.51.10, p. 320, 321.

64 Dk., SBE., vol 37, bk. 9.54.6, p. 341, 342.

65 Dk., vol. 9, p. 625.

66 Dk., vol. 8, p. 480, 481.

increases man's knowledge of religion.<sup>67</sup> Light, purity, perfume, and the archangels are in the man who welcomes Vohuman as his guest,<sup>68</sup> and that individual in whom Vohuman predominates is rich in contentment, and receives praise in both the worlds.<sup>69</sup> Peace and righteousness prevail, when one's will is ruled by Vohuman. Whoever entertains this celestial being as his guest purifies his own thoughts, words, and deeds;<sup>70</sup> and the man that has Vohuman as his guest becomes staunch in virtue.<sup>71</sup> The lover of Vohuman spreads instruction of virtue in the world.<sup>72</sup> Anyone, furthermore, who speaks words of virtue sacrifices unto Vohuman.<sup>73</sup> In order that Vohuman may dwell in man, every vestige of evil should be destroyed. When he has taken his seat in man, wrath and avarice and evil deeds disappear; but when man indulges in these vices, Vohuman departs from him.<sup>74</sup> Sin flees away where Vohuman resides;<sup>75</sup> and prosperity, good reputation, and piety ensue where Vohuman has his dwelling-place in man.<sup>76</sup> He becomes righteous, who makes Vohuman his own.<sup>77</sup> Vohuman is besought to grant wisdom and good thought.<sup>78</sup> Man is exalted by imbibing the superior knowledge of Vohuman,<sup>79</sup> and wisdom comes through the friendship of Vohuman.<sup>80</sup> The archangel preserves intelligence in man,<sup>81</sup> and endows him with wisdom.<sup>82</sup> Man gets the innate and acquired wisdom through him.<sup>83</sup>

**On the material side Vohuman is the patron divinity of animals.** In the creation of this world, cattle are placed under the care

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67 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.50.14, p. 313, 314.

68 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.67.4, p. 382.

69 Dk., vol. 3, p. 159.

70 Dk., vol. 1, p. 27, 28.

71 Dd3.14; Dk., SBE., vol. 37. bk. 9.47.16, p. 306, 307.

72 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.63.9, p. 372.

73 Dk., SBE, vol. 37, bk. 9.52.3, p. 323.

74 Sg. 8. 128, 129; *Sitāyish-i Vohuman* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 244.

75 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 193, p. 69.

76 Dk., vol. 6, p. 410, 411.

77 *Sitāyish-i Vohuman* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 244.

78 SnS22.2.

79 Dk., vol. 6, p. 413, 414.

80 Dk., vol. 6, p. 357.

81 Dk., vol. 3, p. 152.

82 Dk., vol. 8, p. 471, 472.

83 *āfrin-i Rapithwin; Sitāyish-i Vohuman* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 98, 244.

of Vohuman.<sup>84</sup> The true follower of Zartosht nourishes and feeds them, protects them from oppressors, and delivers them not over to cruel tyrants; it is such a one that propitiates Vohuman;<sup>85</sup> for cattle are the counterparts of Vohuman, and he who is good to them reaps the benefit of both the worlds.<sup>86</sup> Vohuman, accordingly, asks Zartosht in his conference with the prophet to maintain the species of certain classes of animals in the world.<sup>87</sup>

### ARDWAHISHT

**His zeal for the protection of fire now supersedes his primal work of guarding righteousness.** Ardwhisht is the Pahlavi form of the Avestan name read as Asha Vahishta, and really preserves the older form, Arta. Righteousness, glory, light, and healing are from him.<sup>88</sup> Righteousness, over which this archangel presides, remains still in the Pahlavi period the cardinal word of the religion, but this divine personality is less frequently mentioned in connection with the abstract virtue than in connection with fire, the physical object which is under his tutelage.<sup>89</sup> Fire is his earthly counterpart, and whoso procures wood and incense for the fire by honest means propitiates him.<sup>90</sup> For that reason, Ardwhisht in his conference with Zartosht, commissions the sage to teach the people of the world not to ill-treat fire.<sup>91</sup> Ohrmazd has given him sovereignty in heaven, with the power of refusing admission therein to those who have displeased him.<sup>92</sup> The Denkard tells us that he excluded the soul of the mighty hero Kersasp, because, despite his great heroic works by which he had saved the world from the atrocities of monsters, he had once extinguished fire.<sup>93</sup> The *Shayest Ne-Shayest* incidentally records that Ardwhisht is invisible.<sup>94</sup>

**His work.** He accompanies Vohuman to protect Zartosht when he was born, and when he became a prophet, the archangel goes to the royal court of Vishtasp as an envoy of Ohrmazd to convince him of the

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84 SnS13.14; 15.5.

85 SnS15.9, 10.

86 SnS15.11, *Afrin-i Rapithwin; Sitdyish-i Vohuman* in *Pazend Texts* p. 98, 244.

87 Zsp. 22.6.

88 *Afrin-i Rapithwin, Sitāyish-i Ardibahisht* in *Pazand Texts*, p. 98, 244.

89 *Ib.*

90 SnS15.5, 12, 13.

91 Zsp. 22.7.

92 Sd. 11.5.

93 Dk., SBE., vol. 18, p. 369-382; vol. 37, bk. 9. 15. 3, 4, p. 199.

94 SnS15.3.

divine nature of the seer's mission.<sup>95</sup> Ohrmazd sends through him also a cup of immortal drink to King Vishtasp to enlighten that monarch with spiritual vision.<sup>96</sup> We can see, therefore, why Ardwhisht is implored to grant understanding and intelligence.<sup>97</sup> When a sick person is healed, the spiritual debt is due to Ardwhisht.<sup>98</sup> He is the mighty power that will smite his adversary Indar at the Renovation.<sup>99</sup>

### SHAHREWAR

**Once the genius of the Divine Kingdom of Ohrmazd, but in the Pahlavi period the guardian spirit of the mineral kingdom only.** The abstract virtue of sovereign power which this archangel personified is unknown throughout the Pahlavi literature, his activity being now mainly restricted to metal, which is placed under his guardianship.<sup>100</sup> When Shahrewar confers With Zoroaster in heaven he advises him to teach mankind to make good use of metals.<sup>101</sup> Metals are the special product of Shahrewar, and those who desire to profit in both the worlds through the propitiation of this genius of those elements should not give gold and silver to the wicked, or make any ill use of them.<sup>102</sup> It is said that the best way of such propitiation of the divine personage is to be pure and unsullied of the heart, so that even if one is subjected to the ordeal of the molten metal and the burning liquid is poured on his breast, one may not burn and die like a sinner, but may come out of the trial as successful as the great Sasanian Dastur Adarbad, who felt as if milk were being poured on his breast when he voluntarily submitted himself to this test for the good of the religion.<sup>103</sup> As the lord of the hidden treasures of the earth Shahrewar is asked to grant wealth,<sup>104</sup> and in the final battle between good and evil he will assail his adversary Sovar and destroy him.<sup>105</sup>

It is interesting to note that Shahrewar appears in the Pazand form Shahrevar on the coins of the Indo-Scythian kings Kanishka and Huvishka as early as the latter part of the first century.

95 Zsp. 23. 7; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 2. 17, 19, 24, 25, 29, p. 22-25; 4. 75, 78, p. 67-69.

96 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 4. 84-86, p. 70, 71.

97 SnS22. 3.

98 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 8.37.14, p. 116.

99 Bd30.29.

100 Bd30.19; SnS13.14, 39; 15.5; *Afrin-i Rapithwin; Sitāyish-i Shahrivar* in *Pazand Texts*, p. 98, 99, 244.

101 Zsp. 22.8.

102 SnS15.18, 19.

103 SnS15.15, 17.

104 SnS22.4.

105 Bd30.29.

## SPANDARMAD

**Her work.** She is perfect-minded, wise, and of efficacious eyes.<sup>106</sup> She gives bodily strength and vigour unto man,<sup>107</sup> and has the lodgment in man's will.<sup>108</sup> Any one who entertains her as his guest becomes truly devotional.<sup>109</sup> The advice of this female archangel is that one should consult a good man, when one is in doubt as to good or evil deed, for, just as the swiftest horse sometimes requires a whip and the sharpest knife a whetstone, so even the wisest man needs counsel.<sup>110</sup> As the genius of earth,<sup>111</sup> Spandarmad rejoices when the faithful cultivate waste land and rear cattle upon it, or when a virtuous son is born upon it.<sup>112</sup> But she is grieved when a robber or a tyrant treads over her sacred face.<sup>113</sup> Even as a mother carrying her dead child in her bosom is in grief and sorrow, so does Spandarmad suffer when wicked persons trample on her breast.<sup>114</sup> The genius of earth trembles like a sheep that sees a wolf, when the corpse of a wicked one is interred in her.<sup>115</sup> When a corpse is buried in the ground she is shocked, as when one discovers a serpent or a scorpion in his bed.<sup>116</sup> Even walking with bare foot upon the ground injures her.<sup>117</sup> Spandarmad's earth bears on her bosom high mountains, and rivers and oceans; tress and fodder and corn and fruit grow upon her; men and animals thrive upon her. She yields nourishment and prosperity unto all.<sup>118</sup> The faithful who wish to propitiate her should propitiate both the earth and virtuous women.<sup>119</sup>

Spandarmad in the Pahlavi period takes up a new function which was not hers in the earlier times. She becomes the guardian of virtuous women, as intimated in the close of the preceding paragraph.<sup>120</sup> Whoever desires to propitiate her, should propitiate the virtuous

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106 *Afrin-i Rapithwin; Sitāyish-i Spandarmad* in *Pazand Texts*, p. 99, 44.

107 Dk., vol. 9. p. 582.

108 Dd94.2.

109 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6.78, p. 22.

110 SnS10.27, 28; Sd. 85.3.

111 BYt. 2.8. 16, 31, 48, 53; SnS13, 14.

112 SnS15.24.

113 SnS15.22.

114 SnS15.23.

115 Sd. 65.5.

116 Sd. 33.2.

117 Sd. 44.1.

118 *Afrin-i Rapithwin; Sitāyish-i Spandarmad* in *Pazand Texts*, p. 99, 244.

119 SnS15.20.

120 SnS15.5.



women;<sup>121</sup> and through her intervention men pray for noble wives.<sup>122</sup> When a faithless wife of a righteous husband has her abode on her earth, Spandarmad is in sore distress.<sup>123</sup> She will rout her adversary Taromat at the Renovation.<sup>124</sup>

## HORDAD

**The giver of daily bread.** He is the lord of the divisions of time, the years and months and days, and it is through him that a good man lives an honest and happy life during the year.<sup>125</sup> On the material side this archangel has water for his special care,<sup>126</sup> and Zartosht is commissioned by this archangel to advocate good use of it in the world.<sup>2490</sup> As water gives fertility to the land and is the source of prosperity, Hordad is taken as the possession of plenty and prosperity, and is invoked by the pious to bestow these gifts upon mankind.<sup>2490</sup> The waters of Hordad bring purity unto all. No living being can live without this precious element. The earth of Spandarmad becomes fertile owing to Hordad's water; Amurdad grows trees owing to his waters. Because he spreads prosperity everywhere, 'prosperity' becomes his very name.<sup>127</sup> Food and drink are his gifts.<sup>2491</sup> It is said that the daily bread which every one obtains in this world throughout a year is apportioned in the celestial world on the day Hordad of the first month of the Zoroastrian calendar and the archangel intercedes in behalf of those who have propitiated Hordad by their deeds, and that these offerings thus secure for the faithful a large share in this annual allotment of earthly riches.<sup>2491</sup> Those who make proper use of water rejoice Hordad and receive rewards in both worlds;<sup>2492</sup> but those who are guilty of its misuse or defilement find their way to heaven blocked up by the spirits that preside over water.<sup>128</sup> In addition the Pahlavi writings record that an unseasonable chatter and an immoderate drinking of wine distress him.<sup>129</sup> Hordad will drive away his adversary, the demon Tairev, at the time of Resurrection.<sup>130</sup>

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121 SnS15.20.

122 SnS22.5.

123 SnS15.22.

124 Bd30.29.

125 *Afrin-i Rapithwin* in *Pazand Texts*, p. 99.

126 SnS9.8; 13.14; 15.5.

127 *Afrin-i Rapithwin; Sitāyish-i Khurdād* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 99, 244.

128 SnS15.27, 28.

129 Mkh. 2.33, 34; 16.49, 56.

130 Bd30.29.

**AMURDAD**

**Amurdad's activity of guarding the vegetable kingdom.** Ohrmazd wills that man shall abstain from sin and practise goodness. Life devoted to goodness in this world brings Amurdad's happy reward to his soul in the next world. After death the righteous soul goes to the all-happy Garothman of endless light.<sup>131</sup> This divinity works in the vegetable kingdom that belongs above all to him,<sup>132</sup> and helps those who work for the plant world.<sup>133</sup> Food and drink are in his care.<sup>2497</sup> Like his comrade Hordad, Amurdad refuses a passage to heaven to those who sin against plants, and do not expiate the wrong.<sup>134</sup> The prophet is requested by him to enjoin rules for the preservation of plants.<sup>135</sup> He will banish Zairich from the world in the final struggle.<sup>136</sup>

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131 *Sitāyish-i Amardād* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 244.

132 Bd9.2: Zsp. 8.1; SnS9.8; 13.14; 15.5.

133 SnS15.25, 29.

134 SnS15.27, 28.

135 Zsp. 22.12.

136 Bd30.29.

## CHAPTER XL. IZADS

**The angels.** Izad is the Pahlavi equivalent of the Avestan word Yazata, and is similarly employed as the designation for an angel. These angels are immortal and invisible;<sup>1</sup> and some of them, who were pre-eminently the genii of the living in the Younger Avestan period, have by this time been transferred more particularly to the sphere of the dead. For example, Srosh, Rashn and Mihr, three of the most prominent Izads of the Avestan period, have changed their sphere of activity. In the Avestan period they were the genii exclusively of the corporeal world, but now they are converted into the judges of the dead. In the Pahlavi time, the faithful, rather than looking to them for protection and help in this world, solicit more especially their favour for the next world. Srosh still retains some of his earthly functions, but he becomes the genius of the dead first, and of the living afterwards. The angels Hom and Din have extended their sphere of activity by joining Tishtar in his work of producing rain.<sup>2</sup> Certain qualities that were attributed in the Avestan texts to one angel are now loosely ascribed to another.

**The Izads are the loving guides and protectors of men.** They first expounded the faith of Ohrmazd to Gayomard, the primeval man;<sup>3</sup> and they are ever ready to fulfil the behests of Ohrmazd, who has created them for the welfare of his creatures.<sup>4</sup> They most frequently visit the sacred temples consecrated to the fire Bahram.<sup>5</sup> They help man,<sup>6</sup> and instruct him in goodness.<sup>7</sup> It is through their aid that man learns to know God, to dispel demons, and to liberate his soul from the future torments of hell.<sup>8</sup> Man's knowledge of them enables him to enter into relationship with his creator;<sup>9</sup> for he is unable to progress morally without their assistance.<sup>10</sup> If man remembers them, he receives their favour and prospers in both worlds.<sup>11</sup> Through their wisdom, moreover,

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1 Dk., vol. 1, p. 47; vol. 2, p. 65, 66, 114.

2 Bd7.3; Zsp. 6.3; Dk., vol. 3, p. 146.

3 Dk., vol. 7, p. 457.

4 Dk., vol. 3, p. 170.

5 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.230, p. 87.

6 Dk., vol. 1, p. 44, 45.

7 Mkh. 52.15.

8 Dk., vol. 2, p. 85.

9 Dk., vol. 2, p. 81.

10 Dk., vol. 4, p. 249.

11 Dk., vol. 7, p. 454.

he becomes illustrious,<sup>12</sup> and attains to spiritual wealth through them.<sup>13</sup> They hasten to help the man who practises righteousness and abstains from wickedness;<sup>14</sup> such a man wins their favour by invoking them.<sup>15</sup> It was for this very reason that the prophet Zartosht prayed to them to grant him the power of spiritual leadership.<sup>16</sup> They keep off Druj from the body of man, and guard him against the miseries of both the Worlds.<sup>17</sup> As a physician removes bodily illness, or as a farmer cleans corn of all impurity, so do the angels remove harm from man.<sup>18</sup> They keep up this relation with man as long as he practises goodness, but they give up his company when he falls into sinful habits.<sup>19</sup> They lodge in the body of a righteous person, causing him joy,<sup>20</sup> and instruct the faithful in spiritual matters;<sup>21</sup> moreover, sin flees from him in whom they dwell.<sup>22</sup> They help and protect a pious man, even as a loving master would lead a calf to the pasture land and prevent it from going to a place of harm.<sup>23</sup> Like loving parents who prohibit their children from partaking of some unwholesome food, the angels prevent man, even against his will, from doing that which they foresee, through their superior knowledge to be of eventual harm to him.<sup>24</sup> Persons who befriend the righteous in this world find angels as their friends in the next;<sup>25</sup> the good leave name and fame here, and are blessed with the company of the angels there.<sup>26</sup>

**Sacrificial offerings made to the angels.** We have already seen that meat formed a conspicuous article among the sacrificial gifts made to the heavenly beings in the Avestan period. Meat viands are the special feature of the sacred feast during the Pahlavi period. The Pahlavi treatise *Shayest Ne-Shayest* explains what particular parts of a slaughtered animal are to be specifically dedicated to the various

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12 Dk., vol. 7, p. 488.

13 Dk., vol. 7, p. 490.

14 Dk., vol. 2, p. 65.

15 Dk., vol. 7, p. 454.

16 *Ib.*

17 Dk., vol. 8, p. 475, 476.

18 Dk., vol. 1, p. 38, 49.

19 Dk., vol. 1, p. 26.

20 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6, 97, p. 12, 13; 236, p. 90, 91.

21 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.214, p. 79.

22 Dk., vol. 3, p. 153.

23 Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6. E. 1, p. 1.

24 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 222, p. 83.

25 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 133, p. 38, 39.

26 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 140, p. 41, 42.

divinities in ceremonies. The angel Hom's right to receive the tongue, jaw, and left eye, recognized by the Avestan scriptures, remains still undisputed.<sup>27</sup> The head and neck, shoulders and thighs, loin and belly, kidneys and lungs, liver and spleen, legs and tail, heart and entrails are all distributed among several different beings; until at last the tail-bone falls to the lot of the august Farohar of Zartosht, and the great archangels have to content themselves merely with the residue.<sup>28</sup> Decomposed meat is not to be consecrated to any angel;<sup>29</sup> nor is any meat at all to be used in any ceremony for the first three days after the death of a person, but milk, cheese, fruit, eggs, and preserves are to be consecrated instead.<sup>30</sup> It is stated that if the relations of the deceased person were to consecrate and eat fresh meat within three days after his death, another death might perchance occur in the family.<sup>31</sup> Yet on the fourth day they may slaughter a goat or a sheep.<sup>32</sup> A short formula is to be recited by the man who slaughters this animal.<sup>33</sup> It is desirable that the head of a slaughtered animal should be consecrated before being eaten; but if it is not possible to consecrate the head, one kidney at least must necessarily be consecrated.<sup>34</sup>

In our treatment of the Izads individually, which we shall now undertake, we shall deal only with those that are discussed at any great length in the Pahlavi works.

### SROSH

**His activity.** The whole earth, or more especially, Arzah and Savah, two of the zones, are the abode of Srosh.<sup>35</sup> Three times every night he comes to the world.<sup>36</sup> According to the Pahlavi texts, precisely as was recorded above for the Avestan scriptures, the cock and dog are his associates in routing the demons.<sup>37</sup> He helps the man who in the midst of temptations practises virtue;<sup>38</sup> for he makes his abode in the body of a righteous person; and the man in whose body he is a guest becomes the

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27 SnS11.4, 6.

28 SnS11.4.

29 SnS10.34.

30 SnS17.2; Sd. 78.1.

31 Sd. 78.2.

32 SnS17.5.

33 Antia, *Pazend Texts*, p. 178.

34 Sd. 34.4-6.

35 Mkh. 62.25.

36 SnS13.43.

37 Bd19.33.

38 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 90, p. 4, 5.

more polite in his utterances of welcome.<sup>39</sup> Again we see Srosh inspiring an intelligent man to speak good words, as also an unintelligent one who listens to the teachings of the high-priests.<sup>40</sup> When the prophet child was thrown into the lair of a wolf for destruction, Srosh and Vohuman brought a sheep with udder full of milk to the den for the babe's nourishment.<sup>41</sup> Srosh, likewise, escorted Viraf in his journey to heaven above and to hell below; and at the time of the final restoration of the world, Ohrmazd will depute him with Neryosangh to arouse the sleeping hero Kersasp and fire him with the spirit to kill the accursed Zohak.<sup>42</sup> Srosh, in the final struggle between the angels and the demons, will smite his adversary Eshm.<sup>43</sup> He will then join in officiating with Ohrmazd in celebrating, once and forever, the final destruction of evil.<sup>44</sup>

**A judge of the dead.** Srosh is one of the judges who take accounts of the souls of the dead at the Bridge of Judgment.<sup>45</sup> If a man, during his lifetime, performs the three nights ceremonies in honour of Srosh for the future welfare of his soul, the angel will not forsake him for the first days after his death.<sup>46</sup> At the dawn of the fourth day after the death of a righteous person, Srosh accordingly helps to conduct his soul across the bridge.<sup>47</sup> Ceremonies are therefore to be performed in honour of Srosh for the first three days and nights after death, in order that this divine helper may protect the soul from the attack of the demons during this period,<sup>48</sup> and may serve in its favour at the seat of judgment.<sup>49</sup> Specially distinct praise and reverence are to be bestowed upon Srosh, and even the names of the archangels should not be associated with him.<sup>50</sup> In addition, it may be noted, regarding Srosh's relation to mankind, that when children under seven years of age die, their souls accompany in the hereafter those of their parents, to heaven or hell, wherever the parents happen to be. On the other hand, invocation of Srosh in the

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39 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6. 78, p. 21.

40 Dd3.14.

41 Zsp. 16.9; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.3.17, p. 39.

42 BYt. 3.59, 60.

43 Bd30.29; Mkh. 8.14.

44 Bd30.30.

45 Dd14.4: 28.5; Mkh. 2.118.

46 Sd. 58.4, 7.

47 Mkh. 2.115, 124.

48 SnS17.3.

49 Dd28.6.

50 Dd29.2.

name of the child enables its soul to separate itself from those of its parents.<sup>51</sup>

## MIHR

**Lord chief justice of the heavenly tribunal.** Though retaining his appellation of being the lord of wide pastures, Mihr (Av. Mithra) no longer appears as a pastoral divinity; neither is he seen driving in his chariot to the battlefield as a war angel. He has chosen a quieter realm of work, and now occupies a seat in Ohrmazd's privy council in heaven. He administers justice at the heavenly court, and is one of the celestial judiciaries that make up the reckoning of good and evil deeds of the souls at the Bridge of Judgment.<sup>52</sup> All mankind has to appear before this lord of truth and justice.<sup>53</sup> In his trial of the dead, as the ancient divine personage presiding over truth, he exposes those guilty of breach of promise.<sup>54</sup> Great is the distress of every soul at the Bridge, but Mihr saves those souls that have belonged to truth-speaking persons.<sup>55</sup>

Morning time is the proper time for the ceremonials to be performed in honour of Mihr;<sup>56</sup> and the old idea has never been lost; that none should lie unto him.<sup>57</sup> That law remained ever supreme.

At the time of Renovation Mihr will help Peshyotan, who has lain asleep, tradition repeats, from ancient times only to help in confounding the Evil Spirit, who will flee back to the darkest recess of hell.<sup>58</sup>

## RASHN

**He holds the balance of judgment in the celestial court.** This Izad of the Avesta, who traversed all earthly regions and presided at the ordeals, in regard to mankind, is transferred in the texts of the Pahlavi period to the celestial world. As genius of truth, Rashn now sits in the heavenly tribunal for judging the souls of the dead.<sup>59</sup> He holds in his hands the golden balance and weighs the good and evil deeds of the souls.<sup>60</sup>

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51 Sd. 47.1-3.

52 Dd31.11; Mkh. 2.118; Sd. 1.4, 18.16; 100.2; AV. 5; AnKhK. 5.

53 Gs. 169.

54 Dd14.3.

55 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.20.4, p. 210.

56 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.9.7, p. 183, 184.

57 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.20.5, p. 210.

58 BYt. 3.32-36.

59 Dd14.4; 31.11; Sd. 1.4; 18.16; 58.5; 100.2; Dk., vol. 5, p. 280. 281; AnKhK. 5.

60 Mkh. 2.118, 119; AV. 5. 5.

A sacred cake is consecrated to Rashn as an angel, on the dawn of the fourth day after the death of a person.<sup>61</sup> The proper period to commemorate him is at dawn.<sup>62</sup>

### KHWARSHED

**The sun.** The entire creation of Ohrmazd longs for the rising of the sun in order to escape the brood of darkness, the demons and fiends, sorcerers and wolves, noxious creatures of hell, the wicked and the hordes. The faithful pray that the resplendent sun may continue to shine from its loftiest position, for it is due to its light that the earth created by Ohrmazd exists, the creation does not die owing to excessive cold, the fruits of trees gain life and sweetness and the earthly creation gains help and protection and growth. The prayer concludes with a pious wish that the sun may shine with greater glory and greater brilliance and be a more beneficent host to the earth created by Ohrmazd.<sup>63</sup>

**Khwarshed's message to mankind.** Man should invoke this personification of the sun three times every day. He should completely resign himself to Ohrmazd, and expiate his sins; he should also daily interrogate his own self as to whether he has lived that day in the pious service of Ohrmazd or in the accursed bondage of Ahriman.<sup>64</sup> Khwarshed delivers three messages of Ohrmazd every day to mankind. In the first, or the message of the morning, Ohrmazd desires that mankind be zealous in doing meritorious deeds, so that, by Ohrmazd himself, their condition in this world may be made better. Secondly, at noon, men are reminded to marry and have children; and are likewise exhorted to co-operate with each other in doing good deeds that will prevent Ahriman and his brood from freeing themselves out of bondage until the day of resurrection. In the third, or evening message, mankind are reminded to repent of sins they may have unconsciously committed as in that case they would be forgiven.<sup>65</sup> One should reverence the sun during the day, for not to do so is sin.<sup>66</sup> It is proper to invoke it even if it is not visible owing to cloudiness;<sup>67</sup> otherwise by not thus reverencing it, the good works that a man does that day lose their value for him.<sup>68</sup>

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61 Dd30.2; SnS17.4.

62 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.9.6, p. 183.

63 *Sitāyish-i Khurshed* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 252, 253.

64 Dk., vol. 11. bk. 6. 227, p. 86.

65 Gs. 154-157.

66 SnS7.1, 3.

67 *Ib.*, 5.

68 SnS7.6.



**TISHTAR**

**He retains his position as the genius of rain.** The Pahlavi writers reproduce the account of Tishtar's fight with Aposh from the Avestan Yasht 8, which celebrates his work.<sup>69</sup> The Yasht spoke of the help that Ohrmazd gave Tishtar when he was routed in his first combat with his adversary and invoked the Supreme Being for help and strength. The Dadestan adds that besides Ohrmazd the archangels and the guardian spirits also carried help to him.<sup>70</sup> Vohuman, Ardvisur, Vat, Hom, and Din are spoken of as his associates.<sup>71</sup> Tishtar seizes rain water from the ocean,<sup>72</sup> carries seeds of plants with it and scatters them all over the world. This angel of rain removes the hot winds that parch the dry lands and spreads prosperity all around by means of his fertilizing waters.

Ohrmazd has created the glorious Tishtar, the giver of profit and prosperity, the maker of rain for the help of the stars that further the creation of Ohrmazd. He is invoked to further the growth of trees and plants upon the seven Zones by abundant rain to prevent the harm that the Evil Spirit and his infernal crew bring upon earth.<sup>73</sup>

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69 Bd7.3-10; Zsp 6.3, 4, 9-11, 13.

70 93.13.

71 Dk., vol. 3, p. 146.

72 Mkh. 62.41, 42.

73 *Sitāyish-i Tishtar* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 254, 255.

## CHAPTER XLI. FAROHARS

**The Farohars have existed long before the world came into being.** Farohar, or Fravahar, is the Pahlavi form of the Avestan Fravashi. The Pahlavi works do not speak of the Farohars of Ohrmazd and his heavenly ministers; in the writings of this period, the Farohars are confined to the earthly creatures. Every single good creature of this world has its own Farohar.<sup>1</sup> Ohrmazd created them long before he brought the universe into existence; and they actively worked by the creator's side, when he fortified the sky against the attacks of Ahriman. Mounted on horses and with spears in hands they patrolled the boundaries of the rampart of heaven.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the world Zartosht's Farohar was shown to Goshorun to console her that in the fullness of time the prophet would be sent to the world to remove the inequity that was rampant on earth.<sup>3</sup>

**They volunteer to descend to earth and stand by men to the end of their lives.** From the beginning of time the Farohars lived in supreme felicity in the empyrean realm, along with Ohrmazd and his heavenly host.<sup>4</sup> When Ohrmazd created man, as the climax and crown of his earthly creation, the deity asked these spiritual intelligences whether they would wish to stay in heaven under his constant protection, or migrate to earth in human bodies and encounter the foe, fight with him valiantly, vanquish him in the flesh and return triumphant to God for the eternal reward. The Farohars accepted the latter alternative, and prepared themselves to face the attack of Ahriman.<sup>5</sup> Thus the Farohars, who were seated in heaven and were conscious of the beatific vision of Ohrmazd, prefer the voluntary exile for a time in the world of joy and sorrow, of good and evil, in order to win forever the uninterrupted bliss of heaven. Thus it is, that they tenant human bodies and temporarily adopt the material vehicles for the express purpose of routing evil and redeeming the world from its imperfection.

**In the Pahlavi period their influence is less prominent.** In the Pahlavi texts the Farohars are represented as entrusted with the work of guarding the soul of Sam,<sup>6</sup> and the Hom tree of immortality,<sup>7</sup> as

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1 Mkh. 49. 23.

2 Bd6.3; Zsp. 5.2.

3 Bd4.4.

4 Dk., vol. 2, p. 80.

5 Bd2.10, 11.

6 Bd29.8; Mkh. 62.23, 24.

7 Mkh. 62.28, 29.

well as the passage of hell.<sup>8</sup> Ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine of them watch over Zartosht's seed, which will give birth to the three saviour renovators of the world in the last three millenniums.<sup>9</sup> As a part of their office also they help and keep pure the elements and the sun, moon, and stars;<sup>10</sup> and they preserve the breath of life and energy of the body in men,<sup>11</sup> and keep the bodily organs in unison.<sup>12</sup>

The zeal with which they were approached by the living in the Avestan period has considerably abated by this time. The faithful no longer invoke them for various boons as zealously as their forebears did. The fighting armies do not call upon them for help in the thick of battles. Men do not look to them for riches and plenty; and women do not turn their eager eyes to them for easy childbirth. Their hold on humanity is weakened, and they are less in touch with the daily lives of men than before.

One of the later Pahlavi works divests the Farohars of their spirituality, and identifies them with the stars.<sup>13</sup> The Farohars of the renovators are spoken of as created from the body of the first man.<sup>14</sup>

**In is for the welfare of the living that the Farohars solicit sacrifices.** It is the sacred duty of the faithful to commemorate the Farohars of the dead, especially on the days set apart for that purpose.<sup>15</sup> The Frawardigan festival was a national institution, and the kings and people zealously observed it. A Byzantine ambassador on his way to Persia in 565 was prevented from entering the city of Nisibis for ten days while this festival was celebrated there.<sup>16</sup> On the fourth day after death the Farohar of the departed one in a family is to be invoked along with the Farohars of all righteous persons that have lived in this world from the time of the first man on earth, and also of those that will live up to the advent of the renovator of the world.<sup>17</sup> When thus invoked in prayer the Farohars come down to attend the ceremonies;<sup>18</sup> but if they are not properly propitiated, they wander disconsolate about their former abodes for a time and finally depart leaving their curse. Such a

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8 Mkh. 49.15, 16.

9 Bd32.8, 9.

10 Dk., vol. 8, p. 446.

11 Dk., vol. 6, p. 353.

12 Dk., vol. 6, p. 409.

13 Mkh. 49.22.

14 Mkh. 27.17.

15 SnS10.2; 12.31.

16 *Menander Protector*, ed. Niebuhr, p. 374, Bonn, 1829.

17 SnS17.5; Dd28.7; 81.15.

18 SnS9.11, 12.

curse is irrevocable, if once given, unless nullified by the Farohars who uttered it.

Besides, it is not for their own good that the Farohars seek invocation, because they do not need any ceremony for their own sake; their coming, rather, is to remind the householder of the life after death, to warn him that he also will one day have to leave this world, and that when trouble comes upon him they could not help him, if he neglected them.<sup>19</sup> Yet, if well propitiated by the survivors of the deceased, they escort the souls of these persons, when their turn of death comes. They intercede on their behalf, give a good report to Ohrmazd, and entreat him to give them due reward.<sup>20</sup> But if the living have neglected them, and have failed to sacrifice unto them, they depart cursing, and bide their time, until the day when death brings the survivors to the Bridge of Judgment. To such souls, stepping on the threshold of the next world, they utter reproaches and refuse help.<sup>21</sup>

The line of distinction between the souls and the Farohars of the dead is gradually obliterated in the Pahlavi texts. By the end of the Pahlavi period both of these spiritual faculties, namely, the soul and the Farohar, are invoked to come down upon earth. The Pahlavi texts, accordingly, speak of the souls or of the Farohars, as the case may be, as coming to this world on the days originally dedicated to the latter. The Avestan texts, on the other hand, always spoke of the advent of the Farohars (not of the souls) to this world on the festival days consecrated to them at the end of every year, but the Pahlavi works expressly speak of the souls descending to the earth on these days, as well as on the anniversaries of their bodily death.<sup>22</sup> A passage speaks of the souls as coming on their anniversaries accompanied by nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine Farohars from heaven as their guests, just as men do on earth.<sup>23</sup>

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19 SnS9.13; Sd. 13.6-9.

20 Sd. 37.6-8.

21 Sd. 37.10-12.

22 Phl. Vd. 8.22; Sd. 37.1-12.

23 Sd. 13.3.

## CHAPTER XLII. PRAYERS AND RITUALS

**Pazand prayers.** When the Sasanians came to power, the Avesta, the sacred language of Zoroastrianism, has ceased to be a living tongue. The daily prayers continued to be recited in the dead language. The need was evidently felt to supplement the Avestan prayers by some additional prayers in the vernacular. Dastur Adarbad Mahraspand, the learned high-priest and premier of King Shapur II, composed such supplementary prayers in Pazand, and his example was followed by other Dasturs. Several benedictory, thanksgiving, and expiatory prayers composed during this period have come down to us and are recited as supplementary prayers to the Avestan prayers to the present day. The composers take the original Avestan prayers as the source of their inspiration. Short Avestan formulas or sentences are often rendered word for word in Pazand. The Pazand version of the Avestan confessional prayer *frastuye*,<sup>1</sup> for example, forms the opening part of the Patet. Besides thus reproducing the Avestan passages in Pazand, independent prayers, preserving the spirit and sentiment of the Avesta, are composed in praise of Ohrmazd, Amshaspands, and Izads, presiding over the thirty days of the month. The original Avestan wedding hymn has not come down to us. What has reached us is a Pazand hymn, composed during the Sasanian period, embodying three Avestan passages.<sup>2</sup> The important Pazand prayers that are extant consist of the Afrins, Sitayishes, Patets, Nirangs, the introductory and closing parts of the Avestan Niyayeshes and Yashts, and several devotional pieces of considerable beauty.

**Supplicatory prayers.** The worshipper extols Ohrmazd as the eternal, omnipotent, and beneficent lord and asks him to exalt his thoughts and lead him to goodness and happiness in accordance with his divine will. The devotee sees none besides Ohrmazd, he is his only hope. He, therefore, beseeches him to protect and help him.<sup>3</sup> His is greatness and his is glory, he who is the creator, protector, and liberator of all. The faithful implore him to give holiness and happiness unto all and bestow upon them reward for their good deeds from his Treasury of Eternal Weal. The faithful ask him to liberate them from the tyranny of the wicked, to help the helpless, to bring comfort to those that are in trouble. He alone, they acknowledge, is the source of protection and help to all and is the one who redresses the wrongs of all.<sup>4</sup> The angel presiding over the moon is asked to give ease and health, and the

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1 Y11.17.

2 Y54.1; 59.30, 31.

3 *Sitāyish-i Depādar* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 250.

4 *Sitāyish-i Depmīhr* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 257.

fulfillment of right wishes, joy, well-being, and fearlessness.<sup>5</sup> The faithful pray that they may be exalted in both the worlds, and may have health and long life, name and fame, wealth and happiness. Their fervent prayer is that no harm and distress should come upon them from Ahriman, the jealous, the envious, the malicious, the unjust, and the wicked; on the contrary all evil that the wicked conspire by thought and word and deed to do unto them may recoil upon their own persons.<sup>6</sup>

**Thanksgiving prayers.** The worshipper says unto Ohrmazd, that a thousand times daily he offers him thanks through his thoughts, words, and deeds, for he has created him as an Aryan and of the good religion, and has given him eyes and ears and hands and feet and intelligence and reason and still gives food and garments.<sup>7</sup> He offers his praise and remembers him by his name day and night in heartfelt thanksgiving that he has created him as man and endowed him with speech.<sup>8</sup>

**Benedictory prayers.** The devout pray that the good co-religionists of Iran and the seven zones be the promoters of the faith, doers of the deeds of merit, and abjurers of sin. May their wishes pertaining to the bodily life in this world and those regarding the soul in the next world be realized.<sup>9</sup> May there be prosperity and greatness unto all, and may joy and health come unto the houses of the good. May the heavens shower good and may the earth grow good crops and the good reap the reward of their goodness everywhere.<sup>10</sup> May the Izads bring prosperity and joyous and happy life of 150 years unto the worshippers of Mazda and may the knowledge and renown and glory of the good Mazda-worshipping religion spread over the seven zones.<sup>11</sup> May joy and pleasure and goodness come unto all from the south and may sickness and trouble and harm flee towards the north. May he get more who needs more. May good come unto him who deserves good. May he get a wife who longs for a wife. May he be blessed with a child who prays for a child. May the good Mazda-worshipping religion spread over the seven zones and live.<sup>12</sup>

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5 *Sitāyish-i Māh* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 254.

6 *Sipās-i Akenāreh* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 211, 212.

7 *Namāz-i Dādār Ohrmazd* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 206.

8 *Sitāyish-i Depādar* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 250.

9 *Ba Nām-i Khāvar* in *Pāzend Texts*, p. 213.

10 *Afrin-i Rapithwin* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 100.

11 *Afrin-i Gahanbār Chāshmi* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 105, 106.

12 *Afrin-i haft Amshāspand* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 89.

While showering their blessings on the occasion of a wedding, the priests wish the bride and the groom the special virtues, qualities, and characteristics possessed by Ohrmazd, Amshaspands, Izads, Zartosht, kings, heroes, wise men, Time, sun, moon, stars, earth, water, fire, river, winter, spring, gold, musk, amber, wine, myrtle, jasmine, sweet marjoram, basil, and other good objects.

**Confessional prayers.** The worshipper confesses that he accepts the religion that Ohrmazd taught Zartosht and Zartosht taught Gushtasp and which Adarbad Mahraspand purified and organized. Unto the end of his life, he says, he will adhere to the good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and will embrace the deeds of merit and discard sinful deeds.<sup>13</sup> He avows his faith in Ohrmazd and Amshaspands, and believes in heaven and hell, resurrection and renovation. Good thoughts, good words and good deeds he accepts and evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds he renounces.<sup>14</sup> At the ceremony of investing a child with the sacred shirt and girdle, it is made to recite the Pazand formula of the Confession of Faith in which it says that the good and true religion is sent by God upon earth and Zartosht has brought it. Such is the religion of Ohrmazd and Zartosht that it accepts.

**Penitential prayers.** There are four Pazand Patets extant, called *Patet-i Pashimāni*, *Patet-i Khud*, *Patet-i Irānik*, and *Patet-i Vidardakān*. A short expiatory prayer included in the Kusti formula is recited by every Zoroastrian as many times a day as he or she unties and ties the sacred girdle round the waist. It also forms part of the introduction to the Niyayeshes, Yashts and other prayers. The individual here repents and turns back from all sins which he may have committed knowingly or unknowingly, actually committed or merely contemplated, sins pertaining to thought or word or deed, body or soul, and in this world or the next. In the Patet the faithful enumerate all sins of commission and omission, which have been recognized as sins by Ohrmazd and which have been accepted as such by those of the early faith and say that they repent in the presence of Ohrmazd and the Amshaspands and before Mihr, Srosh, Rashn, Fire, Barsam, Hom, Din, before their own souls, before a Dastur or any righteous person and turn back from them with penitence.<sup>15</sup> The penitent prays that whatever was the will of Ohrmazd according to which he should have thought, but had not thought: according to which he should have spoken, but had not spoken: and according to which he should have done, but had not done-of all these sins he repents. He further repents of the thoughts,

13 *Patet-i Pashimāni* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 123, 124.

14 *Ba nām-i Izad* in *Pāzend Texts*, p. 208.

15 *Patet-i Pashimāni* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 120, 121, 128.

words, and deeds which were after the will of Ahriman and which he should have abstained from and yet he had failed to do so.<sup>16</sup>

**Intercessory prayers and rituals.** The Gathic ideal that each individual reaps as he sows and one's own good thoughts, good words, and good deeds form the only means of salvation is gradually weakened. Prayers recited by others and rituals performed by the living for the dead are believed to help those in whose memory they are celebrated. The man who feels death approaching orders that those around him may recite Ashem Vohu and Patet when his death is imminent, he wishes and orders that his children may recite expiatory prayers for him after his death and may celebrate Srosh and Getofarid ceremonies.<sup>17</sup>

The sacrificer prays that the offerings he makes to the soul to whom this day is sacred, may reach it for its betterment and may the deeds of merit that he performs in behalf of the soul, enable it to advance to a more exalted place, may it win liberation from the clutches of the demons and fiends, and may it enter Garothman, the perfect abode of Ohrmazd, Amshaspands, and the righteous dead, and may Vohuman rise from his golden throne and bestow upon the soul resplendent, golden garments.<sup>18</sup>

**The Nirangs.** The Avestan *mānthra*, Pahlavi *mānsar*, 'spell,' has *nirang*, for its Pazand equivalent. Several such formulas, often embodying Avestan passages, are composed in Pazand, to be recited to obtain various results. They are used to deprecate evil, to rout the malignant demons of disease, to remove barrenness in women, to ward off the fear of thieves and robbers, to put down sorcery and witchcraft, to preserve a child from the evil eye, to exorcise persons possessed of ghosts and goblins, to cure all kinds of sickness and to accomplish various other purposes. Charms inscribed with such spells and tied on the left hand of a child made it wise and dutiful. The same tied on the left hand of a refractory wife brought her on her knees before her husband. The faithful are believed to gain health and wealth and children and the good-will of great persons in this world and divine grace in the next world by the recital of these formulas.

**The merit of prayers, rituals, and good deeds stored in the Place of Eternal Weal.** We saw in the Gathas that the faithful prayed that their devotion and homage be placed in the Garothman. The Avestan texts spoke of a place called *misvāna gātu*, 'the place of mixing,' without giving any information about it. The Pahlavi and Pazand works call it *hameshak sut gās*, 'the Place of Eternal Weal.' It is

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16 *Ib.*, p. 121.

17 *Patet-i Pashimāni* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 124.

18 *Afrin-i Ardāfarvash* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 84, 85.



situated in the Endless Light of heaven.<sup>19</sup> It is the place where unbounded joy prevails.<sup>20</sup>

It is here that the good works of supererogation and the merit of prayers and rituals are stored in a treasury for the benefit of the souls whose credit is found to be inadequate at the Bridge of Judgment.<sup>21</sup> The Pazand texts call it: *Ganj-i Dādār Ohrmazd* ‘the Treasury of the Creator Ohrmazd,’ *Ganj-i Yazatān*, ‘the Treasury of the Angels,’ or *Ganj-i hamisha sud*, ‘the Treasury of Eternal Weal.’<sup>22</sup>

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19 Dd37.24.

20 *Ib.*, 31.24; 37.22.

21 Phl. Vd. 19.36; SnS8.4; Dd26.3.

22 *Afrin-i Ardāfarvash*, *Afrin-i Gahanbār*, *Afrin-i Rapithwin*, *Afrin-i Gahanbār Chāshni*, *Sitāyish-i Depmīhr* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 83, 91, 100, 106, 257; SnS8.4.

## CHAPTER XLIII. EVIL

**Independent origin of evil.** The sharp antithesis of the Avestan period between good and evil is still further intensified by the Pahlavi writers. In fact dualism reaches its consummation in this period. It is the standard philosophy, and is upheld as the only possible solution of the problem of evil. The author of the *Shkand Gumanig Vizar*, who is himself a dualist of the most pronounced kind, strongly urges in his polemics against other religions that good and evil can on no account have originated from one and the same source. Evil is considered to have as independent and complete an existence as good; they are both primeval. They are so entirely separate from each other that neither good originates from evil, nor evil from good.<sup>1</sup> Each one of them exists by itself, and entertains perpetual antagonism towards the other.<sup>2</sup> The pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, perfume and stench, pleasure and pain, health and sickness, life and death, and all others fall under the compass of these fundamental terms, good and evil.<sup>3</sup> This dualism between good and evil in the moral realm is the same as that between light and darkness in the physical world. Right is identified with light, and wrong with darkness. There has never been anything in the World which is not either good or evil or a mixture of both.<sup>4</sup> Besides, in all periods, evil is found to be stronger than goodness.<sup>5</sup> The nature of divinity is light and beauty, fragrance and purity, goodness and wisdom; for darkness and ugliness, stench and pollution, evil and ignorance are outside of his nature.<sup>6</sup> Ohrmazd is not responsible for this imperfect side of existence.

**Tracing both good and evil to God deprives him of his divinity.** It seems that the dualistic system is criticized by the non-Zoroastrian critics as detracting from the grandeur of the godhead;<sup>7</sup> but the author of this treatise retorts by arguing at length that the indispensable attributes of God such as his goodness, omniscience, omnipotence, and the rest, demand that he could not simultaneously be the producer of good and of evil. If evil is also his creation, God is either not wholly good or he is not wholly powerful; both good and evil cannot be dependent on his will. The controversialist continues by addressing arguments to prove that Ohrmazd cannot be held accountable for evil

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1 Sg. 8.89, 102.

2 *Ib.*, 90, 91.

3 *Ib.*, 92-99, 101.

4 *Ib.*, 100; 11.158.

5 *Ib.*, 11. 97.

6 *Ib.*, 319, 320.

7 Sg. 12.33, 34.

without impairing some one or more of his attributes that are essential to his divinity; and whatever reflects upon even a single of his divine attributes degrades his position. We shall now see the main arguments advanced by the learned controversialist against the theory of tracing both good and evil to one and the Same source.

**The goodness of Ohrmazd demands that he could on no account be the author of evil.** One of the essential requisites of the godhead is goodness. If evil arises from him as the deity, he is imperfect in goodness, and consequently could not be deserving of praise and sacrifice from men.<sup>8</sup> Men cannot pray to one who is partly good and partly evil. If the divine being could have averted evil from mankind, and did not so will it, he is not perfect in goodness; and a being that is imperfect in goodness is not to be glorified by men.<sup>9</sup> If he is perfect in goodness, he could not wish for the presence of evil, but only for its extinction;<sup>10</sup> for a being whose will is evil is unworthy of his divinity.<sup>11</sup> Such a view destroys his attribute of goodness. But Ohrmazd is perfect in goodness;<sup>12</sup> and consequently, his will being eternally good, only goodness should prevail in the world from its beginning up to its end.<sup>13</sup> But, the author maintains, the world shows more of evil than goodness,<sup>14</sup> hence evil is outside of and independent of Ohrmazd. Beside all that, everything in the world either happens through his will, or it does not, or there may be some things that happen through his will, and others through the Will of some other.<sup>15</sup> If both the good and evil come to pass through his will, then his will is not perfect,<sup>16</sup> and the being whose will is imperfect is himself imperfect.<sup>17</sup> If nothing proceeds through his will, he works automatically and is therefore made by some one,<sup>18</sup> but this is unthinkable. If some things are through his will and others through the will of some other being, God either ordains the existence of the good or the evil, for there is nothing in the world which is not the result of either of the two. If God wills good, some one else wills evil, or if he wills evil, some other being wills good.<sup>19</sup> Hence a

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8 *Ib.*, 11.103-111.

9 *Ib.*, 280-284, 315.

10 *Ib.*, 11.311.

11 *Ib.*, 35.

12 *Zsp.* 1.17.

13 *Sg.* 11.339-342.

14 *Ib.*, 36, 343.

15 *Ib.*, 155-157.

16 *Ib.*, 125-132, 159-162, 344-351.

17 *Ib.*, 162.

18 *Sg.* 164-167.

power that personifies the opposing will exists,<sup>20</sup> and since God is goodness, the evil in the world proceeds through the will of the rival spirit, who exists independent of the good spirit.

If it is argued that Ohrmazd has created evil for the reason that mankind may better understand and appreciate goodness; or again, that he has created poverty, pain, and death that human beings may better understand the value of wealth, health, and life, and consequently become more grateful to God, it is as unreasonable as saying that the Deity gives poison to mankind so that they may better understand and appreciate the value of the antidote.<sup>21</sup> In another place, however, it is said in the Pahlavi texts that Ohrmazd allows Ahriman, the father of evil, to commingle with his creation for an allotted period for the experience and training of mankind.<sup>22</sup>

**The all-wise God would not create his own adversary.**

Omniscience is one of the attributes requisite for divinity;<sup>23</sup> and in the Pahlavi period Ohrmazd is always spoken of as omniscient.<sup>24</sup> If it is maintained that both good and evil proceed from Ohrmazd himself, the question then arises why he being omniscient, should have foreseen the harm that would be caused to his creation, and yet not have found it inexpedient to create, through his own will, a perverse creature that would turn out to be his adversary and cause him perpetual anxiety and sorrow.<sup>25</sup> If he did not foresee the evil consequences, he is not omniscient.<sup>26</sup> If he created this eternal foe to man for the sake of experiment, without knowing the result, then such a being is making experiments at the painful cost of the miseries of the countless generations of mankind, and is consequently not omniscient.<sup>27</sup>

Again it is meaningless for the wise one who is contented with his own divinity and grandeur to have produced through his own knowledge and will an enemy of mankind, who causes them misery in this and the next world.<sup>28</sup> A wise person always acts with a view to the good of all, and does not contemplate evil. Now evil abounds in the world. If the Lord has created Ahriman, who does good neither to him

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19 *Ib.*, 168-175.

20 *Ib.*, 176.

21 *Ib.*, 11. 197-204.

22 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 5.7, p. 8.

23 Sg. 11.13.

24 *Ib.*, 12.52.

25 *Ib.*, 11.93, 94.

26 *Ib.*, 9.

27 *Ib.*, 115-117.

28 Sg. 11.27-29.

nor to his creatures, but positive harm to all, then this creative act of Ohrmazd is unwise.<sup>29</sup> Again if God does not know the means to avert evil, he is equally unwise,<sup>30</sup> and an unwise God is imperfect.<sup>31</sup> But Ohrmazd is perfect in wisdom, and knows how to eradicate evil,<sup>32</sup> which he has not created.

**Omnipotent Ohrmazd has not created evil.** One of the indispensable attributes of God is omnipotence;<sup>33</sup> and the divinity of the Deity without this quality would be incomplete.<sup>34</sup> The independent existence of a rival spirit, which the theologians of this period so zealously maintain, is in no way considered to diminish the power and grandeur of God.<sup>35</sup> Inasmuch as the ultimate victory rests with the Good Spirit, and goodness is to rout evil at the end of time, the omnipotence of Ohrmazd is not considered to be impaired. It is emphasized in Pahlavi literature that Ohrmazd, who is omnipotent,<sup>36</sup> would on no account be the author of evil.<sup>37</sup> If he desired to prevent evil, but could not do so, he is impotent. The omnipotent being must be capable of performing his own will, for otherwise mankind would not adore him as the almighty Lord.<sup>38</sup> If he is thus capable of performing his will, and if at the same time his will is always for good and never for evil, it should come to pass that the avoidance of sin, the shunning of the path to hell, and the striving to be worthy of heaven would be manifest among all mankind according to God's will.<sup>39</sup> But this is not the case.<sup>40</sup> If the Deity is capable of performing his will, and yet does not do it, he is unmerciful and of inconstant will.<sup>41</sup>

Again, if the rival spirit did not exist, and if evil did not originate from him, the omnipotent creator ought to have created his creatures

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29 *Ib.*, 11.330-338.

30 *Ib.*, 314.

31 *Ib.*, 317.

32 *Ib.*, 310.

33 *Ib.*, 11.13.

34 *Ib.*, 15, 16.

35 *Ib.*, 33, 34.

36 *Ib.*, 12.52.

37 *Ib.*, 11.312.

38 *Ib.*, 288-294.

39 *Ib.*, 295-297.

40 *Ib.*, 298.

41 *Ib.*, 299, 300.

without blemish.<sup>42</sup> His mercifulness and omniscience would have demanded this from him.<sup>43</sup>

If it is said that the adversary was created originally good by Ohrmazd, from whom he afterwards revolted and became evil, then it shows that the adversary possesses a more powerful will than that of the sacred being, since in that event the power of evil is thus able to break his commandment and diffuse more harm in the world than the good of the sacred being.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Ohrmazd, as the almighty being, should not have created an opponent who in the long run, by deluding and misleading mankind, threatened to become triumphant over him.<sup>45</sup> In addition, as the omniscient being, the Deity should have foreseen the consequences and not have produced a rebel for whose existence he would have to be sorry.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the Evil Spirit should not, under these circumstances, be unreasonably blamed, since he has been created of so headstrong a will by God;<sup>47</sup> on the contrary, the Good Spirit who has created him of such perverse nature should be held accountable for the mischief that the Evil One is now doing in the world.<sup>48</sup>

If it is maintained that Ohrmazd has created disease and misfortune to give an opportunity to mankind—an opportunity to practise the virtue of mitigating these evils, and thus to be finally rewarded by eternal happiness—it means that he is not actually able to bestow happiness upon the virtuous, except by causing distress to others.<sup>49</sup> Again, to say that he will give recompense to the sick and needy, who have undeservedly suffered in this world, would reflect upon the Good Spirit;<sup>50</sup> for it shows that it was impossible for him to give these unfortunate people happiness in heaven, without first causing them misery in this world.<sup>51</sup> This after-nobility of rewarding after harassing does no credit to the Almighty One.<sup>52</sup> But, the argument continues, Ohrmazd has neither created Ahriman nor his evil.

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42 *Ib.*, 118.

43 *Ib.*, 119-124.

44 *Ib.*, 51,95-97.

45 *Ib.*, 85-87.

46 *Ib.*, 88-94.

47 *Ib.*, 245-251.

48 *Ib.*, 257, 258.

49 *Ib.*, 141-148.

50 *Ib.*, 149.

51 *Ib.*, 150.

52 *Ib.*, 151-154.

From the trend of his argument we might be led to think that our author thus prefers to limit the omnipotence of Ohrmazd rather than ascribe to him the authorship of evil. But his contention is that inasmuch as Ahriman, who is independent in his origin, will ultimately bow the knee before Ohrmazd and perish at his hands, the omnipotence of the Good Spirit may be considered to be intact.

**Ohrmazd, the sovereign ruler, would not harass his earthly subjects by the creation of evil.** If the divine being who is the eternal sovereign<sup>53</sup> keeps out distress, oppression, injustice from the world, and routs the enemies that threaten the peace and security of mankind, he is worthy of his divinity,<sup>54</sup> but if he rules as a tyrant occasioning eternal distress to mankind, he is unworthy of his divinity.<sup>55</sup> His title to divinity further demands that he cannot be a good and a bad sovereign, causing happiness as well as misery unto mankind, for that would make him of a mixed individuality.<sup>56</sup>

Again, he could not produce evil to injure his own creatures, unless he ceases to be their friend and turns out their enemy.<sup>57</sup> But the creator is the friend of creation and not its enemy. He is its best ruler. Evil is introduced into his earthly kingdom by an infernal sovereign who struggles to found the Kingdom of Wickedness on earth.

**Unmerited harm could not emanate from a just God.** Ohrmazd is just, and administers justice with exactitude unto all. Now, if he is the author of evil, crime, and sin, there is no justice in his thus creating these and then enjoining that mankind shall abstain from committing them, under penalty of incurring punishment.<sup>58</sup> Ohrmazd, the writer continues, is the emblem of truth and justice even as Ahriman is the embodiment of falsehood and injustice. It is, therefore, inconsistent for a true and just being to say, on the one hand, that he hates sin and sinners, and on the other hand to produce more sin and sinners than good deeds and doers of good deeds.<sup>59</sup> It is not justice, moreover, to inflict unlimited punishment for a limited sin, and to cause perpetual pain and distress to his creatures for indulging in the evil which he has himself produced.<sup>60</sup> But Ohrmazd is the embodiment of justice, whereas the existence of evil is a glaring injustice to innocent

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53 Sg. 12. 52.

54 *Ib.*, 11.17-19, 222, 227-232.

55 *Ib.*, 233-238.

56 *Ib.*, 225, 226, 239-244.

57 *Ib.*, 217-221, 252.

58 Sg. 11.109, 110, 125-132, 260-263.

59 *Ib.*, 11.30-33.

60 *Ib.*, 12.41-50.

humanity. Hence evil, the writer concludes, is the creation of an unjust power, that is, of Ahriman.

**God, the embodiment of mercy, could not inflict evil upon his own creatures.** One of the essential traits of Ohrmazd is his mercifulness.<sup>61</sup> If, then, he is merciful, why should he knowingly permit Ahriman to introduce misery and harm among his own creatures.<sup>62</sup> Mankind, even with their little knowledge, would never, of their own accord, allow the lion, the wolf, and other noxious creatures in among their young ones; why has the Lord, who is called merciful, let in Ahriman and his ribald crew of demons upon his own creation.<sup>63</sup> If he is capable of removing evil and yet does not do so, but, on the contrary, curses those who adhere to evil and casts them away for punishment in hell, he is not merciful.<sup>64</sup> Where is his divine mercy in fathering such a world of woe and sorrow.

Again, as a wise being Ohrmazd acts for some purpose when he creates the universe, for to act without a purpose is not worthy of the all-wise lord.<sup>65</sup> If he has, then, created the world for his own pleasure and for the happiness of mankind, as religion claims, why should he ever indulge in their slaughter and devastation.<sup>66</sup> But this is not true, for Ohrmazd is merciful and he does not slaughter, nor devastate, nor wish evil to his creatures; evil is, therefore, not of his making, but of some other merciless being.<sup>67</sup> Such is the view maintained in the treatise.

**It is deemed futile to attempt to resolve Ahriman into a symbolic personification of man's evil nature.** To those who put forth the theory that evil springs from the nature of man our author asks whether it had its origin before the creation of mankind or at the same time with man.<sup>68</sup> If evil arose before man, he says, it must either have been created by God, or it had its independent existence.<sup>69</sup> If it arose after mankind through man's own making, that is, through the freedom of his own will, it means that man originated it in defiance of the imperfect will of his own creator.<sup>70</sup> This is setting up the will of man in opposition to the will of Ohrmazd. Now the sinners, among mankind

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61 *Ib.*, 11.13.

62 *Sg.* 11.8.

63 *Ib.*, 11.111-114.

64 *Ib.*, 121-124, 300.

65 *Ib.*, 103-105.

66 *Ib.*, 106-108.

67 *Ib.*, 12.56.

68 *Ib.*, 11.177-179.

69 *Ib.*, 180-182.

70 *Ib.*, 183-191.



are punished by Ohrmazd. His omnipotence and mercifulness demand that he should not have thus allowed men to sin, when he wanted to punish them afterwards for having committed sin.<sup>71</sup> If evil originates with mankind, because mankind are created by God, then the creator is responsible, for the production of evil.<sup>72</sup>

It is further explained, in the same Pahlavi tractate, that if from outward appearance it seems that good and evil alike spring from mankind it is because mankind are not perfect in goodness.<sup>73</sup> As sickness and death are due to the bodily imperfection of man, so does evil originate owing to his moral imperfection.<sup>74</sup> The two competing propensities existing in human nature cause these imperfections.<sup>75</sup>

Whence this evil propensity in the nature of man? Does it originate with him? Does man load the infirmities of the flesh and the inequities of his moral nature on the back of Ahriman and proclaim him as the source of all evil? If so, why circumscribe Ohrmazd's greatness by postulating this imaginary creature? But the general verdict of the Pahlavi writers is that evil is primeval in its origin; it is not relative, nor did man bring it into existence. It is enhanced when the flesh triumphs over the spirit, but it does not originate with the flesh. The father of evil is as real a personality as the father of goodness. We shall now peruse the life-story of this Prince of Darkness as narrated in the Pahlavi works

### AHRIMAN

**The primeval source of evil.** If evil exists in reality, and is neither produced by Ohrmazd nor by man, then the only alternative is that it must have originated from an independent source. And so it is, say the Pahlavi works. Ahriman, or the Evil Spirit, called in Pahlavi Gana Menu (possibly to be read as Anrak Menu, from Av. Angra Mainyu), is its originator. As we have already seen in the Pahlavi writings, man does not simply objectify the basest and vilest in his own nature under the name of Ahriman; the rival spirit is a personality. He is an independent being, and is co-existent with Ohrmazd.<sup>76</sup> He abode from eternity in the abyss of endless darkness,<sup>77</sup> and, aflame with hatred, he rushed into the world at the beginning of creation to work for its destruction, as he constantly wages war against Ohrmazd and the

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71 *Ib.*, 192-196.

72 *Ib.*, 258.

73 Sg. 8.117, 118.

74 *Ib.*, 119-122.

75 *Ib.*, 123.

76 Dd37.21, 26.

77 Bd1.3, 9.

good creation.<sup>78</sup> He is described as dwelling eternally in darkness and gloom; and as wholly evil without goodness,<sup>79</sup> as the prime source of evil in the world,<sup>80</sup> and as the producer of sin.<sup>81</sup> Though it is possible for Ohrmazd to drive him out of the world, it is not thought necessary to do so now until the end of time, when Ohrmazd has determined his final defeat.<sup>82</sup>

**Ahriman is a spirit.** As the very name of the arch-fiend indicates, he is a spirit, and as such can be thought of in the mind, but cannot be seen by the eye or grasped by the hand. Having no material existence, even the wicked souls, who are domiciled with him in hell, can only understand his nature but cannot see him.<sup>83</sup> The sainted priest Viraf, however, in his apocalyptic journey to hell sees him in the inferno.<sup>84</sup> In the beginning of creation he sprang like a snake from the sky to the earth,<sup>85</sup> and rushed upon the entire creation like a fly.<sup>86</sup> In one Pahlavi passage he is mentioned as possessing the body of a lizard,<sup>87</sup> though he could for his vile purposes assume the pleasing shape of a young man, as noted in the same connection. In allegorical references he is spoken of as assuming the form of a horse when subjugated by Tahmuras.<sup>88</sup>

**Ahriman has backward knowledge.** When the Evil Spirit defies Ohrmazd, the latter reminds him that he is not omniscient;<sup>89</sup> and does not, therefore, foresee his own final defeat.<sup>90</sup> In fact he has only after-knowledge, and knows no event that is to come. He was not even aware of the existence of Ohrmazd, until he arose from the abyss;<sup>91</sup> thus, though cunning, he is totally ignorant and blind.<sup>92</sup> He cannot attain to any knowledge pertaining to the Good Spirit,<sup>93</sup> and does not make any

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78 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 5.4, p. 6.

79 Zsp. 1.17; Dd37.28; Sd. 62.3.

80 Dk., vol. 5, p. 324, 325.

81 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.101, p. 16.

82 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 5.5, 6, p. 6, 7.

83 Dd19.1, 2, 5.

84 AV. 100.1.

85 Bd3.11; Zsp. 2.3.

86 Bd3.14.

87 Bd3.9; 28.1.

88 Mkh. 27.21, 22.

89 Bd1.16.

90 Dk., vol. 4, p. 258.

91 Bd1.9; Zsp. 1.2.

92 Bd1.19; Dk., vol. 8, p. 445; Gs. 122.

93 Dk., vol. 6, p. 416.

preparations to avert his coming downfall.<sup>94</sup> What scanty knowledge he possesses is evil and he will see the consequences of his ignorance at the time of Renovation.<sup>95</sup> He is unobservant, stupid,<sup>96</sup> and ill-informed.<sup>97</sup> He is the after-thinker. Ignorance is the parent of many evils, and Ahriman is the very personification of it. Mani, in his heresy, ascribes foresight to Ahriman.<sup>98</sup>

**As the arch-enemy of Ohrmazd, Ahriman swears vengeance upon the good creation.** The Evil Spirit is the avowed enemy of the creatures of Ohrmazd.<sup>99</sup> Being of malicious nature,<sup>100</sup> and a blemish-giver,<sup>101</sup> he ever wishes evil to all.<sup>102</sup> As the enemy of mankind, he ever strives to make man unhappy,<sup>103</sup> he is filled, in fact, with rancour against the entire creation; he is bent upon its destruction and never thinks, speaks, or does anything but harm to mankind.<sup>104</sup> Ohrmazd saw through his omniscience that the Evil Spirit would find scope for his work up to the time that the imperfections of the world were removed, and evil became eradicated. He therefore proposed peace to Ahriman, asking him to bring help unto the good creatures, and offering to make him in return immortal, undecaying, hungerless, and thirst-less.<sup>105</sup> The Evil Spirit thought that it was helplessness and weakness on the part of Ohrmazd that had thus compelled him to proffer peace, and rejected the divine offer.<sup>106</sup> He then defiantly answered the Good Spirit that not only would he never bring help and praise unto the good creation, but he would ever seek to destroy it and force the creatures into disaffection to Ohrmazd and affection for himself.<sup>107</sup> Ever since this first dispute with the Deity, Ahriman has firmly adhered to his resolve, and is so absorbed in contriving the ruin of his rival's creatures that he has never rested at ease since creation

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94 Dk., vol. 7, p. 462.

95 Dk., vol. 2, p. 108.

96 Bd1.19.

97 Dk., vol. 5, p. 324.

98 Sg. 16.23.

99 Dd3.7; Dk., vol. 4, p. 208, 270; Gs. 127.

100 Bd1.10; Dd37.8, 10; Mkh. 10.5, 10.

101 Dk., vol. 5, p. 324, 325; vol. 6, p. 421; vol. 7, p. 445.

102 Bd1.8; Mkh. 8.23; Sg. 3.5.

103 Dk., vol. 7, p. 461.

104 Bd28.2.

105 Bd1.13.

106 Bd1, 15; Dk., vol. 8, p. 484, 485.

107 Bd1.14; Zsp. 1.6, 8; Sg. 4.12.

began.<sup>108</sup> He is bent upon perverting creatures from their own nature, in order, if possible, to prevent Ohrmazd from bringing about the resurrection and the renovation of the world and restoring his creatures.<sup>109</sup> Having created evil for the ruin of the good creation, he strives to wrest the supremacy from the hands of Ohrmazd,<sup>110</sup> for the idea of revenge eats like a canker into his heart. A righteous person of firm resolve can put him to flight, for he is a coward, just as the prophet Zoroaster routed him. In the beginning of creation when Ahriman first saw the angels and their prowess he fled precipitately back to the darkness of hell;<sup>111</sup> when next he beheld Ohrmazd's creation, he became languid, and when he learnt Ohrmazd's design of renovation he was stupefied, and fell on his knees;<sup>112</sup> yet he remained resolute in his wicked purpose and has never ceased to vent his rage upon humanity.

When Ahriman contemplates any harm to Ohrmazd, it recoils upon himself, and proves of advantage to his adversary; but when Ohrmazd does anything for his own advantage, it turns out of advantage to himself, and harm to Ahriman.<sup>113</sup> He is able to mar the doings of Ohrmazd, but in only so far as it does not ultimately turn out for harm to Ohrmazd, for the final victory rests with Ohrmazd.<sup>114</sup> It is said that Ohrmazd had created Yim, Faridoon, and Kaus immortal, but that Ahriman rendered them mortal;<sup>115</sup> yet when Ahriman contrived to make the monstrous Zohak, the wicked Afrasiyab, and the accursed Sikandar immortal, Ohrmazd did not permit him to do it, as that would have meant incalculable harm to the good creation.<sup>116</sup>

**Ahriman lures man to destruction by deceit.** He is the arch-deceiver,<sup>117</sup> corrupting man's nature, and beguiling him into wickedness and sin.<sup>118</sup> He lurks about to overtake man in his unguarded moments, and has stationed his sentinels for the purpose. Woe unto the man who is found weak in the moment of temptation. Ahriman desires that, man shall not actually recognize him, for if he once appraised the Evil Spirit

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108 Bd28.3.

109 Sg. 12.72-74.

110 Bd28.1.

111 Bd6.1.

112 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.258, p. 100.

113 Dd94.8; Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6.12, p. 4.

114 Mkh. 8. 24-26.

115 Mkh. 8.27, 28.

116 Mkh. 8.29, 30.

117 Dk., vol. 1, p. 22.

118 Dd37.8; Mkh. 45.8; Dk., vol. 8, p. 462; vol. 9, p. 624.

at his true value, he would not follow him on the path of Wickedness.<sup>119</sup> Ahriman seduces man to give up the religion of Ohrmazd and embrace his evil faith, and exults when this object is achieved.<sup>120</sup> Inasmuch as he does not see that his work of deception will finally bring his own ruin, he deceives himself.<sup>121</sup>

**Ahriman produces seductive demons to pervert mankind.**

The first creation of Ahriman was falsehood.<sup>122</sup> Afterwards he produced six chief demons, Akoman, Indar, Sovar, Nakahed, Tairev, Zairich as adversaries to the six archangels of Ohrmazd.<sup>123</sup> Besides this he produced many demons and fiends.<sup>124</sup> Mankind formerly did not commit crime,<sup>125</sup> and there was no sin,<sup>126</sup> but Ahriman implanted various vices in man's nature as the enemies of the soul; among such are avarice, covetousness, anger, jealousy, stubbornness, lust, enmity, idleness, apostasy, slander, ignorance, malice, stinginess, hatred, strife, and many other seductives that mislead men.<sup>127</sup> Ahriman meditates upon nothing but falsehood, wrath, malice, and discord;<sup>128</sup> and especially does he seek to conceal from man the reward of good deeds and the retribution of evil deeds, thus leading human creatures to wickedness and sin.<sup>129</sup> In designing man's ruin Ahriman does not consider his triumph over him complete unless he succeeds in effecting his spiritual destruction; nor does he deem it a victory merely to deprive a man of his life and wife, child and fortune; but he must succeed in seducing his soul.<sup>130</sup> Nothing satisfies his voracity so much as the capture of a human soul.

**Ahriman introduces disease and death into the world.**

When Ahriman first entered the world, he plagued mankind, and introduced death among the living beings;<sup>131</sup> thus misery and affliction entered the world through him.<sup>132</sup> And all the ills human flesh is heir to

119 Bd28.40; Mkh. 40.26, 27; Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6.31, p. 10.

120 Bd28.4-6.

121 Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6; E. 38, p. 16.

122 Bd1.24.

123 Bd1.24, 27.

124 Bd1.10.

125 Mkh. 13.6.

126 Dk., vol. 6, p. 421.

127 Bd3.17; Dd37.53, 54; Dk., vol. 6, p. 354; vol. 8, p. 469; vol. 10, bk. 5.4, p. 6; Gs. 10, 11.

128 Mkh. 10.5.

129 Mkh. 13.7-10.

130 Mkh. 46.4, 5.

131 Bd3.17; Dd37.72, 81; Dk., vol. 2, p. 92, 93.

132 Mkh. 37.10; 42.6, 7.

are from him. He smote the progenitor of animals and made the primeval man mortal.<sup>133</sup> Disease, destruction, and death are identified with Ahriman, and form his chief work.<sup>134</sup>

**Ahriman infests the earth with noxious creatures.** One of the many malicious acts of Ahriman, to thwart the creation of Ohrmazd, is his creation of biting and venomous creatures, such as the snake, scorpion, frog, lizard, and many others, in so great a number that the noxious creatures did not leave an empty space on earth to the size of the point of a needle.<sup>135</sup> Hence killing these noxious creatures and extirpating their burrows are meritorious deeds.<sup>136</sup>

**Ahriman disfigures Ohrmazd's creation.** Smoke and darkness were mingled with fire by the Evil Spirit;<sup>137</sup> the trees that grew on the earth before the appearance of Ahriman had neither thorns, nor rough bark, nor was poison mixed with any of their species. It was Ahriman who introduced these into vegetation, also blight to wither it.<sup>138</sup> Thus he brings disfigurement upon the creatures of Ohrmazd,<sup>139</sup> and exultingly cries out that everything of Ohrmazd has been assailed by him and spoiled.<sup>140</sup> Over against each one of Ohrmazd's good creations there is balanced an evil one of Ahriman.

**The end of Ahriman.** One of the essential proofs of Ahriman's inequality with Ohrmazd is that he is not eternal. As has been noted above, although he was co-eval and co-equal with Ohrmazd, he is not co-eternal, because there will be a time when he will cease to exist.<sup>141</sup> Ohrmazd and Ahriman are therefore not actually balanced equally against each other. As mankind advances in righteousness, and succeeds in weakening the dominion of wickedness, Ahriman will be baffled in his vile attempts to tempt men to the wicked path.<sup>142</sup> Ahriman will then find his resources exhausted and will become impotent and

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133 Dd37.46, 82.

134 Zsp. 5.4; Dk., vol. 4, p. 233, 238; vol. 12, bk. 6.308, p. 25.

135 Bd3.15; Zsp 2.9.

136 SnS20.5; Mkh. 5.8; Sd. 43.1-10; Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 317, p. 29.

137 Bd3.24; Zsp. 2.11.

138 Bd, 3.16; 27.1.

139 Zsp. 4.10.

140 Zsp. 4.3.

141 Bd1.3; Gs. 129; Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 278, p. 7.

142 Dk., vol. 1, p. 22.

confounded.<sup>143</sup> Being completely overpowered,<sup>144</sup> and broken,<sup>145</sup> predominating no longer,<sup>146</sup> he will become afflicted and miserable.<sup>147</sup> He will bow his unwilling knees to the divine authority. Thus baffled, he will flee into darkness and be fettered in hell in perpetual sorrow.<sup>148</sup> We are informed in another place that when he is thus defeated, he will rush back to hell,<sup>149</sup> and disappear.<sup>150</sup> Still other passages state that he will be repulsed and slain.<sup>151</sup> Ahriman exists in the world so long as he can find his lodgment even in one man in the world, but when, owing to the goodness of men, he will be completely cast out from human bodies, he will be exterminated.<sup>152</sup> He will enter into nothingness.<sup>153</sup>

**The final disappearance of evil from the world.** With the disappearance of the Father of Evil, goodness will completely rout evil.<sup>154</sup> The great conflict between good and evil will eventually end in perfecting good and in eliminating evil.<sup>155</sup> Moral and physical imperfections will vanish; for vice and impiety, wickedness and sin, demons and fiends, disease and death will be no more.<sup>156</sup> The dual nature of the creatures of good and evil will be supplanted by the single characteristic of goodness. The evil creatures will perish.<sup>157</sup>

## DIVS

**The emissaries of Ahriman.** There are six arch-fiends created by Ahriman in exact opposition to the archangels; and there are also other minor demons as their evil confederates.<sup>158</sup> They love evil for its own sake. Hell is the specific habitat assigned to them, and from there they rush to the summit of Mount Arezur to hold their infernal council.<sup>159</sup>

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143 Dd37.15, 20, 64; Mkh. 8.13; Gs. 158.

144 Dk., vol. 5, p. 314, 324.

145 Dk., vol. 7, p. 458.

146 Dd7.3.

147 Dk., vol. 5, p. 346; vol. 7, p. 461; Gs. 157.

148 Dk., vol. 3, p. 150.

149 Dk., vol. 8, p. 441, 486.

150 Dd37.71, 122; Dk., vol. 8, p. 436, 445; Jsp. p. 109.

151 Dk., vol. 9, p. 627; Jsp. p. 120.

152 Dk., vol. 8, p. 436; vol. 11 bk. 6.264, p. 102.

153 Dd37.59, 114; Mkh. 57.6; Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6.297, p. 13.

154 Dk., vol. 5, p. 326.

155 Dd37.122.

156 Dd37.120, 121; Mkh. 8.14, 15.

157 Bd1.7.

158 Bd28.12.

159 Dd33.3. 5.Dd33.3. 5.

The north is believed to be the region of Ahriman and demons, just as the south is that of Ohrmazd and angels; and darkness is the steadfast quality of this fiendish crew.<sup>160</sup>

**Their work.** The diabolical host works for procuring success for Ahriman. They will do this up to the end of the world.<sup>161</sup> The strongest and most triumphant of their weapons against man is deceit;<sup>162</sup> they lead man to sin through it.<sup>163</sup> Every demon is an instigator of some evil; on that account, man should always entertain an abhorrence for the demons. He should array himself on the side of the angels, and join in the fight against the demons, who always contemplate harm to man.<sup>164</sup> When they have sway over man's doings, righteousness is arrested and wickedness thrives,<sup>165</sup> for man becomes sinful and wicked in their company.<sup>166</sup> They take up their abode in him when his innate wisdom forsakes him;<sup>167</sup> whence once possessed by demons, he is possessed by evil knowledge.<sup>168</sup> The demons seize upon and carry off one-third of the wisdom and glory of that man who eats in the dark without washing his hands.<sup>169</sup> Procrastination on the part of man also helps the demons; for example, when a man is in the habit of postponing some good work from day to day, until he is overtaken by death, and the good deed remains unaccomplished, the demons are greatly rejoiced.<sup>170</sup> Persons who associate with the wicked in this world get demons for their companions in the next.<sup>171</sup> The fire of Ohrmazd chases the demons and puts them to flight; for, when a large number of them rushed to destroy the child Zoroaster at his birth, they could not harm him owing to the presence of the fire.<sup>172</sup> Zoroaster brought them all to his feet, and forced them to rush headlong into the jaws of hell. Just as the sheep is terrified by the smell of the wolf, so do the demons tremble when they smell the soul of a righteous person.<sup>173</sup> The demons will live so long as man will

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160 Dd37.85.

161 Dd37.59.

162 *Ib.*, 87.

163 Dk., vol. 2, p. 67.

164 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 307, p. 24.

165 Dk., vol. 2, p. 68.

166 Dk., vol. 3, p. 166, 167; vol. 7, p. 459.

167 Dk., vol. 3, p. 159.

168 Dk., vol. 3, p. 166.

169 SnS9.8.

170 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.89, p. 3.

171 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.133, p. 39.

172 SnS10.4; 12.11.

173 *Afrin-i Ardāfarvash* in *Pazend Texts*, p. 84.



have something of the demon in him. When righteousness at last shall triumph in the world, and the world of humanity reach perfection at the final renovation, the demons will sink into their native darkness, and perish forever.<sup>174</sup>

### AKOMAN

**Ahriman's premier.** As Vohuman is the first celestial being in the good creation, so Akoman, Evil Mind, ranks first among the evil creatures. Ahriman first produced Falsehood and after that Akoman,<sup>175</sup> as a consequence of which they often work in concert.<sup>176</sup> Still another text speaks of Akoman and Varun as created together.<sup>177</sup> Akoman came out from the dark world of Ahriman;<sup>178</sup> and of all the fiends this demon of perversion is most to be dreaded.<sup>179</sup>

**His attempt to enter the mind of the prophet Zartosht when a child to pervert it is frustrated by Vohuman.** When Ahriman learnt of the birth of Zartosht, who was to be a sure weapon of destruction against the Kingdom of Wickedness, he sent Akoman with instructions to enter the infant's mind deceitfully and pervert it.<sup>180</sup> The fiend approached the house in which Zartosht was born and contemplated entering by the door.<sup>181</sup> But being as stupid and ignorant as his father he was easily defeated by his own weapon of deceit being turned against him. Vohuman, who had chased him to the spot, schemingly turned back and asked him to enter the house. Akoman thought that as his rival was leaving the place, his own work was finished, and consequently returned without accomplishing anything.<sup>182</sup> Akoman, moreover, is generally said to frighten children at their birth with the ghastly picture of their sufferings at the Renovation, and this is given as a reason why children cry at birth.<sup>183</sup>

**Evil thoughts in man come from Akoman.** In opposition to Vohuman, Akoman gives evil thoughts to men and causes discord.<sup>184</sup> It

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174 Dd37.20.

175 Bd1.24.

176 Dd37.53.

177 Dk., vol. 3, p. 158, 159.

178 Bd1.27.

179 Dk., vol. 9, p. 625.

180 Zsp. 14.8.

181 Zsp. 14.9.

182 Zsp. 14.10, 11.

183 Dk., vol. 8, p. 439.

184 Bd28.7.

is owing to those evil thoughts of his that man becomes wicked.<sup>185</sup> Man has to purge himself of vicious thoughts. Unless he does this, he finds himself driven hither and thither like a shuttlecock, influenced now by Vohuman, now by Akoman. The man whose will is ruled by Akoman fails to discriminate between good and evil,<sup>186</sup> for the friendship of Akoman makes one vicious,<sup>187</sup> and he who entertains Akoman as his guest turns out to be wicked.<sup>188</sup> Such a man courts spiritual destruction.<sup>189</sup> When Akoman prevails over Vohuman in the mind of man, his intelligence becomes blunted and he loses greatness in both the worlds,<sup>190</sup> inasmuch as righteousness flees from him and he is steeped in sin.<sup>191</sup> He is even spoken of as introducing physical evil in the world,<sup>192</sup> even as he brings evil knowledge of religion to man's mind,<sup>193</sup> and makes him miserable.<sup>194</sup>

## DRUJ

**The change wrought in the conception of her work.** This personification of wickedness and deceit has by this time lost her distinctive individuality, and consequently she no longer remains an exclusive rival of Ardwhisht, or Best Righteousness. In fact her name is not mentioned as Ahriman's counter-creation against Ardwhisht. Indar, as we shall see in the sequel, usurps her place as Ardwhisht's recognized adversary. Druj no longer in the Pahlavi period stands exclusively as the class designation of the female demons, which in earlier times was her chief characteristic. The term is at times promiscuously applied to male and female demons alike; in fact it now designates demon in general. Ahriman himself is most frequently termed Druj; and several demons are simultaneously termed *divs* as well as *drujes* in one and the same text.<sup>195</sup> The evil passions of man are personified as *drujes*.<sup>196</sup> These abide in man to pervert his nature,<sup>197</sup> for

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185 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.69.21, p. 388.

186 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.30.8, p. 243.

187 Dk., vol. 6, p. 357.

188 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6.78, p. 21; 87, p. 25; vol. 11, bk. 6.193, p. 69.

189 Dk., vol. 6, p. 410.

190 Dk., vol. 1, p. 28; vol. 3, p. 152.

191 Dk., vol. 1, p. 28.

192 Dk., vol. 6, p. 411.

193 Dk., vol. 6, p. 414.

194 Dk., vol. 8, p. 466.

195 Bd28.11, 13, 14, 20, 33.

196 Mkh. 41.8-11.

197 Dd94.1.

Ahriman has created the drujes;<sup>198</sup> he is their leader,<sup>199</sup> and is himself the arch-druj.

**Druj's work.** The wicked deeds of man further the evil power of Druj in the world. When man leaves the blessed company of Ohrmazd, he is easily overpowered by her,<sup>200</sup> who makes his life miserable and full of blemish.<sup>201</sup> So long as he remains under her damaging influence, he cannot work on behalf of his creator.<sup>202</sup> Druj Nasu, the embodiment of pollution, performs her work of defilement.<sup>203</sup>

**What puts her to flight.** Recital of the holy spells, the heartfelt expiation on the part of the sinner, and the performance of righteous deeds will drive Druj out of man,<sup>204</sup> she flees far from a man of religious inclination.<sup>205</sup> It is the duty of man, therefore, to drive away the various drujes that may surround him.<sup>206</sup> Ohrmazd has endowed him with the knowledge whereby to rout them,<sup>207</sup> and has given him strength commensurate with his needs. The angels help to drive out Druj from the creation, an act that will contribute to furthering the work of the Renovation.<sup>208</sup> When the world reaches the state of goodness, Druj will be impotent and perish.<sup>209</sup>

## INDAR

**Transformation of a great Indian divinity into an execrated demon in Persia.** In the Pahlavi texts Ahriman is represented to have created Indar as the opponent of Ardwhisht.<sup>210</sup> In Y48.1, Druj is glossed in Pahlavi by Indar. His personality is again quite ill-defined. He does not personify Wickedness proper, as the opponent of Ardwhisht should logically do in the dualistic system; but his chief business is to drive the thoughts of men from virtuous deeds, and incite

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198 Bd1.10.

199 Dk., vol. 7, p. 458.

200 Dk., vol. 7, p. 496.

201 Dk., vol. 8, p. 475.

202 Dk., vol. 8, p. 473.

203 Dd17.7, 8.

204 Dk., vol. 1, p. 5; vol. 12, bk. 6. 315, p. 27, 28.

205 Dk., vol. 2, p. 110; vol. 6, p. 363.

206 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.130. p. 36, 37; SBE., 47, bk. 7.1.6, p. 5.

207 Dk., vol.4, p. 245, 269.

208 Dk., vol. 2, p. 111, 112; vol. 6, p. 417.

209 Dk., vol. 7, p. 458.

210 Phl. Vd. 19.43; Bd1.27.

them to do away with the sacred shirt and girdle,<sup>211</sup> He will be routed by Ardwhisht in the final struggle.<sup>212</sup>

### SOVAR

**Enemy of the divine Kingdom of Righteousness.** The business of this demon is, by introducing tyranny and anarchy into the world, to thwart the efforts of Shahrewar towards establishing the Divine Kingdom upon earth.<sup>213</sup> He is delighted if the faithful discard their sacred shirts and girdles.<sup>214</sup> He falls before his rival and perishes at the final conflagration wrought by the flood of molten metal at the end of the world.<sup>215</sup>

### TAROMAT

**The demon that dries up the spring of devotion in man.** This demon, residing in the human will, produces disobedience,<sup>216</sup> and dissuades man from following the dictates of Spandarmad;<sup>217</sup> but he will meet with his end on the last day at the hands of Spandarmad.<sup>218</sup>

### NAONGHAS

**Taromat's confederate.** This demon is identified with Taromat,<sup>219</sup> and is ranked as the opponent of Spandarmad. His Avestan counterpart is Naonghaithya. He gives discontent to creatures and is delighted when one goes without shirt and girdle.<sup>220</sup>

### TAIREV

**The opponent of the archangel of perfection.** The demon is the adversary of Hordad<sup>2838</sup> and mingles poison with plants,<sup>2839</sup> and is rejoiced when one walks barefooted.<sup>221</sup> He will lie low before his opponent.<sup>222</sup>

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211 Bd28.8, 10; Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.9.1, p. 181, 182.

212 Bd30.29.

213 Bd28.9.

214 Bd28.10.

215 Bd30.29.

216 Bd28.14.

217 Dd94.2.

218 Bd 30.29.

219 Bd30.29.

220 Bd28.10.

221 Bd28.13.

222 Bd30.29.

**ZAIRICH**

**Tairev's comrade.** He also poisons plants<sup>223</sup> and other eatables.<sup>224</sup> He is the enemy of Amurdad,<sup>225</sup> who will finally vanquish him.<sup>226</sup>

**ASTOVIDAD**

**This demon of death casts his deadly noose around all.** He it is who causes the painful separation of the soul from the body and brings death.<sup>227</sup> He casts around the necks of all that are born in this world a noose which cannot be thrown off by any one during life. But at the dissolution of the body, when the soul emerges from its prison of clay, it can shake off the halter if it is righteous, but is dragged to hell by means of this rope if it is wicked.<sup>228</sup> When the wicked demon Astwihad strokes a man, he causes lethargy; when he lays his hands on the sick, he makes him feverish; when he looks the victim in the eye, with his deadly gaze, he deprives him of life.<sup>229</sup> He was sent by Ahriman in the beginning of creation to slay the primeval man;<sup>230</sup> and ever since that time he has been destroying all, and yet he knows no check.<sup>231</sup>

**VIZARSH**

**Astwihad's collaborator.** The demon Vizarsh<sup>232</sup> frightens the souls during the three nights of their stay in this world after death.<sup>233</sup> He sits at the gate of hell, ready to drag the wicked souls down to the infernal depths, as soon as they are sentenced to hell by the heavenly judges. When the souls approach the bridge, he contends with Srosh for their possession.<sup>234</sup> He casts a noose around the neck of all persons. The righteous ones are able to free themselves from it, but the wicked ones are entangled in it, and are dragged into the infernal abyss by it.<sup>235</sup>

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223 Bd28.11.

224 Dd37.52.

225 Phl. Vd. 19.43.

226 Bd30.29.

227 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 5.19, p. 16.

228 Bd3.22; Dd23.3; Dk., vol. 7, p. 494, 495; Gs. 141.

229 Bd28.35.

230 Bd3.21; Zsp. 4.4.

231 Mkh. 2.117.

232 Av. Vizaresha.

233 Bd28.18; cf. Bd. Modi, *An untranslated chapter of the Bundelesh*, 2.

234 Mkh. 2.162.

235 Phl. Vd. 19.29.

**ESHM**

**An impetuous assailant of man.** This demon, Eshm (*Av.* Aeshma), who has no bodily existence,<sup>236</sup> occasions trouble in the World by contests.<sup>237</sup> He swells man's spirit to wrath. He contrives all evil, and he attacks mankind with the sevenfold strength of a fiend,<sup>238</sup> and man loses his senses when Eshm overpowers him.<sup>239</sup> He rejoices when man disregards the admonitions of a religious preceptor,<sup>240</sup> and any man in whom he makes his abode acts like a thief.<sup>241</sup> Destruction follows where he steps in.<sup>242</sup> For example, through his seductiveness he made King Kaus discontented with his earthly possessions, and bred in him a burning desire for conquering the heavenly regions,<sup>243</sup> in which attempt to fly up to the sky he fell to his undoing. He incites Arjasp, the arch-enemy of Zoroastrianism, to invade the territories of Gushtasp, who had embraced Zoroaster's faith,<sup>244</sup> but Arjasp's ruin followed. Terrible as was the condition of Iran when Afrasiyab, and still earlier when the monstrous Zohak ruled over her destinies,<sup>245</sup> it would have been immeasurably worse had Eshm been the earthly sovereign.<sup>246</sup> When he fails to spread discord and quarreling among, the righteous, he works among the wicked to the same end, and again if defeat meets him here too, he causes strife among the demons and fiends.<sup>247</sup> He contests the passage of the soul to the Bridge on the dawn of the fourth day after man's death.<sup>248</sup> One of the Pahlavi commentators speaks of him as the antagonist of Vohuman,<sup>249</sup> but his special adversary is Srosh, who will smite him in the end.<sup>250</sup>

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236 Mkh. 27.37.

237 Dd37.52.

238 Bd28.15, 17.

239 Dk., vol. 3, p. 152.

240 Bd28.20.

241 Dk., vol. 3, p. 138.

242 Bd28.16.

243 Dk., SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9.22.5, 6, p. 221.

244 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.4.87, p. 72.

245 Dk., vol. 7, p. 454, 455.

246 Mkh. 27.34-36.

247 Dd37.104.

248 Mkh. 2.115, 117.

249 Phl. Vd. 19.43.

250 Bd30.29; Mkh. 8.14.

## Aposh

**Tishtar's antagonist.** The Pahlavi works mainly repeat the account of this demon's encounter with Tishtar, that is, how the angel of rain fled a mile away in terror when he was first assaulted by this demon of drought, but how he later, after having begged more strength from Ohrmazd and received it, at last overpowered powered his adversary.<sup>251</sup> This demon struggles always to stop the rain from falling; and failing in this, he strives to convert its flow into a cause of damage.<sup>252</sup> Aposh is the chief cause of drought,<sup>253</sup> but the evil eye of the greedy rulers and false judges falling on the rain, prevents its fall;<sup>254</sup> and in this act Spenjagra, another demon, joins with him.<sup>255</sup>

## Jeh

**A powerful demoness.** Ahriman has created the menses in women; and Jeh is the demoness of menstruation. She is so powerful that her very look smites as nothing else could do.<sup>256</sup> When Ahriman first saw man, Ohrmazd's best creation in the world, he was confounded; and coward as he is, he fell prostrate bewailing. His evil confederates tried all in their power to give him courage but to no purpose, until finally Jeh, by her beguiling devices, succeeded in reclaiming him from impotency and dejection.<sup>257</sup>

The inmates in the house of ill-fame are her creatures. It is at her promptings that they bring upon earth this darkest curse that blights human life.

## Other Demons

The author of the *Bundahishn* tells us that every single demon is accompanied by many more, and it would be tedious to enumerate them all here. They are certainly very numerous, and much of their defiling nature is mingled up in the bodies of men.<sup>258</sup> In fact, there are as many demons as the sins that man commits.<sup>259</sup> The following are the demons and fiends who are mentioned in the texts, but about whom nothing special is known. They are Mitokht and Arast (falsehood),

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251 Bd7.8-10; Zsp. 6.9-11.

252 Dd93.12.

253 Bd28.39.

254 Dk., vol. 3, p. 148.

255 Bd7.12; 28.39; Dk., vol. 3, p. 148.

256 SnS3.29.

257 Bd3.1-7.

258 Bd28.37, 38.

259 Bd28.43.

Arashk (malice), Bushasp (sloth), Uda (chattering while eating), Zarman (decrepitude), Akataash (perversion), Oshtohad (excessive winter), Chishmak (disaster), Varun (lust), Sej (decay), Az (avarice), Niyaz (distress), Nas (defilement), Push (stinginess), Friftar (seducer), Spazg (slander), Aighash and Sur Chashmih (evil eye), But (idol), Kundak (wizard), Kashvish (revenge), Drivish (poverty), Daiwish (deceit), Nung (shame), Paitish, Dadani, Frazisht, Nizisht, and Safle.<sup>260</sup>

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260 For minor demons see Gray, *The Foundation of the Iranian Religions*, p. 224-226.



## CHAPTER XLIV. LIFE AFTER DEATH

**Death is the completion of life.** The faithful is warned, in the Pahlavi texts as in the Avesta, that he should always remember the transitory state of earthly existence, the death of the body, and the responsibility of his soul;<sup>1</sup> for, in the end, the body will be mingled with the dust, but the soul will survive; and man should therefore labour for the future welfare of the soul.<sup>2</sup> Death is the completion and perfection of life.<sup>3</sup> It is not an extinction of individuality, but a transfer from one state to another; it is the transition of the soul to a higher life, in which it gives up one duty to take up another.<sup>4</sup> Death brings the dissolution of the body, the earthly elements are dispersed, and the spiritual elements accompany the soul, which now proceeds to the next world to render the account of its deeds.<sup>5</sup> The body served as the garment of the soul as long as the soul wore it during life, but when it is outworn the soul flings it behind it. The body is likened, in more than one Pahlavi passage, to a house, of which the soul is a tenant; for when the body is divested of vital power and falls to the ground, the master of the house leaves it to crumble into dust.<sup>6</sup> Just as a rider becomes helpless without his saddle and his weapons to overthrow his enemy, so does the soul lose all hopes of routing the Druj, when the body perishes; for the soul is the lord of life and conducts the battle between good and evil.<sup>7</sup> It is the master of the body.<sup>8</sup> The body becomes useless and perishes when the soul leaves it.<sup>9</sup>

Man should not put his trust in the possessions of this earth; his happiness is but the passing cloud of a rainy day; riches and wealth, titles and honours, distinctions of birth and race—all will be of no avail when death will at last come upon him.<sup>10</sup> Body is the lineament of man; he should not mistake it as his real self. Whoso moulds his actions with the higher object of the welfare of his soul gains this world by leaving good name and fame behind him, and obtains the next as his reward; but the slave to passions and evil desires, who lives solely for the body,

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1 Mkh. 18.3.

2 Mkh. 1.22, 23; AnAtM. 105.

3 Dk., vol. 5, p. 330.

4 Sg. 4.87; 12.79.

5 Bd17.9; Sg. 4.88-92; Dk., vol. 6, p. 359.

6 Dd23.6; AnAtM. 142.

7 Dk., vol. 6, p. 354.

8 Dd3.8.

9 Dk., vol. 3, p. 150, 175.

10 Mkh. 2.98-110.

loses both this world and the next as well.<sup>11</sup> The body of the one is lean in this world, but his soul is fat in heaven, whereas a man who pines after bodily pleasures is fattened in body in this world, but his soul is hungry and lean in the next world.<sup>12</sup> There is a remedy for every thing, but not for death.<sup>13</sup> A man may live a hundred years in this world, but death will at last overtake him.<sup>14</sup> Then at last he will sleep in the deep silence of death. The closed eyes will not open; the heart will not throb; hands and feet will not move; and the prince and peasant will leave the world in exactly the same manner.<sup>15</sup> The body will then be removed to its final resting-place, where go the great and the small, the master and the servant, the righteous and the wicked alike.<sup>16</sup>

A man may avoid the danger of tigers and wild beasts, of robbers and inimical persons, but he cannot live without fear of the demon of death.<sup>17</sup> He is helpless when death swoops down on him. Some die at an early age, almost as if they had never been born, and even those that live long have ultimately to quit the world.<sup>18</sup> Life is short in this world but long in the next.<sup>19</sup> Man should practice such good deeds during his lifetime that on his death-bed he should think it would have been better had he done even more of them, and avoid such acts for which he would have to wish during the last moments of his life that they had not been performed.<sup>20</sup> The individual who has been indifferent in his devotions to the Lord is distressed when death approaches and thinks of him the more.<sup>21</sup>

**Srosh's help indispensable for the disembodied souls.** At death the soul shakes off the fetters of the body. This severance of the soul from the body is fraught with momentous difficulties for the former. As an infant that is just born in this world requires care from a midwife and others, so does a soul that has just emerged from the body require help and protection against evil influences. It is said that the righteous Srosh acts at this juncture as a midwife to the righteous soul

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11 Mkh. 21.10.

12 BYt. 2.56.

13 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. A.6, p. 37.

14 AnAtM. 139.

15 AnAtM. 143.

16 AnAtM. 145.

17 Dk., vol. 7, p. 452, 453.

18 Gs. 165.

19 AnKhK. 5.

20 Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6.17, p. 6.

21 Dk., vol. 5, p. 279.

in its bewilderment, and does not let it go into the clutches of Ahriman.<sup>22</sup> It is therefore deemed advisable to secure the services of this angel even in advance by propitiating him with rituals during the lifetime of the individual. But if that has not been the case, his relatives should never fail to offer sacrifices in his honour immediately after death and continue them for the three days and three nights that the soul stays in this world after death.<sup>23</sup> Besides watching and protecting the soul at this critical period, Srosh is also, one of the judges who will then take account of the soul. It is indispensable, therefore, to order ceremonies to be performed for Srosh during the time that the soul tarries in this world before embarking on its celestial journey.<sup>24</sup>

**The souls visualize the good or bad deeds of the lives they have just completed.** In conformity with the statement of the Avestan texts, the Pahlavists also depict the human souls as hovering about the head of the dead for three nights after death, experiencing joy or grief, according as they have lived in righteousness or wickedness.<sup>25</sup> It is stated that during the first night satisfaction from their good thoughts comes to the souls and vexation from their evil thoughts, during the second night satisfaction from their good words and vexation from their evil words, and during the third night satisfaction from their good deeds and vexation from their evil deeds.<sup>26</sup> The demon Vizarsh struggles with the souls during this period.<sup>27</sup> The souls experience as much pleasure or pain during these nights as they have had during their whole life on earth.<sup>28</sup> The soul of the wicked person, over whose head hangs the coming retribution, now wishes that it could re-enter the body for some time in order to make up for the faults and shortcomings of the life that it has just finished.<sup>29</sup> Mohammedanism, in the same manner, refers to the desire of the soul of the dead person to be sent back to the bodily life that it can practise good deeds that have been left undone. As a rider requires a horse, so the soul needs a body, without which it is unable to act in this world.<sup>30</sup> It now discovers, when it is too late, that it has lost the opportunity and worked all the while for naught. It feels as if it had thrown away all good deeds either into the fire to be

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22 Sd. 58.7.

23 Dd28.5; SnS17.3; Sd. 58.5, 6, 8, 9.

24 Dd28.6.

25 Bd. Modi, *An untranslated chapter of the Bundehesh*, 2; Mkh. 2.114, 156-160; Dd20.2; 24.2; 25.2; AV. 4.9-14; 17.2-9; Hn. 2.2-5; 3.2-5.

26 Dd24.4; 25.4.

27 Bd28.18; Modi, *op. cit.*, 2.

28 Hn. 2.6, 11, 16; 3.5, 10, 16.

29 Dd16.4.

30 Dk., vol. 6, p. 380, 381.

burnt or into the water to be drowned instead of practising them and storing them up for its own merit.<sup>31</sup> It wishes it had enjoyed less in the world below and practised virtue more,<sup>32</sup> and it realizes too late that the most precious period of its earthly life is now lost beyond recovery.

**The souls escorted by the genii of their own deeds to the other world.** At the end of the third night when the dawn breaks, the souls undertake their memorable journey with the co-operation of the good angels Srosh, Vae the good, and Warharan; in the midst of the opposition of Astovidat, of Vae the bad, Frazisht, Nizisht, and Eshm. When the souls pass from the midst of the sweet-scented trees, if they are righteous, or from among foul-scented trees, if they are wicked, they meet their conscience, the righteous soul beholding her in the form of a beautiful damsel, personifying the store of its own good works, but the wicked soul seeing a hideous woman, typifying the store of its own evil deeds.<sup>33</sup> In addition to the escort of the angelic figure or the fiendish apparition, the Denkard and some copies of the Bundahishn mention that a beautiful fat cow and a fair garden, as well as this damsel, are met with by a righteous soul, while an ugly, lean cow and a barren desert, besides the hideous hag, are encountered by a wicked soul.<sup>34</sup> The description of the celestial journey and of the happenings on the way, as found in the *Menog-i Khrad*, differs a little from the other works. These, in agreement with the accounts in the Avestan texts, depict the soul as meeting its daena prior to its crossing the bridge, but *Menog-i Khrad* brings her on the scene after the soul has passed the bridge. Besides, the pious soul is made to converse on the Way with Srosh, which is not the case in the other texts.

**The heavenly judges.** The Pahlavi works give us an elaborate account of the way in which justice is administered to the souls after death. The reckoning takes place on the dawn of the fourth day.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the entire life of the mortals it is the duty of Vohuman to note down three times each day the good and evil deeds of everyone, both men and women, in the book of life.<sup>36</sup> Mihr, Srosh, and Rashn sit as judges in the hereafter to take account of the souls that approach the bridge.<sup>37</sup> Unlike the human judges who base their decisions on the biased or fallible evidence of the witnesses for the plaintiff or the

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31 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6.219, p. 82.

32 Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 211, p. 78.

33 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 5-7; Dd24.5; 25.5; Mkh. 2.115, 127-181; AV. 4.15-36; 17.10-26; Dk., vol. 2, p. 82, 83; Hn. 2.19-32; 3. 17-20.

34 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 5, 7; Dk., vol. 2, p. 83.

35 Dd13.2; 20.3; Gs. 133.

36 Dd14.2.

37 Dd14.3.4; Mkh. 2.118.

accused, the divine judges need only to scan with their spiritual eyes the record kept by an archangel, and then to acquit or sentence the souls accordingly.<sup>38</sup> Rashn holds the balance in his hands and weighs the good and evil deeds of the souls so impartially that the scales do not turn wrongfully, even by a hair's breadth in favour of a righteous man or of a wicked, of a lord or of a king, but work equally in case of the peasant and the prince.<sup>39</sup> Job makes a solemn protestation of his integrity and says that let God weigh him in an even balance that he may know the truth.<sup>40</sup> The works of the dead are similarly weighed in a balance according to the teachings of Mohammed. Injustice and partiality have no place in this celestial court, which is administered with stern but exact equity.<sup>41</sup>

**Location of the Bridge of Judgment.** All the righteous as well as the wicked souls have to proceed to this bridge for judgment, where the account of the souls takes place.<sup>42</sup> The bridge rests on the peak called 'the peak of justice,' situated in the middle of the world in Eranvej, and is of the height of a hundred men. The two extremities of the bridge rest on the northern and southern ridges of Mount Alburz.<sup>43</sup>

**The bridge provides a wide passage to the pious souls, but confronts the wicked with its sharp edge.** The bridge is guarded by the angels and the spiritual dogs.<sup>44</sup> It is broad as a beam and has many sides. Some of these are twenty-seven reeds in width or nine spears or nine javelins or even a league in width, whereas the others are as sharp as the edge of a razor.<sup>45</sup> The bridge is so arranged that it presents its broad side when a righteous soul passes over it, and gives it an easy passage, but puts forward its thin edge when a wicked soul attempts to cross it.<sup>46</sup> According to Mohammedanism all souls have to cross the Bridge as-Sirat which lies across heaven and hell. It is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword. It gives an easy passage to the righteous souls, but the souls of the wicked cannot cross it and fall headlong into hell. The pious soul is helped by Srosh, Atar, and by its own conscience to cross the bridge and go to its destination,

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38 Dk., vol. 7, p. 451.

39 Mkh. 2.119-122.

40 Job. 31.6; cf. Proverbs, 16.2; 1 Samuel 2.3.

41 Sg. 4.98, 99.

42 Bd12.7; Mkh. 2.115; Gs. 133; AnAtM. 139, 147.

43 Phl. Vd. 19.30; Bd12.7; cf. Modi, op. cit., 1; Dd21.2.

44 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 1.

45 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 1; Dd21.3, 5; Mkh. 2.123; AV. 5.1.

46 Bd Modi, op. cit., 10; Dd21.5, 7; 85.7.

but the impious one falls headlong into hell.<sup>47</sup> A passage adds that, the fire Frabag [Adar Farnbag] smites the darkness and enables a pious soul to pass over the narrow edge in the form of fire.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Vae, the angel of wind, takes such a soul by its hand and escorts it to its proper place.<sup>49</sup> Of all the wicked souls the one of a malicious man finds it most difficult to cross the bridge, for malice is a sin which does not affect the sinner only, but generally abides in a lineage.<sup>50</sup> The wicked soul complains that it would prefer being cut by a sharp knife or pierced by an arrow to its being obliged to cross the terrible bridge.<sup>51</sup>

**Insane persons and children are not accountable for their own deeds, but their parents are responsible.** All those that are mentally unsound and also children are not held responsible for their deeds, but are considered eligible for paradise.<sup>52</sup> We are further told in another passage of the Pahlavi texts that the children accompany their parents either to heaven or hell as the latter have deserved.<sup>53</sup> The children that have thus entered hell with their wicked parents are separated from them if due ceremonies are performed in honour of Srosh by their relatives, and may then proceed to heaven.<sup>54</sup>

**The method of administering justice in the heavenly tribunal.** Among the ancient Egyptians when the soul appeared before the heavenly tribunal, its heart was weighed in a balance. Similarly, the ordinary way of judging the souls according to the Pahlavi writers, is said to be that of weighing the good and evil deeds in a scale and deciding to which of the two sides the scale turned. Roughly speaking, if the good deeds exceed the evil, the soul is entitled to go to heaven.<sup>55</sup> But if the evil deeds preponderate, the soul is assigned to go to hell.<sup>56</sup> The side of the balance that outweighs the other even by a hair of the eyelash determines the fate of the soul accordingly.<sup>57</sup> If the good deeds are in weight three Sroshocharans more than the evil deeds, the soul attains to heaven;<sup>58</sup> if the evil deeds exceed the good ones by three Sroshocharans,

47 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 10, 11, 13; Dd 20.4; 21.7; 25.6; 34.3, 4; Mkh. 2.124; AnKhK. 5.

48 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 9.

49 *Ib*, 11.

50 Mkh. 21.19.

51 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 14.

52 Dk., vol. 2, p. 89, 90; vol. 3, p. 144; vol. 4, p. 189, 190.

53 Sd. 47.2.

54 Sd 47.3.

55 Mkh. 12.13 SnS6.2-4; Sg. 4.93, 94.

56 Mkh. 12.15; Sg. 4.95, 96; AV. 6.10.

57 Sd. 2.3, 4.

58 Phl. Vd. 7.52; SnS6.3; AV. 6.9. 59 Phl. Vd7.52.

the soul is doomed to hell until the time of Resurrection.<sup>59</sup> An infidel is saved from hell if good deeds are one Tanapuhr weight more than his evil deeds.<sup>59</sup>

The author of the *Dadestan* texts takes a more rational view and asserts that it is not simply the preponderating good or evil deeds that score off their opposite, so that the soul receives recompense or retribution on the residue, but that every single good or evil deed is taken into account separately and receives its recompense or retribution in accordance. Thus a righteous soul whose preponderating good deeds have entitled it to heaven does not escape a temporary punishment for the few misdeeds that stand on its account. Similarly the wicked soul that is doomed to hell for its evil deeds has at least a few good deeds to its credit, and consequently receives temporary enjoyment severally for these before it is sent to perdition for its wrongs.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the righteous soul may have a few misdeeds for which it has not atoned, and will therefore undergo a corresponding punishment after death before it is admitted to the company of the righteous,<sup>61</sup> and the same is logically true of the soul of the sinner. The sins usually accounted for at the bridge are those that have not been expiated during the lifetime of the individual.<sup>62</sup> Those that are already atoned for in this world are not laid to his charge hereafter, but stand cancelled in the book of life, and no account is taken of them at the bridge.<sup>63</sup> We find, however, in another place that such a soul does receive a temporary punishment at the bridge, but is spared the future torture of hell.<sup>64</sup>

We have already seen that the Pahlavi-Persian works speak of the Treasury of the Eternal Weal where the supererogatory deeds of the faithful are stored and from which the souls found to be in need of merit at the Bridge of Judgment are compensated.<sup>65</sup> It is said that every Zoroastrian gets the benefit of the accumulated good deeds performed by the faithful in all the seven zones of the earth. If a soul is found deficient in merit at the reckoning the deficit is made up from this treasury.<sup>66</sup> This doctrine appears in the later Judaism and Christianity.<sup>67</sup>

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59 SnS6.6.

60 Dd13.4; 24.6.

61 Phl. Vd. 7. 52.

62 Dd24.5.

63 Dd13.2, 3.

64 Dd41.8; Sd. 45.10.

65 Dd38.3; see Böklen, *Persische Eschatology*, p. 58, 59; Pavri, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 51, 52, 74-77, 100, 102.

66 Sd. 1.3-5.

67 See. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 313.

If a man brings forward false accusation against another or steals his property, the heavenly judges take away corresponding merit of good deeds, which the sinner may have done in this world and credit it to the account of the wronged person. But when it is found that the wrongdoer has not any accumulated merit of his own, the judges draw upon the Treasury of Eternal Weal and compensate the soul of the person who has suffered.<sup>68</sup>

### Heaven

**The graduated heavens.** The division of heaven, or the celestial realms, into several mansions of Paradise, as recognized in the Avesta, remains unaltered in the Pahlavi period. Heaven in general is designated Vahisht, Paradise, but the divisions of heaven into the domains of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, with the highest heaven Garothman, make up the four chief heavens.<sup>69</sup> Endless Light and Best Existence are variants frequently used for Garothman.<sup>70</sup> The several heavens of the celestial world are also known after the names of their locations in space, and are then called the heavens of the Star Region, the Moon Region, the Sun Region, and that of Endless Light.<sup>71</sup> A distinction is generally made between the lower heavens and the highest heaven.<sup>72</sup> If one's good deeds are three Sroshocharans more than his evil deeds he goes to Vahisht, or heaven, but if they are only one Tanapuhr in weight more than his misdeeds the soul goes to the Best Existence.<sup>73</sup> With the same idea it is said that when ceremonies are not performed for the good of the soul, it goes to heaven, but when performed it ascends to the highest Garothman.<sup>74</sup>

If the good deeds are in excess the righteous soul goes to heaven on the dawn of the fourth day, but if, in addition to the stock of this virtue, he has chanted the Gathas and thus has extra merit to his credit as a true believer, he then is transported aloft to Garothman.<sup>75</sup> Vohuman welcomes such a righteous soul, and announces at the command of Ohrmazd, its place and reward.<sup>76</sup> The same archangel thereupon offers

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68 Sd. 64.9; SdBd. 65.1-5; 71.4, 5.

69 Hn. 2.33, 34; Mkh. 2.146; 7.12; 57. 13; AV. 7.1; 8.1; 9.1; 10.1; cf. 2 Corinthians, 12.2.

70 Dd1.3; 14.7; 34.3; SnS10.26.

71 Bd12.1; Dd34.3; Mkh. 7.9-11; Dk. vol. 7, p. 461.

72 Bd12.1; 30-27; Dd14.7; 24.6; 31.4.15, 17, 22, 25; 34.3; Sd. 80.11.

73 SnS6.3.

74 *Ib.*

75 Dd20.3.

76 Dd31.5.



the sanctified spirit a cup of ambrosia to drink,<sup>77</sup> and the righteous souls that are in heaven greet it with joy and pleasure.<sup>78</sup>

**Location of heavens.** The concept of the next world, which was abstract and spiritual in the Gathic and Later Avestan periods, gradually becomes concrete and material. The separate heavens as well as hells retain their names which designate abstract virtues as Good or Evil Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, but they are now in reality completely materialized. Different heavens are located in different parts of the cosmos, and a sharply defined boundary line divides them from one another. The separate heavens, begin with the Star Region.<sup>79</sup> The first heaven, of Good Thoughts, is represented as extending from the stars to the moon; the second heaven, of Good Words, commences from the moon and reaches the sun; the third, of Good Deeds, extends from the sun to the lower limits of Garothman, and the last, or the highest Garothman, the Best Existence, the abode of Ahura Mazda, is in the regions of the Endless Light.<sup>80</sup>

**Nature of heaven.** Heaven is exalted, resplendent, most fragrant, and most desirable.<sup>81</sup> It possesses all light, all goodness, all glory, all fragrance, and all joy.<sup>82</sup> It has comfort, pleasure, joy, and happiness that are higher and greater than the highest and greatest comfort, pleasure, joy, and happiness in this world. It is devoid of want, pain, distress, and discomfort,<sup>83</sup> and it is luminous, full of charm and full of bliss.<sup>84</sup> Just as anything that is unlimited, imperishable, inconsumable, and everlasting is greater than that which is limited, perishable, passing, and consumable, so is the felicity of heaven greater than that of this world.<sup>85</sup> The supremest happiness and pleasure in this world could not bear comparison with the eternal felicities of heaven.<sup>86</sup> Sweet-scented breezes like that of basil, continually blow in paradise, spreading fragrance everywhere.<sup>87</sup> The grandeur and beauty are such that the souls have never seen anything so exquisite in the material world. It is

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77 Phl. Vd. 19.31.

78 Dd31.9.

79 Dk., vol. 9, p. 626.

80 Mkh. 7. 9-12; AV. 7-10.

81 Dd26.2.

82 Dk., vol. 3, p. 136; AV. 15.21.

83 Dd26.3.

84 Dk., vol. 9, p. 626.

85 Dd26.5; 31.23, 24.

86 Dd31.22.

87 Mkh. 7.15.

the residence of Ohrmazd, the archangels and angels, and of the Guardian Spirits as well as the most blessed among mankind.<sup>88</sup>

**Condition of the souls in heaven.** The souls in paradise move and perceive, and feel like the angels and archangels, they are undecaying, undying, unharmed, untroubled, full of glory, joy, pleasure, and happiness; and enjoy the fragrant breeze as sweet as the basil.<sup>89</sup> The radiance and brightness of the souls in heaven are like the stars and the moon and the sun, and they sit on the golden thrones and carpets.<sup>90</sup> The beautiful souls are attired in clothings embroidered with gold and silver and are seated on golden carpets and richly adorned cushions. Those of women are bedecked with jewelry, and those of warriors with golden arms and equipment studded with jewelry.<sup>91</sup>

**Celestial food.** The food that is given to the souls of the righteous ones in heaven as soon as they enter its gates is the ambrosia, the spiritual food of the angels themselves.<sup>92</sup>

**Duration of heavenly bliss.** The souls that have ascended to heaven enjoy happiness, and remain full of glory forever and ever.<sup>93</sup> This state of felicity continues up to the day of Resurrection.<sup>94</sup>

## HAMISTAGAN

**The intermediary place between heaven and hell.** It is situated between the earth and the starry regions.<sup>95</sup> According to the belief current in the Pahlavi period, which dates back to far more ancient times, there is provided a place for those particular souls in whose case the balance trembles evenly between good and evil at the bridge owing to the exact counterpoise between righteousness and sin in the scale into which they have cast their deeds in the present life.<sup>96</sup>

**The condition of its inmates till the final day of the Renovation.** The place of the Hamistagan resembles this earth.<sup>97</sup> The souls that are transported to this place have no other sufferings than

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88 Dk., vol. 2, p. 80.

89 Mkh. 7.13-17; 40.30.

90 AV. 7.2, 3; 8.7; 9.3, 4.

91 Mkh. 2.154, 156; AV. 12.2, 3, 7, 9, 14, 16; 13.1, 2; 14.7-9, 14; 15.9.

92 Dd31.12-14; Mkh. 2.152, 156; Hn. 2.38, 39.

93 Mkh. 2.157; 7.7; 40.30.

94 Dd31.25.

95 Mkh. 7.18.

96 Phl. Vd. 7.52; Bd. Modi, op. cit., SnS6.2; Dd20.3; 24.6; 33.2; Mkh. 12.14; Dk., vol 9, p. 626; AV. 6.7, 11.

97 Bd. Modi, op. cit., 13.

cold and heat.<sup>98</sup> Exposed to the inclemency of weather, they shiver in winter and frost and are scorched in the tropical summer up to the day of Resurrection.<sup>99</sup> Beyond that, however, the Pahlavi texts speak of no other suffering, and their final fate is postponed till the universe is restored at the last day of the general restoration of the world.

## Hell

**Graduated hells.** Corresponding to the four heavens or a fourfold division of heaven, the texts mention four principal hells. These are the Evil Thought Hell, Evil Word Hell, Evil Deed Hell, and the Worst Existence of Darkness.<sup>100</sup> Sometimes the grades of hell are vaguely spoken of without any definite number.<sup>101</sup>

**Location of hell.** The abode of the sinners is in the middle of the earth,<sup>102</sup> down below the Chinwad Bridge.<sup>103</sup> It is in the northern regions, as in Avestan times it was also believed to be, and below the surface of the earth, with its gate on the ridge Arezur, where the demons hold their fiendish council.<sup>104</sup>

**Description of hell.** Hell is deep and dreadful, dark and stinking, vile and grievous, cold and stony, devoid of joy and pleasure, of comfort and happiness, and full of pain and punishment, filth and stench, misery and torture.<sup>105</sup> It is coldest beyond description in one place and hottest in another and is full of noxious creatures, stench, and darkness.<sup>106</sup> It is traversed by a gloomy and dreadful river filled by the tears shed by men for their departed ones.<sup>107</sup> The depth of hell is such that its bottom cannot be reached by a thousand cubits,<sup>108</sup> and it is tenanted by the demons, fiends, and the souls of the damned.<sup>109</sup>

**Ahriman greets the wicked souls in hell with scorn and mockery.** No sooner is the terrible sentence pronounced upon those destined for perdition than Vizarsh and other demons pounce upon the wretched souls of the sinful and put them in heavy chains, and, beating

98 Mkh.7.19; AV. 6.12.

99 AV. 6.6, 11, 12.

100 Mkh. 2.182, 183; 7.20, 21.

101 Bd11; Dd20.4; 33.3-5; Dk., vol. 8, p. 448.

102 Bd3.27.

103 .Bd. Modi, op. cit., 1; Dk., vol. 9, p. 626; AV. 53.2, 3.

104 Phl. Vd. 3.7; Bd12.8; Dd33.5.

105 Bd28.47; Dd27.2-5; 33.2: Dk., vol. 8, p. 449; vol. 9, p. 626; AV. 54. 1.

106 Mkh. 7. 27-31.

107 AV. 16.2, 7.

108 AV. 54.3.

109 Dk., vol.3, p. 135.

them and mercilessly torturing them, drag them down to hell.<sup>110</sup> The wretched souls now repent of their sins and exclaim that it would have been better for them if they had not been born upon the earth.<sup>111</sup> The angels give them up to the charge of the demons, their own conscience deserts them, and thus forsaken and forlorn, they lament and weep, shout and shriek, gnash their teeth and tear their hair, mutilate their limbs and lacerate themselves, making moan, and soaking the ground with a torrent of tears. But all in vain. Unavailing are their cries and lamentations, for the denizens of heaven seem to be under the spell of the drowsy fiend, Bushasp, who has lulled them to sleep, and the righteous souls in heaven seem to have grown callous and indifferent to the pangs of their former earthly associates. In this frightful condition there is no one to pity them, and none to cast a look of mercy on them in their disconsolate condition on the way to the infernal realm. Writhing in suffering and sorrow, weeping and lamenting and gnashing their teeth, they now enter hell,<sup>112</sup> and with the fourth step of the downward descent to perdition they approach Ahriman who addresses them with ribald mockery, saying in scornful banter that it is strange they preferred the gloom and misery of hell to the joy and happiness of heaven,<sup>113</sup> revolted from the will of Ohrmazd, whose bread they ever ate, and practised the evil of the Evil Spirit.<sup>114</sup> The demons and fiends incessantly rail at the wretched souls and finally hurl them headlong into the darkest abyss.

**Punishments and retributive justice.** The souls are generally punished by the particular demon or demons in conformity to whose will the individual has sinned in this world.<sup>115</sup> These fiends take a cruel delight in torturing the souls for the very sins that they themselves had instigated. The degree of suffering is exactly proportioned to the transgression, and the form of punishment meted out corresponds in the same manner to the various crimes committed in this world. We may select only a few instances from the elaborate list of Viraf. The one that has slain a pious man is himself killed over and over again in hell as a punishment.<sup>116</sup> He who has eaten unlawfully without saying grace starves eternally of hunger and thirst.<sup>117</sup> The merchant who used false scales and sold adulterated goods on earth must day and night in hell

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110 Dd32.4-7; Mkh. 2.164.

111 Dk., vol. 5, p. 279.

112 Mkh. 2.165, 166; cf. Mathew, 8.12; 22.13; 25.30.

113 Mkh. 2.184-186; 7.23-25.

114 AV. 100.2-5.

115 Dd14.6; 32.11; Mkh. 21.11, 16, 17, 40, 43, 44.

116 AV. 21.1-5.

117 AV. 23.1-9.

measure bushels full of filth and then devour them.<sup>118</sup> A tyrant king is tortured by being flogged by demons with darting serpents.<sup>119</sup> A liar and a slanderer have their tongues ever gnawed by noxious creatures.<sup>120</sup> The law obtains in hell that all demons assail their victims from the front, but the demon of slander alone attacks from the rear, because a backbiter usually indulges in secret calumnies in the absence of a person.<sup>121</sup> An apostate is converted into a creature with the head of a man and the body of a serpent.<sup>122</sup> The person who in life has defiled the fire or the water through some pollution by means of dead matter must in hell continually devour dead matter.<sup>123</sup> The man who withheld food from the dogs in this world has to offer them bread in plenty in the inferno, but they prefer to devour his flesh instead; nor do they give him a moment's respite.<sup>124</sup> The individual who has removed the boundary stones of others and usurped their lands has to pay the penalty of digging a hill with his fingers and of carrying a mountain of stones on his back.<sup>125</sup> One who has ill-treated cattle is ever trodden under their feet.<sup>126</sup> This method of inflicting punishment analogous to the sins is so systematically carried out that in certain cases where the greater portion of the body of a sinner is exposed to torture corresponding to the sin a single limb may be exempted from the punishment, because it served as a medium of doing some good. For instance, a man whose whole body was either cooked in the caldron or was undergoing some other torment had one of his legs stretched out unmolested, because he had either shoved a wisp of hay before a hungry animal that was tied and could not reach it or killed some noxious creatures with it.<sup>127</sup> He had not done any other good deed his whole life long.

All conceivable forms of physical torture prevail in hell. Viraf recounts the ghastly spectacle he had witnessed in the vision vouchsafed him of hell. The various kinds of most hideous tortures in hell are so dreadful that the torments and sufferings in this world dwindle into insignificance before them; and the worst of earthly calamities and inflictions present but a feeble and inadequate counterpart of their

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118 AV. 27.1-7; 80.1-7.

119 AV. 28.1-6.

120 AV. 29.1-6; 33.1-6; 66.1-6.

121 Mkh. 2.12.

122 AV. 36.1-7.

123 AV. 38.1-7; 41.1-8.

124 AV. 48.1-7.

125 AV. 49.1-9; 50.1-6.

126 AV. 75.1-6.

127 SnS12.29; Sd. 4.3-11; AV. 32.1-6; 60.1-8.

terror.<sup>128</sup> Nay the memory of the miseries on earth is the only joy for the unfortunate inmates of hell in contrast to the torment they have to undergo in the inferno. Viraf relates that the souls are ever gnawed by snakes and scorpions, worms and other noxious creatures, flogged with darting serpents as whips in the hands of demons, suspended head downwards by one leg or by the breasts in the case of women or, again, trodden under the feet of cattle. Iron spikes and wooden pegs are driven into their eyes; they are made to stand on hot brass and compelled to lick a hot oven with their tongues. A brazen caldron is constantly boiling, and is continually fed by the tens of thousands of wretched souls flung into it. Miserable as their lot is as they are cooked, it is made still more miserable by the fact that the fire that burns them never consumes them. On earth such miserable wretches could have hope that a merciful death would release them by bringing an end to their sufferings; but even that one solace is denied to the damned, for though the fire burns them unceasingly, their souls are equally eternal, and cannot therefore be annihilated.

**Solitude in hell is appalling.** One of the miseries that the souls have to endure in hell is its solitude.<sup>129</sup> The souls stand as close to one another as the ear is to the eye, but each one feels itself alone and solitary; and though the souls be as many in number as hairs in the mane of a horse, each one feels that it is lost in solitude, with no eyes to see its sufferings and no ears to hear its groanings.<sup>130</sup> A thousand souls are huddled together in the short space of a span, and yet every one is ignorant of the presence of others besides itself, and considers itself thrown out in the wilderness.<sup>131</sup>

**Intensity of the darkness and stench of hell.** The infernal region is the abode of all darkness.<sup>132</sup> The Avestan texts spoke of hell as the abode of darkness; in the Pahlavi texts the concept is intensified, and the darkness is conceived of as being so dense that it can be grasped by hand,<sup>133</sup> and the stench such that it can be cut with a knife.<sup>134</sup> All the wood in the world put on the fire would not emit a smell in this most stinking place.<sup>135</sup>

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128 Dd27.5.

129 Dk., vol. 7, p. 495.

130 AV. 54.5, 8.

131 Bd28.47.

132 Dd33.4.

133 Phl. Vd. 5.62; 7.22; Mkh. 7.31; cf. Exodus 10.21.

134 Bd28.47.

135 AV. 54.4.

**The foulest food served to the sinners.** The most fetid, putrid, and disgusting kinds of food are given to the sinners in hell,<sup>136</sup> and these the wretched creatures devour in quantities, but yet remain eternally hungry and thirsty.<sup>137</sup> Brimstone and lizard,<sup>138</sup> poison and the venom of snakes, scorpions, and other noxious creatures,<sup>139</sup> blood and filth, bodily refuse and excrement, impurity and menstrual discharge, dust and human flesh, dirt and ashes, form the variety of dishes that the infernal caterer supplies to the inmates of hell.<sup>140</sup>

**Duration of punishment in hell.** Mashya and Mashyoi, the first human couple, broke the divine commandment and lied unto Ahura Mazda; they were sent to hell, and will remain there until the Renovation.<sup>141</sup> When a convert from Zoroastrianism to some other faith dies, his soul is sentenced to the sufferings of hell until the day of Resurrection.<sup>142</sup> Punishment of long duration,<sup>143</sup> or forever and eternal suffering are the expressions most frequently met with in connection with the duration of the souls in hell.<sup>144</sup> This, however, refers only to the end of the cycle, the period of Renovation, when the world will be regenerated and all the sinners saved by the compassionate Lord. Ahura Mazda will not allow even the worst of the sinners to fall permanently into the hands of the Evil Spirit.<sup>145</sup>

The souls find the time so slowly moving and tedious that when they have passed only three days and nights in the torments of hell, or sometimes even a single day, they feel as if nine thousand years had elapsed and as if it were already time for the day of Resurrection to come and bring them release from the prison of the inferno.<sup>146</sup>

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136 Mkh. 2.190.

137 Dd32.8, 9.

138 Bd28.48.

139 Mkh. 2.191, 192.

140 AV. 20.1, 2; 23.1-3; 27.1, 2; 35.1, 2; 38.1, 2; 39.1, 2; 46.1, 2; 51.1, 2; 59.1, 2; 83.1; 91.1; 98.1.

141 Bd15.9.

142 Dd41.6.

143 Mkh. 2.186.

144 Dd13.4; Dk., vol. 2, p. 83; vol. 3, p. 141; vol. 4, p. 264, 270; vol. 6, p. 355, 407; vol. 7, p. 432, 495; Mkh. 2.193; 40.31; AV. 64.13; 87.9.

145 SnS8.23; Dd75.4; Sg. 4.100, 101; 12.59; Dk., vol. 9, p. 627.

146 AV. 18.11; 54.10, 11.

## CHAPTER XLV. THE RENOVATION

**Those who further the work of the final restoration.** The work of regenerating the world, which was commenced by Gayomard, the first man, and was looked forward to from the time of the Gathas, will be brought to completion and perfection by Soshyos [Soshyant], the last saviour.<sup>1</sup> With Gayomard the curtain rose on the human drama. It will fall with the advent of Soshyos. Gayomard, Jamshed, Zartosht, and all pious men who have worked for the betterment of the universe are among those that help in bringing about the final renovation.<sup>2</sup> The great work proceeds with greater or lesser success according as mankind are stronger or weaker in the practice of righteousness at various periods. In two of his visions the prophet sees a tree with four and seven branches respectively. The branches are made of different metals and represent the various periods of the religious history of Zoroastrianism. The first and the golden branch represents the golden age of the faith under King Gushtasp, the silver and steel boughs symbolize a decadence, while the last, depicted by the iron branch, or age of the great catastrophe, is the period of the final overthrow of the empire, the overwhelming cataclysm that threatened to submerge the world except for the triumph of virtue and right.<sup>3</sup> When the mighty work of reclaiming mankind from evil is accomplished, there will follow the Renovation of the universe.<sup>4</sup> Those who work to bring this period nearer are said to be holding communion with Ohrmazd.<sup>5</sup>

**Saviours born immaculately.** Ohrmazd sends his special messengers at various periods of chaos and confusion to save humanity from the clutches of Ahriman.<sup>6</sup> This is clear in the Gathas as in the Younger Avesta. These Messianic heralds of the real truth to be embodied in the final Soshyos exemplify righteousness complete and translate the abstract teachings of religion into concrete actions that thus make the seemingly incomprehensible intelligible and tangible to the masses. The most prominent among these leaders in the last three millenniums, as noted before, are the three sons that are to be born miraculously to Zartosht, from his seed through a supernatural conception by a maid, bathing in the waters of Lake Kans (an idea as old as Yt. 19), and the names of these three ideal promoters of mankind, as perpetuated in the forms current during the Pahlavi period, are

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1 Dk., vol. 1, p. 29.

2 Dd36.2.

3 BYt. 1.2-5; 2.14-22.

4 Dk., vol. 5, p. 332.

5 Dk., vol. 7, p. 426.

6 Dk., vol. 1, p. 29.



Ushedar, Ushedarmah, and Soshyos, who will appear at an interval of a millennium each.<sup>7</sup> It is said that Zartosht went three times near unto his wife Hvov, and that each time the seed went to the ground. On each of these three occasions, important for mankind, the spiritual seeds were caught up by the angel Neryosangh and intrusted to the keeping of Ardivisur, the divinity of waters, and from these sanctified waters they will be born in time to come, as miraculously conceived at different periods by three virgins.<sup>8</sup> The advent of the all-beneficent renovators of the faith for the regeneration of the world will, as we shall see below, be attended with portents and miraculous signs.

**The millennium of Ushedar.** A child is born to a virgin named Shemik-abu of the age of fifteen, who miraculously conceives Zartosht's seed when she drinks the waters from a pool. The seed was emitted during the lifetime of Zartosht and lay concealed in the waters until the maiden kindled the germs and became pregnant.<sup>3032</sup> The child thus immaculately born in the first of the three final millenniums of the world is named Ushedar, a later modified corrupt transcript of the Avestan Ukhshyat-ereta. In the first of the last three thousand years of the world, before the final renovation and the resurrection, he holds, at the age of thirty, a conference with Ohrmazd and receives a revelation.<sup>3032</sup> When he returns from this divine conference, Ushedar makes the sun stand still for ten days and nights to convince the people, of the world about the authenticity of his mission.<sup>9</sup> During his millennium, righteousness, liberality, and all the virtues supreme will be practised by mankind more and more as the world slowly moves towards perfection during this aeon. Two-thirds of the people of Iran, according to the Pahlavi texts, will turn out righteous.<sup>10</sup> The wisdom of the religion will constantly increase,<sup>11</sup> the poverty of the people and the slaughter of cattle will decrease,<sup>12</sup> as he is the benefactor that will help to remove the wickedness of the wolfish nature in mankind.<sup>13</sup>

**The millennium of Hoshedar-mah [Ushedarmah].** A maiden named Shapir-abu is destined to approach the waters and conceive thereby, again through the second seed of Zartosht. The virgin who has never approached man gives birth to a child who is named Ushedarmah, an imperfect rendering of the Avestan Ukhshyat-

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7 Mkh. 2.95.

8 Bd32.8.

9 BYt. 3.45, 46; Dk., vol. 4, p. 247; SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.9.2, p. 107, 108.

10 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.9.13, p. 110.

11 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.9.2, p. 107, 108.

12 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.9. -11, p. 108-110.

13 Dk., vol. 1, p. 49; vol. 2, p. 128; vol. 3, p. 133; vol. 6, p. 378.

nemangh,<sup>14</sup> who confers with Ohrmazd.<sup>15</sup> At the age of thirty years he announces his advent by making the sun to stand still for twenty days and twenty nights.<sup>16</sup> His benign presence and Messianic power, it is destined, will destroy the wicked product of every serpentine and monster engendure.<sup>17</sup> Mankind greatly advances toward the realization of the final goal of perfection during this millennium. Cattle give milk in great quantities. In connection with this millennial view, it may be added, from the Pahlavi texts of this later period, that the small cattle which give milk will give milk then in redoubled quantity, and a cow will give as much milk as could be used by a thousand men. Hunger and thirst decrease, as the world reaches nearer to its perfection. A single meal will be sufficient to satisfy a man for three days.<sup>18</sup> Mankind will furthermore become so versed in the art of healing, and in the science of physical culture, that they will be able to withstand disease and death more successfully.<sup>19</sup> Humility, peace, and liberality will be now and forever more zealously practised by men.<sup>20</sup>

**The millennium of Soshyos.** The world, according to the Pahlavi texts, which carry onward the ideal teachings of Zartosht in the Gathas as developed further in the Younger Avesta, is ever striving and tending toward final betterment, and will reach perfection in the millennium of Soshyos. It needs only the final touch of this greatest of the renovators to bring about this result for the eternal welfare of the universe. Men by this time, when these millennial conditions have been reached, have ceased eating meat, and subsist on milk and vegetables.<sup>21</sup> Even milk, according to the Pahlavi works, is gradually given up, and water and vegetables form the only food of mankind.<sup>22</sup> The Bundahishn, moreover, adds that, before the Resurrection and the Renovation of the universe occur, men will give up milk, vegetables, and even water, and they will ultimately subsist without food of any kind, and yet not die.<sup>23</sup> Still another Pahlavi text states that during the period of the fifty-seven years of the activity of this last apostle mankind will be able to subsist

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14 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.9.18-20, p. 111.

15 Dk., vol. 8, p. 486.

16 Dk., vol. 4, p. 247; SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.9.21, p. 111; 10.2, p. 112, 113.

17 Dk., vol. 1, p. 49; vol. 2, p. 128; vol. 3, p. 133; vol. 6, p. 378, 379.

18 Bd30.2; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.2, p. 112, 113.

19 BYt. 3.53.

20 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.3, p. 113.

21 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.8, p. 114.

22 Bd30.1; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.9, p. 114.

23 Bd30.3.

for seventeen years simply on vegetables, then thirty on water alone, and for the last ten years on spiritual food.<sup>24</sup>

At this time, according to the texts, when the world is ripe to welcome the last of the prophets, a virgin named Gobak-abu conceives immaculately the third seed of Zartosht in the same manner as her two forerunners had done. At the age of fifteen she becomes pregnant and gives birth to the most illustrious Soshyos in the realm of Khvaniras [Xwaniratha].<sup>25</sup> When the final saviour is thirty years of age, the sun stands still in the zenith of the sky for thirty days and nights;<sup>26</sup> through his supernal power the demoniac nature among men will be broken.<sup>27</sup> He will then cause the Resurrection and the future existence.<sup>28</sup> His body, which is as radiant as the sun, partakes only of spiritual food and he is clad with kingly glory. Around him he looks with the power of six eyes and he it is that foresees the end of the Evil Spirit.<sup>29</sup> He is the greatest renovator of the world.<sup>30</sup> He comes to restore the dead to life,<sup>31</sup> and to bring final perfection to the world.<sup>32</sup>

Any kind of wickedness that may still be lingering, in spite of his supreme beneficence, will perish through his presence.<sup>33</sup> The angels will enable mankind to co-operate with the great apostle Soshyos to rout Druj.<sup>34</sup> In advance of his divine mission to the world he has met Ohrmazd in conference and has received the supreme sanction for his task.<sup>35</sup> During the fifty-seven years of his work, he will drive out the drujes from the world,<sup>36</sup> and will make the world eternally happy.<sup>37</sup>

**The collaborators of Soshyos.** Ohrmazd has ordained that Soshyos will be helped by certain great persons who have departed from the world, but who remain immortal and are still living in the body, and are yet to exert sway. The chief among these personages, potent for the

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24 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.11.4, p. 117.

25 Bd11.6; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10. 15-18, p. 115.

26 Dk., vol. 4, p. 247; SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.19, p. 116.

27 Dk., vol. 6, p. 379.

28 Bd.11.6; Gs.133.

29 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.11.2, 3, p. 116, 117.

30 Dk., vol. 7, p. 485.

31 Gs. 133.

32 Dk., vol. 1, p. 29.

33 Dk., vol. 1, p. 49; vol. 2, p 128.

34 Dk., vol. 2, p. 111, 112.

35 Dk., vol. 8, p. 486.

36 *Ib.*

37 Dk., vol. 9, p. 617.

eternal welfare of mankind, are, Peshyotan, Aghrerat, Parsadga, Urvatadnar, Narsih, Tus, Giv, Ibairaz, Ashavazd,<sup>38</sup> with a thousand others.<sup>39</sup> Kay Khosraw will arise to help Soshyos in the raising of the dead;<sup>40</sup> Peshyotan, or Chitra-mahan, will lend help with his hundred and fifty disciples.<sup>41</sup> Still another Pahlavi passage speaks of fifteen men and fifteen women among the living that are to come to the help of Soshyos.<sup>42</sup> They will all leaven the rest of mankind. Zohak, who is put in chains on Mount Demavand, shall even at the last, break loose from the bonds in which he has been confined,<sup>43</sup> and as a monster-man will return to the world and disturb the righteous creation.<sup>44</sup> At the command of Ohrmazd, his ministers Srosh and Neryosangh approach the body of Kersasp and raise it from the dead. The hero then rises up and slays Zohak.<sup>45</sup> Soshyos and six of his companions, Roshn-chashm, Khur-chashm, Fradat-gadman, Varedat-gadman, Kamak-Vakhshishn, and Kamak-sud, all of which names have a spiritual significance, will divide the work between them, and each of them will act in one of the seven zones.<sup>46</sup> Every one will miraculously communicate with the other of his six colleagues in the other zones. They will read each other's thoughts from a distance and will thus converse just as two men sitting close together would do.<sup>47</sup> The work of the renovation of the world will last for fifty-seven years, the number already referred to.<sup>48</sup> Full fifty years of this beneficent activity will be devoted to the seventh zone Khvaniras, where Zartosht himself was the spiritual chief,<sup>49</sup> and where Soshyos himself is working.<sup>50</sup> All evil will perish during these fifty-seven years, and goodness prevail among mankind, and men will embrace righteousness and zealously practise religion before the final raising of the dead.<sup>51</sup> Disease and death, apostasy and vice, depravity and every

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38 Bd29.5, 6; Dd36.3.

39 Jsp. p. 119.

40 Dd36.3; Mkh. 27.59, 63; 57.7; Dk., vol. 7, p. 485; SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.10, p. 114.

41 Dk., vol. 5, p. 275; SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.8.45, 46, p. 104; BYt. 3.27, 29.

42 Bd30.17.

43 BYt. 3.55, 56; cf. Revelation, 20.2, 7-10.

44 BYt. 3.57.

45 Bd29.7-9; Dd36.3; 37.97; BYt. 3.59-61; Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7.10.10, p. 114; vol. 37, bk. 9.15.2, p. 198, 199; Jsp. p. 118, 119.

46 Dd36.5.

47 Dd.36.6.

48 Bd30.7; Dd36.5.

49 Bd29.2.

50 Dd36.7.

51 Dk., vol. 5, p. 277.

fiendish influence, will perish during this period.<sup>52</sup> The world will be restored to its primal state.

**Resurrection of the dead.** The preliminary work of the renovators is to raise again to life all those who have died from the time of Gayomard, the primeval man, down to the last man Soshyos, and then give them their respective bodies.<sup>53</sup> It is natural that the world could not at this period be quite empty of men. Those who happen to be living at the time when the period of renovation approaches near shall abstain from eating, live without food, and live so virtuously that even the offspring that are born unto them at this period will be of spiritual nature. All these, therefore, will be ready to enter the ranks of the dead who will now receive new bodies.<sup>54</sup>

The dead will be made to rise from the place where they had yielded up their lives in the world.<sup>55</sup> Zartosht questions Ohrmazd in this connection, according to the Pahlavi texts, regarding the questions of forming again the bodies of the dead, inasmuch as the material frames of the dead have perished and been reduced to dust.<sup>56</sup> Ohrmazd, thereupon, tells the prophet that even as it was possible for him to have created something from nothing, when nothing at all existed, and as he was able to create the sky and the earth, the sun and the moon, and the stars, fire and water, clouds and wind, grain and mankind, in fact everything that formerly had no existence, it would not be difficult for him at the Resurrection to form anew something that had already existed.<sup>57</sup> Mohammed likewise tells those that doubt, that if God could create them out of nothing, it was certainly possible for him to bring them back to life after death. The spirit of the earth, the water, the plants, and the fire will at that time restore the bones, blood, hair, life, and other materials which had been committed to them by God in the beginning, and in this manner the bodies will be formed anew.<sup>58</sup> And in another Pahlavi work it is said that just as it is easier to teach what once was learnt but was forgotten than it is to teach that which had never been learnt, and as it is easier to repair a house than to build a new one, even so is it easier to bring to pass the restoration of the creation than in the beginning the original creation out of nothing.<sup>59</sup>

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52 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7, 11.4, 5, p. 117.

53 Dk., vol 5. p. 332.

54 Dd35.1-4.

55 Bd30.7; SnS17.11-14.

56 Bd30.4.

57 Bd30.5.

58 Bd30.6.

59 Dd.37.5.

All those resurrected will be furnished with their bodily frames by the command of Ohrmazd.<sup>60</sup> The first body thus raised up will be that of Gayomard, the father of mankind. Then will follow the first couple, Mashya and Mashyoi, and then the rest of mankind, whether righteous or wicked.<sup>61</sup> Exceptions to this general statement are found in other Pahlavi texts, but the tone is in general the same. Men of demoniac nature, sodomites, apostates, and the hateful Afrasiyab will not be given their bodies, for these arch-enemies of religion are no longer men, but have converted themselves into fiends and must consequently share the fate of their class.<sup>62</sup>

**Universal judgment.** A further arraignment at the judgment seat now takes place. The righteous and the wicked souls are now gathered together in one place and are subjected to the collective, or universal judgment. Every soul at this judicial session sees its good and its evil deeds, and the wicked man becomes as conspicuous as a white sheep among the black.<sup>63</sup> Ohrmazd himself takes a final and decisive account of the souls, and pronounces definitely upon them, for he remembers in each detail the several individual judgments passed in connection with every one of the myriads of the wicked souls after their death, as well as the just.<sup>64</sup> From his judgment there is no appeal. The souls called together in this great and last judicial assembly recognize each other after the long separation.<sup>65</sup> The father sees his son, and the brother meets his sister, the husband greets his wife, the relative welcomes his kinsman, and the friend inquires after the experience of his friend. Everyone eagerly narrates his or her account of the joys or sorrows during the long period of separation from their comrades of the material world.<sup>66</sup> The wicked ones taunt their righteous friends or relatives with the bitter reproach that it had not been good on their part to have practised righteousness themselves, and yet to have left them unwarned in the indulgence of vice.<sup>67</sup> The righteous weep for the wicked, and the wicked weep for themselves in the midst of this universal mourning while the righteous are being separated from the wicked and sent back to heaven.<sup>68</sup> So far they had enjoyed bliss and felicity in their spiritual condition, they now enter heaven in body, and

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60 Dk., vol. 6, p. 359.

61 Bd30.7.

62 SnS17.7; Dk., vol 3. p. 144.

63 Bd30.10; cf. Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, p. 75, New York, 1906.

64 Dd14.5.

65 Bd30.9.

66 Bd30.21.

67 Bd30.11.

68 Bd30.12, 14, 15.

have the satisfaction of seeing even the bodily grievances of their earthly life adjusted.

**Bodily punishment.** The wicked are now cast back to hell, where they suffer bodily punishment for three days.<sup>69</sup> Hitherto their life in hell was torment of the spirit, now in the very body that on earth was instrumental in bringing the spiritual fall of the soul suffers materially. It is said that the wicked soul suffers three kinds of punishment at three different periods. Firstly, in this world during the earthly life; secondly, in hell from the night after the individual's death up to the period of the Renovation in spiritual form; and thirdly, now for three days in hell in the bodily form.<sup>70</sup>

**Ordeal of molten metal.** The final punishment of being tortured in hell and burnt in a river of molten metal for three nights, after Ohrmazd's judgment is given, is in store for the wicked souls. A comet, named Gochihar will fall from heaven and melt all metals and minerals in the earth, and will burn up the world in a general conflagration. A boiling flood of the metals of Shahrewar will then flow over the earth,<sup>71</sup> and the righteous as well as the wicked souls will be made to pass into it.<sup>72</sup> In this glowing flood the wicked souls will be purged of their sins, so that they become wholly purified,<sup>73</sup> while the righteous will feel as if they were walking in warm milk.<sup>74</sup> The torture of the worst sinners, such as Zohak, Afrasiyab, and the rest, during these three nights is more intense than that of all others.<sup>75</sup> This final conflagration brings freedom of the sinners from the prison of hell.<sup>76</sup>

**The righteous and the wicked shall no longer remain as divided, but unite into one.** Then, following the great conflagration, there will be the final renovation of the world. The sinners who have been thus purified and purged of their sins by the fiery metal become worthy of eternal bliss;<sup>77</sup> and that final punishment will absolve them of their sins.<sup>78</sup> The entire creation of Ohrmazd now becomes virtuous.<sup>79</sup>

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69 Bd30.13.

70 Phl. Vd. 7.52.

71 Bd30.18, 19; cf. Revelation, 8.10; 9.1.

72 Jsp. p. 119, 120.

73 Bd30.20; Dd32.12, 13; 37.110, 111; Mkh. 21.10.

74 Bd30.20.

75 Bd30.16.

76 Dk., vol. 2, p. 104; vol. 8, p. 476.

77 Dd14.8; Dk., vol. 5, p. 332; vol. 9, p. 627.

78 Dk., vol. 6, p. 421.

79 Dk., vol. 7, p. 458, 469.

The wicked no longer remain wicked,<sup>80</sup> but become righteous.<sup>81</sup> The angels under whose influence they had done good deeds in the world approach them and give joy to them in the proportion of these good deeds.<sup>82</sup> The happiness of the souls that were already righteous is far greater than that of the wicked who had been cleansed through torture and punishment.<sup>83</sup> The erring children are now restored to the bosom of the Heavenly Father, and Ohrmazd now takes back the entire creation to himself.<sup>84</sup>

**The removal of the imperfection of the material bodies of men.** The completion of heavenly bliss requires that it be everlasting. The human soul is immortal, but the body is not so. Therefore Soshyos and his companions prepare through an Izishna ceremony a nectar from the fat of the ox Hadhayosh and the white Hom juice, through a draught of which all beings become immortal forever and everlasting.<sup>85</sup> Every one is given an immortal body and becomes as innocent in nature as cattle.<sup>86</sup> The entire good creation is henceforth immortal.<sup>87</sup> Any one who was a full grown man when he had died is given the appearance of a man of forty years of age; and those who died at an early age are given the stature of a youth of fifteen years.<sup>88</sup> Husbands and wives united with their children live together, even as they lived and acted in this world, but there is no begetting of children.<sup>89</sup> Their existence in paradise is accompanied by the full enjoyment of their reward for ever and ever.<sup>90</sup> Those that had not given clothes as a righteous gift in the world and were now consequently without clothes themselves are provided with garments by the angels.<sup>91</sup> They are hungerless and thirstless, undecaying and undying, undistressed and ever-beneficial.<sup>92</sup> Neither a blow, nor a knife, nor a sword, nor a club, nor a stone, nor an arrow hurts the body, for it is now perfected and is immune from pain of any

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80 Phl. Vd. 7.52.

81 Dd32.14.

82 Dd32.15.

83 *Ib.*, 16.

84 Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6.279, p. 7.

85 Bd19.13; 30.25; Dd37.119.

86 Dk., vol. 1, p. 50; vol. 6, p. 421.

87 Dk., vol. 4, p. 204; vol. 7, p. 472.

88 Jsp. p. 120.

89 Bd30.26.

90 Bd30.27.

91 Bd30.28; cf. 2 Corinthians 5.2-4; Revelation 3.4, 5; 6.11; 7.9; 19.8.

92 Dd37.119.



sort.<sup>93</sup> Bodily ailments have vanished.<sup>94</sup> The portals of eternal bliss are now flung open to the whole humanity.<sup>95</sup>

**The last decisive battle between the forces of good and evil.**

Then will follow the last and decisive battle of the eternal war between the rival armies of Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Every one of the good spirits will combat with his adversary, and in every case the success will be on the side of the good. Ohrmazd assails Ahriman, Vohuman seizes on Akoman, Ardwhisht on Indar, Shahrewar on Sovar, Spandarmad on Taromat or Naonghas. Hordad and Amurdad on Tairev and Zairich, Truth on Falsehood and Srosh on Eshm.<sup>96</sup> Druj will perish.<sup>97</sup> Hell itself is burnt out. Ohrmazd comes down to the world and acts as the Zota, sacrificial priest, together with Srosh as his Raspi, and holds the sacred thread-girdle in his hands. The holy formulas confound the Evil Spirit, who, now impotent, rushes back to darkness by the same passage through which he had come out at the beginning of creation.<sup>98</sup>

Demon and fiend, deceit and falsehood, strife and anger, hatred and ill-temper, pain and disease, want and greediness, shame and fear, all perish.<sup>99</sup> Evil of every kind disappears, and good of every kind is perfected.<sup>100</sup> Ohrmazd at last becomes completely predominant,<sup>101</sup> and his Kingdom of Righteousness is built upon the earth.

Humanity attunes its will to the will of Ohrmazd. All men now become of one will<sup>102</sup> and remain of one accord in the faith of Ohrmazd,<sup>103</sup> giving voice in song to the Glory of their Lord.<sup>104</sup> On no account will their will be in conflict with the divine will, but will ever coincide with it.<sup>105</sup> They now live in the blessed company of Ohrmazd,<sup>106</sup> and work to exalt his glory.

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93 Dd37.122-125.

94 Dk., vol. 4, p. 234.

95 Dk., vol. 5, p. 332.

96 Bd30.29.

97 Dk., vol. 6, p. 421.

98 Bd30.30.

99 Dd37.120, 121.

100 Dd37.122.

101 Dd7.3.

102 Dd37.127.

103 Dk., SBE., vol. 47, bk. 7. 11.6, p. 117.

104 Bd30.23.

105 Dk., vol. 5, p. 332.

106 Dk., vol. 8, p. 436.

**A PERIOD OF  
DECADENCE – FROM  
THE SEVENTH TO THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

## CHAPTER XLVI. DOWNFALL OF THE SASANIANS, AND THE AFTERMATH

**Iran sinks before the hordes of Arabs.** The death of Khusru Parviz, who had waged the last war in the standing rivalry with the West, heralded the collapse of the Persian empire. The death-knell of the national greatness had been struck when with the advent of the weak kings on the throne the commanders, who felt the allegiance of the army to them rather than to the person of the king, persuaded the army to revolt. Rival princes strove to assert their respective rights to the throne. Court intrigues and strifes became rife. The long wars with the Romans in the far West and the Eastern hordes near at home, whose inroads were facilitated by the unfavourable geographical position of Persia, had exhausted the national resources. Famine and plague had extended their ravages over the whole country. Unbridled luxury, with all its concomitant vices, was imported from foreign lands, and the simplicity of life inculcated by Zartosht and zealously upheld by the Dasturs was abandoned. The masses did not escape the contagion of the luxury and vice of the nobility, and the love of simplicity was replaced by a feverish worship of pleasure. The simple habits fostered by agricultural pursuits were on the wane; and the entire social fabric of Iran was seriously dislocated. The springs of patriotism were sapped, and the bravery with which the Persians of old had faced their national foes was weakened. The age of valour had given place to an age of weakness and decay.

These causes aggravated the downfall of Iran and foreshadowed the coming catastrophe, and there was none to come out as a saviour in this the darkest period of the nation's agony, so as to avert the impending ruin. In the midst of this chaos and confusion, Yazdegird III, the last of the illustrious house of Sasan, sat on the tottering throne.

Since Zoroaster founded his religion, Persia played her conspicuous part as one of the mightiest empires of the world in Asia, Africa, and Europe. During this long period when mighty empires rose and fell and great events in human history took place, the peninsula of Arabia harboured a vast population that led its uneventful, independent life. The pastoral people were divided into innumerable tribes always at war with one another. These sons of the desert were generous and hospitable, active and of rugged virtues. They were inured to fatigue and scorching rays of the sun. They made predatory excursions upon neighbouring peoples. Internal feuds kept them divided.

On a sudden, the greatest and most marvellous revolution of human history overtook Arabia, which soon changed the history of mankind. Arabia gave a great prophet to the world. Mohammed united the discordant, warring tribes into one people and bound them with one

common religious and political bond. He breathed new life into the multitude and made them conscious of their power. He leavened the masses, elevated their morals, taught them a higher form of worship, and instilled in them a sense of the dignity of human nature. He inspired them with religious fervour and animated them with burning enthusiasm for one mighty cause, the spread of Islam. To their traditional warlike zeal, he added religious enthusiasm and this combination made them irresistible. They fought with fiery zeal, reckless valour, and fanatic fury. They broke the mightiest empires of the world and changed the destinies of mankind.

Pulsating with the vigour and zeal of youth, and frenzied by the sudden rise of fortune, the host of these formidable foes overran Iran in the first half of the seventh century; and the decisive battles of Qadisiya and Nihavand sealed her fate. The Kingly Glory that had guarded the fortunes of the nation had flown away, and the star of Islam had risen. The Crescent superseded the Kava banner, Shahinshah was followed by Caliph, Ohrmazd was replaced by Allah. Zartosht gave place to Mohammed, the Koran supplanted the Avesta, and the thrilling cry of the Muazzin from the minaret of the mosque drowned the intonations of the Mobad at the altar in the fire-temple and proclaimed; God is great. There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God.

**Persecution and conversion.** The Iranian nation now broke into pieces. There was not the remotest chance of its ever rising to power again. Confusion and chaos became rampant. The sufferings wrought on the faithful by the conquering hordes defy description. Tens of thousands embraced Islam, and threw in their lot with the conquerors to find relief from the persecution that raged around them. Many went over to the new faith because it enabled them to preserve their power and influence. Others became converts, because conversion brought to them exemption from the payment of the poll-tax. Similar causes contributed to the conversion of the Zoroastrians to Islam in the course of successive centuries. Many embraced Islam under the influence of Abu Muslim during the eighth century. The Samanid dynasty (A.D. 874-999) is named after Saman, a Zoroastrian noble of Balkh. He claimed his descent from the famous warrior Bahram Chaubin. He gave up his faith for the religion of Mohammed. The Zoroastrian king of the Qabusiyya dynasty adopted Islam at the beginning of the ninth century. The influence of Daylam brought many Zoroastrians to Islam during the end of the ninth century. The Zoroastrian poet named Mahyar gave up his ancestral religion under the influence of his Mohammedan poet friend who had instructed him in the art of poetry. Those that were more devoted to the national faith resolved to stick to it at any cost. In this they were imitating their prophet who, when tempted by Ahriman to renounce the good Mazdayasnian religion, had said that he would not

do so even to save his body or his life.<sup>1</sup> The inevitable had come, but they could not afford to resign themselves to it. If they fostered the spirit of resignation and despair, they would be wiped away from the surface of the earth in the intense struggle for existence. Zoroastrianism inspired them from within to assert themselves, even in the face of disheartening obstacles of such magnitude and the fear of coming calamities that were ever imminent. If Ahriman had reduced them to such an abject state, it was cowardice to succumb to his doing. It was heroic to revolt against it.

The frequent ravages caused by the inroads of the Tartar and Turk, Mongol and Afghan hordes added to the hardships of the Iranians. Persecutions checkered their progress. Century after century their number decreased by repeated conversions to Islam. When Agha Mohammed Khan, the founder of the Qajar dynasty, laid a siege to Kerman during the end of the eighteenth century, there were about twelve thousand Zoroastrian families in that city alone. About a thousand families have come over to India during the last century. There are about three thousand families left in Iran to-day. Writing to their coreligionists in India in the fifteenth century, they complain that ever since the overthrow of the empire they are living under such troublesome times that the atrocities of a Zohak, or an Afrasiyab, or an Alexander, pale before what they have been suffering for nine centuries.<sup>2</sup> The unfortunate people were denied freedom of thought, safety of life and property, and human justice up to the end of the last century. They retired within themselves, and struggled to eke out an unhappy existence. They slept smarting under the indignities inflicted on them during the day, were haunted by the spectre of persecution in their dreams, and awoke in the morning with gloomy thoughts of the impending morrow. At best they were suffered to exist, they could not live humanly. This was the veritable iron age of Zoroastrianism and its followers, spoken of in the Vohuman Yasht. Zoroastrianism had struggled for its very existence during this period in Persia, and its followers during such troublesome times had to practise their religious rites by stealth.

**Almost every vestige of Iranian scholarship perishes.** The literary edifice of Iran had crumbled along with the empire, after the invasion of Alexander the Great. What little the nation was able to restore during the Sasanian period fell now once more before the devastating fury of the Arabs. Iranian culture never truly emerged from the shock of this final blow. Many of the most famous writers who have contributed to the Arabic literature and science were themselves Zoroastrian converts to Islam or descendants of those who had

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1 Vd19.7.

2 Patell, *Parsi Prakash*, vol. I., p. 6, Bombay, 1888.

embraced Islam in earlier days. We look in vain in the extant Pahlavi literature for the literary works of merit on secular subjects by the Zoroastrian writers. These have evidently perished. We meet with occasional attempts on the part of the priests to save the literary tradition from extinction. The fall of the Umayyads and the ascendancy of the Abbasid Caliphs in 749, by the help of the Persians, succeeded in supplanting the Arab supremacy by a Persian power. The Abbasids owed their elevation to the throne to the Persians, who now rose to power and influence. Persian method of administration, and Persian food, dress and music prevailed at the royal court and among the people. The observance of the Nawruz, the festival of the New Year, was introduced. Ministers of Persian extraction came to the head of affairs. A noble Persian family, known to history, as the Barmicide, descended from Barmak, who was the high-priest of the great fire-temple of Navbahar at Balkh, remained in power for over fifty years (A.D. 752-804) and wisely directed the affairs of the Caliphate. The Zoroastrians got a favourable opportunity of peacefully conducting their literary activities; and some of the important Pahlavi works that have come down to us were produced during this period, more particularly in the reign of al-Mamun, (A.D. 813-833). After that era the literary activity appears to have been arrested, for no original works were produced that can be assigned to the period following. The work of copying manuscripts, however, was carried on up to modern times, and it is owing to the zealous activity of faithful adherents to the cause that the ancient works have reached us.

**A glimpse into the religious life of the Iranians during the centuries that followed.** From this period onward we have very little knowledge of the religious life of the stray remnants of Zoroastrians in Persia. The insufficiency of the data prevents us from forming any very clear opinion about their beliefs. What little information we have of this period comes mostly from the Mohammedan writers. Masudi wrote about A.D. 950 that Avesta came as revelation from heaven. Zand is commentary. Those who differed from the Avesta were called Zendiks, because they based their statements on the Zand rather than the original Avesta. Al-Biruni, who flourished about A.D. 1000, gives some scattered information on miscellaneous matters of religious practice, which he gathered from the Zoroastrians of his day. We shall select some points of interest from his description. The angel Srosh, he notes, is spoken of as the most powerful angel against the sorcerers, and he visits the world three times during the night to rout them. It was Srosh who introduced the practice of Zam-zama, that is, reciting one's prayers with closed lips and emitting inarticulate sounds or in *bāj*, as the Zoroastrians do to this present day. Ardwhahisht, as the genius of fire and light, watches over mankind, he says, and heals diseases with drugs, but besides this, as the genius who presides at the ordeal by fire,

distinguishes a truth-speaking man from a liar.<sup>3</sup> We have already seen that by the end of the Pahlavi period the sharp distinction between man's soul and his Farohar was forgotten, and both were regarded as one and the same. Commenting upon the observance of the Frawardigan festival, or the days set apart for the propitiation of the Farohars, in his own time, al-Biruni says that the Zoroastrians believed that the souls of the dead, both righteous and wicked, descended to the earth during these ten days. They, therefore, fumigated the house with juniper, and put dishes of food and drink on the roofs of their houses, in the pious expectation that the souls would inhale their savour and receive nourishment and comfort. The pious souls, moreover, assumed invisible forms, dwelt among their relatives, and took part in their affairs.<sup>4</sup> Spandarmad, he observes, is the guardian of the earth and of chaste women who are devoted to their husbands. On the fifth day of the twelfth month, both of which take their names after this archangel, the author says people write a charm on three pieces of paper to scare away the noxious creatures and fix them on three walls of their house.<sup>5</sup> The custom lingers in some Parsi families in India up to this day. People get a Pahlavi incantation written by the priests, preferably in red, and stick it to the front door of their houses. Zoroastrianism never enjoined days of fast, and we have already seen from the Pahlavi works that fasting was regarded a sin. The injunction not to fast seems to have been faithfully followed, for al-Biruni attests that he who observed a fast was compelled to feed some needy persons by way of expiation for his sin.<sup>6</sup> Zoroastrians were generally called fire-worshippers. Firdausi admonishes his coreligionists on the point and asks them not to speak of the Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers because they were the worshippers of one holy God. Kazwini, writing about A.D. 1263, says that Zoroaster made the fire a Kibla and not a god.<sup>7</sup>

We have already seen that the religious dissensions during the Parthian and Sasanian periods had racked the Zoroastrian world. Sects and heresies had sprung up in consequence. Several of these flourished in Iran for centuries after the downfall of the Persian empire. Shahrastani (A.D. 1086-1153) in his *Book of Sects* attests the existence of some of these in his times. The more prominent of these were the Mazdakites, Zarvanites, and the Gayomarthians. The latter sect, about which we hear for the first time, evidently derived its name from Gayomard, the primeval man. The followers of this sect, we are told, believe in an eternal being who is called Yazdan. This first principle, it is

3 *Chronology*, tr. Sachau. p. 204, London, 1879.

4 *Ib.*, p. 210.

5 *Ib.*, p. 216.

6 *Ib.*, p. 217.

7 *Cosmography*, ii. p. 267. ed. Wustenfeld, Gottingen, 1848.

said, existed when there was nothing beside him; he entertained a thought in his mind on the probability of the origin of an adversary. This evil thought originated Ahriman, the spirit of darkness. Ever since the manifestation of this evil one, there goes on a fierce war between the powers of light and darkness.<sup>8</sup>

This appears to be still another attempt to palliate dualism which has ever been the crux of Zoroastrianism. The question comes up time after time and was the cause of many sectarian divisions among the believers. Mohammed strongly urges the unity of God. He preaches rigid monotheism. Iblis or satan, in his system, is a fallen angel and, unlike Ahriman, owes his existence to God. Worshipping two gods must have been the taunt hurled at the doctors of the Zoroastrian Church by the Moslem divines. Those among the Mazdayasnians who seem to have viewed dualism as a flaw in their religious system apparently endeavoured to give it a monistic form by declaring that Yazdan originated Ahriman.

The Zoroastrian author of the *Ulama-i Islam*, a controversial treatise in Persian, written in about the fourteenth century, acquaints us with the different opinions held in his own day, to account for this ever-recurring problem. Himself a Zarvanite, the author attests the existence of several different sects, who variously held that both Ohrmazd and Ahriman have originated from Time, or that Ohrmazd himself permitted evil to exist in order that his goodness might be better appreciated, or that Ahriman was a reprobate angel who revolted from Ohrmazd.<sup>9</sup>

A Persian treatise entitled *Siwar-i Akalim-i Sab'ah*, or *Sketches of Seven Countries*, composed at the beginning of the fifteenth century, states that the Magi believe God and Iblis to be two brothers. A thousand years of the world are a cycle of God, and a thousand of Satan.<sup>10</sup>

The Rivayat literature, a collection of questions and answers on ritual observances exchanged between the Parsis of India and their coreligionists in Persia, between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, enables us to gain an insight into the theological beliefs of the Zoroastrians of Persia during that time, and as these Rivayats were

8 Haarbrücker, Theodor, *Religionspartheien und Philosophenschulen, Erster Theil*, Halle: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1850, pp. 276, 277.

9 Tr. Johann August Vullers, *Fragment über die Religion des Zoroaster*, Bonn, 1831, p. 52; tr. Blochet, Paris, 1898, p. 22. [There are two separate medieval treatises titled 'OLAMĀ-YE ESLĀM "The Doctors of Islam;" they are both Zoroastrian polemical treatises. Also in B. N. Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, Bombay, 1932, p. 437 ff. -JHP]

10 Eng. tr. by Yohannan and Jackson in JAOS., vol. 28, p. 183-188.



compiled in India, we shall recur to them when we discuss the Indian period.

**The Zoroastrian community in Persia, during these centuries lay steeped in the grossest ignorance and darkness.**

Although the condition of the Zoroastrians in their fatherland had been growing more and more precarious, they still had succeeded, amid chaos and confusion, in maintaining for a considerably long time their superiority over their Indian coreligionists in the knowledge of their sacred literature. We shall see in the subsequent pages how the Indian Parsis had to look to the Iranians for enlightenment in religious matters. The learned Iranian Mobad Jamasp, who came from Kerman to Surat in 1721, found the state of the intelligence of the Zoroastrian priests in India so low that he resolved to impart religious instruction to some of the leading high priests during the period of his stay in the land. The Dasturs of Surat, Navsari, and Broach consequently became his disciples;<sup>11</sup> and the first of these, Dastur Darab, later became the teacher of Anquetil du Perron. But the times later changed. Zoroastrian scholarship could not thrive in Persia, as it was able to do under the conditions in India. The mother-country to-day has to look to her thriving children living in India for religious instruction, and for masters from the adopted land able to teach the Zoroastrian Persians themselves, as Persia has not been in a position for more than a hundred years to give any real instruction to the Indian Parsis, or to produce any literary work that could throw light on their sacred books. Zoroaster's teachings had, for a century, been losing their hold upon the community of the faithful in Iran. When the representative of the Society for the Amelioration of the Zoroastrians in Persia, founded by the munificence of the Parsis of India, first visited Persia in the middle of the last century, he found persons of full age living without the sacred shirt and girde, the indispensable marks of a Zoroastrian. He saw them smoking tobacco without any compunction. Superstition had been rampant.

It was manifest the pristine purity of the faith had departed with the greatness and glory of the Iranian nation. The sacred fire, kindled by the holy prophet in the remote past, was still there, it is true, but the demon Az had stretched his icy hands to extinguish it, leaving the fire of Ohrmazd only smouldering in ashes upon the altar. Nevertheless, though shorn of its innate radiance, its sparks were not quenched, and its ashes were still hot; only a Tansar or an Adarbad was needed to fan it into flame.

Such has been the tale of sorrow and suffering of the group that chose to remain behind their enterprising coreligionists who

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11 Patell, *Parsi Prakash*, vol. 1, p. 23, 24, Bombay, 1888.

engendered by a spirit of adventure, set sail for India and planted their colonies in Gujarat. Different is the story that the Indian group has to tell us. It is one of phenomenal progress, unprecedented prosperity, social regeneration, and religious revival. To this we shall now turn.

## CHAPTER XLVII. EXODUS TO INDIA

**The Deva-worshippers of India greet the Daeva-abjurers of Iran.** After the collapse of the house of Sasan, several hundreds of the adventurous people, not finding any human court in which to lodge their complaints, resolved to abandon their fatherland in quest of a more peaceful home, where they could practise their faith with a liberty of conscience so ruthlessly denied them by their conquerors. A burning passion for their ancient home and love for liberty of conscience clashed. The latter conquered and a noble band of Iranian exiles now streamed to India in successive waves. Here they found an asylum. India, the land of the devas, magnanimously welcomed the fugitives of Iran, whose religion had branded their devas as evil. The fire of Ohrmazd found a hospitable hearth in the new land which the early Parsi settlers adopted as their home. The Parsi athravan tended his sacred fire, even as the Hindu atharvan did his in the next street. The Parsi Mobad performed the Yasna ceremony and squeezed the Haoma plant, as his Hindu Brahman neighbour practised his Yajnya rites and pounded Soma.

**Reviling each other's gods, yet living peacefully together.** We have already seen that the points of difference between the religious beliefs of the two nations are as many as are the points of resemblance between them. This is seen in the daily practices of the two peoples. The Hindu rises in the morning to begin his day's work with the devout utterance of the devas on his lips, the Parsi leaves his bed cursing them. One invokes them with his uplifted hands, the other lashes them with his sacred girdle. The Hindu anathematizes the *asuras* as the infernal beings, the Parsi pays his homage to the *ahuras* as the celestial beings. Such is the manner in which the Indian and Iranian branches of the Aryan family have behaved towards each other for a thousand years in India where they met each other once more after the long ages of separation.

**A period of literary arrest.** The unsettled times that followed the first settlement of the Parsis in India were unfavourable to literary activity. Centuries full of hardships intervened before Zoroastrianism gained a real foothold in India and secured for its adherents some means of livelihood in this new country of their adoption. Severe was the struggle and terrible was the trial of the faithful throughout the vicissitudes of all this early period. Poverty, an insurmountable barrier to progress of any kind, haunted the faithful followers of Zoroaster for a long time. When we look at the condition of the times, it is no wonder that the literary movement among the Parsis was arrested for a considerable interval before these emigrants succeeded in adapting themselves to the changed circumstances in which they were placed.

Religious knowledge orally transmitted from generation to generation, however, kept alive the native tradition; but no written works have come down to us of this period. With our slender resources we are unable to ascertain the precise scope of the literary activity of the first five or six centuries of Parsi settlement in India.

**Pahlavi studies.** After an absolute blank extending over a period of three centuries, we come across the only literary composition of this period in the form of the Pahlavi inscriptions in one of the Kanheri caves near Bombay, which record the two visits of some Parsi travellers in 1009 and 1021 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Pahlavi seems to have long remained the literary language of the learned Zoroastrian priests in India; and the traditional knowledge of the language had not become extinct. Though the insufficiency of data prevents us from saying anything with certainty, we cannot be wide of the truth when we say that a number of learned priests had with unflagging zeal kept the torch of Iranian scholarship burning. The masterly Sanskrit version of the Pahlavi texts done in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is an eloquent evidence of this.

**Parsi-Sanskrit literature.** Some of the Parsi scholars, who frequently came into contact with the learned Brahmans, seem to have adopted Sanskrit, the learned language of the land, for their literary productions. The extant Parsi literature produced in this tongue comprises the translation into Sanskrit of the greater part of the Avestan Yasna, Khordah Avesta, and Aogem-adaecha, based on their Pahlavi versions; also a Sanskrit translation of the Pahlavi works *Menog-i Khrad*, *Shkand Gumanig Vizar*, and *Arda Viraf Namah*, and the Sanskrit version of the Pazand Asirvad. The most illustrious representative of this group of Parsi Sanskritists is Neryosangh Dhaval, who flourished about 1200 A.D. He has been one of the most eminent doctors of the Parsi church in India, and has made the versions of the major portion of the Zoroastrian work that has come down to us accompanied by a Sanskrit version. We shall not pause here to consider the question of the literary merit of this particular form of the literature, as that lies beyond the pale of the present work. As the Sanskrit works are merely the faithful translations of the Pahlavi texts, and not any original compositions, we look in vain in them for any side-information on the religious thought of this period. What we do find from them is the fact that the religious studies were prosecuted with great zeal at this period, and that the knowledge of Avestan in general, and of Pahlavi and Sanskrit in particular, among the learned clerics was of a superior order.

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1 West, *The Pahlavi Inscriptions at Kanheri* in *Indian Antiquary*, 9. 265-8, Bombay, 1880.

## CHAPTER XLVIII. ZARTUSHT DURING THE PERSIAN PERIOD

**The birth and childhood and youth of Zartosht.** The Persian and Arabic writers use Zartosht, and similar variations for the prophet's name. Following the Pahlavi tradition, they place the date of his birth at about three hundred years before Alexander. His mother's family, they say, came from Rai. He arose somewhere in Azerbaijan and passed the active life of his ministry at Balkh.<sup>1</sup> Several Arabic and Persian works have allusions to Zartosht. The one work, however, which exclusively treats of the life of the prophet is the Persian Zartosht Namah, composed in verse by Zartosht Bahram in the thirteenth century. The author derives his information from the Pahlavi sources.<sup>2</sup> The writers of this period relate that when Ohrmazd created the spirit of Zartosht, he attached it to a tree. In later ages, a cow belonging to the person destined to be the fortunate father of the coming prophet happened to eat the dry leaves of the tree. The owner of the cow partook of her milk and the consequence was that his wife conceived the child Zartosht. The creator had thus ordained that the couple might shelter the child as two shells would cover a pearl. When five months had elapsed Doghduyah [Dogdo], for that was the name of the mother, saw in a dream that a dark cloud had enveloped her house and noxious creatures fell from it. They tore out the child from the womb and were ready to destroy it and the mother was going to scream in terror. But Zartosht at once consoled her that nothing untoward would happen because the almighty befriended him. A brilliant mountain, thereupon, descended and rent asunder the black cloud and the noxious creatures disappeared. A radiant youthful form holding a luminous branch, representing *Farrahi Izad* or the Glory of God, and a book sent by God in his hand, emerged from the mountain. He restored the child to the mother and comforted her that no harm would befall the child, for God himself guarded it. He added, while departing, that the auspicious child would grow to be the prophet of Ohrmazd.<sup>3</sup>

At the moment of his birth, Zartosht laughed aloud.<sup>4</sup> The story reached the ears of the magician Durasarun, who hastened to the house of Pourushasp and raised his sword to cut off the child's head but that instant his hand withered away. He then ordered the child to be thrown

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1 See Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 13, 161-167, 192, 195, 197-205.

2 GIrPh. 2.122, 123.

3 Shahrastani, tr. Haarbrücker, 1.276, f. ZtN. p. 480-483; Mirkhond, *History of the Early Kings of Persia*, tr. Shea, p. 286; *Dabistan*, 1.212-218; Gottheil, *References to Zoroaster*, p. 48.

4 Shahrastani, tr. Haarbrücker, 1.277; ZtN. p. 483; Mirkhond, tr. Shea, p. 286; *Dabistan*, 1. 218, 219; Gottheil, *References*, p. 49.

into a pile of kindled wood, naphtha, and sulphur, but the devouring flame became as cool as water and the child was saved by Ohrmazd. Then the wizard threw the child into a thoroughfare for the passage of oxen but a leading cow took the child between her forefeet and drove off all that came near, with her horns. Then Zartosht is exposed in a narrow defile through which horses passed. A mare at once stood at the child's head and saved it from being trampled to death. In the fourth attempt to destroy the child, it is put in a den of ravening wolves. When a wolf rushed to devour Zartosht, his mouth was sewn up. The wolves were alarmed and sat near the head of Zartosht like nurses. Two sheep came to the spot and applied their teats to the lips of Zartosht. The sheep and the wolves all remained peacefully near him.<sup>5</sup>

Zartosht is placed under the care of a sage for instruction.<sup>6</sup> At the age of seven, Zartosht fell ill and the magicians went to his house with medicine. Zartosht was asked to swallow the medicine, and was told that it would deliver him from pain. Through divine aid Zartosht knew that it was poison. He poured it on the ground and rebuked them.<sup>7</sup>

The magicians were held in high honour in those days and Pourushasp, the Persian writers say, was also under their influence. One day he invited them to a feast at his house and when the feast was over spoke in praise of their work. Zartosht, thereupon, told his father that he should abandon the erroneous path of the wizards and turn to God for inspiration. The magicians, he added, would find their abode in hell when they died. Pourushasp was much incensed at these words and heated discussions ensued between him and Zartosht. Pourushasp and the magicians were vanquished by the future prophet. The magicians left the house in confusion and disgrace. They fell ill and soon hurried along to the abode of retribution.<sup>8</sup>

When Zartosht reached the age of fifteen he gave up attachment to worldly things and engaged himself in holy meditation in seclusion. Day and night he laboured in the service of the Almighty. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and helped the needy. A glory shone round him owing to his pious life of austerity and his fame spread among all people.<sup>9</sup>

**Zartosht receives revelation.** At the age of thirty, one day Zartosht was returning with his relations and companions towards Iran. They came to a large expanse of water and there was no boat. He

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5 ZtN. p. 484-487; *Dabistan*, 1, 219-221.

6 ZtN. p. 488; Db. 1, 224, 225.

7 ZtN. p. 488, 489; Db., p. 227.

8 ZtN. p. 489, 490; Db., 1.227-229.

9 Mirkhond, tr. Shea, p. 283; Db. 1.229.

invoked God's help and crossed over the water in such a way that the water moistened only the soles of their feet. He then met the archangel Vohuman to whom he expressed his heart's desire. Vohuman asked him to close his eyes. On opening the eyes, Zartosht found himself in the midst of the heavenly beings waited on by celestial virgins. The angels greeted him and he conversed with God, who taught him all sciences and everything from the beginning of creation to the end of time. Upon Zartosht's request Ohrmazd showed him Ahriman in his gloomy abode. When the Prince of Darkness beheld Zartosht, he asked him to turn away from the religion of Ohrmazd and promised to grant all his earthly desires. Zartosht was then made to pass successfully through the ordeals. On Zartosht's asking him about the symbol of religion, Ohrmazd said that the most excellent emblem was light, from which he had created the entire good creation. Wherever there was any luminous object it was the effulgence of his divine light. He instructed Zartosht in the Avesta and asked him to recite the texts of the book to king Gushtasp. Each of the other archangels then asked Zartosht to exhort mankind to preserve the material creation under his special charge.<sup>10</sup>

**Zartosht at the court of king Gushtasp.** Zartosht now turned his steps towards the court of Gushtasp, when the Prince of Darkness accosted him on the way with his evil associates. He asked the prophet of Ohrmazd to conceal the Avesta and turn away from preaching the new faith. Zartosht, in reply, recited a chapter of the Avesta, which confounded the evil brood. Some fled, some dropped dead, and some pleaded for mercy. On his way further, Zartosht met two tyrant chiefs and he asked them to embrace his religion. They heeded not his words. Thereupon Zartosht invoked Ohrmazd for help and a mighty wind began to blow. The stormy wind lifted up the two infidels on high and kept them suspended in the air, where the birds tore off their flesh with beaks and talons until their bones fell to the ground.

The fame of Zartosht had circulated abroad and it reached the ears of king Gushtasp. The king became anxious to see the new prophet of Ohrmazd and when he heard that the beloved of Ohrmazd was coming, he set out from Balkh with a numerous retinue to receive him. The king invited the sages and philosophers to his court and no less than sixty obeyed the royal command. When Zartosht entered the council hall he had a blazing fire in his hand which did not hurt him. He passed the fire to the king and courtiers who held it by turn in their hands and were, likewise, not hurt. On being asked to produce a miracle to testify his statements, Zartosht asked molten brass to be poured on his bosom. This was done four times and there was no trace of burning left. The king ordered the wise men to enter into discussion with Zartosht. The

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<sup>10</sup> Masudi, *Prairies d'or*, 2, p. 153, tr. Barbier de Meynard; ZtN. p. 490-497; Db., 229-243.

sages questioned and Zartosht answered. They argued and he replied. For three days these sages, who had not their equals in the seven zones of the earth, put subtle questions both theoretical and practical, pertaining to this world and the next, and Zartosht gave convincing replies, supported by a hundred irrefutable arguments and a hundred demonstrative proofs. When he had thus silenced the sages, Zartosht loosed his holy tongue and told the king that he was the envoy of Ohrmazd who had sent him with a special mission to the king. The Avesta, the sacred book, was given to him by Ohrmazd for the benefit of mankind. It contained the mysteries of both worlds and everything worth knowing was to be found out from that matchless book. Zartosht concluded by asking the king to embrace his religion. The king was impressed with what Zartosht said but he said that, as precipitancy in such an important affair was not proper, he would take some time in thinking over the question. Meanwhile he treated Zartosht with great respect and assigned to him a house adjacent to his palace. The sages who saw themselves defeated conspired to wreak vengeance upon Zartosht. They bribed the porter of the house in which the prophet lived and contrived to place blood and hair, heads of a cat and a dog, and dead men's bones under the pillow of Zartosht. They found Zartosht sitting by the side of the king and reading the Avesta to him. They boldly approached the king and said that the new-comer was a magician and had deluded the king by the force of charms, and added that if the king required to ascertain the truth let him send his men to his house and see what foul things generally used in magic were stored there. The king ordered the soldiers to repair to the house of Zartosht and examine its contents. They soon returned with the impure things and exposed them to the royal view. The king was enraged, he threw away the Avesta, and sent Zartosht to prison in chains. A loaf of bread and a pitcher of water were carried to him daily by a porter and Zartosht remained in chains both day and night. A week thus passed and it was discovered that the fore and hind feet of a favourite royal steed were drawn up into his belly. The king was in great affliction and summoned the skilled surgeons to cure the horse. All possible remedies were applied but they failed to produce any benefit. The king was so grieved that he did not partake of any food. General mourning prevailed at the royal court. When Zartosht learnt from the porter about the malady of the horse, he sent a message to the king that he could restore the health of the royal horse. The king ordered Zartosht to be brought into his presence. He seated him by his side and said that if he could restore the steed to perfect health, he would believe him to be a true prophet, sent by Ohrmazd. Zartosht demanded that if the king engaged to perform four things he would behold again the fore and hind legs of the charger. The king readily accepted Zartosht's conditions. The first condition made by Zartosht was that the king should make his heart and tongue of one



accord and, without doubt and equivocation, speak with the tongue and repeat with the heart that Zartosht was the prophet and messenger sent by God. The king agreed and Zartosht addressed his prayer to Ohrmazd and rubbed the right foot of the horse with his hand and to the great joy of the king and courtiers and soldiers, it straight away came out. Zartosht then demanded that the king should command prince Isfendiar to gird up his loins to propagate the faith of Ohrmazd. This being accepted, Zartosht invoked Ohrmazd and the right hind leg came out. The prophet's third demand was that the queen should embrace his faith. The queen accepted the faith with heart and soul and in all sincerity and Zartosht prayed and the other hind leg came out. Then the prophet asked the king to call the porter and inquire of him how the things for magical preparations entered his house. The king told the chamberlain that he would save his life if he confessed the truth. The unfortunate chamberlain did save his life by giving out the truth. Zartosht recited the sacred formula and the other fore-foot came out and the swift charger once again stood on his legs. The king kissed the head and face of Zartosht, begged his pardon and seated him on the throne near himself.

Zartosht then cured the father and brother of king Gushtasp of the serious maladies for which the physicians had declared their helplessness. The king now asked Zartosht to secure for him four boons from Ohrmazd. The first was that he should behold his own state in the next world, the second was that his body should be invulnerable, the third that he might learn all mysteries of life, and the fourth that his soul might remain united to his body until the day of judgment. Vohuman, Ardwasht, Azar Khurdad, and Azar Gushasp dressed in green, and fully armed, came on horseback to the court of Gushtasp. They declared that they were the envoys of God, who had commissioned them to give the king the divine message that Zartosht was the prophet of God and the king should acknowledge him as such. The king bowed his head and said that he was the Lord's servant and had girt up his loins to execute his commands. The divine messengers then departed. The king then told Zartosht that he devoted his body and soul and wealth to him. The prophet blessed him and invoked Ohrmazd to grant the boons that the king desired. He performed the ceremony and gave the consecrated wine to the king. When the king drank it, he became insensible and rose not for three days. During this period his soul ascended to the heaven, traversed the heavenly regions, and saw his own place in paradise. Zartosht then gave the consecrated milk to Peshotan who became deathless to the day of judgment. To Jamasp he gave the hallowed perfume, which gave him the universal knowledge of existence from the beginning of the world to its end. A grain of the consecrated pomegranate was given to Isfendiar. He ate it and instantly became brazen-bodied. The prophet thus divided the four boons

between Gushtasp and three of his near and dear ones, because, as he told the king, it was not proper to confer all the four incomparable boons on one individual.<sup>11</sup>

Zartosht, the writers tell us, planted a marvellous cypress-tree in the fire-temple at Kishmar in commemoration of the acceptance of his religion by king Gushtasp.<sup>12</sup> Gushtasp ordered twelve thousand cow-hides to be tanned and made as fine as the skin of the gazelle. He had the sacred texts inscribed upon these in gold and silver and deposited them at Istakhar.<sup>13</sup>

**Zartosht's fabled religious debate with Indian and Greek sages.** It is said that there lived a great sage named Changranghacha in India at this time. He claimed many foreign pupils of distinction and Jamasp was one of them. When the news of the conversion of king Gushtasp reached him he wrote an epistle to the king and dissuaded him from embracing the new faith. On the invitation of the king, the great philosopher came to Balkh with his disciples to hold a disputation with Zartosht and refute his doctrines. Learned men from various parts of the country attended the great debate. Before the sage propounded his questions, Zartosht ordered one of his disciples to read a Nask. Herein were already recorded all the questions that the Indian sage was to ask as well as the answers to them. The sage was utterly confused and he saw that the new prophet had premonition and he knew beforehand what particular questions would be put to him. He acknowledged his defeat and accepted Zartosht as the prophet of God. He embraced the new religion, took a copy of the Avesta with him to India and converted in a short time eighty thousand people to the religion of the Iranian Prophet.

When the news that Changranghacha was defeated by Zartosht reached abroad, another Indian controversialist, Bias by name, came to the court of Gushtasp. The king organized a great assemblage to which the learned men came from distant lands. Bias opened the debate and addressing Zartosht said that he had heard that the wise Changranghacha had adopted the new faith. He had heard in his country, of the many miracles performed by the new prophet, therefore he challenged him to disclose the secret thoughts he had kept pent up in his bosom and had not transferred from his heart to his lips. Zartosht, thereupon, took out a book that God sent to him before the coming of Bias to Iran. He then read out all that was concealed in the heart of Bias, with the appropriate explanations. Bias was at once convinced of the

11 ShN. 5.33-37; Shahrastani, tr. Haarbrücker, 1.283; ZtN. p. 498-511; Mirkhond, tr. Shea, p. 284-288; Db. 1.244-260; Gottheil, *References*, p. 40, 41, 50; Jackson *Zoroaster*, p. 56-80.

12 ShN. 5.27, 28, 34, 35; Db., 306-309; Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 80, 217.

13 Mirkhond, tr. Shea, p. 285; Gottheil, *References*, p. 37.

superhuman wisdom of Zartosht and became an ardent follower of his religion.

Tutianush or Niyatus was the other philosopher who was sent by the eminent sages of Greece to interrogate the prophet about the tenets of his faith. The distinguished Greek seer was at once convinced of the divine insight of Zartosht when he beheld his face. Zartosht asked him to keep in his heart whatever he desired to inquire, for God had already acquainted him with it. One of his disciples then read out aloud all that was in the mind of Tutianush. The Greek sage adopted the faith and king Gushtasp appointed him the head of the priests in his country, where he propagated Zartosht's religion.<sup>14</sup>

**Zartosht's death.** When Arjasp invaded Balkh for the second time, king Gushtasp, as the Persian writers record, was partaking of the hospitality of Zal in Seistan. A Turk named Tur-baratur entered Zartosht's oratory and the prophet received his martyrdom by his sword. Zartosht, however, threw the rosary that was in his hand at the assailant. An effulgent splendor proceeded from it and its fire at once consumed him.<sup>15</sup>

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14 *Desatir*, tr. by Mulla Firuz Bin Kaus, p. 2.120-144, Bombay, 1818; Db., 1.276-283; Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 85-90.

15 ShN. 5.92; Db., 1.371, 372; Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 130, 131.

## CHAPTER XLIX. PERSIAN WORKS ON ZOROASTRIANISM

**Rivayats, or codes of usages and rituals.** We have again to pass over a period of about three centuries, or from about the thirteenth century to the latter part of the fifteenth century, before we come across a further record of literary activity. After the convulsions that the small band of fugitives experienced, they had settled down as the tillers of the fields, sellers of liquor and toddy, as minor traders and merchants, or as members of petty professions. By this time, however, the Parsis of Gujarat had begun fairly to prosper. Some of them had even succeeded in building up modest fortunes, and had spread abroad their fame for liberality. This beginning of the economic welfare of the community shows the first signs of the new life, and among these signs was the fact that the community began eagerly to turn its attention to the necessity of gaining authentic information on the religious questions about which they were in doubt. The Parsis of India thought that their co-religionists living in Persia must be better informed on religious matters than themselves, and must have preserved the old-time tradition more faithfully than they themselves did. They therefore drew up certain religious questions on which they needed enlightenment, and in 1478 commissioned a daring Parsi to go to Persia and lay their questions before the learned Dasturs of their fatherland. The news that a band of fugitives lived in India who were one in faith with them, and shared their common traditions, had long since filtered through to the Zoroastrians of Persia. In fact it is possible that the connection between the two bands of the faithful, though imperfect, had never been quite broken. Intercourse through trade, as well as other factors, must have helped to keep up some connection. Great, therefore, was the enthusiasm caused by the fresh opening of a closer communication with them; and for nearly three centuries (1478-1766), a more immediate interchange of views took place between the Zoroastrians of India and Persia. No less than twenty-two messengers had left India during this period with questions pertaining to ritual observances, ceremonial ablutions, purificatory rites, forms of worship, rules of adoption and marriage and other miscellaneous subjects. These collections of traditions, customs, and rites, arranged in the form of questions and answers, are composed in Persia, which became the literary language of the Parsi scholars under the influence of the Moslem rule in Gujarat. These compilations are called Rivayats, and provide a wealth of information on liturgical and social matters.<sup>1</sup> Side by side with a score of

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1 "The dates of the Persian Rivayats" in *Studies in Parsi History*, by S. H. Hodivala, p. 276-349, Bombay, 1920; *Darab Hormazdyar's Rivayat*, edited by M. R. Unvala, with an introduction by J. J. Mody, 2 vols; *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazdyar Framarz and others* by B. N. Dhabhar; *Darab Hormazdyar's Rivayat* by J. J. Mody, in the

important subjects, the disquisitions sometimes fall to the level of barren theological disputations. Among such discussions, for example, were points like these: Whether the Avestan texts could be copied with ink prepared by a non-Zoroastrian, whether the faithful be polluted by conversing with the non-Zoroastrians while they are carrying a dead body, whether a Mobad who has eaten clarified butter prepared by a non-Zoroastrian can ever regain bodily purity by means of ceremonial ablutions.

**Theology of the period.** Bundahishn and Sad Dar, Jamaspi and Arda Viraf Namah inspired the clergy and laity in their conduct of life at this period rather than did the Gathas and other Avestan works. The formal rather than the spiritual, the concrete rather than the abstract, seem to be the prominent feature of the beliefs that we can glean from the Rivayats. The hope of the joys of a materialized heaven and the fear of the sufferings of a physical hell guide and control man's life upon earth. Man's soul and his Farohar are taken, in the Rivayats, for one and the same. The souls and not the Farohars are believed to come down on earth on their monthly or yearly anniversaries. The souls of the righteous persons descend on the earth and remain here for full ten days of the Farohar festival, but the souls of the wicked ones are given only five days' leave of absence from hell to visit their earthly homes. If the souls are properly propitiated, they rejoice and bless; if not, they complain and curse. It came to be believed that the Yasna sacrifices offered in the name of Farohars, or of the angel Hom, or of those of Zartosht, Gushtasp, and other sainted dead persons, could thwart the evil designs of their enemies; could rout the demons and fairies; could oppose the tyrant kings; could withstand famine and plague, retard the evil consequences of bad dreams, gain favour of kings and noblemen, and secure various advantages.

We are informed, moreover, that the reason of consecrating a set of white garments on the fourth day after death is to provide a corresponding heavenly garment to the soul in the next world; because, we are told, the soul is quite naked, when it is liberated from the body at death, and is naturally ashamed to enter the assembly of the heavenly souls who are all clad in fine raiment. The souls are awarded heavenly garments in proportion to what is consecrated to them by their kinsmen in this world. The richer the quality of the garment consecrated here, the finer the raiment bestowed upon the soul in heaven.

Bull's urine, or golden water, as it is now called, has been an indispensable article in the purificatory rites and ceremonial ablutions among the Zoroastrians from the earliest times. From the strong belief in the efficacy of its giving external bodily purification, it was but a step to the idea of attributing to it the power of purifying the internal nature

of man. A most extravagant sanctity came to be attached to the drinking of it. Elaborate rituals are now performed over the liquid and the drinking of this consecrated fluid form an indissoluble part of certain Zoroastrian ceremonials. The Rivayats tell us that the drink gives divine glory, and makes man's inner nature as bright and as pure as the sun.

Bull's urine has been, since ancient times, an essential auxiliary of spells or formulas used to exorcise those possessed by evil power; but the original Avestan and Pahlavi word *gaomaeza* or *gomez* fell into disuse by the Rivayat time, and the term *nirang*, which originally meant spell only, now signifies both spell and bull's urine, and henceforth conveys both the meanings. Such in general is the view that we gather from the Rivayats regarding the conditions prevailing in that period.

**Other works in Persian.** Besides the Rivayats, several works, both in prose and in verse, have reached us. The most important of these is the *Zartusht Namah* or *Book of Zartusht* composed in verse by Zartusht Bahram Pazdu in the thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The account of the life of the prophet is based upon the Pahlavi works. Several Pahlavi works are rendered into Persian. The Avestan texts are translated into Persian with the help of their Pahlavi version. A considerable devotional literature and treatises on miscellaneous subjects are extant. There are about forty short prayers in verse and *gazel* form, called *Monājāts* composed by about a dozen different priests. The earliest in point of time are the four hymns attributed to the authorship of Zartusht Bahram Pazdu, the author of the *Zartusht Namah*. The latest are composed in the third quarter of the last century.

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2 West, GIrPh. 2.122, 123; Eastwick, tr. in English in Wilson's *Parsi Religion*, p. 477-522; Rosenberg, *Le Livre de Zoroaster*.

## CHAPTER L. MYSTICS AND MYSTICISM

**To know God one must become God is the dictum of mysticism.** Religions have looked to divine revelation as the real source of divine wisdom. The faculties of the human mind, it is believed by men of mystic temperament, cannot give the true knowledge of God. Knowledge gathered through the senses is illusive. Reason is not capable of comprehending God. To attempt to see him through the medium of reason is to lose him. Intuition is higher than reason. Though reason may conduct the adept to the divine portal, intuition alone can enable him to penetrate into the sanctuary and have a vision of God. Human intelligence is debarred from entering this inner sphere. Divine wisdom dawns upon the mind when it renounces its own thoughts and reflection, and loses all self-consciousness. In such an entirely passive and receptive state of ecstasy, the mind is divinely illumined. It is the outcome of immediate contact of the pure mind with God. The mind that yearns to know God must seek its union with the divine mind. The transcendental insight gives a supra-rational apprehension of divine wisdom. Truth dawns thus upon him, and shines in its effulgence, while an ecstatic insight is aroused in him and in a moment of ecstasy, when the devotee transcends all self-consciousness, the wave of the occult light surges in upon him, and the mysterious something sweeps, like a meteor, over his soul giving a sudden flash that illumines the inner world. The nightingale in its transport of joy sings to the glory of God, until it becomes half frenzied. When the mystic is bathed in devotion, he is so intoxicated with the divine wisdom that he thinks himself one with the Divine. In this condition the devotee does not meditate upon God, he feels him; he does not think of God, he owns him.

**The allegorical method of interpreting religious texts.** From very early times some theologians of both the East and the West have maintained that the prophets adapt themselves to the mode of thinking of the masses and use parables and legends to express their views. The sacred texts, they say, are written in a way which contains a double meaning, the one is the surface meaning, which can be understood by the masses, and the other is the inner or hidden meaning meant for the initiated. The Sophists and Stoics resorted to the method of allegorically interpreting Greek mythology to meet the attacks of sceptical criticism. The Alexandrian Jewish and Christian theologians, Philo and Origen, spoke of the literal and spiritual meanings of the sacred books. The first, they wrote, was the bodily part of the text meant for the majority and the second was its spiritual part which was understood by those few who could find the revealed kernel, hidden by God in the outer textual shell. The Gnostics and the Neo-Platonists thus attempted to explain Oriental and Occidental myths by allegorical interpretation. The

Ismailis, the Sect of the Seven and other schools that flourished in Iran from the ninth century, called themselves the *Bātinis* or the esoterics as opposed to the *Zāhiris* or the exoterics or literalists. Their method of interpreting the sacred texts on the allegorical basis is called *tā'wil*.

This method of interpreting religious texts persists throughout the various periods of the history of the religions of the world. Legends and myths, traditional dogmas and superstitious customs, historical errors and textual discrepancies, primitive beliefs and practices are all invested with the mysterious meanings. Statements which often repel both intelligence and conscience find an easy expedient in allegory. The esoterics generally seek in the sacred texts what their own thinking is willing to find and read in them what is rooted in their minds. They read the subjective meaning into the texts and draw unwarranted implications from them. Forces of nature, animate or inanimate objects are all given a new meaning and explained as symbolizing some ethical idea, some aspects of man's consciousness, some expression of the divine in man. Rational explanations are attempted for apparently absurd customs to preserve them against rational criticism. Symbolic significance is attached to puerile legends. Unbridled by the canons of reason and undeterred by any regard for historical sense and critical acumen, the esoteric interpreters of religions generally produce allegorizing extravagances.

**Desatir and Dabestan.** In the early part of the last century appeared the text and translation of the *Desatir*, alleged to have a heavenly origin, and to have been written down in the reign of Khusru Parviz and thus to throw a flood of light on Zoroastrianism. A very heated controversy was the result of the appearance of this work. One party of eminent European scholars declared it to be a fraudulent forgery, while others of equal eminence endeavoured to prove its authenticity. The claim of the *Desatir* to have been written in a celestial language was put to a crucial test. Patient research has since declared the book to be an exotic, outside the pale of Zoroastrianism. And so it has been held by all Iranian scholars both of East and West.<sup>1</sup>

In this work are given the teachings of various mystic schools, and the entire treatise breathes a totally different atmosphere from that of the genuine Zoroastrian works, being divergent in tone from the true spirit from its very beginning to its close. The Iranian scriptures of all periods have recognized Gayomard as the primeval man, who was the progenitor of the human race, and who, first among mortals, heard the divine word of Ohrmazd.<sup>2</sup> But this work, on the contrary, gives a regular hierarchy of prophets who are supposed to have preceded the first man.

1 Bharucha, in *Zartoshti*, vol. 3, p.121-134;179-191; vol.4, p.257-279, Bombay, 1275 A. Y.

2 Yt13.87.



God first revealed his secrets to one Mahabad, who was followed by thirteen other prophets in the former cycles of time bearing his name. Through them the supposed revelation came down to Gayomard and his descendants. It is alleged in this book, moreover, that all the early Pishdadian kings conformed to this religion of Mahabad, until the time that Zoroaster came and preached his fundamentally new religion. But even the new prophet's religion, we are told, was so glossed over by the Yazdanians, the followers of Mahabad, that Zoroastrianism was ultimately made to confer to the Mahabadian code.<sup>3</sup>

Another Persian work entitled *Dabestan, or School of Manners*, written in India by Mohsan Fani in the seventeenth century, draws the greater part of its materials from the *Desatir*. The author of this composition mentions some fourteen sects into which he finds the Zoroastrians of his day divided. These are the Sipasian, Abadian, Jamshaspian, Samradian, Khodaiyan, Radian, Shidrangian, Paikarian, Milanian, Alarian, Shidabian, Akhshiyian, Zardushtian, and Mazdakian. Several of these sects are stated to have flourished from very remote times, going back to the Pahlavi and Avestan periods, nay stretching even back to a period of which history has not a word to tell. With the exception of these two works, however, we have no inkling of other sects in the genuine Iranian texts. The statements contained in them are not corroborated by any authority in the writings of the Zoroastrian priests. They do not mention them by name, they are entirely unaware of their existence. The account of the majority of these sects, as found in the *Dabestan*, is very meagre. We meet with some attempts in them to explain the primordial principle from which creation came into being, and we have some sort of crude metaphysics grafted on physics. Sun, fire, air, nature, water, and earth are alternately put forward as having been the physical sources of existence according to various schools of thinkers.<sup>4</sup> Others still preach a strict monism, and assume that the world of phenomena was caused by illusion.<sup>5</sup> The teachings of the Yazdanians and others are characterized by a belief in metempsychosis, as well as in the efficiency of rigorous austerities and ascetic virtues. Our present concern, however, is with the author's account of the Zoroastrian mystics, and we shall now turn to the matter immediately.

**Zoroastrian mystics.** At this period we meet with some Parsi thinkers who were not satisfied with the formal side of religion, and looked with indifference upon the ritual observances, Outward formalism and literal interpretation of the teachings of the prophet failed to meet with the longings of these men of mystic temperament.

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3 *Dabistan*, tr. Shea and Troyer, vol. 1, p. 30.

4 Vol. 1, p. 202-207.

5 *Ib.*, p. 195.

They ever remained in search of mysteries hidden beneath the outward garb of dogmas and rituals. The Parsi priesthood could not satisfy the wants of such ecstatic enthusiasts. They revolted from authority, and set about thinking for themselves. These dissenters as a body lived a life different from that led by their neighbours. Many of them found consolation in the teachings of the Hindu Yogis and became their willing disciples. Under these circumstances we have to turn to the *Dabestan* for the general information of this sect, as the historic Parsi works are silent over the question and do not even notice its existence.

**Azar Kaivan and his disciples.** The author of the *Dabestan* gives us an elaborate account of the Zoroastrian mystics whom he met in Patna, in Kashmir, and in Lahore during the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> The most illustrious of these mystic teachers was Dastur Azar Kaivan who came from Persia and settled in Patna,<sup>7</sup> and lived for years in seclusion far from the public gaze.<sup>8</sup> Some of the most prominent disciples of this recluse sage were the Mobads Farzan Bahram of Shiraz, Hushiyyar of Surat, Sarosh, and Khuda Jui. They extravagantly trace their lineage back to Ma-habad, to Sam, Godrej, Rustam, Jamasp, Zoroaster, and Noshirvan. Let us now pass on to a brief notice of the literary activity of these hermit priests.

**Mystic literature during the period.** These Parsi mystics composed several treatises in Persian, which, as we have already seen, was the literary medium of this period. Among the more important works that have thus come down to us are Jam-i Kaikhusru, Makashefat-i Kaivani, Khishtab, Zaredasht Afshar, and Zindah Rud. The author of the last three allege that their works are translations into Persian from the original Pahlavi books written in the days of the Sasanian kings Hormazd and Khusru Parviz. A search through the literary content of these writings, however, shows that their philosophical dissertations mostly reproduce the teachings of Greek philosophy, current in India in the seventeenth century through its Arabic version. For instance, the Khishtab opens with the prophet Mahabad's descriptions of the four generative principles of things, which are nothing else but the material, formal, efficient, and final causes of Aristotle. The authors fantastically credit the legendary and real kings and princes of Persia with the philosophical ideas, which on very little examination can easily be traced to their original Greek sources. These royal personages are styled prophets or seers and depicted as advancing some original argument for the proof of the existence of God, his eternal attributes, and regarding other kindred subjects. Even the warrior heroes Zal and Rustam seem occasionally to

6 Vol. 1, 108, 115, 118, 119, 122, 123; vol. 3, 204.

7 Vol. 1, 89.

8 Vol. 1, 93.

have proclaimed a truce to warfare, and to have devoutly sat down in more peaceful pursuit of metaphysical investigations; for some of the philosophical disquisitions stand in their names too.

**The alleged twofold meaning of the Avesta.** These esoteric interpreters of the sacred works asserted that Zoroaster had couched his teachings in figurative and enigmatic language.<sup>9</sup> The Zoroastrian scriptures were accordingly divided into 'Great Zend' and 'Little Zend,'<sup>10</sup> the first being followed by the adepts and initiates, and the second by the masses.. The figurative language of the former hid the deeper truths from the ignorant.

The author, then, cites some instances and explains the difference between the exoteric and the esoteric interpretations of the Avestan texts. For instance; when it is said that the archangel Vohuman held a conference with Zoroaster and asked him to close his eyes, the vulgar, according to the *Dabestan*, understand that Vohuman assumed human form and addressed the prophet like a mortal; but the adept is to understand by this that the true essence of man was uncompounded, and that under such a state Vohuman manifested himself before Zoroaster, and his asking the prophet to close his eyes means only that the spirit asked him to eradicate all bodily attachment and suppress carnal desires of the flesh in order to enable him to get a vision of the archangel.<sup>11</sup> When the Zoroastrian texts seem to sanction animal slaughter, it is to be understood as an injunction to kill the animal propensities inherent in man.<sup>12</sup> The author states further that the passages which speak of the hermits as partaking of animal food in reasonable bounds are not to be taken literally. These simply refer to the gradual control and ultimate killing of the animal nature in man.<sup>13</sup> The legend that Ahriman appeared at a season festival in the guise of a glutton and devoured everything to the utter confusion of the assembly, until he was routed by preparing a dish from the flesh of a certain red cow, mixed with vinegar, garlic, and rue, at the instance of some miraculous advice, may be taken by the masses as literally true. But any one versed in esoteric wisdom, and acquainted with the doctrines inculcated by the *Dabestan*, knows that the killing of the red cow stands for the suppression of the sensual appetite, vinegar for the virtue of abstinence, garlic for reflection, and rue for silent reflection. All these would kill Ahrimanic propensities in man.<sup>14</sup> The ignorant invest

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9 Db., vol 1.361.

10 *Ib.*, 352.

11 *Ib.*, 233, 234.

12 *Ib.*, 65, 66, 74, 75.

13 *Ib.*, 240.

14 *Ib.*, 349, 350.

Ahriman with a personality; but, really speaking, he has no independent existence, for he is not an entity and is simply the negation of existence.<sup>15</sup> The aggregate of bodily passions and sensual appetites is symbolically termed Ahriman, named from the originator of evil,<sup>16</sup> and Ahriman's predominance in the world is to exist only for a limited time while the tumult of youth in man and the bodily passions in man are in the ascendancy and until they are ultimately curbed and eradicated.<sup>17</sup> Again, the sacred books speak of Ahriman as the creator of serpents and scorpions. But these noxious creatures, according to this treatise, are nothing but allegorical expressions for the vices and passions that haunt the human mind.<sup>18</sup> All such persons as stick to the exoteric interpretation of the scriptures believe that Zohak actually carried two serpents on his shoulders, but the adept understand the statement as applying to the venomous tyranny and sensuality of the wicked usurper.<sup>19</sup> The legend of the flight of King Kaus to the heavens, his fall, and the subsequent restoration of this lost monarch to his kingdom by Rustam, has likewise an esoteric interpretation. The four eagles that carried the misguided king high up in the air, along with his throne, signify the four elements. The throne, explains the author, stands for the predominant bodily passions, the ascent means that a devotee can rise to a higher plane of existence by a life of abstinence and austerity, the fall denotes the revolt of the passions owing to some neglect in the observance of the ascetic practices: while Rustam's achievement, in finally bringing Kaus back from the forest, indicates the flash of proper knowledge that reclaims the erring aspirant from fatal mishap.<sup>20</sup> Thus the esoteric writings veil the truth from the gaze of the vulgar. The real and deep meaning is hidden within the: outer husks; and only he who grasps this inner meaning can attain to insight into the secret doctrine. This in fact is a summary of the mystic teachings of the Parsi ascetics in the *Dabestan*, based evidently upon the earlier doctrines of Sufism and developed under Hindu mystic influences in India.

**Ascetic practices of the Parsi mystics.** The hermits practised celibacy.<sup>21</sup> They abstained from animal food,<sup>22</sup> and reduced the quantity of their daily food, until many of them could live on food weighing ten

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15 *Ib.*, 360.

16 *Ib.*, 360, 361.

17 *Ib.*, 357, 359.

18 *Ib.*, 360.

19 *Ib.*, 55.

20 *Ib.*, 56, 57.

21 *Ib.*, 113.

22 *Ib.*, vol. 1.95, 96, 113, 118; vol. 3, 205, 206.

dirhams, or a fraction of an ounce, a day<sup>23</sup> or in some cases on only one such unit.<sup>24</sup> Some could live without any kind of food or drink for two or three days in succession.<sup>25</sup> Such devotees practised many kinds of austerities;<sup>26</sup> and all of these mortifications of the flesh were undergone in religious imitation of their Hindu brethren. The chief among such austerities were those of supporting themselves on the extremities of their fingers from midnight until dawn,<sup>27</sup> and of standing on the head with the feet raised in the air from nightfall unto sunrise.<sup>28</sup> By rigorous discipline some such religious enthusiasts, we are told, attained the power of suppressing their breath for three hours,<sup>29</sup> or even for twelve.<sup>30</sup> They would thus swoon away into a state of trance,<sup>31</sup> in which respiration and breathing were totally suspended and by this utter self-abnegation the adepts reached the borders of utter selflessness. Mobad Hushiyyar, once plunged into deep water and remained underneath for full six hours before he raised his head above the surface.<sup>32</sup> These devotees, like the Indian Yogis, as shown below, are credited with the power of quitting the bodily frame at pleasure, traversing the spiritual regions, and returning to the body whenever they liked.<sup>33</sup> They laid claim to read the thoughts of others.<sup>34</sup> They are further fantastically credited with the superhuman power of performing miracles; such as causing the sun to hide his disk and appear at night, or the stars to appear during the day, walking on the surface of water, showing themselves in the form of lightning in the heavens, metamorphosing animals, rendering themselves invisible to man, assuming various forms,<sup>35</sup> appearing at one and the same time at distant places, bringing the dead to life, or causing the death of the living, producing food and wine from nothing,<sup>36</sup> causing the rains to fall or to cease, producing

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23 Db., vol. 1, 76, 77, 120.

24 *Ib.*, 77, 88.

25 *Ib.*, 122, 123.

26 *Ib.*, 89, 108, 120; vol. 3, 204.

27 *Ib.*, 113.

28 *Ib.*, 123.

29 *Ib.*, 111.

30 *Ib.*, 118.

31 *Ib.*, 1, 84, 85.

32 *Ib.*, 124.

33 *Ib.*, 85, 86, 93, 108, 127.

34 *Ib.*, 109, 116.

35 *Ib.*, 107, 108.

36 *Ib.*, 114.

giants to frighten others, converting broken pottery into gold,<sup>37</sup> disporting in the midst of a burning fire, or swallowing it,<sup>38</sup> and such like.

**Unmistakable influence of Hindu Yogism.** All this self-mortification of the body and the assumption of occult powers sounds unfamiliar to Zoroastrian ears. The whole fabric of the ascetic and unworldly view of life is in direct antagonism to the active, and, in the best sense, worldly spirit of the Mazdayasnian faith. In its every detail, as indicated above, the Parsi mystic school savours of the strong influence of the Indian Yogis. The Parsi ascetics of the period seem to have been in close acquaintance with the Hindu hermits. The author of the *Dabestan* informs us that Mobad Hushiyyar conducted him to see some of these Hindu ascetics,<sup>39</sup> and he speaks equally of Parsi adepts who were in constant touch with such Hindu monks.<sup>40</sup> He further mentions a Parsi ascetic who moved about in Gujarat clad in the garments of a Hindu hermit,<sup>41</sup> and who visited the great Sikh saint, Guru Har Govind.<sup>42</sup> Hirbad, a great Parsi mystic, moreover, gave instructions to his disciple, Mobad Hushiyyar, either to burn or bury his body, when dead,<sup>43</sup> because it mattered not whether a corpse was consigned to the fire or to the earth.<sup>44</sup> Every one of its details shows the total indifference on the part of these dissenters to what was really true of Zoroastrian observance.

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37 *Ib.*, 115, 116.

38 *Ib.*, 117.

39 *Db.*, vol. 2, 137, 145.

40 *Ib.*, 146.

41 *Ib.*, 192, 193.

42 *Ib.*, 280, 281.

43 *Db.*, vol. 3, 208.

44 *Desatir*, tr. by Mulla Firuz, vol. 2, p. 29, Bombay, 1818.

## CHAPTER LI. RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES

**Theological disputations.** We find from the extent Persian literature that the writers of this period occupied themselves in minute quibbling and barren discussions of the ritualistic ceremonies and purificatory rites. There is no trace of original thinking on vital problems. Their energy was wholly expended on endless wranglings about dogmas and theological disquisitions. Questions were raised whether it was essential to cover the face of a corpse with the *penom*, or mouth-covering white veil; whether the legs of a corpse should be folded or left lengthwise, before it was removed to its final resting place.<sup>1</sup> The community was actually divided into two parties over the first question, and so bitter was the feeling aroused that at Surat the corpses without such coverings were refused a resting-place in the Tower of Silence. The relatives of the dead had under these circumstances to carry dead bodies to Navsari for their final disposal. This resulted in the erection of separate towers for the contending parties.

**Intercalation controversy provides a powerful incentive to the study of the ancient Zoroastrian scriptures.** In 1720 were planted seeds of a controversy' which gave, however, a real and abiding impetus to religious studies. A learned Mobad named Jamasp, who came to India from Persia, in 1721, found that the Indian Parsis were one month behind the Zoroastrians of Persia in the calculation of their year, and he strongly advocated a reform in the matter. The question at first did not arouse much attention, but later it developed into a serious problem that led to a display of strong passion and to the exchange of bitter words on both sides in the community. Learned priests in each party zealously turned to the study of the original scriptures, as a source to decide the matter, and the question was threshed out in detail, accompanied by the publication of innumerable tracts and pamphlets. While the learned in the community were thus engaged in ransacking their ancient records, the masses took up the controversy acrimoniously, resorting to abuses and sometimes even to blows. The Shahinshahis, or the Imperials, represented the old order, and the dissenters styled themselves the Kadimis, or the Ancients. The former annoyed the latter by their mocking derision. Social intercourse between the two became most strained, the community was split into two sects, and separate places of worship were founded. The division of the community into two sects endures to the present day, but despite the differences obtaining between the two, time and the growth of education have obliterated the bitter feelings. Modern researches have proved that both the parties were wrong in their calculations. The

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<sup>1</sup> Patell, *Parsi Prakash*, 1, 23, Bombay, 1888.

accidentals of the controversy have changed during the long period of hard-fought battles, but the main question has still remained as unsettled as before. Among the chief causes that have contributed to the indefinite postponement of the reform are the indifference and apathy of the community. The question is looked at with misgivings, as not falling in the arena of practical reform, because fraught with many complications. What we are more concerned with is, that the controversy gave new life to literary activities, and encouraged studious habits among the learned.



## CHAPTER LII. AN EPOCH-MAKING ERA IN THE HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIAN RESEARCHES

**Introduction of Iranian studies in the West.** The inexorable decree of Providence had ruled that a new light from the West should dispel the darkness that had surrounded the pages of the sacred scriptures for ages, and add to their better understanding and elucidation. European travellers who had visited India and Persia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries acquainted the people of the West with the religious beliefs, manners, and customs of the followers of Zoroaster. Hyde's masterly work on Parsi religion, which drew its materials from the works of the classical authors and the Persian version of the *Sad Dar* as well as from kindred works, appeared in 1700. Some important Iranian manuscripts had been carried from India to England, and were now shelved as curios in the Bodleian library at Oxford.

**Anquetil du Perron's pioneer work.** To the energetic Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron, is due the credit of making the first systematic attempt to study the Avestan texts and place their contents before the Western world.<sup>1</sup> Having come across a facsimile of four leaves of the Bodleian manuscript, his curiosity was aroused, and with characteristic zeal he enlisted as a soldier in 1754 on a ship bound for India with the aim of bringing back to the Western world a knowledge of the sacred scriptures of Zoroaster. Unbounded enthusiasm, combined with the vigour of youth, enabled Anquetil to overcome the almost insuperable difficulties that stood in the way of his literary enterprise. Having acquired from Dastur Darab, the High Priest of the Parsis of Surat, what inadequate knowledge he could get in those days, he returned home after six years of strenuous work and published the result of his studies in three quarto volumes in 1771. This publication created a stir in literary circles, and gave rise to a heated controversy. One school of thought of eminent scholars in Europe declined to attach any weight to the Frenchman's work, and denied that the grotesque stuff that he had placed before the world could ever be the work of so great a thinker and sage as Zoroaster, stoutly maintaining that Anquetil's Avesta was either a forgery or that he had been duped by the Indian Parsi Mobads. The falseness of this view, however, was ultimately shown.

1. See Mody, *Anquetil du Perron and Dastur Darab*, Bombay, 1916.

**Western scholarship revives Zoroastrian studies.** The disinterested labours of various scholars during the subsequent years fully substantiated Anquetil's pioneer work; and when the closer affinity between the languages of the Avesta and Sanskrit became generally known, the sacred texts began to be studied in the light of comparative

philology, and the authenticity of the Avesta was completely proved. The seeds sown by Anquetil have since blossomed into fruitful trees in the West, but some decades passed after the publication of his work before Western scholarship penetrated into India.

## CHAPTER LIII. PROSELYTIZING COMES TO BE VIEWED WITH DISFAVOUR

### **Beginning of the spirit of exclusiveness among the Parsis.**

We have already seen that the handful of the Parsi fugitives who emigrated to India after the final overthrow of the Persian empire in the middle of the seventh century had to face enormous difficulties in the earlier centuries of their settlement in the new home. The precarious condition in which they lived for a considerable period made it impracticable for them to keep up their former proselytizing zeal. The instinctive fear of disintegration and absorption in the vast multitudes among whom they lived created in them a spirit of exclusiveness and a strong feeling for the preservation of the racial characteristics and distinctive features of their community. Living in an atmosphere surcharged with the Hindu caste system, they felt that their own safety lay in encircling their fold by rigid caste barriers.

**The community was divided regarding the question of admitting lower classes of aliens into its fold.** Though the practice of an active religious propaganda had thus fallen into desuetude, the question of conversion does not seem to have died out entirely, for we find recorded in the Rivayat literature that a heated polemic regarding the subject was carried on during the latter part of the eighteenth century. With the beginning of economic prosperity, the Indian Parsis, we learn, were in the habit of purchasing male and female slaves of low Hindu castes. These slaves, in many cases, were invested with sacred shirt and girdle and admitted into the Zoroastrian fold by the priests at the request of their masters. Those members of the community who were opposed to the mingling of their blood with that of such a low class of people denied to these converts the full privileges of a true believer. The contesting parties applied to their coreligionists in Persia for their advice and decision in the matter. The point made by those who favoured the cause of the converts was that the Parsis of India who owned slaves for their work not only often had them admitted to the Mazdayasnian faith in accordance with the tenets of the religion, but also, without and religious scruples, partook of food prepared by them, and even permitted them, at the season festival to prepare the sacred cakes used for consecration and sacrificial purposes. It was urged that having allowed the converted slaves all such rights of a true Zoroastrian in their lifetime, certain priests as well as laymen objected to the corpses of these slaves being deposited in the Tower of Silence when they died. The Iranian high priests, in replying to their inquiring brothers in India advised them in the beginning to take precautionary measures in all such conversions that no harm should thereby be done to the religion and to the community. It was certainly an act of great merit, they proceeded, to purchase alien children and

bring them up as Zoroastrians. It was unfair and highly objectionable, they added, nay it was an inexpiable sin, to refuse these unfortunate people all the privileges of a believer after once admitting them into the Zoroastrian religious fold. It is taught by the scriptures, they argued, that all mankind will be brought over to the religion of Mazda in the time of the future saviour prophets. It was, therefore, the pious duty of every true Zoroastrian to help this great cause by leading all to the path of righteousness. In the face of such commands, they concluded, those who denied to the proselytes the full rights of a faithful believer did not deserve to be called Zoroastrians.

On another occasion in reply to a question about the conversion of such low-class people, the Iranian informant wrote that even a man who dug graves or followed the profession of burning the dead (two inexpiable sins according to Zoroastrianism), should be admitted into the Zoroastrian fold, provided his admittance would not be harmful to the faith.

**The fear that the community might be swamped by the undesirable alien element was a reason why proselytizing fell into disfavour.** We notice in that discussion that the different sections of the community were divided more on the social side of the question of proselytizing than on its religious side. The protest was chiefly based against the admixture of racial blood that the low class of the aliens introduced into the community. The Zoroastrians of Persia, who were trampled under the iron foot of their Moslem conquerors and had lived in servile state, saw no objection whatsoever in receiving converts even from the lowest strata of the non-Zoroastrian peoples. But the case was different with the Indian Parsis, among whom the improved social and economic conditions had aroused a keen sense of racial pride and consciousness of their past greatness. A very considerable portion of the community, it seems, looked with disapproval upon the introduction of the undesirable element of alien races into their small numbers. This strong feeling was aggravated the more through the fact that such converts who sought admission came always from the lowest classes. Members of the upper classes of the non-Zoroastrian communities were not heard knocking at the door of the Mazdayasnian fire-temples seeking admission. The community was not disposed to any kind of active religious propaganda. The cases of conversion were consequently confined either to the slaves brought up in Parsi families or to the children born to Parsi fathers of their non-Zoroastrian mistresses. Proselytizing came to be associated with the low type of foreign element, and fell into disrepute.

A beginning of opposition to the idea of religious propaganda was thus made when the entire question of proselytizing came to be looked upon by the community with disfavour. No serious attempt has since

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been made by the Parsis of India to organize a proselytizing movement with the sole object of propagating their faiths. But the desire on the part of some Zoroastrians to include in the faith children born to them by illegitimate intercourse with non-Zoroastrian mistresses, or by others seeking a matrimonial alliance with alien women and investing the children born of such unions with the sacred shirt and girdle, has prompted them to open the question from time to time to the present day. So bitter have been the controversies thus arising that they have stopped just short of physical violence.

## CHAPTER LIV. GUJARATI LITERATURE BEARING UPON ZOROASTRIANISM

**The last native version of the Avesta independent of the influence of Western scholarship.** So far the Parsi scholars had generally written in the Persian language, a knowledge of which was limited to a very narrow circle, and the general public accordingly did not profit by their work. The need had long been felt of producing theological literature in the language of the people, and several portions of the Persian Rivayats had already been done into Gujarati. These were followed during the early part of the last century by a Gujarati version of the Avestan texts, not from the original, but based on the Pahlavi, Sanskrit, and Persian renderings. This was the last native attempt to render the Avestan scriptures into another language through the medium of the Pahlavi translation. The Sanskrit, Persian, and Gujarati translators had all successively made their renderings on the basis of the traditional Pahlavi version; it was left for the modern philologists to approach the Avestan texts in the original itself, independently of the Pahlavi rendering though aided by it, and through the methods of strict linguistic science to give an independent and first-hand translation of the original Avestan texts.

**Rendering of other Persian works into Gujarati.** The Persian Zartosht Namah was rendered into verse in Gujarati by Mobad Rustam Peshutan Hamajiar in the early part of the eighteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The Gujarati version of the Avesta was soon followed by a translation of some of the important Pazand-Persian works into Gujarati. The most popular among these were Jamaspi and Arda Viraf Namah. The prognostications of the former treatise fascinated the gentler sex, who were regaled by the recital of its contents from the lips of the family priest, or of some male member of the family who happened to know the language. Viraf's account of the beatific visions of heaven and the horrors of hell appeared in illustrated lithographed editions. The pictures of the heavenly persons seated on golden thrones, and of the wicked falling headlong into hell to be gnawed by noxious creatures, served vividly to bring the abstract ethical teachings, before the mind of young and old. Some devotional literature, both in prose and verse, appeared during this period. In the same connection, it may be added that the episodes of the Persian kings and warriors, handed down from antiquity by tradition, were rendered into Gujarati, and were most enthusiastically read or heard by all. This helped to bring home to them the greatness and glory of their ancestors.

<sup>1</sup> Meherbanu and Behramgore Anklesaria's *Zartosht Namun*, Bombay, 1932.

**A PERIOD OF REVIVAL  
NINETEENTH CENTURY  
AND AFTER**

## CHAPTER LV. MODERNISM VERSUS TRADITIONALISM

**The modern world is divided between Modernism and Traditionalism.** Religions rest on divine revelation. This revealed knowledge is static. Secular knowledge progresses with time and, by continuous research and discovery in the realm of the physics of nature and the laws of life, creates new knowledge. It knows no end and is ever new. It adapts itself to the times and satisfies the cravings of the thinking minds. From the earliest times, religion spoke with authority on matters relating to the spirit. But there were physical problems for which the inquisitive mind always demanded solution. Science claimed to make new discoveries in the realm of physical researches. Religion adopted science as its handmaid and incorporated the discoveries of the scientists and the physicists and proclaimed them as the further divine revelation to mankind to explain physical questions. The crude cosmologies and cosmogonies of the times when science was in its infancy were thus made integral parts of the religions of the world. The researches of modern science have rendered them untenable in the light of advanced knowledge. The doctrine of evolution has revolutionized man's outlook upon life throughout the world. Modern science has changed the attitude of the thinking people everywhere. The intellectual ferment and spiritual unrest have stirred the whole world. The enlightened youths are driven to disbelief. They are not happy in the state of disbelief. They are anxious to believe and secure peace of mind but they cannot honestly subscribe to the beliefs in which they are brought up. They are disbelievers despite themselves. This state of disbelief is produced by honest doubt.

**Orthodoxy is obstinacy to forget anything old and learn anything new.** Orthodoxy has always and everywhere professed that the doctrines, dogmas, rituals, and the established views of life that a people has inherited are fixed and right. All those that dissent from them are heterodox, other than right, not right, that is, wrong. Orthodoxy has always numbers on its side, for the average man is temperamentally timid and conservative and is unwilling to be disturbed in the thoughts and views he has inherited with his birth. He seeks refuge in tradition and is content to live secure in the dead past. All that is handed down from remote times and forms the tradition of the people is sacred. Orthodoxy is jealous of the views it holds and resents all opposition to them. It aims at making people religious in its own way. It moves about with prying eyes and spies on its neighbour's conscience and struggles to read his thoughts. Whenever it is powerful enough to inflict its will upon others, it clips the wing of thought, gags speech, and cripples action. The collective orthodox mind controls the thinking of the individual and drives the dissenters to secrete their



thoughts in the lowest depths of their souls. Orthodoxy makes free thinking taboo and fails to see that high thinking is impossible without free thinking. Orthodoxy is impervious to the influence of the times.

## CHAPTER LVI. THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING AMONG THE PARSIS

**Awakening of the communal conscience.** The advent of the British in India, and an era of peace, justice, and security of life and property, ushered in by them, opened a new page in the history of the Parsis. Having a ready scope, the means of adaptation, and also elasticity in their religion, they now began to assert their latent capacity, and soon emerged from the obscurity in which they had lived, to become henceforth the foremost people in India in matters educational, industrial, and social. They came in the vanguard of progress, amassed vast fortunes, and munificently gave away large sums in charity. This unprecedented economic prosperity helped the revival of learning among the Zoroastrians. The new epoch of the revival of learning gave new hopes for a period of formation and life. Various educational institutions had been founded, and the Parsis faced the problem of the responsibility of universal franchise in the world of letters. The average Parsi child of both the sexes entered the schools founded on European lines by the community during the first half of the last century, in various centres of Parsi population, and education on Western standards spread with accelerated rapidity.

**The new knowledge profoundly modified the religious conceptions of the young.** The inroads of Western ideas and culture undermined the old ideals, and modified many of the beliefs sanctified by ages. It was the opening of a new age for the Parsis, in which they witnessed the waning of the power of authority and the waxing of the demand for the verification of religious truths. The transition from the old to the new was bound to be disruptive. The new spirit that had taken hold of the community stirred it to its lowest depth. It threatened the community with an intellectual revolt from the new school. The reaction was bound to come, and come it did. It was violent as all reaction is apt to be, and it ended in indifferentism. The popular creed as propounded by the traditionalist exponents and orthodox formalists failed to carry conviction to their intellect. They wanted to verify their doubts and refused to believe that which, as they said, was not in accord with reason. The glowing accounts of the reward and retribution of the materialized heaven and hell ceased to act upon the imagination of the educated classes. The imaginings of Viraf failed to exert any restraining influence over the tendency to sin. The inspired visions of this seer, about the scenes of the hereafter, depicting the pleasures of the souls of the blessed in paradise and the agonies of the wicked in hell, which satisfied the spiritual cravings of their elders for ages, failed longer so to do in the case of the new generation. The waters of Ardisur had inundated the regions of hell and quenched the blazing fire, the horrors of hell had vanished into thin air, and the apocalyptic account of Viraf

no longer presented to the minds of the enlightened youth what they had to the strictly orthodox. A treatment of the unfortunate souls, such as was portrayed traditionally, seemed to them monstrous, and subverting man's idea of the goodness of Ohrmazd. They thought them to be crude and archaic. The germs of new thought were sprouting among the young, and they viewed these theological problems with a changed attitude. They gradually became estranged from all beliefs that had been instilled into them from childhood. They aimed at reconciling religion and contemporary knowledge, and bringing religious beliefs and practices into closer relation with the intellectual ways and thought. Parsi orthodoxy resented it.

**An illiterate priesthood failed to satisfy the intellectual wants of the enlightened youth.** The Parsi priesthood had long before degenerated into ignorance. The situation was not keenly felt so long as the laity was equally illiterate. But now when the latter sought enlightenment, the clergy had kept less and less abreast of the times. During the long period of twelve centuries, very few priests rose above mediocrity. The priest hitherto had acted as an intercessor between the layman and Ohrmazd, and through elaborate ritual had undertaken to gain for him divine help, being duly paid to recite penitential prayers for the expiation of the sins of the living, and to sacrifice for the purchase of paradise for the dead. The youth of the new school argued that there was no more need of the Mobad's mediation between him and his Heavenly Father. He demanded that the priest should act as a moral preceptor, a spiritual ministrant to his soul. This, in those times, the priest could not do. He could not widen his religious outlook and adapt himself to the demand of the younger generation.

The youth now grew up without religious instruction and gradually gravitated towards indifferentism. The apathy, callousness, and disregard towards religion on the part of the educated youth waxed stronger day by day, and culminated in an atmosphere of agnosticism that withered the beliefs in which they were brought up. Agnosticism became the threatening evil of the day.

## CHAPTER LVII. INTRODUCTION OF THE WESTERN METHOD OF IRANIAN SCHOLARSHIP IN INDIA

**Parsi scholarship at this period.** Up to that time the Avestan texts had been almost wholly interpreted by the Zoroastrian authorities through the help of their Pahlavi translations. The original Avestan texts had remained largely unintelligible without the Pahlavi version. It was not then known that the Gathas were composed in metre, much less the fact that some other minor texts were also metrical. The rudiments of Avestan grammar that various inflections modified the meaning of a word had been a long forgotten fact. This was due to the circumstance that, owing to the inflectional poverty of the Pahlavi language, the translators had resorted to the use of particles and very often had even dropped this only means of indicating the syntactical relation of words in a sentence, and had contented themselves with rendering an inflected Avestan word by its uninflected crude Pahlavi equivalent. Firdausi and other Moslem writers were the sole informants of the Parsi scholars regarding the ancient and legendary history of Iran. As these did not record the doings of the Achaemenian kings, the Parsi community remained without any inkling of the greatness and glory of the illustrious Parsi kings of the great Persian empire. European history had now for the first time startled the English-educated Parsi youth with the information that there once flourished a mighty dynasty of rulers whom the modern Parsi can claim as his kith and kin. The truth had been denied for centuries to their legitimate descendants in India and Persia that a Cyrus or a Darius, a Xerxes or an Artaxerxes, who had carried the Persian banner in war to the farthest ends of the world, were historically their own coreligionists.

In vain did the august Farohar of Darius hover round the rock of Behistan for over two thousand years in pious expectation of some Parsi traveller who would one day trace his steps to this hallowed place, climb the rock to read the great king's record, make it known to the world, and thus earn the royal monarch's blessings whispered in the solemn silence by as many tongues as there were wedges and angles in the letters of the carved inscriptions.

Such, in short, was the deplorable state of Parsi scholarship when comparative philology came to its aid from the West and opened a new era of critical study in the field of Iranian researches.

**Introduction of the science of comparative philology among the Parsis.** Since the year 1771, when that worthy pioneer of romantic renown in Iranian studies, Anquetil du Perron, published his volumes containing the first European translation of the Avesta, or Sacred Book of Zoroaster, great strides forward have been made in

Europe and America in the realm of Iranian research. The field is now replete with the lasting monuments of Western scholarship whether in the department of standard editions of the sacred texts or the compilation of grammars and dictionaries or again in the preparation of scientific translations as well as in making exegetical, philological and archeological researches. The service that these scholars have rendered to the Parsis is greater than can ever be expressed.

To K. R. Kama, Parsi pioneer of the Iranian studies on Western lines in India, who had studied the Avestan texts in Europe under the German savant Spiegel, is due the credit of introducing among Parsi scholars the science of comparative philology and the scientific method of interpreting their sacred books. The inauguration of this new era belongs to the early part of the second half of the last century.

**Textual criticism brings startling revelation for the Parsis.**

The first outcome of the critical study of the Avestan literature, as may be judged from intimations given above, was the discovery made by the Western scholars that the grammar, style, and internal evidence of the extant Avestan texts show that they were not composed at a single period and by one person, but that they were the products of many persons who worked at various times. Scholars such as these undertook to determine the approximate dates of the component parts of the Avesta. The Gathas were shown to be the oldest in time of composition and the authorship of a considerable portion, if not all, of these hymns was ascribed to Zoroaster himself. The prophet's work, it was said, was continued by his immediate disciples, and must have extended over a very long period after him, even though the immediate impression made by Zoroaster himself may be acknowledged to have become fainter in succeeding generations. The religion of the Younger Avesta had departed in certain respects from the religion of the Gathas, and the subsequent compositions showed signs of degeneration both in substance and style. The simple and abstract spirit of the Gathas was blurred if not lost, and the development of the later texts tended to become more complex and concrete. We breathe a different atmosphere, they declared, when we pass from the Gathic to the Later Avestan field. Nature-worship, which Zoroaster strove to supplant by a higher type of ethical religion, was shown to have been reinstated in these later texts. The masses could not be weaned from the beliefs that loomed large in their eyes, and thus, the scholars maintained, many practices abolished by Zoroaster were later resuscitated by the clergy.

Startling indeed were these new ideas that philological researches brought to the Parsis, who had been accustomed to attribute indiscriminately all Avestan compositions to Zoroaster himself and who never approached their own sacred books with a historical perspective.

**Back to the Gathas was the war-cry of the new school.** This critical estimate of their scripture by the Iranian scholars of the West greatly influenced the young Parsi scholars in India. They now hailed the Gathas as providing a self-sufficient religious system in themselves. They claimed to have discovered the only true mirror in which the genuine teachings of Zoroaster were, reflected. The Later Avestan texts were declared to render nugatory the pristine purity. An exuberant outgrowth of dogmatic theology and ceremonial observances, they asserted, had supplanted the buoyant simplicity of the Gathic teachings, and simply represented a decline from the pure teachings of Zoroaster. The names of the Amshaspands in the Gathas were considered to be merely descriptive of the attributes of Ohrmazd. These attributes, they insisted, had crystallized into concrete beings, thus converting the monotheistic religion of Zoroaster into a veritable system of polytheism. Tradition, they argued, attributed to Zoroaster doctrines that he never preached. They advocated a return to the original purity of the faith by stripping off the accretions that had gathered round the pure canon of the prophet, thus removing the haze of ignorance and bigotry that had overclouded the light of their excellent religion.

All this was highly sacrilegious to orthodox ears. Such statements roused the strong resentment of the community and elicited vehement protests from priests and laymen alike. The new school was assailed on all sides. More sober opinion intervened to modify the sweeping assertions, and declared that while the Gathas, of course, should be taken as the norm, there should also be admitted into the Zoroastrian canon such parts of the later scriptures as were in accord with the Gathic spirit; but whatever could not be traced to the Gathas was adventitious, and therefore not deserving of acceptance. The problem at once arose as to who was going to distinguish the authoritative from the un-authoritative and a new controversy opened amid still more bitter feelings.

**A new theory to defend the Gathas from the accusation of dualism.** The salient feature of dualism in the Iranian faith has ever been the chief point assailed by the non-Zoroastrians, both in ancient and modern times, whenever they have entered into religious disputations with the followers of the prophet. They have laid the doctrine of two gods to the charge of Zoroastrianism. The accidentals of the controversy have varied materially in their character at different periods, but the main point of contention has ever remained the same. We have already seen how vehemently the learned prelates of the Pahlavi period strove to vindicate this characteristic feature of the Zoroastrian teachings. Far from considering it a weak point, they hailed it the only possible solution of the problem of evil. Not so their modern descendants. The repeated attack of the Christian missionaries, and the

strong influence of the Western literature, which hailed monotheism as the highest category of theology, brought about an unprecedented change in this belief; and so powerful has this influence been, that we hardly ever find even at this day any learned Parsi priest or layman marshalling arguments in vindication of the doctrine. Attempts are now generally made either to explain it away by ingenious arguments or to speak of it apologetically.

Haug was the first to bring it to the notice of the Parsis that the leading idea of the Gathas was monotheism. Ahura Mazda, he declared, is the supreme godhead, who has produced the two rival principles Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu as his twin spirits. Separated as they seem, they are united in action. They are indispensable to each other in the formation and conduct of the universe. They are the creative and the destroying, constructive and destructive powers of God, and are as inseparable from each other as day and night. The opposition rests with the two rival spirits, and nowhere in the Gathas does Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit, stand in direct opposition to Ahura Mazda. This fundamental distinction, he said, is lost sight of in the late period, and we find in the Vendidad that the Good Spirit Spenta Mainyu is identified with Ahura Mazda himself, and the Evil Spirit Angra Mainyu stands in direct antagonism to God. The Parsi scholars who were ever in search for some new arguments to remove the so-called weak point of their faith eagerly embraced this new explanation, which, they thought, saved the Gathas at least from the stain of dualism. If the Vendidad and other later works introduced it in the Zoroastrian theology, it was a decided fall, they claimed, from the original pure monotheism. The prophet himself never taught dualism, they argued, and it is unfair to ascribe that doctrine to him, for which the enlightened youth had to blush before modern criticism!

## CHAPTER LVIII. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES ATTACK ZOROASTRIANISM

**Indifference on the part of the Parsi youth arouses the proselytizing zeal of the Christian missionaries.** These thought that they could easily turn the apathy of the newly educated Parsi youth for his own religion to interest in the faith of Jesus, if they could convince him of the superiority of Christianity over his national creed. The impressionable youth once secured, they imagined, would prove a valuable asset in bringing over his enlightened coreligionists to the Christian fold. Christianity would thus easily spread downwards among the masses, they thought, if only they could capture the upper educated classes. The missionaries felt that this handful of the progressive people, who approached nearest to the Western people in their modes of living, would ultimately be easily won over to their faith. With this object in view some of them began to study the Zoroastrian scriptures first hand, during the latter part of the first half of the last century. They picked out what seemed to them to be vulnerable points in the Zoroastrian faith, and exposed them to the ridicule of the Parsi youth newly tinged with Western ideas. The community was alarmed at this aggression, the more so when a couple of converts were actually made to Christianity from this class.

**Salient features of Zoroastrianism assailed by the missionaries.** The religion of Zoroaster, the controversialists alleged, abounded in absurdities and incongruities. It was based on the idolatry of nature. The Parsi scholars repudiated the accusation with indignation, and said that in their reverence for the elements of nature they never worshipped fire, sun, and such other elements, but venerated the angels presiding over these noble productions of God, holding them to be his purest symbols.<sup>1</sup>

An erroneous rendering of Vd19.9 had led Anquetil du Perron, the first translator of the Avestan text into a European tongue, to depict Boundless Time as the first principle of the Universe.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation was taken as an unequivocal testimony of the Zoroastrian scriptures to corroborate the statement of the Greek and Armenian writers who had alleged that both Ohrmazd and Ahriman had sprung from Time. Anquetil's mistake was repeated in the works of the European writers for a considerable time, until it was finally corrected by the unanimous verdict of the Iranian scholars of the West during the latter half of the last century. When the Zoroastrian scriptures were adversely criticized by the missionaries on the ground that the doctrine

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1 A Parsi Priest, *Tālim-i Zurtoosht*, p. 15, Bombay, 1840; Aspandiarji, *Hādie Gum Rāhān* (Eng. version), p. 44, Bombay, 1841.

2 *Zend-Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 414; vol. 2, p. 592, Paris 1771.



of Boundless Time at the apex of existence proved the derivative and secondary character of Ormazd,<sup>3</sup> the Parsi priests repudiated the charge and vigorously maintained that the concept simply designated eternity and nothing more. Far from being Ormazd's superior, Boundless Time, they affirmed was his creation.

More heated was the controversy that hinged upon the alleged belief of two rival spirits. We have already seen 'how dualism has been the main question of inveterate controversies,; we shall here only advert to it in passing When the missionaries derisively called the Parsis the worshippers of two gods, which certainly they never were, they at once vehemently denied the charge and hastened to repudiate it by denying downright an objective existence to Ahriman. The Evil Spirit, they argued, is not an entity, but merely the symbolic personification of evil nature in man owing his origin to man's errant thoughts. Outside of man he has no existence at all. He is a gratuitous invention. The concept of his existence is purely negative, a chimera. He is man's creation, as are also the infernal host of demons and fiends, which are nothing more than the lusts and passions of man.<sup>4</sup>

**Parsi apologists meet the charges of their opponents by resorting to allegorical explanations.** This attempt at giving allegorical interpretations of the scriptures was carried still further. Tradition had always seen some geographical data in the first chapter of the Vendidad, and modern scholarship had accepted that view; but in their polemics with the missionaries the Parsi scholars explained the opening of the chapter by asserting that the act of Ohrmazd in creating Iran Vej, the first region of the world, was to be interpreted as a mere figurative expression for religious faith, and Ahriman's counter creation of winter was emblematic of infidelity. Similarly, the various places said to have been created by Ohrmazd indicated man's body, and the obnoxious creatures of Ahriman signified man's evil passions.<sup>5</sup> Another instance of the same kind of interpretation may be cited. Druj Nasu, or the Demon of Defilement is spoken of in the Vendidad as taking possession of a man who has touched the corpse of a dog or a man,<sup>6</sup> and a minute description is given as to how the demon is successively driven out from the top of the head of the defiled person to the tips of his toes, as the ablution ceremony is being performed. This rite was criticized as being revolting to common sense.<sup>7</sup> Instead of defending it on hygienic

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3 Wilson, *The Parsi Religion*, p. 134, Bombay, 1843.

4 A Parsi Priest, *Tālim-i Zurtoosht*, p. 62-64, 83, 84; Aspandiarji, *Hādīe Gum Rāhān* (Eng. version); p. 35-37, 73, 74.

5 A Parsi Priest, *Tālim-i Zurtoosht*, p. 35, 36.

6 Vd8. 35-71.

7 Wilson, *The Parsi Religion*, p. 161.

principles, the learned controversialists again expatiated upon the mystic significance of the text, and alleged that the whole ceremony referred to the internal purification of man, and that Nasu represented his evil nature, while the successive expulsion of the fiend from one part of the body to the other, until finally eradicated, meant the gradual improvement of a man's character.<sup>8</sup> Zoroastrianism teaches that the sin of burying corpses is inexpiable.<sup>9</sup> The pulling down of the dakhmas, wherein lie interred the dead bodies of such men, is a means of the expiation of one's sins in thought, word, and deed; and is equivalent to the recital of a Patet.<sup>10</sup> Responding to a criticism on this passage, recourse was again taken to declare it as couched in mysterious language. It was curiously explained to mean that the dakhma referred to the body of man, the corpse stood for his evil passions, its disinterment meant the expulsion of the evil propensities, and the final exposure to the light of the sun signified the enlightenment of the inner man by the divine wisdom.<sup>11</sup>

**The outcome of this controversy.** The Parsis further retaliated by seizing upon the weak points of the Christian scriptures and turning them into ridicule, just as we have seen, the author of the *Shkand Gumanig Vizar* did in the Pahlavi period. Theological questions were thus discussed with acrimonious zeal on both sides, and a considerable polemic literature was produced. The good that came out of this controversy was that the study of their own religion began to be prosecuted by the Parsi priests with greater avidity than before.

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8 Aspandiarji, *Hādie Gum Rāhān* (Eng. version), p. 74; A Parsi Priest *Tātim-i Zurtoosht*, p. 180.

9 Vd1.12; 3.38, 39.

10 Vd7.51; 13.57.

11 Aspandiarji, *Hādie Gum Rāhān*, p. 79, 80.

## CHAPTER LIX. THE REFORM MOVEMENT

**Crusade against the non-Zoroastrian practices engrafted upon Zoroastrianism.** The compromises and concessions made on the part of the early Parsi settlers in India were needed to conciliate the prejudices of the Hindu rulers. The Parsis were a handful of people living in the midst of the teeming millions of India, and even the twelve centuries of their residence in this country have failed to merge them in the ocean of Indian humanity. This fact is largely due to their intensely communal spirit, fostered by the dread of being assimilated into greater communities, and of thus losing their individuality. But the average Parsi did not fail to borrow many superstitious customs and habits from the Hindus as well as from the Mohammedans during the later period. The Hindu augur and the Moslem diviner became important factors in the family life of the Parsis. These seers were called in to cast the horoscope of the new-born Zoroastrian child; they foretold the future, administered amulets to heal every sickness and disease in the family, prescribed charms to ward off the evil eye, exorcised demoniacal influences from persons possessed by the powers of darkness, and, in many ways, proved indispensable auxiliaries to a Parsi from birth to death. The mediation of a Brahman or of a Mullah was often rated higher than that of a Mobad., and a Sanskrit mantra or an Arabic kalma was regarded more efficacious for the purchase of heavenly boons than an Avestan manthra. The Zoroastrian priest ruled in the fire-temple, but the non-Zoroastrian priest had a powerful sway over the hearts of the Parsi populace. With rich offerings did the faithful repair to the tombs of Moslem saints and to Hindu shrines. They laid their faith upon all altars and turned to strange gods in their extremities. The grandeur of the Mazdayasnian teachings had faded, and Zoroaster had partly ceased to be a living force in the spiritual life of the community.

Many alien customs had thus worked their way into Zoroastrianism. These were hard facts for the orthodox to admit but they were facts all the same. With the vigour of youth and with unquenchable zeal the reformers of that day undertook to liberate the community from the thralldom of superimposed non-Zoroastrian customs, and to wean it from superstitions.

**The reformers protested against reciting their prayers parrot-wise in an unintelligible language.** The Avesta language had long since fallen into disuse. It was not a living language. Yet the belief in its being of celestial origin, the tongue in which Ohrmazd addressed his heavenly court, and even that in which Ahriman harangued his ribald crew, had preserved it as the only true vehicle for conveying prayers. The reformers now argued that it was meaningless to mumble an unintelligible gibberish which neither the priest himself

nor the layman understood. Ejaculations and genuflexions were of no avail, when they recited their prayers in a dead language. No amount of such formulas would affect the character of the devotees and ennoble their thoughts. A prayer that had no subjective value was no prayer. It failed to awaken any ethical fervour, for a truly devout prayer should spur the spirit within to a higher life. This was not possible so long as the priest perfunctorily droned prayers, not a word of which was understood.

The orthodox vehemently retorted that the Avestan language was divine, and as such it possessed inherent magical efficacy. Miraculously composed as these Avestan prayers were, they had indescribable objective value, it was claimed, quite independent of the motive of one who recited them. The mere utterance of the sacred texts, without knowing in the least what they meant, would produce marvellous effect. The ultra-orthodox viewed the situation with pious dread and entertained serious apprehension that, if once the community permitted the use of Gujarati or English compositions for daily prayers, nothing short of a revolutionary change would come, and with the lapse of time the Avestan texts would be supplanted by prayer-books composed in the modern vernaculars. The reformers pointed out that there already existed some monajat prayers composed in Persian by some of the learned Dasturs even in their own lifetime, which the orthodox were using without any scruple at the end of their daily Avestan prayers.

A fierce controversy raged around this question, with the result that the orthodox went on praying in their own way, and the reformers, neither having faith in the recital of their prayers in an unintelligible language nor having a proper substitute to satisfy their demand, went without prayers of any kind. And the situation remains, in large measure, unchanged up to this very day.

**The Avesta text metamorphosed into an ungrammatical jargon.** The reformers further said that the Avestan texts were recited with the most incorrect pronunciations. In vindication of their statement they quoted passages from the original texts and put by their side the corrupt formulas in vogue in the community. An example of this kind may not be out of place here, and we shall insert the text of Ahunwar, the most important Zoroastrian formula, first in its correct form and then in the corrupt form which obtains among a considerable portion of the community up to this hour. The original formula is as follows:

*yathā ahu vairyō athā ratush ashāt chit hachā  
vangheush dazdā manangho shyaothananām angheush  
Mazdāi  
khshathremchā ahurāi ā yim dregubyo dadat vāstārem.*

The corrupt form of the same:

*athāu veryo thāre tose sāde chide chāvanghoise dezdā  
manengho sotthenanām anghyos Mazdāe  
khostharamchāe orāe āiyem daregobyō daredar  
vāstārem.*

This, however, did not trouble the orthodox, for they complacently remarked that as long as they had implicit faith in what they recited, and recited it whole-heartedly, it mattered very little whether they used correct pronunciation or not. Ohrmazd looked to their hearts, and not to their sense of grammar and orthography. So long as their motives were good, their prayers were acceptable to the Heavenly Father.

The redeeming feature of this entire controversy has been a growing tendency in the community to avail itself of the help of the philologist, who has brought nearer home to them the correct and carefully edited version of their sacred scriptures, and they have consequently begun to recite their daily prayers from books that have based their texts on the standard and authorized version of the liturgy.

**Too much ritualism, protested the reformer.** The mechanical handling of the ritual, which was as much unintelligible in its real purport to the priest who performed it as it was to the layman who ordered it, failed to satisfy the new school. The orthodox maintained that although the priestly authorities themselves had lost the key of the mysteries of the ceremonies and were unable to understand their meaning, nevertheless untold good accrued to those who devoutly ordered such ceremonies for their own merit. They entertained a pious hope that the lost key would some day be recovered, and the hidden secrets brought to the light of the day.

The reformers urged that a vast structure of formalism and ritual had replaced the edifice of the simple faith, and religion had simply turned into ritualism. They dwelt especially on the subjective value of the ritual, and argued that however elaborate and expensive the ceremony might be, it was of no value if it failed to symbolize a moral idea for the faithful who ordered it. Ceremonial observances, they complained, were given greater importance than moral observance. Righteousness was identified with rituals. They were only a clothing of religion, but the ethical substance of religion was of greater importance than the clothing itself. Religion, they urged, does not consist in laying up merit by ceremonials. The orthodox retorted that the ritual as such had an intrinsic value and inherent merit, and the more such rites were performed, the greater was the merit assured to the faithful. The new school said that these ceremonials may perhaps serve as a means of conveying ethical ideas to a backward people, but the Parsis were not a

backward people. Hence they did not need them. Righteousness did not depend upon such ceremonial observances, but upon the purity of man's inner life. Besides, the ceremonials became an economic drain on the slender resources of the credulous poor, who incurred heavy debts for their performance, which was displeasing in the sight of Ohrmazd. The orthodox declared these statements an Ahrimanian onslaught upon the Mazdayasnian rites.

**The progressives denounced the intercessory prayers for the dead.** The philological researches had for the first time brought to the notice of the Parsis the fact of the sharp distinction between man's soul and his Farohar. From what has been stated in the earlier pages, it can be clearly seen how this essential difference was lost sight of, as early as during the later Pahlavi period. The soul and the Farohar were taken to be one and the same by the Zoroastrians before the philologist pointed out the error. Priest and layman, the learned and the illiterate alike, believed implicitly that the souls of the dead profited by the ceremonials performed in their honour by their relatives in this world. The Avestan and Pahlavi passages, which speak of the coming of the Farohars to earth at the period of the Frawardigan festival, seeking invocation and sacrifice, were understood by the entire Community as indubitably referring to the coming of the souls of the dead.<sup>1</sup>

According to the general conviction, the supplications offered by the living procured either a remission of the sins committed by the deceased in this world, or else a specific merit for the good deeds he had done. It was this strong faith in the efficacy of the ceremonials to help the struggling soul in either making its way out of hell, or in ascending upwards through the graded heaven in the next world, that inspired the loving and dutiful survivors to order elaborate rituals for the spiritual welfare of the departed. Propitiatory offerings were made, and penitential prayers were recited to secure a better lot for the souls of the dead, and the performance of these periodical rites was most zealously observed. Rich viands were consecrated in the name of the deceased. Whatever kind of food or drink the departed ones had best liked in life were specially prepared. On the last day of the festival, moreover, when the souls were believed to leave this world and return to that beyond, food and drink were offered them to assuage the hunger and thirst on their return journey, while money in copper and silver was dedicated to them to meet their travelling expenses.

The recital of the Patet, or expiatory prayer, forms an important part of the ceremonies performed in honour of the dead. The relatives and friends of the deceased still engage a priest to recite it, and do the same themselves for the expiation and welfare of the soul when it is

1 K. M. Modi, *Kholase Majdiasne*, p. 91-95, 101-106, Bombay, 1853; *Suryoday*, vol. 2, p. 113-117, 158-161, Bombay, 1868.

embarking on its journey to the next world after death. The devout generally keep up this observance daily for at least a month, or throughout the first year, or in many cases for a still longer period.

The reformers took up the question and said that Zoroastrianism enjoined that a man went to the abode of weal or woe according to his deserts, and that no amount of ceremonials performed by the living could either mitigate his sufferings or improve his condition in the spiritual world. His sins could not be atoned for by elaborate rituals performed in his name, nor would he be one whit the happier for them. It is true, they further said, that according to the scriptures, the benefit of the ceremonials performed for the dead accrues to the soul during the first three nights after death, while it still hovers over the body, but from the period of the dawn of the fourth day, when justice is administered to the soul, and it is awarded its special place, the rituals do not affect its position. Any ceremonies performed after this day, that is, on the monthly and yearly anniversaries or on any other occasions, are mainly for the Farohar of the dead man, and not for his soul. In fact, it was claimed, these rites are more for the interest of the living than for the imagined interest of the dead. Zoroastrianism, they said, never stood for any kind of vicarious salvation, for the question of salvation or damnation rested on the individual's own deeds. Neither would the expiatory prayers recited by the living wash out the sins of the dead, nor would the propitiatory sacrifices offered by them induce the heavenly judges to revoke their decision. As the man sows, so shall he reap, is the immortal truth taught by Zoroaster. Merit, they contended, cannot be purchased at a price, and sin cannot be expiated by proxy. It was destroying the true spirit of the prophet's great religion to entertain such degrading ideas of vicarious expiation which had been fastened on Zoroastrianism.

These scathing criticisms seriously wounded the religious susceptibilities of the orthodox, who became unsparing in the vehement denunciation of the reformers, charging them as reactionaries with carrying the religious barque to ruin. They branded the attempts of the reformers as blasphemous and as an irreverent prying into the divine work of Ohrmazd. Bitter words were exchanged between the rival parties, and abuses and invectives, ridicule and obloquy, became rampant over these and several other controversial questions.

**The good sense of the disputants saved the community from being split into sects.** The reformers were termed the Parsi Protestants and were charged with thinking in terms of Christianity. They were said to be fired by the sole ambition of being original, and of setting at naught the achievements of their elders for the last three thousand years. The reformers replied that they were simply looking to antiquity for models for their conduct and were profiting solely by the

vast experience of the past. But at the same time, they rejoined, the orthodox should remember that the ancients had tackled the religious and ceremonial questions that arose in their own days according to light that had prevailed in the past. Those of that day had not done the thinking for all times to come, with injunctions to the future generations to act in strict accordance with them. They alone had not the monopoly to think, and had not given the final mandate to acquiesce in all that they had believed. Besides, a return to the past could not be unalloyed happiness to the Parsis in the present times. The community, it was urged, cannot afford to transplant itself back to the age of the Vendidad. There was no use sticking to outworn forms and seeking to give them a new life. It was futile to attempt to support delusions, and the orthodox, they said, should not throw all possible shackles in the way of progress by hampering and paralyzing the well-meant efforts of the new school.

Such, in brief form, is the story of the opening of the conflict between conservative and free thought among the Parsis in India, which rent the community into two sections. The rival parties, however, did not make any formal division between themselves. The reformers did not venture to contemplate so complete a break with the orthodox as would culminate in the establishment of a reformed Church. The orthodox could not excommunicate the reformers even if they would. The orthodox had to content themselves with condemning the reformers, and the reformers by satirizing the orthodox. Even to-day the main disputes over some of these vital problems remain much the same as they were nine decades ago, and the battle goes on, still to be won.



## CHAPTER LX. PARSI THEOSOPHISTS

**Inquiring minds seek a deeper meaning of life.** At this period of transition, when the old practices seemed to have spent their force, and the younger generation was drifting towards indifference in religious matters, there were other forces at work which heralded the rise of a new class of dissenters. Those of a prosaic and matter-of-fact turn of mind in the community had steadily doubted the statements that did not admit of a rational justification, and refused to believe in anything mysterious and mystical in religion. But human life cannot altogether be stripped of mystery. Rationalism is not the whole of human nature. Besides, the state of doubts and disbeliefs that prevailed in the community could not last long. Man is essentially a religious being. He feels an inherent need in himself for some form of religious belief which would satisfy the yearnings of his spirit—that irrepressible heart-hunger of the human soul.

The Parsi priesthood, as custodians of the conscience of the community, zealously guarded and conserved the dogmatic teachings and traditions, but they were unable to work for the adaptation of the traditional material to the contemporary situation. They were incapable, at the time, of helping the community in its religious crisis. Persons who thought that the rationalism of the new school ignored an essential part of human nature when it discarded the emotional side of man, to which man was indebted for some of his noblest virtues, yearned for new light. If that light did not come from within, they would welcome it from without. At this juncture the Theosophical Society opened its propaganda in India, and a number of Parsis eagerly embraced the movement.

**Parsi theosophists.** In the early eighties of the last century the Parsi members of the Theosophical Society entered the arena of religious controversy and gave new zest to it. They became a potent factor in shaping the religious beliefs of a section of the community through their active propaganda. Hitherto ritual observances, theological dogmas, and ecclesiastical usages had occupied a most conspicuous place in the religious controversies. The Parsi theosophists introduced metaphysical themes such as the nature of Being, a personal or an impersonal God, creation or emanation, reincarnation, and such like for discussion. This is significant as an indication of a higher phase in religious polemics. They showed a strong tendency towards mysticism in religion. They did not flee from the sight and sound of man and withdrew themselves to the fastness of the jungle, nor did they mortify their flesh, but their code of ethics comprised the ascetic virtues, tempered by the spirit of the age.

**Custodians of the only key to Zoroastrianism.** Zoroaster and his disciples, the theosophical interpreters said, wrote in a mystic language which conveyed a double meaning. The exoteric, or surface meaning, was intended for the vulgar, and the esoteric, or inner meaning, was designed only for the initiates. The adepts of various periods were the ones who possessed the mysterious key to the chamber of hidden truths. The last of such Parsi adept was Azar Kaivan, who died at Patna in 1614. With his death this key was lost. Occult science alone, it was asserted, could explain and vindicate the allegorical teachings of Zoroaster. Providence had blessed the founders of the Theosophical Society with the possession of a master-key that opened the secret chambers of the hidden knowledge of all religions. The Zoroastrian theosophists applied this key to Zoroastrianism to unravel the mysteries of its exoteric teachings. They aimed at an adjustment of the fundamental Zoroastrian concept according to the standard philosophy of their society, which was an eclectic system drawing its materials mostly from Hinduism and Buddhism.

**The theosophists summarily rejected the method of the philologist adopted in interpreting the sacred texts.** In their zeal for discovering great truths buried under the seemingly simple texts, but alleged to be pregnant with deep meaning, these esoterics often invested legends and myths with a symbolic significance, and included much in the sphere of serious literature that could be relegated to the realm of poetry. They alleged that the philologists, being bound by the fetters of literalism in the interpretation of the sacred texts, generally took a statement at its face value and adhered to the surface meaning. The theosophists chose to lean upon the miraculous and mysterious, rather than to follow the recognized canons of the method of reasoning. Consequently, the sense of proportion, critical acumen, the historical sense, accurate thinking, and such preliminary requisites of modern scholarship became conspicuous by their absence in most of their interpretations. Flashes of vague thought came to be regarded as inspiration, and visions as verities.

Passage after passage in the Zoroastrian scriptures was explained to signify what it did not mean in the original. The following may be adduced as a specimen: The pastoral people in Ancient Iran had found a faithful sentinel in the dog, and that animal, as shown by the Avesta, occupied an exalted place among the Iranians from the earliest ages; three chapters of the Vendidad in fact were devoted to this indispensable companion of the household, All scholars in accord with the traditional interpretation have naturally taken these passages as the fragments of an old Iranian canine literature. But the theosophists branded this explanation as absurd, and discerned in the chapters an

allegorical description of conscience and its workings. Space here precludes the citation of other examples of this kind.

When the linguists challenged such interpretation of the ancient texts, they were informed that their inability to reconcile themselves to the new esoteric explanations was due to the fact of not having yet sufficiently developed their spiritual faculties. They were dubbed 'mere philologists,' 'dry-as-dust' grammarians. Highly pungent bitterness was marked in the controversy carried on between the two parties. The theosophists in this controversy denounced the philologists, and the philologists denounced the theosophists.

**Parsi theosophists as champions of the cause of orthodoxy.**

The advocacy on the part of the theosophists of the revival of the past, and their seeing in such a revival the sole panacea of communal ills, whether real or imaginary, their readiness to allege religious sanction for the time-hallowed customs, matched with their zeal for ritual, and their eagerness to vindicate the sacred ceremonies by giving strained allegorical interpretations to explain them, won for them the applause of the orthodox party, who cast in their lot with them. Inasmuch as the Parsi theosophists declared that they were working to bring out the youth of the community from the trough of materialism, and endeavoring to defend Zoroastrianism against innovations of the reformers, they were regarded as the pillars of faith and the guardians of the edifice of ceremonialism.

**Avestan prayers, however unintelligible, were declared the most efficacious owing to their occult significance.** We have already seen the arguments advanced by the reformers against addressing to God prayers in a language unintelligible to the suppliant, and we have noted the discussion that followed. We now need only notice the part that the theosophists took in the controversy. The syllables composed in the Avestan texts, they averred, were so mysteriously adjusted to each other in the prayers, that they produced vibrations on the ethereal plane, when pronounced. The potency of such rhythmical sound was so great that, like every good thought that flashed out with strong occult force and sent forth a good "elemental," it created forms in the ethereal world, attracted good "elementals," and repelled evil ones. Every single sentence conveyed an occult meaning, and the prayers composed in the celestial tongue of the prophet and other seers had an unspeakable efficacy conducing to the welfare of the individual concerned, but their renderings into any modern vernacular would make them totally ineffectual as prayers.

**Zoroastrianism in the light of theosophy.** These followers of an eclectic philosophy, and interpreters of the divine scriptures through a claimed knowledge of occult and hidden meanings, applied the theosophic principles of explanation to the teachings of Zoroaster, and

adapted them to the Zoroastrian theology. Such an interpretation, however, led them to credit the religion of Zoroaster with ideas that in no period of its religious history were ever included in its sphere.

When these theosophic interpreters of Zoroastrianism were reminded that the thoughts they claimed to read in the canonical Zoroastrian works were not there, they argued with a doubtful historical perspective that if they did not meet them in the plain words, in the authentic texts, it was because the twenty-one Nasks of the prophet had not been preserved. If the bulk of the Zoroastrian canon had not been irrevocably lost, they should undoubtedly have found such doctrines to be indissolubly associated with the cardinal texts of the Zoroastrian faith. Every Iranian student knows that the historical sources and records of the teachings of the prophet that were in vogue at any particular period of Zoroastrian history have not perished altogether. Something of every period, whether the Gathic, Avestan, Pahlavi, or the later periods, has fortunately survived the vandalism of the conquering hordes and the ravages of time, and consequently has come down to the present day. For instance, in the controversy regarding the rebirth theory, to which we shall advert below, the theosophic interpreters, having recourse to similar arguments, stated that we should have found the theory of transmigration of souls taught in the Zoroastrian works, if these had reached us intact. It might be pointed out, however, that the fragmentary works of all periods of Zoroastrian history have come down to us; they contain the authentic teachings on the life after death, but they all persistently and systematically speak of only one bodily life on the earth, and never once suggest the theory of rebirth.

**Zrvan Akarana as an impersonal God in the theosophic light.** The theosophists attempted a readjustment of the Zoroastrian doctrine of a personal God, or rather in accordance with their theory of an impersonal God. Personality, they alleged implied limitation and was a characteristic of the finite. A personal God meant that the godhead was a limited God, and therefore an incomplete God. In Zrvan Akarana, or Boundless Time, the Parsi theosophists saw this impersonal neuter being of whom nothing could be predicated. This supposititious being was the rootless root from which issued Ohrmazd. Ahriman was but Ohrmazd's manifested shadow. Zrvan Akarana, the primeval impersonal principle, according to their interpretation, was like a central fire from which all creation had emanated. The individual was only a vital spark, and his final resting-place was in it. Passionately loving the light, the moth finally immolated itself in the flame; in like manner the individual had to throw off the illusory shackles of personality and be merged in the Universal, the One. This doctrine is certainly not Zoroastrian, because through the whole history of the religion individuality is not an illusion. It is ever a stern fact. Personality

is not an imperfection, but it is the highest expression of life, that ultimately strives for the divine. Not the losing of individuality and the loss of the personal self, and not the weakening of personality, but the gaining and strengthening of it, is the Zoroastrian ideal. This has been the truth taught by Zoroastrianism in the striving for the highest aims comprehensible to mankind from the remotest antiquity.

Zrvan was extolled above Ohrmazd, who was ranked by them as a mere manifestation of Time. The one was elevated by debasing the other. The personal God who could be loved and feared, who responded to the gentle aspirations of the human heart, was dethroned to make room for a monistic principle that might answer the stern canons of cold intellectualism, but which evaporated into an unthinkable abstraction and mercilessly left its hapless votaries without a word of solace or hope. Affection, love and devotion, however, can centre about some personality only. We find in the authoritative teachings of the Zoroastrian Church that Ohrmazd knows no peer, and he always sits supreme at the head of the divine hierarchy.

These modern votaries of Zrvan were, however, not to be confounded with the Zarvanite sect of old, which looked to Zrvan Akarana as a personality as much defined as Ohrmazd. We have already seen that, in postulating impersonated Time as the originator of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, the sect aimed at supplanting Zoroastrian dualism by monotheism, in order to save their religion from the so-called stigma of dualism. Not so the theosophists, who grafted this new feature on the pure teachings of Zoroaster. They did not personify Time, but reckoned this abstract principle of Time as higher than Ohrmazd himself, because, in common with all mystic schools, they held the idea of an impersonal God as the highest category of philosophical thought.

**Zoroastrianism declared by the theosophic claim to be incomplete without the doctrine of transmigration of souls.**

From first to last Zoroastrianism, like Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, shows no sign of this theory of rebirth. But this dogma occupied a pre-eminent place among the theosophists, being, in fact, one of the most conspicuous characteristics of their doctrines. To teach man to attain liberation from the bondage of rebirth was the ultimate aim of their ethics. It was not regarded by the theosophists as one of the many solutions put forward by the human mind to solve the mysteries of the life after death, but as the only rational explanation that satisfied human instinct of justice, and the only solution of the anomalies in this world. They persuaded themselves that the theory was fast becoming a recognized truth in the West, and that, at no distant date, it would be hailed as an inexorable law of nature proved with scientific certitude. With a view to investing their statements with scriptural authority they tore one or two passages from their context,

and basing their arguments on these, they declared that they had unearthed the theory from the labyrinth of Zoroastrianism. When the Dasturs and other Parsi scholars asserted, in accord with all Iranian scholars of the West, that in no period of the religious history of Iran was metempsychosis ever hinted at in the remotest form, and that the passages referred to had no bearing upon the question, they retorted that the scholarship of the scholars must be at fault, for so great a master as Zoroaster simply could not fail to have taught this fundamental truth.

But this was not all. Enthused by a zeal for the theory, they went a step further and alleged that Zoroaster himself was an Amshaspand incarnate. This is contrary to the spirit of Zoroastrianism. The sacred books speak of the prophet as the greatest of the mortals, the most brilliant among men, even as the star Tishtar is among the infinite stars,<sup>1</sup> and as the noblest soul whose ideal is a leaven of righteousness to humanity. He is the highest and the greatest ideal of human perfection, the very embodiment of piety. The Gathas give a distinctly visualized image of the personality of Zoroaster. His life is surrounded by a nimbus of miracles in the later period, and most extravagant legends are woven about his personality, but after all that the human language can sing in his praise, he is simply a man, and not an arch angel incarnate. So was he during life, and so he is after death,

x x x    x x x    x x x  
 x x    x x    x x  
 x      x      x

These modern successors of the Parsi Yogists of the seventeenth century have caused several members of the community to drift towards a growing fondness for occult mystery. Many men and women, with or without higher education, are seen to-day running after any form of occultism that they come across. These continue to interpret and explain the sacred texts on the allegorical basis. With overweening presumption, common to the occultists of all ages and places, they claim to be the only correct interpreters of Zoroastrianism and are busy producing a novel type of Zoroastrian ideological literature.

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<sup>1</sup> Yt8.44.

## CHAPTER LXI. CONCLUSION

And now we have reached the completion of our study down to the present day. We have traced the gradual development of the religion of Zarathushtra during the various periods of its history. Nearly three thousand years have elapsed since the great prophet first gave the message of Mazda to the people of Iran. Many millions of human souls have lived a happy life and died a peaceful death under the shadow of the protecting wings of the faith. Zarathushtra's immortal triad of 'good thoughts, good words, and good deeds' has kindled the religious zeal, intensified the desire, ennobled the thoughts, illumined the minds, and warmed the hearts of the countless numbers of his followers. Throughout its history Zoroastrianism has seen its bright and dark days, accompanied by the rise and fall of the political power of its adherents. During these ages, great and mighty kings, in whom was concentrated the temporal power of Persia, have ruled over Iran. Yet they are no more. But the one personality in whom was sanctified the spiritual power, the everlastingly greater than kings, has ruled over the hearts of men in all periods of the nation's history and will ever continue to rule so in the ages to come. Zarathushtra, the chosen of Ahura Mazda, does not belong to any single period and particular people, but to all ages and to all peoples. He is unchanging. His religion it was that inspired the Iranian nation with the loftiest of ideals when Iran was at the zenith of her power. His ever optimistic teachings and the ever cheerful spirit of his sublime doctrines saved its remnants from falling into the slough of pessimism and gloom, thirteen centuries ago, when the Zoroastrian community stood appalled by the national catastrophe that sounded the death-knell of their empire. With the downfall of the empire the hope of regaining power had disappeared forever. They could never see visions of its restoration. History has recorded this one and unique pathetic instance of a great nation of millions being reduced to a small community of a little over a hundred thousand souls all told, still true to its ancient faith. Everything that was nearest and dearest to them in the fatherland was gone. Zarathushtra remained their only hope, and with his religion as the only cherished heritage, the Parsi exiles sought an asylum in Iran. Thirteen centuries have dragged their weary course since they first landed on this the land of their hope and began their life anew. Rulers of nations they have not become, but they have proved themselves to be the true bearers of the great name and fame of their illustrious forebears. The pages of their national history are still thrilling with the noble deeds of the ancient Iranians, and their dutiful descendants have faithfully reflected their past national glory in the mirror of their small community. Zoroastrian virtues have made the modern Parsis great. The community has secured a pioneer place in the social, intellectual, and industrial life of the

teeming millions of India. They have amassed vast fortunes and have given away equally vast sums for philanthropic purposes without distinction of caste, color, or creed. An individual member among the Parsis to-day is a better cared-for unit than one in any society. The Parsis yearly contribute for his relief at a rate which no people in the world does for its individual member. The virtue of charity has been built into the very communal fibre, and is woven into the tissues of every individual's being. A religion that produces such results in the practical life of a community well deserves the epithet 'excellent,' which the Mazda-worshipping religion of Zarathushtra is given in the Confession of Faith.

With sublime confidence Zarathushtra foretold to the Evil Spirit that his religion will ever live and his followers will do battle with the forces of evil up to the end of the world.<sup>1</sup> His noble faith has weathered the heaviest of storms and survived them; and a religion which stood these trials in the past will stand any trial in the future. Zoroastrianism will live by its eternal verities of the belief in the personality of Ohrmazd, an abiding faith in the triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, the inexorable law of righteousness, the reward and retribution in the life hereafter, the progress of the world towards perfection, and the ultimate triumph of the good over evil through the coming of the Kingdom of Ohrmazd with the co-operation of man. These are the truest and the greatest realities in life. They are valid for all times. They constitute the lasting element of Zoroastrianism. In the midst of the accretions that have gathered round it during the long period of its life, these immortal truths have remained substantially unchanged, and by them Zoroastrianism will live for all time. Dogmas and rituals are based upon the needs of the times, and as such they are subject to the natural laws of growth and decay. They have their place in the spiritual development of man. They are the accompaniments of religion, but not religion itself. Man may fall away from dogmas and from rituals, and yet he may remain religious. Righteousness rests on the individual's piety, and not on a scrupulous observance of ceremonials, or a practice of elaborate lustrations. Let the Parsi individually, and his community collectively, abide steadfast in the path of righteousness, and they will be practising true Zoroastrianism. In the fret and fever of modern civilization, which renders man exceedingly sensitive to suffering, and lets loose on him the demons of restlessness and discontent, Zarathushtra's religion is the best sedative for him to-day. So will it be in all social unrests, economic crises, and religious upheavals of the future. Zarathushtra has been the hope of the Parsis in the past. So is he now, and so will he be forever.

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1 Vd19. 5.



*frājajt pavan darât u shātīh u rāmishnīh.*  
“Completed in peace and joy and pleasure.”

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<i>Shatroiha-i Airan.</i>	Translated from the Pahlavi text by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. Bombay, 1899.
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<i>Zand-i Khurtak</i> <i>Avistak</i> .	<i>Pahlavi Text</i> . Edited by B. N. Dhabhar. Bombay, 1927.
<i>Zadspram</i> .	Translated from the Pahlavi text by E. W. West. In <i>Sacred Books of the East</i> , vol. 5.

## Spelling changes from Dhalla 1938

<b>Dhalla</b>	<b>This edition</b>
Afrasiab	Afrasiyab
Ardeshir	Ardashir
Chinvat	Chinwad
Dinkard	Denkard
Dughdo	Dughdov
Elburz	Alburz
Fravardin	Frawardin
Goshurun	Goshorun
Haosrava	Haosravah
Hoshedar, Hoshedarmah	Ushedar, Ushedarmah
Jamshid	Jamshed
Khurdad	Hordad
Khordah Avesta	Khorda Avesta
Khurshid	Khwarshed
kianian	Kayanian
mobad	mobed
Nyaish	Niyayesh
PatitPatet	
Pazend	Pazand
Rivayets	Rivayats
Shayast-la-Shayast	Shayast-Na-Shayast
Siamak	Siyamak
tanapuhar	tanapuhr
Zaratusht	Zartosht