

ZOROASTER

AND

ZOROASTRIANISM.

BY

R. H. MISTRİ

The Editor

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with the best compliments  
of the author

for favour of a review

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R. H. MISTRI,



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## PREFACE.

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Looking to the far back, when the Zoroastrians ruled over Iran, it was the privilege only of the priestly class to write works on theological, eschatological and ethical subjects. In fact, they were the authors of almost all the works on the various branches of literature. Fortunately or unfortunately, it is not so now. I therefore as a layman was free to decide, some time ago, to devote my attention, which had been hitherto paid to translating several English books into Gujarati and annotating school prose and poetical works, to writing a book on my religion, but no sooner did I start it than I found that the work was not so easy. My limited knowledge of the literature bearing on the religion at the moment was not sufficient to enable me to proceed with the task I had undertaken. The only course, therefore, left open was to add to my knowledge by studying several authors well-known for their valuable works relating to Zoroastrian religion, and this I had to do patiently for about 3 years. From this it can be easily seen that my present work is simply the result of my studying several authors, to whom, it goes without saying, I am very much indebted, for, without them I could not have proceeded with this work which, from the above lines, claims no originality.

I believe this work will furnish cheap and popular reading to the general reader who may desire to know something about Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism, as the voluminous works written by the orientalist in Europe, America, and India on Zoroaster and his Scriptures are meant for advanced scholars and scholastic purpose in connection with the Zoroastrian religion. Besides, most of them are too costly to be within the reach of all.

## PREFACE.

A question might be put, why I wrote this book in English and not in Gujarati, the language known to every Parsi male and female. I say, 'For many reasons.' Firstly, there are many such works already in Gujarati; secondly, there are now many amongst the Parsis themselves that prefer English reading to Gujarati; thirdly, my present work can be read also by non-Zoroastrians desirous of learning something about Zoroaster and his religion; and, fourthly, a work like this in English is serviceable in removing the fallacy that Zoroastrianism teaches dualism or polytheism, and that Zoroastrians are worshippers of the elements.

The Zoroastrian literature, notwithstanding the lamented loss of a large portion of it, is still extensive enough to fill volumes, and hence this work should be considered as laying no pretensions to being exhaustive on the subject. Also, as everybody does acknowledge, religious questions are subject to very keen controversy and discussion, and in this respect, I believe, Zoroastrianism stands at the top, as much of it is traditional. I have, however, taken care to steer clear of all dubious points and touch only those that have been generally accepted and believed by the intelligent portion of the community.

R. H. MISTRI.

BOMBAY, 1st June, 1906.

## List of well-known works consulted in writing this book.

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ESSAYS ON THE SACRED LANGUAGE, WRITINGS AND RELIGION OF  
THE PARSEES. *By Dr. Martin Haug.*

THE VENDIDAD. *By James Darmesteter (Sacred Books of the  
East, Vol. IV).*

THE ZEND-AVESTA. *By James Darmesteter (S. B. E.  
Vol. XXIII).*

THE PAHALVI TEXTS, PT. I—*By Dr. E. W. West.*

" " II Do.

" " III Do.

" " IV Do.

LIFE OF ZOROASTER—*By Prof. A. V. Jackson.*

" (in Gujarati)—*By K. R. Cama.*

" ( " )—*By Dastur P. B. Sanjana.*

GUJARATI TRANSLATION OF JACKSON'S LIFE OF ZOROASTER—  
*By P. B. Desai, with Notes and Explanation.*

GATHAS ... (in Gujarati)—*By Erwad K. E. Kanga.*

VENDIDAD ... ( " ) Do.

YASHT ... ( " ) Do.

KHORDE-AVESTA ( " ) Do.

YAZASNE ... ( " )—*By Erwad M. P. Madon.*

ZARATHUSHTRA AND THE GREEKS—*By Dr. L. H. Mills.*

TRANSLATION OF THE GATHAS. Do.

RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS OF THE PARSIS—*By J. J. Modi, B.A.*

A MODERN ZOROASTRIAN—*By Samuel Laing.*

DINKARD—Translated into Gujarati—*By Dastur P. B. Sanjana.*

" " " ENGLISH—*By E. Kohlar,  
B.A., LL.B.*

ENLIGHTENED NON-ZOROASTRIANS ON MAZDAYASNI SM THE  
EXCELLENT RELIGION—*By J. J. Motiwala and B. N. Sahiar.*



ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE GATHAS AND IN THE CLASSICS—  
*Translated into English by Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana, B.A., from the German Text of Drs. Geiger and Windischmann.*

GREAT INDIAN<sup>1</sup> RELIGIONS—*By G. T. Bettany, M.A., B.Sc.*  
THE ALLEGED PRACTICE OF CONSANGUINEOUS MARRIAGES IN  
ANCIENT IRAN—*By Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana, B.A.*

DASATIR OR THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE ANCIENT  
PERSIAN PROPHETS—*Translated by Mullan Feroze bin Kaus—Edited by D. J. Medhora.*

THE POSITION OF ZOROASTRIAN WOMEN IN REMOTE ANTI-  
QUITIES. *By Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana, B.A.*

FRENCH VIEWS ON ZOROASTRIANISM—*By M. Adolphe Franck and  
M. Jules Oppert (English Translation).*

etc.

etc.

etc.

# PART I.

## LIFE OF ZOROASTER.

### CHAPTER I.

#### Zoroaster—A Historic Personage.

ABOUT a century ago, it was believed on the Continent by the literary men of the time, one of whom was Professor Darmesteter,<sup>(1)</sup> that Zoroaster was no real historical personage and prophet, but that his was a name based on fable, legend, or tradition, whatever you might call it, and that the name had simply been transmitted from generation to generation.

The opinion has, however, undergone a complete change, as many learned men, not only on the Continent, but also in America, have, without the least shadow of a doubt, satisfactorily proved to the whole world, that Zoroaster is a real historic personage and

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(1) James Darmesteter writes in his first edition of *Zend-Avesta*:—"Every one agrees that all that the Parsis and the Greeks tell of him is mere legend."

In his second edition of the same book, he makes an improvement in his view as follows:—

"Whether Zarathushtra was an historic or a legendary personage it is difficult to decide."

But as for Zoroastrianism, he writes in the same book, page LXVII, as under:—

"Zoroastrianism is an historic religion; that is to say, one that has changed in course of time, not only by an evolution, but also under the reaction of foreign schools and political events."

prophet, and that his religion is no concoction, but founded by the prophet himself, and full of philosophy, and that his doctrines are based upon the principles of righteousness.

One of the present-day *savants*, who have been studying the religious literature of the Parsis, the followers of Zoroaster or Zarathushtra, is Professor A. V. Jackson of the Columbian University. He has written a voluminous book on the life of Zoroaster, which has already been translated into Gujarati by the learned Parsi scholar, Mr. P. B. Desai. This work is largely based upon authorities from Pehelvi, a language closely allied to Zend and distantly related to Persian, and which language was in use between the second and the seventh century A. D.

Before Professor Jackson, Professors like Anquetil Duperron, Burnouf, Spiegel, Westergaard, Geiger, Windischmann, Haug, Muller, Mills, and others, who, having studied the Avesta—the Zoroastrian scriptural writings—as their special subject, have declared to the world, that there actually existed a personage of the name of Zoroaster, or as it is found in the Avesta *Zarathushtra Spitama*.

A few years ago, Zend and Pehelvi, languages allied to Sanskrit, were very imperfectly understood, even by the Parsi clergy, called *Athravans* or *Dasturs*, but to-day the aspect is quite changed. Philological researches have opened up a new field for those that desire to study Zend and Pehelvi. To-day, there

are many in Bombay amongst the Parsis themselves, who can explain the scriptures much better than before, and the chief among them are Mr. K. R. Cama, a layman, and Dastur Minocher Jamaspji, Dastur Darab Peshotan, Erwad Sheriarji Bharucha and Samshul-Olma J. J. Modi, all priests. Mr. K. R. Cama has written, amongst other useful works, a life of the prophet in Gujarati, which is, unlike that by Professor Jackson, based mainly on the facts found in the Avestaic literature.

It was believed by the followers of Zoroaster that the Avestaic literature,<sup>(2)</sup> which was originally divided into 21 Nasks, was written by Zoroaster himself. It contained the revelations of God regarding Heaven and Earth, and subjects like astronomy, astrology, geography, philosophy, medicine, mid-wifery, etc, were therein fully treated. Questions were put to God by the prophet in his inspired state, and he received answers from Him, whom the Parsis know by the name of Ahura-Mazda.

This Avesta, especially the Gathas, proves that there existed a personage of the name of Zarathushtra, who preached and propagated his new religion in Bactria<sup>(3)</sup> and surrounding provinces, notwithstanding many reverses and fierce opposition from his enemies.

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(2) The present day opinion is that the *Gathas* only are the original writings of the prophet. The other portions were written after him.

(3) There is a divided opinion about the country of the prophet's mission. There are some who declare Media as the first country that received religious instructions from the prophet.

Almost all well-known ancient Greek and Roman writers have mentioned Zoroaster as the head of the Magi, by which name the priests and philosophers before, and even after, the time of Zoroaster, were distinguished. Of those writers, Plato who flourished in the fifth century B. C., and Pliny<sup>(4)</sup> and Plutarch, who lived in the first century A. D., are the chief. Even the oldest writer Xanthos<sup>(5)</sup> mentions Zoroaster in his writings, and this authority has been since cited by several later writers. In fact, about two dozen such eminent writers, and many more of less fame<sup>(6)</sup>, all of whom lived between the first and the sixth century A. D., have written distinctly to shew that Zoroaster was not only a sage and philosopher, but also a prophet and the founder of the new religion called after him *Zoroastrianism*. It should be specially mentioned that Herodotus, the Greek historian, who is known as the father of history, has written a number of pages on the religion of the *Magis*, and although some of his remarks are refutable, his writings prove sufficiently that there existed thousands of years ago, a religion similar to the one the Parsis believe in at the present day. Although he does not mention directly anything about the prophet, his description of the several rites performed by the then-ancestors of the Parsis, proves that the

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(4) This is Pliny, the second.

(5) Xanthos of Lydia flourished in the fifth century B. C.

(6) Professor Jackson gives a full list of the classical writers, who mention the name of Zoroaster in their writings. This list fills nearly five pages of his work, pages 226 to 230.

*Avesta*, wherein the same rites are prescribed, and wherein some description is given about the prophet, is no work of concoction or imagination, but that it is based upon the actual teachings of some prophet, and that prophet is doubtless *Zarathushtra*.

It leaves no doubt, therefore, that Zoroaster was a historic personage, and that he taught to mankind the religion which had been revealed to him by God.

There is also a mention made in the writings of some of the above-named authors, that eminent philosophers like Pythagoras and Hermippus, actually studied the Zoroastrian religion, as embodying the best theological and philosophical questions that one could desire to study. This fact leads us to believe that even the then great men belonging to different nationalities could not but respect the religion propounded by Zoroaster for the noble tenets contained therein.

After having mentioned above the European and American authorities of the nineteenth Century, who confirm the existence of the prophet mentioned by the classical writers, we will now speak of the oldest existing Pehelvi book, '*Dinkard*,' written about a thousand years ago. This work is divided into nine parts of which the first two are missing. The remaining parts shed sufficient light on the life and teachings of Zarathushtra. The editor-ship of this bulky work is ascribed to one Aderbad Adar Farobag Farukhzada, a high-priest of the time.

Besides *Dinkard*, there is another authority equally old, and that is the work of Zad-Sparam, a learned priest of the ninth Century A. D. Professor Jackson, has, it appears, taken special help of this latter work in getting up his work on the life of the prophet. Both these ancient works throw a good deal of light on the life and doctrines of Zoroaster. There are a number of other Pehelvi works which directly or indirectly mention the existence of the prophet. They are, however, written by high priests born Zoroastrians; but there also exist works written by Mahomedan historians. Al birooni,<sup>(7)</sup> Masudi,<sup>(8)</sup> and Sharastani<sup>(9)</sup> are chief among them. There are, besides, Assyrian and Egyptian writers, and they all acknowledge the real existence of the prophet.

If all the parts of the Avesta were preserved up to the present day, there would have been neither difficulty in gathering facts about the prophet, nor doubt as to his real existence. The *Gathas*, that are preserved and translated into several languages, are the only Avestaic writings which prove the reality of the personage. Most of the other parts of the Avesta, as well as other writings, have been destroyed. The guilt of annihilating the works relating to the most eminent religion like Zoroastrianism, is ascribed to

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(7) *Albirooni* was born 973 A.D., died 1048 A.D.

(8) *Masudi* died 951 A. D.

(9) *Sharastani* flourished in the eleventh century; died 1086 A. D.

Alexander the Great,<sup>(10)</sup> who conquered Persia in 331 B. C. It is possible, nay probable, that some valuable works were destroyed by the Arabs also, when they defeated the Persians under the last Sassanian King, Yezdezerd, in the battles of Cadesia and Nahavend in the years 636 and 637 A. D. respectively, and compelled them either to adopt Mahomedanism or accept death.

Masudi, Albirooni, and Sharastani are eminent writers, who have gained fame by their honest and sincere writings, and although they are Mahomedans, they have in their works made a distinct mention of the existence of the prophet of the Parsis.

There is, therefore, no reason to disbelieve, without any cogent proof, the unanimous opinion of the ancient authors, who speak of Zoroaster as a real personage and the founder of the Persian religion.

Now, as to the authenticity of the *Avesta*; this is proved beyond doubt by the Pehelvi and cuneiform inscriptions found in Persia. The Pehelvi inscriptions of the Sassanian kings were deciphered first, it is said, by DeSacy, and they in turn led to the reading of the cuneiform inscriptions<sup>(11)</sup> engraved in mountains to commemorate the reigns of the Achæmenian kings. The readings of these inscriptions by the eminent professors like Burnouf and Rawlinson, have proved beyond doubt, that the *Avesta* was no

(10) It is stated that Alexander was in a drunken state, when he gave the order to burn the library. All the books were burnt except those that related to medicine and astronomy. [Great

(11) The oldest cuneiform inscription is about Cyrus, the



concoction at all, but was written in a language derived from the same source from which Sanskrit is derived. At least the text of the *Gathas*, which closely resembles old Sanskrit, and which depict the prophet as a speaking individual, proves that they were written in his own life-time. These *gathas* have now proved to the world that Zarathushtra was an historical personage, and Rev. Lawrence Mills, who has translated these hymns of the prophet, is of opinion, that there is nothing 'so silly as the discussion about the historical personality of Zarathushtra.'

This chapter will, therefore, be closed with the following quotations from some well-known authors bearing on this subject.

Rev. Lawrence Mills in the preface to his second edition of the translation of the *Gathas*, says, regarding the prophet and the several persons after him, who went by the name of Zarathushtra:—

"I do not say that he is here the same person who is so often alluded to in the so-called history, and in acknowledged myth; we even have the same name among a list of ancient kings and of the *Avesta* itself, one of the titles of a governor of a province, and is even used in the superlative form 'the most Zarathushtra.' We do however claim that the fictitious importance attributed to all the Zarathushtras scattered up and down the pre-Christian age, was borrowed from the singular man whose personality together with that of his colleagues, is so strikingly revealed in these early pieces (*i. e.* the *Gathas*)."

The same reverend professor gives in the same preface, a quotation from the Critical Review, by the Rev. James Hope Moulton, who praises the *Gathas* in which Zoroaster appears as a historical personage:—

“The *Gathas* or hymns of Zoroaster are by far the most precious relic which we possess of oriental religion, the only sacred literature which, in dignity, in profoundness, in purity of thought and absolute freedom from unworthy conceptions of the Divine, could for a moment be compared with the Hebrew Scriptures.”

Dr. Martin Haug in his essays on the religion of the Parsis gives an important passage from the work of the historian Agathias (500 A. D.):—

“The present Persians almost entirely neglect their former customs, and have even changed them, and observe some strange and spurious usages, professing the doctrines of Zoroaster, the son of Ormasdes (*i. e.* the *Supreme Being*). The time when this Zoroaster or Zarades flourished and gave his laws, is not to be ascertained. The Persians now a days simply say, that he lived at the time of Hystaspes; but it is very doubtful, and doubt cannot be resolved whether this Hystaspes was the father of Darius or another Hystaspes. At whatever time he may have lived, he was at all events their prophet, and the master of the Magic rites. He after having changed the ancient form of worship, introduced manifold and strange doctrines.”

Those who consider Zoroaster as a mythical being should carefully read the words of Dr. E. W. West in his introduction to *Pahlavi Texts*. He writes, "Notwithstanding the ingenious rhetoric of the expounders of myths, it is still as unsafe, from a scientific point of view, to disbelieve the former existence of Zaratust, as it is to doubt that of Moses, or any other practically pre-historic personage, merely because mythic tales have gathered about his name in later times, as they always do about the memory of any individual who has become famous or revered."

*Samuel Laing* in his 'A Modern Zoroastrian' says at page 198 :—"In the case of Zoroaster the argument of his historic existence seems even stronger, for his name is connected with historical reigns and places, and his genuine early history contains nothing supernatural and improbable. He is represented as simply a deep thinker and powerful preacher, like Luther, who gave new form and expression to the vague religious and philosophic ideas of his age and nation, reformed its superstitions and abuses, and converted the leading minds of his day, including the monarch, by the earnestness and eloquence of his discourses."

Lastly, will be given a quotation from the work of Professor Jackson. He calls the prophet "The sage of the past, the Persian Prophet of Old, forerunner of those Wise Men of the East who came and bowed before the Majesty of the New-born Light of the World."

## CHAPTER II.

## Age of Zoroaster.

The question of the age of the prophet has occupied the attention of several oriental scholars, but their labour has not yet been crowned with success. Although a good deal has been written on the subject, none has, in the absence of direct proofs, been able to say with certainty in what age the prophet actually lived.

For this purpose, the scholars can be divided into three classes. The first class puts him from about 4000 to 6000 years before Christ, the second class about 1300 to 1400 years B.C., and the third class about 500 to 600 years B.C. These are the principal classes, but some have also advocated intermediate periods between the first and the second, or between the second and the third.

The first class above-mentioned puts Zoroaster about 6000 to 8000 years ago. This seems at once improbable. It is said on the authority of Diogenes that Zoroaster lived 6000 years before the invasion of Greece by Xerxes in 480 B.C. Some say that he lived 5000 years before the memorable battle of Troy which dates 1180 B.C. Several classical writers<sup>(12)</sup> place him about 8000 years ago. Some oriental

(12) Chief among them are Aristotle, Eudoxus, and Hermippus.

scholars try to prove the age of the Avesta from the Rig Veda, but Professors like Müller, Haug and Mills, and also Hindoo scholars, differ as to the time when the Veda was written. The Vedic period is not yet correctly fixed. Some say it was written about 3000 years ago, and others regard it about 6000 years old. Samuel Laing puts it about 4000 years ago. If the Vedic period be fixed with precision, the age of the Avesta and that of the Prophet can, of course, be very approximately determined, for this much is proved that the Avestaic and Vedic languages are sister languages,<sup>(13)</sup> and derived from the same source, and that therefore the interval between their ages cannot be long.

It is historically proved by the late Dr. Haug that Zoroaster was alive when the Aryans separated. Some going to the north-east of Persia became Iranians or Persians, and those that travelled towards the Punjab, called themselves Hindoos from their having

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(13) "One mere fact is enough to convince us of the close relations and the intimate resemblances which originally existed between Persia and India, viz., the language in which the books of Zoroaster are written, the ancient language of Iran, rediscovered by Burnouf's genius. Zend is only a derivation of Sanskrit, or rather Sanskrit itself somehow contracted in the mouth of a more masculine nation and amid a nature ruder than that which gave it birth."—*M. Adolphe Frank.*

"Its relation (i.e., the relation of Zend) to the most ancient Sanskrit, the so-called Vedic dialect, is as close, as that of the different dialects of the Grecian language (Æolic, Ionic, Doric, Attic) to each other. The language of the sacred songs of the Brahmins and that of the Parsis are nothing but two dialects of two or more tribes of one and the same nation."—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

settled about the Indus. Max Müller says that *Veda* was written immediately after the separation of the Aryans, but as the century<sup>(14)</sup> of this separation is not finally settled, the time of the Rig-Veda, as that of the *Avesta*, remains doubtful.

Those that have declared Zoroaster's age to be between 4000 to 6000 B.C., *i.e.*, about 6000 to 8000 years ago, have probably mistaken<sup>(15)</sup> *Hoam* and *Jamshed* for Zoroaster. They are spoken of as true prophets in the *Avesta*, having taught the Mazdiyasni religion, *i.e.*, the religion of *Mazda* or God. As the *Magi*, who were the spiritual heads of the Mazdiyasni religion, continued to hold the same position after they had accepted the Zoroastrian faith, probably the ancient writers mistook Hoam and Jamshed for Zoroaster who flourished in the reign of Gustasp (or Vistasp as pronounced in the *Avesta*). King Vistasp belonged to the Kianian dynasty that ruled in Iran and surrounding provinces. This is proved from the prefix *kai* attached to his name, as is seen in the names of Kai-Kobad, Kai-Kaos, and Kai-Vistasp. The Kianian dynasty was terminated by the coming in of the Assyrians and the Medes, who ruled over Iran for about 500 and 200 years respectively. The Medes were replaced by the Persians under Cyrus the Great in 536 B.C. To put, therefore, Zoroaster so far back as 4000, let alone 6000, years before

(14) It is believed by some to be the 13th century B. C.

(15) This is the opinion of the well-known orientalist Mr. K. R. Cama.

Christ, seems improbable. If we take 4000 years, B.C. as the age of the Prophet, the period between Gustasp and the last king of the Kianian dynasty works out to nearly 2800 years,<sup>(16)</sup> a period never before recorded in history only for a few kings of a dynasty.

Leaving the second class above referred to for our last consideration, let us look at the arguments of the third class. They put the age of the Prophet about 500 to 600 B.C., *i. e.*, the Zoroastrian era about 2400 to 2500 years back. As it is clearly found in the Avesta that the king who backed up Zoroastrianism and accepted the faith was *Vistasp* by name, and as the name of (Darius) Hystaspes mentioned by the Greek historians sounds similar to the Avestaic Vistasp, the supporters of this age of Zoroaster, have jumped to the conclusion that the Prophet flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, an Achæmenian king,<sup>(17)</sup> who ruled over Persia and other tributary countries from 521 to 485 B.C. Thus they

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(16) From the supposed age of Zoroaster 4,000 B. C., deduct 700 years for the rules of the Assyrians and the Medes, and 536 (B. C.) the date of the conquest of Cyrus, giving a date of 1236 B. C. for the last king of the Kianian dynasty. Therefore the interval between Gustasp and the last king of his dynasty works out to 2764 (or 2800 in round number).

(17) K. D. KIASH in his very useful work on the *Ancient Persian Sculptures* gives the following translation of the inscription on the Bi-Satoon mountain:—

“(1) Says Darius the King! (2) ‘my father (was) Hystaspes; (3) of Hystaspes the father (was) Arsames; (4) of Arsames the father (was) Aregaramnes; (5) of Aregaramnes the father (was) Tispes; (6) of Tispes the father (was) Achæmenes.’

have put the era in question about 2400 to 2500 years back. The belief of this class of scholars was a general one, and supported by a number of writers till a few years ago. Of these, the late Mr. Nowrozjee Furdoonjee was the chief in Bombay. He in his time tried to prove on the testimony of some Greek, Latin, French, English and other European, as well as Pehelvi, Arabic and Persian authors, that Zoroaster flourished in the sixth century before the Christian era. He appears to have studied for his 'Discussion'<sup>(18)</sup> every work on the subject, that was within his reach in his time, and what he wrote was, although now proved to be incorrect, was considered true in his time.

But as the Avesta study progressed, and the cuneiform inscriptions were discovered and deciphered, the supporters of the theory that Zoroaster lived in the time of Darius Hystaspes, began to see their mistake and dwindle in number, and now there are very few who hold that opinion. Almost all are now agreed that the King Vistasp mentioned in the Avesta is quite a different person from King Darius Hystaspes, and that the former lived a considerable time before the latter. The following facts go to disprove that Darius Hystaspes was a contemporary of Zoroaster:—

(1): The Avesta proves that Vistasp (Gustasp), the patron of Zoroaster, was the temporal head (ruling

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(18). This work is written in Gujarati and styled "Discussion On The Era Of Zurthost Or Zoroaster, The Prophet of The Persians." It contains about 200 pages. Published in 1850, A. D.



king) of the people of the time, whereas it is proved in history that Hystaspes, father of Darius, never sat on the throne, although his son Darius did.

(2) The Persian Kings used to put up tablets on which were inscribed their pedigree and all the noteworthy events of their reigns. Darius in his tablet clearly mentions himself to be a descendant of Achæmenes, but as it has been stated above, King Vistasp (Gustasp) of the Avesta is one of the Kianians, as the prefix *kai* in Kai-Vistasp or Kai-Gustasp signifies.

(3) The father of Vistasp (Gustasp) of the Avesta was Lohrasp or Kai-Lohrasp, one of the Kianian kings, whereas the name Darius Hystaspes denotes that Darius was the son of Hystaspes. This shows that those who support the view that Darius was the king to accept the religion of Zoroaster, take the son for the father. This they are obliged to do, because they know that Hystaspes, father of Darius, was never on the throne of Persia.

(4) If it was Darius Hystaspes that introduced the new religion of Zoroaster, he would have with pride mentioned the advent of Zoroaster and his teachings on the tablets commemorating his reign. There neither has he mentioned the name of Zoroaster, nor has he hinted at his accepting the new religion. Everybody will agree that the coming in of a new prophet and the adoption of a new faith by the king and his subjects, are the events which

none who tries to describe a reign can pass over, for such events happen but once in several thousands of years, and is hence undoubtedly a very rare and noteworthy one. That Darius has carefully described the events of his reign in his tablets, and said nothing about Zoroaster or his religion, proves beyond doubt that Zoroaster did *not* flourish in his time. On the other hand, his tablet proves that the prophet lived long before his time, as the religion in which Darius believed appears to be Zoroastrianism, religion which teaches Ahura-Mazda as the Supreme Being, whose divine favour the king acknowledges.<sup>(19)</sup> In one place the king states that on ascending the throne he had to weed out some wrong religious practices that had crept in before his time. This shews that Zoroastrianism must have begun hundreds of years before him, because a new religion is always in full vigour for several centuries following, and it is after a long time only that evil practices take root in the nation. Darius says that he had to reform the religion. It means that the religion was not founded in his time, but probably some centuries before him. There is also another reason for believing that the religion was in a degenerated state in the time of Darius. As it has been said before, the Assyrians and the Medes had intercepted the Persian rule, and as they were Anti-

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(19) "In the ninth part of Column I: (1) Says Darius the King: (2) 'Ormazda has granted me the empire: (3) Ormazda has brought help to me until I have united this empire: (4) By the grace of Ormazda I hold this empire.'"—K. D. KIRBY—*Ancient Persian Sculptures*. Page 188.

Zoroastrians, Zoroastrianism might have been found in a changed form when Darius ascended the throne. This historical fact proves Darius' own statement of having tried to bring back the religion to its original form, and leaves no doubt that Zoroaster lived very long before him.

(5) Herodotus<sup>(20)</sup>, the father of historians, has given a full history of Darius Hystaspes, in whose reign he was born. All the events described by the king himself in his tablet, are confirmed by this well-known historian, or rather say that the tablet which has been only recently discovered, fully confirms the description given by Herodotus thousands of years ago. Events are minutely narrated in the number of pages written on Darius' reign, and if Zoroastrianism was founded in the reign of Darius, such a noteworthy event could not have escaped the attention of this eminent historian. The story of the advent of Zoroaster into this world, and of his miracles and teachings had spread all over the Eastern Europe, Egypt, China and India, but the event must have become so old by the time of Herodotus, that it was not thought worth while to note it. That Herodotus is silent over it proves that the prophet did not flourish in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.

(6) King Vistasp (or Gustasp) had to fight against Arjasp, king of Turan, a province to the east of the lake Earl. The latter declared a war because he did

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(20) Herodotus, about 484 to 420 B.C.

not like Gustasp's conversion to the new faith. Herodotus makes no mention of this also, which further proves that Darius Hystaspes was not the Vistasp of the Avestaic period.

(7) It has been satisfactorily proved that king Vistasp mentioned in the Avesta, reigned at Balkh or Bactria, N.-W. of Kabul, whereas the capital of Darius Hystaspes was Persepolis, <sup>(21)</sup> south-east of Isphahan. There is a distance of many hundreds of miles between these two places.

(8) King Vistasp of the Avesta not only accepted and followed zealously the Zoroastrian faith, but also sent out missions to several countries and exhorted princes, nobles, and learned men of the time to study and follow the religion of one God, *i.e.* the religion of Ahura-Mazda, believe in Zoroaster as the true prophet, and leave off idolatry or the worship of many gods. Vistasp is said to have given his heart and soul to this important affair of religion. Such facts Darius would have engraved in the mountain with pride and satisfaction, if he was the same person as Vistasp (or Gustasp) of the Avestaic period. All this goes to lend a further support to the belief that Kai-Gustasp and Darius Hystaspes were quite different persons belonging to different ages.

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(21) "The site of the once celebrated city of Persepolis (the city of the Parsees) now generally known by the name of Takhat-i-Jamshid (the throne of Jamshid), is situated towards the southern direction, and in close proximity to the Kenar-i-Gard in the pleasant and fertile plain of Merdasht, at a distance of 33 miles from Shiraz, 40 from Parsagerd, or about 15 from Jurgoon."—*Ancient Persian Sculptures*.—K. D. KIASH.

(9) The language of the Avesta, and that of the cuneiform inscriptions of the Achæmenian period lately discovered, show on comparison a marked difference, such as could only be caused, according to the opinions of philologists, by the interval of a very long time between the two. In fact, there should be no difference in the language of the Avesta and that of the tablet of Darius, if the Avesta was written in his reign.

(10) Books, such as *Dinkard*, *Bundeish* and *Ardaviraf-nameh* and several others written at different times in the Pehelvi language, put Zoroaster about 300 years before the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. As it has been said before, Pehelvi was used between the second and the seventh century A. D., and many of the Pehelvi works now extant were written in Persia by the head priests or *dasturs* from traditions, for there were probably few or no books or manuscripts of authority left with the Persians. These books are therefore of a much later date than that of the Avesta or of the tablets. No one would, therefore, for a moment give preference to these Pehelvi books, and discard the authority of the very ancient Avesta and the original tablets written under the authority of the Achæmenian kings. The tablets confirm some of the points found in the Avesta, and are also confirmed by many ancient writers, and they are, therefore, more worthy of belief than the Pehelvi books, which have erred on this particular point. All these arguments go at least to prove

that Zoroaster was not a contemporary of Darius Hystaspes (521 B.C.).

Let us now consider the arguments advanced by the authors who try to prove Zoroaster's era to be about 1300 to 1400 years before Christ, that is 3200 to 3300 years ago. This appears to be very nearly approximate. In this connection it should be noted that by this it is not meant that Zoroaster lived exactly 3400 years ago. What is meant is *that he lived not less than 3400 years ago*, as will be seen from the following calculation :—

1906	A. D.	...	...	...	the present year.
+ 536	B. C.	....	...	...	the date Cyrus de-
<hr/>					
2442					feated the Medians
+ 700		...	...	...	and re-took Iran.
<hr/>					
3142					the round number
+ 300		...	...	...	of years the Assy-
<hr/>					
3442		...	...	...	rians and the Medes
					ruled over Iran.
					Round number of
					years adopted by
					some authors be-
					tween the reigns of
					Gustasp and King
					Oxarthes, the last
					of the Kianian
					Kings, whom Ninus
					defeated at the head
					of the Assyrians.
					Probable age of
					Zoroaster.

From the above it will be seen that Zoroaster lived not less than about 3442 years ago. Further investigations might put him still further back.

It is a misfortune that the links between the reigns of Kai-Vistasp and Oxarthes (Oxyarthes) are missing, and the addition, in the above calculation, of 300 years in round number, is on the supposition that only a few sovereigns may have ruled between Kai-Vistasp and Oxyarthes.

Another reason for adding 300 years only, is that there are statements scattered in many ancient books to the effect that the religion of Zoroaster suffered a great change 300 years after its introduction in the reign of Gustasp.

In future, if the missing links between Gustasp and Oxarthes are correctly discovered, the period would then be definitely fixed.

Another date, viz., 4500 years ago is given as the age of Zoroaster. This period is advocated on the authority of Berossus (Berosos), a Babylonian priest and writer, who wrote a history of the Babylonian Kings from their tablets. According to this writer, one Zarathushtra was the first of the eight Perso-Babylonian Kings that ruled over Babylon between 2458 B.C. to 2234 B.C. Dr. Haug has used the authority of Berossos in his chapter on the age of Zoroaster to prove that this King Zarathushtra must be one of the immediate successors of Zarathushtra, the prophet, and that he

(i.e. the King Zarathushtra) must have passed at once as the spiritual and temporal head of Babylon over which he ruled. On this supposition, the prophet *Zarathushtra* must have lived even before 2458 B.C. This can be true, only if there existed before the prophet no human being that ever passed by the name of Zarathushtra, either among the rich or poor classes. It is probable that the parents of the prophet gave him the name of Zarathushtra immediately after his birth, as one of the names in vogue at the time. It does not matter what the name means. Even the prophet's father's name Paorooshasp means something. This cannot lead us to the conclusion that there was no other Paorooshasp at the time amongst the many millions of people that lived at the time.

If Zarathushtra was a name which was borne by many other Persians of the time, it might be that the King Zarathushtra, of whom Berosus writes, was one of the *Magi*, and he might have lived before the prophet Zarathushtra, and not after him as it is suggested. So long as it is not proved that the name *Zarathushtra* was specially coined for the prophet, it is fair to assume that the name was one common amongst the people amidst whom the prophet was born, and, therefore, the era of the prophet cannot be determined from the mere mention of a Zarathushtra ruling over Babylon.

Dr. Haug writes as follows:—

“The confusion of opinion regarding his age, was, no doubt, mainly caused by the appellative name ‘Zarathushtra,’ i.e., High-priest, which was taken afterwards as the only proper name of the prophet.”



If the name 'Zarathushtra' was appellative, as believed by some, let us ask what was the name given to him by his parents when he was born. If the appellation of the prophet meant 'High-priest', there must have been some proper name by which the prophet was called for the first 45 years<sup>(22)</sup> of his life, for it was after this age that the prophet was recognised by the people as 'High-priest.'

Everywhere in the ancient Scriptures, we find the prophet addressed as, or called 'Zarathushtra Spitama,' i.e., Zarathushtra of the Spitama family. This family name was undoubtedly added especially to distinguish him from other Zarathushtras contemporaneous with the prophet.

If there was any other proper name of the prophet, it would surely have been mentioned somewhere, at least in the Gathas, where he is invariably called either 'Zarathushtra' or 'Zarathushtra Spitama.'

We also find in many places in the sacred writings the prophet using the words 'I Zarathushtra' for himself. It is more likely that he called himself by his own name than by the title used by the people for him.

From this, it is evident that 'Zarathushtra' was his proper name from the very beginning of his life, and that when he performed miracles and declared his religion in his middle life, i.e. after the age of 45,

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(22) It is on all hands accepted that Zoroaster retired from the world at the age of 30. He passed 10 years in meditation and about 5 more years passed before Gustasp accepted him as prophet, i.e., when Gustasp accepted the religion, Zoroaster was about 45 years old.

this name carried with it the highest idea of piety, and was looked upon with reverence such as was due to the prophet and spiritual head, and then the proper name of the prophet might have been taken after his death as the appellative name or title of the high priests that filled the post of the spiritual head of the country.

If as mentioned above, it be accepted that Cyrus re-took Persia in 536 B.C., if before it the Medians ruled over Iran for about 200 years, and if before this the Assyrians ruled for about 500 years, then the Assyrians took Iran from Oxyarthes in about 1236 B.C. Then, supposing that Zoroaster lived 4500 years ago, as is reckoned by those that calculate on the mention of Berosus, 1358 years<sup>(23)</sup> should be taken to fill up the gap between the reigns of Gustasp and Oxyarthes, which also seems a very incredible period only for a part of a dynasty.

In the present state of the knowledge, therefore, let us be content with the assumption that the prophet Zoroaster or Zarathushtra lived *not less than 3400 years ago.*

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(23)	536 B.C.	... Cyrus re-took Persia.
	+200	... The rule of the Medes in Iran.
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	736 B.C.	
	+500	... The rule of the Assyrians in Iran.
<hr/>		
	1236 B.C.	... Oxyarthes was defeated by the Assyrians.
	+1906	... The present year.
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	3142	... Oxyarthes was defeated so many years ago.

Deduct from 4500 (the age suggested on the authority of Berosus) 3142 as shewn above. The result is 1358.

## CHAPTER III.

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 Childhood, Divine Protection and Miracles.

According to several ancient Pehelvi and Persian books, the advent of Zoroaster into this world had been predicted long before he was born, and the wicked of the time, especially their leaders, were frightened, when they heard of the birth of the prophet. The chief of these was one named Durasan, Governor of Ræ-

The Pehelvi books<sup>(24)</sup> further mention, and every Parsi even now believes that Zarathushtra laughed, instead of crying, at the moment of his birth.<sup>(25)</sup> An attempt is made to explain this miracle by stating that ordinary men are born ignorant of what this world and the next are, but a prophet is sent on a divine mission, and is born with full knowledge of both the worlds. Ordinary men are all subject to the rules of nature, but a prophet is born quite independent of them.

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(24) Chief of these is 'Dinkard.'

(25) "Zoroaster was the only human being who ever laughed on the same day on which he was born. We hear, too, that his brain pulsed so strongly that it repelled the hand when laid upon it, as presage of his future wisdom."—*Pliny's Natural History, Book VII.*

"When Zoroaster was born, he burst out into a loud laugh (like the prince of Necromancers, Merlin) and such a light shone from his body as illuminated the whole room."—*History of Persia by Sir John Malcolm.*

It is farther said that a prophet is sent down to this world by God, when He sees that people here have become very sinful and wicked. The Aryan-vaij badly required a prophet at that time, when magic, sorcery, and worship of many gods, were in full practice, and Zoroaster was therefore selected as a prophet to correct the wicked and guide them back to the path of righteousness.

As stated above, the wicked began to tremble, when they knew that Zoroaster was born. They had heard the prediction<sup>(26)</sup>, that on and after his birth nothing immoral, wicked, or unrighteous, will be tolerated, and every wrong deed will be punished.

Durasan, who was the head of the wicked people of the time, got very uneasy when he heard of the birth of the prophet. He therefore decided to kill the child and rather than order him to be put to death, he himself went up to the place where the child lay, and proceeded to stab him with a dagger ; but when he raised his hand to do so, he found it stiff and unable to move or work.

When Durasan<sup>(27)</sup> found that he could not kill the child, he got very angry with himself. His wicked advisers then suggested that the child should be burnt alive. For this purpose a very huge pyre was erected, and Durasan compelled the father to give up

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(26) King Jamshed and King Fredoon of the Peshdadian dynasty had predicted the birth of Zoroaster.

(27) Compare Durasan with Herod or Pharaoh.

the child to him. As soon as they put the child on the burning pile, the flame went out of itself, and the pile at once cooled down. The mother of the child going up to the heap, found him alive and quite safe, though Durasan was under the impression that the child was burnt to ashes.

He then decided to steal the child and put him on a very narrow road, on which heads of cows passed, so that he might be crushed to death. But when this advice was followed, the child received divine protection. A strong cow immediately came forward, kept the child safe between her four feet, and let every other cow pass by her. Thus the whole herd cleared away, and the child remained safe. The protecting cow moved from the spot, only when she saw the bewildered mother come running to pick up the child.

Thus disappointed, once again Durasan put the child where horses were sure to trample him under their feet, but there again the child remained safe in the same miraculous way.

At last, a stronger measure was adopted. The child was placed in a jungle where escape from wolves was impossible. Here also he escaped miraculously indeed. The wolves on looking at their prey, wanted to tear him to pieces, but they were, as it were, rivetted to the spot, and their jaws could not open. Here the child lay for two days, because his mother did not know his whereabouts. The most

wonderful part of this miracle was, that the child did not remain there without milk. Two she-goats came from the nearest mountains, and feeded him as they would their young ones. *Dinkard* takes these goats to be angels<sup>(28)</sup> in the assumed form, and other religious books, wherein this miracle is mentioned, give the same explanation.

Again, the boy-prophet once fell ill, and his father had to consult a physician. One Bartroosh was looked upon as the best physician of the time. Once more Durasan got an opportunity to get rid of Zoroaster. He called the doctor and asked him to prescribe poison for the child, which the doctor did. It is related that the boy-prophet, when he was asked to take a dose of the poisoned stuff, took it in his hand and threw it away, declaring it to be a poison meant to destroy his life. Both Durasan and Bartroosh were helpless, when they found that the boy was gifted with such extraordinary powers.

When the prophet was seven years old, his father gave him in charge of a very pious man by name Burjukrus, under whom he received education, till he attained the age of fifteen.

In addition to these miracles during his infancy and childhood, the prophet performed several others himself. He is described to have carried in his hand as an emblem for years together till the

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(28) These angels were *Bahman* and *Srosh*.

end of his life, the ball of fire received by him from Heaven, just as easily as one could carry a cricket-ball.

Again, when Zoroaster was travelling towards the capital of Gustasp, he had in his way to cross the river Vehdaeti.<sup>(29)</sup> He prayed to God that he and his disciples be allowed to pass the river, and his prayer was heard and granted. The waters parted and Zoroaster with his disciples walked through the passage created for him.

When Zoroaster reached the capital of Gustasp, he asked the king to listen to his religious teachings, and accept his faith. The king was inclined to listen, to the prophet. But some of the courtiers declared that Zoroaster had a communication with the evil spirit, and accused him of deceiving the king. He was thereupon tried and found guilty, and sent to prison, as human hair, nails, etc., were found from under his bed.<sup>(30)</sup>

Zoroaster had a presentiment of this difficulty and knew who the persons were that had actuated the king to this step.

Shortly after his imprisonment, the four feet of the king's favourite black horse, Behzada, shrunk up into his body. All the royal physicians tried various

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(29) The modern Rode-Amoor. Zoroaster was born at Rae from which he had to travel far eastward to reach Balkh, the capital of Gustasp.

(30) Humam hair and nails, after they are removed from the body, are considered evil things according to Zoroastrianism.

remedies, but could not succeed in taking out the feet. Zoroaster, however, had a fore warning of this occurrence also. When nothing more could be done, and the horse was given up, the prophet undertook to cure the horse on conditions, that the king should punish those who had falsely accused him of having anything to do with the devil, and that he with the queen and his son should embrace his religion. As the horse was a great favourite of the king, these conditions were accepted, and the prophet cured the horse without any internal medicine or external application, but simply by making some passes of the hand over the horse's body.

It is also related that king Gustasp, long after he had accepted and spread the new faith, desired to see Heaven and communicated his wish to the prophet. Zoroaster satisfied his desire by shewing him Heaven and the happy after-state of the virtuous soul.





## CHAPTER IV.

## Birth-place.

Almost all oriental scholars agree that the prophet was born at Rae,<sup>(31)</sup> a town in Persia, to the south of Teheran.

According to the Avesta, Zoroaster's home was Aryan-vaij or Iran-vaij, which, it is believed, lay between Mount Caucasus in the west and Mount Albruz in the east, and Rae was in Iran-vaij.

In the 19th chapter of the Vendidad, it is stated that Zoroaster was born in the house of Paorooshasp. No town is mentioned there, but it is simply stated that the house was situated on the bank of the river Darejia, which flowed from Mount Jabar. Both the river and the mountain being in Iran-Vaij, it supports the belief that the prophet was born at Rae.

There is no direct proof to support the contention that the prophet's birth-place was Rae, but there does exist an indirect one. Some Pehelvi works mention that Paorooshasp, father of the prophet, was an inhabitant of Adarbaijan,<sup>(32)</sup> a province a little to the west of the Caspian Sea, and as the town of Rae is in this province, the contention that the birth-place

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(31) Rae was the native place of the prophet's mother. With Rae, Urmī and Shiz each claims to be the birth place of the prophet.

(32) Adarbaijan is considered to be the same as modern Atropatene.

of the prophet was this famous town, finds a support.

There is another point to support the belief. The prophet is styled in the Avesta as Zoroaster of Rae, and it is probable that this was owing to his being born in this town.

Rae is again spoken of in the first chapter of the Vendidad as the twelfth among the chosen places.

All the traditional works mostly agree in stating that Zoroaster was born at Rae which was in Media. For this reason some know him as the Median Prophet, but it is certain he did not preach his religion there. There are sufficient proofs, that the place where he first succeeded in establishing his religion, was Balkh in Bactria, where king Gustasp reigned, and for this reason many call him *The Bactrian Prophet*.



## CHAPTER V.

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### Ancestors, Parents, and Family.

Zoroaster was descended from a royal family, being the fourteenth<sup>(33)</sup> descendant of Manooshcheher, a king of the Peshdadian dynasty.

The prophet is, however, more widely known as "Zarathushtra Spitama," *i. e.*, Zarathushtra of the Spitama family. Spitama was the fifth descendant of the above-named king Manooshcheher.<sup>(34)</sup>

In some places in the Avesta the prophet is mentioned as being a descendant of Haechatasp, great-great-grandfather of the prophet, but he is more frequently named and spoken of as *Zarathushtra Spitama*.

His paternal grandfather's name was *Paetirasp*, and that of his maternal grandfather *Frahimarv*. His paternal uncle was one *Arasti*, who had a son, named *Mediomah*<sup>(35)</sup>, the first and staunchest disciple of Zoroaster.

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(33) (1) Manooshcheher, (2) Durastrobo, (3) Rajan, (4) Nayazem, (5) Vaedishta, (6) Spitama, (7) Hardbar, (8) Hardarshan, (9) Paetirasp, (10) Chikshnoos, (11) Haechatasp, (12) Orvadaso, (13) Paetirasp, (14) Paorooshasp, (15) Zaratushta.—*Bundeish*.

(34) This name is pronounced *Minocheher* in Persian, which is also one of the names in vogue amongst the present Parsis.

(35) Mediomah was to Zoroaster what St. John was to Christ.

His father's name, as already mentioned, was Paorooshasp.<sup>(36)</sup> While this name is often repeated in the Avesta, that of his mother is not found there at all. However, all the later works written in Pehelvi agree that her name was *Dughdao*, or *Dogdo* as it is written in Persian.

It is said of the mother of the prophet that an aureole<sup>(37)</sup> or halo of divine light was present about her face, and that this shining face actually supplied light in darkness, and that her very presence added to the warmth of the room.

This divine favour being known far and wide, had alarmed the wicked of the time, and more so, as they had been informed by the fore-seers, that she was to give birth to a prophet. For this reason attempts were often made to put an end to her life. Her father was, therefore, obliged to send her away to a distant place, and place her in charge of the respectable family of Paorooshasp, whom she subsequently married, and to whom she bore the illustrious son Zoroaster. To the son at his birth passed the halo of light belonging to the mother.

According to Professor Jackson, who writes on the authority of Pehelvi works, Zoroaster married three wives living at the same time. The Avesta, it should be noted, mentions nothing of the kind. It is

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(36) The derivation of this name means "keeper of many horses."

(37) Dogdo's aureole remained with her until she gave birth to Zoroaster. It is said that she inherited the aureole from her mother.

not only improbable but absolutely unbelievable that the prophet could have more than one wife.

In *Bundeish*, the names<sup>(38)</sup> of the three wives are given. But, even if it be true that Zoroaster married three times, it is more likely that he re-married twice, having only one wife at a time.

In the Avesta, only the name of one wife, *viz.*, *Havovee*, is found. She belonged to the noble Havogav family, members of which were distinguished courtiers of King Gustasp.

The Pehelvi works, which mention three wives, state that the second wife bore the prophet four children, one son and three daughters, and the third two children, both sons.<sup>(39)</sup> The first (*i.e.* *Havovee*) bore him no child.

Some writers put *Havovee* as the third wife, but Dr. West puts her as the first in the three. If this be true, then the prophet must have married only after his coming to the court of Gustasp, as *Havovee's* father belonged to the Bactrian court.

On taking a comprehensive view of the whole of Zoroastrian literature, it appears that *Havovee* was the

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(38) "Zaratust the righteous had three wives; all three were in the lifetime of Zaratust, and all three were living throughout the lifetime of Zaratust; the name of one was *Hvov*, of the second *Urvig*, of the third *Arnig-bareda*." (*Dr. E. W. West* in his foot-notes to *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I.)

(39) By *Urvig*, the second wife were born:—(1) *Isadwastar* (son), (2) *Freni* (daughter), (3) *Thrity* (daughter), and (4) *Paoroochista* (daughter).

By *Arnig-bareda*, the third wife:—(1) *Havrechithra* (*Khoorshed-cheher*) and (2) *Oorwatnar*, both sons.

only wife that the prophet married, and that all his six children were born of her only. This is a more sensible view, because it is not credible that the prophet could have married before he had fulfilled the mission for which he was ordained by God, and for which he had been forewarned, and if it be true that he married after Gustasp had been converted to his faith, then Havovee was the first and only wife he had.

In the Farvardin Yasht, the Fravashis of many pious men and women are praised, amongst whom are the names of Havovee and of the other members of the prophet's family, including even the names of the mothers by whom his sons (future prophets) will be born. It would, therefore, be very strange that the names of the mothers of the children born during the prophet's life-time should be omitted in the said Yasht, if he had three wives. The Avesta is more to be relied upon than *Bundeish*, a purely traditional work.

According to the Pehelvi works, written on the authority of tradition, three sons of Zoroaster will be born in different ages in distant future, and each of them will be the prophet of his time. Their names are:—(1) Hoshedar<sup>(40)</sup> (2) Hoshedarbami, and (3) Soshiosh. This view is also supported by the Avesta.

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(40) The tradition about Hoshedar is:—Hoshedar will be born in the reign of Beram Varjawand, who will be born about 1300 years after Yezdezerd, the last king of the Sassanian dynasty. A pious woman will go to bathe in the river Kashva (the present *Delmand*) near Herat, wherein lie guarded by an angel (Neriosangh) three generative seeds of Zoroaster. The woman, while bathing, will take in one of the seeds, and thus conceive. In this way Hoshedar will be born of a woman. When he will be 30 years old, he will get divine inspiration to spread his religion, which, it is said, will be accepted by every body.

Sufficient description is given about the future prophets in the well-known Pehelvi works like *Dinkard*, *Bundeish* and in the work of Zad-Sparam. Even in the Avesta, a distinct mention is made of the last future prophet, *Soshiosh*, whose name derivatively means "The future reliever of the world." According to revelation, there will be no more evils, diseases and deaths in his time.

Of the prophet's three sons, Isad-vastar became the Priest of Priests, Oorwatnar an agriculturist, and Khoorshed-cheher a warrior and commander of the army of Peshotan, son of Vistasp.

Of the prophet's three daughters, the youngest Paoroochista<sup>(41)</sup> is much admired in a part of the Avesta, as being the cleverest woman of the time. She was very pious and learned. It is said she preached her father's religion to the women of her time, exhorting them to believe in one God, to accept the true and righteous path shewn them by Zarathushtra, and to relinquish all the wrong deeds practised under the sanction of their so-called religion. According to some authorities, this daughter Paoroochisp married Jamasp Hakim (Jamasp the Wise), prime minister to King Gustasp.

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(41) This name is found in various forms, such as Paoroochisti, Paoroochistra, Paoroochisp.

## CHAPTER VI.

## Derivation of the name Zarathushtra.

Though almost all the European nations know the prophet of the Parsis by the name of 'Zoroaster,' the proper form of the name according to the Avesta is *Zarathushtra*. This name is, however, written and pronounced in various ways as follows :—

*Zoroaster, Zoroastres, Zarthoost, Zarathusht, Zardaosht, Zardoosht, Zarathoosht, Zarthost, Zardasht, Zarathost* and *Zarvest*, and so on.

The Parsis of the present day ordinarily pronounce the name as *Zarthost*.

Some orientalist contend that the name *Zarathushtra* is an appellative, afterwards taken to be the only proper name of the prophet; but this cannot be the case. It is very simple enough to believe that the prophet's parents must have called him by some name from the time of his birth, and so long as we have not come across that name, we must take *Zarathushtra* to be that name by which he was called from his very infancy.

Dr. Haug derives it from *Zarta*, old, and *ooshtra*, the best, the whole meaning 'the head of the religion,' but this derivation is accepted by few at present, it being regarded as far-fetched.

In very ancient times, when people's main occupation was pastoral or agricultural, their social position



was considered higher or lower according as they owned greater or smaller number of animals, such as, cows, horses, camels, etc., and especially it was so in Iran during the life of Zoroaster. Accordingly their names originated after some such animal. For illustrations are given some Iranian proper names having the derivation of:—

Cows (*gao* = the cow):—

*Avaregao, Dazgarogao, Parshatgao, Yetooshgao,* and so on.

OF CAMELS (*Ooshtra* = the camel):—

*Arvoshttra, Frashoshtra, Vohushtra, Avaroshtra, Zarathushtra,* and so on.

OF HORSES (*asp* = the horse):—

*Kershasp, Jamasp, Gustasp (or Vistasp), Aoorvatasp, Haechatasp, Habasp, Vajasp, Habasp, Virasp, Haredhasp, Paorooshasp,* and so on.

The prophet's father's name, *Paorooshasp* and his ancestor's name *Haechatasp*, are both derived from *asp* meaning horse, and it is therefore very likely that the termination *ooshtra* in the prophet's name means some animal, and as *ooshtra* means *camel* in the Avesta language, we should have no hesitation in believing that the name 'Zarathushtra' was a name having the termination meaning *camel*.

Scholars of the Avestaic literature derive the name in different ways as given below:—

- (1) *Zartha*, yellow, and *ooshtra*, the camel, meaning *keeper of yellow camels*.

- (2) *Zarthoo*, old, and *ooshtra*, the camel, meaning *keeper of old camels*.
- (3) *Zar*, golden, and *thooshtra*, a star, meaning *the golden star*.
- (4) *Zarta*, old, and *ooshtra*, the best, meaning *the head of a religion or high-priest*.

Besides the above, there are other derivations, but the above four are the principal ones. Of all these, the derivation, viz., the *keeper of yellow camels*, seems to be more reliable than any other.

It may be that Zoroaster was not actually the owner of yellow camels. It is easy to think that in those ancient times, even before the time of Zoroaster, when the people's chief avocation was either agricultural or pastoral, and their property consisted mainly of domestic animals, most of the names of persons had their origin in one or other kind of these animals, but subsequently such names were given to their children irrespective of their origin or meaning. Such was the case with all the nations of the world. Amongst the Europeans almost all the Christian names have some meaning. All Napoleons now are not *lions of the forest dell*, nor all Richards *rich-hearted*, nor Philips *lovers of horses*. Again, all Victors are not *conquerors*, nor all Edwards *guardians of property*. These names are now given, as we all know, without the slightest consideration as to their meaning. Amongst the Parsis also, all Jehangirs are not *conquerors of the world*, all Khooshroos are

not *pleasant-faced*, all Sheriars are not *patriots*, nor are all Motabhais and Nanabhais *elder or younger brothers*. These names are now given by Parsis to their children without stopping for a moment to think what they mean. The conclusion could be drawn that the same was the case with the name 'Zarathushtra.'

In any case the name Zarathushtra was not an appellative of the prophet. If we accept the meaning 'high-priest' as given by the late Dr. Haug, *Zarathushtra Spitama* would mean 'high-priest of the Spitama family.' This would again lead us to believe that there were other high-priests who belonged to families other than that of Spitama. But it was not so. We know Zarathushtra was the only high-priest of his time.

Again, the reason for adding the distinguishing name 'Spitama' to the name Zarathushtra, is clear enough, and that reason is the same why we now call one Kharshedji *Cama* and another Kharshedji *Battiwalla*, or one William *Cooper* and another William *Shakespeare*. In other words 'Spitama' is the surname of Zarathushtra, just as the Parsis now use surnames, or the Europeans use their family names. There must have been many persons named Zarathushtra even in the prophet's time, and to distinguish him from his namesakes, it was necessary to add to his name the family designation 'Spitama.'

The following passage from Professor Jackson's monumental work is worth quoting as regards the name, and it is as follows:—

“Doubtless the name is an unromantic, unpoetic name, a title which the man retained as his birth-right even after he became famed as a spiritual and religious teacher. The very fact of his retaining the somewhat prosaic appellative testifies to a strong personality; Zoroaster remains a man and he is not dubbed anew with a poetic title when later satisfaction has thrown a halo of glory about his head.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

## Pre=prophetic Period.

It was after the age of forty that the prophet publicly announced his mission.

When Paorooshasp saw that the *elite* of the time predicted that his son was destined to be a great man, and that the leaders of the wicked sought to kill him, he thought it advisable to educate him accordingly. As stated above, when Zoroaster was seven years old, his education was entrusted to a learned man of the time, by name Burjinkrus.

Nothing is mentioned anywhere as to who the associates of the prophet were in his early life, and who inculcated on him the virtuous ideas. In fact, little is known to us about his society or social life.

However, in many places we find some glimpses of his kind and charitable disposition in his early years. In one place we find him working heart and soul in relieving the sufferings of his poor neighbours during a famine by supplying pasture for their cattle, and food and clothing for the old and the infirm.

At the age of fifteen, when he had acquired sufficient knowledge of the Mazdiyasni religion in which he was born, the ceremony of investing him

with the sacred shirt (*sudreh*) and girdle (*kusti*)<sup>(42)</sup> was performed. The *kusti* was so highly prized in those days, that long after when Paorooshasp divided his property<sup>(43)</sup> amongst his sons, Zoroaster selected among other things a *kusti* as his portion.

Much has been written about the courage of the prophet. Before he publicly preached his mission, and even before the time of his receiving divine inspiration, the prophet had very often discussed several religious questions even with the wicked governor, Durasan, and his supporters, with whom he had several interviews at their own request. He boldly exposed their vice and wickedness, declared their mode of living and ruling altogether inconsistent with the commandments of the Supreme Being, condemned sorcery as an evil art disliked by God, and fully satisfied them that nobody could harm a true and virtuous man. In all his interviews with the leading sorcerers of his time, whom even his father regarded as the most learned people of those days, and who were all eager to checkmate Zoroaster in argument, he spoke so plainly, so boldly, and so forcibly, that they were quite dumb-founded and checkmated.

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(42) Some of the Parsis wrongly believe that Zoroaster introduced this ceremony, but it was not so. The investiture with the sacred shirt and thread commenced with the time of the prophet Hoam, who introduced the ceremony amongst the Mazdijasnians. He flourished a long time before Zoroaster. Some say *Jamshed* introduced it.

(43) This division was made during the life-time of Paorooshasp. It appears the Iranians used to divide their property and wealth among their children during their old age.

At about the age of thirty, he began to feel that the worldly knowledge imparted to him, was not sufficient to enable him to know thoroughly God and His works. He had been endowed with great Wisdom, and through that Wisdom, he wanted to know Nature and her secrets. He yearned to know who had made the elements, and what the uses of the elements were : why there were day and night, and sleep and consciousness ; and how to remove evil and lies from the world.

Thereupon he decided to go into retirement at the age of 30, and for this purpose he selected a high mountain,<sup>(44)</sup> where he passed more than ten years in prayer and contemplation.

Here, it may be mentioned what the popular belief of the Parsis is about Zoroaster's visit to God in Heaven. They believe that Zoroaster in person travelled through the aerial passage and reached Heaven, where he had a conversation with God. But in the Gathas, the version is different and more philosophic. There Zoroaster himself says that he asked questions through *Bahman*,<sup>(45)</sup> and received answers through *Srosh*,<sup>(45)</sup> meaning thereby that he raised certain recondite questions through his intellect (*Bahman*), and obtained the solutions of those problems in the inspired state (*i. e.* *Srosh* spoke into his ears), which was all owing to the extraordinary

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• (44) Mount *Asnavat* in Adarbajan.

(45) *Bahman* means good mind, wisdom or intellect, and *Srosh* is the divine oracle.

elevation of Zoroaster's faculty of mind and imagination. He was under the divine influence of Ahura,-Mazda, and because of that influence he understood and perceived what others could not. In short, he was under the influence of what is called *Divine Inspiration*.

When a man concentrates his attention to one point, he after a time becomes quite unconscious of what passes around him, and he can neither hear, nor see, though his eyes be open. Such is the experience of everybody even in ordinary life. But in the case of religious enthusiasts, it is found that during their prayer and devotion they can neither hear, nor see, nor even move for hours together, their body remaining totally inactive during the time. Such was actually the case with Zoroaster. When he was absorbed in prayer and deep devotion, and his soul visited the Divine Powers, his body remained inactive on the mountain, it is believed, for 14 days.

The popular belief further adds that when the prophet personally visited God in Heaven, He presented him the 21 volumes of the Scriptures.

According to the Gathaic version, it might be said that these 21 volumes were produced by the prophet by inspiration, or as allegorically put, Srosb, the divine oracle, spoke into Zoroaster's ears, and Zoroaster subsequently dictated the information he had so received to his disciples.



The *Gathas* are the recitings of Zoroaster himself, and from them, it is seen that God found no other human being more fitted to preach Truth and Righteousness to his fellow-creatures than Zoroaster. He, however, succeeded in his mission, as he himself confesses in a part of the *Gathas*, only by Divine Will and Divine Help. In fact, God wanted to establish a religion, and He did it through the medium of Zoroaster.

After the age of forty, the prophet set himself to the task of propagating his teachings. So strong was his conviction in the truth of his mission, that in one of the *gathas*, he is represented as speaking before a gathering of people come from near and from afar, and exhorting them boldly *to hear his arguments, to use their senses, and to select the path of virtue or vice, as they thought better.*

Nowhere in the *Gathas* is any mention made of the prophet trying to convert people by force. In fact, in the whole Zoroastrian Scriptures, man is left free to select this or that path, *viz.*, virtue or vice. The task imposed by Zoroaster upon himself was to prove to the people that *virtue had its own reward, and vice its own punishment.* In short, he preached a religion of culture and not of dogma. As S. Laing says, "His religion was one of pure reason."

The religion in which Zoroaster was born was known as the *Poriodakeshi* religion, which also

acknowledged God as the Supreme Being, advocated Truth and Virtue as the best principles, and denounced idolatry. Zoroaster did not set aside entirely this religion. On the contrary he accepted, confirmed, and recommended what was good in it. In fact he reformed the old religion, retaining some of its tenets and ceremonies.<sup>(46)</sup>

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(46) Hoam and Barashnoom ceremonies originally belonged to the Poriodakeshi religion, but were retained and recommended by Zoroaster.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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 The Inspired State.

As mentioned above, according to the popular idea, Zarathushtra visited the other world by the help of *Bahman* (or *Vohuman*) after he was thirty. In this chapter will be related what he is reported to have seen and heard there; in other words here will be given the ideas of Zoroaster in his inspired state with regard to certain social, moral and religious questions which are related in the form of a dialogue:—

*Question.*—*Who is good in this world?*

*Answer.*—That man is good who has Truth in his deeds, who has pleased all by his charity, who knows how to deal justice impartially, and who respects and takes care of fire, water, cattle, and other useful animals.

*Question.*—*Through whom do evil deeds arise?*

*Answer.*—God says, “I wish to see Virtue and Piety spread. I detest evil deeds, and am not pleased at all to see anybody harmed in the world. Also, I do not wish to see in the world sorrow, trouble, affliction, and diseases of any kind, which all are the works of the unholy, shameless *Ahriman*. I have therefore resolved to keep bad people, the followers of *Ahriman*, in hell. To say evil deeds proceed from me is wrong.”

*Question.—How to offer prayers?*

*Answer.—*Man may pray to Me (God) in public or in private. He should conceive that I am present in any luminous creation of mine, face such an object while praying to me, for all should esteem Light in the world. You will not find a place in both the worlds, where you will not see my Light. Those that will follow this precept, cannot be harmed by Ahriman, as darkness and its harmful results cannot enter a place where there is Light.

Again, the prophet received the knowledge about the world and how it was created, and about the planets and how they move in their path, and about the influence of the planets over this world.

It was also in the inspired state that Zoroaster had the opportunity to know the past and the future of the world, and to see heaven and hell.

In hell, he was shewn Ahriman, who did his best to dissuade him from Righteousness and bring him round to the path of unrighteousness. The reply Zoroaster gave him was :—" Oh unholy ! hell is properly and justly assigned to thee. He who shall follow thee, shall also be punished as thou hast been, and his place will also be hell. By the grace of Ahura-mazda I shall oppose all thy deeds."

In heaven, the Ameshaspentas (archangels) welcomed Zoroaster, one after another, and every one of them gave him his special commandment :

The first archangel and the one next to Ahura-mazda is Bahman. He addressed Zoroaster as follows:—

“O Zarathushtra! I give unto your care all the cattle and sheep on the Earth. Persuade all the chiefs and priests to take care of them. They are of great use to mankind, and I do not like that innocent quadrupeds should be tortured.”

Ardibehesht told Zarathushtra to the following effect:—

“O prophet of Ahura-mazda! tell king Gustasp to take care of and preserve all fires, for I entrust this work to him. He should build fire-temples in every place, and appoint learned and pious priests to preserve fire there with great respect, and see that nobody puts it out by pouring cold water over it, or throwing dust or dirt in it. Tell him to lay aside sufficient funds for the maintaining of every fire-temple and the priest presiding over it. Fire proceeds from Ahura-mazda Himself, and it is His lustre. You should know that Fire is one of the grandest things in the world, and is wanted everywhere by everybody. Fire wants from man nothing but dry wood. If you will put fragrant wood on it, it will spread around you a pleasant smell which will please your brain, but if you will lay anything foul on it, the smell out of it will surely harm you. The heat of fire cures all the diseases proceeding from cold. Fire illuminates your dark heart. Many

grand deeds can be achieved with Fire, and it is your duty to give it the high respect it deserves. Ahura-mazda has given me the care of Fire, and I in turn entrust it to your care. He who will follow my advice will endear himself to the Supreme Being, but he who disobeys will have his soul overcome by the evils of hell."

Zoroaster promised Ardi-behesht that he will advise the people of the world to revere and preserve Fire.

Then spake Shahrevar to the prophet :—" O holy Zarathushtra of good sense ! may Ahura-mazda always crown you with success ! When you return to the lower world, give this message to the people there, *viz.*, that those who have at their place swords, daggers, spears and other weapons, should keep them always shining, and not allow them to rust. Bad people are always afraid of those that have their weapons shining. With such weapons people always shine out in war and against their enemies. It is necessary to preserve these weapons and not let them go into their hands."

Having got the message of Shahrevar, he proceeded to receive one from Archangel Spandarmad, who addressed the prophet in the following terms :—

" O holy man ! it behoves you to hear my message for your followers. It is the order of the Creator of the universe to keep land clean and not to pollute it with blood or any foul substance. Tell the people

not to bury the dead, and enjoin them to put foul things or matter far from populated places, far from flowing water and far from cultivated land. People will be benefitted by cultivating land or by dwelling on it. Those kings, that will try to improve their land, will be regarded as pious."

The next in order was Archangel Khordad, who enjoined the prophet to take care of the waters of the rivers and wells, which flow from mountains and underground passages, and which are used in cultivation, and for cooking purposes. He wanted the people of this world not to throw any dead body or a part of the dead body into such flowing waters, nor allow any foul substance to mix with them, and added that if the water used in cooking food was clean and unpolluted, the food would never harm the person who ate it, and told him not to forget that foul water was the cause of several diseases in this world.

The sixth Archangel Amardad advised Zarathushtra to take care of the vegetable world. To destroy trees and plants without any plausible cause is unreligious. Such a step is considered harmful to men and animals.

After this, Zoroaster returned to this world, when immediately evil spirits surrounded him. They asked Zarathushtra to try their evil path first, and assured him that if he once befriended Ahriman, he was sure to dislike the Avesta of Ahura-mazda. Zarathushtra laughed them out and recited *Ahunavar* from the

**Avesta.** The evil spirits could not stand against this recital and were forced to disappear from the spot at the same moment.<sup>(47)</sup>

Here the words of Samuel Laing in his "A Modern Zoroastrian" would be worth quoting:—

"Zoroaster appears to us, like Mahomet, at a later age and among a ruder people, as a prophet or reformer who abolished these abuses (*i. e.*, the belief in many gods and idolatry) and restored the ancient faith in a loftier and more intellectual form, adapted to the use of an advanced and civilized society. The records of his life and teaching have fortunately been preserved in so authentic a form, that distant as he is from us, we can form a singularly accurate idea of who he was and what he taught."

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(47) The philosophy of this is clear enough. Even now, when one tries to do a good deed, evil thoughts are sure to disturb one, and make one doubtful about the success of the good undertaking, but if one stands firm and resolute, the evil thoughts do leave one, and one at length succeeds in the good act. Avestaic recitals are supposed to give resolution to the mind.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## Zoroaster at the Court of King Gustasp.

After this, the prophet proceeded<sup>(48)</sup> towards Balkh, the capital of Gustasp. He had with him the Avesta, which contained all the information about the past and the future, a branch of the cypress tree in one hand, and a ball of fire<sup>(49)</sup> in the other.

When he appeared at the court, he made obeisance to the king and showered blessings<sup>(50)</sup> on him. The king could at once understand from the noble demeanour of the prophet, that he was some illustrious personage, and could not but welcome him to his court and allow him a seat near the throne.

The first and the most wonderful thing that drew the attention of the king and his courtiers was, that he carried the ball of fire in his hand without receiving any harm from it. Zoroaster placed the same fire in the hand of the king, whom it also did not injure. His courtiers could also try it in their hands and were none the worse for it. For this at least, the king and the courtiers could not but look upon his person with reverence.

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(48) For this the prophet had to travel eastward from his birth-place.

(49) This fire received by him from Heaven was known by the name of "Adar-burjin."

(50) The words of these blessings are still preserved in the Parsi Scriptures.

The prophet then asked the king to invite from near and from afar all the wise and the learned of the land, to have discussions with him on any subject they liked. During the discussion it was found that Zoroaster could handle every subject, that was placed before him, with such perfection that it created a great sensation among the hearers, and the king was so much impressed with the personality of the prophet, who in fact appeared to know everything, that he allowed him a seat, next to the throne, and liked very much to converse with him.

After a few days' stay at the court, Zoroaster declared his divine mission to the king, and said he was the prophet of Ahura-mazda, and sent by Him to instruct the world to believe in Him as the Creator, and to follow the Righteous path, the only path liked by Him. Gustasp, who had a pure conscience, heard him with pleasure and attention.

There is a story in connection with the king Gustasp's easily acknowledging Zoroaster as prophet. Early in the morning of the day, on which Zoroaster declared his mission, and before the court had fully assembled for the day, the gate-keeper of the court went running to the king, who had already occupied his seat on the throne a little before the usual time, and informed him of the coming up at the gate of some four horsemen. Before the gate-keeper had time to describe to the king their person and dress, and before the king could give him permission to

admit them, those four men had entered the court-room, and advancing towards the throne, addressed the king by his name, and having showered blessings on him, told him that they were divine messengers sent by Ahura-mazda (God) to enjoin the king to accept Zoroaster as the prophet of Ahura-mazda, and his mission to be true, and to embrace his religion, and persuade his courtiers and subjects to follow the same. The men had then left the court without taking leave of the king and disappeared.

As this had taken place a little before Zoroaster appeared at the court that morning, the king was still under the impression produced by the sudden appearance and disappearance of the four mounted men, when Zoroaster broke to him the subject of his prophecy, with so much impressiveness that the king and the courtiers could not but listen to him with due reverence.

As the prophet showed great proficiency in the knowledge of all matters, political, social, religious, etc., the king thence forward took his advice on those subjects, and neglected to consult his ministers and courtiers. This naturally excited jealousy against the prophet among some of the courtiers, but as they knew that he had divine help, and was therefore able to detect any plot that could be attempted against him, they thought it prudent not to try anything of the kind.

However, four of them, quite blinded by envy, undertook to ruin the prophet by false accusation. They bought over the keeper in charge of the building

which was assigned to Zoroaster for his use, and obtained the possession of the key of the door, and in his absence they put the hair of dead persons, heads of cats and dogs, human nails and skulls, and such other materials that Zoroaster had condemned as foul and harmful, and irreligious to keep. After this, one of the party involved in it, approached the king, made the usual obeisance, and told him not to lend ears to Zoroaster as he was not the prophet of God, but only a magician who kept foul dead materials in his room and under his bed, and performed his magic feats at dead of night.

Zoroaster, on being asked to defend himself, denied having done anything of the kind. The room was, however, searched by the order of the king, and the statement of the complainant was confirmed by the discovery of the foul things. The evidence of the watchman further supported the complainant.

The king, of course, under these circumstances got very angry with the new comer, threw aside the Avesta which he now regarded as a charm to mislead him, and ordered him to be thrown into prison, where the prophet remained for seven days.

On the morning of the eighth day, there was an uproar in the town at a strange occurrence. The king's very favourite black horse, known by the name of Behzada,<sup>(51)</sup> whom the king always rode

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(51) This horse was also called *Aspe-siah*. Pers. *Asp*, horse, and *Siah*, black.

when out hunting, or in battle, and who had always proved himself to be of better mettle than that possessed by any other horse in the kingdom, was all of a sudden taken ill, and lay with his belly touching the ground, his four legs having shrunk up into his body. People came from near and distant places to witness the singular occurrence. The eminent *Hakims* of the time could not diagnose the disease of the horse, and declared themselves unable to cure him. As all were helpless, the king was much grieved at finding his favourite animal in such a sad plight.

On that day, the keeper of the prison carried the usual meal to Zoroaster a little later. Without being asked the cause of the delay, the keeper excused himself by informing the prophet of the strange illness of the king's horse, and of all the *Hakims'* total inability to do anything for the poor animal.

Zoroaster, who had known all this, simply told the official to run up to the king and tell him that his prisoner said that he had the power and undertook to restore the legs to the horse. As in those days, if a person approached a king with any good news, he generally secured precious gifts from the crown, the keeper, without wasting a moment, sought the king, and having hurriedly passed through the usual formality, informed him of the conversation he had had with the prophet, whom the king ordered immediately to be released and brought before him.

On arrival, Zoroaster was again given his place beside the throne. The king informed him of the condition of his horse, and asked him if he could restore the legs to the horse. Zoroaster forthwith undertook the task on certain conditions. The king having promised him all that he wanted, the prophet went aside, washed his hands and face, and passed some time in prayer. He then came to the king and asked him to accept his (Zoroaster's) religion, before he took out the first leg; the king having promised this, the prophet passed his hand over the horse's back, and immediately one leg was restored to him. At this the king and the whole court were surprised. The king at once accepted his religion and was fully satisfied that Zoroaster was not a cheat and magician, but that he was really the messenger of God and His angels.

Before the prophet restored the second leg, he wanted that the king's son Asfandiar should promise to embrace the new religion, and help him to spread it far and wide. The prince did not at all hesitate to promise this to Zoroaster, who then made another pass of his hand over the body of the horse, to whom now the second leg was restored at once.

Before the third leg was taken out, the prophet desired that the king's wife should also adopt his religion as her own, and try her best to spread it amongst the members of her own sex. This being at once accepted, the third leg was in the same manner restored to the animal.

Lastly, and before taking out the fourth leg, he announced to the king the names of the persons who had placed the foul substances in his room. They were four in all and held important posts at the court. They, of course, denied the charge, but the prophet said he had known everything, and he related the details of the whole plot circumstantially. The keeper, who was threatened with death in case he concealed the truth, fearing the prophet's power of knowing everything, confessed the whole truth, which corroborated the prophet's statement, and the four courtiers were thus convicted. The king was satisfied, because the names given by the prophet, and those given by the keeper were the same. The four courtiers had no other help left them but to confess their guilt. The king ordered them all four to be immediately put to death. The prophet, thereafter, with prayers on his lips made passes of his hand just as before, and restored the fourth leg to the horse, who now at once got up on all fours.

This miracle of Zoroaster was the topic of conversation for days together, and no courtier thereafter dared say anything more against the prophet.

As time proceeded, his religion began to gain ground in the kingdom, but the propagation was not effected by force, as that was against the spirit of his teachings.

Zoroaster's position in the court was now next to the king, and above the prime-minister. He used to pass some time at the court and the rest in prayers.

Some time after, the king expressed to the prophet the following four desires, which he wanted him to gratify.—They were:—

- (1) To see in Heaven his own place after death.
- (2) To become invulnerable.
- (3) To be able to know the past and the future—and
- (4) To become immortal.

On hearing this, the prophet said, that though he was able to gratify, with the help of Ahura-mazda, all the four desires of the king, one and the same person could not be favoured with the gratification of all the four. The king was requested to name one of these four desires for himself, and he selected the first, *viz.*, to see his own place in the other world after his death. The second, the third, and the fourth favours were to be bestowed upon Asfandiar<sup>(52)</sup>, Jamasp<sup>(53)</sup>, and Peshotan<sup>(54)</sup> respectively.

For this purpose, the prophet performed certain religious ceremonies, and consecrated some wine, pomegranate, flowers, and milk. To the king he gave the consecrated wine to drink, which threw him into a sort of sleep or trance, and kept him in the same state for three successive days, during which

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(52) Gustasp's Son. He was the commander-in-chief of the Iranian army.

(53) Prime-minister of Gustasp. He is known to the Parsis by the name of Jamasp Hakim. (*Hakim* means *Doctor*).

(54)† Gustasp's Son.



time his soul visited Heaven, where he saw all the wonders of the place and his own status after death. Asfandiar was made to eat the seeds of the consecrated pomegranate, and he thereby became invulnerable. Jamasp was made to smell the consecrated flowers, whereby he secured the knowledge of the past and the future; and the milk was drunk by Peshotan, who thereby became immortal<sup>(55)</sup>.

As time passed, Gustasp and his subjects became staunch converts to the prophet's religion. The king erected in every town suitable buildings, wherein the sacred fire was kept perpetually burning, and appointed worthy priests to take care of it, setting aside, at the same time, large areas of land for their maintenance.

Not only this, but Gustasp, Jamasp, Asfandiar, Frashoshtar, and other leading men of the territory, endeavoured their utmost to spread the Zoroastrian faith in different countries.<sup>(56)</sup>

The news of the new prophet and his mission spread far and wide beyond the Iranian dominion. According to later Pehelvi works, Tutianus<sup>(57)</sup>, Chandraghasch,

(55) According to the belief of the Parsis, Peshotan is still living, but his whereabouts are not known.

(56) There is no religious objection to allowing any person born a non-Zoroastrian, who firmly believes in the Zoroastrian religion, to adopt it as his own. On the contrary, Zoroaster and his disciples perseveringly attempted to persuade people to set aside their wrong faith and join the right one. This can be proved on the authority of the Avesta.

(57) Some believe Tutianus to be a Persianized name of Pythagoras; others say he lived several centuries after Zoroastrian. It is, however, true that Pythagoras studied the Zoroastrian religion.

and Vias or Bias were the contemporaries of Zoroaster, and the most learned and wisest men of the time in their own countries.

Tutianus, when he came to the court of Gustasp as the representative of the Greeks, was quite sanguine of defeating Zoroaster in argument, and exposing him as an imposter, but when the Greek philosopher saw the prophet entering the court, he, being thoroughly experienced in reading human faces, could not but be deeply struck with the physiognomy of the prophet. He involuntarily ejaculated the remark, viz., "A man possessing such a brilliant face cannot be a pretender!" The Greek philosopher was also well versed in astrology. He asked the prophet on what day and at what hour of the day he was born. On learning the exact time, the Greek astrologer said that a man born on that day and at that hour could never be a cheat! He then discussed several subjects with Zoroaster who expounded them quite lucidly and very easily, and satisfied himself that Zoroaster undoubtedly possessed a super-human power. He then asked the prophet if he could solve certain questions, of which the Greeks desired the solution from him (Zoroaster). The prophet offered to give the answers without hearing the questions. He simply asked one of his disciples to recite certain parts of the Avesta, which were found to contain the answers to all the points the Grecians wanted to know. Tutianus, thereupon, acknowledged Zoroaster's superiority, and willingly became one of his followers.

Chandraghasch from India visited 'the court of Gustasp with the same intention as the Greek philosopher, but he also in his turn was convinced of the mission of Zoroaster. He returned to India a Zoroastrian at heart, and sincerely attempted to propagate the new religion.

*Vias* (pronounced by some *Bias*) another learned and enlightened contemporary of Zoroaster, was enraged at his countryman's (Chandraghasch) being checkmated by the Iranian prophet. He, therefore, went himself to the capital of Gustasp to test the powers of the prophet. He also in his turn had to acknowledge the superior powers of the Bactrian sage. In his own country, he had, before that time, run down Zoroaster and his teachings, but his single visit converted him into a most enthusiastic admirer of the prophet. Before returning to India, the Indian philosopher, in order to further test the Iranian's powers, asked him if he could read his secret thoughts. Zoroaster having satisfied him on that score also, he became a convert to the new religion which he tried to propagate in his own country.

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## CHAPTER X.

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 Spread of Religion and Religious Wars.

It would have been a fortunate circumstance, if the *Vistasp-sast* Nask of the Avesta was extant to-day. It is said it contained a full description about the reign of Gustasp, his adopting the new religion, and the extent to which it was spread in the surrounding territories. We have, therefore, to depend only upon the Pehelvi and Arabic works from which it may be inferred, that the faith was spread in Greece, Rome, Turkestan, Asia Minor, China and in India. This was done through the missionaries dispatched by the order of the old king Gustasp, aided by Jamasp and Frashoshtar, his brave son Asfandiar, and pious son Peshotan, and many other zealous persons of the time. It is also said that the prophet himself travelled for the purpose, but there is no direct proof to support this statement, except some reference in the "Dinkard." However, it is probable that the prophet may have travelled to personally influence his cause.

It is mentioned that Babylon was one of the places visited by the prophet himself. It is a proved fact, that there were in ancient times many persons in that city, who were fully acquainted with the Zoroastrian lore and its philosophy. It is said that Pythagoras studied the Zoroastrian religious literature under the Magis of Babylon. From this it can be concluded that the Zoroastrian faith had extended

even to Babylon, where it was advocated, if not by the prophet himself, at least by his followers.

Some years after king Gustasp had adopted the new faith, Arjasp, the then-king of Turan, Turkestan and China, sent his ambassador to Gustasp's court and declared his desire, that the new faith should be abandoned by the king of Iran: Arjasp used to entertain magicians and sorcerers at his court. It was, therefore, natural that he did not like the new faith which taught only piety and morality.

In short, Gustasp contemptuously refused to leave off Zoroastrianism and prepared himself for war.

At length a war was declared by Arjasp. He approached the Iranian boundary with a very large army, consisting of, according to Pehelvi works, three lacs of men, led by Gurgsar, commander-in-chief of the Turanian army, which was divided into four parts, of which one remained in the front, another in the rear, and the other two parts formed the wings.

The Iranian army was also a large one, and divided into parts, the whole army being led by the king's son, Asfandiar, aided enthusiastically by the king's brother, Zarir.

Both the kings stationed themselves on the tops of the neighbouring hills and watched the proceedings of the war.

Many sons<sup>(58)</sup> of Gustasp were killed in the fight.

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(58) Their names were Ardeshir, Hormazd, Shedasp, Nevzar and Padkhooshroo.

Zarir, who was a famous warrior of the time, was challenged into a duel by Bidrafoosh, a known Turanian general. The duel ended in favour of the Iranian chief, but when he was about to return to his tent, he was killed with a lance thrown by his antagonist from behind. As a reward for killing Zarir, Arjasp gave to the chief his daughter Zaraster in marriage.

On the other side, Gustasp promised his daughter Homae in marriage to any chief of his, who could avenge the death of his brother, Zarir. This reward was secured by the young and brave Nastoor, Zarir's son, who had, immediately on hearing the declaration of the reward, engaged himself in hand to hand fight with the antagonist and murderer of his father, and killed him on the spot. Also, Asfandiar the Invulnerable made a sad havoc in the army of Arjasp, who at length fled with the remaining army, and desired for a peace which was granted to him.

Gustasp was once more free to attend to the propagation of the new religion, which now spread with astonishing speed. For years together this work was carried on with ease and peace.

It happend, however, that Gustasp had a son named Koorzam, who was naturally of an envious disposition. He could not bear to hear his brother Asfandiar praised on every side for his courage and strength. He, therefore, found out some means to poison the ears of his father, and thereby excite his

rage against the admired brother. In this he succeeded. His father ordered Asfandiar to be shackled and thrown into a solitary prison built on a lonely hill situated in the province of Sistan. A short time after this event, the king himself left his capital and went on a visit to a friend, with whom he intended to stay for about two years.

Arjasp, taking advantage of the imprisonment of Asfandiar and the absence of the king from his capital, advanced with a large army and besieged the capital. Gustasp's very old father Lohrasp was killed, fire-temples, of which Noosh-adar was the chief, were demolished, the fires therein were extinguished, the resident priests who were unarmed and unprotected were easily put to the sword, and the last but the greatest loss was the death of the prophet who was killed, while he was deeply engaged in praying in one of the fire-temples.

The news of all these occurrences having reached Gustasp, he at once collected a large army, and appointing his son Frashidward leader of the same, sent him against the enemy. Frashidward was mortally wounded in the fight, and Gustasp was obliged to flee and take shelter in a jungle close by. The Iranian army was on the point of surrendering, when Asfandiar, who had been liberated by Jamasp the Wise at such a critical time, appeared on the spot on behalf of his country and turned the scale. The Turanian army was annihilated and Arjasp could save his life only by running away. Asfandiar pursued him up to his capital, took it, and forced the king, who now submitted, to accept the Zoroastrian faith.

## CHAPTER XI.

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**Death.**

Zoroaster died at the age of 77 years<sup>(59)</sup>, about 35 years after Gustasp had adopted the new faith.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the king was at that time out on a visit to Jabulstan. Arjasp, king of Turan (Tartary), taking advantage of his absence, entered Iran, and besieged Balkh, capital of Gustasp. Asfandiar, the noted commander-in-chief of the Persian army, who had defeated the Turanians on the first occasion, lay imprisoned in the fortress of Gumbdan, he having incurred the displeasure of his royal father. Old Lohrasp, father of king Gustasp, had, therefore, no other recourse left for him but to take up the command of the Iranian army. The Iranians were taken by surprise and were defeated, and the Turanians entered the capital of Gustasp.

At that time Zoroaster was praying in a fire-temple.<sup>(60)</sup> A Turanian chief, Turbaratur by name, entered the sacred place, and mortally stabbed Zoroaster in the back. Thus died the earliest and the noblest of God's prophet.

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(59) 77 years and 40 days.

(60) This fire-temple was known as the Noosh-Adar Fire Temple.



It is said that Zoroaster had had forebodings about his death. He knew that he would meet with such a violent death, and also knew the name of the murderer.<sup>(61)</sup> When stabbed, he threw at the murderer the rosary which he had in his hand with such violence, that with the flash of the lightning that emanated from it, the evil Turanian also lay dead beside the prophet.

Some Greek and Roman writers narrate a sort of fable in connection with the death of Zoroaster. They say that he had endeavoured to command the stars and thus had claimed to be a god, but a deity presiding over a certain star, getting angry at this presumption of his, threw lightning at him which burnt him to ashes. This fabulous narration seems to have been created by the Greeks and the Romans to support their theory of the meaning of the word 'Zoroaster,' which, according to them, had some connection with a star, as *aster* in Zoroaster means.

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(61) It is said of Zoroaster that he once asked God to make him immortal. God said that if He made Zoroaster immortal, Turbaratur also would be immortal.

## CHAPTER XII.

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 Conclusion.

In conclusion, if a question is asked "Who was Zarathushtra?" the answer that can be given is ready found in the *Farvardin Yasht* (of the Khordé Avesta), wherein Zarathushtra is described and praised in the following words:—

"The holy farohar (spirit) of the pure Zartost Spitman praise we : who thought the best of good thoughts, spoke the best of good words, and did the best of good deeds : who was the highest priest, the greatest warrior (*i. e.* the smiter of the *devs*), the best husbandman, and the greatest prophet : who imparted the best knowledge about things invisible : through whom men obtained the strength pertaining to the coming world, truth, the word, and the knowledge of all the good things adorned with truth created by Ahura-mazda, and of the words pertaining to His rule : Who, as the highest priest, warrior, and increase-causing husbandman, in various ways, turned (away) from *devs* and ignorant men the wheels pertaining to them : Who praised purity in the best manner among the living creation of this world, and chose the mazdiyasnian religion, which contains laws and rules, and drives away the *devs*, and by means of it destroyed the *devs* : who spoke in the best manner among the people of this world, the words in the religion of Ahura-mazda for driving away the *devs*.

and published among the people of this world the words in the religion of Ahura-mazda for the removal of *deus*: who mentioned well to the entire corporeal world all the ways of the *deus*, unworthy of belief and of praise: who, owing to his good life and belief in the old religion, was considered to be powerful among the people of the city: Through whom have been heard all truthful words worthy of being explained, in which, he, as the guide of the people of the world, for this and the coming world, praised truth, which is the highest, the best, and the most excellent thing, and promulgated that religion which was the best of all the current religions: Who was chosen, on account of his continuing the work of stirring up (people) with all his heart and soul to thoughts (of the religion), by the Ameshaspentas possessed of all good wishes and good choice, as the augmentor of faith (in the religion), and the guide of people in this and the coming world, and the praiser of truth which is the highest, the best, and the most excellent thing, and the promulgator of the best of all current religions (the Mazdayasui religion): Through whose knowledge and discourse, water and vegetable became eager and growing."

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## PART II.

# ZOROASTRIANISM.

### I.

## Zend-Avesta.

The sacred writings of Zoroaster and his disciples are called the "Zend-Avesta."

The language in which these scriptures are written goes by the name of *Avesta*. The *Avesta* language belongs to the Iranian family of the Aryan Stock of languages, and is closely allied to the Vedic Sanskrit. The late Dastur Jamaspji has given a number of proofs<sup>(1)</sup> to show that the *Avesta* language was a spoken language in the reign of Gustasp, that is, in the time of Zoroaster. His words are :—

"These incontrovertible testimonies clearly prove that during the reign of king Gustasp, *Avesta* was a spoken language both in the courts and among the masses of the people. It was also in the same language that our Lord and Prophet Zoroaster propounded the truths of his religion to the populace."

Several orientalists state that 'Avesta' is the original text of the Scriptures, and 'Zend' is the commentary on it. 'Zend' comes from 'zan' to know =

(1) *Vide* the introduction to Pehalvi Dictionary, Vol. I. by Dastur Jamaspji Minocherji Jamasp Asana.

Greek, *gno*, to know. According to Dastur Jamaspji, 'Zend' means 'knowledge' and therefore 'Zend Avesta' means 'the knowledge of the religion of God,' the term being applied to the Pehelvi translation of the books written in the Avestaic language.

Dastur Jamaspji's opinion as to the word 'Zend' is:—

"In fact the term 'Zend' must have been formed particularly to distinguish these Pehelvi translations from the Avesta at the period they were written, because the term 'Uzvaresh' was formerly used to designate generally the Pehelvi language."

In this connection the opinion of the late Dr. Martin Haug is worth noting:—

"The meaning of the term 'Zend' varied at different periods. Originally it meant the interpretation of the Sacred Texts descending from Zarathushtra and his disciples, by the successors of the prophet. In the course of time these interpretations being regarded equally sacred with the original texts, both were then called 'Avesta'. Both having been unintelligible to the majority of the Zoroastrians, in consequence of their language having died out, they required, in order to become intelligible, a 'Zend' or explanation again. This new Zend was furnished by the most learned priests of the Sassanian period in the shape of a translation into the vernacular language.

of Persia (Pehlevi)<sup>(2)</sup> in those days, which translation, being the only source to the priests of the present time whence to derive any knowledge of the old texts, is therefore, the only 'Zend' or explanation they know of."

From the above, it should be concluded that 'Zend' was no language at all, but the term was applied only to the explanations or translations of the Avesta—the Law of God—at different periods.

The Zend-Avesta<sup>(3)</sup>, as it is extant at the present day, is divided into two principal parts, the large Avesta and the small Avesta. The first part contains the Vendidad, the Visparad, and the Yasna. The Vendidad contains the religious laws of the Parsis the Visparad is a collection of litanies, and the Yasna is composed of some litanies, and the five hymns or *Gathas* proved to be the original writings

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(2) According to the late Dastur Dr. Jamaspji, there are no less than six distinct theories, as regards the date of the origin of Pehelvi, which may be described as follows: (1) That it was contemporaneous with the Avesta: (2) That it was in use in the time of king Gustasp, Aspandiar and Ardeshir Babegan: (3) That it was current 500 or 600 B.C. in Syria and parts of Persia: (4) That it arose in the times of the Parthian dynasty: (5) That it arose in the Sassanian times: and (6) That it was invented by Dasturs and adapted from Arabic and Persian.

(3) "The Avesta is the ray of light, the column of fire, that guides the historian through the wilderness of Iranian History, illuminates the scanty documents preserved from the Achæmænian and Sassanian period, gives a meaning to the vague and obscure accounts of foreign writers, Greek, Latin, Jew, Armenian, Chinese, and even the author of the Coran, how often did he not borrow from that book which his successors wanted to tear to pieces."—*Professor James Darmesteter.*

of the prophet. These three principal parts of the Avesta, taken as one, are called *Vendidad Sadé*.

The second part of the Avesta, which is a collection of short prayers, is known by the name of *Khorde-Avesta* (from *Khordeh*, small). These short prayers are composed in the praise of Ahura-Mazda, the Creator, and his arch-angels and angels, and are known to the Parsis by the names of *Yasht*, *Niyas*, *Shiroza*, *Afringhan*, etc.

Originally the Zend-Avesta consisted of 21 *nasks*<sup>(4)</sup> or books, but only two entire *nasks*, and fragments of some of the other *nasks*, are left with the Parsis at the present day.

According to the *Dinkard*, the 21 *nasks* were formed by Ahura-Mazda to represent the 21 words of the Ahunavar, better known to the present Parsis by the name 'Yatha-ahu-vairyo,' and they were presented to Zoroaster, who took them to the court of king Vistasp. Two copies of the whole Scriptures were made by the order of the king. One was placed in the treasury and the other was placed in the State Library. Alexander the Great,

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(4) The 21 *Nasks* are known by the names of (1) The *Stot-yast*; (2) The *Sutkar*; (3) The *Varstmansar*; (4) The *Bak*; (5) The *Vastag*; (6) The *Hadhokht*; (7) The *Spand*; (8) The *Nikatum*; (9) The *Gunba-sar-nigat*; (10) The *Hasparam*; (11) The *Sakatum*; (12) The *Vendidad*; (13) The *Kitradat*; (14) The *Bakan Yast*; (15) The *Damdat*; (16) The *Natar*; (17) The *Pagag*; (18) The *Rat-dat-itag*; (19) The *Baris*; (20) The *Kaskisrav*; (21) The *Vistasp-sast*. The order varies in some books.

when he conquered Persia, burnt the copy in the library and carried to Greece the copy preserved in the treasury. This copy, it is said, was translated into Greek by the order of Alexander.

An attempt was made by Ardeshir Babegan of the Sassanian dynasty (211 to 241 A.D.) to collect the scattered and lost fragments of the Avesta, and the result was that considerable portions of the Avesta were found, but most of these again were destroyed by the Arabs when they conquered Persia, (642 A.D.).

What is left with the Parsis now, however, gives a sufficient idea of the noble religion propagated by Zoroaster.

Rev. Dr. L. H. Mills writes:—"Zend-Avesta should be revered and studied by all who value the records of the human race."

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## II.

### G a t h a s .

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The word *Gathas* comes from the root *gai*, to sing, and means hymns or songs, and as they are originally written by Zarathushtra himself,<sup>(5)</sup> they are known

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(5) "The gathas were all composed in the age of Zarathushtra with the simple exception of Yasna LIII and they are distinguished, therefore essentially, from the rest of the Avesta in which Zarathushtra is a personage of the past period."—(*Dastur Darab's English Translation of 'Zarathushtra in the Gathas and in the Classics' in German by Drs. Geiger and Windischmann*).



by the name of "Zarathushtra's Gathas," for in them the prophet speaks directly.<sup>(6)</sup> It appears, however, from the language of the gathas, as they are with us at the present day, that the style of some portions differs from the style in general, and the orientalist have, therefore, drawn the conclusion, that the few passages of the gathas, wherein the style shows a marked difference, must have been written by the followers of Zarathushtra. We know that an attempt was made during the Sassanian dynasty, especially in the reign of Ardeshir Babegan, to re-collect the religious literature destroyed by the conquerors of Iran. It might be that the gathas composed by Zarathushtra and those by his disciples were mixed up in mistake at that time.

The gathas are five in number according to the division made by the Parsis, and most of them are written in metrical pieces. They relate to the theology and philosophy of Zoroaster.

The language of the gathas being poetical is more difficult to understand than that of the other parts of the Avesta. They are, however, translated into several languages. The five gathas are known to the Parsis by the following distinguishing names:—

- |                                   |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) Ahunavaiti or Hon-vad         | gatha... (Wisdom).   |
| (2) Ooshtavaiti or Ostavad        | „ ... (Bliss).       |
| (3) Spentamainyo or Spendomad     | „ ... (Good Spirit)  |
| (4) Vohukshshtra or Vohukhashthar | „ ... (Power).       |
| (5) Vahishtoisti                  | „ ... (Divine Will). |

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(6) "That they really contain the saying and teachings of the great founder of the Parsee religion, Zarathushtra Spitama himself, cannot be doubted."—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

The first three gathas are divided each into several chapters, called *hâ-s*. As the gathas form a part of the *Yasna* or *Yazashné*, European orientalists distinguish them from the number of the chapters of *Yasna* :—

1st gatha	comprehends	<i>Yasna hâ</i>	28 to 34.
2nd	"	"	43 to 46.
3rd	"	"	47 to 50.
4th	"	"	51 only.
5th	"	"	53.

The gathas are alluded to in all the remaining parts of the *Avesta*, but no other work of the *Avesta* is mentioned in the gathas. This proves that the gathas are the oldest of all the religious writings relating to Zoroastrianism. This is also proved by comparing the language of the gathas with that of the later *Avestas*, the language of the former being decidedly older than that of the other *Avestaic* literature.

From the gathas we clearly see that Zoroastrianism is another word for Righteousness. These gathas prove that Zoroastrians are enjoined to pray to *Ahura-Mazda* only. From this adorable work of the gathas, it is found that complete and free choice is given to every individual, either to select the righteous path or the path of vice. According to Gathaic teachings, the whole responsibility is thrown over man to fight against evil, if he ultimately desires to meet the God-head, which he can do

only by righteousness. No offering or sacrifice is prescribed in the gathas. It is in the gathas that the pristine purity of the prophet's teachings is preserved.

*Rev. Dr. Mills* writes about the gathas:—"In the gathas all is sober and real. The kine-soul is indeed poetically described as wailing aloud, and the Deity with His Immortals is reported as speaking, hearing, and seeing; but with these rhetorical exceptions everything which occupies the attention is practical in the extreme. Grehma and Bendva, the Karpans, the Kavis and the Usijs (—ks) are no mythical monsters. No dragon threatens the settlements, and no fabulous beings defend them. Zarathushtra, Jamaspa, Frashoshtra, and Maidhyo-mah, the Spitamas, Hvogvas, the Haechataspas, are as real, and are alluded to with a simplicity, as unconscious, as any character in history. Except inspiration there are also no miracles."

It is not within the scope of this small work to give here the full translation of the gathas<sup>(7)</sup>, but a few pieces can be quoted below from *Dr. Haug*, to give the reader an idea as to the contents of the gathas, the original writings of the prophet:—

"I (Zarathushtra) will now tell you who are assembled here, the wise sayings of the most wise, the praises of the living God, and the songs of the

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(7) To the Parsis can be recommended the excellent translation of the gathas into Gujarati by the late *Erwad K. E. Kanga*.

good spirit, the sublime truth which I see arising out of these sacred flames." (*Yasna 30, verse 1.*)

"You shall, therefore, hearken to the soul of nature (*i.e.* to plough and cultivate the earth); contemplate the beams of fire with a most pious mind! Every one, both men and women, ought to-day to choose his creed (between the Deva and the Ahura religion). Ye offspring of renowned ancestors, awake to agree with us (*i.e.* to approve of my lore, to be delivered to you at this moment (*Yasna 30, verse 2.*))

"In the beginning there was a pair of twins, two spirits, each of a peculiar activity, these are the good and the base in thought, word and deed: Choose one of these two spirits! be good, not base!" (*Yasna 30, verse 3.*)

"And these two spirits united, created the first (Material things); one, the reality, the other, non-reality. To the liars (the worshippers of the *devas* *i.e.*, gods) existence will become bad, whilst the believer in the true God enjoys prosperity." (*Yasna 30, verse 4.*)

"Of these two spirits you must choose one, either the evil, the originator of the worst actions, or the true holy spirit. Some may wish to have the hardest lot (*i.e.*, those who will not leave the polytheistic *dev* religion), others adore Ahura-Mazda by means of sincere actions." (*Yasna 30, verse 5.*)

"You cannot belong to both of them (*i.e.* you cannot be worshippers of the one true God, and of

many gods at the same time). One of the devas, against whom we are fighting might overtake you, when in deliberation (what faith you are to embrace) whispering you to choose the naught-mind. Then the Devas flock together to assault the two lives (the life of the body and the life of the soul) praised by the prophets." (*Yasna 30, verse 6.*)

"Wisdom is the shelter from lies, the annihilation of the destroyer (the evil spirit). All perfect things are garnered up in the splendid residence of the good mind (vohumano), the Wise (Mazda) and the Righteous (Asha) who are known as the best things." (*Yasna 30, verse 10.*)

"When my eyes beheld Thee, the essence of Truth, the Creator of life, who manifests his life in his works, then I knew Thee to be the primeval spirit, Thou Mazda, so high in mind as to create the world, and the father of the good mind." (*Yasna 31, verse 8.*)

"Ye devas and thou evil spirit! ye by means of your base mind, your base words, your base actions, rob mankind of its earthly and immortal welfare by raising the wicked to power." (*Yasna 32, verse 5.*)

"But by means of prayer I will remove from thee (thy community), O Mazda! the irreligiousness and wickedness, the disobedience of the lord, and the falsehood of the servant belonging to him and his Yeoman, and frustrate the most wicked designs plotted for destroying the fields." (*Yasna 33, verse 4.*)

"I believe Thee to be the best being of all, the source of light for the world. Everybody shall choose Thee (believe in thee) as the source of light, Thee, Mazda, most beneficent spirit! Thou createdst all good true things by means of the power of Thy good mind at any time, and promisedst us (who believe in Thee) a long life." (*Yasna 43, verse 2.*)

"I replied to him (*i.e.* to Srosh): Firstly, I am Zarathushtra. I will show myself as a destroyer to the wicked, as well as be a comforter for the righteous man. As long as I can praise and glorify Thee, O Mazda! I shall enlighten and awaken all that aspire to prosperity (who wish to separate themselves from the nomadic tribes and become settlers in a certain country)." (*Yasna 43, verse 8.*)

"That I will ask Thee, tell me it right, thou living God! who is the religious man and who the impious, after whom I wish to inquire? With whom of both is the black spirit, and with whom the bright one? Is it not right to consider the impious man who attacks me or Thee to be a black one?" (*Yasna 44, verse 12.*)

"That I will ask Thee, tell me it right, O Ahura! How may I come to your (of God and the angels) dwelling place to hear you sing? Aloud I express my wish to obtain the help of the angel of health, and that of immortality, by means of that hymn which is a treasure of truth." (*Yasna 44, verse 17.*)

“Whatever man or woman, O Ahuramazda! performs the best actions known to thee, for the benefit of this (earthly) life, promoting thus the truth for the angel of Truth, and spreading thy rule through the good mind, as well as gratifying all those men who are gathered round me, to adore the heavenly spirits: all these I will lead over the bridge of the gatherer (heavenly bridge to Paradise).” (*Yasna 46, verse 10.*)

“For him, who bestowed most favours on me, I collect all the best of my goods *acquired* through the Good Mind. But to their last shifts I will put all those, Mazda, O righteous! who have put us to them. I will beseech Thee to assist me. Such is my decision conceived according to my intellect and understanding.” (*Yasna 46, verse 18.*)

“Mazda himself, and the prayers (offered by men), and every one who is a truly noble son of Armaiti (the Earth), as well as all that are in Thy dominions, O Ahura! will protect this faith (*i.e.*, Zoroastrian religion) by means of the good (inborn) mind.” (*Yasna 49, verse 5.*)

“All the luminaries with their bright appearances, all that is endowed with a radiant eye by the Good Mind, stars and the sun, the day’s foreteller, wander (in their spheres) to Thy praise, O Righteous Ahuramazda!” (*Yasna 50, verse 10.*)

“Thou who hast created earth, water, and trees, give me immortality (Ameretât) and prosperity (Haurvatât) O Mazda, most beneficent spirit! Those everlasting powers I will praise with a good mind.” (*Yasna 51, verse 7.*)

## III.

## V e n d i d a d .



The word 'Vendidad' is a corruption of '*Vi-daevo-datem*,' *vi*, against, *daevo*, demons, and *datem*, law, *i.e.* the anti-demoniac-law. This root of the word itself tells the contents of this valuable book. The whole law-book<sup>(8)</sup> is called the Vendidad-Sadé, which comprises the Vendidad, Visperad, and the Yasna, save those portions that form the Gathas.

The laws of purification form the greatest portion of the Vendidad. Only a few chapters<sup>(9)</sup> treat other subjects, such as, cosmogony, medicine, morality, etc.

In some places of the Vendidad, Gathas are recommended for recital. This proves that the Vendidad was written after the Gathas.

In this book great importance is attached to health questions. To the Zoroastrian mind virtuous deeds are also deeds conducive to health.

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(8) "The outward form of the Vendidad has been often compared with that of the Book of Moses. But in reality, in the Bible, there is no conversation between God and the law-giver: the law comes down unasked, and God gives commands, but gives no answers. In the Vendidad, on the contrary, it is the wish of man, not the will of God, that is the first cause of the revelation. Man must ask of Ahura, who knows everything, and is pleased to answer: the law is the 'question to Ahura.'"—*James Darmesteter*.

(9) The chapters of the Vendidad are called *Fargarads*.



The Vendidad teaches one to be true to one's ruler, parents, relatives, superiors, neighbours, and fellow-countrymen. From this very ancient book it is clear that some of the laws of sanitation known to the civilized nations during the last two centuries, were known to the ancient Iranians, who, it appears, had a good knowledge of medicine and hygiene. This book, in short, recommends cleanliness of body and cleanliness of mind, for, it teaches that these two sorts of cleanliness together raise a man to godliness.

From the purport of some of the passages from the Vendidad, given below<sup>(10)</sup>, it will be seen that the person who follows the directions, is likely to keep good health as well as good manners.

(1) To touch a dead body, either human or animal, is prohibited.

(2) The man who touches a dead body, and the ground where it is placed are both unclean. Other men should neither touch the man nor use the place. The ground where a corpse lies is unfit for cultivation for some time, according to the teachings of the Vendidad.

(3) Corpse-bearers should live separate at a distance from the populated quarters, and not mix with other people. They should disinfect their hair, and live on light food and put on light clothes. (*Vendidad, Ch. III, paras 15 to 19.*)

(10) These passages are freely translated into English from the Gujarati translation of the *Vendidad* by the late Erwad K. E. Kanga.

(4) Dead bodies should be removed, far from the populated quarters, and be exposed to the sun, and given up to be devoured by vultures. (*Vendidad, Ch. V, para 14.*)

(5) To bury any dead body or even a part (of) it, or to bury any dead matter, is to help the cause of Angremainyo, the evil spirit. (*Vendidad, Ch. I, para 13.*)

(6) The ground where dead bodies are buried is considered unfit for cultivation or for habitation for 50 years. (*Vendidad, Ch. VII, paras 47:50.*)

(7) To throw any dead body or any part of the dead body into water is highly sinful according to Zoroastrianism. A Zoroastrian is enjoined to remove such dead bodies or any part of a dead body, or any dead matter, if he finds any such thing lying or floating in water, and expose it to the sun on the land. (*Vendidad, Ch. VI, paras 26 to 41.*)

(8) To burn any dead body or any unclean, foul or rotten substance in fire is to help the cause of Angremainyo, the evil spirit, (*Vendidad, Ch. XVI, para 17.*)

(9) The bedding and clothing that may have come in contact with a dead body, either before death or after it, are considered unclean and polluted. If they are besmeared with any sort of mucous or filthy substance excreted by the sick man before dying, all of them should be buried underground but if they are not so spoiled, they may be washed and taken

into some sort of rough use only ; but under no circumstance should they be used for any high or noble object, that is, such clothing should not be worn by any priest or cultivator. (*Vendidad, Ch. VII, paras 11 to 18.*)

(10) A woman during her periods should keep herself aloof during her course, and should not touch fire and water. She must take rest for the whole time. Others are prohibited even to touch her in the state. (*Vendidad, whole Ch. XVI.*)

(11) A dwelling-house must have a free access of the light of the sun. A house in which the sun does not shine is not a fit abode for a Zoroastrian. (*Vendidad, Ch. II, para 30.*)

(12) Land should be cultivated or dwelling-houses should be erected thereon. It is against the spirit of the religion to keep a piece of land entirely unused. (*Vendidad, Ch. III, paras 1 and 2.*)

(13) It is highly religious to turn a mountain or a desolate piece of land into a populated place, to turn a jungle into a cultivated land, to annihilate wild and hurtful animals from a forest, and change it into a useful land.

(14) Ahurs-mazda does not like to see men and women unmarried and childless. Such persons are compared to a barren land. (*Vendidad, Ch. III, para 24.*)

(15) Cultivation and other branches of industry are highly recommended. Idle and wandering life is much abhorred. (*Vendidad, Ch. IV, para 49.*)

(16) Practising sorcery, incurring debt, and burying dead bodies under the ground are equally condemned in Zoroastrianism. (*Vendidad, Ch. III, para 41.*)

(17) Much importance is attached to duty, promise, and agreement. No man should under any circumstance shrink from his duty, or break his promise or contract. (*Vendidad, Ch. IV, paras 1 and 2.*)

(18) A Zoroastrian is enjoined to attend to the wants of a virtuous person in need, regardless of caste or creed, and it is his incumbent duty to relieve him from misery and want as much as lies in his power. (*Vendidad, Ch. IV, para 44.*)

(19) A married man is preferred to an unmarried one, and one with children to one without them. (*Vendidad, Ch. IV, paras 47 to 49.*)

(20) It is highly irreligious and sinful to throw on a field or bury in it any foul or unclean or rotten substance, according to the *Vendidad*.

(21) Purity of mind is much extolled. A man's conscience is kept pure by good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. (*Vendidad, Ch. V, para 11.*)

(22) Zoroastrianism teaches that repentance for a wrong act committed unknowingly purifies the conscience, and the person is pardoned for his wrong deed, but repentance will not do for a wrong act intentionally committed. (*Vendidad, Ch. V, para 26.*)

(23) A woman who gives birth to a still-child is recommended to be kept aloof for some time, at least

12 days, and not be allowed to associate with other persons. For the first three days only milk is to be given to her, and for some days more light diet is recommended. (*Vendidad, Ch. V, paras 52 to 56.*)

(24) Waste of water, just as the defilement of water, is strictly prohibited. (*Vendidad, Ch. VI, para 52.*)<sup>(11)</sup>

(25) It is enjoined that people of a house where a death occurs, should eat and drink as they usually do, after the dead body has been removed to its final destination. Fasting is prohibited. (*Vendidad, Ch. VIII, para 22.*)

(26) It is a special commandment that rich or shewy, or silken or woollen, pieces of cloth should not be used to cover the dead body, however rich the dead person's connections may be. Clean-washed, and plain white pieces of cotton cloth are enough to cover the dead body, no matter how rich the dead person was. (*Vendidad, Ch. VIII, para 25.*)

(27) Mourning for the dead relatives should not be prolonged. The more distant the relatives, the shorter the period of mourning. One should mourn double for the wicked relatives than for those that were pious in this world. (*Vendidad, the whole Chapter XII.*)

(28) To erect bridges over rivers is a kind of atonement for sins. (*Vendidad, Ch. XIV, para 16, and Ch. XVIII, para 74.*)

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(11) "Another precept, which might well have been made by an English board of health in the nineteenth century, is not to pollute water by throwing impure matter into it."—*S. Laing.*

(29) To employ or get employed those good men that are without means to maintain themselves, is one of the good actions recommended to Zoroastrians. (*Vendidad, Ch. XIV, para 17.*)

(30) To feed hungry travellers is considered a religious step. (*Vendidad, Ch. XIV, para 17.*)

(31) To entertain or utter a bad opinion about a pious man with the intention of lowering him in the estimation of others, is considered a sinful act. (*Vendidad, Ch. XV, para 2.*)

(32) Early rising in the morning from the bed is of very great importance to a Zoroastrian, for he is promised Heaven as his reward for doing so. (*Vendidad, Ch. XVIII, para 26.*)

(33) He, who can afford, should give money, or clothing, or both, to the really needy. Miserliness is one of the evil actions. (*Vendidad, Ch. XVIII, paras 34 to 36.*)

(34) A Zoroastrian's first and main object ought to be to seek Truthfulness, and to cherish and support it. (*Vendidad, Ch. XX, para 11.*)

#### IV.

### Yazashné (*Yasna*).

Yazashné or Yasna is a part of the principal Avesta of the Parsis. Yazashné means 'prayer of praise or prayer of invocation.' It is divided into 72 chapters.

called 'Há-s.' A few chapters or *hás* of the book form a separate book called the *Gathas*, which are spoken of under the respective heading.

In the *Yasna*, God (Ahur-Mazda) and the angels are addressed in various ways such as, 'I love,' 'I honour,' 'I praise,' 'I remember,' 'I consider Holy,' 'I gladden,' 'I invoke.'

Below is quoted a passage from this book (*Yazashné*), from which the reader will get an idea as to the notion of the Parsis about the Creator:—

"The great judge, Ahura-Mazda, full of glory and brightness, I invoke. The highest, the all virtuous, the greatest, the strictest, the all-wise, of the purest nature, the holiest, lover of gladness, the invisible among the invisible, the increaser; He created our soul—He moulded our body—He gave us existence. Him I invoke and complete this *Yazashué*."

In the *Yazashué* not only are all the archangels and angels praised, remembered, and invoked, but also time, fire, mountains, cities, forests, places of comfort, water and land, trees, the whole earth, the sky, the holy wind, the stars, the sun, the moon, the God-created immeasurable light, and all pure creation that is exalted by holiness, are remembered and considered holy,

The reciter of the *Yazashné* prays to Ahura-Mazda for pardon in the following words:—

"If I have by thought, word, or deed, intentionally or unintentionally, not kept Thy commands, and thereby saddened Thee, I invoke Thee in this

invocation, I pray to Thee, and praise Thee, and beseech Thee for Thy pardon."

From this book of Yazashné, as well as from other Avestas, it is evident that Zoroaster does not act the part of an interceder for the wicked, but it is clear in his religion that the pious will be rewarded and the wicked must suffer. A passage from the mouth of Zoroaster will illustrate this:—

"O God, in Thy creation those that are virtuous and follow Thy commands, to them give Thou water and fruit, and over all good things of this world, such as they desire, give them command. May the aspirations of the holy be fulfilled! May the wicked and the evil-doers be disappointed and be swept away from the creation of the holy Creator!"

The benefits of prayer are mentioned in a part of this Yazashné: They are described in the following words:—

"I invoke the benefit and success of prayer: to arrive at prayer is to arrive at perfect conscience: the good seed of prayer is virtuous conscience, virtuous words, and virtuous deeds. May our prayer be efficacious in thwarting the inflictions of wicked spirits and wicked men! May I love prayer to Ahura-Mazda, for that prayer is joy to me! I resort to prayer. I invoke prayer. Prayer to Thee, O Ahura-Mazda, is the giver of excellence, holiness, success and high exaltation—it is the act of virtue."



## D i n k a r d .

This is a very old and reliable work written in the Pehelvi language. It contains some description about Zoroaster's life and numerous precepts of his religion. It is said that Gustasp, the patron of the Zoroastrian religion, had ordered all the religious laws and social rules to be all gathered into a book, which was by his order called the "Dinkard." Two copies of this work were preserved in "Dejé napésté," i.e., the building for preserving works relating to the Zoroastrian religion. Then this work was also copied out and valued high as a property by several noblemen and other leading citizens of the time of Gustasp. Then, as we know, the original work was destroyed by the invaders. Then it was got up and written again in the reign of Ardeshir Babegan by one Tosré, but that even being destroyed, the last attempt to gather together the fragments of the original Dinkard was made by Dastur Adarfarobag.<sup>(12)</sup> Even this last attempt dates nearly a thousand years ago. Adarfarobag was successful in reproducing the "Dinkard," of course not without several omissions and alterations. Even some parts of the last

(12). The last edition though commenced by Adarfarobag, was not completed by him. The completion of the last edition of the Dinkard was effected by one Adarbad Hemed.

reproduction of the "Dinkard" are lost, but from the remaining parts, it is found that *the road to hell is cut off by repentance for a repenter by words and deeds.*

The following question and answer give the reader an idea in short as to his duty.

The question:—"Which among the deeds of men is most beneficial to the world, the causer of much pleasure to the Ijads (*i.e.*, angels), and the giver of much pain to the *dévs* and is the highest in rank of all?"

The answer to the above as found in the "Dinkard" is:--"Be it known that among the deeds of men the deed that is highly beneficial to the world is the remaining in submission to one's meritorious master and just king, who is a giver of commands for the improvement of the people: the producer of pleasure to the Ijads is the remaining firm in the Mazdiyasni religion, and the keeping people righteous: and the deed that is highest in rank of all is the imparting of knowledge to worthy students, the originators of righteous deeds."

To the last editor of the "Dinkard" it was known that there were seven *keshwars* or continents (regions) on the Earth, for he writes that at a time the *sun shone on 3½ keshwars*, meaning thereby that there was day on half the earth and night on the other.

A true Zoroastrian ought to be righteous, temperate and hard-working in order to be healthy, happy

and cheerful, as is gathered from the depiction of true Zoroastrian Iranians, as follows:—

“Because a native of Iran has the ways of the Mazdiyasnian religion and keeps the good mind (spirit) with him, he has greatness, and the evil principle is constantly harassed by him. And owing to well-made, proportioned and well-regulated food, he keeps healthy, well-mended, improved, happy, pure, beautiful, fragrant, and cheerful.”

This work (i.e. *Dinkard*) contains expositions and interpretations of several subjects promiscuously arranged. Like the Hindoos, the Iranian nation also was divided into four classes, (1) the *Athornan* or the *Athravan* (priest); (2) the *ratheshtar* (warrior), (3) the *vasterius* (agriculturist), and (4) the *hutoksh* (workman or artisan). Five causes are given in this work for placing the priestly class at the top, and one of the causes is given below for the excellent rhetoric of the passage:—

“The dignity of the head in the human body is allotted to the profession of *athornan*: of the hand, to the profession of *arthestar*: of the belly, to the profession of *vasterius*: and of feet, to the profession of *hutoksh*: thus it is symbolically shewn, that in rank and dignity, the profession of *athornan* is as the head of the world; the profession of *arthestar* is as the hands of the world; the profession of *vasterius* is as the belly of the world; and the profession of *hutoksh* is as the feet of the world.”

On one hand, the subjects of the king are enjoined to be loyal to him. On the other hand, the duties

of the ruler towards his subjects are great and grave. It is his religion to guard them against misery, want, hardship, filth and pestilence. The king, who is unable to redress the grievances of his people, is unfit to hold the throne; and it is plainly written in this "Dinkard" that it is just and fair, nay religious, for the neighbouring sovereign, to declare a war against the unfit king and remove him from the throne.

The writer of this ancient book in his description of the human body says that the *soul governs the body with the assistance of seven senses, and that the nerves act as the carriers of the messages to the soul.* He compares a good soul with a good governor.

Much is written on marriage in this book. Next-of-kin marriages, *i.e.*, marriages with the first cousins, are recommended, but it is evident from the spirit of the text that this was not a religious law binding on the Iranians, but only a custom originated by the Athravans and other sects to keep their own sects intact socially. However, it is a sin according to the dictates of the religion to bring about or help in the cause of incestuous marriages. According to this *Dinkard*, which is but a compendium of the dictates of the religion, it is *not unlawful or sinful* for a Zoroastrian to marry a wife of another caste, provided, before such a marriage she professes the Zoroastrian religion.

This, however, is not recommended by the author of the *Dinkard* in the following words:—

“It is apparent that difference of race cannot secure advantageous condition to pass life in.” The author calls those who marry among themselves “protectors of race,” and to them are born “honest and worthy offsprings.”

This book of religion is interspersed with passages worth the value of gold. It teaches that *beauty consists in seeking salvation: that safety lies in virtuous self-restraint, and care in industry: that illness is caused for want of self-restraint, and hardship by idleness, and that goodness consists in the improvement of mankind.*

Although the priestly class is put at the top, it is understood that they should be thoroughly conversant with the teachings of the religion. For the ignorant priests the command, as given by the author of the “*Dinkard*,” is as follows:—

“Religious teachers who do not perform some of the work of the religion to guide people in the manner, and who are without a regular knowledge of religion, should be removed from their position for want of the knowledge.” *Dasturs* or priests ought to be “of the root of goodness, righteous, preservers of the people, and who, liberating the people of the world (from hell) render them pure and ever virtuous.” Those religious teachers that claim to understand religion, and guide the other classes to a sinful act, are

great sinners in the eye of the Zoroastrian religion, and they will 'remain into hell for eternity without any mercy being shewn to them.'

The invisible parts of man are *soul*, *farohar* (guardian spirit) and *conscience*. The powers of the soul are *imagination*, *intelligence* and *understanding*. *Farohar* and *conscience* are the *two improving powers of man*. A virtuous man's soul is pure, and with the purity of the soul he can be possessed of the wisdom of the invisible world: According to the teachings of the Zoroastrian religion, the soul of the righteous can hold relation with the *Yazads* or angels. On the other hand, the soul of the sinful loses the power of intelligence and his *farohar* separates from the soul and becomes invisible to it.

Several words are explained in the *Dinkard* from religious point in such an excellent language that it appears that the author of the *Dinkard* was a very learned and wise man. According to him:

"*Foresight* is a knowledge of the final end of things derived from a knowledge of the religion. *Superiority* consists in making many things out of one. To recognize a thing out of a multitude is *wisdom*. To know the advantages and disadvantages of everything is the power of *discrimination*. *Faith and belief* are the analogical indications for understanding the things which obtain (secure) life and which do not obtain life. *Inference* is the power to understand the object (or aim) of things. *Sense* is the strength for preserving the internal powers. The *understanding*

is for examining and selecting things. *Thought* is (given) for guiding the powers (of man) through approvable reflection. *Speech* is (given) for the purpose of making known what is hidden in man for describing the invisible powers. *Deeds* are the result of the guidance, through the members of the body and through wisdom of its powers (of the body).

This book teaches that *Faith*, along with *wisdom* (philosophy) and *experience*, is necessarily required in a man to know the Deity, for, without faith one cannot believe in *divine existence whose nature is invisible and imperceptible*.

A Zoroastrian is enjoined to divide a day into three equal parts. Eight hours are to be devoted to righteousness and righteous deeds pertaining to the immortal existence: eight hours to be devoted to the performance of approved deeds relating to this world; and the remaining eight to rest which is essentially necessary for the preservation of physical strength.

To the person who does not believe in the invisible world, the idea of the effect of blessings and curses would sound like a superstition. The Dinkard, which is based on religious ideas, gives, however, the following version regarding blessings and curses:—

Be it known that the effects of blessings and curses are felt at their proper time. Blessings are for those works that deserve them; and curses are owing to cursed works. The effects of blessings or curses are felt at the proper time by the man who

by his works has deserved the one or the other. Blessings should be given to the man according to his deeds \* \* \*. The blessings of a good man benefit him who deserves them: in the same way his curses are also harmful."

In short, the Dinkard teaches a man to believe in one God, to pray to him daily, to repent for wrong deeds done, to be industrious in order to keep the body in health, and to do charitable and philanthropical deeds with a view to attain a high position in the invisible world.

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## VI.

### **B u n d e i s h .**

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The Bundeish is a Pehelvi work relating to cosmogony and legendary history as taught by Mazdiyasnian tradition. *Bundeish*<sup>(13)</sup> means 'original creation.' This work was written in the seventh century A. D. At present only a few manuscript copies in Pehelvi are extant. According to Dr. West, the original title of the work is "*Zandākas*, and it is an abridged translation of the Avesta of the Damdad Nask.

In this work a long description is given about the good spirit and the evil spirit and their conflict. A portion of it treats of the origin of mankind;

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(13) The *Bundeish* of the Parsis may be compared to the *Genesis* of the Christians, the first book of the Old Testament.



*Gayomard* being the first man as taught by this book. It also contains a description about the seven regions of the Earth, its mountains, rivers and lakes. Several kinds of animals are mentioned and described therein.

Some account is given about the appearance of the future prophets, and an attempt is made to give some explanation about the resurrection and future existence on the authority of the religion. Also, a short sketch of the life of Zoroaster is given, together with the genealogies of the Persian kings and heroes.

The few Pehelvi manuscripts of this book, that are extant, differ in some points among themselves. To say in the words of Dr. West the work is "evidently of a fragmentary character, bearing unmistakable marks both of omissions and dislocations."

The *Bundeish* has been translated into English by more than one Pehelvi scholars, but the translation by Dr. West is considered to be the best.

The following quotation from this book is worth noting, as it explains why there are troubles in this life, and why there will be no such trouble in the future existence:—

"Ahura-Mazda asked the guardian spirits of men, 'Which seems to you the more advantageous, when I shall present you to the world? that you shall contend in a bodily form with the fiend (*druj*) and the fiend shall perish, and in the end I shall have you prepared again perfect and immortal, and in the

end give you back to the world, and you will be wholly immortal, undecaying, and undisturbed; or that it be always necessary to provide you protection from the destroyer?' Thereupon the guardian spirits of men became of the same opinion with the Omniscient Wisdom about going to the world, on account of the evil that comes upon them in the world, from the fiend (*druj*) Ahriman, and their becoming at last again unpersecuted by the adversary, perfect and immortal in the future existence, for ever and everlasting."

The *Bundeish* proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Zoroastrianism is purely a monotheistic religion, and gives some necessary information about several points relating to this religion. It is therefore not without its own importance.

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## VII.

### Bahman Yasht.

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This Yasht is mostly a dialogue between Ahura-Mazda and Zarathushtra, regarding the future events to happen in Iran and the future fate of the Zoroastrian religion. The prophet, in the beginning of this Yasht<sup>(14)</sup>, desired of Ahura-Mazda immortality for

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(14) The *Bahman Yasht* is to the Parsis what the *Apocalypse*, the last book of the Bible, is to the Christians.

himself. Ahura-Mazda refused it and said, "When I shall make thee immortal, O Zarathust Spitaman! then Tur-i-Bradarvash, the *karap*, will become immortal, and when Tur-i-Bradarvash becomes immortal, the resurrection and future existence are not possible."

Zarathushtra is mentioned in this Yasht as having seen in a dream sent by Ahura-Mazda, a tree with seven branches, the tree representing the world, and the seven branches seven periods in the millenium of Zoroaster. The seven periods were the golden, silver, copper, brazen, tin, steel, and iron ages.

From this Yasht it appears that Ahura-Mazda had foretold to Zoroaster that a tyrannical nation would, with deceit, rapacity and misgovernment, devastate the Iranian countries.

Thereupon, Zarathushtra had naturally asked God when the Mazdijasni religion would be restored, and by what means the 'demons with dishevelled hair' would be destroyed. The reply was that another nation with red banners, red weapons and red hats, would drive away the idolators, and that there would be a great fight for the sake of religion.

On learning from Ahura-Mazda how people would suffer in the iron age, Zoroaster preferred death to immortality in this life, and asked of God, "O Creator! grant me death! and grant my favoured ones death! that they may not live in that perplexing time: Grant them exemplary living! that they may not prepare wickedness and the way to hell."

In this Yasht are also given the details regarding the advent of the last three prophets, Hushedar<sup>(15)</sup>, Hushedarmah and Soshios. When the last prophet will arrive, he will 'make the creatures again pure,' the resurrection will take place and the future existence will commence.

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VIII.

**S h a y a s t - L â - S h â y a s t .**

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This is the title of another Pehelvi work originally written before the Mahomedan conquest of Iran. The original book is no longer extant. What is left is simply a collection of extracts or translations from the older writings. *Shayast* means *proper*, and *La-Shâyast* means *not proper*. This work is, as its meaning shews, a collection of religious laws, and explains what is proper for Zoroastrians to do and what is not proper, *what is proper* forming acts of righteousness, and *what is not proper* forming sinful acts. From the contents of the work it is evident that the writer of this old book was not only acquainted with

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(15) According to Dr. West, the millenium of Hushedar is past. He calculates it from 635 A. D. to 1635 A. D. We are therefore living at present in the millenium of Hushedarmah. It is predicted in the Bahman Yasht. that during this millenium medical science will progress much. Hushedarmah's millenium will end in 2635 A. D., and then will commence the reign of the last prophet Soshios, in whose time the *Resurrection is expected*.

the Vendidad, but also with the several other *Nasks* of the Avesta. In fact, about 12 *Nasks* (including the Vendidad) out of the 21, have been quoted in this Pehelvi miscellany of Zoroastrian laws and customs, and hence its importance.

In this ancient book of tradition, various degrees of sin are mentioned, also the atonement for them, A long description of the precautions regarding corpses cannot but draw the attention of the reader. Details are also given about good works and about those who can and cannot perform them. The writer, however, has observed no order while writing on different subjects, religious, social and sanitary questions being all mixed up, instead of being treated under their respective headings.

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## IX.

### **A r d a - V i r a f - N a m e h .**

*Arda-Viraf-Nameh* is a book written in the Pehelvi language in the beginning of the restoration of the Persian rule after the conquest by Alexander the Great, who, as it has been already mentioned, had ordered all the Avesta and Zend books, written on prepared cow-skins, to be burnt.

There were, consequently, great confusion and contention among the people of the country about the tenets and ceremonies of the religion. In order to

set matters right, faithful Zoroastrians called a meeting. It was there found necessary that some one of them should bring intelligence from the Spiritual World. Several pious men were selected for the purpose, and lots were cast among them. It was thereupon finally settled that Arda-Viraf should undertake that task.

In the *Arda-Viraf-Nameh*, Arda-Viraf relates what he saw in the other world, and heard from the angels there. We give below some extracts from the book:—

“ After I (Arda-Viraf) had drunk the consecrated wine, and had reposed my body to rest, and given my mind up to the adoration of God, methought my soul took its flight towards the holy regions, where Srosh Yazad appeared unto me, and beckoned me towards him, when, after giving and receiving the customary salutations, Srosh Yazad said to me, ‘ You have made a long journey in the faith. I am happy to see you in these blessed regions, and your escape from the world of wickedness gives one great pleasure; but, Arda-Viraf, you have come before your time. What is the occasion?’

“ I replied in accents of complacency, ‘ I have been sent, O Srosh Yazad! by the king, by the ~~priests~~ and by the voice of the nation in general, on this embassy, to know of heaven and hell, in order that heresy and schism be banished from the earth, and that the worship of the true God be restored to its wonted purity?’

“ On saying this, Srosh Yazad took hold of me by the arm, and led me forward across the bridge, when the throne of Meher Yazad came in view, with Rasne Yazad standing by him, holding in his hands the scales of justice, made of pure gold, and having on his right hand and on his left five thousand angels, and whose different petitions he can hear at once, and if written can see at one glance. Having saluted and having my salutation returned, the attending angels surrounded me, and thus addressed me, ‘ O Arda-Viraf! your time has not yet come. How and by what means have you come so far?’

“ I answered, ‘ I have come thus far by the assistance of God, at the request of my king, Ardeshir Babegan, of the priests, and of the people, to collect and report the wonders of heaven and hell; that I may see that the truth may be by these means again restored to the earth, and heresy and wickedness be banished for ever.’

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“ Afterwards arose Vohumano, the Archangel, from a throne made of gold, and he took hold of my hand. With the words ‘ good thought, good word, ~~and~~ good deed,’ he brought me into the midst of Ahura-Mazda and the Archangels and other holy ones, and the guardian angels of Zarathust Spitama, Kai-Vistasp, Jamar, Isadvastar, the son of Zarathusht, and other upholders and leaders of the religion, than whom I have never seen any one more

brilliant and excellent, and Vohumano said thus, 'This is Ahura-Mazda,' and I wished to offer worship before Him.

"And He said to me thus, 'Salutation to thee, Arda-Viraf, thou art welcome'; from that perishable world thou has come to this pure bright place,' and He ordered Srosh, the pious, and Atars, the angel of fire thus, 'Take Arda-Viraf and show him the place and reward of the pious, and also the punishment of the wicked.'

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"And I saw the darkest hell, which is pernicious, dreadful, terrible, very painful, mischievous, and evil-smelling. And after further observation it appeared to me as a pit, at the bottom of which a thousand cubits would not reach; and though all the wood which is in the world were put on to the fire in this most stinking and gloomy hell, it would never emit a smell; and again also, as close as the ear to the eye, and as many as the hairs on the mane of a horse, so close and many in number the souls of the wicked stand—but they see not and hear no sound one from the other; every one thinks thus, 'I am alone!' and for them are the gloom of darkness and the stench and fearfulness of the torments and punishment of hell of various kinds, so that whoever is only a day in hell cries out thus, 'are not those nine thousand years yet completed, when they should release us from the hell?'

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“Without trouble nothing can be attained,” said Srosh Yazad, “the poor day labourer is worthy of his hire, and those who perform good works will have their reward in eternal life according to their several merits;” He continued, “The life of man is of short duration, and many troubles and anxieties fall to his lot; and a man, after fifty years of prosperity and happiness, may be, by some unforeseen accident, reduced to sickness and poverty. Many are tried by this criterion, and but few are found worthy. To suffer a day of pain, after fifty years of pleasure, is too much for them, and they complain in bitterness of spirit to the Creator of all good of His injustice and cruelty, without remembering the good they have so long enjoyed or calling to mind the eternity of punishment in reserve for the wicked. Therefore, O Arda-Viraf! walk yourself in the ways of righteousness, and teach others also to do so. Recollect that your body will return to dust, but your soul, if rich in good works, will mount to immortality, and partake of the happiness you have already witnessed. Take less care of your body, and more of your soul; the pains and aches of the body are easily cured, but who can minister to the diseases of the soul? When you set out on a journey in the lower world, you ~~bring~~ yourselves, and take with you money, clothes, provision, and are prepared against all the exigencies of the road, but what do you provide yourselves with for your last journey of the soul from the lower to the upper world, and whose friendship have you to

assist you on the way? Hear, O Arda-Viraf! and I will describe to you the provisions requisite for the voyage to the eternal life.

“In the first place, the friend who will assist you is God: but to attain His friendship, you must walk in His ways and place in Him the firmest reliance. The provisions must be faith and hope and the remembrance of your good works: The body, O Arda-Viraf! may be likened unto a horse, and the soul to its rider, and the provisions requisite for the support of both are good actions; but as with a feeble rider the horse is ill-managed, so with a feeble horse the rider is but ill-accommodated. Care ought to be taken that both are kept in order; so, in a spiritual sense, the soul and body must be kept in order by a succession of good actions. Even in the world multitude will sneer at a man who took more care of his horse than of himself; for this reason a man ought to take more care of his soul than of his body. God, O Arda-Viraf! requires only two things of the sons of men; the first, that they should not sin; the next, that they should be grateful of the many blessings He is continually bestowing upon them.

“Let the world, O Arda-Viraf! be taught not to set their hearts on the pleasures and vanities of life, as nothing can be carried away with them. You have already seen the rewards given to the good and deserving, how they have been repaid for all their trouble; the poor and the rich, the king and the peasant, here receive honours and distinctions.

According to their good works. The herdsmen and shepherd, you have seen their condition.

"In youth and in the prime of manhood, when blessed with health and vigour, you suppose that your strength will never fail; that your riches, your lands, your houses, and your honours will remain for ever; that your gardens will be always green, and your vineyards fruitful. But, O Arda-Viraf! teach them not to think so; teach them the danger of such a way of thinking; all, all will pass away as a dream!

"The flowers fade, and give lessons unto man, that he is unwilling to profit by. Yea, the world itself will pass away, and nothing will remain but God!

"Therefore, O Arda-Viraf! turn your thoughts only towards Him. No pleasure but has its concomitant pain; roses have thorns, and honours fall into disgrace. It is pleasant to drink wine, but intoxication brings pain, if not disgrace; if you exceed in eating, this also brings its punishment, and you must have a doctor; even if you drink the purest water to excess, it endangers dropsy; therefore, let the avoidance of excess in everything be most particularly inculcated—in wine or women, in eating; and though they bring their own punishment in the world by the diseases they engender, yet they encourage the most deadly sins; and the indulgence will most surely be cut off from Heaven. You see, O Arda-Viraf, that the indulgence of

our passions brings no pleasure of long duration, nor impresses any good sentiment on the heart.

“If after praying to God for offspring, and He has granted your request, into what sea of trouble and anxiety are you plunged! Your son or daughter may grow up in vicious habits, and embitter your days by their undutiful conduct; the one may become a thief, the other a courtesan, and bring disgrace on your old age. The bee that produces honey has also a sting.

“The world is composed of lust, avarice, and of passions the most ungovernable; if God gives them one thing, even that for which they most desire, they are not satisfied, but are continually craving for more and more to a hundredfold.

“Avarice and ambition deprive them of sleep, and prevent them from making a laudable exertion to subdue these dreadful passions, which will plunge them into everlasting misery.

“A king who has conquered all the surrounding countries sighs because he has no more worlds to subdue. *Kai-Kaus*, after having conquered many countries, aspired to be a king in heaven, and was punished for his presumption by a dreadful fall which made him sensible of his folly.

So you see, O Arda-Viraf! that contentment is the happiest condition of man and the most pleasing to the Creator, and treasure the advice I have given you; and as you return to the lower world, do not

these precepts, and abide by the laws and walk in the ways of truth and holiness, and continue in the worship of the true God.' ”

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X

D â d i s t a n - i - D i n i k .

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The meaning of the title of this book is '*religious opinions*.' This is a Pehelvi work believed to be written about 800 A. D.,<sup>(16)</sup> by a head-priest, named Mauushcheher, son of Gûsndan, otherwise written Yûdan-Yim. This work being more than a thousand years old,<sup>(17)</sup> is useful as a work of reference regarding the tenets and customs of the Zoroastrian religion, as they were practised at the time. It, however, treats only the 92 questions asked in a letter by one Mitra-Khurshed on the religious subjects which the author Manushcheher, who was the head-priest of the Zoroastrian religion at the time, answers in the order asked. According to Dr. West, who has translated the book into English, the author of the work 'displays much intelligence and wisdom, and the morality he teaches is of a high standard for the age in which he lived.' In this work a detailed and lucid

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(16) Dr. West dates it exactly 881 A. D.

The *Dinkard* is older than the *Dadistani Dinik*, as the latter has preserved in his work the author of the *Dadistani Dinik* flourished in the eighth century A. D.



In this book questions are asked whether it is against the religion to drink or sell wine<sup>(18)</sup> and from the answer given it appears that it is allowable to drink it in moderation. From the answer it can also be understood that it is a sin to sell it or offer it to those who have already drunk enough, and who, by drinking more, are likely to spoil their health or do some mischief. The words relating to this subject are as under:—

“Even he who gives wine authorisedly unto any one and he is thereby intoxicated by it, is equally guilty of every sin which that drunkard commits owing to that drunkenness.”

From the several astronomical subjects treated in this book, such as the rain<sup>(19)</sup>, the rainbow<sup>(20)</sup>, the sun and the moon<sup>(21)</sup> it is decidedly proved that the Iranians of the time were perfectly versed in this branch of science. The Persians knew the cause of the eclipse<sup>(22)</sup> and held no superstitious belief about it like their neighbours, the Hindoos. They knew no harm caused by the eclipse as the Hindoos one way or other believed, save that *the light which the luminaries divert to the world is not complete for the time the eclipse lasts.*

(18) Refer Chapters 50 and 51 of the Dadistani Dinik by Dr. West.

(19) Refer answer to the question 92 of the Dadistani Dinik.

(20) Refer answer to the question 66 of The Dadistani Dinik.

(21) Refer to the question 67 of The Dadistani Dinik.

(22) Refer answer to the question 68 of The Dadistani Dinik.

## Epistles of Manooshcheher.

The epistles known as the epistles of Manooshcheher were written by the author of *Dadistan-i-Dinik*. They are three<sup>(23)</sup> in number, and so far as religion is concerned, throw light on the question of cleansing only. They have, however, rendered us an indirect service by disclosing definitely the dates, which were hitherto uncertain, of some of the important Pehelvi works<sup>(24)</sup>. They also shew us in what manner the followers of Zoroaster were anxious to uphold their religion, even after the two centuries of constant struggle with Mahomedanism. That Manooshcheher was the head *dastur* of the Zoroastrians left in Iran, appears from the authoritative tone and the threat of dismissal in the epistle to his younger brother, Zadsparam, who was the head-priest of Sirkan, near Kirman, and whose heretical order, issued to the Zoroastrians under him in connection with the question of cleansing, had caused these epistles to be written. They also lead us to infer that the

(23) The first epistle was addressed to the good people of Sirkan; the second to Zadsparam, and the third to all of the good religionists of Iran.

(24) From these epistles which are dated 881 A.D. it is well-nigh correct to say that the well-known book of *Avesta* was written in the sixth century, and that the Pehelvi *Dadistan-i-Dinik*, as well as the *Yasna*, were written about the middle of the ninth century.



posts of the ecclesiastical heads of different towns were filled up by the arch-dastur, that the orthodox Zoroastrians had a resource to complain against the heretical orders or opinions of their respective religious heads, and that the subordinate priests were likely to be punished or dismissed by the arch-dastur of Iran.<sup>(25)</sup> We learn one more fact from these epistles that the leaders of the Zoroastrian faith of the time were in the habit of maintaining troops.

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## XII.

### Dinai-Mainyo-i-Khirad.

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This is the title assumed of a Pehelvi work. It means "opinions of the Spirit of Wisdom." In this work, questions are asked by a person, whose name is not mentioned, and they are answered by the Spirit of Wisdom. There are in all 62 inquiries made on miscellaneous subjects comprising mostly the tenets, legends and morality of the religion. The moral questions and answers are really of a high order. From the book nothing can be gathered about the identity of its author or its date, but there

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(25) The present Arch-dasturs of the Parsis in Bombay and other towns of India have no control over the lower orders of priests nor over the laity, and cannot punish them for the infringement of any of the religious laws.

is no doubt that the person who wrote it must be a devoted Zoroastrian and highly enlightened layman of the time.

The work is a selection of wise points in the religion. It contains a number of wise precepts and precious bits of advice.

Writing about the lazy man, this book says :—

“He who is a lazy man is said to be the most unworthy of men. Because it is declared by revelation, that the Creator, Ahura-mazda, produced no corn for him who is a lazy man; for him who is a lazy man there is then no giving of anything in gifts and charity, and lodging and entertainment are not to be provided for him. For this reason because that food which a lazy man eats, he eats through impropriety and injustice; and, on account of his laziness and unjust eating, his body then becomes infamous and the soul wicked.”

The author on one hand considered wisdom and knowledge necessary for thriving in this world, but on the other hand he was a firm believer in destiny and providence. His belief in destiny seemed to be strong as appears from the following words :—

“Even with the might and powerfulness of wisdom and knowledge, even then it is not possible to contend with destiny. Because when predestination as to virtue, or as to the reverse, comes forth, the wise becomes wanting in duty, and the astute in evil becomes intelligent; the faint-hearted becomes

braver, and braver becomes faint-hearted; the diligent becomes lazy, and the lazy acts diligently. Just as is predestined as to the matter the cause enters into it, and thrusts out everything else."

But with all his belief in destiny, he recommends efforts to be always continued. He says that even if some of the efforts are fruitless in this worldly existence, they are noted down in the 'book of Fate,' and are taken into account when good and bad deeds are weighed in the balance of divine justice.

This book divides man into three classes, one is man, the second is demi-man, and the third is demi-demon. In the first class are put those men who believe in Ahura-Mazda, have faith in the religion, understand well the two primeval causes, and believe in the justice of God, resurrection and future existence. In the second class of demi-man come those persons, who seldom or never think of the God-head, are indifferent about the spiritual existence, and live out this worldly life in a manner best suited to the surrounding circumstances. In the third class are put those persons that are men in name but demons in deeds.

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### XIII.

#### **Sikand-Gumâni-Vajâr.**

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This is a work written originally in Pehelvi after the Mahomedan conquest of Persia, probably in the ninth century A. D. The title of this work means 'doubt-dispelling explanation.' The name of the

author of this work is Farzand Mardān Farrakh Hormazd. He was a *dastur* of his time, was well versed, as appears from his writings, in the Zoroastrian lore, and could argue logically on the subjects of the Zoroastrian, Mahomedan and Christian religions. From this work it appears that he was fully acquainted with the Bible of the Christians. The main object of his writing this *Sikand-Gumani-Najar* was to prove to the people of the time the correctness of the fundamental doctrine of the Zoroastrian religion and to prove that Ahura Mazda, Who is all-good, cannot be the author of evil, but that there must be another source through which evil arises. While proving this by arguments the author displays his knowledge and logic admirably well. In his work he rests content with making some allusions to Mahomedanism, for he could not write openly against the state religion of Persia of which he was an inhabitant, but openly attacks Christianity and points out its evident inconsistencies with regard to the origin of evil and the existence of unity in trinity.

According to this author, the stars belong to the good side of Spentomaiyo, but the planets belong to the side of Ahreman.

Death in this life is not a complete dissolution of existence as appears from the following words of the author :—

“ If the births of the worldly existence are mostly manifest through the occurrence of death therein, even then it is seen that that death is not a complete

dissolution of existence, but a necessity of going from place to place, from duty to duty. For, as the existence of all these creations is derived from the four elements, it is manifest to the sight that those worldly bodies of theirs are to be mingled again with the four elements."

The author, like the other ancient *dasturs* of Iran, emphatically believes in the spiritual existence, which is the root of the worldly existence which is the fruit. A quotation from the author will be worth noting here:—

"This worldly existence which is visible and tangible is produced and has arisen from a spiritual existence which is invisible and intangible. In like manner the lapsing from visibility and tangibility into invisibility and intangibility which are themselves a spiritual state is unquestionable."

The Zoroastrian religion is represented as a tree. It has one stem, two branches, three boughs, four twigs and five shoots. The one stem is *Truth*; the two branches are performance and abstinence; the three boughs are good thought, good word and good deed; the four twigs are the four classes of men, priesthood, warriorship, husbandry and artisanship; and the five shoots are the five rulers mentioned in the Zoroastrian Scriptures, *viz.*, the house-ruler, the village-ruler, the tribe-ruler, the province-ruler and Zaratusht over all.

The four classes of men represent four capabilities *viz.*, *temper*, *ability*, *wisdom* and *diligence*. *Temper* belongs to priesthood as the 'greatest duty of priests

is the temper—that they do not commit sin on account of shame and fear.' *Ability* belongs to warriorship. It is a 'princely adornment of warriors', for, to say in the words of the author, the manliness of a warrior is owing to self-possession. Husbandmen require *wisdom* for the tillage of the ground, and the artisans *diligence* for the advancement of their class.

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XIV.

**S a d - d a r .**

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The Sad-dar is another work originally written in the seventh century A.D.; near the time of the Arab conquest. The original work is known as *Prose-Saddar*.<sup>(26)</sup> There is another work called the *Metrical Sad-dar*<sup>(27)</sup> written in 1495 A.D.; by Yazdagar, who calls himself a linear descendant of Adarbad Marespand, the distinguished prime-minister of Shapoor II of the Sassanian dynasty, who ruled over Iran in the fourth century A.D.<sup>(28)</sup> The same work appeared later on in 1531 A.D. in long metres and is therefore known by the name of Long-metre Saddar.<sup>(29)</sup> The

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(26) It is called Saddar-i-nasr.

(27) It is called Saddar-i-nazam.

(28) Shapoor II from 309 to 379 A.D.

(29) It is called *Saddar-i-behere-tavil*. It is translated into Gutat raji by the late Dastur Jamaspji Minocherji Jamasp-Asana.

authorship of this last edition is ascribed to a Dastūr named Rustain Bēhzaad.

The word *Saddar* means 'hundred doors.' The work is so called because it treats of one hundred subjects connected with the Zoroastrian religion. (*Sad*, hundred and *dar*, door or chapter).

This work is often quoted by Parsi priests, as it upholds, amongst other subjects, the rights of the priestly class. Priests must be obeyed. They should be consulted on every religious matter, and Pehelvi should be taught to them only. All this proves that the priestly class was indeed one much respected and obeyed by the ancient Iranians.

This work mostly resembles the Pehelvi work, *Shayast-lā-Shayast*, as it also teaches what is proper and improper to do, and it seems to be written mostly on the authority of the Avesta, especially the Vendidad, the Hadokht Nask, and the Spend Nask.

Of the one hundred chapters of this work, some relate to religious precepts and ceremonies, and the remaining to moral subjects, such as charity, truth falsehood, promise, duty of a son, duty of a wife, theft, adultery, etc. The most important lesson it teaches is the necessity of unwavering faith in the religion. It says that it is fruitless to expect to go to Heaven without a steadfast belief in the religion. Like other works relating to the Zoroastrian religion

it denounces laziness, idleness, and indifference, and delay in doing any work. The following passage regarding postponement is worth noting down:—

“Ahura-Mazda told to Zarthusht, ‘O Zarthusht! I enact a precept for thee, that every good work which thou art able to do to-day, do not postpone for to-morrow, and accomplish with thine own hand the counsel of thy own soul. Do not be proud on the score that it is still the time of youth, and it is quite possible to do it hereafter, whilst thou thinkest thus ‘I will do it after this.’ For there have been many people whose remaining life was one day, and they, have been taken away in the presence of fifty years’ work.’”

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XV.

A h u r a - M a z d a .

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Zoroastrianism teaches its followers to believe in one God, the Supreme Being, as the Creator of the universe, and it is therefore undoubtedly a monotheistic religion.<sup>(30)</sup> The Creator is named in the

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(30.) “We recognize in Zoroaster a man who was far in advance of his times, who proclaimed already in a remote antiquity a monotheistic religion to the people, who conceived from a philosophic standpoint the Being of the Godhead, the relation in which man stands to Him, and the origin of evil; and who perceived the chief point not in offerings and external ceremonies, but in a pious mind, and in a life conforming to such-a pious mind.”—*Dastur Darab's English Translation of 'Zarathushtra in the Gathas and in the Classics,' from Gernon, by Drs. Getdner and Windischmann.*



Zoroastrian Scriptures 'Ahura-Mazda'<sup>(31)</sup>, i. e., 'the Omniscient Lord. He has no form, the forms that one reads of in some parts of the Scriptures being only symbolic. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. He rules both the visible and the invisible worlds. He existed before anything else, and will exist for ever. He likes, loves, and defends only the good. He is One and Indivisible. He has no rival.

In the Ahura-Mazda Yasht, prayer dedicated to Ahura-Mazda, God describes all His attributes in answer to the question put to Him by Zoroaster:—

"I am The Keeper: I am The Creator and The Maintainer: I am The Discerner: I am The Most Beneficent Spirit: My name is The Best Bestower of Health: My name is The Athravan (The Priest): I am Ahura, the Lord; I am Mazda, the All-knowing; my name is The Most Holy: my name is The Glorious: my name is The Full-seeing; my name is The Protector, The Well-Wisher, The Creator, The Producer of Prosperity: I am The King Who Rules at His Will; my name is The Most Liberal King: my name is He Who does not deceive; my name is He Who is not deceived; my name is He Who conquers everything; my name is He Who has shaped everything; my name is All Weal; my name

(31) "On a review of the Avesta books I find that 'Mazda' is not a denomination by which the Creator is recognised, but it is a mere title attached to 'Ahura' who is the sole Lord of the Creation. 'Ahura' comes from Persian *hastan*, to be, to exist. 'Mazda' comes from Sanskrit *mahá*, great, and *da*, short form of Persian *danash*, wisdom. 'Ahura-Mazda' therefore means 'The Lord of high wisdom.'"—*Mazda, Ahura-Mazda, Ahura,* by Dastur. Jamaspji M. Jamaspasana.

is Full Weal; my name is The Master of Weal; my name is He Who can benefit at His wish; my name is The Beneficent One; my name is The Energetic One; my name is Holiness; my name is The Great One; my name is The Best of Sovereigns; my name is The Wisest of the Wise; my name is He Who does good for a long time."

Ahura-Mazda<sup>(32)</sup> further says in the same Yasht:—

"I have created Good Mind (Vohumano), Immortality (Ameretat), Health (Haurvatat), The Best Truth (Ashvahista), Devotion and Piety (Armaiti), and Abundance of every earthly good (Khshthravairy)." "

Ahura-Mazda<sup>(33)</sup> not only rewards the good but also He punishes the wicked.<sup>(34)</sup>

(32) "Zarathushtra Spitaman's conception of Ahura-Mazda as the Supreme Being is perfectly identical with the notion of Elohim (God) or Jeovah, which we find in the books of the Old Testament. Ahura-Mazda is called by him 'The Creator of the earthly and spiritual life, the Lord of the whole universe at whose hands are all the Creatures' ".—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

(33) "The doctrines of this excellent religion are extremely simple. The leading idea is that of monotheism, but the one God has far fewer anthropomorphic attributes and is relegated much farther back into vague and infinite, than the god of any other monotheistic religion. 'Ahura-Mazda,' of which the more familiar appellation Ormazd is an abbreviation, means the 'All-knowing Lord;' he is said sometimes to dwell in the infinite luminous space, and sometimes to be identical with it. He is, in fact, not unlike the inscrutable First Cause, whom we may regard with awe and reverence, with love and hope, but, whom we do not pretend to define or understand: But the radical difference between Zoroastrianism and other religion is that it does not conceive of the one God as an Omnipotent Creator, who might make the universe as He chose and therefore was directly responsible for all the evils in it; but as a Being acting by certain laws, one of which was, for reason totally inscrutable to us, that existence implied polarity, and therefore there could be no good without corresponding evil."—*Samuel Laing.*

(34) Refer Yasna XLIII, para. 5.

According to the late Dastur Jamaspji, <sup>(35)</sup> *Ahura* is the name of the Creator of the universe, and *Ahura-Mazda* is the name of the primeval spirit and the first of the seven Ameshaspentas.

In the later Avesta, the name, *Ahura-Mazda*, is used both for the Creator and the primeval spirit created by Him, and on account of this confusion, several critics on Zoroastrianism find cause to say that *Ahriman* or *Ganamino* is the antagonist of the Creator, but it is not so. In reality, *Ganamino* is the antagonist of *Spentomainyo* (or *Spenamino*,) the primeval good spirit. *Ahura* is the Creator of both these spirits, and has no rival.

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## XVI.

### Two Presiding Powers.

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The Almighty, *Ahura-Mazda*, is the cause of everything. For the proper management of the world He works through two principal spirits, *Spentomainyo*, <sup>(36)</sup>

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(35) The late Dastur Jamaspji M. Jamaspasana published a paper on the Avestaic terms 'Mazda—Ahura-mazda—Ahura.'

(36) "Spentomainyush was regarded as the author of all that is bright and shining, of all that is good and useful in nature; while Angremainyush called into existence all that is dark and apparently noxious. Both are inseparable as day and night, and though opposed to each other, are indispensable for the preservation of creation. The beneficent spirit appears in the blazing flame; the presence of the hurtful one is marked by the wood converted into charcoal. Spentomainyush has created the light of day, and Angremainyush, the darkness of night; the former awakens men to their duties, the latter lulls them to sleep. Life is produced by Spentomainyush, but extinguished by Angremainyush, whose hands, by releasing the soul from the fetters of the body, enables her to rise into immortality and everlasting life".—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

the good spirit, and *Angremainyo*,<sup>(37)</sup> the evil spirit, the former representing the creative, and the latter, the destructive power of the universe. These two spirits are the primeval causes of everything, good or bad, in the universe. He has ordained that the world can only go on with these two powers opposed to each other. The existence of the one is necessary for the existence of the other. Man, who is created with a conscience to know the right thing from the wrong, and who is endowed with a free will,<sup>(38)</sup> has either to take the side of Spentomainyo or Angremainyo, that is, he has to select either the path of virtue or that of vice. Constant conflict is going on in the universe between Spentomainyo and Angremainyo, but it has been so ordained by Ahura-Mazda, Who likes to see only the followers of Spentomainyo prosper, that the good spirit should turn out more powerful than the other and finally prevail over him. The pious should therefore turn

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(37) "All that is good in the world comes from the former (Spentomainyush); all that is bad in it comes from the latter (Angremainyush). The history of the world is the history of their conflict, how Angremainyush invaded the world of Ahura-mazda and marred it, and how he shall be expelled from it at last. Man is active in the conflict, his duty in it being laid before him in the law revealed by Ahura-mazda to Zarathushtra. When the appointed time is come \* \* \* \* Angremainyush and hell will be destroyed, man will rise from the dead, and everlasting happiness will reign over the world."—*Professor James Darmesteter.*

(38) "Placed henceforth between truth and lie, between light and darkness, man has the power to make his choice, and is the master of his own destiny."—*M. A. Frank.*

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out victorious in the end. Both the material and the immaterial worlds are based upon these two *mainyos*.<sup>(39)</sup>

It is believed according to the teachings of Zoroaster that Angremainyo will finally be destroyed, and perfect happiness will reign everywhere for ever, death, sickness and difficulties of every sort disappearing with the destruction of the evil spirit.<sup>(40)</sup>

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## XVII.

### Ameshaspentas.

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Ahura-Mazda,<sup>(41)</sup> as stated before, is the source of everything in this material, as well as in the spiritual world. Spentomainyo, the good spirit, is, as it were, the essence of all goodness of the Almighty, but it is an abstract idea. There are six Ameshaspentas

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(39) "Strictly speaking, Ahura-Mazda is the great unknown First Cause, who comprehends within himself both principles as a necessary law of existence, and in whom believers may hope that evil and good will ultimately be reconciled."—*Samuel Laing*.

(40) "They appear, originally, to have been both supposed to spring from Ahura-Mazda who speaks of 'the more beneficent of my two spirits' in Yasna XIX, 21; but in later times and throughout the Pahalvi literature, the beneficent spirit is identified with Ahura-Mazda and the origin of the evil spirit is left in obscurity."—*Dr. E. W. West—Pahalvi Texts, Part II.*

(41) *Ahura-Mazda* is now pronounced *Ormazd* by the modern Parsis. *Ormasdes* was the form used by the foreign writers of old.

(= Archangels) to represent His (*i.e.*, Ahura-Mazda's) six chief attributes. They all are, of course, on the good side of the universe, that is, they all support the work of Spentomainyo, and every one of them looks after that part of the creation, which is specially assigned to his care. These archangels are potent in their respective functions and have their abode in the spiritual world.

*Vohumano* is the chief archangel whom the Parsis know by the easier and modern Persianized form *Bahman* (Persian *beh*, good, and, *man*, mind). This name means *good mind*, and represents *Divine Wisdom*.

The second Ameshaspenta is *Ashvahista*. The Parsis now know him by the easier form *Ardibehesht*. This Ameshaspenta represents *Divine Holiness*, as the name means *best holiness*.

The third is *Khshthravairyo*. The modern easier Persianized form is *Shahrevan*. It means *desirable sovereignty* and represents *Divine Prosperity*.

The fourth Ameshaspenta is known by the old name *Spent-Armaiti* (the modern form *Aspandad*). The name means *moderate thinking and humble sense*. This Ameshaspenta represents *Devotion and Piety*.

The fifth is *Haurvatat* or *Khordad*. The word means *well-being, happiness or health*. He presides over waters and represents *Health*.

The sixth and last is *Ameretat*, or *Amardad*. It means *long life and immortality*. This archangel presides over plants and represents *Immortality*.

The above meanings, *viz.*, (1) The good mind, (2) The best holiness, (3) The desirable sovereignty, (4) Moderate thinking and humble sense, (5) Well-being, happiness and health, and (6) Long life and immortality, are no more than the chief attributes of Ahura-Mazda, the Lord, Who has, in order to represent every one of these six attributes, created this world of six principal parts, and placed an archangel over every of these creations. The six creations are (1) man, (2) fire, (3) metals, (4) earth, (5) water, and (6) plants, which all are respectively looked after by the six archangels. *Bahman*, the good mind, rules over man and domestic animals, a function quite suitable to him. The second archangel, *Ardibehesht*, is the genius of fire, than whom no other being is holier. The third one, *Shahrevar*, has to reign over the kingdom of metals; the fourth, over the earth which is the symbol of humbleness; the fifth over water, essential for the well-being or happiness of the whole creation; and the sixth rules over plants which have the properties to cure diseases and prolong lives.

A European author writes :—

“The belief in the Ameshaspentas does not interfere with the monotheism of the Gathaic theology. In spite of all, Ahura-Mazda stands out as the Almighty Being. It is He who gives decision upon all, since everything happens according to His will. He is of one nature with them all, or, as the poet (*i. e.* Zoroaster) puts it, He dwells together with Asha and Vohumano, that is, He has these powers at His

disposal. They stand at His command. *They issue from Him and go back with Him.* Ahura-Mazda existed first of all. Khshthra and Armaiti, Vohumano, and Asha are associated with Him as natural evolutions from His Being. Such powers only emanate from Him."

In the Gathas, or say in the Gathaic period, only Ahura-Mazda was prayed to. The pristine purity of the Zoroastrian religion appears only in the Gathas. The Ameshaspentas were innate with Him<sup>(42)</sup> in that period. It is only in the later Avestas, written by the disciples of Zoroaster, or by the head-priests of the later periods, that we find the Ameshaspentas mentioned as separate beings created by Ahura-Mazda, and it was in the later periods only that prayers were composed and dedicated to the Ameshaspentas and Yazads. It is only in the later works that we find these archangels placed against the corresponding arch-demons as shewn below :—

<i>Arch-angels.</i>	<i>Arch-demons.</i>
(1) <i>Vohumano</i> , good thought	<i>Akoman</i> , bad thought.
(2) <i>Ashvahista</i> , piety.	<i>Indra</i> , vice.
(3) <i>Khshthravairyō</i> , Desirable sovereignty.	<i>Sauru</i> , bad government.
(4) <i>Spent-Armaiti</i> , humble sense.	<i>Naunghaithya</i> , discontent.
(5) <i>Haurvatat</i> , health and water..	<i>Tauru</i> , poisonous waters.
(6) <i>Ameretat</i> , Immortality.	<i>Zairi</i> , poisonous plants.

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(42) "The several names, by which we find the Ameshaspentas called .....are frequently mentioned in the Gathas, but they are, as the reader may clearly see from the passages (see Yasna XLVII-1) as well as from etymology, nothing but abstract nouns and ideas, representing all the gifts which, Ahuramazda, as the only Lord, grants to those who worship him with a sincere heart, by always speaking truth, and performing good actions. In the eyes of the prophet they were no personages; that idea being imported into the sayings of the great master by some of his successors."—*Dr. Martin Haug.*



## XVIII.

### Yazads.

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Besides the six Ameshaspentas, there are other minor attributes of Ahura-Mazda, known by the name of Yazads, *i. e.* angels. They are taken, in the later Avestas, as the supernatural beings created by Ahura-Mazda to guide the invisible world.

Of these Yazads the chief are: *Mithra* or *Meher*, the lord of heavenly light and all pastures: *Srosh*, the genius that guides the soul after death to the Chinvat Bridge: *Teshtrya* or *Tir*, the angel presiding over rain: *Rashne*, the genius of justice: *Astad*, the angel of truth: and *Ram*, the ruler of air and storms.<sup>(43)</sup>

To enable a Zoroastrian to remember the arch-angels and angels from time to time, most of the days of the Parsi month are dedicated to them. A Zoroastrian may love, praise and adore them. By so doing he simply strengthens his resolutions to drive out evil thoughts, to speak the truth, and to do praiseworthy actions. In other words, he may try to exalt his own ideas, and thereby exalt himself, by remembering and keeping before his eyes the names, attributes, and praises of such powerful deities as the Ameshaspentas and Yazads, who are really speaking mere emanations from the God-head, Ahura-Mazda. They are therefore no separate gods, and the Parsis do not consider them as such.

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(43) For a complete list of the Ameshaspentas and Yazads see *The Parsi Month* in this book.

## XIX.

## Ahreman.

Some of the writers on Zoroastrianism regard the two *mainyos*, the two primeval causes, as the two gods of the Zoroastrians, and stigmatize this religion with the name of duo-theistic religion, or call it a dualism. They call Ahreman the second God of the Parsis. This view, from what has been stated in previous chapters, will be found to be untenable. Angre-mainyo, who can be compared with the Satan of Mahomedanism or the Devil<sup>(44)</sup> of Christianity, is otherwise called Ahreman<sup>(46)</sup> by the Parsis. He is not believed to be omnipresent, omniscient, nor omnipotent like Ahura-Mazda, the Creator. On the contrary, it is plainly stated in the Parsi Scriptures that Ahreman<sup>(46)</sup> is after-sighted, cannot be present at two places at the same time, cannot harm or resist staunch piety, and cannot

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(44) "The Zoroastrian idea of the Devil of the infernal kingdom coincides entirely with the Christian doctrine. The devil is a murderer and father of lies according to both the Bible and the Zend-Avesta."—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

(45) The following characteristics are mentioned of Ahreman:—Lie, diseases, dishonesty, poisoning, wolfishness, disobedience, pride, anger, fever, murderousness, impatienc, envy, adultery, sorcery and licentiousness. The northerly wind comes from Ahreman—(*Vendidad*, Chapter II.)

(46) "If therefore a belief in Aharaman, as the author of evil, makes the Parsi religion a dualism, it is difficult to understand, why a belief in the devil, as the author of evil, does not make Christianity also a dualism. At any rate it is evident from the Bundahis that a Christian is treading on hazardous ground when he objects to Zoroastrianism on the score of its dualism."—*Introduction to Pahalvi Texts by Dr. E. W. West.*

predict the future at all. He is further mentioned as weak and wily. His business is to tempt away the pious to wickedness. He is not everlasting, but has an end in the distant future.<sup>(47)</sup> With his end all the wickedness and destruction in the world will cease. He is therefore no god<sup>(48)</sup> at all, no more than Spentomainyo, the good cause, as both these are regarded as the primeval causes of everything.

In the *Mainyo-i-Khirad*, it is written:—

“A treaty of nine thousand winters<sup>(49)</sup> in unlimited time was also made by him (Ahreman) with Ahura-Mazda, and until it has become fully completed, no one is able to alter it and to act otherwise. And when the nine thousand years are completed, Ahreman is quite impotent, and *Srosh*, the righteous will smite *Aeshm*, and *Mitro* and unlimited time and the spirit of Justice who deceives no one in anything, and destiny and divine providence will smite the creatures and creation of Ahreman of every kind, and in the end, even *Aco*, the demon; and every creature and creation of Ahuramazda becomes again as undisturbed as those which were produced and created by him in the beginning.”

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(47) Refer *Jamiad Yasht*, para 12, also refer the *Bundeish*.

(48) “A separate evil spirit of equal power with Ahura-Mazda and always opposed to Him is entirely strange to Zoroaster’s theory”—*Dr. Martin Haug*.

(49) For the first three thousand years the creation of Ahura-Mazda was to thrive; in the second three thousand years the evils of Ahreman were to predominate, and during the last three thousand years the power of Ahreman will be diminished and will altogether disappear in the end.

## XX.

**Soul : Farohar : Conscience.**

The living body is made up of the elements known in the Zoroastrian religion as the *continuators of life and regulators of the mixture of the living body*. They are, however, material and perishable. But there are also immaterial elements that are connected with the human body. They are *soul, farohar*<sup>(50)</sup> (guardian spirit), and *conscience*. Regarding them no better description can be found than in the *Dinkard*:—

“In this world the thing that is of the way of the *minos* (invisible powers) is the soul that dwells in the body. And the invisible power that is in the soul, to help it and make it behave properly in this world, is the conscience that gives warnings to walk in the good path. The soul, as it keeps the body alive, and gives it the power to perceive, in this world, so it makes the body walk towards the *minos* and keeps it on the side of the *minos*. The soul, as it keeps the body alive in this world, so it keeps its eyes on those bodies that do not act according to law, and instructs them in the matter, through the invisible powers that make them act according to law. Of the regulated things in the body, whichever becomes irregulated is

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(50) “The *farvahar* or *fravashi* which is the prototype or spiritual counterpart supposed to have been created in the beginning for each good creature and creation afterwards produced, whether material or immaterial, and whose duty is to represent the creature and watch over its interests in the spiritual world.”  
—Dr. E. W. West (Pahalvi Texts Part II.)

perceived by the eye of the soul. The power that is invisible perceives through the eye of the soul. The invisible, improving powers are as a great strength to the soul. And these powers of the soul are imagination, intelligence and understanding. And they dwell with the soul! The soul and conscience (*Vakhsh* i.e. the power that guides man in the right path) in all their doings, perceive and gain success through the instrumentality of the above three invisible powers. The soul and *farohar* are because of conscience (*Vakhsh*); and it is also owing to conscience that the soul and *farohar* perceive, and conscience is the eye (of souls and *farohars*). And the soul and *farohar* perceive each other through the eye of conscience. And the soul performs the work relating to its wishes, and the *farohar* prevails in the vigour of its own work, through conscience. When the soul is itself possessed of conscience, then, owing to that power, the spirit perceives through the soul, and, when conscience keeps perceiving through the soul, then both (conscience and the soul) perform works fit to be approved. It is owing to its having within its power, conscience, that a *farohar* is possessed of helping and victorious energy. Whatever perception the soul has of the work to be done in relation to its wishes, is owing to the predominating *farohar*. Generally conscience is intended to improve the soul. And the improving powers, *farohar* and conscience reside the one with the other, owing to the soul. When each of the three (soul: *farohar*: and con-

science) is in the harmony with the other, it is full of vigour. Man improves because of the air of life. And the farohar keeps the air of life bright through the instrumentality of the predominating fire. It is owing to the brightness (vigour) of the air of life that the body enjoys life. The soul (lodged) in the semblance of the body, keeps the body espying and moving, by means of the conscience-possessing intelligence. And as long as the soul is in harmony with conscience, so long it improves itself for the invisible state. And its (soul's) other companions are all intended for the improvement of man through the connection with farohar and conscience. And they reside with the pure soul after it has passed from the body. When the soul becomes sinful, intelligence and farohar (these two powers) separate from it and they immediately become invisible to the sinful (soul)."

In order to attain righteousness, not only is purity of body necessary, but also that of conscience, whereby the soul is purified. In the translation of the *Vendidad* by James Darmesteter,<sup>(51)</sup> the following passage refers to the purity of the soul :—

“ For, purity is for man, next to life, the greatest good, that purity, O Zarathushtra, that is in the religion of Mazda for him who cleanses his own self with good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

“ Make thy ownself pure, O Righteous man! any one in the world here below can win purity for his

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(51) Chapter X, paras. 18 and 19.

own self, viz., when he cleanses his own self with good words, good thoughts and good deeds.”

Farochar is the quickening power that keeps the body always active through energy and when this quickening power is separated from the body, the body dies, and the soul, which with the farochar and the intellect used to recruit the body in its functions also separates from the body.

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## XXI.

### Reward and Punishment.

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According to Zoroastrianism, man has been endowed with free will,<sup>(52)</sup> and he is, therefore, the architect of his own destiny. He is at liberty to follow either the path of virtue or the path of vice, but he has to suffer the consequence of the one or the other. The man who is pious and good in every respect, is blessed with mental ease and happiness in this material world, and also exalted in the invisible or the spiritual world, or in other words he goes to Heaven (called *Garodemana* in the Avesta, pronounced *garothman* in Persian) after death.<sup>(53)</sup> The contrary is the case

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(52) A European Orientalist writes :—

“According to Zoroastrian idea, man is not fettered with a blind fate nor prejudiced in his judgment, by hereditary sins. God has given him power of judgment, and he who has ears may hear, and he who has intellect may choose what is right and true. The sinner is a fool and the fool a sinner.”

(53) “Closely connected with this idea (i.e. of resurrection) is the belief in Heaven and Hell, which Spitama Zarathushtra himself clearly pronounced in the Gathas.”—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

with the wicked, who go to Hell, called *Drujo-demana*, i.e. house of destruction. Though this tenet of Zoroaster was propounded thousands of years ago, the practical truth of it is ever evident. It is seen clearly in our every-day life, that constant conflict between good and bad thoughts is going on in a man, and only he is happy, who can master the evil thoughts raging in himself. The wicked, before they go to hell after death, suffer also here from the troubles of the wicked mind and the guilty conscience. It is, therefore, on the whole unreasonable to say that the actions of this life should go unrewarded or unpunished after death.

The *Dinkard* says :—

“Be it known that for man there are both these things from the holy *Dúrdár*; reward for righteousness and punishment for sin. In particular man becomes deserving of the punishment of sin by remaining aloof from doing righteousness, and by knowingly committing sin; and he becomes (an observer) of the law, fit to be approved for his own sake, by remaining aloof from committing sin and by doing deeds of righteousness. Man is enabled to do the work of purity for his soul, while suffering (hardships in this world) by retaining the Creator within himself as a friend. The intelligence and religious feelings and other good qualities, which are in man, are means to enable him to form righteousness.”

In the *Dinkard*, we also find :—

“Children under eight years of age, and persons without intelligence are harmless and safe from hell.



Every child not being of age, and small in proportion, and imbecile men owing to want of intelligence, do not deserve to be punished, and their souls in addition to being saved from hell, are destined to return to *Khorshed-paya* (Paradise)."

Zoroastrianism recognizes that every intellectual human being is born capable of securing for himself or herself the salvation of his or her soul, but for that he or she has to rest on his or her own actions, and not on the promise or pardon of any priest or prophet. The salvation of his (or her) soul can be attained by his or her abstaining from sins in this world, and that is the only way of attaining it.

In various places in the *gathas*, heaven is promised to the good, and hell to the wicked. For instance, refer *Yasna* 32, para 15, where Ahura-Mazda says:—

"I shall shut out from Heaven<sup>(54)</sup> the *Karaps* and the *Kavis*, and all those that do not help, though able, the cause of the religion. Those that help in spreading the religion and are morally good, will have their abode with *Bahman* (i.e. in Paradise)."

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(54) In the *Arda-Viraf-nameh*, four heavens are described as seen by Arda-Viraf in his vision, (1) *Setar-paya* (i.e., of the star pathway), (2) *Maha-paya* (of the moon pathway), (3) *Khorshed-paya* (of the sun pathway) and (4) *Garotman*.

Cf. The ten heavens seen by Dante in his vision:—

"Dante has the following ten heavens—the heavens of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, the Primum Mobile, and the Empyrean. The last Heaven of Dante is the seat of the Almighty God, just as Garotman, the last Heaven of Viraf, is the seat of Ahura-Mazda."

In the *gathas*, hell is spoken of as *the dark world*, or darkness itself; as appears from the following words in the Ahunavaiti Gatha, para. 20 :—

“The person who cheats the pious will have his abode after death in darkness for a long time; his food poisonous, his lamentations mournful. O sinners! your evil inclinations will carry you to that dark world owing to your bad actions.”

The above view is supported by the *Mainyo-i-Khirad*<sup>(55)</sup> :—

“As to that which is asked by thee concerning the spiritual and worldly existences, the worldly existence is, in the end, death and disappearance; and of the spiritual existence in the end, that of a soul of the righteous is undecaying, immortal and undisturbed, full of glory, and full of enjoyment, for ever and everlasting, with the angels and archangels and the guardian spirits of the righteous: And the bridge and destruction and punishment of the wicked in hell are for ever and everlasting.”

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## XXII.

### Chinvat Bridge.

The Parsis believe in the immortality of the soul. Their soul after death goes to Heaven or Hell, to the former if they practised good actions in this world, or to the latter if otherwise. According to the Parsi idea

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55) See chapter XL, 29—31 of the *Mainyo-i-khirad* by Dr. E. W. West.

there is a bridge, called *Chinvat*, between this world and Heaven.<sup>(56)</sup> The Angel, *Srosh*, guides the soul after death towards the *Chinvat*, to which it soars on the dawn of the fourth day.<sup>(57)</sup> At this bridge, the soul has to account for its actions done in the nether world, which actions are judged by the angel, *Meher*, assisted by *Rasné*, the angel of Justice, and by *Astad*, the angel of Truth. The good actions of the soul are actually weighed against the bad ones. If the good ones outweigh the bad ones, the soul can pass over the bridge. If the result is contrary, the soul cannot pass over it and is therefore obliged to hurl itself down into a dark and bottomless abyss termed Hell. Besides Heaven and Hell, Zoroastrianism recognizes the intermediate space as *Hamest-gehan*. This intermediate space is assigned to the soul, if the good and bad actions are equal in weight.<sup>(58)</sup>

In Heaven or in Hell, all do not enjoy the same amount of bliss or suffer punishments equally rigorous. Zoroastrianism promises rewards in proportion to the merit of the good actions, and mentions that punishments are dealt out according as the sins are of higher

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(56) "Between Heaven and Hell is *Chinvat Peretu* (*Chinvad pul*) "the bridge of the gatherer," or "the bridge of the judge" (*Chinvat* can have both meanings), which the soul of the pious alone can pass, while the wicked fall from it down into Hell."—*Dr. Martin Haug*.

(57) "The soul of man, itself the spirit of the body, after passing away, is three nights upon earth; doubtful about its own position and in fear of the accounts; and it experiences terror, distress and fear through anxiety about the *Kinvad* bridge and as it sits it notices about its own good works and sin"—*Dadistan-i-Dinik*, question 23.

(58) According to the *Dadistani-Dinik*, there are, besides heaven and hell, two intermediate places, one is for those that are not well enough for heaven and the other is for those that are not well enough for hell.

or lower grades. As an illustration the following passage is given:—

“One of the numerous questions asked by Zoroaster of Ahura-Mazda, was in reference to a man whose body was feeling the torments of hell, with the exception of his right foot. The man was a wicked king in the world below, who ruled his country with oppression, lawlessness, and violence. He was incapable of practising any known virtue. One day when he was out hunting for his pleasure, he saw a goat tethered to a stake, vainly trying to reach a morsel of hay. The sight of a poor hungry beast straining at the rope kindled a spark of mercy in his otherwise obdurate heart. Thus moved by a sudden impulse, he, with his right foot, kicked the morsel of hay within reach of the famished beast. The incident was duly recorded in the book of Fate, and the foot received its reward.”<sup>(59)</sup>

In the Gathas, *Yasna 46, para 10*, Zoroaster promises to the righteous success in crossing the bridge, in the following words:—

“O Ahura-Mazda ! if any man or woman puts faith in me and in my religion, if he (or she) follows righteousness for the sake of righteousness and rules with good thoughts, I shall shew him (or her) the way to meet Thee. I shall enable all such persons to pass over the Chinvat Bridge.”

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(59) This story is related in the *Sad-dar*, Chapter III., 3-11.

In the next para of the same Yasna, Zoroaster plainly says that the wicked shall go to Hell. His words are as follows :—

“But when the vicious and the wicked who have not seen with their eyes nor heard with their ears, approach the Chinvat Bridge, their soul and conscience will lament and their abode will be forever in hell.”

According to the *Dinkard*, the *kinvad* or the Chinvat Bridge extends over hell and leads to the Paradise. When a righteous man dies, the breadth of the Chinvat appears to his soul as much as the length of nine swords arranged in a line; but when a wicked man dies, his soul finds the bridge as thin as a hair.

In *Yasht XXII*, it is mentioned that if a pious man dies, his soul confronts at the bridge with a maid of divine beauty, whereas, on the other hand, the soul of the wicked is confronted by an exceedingly ugly maid. These maids are the dead man's *kérdar*, i.e., the prototype of his good or evil deeds.

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### XXIII.

## Resurrection.

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Although the Zoroastrian religion teaches that the pious will go to heaven and the wicked to hell, it also teaches that the wicked will be released from hell on the day of resurrection, known to the Parsis by the

name *Rasita-khaiz*,<sup>(60)</sup> and that Ahreman and his helping spirits will repent and acknowledge the supremacy of Ahura-Mazda, and will no more torment His creatures.

On the day of resurrection, all from heaven and hell will meet together. For three days the wicked will undergo the final punishment in the presence of the pious who will cry for mercy and pass those three days in prayer for pardoning those wicked. Then, all the metals hidden in mountains and hills will melt on account of excessive heat, and flow in the form of a river which the pious and the wicked will have to cross together. Thus all will be purified for the future existence, and all will be set free, and all will live happily in the highest heaven, known as *Garothman Behesht*, for ever and ever, without experiencing any sort of trouble or affliction whatever.<sup>(61)</sup>

The *Dinkard* says:-

"It is declared in the religion that at the time when the *Dadar* will perform *Frashokant* (resurrection), Angremainyo will turn back from the ambition to which he yielded, and his office-bearers (work-doers) will be swallowed up, harmed and saddened."

The *Gathas* also hint at the resurrection and the final purification through molten metal. The words

(60) This word is found in various places of the Avesta.

(61) For a detailed description about Resurrection and Future Existence, the reader is referred to the 30th chapter of the *Bundahis* by Dr. E. W. West. (*Max Muller's Sacred Books of the East*, vol. V.)

in the Ahunavaiti Gathas are to the following effect:—

“The holy Ahura-Mazda will throw both kinds of men (*i.e.*, the virtuous and the vicious) into molten metal in order to make them understand their respective fates. Then the good will remain unharmed and the sinners will suffer pain. And thus the good will in the end be benefited.”

The teaching of Zoroaster about the resurrection and future existence was his original doctrine. The Jews and the Christians appear to have adopted the idea later on from Zoroastrianism. In support of this belief, a few quotations from Christian writers will interest the reader:—

*Dr. E. W. West* in his introduction to ‘*Mainyo-i-Khirad*’ writes as follows:—

“Few Christians will be disposed to admit that they owe their ideas of the resurrection and the future world, to the traditions of the Mazdayasnian religion; and yet they will find it difficult to disprove it. Let those who doubt this fact, ascertain how many decided references to the resurrection and future life, they can find in the earlier scriptures of the Jews, written before they came in contact with the Assyrians and Persians; and then compare them with the more frequent references to the same subject in the later Psalms and Prophets, the book of Job, and the new testament, all written after the Jews had become acquainted with Persian traditions. In fact, the book of Job has some appearance of being a translation or adaptation from a Persian or Assyrian text.”

*Dr. A. Menzies, D.D.*, in his 'History of Religion' writes :—

"The belief in the resurrection, found among the Jews after the exile, and not before it, has been maintained by many to be a loan from Persia, where the belief in future reward and punishment was a settled thing from the time of Zoroaster."

*G. T. Bettany, M.A., B.Sc.*, in his *The Great Indian Religions*, writes :—

"The general tenor of the Avesta is to look for a regeneration of the earth, with a resurrection of the bodies of the dead, to join their souls. Many hold that this view of the resurrection was original in Zoroastrianism, and that it was adopted from the Persians by the Jews."

In *Chamber's Encyclopædia, Vol. X*, the following mention is made about the resurrection :—

"The resurrection of the body is clearly and emphatically indicated in the Zend Avesta, and it belongs, in all probability, to Zoroaster's original doctrine—not as has been held by some, to later times, when it was imported into his religion by other religions."

*Dr. Martin Haug* writes :—

"There can be no doubt that this important doctrine is a genuine Zoroastrian dogma, which developed itself naturally from Spitama Zarathushtra's sayings. There is not the slightest trace of its being borrowed from a foreign source. Besides these direct proofs of its forming a genuine and original part of Zoroastrian theology, it agrees completely with the spirit and tendency of the Parsi religion."



## XXIV.

## Repentance.

It is enjoined in the Avesta<sup>(62)</sup> on a Zoroastrian that he should pray to Ahura-Mazda for forgiveness of his sins. It is taught to him that repentance enlightens the conscience of the man who has committed sins, and deters him from sinning again. For the Zoroastrians there is a prayer in the *Khordé-Avesta*, comparatively a later composition. It is known as *Patét Pashémani*, i.e., the prayer for repentance of sins. Below are given extracts<sup>(63)</sup> from this prayer, giving an idea in details of the deeds and actions that are considered sins in Zoroastrianism.

“O pious Dastur! I ask for forgiveness of all my sins and repent for them in your presence.<sup>(64)</sup> O Ahura-Mazda! I repent for all my bad thoughts, bad words, and bad actions, that I may have done in this world, and promise never to do so again, and I repent for all my sins, relating to my thoughts, or words, or deeds, or relating to my body or soul, or relating to this world or the next. I with *manashni*,

(62) Refer *Gathas*, *Ha* 33, *verse* 4:—“Oh Ahura-Mazda! from Thee I worship away disobedience and evil thoughts. O Ahura-Mazda! I from Thee worship away my discourteousness to my relations, roguery towards my partners, insult to my assistants, and inattention to my domestic animals.”

(63) Refer—Erwad K. E. Kanga's Gujarati translation of the *Khordé-Avesta*.

(64) From this *Patét*, it appears that ‘confession’ was practised by Zoroastrians at the time it was composed. This is an invention of the *Dasturs* of the later times, as in the *Gathas* the words for repentance are addressed only to Ahura-Mazda.

*gavashni* and *kunashni* repent for my sins by saying this *Patét*.

\* \* \* \*

“There are sins of a higher order and they are:—  
 To harm a person by injustice or to prevent him from doing a good action—To give a wrong advice to any person, or to advise him to tell lies, or to shew him a wrong path—Not to execute the will of a dead person—To steal men or animals and sell them—To spoil or defile intentionally articles of clothing or articles of food—To harm and molest the poor and the destitute instead of helping them, though able to do so—To starve the lower animals belonging to one's self—To hold a weapon in the hand with the intention of striking somebody with it—To use a weapon with the intention of wounding somebody—To cause a person a wound such as can be healed in three days—To wound a person on the hand—To lame a person—The sin of joking excessively at a person—To co-habit with a prostitute—To co-habit with a woman in menses—To sodomize—To have an unnatural intercourse with a woman—To self-pollute—To have an illegal intercourse with another's wife—To steal the belongings of any person—Not to perform the religious duties as a Zoroastrian—To repeat a sin again and again—**ALL THESE DEEDS** are declared by Ahura-Mazda as sins, and all the good *Poriodakeshos* have acknowledged them as sins. In the presence of Ahura-Mazda, in the presence of *Ameshaspentas*, *Meher*, *Srosh*, *Rasne*, in the presence

of *Fire*, *Barsam*, *Hoam*, in the presence of my religion and in the presence of my soul, in the presence of the leaders and *dasturs*, and in the presence of religious persons, I ask for forgiveness of any of the above sins that I may have committed, and repent and promise not to do them again.—

\* \* \* \*

“Towards my own father, mother, sister, brother, towards my wife (or husband) or children, high-priests, distant or near relations, tenants, partners, neighbours, fellow-citizens or servants, if I have committed a sin or sins by any sort of negligence in my duty towards them, I ask for forgiveness of the same and repent for the same by saying this *Patét*.—

\* \* \* \*

“To be conceited or to be arrogant, to slander the dead, to be avaricious, to take bribes, to be excessively angry, to be jealous, to look upon with an evil eye, to be ungrateful, to look at anybody with a bad intention, to seduce another’s wife, or to misappropriate his money or goods, to praise one’s own self, to be discontented, to be self-willed and to be disobedient to parents, priests or teachers, to be lazy, to back-bite, to revenge, to look upon with a suspicious eye, to speak ill of piety and pious persons, to give wrong evidence, to administer justice partially, to worship idols, to move about without *Sudre* and *Kusti*, to move about without clothes, to move with a shoe in one foot, to talk during meals, to take

meals without saying God's grace; to steal, to rob, to commit adultery, to practise the black art, to practise magic, to indulge in licentiousness, to sodomize, to lament and mourn too much for the dead—**THESE SINS** and sins of any other nature that I may not have mentioned in this *Patèt*, all the sins that I may have knowingly or unknowingly committed, all the sins that I may have thought of, or that I may not have thought of, and all the sins that according to the rule of obedience I may have or may not have confessed before the *dasturs* or the leaders of my community—for all of them I ask for forgiveness by saying this *Patèt*, and repent for all of them.”

In the *Dinkard*, the following passage relates to repentance :—

“ The ailing body is relieved and renovated through the instrumentality of the physician and the surgeon who are the pointers out and doers of remedies for the ailments of the diseased constitution and the deformed body: so for the soul that is rendered unholy and polluted by sin, if, by the injunction of the *dastur* of the good religion, it be a hearty repentor for sin, a seeker of pardon by speech, and repentor by deed, there is remission of committed sin through the physician of the soul, the *dasturs* of the good religion, and the soul becomes purified of the unholiness and pollution of sin, and thus the road to hell is cut off.”

The author of the *Dinkard* considers even an insincere repentor worthy of some praise in preference to the person who does not repent at all for his sins. His words are:—

"If a sinful liar repents for his sins, though he is insincere in his utterances, still that false wretch should be praised for keeping himself back from his evil nature by sincere penitence for his sin—he should be generally encouraged for this superior contemplation for the good of his miserable spirit; because whosoever after the commission of sins keeps himself back from such sinful habits, is said to rise to a higher condition."

But a better idea and one conforming to wisdom, is given by the author of the *Mainyô-i-Khirad* who considers repentance effective, only if the person does not commit the same kind of sin again. The words from this book of wisdom run as follows:—

"If through folly or weakness and ignorance a sin occurs, he is then in renunciation of sin before the high priests and the good; and after that when he does not commit it, then that sin which is committed by him becomes thus a sweeping from his body, just as the wind which is hasty and mighty when it comes swift and strong, sweeps so over the plain that it carries away every single blade of grass and anything that is broken in that place."<sup>(65)</sup>

(65). Compare this with the same idea given in *Sad-dar*, Ch. XL., 11:—  
"Repentance is that when they accomplish repentance of the sin which they have committed and do not commit that sin a second time; if they do commit it, that first sin then comes back."

## XXV.

**Zoroastrian Prayer:**

A Zoroastrian is enjoined to pray to Ahura-Mazda in an audible voice, five times in a day if he can, a day being divided into five parts, called *ghahay-s* in the Parsi Scriptures. In every *ghahay* he should sacrifice a few minutes to the remembrance of God. He has to pray for prayer's sake, considering it to be his duty. The object of his prayer is not to gain the frail worldly happiness. He is to wish for self-control, in order that he may be able to master wicked thoughts, to gain courage to speak the truth, and to acquire strength and resolution to do pious deeds, whereby he can ultimately make way for his soul after death for an exalted position in Heaven.

A Zoroastrian has no special injunction as to where he should recite his prayers. He may, if he likes, do so on the land or in the sea, in a house or in an open space, in his hall or in his bed-room, for, he is taught that Ahura-Mazda is Omnipresent. However, the usual custom is to go to a fire sanctuary, if available at hand, and to pray to Ahura-Mazda, facing the holy fire burning there, or to go and stand before the rolling waves of the sea, or to pray before the fire in the hearth, or to stand in a solitary place and pray to Ahura-Mazda with the face turned towards the sun or the moon: On account of this, the anti-Zoroastrians falsely call

the followers of the Zoroastrian faith fire-worshippers, sun-worshippers, and so on. The Parsis, as already explained before, do not consider the fire, the sun, the moon and the sea as different gods. On the contrary, they consider them as mere creations of Ahura-Mazda. The object of facing these sublime and awe-producing creations of Ahura-Mazda, while praying to Him, is to get the true and proper idea of His Majesty and presence. All these grand objects in nature make a Parsi admire and praise Ahura-Mazda, Who has created them all. The presence of these mighty creations awakens in his heart the emotion of veneration due to the Almighty.

Zoroastrianism abhors and denounces all forms of idolatry, and never recommends any sort of sacrifices.<sup>(66)</sup> When a Parsi visits a fire-sanctuary, he usually carries with him sandalwood, as much as he can afford, with the sole object of giving his modicum towards perpetuating the holy fire, but it is not compulsory at all. He is judged by Ahura-Mazda not from the quantity of sandalwood he carries to feed the fire, but from the sincerity of his prayer. In short, a Parsi prays to admire Nature, for, 'from Nature he is led to Nature's God.'

A quotation is given by Mr. J. J. Modi in his paper on "The Religious System of the Parsis." That excellent quotation is from the pen of Mr. Andrew

(66) "The Avesta sanctions no immoral acts as a part of worship. None of the prescribed forms of worship is marked by cruelty. One remarkable characteristic of the system is the absence of image-worship."  
*The Zend Avesta* by J. Murray Mitchell, M.A., LL.D.

Carnegie, an American traveller who visited Bombay, and as it pertains to the mode of Parsi prayer, we are tempted to give it below *verbatim*:—

“ This evening we were surprised to see, as we strolled along the beach, more Parsees than even before, and more Parsee ladies richly dressed, all wending their way towards the sea. It was the first of the new moon, a period sacred to these worshippers of the elements; and here on the shore of the Ocean, as the sun was sinking in the sea, and the slender silver thread of the crescent moon was faintly shining on the horizon, they congregated to perform their religious rites. Fire was there in its grandest form, the setting sun, and the water in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean outstretched before them. The earth was under their feet, and wafted across the sea the air came laden with the perfumes of ‘Araby the blest.’ Surely no time or place could be more fitly chosen than this for lifting up the soul to the realms beyond sense. I could not but participate with these worshippers in what was so grandly beautiful. There was no music save the solemn moan of the waves as they broke into foam on the beach. But where shall we find so mighty an organ or so grand an anthem? How inexpressibly sublime the scene appeared to me, and how insignificant and unworthy of the unknown seemed even our cathedrals ‘made with the human hands’, when compared with this, looking up through Nature unto Nature’s God! I stood and drank in the serene happiness which seemed to fill the air. I



have seen many modes and forms of worship, some disgusting, other saddening, a few elevating when the organ pealed forth its tunes, but all poor in comparison with this. Nor do I ever expect in all my life to witness a religious ceremony which will so powerfully affect me as that of the Parsees on the beach of Bombay."<sup>(67)</sup>

A Zoroastrian always recites his prayer to say that *Ahura-Mazda is the Creator, Ahura-Mazda is the Giver, Ahura-Mazda is the Forgiver, Ahura-Mazda is the Omnipotent, Ahura-Mazda is the All-Wise*, and so on, and repents for his past evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds, and desires to turn his mind to pious thoughts, pious words and pious deeds. He invokes the help of Ahura-Mazda and praises Him for his various creations, especially the sun, the moon, the earth, the heavens, fire, water, plants, metals, and rain, which all He has created for the benefit and welfare of mankind. A Zoroastrian praises and adores angels and archangels (*yazads* and *ameshaspentas*) who are looked upon as the spiritual guides of man. A Parsi desires that he be enabled to do good to his fellow-creatures, for, helping men is in other words doing his duty towards Ahura-Mazda. A Parsi in his prayer asks of Ahura-Mazda to make him healthy and industrious.

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(67) This quotation also appears in the book, 'A Modern Zoroastrian' by S. Laing, (Ch. XIV, pages 219—220), who, after quoting the words of Carnegie, remarks about the Zoroastrian mode of prayer as follows:—"I say Amen with all my heart to Mr. Carnegie. Here is an ideal religious ceremony combining all that is true, most touching, and most sublime, in the attitude of man towards the Great Unknown. Compare it with the routine of an ordinary English Sunday, and how poor and prosaic does the latter appear."

At the end of his prayer, he asks Him for His blessings in general, but even in this respect he is not selfish. He desires that God should confer His blessings—*first* on the rulers of the land, *then* on his community, *then* on his teachers, *then* on his parents and relations, *then* on his fellow-creatures in general, and *last of all* on his wife, children and himself.

From the Zoroastrian prayers, it can be concluded that a Zoroastrian is religiously enjoined to be loyal to his king, to be dutiful towards his parents, wife and children, obedient to his teachers and superiors, and sincere towards his friends and fellow-creatures. <sup>(68)</sup>

It is the bounden duty of every Zoroastrian to remember and pray to Ahura-Mazda daily, for, in the Ahura-Mazda Yasht, Ahura-Mazda promises Zoroaster that He will remove the sufferings of all those that always remember His names. The promise of Ahura-Mazda is as follows:—

“Whoever in the Corporeal world, O Spitaman Zarhost! will count and recite day and night these

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(68) “The worshippers of Ahura-Mazda too prays to his Father in heaven: also he begs daily for food and for all other things that he needs, and implores daily for the forgiveness of all his sins, and all this truly, exactly, in the sense of a Christian confession, and prays for the averting of the seductions of the *Ders*, and for deliverance from all evil; also he says his prayers not without elevating his spirit by means of the contemplation of the greatness of his Creator, who supports the world by his power, and is elevatingly wrapt in his glory. The proofs for these assertions are found on all sides of the Zend writings, in the prayers, which in part could serve as specimens even at the present day, by reason of their sublime simplicity and childlike frankness. We can in matter of fact take the prayers of Jesus as a short extract out of the prayers of the Zend writings, and for every supplication in it, we find several parallel passages almost literally of the same tenor and contents.”—(*Comparison of the Laws of Ormuzd with the Laws of Jehova by Dr. Rhode.*)

names (*i.e.*, the names of Ahura-Mazda), to that man, during those days and nights, will the evil thoughts of evil *Heshem* do no injury. To him will happen no harm from scissiors, sling, arrow, sword, man, or stone, for, as a thousand men keep guard over one man, so will these my names preserve that man from all the injurious wickedness proceeding from invisible *drujs* (demons) of perverted intellect, and from revenge-bearing *Ahremen*.<sup>(69)</sup>

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## XXVI.

### Fire.

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It is a wrong notion of the anti-Zoroastrians that the followers of Zoroaster worship fire as their god. No, they do not consider fire<sup>(70)</sup> as their god at all. They know very well that like other things fire is created by God. Fire is, however, considered by them as the purest of the creation of God. They, therefore, take it as the symbol of Ahura-Mazda. The brightness and purity of fire<sup>(71)</sup> reminds them of

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(69) For the benefits of prayer—refer the Chapter on ‘Yazashme’ in this book, page 95.

(70) “In many parts of the Avesta fire is no doubt spoken of with great reverence, but those who speak of Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers, should know that the true followers of Zoroaster abhor that very name.”—*Prof. Max Muller*.

(71) “In every place where Parsees are settled, an everlasting fire is kept, the Behram fire, which, ‘preserved by a more than vestal care,’ and ever fed with perfumes and dry well-blazing wood, whichever side its flames are brought by the wind, goes and kills, thousands and thousands of fiends, as Behram does in heaven. If the necessities of life oblige us to employ fire for profane uses, it must be only for a time an exile on our hearth, or in the oven of the potter, and it must go thence to the right Place for the fire, (*Dáityo Gátu*), the altar of the Behram Fire, there to be restored to the dignity and rights of its nature.”—*Jumex Darmesteter (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. IV.)*

the brightness and purity spread everywhere in nature. Ahura-Mazda is ETERNAL LIGHT, and if, therefore, a Zoroastrian turns his face during prayer (to God) to the light of the dazzling flame of the fire in the Parsi Fire Sanctuary, or to the powerful light of the sun, or to the flame in his hearth, or to the flame in a metallic vase placed before him, it does not mean, nay, it is hastiness to conclude, that he worships fire. It conveys that the prayer-offerer understands well, with the fire before him, the sublimity of the Creator to whom he prays.<sup>(72)</sup>

The fire in the Zoroastrian so-called fire-temple<sup>(73)</sup> is not the ordinary fire. It is prepared and made pure after several ceremonies. Mr. J. J. Modi in his paper on "The Religious System of the Parsees" explains quite lucidly the process through which an ordinary fire is passed to make it ready for a fire-temple, and it is as follows:—

"In establishing a fire-temple, fires from various places of manufacture are brought and kept in different vases. Great efforts are also made to obtain fire caused by lightning. Over one of these fires a perforated metallic flat tray with a handle attached is

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(72) There is a perpetual flame burning in the sanctuary of the Christian Church, but for that the Christians are not fire-worshippers.

(73) "Fire is to the Parsees a mere symbol of Almighty power and purity. It is their *Kiblah*, to which they turn when they address the Supreme Being. It is on this account that the term fire-temple, as used by Anglicized Parsis, is objected to by the more orthodox, on the ground that it is suggestive of idolatry, whereas fire is never worshipped as a god. Herodotus expressly affirms that the Persians had no temples."—*Professor Montier Williams*.

held. On this tray are placed small chips and dust of fragrant sandalwood. These chips and dust are ignited by the heat of the fire below, care being taken that the perforated tray does not touch the fire. Thus a new fire is created out of the first fire. Then from this new fire another one is created by the same process. From this new fire another is again produced and so on, until the process is repeated nine times. The fire thus prepared after the ninth process is considered pure. The fires brought from the places of manufacture are treated in a similar manner. These purified fires are all collected together upon a large vase which is then put in its proper place in a separate chamber."

Thus, in the vase before him in the fire-temple, a Parsee sees in a purified state a collection of fires taken from the houses and workshops of different grades and professions. This reminds him that men of different positions and ranks hold the same high position in the presence of Ahura-Mazda, provided they have, like the fire in the fire-sanctuary, gone through the process of purification.

It is a custom for the officiating priest in the fire-temple to hold before the visitors on a small tray, a small quantity of the ashes collected in the fire-vase. The visitors, as a custom, taking a pinch out of it, apply it to their fore-head. There is a meaning implied in this custom. The sandalwood on the fire burns and spreads fragrance all about, but at length is reduced to ashes. To apply a pinch of these ashes

suggests the idea that everything rises from the dust and at length returns to dust, and we, men, have also to go through the same process, that is, dust we are, we spread fame in this world just like the fragrance of the sandalwood burnt, but at length we must return to dust.

In the prayer in the Khordé-Avesta, known as *Atash-ni-Nias*, i.e., the prayer in the praise of fire, from the words,

*Atarsh pulhra Ahurahé Mazdao* :—

Meaning "O purifying fire of Ahura-Mazda," it is easy for one to discriminate between *Ahura-Mazda*, the Creator, and *fire* which is created by Him.

Further in the same *Nias* (praise), one finds words to the following effect :—

"O fire of Ahura-Mazda, give me such wisdom and shew me such a path that I may perform pious actions, that I may offer my prayers to Ahura-Mazda, and that I may lead my soul to morality and righteousness, in order that I can, after my death, secure the highest heaven as reward for my good actions."

From these words, it is apparent that Ahura-Mazda is the Creator, and that fire is a symbol of piety through which one can resolutely follow the virtuous path, with the ultimate object of going to *Garothman Behesht* (the Highest Heaven).

In Yasna XXXVI, Zoroaster himself is found praying to God as follows :—

"O Ahura-Mazda! We (who are thy indebted creatures) sincerely approach Thee through the Fire of Ahura-Mazda."

## XXVII.

**Disposal of the dead body.**

As it is a Zoroastrian tenet never to defile the earth, it is consequently understood that the dead body of a Zoroastrian should not be interred. If he does so, he helps the evil principle of Angremainyo.

When a Zoroastrian is dead, he is taken by professional corpse-bearers called *Nasa-salars*<sup>(74)</sup> to the *Tower of Silence*, which is specially built to receive the dead bodies from the Zoroastrian community, irrespectively of rank or grade. Here the flesh of the dead body, which is otherwise subject to decomposition, is at once disposed of by the vultures, and the bare skeleton of the bones being exposed to the powerful heat of the sun, is very soon reduced to ashes. These bones and ashes of all the dead are passed into a big hollow in the middle of the Tower. With this hollow are connected four channels which lead up to the four wells in four directions, built underground out of the circle of the Tower. All the liquids flowing from the corpses are drained through charcoal and sandstones placed at the mouths of the four channels

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(74) In almost all the big towns where a good number of Parsis live, there is a Tower of Silence, either erected from the funds raised for it, or dedicated publicly to the community by one of its members at his sole expense, and a few *Nasa-salars* or corpse-bearers are engaged for the special duty of conveying the dead. According to the dictates of this religion, nobody should touch the corpse, and if he does so, he should purify himself (or herself) by an ablution. *Nasa-salars* also live in a segregated place, and are not allowed to mix with the society in general.

through which they pass into the wells, where the liquids are again filtered through sand spread on the permeable bottoms of the wells. This way of disposing of the corpse is based upon the best rules of sanitation, and there is no fear of contagion, even if persons died of epidemic diseases.

The funeral ceremonies of either a millionaire or a pauper are the same. *Nasa-salars* carry all the dead in an iron bier on their shoulders. The dead are covered up with worn-out, white, and clean-washed linen,—coloured, patterned or grey cloths being emphatically prohibited.<sup>(75)</sup>

The richest Zoroastrian dead is placed besides the poorest menial. This way of disposing of the dead reminds a Zoroastrian every now and then, that when he is dead, he is to be carried to *The Tower of Silence* in the same way as all his co-religionists, without any distinction of wealth or position.

Burying the dead is against the teachings of Zoroaster, as will appear from the following passages:—

Zarathushtra asked of Ahura-Mazda:—

“O Maker of the material world, Thou Holy One! If a man shall bury in the earth either the corpse of a dog or the corpse of a man, and if he shall not disinter it within the second year, what is the penalty for it? What is the atonement for it? What is the cleansing from it?”

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(75) “Whoever throws any clothing on a dead body even so much as a maid lets fall in spinning is not a pious man whilst alive, nor shall he, when dead, have a place in Paradise.”—*Vendidad, Chapter V, para 61.* (Also, *vide Vendidad Chapter VIII, paras 23 to 25*).



Ahura Mazda answered, "For that deed there is nothing that can pay, nothing that can atone, nothing that can cleanse from it; it is a trespass for which there is no atonement for ever and ever."— *Vendidad, Chapter III, paras 38 and 39.*

Burning the dead is, like burying the dead, religiously prohibited.<sup>(76)</sup>

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## XXVIII.

### Economy in Nature.

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A Zoroastrian is not to allow himself to be in want, or to impose self-punishment, or pass the body through any sort of ordeal. He is not to fast<sup>(77)</sup> nor force others to go without meals. He is taught, however, that although everything found on the surface of the earth is meant for him and for his use, he is not to waste anything. Water, fire, trees, animals, and everything else, he should have as much as he requires. Wasting or defiling water, adulterating food, felling trees and killing goats more than for human wants, or wasting any other thing or using it immoderately, is prohibited in the *Avesta*.

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(76) "Burning the dead is the most heinous of sins: in the times of Strabo, it was a capital crime, and the *Avesta* expresses the same, when putting it in the number of those sins for which there is no atonement."— *Sacred Books of the East, Vol. IV.*

(77) "Fasting occupies so important a place in most systems of religion that its entire absence from the list of prescribed duties in the *Avesta* attracts the more attention. There is no trace of asceticism in the *Avesta* precepts or the *Parsi Practices*."— *The Zend Avesta or the Religion of the Parsis*, by J. Murray Mitchell, M. A., LL. D.

Mark the passage :—

“ Ahura-Mazda indeed does not allow us to waste anything of value that we may have; not even so much as an Asperena's weight of thread, not even so much as a maid lets fall in spinning.”—*Sacred Books of the East, Vol. IV.*

In fact, nothing on the surface of the earth is to be wasted, but to be used by man as much is necessary for his and his neighbour's wants. The well known saying ‘Waste not, want not’ is quite in accordance with the teachings of Zoroaster.

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XXIX.

**K u s t i .**

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The *Kusti* is the sacred thread-girdle which a Zoroastrian is enjoined to wear on the middle of the body and in the neighbourhood of the heart. It is tied loose on the sacred shirt called *Sudré*, with a double knot in the front, one knot being done with the right and the other with the left hand. It is passed three times round the waist, and finally tied behind with two knots, similar to those in the front.

To pass it three times round the waist means that the wearer of it is prepared for the triad of morality viz., *humata, hukhta, huvarashta*, i.e., good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The two ends of the *kusti* signify that a man born in this world which is the one end, has to go to the other world, the other

end. Each end of it is woven into three strands, each strand being of twelve fine woollen threads, thus making six strands at both the ends. The *kusti* is a texture of altogether seventy-two threads woven together, which symbolize the seventy-two *Há-s* of Yasna. The six strands named above symbolize the six *gambhars* which are seasonal feasts. The twelve threads in each strand remind the wearer of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, or the twelve months of the year. This sacred girdle is woven hollow, which signifies the space between the heaven and the earth. The four knots mean that this world is created by Ahura-Mazda out of the four elements, fire, water, air and earth.

A Zoroastrian has to untie and retie the *kusti* several times in a day, say, before meals, after the bath, on rising from the bed, before going to bed, before commencing a prayer, after returning from the water closet, and so on, on many other occasions, and each time he has to say a particular short prayer. Before untying it, he has to wash his hands and face.

It is said that king Jamshed, who is known in the Zoroastrian Scriptures by the name of *Yim*, ordered the *kusti* to be put on as the sacred badge of the Mazdiyasnian religion, and Zoroaster afterwards confirmed the use of it in the following words as given by Dr. West in his *Dadistan-i-Dinik*<sup>(78)</sup> :—

“The sacred thread-girdle is as a sign of the service of the sacred beings, a token of sin ended, and a presage

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(78) Vide *Dadistan-i-Dinik*, question 39.

of beneficence; and one is to put it on and to gird it, in the neighbourhood of the heart, and on the middle of the body, with the religious formula accompanying the glorious scripture."

The reciter of the formula is taught to think that *there is but one God* while tying the first knot, and to think that *Zoroaster is His true prophet* while tying the second knot in the front. While tying the other two knots behind, he has to think at the third knot that *the Mazdiyasnian religion as taught by Zoroaster is the true religion*, and at the fourth knot he must think that *he is born for beneficent deeds*.

The *kusti* is as it were a badge of service. It signifies that the wearer stands girdled with the sacred belt on his waist in the service of Ahura-Mazda.<sup>(79)</sup> In fact he is symbolically tied to the laws of the Zoroastrian religion.

A child goes without *sudré* and *kusti* till it attains seven or nine years, according to the present custom, when he (or she) is invested with these sacred signs after a certain ceremony known as the *Narjot* ceremony.

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XXX.

**S u d r é .**

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The *sudré* is the sacred vestment, with which a child is invested, and on which the *kusti* is to be girdled, when the child is Zoroastrianized.

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(79) "The sacred thread-girdle is to be a girding of the loins and to preserve obedience to the Lord, may he be honoured and glorified."  
*Saddar X, 2.*

After the investiture ceremony, the child must always put on the *sudré* next to the skin with the *kusti* on it. He (or she) must take them off only before bathing; for a Zoroastrian cannot otherwise do without them even for a moment.

The *sudré* is invariably a white cotton shirt, whiteness being the symbol of purity according to Zoroastrianism.<sup>(80)</sup>

In the front of the *sudré*, and near the breast, there is a small bag, of about the size of a square inch, made of two pieces of the same cloth of which the *sudré* is made, and sewn up with it. This bag, known by the name *géréban* is the symbol of faith in the Zoroastrian religion. *Géréban* means faith. This bag is otherwise called *kissè-i-kèrfè*, that is, the bag of virtuous deeds. The wearer of the *sudré* is therefore, bound to practise as much virtue and beneficence as he can in this world.

The whiteness of the *sudré* reminds a Zoroastrian that he (or she) should behave in this world quite in the straightforward way taught by the Zoroastrian religion. In other words, his deeds must be as white and spotless as the white shirt. *Sudré* means right path, and a Zoroastrian with the *sudré* on his body symbolically and tacitly promises to follow the righteous path of God. The short sleeves of the shirt are suggestive of the shortness of this worldly life.

<sup>80</sup> For this reason Zoroastrians appear in a white dress on all religious occasions.

## Marriage.

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It is emphatically stated in the *Vendidad* that every Zoroastrian should try to marry<sup>(81)</sup> and beget children. Ahura-Mazda prefers a married man to an unmarried one. Marriage is considered necessary for helping the cause of nature. A married man is considered more likely to lead an honest life than an unmarried one. In a Zoroastrian social circle one with children is, therefore, respected more than one without them.<sup>(82)</sup> Zoroastrianism enforces that a man is to have his own selection of a wife, and that a woman also should not be forced to marry the man that she does not like. Parents may suggest and advise, but they ought not to force upon their son or daughter a consort of their own choice. Zoroaster himself selected wife of his own liking.<sup>(83)</sup>

A woman desires to have a husband in the following words found in the *Avesta* :—"Grant us the grace, that we may obtain a husband, a youthful one, one of surpassing beauty, who may procure us sus-

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(81) From the text of the *Avesta*, it is concluded that those who are lunatic, impotent, or unable to maintain themselves and their family, should not marry. Also, lepers and consumptive persons should not marry.

(82) Refer—*Vendidad* Chapter III, para, 24.

(83) During the marriage ritual on the wedding day the officiating priests more than once ask the bridegroom as well as the bride, whether they like the match and consent to it. This proves that the consent of the marrying couple is religiously necessary amongst the Parsis.

tenance as long as we have to live with each other, and who will beget of us offspring; a wise, learned, and ready-tongued husband."

The ancient Zoroastrians, especially those in the Sassanian dynasty, liked to marry their children to first cousins, but that was a mere custom, and by no means a compulsory rule based upon any religious precept.

In some classical authors, and in the translations of some of the Pehelvi works, which were not well understood by their translators, a charge was laid against the door of the ancient Iranians, that they could by law and religion effect next-of-kin marriages, but it was no doubt a gross mistake on the part of the writers to apply some solitary instances to the whole community. They were mostly led away by the word *khvetukdas*<sup>(84)</sup> which they construed into a meaning suitable to their belief. Some three or four instances<sup>(85)</sup> were put forward of such incestuous connections, but granting that they were authentic, that could not prove that the religion of

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(84) The word *khvetukdas* in Pehelvi has created all this confusion. The Oriental Scholars translate it into 'marriage with next of-kin.' We recommend our readers to read Dastur Darab's Papers on *The Alleged Practice of Consanguineous Marriage In Ancient Iran* read by him before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, wherein he has treated the subject at length.

(85) The Classic writers, especially Ctesias, the physician to Artaxerxes II, who flourished about 440 B. C., and Agathias, who celebrated himself in the middle of the 6th century A. D., give only four instances in 1000 years of Persian Kings guilty of consanguineous marriages *viz.*, of Cambyses, Artaxerxes II, Kobad, and Terituchmes. They were tyrannical, arbitrary and licentious. Their subjects did not endorse such marriages with their approval, and in the case of Kobad we read they even dethroned him.

Zoroaster himself approved of such immoral procedure.<sup>(86)</sup> In face of the fact that the whole religion was based upon rules of piety and strict morality, it was impossible to think that this religion could tolerate such impious unions. Isolated instances of such heretic offenders can be found in almost all nations, but that is no argument to charge the whole nations with such a crime.

The spirit of the Avesta supports the idea of one wife at a time,<sup>(87)</sup> and, according to the present Parsi Law also, polygamy is a punishable crime.

The object of matrimony amongst the Parsis is purely religious. To propagate the human race,<sup>(88)</sup> and to lead an honest, virtuous and peaceful life, are the two main objects of marriage. Amongst the ancient Zoroastrians, therefore, if a wife was found barren the husband was allowed to take to another wife for the purpose of begetting children, but this will not do now.

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(86) "The term (khvetukdas) does not occur at all in the oldest part of the Avesta, and when it is mentioned in the later portion it is noticed merely as a good work which is highly meritorious without any allusion to its nature; only one passage (Vend. VIII, 36) indicating that both men and women can participate in it. So far, therefore, as can be ascertained from the extant fragments of the Avesta—the only internal authority regarding the ancient practices of Mazda-worship—the Parsis are perfectly justified in believing that their religion did not originally sanction marriages between those who are next of kin, provided they choose to ignore the statements of foreigners, as based upon imperfect information."—*Dr. E. W. West, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XVIII, page 427.*

(87) "Marriage is much encouraged. It is implied that monogamy was the general rule"—*The Zend Avesta and the Religion of the Parsis* by J. Murray Mitchell, M.A., L.L.D.

(88) Refer *Vendidad*, Chapter IV, para 47.



The gift of a son or sons was considered, and it is still considered, a great blessing bestowed by Ahura-Mazda, as sons could continue the family name.<sup>(89)</sup> Nothing troubled the ancient Iranian on the death-bed more than the thought that he was to die without leaving a male lineal descendant.<sup>(90)</sup>

The Parsis of the present time do not marry till they are able to look out for themselves. In the Avesta, fifteen was the age when a girl was considered to be in a marriageable state.<sup>(91)</sup> Not to marry a daughter when she has attained puberty is considered a very sinful act for her father.<sup>(92)</sup>

Here it would be appropriate to give the advice given by Zoroaster to marrying couples. In the 5th Gatha, (Yasna LIII, verse 5), the Prophet says:—

“I who advise and encourage marriages, give you brides and bridegrooms, the following advice which you must heed. Acquire knowledge through righteous persons and live a life of virtue. Love each other through pure conscience so that you will surely secure a happy home-life.”

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(89) “He who has no child, the bridge (of Paradise) shall be barred to him. The first question the angels there will ask him is, whether he has left in this world a substitute for himself. If the answer is “No,” they will pass by and he will stay at the head of the bridge full of grief and sorrow” (Saddar 18, Hyde 19). The primitive meaning of the belief is explained by Brahamanical doctrine; the man without a son falls into hell, because there is no body to pay him the family worship:—*Sacred Books of the East, Vol. IV, page 47.*

(90) In *Bahman Yasht*, Zoroaster says that after he received omniscient wisdom he saw several things: He says: “I saw a wealthy man without children and it did not seem to me commendable; and I saw a pauper with many children, and it seemed to me commendable.”

(91) See *Vendidad* Ch. XIV, para 15.

(92) See *Ashkivangh Yasht*, para 59.

According to Herodotus, in ancient Persia the state itself encouraged married life. Every year the king gave a rich present to the person who shewed the largest number of sons.

The present religious marriage ceremony of the Parsis consists mainly of admonitions and benedictions to the marrying couple by two officiating priests.<sup>(93)</sup>

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## XXXII.

### Unlawful Unions.

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Not only does the Avesta uphold marriage, but it also distinctly denounces unlawful unions, and mentions the laws regarding them and regarding other relative subjects. The following passages are found in the *Vendidad*, as translated by James Darmesteter :—

#### Vendidad Chapter xv, Para, 9 :—

“If a man come near unto a damsel, either dependent on the chief of the family, or not dependent, either delivered (unto a husband) or not delivered, and she conceives by him, let her not, being ashamed of the people, produce in herself the menses, against the course of nature, by means of water and plants (*i.e.*, by means of drugs)”.

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(93) To get a complete idea about Parsi marriages and marriage ceremonies, read “Marriage Customs Among the Parsees,” by J. J. Modi, B.A.

Vendidad, Chapter xv, Para, 10 :—

“And if the damsel, ashamed of the people, shall produce in herself the menses against the course of nature, by means of water and plants, it is a fresh sin as heavy (as the first).”

Vendidad, Chapter xv, Para, 11 :—

“If a man come near unto a damsel, either dependent on the chief of a family or not dependent, either delivered (unto a husband) or not delivered, and she comes by him, let her not, being ashamed of the people, destroy the fruit in her womb.”

Vendidad, Chapter xv, Para, 12 :—

“And if the damsel, being ashamed of the people, shall destroy the fruit in her womb, the sin is on both the father and herself,—the murder is on both the father and herself; both the father and herself shall pay the penalty of wilful murder.”

Vendidad, Chapter xv, Para, 14 :—

“And the damsel goes to the old woman and applies to her for one of her drugs, that she may procure her miscarriage, and the old woman brings her some *bhang* or *shaëta*, a drug that kills in the womb or one that expels out of the womb, or some other of the drugs that produce miscarriage, and (the man says) ‘cause thy fruit to perish,’ and she causes her fruit to perish, the sin is on the head of all three, the man, the damsel, and the old woman.”

Vendidad, Chapter xv, Para, 18 :—

“If a man come near unto a damsel, either dependent on the chief of the family, or not dependent, either delivered (unto a husband) or not delivered, and she conceives by him, so long shall he support her, until the child be born.”

In the *Vendidad*, prostitution<sup>(94)</sup> is considered as one of the greatest sins. Zoroastrianism is very hard against prostitutes: Zarathushtra asked Ahura-Mazda, “who grieves Thee most?” The answer is—*a courtesan*. Ahura-Mazda calls her an incarnation of the demon, *Gahi*. Her look dries up mighty floods and her touch withers the earth. If a pious man touches her, he loses one-third of his holiness. She deserves to be killed as a she-wolf or a snake.<sup>(95)</sup>

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XXXIII.

**Triad of Thought, Word, and Deed.**

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Zoroastrianism inculcates upon its followers the exercise of *humata*, *hukhta*, and *huvarashta*,<sup>(96)</sup> *i.e.*, good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. In fact, the foundation of the whole moral philosophy of Zoroaster

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(94) “The practice of prostitution, adultery, sodomy, and such other crimes is strongly denounced”—‘*The Zend Avesta and the Religion of the Persia*’ by J. Murray Mitchell, M. A., LL. D.

(95) Refer *Vendidad*, Chapter XVIII, paras 61 to 65.

(96) Also, the words *manashni*, *gavashni*, and *kunashni* are used to denote the triad of morality.

is based upon this Triad<sup>(97)</sup> of thought, word, and deed. A true Zoroastrian is supposed to entertain good thoughts, utter good words, and do good actions. That is the sum and substance of the righteous path of God. The man who fulfils this goes to heaven after death. But if a man acquires the contrary habits of evil thoughts (*dushmata*), evil words (*duzukhta*), and evil deeds (*duzuvarashta*), he is considered to be a follower of Ahreman or Angremainyo, and his abode after death is hell.

It should be noted that *thought* is given the first place in the Zoroastrian moral philosophy. Unless a man's mind is purified, he is not qualified for good words, and if he is not qualified for good words, he is not supposed to be able to do good deeds. Man is that creature of Ahura-Mazda, who is endowed with *mun*, the mind. If he has a good *manash*,<sup>(98)</sup> (*i.e.*, mind), he is a good man, and the thoughts that proceed from the good *manash* of a man are naturally based on the principles of *manashni*. When a man's *manashni* is developed, he reaches the first stage of righteousness. He can then very easily use good words, and practise good deeds. And when he fulfils these three functions of the Zoroastrian morality, he is qualified as a perfectly righteous man.

(97) "The moral philosophy of Zoroaster was moving in the triad of thought, word, and deed."—*Dr. Martin Haug.*

"The Code of morality enjoined by the Zoroastrian religion is as pure as its theory is perfect."—*S. Laing.*

(98) *Manashni*, *mān*, and *mind*—all are derived from Sanskrit *mun*, to think, or *manas*, the mind.

## XXXIV.

**Promise and Contract.**

It is mentioned in the preceding pages that the foundation of Zoroastrian morality is based on the triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Promise forms a part of the second portion of the moral triad. To break a promise is a sin. Falsehood and false promise are identical in the Avesta. With the ancient Iranians their word was their bond. At any cost and at any risk their promise was fulfilled. The following are a few extracts from the Avesta,<sup>(99)</sup> regarding false-promise:—

“O Ahura-Mazda! cruel promise-breaker harms the whole country: that person is equal to 100 wicked persons who harm the pious: O Zarathushtra! do not break promise, whether you give it to a wicked man or to a pious man: for, the promise to a good man or to a bad man is the same.”

“*Meher Yazad* bestows spirited horses on him who does not break promises: The Fire of Ahura-Mazda shews the righteous path to him who does not break promises: the protecting guardian spirits of the good and the courageous bestow intellectual children on him who does not break promises.”

“The angry and annoyed *Meher Yazad* arrives at the place where lives the promise-breaking person: To him *Meher Yazad* does not extend his protection.”

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(99) Refer *Meher Yasht*, in Erwad K. E. Kanga's Gujarati translation of *Kherdé-Avesta*, paras. 2, 3, 19, 21, 41 and 48.

“Although the lances of false-promises fly at the person at whom they are aimed, they do not wound him.<sup>(100)</sup> The lances fly back owing to the opposite wind.”

“*Meher Yazad* protects the person who abstains from lies and false promises.”

“*Meher Yazad* threatens the promise-breaking person from one side: *Rasné Yazad* threatens him from the other side: and the pious *Srosh Yazad* blows the wind forcibly from both the directions to help the two Yazads: When *Meher Yazad* is enraged, annoyed, and dishonoured by the promise-breaking person, he scatters the flanks of the army of that promise-breaking person.”<sup>(101)</sup>

“*Meher Yazad* shackles the hands of the person who gives false promises, screens his eyes (*i.e.*, blinds them), and disables him from hearing and from standing on his legs.”

For breaking promises and contracts, we also find a mention made in the fourth chapter of the Vendidad, as follows:—

“O Maker of the material world, Thou Holy One! How many in number are thy contracts, O Ahura-Mazda?”

Ahura-Mazda answered, “They are six in number, O holy Zarathushtra! The first is the word-contract: the second is the hand-contract: the third is the

(100) *i.e.*, a liar cannot gain his object by false promises.

(101) *i.e.*, a false promise giver never succeeds in his evil object.

contract to the amount of a sheep: the fourth is the contract to the amount of an ox: the fifth is the contract to the amount of a man: the sixth is the contract to the amount of a field in good land, a fruitful one, in good bearing."

From the other passages in the same chapter of the Vendidad, it is seen that not only is the party who makes the contract held responsible for the fulfilment thereof, but also his family members who are expected to carry out the terms of the contract.<sup>(102)</sup>

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### XXXV.

## Obedience.

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—*Will destroy disobedience:—will conquer the disobedient*<sup>(103)</sup>—such expressions are met with in some parts of the Avesta. *Ahura-Mazda* expects that in both the spiritual and the temporal worlds, subordinate powers should obey the superior ones. The Ameshaspentas and Yazads are expected by the Godhead to be obedient in their respective duties and they perform their functions quite punctually. The sun, the moon, and the stars have their functions assigned to them in the universe, and without swerving from their fixed path, they are always

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(102) "It (The Zend Avesta) dwells earnestly on the importance of Truthfulness. Mithra, the divinity of Light, is especially the guardian of Truth; and 'to lie to Mithra,' or perjure oneself, is a very grievous sin. Promises and contracts must be faithfully observed,"—*The Zend Avesta and the Religion of the Parsis* by J. Murray Mitchell, M. A., LL. D.

(103) Refer *Ardibeheht Yasht*, para 15.



obedient to the Will of God. Ahura-Mazda has so ordained that every object in nature should go along the path struck for it, and this order and harmony in nature are nothing but obedience to the Will of God. He expects in the same way order and harmony from man on the Earth. The king ought to rule over his subjects on righteous principles, and by so doing he obeys the Creator.<sup>(104)</sup> The governor of a province ought to be obedient to the king, and in return expects obedience from the officers under him. In this way we come down to the head of a family.<sup>(105)</sup> He is supposed to be the king of his own house,<sup>(106)</sup> his wife being the queen, and his children the subjects. The pater-familias expects as much obedience from his wife and children, as the king from his subjects. To be disobedient to the father is considered as great an offence as to be disloyal to the king. To have a disobedient wife or a disobedient child<sup>(107)</sup> is considered a misfortune. Obedience from his own children is naturally expected by the Zoroastrian father, so much so, that we read of the ancient Zoroastrians, that they even doubted the legality of a disobedient child.

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(104) "The nineteenth (good quality of a king) is keeping himself, through wisdom, in obedience to the holy Self-existent, for, by (his) keeping himself, through wisdom, in obedience to the holy Self-existent, the king's subjects remain heartily in obedience to him."—*Dinkard*.

(105) In the Avesta period, the heads of houses were responsible for their good conduct to the heads of their respective streets, the heads of the streets to the heads of their respective districts, the heads of the districts to the heads of the provinces, and the heads of the provinces to the king. (See *Meher Yasht*, paras 17 and 18: and *Farvardin Yasht*, para 151.)

(106) Refer *Yasht V*, 87, (i. e. *Avan Yasht*.)

(107) The Chapter XL of *Saddar* is written on Obedience of children to their parents and *dasturs*.

A Zoroastrian wife<sup>(108)</sup> is open to censure and punishment for disobedience. Generally speaking, obedience is one of the essential qualifications required of the Zoroastrian to attain righteousness.

With obedience, gratefulness is recommended to the Zoroastrian. The *Dinkard* says:—

“Be it known that it is the duty of man to be always grateful in thought, word, and deed, especially towards the following four:—(1) Towards Ahura Mazda principally for His having created him: (2) Towards the sovereign, chiefly for his having given him protection in this world: (3) Towards the parents, especially for their having brought him up with care: (4) Towards the moral teacher, chiefly for his instruction to recognize these four kinds of obligations.

The same idea is reflected in the well-known Pehelvi book of wisdom, *Mainyo-i-Khirad*, Chapter XXXIX:—

“The wife (must be personally obedient) unto the husband, and the child unto the father and mother\*\*. One is also to be obedient unto rulers, chieftains, and teachers.”

It is true that the family, in which the rules of superiority and subordination are not enforced, that is, the family in which the elderly people do not

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(108) “We honour the pious lady who is straightforward in her mind, speech, and action, who is worthy of respect for her accomplished education, who is obedient to her husband, who is chaste, and who is obedient to her parents or guardians, as Armaiti and other female angels are devoted”—*Eveshathrum Gah*, para 9.

keep up their position and the younger members do not obey and respect their parents, is not happy. There is no peace in that family. The *Dinkard* suggests the same idea in the following terms:—

“When, however, supremacy is to pass away from the family, it is deserted by right reason, and is the hot-bed of quarrels. God loves not such a family.”

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### XXXVI.

### Charity.

Charity is one of the essential qualifications towards righteousness, as it forms a part of the triad of the moral philosophy of Zoroaster. It is religiously required of a Zoroastrian, that he should help the needy. That is the reason why the Parsis are always foremost in helping people made destitute by famine, flood or fire. A true Zoroastrian's heart ought to sympathize with the afflicted. His surplus wealth should go to redress the grievances of his poor relations, friends, neighbours and co-religionists, nay, mankind in general.

Mark the spirit of the Avesta:—

“If men come as co-religionists, or as friends in the hope of money, wife, or education: if they desire money, give money: if they want a wife, join them in matrimony: if they want wisdom, teach them the deep philosophy of this holy religion <sup>(109)</sup>.”

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(109) Refor *Vendidad*, Ch. iv, para 44.

The above is only applicable to really needy men who are honest in their intentions. From the Zoroastrian point of view, laziness and dishonesty are considered sins, and it is also regarded as a sin for any rich man to encourage the lazy and the dishonest.<sup>(110)</sup>

On the other hand, references are found in the Avesta about miserliness: In the Vendidad chapter 18, paras 34 and 35, the evil spirit, Angremainyo replies to the questions of the angel, Srosh:—

“He makes me (*i. e.* Angremainyo) pregnant (*i. e.* adds to my creation) who does not give clothing or money or whatever else to the (needy) pious:—

“The miser who does not sympathize with and help the pious, as it were, co-habits with me.”

From this, it will be seen that to be miserly and to refuse to help the needy, helps the evil cause of Angremainyo, and it is contrary to the requirements of Zoroastrianism.

The religious belief that charitable actions enable the soul after death to cross the Chinvat Bridge, actuates the Parsis to give away money in charity for hospitals, schools, and such other benevolent institutions.

There is a question in the *Dinkard*:—“How should the Almighty be extolled?” The answer

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(110) “That gift is the more unprofitable which they give to the unworthy.”—*Mainyo-i-Khirad*.

Cf. “In revelation as regards that person who provides any munificence for the unworthy, they call it a vain work and a gift without advantage, and day by day it is the punishment and torment of that person.”—*Saddar*, Ch. xxix, 1-3.

is:—"By means of religious wisdom, truth and *charity*. Because thereby he is sufficiently glorified, and man receives a reward for it."

Liberality <sup>(111)</sup> is one of the characteristics of that man who is perfectly well-versed in Zoroastrian moral philosophy. According to Zoroastrianism, it is not advisable to associate with a niggard. <sup>(112)</sup>

In the Gathas, <sup>(113)</sup> it is said that "The charitable persons who exist, who existed, and who will exist expect reward (for their charity) from Ahura-Mazda: The soul of a righteous man desires immortality."

In the Gathas, <sup>(114)</sup> there is a question put by Zoroaster to Ahura-Mazda, viz., "Where is the reward for beneficent actions?" The answer is—"In the other world." This question is followed by another, viz., "Where is pardon to be found?" (*i. e.* how can a man obtain pardon for his sins?) The answer is—"By doing charitable and benevolent deeds."

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## XXXVII.

### Industry.

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Ahura-Mazda has created man able to earn his own livelihood. One third of the day he should

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(111) Of the thirty-three ways and motives of good works recommended, *liberality* is placed at the top of all: *vide Mainyo-i-Khirad*, Chap. er xxxvii: (*Max Muller's Sacred Books of the East.*)

(112) Refer the English translation of the *Dinkard* by Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana, B.A., vol. vi, page 398.

(113) Refer Yasna 45, para. 7.

(114) Refer Yasna 51, para. 4.

devote to some sort of industry,<sup>(115)</sup> so that he may maintain himself and his family, be able to fulfil the duty he owes to his wife and children, especially the education of the latter, and keep up his health and energy to prepare himself for the other world.

Almost all the religious works are full of advices regarding one's bounden duty to be industrious, but here we shall give quotations from the *Gathas*, as this work has of late drawn the special attention of the learned class.

In *Yasna 29, para 2*, (*i.e.*, in the Ahunavaiti Gatha), it is said that a person spreads prosperity on the earth by industry and intelligence.

Further in the same *Yasna, para 5*, the version runs thus:—"There is no harm in living the life in honesty. The industrious and hard-working are not obliged to go to the wicked."<sup>(116)</sup>

In the same Gatha; *Yasna 31, para 9*, Zoroaster appears talking to the following effect:—

"O Ahura-Mazda! Thou art perfect Righteousness. Thine is the divine wisdom to create the world. Thou hast ordained to give the due reward both to the person who passes his time (life) in industry and to the person who is not industrious."

In the same *Yasna* the following sentence appears in para 10:—

"O Ahura-Mazda! a cheating lazy man does not obtain the benefit of the laws of the good religion."

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(115) "It is interesting to note the anxiety of the authors of the Avesta that the people should cease to be nomadic and take to a settled life"—*The Zend Avesta by J. Murray Mitchell, M. A.; L.L.D.* . . .

(116) *i.e.* Apply for help to the wicked.

An industrious man is supposed to be on the side of virtue, and by industry he possesses *good wisdom and humility.*<sup>(117)</sup>

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XXXVIII.

**H e a l t h .**

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It is of paramount importance that a Zoroastrian should take care of his health. He has to do good deeds which he cannot carry out, unless all the parts of his body are hale and healthy. To be a true Zoroastrian he requires a deal of energy and resolution. He also requires a good constitution and strong brains. To have a good mind a good body is essential. Zoroastrianism entirely supports the Latin maxim, *mens sana in corpore sano*. To be healthy one must be industrious, and it is clearly and distinctly stated in the Vendidad, that only the industrious are loved by God. The idle and the lazy are the dupes of the evil spirit, and they are sinners to Ahura-Mazda. Side by side with the bodily work, Zoroastrianism recommends mental culture, for, without it one is not able to withstand the temptations of Agremainyo. In fact, both sound mind and sound body are essentially required for the execution of *munashni*, good thoughts, *gavashni*, good words, and *kunashni*, good deeds. An unhealthy man cannot act up to the tenets of the religion, he being void of energy, activity and cheerfulness. An illiterate weak-minded fellow is full of

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(117) Refer Yasna LI, para 5.

laziness, quarrelsomeness, fickleness, and unscrupulousity—qualities which all belong to the domain of the evil spirit.

In order to fight against the wicked and to be able to carry out the commandments of Ahura-Mazda, Zoroaster himself required a resolute mind and strength to withstand the temptation of the demon who offered him the sovereignty of the world. In the Gathas,<sup>(118)</sup> Zoroaster is found praying to Ahura-Mazda, asking of him amongst other things soundness of his hands and feet, and of his eyes and ears. Health is necessary for a man, if he wants to reach perfection.

In *Yasna XLIII, para 1*, Zoroaster prays as follows :—"O Ahura-Mazda! I sincerely pray to Thee for health and vigour in order to be able to continue in Righteousness."

In the well-known Pehelvi work, *Dinkard*, much is written about health and how to preserve it. According to this work :—"Health is of two kinds. Of these, one depends upon the acquisition of merit (virtues) through the good qualities of the soul and upon the improvement of the powers of the soul. The second (description of) health refers to the body: It consists in the safe-ordering of the members of the body."

According to the exposition in the Zoroastrian religion, there should be physicians of the soul and

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(118) Also see *Yasna IX, para 19*.



physicians of the body, for, to be perfectly healthy both mind and body should be treated.<sup>(119)</sup>

The following passage from the same ancient work on Zoroastrianism, *viz. the Dinkard*, we give below the five rules to preserve health :—

“*First*: the setting right of the original (*i. e.* the body) and existence (*i. e.* the soul): *secondly*—making the elements work harmoniously: *thirdly*—to set right again parts of the body and the soul that have been injured: *fourthly*—bringing up those that have been born: *fifthly*—keeping the bodily passions and disposition in regulation.”

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### XXXIX.

## E d u c a t i o n .

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In the later Zoroastrian Scriptures, it is enjoined that a child should be taught at home by the parents elementary principles of religion. He (or she) should be taught the necessary short prayers to prepare him (or her) for the investiture with the sacred shirt and girdle, (*sudré* and *kusti*), for which ceremony the present Parsis have fixed seven to nine years as the proper age<sup>(120)</sup>. After this, his (or her) education

(119) In the ancient Iran, Doctors of Divinity were also Doctors of Medicine. Again if anybody from a non-priestly class learnt medicine, he also thought it necessary to receive an adequate knowledge of the religion from a *dastur*.

(120) This ceremony can be performed at the age of fifteen the latest, *vide* Vendidad, Ch. XVIII, paras 54 and 55.

should continue either at school or at home. Girls should be educated just as well as boys, for males and females are equal in the eye of this religion. The knowledge of reading the Avesta was at least quite essential to the ancient Parsis, for, in fact, the person who could not read and write was not considered accomplished at the time.

With the ancient Persians, home education claimed more attention, as it was their sole desire to leave after them children fully acquainted with their duties in this world. <sup>(121)</sup> Moral education was therefore considered very important for them.

As loyalty was a duty with the Iranians, they never hesitated to train their sons in physical exercise, so that they might turn out useful soldiers in time of war. If anybody showed a tendency to cowardice, he was looked upon with contempt.

Education is religiously enjoined on a Zoroastrian. It is mentioned in the Avesta, that a man must have *Asnideh Kherad* and *Gaosh-srut Kherad*, i. e., *natural wisdom* and *acquired wisdom*, natural wisdom being *Intellect*, and acquired wisdom being *Education*.

The prophet says in his *Gathas*, "Let the enlightened (*vidvao*) speak to the wise, let not the foolish (*a-vidao*) longer beguile us." This proves the

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(121) The late Mr. Mansookh in one of his lectures gave the following quotation from a European historian:—

"As to the child's education, their first aim was to make of him an able and useful member of their community, and to implant in him those virtues for which the old Iranian people were principally remarkable, and which the Avesta sums up in the words 'Piety in the thought, word and action.'"—*Mansookh's Lectures*, page 11.

necessity of acquiring enlightenment of the mind, which can only be done by religious and moral education.

In the *Dinkard*, imparting education is considered very meritorious. The following are the words:—

“And the deed that is highest in rank of all is the imparting knowledge to worthy students, the originators of righteous deeds.”

In the *Gathas* (see *Ahunavaiti Gatha, Yasna 28, verses 2, 3, 4 and 5*) the words of Zoroaster imply religious education. What he wants to say is that ‘*You should receive instruction such as may raise you to a higher condition, and should look through light-bearing thought.*’

A man’s education cannot be called perfect without religious knowledge.<sup>(122)</sup> Therefore it is the duty of every parent to impart it to his (or her) children. The *Dinkard* supports this view in the following words:

“Be it known that the acquisition by a man of perfect knowledge of the work of his profession, and generally his success therein, happen only when he is possessed of proper thought and concern for the Possessor of Good Gifts.”

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(122) A European historian was quoted by the late Mr. Mansookh in one of his lectures:—

“It is pretty clear that the special training of the boys for future callings went hand in hand with their religious education; and that it was chiefly regulated according to the profession of the father.”—*Mansookh’s Lectures, page 11.*

On the point of education, *Saddar* is quite clear :—“ It is incumbent on every one to send a child to school and to teach it something. If they (*i.e.* parents) do not deliver children to school, and do not teach them anything, and they (*i.e.* children) become bold in committing sin, that sin becomes, fixed on the necks of the father and mother.”<sup>(123)</sup>

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 XL.

### Zoroastrian Woman.

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In the Avestaic period, woman was respected and considered as man's equal. In the Avesta itself women are addressed, advised, remembered and praised just as well as men,<sup>(124)</sup> Zoroaster himself in the Gathas enjoins religious commandments not only on men but also on women. He makes no difference between *man* and *woman* as regards his precepts. In the *Ostavad Gatha*, 46th *Ha*, verse 10, he plainly promises the Paradise to every religious person, whether *man* or *woman*, distinctly using the Avestaic word “*gena*” for woman. Also we find the word “*jenayo*” used for women in the *Vahishtoishti Gatha*, 53rd *Ha*, verse 6, wherein men and women are addressed together and asked to

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(123) Vide ‘*Saddar*’ Chapter LI, paras 4 and 5.

(124) *Bareshnum* ceremony is recommended to both men and women.—  
See *Saddar*, Ch. XXXVI.

denounce publicly the path of vice. Not only the *Gathas*, but also the *Vendidad* and other religious works put woman on the same footing as man. In short, the spiritual position of woman is no way inferior to that of man according to the Avesta.<sup>(125)</sup> In the later Avesta also, especially in the *Farvardin Yasht*, where the guardian spirits of the pious men of the Avestaic period are remembered and praised with veneration, those of the pious women of the time are not forgotten. Not only are they invoked by their proper names in several passages,<sup>(126)</sup> but also pious women of Iran and pious women of Turan in general<sup>(127)</sup> are remembered with due veneration. This and many other references from the Avesta prove that in the eye of the Zoroastrian religion woman holds the same position as man.<sup>(128)</sup>

As Zoroastrianism makes no difference between the sexes, elementary religious education is as essential to a girl as to a boy. The ancient Iranians were very careful in training up their young daughters with the precepts of the religion, just as they did in the case of their sons, and the Parsis of the present day do the same.

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125 "Amongst the Avesta people, women took part even in the holy ceremonies and solemn offerings. The ladies of the house, who cherish good thoughts, utter good words, and perform good actions, who are obedient subject to their lords, are invited in the Visperad at the offering ceremony equally with pious and orthodox men. Further on it is said that both wife and husband naturally pray together to Mithra for his protection and support." (*A quotation from a European Historian in the late Mr. Mansookh's Lectures, page 91*)

126 Vide *Farvardin Yasht*, paras 139, 140, 141 and 142.

127 Vide *Farvardin Yasht* para 143.

128 "The moral victory of Zoroastrianism is the work of a woman, and that no picture of woman is nobler and higher than that which is drawn in the Avesta."—*Prof. Darmesteter*.

A Zoroastrian girl is guided by her parents or guardians, till she attains puberty which this religion fixes at the age of 15.<sup>(129)</sup> At this age she must be married according to the precepts of the religion, otherwise her father or guardian sins against Ahura-Mazda, as has been related in the Vendidad and other works on Zoroastrianism. She has her own choice in the union, but she may be guided by her parents or guardians. As a rule, priests never complete the marriage ceremony without asking both the bride and the bridegroom, whether they approve and consent to the match.<sup>(130)</sup>

In the Zoroastrian Scriptures one reads that the pious women are always blessed with many children. A Zoroastrian wife therefore considers her happiness imperfect, if she is not blest with children. To be without them means a divine disfavor.<sup>(131)</sup>

A married woman is the queen of her house, her husband being the king. In the Avesta she is considered her husband's equal. The husband is the paterfamilias (in the Avesta language *nmano-paiti*) and the wife is the materfamilia (in the Avesta, language *nmano-pathni*). In *Yasht XV, para 40* (i.e. *Ram Yasht*) a woman desires two blessings from her husband—(1) *love* and (2) *children*, and three characteristics in him, viz., (1) *wisdom*, (2) *mild disposition*, and (3) *fluency of tongue*.

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(129) See *Vendidad*, Fargarad XIV, para 15.

(130) *Vide* Chapter on Marriage, foot-note 83.

(131) Refer *Yasht X* (i.e. *Meher Yasht*), para 38.

A Zoroastrian woman is not to be considered merely a child-bearing machine. She is her husband's better-half, and without her he is but a half of the whole, for it is she who manages all the domestic and private affairs of her husband. She superintends the kitchen (or cooks herself), look after the home education of her children, gives orders to the servants, keeps accounts of the household expenses, looks after the comforts of her husband and children, advises her husband in all domestic affairs, consoles him in his troubles, and is, in fact, the life and soul of the domestic circle. Not only this. She is also her husband's companion to religious and social gatherings.

We read also of the ancient Iranian women that they spun, milked, superintended the fields, rode on horseback, gave sermons to their own sex, fought (disguised as males) in battles against the enemies, and managed the household affairs. Even in the time of Zoroaster, his own daughter Paoroochista, is found sermonizing before her own sex, in the *Gathas*<sup>(132)</sup>, as follows:—

“The virtuous girl who will be faithful to her father, husband, servants, as well as to her relations and righteous persons, will have all her good desires gratified, and Ahura-Mazda will favour her with the eternal happiness of Heaven as a reward for her pious inclinations.”

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132 Refer *Vahishtoishiti Gatha* (Yasna LIII), verse 4.

A Zoroastrian woman is considered excellent, if she fulfils the ideas conveyed by the following words in the *Mainyo-i-Khirad*:—

“ The woman who is young, who is properly disposed, who is faithful, who is respected, who is good-natured, a friend of her own father and elders, husband and guardian, handsome and replete with animation, is chief over the women who are her own associates.”

Instances of heroic acts performed by Iranian women are recorded in history. We may mention here, for an instance, the heroic deed performed by *Gardafriid*, daughter of Gustahim the Brave. She withstood and defeated Sohrab, son of Rustam, as it is beautifully described by Firdousi, the well-known Persian poet.

One noticeable characteristic of the ancient Iranian women was that they took care to feed their children at their own breast.

A Zoroastrian woman's morality is a matter of considerable importance. As Zoroastrianism inculcates the principles of truth, a Zoroastrian woman is always honest in her dealings, and true to her word and promise. She never lacks in her duty towards her parents, brothers and sisters, and in her sympathy towards her poor relations, friends and fellow-countrymen.

The Avesta strictly advises chastity in a woman. Adultery, prostitution and infanticide are considered in Zoroastrianism heinous sins for which there is no atonement at all, as it is taught in the *Vendidad*.



In the Pehelvi work "*Mainyo-i-Khirad*," it is advised that a *wife is worthy of more protection and more regard.*

The Zoroastrian women of the ancient times were very particular as to their constitutional health and beauty. A Zoroastrian maid ought to have her form and face as described in the *Hadokht Nask, Ch. II, para 9.* She ought to be "beautiful, bloomy, white-armed, courageous, handsome, straight-statured, with prominent breasts, of attractive constitution, of noble descent, and of shining face."

Even the present day Zoroastrian women, although not so strong as their ancestors, are graceful and fair-looking. They attend schools and colleges, and vie at examinations with males. Amongst them there are authoresses, lecturesses school-mistresses doctresses, lawyeresses and paintresses. They also, serve as clerks or nurses. In fact the Zoroastrian women now-a-days vie with males in almost every branch of knowledge. They freely move about in the public and hold meetings amongst themselves, and also attend those convened by males for the public in general. Everywhere they are respected and honoured by the Zoroastrian males,<sup>(133)</sup> and always given a place in the front ranks in all gatherings, whether religious or social.

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133 "The Parsees in this respect (i.e. respect to woman) stand high far higher than any other Oriental people and on a level with the best European civilization. The equality of the sexes is distinctly laid down in the Zoroastrian Scriptures. Women are always mentioned as a necessary part of the religious community. They have the same religious rites as men."—*S. Laing.*

## XLI.

**Zoroastrian Month.**

Most of the days of the Parsi month are named after the archangels and angels. The month is divided into nearly four equal divisions resembling weeks. The first division or week begins with the name of the Creator, Ahura-Mazda, and is followed by the names of six archangels; the second division begins with an appellation of Ahura-Mazda and it is followed by the name of six angels; the third division also begins with an appellation of the Creator, followed by the names of other seven angels; and the fourth also, like the first three divisions, begins with an appellation of God and is followed by the names of the remaining seven angels. The first fortnight is of 14 days, and the latter half of the month consists of 16 days.

The thirty days of the month are named as below :—

(1) *Ahura-Mazda*. The first day of the month is named after the Creator.

(2) *Bahman*. (Vohumano) is the Good Mind. He presides over Peace and Knowledge. He looks after man and the animals created by God.

(3) *Ardi-behesht* (Ash-Vahista) is an impersonification of Divine Order and Holiness. He presides over Fire. He keeps the key to the gate of Heaven.

(4) *Shahrevar* (Khshithra-Vairyō) presides over Metals. He is the archangel of Mercy and Charity.

(5). *Aspandad* (Sapendârmad) presides over the good Spenta-Armaiti, the Earth.

(6). *Khordad* (Haur-vatat) rules over the seasons of the year. He is the genius of Health and presides over Waters.

(7). *Amerdad* (Ameretat) rules over Plants. He is the genius of Immortality.

(8). *Depâdar* (Dai-pa-adar). This is the first day of the second week. It is set apart for the worship of the Creator.

(9). *Adar* (Atar) is the Glory and Weal of Ahura-Mazda. He presides over Fire.

(10). *Avan* (Abân) presides over all good waters and all Plants.

(11). *Khorshèd* (Huvré-Khshaetém) is the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun.

(12). *Mohor* is the shining Moon.

(13). *Tir*<sup>(134)</sup> (Tistrya) is the leader of the Stars against the planets. He presides over the Rain.

(14). *Ghos* is a female angel. She is a personification of the animal kingdom which she maintains and protects.

(15). *Dap-meher* (Dai-pa-meher). This day is set apart for the worship of Ahura-Mazda, the Creator.

(16). *Meher* (Mitbra) is the lord of wide pastures. He is the genius of Heavenly Light. He presides

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(134) *Tir* has to fight with *Apaosha*, the demon of draught.

over Truth. He is the preserver of oaths and good faith and punishes those that break their promises or fail in their contracts.

(17). *Srosh* is the master of Holiness. He smites fiends. He is the Divine Messenger. He leads souls after death to the Chinvat Bridge. Before him all the *dèvs* (fiends) bow with fear and fright and rush away to darkness.

(18). *Rashnè* (Rashna Razista) is the genius of Truth. He is one of the three judges (with Mithra and Srosh) that decide the fate of the soul after death. He holds the golden balance in which the deeds of men are weighed after their death. He is just and shews no favour, and is the avenger of lies.

(19). *Farvardin*. This day is set apart to remember the *Fravashis* i.e., the souls of the dead.

(20). *Behram* (Verethraghna) is the genius, strongest in strength, the most victorious in victory, the most glorious in glory, the most favouring in favour, the best giver of welfare, the best healing in health-giving.

(21). *Râm* is the genius who presides over *Vayu*, the wind. He presides over the sovereign sky and the boundless time.

(22). *Gowad* (Bâd) is the bounteous Wind. This genius presides over Courage.

(23). *Depdin* (Dai-pa-din). This day is the first in the fourth week and is set apart for the worship of God.

(24). *Dîn* (Daêna) is invoked in company with *Kista*, the genius over Religious Knowledge. Daêna is the impersonification of the Zoroastrian Religion.

(25). *Ashishang* (Ashivanguhi) is a female genius. She is a genius of Fortune and Wealth. She is a female impersonification of Piety.

(26). *Astad* (Arstât) is Truthfulness. She is invoked in company with *Rasné*, the genius of Truth. *Astad* makes the world grow.

(27). *Asman* presides over heavens, and the bright happy abode of the holy ones.

(28). *Jamiad* (Zemyad) presides over the Earth fields and mountains.

(29). *Maharespand* (Mathra-Spenta) is the Holy Word or Law, or The Heavenly Wisdom.

(30). *Aneran* (Anaghra-raokun) rules over the eternal and sovereign luminous space.

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In the book styled "Shayast-La-Shayast (book of the Pehelvi Revayet), the qualities of the Ameshaspentas and Yazads are mentioned as below. The order preserved is the same as in the Zoroastrian month:—

*Qualities of Ameshaspentas and Yazads:—*

(The first week).

(1)	AHURA-MAZDA	IS	MORE	CREATIVE.
(2)	Bahman	is	more	embellished.
(3)	Ardibeheshst	is	more	brilliant.

- |               |    |          |           |
|---------------|----|----------|-----------|
| (4) Shahrevar | is | more     | exalted.  |
| (5) Aspandad  | is | more     | fruitful. |
| (6) Kherdad   | is | moister. |           |
| (7) Amerdad   | is | fatter.  |           |

( The second week ).

- |               |    |              |              |
|---------------|----|--------------|--------------|
| (8) DEPADAR   | IS | JUST LIKE    | AHURA-MAZDA. |
| (9) Adar      | is | hotter.      |              |
| (10) Avan     | is | more golden. |              |
| (11) Khorshed | is | „            | observant.   |
| (12) Mohor    | is | „            | protective.  |
| (13) Tir      | is | „            | liberal.     |
| (14) Ghos     | is | swifter.     |              |

( The third week ).

- |                |    |      |              |
|----------------|----|------|--------------|
| (15) DAP-MEHER | IS | LIKE | AHURA-MAZDA. |
| (16) Meher     | is | more | judicial.    |
| (17) Srosh     | is | more | vigorous.    |
| (18) Rashnè    | is | more | just.        |
| (19) Farvardin | is | more | powerful.    |
| (20) Bèhram    | is | more | victorious.  |
| (21) Râm       | is | more | pleasing.    |
| (22) Gowad     | is | more | fragrant.    |

( The fourth week ).

- |                  |    |             |                               |
|------------------|----|-------------|-------------------------------|
| (23) DEPDIN      | IS | LIKE        | AHURA-MAZDA.                  |
| (24) Din         | is | more        | valuable.                     |
| (25) Ashishang   | is | more        | beautiful.                    |
| (26) Astad       | is | purser.     |                               |
| (27) Arman       | is | more        | lofty.                        |
| (28) Jamiad      | is | more        | conclusive.                   |
| (29) Maharespand | is | more        | conveying the re-<br>ligion.  |
| (30) Aneran      | is | the extreme | of exertion and<br>listening. |

## XLII.

**Zoroastrian Benedictions.**

As archangels and angels guide mankind on the Earth, their names are often used by the Parsis, especially the Parsi priests, in connection with blessings and benedictions on certain occasions. They are given below in the order of the days of the Parsi month :—

(1) May *Ahura-Mazda* give thee the august rank and throne of a Champion !

(2) May *Bahman* give thee Wisdom ! May the benefit of knowing Vohuman be good thought, and mayst thou be acting well, that is, saving the soul !

(3) May *Ardibehesht*, the beautiful, give thee understanding and intellect !

(4) May *Shahrevar* grant thee wealth from every generous one !

(5) May *Aspandad* grant thee praise through the seed of the body ! May she give thee as wife a woman from the race of the great !

(6) May *Khordad* grant thee plenty and prosperity !

(7) May *Amerdad* grant thee herds of four-footed beasts !

(8) May *Depâdar* always secure thee the support of the Creator, Ahura-Mazda !

(9) May the light of the sublime *Adar* hold thy throne in heaven !

(10) May *Avân* grant thee wealth from every generous one!

(11) May *Khorshed* hold thee without mystery and doubt among the great and thy compeers!

(12) May *Mohor* give thee an assistant who is the assistant of champions!

(13) May *Tistrya* hold thee a traveller in the country of the seven regions!

(14) *Ghos*, the angel, is the protector of four-footed animals!

(15) May *Dap-Meher* always remain for thee as the support of the Creator, Ahura-Mazda!

(16) May *Meher* be thy judge who shall wish thy existence to be vigorous!

(17) May *Srosh*, the righteous, the smiter of demons, keep greed, wrath, and want far from thee! May he destroy them, and may he not seize thee as unjust!

(18) May *Rashné* be thy conductor to the resplendent heaven!

(19) May *Furvardin* give thee offspring which may bear the name of thy race!

(20) *Behram*, the victorious, is the stimulator of the war-like!

(21) May *Râm*, applauding the life of a praiser of the persistent lord, keep thee perfect, that is, living three hundred years, undying and undecaying unto the end of thy days!



(22) May *Gowad* bring thee peace from the resplendent heaven!

(23) May *Depdin* always secure thee the support of the Creator, Ahura-Mazda!

(24) May *Daêna* become thy guest in the home and dwelling!

(25) *Ashishang*, the beautiful, is the resplendent glory of the Kayans!

(26) May *Astad* be thy helper, who is the assistant of champions!

(27) May *Asman* bless thee with all skill and wealth!

(28) May *Jamiad* destroy for thee the demon and fiend out of thy dwelling!

(29) May *Maharespand* hold thee a throne in the resplendent heaven!

(30) May *Aneran*, the immortal, with every kind of all wealth, become thy desire!

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### XLIII

## Sermon of Zoroaster.

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(In the *Gathas-Yasna XLV*.)

In the whole 45th *Ha* (Chapter) of *Yazashné*, we find Zoroaster addressing his audience and exhorting them to believe in one God, Ahura-Mazda and asking them

not to follow the evil spirit. As this chapter gives an idea about what Zoroaster desired of his audience and wanted them to do, it is considered worth while to give here the translation of the whole chapter<sup>(135)</sup>.

### Yasna XLV.

(1) (Prophet Zoroaster addresses his audience come to hear his sermon)—You that have come from near and from far desire to know about (my) religion. Lend me your ears and listen to me with attention: You will this time surely ponder over what I say, in order that no false prophet might again lead you astray and ruin your life.

(2) (Ye that are present) Firstly I declare to you the two *māinyos* (spirits), the one who helps the creative side of nature, told the other whose work is to destroy nature, thus: 'Our thoughts, our creeds, our words, our deeds, our faith, our souls, none of these agree with one another.'

(3) Ahura-Mazda has told me about the first thing (for man) to know in this world, and it is this: Those that will not consider the Avesta, or the Word of Ahura-Mazda, as I consider and declare it, will have their lives terminated in ruin.

(4) I declare to you about Ahura-Mazda who is the Father of Good-Mind, (and) who is the best owing to His Righteousness, and who is the Most Intelligent; and about the Armaiti (the Earth) who is His

(135) This whole Yasna XLV is translated *freely* from the Gujarati translation of the *Gāthās* by Ervad K. F. Kanga.

daughter and who is the best owing to her righteous deeds. <sup>(136)</sup> Ahura-Mazda knows everything (*i.e.* He is Omniscient.) He has given me this religion (or the Law or Word of Ahura-Mazda.) Ahura-Mazda who sees everything is never deceived by anybody.

(5) I announce to you the Word (religion) which the Increaser (*i.e.* Ahura-Mazda) has told me and which is the best (for man) to hear. Those that will pay attention to me and follow me (*i.e.* follow my religion), will secure for themselves health (in this world) and immortality (in the other world). Such men will be able to see Ahura-Mazda through Good Mind.

(6) I declare to you the Being who holds the highest position over all. I sing His glory owing to His Righteousness; He is the Wisest and His *ameshaspentas* (the archangels or the attributes of Ahura-Mazda) are also such. Ahura-Mazda, to whom I pray through Good Mind (Vohuman) will hear my prayer through the *mainyo* of prosperity: He will instruct me through His best Wisdom.

(7) Those charitable persons, that exist now, existed before, and will exist in future, surely expect reward (benefits) from Him (Ahura-Mazda). The soul of a righteous man expects immortality (or happiness in paradise). The wicked have to suffer much. This law, Ahura-Mazda, the Creator, established by His power.

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(136) Armaiti is the Piety or Devotion of God.

(8) We desire to praise Him by hymns of prayer, because, owing to the knowledge of His Law and owing to Good Mind, I now see clearly the Almighty, the source of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. We glorify Him in *Garothman* (the Highest Heaven).

(9) We adore, with the help of Good Mind, Him who has for our benefit created happiness and misery (of this world). May Ahura-Mazda, with His power, bestow on us, owing to our good Wisdom obtained through Good Mind, energy and strength to flourish our men and cattle!

(10) Him, who, owing to His inexhaustible power, is known as the Omniscient Creator, and who has ordained health and immortality for virtuous persons, Him we worship with the prayer of devotion. Ahura-Mazda always gives to the virtuous strength and energy.

(11) Ahura-Mazda is the friend, helper, and patron of those persons, who despise the demons and wicked persons, and who respect Ahura-Mazda and enlightened Soshiyants through His holy religion. From these (*i. e.* the Soshiyants) the demons are of quite the contrary nature.

## XLIV.

**30 Sins in Zoroastrianism.**

Every bad thought, word or deed is a sin in Zoroastrianism, and the number of sins is great, but thirty of them are enumerated as heinous in the *Pehelvi Mainyo-i-Khirad*.<sup>(137)</sup>

- (1) Unnatural intercourse.<sup>(138)</sup>
- (2) To suffer or perform intercourse with men.
- (3) To slay a righteous man.
- (4) To break off a marriage.
- (5) To break the arrangement of an adopted son.
- (6) To defile the sacred fire.
- (7) To kill a water-beaver.
- \* (8) To worship an idol.
- (9) To believe and to wish to worship in every religion.
- (10) To misappropriate and to embezzle another person's goods.
- (11) To help the wicked : to help the liar.
- (12) To do no work but eat unthankfully and unlawfully.
- (13) To commit heresy.
- (14) To commit witchcraft.
- (15) To commit apostasy.
- (16) To commit demon-worship.

(137) Refer Chapter XXXVI of *Daini-Mainyo-i-Khirad* by Dr. E. W. West.

(138) "There is no worse sin than this in the good religion and it is proper to call those who commit it worthy of death in reality."—*Sad-dar*, Ch. VII, 2.

- (17) To steal or to abet stealing.
- (18) To break a promise or a contract.
- (19) To shew malice.
- (20) To rob others of their possessions and to oppress people.
- (21) To distress a righteous man.
- (22) To slander and backbite.
- (23) To practise arrogance.
- (24) Debauchery.
- (25) Ingratitude.
- (26) To tell a lie or a falsehood.
- (27) To cause discontent as to the affairs of those that are departed.
- (28) To try to derive pleasure from viciousness, and to harass the good.
- (29) To urge on a sin, and to delay a good work.
- (30) To be grieved at the happiness of others.

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 XLV.
 

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### Sovereign Rules for Kings.

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Righteousness is much needed in a king, for, through righteousness the king can do much good to the people. Several good qualities are enumerated in the "Dinkard" as necessarily required in the ruler of a land, and as they are worth noting, they are given below<sup>(139)</sup> :—

(1) The first virtuous quality is that connected

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(139) The following passages are quoted from the English rendering of the Gujarati translation of the 'Dinkard' by the late Dastur Peshotan B. Sanjana.

with the good religion; for, it is owing to kings being of the good religion that innumerable people belong to the good religion.

(2) The second good quality is that connected with good sense, for it is owing to kings possessing good sense that they are able to conduct themselves and their dependants well.

(3) The third (good quality) is that connected with a good conscience, for, it is owing to good conscience that kings acquire very high courage, and it is owing to the courage of kings that (their) enemies suffer harm, and thereby the world is protected.

(4) The fourth (good quality) is the power of forbearance, for, it is owing to forbearance by rulers that their servants love them; and it is owing to their willingness to do the work in accordance with the commands of the ruler that the government of the people continues with safety and the people are benefited.

(5) The fifth (good quality) is to bear good love to subjects, for, owing to want of kindness on the part of rulers, the people become their enemies, and thereby the hopes of securing kindness between rulers and subjects are cut off, and then danger is apprehended, by the world, of a certain degree of violence from rulers, and from the people to the rulers.

(6) The sixth (good quality) is that connected with thoughts of providing comfort for the subject

people, for, kings, entertaining thoughts of procuring comfort for (their) subjects, perform very great and beneficial works for (their) present and future subjects.

(7) The seventh (good quality) is cheerfulness of heart, for, if kings have in them (any) degree of cheerfulness, the troubles of (their) subjects are thereby averted in the best manner.

(8) The eighth (good quality) is the constant remembrance that dominion is liable to pass away, for, remembering that dominion is liable to pass away, the king lives without pomp, and a wise king, by means of the income of transient dominion obtains the in-transient dominion connected with the soul.

(9) The ninth (good quality) is raising the rank of persons possessing good qualities, for, owing to the king's bestowing high rank upon men skilled in the arts, those arts which are known to the people shine forth, and those which have not become known acquire the strength for becoming known, whereby the world is improved and embellished.

(10) The tenth (good quality) is causing hardship to those possessing evil qualities, for, owing to the hardship inflicted by the king upon those possessed of evil qualities, those evil qualities which are being generated disappear, and the strength of those which have not taken birth is broken, and they cease. And he world is purified from blemishes.



(11) The eleventh (good quality) is living united in thought with the people, for being united in thought with (his) subjects, a king is liked by every city, and a king that is liked by his subjects has stability. Again, such a king peoples new cities by levying heavy taxes, and does work calculated for the prosperity of the people of the world, the benefit of the country, the acquirement of help by the people and lasting final improvement. And that his greatness might become known to the kings of other countries, (he) considers it is his duty to embellish every country with great wealth and to make gifts to the people.

(12) The twelfth (good quality) is giving meritorious commands, for it is from meritorious commands of kings that justice takes its birth, and the improvement of the world depends upon justice.

(13) The thirteenth (good quality) is observing the practice of sitting in open court in every country, for, by kings observing the practice of sitting in open court in every country, the sweetness of sin is prevented from (approaching) sinful rulers, and their oppression is stopped, and pious rulers have hopes of wealth and the destitute of obtaining proper relief. And such kings are as a token (mark) for the doers of the work connected with immortality behaving well with reference to such work, for mendicants (*dervishes*) being cared for, (and) for great benefit being derived by the kingdom.

(14) The fourteenth (good quality) is generosity, for, as water makes vegetation to bloom, so do ease-giving kings keep the creation of this world blooming by generosity.

(15) The fifteenth (good quality) is restraining of covetousness, for, he who is a restrainer of covetousness, in him the *Yazads* descend, and he thereby is enabled to prevent the innumerable, covetous wolves of the world from openly ruining it.

(16) The sixteenth (good quality) is the removal (prevention) by him (the king) of mutual fear from among the people of the world, that thereby much fear might not enter into the people.

(17) The seventeenth (good quality) is that of rewarding good men and of making them courtiers and nobles, for, owing to good men getting rank and leadership from the king, every vice retires and disappears, and every virtue (goodness) blossoms and advances.

(18) The eighteenth (good quality) is the great carefulness required in appointing administrators of the kingdom (to see) whether they are good or bad (low) men, for, it is owing to kings making full enquiries as to which officers are good and which bad, that the connection with the people continues, and thereby the people obtain the benefits,—goodness, prosperity, and proper gifts, (obtainable) from kings.

(19) The nineteenth (good quality) is keeping himself, through wisdom, in obedience to the holy Self-existent, for, by (his) keeping himself, through wisdom, in obedience to the holy Self-existent, the king's subjects remain heartily in obedience to him, and thereby the authority of kings over the people of the world attains a higher grade, their justice and commands continue and the people are greatly benefited.

